

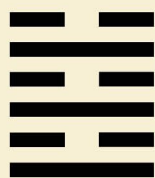
PROGNOSTICATION IN HISTORY



# The Origin and Early Development of the *Zhou Changes*

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Edward L. Shaughnessy

## The Origin and Early Development of the *Zhou Changes*

# Prognostication in History

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# The Origin and Early Development of *the Zhou Changes*

*By*

Edward L. Shaughnessy



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Cover Illustration: The hexagram picture shared by the invertible pair of hexagrams *Jiji* 既濟 ䷾ “Already Across” and *Weiji* 未濟 ䷿ “Not Yet Across.” This symbolizes that the book’s completion is also incomplete.

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# Preface

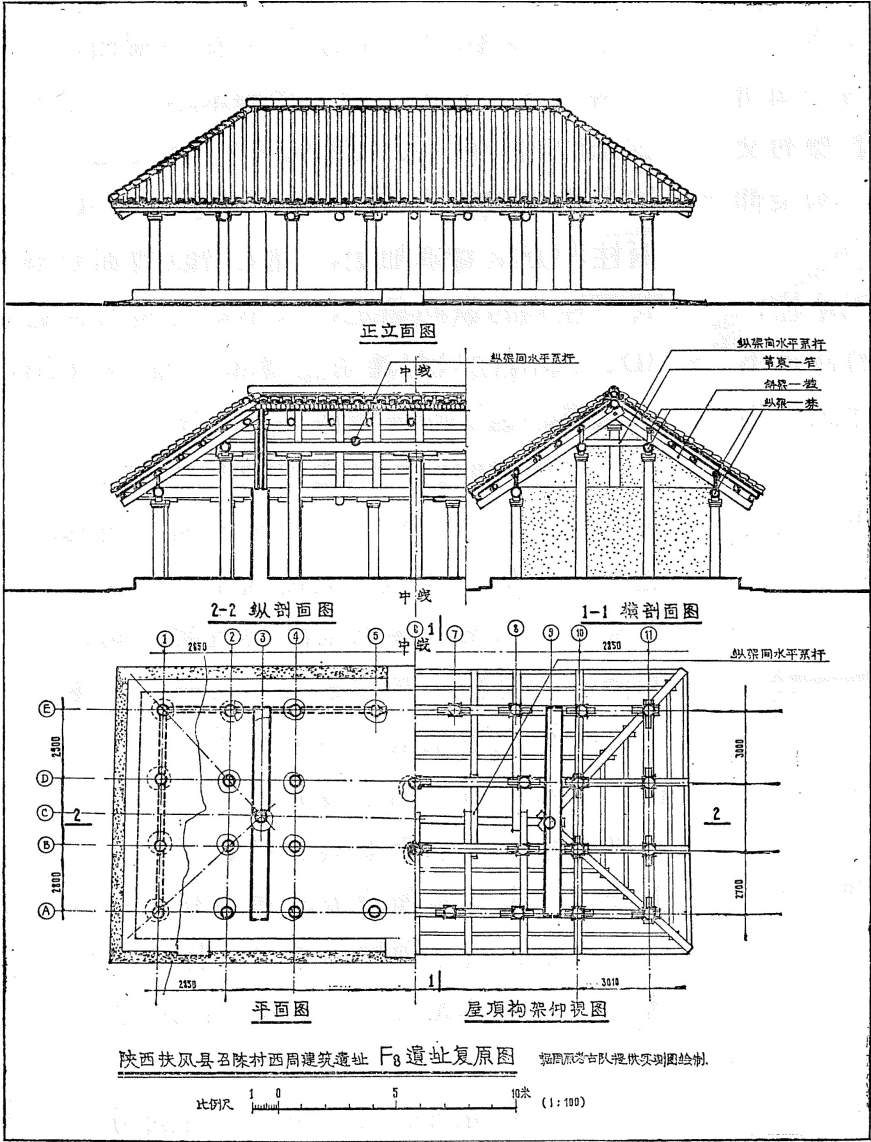


FIGURE 0.1 Plan of Western Zhou structure at Shaochen 召陳; from Fu Xinian 傅熹年, "Shaanxi Fufeng Shao-Chen Xi Zhou jianzhu yizhi chutan: Zhouyuan Xi Zhou jianzhu yizhi yanjiu zhi er" 陝西扶風召陳西周建築遺址初探：周原西周建築遺址研究之二, *Wenwu* 文物 1981.3: 37

The reconstruction of this Western Zhou temple depicted above was achieved through the methodology of archaeology. At least four steps were required before the picture could be completed. First, successive layers of accumulated Chinese history had to be penetrated, coming at last to the *pisé* foundation on which the temple was erected. Next, the perimeter of the foundation had to be determined, thereby demonstrating the size and outline of the structure. Third, post-holes cut into the *pisé* indicated the detailed configuration of the temple's walls and some idea of the supporting structure of the roofing. And finally, comparative evidence and a degree of imagination allowed the archaeologists to draw in the roof.

In the following pages I propose to undertake a somewhat similar reconstruction of another temple of the Western Zhou. The same four-stage methodology will be employed: successive layers of Chinese history will have to be penetrated, the outline of the foundation will have to be determined, markpoints will have to be found in that foundation demonstrating how the edifice was constructed, and finally, a degree of imagination will be required to complete the picture. But the result of this reconstruction effort will inevitably be less graphically satisfying than that of the temple at Shaochen village, for although the temple with which we will be concerned was crafted by the same Western Zhou men out of the same hard Western Zhou earth, it was constructed of ideas and images rather than of timber and thatch. This temple of which I speak is the *Zhou Changes*.

The comparison is not fatuous. As surely as men worshipped in the temple at Shaochen, so too have one hundred generations of Chinese never ceased to worship at the temple of the *Zhou Changes*. But exposure to the light of day can result in the same type of disfiguration of original structures as can such long burial as that at Shaochen. Living institutions invariably and ceaselessly evolve. This has been true also with the *Zhou Changes*. Early on, a cult formed around the sacred scripture, giving rise in turn to an intermediary priesthood formed in order to explain its mysteries. Later, successive generations never hesitated to change the temple trappings to suit the fashions of their own day. This evolutionary process continues even today with the *Zhou Changes*.

But for better or for worse, modern historical scholarship is decidedly agnostic. We in the halls of academe are only anthropologically concerned with cult. We are interested in the context of cult: where did it happen? when did it happen? how did it happen and what actually happened? who was responsible? and finally why did it happen? We are fortunate with regard to the period since the formal organization of the cult of the *Zhou Changes* to have abundant evidence with which to answer these questions. Unfortunately, even the beginning of that period some two thousand years ago was already long removed from the

original creation of the temple by the people of the Western Zhou. But thanks largely to the efforts of modern archaeologists and their related brethren the paleographers and historians of ancient China, it is now becoming ever more possible to ask these questions even of the time when the *Zhou Changes* was but newly built. Indeed, it is time that these questions must be asked. For as splendid as the temple at Shaochen appears, it is but a hollow shell. It is from relics such as the *Zhou Changes* that the spirit of the time may finally be divined.<sup>1</sup>

I beg the reader's indulgence to begin this book on the origin and early development of the *Zhou Changes* with a lengthy quotation from the very beginning of my own doctoral dissertation, written almost forty years ago. I hope that the reader will excuse the purple prose as just an indication of my youthful exuberance, but see in that exuberance something of the spirit that I brought to that dissertation. While I hope that my writing style now is a little less breathless, I also hope that I have not lost any of that exuberance for the topic, or any of the imagination that I suggested was necessary to complete the picture.

It has become quite standard in the American scholarly world for newly minted Ph.D.s to go on to publish the dissertation as their first book. In the Spring of 1986, less than three years after completing my degree, I was approached by Jim Clarke, then director of the University of California Press, who inquired whether I would consider publishing the dissertation book with his press. Of course, I was flattered but also reluctant. As I told Mr. Clarke, I was then deep into another research project, studying the bronze inscriptions of the Western Zhou dynasty, hoping thereby to gain a better control over the linguistic context of the period.<sup>2</sup> I promised him that once I had gained that better control that I would return to the dissertation and to the *Zhou Changes*.

I hoped to do so when I finally had my first research leave from the University of Chicago, in 1993–1994. However, in the middle of that year the Mawangdui 馬王堆 manuscript of the *Yijing*, first unearthed twenty years earlier, was finally published and I was invited by Owen Lock of Ballantine Books to publish a translation of it. Again, I was flattered and happy to be paid for a task that I would surely have turned my attention to in any event. In the years immediately after publishing that translation,<sup>3</sup> three more manuscripts that had been

- 
- 1 Edward Louis Shaughnessy, "The Composition of the *Zhouyi*" (Ph.D. diss.: Stanford University, 1983), vii–ix, changing "*Zhouyi*" to "*Zhou Changes*" in line with usage of the present book.
  - 2 The result of this research was published in due course, with the University of California Press: *Sources of Western Zhou History: Inscribed Bronze Vessels* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).
  - 3 This book too was published in due course: *I Ching, The Classic of Changes: The First English*

unearthed in the intervening time were also made available in China, and I published preliminary reports on each of them in scholarly journals.<sup>4</sup> In 2007–2008, the beneficiary of another sabbatical leave, I thought that maybe I would finally return to the dissertation. However, for reasons no longer clear to me (I seem to recall that it had something to do with becoming chair of my department at Chicago), I decided instead to gather these preliminary articles and to pair them with translations of all three of those newly published manuscripts, which could then be published as a single book.<sup>5</sup>

I was beginning to think that my dissertation would remain just that: my dissertation. However, as luck would have it, as I was writing my book on the unearthed manuscripts of and related to the *Zhou Changes*, the Chinese government launched a major initiative called the “2011 Project,” one important item of which was designed to reconsider the Chinese traditional literary heritage in the light of recent archaeological discoveries. This project brought together scholars from eleven different universities and research institutes under the joint leadership of Li Xueqin 李學勤 (1933–2019) of Tsinghua University in Beijing and Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭 of Fudan University in Shanghai, then the two greatest authorities on China’s ancient cultural history. In 2014, Professor Qiu invited me to write the Project’s book on the *Yijing*. Imagine my shock at this, that a major research project funded by the Chinese government and intended to reconsider China’s literary heritage would invite a foreign scholar to write the book on the *Yijing*, arguably the most important single book in that tradition. Needless to say, I was once again flattered and could not possibly say no to Professor Qiu.

However, while I could not say no, I accepted with three conditions. First, I would write the book that I wanted to write, which was finally to finish my dissertation. Second, I would not be able to begin work immediately. I was just then in the process of writing a very different kind of book: a comprehensive overview of the contributions that Western Sinology has made to the study of Chinese unearthed texts. This book too was started at the instigation of friends

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*Translation of the Newly Discovered Second-Century BCE Mawangdui Texts* (New York: Ballantine Press, 1996).

- 4 “The Wangjiatai *Gui Cang*: An Alternative to *Yijing* Divination,” in A. Cadonna, and E. Bianchi, eds., *Facets of Tibetan Religious Tradition and Contacts with Neighbouring Cultural Areas*, *Orientalia Venetiana* 12 (Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 2002), 95–126; “The Fuyang *Zhou Yi* and the Making of a Divination Manual,” *Asia Major*, 3rd ser., 14.1 (2001 [actually 2003]): 7–18; “A First Reading of the Shanghai Museum Bamboo-Strip Manuscript of the *Zhou Yi*,” *Early China* 30 (2005): 1–24.
- 5 Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Unearthing the Changes: Recently Discovered Manuscripts of and Relating to the Yi Jing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

in China, and was absorbing much of my time and energy. I wanted to finish that book before turning my attention back to the *Zhou Changes*.<sup>6</sup> Professor Qiu agreed to both of these conditions without hesitation. The third condition was more problematic. I insisted on writing the book in English. I have spent much of my scholarly career writing in Chinese, which is doubtless why Professor Qiu invited me to write the book in the first place. However, two factors caused me to be reluctant to write this book in Chinese. First, the book I was then writing was in Chinese, and I became quite aware of just how limited my ability to express myself in Chinese is over the course of a lengthy book (that book was eventually published at 650 pages). Second, and much more important, in the years immediately preceding Professor Qiu's invitation I had come to know a brilliant young scholar from Fudan University: Dr. Jiang Wen 蔣文. Then a post-doctoral fellow at Chicago (she is now an instructor at Fudan), she had translated a couple of short pieces that I had written about other topics, and had demonstrated both a perfect grasp of what I was saying and also an ability to put it into straight-forward but elegant Chinese. I asked Professor Qiu to make Dr. Jiang available to undertake the translation when I would finally finish the English draft, and he—and she—readily agreed.<sup>7</sup>

In publishing this study, I am well aware of three possible dangers—for me and for my readers. First, I have been studying and writing about the *Zhou Changes* and the *Yijing* for over forty years now, and although I have learned a thing or two since first writing my doctoral dissertation, I know very well the danger of repeating myself, at least in many details if not in the grand organization. I will just have to trust that readers who have read much of my already published scholarship will be forgiving, and that I will have something to offer to newer readers. Second, as noted above, this book was originally intended for Chinese readers, even though I subsequently determined that it should appear in both Chinese and English. These different groups of readers approach the topic with very different backgrounds and very different sets of expectations. Even in terms of general presentation, Chinese readers tend to expect extensive surveys of the relevant data, while Western readers value analyses of paradigmatic cases. In trying to satisfy both of these demands, I suspect that to a greater

6 I finished writing this book in the summer of 2017, and saw it through to publication in the spring of 2018: Xia Hanyi 夏含夷, *Xiguan Han ji: Xifang Hanxue chutu wenxian yanjiu gaiyao* 西觀漢記—西方漢學出土文獻研究概要 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 2018). For a translation into English, see Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Chinese Annals in the Western Observatory: An Overview of Western Sinologists' Studies of Chinese Excavated Documents*, Jao Tsung-i Academy of Sinology Monograph (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019).

7 Xia Hanyi 夏含夷, *Zhou Yi de qiyuan yu qi zaoqi yanbian* 《周易》的起源與其早期演變, Jiang Wen 蔣文 tr. (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 2022).



or lesser extent I will dissatisfy both sets of readers. Third, I am all too aware of the danger of trying to produce a general theory of the *Zhou Changes*. Having begun my doctoral dissertation—and this book—with an architectural rendering of an ancient Chinese temple, I very much take to heart a warning by Li Xueqin, who himself published some of the most outstanding research on the *Zhou Changes*:

I often feel that studying the *Zhou Changes* is very “dangerous.” The text of the *Zhou Changes* is arcane and simple, but subtle and abstruse; you can explain it this way, but it is also not hard to explain it that way. It’s bad enough if you borrow the terminology of the *Changes* to express your own thoughts, but if you want to find the original meaning of the *Changes*, it is really too difficult. One very common result is that one constructs upon the foundation of one’s own imagination a seven-storeyed pagoda, the soaring eaves and complex structure of which give the architect the sense that it is entirely natural.<sup>8</sup>

I have no illusion that the present book constitutes any sort of “seven-storeyed pagoda,” but I am well aware that many of my conclusions are constructed upon the foundation of my own imagination. My only defense in this regard is the book itself. To the extent that some readers may find it helpful in explaining some aspects of the *Zhou Changes*, my forty years of study of the text will not have been in vain. And I know full well that other readers will feel that I have misinterpreted or simply left unexplained many other aspects of the text. I hope those readers will be inspired by my mistakes to undertake their own explanations. I very much look forward to spending the next forty years reading their work.

8 Li Xueqin 李學勤, “Xu” 序, in Xing Wen 邢文, *Boshu Zhou Yi yanjiu* 帛書周易研究 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1997), 2.

## Acknowledgments

It probably goes without saying that over the course of these forty or more years of studying the *Zhou Changes* I have been helped by hundreds of people, acknowledging all of whom would amount to an intellectual autobiography. While I don't propose to subject the reader to that exercise, I should certainly mention my first teacher of the *Changes*, Aisingioro Yuyun 愛新覺羅毓璽 (1906–2011), and the two major advisers of my doctoral dissertation: David S. Nivison (19223–2014) and David N. Keightley (1932–2017); what I learned from these three teachers went well beyond the *Zhou Changes*, and are lessons that have remained with me every day in my life as a scholar. Turning to individuals who have had a direct hand in the writing of the present book, I should begin with Li Xueqin 李學勤 (1933–2019) and Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭, two other teachers whose invitation to write the book I recounted above; to Professors Li and Qiu too, my intellectual debts far exceed anything that I could repay with just this one book. Next, I must thank Dr. Jiang Wen 蔣文, who I also mentioned above as the translator of the Chinese version of this book. She has done far more than just produce a splendid translation; she has checked all of my citations, and corrected numerous mistakes in my initial draft; while she refers to me as her teacher, in truth I regard her as my newest teacher.

I thank too Rich Smith and Adam Schwartz, two friends who have contributed much to my understanding of the *Zhou Changes* and who read the entire manuscript of this book in draft and offered many corrections. This is the second book for which Rich has done me this favor, and my debt to him is especially deep. I should also mention the anonymous Brill referee, who also favored me with several pages of very helpful corrections. Of course, it goes without saying that the remaining mistakes are all my own responsibility.

Other friends who have helped by providing materials and help with the production of the book include Professor Jia Lianxiang 賈連翔 and my student Wu Fang 吳方. Others who have given permission to use their materials are credited in the notes and captions to illustrations.

Finally, I should like to express my debt to four institutions: first and foremost, the University of Chicago, which has been my intellectual home throughout my entire career. Among many other reasons for me to be grateful to them, I appreciate that my colleagues did not require me to publish the dissertation before I was ready to do so. Second, I should also like to thank the Siemens Foundation of Munich, Germany, and especially its director Heinrich Meier, who sponsored me during academic year 2017–2018, during which time I was able to focus exclusively on the writing of the book; without their timely

support, the book would doubtless still be just the dissertation. Third and fourth, I should like to thank the IKGF (Internationales Kolleg für Geisteswissenschaftliche Forschung) at the University Erlangen-Nuremberg, and especially its director Professor Michael Lackner, for accepting this book in their long-term project “Fate, Freedom and Prognostication,” and the Chutu wenxian yu guwenzi yanjiu zhongxin 出土文獻與古文字研究中心 (Center for the Study of Unearthed Documents and Paleography) at Fudan University 復旦大學, and especially its director Professor Liu Zhao 劉釗, for supporting the work of Dr. Jiang Wen and the publication of her Chinese translation of the book.

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## Conventions

Although the two titles *Zhou Yi* 周易 *Zhou Changes* and *Yijing* 易經 *Classic of Changes* are used more or less interchangeably in China, and although the text is far better known in the West by the latter of these two titles (usually in the Romanization *I Ching*), I will use both titles but will strictly differentiate between them. In this book, *Zhou Yi* 周易 *Zhou Changes* will refer solely to the hexagram and line statements of the text—especially as understood within the context of the Zhou dynasty (1045–249 BCE). *Yijing* 易經 *Classic of Changes*, on the other hand, will be used for the entirety of the received text inclusive of the canonical commentaries, the so-called “Ten Wings” (*Shi yi* 十翼)—especially as understood as a “classic” (*jing* 經).

Except for very occasional references to others’ translations of the *Yijing*, all translations in this book, whether of the *Zhou Yi*, the *Yijing*, or other texts, are by me. For a comment on my philosophy of translating the *Zhou Yi* in particular, see pp. 9–12.

Since the *Yijing* is widely available in standard editions, most of which follow a similar sequence of contents, I will not provide bibliographic citations to that text. For other works, both traditional and modern, full bibliographic citations will be provided at the first mention, and will be repeated in the Bibliography. However, to avoid redundancy to the extent possible, thereafter works will be cited only by author’s last name (for Chinese authors, the full name will be given in Romanization), by an abbreviation of the title, and by relevant page numbers. Except in very rare cases, I will cite traditional Chinese works in the following editions: the “thirteen classics” will be cited in page number in Ruan Yuan 阮元 ed., *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009); the dynastic histories will be cited by page number in the various Zhonghua shuju editions; other works will be cited by *juan* 卷 and folio number in the *Sibu beiyao* 四部備要 edition or in other standard scholarly editions.

# Introduction

We are fortunate today in that there are probably more sources—and more varied sources—available to study the origin and early development of the *Zhou Changes* than at any time since the end of the Han dynasty (A.D. 220), and perhaps even since the end of the Zhou dynasty (249 BCE). Some of these sources, including some of the most important, have long been available, but many others have been unearthed only in the last several decades. Some of these new sources have made it possible to ask entirely new questions about the text and especially its early context. Of course, there is no way to know how many and what kind of other sources have been lost over the centuries. We can only guess at what kinds of sources there may have been during the crucial first centuries of the text's history. Thus, even though we can now say some things about the origin and early development of the *Zhou Changes* with more assurance than has ever before been possible, it is important to admit at the outset that much that is said about these topics—including much that will be said in the present book—is guesswork that may well be overturned with the next discovery to come out of the soil of China. This state of uncertainty may be disconcerting for some readers, but I for one find the prospect of learning new things about the text—and even being proven wrong—to be quite thrilling.

However, the prospect that more evidence will almost certainly be forthcoming in future years ought not induce a sort of intellectual paralysis keeping us from taking account of what we can know today and also formulating hypotheses that can be tested against that future evidence. Even aside from the personal imperative for me finally to finish my doctoral dissertation work while I still can, now would be an opportune time to undertake a comprehensive review of this topic. By the time this book is published and in the hands of readers, it will have been almost fifty years since the discovery of the early Han-dynasty silk manuscripts in Tomb 3 at Mawangdui 馬王堆, Hunan, that revolutionized the study of ancient Chinese intellectual and textual history.<sup>1</sup> The manuscripts in that tomb included a nearly complete text of the *Zhou Changes*, even if very differently arranged, as well as various commentaries,

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1 Scholarly work on the Mawangdui manuscripts is vast. For the now definitive editions of the texts, see Hunan sheng bowuguan, and Fudan daxue Chutu wenxian yu guwenzi yanjiu zhongxin eds., Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭, ed.-in-chief, *Changsha Mawangdui Han mu jianbo jicheng* 長沙馬王堆漢墓簡帛集成, 7 volumes (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2014). For an overview of Western scholarship on the manuscripts, see Shaughnessy, *Chinese Annals in the Western Observatory*, 289–311.



some previously known and others seen for the first time in over two thousand years. Although for various reasons this discovery was very slow in being published, the complete text only becoming available to the scholarly public some twenty years later, and even at that only in an unofficial format, just the knowledge that such a manuscript existed stimulated new interest in the early history of the text.<sup>2</sup> While waiting for the Mawangdui manuscript to be published, scholars interested in the early history of the *Zhou Changes* and especially the context of divination in ancient China could turn their attention to several other important discoveries made throughout the 1970s and 1980s. These discoveries were of various types: in 1975, Qin-period (217 BCE) divinatory texts called “Daybooks” (*rishu* 日書) excavated from tomb M11 at Shuihudi 睡虎地, Hubei suggested just how pervasive the practice of divination had become by the time of these texts, and showed also that much of their language was similar to the divination formulas of the *Zhou Changes*;<sup>3</sup> in 1977, early Zhou-dynasty oracle-bone inscriptions (11th c. BCE) found in the Zhou ancestral homeland of Qishan 岐山 county, Shaanxi demonstrated that the practice of turtle-shell divination by no means ended with the end of the Shang dynasty and, more

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- 2 The portion of the manuscript containing the hexagram and line statements of the *Zhou Yi* was first published, in simplified Chinese characters, in 1984: Mawangdui Han mu boshu zhengli xiaozu, “Mawangdui boshu Liushisi gua shiwen” 馬王堆帛書六十四卦釋文, *Wenwu* 文物 3 (1984): 1–8. The various commentaries were then published ten years later, in an even more informal manner: Chen Songchang 陳松長, “Boshu *Xi ci* shiwen” 帛書《繫辭》釋文, *Daojia wenhua yanjiu* 道家文化研究 3 (1993): 416–423; Chen Songchang 陳松長, “Mawangdui bo shu *Mu He Zhao Li* shiwen” 馬王堆帛書《穆和》《昭力》釋文, *Daojia wenhua yanjiu* 道家文化研究 6 (1995): 367–380; Chen Songchang 陳松長 and Liao Mingchun 繆名春, “Boshu *Ersanzi wen Yi zhi yi Yao* shiwen” 帛書《二三子問》《易之義》《要》釋文, *Daojia wenhua yanjiu* 道家文化研究 3 (1993): 424–435. Another almost fifteen years later brought the original editor’s final edition of the manuscript: Zhang Zhenglang 張政烺, *Mawangdui boshu Zhou Yi jing zhuan jiaodu* 馬王堆帛書《周易》經傳校讀 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008), and then a few years later still the definitive edition: Hunan sheng bowuguan and Fudan daxue Chutu wenxian yu guwenzi yanjiu zhongxin, eds., *Changsha Mawangdui Han mu jianbo jicheng*, vol. 3, 3–162. For a posthumous collection of essays by Zhang Zhenglang, the original editor of the Mawangdui *Zhou Yi* manuscript, see Zhang Zhenglang 張政烺, Li Ling 李零, ed., *Zhang Zhenglang lun Yi conggao* 張政烺論《易》叢稿 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011). For Western-language translations and studies of the manuscript, see Dominique Hertzner, *Das Mawangdui-Yijing: Text und Deutung*, Diederichs Gelbe Reihe 122 (Munich: Diederichs, 1996); Shaughnessy, I Ching: The Classic of Changes.
- 3 For the original publication of record for these these manuscripts, see Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian zhengli xiaozu, *Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian* 睡虎地秦墓竹簡 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1978). “Daybooks” have subsequently been found in more than twenty other tombs, from the Warring States through the Han periods. For a comprehensive study, see Donald Harper and Marc Kalinowski, eds., *Books of Fate and Popular Culture in Early China: The Daybook Manuscripts of the Warring States, Qin, and Han* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

important, led to a breakthrough in the understanding of early milfoil divination, showing that its results were expressed as sets of six numbers;<sup>4</sup> in 1978, the Han-dynasty tomb of Zao, Lord of Ruyin 汝陰侯竈 (d. 165 BCE) was excavated at Shuanggudui 雙古堆, Fuyang 阜陽, Anhui, with yet another text of the *Zhou Changes*, but this one complete with divination formulas appended after every hexagram and line statement;<sup>5</sup> and in 1987, a Warring States tomb (dated 316 BCE) was excavated at Baoshan 包山, Hubei, complete with numerous contemporary records of divinations—both turtle-shell and milfoil—conducted during the last years of the life of the deceased, a man named Shao Tuo 邵朮, who other records showed to be a royal officer (*zuoyin* 左尹) of the state of Chu 楚.<sup>6</sup> These were all different types of textual materials. In addition to the considerable new evidence that they provided about their own archaeological and historical context, each one also contributed in different ways to our understanding of the early development of the *Zhou Changes*.

By the early 1990s, when the complete transcriptions of the Mawangdui manuscript were finally being published, other manuscripts of still different types were also unearthed. In March, 1993, peasants digging a fish pond at Wangjiatai 王家台, Hubei, opened sixteen tombs from the third century BCE. One of them, M15, contained hundreds of fragments of bamboo strips with texts of various kinds, including two separate manuscripts of a text that was eventually identified as the *Gui cang* 歸藏 *Returning to be Stored*, long known

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- 4 For what is now the publication of record for these oracle-bone inscriptions, complete with high resolution photographs, see Cao Wei 曹瑋, *Zhouyuan jiaguwen* 周原甲骨文 (Beijing: Shijie tushu chubangongsi, 2002). For the first study identifying the “hexagram numerical symbols,” see Zhang Zhenglang 張政烺, “Shishi Zhou chu qingtongqi mingwen zhong de Yi gua” 試釋周初青銅器銘文中的《易》卦, *Kaogu xuebao* 考古學報 1980.4: 404–415. For an English-language translation of this article, see Zhang Zhenglang 張政烺, “An Interpretation of the Divinatory Inscriptions on Early Zhou Bronzes,” translated by H. Huber, R. Yates, et al., *Early China* 6 (1980–1981): 80–96.
- 5 For an initial report of the texts found in the tomb, see Anhui sheng Wenwu gongzuodui and Fuyang Diqū bowuguan Fuyang Han jian zhenglizu, “Fuyang Han jian jianjie” 阜陽雙漢簡簡介, *Wenwu* 文物 1978.8: 12–31; to this date, no formal report of the complete excavation has ever been issued. For the more or less definitive publication of the *Zhou Yi* manuscript, see Han Ziqiang 韓自強, *Fuyang Han jian Zhou Yi yanjiu* 阜陽漢簡《周易》研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 2004). For a translation and study in English, see Shaughnessy, *Unearthing the Changes*, 189–279.
- 6 For the publication of record for these manuscripts, see Hubei sheng Jing-Sha tielu kaogudui, *Baoshan Chu jian* 包山楚簡 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1991). For Western-language monographic studies of the Baoshan tomb and its manuscripts, see Constance A. Cook, *Death in Ancient China: The Tale of One Man's Journey* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), and Guolong Lai, *Excavating the Afterlife: The Archaeology of Early Chinese Religion* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015).



as the milfoil divination text associated with the Shang dynasty, but a text lost since no later than the Han dynasty.<sup>7</sup> In the autumn of that year, another tomb in Hubei would be opened, but this time not by local peasants or archaeologists but rather by tomb robbers. The contents of that tomb, over one thousand fragments of bamboo strips representing scores of different texts, were shipped to Hong Kong, where the Shanghai Museum purchased them and returned them to Shanghai. After a concerted editorial effort by the staff of the museum as well as outside experts, these manuscripts began to be published in 2001. One of the first texts to be published was a manuscript of the *Zhou Changes*.<sup>8</sup> Although this manuscript is incomplete, the bamboo strips preserved containing only about one-third of the text, still this suffices to show the nature of the manuscript and also to demonstrate that by the time of the manuscript, the late 4th c. BCE, the format and much of the text of the *Zhou Changes* were essentially fixed. Other manuscripts in the Shanghai Museum collection would touch on other aspects of divination in the Warring States period, including one of the last manuscripts to be published, entitled by the editors \**Bu shu* 卜書 \**Turtle-shell Divination Document*, which purports to describe the results of different turtle-shell divinations and their prognostications.<sup>9</sup>

The scourge of tomb robbing in China has continued down to the present day, with different universities buying up the manuscripts that have appeared on the Hong Kong antiques market. Among the collections that are still being edited and published, those of Tsinghua University and Peking University have made available texts pertaining to milfoil divination. In the Tsinghua University collection is a text that the editors titled \**Shi fa* 筮法 \**Method of Milfoil*

7 For first notice of these manuscripts, which have never been definitively published, see Wang Mingqin 王明欽, "Wangjiatai Qin mu zhujian gaishu" 王家台秦墓竹簡概述, in Ai Lan 艾蘭 and Xing Wen 邢文 eds., *Xin chu jian bo yanjiu: Xin chu jianbo guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji*, 新出簡帛研究：新出簡帛國際學術研討會論文集 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2004, 26–49). For a study and translation in English, see Shaughnessy, *Unearthing the Changes*, 141–187.

8 For this manuscript, see Ma Chengyuan 馬承源, ed., *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu* 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書, Vol. 3 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 2003), 11–70 (photographs), 133–260 (transcription; the editor of this manuscript was Pu Maozuo 濮茅左). For a study and translation in English, see Shaughnessy, *Unearthing the Changes*, 37–139.

9 For this manuscript, see Ma Chengyuan 馬承源, ed., *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu* 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書, Vol. 9 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 2012), 290–302 (the editor of this manuscript was Li Ling 李零). For a study and translation in English, see Marco Caboara, "Bu Shu 卜書: A Recently Published Shanghai Museum Manuscript on Divination," in Michael Lackner, ed., *Coping with the Future: Theories and Practices of Divination in East Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 23–46.

*Divination*.<sup>10</sup> This manuscript, beautifully preserved, provides a comprehensive overview of one type of milfoil divination. Although it is distinct from the type of milfoil divination that produced the *Zhou Changes*, it allows for numerous insights into how milfoil divination was conducted and how the trigrams were understood by the middle of the Warring States period (4th c. BCE). Finally, the most recent such manuscript to be published is in the collection of Peking University. Entitled *Jing jue* 荊決 *Thornwood decisions* (or perhaps *Formulas of Chu*), it presents an entirely different Western Han dynasty (c. 100 BCE) type of milfoil divination that produced results in the form of trigrams (i.e., diagrams composed of three different lines), but not the trigrams of solid and broken lines familiar from the *Yijing* tradition; instead, each segment of these trigrams contains from one to four parallel lines, the top and bottom segments drawn horizontally and the middle segment drawn vertically, such as  or . The manuscript contains sixteen of these trigrams together with their oracles and the hexes (*sui* 祟) they concern.

In 2011, just as the teams at Tsinghua and Peking Universities were beginning to publish their manuscripts, tomb robbers struck again at Nanchang 南昌, Jiangxi. By March of that year, they had managed to empty one large Han-dynasty tomb, and were tunneling into the large tomb adjacent to it when local authorities were alerted and secured the site. It has turned out to be perhaps the most important discovery of tombs since the Mawangdui tombs were excavated in the early 1970s. There were nine tombs in all in this cemetery, as well as a number of ancillary pits, including one of a horse and chariot, which by the Han dynasty had become a privilege reserved only for the emperor and the highest stratum of the nobility. Archaeological excavations continued there for five years, between 2011 and 2016. The main tomb, spared from the robbers' tunnel by just five centimeters, proved to be that of Liu He 劉賀 (92–59 BCE), famous in historical sources for having been installed in 74 BCE as emperor of the dynasty, but having then been deposed after being in power for just twenty-seven days, ostensibly for his dissolute behavior (the articles of impeachment against him listed 1,127 acts of impropriety). His name is not included among the official list of Han emperors. Instead, he is known to history as Haihun Hou

10 Li Xueqin 李學勤, ed.-in-chief, Qinghua daxue Chutu wenxian yanjiu yu baohu zhongxin, ed., *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian (Si)* 清華大學藏戰國竹簡（肆）(Shanghai: Zhong-Xi shuju, 2013), 2–9 (full-size photographs), 21–52 (magnified photographs), 75–123 (transcription; the editor of this text was Li Xueqin). For a translation and study in English, see Constance A. Cook and Zhao Lu, *Stalk Divination: A Newly Discovered Alternative to the I Ching* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

海昏侯, the Lord of Haihun, Haihun 海昏 being the distant appanage to which he was remanded after being deposed.

The riches of the tomb of the Lord of Haihun, amounting to some 20,000 items, will be the topic of numerous dissertations in years to come. Reports that the tomb also included 5,000 bamboo strips, including a partial text of the *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語) of Confucius, drew initial attention to the potential contribution the tomb could make to Chinese textual history. Then, on October 14, 2017, at the annual meeting of the Chinese Association for the Study of Qin and Han History (*Zhongguo Qin Han shi yanjiuhui* 中國秦漢史研究會), held that year in Nanchang, the lead archaeologist of the Haihun Hou tomb, Yang Jun 楊軍, reported that the tomb also included a text of the *Yijing*.<sup>11</sup> Yang Jun's report was very brief. He said simply that the sequence of the sixty-four hexagrams is similar to that of the received text, though much else about the text is very different from anything we have seen before.

Li Ling 李零, professor of Chinese at Peking University 北京大學, has provided a complete transcription, showing that Yang Jun's description, brief as it was, was accurate.<sup>12</sup> The text is extremely formulaic. It is written on sixty-four bamboo strips, with one hexagram per strip. Each strip begins with a hexagram picture, written very much like the hexagram pictures of the received text (that is to say, with *yang* lines written as — and *yin* lines written as - -), which it then analyzes into its bottom and top trigrams. The eight trigrams are written with the following names.

☰	☱	☲	☵	☴	☶	☴	☷
<i>Jian</i>	<i>Shun</i>	<i>Chen</i>	<i>Xun</i>	<i>Xian</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gen</i>	<i>Yue</i>
建	巽	晨	巽	陷	麗	根	說

This is followed by the hexagram name, most of which are indeed similar to those of the received *Zhou Changes*, and if not are at least phonetically similar. This is followed by a definition or characterization of the hexagram name. Then comes the word *tuan* 爻, which in the *Yijing* tradition refers to the hexagram statement and is typically translated as “judgment,” followed by a phrase that combines (apparently indicated by the word *jiao* 餃 [i.e., 交]) two different directions, followed by certain *tian gan* 天干 “heavenly stems” and *di zhi* 地支 “earthly branches.” Then comes the number of the hexagram, divided between

11 For a report on this conference, see “Haihun hou mu faxian ‘xinban’ *Yijing*” 海昏侯墓發現“新版”《易經》 (<http://www.ccnovel.com/bolan/2017-10-16/113003.html> (published 15 October 2017, accessed 21 July 2018)).

12 Li Ling 李零, “Haihun zhushu *Yi zhan chushi*” 海昏竹書《易占》初釋, in Zhu Fenghan 朱鳳瀚 ed.-in-chief, Ke Zhonghua 柯中華 Ass. ed., *Haihun jiandu chulun* 海昏簡牘初論 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2020), 254–67.

a *shang jing* 上經 “upper classic” and *xia jing* 下經 “lower classic”; this numbering is identical with that of the received text, even in terms of assigning the first thirty hexagrams to the “upper classic” and the next thirty-four hexagrams to the “lower classic.” Finally it refers to one of thirty different animals, for which it states that one month, indicated as the first, middle, or third month of one season, is auspicious (*ji* 吉) and one other month is “ominous” (*xiong* 凶). The best way to illustrate this structure is to translate several hexagrams.

䷇ 屯建。建者，建也。彖：北方一餃北方一，辛壬癸丑，上經一，中冬觚龍吉，夏凶。

䷇ Pure *Jian*. *Jian* means “Vigorous.” The Judgment: The Northern Quadrant 1 joins the Northern Quadrant 1; *xin, ren, gui* and *chou*. The first of the Upper Classic. The middle month of winter is auspicious for a horned dragon, summer is ominous.

䷋ 屯𠄎。𠄎者，𠄎也。彖：西方三餃西方三，丁庚乙癸丑未，上經二，季冬牛吉，六月凶。

䷋ Pure *Shun*. *Shun* means compliant. The Judgment: The Western Quadrant 3 joins the Western Quadrant 3; *ding, geng, yi, gui, chou* and *wei*. The second of the Upper Classic. The last month of winter is auspicious for an ox, the sixth month is ominous.

䷌ 麗下建上，同人。人同，天下一心也。彖：西方九餃南方十一，戊寅，上經十三，中秋鷄吉，春凶。

䷌ *Li* below and *Jian* above, *Tongren* “Together with People.” Together with People means that all under heaven has a single heart. The Judgment: The Western Quadrant 9 joins the Southern Quadrant 11; *wu* and *yin*. The thirteenth of the Upper Classic. The middle month of autumn is auspicious for a chicken, spring is ominous.

䷌ 建下麗上，大有。大有者，大有天下者也。彖：西方十五餃西方十六，庚寅，上經十四，季秋豕吉，春凶。

䷌ *Jian* below and *Li* above, *Dayou* “Greatly Having.” Greatly Having means greatly to have all under heaven. The Judgment: The Western Quadrant 15 joins the Western Quadrant 16; *geng* and *yin*. The fourteenth of the Upper Classic. The last month of autumn is auspicious for a pig, spring is ominous.

As Li Ling notes, the text is decidedly different from the received text of the *Zhou Changes*, though it certainly makes use of various interpretive strategies

that were used within the *Yijing* tradition during the Han dynasty. Thus, the Haihun Hou text lies outside the purview of this book on the origin and early development of the *Zhou Changes*, and will not be considered further.

In the first chapter, I will introduce the received text of the *Zhou Changes* and the three different manuscripts of it that have been unearthed in the last half century.<sup>13</sup> I will follow this with four chapters examining various aspects of divination. As is well known, the *Zhou Changes* began as a manual of divination, and it is my contention that it is only within the context of divination that one can understand the origin and early development of the text. Chapter Two considers the conceptual foundation of divination, while the next three chapters survey different types of divination: turtle-shell divination (Chapter Three), milfoil divination performed not with the *Zhou Changes* (Chapter Four), and finally milfoil divination using the *Zhou Changes* (Chapter Five). In all four of these chapters on divination, I will focus primarily on evidence from the eight hundred years of the Zhou dynasty, the period over the course of which the *Zhou Changes* developed, though I will occasionally also refer to both earlier and later evidence. In the final chapter of the first half of the book, I will examine oracular poetry found primarily in the *Shi jing* 詩經 *Classic of Poetry* but also in other texts of the Zhou dynasty as well. I believe this poetry is crucial for understanding the oracles of the *Zhou Changes*. The sources introduced in this first half of the book will serve as the primary evidence to which I will return over and over again throughout the book, especially when examining the text of the *Zhou Changes* directly.

The second half of the book will turn from the context of the Zhou dynasty to the text of the *Zhou Changes*. I will devote three chapters to the three integral parts of the text proper: the hexagrams (Chapter Seven), the hexagram statements (Chapter Eight), and the line statements (Chapter Nine). I will follow this with two further chapters that examine the micro and macro structures of the text as a whole: first the organization of both a single hexagram text and also pairs of hexagrams considered together; and then the organization of the sixty-four hexagrams considered as a whole. Finally, I will devote one chapter to the canonical commentaries found in the *Yijing*, known collectively as the “Ten Wings” (*Shi Yi* 十翼). As the title of this book indicates, *The Origin and Early Development of the Zhou Changes* is concerned primarily with the *Zhou Changes*, which is to say the hexagrams, hexagram statements and line statements found in the received text of the *Yijing*, and especially with

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13 As noted above, in previous writings. I have already introduced all three of these manuscripts and all of what I will say here will draw on those previous writings. Readers familiar with these writings should feel free to turn directly to Chapter Two.

how they came to be composed and what they may have originally meant. The canonical commentaries of the *Yijing*—the *Tuan zhuan* 彖傳 *Commentary on the Judgments* (i.e., hexagram statements), *Xiang zhuan* 象傳 *Commentary on the Images*, *Wenyan zhuan* 文言傳 *Commentary on the Words and Sayings*, *Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳 *Commentary on the Appended Statements*, *Shuo gua zhuan* 說卦傳 *Commentary Discussing the Trigrams*, *Xu gua zhuan* 序卦傳 *Commentary on the Sequence of the Hexagrams*, and *Za gua zhuan* 雜卦傳 *Commentary on Mixed Hexagrams*—play an important role in the developing exegetical tradition devoted to the *Zhou Changes*, but it is my contention, following the precedent of the great Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), that they derive from a different age than does the *Zhou Changes* itself,<sup>14</sup> and that they should properly be the subject of a different book.

## 1 A Word about Translations

Writing in 1995 in the scholarly introduction to his own translation of the *Yijing*, Richard Rutt (1925–2011) judiciously surveyed twenty-six previous translations into English (not to mention several partial translations as well as translations into Latin, French, German and Dutch), beginning with that of Thomas McClatchie (1814–1885) and extending down to the very year in which he was writing.<sup>15</sup> Understandably, Rutt paid greatest attention to the translations by

14 Li Jingde 黎靖德, Wang Xingxian 王星賢 ed., *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 1648.

孔子之易，非文王之易；文王之易，非伏羲之易。

The *Changes* of Confucius are not the *Changes* of King Wen, and the *Changes* of King Wen are not the *Changes* of Fuxi.

It is also important to note that Zhu Xi also insisted on the divinatory context in order to understand the *Zhou Changes*; see particularly the first half of *juan* 66 of *Zhuzi yulei*. It bears noting here that I try to distinguish between these two strata of the received text by referring to the hexagram and line statements, particularly as understood in the context of their original creation and use, as the *Zhou Changes* (*Zhou Yi* 周易), and to the entire text inclusive of the “Ten Wings,” especially as understood as a “classic” (*jing* 經), as the *Classic of Changes* (*Yijing* 易經); this distinction is always made quite self-consciously and is intended to signal to the reader these two different understandings of the text.

15 Richard Rutt, *The Book of Changes (Zhouyi): A Bronze Age Document Translated with Introduction and Notes*, Durham EastAsia Series 1 (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1996), 60–82. For McClatchie’s translation, see Thomas McClatchie, *The Confucian Yih King, or, The Classic of Change* (Shanghai, 1876; rpt. Taipei: Chengwen, 1973). The last translation mentioned by Rutt is that of Martin Palmer, Jay Ramsey and Zhao Xiaomin, *I Ching: The Shamanic Oracle of Change* (London: Thorsons, 1995). Some subsequent English-language translations will be noted in n. 17 below. Two important subsequent translations in French



James Legge (1815–1897; translation published in 1882) and by Richard Wilhelm (1873–1930; German translation published in 1924), the latter of which was subsequently translated into English by Cary F. Baynes (1883–1977; translation published in 1950), the two translations that have had far and away the greatest influence in the English-reading world.<sup>16</sup> Rutt's own translation, published in 1996, was based on a lifetime of engagement with the text. The book's Introduction is marked by a scholarly humility that belies the profound research that went into it. What is more, Rutt was extraordinarily generous in his appraisals of his fellow translators. Since the time his book was published, there has been no let up in the pace of new translations. Within just the last six years, seven new translations have come just to my attention.<sup>17</sup> I am not possessed of Bishop Rutt's generous spirit, and so will not attempt to update his survey of translations.

The translations of the *Zhou Changes* presented in this book are all my own. I have previously published translations in two separate books: *I Ching, The Classic of Changes: The First English Translation of the Newly Discovered Second-Century BCE Mawangdui Texts* (New York: Ballantine Press, 1997), and *Unearthing the Changes: Recently Discovered Manuscripts of and Relating to the*

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and German are Cyrille J.-D. Javary and Pierre Faure, *Yijing: Le livre des changements* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2002), and Dennis Schilling, *Yijing: Das Buch der Wandlungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag der Weltreligionen, 2009).

- 16 James Legge, *The Yi King: The Sacred Books of China, Translated by James Legge, The Texts of Confucianism, Part 11*, in Max Müller, ed. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 16 (2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899). Richard Wilhelm, *I Ging: Das Buch der Wandlungen* (1924, Reprint, Düsseldorf: Diederichs, 1960). Richard Wilhelm. *The I Ching: or, Book of Changes: The Richard Wilhelm Translation Rendered Into English by Cary F. Baynes*, Bollingen Series 19 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1950). Of the twenty-six translations mentioned by Rutt, twenty-three appeared after the publication of the Wilhelm/Baynes translation (1950). As Rutt notes, many of these were either modernizations of Legge's Victorian English or simple pastiches of Legge's and Wilhelm's work.
- 17 These are (in chronological order): John Minford, *I Ching: The Essential Translation of the Ancient Chinese Oracle and Book of Wisdom* (New York: Viking, 2014); Stephen L. Field, *The Duke of Zhou Changes: A Study and Annotated Translation of the Zhouyi*, *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 97 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2015); David Hinton, *I Ching: The Book of Change, A New Translation* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2017); Geoffrey Redmond, *The I Ching (Book of Changes): A Critical Translation of the Ancient Text* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017); Paul G. Fendos, *The Book of Changes: A Modern Adaptation and Interpretation* (Wilmington, Del.: Vernon Press, 2018); Rudolf Ritsema and Shantena Augusto Sabbadini, *The Original I Ching or The Book of Changes: The Eranos I Ching Project* (London: Watkins Publishing, 2018), which seems to be just an updating of past publications by Rudolf Ritsema; and Joseph A. Adler, *The Original Meaning of the Yijing: Commentary on the Scripture of Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020).

Yi Jing (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), the second of which contains two partial translations. In both of these publications, I was addressing unearthed manuscripts of the text: in the first the Mawangdui manuscript of the *Yijing*, and in the second the Shanghai Museum and Fuyang manuscripts of the *Zhou Changes*, and sought deliberately to reflect what I thought the understanding of those manuscripts' copyists might have been. The translations in the present book, on the other hand, are intended to reflect what I understand as the original meaning of the text as it developed over the course of the Zhou dynasty; they are unabashedly idiosyncratic, though I have attempted at all times to be rigorously faithful to the grammar of the text and to the etymology of the words in it (often at the risk of sacrificing smooth English).<sup>18</sup> For that reason (and also because of the development in my own understanding of the text over the more than twenty years since the first of those books was published), the translations offered here will inevitably differ to some extent from those earlier versions.

A final word of caution regarding translations of the *Zhou Changes*. As I said above, my own translations are meant simply to illustrate my understanding of what the text meant in its formative context—roughly the period from 800–500 BCE. It goes without saying that as the context changed, different readers' understandings will have changed. I am reminded of the story in the *Lü shi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 of a man of Chu 楚 crossing the Yangzi River in a boat. His sword having fallen overboard, he took his knife and notched the gunwale of the boat at the place from which the sword fell. When the boat got to the other side of the river, he proposed jumping into the river from the spot he had notched on the gunwale, expecting to find the sword there. Of course, since the boat had moved in the meantime (not to mention the river), his attempt to retrieve his sword has become proverbial in China for using anachronis-

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18 I might add a word here about the style of translation that I have adopted. Except in cases when I am confident that phrases are logically connected, I have chosen to separate hexagram or line statements into individual phrases, punctuated with a period; other punctuation, such as commas or colons, is intended to reflect a relationship between the phrases on either side of the punctuation. In the Chinese text printed above the translation, except for a colon after the hexagram name and also after the line statement tags ("first nine" [*chu jiu* 初九], "Six in the Second" [*liu er* 六二], "Top Nine" [*shang jiu* 上九], etc.), I employ only the traditional Chinese "round dot" (*douhao* 逗號). To the extent possible, I have deliberately refrained from using either the definite or indefinite particle, neither of which is indicated by the Chinese text; in practice, this generally entails translating nouns as plurals. Similarly, again to the extent possible, I have refrained from choosing between present and past tense in translating verbs; in practice, this entails the use of the progressive tense.

tic information to try to solve a problem (*ke zhou qiu jian* 刻舟求劍). So too, both the Chinese language and Chinese intellectual notions have moved on since the Zhou dynasty, not to mention the way the problem is compounded by using a foreign language. Deciding to use the language and understanding of any period in China's subsequent more than two thousand years of history is akin to notching the boat passing through the river of time. Any translation that attempts to produce a synoptic understanding of the *Zhou Changes* valid for all periods and all readers would have as much chance of succeeding as the man of Chu had in finding his sword. And yet, still we dive in.

**PART 1**

*The Context*





## The *Zhou Changes*: Received Text and Early Manuscripts

The source of first recourse for understanding the origin and early development of the *Zhou Changes* is of course the received text of the *Zhou Changes* itself. In our excitement about new discoveries, we ought not forget what excited our interest in the topic in the first place. The *Zhou Changes* is more or less unique within Chinese literature—and perhaps within world literature in general—for employing both signs and language that are best understood by the reader of the text—or perhaps, better, the user of the text—in a non-linear manner. True, it is possible for readers of the text to read from beginning, *Qian* 乾 ☰ “Vigorous” (#1) hexagram, to end, *Weiji* 未濟 ☵ “Not Yet Across” (#64) hexagram, and there is classical precedent for doing so.<sup>1</sup> However, even in this reading, the end is self-consciously phrased as a non-end, alerting the reader to the unending nature of the book. Users—as opposed to just readers—of the *Zhou Changes* are encouraged to adopt a much more participatory use of the text, consulting first one part of the text and then another in an almost random manner, each

1 One of the canonical commentaries traditionally attributed to Confucius, the *Xu gua zhuan* 序卦傳 *Commentary on the Sequence of the Hexagrams*, explains the sequence as a natural progression through time. Each hexagram necessarily results from the preceding hexagram and gives rise in turn to the hexagram following it. The sequence begins with *Qian* ☰ “Vigorous” and *Kun* ☷ “Compliant,” generally thought to represent “heaven” and “earth” respectively:

有天地，然後萬物生焉。盈天地之間者唯萬物，故受之以屯。屯者盈也。屯者物之始生也。物生必蒙，故受之以蒙。蒙者蒙也。物之穉也... 有過物者必濟，故受之以既濟。物不可窮也，故受之以未濟，終焉。

There being heaven and earth, only then are the ten-thousand beings born in it. What fills the interstice between heaven and earth is only the ten-thousand beings. Therefore, it follows it with *Zhun*. *Zhun* means “filling,” when beings are first born. When beings are born they are necessarily ignorant, therefore it follows it with *Meng*. *Meng* means “ignorance,” the immaturity of beings. ... When there is passing, beings are necessarily completed. Therefore, it follows it with *Jiji*. Since beings cannot be exhausted, therefore it follows it with *Weiji*, ending there.

*Zhou Yi zhengyi* 周易正義, in Ruan Yuan 阮元, ed., *Shisan jing zhushu* 十三經注疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009), 9.82–84 (pp. 94–96). As we will see in Chapter Eleven below, there have been other sequences of the hexagrams proposed in different texts, including in another of the canonical commentaries (the *Za gua zhuan* 雜卦傳 *Commentary on Mixed Hexagrams*). Needless to say, these would require a different teleology.

consultation producing a different reading depending on the circumstances of the intentions that the user brings to the text. The reader/user truly recreates the text with each new reading.

This intentional instability in the macrostructure of the text is mirrored by a similar instability or, perhaps more accurately, by a polysemy in the microstructure of the text. Throughout the later history of the text, words in the text have been interpreted in different ways by different readers, no one reading necessarily preferable to other readings. With the discovery of early manuscripts in recent decades, it is becoming increasingly clear that during the centuries of the Zhou dynasty when the text was still developing, different scribes also wrote words differently. Most often these differences consisted of different classifier components, the so-called radicals of the Chinese script. In these cases, we can only imagine that some early instantiation of the text was written with a graph lacking any classifier at all, what we would call a proto-graph, and the context is often obscure enough to allow for multiple meanings; hence, as the text was copied by different scribes, perhaps representing different exegetical traditions, a single original word could be written in different ways.

Perhaps it is this instability or polysemy that has caused the *Zhou Changes* to be regarded as mysterious, or even inscrutable. Herbert A. Giles (1845–1935), the first professor of Chinese at the University of Cambridge wrote: “No one really knows what is meant by the apparent gibberish of the Book of Changes. This is freely admitted by all learned Chinese, who nevertheless hold tenaciously to the belief that important lessons could be derived from its pages if only we had the wit to understand them.”<sup>2</sup> A few decades later, another Western authority on ancient Chinese intellectual history, Herrlee G. Creel (1905–1994), just then beginning his career, wrote:

The language of this book is very concise, even cryptic. This has given rise to various theories that it contains a secret language or an occult symbolism. It makes one wonder if it was written at a time when the Chous had not yet learned to write very clear Chinese.<sup>3</sup>

The text is certainly open to multiple interpretations; in some ways its very openness is what makes the *Zhou Changes* the unique classic that it is. Nev-

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2 H.A. Giles, *History of Chinese Literature* (London: Heinemann, 1901), 23; quoted at Rutt, *The Book of Changes (Zhouyi)*, 48.

3 Herrlee Glessner Creel, *The Birth of China: A Survey of the Formative Period of Chinese Civilization* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1936), 268.

ertheless, it is generally understandable—so long as one is clear about the historical context within which it is to be understood.

## 1 The Structure of the Received Text of the *Zhou Changes*

As most readers will know, the core of the text is organized around sixty-four graphs or “pictures” (known in Chinese as *gua* 卦 or *gua hua* 卦畫), each of which is composed of six lines, either solid (—) or broken (- -). These sixty-four hexagrams are usually understood to have developed from the doubling of eight graphs or pictures made up of three solid and/or broken lines each, somewhat confusingly also known as *gua* 卦. In the West, these have come to be differentiated as “hexagrams” and “trigrams.”<sup>4</sup> Each of the sixty-four hexagrams is supplied with a name and seven brief texts: a “hexagram statement” (*gua ci* 卦辭) understood to represent the entire hexagram, and “line statements” (*yao ci* 爻辭) for each of the six lines.<sup>5</sup> The hexagram statement is usually quite formulaic, often including little more than the hexagram name and one or more injunctions for (or against) certain actions. The statement for *Xian* 咸 ䷞ “Feeling” (#31) is more or less representative:

咸 ䷞：亨。利貞。取女吉。

*Xian* “Feelings”: Receipt. Beneficial to affirm. Taking a maiden: Auspicious.<sup>6</sup>

Chapter Seven below will present a detailed analysis of the formulas found in the hexagram statements.

The line statements are counted from the bottom of the hexagram to its top, each one introduced by a sort of tag identifying its place within the hexagram

4 The Western use of “hexagrams” and “trigrams” to refer to these six-line and three-line diagrams seems to go back to Claude de Visdelou (1656–1737), who in 1728 penned a note entitled “Notice du livre chinois nommé Y-king ou livre canonique des changements” (Paris: Société du Panthéon littéraire, 1842), in which he created the French neologisms *trigramme* and *hexagramme*. For notice of Visdelou’s work, see Rutt, *The Book of Changes (Zhouyi)*, 62–64.

5 In the cases of *Qian* 乾 ䷀ “Vigorous” and *Kun* 坤 ䷁ “Compliant” hexagrams, the first two hexagrams of the text and the only two “pure” hexagrams (i.e., composed purely of either solid lines or broken lines), there is an additional “Use” (*yong* 用) line attached after the final line statement.

6 Here and throughout this book, the text of the received *Changes* will be that of *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, *juan* 1–6 (pp. 21–151). Since the text is arranged similarly in all editions, I will forgo explicit citations of the text unless it is to cite commentarial material.



and the nature of the line (whether solid or broken) to which it is attached: the bottom line is called “First” (*chu* 初), the top line “Top” (*shang* 上), and the intervening lines are simply numbered “Second” (*er* 二), “Third” (*san* 三), “Fourth” (*si* 四), and “Fifth” (*wu* 五); solid lines, considered to be yang (i.e., “sunny,” understood in the traditional Chinese worldview from no later than the Spring and Autumn period [late 8th c.-early 5th c. BCE] to be one of the two basic attributes of all things), are referred to as “Nine” (*jiu* 九), and broken lines, understood to be yin (i.e., “shady”), are referred to as “Six” (*liu* 六). The combination of these two features gives such tags as “First Six” (*chu liu* 初六), indicative of a broken line at the bottom of the hexagram, “Nine in the Third” (*jiu san* 九三), indicative of a solid line in the third position (counting from the bottom), and “Top Six” (*shang liu* 上六), a broken line at the top. The line statement proper, on the other hand, is often built around an “image” (*xiang* 象) describing some thing or activity in either the natural or human realms that then may or may not prompt an oracle. It is presumably these images that struck Herrlee Creel as “secret.” They are certainly enigmatic, but I will argue below that with judicious use of the poetry of the age, especially poems in the *Shi jing* 詩經 *Classic of Poetry*, it is possible to understand at least some of the symbolism. The images are often followed by terms associated with divinatory prognostications: *ji* 吉 “auspicious,” *xiong* 凶 “ominous,” *lin* 吝 “stinted,” *wu jiu* 无咎 “without trouble,” etc. For readers concerned with the moral implications of the images, these determinations often provoke the most profound discussion of its meaning.

There is a total of just under 5,000 characters in the *Zhou Changes* (4,933), though this number would be lowered to 4,161 characters if we were not to count the 772 two-character tags at the beginning of each line statement (on the other hand, it would be raised to 4,997 if the hexagram pictures were to be counted as characters). There are 878 discrete characters in the text, with the great majority being used just once or twice. Not surprisingly, common grammatical words and words used in the divinatory prognostications occur most frequently: those with 100 or more uses are *wu* 无 “without” (159 times), *ji* 吉 “auspicious” (147 times), *you* 有 “to have” (120 times), *li* 利 “beneficial” (119 times), *zhen* 貞 “to affirm” (111 times), *qi* 其 “its” (110 times), and *jiu* 咎 “trouble” (100 times).<sup>7</sup> The texts of the sixty-four individual hexagrams range in length

7 I derive these numbers from Richard Alan Kunst, “The Original *Yijing*: A Text, Phonetic Transcription, Translation, and Index, with Sample Glosses” (Ph.D. diss.: University of California, Berkeley, 1985), 441–449: Appendix B “Frequency Count of Graphs in the Text: A Type-Token Analysis.”

from the shortest with 50 graphs (*Dui* 兌 ䷹ “Expressing” [#58]) to the longest with 107 graphs (*Kun* 困 ䷮ “Bound” [#47]). The texts differ from each other sufficiently that it would be difficult to select a single hexagram to serve as a model. Perhaps these hexagram texts with the least and greatest number of characters can suggest something of the range of line statement available.

兌 ䷹：亨。利貞。

*Dui* “Expressing”: Receipt, beneficial to affirm.

初九：和兌。吉。

First nine: Harmonious expressing. Auspicious.

九二：孚兌。吉。悔亡。

Nine in the Second: Trustful expressing. Auspicious. Regret gone.

六三：來兌。凶。

Six in the Third: Coming expressing. Ominous.

九四：商兌未寧。介疾有喜。

Nine in the Fourth: Shang expressing not yet peaceful. A strong illness having happiness.

九五：孚于剝。有厲。

Nine in the Fifth: Trust in paring. There is danger.

上六：引兌。

Top Six: Drawn expressing.

困 ䷮：亨。貞大人吉。无咎。有言不信。

*Kun* “Bound”: Receipt. Affirming: A great person auspicious. Without trouble. There are words not believed.

初六：臀困于株木。入于幽谷。三歲不覿。

First Six: Buttocks bound to a stumpy tree: Entering into a somber valley, For three years not seen.

九二：困于酒食。朱紱方來。利用享祀。征凶。无咎。

Nine in the Second: Bound in wine and food: The Red-Kneepads country comes. Beneficial herewith to offer and sacrifice. Campaigning: Ominous. Without trouble.

六三：困于石。據于蒺藜。入于其宮。不見其妻。凶。

Six in the Third: Bound by stone, Stuck in a bramble patch. Entering into his palace, Not seeing his wife. Ominous.

九四：來徐徐。困于金車。吝。有終。

Nine in the Fourth: Coming slowly-slowly, Bound by a metal cart. Stinted. Having an end.

九五：劓刖。困于赤紱。乃徐有說。利用祭祀。

Nine in the Fifth: Nose and leg amputated: Bound by scarlet kneepads, Then slowly having release. Beneficial herewith to sacrifice.

上六：困于葛藟。于臲臲。曰動悔。有悔。征吉。

Top Six: Bound by kudzu creepers, by jitters, means that moving brings regret. There is regret. Campaigning: Auspicious.

It would be the foolhardy scholar who would insist that he understands everything in these two hexagram texts. Just the title of *Dui* 兌 hexagram is an enigma, even though the word appears in five of the hexagram's six line statements and even though the graph is the name of one of the eight basic trigrams. The root of a word family that includes such words as *shuo* 說 "to speak," *shui* 說 "to persuade," *yue* 悅 "to enjoy," *tuo* 脫 "to shed," *tui* 蛻 "to molt," *tuo* 捫 "to extricate," *duo* 斂 "to snatch," etc., the word was written with a pictograph depicting a person with mouth turned skyward and something coming out of the mouth. In the *Yijing* tradition, it has generally been associated with language and with joy, and this is how it has been taken by most commentators and translators; that is certainly a reasonable interpretation. My own "expressing" is intended to approximate the ambiguity of the root word, though I admit that this is insufficiently joyful. On the other hand, given the meanings of the other words in the word family, I suspect that rather than pure unadulterated joy, the sense of the word was something more like "relief."

The rest of *Dui* "Expressing" hexagram text is simple, even if not much clearer than the hexagram name. Five of the six line statements contain images based on the word "expressing" (*dui* 兌), from "harmonious expressing" (*he dui* 和兌) in the First Nine line statement through "Drawn expressing" (*yin dui* 引兌) in the Top Six line statement. Several line statements follow this image with prognostications: "auspicious" (*ji* 吉; First Six and Nine in the Second), "regret gone" (*hui wang* 悔亡; Nine in the Second), "ominous" (*xiong* 凶; Six in the Third), and "there is danger" (*you li* 有厲; Nine in the Fifth). Simple though these statements are, they do include most of the essential information of any line statement.

The hexagram text of *Kun* “Bound” is more forthcoming, though not necessarily any less enigmatic. The reader can be excused for wondering just what the “buttocks” (*tun* 臀) are doing “bound” (*kun* 困) to a “stumpy tree” (*zhu mu* 株木) in the First Six line statement. While I too can only guess at the meaning,<sup>8</sup> the line statement itself is a perfect example of an ancient Chinese oracle, beginning with an image that prompts a rhyming couplet that relates the image to some result in the human realm.

臀困于株木。入于幽谷。三歲不覿。

Buttocks bound to a stumpy tree (*mu*/\*môk): Entering into a somber valley (*gu*/\*lok), For three years not seen (*di*/\*liûk).<sup>9</sup>

The Six in the Third line statement supplies another oracle, this one even more reminiscent of the “arousal” (*xing* 興) response format famous from the *Shi jing* 詩經 *Classic of Poetry*.

六三：困于石。據于蒺藜。入于其宮。不見其妻。凶。

Six in the Third: Bound by stone (*shi*/\*dak), Stuck in a bramble patch (*li*/\*ri). Entering into his palace, Not seeing his wife (*qi*/\*tshai). Ominous.

Here knowing that a “bramble patch” (*jili* 蒺藜) often appears in poetry and early texts as an omen of some moral failing, it is perhaps not surprising that the wife (*qi* 妻) should be absent from the house. The two couplets of the image and the response are bound by more than just rhyme. For one familiar with the symbolic world of the *Zhou Changes*, thorn bushes immediately evoke trouble. It is no wonder that the prognostication is “ominous” (*xiong* 凶).

It is not my purpose, either here or elsewhere in this book, to provide a complete annotated translation of the entire *Zhou Changes*. I am interested only in pointing to certain features that show how the text was produced and what it may have meant to its earliest users.

8 The Nine in the Second and Six in the Third line statements are concerned with an intrusion from a foreign people (the *Zhufu fang* 朱紱方: the Red-kneepad Country) and failing to find a wife inside the home. *Tun* 臀 “buttocks” is graphically and doubtless conceptually related to *dian* 殿 “pavilion,” and thus perhaps indicates some anxiety about foreign intrusions into one’s domestic space.

9 The reconstructions of the archaic pronunciations here are taken from Axel Schuessler, *Minimal Old Chinese and Later Han Chinese: A Companion to Grammata Serica Recensa* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2009), 161, 158, and 187. All subsequent phonetic reconstructions will be taken from Schuessler’s book; since it is in the form of a dictionary, I will generally follow further references to it.

## 2 The Date of the *Zhou Changes*

Chinese tradition has long held a consensus regarding the date of the *Zhou Changes*. The *Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳 *Commentary on the Appended Statements*, one of the canonical commentaries of the *Yijing*, twice attributes the text to the time of King Wen of Zhou 周文王 (r. 1099/1056–1050 BCE), even if the first time it does so quite obliquely and both statements qualify the assertion as questions.

易之興也，其於中古乎！作易者，其有憂患乎！

As for the rise of the *Changes*, was it not in middle antiquity? Was the maker of the *Changes* not one with worries and anxieties?

易之興也，其當殷之末時，周之盛德邪，當文王與紂之事邪？

As for the rise of the *Changes*, was it not at the end of the Yin, when Zhou was at full virtue facing the matter of King Wen and [Shang king] Zhòu?

Sometime later, Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145–c. 86 BCE), the great historian of ancient China, answered these questions in the affirmative, though he was still cautious enough about this dating to qualify it as “probably” (*gai* 蓋) the case.

西伯蓋即位五十年。其囚羑里，蓋益《易》之八卦爲六十四卦。

The Western Earl (i.e., King Wen) was probably in power for fifty years. When he was imprisoned at Youli, he probably increased the eight trigrams of the *Changes* into sixty-four hexagrams.<sup>10</sup>

Two centuries later, the “*Yiwen zhi*” 藝文志 “Record of Arts and Letters” chapter of the *Han shu* 漢書 *History of Han*, the first definitive accounting of ancient China’s literary heritage, provided a comprehensive overview of the creation of all parts of the *Yijing*, confirming what the *Xici zhuan* and Sima Qian had said about King Wen’s role in making the *Zhou Changes*.

《易》曰：“宓戲氏仰觀象於天，俯觀法於地，觀鳥獸之文，與地之宜，近取諸身，遠取諸物，於是始作八卦，以通神明之德，以類萬物之情。”至於殷、周之際，紂在上位，逆天暴物，文王以諸侯順命而行道，天人之占可得而効，於是重《易》六爻，作上下篇。孔氏爲之《彖》、《象》、《繫辭》、《文言》、《序卦》之屬十篇。故曰《易》道深矣，人更三聖，世歷三古。

10 Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shi ji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 119.

The *Changes* says, “Bao Xi looked up and contemplated the images in the heavens and looked down and contemplated the patterns on the earth. He contemplated the markings of the birds and beasts and the adaptations to the regions. Near at hand he took from his body and at a distance he took from things. Thus, he invented the eight trigrams to enter into connection with the virtue of the light of the gods and to regulate the condition of all beings.” By the time of the Shang-Zhou transition, (Shang king) Zhòu was in the highest position but he rebelled against heaven and was cruel to things. King Wen commanded the allegiance of the lords and put into practice the Way, and the prognostications of the heavens and men could be reproduced. Thereupon, he doubled the *Changes* to six lines and created the upper and lower texts (i.e., the hexagram and line statements). Confucius made for it the *Tuan Judgments*, *Xiang Images*, *Xici Appended Statements*, *Wenyan Words and Sayings* and *Xugua Sequence of the Hexagrams*, ten texts in all. Therefore, it is said that the way of the *Changes* is profound indeed, having passed through the three sages of each of the periods of antiquity.<sup>11</sup>

A slight qualification to this view was the suggestion by Ma Rong 馬融 (79–166) that King Wen was responsible only for the hexagram statements, while his son the Duke of Zhou 周公 was given credit for the line statements. This doubtless is due to the manifest difference between the forms of these two parts of the text, but also to the rise of a cult to the Duke of Zhou among the scholars of the Eastern Han dynasty. Otherwise, this dating would go all but unchallenged until the twentieth century, when the iconoclastic wave of the *Gu shi bian* 古史辨 *Discriminations of Ancient History* movement called virtually all of China’s ancient literary heritage into question. However, even the leader of this movement, Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 (1893–1980), while denying the sagely pedigree of the text to King Wen, still dated its creation to the early Western Zhou.<sup>12</sup>

Twenty years later, Gao Heng 高亨 (1900–1986), generally reputed to be the foremost modern scholar of the *Zhou Changes* and a name that we will encounter multiple times throughout this book, presented his own comprehensive scenario for the text’s creation. It deserves quotation in full.

11 Ban Gu 班固, *Han shu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 1704.

12 Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛, “Zhou Yi gua yao ci zhong de gushi” 周易卦爻辭中的故事, *Yanjing xuebao* 燕京學報 6 (1929); rpt. in Gu Jiegang, ed., *Gu shi bian* 古史辨 (Beiping: Pushe, 1931; rpt. Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 1982), 3:43: “The *Zhou Changes*’ date of composition should be the early stage of the Western Zhou.”

The ancient classic of the *Zhou Changes* was a milfoil divination text created on the basis of the superstition of the ancients. Milfoil divination was the responsibility of magicians. When magicians calculated the hexagrams for people, they would determine the prognostication based on the image and number of such and such a hexagram and such and such a line, and of course sometimes by coincidence there would be things that would match reality; this was their experience. They recorded some of this experience under the hexagram and line, little by little accumulating them, creating a fragmentary and partial divination book. It was only at the beginning of the Western Zhou that somebody added to it and edited it, and it was only then that the ancient classic of the *Zhou Changes* was complete. Therefore, the *Zhou Changes* actually was not written at any one time, much less being from the hand of a single person. Looking at it on the basis of its contents and form, its completion should have been at the beginning of the Western Zhou. Sima Qian (in “The Grand Historian’s Self Preface” to the *Records of the Historian*) and Ban Gu (in the “Record of Arts and Letters” in the *History of Han*) both said that “King Wen made the hexagram and line statements,” while Ma Rong and Lu Ji (quoted in the *Correct Significance of the Zhou Changes*) said “King Wen made the hexagram statements and the Duke of Zhou made the line statements,” something for which there is no proof in pre-Qin ancient texts, and is hard to believe. Today there are those who say that it is an Eastern Zhou text, which is even less acceptable.<sup>13</sup>

In China today, there are essentially two views regarding the date of the *Zhou Changes*: one that treats the text as the inspired creation of the sages, whether just King Wen or both King Wen and the Duke of Zhou, and one that follows Gao Heng in discounting the sagely creation but upholding the early Western Zhou dating of the text. Both of these approaches are almost surely wrong.

In the middle years of the twentieth century, after the initial fervor of the iconoclastic movement had subsided somewhat but before the full force of the conservative backlash that characterizes much of contemporary Chinese scholarship on the *Zhou Changes* could make itself felt, there were a few excellent scholars in China who insisted on using linguistic evidence to date the text.

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13 Gao Heng 高亨, *Zhou Yi gu jing jin zhu (Chongding ben)* 周易古經今注(重訂本) (1947; rpt. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), 6–7. The final sentence of this quotation alludes to a suggestion by Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892–1978), one of the luminaries of China’s mid-twentieth century scholarship, arguing that the composition of the *Zhou Changes* was as late as the Warring States period.

The first such suggestion was made by Lu Kanru 陸侃如 (1903–1978), writing in 1932 in his synoptic overview of the history of Chinese literature: *Zhongguo wenxue shi jianbian* 中國文學史簡編 *Simplified Edition of the History of Chinese Literature*. Noting syntactic similarities between the hexagram and line statements of the *Zhou Changes* and the poetry of the *Ya* 雅 *Odes* and *Feng* 風 *Airs* sections of the *Shi jing* 詩經 *Classic of Poetry*, Lu suggested that while the *Zhou Changes* doubtless began to be compiled during the Western Zhou period, it was not until the Spring and Autumn period (8th–6th c. BCE) that the text was finally “established.”<sup>14</sup>

A few years later, Chen Mengjia 陳夢家 (1911–1966), one of the greatest scholars of all forms of ancient Chinese unearthed documents, from oracle-bone and bronze inscriptions to wooden-strip documents of the Han dynasty, contributed his only remarks regarding the *Zhou Changes*. In a post-face to a book by Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892–1978) on the topic, Chen noted that the *Zhou Changes* makes use of a number of words that appear in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions but are not seen in the earlier Shang oracle-bone inscriptions.<sup>15</sup> Among these, he mentioned *xiangsi* 享祀 “to offer and sacrifice,” *jin* 金 “metal,” *zhu fu* 朱紱 “red kneepads,” *chi fu* 赤紱 “scarlet kneepads,” *wang mu* 王母 “grandmother,” *zhe shou* 折首 “cut off heads,” and *hun gou* 婚媾 “marriage meeting.” Since these terms only appear gradually throughout the Western Zhou period, he argued that the *Zhou Changes* could not date to the early Western Zhou, but that a general date of Western Zhou would be more appropriate.

Suggestive as this evidence from the *Classic of Poetry* and Western Zhou bronze inscriptions is, that neither Lu Kanru nor Chen Mengjia was known to be a scholar of the *Zhou Changes* limited the influence of their datings. However, a few years after Chen Mengjia published his short postface, Li Jingchi 李鏡池 (1902–1975), one of the founders of the “New *Changes* Studies” (*Xin Yi*

14 Lu Kanru 陸侃如, *Zhongguo wenxue shi jianbian* 中國文學史簡編 (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1932), 13–14. It is worth noting that very much at the same time as Lu Kanru was publishing this argument in China, a scholar in the then Soviet Union, Iulian K. Shchutskii (1897–c. 1935) was making a very similar argument in his doctoral dissertation on the *Zhou Changes*. Employing what he termed a “Karlsgrenian analysis” of the language of the text, he noted that the text makes use of the copula *ze* 則 “then,” and concluded that “the language of the *Shi jing* and the language of the *Book of Changes* represent two successive stages in the development of the same language,” with the *Zhou Changes* being the latter stage, created sometime during the 8th to 7th centuries BCE.

15 Chen Mengjia 陳夢家, “Guo Moruo *Zhou Yi de goucheng shidai shu hou*” 郭沫若周易的構成時代書後, in Guo Moruo 郭沫若, *Zhou Yi de goucheng shidai* 周易的構成時代 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1940), 57–78. Guo’s short book, really just a pamphlet, caused something of a stir in China because he argued that the *Zhou Changes* was produced after the time of Confucius, probably sometime in the 5th century BCE.



xue 新易學) movement, published a study with similar conclusions. Li had first come to prominence in 1931 with a study entitled “*Zhou Yi shici kao*” 周易筮辭考 “A Study of the Divination Terms in the *Zhou Changes*,” published in the volume of the *Gu shi bian* 古史辨 *Discriminations of Ancient History* series dedicated to the *Zhou Changes*.<sup>16</sup> In that study, he had accepted the traditional viewpoint that the *Zhou Changes* was produced at the beginning of the Western Zhou. However, after the Chinese civil war ended, in 1947, he published a lengthy sequel to that earlier study, “*Zhou Yi shici xukao*” 周易筮辭續考 “A Continued Study of the Divination Terms in the *Zhou Changes*,” in which he dated the text to the late Western Zhou.<sup>17</sup> Like Lu Kanru before him, Li Jingchi also began with the *Classic of Poetry*, arguing for a progressive development in that text from the poems of the *Zhou Song* 周頌 *Zhou Hymns* section, which he dated to the first century of the Western Zhou, down to the *Guo feng* 國風 *Airs of the States*, which he dated to the 8th and 7th centuries BCE. And like Chen Mengjia, he also examined bronze inscriptions, though not for individual vocabulary items but rather for the development of rhyme. Based on these comparisons, he argued that the *Zhou Changes* also employs considerable rhyme, but of a less developed nature than that of the *Guo feng* poems. This study by Li Jingchi is one of the finest studies of the *Zhou Changes* published in China. Unfortunately, it was originally published in an academic journal, and was published in the same year that Gao Heng published his book *Zhou Yi gu jing jin zhu*, which has proved to be far more influential.

In my own doctoral dissertation of 1983, I attempted a comprehensive study of the date of the *Zhou Changes*. Like Lu Kanru and Li Jingchi, I too compared the text with the *Classic of Poetry*, and like Chen Mengjia I too made considerable use of linguistic evidence found in bronze inscriptions, especially from the Western Zhou period. In terms of poetic development, I noted that in the *Zhou Changes* rhyme, “whether conscious or coincidental, occurs in 118 of the 386 line statements, or slightly less than one line in three (30%),” though considering intra-line rhymes as well would raise this percentage to 46%.<sup>18</sup> I noted too that 142 lines contain at least one four-character phrase, the standard feature of poetry in the *Classic of Poetry*. Thus, I concurred with Li Jingchi that a comparison of the *Zhou Changes* with the *Classic of Poetry* would place it well after the

16 Li Jingchi 李鏡池, “*Zhou Yi shici kao*” 周易筮辭考, in Gu Jiegang, ed., *Gu shi bian* 古史辨 (Beiping: Pushe, 1931), 3:187–251.

17 Li Jingchi 李鏡池, “*Zhou Yi shici xukao*” 周易筮辭續考, *Lingnan xuebao* 嶺南學報 8.1 (1947): 1–66; rpt. with an added post-face, in Li Jingchi 李鏡池, *Zhou Yi tanyuan* 周易探源 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1978), 72–150.

18 Shaughnessy, “The Composition of the *Zhouyi*,” 36.

time of the *Zhou Hymns* (i.e., c. 1050–950 BCE) but certainly before the time of the *Airs of the States* poems (c. 8th–7th c. BCE). I then turned to what I termed “philological evidence”: a comparison of specific vocabulary items found in the line statements of the *Zhou Changes* with datable examples in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, similar to that undertaken by Chen Mengjia, but with an emphasis on language that can be dated with a certain degree of specificity. I noted that the following hexagram and line statements all contain phrases (highlighted in bold) seen formulaically in bronze inscriptions beginning about the middle of the ninth century BCE (toward the end of middle Western Zhou and the beginning of late Western Zhou):

師 ䷆

*Shi* “Army” (#7)

六五：田有禽。利執言。无咎。長子帥師。弟子輿尸。貞凶。

Six in the Fifth: In fields there are fowl. **Beneficial to grasp prisoners.** Without trouble. An elder son leading an army, a younger son carting corpses. Affirming: Ominous.

離 ䷄

*Li* “Netted” (#30)

上九：王用出征，有嘉折首，獲匪其醜。无咎。

Top Nine: The king herewith going out campaigning: **Having the joy of cutting off heads, Capturing not their chief.** Without trouble.

夬 ䷪

*Guai* “Resolute” (#43)

揚于王庭。孚號。有厲。告自邑。不利即戎。利有攸往。

**Raised up in the king’s court.** Captives crying out. There is danger. Announcing from the city. Not beneficial to approach the warriors. Beneficial to have somewhere to go.

萃 ䷬

*Cui* “Collected” (#45)

亨。王假有廟。利見大人。亨，利貞。用大牲吉。利有攸往。

Receipt. **The king entering the temple.** Beneficial to see a great person. Receipt. Beneficial to affirm. Using a great victim: Auspicious. Beneficial to have somewhere to go.

渙 ䷺

*Huan* “Dispersing” (#59)

亨。王假（有）于廟。利涉大川。利貞。

Receipt. **The king entering in the temple.** Beneficial to ford a great river. Beneficial to affirm.

I noted in particular that the first two of these examples are phrases “which are virtually a signature of King Xuan’s reign,”<sup>19</sup> King Xuan 宣王 (r. 827/825–782 BCE) being the penultimate king of the Western Zhou dynasty whose reign spanned the decades on either side of 800 BCE. The last three examples suggest a thriving royal court such as that during much of King Xuan’s reign and certainly inconsistent with the political situation after the fall of the Western Zhou in 771 BCE.

In a more hypothetical coda to these linguistic comparisons, I also examined the “Historical Background” of the middle and late Western Zhou in an attempt to situate the intellectual context in which the *Zhou Changes* may have developed. I noted that the second half of the middle Western Zhou (roughly the first half of the 9th c. BCE) saw a steady decline in the fortunes of the Zhou royal house. This decline culminated in the forced exile of King Li 厲王 (r. 857/853–842/828 BCE), during which time the royal capital was ruled by a local lord, Elder He of Gong 共伯和. It was only after King Li died in exile that Elder He installed King Xuan as the legitimate heir. King Xuan’s lengthy reign was in many ways the most consequential reign of the late Western Zhou. It began with a resurgence in the fortunes of the royal court, with the king’s armies conducting a military campaign—apparently successfully—against perennial enemies to the south and east of the royal domain. Then, the armies turned their attention to the west, where they faced an entirely new threat, referred to as the Xianyun 玃狁, apparently a Chinese rendition of a foreign name. Judging from bronze inscriptions that date to about 815 BCE, the first of several campaigns in the west were also largely successful, driving off incursions by the Xianyun that had reached into the very heart of the Zhou capital region. However, by the end of King Xuan’s forty-six-year long reign, the Zhou fortunes took a decisive turn for the worse, with the royal armies defeated in a series of campaigns.

Drawing on studies of the writing of the Hebrew *Bible* that argued that “reduction to writing is linked with a general crisis of confidence,”<sup>20</sup> I suggested that the psychological blow to the royal house of King Li’s exile in 842 BCE, exacerbated by the incursions of the Xianyun throughout the reign of King Xuan,

19 Shaughnessy, “The Composition of the *Zhouyi*,” 42.

20 The quotation is taken from Eduard Nielsen, *Oral Tradition: A Modern Problem in Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), 32–33. Nielsen was in turn drawing on the work of Ivan Engnell, *Gamla Testamentet: en traditioshistorisk inledning* (Stockholm: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrelses Bokförlag, 1945), 42, and H.S. Nyberg, *Studien zum Hoseabuche*, Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift 6 (Uppsala, Sweden: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1935).

may have caused the scribes at the royal court to lose faith in their ability to preserve the literature, both written and oral, for which they were responsible. I suggested too that this political situation might also be consistent with one of the statements in the *Commentary on the Appended Statements* concerning the date of the text's composition:

易之興也，其於中古乎！作易者，其有憂患乎！

As for the rise of the *Changes*, was it not in middle antiquity? Was the maker of the *Changes* not one with worries and anxieties?

To be sure, this passage has always been associated with the time of King Wen, two and a half centuries before the time of King Xuan, and another passage in the *Xici zhuan* mentions King Wen by name. However, the linguistic evidence that Lu Kanru, Chen Mengjia, Li Jingchi, and I examined shows beyond any doubt that the *Zhou Changes* could not have been written much before about 800 BCE. Therefore, I concluded my own study with the statement “its literary development and linguistic usage show the *Zhouyi* to be a product of the latter stage of the Western Zhou dynasty, and the historical context of this period suggests a composition date in the early years of King Xuan's reign: most probably, during the last two decades of the ninth century BCE.”<sup>21</sup>

21 Shaughnessy, “The Composition of the *Zhouyi*,” 49. In subsequent Western studies of the *Zhou Changes*, this conclusion has proved to be more influential than it should have been. For instance, both Richard Kunst and Richard Rutt, the two finest English-language translators of the *Zhou Changes*, have written:

The earliest stratum, that of the *jing* 經 “classic,” came into existence during the early centuries of the first millennium BCE. ... It did not have a single identifiable author or even authors, but was the result of gradual accretion over centuries. The most that could be claimed is that a single editor, working in the waning years of the Western Zhou dynasty, that is, roughly 800 BCE, wrote down the text and subjected it to extensive polishing (Kunst, “The Original *Yijing*,” 2, 4).

Weighing all the indications, it is not unreasonable to conclude that the book as we now have it comes from late Western Zhou times, possibly the last quarter of the ninth century BC (825–800 BC); but the material in it may well reflect an oral history going back three to five centuries or more. Attempts to establish the name of the redactor are doomed to failure, unless some new evidence is discovered. The material must have been collected and collated by diviners; and that is all we need to know for understanding the text (Rutt, *The Book of Changes [Zhouyi]*, 33).

Both Kunst and Rutt were properly cautious, but the date 800 B.C. has acquired more assurance than is warranted. While the linguistic evidence still seems to me to point to roughly this time, as we will see below, the final editing of the text—if we can even speak of a final editing—may well have taken place a century or two later.

Just two years after I offered that conclusion, Richard Kunst submitted his doctoral dissertation “The Original *Yijing*: A Text, Phonetic Transcription, Translation, and Indexes, with Sample Glosses” that returned the study of the *Zhou Changes* to “an unromantic, linguistically rigorous commitment to paying heed to the nuts of phonology and bolts of syntax.”<sup>22</sup> As part of this commitment, Kunst provided a lengthy “Grammatical Sketch” (pp. 95–149) that does indeed put all of the nuts and bolts in their proper bins. Many of his observations about grammar have important implications for the date of the text. For instance, he notes that of the 78 occurrences of the character *zhi* 之, about 30 are markers of modification, a usage never seen in Shang oracle-bone inscriptions and rarely seen in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, whereas throughout most of the Western Zhou, the standard third person possessive pronoun is *jue* 厥, in the *Zhou Changes* this word occurs only twice, while the word *qi* 其 occurs 110 times.<sup>24</sup> Although *qi* too occurs ubiquitously throughout Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, its standard usage there is as a modal auxiliary, introducing statements of desire or the future tense. In the *Zhou Changes*, on the other hand, it usually serves as the third person possessive pronoun, a function seen only occasionally before the early Eastern Zhou period. Finally, Kunst notes too the distinction between the “pre-verbal object substitutes” *you* 攸 and *suo* 所. *You* 攸 represents an earlier usage, seen for instance in the *Da Ya* 大雅 *Greater Odess* section of the *Classic of Poetry*, while *suo* 所 comes to replace it in later texts, such as the *Airs of the States* section of the *Classic of Poetry*. In the *Zhou Changes*, a simple count of *you* 攸 versus *suo* 所 would support an earlier dating: there are 32 occurrences of *you* 攸 against only 5 uses of *suo* 所. However, of the 32 uses of *you* 攸, 21 are in the phrase *you you wang* 有攸往 “having somewhere to go” and 10 in the phrase *wu you li* 无攸利 “nowhere beneficial.” There is only a single non-formulaic use of *you* 攸: *wu you sui* 无攸遂 “nowhere to follow” (in the Six in the Second line of *Jiaren* 家人 ䷤ “Family Members” [#37]). Thus, the 5 cases of *suo* 所 may reflect a later development in terms of grammar.<sup>25</sup> None of this grammatical evidence is decisive in terms of dating, but at least some of it may point to a date shortly after the end of the Western Zhou.

In the years since Kunst and I submitted our doctoral dissertations, not to mention in the years since Lu Kanru, Chen Mengjia and Li Jingchi offered analyses of the date of the *Zhou Changes*, there have been few new studies to appear.

22 Kunst, “The Original *Yijing*,” v.

23 Kunst, “The Original *Yijing*,” 105.

24 Kunst, “The Original *Yijing*,” 114.

25 Kunst, “The Original *Yijing*,” 115–116.

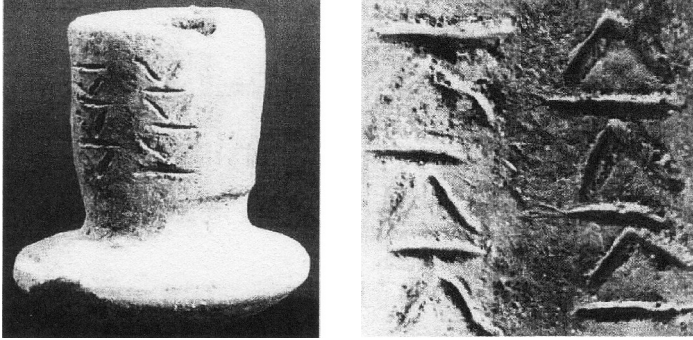


FIGURE 1.1 Pottery paddle CHX 採集: 1 excavated at Xiren Village 西仁村, Shaanxi, 2001; Left: Pottery Paddle, Right: Inscription; from Cao Wei 曹瑋, “Tao pai shang de shuzi gua yanjiu” 陶拍上的數字卦研究, *Wenwu* 文物 2002.11, 66; used with permission

However, there have been two different kinds of artifactual discoveries that may bear on the date of the text. The first of these are a pair of pottery paddles inscribed with numerical symbols that can be understood as hexagrams. Discovered in 2001 at the site of a late Western Zhou pottery kiln excavated at Xiren Village 西仁村, Huangliang County 黃良鄉, near Chang’an 長安, Shaanxi, one (CHX 採集: 1) has two vertical columns of numbers, while the second (CHX 採集: 2) has four sets of numbers running both horizontally and vertically.<sup>26</sup>

The numbers on CHX 採集: 1 read (the right-hand column, reading from bottom to top) 一Λ 一Λ 一Λ, which can be read as 一六一六一六 or 1-6-1-6-1-6, and (the left-hand column, again reading from bottom to top) Λ— Λ— Λ—, which can be read as 六一六一六一 or 6-1-6-1-6-1 (note that the numbers are upside-down in the photograph of the paddle, the orientation being shown by the character Λ for 六 “6”). It has become standard in China since the early work of Zhang Zhenglang 張政烺 (1912–2005) to convert the odd numbers of these numerical symbols to solid lines and the even numbers to the broken lines of an *Yijing* hexagram.<sup>27</sup> In this case, such conversion would produce the two hexagram pictures ䷛ and ䷛, which in the *Yijing* are the hexagrams *Jiji* 既濟 “Already Across” and *Weiji* 未濟 “Not Yet Across,” the sixty-third and sixty-fourth hexagrams in the traditional sequence. Although Cao Wei 曹瑋, the author of the report on these paddles, argues that these “numerical hexagrams” were the

26 Cao Wei 曹瑋, “Tao pai shang de shuzi gua yanjiu” 陶拍上的數字卦研究, *Wenwu* 文物 2002.11, 65–71.

27 Zhang Zhenglang, “Shi shi Zhou chu qingtongqi mingwen zhong de Yi gua”; Zhang Zhenglang, “An Interpretation of the Divinatory Inscriptions on Early Zhou Bronzes.”

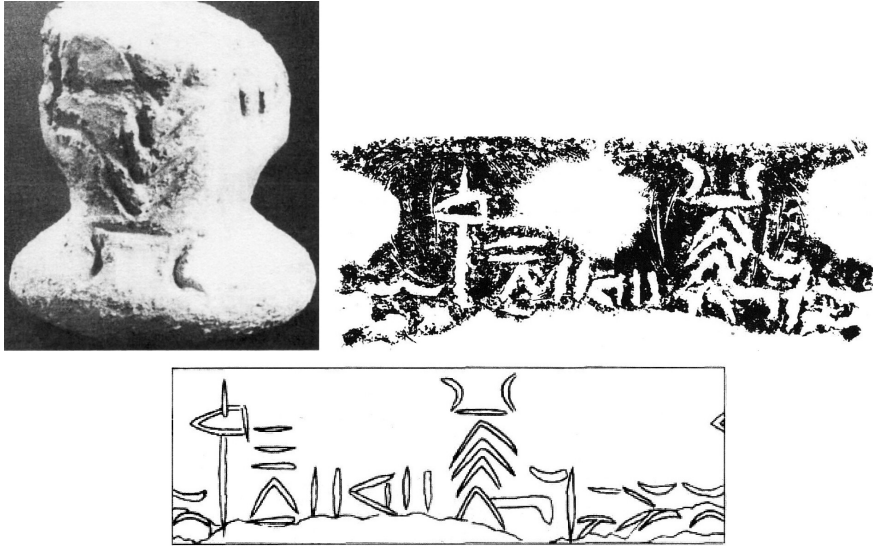


FIGURE 1.2 Pottery paddle CHX 採集: 2 excavated at Xiren Village 西仁村, Shaanxi, 2001; Top Left: Pottery Paddle, Top Right: Rubbing, Bottom Center: Line Drawing; Cao Wei 曹璋, “Tao pai shang de shuzi gua yanjiu” 陶拍上的數字卦研究, *Wenwu* 文物 2002.11, 66; used with permission

result of a milfoil divination conducted upon the making of the paddle, and that they constitute evidence of “changing hexagrams,” in which lines of a first hexagram change to their opposite nature (i.e., yang lines change to yin lines and vice versa),<sup>28</sup> this would require a situation in which all six lines change, which is almost inconceivable with the traditional understanding of how *Yijing* milfoil divination was performed. A far more likely explanation is that these two groups of numbers were intended merely to serve as decoration, although they doubtless do represent “hexagrams.” That they represent hexagrams that are found one after the other may suggest that they were already considered to be a pair at this time. As we will see, the second paddle presents even more evidence that this could be the case.

The numerical symbols engraved on the second pottery paddle (CHX 採集: 2) are by no means as easy to see or to “read” as those on the first. Indeed, it is only from a rubbing of the inscription and a line drawing of that rubbing that the numbers become more or less clear.

28 Cao Wei, “Tao pai shang de shuzi gua yanjiu,” 69–70. Indeed, Cao Wei argues that this is evidence of “changing hexagrams” more than one thousand years earlier than the generally accepted earliest mention of “changing hexagrams.”

What is clear is that there are four sets of six numerals (though one number of the left-hand most set has been effaced) that run entirely around the circumference of the paddle handle, two oriented vertically (in the rubbing) and two oriented horizontally, though the two horizontally oriented sets seem to run in opposite directions from each other (based again on the orientation of the character  $\Lambda$ ). Reading these from right to left produces the following “hexagrams”:

八 八 六 八 一 八      ☵      *Shi* 師 “Army” (#7)  
8 - 8 - 6 - 8 - 1 - 8

八 一 六 六 六 六      ☱      *Bi* 比 “Alliance” (#8)  
8 - 1 - 6 - 6 - 6 - 6

一 一 六 一 一 一      ☲      *Xiaochu* 小畜 “Lesser Livestock” (#9)  
1 - 1 - 6 - 1 - 1 - 1

一 一 一 六 一 [一]      ☳      *Lü* 履 “Stepping” (#10)  
1 - 1 - 1 - 6 - 1 - [1]

These are the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth hexagrams in the traditional sequence of the *Yijing*. As Li Xueqin 李學勤 has pointed out, even if one or another of these symbols was the result of an actual divination, it is almost inconceivable that a pair of divinations could produce “changing hexagrams” in exactly this sequence.<sup>29</sup> Thus, it would seem that the numerical hexagrams on this pottery paddle must have some other explanation, the most likely being that they represent a segment of some complete sequence of hexagrams—the sequence evidently being that of the received *Zhou Changes*.

It is not at all clear why numerical hexagrams should have been incised into the handles of these pottery paddles,<sup>30</sup> nor is the date of the paddles very clear; Cao Wei said simply that “the latest date for these pottery paddles should not

29 Li Xueqin 李學勤, “Xin faxian Xi Zhou shi shu de yanjiu” 新發現西周筮數的研究, *Zhou Yi yanjiu* 周易研究 2003.5, 3–7. This is not to mention, as I will point out in Chapter Four below, there is no evidence that there was anything like a “changing hexagram” at this time.

30 Andrea Bréard and Constance A. Cook, “Cracking Bones and Numbers: Solving the Enigma of Numerical Sequences on Ancient Chinese Artifacts,” *Archive for History of Exact Sciences* 2019 (<https://doi.org/10.1007/s00407-019-00245-9>), suggest that these pottery paddles could be “divination spindles of some sort,” noting that a Han-dynasty example with





FIGURE 1.3 Photograph of *Ding* 鼎 hexagram dagger-axe; from Dong Shan 董珊, “Lun xinjian Ding gua ge” 論新見鼎卦戈, *Chutu wenxian yu guwenzi yanjiu* 出土文獻與古文字研究 4 (2011), 87; used with permission

be later than the late Western Zhou.”<sup>31</sup> If this date and these explanations for the groups of numbers are accepted, the inscriptions on the two paddles would suggest that the received sequence of hexagrams was already available for quotation by the end of the Western Zhou dynasty. This is not to say, necessarily, that the full text of the *Zhou Changes* was available for quotation at this date. There is one other artifact that has been published even more recently that might bear on the question of what sort of text may have been available for quotation.

In an article published in 2011, Dong Shan 董珊, professor of Chinese at Peking University, introduced a bronze *ge* 戈–dagger-axe with an inscription that seems to include two separate numerical hexagrams, both of which can be converted into *Ding* 鼎 “Caldron” (#50) hexagram, as well as two different phrases that seem to relate to two separate line statements of that hexagram.<sup>32</sup>

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six pips on it was excavated in 2015 in Shenfangshi 什邡市, Sichuan. For this discovery, see Liu Zhangze 劉章澤, “Sichuan Shenfangshi Jiantaicun chutu Han dai ‘tuoluo’ touzi kao” 四川什邡市箭台村遺址出土漢代“陀螺”骰子考, *Sichuan wenwu* 四川文物 2016.2, 66 Figs. 1 and 2.

31 Cao Wei, “Tao pai shang de shuzi gua yanjiu,” 65.

32 Dong Shan 董珊, “Lun xinjian Ding gua ge” 論新見鼎卦戈, *Chutu wenxian yu guwenzi yanjiu* 出土文獻與古文字研究 4 (2011): 68–88. For discussion of this artifact in English, see Adam Schwartz, “Between Numbers and Images: The Many Meanings of Trigram *Li* 離 in the Early *Yijing*,” *Bulletin of the Jao Tsung-I Academy of Sinology* 5 (2018): 68–72.



FIGURE 1.4

Photograph of inscription on *Ding* 鼎 dagger-axe; from Dong Shan 董珊, “Lun xinjian Ding gua ge” 論新見鼎卦戈, *Chutu wenxian yu guwenzi yanjiu* 出土文獻與古文字研究 4 (2011), 87; used with permission

Although this dagger-axe was not archaeologically excavated and its provenance is somewhat suspicious, Professor Dong has provided a detailed description of the corrosion on the dagger-axe, arguing that it is natural and could not have been fabricated recently. He notes as well that the shape of the dagger-axe is consistent with dagger-axes made just before and just after the transition from Western Zhou to Eastern Zhou; thus, roughly the eighth century BCE.<sup>33</sup>

Clear as the photograph of the inscription is, it is again possible to see the inscription more clearly in a rubbing of it. Because the inscription runs around the exterior of the blade of the dagger-axe in a U-shaped fashion, with the two different numerical hexagrams facing in different directions, I display the rubbing of the inscription twice, inverted, so that each half can be read right-side up.

The inscription can be transcribed and translated as follows (reading from top to bottom, right to left of the left-hand-side illustration):

六一一一六一日  
 鼎止(趾)真(顛)  
 鼎黃耳奠止(趾)  
 八五一一六五  
 拇(吝)

33 Dong Shan, “Lun xin jian Ding gua ge,” 70.

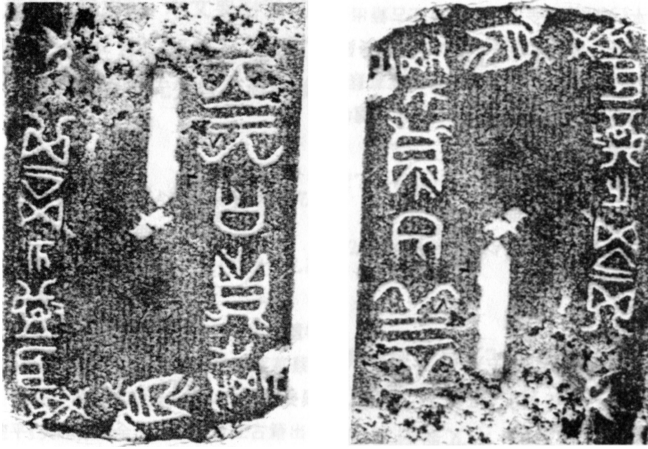


FIGURE 1.5 Rubbing of *Ding* 鼎 dagger-axe inscription, inverted so as better to display the two halves of the inscription

6-1-1-1-6-1 says:

The cauldron's legs overturned.

The cauldron's yellow ears; setting down its legs.

8-5-1-1-6-5 Stinted

Based on the assumption that odd numbers are to be associated with *yang* or solid lines and even numbers with *yin* or broken lines, both sets of numerals can be converted into *Ding* hexagram of the *Yijing* tradition. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the two sets of numbers differ not only in the numbers they use, but also in the iconicity of their picture. What I present above as the first hexagram, ䷛, is made up of only the numbers “1” (一) and “6” (六, usually written in the script of this time more or less as  $\wedge$ , but here drawn rather more ornamentally as  $\sim$ ). By contrast, not only does the second hexagram include also the numbers “8” and “5” in addition to “1” and “6”, but the entire effect produces almost a pictographic rendering of a cauldron: ䷛, with the legs and “ears” (i.e., handles) all particularly apparent.

Even more important, the characters following the first numerical hexagram picture, introduced with the word *yue* 曰 “to say,” not only refer to two parts of a hexagram, but also correspond reasonably closely to the line statements of the First Six and Six in the Fifth line statements of *Ding* hexagram in the *Zhou Changes* as seen in the side-by-side textual comparison on the following page.

In Chapter Nine below, I will examine in more detail the nature of the *Zhou Changes* line statements, and will demonstrate that they are ordinarily composed, in addition to the identifying tags such as *chu liu* 初六 “First Six” and *liu*

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**Ge-Dagger-Axe Inscription**    *Zhou Changes Ding Hexagram*


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鼎止（趾）真（顛）                      初六：鼎顛趾。利出否。得妾以其子。无咎。  
 The cauldron's legs upturned.    First Six: A cauldron's upturned legs: Beneficial to expel the bad, Getting a consort with her child. Without trouble.

鼎黃耳奠止（趾）                      六五：鼎黃耳金鉉。利貞。  
 The cauldron's yellow ears;    Six in the Fifth: A cauldron's yellow ears and setting down its legs.    metal bar. Beneficial to affirm.

---

wu 六五 “Six in the Fifth” seen here, of both an “image” (*xiangci* 象辭) and various types of technical divination terminology. Although the two statements on the *ge*-dagger-axe are similar to the images in these two line statements of the *Zhou Changes*, Professor Dong argues vigorously that the inscriptions are not evidence of the *Zhou Changes* at all, but rather should reflect either the *Lian shan* 連山 *Linked Mountains* or *Gui cang* 歸藏 *Returning to Be Stored*, the putative divination texts of the Xia and Shang dynasties, or perhaps some other ancient divination method. For now, it would seem to be premature to use this one isolated artifact to say anything definitive about the date of the *Zhou Changes*. Even if the artifact is authentic, and even if the inscription is related to the *Zhou Changes*, it would suggest only that the text was still in the process of formation in the eighth century BCE.

By way of a tentative conclusion to this discussion of the date of the *Zhou Changes*, whereas more than thirty-five years ago I argued that the final editing of the text was complete by about 800 BCE, I would now suggest that it would be more prudent to use this date as a general marker for the time period of the text's creation. The final editing of the text—to the extent that we can even talk about a “final editing”—may well have been a century or even two centuries later than this date. We must look forward to future archaeological discoveries before arriving at a more specific date.

### 3        **Early Manuscripts of the *Zhou Changes***

There is little reason to hope that we will ever have an autograph copy of that original editor's *Zhou Changes*, whenever and wherever he (or they) may have lived. The most we can reasonably hope for from the Springs and Autumns

period, not to mention from the Western Zhou, are occasional quotations or records of divination. However, there has already been one Warring States manuscript and two early Han-dynasty manuscripts of the *Zhou Changes* unearthed. With always improving archaeological techniques, there can be every expectation that more and more manuscripts will be found in the centuries to come. In the following section, I will introduce these three manuscripts.<sup>34</sup>

#### 4 Shanghai Museum Manuscript

At the beginning of 1994, there appeared on the Hong Kong antique market a significant cache of bamboo strips, which had obviously been robbed from a tomb in central China.<sup>35</sup> After a preliminary appraisal, the strips were purchased on behalf of the Shanghai Museum. The Museum assembled a team of scholars to edit these strips, and began publishing them in 2001.<sup>36</sup> Although there is no archaeological evidence to assist in the dating of these manuscripts, paleographers have used the physical characteristics of the bamboo strips and especially the orthography of the texts to give a general date of about 300 BCE, give or take a couple of decades.<sup>37</sup> Nine volumes of texts have now been published, with an unknown number of fragments still remaining in the Shanghai Museum collection.

In 2003, Volume 3 of the Shanghai Museum strips contained a manuscript of the *Zhou Changes*.<sup>38</sup> Although the manuscript is fragmentary, with only about a third of the received text available, enough of the text survives to show how individual hexagram texts were organized, and also to allow for some conjectures about the overall organization of the manuscript. The manuscript includes fifty-eight strips, counting fragments that can be rejoined as a single

34 One of these, unearthed from an ancient tomb in A.D. 279 in Ji 汲 Commandery (present-day Jixian 汲縣, Henan), has long been lost. However, early eyewitness reports indicate that it was “just the same” (*zheng tong* 正同) as the received text of the *Zhou Changes*.

35 The following discussion of the Shanghai Museum manuscript of the *Zhou Changes* is adapted from Shaughnessy, *Unearthing the Changes*, 37–66.

36 Ma Chengyuan 馬承源, ed., *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu* 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書, 9 vols., (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 2001–2012).

37 For an account of the purchase of these strips and steps taken to authenticate them, see “Ma Chengyuan xiansheng tan Shang bo jian” 馬承源先生談上博簡, in Liao Mingchun 廖名春, and Zhu Yuanqing 朱淵清, eds., *Shang bo guan cang Zhanguo Chu zhu shu yanjiu* 上博館藏戰國楚竹書研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2002), 1–8.

38 Ma Chengyuan, ed., *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhu shu*, Vol. 3, 13–70 (plates), 133–215 (transcription).

strip (there is also one fragment in the possession of the Chinese University of Hong Kong that can be rejoined with strip #32 of the Shanghai Museum manuscript<sup>39</sup>). Forty-two of these strips are complete or nearly so, with an average length of about 43.5 cm (the strips are .6 cm wide and .12 cm thick). The strips were originally bound with three silk binding straps (none of which survives, though vestiges of the silk can be seen on the bamboo strips), passing through notches cut into the right side of the strips: the top one 1.2 cm from the top, the middle one 22.2 cm from the top (21 cm from the top binding strap), and the bottom 1.2 cm from the bottom (20.5 cm from the middle notch). The first character of each strip begins just below where the first binding strap passed, and the last character ends just above where the last binding strap passed, with an average of 42–44 characters per complete strip. Each hexagram text begins on a new strip: first comes the hexagram picture (*gua hua* 卦劃; with yang lines written as —, and yin lines written as ʘ), with the six lines segregated into two groups of three lines each; the hexagram name; one of several different black and/or red symbols: a solid red square (■); a solid black square (■); a three-sided hollow red square with an inset smaller solid black square (▣); a three-sided hollow black square with an inset smaller solid red square (▣); as well, perhaps, as a solid red square with an inset hollow black square (▣), and a three-sided hollow black square (□) never before seen in connection with *Yijing* hexagrams;<sup>40</sup> the hexagram statement; the six line statements, beginning with *chu liu* 初六 “First Six” or *chu jiu* 初九 “First Nine” and continuing through *liu er* 六二 “Six in the Second,” *jiu san* 九三 “Nine in the Third,” etc. until either *shang liu* 上六 “Top Six” or *shang jiu* 上九 “Top Nine”; and finally the same type of symbol found after the hexagram name. After this second symbol, the remainder of the final strip of any given hexagram is left blank. The 58 strips include text from 34 different hexagrams, with 1,806 characters, as opposed to

39 For this strip, see Rao Zongyi 饒宗頤, “Zai kaituo zhong de xunguxue: Cong Chu jian *Yijing* tandao xinbian *Jingdian shiwen* de jianyi” 在開拓中的訓詁學：從楚簡《易》經談到新編《經典釋文》的建議, in *Di yi jie Guoji ji di san jie quanguo xunguxue xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 第一屆國際暨第三屆全國訓詁學學術研討會論文集 (Gaoxiang: Zhongshan daxue, 1997), 1–5; Zeng Xiantong 曾憲通, “Zhou Yi Kui gua ji liusan yaoci xinquan” 《周易·睽》卦辭及六三爻辭新詮, *Zhongguo yuyan xuebao* 中國語言學報 1999.9: 301–305.

40 The identification of these six different symbols follows that of Pu Maozuo, *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhangguo Chu zhu shu* (*san*), 134, 251–260. As will be discussed below, it is likely that the last two of Pu’s symbols (the solid red square with an inset hollow black square and the three-sided hollow black square) occur only exceptionally and only on strips copied by a different copyist than those of the other symbols, and probably should not be analyzed together with the other four symbols.

the 64 hexagrams and 4,933 characters of the received text. This constitutes just over one-third (36%) of the text. I estimate that 84 complete strips of the original manuscript are now missing.

An important feature of the manuscript is that it was obviously copied by at least two different copyists. As first pointed out by Fang Zhensan 房振三, of the fifty-eight extant strips, forty-five (##2–4, 6–7, 9–19, 28–36, 38–48, 50–58) share the same calligraphy and method of writing common graphs. However, the other thirteen strips (##1, 5, 8, 20–27, 37 and 49) have a very different calligraphy and different ways of writing common graphs.<sup>41</sup> As we will see below, these two different copyists apparently had different understandings of the red and/or black symbols that appear at the beginning and end of each hexagram text, and this has important implications for their analysis.

It is clear that this manuscript of the *Zhou Changes* was originally complete, and essentially in the form in which we know it today, though with a considerable number of individual textual variants. Much of the interest in the Shanghai Museum manuscript of the *Zhou Changes* has concerned one of two questions. First is the question of the sequence of hexagrams in it, a question that has loomed large in studies of the *Yijing* ever since the Mawangdui manuscript was discovered with a radically different arrangement. Because the bamboo strips on which the manuscript was written arrived at the Shanghai Museum in a disordered bundle, and because each new hexagram text begins on a new bamboo strip, there is only indirect evidence with which to address this question. A reconstruction of the original organization of the manuscript is inevitably conjectural, so that a detailed discussion will be postponed until Chapter Eleven below, which is dedicated to the sequence of the hexagrams. In short, there is considerable evidence, albeit circumstantial, that the sequence of hexagrams in the manuscript was probably very similar to, if not quite identical with, that of the received text.

One bit of evidence supporting this reconstruction is the second feature of the Shanghai Museum manuscript that has prompted considerable discussion: this is the red and/or black symbols found at the beginning and end of the hexagram texts. As mentioned, there appear to be six such symbols. In most cases in which both the first and last strip of a hexagram survive in the manuscript, the symbols at the beginning and end of the text are identical. However, in three cases, the symbol at the end is different from that at the beginning. The editor of the Shanghai Museum manuscript, Pu Maozuo 濮茅左, devoted a special

41 Fang Zhensan 房振三, "Zhu shu Zhou Yi caise fuhao chutan" 竹书《周易》彩色符号初探, *Zhou Yi yanjiu* 周易研究 2005.4, 22.

appendix to explaining the significance of the symbols, suggesting that red is a manifestation of the yang or sunny characteristic and black that of the yin or shady characteristic.<sup>42</sup> With respect to the hexagrams in which the symbols differ, he suggested that they mark transitional stages in the respective growth and decline of the yin and yang. Ingenious though this explanation is, it has now been demonstrated conclusively that the strips that display this difference were written in a different hand from the other strips of the manuscript.<sup>43</sup> This would seem to obviate any comparison between the symbols in the two different groups.

At the end of this chapter, I will examine in some detail the text of one hexagram, *Jing* 井 ䷯ “Well-Trap” (#48), as it is written in the Shanghai Museum manuscript of the *Zhou Changes* by way of suggesting a possible polysemous reading of the text. However, for now to illustrate something of the nature of the text and the contribution it can make to the understanding of the *Zhou Changes*, I will look more briefly at one other hexagram, *Yu* 豫 ䷏, normally understood in the received text as something like “Relaxed,” but written in the manuscript as *Yu* 余 “Excess.” I think a good case can be made that the manuscript reading is original and is preferable to the reading of the received text (and will incorporate that reading into my translation of the hexagram elsewhere in this book), but for the sake of comparison I will show the received text as it is often understood. I will display the text of the manuscript side-by-side with that of the received text, both in Chinese and in English. In the manuscript, the text is written continuously on two bamboo strips (##14–15) without any punctuation, but for the sake of comparison I will present it divided and line statements (and again without punctuation).

It will be seen at a glance that the two texts are largely similar. Nevertheless, closer examination will reveal a number of differences, most of them minor orthographic differences, but some differences perhaps pointing to very different ways of understanding the text. I think we can disregard the differences between 利 and *li* 利 “benefit,” 師 and *shi* 師 “army,” 冬 and *zhong* 終 “end,” 晶 and *san* 三 “three,” 愆 and *hui* 悔 “regret,” 遲 and *chi* 遲 “slow,” 死 and *heng* 恆

42 Ma Chengyuan, ed., *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhu shu*, Vol. 3, 251–260.

43 He Zeheng 何澤恒, “Lun Shangbo Chu Zhu shu Zhou Yi de Yi xue fuhao yu guaxu” 論上博楚竹書周易的易學符號與卦序, in Zheng Jixiong 鄭吉雄, ed., 2009 *Zhou Changes zhuan wenxian xin quan* 2009 周易經傳文獻新詮 (Taipei: Taiwan daxue chuban zhongxin, 2009), 9–32. For a particularly well-illustrated discussion of these two different scribal hands, see Haeree Park, *The Writing System of Scribe Zhou: Evidence from Late Pre-Imperial Chinese Manuscripts and Inscriptions (5th–3rd centuries BCE)* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 78–87.



Shanghai Museum Text of *Yu* 余 ䷗ “Excess”Received Text of *Yu* 豫 ䷏ “Excess”

䷗ 余 勗建侯行市

䷗ 豫利建侯行師

初六鳴余凶

初六鳴豫凶

六二矧于石不冬日貞吉

六二介于石不終日貞吉

六三可余憊遲又憊

六三盱豫悔 遲有悔

九四猷余大又旻毋頽墜故壘

九四由豫大有得勿疑朋盍簪

六五貞疾死不死

六五貞疾恆不死

上六楨余成又愈亡咎

上六冥豫成有渝无咎

䷗ Excess 余: Beneficial to establish a lord and set in motion an army.

䷗ Relaxation: Beneficial to establish a lord and set in motion an army.

First Six: Calling excess. Ominous.

First Six: Calling relaxation. Ominous.

Six in the Second: Strengthening by stones. Not to the end of the day. Affirming: auspicious.

Six in the Second: Strengthening by stones. Not to the end of the day. Affirming: auspicious.

Six in the Third: Singing excess. Regret. Slowly having regret.

Six in the Third: Open-eyed relaxation. Regret. Slowly having regret.

Nine in the Fourth: Hesitant. Greatly having gain. Don't doubt. For friends what criticism.

Nine in the Fourth: Hesitant. Greatly having gain. Do not doubt friends putting on hair-pins.

Six in the Fifth: Affirming: Sickness, in the long-term not dying.

Six in the Fifth: Affirming: sickness, in the long-term not dying.

Top Six: Dark excess. Completion having deterioration. Without trouble. 余

Top Six: Dark relaxation. Completion having deterioration. Without trouble. 豫

“long-term,” and 楨 and *ming* 冥 “dark,” which almost certainly represent simply different orthographies, different spellings, if you will, for the same words. For the purposes of the present book, it will have to suffice to consider just two differences and the implications they might have for other readings in the text. The first and most obvious difference is in the name of the hexagram, which also repeats in four of the line statements. In the Shanghai Museum manuscript it is written *yu* 余 “I” (but probably the protograph for *yu* 餘 “excess,” which is in fact the reading of the Mawangdui manuscript) as opposed to *yu* 豫 “relaxation” in the received text of the *Zhou Changes*. The protograph or root of the received text’s *yu* 豫 is *yu* 予, which like *yu* 余 also means “I,” such that it is easy to imagine that different scribes might have written the graph with either

character. Nevertheless, when these protographs are expanded with other components, they lead to very different interpretations: “excess” on the one hand as opposed to “relaxation” on the other hand. A good case has been made by Liao Mingchun 廖名春 that the reading of the manuscripts, *yu* 余: 餘 “excess,” is the better reading in this case, since this would form a conceptual contrast with the preceding hexagram in the received sequence: *Qian* 謙 ䷎ “Modesty” (#15).<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, the reading of the received text, *yu* 豫 “relaxation,” could also make a sensible contrast, though a different contrast.<sup>45</sup>

Turning to the line statements, we find other interesting differences, one of which we can explore here. Four of the six line statements share a common structure, with a two-character image in which the character *yu* 余 or 豫 is the second character. The Six in the Third line statement reads quite differently in the two texts: the manuscript writes *ke yu* 可余, which on the surface might mean something like “permissible excess,” while the received text reads *xu yu* 盱豫 “open-eyed relaxation.” Among other texts of the *Zhou Changes*, there are numerous variants for the first of these two characters (the English definitions being those of a dictionary reading, not necessarily what was intended in the respective text): *yu* 杆 “tub” (the Mawangdui manuscript), *yu* 紆 “twist” and *wu* 汙 “polluted” (both found in the *Jingdian shiwen* 經典釋文), but also *ge* 歌 “to sing” (given by the Fuyang manuscript). Even though the overwhelming majority of these variants share the phonetic root *yu* 于, there is an interesting connection between the two outliers, the Shanghai Museum manuscript’s *ke* 可 and the Fuyang manuscript’s *ge* 歌 “to sing”; the archaic form of *ge* 歌 was 訶, for which 可 would have been the protograph. Moreover, as Liao Mingchun has also noted, another one of the Mawangdui manuscripts, *Er san zi wen* 二三子問 *The Several Disciples Asked*, quotes Confucius as saying of this line

44 Liao Mingchun 廖名春, “Shanghai bowuguan cang Chu jian Zhou Yi guankui” 上海博物館藏楚簡周易管窺, *Zhou Yi yanjiu* 周易研究 2000.3: 21–31, and also Liao Mingchun 廖名春, “Chu jian Zhou Yi Yu gua zai shi” 楚簡周易豫卦再釋, *Chutu wenxian yanjiu* 出土文獻研究 6 (2004): 24–33.

45 It is worth noting that the occurrence of *yu* 余 in the Nine in the Fourth line statement would seem to require a different explanation. The word preceding it is written *you* 猷 in the Shanghai Museum manuscript and *you* 由 in the received text. The manuscript’s reading of this particular word is supported by the *Jingdian shiwen* 經典釋文 of Lu Deming 陸德明 (556–627), which quotes Ma Rong 馬融 (79–166) as giving *you* 猶, and understanding it as part of the word *youyu* 猶豫 “to hesitate”; at *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, 210. *You* 猷 and *you* 猶 are simply two different writings of the same word. Although *youyu* 猶豫 is the standard form for the word “to hesitate,” this sort of binom cannot be analyzed based on the individual characters, the characters used to write it often varying freely. Thus, the manuscript’s *youyu* 猷余 should probably be understood as “to hesitate,” just as if it were written as *youyu* 猶豫, in which case *yu* 余 does not have any sense of “excess.”

“This speaks of drumming music and not being warned of concern” (*ci yan gu yue er bu jie huan ye* 此言鼓樂而不戒患也), which seems to speak in favor of the reading *ge* “to sing” (even though the *Er san zi wen* line itself writes the word as *xu* 盱).<sup>46</sup> It is easy to see that the graphic similarity between the protographs 可 and 于 could easily lead to this sort of difference of interpretation.

By some principles of traditional textual criticism, whenever there is a difference between an early manuscript, such as that of the Shanghai Museum, and a received text such as the *Zhou Changes*, the manuscript reading would be given priority as the oldest extant witness. However, in the case of the *Zhou Changes*, many readers—and probably most readers in China—would prefer the reading of the received text, which, after all, has had the status of a classic for over two-thousand years. In the final section of this chapter, I will examine one other hexagram text of the Shanghai Museum manuscript to argue for a new way of reading the text, one that is always open to textual differences. This is not to say that any given reading—whether of a variant writing or difference of interpretation—is necessarily equal, but rather to say that one reading or another may be preferred in different historical contexts, and that a history of the *Zhou Changes* needs to allow for these differences.

## 5 Fuyang *Zhou Changes*

In July 1977, archaeologists excavated a pair of Han-dynasty tomb-mounds at a site called Shuanggudui 雙古堆 in the city of Fuyang 阜陽, Anhui.<sup>47</sup> The larger of the two mounds turned out to be the tomb of the lord of the state of Ruyin 汝陰, who is known from historical records to have died in 165 BCE. The tomb was furnished with a veritable library of ancient texts. Written on bamboo strips, these included an early word-list called the *Cang Jie pian* 倉頡篇, a copy of the *Classic of Poetry*, a medical text called *Wan wu* 萬物 *Ten-thousand Things*, two different sorts of historical annals, a “Day Book,” as well as a text of the *Zhou Changes*.<sup>48</sup> Unfortunately, the bamboo strips on which these texts were

46 Liao Mingchun, “Chu jian *Zhou Yi Yu gua zai shi*.”

47 The following section is digested from Shaughnessy, *Unearthing the Changes*, Chapter 6.

48 For the initial report of this discovery, see Anhui sheng Wenwu gongzuodui, Fuyang diqu bowuguan, and Fuyang xian Wenhuaaju, “Fuyang Shuanggudui Xi Han Ruyin Hou mu fajue jianbao” 阜陽雙古堆西漢汝陰侯墓發掘簡報, *Wenwu* 文物 1978.8: 12–31; for the texts in the tomb, see Anhui sheng Wenwu ju Wenxian shi and Fuyang diqu bowuguan zhenglizu, “Fuyang Han jian jianjie” 阜陽漢簡簡介, *Wenwu* 1983.2, 21–23. For a valuable overview of the materials in the tomb related to divination, see Hu Pingsheng

written were very badly preserved. Thus, even though a brief report of the discovery was published in 1983, with a surprisingly accurate description of most of the texts, it was not until the year 2000 that a complete transcription of the Fuyang *Zhou Changes*, as this text is now usually called, was finally published.<sup>49</sup> The text of the *Zhou Changes* has one very important feature: every hexagram and line statement is followed by one or more divination statements.

Han Ziqiang 韓自強, the editor of the Fuyang *Zhou Changes*, identified 752 fragments as belonging to the text, with a total of 3,119 characters. Of these, 1,110 characters belong to the basic text (i.e., corresponding to the received text of the *Zhou Changes*), including three different hexagram pictures (*gua hua* 卦畫), with passages from 170 or more hexagram or line statements in 52 different hexagrams.<sup>50</sup> The remaining 2,009 characters belong to divination statements appended to each hexagram and line statement of the basic text.<sup>51</sup> These divination statements, which concern such personal topics as someone who is ill (*bingzhe* 病者), one's residence (*ju jia* 居家), marriage (*qu fu* 取婦 or *jia nü* 家女), someone who is pregnant (*yunzhe* 孕者) and births (*chan zi* 產子); administrative topics such as taking an office (*lin guan* 臨官 or *ju guan* 居官), criminals (*zui ren* 罪人), jailings (*xi qiu* 繫囚), someone who has fled (*wangzhe* 亡者), and military actions (*gong zhan* 攻戰 or *zhandou* 戰斃); general topics such as undertaking some business (*ju shi* 舉事) or trying to get something (*you qiu* 有求); or traveling (*xing* 行) and hunting and fishing (*tian yu* 田漁); and also, of course, the weather: whether it will be fine (*xing* 星, i.e., *qing* 晴), will rain (*yu* 雨), or if the rain will stop (*qi* 齊), as well as other more occasional topics, are perhaps the most interesting feature of the manuscript.

胡平生, "Fuyang Shuanggudui Han jian shushu shu jianlun" 阜陽雙古堆漢簡數術書簡論, *Chutu wenxian yanjiu* 出土文獻研究 4 (1998): 12–30.

49 Zhongguo Wenwu yanjiusuo Guwenxian yanjiushi and Anhui sheng Fuyang shi bowuguan, "Fuyang Han jian *Zhou Yi* shiwen" 阜陽漢簡《周易》釋文, *Daojia wenhua yanjiu* 道家文化研究 18 (2000): 15–62. This was subsequently re-issued as a separate monograph: Han Ziqiang, *Fuyang Han jian Zhou Yi yanjiu*.

50 A few fragments which would be appropriate at two or more points in the *Zhou Yi* text (such as those containing only the formulaic divination terms *ji* 吉 "auspicious" or *xiong* 凶 (i.e., 凶) "ominous" that end many line statements) have been placed at their first possible occurrence. Other fragments that contain only numerical tags for lines (e.g., *Chu liu* 初六 "First Six" or *Jiu er* 九二 "Nine in the Second") or only divination statements have been arbitrarily listed at the end of the transcription.

51 Han Ziqiang, "Fuyang Han jian *Zhou Yi* yanjiu," 63, gives the number of characters of the divination statements as 2,009, while at p. 74, he gives the number as 2,169; these numbers are repeated in Han Ziqiang, *Fuyang Han jian Zhou Yi yanjiu*, 87, 95. Simple arithmetic suggests that the former number should be correct, but it is apparent that there may be different counts of fragments and characters.

The Fuyang *Zhou Changes* manuscript is too fragmentary to illustrate the entirety of even a single hexagram text. Indeed, there is not even a single complete strip.<sup>52</sup> Based on my own analysis of the fragments, the original strips were about 36 cm in length, or roughly one foot (*chi* 尺) six inches (*cun* 寸) in Han-dynasty measure,<sup>53</sup> and were bound with three binding straps. Each of the sixty-four discrete hexagram texts begins on a new strip, with the text of the hexagram copied on consecutive strips until completed, with the remainder of the last strip then left blank. The hexagram text begins with the hexagram picture, with yang lines drawn as — and yin lines drawn more or less as / \, coming at the very top of a strip, just above the top binding strap. Under the top binding strap comes the hexagram name. Then follows the hexagram statement, and then the first of the divination statements, usually introduced by the word *bu* 卜 “to divine.” The divination statement or statements is concluded with the punctuation mark “•”, and then followed by the first line statement. Each of the six line statements follows the same format. As noted above, after the divination statement(s) after the Top line statement, any remaining space on the last strip is left blank.

The general structure can be shown by eleven fragments that pertain to the hexagram statement and five of the six line statements of *Tongren* 同人 ䷌ “Together with People” (#13) hexagram. To give some sense of the process involved in reconstructing the text, I first present as individual lines all eleven strips in Chinese (the numbers being the entry numbers in the Fuyang report) and then follow that with an English translation that is separated into the hexagram and various line statements of the *Zhou Changes* (in the translation supplying missing text from the received text as needed in parentheses), and highlighting the divination statements in bold>.

- 53. 同人于壘亨
- 54. 君子之貞
- 55. •六二同人于宗吝卜子產不孝吏
- 56. 三伏戎于
- 57. 興卜有罪者兇

52 Han Ziqiang reports simply that the longest fragment (he does not indicate which fragment, but it is presumably #126) is 15.5 cm long, .5 cm wide, and bears 23 characters; Han Ziqiang, “Fuyang Han jian *Zhou Yi* shiwen,” 16 (= Han Ziqiang, *Fuyang Han jian Zhou Yi yanjiu*, 46). In fact, there is another strip, #58, that is 19 cm long.

53 Hu Pingsheng 胡平生, one of the two editors of the Fuyang texts, has suggested that the strips were “possibly about 26 cm long”; Hu Pingsheng, “Fuyang Shuanggudui Han jian shushu jian lun,” 22. However, he seems to have been overly influenced by his previous study of the Fuyang *Shi jing* fragments.

58. 戰斷遄强不得志卜病者不死乃瘥・九四乘高唐弗克  
 59. 有爲不成・九五同  
 60. 人先號  
 61. 後笑大師  
 62. 相偶卜馱囚  
 63. 九同人于鄙无咎卜居官法免
53. (☵) Together with people in the wilds. Receipt. (Beneficial to ford a great river. Beneficial) to affirm about  
 54. a lord's son.  
 (• First Nine: Together with people at the gate. Without trouble.)  
 55. ... • Six in the Second: Together with people at the temple. Stinted. **Divining about a child: you will give birth, but it will not be filial; about serving ...**  
 56. (• Nine in the) Third: Crouching warriors in (the weeds: Ascending its high mound, For three years not)  
 57. ... arising. **Divining about a guilty one: ominous ...**  
 58. ... **battling: the enemy will be strong but will not obtain its will; divining about someone who is sick: if they do not die then they will get better.** • Nine in the Fourth: Astride a high wall, Not able (to attack it. Auspicious.) ...  
 59. ... **something will be done but not finished.** • Nine in the Fifth: Together with  
 60. people. First wailing,  
 61. later laughing. Great armies .. (succeed in)  
 62. meeting each other. **Divining about tying a prisoner: ...**  
 63. ... (• Top) Nine: Together with people in Hao. Without regret. **Divining about residing in office: you will be dismissed. ...**

Strips 53 and 54 contain part of the hexagram statement of *Tongren* 同人 ☵  
 “Together with People” hexagram. The First Nine line statement is missing in its entirety, so that even if one or more of the divination statements pertaining to it may survive among the fragments, there is no way to identify them. The Six in the Second line statement, on strip 55, provides a fine example of the format of the manuscript.

- 六二同人于宗吝卜子產不孝吏 ...
- Six in the Second: Together with people at a temple. Stinted. **Divining about a child: you will give birth, but it will not be filial; about serving ...**

This line statement is divided from the preceding divination statement by the “•” punctuation mark, and then is introduced by the typical line statement tag, in this case *Liu er* 六二 “Six in the Second.” The line statement proper contains only a permutation of the formulaic image *Tongren yu* 同人于 “Together with people at,” in this case being at “the ancestral temple” (*zong* 宗), and then the prognostication *lin* 吝 “stinted.”<sup>54</sup> Then, introduced by the word *bu* 卜 “to divine” come two separate divination statements, one about “children” (*zi* 子) and one about “serving” (*li* 吏); only the first of these statements is complete, with the prognostication that the child would be born but would turn out to be “unfilial” (*bu xiao* 不孝). The other five line statements all survive, to a greater or lesser extent. The Nine in the Third line statement, on strips 56, 57 and 58, was supplied with at least three divination statements.<sup>55</sup> These will be analyzed in Chapter Nine below for what they reveal about how the prognostications in the *Zhou Changes* may have been added to the text. In short, the Fuyang divination statements seem often to be related to the oracle or image of the line statement. This is the most important contribution of the Fuyang manuscript to understanding not only how the *Zhou Changes* may have been used early in the Han dynasty, but also how the text may have been created.

## 6 Mawangdui *Yijing*

One other Han-dynasty manuscript of the *Zhou Changes* had been discovered five years before the Fuyang manuscript; this came from the famous Han-dynasty Tomb 3 at Mawangdui 馬王堆 in Changsha 長沙, Hunan, excavated late in 1973 and early 1974.<sup>56</sup> The manuscripts found in that tomb, some written

54 *Lin* 吝, here translated as “stinted,” is one of the formulaic prognostications used in the *Zhou Changes*, for which see the discussion in Chapter Nine below. In the *Zhou Changes*, it is usually understood as a prognostication of less baleful significance than *xiong* 凶 “ominous” or *li* 厲 “dangerous,” and is often translated as something like “distress.” I recognize the attraction of this sort of functional translation, but try to reflect the basic meaning of *lin* 吝, which means something like “stingy” or “to stint.”

55 Strip 57, which contains the first of these divination statements (*bu you zuizhe xiong* 卜有罪者凶 “divining about a guilty one: ominous”), is introduced by the word *bu* 卜 “to divine,” with only the graph *xing* 興 “to arise” coming before it. In the received text of the *Zhou Changes*, the only occurrence of the word *xing* 興 comes in this Nine in the Third line of *Tongren* “Together with People.” Thus, it is likely that this fragment does belong here. It is also possible (though not likely) that *xing* here marks the end of another divination statement.

56 The following discussion of the Mawangdui *Zhou Changes* manuscript is digested from

on bamboo strips but many others on rolls of silk, included a nearly complete text of the *Zhou Changes* together with a number of early commentaries, most of them previously unknown. Some of the other manuscripts found in the tomb, including especially two copies of the *Laozi* 老子, were published very quickly, generating tremendous interest in the discovery.<sup>57</sup> Unfortunately, formal publication of the *Zhou Changes* manuscript was never issued by its original editors. Nevertheless, a preliminary report on the contents of the hexagram and line statements of the classic was released in 1984, photographs of this portion of the manuscript as well as the portion bearing the most important of the commentaries, the *Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳 *Commentary on the Appended Statements*, were published in 1992, and complete transcriptions of the rest of the manuscript were published in 1993 and 1995.<sup>58</sup> Each of these publications stimulated flurries of excitement concerning the *Changes*, first because the classic portion of the text was arranged in a very different order from that of the received text and then because the new commentary material provides new perspectives on the development of the *Changes* tradition.

The sequence of the sixty-four hexagrams in the received text of the *Zhou Changes* shows no discernible logic other than that pairs of hexagrams sharing a single invertible hexagram picture or, in the eight cases where inversion produces the same hexagram picture, by the conversion of all lines to their opposite, are always grouped together.<sup>59</sup> By contrast, the Mawangdui manuscript is arranged according to systematic combinations of the hexagrams' constituent trigrams. Each of the eight trigrams forms a set of eight hexagrams all sharing the same top trigram, according to the following order (here using the names of the trigrams as given in the received text of the *Zhou Changes*<sup>60</sup>):

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Edward L. Shaughnessy "A First Reading of the Mawangdui *Yijing* Manuscript," *Early China* 19 (1994): 47–73, and Shaughnessy, *I Ching: The Classic of Changes*.

57 Guojia Wenwuju Gu wenxian yanjiu shi, ed., *Mawangdui Han mu bo shu* (yi) 馬王堆漢墓帛書(壹), vol. 1 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1980).

58 Mawangdui Han mu boshu zhengli xiaozu, "Mawangdui boshu 'Liushisi gua' shiwen," 1–8; Fu Juyou 傅舉有 and Chen Songchang 陳松長, *Mawangdui Han mu wenwu* 馬王堆漢墓帛書 (Changsha: Hunan chubanshe, 1992), 416–435; Chen Songchang, "Boshu *Xi ci* shiwen"; Chen Songchang and Liao Mingchun, "Boshu *Ersanzi wen Yi zhi yi*, Yao shiwen"; Chen Songchang, "Mawangdui boshu *Mu He Zhao Li* shiwen." For photographs of the entire manuscript, together with a posthumous facsimile edition of the draft transcription done by the editor of the manuscript, see Zhang Zhenglang *Mawangdui boshu Zhou Yi jing zhuan jiaodu*. For translations of the Mawangdui manuscripts, see Hertzner, *Das Mawangdui-Yijing*; Shaughnessy, *I Ching: The Classic of Changes*.

59 A detailed discussion of this organizing feature will be given in Chapter Seven below.

60 In the Mawangdui manuscript, the eight trigrams all have different names from those found in the received text, though most of them are phonetically related. They are, in the



☰	☱	☵	☳	☷	☶	☲	☴
<i>Qian</i>	<i>Gen</i>	<i>Kan</i>	<i>Zhen</i>	<i>Kun</i>	<i>Dui</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Xun</i>
乾	艮	坎	震	坤	兌	離	巽

They combine in turn with trigrams of the bottom trigram in the following order (except that each of the top trigrams first combines with its same trigram):

☰	☷	☱	☳	☵	☶	☲	☴
<i>Qian</i>	<i>Kun</i>	<i>Gen</i>	<i>Dui</i>	<i>Kan</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Zhen</i>	<i>Xun</i>
乾	坤	艮	兌	坎	離	震	巽

This gives a hexagram sequence completely different from that of the received text (for which, see Chapter Eleven, Table 11.2). When this sequence was first published, there was a vigorous debate as to whether the hexagram sequence of the manuscript or that of the received text represented the original or, at least, earlier sequence.<sup>61</sup> There is still no definitive evidence with which to resolve this debate, though there does seem to be a growing consensus that the Mawangdui manuscript represents primarily a sequence used by diviners of the Han dynasty.<sup>62</sup>

Ten years after the first publication of the hexagram and line statements portion of the manuscript, bare transcriptions of the remaining portions of the manuscript—five or six commentaries, depending on how one counts—were finally published. Only one of these commentaries, that of the *Xici zhuan Commentary on the Appended Statements*, was previously known, and even its contents were somewhat different from those of the received text. This publication again brought the *Changes* to the forefront of scholarly interest, and touched off yet another vigorous debate, this one over whether this partic-

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order given in the manuscript: ☳ *Jian* 鍵, ☱ *Gen* 根, ☵ *Gan* 贛, ☳ *Chen* 辰, ☷ *Chuan* 川, ☱ *Duo* 奪, ☵ *Luo* 羅, and ☳ *Suan* 筭.

- 61 For an analysis of the sequence of the Mawangdui manuscript, with citations of studies published in the 1980s, see Xing Wen 邢文, *Bo shu Zhou Yi yanjiu* 帛書周易研究 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1997), 65–93. See, too, Richard J. Smith, *Fathoming the Cosmos and Ordering the World: The Yijing (I Ching or Classic of Changes) and Its Evolution in China* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008), 62–77.
- 62 For two discussions of this topic, both arguing in favor of the antiquity of the received sequence, see Liao Mingchun 廖名春, *Boshu Zhou Yi lunji* 帛書周易論集 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 2008), 13–14; and Li Shangxin 李尚信, *Gua xu yu jie gua lilu* 卦序與解卦理路 (Chengdu: Ba Shu shushe, 2008), 103–123.

ular commentary reflects more Confucian or Daoist thought.<sup>63</sup> The *Xici*, like the other canonical commentaries found in the received text, was traditionally supposed to have been written by Confucius. Even though the Mawangdui manuscript, like the received version of the *Xici*, includes numerous sayings explicitly attributed to Confucius, several passages of the received text were not found in the manuscript, but rather in one or another of the manuscript's other commentaries. Some scholars argued that these were precisely the passages with the strongest Confucian message, and that they must have been introduced into the received text of the *Xici* some time after the imperial recognition of Confucianism in 136 BCE, thirty years after the date of the Mawangdui burial. This too is a debate for which no definitive evidence has surfaced; indeed, it is hard to imagine what sort of evidence might resolve it.

One other passage found in the received text of the *Xici*, referred to as the "Da yan" 大衍 "Great Exposition" passage, that has traditionally been regarded as the most important evidence for the method of milfoil divination employed by the *Zhou Changes*, is entirely missing from the Mawangdui manuscript. This led Zhang Zhenglang, the original editor of the manuscript, to argue that the "Da yan" passage marks a later addition to the text.<sup>64</sup> This passage will be the topic of a detailed discussion in Chapter Five below.

## 7 Toward a New Way of Reading the *Zhou Changes*

The text of the hexagram and line statements seen in the early manuscripts is largely similar to that of the received text. This has stimulated a widespread view, at least in China, that the text of the *Zhou Changes* was more or less fixed by no later than 300 BCE, and perhaps was fixed already much earlier. As argued above, various types of linguistic evidence point to a general date of composition for the hexagram and line statements in the ninth and eighth centuries BCE, some four to five hundred years before even the earliest of the manuscripts. Thus, the manuscripts do not provide much, if any, evidence concerning this question. However, in concluding this first chapter, I would like to suggest that the manuscripts do provide important evidence concerning another question: how we should read the text. This evidence involves textual variants, including especially variants that seem to involve only superficial orthographic differences.

63 For a brief summary of this debate, see Shaughnessy, "A First Reading of the Mawangdui *Yijing* Manuscript," 58–66. One of the implications of the debate will be taken up in Chapter Twelve below.

64 Zhang Zhenglang, "Shishi Zhou chu qingtongqi mingwen Zhong de Yi gua," 403–415.

The first strip in the Shanghai Museum manuscript carries the text that corresponds to the top four line statements of *Meng* 蒙 (Hexagram #4) “Shrouded” (#4) hexagram.<sup>65</sup> Comparing the reading of the manuscript with that of the received text, we will see that the manuscript contains a character for every one of the thirty-six characters in the received text.

六晶勿用取女見金夫不又躬亡卣利六四困艮吝六五童蒙吉上九擊蒙不利為寇利御寇  
六三勿用取女見金夫不有躬无攸利六四困蒙吝六五童蒙吉上九擊蒙不利為寇利禦寇

Of these thirty-six characters, twenty are either identical or essentially so. There are also thirteen variants: 晶: 三, 又: 有, 躬: 躬, 亡: 无, 卣: 攸, 利: 利 (three times), 艮: 蒙 (three times), 童: 童, 擊: 擊, 寇: 寇 (two times), and 御: 禦. Of these, 晶: *san* 三 “three,” 又: *you* 有 “to have,” 躬: *gong* 躬 “body,” 卣: *you* 攸 “nominalizing particle,” 利: *li* 利 “benefit,” 童: *tong* 童 “youth,” and 寇: *kou* 寇 “bandit,” are simple graphic variants, essentially different ways of spelling the same words. *Wang* 亡 “not to have” and *wu* 无 “not to have” are synonymous (and traditionally regarded as homophonous as well), probably reflecting a change over time in the use of the common negative verb. The variants 擊 as opposed to *ji* 擊, and 御 as opposed to *yu* 禦 may well also be simple graphic variants, in both cases the character of the received text having an additional classifier, specifying the meaning of the characters (thus, *ji* “to hit”; and *yu* “to drive off; to resist,” respectively). However, in these cases, it would also be possible to imagine other meanings for the manuscript. For example, 御 can be understood perfectly well without any additional classifier, writing the word *yu* “to drive, to control,” while 擊 might also be expanded to *xi* 繫 “to tie” (i.e., adding a “silk” classifier, 糸). Variants such as these are similar to variants seen throughout the early textual history of the *Zhou Changes*; adopting one reading or another does not require major differences in how to read this hexagram. However, the final variant, that between 艮 and 蒙, is perhaps of a different nature. In conventional script, 艮 is the standard graph for the word *mang* “long-haired dog,” while 蒙 is used to write a series of words pronounced *meng*: “type of plant, dodder”; “lush, luxuriant”; “to cover”; “to wear on the head”; “to trick”; “occluded”; “ignorant”; “confused”; “youth.” In the *Zhou Changes* tradition, the character, which is also the name of this hexagram,<sup>66</sup> is variously explained as “youth,” or

65 The following discussion repeats with only minimal changes the discussion in Shaughnessy, *Unearthing the Changes*, 57–66.

66 The bamboo strip that would have carried the hexagram picture and hexagram name of

“ignorance,” with many commentators combining the two meanings (i.e., “the ignorance of youth” or “Youthful Folly”).<sup>67</sup> What could a “long-haired dog” have to do with “the ignorance of youth”?

The early seventh-century *Jingdian shiwen* 經典釋文 *Interpretations of Words in the Classics* of Lu Deming 陸德明 (556–627) indicates that in addition to its standard pronunciation akin to the modern *mang*, 𤝵 also had an alternative pronunciation *meng* 蒙.<sup>68</sup> This suggests that Lu Deming regarded both 𤝵 and 蒙 as representing the same word, which he regarded as *meng* “youth; ignorance.” There is no question that *mang* 𤝵 and *meng* 蒙 were sufficiently similar in pronunciation that 𤝵 could be used to write *meng* 蒙,<sup>69</sup> no different from writing “red” for “read” in “she red the book.” If so, despite this variation in the character, the manuscript should be understood as writing the same word as the received text. Nevertheless, despite the long-standing tradition that in this hexagram of the *Zhou Changes* that word should be *meng* “youth; ignorance; Youthful Folly,” it stands to reason that the opposite could also be true; that is, 蒙 might also be used to write *mang* 𤝵 “shaggy dog.” In fact, this is an argument that has been made recently by Ōno Yuji 大野裕司.<sup>70</sup> He notes that in line statements of this hexagram such as *kun mang/meng* 困𤝵/蒙 and *ji*

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this hexagram is missing from the Shanghai Museum manuscript, but it is clear that it would have been written 𤝵 as in these line statements.

67 For instance, the *Xu gua zuan* 序卦傳 *Commentary on the Sequence of the Hexagrams*, basing itself on the traditional sequence of the hexagrams, moving from *Zhun* 屯 ䷂ “Sprouting” (#3), which is explained as “a plant first sprouting,” explains the name of the hexagram: *wu sheng bi meng* 物生必蒙 “when things are born they are necessarily *meng*.” On the other hand, the commentary of Wang Bi 王弼 (226–249), which serves as the basis of the orthodox exegetical tradition, explains the hexagram’s hexagram statement as “a youth wishing to resolve that which confuses him” (*yu jue suo huo ye* 欲决所惑也); *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, 36. This is reflected in the English translation of Richard Wilhelm’s German translation of the hexagram name: “Youthful Folly”; see Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, 20. It is also worth noting that already in the Mawangdui manuscript *Mu He* 繆和, Confucius is quoted as saying: *fu meng zhe, ran shao wei you zhi ye* 夫蒙者，然少未又知也 “As for *meng*, thus the young do not yet have knowledge”; see Chen Songchang, “Mawangdui bo shu *Mu He Zhao Li shiwen*,” 370. In my own translation of the name of the hexagram, “Shrouded,” I have opted to emphasize the basic meaning of the word, “covered,” though hoping also to suggest something of the meaning of “benighted; unenlightened.”

68 Ma Chengyuan, ed., *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu (san)*, Vol. 3, 137.

69 According to the phonetic reconstructions of Axel Schuessler, *mang* 𤝵 had an Old Chinese pronunciation of mr̥ɔŋ and a Middle Chinese pronunciation of mǎŋ, whereas *meng* 蒙 had Old Chinese and Middle Chinese pronunciations of m̥ɔŋ and muŋ respectively; see Schuessler, *Minimal Old Chinese and Later Han Chinese*, 169.

70 Ōno Yuji 大野裕司, “*Shu Eki Mō ka shinkai: Jōkai hakubutsukan zō Sengoku So chiku sho Shu Eki Mō ka ni miru ken no minzoku*” 《周易》蒙卦新解：上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書《周易》𤝵卦に見る犬の民俗, *Chūgoku tetsugaku* 中国哲学 33 (2005): 21–44.

*mang/meng* 擊彪/蒙, “long-haired dog” makes better sense as an object of the verbs *kun* 困 “to latch, to bind” and *ji* 擊 “to hit” than does “the ignorance of youth.” Even in the Six in the Fifth line statement, *tong mang/meng* 僮彪/蒙, *tong* 僮 “young; youth” could describe a long-haired puppy just as well as a child, ignorant or otherwise. Examining the other line statements in the received text of this hexagram, which however have not survived in the manuscript, the case for reading *meng* 蒙 as “the ignorance of youth” becomes even more strained. The First Six and the Nine in the Second lines read:

發蒙利用刑人用說桎梏以往吝

Propeling (lit. “shooting”) a *meng*. Beneficial to use a punished person, herewith removing the shackles. In going: Stinted.

包蒙吉納婦吉子克家

Wrapping a *meng*. Auspicious. Taking a wife: Auspicious. A son can marry.

Later commentators have naturally read the *fa* 發, literally “to shoot, to propel,” of the first line in its extended sense of “to develop,” and thus interpret the image as an injunction in favor of education (“develop the ignorant youth”).<sup>71</sup> While this makes good sense within a Confucian context, does it make sense within the context of the rest of the line statement, with its injunctions regarding punishment? Another textual variant in the early textual history of the *Zhou Changes* with respect to the second of these line statements might well bring us back to reading *mang* or *meng* as a hairy dog: instead of *bao meng* 包蒙 “to wrap the *meng*,” the *Jingdian shiwen* quotes the text of Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200) as reading *biao meng* 彪蒙, the original meaning of *biao* 彪 being “stripes (of a tiger).”<sup>72</sup> Although this line is missing from the Shanghai Museum manuscript, if it too were to read *biao mang* 彪彪, might we then read it as “a striped long-haired dog”?

I do not wish to insist on any necessary difference in meaning between the Shanghai Museum manuscript’s *mang* 彪 and the received text’s *meng* 蒙, but by the same token I think it would be wrong to gloss over the variation and

71 This sense is hinted at in the commentary of Wang Bi, made more explicit in the sub-commentary of Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574–648), and fully elaborated in the later commentary of Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033–1107); for the first two, see *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, 1.19b, for the latter, see Cheng Yi 程頤, *Zhou Yi Cheng shi zhuan* 周易程氏傳 (Wuqiubei zhai Yijing ji cheng ed.), 42 (1.11b). See too Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, 22; Wilhelm begins his comment on the line by saying “Law is the beginning of education.”

72 Lu Deming 陸德明, *Zhou Yi yin yi* 周易音義 (Wuqiubei zhai Yijing ji cheng ed.), 907 (1.4a).

treat it as if it is a meaningless difference of “spelling.”<sup>73</sup> Might a single word, or at least a single word root or even a single sound, be used in different senses? When we consider another hexagram the name of which is also written with a different character in the manuscript from that in the received text, I think we will see that the difference literally ripples through the text of the hexagram. This is the case of *Jing* 井 ䷯ “Well-Trap” (#48) hexagram, the name of which is written 菜 in the manuscript and 井 in the received text. In this case, the manuscript preserves the complete text of the hexagram. Again placing the manuscript text over top of the received text, we will again see considerable similarity between the two texts, within which there is again a certain amount of variation, some of which may be insignificant but some of which may be very significant indeed. The manuscript text is found on three complete bamboo strips, numbers 44, 45 and 46. For ease of comparison, I place the corresponding text of the received text of the *Zhou Yi's Jing* 井 hexagram immediately under that of each strip, but will refrain from translating either text so as not to anticipate the discussion to follow.

44. ䷯ 菜 改邑不改菜亡允亡旻連菜气至亦毋夔菜羸刀餅凶初六  
 菜普不飢舊菜亡允九二菜浴弼豨佳徹  
 ䷯ 井 改邑不改井无喪无得往來井井汔至亦未繙井羸其瓶凶初  
 六井泥不食舊井无禽九二井谷射鮒瓮敝
45. 縷九晶菜柶不飢為我心蹇可以汲王明並受刀福六四菜繙亡咎九  
 五菜掣寒泉飢上六菜柶勿寔又孚元  
 漏九三井渫不食為我心惻可用汲王明并受其福六四井甃无咎九  
 五井冽寒泉  
 食上六井收勿幕有孚元
46. 吉  
 吉

Again, it is easy to see that the text of the manuscript is extremely similar to that of the received text.<sup>74</sup> The received text contains eighty-five characters in

73 There would be no difference so long as one does not automatically assume that one spelling is “correct” and the other “incorrect”; notions of correct writing may well be anachronistic for the period of the Shanghai Museum manuscript, written several hundred years before the first known Chinese dictionary.

74 Indeed, in a published transcription of the manuscript text, Li Ling 李零, professor of Chinese at Peking University and the first scholar to have worked with the Shanghai Museum

all (including the hexagram name) as does the text of the manuscript (counting the case of 菜<sub>二</sub> with a repetition mark as two characters, but not counting the two red and black symbols), each and every phrase corresponding exactly. To take just the hexagram statement as an example, as in the case of *Mang* or *Meng* hexagram above, the difference between 亡 of the manuscript and the *wu* 无 of the received text is textually insignificant (even if interesting for grammatical history), while those between the manuscript's 尢, 旻, 遶 and 漚 and the received text's *sang* 喪, *de* 得, *wang* 往 and *lai* 來 are certainly just a matter of orthography, as are doubtless also those between 羸 and *lei* 羸 and 餅 and *ping* 瓶.<sup>75</sup> The difference between the manuscript's 气 and the received text's *qi* 汽 is essentially the addition of a classifier. The *wu* 毋 of the manuscript and the corresponding *wei* 未 of the received text are both negatives, even if they do have different nuances.<sup>76</sup>

As in the case of *Meng* 蒙 ䷃ “Shrouded” (#4) hexagram above, the name of this *Jing* 井 ䷯ “Well-Trap” (#48) hexagram is also written with a different character in the manuscript from that of the received text, and also as in the case of *Meng* “Shrouded,” this difference may well point to a different way of reading the entire hexagram text. For the received text's *jing* 井 “well,” the manuscript writes 菜, which differs only by placing a “water” classifier under the pictograph of the “well.” Since a “well” is “a place where the earth is excavated to produce water,” the additional “water” classifier would seem to be entirely con-

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manuscripts, has dismissed almost all of the differences between the manuscript and the received text, in almost every case simply transcribing the manuscript with the corresponding character of the received text.

井改邑不改井，无亡无得，往来井井，汽至，亦毋夔井，羸餅，凶。

Even with respect to one of the two characters that he transcribes directly, 夔, which he renders slightly differently 夔, still he “suspects” that it should be read as *yu* 繻, the graph used in the received text. Since *yu* 繻 means “a rope used to draw water from a well” or, as an extended sense, “to draw from,” it is clear that this latter “suspicion” is based on the premise that this hexagram text is entirely concerned with a “well” (i.e., *jing* 井), the name of the hexagram in the received text. Professor Li also transcribes the corresponding character in the manuscript, 菜, directly as *jing* 井, the character used in the received text. Li Ling 李零, “Du Shang bo Chu jian Zhou Yi” 讀上博楚簡《周易》, *Zhongguo lishi wenwu* 中國歷史文物 2006.4: 54–67.

- 75 Although the 羸 of the manuscript seems not to be otherwise attested, it differs from the *lei* 羸 of the received text only in the substitution of a “horn” signific (*jiao* 角) for a “sheep” signific (*yang* 羊), which of course also features prominent horns; this would seem to be a natural transformation. As for 餅 and *ping* 瓶, according to the *Shuo wen*, 餅 is in fact the standard form of *ping* “jar,” with the 瓶 of the received text given as a variant form, reasonably so since both 缶 and 瓦 are classifiers for earthenware implements.
- 76 *Wu* 毋 (archaic \*mə) is the prescriptive negative “don’t,” while *wei* 未 (archaic \*məs), though phonetically similar, is quite different in meaning, typically meaning “not yet.”

sistent with this sense. This would also be consistent with the explanation of the hexagram's meaning in the canonical *Tuan zhuan* 彖傳 *Commentary on the Judgments*, based on the constituent trigrams of the hexagram picture ䷛, *Xun* ䷛ “wind” or “motion” under *Kan* ䷜ “water”: “when there is motion on water causing the water to rise, this is a well” (*xun hu shui er shui shang, jing* 巽乎水而上水，井). There would also seem to be good evidence in support of this sense in the hexagram and line statements of the received text. For instance, in the line statement of the First Six line, for the *jing ni bu shi, jiu jing wu qin* 井泥不食，舊井无禽 of the received text, it would be very easy to interpret *jing ni* 井泥 as meaning that the well water is muddy and, of course, should not be drunk. Despite this, the *jing* 井 of this line statement's second phrase, *jiu jing wu qin* 舊井无禽, cannot be quite so unproblematically interpreted as “a place where the earth is excavated to produce water.” In their *Jing yi shu wen* 經義述聞 *Narrating What I Have Heard of the Meanings of the Classics*, Wang Niansun 王念孫 (1744–1832) and Wang Yinzhì 王引之 (1766–1834) gave the following discussion of this phrase:

Whenever the *Yi* line statements have “*tian you qin*” 田有禽 “in the hunt there is a catch,” “*tian wu qin*” 田无禽 “in the hunt there is no catch,” or “*shi qian qin*” 失前禽 “losing the forward catch,” it is always in reference to wild animals. The *qin* 禽 in this phrase should not be any different. Hence, *jing* 井 should be read as *jing* 阱 “trap,” which has 井 as its phonetic. The *Shuo wen Discussing Pictographs* says: “A trap [*jing* 阱] is a large hole in the ground. The character is based on ‘hill’ and ‘well’ (*jing* 井), with *jing* 井 also serving as phonetic.” Therefore, *jing* 阱 “trap” is often written as *jing* 井 “well,” and this is different from the *jing* 井 “well” of “the well is muddy and not drinkable.” “The well is muddy and not drinkable” has one meaning, and “the old trap does not have a catch” has another meaning. *Jing* 阱 “trap” and *jing* 井 “well” are similar, and that is why they are both written with *jing* 井.<sup>77</sup>

The Wangs' explanation is very astute, but their quotation of the *Shuo wen* 說文 *Discussing Pictographs* is incomplete. After the entry for *jing* 阱, which indeed reads as they say it does, the *Shuo wen* includes another character, 茷, for which it states “the archaic form of *jing* 阱 ‘trap’ is based on ‘water’” (*gu wen jing cong shui* 古文阱从水).<sup>78</sup> Since the name of this hexagram is written as 茷 in the

77 Wang Niansun 王念孫 and Wang Yinzhì 王引之, *Jing yi shu wen* 經義述聞 (Sibu beiyao ed.), 1.29b–30a.

78 Xu Shen 許慎, *Shuo wen jie zi Duan zhu* 說文解字段注 (Sibu beiyao ed.), 5B.2a.



Shanghai Museum manuscript, we might ask whether this character should always be transcribed as 井 or as 阱, or perhaps sometimes as 井 and sometimes as 阱. Based on the interpretation of the Wangs, it seems to make good sense that at least the 井 or 茌 of the phrase *jiu jing wu qin* 舊井无禽, or, in the Shanghai Museum manuscript, *jiu jing wang qin* 舊茌亡禽, should be read as a “trap” (i.e., *jing* 阱) to catch wild animals.

Other than this phrase *jiu jing wang qin* 舊茌亡禽, the following line statement should perhaps be read in the same way. In the received text of the *Zhou Yi*, the Nine in the Second line statement reads *jing gu she fu* 井谷射鮒, which seems consistent in meaning with the reading of *jing* 井 as “a place where the earth is excavated to produce water,” even if it is hard to construe.<sup>79</sup> The word *fu* 鮒 is the key to the line. If we look in a dictionary such as the *Hanyu da cidian* 漢語大詞典 *Great Dictionary of The Chinese Language*, *fu* 鮒 has two different senses: one is a “carp,” a relatively large fish, while the other is a “frog.”<sup>80</sup> While the *Zi Xia zhuan* 子夏傳 commentary, ostensibly the oldest commentary on the *Zhou Yi*, credited to Confucius’s disciple Zi Xia 子夏 (b. 507 BCE), is quoted as explicitly defining *fu* as “frog” (*hama* 蝦蟆),<sup>81</sup> later commentaries have tended to agree that the word should refer to a “small fish.”<sup>82</sup> At least one early poet sensed the difficulty inherent in this interpretation; in his *Wu du fu* 吳都賦 or “Wu Capital Rhapsody,” Zuo Si 左思 (c. 250–c. 305) wrote:

雖復臨河而釣鯉，無異射鮒於井谷

Although you return to the side of the River and angle for a bream, it is no different than shooting ‘sardines’.<sup>83</sup>

79 Although no commentaries that I have seen have questioned the meaning of *jing* 井, every other character in the clause has elicited various explanations. For instance, Lu Deming, *Zhou Yi yin yi*, 941 (21a) reports that Zheng Xuan and Wang Su 王肅 (195–256) both explicitly read 射 not as *she* “to shoot,” but as *yi* “to press upon; to pour into,” and this seems to be the sense given to it by both Wang Bi and Kong Yingda (see *Zhou Yi zhengyi* 5.9b). As we will see below, the character *fu* 鮒 has also been interpreted variously, either as “frog” or “small fish” (i.e., sardine).

80 *Hanyu da cidian* 漢語大詞典 (Shanghai: Hanyu da cidian chubanshe, 1994), Vol. 12, 1215.

81 Lu Deming, *Zhou Yi yin yi*, 941 (21a); *Zhou Yi zhengyi* 5.9b.

82 The earliest commentator on the *Zhou Yi* to have stated this explicitly seems to be Yu Fan 虞翻 (164–233), cited at Li Dingzuo 李鼎祚, *Zhou Yi jijie* 周易集解 (Wuqiubei zhai Yijing jicheng ed.), 490 (10.4b). For more evidence, see Gao Heng 高亨, *Zhou Yi gu jing jin zhu* 周易古經今注 (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1947), 165.

83 Xiao Tong 蕭統, *Wen Xuan* 文選 (Shanghai: Shanghai Gugu chubanshe, 1986), 1:228; see, too, David R. Knechtges, *Wen Xuan or Selections of Refined Literature*, vol. 1, *Rhapsodies on Metropolises and Capitals* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 417 (Knechtges translates *fu* as “goldfish”).

This obviously alludes to this line statement and just as obviously portrays it as something nonsensical. Different from the received text, in the Shanghai Museum manuscript this line reads 菜浴弼豨. It is unclear what the character 豨, seen here for the first time, might mean; Pu Maozuo, the editor of the Shanghai Museum manuscript, states simply that it “awaits further study.”<sup>84</sup> Li Ling disagrees with Pu’s careful attitude, stating “in fact, the phonetic 丰 belongs to the *dong* 東 rhyme class with a *bing* 并 initial, while *fu* 付 belongs to the *hou* 侯 rhyme class also with a *bing* 并 initial, so they can be loan characters.”<sup>85</sup> While I have no reason to question the possibility that the phonetics 丰, archaic \*phoŋ, and 付, \*poh, might be sufficiently homophonous to serve as loans for each other, this does not explain at all the 豨 component of the character, generally indicative of “pigs” or porcine animals, which should be its classifier. Unless we were to say that this classifier is entirely without significance, it would seem to imply that the copyist of the Shanghai Museum manuscript imagined that what was in the 菜 was a type of animal, not a type of fish. This would be entirely in line with understanding 菜 as a trap to catch wild animals, but not as a water well.

I have no idea what the original reading of the *Zhou Changes* may have been here; perhaps it was 井谷射丰 or 井谷射付 (which is to say that none of the characters was supplied with a classifier). We should not assume that just because the Shanghai Museum manuscript is the most ancient manuscript of the *Zhou Yi* currently available that it therefore represents the original reading, or even that it is necessarily closer to the original reading than any other text. However, neither should we assume, as Li Ling seems to do, that the received text, edited as it was during the Han dynasty, represents some sort of “correct” interpretation. As far as meaning is concerned, “to shoot a wild pig in a trap” does not seem to me any less sensible than “to shoot sardines (or carp or frogs) at the bottom of a well.” I can well imagine that the copyist of the Shanghai Museum manuscript (or some other copyist at some point before him), thinking that in the phrase 舊菜亡禽 (or in 舊井无禽) in the First Six line statement the character 菜 (or 井) should be read as “trap” (i.e., 阱), might have understood the phrase 井谷射丰 in the following Nine in the Second line to refer to a wild pig at the bottom of that trap. To put this differently, the reading 井谷射付 in the received text of the *Zhou Changes* also represents the same sort of interpretive process, being simply the interpretation of one scribe or another. Since he understood the 井 or 菜 to be a water well (i.e., 井), he very reasonably assumed that the thing in it should be some sort of fish, and therefore added

84 Ma Chengyuan, ed., *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu (san)*, Vol. 3, 197.

85 Li Ling, “Du Shang bo Chu jian *Zhou Yi*,” 63.

a “fish” classifier (魚) to the phonetic 丰 or 付. His reading perhaps was based on some teaching tradition, but even so I suspect that this was still nothing more than a guess. Textual variants and different commentarial explanations in the early history of the *Zhou Changes* clearly show that there were different, sometimes apparently even wildly different, teaching traditions. In trying to understand the Shanghai Museum manuscript of the *Zhou Changes*, I do not think we should regard the received reading as having primary importance.<sup>86</sup>

Another case is the Six in the Fourth line statement, which reads in the manuscript 葑罇亡咎, and in the received text as *jing zhou wu jiu* 井甃无咎 “The well is bricked. Without trouble.” Pu Maozuo says of this:

罇 has *shu* 鼠 “rat” as signific and *fu* 膚 as phonetic and should be read as *fu* 扶 “to support.” In the *Shuo wen* 說文 *Discussing Pictographs*, *fu* is defined as “to be to the left” (*zuo ye* 左也), while the *Fang yan* 方言 *Regional Sayings* gives “to help; to protect” (*hu ye* 護也), and the *Shi ming* 釋名 *Explaining Words* “to assist; assistingly nearing it, to bring aid to it” (*fu, fu ye, fu jin zhi ye, jiang jiu hu zhi ye* 扶，傳也，傳近之也，將救護之也). 葑罇 means the well is repaired and preserved. Thus, the *Xiang* 象傳 *Commentary of the Images* says, “The well is bricked. Without trouble’ means to repair the well” (“*jing zhou wu jiu*” *xiu jing ye* ‘井甃无咎修井也’).<sup>87</sup>

Li Ling has a completely different transcription and explanation.

As for 罇, in the manuscript characters with *fu* 膚 in them are often *yu* 魚 rhyme class words with *lai* 來 (or *bang* 幫) initials. Since Pu transcribes it as *zhou* 甃 and in his note explains it as *fu* 扶, there is no way of knowing just how it should be understood. I suspect that the character corresponds to *xie* 洩 “to leak,” which is in the *yue* 月 rhyme class with a *xin* 心 initial.<sup>88</sup>

This is based on another idea of Professor Li’s, that the 葑罇 of the manuscript’s Nine in the Third line statement should correspond with the *jing zhou* 井甃 in the received text’s Six in the Fourth line statement, and that the 葑罇 (or 葑甃 in his own transcription) of the manuscript’s Six in the Fourth line statement should instead correspond with the *jing xie* 井洩 “the well leaks” of the received

86 By the same token, neither should we disregard the received reading, trying at all costs to read the manuscript differently.

87 Ma Chengyuan, ed., *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu (san)*, Vol. 3, 197.

88 Li Ling, “Du Shang bo Chu jian Zhou Yi,” 63.

text's Nine in the Third line statement; that is, he believes that the images of the Nine in the Third and Six in the Fourth line statements have been "exactly reversed." It is not at all impossible that line statements of the *Zhou Yi* might be reversed in this way, but one would like to see more direct evidence than is presented here.

I do not know whether this character should be transcribed with a *shu* 鼠 "rat" classifier or with a *zhi* 豸 "wild animal" classifier,<sup>89</sup> nor do I know how 茭罟 or 茭豸 should be understood. However, in either case the classifier would be consistent with reading 茭 as a trap to catch animals, and it is entirely possible that the Shanghai Museum manuscript's scribe had a completely different understanding of the line. I also do not know what character the received text's source text might have had here, but it is clear that the reading given in the received text, *zhou* 甃 "brick; bricked well," was profoundly influenced by the premise that 井 or 茭 refers to a water well. In this case, we can perhaps call on archaeology to understand the context in which this reading developed. Thousands of wells from all periods of China's ancient history have been excavated over the last several decades, and they display certain clear technological advances over the course of that history. Most important for our purposes here, until the Spring and Autumn period, wells invariably had only dirt walls. It was not until the end of the Spring and Autumn period and beginning of the Warring States period (i.e., the fifth century BCE) that wells began to be lined with brick or earthenware tiles.<sup>90</sup> Therefore, if the *Zhou Changes* was first composed in the Western Zhou period (1045–771 BCE) or shortly thereafter, as the evidence presented above suggests, then the received reading "the well is bricked" would necessarily be anachronistic, based on the cultural awareness of teachers and scribes many centuries later.<sup>91</sup> Of course, if the line statement refers to a "rat"

89 Haeree Park, "The Shanghai Museum *Zhouyi* Manuscript and the Warring States Writing System" (Ph.D. diss.: University of Washington, 2009), 238, suggests that words written in Chu script with the "rat" signific (*shu* 鼠), are typically written in Qin script (and thus in the received script) with the "wild animal" (*zhi* 豸) signific. Elsewhere in the Shanghai Museum *Zhou Yi* manuscript, the 鼠 signific occurs in the graph 𤝵 (strip #37, the Nine in the Second line statement of *Jie* 解 [R40]), which corresponds with the character *hu* 狐 "fox" in the received text, suggesting that 鼠 and *quan* 犬 "dog" are also to some extent interchangeable as significs.

90 Li Falin 李發林, *Zhanguo Qin Han kaogu* 戰國秦漢考古 (Jinan: Shandong daxue chubanshe, 1991), 9. I am grateful to Zhang Lidong 張立東 for this reference.

91 Some might suggest that this demonstrates that the *Zhou Yi* was not composed in the first place until the Warring States period, but this seems to me to confuse the senses of "writing" in terms of "composition" and "copying." Indeed, the reading of the Shanghai Museum *Zhou Yi* manuscript in this case demonstrates that a sense of the line very different from that of the received text was available already in the fourth century BCE.

(or some other animal) in a “trap,” as the reading of the Shanghai Museum manuscript suggests, then this archaeological evidence, interesting as it is for the development of the text and its exegesis, tells us nothing about the original text of the line.

Other words and images throughout the other line statements are also susceptible to different interpretations, both vis-à-vis the Shanghai Museum manuscript and also in the received text, but there is no need to belabor the point.<sup>92</sup> On the basis of the forgoing discussion, it is possible to give the following preliminary conclusion: in the line statements of this hexagram, some of the words *jing* (whether written as 井 or as 罝) should be interpreted as a “trap” (i.e., *jing* 罝) to catch wild animals, while others should be interpreted as a water well (i.e., *jing* 井). The characters associated with *jing* in the hexagram and line statements are also all influenced by these readings; when *jing* is read as a “water well” they often include a “water” (i.e., 水) or “fish” (i.e., 魚) classifier, whereas when *jing* is read as a “trap” they often include some sort of wild animal classifier. What sort of exegetical principle can we derive from this discussion of the word *jing* in the *Zhou Changes*? I believe the fundamental philosophical thought of the *Zhou Changes* lies in change. The linguistic usage of the text would seem to be no exception. The diviners who created the hexagram and line statements seem to have very much appreciated the different senses of individual words, in the different line statements of a single hexagram often emphasizing different aspects of a single word. In his 1985 doctoral dissertation, Richard Kunst highlighted this polysemous quality of the text.

[I]n the case of the *Yi*, it may often be the case that a given word in a single context or in several adjacent contexts was meant from the beginning to be ambiguous. Or rather, put differently, it was the polysemy inherent in a word which gave it a numinous quality and led to its incorporation in the text in contexts capable of more than one reading.<sup>93</sup>

In the Western Zhou or Spring and Autumn periods, when the *Zhou Changes* was being composed, the words of these word families were often written with a single character. I suspect the ancient diviners were already well aware that words are variable, changeable, and that in creating the *Yi*, the *Changes*, they sought to exploit this feature of their language. However, later in the process of

92 For a detailed discussion of the various readings proposed for the Six in the Fourth line statement, see Shaughnessy, *Unearthing the Changes*, 64–65.

93 Kunst, “The Original *Yijing*,” 58.

the transmission of the *Changes*, different schools of interpretation, which is to say the scribes of different times and places, were only able to choose a single one of these meanings to understand any given character; moreover, based on the writing conventions of their times, they were only able to use a single “correct” character to write it.

I certainly do not wish to argue about the *Zhou Changes* that Herrlee Creel was right to say “It makes one wonder if it was written at a time when the Chous had not yet learned to write very clear Chinese,” nor do I wish to argue that all readings—or all translations—are therefore equally valid, taking very much to heart the admonition by Li Xueqin 李學勤 quoted in this book’s Preface that “One very common result is that one constructs upon the foundation of one’s own imagination a seven-storeyed pagoda.” The original text of the *Zhou Changes* was neither nonsense nor entirely “open.” Instead, it was very much a product of its own cultural and intellectual context. The better we understand that context, the better we will be able to understand how the creators of the text meant it to be understood and how the earliest users understood it.

To return to the archaeological analogy with which I began my doctoral dissertation so many decades ago and which I quoted in the Preface to this book, I suggested that a four-stage methodology can be used to reconstruct what the text may have looked like when it was first created and first used:

successive layers of Chinese history will have to be penetrated, the outline of the foundation will have to be determined, markpoints will have to be found in that foundation demonstrating how the edifice was constructed, and finally, a degree of imagination will be required to complete the picture.

The next five chapters will be my attempt to penetrate those successive layers of Chinese history and to determine the outline of the *Zhou Changes*, while the five chapters following those will attempt to find markpoints in the text to show how it was constructed. All of these stages will require imagination. While imagination is not generally the most reliable scholarly methodology, its use in reconstructing ancient Chinese history is part of the Chinese language itself. In one of the oldest archaeological analogies in China, Han Feizi 韓非子 (d. 233 BCE) commented on the use of the word *xiang* 象 “elephant” to write the word *xiang* 象 “imagination,” saying:

人希見生象也，而得死象之骨，案其圖以想其生也，故諸人之所以意想者皆謂之象也。

People have rarely seen a living elephant, but when they get the bones of a dead elephant they use their design to think of what it was in life, and this is why when people use ideas to think they always call it imagination.<sup>94</sup>

In the text of the *Zhou Changes*, we have much more than just the bones of a dead elephant to think of what the text was in its earliest life. And the better we understand its earliest life, the better we will be able to understand how the text eventually developed into the first of the Chinese classics.

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94 Han Fei 韓非, *Han Feizi* 韓非子 (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1927), 6.9a.

## The Philosophy of Divination in Ancient China

Divination is one of the most characteristic features of the religious life of ancient China. Its practice took many forms. Some of these, such as interpretations of dreams or the notation of baleful omens in the skies, will doubtless be familiar to people everywhere. Other forms are more or less unique to China: for example, the well-known oracle bones of the Shang dynasty or the hemerological texts that have been found in recent decades in numerous tombs of the Warring States, Qin and Han dynasties.<sup>1</sup> Of course, the *Yijing* 易經 *Classic of Changes* or the *Zhou Yi* 周易 *Zhou Changes*, as I prefer to call it in this book, is the best known of all Chinese forms of divination. Chinese tradition has always held that the *Zhou Changes* originated in the practice of divination; indeed, it was by virtue of its status as a manual of divination that the *Zhou Changes* was spared from the order by Qin Shi huangdi 秦始皇帝 (r. 221–210 BCE), the First Emperor, that works of ancient literature be burned. Throughout Chinese history, many of the most noted students of the *Zhou Changes* have stressed that divination is the starting point for understanding the text. Thus, the first of the comments attributed to the great Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200) about the text

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1 For still the finest Western-language introduction to Shang oracle-bone divination, see David N. Keightley, *Sources of Shang History: The Oracle-Bone Inscriptions of Bronze Age China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978). For an important extension of Keightley's work to later periods of Chinese history, see Stephan N. Kory, "Cracking to Divine: Pyro-Plastromancy as an Archetypal and Common Mantic and Religious Practice in Han and Medieval China" (Ph.D. diss.: Indiana University, 2012). For the manuals of hemerology, see Harper and Kalinowski, *Books of Fate and Popular Culture in Early China*. Among other general Western-language studies of divination in ancient China, see in particular Karine Chemla, Donald J. Harper, and Marc Kalinowski, eds., *Divination et rationalité en Chine ancienne*, special issue *Extrême-Orient, Extrême-Occident* 21 (Paris: Presses universitaires de Vincennes, 1999); Marc Kalinowski, "Diviners and Astrologers under the Eastern Zhou: Transmitted Texts and Recent Archaeological Discoveries," in John Lagerwey, and Marc Kalinowski, eds., *Early Chinese Religion, Part One: Shang through Han (1250 BC–220 AD)*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2009, 341–396); Marc Kalinowski, "Divination and Astrology: Received Texts and Excavated Manuscripts" in Michael Nylan and Michael Loewe, ed., *China's Early Empires: A Re-Appraisal* (Cambridge University Press, 2010, 339–366). For specialized studies of other forms of divination, such as dreams and astrology, see, for example, Michael Lackner, *Der chinesische Traumwald: traditionelle Theorien des Traumes und seiner Deutung im Spiegel der Ming-zeitlichen Anthologie Meng-lin hsüan-chieh* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1985), and Edward H. Schafer, *Pacing the Void: T'ang Approaches to the Stars* (Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 1977).



reads: “The *Changes* was originally a divination book” (*Yi ben wei bushi zhi shu* 易本為卜筮之書).<sup>2</sup> More recently, Shang Binghe 尚秉和 (1870–1950) said: “The *Changes* was originally used for divination. If you are not adept at the method of milfoil divination, the meaning of ‘nines’ and ‘sixes,’ then you will not understand where it came from.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, it seems important that a study of the origin and early history of the text begin with a thorough exploration of the practice of divination in ancient China. In this chapter, I will explore the philosophical foundation of divination in ancient China. In the following three chapters, I will then turn my attention to the mechanics of divination, first of turtle-shell divination, then milfoil divination, and finally divination specifically using the *Zhou Changes*.

## 1 The Terms of Divination

Whether familiar or exotic, most forms of divination in China derive from a common philosophy or way of viewing the world, which I propose to consider before going on to examine in more detail the specific types of divination that are most relevant for understanding the *Zhou Changes* itself. Both in China and in the West, there is a general sense that divination and fortune-telling are more or less synonymous.<sup>4</sup> In China, there are many words that are usually translated as “to divine,” the most common being *zhenbu* 貞卜 (literally “to affirm the crack”), *zhenwen* 貞問 (literally “to affirm the question”), *zhanbu* 占卜 (lit-

2 Li Jingde, *Zhuzi yulei*, 1620.

3 Shang Binghe 尚秉和, *Zhou Yi gu shi kao tongjie* 周易古筮考通解 (Taiyuan: Shanxi Guji chubanshe, 1994), 2.

4 For Western-language studies of divination throughout Chinese history, see Van Xuyet Ngo, *Divination Magie et Politique dans la Chine Ancienne* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1976); Marc Kalinowski, *Cosmologie et divination dans la Chine ancienne: Le Compendium des cinq agents* (Wuxing dayi, *vie siècle*) (Paris: Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient, 1991); Marc Kalinowski, ed., *Divination et société dans la Chine médiévale: Étude des manuscrits de Dunhuang de la Bibliothèque nationale de France et de la British Library* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2003); Michael Lackner, ed., *Coping with the Future: Theories and Practices of Divination in East Asia* (Boston: Brill, 2018); and Richard J. Smith, “An Overview of Chinese Fortune Telling in Traditional Times,” in Sin-wai Chan, ed., *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Traditional Chinese Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2020, 299–322). For studies comparing divination practices throughout the world, see in particular Jean-Paul Vernant, ed., *Divination et Rationalité* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1974) and Michael Loewe and Carmen Blacker, eds., *Oracles and Divination* (Boulder: Shambhala, 1981). For a study comparing specifically ancient Chinese and Greek divination, see Lisa Raphals, *Divination and Prediction in Early China and Ancient Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

erally “to prognosticate the crack”), *bushi* 卜筮 (literally “to crack and sort”), *jiyi* 稽疑 (literally “to examine doubts”), and *suanming* 算命 (literally “to calculate fate”). All of these, except for perhaps the last two (which are also the least common terms during China’s ancient period), are functional terms, descriptive of specific practices, rather than generally applicable.<sup>5</sup> In English, the word “divination” derives from the Latin *divinare*, the usual sense of which is “to foresee.” However, since the root of the word is *divinus*, giving the English word “divine,” the verbal form might better be understood as “to be inspired by a god.”

In ancient China, the two most general words that can be functionally translated as “to divine” were *bu* 卜 and *zhen* 貞. The character used to write the word *bu*, 卜, is a pictograph of a crack made in a turtle shell or animal bone,<sup>6</sup> deriving from the ancient Chinese form of divination called pyromancy or turtle-shell divination. Although *bu* originally pertained exclusively to pyromantic divination, by China’s classical period of the Warring States period, and certainly by the Han dynasty, it had come to be used much more broadly in a general sense of “divination.”

The word *zhen* has a more complicated history. As we will see, much turns on the etymology of this word. Although the word now generally means “virtuous, chaste, pure; loyal,” China’s earliest extant dictionary, the *Shuo wen jie zi* 說文解字 *Discussing Pictographs and Explaining Compound Characters* of Xu Shen 許慎 (A.D. 58–148), gives the following definition:

貞，卜問也。从卜，貝以爲贄。一曰鼎省聲。京房所說。

*Zhen*: To ask through crack-making. From *bu* 卜 “crack” and *bei* 貝 “cowrie,” meaning “gift.” One says that it is *ding* 鼎 “caldron” with the phonetic abbreviated. This was said by Jing Fang.<sup>7</sup>

Leaving aside for the moment the definition “To ask through crack-making,” it is now clear that the form of the character, 貞, with *bu* 卜 “crack” and *bei* 貝 “cowrie” components, is a late simplification of an earlier form written with *bu* 卜 “crack” and *ding* 鼎 “caldron”: 鼎, and that *ding* 鼎 served as the phonetic component of the word, *ding* pronounced something like \*tênʔ and *zhen* some-

5 The word *bu* 卜, which originally referred specifically to divination by making cracks appear in bones of animals or the shells of turtles, came eventually to be used in the broader sense of divination by any means. The same is true, but to a lesser extent, of the word *shi* 筮, which originally referred specifically to divination by sortilege.

6 It is interesting to note that the pronunciation of the word, *bu* in modern Mandarin Chinese but something like \*pok in archaic Chinese, is almost certainly onomatopoeia for the sound made when the shell cracked.

7 Xu Shen, *Shuo wen jie zi Duan zhu*, 3B.39a.

thing like \*treŋ. It was only during the Warring States period (453–222 BCE) that the *ding* 鼎 component was replaced with the graphically similar but simpler to write *bei* 貝. This had the effect of masking the original meaning of the word. Indeed, not only was *ding* 鼎 the original phonetic element of the word *zhen* 鼎, but even this form of the graph marks an evolution in the writing of the graph. The *Shuo wen jie zi* definition of *ding* 鼎 “caldron” itself includes the following note:

籀文以鼎爲貞字。

The Zhou Script used *ding* 鼎 as the graph for *zhen* 貞.

In fact, in Shang oracle-bone inscriptions, which mark the earliest known stage of China’s written language, the same characters are used to write both *ding* 鼎 “caldron” and *zhen* 貞 “to divine”: 𠄎 and 𠄎, the first more pictographic and the second a more stylized, easier to engrave version. The character for *ding* “caldron” was simply “borrowed” to write the word *zhen*.<sup>8</sup> Both *ding* “caldron” and *zhen* whatever it originally meant (i.e., whether “to ask through crack-making,” as defined by the *Shuo wen jie zi*, or more generally as “to divine,” or even “pure” or “virginal,” as it came to mean in later usage) are part of a larger word family that also includes words such as *ding* 定 “settled” or “definite,” *ding* 訂 “to correct a text,” *zheng* 正 “upright,” *zheng* 政 “government,” and *zheng* 征 “punitive military campaign.”<sup>9</sup> I suspect that the root of this word family, all the members of which share the sense of being (or making) “upright,” “firmly placed,” “secure,” “correct,” is the word *ding* 丁 “nail,” which was originally written 〇 or ●, the pictographic form of a character now written 釘. Indeed, given its membership in this word family, good cases can be made for translating *zhen* 貞 as “to affirm” or “to determine.” In this book, even at the risk of archaicizing the use of this particular word, I have opted to translate *zhen* as “to affirm.”<sup>10</sup>

The *Shuo wen jie zi* definition of *zhen* 貞 as “to ask through crack-making” corresponds well with a definition offered by Xu Shen’s elder contemporary

8 It was only later that the word *zhen* \*treŋ (i.e., *zhen* 貞) “to affirm” was differentiated from that of *ding* \*têŋʔ (i.e., *ding* 鼎) “caldron” by the addition of the signific *bu* 卜 “crack-making.”

9 For a discussion of this word family, see K. Takashima, “Settling the Cauldron in the Right Place: A Study of *Ting* 𠄎 in the Bone Inscriptions,” in *The Chinese Language Society of Hong Kong*, ed., *Wang Li Memorial Volumes: English Volume* (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing, 1987, 405–421).

10 I recognize that “to determine” is also an attractive similar choice for translating the word, especially given that its noun form, “determination,” renders well the later *Yijing* tradition’s understanding of the use of word in the *Zhou Changes*.

Zheng Zhong 鄭眾 (also known as Zheng Sinong 鄭司農; d. A.D. 83) to two different occurrences of the word in the classic *Zhou li* 周禮 *Rites of Zhou*.

季冬陳玉，以貞來歲之嫩惡。

At the last month of winter, array jades in order to *zhen* the coming year's good and bad.<sup>11</sup>

凡國大貞，卜立君、卜大封，則眡高作龜。

In all cases of the state's great *zhen*, crack-making about installing a lord or crack-making about a great investiture, then examine the top and place the turtle.<sup>12</sup>

In the first case, Zheng Zhong commented simply: "*Zhen* means 'to ask'" (*zhen wen ye* 貞，問也), and in the second case added to the same gloss the elaboration "*Zhen* means 'to ask'. When the state has great doubts, it asks of the milfoil and turtle" (*Zhen, wen ye. Guo you da yi, wen yu shi gui* 貞，問也。國有大疑，問於蓍龜). However, somewhat later, another Zheng, Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (A.D. 127–200), perhaps the greatest Han-dynasty authority on China's ancient literature, offered a still further elaboration on this point.

貞之爲問，問於正者，必先正之，乃從問焉。

For *zhen* meaning "to ask," in asking about correctness, one must first correct it and only thereafter ask about it.<sup>13</sup>

Although the difference between the comments by the two Zhengs may seem to be subtle, it points to an important philosophical difference in the conception of divination. The following sections will explore this difference.

## 2 Divination as Resolution of Doubt

Chinese discussions of divination frequently begin with a comment found in the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 *Zuo Tradition* saying that the purpose of divination was to "resolve doubts" (*jue yi* 決疑).

11 *Zhou li zhushu* 周禮注疏, in Ruan Yuan 阮元, ed., *Shisan jing zhushu* 十三經注疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009), 1675.

12 *Zhou li zhushu*, 1735.

13 *Zhou li Zheng zhu* 周禮鄭注 (Sibu beiyao ed.), 24.7b.

楚屈瑕將盟貳、軫。鄖人軍於蒲騷，將與隨、絞、州、蓼伐楚師。莫敖患之。鬬廉曰：「鄖人軍其郊，必不誠。且日虞四邑之至也。君次於郊郢，以禦四邑，我以銳師齊加於鄖。鄖有虞心而恃其城，莫有鬬志。若敗鄖師，四邑必離。」莫敖曰：「盍請濟師於王？」對曰：「師克在和，不在眾。商周之不敵，君之所聞也。成軍以出，又何濟焉？」莫敖曰：「卜之？」對曰：「卜以決疑；不疑何卜？」遂敗鄖師於蒲騷，卒盟而還。

Qu Xia of Chu was about to swear a covenant with Er and Zhen. The forces of Yun were at Pusao and were about to join with Sui, Jiao, Zhou and Liao to attack the Chu army. The Marshall (i.e., Qu Xia) was worried about this. Dou Lian said: "The forces of Yun are stationed in their own outlying districts and are certainly not on guard. Moreover, each day they anticipate the arrival of the four settlements. My lord should make camp in the outlying districts of Ying in order to drive off the four settlements. I will take our crack troops and join in against Yun during the night. Yun is worried and relying on its city wall. No one has the will to fight. If we defeat the Yun army, the four settlements will certainly leave." The Marshall said, "Should we request reinforcements from the king?" He responded, "An army's victory resides in harmony and not in numbers. My lord has heard that Zhou was no for match Shang. When we have formed our army and marched out, what need will there be of reinforcements?" The Marshall said, "Let us divine it by turtle-shell." He responded, "Divination is for resolving doubts. If one does not doubt, why divine?" Thereupon they defeated the Yun army at Pusao, and finishing their covenant turned back.<sup>14</sup>

The statement "Divination is for resolving doubts. If one does not doubt, why divine?" (*bu yi jue yi; bu yi he bu* 卜以決疑；不疑何卜), appearing as it does in the semi-classic *Zuo zhuan*, is often regarded as definitional: "resolving doubts" is what divination is all about. However, this fails to take account of the full context of this story, which involves a disagreement between two leaders of the Chu 楚 army: Dou Lian 鬬廉, an aristocrat put in charge by the Chu central

14 *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義, in Ruan Yuan 阮元, ed., *Shisan jing zhushu* 十三經注疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009), 381 (11th year of Duke Huan 桓). For other translations, from both of which I have benefitted, see James Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, Vol. 5, *The Ch'un Ts'ew, with the Tso Chuen* (London: Trübner, 1872; rpt. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), 56–57, and Stephen Durrant, Wai-ye Li, and David Schaberg, *Zuo Tradition, Zuozhuan 左傳: Commentary on "The Spring and Autumn Annals"* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016), 113. However, throughout this book, translations from the *Zuo zhuan* will be my own.

court, and Qu Xia 屈瑕, who was the *mo'ao* 莫敖 (also known as *moxiao* 莫囂), a professional military rank here translated as “Marshall.” Dou Lian, confident of success, urged that the attack be launched forthwith, while Qu Xia, like most professional officers preparing for battle, was cautious. His suggestion that they perform a divination was clearly a strategy on his part intended to buy time in the hope that the Chu army might receive reinforcements. Dou Lian’s rejection of this suggestion had nothing to do with the purpose of divination, and everything to do with his own determination to launch the attack. It would seem that there was more to this divination than just “resolving doubts.”

Other passages in the *Zuo zhuan* suggest that divination concerned a choice between two alternatives, neither of which was preferable in its own right. Thus, in the 26th year of Duke Zhao of Lu 魯昭公 (r. 541–510 BCE; i.e., 516 BCE), we read:

昔先王之命曰：「王后無適，則擇立長；年鈞以德，德鈞以卜。」

In antiquity the former kings’ command said: “If the king’s consort has no heir, then choose and establish the eldest; if the ages are equal, use virtue; if the virtue is equal, use divination.”<sup>15</sup>

However, when we consider the context of this statement, we will find that it is to be taken with a grain of salt. It comes toward the end of a long apologetic by Wangzi Chao 王子朝 (d. 505 BCE) arguing for his right to rule. Although Chao was the eldest son—and favorite—of King Jing of Zhou 周景王 (r. 544–520 BCE), because he had been born of a secondary consort, he was not entitled to succeed his father. Nevertheless, he engaged in various plots against his half-brother and the heir-apparent, Meng 猛, who had been born of the primary consort. Attempts to supplant Meng proved fruitless, and upon the death of King Jing, Meng was installed as the Zhou king, known posthumously as King Dao of Zhou 周悼王 (r. 520 BCE). This still did not deter Wangzi Chao, who then mobilized various supporters to attack the king, first driving him from the capital. Sometime later, after the king had been returned to the capital under the protection of the powerful state of Jin 晉, Chao again attacked him, this time killing him. Jin then installed Wangzi Gai 王子匄, another son of King Jing’s primary consort, as King Jing of Zhou 周敬王 (r. 519–477 BCE). Chao attacked him as well, precipitating a civil war that lasted for three years before he was finally forced to flee into exile in the southern state of Chu 楚. Thus, his statement about the role of divination in choosing successors to the ruler was by

15 *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 4592.

no means a disinterested report concerning rules of the former kings, and has virtually no explanatory value regarding the purpose of divination.

In other discussions of divination, often regarded as authoritative, we also read that it was engaged in only when one was doubtful about something. The “Hong fan” 洪範 “Great Plan” chapter of the *Shang shu* 尚書 *Exalted Scriptures*, which purports to be a plan of government presented to the first Zhou ruler, consists of nine sections. Of these, divination, referred to as *ji yi* 稽疑 “examining doubts,” constitutes the seventh. It in turn lists seven topics of divination (“rain” [yu 雨], “clearing” [ji 霽], “overcast” [meng 蒙], “dispatches” [yi 驛], “victory” [ke 克], the “affirmation” [zhen 貞] and the “regret” [hui 悔]), the first five of which are said to concern turtle-shell divination and the latter two of which concern milfoil divination. For these, the ruler is advised to follow a majority prognostication: if three diviners prognosticate, and two of them agree, then one should follow their prognostication. In cases of great doubt, more elaborate advice is given.

汝則有大疑，謀及乃心，謀及卿士，謀及庶人，謀及卜筮。

If you have great doubts, consult with your heart, consult with the ministers and officers, consult with the common people, and consult with cracking and sorting.<sup>16</sup>

The chapter then lists five different scenarios in which some or other of these advisors agree or disagree with the result of divination. In almost all cases, divination seems to be corroborative rather than decisive in the policy decision, though there is one final situation in which no one agrees with the result of divination.

龜筮共違於人，用靜吉，用作凶。

If both the turtle and milfoil go against the people, in the case of remaining passive it is auspicious, in the case of doing something it is ominous.<sup>17</sup>

Although this passage is often cited in discussions of the theoretical foundations of divination in China, aside from the single mention of consulting the turtle-shell and milfoil in case of “great doubts” and of following a majority rule in interpreting the results, there is very little to learn from it about either the practice or the theory of divination.

16 *Shang shu zhengyi* 尚書正義, in Ruan Yuan 阮元, ed., *Shisan jing zhushu* 十三經注疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009), 405.

17 *Shang shu zhengyi*, 405.

Other statements concerning the theory of divination also mention that it was to be resorted to only in the case of great doubts. The chapter “Divination Cases” (*Bu lie* 卜列) of the Han-dynasty text *Qianfu lun* 潜夫論 *Essays of a Submerged Person* states:

聖人甚重卜筮，然不疑之事，亦不問也。

The sages treated cracking and sorting very seriously; thus, for affairs that were not doubtful, they would still not ask.<sup>18</sup>

This too seems clearly to say that divination is a matter of resolving doubt. However, the same passage continues, linking divination with sacrifices in ways that introduce a different rationale for divination.

甚敬祭祀：非禮之祈，亦不為也。故曰：“聖人不煩卜筮”，“敬鬼神而遠之”。夫鬼神與人殊氣異務；非有事故，何奈于我？故孔子善楚昭之不祀河，而惡季氏之旅泰山。今俗人筮於卜筮，而祭非其鬼，豈不惑哉！

Be extremely respectful of sacrifices: if it is not a request of ritual, it should not be made. Therefore, it is said: “The sages did not trouble about cracks and sorting,” and “Respect the ghosts and spirits but keep them at a distance.” The ghosts and spirits are of different breaths and responsibilities from humans; if there is not any business related, what do they have to do with us? Therefore, Confucius approved of Zhao of Chu not sacrificing to the River and disdained the Ji clan’s traveling to Mount Tai. The common people of today engage with cracks and milfoil and sacrifice to ghosts other than their own; how could it be that this is not deluded!<sup>19</sup>

Here, “the common people of today” (*jin su ren* 今俗人)—the latter Han dynasty—are criticized for using divination in the same way that they use sacrifice, more or less to bribe the “ghosts and spirits” (*guishen* 鬼神).<sup>20</sup> The same chapter provides a more historical account of divination.

18 Wang Fu 王符, *Qianfu lun* 潜夫論 (Sibu beiyao ed.), 6 (“Bu lie” 卜列), 2a.

19 Ibid.

20 This complaint against the practices of the day was by no means new in the Han dynasty. Already in the middle of the third century BCE, the *Lü shi chunqiu* 《吕氏春秋》 contains a similar complaint.

今世上卜筮禱祀，故疾病愈来。

The superiors of the current age divine and sacrifice, and therefore sickness grows ever worse.

See *Lü shi chunqiu* 吕氏春秋 (Siku quanshu ed.), 3 (《盡數》).6.



天地開闢有神民，民神異業精氣通。行有招召，命有遭隨。吉凶之期，天難諶斯。聖賢雖察不自專，故立卜筮以質神靈。孔子稱「著之德圓而神，卦之德方以智」。又曰：「君子將有行也，問焉而已言，其受命而嚮」。是以禹之得皋陶，文王之取呂尚，皆兆告其象，卜底其思，以成其吉。

Ever since heaven and earth opened there have been spirits and people. The people and spirits have different patrimonies, but their essence and breath inter-penetrate. Actions bring about responses, and commands have consequences. Regarding the timing of the auspicious and ominous, heaven is difficult to rely upon. Although the sages examined carefully, they did not decide for themselves, but therefore established divination (lit. cracking and sorting) in order to interrogate the spiritual numens. Confucius said, "The virtue of the milfoil is round and spiritual, and the virtue of the hexagrams is square so as to know." He also said, "When the gentleman is about to act, he asks of it with words, it receives the command and responds."<sup>21</sup> This is why in both the cases of Yu getting Gao Yao and King Wen getting Lü Shang, the images were announced in the shapes of the cracks, the crack-making bringing about their wishes in order to complete their auspiciousness.<sup>22</sup>

The final phrase of this passage might suggest why not only the people of the Han dynasty, but also people of earlier times, might have regarded divination and sacrifice as complementary means to interact with the ghosts and spirits. When it says that "the crack-making brings about their wishes in order to complete their auspiciousness" (*bu di qi si, yi cheng qi ji* 卜底 [but here doubtless to be read as *di* 抵 "to support, sustain"] 其思，以成其吉), this perhaps points to a different understanding of divination: "Wishes" here suggests that divination was not understood as an open-ended inquiry, but rather involved the expression of desires. Other passages concerning divination point to the same connection between divination and sacrifice.

21 This quotation is taken from the *Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳 *Commentary on the Appended Statements* of the *Yijing*. However, there are two notable differences in wording. First, whereas the text here reads *er yi yan* 而已言, which would mean literally "and already speaking," the received text of the *Xici zhuan* reads "with words" (*yi yan* 以言), which is obviously preferable in the context. On the other hand, where the text here reads "and responds" (*er xiang* 而嚮), the received text of the *Xici zhuan* reads "like an echo" ("like an echo" [*ru xiang* 如嚮]), either of which makes good sense. Nevertheless, in this case, I suspect that both texts should probably be read as *xiang* 嚮 "to receive," playing on the formulaic ending of divination prayers: *shang xiang* 尚嚮 "would that it be received."

22 Wang Fu, *Qianfu lun*, 6.1a–b.

The *Yantie lun* 鹽鐵論 *Essays on Salt and Iron* purports to record a debate that took place in 81BCE at the court of Emperor Zhao of Han 漢昭帝 (r. 87–74BCE). It includes the following comment about divination.

古者，德行求福，故祭祀而寬。仁義求吉，故卜筮而希。今世俗寬於行而求於鬼，怠於禮而篤於祭。嫚親而貴勢，至妄而信日，聽訑言而幸得，出實物而享虛福。

The ancients sought blessing through virtuous actions, and therefore sacrificed but only sparingly. They sought auspiciousness through humaneness and propriety, and therefore divined (lit. cracked and sorted) but only rarely. The common people of the present age are sparing in their conduct but seek from the ghosts, and are lazy in the rites but generous in sacrificing. They neglect their parents and esteem power, to the point that they foolishly believe the chronomancers, and hearing empty talk and if by chance they get something they put out real goods to receive empty blessings.<sup>23</sup>

The first part of this passage in the *Yantie lun* coincides very closely with a passage in the Mawangdui 馬王堆 manuscript of the *Yijing* entitled *Yao* 要 *Essentials*, attributed to none other than Confucius. The text describes Confucius as performing divinations of his own, but expresses the same reservation about it as the *Yantie lun*.

君子德行焉求福，故祭祀而寡也。仁義焉求吉，故卜筮而希也。

The gentleman seeks blessings through virtuous actions, and therefore sacrifices but only seldom; seeks auspiciousness through humaneness and propriety, and therefore divines but only rarely.<sup>24</sup>

As we will see in the next section, there is considerably more explicit evidence in support of this understanding of divination as a part of the moral training of a ruler or gentleman.

### 3 Divination as Expression of Intention

Perhaps the most important insight into the actual philosophy of divination found in any of the Chinese classics other than the *Yijing* itself comes in the

<sup>23</sup> *Yantie lun* 鹽鐵論 (Siku quanshu ed.), 7 (“San bu zu” 散不足), 20b.

<sup>24</sup> Chen Songchang and Liao Mingchun, “Boshu *Ersanzi wen*, *Yi zhi yi*, *Yao shiwen*,” 435.

“Da Yu mo” 大禹謨 “Consultations of the Great Yu” chapter of the *Shang shu*. This chapter purports to recount the abdication of the early sage-emperor Shun 舜, and his intention to appoint Yu the Great 大禹, who had saved the world from the flood waters, to succeed him. Yu initially demurs, suggesting that other ministers, such as Gao Yao 皋陶, were better suited to succeed Shun. After this demurrer is rejected by Shun, Yu takes a step backwards, proposing that the emperor perform a divination to determine who should succeed him. The emperor again rejects this advice, asserting that his mind was already made up. Although this chapter is found only in the Ancient Script (*guwen* 古文) version of the *Shang shu*, and thus is generally suspected of being a late forgery, the passage in question is quoted in the *Zuo zhuan*, and thus has a legitimate ancient pedigree. The passage in question in the “Da Yu mo” text reads as follows:

禹曰：「枚卜功臣，惟吉之從」。帝曰：「禹！官占，惟先蔽志，昆命于元龜。朕志先定，詢謀僉同，鬼神其依，龜筮協從。卜不習吉。」  
 Yu said: “Let us divine the meritorious ministers, letting it be the auspicious that we accept.” The Emperor said: “Yu, when officials prognosticate, it is that they first determine their intention and only afterwards command the prime turtle. My intention having first been settled, I consulted about the plan and all agreed. The ghosts and spirits being reliable, the turtle-shell and milfoil confirm the approval. Crack-making is not to repeat what is auspicious.”<sup>25</sup>

The passage in the *Zuo zhuan* in which this text is quoted is somewhat longer, but adds yet another anecdote through which to understand attitudes toward divination and also underscores the importance of the “intention” (*zhi* 志) in this process. It is found in the eighteenth year of Duke Ai 哀公 (477 BCE), and concerns yet another divination conducted in the state of Chu.

巴人伐楚，圍鄆。初，右司馬子國之卜也，觀瞻曰：「如志。」故命之。及巴師至，將卜帥。王曰：「寧如志，何卜焉？」使帥師而行。請承，王曰：「寢尹、工尹，勤先君者也。」三月，楚公孫寧、吳由于、薳固敗巴師於鄆。故封子國於析。君子曰：「惠王知志。《夏書》曰：『官占唯能蔽志，昆命於元龜。』其是之謂乎！《志》曰『聖人不煩卜筮』，惠王其有焉。」

Men of Ba attacked Chu, surrounding You. At first, with respect to the crack-making about Zigu being Marshal of the Right, Guan Zhan said,

25 *Shang shu zhengyi*, 286–287.

“It is as intended.” Therefore, he was appointed. Coming to the time when the army of Ba arrived and they were about to divine about who should lead (the Chu army), the king said: “Ning is as intended, what is there to divine about?” He was sent to lead the army and set out. When he requested assistants, the king said, “The Intendant of the Bed-chamber and the Intendant of Works were diligent with respect to the prior lord.” In the third month, Gongsun Ning of Chu, Wu Youyu, and Wei Gu defeated the Ba army at You. Therefore, they invested Ziguo with Xi.

The gentleman said: “King Hui knew his intention. When the *Documents of Xia* says: ‘When officials prognosticate, it is that they are able to determine their intention and only afterwards command the prime turtle,’<sup>26</sup> is this not what it means! The *Record* says, ‘The sage does not trouble the turtle and milfoil,’ which describes King Hui.”<sup>27</sup>

Thirty years ago, in a discussion of the nature of divination in China, Jao Tsung-i 饒宗頤 (1917–2018) cited this passage from the “Da Yu mo” chapter of the *Shang shu*. The conclusions he drew from it are still worthy of attention:<sup>28</sup>

The diviner had first to reach a decision and only thereafter would he make a charge to the great turtle. In performing divination, the “will” was a very important prerequisite. One first had to have a definite idea and only then obtain compliance from the turtle and milfoil. From this it can be seen that in antiquity when the king divined he was not at all completely basing his decisions on the report of the turtle, but was charging the turtle after his own will was first determined. In other words, the human deliberation was primary. The importance of the “will” can be seen in this.<sup>29</sup>

In support of this statement, Jao quoted a divination record from Tomb 1 at Wangshan 望山 in Jiangling 江陵, Hubei that concluded “One will have happiness in the will and happiness in the affair” (*you xi yu zhi xi yu shi* 又喜於志

26 The two passages differ only in that the “Da Yu mo” says that “when officials prognosticate it is that they first (*xian* 先) determine their intention,” whereas the *Zuo zhuan* quotes it as “it is that they are able (*neng* 能) to determine their intention.”

27 *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhushu*, 4735.

28 The following section derives from my review of Lisa Raphals, *Divination and Prediction in Early China and Ancient Greece*, *Journal of Chinese Studies* 60 (2015), 327–330.

29 Jao Tsung-i, “Forum: Jao Tsung-i 饒宗頤,” *Early China* 14 (1989), 137. For a similar explanation, published shortly after this study, see Zhou Fengwu 周鳳五, “Baoshan Chu jian wenzi chukao” 包山楚簡文字初考, in *Wang Shumin xiansheng bashi shouqing lunweiji* 王叔岷先生八十壽慶論文集 (Taipei: Da’an chubanshe, 1993), 361–378.

烹於事), and connected the reference here to the “will” (*zhi* 志) to what I have translated above as the “intention.” At the time that Jao Tsung-i was writing, the number of divination records was still quite limited, but ten years before he was writing 2,440 bamboo strips containing divination records and tomb inventories had been excavated from Tomb 1 at Tianxingguan 天星觀, also in Jiangling, Hubei. Some of these divination records include mention of the same phrase *bi zhi* (here written as 誌志) “determine the intention” seen in the “Da Yu mo” chapter of the *Shang shu*.<sup>30</sup> The following is just one such example:

陳邗習之以新保家。占之：恆貞：吉，小有外憂，有崇。以其故說之，舉禱社特牛；樂之。誌志，凶攻解于不辜、強死者。

Chen Sheng repeated it with the New Protect the Family. Prognosticating it: The long-term affirmation is auspicious, but there is a little external concern, and there is a hex. For this reason dispel it, raising up and praying to the altar: a specially-raised ox; enjoy it. Having determined the intention, may this resolve and relieve those who are innocent and those who have been murdered.<sup>31</sup>

As we will see both immediately below and also in the following two chapters, the form of this record is quite standard for Warring States divinations. Although, being fragmentary, it does not mention the topic of the divination, it does provide both a preliminary prognostication and also a secondary prognostication. The preliminary prognostication was generally auspicious, but with some unresolved trouble. For this reason, a further sacrifice and prayer were proposed. The term “Determine the intention” comes immediately before the final prayer of the divination: that the sacrificial offering resolve the concern detected in the initial divination, and relieve the affliction that must have been the cause of the divination. It seems to constitute an affirmation that the divination was being conducted properly.

30 This phrase is indexed in Teng Rensheng 滕壬生, *Chu xi jianbo wenzi bian* 楚系簡帛文字編 (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 1995), 188; see also Yan Changgui 晏昌貴, “Tianxingguan ‘Bushu ji dao’ jian shiwen jijiao (xiuding gao)” 天星觀「卜筮祭禱」簡釋文輯校(修訂稿) ([http://www.bsm.org.cn/show\\_article.php?id=31](http://www.bsm.org.cn/show_article.php?id=31)). For a thorough study of this term, including a demonstration that 誌 is an allograph of 蔽, see Shen Pei 沈培, “Cong Zhanguojian kan guren zhanbu de ‘bi zhi’: Jianlun ‘yi sui’ shuo” 從戰國簡看古人占卜的「蔽志」—兼論「移崇」說, *Guwenzi yu gudaishi* 古文字與古代史 1 (2007), 401.

31 Wang Mingqin 王明欽, “Hubei Jiangling Tianxingguan Chu jian de chubu yanjiu” 湖北江陵天星觀楚簡的初步研究 (Master’s thesis: Beijing daxue, 1989), quoted from Shen Pei, “Cong Zhanguojian kan guren zhanbu de ‘bi zhi,’” 401, n. 32.

The best known of these Warring States divination records are those from Baoshan 包山, Hubei. Fortunately, these records were well preserved when unearthed, and were published with considerable dispatch. As typical in these divination records, the prognostication to the primary divination indicates that there are certain problems that need to be removed. In the following example, the problem is that “the intention and the affair will be obtained a little slowly” (*zhi shi shao chi de* 志事少遲得),<sup>32</sup> apparently referring to the original “intention” of the divination.

宋客盛公鸚聘於楚之歲，荊夷之月乙未之日，石被裳以訓鼈為左尹庾貞：自荊夷之月以就荊夷之月，盡卒歲，躬身尚毋有咎。占之：恆貞吉，少外有憂，志事少遲得。以其故斂之。罷禱於邵王特牛，饋之；罷禱文坪夜君、郢公子春、司馬子音、蔡公子家，各特豢、酒食；罷禱於夫人特豬。志事速得，皆速賽之。占之：吉。享月夏夷有憲。

In the year that the Song emissary Sheng Gong Bian visited Chu, on the *yíwei* day of the Jingyi month, Shi Beishang used the Instructing Turtle to affirm on behalf of Shao Yin Tuo: “From the Jingyi month until the next Jingyi month, throughout the entire year, would that his person have no trouble.” Prognosticating it: “The long-term affirmation is auspicious, but there is a little external concern, and the intention and the affair will be obtained a little slowly.” For this reason they exorcised it, praying to King Shao with a specially-raised ox, and offering it; praying to Wenping Yejun, Wu Gongzi Chun, Sima Ziyin, and Cai Gongzi Jia, each with a specially-raised piglet and wine and food; and praying to the wife with a specially-raised pig: “If the intention and the affair are quickly gotten, all will be quickly reciprocated.” Prognosticating it: “Auspicious. Offering in the Xiayi month there will be joy.”<sup>33</sup>

In Chapters Three and Four below, examining turtle-shell and milfoil divination respectively, we will find much more evidence that the “commands” of divinations (*ming* 命; i.e., the topics of divination addressed to the turtle-shell or to the milfoil) were routinely phrased as prayers, enlisting the aid of the spirits in the realization of their intentions.

32 Of course it is also possible that *zhi* 志 (intention) should be treated as an adjective here, i.e., “the intended affair,” but the formula in the Wangshan divination—“one will have happiness in the intention (i.e., Jao Tsung-i’s “will”) and happiness in the affair” (*you xi yu zhi xi yu shi* 又喜於志喜於事)—suggests that *zhi* and *shi* 事 (affair) here should be treated separately.

33 Hubei sheng Jing-Sha tielu kaogudui, *Baoshan Chu jian*, 32, strips 199–200.

#### 4 Divination as Communion with Spirits

There is a chapter of the *Lun heng* 論衡 *Balance of Essays* by Wang Chong 王充 (A.D. 27–100) that is entitled “Divination” (“Bu shi” 卜筮; literally “Cracking and Sorting”). Proposing that the spirits of heaven and earth might be able to hear the divination “commands” of human beings and then communicate to them their response, he first quotes some unnamed interlocutor (*huo* 或) as making the following statement.

人懷天地之氣。天地之氣，在形體之中，神明是矣。人將卜筮，告令著龜，則神以耳聞口言，若己思念，神明從胸腹之中聞知其旨。故鑽龜揲著，兆見數著。

People harbor the breath of heaven and earth. The breath of heaven and earth, when within their bodies, is spiritual brightness. When people are about to divine by cracking or sorting, they announce the command to the milfoil or turtle, and the spirits hear through their ears and speak through their mouths, just as if it were their own thoughts and wishes, the spiritual brightness hearing and knowing their intent from within their chest and stomach. Therefore, drilling plastrons and sorting stalks, the cracks show themselves and the numbers appear.<sup>34</sup>

Wang Chong, the famous rationalist that he was, tried to refute the suggestion here that there is some sort of mystical communion between the thoughts of people and the responses of the turtle-shell and milfoil. However, if I am not mistaken in my understanding of what he said, he ended up more or less agreeing with the interlocutor, concluding “If the spirit brightly makes the crack or number, it should not be any different from what is thought.”

夫人用神思慮，思慮不決，故問著龜。著龜兆數，與意相應，則是神可謂明告之矣。時或意以為可，兆數不吉；或兆數則吉，意以為凶。夫思慮者、己之神也，為兆數者、亦己之神也。一身之神，在胸中為思慮，在胸外為兆數，猶人入戶而坐，出門而行也。行坐不異意，出入不易情。如神明為兆數，不宜與思慮異。

When people use their spirit to think about or consider things, and their thoughts and considerations are inconclusive, they therefore ask the milfoil and turtle. If the milfoil and turtle’s cracks and numbers correspond

34 Wang Chong 王充, Huang Hui 黃暉, ed., *Lun heng jiaoshi* 論衡校釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), 999–1000.

with their idea, then this can be said to be the spirit brightly telling them. At times perhaps they consider their idea to be acceptable, but the crack or number is not auspicious, or the crack or number is auspicious but they consider it to be ominous. That which thinks is one's own spirit, and that which causes the crack or number is also one's own spirit. As for the spirit of a person, in the breast it is a thought or consideration, and outside of the breast it is a crack or number. It is just like a person entering a door and sitting down or going out of the gate and walking. Walking or sitting does not cause his ideas to differ, and going out or going in does change the situation. If the spirit brightly makes the crack or number, it should not be any different from what is thought.<sup>35</sup>

The same idea about divination seems to motivate an earlier Han-dynasty treatise on divination, the "Gui ce liezhuan" 龜策列傳 "Arrayed Biographies of Turtle-Shell and Milfoil Diviners" of the *Shi ji* 史記 *Records of the Historian*. It is much pithier.

兆應信誠於內，而時人明察於外，可不謂兩合者哉！

The cracks respond to trust and sincerity within, and the men of the time brightly inspect them on the outside; can this not be said to be the two coinciding!<sup>36</sup>

There is a sense here in which divination is more than an open-ended investigation of future events, or even of the resolution of doubts. Instead, it assumes that the individual undertaking the divination has not only already determined his own mind, but that that mind should be morally correct. It is only then that the spirits respond. And the spirits respond because they are within the individual; indeed, they are produced by the individual. More than that, they are the individual.

There is some classical precedent for this interpretation of divination within the *Yijing* tradition itself. It is found in the *Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳 *Tradition of Appended Statements*, and is of course portrayed as the words of Confucius. The passage is deserving of quotation in full, and it also deserves a closer reading than it will be possible to give it here. It provides a general characterization of four different ways in which a proper reader of the *Zhou Changes* can understand the text. The last one of these ways is divination, and it is the one way that

35 Wang Chong, *Lun heng jiaoshi*, 1000.

36 Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, 3225.



is provided with further elucidation. This phrase (marked in bold), was already quoted above in the *Qianfu lun* of the Eastern Han dynasty. It addresses the way in which divination is efficacious. Understanding it will require some grammatical analysis, which, however, may prove to be ambiguous. This is not surprising given the nature of the topic.

子曰：「知變化之道者，其知神之所為乎！」易有聖人之道四焉：以言者尚其辭，以動者尚其變，以制器者尚其象，以卜筮者尚其占。**是**以君子將有為也，將有行也，問焉而以言，其受命也如響。无有遠近幽深，遂知來物。非天下之至精，其孰能與於此！參伍以變，錯綜其數，通其變，遂成天下之文；極其數，遂定天下之象。非天下之至變，其孰能與於此！易，无思也，无為也，寂然不動，感而遂通天下之故。非天下之至神，其孰能與於此！夫易，聖人之所以極深而研幾也！唯深也，故能通天下之志；唯幾也，故能成天下之務；唯神也，故不疾而速，不行而至。子曰：「易有聖人之道四焉。」者，此之謂也。

The Master said: "Knowing the way of alternation and transformation, is this not knowing what the spirits do!" The *Changes* has four ways of the sages in it: in speaking, esteeming its statements; in moving, esteeming its alternations; in crafting implements, esteeming its images; and in divining, esteeming its prognostications. **This is why whenever the gentleman is about to act or is about to move, he asks of it with words and its receiving the command is like an echo.** No matter if it is distant or near, dark or deep, he thereupon knows what is to come. If it were not the most seminal thing under heaven, what would be able to partake in this! By alternating the threes and fives, making horizontal and vertical its numbers, and penetrating its alternations, it thereupon completes the patterns under heaven; and by taking its numbers to the limit, it thereupon settles the images under heaven. If it were not the most alternating thing under heaven, what would be able to partake in this! The *Changes* is without thought and without doing; silently unmoving, it feels and then penetrates the precedents of the world. If it were not the most spiritual thing under heaven, what would be able to partake in this! As for the *Changes*, it is what the sages use to plumb the depths and to discern the trigger. Being deep, therefore it is able to penetrate the will under heaven; being the trigger, therefore it is able to complete the work under heaven; being spiritual, therefore it is fast without being quick, and arrives without moving. When the Master said "The *Changes* has four ways of the sages in it," this is what he was talking about.

The word translated here as “alternation,” *bian* 變, is one of several words all of which refer to some aspect of “change,” which is basic to the tradition of the *Yijing* or *Classic of Changes*. *Bian* indicates in particular the alternation or oscillation between two opposed poles: soft or hard, even or odd, or—in Chinese terminology—*yin* or *yang*, and refers generally to the ebb and flow of events. In the words of this passage, being able to intuit how and when these changes will take place allows the diviner to “know what is to come.” This is commonly thought to be the purpose of divination.

The person who engages in divination “knows what is to come,” because he has already determined in his own mind what it is that he wants to happen. But he does not presume to undertake this on his own. Instead, he addresses his intention to the turtle-shell or (in the case of the *Zhou Changes*) to the milfoil. “This is why whenever the gentleman is about to act or is about to move, he asks of it with words and its receiving the command is like an echo” (*junzi jiang you wei ye, jiang you xing ye, wen yan er yi yan, qi shou ming ye ru xiang* 君子將有為也、將有行也、問焉而以言、其受命也如響). This sentence is perplexing in its ambiguity, turning on two different aspects of divination discussed above: “asking” (*wen* 問) and “commanding” (*ming* 命). Given the formulas of divination that we will examine in the next two chapters, the “asking” here is almost surely not an open-ended interrogation of what will happen. Instead, the diviner—the “gentleman”—has to put into words his own intention. This leads to the final phrase which is the most ambiguous part of this very ambiguous sentence. The phrase turns on the antecedent of the third-person pronoun *qi* 其 that begins it. The most obvious grammatical antecedent would be the “gentleman” (*junzi* 君子) mentioned at the beginning of the sentence. Indeed, this is the only antecedent in this sentence. In this case *qi* should be translated as “his,” and refer to this “gentleman” or diviner. However, it is also clear that it is the medium of divination (in this case, the milfoil) that “receives the command” (*shou ming* 受命), and so the pronoun *qi* 其 should refer to that medium of divination, and be translated as “its.” Or perhaps *qi* 其 refers to both the diviner and the medium of divination simultaneously, which is why the command and the reception of the command are “like an echo” (*ru xiang* 如響), a metaphor that would seem to be universal in its bi-directionality. The command goes out and the command comes back, and it is the same command. As Wang Chong said in the *Lun heng*, “It is just like a person entering a door and sitting down or going out of the gate and walking. Walking or sitting does not cause his ideas to differ, and going out or going in does not change the situation. If the spirit brightly makes the crack or number, it should not be any different from what is thought.”

The universality of the “echo” metaphor notwithstanding, I think there is more than an echo to be heard in this phrase. If I am not mistaken, the “receipt of the command” here is not only “like an echo,” but is also like the final formulaic phrase of many ancient Chinese divinations: *shang xiang* 尚饗 “would that it be received.” Both *xiang* 響 “echo” and *xiang* 饗 “to feast; to enjoy” derive from the word *xiang* 鄉, originally written with a pictograph of two kneeling figures facing each other over a pot of grain (i.e., 𡗗), and itself meaning both “to offer” and “to receive” or “to enjoy.” As I will have occasion to discuss in much more detail in Chapter Eight, *xiang* 鄉 (or 饗) is the same word as the word *heng* 亨 “receive” that occurs frequently (and almost uniquely) in the *Zhou Changes*. As a prayer, *shang xiang* 尚饗 “would that it be received” asked that the command of the divination be approved; when it was, the prognostication was *xiang* 饗 “it has been received” or *heng* 亨 “receipt.” I suspect that in the *Xici zhuan*, the *xiang* 響 “echo” is also the “receipt” of the prayer offered by the diviner. Divination in ancient China was much less an open-ended inquiry into future events than it was a statement on the part of the diviner of what they wished to happen, hoping that the spirits would receive their prayers and bestow blessings in return.

## Turtle-Shell Divination

At the very end of the nineteenth century, “dragon bones” (actually, pieces of turtle shell and ox bone) inscribed with archaic Chinese characters began to appear on the antique markets of northern China. The source of the bones was soon traced to near Anyang 安陽, Henan, known historically as the site of the last capital of the Shang dynasty. Over the course of the next century, some 200,000 more pieces were unearthed near the village of Xiaotun 小屯, just outside of Anyang, and archaeological excavations at this site, which have been on-going almost continuously since the late 1920s, have demonstrated conclusively that it was indeed the home of the last nine kings of the Shang dynasty, stretching from the late thirteenth century through the mid eleventh century BCE (until 1045 BCE, according to the chronology used in this book). The inscriptions on these “dragon bones,” or “oracle bones” (*jiagu* 甲骨; literally “shell and bone”), as they are now more commonly known, are the records of divinations performed—for the most part—for those kings. The study of those inscriptions has become one of the most developed sub-fields in the study of ancient Chinese cultural history, and by right ought to command a prominent place in a book on the origin and early development of the *Zhou Changes*, which began as a divination manual, even if of a different mode of divination (i.e., milfoil sortilege).<sup>1</sup>

However, I will refrain here from addressing these Shang oracle-bone inscriptions directly. I do so for two reasons. First, the field of Shang oracle-bone inscription studies has become so large and so complex that no simple summary could possibly do it justice.<sup>2</sup> Second, as has been noted in Chapter One above, the *Zhou Changes* was produced sometime after the beginning of the Zhou dynasty (and perhaps well after the beginning of the Zhou dynasty), and thus after the Shang dynasty. While the conception of divination seen in the

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1 Evidence of milfoil divination will be surveyed in Chapter Four below, while evidence of early uses of the *Zhou Changes* in divination will be addressed in Chapter Five.

2 Keightley, *Sources of Shang History*, provides a survey of the foundational studies in the field. Kory, “Cracking to Divine” provides an important extension of Keightley’s work to later periods of Chinese history. For one recent attempt at a basic bibliography of this field in a Western language, see the relevant sections of Edward L. Shaughnessy, “Paleography,” Oxford Bibliographies Online: <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com.proxy.uchicago.edu/view/document/obo-9780199920082/obo-9780199920082-0043.xml?rskey=GiiRxM&result=100> (posted 30 September 2013; accessed 16 June 2018).

*Zhou Changes* shares much with that of Shang turtle-shell divination, including some important technical language, still the book is very much a product of Zhou culture. Fortunately, there is manifold evidence in both the traditional literature of Zhou China and also in its archaeological record that turtle-shell divination continued to be practiced throughout the eight hundred years of this dynasty, and it is this evidence that is most directly relevant to understanding the early history of the *Zhou Changes*. Therefore, with the exception of a few remarks drawn from studies of Shang oracle-bone inscriptions in the analytical portion of this chapter below, I will limit the survey given here to just evidence of turtle-shell divination during the Zhou dynasty.

Although it has been suggested that the practice of turtle-shell divination was particularly characteristic of the Shang dynasty, and that it was subsequently supplanted during the Zhou dynasty by the sort of milfoil divination associated with the *Zhou Changes*,<sup>3</sup> there is plentiful evidence for Zhou-dynasty turtle-shell divination in all of the different kinds of texts from the period: in the classics (especially the *Shang shu* 尚書 *Exalted Scriptures* or *Shu jing* 書經 *Classic of Scriptures*), in numerous philosophical texts of the Warring States, Qin and Han periods, and in such historical works as the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 *Zuo Tradition*, *Guo yu* 國語 *Stories of the States*, and *Shi ji* 史記 *Record of the Historian*. A humorous anecdote in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 serves to illustrate the important role that turtle-shell divination continued to play even in the late Warring States period.

莊子釣於濮水。楚王使大夫二人往先焉，曰：「願以竟內累矣！」莊子持竿不顧，曰：「吾聞楚有神龜，死已三千歲矣。王巾笥而藏之廟堂之上。此龜者，寧其死為留骨而貴乎？寧其生而曳尾於塗中乎？」二大夫曰：「寧生而曳尾塗中。」莊子曰：「往矣！吾將曳尾於塗中。」

Zhuangzi was fishing in the Pu River. The king of Chu sent two great officers to go and present themselves to him, saying: "We would like to trouble you with the [administration of] the state." Zhuangzi gripped his pole and without looking back said: "I have heard that Chu has a spiritual turtle that has been dead already for three thousand years. The king stores it in the ancestral temple, wrapped in silk and placed in a bamboo hamper. Would this turtle rather be dead and have its bones kept and honored, or would

3 For just three such examples of this once widespread view, see Yu Yongliang 余永梁, "Yi gua yao ci de shidai jiqi zuozhe" 易卦爻辭的時代及其作者, in Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛, ed., *Gu shi bian* 古史辨 (Beiping: Pushe, 1931. Reprint, Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 1982), 3:148; Li Jingchi, *Zhou Yi tanyuan*, 90; Zheng Yantong 鄭衍通, *Zhou Yi tanyuan* 周易探原 (Singapore: Nanyang daxue, 1972), 19.

it rather be alive and drag its tail in the mud?" The two great officers said: "It would rather be alive and drag its tail in the mud." Zhuangzi said: "Go away! I will drag my tail in the mud."<sup>4</sup>

## 1 Generic Accounts of Turtle-Shell Divination

Traditional Chinese treatments of turtle-shell divination during the Zhou dynasty would typically begin with the ancient Chinese canonical ritual texts *Zhou li* 周禮 *Zhou Rites*, *Li ji* 禮記 *Record of Rites*, and *Yi li* 儀禮 *Ceremonies and Rites*. While the *Zhou li*, in particular, was doubtless not edited until the Han period, its entry for the "Grand Diviner" (*Da bu* 大卜) office, in charge of turtle-shell, milfoil and dream interpretation, provides considerable evidence for the institutional practice of these kinds of divination. Regarding turtle-shell divination specifically, the account describes an ideal administration of seventy-eight different functionaries, not to mention another fifty-four people of different ranks to handle the turtles, eleven people of three different ranks to handle the thornwood brands used to scorch the turtle, and nineteen others in the office of the prognosticator (*zhan ren* 占人).

大卜下大夫二人；卜師上士四人；卜人中士八人，下士十有六人；府二人，史二人，胥四人，徒四十人。

Of Grand Diviners, there are two lower great officers; of Masters of the Cracks, there are four higher sires; of Cracksmen, there are eight middle sires and sixteen lower sires; as well as two men to manage the archive, two scribes, four clerks, and forty runners.<sup>5</sup>

It mentions six different types of turtle ("heavenly" [*tian* 天], "earthly" [*di* 地], and one each for the four directions), eight different topics of "state affairs" (*bang shi* 邦事) to be divined: campaigns (*zheng* 征), apparitions (*xiang* 象), gifts (*yu* 與), strategies (*mou* 謀), harvests (*guo* 果), arrivals (*zhi* 至), weather (*yu* 雨), and illness (*chou* 瘳), and three different methods of turtle-shell divination: Jade Cracks (*Yuzhao* 玉兆); Tile Cracks (*Wazhao* 瓦兆); and Plateau Cracks (*Yuanzhao* 原兆). After the Master of the Cracks prepared the turtle shell for divination by boring holes in it and inking it, he would examine it for four different types of cracks having to do with the different regions of the state

<sup>4</sup> *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Sibu beiyao ed.), 6 ("Qiu shui" 秋水), 14b–15a.

<sup>5</sup> *Zhou li zhushu*, 1627.

(*fang zhao* 方兆), work (*gong zhao* 功兆), ceremonies (*yi zhao* 義兆) and warfare (*gong zhao* 弓兆), differentiated also depending upon their location on the shell. He would give the turtle shell to the person who “commanded the turtle” (*ming gui* 命龜) for him to examine it as well.

卜師掌開龜之四兆，一曰方兆，二曰功兆，三曰義兆，四曰弓兆。凡卜事，視高揚火以作龜致其墨。凡卜辨龜之上下左右陰陽，以授命龜者而詔相之。

The masters of the cracks handle the opening of the four crack omens: the first is called “Quarter Crack;” the second is called “Effect Crack;” the third is called “Ceremony Crack;” and the fourth is called “Bow Crack.” In all cases of divining affairs, they display it on high and hold up the fire in order to make the turtle present the ink. In all cases, the cracks are differentiated by the top and bottom, left and right, and *yin* and *yang* of the turtle, giving it to the person who commanded the turtle and inviting him to examine it.

The turtle shell was then turned over to the “Prognosticator,” who was responsible for interpreting the meaning of the cracks (and also of the hexagram, in the case of milfoil divination), and who was also responsible for making and keeping a record of the result.

占人掌占龜，以八簪占八頌，以八卦占簪之八故，以眡吉凶。凡卜簪，君占體，大夫占色，史占墨，卜人占坼。凡卜簪，既事則繫幣以比其命。歲終則計其占之中否。

The prognosticator handles prognosticating the turtle, and using the eight milfoil divinations to prognosticate the eight chants and the eight trigrams to prognosticate the eight precedents in order to see what is auspicious and ominous. In all cases of turtle-shell and milfoil divination, the lord prognosticates the shape, the great officer prognosticates the color, the scribe prognosticates the ink, and the cracksman prognosticates the fissure. In all cases of turtle-shell and milfoil divination, when the matter is finished one attaches a tag to compare the command. At the end of the year, then one tallies the correctness of the prognostications.

The “Jade Trinket” (“*Yu Zao*” 玉藻) chapter of *Li ji* also indicates that the prognostication involved several people, each examining a different aspect of the crack.

卜人定龜，史定墨，君定體。

The Cracksman settles the turtle, the scribe settles the ink, and the lord settles the shape.<sup>6</sup>

Still more detailed, the “Rites of a Sire’s Mourning” (“Shi Sang Li” 士喪禮) chapter of the *Yi li* provides a step-by-step description of a turtle-shell divination about the proper day for a burial. It probably provides more detail than most twenty-first century readers require, but for the sake of completeness I here translate it in full.

卜日，既朝哭，皆復外位。卜人先奠龜于西塾上，南首，有席。楚焯置于爇，在龜東。族長泣卜，及宗人吉服立于門西，東面，南上。占者三人在其南，北上。卜人及執爇、席者在塾西。闔東扉，主婦立于其內。席于闔西闔外。宗人告事具。主人北面，免經，左擁之。泣卜即位于門東，西面。卜人抱龜爇，先奠龜，西首，爇在北。宗人受卜人龜，示高。泣卜受視，反之。宗人還，少退，受命。命曰：「哀子某，來日某，卜葬其父某甫。考降，無有近悔。」許諾，不述命，還即席，西面坐命龜，興；授卜人龜，負東扉。卜人坐作龜，興。宗人受龜，示泣卜。泣卜受視，反之。宗人退，東面。乃旅占，卒，不釋龜，告于泣卜與主人：「占曰：『某日從。』」授卜人龜。告于主婦，主婦哭。告于異爵者。使人告于眾賓。卜人徹龜。宗人告事畢。主人經，入哭，如筮宅。賓出，拜送。若不從，卜宅如初儀。

On the day of the turtle-shell divination, after the morning wailing they all return to the outside position. The Cracksman first places the turtle on top of the western alcove with its head to the south on a mat. The thorn-wood brand is set up by the kindling to the east of the turtle. The Clan Elder who is the Overseer of Divination and the Temple Intendant dressed for the rites stand to the west of the gate, facing east, with the senior to the south. The three Prognosticators are to their south, with the senior to the north. The Cracksman and Holder of the Firewood and Mat are located to the west of the alcove. Closing the eastern double-leaf door, the Chief Matron takes her place inside of it. A mat is placed to the west of the doorsill, just outside of it. The Templar announces that the service is ready. The Host faces north in coif and hempen girdle, to the left assisting him. The Overseer of the Divination then takes his place to the east of

6 *Li ji zhengyi* 禮記正義, in Ruan Yuan 阮元, ed., *Shisan jing zhushu* 十三經注疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009), 3195. It is worth noting here that in the action of the “cracksman” (*buren* 卜人) here, “settling the turtle,” the verb “to settle” (*ding* 定) is certainly cognate with and probably equivalent to the verb *zhen* 貞 “to affirm; to divine.”



the door, facing west. The Cracksman carries the turtle and the kindling, first placing the turtle with the head to the west and the kindling to the north. The Templar receives the turtle from the Cracksman and displays it on high. The Overseer of the Divination receives it to inspect it and then returns it. The Templar turns around, slightly retreating and receives the command. The command says: “Grieving son so-and-so, on the coming day such-and-such, divines by crack-making about burying his father so-and-so; may the deceased-father descend and have nothing that would attract any regret.” If it is approved, he does not extend the command, but turns around and takes his place on the mat, facing west and kneels to command the turtle. Arising he gives the turtle to the Cracksman who carries it to the eastern door. The Cracksman kneels to the turtle, and rises. The Templar receives the turtle, and shows it to the Overseer of the Divination. The Overseer of the Divination receives and inspects it, and then returns it. The Templar retreats, facing east. Then, the functionaries prognosticate. When they have finished, without putting down the turtle they report to the Overseer of the Divination and Host: “The prognostication says such-and-such a date is acceptable.” Giving the turtle to the Cracksman, he reports to the Chief Matron; the Chief Matron wails. He reports to the dignitaries and sends someone to report to the assembled guests. The Cracksman removes the turtle and the Templar announces that the service is complete. The Host, in hempen girdle, enters and wails, as when he divined by milfoil about the siting (of the tomb). The guests go out, sent off with a bow. If it is not approved, divine by crack-making about the siting as in the first ceremony.<sup>7</sup>

As detailed as this description is, it does not provide much information about how the cracks were made or, especially, what they looked like and how they were interpreted. Somewhat more information in this regard is to be found in the “Biographies of Turtle-[Shell] and Milfoil Diviners” (“Gui ce liezhuan” 龜策列傳) chapter of the *Shi ji*.<sup>8</sup> The chapter begins with a series of historical vignettes in which turtle-shell and milfoil divination had been employed. This is followed by a similar general description of spiritual turtles and numinous milfoil plants. However, the bulk of the very lengthy chapter is divided

7 *Yi li zhushu* 儀禮注疏, in Ruan Yuan 阮元, ed., *Shisan jing zhushu* 十三經注疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009), 2476–2477.

8 Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, *juan* 128. For a complete translation, see Edward L. Shaughnessy, “Turtle-(shell) and Stalk (Diviners), Memoir 58,” in William Nienhauser et al., tr., *The Grand Scribe’s Records*, vol. XI (Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 2020), 217–258.

almost evenly into two segments. The first segment is in the form of a conversation between King Yuan of Song 宋元王 (i.e., Duke Yuan of Song 宋元公; r. 530–517 BCE) and his prime minister Wei Ping 衛平. Just after acceding to the kingship, King Yuan dreamt that a spiritual turtle had been sent by the spirit of the Yangze River to serve as an emissary to the Yellow River when it was caught in the net of a fisherman. The turtle asked the king to release it, promising him great riches if he did so. However, Wei Ping argued that the king should use the turtle for divination, by which means all of his wishes—including enhanced political power—could be obtained. According to the story, persuaded by Wei Ping, King Yuan had the turtle killed and used it for divination throughout his reign, becoming the greatest king of his time, just as Wei Ping had argued. The second extensive segment of the chapter takes the form of a technical manual concerning turtle-shell divination. It begins with a description of how a turtle-shell was to be prepared for divination, treating it with proper rites and boring hollows in the back of the shell. Then scorching the hollows three times each in the middle of the shell and at the top of the shell, the diviner was to announce the topic of the divination, phrased as a prayer. This is followed by a lengthy catalog of crack shapes and their auspices concerning a variety of topics, which will be surveyed below. The prognostications in this segment are quite generic, usually simply “auspicious” (*ji* 吉) or “ominous” (*xiong* 凶), or some slight variation of these two. The following passages open this latter handbook.

卜先以造灼鑽，鑽中已，又灼龜首，各三；又復灼所鑽中曰正身，灼首曰正足，各三。即以造三周龜，祝曰：「假之玉靈夫子。夫子玉靈，荊灼而心，令而先知。而上行於天，下行於淵，諸靈數策，莫如汝信。今日良日，行一良貞。某欲卜某，即得而喜，不得而悔。即得，發鄉我身長大，首足收人皆上偶。不得，發鄉我身挫折，中外不相應，首足滅去。」

In divination one first bores and scorches the hollows. When you have finished scorch the middle, then go on to scorch the turtle's head, each three times. Then, again scorch the hollows that have been bored in the center; this is called regulating the body. Scorch the head; this is called regulating the foot, each three times. When you have bored three rounds of the turtle, pray saying, “We call on you, the Jade Spirit Man. Master Jade Spirit, thistle scorches your heart and we command your prior knowledge.

Above, you move through the heavens; below, you move through the depths.

Of all the numinous counting stalks, there is none as trustworthy as you.

Today is a proper day and we are conducting a proper divination. Mr. X wishes to divine about topic X; if successful I will be happy; if unsuccessful I will regret it. If I am to be successful, send out our body long and thick, the head and foot receiving the man and both upwardly paired. If I am not to be successful, send out our body twisted and broken, inside and outside not in correspondence, and the head and foot disappearing.”<sup>9</sup>

Another shorter divination prayer is cited as coming from another handbook of divination, the *Ling gui* 靈龜 *Numinous Turtle*.

靈龜卜祝曰：「假之靈龜，五巫五靈，不如神龜之靈，知人死，知人生。某身良貞，某欲求某物。即得也，頭見足發，內外相應；即不得也，頭仰足矜，內外自垂。可得占。」

In the *Numinous Turtle* divination one prays, saying, “We call on the numinous turtle. The five magicians and the five numens are not as numinous as the spiritual turtle in knowing of men’s death and knowing of men’s life. Mister X, a proper diviner, has X desire to get X thing. If I am to be successful, the head will appear and the foot rise, with inside and outside in correspondence. If I am not to be successful, the head will be raised and the foot folded,<sup>10</sup> with both inside and outside falling. May we get a prognostication.”<sup>11</sup>

The chapter goes on to indicate what different crack shapes mean for twenty-three different topics: sickness; a hex; a prisoner being released; getting resources; selling or buying servants, wives, horses and cows; several different concerns for robbers; traveling; leaving or taking office; the weather; home; epidemics; fighting; visitations or requesting an audience; pursuing someone who is lost; hunting or fishing; and different aspects of the weather. While these are too lengthy—and their interpretation too uncertain—to quote in full, the first topic, divining about a sick person, will give some indication of what they are all like.

9 Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, 3240.

10 This understanding of *qin* 矜 follows Hu Xu 胡煦, *Bufa xiangkao* 卜法詳考 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008), 1162 (at *lian ye* 斂也). In The Shanghai Museum manuscript \**Bu shu* 卜書 \**Document on Turtle-shell Divination*, the word refers to a portion of the crack, perhaps the midsection (“belly”); for the \**Bu shu*, see below, pp. 94–97. However, the uses there and here seem to be quite distinct.

11 Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, 3240.

卜占病者祝曰：「今芋病困。死，首上開，內外交駭，身節折；不死，首仰足胗。」卜病者祟曰：「今病有祟無呈，無祟有呈。兆有中祟有內，外祟有外。」

Crack prognosticating about a sick person, we pray saying, "Today X is sick and troubled. If he is to die, the head will open above, inside and out will intersect jaggedly, and the body will be broken up. If he is not to die, the head will be raised and the foot folded."<sup>12</sup>

The meaning of the technical terminology used to describe the cracks is uncertain at best. The basic features of a crack are the "head" (*shou* 首) and "foot" (*zu* 足), which are regularly described as "raised" (*yang* 仰) and "open" (*kai* 開) or "lowered" (*fu* 俯) or "folded" (*qin* 胗). It seems clear that these should refer to the branch crack of the 卜-shaped crack that was caused to appear on the turtle plastron, the head being the portion closest to the vertical crack, and the foot being the other end of the branch crack. The text also occasionally refers to the "body" (*shen* 身) of the crack, described as either "straight" (*zheng* 正) or as "broken into sections" (*jie zhe* 節折). It also regularly refers to the "inside" (*nei* 內) and "outside" (*wai* 外) of the crack, usually described as "high" (either *gao* 高 or *shang* 上) or "low" (*di* 底 or *xia* 下), and regularly mentioning whether the inside and outside are "in correspondence" (*xiang ying* 相應). There is also occasional mention of "something to the outside" (*you wai* 有外), which may refer to surviving ink of a picture of the desired crack drawn on the plastron prior to the divination, which was not "eaten" (*shi* 食) by the crack itself, but this is even more unclear than much of the other terminology. Finally, throughout the chapter, one crack in particular is mentioned by name: "horizontal auspicious" (*heng ji* 橫吉) or "horizontal auspicious peace" (*heng ji an* 橫吉安); this appears to indicate a crack in which the horizontal line extends directly out from the vertical crack: 一. It is a crack shape mentioned elsewhere in the *Shiji*,<sup>13</sup> and was almost always regarded as an auspicious result.

This following passage relates, somewhat more compactly, most of these same divination topics to this single crack configuration "horizontal auspicious peace."

命曰橫吉安。以占病，病甚者一日不死；不甚者卜日瘳，不死。繫者重罪不出，輕罪環出；過一日不出，久毋傷也。求財物買臣妾馬牛，一日環得；過一日不得。(不得)行者不行。來者環至；過食時不至，

<sup>12</sup> Sima Qian, *Shiji*, 3241.

<sup>13</sup> As we will have occasion to mention in several chapters below, this crack shape is mentioned in the "Wen di benji" 文帝本紀 chapter of the *Shiji*.

不來。擊盜不行，行不遇；聞盜不來。徙官不徙。居官家室皆吉。歲稼不孰。民疾疫無疾。歲中無兵。見人行，不行不喜。請謁人不行不得。追亡人漁獵不得。行不遇盜。雨不雨。霽不霽。

When the command says 'horizontal auspicious peace': in prognosticating about sickness, in the case of a severe sickness, the person will not die within one day, and if it is not severe, the person will recover on the day of the crack-making and will not die; about someone imprisoned, if it be for a serious crime he will not get out, but if it be for a light offense he will still get out; if after one day he does not get out, in the long run there will be no harm; about seeking resources and commodities or in buying servants, consorts, horses and cows, within one day they can be gotten but beyond one day they will not be gotten; about travelers, they will not travel; about those coming, they will still arrive, but if they do not arrive past dinnertime they will not come; about attacking robbers, you will not travel, and if you do travel you will not meet them; about hearing that robbers will not come, they will not come; about transferring office, you will not transfer; about staying in office and in your home, both are auspicious; about the harvest, the crops will not ripen; about sickness among the people, there will be an epidemic but it will not be critical; there will be no fighting during the year; about seeing someone, if you do not go you will not be happy; about requesting an audience with another, if you do not travel you will not get one; about pursuing a lost person or about hunting and fishing, you will not get anything; about traveling, you will not meet robbers; about rain, it will not rain; about clearing up, it will not clear up.<sup>14</sup>

There is one other generic account of turtle-shell divination that has only become available very recently and which is even more difficult to understand than the "Gui ce liezhuan." This is a manuscript in the collection of the Shanghai Museum, whose editors have assigned it the title *\*Bu shu* 卜書 *Document on Turtle-Shell Divination*. As do all of the Shanghai Museum manuscripts, it came to the museum through the Hong Kong antique market after having been robbed from some unknown tomb (presumably from the area of the ancient state of Chu 楚, and possibly from the vicinity of the modern city of Jingzhou 荊州). It begins with prognostications by three different individuals. It is unclear whether they are prognosticating three different cracks, or are simply describing a single crack very differently. In each case, they begin by describing the

14 Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, 3242–3243.

crack in terms more or less like those of the “Gui ce liezhuan,” and also like the “Gui ce liezhuan” they each assign the crack a name. After this, they offer a prognostication or prognostications for different topics that might be divined by private individuals. The text concludes with two strips recording prognostications by a fourth prognosticator, one Yuan Gong 淵公, who employs a different technical vocabulary from the other three prognosticators and whose own prognostications seem to concern state affairs rather than private affairs. The text is short enough (written on ten bamboo strips), such that it can be presented here in its entirety. However, even if it were not for several breaks in the text due to broken bamboo strips, no one would be able to claim to understand all of it.<sup>15</sup>

肥叔曰：卦印首出止，是胃闕，卜人無咎，將去其里，而它方焉適。

Feishu said: “The crack has a raised head and extended foot; this is called ‘Open’: For the diviner there will be no trouble, but he will leave his village, and depart to another country.”

季曾曰：卦墮首內止，是胃咎，處宮無咎，有疾乃適。

Ji Zeng said: “The crack has a lowered head and a constricted foot; this is called ‘Sinking’: Residing in the palace there will be no trouble, but if one has an illness then he will depart.”

蔡公曰：卦如印首出止，而屯不困膺，是胃豕。卜炮龜，其有吝；處，不沾大汗，乃沾大浴。

Cai Gong said: “The crack resembles a raised head and extended foot, and gathers but does not bind the chest; this is called ‘Shaded’. The diviner inspects the turtle: there is distress; for residing, if you are not stained by a great mud, then you will be stained by a great watercourse.”

曰：卦少陷，是胃隳。少子吉，偃乃哭；甬處宮 ... 瀆。

He said: “The crack is a little sunken; this is called ‘Dim’: For the younger son it will be auspicious, but the elder man will then cry; using it to reside in the palace ... filth.”

15 For the text, see Ma Chengyuan, ed., *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu*, Vol. 9, 127–138 (Photographs), 289–302 (transcription); the editor for the Shanghai Museum was Li Ling 李零. For the only Western-language translation to date, which includes also references to the early Chinese studies of the text, see Caboara, “*Bu Shu* 卜書: A Recently

脢高上，剝屯深，是胃杆。婦人杆以飲飲飲■，偃夫深以伏匿■。

The belly is elevated on high and the crack gathers deep; this is called 'Level': The wife is level to drink and eat, the husband is deep to lie in hiding.

一占【○○○○○○○○四】【○○○○○○○○○○○○】吉，邦必有疾■。

One prognostication ... auspicious, the country will certainly have illness.

凡三族有此（疵），三末唯吉，如白如黃，貞邦【○○○○○○○○○○五】夫■。

Whenever the three beginnings have flaws, and the three tips mean auspiciousness, resembling white or yellow, affirming about the country ... fellow.

貞卜邦■：剝唯起（起）句（鉤），毋白毋赤，毋卒以易，貞邦無咎毆將有役。如【○○○○○○○○六】食墨，亦無它色。

Affirming about the country: when the crack begins with a hook, neither white nor red, nor completed in changing: affirming about the country, there will be no trouble indeed, but there will be a campaign. Resembling ... eats the ink, there is also no other color.

淵公占之曰：三族之啟■，周邦有吝，亦不絕■；三末食墨且表（孚），我周之孫其遷于百邦■，大貞邦亦兇■。

Yuan Gong prognosticated it and said: "The removal of the three beginnings: The Zhou country will have a grudge, but it will not break off. The three tips eat the ink and also match: The descendants of our Zhou will move to the hundred countries. The great affirmation about the country is also ominous."

淵公占之曰：若卜貞邦，三族句旨而惕；三末唯敗■，亡大咎，有【八】吝於外。如三末唯吉，三族是卒，亦亡大咎，有吝於內■。如三族【○○○○○○○○九】兇，剝不利邦貞■。【十】

Yuan Gong prognosticated it and said: "If in divining by turtle-shell and affirming about the country, the three beginnings are hooked but changing and the three tips are disappearing, there will be no great trouble, but there will be distress on the outside. If the three tips are auspicious and

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Published Shanghai Museum Manuscript on Divination." The translation presented here differs from that of Caboara in certain important respects.

the three beginnings are complete, there will also not be any great trouble, but there will be distress on the inside. If the three beginnings ... ominous, the crack is not beneficial for the country's affirmation."

As with the "Gui ce liezhuan," there are numerous uncertainties regarding the technical terminology used in these prognostications. However, there is at least one term seen in strips 7 and 8 of this text (apparently in prognostications of two different prognosticators, Cai Gong and Yuan Gong) that seems also to be alluded to in the "Luo gao" 洛誥 "Announcement at Luo" chapter of *Shang shu*, and which is described in the Tang-dynasty *Shang shu zhengyi* 尚書正義 *Correct Significance of the Exalted Scriptures* commentary of Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574–648). "Eating the ink" (*shi mo* 食墨) is said there to refer to the practice of drawing a desired shape of the crack onto the turtle shell prior to crack making; if the crack did in fact coincide with the drawn shape of the crack to the point of obliterating the ink of the drawing, this is said to have "eaten the ink." In the *Shang shu zhengyi* commentary, this is said to indicate a successful divination. In the Shanghai Museum *Bu shu* text, on the other hand, it elicits at least one prognostication of ominousness.

## 2 Specific Accounts of Turtle-Shell Divination

While there is much to learn from these handbooks and formulaic descriptions of turtle-shell divination, for the purposes of understanding how divination may have influenced the origin and early development of the *Zhou Changes*, which, after all, is the intent of this book, nothing is as good as examining records of actual divinations recorded in both ancient China's received literature and also in unearthed documents of various sorts. Below I will first introduce eighteen such accounts of turtle-shell divination drawn from eight or nine different types of sources. So as not to prejudice the reader's understanding of these accounts (at least any more than my own translation of them will necessarily do), I will provide only a brief introduction giving their historical and literary contexts (not repeating information given in Chapter One). After examining all of these accounts, I will then analyze them with respect to four different topics that it seems to me are relevant for understanding the *Zhou Changes*: the "command" (*ming* 命) to the turtle, often introduced with the word *zhen* 貞, consistently translated here as "to affirm"; the crack (*bu* 卜 or *zhao* 兆); the "oracle" (*zhou* 繇); and the prognostication (*zhan* 占).



### 2.1 *Account #3.1: Zhouyuan Oracle Bones*

In 1977, archaeologists excavating a large building site at Fengchu 鳳雛, Qishan 岐山, Shaanxi, in the middle of an area referred to as the Zhouyuan 周原 or Plain of Zhou, opened a pit in one corner of the structure in which they found some 16,700 pieces of turtle-shell and somewhat more than 300 pieces of ox bone, about 300 pieces of the turtle-shell being inscribed.<sup>16</sup> Although most of these inscriptions are quite fragmentary, they seem to concern activities undertaken by the first kings of the Zhou dynasty, probably in the eleventh century BCE. The following, H11:1, is a rare example of a complete divination inscription. Although there are different interpretations of its historical context, it seems to concern a sacrifice by a Zhou king, including an offering to a former king of the Shang dynasty.<sup>17</sup> A very small piece of turtle shell, it is fortunate that its twenty-seven character long inscription is intact. The inscription begins with a preface indicating the time and place of the divination ritual, followed by the topic of the divination, in this case proposing the sacrifice of two women and six domesticated animals, and ends with a formulaic prayer.

癸子彝文武帝乙宗貞：王其卩祝成唐，鬯禦辰二女，彝血牲三豚三；  
凶又正。

On *guisi* (day 30), performing the *yi*-sacrifice at the temple of the accomplished and martial Di Yi, affirming: “The king will sacrifice to Cheng Tang, performing a caldron-exorcism of the two surrendered women and an *yi*-sacrifice with the blood of three rams and three sows; may it be correct.”

### 2.2 *Account #3.2: Qijia Oracle Bones*

Archaeological work has continued to the present day in the vicinity of the 1977 Zhouyuan discovery. In 2003, several pieces of ox bone used in divination were unearthed very near Qijia 齊家 village, just to the east of the Fengchu temple or residence that produced the first great discovery of Zhou oracle bones.<sup>18</sup> Unusually for these records of Zhou bone or shell divination, one piece in particular records three separate divinations, all concerning an illness of some

16 For the initial report of this discovery, see Shaanxi Zhouyuan kaogudui, “Shaanxi Qishan Fengchu cun faxian Zhou chu jiaguwen” 陝西岐山鳳雛村發現周初甲骨文, *Wenwu* 文物 1979.10: 38–43; for the most recent and most thorough presentation of this and other similar discoveries in the Zhouyuan area, see Cao Wei, *Zhouyuan jiaguwen*.

17 For some discussion of this feature, see Edward L. Shaughnessy, “Western Zhou Oracle-Bone Inscriptions: Entering the Research Stage?” *Early China* 11–12 (1985–1987): 146–194.

18 Cao Wei 曹瑋, “Zhouyuan xin chu Xi Zhou jiaguwen yanjiu” 周原新出西周甲骨文研究, *Kaogu yu wenwu* 考古與文物 2003.4: 43–49.

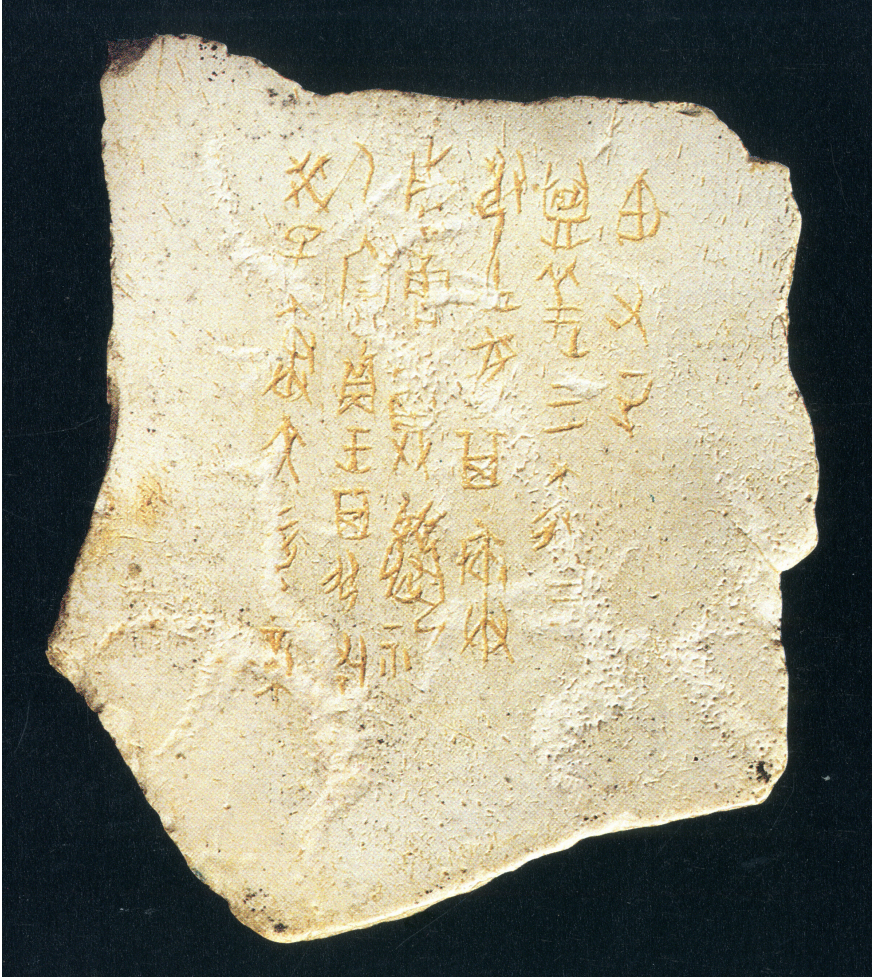


FIGURE 3.1 Zhouyuan 周原 oracle bone H11.1; from Cao Wei 草瑋, *Zhouyuan jiaguwen* 周原甲骨文 (Beijing: Shijie tushu chubanshe, 2002), #H11.1; used with permission

apparently unnamed person. Like the Zhouyuan inscription in Account #1, these inscriptions also each propose an activity and conclude with a prayer, although it seems likely that the first two divinations were preliminary and the third more definitive.<sup>19</sup> An important feature of all three inscriptions is that

19 This is shown by the word *ji* 既 “after; already” in the third inscription. In Chapter Five below, I will address the possible significance that this sort of two-step divination procedure may have had vis-à-vis milfoil divination with the *Zhou Changes*.

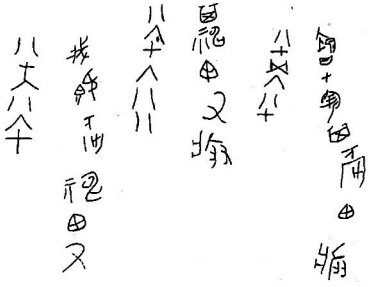


FIGURE 3.2  
Line drawing of Qijia Village oracle bone; from Cao Wei 曹璋, “Zhouyuan xin chu Xi Zhou jiaguwen yanjiu” 周原新出西周甲骨文研究, *Kaogu yu wenwu* 考古與文物 2003.4: 43; used with permission

they include a grouping of six numerals, thought to indicate the result of a concurrent milfoil divination.<sup>20</sup> The significance of these groupings of numerals will be addressed in Chapter Four on milfoil divination.

翌日甲寅其禱由廖  
七八六五七八

On the next day *jiayin* (day 51), we will make offering; may he heal.  
7-8-6-5-7-8

其禱由又廖  
八八六七六八

We will pray; may there be healing.  
8-8-6-7-6-8

我既禱由又  
七六八六七八

We having already made offering and prayed, may he be blessed.  
7-6-8-6-7-8

2.3 Account #3.3 The “*Jin Teng*” 金滕 “Metal-Bound Coffin” of the Shang Shu

The oldest texts in China’s received literary tradition are found in the *Shang shu* 尚書 *Exalted Scriptures* (also known as the *Shu jing* 書經 *Classic of Scriptures*). Several of the earliest of these include mention of turtle-shell divination, and a comprehensive account of turtle-shell divination in China would take account of all of them. The best known of these accounts of turtle-shell divination is found in the received text of the “*Jin teng*” 金滕 “Metal-Bound Coffin” chapter,

20 For discussion of these numerical symbols, see Chapter Four, p. 175. Note that I read the numbers from bottom to top, as is customary with *Yijing* hexagrams.

purporting to recount a divination performed by the Duke of Zhou 周公, one of the dynastic founders, upon the occasion of an illness afflicting his elder brother King Wu 武王 (r. 1049/1045–1043 BCE), just two years after the Zhou conquest of Shang. This text is almost certainly not a contemporary record of such a divination, but rather seems clearly to be a later fictional account (indeed, it has been described, with some justification, as perhaps “the first Chinese short story”<sup>21</sup>), and a recently discovered manuscript version of the text included among the corpus of Warring States bamboo-slip manuscripts housed by Tsinghua University in Beijing differs from the received text in not mentioning the divination.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, the received text’s account of the divination surely reflects Zhou-dynasty understandings of turtle-shell divination, and it is one of the most detailed such accounts in all of ancient China’s received literary tradition.

The account states that the divination was initially proposed by the “two dukes” (*er gong* 二公), presumably the Grand Duke Wang 太公望 and Duke Shi of Shao 召公奭, two of the other senior figures in the Zhou leadership, but was subsequently carried out by the Duke of Zhou with the assistance of a scribe or scribes. It includes an extended prayer in which the Duke of Zhou proposed himself as a scapegoat for the king. After the divination, in which three different turtle shells were divined and all of them produced an auspicious result, the duke had the results, written on bamboo slips, sealed away in a metal-bound coffer, thus explaining the title of the chapter.

既克商二年，王有疾，弗豫。二公曰：「我其為王穆卜。」周公曰：「未可以戚我先王。」公乃自以為功，為三壇，同壇，為壇于南方，北面，周公立焉。植璧秉珪，乃告太王、王季、文王。史乃冊祝曰：

「惟爾元孫某邁厲虐疾，若爾三王是有丕子之責于天，以旦代某之身。予仁若考，能多材多藝，能事鬼神。乃元孫不若旦多材多藝，不能事鬼神。乃命于帝庭，敷佑四方，用能定爾子孫于下地，四方

21 For this characterization, see Herrlee G. Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China*, vol. 1, *The Western Chou Empire* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), 458.

22 A Warring States-period manuscript of this text, self-titled as “Zhou Wu Wang you ji Zhou Gong suo zi yi dai wang zhi zhi” 周武王有疾周公所自以代王之志 (Record of King Wu of Zhou Being Ill and the Duke of Zhou Himself Substituting for the King) is included among the bamboo strips housed by Tsinghua University; see Li Xueqin 李學勤, ed.-in-chief, Qinghua Daxue chutu wenxian yanjiu yu baohu zhongxin, ed., *Qinghua Daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian* (Yi) 清華大學藏戰國竹簡(壹), vol. 1 (Shanghai: Zhong-Xi shuju, 2010), 14–17 (full-size photographs), 75–86 (enlarged photographs), 157–162 (transcription and notes). The manuscript is generally similar to the received text, but while it also contains the Duke of Zhou’s prayer, it notably does not mention that this is part of a divination.

之民罔不祇畏。嗚呼！無墜天之降寶命，我先王亦永有依歸。今我即命于元龜，爾之許我，我其以璧與珪，歸俟爾命；爾不許我，我乃屏璧與珪。」

乃卜三龜，一習吉，啟籥見書，乃并是吉。公曰：

「體，王其罔害！予小子新命于三王，惟永終是圖，茲悠俟，能念予一人。」

公歸，乃納冊于金滕之匱中，王翼日乃瘳。

Two years after conquering Shang, the king was ill and not getting better. The two dukes said: "We should respectfully divine on behalf of the king." The Duke of Zhou said: "We cannot yet trouble our past kings." The duke then pledged himself as hostage, and made three altars flat and smooth. At the altar in the southern quarter, facing north, the duke took his stand there. Placing the jade disk and grasping the jade sceptre, he then made announcement to Tai Wang, Wang Ji and Wen Wang. The scribe then read the written prayer, saying:

It is your prime grandson so-and-so (i.e., King Wu) who has met this vicious illness. If you three kings really owe the debt of a son to heaven, take me Dan to substitute for him. I am humane like our father, capable of many talents and many arts, and capable of serving the ghosts and spirits. Your prime grandson is not as multi-talented or artistic as I am, and is not capable of serving the ghosts and spirits. Then command in the court of Di to extend throughout the four quarters, and herewith to be able to settle your descendants in the land below. None of the peoples of the four quarters is not respectful. *Wuhu!* Do not let fall the precious command that Heaven has sent down, and our past kings will also eternally have support. Now I come to command the Prime Turtle: "If you permit me, I will take the jade disk and scepter, and return to await your command. If you do not permit me, I will hide away the jade disk and scepter."

Then he divined the three turtles, each repeatedly auspicious. Opening the tubes to see the documents, then they were all really auspicious. The duke said:

As for the shape, the king will be without harm. I the young son have newly commanded the three kings, and this design means an eternal end, here for long to await and able to consider me the one man.

The duke returned and enclosed the slips inside the metal-bound coffer. On the next day, the king then got better.<sup>23</sup>

23 *Shang shu zhengyi*, 415-417.

#### 2.4 Account #3.4: The “Da Gao” 大誥 “Great Announcement” Chapter of the Shang Shu

Whereas the “Jin teng” chapter of the *Shang shu* was almost certainly composed well after the events that it purports to describe, the “Da gao” 大誥 “Great Announcement” chapter of the *Shang shu* has a good claim to be the oldest text in the traditional Chinese literary record. It purports to be a royal speech made just after the death of King Wu, at a time when the newly established Zhou government was threatened with insurrection from the just defeated Shang people as well as a civil war with two or three of King Wu’s own brothers who had been deputed to oversee the conquered Shang lands and people. The young King Cheng 成王 (r. 1042/35–1006 BCE), addressing other members of the royal family in the Zhou homeland, announced that “pitiless Heaven has sent down division on our family” (*fu diao tian jiang ge yu wo jia* 弗弔天降割于我家), and described himself as a young man attempting to cross a deep water. However, he noted that his grandfather, King Wen (r. 1099/56–1050 BCE), to whom the Zhou looked as their founding father, had used turtle-shell divination and had bequeathed to him a great turtle, to which he now proposed to turn for assistance. Much of the body of the address, which is long and involved, including various embedded quotations, then recounts the divination(s) that he performed with the turtle, and the auspicious results that he obtained, results that supported his intention to campaign against his royal uncles in the eastern lands. It is very difficult to understand in its entirety, but the important place that turtle-shell divination holds for the young king is very clear.

寧王遺我大寶龜，紹天明。即命，曰：『有大艱于西土，西土人亦不靜，越茲蠹。殷小腆，誕敢紀其敘。天降威，知我國有疵，民不康，曰：『予復反鄙我周邦今蠹』。今翼曰民獻有十夫予翼，以于救寧、武圖功。我有大事休，朕卜并吉！肆予告我友邦君，越尹氏、庶士、御事，曰：『予得吉卜，予惟以爾庶邦，于伐殷逋播臣。』

爾庶邦君、越庶士、御事罔不反曰：『艱大，民不靜。亦惟在王宮、邦君室，越予小子考翼，不可征；王害。不違卜？』肆予冲人永思艱，曰：嗚呼！允蠹，鰥寡哀哉！予造天役遺大，投艱于朕身，越予冲人不印自恤。義爾邦君，越爾多士、尹氏、御事，綏予曰：『無毖于恤，不可不成乃寧考圖功。』已！予惟小子，不敢替上帝命。天休于寧王，興我小邦周。寧王惟卜用，克綏受茲命。今天其相民，矧亦惟卜用。嗚呼！天明畏，弼我不丕基！」

...

王曰：「嗚呼！肆哉！爾庶邦君，越爾御事。爽邦由哲，亦惟十人，迪知上帝命。越天棗忱，爾時罔敢易法，矧今天降戾于周邦？惟大艱人，誕鄰胥伐于厥室，爾亦不知天命不易！予永念曰：天惟喪殷；若

稽夫，予曷敢不終朕畝？天亦惟休于前寧人，予曷其極卜？敢弗于從？率寧人有指疆土？矧今卜并吉，肆朕誕以爾東征。天命不僭，卜陳惟若茲。」

King Wen bequeathed to us a great treasured turtle, handing down Heaven's brightness. I have commanded it saying: "There is great turmoil in the western lands, and the men of the western lands are also restive and in increasing commotion. The minor functionaries of Yin (i.e., Shang) have also arrogantly dared to outline their plaint. Heaven has sent down its majesty, knowing that our state has flaws and that the people are not at peace, saying: 'I will restore the locales rebelling against our Zhou country and the present commotion.'"

On the next day, the people presented ten men to be my support, to stabilize the effect of kings Wen and Wu's plan. Our great affair has been successful, and my divinations have both been auspicious. And so I announce to our friendly rulers of the countries and to their governors and common people and managers of affairs, saying: "I have obtained an auspicious divination. It is with your many countries that I will go to attack the absconding ministers of the Yin. Of you many rulers of the states and common people and managers of affairs, none has not responded saying: 'The turmoil is great and the people are restive, and it is also so in the royal palace and the houses of the leaders of the countries and with us the princes who are the support; you ought not go on campaign. Why does the king not go against the divination?' And so I the young man have long thought of the turmoil, and say: *Wuhu*. There is surely commotion. Woe indeed on our widows and orphans! I have accepted the greatness that Heaven has extended and bequeathed, and the turmoil it has thrown on my person. But I the young man do not presume to pity myself. It should be you rulers of the states and governors and managers of affairs that comfort me saying: 'There is no need for pity; you will certainly complete the work of King Wen and your father's plan.'

"Stop, It is that I am but a young man, and do not presume to command in the name of God on High. Heaven favored King Wen and raised our little country of Zhou. It was divination that King Wen used successfully to receive this mandate. Now when Heaven is assisting the people, how could we not use divination! *Wuhu*, Heaven's brightness is awesome, and it is the foundation on which I rely."

... "*Wuhu*. Take account indeed you leaders of the many countries and you managers of affairs. It is also you ten wise men of our own bright country that know the mandate of God on High, and also that Heaven's support is sincere. When have you ever dared to change the pattern, how much

more so now that Heaven has sent down affliction on the Zhou country! It is with great turmoil that the functionaries of our arrogant neighbors attack our house. Could it be that you do not know that Heaven's Mandate is unchanging. I have long contemplated this and say: It is Heaven that has brought an end to Yin; how would I dare not to finish my husbandry. Heaven having also shown favor to our ancestors, how would I dare not to follow the divinations they have extended over the borderlands that our ancestors have pointed out to us, all the more so now that our divinations have both been auspicious. And so it is that I presume to take you on campaign in the east. Heaven's Mandate is not capricious. It has been in this way that the divinations have presented it."<sup>24</sup>

## 2.5 *Account #3.5: "Luo Gao" 洛誥 "Announcement at Luo" Chapter of Shang Shu*

The "Luo gao" 洛誥 "Announcement at Luo" chapter of the *Shang shu* is the last of the five "announcement" (*gao* 誥) chapters of the text, documents that purport to record events that took place in the first years of the Zhou dynasty and which are generally considered to be the core of the work. The "Luo gao" purports to date to the last year that the Duke of Zhou served as regent for his nephew King Cheng, recording his decision to return power to his nephew. The document begins with his report of a series of divinations to determine the proper site for a new capital city in the eastern lands.

周公拜手稽首曰：「朕復子明辟，王如弗敢及天基命定命，予乃胤保大相東土，其基作民明辟。予惟乙卯，朝至于洛師。我卜河朔黎水。我乃卜澗水東、灋水西，惟洛食。我又卜灋水東，亦惟洛食。俘來以圖、及獻卜。」

王拜手稽首曰：「公，不敢不敬天之休，來相宅，其作周匹休。公既定宅，俘來，來視。予卜休恆吉。我二人共貞。」

The Duke of Zhou bowed and saluted, saying: "I have restored you, my bright lord. If the king does not presume to accept the Mandate that Heaven has founded and secured, I have then succeeded to protect the eastern lands, making a foundation of the people for the bright lord. It was on the morning of the day *yimao* that I arrived at the Luo Camp. We divined about the Li River where it enters the [Yellow] River. We then divined about the east of the Jian River and west of the Zhan River, and it was the Luo that was eaten (*sic*). We also divined about the east of the

24 *Shang shu zhengyi*, 420–424.



Zhan River, and it was again the Luo that was eaten. I have sent the map together with the proffered divinations.”

The king bowed and saluted, saying: “Duke, I do not dare not to respect Heaven’s favor, and have come to inspect the site; it will bring matching favor for Zhou. The duke having secured the site, and caused me to come, I have come and examined it. I have divined, and it was favorable: ‘Long-term auspicious.’ We two men have both affirmed it.”<sup>25</sup>

## 2.6 Account #3.6: Zuo Zhuan 左傳, 22nd Year of Duke Zhuang 莊 (672 BCE)

The *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 *Zuo Tradition* is the most extensive historical text from the Zhou period. Ostensibly a commentary to the *Chunqiu* 春秋 *Spring and Autumn Annals*, which is a spare annalistic history of the state of Lu 魯 from the years 722 to 481 BCE, the *Zuo zhuan* not only goes into much more detail about almost all of the events recorded in the *Chunqiu*, but it also provides detailed accounts of many events not even mentioned there. Among these historical vignettes are numerous cases of divination, both with turtle shell and also milfoil. It will not be necessary here to examine each and every one of these vignettes (and this is especially so in the case of milfoil divinations to be taken up in the next chapter), but many of them are sufficiently self-contained to be intelligible here. I will present five such vignettes concerning turtle-shell divination, presenting them in simple chronological order with only minimal contextualization. Two of the accounts presented here also describe a concurrent milfoil divination, the implications of which will be addressed in the next chapter.

The first account of turtle-shell divination to be considered here is a retrospective prediction of the rise of the house of Chen 陳 in the state of Qi 齊. Upon brutal political machinations in his native state of Chen, Chen Wan 陳完 (also known as Jingzhong 敬仲; born 705 BCE), a son of Duke Li of Chen 陳厲公 (r. 706–700 BCE), fled into exile in Qi and became a favorite of the powerful Duke Huan of Qi 齊桓公 (r. 685–643). Qi Yizhong 齊懿仲, the head of one of the powerful lineages of Qi, wishing to marry his daughter to Jingzhong first had a turtle-shell divination performed. The prognostication, pronounced by his own wife, was auspicious, predicting that the house of Chen would eventually come to power in Qi. To understand the oracle, delivered in four rhyming couplets, it is important to know that the house of Chen was of the Gui 媯 family, while that of Qi was of the Jiang 姜 family.

25 *Shang shu zhengyi*, 454–455.

初，懿氏卜妻敬仲。其妻占之，曰：「吉。是謂：  
 鳳皇于飛，和鳴鏘鏘。  
 有媯之後，將育于姜。  
 五世其昌，並于正卿。  
 八世之後，莫之與京。」

Previously, Yi(-zhong) divined by turtle shell about marrying (his daughter) to Jingzhong. His wife prognosticated it, saying: "Auspicious. This says: The phoenixes are in flight, Harmonious calls resounding. Descendants of the house of Gui, Will be nurtured among the Jiang. Five generations will they flourish, Side-by-side with chief ministers. After eight generations, No one will be so towering."<sup>26</sup>

### 2.7 *Account #3.7: Zuo Zhuan, 25th Year of Duke Xi 僖 (635 BCE)*

In 636 BCE, King Xiang of Zhou 周襄王 (r. 652–619 BCE) was driven from the capital by his own brother Wangzi Dai 王子帶 (672–635). Confronted with the threat that the state of Qin 秦 would move to reinstate the king, Duke Wen of Jin 晉文公 (r. 636–628 BCE), the most powerful ruler of the day, contemplated doing so himself. Before launching the military campaign, he had a turtle-shell divination performed, producing a crack named for a battle from China's mythological past. It would seem that Duke Wen may have misunderstood the prognostication, thinking that it pertained to himself, when in actuality it seems to have pertained to King Xiang and his brother Wangzi Dai (portending the king's victory over his brother). Perhaps for this reason, Duke Wen had a milfoil divination performed, producing much the same result, a result that we will consider again in Chapter Five. In the end, Duke Wen did attack and kill Wangzi Dai, and thereupon restored King Xiang to the capital.

使卜偃卜之，曰：「吉。遇黃帝戰于阪泉之兆。」公曰：「吾不堪也。」對曰：「周禮未改，今之王，古之帝也。」公曰：「筮之！」筮之，遇大有 ䷍ 之睽 ䷥，曰：「吉。遇『公用享于天子』之卦。戰克而王饗，吉孰大焉？且是卦也，天為澤以當日，天子降心以逆公，不亦可乎？大有去睽而復，亦其所也。」

(The Lord of Jin) had Diviner Yan divine about it by turtle shell, who said: "Auspicious. We have met the crack of the Yellow Emperor battling at Banquan." The duke said: "I am not up to this." (Yan) responded saying, "The Zhou rites have not changed. The current king is tantamount to the emperors of old." The duke said: "Divine it by milfoil." Divining it

26 *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 3852.

by milfoil, he met *Dayou* ䷗ “Great Possession”’s *Kui* ䷗ “Cross-Eyed,” and said: “Auspicious. I met the hexagram ‘The duke herewith makes offering to the Son of Heaven.’ What could be more auspicious than being victorious in battle and the king feasting you? What is more, as for this hexagram, ‘Heaven’ becomes ‘Marsh’ in order to face ‘Sun.’ Is it not also proper that the Son of Heaven should humble his heart to receive my lord? That *Dayou* goes to *Kui* and then returns is also its place.”<sup>27</sup>

### 2.8 *Account #3.8: Zuo Zhuan, 10th Year of Duke Xiang 襄 (563 BCE)*

Sun Wenzi 孫文子, chief minister of the state of Wei 衛, deliberating whether to counter an attack on his state by Huang'er 皇耳 of Zheng 鄭, had a turtle-shell divination performed. He presented the crack to Ding Jiang 定姜, wife of Duke Ding of Wei 衛定公, for her interpretation. Ding Jiang interpreted the crack to mean that the counter-attack would be successful, as indeed it turned out to be. Because of the similarity of the oracle (*zhou* 繇) here to some line statements of the *Zhou Changes*, this is an account to which we will return in future chapters.

孫文子卜追之，獻兆於定姜。姜氏問繇。曰：

兆如山陵，有夫出征，而喪其雄。

姜氏曰：「征者喪雄，禦寇之利也。大夫圖之！」衛人追之，孫蒯獲鄭皇耳于犬丘。

Sun Wenzi divined by turtle-shell about pursuing them. He presented the crack to Ding Jiang. Madame Jiang asked about the oracle. He said:

The crack is like a mountain peak:

There's a man going on campaign,

And yet loses his leader.

Madame Jiang said: “That the campaigner loses his leader is the benefit of driving off bandits; the great minister should plan on it.” The men of Wei pursued them, and Sun Peng captured Huang'er of Zheng at Quanqiu.<sup>28</sup>

### 2.9 *Account #3.9: Zuo Zhuan, 5th Year of Duke Zhao 昭 (537 BCE)*

In 537 BCE, in the course of a military campaign by Chu 楚 against Wu 吳, after a series of preliminary victories by Chu, the king of Wu, Wu Wang Yumo 吳王餘昧 (r. 543–527 BCE), sent his younger brother Guiyou 蹇由 as an envoy to the Chu army, ostensibly to feast the enemy but apparently to spy on them. The ruler of Chu, King Ling 楚靈王 (r. 541–529 BCE) had Guiyou seized and

<sup>27</sup> *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 3951–3952.

<sup>28</sup> *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 4228.

was about to execute him. Through a series of arguments, including about the nature of divination, Guiyou managed to persuade King Ling to spare him. He was taken back to the Chu capital as a hostage, only returning to his home country fourteen years later.

吳子使其弟蹶由犒師，楚人執之，將以鬻鼓。王使問焉，曰：「女卜來吉乎？」對曰：「吉。寡君聞君將治兵於敝邑，卜之以守龜，曰：『余亟使人犒師，請行以觀王怒之疾徐，而為之備，尚克知之！』龜兆告吉，曰：『克可知也。』君若驩焉好逆使臣，滋敝邑休息，而忘其死，亡無日矣。今君奮焉震電馮怒，虐執使臣，將以鬻鼓，則吳知所備矣。敝邑雖羸，若早修完，其可以息師。難易有備，可謂吉矣。且吳社稷是卜，豈為一人？使臣獲鬻軍鼓，而敝邑知備，以禦不虞，其為吉，孰大焉？國之守龜，其何事不卜？一臧一否，其誰能常之？城濮之兆，其報在邲。今此行也，其庸有報志？」乃弗殺。

When the prince of Wu sent his younger brother Guiyou to celebrate the army, the men of Chu seized him and were about to anoint their drums with his blood. The king sent an envoy to ask him about it, saying: "Was your turtle-shell divination about coming auspicious?" He responded saying: "It was auspicious. When our unworthy ruler heard that you were about to marshal your army in our lowly settlement, he divined it with the Preserved Turtle, saying: 'I will urgently send a man to celebrate the army, requesting that he go to observe the intensity of the king's anger, and then prepare against it. Would that we can know this.' The crack in the turtle announced auspiciousness, saying, 'Success can be known.' If mylord were to receive this envoy happily and with goodwill, this would increase our lowly city's indolence, so that forgetting about death, there would be no time before we were lost. Now, since mylord is enraged and thundering with anger, viciously seizing an envoy and about to anoint your drums with his blood, even though our lowly city is emaciated, if we prepare in advance, we will be able to stop your army. Having defense, whether hard or easy, can be said to be auspicious. What is more, this divination was about the altars of state; how could it have been about a single man? If I should succeed to anoint the drums of the army with my blood, and our lowly city knows to defend itself to fend off the unhappiness, what auspiciousness could be greater? What affair is not divined with the state's Preserved Turtle? Sometimes good, sometimes bad, who could make it constant! The crack of Chengpu was repaid at Bi. Now might this conduct serve to repay our intention?" Then they did not kill him.<sup>29</sup>

29 *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 4436–4437.

### 2.10 *Account #3.10: Zuo Zhuan, 17th Year of Duke Zhao 昭 (525 BCE)*

In 525 BCE, in the course of further battling between Chu 楚 and Wu 吳, a turtle-shell divination performed by Yang Gai 陽匄 (d. 519 BCE), the Commandant (*lingyin* 令尹) of Chu, the highest official position in the Chu administration, was not auspicious. At this, Zi Yu 子魚, Superintendent of the Horse (*sima* 司馬), the commander of the Chu army, argued that it was his prerogative to perform the divination. The second divination proved to be auspicious.

吳伐楚，陽匄為令尹，卜戰，不吉。司馬子魚曰：「我得上流，何故不吉？且楚故，司馬令龜。我請改卜。」令曰：「魴也以其屬死之，楚師繼之，尚大克之！」吉。

Wu was attacking Chu. Yang Gai was serving as Commandant and divined by turtle-shell about the battle; it was inauspicious. Superintendent of the Horse Zi Yu said: "We are upstream, why should it be not auspicious? What is more, the precedent in Chu is for the Superintendent of the Horse to command the turtle. I would ask to change the divination." He commanded saying: "Even if I Fang together with my followers die, the Chu army will follow up; would that we greatly defeat them." It was auspicious.<sup>30</sup>

### 2.11 *Account #3.11: Zuo Zhuan, 9th year of Duke Ai 哀 (486 BCE)*

Zhao Yang 趙鞅, better known as Zhao Jianzi 趙簡子 (d. 476 BCE), was the head of the Zhao 趙 lineage of Jin 晉 and one of the most important political figures of the Spring and Autumn period. In 493 BCE, he defeated two of Jin's six lineages, the Fan 范 and Zhonghang 中行 lineages, and gained control of the Jin government. In the autumn of 486, the state of Song 宋 attacked its neighboring state of Zheng 鄭. Zhao Yang had a turtle-shell divination performed about coming to the aid of Zheng.

Three different diviners used three different methods to prognosticate the turtle-shell divination, all three of them counselling against attacking Song. Thereafter, another diviner, Yang Hu 陽虎, used the *Zhou Changes* to perform a milfoil divination, which resulted in the Nine in the Fifth line of *Tai* 泰 ䷊ "Positive" (#11) hexagram. This line reads:

六五：帝乙歸妹以祉。元吉。

Six in the Fifth: Di Yi marries off a daughter with blessings. Prime Auspiciousness.

<sup>30</sup> *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 4527.

Although the prognostication does not quote the line exactly, it clearly drew on it to argue against attacking Song. Zhao Yang did not come to the relief of Zheng, but rather attacked the state of Qi 齊 in the following year.

晉趙鞅卜救鄭，遇水適火，占諸史趙、史墨、史龜。史龜曰：是謂沈陽，可以興兵，利以伐姜，不利子商。伐齊則可，敵宋不吉。史墨曰：「盈，水名也；子，水位也。名位敵，不可干也。炎帝為火師，姜姓其後也。水勝火，伐姜則可。」史趙曰：「是謂如川之滿，不可游也。鄭方有罪，不可救也。救鄭則不吉，不知其他。」陽虎以《周易》筮之，遇泰 ䷊ 之需 ䷄ 曰：「宋方吉，不可與也。微子啟，帝乙之元子也。宋、鄭，甥舅也。祉，祿也。若帝乙之元子歸妹而有吉祿，我安得吉焉？」乃止。

Zhao Yang of Jin divined by turtle-shell about relieving Zheng, and met Water going to Fire. He had it prognosticated by Scribe Zhao, Scribe Mo, and Scribe Gui.

Scribe Gui said: "This is called submerged *yang*: you can raise troops; it is beneficial to attack the Jiang, but it is not beneficial for the Zi-Shang. Attacking Qi is acceptable, but opposing Song is not auspicious."

Scribe Mo said: "Fullness is a word for water, and Zi is the position of water. The word and position being opposed, it cannot be undertaken. The Flame Emperor was the Captain of Fire, and the Jiang family are his descendants. Since water overcomes fire, attacking the Jiang clan is acceptable."

Scribe Zhao said: "This is called 'Like a river's fullness, it cannot be swum.' Zheng has just now been guilty of an offense, so it cannot be relieved. To relieve Zheng would not be auspicious. I do not know anything else."

Yang Hu used the *Zhou Changes* to divine by milfoil about it, meeting *Tai* ䷊ "Positive"'s *Xu* ䷄ "Waiting," and said: "The quadrant of Song is auspicious; it cannot be engaged. Weizi Qi was the eldest son of Di Yi. Song and Zheng are cousins. 'Blessings' are rewards. If the eldest son of Emperor Yi married off a daughter and there were auspicious rewards, how could we obtain auspiciousness from it?" Then (Jin) stopped.<sup>31</sup>

### 2.12 Account #3.12: Zuo Zhuan, 17th Year of Duke Ai (478)

The short reign of Kuaikui 蒯聵, Duke Zhuang of Wei 衛莊侯 (r. 480–478 BCE), was marked by considerable court intrigue involving his sons and his confi-

31 *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 4702.

dante (and husband of his elder sister) Hun Liangfu 渾良夫. In this passage, which purports to recount events in the autumn of 478 (i.e., the last year of Duke Zhuang's life), Duke Zhuang dreamt of seeing Hun Liangfu, leading him to perform both milfoil and turtle-shell divination to determine the significance of the dream. The oracle of the turtle-shell divination seems to portend his imminent demise, as well as that of Hun Liangfu, who was subsequently killed by Duke Zhuang's heir.

衛侯夢于北宮，見人登昆吾之墟，被髮北面而譟曰：

登此昆吾之墟，絛絛生之瓜。余為渾良夫，叫天無辜。

公親筮之，胥彌赦占之，曰：「不害。」與之邑，寘之而逃，奔宋。衛侯貞卜，其絛曰：

如魚窺尾，衡流而方羊。

裔焉大國，滅之，將亡。

闔門塞竇，乃自後踰。

The Lord of Wei had a dream in the northern palace, seeing a man climbing the waste of Kunwu. With hair let down and facing north, he shouted saying:

Climbing this mound of Kunwu, Gourds growing from long tendrils.

I am Hun Liangfu, Crying to Heaven that I am without blame.

The duke personally divined by milfoil about it. Xumi She prognosticated it, saying: "It is not harmful." Giving him a city, no sooner was he settled than he absconded and fled to Song. The Lord of Wei then affirmed the turtle-shell crack-making. Its oracle said:

Like a fish with reddened tail, Floating cross-current and hesitating.

Bordering on a great country, Extinguishing it, it will be gone.

With gates shut and holes blocked, Then from the back crossing over.<sup>32</sup>

### 2.13 *Account #3.13: "Jin Yu 晉語 1," Guo Yu 國語*

The *Guo yu 國語 Stories of the States* is a sister-text to the *Zuo zhuan*, recounting stories from the various states of Spring and Autumn China. The following account is from an early period in the history of the state of Jin 晉. According to this well-known story, Duke Xian of Jin 晉獻公 (r. 676–651BCE) was a ruler who, despite initial successes, brought shame on himself and civil war to his state for several generations by taking as his principal consort Li Ji 驪姬

32 *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 4733.

(d. 651BCE), a woman captured in his attack on the Li Rong 驪戎. The story purports to recount a divination performed prior to his attack on the Li Rong. The divination results in an ambiguous prognostication, said to be based on the shape of a bifurcated crack, which is described as resembling teeth (*chi ya* 齒牙), the tips being in “each other’s clutches” (*jiao cuo* 交掣).

獻公卜伐驪戎，史蘇占之，曰：「勝而不吉。」公曰：「何謂也？」對曰：「遇兆，挾以銜骨，齒牙為猾，戎夏交掣。交掣，是交勝也，臣故云。且懼有口，懼民，國移心焉。」公曰：「何口之有！口在寡人，寡人弗受，誰敢興之？」對曰：「苟可以懼，其入也必甘受，遲而不知，胡可壅也？」公弗聽，遂伐驪戎，克之。獲驪姬以歸，有寵，立以為夫人。

公飲大夫酒，令司正實爵與史蘇，曰：「飲而無肴。夫驪戎之役，女曰『勝而不吉』，故賞女以爵，罰女以無肴。克國得妃，其有吉孰大焉！」史蘇卒爵，再拜稽首曰：「兆有之，臣不敢蔽。蔽兆之紀，失臣之官，有罪二焉，何以事君？大罰將及，不唯無肴。抑君亦樂其吉而備其凶，凶之無有，備之何害？若其有凶，備之為謬。臣之不信，國之福也，何敢憚罰。」

Duke Xian divined by turtle-shell about attacking the Li Rong. Scribe Su prognosticated it, saying: “Victorious and yet not auspicious.” The duke said: “What does this mean?” He responded saying: “We have met the crack:

Clasped together with bit and bone:<sup>33</sup> The teeth and fangs are slippery,  
The Rong and Xia in each other’s clutches.

‘In each other’s clutches’ is to exchange victories; that is why I have said this. What is more, I fear that to have a mouth leading the people, the state will lose its heart from this.” The duke said: “What mouth is there! The mouth is mine, and if I do not receive it who would dare to bring it up?” (Su) responded saying: “If they can be led, their entrance will certainly be sweet, but if put on display without knowing it how could it be dammed up?” The duke did not listen to it, and subsequently attacked the Li Rong, conquering them. He captured Li Ji and brought her back with favor, establishing her as his principal consort.

The duke toasted his great ministers with wine, commanding the superintendent to fill a chalice to give to Scribe Su saying: “Drink and yet no delicacies. Of the battle against the Li Rong, you said ‘Victorious and yet not auspicious,’ therefore I award you with the chalice, but punish

33 This phrase, *jia yi xian gu* 挾以銜骨, could also be translated as “Clasped together to bite the bone,” *xian* 銜 meaning either “bit” (as of a bridle) or “to bite; to hold in the mouth.”



you with no delicacies. What could be more auspicious than conquering a state and getting a mate!” Scribe Su finished the chalice, bowed twice and said: “It was in the crack, and your servant did not dare to hide it. Hiding a crack’s web would be to neglect my office, doubling my guilt. How would I dare to serve mylord! Great punishment would come, and it would not only be to be without delicacies. Now if mylord enjoys its auspiciousness and prepares for its ominousness, even if there is no ominousness what harm will there be in preparing for it? If it is ominous, to prepare for it is the cure. If your servant’s not being trustworthy is the good fortune of the state, how would I dare to dread the punishment!”<sup>34</sup>

### 2.14 Account #3.14: Mozi 墨子 Chapter “Geng Zhu” 耕柱

The *Mozi* 墨子 includes materials that are among the earliest attempts in the Chinese tradition to write logical arguments. Ascribed to one Mo Di 墨翟 (c. 468–376 BCE), better known as simply Mozi 墨子 or Master Mo, the text is famous for its arguments in favor of austerity, self-less affection, and the utility of the best possible result, and for the many popular notions that it opposed, including music, fate, and offensive warfare. He also discounted the necessary authority of the ancients. On the other hand, he argued passionately for the existence of ghosts and spirits. In the chapter “Geng Zhu” 耕柱, which purports to be a dialogue between Mozi and a disciple of his named Geng Zhu, he had occasion to address the qualities of ghosts. In it, he recounted an ancient turtle-shell divination that had predicted the rise of the Three Dynasties of ancient China (i.e., the Xia 夏, Shang 商 and Zhou 周). As in many other places in the text of the *Mozi*, this passage suffers textual corruption, but through the efforts of Qing-dynasty textual critics it has been possible to reconstitute much of the text, which preserves important information concerning divination. This information will be analyzed in the second half of this chapter.

巫馬子謂子墨子曰：鬼神孰與聖人明智。子墨子曰：鬼神之明智於聖人猶聰耳明目之與聾瞽也。昔者夏后開使蜚廉折金於山川而陶鑄之於昆吾。是使翁難雉乙卜於白若之龜曰：“鼎成三足而方，不炊而自烹，不舉而自臧，不遷而自行，以祭於昆吾之虛；上鄉”。乙又言兆之由曰：“饗矣。逢逢白雲，一南一北，一西一東。九鼎既成，遷于三國”。夏后氏失之，殷人受之；殷人失之，周人受之。夏后、殷、

34 Zuoqiu Ming 左丘明, Xu Yuangao 徐元誥 comp., *Guo yu jijie* 國語集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2002), 249–250.

周之相受也，數百歲矣。使聖人聚其良臣與其桀相而謀，豈能智數百歲之後哉，而鬼神智之。是故曰鬼神之明智於聖人也猶聰耳明目之與聾瞽也。

Magician Mazi addressed Master Mozi saying, "Who is more intelligent, the ghosts and spirits or the sages?" Master Mozi said, "The intelligence of the ghosts and spirits vis-à-vis that of the sages is just like those with perceptive ears and bright eyes vis-à-vis the deaf and blind. In antiquity, Qi, the lord of Xia sent Fei Lian to dig metal out of the hills and streams, and to cast a caldron at Kunwu. This one sent Wengnan Zhi Yi to divine about it with the turtle White Approval, saying: 'The caldron will be complete with three legs and will yet be square, will not roast and yet will cook of its own, will not be raised up and yet will store itself, and will not be transferred and yet will move on its own, in order to sacrifice on the mound of Kunwu; would that it be received.' Yi then spoke of the crack's oracle, saying: 'Received indeed. So billowing the white clouds, Now south now north, Now west now east: The nine caldrons being complete, Will be transferred to the three kingdoms.' The lords of Xia lost them, and the men of Yin got them; the men of Yin lost them, and the men of Zhou got them. The lords of Xia and Yin and Zhou getting them from each other has taken several hundred years. Even if we caused the sages to assemble their best ministers and their finest advisors, could it be that they would be able to know what would happen after several hundred years! And yet the ghosts and spirits knew it. This is why I say that the intelligence of the ghosts and spirits vis-à-vis that of the sages is just like those with perceptive ears and bright eyes vis-à-vis the deaf and blind."<sup>35</sup>

### 2.15 Account #3.15: Baoshan 包山 Bamboo Strips 197–198

The first significant discovery of textual material from the Warring States period came in January, 1987, from tomb 2 at Baoshan 包山, in Hubei province near the former capital of the southern state of Chu 楚. There were 448 bamboo strips found in the tomb, 278 bearing writing showing that this was the tomb of one Shao Tuo 召佗, a royal official who died in 316 BCE.<sup>36</sup> The greater part of the strips record court cases over which he presided, and thus provide rare

35 Sun Yirang 孫詒讓, *Mozi xian gu* 墨子問詁 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 4226 (the punctuation in the Chinese text is mine). Sun's emendations are based on Bi Yuan's critical edition, which in turn is based on the 1445 Ming-dynasty *Dao zang* 道藏 or Daoist canon text of the *Mozi* (this passage is found in that text at 11.9a–b) as well as later Ming editions and commentaries, all of which are copiously cited.

36 For these strips, see Hubei sheng Jing-Sha tielu kaogudui, ed., *Baoshan Chu jian*. For

information about the history of law in ancient China. However, there is also a considerable corpus, fifty-four strips, that record divinations that were performed and prayers that were offered on behalf of Shao Tuo during the last years of his life. Most of these divinations used turtle shells, though five of them used some method of milfoil divination that produced a result expressed as a pair of hexagrams. One such record from Baoshan has already been given in Chapter Two above, and examples using milfoil divination will also be examined in Chapter Four below.

With both turtle-shell and milfoil divination, the form of the record is essentially identical, beginning with the date of the divination, the name of diviner presiding and the divination material he was using. This was followed by the topic or “charge” of the divination proper, expressed as a desire that the matter would result in success. The divination officer then prognosticated the result, invariably interpreting the auspices as indicating that while the long-term prognosis was auspicious, in the short term there would continue to be problems, problems which required sacrificial propitiation. The record of these sacrifices was accompanied with yet another prayer for their success, and a final prognostication, invariably “auspicious,” offered by a different person.

The first example here is a routine turtle-shell divination about Shao Tuo’s service to the king. It offers few problems of interpretation, though two characters near the end of the record are indecipherable.

宋客盛公鸚聘於楚之歲，荊夷之月乙未之日，鹽吉以保家爲左尹庀貞：自荊夷之月以就荊夷之月，出入事王，盡卒歲，躬身尚毋有咎。占之：恆貞吉，少有憂於躬身，且志事少遲得。以其故斂之。思攻解於人愚。占之：甚吉。期中有喜。

In the year that the Song envoy Sheng Gong Bian visited at Chu, in the Jingyi month on the day *yimei*, Yan Ji used the Protect the Family (turtle) to affirm on behalf of Administrator of the Left Tuo: “From the Jingyi month through to the Jingyi month, coming out and going in to serve the king, through to the end of the year, would that his person not have any trouble.” Prognosticating it: “The long-term affirmation is auspicious, but there is a little concern about his person; moreover, the intended affair will be obtained a little slowly.” For this reason they propitiated it: “May it attack and dispel the person’s ignorance.” Prognosticating it: “Very auspicious. Within the period there will be joy.”<sup>37</sup>

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overviews of this tomb and the deceased buried in it, see Cook, *Death in Ancient China* and Lai, *Excavating the Afterlife*.

37 Hubei sheng Jing-Sha tielu kaogudui, *Baoshan Chu jian*, 32 (## 197–198).

2.16 *Account #3.16: Baoshan 包山 Bamboo Slips 199–200*

The second example of a turtle-shell divination from the Baoshan strips was divined on the same day as the first one, but whereas the first concerned Shao Tuo's service to the king, this second example seems to be a generic divination concerning his health. Over the course of the seven years chronicled by these divination records, Shao Tuo's health would deteriorate, such that in the last year most divinations came to concern the illness from which he would die. The general format of these health divinations is similar to that of the service divinations.

宋客盛公鸚聘於楚之歲，荊夷之月乙未之日，石被裳以訓鼈為左尹庀貞：自荊夷之月以就荊夷之月，盡卒歲，躬身尚毋有咎。占之：恆貞吉，少外有憂，志事少遲得。以其故斂之。罷禱於邵王特牛，饋之；罷禱文坪夜君、郢公子春、司馬子音、蔡公子家，各特豢、酒食；罷禱於夫人特豬。志事速得，皆速賽之。占之：吉。享月夏禱有憲。

In the year that the Song envoy Sheng Gong Bian visited at Chu, in the Jingyi month on the day *yíwei*, Shi Beishang used the Instructing Turtle to determine on behalf of Administrator of the Left Tuo: "From the Jingyi month through to the Jingyi month, through to the end of the year, would that his person have no trouble." Prognosticating it: "The long-term affirmation is auspicious, but there is a little concern on the outside, and the intended affair will be obtained slightly slowly." For this reason they exorcised it, praying to King Zhao with a specially-raised ox, and offering it; praying to Wenping Ye Jun, Wu Gongzi Chun, Sima Ziyin, and Caigong Zijia, each with a specially-raised piglet and wine and food; praying to the wife with a specially-raised pig: "If the intended affair is quickly gotten, all will be quickly reciprocated." Prognosticating it: "Auspicious. Offering in the Xiayi month there will be joy."<sup>38</sup>

2.17 *Account #3.17: Baoshan 包山 Bamboo Slips 234–235*

The final example of a turtle-shell divination record from Baoshan, performed in a different year from that of strips 197–198 and 199–200, again concerns Shao Tuo's service to the king. However, unlike most other records, which generally result in a preliminary prognostication that "The long-term affirmation is auspicious, but there is a little concern ..." (*heng zhen ji, shao you you* 恆貞吉，少有憂), which is then first followed by various acts of propitiation and then a final

38 Hubei sheng Jing-Sha tielu kaogudui, *Baoshan Chu jian*, 32 (## 199–200).

prognostication (invariably auspicious), this divination results in a prognostication of unqualified auspiciousness: “Auspicious. Without trouble, without hex.” (*ji wu jiu wu sui* 吉無咎無祟). Given this prognostication, there was no need for any propitiation, and so the record ends here.

大司馬悼滑將楚邦之師徒以救郟之歲，荊夷之月己卯之日，鄒吉以駁靈爲左尹舵貞：出入侍王，自荊夷之月以就集歲之荊夷之月，盡集歲，躬身尚毋有咎。鄒吉占之：吉，無咎，無祟。

In the year that Great Supervisor of the Horse Dao Hua led the army of the state of Chu to go to relieve Fu, in the Xingyi month, on the day *jimao*, Xu Ji used the Speckled Numen (turtle) to determine on behalf of Administrator of the Left Tuo: “Coming out and going in to serve the king, from the Jingyi month through to the whole year’s Jingyi month, throughout the whole year, would that his person not have any trouble.” Xu Ji prognosticated it: “Auspicious. Without trouble, without hex.”<sup>39</sup>

### 2.18 *Account #3.18: “Xiaowen Benji” 孝文本紀 Chapter of Shi Ji 史記*

The final account of turtle-shell divination to be considered here comes from slightly outside of the temporal boundaries that I have set (i.e., the Zhou dynasty), but I include it because it is so important and preserves information to which I will have occasion to return in several later chapters. Found in the *Shi ji* 史記 *Records of the Historian* (c. 100 BCE), the account describes a divination performed on behalf of Liu Heng 劉恆 (d. 157 BCE), one of the sons of Liu Bang 劉邦 (247–195 BCE), the founder of the Han dynasty (r. 202–195 BCE). After the death of Liu Bang, the Han ruling house fell into a fifteen-year-long period of civil war between the Liu family and the family of Liu Bang’s empress, Empress Lü 呂后 (241–180 BCE). With the death of Empress Lü in 180 BCE and the subsequent elimination of her family, emissaries from the imperial court approached Liu Heng, then serving as the king (*wang* 王) of the state of Dai 代, and invited him to become the new emperor. His advisors were of two minds as to whether he should accept this offer. Eventually he was persuaded to accept it. According to the narrative of the *Shi ji*, one of the factors in his decision was a turtle-shell divination that he had performed about it. The relevant portion of the account is quite short. In the next half of this chapter, we will return to consider the crack encountered and the oracle given to it.

39 Hubei sheng Jing-Sha tielu kaogudui, *Baoshan Chu jian*, 36 (## 234–235).

代王報太后計之，猶與未定。卜之龜，卦兆得大橫。占曰：

「大橫庚庚，余為天王，夏啟以光。」

代王曰：「寡人固已為王矣，又何王？」卜人曰：「所謂天王者乃天子。」

The king of Dai consulted with the queen-mother about (whether to accept the emperorship), but he was still not decided about it. He divined it with a turtle, the hexagram (*sic*) crack obtained being the “Grand Transversal.” (The diviner) prognosticated saying:

大橫庚庚，余為天王，夏啟以光。

The Grand Transversal *geng-geng*:

I will become the heavenly king,

With Qi of Xia thereby shining.

The King of Dai said: “Given that I am already a king, what further kingship could there be?” The diviner said, “What it means by ‘heavenly king’ is being the Son of Heaven.”<sup>40</sup>

### 3 Analysis

It would be possible to examine various aspects of the accounts of turtle-shell divination quoted above. However, for the purpose of understanding the relationship between these divinations and how the *Zhou Changes* came to be produced and how the text may have first been used, I propose to examine only four discrete topics: the “Command” (*ming* 命) to the turtle, which presented the topic to be divined; the “crack” (*bu* 卜), which served as the omen to be interpreted; the “oracle” (*zhou* 繇), the initial attempt to put into words the significance of the crack for the topic of the divination; and the “prognostication” (*zhan* 占), almost invariably employing a restricted set of formulaic terms. These four aspects are not on display in each and every one of the accounts studied here, but all four occur frequently enough and in a varied enough set of accounts that I am confident they do reflect the actual practice of turtle-shell divination in Zhou China. These accounts stretch over the course of the entire Zhou period and into the opening years of the Western Han dynasty, a span of almost one thousand years, and thus naturally display some variation and evolution. However, I am confident that they are consistent enough that the broad pattern of turtle-shell divination cannot be mistaken. In the next chapter, we will see that the practice of turtle-shell divination is also essentially the same as that of milfoil divination.

40 Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, 414.

### 3.1 *The “Command”*

The “command” to the turtle, also often referred to in Western-language studies of turtle-shell divination as the “charge” and in Chinese-language studies as the *mingci* 命辭 “command statement,” announces the topic of the divination and especially the desired outcome. It is very often, though not invariably, introduced by the word *zhen* 貞, translated above as “to affirm.” The word “command” itself is not used in the actual divination statement (though it is mentioned in accounts #3.3, #3.4 and #3.10 above [#3.10 employing the synonym *ling* 令 instead of *ming* 命]), but the *Zhou li* refers to the *mingguizhe* 命龜者 “the one who commands the turtle” in the performance of turtle-shell divination. This is quite straight-forward. However, the command to the turtle is at the heart of the most important debate within modern studies of divination. As mentioned in Chapter Two, there are classical statements to the effect that “turtle-shell divination is intended to resolve doubts” (*bu yi jue yi* 卜以決疑), suggesting that divination is an act of questioning. Thus, when Shang oracle-bone inscriptions first came to light at the beginning of the twentieth century, scholars routinely understood their charges as grammatical questions, those scholars using modern punctuation in their transcriptions of the commands routinely adding a question mark at the end. The most common type of divination among all Shang-dynasty oracle-bone inscriptions concerns the coming ten-day week, which was traditionally transcribed and understood as follows:

貞：旬亡憂？

Affirmed: Will the (next) ten-day week be without misfortune?

According to this punctuation and the understanding of divination that it entails, this type of divination was an open-ended inquiry as to whether there would or would not be any misfortune in the coming week. However, it might stand to reason that the same question could be asked without the negative (*wang* 亡 “to be without”); thus, “will the (next) ten-day week have any misfortune” (*xun you you* 旬有憂). However, this divination command was repeated literally thousands of times throughout all periods covered by the Shang oracle-bone inscriptions, and indeed by the end of the Shang period came to be almost the only topic of divination, yet not once do we ever see the grammatically positive command.

Proponents of the interrogative nature of Shang turtle-shell divination point to the positive-negative “paired affirmations” (*dui zhen* 對貞) frequently, and even routinely, seen in the inscriptions from the reign of King Wu Ding 武丁 (r. c. 1210–1190 BCE). One standard form of this type of paired affirmation would be as follows:

貞：我受年？

Affirmed: Will we receive harvest?

貞：我弗其受年？

Affirmed: Will we perhaps not receive harvest?

According to this interpretation, posing both positive and negative commands is a standard way of forming a question in Chinese, still routinely heard, as for instance *hao bu hao* 好不好, literally “good not good,” but meaning “is it alright?” Thus, the paired affirmation above is again a neutral inquiry as to whether or not the harvest will be received. However, in his 1959 book *Yindai zhenbu renwu tongkao* 殷代貞卜人物通考 *Comprehensive examination of Yin dynasty diviners*, Jao Tsung-i 饒宗頤 (1917–2018) suggested that the commands ought not be understood as questions, but rather were statements; in the many thousands of transcriptions of commands found throughout his book, he broke with convention in not employing question marks after the commands. However, the argument he gave in support of this new interpretation was concise to the point of being easily overlooked.<sup>41</sup> Fuller elaboration came in the early 1970s with the work of a pair of Western scholars: Fr. Paul L.-M. Serruys (1912–1999) and David N. Keightley (1932–2017).<sup>42</sup> The study by Serruys, published in the journal *T'oung Pao*, has proved particularly influential. One of the most important points he made concerned what has come to be called “modal *qi* 其,” a character seen in the negative harvest command above and theretofore often understood as “perhaps” or some sort of equivalent softener. Serruys demonstrated that modal *qi* is routinely found only in one command of a paired affirmation. It can be found in either the grammatically positive or negative command, but it invariably appears in the command that is less desired. For instance, in the harvest divination above, it goes without saying that the Shang diviners hoped to receive a good harvest, and wished to avoid the negative outcome, and they indicated this with the inclusion of the word *qi*. This may seem to be a trivial interpretation of a single particle, what in Chinese is typically referred to as an “empty word” (*xuci* 虛詞). Instead, it launched a powerful new understanding of divination within the ancient Chinese world.

41 Rao Zongyi 饒宗頤, *Yindai zhenbu renwu tongkao* 殷代貞卜人物通考 (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1959), 70–71.

42 See David N. Keightley, “*Shih cheng* 釋貞: A New Hypothesis About the Nature of Shang Divination,” paper presented to the conference Asian Studies on the Pacific Coast, Monterey, California, 17 June 1972; Paul L.-M. Serruys, “The Language of the Shang Oracle Inscriptions,” *T'oung Pao* 60.1–3 (1974): 21–23.



Serruys and Keightley both noted that commands such as that of the weekly inscription *xun wang you* 旬亡憂, translated above as “Will the (next) ten-day week be without misfortune?,” should actually be understood—both grammatically and conceptually—as a statement: “The (next) ten-day week will be without misfortune.” Pushing this interpretation one step further, they both noted that this is tantamount to a form of prayer stating the outcome desired by the Shang diviners. As for the earlier form of divination employing paired affirmations, they noted that positive and negative statements need not have an interrogative function. Just as young children in the West who pluck daisy petals intoning “She loves me,” “She loves me not” are not engaged in an open-ended inquiry into whether she actually does love me, but rather are trying to use the magic of the procedure to ensure that she does (or, I suppose, for some little boys, that she does not), so too did the early Shang diviners hope to use the magic of divination to ensure that they would receive a good harvest. This understanding of Shang divination would provide a firm foundation on which to understand later Chinese divination, and indeed much of later Chinese religious practice.

However, Serruys and Keightley were concerned primarily with Shang oracle-bone inscriptions, and turned their attention only tangentially to later evidence and later practice. The next important development in this interpretation probably came in my own 1983 doctoral dissertation, when I attempted to extend its implications to understanding the early use of the *Zhou Changes*.<sup>43</sup> In the years immediately after Serruys and Keightley were writing about Shang divination, archaeologists finally unearthed a significant corpus of Western Zhou turtle-shell inscriptions. Account #3.1, translated above, is just one example of these inscriptions. Just the command portion of this divination record, introduced by the word *zhen* 貞 “to affirm,” reads as follows:

貞：王其卪祝成唐，鬻禦艮二女，彝血牲三豚三；凶又正。

Affirmed: “The king will sacrifice to Cheng Tang, performing a caldron-exorcism of the two surrendered women and an *yi*-sacrifice with the blood of three rams and three sows; may it be correct.”

The final phrase of this command, here transcribed as *si you zheng* 凶又正 and translated as “may it be correct,” is key to understanding this divination command, and indeed all Zhou divination commands. In my dissertation, I noted that some variant of this phrase is found formulaically at the end of virtually all

43 Shaughnessy, “The Composition of the *Zhouyi*,” 57–59, 78–81.

complete Zhouyuan inscriptions, as the following listing shows (the numbers being the entry numbers for the individual inscriptions in which the formulaic ending is found):

凶亡咎 may there be no trouble.	H11:28, H11:35, H11:96, H31:3
凶亡咎 may there be no curse.	H11:20
凶正 may it be correct.	H11:82, H11:84, H11:114, H11:130
凶又正 may there be correctness.	H11:1
凶尚(當) may it match.	H11:2
凶克事 may we be able to serve.	H11:21
凶克往密 may we be able to go to Mi.	H11:136
凶成 may it be complete.	H31:5
凶丕妥王 may it greatly comfort the king.	H11:174
凶不大追 may they not greatly pursue.	H11:47
凶孚于永終 may it match with an eternal end.	齊家村
凶孚于永命 may it match with an eternal mandate.	齊家村

Further similar evidence, which only became available later, is seen in Account #3.2 above, the commands of which read:

翌日甲寅其𠄎凶廖

On the next day *jiayin* (day 51), we will make offering; may he heal.

其禱凶又廖

We will pray; may there be healing.

我既𠄎禱凶又

We having already made offering and prayed, may he be blessed.

These phrases are invariably conceptually (though not necessarily grammatically) positive, and it is easy to see that they serve as a final prayer that the proposal of the command be realized, much like the weekly prayers of the Shang diviners that there be no misfortune in the coming week. However, unlike the Shang commands, these final prayers are all introduced with the same word, written in the Zhouyuan inscriptions as 𠄎. The earliest studies of the Zhouyuan inscriptions variously transcribed this word as *hui* 惠, *nai* 迺 or *si* 斯, all understood as meaningless particles. Instead, I proposed that the graph should be transcribed as *xin* 𠄎 and understood as the protograph (i.e., the earliest form) of the character *si* 思 meaning “to think” or “to wish,” here used with the modality “may.”

This proposal was immediately accepted, at least in principle, by the influential scholar Li Xueqin 李學勤 (1933–2019) and through his publications it attracted considerable notice among Chinese scholars.<sup>44</sup> I myself have discussed this interpretation at considerable length in Chinese,<sup>45</sup> and do not pro-

44 Li Xueqin 李學勤, “Xulun Xi Zhou jiagu” 續論西周甲骨, *Zhongguo yuwen yanjiu* 中國語文研究 7 (1984): 1–8; *idem*, *Renwen zazhi* 人文雜誌 1986.1: 68–72.

45 My own Chinese translation of the relevant portion of my doctoral dissertation was first made available at a scholarly conference at the University of California, Berkeley, in June, 1983, but for various reasons was not published until 1989; Xia Hanyi 夏含夷, “Shilun Zhouyuan buci si zi: Jianlun Zhou dai zhenbu zhi xingzhi” 試論周原卜辭凶字—兼論周代貞卜之性質, *Guwenzi yanjiu* 古文字研究 17 (1989): 304–308. For a fuller treatment of the topic, including references to most of the relevant literature, see Xia Hanyi 夏含夷, “Zailun Zhouyuan bu ci si zi yu Zhou dai bu shi xingzhi zhu wenti” 再論周原卜辭凶字與周代卜筮性質諸問題, in 2007 *nian Zhongguo jianbo xue guoji luntan lunwenji* 2007年中國簡帛學國際論壇論文集 (Taipei: Taiwan daxue Zhongguo Wenxue, 2011), 17–48. A still more recent study of the topic, employing different evidence, is Xia Hanyi 夏含夷, “Shi zhi zhusong: San lun ‘si’ zi de fuci zuoyong” 《詩》之祝誦：三論‘思’字的副詞作用, *Qinghua jian yanjiu* 清華簡研究 2 (2015): 52–62.

pose here to revisit the issue. Let me just say that in the thirty-five years since I first proposed this reading, considerable new independent evidence has surfaced to demonstrate that it is surely correct, not withstanding resolute arguments against it by a great many Chinese scholars.<sup>46</sup> There is no question at all that 𠄎 is, in fact, to be transcribed as 𠄎 and is the protograph of *si* 思; it is found also in Baoshan divination records, also introducing formulaic prayers, sometimes written as 𠄎 and sometimes written as 思.

The Baoshan divination records also provide evidence for the use of another word to introduce these formulaic prayers: *shang* 尚. Accounts #3.15, #3.16 and #3.17 above all employ this word to introduce the final prayer of the command (highlighted in the following examples):

#3.15: 自荊夷之月以就荊夷之月，出入事王，盡卒歲，躬身尚毋有咎。

From the Jingyi month through to the Jingyi month, coming out and going in to serve the king, through to the end of the year, **would that** his person not have any trouble.

#3.16: 自荊夷之月以就荊夷之月，盡卒歲，躬身尚毋有咎。

From the Jingyi month through to the Jingyi month, through to the end of the year, **would that** his person have no trouble.

#3.17: 出入侍王，自荊夷之月以就集歲之荊夷之月，盡集歲，躬身尚毋有咎。

Coming out and going in to serve the king, from the Jingyi month through to the whole year's Jingyi month, throughout the whole year, **would that** his person not have any trouble.

Similar uses of the word are seen in the *Zuo zhuan* accounts #9 and #10, and in a slightly different form in the example of divination from the *Mozi*.

46 The most influential of these counter-arguments has been Chen Sipeng 陳斯鵬, "Lun Zhouyuan jiagu he Chu xi jianbo zhong de 'xin' yu 'si': Jianlun buci mingci de xingzhi" 論周原甲骨和楚系簡帛中的'凶'與'思'—兼論卜辭命辭的性質, in Zhang Guangyu 張光裕, and Zhang Shuangqing 張雙慶, *Disijie guoji Zhongguo guwenzixue yantaohui lunwenji* 第四屆國際中國古文字學研討會論文集 (Hong Kong: Xianggang Zhongwen daxue Zhongguo yuyan ji wenxue, 2003), 393–413. Chen Sipeng's proposal that *xin* 凶 or *si* 思 should be read as a phonetic loan for *shi* 使 "to cause" has been widely adopted in subsequent Chinese transcriptions and studies of excavated texts. I can only say that this transcription has neither paleographic support nor any conceptual validity. Its adoption in these other studies invariably misconstrues the sense of the passages in which the graph is found.

#3.9 余亟使人犒師，請行以觀王怒之疾徐，而為之備，尚克知之！

I will urgently send a man to celebrate the army, requesting that he go to observe the intensity of the king's anger, and then prepare against it; **would that** we can know this.

#3.10 魴也以其屬死之，楚師繼之，尚大克之！

Even if I Fang together with my followers die, the Chu army will follow up; **would that** we greatly defeat them.

#3.14 鼎成三足而方，不炊而自烹，不舉而自臧，不遷而自行，以祭於昆吾之虛；上鄉。

The caldron completing three legs will yet be square, will not roast and yet will cook of its own, will not be raised up and yet will store itself, and will not be transferred and yet will move on its own, in order to sacrifice on the mound of Kunwu; **would that** it be received.<sup>47</sup>

Indeed, we will see in the next chapter on milfoil divination that this word *shang* 尚 was formulaically used in the commands of milfoil divination as well. While this word had a wide range of meanings in ancient Chinese, in these contexts commentaries are consistent in glossing it as *shuji* 庶幾, meaning “to wish,” though with a softer modality such as “would that.” Thus, all of these Zhou-dynasty divination commands were essentially prayers addressed to the spirits through the medium of the turtle-shell (and it is worth underscoring again that these divination statements have always been called “commands,” the imperative nature of which is unmistakable). This supports what was said in Chapter Two above about the philosophical understanding of divination in ancient China: one was expected to make up one's mind before performing a divination. The divination was intended to enlist the aid of the spirits in the realization of one's intention.

### 3.2 *The Crack*

There are tens of thousands of cracks to be seen in pieces of Shang-dynasty turtle-shell and ox-bone divination, but the shapes of most of these cracks defy any more elaborate description than that of the character 卜 itself: a long vertical crack with a second crack branching off from it, either horizontally or

47 *Shang xiang* 上鄉 here is essentially meaningless in this context. Already in the eighteenth century, Bi Yuan 畢沅 indicated his suspicion that this should be read as *shang xiang* 尚饗, a suggestion later accepted by Sun Yirang 孫詒讓; see Bi Yuan 畢沅, *Mozi* 墨子 (Sibu beiyao ed.), 11.8b; Sun Yirang, *Mozi xian gu*, 425.

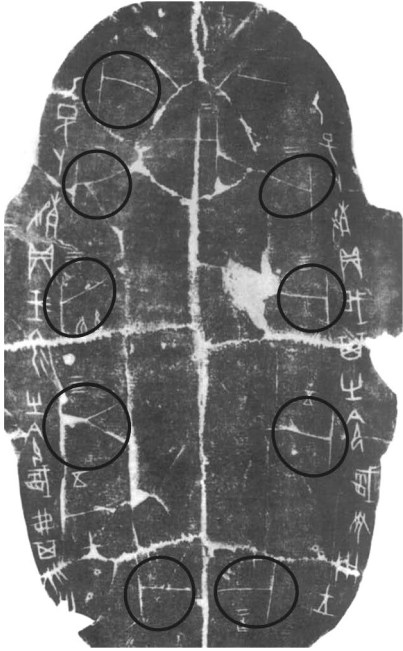


FIGURE 3.3

Cracks on a Shang-dynasty oracle bone; from Guo Moruo 郭沫若 ed.-in-chief, Zhongguo Shehui kexueyuan Lishi yanjiusuo ed., *Jiaguwen heji* 甲骨文合集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), #1107, highlights added

slanting downward (as in the character) or upward. This shape of the crack is dictated by the way in which the turtle-shell (or bone) was prepared in advance of the divination. Oblong-shaped hollows were carved into the reverse side of the shell, with a second round hollow drilled to one side or the other of the first hollow. When a hot brand was inserted into this hole, the oblong-shaped hollow produced the long vertical crack ( | ), while the round crack to the side produced the branch crack, seen multiple times in the figure above.

In contrast to the apparently uniform shape of cracks in Shang oracle bones, the descriptions of crack shapes in Zhou turtle-shell divination are anything but uniform. An illustration of this diversity of crack shapes can be seen in the Shanghai Museum manuscript *\*Bu shu*. Isolating just the descriptions of cracks and their names, we see the following:

𠄎印首出止，是胃闕。

The crack has a raised head and extended foot; this is called 'Open.'

𠄎膺首內止，是胃陷。

The crack has a lowered head and a constricted foot; this is called 'Sinking.'

𠄎如印首出止，而屯不困膺，是胃狝。

The crack resembles a raised head and extended foot, and gathers but does not bind the chest; this is called 'Shaded.'

𠄎少陷，是胃隳。

The crack is a little sunken; this is called 'Dim.'

𠄎高上，𠄎屯深，是胃干。

The belly is elevated on high and the crack gathers deep; this is called 'Level.'

凡三族有此（疵），三末唯吉，如白如黃。

Whenever the three beginnings have flaws, the three tips mean auspiciousness, resembling white or yellow.

𠄎唯起（起）句（鉤），毋白毋赤，毋卒以易。

When the crack begins with a hook, neither white nor red, nor completed in changing.

三族之放。三末食墨且表（孚）。

The removal of the three beginnings. The three tips eat the ink and also match.

三族句旨而易；三末唯敗。

The three beginnings are hooked but changing and the three tips are disappearing.

如三末唯吉，三族是卒。

If the three tips are auspicious and the three beginnings are complete.

Some of these descriptions are more or less clear. It seems, for instance, that the “head” (*shou* 首) is that portion of the branch crack closest to the vertical crack, while the “foot” (*zhi* 止) is that portion of the crack farthest away from the vertical (though there are other understandings as well).<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, there is no consensus at all regarding what I have here translated, for want of

48 See, for instance, Cheng Shaoxuan 程少軒, “Xiao yi Shangbo Jiu *Bu shu* de ‘san zu’ he ‘san mo’” 小議上博就《卜書》的“三族”和“三末,” [http://www.gwz.fudan.edu.cn.Srcshow.asp?src\\_ID=1995](http://www.gwz.fudan.edu.cn.Srcshow.asp?src_ID=1995), who understands the “head” and “foot” as the top and bottom of the vertical crack respectively.

anything better, as the “three beginnings” (*san zu* 三族) and “three tips” (*san mo* 三末).<sup>49</sup> As I noted above, it is also possible that at least the first three or four of these descriptions are intended to describe one and the same crack. It is not at all unthinkable that different diviners could see different shapes, even wildly different shapes, in the cracks. I think that for the time being it is probably best to confess ignorance of what these shapes might have been like, and also how they may have been interpreted.

On the other hand, some of the descriptions of cracks in received texts have at least been supplied with a long commentarial tradition. It is of course also possible that these commentaries are as inconsistent or as unreliable as the diviners of the *\*Bu shu* may have been, but at least they supply us with an initial vocabulary. Among the eighteen accounts of turtle-shell divination examined above, there are five descriptions of the cracks encountered in the divinations. Isolating just the description, they are as follows:

#3.5 我乃卜澗水東、灋水西，惟洛食。我又卜灋水東，亦惟洛食。  
We then divined about the east of the Jian River and west of the Zhan River, and it was the Luo that was eaten (*sic*). We also divined about the east of the Zhan River, and it was again the Luo that was eaten.

#3.7 遇黃帝戰于阪泉之兆。  
We have met the crack of the Yellow Emperor battling at Banquan.

#3.8 兆如山陵。  
The crack is like a mountain peak.

#3.13 遇兆，挾以銜骨，齒牙為猾，戎夏交捽。  
Meeting the crack: Clasped together with bit and bone: The teeth and fangs are slippery, The Rong and Xia in each other's clutches.

#3.18 卦兆得大橫。... 大橫庚庚  
The hexagram (*sic*) crack obtained being the “Grand Transversal.” ... The Grand Transversal *geng-geng*.

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49 The translation follows the interpretation of Cheng Shaoxuan, “Xiao yi Shangbo Jiu *Bu shu* de ‘san zu’ he ‘san mo,’” as the point of intersection between the vertical and branch cracks, understanding the vertical crack as divided by the branch crack into two separate portions, and the “three tips” (*san mo* 三末) then as the opposite ends of these three crack portions.



According to the Tang-dynasty commentary *Shang shu zhengyi*, the description in the “Luo gao” (account #3.5) of the crack being “eaten” (*shi* 食) derives from a practice of the diviner, in advance of the divination, drawing the anticipated shape of the crack in ink on the shell; if, after the divination had been performed, the actual crack in the shell coincided with what had been drawn, obliterating the ink, this would be said to be “eating the ink” (*shi mo* 食墨). That this practice is thoroughly reported in the later commentarial literature, but—prior to the discovery of the \**Bu shu* manuscript—had almost never been mentioned in discussions of actual Shang-dynasty turtle-shell divination shows how little we actually know about this practice, not withstanding the many tens of thousands of physical specimens available for study.

The second example of a crack shape listed here, found in the *Zuo zhuan* for the 25th year of Duke Xi 僖, states that when Duke Wen of Jin had a turtle-shell divination performed concerning whether to come to the aid of the exiled King Xiang of Zhou, he encountered a crack named for a famous battle in China’s mythological past: “the crack of the Yellow Emperor battling at Banquan” (Huang Di *zhan yu* Banquan *zhi zhao* 黃帝戰于阪泉之兆). This might suggest that there was some sort of compendium of diagrams, such as might originally have been contained in the “Gui ce liezhuan” of the *Shi ji*, depicting the shapes of cracks and perhaps also giving names to them. Of course, it is also just as possible that the diviner simply imagined this, drawing on his own store of experience with the shapes of cracks. In this case, since the divination was occasioned by a conflict between two royal brothers, King Xiang and his brother Wangzi Dai, it would have been natural to recall this famous mythological battle between two ruling brothers, the Yellow Emperor (Huang Di 黃帝) and the Flame Emperor (Yan Di 炎帝), especially since the result of that battle—the legitimate ruler, the Yellow Emperor, banishing his rebelling brother—anticipated the desire result here—that King Xiang would displace his brother Wangzi Dai and be restored to his proper place in the Zhou capital.

The other named crack in these accounts, the “Grand Transversal” (*Da heng* 大橫) in account #18, is doubtless similar to a crack called “transversal auspicious peace” (*heng ji an* 橫吉安) found in the “Gui ce liezhuan.” According to commentaries to that work, the shape of this crack was just as its name suggests: a long branch crack extending transversally from the vertical crack, perhaps like 𠄎 with an accentuated horizontal line. In the “Gui ce liezhuan,” this crack usually results in “auspicious” prognostications.

Crack-making about whether or not to travel: If one is to travel both the head and foot will be open. If one is not to travel, the foot will be

folded and the head raised. If it is “transversal auspicious peace,” then rest and do not travel.<sup>50</sup>

While the word *heng* 橫 “transversal, horizontal” has various connotations in Chinese, some positive and some negative, in the context of the divination for Liu Heng reported in account #18 it was almost certainly understood by the diviner to be auspicious, presumably indicating an uninterrupted line of succession within the Liu family house, extending from Liu Bang, the founder of the dynasty, to his son Liu Heng (whose name Heng 恆, is not to be confused with *heng* 橫 “transversal, horizontal”). In this case, in addition to describing the shape of the crack, the diviner apparently also recorded the sound that the shell made as it was cracking: “*Geng-geng*” 庚庚. Although the character used to write the sound here (*geng* 庚) is more or less meaningless, several commentators to the *Shi ji* point out that it is homophonous with another word (*geng* 更) that means “to succeed” (as in “to inherit”), as a son would “succeed” a father.<sup>51</sup> Whether the sound the crack made was actually anything like *geng-geng*,<sup>52</sup> the diviner apparently understood the sound—like the shape—of the crack to mean that Liu Heng should become emperor.

The other two crack shapes encountered in these accounts are rather more specific. In account #3.8, we are told explicitly what the crack looked like: “The crack is like a mountain peak” (*zhao ru shan ling* 兆如山陵). It is not hard to imagine that this would be a shape such as 丿 or ㄟ. A “mountain peak” also had ambiguous connotations in ancient China. Of course, they were places nearest to the heavens, and so closest to the heavenly spirits. However, they were also dangerous places. To understand the connotation here, it is necessary to note that this description comes in the “oracle” of the divination extemporized by the diviner (as did the “Grand transversal *geng-geng*” description of account #3.18). As we will see below, the format of these oracles demanded a following

50 Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, 3241.

51 The *Shi ji jijie* 史記集解 commentary quotes Zhang Yan 張晏 (3rd c.) more or less to this effect, while the *Shi ji suoyin* 史記索隱 commentary quotes Xun Yue 荀悅 (148–209) as explicitly stating this explanation; for both of these, see Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, 415 n. 8.

52 In this regard, while it is well known that the word *bu* “crack; divination” is written with the pictograph 卜 depicting the shape of the graph, it is worth recalling that the pronunciation of the word, something like \*puk in archaic Chinese, was originally also onomatopoeic, depicting the sound of the cracking. While *puk* seems to be a reasonable approximation of such a sound (in English often approximated with a spelling such as *pok*), it is hard to imagine the crack sounding like *geng*. However, this is probably beside the point. If the diviner said that he heard *geng*, then he heard *geng*, and he was free to understand the sound as a Chinese word.

couplet that would relate the omen of the crack to the topic of the divination. Without wishing to anticipate the discussion of these oracles, I suspect that in the case of this divination, which was about the desirability of countering an attack on his home state, the diviner must have understood a “mountain peak” to portend danger.

The final description of a crack shape, in account #3.13, is the most specific of all. This divination comes in the course of one of the most famous (perhaps notorious would be a better word) romances in ancient Chinese history, between Duke Xian of Jin and Li Ji, a woman of “barbarian” birth who was captured by Duke Xian in the course of a successful military campaign against her people. Duke Xian’s lengthy reign (twenty-six years) began well. However, in 672 BCE, his attack on the Li Warriors (Li Rong 驪戎), though initially successful, would prove ultimately to have disastrous consequences for the state of Jin 晉. In the course of this campaign, the Jin army captured Li Ji, who “gained the favor” of Duke Xian, as the expression would have it. In 665, she gave birth to a son, named Xiqi 奚齊, and quickly moved to have this son made the heir apparent. She first persuaded Duke Xian to remove his principal sons, Shensheng 申生, Chong’er 重耳, and Yiwu 夷吾, to provincial towns. Nine years later, in 656 BCE, she then engaged in what Chinese history has come to term “the disturbance of Li Ji” (Li Ji *zhi luan* 驪姬之亂), resulting in the suicide of the heir apparent Shensheng and the eventual exile of both Chong’er and Yiwu. Upon the death of Duke Xian in 651, Li Ke 里克 (d. 650 BCE), one of the state’s most powerful generals killed Xiqi and installed Yiwu as Duke Xian’s successor; this was Duke Hui of Jin 晉惠公 (r. 650–637 BCE).

The divination performed for Duke Xian prior to his attack on the Li Warriors resulted in a crack phrased in its entirety as an oracle, with three four-character phrases: “Clasped together with bit and bone: The teeth and fangs are slippery, The Rong and Xia in each other’s clutches” (*jia yi xian gu, chi ya wei hua*, Rong Xia *jiao zuo* 挾以銜骨，齒牙為猾，戎夏交掙). The first phrase surely describes the crack, while the other two seem both to add to that description and also to relate it to the topic of the divination. According to Wei Zhao 韋昭 (A.D. 204–271), the earliest commentator on the *Guo yu*, the “teeth and fangs” here suggest that “to the left and right at the tip of the crack there were splits smeared with blood” (*zhao duan zuo you xin che* 兆端左右鬣垢).<sup>53</sup> He also suggested that this reference to teeth was meant to symbolize that it is through the mouth that harm is done, but this is perhaps a different topic to which we will return in the discussion of oracles below. For now, it will have to suffice that the

53 Zuoqiu Ming, *Guo yu jijie*, 249.

diviner described this crack as bifurcated and jagged, perhaps something like 卜^, with the different parts of the crack representing the two main protagonists of the divination topic.

### 3.3 *The Oracle*

The oracle (*zhou* 繇; also pronounced *yao*) is the portion of the divination result, whether of turtle-shell or milfoil divination, of the most direct relevance to the *Zhou Changes*. Indeed, the lines of the hexagrams of the *Zhou Changes*, now usually referred to as *yao* 爻, were originally called *zhou* 繇. The ancient pronunciation of the two words was identical, and the two graphs refer to the same word. The oracle is also doubtless the portion of the divination result with the most general interest, since its most common format is reminiscent of poetry from ancient China's *Shi jing* 詩經 *Classic of Poetry*. Although there are different formats, the classic form of a divinatory oracle is of three rhyming four-character phrases, the first phrase of which describes the crack itself, the following couplet then relating this to the topic of the divination, sometimes only elliptically or euphemistically. These oracles are only seen in the received literature, though as we will see in Chapter Four below, there is also one case of an oracle seen on a bamboo-slip record of a milfoil divination from Geling 葛陵, Xincai 新蔡, Henan. In the accounts of turtle-shell divination surveyed above, there are five different cases either explicitly referred to as "oracles," or which can be identified as such on the basis of their form.

- #3.6: 鳳皇于飛，和鳴鏘鏘。  
有媯之後，將育于姜。  
五世其昌，並于正卿。  
八世之後，莫之與京。

The phoenixes are in flight, Harmonious calls resounding.  
Descendants of the house of Gui, Will be nurtured among the  
Jiang.  
Five generations will they flourish, Side-by-side with chief ministers.  
After eight generations, No one will be so towering.

- #3.8: 姜氏問繇。曰：  
兆如山陵，有夫出征，而喪其雄。

Madame Jiang asked about the oracle. He said:  
The crack is like a mountain peak:  
There's a man going on campaign, And yet loses his leader.

#3.12: 其繇曰:

如魚鏡尾，衡流而方羊。  
 裔焉大國，滅之，將亡。  
 闔門塞竇，乃自後踰。

Its oracle said:

Like a fish with reddened tail, Floating cross-current and hesitating,  
 Bordering on a great country, Extinguishing it, it will be gone.  
 With gates shut and holes blocked, Then from the back crossing over.

#3.14: 乙又言兆之由曰：饗矣。

逢逢白雲，一南一北，一西一東。  
 九鼎既成，遷于三國。

Yi then spoke of the crack's oracle, saying: "Received' indeed.

So billowing the white clouds, Now south now north, Now west now east:

The nine caldrons being complete, Will be transferred to the three kingdoms."

#3.18: 占曰：

大橫庚庚，余為天王，夏啟以光。

(The diviner) prognosticated saying:

The Grand Transversal *geng-geng*:

I will become the heavenly king, With Qi of Xia thereby shining.

As I will stress in other chapters of this book, and especially in Chapter Nine on line statements of the *Zhou Changes*, I view the examples of oracles given in accounts #3.8 and #3.18 to be paradigmatic. I have already discussed the first phrases of these two accounts in the discussion of The Crack above, and will not repeat that discussion here.

In retrospect, what I will term the "rejoinder couplet" in these two cases is easy enough to understand. However, it is also easy to see that it is phrased ambiguously enough to makes its interpretation problematic, especially if it were pronounced in advance of the intended action, as purported in these accounts. The oracle was supposed to have been announced by the diviner, based upon what had been commanded to the turtle (i.e., the "command") and also the shape (and perhaps the sound) of the crack. In account #3.8, about a possible counter-attack by the state of Wei against an invasion by the state

of Zheng, we learn of the oracle only second-hand. Sun Wenzi 孫文子, chief minister of Wei, asked that the turtle-shell be given to Ding Jiang 定姜, wife of Duke Ding of Wei 衛定公, for her interpretation. Ding Jiang asked what the oracle had been. This suggests to me that Sun Wenzi had been unconvinced by the initial result announced by the diviner performing the divination. Reading the oracle, I think we can see why Sun Wenzi may have been dissatisfied.

兆如山陵，有夫出征，而喪其雄。

The crack is like a mountain peak:

There's a man going on campaign, And yet loses his leader.

This rejoinder is ambiguous. Does the loss of the leading man pertain to the original invaders from Zheng, or might it portend instead an unsuccessful counter-attack, including even the death of Sun Wenzi himself? The ambiguity may have been intentional on the part of the diviner; it would have given him plausible deniability in the event that the counter-attack failed. When Sun Wenzi turned to Ding Jiang for her interpretation, she resolved the ambiguity: "That the campaigner loses his leading man is the benefit of driving off bandits" (*zheng zhe sang xiong, yu kou zhi li ye* 征者喪雄，禦寇之利也). This statement is a simple transformation of a formula that occurs twice in the *Zhou Changes*: "beneficial to drive off bandits" (*li yu kou* 利禦寇). As we will have occasion to discuss in considerably more detail in Chapter Nine below, it occurs, for instance in the Nine in the Third line of *Jian* 漸 ䷴ "Progressing" (#53) hexagram:

九三：鴻漸于陸，夫征不復，婦孕不育。凶。利禦寇。

Nine in the Third: A wild goose progressing to a mound: A husband campaigning but not returning, A wife pregnant but not giving birth. Ominous. Beneficial to drive off bandits.

It is easy to see that the main portion of this line statement has the same form as the oracles seen above in the two accounts of turtle-shell divination: a four-character phrase describing an omen (in this case, one in the natural world rather than the shape of the crack in the turtle-shell), followed by a rhyming couplet of four-character phrases relating it to a topic in the human realm, again apparently a military campaign, though with an additional concern for the women left behind. In the case of this *Zhou Changes* line statement, the oracle is obviously negative, leading naturally to the prognostication "ominous" (*xiong* 凶). That the phrase "the benefit of driving off bandits" (*yu kou zhi li ye* 禦寇之利也) in account #3.8 here was the interpretation of Ding Jiang and

was not part of the original oracle produced by the diviner might suggest that the similar sorts of interpretations found in the line statements of the *Zhou Changes* might also have been added to the line statement, by some process of accretion, sometime after the original oracle was put into the text. The evidence in this divination would certainly point in this direction.

In the case of account #3.18, the oracle is easier to understand, and should have been easier for Liu Heng to understand as well. The topic of this divination was whether he would become the emperor; it presumably was addressed to the turtle with a command such as “I will become emperor; would that it be received” (which might have been stated, in its simplest form, as *yu wei huang di; shang xiang* 余為皇帝；尚饗). The oracle, pronounced by the diviner on the basis of the shape and sound of the crack (“the Grand Transversal *geng-geng*” [*da heng geng geng* 大橫庚庚]), would seem to be unambiguous: “I will become the heavenly king, With Qi of Xia thereby shining” (*yu wei tian wang*, Xia Qi *yi guang* 余為天王，夏啟以光). “Qi of Xia” was the son of Yu the Great 大禹, the legendary founder of the Xia dynasty, with Qi instituting for the first time dynastic rule. This was certainly meant to suggest that Liu Heng, the son of Liu Bang, the founder of the Han dynasty, should likewise inherit his father’s position as emperor. However, Liu Heng was reticent, whether sincerely or not, and objected that since he was already a “king” (*wang* 王; he was king of the state of Dai 代), this oracle did not pertain to him. It was left to the diviner in this case to explain to him the difference between “the heavenly king” (*tian wang* 天王) and just any king. In the end, Liu Heng allowed himself to be persuaded, and went on to rule for twenty-four years (180–157 BCE), going down in history as one of China’s greatest emperors of all time.

### 3.4 The Prognostication

Whereas only a minority of the accounts provide evidence for any of the first three topics considered here (the Command, Crack, and Oracle), with the exception of the two Zhouyuan oracle-bone inscriptions, almost all of them contain an explicit Prognostication (*zhan* 占, or *zhanci* 占辭). Most of these Prognostications are quite simple. Indeed, most of the Prognostications are simply “Auspicious” (*ji* 吉) or some variation of that: “Long-term auspicious” (*heng ji* 恆吉), “not auspicious” (*bu ji* 不吉), or “very auspicious” (*shen ji* 甚吉). These Prognostications are similar to such prognostications seen in the *Zhou Changes* as “auspicious,”<sup>54</sup> or “ominous” (*xiong* 凶),<sup>55</sup> though the *Zhou*

54 *Ji* 吉 occurs in the *Zhou Changes* 147 times, sometimes specified as “prime auspiciousness” (*yuan ji* 元吉; 13 times), “great auspiciousness” (*da ji* 大吉; 5 times), or “extended auspiciousness” (*yin ji* 引吉; 1 time).

55 *Xiong* 凶 occurs in the *Zhou Changes* 58 times, never modified by any other word.

*Changes* also employs some other technical divination terms, such as “stinted” (*lin* 吝), “danger” (*li* 厲), or especially the frequently occurring “without trouble” (*wu jiu* 无咎),<sup>56</sup> which would seem to be analogous to the “without harm” (*wang hai* 罔害) seen in account #3.3. I list all of the Prognostications seen in these accounts.

#3.3: 體，王其罔害！

As for the shape, the king will be without harm.

#3.4: 予得吉卜。... 矧今卜并吉。

I have obtained an auspicious divination. ... All the more so now that our divinations have both been auspicious.

#3.5: 予卜休恆吉。

I have divined, and it was favorable: ‘Long-term auspicious.’

#3.6: 其妻占之，曰：吉。

His wife prognosticated it, saying: ‘Auspicious.’

#3.7: 使卜偃卜之，曰：「吉。」

(The Lord of Jin) had Diviner Yan divine about it by turtle shell. (Diviner Yan) said: ‘Auspicious.’

#3.8: 姜氏曰：「征者喪雄，禦寇之利也。大夫圖之！」

Madame Jiang said: ‘That the campaigner loses his leading male is the benefit of driving off bandits; the great minister should plan on it.’

#3.9: 龜兆告吉，曰：『克可知也。』

The crack in the turtle announced auspiciousness, saying, ‘Success can be known.’

56 *Lin* 吝 occurs in the *Zhou Changes* 20 times, *li* 厲 27 times, and *wu jiu* 无咎 93 times (in addition to two occurrences of “no great trouble” [*wu da jiu* 无大咎]). In Shaughnessy, “The Composition of the *Zhouyi*,” 152–158, I argued for a categorical distinction between one group of technical divination terms (*ji* 吉, *xiong* 凶, *lin* 吝 and *li* 厲), which I termed “prognostications,” and another group, including especially *wu jiu* 无咎 (but including also “nothing not beneficial” [*wu bu li* 无不利], “nothing beneficial” [*wu you li* 无攸利], “regret” [*hui* 悔] and “regret gone” [*hui wang* 悔亡]), which I termed “verifications.” I noted there that whereas the first group (i.e., *ji* 吉, *xiong* 凶, *lin* 吝 and *li* 厲) regularly appears after the word “affirm” (*zhen* 貞), the other group almost never does (*wu bu li* 无不利, *wu you li* 无攸利 and *hui* 悔 never doing so, and *hui wang* 悔亡 doing so only once



#3.10: 陽句為令尹，卜戰，不吉。... 令曰：... 吉。

Yang Gai was serving as Commandant and divined by turtle-shell about the battle; it was not auspicious. ... He commanded saying: "... It was auspicious."

#3.13: 史蘇占之，曰：「勝而不吉。」

Scribe Su prognosticated it, saying: "Victorious and yet not auspicious."

#3.14: 乙又言兆之由曰：「饗矣。」

Yi then spoke of the crack's oracle, saying: "'Received' indeed."

#3.15: 占之：恆貞吉，少有憂於躬身，且志事少遲得。... 占之：甚吉。期中有喜。

Prognosticating it: "The long-term affirmation is auspicious, but there is a little concern about his person; moreover, the intended affair will be obtained a little slowly." ... Prognosticating it: "Very auspicious. Within the period there will be joy."

#3.16: 占之：恆貞吉，少外有憂，志事少遲得。..... 占之：吉。享月夏祭有喜。

Prognosticating it: "The long-term affirmation is auspicious, but there is a little concern on the outside, and the intended affair will be obtained slightly slowly." ... Prognosticating it: "Auspicious. Offering in the Xiayi month there will be joy."

#3.17: 鄒吉占之：吉，無咎，無崇。

Xu Ji prognosticated it: "Auspicious. Without trouble, without hex."

As noted above, the "without harm" (*wang hai* 罔害) of account #3.3 is doubtless analogous to the "without trouble" (*wu jiu* 无咎) of the *Zhou Changes*. "No trouble" is also seen in account #3.17, from the Baoshan divination records. While the translation "without trouble" is literally accurate, it may be somewhat misleading; the term *wu jiu* 无咎 has several antecedents in Shang oracle-

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in 18 occurrences and *wu jiu* 无咎 only once in its 93 occurrences). I still believe that this difference in usage in the *Zhou Changes* may point to some functional difference between these two groups. However, the appearance of *wu jiu* (written 無咎) together with *ji* 吉 in account #3.17 here, explicitly termed a "prognostication" (*zhan* 占) would seem to argue strongly against such a distinction.

bone inscriptions,<sup>57</sup> and as its association with the further prognostication “without hex” (*wu sui* 無祟) in account #3.17 would suggest, it seems to refer to some sort of curse or hex from the spirit world, rather than to any general notion of trouble.

Moving on to the non-standard prognosticatory phrasing in account #3.8, the sentence “That the campaigner loses his leading male is the benefit of driving off bandits” (*zhengzhe sang xiong, yu kou zhi li ye* 征者喪雄，禦寇之利也) listed above is probably not a prognostication in a technical sense, but rather is a secondary explanation of the significance of the original prognostication. Nevertheless, it is worth noting here again that it is the transformation of a phrase that occurs twice in the *Zhou Changes*, “beneficial to drive off bandits” (*li yu kou* 利禦寇):

蒙 ䷃ (#4): 上九：擊蒙。不利為寇，利禦寇。

*Meng* ䷃ “Shrouded”: Top Nine: Striking a shroud. Not beneficial to be bandits, beneficial to drive off bandits.

漸 ䷴ (#53): 九三：鴻漸于陸，夫征不復，婦孕不育。凶。利禦寇。

*Jian* ䷴ “Progressing”: Nine in the Third: A wild goose progressing to a mound: A man campaigning but not returning, A wife pregnant but not giving birth. Ominous. Beneficial to drive off bandits.

In the hexagram and line statements of the *Zhou Changes*, expressions such as “beneficial to drive off bandits,” in which the word “beneficial” (*li* 利) introduces a phrase advising for or against some action, occur frequently (19 times). Implications of this grammar vis-à-vis the frequently occurring phrase “beneficial to affirm” (*li zhen* 利貞) and vis-à-vis the nature of *Zhou Changes* divination will be discussed in chapters Five and Eight below. For now, it probably suffices to note that these “beneficial to” phrases, and especially those found in the line statements of the *Zhou Changes*, should also be understood, as here in account #3.8, as a secondary explanation of the significance of a prognostication.

Next, the prognostication of account #3.14 calls for special attention. It is simply the word *xiang* 饗 “received” (though here emphasized as “Received indeed” by the addition of the final particle *yi* 矣). As noted in the discussion of

57 For a full discussion of these antecedents, see Kunst, “The Original *Yijing*,” 163–168.

the Command above, *xiang* 饗 forms part of what would become the standard final prayer of divinations and sacrificial offerings: *shang xiang* 尚饗 “would that it be received.” This passage shows well how it is to be understood: it is the announcement of the diviner that the wish expressed in the divination has been “received” and “enjoyed” by the spirits, thereby also constituting the divination’s response. A similar example of the use of this prognostication is seen in the “Gu ming” 顧命 “Retrospective Command” chapter of the *Shang shu*, which describes ceremonies surrounding the installation of King Kang of Zhou 周康王 (r. 1005/03–978 BCE).

太保、太史、太宗皆麻冕彤裳。太保承介圭，上宗奉同、瑁，由阼階躋。太史秉書，由賓階躋，御王冊命曰：“皇后憑玉几，道揚末命，命汝嗣訓，臨君周邦；率循大卞，變和天下，用荅揚文武之光訓。”王再拜，興。荅曰：“眇眇予末小子，其能而亂四方，以敬忌天威。”乃受同、瑁。王三宿，三祭，三咤。上宗曰：“饗”。

The Grand Protector, Grand Scribe, and Grand Templar were all dressed in hempen caps and vermilion robes. The Grand Protector received the jade tessera and the High Templar held aloft the chalice and ladle, ascending via the main stairs. The Grand Scribe grasped the document, ascending via the guest stairs, and facing the king read the command, saying: “The august ruler resting on the jade armrest announced his final command, commanding you to inherit the instruction and to oversee the Zhou state, direct the great model and harmonize all under heaven, herewith responding to the radiant instruction of (kings) Wen and Wu.” The king bowed twice and then arose, answering saying: “Dim-sighted though I the young son am, would that I be able to govern the four quarters and fear the awe of heaven.” Then, receiving the chalice and ladle, the king thrice proffered the chalice, thrice sacrificed, and thrice re-set the chalice. The High Templar said: “Received.”<sup>58</sup>

The “Received” (*xiang* 饗) announced by the High Templar (*shang zong* 上宗), indicating the successful completion of the sacrificial offering, is the same word seen in the *Mozi* (account #3.14). As I will show in Chapter Eight below, it is also almost certainly the same word as the word *heng* 亨 found frequently in the hexagram statements of the *Zhou Changes*. Its use in those hexagram statements is a key to understanding the divinatory nature of the *Zhou Changes*.

58 *Shang shu zhengyi*, 511–512.

Finally, it is important to consider the prognostications seen in both accounts #3.15 and #3.16. In both cases, it is important to note that the prognostications are plural and come in two stages. Let us examine more closely just account #3.15:

#3.15: 占之：恆貞吉，少有憂於躬身，且志事少遲得。... 占之：甚吉。期中有喜。

Prognosticating it: “The long-term affirmation is auspicious, but there is a little concern about his person; moreover, the intended affair will be obtained a little slowly.” ... Prognosticating it: “Very auspicious. Within the period there will be joy.”

The first prognostication is generally auspicious, at least for the “long-term affirmation” (*heng zhen* 恆貞), but within this general auspiciousness there are also certain problems that will cause the “intended affair” (*zhi shi* 志事) to be “obtained a little slowly” (*shao chi de* 少遲得). For this reason, the diviner is enjoined to undertake a further series of rituals, both sacrificial and exorcistic, intended to propitiate the spirits. With this, there then follows a further prayer and a further prognostication, in this case “Very auspicious. Within the period there will be joy” (*shen ji, qi zhong you xi* 甚吉。期中有喜). As Li Ling 李零 pointed out already in one of the very first studies of these divination records, almost all of them share the same two-stage procedure,<sup>59</sup> and this may well be characteristic of divination in general, first determining a general response, and then going on to determine a more specific response.

The Western Zhou oracle bone examined in account #3.2 above may offer a precursor to this sort of two-stage divination. Three divination records are seen on a single fragment of ox bone, the divination apparently concerning someone who was sick. Although the transcription of the crucial words in both inscriptions is more or less uncertain, they would seem to propose two different methods to bring about his healing: an “offering” (餽) and “prayer” (禱). The third inscription makes explicit that its divination came after the first two, using the word *ji* 既 “after; already.” Thus, having performed both of the remedies proposed in the first two divinations, this final divination is intended to procure not only “healing” (廖; i.e., *chou* 瘳), but also “blessings” (又; i.e., *you* 祐).

59 Account #3.17 is an exception to this pattern. Here the first prognostication is simply “Auspicious. Without trouble, without hex” (*ji, wu jiu wu sui* 吉，無咎，無祟). Since there were no lingering troubles or uncertainties, there was no need to propitiate the spirits.

翌日甲寅其禱由廖

On the next day *jiayin* (day 51), we will make offering; may he heal.

其禱由又廖

We will pray; may there be healing.

我既禱由又

We having already made offering and prayed, may he be blessed.

In Chapter Five below, I will suggest that the hexagram and line statements of the *Zhou Changes* may also preserve for us a vestige of a similar two-stage divination process: the first stage resulting in one of the sixty-four hexagrams and its hexagram statement, and the second stage further specifying which of the six lines of that hexagram is to be used for the final determination. I will have occasion there to note that there are only bits and pieces of evidence, some of it quite circumstantial, in support of this hypothesis that *Zhou Changes* divination originally involved a two-step process. However, that archaeological evidence from both the Western Zhou and the Warring States periods shows that turtle-shell divination routinely involved two stages should cause us to entertain seriously the possibility that *Zhou Changes* divination was similar.

## Milfoil Divination

Milfoil or yarrow-stalk divination (*shi* 筮) is the second great divination tradition of ancient China. Usually associated with the *Yijing*, it was actually a form of divination much broader than just this one textual tradition. Originally making use of stalks of the milfoil or yarrow (*shi* 蓍) plant (*Achillea sibirica* or *Achillea mongolica*), whence it is sometimes referred to as achillomancy, milfoil divination involved the arithmetic sorting of the stalks to produce a numerical result. As such, it is a form of cleromancy or sortilege akin to the practice of casting lots known from the Hebrew Bible.

Yarrow or *Achillea millefolium*, whence its other common English name milfoil (lit. “thousand leaves”), is a common flowering herb related to chamomile, chrysanthemum, tarragon, and ladslove. Throughout the world, it has been used in traditional medicine for its astringent effects (the Latin name *Achillea* derives from Achilles, the hero of the *Iliad*, carrying it into battle to stanch battle-field wounds) and for pain relief. Richard Rutt notes that in England, yarrow was traditionally used in divinations, being put under a pillow to induce dreams.<sup>1</sup> In China, the plant has traditionally been used in sortilege divination. The long, straight stalks were cut into bunches that could be held in a single hand. Rutt notes from personal experience in Korea that “yarrow wands have a whippiness that makes them easy and pleasant to handle.”<sup>2</sup> Richard Kunst, for his part, notes that the Chinese name for the plant, *shi* 蓍, “is probably related either phonetically or graphically through etymology and word magic” to such other words as *shi* 示 “sign, signify,” *zhi* 旨 “meaning,” *zhi* 指 “finger,” *ji* 稽 “calculate, consult, inquire,” and *suan* 算 “counting tally, calculate.”<sup>3</sup>

Until relatively recently, most evidence regarding milfoil divination in ancient China derived almost exclusively from the *Yijing* tradition. This began to change in the late 1970s, when bamboo strips with records of divinations performed in the ancient state of Chu 楚 first began to be excavated in large numbers. More and more of these divination records have become available over the following forty years, such that the forms of these divination records have become well known. More recently, other texts have surfaced providing in one case a comprehensive overview of how one type of milfoil divination was prog-

1 Rutt, *The Book of Changes (Zhouyi)*, 151.

2 Rutt, *The Book of Changes (Zhouyi)*, 152.

3 Kunst, “The Original *Yijing*,” 5.

nosticated, and in another case a complete milfoil divination manual. The first of these texts, titled by its editors \**Shifa* 筮法 \**The Method of Milfoil Divination*, dates from about 300 BCE, and belongs to the corpus of bamboo-strip texts in the possession of Tsinghua University in Beijing. The second text, which bears the title *Jing jue* 荆決 *Thornwood Decisions*, is in the possession of Peking University, also in Beijing; it dates to the Western Han dynasty. Because these two texts have only recently been published and are not yet well known in the West, it seems appropriate here to provide relatively in-depth introductions to them.

In addition to these two texts, two manuscripts of another text that represents yet another alternative form of divination were unearthed in 1993 from a mid-third century BCE tomb at Wangjiatai 王家台, Hubei. This text has been identified as the *Gui cang* 歸藏 *Returning to be Stored*, a name that has long been known and which purports to be a milfoil divination manual from the Shang dynasty. While the authenticity of this text has also long been questioned, these manuscripts would seem to demonstrate beyond question that it is an ancient text, even if not necessarily as old as traditional accounts asserted. Given the apparent pedigree of this text as one of three acknowledged ancient milfoil divinations texts (along with the *Zhou Changes* and a third text known as *Lianshan* 連山 *Linked Mountains*), it seems important to provide some introduction to it as well. However, since I provided a thorough overview of the text and especially these manuscripts in a recent publication, the introduction given here will focus only on what the *Gui cang* can tell us regarding the form and function of milfoil divination.

1            \**Shifa* 筮法  
              \**The Method of Milfoil Divination*

\**Shi fa* 筮法 \**The Method of Milfoil Divination* was published in December 2013 in Volume 4 of *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhu jian* 清華大學藏戰國竹簡 *Warring States Bamboo Strips in the Collection of Tsinghua University*, a serialized publication of Warring States bamboo-strip manuscripts that Tsinghua University acquired in 2008.<sup>4</sup> \**Shi fa* consists of sixty-three bamboo strips and is the single best preserved manuscript among those in the Tsinghua collec-

4 Li Xueqin, *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian (si)*, 2–9 (full-size photographs), 21–52 (magnified photographs), 75–123 (transcription). For a translation and study in English, see Cook and Lu, *Stalk Divination*. This volume also includes two shorter manuscripts: \**Bie gua* 別卦 \**Separated Hexagrams*, and \**Suan biao* 算表 \**Table of Calculations*. In the case of all three manuscripts, the names were assigned by the editors, based on content.

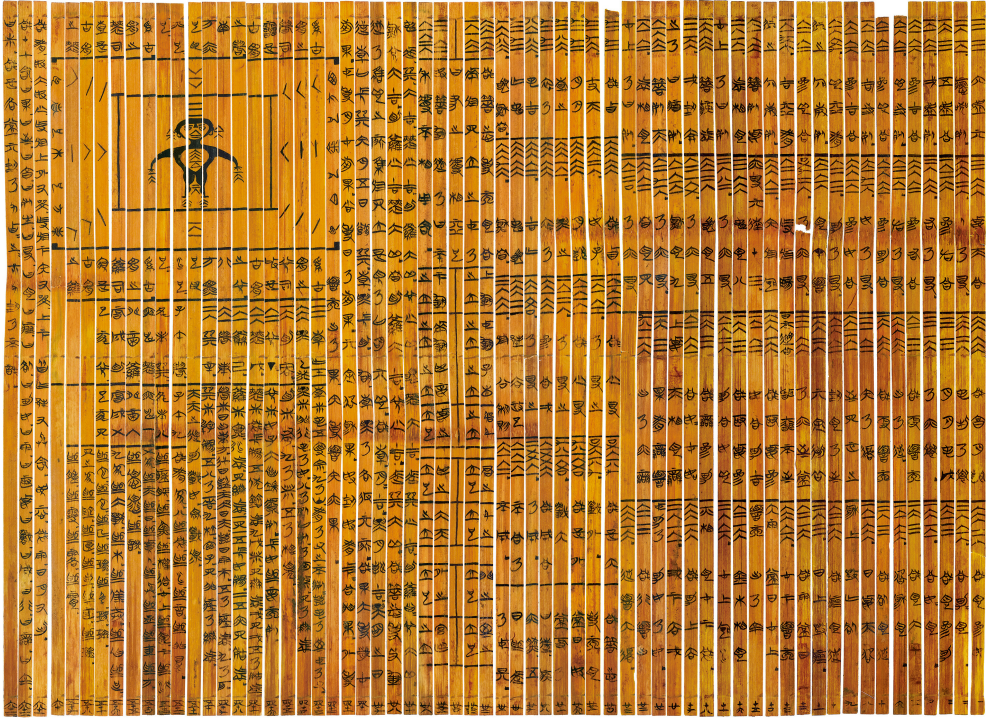


FIGURE 4.1 Photographic reproduction of the Tsinghua Manuscript \**Shifa* 筮法 manuscript; from Li Xueqin 李學勤, ed.-in-chief, *Qinghua daxue Chutu wenxian yanjiu yu baohu zhongxin*, ed. *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian (Si)* 清華大學藏戰國竹簡(肆), Vol. 4 (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2013), 76; courtesy of Tsinghua University Unearthed Research and Protection Center (清華大學出土文獻研究與保護中心)

tion. When it arrived at the university, it was still basically in its original scroll, with only a few of the strips on the outer layer detached from the scroll itself. The individual strips are 35 cm long, each strip numbered sequentially at the bottom of the strip. The strips were originally very tightly bound, creating an even surface, such that the text could be arranged as a modular table, including as well a graphic illustration, that stretches across the bamboo strips (see Fig. 4.1 for a reconstructed photograph of the text as it would have appeared, and Fig. 4.2 for a schematic rendering of the layout). In addition to binding straps at the top, bottom and middle of the strips, there is also a vestige of two pieces of 4cm-wide silk pasted to the back of the strips across the width of the scroll, one on the top half of the scroll and one on the bottom; these were apparently intended to strengthen the integrity of the scroll when laid flat and to maintain the cohesion of the individual strips. The editors include a brief explanation of the steps taken in unwrapping the scroll. They note that the fifty-



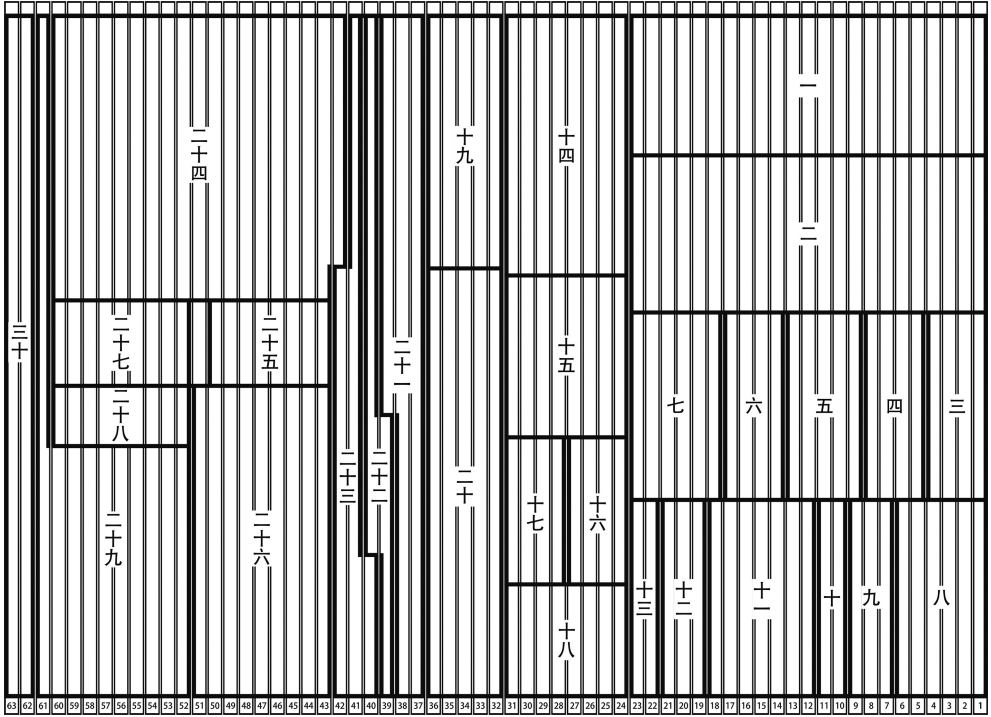


FIGURE 4.2 Schematic drawing of the Tsinghua Manuscript \**Shifa* 筮法 manuscript layout; from Li Xue-qin 李學勤, ed.-in-chief, Qinghua daxue Chutu wenxian yanjiu yu baohu zhongxin, ed. *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian (Si)* 清華大學藏戰國竹簡(肆), Vol. 4 (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2013), 77; courtesy of Tsinghua University Unearthed Research and Protection Center (清華大學出土文獻研究與保護中心)

two strips that were still stuck together as a scroll were basically in their original order, though some had shifted or become reversed over time. However, since all of the strips are numbered sequentially at the bottom of the strip, it was a simple matter to restore the text to its original sequence. Because the bamboo strips were super-saturated when they arrived at Tsinghua, the editors never removed them from a water bath. After separating the individual strips, they were placed in glass trays filled with distilled water, in which they remain to this day.

The text is divided into thirty distinct sections, as shown in Fig. 4.2. The sections do not include headings, but the editors have given them names based in part on their content and in part on the contents of Section Thirty (called by the editors “The Seventeen Commands”), which enumerates seventeen separate headings (the first seventeen in the list below). The thirty sections are as follows:

- Section 1: Death and Life (*Si sheng* 死生)
- Section 2: Obtaining (*De* 得)
- Section 3: Offering (*Xiang* 享)
- Section 4: Capping (*Bian* 變)
- Section 5: Arriving (*Zhi* 至)
- Section 6: Taking a Concubine (*Qu qie* 娶妾)
- Section 7: Matching (*Chou* 讎)
- Section 8: Seeing (*Jian* 見)
- Section 9: Trouble (*Jiu* 咎)
- Section 10: Healing (*chou* 瘳)
- Section 11: Rain and Drought (*yu han* 雨旱)
- Section 12: Male and Female (*nan nü* 男女)
- Section 13: Traveling (*xing* 行)
- Section 14: Affirming about Husbands and Daughters (*zhen zhangfu nüzi* 貞丈夫女子)
- Section 15: Minor Obtaining (*xiao de* 小得)
- Section 16: Warfare (*zhan* 戰)
- Section 17: Completing (*cheng* 成)
- Section 18: Setting the Will to Affairs (*zhi shi* 志事)
- Section 19: Setting the Will to Affairs and Military Travels (*zhi shi, jun lü* 志事、軍旅)
- Section 20: Chart of the Four Positions (*siwei biao* 四位表)
- Section 21: The Lucky and Ominous of the Four Seasons (*siji jixiong* 四季吉凶)
- Section 22: Rotation of *Qian* and *Kun* (*Qian Kun yunzhuan* 乾坤運轉)
- Section 23: Results (*guo* 果)
- Section 24: Diagram of Trigram Position and Diagram of the Human Body (*guawei tu, renshen tu* 卦位圖、人身圖)
- Section 25: Heavenly Stems and Trigrams (*tiangan yu gua* 天干與卦)
- Section 26: Hexes (*sui* 崇)
- Section 27: Earthly Branches and Trigrams (*dizhi yu gua* 地支與卦)
- Section 28: Earthly Branches and Lines (*dizhi yu yao* 地支與爻)
- Section 29: Line Images (*yao xiang* 爻象)
- Section 30: The Seventeen Commands (*shiqi ming* 十七命)
- These sections are of varying length and complexity.

The first seventeen sections are all arranged around divination results which appear at first sight to be pairs of hexagrams, each composed of two separate trigrams, the top and bottom trigrams separated by a distinct gap. However, since the manuscript mentions by name only the eight trigrams, it is clear that these divination results should actually be understood as four separate

trigrams. Each of these divination results is supplied with a prognostication, which will be explored at some length below.

One of the most important features of this manuscript is that it demonstrates beyond any doubt that the hexagram pictures are written with numerals. The most common numbers used to depict lines are — and  $\wedge$ . Some scholars—including most notably Li Xueqin 李學勤, the editor of this manuscript—had previously argued that similar hexagram pictures seen in other Warring States manuscripts were early versions of yang and yin lines known in the received tradition as — and --. However, in this manuscript the numbers “4” (written as  $\cup$ ), “5” ( $\times$ ) “8” ( $/ \backslash$ ) and “9” ( $\curvearrowright$ ) also occur. Nevertheless, there remains some question as to how to read — and  $\wedge$ . It is clear that  $\wedge$  should be read as the number “6”, but it is less clear how to read —. It would seem to be a simple matter to read it as the number “1”, as it is written in conventional Chinese script and as it has also traditionally been read in hexagram numerical symbols seen on bronze and bamboo-strip divination materials. However, Ma Nan 馬楠, a member of the Tsinghua University editorial team, was the first to suggest that it should instead be read as the number “7”, and her suggestion was subsequently accepted also by Li Xueqin.<sup>5</sup> Counter-intuitive though this suggestion is, there is considerable evidence in support of it. Ma Nan offered three types of evidence internal to the manuscript itself.

First, in section 16, entitled by the editors “Warfare” (*zhan* 戰), strips 24–27 contain the following prognostications:

爻 爻

爻 爻

凡是內勝外

In all cases of this, the internal  
will defeat the external. 24 25

爻 爻

爻 爻

凡是外勝內

In all cases of this, the external  
will defeat the internal. 26 27

It can be seen here that the numbers in the first prognostication (on strips ##24–25) read (reading from bottom to top, right to left):

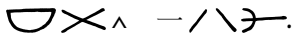
$\curvearrowright / \backslash - \wedge \times \cup$ ,

5 Ma Nan 馬楠, “Qinghua jian *Shifa* er ti” 清華簡《筮法》二題, *Shenzhen daxue xuebao*

巳亥	辰(辰)戌	卯(酉)	寅申	丑未	子午	
四	× (五)	∧ (六)	—	八	九	
【五 七】	【五 六】	【五 五】	【五 四】	【五 三】	【五 二】	
						Zi (branch 1) and Wu (branch 7)      ☳ 52 Chou (branch 2) and Wei (branch 8)      ∧\ 53 Yin (branch 3) and Shen (branch 9)      — 54 Mao (branch 4) and You (branch 10)      ^ 55 Chen (branch 5) and Xu (branch 11)      × 56 Si (branch 6) and Hai (branch 12)      ☵ 57

FIGURE 4.3 Tsinghua manuscript \**Shifa* “The Earthly Branches and Lines”; after Li Xueqin 李學勤, ed.-in-chief, *Qinghua daxue Chutu wenxian yanjiu yu baohu zhongxin*, ed. *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian (Si)* 清華大學藏戰國竹簡(肆), Vol. 4 (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2013), 114; courtesy of Tsinghua University Unearthed Research and Protection Center (清華大學出土文獻研究與保護中心)

whereas in the second prognostication (on strips ##26–27), they read in the reverse order:



Since it is clear that ☳ is to be read as “9”, / \ as “8”, × as “5” and ☵ as “4,” and, as already noted, that ^ is “6,” it seems that the orders should be sequential: 9-8-7 6-5-4 in the first prognostication, and 4-5-6 7-8-9 in the second prognostication. Thus, — must represent the number “7.”

Second, section 28, “The Earthly Branches and the Lines” (*Dizhi yu yao* 地支與爻), on strips ##52–57, correlates the twelve “earthly branches” (*dizhi* 地支) with the numbers used in the manuscript in the order seen in the figure at the top of this page.

Once again, it can be seen that these numbers are in descending order: 9-8-7-6-5-4, and thus that “—” should be read as the number “7.”

Third, in section 2, “Obtaining” (*De* 得), strip #15 is hard to understand, but seems to suggest that the number “13” is important:

深圳大學學報 1 (2014): 64–65. For Li Xueqin’s acceptance of this argument, see Li Xueqin, *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhu jian (Si)*, 102.



作於陽內於陰亦得其失十三

If it rises over yang,

13

and is contained within yin,

14

one should expect to lose three out of ten.

15

According to Ma Nan, the final *shi san* 十三 of this prognostication, here translated as “three out of ten,” understood as the number “thirteen” would serve as the sum of of “6” and “7,” “9” and “4” or “8” and “5.” I understand the arithmetic, but confess that I understand neither the correct interpretation of the final clause of this prognostication nor the logic of Ma Nan’s explanation.

Despite the apparent weakness of this last point of evidence, there is another reason to believe that this manuscript’s “一” should not be read as “1.” Whenever the manuscript writes what is unmistakably “one,” it writes it as *yi* 弌:



五虛同弌虛死

If five voids are together with one void, he will die.

(Section 1, ## 3–4)



參同弌乃得之

If three are together with one, then you will obtain it.

(Section 15, ##28–29)

弌四弌五乃殂者

If one “4” and one “5,” then it will be desiccated.

(Section 26, #47)

Therefore, as Ma Nan has suggested and as Li Xueqin has accepted, there is good reason to read the manuscript’s “一” as the number “7.”

As noted above, the numbers “4” (written as ☐), “5” (☒) “8” (∕ \) and “9” (☞) also occur in the manuscript. As I will discuss below, in some of the places where the lines are written with one of these other numbers, the number seems to have a special significance, though the manuscript does not clarify at all how the numbers were produced. The only thing that can be said at this point is that the method of sortilege described by the “Da Yan” 大衍 “Great Exposition” chapter of the *Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳 *Commentary on the Appended Statements of the Yijing* could not produce results expressed with “4” or “5.” In the analysis of

hexagram results presented in the second half of this chapter, I will review one proposal for how these sortilege results may have been obtained.

The trigrams are named similarly to the names found in the *Gui cang* 歸藏 *Returning to be Stored*:

- ☰ *Qian* 乾 (乾)
- ☷ *Kun* 坤 (坤)
- ☱ *Gen* 艮
- ☵ *Dui* 兌
- ☶ *Lao* 癸 (癸 : *Kan* 坎)
- ☲ *Luo* 羅 (*Li* 離)
- ☳ *Zhen* 震 (震)
- ☴ *Xun* 巽

However, it should be noted that the trigrams are mentioned by name only in the second half of the manuscript, which provides systematic lists.

Many readers will doubtless find most interesting what the editors number Section 24: The Diagram of the Trigram Position and Diagram of the Human Body. As the title indicates, this is presented in the manuscript as a diagram, with a depiction of a human body in the center bearing trigrams at the important parts of the body: head (☰), mouth (☷), ears (☱), chest (☱), abdomen (☷), genitals (☱), hands (☱), and feet (☷). Around this is a middle register with the trigrams in the eight directions (oriented with south at the top): E: ☱, SE: ☱, S: ☱, SW: ☱, W: ☱, NW ☱, N: ☱, NE: ☱. Most of these associations are identical with those known from the *Yijing* tradition, as seen, for instance, in the *Shuo gua zhuan* 說卦傳 *Commentary Discussing the Trigrams*.<sup>6</sup> Around this is another register, with south (at the top) said to be fire and red, north (at the bottom) said to be water and black, east (to the left, and written facing right) said to be wood and green, and west (to the right, written facing left) said to be metal and white. In this same register, to the left and right of the descriptions of north and south, there are also questions and answers as to why the four cardinal trigrams are called as they are. For instance, “Why is it called *Zhen*? It controls thunder, this is why it is called *Zhen*.” Similarly, *Dui* controls “collecting,” *Kan* controls “trees,” and *Li* controls “storing.”

6 The only significant divergence of this orientation from the directions given in the *Shuo gua* commentary is that the directions of *Kan* ☱ (S) and *Li* ☱ (N) (to use the names of the trigrams as known from the *Yijing* tradition) are reversed; there are also other indications in the manuscript that these two trigrams have different associations from those seen in the received *Yijing* tradition.



FIGURE 4.4

Tsinghua manuscript “Diagram of the Trigram Position and Diagram of the Human Body”; from Li Xueqin 李學勤, ed.-in-chief, *Qinghua daxue Chutu wenxian yanjiu yu baohu zhongxin*, ed. *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian (Si)* 清華大學藏戰國竹簡(肆), Vol. 4 (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2013), 113; courtesy of Tsinghua University Unearthed Research and Protection Center (清華大學出土文獻研究與保護中心)

Five of the body part associations seen in this diagram are exactly the same as found in the *Shuo gua zhuan* commentary, and the other three trigrams are either similarly positioned or have similar secondary associations:

乾為首，坤為腹，震為足，巽為股，坎為耳，離為目，艮為手，兌為口。

*Qian* is the head, *Kun* is the breast, *Zhen* is the feet, *Xun* is the thighs, *Kan* is the ears, *Li* is the eyes, *Gen* is the hands, and *Dui* is the mouth.<sup>7</sup>

An interesting feature of these trigram associations is that several of them seem to be pictographic, or at least to have pictographic connotations. *Dui* ☱, drawn here as ☱, the “mouth” is perhaps the clearest case, with the bottom two solid lines seemingly representing the lips of the mouth, and the top broken line, rendered as usual in this manuscript as ^, representing the nose. Other apparent iconic representations are *Gen* ☶, ☶, the two “hands,” in which the trigram image mimics the drawing of the hands (✋), with the bottom two broken lines representing the fingers, and *Zhen* ☳ the two “feet,” in which the bottom solid line again mimics the solid line used to depict the feet at the bottom of the legs. Finally, *Xun* ☴, ☴, the “genitals” may also be pictographic.

<sup>7</sup> In the diagram, *Kun* ☷ corresponds with the breast, whereas in the *Shuo gua* commentary it is said to be the “abdomen” (*fu* 腹). However, this may be a matter of definition; there is some evidence that *fu* 腹 was understood to include both the abdomen and the breast. For *Xun* ☴, which the *Shuo gua* associates with the thighs, as will be suggested below, the diagram seems

Whereas the *Shuo gua zhuan* commentary associates *Xun* with the two “thighs” (*gu* 股), in the manuscript the trigram is drawn only once, between the thighs. Both within the *Yijing* tradition and also in this manuscript, *Xun* is regarded as female, the eldest daughter. In this connection, the broken line at the bottom of the trigram, once again written as  $\wedge$ , would seem to depict the opening of the vagina.

As in the case of *Xun*, the trigrams are all gendered, which clearly informs many of the prognostications in the first half of the manuscript. *Qian* ☰ and *Kun* ☷ are of course male and female respectively, and the other trigrams seem to be gendered in the same way as they are in the received tradition; i.e.: *Zhen* ☳, *Kan* ☵ and *Gen* ☶ are male, while *Xun* ☴, *Li* ☲ and *Dui* ☱ are female (in those orders; that is, *Zhen* ☳ is the eldest son, *Kan* ☵ the second son, *Gen* ☶ the youngest son, *Xun* ☴ the eldest daughter, *Li* ☲ the second daughter, and *Dui* ☱ the youngest daughter). The first case in which this comes into play is in Section Two “Obtaining” (strips 7–8):



參男同女乃得

Three males together with a female, then one obtains.

The right-hand trigrams are 7-6-6 ☳ *Zhen* (bottom) and 6-7-6 ☵ *Kan* (top), while the left-hand trigrams are 6-7-9 ☴ *Xun* (bottom) and 7-6-6 ☳ *Zhen* (top); *Zhen* and *Kan* are both males, and since *Zhen* appears twice, that makes three males, while *Xun* is female. This gender distinction is seen also in sections Six, Seven, Eight and Twelve, and may also inform references to “Concubine” (*qie* 妾) and “Husband” (*fu* 夫), as in sections One, Two and Nine.

The generative aspect of *Qian* and *Kun* seems to inform also references to the trigrams as *zhao* 昭 and *mu* 穆. *Zhao* and *mu* refer to the two sides of Zhou-dynasty ancestral temples, *zhao* to the left and *mu* to the right, with ancestors arrayed on alternating sides according to successive generations; thus, if one’s father were a *mu* ancestor on the right, one’s grandfather would be a *zhao* ancestor on the left, and so on back through the generations. By the same logic, this person would be identified with the *zhao* side of the temple, and his children with the *mu* side. Both sections Eight and Nine refer to this *zhao* and *mu*:

---

to indicate that it should be associated instead with the genitals. Finally, whereas the passage of the *Shuo gua zhuan* quoted here associates *Li* ☲ with the eyes, another passage in the commentary does associate it with the abdomen.



☰ ☱	
☱ ☱	凡見大人昭穆見
7-7-7 6-6-7	In all cases of visiting a great man,
6-6-6 7-6-7	whether <i>zhao</i> or <i>mu</i> : visit.
☰ ☱	
☱ ☱	凡咎見述日妾夫昭穆上毀亡咎
7-7-7 6-7-7	In all cases of trouble, seeing the calculated
6-6-6 7-6-7	day, the concubine and husband, <i>zhao</i> and
	<i>mu</i> , and the top is destroyed: without trouble.

In both of these cases, the bottom trigrams are *Qian* and *Kun*, and thus one generation ascending from the two top trigrams, *Gen* ☱ and *Li* ☲ in the first case, and *Xun* ☴ and *Li* in the second case. Thus, *zhao* and *mu* here seem to refer to the trigrams vertically arrayed.

Elsewhere in Section One, trigrams are characterized as “auspicious” (*ji* 吉) or “ominous” (*xiong* 凶), as in the following two cases:

☱ ☱	
☱ ☱	參吉同兇待死
6-7-6 7-6-6	Three auspicious together
6-7-6 6-7-7	with an ominous: awaiting death.
☰ ☱	
☱ ☱	參兇同吉待死
7-7-6 7-7-6	Three ominous together
7-6-6 7-6-7	with an auspicious: awaiting death.

Since the first of these pairs includes two *Kan* ☵ trigrams, in addition to one *Zhen* ☳ and one *Dui* ☱ trigram, it is clear that *Kan* must be “auspicious.” Similarly, in the second case, since there are two *Dui* trigrams, *Dui* must be “ominous.” Therefore, a process of elimination suggests that in the first pair *Zhen* is also “auspicious.” The second pair, which prognosticates about “three ominous together with an auspicious,” contains two *Dui* (ominous), one *Zhen* (auspicious) and one *Li* ☲; again, a process of elimination indicates that *Li* must be “ominous.” In another pair later in the section, it can similarly be determined that *Xun* ☴ is “ominous.” Since both *Kan* and *Zhen* are “male” trigrams, and *Dui*, *Li* and *Xun* are all “female” trigrams, it would seem that “auspicious” and “ominous” are tied to the gender of the trigram. Although the trigram *Gen* ☱, corresponding with the “youngest son,” is not mentioned in any of these prognostications, a process of elimination would suggest that it is “auspicious.”

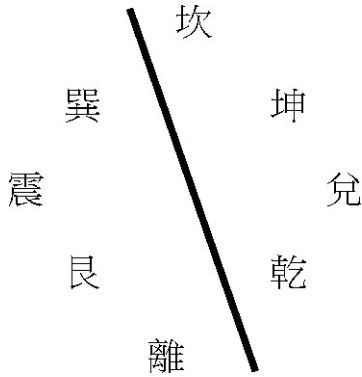


FIGURE 4.5

Tsinghua manuscript \**Shifa* "Diagram of Trigram Position"; from Li Xueqin 李學勤, ed.-in-chief, Qinghua daxue Chutu wenxian yanjiu yu baohu zhongxin, ed. *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian (Si)* 清華大學藏戰國竹簡(肆), Vol. 4 (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2013), 82; courtesy of Tsinghua University Unearthed Research and Protection Center (清華大學出土文獻研究與保護中心)

Trigrams are also characterized as being "left" (*zuo* 左) and "right" (*you* 右). As Li Xueqin explains, these associations seem to derive from the arrangement of the trigrams in Section Twenty-Four: "Diagram of Trigram Position." This arrangement can be depicted as shown in Figure 4.5 above.

As illustrated by the slanting line, *Kan*, *Kun*, *Dui* and *Qian* are "right" trigrams, while *Xun*, *Zhen*, *Gen* and *Li* are "left" trigrams, and this does seem to explain their associations elsewhere in the manuscript. The same arrangement of trigrams seems to explain the associations given in Section Five, in which *Li*, *Zhen*, *Dui* and *Kan* are referred to as "cardinal" (*zheng* 正) trigrams, that is representing due S, due N, due W, and due E respectively.

This Diagram of Trigram Position also correlates the directions with the "five paces" (*wu xing* 五行), or at least with four of them:

東方也木也青色南方也火也赤色也西方也金也白色北方也水也黑色也  
As for the east, it is tree, it is green color. As for the south, it is fire, it is red color. As for the west, it is metal, white color. As for north, it is water, it is black color.

In Section Eleven, there is reference to these associations in one prognostication:

☶ ☳

☱ ☲

6-6-7 7-7-6

6-7-6 6-7-7

金木相見才上陰水火相見才下風

Metal and wood see each other

on top: cloudy. Water

and fire see each other on the bottom: windy.

As Li Xueqin also explains, the top two trigrams are *Dui* ☱ and *Xun* ☴, associated with the west and southeast respectively, whereas the bottom trigrams

TABLE 4.1 Tsinghua Manuscript \**Shifa* Associations of Trigrams with Seasons

	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
greatly auspicious	<i>Zhen, Xun</i>	<i>Kan</i>	<i>Dui</i>	<i>Gen, Li</i>
a little auspicious	<i>Kan</i>	<i>Zhen, Xun</i>	<i>Gen, Li</i>	<i>Dui</i>
greatly ominous	<i>Gen, Li</i>	<i>Dui</i>	<i>Kan</i>	<i>Zhen, Xun</i>
a little ominous	<i>Dui</i>	<i>Gen, Li</i>	<i>Zhen, Xun</i>	<i>Kan</i>

are *Gen* ☶ and *Kan* ☵, associated with the northeast and south respectively. Since “west” is “metal,” this would explain *Dui*. Similarly, “south” being “fire” would explain *Kan*. *Xun* being in the southeast could then be associated with the “east” and thus “wood,” and *Gen* being in the northeast could be associated with “north” and thus “water.” While this seems to make sense of this prognostication, it seems decidedly ad hoc. Moreover, it points to a reversal in the symbolism of *Kan* from that seen in the *Yijing* tradition, in which it has always been associated with “water” rather than “fire.”

Several other attributes of the trigrams in the second part of the manuscript are consistent with those seen in the *Yijing* tradition and are relatively easy to understand. Section 21 describes the auspices of the six secondary trigrams (i.e., discounting *Qian* and *Kun*) for each of the four seasons of the year, differentiated as “greatly auspicious” (*da ji* 大吉), “a little auspicious” (*xiao ji* 小吉), “greatly ominous” (*da xiong* 大凶) and “a little ominous” (*xiao xiong* 小凶); these auspices can be diagrammed as seen in Table 4.1 above (again using the conventional trigram names).

Section 25 provides associations between the eight trigrams and the heavenly stems (*tiangan* 天干), while Section 27 lists those between the six secondary trigrams and the earthly branches. These can be diagrammed as seen in Table 4.2 on p. 157 (using the conventional trigram names).

Section 28 apportions two “earthly branches” (*dizhi* 地支) to each of the six line numbers used in the text, in the following order:

- 9: *zi* 子 (branch 1) and *wu* 午 (branch 7)
- 8: *chou* 丑 (branch 2) and *wei* 未 (branch 8)
- 7: *yin* 寅 (branch 3) and *shen* 申 (branch 9)
- 6: *mao* 卯 (branch 4) and *you* 酉 (branch 10)
- 5: *chen* 辰 (branch 5) and *xu* 戌 (branch 11)
- 4: *si* 巳 (branch 6) and *hai* 亥 (branch 12)

TABLE 4.2 Tsinghua Manuscript \**Shifa* Associations of Trigrams with Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches

	☰	☱	☲	☴	☵	☶	☷	☸
	<i>Qian</i>	<i>Kun</i>	<i>Gen</i>	<i>Dui</i>	<i>Kan</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Zhen</i>	<i>Xun</i>
天干	甲壬	乙癸	丙	丁	戊	己	庚	辛
<i>tiangan jia,</i>	<i>yi,</i>	<i>bing</i>	<i>Ding</i>	<i>wu</i>	<i>Ji</i>	<i>Geng</i>	<i>xin</i>	
	<i>ren</i>	<i>gui</i>						
地支			辰戌	巳亥	寅申	卯酉	子午	丑未
<i>dizhi</i>			<i>chen,</i>	<i>si,</i>	<i>yin,</i>	<i>mao,</i>	<i>zi,</i>	<i>chou,</i>
			<i>xu</i>	<i>hai</i>	<i>shen</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>wu</i>	<i>wei</i>

As the editors indicate (p. 119), this seems to demonstrate the correctness of the practice of associating odd numbers with yang lines (—), and even numbers with yin lines (--) that has been standard ever since the 1980 article by Zhang Zhenglang 張政烺 (1912–2005) identifying what have come to be called “hexagram numerical symbols” (*ba gua shuzi fuhao* 八卦數字符號).<sup>8</sup>

Section 29, entitled “Line Images,” constitutes lists of attributes for the lines 8, 5, 9 and 4; the listing for 8 is representative:

凡看象八為風為水為言為非鳥為腫脹為魚為權笱才上為飢醪下為汰

In all cases of line images: eight is wind, is water, is speech, is flying birds, is swelling, is fish, is a bowl or basket; above it is sediment, below it is rinse. (strips ##52–53)

These images are also similar to the sorts of lists attributed to trigrams in the *Shuo gua zhuan* commentary of the *Yijing*.<sup>9</sup>

More difficult to understand, but potentially of great interest for prognostications seen both in the *Zhou Changes* and elsewhere in the received literature, is Section 26. Titled “Hexes” (*sui* 崇), it lists hexes or curses associated with each trigram. The entries for *Lao* 勞 (i.e., *Kan* 坎) and *Luo* 羅 (i.e., *Li* 離) are perhaps representative:

8 Zhang Zhenglang, “Shi shi Zhou chu qingtongqi mingwen zhong de Yi gua”; Zhang Zhenglang, “An Interpretation of the Divinatory Inscriptions on Early Zhou Bronzes,” 80–96.

9 Adam Schwartz, “Numbers and Images of Trigram *Gen* 艮 in the *Changes* and Related Texts,”

勞崇風長殤五伏劍者九戊崇四縊者弑四弑五乃殄者

*Lao* (i.e., *Kan*)'s hexes: the wind: the eldest will die young. If "5," it will be ambushed by sword; if "9," it will be a male boar; if "4," a hanging; if there is one "4" and one "5," then one who is desiccated.<sup>10</sup>

羅崇熱溺者四縊者一四一五長女殤二五夾四殄者

*Luo* (i.e., *Li*)'s hexes: burning and drowning. If "4," a hanging; if there is one "4" and one "5," the eldest daughter will die young; if "2" and "5" bracket "4," one who is desiccated.

Finally, at the very end of the manuscript, after a listing of the contents of the seventeen different types of prognostications, the final sentence seems to pertain to how the results are obtained in the first place, and how to prognosticate them in general. Unfortunately, it is concise to the point of not being very intelligible.

凡是各當其卦乃力占=之=必力卦乃不忒

In all of these, each matching its trigram, then you sort and prognosticate it; prognosticating it you must sort the trigram and then you will not be wrong.

The editors suggest that 力 is to be read as *le* 扌 "to sort." The repetition of this verb may indicate a dual sorting, but other interpretations would also be possible and there is no way to be sure.

Much more work remains to be done with this manuscript. Fortunately, not only is the manuscript intact with no question as to its original arrangement, but there are also relatively few paleographic problems. Below I will give just a sample of the prognostications seen in the first three sections of the manuscript. In all cases, I include a stylized rendering of the divination result, as well as a translation of it into Arabic numerals (the Arabic numbers, written from left to right, correspond with the Chinese numbers from bottom to top); the numbers to the far right indicate the strip number on which the record appears.

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*Études Asiatiques/Asiatische Studien* 72.4 (2018): 1133–1193, makes a strong case showing that these associations derive from the shapes of the graphs used to write the numbers.

10 My understanding of how to understand these hexes is much indebted to Adam Schwartz.

## Section One: 死生 Death and Life

☱ ☱			
☱ ☱	筮死妾者相見才上乃曰死		
6-6-6 7-6-6	Divining about a dying concubine,		15
7-6-7 6-7-7	seeing each other		16
	on top, then it says she will die.		17
☳ ☳			
☳ ☳	筮疾者弑卦亢之乃曰將死		
6-6-6 6-6-7	Divining about a sick one,		18
6-6-7 7-7-7	if one trigram opposes		19
	it, then it says he is about to die.		20
☱ ☱			
☱ ☱	筮死夫者相見才上乃曰死		
7-6-6 6-7-6	Divining about a dying husband,		21
7-7-6 7-6-7	seeing each other		22
	on top, then it says he will die.		23

The logic of these prognostications is not immediately apparent. Easier to understand is the following pair of prognostications.

## Section Two: 得 Obtaining

☱ ☱			
☱ ☱	參男同女乃得		
7-6-6 6-7-6	Three males together		7
6-7-9 7-6-6	with a female, then you will obtain.		8
☱ ☱			
☱ ☱	參女同男乃得		
7-6-7 6-6-6	Three females together		9
7-7-7 7-7-6	with a male, then you will obtain.		10

As explained above, both in traditional *Yijing* exegesis and apparently here, the trigrams are strictly gendered. In the first pair here, *Zhen* ☳ (bottom right and top left) and *Kan* ☵ (top right) constitute the three “males,” while *Xun* ☴ (bottom left) is “female.” In the second pair, *Li* ☲ (bottom right), *Kun* ☷ (top right) and *Dui* ☱ (top left) are all “female,” while *Qian* ☰ (bottom left) is of course “male.”

Section Three: 享 Offering

☳ ☳			
☵ ☳	凡享月朝屯牝乃鄉		
6-6-6 6-6-6	In all cases of offering, with the moon at morning	1	
6-7-7 6-6-6	and a pure female, then it is received.	2	
☷ ☷			
☱ ☷	月夕屯戊乃亦鄉		
7-7-7 7-7-7	With the moon at evening and a pure male,	3	
6-6-7 7-7-7	then it is also received.	4	

In the first case here, three of the four trigrams (the two right-hand trigrams and the top left) in the result are *Kun* ☷, the pure yin or female trigram, whereas in the second case the same three trigrams are *Qian* ☰, the pure yang or male trigram; these three trigrams doubtless determine the gender of the sacrificial offering, pure female in the first case (*chun pin* 屯[純]牝), and pure male in the second case (*chun wu* 屯[純]戊). The bottom left trigram, in both cases the one trigram that differs from the others, presumably reflects the different timings of the prognostications, “morning” (*zhao* 朝) as opposed to “evening” (*xi* 夕). Since the moon is yin by nature, the yin line at the bottom of *Xun* ☴, the bottom trigram on the left, might represent the newly appearing moon and, thus, evening, whereas the two yin lines of *Gen* ☶, the lower left trigram in the second case, might represent the moon at a later stage.<sup>11</sup>

11 This seems to be the interpretation suggested by Li Xueqin; see Li Xueqin, *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhu jian* (Si), 85; however, even his suggestion is uncertain.

2 *Jing jue* 荊決 *Thornwood Decisions*

In 2009, Peking University 北京大學 received a donation of 3,346 Han-dynasty bamboo strips, bearing seventeen different texts. Although the strips were robbed from some unknown tomb, and thus have no archaeological provenance by which to determine their immediate context, the paleographers at Peking University have determined that they date to the middle of the Western Han dynasty, perhaps around 100 BCE, and certainly no later than the first decades of the first century BCE. The texts pertain to various aspects of traditional Chinese literature, including belles lettres, philosophy, and the mantic arts. The entire corpus is projected to be published in seven volumes, five of which have already appeared.

Volume Five, which was published in 2015, includes a text that bears the title *Jing jue* 荊決.<sup>12</sup> This title, recorded on the back of the second strip, is understood by the editor of the manuscript, Li Ling 李零, as “Decisions of Chu.” However, it seems more likely that the word *jing* 荊 should be understood in its generic sense of “thorn-wood,” thus *Thorn-wood Decisions*.<sup>13</sup> The text presents a type of sortilege divination not previously known from ancient China.<sup>14</sup> The entire manuscript includes thirty-three strips (including six strips that have been rejoined), and it is evident that two other strips are lacking. The text of the manuscript also has several passages repeated among the “Daybook” (*rishu* 日書), also within the Peking University corpus but not yet published. There is some suggestion that the text of *Jing jue*, though almost certainly copied at about the same time as the other manuscripts in the corpus, should date at least a century earlier. The opening of the text uses a word that was officially taboo from the second decade of the dynasty: *ying* 盈, the given name of Liu Ying 劉盈 who reigned as emperor from 195–188 BCE and is posthumously known as Emperor Hui of Han 漢惠帝.

12 Beijing daxue Chutu wenxian yanjiusuo, ed., *Beijing daxue cang Xi Han zhu shu* (Wu) 北京大學藏西漢竹書 (伍) (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 2015). The editor of this text was Li Ling 李零.

13 Wang Ning 王寧, “Du Beida Hanjian wu *Jing jue* zhaji” 讀北大漢簡伍《荊決》札記, at [http://www.gwz.fudan.edu.cn/srcshow.asp?src\\_id=2665](http://www.gwz.fudan.edu.cn/srcshow.asp?src_id=2665) (accessed 23 February 2016). It is also possible to understand the word *jue* 決 as a loan-word for *jue* 訣 “formula,” especially in the sense of oral prophecies (*koujue* 口訣).

14 The editor of the manuscript, Li Ling, notes that there is a Dunhuang 敦煌 manuscript from medieval China, *Zhou Gong bu fa* 周公卜法 *The Duke of Zhou's turtle-shell divination method*, which presents a similar divination method, sorting by fours and producing sixteen graphs. The only difference is that this *Zhou Gong bu fa* used thirty-four stalks as



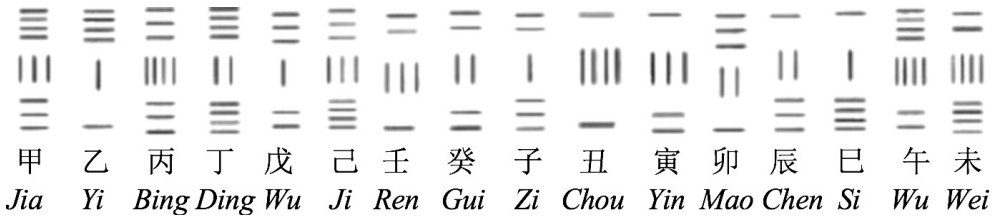



FIGURE 4.6 Schematic drawings of the sixteen trigrams of the Peking University *Jing Jue* manuscript

The text begins with a sort of preamble, first claiming the unique efficacy of this type of milfoil divination, and then explaining the method of sortilege. One takes thirty stalks, presumably of thorn-wood, and divides them arbitrarily into three separate bunches. Each bunch is then counted through by fours, producing a final remainder of 1, 2, 3 or 4. The remainder of the first bunch is the top line of the divinatory result, written with one, two, three or four horizontal lines. The remainder of the second bunch is the middle line of the result, but written with vertical lines; and the remainder of the third bunch is the bottom line, written again horizontally. Although such a method of sortilege could conceivably produce sixty-four different results ( $= 4^3$ ), in fact the manuscript seems to employ only sixteen of them, the first half named for eight of the “heavenly stems” (*tian gan* 天干) and the second half half named for eight of the “earthly branches” (*dizhi* 地支): *jia* 甲, *yi* 乙, *bing* 丙, *ding* 丁, *wu* 戊, *ji* 己, *ren* 壬, and *gui* 癸, in the first case, and *zi* 子, *chou* 丑, *yin* 寅, *mao* 卯, *chen* 辰, *si* 巳, *wu* 午, and *wei* 未. One thing to note is that the numbers of horizontal and vertical lines in all sixteen results add up to either 6 or 10.<sup>15</sup> The sixteen results are written as seen in Figure 4.6 above.

Following the name and trigram picture comes a more or less extended series of rhyming oracular phrases, most of them consisting of four characters and many of them beginning with the movement of a fantastic animal or of some meteorological phenomenon. There are only occasional predictions having to do with human affairs, many of them involving the arrival of someone (usually someone beautiful [*mei ren* 美人]). Most entries include a standard prognostication, either “auspicious” (*ji* 吉) or “ominous” (*xiong* 凶). At the end, there is an enumeration of hexes (*sui* 祟). The text is short enough that it can be presented in its entirety. The numbers embedded in the text refer to the entry numbers of the individual bamboo strips on which it is written.

opposed to the thirty stalks used by the *Jing jue* method. For the *Zhou Gong bu fa*, see Kalinowski, *Divination et société dans la Chine médiévale*, 316–317 and 367 Pl. 28.

15 The first trigram picture, written as , which is to say 3-4-4 (reading from top to bottom), is an exception to this rule, adding up to 11 as it does. Li Ling suggests that it should read

•鑄龜吉筮，不如荊決。若陰若陽，若短若長。所卜毋方，所占毋良，必察以明。卅筮以卜其事，【一】若吉若凶，唯筮所從。左手持書，右手操筮，必東面。用卅筮，分以爲三分，其上分衡，中【二】分從，下分衡。四四而除之，不盈者勿除。【三】

•Drilled turtles and auspicious milfoil are not as good as “Thorn-wood Decisions.” Whether yin or yang, whether long or short, what is divined has no limit, what is prognosticated has nothing better; one must examine it with clarity. Thirty stalks are used to divine its affairs [1], whether auspicious or ominous, only the stalks are to be followed. In the left hand holding the document, in the right hand holding the stalks, one must face to the east. Using thirty stalks, divide them into three groups; the upper is horizontal, the middle [2] group is vertical, the bottom group is horizontal. Discard them four by four, but what is not full ought not to be discarded. [3]

己〈甲〉䷗ 窮奇欲登于天，浮雲如人。氣已行之，乘雲冥冥，行遇大神。其高如城，大息如壘，【四】中道而驚。泰父爲崇，欲來義（我）生。凶。【五】

*Jia* ䷗<sup>16</sup> The griffin<sup>17</sup> wishing to rise to heaven, the floating clouds are like people. Having already put them in motion, ride the clouds oh so dark, and in moving meet the great spirit. Its height is like a city wall, its great breath is like thunder, [4] in the middle of the road startled. The Great Father is the hex, wishing to come into my life. Ominous. [5]

乙 龍處于澤，欲登于天。吉日嘉時，登高曲望，相須〈焉〉以色。今日何日，吉樂無極。【六】津橋氣行，願欲中音〈意〉。吉。外爲崇。【七】

*Yi* ䷗ The dragon dwelling in the marsh, wishes to rise into heaven. A lucky day, a happy hour, rise on high and scan the distance, Examining it by color. As for today, what day is it? Auspicious and joyous unlimited. [6] The ford's bridge having been travelled, one's wishes hit the intention. Auspicious. The external is the hex. [7]

䷗, i.e., 4-3-3. See Beijing daxue Chutu wenxian yanjiusuo, *Beijing daxue cang Xi Han zhu shu* (Wu), 172 n. 2.

16 The editor of the *Jing jue* text notes that the name of this trigram in the manuscript, given as *Ji* 己, is the same as the sixth trigram below, and thus must be wrong; he suggests that it should be *Jia* 甲, the first of the ten stems, and this seems certainly to be correct.

17 The editor interprets *qiong qi* 窮奇 as two words meaning “completely odd” (as in odd numbers), however Wang Ning, “Du Beida Hanjian wu *Jing jue zhaji*” points out that such early texts as the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 and *Huainanzi* 淮南子 give it as the name of some sort

丙<sup>三</sup>有鳥將來，文身翠翼。今夕何日（夕）。吉樂獨極。澤（釋）怒亡憂，適中我意。有人將【八】來，嘉喜毋亟。吉。崇百兩【九】

*Bing* <sup>三</sup> There is a bird about to come, striped body and halcyon wings. This evening, what evening is it?<sup>18</sup> Auspicious and joyous uniquely extreme. Relax anger and have no worries, meeting with my intention. There is a person about [8] to come, well and happy, do not hurry. Auspicious. The hexes are the Hundred Carts.<sup>19</sup> [9]

丁<sup>二</sup>善哉善哉，百事順成。得天之時，弗召自來。【翩翩】蜚（飛）鳥，止陽【之】枝。美人將來，與議（我）相智（知）。中心【十】愛之，不智（知）其疵。吉【十一】

*Ding* <sup>二</sup> Well done, well done, the hundred affairs succeed in line. Gaining heaven's timeliness, unbidden it comes of itself. Flutter-flutter the flying bird, stops on the sunny branch. A beautiful person will come, one who is known to me. In my heart [10] I love her, and do not know her flaws. Auspicious. [11]

戊<sup>一</sup>冥冥之海（晦），吾獨得其光。雷電大陰，吾蜀（獨）得陽。有人將至，貴如公王。樹木未產【十二】，其葉綉綉（青青）。凶事盡除，吉事順成。吉【十三】

*Wu* <sup>一</sup> Somber somber is the darkness, I alone get its brightness. Thunder and lightning very cloudy, I alone get the sun. There is someone about to come, honored like a duke or king. The planted trees have not yet borne fruit, [12] their leaves are oh so verdant. Ominous affairs have all been removed, auspicious affairs succeed in line. Auspicious. [13]

己<sup>三</sup>泰官甚敬，身獨禺（遇）惡。且恐且懼，身毋定處。中心不樂，相追道路。請謁不【十四】得，獨留馭（繫）舍。【先】來其崇，後乃毋故。凶【十五】

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of a mythical creature. The *Shan hai jing* 山海經, provides two descriptions of the creature, once describing it as having the shape of a cow and the fur of a yak and in the other case resembling a tiger with wings; see *Shan hai jing guangzhu* 山海經廣注 (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshuguan, 1972), 2 ("Xishan jing" 西山經), 41b; 12 ("Hainei beijing" 海內北經), 3a. Since the creature is here described as wishing to rise to heaven, it would seem that the *qiongqi* here refers to the latter griffin-like creature.

18 I here follow the editor in reading *ri* 日 "day" as *xi* 夕 "evening," to correspond with the *jin xi* 今夕 opening the phrase; see Beijing daxue Chutu wenxian yanjiusuo, ed., *Beijing daxue cang Xi Han zhu shu* (Wu), 173 n. 23.

19 It is unclear what this character 兩 might mean. On slip 25 of *Jing jue*, at Yin 寅 tri-

*Ji* ䷗ The great office is very alarming, one's person alone meets with evil. Both fearful and apprehensive, one's person has no settled place. In one's heart unhappy, following after you on the road. Requests for audience do not [14] succeed, remaining alone tied to the domicile. First comes the hex, afterwards then there is no reason. Ominous. [15]

壬 ䷗ 凡（鳳）鳥不處，羊羊（洋洋）四國。我欲見之，多害不得。疾蜚（飛）哀鳴，憂心墨墨（默默）。勞身毋功，其事不【十六】得。凶。崇外死不葬。【十七】

*Ren* ䷗ The phoenix bird does not roost, soaring-soaring above the four regions. I wish to see it, with much harm it is not successful. Flying fast with a mournful cry, the sorrowful heart is oh so sullen. Belaboring my person without result, its affair is not [16] successful. Ominous. The hex is one who has died abroad and unburied.<sup>20</sup> [17]

癸 ䷗ 玄鳥朝蜚（飛），羊羊（洋洋）翠羽。與人皆（偕）行，其身蜀（獨）處。請謁云若，有欲弗許。今日何日，吉人【十八】將來。日【夜望之】，賁來會期。吉，崇王父母。【小吉】。【十九】

*Gui* ䷗ The black bird in the morning flies, soaring-soaring its kingfisher wings. Traveling together with another, his person is located alone. Requests for audience say yes, what is wished for is not approved. As for today, what day is it, an auspicious man [18] about to come. Day and night watching for him, hoping his coming meets the date. Auspicious. The hexes are grandfather and grandmother. Little auspicious. [19]

子 ䷗ 善哉首，如登高臺。布有美人，弗召自來。齊其翠羽，或與旌旗。非以為首，如登【二〇】高丘，安而毋軌。今日何日，遠人將來。吉。崇在司命。【二一】

*Zi* ䷗ Well done, at the head, like climbing a high terrace. Setting out there is a beautiful person, unbidden she comes of herself. Presenting her halcyon feathers, and now also banners and flags. It is not that it is the head, like climbing [20] a high mound, peaceful and without trouble. What day is it today? A distant person is about to come. Auspicious. The hex is in the Supervisor of Fate. [21]

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gram it is written 兩, which may resemble *liang* 兩 “cart,” but this is nothing more than a guess.

20 I am grateful to Adam Schwartz for suggesting this reading; personal communication, 1 July 2020.

丑 沛沛羽蓋乎，吾誰與持之？道路曲望，美人不來。氣大有小，如羊與牛。所來不得，【二二】或為之患。雖欲行作，有閉於關。崇陽。【二三】

*Chou* 沛沛羽蓋乎，吾誰與持之？道路曲望，美人不來。氣大有小，如羊與牛。所來不得，【22】 perhaps it causes turmoil. Although I wish to go and act, there is a lock on the gate. The hex is sunny. [23]

寅 山有玄木，其葉卑離。勞心將死，人莫之智。欲與美會，其後必離。有隱者，【二四】雲古滿滿。晨鳴不會，直為人笑。崇行、竈、百兩。凶【二五】

*Yin* 山有玄木，其葉卑離。勞心將死，人莫之智。欲與美會，其後必離。有隱者，【24】 oh so sorrowful! The morning call is not met, and I am just laughed at by others. The hexes are the Road, the Stove, and the Hundred Carts. Ominous. [25]

卯 介介者雲，蔽天白日。美人不來，曰心疾。翩翩飛鳥，閒關浮雲。吾召不來，或為是】根（恨）。以車馳之，壹反壹頃。欲會美人，其事不成。凶，崇行、竈。【二六】

*Mao* 介介者雲，蔽天白日。美人不來，曰心疾。翩翩飛鳥，閒關浮雲。吾召不來，或為是】根（恨）。以車馳之，壹反壹頃。欲會美人，其事不成。凶，崇行、竈。【26】

辰 玄龍在淵，雲持才天。嘉賓將來，以我【為】視（親）。往來如矢，人莫之止。今夕何如，如得父【二七】母，盈意中欲，其後不誨。吉，崇社。【二八】

*Chen* 玄龍在淵，雲持才天。嘉賓將來，以我【為】視（親）。往來如矢，人莫之止。今夕何如，如得父【27】母，盈意中欲，其後不誨。吉，崇社。【28】

巳 ䷗ 海有琅干。南山有時（直：植）。時命將合，不期而相得。同心不去，結志不離。有人將來，直【二九】其湍盈。今日何日，百事皆成。吉，崇泰父母。【三〇】

*Si* ䷗ In the sea there are pearl-stems, On South Mountain they are planted.<sup>21</sup> This fate is about to be met, getting it not at an appointed time. Those of the same heart do not leave, joined wills do not separate. There is someone about to come, just [29] quickly fulfilling it. What day is it today? All affairs will be successful. Auspicious. The hexes are the Grandfather and Grandmother. [30]

午 ䷔ 玄鳥朝食，南山之陽。奮羽將蜚，路毋關梁。前如凶，後乃吉光。有人將至，甚好【三一】以良。笑言夷色，美人夕極。吉

*Wu* ䷔ The black bird in the morning eats, on the sunny side of South Mountain. Beating its wings it's about to fly; the road has no closed bridges. At first as if ominous, later then auspicious and radiant. There's a person about to arrive, very pretty [31] and good. Laughing and talking so sexily, a beautiful person seductive to the extreme. Auspicious.

未 ䷛ 繹哉心乎，何憂而不已？唯欲行作，關梁之止。翩翩蜚鵠，不飲不食。疾蜚哀鳴，所【三二】來不得。愛愛者雲，作陰作陽。效人祠祀，百鬼莫嘗。凶，崇巫、立、社。【三三】

*Wei* ䷛ Relaxed indeed the heart! What worries have not stopped. Although I wish to go and act, I'm stopped by the gate and bridge. Flutter, flutter the flying swan; it doesn't drink and doesn't eat. Flying so fast with mournful call, what [32] is coming I will not get. Covering-covering the many clouds, sometimes shady sometimes sunny. The offerer serves at the altar; of the hundred ghosts none accept it. Ominous. The hexes are the Magician, the Stand, and the Altar. [33]

There is no single pattern that would describe all sixteen of these trigrams and their resultant oracles and prognostication. However, perhaps that for *Ren* ䷲ might serve as an example worthy of analysis. As translated above, it is written on two bamboo strips (##16–17), not filling the entirety of the second strip. After the name of the trigram and the trigram picture come four four-character couplets, all of them rhyming:

21 The editor notes that a corresponding text among the *Ri shu* 日書 *Day-book* in the Peking University collection reads *nan shan you zhi* 南山有直, the final graph of which he interprets as *zhi* 植 “to plant”; see Beijing daxue Chutu wenxian yanjiusuo, *Beijing daxue cang Xi Han zhu shu* (*Wu*), 13 n. 35.

鳳鳥不處， The phoenix bird does not roost,  
 洋洋四國。 Soaring-soaring above the four regions (*guo*/\* kwək).  
 我欲見之， I wish to see it,  
 多害不得。 With much harm it is not successful (*de*/\* tək).  
 疾飛哀鳴， Flying fast with a mournful cry,  
 憂心默默。 The sorrowful heart is oh so sullen (*mo*/\* mək).  
 勞身毋功， Belaboring my person without result,  
 其事不得。 Its affair is not successful (*de*/\* tək).

The first and third of these couplets describe a scene in the natural world, while the second and fourth seem to relate that scene to the personal situation of the diviner. This is similar to the *xing* 興 “arousal” or “evocation” motif so characteristic of poems in the *Shijing*. As I have had occasion to argue already in Chapter Three above and will go on to repeat in several more chapters below (and especially in Chapter Nine on the line statements of the *Zhou Changes*), this *xing* motif is also characteristic of the oracles pronounced within various sorts of divination in ancient China. The entry for *Ren* in *Jing jue* then concludes with the simple prognostication “Ominous” (*xiong* 凶), and then the statement that the “hex” (*sui* 祟) is external, and that one will die without being buried.

祟外，死不葬。

Ominous. The hex is external, dying unburied.

### 3 *Gui Cang* 歸藏 *Returning to Be Stored*

According to the “Great Pyromancer” (*Tai bu* 大卜) section of the *Zhou li* 周禮 *Rites of Zhou*, there were three ancient manuals of milfoil divination: the *Lian shan* 連山 *Linked Mountains*, *Gui cang* 歸藏 *Returning to Be Stored*, and *Zhou Yi* 周易 *Zhou Changes*.<sup>22</sup> The only more specific information concerning the *Lian shan* and *Gui cang* comes from the *Xin lun* 新論 of Huan Tan 桓譚 (c. 43 BCE–A.D. 28), saying that the *Lian shan* was stored in the Orchid Terrace (Lantai 蘭台) and included 80,000 characters, while the *Gui cang* was stored with the Grand Pyromancer and included 4,300 characters.<sup>23</sup> However, neither of these texts is mentioned in the *Qi lüe* 七略 *Seven Outlines*, the catalog of the

22 *Zhou li zhushu*, 1733. The following description of the *Gui cang* is digested from Shaughnessy, *Unearthing the Changes*, Ch. 4.

23 This portion of the *Xin lun* was lost by the end of the Northern Song dynasty, but this

Han imperial library prepared by Liu Xiang 劉向 (79–8 BCE) and Liu Xin 劉歆 (46 BCE–A.D. 23), nor were these two texts included in the subsequent “Yi wen zhi” 藝文志 “Record of Arts and Letters” bibliographic monograph of the *Han shu* 漢書 *History of Han*. The next official bibliography, the “Jing ji zhi” 經籍志 “Record of Classics and Writings” of the *Sui shu* 隋書 *History of Sui*, compiled by Wei Zheng 魏徵 (580–643), does mention the *Gui cang*,<sup>24</sup> saying that it was included in the *Zhong jing* 中經 *Central Classics*. The *Zhong jing* was a massive compendium of all the texts in the imperial library of the Western Jin dynasty; it was completed in the 270s under the editorship of Xun Xu 荀勗 (d. 289), and then added to in the 280s. There is now a growing consensus that the *Zhong jing* text of the *Gui cang* was based on a bamboo-strip text discovered in A.D. 279 when a tomb in Ji Commandery 汲郡 (present-day Jixian 汲縣, Henan) was burgled.<sup>25</sup> One inventory of the texts retrieved from that tomb mentions a *Yi zhou yin yang gua* 易繇陰陽卦 *Yin Yang Hexagrams of the Changes Oracles*, said to have been “similar to the *Zhou Changes*, but with different line statements” (*yu Zhou Yi lue tong zhou ci ze yi* 與周易略同繇辭則異).<sup>26</sup> An earlier account of this discovery described the text as “similar to the *Lianshan* and *Gui cang*” (*si Lian shan Gui cang* 古書有易卦似連山歸藏).<sup>27</sup> After its discovery, the text was quoted in numerous sources between the late third century and the late

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remark is preserved in Li Fang 李昉, ed., *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), 2737.

- 24 Wei Zheng 魏徵, *Sui shu* 隋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), 913. Prior to the listing in the *Sui shu*, the *Gui cang* was also included in the *Qi lu* 七錄 of Ruan Xiaoxu 阮孝緒 (479–536), which said of it that it was “a book of miscellaneous divinations” (*za bu shi zhi shu zashi* 雜卜筮之書雜事); cited at Ma Guohan 馬國翰, *Gui cang* 歸藏, in Ma Guohan 馬國翰, *Yuhan shanfang jiyi shu* 玉函山房輯佚書 (Jinan: Huanghua guan shuju, 1871), “Xu” 序, 1a, which provides a good overview of the textual history of the *Gui cang*.
- 25 This suggestion had actually been made almost fifty years before the discovery of the Wangjiatai bamboo strips; see Guo Moruo 郭沫若, *Qingtong shidai* 青銅時代 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 1957), 2. For the suggestion in connection with the Wangjiatai discovery, see Wang Mingqin 王明欽, “*Gui cang* yu Xia Qi de chuanshuo: Jianlun tai yu jitan de guanxi ji Diaotai de diwang” 歸藏與夏啟的傳說：兼論台與祭壇的關係及釣台的地望, *Huaxue* 華學 3 (1998): 212–226; Wang Ning 王寧, “Qin mu Yi zhan yu *Gui cang* zhi guanxi” 秦墓易占與歸藏之關係, *Kaogu yu wenwu* 考古與文物 2000.1: 49–50, 55; Zhu Yuanqing 朱淵清, “Wangjiatai *Gui cang* yu Mu tianzi zhuan” 王家台歸藏與穆天子傳, *Zhou Yi yanjiu* 周易研究 2002.6: 9–13; Ren Junhua 任俊華 and Liang Ganxiong 梁敢雄, “*Gui cang* Kun Qian yuanliu kao” 歸藏坤乾源流考, *Zhou Yi yanjiu* 2002.6: 14–23.
- 26 Fang Xuanling 房玄齡, *Jin shu* 晉書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 1432.
- 27 This biography was included in Wang Yin’s *Jin shu* 晉書, which was extant into the Tang dynasty, and was thus an important source for Fang Xuanling’s *Jin shu*, but it was lost thereafter. This passage of its biography of Shu Xi is quoted at Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢, ed., *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 1982), 40, 732.



tenth century.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, about this time, the first doubts about the text began to be stated, as for instance by Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–1072), who said that there was no trace of it among the texts of his own day.<sup>29</sup> It was only later, during the Qing dynasty, that scholars attempted to reconstitute the text on the basis of the medieval quotations,<sup>30</sup> but most scholars continued to regard the text as a forgery—when they even considered it at all.<sup>31</sup>

This neglect of the *Gui cang* changed dramatically beginning in 1993, when peasants digging a fish pond in the village of Wangjiatai 王家台 in Hubei province exposed a group of sixteen ancient tombs. In one of them, numbered M15, a relatively small tomb (2.9 m × 1.8 m at the mouth, just 2.3 m × 1.2 m at the bottom), the archaeologists found inside its single coffin a wooden diviner's board, bamboo sorting stalks placed in a bamboo canister, a number of dice, the haft of a dagger-axe, and, perhaps most important of all, a heap of bamboo strips with writing on them.<sup>32</sup> Among the texts written on the bamboo strips was not just one, but two separate copies of what eventually would be identified as the *Gui cang*. Although the bamboo strips were badly preserved, nevertheless there were enough fragments to show that the texts matched several of the medieval quotations almost verbatim. This has allowed scholars,

28 For instance, the *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 *Imperial Conspectus of the Great Peace Reign Era* includes at least nineteen explicit quotations of the *Gui cang*.

29 Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修, *Ouyang Wen Zhong gong wen ji* 歐陽文忠公文集 (Sibu congkan ed.), 124.1b.


30 At least three separate recensions of *Gui cang* quotations were produced in the first half of the nineteenth century: Yan Kejun 嚴可均, *Quan shang gu San dai Qin Han San guo Liu chao wen* 全上古三代秦三國六朝文 (1836; rpt. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1958), 104–105; Hong Yixuan 洪頤煊, “*Gui cang*,” in *Jing dian ji lin* 經典集林 (1926; rpt. Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1968), 1.1a–4a; and Ma Guohan, *Gui cang*. For a convenient comparison of all of these quotations and the Wangjiatai texts, see Kondo Hiroyuki 近藤浩之, “Ōkantai Shin bo chikuken *Ki sō no kenkyū*” 王家台秦墓竹簡「歸藏」の研究, in Kakuten Sokan Kenkyūkai 郭店楚簡研究会編, *So chi shutsudo shiryō to Chūgoku kodai bunka* 楚地出土資料と中國古代文化 (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 2002), 317–321.

31 See, for example, Sun Yirang 孫詒讓, *Zhou li zhengyi* 周禮正義 (Sibu beiyao ed.), 47.7a; Yu Yongliang, “Yi gua yao ci de shidai ji qi zuozhe,” 167; Rong Zhaozu 容肇祖, “Zhanbu de yuanliu” 占卜的源流, in Gu Jiegang, ed., *Gu shi bian* 古史辨, 3:276–277.

32 The initial report of the discovery was Jingzhou diqu bowuguan, “Jiangling Wangjiatai 15 hao Qin mu” 江陵王家台15號秦墓, *Wenwu* 文物 1995.1: 37–43. Wang Mingqin 王明欽, the lead excavator of the tomb, has given a more detailed report, especially focusing on the bamboo strips in the tomb: Wang Mingqin, “Wangjiatai Qin mu zhu jian gaishu.” This latter report still does not constitute a formal publication of the complete contents of either the tomb or the bamboo strips, and there are some indications that such a report may not be forthcoming. It seems that we may have to make do with what information is presently available.

including myself, to produce new studies of the *Gui cang*, and to show that it was, indeed, an important alternative milfoil divination tradition.

Since I have recently published a lengthy study of this discovery, including a complete translation of all published fragments, there seems to be no need here to repeat that information.<sup>33</sup> A brief description of the *Gui cang* text will suffice for the purposes of this book. It has long been known that the *Gui cang* features only “hexagram statements,” and not line statements, though the nature and function of *Gui cang* hexagram statements should be strictly differentiated from those of the *Zhou Changes*. Based on the Wangjiatai manuscripts, it can be known that the *Gui cang* hexagram statements begin with a hexagram picture, with the yin lines written as ^ and the yang lines as —. This is followed by the hexagram name, which is sometimes similar to and sometimes different from the name of the hexagram seen in the *Yijing* tradition; for a listing of the *Gui cang* hexagram names, comparing them to the *Yijing* hexagram names, including those from different manuscripts, see Table 7.1 in Chapter Seven. After the hexagram picture and the hexagram name, there then follows the text proper of the hexagram statement. In many cases, the text reports a divination performed upon the occasion of some important event in early Chinese history or mythology. The records also note that the divination was prognosticated by a named figure, the name often being that of a legendary figure known from ancient times. The prognostication is either “auspicious” (*ji* 吉) or, more frequently, “not auspicious” (*buji* 不吉). Often, the prognostication is then followed by a rhyming oracle, more or less similar to line statements of the *Zhou Yi*.

Three *Gui cang* hexagram statements are available almost in their entirety. One of these seems to be the only statement preserved intact among the Wangjiatai bamboo strips, while the other two can be reconstituted on the basis of comparisons of text on different Wangjiatai fragments together with medieval quotations of the text. In the Wangjiatai manuscripts, the only hexagram statement preserved more or less in its entirety is that for *Ding* 鼎  “Caldron.”<sup>34</sup> In the Wangjiatai manuscripts, the symbol ✓ seems to be analogous

33 Shaughnessy, *Unearthing the Changes*, Chapters 4 and 5: 141–188.

34 Wangjiatai #214. In *Unearthing the Changes*, 153, 177, I followed Wang Mingqin 王明欽, the archaeologist in charge of the Wangjiatai excavation, in transcribing the name of this hexagram as *zi* 卣 “Small-Mouthed Caldron.” Although I have not seen the actual manuscripts, I have since become convinced that the name of this hexagram should probably be transcribed instead as 鼎. Typically this would be read as *zhen* “to determine; to divine,” but there is good evidence in early paleographic records that the characters 鼎 and 卣 (usually used to write the word *ding* “caldron”) were largely interchangeable. Thus, I now assume that the name of the hexagram in the *Gui cang* is the same as it is in the *Yijing* tradition. I should note too that the text of this hexagram statement presented below necessarily

with the symbol 乙 seen regularly in Warring States, Qin and Han manuscripts to indicate the end of a section of text; in this case, it indicates the end of the hexagram text, and thus serves to show that this text is complete (except for the one lacuna indicated by the symbol □ in the Chinese text and by the ellipsis [...] in the English translation).

䷱ 鼎曰：昔者宋君卜封口而支占巫苍。巫苍占之曰：吉。鼎之苍苍，鼎之鞅鞅：初有吝后果述。✓

䷱ *Ding* “Caldron” says: In the past the Lord of Song divined about installing .. and had the stalks prognosticated by Wu Cang. Wu Cang prognosticated them and said: Auspicious. The caldron’s grass-snakes, the caldron’s fragments. At first there is stinting, later it is really in accord. ✓

Two other hexagram statements are preserved only fragmentarily in the Wangjiatai manuscripts, but the fragments can be supplemented by medieval quotations of the *Gui cang* to reconstitute them in their entirety. *Shi* 師 “Army” hexagram can be reconstituted on the basis of three different Wangjiatai fragments and two different quotations in medieval literature.<sup>35</sup>

䷆ 師曰：昔者穆天子卜出師（西征）而枚占于禹强，禹强占之曰：不吉。龍降于天，而道里修遠，飛而冲天，蒼蒼其羽。

䷆ *Shi* “Army” says: In the past Son of Heaven Mu divined about sending out the army (to campaign westwardly) and had the stalks prognosticated by Yu Qiang. Yu Qiang prognosticated them and said: Not auspicious. The Dragon descends from heaven, but the road is long and distant. Flying and piercing heaven, Green green its wings.

Another statement that can be reconstituted by piecing together different fragments from Wangjiatai together with quotations in early and medieval texts is that of the hexagram *Guimei* 歸妹 ䷵ “Returning Maiden.”<sup>36</sup>

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employs the simplified characters (*jianti zi* 簡體字) used by Wang Mingqin, since no photographs or line drawings of the original strips have ever been published.

35 The Wangjiatai fragments are #439 plus two unnumbered fragments, which can be augmented with quotations found at Li Fang, *Taiping yulan*, 401 and *Zhuangzi*, 3.6b. For a demonstration of how these texts can be combined, see Shaughnessy, *Unearthing the Changes*, 153–154.

36 This reconstitution is based on Wangjiatai fragments #307 and #201. The story is twice quoted at Xiao Tong, *Wen xuan*, 13.600 (at the “Yue fu” 月賦 by Xie Zhuang 謝莊), and 60.2609 (at the “Ji Yan Guanglu wen” 祭顏光祿文 by Wang Sengda 王僧達) as coming from the *Gui cang*. Almost the entirety of the text is also quoted, though without attribu-

䷵ 歸妹曰：昔者姮娥窃毋死之藥于西王母以奔月，將往，枚筮之于有黃，有黃占之曰：吉。翩翩歸妹，獨將西行。逢天晦芒，毋恐毋惊。後且大昌。

䷵ *Guimei* "Returning Maiden" says: In the past Heng E stole the medicine of immortality from the Western Queen Mother to flee to the moon. When she was about to go, she had the stalks divined by You Huang. You Huang prognosticated them and said: Auspicious. Soaring soaring returning maiden, alone about to travel west. Meeting heaven's darkened vastness, do not shudder, do not tremble. Later still great prosperity.

As I will note in the analysis section of this chapter, the oracles are the most unique aspects of these hexagram statements. In all three of the hexagrams examined here, the prognostication is followed by a short passage of rhyming couplets. Although it is very difficult to understand just what the oracle of *Ding* hexagram might portend, the other two oracles seem to be relatively straightforward.

鼎之上苕苕，  
鼎之執執：  
初有吝，  
后果述。

The caldron's grass-snakes,  
the caldron's fragments.  
At first there is stinting,  
later it is really in accord.

龍降于天 (*tian/\*thîn*)，  
而道里修遠 (*yuan/\*wan?*)，  
飛而冲天 (*tian/\*thîn*)，  
蒼蒼其羽 (*yu/\*wa?*)。

The Dragon descends from heaven,  
but the road is long and distant.  
Flying and piercing heaven,  
Green green its wings.

翩翩歸妹 (*mei/\*mæs*)，  
獨將西行 (*xing/\*grân*)。  
逢天晦芒 (*mang/\*maj*)，  
毋恐毋惊 (*jing/\*raj*)，

Soaring soaring returning maiden,  
alone about to travel west.  
Meeting heaven's darkened vastness,  
do not shudder, do not tremble.<sup>37</sup>

tion, in both the *Hou Han shu buzhu* 後漢書補注 commentary of Liu Zhao 劉昭 (at Fan Ye 范曄, *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 [Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965], 3216), and in the *Sou shen ji* 搜神集 of Gan Bao 干寶 (*Xin jiao Sou shen ji* 新校搜神集 [Taipei: Shijie shuju, 2003], 108).

37 This pair of couplets is followed by another rhyming four-character phrase, *hou jie da chang* 後且大昌 (\**thaj*) "later there will be great prosperity," which may be part of the oracle or may be a sort of postfaced prognostication.

These oracles resemble those of the *Jing jue* considered in the preceding section, and, as I will show in Chapter Nine below, resemble too the line statements of the *Zhou Changes*.

#### 4 Specific Accounts of Milfoil Divination

Above I have presented various general descriptions of milfoil divination presented in such texts as the Tsinghua University \**Shifa*, the Peking University *Jing jue*, and in the *Gui cang*. There are also a great many specific accounts of milfoil divination recorded in ancient literature; these are found in both the received literary tradition and also in unearthed documents, and span the entirety of the Zhou dynasty. Below, I will present nineteen such accounts that seem to me to be more or less paradigmatic, especially as related to the context in which the *Zhou Changes* developed. I will present them more or less in chronological order, presenting first a brief introduction to the source of the account, followed by a translation of the record itself. After presenting all nineteen of these cases, I will then again analyze them according to the same four considerations as seen above in Chapter Three: the command (this time, to the milfoil), the result of the divination, the oracle, and the prognostication.

##### 4.1 Account #4.1 *Zhouyuan* 周原 Oracle-Bone Inscriptions

In Chapter Three above, we examined two separate accounts of turtle-shell divination found among the Zhouyuan 周原 oracle-bone inscriptions. Another feature of these inscriptions bears perhaps even more directly on the origin of *Zhou Changes* divination. Several pieces contain sets of six numerals, which scholars now almost universally agree reflect an early form of the six-lined graphs—the hexagrams—so famous from the *Changes*. Since the first identification of these sets of numerals, by the Chinese scholar Zhang Zhenglang 張政烺 (1912–2005),<sup>38</sup> scores of other examples have been discovered on various

38 Zhang Zhenglang, “Shishi Zhou chu qingtongqi mingwen zhong de Yi gua,” 403–415; Zhang Zhenglang, “An Interpretation of the Divinatory Inscriptions on Early Zhou Bronzes,” 80–96. For the most thorough recent surveys of these “hexagram numerical symbols,” all taking very different approaches, see Cai Yunzhang 蔡運章, “Shang Zhou shi shu Yi gua shili” 商周筮數易卦釋例, *Kaogu xuebao* 考古學報 2004.2: 131–156; Li Zongkun 李宗焜, “Shuzi gua yu yin yang yao” 數字卦與陰陽爻, *Shiyusuo jikan* 史語所集刊 77.2 (2006): 279–318; Xing Wen, “Hexagram Pictures and Early Yi Schools: Reconsidering the *Book of Changes* in Light of Excavated Yi Texts,” *Monumenta Serica* 51 (2003): 571–604; and Jia Lianxiang 賈連翔, “Chutu shuzigua cailiao zhengli yu yanjiu” 出土數字卦材料整理與研究 (Ph.D. diss.: Tsinghua University, 2014).



FIGURE 4.7

Line drawing of Zhouyuan 周原 oracle-bone inscription H11:85; from Xu Xitai 徐錫臺, *Zhouyuan jiaguwen zongshu* 周原甲骨文綜述 (Xi'an: San Qin chubanshe, 1987), 60

media. Zhang suggested, in line with traditional Chinese numerology, that odd numbers within these sets should be regarded as yang, and thus correspond with solid lines of *Zhou Changes* hexagrams, while even numbers should be regarded as yin, and thus correspond with broken lines. For instance, on the fragment H11:85, we find the following text:

七六六七一八日其口  
 .. 既漁  
 7-6-6-7-1-8 says: It ...  
 .. having already fished ...<sup>39</sup>

According to Zhang, the two “7”s and the “1” should convert to yang or solid lines, while the two “6”s and the “8” would convert to yin or broken lines, producing the hexagram picture ䷛, which in the *Zhou Changes* tradition corresponds with *Gu* 蠱 “Pestilence” hexagram (hexagram 18 in the traditional *Changes* sequence). Unfortunately, this—and all other Zhouyuan oracle bones with these numerical symbols—is fragmentary, and provides little or no context for understanding what role it played in the divination. For instance, although others read the two columns of characters together, treating the words *ji yu* 既漁 “having already fished” in the second column as something akin to a line statement, not only is there no similar line statement in the received text of the *Changes*, but it is not even clear that this belongs to the same divination or what the missing characters might be.<sup>40</sup>

39 Note that even though the text is written top-to-bottom vertically, I write the numbers from bottom-to-top as I do with numerical symbols elsewhere in this book.

40 See, for instance, Xu Zhongshu 徐仲舒, “Shu zhan fa yu Zhou Yi de ba gua” 數占法與周易的八卦, *Guwenzi yanjiu* 古文字研究 10 (1983), 383. Xu also reads the lines imme-

#### 4.2 Account #4.2 Qijia 齊家 Village Oracle-Bone Inscriptions

Archaeological work has continued to the present day in the vicinity of the 1977 Zhouyuan discovery. In 2003, several more pieces of inscribed ox bone were unearthed very near Qijia 齊家 village, just to the east of the Fengchu 鳳雛 temple or residence that produced the first great discovery of Zhou oracle bones.<sup>41</sup> Unusually for these fragments of Zhou bones, one of these pieces contains three separate divinations, all concerning an illness of someone apparently unnamed. Like the Zhouyuan inscription in Account #4.1, these inscriptions also each propose an activity and conclude with a prayer. As pointed out in Chapter Three above, it seems likely that the first two divinations were preliminary and the third more definitive. An important feature of all three inscriptions is that they include groupings of six numerals, thought to indicate the result of a concurrent milfoil divination. For a line-drawing of the inscription, see Fig. 3.2, p. 100.

翌日甲寅其禱由瘳  
七八六五七八

On the next day *jiayin* (day 51), we will make offering; may he heal.  
7-8-6-5-7-8

其禱由又瘳  
八八六七六八

We will pray; may there be healing.  
8-8-6-7-6-8

我既禱由又  
七六八六七八

We having already made offering and prayed, may he be blessed.  
7-6-8-6-7-8

#### 4.3 Account #4.3 Zuo Zhuan 左傳, 4th Year of Duke Xi 僖 (656 BCE)

In Chapter Three above, we examined an account in the “Jin Yu” 晉語 “Stories of Jin” chapter of the *Guo yu* 國語 *Stories of the States* concerning a turtle-shell divination performed on behalf of Duke Xian of Jin 晉獻公 (r. 676–651 BCE), ruler of the state of Jin 晉 who wished to take as his principal consort Li Ji 驪姬

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diately above *ji* 既 “having already,” which no one else can decipher, as the character 文, understood as the protograph for *lin* 吝 “stinted,” a divinatory term commonly used in the *Changes*.

41 Cao Wei, “Zhouyuan xin chu Xi Zhou jiaguwen yanjiu,” 43–49.

(d. 651 BCE), a woman captured in his attack on the Li Rong 驪戎. The *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 *Zuo Tradition* alludes to this same turtle-shell divination, but declaring it “not auspicious” (*bu ji* 不吉) says that it was followed by a milfoil divination, which the duke ordered should be followed, against the advice of his diviner. The diviner pronounced the oracle (*zhou* 繇), which he clearly interpreted to be ominous. Nevertheless, Duke Xian went ahead with making Li Ji his consort, with disastrous results for the state of Jin.

初，晉獻公欲以驪姬為夫人，卜之，不吉；筮之，吉。公曰：「從筮。」卜人曰：

筮短龜長，不如從長。且其繇曰：

專之渝，攘公之瑜，一薰一蕕。十年尚猶有臭。

必不可！」弗聽，立之。生奚齊，其娣生卓子。

Earlier, Duke Xian of Jin wanting to take Li Ji as his wife, divined it by turtle shell; it was not auspicious. Divining it by milfoil, it was auspicious. The duke said: “Follow the milfoil.” The diviner said: “The milfoil is short and the turtle is long. It is not as good as following the long. Moreover, its oracle says:

Concentration’s changing: Snatching the duke’s rams,

One fragrant, one stinky. In ten years there will still be the stench.

It is certainly not acceptable!” (The duke) did not listen to it, but established her (i.e., Li Ji as his consort). She gave birth to Xiqi, and her younger sister gave birth to Zhuozi.<sup>42</sup>

#### 4.4 Account #4.4 *Zuo Zhuan*, 2nd Year of Duke Min 閔 (660 BCE)

Upon the assassination of Duke Min of Lu 魯閔公 (r. 661–660 BCE), Ji Chengzi 季成子 (d. 644 BCE), here referred to as Cheng Ji 成季 but also often known as Gongzi You 公子友, became the pre-eminent power broker in the state of Lu 魯. This brief passage looks back at his birth, recounting both turtle-shell and milfoil divinations at the time that predicted the future rise of his lineage, the Jisun 季孫 lineage, in Lu. His lineage continued to exercise power in the state for two generations after his death. It is possible that the milfoil divination made use of the *Zhou Changes*, however since this is not explicitly stated and since the most straight-forward interpretation of the result differs from anything in that text, I treat it here as an instance of some other type of milfoil divination. The quotation “Together returning to the father, Respected as in the lord’s place” (*tong fu yu fu, jing ru jun suo* 同復于父，敬如君所), could either refer to the oracle

42 *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 3892–3893.



of the divination or the diviner's own interpretation of it. In the former case, since the lines are not found in the *Zhou Changes*, it would seem to derive from some other divination tradition. In the latter case, it is possible to understand it within the *Zhou Changes* tradition.<sup>43</sup>

成季之將生也，桓公使卜楚丘之父卜之，曰：「男也，其名曰友，在公之右；間于兩社，為公室輔。季氏亡，則魯不昌。」又筮之，遇《大有》䷍之《乾》䷀曰：「同復于父，敬如君所。」及生，有文在其手曰「友」，遂以命之。

When Cheng Ji was about to be born, Duke Huan had Diviner Chuqiu's father divine it by turtle-shell; he said: "A son, his name will be You 友, and he will be at the duke's right (*you* 又), between the two altars of state, serving as the support of the ducal house. When the Ji lineage dies out, then Lu will not flourish." He also divined it by milfoil, meeting *Dayou* 大有䷍ "Greatly Having"'s *Qian* 乾䷀ "Vigorous," saying: "Together returning to the father, Respected as in the lord's place." When he was born, there was a mark on his hand that read *you* 友 ("friend; assistant"), and thereupon he was named that.<sup>44</sup>

#### 4.5 Account #4.5 Zuo Zhuan, 15th Year of Duke Xi (645 BCE)

Upon the death of Duke Xian of Jin, one of his sons, Yiwu 夷吾, succeeded to power, being known to history as Duke Hui of Jin 晉惠公 (r. 650–637 BCE). During the tumultuous period of his father's reign, Yiwu had been given refuge in the state of Qin 秦. Shortly after assuming power, his state suffered from a severe drought; Duke Hui sought relief from Duke Mu of Qin 秦穆公 (r. 659–621 BCE), who agreed to give it. However, the very next year, when Qin suffered from famine, Jin refused to send relief. Enraged, Duke Mu determined to attack Jin, first having his diviner Tufu 徒父 perform a milfoil divination. Tufu pronounced the divination "auspicious," and also added a more specific prognostication predicting the breakdown of the lord's chariot. Pressed by Duke Mu to explain this prognostication, Tufu explained that it certainly meant the cap-

43 The commentary of Du Yu 杜豫 treats this as a case of divination with the *Zhou Changes*, suggesting that the quotation is the diviner's interpretation. He understands that the top *Li* 離䷄ trigram of *Dayou* 大有䷍ "Greatly Having" hexagram changes into *Qian* 乾䷀ trigram to produce *Qian* 乾䷀ "Vigorous" hexagram, that *Qian* trigram represents the "father" (*fu* 父) and thus that *Li* trigram represents the son (i.e., Gongzi You). The Tang-dynasty *Wu jing zhengyi* 五經正義 sub-commentary states that this is not a case of *Zhou Changes* divination, though it gives a similar interpretation of the result.

44 *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 3879.

ture of the lord of Jin. He also indicated the hexagram that had been obtained (*Gu* 蠱 ䷑ “Pestilence”), and the oracle (*zhou* 繇), for which he also provided a detailed exegesis. In fact, Qin won a decisive victory, including also the capture of Duke Hui.

卜徒父筮之，吉：「涉河，侯車敗。」詰之。對曰：「乃大吉也。三敗，必獲晉君。其卦遇蠱 ䷑ 曰：

千乘三去，三去之餘，獲其雄狐。

夫狐蠱，必其君也。蠱之貞，風也；其悔，山也。歲云秋矣，我落其實，而取其材，所以克也。實落材亡，不敗，何待？」

Diviner Tufu divined it with milfoil, and it was auspicious: “Fording the River, the lord’s chariot breaks down.” (The Duke of Qin) questioned him, and he responded saying: “Then it is greatly auspicious. After three defeats, you will certainly capture the Jin ruler. Its hexagram met *Gu* ䷑ ‘Pestilence,’ which says:

A thousand chariots thrice depart: What is left from three departures,  
Will capture their leading-male fox.

“The fox and ‘Pestilence’ certainly refer to their ruler. The lower trigram of ‘Pestilence’ is ‘Wind’; its upper trigram is ‘Mountain.’ The year being now autumn, we will cause their fruit to fall and take their timber, and through that succeed. With the fruit fallen and the timber gone, what awaits one if not defeat?”<sup>45</sup>

#### 4.6 Account #4.6 Zuo Zhuan, 16th Year of Duke Cheng 成 (575 BCE)

The battle of Yanling 鄢陵 in 575 BCE featured a coalition of northern states (Qi 齊, Lu 魯, and Wei 衛) led by Duke Li of Jin 晉厲公 (d. 574 BCE) attacking the state of Zheng 鄭, to the defense of which King Gong of Chu 楚共王 (r. 590–560 BCE) brought his army. As the battle was about to commence, all but one minister of Duke Li cautioned against Jin launching an attack. Only Fen Huang 賁皇 advised that an attack would be successful. Duke Li had a milfoil divination performed about attacking, resulting in *Fu* 復 ䷗ “Returning” hexagram, with an oracle predicting the success of the attack. Duke Li accepted this prognostication and attacked. After a further initial description of the battle, the narrative concludes by recounting a dream on the part of Lü Yi 呂錡 (i.e., Wei Yi 魏錡), a Jin general, and then with a brief account of events on the battlefield, in which Lü Yi shot King Gong in the eye with an arrow, and then King Gong had a warrior of his own shoot and kill Lü Yi.

45 *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 3919.

公筮之。史曰：「吉。其卦遇復☱，曰：

『南國蹙，射其元王，中厥目。』

國蹙、王傷，不敗何待？」公從之。

...

呂錡夢射月，中之，退入於泥。占之，曰：「姬姓，日也；異姓，月也，必楚王也。射而中之，退入於泥，亦必死矣。」及戰，射共王中目。王召養由基，與之兩矢，使射呂錡，中項，伏弢。以一矢復命。The lord divined about it with milfoil. The scribe said: "Auspicious. Its hexagram met *Fu* ☱ 'Returning,' which says:

The southern state stumbling: Shooting its prime king, Hitting his eye. For the state to 'stumble' and the king to be wounded, if not defeat what would they expect?" The duke followed it.

...

Lü Yi dreamt of shooting at the moon, hitting it, retreating and entering into mud. Prognosticating it, he said: "The Ji family is the sun; a different family is the moon, which must be the King of Chu. Shooting and hitting it, retreating and entering into mud, I also will surely die." Coming to the battle, he shot at King Gong and hit his eye. The king summoned Yang Youji, giving him two arrows, and had him shoot Lü Yi, hitting him in the neck, at which he fell on his quiver. With one arrow, he returned his command.<sup>46</sup>

4.7 *Account #4.7 "Zhou Yu" 周語 "Zhou Stories" Chapter of Guo Yu 國語 Stories of the States: "Duke Xiang of Shan Discusses Zhou of Jin Being about to Obtain the State of Jin"* (單襄公論晉周將得晉國)

The divination recorded in this account, put in the words of Duke Xiang of Shan 單襄公 (fl. 601–574 BCE), is part of a complicated story of how Gongzi Zhou 公子周 (also known as Duke Dao of Jin 晉悼公 [r. 573–558]), the great grandson of Duke Xiang of Jin 晉襄公 (r. 627–621 BCE), came to be selected by the noblemen of the state of Jin 晉 to be lord of the state upon the death of Duke Li of Jin 晉厲公 (r. 580–574 BCE). Zhou was highly regarded for his numerous virtues, but he had passed the preceding years outside the state, intentionally avoiding the succession struggles within it. The unusual nature of his selection is explained by recalling this milfoil divination from three decades earlier. The interpretation of the divination turns on the genealogy of six lords of the state who reigned over the course of more than half a century:

46 *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 4164–4165.

- Duke Xiang 襄公 (r. 627–621 BCE)  
 Duke Ling 靈公 (r. 620–607 BCE)  
 Duke Cheng 成公 (r. 606–600 BCE)  
 Duke Jing 景公 (r. 599–581 BCE)  
 Duke Li 厲公 (r. 580–574 BCE)  
 Duke Dao 悼公 (r. 573–558)

When Duke Ling of Jin 晉靈公 (r. 620–607 BCE) had died, Duke Xiang's younger brother Heigu 黑臀 (lit. Blackbutt), was selected to to be duke, though he too had been outside the state; Heigu became known as Duke Cheng of Jin 晉成公 (r. 606–600 BCE). At the time of his appointment, a milfoil divination was performed, meeting with two hexagrams, together with what seems to be a very cryptic oracle: "Matching and yet not ending, the lord at the third goes out from it" (*pei er bu zhong, jun san chu yan* 配而不終，君三出焉). After Duke Cheng was succeeded by two further dukes, Gongzi Zhou, i.e., Duke Dao was finally selected, confirming the oracle that "the lord at the third goes out from it" (*jun san chu yan* 君三出焉).

成公之歸也，吾聞晉之筮之也，遇《乾》☰之《否》☷，曰：『配而不終，君三出焉。』一既往矣，後之不知，其次必此。且吾聞成公之生也，其母夢神規其臀以墨，曰：『使有晉國，三而畀驩之孫。』故名之曰『黑臀』，於今再矣。襄公曰驩，此其孫也。而令德孝恭，非此其誰？且其夢曰：

『必驩之孫，實有晉國。』

其卦曰：

『必三取君於周。』

其德又可以君國，三襲焉。吾聞之《大誓》，故曰：『朕夢協朕卜，襲于休祥，戎商必克。』以三襲也，晉仍無道而鮮胄，其將失之矣。必早善晉子，其當之也。』

When Duke Cheng had returned, I heard that Jin had divined about it by milfoil, meeting *Qian* 乾 ☰ "Vigorous"'s *Pi* 否 ☷ "Negation," saying: "Matching and yet not ending, the lord at the third comes out from it." Once having gone away, what comes after it is not known. The next must certainly be this. What is more, I have heard that when Duke Cheng was born, his mother dreamt that a spirit had marked his buttocks with ink, saying: 'If he has the state of Jin, on the third remove it will be given to Huan's [i.e., Duke Xiang's] grandson.' Therefore, she named him Blackbutt, and now it has been repeated. Duke Xiang was named Huan, and this is his grandson. And given his commanding virtue and filial respect, if not he then who? Moreover, her dream had said:

“It must be Huan’s grandson really to have the state of Jin.

Its hexagram said:

We must thrice take the lord from Zhou.

“His virtue also being enough to rule the state, there are three successions in it. I have heard it from the ‘Great Exhortation’ (Tai Shi 泰誓) that thus it is said ‘My dream coincides with my turtle-shell divination, successive beneficent auspices: the belligerent Shang will surely be defeated.’ Given these three successions, Jin is still without the Way and with little power, it is about to be lost indeed. We must soon treat well the prince of Jin; it is he who is right for it.”<sup>47</sup>

4.8 *Account #4.8 “Jin Yu” 晉語 “Jin Stories” Chapter of Guo Yu 國語*  
*Stories of the States: “Chong’er Personally Divines by Milfoil about*  
*Obtaining the State of Jin” (重耳親筮得晉國)*

The following account from the *Guo yu*’s “Jin yu” 晉語 “Stories of Jin” chapter concerns a divination by Chong’er 重耳, the most prominent of the sons of Duke Xian of Jin. Given the intrigues surrounding the succession of Duke Xian, Chong’er went into exile, traveling throughout northern China for nineteen years before finally returning to his home state of Jin, where he became ruler, going on to be known as one of the greatest hegemon in Chinese history: Duke Wen of Jin 晉文公 (r. 636–628).

It would seem that the initial milfoil divination was performed using some system other than the *Zhou Changes*, producing two hexagrams, one said to be the *zhen* 貞 (literally “to affirm,” but here clearly used nominally in a different sense) and one said to be the *hui* 悔 (literally “regret,” but, like *zhen*, used in a different sense here), said to be “both eights” (*jie ba* 皆八). This led multiple prognosticators to pronounce it “not auspicious.” However, a different prognosticator suggested that using the *Zhou Changes* to interpret the result would produce a very different prognostication. In the next chapter, we will consider this account yet again, from the perspective of divination with the *Zhou Changes*. For the purposes of this chapter, I will return in the analysis section to consider the possible significance of the terms *zhen* and *hui*, and what it might mean that they were “both eights.”

公子親筮之，曰：「尚有晉國。」得貞《屯》䷂、悔《豫》䷏，皆八也。筮史占之，皆曰：「不吉。閉而不通，爻無為也。」司空季子曰：

47 *Guo yu* 國語 (Sibu beiyao ed.), 3 (“Zhou yu xia” 周語下), 4a–b.

「吉。是在《周易》，皆利建侯。不有晉國，以輔王室，安能建侯？我命筮曰：『尚有晉國』，筮告我曰：『利建侯』。得國之務也，吉孰大焉！《震》，車也，《坎》，水也，《坤》，土也，《屯》厚也，《豫》，樂也。車班外內，順以訓之，泉原以資之，土厚而樂其實。不有晉國，何以當之？《震》，雷也，車也。《坎》，勞也，水也，眾也。主雷與車，而尚水與眾。車有震，武也。眾而順，文也。文、武具，厚之至也。故曰《屯》。其繇曰：『元亨利貞，勿用有攸往，利建侯。』主震雷，長也，故曰元。眾而順，嘉也，故曰亨。內月震雷，故曰利貞。車上水下，必伯。小事不濟，壅也。故曰『勿用有攸往』，一夫之行也。眾順而有武威，故曰『利建侯』。《坤》，母也，《震》，長男也。母老子彊，故曰《豫》。其繇曰：『利建侯行師。』居樂、出威之謂也。是二者，得國之卦也。」

The ducal son personally divined it by milfoil, saying “Would that I have the state of Jin.” He obtained the *zhen Zhun* 屯 ☵☳ “Sprouting” and the *hui Yu* 豫 ☱☳ “Relaxed,” both of them “eights.” The milfoil divination scribes prognosticated it, all saying: “Not auspicious. It is shut and not penetrating, the lines have no activity.” Sikong Jizi said: “Auspicious. In the *Zhou Changes* these are both ‘Beneficial to establish a lord.’ If you were not to have the state of Jin in order to support the royal house, how would it be possible to establish a lord? We commanded the milfoil saying: ‘Would that I have the state of Jin.’ The milfoil reported to us saying: ‘Beneficial to establish a lord.’ What auspiciousness could be greater than getting the responsibility of the state! *Zhen* ☳ is a ‘Chariot’; *Kan* ☵ is ‘Water’; *Kun* ☷ is ‘Earth’; *Zhun* ☵☳ is ‘Thick’; *Yu* ☱☳ is ‘Happiness.’ If the chariot is painted outside and in, following along the lines and supported by the spring, and the earth is solid and enjoying its fruit, what could this correspond to if not having the state of Jin? *Zhen* ☳ is ‘Thunder’ and ‘Chariot.’ *Kan* ☵ is ‘Labor,’ ‘Water’ and the ‘Multitudes’: ruling thunder and chariots, and raising up water and the multitudes. For a chariot to be startling is martial. For the multitudes to be in line is cultured. For the cultured and martial both to be complete is the extreme of being solid. This is why it is called *Zhun* ‘Sprouting.’ Its oracle says: ‘Prime receipt; beneficial to affirm. Do not herewith have someplace to go. Beneficial to establish a lord.’

Ruling startling thunder is to be the head, therefore it says ‘Prime.’

The multitudes being in line is enjoyment, therefore it says ‘Receipt.’

The internal moon startles the thunder, therefore it says ‘Beneficial to affirm.’

For the chariot to be above and water to be below, it is certainly the elder. Little endeavors do not get across, but are dammed up.

Therefore it says: 'Do not herewith have someplace to go,' which pertains to a single person's travels.

Since the masses are in line and are awed by the martial valor, therefore it says 'Beneficial to establish a lord.'

"*Kun* ☷ is 'Mother,' and *Zhen* ☳ is 'Eldest Son.' Since the mother is old and the son strong, therefore it says *Yu* ☱ 'Relaxed.' Its oracle says 'Beneficial to establish a lord and move the army.' This is what is said about residing in joy and setting out with awe. These two are hexagrams of obtaining the state."<sup>48</sup>

4.9 *Account #4.9 "Jin Yu" 晉語 "Stories of Jin" Chapter of Guo Yu 國語*  
*Stories of the States: The Elder of Qin Inserted Chong'er into Jin* (秦  
 伯納重耳於晉)

The following account reports yet another milfoil divination performed upon the occasion of Chong'er's return to Jin. The final refuge of Chong'er's nineteen-year exile had been in the state of Qin 秦, which had long had a sometimes close, sometimes fraught relationship with Jin. Finally, with the death of Yiwu 夷吾, Duke Hui of Jin 晉惠公 (r. 650–637), who had ruled (or better, misruled) Jin for thirteen years, Duke Mu of Qin 秦穆公 (r. 659–621) moved to re-insert Chong'er as the lord of Jin.

Anomalous among most milfoil divinations reported in both the *Zuo zhuan* and *Guo yu*, this divination resulted in a single hexagram, *Tai* 泰 ☱ "Positive," though noting that it had obtained its "eight" (*ba* 八). The announced oracle, "heaven and earth matching receipt, the little going and the great coming" (*tian di pei heng, xiao wang da lai* 天地配亨，小往大來) may point to the *Zhou Changes*, but unlike many other cases this is not explicitly stated. In the *Zhou Changes*, the hexagram statement of *Tai* 泰 ☱ "Positive" is:

泰 ☱：小往大來。吉。亨。

*Tai*: The little go, the great come. Auspicious. Receipt.

"The little go, the great come" obviously matches the oracle here. "Heaven and earth" may also refer to the two constituent trigrams of *Tai* ☱: *Qian* ☰ and *Kun* ☷.

董因（迎）〔逆〕公於河。公問焉，曰：「吾其濟乎？」對曰：「歲在大梁，將集天行。元年始授，實沈之星也。實沈之墟，晉人是居，所以

48 *Guo yu*, 10 ("Jin yu si" 晉語四), 10a–11a.

興也。今君當之，無不濟矣。君之行也，歲在大火。闕伯之星也，是謂大辰。辰以成善，后稷是相，唐叔以封。《誓史記》曰：『嗣續其祖，如穀之滋』，必有晉國。臣筮之，得《泰》䷊之八。曰：

是謂天地配亨，小往大來。

今及之矣，何不濟之有？且以辰出而以參入，皆晉祥也，而天之大紀也。濟且秉成，必霸諸侯。子孫賴之，君無懼矣。」

Dong Yin met the duke at the River. The duke asked him, saying: "Shall I cross?" He responded saying: "When the year-star was in the Great Bridge and about to gather in Heavenly Motion, the first year's first reception was the star of Shichen; the mound of Shichen is the residence of the men of Jin, which is why they have arisen. Now that my lord is facing it, there is nothing that does not get across. As for my lord's travels, the year-star is in Great Fire. As for Yubo's star, it is called Great Chronogram. Time being used to complete goodness, Lord Millet was the assistant and through it Tangshu was invested. The *Blind Scribe's Record* says: 'Succeeding his ancestors, it is like the propagation of grains'; he will certainly have the state of Jin. Your servant has divined it by milfoil, obtaining the eight of *Tai* 泰 ䷊ 'Positive,' which says:

'This is said to be heaven and earth matching receipt, the little going and the great coming.'

"Now arriving at this, how would it be possible that you not cross! Moreover, with Chronogram coming out and Triaster entering, these are both auspices of Jin, and heaven's great net. Crossing and grasping completion, you will certainly be first among lords. Your descendants will rely on it. My lord should have no fear indeed."<sup>49</sup>

#### 4.10 Account #4.10 *Chu Bamboo Strips from Geling* 葛陵, Xincai 新蔡, 1

In July, 1994, a cache of more than 1,500 bamboo strips was unearthed from a large tomb at Geling 葛陵 Village, twenty-five kilometers northwest of Xincai 新蔡, Henan.<sup>50</sup> This was the tomb of a local lord named Cheng, Lord of Pingye 平夜君成 (d. c. 398 BCE). Many of the records in the tomb record div-

49 *Guo yu*, 10 ("Jin yu si"), 11a–12a.

50 The first site report was Henan sheng Wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, Henan sheng Zhumadian-shi Wenhua ju and Xincai xian Wenwu baohu guanlisuo, "Henan Xincai Pingye jun Cheng mu de fajue" 河南新蔡平夜君成墓的發掘, *Wenwu* 文物 2002.8: 4–19. The formal site report was Henan sheng Wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, *Xincai Geling Chu mu* 新蔡葛陵楚墓 (Zhengzhou: Da xiang chubanshe, 2003). For the definitive edition of the bamboo-strip texts, see Wuhan daxue Jianbo yanjiu zhongxin, and Henan sheng Wenwu Kaogu yanjiusuo, ed., *Chu di chutu Zhangguo jiance heji (er)* 楚地出土戰國簡冊合集 (二) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2013).



inations about him, and are apparently the earliest such bamboo-strip records yet known, dating to the early fourth century BCE.<sup>51</sup> Unfortunately, the strips are quite fragmentary.

The following several fragments seem all to derive from a single act of divination, apparently concerning a trip by Cheng to the Chu capital of Ying 郢, perhaps to respond to some rumor or allegation against him.<sup>52</sup> They begin with the same format seen in the last chapter for turtle-shell divinations: there is a date, with the year indicated by a “great event” notation, and the month given with the names of the month in the Chu 楚 calendar. This is followed by the command to the milfoil, concerning the lord’s trip to the capital, and then the prognostication, as usual auspicious (in this case indicated as “no trouble” [*wu jiu* 无咎]) but with some unresolved concern (in this case, a “hex” [*sui* 祟]). Unique in all bamboo-strip records of divination so far discovered, this is then followed with what seems to be an interpretation of the hexagram result, as well as a specific reference to the “oracle” (*zhou* 繇). The oracle is fragmentary and of somewhat uncertain reading, but as will be discussed in the analysis section below, its form is more or less analogous with line statements of the *Zhou Changes*.

Each line below represents the text on a single fragmentary bamboo strip.

齊客陳異致福于王之歲，獻馬之月，乙丑之日（甲三217），

The year that the Qi envoy Chen Yi presented blessings to the king, the Xianma month, the *yichou* day (A/3: 217),

... .. 示筮為君貞：居郢還返至於東陵，尚亡有咎。占曰：兆亡咎，有祟（乙四100、零532、678）

... .. X divined by milfoil on behalf of the lord, affirming: “Residing in Ying and returning as far as Dongling, would that there not be any trouble.” Prognosticating it, he said: “The omen is without trouble, but there is a hex” (B/4: 100, 0: 532, 678)<sup>53</sup>

... (䷋ ䷋) 是翦翮而口亦不為大詢，毋卹，亡咎。... (零115)

51 For a thorough study of this corpus of bamboo-strip texts, see Song Huaqiang 宋華強, *Xincai Geling Chu jian chutan* 新蔡葛陵楚簡初探 (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue chubanshe, 2010).

52 Song Huaqiang, *Xincai Geling Chu jian chutan*, 61, 165–185.

53 Here I follow the reading of Song Huaqiang, *Xincai Geling Chu jian chutan*, 61, rather than that of Wuhan daxue Jianbo yanjiu zhongxin, and Henan sheng Wenwu Kaogu yanjiusuo, *Chu di chutu Zhanguo jiance heji* (er), 10, since this concerns a milfoil divination.

... (䷗ ䷗) This is to stab and wound your mouth. Still this is not a great shame. Don't worry; without trouble. ... (〇: 115)

... 其繇曰：氏日末兑大言絕<sub>上</sub>，小言憊<sub>上</sub>，若組若結，終以 ... (甲三31)

... its oracle says: "This day's end is *Dui*: major sayings so sincere, minor sayings so worrisome. Orderly and knot-like, in the end use to ... "(A/3: 31)<sup>54</sup>

4.11 *Account #4.11 Chu Bamboo Strips from Geling* 葛陵, *Xincai* 新蔡, 2

The following divination record from Geling, Xincai is pieced together from two different fragments of bamboo strips, A/3: 198, 199–2 + A/3: 112. They record three separate divinations, all of which concern the same original topic, some indecipherable illness of the lord. The first divination results in the standard prognostication "the long-term affirmation is auspicious" (*heng zhen ji* 恆貞吉), but with the reservation that it will "slightly slowly come out" (*shao chi chu* 少遲出). This is followed by a divination concerning this slow recovery, praying that there not be a "hex" (*sui* 祟), for which the prognostication is that "there is no long-term hex" (*wu heng sui* 無恆祟). Finally, there is a third divination, unfortunately only fragmentarily recorded, about there not being any long-term hex. In the cases of the first two divinations, the results are recorded as two sets of six numbers, showing that these were certainly milfoil divinations. In the case of the third divination, the bamboo strip is broken before where the record of the result would have been recorded.

... 悶，且疥不出，以有瘡，尚速出，毋爲憂。嘉占之曰：恆貞吉，少遲出。六六一 一六一 六一一 一一六 或為君貞：以其遲出之故，尚毋又祟。嘉占之曰：無恆祟。六六六 六一一 一一一 六六六 或為君貞：以其无恆祟之故 ...

... depressed, and what is more the scabies will not leave together with the itch; would that it quickly leave and that there not be any concern. Jia prognosticated it saying: "The long-term affirmation is auspicious, but it will slightly slowly leave." 6-6-1 1-6-1 6-1-1 6-6-6 And then on behalf of the lord affirmed: "On account of its leaving slowly, would that there not be any hex." Jia prognosticated it saying: "There is no long-term hex." 6-6-6 6-1-1 1-1-1 6-6-6 And then on behalf of the lord affirmed: "On account of its not having any long-term hex, ..." <sup>55</sup>

54 See Henan sheng Wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, *Xincai Geling Chu mu*, 187–231.

55 See Henan sheng Wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, *Xincai Geling Chu mu*, A/3: 198, 199–2 + A/3: 112. See Song Huaqiang, *Xincai Geling Chu jian chutan*, 77–79.

#### 4.12 *Account #4.12 Chu Bamboo Strips from Tianxingguan 天星觀*

Tomb 1 at Tianxingguan 天星觀, in Jiangling county, Hubei, was excavated in 1978. It contained more than seventy complete bamboo strips containing tomb inventory and divination records, dating to about 340 BCE.<sup>56</sup> The divinations were performed on behalf of the deceased, one Pan Sheng 番勝, the lord of Diyang 鄧陽, one of the highest officials in the Chu government of that time. The divinations are of three types: Pan Sheng's serving the Chu king, his own health, and his occupying a new residence. One of these latter type gives the result in terms of two hexagram symbols, the first time this kind of hexagram was seen in Chu bamboo-strip records.

左師虎聘于楚之歲，夏柞之月己丑之日，應奮以大央為鄧陽君勝貞：既治，處其新室，尚宜長居之。一一一 一一六 六六一 六一六

In the year that Hu, Captain of the Left, paid visit to Chu, on the day *jichou* of the Xiayi month, Ying Fen used Great Brightness to determine on behalf of Sheng, Lord of Diyang: "Having governed, he will be seated in his new chamber; would that he be suitable long to reside in it." 1-1-1 1-1-6 6-6-1 6-1-6<sup>57</sup>

#### 4.13 *Account #4.13 Chu Bamboo Strips from Baoshan 包山, Strips #228-229*

In 1987, archaeologists exploring a Warring States cemetery at Baoshan 包山, near Jingmen 荊門, Hubei, opened a large tomb that was particularly well preserved. In it, they found, among other grave goods, 278 bamboo strips bearing records of court cases, tomb inventories, and divinations and prayers. The tomb belonged to a high-ranking official from the Chu capital, Superintendent of the Left Shao Tuo 左尹召舵, who died in 316 BCE. Because these bamboo strips were so well preserved and were published very expeditiously, they have become among the best known and most studied records from the Warring

56 These bamboo-strip divination records were published only sporadically and incompletely. For the site report, with two photographs of the strips, see Hubei sheng Jingzhou diqu bowuguan, "Jiangling Tianxingguan 1 hao Chu mu" 江陵天星觀 1 號楚墓, *Kaogu xuebao* 考古學報 1982.1: 71-116. For the lead archaeologist's own study, see Wang Mingqin, "Hubei Jiangling Tianxingguan Chu jian de chubu yanjiu." For a published study focusing on the divination records, see Yan Changgui 宴昌貴, "Tianxingguan bushi daoci jian shiwen jijiao" 天星觀卜筮禱辭簡釋文輯校, *Chu di jianbo sixiang yanjiu* 楚地簡帛思想研究 2 (2005): 265-298, and also the revised version of this study: Yan Changgui, "Tianxingguan 'Bushiji dao' jian shiwen jijiao (xiuding gao)."

57 Yan Changgui, "Tianxingguan bushi daoci jian shiwen jijiao," 15.01.

States period.<sup>58</sup> Several of the divination records involve milfoil divination, and concern both Shao Tuo's government service and also the illness that eventually killed him. I here present three of these records.

大司馬悼憫將楚邦之師以救鄆之歲，荆夷之月己卯之日，陳乙以共命為左尹斡貞：出入侍王，自荆夷之月以就集歲之荆夷之月，盡集歲躬身尚毋有咎。一六六八六六 一六六一一六 占之：恒貞吉，少有憂于宮室。以其故斂之，舉禱宮、行一白犬、酉飮，由攻敘于宮室。五生占之曰：吉。

In the year that the Great Supervisor of the Horse Dao Hua led the army of the Chu country to relieve Fu, in the Jingyi month on the day *jimao*, Chen Yi used the Proffered Command to affirm on behalf of Commander of the Left Tuo: "Coming out and going in to serve the king, from the Jingyi month all the way until the next Jingyi month, throughout the entire year, would that his person not have any trouble." 1-6-6-8-6-6 1-6-6-1-1-6 Prognosticating it: "The long-term affirmation is auspicious, but there is a little concern in the palace chamber. For this reason they exorcised it, offering prayer to the Palace and to the Road: one white dog and wine and food; may this dispel the trouble in the palace chamber." Wu Sheng prognosticated it, saying: "Auspicious."<sup>59</sup>

4.14 *Account #4.14 Chu Bamboo Strips from Baoshan 包山, Strips ##209–211*

東周之客鄆經致胙於葦郢之歲，夏夷之月乙丑之日，五生以承德為左尹斡貞：出入侍王，自夏夷之月以就集歲之夏夷之月，盡集歲，躬身尚毋有咎。一一六六六六 一一六六六一占之：恆貞吉，少有憂於躬身與宮室，且外有不順。以其故斂之。舉禱蝕太一全豢；舉禱社一全豢；舉禱宮、行一白犬、酒食。逕鄆會之祝，賽禱東陵連敖豕豕、酒食，蒿之。凶攻解於盟詛，且除於宮室。五生占之曰：吉。□□三歲無咎，將有大憲，邦知之。

58 Hubei sheng Jing-Sha tielu kaogudui, *Baoshan Chu jian*. For monographic studies of this tomb in English, see Cook, *Death in Ancient China*; Lai, *Excavating the Afterlife*.

59 Hubei sheng Jing-Sha tielu kaogudui, *Baoshan Chu jian*, ##228–229. For more detailed discussion of these divination records, including (in the first of these studies) another translation of this same record, see Donald Harper, "Warring States Natural Philosophy and Occult Thought," in Michael Loewe, and Edward L. Shaughnessy, ed., *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 BCE*, (New York: Cambridge University Press), 852–856, esp. 855; and Kalinowski, "Diviners and Astrologers under the Eastern Zhou", 381–384.

In the year that the East Zhou envoy Xu Cheng brought sacrificial meats to Ying, in the Xiayi month on the day *yichou*, Wu Sheng used Received Virtue to affirm on behalf of Commander of the Left Tuo: “Coming out and going in to serve the king, from the Xiayi month all the way to the next year’s Xiayi month, throughout the entire year, would that his person have no trouble.” 1-1-6-6-6-6 1-1-6-6-6-1 Prognosticating it: “The long-term affirmation is auspicious, but there is a little concern in his person’s body and in the palace chamber; moreover, outside there is something discordant.” For this reason they exorcised it, offering prayer to Rong Tai: one complete specially-raised animal; offering prayer to the Altar of the Soil: one complete pig; offering prayer to the Palace and to the Road: one white dog and wine and food. Transferring the Yanhui prayers, and providing the Dongling Lian’ao large pig, wine and food, and offering it: “May it attack and dispel the sworn curse, and moreover remove it from the palace chamber.” Wu Sheng prognosticated it saying: “Auspicious .. for three years there will be no trouble; there will be great joy, and the country will know it.”<sup>60</sup>

4.15 *Account #4.15 Chu Bamboo Strips from Baoshan 包山, Strips*  
##239–241

大司馬悼滑將楚邦之師徒以救郟之歲，荊夷之月己卯之日，陳乙以共命爲左尹胤貞：既腹心疾，以上氣，不甘食，尚速瘥，毋有祟。一六六一一一 一六六六六一。占之：恆貞吉，疾變，有續，遲瘥。以其故祝之。舉禱五山各一牂；舉禱邵王特牛，饋之；舉禱文坪夏君子良、郟公子春、司馬子音、蔡公子家，各特豢，饋之。凶攻解於祖與兵死。聿鹽吉之祝。享祭築之高丘、下丘，各一全豢。陳乙占之：曰：吉。

In the year that the Great Marshall Dao Hua led the army of Chu to relieve Fu, in the Jingyi month on the day *jimao*, Chen Yi used Proffered Command to affirm on behalf of Commander of the Left Tuo: “Having had a sick stomach and heart, with breath rising and lack of appetite, would that it quickly improve and that there not be any hex.” 1-6-6-1-1-1 1-6-6-6-6-1 Prognosticating it: “The long-term affirmation is auspicious, but the sickness has changed for the worse, there is a continuation and it will be slow to improve.” For this reason they exorcised it, offering prayer to the Five Mountains: each one sheep; offering prayer to King Zhao: a specially-

60 Hubei sheng Jing-Sha tielu kaogudui, *Baoshan Chujian*, #209–211 (32).

raised ox, and presenting it; offering prayer to Wenping Xia Junzi Liang, to Wu Gongzi Chun, to Sima Ziyin and to Caigong Zijia: each one specially-raised pig, and presenting them. “May it attack and dispel with respect to the ancestors and those who have died in battle.” Transferring Yan Ji’s exorcism, making offering at the High Mound and Lower Mound of the structure: each one whole pig. Chen Yi prognosticated it, saying: “Auspicious.”<sup>61</sup>

#### 4.16 Account #4.16 Mu Tianzi Zhuan 穆天子傳

The *Mu tianzi zhuan* 穆天子傳 “Biography of Son of Heaven Mu” was unearthed in 279, when tomb robbers opened an ancient tomb in Ji Commandery 汲郡 (present-day Jixian 汲縣, Henan). Other texts found in the tomb suggest that the tomb was closed in 299 BCE or shortly thereafter. The *Mu tianzi zhuan* is a pseudo-history of the travels of King Mu of Zhou 周穆王 (r. 956–918 BCE); its provenance in the Ji Commandery tomb shows that it could not have been written any later than the late fourth century BCE.

For our interests here, the text preserves a complete account of a milfoil divination resulting in a hexagram, *Song* 訟 ䷅ “Lawsuit.” The prognostication first mentions the hexagram’s “oracle” (*zhou* 繇), which seems, as elsewhere, to include three four-character phrases. Interestingly, it follows this oracle with three further prognostications, all auspicious, regarding military affairs, sacrifices, and hunting. Finally, the account notes that the person who made the prognostication, one Feng Gong 逢公, was presented with various gifts, and that he in turn presented other gifts to the milfoil divination scribe (*shi shi* 筮史).

丙辰，天子南遊于黃口室之丘，以觀夏侯啟之所居，乃口于啟室。天子筮獵莘澤，其卦遇訟 ䷅。逢公占之曰：訟之繇：

藪澤蒼蒼，其中口口，宜其正公。

戎事則從，祭祀則烹，畋獵則獲。口飲逢公酒，賜之駿馬十六、絳紵三十篋。逢公再拜稽首，賜筮史狐口。

On *bingchen*, the Son of Heaven traveled southwards to the Mound of Yellow .. Chamber in order to view where Xia Hou Qi had resided, and then .. in Qi’s chamber. The Son of Heaven divined by milfoil about hunting at Duckweed Swamp; the hexagram he met was *Song* ䷅. Feng Gong prognosticated it, saying: “Song’s oracle is:

The swamp is green green (*cang*/\*tshân), Its midst .. .., appropriate for its upright duke (*gong*/\*klôn).

61 Hubei sheng Jing-Sha tielu kaogudui, *Baoshan Chujian*, #239–241 (36).

In military affairs there will be accord (*cong*/\**dzoŋ*), in sacrifices there will be happiness, and in hunting there will be a catch.” .. toasted Feng Gong with wine, and awarded him sixteen fine horses and thirty chests of gauze. Feng Gong twice bowed and touched his head to the ground, and awarded the milfoil divination scribe a fox ...<sup>62</sup>

4.17 *Account #4.17 “Shi Guan Li” 士冠禮 “The Sires’ Capping Rites”*  
*Chapter of Yi Li 儀禮 Ceremonies and Rites*

Chapter Three above included the description of a turtle-shell divination in the *Yi li 儀禮 Ceremonies and Rites*. The same text also includes detailed descriptions of milfoil divinations. Although the first passage (Account #4.17) does not specify the topic of the divination or its result, it does provide considerable other information. The second and third passages (Accounts #4.18–19) provide more detail about divinations concerning sacrifices to the ancestors.

筮于廟門。主人玄冠，朝服，緇帶，素鞵，即位于門東，西面。有司如主人服，即位于西方，東面，北上。筮與席所卦者，具饌于西塾。布席于門中，闌西闌外，西面。筮人執筮，抽上韞，兼執之，進受命於主人。宰自右少退，贊命。筮人許諾，右還，即席坐，西面；卦者在左。卒筮，書卦，執以示主人。主人受、眡，反之。筮人還，東面；旅占，卒；進告吉。若不吉，則筮遠日，如初儀。徹筮席。宗人告事畢。

Divining by milfoil at the temple gate. The Master wearing a dark cap and wearing court robes with a black sash and plain kneepads approaches position to the east of the gate, facing west. The Supervisors, dressed like the Master, assume position in the western quadrant, facing east, with the superior to the north. The milfoil stalks and mat for the Hexagramer are all supplied in the western alcove. The mat is rolled out in the middle of the gate, to the west of the doorsill, facing west. The Milfoil Diviner holding the stalks pulls out the top quiver, holding it as well, and advances to receive the command from the Master. The Master of Ceremonies steps back slightly from the right and intones the command. The Milfoil Diviner approves, and returns to the right, taking his seat on the mat, facing west, the Hexagramer to the left. Having finished the milfoil divination, he draws the hexagram, and holding it shows it to the Master. The Master receives, inspects, and gives it back. The Milfoil Diviner returns, facing east; presenting the prognostication, he finishes, and advances to

62 *Mu tianzi zhuan* 穆天子傳 (Sibu beiyao ed.), 5.4a–4b.

announce the auspiciousness. If it is not auspicious, then they divine by milfoil about a more distant day, just as in the first rite. Removing the milfoil divination mat, the Templar announces that the service is complete.<sup>63</sup>

4.18 *Account #4.18 “Te Sheng Kuishi Li” 特牲饋食禮 “Single Victim Food Offering Rite” Chapter Chapter of Yi Li 儀禮 Ceremonies and Rites*

不諷日，及筮日。主人冠端玄，即位于門外，西面。子姓兄弟如主人之服，立于主人之南，西面，北上。有司群執事如兄弟服，東面，北上。席于門中，闌西闌外。筮人取筮于西塾，執之，東面受命于主人。宰自主人之左贊命，命曰：

「孝孫某，筮來日某，諷此某事，適其皇祖某子。尚饗！」

筮者許諾，還即席，西面坐。卦者在左。卒筮，寫卦。筮者執以示主人。主人受視，反之。筮者還，東面。長占，卒，告于主人：

「占曰『吉』。」

若不吉，則筮遠日，如初儀。宗人告事畢。

Not choosing the day, one comes to divine the day by milfoil. The Host capped in pure black takes his position outside of the gate facing west. The males of the family, dressed like the host, stand to the south of the host, facing west, with the superior to the north. The Superintendent of the many functionaries dressed like the males, faces east, with the superior to the north. A mat is placed to the west of the doorsill, just outside of it. The Milfoil Diviner takes the milfoil from the western vestibule, holding it, and facing east receives the command from the Host. The Master of Ceremonies intones the command from the Host's left, commanding saying:

Filial grandson so-and-so divines by milfoil about coming day such-and-such; choosing this such-and-such an affair to meet his august ancestor so-and-so, would that it be received.

The Milfoil Diviner assents, returning to his mat, sitting facing west, the Hexagrammer to his left. When the sorting is finished, they draw the hexagram. The Milfoil Diviner grasps it to show the Host. The Host receives it and looks at it, then returns it. The Milfoil Diviner returns, facing east. The Elder prognosticates; when finished, he announces to the Host:

The prognostication says: “Auspicious.”

If it is not auspicious, then they divine by milfoil a more distant day, just as the former ceremony. The Templar announces that the affair is finished.<sup>64</sup>

63 *Yi li zhushu*, 2038–2041.

64 *Yi li zhushu*, 2554–2555.



4.19 *Account #4.19 "Shao Lao Kuishi Li" 少牢饋食禮 "Minor Pen Victim Food Offering Rite" Chapter of Yi Li 儀禮 Ceremonies and Rites*

日用丁、己，筮旬有一日。筮於廟門之外。主人朝服，西面于門東。史朝服，左執筮，右抽上韞，兼與筮執之，東面受命于主人。主人曰：

「孝孫某，來日丁亥，用薦歲事于皇祖伯某，以某妃配某氏。尚饗！」

史曰：

「諾！」

西面于門西，抽下韞，左執筮，右兼執韞以擊筮，遂述命，曰：

「假爾大筮有常。孝孫某，來日丁亥，用薦歲事于皇祖伯某，以某妃配某氏。尚饗！」

乃釋韞，立筮。卦者在左坐，卦以木。卒筮，乃書卦于木，示主人，乃退占。吉，則史韞筮，史兼執筮與卦以告于主人：

「占曰『從』。」

乃官戒，宗人命滌，宰命為酒，乃退。若不吉，則及遠日，又筮日，如初。

On a *ding* or *ji* day, divining by milfoil a day eleven days off. The milfoil divination takes place outside of the temple gate. The Host dressed for court faces west to the east of the gate. The Scribe, dressed for court, in his left hand holds the milfoil, and with his right hand takes out the top quiver, holding them together with the Milfoil Diviner, facing east to receive the command from the Host. The Host says:

Filial grandson so-and-so herewith makes offering to august ancestor so-and-so and his consort so-and-so; would that it be received.

The Scribe says:

Approved.

Facing west to the east of the gate, he takes out the bottom quiver, in his left hand holding the milfoil, and in his right also holding the quiver in order to strike the milfoil, and thereupon pronouncing the command, says:

Approaching you great milfoil with constancy, filial grandson so-and-so on the coming day *dinghai* will herewith make offering to august ancestor so-and-so and his consort so-and-so; would that it be received.

Then he puts down the quiver and erects the milfoil. The Hexagrammer sits to his left, making the hexagram with wood. When the sorting is finished, then he writes the hexagram on the wood, showing the Host, and then retreats to prognosticate. If auspicious, then the Scribe quivers the

milfoil, and the Scribe holds both the milfoil and the hexagram in order to announce to the Host:

The Prognostication says: “Approved.”

Then the officers put away the equipment, the Templar commands to cleanse it, the Master of Ceremonies commands to ready the wine, and then they retreat. If it is not auspicious, then they reach a more distant day, again sorting the day, as before.<sup>65</sup>

## 5 Analysis

### 5.1 *The Command*

Based on the evidence available to us, it is possible to say that the command in milfoil divination was exactly the same as that used in turtle-shell divination. Almost all divinations for which a command is recorded begin with the same word *zhen* 貞 “to affirm” discussed in the preceding chapter. Moreover, the Western Zhou turtle-shell divinations that also record hexagram numerical symbols, and thus would seem to constitute evidence for milfoil divination as well, also close with a final prayer that begins with the word *si* 由 (i.e., 思) “to wish; may,” as in the example from Qijia village discovered in 2003.

翌日甲寅其禱由瘳  
七八六五七八

On the next day *jiayin* (day 51), we will make offering; may he heal.  
7-8-6-5-7-8

其禱由又瘳  
八八六七六八

We will pray; may there be healing.  
8-8-6-7-6-8

我既禱由又  
七六八六七八

We having already made offering and prayed, may he be blessed.  
7-6-8-6-7-8

Of course, it is unclear whether the divination command here refers to turtle-shell divination (even if this inscription is recorded on an ox-bone) or to milfoil

<sup>65</sup> *Yi li zhushu*, 2592–2593.

divination, to which the numerical symbols would seem to pertain. Fortunately, evidence from the Warring States period is less ambiguous. In the preceding chapter, we have already examined several records of turtle-shell divination from Baoshan. As indicated above, the same site also produced records of milfoil divination, producing divination results expressed with numerical symbols, in which the divination commands are identical to those using turtle shells. The commands of the following two divinations from that site, the first using turtle-shell divination and the second milfoil divination, are virtually identical (with only a minor transposition of one clause).

鹽吉以保家為左尹舵貞：自荆夷之月以就荆夷之月，出入事王，盡卒歲，躬身尚毋有咎。

Yan Ji used the Protect the Family (turtle) to affirm on behalf of Administrator of the Left Tuo: "From the Jingyi month through to the Jingyi month, coming out and going in to serve the king, through to the end of the year, would that his person not have any trouble."

陳乙以共命為左尹舵貞：出入侍王，自荆夷之月以就集歲之荆夷之月，盡集歲，躬身尚毋有咎。

Chen Yi used the Proffered Command (milfoil) to affirm on behalf of Commander of the Left Tuo: "Coming out and going in to serve the king, from the Jingyi month all the way until the next Jingyi month throughout the entire year, would that his person not have any trouble."

Similar commands are repeated formulaically throughout all other Warring States divination records, whether of turtle-shell or milfoil divination. The following is just a sample, the first coming from Geling 葛陵, Xincai; the second from Tianxingguan 天星觀; and the third from yet another milfoil divination from Baoshan.

... .. 示筮為君貞：居郢還返至於東陵，尚亡有咎。占曰：兆亡咎，有崇

... .. X divined by milfoil on behalf of the lord, affirming: "Residing in Ying and returning as far as Dongling, would that there not be any trouble."

應奮脰以大央為邸陽君勝貞：既治，處其新室，尚宜長居之。

Ying Fen used Great Brightness (milfoil) to determine on behalf of the Lord of Diyang: "Having governed, he will be seated in his new chamber; would that he be suitable long to reside in it."

陳乙以共命爲左尹舵貞：既腹心疾，以上氣，不甘食，尚速瘥，毋有崇。

Chen Yi used the Proffered Command (milfoil) to affirm on behalf of Zuoyin Tuo: "Having had a sick stomach and heart, with breath rising and lack of appetite, would that it quickly improve and that there not be any hex."

These examples could be repeated at great length; all known examples of Warring States milfoil divination records begin with the word *zhen* "to affirm" and conclude with a final prayer introduced by the word *shang* 尚 "to wish for; would that." In short, there was apparently no conceptual difference between turtle-shell divination and milfoil divination insofar as the way in which the topic of the divination was addressed to the divination medium, and through it to the spirit world; these were commands entreating the aid of the spirits in their realization.

### 5.2 *The Result: The Method of Sortilege*

Accounts of milfoil divination in China almost all begin with the "Da yan" 大衍 "Great Exposition" chapter of the *Xici zhuan* 系辭傳 *Commentary on the Appended Statements*. This text describes a method of sortilege using fifty stalks of milfoil. Through a complicated process of sorting the diviner produces one of four numbers for each line of a hexagram: 6, 7, 8 or 9. Because it has to do primarily with *Yijing* divination, I will postpone a detailed discussion of the "Da yan" chapter and its method of sortilege until the next chapter. However, it is very much implicated in virtually all other discussions of this topic.

Over the course of the last forty years, sets of six numbers have been seen in the results of actual sortilege divinations beginning with the Zhouyuan oracle-bone inscriptions of the Western Zhou period and stretching through the bamboo-strip records from the state of Chu in the Warring States period. The first attempts to interpret these numbers assumed that they were early versions of *Yijing* hexagrams, and scholars simply converted odd numbers to yang or solid lines and even numbers to yin or broken lines to produce a corresponding *Yijing* hexagram. The appearance in just the last five years of two separate manuscripts purporting to describe methods of sortilege divination has caused scholars to reevaluate this original understanding. Both of these manuscripts, the \**Shifa* 筮法 \**Method of Milfoil Divination* from the Tsinghua University collection of Warring States bamboo-strip texts and the *Jing Jue* 荊決 *Thorn-wood Decisions* from the Peking University collection of Han-dynasty bamboo strips, have been introduced at the beginning of this chapter, and it

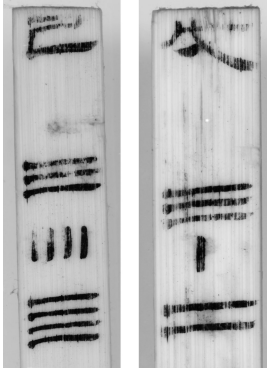


FIGURE 4.8

Infrared photographs of Peking University *Jing Jue* manuscript trigram, *Ji* 己 and *Wu* 戊; courtesy of Peking University

will not be necessary to repeat that discussion here. However, because these two manuscripts have precipitated a radical rethinking of the method of sortilege, we should review again the evidence they present for how the divination results were obtained.

The only text that purports to describe an entire method of sortilege is the recently published *Jing jue* of the Peking University manuscripts. Its description of the method is concise but clear.

卅筭以下其事，若吉若凶，唯筭所從。左手持書，右手操筭，必東面。用卅筭，分以爲三分，其上分衡，中分從，下分衡。四四而除之，不盈者勿除。

Thirty stalks are used to divine its affairs, whether auspicious or ominous, only the stalks are to be followed. In the left hand holding the document, in the right hand holding the stalks, one must face to the east. Using thirty stalks, divide them into three groups; the upper is horizontal, the middle group is vertical, the bottom group is horizontal. Discard them four by four, but what is not full is not to be discarded.

This produces a three-line result that we can call a trigram, but it is a very different trigram from those of the *Yijing* tradition. *Jing jue* trigrams are drawn with between one and four parallel strokes, the bottom and top lines writing the strokes horizontally and the middle line written vertically, as in Figure 4.8 above.

Although there are potentially sixty-four ( $= 4^3$ ) different possibilities for this sort of trigram, the text itself only includes sixteen different trigrams. These trigrams bear some resemblance to the tetragrams seen in the received text *Tai xuan* 太玄 *Great Darkness* (now usually referred to as *Tai xuan jing* 太玄經 *Classic of Great Darkness*), written by Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53 BCE–18 CE) at the



FIGURE 4.9 Tsinghua University manuscript \**Shifa* “Hexagrams”; after Li Xueqin 李學勤, ed.-in-chief, *Qinghua daxue Chutu wenxian yanjiu yu baohu zhongxin*, ed. *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian (Si)* 清華大學藏戰國竹簡(肆), Vol. 4 (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2013), 76; courtesy of Tsinghua University Unearthed Research and Protection Center (清華大學出土文獻研究與保護中心)

very end of the first century BCE.<sup>66</sup> The *Tai xuan* tetragrams are composed of four lines, each of which can be either solid, broken once, or broken twice, producing eighty-one ( $= 3^4$ ) different possibilities as in the following examples:



However, whereas the *Jing jue* seems to reflect an actual sortilege tradition, the *Tai xuan* was a self-conscious imitation of the *Zhou Changes* and, although it attracted some attention for its philosophical exposition, it seems to have had very little influence as a means of divination, either in its own time or later. The *Jing jue* too had little continuing influence and so should probably not command more of our attention here.

The \**Shi fa* 筮法 \**Method of Divination* text included among the Tsinghua University manuscripts would seem to have the greatest potential to reveal how milfoil divination was performed during the Warring States period. The divination results depicted on it superficially resemble the hexagrams of the *Zhou Changes*, and include what appear to be 114 examples of hexagrams (which is not to say 114 different hexagrams). They are always presented as pairs two-by-two, as in the examples in Figure 4.9 (which should be read from right to left, noting the dot at the bottom right of the left-hand diagram of each pair in Figure 4.9).

At first, these were regarded as pairs of hexagrams, but after further study it became clear that they are probably better regarded as groupings of four discrete trigrams. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, there has been considerable discussion as to how the individual lines should be understood.

66 For a translation of the *Tai xuan jing* 太玄經 into English, see Michael Nylan, *The Canon of Supreme Mystery: By Yang Hsiung; A Translation with Commentary of the T'ai Hsüan Ching* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1993).



FIGURE 4.10

Tsinghua University manuscript \**Shifa* “Hexagrams” with Numbers 4, 5, 8, and 9; after Li Xueqin 李學勤, ed.-in-chief, Qinghua daxue Chutu wenxian yanjiu yu baohu zhongxin, ed. Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian (Si) 清華大學藏戰國竹簡(肆), Vol. 4 (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2013), 76; courtesy of Tsinghua University Unearthed Research and Protection Center (清華大學出土文獻研究與保護中心)

The most common numbers used to depict lines are 一 and 入. Some scholars—including most notably Li Xueqin—had previously argued that similar hexagram pictures seen in other Warring States manuscripts were early versions of the yang and yin lines, known in the received tradition as — and --. Appearing less frequently in these other manuscripts are lines written as  $\times$  and  $\diagup \diagdown$ ; Li originally regarded these as essentially equivalent to 入. Other scholars argued that these divination results should be understood as numerical symbols, and thus that — is the number “1” (*yi* 一) and 入 is the number “6” (*liu*), and that the less commonly occurring  $\times$  and  $\diagup \diagdown$  in those other Warring States manuscripts are the numbers “5” (*wu* 五) and “8” (*ba* 八). This numerical understanding has now been demonstrated to be correct by the \**Shifa* manuscript; not only does it clearly use these four characters as numbers (though it is important to note that — seems to be used for the number “7” [*qi* 七], and not for the number “1” [*yi* 一], as would seem natural), but it also uses the numbers “4” (written as  $\cup$ ) and “9” ( $\ominus$ ), as in the examples in Figure 4.10 above.

It is clear that the method of sortilege described by the “Da yan” passage, which as mentioned above and which will be discussed at length below in Chapter Five, describes a process that results in the four numbers 6, 7, 8 and 9, could not have produced the six different numbers 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 seen in the \**Shifa*. There have been several proposals suggesting how different numbers of stalks could have been sorted to produce these numbers. For instance, Cheng Hao 程浩 argues that the received text of the “Da yan” passage is corrupt, and rather than saying that 50 stalks of milfoil were to be used, it should have originally stated that 55 stalks were used. He also notes that in the tomb M15 at Wangjiatai 王家台 in which were found two copies of the divination text *Gui cang Returning to be Stored*, there were found sixty counting rods that presumably were used in performing divinations. Stating that this is consistent with his proposal regarding the “Da yan” passage, he proposes a sortilege method in which 55 stalks were used.<sup>67</sup> Starting with these 55 stalks, he first removes either 3 or 7 stalks, to produce two possible results: 52 or 48 remaining stalks.

67 Cheng Hao 程浩, “*Shifa zhanfa yu ‘Da yan zhi shu’*” 《筮法》占法與“大衍之數”, *Shenzhen daxue xuebao (Renwen Shehui kexueban)* 深圳大學學報 (人文社會科學

TABLE 4.3 Numbers Seen in Divination Results from Tianxingguan 天星觀, Baoshan 包山, and Geling 葛陵

Place	Examples	4	5	6	7 (一)	8	9
Tianxingguan	8	0	1	50	38	6	1
Baoshan	6	0	1	31	34	6	0
Geling	11	0	6	74	46	4	2
Total	25	0	8	155	118	16	3

TABLE 4.4 Numbers Seen in Divination Results from Tsinghua University Manuscript \**Shifa*

Text	Examples	4	5	6	7 (一)	8	9
* <i>Shifa</i>	57	7	13	323	308	10	23

Then counting through these by fours four more times would produce one of six different results: 36, 32, 28, 24, 20 or 16. Dividing these by four again would then produce the numbers 9, 8, 7, 6, 5 and 4. While these numbers are the same as the numbers seen in the *Shifa*, the number with which he starts, 55, seems arbitrary, as is the initial subtraction of either three or seven stalks.

A different sorting using 50 stalks, as in the “Da yan” text, has been proposed by Jia Lianxiang 賈連翔. He begins with a tabulation of all numbers seen in twenty-five different milfoil divination results from Tianxingguan 天星觀, Baoshan 包山, and Geling 葛陵.<sup>68</sup> Each of these examples includes twelve lines, six for each of the two six-line hexagrams (or four three-line trigrams) that express the result of the divination, each line expressed as a number (the numbers 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 all appearing). Table 4.3 above displays the distribution of the numbers used.

Against these examples of actual divinations, he compares the results in the *Shifa*, noting that these would seem to be theoretical examples rather than results of actual divinations.

版) 2014.1: 62–64. Indeed, he argues that the received text of the “Da yan” passage of the *Xici zhuan* is corrupt, and that the original should have read “The Great Exposition’s number is 55” (*da yan zhi shu wushiyouwu* 大衍之數五十又五).

68 Jia Lianxiang, “Chutu shuzigua cailiao zhengli yu yanjiu,” 194–201.



TABLE 4.5 Distribution of Numbers Seen in all Unearthed Warring States Divination Results

Actual divinations	%	* <i>Shifa</i> divinations	%	Combined	%
4: 0	0%	4: 7	1.02%	4: 7	0.71%
5: 8	2.66%	5: 13	1.90%	5: 21	2.13%
6: 155	51.66%	6: 323	47.22%	6: 478	48.57%
7: 118	39.33%	7: 308	43.57%	7: 426	43.28%
8: 16	5.33%	8: 10	1.46%	8: 26	2.64%
9: 3	1.00%	9: 23	3.36%	9: 26	2.64%

In both types of examples, 6 and 7 (written —) make up the predominance of numbers used. However, in the actual divination results, the numbers 5, 6, 8, and 9 also appear with greater or lesser frequency, and in the \**Shifa* the number 4 also appears occasionally. In the two types of examples, the percentages of numbers in the total number of lines are similar, as Table 4.5 shows.

Jia next suggests that although he regards the “Da yan” passage as an ancient text, deriving from no later than the mid-Warring States period, roughly the fourth century BCE, he admits that the system described therein could not produce the divination results seen in the *Zuo zhuan* and *Guo yu* accounts of divination. The “Da yan” passage begins as follows:

大衍之數五十，其用四十有九。分而為二以象兩，掛一以象三，揲之以四以象四時，歸奇於扚以象閏，五歲再閏，故再扚而後掛。

The Great Exposition's number is 50, its use being 49. Divide them into two to represent the pair. Set one apart to represent the three. Sort them by fours to represent the four seasons. Return the remainder between the fingers to represent the intercalation. In five years, there are two intercalations; therefore, repeat the fingering and only then do you put them aside.

According to the interpretation of this text that has been standard since the Song dynasty, while one begins with 50 stalks, only 49 stalks are actually used in the sorting. These 49 stalks are divided into two bundles. Then one more stalk is set aside, held between the little finger and ring finger of the left hand. Counting through the remaining stalks by fours three different times produces one of four different results: 36, 32, 28 or 24 stalks. Dividing by four, these pro-

duce the results: 9, 8, 7 or 6. There has been considerable discussion about why 50 stalks are used in this type of sortilege, with various numerological explanations given. Yet, as Richard Rutt notes, “Symbolic explanations, attractive though they are, tend to obscure mathematical necessities. There is a plain mathematical reason for counting with 49 wands. Counting has to arrive at four possible answers (6, 7, 8 and 9), and the method is division by four in order to discover remainders. The wands are divided into two heaps, because if there were only one, the remainder would always be the same. One heap must contain an even number and the other an odd number, and the total must be divisible by four with one over. The only number that will give the desired results (6, 7, 8 or 9) and no others is 49.”<sup>69</sup>

As we will see in the next chapter, according to interpretations of *Yijing* divination that have been traditional since the Song dynasty, 9 and 7 produce a yang line, while 8 and 6 produce a yin line, but with the difference being that 8 and 7 are considered to be stable or non-moving or non-changing lines, while 9 and 6 are changing lines. It is well known that this form of sortilege does not produce these results evenly. The chance of getting either 7 or 8, that is an unchanging line, is 75% as opposed to only 25% for a 6 or 9.<sup>70</sup>

Jia suggests a new interpretation of the “Da yan” text. He begins as does the traditional interpretation by starting with 50 stalks, and then setting aside a single stalk. However, he then proposes to divide the remaining 49 stalks first into two bundles and then, instead of dividing out a single stalk and inserting it between the little and ring finger, he suggests that one would divide out a separate bunch of stalks and place all of them between those two fingers. This would have the effect of dividing the 49 stalks into three bundles. Then sorting each of these three bundles by fours three different times would produce the numbers 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 or 9. Finally, he further suggests that the probabilities of getting each of these results match well the incidence with which these numbers appear in cases of divination in the unearthed documents and the \**Shifa*.

He notes that in excavated texts of all sorts, the numbers 6 and 7 (understanding “—” as 7) make up the overwhelming majority of numbers used to write hexagrams, with 8 and 5 occurring more rarely; the number 4 appears only in the Tsinghua manuscript \**Shifa*, and even at that only very rarely.

69 Rutt, *The Book of Changes (Zhouyi)*, 159.

70 In fact, using the sortilege system understood from the “Da yan” passage, the odds are different for each different number; the odds of producing a “9” are three in sixteen (3/16), an “8” five in sixteen (5/16), a “7” seven in sixteen (7/16), and a “6” only one in sixteen (1/16); see Rutt, *The Book of Changes (Zhouyi)*, 168.

TABLE 4.6 Distribution of Numbers According to the Sortilege Method of Jia Lianxiang 賈連翔 and in Unearthed Warring States Divination Results

Jia sortilege method	%	Combined divination cases	%
4	0.21 %	4: 7	0.71 %
5	5.01 %	5: 21	2.13 %
6	34.74 %	6: 478	48.57 %
7	41.24 %	7: 426	43.28 %
8	16.68 %	8: 26	2.64 %
9	2.12 %	9: 26	2.64 %

The coincidence between these probabilities and the long-time tradition that milfoil stalks were sorted by fours is certainly very suggestive, and would seem to be a reasonable hypothesis concerning how the divination results in Warring States bamboo-strip manuscripts were produced. Of course, this does not explain how any of the other divination results, such as those of the *Guicang*, may have been produced, or how they may have differed from results using the *Yijing*. In the absence of any relevant evidence, it seems best to await future archaeological discoveries.

One other numerical result of milfoil divination is seen in accounts #4.8 and #4.9 above, with the result being stipulated as “meeting the 8” of something. The relevant portion of account #4.8 reads as follows:

公子親筮之，曰：「尚有晉國。」得貞《屯》䷂、悔《豫》䷏，皆八也。筮史占之，皆曰：「不吉。閉而不通，爻無為也。」司空季子曰：「吉。是在《周易》，皆利建侯。」

The ducal son personally divined it by milfoil, saying “Would that I have the state of Jin.” He obtained the *zhen Zhun* 屯䷂ “Sprouting” and the *hui Yu* 豫䷏ “Relaxed,” both of them “8s.” The milfoil divination scribes prognosticated it, all saying: “Not auspicious. It is shut and not penetrating, the lines have no activity.” Sikong Jizi said: “Auspicious. In the *Zhou Changes* these are both ‘Beneficial to establish a lord.’”

The *zhen* 貞 and *hui* 悔 mentioned here are often understood to be the bottom trigram and top trigram respectively, but that would seem not to be possible here. Perhaps it is meant to be the first hexagram and second hexagram, respectively, in a pair. None of this is particularly clear. In any event, both of these are said to be “8s”. What is clear is that this was a case of milfoil divination that did

not make use of the *Zhou Changes*. Instead, it apparently used some other form of milfoil divination, such as the *Gui cang*.<sup>71</sup>

A second topic to discuss in terms of the results of milfoil divination is that the divinations seem routinely to have produced not just two separate hexagrams (or groupings of four trigrams), but also two separate results. This two-step divination procedure was stressed by Li Ling 李零 in an early study of the Baoshan milfoil divination records.

The immediate impression one gets from these strips, in spite of the fact that they are not yet fully studied, is that they fall into two categories: (1) those that record day, month, and year, and are comparatively detailed, and (2) those that do not record any dates, but simply start out with a statement like: 某某習之 “[The diviner] so and-so follows up on this ...,” and are relatively concise and without many details. Generally, these two kinds of divinatory accounts are written on separate strips, but sometimes they appear on the same piece. In these latter cases we can see direct evidence that the content of the second kind follows directly upon the first to make a thematic whole. The record that is fully detailed, and that gives precise day, month, and year of the divination is the first account of the series of divinations about the matter at issue, while the records that do not give many details, nor give dates, are the accounts of subsequent, or what we may call ‘follow-up,’ divinations carried out on the same day, and concerning the same matter as the first divination. The two kinds together constitute a single divinatory report. For convenience here we shall call the first kind the ‘initial divination’ (*chu zhan* 初占) and the second kind the ‘follow-up divination’ (*xi zhan* 習占).<sup>72</sup>

This two-step divination procedure is clearly seen in the Baoshan record given in Account #4.13, and indeed, in all other Warring States milfoil divination records. In order to see the two-step procedure, it will be necessary to repeat the entire record.

大司馬悼懼將楚邦之師以救鄆之歲，荆夷之月己卯之日，陳乙以共命為左尹舵貞：出入侍王，自荆夷之月以就集歲之荆夷之月，盡集歲躬身尚毋有咎。一六六八六六一六六一一六 占之：恒貞吉，少有憂于

71 Account #4.9 also results in an “8,” in this case “the 8 of *Tai* ‘Positive’” (*Tai zhi ba* 泰之八). In this case, it is unclear whether this divination was done with the *Zhou Changes* or not.

72 Li Ling, William G. Boltz tr., “Formulaic Structure of Chu Divinatory Bamboo Slips,” *Early China* 15 (1990), 73.

宮室。以其故敝之，舉禱宮、行一白犬、酉飩，由攻敘于宮室。五生占之曰：吉。

In the year that the Great Supervisor of the Horse Dao Hua led the army of the Chu country to relieve Fu, in the Jingyi month on the day *jimao*, Chen Yi used the Proffered Command to affirm on behalf of Commander of the Left Tuo: "Coming out and going in to serve the king, from the Jingyi month all the way until the next Jingyi month, throughout the entire year, would that his person not have any trouble." 1-6-6-8-6-6 1-6-6-1-1-6 Prognosticating it: "The long-term affirmation is auspicious, but there is a little concern in the palace chamber. For this reason they exorcised it, offering prayer to the Palace and to the Road: one white dog and wine and food; may this dispel the trouble in the palace chamber." Wu Sheng prognosticated it, saying: "Auspicious."

The first step, which Li Ling terms the "initial divination" includes a detailed Command, and produces a numerical hexagram result, in this case "1-6-6-8-6-6 1-6-6-1-1-6." A prognostication is given for this result, usually expressed as "The long-term affirmation is auspicious, but there is a little concern in" (*heng zhen ji, shao you you yu* 恒貞吉，少有憂于) something or other, here the "palace chamber" (*gong shi* 宮室). This prompts the second step, which includes another Command, often expressed, as here, as "may this dispel the trouble in" (*si gong chu yu* 由攻敘于) wherever the trouble was determined to be, here the "palace chamber." The Prognostication to this second Command is invariably simply "Auspicious" (*ji* 吉).

Li Ling provided the following explanation of this two-step milfoil divination procedure.

The first parts of the text of the Charge and the text of the Prognostication are concerned with ascertaining whether the times are auspicious or not, and the result of this part is generally stated as *heng zhen ji* 恒貞吉, 'it is predominantly decisive and favorable.' There is typically also some indication of a problem of some sort, so it is necessary to continue with a *duo* 敝, that is, a process of getting rid of whatever is causing the problem. The subject of the second part of the texts of the Charge and the Prognostication is about *duo*. The divination about an auspicious time is relatively clear from the texts of the Charge and the Prognostication taken as a set. But our understanding of the divination about the elimination of the cause of the problem is still somewhat incomplete. Because this latter part of the divination typically does not use the word *zhen* 貞, 'test,' scholars have sometimes referred to this part as a 'prayer,' and not a 'charge.' But

this is not correct. ‘Prayers’ on these kinds of strips are always prayers in the form of proposals, and are not actual, direct prayers for some thing in any literal sense. Before prayers in any form can be presented one must still go through the divination process for selecting a favorable time.<sup>73</sup>

This seems to me to be quite reasonable. Indeed, I believe that it is to be seen already in Western Zhou divinations, as seen in Account #4.2 above:

翌日甲寅其禱由瘳  
七八六五七八

On the next day *jiayin* (day 51), we will make offering; may he heal.  
7-8-6-5-7-8

其禱由又瘳  
八八六七六八

We will pray; may there be healing.  
8-8-6-7-6-8

我既禱由又  
七六八六七八

We having already made offering and prayed, may he be blessed.  
7-6-8-6-7-8

As noted several times already, this record incudes both turtle-shell divinations and also milfoil divinations. It is unclear how these two types of divination were coordinated, but it seems clear that the first two inscriptions represent the first step of a two-step procedure, one of the Commands proposing making an “offering” (禱) and the other proposing “praying” (dao 禱). The third inscription would then seem to be the second step: having already undertaken the first two alternatives, they then wished that he would be “blessed” (you 又; i.e., 祐).<sup>74</sup> In a study of the role of “fixing the intention” (*bi zhi* 蔽志) in divinations of all sorts, Shen Pei 沈培 has proposed what I view also to be a reasonable explanation of

73 Li Ling, “Formulaic Structure of Chu Divinatory Bamboo Slips,” 75–76.

74 Li Xueqin 李學勤, *Zhou Yi jingzhuan suyuan (Zengding ben)* 周易經傳溯源 (增訂本), (Chengdu: Ba Shu shushe, 2006), 270–271, discussing the Baoshan divinations, both of turtle-shell and milfoil, suggested a two-stage divination process involving a first stage that was a milfoil divination, and a second stage that was the turtle-shell divination. This seems to misconstrue the evidence of both types of divination, but it is noteworthy that he too perceived a two-step divination procedure.

this two-step procedure, though he terms the steps simply as “the first divination” (*diyici zhenwen* 第一次貞問) and “the second divination” (*dierci zhenwen* 第二次貞問). While his comments pertain only to Warring States divination records, I believe that they have more general implications.

「蔽志」之類的话一般出現在第二次貞問的命辭的最後一部分，常以「凶（或思）」開頭，與第一次貞問的命辭中使用「尚……」有所區別。這也反映第一次貞問和第二次貞問的性質或目的不同，第一次貞問無論是「歲貞」或「疾病貞」，一般都是一種廣義的求福的貞問，真正的目的在於求祟。第二次貞問則是在得祟的前提下，提出具體的祭禱方案，其目的在於除祟。

The type of wording involving “fixing the intention” (*bi zhi*) usually appears at the very end of the second divination Command, often introduced by the word *si* 凶 (or 思) “may,” somewhat different from the word *shang* 尚 “would that” used in the command of the first divination. This also reflects a difference in the nature or goal of the first and second divinations. Regardless of whether it is concerned with the year or with illness, the first divination always seeks good fortune in a broad sense, the actual goal being to ascertain what sort of hex there may be. On the basis of getting this hex, the second divination proposes a specific type of sacrifice, the goal of which is to remove the hex.<sup>75</sup>

As I will propose in the next chapter, I suspect that this two-step divination procedure also had important implications for divinations with the *Zhou Changes*. I will not attempt to anticipate that discussion here.

### 5.3 *The Prognostication*

The most common prognostication in all sorts of milfoil divinations is the simple “auspicious” (*ji* 吉), as seen above in accounts ##4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 4.8 (also including a prognostication of “not auspicious” [*bu ji* 不吉]), and 4.17. In addition, account #4.18 includes the synonymous prognostication “approved” (*cong* 從). Among the records of actual milfoil divinations from the Warring States period, the prognostications of the first step in the divination procedure are routinely qualified as auspicious, but with some lingering problem. The first two examples below are from Geling 葛陵, the next three are all from Baoshan 包山.

75 Shen Pei, “Cong Zhanguo jian kan guren zhan bu de ‘Bi zhi’: Jianlun ‘Yi sui’ shuo,” 391.

占曰：兆无咎有祟

The prognostication says: "In the result there is no trouble, (but) there is a hex." (account #4.10)

嘉占之曰：恆貞吉，少遲出。

Jia prognosticated it saying: "The long-term affirmation is auspicious, but it will slightly slowly leave." (account #4.11)

占之：恆貞吉，少有憂于宮室。

Prognosticating it: "The long-term affirmation is auspicious, but there is a little concern in the palace chamber." (account #4.13)

占之：恆貞吉，少有憂於躬身與宮室，且外有不順。

Prognosticating it: "The long-term affirmation is auspicious, but there is a little concern in his person's body and in the palace chamber; moreover, outside there is something discordant." (account #4.14)

占之：恆貞吉，疾變，有續，遲瘥。

Prognosticating it: "The long-term affirmation is auspicious, but the sickness has changed for the worse, there is a continuation and it will be slow to improve." (account #4.15)

Since the implications of this sort of qualified prognostication have already been discussed in the preceding section (concerning the result of the milfoil divination), there is little need here to say more about it. It suffices to say that the problem detected in the prognostication to this first step in the milfoil divination seems to be the ground for the second step in the divination.

#### 5.4 *The Oracle*

As in turtle-shell divination, the generic prognostication was often followed by a short text referred to as a *zhou* 繇 "oracle." As in the case of the Command discussed above, there does not seem to be any difference in the way these Oracles were formulated in milfoil divination as opposed to turtle-shell divination. Among the accounts surveyed above, those that refer explicitly to the Oracle include the following:

且其繇曰：專之渝，攘公之瑜，一薰一蕕。十年尚猶有臭。

Moreover, its oracle says: Concentration's change; Stealing the duke's rams, One fragrant, one stinky. In ten years there is still the stench. (Account #4.3)



故曰《屯》。其繇曰：『元亨利貞，勿用有攸往，利建侯。』故曰《豫》。其繇曰：『利建侯行師。』居樂、出威之謂也。是二者，得國之卦也。」

This is why it is called *Zhun* “Sprouting.” Its oracle says: “Prime receipt; beneficial to affirm. Do not herewith have someplace to go. Beneficial to establish a lord.” ... therefore it says *Yu* “Relaxed.” Its oracle says “Beneficial to establish a lord and move the army.” This is what is said about residing in joy and setting out with awe. These two are hexagrams of obtaining the state. (Account #4.8)

... 其繇曰：氏日末兌，大言絕<sub>二</sub>，小言憊<sub>二</sub>。若組若結，終以 ...  
... its oracle says: “This day’s end is *Dui*: major sayings so sincere, minor sayings so worrisome. Orderly and knot-like, in the end use to ...” (Account #4.10)

逢公占之曰：訟之繇：藪澤蒼蒼，其中口，宜其正公。戎事則從、祭祀則憲，畋獵則獲。

Feng Gong prognosticated it, saying: “Song’s oracle is: ‘The swamp is green green, Its midst .. .., appropriate for its upright duke.’ In military affairs there will be accord, in sacrifices there will be happiness, and in hunting there will be a catch.” (Account #4.16)

These accounts reveal two important features of these Oracles. First, in account #4.8, which first recounted a milfoil divination using some form of divination other than that of the *Zhou Changes* and then subsequently modified it using the *Zhou Changes*, the Oracles for both *Zhun* “Sprouting” and *Yu* “Relaxed” match exactly the hexagram statements for these hexagrams in the received text of the *Zhou Changes*. In other sources as well, the word *zhou* 繇 “oracle” is an alternative name for the “lines” (*yao* 爻) or “line statements” (*yaoci* 爻辭) of the *Zhou Changes*. In Chapters Five and Nine below, we will examine this identification in more detail. The second feature to note is that, as in the Oracles from turtle-shell divinations examined in Chapter Three above, the accounts above also show the Oracles of milfoil divination to have been routinely composed of three rhyming phrases (usually of four characters each), the first of which describes some omen, usually of nature, with the couplet serving as a sort of comment upon the omen.

This format allows Oracles in two of the other accounts to be identified as well, even though they are not explicitly referred to as an Oracle.

其卦遇蠱 ䷑ 曰：千乘三去，三去之餘，獲其雄狐。

Its hexagram met *Gu* ䷗ “Pestilence,” which says: “A thousand chariots thrice depart: What is left after three departures, Captures their male fox.” (Account #4.5)

其卦遇復 ䷗，曰：『南國蹙，射其元王，中厥目。』

Its hexagram met *Fu* ䷗ “Returning,” which says: “The southern state stumbles: Shooting its prime king, Hitting his eye.” (Account #4.6)

These milfoil divination results are given as hexagrams, the names of which are also found in the received text of the *Yijing*, but since the quoted texts do not match anything from those respective hexagrams in the *Zhou Changes*, these results have long been identified as deriving from some other ancient divination manual, such as the *Gui cang*. With the discovery of two manuscripts of the *Gui cang* at Wangjiatai 王家台 in 1993, it is now possible to reconstruct in their entirety at least a couple of the Oracles from that text. Those for *Shi* 師 ䷆ “Army” and *Guimei* 歸妹 ䷵ “Returning Maiden” are the best examples.

不吉。曰：龍降于天，而道里修遠。飛而冲天，蒼蒼其羽。

Not auspicious. It said: “The dragon descends from heaven, but the road is long and far; flying and piercing heaven, so green its wings.”

吉。翩翩歸妹，獨將西行。逢天晦芒，毋惊毋恐。

Auspicious. So soaring the returning maiden, alone about to travel westward. Meeting heaven's dark void, do not tremble, do not fear.

In both cases, these Oracles have a generally similar format, but rather than featuring an omen of a single phrase, the opening omen is in the form of a couplet, making the entire Oracle virtually indistinguishable from a stanza in many poems of the *Shi jing* 詩經 *Classic of Poetry*.

The difference in format between these two Oracles of the *Gui cang* and those of the divination results in accounts #4.5 and #4.6 may suggest that those results ought not to be identified as coming from the *Gui cang* after all, but rather may derive from some other lost divination text. The recently published *Jing jue* from the Han-dynasty bamboo-strip manuscripts held at Peking University shows that there were indeed other such divination texts in circulation. Its format seems to include multiple Oracles, or perhaps rather a single Oracle with multiple parts, each of them further specifying the description or significance of the omen. The first trigram in the text is illustrative of all the examples.

窮奇欲登于天，浮雲如人。氣已行之，乘雲冥冥，行禹大神。其高如城，大息如壘，中道而驚。

The griffin wishing to rise to heaven, the floating clouds are like people. Having already put them in motion, ride the clouds oh so dark, and in moving meet the great spirit. Its height is like a city wall, its great breath is like thunder, in the middle of the road startled. (*Jing jue*)

Before concluding this discussion of Oracles in milfoil divinations, it is worthwhile to return to the oracle seen in the *Mu tianzi zhuan* account of divination (account #4.16).

逢公占之曰：訟之繇：藪澤蒼蒼，其中口，宜其正公。戎事則從、祭祀則憲，畋獵則獲。

Feng Gong prognosticated it, saying: “Song”’s oracle is: ‘The swamp is green green (*cang*<\*tshâŋ), Its midst .. .., appropriate for its upright duke (*gong*<\*klôŋ).’ In military affairs there will be accord (*cong*<\*dzon), in sacrifices there will be happiness, and in hunting there will be a catch.”

It can be seen that the Oracle is in the standard format of a single phrase describing a natural omen (the color of the swamp) followed by a rhyming two-character phrase indicating its significance for the topic of the divination within the human realm.<sup>76</sup> What is of particular interest in this account is that the Oracle proper is followed by several more prognostications indicating the significance of the Oracle for specific topics: warfare (*rong shi* 戎事), sacrifices (*ji si* 祭祀), and hunting (*tianlie* 田獵), in all three cases the prognostication being favorable. I suspect that warfare is placed first among these prognostications because the final word in the four-character phrase, *cong* 從 “accord” (\*dzon) rhymes with the final word of the Oracle: *gong* 公 “duke” (\*klôŋ).

Without wishing to anticipate the discussion of line statements in the *Zhou Changes* that will be the topic of Chapter Nine below, it bears noting that the wording of these prognostications is reminiscent of phrases in the line statements of the *Zhou Changes* such as “beneficial to see the great man” (*li jian da ren* 利見大人), “beneficial to drive off bandits” (*li yu kou* 利禦寇), etc. We will also see there that some of these phrases rhyme with the oracle or with the omen.

76 There is a lacuna in the first phrase of this couplet, indicated in the received text of the *Mu tianzi zhuan* with a square box (i.e., □). In the text of the *Mu tianzi zhuan*, these square boxes can indicate either a single missing character or an entire string of characters. Here

## 6 Conclusion

The detailed examination of milfoil divination given in this chapter shows that while the procedure of divination and the result were very different from that of turtle-shell divination examined in Chapter Three above, in most other respects there was no essential difference between these two types of divination. Both types began with a Command to the medium of divination, whether the turtle-shell or the stalks of milfoil, and both included a simple Prognostication and also an Oracle, all of which were essentially identical in form. Based on records of actual divinations performed during the Warring States period, both types of divination seem also to have involved a two-step procedure, in which a preliminary prognostication required some further refinement, producing a second, definitive prognostication. When we turn in the next chapter to divination cases involving specifically the *Zhou Changes*, we will find that all of these conceptions and procedures are again similar.

One difference between turtle-shell divination and milfoil divination, at least as seen in the accounts examined above (and especially those of the *Zuo zhuan* and *Guo yu*), is that milfoil divinations were often supplied with a sophisticated interpretive apparatus to explain the significance of the divination result. It is likely that much of this apparatus owes to literary embellishments introduced by the writers of the accounts, but their presence attests to a developing tradition of exegesis that would come to its first systematic expression in the “Ten Wings” of the *Yijing*. This tradition will be the topic of the final chapter of this book, Chapter Twelve below. However, before addressing that development, we should now turn to divination with the *Zhou Changes* itself.

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it seems clear that there are two characters missing, the second of which would presumably rhyme in the *dong* 東 rhyme class.

## Milfoil Divination with the *Zhou Changes*

The accounts of turtle-shell and milfoil divination examined in the preceding two chapters are necessary background for understanding divination with the *Zhou Changes*. Nevertheless, it goes without saying that accounts of divination with the *Zhou Changes* should command our greatest attention. For the Zhou dynasty, the period of the origin and early development of the *Zhou Changes*, accounts of divination with that text are found exclusively in the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 *Zuo Tradition* and in the *Guo yu* 國語 *Stories of the States*. In the preceding chapter, I considered two accounts of milfoil divination contained in the *Guo yu*, and pointed out that they reflect a mixture of different types of milfoil divination, including the use of the *Zhou Changes*. Since these two accounts have been translated in their entirety there, I will not repeat them in this chapter devoted to the divination with the *Zhou Changes*.

There is a Han-dynasty manuscript that bears on how the *Zhou Changes* was used in divination, if only indirectly. The Fuyang 阜陽 manuscript of the *Zhou Changes*, discovered in the winter of 1977–1978, is, as introduced in Chapter One above, quite fragmentary, but it does show that every hexagram and line statement of the text was followed by one or more prognostications concerning certain typical topics of divination. In the first part of this chapter, following the examples of Chapters Three and Four, I will examine what this manuscript shows about divination with the *Zhou Changes*. Then I will go on to examine cases of milfoil divination with the *Zhou Changes* seen in received texts, in this case restricted to the *Zuo zhuan*. In the *Zuo zhuan*, there are ten accounts of milfoil divination either explicitly said to be using the *Zhou Changes* or in which the result is stated in the form of a quoted oracle that matches or nearly matches the received text of the *Zhou Changes*.<sup>1</sup> There are also five other narratives in the *Zuo zhuan* in which the *Zhou Changes* is quoted for rhetorical purposes.<sup>2</sup> While some of these rhetorical uses of the text include analyses of

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1 There is one other account, in the 2nd year of Duke Min 閔 (660 BCE) that produces a result that resembles the results using the *Zhou Changes*, and so perhaps should be included here. However, since the *Zhou Changes* are not mentioned explicitly and since the oracle is not found in the received text of the *Zhou Changes*, I have examined this account in Chapter Four above (account #4.5).

2 These narratives are found in the following years (in chronological order): 6th year of Duke Xuan 宣 (603 BCE), 12th year of Duke Xuan (597 BCE), 28th year of Duke Xiang 襄 (545 BCE),

the text that have important implications for the developing tradition of interpreting the *Zhou Changes*, I will examine them only in the second part of this chapter and only insofar as they pertain to divination results. In the second half of the chapter, I will analyze all of these cases in terms of the same four topics concerning the nature of divination seen in the preceding two chapters: the command, the result, the prognostication, and the oracle. We will find that all four of these topics are quite similar to what we have seen with respect to the other types of divination.

One feature that numerous historians of the developing *Yijing* tradition have noted is that the year 603 BCE seems to mark a watershed in the use of the *Zhou Changes*. Prior to this year, all mentions of the text pertain to divination, whereas from this year forward the text is also quoted for rhetorical effect. If it could be demonstrated that the *Zuo zhuan* is a reliable witness to intellectual and cultural developments throughout the period it chronicles, this observation regarding the use of the *Zhou Changes* might well be important (though the year 603 BCE in itself would not necessarily be meaningful). However, given the current scholarly consensus that the *Zuo zhuan* was composed in the fourth century BCE, even if it was based on earlier materials, it would seem most prudent to assume all of the accounts reflect the historiographical view of the period of its composition.

## 1 Fuyang *Zhou Changes*

The Fuyang *Zhou Changes* has already been introduced in Chapter One above, and there is no need to repeat the basic information about the discovery and physical nature of the manuscript here. The most characteristic feature of the manuscript, and the feature that is its most important contribution to an

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1st year of Duke Zhao 昭 (541 BCE), and 29th year of Duke Zhao (513 BCE). The first of these accounts is often regarded as important in the developing tradition of the *Zhou Changes* as the earliest rhetorical reference to the text. Three of the other accounts (excluding the 1st year of Duke Zhao) will be cited below in the discussion of *Zhou Changes* divination procedures for the information they provide regarding how lines of hexagrams were determined. In addition to these five narratives, the *Changes* is also mentioned in the 2nd year of Duke Zhao (540 BCE); the account states that the lord of Jin sent an envoy, Han Xuanzi 韓宣子, to Lu 魯, where he was shown the *Yi xiang* 易象 *Changes Images* and the *Lu chunqiu* 魯春秋 *Lu Springs and Autumns*, prompting him to exclaim that “The rites of Zhou are complete in Lu indeed” (*Zhou li jin zai Lu yi* 周禮盡在魯矣). This too is often regarded as an important event in the transmission of the *Zhou Changes*, suggesting that the text was preserved in the state of Lu. For the passage, see Chapter Twelve, n. 12.

understanding of divination with the *Zhou Changes*, is that every hexagram and line statement is followed by a prognostication, whether of a single topic or multiple topics. These prognostications are typically introduced with the word *bu* 卜 “divining,” followed by a topic and an expected result, in the form “Divining about a certain topic, a certain result can be expected.” Unfortunately, because the manuscript has survived only in small fragments, there exist many fragments with isolated prognostications that cannot be rejoined with specific hexagram or line statements. However, there are enough larger pieces with both text of the *Zhou Changes* and also prognostications that it is possible to get a good sense of what the original manuscript was like.

In Chapter One, I introduced eleven fragments of Fuyang strips all of which pertain to *Tongren* 同人 ䷌ “Together with People” (#13) hexagram. Taken together they constitute the most complete hexagram text contained within that manuscript. I will not repeat that example here, but the reader interested in how the fragments have been pieced together might refer back to the discussion in Chapter One. For our purposes here, in examining how the *Zhou Changes* was used in divination, there are several other examples that are also quite illuminating. One of the most developed examples of the prognostications in this manuscript is seen on two strips, numbered #125 and #126 in the published report, that contain the hexagram statement and First Nine line statement of *Wuwang* 无妄 ䷘ “Without Folly” (#25), but called by the manuscript *Wuwang* 无亡 “Without Loss.”<sup>3</sup> As I did in Chapter One, in the English translation here I write the prognostications in bold to differentiate them from the text of the *Zhou Changes* that they follow. I should again note that on the original strips, there is no orthographic distinction between the text of the *Zhou Changes* and the prognostications, though, as noted above,

3 The name of this hexagram is written variously in different manuscripts, not just in the Fuyang manuscript. Thus, the Shanghai Museum manuscript writes it *Wangwang* 亡忘 (literally “Nothing Forgotten”), the Wangjiatai 王家台 *Gui cang* 歸藏 writes it as *Wuwang* 毋亡 (literally “Don’t Lose”), and the Mawangdui 馬王堆 manuscript writes it as *Wuwang* 无孟 (literally “Without Elder,” or perhaps “Without Impetuosity”). I am tempted to regard these binomial names as related to the name of demonic creatures inhabiting forests variously named *wangliang* 罔兩 (or 魍魎), *wangxiang* 罔象 (also written 罔像 and 魍象), and *wanghang* 亡行. This might explain why in the text of *Wuwang* hexagram the term seems to indicate some malady that requires propitiation, and might also explain the connection in the Fuyang manuscript with hunting. For a discussion of these creatures, which he refers to memorably as “telluric bogies,” see Donald Harper, “A Chinese Demonography of the Third Century BCE,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 45.2 (1985), 481. However, in the end, discretion seems to suggest a literal translation such as “Without Folly.”

the prognostications are usually introduced with the word *bu* 卜 “divining,” and then are separated from the following *Zhou Changes* text with a black dot “•.”

125. 无亡元亨利貞其匪証有眚不利有攸往卜雨不雨不口  
 126. 齊= 不吏君不吉田魚不得 • 初九无亡往吉卜田魚得而  
 125. Without Loss: Prime receipt; beneficial to affirm; his not going to correct has curses; not beneficial to have someplace to go. **Divining about rain: it will not rain; it will not ...**  
 126. ... about clearing: it will clear; about not serving the lord: not auspicious; about hunting and fishing: you will not obtain anything. • First Nine: Nothing Lost goes; auspicious. **Divining about hunting and fishing: you will obtain something and ...**

It would appear that these two fragments, both of which are 15.5 cm long and both of which are broken on both ends, are parts of a single bamboo strip that was originally about 36 cm long. Above the name of the hexagram, “Without Loss” (*Wuwang* 无亡), on strip #125, there would originally have been another short fragment containing the hexagram picture, which in this manuscript always came at the head of a bamboo strip (separated from the text of the hexagram by the top of the three binding straps that originally held the manuscript together). It is unclear how much text was lost by the breakage at the bottom of strip #126.<sup>4</sup>

There are at least four different prognostications appended to the hexagram statement here: two different statements concerning the weather (whether it will rain and whether it will clear),<sup>5</sup> one about serving one’s lord, and one about hunting and fishing, and one prognostication appended to the First Nine line statement (again about fishing and hunting). Isolating just these prognostications and adding punctuation, they are:

卜雨：不雨。不口 Divining about rain: it will not rain; it will not ...  
 齊= (i.e., 齊：齊) about clearing: it will clear  
 不吏君。不吉。 about not serving the lord: not auspicious

4 Strip #127 of the manuscript is also fragmentary, containing part of the text of the Six in the Second line statement of *Wuwang* hexagram but not the characters *liu er* 六二 “Six in the Second” themselves. Thus, there is no way to know what text was lost from this breakage.

5 Because of the break at the bottom of strip #126, it is unclear whether the *bu* 不 “not” that follows the prognostication that it will not rain (*bu yu* 不雨) was meant to qualify that prognostication or to introduce another topic of divination.



田魚：不得。	about hunting and fishing: you will not obtain anything
卜田魚：得而	Divining about hunting and fishing: you will obtain something and

The weather, serving the lord, and hunting and fishing are, of course, standard divination topics seen in other divination texts and accounts of divination.

Another excellent example of prognostications seen in the Fuyang manuscript comes from six fragments that pertain to the hexagram statement and first two line statements of *Daguo* 大過 ䷛ “Greater Surpassing” (#28) hexagram. The hexagram statement and the Nine in the Second line statement are complete, matching the received text almost exactly; both have at least three prognostications, although in both cases the third prognostication is unfortunately fragmentary. The First Six line statement is also fragmentary, with only part of the line statement contained on one strip (#139) and the last two characters of a prognostication (“will not die” [*bu si* 不死]) on another strip (#140) that also contains the beginning of the Nine in the Second line statement.

138. ䷛ 大過 橈 利用攸往 亨 卜病者不死 妻夫不相去
139. 不死 · 初六 口用白
140. 不死 · 九二 枯楊  
生蓂 老夫得
141. 生蓂 老夫得
142. 女妻无不利 卜病者不死 戰鬪
143. 適强而有勝 有罪而饗徙
138. ䷛ Greater Surpassing: Rafters sagging. Beneficial to have somewhere to go. Receipt. **Divining about someone who is sick: he will not die; about a wife and husband: they will not leave each other;**
- ...
139. ... **will not die.** • First Six: .. using white ...
140. ... **will not die.** • Nine in the Second: Withered poplar  
growing shoots: An old husband getting ..
141. maiden wife. Nothing not beneficial. **Divining about someone who is sick: he will not die; about warfare: ...**
143. **the enemy will be strong and will have victory; about having guilt and moving away. ...**

Again isolating the prognostications may reveal at least one closer relationship with the line statements of *Daguo* “Greater Surpassing” than in the case of *Wuwang* hexagram above.

卜病者：不死。	Divining about someone who is sick: he will not die
妻夫：不相去。	about a wife and husband: they will not leave each other
不死。	will not die
不死。	will not die
卜病者：不死。	Divining about someone who is sick: he will not die
戰鬪：適強而有勝。	about warfare: ... the enemy will be strong and will have victory
有罪而饗徙：	about having guilt and moving away ...

Four of the seven prognostications here concern sickness and/or dying, for which there is no obvious connection to the text of *Daguo* “Greater Surpassing” (unless, as we will see, oracles about an elderly man and woman might cause concern for the health and life of the diviner). However, the second prognostication concerning “a wife and husband: they will not leave each other” (*qifu bu xiang qu* 妻夫不相去) would seem to be directly related to the oracle contained in the line statement to which it is attached.

九二：枯楊生稊，老夫得其女妻。无不利。

Nine in the Second: Withered poplar growing shoots: An old husband getting his maiden wife. Nothing not beneficial.

I will return to this example in Chapter Nine below, discussing the prognostications seen in the received text of the *Zhou Changes* itself. To anticipate that discussion, it bears noting that the oracle of this line statement is paired with a similar oracle in the Nine in the Fifth line statement:

九五：枯楊生華，老婦得其士夫。无咎无譽。

Nine in the Fifth: Withered poplar growing flowers: An old wife getting her sire husband. Without trouble, without praise.

The symbolism of these two oracles about the withered poplar growing shoots and flowers would seem to be easy to understand. However, the prognostications attached to them perhaps deserve comment. The phrases “Nothing not beneficial” (*wu bu li* 无不利) and “Without trouble, without praise” (*wu jiu wu yu* 无咎无譽) are not very different in kind from the prognostications seen in the Fuyang manuscript; presumably they were attached to these lines in much the same manner as the Fuyang prognostications were attached to the line statements in that manuscript. There is one additional feature to note: the last words of these two prognostications, *li*/\*rih 利 “beneficial” and *yu*/\*la 譽

“praise” are perfect rhymes with the final words of the two phrases of the oracles: *ti/\*dî* 第 (written 稊 in the received text) “sprout” and *qi/\*tshəih* 妻 “wife,” in the case of the Nine in the Second line, and *hua/\*wrâ* 華 “flower” and *fu/\*pa* 夫 “man” in the Nine in the Fifth line. It may be that this rhyme made these prognostications particularly memorable, so that they were incorporated into the received text, or indeed it may be that some prognosticator was originally led to make these prognostications based on the rhyme.

Other Fuyang prognostications are also clearly related to the contents of the hexagram or line statement to which they are attached. Indeed, if we did not have a received text of the *Zhou Changes* against which to compare these fragments and if they were not introduced by the word *bu* 卜 “to divine,” it would sometimes be difficult to differentiate them from the hexagram or line statement. In the following examples, I supply in parentheses (in both the Chinese and English text) the missing text from the received text of the *Zhou Yi* when it is relevant to the understanding, and again write the prognostication in bold.

98. • 初九屢校威 (趾无咎)  
 99. 馱囚者桎梏吉不兇 • 六二筮膚威  
 98. ... • First Nine: Wearing shackles and amputating (a foot. Nothing troubling.)  
 99. ... **Tying a prisoner in fetters and handcuffs: auspicious, not ominous.** • Six in the Second: Biting flesh and amputating ...

Because the prognostication seen on strip #99 is followed, after the black dot •, by the Six in the Second line of *Shike* 噬嗑 ䷔ “Biting and Chewing” (#21) hexagram (written *Shi zha* 筮闡 in the Fuyang manuscript), it is apparent that it is attached to the First Nine line of that hexagram. Since the oracle of that line statement reads “Wearing shackles and amputating a foot” (*lǜ jiao* [wei:] *mie zhi* 屢校威 [滅] 趾), it is easy to see that the prognostication about “Tying a prisoner in fetters and handcuffs” (*xi qiu zhe zhigu* 馱囚者桎梏) corresponds exactly with the contents of the line statement.

120. 六二休復吉卜  
 121. 出妻皆復 • 六三頻  
 120. ... Six in the Second: Successful returning. Auspicious. **Divining ...**  
 121. ... **departing wives all return.** • Six in the Third: Repeated ...

In this case too, since the prognostication “departing wives all return” (*chu qie jie fu* 出妻皆復) comes before the Six in the Third line of *Fu* 復 ䷗ “Return-

ing” (#24) hexagram, it is clear that it pertains to the Six in the Second line of that hexagram, the oracle of which reads “Successful returning” (*xiu fu* 休復). Whatever “Successful returning” might have meant, the prognostication that “departing wives all return” is obviously related to the major theme of “returning.”

151. ☲ 離利貞亨畜牝牛吉居官及家不吉罪人  
 152. 不解·初九履蕃然  
 151. ☲ Netted: Beneficial to affirm. Receipt. Rearing a cow: Auspicious.  
**Residing in office and the family: not auspicious; about a guilty man: he will**  
 152. **not be released.** • First Nine: Stepping crosswise;

In the case of the hexagram statement of *Li* 離 “Netted” (#30) hexagram, since the Fuyang prognostication does not begin with *bu* “divining,” there is no obvious distinction between the oracle and prognostication of the hexagram statement proper, “Rearing a female bovine; auspicious” (*chu pin niu ji* 畜牝牛吉), and the prognostications “Residing in office and the family: not auspicious” (*ju guan ji jia bu ji* 居官及家不吉) and “(about a) guilty man: he will not be released” (*zui ren bu jie* 罪人不解). Although there is no necessary correlation between the hexagram statement proper and a prognostication about “Residing in office and the family,” neither is there any obvious correlation between the name and topic of the hexagram (*li* 離 originally meant “to net” [especially a bird],<sup>6</sup> but it came to have several other extended meanings) and the phrase “rearing a female bovine; auspicious” (*chu pin niu ji* 畜牝牛吉), which is part of the original hexagram statement. Indeed, it would be easy to imagine that this phrase seen in the hexagram statement of the received text was produced in the same context as the prognostications in the Fuyang manuscript.

If we now consider one final example, I think it may be possible also to draw some inferences about how the original line statements of the *Zhou Changes* came to be formed. Fuyang strips #18 and #19 correspond to the Nine in the Second line of *Meng* 蒙 ☶ “Shrouded” (#4).

18. (九二包蒙吉納) 老婦吉子克  
 19. 家利嫁

6 It is possible to see an association between this sense of being “caught in a net” and the prognostication about the “guilty man not being released” (*zui ren bu jie* 罪人不解).

18. (Nine in the Second: Wrapping a shroud. Auspicious. Taking) an old wife:<sup>7</sup> Auspicious. A son can  
 19. marry. **Beneficial to marry off (a daughter) ...**

Given the relationship between the divination statements and hexagram or line statements suggested above, it is easy to see a relationship between the prognostication “beneficial to marry off (a daughter)” (*li jia* 利嫁) and the line statement “a son can marry” (*zi ke jia* 子克家). Indeed, if, as appears to be the case, there were no “divining about” here to divide the two statements,<sup>8</sup> it would be easy to read the divination statement as part of the line statement. One of the most frequent formulas in the line statements of the *Zhou Changes* begins with the word “beneficial” (*li* 利), introducing phrases such as “beneficial to see a great man” (*li jian da ren* 利見大人), “beneficial to ford a great river” (*li she da chuan* 利涉大川), and “beneficial to have someplace to go” (*li you you wang* 利有攸往), etc. The prognostication “beneficial to marry off (a daughter)” would seem to be no different in kind from all of these “beneficial” formulas of the *Zhou Changes*. One can imagine that, but for a different divination official responsible for the final editing of the *Zhou Changes*, this Fuyang phrase, or one much like it, could have come to be attached at the end of the Nine in the Second line statement of *Meng* hexagram.

In the second section of this chapter, I will examine ten different accounts of divination in the *Zuo zhuan* which either explicitly mention the use of the *Zhou Changes* or else quote results that correspond, either exactly or closely, with hexagram or line statements in the received text of the *Zhou Changes*. As I did also in Chapters Three and Four, I will introduce each of these accounts, providing some of the historical context and also suggesting some of the features of *Zhou Changes* divination that deserve attention. More systematic discussion of these features will then be given in the second half of this chapter devoted to analysis.<sup>9</sup>

7 The received text of the *Zhou Changes* reads *na* 納 “to take in” rather than the *lao* 老 “old” of the Fuyang text (the Mawangdui manuscript reads *ru* 入 “enter,” cognate with *na*).

8 It is possible that these two strips should not be rejoined in this way. While the first character of strip #19, “family” (*jia* 家), neatly completes the Nine in the Second line of *Meng* hexagram, not only is it also the last word of the Top Nine line of *Sun* 損 *Decrease* hexagram (number 41), but it is also a word found with some frequency among the Fuyang divination statements themselves (for example, in fragments 566–591, the word occurs twenty-two times) and thus might instead be the last word of a preceding divination phrase. Despite these two alternative possibilities, the example here seems sufficiently plausible (especially considering the precedents noted above) to warrant consideration.

9 For a different account in English that considers many of these accounts, see Kidder Smith,

2 *Zuo Zhuan* Accounts of Divination Using the *Zhou Changes*2.1 *Account #5.1 Zuo Zhuan* 左傳, *Zhuang* 莊 22 (672 BCE)

The first account in the *Zuo zhuan* of a milfoil divination that results in an oracle found in the received text of the *Zhou Changes*, though set in the first half of the seventh century BCE, predicts events that actually took place only five and eight generations later. The state of Chen 陳 was one of the small states in existence at the beginning of the Spring and Autumn period, located in present-day Huaiyang 淮陽 county, Henan. This account concerns the birth of Jingzhong 敬仲, son of Duke Li of Chen 陳厲公 (r. 706–700 BCE). According to the account, when Jingzhong was young, a or the Scribe of Zhou (Zhou *shi* 周史) gained audience with Duke Li showing him the *Zhou Changes*. This is often understood to suggest that the text was not yet in general circulation. The duke had the scribe divine the fate of Jingzhong, which resulted in the Six in the Fourth line of *Guan* 觀 ☱ “Looking Up” (#20) hexagram (referred to as *Guan* ☱ “Looking Up”’s *Pi* ☶ “Negation,” the explanation of which will be given in the analysis of divination results in the second half of the chapter<sup>10</sup>). After quoting the line statement, the scribe employed both philological and trigram analyses to predict that the Chens would eventually enjoy great glory, but that it would come in a different state.<sup>11</sup> This would prove true, first in 534 BCE, when Tian Wuyu 田無宇 (also known as Chen Huanzi 陳桓子; fl. 571–532) was appointed as high minister in the state of Qi 齊, and then three generations later when, in 478 BCE, another Chen, Tian Heng 田恒 (also known as Chen Chang 陳常 and Tian Chengzi 田成子; fl. 481 BCE), took control of Qi.

陳厲公，蔡出也，故蔡人殺五父而立之。生敬仲。其少也，周史有以《周易》見陳侯者，陳侯使筮之，遇觀☱之否☶，曰：

「是謂『觀國之光，利用賓于王。』」

此其代陳有國乎？不在此，其在異國；非此其身，在其子孫。光，遠

Jr., “*Zhouyi* Divination from Accounts in the *Zuozhuan*,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 49.2 (1989): 424–463.

10 When the *Zuo zhuan* refers to line statements in the *Zhou Changes*, whether as the result of a divination or just for rhetorical effect, it indicates the line as a relationship between two hexagrams, the second of which “belongs to” the first (marked by the possessive particle *zhi* 之). In almost all cases, the hexagram pictures of the two hexagrams differ by just a single line. In this case, *Guan* ☱ “Looking Up” *zhi* 之 *Pi* ☶ “Negation,” only the fourth line differs, in *Guan* being a yin line and in *Pi* a yang line. For a detailed discussion of this type of expression and its implications for the understanding of the *Zhou Changes*, see below, pp. 257–264.

11 For a detailed discussion of these analyses, see, below, Chapter Twelve.

而自他有耀者也。坤，土也；巽，風也；乾，天也。風為天於土上，山也。有山之材，而照之以天光，於是乎居土上，故曰『觀國之光，利用賓于王』。庭實旅百，奉之以玉帛。天地之美具焉，故曰『利用賓于王』。猶有觀焉，故曰其在後乎！風行而著於土，故曰其在異國乎！若在異國，必姜姓也。姜，大嶽之後也。山嶽則配天。物莫能兩大。陳衰，此其昌乎！」及陳之初亡也，陳桓子始大於齊；其後亡也，成子得政。

Duke Li of Chen was born of a woman from Cai. Therefore, men of Cai killed Wufu and established him (i.e., Duke Li, as ruler). He fathered Jingzhong. When (Jingzhong) was young, the Scribe of Zhou used the *Zhou Changes* to have an audience with the Lord of Chen. The Lord of Chen had him divine by milfoil (about Jingzhong), meeting *Guan* ䷛ “Looking Up”’s *Pi* ䷋ “Negation,” and said: “This says,

Looking up at the kingdom’s radiance. Beneficial herewith to be hosted by the king.

“Will this one not come to replace Chen’s rulers? If not here, it will be in a different state. If not by himself, it will be his descendants. ‘Radiance’ is distant and shines from something else. *Kun* ䷁ is ‘Earth,’ *Xun* ䷴ is the ‘Wind,’ and *Qian* ䷀ is ‘Heaven.’ ‘Wind’ becoming ‘Heaven’ above ‘Earth’ is ‘Mountain.’ Having the resources of a mountain, and shining on it with heavenly radiance is to reside above ‘Earth’; therefore, it says, ‘Looking up at the kingdom’s radiance. Beneficial herewith to be hosted by the king.’ The court’s goods are displayed by the hundreds, presented with jades and silk. The beauties of heaven and earth are all complete among them. Therefore, it says: ‘beneficial herewith to be hosted by the king.’ And yet there is ‘looking up’ in it, and therefore I said it will be with his descendants. The ‘Wind’ moves and strikes upon the ‘Earth,’ therefore I said that it will be in another state. If it is in another state, it surely will be of the Jiang family. The Jiangs are the descendants of Grand Peaks. Mountain peaks then match Heaven. Among things, nothing can be of equal greatness. When Chen declines, this one will flourish.”

Coming to the time when Chen was first being lost, Chen Huanzi for the first time was great in Qi. Later when (Chen) was lost, Chen Heng gained the government.<sup>12</sup>

12 *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 3852–3854.

### 2.2 Account #5.2 Zuo Zhuan Min 閔 1 (661 BCE)

Bi Wan 畢萬 was a descendant of Gao, Duke of Bi 畢公高, one of the founding fathers of the Zhou dynasty and first ruler of the state of Bi 畢. Bi was eventually absorbed into the state of Jin 晉, and the ruling family, also known as Bi, became commoners. This account records that Bi Wan had a milfoil divination performed about serving in Jin. Although the account does not explicitly mention that he used the *Zhou Changes*, nor is the text quoted, nevertheless since the prognostication makes use of interpretive techniques associated with the *Yijing* tradition, I treat it here. The diviner interprets the result, the First Six of *Zhun* 屯 ䷂ “Sprouting” (#3) to mean that the ducal status of Bi would be restored.<sup>13</sup> This prediction would be proven true when in 403 BCE, Jin was divided into three states: Han 韓, Zhao 趙, and Wei 魏, the last of which was ruled by descendants of Bi Wan.

初，畢萬筮仕於晉，遇屯 ䷂ 之比 ䷇。辛廖占之，曰：「吉。屯固、比入，吉孰大焉？其必蕃昌。震為土，車從馬，足居之，兄長之，母覆之，眾歸之。六體不易，合而能固，安而能殺，公侯之卦也。公侯之子孫，必復其始。」

Earlier, Bi Wan had divined by milfoil about serving in Jin, meeting *Zhun* ䷂ “Sprouting”’s *Bi* ䷇ “Allying.” Xin Liao prognosticated it, saying: “Auspicious. *Zhun* 屯 “Sprouting” is to be sturdy and *Bi* 比 “Allying” is to enter; what auspiciousness could be greater than this! He will certainly flourish and prosper. *Zhen* ䷲ becomes ‘Earth,’ the ‘chariot’ follows the ‘horse,’ the ‘foot’ resides there, the ‘elder brother’ raises him, the ‘mother’ protects him, and the ‘multitudes’ return to him. For the six lines not to change is to be cooperative and yet able to be sturdy, peaceful and yet able to kill; this is the hexagram of a duke or lord. The descendants of a duke or lord will surely return to their beginning.”<sup>14</sup>

### 2.3 Account #5.3 Zuo Zhuan Xi 僖 15 (645 BCE)

The *Zuo zhuan*’s third narrative involving *Zhou Changes* milfoil divination comes in the 15th year of Duke Xi 僖 (645 BCE), a year for which the text had already narrated a milfoil divination examined in the preceding chapter

13 Although the text does not quote the *Zhou Changes* line statement for this line, it is plausibly relevant to the prognostication:

初九：磐桓。利居貞。利建侯。

First Nine: Spiraling around. Beneficial to affirm about residing. Beneficial to establish a lord.

14 *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 3877–3878.



(account #4.4). This was a momentous year in relations between the states of Jin 晉 and Qin 秦, with Qin attacking Jin and taking its ruler, Duke Hui of Jin 晉惠公 (r. 650–637 BCE), captive back to Qin. Duke Hui's sister Mu Ji 穆姬 was the principal consort of Duke Mu of Qin 秦穆公 (r. 659–621 BCE). When she heard that her brother had been taken captive and was being brought to the Qin capital, she threatened to kill herself and her children if her brother were not spared, and so Duke Mu of Qin did indeed spare his life. The account here is a flashback to when Duke Hui and Mu Ji's father, Duke Xian of Jin 晉獻公 (r. 676–651 BCE), had divined about marrying her to the ruler of Qin. Although the narrative does not mention the *Zhou Changes* explicitly, the result, the Top Six line of *Guimei* 歸妹 ䷵ “Returning Maiden” hexagram, resembles that line statement closely enough to leave little doubt that the divination was performed with the *Zhou Changes*. The explanation of the prognostication involves both trigram symbolism and also quotation and apparent paraphrase of other line statements from the *Zhou Changes* (as indicated in the notes to the translation). The final retrospective paragraph, in which the attendant Han Jian 韓簡 explains that turtle-shell divination is a matter of “image” (*xiang* 象) while milfoil divination is a matter of “number” (*shu* 數), is often quoted as an important distinction between these two types of divination.

初，晉獻公筮嫁伯姬於秦，遇歸妹 ䷵ 之睽 ䷥。史蘇占之，曰：「不吉。其繇曰：

士刳羊，亦無盍也；女承筐，亦無貺也。

西鄰責言，不可償也。歸妹之睽，猶無相也。震之離，亦離之震。為雷為火，為嬴敗姬。車說其輻，火焚其旗，不利行師，敗于宗丘。歸妹睽孤，寇張之弧。姪其從姑，六年其逋，逃歸其國，而棄其家，明年其死於高梁之虛。

及惠公在秦曰：「先君若從史蘇之占，吾不及此夫！」韓簡侍曰：「龜，象也；筮，數也。物生而後有象，象而後有滋，滋而後有數。先君之敗德，及可數乎！史蘇是占，勿從何益！」

Earlier, Duke Xian of Jin divined by milfoil about marrying (his daughter) Bo Ji to (the ruler of) Qin, and met *Guimei* 歸妹 ䷵ “Returning Maiden”’s *Kui* 睽 ䷥ “Cross-Eyed.” Scribe Su prognosticated it saying: “Not auspicious. Its oracle says:

A sire stabbing a sheep, but there is no blood.

A woman raising a basket, but there is no gift.<sup>15</sup>

15 This oracle is quite similar to the Top Six line statement of *Guimei* 歸妹 ䷵ “Returning Maiden” (#54) hexagram:

“The western neighbor’s censuring words means that it cannot be redeemed.<sup>16</sup> ‘Returning Maiden’<sup>17</sup>’s ‘Cross-Eyed’ also means to have no support. *Zhen*’s ☳ *Li* ☳ is also *Li*’s ☳ *Zhen* ☳; it is ‘Thunder’ and ‘Fire,’<sup>17</sup> and it is Ying defeating Ji.<sup>18</sup> ‘A chariot losing its axle,’ ‘Fire burning its banners,’ ‘Not beneficial to set the army in motion,’ are to be defeated at Ancestral Mound.<sup>19</sup> ‘Returning Maiden’ is the orphan of ‘Cross-Eyed’: ‘The bandits’ stretched bows.’<sup>20</sup> The nephew will follow the aunt: In six years abscond-

上六：女承筐无實，士刲羊无血。无攸利。

Top Six: A woman raising a basket without fruit, A man stabbing a sheep without blood. Nowhere beneficial.

- 16 Some readers treat this sentence as part of the oracle. As seen in the note above, it is not part of the received text of the Top Six line statement of *Guimei* 歸妹 ☱ “Returning Maiden” (#54) hexagram. However, the format of the couplet made up of four-character phrases, with the last phrase ending in the particle *也*, is more or less similar to the format of the preceding couplets. Moreover, the sense of this couplet is at least somewhat reminiscent of the oracle in the Six in the Fifth line statement of the same hexagram.

六五：帝乙歸妹，其君之袂不如其娣之袂良。月幾望。吉。

Six in the Fifth: Di Yi marrying off the maiden, Her lord’s sleeves are not as fine as her younger sister’s. The moon is almost full. Auspicious.

This oracle has traditionally been understood to refer to a wedding between a daughter of Di Yi 帝乙 (r. c. 1105–1087 BCE), the penultimate king of the Shang dynasty, and a lord of Zhou (perhaps the future King Wen 文王 [r. 1099–1050 BCE]), with the clothing of the bridal retinue being more refined than that of the groom.

- 17 The primary image of *Zhen* ☳ trigram is “thunder,” and that of *Li* ☳ trigram is “fire.”  
 18 Ying 嬴 was the surname of the rulers of Qin, while Ji 姬 was the surname of the rulers of Jin. Thus, this predicts the Qin defeat of Jin.  
 19 “A chariot losing its axle” resembles the Nine in the Third line of *Xiaochu* 小畜 ☱ “Lesser Livestock” (#9):

九三：輿說輹，夫妻反目。

Nine in the Third: A cart dropping an axle, A husband and wife crossing eyes.

“Fire burning its banners,” resembles the Nine in the Third line of *Lü* 旅 ☱ “Traveling” (#56):

九三：旅焚其次，喪其童僕。貞厲。

Nine in the Third: Traveling and burning his camp: Losing his young servant. Affirming: Dangerous.

“Not beneficial to set the army in motion,” resembles several line statements. “Ancestral Mound” is where the decisive battle between Qin and Jin took place.

- 20 These images seem to derive from the Top Nine line of *Kui* 睽 ☱ “Cross-Eyed” (#38) hexagram:

上九：睽孤，見豕負涂，載鬼一車，先張之弧，后說之弧。匪寇婚媾。往遇雨則吉。

Top Nine: Looking cross-eyed at an orphan: Seeing a pig with mud on its back, One cart carrying ghosts. A bow first drawn, A bow later released. Non-bandits in marriage meeting. In going, if meeting rain then auspicious.

ing, fleeing and returning to his state, and abandoning his family. In the next year he will die in the ruins of Gaoliang.”<sup>21</sup> Coming to when Duke Hui was in Qin, he said: “If the past lord had followed Scribe Su’s prognostication, I would not have arrived at this.” Han Jian was attending and said: “Turtle-[shell divination] is a matter of images; milfoil divination is a matter of numbers. Only after things are born are there images, and only after images multiply are there numbers. Could the failed virtue of the past lord even be numbered? What gain could there have been not to follow this prognostication of Scribe Su!”<sup>22</sup>

#### 2.4 Account #5.4 Zuo Zhuan Xi 僖 25 (635 BCE)

This narrative was examined already in Chapter Three because it begins with the account of a turtle-shell divination (account #3.7). Since it also includes a second divination, this one a milfoil divination the result of which is clearly related to the *Zhou Changes*, it is worth examining once again.

To repeat the context of the divination, in 636 BCE, King Xiang of Zhou 周襄王 (r. 652–619 BCE) was driven from the capital by his own brother Wangzi Dai 王子帶 (672–635). Confronted with the threat that the state of Qin 秦 would move to reinstate the king, Duke Wen of Jin 晉文公 (r. 636–628 BCE), the most powerful ruler of the day, contemplated doing so himself. Before launching the military campaign, he had a turtle-shell divination performed, producing a crack named for a battle from China’s mythology. It would seem that Duke Wen may have misunderstood the prognostication, thinking that it pertained to himself, when in actuality it seems to have pertained to King Xiang and his brother Wangzi Dai (portending the king’s victory over his brother). The result of the milfoil divination is expressed as the relationship between two hexagrams, *Dayou* 大有 ䷍ “Greatly Having” and *Kui* 睽 ䷥ “Cross-Eyed.” Although this is not explicitly stated to be from the *Zhou Changes*, the result is a quotation from the Nine in the Third line of *Dayou* “Greatly Having”:

九三：公用亨于天子。小人弗克。

Nine in the Third: A duke herewith offering to the Son of Heaven. A petty man is not capable of it.

21 This refers to Zi Yu 子圉, crown-prince of Jin, who was sent as a hostage to Qin. Mu Ji, sister of Duke Hui of Jin and wife of Duke Mu of Qin, was his aunt. During his six years in Qin, he married a woman of Qin and sired a child with her. However, he then absconded to Jin, leaving his family behind.

22 *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 3921–3923.

The prognostication turns on a play on the words *xiang* 享 “to offer” and *xiang* 饗 “to feast,” which we will see in Chapter Eight below to be an important key to understanding *Zhou Changes* hexagram statements.

In the end, Duke Wen did attack and kill Wangzi Dai, and thereupon returned King Xiang to the capital.

使卜偃卜之，曰：「吉。遇黃帝戰于阪泉之兆。」公曰：「吾不堪也。」對曰：「周禮未改，今之王，古之帝也。」公曰：「筮之！」筮之，遇大有 ䷍ 之睽 ䷥，曰：「吉。遇『公用享于天子』之卦。戰克而王饗，吉孰大焉？且是卦也，天為澤以當日，天子降心以逆公，不亦可乎？大有去睽而復，亦其所也。」

(The Lord of Jin) had Diviner Yan divine about it by turtle shell, who said: “Auspicious. We have met the crack of the Yellow Emperor battling at Banquan.” The duke said: “I am not up to this.” (Yan) responded saying, “The Zhou rites have not changed. The current king is tantamount to the emperors of old.” The duke said: “Divine it by milfoil.” Divining it by milfoil, he met *Dayou* ䷍ “Greatly Having”’s *Kui* ䷥ “Cross-Eyed,” and said: “Auspicious. I met the hexagram

A duke herewith offering to the Son of Heaven.

What could be more auspicious than being victorious in battle and the king feasting you? What is more, as for this hexagram, ‘Heaven’ becomes ‘Marsh’ in order to face ‘Sun.’ Is it not also proper that the Son of Heaven should humble his heart to receive my lord? That *Dayou* goes to *Kui* and then returns is also its place.”<sup>23</sup>

### 2.5 Account #5.5 *Zuo Zhuan Xiang* 襄 9 (564 BCE)

The following narrative is probably the best known and most often cited *Zuo zhuan* narrative regarding *Zhou Changes* divination. Found in the ninth year of Duke Xiang 襄 (r. 572–542 BCE; i.e., 564 BCE), it concerns Mu Jiang 穆姜 (d. 564 BCE), one of the most heinous of the female villains in the *Zuo zhuan*, who died in this year. Mu Jiang had been the primary consort of Duke Xuan of Lu 魯宣公 (r. 608–591 BCE) and was the mother of Duke Cheng of Lu 魯成公 (r. 590–573 BCE). In 575 BCE, at the instigation of her lover Shusun Qiaoru 叔孫僑如, Mu Jiang urged her son to depose the heads of the Jisun 季孫 and Mengsun 孟孫 lineages, the two paramount lineages of the state, and to confiscate their property, threatening to depose her own son if he did not do so. For her threat, she was confined to the Eastern Palace, the palace of the heir apparent, where

23 *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 3951–3952.

she lived out her final years as a prisoner. The narrative here purports to recount a divination performed for her when she was first placed in confinement and intended to determine whether she would be set free.

The narrative is considered to be crucial evidence for the performance of milfoil divination for two reasons. First, the initial result, not specified as using the *Zhou Changes*, met with “the ‘eight’ of *Gen* ䷋ ‘Stilling’”; as noted in Chapter Four above, this would seem to be the result of some milfoil divination system other than the *Zhou Changes*. When the scribe conducting the divination pronounced this an auspicious result, apparently employing some sort of trickery to suggest that it could produce the hexagram *Sui* 隨 ䷐ “Following;”<sup>24</sup> Mu Jiang refuted him, quoting the hexagram statement of *Sui* in the *Zhou Changes* and denying that it pertained to her. Second, in her exegesis of why this hexagram statement should not pertain to her, she explained the four main words of the statement, *yuan heng li zhen* 元亨利貞 as constituting “four virtues” (*si de* 四德). This explanation is repeated almost verbatim in the *Wen yan zhuan* 文言傳 *Commentary on the Words and Phrases*, one of the canonical commentaries in the *Yijing*, raising the question of priority between the two sources. This is a topic to which we will return in both Chapters Eight and Twelve below.

穆姜薨於東宮。始往而筮之，遇艮 ䷋ 之八。史曰：「是謂艮之隨 ䷐。隨，其出也。君必速出！」姜曰：「亡！是於《周易》曰：

『隨，元、亨、利、貞，无咎。』

元，體之長也；亨，嘉之會也；利，義之和也；貞，事之幹也。體仁足以長人，嘉德足以合禮，利物足以和義，貞固足以幹事。然，故不可誣也，是以雖隨無咎。今我婦人，而與於亂。固在下位，而有不仁，不可謂元。不靖國家，不可謂亨。作而害身，不可謂利。棄位而

24 As noted above (n. 10), almost all *Zuo zhuan* divinations using the *Zhou Changes* produce a result said to be the relationship between two hexagrams, the hexagram pictures of which differ by just one line, the line cited as the oracle. This case is the sole exception. Here, the scribe interprets the “eight” of *Gen* ䷋ “Restraint” (艮 ䷋ 之八) as “*Gen* ䷋ ‘Restraint’’s *Sui* ䷐ ‘Following.’” The hexagram pictures of these two hexagrams differ by five lines, only their second line being the same. The scribe bases his prognostication only on the name of *Sui* hexagram, which he interprets to mean that Mu Jiang will get out of her jail. She, in turn, quotes the hexagram statement of *Sui* in the *Zhou Changes*, arguing that it does not pertain to her. Although this is often cited as the basis for arguing that in this form of divination, if there were three or more “changing” lines, the prognostication would be based on the hexagram statement of the second hexagram, it is clear that this case is entirely artificial and that the diviner was employing a sort of professional chicanery. To my mind, this trick has no explanatory value vis-à-vis *Zhou Changes* divination.

姣，不可謂貞。有四德者，隨而無咎。我皆無之，豈隨也哉？我則取惡，能無咎乎？必死於此，弗得出矣。」

Mu Jiang passed away in the Eastern Palace. When she first went there, she divined by milfoil about it, meeting the “eight” of *Gen* ䷋ “Stilling.” The scribe said: “This is called *Gen* ䷋ ‘Stilling’*s* *Sui* ䷐ ‘Following.’ ‘Following’ means getting out. Milady will certainly quickly get out. Jiang said: “Not so! In the *Zhou Changes* this says:

Following: Prime, Receipt, Benefit, Affirmed. Without trouble.<sup>25</sup> ‘Prime’ is the leader of the body; ‘Receipt’ is the gathering of enjoyment; ‘Benefit’ is the harmony of propriety; and ‘Affirmed’ is the trunk of endeavors. Embodying humaneness suffices to lead people, enjoying virtue suffices to join the rites, benefiting others suffices to harmonize propriety, and affirming sturdiness suffices to strengthen endeavors. Thus, there can be no deception even if in this way it is ‘Following. Without trouble.’ Now I am a woman and have taken part in disorder. Solidly in a lowly position, I was also inhumane; this cannot be said to be ‘Prime.’ Not bringing peace to the state cannot be said to be ‘Receipt.’ Acting and harming my person cannot be said to be ‘Benefit.’ And abandoning my position to indulge in licentiousness cannot be said to be ‘Affirmed.’ With these four virtues, one might ‘Follow’ and be ‘without trouble.’ But since I have none of them, how could I ‘Follow’? And since I have taken up evil, how could I be ‘without trouble’? I will surely die here, and will not be able to get out.”<sup>26</sup>

## 2.6 Account #5.6 *Zuo Zhuan Xiang* 襄 25 (548 BCE)

This account concerns yet another divination regarding a marriage that would prove to end badly. Cui Zhu 崔杼 (d. 546 BCE), a member of the ruling family of Qi 齊 and the *eminence grise* in the state was struck by the beauty of Dongguo Jiang 東郭姜 (d. 546 BCE), the widow of the Duke of Tang 棠公, and wished to marry her. Told that this would violate an incest taboo, he had a milfoil divination performed to determine the auspices. Despite being advised that the divination was also inauspicious, Cui Zhu went ahead with the marriage. Dongguo Jiang bore him a son, Cui Ming 崔明, who Cui Zhu eventually installed as his heir, dismissing his first-born son Cui Cheng 崔成. This fraternal rivalry ended with the death of Cui Cheng and the exile of Cui Ming, and thereafter in short order the suicides of both Dongguo Jiang and Cui Zhu.

25 I here translate this hexagram statement according to the interpretation given by Mu Jiang, even though I translate the same words differently elsewhere in this book.

26 *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 4215–4216.

Although the *Zhou Changes* is not mentioned explicitly in the account of the divination, the result, “*Kun* ䷁ ‘Bound’*s* *Daguo* ䷌ ‘Greater Surpassing,’” and the oracle cited, “Bound by stone, Stuck in a bramble patch. Entering into his palace, Not seeing his wife. Ominous,” match the Six in the Third line statement of *Kun* 困 ䷮ “Bound” (#47) hexagram. The symbolism would seem to be unmistakable. Nevertheless, Cui Zhu disregarded the prognostication, with disastrous effects.

武子筮之，遇困 ䷮ 之大過 ䷛。史皆曰「吉」。示陳文子，文子曰：「夫從風，風隕妻，不可娶也。且其繇曰：

『困于石，據于蒺藜，入于其宮，不見其妻，凶。』

困于石，往不濟也；據于蒺藜，所恃傷也；入于其宮，不見其妻，凶，無所歸也。」崔子曰：「嫠也，何害？先夫當之矣。」遂取之。

Wuzi [i.e., Cui Zhu] divined it by milfoil, meeting *Kun* ䷁ “Bound”*s* *Daguo* ䷌ “Greater Surpassing.” The scribes all said: “Auspicious.” Showing it to Chen Wenzhi, Wenzhi said: “The husband following the wind, and the wind blowing down the wife, it is not permissible to take her as wife. Moreover, its oracle says:

Bound by stone, Stuck in a bramble patch. Entering into his palace, Not seeing his wife. Ominous.

‘Bound by stone’ means that going forward will not get across. ‘Stuck in a bramble patch’ means being wounded by what one relies upon. ‘Entering his palace, not seeing his wife. Ominous’ means that there will be no place to return.” Cuizi (Cui Zhu) said: “She is a widow. What harm is there? This was about her former husband.” Subsequently he took her as wife.<sup>27</sup>

## 2.7 Account #5.7 Zuo Zhuan Zhao 昭 5 (537 BCE)

This narrative makes use of the *Zhou Changes* to predict the fate of Shusun Bao 叔孫豹 (d. 538 BCE), the head of the Shusun 叔孫 lineage of the state of Lu 魯, at the time of his birth. Bao was the younger brother of the notorious Shusun Qiaoru 叔孫僑如, the lover of Mu Jiang 穆姜, the protagonist of account #5.5 above. Early in his life, Bao was in exile in the state of Qi 齊, but when his brother Qiaoru was exiled he was brought back to Lu to be the head of the lineage. For more than thirty-five years he was active in the Lu government, frequently representing it abroad in diplomatic meetings. In the last year of his life, his son by a secondary consort Shu Niu 豎牛 killed Bao’s sons

<sup>27</sup> Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi, 4305–4306.

by his primary consort and also caused Bao to starve to death, then installing his own younger brother Shusun Ruo 叔孫婞 (d. 517 BCE) to succeed as lineage head.

The divination resulted in the First Nine line of *Mingyi* 明夷 ䷣ hexagram (#36), which I translate as “Calling Pheasant,” but which traditional understandings would render as something like “Brightness Wounded.” The diviner, named Bu Chuqiu 卜楚丘 (i.e., Turtle-shell Diviner Chuqiu), used various exegetical techniques, including especially quotations of the line statements and trigram symbolism, to explain the result. Although the line statement is not quoted explicitly, each phrase of it is explained. In the received text of the *Zhou Changes*, the First Nine line statement of *Mingyi* reads as follows:

初九：明夷于飛。垂其翼。君子于行。三日不食。有攸往。主人有言。

First Nine: Calling pheasant in flight, Dipping its wing. A lord's son in motion, For three days not eating. Having somewhere to go. The master has sayings.

Bu Chuqiu's explanations of this result would prove to be uncannily prescient, suggesting of course that the account of the divination and especially its explanation represent a post facto insertion into the text.

初，穆子之生也，莊叔以《周易》筮之，遇明夷 ䷣ 之謙 ䷎，以示卜楚丘，楚丘曰：是將行，而歸為子祀。以讒人入，其名曰牛，卒以餒死。明夷，日也。日之數十，故有十時，亦當十位。自王已下，其二為公、其三為卿。日上其中，食日為二，旦日為三。明夷之謙，明而未融，其當旦乎，故曰「為子祀」。日之謙，當鳥，故曰「明夷于飛」。明而未融，故曰「垂其翼」。象日之動，故曰「君子于行」。當三在旦，故曰「三日不食」。離，火也；艮，山也。離為火，火焚山，山敗。於人為言。敗言為讒，故曰「有攸往。主人有言」。言必讒也。純離為牛，世亂讒勝，勝將適離，故曰「其名曰牛。」謙不足，飛不翔；垂不峻，翼不廣。故曰「其為子後乎」。吾子，亞卿也；抑少不終。

Earlier, when Muzi (i.e., Shusun Bao 叔孫豹) was born, [his father] Zhuang Shu divined by milfoil about it with the *Zhou Changes*, meeting *Mingyi* ䷣ “Calling Pheasant”'s *Qian* ䷎ “Modesty.” Showing it to Diviner Chuqiu, Chuqiu said: “This one will travel, but will return to perform a son's sacrifices. Bringing in a slanderer, whose name will be Ox, in the end he will starve to death. ‘Calling Pheasant’ is the ‘Sun.’ The number of



suns is ten, thus there are ten hours, also corresponding to the ten positions. From the king on down, the second is the duke, and the third is minister. When the sun is at its highest it is the center; Breakfast is the second (hour), and Dawn the third. As for 'Calling Pheasant's 'Modesty,' it is bright but not yet at the brightest, which should correspond to dawn; thus I say he will 'perform a son's sacrifices.' The 'Modesty' of the sun corresponds to a 'Bird'; thus it says 'Calling pheasant in flight.' Being bright but not yet at its brightest, thus it says 'Dips its wing.' Giving image to the movement of the sun, thus it says 'A lord's son in motion.' Corresponding to the third hour at dawn, thus it says 'For three days not eating.' *Li* ☲ is 'Fire,' and *Gen* ☶ is 'Mountain.' *Li* being 'Fire,' fire burns the 'Mountain,' and the mountain is ruined. With respect to humans it is 'Words,' and ruinous words are slander; thus it says 'There is someplace to go; the host has words.' Words will certainly be slanderous. Pure *Li* is 'Ox'; with the world disordered and slander prevailing, the victor will go to *Li*; thus, I said his name will be Ox. Modesty is insufficient, and flying but not soaring, dipping not high, the wings are not broad; thus, I said 'Might it be your descendant.' My son will be a secondary minister; oh, slightly not ending well."<sup>28</sup>

## 2.8 Account #5.8 *Zuo Zhuan Zhao 7* (535 BCE)

This account purports to recount various prophecies and divinations concerning the succession in the state of Wei 衛. It is inserted in the *Zuo zhuan* under the seventh year of Duke Zhao of Lu 魯昭公 (r. 541–510 BCE; i.e., 535 BCE), the year that Duke Xiang of Wei 衛襄公 (r. 543–535 BCE) died. Duke Xiang's primary consort was childless, but a secondary consort by the name of Zhou E 媯始 had given birth to two sons: Meng Zhi 孟縶 was first born and Yuan 元 was the younger brother. Under rules of primogeniture in ancient China, Meng Zhi would ordinarily have been designated as the successor. However, he was crippled, and there were prohibitions against crippled people performing ancestral rituals. Thus, the younger brother Yuan, only five years old at the time, was designated as successor, known subsequently as Duke Ling of Wei 衛靈公 (r. 534–493 BCE).

The account begins with the recollection of a dream in which Kong Chengzi 孔成子, a minister of the state, dreamt that the high ancestor of the state had told him to install Yuan as sovereign. It then continues with a pair of divinations performed five years earlier when Yuan had been born. The account of

<sup>28</sup> *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 4431–4432.

these divinations is particularly important for understanding divination with the *Zhou Changes* because they both include the commands to the milfoil and also because they are the best evidence of a two-step divination procedure involving the *Zhou Changes*. The first divination resulted in the single hexagram, *Zhun* 屯 ䷂ “Sprouting” (#3), which is the only case in the *Zuo zhuan* of a divination using the *Zhou Changes* resulting in a single hexagram; it seems that the oracle quoted in this case is the hexagram statement of that hexagram. The second divination resulted in *Zhun* ䷂ “Sprouting”’s *Bi* ䷗ “Allying,” which designates the First Nine line of *Zhun*. Thus, both divinations resulted in the same hexagram, though the second one was specified as one of that hexagram’s six lines. In the second half of this chapter, I will examine this case in some detail. The prognostications of both divinations are limited to the hexagram and line statements of the two results.

衛襄公夫人姜氏無子，嬖人媯始生孟縶。孔成子夢康叔謂己：「立元，余使羈之孫圉與史苟相之。」史朝亦夢康叔謂己：「余將命而子苟與孔烝鉏之曾孫圉相元。」史朝見成子，告之夢，夢協。晉韓宣子為政聘于諸侯之歲，媯始生子，名之曰元。孟縶之足不良能行。孔成子以《周易》筮之，曰：「元尚享衛國，主其社稷。」遇屯 ䷂。又曰：「余尚立縶，尚克嘉之。」遇屯 ䷂ 之比 ䷇。以示史朝。史朝曰：「『元亨』，又何疑焉？」成子曰：「非長之謂乎？」對曰：「康叔名之，可謂長矣。孟非人也，將不列於宗，不可謂長。且其繇曰：『利建侯。』嗣吉，何建？建非嗣也。二卦皆云，子其建之！康叔命之，二卦告之，筮襲於夢，武王所用也，弗從何為？弱足者居。侯主社稷，臨祭祀，奉民人，事鬼神，從會朝，又焉得居？各以所利，不亦可乎？」故孔成子立靈公。十二月癸亥，葬衛襄公。

Duke Xiang of Wei’s primary consort Madame Jiang was without child, and the favored consort Zhou E gave birth to Meng Zhi. Kong Chengzi dreamt that Kang Shu said to him: “Establish Yuan; I will let Ji zhi Sun Yu and Scribe Gou assist him.” Scribe Chao also dreamt that Kang Shu said to him: “I will command your son Gou and Kong Chengxu’s great grandson Yu to assist Yuan.” Shi Chao saw Chengzi and reported the dream to him, the dreams coinciding.

In the year that Han Xuanzi of Jin was in charge of the government and convened the many lords [i.e., 540 BCE], Zhou E gave birth to a son, and he was named Yuan. The feet of Meng Zhi were not able to walk well. Kong Chengzi used the *Zhou Changes* to divine it, saying: “Would that Yuan receive the state of Wei, and preside over its altars.” He met *Zhun* ䷂ “Sprouting.” He also said: “I wish to establish Zhi; would that he be able to enjoy it.” He met *Zhun* ䷂’s *Bi* ䷗ “Allying,” which he showed to

Scribe Chao. Scribe Chao said: “‘Prime [Yuan] receipt.’ What doubt could there be!” Chengzi said: “Is it not said of the elder?” He responded saying: “Kangshu named him, so that he can be said to be the elder. Meng is not an (able-bodied) man, and so will not be arrayed in the ancestral temple, and so cannot be said to be the elder. Moreover, its oracle says: ‘Beneficial to establish a lord.’ If the succession were auspicious, what need would there be to ‘establish’? ‘To establish’ is not ‘to succeed.’ The two hexagrams both state it; you are ‘to establish’ him. Kangshu commanded it and the two hexagrams reported it. The milfoil agreeing with the dream is what King Wu used. If you were not to follow this, then what would you do! One whose feet are feeble will sit. The lord will preside over the altars, oversee the sacrifices, uphold the people, serve the ghosts and spirits, and follow the court assemblies; how would he be able to sit! Is it not appropriate that each should follow his own benefit?” Therefore, Kong Chengzi established Duke Ling.<sup>29</sup>

## 2.9 Account #5.9 Zhao 昭 12 (530 BCE)

Nan Kuai 南蒯 was a minister serving in the Jisun 季孫 lineage of the state of Lu 魯, the senior lineage in the state. At the time of this account, Ji Pingzi 季平子 (d. 505 BCE) was the head of the Jisun lineage and also in control of the Lu government. Feeling that he had been treated unfairly and considering rebelling against the Jisun lineage, Nan Kuai divined about it by milfoil. The result was the Six in the Fifth line of *Kun* 坤 ䷁ “Compliant” (#2) hexagram, the line statement of which was quoted: “Yellow skirts. Prime auspiciousness.” Considering this to be auspicious, Nan Kuai showed the result to Zifu Huibo 子服惠伯, who sought to dissuade him from his plan, arguing that the result only pertained to loyal actions; with respect to disloyalty, it would surely lead to ruin. Nan Kuai offered his home base of Bi 費 to the neighboring state of Qi 齊, but two years later the people of Bi turned against Nan Kuai, and Bi was returned to Lu, Nan Kuai himself fleeing in exile to Qi.

南蒯枚筮之，遇坤 ䷁ 之比 ䷇ 曰：

「黃裳元吉」，

以為大吉也。示子服惠伯曰：「即欲有事，何如？」惠伯曰：「吾嘗學此矣，忠信之事則可，不然，必敗。外疆內溫，忠也；和以率貞，信也，故曰『黃裳元吉』。黃，中之色也；裳，下之飾也；元，善之長也。中不忠，不得其色；下不共，不得其飾；事不善，不得其極。」

29 *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 4454–4455.

外內倡和為忠，率事以信為共，供養三德為善，非此三者弗當。且夫《易》不可以占險，將何事也？且可飾乎？中美能黃，上美為元，下美則裳，參成可筮。猶有闕也，筮雖吉，未也。◦

Nan Kuai divined about it by rods, meeting *Kun* ䷁ “Receptive”’s *Bi* ䷗ “Alliance,” which says:

Yellow skirts. Prime auspiciousness, which he took to be greatly auspicious. Showing it to Zifu Huibo, he said, “If I want to have an endeavor, how would it be?” Huibo said, “I have previously studied this. For endeavors of loyalty and sincerity it is acceptable; otherwise you will certainly be defeated. To be strong on the outside and warm on the inside is loyalty. Harmony leading to affirmation is sincerity. Thus it says, ‘Yellow skirts. Prime auspiciousness.’ ‘Yellow’ is the color of the center. The ‘skirt’ is the adornment of the bottom. ‘Prime’ is the head of excellences. If the center is not loyal, it will not obtain its color. If the bottom is not supportive, it will not get its ornamentation. If an endeavor does not excel, it will not obtain its end. When outside and inside accord in harmony, it is loyalty. Performing affairs with sincerity, there is support. Providing and nurturing the three virtues is excellence. Anything other than these three virtues will not correspond to it. What is more, the *Changes* cannot be used to prognosticate about danger. What endeavor will it be? What is more, can it be adorned? When the center is beautiful it can be yellow. When the top is beautiful it is ‘prime.’ When the bottom is beautiful then it is ‘skirt.’ When all three are complete, you can divine by milfoil. If there is anything lacking, then even if the divination is auspicious, it is not yet enough.”<sup>30</sup>

#### 2.10 Account #5.10 Zuo Zhuan Ai 哀 9 (486 BCE)

Zhao Yang 趙鞅, better known as Zhao Jianzi 趙簡子 (d. 476 BCE), was the head of the Zhao 趙 lineage of Jin 晉 and one of the most important political figures of the Spring and Autumn period. In 493 BCE, he defeated two of Jin’s six lineages, the Fan 范 and Zhonghang 中行 lineages, and gained control of the Jin government. In the autumn of 486, the state of Song 宋 attacked its neighboring state of Zheng 鄭. Zhao Yang had a turtle-shell divination performed about coming to the aid of Zheng. This has already been considered in Chapter Three above.

30 *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 4480–4481.

Three different diviners used three different methods to prognosticate the turtle-shell divination, all three of whom counselled against attacking Song. Thereafter, another diviner, Yang Hu 陽虎, used the *Zhou Changes* to perform a milfoil divination, which resulted in the Nine in the Fifth line of *Tai* 泰 ䷊ “Positive” (#11) hexagram. This line reads:

六五：帝乙歸妹以祉。元吉。

Six in the Fifth: Di Yi marrying off the maiden with blessings. Prime auspiciousness.

Although the prognostication does not quote the line exactly, it clearly drew on it to argue against attacking Song. Zhao Yang did not come to the relief of Zheng, but rather attacked the state of Qi 齊 in the following year.

晉趙鞅卜救鄭，遇水適火，占諸史趙、史墨、史龜。史龜曰：是謂沈陽，可以興兵，利以伐姜，不利子商。伐齊則可，敵宋不吉。史墨曰：「盈，水名也；子，水位也。名位敵，不可干也。炎帝為火師，姜姓其後也。水勝火，伐姜則可。」史趙曰：「是謂如川之滿，不可游也。鄭方有罪，不可救也。救鄭則不吉，不知其他。」陽虎以《周易》筮之，遇泰 ䷊ 之需 ䷄ 曰：「宋方吉，不可與也。微子啟，帝乙之元子也。宋、鄭，甥舅也。祉，祿也。若帝乙之元子歸妹而有吉祿，我安得吉焉？」乃止。

Zhao Yang of Jin divined by turtle-shell about relieving Zheng, and met Water going to Fire. He had it prognosticated by Scribe Zhao, Scribe Mo, and Scribe Gui.

Scribe Gui said: “This is called submerged *yang*: you can raise troops; it is beneficial to attack the Jiang, but it is not beneficial for the Zi-Shang. Attacking Qi is acceptable, but opposing Song is not auspicious.”

Scribe Mo said: “Fullness is a word for water, and Zi is the position of water. The word and position being opposed, it cannot be undertaken. The Flame Emperor was the Captain of Fire, and the Jiang family are his descendants. Since water overcomes fire, attacking the Jiang clan is acceptable.”

Scribe Zhao said: “This is called ‘Like a river’s fullness, it cannot be swum.’ Zheng has just now been guilty of an offense, so it cannot be relieved. To relieve Zheng would not be auspicious. I do not know anything else.”

Yang Hu used the *Zhou Changes* to divine by milfoil about it, meeting *Tai* ䷊ “Positive”’s *Xu* ䷄ “Waiting,” and said: “The quadrant of Song is auspicious; it cannot be engaged. Weizi Qi was the eldest son of Di Yi.

Song and Zheng are cousins. 'Blessings' are rewards. If the eldest son of Emperor Yi is giving a girl in marriage and there are auspicious rewards, how could we obtain auspiciousness from it?" Then (Jin) stopped.<sup>31</sup>

### 3 Analysis

For the sake of comparison with the last two chapters, I will confine the analysis here to the same four topics concerning divination: the command (to the milfoil), the result of the divination, the oracle, and the prognostication. However, while all four of these topics continue to be the fundamental components of the divination proper, they are not all represented as completely in the ten accounts of *Zhou Changes* divination from the *Zuo zhuan* as in the accounts of turtle-shell and milfoil divination examined in Chapters Three and Four. For instance, the command, which properly attracted our attention with respect to turtle-shell divination, is represented in only one of the accounts examined in this chapter, though there are two separate commands quoted there. That these two commands correspond exactly with the commands represented more fully in the other two chapters gives me every confidence to suggest that this aspect of divination was entirely the same whether using turtle shells, other forms of milfoil divination, or *Zhou Changes* divination. Thus, the discussion of this topic in this chapter will be brief. Similarly, the oracles, to which I devoted considerable discussion in Chapters Three and Four above, will require little discussion here. They will be taken up again much more fully in Chapter Nine below, when we examine the line statements of the *Zhou Changes*.

On the other hand, the other two of these four topics will require rather more and rather different discussion than given to them in the last two chapters. The results of divination seen in the accounts of *Zhou Changes* divination in this chapter differ radically, not only from the results of turtle-shell divination (which is, of course, understandable enough), but also from the results of other forms of milfoil divination. What is more, the received understanding of how these results were produced, more or less unquestioned for the last eight hundred years, is certainly inconsistent with the accounts of milfoil divination unearthed in recent decades and is also, I will argue, inconsistent with the results of *Zhou Changes* divination seen in the *Zuo zhuan*. For this reason, this topic will require considerable discussion. And while the prognostications proper in the *Zuo zhuan* accounts are usually quite simple, just

<sup>31</sup> *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 4702.

“auspicious” (*ji* 吉) or “not auspicious” (*bu ji* 不吉), many of them are complemented with an extensive exegesis drawing largely on the imagery of the constituent trigrams of the hexagram results. Since this form of exegesis would become extremely important in the later *Yijing* tradition, it is essential that we consider it here, even if the discussion will be unable to do justice to that later tradition.

### 3.1 *The Command*

Seven of the ten accounts of *Zhou Changes* divination examined here narrate a certain situation and proposed course of action, and then state simply that the protagonist “divined it by milfoil” (*shi zhi* 筮之), though in two of these cases (#5.7, #5.10) and in one other (#5.8) this is qualified as “used the *Zhou Changes* to divine it by milfoil” (*yi Zhou Yi shi zhi* 以周易筮之), and one other case (#5.1) implies as much. In two cases, the proposed course of action is written into this statement. Thus, account #5.2 states that “Bi Wan divined by milfoil about serving in Jin” (Bi Wan *shi shi yu* Jin 畢萬筮仕於晉), and account #5.3 states that “Duke Xian of Jin divined by milfoil about marrying Bo Ji in Qin” (Jin xian Gong *shi jia* Bo Ji *yu* Qin 晉獻公筮嫁伯姬於秦). Parallels with milfoil divination records examined in Chapter Four would suggest that the commands to the milfoil in these two cases would have been something like “Bi Wan will come and go to serve Jin; would that there be no trouble” (Bi Wan *chu ru shi* Jin; *shang wu you jiu* 畢萬出入侍晉，尚毋有咎),<sup>32</sup> or something like “Bo Ji will marry into Qin; would that it be received” (Bo Ji *jia yu* Qin; *shang xiang* 伯姬嫁於秦；尚饗).<sup>33</sup> Of course, because these commands are not quoted in the respective accounts, we can only imagine what the original command was.

There is only a single account among the ten *Zuo zhuan* accounts in which the actual commands are quoted. There are two such commands quoted in the account under the seventh year of Duke Zhao (account #5.8). These two divinations concerned the succession in the state of Wei 衛, for which there were two brothers, Zhi 紕 and Yuan 元, who were under consideration. The divinations were conducted consecutively, first about Yuan, the younger son but the favored heir, and then about Zhi, the first-born son but one who was handicapped.

32 This command can be hypothesized by comparison with Baoshan 包山 strips (228–229) examined in account #4.13 of Chapter Four.

33 This is the simplest type of command, seen in several of the commands in turtle-shell and milfoil divination examined in Chapters Three and Four.

孔成子以《周易》筮之，曰：「元尚享衛國，主其社稷。」

Kong Chengzi used the *Zhou Changes* to divine it by milfoil, saying: "Would that Yuan receive the state of Wei, and preside over its altars."

又曰：「余尚立摯，尚克嘉之。」

He also said: "I wish to establish Zhi; would that he be able to enjoy it."

We will go on to examine this account in considerably more detail in the section on the results of *Zhou Changes* divination below. Here, it will suffice to note again that these commands show *Zhou Changes* divination to have been similar to turtle-shell and other forms of milfoil divination. The divinations began with a statement of intent on the part of the person for whom the divination was performed, the intent explicitly indicated by the word *shang* 尚 "would that."

### 3.2 *The Results of Divinations with the Zhou Changes*

The basis for virtually all discussions of ancient milfoil divination is a passage found in the *Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳 *Tradition of Appended Statements*, which is one of the canonical commentaries of the *Yijing*. This passage is generally referred to as the "Da yan" 大衍 "Great Exposition," based on the first two characters in the passage. It reads as follows:

大衍之數五十，其用四十有九。分而為二以象兩，掛一以象三，揲之以四以象四時，歸奇於扚以象閏，五歲再閏，故再扚而後掛。天數五、地數五，五位相得而各有合。天數二十有五，地數三十。凡天地之數五十有五。此所以成變化而行鬼神也。乾之策，二百一十有六，坤之策，百四十有四，凡三百有六十，當期之日。二篇之策，萬有一千五百二十，當萬物之數也。是故四營而成易，十有八變而成卦。八卦而小成；引而伸之，觸類而長之，天下之能事畢矣。顯道神德行，是故可與酬酢，可與祐神矣。

The Great Exposition's number is 50, its use being 49. Divide them into two to represent the pair. Set one apart to represent the three. Sort them by fours to represent the four seasons. Return the remainder between the fingers to represent the intercalation. In five years, there are two intercalations; therefore, repeat the fingering and only then do you put them aside.

The numbers of Heaven are five and the numbers of Earth are five, each of the five finding their places and being joined with the other. The numbers of Heaven (add up to) 25, and the numbers of Earth (add up to) 30. In all, the numbers of Heaven and Earth (add up to) 55. This is what com-



pletes the changes and transformations and puts in motion the ghosts and spirits. The stalks of *Qian* are 216; the stalks of *Kun* are 144. In all, there are 360, matching the days of a (yearly) cycle. The stalks of the two parts (of the text) add up to 11,520, matching the number of the myriad things. This is why with four operations one completes the *Changes* and with eighteen alternations one completes a hexagram.

With the eight trigrams there is a minor completion. Drawing and extending them, organizing into categories and growing them, all the capacities under Heaven are complete. Making evident the virtuous motion of the Way and the spirits, this is why they can be entertained and blessings can be received.

In the English translation, I have divided the passage into three paragraphs corresponding to three different topics. The first paragraph describes how a single line of a hexagram is derived by sorting fifty different milfoil stalks. The second paragraph is thought to indicate how a complete hexagram is composed, and the third paragraph represents a general conclusion to the passage. None of this is particularly clear or explicit. Most interpreters understand this on the basis of descriptions given by Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), which it is necessary to examine in some detail.

Zhu Xi's most explicit description of milfoil divination comes in a brief preface to his commentary on the *Zhou Changes* entitled *Shi yi* 筮儀 *The Ceremony of Milfoil Divination*. It is easiest to describe this in a step-by-step manner, leaving aside the number symbolism mentioned in the "Da yan" passage.

- Beginning with 50 stalks, 1 stalk is set aside.
- The 49 remaining stalks are divided into two bundles.
- 1 stalk is taken from the right-hand bundle and placed between the little finger and ring finger of the left hand.
- The left-hand bundle is then sorted by fours, until only 1, 2, 3 or 4 stalks remain; these are placed between the ring finger and middle finger of the left hand.
- The right-hand bundle is also sorted by fours in the same way, until only 1, 2, 3 or 4 stalks remain; these are placed between the middle finger and the index finger of the left hand.
- There will be either 5 or 9 stalks in the left hand. This is the first "alternation" (*bian* 變).<sup>34</sup> These 5 or 9 stalks are set aside.
- The 40 or 44 remaining stalks are again divided into two bundles.

34 In discussions of milfoil divination, the word *bian* 變, usually translated simply as "change," usually refers to the oscillation between the two poles yin and yang; the change

- The same three procedures are done again: placing one stalk from the right-hand bundle between the little finger and ring finger; counting the left hand bundle by fours and putting the remainder between the ring finger and middle finger; and sorting the right-hand bundle by fours, putting the remainder between the middle finger and index finger of the left hand. There will be either 4 or 8 stalks in the left hand. These 4 or 8 stalks are again set aside.
- There will now be 40, 36 or 32 stalks remaining.
- These 40, 36 or 32 stalks are again divided into two bundles and the same three procedures done to them. Again there will be either 4 or 8 stalks in the left hand. These 4 or 8 stalks are again set aside.
- There will now be 36, 32, 28 or 24 stalks remaining.
- These remaining stalks are again divided by fours, resulting in the numbers 9, 8, 7 or 6. This is one full “operation” (*ying* 營).
- In order to make a hexagram, all of these steps have to be repeated six more times. This is why it says that 18 “alternations” (*bian* 變) are needed to make one hexagram.

The “Da yan” passage indicates only very obliquely how these “operations” make a line. Since *Qian*, which is composed of six yang lines, equals 216, then  $216 \div 6 = 36$ ; and since *Kun*, which is composed of six yin lines, equals 144, then  $144 \div 6 = 24$ . Thus, it stands to reason that  $(36 \div 4 =)$  9 corresponds to a yang line and  $(24 \div 4 =)$  6 corresponds to a yin line. Similarly, the “Da yan” passage states that 11,520 stalks make up the entire *Zhou Changes*. There are 384 lines in the 64 hexagrams ( $64 \times 6 = 384$ ), half of which (192) are yang lines and half of which (192) are yin lines. If the yang lines equal 36, then  $36 \times 192 = 6912$ ; if the yin lines equal 24, then  $24 \times 192 = 4608$ , and  $6912 + 4608 = 11520$ . Thus, according to the “Da yan” passage, it is clear that yang and yin lines have the values 9 and 6 respectively.

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of a yin line to a yang line or vice versa. In order to differentiate this from other words routinely translated as “change” (such as the *yi* 易 of *Zhou Yi*, which I do translate as “change”; *hua* 化, “transformation,” which refers to a change of appearance but not of basic nature, such as a tadpole transforming into a frog; or even *ge* 革, which originally referred to the stripping of a hide but was early on extended to a notion of “revolution” or “overthrowal” of a political state), I will systematically translate *bian* as “alternate” or “alternation.”

I should note too in the context of this particular usage of the word *bian* in the “Da yan” section of the *Xici zhuan* that Richard Rutt cites Ulrich Libbrecht as showing that in later mathematical treatises *bian* refers to an “interim result” after one operation on a counting board or one step in a mathematical problem; Rutt, *The Book of Changes (Zhouyi)*, 159–160, citing Ulrich Libbrecht, *Chinese Mathematics in the Thirteenth Century: The Shu-shu chin-chang of Ch'in Chiu-shao* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1973), 485.

However, according to Zhu Xi and all other interpreters, the numbers 7 and 8 also produce yang and yin lines respectively. According to this interpretation, these two different types of results are differentiated by the nature of the line: 9 and 6 are referred to as “Old Yang” and “Old Yin,” and are thought to be “alternating lines” (*bian yao* 變爻), which is to say lines that change into their opposite, while 7 and 8 are referred to as “Young Yang” and “Young Yin,” and are regarded as lines that do not alternate or change. The probabilities of obtaining any of these numbers by using the sorting method described in the “Da yan” text and as understood by Zhu Xi are not equal; there is only a 1/16 chance of obtaining a 6 (6.25%), 5/16 chance of obtaining a 7 (31.25%), 7/16 chance of obtaining an 8 (43.75%), and 3/16 chance of obtaining a 9 (18.75%). The chances of obtaining a hexagram with “alternating lines” (i.e., either a 6 or 9) or “non-alternating lines” (i.e., 7 or 8) are also quite unequal.

- lines alternate: 17.799%
- 1 line alternates: 35.595%
- 2 lines alternate: 29.663%
- 3 lines alternate: 13.184%
- 4 lines alternate: 2.966%
- 5 lines alternate: 0.439%
- 6 lines alternate: 0.024%

As can be seen, the greatest probability, slightly more than 1/3, is that one of the six lines will result in either a 6 or 9, the other five lines being either 7 or 8. The odds go down from there for two lines being either 6 or 9, or no lines being 6 or 9, etc. The chances of either four, five or especially all six lines resulting in either 6 or 9 are very small.

Even Zhu Xi admitted that his explanation was largely guesswork. His final comment to the passage in the *Xici* states:

此第九章，言天地大衍之數，揲著求卦之法，然亦略矣。意其詳具於太卜筮人之官，而今不可考耳。其可推者，《啟蒙》備言之。

This is the ninth section, speaking of the numbers of the Great Exposition of heaven and earth and of the method of seeking a hexagram by sorting the stalks, but it too is sketchy indeed. I think that the details must have been complete in the office of the Milfoil Diviner of the Grand Cracksman, but now there is no way to test this. What can be extrapolated is thoroughly discussed in the *Qi meng*.<sup>35</sup>

35 Zhu Xi 朱熹, Liao Mingchun 廖名春 punctuator, *Zhou yi ben yi* 周易本義 (Beijing:

In the section of his sayings (*Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類) devoted to the *Yijing*, he admitted even more clearly just how little he (and others of his time) knew of the ancient divination methods.

今之說易者，先掙擊了卜筮。如《下系》說卜筮，是甚次第！某所恨者，不深曉古人卜筮之法，故今說處多是想象古人如此。若更曉得，須更有奧義可推。

Those who talk about the *Changes* today first approach it by milfoil divination. As with what the *Xici* says of milfoil divination, this is extremely contingent! What I hate about it is that I don't really know the ancients' method of milfoil divination. Thus, now much of what I say about it is just imagining that the ancients were like this. If I were to know any more than this, I would need more abstruse meaning to be able to infer it.<sup>36</sup>

Indeed, Zhu Xi's own explanation of how to perform a milfoil divination is "sketchy" (*lüe* 略). While he followed the "Da yan" passage of the *Xici* to describe how to produce a single hexagram, he never explained how to use this hexagram to determine the result of a divination. More important, he did not explain at all how "alternating lines," which would become one of the most defining features of later *Yijing* divination, were to be used in the interpretation of milfoil divination. While this notion of "alternating lines" may not have been Zhu Xi's own invention,<sup>37</sup> there was little or no precedent for it prior to his time.

Whether the "Da yan" chapter of the *Xici zhuan* should be understood to imply the use of "alternating lines," as Zhu Xi suggested, there is good reason to doubt that it has any direct connection with Zhou-dynasty sortilege divination as seen in either the evidence of milfoil divination unearthed in recent decades and examined in Chapter Four or in the accounts of divination with the *Zhou Changes* contained in the *Zuo zhuan*. The "Da yan" passage is not included in the Mawangdui 馬王堆 manuscript version of the *Xici* that was dis-

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Zhonghua shuju, 2009), 236–237. The "Qi meng" that Zhu Xi refers to here is his longer study *Yi xue qimeng* 易學啟蒙 *Primer for the Study of the Changes*, the third *juan* 卷 of which repeats this method of making a hexagram but says nothing about "alternating lines."

36 Li Jingde, *Zhuzi yulei*, 66, 2592–2593.

37 The first person to mention changing lines explicitly seems to be Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–1072), who in his *Yi tongzi wen* 易童子問 described the *Yong jiu* 用九 "Use the Nine" and *Yong liu* 用六 "Use the Six" lines of *Qian* 乾 ☰ "Vigorous" (#1) and *Kun* 坤 ☷ "Compliant" (#2) hexagrams as referring to a divination in which all six lines are either 9 or 6. The *Yong jiu* and *Yong liu* lines are unique to *Qian* and *Kun* hexagrams.

covered in 1973, which does include almost every other passage of the received text. Since the Mawangdui manuscript was buried in 168 BCE, and probably was copied in the 170s BCE, this would seem to be *prima facie* evidence that the “Da yan” passage was composed sometime after this date. This, at least, was the conclusion of Zhang Zhenglang 張政烺 (1912–2005), the editor primarily responsible for the Mawangdui *Yijing* manuscripts; he suggested that the “Da yan” passage should date to the middle of the Western Han period, i.e., the late second or early first century BCE.<sup>38</sup> As such, it presumably reflects more of the Han-dynasty uses and conceptions of the *Yijing* than the Zhou-dynasty uses and conceptions of the *Zhou Changes*.

The earliest reference to “changing” or “alternating” (*bian* 變) lines seems to be by Jing Fang 京房 (77–37 BCE). The Tang-dynasty *Zhou Yi jijie* 周易集解 *Collected explanations of the Zhou Changes* quotes a comment of his to the hexagram statement of *Dachu* 大畜 ䷙ “Greater Livestock” (#26) and especially to the *Tuan zhuan* 彖傳 *Commentary on the Judgments* on that hexagram statement:

大畜 ䷙：利貞。不家食吉。利涉大川。

*Dachu* ䷙ “Greater Livestock”: Beneficial to affirm. Not eating at home: Auspicious. Beneficial to ford a great river.

彖曰：利涉大川，應乎天也。

The *Judgment* says: “Beneficial to ford a great river” is that it corresponds with Heaven.

京房曰：謂二變互體坎，故利涉大川。五天位，故曰應乎天。

Jing Fang said: This means that the Second line alternates so that the internal trigram is *Kan* ䷜, thus “beneficial to ford a great river.” The Fifth is the place of Heaven, thus it says “corresponding with Heaven.”<sup>39</sup>

There was an imperative among many commentators of the Han and Wei dynasties to use trigram symbolism to explain every phrase and even every

38 Zhang Zhenglang, “Shishi Zhou chu qingtongqi mingwen zhong de Yi gua,” 406.

39 Li Dingzuo, *Zhou Yi jijie*, 172. Qu Wanli 屈萬里, *Xian Qin Han Wei Yi li shuping* 先秦漢魏易例述評 (Taipei: Taiwan Xuesheng shuju, 1975), 99, points out that *Zhou Yi jijie* here reads *wei er bian wu ti kan* 謂二變五體坎, but that *wu* 五 “Fifth” must be a mistake for *hu* 互 “mutual” (or, in this case, “internal”). A *huti gua* 互體卦 “shared body trigram” refers to the trigrams formed by the second, third and fourth or third, fourth and fifth lines of a hexagram.

word in the hexagram and line statements of the *Zhou Changes*. In the case of *Dachu* 大畜 ䷙ “Greater Livestock,” the constituent trigrams are *Qian* ䷀ “Heaven” on the bottom and *Gen* ䷂ “Mountain” on the top; thus, there is no ready explanation for the phrase “Beneficial to ford the great river” in the hexagram statement. According to Jing Fang, by changing the Nine in the Second line from a yang line to a yin line, one then obtains the internal trigram (*huti gua* 互體卦), which is to say the trigram made up of lines Two, Three and Four, of *Kan* ䷜, the symbolism of which is “Water.” According to canonical commentaries, the second line and fifth lines, which is to say the middle lines of the bottom and top trigrams, are regarded as being in correspondence. Since the Fifth line is the position of Heaven, thus this phrase corresponds with Heaven.

The notion of “alternating lines” is particularly associated with Yu Fan 虞翻 (164–233) of the late Han and early Wei dynasties.<sup>40</sup> The *Zhou Yi jijie* quotes him as explaining the First Six line statement of *Jian* 漸 ䷴ “Progressing” (#53) hexagram:

初六：鴻漸于干，小子厲。有言无咎。

First Six: A wild goose progressing to a bank. For a petty son dangerous. There are sayings. Without trouble.

虞翻曰：初失位，故厲。變得正，三動受上，成震。

Yu Fan said: The First is out of position, and thus it is “dangerous.” If it alternates and gets to be correct, and the Third moves to receive the Top, then it makes *Zhen* ䷲.

According to canonical commentaries, the odd lines of a hexagram, First, Third and Fifth, should properly be yang lines, and the even lines, Second, Fourth and Top, should properly be yin lines; otherwise, they are regarded as out of position. In the case of *Jian* 漸 ䷴, the First Six line is out of position and this is the reason that the line statement mentions “dangerous” (*li* 厲). As mentioned above, lines in the bottom trigram are said to be in correspondence with lines in the same position of the top trigram. What is more, for these correspondences to be proper, the two corresponding lines should be of different nature, one yang and one yin. In the case of the Third and Top lines, they are both yang lines and thus out of correspondence. If the Third line receives the influence of

40 Zhu Bokun 朱伯坤, *Yi xue zhhexueshi* 易學哲學史 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1988), Vol. 1, 202–212, argues that Yu Fan was the first to talk about “changing lines.”

the Top line to be in correspondence, it will then change into a yin line. With these two changes, the bottom trigram then changes from *Gen* ☶ to *Zhen* ☳.

While both Jing Fang and Yu Fan mention “alternating” (*bian* 變) hexagrams and/or lines, it is important to note that their comments have nothing to do with the process of divination. These are exegetical principles intended to explain why a word or phrase in a hexagram or line statement reads as it does. About the same time as Yu Fan was writing, the text *Yi Qian zuo du* 易乾鑿度 *Drilling the Degrees of Qian of the Changes* seemed to comment on the numerology of the “Da yan” passage of the *Xici zhuan*:

易一陰一陽，合而為十五之為道。陽變七之九，陰變八之六，亦合於十五，則彖變之數，若之一也。

The *Changes* is the way of one yin and one yang combining to make 15. If yang changes 7 to go to 9, and yin changes 8 to go to 6, also adding up to 15, then the numbers of the Judgment alternations are as if one.<sup>41</sup>

It is very hard to understand just what this means.<sup>42</sup> The commentary by Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200) may or may not shed light on it.

彖者，爻之不變動者。《連山》、《歸藏》占彖，本其質性也。《周易》占變者，效其流動也。

The Judgment is when the lines do not alternate and move. The *Lian shan* and *Gui cang* prognosticate the Judgment, rooted in their simple nature. The *Zhou Changes* prognosticates the alternation, imitating its flowing motion.<sup>43</sup>

In the light of later theories about *Zhou Changes* divination, it is certainly suggestive to interpret this as meaning that divination involved the change from one hexagram to another. However, it is also quite possible that “alternation” refers to the differences between lines in a single hexagram, the way imagery moves throughout a single hexagram from bottom to top (a topic to be explored

41 See *Yi Qian zuo du Zheng shi zhu* 易乾鑿度鄭氏注, in Huang Shi 黃奭, *Huang shi yi shu kao* 黃氏逸書考 (Rpt.: Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 1993), “*Yi wei*” 易緯, 2.11. For a study of the *Qian zuo du*, see Bent Nielsen, “The *Qian zuo du*: A Late Han Dynasty (202 BC–AD 220) Study of the Book of Changes, *Yijing*” (Ph.D. diss.: University of Copenhagen, 1995).

42 Obviously, since neither 7 + 9 nor 8 + 6 adds up to 15, this would have to mean that both 9 + 6 and 8 + 7 = 15. But it is unclear what significance this would have for the “Judgment alternations” (*tuan bian* 彖變).

43 *Yi Qian zuo du Zheng shi zhu*, 2.11.

in Chapter Nine). After all, the “Da yan” passage states that with “eighteen alternations one completes a hexagram” (*shìyoubā bian er chéng guā* 十有八變而成卦), in which the word *bian* 變 “to alternate” refers to the steps in producing a single hexagram, and not to the alternation of lines from one hexagram to another.<sup>44</sup> Thus, this too seems to be inconclusive regarding the notion of “changing hexagrams.”

By the Tang dynasty, one sees the first tentative suggestions that “alternating (i.e., changing) lines” were used in prognosticating the results of divination. In the *Zhengyi* 正義 *Correct Significance* commentary to the *Zuo zhuan*, the editorial team under the auspices of Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574–648) gave the following explanations:

《周易》以變為占，占九六之爻。傳之諸筮皆是占變爻也。其《連山》、《歸藏》以不變為占，占七八之爻。二易並亡，不知實然以否。The *Zhou Changes* uses alternations for its prognostications, prognosticating the 9 and 6 lines. All of the milfoil divinations in the [*Zuo*] *zhuan* prognosticate changing lines. The *Lian shan* and *Gui cang* use the non-alternations for prognostication, prognosticating the 7 and 8 lines. Those two *Changes* are both lost, so we do not know whether this is really the case or not.<sup>45</sup>

《易》筮皆以變者為占。傳之諸筮皆是也。若一爻獨變，則得指論此爻。遇一爻變以上，或二爻、三爻皆變，則每爻義異，不知所從，則當總論彖辭。故姜亦以彖為占。

All *Changes* divination use what alternates for its prognostications. All of the milfoil divinations in the [*Zuo*] *zhuan* are like this. If one line alone alternated, then they could use this line. If they met with more than one line changing, such as two or three lines all alternating, then the meaning of each line would be different, and if they did not know what to follow, they would comprehensively discuss the hexagram statement. Thus [Mu] Jiang also used the hexagram statement for the prognostication.<sup>46</sup>

Both of these explanations seem to be decidedly *ad hoc*, the first one at least admitting the commentators' lack of any specific knowledge of how ancient milfoil divination was performed. However, these explanations are now gener-

44 As noted above (n. 34), Ulrich Libbrecht suggested that the word *bian* 變 “alternation” was later used to indicate the steps involved in a mathematical computation.

45 *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 4215.

46 *Ibid.*



ally understood in light of Zhu Xi's later description of milfoil divination, even though—as we have seen—this too seems to have been both *ad hoc* and also not very specific.

More recently, Gao Heng 高亨 (1900–1986) sought to correlate the evidence in the *Zuo zhuan* and *Guo yu* with that in the “Da yan” passage in the *Xici* to explain this next step in the divination method.<sup>47</sup> Gao's analysis is very complicated, but since it too has been extremely influential, especially in mainland China, it is important to consider it fully here. The first part of his explanation—the use of sortilege to produce a hexagram—is no different than that of Zhu Xi's explanation of the “Da yan” passage. But the heart of Gao Heng's explanation lies in his analysis of the *Zuo zhuan* and *Guo yu* accounts. As we have seen above, the standard result of these divinations is expressed as “hexagram<sup>1</sup> zhi 之 hexagram<sup>2</sup>” (*mou gua zhi mou gua* 某卦之某卦). Gao accepted a standard interpretation of this formula, whereby “hexagram<sup>1</sup>” is the “base hexagram” (*ben gua* 本卦) that one first obtains through sortilege, and “hexagram<sup>2</sup>” is the “moving hexagram” (*zhi gua* 之卦) or “alternating hexagram” that one obtains after all of the 6 and 9 lines of the “base hexagram” alternate into their opposite. Thus, he would explain that the result of the milfoil divination in account #5.1 above, “*Guan* 觀 ䷓ ‘Looking Up’ 之 *Pi* 否 ䷋ ‘Negation,’” there translated as “*Guan* 觀 ䷓ ‘Looking Up’'s *Pi* 否 ䷋ ‘Negation,’” as *Guan* ䷓ hexagram changing into *Pi* ䷋ hexagram, employing an ancient verbal sense of *zhi* 之 as “to go.” Since the hexagram picture of *Pi* ䷋ differs from that of *Guan* ䷓ by only a single line, the fourth line, Gao surmised that the sortilege that produced this result would have resulted in the following numbers (reading the lines of the hexagram from bottom to top):

7 —  
 7 —  
 6 \_\_  
 8 \_\_  
 8 \_\_  
 8 \_\_

47 This was originally published as “Zhou Yi shifa xinkao” 周易筮法新考 in Gao Heng, *Zhou Yi gu jing tongshuo* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1958); reprinted in Gao Heng 高亨, *Zhou yi gu jing jin zhu* (*Zengdingben*) 周易古經今注 (增訂本) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1958), 139–160. For an English-language version of Gao's work, which however fails to give any attribution to the work, see Shih-chuan Chen, “How to Form a Hexagram and Consult the *I Ching*,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 92.2 (1972): 237–249.

All of the 7s and 8s of this hexagram would be stable and not change, with only the 6 in the fourth line changing to its opposite:

7 —  
 7 —  
 9 —  
 8 —  
 8 —  
 8 —

Gao then referred to two passages in the *Xici zhuan* that had been brought together by Zhu Xi in his re-arrangement of the text and placed at the beginning of the “Da yan” passage.

天一、地二、天三、地四、天五、地六、天七、地八、天九、地十。天數五、地數五，五位相得而各有合。天數二十有五，地數三十；凡天地之數五十有五。此所以成變化而行鬼神也。

Heaven is 1, Earth is 2, Heaven is 3, Earth is 4, Heaven is 5, Earth is 6, Heaven is 7, Earth is 8, Heaven is 9, and Earth is 10. There are five Heavenly numbers and five Earthly numbers. The five positions are mutually set and each gets its complement. The numbers of Heaven (add up to) 25, and the numbers of Earth (add up to) 30; in all, the numbers of Heaven and Earth (add up to) 55. This is what completes alternation and transformation and sets the ghosts and spirits in motion.<sup>48</sup>

Emphasizing the importance of the number 55, Gao observed that this number is one greater than the largest possible product of six *Yijing* hexagram lines (i.e.,  $6 \times 9 = 54$ ). Next he noted that the sum of the numbers of the six lines of the “base hexagram” would be some number between 36 (=  $6 \times 6$ ) and 54. He then proposed that this number should be subtracted from 55, producing a number between 1 (=  $55 - 54$ ) and 19 (=  $55 - 36$ ). This number would then be used to determine the line to be used in the prognostication. This was done by a process of counting first up and then down the hexagram line by line until arriving at the

48 In the received text of the *Xici*, the first sentence here is found at the beginning of the tenth chapter (*zhang* 章) of the top scroll (*shang zhuan* 上傳), while the second sentence is found in the eighth chapter after the description of sortilege. Zhu Xi re-arranged the text based on his understanding of context, saying that the “strips” (*jian* 簡) had become dis-arranged.

TABLE 5.1 Gao Heng's Deduction of Hexagram Line to Use in Prognostication

	54	53	52	51	50	49	48	47	46	45	44	43	42	41	40	39	38	37	36		
上						6	7												18	19	
五					5			8										17			
四				4					9								16				
三			3							10						15					
二		2									11			14							
初	1																			12	13

number of this subtrahend. Thus, 1 would indicate the First line, 2 the Second, and so on through 6 indicating the Top line, and then in reverse order 7 would again indicate the Top line, 8 the Fifth, and so on through 12 indicating the First line again, 13 also indicating the First line, and so on, as indicated in Table 5.1 above.

Counting through the “base hexagram” in this way, the value of the line, whether “stable” or “alternating,” would determine which line to use in the prognostication. However, this result would also be influenced by the value of the other lines in the “base hexagram.” Gao proposed twelve possible scenarios: that no lines would alternate (i.e., that all lines were either 7 or 8), that all lines would alternate (i.e., that all lines were either 6 or 9), and two scenarios apiece for whether one, two, three, four or five lines would alternate: whether the subtrahend from 55 would meet with either an “alternating” line (i.e., a 6 or 9) or with a “stable” line (i.e., 7 or 8). If no lines would alternate, then one would use the hexagram statement of the “base hexagram” to prognosticate. If all six lines would alternate, then in the case of *Qian* and *Kun* hexagrams one would use the *Yong jiu* and *Yong liu* line statements,<sup>49</sup> and in the cases of the other sixty-two hexagrams one would use the hexagram statement of the “moving hexagram.” These results can be diagrammed as follows, with 卦<sup>1</sup> indicating the “base hexagram” and 卦<sup>2</sup> indicating the “moving hexagram.” The final column of the table indicates examples from the *Zuo zhuan* examined in the first part of this chapter, though in the discussion below I will also mention examples in the *Guo yu*, which Gao views as particularly strong support for his hypothesis.

49 *Qian* and *Kun* hexagrams are unique in having a seventh line statement, called *Yong jiu* 用九 “Use the Nine” or *Yong liu* 用六 “Use the Six.”

TABLE 5.2 Gao Heng's *Zuo Zhuan* Examples of Milfoil Divination with *Zhou Changes*

Number of “alternat- ing lines” in 卦 <sup>1</sup>	Whether line indicated or not by subtracting from 55	Prognostication based on	Examples in <i>Zuo zhuan</i>
0	No	Hexagram statement of 卦 <sup>1</sup>	Zhao 7 (#5.8)
1	Yes	Line statement indicated in 卦 <sup>1</sup>	Zhuang 22 (#5.1) Min 1 (#5.2) Xi 15 (#5.3) Xi 25 (#5.4) Xiang 25 (#5.6) Zhao 5 (#5.7) Zhao 7 (#5.8) Zhao 12 (#5.9) Ai 9 (#5.10)
1	No	Hexagram statement of 卦 <sup>1</sup>	None
2	Yes	Line statement indicated in 卦 <sup>1</sup>	None
2	No	Hexagram statement of 卦 <sup>1</sup>	None
3	Yes	Line statement indicated in 卦 <sup>1</sup>	None
3	No	Both hexagram statements	None
4	Yes	Line statement indicated in 卦 <sup>1</sup>	None
4	No	Hexagram statement of 卦 <sup>2</sup>	None
5	Yes	Line statement indicated in 卦 <sup>1</sup>	None
5	No	Hexagram statement of 卦 <sup>2</sup>	Xiang 9 (#5.5)
6	Yes	Hexagram statement of 卦 <sup>2</sup>	None

In addition to the cases in the *Zuo zhuan*, Gao also mentions accounts of divination in the *Zuo zhuan* or *Guo yu* that result either in the “8 of some hexagram” or in oracles not found in the *Zhou Changes*. These were examined in Chapter Four above. Here I will cite just the results.

其卦遇蠱 ䷑ 曰：千乘三去，三去之餘，獲其雄狐。

Its hexagram met *Gu* ䷑ “Pestilence,” which says: A thousand chariots thrice depart: What is left after three departures, Captures their male fox. (*Zuo Xi* 15, #4.4.)

其卦遇復 ䷗，曰：『南國蹙，射其元王，中厥目。』

Its hexagram met *Fu* ䷗ “Returning,” which says: “The southern state stumbles: Shooting its prime king, Hitting his eye.” (*Zuo Cheng* 16, #4.)

公子親筮之，曰：「尚有晉國。」得貞屯 ䷂、悔豫 ䷏，皆八也。筮史占之，皆曰：「不吉。閉而不通，爻無為也。」司空季子曰：「吉。是在《周易》，皆利建侯。」

The ducal son personally divined it by milfoil, saying “Would that I have the state of Jin.” He obtained the *zhen Zhun* 屯 ䷂ “Sprouting” and the *hui Yu* 豫 ䷏ “Relaxed,” both of them “eights.” The milfoil divination scribes prognosticated it, all saying: “Not auspicious. It is shut and not penetrating, the lines have no activity.” Sikong Jizi said: “Auspicious. In the *Zhou Changes* these are both ‘Beneficial to establish a lord.’” (*Guo yu*, #4.)

Although in the third case here, the *Zhou Changes* is cited, it is clear that this was an after the fact intervention by a separate prognosticator, and was not the method used to obtain “the *zhen Zhun* 屯 ䷂ ‘Sprouting’ and the *hui Yu* 豫 ䷏ ‘Excess,’ both of them ‘eights.’” Since these divinations were performed using a different milfoil divination method, they do not seem to me to be directly relevant to divination with the *Zhou Changes*.

In the case of the *Zuo zhuan* accounts, which we will examine more closely below, Gao Heng regards as particularly important the account of Mu Jiang’s divination recorded under the ninth year of Duke Xiang. The relevant portion of this account is as follows.

穆姜薨於東宮。始往而筮之，遇艮 ䷳ 之八。史曰：「是謂艮 ䷳ 之隨 ䷐。」

Mu Jiang passed away in the Eastern Palace. When she first went there, she divined by milfoil about it, meeting the “eight” of *Gen* ䷳ “Stilling.” The scribe said: “This is called *Gen* ䷳ ‘Restraint’s *Sui* ䷐ ‘Following.’”

In this case, Gao posits the following result for *Gen* 艮 ䷳ “Stilling” hexagram (for the sake of space, I here write the numbers from left to right corresponding to the lines bottom to top): 6-7-9-6-6-9. He adds these numbers, getting 44, which when subtracted from 55 gives 11. Counting through the hexagram as in Table 5.1, one arrives at the Second line, which he reads from the account as an “8.” From this he proclaims “If not for my ‘Alternating Hexagram Method’ (*biangua fa* 變卦法), then there would never be any way to explain “meeting the ‘eight’ of *Gen* ䷳ ‘Stilling.’ “This is called *Gen* ䷳ ‘Restraint’s *Sui* ䷐

“Following,” which can also show that my ‘Alternating Hexagram Method’ is not arbitrary.”<sup>50</sup>

We will return to whether Gao Heng’s “Alternating Hexagram Method” is arbitrary or not, but there is good reason to believe that the scribe’s citation of the *Zhou Changes* here was arbitrary. The original result of the milfoil divination is reported simply as “meeting the ‘eight’ of *Gen* ䷋ ‘Stilling.’” This is different from all of the other cases of milfoil divination in the *Zuo zhuan* that explicitly use the *Zhou Changes*, in which the result is given as “meeting hexagram<sup>1</sup> *zhi* 之 hexagram<sup>2</sup>.” True, the scribe goes on to use this method to suggest that “This is called *Gen* ䷋ ‘Stilling’<sup>1</sup>’s *Sui* ䷐ ‘Following,’” and then quotes the hexagram statement of *Sui* ䷐ “Following” hexagram. However, it is clear from this that as in the third of the *Guo yu* milfoil divination cases listed above, the original milfoil divination was performed with some divination method other than that of the *Zhou Changes*, and that the scribe was attempting to change the method of exegesis. In the method of sortilege described in the “Da yan” passage, the odds of obtaining a hexagram in which five of the six lines are “changing” lines (i.e., either a 6 or 9), are less than one in two hundred (0.439%). Moreover, it seems to me that Mu Jiang’s dismissal of this interpretation, ostensibly because she regarded herself as unqualified for such a result, was more likely because she recognized the exegetical trick employed by the scribe. Needless to say, this suggestion is conjectural, but this one anomalous case certainly does not prove that Gao Heng’s “Alternating Hexagram Method” is not “arbitrary.” The several other accounts in the *Zuo zhuan* of milfoil divination using the *Zhou Changes* will show beyond doubt that it is.

Of the twelve possible results of milfoil divination posited by Gao Heng, every other result in the *Zuo zhuan* except one (the first of the two divinations in the 7th year of Duke Zhao, about which more will be said below) is expressed as “meeting hexagram<sup>1</sup> *zhi* 之 hexagram<sup>2</sup>,” in which the hexagram pictures of hexagram<sup>1</sup> and hexagram<sup>2</sup> differ by just a single line. For example, in the first account, under the 22nd year of Duke Zhuang, the result is “meeting *Guan* ䷋ ‘Looking Up’<sup>1</sup>’s *Pi* ䷔ ‘Negation.’” The hexagram pictures of *Guan* ䷋ and *Pi* ䷔ differ in only the fourth line, a yin line in *Guan* and a yang line in *Pi*. According to Gao Heng, this would mean that the fourth line of *Guan* was a 6, whereas all five of the other lines were either a 7 or 8; this result can be expressed numerically as (again, left to right corresponding to bottom to top): 8-8-8-6-7-7. Gao Heng states that in the case of one line “alternating,” if the sum of these lines

50 Gao Heng, *Zhou Yi gu jing jin zhu*, 158.

subtracted from 55 meets with the “alternating line,” then the line statement of that line would produce the oracle. However, if the sum of these lines subtracted from 55 does not meet with the “alternating line,” then the oracle would be “primarily” (*zhuyao* 主要) the hexagram statement of hexagram<sup>1</sup>. In this case, the numbers of the six lines add up to 44, which subtracted from 55 gives 11. Using Table 5.1 representing Gao Heng’s “Alternating Hexagram method,” it can be seen that 11 would indicate the second line of *Guan*. However, the oracle quoted in this account is the fourth line of *Guan*, a direct contradiction of his method.

It is not only this one case in which Gao’s “Alternating Hexagram Method” fails to explain the result of *Zhou Changes* milfoil divination results in the *Zuo zhuan*; it fails in every single one of the cases in which the result is stated as “meeting hexagram<sup>1</sup> *zhi* 之 hexagram<sup>2</sup>.” I will tabulate these results below in the numerical form used above.

#5.1:	Zhuang 22	<i>Guan</i> 觀 ䷓ 之 <i>Pi</i> 否 ䷋	8-8-9-8-7-7	55-44=11 2nd line
	oracle quoted:	4th line of <i>Guan</i>		
#5.2:	Min 1	<i>Zhun</i> 屯 ䷂ 之 <i>Bi</i> 比 ䷇	9-8-8-8-7-8	55-48=7 6th line
	oracle quoted:	First line of <i>Zhun</i>		
#5.3:	Xi 15	<i>Guimei</i> 歸妹 ䷵ 之 <i>Kui</i> 睽 ䷥	7-7-8-7-8-6	55-43=12 1st line
	oracle quoted:	Top line of <i>Guimei</i>		
#5.4:	Xi 25	<i>Dayou</i> 大有 ䷍ 之 <i>Kui</i> 睽 ䷥	7-7-9-7-8-7	55-43=12 1st line
	oracle quoted:	Third line of <i>Dayou</i>		
#5.6:	Xiang 25	<i>Kun</i> 困 ䷮ 之 <i>Daguo</i> 大過 ䷛	8-7-6-7-7-8	55-43=12 1st line
	oracle quoted:	Third line of <i>Kun</i>		
#75.:	Zhao 5	<i>Mingyi</i> 明夷 ䷣ 之 <i>Qian</i> 謙 ䷎	9-8-7-8-8-8	55-48=7 6th line
	oracle quoted:	First line of <i>Mingyi</i>		
#5.8:	Zhao 7	<i>Zhun</i> 屯 ䷂ 之 <i>Bi</i> 比 ䷇	9-8-8-8-7-8	55-48=7 6th line
	oracle quoted:	First line of <i>Zhun</i>		
#5.9:	Zhao 12	<i>Kun</i> 坤 ䷁ 之 <i>Bi</i> 比 ䷇	8-8-8-8-6-8	55-46=9 4th line
	oracle quoted:	Fifth line of <i>Kun</i>		
#5.10:	Ai 9	<i>Tai</i> 泰 ䷊ 之 <i>Xu</i> 需 ䷄	7-7-7-8-6-8	55-43=12 1st line
	oracle quoted:	Fifth line of <i>Tai</i>		

Although Gao Heng quotes each and every one of these accounts, he does not say a word about whether they do or do not meet the criteria of his method. Nevertheless, he concludes this discussion with the statement:

此法在《左傳》、《國語》中，或有徵，或無徵。有徵者，以其徵知之，無徵者，以其有徵者推知之，當無大謬也。

In the *Zuo zhuan* and *Guo yu*, this method sometimes has evidence and sometimes is without evidence. For those cases with evidence, we can know it through the evidence; for those cases without evidence, inferring it based on the cases with evidence, there shouldn't be any great error.<sup>51</sup>

It is disheartening that the senior-most scholar of the *Yijing* in China in the middle of the twentieth century would publish an hypothesis as flawed as this. It is even more disheartening that Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, the premier publisher of scholarly books in China, would not only publish this work in the first place but then would re-publish it decades later, without a note of warning to the reader that it did not explain over 90% of the cases it sought to explain. There has to be a better explanation for the cases of divination in the *Zuo zhuan*.

The explanation is easy to see for those who read the Chinese text of these accounts. While it is true that the word *zhi* 之 in the formula “hexagram<sup>1</sup> *zhi* 之 hexagram<sup>2</sup>” can function as a verb with the meaning “to go,” by far its most common meaning in the language of the *Zuo zhuan* and of the Zhou dynasty in general is as the genitive particle indicating possession, akin to the modern Chinese *de* 的. As noted above, in all of these cases of milfoil divination with the *Zhou Changes* the result is expressed as a relationship between two hexagrams the hexagram pictures of which differ by just a single line, and it is invariably the line statement of that line which is quoted as the oracle of the divination. The simplest explanation is that prior to the use of the numerical tags “First Six” (*chu liu* 初六), “Nine in the Second” (*jiu er* 九二), etc. designating the lines of a hexagram, or perhaps simply as an alternative to those tags, the formula “hexagram<sup>1</sup> *zhi* 之 hexagram<sup>2</sup>” was used to designate a single line of hexagram<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the “*Guan* 觀 ䷓ 之 *Pi* 否 ䷋” of account #5.1, in which five of the lines of the two hexagram pictures are identical but for which the fourth line of *Guan* 觀 ䷓ is a yin line while the fourth line of *Pi* 否 ䷋ is a yang line, indicates the fourth line of *Guan* 觀 ䷓, which in the received text of the *Zhou Changes* is indicated as “Six in the Fourth.” This is why the account of this divination goes on to say “This says, ‘Look up at the radiance of the state; beneficial herewith to be hosted by the king;’” which is none other than the Six in the Fourth line statement of *Guan* 觀 ䷓ hexagram. Every other one of these accounts is exactly the same. Thus, the simplest explanation of this formula “hexagram<sup>1</sup> *zhi* 之 hexagram<sup>2</sup>” is that the *zhi* 之 linking the two hexagrams is the simple possessive particle indicating the relationship between the two hexagrams.

51 Gao Heng, *Zhou Yi gu jing jin zhu*, 150.



That this is indeed the proper understanding of this formula can be demonstrated by its use elsewhere in the *Zuo zhuan* in quotations of the *Zhou Changes* that have nothing to do with divination. For example, in the 12th year of Duke Xuan 宣 (597 BCE), prior to the battle of Bi 畢 between armies of Jin 晉 and Chu 楚, the Jin generals were divided as to the prospects of the battle. One of them, Xun Shou 荀首 (known posthumously as Zhi Zhuangzi 知莊子), advised against going into battle, quoting a line from the *Zhou Changes* to suggest the danger of doing so.

知莊子曰：「此師殆哉！《周易》有之：在師 ䷆ 之臨 ䷒，曰：

『師出以律，否臧。凶。』

執事順成為臧，逆為否。眾散為弱，川壅為澤。有律以如己也，故曰律。否臧，且律竭也。盈而以竭，天且不整，所以凶也。不行謂之臨，有帥而不從，臨孰甚焉？此之謂矣。果遇必敗，斃子尸之，雖免而歸，必有大咎。」

Zhi Zhuangzi said, “This army is in danger indeed. The *Zhou Changes* has it, at *Shi* 師 ䷆ ‘Army’ *zhi* 之 *Lin* 臨 ䷒ ‘Looking Down,’ which says:

“An army going out in ranks, Negating goodness. Ominous.

In managing affairs, fluent completion is good and going against this is bad. For the multitudes to disperse is weakness, and when the river is dammed it becomes a marsh. Having ranks to use is as with oneself, thus it says ‘ranks.’ ‘Negating goodness’ means that the ranks are shattered. Being full and then shattered, lessened and then irregular is why it is ‘ominous.’ Not moving is said to be ‘Looking Down.’ Having a general and not following him, what could be more extreme ‘looking down’ than that? That is what this means. If we really meet them we will certainly be defeated. Zhizi (i.e., Xian Hu 先穀) being in charge of this, even if he escapes and returns home, he will certainly have great trouble.”

No divination was performed here. Instead, the *Zhou Changes* is quoted entirely for rhetorical effect. Thus, there can be no question about the formula “*Shi* 師 ䷆ ‘Army’ *zhi* 之 *Lin* 臨 ䷒ ‘Looking Down’” having anything to do with “changing lines.” Instead, as in all of the cases examined above, the two hexagram pictures differ by just a single line, the first line, and it is precisely the First Six line of *Shi* 師 ䷆ “Army” hexagram that is quoted:

初六：師出以律，否臧。凶。

First Six: An army going out in ranks, Negating goodness. Ominous.

Similarly, in the 28th year of Duke Xiang 襄 (545 BCE), when You Ji 游吉 (d. 506; here referred to as Zi Dashu 子大叔), an envoy from the state of Zheng 鄭 to

the state of Chu 楚 reached Chu, the Chu rulers sent him back, insisting instead that the lord of Zheng come to court personally. Upon his return to Zheng, You Ji reported the incident to Gongsun Shezhi 公孫舍之 (d. 544 BCE; here referred to as Zi Zhan 子展), the grandson of Duke Mu of Zheng 鄭穆公 (r. 627–606 BCE), and predicted doom for the ruler of Chu, citing the *Zhou Changes* as his support.

子大叔歸，復命，告子展曰：「楚子將死矣。不修其政德，而貪昧於諸侯，以逞其願，欲久得乎？《周易》有之：在復 ䷗ 之頤 ䷚，曰：

『迷復。凶。』

其楚子之謂乎！欲復其願而棄其本，復歸無所，是謂『迷復』。能無凶乎？君其往也，送葬而歸，以快楚心。楚不幾十年，未能恤諸侯也。吾乃休吾民矣。」

Zi Dashu went back and returned command, reporting to Zi Zhan (i.e., Gongsun Shezhi) saying: “The prince of Chu is about to die indeed. Not cultivating his government’s virtue, but being greedy and blind with respect to the many lords to indulge his desires, could he hope to obtain longevity? The *Zhou Changes* has it, at *Fu* 復 ䷗ ‘Returning’ *zhi* 之 *Yi* 頤 ䷚ ‘Jaws,’ which says:

Confused returning. Ominous.

Is this not about the prince of Chu! Wanting to ‘return’ to his desires but discarding his base, he has no place to which to return; this is what is meant by ‘Confused returning.’ Could it be other than ‘ominous’! My lord should go there, escort the funeral and then return to gladden the hearts of Chu. For close to ten years, Chu will not be able to concern itself with the many lords. We can then rest our people indeed.”

Once again, the citation of the *Zhou Changes* here is entirely for rhetorical effect; no divination was performed. Thus, the formula *Fu* 復 ䷗ “Returning” *zhi* 之 *Yi* 頤 ䷚ “Jaws” could not have anything to do with “changing lines.” Instead, it indicates the Top Six line of *Fu* 復 ䷗ “Returning” hexagram, which does indeed read “Confused return. Ominous,” just as quoted by Zi Dashu.

The clearest evidence of all that the *zhi* 之 of this formula in the *Zuo zhuan* must be interpreted as a possessive particle comes in the final passage to be considered here. It is part of a lengthy narrative about the existence of dragons. Upon the report of an appearance of a dragon, Wei Shu 魏舒 (d. 509 BCE; here referred to posthumously as Wei Xianzi 魏獻子) asked the scribe Cai Mo 蔡墨, renowned for his knowledge of antiquity, if there were indeed dragons and why they were no longer to be seen. Cai Mo cited various ancient texts in support of the existence of dragons. Finally, he then cited the *Zhou Changes*.

龍，水物也。水官棄矣，故龍不生得。不然，《周易》有之：在乾☰之姤☱曰「潛龍。勿用」。其同人☶曰「見龍在田」。其大有☱曰「飛龍在天」。其夬☱曰「亢龍。有悔」。其坤☷曰「見群龍无首。吉」。坤☷之剝☶曰「龍戰于野」。若不朝夕見，誰能物之？

The dragon is a water creature. The Water office has been discarded, and thus dragons have not been caught alive. Nevertheless, the *Zhou Changes* has it at *Qian* 乾☰ “Vigorous” *zhi* 之 *Gou* 姤☱ “Meeting,” which says: “Submerged dragon. Don’t use.” Its *Tongren* 同人☶ “Together with People” says “Seeing a dragon in the fields.” Its *Dayou* 大有☱ “Greatly Having” says “Flying dragon in the heavens.” Its *Guai* 夬☱ “Resolute” says “Necked dragon. There is regret.” Its *Kun* 坤☷ “Compliant” says “Seeing a flock of dragons without heads. Auspicious.” *Kun* 坤☷ “Compliant” *zhi* 之 *Bo* 剝☶ “Paring” says “Dragons battling in the wilds.” If they had not appeared morning and night, who would have been able to regard them as creatures!

These quotations of line statements of *Qian* 乾☰ “Vigorous” and *Kun* 坤☷ “Compliant” hexagrams are also simple quotations, having nothing to do with divination. And yet the first quotation also uses the same “hexagram<sup>1</sup> *zhi* 之 hexagram<sup>2</sup>” formula seen in the divination accounts. More important, the subsequent quotations of *Qian* hexagram replace “*Qian zhi*” 乾之 with the possessive pronoun *qi* 其 “its,” the “it” of which refers to *Qian*, while the possessive “s” of it has to substitute for *zhi* 之. This shows beyond any doubt that the *zhi* 之 of “*Qian zhi*” 乾之 can only be understood as the possessive particle. Since that is certainly true in these cases, it only stands to reason that the same formula functions the same way in the accounts of divination. It has nothing to do with “changing lines” or “changing hexagrams,” but merely identifies which one of the six lines of hexagram<sup>1</sup> was indicated as the result of the divination.

According to traditional accounts of ancient divination methods, one of the important differences between divination with the *Zhou Changes* and such other divination manuals as the *Gui cang* 歸藏 *Returning to Be Stored* is that whereas the *Gui cang* had only hexagram statements, and it was on the hexagram statement that the prognostication was based, the *Zhou Changes* has statements for each of the six lines as well, and the prognostications were usually based on these line statements. As seen in Chapter Four above, the Wangjiatai 王家台 manuscripts of the *Gui cang* indeed confirm that that text has only hexagram statements. As for the *Zhou Changes*, almost all of the divination accounts examined above also confirm that the divination results in a single line of one hexagram, and that line statement usually served as the oracle to be prognosticated. However, there is one anomalous case that I think is

exceptionally important and which provides important information regarding how these lines may have been determined. This is account #5.8 above, from the 7th year of Duke Zhao 昭. Because of its crucial nature, I will quote the passage and translation once again.

衛襄公夫人姜氏無子，嬖人媯始生孟縶。孔成子夢康叔謂己：「立元，余使羈之孫圉與史苟相之。」史朝亦夢康叔謂己：「余將命而子苟與孔烝鉏之曾孫圉相元。」史朝見成子，告之夢，夢協。晉韓宣子為政聘于諸侯之歲，媯始生子，名之曰元。孟縶之足不良能行。孔成子以《周易》筮之，曰：「元尚享衛國，主其社稷。」遇屯 ䷂。又曰：「余尚立縶，尚克嘉之。」遇屯 ䷂ 之比 ䷇。以示史朝。史朝曰：「『元亨』，又何疑焉？」成子曰：「非長之謂乎？」對曰：「康叔名之，可謂長矣。孟非人也，將不列於宗，不可謂長。且其繇曰：『利建侯。』嗣吉，何建？建非嗣也。二卦皆云，子其建之！康叔命之，二卦告之，筮襲於夢，武王所用也，弗從何為？弱足者居。侯主社稷，臨祭祀，奉民人，事鬼神，從會朝，又焉得居？各以所利，不亦可乎？」故孔成子立靈公。十二月癸亥，葬衛襄公。

Duke Xiang of Wei's primary consort Madame Jiang was without child, and the favored consort Zhou E gave birth to Meng Zhi. Kong Chengzi dreamt that Kang Shu said to him: "Establish Yuan; I will let Ji zhi Sun Yu and Scribe Gou assist him." Scribe Chao also dreamt that Kang Shu said to him: "I will command your son Gou and Kong Chengxu's great grandson Yu to assist Yuan." Shi Chao saw Chengzi and reported the dream to him, the dreams coinciding. In the year that Han Xuanzi of Jin was in charge of the government and convened the many lords [i.e., 540 BCE], Zhou E gave birth to a son, and he was named Yuan. The feet of Meng Zhi were not able to walk well. Kong Chengzi used the *Zhou Changes* to divine it, saying: "Would that Yuan receive the state of Wei, and preside over its altars." He met *Zhun* ䷂ "Sprouting." He also said: "I wish to establish Zhi; would that he be able to receive it." He met *Zhun* ䷂ "Sprouting"'s *Bi* ䷇ "Allying," which he showed to Scribe Chao. Scribe Chao said: "Prime [Yuan] receipt! What doubt could there be!" Chengzi said: "Is it not said of the elder?" He responded saying: "Kangshu named him, so that he can be said to be the elder. Meng is not an (able-bodied) man, and so will not be arrayed in the ancestral temple, and so cannot be said to be the elder. Moreover, its oracle says: 'Beneficial to establish a lord.' If the succession were auspicious, what need would there be to 'establish'? 'To establish' is not 'to succeed.' The two hexagrams both state it, you are 'to establish' him. Kangshu commanded it and the two hexagrams reported it. The milfoil agreeing with the dream is what King Wu used. If you were

not to follow this, then what would you do! One whose feet are feeble will sit. The lord will preside over the altars, oversee the sacrifices, uphold the people, serve the ghosts and spirits, and follow the court assemblies; how would he be able to sit! Is it not appropriate that each should follow his own benefit?" Therefore, Kong Chengzi established Duke Ling.

As noted in the brief discussion of this account given at its first translation, the passage recounts two divinations to determine which of two brothers should be designated as the successor to the lord of Wei 衛. The elder of these two brothers, Meng Zhi 孟縶, was disabled and so, according to the tenets of Zhou ritual, was unable to officiate over the ancestral rituals. On the other hand, the younger brother, Yuan 元, the meaning of which is "first" or "prime," had been named on the basis of a dream in which the high ancestor of the state of Wei had commanded that he be made successor. Of the two divinations, performed one after the other, the first resulted in the hexagram *Zhun* ䷮ "Sprouting," and the second in *Zhun* ䷮ "Sprouting"'s *Bi* ䷗ "Allying," which is to say the First Nine line of *Zhun*. The hexagram statement and First Nine line statement of *Zhun* read as follows:

屯 ䷮：元亨，利貞。勿用有攸往。利建侯。

*Zhun* ䷮ "Sprouting": Prime receipt. Beneficial to affirm. Don't use to have somewhere to go. Beneficial to establish a lord.

初九：磐桓。利居貞。利建侯。

First Nine: Spiraling around. Beneficial to affirm about residing. Beneficial to establish a lord.

In interpreting the results of these two divinations, the Scribe Chao first quotes the hexagram statement of *Zhun*: "Prime receipt." Since "Prime" (*yuan* 元) is the name of the younger brother, he says that this is prima facie evidence that it is he, Yuan, who is favored. He then goes on to say: "Moreover, its oracle says: 'Beneficial to establish a lord.' If the succession were auspicious, what need would there be to 'establish'? 'To establish' is not 'to succeed.' The two hexagrams both state it, you are 'to establish' him." It is obvious that the "oracle" is the phrase "beneficial to establish a lord" (*li jian hou* 利建侯), which, as he notes, is found in both "hexagrams" (*gua* 卦), that is, both results of the divination: the hexagram statement of *Zhun* and the First Nine line statement of *Zhun*.<sup>52</sup>

52 In both his *Zhou Yi gu jing tongshuo* and *Zhou Yi gu jing jin zhu*, Gao Heng proposed that

The reason that I regard this account as particularly important for reconstructing the process of milfoil divination using the *Zhou Changes* is because both divinations resulted in a single hexagram: *Zhun* “Sprouting.” It is impossible to compute the odds of this happening, but it seems to me that they must be very slim.<sup>53</sup> What is more, that the first divination resulted in the hexagram statement of *Zhun*, while the second divination resulted in one of its six line statements suggests to me that this reflects a two-step divination procedure with the *Zhou Changes*. I propose that the first step in this divination procedure was to determine one of the sixty-four hexagrams, and that the second step was to determine which of that hexagram’s six line statements to use as the oracle. In my doctoral dissertation, “The Composition of the *Zhouyi*,” I found support for this proposal in the formulaic occurrence of the phrase “beneficial to affirm” (*li zhen* 利貞) in hexagram statements.<sup>54</sup> I also suggested that the hexagram statement of *Bi* “Allying” may point to such a two-step divination procedure, with an “original milfoil divination” (*yuan shi* 原筮) producing the result “Prime” (*yuan* 元), regularly seen in hexagram statements, and a “long-term affirmation” (*yong zhen* 永貞) producing the prognostication “without trouble” (*wu jiu* 无咎), seen almost only in line statements.<sup>55</sup>

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what “The two hexagrams both state it” refers to the phrase “Prime receipt” (*yuan heng* 元亨). As noted here, the hexagram statement of *Zhun* “Sprouting” includes this phrase. Gao says that the prognostication here is also based on the hexagram statement of *Bi* “Alliance,” the “changing hexagram.” That hexagram statement reads:

比 ䷇：吉。原筮元，永貞无咎。不寧方來，后夫凶。

*Bi* ䷇ “Allying”: Auspicious. Original milfoil divination: Prime. Affirming about the long-term: Without trouble. An unpeaceful country coming. For a latter man: Ominous.

Gao says that although the phrase “Prime receipt” does not occur in this statement, this is because the word “receipt” (*heng* 亨) has been dropped from the text after the word *yuan* 元 “prime.” It might be noted that the Shanghai Museum manuscript of the *Zhou Changes* reads exactly as does the received text, though Gao Heng of course had no way of knowing this when he was writing. Nevertheless, his suggestion is entirely imaginary, contrived only to support his “Changing Hexagram Method,” even though the sentence itself mentioning the “two hexagrams” indicates explicitly that the phrase that they both state is “Beneficial to establish a lord.”

- 53 Andrea Bréard has explained to me that the odds of obtaining any single hexagram once should be one in sixty-four, but once having obtained that hexagram the odds of obtaining it a second time would once again be one in sixty-four; personal communication, 5 November 2018.
- 54 Shaughnessy, “The Composition of the *Zhouyi*,” 96–97 and 124–133.
- 55 Shaughnessy, “The Composition of the *Zhouyi*,” 96. In note 52 above, I noted that Gao Heng proposed emending this hexagram statement, such that the word *heng* 亨 “receipt” would follow the word *yuan* 元 “Prime,” a formula that occurs regularly in hexagram statements. As I pointed out there, the Shanghai Museum manuscript provides no evidence that such

比 ䷇：吉。原筮元，永貞无咎。不寧方來，后夫凶。

*Bi* ䷇ “Allying”: Auspicious. Original milfoil divination: Prime. Affirming about the long-term: Without trouble. An unpeaceful country coming. For a latter man: Ominous.

I admitted there that this proposal is “quite speculative,” and I still admit that it is speculative. Nevertheless, in the nearly forty years since that dissertation was completed, numerous records of turtle-shell and milfoil divination from the Warring States period have been unearthed, and they do in fact show just such a two-step process of milfoil divination. These have been examined in detail in Chapter Four above (and, with respect to turtle-shell divination, in Chapter Three as well), and I will not repeat that analysis here. While the evidence examined there does not make use of the *Zhou Changes* and thus may not be directly relevant,<sup>56</sup> it certainly suggests that such a two-step process of divination was well known at the time that *Zhou Changes* divination was developing. Added to the evidence adduced in this chapter, I believe that this theory of a two-step procedure of *Zhou Changes* divination—with the first step producing a hexagram (and presumably its hexagram statement), and the second step determining one of the six lines of that hexagram, the line statement of that line serving as the oracle of the divination—is reasonably well supported.

### 3.3 *The Oracle*

In the preceding two chapters on turtle-shell divination and milfoil divination, I have examined in considerable detail the oracles (*zhou* or *yao* 繇) that were produced in the process of divination. I did so in large part because, as we will see in Chapter Nine, those oracles closely resemble the standard form of many line statements of the *Zhou Changes*. Indeed, the word *zhou* or *yao* 繇 itself is often used either as an early form of the homophonous word *yao* 爻 for a line of an *Yijing* hexagram or as a synonym for it.<sup>57</sup> Since the relationship between

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an emendation is justified. Nevertheless, that the word *yuan* 元 “prime” occurs regularly in hexagram statements (ten times) suggests to me that it has a special function in them.

56 For instance, Wang Huaping 王化平 has argued recently that the results of divination seen in the unearthed materials must be different from those seen in the *Zuo zhuan* and *Guo yu*; whereas the *Zuo zhuan* and *Guo yu* routinely mention the names of trigrams and hexagrams and also line statements (whether identical to those of the *Zhou Changes* or not), the unearthed materials for the most part record only numbers. See Wang Huaping 王化平, “*Zuo zhuan* he *Guo yu* zhi shili yu Zhanguo Chu jian shuzi guahua de bijiao” 左傳和國語之筮例與戰國楚簡數字卦畫的比較, *Kaogu* 考古 2011.10: 62–67. For a similar conclusion, see, too, Jia Lianxiang, “Chutu shuzigua cailiao zhengli yu yanjiu,” 125.

57 In modern Chinese, 繇 has two pronunciations, *zhou* and *yao*, both of which refer to

this form of oracle and the line statement will be explored in much more detail in Chapter Nine, there seems little need here to do more than to reiterate that in almost every case of divination using the *Zhou Changes* recorded in the *Zuo zhuan*, the “oracle” is simply the line statement of the *Zhou Changes* indicated by the formula “hexagram<sup>1</sup> zhi 之 hexagram<sup>2</sup>” explored in the preceding section.<sup>58</sup>

Here it will suffice to examine just the two cases that mention the word “oracle” specifically. These occur in accounts #5.3 and #5.6. I will cite only the oracle itself.

Account #5.3: 其繇曰：士刳羊，亦無盍也。女承筐，亦無貺也。  
Its oracle says: The sire stabs the sheep, but there is no blood.  
The woman raises the basket, but there is no gift.

Account #5.6: 其繇曰：困于石，據于蒺藜，入于其宮，不見其妻。凶。  
Its oracle says: Bound by stone, Stuck in a bramble patch.  
Entering into his palace, Not seeing his wife. Ominous.

The first of these oracles pertains to the result “*Guimei* 歸妹 ䷵ ‘Returning Maiden’*s* *Kui* 睽 ䷥ ‘Cross-Eyed’” (歸妹 ䷵ 之 睽 ䷥), which is to say the Top Six line of *Guimei* (#54). In the received text of the *Zhou Changes*, this line statement reads as follows:

上六：女承筐无實，士刳羊无血。无攸利。

Top Six: A woman raising a basket without fruit, A man stabbing a sheep without blood. Nowhere beneficial.

Although in the quoted oracle there is an inversion in the phrases of the oracle proper, with the actions of the sire (*shi* 士) coming first and those of the woman (*nü* 女) coming second, and even though there are also several words that are different, there can be no doubt that these two texts pertain to the same ora-

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this sort of oracle. The archaic pronunciations reconstructed by Axel Schuessler are: *zhou*/\*druh 繇 and *yao*/\*grâu 爻. While these do not seem to be particularly close in sound, in fact the two words are usually regarded as having been both synonomous and homophonous.

58 I qualify this statement as “in almost every case” because of the anomalous case of the divination for Mu Jiang in account #5.6, which however I have suggested should not be viewed as a case of divination with the *Zhou Changes*, and also because of the interim result obtained in the two divinations concerning succession in the state of Wei 衛 narrated in account #5.8, which cited the hexagram statement of *Zhun* 屯 ䷂ “Sprouting” (#3).



cle. I see no way to determine which of these two versions of the oracle may be earlier or later, or if the question of a definitive text of the *Zhou Changes* at this early date is even worth asking.<sup>59</sup>

In the second case, there is even less doubt that the oracle quoted is indeed the line statement from the *Zhou Changes*. The result of the divination here is “*Kun* ䷁ ‘Bound’*s* *Daguo* ䷛ ‘Greater Surpassing’” (遇困 ䷁ 之大過 ䷛), which is to say the Six in the Third line of *Kun* “Bound” (#47) hexagram. The line statement of that line in the *Zhou Changes* reads:

六三：困于石，據于蒺藜，入于其宮，不見其妻。凶。

Bound by stone, Stuck in a bramble patch. Entering into his palace, Not seeing his wife. Ominous.

The oracle quoted and the line statement are exactly the same, including even the prognostication “ominous” at the end of the line. It would seem here that rather than extemporaneously composing an oracle *de novo*, the diviner consulted a text that resembled very closely the received text of the *Zhou Changes*.<sup>60</sup>

59 Discussing this account, Hellmut Wilhelm stated:

Just as in this instance, *I-ching* passages quoted in the *Tso-chuan* which differ from our present text always a more original version (*sic*). As a first example I would like to refer to the line text 6/6 of the hexagram 54, *Kuei-mei*. Here the *Tso-chuan* version differs somewhat from the present reading, even though the meaning is approximately the same. The present text has reversed the order of the girl and the knight, possibly to keep in consonance with the sequence yin-yang, which had become dominant; it has replaced the ritualistically loaded terms *wang* and *k'uang* by the more temporal ones *hsüeh* and *shih* and has shortened the reading somewhat. In this way the rhythm of the original version and the rhyme were lost. The perfect rhyme of the *Tso-chuan* version alone would tend to attest to its being the older one.

Hellmut Wilhelm, “*I-ching* Oracles in the *Tso-chuan* and *Kuo-yü*,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 79.4 (1959), 276. Such a conclusion seems unconvincing to me.

60 This raises the question of the extent to which the quotations of the *Zhou Changes* within the *Zuo zhuan* can attest to the existence and circulation of the text. For example, the result of account #5.1, from the 22nd year of Duke Zhuang 莊 (672 BCE) matches the received text exactly; does this attest to the existence of the *Zhou Changes*? As discussed in the brief introduction to that account, the prognostication and especially the detailed explication of it given in that account accurately predict events that took place only five and eight generations later, with the latest event taking place in 478 BCE. Thus, it is entirely likely that this account of “divination” was a retrospective story interpolated into the history of Duke Zhuang. Most predictions in the *Zuo zhuan*, whether from divinations or other types of mantic activity, seem to be prescient through the mid fourth century BCE, after which time they become much less so. This has suggested to many scholars that the *Zuo zhuan* was probably composed in the mid-fourth century and should be under-

### 3.4 *The Prognostication*

In the preceding two chapters, the discussion of the prognostication could be quite simple. The prognostications in accounts of turtle-shell and milfoil divination are usually terse “auspicious” (*ji* 吉) or “not auspicious” (*bu ji* 不吉), though in unearthed records of both types of divination from the Warring States period, the first step of the two-step divination process usually qualifies this prognostication as also containing some cause for concern, necessitating further ritual actions. *Zuo zhuan* accounts of divination using the *Zhou Changes* also regularly record the prognostication “auspicious” (as in accounts #5.2, #5.4 and #5.6) or “not auspicious” (account #5.3), or sometimes qualify the prognostication as “what could be more auspicious than this” (*ji shu da yan* 吉孰大焉; account #5.4) or “greatly auspicious” (*da ji* 大吉; account #5.9), or phrased as a rhetorical question “how would we obtain auspiciousness from it?” (*wo an de ji yan* 我安得吉焉; account #5.10). Sometimes different prognosticators offer different prognostications (as in accounts #5.6 and #5.9), or the person for whom the divination is performed refuses to accept the prognostication (as in accounts #5.5, and #5.6).

Some prognostications derive directly from prognostications included within the *Zhou Changes* hexagram or line statement quoted as the result of the divination. Thus, in account #5.8 about whether the younger son Yuan 元 should be named the successor to rule the state of Wei 衛, the scribe officiating over the divination simply quotes the hexagram statement of *Zhun* 屯 ䷂ “Sprouting”:

史朝曰：「『元亨』，又何疑焉？」

Scribe Chao said: “‘Prime [Yuan] receipt.’ What doubt could there be!”

Similarly in account #5.9, the divination by Nan Kuai 南蒯 about whether to revolt against the ruling Jisun 季孫 family of the state of Lu 魯, Nan Kuai quotes the line statement encountered, regarding it as a transparent endorsement of his desire.

南蒯枚筮之，遇坤 ䷁ 之比 ䷇ 曰：「黃裳元吉」，以為大吉也。

Nan Kuai divined about it by rods, meeting *Kun* ䷁ “Receptive”’s *Bi* ䷇ “Alliance,” which says: “Yellow skirts. Prime auspiciousness,” which he took to be greatly auspicious.

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stood to reflect the literary situation current at that time. A thorough consideration of this topic is beyond the purview of this book. For my part, I am content to claim only that the *Zuo zhuan* evidence reflects the understanding of divination and the *Zhou Changes* at the probable date of the *Zuo zhuan*’s composition, roughly the fourth century BCE.

This account goes on to suggest that prognostication was not always such a simple matter. Nan Kuai's advisor Zifu Huibo 子服惠伯, shown the result of the divination, argued that it did not pertain to Nan Kuai at all. In his argument, he too referred to the words of the line statement, but provided a different context for understanding them.

示子服惠伯曰：「即欲有事，何如？」惠伯曰：「吾嘗學此矣，忠信之事則可，不然，必敗。外彊內溫，忠也；和以率貞，信也，故曰『黃裳元吉』。黃，中之色也；裳，下之飾也；元，善之長也。中不忠，不得其色；下不共，不得其飾；事不善，不得其極。外內倡和為忠，率事以信為共，供養三德為善，非此三者弗當。且夫《易》不可以占險，將何事也？且可飾乎？中美能黃，上美為元，下美則裳，參成可筮。猶有闕也，筮雖吉，未也。」

Showing it to Zifu Huibo, he said, "If I want to have an endeavor, how would it be?" Huibo said, "I have previously studied this. For endeavors of loyalty and sincerity it is acceptable; otherwise you will certainly be defeated. To be strong on the outside and warm on the inside is loyalty. Harmony leading to affirmation is sincerity. Thus it says, 'Yellow skirts. Prime auspiciousness.' 'Yellow' is the color of the center. The 'skirt' is the adornment of the bottom. 'Prime' is the head of excellences. If the center is not loyal, it will not obtain its color. If the bottom is not supportive, it will not get its ornamentation. If an endeavor does not excel, it will not obtain its end. When outside and inside accord in harmony, it is loyalty. Performing affairs with sincerity, there is support. Providing and nurturing the three virtues is excellence. Anything other than these three virtues will not correspond to it. What is more, the *Changes* cannot be used to prognosticate about danger. What endeavor will it be? What is more, can it be adorned? When the center is beautiful it can be yellow. When the top is beautiful it is 'prime.' When the bottom is beautiful then it is 'skirt.' When all three are complete, you can divine by milfoil. If there is anything lacking, then even if the divination is auspicious, it is not yet enough."

This argument clearly draws on the understanding of divination as a moral exercise that was demonstrated in Chapter Two above. Of course, this argument regarding the morals of divination did not dissuade Nan Kuai from his intention, though it is also not surprising given the didactic purposes of the *Zuo zhuan* that Huibo's warning proved to be prescient and Nan Kuai's revolt came to a disastrous end for him.

Other explanations of prognostications drew not on morality but on a technical analysis of the symbolic values of hexagrams used to express the result of

the divination (and it is important to note that both hexagrams in the formula “hexagram<sup>1</sup> *zhi* 之 hexagram<sup>2</sup>” are analyzed), and especially their constituent trigrams. With the discovery in recent decades of numerous manuscripts of the Warring States, Qin and Han periods, there is reason to believe that the system of symbolism underlying this type of analysis was not restricted just to divination with the *Zhou Changes*, but it is true that by the Han dynasty at the very latest it had come to be particularly associated with the *Yijing*. Account #5.7, the recollection of a divination performed upon the birth of Shusun Bao 叔孫豹 (i.e., Muzi 穆子), is a particularly revealing example of this sort of analysis. To recall the circumstances of Bao’s life, he was the younger brother of the notorious Shusun Qiaoru, who headed the Shusun 叔孫 lineage of Lu 魯, the third of the three leading lineages of the state. During Bao’s youth he lived in the neighboring state of Qi 齊, but when his brother Qiaoru was exiled he was brought back to Lu to be the head of the lineage. Although he lived there for more than thirty-five years, in the last year of his life his son by a secondary consort, Shu Niu 豎牛, killed Bao’s sons by his primary consort and also caused Bao to starve to death.

The narrative states explicitly that the divination made use of the *Zhou Changes*. The result of the divination, “*Mingyi* ䷗ ‘Calling Pheasant’*s Qian* ䷀ ‘Modesty,’” indicates the First Nine line of *Mingyi* ䷗ “Calling Pheasant” (#36).

初九：明夷于飛，垂其翼。君子于行，三日不食。有攸往。主人有言。

First Nine: Calling pheasant in flight, Dipping its wing. A lord’s son in motion, For three days not eating. Having somewhere to go. The master has sayings.

The prognosticator Bu Chuqiu 卜楚丘, whose name suggests that he was a member of a family of diviners, provides a lengthy and very specific prognostication:

是將行，而歸為子祀。以讒人入，其名曰牛，卒以餒死。

This one will travel, but will return to perform sacrifices for you. Bringing a slanderer to enter, whose name will be Ox, in the end he will starve to death.

He then goes on to provide a detailed technical explanation of his prognostication. Although he does not directly quote the line statement, each phrase in it is eventually analyzed. I will here paraphrase the explanation; for a literal translation, see account #5.7.

He begins with the hexagram name: *Mingyi* 明夷, which I translate as “Calling Pheasant.” However, as noted in the discussion of this account, traditional glosses would render it as something like “Brightness Wounded.” The word “brightness” (*ming* 明) is associated with the “sun,” which is also the symbol of the hexagram’s bottom trigram, *Li* ☲. According to Chinese mythology, there are ten suns, hence ten days of the week and also ten hours to the day. This number ten is also correlated with the human realm, giving ten positions within the social hierarchy. Counting down from the king, the second is the duke, and the third is the minister. In terms of the hours of the day, midday corresponds to the king, breakfast time corresponds with the duke, and dawn corresponds with the minister. Since the result of the divination, *Mingyi* 明夷 “Calling Pheasant” *zhi* 之 *Qian* 謙 “Modesty,” both refers to the first line of *Mingyi* and can also be translated as “The ‘Modesty’ of ‘Brightness Wounded’” or “‘Brightness Wounded’ going to ‘Modesty,’” this means that the sun is not at its brightest, which must correspond with dawn, the position of the minister. Zhuangshu, the father of Muzi about whom the divination was performed, was a minister; therefore, it stands to reason that the son would also be a minister, and so will maintain the family rites.

Bu Chuqiu then begins explaining the line statement, phrase by phrase. To do so, he again draws on the symbolism of *Li* ☲ trigram. In the *Shuo gua zhuan* 說卦傳 *Commentary Discussing the Trigrams*, one of the canonical commentaries of the *Yijing*, *Li* is said to correspond to both the sun (*ri* 日) and to “birds” (*niao* 鳥). This may also derive from Chinese mythology, which has long viewed a black raven inside the sun. Bu Chuqiu’s explanation of his prognostication seems to mediate between these two symbols of *Li* trigram. According to the *Zhengyi* 正義 *Correct Significance* commentary to the *Zuo zhuan*, since changing (*zhi* 之) *Li* results in *Qian* 謙 “Modesty” hexagram, it loses its more important association with the sun and retains only the lesser association with birds; hence the statement “Calling pheasant in flight,” presumably suggesting that *ming yi* 明夷 can mean both “brightness wounded” and also something like “calling pheasant.” Drawing on both of these senses of *ming yi*, Bu Chuqiu then says that it is because the brightness is not at its brightest that it “dips its wing.” Being “in flight” and “dipping its wing” both refer to the motion of the sun; hence the phrase “A lord’s son in motion.” And since the first line has already been associated with the third of the sun’s positions, this can explain the phrase “for three days not eating.”

The next move in the explanation of this prognostication draws on yet another related image of the trigram *Li* ☲: “fire” (*huo* 火), which is a natural extension of its association with the “sun.” When the first line “changes” from a yang line to a yin line, it produces the trigram *Gen* 艮, the primary image

of which is “mountains” (*shan* 山). However, when fire reaches mountains, it burns them, such that the mountain is ruined. A second image of the trigram *Gen*, when applied to human activity, is speech; ruinous speech is “slander” (*chan* 讒), which is why the line statement states “There is someplace to go; the host has words.”

To explain why he says that the slandered will be named Niu 牛 “Ox,” he employs a different exegetical technique. Having drawn much on the imagery of *Li* 離 trigram, he then says that *Li* 離 hexagram can be characterized as an ox; this is because the hexagram statement of this hexagram mentions a “female ox” (*pin niu* 牝牛):

離 離 離：利貞，亨。畜牝牛。吉。

*Li* 離 “Netted”: Beneficial to affirm. Receipt. Raising a female ox: Auspicious.

This is followed by what can only be characterized as a logical leap: in a chaotic age when slander reigns, the divination would produce *Li* hexagram, and thus Bu Chuqiu knew that the slanderer’s name would be Ox.

The conclusion to Bu Chuqiu’s exegesis is even more of a logical leap, and seems to have defied all attempts to understand it. Indeed, I suspect that some text has gone missing from the explanation. Bu Chuqiu draws on the meaning of *Qian* 謙 hexagram, “modesty” suggesting a deficit; thus in terms of travel, he will not go far. This much is more or less understandable. But when Bu Chuqiu then says that this is why he says “Might it be your descendant,” there seems to be something missing from the text, since this phrase occurs neither in the line statement of *Mingyi* nor in Bu Chuqiu’s own prognostication. Moreover, the last sentence of the narrative, “My son will be a secondary minister; oh, slightly not ending well,” is not explained at all, and seems quite unrelated to any of the trigram symbolism of the foregoing explanation.

It goes without saying that this entire account is a retrospective fiction, intended to explain how and why Shusun Bao would finally come to his end. The techniques of exegesis employed by Bu Chuqiu would eventually come to full fruition in the hands of such later *Yijing* exegetes as Jing Fang and Yu Fan. Theirs is an important chapter in the history of the *Yijing*, and Bu Chuqiu’s techniques attest to the early beginnings of trigram symbolism and using both hexagrams mentioned in the “hexagram<sup>1</sup> *zhi* 之 hexagram<sup>2</sup>” formula to explain the result of a divination. However, it seems to me that these explanations have much more to do with the developing tradition of exegesis than they do with the actual performance of milfoil divination.

## The Poetic Imagination

Therefore God takes away the minds of poets, and uses them as his ministers, as he also uses diviners and holy prophets, in order that we who hear them may know them to be speaking not of themselves who utter these priceless words in a state of unconsciousness, but that god himself is the speaker, and that through them he is conversing with us.

PLATO, *Ion*<sup>1</sup>



As noted briefly in Chapter One above, and as will be explored in more detail in the various chapters of Part Two below, the language in which the *Zhou Changes* was written is unmistakably Chinese, albeit the archaic Chinese of the Zhou dynasty, and the more we learn about that language the better we can understand the text. Nevertheless, the images of the *Zhou Changes* are often enigmatic at best, and anyone who claims to understand everything in the book is either a trickster or someone who is content to invent his own meaning. Some of these tricks and many of the inventions have developed the meaning of the text in important ways and are fully deserving of study in their own right, but that is a topic for a different book.<sup>2</sup>

Part of the difficulty in understanding is doubtless the incomplete state in which the book has come down to us. This is not to say that any significant portion of the text has been lost or that many line statements have been split or otherwise deformed (though this is certainly possible and even probable), but rather that the text simply never underwent the sort of systematic editing that would have filled in all of the blanks. But even if we could be sure that

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Ion*, translated by Benjamin Jowett, at: <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/ion.html>.

<sup>2</sup> For Western readers, the best single-volume history of the *Yijing*'s exegetical tradition is Smith, *Fathoming the Cosmos and Ordering the World*. For Chinese readers, a still more detailed history is Zhu Bokun, *Yixue zhexue shi*. English readers interested in a traditional Chinese presentation might consult Liu Dajun, *An Introduction to the Zhou Yi (Book of Changes)* (Asheville, NC: Chiron Publications, 2019).

we had a pristine text available to us, and even if we were as familiar as possible with the grammar of the archaic Chinese language, we would still find much about the *Zhou Changes* baffling. This is because as a manual of divination the *Zhou Changes* also employed a very different grammar: a grammar of signs seen in the natural world. While some of that natural world has survived to the present, and remains an important resource for understanding the text, the grammar of its signs has surely changed over the course of the centuries, and much of the original symbolism is lost to us now. However, by learning as much as we can about how natural omens were viewed at the time that the *Zhou Changes* was created, we can at least come to some appreciation of how the oracles of the text may have been understood. To learn more about these omens, there is probably no better source than the contemporary poetry, and especially the *Shi jing* 詩經 *Classic of Poetry*. When no less a figure than Confucius himself said that study of the *Poetry* would teach his disciples about the names of birds and animals, plants and trees,<sup>3</sup> his was almost certainly not the interest of a zoologist or a botanist; rather, he was urging his disciples to understand the symbolic meaning of the world around them, which is most immediately visible in the different natures of the goose and the grackle, the osprey and the oriole, or the pine and cypress. In this chapter, I propose to explore these poetic images, and to suggest that just as divinations could partake of the language of poetry, so too could poems be divinatory.<sup>4</sup>

Before examining the *Shi jing* itself, I would like to begin with another sort of poem or song from about the same time period. This is a “children’s oracle” (*tong yao* 童謠) recorded in the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 *Zuo Tradition*. The “children’s oracle” was a more or less extensive genre of folk-song that was regarded as prophetic. This particular song is said to have been occasioned by two events that took place in 517 BCE in the state of Lu 魯, the homeland of the *Chunqiu* 春秋 *Spring and Autumn Annals*, to which the *Zuo zhuan* is a sort of commentary. In the autumn of that year, the lord of the state, Duke Zhao of Lu 魯昭公 (r. 541–510 BCE), fled into exile after unsuccessfully challenging the great families that wielded real power in his state. Earlier in the year, a type of mynah bird or grackle (*quyu* 鷓鴣), theretofore unknown in northern China, had been spot-

3 *Lunyu zhushu* 論語注疏, in Ruan Yuan 阮元 ed., *Shisan jing zhushu* 十三經注疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009), 17/9.

4 Much of this chapter is derived from Edward L. Shaughnessy, “Arousing Images: The Poetry of Divination and the Divination of Poetry,” in Amar Annus, ed., *Divination and Interpretation of Signs in the Ancient World* (Oriental Institute Seminars 6, Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2010), 61–75.



ted nesting in the state. The music master, taking note of this natural omen, recalled a children's song that had been popular about a century earlier than his own time. Although the *Zuo zhuan* does not mention a title, we might call it simply “*Quyū*” 鵲鴝 “The Grackle.” I present it in the inimitable translation of James Legge (1815–1897), the Scottish missionary who contributed so much to our understanding of ancient China through his translations of the Confucian classics. I preserve even Legge's Victorian transliterations of Chinese words, since in one case it suggests an interlingual visual rhyme. The rhyme scheme serves to break the poem into stanzas.

鵲之鴝之，公出辱之。  
 鵲鴝之羽，公在外野，往饋之馬。  
 鵲鴝跣跣，公在乾侯，征褰與襦。  
 鵲鴝之巢，遠哉遥遥。稠父喪勞，宋父以驕。  
 鵲鴝鵲鴝，往歌來哭。

Here are grackles apace! The duke flies in disgrace.

Look at the grackles' wings! To the wilds the duke flings, A horse one to him brings.

Look how the grackles go! In Kan-how he is low, Wants coat and trousers now.

Behold the grackles' nest! Far off the duke doth rest. Chow-fu has lost his state, Sung-foo comes proud and great.

O the grackles so strange! The songs to weeping change.<sup>5</sup>

5 *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 4580; Legge, *The Ch'un Ts'ew with the Tso Chuen*, 709. The recent translation of the *Zuo zhuan* by Stephen Durrant, Wai-ye Li and David Schaberg makes no attempt to replicate the rhymes (though the translators do add a note indicating the rhyme scheme), and only careful attention to their punctuation would reveal any internal structure to the song:

Mynah:  
 The lord departs in shame.  
 The mynah's feathers:  
 The lord is in the far countryside;  
 Go to feed his horses.  
 The mynah hops:  
 The lord is at Ganhou,  
 Seeking trousers and jackets.  
 The mynah's nest:  
 Far, far away from us,  
 Father Chou dies in his exertions,  
 While Father Song is raised high.

Whether this poem should be viewed as prophecy—as it has been portrayed in the Chinese literary tradition—or as historical comment (written after the event)—as a more cynical reading might suggest, is perhaps irrelevant; the structure is that of an oracle. This “children’s oracle,” the word for which in Chinese is *yao* 謠, can readily be compared with the “oracles” (*zhou* or *yao* 繇) in accounts of divination, and also with line statements (usually referred to as *yao* 爻, but sometimes also as *zhou* or *yao* 繇) of the *Zhou Changes* as explored in the preceding three chapters. Compare just the second stanza with the oracle found also in the *Zuo zhuan* under the tenth year of Duke Xiang of Lu 魯襄公 (r. 572–542 BCE; i.e., 563 BCE) describing the divination performed on behalf of Sun Wenzhi 孫文子, as well as the Nine in the Third line statement of *Jian* 漸 ䷴ “Progressing” (#53) hexagram of the *Zhou Changes* (though I will not try to rhyme the latter two oracles, but rather indicate the rhyme with reconstructions of the archaic pronunciations).

鵲鵲之羽，公在外野，往饋之馬。

Look at the grackles’ wings! To the wilds the duke flings, A horse one to him brings.

兆如山陵，有夫出征，而喪其雄。

The crack is like a mountain peak (*ling*/\*ljəŋ): There’s a man going on campaign (*zheng*/\*tsjəŋ), And yet loses his leader (*xiong*/\*jəŋ).<sup>6</sup>

鴻漸于陸，夫征不復，婦孕不育。

A wild goose progressing to a mound (*lu*/\*ljuk): A husband campaigning but not returning (*fu*/\*bjuk), A wife pregnant but not giving birth (*yu*/\*jiuk).

As I have stressed already in Chapter Three above and will have occasion to explore further in Chapter Nine below, all three of these results begin with a description of a natural omen and then correlate it—by way of a rhyming couplet—with a situation in the human realm. As I stress in those other contexts, just as the crack in the turtle shell having the shape of a mountain peak portends danger for one on campaign, and the flight of the wild goose is a harbinger of marital separation, so too do the wings of the grackle suggest that

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Mynah, mynah:

As he goes we sing; as he returns we wail.

Durrant, Li, and Schaberg, *Zuo Tradition, Zuozhuan* 左傳, 1640–1641.

6 *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 4228.

the duke is about to take flight, i.e., to flee into exile. Both structurally and conceptually, these oracles are all of a piece.

If we turn to the fourth stanza of this “children’s oracle,” it looks very much like scores of couplets found in the *Shi jing*. For the sake of comparison, I will cite just one stanza from the poem “The Magpie’s Nest” (*Que chao* 鵲巢; Mao 12), which also concerns the nest of a bird. Legge’s change in rhyme masks the inter-connectedness of the four phrases of the children’s oracle, but it should be clear from the archaic pronunciations I add.

鵲鵲之巢，遠哉遥遥。稠父喪勞，宋父以驕。

Behold the grackles’ nest (*chao/\*dzhâu*)! Far off the duke doth rest (*yao/\*jau*).<sup>7</sup>

Chow-fu has lost his state (*lao/\*râu*), Sung-foo comes proud and great (*ao/\*ngau*).

維鵲有巢，維鳩居之。之子于歸，百兩御之。

It is the magpie with a nest, It is the cuckoo settling (*ju/\*kjwo*) it.

Here’s a girl who’s off to marry, A hundred carts are driving (*yu/\*njwo*) her.

The similarity between these stanzas and the oracles cited above is not hard to see, but they have a slightly different structure. Whereas the oracles begin with a single four-character description of an omen, these two poems—and indeed many other poems in the *Shi jing*—begin with a couplet, also describing some aspect of nature. In both cases, this nature image is then followed by a couplet describing some human event or relationship. I would like to suggest that despite the slight structural difference, the functions of the nature image and the oracle are very much the same in terms of drawing a relationship between the omen and the human condition. In the *Shi jing*, this structure is referred to as a *xing* 興, a word that means “to raise up” or “to cause to arise” (often understood in the sense of “to evoke” or “to stimulate”). The “arousal” routinely comes at the beginning of a stanza, which, as here, is often as short as four lines (of four characters each, or two lines of eight-character couplets), and can be drawn from the animal or botanical world (astral and geomantic

7 Legge’s introduction of “the duke” in the translation of this line (“Far off the duke doth rest”) is certainly not explicit in the original (*yuan zai yao yao* 遠哉遥遥), which might be translated literally as “Distant oh, away away.” This may affect how the two couplets are to be understood. I suspect the line describes the grackle, and not the duke, who appears only in the following couplet.

images also occur). Although some readers have dismissed these arousals as essentially meaningless, designed simply to set the rhyme scheme,<sup>8</sup> I think a more sympathetic reading can readily identify connections between them and the following couplets. A few poems, chosen almost at random from among the opening poems of the collection, will illustrate how these arousals work. Let us begin with a full translation of “The Magpie’s Nest,” discussed briefly above.

The Magpie’s Nest (*Que chao* 鵲巢; Mao 12)

維鵲有巢， It is the magpie with a nest,  
 維鳩居之。 It is the cuckoo settling (*ju*/\*kjwo) it.  
 之子于歸， Here’s a girl who’s off to marry,  
 百兩御之。 A hundred carts are driving (*yu*/\*njwo) her.

維鵲有巢， It is the magpie with a nest,  
 維鳩方之。 It is the cuckoo housing (*fang*/\*pjwang) it.  
 之子于歸， Here’s a girl who’s off to marry,  
 百兩將之。 A hundred carts are leading (*jiang*/\*tsjang) her.

維鵲有巢， It is the magpie with a nest,  
 維鳩盈之。 It is the cuckoo filling (*ying*/\*jiäng) it.  
 之子于歸， Here’s a girl who’s off to marry,  
 百兩成之。 A hundred carts are placing (*cheng*/\*zjäng) her.

The poem uses the nesting of a bird (or, in this case, two different types of birds), a magpie (*que* 鵲) and cuckoo (*ju* 鳩), to evoke a wedding. In his translation of the *Shi jing*, Arthur Waley (1889–1966) pointed out that the cuckoo is known for settling in the nests of other birds.<sup>9</sup> Whereas in the West, this habit carries pejorative connotations regarding the fidelity of the wife, Chinese tradition regards it positively, simply portending the arrival of a woman from another family, as all brides needed to be, coming to take up residence in her husband’s home. The entire poem is in three stanzas, the stanzas differentiated only by the cuckoo’s action (first “settling” [*ju* 居] the nest, then “housing”

8 See. For instance, Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛, “Qi xing” 起興, *Ge yao zhoukan* 歌謠週刊 94 (1925), rpt. in Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛, ed., *Gu shi bian* 古史辨 (Beiping: Pu she, 1931), Vol. 3, 672–677. For an excellent discussion of the nature and history of the arousal trope, see Pauline Yu, *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 44–83.

9 Arthur Waley, *The Book of Songs* (New York: Grove Press, 1996), 13–14.

[*fang* 方 (perhaps to be read as *fang* 房)] it, and then finally “filling” [*yíng* 盈] it) and by the word describing the bride’s arrival, with the carts first “driving” [*yu* 御] her, then “leading” [*jiang* 將] her, and finally “completing” or “placing” [*cheng* 成] her, in all cases the corresponding words in the two couplets rhyming. I think it is easy to see that the final stanza, with the cuckoo “filling” the nest and the carts “placing” the bride, serves as a fitting climax to the wedding festivities.

Another wedding song found just a few poems before the “The Magpie’s Nest” in the traditional arrangement of the *Shi jing* is introduced with a different sort of nature image: the various attributes of the peach (and of the peach tree). The poem “Heavy Hanging is the Peach Tree” (*Tao Yao* 桃夭; Mao 6) also consists of three stanzas of two couplets each, with the second clause of each couplet differentiated by just one or a few words.

Heavy Hanging is the Peach Tree (*Tao yao* 桃夭; Mao 6)

桃之夭夭， Heavy, heavy hangs the peach tree,  
灼灼其華。 Glistening are its blossoms (*hua*/\**xwa*).  
之子于歸， Here’s a girl who’s off to marry,  
宜其室家。 Proper for her house and home (*jia*/\**ka*)

桃之夭夭， Heavy, heavy hangs the peach tree,  
有蕢其實。 Swelling is its fruit (*shi*/\**dzjet*).  
之子于歸， Here’s a girl who’s off to marry,  
宜其家室。 Proper for her home and house (*shi*/\**sjet*)

桃之夭夭， Heavy, heavy hangs the peach tree,  
其葉蓁蓁。 Its leaves wrapping (*zhen*/\**sjen*) all about.  
之子于歸， Here’s a girl who’s off to marry,  
宜其家人。 Proper for her home and man (*ren*/\**nzjen*)

While it would be hard to see much development in the distinctions between being “proper” (*yi qi* 宜其) for “house and home” (*shi jia* 室家), for “home and house” (*jia shi* 家室), or even for “home and man” (*jia ren* 家人), I think it is not hard to see that the glistening freshness of the peach blossoms in the first stanza first attracts us to the girl, while the shape of the fruit in the second stanza surely predicts the swollen belly that the singers hoped she would soon have. If the symbolism of the enveloping leaves in the final stanza is perhaps less immediately intelligible, a walk through any peach grove would quickly show that the leaves of the peach tree wrap around the fruit, protecting the peach

until it is mature enough to separate from the tree. Surely we are to see in this envelopment the mother protecting her “home,” which is to say her children. Indeed, the two words *jia ren* 家人 in the corresponding couplet describing the human condition, here translated as “home and man” to maintain the parallel with the preceding two stanzas, might better be translated as “family members” and point not just to the bride’s husband but also to the offspring they will produce.<sup>10</sup> This poem is simultaneously both a prayer and a prediction. Sung as the girl was going to her wedding, the singers were not just congratulating her, but praying that she would be fertile, and indeed through their song helping to ensure that she would be so. As I have stressed in the preceding chapters, this was also the purpose of divination.

Other fruit falling from a vine could suggest to a young girl that she had missed her chance.

“Falling are the Plums” (*Biao you mei* 標有梅; Mao 20)

標有梅， Falling are the plums;  
其實七兮。 Their fruits are seven (*qi/\*dzjet*), oh!  
求我庶士， Of the many sirs seeking me;  
迨其吉兮。 Would that one be fine (*ji/\*kjiet*), oh!

標有梅， Falling are the plums;  
其實三兮。 Their fruits are three (*san/\*sâm*), oh!  
求我庶士， Of the many sirs seeking me;  
迨其今兮。 Would that it be now (*jin/\*kjəm*), oh!

標有梅， Falling are the plums;  
頃筐墜之。 The slant basket takes (*xi/\*kjei*) them.  
求我庶士， Of the many sirs seeking me,  
迨其謂之。 Would that one might say (*wei/\*jwei*) it.

Even without knowing that in later Chinese sex texts a “slant basket” (*qing kuang* 頃筐) was a euphemism for the uterus,<sup>11</sup> it is probably not hard to see in

10 It is worth noting that *Jiaren* 家人 is the name of a hexagram in the *Zhou Changes*: ䷤ “Family Members” (#37).

11 For instance, the term appears written as *cheng kuang* 拯匡 “receiving basket” in the Mawangdui text *He yin yang* 合陰陽 *Conjoining yin and yang*; see Donald Harper, *Early Chinese Medical Literature: The Mawangdui Medical Manuscripts* (London: Kegan Paul, 1998), 413.

this poem the despairing prayer—and I use the word “prayer” deliberately—of the last woman to be chosen at the dance. It might not be fatuous to compare this poem to the sort of divination that young children in the West have performed for generations: picking the petals off of a daisy and chanting “she loves me, she loves me not, she loves me.” To be sure, this was a song or a poem, but the singer was also hoping that by employing this particular nature image—by catching a plum in her basket—that she could induce a suitable boy to come to her.

A similar magic, whether of word or of action, is to be seen in the poem “Plantains” (*Fuyi* 芣苢; Mao 8).

“Plantains” (*Fuyi* 芣苢; Mao 8)

采采芣苢， Picking, picking the plantains,  
 薄言采之； Going out and picking (*cai*/\*tshəʔ) them.  
 采采芣苢， Picking, picking the plantains,  
 薄言有之。 Going out and having (*you*/\*wəʔ) them.

采采芣苢， Picking, picking the plantains,  
 薄言掇之； Going out and plucking (*duo*/tôt) them.  
 采采芣苢， Picking, picking the plantains,  
 薄言捋之。 Going out and choosing (*luo*/\*rôt) them.

采采芣苢， Picking, picking the plantains,  
 薄言袺之； Going out and breasting (*jie*/\*kît) them.  
 采采芣苢， Picking, picking the plantains,  
 薄言漚之。 Going out and girdling (*xie*/\*gît) them.

No one would claim that this is great poetry, but it does illustrate how poetic images could stimulate—arouse—desired responses. There are two different identifications of the *fuyi* 芣苢 that is the focus of this poem: the Mao Commentary, the earliest commentary on the text identifies it as the “plantain” (*cheqianzi* 車前子), while other texts identify it as a type of pear.<sup>12</sup> Regardless of which of these identifications might be correct, both interpretations agree that eating the fruit induced pregnancy. As noted by Wen Yiduo 聞一多 (1899–1946),

12 For the Mao Commentary, see *Mao Shi Zhengjian* 毛詩鄭箋 (Sibu beiyao ed.), 1.7b. The “Wang hui” 王會 chapter of the *Yi Zhou shu* 逸周書 (Sibu beiyao ed.), 7.10a, writes the plant name as 桴苢, and identifies its fruit as being similar to a pear.

arguably modern China's most insightful reader of the *Shi jing*, this was doubtless because the name of the fruit was closely homophonous in archaic Chinese with the word for fetus (*peitai* 胚胎; indeed, the original characters were essentially the same for both words). In this simple poem, the woman wishing to become pregnant went out to gather the *fuyi*, which for convenience sake I have translated as “plantains.” In the first two stanzas, she picks it off the tree or bush, in the next two stanzas she gathers several together, and then in the final two stanzas she tucks them into her clothing: first into her blouse near to her breasts, and then finally into her girdle at her waist. She must have understood that by singing this song as she gathered the plantains she would have activated whatever medical—as well as magical—properties they may have possessed, progressively making them more and more personal. Just as children plucking the daisy petals seek to influence the future course of their own romances, so too did this poetess seek to use nature to bring about the result that she desired.

It is not possible or necessary in this chapter to supply anything like an inventory of nature images in ancient China, much as it would be useful for our understanding not only of the *Shi jing* but also of the *Zhou Changes*. However, to give one final example of how these images work in the *Shi jing*, let me provide one more wedding song, “Guanju” 關雎 (*J-o-i-n*, the Osprey), the first and best-known poem in the collection. This poem begins with yet another avian image before concluding in the last two stanzas with the male protagonist providing musical entertainment for the woman he has sought, first with strings and then percussion instruments, said to be appropriate first for courtship and then for a wedding feast. The poem is much more sophisticated than the simple prayers examined above, employing multiple layers of metaphor.

“*J-o-i-n*, the Osprey” (*Guanju* 關雎; Mao 1)

關關雎鳩， “*J-o-i-n*, *J-o-i-n*,” chirps the osprey,  
 在河之洲。 On the island of the river (*zhou*/\*tu).  
 窈窕淑女， Shy and slender is the chaste girl,  
 君子好逑。 For the lord's son a loving mate (*qiu*/\*guR!).

參差荇菜， Up and down the water lilies;  
 左右流之。 To the left and right drifting (*liu*/\*ru) them.  
 窈窕淑女， Shy and slender is the chaste girl,  
 寤寐求之。 Awake and asleep seeking (*qiu*/\*gwəR!) her.



求之不得， Seeking her but not getting her;  
 寤寐思倍。 Awake and asleep, wishing to pair (*bei/\*bəʔ*).<sup>13</sup>  
 悠哉悠哉！ Longing, ah, longing, ah!  
 輾轉反側。 Tossing and turning to and fro (*ce/\*tsrək*).

參差荇菜， Up and down the water lilies;  
 左右采之。 To the left and right picking (*cai/\*tshəʔ*) them.  
 窈窕淑女， Shy and slender is the chaste girl;  
 琴瑟友之。 With harp and lute befriending (*you/\*wəʔ*) her.

參差荇菜， Up and down the water lilies;  
 左右芣之。 To the left and right choosing (*mao/\*māu*) them.  
 窈窕淑女， Shy and slender is the chaste girl;  
 鐘鼓樂之。 With bell and drum delighting (*le/\*râuk*) her.

In the interest of brevity, I will ignore traditional interpretations and will assume simply that this poem concerns a man's yearning for a woman. Also in the interest of brevity, I will disregard all of the other images in the poem, natural and otherwise, and focus only on the image of the osprey and the call that it makes at the very beginning of the poem. Most of the interpretation of this opening image has focused on the identification and nature of the bird. Despite the uncertainty surrounding the names of plants and animals from three thousand years ago, virtually all interpreters agree that this bird is a fish-eating raptor, usually identified as an osprey or a fish-hawk. Traditional commentators stress the behavior of the bird, either that it mates for life or that it maintains separation from other birds. Focusing on one or the other of these behaviors has led these commentators to widely different interpretations of the poem. However, there is one other behavior about which all readers would agree: that the bird eats fish. I have already mentioned above the modern scholar Wen Yiduo. In a classic essay of his entitled "On Fish,"<sup>14</sup> he demonstrated that in the *Shi jing* fish consistently evoke sexual relations, and that the eating of fish evokes the consummation of those

13 I here emend the received text, which reads *wu mei si fu* 寤寐思服 "Awake and asleep, thinking to serve," on the basis of the Warring States manuscript in the collection of Anhui University; see Anhui daxue Hanzi fazhan yu yingyong yanjiu zhongxin 安徽大學漢字發展與應用研究中心, ed., *Anhui daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian* 安徽大學藏戰國竹簡, Vol. 1 (Shanghai: Zhong-Xi shuju, 2019), 5 (slip #2) and 69 (transcription).

14 Wen Yiduo, *Wen Yiduo quanji* 聞一多全集 (1956; rpt. Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1982), 117–138.

relations. He sees this illustrated, for instance, in the poem “The Cross-Street Gate” (“Heng men” 衡門; Mao 138), the title of which refers to the “eastern gate” that led in ancient Chinese cities to what we would call the “red light district.”

“The Cross-Street Gate” (*Heng men* 衡門; Mao 138)

衡門之下， Down there underneath Cross-street Gate,  
 可以棲遲。 One can roost about so slowly (*chi/\*dri*).  
 泌之洋洋， There by the fully flowing spring,  
 可以樂飢。 One can satisfy his hunger (*ji/\*kri*).

豈其食魚， Could it be in eating a fish,  
 必河之魴？ One has to have a River bream (*fang/\*baŋ*)?  
 豈其娶妻， Could it be in taking a wife,  
 必齊之姜？ One has to have a Jiang of Qi (*jiang/\*kaŋ*)?

豈其食魚， Could it be in eating a fish,  
 必河之鯉？ One has to have a River carp (*li/\*rəʔ*)?  
 豈其娶妻， Could it be in taking a wife,  
 必宋之子？ One has to have a Zi of Song (*zi/\*tsəh*)?

The connection between “roosting” (*qi* 棲) and “taking a wife” (*qi* 妻) is evident in the two graphs, the former written with *qi* 妻 as its phonetic component. Whether the meaning of this phonetic component was originally meant to contribute to the word’s meaning is a topic for linguists to debate, but it is clear that the poet here very much understood it in this sense. Indeed, the compound here translated as to “roost about so slowly,” *qi chi* 棲遲, is routinely explained as meaning “to sport and rest” (*youxi* 遊息), an obvious euphemism for indulging in sexual activities. And recalling Wen Yiduo’s explanation of the symbolism of fish in the *Shi jing*, the connection between eating bream or carp and taking a wife is just as evident (even more so recognizing that the names of these fish rhyme with the names of the women from the respective states). On the other hand, the moral of the poem is that while these women might be desirable as marriage partners, in visiting a brothel any fish in the pond will satisfy one’s hunger.

Wen noted that the sexual symbolism of fish even seems to inform some poems that do not mention fish explicitly, as for instance the poem “The Men at Waiting” (*Hou ren* 候人; Mao 151, the title of which might also be construed as “Waiting for Someone”).

“The Men at Waiting” (*Hou ren* 候人; Mao 151)

彼候人兮， Oh, those men there at waiting,  
 何戈與殳。 Shouldering dagger-axes and lances (*shu/\*do*).  
 彼其之子， And those boys over there:  
 三百赤芾。 Three hundred red knee-pads (*pei/\*pət*).

維鷓在梁， There's a pelican on the bridge  
 不濡其翼。 Who doesn't wet his wings (*yi/\*ləkh*).  
 彼其之子， And that boy over there  
 不稱其服。 Doesn't rise to his clothing (*fu/\*bəʔ*).

維鷓在梁， There's a pelican on the bridge  
 不濡其喙。 Who doesn't wet his beak (*zhu/\*tōkh*).  
 彼其之子， And that boy over there  
 不遂其媾。 Doesn't pursue his meeting (*gou/\*kōh*).

蒼兮蔚兮， Oh, how dense; oh, how lush,  
 南山朝隴。 South Mountain's morning mist (*ji/\*tsî*).  
 婉兮孌兮， Oh, how cute; oh, how charming,  
 季女斯飢。 Is this hunger of the young girl (*ji/\*kri*).

The two central stanzas of this poem are both introduced by the image of a pelican (*ti* 鷓). As Wen notes, the primary quality of this bird is that it eats fish. However, in this poem the pelican does not deign to dip its head into the water to take its fish. So too, the young man preening in his guardsman's uniform, disregards the young girl who hungers for him; indeed, the line that I have translated as “Doesn't pursue his meeting” (*bu sui qi gou* 不遂其媾) literally means “does not pursue his (sexual) intercourse.”<sup>15</sup>

15 It might bear noting here that this *gou* 媾 is but another way of writing *gou* 媾, which in the received text of the *Yijing* is the name of 媾 ䷵ “Meeting” (44) hexagram, the hexagram statement of which reads:

媾：女壯。勿用取女。

“Meeting”: The woman is strong. Don't use to take a woman.

The *Tuan zhuan* 彖傳 *Commentary on the Judgments*, either in light of the one yin line under five yang lines or that the bottom trigram is *Xun* ䷺, usually identified as the “Eldest Daughter,” and the top trigram is *Qian* ䷀, the pure male trigram, seems to understand the “meeting” as a temporary assignation:

媾，遇也，柔遇剛也。勿用取女，不可與長也。

This evocative quality of fish would seem to be one of those cases of an interpretation so obvious that it needed but to be pointed out. Yet, it is curious that Wen himself seems to have overlooked the equally obvious parallel between the pelican in “The Man at Waiting” and the osprey in “*J-o-i-n*, the Osprey.” Although fish are not mentioned in “*J-o-i-n*, the Osprey,” their signification of sexual desire is not far beneath the surface of the poem. Despite the concern among both traditional and modern interpreters of the *Shijing* over the identification and nature of the bird image in “*J-o-i-n*, the Osprey,” there has been very little attention to the one action that it undertakes: its calling *guan-guan* 關關. The *Mao Commentary* remarks that this is “the concordant sound of the male and female responding to each other,” and most subsequent interpreters have been content to accept this.<sup>16</sup> It seems to me, however, not well to evoke the mood of unrequited love that persists throughout much of the poem. Instead, I would suggest that the poet, in the person of the poem’s male protagonist, heard the osprey, and presumably only the male osprey, seeking “to join” (*guan* 關) with its mate. The character with which this sound is written, which means generally “to close” a door, refers originally to the crossbar which locks a two-fold gate (*guan* 關). If the phallic significance of this is not apparent enough, the word is also perfectly homophonous with the word *guan* 貫, which means generally “to pierce the center of,” but which in ancient China was also the standard euphemism for sexual penetration. Indeed, in two different Warring States manuscripts that discuss this poem, the graph was written as 串, which is the early form of *guan* 貫 and which graphically depicts the interpenetration of two bodies. Whatever sound the osprey actually made, the poet heard what he wanted to hear: the Chinese word *guan* 關 (or 貫), which he understood to have its normal semantic value, here translated (somewhat delicately) as “join” (and rendered in italics to indicate the foreign—avian—origin of the word).<sup>17</sup>

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*Gou* is to meet, the soft meeting the hard. “Don’t use to take a woman” means that one cannot stay with her for long.

- 16 The only other interpretation that I have seen is that of Zheng Qiao 鄭樵 (1108–1166) in the *Tong zhi* 通志: “In all species of geese and ducks, since their beaks are flat their sound is *guan-guan*; in species of chickens and pheasants, since their beaks are pointed, their sound is *yao-yao*; these are natural sounds. The beak of the osprey resembles that of ducks and geese, therefore its sound is like this, also getting the sense of the water’s edge”; quoted in Xiang Xi 向熹, ed., *Shijing cidian* 詩經詞典 (Chengdu: Sichuan Renmin chubanshe, 1986), 144.
- 17 Despite the comment of Zheng Qiao noted in the preceding note, the beak of an osprey does not at all resemble those of ducks and geese, but rather is distinctly pointed, and its sound is nothing like *guan-guan*. Instead, the sound of the osprey is a shrill chirp, best described as the creak of a door on a rusty hinge. For a video of a chirping osprey,

As in the “children’s oracle” with which we started this chapter, this call of the osprey predicts what will happen in the human world. Just as the grackle’s “wings” somehow suggested the flight of the lord or its “hopping” the unusual appearance of the lord, so too I would suggest, should we hear the call of the osprey, *guanguan* “*j-o-i-n, j-o-i-n,*” to predict the union of the “chaste girl” and the “lord’s son,” consummated at the end of the poem by the banging of bells and drums. Of course, with a language such as Chinese, in which there is no alphabet with which to write onomatopoeia, the sounds of nature can only be rendered with Chinese words. Whether for the poets or the diviners of ancient China, ospreys could only speak Chinese and anyone who spoke that language could understand them. But those attentive to nature did not need to wait for it to speak. Nature revealed itself also in the movement of the wild geese, the hopping of the grackle, the shape of the peach, the dropping of the plums. But more than this, it could be seen also in the belly of the caldron, the rise of a rafter, the biting of flesh, and the flight of the dragon—all images that occur prominently in the *Zhou Changes*. To be sure, these images can be confusing. That is why then—as now—it was the job of the diviners and the poets to listen to them, to see them, to interpret them, and in turn to tell us what they mean.

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see cfallon, “Osprey call,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3c5IH6zEWHE> (uploaded 6 July 2008; accessed May 30, 2018).

**PART 2**

*The Text*





## The Hexagram

The most distinguishing feature of the *Zhou Changes* is without question the six-line figure known as a *gua* 卦 or, in the West, as a “hexagram.” In the received tradition, a hexagram is composed of different combinations of solid (—) and/or broken (--) lines (*yao* 爻), said to represent the yang or sunny (or male) and yin or shady (or female) aspect respectively, stacked one on top of the other through each of six places. In early manuscripts these hexagrams are sometimes displayed divided into two groups of three lines. These groups of three lines, of which there are eight ( $= 2^3$ ), are also referred to as *gua* in China but in the West are usually termed “trigrams.” Within the *Yijing* tradition, these trigrams are said to be the origin of the hexagrams, and are also the most basic way to analyze the composition of the hexagrams. As for the hexagrams themselves, in a figure with six different positions, the two possibilities of a solid or broken line in each position necessarily produce sixty-four different results ( $= 2^6$ ). This provides a mathematical limit to the number of hexagrams in the text, though recent archaeological discoveries introduced already in Chapters One and Four above suggest other possibilities. First, as seen in the Peking University *Jing jue* 荊決 *Thornwood Decisions* manuscript, it was also possible to have diagrams of a different number of lines and/or different types of lines, which would produce a different number of diagrams.<sup>1</sup> Second, as we have also seen, there is considerable evidence that hexagrams were originally composed of numbers, with evidence for the numbers 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9; at least theoretically, groupings of six such numbers would have admitted many more possibilities (112,749, if all of these numbers were used within a single system<sup>2</sup>). However, there is no evidence as of yet that these numbers were differentiated to this extent; ever since the identification of these “numerical hexagrams” (*shuzi gua* 數字卦), it has been assumed that they should be translated into the traditional sixty-four hexagrams of the *Yijing* tradition by systematically converting odd numbers

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- 1 In addition to the recently discovered *Jing jue* manuscript, which features three lines of four different types, also potentially producing sixty-four different results, but of which only sixteen seem to have been used, there is also the example of the *Tai xuan jing* 太玄經 *Classic of Great Mystery* of Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53 B.E.–A.D. 18 CE), which features four-line diagrams with three different types of lines, thus producing eighty-one different quadrigrams or, in the terminology of that text, “heads” (*shou* 首).
  - 2 It is clear, however, that not all seven numbers were used within a single system. The Tsinghua University *Shifa* seems to have used the most numbers: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. See above, pp. 148–150.



into solid lines and even numbers into broken lines. Within the *Yijing* tradition these sixty-four different hexagrams are understood to encompass all of the individual aspects of nature and the human experience.

## 1 The Eight Trigrams

The *Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳 *Commentary on the Appended Statements* describes the creation of the eight trigrams, and presumably all things, including the sixty-four hexagrams, as a quasi mathematical process of division, deriving originally from a Great Ultimate (*taiji* 太極) or, probably more properly, a Great Constant (*da heng* 大恆),<sup>3</sup> and ending with a Great Patrimony (*da ye* 大業):<sup>4</sup>

是故易有太極，是生兩儀，兩儀生四象，四象生八卦，八卦定吉凶，吉凶生大業。

This is why the *Changes* has the Great Ultimate; this gives birth to the Two Properties, the Two Properties give birth to the Four Images, the Four Images give birth to the Eight Trigrams, the Eight Trigrams determine the auspicious and ominous, and the auspicious and ominous give birth to the Great Patrimony.

The Great Ultimate or Great Constant is synonymous with the Dao 道 or Way, the universal and singular process of existence. The Two Properties are understood to be the yin and yang, the light and dark or male and female aspects of all matter; these are represented in the *Yijing* tradition by the solid (—) and broken (- -) lines. The Four Images have various correlates: in the *Yijing* tradition, they are said to be Old Yang (*tai yang* 太陽), Old Yin (*tai yin* 太陰), Young Yang (*shao yang* 少陽), and Young Yin (*shao yin* 少陰), which in this tradition are in turn correlated with the numbers 9, 6, 7, and 8. We have already seen in Chapter Five how these numbers figure in the production of hexagrams in the course of divinations. Other natural correlations of the Four Images include primarily the four seasons of the year (spring, summer, autumn, and winter)

3 The word *heng* 恆 “constant” came to be tabooed during the Han dynasty because it was the name of Emperor Wen 漢文帝 (r. 180–157 BCE): Liu Heng 劉恆. Although it was usually replaced with the synonymous *chang* 常 “always,” it is possible that in cosmological contexts it was replaced with the word *ji* 極 “extreme; ultimate.” It is also possible that the two words came to be interchanged because of the similarity of the two graphs used to write them, as seen in the Seal Script forms: 恆 and 恆.

4 The “Great Patrimony” is elsewhere defined in the *Xici zhuan* as “richly having it” (*fu you zhi* 富有之), in a context in which this refers to the profusion of nature.

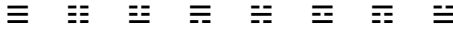


FIGURE 7.1 The eight trigrams

TABLE 7.1 Associations of the Eight Trigrams

Trigram picture	Name	Primary image	Direction	Family member	Body part	Animal
☰	<i>Qian</i> 乾	heaven	Northwest	Father	Head	Horse
☷	<i>Kun</i> 坤	Earth	Southwest	Mother	Breast	Cow
☳	<i>Zhen</i> 震	Thunder	East	Eldest Son	Feet	Dragon
☴	<i>Xun</i> 巽	Wind	Southeast	Eldest Daughter	Thighs	Chicken
☵	<i>Kan</i> 坎	Water	North	Middle Son	Ears	Pig
☲	<i>Li</i> 離	Fire	South	Middle Daughter	Eyes	Pheasant
☶	<i>Gen</i> 艮	Mountain	Northeast	Youngest son	Hands	Dog
☱	<i>Dui</i> 兌	Lake	West	Youngest daughter	Mouth	Sheep

and the four cardinal directions (east, south, west, and north), as well as the mythological animals associated with those seasons and directions: the “green dragon” (*cang long* 蒼龍), the “red bird” (*zhu que* 朱雀), “white tiger” (*bai hu* 白虎), and “dark warrior” (*xuan wu* 玄武).

The Eight Trigrams are understood to be the fundamental building blocks of the sixty-four hexagrams, made up of three lines apiece, which like the hexagrams are either solid (—) and/or broken (- -) lines.

These Eight Trigrams are correlated with the material world, being understood to represent the fundamental aspects or matter composing that world: Heaven, Earth, Thunder, Wind, Water, Fire, Mountain, and Lake (associated, from left to right, with the figures of the trigrams in Figure 7.1). In addition to these fundamental associations the Eight Trigrams also have many other associations, elaborated most fully in the *Shuo gua zhuan* 說卦傳 *Commentary Discussing the Trigrams*: the directions, the members of a family, body parts, and animals, as indicated in Figure 7.1. This chart could be expanded to include numerous other attributes.

Another frequently quoted passage from the *Xici zhuan* attributes the “making” (*zuo* 作) of the Eight Trigrams to the early culture hero Baoxi shi 包犧氏, better known as Fuxi 伏羲 (whose name means “Tamer of the Beasts”). Fuxi is otherwise also credited with the invention of hunting and fishing, cooking, and also marriage. However, according to the *Xici zhuan*, this making of the trigrams probably ought not to be thought of as an “invention,” but rather as a

discovery or a realization or reification. Baoxi is said to have observed natural patterns or “images” (*xiang* 象) that exist in the universe, and to have made the trigrams based on them.

古者包犧氏之王天下也，仰則觀象於天，俯則觀法於地，觀鳥獸之文，與地之宜，近取諸身，遠取諸物；於是始作八卦，以通神明之德，以類萬物之情。

In antiquity when Baoxi shi ruled all under heaven, he looked up and observed the images in the heavens, looked down and observed the patterns on the earth, observed the markings of birds and animals, and the properties of the earth, and near at hand taking from his own body and at a distance taking from the many things thereupon first made the eight trigrams in order to penetrate the virtue of spiritual brightness and to categorize the conditions of the ten-thousand things. (*Xici zhuan* B2)

This genesis of the trigrams as pre-existing in nature and realized by the sage or sages is repeated throughout the *Xici zhuan*, often terming this realization as a process of “imaging” (*xiang* 象).

是故天生神物，聖人則之。天地變化，聖人效之。天垂象，見吉凶，聖人象之。河出圖，洛出書，聖人則之。

Heaven gave birth to the spiritual beings and the sage(s) measured them. Heaven and earth alternate and transform and the sage(s) imitated them. Heaven suspended images showing the auspicious and ominous and the sages imaged them. The River gave forth the design and the Luo gave forth the writing and the sages measured them. (*Xici zhuan* A11)

是故夫象，聖人有以見天下之賾，而擬諸其形容，象其物宜，是故謂之象。

This is why, as for images, the sages saw the manifestations of all under heaven and copied their shapes and appearances in them, imaging what was proper to the thing; this is why they are called images. (*Xici zhuan* A12 [also A8])

The English translation of the verbal form of “image” is intentionally awkward. In classical Chinese, words can function as both nouns and verbs, the verbal usage often—but not always—meaning to treat something as the noun. In the case of the word image, as a noun it pertains to both patterns visible in nature as well as to the trigrams and hexagrams; as a verb, it refers here not to treating

images as images, but rather as the making of images,<sup>5</sup> which I have translated as “to image.”<sup>6</sup> A pair of sentences in the *Xici zhuan* just after the first passage above concerning Baoxi’s making of the trigrams captures very well both the nominal and verbal uses of images.

是故易者，象也。象也者，像也。

This is why the *Changes* means to image; as for what images, it is images.  
(*Xici zhuan* B3)

Images are, indeed, imaged, even if it is not possible to do so in the English language. As for the *Changes* being “images,” we will see in Chapter Nine below that this is not limited to just the trigrams or, by extension, the hexagrams.

If we ask how the trigrams image these natural images, one influential thesis sees them as the prototypes of Chinese characters. The preface to the *Shuo wen jie zi* 說文解字 *Discussing Pictographs and Analyzing Compound Graphs*, China’s earliest dictionary presented at court by Xu Shen 許慎 (58–147) in A.D. 100, begins with a passage describing the invention of writing, explicitly adapting the passage of the *Xici zhuan* describing Baoxi’s making of the trigrams.

古者庖羲氏之王天下也，仰則觀象於天，俯則觀法於地，視鳥獸之文與地之宜，近取諸身，遠取諸物，於是始作《易》八卦，以垂憲象。及神農氏，結繩為治，而統其事。庶業其繁，飾偽萌生。黃帝史官倉頡，見鳥獸蹄迹之跡，知分理之可相別異也，初造書契。百工以又，萬品以察，蓋取諸夬。

In antiquity when Baoxi shi ruled all under heaven, he looked up and observed the images in the heavens, looked down and observed the patterns on the earth, examined the markings of birds and animals and the properties of the earth, and near at hand taking from his own body and at a distance taking from the many things thereupon first made the eight trigrams of the *Changes* in order to suspend patterns and images. Coming

5 The same could be said of the word 則 “measure” in the first of these passages. Used verbally, here rendered “to measure,” it does not mean “to measure” as in the normal English sense of the word, but rather “to imitate.” It might be possible to translate it as “to take the measure of,” though this has different implications in English.

6 The English verb “to imagine” derives from “image,” and the connection between the two senses of the word was famously drawn in the Chinese context in the *Han Feizi* 韓非子, when the bones of “elephants” (*xiang* 象), by then no longer existent in north China, caused the discoverers “to imagine” (*xiang* 象) the shape of the original beast; see Wang Xianshen 王先慎, *Han Feizi jijie* 韓非子集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1998), 148.

to Shennong shi, he knotted cords by way of governing and systematized the affairs. As the many occupations proliferated, ornament and artifice sprouted. Cangjie, the scribal officer of the Yellow Emperor, saw the tracks of footprints of birds and beasts and knowing that their different patterns could be differentiated, for the first time invented writing. The hundred handicrafts were thereby managed and the ten-thousand types thereby investigated, probably taken from *Guai*.

The first portion of this passage, concerning Baoxi's making of the trigrams, is obviously taken directly from the *Xici zhuan*.

The connection drawn by the *Shuo wen jie zi* between natural images, the *Yijing* trigrams and writing has been accepted by virtually all commentators on the *Yijing* down to modern times. Even as many twentieth century scholars sought to recover the origins of the *Zhou Changes* in the practice of divination during China's Bronze Age, both by turtle shell and by milfoil, some scholars saw evidence for the trigrams in the recently discovered oracle-bone inscriptions. Most famously, Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892–1978), one of the most prominent scholars of the middle fifty years of that century, argued that the names and associations of the Eight Trigrams derive from the similarity between the respective trigram pictures and certain archaic characters.<sup>7</sup> For instance, he claimed that the trigram *Kan* 坎 ☵, the primary association of which is “water,” derives from the character 𠄎 for *shui* 水 “water”; this is easier to see if that character is rotated 90 degrees: 𠄎. Confusingly, he also identified *Kun* 坤 ☷, usually associated with “earth,” with the archaic form of the character *chuan* 川 “river,” though in this case he associated the character with a secondary characteristic of *Kun*: its docile nature, to be in the flow, associated with the word *shun* 順; the Han-dynasty form of this character, 𠄎, does somewhat resemble the trigram picture for *Kun*, especially if it is turned on its side: 𠄎. He also suggested, less convincingly, that *Qian* 乾 ☰, associated primarily with “heaven,” derives from the character *tian* 天 “heaven,” the top two strokes of which are indeed solid horizontal strokes, at least in the later *kaishu* 楷書 “clerical script” form of the character. However, it is necessary to suppose that the remaining 人 would somehow transform into a single horizontal stroke.<sup>8</sup> He also noted that *Qian* ☰ also has associations within the

7 Guo Moruo 郭沫若, *Zhou Yi de goucheng shidai* 周易的構成時代 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1940), 4–5.

8 What is more, the archaic form of *tian* 天 features a round head, 𠄎, which was only subsequently simplified into a horizontal line. Thus, Guo's analysis of this character is entirely unconvincing.

*Yijing* tradition with “metal” (*jin* 金) and “jade” (*yu* 玉), both of which words are written with characters having three horizontal strokes. Chen Mengjia 陳夢家 (1911–1966), another prominent paleographer who was a contemporary of Guo Moruo, criticized Guo’s identifications as both incomplete and tendentious.<sup>9</sup> While this criticism is well taken, this is not to say that there is no archaeological evidence supporting the interpretation of the trigrams as images.

As noted in Chapter Four above, Tsinghua University has recently published a manuscript that its editors have entitled *\*Shifa* 筮法 *\*Method of Milfoil Divination*. Although this manuscript was robbed from some unknown tomb, and thus is lacking in any archaeological provenance, details of the calligraphy with which the manuscript is written, as well as that of other texts from the same cache, lead the editors to conclude that the manuscript dates to the fourth century BCE. As such, it is among the earliest systematic evidence available for the use of the trigrams. Most of the manuscript records individual results of divination, all expressed as combinations of four individual trigrams. Schematic drawings of some of these results are pictured below.



One of the most important features of this manuscript is that it demonstrates beyond any doubt that the trigram pictures are written with numerals. The most common numbers used to depict lines are — and  $\wedge$ ; these account for 85% of the 228 lines depicted in the manuscript. Some scholars—including most notably Li Xueqin 李學勤 (1933–2018)—had previously argued that similar hexagram pictures seen in other Warring States manuscripts were early versions of the yang and yin lines, known in the received tradition as — and - -.<sup>10</sup> However, in this manuscript the numbers “4” (written as  $\cup$ ), “5” ( $\times$ ) “8” ( $\wedge \setminus$ ) and “9” ( $\text{㊦}$ ) also occur. Thus, it is clear that  $\wedge$  should be read as the number “6.” There remains some question as to how to read —. It would seem to be a simple matter to read it as the number “1,” as it is written conventionally and as it has traditionally been read in hexagram numerical symbols seen

9 Chen Mengjia, “Guo Moruo *Zhou Yi de goucheng shidai shu hou*,” 62.

10 The manuscript once refers to these lines as yang and yin lines. On strips 13–15 is recorded a divination result and its prognostication:

⊗	⊗	
⊗	⊗	
⊗	⊗	作於陽入於陰亦得其失十三
7 - 7 - 7 7 - 7 - 6		If it rises over yang,
7 - 7 - 6 6 - 6 - 6		and is contained within yin, you should expect to lose three out of ten.



FIGURE 7.2

Tsinghua manuscript “Diagram of the Trigram Position and Diagram of the Human Body”; from Li Xueqin 李學勤, ed.-in-chief, *Qinghua daxue Chutu wenxian yanjiu yu baohu zhongxin*, ed. *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian (Si)* 清華大學藏戰國竹簡 (肆), Vol. 4 (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2013), 113; courtesy of Tsinghua University Unearthed Research and Protection Center (清華大學出土文獻研究與保護中心)

on bronze and bamboo-strip divination materials. However, Ma Nan 馬楠, a member of the editorial team at Tsinghua University, was the first to suggest that in this context it should instead be read as the number “7,” and her suggestion was subsequently accepted by Li Xueqin, the editor of the manuscript.<sup>11</sup> Counter-intuitive though this suggestion is, as pointed out in Chapter Four above, there is considerable evidence in support of it.

The most visually striking aspect of the manuscript is a human figure juxtaposed with the eight trigrams (see Figure 7.2 above).

The trigram *Qian* ☰ is written just above the “head,” with which it is obviously associated; *Dui* ☱ actually forms the “mouth”; *Kan* ☵, is written twice, beside the two “ears”; *Kun* ☷ is written at the top of the chest in the place of the “heart”; *Li* ☲, is written just below that, suggesting the “abdomen”; *Gen* ☶, is also written twice, just below the two “hands”; *Xun* ☴, which it is important to note is written only once, between the two thighs, might suggest the “genitals,” and *Zhen* ☳, is written twice, below the two “feet.” Five of these associations are exactly the same as found in the *Shuo gua zhuan*, and two of the others are at least similarly positioned:

乾為首，坤為腹，震為足，巽為股，坎為耳，離為目，艮為手，兌為口。

*Qian* is the head, *Kun* is the abdomen, *Zhen* is the feet, *Xun* is the thighs, *Kan* is the ears, *Li* is the eyes, *Gen* is the hands, and *Dui* is the mouth.

11 Ma Nan, “Qinghua jian *Shifa* er ti.” For Li Xueqin’s acceptance of this argument, see Li Xueqin, *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhu jian (Si)*, 102.

Only *Li* has a completely different association. In the Diagram of the Human Body, it is associated with the “abdomen,” while in the *Shuo gua zhuan* it is associated with the “eyes.”<sup>12</sup>

An interesting feature of these trigram associations is that several of them seem to be pictographic, or at least to have pictographic connotations. *Dui* ☱: ☱, which is associated with the “mouth,” is the clearest case, with the bottom two solid lines seemingly representing the two lips, and the top line, rendered as usual in this manuscript as  $\wedge$ , representing the nose. Other apparent iconic representations are *Gen* ☶, written just below the two hands, in which the trigram image mimics the drawing of the hands and especially the fingers, with the bottom two lines representing the fingers. As Adam Schwartz notes, there is also an obvious connection between the way in which the trigram is drawn here, ☶, and the word for “hand” (*shou* 手) in Western Zhou, 𠄎, and Warring States, 𠄎, script.<sup>13</sup> *Zhen* ☳, representing the two “feet,” in which the bottom solid line again mimics the solid line used to depict the feet at the bottom of the legs. Finally, *Xun* ☴ the “genitals” would also seem to be pictographic. Whereas the *Shuo gua zhuan* commentary associates *Xun* with the two “thighs” (*gu* 股), in the manuscript the trigram is drawn only once, between the thighs. Both traditionally and in this manuscript, *Xun* is regarded as female, the eldest daughter. In this connection, the broken line at the bottom of the trigram, once again written as  $\wedge$ , would seem to depict the opening of the vagina.<sup>14</sup>

Schwartz has explored many more “pictographic images” of both the trigram pictures and also hexagram pictures. In addition to the images of *Kan* ☵ for “water,” *Dui* for the “mouth” (and by extension with speech), *Xun* ☴ for the female genitalia (and also for legs), and *Gen* ☶ for the “hands,” Schwartz also argues that *Gen*, written ☶ in the *Shifa* manuscript, acquired its association with “mountains” because of its similarity with the early pictograph for the word *shan* 山 “mountain”: 𠄎 or 𠄎. These associations are by no means singular. For the trigram *Dui* ☱, the *Shuo gua zhuan* commentary of the *Yijing* says:

12 However, while in the *Shuo gua zhuan* commentary the main association of *Li* ☲ trigram is with the “eyes,” elsewhere the same commentary does provide a secondary association for this trigram with the “abdomen.”



13 Schwartz, “Numbers and Images of Trigram *Gen* 艮 in the *Changes* and Related Texts,” 1152.

14 Schwartz, following a traditional argument by Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610–1695), suggests that *Xun* ☴ represents legs because of the bottom broken line; see Schwartz, “Between Numbers and Images,” 59, citing Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲, *Yixue xiangshu lun* 易學象數論 (rpt. Beijing: Jiuzhou chubanshe, 2007), 155.



兌為澤，為少女，為巫，為口舌，為毀折，為附決。其於地也，為剛鹵，為妾，為羊。

*Dui* is lake, is youngest daughter, is a magician, is the mouth and tongue, is ruined and broken, is an appended divide. With respect to the earth, it is hard salt, it is a consort, it is a goat.



We have noted above why the picture of the trigram, written  in the \**Shifa* manuscript, would lead to an association with the “mouth.”<sup>15</sup> Schwartz presents graphic evidence for a similar association with a “goat” (*yang* 羊), still written pictographically in Warring States script as .

## 2 The Sixty-Four Hexagrams

In Chinese, there is no necessary distinction between the three-lined trigrams and the six-lined hexagrams, both of which are referred to simply as *gua* 卦. When it is necessary to differentiate between them, the trigrams can be referred to as *dan gua* 單卦 “single *gua*” and the hexagrams as *chong gua* 重卦 “repeated *gua*,” or they can be differentiated by their number: the “eight trigrams” versus the “sixty-four hexagrams.” The word *gua* is a specialized nominal form of a verb usually written *gua* 掛 that means variously “to draw,” “to suspend,” or “to separate.” All of these meanings are associated with the production of a hexagram or hexagrams in the course of *Yijing* divination. In the *Yijing* tradition of divination, stalks of milfoil are “separated” into two bundles and then separated again into groups of four. The remainder from this process of separation is then “suspended” between the fingers of the left hand. Finally, when this sorting is completed, the hexagram figure is “drawn.” In other contexts, *gua* can mean simply to arrive at the result of a divination.

In the received tradition of the *Zhou Changes*, the sixty-four hexagrams are organized as in Figure 7.3 (from left to right, top to bottom).

Like the trigrams, the hexagrams are also seen as images of natural or human creations or as iconic representations of actions or emotions. The last sentence

15 Schwartz, “Between Numbers and Images,” 54, suggests that the name of the trigram may have derived from similarity between the numerical picture  and the shape of the graph  for the word *dui* 兌, the ancestral form of the word *shuo* 說 “to speak.” This is enticing, but since only the top portion of the numerical trigram resembles the top of the graph, and only when it is written with the number “8” ( / \ ), it seems rather less persuasive than some of his other suggestions.

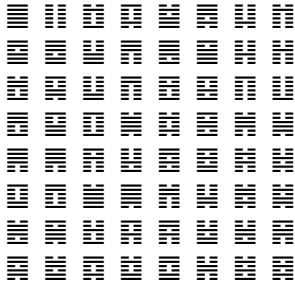


FIGURE 7.3 The sixty-four hexagrams

of the passage from the *Shuo wen jie zi* quoted above, which draws a connection between natural images, the eight trigrams, and the invention of writing, points to one of the sixty-four hexagrams.

百工以爻，萬品以察，蓋取諸夬。

The hundred handicrafts were thereby managed and the ten-thousand types thereby investigated, probably taken from *Guai*.

Just as the first part of the *Shuo wen* passage is a close paraphrase of the *Xici zhuan*, so too is this final sentence. Later in the chapter of that work that describes Baoxi's making of the trigrams, there is a list of eleven different hexagrams that inspired significant cultural inventions. The last of these pertains to *Guai* 夬 ☱ "Splitting," the 43rd hexagram in the received sequence. The sentence reads:

上古結繩而治。後世聖人易之以書契，百官以治，萬民以察，蓋取諸夬。

In high antiquity they ruled by knotting cords. In later ages sages exchanged this for writing whereby the hundred officers were governed and the ten-thousand people were investigated, which was probably taken from *Guai* 夬 ☱ "Splitting" (*Xici zhuan* B2)

It is difficult to detect any iconic value in the picture of this hexagram that would lead to this invention; more likely, the comment derives from the name given to the hexagram within the *Yijing* tradition; perhaps because *guai* 夬 "to separate, to split" is the protograph of *jue* 決 "to decide," and is often read in this way in the *Yijing* tradition, it led the author of this passage of the *Xici zhuan* to associate it with a government's investigation of the common people. Some of the other examples given in this list are more visually satisfying. The first example is perhaps the simplest. The hexagram *Li* 離 ☲, which is composed of two



FIGURE 7.4

A bronze *ding*-caldron from the Western Zhou period, c. 800 BCE

*Li* 離 ☲ trigrams, is said to have inspired the knotting of cords and the making of nets; both the hexagram and the trigram feature a hollow center in which, with imagination, one might see a net. The second example is more complex, combining the visual aspect of the hexagram with the association of a trigram. The invention of plowing is said to have been made by Shennong 神農, the Spiritual Farmer, inspired by the hexagram *Yi* 益 ䷗, the meaning of which is “to increase”; commentators explain that the hexagram depicts a plow turning up soil, the three broken lines in the second through fourth lines comprising the trigram *Kun* 坤 ䷁, the primary association of which is “earth,” while the solid line at the bottom represents the plow going under the soil (the two solid lines at the top presumably represent the plow’s superstructure).

The most iconic of the *Yijing* hexagrams is *Ding* 鼎 ䷱, “Caldron.” At first sight, it may be difficult to discern the shape of a caldron in this hexagram picture, even if the *Tuan zhuan* 彖傳 *Commentary on the Judgments* comment on the hexagram statement states it explicitly: “the image of a caldron” (*ding xiang ye* 鼎象也). However, it is clear from the text of the line statements appended to the hexagram that the author or authors of the *Zhou Changes* could see it.

初六：鼎顛趾。利出否。得妾以其子。无咎。

First Six: A caldron’s upturned legs: Beneficial to expel the bad, Getting a consort with her child. Without trouble.

九二：鼎有實。我仇有疾。不我能即。吉。

Nine in the Second: A caldron having substance: Our enemy has an illness, It will not be able to reach us. Auspicious.

九三：鼎耳革。其行塞。雉膏不食。方雨虧。悔終吉。

Nine in the Third: A caldron's ears stripped: Its motion is blocked. Pheasant fat uneaten, Border rains diminish. Regret, in the end auspicious.

九四：鼎折足。覆公餗。其形渥。凶。

Nine in the Fourth: A caldron's broken leg: Upsets a duke's stew, Its shape glossy. Ominous.

六五：鼎黃耳金鉉。利貞。

Six in the Fifth: A caldron's yellow ears and metal bar. Beneficial to affirm.

上九：鼎玉鉉。大吉。无不利。

Top Nine: A caldron's jade bar. Greatly auspicious. Nothing not beneficial.

As we will see in Chapter Ten below, these lines are to be read from the bottom of the hexagram picture to the top. Thus, the bottom line, a broken line in the received *Yijing* tradition, refers to the legs of the caldron, of which two are prominently visible when viewing a caldron from the front. The next three lines, all solid lines, are thought to depict the solid belly of the caldron; indeed, the second line statement, "The caldron has substance," seems to refer to this solidity. The fifth line is again broken, and the line statement refers to the two handles or "ears" that rise prominently above the belly of the caldron. Finally, although not pictured with the caldron above, caldrons were suspended over a fire by inserting a metal bar through the two ears; the solid top line is said to depict this metal bar, though here it is termed, doubtless euphemistically, a "jade bar."

No other hexagram picture, whether in the form of a numerical hexagram or its traditional *Yijing* hexagram picture, is as iconically compelling as that of *Ding* hexagram. However, with a certain degree of imagination, images can also be seen in a number of other hexagram pictures. For instance, Wen Yiduo 聞一多 (1899–1946), one of the most imaginative scholars ever to address the *Yijing*, proposed that the hexagram picture of *Yi* 頤 "Jaws" hexagram, ䷚, when rotated ninety degrees resembles a jack-o-lantern-like mouth with top and bottom teeth: 𠄎.<sup>16</sup> Although the corresponding oracle-bone character 𠄎 is usually

16 Wen Yiduo, *Wen Yiduo quanji*, 2:60. August Conrady, "Yih-king-Studien," *Asia Major* 7 (1931), 417 makes a similar suggestion.

identified with the character *chi* 齒 “tooth,” the seal script form of which was still pictographic (except for the added phonetic element *zhi* 止 at the top of the character) 𪚩 there is evidence linking the character for *yi* 頤 with the hexagram picture: in the Shanghai Museum manuscript of the *Zhou Changes*, the character is written 𪚩, the bottom jack-o-lantern-like component being the *yi* 臣 which is the left-hand side of the character *yi* 頤 “jaws,” while the top portion of the character is the semantic classifier *shou* 首 “head.” A similar example is to be seen in the hexagram picture of *Shike* 噬嗑 “Biting and Chewing,” ䷔; even without rotating the image, it is not a very far step from the iconicity of *Yi* “Jaws” to see a mouth with something in it, but it is even clearer when rotated: 𪚩.

Other examples are more conceptual, but no less compelling. Knowing that hexagrams are drawn from bottom to top, and that solid yang lines are associated with substance and growth while broken yin lines are associated with insubstantiality and decline, it is perhaps not hard to understand why ䷗, with a single yang line at the bottom, might be termed *fu* 復 “Returning” (i.e., the return of yang), while ䷖, with a single yang line at the top, is *Bo* 剝 “Paring” (i.e., the progressive paring away of yang by yin). Similarly, it is also easy to see why ䷒, with two yang lines at the bottom, might be termed “Lin” 臨 “Looking Down” (#19), while ䷓, with two yang lines at the top, is termed *Guan* 觀 “Looking Up” (#20).

### 3 The Image and Number Legacy of Trigram and Hexagram Images

The association of images with the trigrams and hexagrams would become one of the most important exegetical techniques used in explaining the meaning of *Yijing* hexagrams as well as their hexagram and line statements. This type of exegesis, known as *xiangshu* 象數 or “image and number,” would reach its apogee in the work of the third century scholar Yu Fan 虞翻 (164–233), when he would see images behind every word of the text. Without wishing to anticipate the discussion of line statements in Chapter Nine below, it might be germane here to give one example of his style of exegesis. For readers interested in understanding the mechanics of this type of exegesis, I will try to explain each step in notes.<sup>17</sup> Other readers might wish to move directly to the following section, on hexagram names.

17 The most important exegetical principles, common to all traditional interpreters of the *Yijing*, include the following: *yao wei* 爻位, “line position,” in which the odd-numbered lines (the first [*chu* 初], third [*san* 三], and fifth [*wu* 五]) are considered to be yang positions while the even numbered lines (second [*er* 二], fourth [*si* 四], and top [*shang* 上]) are yin positions; *yao de* 爻德 “line virtue,” whether the line is yin or yang; and *xiang ying*

The Top Nine line statement of Lü 旅 ䷷ “Travelling” hexagram (Hexagram 56) reads as follows.

上九：鳥焚其巢。旅人先笑後號咷。喪牛于易。凶。

Top Nine: A bird burning its nest: A traveler first laughing, later crying out. Losing an ox at Yi. Ominous.

Yu Fan’s commentary reads as follows.<sup>18</sup>

離為鳥、為火。巽為木、為高。四失位，變震為筐，巢之象也。今巢象不見，故鳥焚其巢。震為笑，震在前，故先笑。應在巽，巽為號咷，巽象在後，故後號咷。調三動時坤為牛，五動成乾，乾為易。上失三。五動應二，故喪牛于易。失位無應，故兇也。五動成遯。六二執之，用黃牛之革，則旅家所喪牛也。

*Li* ䷲ is a “bird,” is “fire.”<sup>19</sup> *Xun* ䷶ is “wood,” is “high.”<sup>20</sup> The fourth (line) (loses:) is out of position; changing into *Zhen* ䷲, it is a “basket,” the image

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相應 “correspondence,” which refers to relationships between the first and fourth, second and fifth, and third and top lines (i.e., the lines that occupy the same positions in the two trigrams constituting a hexagram), especially when the lines are of a different nature. These three principles are at least implied in the canonical commentaries *Tuan zhuan* 彖傳 *Commentary on the Judgments* and *Xiang zhuan* 象傳 *Commentary on the Images*. In addition to these principles, Yu Fan was also able to draw on several other principles that had become popular during the four hundred years of the Han dynasty: *huti* 互體 “internal trigrams,” in which the second through the fourth and the third through the fifth lines of the hexagram are used to create new trigrams or even a new hexagram; *yao bian* 爻變 “line changes” or *yao dong* 爻動 “line movement,” whereby a line changes from yin to yang or vice versa; *shengjiang* 升降 “ascending and descending” lines, whereby one of the three lines in the bottom trigram will ascend and take the place of the corresponding line in the top trigram, or vice versa; *banxiang* 半象 “half images,” in which two lines are expanded to stand for a complete trigram, as for instance = is taken to represent *Qian* ䷀, or -- to represent *Zhen* ䷲; *pangtong* 旁通 “mirror images,” in which all of the lines of a trigram change into their opposites; and *fan gua* 反卦 “upside-down trigrams,” the name of which is self-explanatory. Yu Fan himself relied primarily on the various images associated with the trigrams, both the main constituent trigrams of the hexagram (the bottom three and top three lines respectively) and also the “internal” trigrams and “changed” trigrams (the trigram obtained if one of the lines, usually the line in question, were to change from yang to yin or from yin to yang), usually (though by no means always) as those images are given in the canonical commentary *Shuo gua zhuan* 說卦 *Commentary Discussing the Trigrams*.

18 Yu Fan’s comment is quoted in Li Dingzuo, *Zhou Yi jijie*, 11.19b–20a (570–571).

19 In the *Shuo gua zhuan*, section 8, the trigram *Li* ䷲ is associated with a pheasant (*zhi* 雉), whence “bird” (*niao* 鳥), and in section 11 it is associated with “fire” (*huo* 火).

20 In the *Shuo gua zhuan*, section 11, the trigram *Xun* ䷶ is associated with both “wood” (*mu* 木) and “high” (*gao* 高).

of a “nest.”<sup>21</sup> Now the nest image is not seen, therefore it says “birds burning their nest.” *Zhen* ☳ is “to laugh”; *Zhen* is at the beginning, whence “first laughing.”<sup>22</sup> The response is in *Xun*; *Xun* is “to weep and wail,” and the image of *Xun* is later, whence “later weeping and wailing.”<sup>23</sup> When the third (line) moves, *Kun* ☷ is an “ox”; when the fifth (line) moves, it forms *Qian* ☰, and *qian* is “ease.”<sup>24</sup> The top (line) “loses” the third line, while if the fifth (line) moves it responds to the (line) second (line), whence “losing an ox in ease.”<sup>25</sup> Losing its position and being without a response, therefore it is “ominous.”<sup>26</sup> If the fifth (line) (moves:) changes, it forms (the hexagram) *Dun* ☱ “Retreating” (#33); the second line would “grasp it using a yellow ox’s leather,” the lost ox of the traveler’s family.<sup>27</sup>

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- 21 The fourth line in this hexagram is a yang line, which according to notions of line position is inappropriate. If it therefore changes into a yin line, as would be proper to its position, it would cause the internal trigram of the second through fourth lines of *Lü* hexagram to become *Zhen* ☳; some of the images of *Zhen* in the *Shuo gua*, section 11, are “young bamboo” (*cangliang zhu* 蒼筤竹) and “rushes” or “reeds” (*huanwei* 菴葦), which may suggest the image of a “basket” (*kuang* 筐) and, thus, of a “nest” (*chao* 巢). However, the internal trigram here is *Dui* ☱ and not *Zhen* ☳, which seems to be why Yu Fan says that the “nest image is not seen.”
- 22 *Zhen* ☳ is the trigram obtained for the top trigram if the top line changes from a yang line to a yin line. The image “laughing” (*xiao* 笑) is taken from the First Nine line statement of *Zhen* 震 ☳ “Thunder” (#51) hexagram, the hexagram formed by doubling the trigram *zhen*. This would also explain why Yu Fan regards this as “first” (*xian* 先).
- 23 The “response” (*ying* 應) should refer to the third line of the hexagram, which is the middle line of the internal trigram *Xun* ☴. One of the images of *Xun* trigram in the *Shuo gua zhuan* is “unfruitful” (*buguo* 不果), which may be consistent with the image “weeping and wailing.”
- 24 To “move” here means that the indicated line changes nature. If the third line of *Lü* hexagram changes, the bottom trigram becomes *Kun* ☷, a standard image of which is “ox”; if the fifth line changes, the top trigram becomes *Qian* ☰. In the *Xici zhuan*, *Qian* is said to be *yi* 易 (usually understood as “ease”).
- 25 As noted above, the top line of a hexagram (the top line of the top trigram) is said to “respond” to the third line of the hexagram (the top line of the bottom trigram) if the two lines are of opposite nature. In this case, both the top line and the third line being yang lines, the top line “loses” its response. The same response relationship obtains between the fifth and second lines, which in this case are both yin lines; if the fifth line were to change, then it would respond with the second line.
- 26 As mentioned in n. 17 above, notions of “line position” and “line virtue” hold that the odd numbered lines of a hexagram should be yang lines, while the even numbered lines should be yin lines. In the case of this top line of *Lü* hexagram, since it is a yang line in an even position it “loses its position.” Since the third line, with which it corresponds, is also a yang line, it also has no “response.”
- 27 “Holding fast to it use the leather of a yellow ox” is the line statement of the Six in the Sec-

There will not be many more occasions in the present book to consider such exegetical techniques vis-à-vis the original creation and interpretation of the *Zhou Changes*. However, even while seeking to use the latest archaeological evidence to understand this original creation, it is well to keep in mind that readers of all times saw nature all around them, and for them nature has always been imbued with symbolic value. This is why the connection between natural images, the *Yijing* trigrams and hexagrams, and writing in general drawn by the *Xici zhuan* and then by the *Shuo wen jie zi* is so important.<sup>28</sup>

#### 4 Hexagram Names

Each hexagram is associated with a name, which in most *Yijing* traditions is thought in many cases to derive from the composition of the hexagram picture and which is intended to characterize the major theme of the hexagram text. As noted above, the sixty-four different themes are thought to encapsulate the entirety of the human experience, with some hexagram names referring to aspects of the social or material world, and others human emotions and/or characteristics. Again in the received tradition of the *Yijing*, as seen especially in the canonical *Xu gua zhuan* 序卦傳 *Commentary on Sequence of the Hexagrams*, the sequence of the hexagram names is understood to chart a progression through these life experiences. However, it should be noted that the logic of this sequence is often forced at best. What is more, as will be explored in Chapter Eleven below, we know that the *Zhou Changes* itself circulated in at least three different sequences, and other systems of milfoil divination that also made use of sixty-four hexagrams, such as the *Gui cang* 歸藏 *Returning to be Stored*, also arranged the hexagrams in different sequences. Finally, as shown in Table 7.2 (pp. 310–313), it is also important to note that the hexagram names also often differ, not only in these different milfoil divination

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ond line of *Dun* 遯 ䷠ “Piglet” (#33), the hexagram created if the fifth line of *Lü* (which as already noted is out of position) were to change. If the fifth line were to change to a yang line, then the yin line in the second position would correspond with it and, thus, “hold fast to it.”

28 With respect to the role of paleographic discoveries for understanding the *Zhou Changes*, it is well to note that Yu Xingwu 于省吾 (1896–1984), one of the twentieth century’s greatest scholars of oracle-bone inscriptions, argued for this same tri-partite connection. In the preface to his book on the *Yijing*, *Shuangjianchi Yijing xinzheng* 雙劍詠易經新證, he declared that the *Yijing* is a study of images; see Yu Xingwu 于省吾, *Shuangjianchi Yijing xinzheng* 雙劍詠易經新證 (Beiping: Daye yinshuaju, 1937), 1.2b.



texts, but even in different manuscripts of the *Zhou Changes*.<sup>29</sup> Sometimes these differences are just minor, different spellings, so to speak, of the same underlying word, but often they are different words entirely. Thus, it is probably misguided to try to determine what the original names of the hexagrams may have been. Different interpreters have argued for different meanings, and these meanings are more or less meaningful within their own systems of exegesis. This points to the polysemy that has often been understood to mark the *Zhou Changes*.

In the received tradition of the *Zhou Changes*, the hexagram names are as follows, together with a translation of the meaning of the name, more or less as understood in the received tradition.

- Qian* 乾 ☰ “Vigorous” (#1)  
*Kun* 坤 ☷ “Compliant” (#2)  
*Zhun* 屯 ☵ “Sprouting” (#3)  
*Meng* 蒙 ☶ “Shrouded” (#4)  
*Xu* 需 ☵ “Awaiting” (#5)  
*Song* 訟 ☶ “Lawsuit” (#6)  
*Shi* 師 ☷ “Army” (#7)  
*Bi* 比 ☶ “Allying” (#8)  
*Xiaochu* 小畜 ☶ “Lesser Livestock” (#9)  
*Lü* 履 ☱ “Stepping” (#10)  
*Tai* 泰 ☱ “Positive” (#11)  
*Pi* 否 ☷ “Negation” (#12)  
*Tongren* 同人 ☲ “Together with People” (#13)  
*Dayou* 大有 ☱ “Greatly Having” (#14)  
*Qian* 謙 ☱ “Modesty” (#15)  
*Yu* 豫 ☱ “Excess” (#16)  
*Sui* 隨 ☱ “Following” (#17)

29 The table compares the names of the hexagrams in the received tradition of the *Yijing* with the hexagram names in the following five manuscripts: the Shanghai Museum manuscript of the *Zhou Changes* (c. 300 BCE), the Tsinghua University *\*Bie gua* 別卦 *\*Separated Hexagrams* manuscript (c. 300 BCE), the Fuyang 阜陽 manuscript of the *Zhou Changes* with added prognostications (c. 200 BCE), the Mawangdui 馬王堆 manuscript of the *Zhou Changes* (c. 175 BCE), and the Wangjiatai 王家台 manuscript of the *Gui cang* 歸藏 *Returning to be Stored* (c. 250 BCE). In addition, it also includes the names of the hexagrams in the *Gui cang* as reconstituted by Ma Guohan 馬國翰 (1794–1857). Note that because these manuscripts have been preserved only incompletely, not all hexagram names can be given for each of them.

- Gu* 蠱 ䷑ “Pestilence” (#18)  
*Lin* 臨 ䷒ “Looking Down” (#19)  
*Guan* 觀 ䷓ “Looking Up” (#20)  
*Shike* 噬嗑 ䷔ “Biting and Chewing” (#21)  
*Bi* 賁 ䷖ “Ornamented” (#22)  
*Bo* 剝 ䷖ “Paring” (#23)  
*Fu* 復 ䷗ “Returning” (#24)  
*Wuwang* 无妄 ䷘ “Without Folly” (#25)  
*Dachu* 大畜 ䷙ “Greater Livestock” (#26)  
*Yi* 頤 ䷚ “Jaws” (#27)  
*Daguo* 大過 ䷛ “Greater Surpassing” (#28)  
*Xikan* 習坎 ䷜ “Repeated Pits” (#29)  
*Li* 離 ䷄ “Netted” (#30)  
*Xian* 咸 ䷞ “Feelings” (#31)  
*Heng* 恆 ䷟ “Constancy” (#32)  
*Dun* 遯 ䷠ “Piglet” (#33)  
*Dazhuang* 大壯 ䷡ “Great Strength” (#34)  
*Jin* 晉 ䷢ “Advancing” (#35)  
*Mingyi* 明夷 ䷣ “Calling Pheasant” (#36)  
*Jiaren* 家人 ䷤ “Family Members” (#37)  
*Kui* 睽 ䷥ “Cross-eyed” (#38)  
*Jian* 蹇 ䷦ “Lame” (#39)  
*Jie* 解 ䷧ “Released” (#40)  
*Sun* 損 ䷨ “Decreasing” (#41)  
*Yi* 益 ䷩ “Increasing” (#42)  
*Guai* 夬 ䷪ “Resolute” (#43)  
*Gou* 姤 ䷫ “Meeting” (#44)  
*Cui* 萃 ䷬ “Collected” (#45)  
*Sheng* 升 ䷭ “Ascending” (#46)  
*Kun* 困 ䷮ “Bound” (#47)  
*Jing* 井 ䷯ “Well-Trap” (#48)  
*Ge* 革 ䷰ “Rebellion” (#49)  
*Ding* 鼎 ䷱ “Caldron” (#50)  
*Zhen* 震 ䷲ “Shaking” (#51)  
*Gen* 艮 ䷳ “Stilling” (#52)  
*Jian* 漸 ䷴ “Progressing” (#53)  
*Guimei* 歸妹 ䷵ “Returning Maiden” (#54)  
*Feng* 豐 ䷶ “Fullness” (#55)  
*Lü* 旅 ䷷ “Traveling” (#56)  
*Xun* 巽 ䷸ “Presenting” (#57)

- Dui* 兌 ䷹ “Expressing” (#58)  
*Huan* 渙 ䷺ “Dispersing” (#59)  
*Jie* 節 ䷻ “Moderation” (#60)  
*Zhongfu* 中孚 ䷛ “Inner Trust” (#61)  
*Xiaoguo* 小過 ䷽ “Lesser Surpassing” (#62)  
*Jiji* 既濟 ䷾ “Already Across” (#63)  
*Weiji* 未濟 ䷿ “Not Yet Across” (#64)

In the received text of the *Zhou Changes*, the hexagram name follows the hexagram picture, and, with but two exceptions,<sup>30</sup> is not to be read together with the words that follow it (i.e., the hexagram statement, for which see the following chapter). Indeed, in the Shanghai Museum manuscript of the *Zhou Changes*, the earliest material evidence that we currently have for the *Zhou Changes*, the hexagram name is separated from the following hexagram statement by one of the black and/or red symbols that are unique to that manuscript. This suggests that the hexagram names are to be read separately from the rest of the hexagram text.

Although the hexagram name is independent from the rest of the hexagram text, the name often occurs also in the line statements (for which, see Chapter Nine below), in which cases it is to be read as part of the syntax of the line statement. In thirteen hexagrams, the hexagram name appears in all six

30 The two exceptions are *Tongren* 同人, “Together with People” (#13), and *Gen* 艮 “Stilling” (#52):

同人于野。亨。利涉大川。利君子貞。

Together with people in the wilds. Receipt. Beneficial to ford a great river. Beneficial to affirm about a lord's son.

艮其背，不獲其身，行其庭，不見其人。无咎。

Stilling its back, Not bagging its body. Walking into his court, Not seeing his person. Without trouble.

There are two other cases in which the first character is repeated immediately, the second iteration of the character entering into the syntax of the following phrase:

履：履虎尾，不咥人。亨。

*Lü* “Stepping”: Stepping on a tiger's tail, Not eating a person. Receipt.

否：否之匪人。不利君子貞。大往小來。

*Pi* “Negation”: Negation's non-human. Not beneficial to affirm about a lord's son. Great going, little coming.

There is also one case in which the name of the hexagram is repeated, but after the interposition of one other character:

震：亨。震來虩虩，笑言啞啞。震驚百里，不喪匕鬯。

*Zhen* “Shaking”: Receipt. Thunder comes crack-crack, Laughing and talking ha-ha. Thunder startles a hundred *li*, Not losing ladle or sweet-wine.

line statements; in another thirteen hexagrams, it appears in five of the six line statements; in fifteen hexagrams, it appears in four line statements; in five cases, it appears in three line statements; in seven cases, it appears in two line statements; in three cases, it appears in only one line statement; while in eight cases, it does not appear in any line statement. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Nine below, these statistics describe a general tendency within the text of the *Zhou Changes* for the hexagram name to be linked with the general theme of the line statements, with forty-one of the sixty-four hexagrams (64%) showing a more or less strong tendency in this regard. Moreover, even in the eight cases in which the hexagram name does not occur in any line statement (*Kun* 坤 ☷ “Compliant” [#2], *Xiaochu* 小畜 ☵ “Lesser Livestock” [#9], *Tai* 泰 ☰ “Positive” [#11], *Dayou* 大有 ☰ “Greatly Having” [#14], *Dachu* 大畜 ☰ “Greater Livestock” [#26], *Zhongfu* 中孚 ☱ “Inner Trust” [#61], *Jiji* 既濟 ☵ “Already Across” [#63], and *Weiji* 未濟 ☲ “Not Yet Across” [#64]), it is possible to see at least a general association between the hexagram name and the contents of some line statements. For example, while the word *chu* 畜 “livestock; domestic animals” does not occur in any line statement of *Dachu* “Greater Livestock” hexagram, nevertheless three of the line statements feature a “horse” (*ma* 馬; 26/4), “ox” (*niu* 牛; 26/5), or “pig” (*shi* 豕; 26/6).<sup>31</sup>

While it is easy enough to demonstrate a connection between the hexagram name and the line statements of that hexagram, it is more difficult to determine the priority of these two aspects of the text; i.e., whether the hexagram name came first and generated the key word or words of the line statements, or whether the hexagram name derived from that key word. While traditional commentators assumed, whether explicitly or implicitly, that the hexagram name had priority, such modern *Yijing* scholars as Li Jingchi 李鏡池 (1902–1975) and Gao Heng 高亨 (1900–1986) have argued that the line statements came first, produced in the course of milfoil divination, and that the hexagram name was subsequently added at a later time for convenience of citation. Interesting though this sort of chicken-and-egg question is for the history of the *Zhou Changes*, I suspect that it is ultimately unanswerable.

31 For ease of reference, I here refer to the lines by hexagram number and line number, thus 26/4, instead of by the more cumbersome “Six in the Fourth” of the text, referring to the fourth line of *Dachu* “Greater Livestock” hexagram.

TABLE 7.2 Hexagram Names in the *Zhou Changes* and Its Five Manuscripts and *Gui Cang* Compared

Hex.	Received <i>Zhou Yi</i>	Shanghai Museum <i>Zhou Yi</i>	Tsinghua <i>Bie gua</i>	Mawang- dui <i>Zhou Yi</i>	Fuyang <i>Zhou Yi</i>	Wangjia- tai <i>Gui Cang</i>	Ma Guo- han <i>Gui Cang</i>
☰	乾 <i>Qian</i>			鍵 <i>Jian</i>		天 <i>Tian</i>	乾 <i>Qian</i>
☷	坤 <i>Kun</i>			川 <i>Chuan</i>		寡 <i>Gua</i>	輿 <i>Kun</i>
☶	屯 <i>Zhun</i>			屯 <i>Zhun</i>	肫* <i>Zhun</i>	肫 <i>Zhun</i>	屯 <i>Zhun</i>
☱	蒙 <i>Meng</i>	彪 <i>Mang</i>	愧 <i>Mang</i>	蒙 <i>Meng</i>	蒙* <i>Meng</i>		蒙 <i>Meng</i>
☵	需 <i>Xu</i>	孚 <i>Ru</i>		濡 <i>Ru</i>			溥 <i>Ru</i>
☲	訟 <i>Song</i>	訟 <i>Song</i>	訟 <i>Song</i>	訟 <i>Song</i>		訟 <i>Song</i>	訟 <i>Song</i>
☳	師 <i>Shi</i>	帀 <i>Shi</i>	帀 <i>Shi</i>	師 <i>Shi</i>	帀* <i>Shi</i>	帀 <i>Shi</i>	師 <i>Shi</i>
☶	比 <i>Bi</i>	比 <i>Bi</i>		比 <i>Bi</i>	比* <i>Bi</i>	比 <i>Bi</i>	比 <i>Bi</i>
☳	小畜 <i>Xiaochu</i>		少管 <i>Shaodu</i>	少菽 <i>Shaoshu</i>		少督 <i>Shaoshu</i>	小毒畜 <i>Xiaoduchu</i>
☱	履 <i>Lü</i>		顛 <i>Lü?</i>	禮 <i>Li</i>	履* <i>Lü</i>	履 <i>Lü</i>	履 <i>Lü</i>
☰	泰 <i>Tai</i>		夔 <i>Tai</i>	泰 <i>Tai</i>		柰 <i>Tai</i>	泰 <i>Tai</i>
☷	否 <i>Pi</i>		晷 <i>Pi</i>	婦 <i>Fu</i>		否 <i>Pei</i>	否 <i>Pi</i>
☱	同人 <i>Tongren</i>		同人 <i>Tongren</i>	同人 <i>Tongren</i>	同人 <i>Tongren</i>	同人 <i>Tongren</i>	同人 <i>Tongren</i>
☰	大有 <i>Dayou</i>		少又 <i>Shaoyou</i>	大有 <i>Dayou</i>	大有 <i>Dayou</i>	右 <i>You</i>	大有 <i>Dayou</i>
☶	謙 <i>Qian</i>	歷 <i>Qian</i>	謙 <i>Qian</i>	嗛 <i>Qian</i>		陵 <i>Ling</i>	兼 <i>Jian</i>
☱	豫 <i>Yu</i>	余 <i>Yu</i>	介 <i>Jie</i>	余 <i>Yu</i>	豫* <i>Yu</i>	介 <i>Jie</i>	分 <i>Fen</i>

TABLE 7.2 Hexagram Names in the Zhou Changes (*cont.*)

Hex.	Received <i>Zhou Yi</i>	Shanghai Museum <i>Zhou Yi</i>	Tsinghua <i>Bie gua</i>	Mawang- dui <i>Zhou Yi</i>	Fuyang <i>Zhou Yi</i>	Wangjia- tai <i>Gui Cang</i>	Ma Guo- han <i>Gui Cang</i>
䷐	隨 <i>Sui</i>	懇 <i>Sui</i>	懇 ?	隋 <i>Sui</i>	隋* <i>Sui</i>		規 <i>Gui</i>
䷌	蠱 <i>Gu</i>	蛊 <i>Gu</i>	敝 <i>Gu</i>	箇 <i>Gu</i>		夜 <i>Ye</i>	夜 <i>Ye</i>
䷒	臨 <i>Lin</i>		謹 <i>Lin</i>	林 <i>Lin</i>	林 <i>Lin</i>	臨 <i>Lin</i>	林禍 <i>Lin Huo</i>
䷓	觀 <i>Guan</i>			觀 <i>Guan</i>	觀* <i>Guan</i>	灌 <i>Guan</i>	觀 <i>Guan</i>
䷔	噬嗑 <i>Shike</i>		𪔐 <i>Shi?</i>	筮嗑 <i>Shike</i>	筮闌 <i>Shike</i>	筮 <i>Shi</i>	
䷖	賁 <i>Ben</i>		赫 <i>Fan?</i>	繁 <i>Ben</i>	賁 <i>Ben</i>		岑霤 <i>Jinyi</i>
䷗	剝 <i>Bo</i>		僕 <i>Pu</i>	剝 <i>Bo</i>	僕* <i>Pu</i>		僕 <i>Pu</i>
䷗	復 <i>Fu</i>	復 <i>Fu</i>	復 <i>Fu</i>	復 <i>Fu</i>	復* <i>Fu</i>	復 <i>Fu</i>	復 <i>Fu</i>
䷘	无妄 <i>Wuwang</i>	亡忘 <i>Wangwang</i>	亡孟 <i>Wangmeng</i>	无孟 <i>Wumeng</i>	无亡 <i>Wuwang</i>	毋亡 <i>Wuwang</i>	毋亡 <i>Wuwang</i>
䷌	大畜 <i>Dachu</i>	大筮 <i>Dazhu</i>	大管 <i>Daxiang</i>	泰畜 <i>Taichu</i>			大毒畜 <i>Daduchu</i>
䷔	頤 <i>Yi</i>	頤 <i>Yi</i>	顚 <i>Yi</i>	頤 <i>Yi</i>	頤* <i>Yi</i>	亦 <i>Yi</i>	頤 <i>Yi</i>
䷛	大過 <i>Daguo</i>		大訛 <i>Daguo</i>	泰過 <i>Taiguo</i>	大過 <i>Daguo</i>	大過 <i>Daguo</i>	大過 <i>Daguo</i>
䷜	坎 <i>Kan</i>			贛 <i>Gan</i>		勞 <i>Lao</i>	犖 <i>Lao</i>
䷝	離 <i>Li</i>			羅 <i>Luo</i>	離 <i>Li</i>	麗 <i>Li</i>	離 <i>Li</i>
䷞	咸 <i>Xian</i>	欽 <i>Qin</i>	愆 <i>Qin?</i>	欽 <i>Qin</i>		咸 <i>Xian</i>	欽 <i>Qin</i>
䷟	恆 <i>Heng</i>	死 <i>Heng</i>	恆 <i>Heng</i>	恆 <i>Heng</i>		恆我 <i>Heng'e</i>	恆 <i>Heng</i>

TABLE 7.2 Hexagram Names in the Zhou Changes (*cont.*)

Hex.	Received <i>Zhou Yi</i>	Shanghai Museum <i>Zhou Yi</i>	Tsinghua <i>Bie gua</i>	Mawang- dui <i>Zhou Yi</i>	Fuyang <i>Zhou Yi</i>	Wangjia- tai <i>Gui Cang</i>	Ma Guo- han <i>Gui Cang</i>
䷛	遯 <i>Dun</i>	𨾏 <i>Dun</i>	𨾏 <i>Dui</i>	揅 <i>Yuan</i>	椽* <i>Chuan</i>	遂 <i>Dun</i>	遂 <i>Dun</i>
䷡	大壯 <i>Dazhuang</i>		大臧 <i>Dacang</i>	泰壯 <i>Dazhuang</i>		大壯 <i>Dazhuang</i>	
䷢	晉 <i>Jin</i>		𨾏 <i>Jin</i>	潛 <i>Jin</i>		晉 <i>Jin</i>	晉 <i>Jin</i>
䷣	明夷 <i>Mingyi</i>		亡𨾏 <i>Wangyi</i>	明夷 <i>Mingyi</i>			明𨾏 <i>Mingyi</i>
䷤	家人 <i>Jiaren</i>		隤 <i>San?</i>	家人 <i>Jiaren</i>		散 <i>San</i>	散家人 <i>Sanjiaren</i>
䷥	睽 <i>Kui</i>	睽 <i>Kui</i>	僂 <i>Kui?</i>	乖 <i>Guai</i>		瞿 <i>Ju</i>	瞿 <i>Ju</i>
䷦	蹇 <i>Jian</i>	𨾏 <i>Jie</i>		蹇 <i>Qian</i>	蹇* <i>Jian</i>		蹇 <i>Jian</i>
䷧	解 <i>Jie</i>	𨾏 <i>Jie</i>	纏 ?	解 <i>Jie</i>			荔 <i>Xie</i>
䷩	損 <i>Sun</i>		𨾏 ?	損 <i>Sun</i>	損* <i>Sun</i>	損 <i>Sun</i>	員 <i>Yuan</i>
䷮	益 <i>Yi</i>		赫 <i>Yi</i>	益 <i>Yi</i>			誠 <i>Xian</i>
䷧	夬 <i>Guai</i>	夬 <i>Guai</i>	夬 <i>Jie</i>	訣 <i>Guai</i>		鬪 <i>Ji</i>	
䷔	姤 <i>Gou</i>	敏 <i>Gou</i>	𨾏 <i>Xi?</i>	狗 <i>Gou</i>			
䷈	萃 <i>Cui</i>	啐 <i>Cui</i>	萃 <i>Cui</i>	卒 <i>Zu</i>		卒 <i>Zu</i>	萃 <i>Cui</i>
䷭	升 <i>Sheng</i>		掙 ?	登 <i>Deng</i>	登* <i>Deng</i>	升 <i>Sheng</i>	稱 <i>Cheng</i>
䷮	困 <i>Kun</i>	困 <i>Kun</i>	困 <i>Kun</i>	困 <i>Kun</i>		困 <i>Qun</i>	困 <i>Kun</i>
䷯	井 <i>Jing</i>	茘 <i>Jing</i>		井 <i>Jing</i>	井* <i>Jing</i>	井 <i>Jing</i>	井 <i>Jing</i>
䷰	革 <i>Ge</i>	革 <i>Ge</i>	𨾏 <i>Jie</i>	勒 <i>Le</i>			革 <i>Ge</i>

TABLE 7.2 Hexagram Names in the Zhou Changes (*cont.*)

Hex.	Received <i>Zhou Yi</i>	Shanghai Museum <i>Zhou Yi</i>	Tsinghua <i>Bie gua</i>	Mawang- dui <i>Zhou Yi</i>	Fuyang <i>Zhou Yi</i>	Wangjia- tai <i>Gui Cang</i>	Ma Guo- han <i>Gui Cang</i>
☰	鼎 <i>Ding</i>		鼎 <i>Zhen</i>	鼎 <i>Ding</i>	鼎* <i>Ding</i>	鼎 <i>Ding</i>	鼎 <i>Ding</i>
☳	震 <i>Zhen</i>			辰 <i>Chen</i>			釐 <i>Li</i>
☶	艮 <i>Gen</i>	艮 <i>Gen</i>		根 <i>Gen</i>	艮* <i>Gen</i>		狠 <i>Gen</i>
☴	漸 <i>Jian</i>	漸 <i>Jian</i>	漸 ?	漸 <i>Jian</i>		漸 <i>Jian</i>	漸 <i>Jian</i>
☱	歸妹 <i>Guimei</i>		歸妹 <i>Guimei</i>	歸妹 <i>Guimei</i>		歸妹 <i>Guimei</i>	歸妹 <i>Guimei</i>
☱	豐 <i>Feng</i>	豐 <i>Feng</i>	豐 <i>Feng</i>	豐 <i>Feng</i>		豐 <i>Feng</i>	豐 <i>Feng</i>
☷	旅 <i>Lü</i>	遯 <i>Lü</i>	遯 <i>Lü</i>	旅 <i>Lü</i>	旅* <i>Lü</i>	旅 <i>Lü</i>	旅 <i>Lü</i>
☱	巽 <i>Xun</i>			算 <i>Suan</i>			巽 <i>Xun</i>
☱	兌 <i>Dui</i>			奪 <i>Duo</i>		兌 <i>Dui</i>	兌 <i>Dui</i>
☱	渙 <i>Huan</i>	爨 <i>Huan</i>	睿 ?	渙 <i>Huan</i>		渙 <i>Huan</i>	奐 <i>Huan</i>
☱	節 <i>Jie</i>			節 <i>Jie</i>	節* <i>Jie</i>	節 <i>Jie</i>	節 <i>Jie</i>
☱	中孚 <i>Zhongfu</i>		中 <i>Zhong</i>	中復 <i>Zhongfu</i>		中純 <i>Zhongbao</i>	
☱	小過 <i>Xiaoguo</i>	少過 <i>Shaoguo</i>	少過 <i>Shaoguo</i>	少過 <i>Shaoguo</i>			小過 <i>Xiaoguo</i>
☱	既濟 <i>Jiji</i>	既淒 <i>Jiji</i>		既濟 <i>Jiji</i>		蜚 <i>Teng</i>	
☱	未濟 <i>Weiji</i>	未淒 <i>Weiji</i>	漶 <i>Qie?</i>	未濟 <i>Weiji</i>			未濟 <i>Weiji</i>



## The Hexagram Statement

The hexagram statement is the first textual material that one encounters in examining any hexagram. According to tradition, whereas the hexagrams themselves were created by the early culture hero Baoxi shi 包犧氏, better known as Fuxi 伏羲, the hexagram statements were composed by King Wen of Zhou 周文王 (r. 1099/1057–1050 BCE), the nominal founder of the Zhou dynasty. This same tradition goes on to credit the Duke of Zhou 周公, one of the sons of King Wen, with the composition of the six line statements of each hexagram text. These will be the topic of the next chapter, but it is worth mentioning at the outset that Chinese tradition has always attributed these two different parts of the hexagram text to two different authors. For the most part, they display very different forms, and also seem to have played very different roles both in the creation of the text and also in its subsequent use. Therefore, I will examine these two different types of statements, hexagram statements and line statements, separately in this and the following chapter.

### 1 The Hexagram Statement of *Qian* Hexagram

For the most part, the hexagram statements are quite formulaic, that of *Qian* 乾 ☰ “Vigorous” hexagram, the first hexagram in the received sequence, being the best known example of these formulas. While some other hexagram statements contain different formulas, and a few hexagram statements are formally similar to line statements, so that an analysis of *Qian* hexagram’s hexagram statement will not suffice to explain all hexagram statements, it is certainly the case that unless one understands the hexagram statement of *Qian* it will not be possible to understand any hexagram statement. Thus we start at the beginning. The text of this one hexagram statement reads in its entirety:

乾元亨利貞  
*Qian yuan heng li zhen*

As noted above in Chapter Seven, the first word of this statement is simply the name of the hexagram, seemingly added as a tag at the head of the entire hexagram text, not to be read together with the words that follow it. Therefore, given the conventions that I employ in the translations offered in this book, I trans-

late it as: “*Qian* ‘Vigorous’:.” As also noted in Chapter Five above, the following four characters, *yuan* 元, *heng* 亨, *li* 利 and *zhen* 貞, are at the heart of one of the most important debates in the history of *Yijing* exegesis, and thus are certainly deserving of extended consideration here. These four characters are found in exactly the same order, though with some other words before or after, in five other hexagrams.<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere, *yuan* 元 and *heng* 亨 occur together without *li* 利 and *zhen* 貞 three times,<sup>2</sup> while *heng* 亨 occurs by itself twenty-seven times (as well as once modified by the word *guang* 光 “radiant” and twice modified by the word *xiao* 小 “little”) in hexagram statements. Indeed, *heng* would seem to be the single most conspicuous marker of hexagram statements.<sup>3</sup> *Li* 利 and *zhen* 貞 occur together without 元亨 twelve times. At least one of the four words occurs in fifty of the sixty-four hexagram statements. Before going on to offer a translation, or even to punctuate the Chinese text (which is a first step along the way to understanding it), it will be useful first to explore how this hexagram statement has been interpreted historically.

## 2 Past Interpretations of *Yuan Heng Li Zhen*

Ostensibly the earliest interpretation of the statement is found—in almost identical terms—in both the *Wenyan zhuan* 文言傳 *Commentary on the Words and Phrases*, one of the canonical “Ten Wings” (*Shi yi* 十翼) of the *Yijing*, the authorship of which is attributed to Confucius, and also in the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 *Zuo Tradition*, one of the commentaries to the *Chunqiu* 春秋 *Spring and Autumn* annals.<sup>4</sup> The comment in the *Wenyan zhuan* comes at the very beginning of the commentary:

1 The other five hexagram statements in which the formula *yuan heng li zhen* 元亨利貞 occur are *Zhun* 屯 ䷂ “Sprouting” (#3), *Sui* 隨 ䷐ “Following” (#17), *Lin* 臨 ䷒ “Looking Down” (#19), *Wuwang* 无妄 ䷘ “Without Folly” (#25), and *Ge* 革 ䷰ “Rebellion” (#49). The formula also appears, though interrupted by other words between *li* 利 and *zhen* 貞, in *Kun* 坤 ䷁ “Compliant” (#2).

2 These occurrences are in *Dayou* 大有 ䷍ “Greatly Having” (#14), *Gu* 蠱 ䷑ “Pestilence” (#18), and *Sheng* 升 ䷭ “Ascending” (#46).

3 It should also be noted that it occurs by itself four times in line statements (the First Six and Six in the Second lines of *Pi* 否 ䷋ “Negation” [#12], the Top Nine line of *Dachu* 大畜 ䷙ “Greater Livestock” [#26], 6 and the Six in the Fourth line of *Jie* 節 ䷻ “Moderation” [#60]), as well as four occurrences in line statements of the received text in which it is almost certainly a mistake for the cognate word *xiang* 享 “to offer” (the Nine in the Third line of *Dayou* 大有 ䷍ “Greatly Having” [#14], the Top Six line of *Sui* 隨 ䷐ “Following” (#17), the Six in the Fourth line of *Sheng* 升 ䷭ “Ascending” [#46], and the Nine in the Second line of *Kun* 困 ䷮ “Bound” [47]).

4 The passage in the *Zuo zhuan* actually comments on the hexagram statement of *Sui* 隨

元者，善之長也。亨者，嘉之會也。利者，義之和也。貞者，事之幹也。君子體仁足以長人，嘉會足以合禮，利物足以和義，貞固足以幹事。君子行此四德者，故大曰：『乾：元、亨、利、貞。』

*Yuan* is the leader of goodnesses. *Heng* is the gathering of enjoyments. *Li* is the harmony of proprieties. *Zhen* is the trunk of affairs. The gentleman's embodiment of humanity is sufficient to lead others; enjoyments being gathered is sufficient to conjoin ritual; benefitting things is sufficient to harmonize proprieties; and affirmed sturdiness is sufficient to stiffen affairs. The gentleman practices these four virtues, and therefore it says: *Qian*: Prime, Receipt, Benefit, Affirmed.

The passage in the *Zuo zhuan* is embedded within a longer story about one Mu Jiang 母姜 (d. 564 BCE), one of the more notorious women of ancient China. As examined in Chapter Five above (account #5.5), the passage comes in the year of her death (ninth year of Duke Xiang of Lu 魯襄公 [r. 572–542 BCE]; i.e., 564 BCE), and recounts a divination made years earlier. She had been the wife of Duke Xuan of Lu 魯宣公 (r. 608–591 BCE) and mother of his son Duke Cheng 魯成公 (r. 590–573 BCE), against whom she subsequently conspired in favor of her lover Shusun Qiaoru 叔孫僑如, for which reason she was then put into prison. At the time that Mu Jiang was first imprisoned, a diviner had sought to convince her that a divination performed on her behalf meant that she would get out of prison. She rejected this prognostication, offering her own interpretation of the hexagram statement of *Sui* 隨 ䷐ “Following” hexagram (#17),<sup>5</sup> which coincidentally shares the same main four words as that of *Qian* hexagram.

䷐ “Following” (#17) hexagram, which however is almost identical to that of *Qian* hexagram, the sole difference (other than the different hexagram names) being the term *wu jiu* 无咎 “without trouble” after “*yuan heng li zhen*.”

5 As noted above in Chapter Five, the prognostication of this divination seems to have involved some subterfuge. The initial result, not specified as using the *Zhou Changes*, was pronounced as the “eight of *Gen* ䷋ ‘Stilling’” (*Gen zhi ba* 艮 ䷋ 至八). The scribe performing the divination suggested that this points instead to the hexagram *Sui* 隨 ䷐ “Following”: “This is called *Gen* ䷋ ‘Stilling’’s *Sui* ䷐ ‘Following’” (*shi wei Gen zhi Sui* 是謂艮 ䷋ 之 隨 ䷐). There is no convincing explanation of why this should be so. The hexagram pictures for *Gen* ䷋ and *Sui* ䷐ differ by five lines, the only similar line being the broken line in the second position. As we have seen in Chapter Five, in the *Zuo zhuan* milfoil divination using the *Zhou Changes* was almost always expressed as the same sort of “Hexagram<sup>1</sup> *zhi* 之 Hexagram<sup>2</sup>” formula, but in this formula the two hexagrams invariably differ by just a single line. That this divination would result in five changing lines is extraordinarily improbable, at least according to the traditional understanding of how sortilege divination was performed. According to this understanding of milfoil divination, the chances of obtaining a moving yin line (i.e., a 6) are 1/16, while the chances of getting a moving yang line (i.e., 9) are 3/16. Since the hexagram

穆姜薨於東宮。始往而筮之，遇艮☶之八。史曰：「是謂艮☶之隨☱。隨，其出也。君必速出！」姜曰：「亡！是於《周易》曰：『隨，元、亨、利、貞，無咎。』元，體之長也；亨，嘉之會也；利，義之和也；貞，事之幹也。體仁足以長人，嘉德足以合禮，利物足以和義，貞固足以幹事。然，故不可誣也。是以雖隨無咎，今我婦人，而與於亂。固在下位，而有不仁，不可謂元。不靖國家，不可謂亨。作而害身，不可謂利。棄位而姤，不可謂貞。有四德者，隨而無咎。我皆無之，豈隨也哉？我則取惡，能無咎乎？必死於此，弗得出矣。」

Mu Jiang passed away in the Eastern Palace. When she first went there, she divined by milfoil about it, meeting the eight of *Gen* ☶ “Stilling.” The scribe said: “This is called *Gen* ☶ ‘Stilling’'s *Sui* ☱ ‘Following.’” ‘Following’ means getting out. Milady will certainly quickly get out. Jiang said: “Not so! In the *Zhou Changes* this says:

Following: Prime, Receipt, Benefit, Affirmed. Without trouble.<sup>6</sup>

‘Prime’ is the leader of the body; ‘Receipt’ is the gathering of enjoyment; ‘Benefit’ is the harmony of propriety; and ‘Affirmed’ is the trunk of endeavors. Embodying humaneness suffices to lead people, enjoying virtue suffices to join the rites, benefiting others suffices to harmonize propriety, and affirming sturdiness suffices to strengthen endeavors. Thus, there can be no deception even if in this way it is ‘Following. Without trouble.’ Now I am a woman and have taken part in disorder. Solidly in a lowly position, I was also inhumane; this cannot be said to be ‘Prime.’ Not bringing peace to the state cannot be said to be in ‘Receipt.’ Acting and harming my person cannot be said to be of ‘Benefit.’ And abandoning my position to indulge in licentiousness cannot be said to be ‘Affirmed.’ With these four virtues, one might ‘Follow’ and be ‘without trouble.’ But since I have none of them, how could I ‘Follow’? And since I have taken up evil, how could I be ‘without trouble’? I will surely die here, and will not be able to get out.”<sup>7</sup>

Given this canonical pedigree, this “four virtues” interpretation of the phrase *yuan heng li zhen* has been adopted in many commentaries and translations

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picture of *Gen* differs from that of *Sui* by three yin lines and two yang lines, the chances of all five of these lines changing would be  $(1/16^3 \times 3/16^2 =) 1/116,508$ . Instead of such an improbable result, it seems to me much likelier that the diviner was using a technical trick to convince Mu Jiang of a positive result. She did not fall for the trick, rejecting it on philosophical grounds rather than on technical grounds.

6 I here translate this hexagram statement according to the interpretation given by Mu Jiang, even though I translate the same words differently elsewhere in this book.

7 *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 4215–4216.

of the *Zhou Changes*. In the West, it is represented in the translation by James Legge (1815–1987): “*Khien* (represents) what is great and originating, penetrating, advantageous, correct and firm,” translating *yuan* 元 (translated above as “Prime”) as “great and originating,” translating *heng* 亨 (translated above as “Receipt”) as “penetrating,” translating *li* 利 (translated above as “Benefit”) as “advantageous,” and translating *zhen* 貞 (translated above as “Affirmed”) as “correct and firm.”<sup>8</sup>

Influential though this “four virtues” interpretation has been, it is by no means the only important interpretation, or even the only important interpretation within the canonical *Yijing* itself. The *Tuan zhuan* 彖傳 *Commentary on the Judgments*, the canonical commentary devoted to the hexagram statements, also credited to Confucius, three times glosses *yuan heng li zhen* as *da heng yi zheng* 大亨以正 “great *heng* to be upright” or “great *heng* through rectitude.”<sup>9</sup> This reading obviously divides the phrase into two two-word compounds, *yuan heng* 元亨 and *li zhen* 利貞, with *yuan* 元 glossed as *da* 大 “great” and *li* 利 as *yi* 以 “to use to.” *Zhen* 貞 is glossed paranomastically as *zheng* 正 “upright; rectitude,” as is common in early Chinese commentarial literature. *Heng* 亨 seems never to be explained explicitly by the *Tuan zhuan*, but other occurrences of *yuan heng* 元亨 are also glossed *da heng* 大亨, so it is clear that at least this commentary read the two words together, with *yuan* understood as an adjective. This interpretation has also been adopted by many commentators and translators, represented most influentially in the Chinese tradition by Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200). In his commentary *Zhou Yi ben yi* 周易本義 *Basic Meaning of the Zhou Changes*, Zhu Xi provided the following comment on this line of *Qian* hexagram:

文王以為乾道大通而至正。故於筮得此卦，而六爻皆不變者，言其占當得大通，而必利在正面，然後可以保其終也。

King Wen considered the way of *Qian* to be greatly penetrating and of the highest rectitude. Therefore, in milfoil divination, meeting with this hexagram, with all six of the lines unchanging, one says of its prognostication that you should get “great penetration,” and then certainly “benefit will reside in being upright,” and only then can one protect the end.<sup>10</sup>

8 Legge, *The Yi King*, 57.

9 This formulation is found in the comments to *Lin* 臨 “Looking Down” (#19), *Wuwang* 无妄 “Without Folly” (#25) and *Ge* 革 “Rebellion” (#49).

10 Zhu Xi, *Zhou Yi benyi*, 30.

This interpretation has also been quite influential in the West, best known through the work of Richard Wilhelm (1873–1930), who translated *Qian yuan heng li zhen* into German as “Das Schöpferische wirkt erhabenes Gelingen, fördernd durch Beharrlichkeit,”<sup>11</sup> in which “Schöpferische” (“creative”) represents Wilhelm’s translation of the hexagram name *Qian*. This translation has become better known throughout the West by way of the translation of it into English by Cary F. Baynes (1883–1977): “The Creative works sublime success, Furthering through perseverance.”<sup>12</sup> “Sublime success” is an aesthetic rendering of *yuan heng* 元亨, while “furthering through perseverance” is a somewhat more literal translation of *li zhen* 利貞.

With the rise of what is called “New Changes Studies” (*Xin Yi xue* 新易學) in the twentieth century, a third interpretation was added to these two dominant interpretations of *yuan heng li zhen*. This was pioneered in particular by Gao Heng 高亨 (1900–1986) in his book *Zhou Yi gu jing jin zhu* 周易古經今注 *New Notes on the Ancient Classic Zhou Changes*. Arguing that the *Zhou Changes* grew out of a divination context more or less similar to that of Shang turtle-shell divination but also thoroughly imbedded within the Zhou dynasty ritual culture, he explained this hexagram statement in the following terms:

元，大也。亨即享字。古人舉行大享之祭，曾筮遇此卦，故記之曰元亨。利貞猶言利占也。筮遇此卦，舉事有利，故曰利貞。

*Yuan* means “great.” *Heng* is none other than the character *xiang* “to offer.” When the ancients performed the sacrifice of great offering, they divined and met with this hexagram and therefore noted it saying “Great offering.” *Li zhen* is the same as saying “beneficial prognostication.” In divining when they met with this hexagram, the affair they were to perform was beneficial and therefore they said *li zhen*.<sup>13</sup>

Gao’s interpretation is more or less grammatically similar to Zhu Xi’s and the *Tuan zhuan*’s, in that the four characters are divided into two two-character compounds, with *yuan* 元 interpreted as an adjective “great” modifying the word *heng* 亨. However, the resemblance ends there. Gao insists that the character *heng* 亨 “is none other than” (*ji* 即) the word *xiang* 享 “to offer.” Also different is his interpretation of both the word *zhen* 貞, and also the relationship between it and the word *li* 利. Whereas throughout most of the history of *Yijing* exegesis, *zhen* 貞 was glossed as *zheng* 正 “upright; rectitude,” Gao Heng

11 Wilhelm, *I Ging*, 1.

12 Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, 4.

13 Gao Heng, *Zhou Yi gu jing jin zhu*, 1.

insisted that in the context of divination it had a special meaning, which he rendered as “prognostication” (*zhan* 占). Gao’s interpretation of the word *li* 利 was also quite different from any of the traditional commentaries. *Li* normally means “benefit,” either as a noun or a verb; both the *Tuan zhuan* and Zhu Xi had treated it as a verb complement meaning something like “beneficial to do or be” something. By contrast, Gao Heng interpreted it as an adjective, meaning a “beneficial prognostication.” This interpretation too has been influential, though perhaps more so in the West than in China. Richard Kunst, who followed Gao Heng in much of his interpretation on the *Zhou Changes*, gave this as “Grand treat, favorable determination,”<sup>14</sup> while Richard Rutt, whose translation is otherwise eclectic, offers “Supreme offering; favourable augury.”<sup>15</sup>

My own reading of the *Zhou Changes* is usually identified with the “New Changes Studies.” Nevertheless, I would argue that while Gao Heng (and thus Kunst and Rutt’s) sense that this crucial phrase should be interpreted within the context of divination is certainly correct, their understanding of both the grammar and semantics of the phrase are also almost certainly mistaken. Much preferable, at least grammatically, is the reading of the *Tuan zhuan* and Zhu Xi. Demonstration of this will require us to consider each of the four words individually, with emphasis being given to *heng* 亨 and *zhen* 貞.

### 3 *Yuan* 元

The word *yuan* 元 originally meant “head” or “chief” (whence the *Tuan zhuan* gloss for it as *da* 大 “great”), but early on came more commonly to mean “first” or “prime,” as in *yuan nian* 元年 “first year.” It is often ambiguous as to which of these two related meanings is intended. Richard Kunst notes disagreement about the meaning of the term *yuan si* 元祀 in the “Luo gao” 洛誥 “Announcement at Luo” and “Jiu gao” 酒誥 “Announcement Regarding Liquor” chapters of the *Shang shu* 尚書 *Exalted Scriptures*: whereas the canonical pseudo-Kong Anguo 孔安國 commentary glosses *yuan* as “great” (*da* 大), such modern scholars as Sun Xingyan 孫星衍 (1753–1818), Yu Yue 俞樾 (1821–1907), and Bernhard Karlgren (1889–1978) have all argued that it should mean “original sacrifice” or “originator’s sacrifice.”<sup>16</sup>

In the received text of the *Zhou Changes*, *yuan* occurs twenty-seven times, thirteen times in hexagram statements and fourteen times in line statements.

14 Kunst, “The Original *Yijing*,” 369–380.

15 Rutt, *The Book of Changes (Zhouyi)*, 224.

16 Kunst, “The Original *Yijing*,” 199.

Ten of the thirteen occurrences in hexagram statements come before the word *heng* 亨, as in the case of *Qian* hexagram under discussion here. In two of the other three cases, it comes before the word *ji* 吉 “auspicious”;<sup>17</sup> the compound *yuan ji* 元吉 also comprises twelve of the fourteen occurrences of the word *yuan* in line statements.<sup>18</sup> In the compound *yuan ji*, *yuan* is almost universally understood to be a modifier, the compound meaning something like “greatly auspicious” or “prime auspiciousness.” Thus, it seems certain that in the parallel formula in hexagram statements, *yuan heng* 元亨, *yuan* should also be a modifier, meaning either “great” or “prime.” The choice between these two meanings is less certain. My translation as “prime” is informed by my own understanding of the way that milfoil divination with the *Zhou Changes* was conducted, at least in Spring and Autumn times, an understanding that is admittedly speculative. However, in addition to that reconstruction of the divination procedure, there is also some linguistic evidence within the *Zhou Changes* themselves in support of reading *yuan* 元 as “first” or “prime.” In two of the three occurrences of the word in which it does not modify either *heng* 亨 or *ji* 吉,<sup>19</sup> it is paired with the word *yong* 永 “eternal” or “long-term.”

比 ䷇：吉。原筮元；永貞无咎。不寧方來。后夫凶。

*Bi* “Allying” (#8): Auspicious. Original milfoil divination: Prime. Affirming about the long-term: Without trouble. An unpeaceful country coming. For a latter man: Ominous.

17 The one exceptional usage in a hexagram statement is with *Bi* 比 ䷇ “Allying” (#8). There are different ways to punctuate the phrase in which *yuan* appears. As discussed in Chapter Five above (pp. 262–263 nn. 52, 55), a good argument can be made that the phrase is corrupt. The interpretation offered there is:

比：吉。原筮元永貞无咎。不寧方來；后夫凶。

*Bi* “Allying”: Auspicious. Original milfoil divination: Prime. Affirming about the long-term: Without trouble. An unpeaceful country coming. For a latter man: Ominous.

18 The two exceptional occurrences of *yuan* in the line statements are:

睽 ䷥九四：睽孤，遇元夫，交孚。厲。无咎。

*Kui* “Cross-eyed” (#38): Nine in the Fourth: Looking cross-eyed at an orphan: Meeting a prime husband, exchanging captives. Dangerous. Without trouble.

萃 ䷬九五：萃有位。无咎。匪孚。元永貞。悔亡。

*Cui* “Collected” (#45): Nine in the Fifth: Collecting has positions. Without trouble. Untrustworthy. Prime affirming about the long-term. Regret gone.

19 In the third occurrence, in the Nine in the Fourth line of *Kui* 睽 “Cross-eyed” (#38), it seems to mean “chief” or “great,” or perhaps as a compound “headman.”

九四：睽孤，遇元夫，交孚。厲。无咎。

Nine in the Fourth: Looking cross-eyed at an orphan: Meeting a prime husband, exchanging captives. Dangerous. Without trouble.



萃九五：萃有位。无咎。匪孚。元永貞。悔亡。

Cui “Collected” (#45): Nine in the Fifth: Collecting has positions. Without trouble. Untrustworthy. Prime affirming about the long-term. Regret gone.

It is likely that both of these statements are corrupt to some extent.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, the contrast with *yong* 永 “long-term” does suggest that  *yuan* 元 should mean something like “preliminary” or, as I translate it, “prime.”

#### 4 Heng 亨

*Heng* 亨 is one of the most characteristic words of the *Zhou Changes*; indeed, it occurs in Chinese literature almost uniquely in conjunction with the *Zhou Changes*. Dictionaries routinely treat the word as cognate with, or even interchangeable with, *xiang* 享 “to offer; to enjoy,” both words deriving from the single original character 亨. This character is in turn more or less interchangeable with *xiang* 饗 “to feast, to offer; to receive, to enjoy.” The character 亨 was written either 亨 or 亨 in Seal Script, the latter form said to be a pictograph of a covered container with food inside it. The original form of 饗 is even more pictographic: 饗, depicting two kneeling figures facing each other over a pot of grain, producing the character 鄉.

Some early Chinese texts use these two (or more) characters indiscriminately, while others are careful to differentiate their uses. For instance, the *Zhou li* 周禮 *Rites of Zhou* uses *xiang* 亨 (i.e., 享) for “to offer,” and *xiang* 饗 for “to feast,” while the *Yi li* 儀禮 *Ceremonies and Rites* uses *xiang* 亨 for “to feast,” and *xiang* 饗 for “to receive, to enjoy.” On the other hand, the *Li ji* 禮記 *Record of Rites* uses only *xiang* 饗 for all of these meanings, while the *Zuo zhuan*, uses only *xiang* 亨. The *Shi jing* 詩經 *Classic of Poetry* clearly differentiates the different meanings, the differentiation being important for our understanding of the meaning of *heng* 亨 in the *Zhou Changes*. The *Shi jing* consistently uses *xiang* 享 for offerings to the spirits, and *xiang* 饗 for the spirits’ receipt of the offerings. For instance, the poems “Thorny Bramble” 楚茨 (*Chu ci*; Mao 209) and “We

20 Gao Heng, *Zhou Yi gu jing jin zhu*, 29–30, argues that in the hexagram statement for *Bi* “Allying” hexagram, *yuan* 元 should have been followed by *heng* 亨, as is customary in hexagram statements. This is a reasonable suggestion, but it should be noted that the Shanghai Museum manuscript, the earliest extant text of the *Zhou Changes*, reads the same as the received text (except for the added word *ji* 吉 “auspicious” between *yong zhen* 永貞 “affirming about the long-term” and *wu jiu* 无咎 “without trouble”).

Offer” 我將 (*Wo jiang*; Mao 273) both differentiate these two meanings. The first two stanzas of “Thorny Bramble” describe the process of ancestral sacrifice, the first stanza describing the offering, the second the result. The two stanzas end with the following lines (the words *xiang* 享 “to offer” and *xiang* 饗 “to receive” in bold for emphasis):

以為酒食，以享以祀，  
以妥以侑，以介景福！  
To make into wine and food,  
With which **to offer**, to sacrifice,  
To bring comfort, to bring blessings,  
To strengthen imposing fortune.

先祖是皇，神保是饗，  
孝孫有慶，報以介福，  
萬壽無疆！  
The ancestors these are august,  
Spirit Protectors these **receive**.  
Filial grandsons celebrate,  
Requited with sturdy fortune,  
Myriad long-life without end.<sup>21</sup>

The poem “We Offer” of the *Zhou Song* 周頌 *Zhou Hymns*, the oldest section of the *Shi jing*, includes a further use of the word *xiang* 饗 “to receive,” providing an excellent contrast to its earlier use of *xiang* 享 “to offer.” The poem reads in its entirety (the words *xiang* 享 and *xiang* 饗 and their respective translations again in bold):

我將我享，維羊維牛，維天其右之！  
儀式刑文王之典，日靖四方。伊嘏文王！  
既右饗之。我其夙夜，畏天之威。于時保之！  
We sacrifice, we **offer**,  
It is sheep, it is oxen,  
May it be Heaven to have them!  
Properly formed were King Wen’s standards,  
Daily pacifying the four quarters.

21 It is a coincidence that this stanza also includes the character 亨, in the phrase “*huo bo huo peng*” 或剝或亨 “And now paring, and now boiling.” However, as my Romanization and translation here indicate, this 亨 is almost certainly to be read as *peng* 烹 “to boil.”

He is blessed, King Wen.  
 Having blessed and **received** them,  
 May we morning and evening  
 Fear Heaven's awe  
 And Protect them in this!

Within the *Zhou Changes* itself, the word *heng* 亨 occurs predominantly in hexagram statements (forty of forty-seven occurrences). Ten of these forty occurrences of the word *heng* in hexagram statements follow immediately after the word *yuan* 元, as in the case of *Qian* hexagram. In two occurrences, it follows the word *xiao* 小 “little,” and in one case it follows *guang* 光 “bright.” In its other twenty-seven occurrences, *heng* occurs by itself, without any apparent syntactic connection with other words. Of the seven occurrences in line statements, four occur in contexts similar to that of the hexagram statements (i.e., either in the phrase *yuan heng* or just *heng* by itself). However, in three cases, the graph appears where we would expect a verb meaning “to offer” or “to sacrifice”:

大有九三：公用亨于天子。小人弗克。

*Dayou* “Greatly Having” (#14): Nine in the Third: A duke herewith offering to the Son of Heaven. A petty person is not capable of it.

隨上六：拘系之。乃從維之。王用亨于西山。

*Sui* “Following” (#17): Top Six: Arresting and tying them, and then further trussing them. The king herewith offers on the western mountain.

升上六：拘系之。乃從維之。王用亨于西山。

*Sheng* “Ascending” (#46): Six in the Fourth: The king herewith makes offering on Forked Mountain. Auspicious. Without trouble.

These three occurrences of *heng* 亨 in the line statements of the *Zhou Changes* are paralleled by three occurrences of the graph *xiang* 享, all clearly in the sense “to offer”:

損 ䷨：有孚。元吉。无咎。可貞。利有攸往。曷之用。二簋可用享。  
*Sun* “Decreasing” (#41): There is trust. Prime auspiciousness. Without trouble. One can affirm. Beneficial to have somewhere to go. What is it to use? Two tureens can be used to make offering.

益六二：或益之十朋之龜弗克違。永貞吉。王用亨于帝。吉。

*Yi* “Increasing” (#42): Six in the Second: Now increasing it, Ten double

strands of turtle-shells cannot be disobeyed. Affirming about permanence: Auspicious. The king herewith makes offering to Di. Auspicious.

困九二：困于酒食。朱紱方來。利用享祀。征凶。无咎。

*Kun* “Bound” (#47): Nine in the Second: Bound in wine and food: The Red-Kneepads country comes. Beneficial herewith to offer and sacrifice. Campaigning: Ominous. Without trouble.

It is the parallel between the uses of *heng* 亨 and *xiang* 享 in the sense of “to offer” that was the principal evidence for Gao Heng, followed by Richard Kunst and Richard Rutt in English, to argue that the word *heng* 亨 should have the same meaning in its forty occurrences in hexagram statements. Thus, for *heng* 亨 itself, they would say that on the occasion of “an offering” or “sacrifice,” a divination would be performed; the two characters *yuan heng* 元亨 would refer to the occasion of “a great sacrifice.”

Although this argument seems to be reasonable, early manuscripts of the *Zhou Changes* show that the two different senses “to offer” and “to receive, to enjoy” were, in fact, clearly differentiated. In the Mawangdui 馬王堆 manuscript, *heng* 亨 is consistently written as 亨, while the three cases of *xiang* 享 are all written as 芳. It is significant that in the Nine in the Third line of *Dayou* “Greatly Having” and the Top Six line of *Sui* “Following,” i.e., where the received text writes *heng* 亨 in the apparent sense of “to make offering,” the graph is also written in the manuscript as 芳.<sup>22</sup> The Shanghai Museum manuscript, although quite fragmentary, reflects the same differentiation: whereas the manuscript consistently writes the *heng* of the received text as 鄉, it writes the character in the Top Six line of *Sui* “Following” as 享 (all three of the places in which the received text writes *xiang* 享 are missing due to breaks in the text).

However the word *heng* or *xiang* may have been written during the earliest stage of the *Changes*’s writing—亨，享，亨，鄉 or 饗—I feel certain that the form given in the Shanghai Museum manuscript points toward the original meaning of the word in the context of the earliest *Changes* divination. *Xiang* 鄉, a pictograph of two kneeling figures facing each other over a pot of grain, is cognate with the word *xiang* 饗, which, as we have seen, means both “to offer” and “to receive” or “to enjoy.” A special feature of the Chinese language is that many words involving the give and take of communications between two persons or two parties were originally expressed with a single word. Thus, both

22 The Six in the Fourth line of *Sheng* 升 “Ascending,” the only other case in which the received text uses *heng* as a verb meaning “to make offering,” is missing from the Mawangdui manuscript due to a break in the silk.

“to give” and “to take” were written as *shou* 受 (“to give” was later differentiated in writing as *shou* 授), “to buy” and “to sell” were both written as *mai* 買 (“to sell” was later differentiated as *mai* 賣), while *jie* 借 is still used for both “to lend” and “to borrow,” and *ming* 明 can mean either “to explain” or “to understand.” Even the word family deriving from *you* 有 “to have” seems to display this feature: the word *you* 侑 means “to give offering (to the spirits)” while the word *you* 祐 means “to receive blessings (from the spirits);” in Shang oracle-bone inscriptions, both of these senses, as well as that of *you* “to have,” could be written simply as *you* 又. The word family that includes both *heng* 亨 and *xiang* 饗 reveals this same sense of bi-directional communication.

As we have seen in Chapters Three and Four above, in ancient China the word *xiang* 饗 appeared formulaically at the end of prayers (including divinatory prayers): *shang xiang* 尚饗 “would that (the spirit-world) receive (our prayer).” For instance, the “Shao lao kuishi li” 少牢饋食禮 “Rites of the Minor Sacrifice and Food Offerings” chapter of the *Yi li* gives the following description of a divination about presenting the annual sacrifice to the ancestors (*shang xiang* 尚饗 and its translation “would that it be received” is emphasized in bold):

日用丁、己，筮旬有一日。筮於廟門之外。主人朝服，西面于門東。史朝服，左執筮，右抽上韠，兼與筮執之，東面受命于主人。主人曰：「孝孫某，來日丁亥，用薦歲事于皇祖伯某，以某妃配某氏。尚饗！」史曰：「諾！」西面于門西，抽下韠，左執筮，右兼執韠以擊筮，遂述命，曰：「假爾大筮有常。孝孫某，來日丁亥，用薦歲事于皇祖伯某，以某妃配某氏。尚饗！」乃釋韠，立筮。卦者在左坐，卦以木。卒筮，乃書卦于木，示主人，乃退占。吉，則史韠筮，史兼執筮與卦以告于主人：「占曰『從』。」

Using either day *ding* or *ji*, one divines by milfoil about eleven days hence. The milfoil divination takes place outside of the temple gate. The Host wearing court clothing faces west on the eastern side of the gate. The Scribe, wearing court clothing, holds the milfoil in his left hand and with his right hand draws out the upper quiver, and puts it together with the milfoil to hold; facing east he receives the command from the Host. The Host says: “Filial grandson So-and-so on the coming day *dinghai* will herewith present the annual service to august Grandfather So-and-so and to Consort So-and-so; **would that it be received.**” The Scribe says: “Approved.” Facing west on the western side of the gate, he draws out the lower quiver, and with his left hand holding the milfoil, and with his right hand combining and holding the quiver strikes the milfoil, thereupon pronouncing the command, saying: “Approaching you great milfoil in the

standard way: 'Filial Grandson so-and-so on the coming day *dinghai* will herewith present the annual service to August Grandfather So-and-so and to Consort So-and-so; **would that it be received.**' Then putting down the quiver he sets up the milfoil. The Hexagramer kneeling to his left draws the hexagram on a wooden board. Finishing the divination, then he draws the hexagram on the wooden board. Showing it to the host, then they step back to prognosticate. If it is auspicious, then the Scribe quivers the milfoil, then the Scribe holds the milfoil and hexagram together to announce to the Host: "The prognostication says 'Approved.'"

Similarly, the "Shi yu li" 士虞禮 "Rites of the Sire Relaxing [the Ancestors]" includes the following description of an offering made to pacify the soul of a newly deceased parent:

死三日而殯，三月而葬，遂卒哭。將旦而祔，則薦。卒辭曰：「哀子某，來日某，濟祔爾于爾皇祖某甫。尚饗！」女子，曰：「皇祖妣某氏」。婦，曰：「孫婦于皇祖姑某氏」。其他辭，一也。饗辭曰：「哀子某，圭為而哀薦之。饗！」

On the third day after the death one encoffins, on the third month one buries, and then one completes the wailing. The next day at dawn, the spirit tablet is placed and then the offering is made. The final statement says: "The mourning son so-and-so, on the coming day such-and-such will raise your tablet up together with your august ancestor so-and-so; **would that it be received.**" For a daughter, one says: "August ancestress Madame so-and-so." For a wife, one says: "The descendant wife of august ancestress Madame so-and-so." All of the other statements are as one. The **receipt statement** says: "Mourning son so-and-so acting purely has mournfully sacrificed to him. **It is received!**"

The "receipt statement" (*xiang ci* 饗辭) is the announcement that the sacrifice has been successfully received by the ancestor in question, similar to the "prognostication" (*zhan* 占) in the preceding description of a divination: *zhan yue* "cong" 占曰『從』 "the prognostication says: 'Approved.'"

The same format for a divination is found in a description of a turtle-shell divination in the "Geng Zhu" 耕柱 chapter of the *Mozzi* 墨子. This passage has also already been examined in Chapter Three above (account #3.14). Nevertheless, it is worth revisiting here in the context of our discussion of *heng* 亨 and *xiang* 饗, even though some of its most important information is hidden by variant characters. I here include only the initial context and the divination charge and the first part of the prognostication. The passage, including the ora-

cle that follows the first part of the prognostication, will be taken up yet again in Chapter Nine on the line statements of the *Changes*. I again highlight the relevant words, both in the Chinese text and in the translation.

巫馬子謂子墨子曰：鬼神孰與聖人明智。子墨子曰：鬼神之明智於聖人猶聰耳明目之與聾瞽也。昔者夏后開使蜚廉折金於山川而陶鑄之於昆吾。是使翁難雉乙卜於白若之龜曰：“鼎成三足而方，不炊而自烹，不舉而自臧，不遷而自行，以祭於昆吾之虛；上鄉”。乙又言兆之由曰：“饗矣”。

Magician Mazi addressed Master Mozi saying, “Who is more intelligent, the ghosts and spirits or the sages?” Master Mozi said, “The intelligence of the ghosts and spirits vis-à-vis that of the sages is just like those with perceptive ears and bright eyes vis-à-vis the deaf and blind. In antiquity, Qi, the lord of Xia sent Fei Lian to dig metal out of the hills and streams, and to cast a caldron at Kunwu. This one sent Wengnan Zhi Yi to divine about it with the turtle White Approval, saying: ‘The caldron will be complete with three legs and will yet be square, will not roast and yet will cook of its own, will not be raised up and yet will store itself, and will not be transferred and yet will move on its own, in order to sacrifice on the mound of Kunwu; **would that it be received.**’ Yi then spoke of the crack’s oracle, saying: “**Received indeed.**”<sup>23</sup>

The ending of the divination prayer, here translated as “would that it be received,” is written in the Chinese text as *shang xiang* 上鄉, essentially meaningless in this context.

However, already in the eighteenth century, Bi Yuan 畢沅 (1730–1797) indicated his suspicion that this should be read as 尚饗, a suggestion later accepted and elaborated upon by Sun Yirang 孫詒讓 (1848–1908).<sup>24</sup> I think there is no question that they are correct in this emendation. The diviner then pronounces the prognostication, saying *xiang yi* 饗矣 “It is Received indeed.”

When Wengnan Zhi Yi begins his prognostication with the word *xiang* 饗, it is also almost certainly the same word as the *heng* 亨 of the *Changes*. This

23 Sun Yirang, *Mozi xian gu*, 42226. Bi Yuan’s emendations to the 1445 Ming-dynasty *Dao zang* 道藏 or Daoist canon text of the *Mozi* (this passage is found in *Mozi* 墨子 [*Daozang* ed.], 11.9a–b) are based on medieval quotations of the passage, all of which he copiously cites.

24 Bi Yuan 畢沅, *Mozi* (Sibu beiyao ed.), 11.8b. Sun Yirang, *Mozi xian gu*, 42226 specifically differentiates this “command to the turtle” (*ming gui zhi ci* 命龜之辭), from the “prognostication” (*zhan ci* 占辭) below.

passage shows well how it is to be understood: it is the announcement of the diviner that the wish expressed in the divination has been “received” and “enjoyed” by the spirits, thereby also constituting the divination’s response. In the hexagram statements of the *Changes*, the first two words *yuan heng* 元亨 announce the “initial receipt” of the spirits’ favor, and this is why Richard Wilhelm’s translation as “success” points in the right direction.<sup>25</sup>

There is still earlier evidence for this use of *xiang* 饗 as a sort of prognostication indicating that communication with the ancestors had been successful. Indeed, some of the evidence goes back almost to the beginning of Chinese literary history. Shang oracle-bone inscriptions associated with the He 何 Diviner Group, the so-called Period III during the reigns of the Shang kings Lin Xin 廩辛 (r. c. 1150–1140 BCE) and Kang Ding 康丁 (r. c. 1040–1030 BCE), display a feature not seen in other Shang oracle-bone inscriptions: the formulaic use of the character *xiang* 鄉 as a sort of prognostication. Several examples of this usage are visible in the single oracle bone *Jiaguwen heji* 甲骨文合集 #27456, illustrated in Figure 8.1 on the following page.

The inscriptions running up the right-hand side of the ox plastron are divinations concerning offerings made to ancestors of the Shang king. The first two of these (reading from the bottom to the top, as indicated by the day dates), read:

王子卜何貞：翌癸丑其侑妣癸。鄉（《合集》27456）

Crack-making on *renzi* (day 49), He affirming: “On the next day *guichou* (day 50), we will make offering to Ancestress Gui.” **Received**<sup>26</sup>

癸巳卜何貞：翌甲午登于父甲。鄉（《合集》27456）

Crack-making on *guisi* (day 30), He affirming: “On the next day *jiawu* (day 31), we will lift up to Father Jia.” **Received**<sup>27</sup>

As Song Zhenhao 宋鎮豪 notes in his discussion of this feature, *xiang* 鄉 here has to be read separate from the “charges” of the divination (i.e., the proposals to perform offerings to Ancestress Gui and Father Jia), and indicates the spir-

25 In the *Changes* commentarial tradition, *heng* is routinely glossed as *tong* 通 “to penetrate, to communicate,” which, as noted here, Richard Wilhelm rendered as “success.” Although this translation would seem to be only very loosely related to the meaning of “communicate,” as I will try to show below, it does point in the right direction.

26 Guo Moruo 郭沫若, ed.-in-chief, Hu Houxuan 胡厚宣, ed., *Jiaguwen heji* 甲骨文合集 (13 vols., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1978–1982), #27456.1.

27 Guo Moruo, *Jiaguwen heji*, #27456.2.



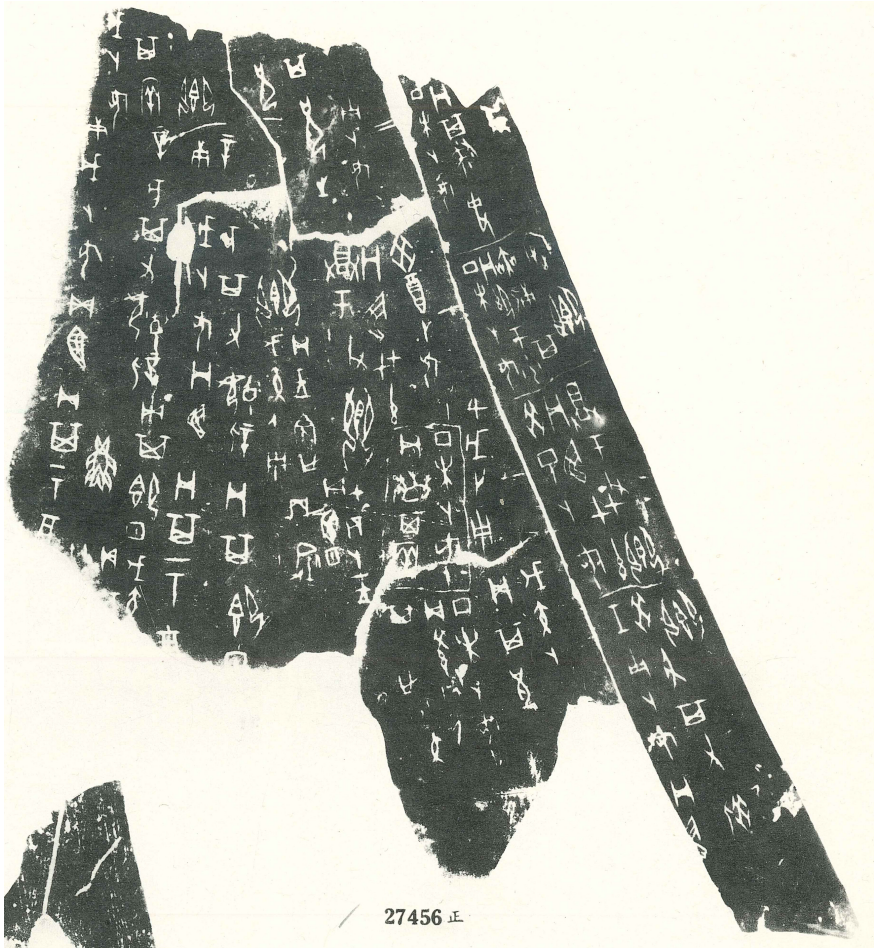


FIGURE 8.1 Shang oracle-bone inscription *Heji* #27456 illustrating use of word *xiang* 鄉; from Guo Moruo 郭沫若 Ed.-in-chief, *Zhongguo Shehui Kexueyuan Lishi yanjiusuo* ed., *Jiaguwen heji* 甲骨文合集, 13 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1978–1982), #27456

its' acceptance of the proposed sacrifice.<sup>28</sup> Proof that *xiang* 鄉 here is not to be read together with the divination charge can be seen in the following two contemporary inscriptions, in which the character is physically separated from the charge, in the second case actually being written on the opposite side from the charge's direction of writing.

28 Song Zhenhao 宋鎮豪, *Xia Shang shehui shenghuoshi (Zengdingben)* 夏商社會生活史 (增訂本) (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui jexue chubanshe, 2005), 487.

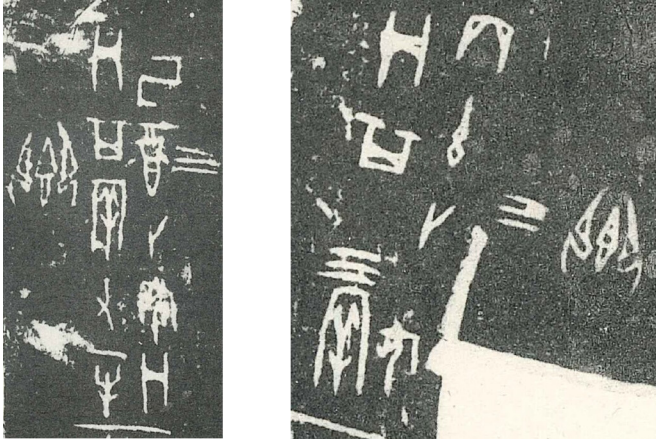


FIGURE 8.2 Shang oracle-bone inscriptions *Heji* #27138 and #27321 illustrating use of word *xiang* 鄉; from Guo Moruo 郭沫若 Ed.-in-chief, Zhongguo Shehui Kexueyuan Lishi yanjiusuo ed., *Jiaguwen heji* 甲骨文合集, 13 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1978–1982); left: #27138, right: #27321

己酉卜何貞貞其牢又一牛 鄉 《合集》 27138

Crack-making on *jiyou* (day 46), He affirming affirming (*sic*): “Let it be a penned ox and also an ox.” **Received**

丙午卜何貞其三牢三 鄉 《合集》 27321

Crack-making on *bingwu* (day 43), He affirming: “Let it be three penned oxen.” Three **Received**

Of course, *xiang* 鄉 here is but the protograph for the *xiang* 饗 seen in the *Yi li*.

Finally, there is also evidence for this use of *xiang* 饗 in the “Gu ming” 顧命 “Retrospective Command” chapter of the *Shang shu* 尚書, which almost certainly dates to the Western Zhou period (and perhaps to the early Western Zhou period). The passage records a series of rituals performed in conjunction with the installation of King Kang of Zhou (r. 1005/03–978 BCE) after the death of his father King Cheng (r. 1042/35–1006 BCE).

太保、太史、太宗皆麻冕彤裳。太保承介圭，上宗奉鬯、瑁，由阼階。太史秉書，由賓階。御王冊命。曰：“皇后憑玉几，道揚末命，命汝嗣訓，臨君周邦；率循大卞，變和天下，用荅揚文武之光訓。”王再拜，興。荅曰：“眇眇予末小子，其能而亂四方，以敬忌天威。”乃受鬯、瑁。王三宿，三祭，三咤。上宗曰：“饗”。

The Grand Protector, the Grand Scribe and the Grand Templar all dressed in hemp cap and black robes. The Grand Protector accepted the great tessera, and ascended the ancestral temple from the main stairs holding aloft the chalice and jade-piece. The Grand Scribe clutching the document, ascended from the side stairs, leading the king with the written command, saying: “The august sovereign leaning on his jade armrest spoke his final command, commanding you with the succession instruction, to oversee lordship of the Zhou country, to follow the great patterns, and to harmonize all under heaven, thereby responding to the bright instruction of [Kings] Wen and Wu.” The king bowed twice, and arose, responding saying: “Shortsighted though I am as the surviving young child, may I be able to rule over the four quarters in order to respectfully revere Heaven’s awe.” Then he received the chalice and jade-piece. The king thrice advanced, thrice sacrificed, and thrice poured out [the wine]. The High Templar said: “Received.”

Here too *xiang* 饗 is an announcement that the spirits had accepted the king’s sacrifice. It is the same word written in the Shanghai Museum manuscript of the *Zhou Changes* as *xiang* 鄉 corresponding to what is written in the received text of the *Zhou Changes* as *heng* 亨. I think there can be no question that Gao Heng’s “New Changes Studies” interpretation of *heng* 亨 as *xiang* 享 “to offer, to sacrifice,” misinterprets the function of *heng* 亨 in the hexagram statements.

In the *Zhou Changes*, it should be understood as a sort of prognostication, indicating that the spirits had received—and in receiving, had approved—the communication of the charge of the divination. That the term appears overwhelmingly in hexagram statements, and often appears in the expression *yuan heng* 元亨 “prime receipt,” suggests to me that this was an initial prognostication, authorizing further deliberation in the matter. Evidence for this two-step procedure in divination has already been examined in Chapter Four above with respect to the Warring States divination records from the state of Chu. There we have seen that in these divinations, the charge to the milfoil produced a result in the form of either two hexagrams or four trigrams, the prognostication of which is almost invariably that “The long-term affirmation” (*heng zhen* 恒貞) is “auspicious” (*ji* 吉), but there is “a little worry” (*shao you you* 少有憂) in one respect or another. This “worry” prompted a second-stage divination to propitiate the problem. It was this second divination that produced the definitive prognostication, invariably also “auspicious” (*ji* 吉), but without the qualification of the first prognostication. The type of milfoil divination recorded on the Baoshan bamboo strips is almost certainly not the same as that done using the *Zhou Changes*. However, it is likely to have employed similar methods or at least

a similar understanding of how divination proceeded. The occurrence of the word *heng* 亨 in the hexagram statements of the *Zhou Changes* is an important indication of that divination process.

## 5 *Li* 利

The word *li* 利 is one of the most common words in the *Zhou Changes*, occurring 119 times. A “conjoined meaning” character (*huiyizi* 會意字) composed of a “stalk of grain” (禾) and a knife (刂, i.e., 刀), *li* seems originally to have meant “sharp.” However, it soon took on the sense of “benefit, favorable,” in which sense it is used throughout all Chinese literature, even though some philosophers regarded the word negatively, akin to pejorative senses of “profit.” In the *Zhou Changes*, *li* introduces many formulaic phrases that are understood to be advice to the user or reader:

(*bu*) *li you you wang* (不)利有攸往 “(not) beneficial to have somewhere to go” (12×)<sup>29</sup>

*li she da chuan* 利涉大川 “beneficial to ford a great river” (10×)<sup>30</sup>

*li jian da ren* 利見大人 “beneficial to see a great person” (7×)

*li jian hou* 利建侯 “beneficial to establish a lord” (3×)

*li yu kou* 利禦寇 “beneficial to drive off bandits” (2×)

There are also seventeen similar phrases of advice that occur only once. The following is but a sampling of these phrases.

*li yong xing ren* 利用刑人 “beneficial to use a punished person”

*li yong qin fa* 利用侵伐 “beneficial herewith to invade and attack”

*li yong xing shi zheng bang* 利用行師征邦 “beneficial herewith to set in motion an army and campaign against a country”<sup>31</sup>

*li yong xiang si* 利用享祀 “beneficial herewith to offer and sacrifice”

These phrases all share the same grammatical structure, in which *li* functions as a predicate-complement followed by a main verb. Two other formulas in which *li* occurs frequently also show it to function as a predicate:

29 Nine of twelve occurrences of this phrase are found in hexagram statements.

30 Eight of ten occurrences of this phrase are found in hexagram statements.

31 This is the reading of the Shanghai Museum manuscript. The received text reads *yi guo* 邑國 “city and kingdom” instead of *bang* 邦 “country.”

*wu you li* 无攸利 “nothing for which it benefits” (10×)

*wu bu li* 无不利 “nothing not beneficial” (13×)

The negative *bu* 不 always negates verbs, while *you* 攸 is the standard pre-verbal object substitute of early archaic Chinese, which later came to be replaced by the word *suo* 所. In both of these expressions, *li* must be understood as a verb; i.e., “it benefits to do something; beneficial to do something.” Thus, in all of these uses, *li* is understood by everyone to mean something like “it benefits to do something.”<sup>32</sup>

These phrases of advice for which it is beneficial (or not beneficial) to do something are also seen in other types of divination texts from ancient China. As just one example, consider the following passage from the Shuihudi 睡虎地 *Ri Shu* 日書 *Day Book*.

害日，利以除凶厲，攸不祥。祭門行，吉。以祭，最眾必亂者。

陰日，利以家室。祭祀、嫁子、娶婦、入材，大吉。以見君上，數達，毋咎。

達日，利以行師出征、見人。以祭，上下皆吉。生子，男吉，女必出於邦。

On Harmful days, it is beneficial to remove inauspiciousness and danger, and to dispel what is not lucky; sacrificing and moving gates will be auspicious; sacrificing in great number will certainly be disorderly.

On Shady days, it is beneficial to marry and start a household; sacrificial offerings, marrying a son, taking a wife, and contributing resources will be greatly auspicious; in seeing the lord or superiors, if you reach them several times, there will be no trouble.

On Reaching days, it is beneficial to set the army in motion and go out on campaign and to see others; in sacrificing, the high and low will all be auspicious; in giving birth to children, males will be auspicious, while females will certainly leave the country.

These “beneficial to” phrases are very reminiscent of the *Zhou Changes*, though they regularly transform the archaic *li yong* 利用 “beneficial herewith” of the *Changes* to the more modern *li yi* 利以 “beneficial to use.”

32 James Legge routinely translates these phrases as “It will be advantageous to” do something. Richard Wilhelm gives “fördernd,” which is in turn translated as “furthers” in the Cary F. Baynes English version. Richard Kunst translates them as “favorable” to do something.

Easy though these phrases of advice are to understand, there is one other type of phrase in which *li* 利 frequently appears in the *Zhou Changes*, the interpretation of which has been more problematic, especially for scholars associated with the “New Changes Studies.” These are phrases in which *li* 利 is followed, whether immediately or not, by *zhen* 貞. The simple *li zhen* 利貞 occurs 21 times, of which 18 are in hexagram statements and only three in line statements. In addition to these, there are also two cases of *xiao li zhen* 小利貞, both of them also in hexagram statements, as well as 11 occurrences of the following phrases in which one or two characters are interposed between *li* 利 and *zhen* 貞.

*li yong zhen* 利永貞 (2×), *yong* 永 meaning “long-term”  
*li ju zhen* 利居貞 (2×), *ju* 居 meaning “to reside”  
*li junzi zhen* 利君子貞 (2×), *junzi* 君子 meaning “lord’s son”  
*li nü zhen* 利女貞 (2×), *nü* 女 meaning “woman”  
*li jian zhen* 利艱貞 (3×), *jian* 艱 meaning “difficulty”

There are also four occurrences in which *zhen* 貞 is preceded by the possessive particle *zhi* 之 which usually indicates a relationship between two nouns.

*li pin ma zhi zhen* 利牝馬之貞, *pin ma* 牝馬 meaning “female horse”  
*li yu buxi zhi zhen* 利于不息之貞, *buxi* 不息 meaning “unending”  
*li you ren zhi zhen* 利幽人之貞, *you ren* 幽人 meaning “somber person”  
*li wu ren zhi zhen* 利武人之貞, *wu ren* 武人 meaning “martial person”

For traditional interpreters of the *Zhou Changes*, it is a simple matter to read these phrases parallel to the other phrases in which *li* occurs, typically understanding *zhen* 貞 to be a verb meaning “to be upright,” or in some contexts used as a noun meaning “rectitude”: “it is beneficial to be upright,” “it is beneficial to be upright for the long-term,” “it is beneficial to be upright in residence,” “it is beneficial for a woman to be upright,” “it is beneficial to be upright in difficulty,” “it is beneficial for a mare’s rectitude,” “it is beneficial for unceasing rectitude,” “it is beneficial for a somber person’s rectitude,” and “it is beneficial for a martial person’s rectitude.”

However, beginning with Gao Heng in 1947, it has become prevalent among “New Changes Scholars” to understand *li* 利 in these contexts not as a pre-verbal complement, but rather as an adjective modifying *zhen* 貞 understood as a noun: “a beneficial affirmation.” To understand the implications of this, it is necessary now to turn to the final word of *Qian* hexagram’s hexagram statement: *zhen* 貞.

6 *Zhen* 貞

Richard Kunst has said of the word *zhen* 貞 in the *Zhou Changes*:

No other single word in the *Yijing* is as critical as *zhen* to an understanding of the primitive meaning of the whole text, and no other word played a more important role in the Confucian moral reinterpretation of the original *Yijing* during the latter half of the first millennium BCE. Fortunately, in the late twentieth century we are in the enviable position of having more of the primary sources of pre-Imperial China at our disposal than any previous generation since at least the Warring States period itself. I refer, of course, to the precious original documents of E[arly] O[ld] C[hinese], the oracle bone and bronze inscriptions, and to the other original documents on bamboo and silk unearthed in recent decades.<sup>33</sup>

As Kunst went on to specify, it was the discovery of the Shang oracle-bone inscriptions, in particular, that suggested new avenues of interpretation to scholars of the *Zhou Changes*. In the oracle-bone inscriptions, the character that was eventually identified as *zhen* 貞 appears in the overwhelming majority of inscriptions. It usually appears in the straight-lined form 貞, but occasionally is drawn as 貞, which is obviously the pictograph of a “caldron” (i.e., *ding* 鼎). That *zhen* 貞 and *ding* 鼎 should be related is not immediately obvious either from the modern Chinese pronunciations or from the forms of the characters, but in fact they are part of the same word family and these two words were originally interchangeable. Both words were originally pronounced something like \**tieng*. Using 鼎 to write the word *zhen* 貞 is known in Chinese as a “loan word” (*jiajiezi* 假借字), which is essentially the same as a rebus writing, taking the form of one word for which a character exists to write another word with the same pronunciation. Later the two words were differentiated by the addition of the “[turtle-shell] divination” component to *zhen* 貞, which was then written as 貞. It was only subsequently in the course of various script reforms that the component 鼎 came to be simplified as the more or less graphically similar *bei* 貝 “cowrie.” Thus, there are excellent paleographic and syntactic reasons to identify the oracle-bone inscriptional 貞 with *zhen* 貞.

In the oracle-bone inscriptions, *zhen* 貞 most frequently appears in conjunction with another character that also has to do with divination: *bu* 卜. 卜 is a pictograph of a crack in a turtle-shell or ox bone, the sort of pyromantic

33 Kunst, “The Original *Yijing*,” 200–201.

divination associated with the Shang oracle-bone inscriptions. The distinction between these two words can be seen in the inscription discussed above with respect to the word *heng* 亨:

王子卜何貞：翌癸丑其侑妣癸。鄉

**Crack-making on *renzi* (day 49), He affirmed:** “On the next day *guichou* (day 50), we will make offering to Ancestress Gui.” Received<sup>34</sup>

The word *bu* 卜 follows the indication of the day on which the divination was performed, and refers to the crack-making that was done on that day. Then comes the name of the divination official presiding, in this case someone named He 何, who announced the “charge” (*ming* 命) to the turtle; the verb controlling this charge is *zhen* 貞.

By late in the Shang dynasty, turtle-shell divination had become much reduced in scope from what it had been in earlier times, for the most part concentrated on just weekly divinations intended to ensure that the coming ten-day week would have no misfortune. These occasionally, though not always contained a “prognostication” by the king, announced by the word *zhan* 占:

癸丑王卜貞：旬亡禍。王占曰：吉。

On *guichou* (day 50), the king **made cracks and affirmed:** “The week will have no misfortune.” The king **prognosticated** and said: “Auspicious.”<sup>35</sup>

These three words, *bu* 卜, *zhen* 貞 and *zhan* 占, are far and away the most common words used in Shang oracle-bone inscriptions concerning the different aspects of the divination rite. Although *bu* 卜 and *zhen* 貞 are sometimes used seemingly interchangeably,<sup>36</sup> *zhan* 占 is always reserved for the “prognostication,” usually announced by the king. It will be important to keep these differences in mind as we turn to the use of *zhen* 貞 in the *Zhou Changes*.

In the *Zhou Changes*, the word *zhen* 貞 occurs 111 times, the fourth most common word in the text. It occurs primarily in one of two patterns. The first pattern is when *zhen* 貞 follows *li* 利. As noted above in the discussion of *li* 利, the phrase *li zhen* occurs 21 times, as well as two other occurrences in which the

34 Guo Moruo, *Jiaguwen heji*, #27456.1.

35 Guo Moruo, *Jiaguwen heji*, #39393.

36 However, Adam Craig Schwartz, *The Oracle Bone Inscriptions from Huayuanzhuang East: Translated with an Introduction and Commentary* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019), 81 n. 20, makes a strong case that even in cases where the two words seem to be used interchangeably, in fact *bu* 卜 and *zhen* 貞 were strictly differentiated.



modifier *xiao* 小 “little” comes before *li* 利; in addition, there are also 16 phrases in which another word or words comes between *li* 利 and *zhen* 貞, as in:

- li yong zhen* 利永貞 (2×), *yong* 永 meaning “long-term”  
*li ju zhen* 利居貞 (2×), *ju* 居 meaning “to reside”  
*li junzi zhen* 利君子貞 (2×), *junzi* 君子 meaning “lord’s son”  
*li nü zhen* 利女貞 (2×), *nü* 女 meaning “woman”  
*li jian zhen* 利艱貞 (3×), *jian* 艱 meaning “difficulty”  
*li pin ma zhi zhen* 利牝馬之貞, *pin ma* 牝馬 meaning “female horse”  
*li yu buxi zhi zhen* 利于不息之貞, *buxi* 不息 meaning “unending”  
*li you ren zhi zhen* 利幽人之貞, *you ren* 幽人 meaning “somber person”  
*li wu ren zhi zhen* 利武人之貞, *wu ren* 武人 meaning “martial person”

In addition to these uses following *li* 利, there is also one occurrence of *wu yong yong zhen* 勿用永貞 “do not herewith do long-term *zhen*,” and six cases of *ke zhen* 可貞 “can *zhen*” or *bu ke zhen* 不可貞 “cannot *zhen*,” which all seem to follow the same grammar in which *zhen* 貞 should be understood as a verb.

The second predominant pattern in the use of *zhen* 貞 is when it is followed by one of the following technical prognostication terms: *ji* 吉 “auspicious” (38×), *xiong* 凶 “ominous” (10×), *li* 厲 “dangerous” (8×), *lin* 吝 “stinted” (4×), *wu jiu* 无咎 “without trouble” (2×), *hui wang* 悔亡 “regret gone” (1×). There is also one case of *zhen ji* 貞疾 “*zhen* sickness” and one case of *nüzi zhen bu zi* 女子貞不字 “girl *zhen* not pregnant,” which also seem to be prognostications.

In traditional *Yijing* exegesis, *zhen* 貞 is routinely glossed paronomastically as *zheng* 正 “upright; rectitude.” This gloss makes excellent sense of both of the predominant patterns in which *zhen* occurs in the *Zhou Changes*. The *li zhen* 利貞 pattern is understood as “it is beneficial to be upright” or, as found in the Wilhelm/Baynes translation “furthering through perseverance.” The *zhen ji* 貞吉 pattern gives “to be upright is auspicious” or “rectitude is auspicious.” True, the juxtaposition of *zhen* 貞 and *xiong* 凶 “ominous” presents a challenge to this line of interpretation, but there are certainly circumstances under which “to be upright is ominous” would make sense.

However, scholars have also long noted that the *Shuo wen jie zi* 說文解字 *Explaining Pictographs and Analyzing Compound Graphs*, China’s earliest dictionary, gives a different meaning for *zhen* 貞: “*bu wen ye*” 卜問也 “to inquire by crack-making.” Since tradition has also always held that the *Zhou Changes* began as a divination text, it would seem to make sense that this meaning be applied to the uses of *zhen* 貞 in the text. Moreover, this definition is consistent with other usage in the Chinese classics. For instance, in the “Luo gao” 洛誥

“Announcement at Luo” chapter of the *Shang shu*, the Duke of Zhou is reported to have performed several turtle-shell divinations concerning the siting of the new city to be built along the Luo 洛 River, and then to have sent the maps and turtle shell back to King Cheng in the Zhou capital. The king responded to these by saying:

公既定宅，佯來，來，視予卜，休恆吉。我二人共貞。

The duke having determined the siting sent them back, showing me the turtle-shell cracks: success, long-term auspicious. We two men have jointly *zhen*.<sup>37</sup>

The *Zuo zhuan*, for the seventeenth year of Duke Ai 哀 (478 BCE), contains a lengthy narrative of multiple divinations, including the following sentence:

衛侯貞卜，其繇曰：如魚窺尾，衡流而方羊。裔焉大國，滅之將亡。闔門塞竇，乃自後踰。

The Lord of Wei *zhen* the turtle-shell crack-making, its oracle saying:

Like a fish with reddened tail, Floating cross-current and hesitating.

Bordering on a great country, Extinguishing it, it will be gone.

With gates shut and holes blocked, Then from the back crossing over.<sup>38</sup>

It is clear in both of these examples that *zhen* 貞 has to do with divination.

With the discovery of the Shang oracle-bone inscriptions, with their formulaic use of *zhen* 貞 in the prefaces of most inscriptions, it became clear too that the *zhen* 貞 of the *Zhou Changes* almost certainly also had to do with divination. However, it is important to explore how *zhen* is used in the oracle-bone inscriptions to understand what it may have meant in the *Zhou Changes*. In Chapter Two above, I have discussed at some length the view that divination is not an act of questioning, as the *Shuo wen jie zi* definition would suggest—and as many modern scholars have assumed, but rather is act of prayer or a statement of intent. In this regard, the connection between *zhen* 貞 and *ding* 鼎 “caldron” is an important consideration. These two words are part of a larger word family that includes also *zheng* 正, “upright, correct,” which as we have seen is the traditional gloss for *zhen* 貞 in the *Yijing* tradition, and many other words as well: *zheng* 政 “government,” *zheng* 征 “punitive military campaign,”

37 *Shang shu zhengyi*, 455.

38 *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 4733.

*zheng* 證 “confirm,” *ding* 丁 “nail” (the original pictographic form of a character now written 釘), *ding* 定 “settled, definite,” and *ding* 訂 “to correct a text,” among others. All of these words share a sense of being upright or firmly settled. As a divinatory term, *zhen* 貞 introduces the statement of intent, what the person performing the divination hoped would happen; it can perhaps best be translated as “to affirm” or “to determine.”

From the two Shang oracle-bone inscriptions examined above, we can learn two other things about *zhen* 貞 and the two other important divination terms *bu* 卜 and *zhan* 占 (in bold in the following inscriptions).

王子卜何貞：翌癸丑其侑妣癸。鄉

**Crack-making on *renzi* (day 49), He affirmed:** “On the next day *guichou* (day 50), we will make offering to Ancestress Gui.” Received<sup>39</sup>

癸丑王卜貞：旬亡禍。王占曰：吉。

**On *guichou* (day 50), the king made cracks and affirmed:** “The week will have no misfortune.” The king **prognosticated** and said: “Auspicious.”<sup>40</sup>

First, *zhen* is used in the inscriptions (as well as in the “Luo gao” and *Zuo zhuan* quotations) as a verb, introducing the topic of the divination. Second, it is strictly differentiated from the word *zhan* 占, which refers exclusively to the prognostication. This distinction between *zhen* 貞 and *zhan* 占 continued without change throughout the Zhou dynasty, as can be seen in the Baoshan record of milfoil divination also examined above.

大司馬悼懼將楚邦之師以救郟之歲，荆夷之月，己卯之日，陳乙以共命為左尹胤貞：「出入侍王，自荆夷之月以就集歲之荆夷之月盡集歲，躬身尚毋有咎」。一六六八六六 一六六一一六 占之：「恒貞吉，少有憂于宮室。以其故效之。舉禱宮行一白犬、酉、飴，由攻敘于宮室」。五生占之曰：「吉」。

In the year that the Great Supervisor of the Horse Dao Hua led the army of the Chu country to relieve Fu, in the Jingyi month, on the day *jimao*, Chen Yi used the Proffered Command to **affirm** on behalf of Commander of the Left Tuo: “Coming out and going in to serve the king, from the Jingyi month all the way until the next Jingyi month throughout the entire year, would that his person not have any trouble.” 1-6-6-8-6-6 1-6-6-1-1-6 He

39 Guo Moruo, *Jiaguwen heji*, #27456.1.

40 Guo Moruo, *Jiaguwen heji*, #39393.

**prognosticated** it: “The long-term **affirmation** is auspicious, but there is a little worry in the palace chamber. For this reason they propitiated it, raising up prayers in the palace, moving one white dog and ale to drink; may this dispel the trouble in the palace chamber.” Wu Sheng **prognosticated** it, saying: “Auspicious.”<sup>41</sup>

It is important to note this distinction because of the influence that Gao Heng’s interpretation has had within the “New *Changes* Studies.” As noted above, in his 1947 book *Zhou Yi gu jing jin zhu*, Gao explained the hexagram statement *yuan heng li zhen* 元亨利貞 in the following way:

元，大也。亨即享字。古人舉行大享之祭，曾筮遇此卦，故記之曰元亨。利貞猶言利占也。筮遇此卦，舉事有利，故曰利貞。

*Yuan* means “great.” *Heng* is none other than the character *xiang* “to offer.” When the ancients performed the sacrifice of great offering, they divined and met with this hexagram and therefore noted it saying “Great offering.” *Li zhen* is the same as saying “beneficial prognostication.” In divining when they met with this hexagram, the affair they were to perform was beneficial and therefore they said *li zhen*.<sup>42</sup>

Moreover, throughout the book, he consistently equated *li zhen* 利貞 with *zhen ji* 貞吉, the first understood as a “beneficial prognostication” and the second as “prognostication: auspicious.”

In my 1983 doctoral dissertation “The Composition of the *Zhouyi*,” I suggested a different interpretation of the term *li zhen* 利貞. Since the word *zhen* 貞 is strictly differentiated from the word *zhan* 占 “to prognosticate,” *li zhen* 利貞 cannot mean a “beneficial prognostication.” Moreover, since in all of its other many uses in the *Zhou Changes* the word *li* 利 is invariably a verbal complement, meaning “it is beneficial to do” something, and since *zhen* 貞 is used as a verb in the oracle-bone inscriptions (and also in all other divination records),<sup>43</sup> the only interpretation that adheres rigorously to the grammar would be “it is beneficial to *zhen*,” i.e., “it is beneficial to affirm” or “it is beneficial to divine.” I am not insensitive to the spirited criticism of this interpre-

41 Hubei sheng Jing-Sha tielu kaogudui, *Baoshan Chu jian*, 35 (#228–229).

42 Gao Heng, *Zhou Yi gu jing jin zhu*, 1.

43 I of course realize that verbs, including *zhen* 貞, can be used in Chinese as nouns, as in the case of “*heng zhen*” 恆貞 “long-term affirmation,” in the Baoshan divination record quoted just above, but this does not seem to me to mitigate the force of this grammatical analysis.

tation put forward by Kunst: if the *Zhou Changes* is a manual of divination, and the hexagram statements are the result of a divination, advice that it is beneficial to divine would be essentially a matter of putting the cart before the horse. One would have to perform divination to be told to perform divination.<sup>44</sup> And yet, this is what the grammar of the hexagram statement would seem to require.

In Chapter Four above, I demonstrated that Zhou-dynasty divination regularly featured a two-step process, which produced first a “long-term affirmation” (*heng zhen* 恆貞) and then a further specification that resulted in a second prognostication. In Chapter Five, I further suggested that divination with the *Zhou Changes* was a two-stage process, the first stage resulting in one of the sixty-four hexagrams (and also its hexagram statement), and the second stage resulting in one of that hexagram’s six line statements. While this remains but an hypothesis that has not gained much acceptance from other scholars of the *Zhou Changes*, I am confident that neither the traditional interpretation of *li zhen* 利貞 as “beneficial to be upright” nor Gao Heng’s interpretation of a “beneficial prognostication” properly understands the original meaning of this important phrase. Rather, it should be read as a complement plus verb meaning something like “beneficial to affirm.” Combined with the reading of *yuan heng* 元亨 as “prime receipt” demonstrated above, I believe this sense of *li zhen* is crucial for understanding the role that the hexagram statement played in early *Zhou Changes* divinations.

## 7 Other Hexagram Statements

Paradigmatic though the hexagram statement of *Qian* hexagram’s hexagram statement has been regarded throughout the millennia of the *Yijing* interpretations, there are of course sixty-three other hexagram statements, which come in all lengths and include different elements. The longest hexagram statement, that of *Kun* 坤 ䷁ “Compliant” (#2), is twenty-nine characters long (not including the hexagram name *Kun* itself), longer even than any single line statement, while the shortest statements are only two characters long (again excluding the hexagram name itself).

坤 ䷁：元亨。利牝馬之貞。君子有攸往，先迷后得主。利西南得朋，東北喪朋。安貞吉。

44 Kunst, “The Original *Yijing*,” 378–380.

*Kun* ䷁ “Compliant” (#2): Prime receipt. Beneficial for a female horse’s affirmation. A lord’s son having somewhere to go, first lost, later gaining his master. Beneficial to the southwest gaining friends, to the northeast losing friends. Affirming about peace: Auspicious.

大有 ䷍：元亨。

*Dayou* ䷍ “Greatly Having” (#14): Prime receipt.

大壯 ䷡：利貞。

*Dazhuang* ䷡ “Great Strength” (#34): Beneficial to affirm.

Several other hexagram statements include only three characters, while numerous others, though somewhat longer, are entirely composed of the sorts of formulas examined above.

屯 ䷂：元亨。利貞。勿用有攸往。利建侯。

*Zhun* ䷂ “Sprouting” (#3): Prime receipt. Beneficial to affirm. Don’t use to have somewhere to go. Beneficial to establish a lord.

需 ䷄：有孚。光亨。貞吉。利涉大川。

*Xu* ䷄ “Awaiting” (#5): There is trust. Radiant receipt. Affirming: Auspicious. Beneficial to ford a great river.

隨 ䷐：元亨。利貞。无咎。

*Sui* ䷐ “Following” (#17): Prime receipt. Beneficial to affirm. Without trouble.

噬嗑 ䷔：亨。利用獄。

*Shike* ䷔ “Biting and Chewing” (#21): Receipt. Beneficial herewith to sue.

賁 ䷖：亨。小利有所往。

*Bi* ䷖ “Ornamented” (#22): Receipt. A little beneficial to have somewhere to go.

剝 ䷖：不利有攸往。

*Bo* ䷖ “Paring” (#23): Not beneficial to have somewhere to go.

咸 ䷞：亨。利貞。取女吉。

*Xian* ䷞ “Feelings” (#31): Receipt. Beneficial to affirm. Taking a woman: Auspicious.

恆 ䷟：亨。无咎。利貞。利有攸往。

*Heng* ䷟ “Constancy” (#32): Receipt. Without trouble. Beneficial to affirm. Beneficial to have somewhere to go.

遯 ䷠：亨。小利貞。

*Dun* ䷠ “Piglet” (#33): Receipt. A little beneficial to affirm.

明夷 ䷣：利艱貞。

*Mingyi* ䷣ “Calling Pheasant” (#36): Beneficial to affirm about difficulty.

家人 ䷤：利女貞。

*Jiaren* ䷤ “Family Members” (#37): Beneficial to affirm about a woman.

睽 ䷥：小事吉。

*Kui* ䷥ “Cross-eyed” (#38): Little service: Auspicious.

益 ䷩：利有攸往。利涉大川。

*Yi* ䷩ “Increasing” (#42): Beneficial to have somewhere to go. Beneficial to ford a great river.

鼎 ䷱：元吉。亨。

*Ding* ䷱ “Caldron” (#50): Prime auspiciousness. Receipt.

漸 ䷴：女歸吉。利貞。

*Jian* ䷴ “Progressing” (#53): A woman returning: Auspicious. Beneficial to affirm.

歸妹 ䷵：征凶。无攸利。

*Guimei* ䷵ “Returning Maiden” (#54): Campaigning: Ominous. Nowhere beneficial.

旅 ䷷：小亨。旅貞吉。

*Lü* ䷷ “Traveling” (#56): Little receipt. Affirming about traveling: Auspicious.

巽 ䷸：小亨。利攸往。利見大人。

*Xun* ䷸ “Presenting” (#57): Little receipt. Beneficial to have somewhere to go. Beneficial to see a great person.

兌 ䷹ : 亨。利貞。

*Dui* ䷹ “Expressing” (#58): Receipt, beneficial to affirm.

If these statements were characteristic of the entire *Zhou Changes*, I think it is safe to say that it would not have come to be recognized as one of the great works of world literature.

There are some hexagram statements with more individuated content. I suspect that several of these originated as line statements, and somehow through a process of corruption came to be positioned as hexagram statements. Two of these seem to lack the hexagram name tag at the beginning of the hexagram statement, the hexagram name entering into the syntax of the statement.

䷌ 同人于野。亨。利涉大川。利君子貞。

*Tongren* 同人 ䷌ “Together with People” (#13): Together with people in the wilds. Receipt. Beneficial to ford a great river. Beneficial to affirm about a lord’s son.

䷌ 艮其背，不獲其身，行其庭，不見其人。无咎。

*Gen* 艮 ䷌ “Stilling” (#52): Stilling its back, Not bagging its body. Walking into his court, Not seeing his person. Without trouble.

Other hexagram statements, although more regular in format, also include individuated statements akin to line statements:

蒙 ䷃ : 亨。匪我求童蒙，童蒙求我。初噬告，再三瀆，瀆則不告。利貞。

*Meng* ䷃ “Shrouded” (#4): Receipt. Not we seeking the young shroud, the young shroud seeking us. If the first divination announces, and the second and third are muddy, muddied then does not announce. Beneficial to affirm.

履 ䷉ : 履虎尾，不啞人。亨。

*Lü* ䷉ “Stepping” (#10): Stepping on a tiger’s tail, Not eating a person. Receipt.

否 ䷋ : 否之匪人。不利君子貞。大往小來。

*Pi* ䷋ “Negation” (#12): Negation’s non-human. Not beneficial to affirm about a lord’s son. Great going, little coming.



晉 ䷢：康侯用錫馬蕃庶，晝日三接。

*Jin* ䷢ “Advancing” (#35): The Lord of Kang herewith awards horses profusely often, In daylight thrice joining.

夬 ䷪：揚于王庭。孚號，有厲。告自邑。不利即戎。利有攸往。

*Guai* ䷪ “Resolute” (#43): Raised up in the king’s court. Captives crying out. There is danger. Announcing from the city. Not beneficial to approach the warriors. Beneficial to have somewhere to go.

井 ䷯：改邑不改井，无喪无得。往來井井。汔至，亦未繙井，羸其瓶。凶。

*Jing* ䷯ “Well-Trap” (#48): Changing a city and not changing a well, Nothing lost nothing gained, Going and coming in a line. Dessication approaching: Still not yet drawing from a well, Breaking its pitcher. Ominous.

震 ䷲：亨。震來虩虩，笑言啞啞。震驚百里，不喪匕鬯。

*Zhen* ䷲ “Shaking” (#51): Receipt. Thunder comes crack-crack, Laughing and talking ha-ha. Thunder startles a hundred *li*, Not losing ladle or sweet-wine.

To appreciate the nature of these hexagram statements, it will be necessary to learn more about line statements, the topic of the next chapter.

## The Line Statement

Other than the sixty-four hexagram pictures, the texts attached to each of the six lines of the hexagram are doubtless the most characteristic feature of the *Zhou Changes*. Indeed, it is commonly said that it is the line statements that differentiate the divination system of the *Zhou Changes* from such other divination traditions as the *Gui cang* 歸藏 *Returning to Be Stored* or the recently published Peking University manuscript *Jing jue* 荊決 *Thornwood Decisions*, which make use of only a single statement for each hexagram or trigram. In the received tradition of the *Zhou Changes*, the lines of the hexagrams are referred to as *yao* 爻, the character said to be a pictograph of crossed counting sticks, hearkening back to the *Changes*' use in sortilege. The line statements are then referred to as *yao ci* 爻辭. However, both the lines and the line statements are also commonly known by the alternative word *zhou* or *yao* 繇 “oracle”; the two words were pronounced identically in antiquity and are doubtless just two different “spellings” of the same word. As we have seen in Chapters Three, Four and Five and as we will examine in more detail later in this chapter, the oracle features in some of the most illustrative anecdotes concerning divination from ancient China.

An alternative term for the line statement is *xiang* 象 “image,” though this usage is by no means consistent or clear cut. The canonical commentary *Xiang zhuan* 象傳 *Commentary on the Images* focuses on the line statements, which then by definition are *xiang* 象 “images”; this usage has also been followed by some later commentators within the *Yijing* tradition.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the *Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳 *Commentary on Appended Statements*, another of the canonical commentaries, reserves the noun usage of *xiang* 象 for “images” of the trigrams and hexagrams, and clearly differentiates these from the *yao* 爻 “lines” and *yaoci* 爻辭 “line statements.” Adding to the ambiguity concerning the word *xiang*, Li Jingchi 李鏡池 (1902–1975), one of the pioneers of the “New *Changes* Studies,” coined the term “image prognostication” (*xiang zhan zhi ci*

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1 For instance, Zhu Xi, *Zhou Yi benyi* somewhat confusingly defines the *xiang* 象 of the *Xiang zhuan* as “the statements appended by the Duke of Zhou to the top and bottom images of a hexagram and to the six lines of the two images”; see Zhu Xi, *Zhou Yi benyi*, 34. I should note too that my own reference to the *Xiang zhuan* pertains only to that portion known as the *Xiao Xiang zhuan* 小象傳 *Lesser Commentary on the Images*; the *Da Xiang zhuan* 大象傳 *Greater Commentary on the Images* pertains to the hexagram statements.

象占之辭) to describe one type of or one element within a line statement.<sup>2</sup> I think that Li's analysis of the line statements is generally correct, and in particular this term "image prognostication" is helpful in understanding the nature of the line statements. Thus, following him, I will reserve the word *xiang* 象 "image" to just one portion of the line statement, which I will explore in detail below.

In the received text of the *Yijing*, there are 386 line statements in all (= 6 × 64 + one extra line statement each for *Qian* 乾 ☰ "Vigorous" (#1) and *Kun* 坤 ☷ "Compliant" (#2) hexagrams), each of which begins with a two-character tag that identifies the position of the line within the hexagram (*chu* 初 "first," *er* 二 "second," *san* 三 "third," *si* 四 "fourth," *wu* 五 "fifth," and *shang* 上 "top") and also its "virtue" (*de* 德) as a yin or yang line (*liu* 六 "six" representing yin lines and *jiu* 九 "nine" representing yang lines) thus, *chu liu* 初六 "First Six" identifies the line as a yin line at the bottom of the hexagram, *jiu er* 九二 "Nine in the Second" identifies the line as a yang line in the second position (from the bottom of the hexagram), and so on up to *shang jiu* 上九 "Top Nine," which identifies a yang line at the top of the hexagram. As we will see in Chapter Ten below, the position of the line within the hexagram is often directly correlated with the text of the line statement. Whether the virtue of the line as yin or yang also influenced the wording of the line statement is one of the major points of debate in the study of the *Zhou Changes*; a basic premise for most traditional readers of the *Yijing* was that there is a direct correlation between the virtue of the line and the way the line statement reads, but it is difficult to show this systematically throughout the text.

If we disregard the two-character tags that begin each line statement, the line statements can be as short as two characters, found in five different lines, or as long as the twenty-seven characters of the top line of *Kui* 睽 ☱ "Cross-eyed" (#38) hexagram.

否 ☷ (#12): <i>Pi</i> "Negation":	六三：包羞。 Six in the Third: Wrapping sacrificial-meats.
恆 ☱ (#32): <i>Heng</i> "Constancy":	九二：悔亡。 Nine in the Second: Regret gone.
大壯 ☱ (#34): <i>Dazhuang</i> "Great Strength":	九二：貞吉。 Nine in the Second: Affirming: Auspicious.

2 Li Jingchi, "Zhou Yi shici xu kao".

解 ䷧ (#40): 初六：无咎。  
*Jie* “Released”: First Six: Without trouble.

兌 ䷹ (#58): 上六：引兌。  
*Dui* “Expressing”: Top Six: Drawn expressing.

To these very short line statements, compare the Top Nine line of *Kui*:

睽 ䷥ (#38): 上九：睽孤。見豕負涂。載鬼一車。  
 先張之弧。后說之弧。匪寇婚媾。往遇雨則吉。  
*Kui* “Cross-eyed”: Top Nine: Looking cross-eyed at an orphan: Seeing a pig with mud on its back, One cart carrying ghosts. A bow first drawn, A bow later released. Non-bandits in marriage meeting. In going, if meeting rain then auspicious.

Doubtless the best known line statements in the entire text are those found in the first hexagram *Qian* 乾 ䷀ “Vigorous,” which for the most part concern the appearances of a dragon or dragons.

初九：潛龍。勿用。  
 First Nine: Submerging dragon. Don't use.

九二：見龍在田。利見大人。  
 Nine in the Second: Seeing a dragon in the fields. Beneficial to see a great person.

九三：君子終日乾乾。夕惕若厲。无咎。  
 Nine in the Third: A lord's son to the end of the day so vigorous, In the evening apprehensive-like. Dangerous. Without trouble.

九四：或躍在淵。无咎。  
 Nine in the Fourth: And now jumping in the depths. Without trouble.

九五：飛龍在天。利見大人。  
 Nine in the Fifth: Flying dragon in the heavens. Beneficial to see a great person.

上九：亢龍。有悔。  
 Top Nine: Throttled dragon. Having regret.

用九：見群龍无首。吉。

Use the Nine: Seeing a flock of dragons without heads. Auspicious.

It is easy to see that these lines are largely composed of two different types of language: descriptions of events or situations, such as “Wrapping the offering” of *Pi* 否 ䷋ “Negation” (#12) hexagram, “Seeing a pig with mud on its back, One cart carrying ghosts.” of the top line of *Kui* hexagram, or the various appearances of the dragons in *Qian* hexagram; and terminology associated with divination, such as “Affirming: Auspicious” of *Dazhuang* 大壯 ䷡ “Great Strength” (#34), “In going, if meeting rain then auspicious” of the top line of *Kui*, and “Without trouble” or “Having regret” found in the line statements of *Qian*. The first type of language, which more or less following Li Jingchi I will refer to as the “Image Statement,” is what has caused the *Zhou Changes* to seem so enigmatic; what could “Seeing a pig with mud on its back” mean, and why should such an image be included in what would become the first of the Chinese classics? This Image is intimately related to the Oracle (*zhou* 繇), though I will suggest that it is but a part of a full oracle. The second type of terminology, which I will refer to broadly as the “Prognostication,” is more formulaic, with only about ten or so formulas making up at least a part of almost every line of the text.<sup>3</sup> These prognostications are clearly related in some way to the original divinatory context in which the *Zhou Changes* originated and first developed. However, there are different opinions as to whether they are intrinsically related to the images with which they occur, usually before them in the line statement, or if they merely represent ad hoc pronouncements of a single divination act that for whatever reason just happened to be recorded in the text. These two related questions as to the meaning of the images and the meanings of the prognostications determine how one understands the entire text. I will address this question toward the end of this chapter.

## 1 The Formal Structure of the Oracle

In Chapter Three above, I recounted a turtle-shell divination performed on behalf of the Han-dynasty King of Dai 代, the future Emperor Wen of the Han

3 In the West, already in 1894 Thomas Kingsmill had suggested that these two types of language in the text should be differentiated; see Thomas W. Kingsmill, “The Construction of the Yih King,” *China Review* 21 (1894–1895): 272–275. As will be noted below, Arthur Waley made a similar suggestion, explicitly following early work of Li Jingchi; see Arthur Waley, “The Book of Changes,” *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 5 (1933): 121–142.

dynasty (r. 180–157 BCE), upon the occasion of his being invited to become emperor (account #3.18). I will not reprise the entire anecdote here, but note merely that the divination would have been announced as a “charge” or “command” (*ming* 命) to the turtle in a form something like “The King of Dai will become emperor; would that it be received” (Dai wang *wei tianzi shang xiang* 代王為天子尚饗).<sup>4</sup> It resulted in the following oracle (*zhou* 繇), pronounced by the diviner presiding over the divination:

大橫庚庚，余為天王，夏啓以光。  
 The Grand Transversal *geng-geng* (*geng*/\*keng):  
 I will be the heavenly king (*wang*/\*jwang),  
 Qi of Xia thereby shining (*guang*/\*kwang).<sup>5</sup>

As recounted in Chapter Three, the “Grand Transversal” (*da heng* 大橫) refers to the shape of the crack (*zhao* 兆) that was caused to appear in the turtleshell. It is mentioned frequently in the “Gui ce liezhuan” 龜策列傳 “Biographies of Turtle-shell and Milfoil [Diviners]” chapter of the *Shiji* 史記 *Records of the Historian*, in which it is interpreted to mean a crack in the shape of 卜, the branch crack made in the course of turtle-shell divination (*bu* 卜) extending straight out to the side. In the “Gui ce liezhuan,” this crack shape is almost always interpreted to be auspicious. Commentaries to the *Shiji* suggest that “*geng-geng*” 庚庚 is the sound made when the turtle-shell cracked; *geng* 庚 is homophonous with the word *geng* 更 that means “to succeed” (in the sense of “succession” or “inheritance”; the protoform of *geng* 賡) and apparently was so understood by the diviner. Thus, the first four characters of this oracle describe the crack—the image or portent to be interpreted.

As I also suggested in Chapter Three, this description of the crack is then followed by a rhyming couplet, created, perhaps extemporaneously, by the diviner. In creating this response, he seems to have worked within a couple of simple constraints: he needed to produce a couplet, the last character or characters of which would rhyme with the last character of the four character-phrase describing the image; and this couplet should relate both to the command to the turtle (i.e., the topic of the divination) and to the possible meaning of the image. Both the “Grand Transversal” (*da heng* 大橫) crack shape and the *geng-geng* 庚庚 sound that the turtle made as it was cracking, understood as

4 I should note that this charge to the turtle is not explicit in the anecdote; I supply it on the basis of comparisons with other accounts of divination that do record the charge.

5 Sima Qian, *Shiji*, 414.

*geng geng* 更更 “succeed succeed,” would have led the diviner to predict that the King of Dai should indeed succeed his father to become emperor, the “Son of Heaven.”

Another account of a turtle-shell divination that is said to have taken place almost four hundred years earlier is similar in many respects. This account too has been discussed in Chapter Three above (account #3.8), but because it corresponds in some ways with a line statement of the *Zhou Changes*, it is worthwhile looking at it once again. The account is found in the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 *Zuo Tradition*, under the tenth year of Duke Xiang of Lu 魯襄公 (r. 572–542 BCE; i.e., 563 BCE). It describes a divination performed on behalf of Sun Wenzhi 孫文子, ruler of the state of Wei 衛, as he deliberated whether to counter an attack on his state by Huang'er 皇耳 of the state of Zheng 鄭. The account reads as follows:

Sun Wenzhi divined by turtle-shell about pursuing them. He presented the crack to Ding Jiang. Madame Jiang asked about the oracle (*zhou* 繇). He (i.e., the diviner) said:

兆如山陵，有夫出征，而喪其雄。

The crack is like a mountain peak (*ling*/\*ljəŋ):

There's a man going on campaign (*zheng*/\*tsjəŋ),

And yet loses his leader (*xiong*/\*jəŋ).

Madame Jiang said: “That the campaigners lose the leader is the benefit of driving off bandits (*yu kou zhi li ye* 禦寇之利也); the great ministers should make plans for it.” The men of Wei pursued, and Sun Peng captured Huang'er of Zheng at Quanqiu.<sup>6</sup>

Again we can surmise that the command to the turtle shell must have been a statement akin to “We will counter-attack Zheng; would that we defeat them” (*wo fan fa* Zheng; *shang da ke zhi* 我反伐鄭，尚大克之). This would have been followed by the cracking of the turtle-shell, the shape of the crack being explicitly described in the oracle. We learn of this oracle only retrospectively when someone other than the divination official is called on to interpret the crack, presumably because the oracle was regarded as ambiguous. Again the oracle takes the form of a four-character phrase describing the crack as being in the shape of a mountain peak (*zhao ru shan ling* 兆如山陵), perhaps something like 凵 or 凵. This omen is also followed by a couplet of four-character phrases that relates the significance of the crack to the topic of the divination. It is

<sup>6</sup> *Chunqiu Zuo zuan zhengyi*, 4228.

perhaps easy to see that “There’s a man going on campaign, And yet loses his leader” might be ambiguous; which man going out on campaign would lose his leader: the attackers from Zheng or the counter-attackers from Wei? For this reason, Sun Wenzhi consulted a woman named Ding Jiang 定姜 to provide the definitive interpretation: “That the campaigners lose the leader is the benefit of driving off bandits” (*zheng zhe sang xiong, yu kou zhi li ye* 征者喪雄，禦寇之利也). “Bandits” (*kou* 寇) could only refer in this context to the attackers from Zheng, and it is these “campaigners” (*zhengzhe* 征者) who would “lose the leader” (*sang xiong* 喪雄); thus, there would be “benefit” (*li* 利) in “driving off” (*yu* 禦) the invaders.

This interpretation or prognostication by Ding Jiang is a simple transformation of a phrase that occurs twice in the line statements of the *Zhou Changes*: “beneficial to drive off bandits” (*li yu kou* 利禦寇).<sup>7</sup> One of the occurrences comes in the Nine in the Third line of *Jian* 漸 ䷴ “Progressing” (#53) hexagram:

九三：鴻漸于陸。夫征不復。婦孕不育。凶。利御寇。

Nine in the Third: A wild goose progressing to a mound (*lu*/\*ljuk):

A husband campaigning but not returning (*fu*/\*bjuk),

A wife pregnant but not giving birth (*yu*/\*jiuk).

Ominous. Beneficial to drive off bandits.

It is easy to see that the main portion of this line statement has the same form as the oracles seen above in the two accounts of turtle-shell divination: a four-character phrase describing an omen (in this case, one in the natural world rather than the shape of the crack in the turtle-shell), followed by a rhyming couplet of four-character phrases relating it to some topic in the human realm. We can surmise that the divination that inspired this oracle was concerned with either a military campaign or birth-giving (or perhaps a general topic of marital fidelity), for which the movement of the wild goose (or geese) had a specific—and ominous—significance.<sup>8</sup> We can also deduce from the cases of turtle-shell divination examined above that the remaining words of the line statement, the prognosticatory formulas “ominous” (*xiong* 凶) and “beneficial to drive off bandits,” reflect a secondary composition, presumably added by a subsequent prognosticator, who was attempting to specify the significance of the oracle.

7 In addition to the Nine in the Third line line of *Jian* 漸 ䷴ “Progressing” (#53) discussed here, the formula occurs also in the Top Nine line of *Meng* 蒙 ䷃ “Shrouded” (#4).

8 On several occasions, I have discussed the symbolic significance of the wild goose in ancient China; see, for instance, Edward L. Shaughnessy, “Marriage, Divorce and Revolution: Reading between the Lines of the *Book of Changes*,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 51.3 (August 1992), 594.



Similar oracles can be found sporadically throughout the *Zhou Changes*. For the sake of completeness, I list here the line statements that I can identify as containing a complete oracle,<sup>9</sup> writing the translation in the same format as given above for the oracles of the two turtle-shell divinations and also that for the Nine in the Third line of *Jian* hexagram. I include also reconstructions of the archaic pronunciation of words potentially in rhyming position.

- 泰 ䷊ (#11):            上六：城復于隍。勿用師。自邑告命。貞吝。  
*Tai* “Positive”:        Top Six: A city wall returning to a moat (*huang*/\*wâŋ):  
                               Don’t use an army,  
                               From a city announce command (*ming*/\*mreŋ).  
                               Affirming: Stinted.
- 同人 ䷌ (#13):            九三：伏戎于莽。升其高陵。三歲不興。  
*Tongren* “Together    Nine in the Third: Crouching warriors in the weeds  
 with People”:        (*mang*/\*mâŋ?):  
                               Ascending its high peak (*ling*/\*rəŋ),  
                               For three years not arising (*xing*/\*həŋ).
- 習坎 ䷜ (#29):            上六：繫用徽纆。寘于叢棘。三歲不得。凶。  
*Xikan* “Repeated     Top Six: Tied using twisted cord (*mo*/\*mək)  
 Pits”:                   Placed in a clump of brambles (*ji*/kək\*),  
                               For three years not obtaining (*de*/\*tək).  
                               Ominous.

9 Other line statements that might share the same sort of oracle, but which are more or less non-standard, include the Six in the Third line of *Zhun* 屯 ䷂ “Sprouting” (#3), the Nine in the Second line of *Song* 訟 ䷅ “Lawsuit” (#6), the Nine in the Fifth line of *Bi* 比 ䷇ “Allying” (#8), the Nine in the Third line of *Xiaochu* 小畜 ䷈ “Lesser Livestock” (#9), the Nine in the Second and Nine in the Fourth lines of *Tai* 泰 ䷊ “Positive” (#11), the Six in the Third line of *Wuwang* 无妄 ䷘ “Without Folly” (#25), the Nine in the Second and Nine in the Fifth lines of *Daguo* 大過 ䷛ “Greater Surpassing” (#28), the Nine in the Third and the Top Nine lines of *Li* 離 ䷄ “Netted” (#30), the First Nine, the Nine in the Third, and the Six in the Fourth lines of *Mingyi* 明夷 ䷣ “Calling Pheasant” (#36), the Six in the Third and the Top Nine lines of *Kui* 睽 ䷥ “Cross-eyed” (#38), the Nine in the Fourth line of *Guai* 夬 ䷪ “Resolute” (#43), the Nine in the Second and Six in the Third lines of *Kun* 困 ䷮ “Bound” (#47), the Nine in the Third line of *Jing* 井 ䷯ “Well-Trap” (#48), the First Six line of *Ding* 鼎 ䷱ “Caldron” (#50), the First Nine and Six in the Second lines of *Zhen* 震 ䷲ “Shaking” (#51), the hexagram statement and Nine in the Third line of *Gen* 艮 ䷳ “Stilling” (#52), the Six in the Second, Six in the Fourth and Top Nine lines of *Jian* 漸 ䷴ “Progressing” (#53), the Top Six line of *Feng* 豐 ䷶ “Fullness” (#55), the Nine in the Third line of *Lü* 旅 ䷷ “Traveling” (#56), and the Six in the Second line of *Zhongfu* 中孚 ䷛ “Inner Trust” (#61).

- 困 ䷮ (#47): 初六：臀困于株木。入于幽谷。三歲不覿。  
*Kun* "Bound": First Six: Buttocks bound to a stumpy tree (*mu/\*môk*):  
 Entering into a somber valley (*gu/\*klôk*),  
 For three years not seen (*du/\*lôk*).
- 鼎 ䷱ (#50): 九二：鼎有實。我仇有疾。不我能即。吉。  
*Ding* "Caldron": Nine in the Second: A caldron having substance  
 (*shi/\*m-lit*):  
 Our enemy has an illness (*ji/\*dzit*),  
 It will not be able to reach us (*ji/\*tsit*).  
 Auspicious.
- 鼎 ䷱ (#50): 九三：鼎耳革。其行塞。雉膏不食。方雨虧。悔。終  
 吉。  
*Ding* "Caldron": Nine in the Third: A caldron's ears stripped (*ge/\*kræk*):  
 Its motion is blocked (*sai/\*sæk*),  
 Pheasant fat uneaten (*shi/\*m-læk*),  
 Border rains diminish.  
 Regret, in the end auspicious.
- 鼎 ䷱ (#50): 九四：鼎折足。覆公餗。其形渥。凶。  
*Ding* "Caldron": Nine in the Fourth: A caldron's broken leg (*zu/\*tsok*):  
 Upsets a duke's stew (*su/\*sôk*),  
 Its shape glossy (*wo/\*ʔrôk*).  
 Ominous.
- 艮 ䷳ (#52): 六二：艮其腓。不拯其隨。其心不快。  
*Gen* "Stilling": Six in the Second: Stilling its calf (*fei/\*bài*):  
 Not saving its marrow (*sui/\*s-wai*),  
 Its heart unhappy (*kuai/\*khwets*).
- 漸 ䷴ (#53): 九五：鴻漸于陵。婦三歲不孕。終莫之勝。吉。  
*Jian* "Progressing": Nine in the Fifth: A wild goose progressing to a peak  
 (*ling/\* rəng*):  
 A wife for three years not pregnant (*yun/\*ləng*),  
 In the end nothing overcomes her (*sheng/\*lhəng*).  
 Auspicious.
- 豐 ䷶ (#55): 六二：豐其蔀。日中見斗。往得疑疾。有孚發若。吉。  
*Feng* "Fullness": Six in the Second: Full its screen (*bu/\*bôʔ*):

At mid-day seeing the Dipper (*dou/\*tô?*).  
 Going gets doubts and illness (*ji/\* dzit*).  
 There is trust projecting-like. Auspicious.

豐 ䷶ (#55): 九三：豐其沛，日中見昧，折其右肱。无咎。  
*Feng* “Fullness”: Nine in the Third: Full its covering (*pei/\*phâts*):  
 At mid-day seeing tiny stars (*mei/\*mäs*),  
 Breaking his right arm.  
 Without trouble.

豐 ䷶ (#55): 九四：豐其蔀，日中見斗，遇其夷主。吉。  
*Feng* “Fullness”: Nine in the Fourth: Full its screen (*bu/\*phâts*):  
 In the day seeing the Dipper (*dou/\*tô?*),  
 Meeting his Yi master (*zhu/\*to?*).  
 Auspicious.

旅 ䷷ (#56): 六二：旅即次，懷其資，得童僕。貞。  
*Lü* “Traveling”: Six in the Second: Traveling approaching the camp  
 (*ci/\*tshih*):  
 Embracing his wares (*zi/\*tsi*),  
 Obtaining a young servant (*pu/\*phôk*).  
 Affirming.

旅 ䷷ (#56): 九四：旅于處，得其資斧，我心不快。  
*Lü* “Traveling”: Nine in the Fourth: Traveling in residence (*chu/\*k-hla?*):  
 Obtaining his wares and axe (*fu/\*pa?*),  
 Our hearts unhappy (*kuai/\*khwets*).

旅 ䷷ (#56): 上九：鳥焚其巢。旅人先笑後號咷。喪牛于易。凶。  
*Lü* “Traveling”: Top Nine: A bird burning its nest (*chao/\*dзраu*):  
 A traveler first laughing (*xiao/\*sauh*),  
 later crying out (*haotao/\*lâu*).  
 Losing an ox (*niu/\*ngwə*) at Yi. Ominous.

Not all of these oracles are as easy to understand as those from the two turtle-shell divinations or from the Nine in the Third line of *Jian* 漸 ䷴ “Progressing” (#53) hexagram examined above, and I will not attempt to interpret them here, being content just to note their form. In some of these cases, the form is not perfect; I suspect that a failed rhyme may be due to textual corruption. One thing that may be worthy of note when we turn to the question of the sequence of

the text in Chapter Eleven is that there is a curious concentration of these oracles among the hexagrams from *Ding* 鼎 ䷱ “Caldron” (#50) through *Lü* 旅 ䷷ “Traveling” (#56), with almost every line of several of these hexagrams containing either a complete oracle, or at least phrases that appear to derive from an oracle.

There is one other hexagram, *Tongren* 同人 ䷌ “Together with People” (#13), near the beginning of the text in the traditional sequence of hexagrams, in which almost every line contains at least part of an oracle. However, many of these oracles are only partially preserved, making their structure difficult to identify. This deformation can actually be an advantage, allowing us better to see how the oracles were created. The text of the entire hexagram reads as follows, beginning with the hexagram statement, which as noted in Chapter Eight above is anomalous in writing the hexagram name into the grammar of the statement itself:

䷌ 同人于野。亨。利涉大川。利君子貞。

Together with people in the wilds. Receipt. Beneficial to ford a great river. Beneficial to affirm about a lord's son.

初九：同人于門。无咎。

First Nine: Together with people at the gate. Without trouble.

六二：同人于宗。吝。

Six in the Second: Together with people at the temple. Stinted.

九三：伏戎于莽。升其高陵。三歲不興。

Nine in the Third: Crouching warriors in the weeds: Ascending its high peak, For three years not arising.

九四：乘其墉。弗克攻。吉。

Nine in the Fourth: Astride its wall, Not able to attack it. Auspicious.

九五：同人。先號咷而後笑。大師克相遇。

Nine in the Fifth: Together with people. First wailing but later laughing, Great armies succeed in meeting each other.

上九：同人于郊。无悔。

Top Nine: Together with people in the suburbs. Without regret.

The Nine in the Third line here was already entered into the list given above of standard oracles. Even though it employs a different image than the other lines, it is easy to see that it constitutes a standard oracle, “Crouching enemies in the grass” (*fu rong yu mang* 伏戎于莽) being the description of the image, and “Ascending its high peak, For three years not arising” (*sheng qi gao ling, san sui bu xing* 升其高陵，三歲不興) being the couplet that apparently comments on this omen’s significance for the topic of the divination. The other lines are all less complete. Nevertheless, I think it is still possible to see that the various “Together with people” phrases must have served as the image portion of the oracles. Depending on the topic of any given divination, an omen such as “Together with people in the wilds” (*Tongren yu ye* 同人于野) or “Together with people at the gate” (*Tongren yu men* 同人于門) would have prompted a divination official to compose a couplet of the sort “Astride its wall, Not able to attack it” (*cheng qi yong, fu ke gong* 乘其墉，弗克攻) seen in the Nine in the Fourth line statement. Indeed, the rhyme in this latter couplet (*yong*/\*jiwoŋ 墉 and *gong*/\*kuŋ 攻) suggests that it was probably originally attached to the image “Together with people at the temple” (*Tongren yu zong* 同人于宗; i.e., *zong*/\*tsuoŋ 宗) of the Six in the Second line statement. Similarly, rhyme might suggest that the fifth and sixth lines were split from an original complete oracle:

同人于郊。先號咷而後笑。大師克相遇。无悔  
 Together with people in the suburbs (*jiao*/\*kau 郊):  
 First crying out (*tao*/\*dâu 咷) and later laughing (*xiao*/\*sjäu 笑).  
 Great armies succeed in meeting each other (*yu*/\*ngju).  
 Without regret.

The phrase “Great armies succeed in meeting each other” does not share a perfect rhyme with the two preceding phrases, and so may not be part of the oracle. But its near rhyme may well have influenced its insertion here, a point to which I will return later in this chapter when we consider types of prognostications seen in line statements.

That the phrase “Together with people in the wilds” (*Tongren yu ye* 同人于野) of the hexagram statement, or the First Nine, Six in the Second, and Top Nine line statements, that pair similar phrases, “Together with people at the gate” (*Tongren yu men* 同人于門), “Together with people at the temple” (*Tongren yu zong* 同人于宗) and “Together with people in the suburbs” (*Tongren yu jiao* 同人于郊), with a prognostication (“Without trouble” [*wu jiu* 无咎], “Stinted” [*lin* 吝], and “Without regret” [*wu jiu* 无悔]), can be identified as the opening images of oracles is important for understanding the several hundred

*Zhou Changes* line statements that do not contain complete oracles. Most line statements in the text are as simple as the following examples, drawn almost randomly from throughout the book:

- 乾 ☰ (#1): 上九：亢龍。有悔。  
*Qian* “Vigorous”: Top Nine: Throttled Dragon. Having regret.
- 坤 ☷ (#2): 六五：黃裳。元吉。  
*Kun* “Compliant”: Six in the Fifth: Yellow skirts. Prime auspiciousness.
- 蒙 ☶ (#4): 六四：困蒙。吝。  
*Meng* “Shrouded”: Six in the Fourth: Binding a shroud. Stinted.
- 師 ☷ (#7): 六三：師或輿尸。凶。  
*Shi* “Army”: Six in the Third: An army now carting corpses. Ominous.
- 小畜 ☱ (#9): 九二：牽復。吉。  
*Xiaochu* “Lesser Livestock”: Nine in the Second: Repeatedly returning. Auspicious.
- 履 ☱ (#10): 初九：素履。往无咎。  
*Lü* “Treading”: First Nine: Plain stepping. Going: Without trouble.
- 謙 ☱ (#15): 六二：鳴謙。貞吉。  
*Qian* “Modesty”: Six in the Second: Calling modesty. Affirming: Auspicious.
- 豫 ☱ (#16): 初六：鳴豫。凶。  
*Yu* “Relaxed”: First Six: Calling excess. Ominous.
- 蠱 ☱ (#18): 九二：干母之蠱。不可貞。  
*Gu* “Pestilence”: Nine in the Second: A stem mother’s pestilence. One cannot affirm.
- 噬嗑 ☲ (#21): 六二：噬膚滅鼻。无咎。  
*Shike* “Biting And Chewing”: Six in the Second: Biting flesh and amputating a nose. Without trouble.
- 賁 ☶ (#22): 六二：賁其須。  
*Bi* “Ornamented”: Six in the Second: Ornamenting his beard.

- 復 ䷗ (#24): 六二：休復。吉。  
*Fu* "Returning": Six in the Second: Successful returning. Auspicious.
- 復 ䷗ (#24): 六三：頻復。厲。无咎。  
*Fu* "Returning": Six in the Third: Repeated returning. Dangerous. Without trouble.
- 大畜 ䷙ (#26): 九二：輿說輻。  
*Dachu* "Greater Livestock": Nine in the Second: A cart shedding an axle.
- 大過 ䷛ (#28): 大過九三：棟橈。凶。  
*Daguo* "Greater Surpassing": Nine in the Third: Rafters sagging. Ominous.
- 離 ䷝ (#30): 六二：黃離。元吉。  
*Li* "Netted": Six in the Second: Yellow netting. Prime auspiciousness.
- 咸 ䷞ (#31): 初六：咸其拇。  
*Xian* "Feeling": First Six: Feeling its toe.
- 遯 ䷠ (#33): 上九：肥遯。无不利。  
*Dun* "Retreating": Top Nine: Fat piglets. Nothing not beneficial.
- 大壯 ䷗ (#34): 六五：喪羊于易。无悔。  
*Dazhuang* "Great Maturity": Six in the Fifth: Losing sheep in Yi. Without regret.
- 家人 ䷤ (#37): 六四：富家。大吉。  
*Jiaren* "Family Members": Six in the Fourth: Enriched family. Greatly auspicious.
- 蹇 ䷦ (#39): 初六：往蹇來譽。  
*Jian* "Lame": First Six: Going lame, coming praised.
- 姤 ䷫ (#44): 九四：包无魚。起凶。  
*Gou* "Meeting": Nine in the Fourth: A wrapper without fish. Arising: ominous.

- 井 ䷯ (#48): 六四：井甃。无咎。  
*Jing* “Well”: Six in the Fourth: A well bricked. Without trouble.
- 鼎 ䷱ (#50): 上九：鼎玉鉉。大吉。无不利。  
*Ding* “Caldron”: Top Nine: A caldron’s jade bar. Greatly auspicious. Nothing not beneficial.
- 震 ䷲ (#51): 九四：震遂泥。  
*Zhen* “Shaking”: Nine in the Fourth: Shaking followed by mud.
- 巽 ䷸ (#57): 九三：頻巽。吝。  
*Xun* “Presenting”: Nine in the Third: Repeated presenting. Stinted.
- 兌 ䷹ (#58): 初九：和兌。吉。  
*Dui* “Expressing”: First Nine: Harmonious expressing. Auspicious.
- 節 ䷻ (#60): 九二：不出門庭。凶。  
*Jie* “Moderating”: Nine in the Second: Not exiting gate or courtyard. Ominous.
- 既濟 ䷾ (#63): 上六：濡其首。厲。  
*Jiji* “Already Across”: Top Six: Wetting its head. Dangerous.
- 未濟 ䷿ (#64): 九二：曳其輪。貞吉。  
*Weiji* “Not Yet Across”: Six in the Second: Dragging its wheel. Affirming: Auspicious.

It would be a simple matter to multiply several times over these thirty examples of line statements consisting of a simple image, usually, though not always, paired with one or more prognostication. I wish to suggest that that these images should be recognized as the first phrase of an oracle, the phrase that describes an omen, but that they are incomplete without the following phrase or couplet that relates the omen to the topic of the divination. Just as the image “Together with people at the temple” (*Tongren yu zong* 同人于宗) of the Six in the Second line statement of *Tongren* 同人 ䷌ “Together with People” (#13) hexagram, which ends with the word *zong*/\*tsûŋ 宗 “temple,” should probably be combined with the couplet “Astride its wall, Not able to attack it” (*cheng qi yong, fu ke gong* 乘其墉，弗克攻) seen in the Nine in the Fourth line statement of the same hexagram, completing the rhyme with the word *gong*/\*kûŋ “to attack,” so



too can we imagine that an image such as “Dragging its wheel” (*yi qi lun* 曳其輪) in the Six in the Second line of *Weiji* 未濟 ䷿ “Not Yet Across” (#64) hexagram, ending with the word *lun*/\*run “wheel,” might have been completed by a couplet such as “awarding them shields, protecting sons and grandsons” (*ci zhi dun, bao zi sun* 賜之盾，保子孫), in which *sun*/\*sùn “grandson” would complete the rhyme. I should hasten to note that this latter example is entirely imaginary. The text does not read this way, and I have made up the rejoinder couplet. However, it seems to me to be the sort of oracle that a diviner might have extemporized in the event of a divination regarding travel or a military campaign.

There are also instances in which line statements include what appear to be only the couplet of an oracle that follows the image, though these are much rarer than the isolated images and more difficult to identify. The following lines may be examples of this sort of orphan couplet (adding emphasis to the couplet by bolding it).

訟 ䷅ (#6):            上九：或錫之鞶帶，終朝三褫之。  
*Song* “Lawsuit”:    Top Nine: **Now awarding him a leather belt, To the end of the morning thrice stripping it.**

師 ䷆ (#7):            六五：田有禽。利執言。无咎。長子帥師，弟子輿尸。貞凶。  
*Shi* “Army”:        Six in the Fifth: In the fields there are fowl.  
                                  Beneficial to grasp prisoners. Without trouble.  
                                  **An elder son leading an army, A younger son carting corpses.** Affirming: Ominous.

師 ䷆ (#7):            上六：大君有命，開國承家。小人勿用。  
*Shi* “Army”:        Top Six: **A great lord having a mandate, Opening a country and receiving families.**  
                                  For a little person don’t use.

否 ䷋ (#12):           九五：休否。大人吉。其亡其亡，繫于苞桑。  
*Pi* “Negation”:      Nine in the Fifth: Successful negation. For a great person auspicious.  
                                  **It’s gone, it’s gone, Tied to a bushy mulberry.**

歸妹 ䷵ (#54):       上六：女承筐无實，士刲羊无血。无攸利。  
*Guimei* “Return-    Top Six: **A woman raising a basket without fruit, A sire**  
 ing Maiden”:        **stabbing a sheep without blood.** Nowhere beneficial.

小過 ䷛ (#62): 九三：弗過防之，從或戕之。凶。  
*Xiaoguo* “Lesser Surpassing”: **Nine in the Third: Not surpassing it but defending it, Following and now hurting it. Ominous.**

小過 ䷛ (#62): 上六：弗遇過之，飛鳥離之。凶。是謂災眚。  
*Xiaoguo* “Lesser Surpassing”: **Top Six: Not meeting it but surpassing it, A flying bird netted in it. Ominous. This is called Disaster and curses.**

In these cases, it is very hard to imagine what sort of image might have prompted these responses. Perhaps it is sufficient just to recognize the incompletely edited state of the received text of the *Zhou Changes*.<sup>10</sup>

## 2 The Symbolic Meaning of the Oracle

The identification of the formal structure of the oracles contained in the *Zhou Changes* is but the first step in understanding their role in the text. Readers will want to know how these oracles were produced—and especially where the images that open them came from—and also how they were understood within the divinations of the time. In the case of the two turtle-shell divinations examined at the beginning of the preceding section, the answer to these questions would seem to be quite easy: the images were the shapes of cracks (and in one case the sound made by the crack) that appeared in the turtle shell in the course of the pyromantic operation that was turtle-shell divination in ancient China. In the first case, “The Grand Transversal *geng-geng*” (*da heng geng geng* 大橫庚庚), we know from other accounts of divination that “Grand Transversal” (*da heng* 大橫) was a commonly recognized crack, presumably in the shape 卜, and commentaries inform us that *geng geng* 庚庚 was the sound of the crack. Similarly in the case of the second divination, the image of the oracle says explicitly that “The crack is like a mountain peak” (*zhao ru shan ling* 兆如山陵). Of course, the shape of the crack might be a sort of Rorschach test, in which different diviners or prognosticators could see different forms and suggest different interpretations of the forms. In the case of the first crack here, “Grand Transversal,” this seems not to have been a problem; the same name of a crack appears numerous times in the “Gui ci liezhuan” chapter of the *Shi*

10 In a personal communication (5 May 2020), Richard Smith has made the following remark about this statement: “The remarkable achievement of *Changes* exegesis over the next two thousand-plus years was that the best minds of China made sense of this stuff.” I agree wholeheartedly.

*ji*, where it is almost invariably regarded as an “auspicious” (*ji* 吉) omen. In the case of the second crack, on the other hand, even if the crack actually did look like a “mountain peak” (*shan ling* 山陵), perhaps something like 凵 or 凵, we would still need to know what symbolic meaning, if any, was attached to mountain peaks. I have surmised above that a mountain peak could portend danger, as the word “cliff” would do for speakers of English. But, even if this is the case, in the case of this particular divination, which was about launching a counter-attack against an invading force, for whom would it be dangerous: the attackers or the counter-attackers. In the case of this particular divination, we know from the narrative that precisely this question of interpretation arose, and the patron of the divination turned to an outside prognosticator to resolve the meaning.

In the cases of the oracles contained in the *Zhou Changes* itself, we have not only the same question of interpreting their symbolic meaning, but even before that step asking how the oracles—and especially the images that begin them—were produced. Regarding this second question, Richard Kunst has suggested the following hypothesis:

According to this hypothesis an omen like, for example *yu tuo fu* 輿說 (脫) 輓, “a cart has its axle-support come off,” appears in line 26.2 (i.e., the Nine in the Second line of *Dachu* 大畜 ䷙ “Greater Livestock” [#26]) because it was this line which was encountered, perhaps repeatedly encountered, when the stalks were manipulated in divining the significance of this omen.<sup>11</sup>

Elsewhere, he considers such other images as a “rafter sagging” (*dong nao* 棟橈) or “biting dried meat-on-bone and getting a bronze arrowhead” (*shi gan zi de jin shi* 噬乾肺得金矢),<sup>12</sup> and concludes: “Aside from many linguistic and paleographic problems in the interpretation of particular passages, ... the function of these omen references in the *Yi* text is fairly clear. After observing an ominous event, a divine signal, one sought the advice of a diviner to clarify its meaning.”<sup>13</sup>

This hypothesis is not original to Kunst. It derives largely from the work of Gao Heng 高亨 (1900–1986), one of the most influential scholars of the “New *Changes* Studies” of the middle half of the twentieth century. In his ear-

11 Kunst, “The Original *Yijing*,” 28.

12 These images are found in the Nine in the Third line of *Daguo* 大過 ䷛ “Greater Surpassing” (#28) and the Nine in the Fourth line of *Shike* 噬嗑 ䷔ “Biting and Chewing” (#21) respectively.

13 Kunst, “The Original *Yijing*,” 66–67.

liest study of the *Zhou Changes*, *Zhou Yi gu jing jin zhu*, Gao Heng repeatedly explained the images of line statements as the catalyst for the divination.<sup>14</sup> For instance, he said that the various “dragon” (*long* 龍) images of *Qian* hexagram were put into the text because when the ancients saw a dragon, they were unsure whether it was an auspicious or ominous portent and so performed a divination. Obtaining the result of *Qian* hexagram, or even a single line of *Qian* hexagram, they then noted beside that line the appearance of the dragon, and whether the portent had proved to be auspicious or not.

In his somewhat later book *Zhou Yi gu jing tongshuo* 周易古經通說 *Comprehensive Discussion of the Ancient Classic Zhou Changes*, Gao gave a more complete (if rather redundant) account of how line statements were produced.

《周易》古經，蓋非作於一人，亦非著於一時也。其中有為筮事之記錄。古代卜與筮皆有記錄。蓋當時有人將舉一事，卜人為之卜，遇某種兆象，論斷其休咎，及事既舉，休咎有驗，卜人（或史官）記錄其所卜之事要，與其卜時之論斷與其事之結果，此即卜事之記錄也。同此，當時有人將舉一事，筮人為之筮，遇某卦爻，論斷其休咎，及事既舉，休咎有驗，筮人（或史官）記錄其所筮之事要與其筮時之論斷與其事之結果，此即筮事之記錄也。

The ancient classic *Zhou Changes* probably was not composed by a single person and was not written at a single time. In it there are records of milfoil-divination acts. In antiquity turtle-shell and milfoil divination both had records. It is probably the case that at that time, when a person was about to do something, a turtle-shell diviner would divine on his behalf, and meeting with some type of crack, determined whether it would be good or bad, and then after the affair had been done and whether it had been good or bad was confirmed, the turtle-shell diviner (or the scribal official) recorded a summary of what had been divined about, together with the prognostication at the time of the divination and the result of the affair; this is what the record of a turtle-shell divination was. Similarly, at that time when a person was about to do something, a milfoil diviner would divine on his behalf, and meeting with some type of hexagram and line, determined whether it would be good or bad, and then after the affair had been done and whether it had been good or bad was confirmed, the milfoil diviner (or the scribal official) recorded a summary of what had been divined about, together with the prognostication at the time of the divination and the result of the affair; this is what the record of a milfoil divination was.<sup>15</sup>

14 Gao Heng, *Zhou Yi gu jing jin zhu*, 1.

15 Gao Heng, *Zhou Yi gu jing tongshuo*, 5.

He went on to cite the “Prognosticator” (*zhanren* 占人) section of the *Zhou li* 周禮 *Rites of Zhou* as a classical precedent for this scenario.

凡卜筮既事，則繫幣以比其命，歲終則計其占之中否。

In all cases after a turtle-shell divination had been finished, then they would attach a cloth to compare its command, and at the end of the year would then tabulate whether the prognostications had hit the mark or not.<sup>16</sup>

He noted two different ancient understandings of what it meant to “attach a cloth” (*xi bi* 繫幣). Du Zichun 杜子春 (c. 30 BCE–c. 58) gave the simple explanation that the prognostication was written on silk, which was attached to the turtle. Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200) gave a quite different explanation.

謂既卜筮，史必書其命龜之事及兆於策，繫其禮神之幣，而合藏焉。

This means that after the turtle-shell or milfoil divination, the scribe necessarily wrote on bamboo strips what had been commanded to the turtle as well as the crack, and attached the cloth-offering that had been used to propitiate the spirits, and stored them together.<sup>17</sup>

Zheng Xuan's explanation seems better to accord with divination records that have been unearthed from Warring States tombs in recent decades, none of which has been found attached to the actual turtle shell or to the milfoil stalks used in the divination. Nevertheless, Gao Heng preferred Du Zichun's explanation, though he suggested that it too was incomplete. Focusing on the meaning of to “compare its command” (*bi qi ming* 比其命), Gao explained that this was the command given to the turtle or milfoil, i.e., the topic of the divination.

卜人卜時，以所卜之事告於龜，謂之命龜；筮人筮時，以所筮之事告於著，謂之命著。卜人將命龜之辭，依其兆象，分別繫列；筮人將命著之辭，依其卦爻，分別繫列。此即所謂“比其命”也。

When a turtle-shell diviner divined by turtle shell, he announced the topic of the divination to the turtle, which is called the “command to the turtle.” When a milfoil diviner divined by milfoil, he announced the topic of the divination to the milfoil, which is called the “command to the milfoil.” The turtle-shell diviner would separately attach and arrange the statements of

16 *Zhou li zhengyi* 周禮正義, in Ruan Yuan 阮元, ed., *shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009), 1738.

17 *Ibid.*

the commands to the turtle depending on the crack images. The milfoil diviner would separately attach and arrange the statements of the commands to the milfoil depending on the hexagrams and lines. This is what is called “comparing its command.”<sup>18</sup>

Gao understood the *Zhou Changes* as a cumulative record of milfoil divination records. It was cumulative both in that original records were entered under different hexagrams and lines, and also that subsequent divinations might result in additions to records that had already been recorded. Moreover, he also allowed for the role of an editor or editors who would refine the records based on his “observation of events” (*shiwu zhi guan cha* 事物之觀察), his “experience of the world” (*she shi zhi jing yan* 涉世之經驗), or his “view of philosophy” (*zheli zhi jian jie* 哲理之見解). This editor (or editors) used narrative, metaphor, or historical anecdote to illustrate his (or their) understanding of right and wrong. It was also this editor who organized the different line statements within a single hexagram text, lending them a logical sequence. According to Gao Heng, it was only through the work of this editor that the *Zhou Changes* was finally completed.

Reasonable and well supported with classical precedent though this hypothesis would seem to be, Gao Heng does not explain here what the topics of the divination were. Did he still imagine, as he did in 1947, that the divinations were prompted by the sighting of dragons or, with Richard Kunst, about “a cart having its axle-support come off,” or were the topics of divination similar to the turtle-shell divinations examined above: the King of Dai becoming emperor or the state of Wei counter-attacking the invaders from Zheng? It seems to me that this is a fundamental question in our understanding of the purpose of divination.

Even though the symbolic meaning of the images of these oracles is often unclear to modern readers, almost three thousand years removed from the time of their original creation, I do not believe that they were unclear to the diviners who created these oracles. One of Western Sinology’s most evocative descriptions of the symbolic world of ancient China was penned by Marcel Granet (1884–1940). Writing of seasonal festivals, Granet noted that “Virtue was in everything.”

The sentiment of reverence which sprang up in the course of the seasonal gathering was called out indiscriminately by the streams and rocks, like-

18 Gao Heng, *Zhou Yi gu jing tongshuo*, 7.

wise by the flowers and animals, by the most beautiful trees as well as by the meanest plants. One common Virtue was in everything. Equal hopes were aroused by picking a berry and by crossing a river. Every flower produced pregnancy, removed evil influences, united hearts, ratified vows.<sup>19</sup>

Are we to imagine that the participants in these seasonal gatherings were unsure of which flower produced pregnancy, which removed evil influences, which united hearts, or which ratified vows? Even dedicated city dwellers in the modern world know the different meanings evoked by a red rose or a white carnation. For historical reasons in the West, a red poppy worn on the lapel on November 11 has a very specific meaning, one known to all whose memories extend back a century. And who does not know the difference between extending an olive branch, awarding a laurel wreath, or offering someone hemlock? There would be no need to divine the meaning of these images. More individuated arboreal images, such as a withered poplar tree that suddenly sprouted and flowered, would also seem to be easy enough to interpret. These are images that occur in the *Zhou Changes*.

大過 ䷛ (#28): 九二：枯楊生稊，老夫得其女妻。无不利。  
*Daquo* “Greater Surpassing”: Nine in the Second: Withered poplar growing shoots: An old husband getting his maiden wife. Nothing not beneficial.

大過 ䷛ (#28): 九五：枯楊生華，老婦得其士夫。无咎无譽。  
*Daquo* “Greater Surpassing”: Nine in the Fifth: Withered poplar growing flowers, An old wife getting her sire husband. Without trouble, without praise.

In one of Western scholarship’s most important early studies of the *Zhou Changes*, Arthur Waley (1889–1966) suggested that the text was “an arbitrary amalgam of two quite separate works”: “an omen or ‘peasant interpretation’ work” and “a divination text.”<sup>20</sup> His concern in that study was primarily with the omens, which he compared to English proverbs such as:

A red sky at night  
 Is the shepherd’s delight.

19 Marcel Granet, *Chinese Civilization* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1930), 173.

20 Waley, “The Book of Changes,” 121.

A red sky at morning  
Is the shepherd's warning.<sup>21</sup>

He also compared images seen in the *Shi jing* 詩經 *Classic of Poetry* with those in the *Zhou Changes*. For instance, he observed the connection between the “wild goose” (*hong* 鴻) and the absent husband in the Nine in the Third line of *Jian* 漸 ䷴ “Progressing” (#53) hexagram, mentioned above and also discussed at some length in Chapter Six above.

九三：鴻漸于陸，夫征不復，婦孕不育。凶。利禦寇。  
Nine in the Third: A wild goose progressing to a mound (*lu*/\*ljuk):  
A husband campaigning but not returning (*fu*/\*bjuk),  
A wife pregnant but not giving birth (*yu*/\*jiuk).  
Ominous. Beneficial to drive off bandits.

As evidence that this symbolism was tied to the wild goose already in ancient China, Waley pointed to the *Shij jing* poem “Nine-strand Net” (“Jiu yu” 九罭; Mao 159), the second and third stanzas of which read:

鴻飛遵渚，公歸無所，於女信處。  
Wild geese flying along the bank, My lord's return is without place, To take  
abode with the maiden.

鴻飛遵陸，公歸不復，於女信宿。  
Wild geese flying along the land, My lord's return does not come back, To  
spend the night with the maiden.<sup>22</sup>

As discussed in Chapter Six above, similar examples of this symbolism of the wild goose can be found throughout the *Shi jing*. Not only was it a common image in antiquity, but Waley notes “the correlation between absent lovers and wild-geese has of course remained as a stock theme in Chinese poetry down to

21 Waley, “The Book of Changes,” 121.

22 Waley, “The Book of Changes,” 128. The translation here is my own. For some reason, Waley quotes only the first two phrases of these two stanzas, omitting the conclusive final phrase. Moreover, his translation is surprisingly awkward for such a celebrated translator: “When the wild goose in its plight (*sic*) follows the island, (It means that) my lord has nowhere to go,” and “When the wild goose in its flight follows the land, (It means that) my lord will not return.” I assume that Waley’s “plight” in the first line is a simple typographical error, but it may point to an interesting subconscious association between the goose’s “flight” and the maiden’s “plight.”



the present day.”<sup>23</sup> The image of wild geese in flight, whether actually sighted or only imagined, required no divination to determine its symbolism.

Thus, I think we can dismiss Gao Heng and Kunst’s hypothesis regarding the origin of the oracles in the line statements. The image of the oracle needed no divination, but rather was the result of the divination. But how did the diviner identify any particular image as the result of a divination? In Chapter Seven above, I noted that some hexagram pictures bear some relationship with the hexagram name. The most obvious example—and in some ways the only example explicitly alluded to in the text—is the hexagram *Ding* 鼎 ☱ “Caldron” (#50).



This hexagram, especially as drawn in the traditional solid and broken lines, bears at least some resemblance to a bronze caldron, the most symbolically potent type of bronze vessel in antiquity. It would require only one influential and imaginative diviner to draw the connection between this result and the caldron for this particular hexagram to be so defined. That first diviner to draw this association may have produced the simple hexagram statement for this hexagram:

鼎 ☱ (50): 元吉。亨。  
*Ding* ☱ “Caldron”: Prime auspiciousness. Receipt.

Then, by a process of inference—not accretion, he—or subsequent diviners—might have drawn (almost literally have drawn) associations between the discrete parts of the caldron, the lines of the hexagram, and the images of the respective line statements (emphasized by **bolding**).

初六：鼎顛趾。利出否。得妾以其子。无咎。

First Six: **A caldron’s upturned legs**: Beneficial to expel the bad, Getting a consort with her child. Without trouble.

九二：鼎有實。我仇有疾。不我能即。吉。

Nine in the Second: **A caldron having substance**: Our enemy has an illness, It will not be able to reach us. Auspicious.

23 Waley, “The Book of Changes,” 128–129.

九三：鼎耳革。其行塞。雉膏不食。方雨虧。悔終吉。

Nine in the Third: **A caldron's ears stripped:** Its motion is blocked. Pheasant fat uneaten, Border rains diminish. Regret, in the end auspicious.

九四：鼎折足。覆公餗。其形渥。凶。

Nine in the Fourth: **A caldron's broken leg:** Upsets a duke's stew, Its shape glossy. Ominous.

六五：鼎黃耳金鉉。利貞。

Six in the Fifth: **A caldron's yellow ears and metal bar.** Beneficial to affirm.

上九：鼎玉鉉。大吉。无不利。

Top Nine: **A caldron's jade bar.** Greatly auspicious. Nothing not beneficial.

Only four of the images in the line statements (the First, Second, Fifth and Top) seem to be properly associated with the respective parts of the caldrons, but it would have required only one such association for an eventual editor to infer the organizational structure. This would have been the editor Gao Heng surmised would refine the records based on his “observation of events,” his “experience of the world,” or his “view of philosophy.” According to Gao, this editor or editors used narrative, metaphor, or historical anecdote to illustrate his understanding of right and wrong. More likely, he used the oracles that diviners had produced in the course of divinations. Thus, we can imagine that in the case of a contagious disease, a divination would have been performed with the express wish that the contagion not affect the family or city of the person for whom the divination was performed. If the result of the divination was the second line of *Ding* “Caldron” hexagram, the diviner would have imagined the solid belly of the caldron, and understanding the solidity of that most auspicious of bronze vessels to be a defense against the contagion, would have extemporized the oracle “A caldron having substance: Our enemy has an illness, It will not be able to reach us.” Alternatively, a divination about a court case might have produced the fourth line: “A caldron's broken leg: Upsets a duke's stew, Its shape glossy,” even though it is much harder to see a leg of a caldron in this line.<sup>24</sup>

24 Kunst, “The Original *Yijing*,” 40 notes that there is a greater than ordinary number of “low” words (words such as “foot” or “leg”) found in fourth lines of hexagram. He says that he finds this “disconcerting,” because it seems to imply that hexagrams were already understood to be composed of top and bottom trigrams at the time the line statements were composed.

Of course, this explains only one of the sixty-four hexagrams, but at least it suggests how the process of association might have functioned. As we will see in Chapter Ten, one of the organizing principles of the *Zhou Changes* is that hexagrams were paired, either by inverting the hexagram picture or, in the eight cases where this would produce the same picture, by conversion of all lines to their opposite (i.e., changing yang lines to yin or yin to yang). For instance, *Ding* 鼎 hexagram is paired with *Ge* 革 hexagram “Rebellion” (#49). This pairing is not simply figural, but also conceptual. As noted in Chapter Eight above in the discussion of the word family associated with the word *zhen* 貞, the word *ding* 鼎 “caldron” is intimately connected with—indeed, cognate with—the word *zheng* 正 “upright,” and through it with the word *zheng* 政 “government.” As seen too in the story in the *Mozi* 墨子 about the divination performed on behalf of Qi, the lord of Xia 夏后啟, in ancient China caldrons were viewed as symbols of political legitimacy. Thus, it is a simple step from this to associate a caldron—☰—turned upside down—☷—with the overturning of a government, i.e., with “rebellion.”

In Chapter Seven, associations between hexagram pictures and some other hexagram names were also suggested. Thus, the hexagram picture of *Yi* 頤 ䷚ “Jaws” (#27), if viewed from the side, 𠄎, resembles the oracle-bone character 𠄎 usually identified as *chi* 齒 “tooth,” but which is also linked to the “jaw.” Similarly, the hexagram picture of *Shike* 噬嗑 ䷔ “Biting and Chewing” (#21) can be seen as the mouth with something in it, which is to say the act of “biting and chewing.” Other associations are conceptual based on an understanding of the structure of an *Yijing* hexagram. For instance, knowing that hexagrams were formed, almost organically, growing from bottom to top, and that a yang line is considered to be solid and a yin line to be broken, it could be natural to associate the hexagram picture ䷖ with the hexagram *Bo* 剝 ䷖ “Paring” (#23), and conversely its inverse ䷗ with the hexagram *Fu* 復 ䷗ “Returning” (#24). Still more conceptual, given that yang is regarded as the active and yin as the quiescent principle, it might have been natural to associate the hexagram picture ䷀ with *Qian* 乾 ䷀ “Vigorous” (#1) and ䷁ with *Kun* 坤 ䷁ “Compliant” (#2). And since yang and *Qian* were also associated with Heaven, it would be a simple step for a diviner to see in the hexagram *Qian* ䷀ the image of the dragons that fly across the night sky (and also rest in the watery depths beneath the earth).

It goes without saying that this has added only another half dozen hexagram images to that of *Ding* ䷁ “Caldron,” and I suspect that even the most imaginative modern reader of the *Zhou Changes* would be hard pressed to explain more than another dozen or so of the sixty-four hexagrams. Why, for instance, should ䷆ have been associated with *Shi* 師 ䷆ “Army” (#7)? The explanation of the *Tuan zhuan* 彖傳 *Commentary on the Judgments* that the five yin lines

represent the multitudes (*zhong* 眾) who are governed by the “correct” (*zheng* 正) second line is not very convincing, but at least it is not as opaque as the explanation of the *Xiang zhuan* 象傳 *Commentary on the Images*: “Within the earth there is water: the army” (*di zhong you shui, shi* 地中有水，師).

However, the *Zhou Changes* was not the only system of divination that made use of hexagrams. As discussed in Chapter One above, the *Gui cang* 歸藏 *Returning to be Stored* was an alternative divination system, for which we can deduce the complete statement for *Shi* 師 ䷆ “Army” hexagram.

䷆ 師曰昔者穆天子卜出師（西征）而枚占于禺强，禺强占之曰：不吉。龍降于天，而道里修遠，飛而冲天，蒼蒼其羽。

䷆ *Shi* “Army” says: In the past Son of Heaven Mu divined about sending out the army (to campaign westwardly) and had the stalks prognosticated by Yu Qiang. Yu Qiang prognosticated them and said: Not auspicious. The Dragon descends from heaven, but the road is long and far; flying and piercing heaven, so green its wings.

We have no way of knowing, of course, but it is possible that King Mu of Zhou (r. 956–918 BCE) may have had a milfoil divination performed before sending his army out on western campaign, the result being ䷆. The diviner may have named this hexagram *Shi* 師 “Army” simply because this was the topic of the divination, and this name was then taken over by diviners responsible for the *Zhou Changes* as well.

These are all possible derivations for some of the oracles contained in the *Zhou Changes*. However, at the end of the day, we also cannot rule out sheer coincidence. It is entirely possible that at the time of a divination about a military campaign or a pregnancy, a flock of geese just happened to fly past the site of the divination, and the diviner associated this with the result of the divination, which just happened to be *Jian* 漸 ䷴ “Progressing” (#53) hexagram. Needless to say, this is supposition on my part. Other divination texts provide evidence from later periods that diviners were intensely interested in natural phenomena. The *Dong guan Han ji* 東觀漢記 *Han Records in the Eastern Observatory* records the following account of a milfoil divination performed in the autumn of 62 CE, when the capital region was suffering from drought. Emperor Ming of the Han dynasty 漢明帝 (r. 57–75), is said to have ascended the Cloud Terrace (*Yun tai* 雲臺) and performed a divination using a text titled *Zhou Yi gua lin* 周易卦林 *Forest of Hexagrams of the Zhou Changes*.<sup>25</sup> The account reads as follows:

25 This refers to the *Jiao shi Yi Lin* 焦氏易林 of Jiao Yanshou 焦延壽 (1st c. BCE), the sup-

沛獻王輔，善《京氏易》。永平五年秋，京師少雨，上御雲臺，召尚席取卦具自卦，以《周易卦林》占之，其繇曰：「蟻封穴戶，大雨將集。」明日大雨。上即以詔書問輔曰：「道豈有是耶？」輔上書曰：「案《易》卦《震》䷲之《蹇》䷦，蟻封穴戶，大雨將集。《蹇》、《艮》䷳下《坎》䷜上，《艮》為山，《坎》為水。山出雲為雨，蟻穴居而知雨，將雲雨，蟻封穴，故以蟻為興文。」詔報曰：「善哉！」王次序之。

Fu, Xian Wang of Pei, was adept at Jing [Fang]'s *Changes*. In the autumn of the fifth year of the Eternal Peace era (A.D. 62), the capital had had little rain, so the emperor mounted the Cloud Terrace and taking the divin- ing instruments divined for himself, using the *Forest of Hexagrams of the Zhou Changes* to prognosticate it. Its oracle was: "Ants sealing the opening of their mound, A great rain is about to gather." On the next day, there was a great rain. The emperor then wrote to Fu asking: "Does the Way really have such a thing?" Fu wrote back to the emperor saying: "According to the *Changes* when *Zhen* ䷲ hexagram changes to *Jian* ䷦ hexagram, 'Ants seal off the opening of their mound, A great rain is about to gather.' *Jian* has *Gen* ䷳ trigram below and *Kan* ䷜ trigram above; *Gen* is 'mountain,' and *Kan* is 'water.' Mountains produce clouds to make rain; ants reside in mounds and know when it will rain; when it is about to rain, ants seal their mounds. Therefore, it uses ants as an arousal text." The emperor wrote back: "Splendid!" The king then put it in sequence.<sup>26</sup>

Although this story and the *Forest of Hexagrams of the Zhou Changes* to which it refers date to the Han dynasty, almost a millennium after the time that the *Zhou Changes* was being produced, it may be illustrative of the way in which the *Zhou Changes* was produced. Of course, the *Forest of Hexagrams of the Zhou Changes* was clearly derivative of the *Zhou Changes*. Moreover, we can disregard for present purposes the explanations that Fu, Xian Wang of Pei 沛獻王輔 gave of the hexagrams and their component trigrams; these too are more informative of Han-dynasty exegetical techniques than of the context in which the

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posed teacher of the noted *Yijing* scholar Jing Fang 京房 (77–37 BCE), in which the *Zhen* ䷲ *zhi* 之 *Jian* ䷦ oracle reads:

蟻封穴戶，大雨將集。鵲起數鳴，牝雞嘆室。相薨雄父，未到在道。

Ants sealing the opening of their mound, A great rain is about to gather.

The magpie raises numerous calls, The hen awakens the chamber.

Burying the heroic fathers, They are on the way not yet arrived.

See Jiao Yanshou 焦延壽, Ma Xinqin 馬新欽, ed., *Jiao shi Yi Lin* 焦氏易林 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2017), 678.

26 *Dong guan Han ji* 東觀漢記 (Sibu beiyao ed.), 7.3b.

*Zhou Changes* developed.<sup>27</sup> However, ants sealing their mounds before a rain-storm is the sort of natural portent that we can well imagine an attentive diviner would notice. Since *Zhen* 震 ☳ “Shaking” (#51) hexagram is composed of *Zhen* ☳ trigram doubled, and *Zhen* trigram has long been associated with “thunder,”<sup>28</sup> this is the sort of oracle that might have been attached to one or another of its lines—whether or not the name of the hexagram resulted from an actual divination about rain.

These oracles that we see in the *Zhou Changes* were perhaps the fundamental aspect of early Chinese divination. At the beginning of this discussion, we saw them employed also in turtle-shell divination. With the discovery of the Wangjiatai 王家台 *Gui cang* manuscripts, we now know that they also featured prominently in that other important Zhou-dynasty divination manual. At least two hexagram statements of the *Gui cang*, for *Shi* 師 ☷ “Army” and *Guimei* 歸妹 ☱ “Returning Maiden” hexagrams, can be reconstructed in their entirety. They both conclude with oracles that are at least reminiscent of those of the *Zhou Changes* (again emphasized by bolding).

昔穆王天子筮出於西征。不吉。曰：龍降於天，而道里修遠。飛而冲天，蒼蒼其羽。

In the past Son of Heaven King Mu divined by milfoil about going out on western campaign. Not auspicious. It said: **The dragon descends from heaven, but the road is long and far. Flying and piercing heaven, so green its wings.**

羿請無死之藥於西王母。姮娥竊之以奔月。將往枚筮之於有黃。有黃占之，曰：吉。翩翩歸妹，獨將西行。逢天晦芒，毋驚毋恐，後其大昌。恒娥遂託身于月。是為蟾蜍。

Yi requested the medicine of immortality from the Western Queen Mother. Heng E stole it to flee to the moon. When she was about to go, she had the stalks divined by milfoil by You Huang. You Huang prognosti-

27 The *Jiao shi Yi lin* has 4,096 oracles, with each of the sixty-four hexagrams having sixty-four oracles. Jing Fang was famous for his ability to use the images of trigrams to interpret divinations, but these are all Han-dynasty developments of the *Yijing* tradition, and do not necessarily have anything to do with the origin and early development of the *Zhou Changes*. There is a longstanding controversy concerning the date and authenticity of the text; for a comprehensive discussion, see Qian Shiming 錢世明, *Yilin tongshuo* 易林通說 (Zhengzhou: Huaxia chubanshe, 1993).

28 In Chinese mythology, thunder is thought to be a yang force produced from under the ground; thus the trigram picture, ☳, with a yang line under two yin lines, representative of earth, can be understood to depict thunder.

cated them and said: Auspicious. **So soaring the returning maiden, alone about to travel westward. Meeting heaven's dark void, do not tremble, do not fear. Afterwards there will be great prosperity.** Heng E subsequently consigned her body to the moon, and this became the frog.<sup>29</sup>

Isolating just the oracles here, we can both see their formal features and also gain some sense of their symbolic meaning.

龍降於天 (*thîn) ,	The Dragon descends from heaven,
而道里修遠 (*wanʔ) ,	but the road is distant;
飛而冲天 (*thîn) ,	flying and piercing heaven,
蒼蒼其羽 (*waʔ) 。	so green its wings.

翩翩归妹 (*məs) ,	So soaring the returning maiden,
独将西行 (*grâŋ) 。	alone leading along the western road.
逢天晦芒 (*maŋ) ,	Meeting heaven's dark void;
毋驚毋恐 (*khoŋʔ) ,	do not tremble, do not fear,
后其大昌 (*thaŋ) 。	later there will be great prosperity.

For King Mu divining about sending out his army on campaign, the beginning of the oracle suggests the peril the army might meet. However, for the “dragon” (*long* 龍) to “pierce heaven” (*chong tian* 冲天) almost surely was meant to indicate that this endeavor would prove to be successful. Similar anxiety, but ultimate success, is also written explicitly into the final rhyme of the oracle for *Guimei*: “later there will be great prosperity” (*hou qie da chang* 后且大昌).

This prognosticatory function of oracles can also be seen in yet another account of divination that apparently used a still different type of milfoil divination or milfoil-divination manual. It too concerns King Mu of Zhou, ostensibly during the western campaign to which the *Gui cang* hexagram statement for *Shi* ䷆ “Army” alludes. It is found in the *Mu tianzi zhuan* 穆天子傳 *Biography of Son of Heaven Mu*, and was introduced already in account #4.16

丙辰，天子南遊于黃室之丘，以觀夏侯啟之所居，乃口于啟室。天子筮獵莘澤。其卦遇訟 ䷅。逢公占之曰：訟之繇：藪澤蒼蒼，其中口，宜其正公。戎事則從、祭祀則烹、田獵則獲。口飲逢公酒，賜之駿馬十六、絺紵三十篋。逢公再拜稽首，賜筮史狐口。

29 Quoted in the *Hou Han shu buzhu* 後漢書補注 of Hui Dong 惠棟; at Fan Ye, *Hou Han shu*, 3216.

On *bingchen*, the Son of Heaven traveled southwards to the Mound of Yellow Chamber in order to view where Xia Hou Qi had resided, and then .. in Qi's chamber. The Son of Heaven divined by milfoil about hunting at Duckweed Swamp; the hexagram he met was *Song* ䷗. Feng Gong prognosticated it, saying: "Song's oracle is: 'The swamp is green green, Its midst .., appropriate for its upright duke.' In military affairs there will be accord, in sacrifices there will be happiness, and in hunting there will be a catch." .. toasted Feng Gong with wine, and awarded him sixteen fine horses and thirty chests of gauze. Feng Gong twice bowed and touched his head to the ground, and awarded the milfoil divination secretary a fox ...<sup>30</sup>

This account of a milfoil divination is particularly rich. It tells us the topic of the divination: hunting at Duckweed Swamp (*Ping ze* 萍澤). It also tell us the result: *Song* 訟 ䷗ "Lawsuit" hexagram. Here it is clear that even though this is a hexagram of the same name as found in the *Zhou Changes*, the divination did not make use of the *Zhou Changes*, but rather used a different sort of milfoil divination. This different sort of divination also produced an oracle (*zhou* 繇), mentioned explicitly in the narrative. Unfortunately, because the *Mu tianzi zhuan* is an unearthed text, discovered in A.D. 279 in a tomb at Ji jun 汲郡 in present-day Jixian 汲縣, Henan, it has not been preserved completely, and there is a break in the middle of the oracle. Nevertheless, from the structure of other oracles we know that just two characters are missing here:<sup>31</sup>

藪澤蒼蒼，其中□□，宜其正公。

'The swamp is green green (*cang*<\*tshâŋ), Its midst .. .., appropriate for its upright duke (*gong*<\*klôŋ):'

As with the *Zhou Changes* oracles and other oracles that we have examined, it begins with an image or omen, in this case the greenery of the swamp, and then concludes it with a rhyming couplet that suggests the meaning of this for the topic of the divination. Although this rhyming couplet is incomplete, we can see that it was understood to be successful. Indeed, this meaning is further specified by three more phrases that serve as specific prognostications:

30 *Mu tianzi zhuan*, 5.4a–4b.

31 The received text of the *Mu tianzi zhuan* includes only a single box, "□," indicative in that text and generally in Chinese editions of texts of a missing character or characters. I supply the second box here to indicate explicitly that two characters are missing.



戎事則從、祭祀則熹、田獵則獲。

In military affairs there will be accord, in sacrifices there will be happiness, and in hunting there will be a catch.

While all three of these prognostications are certainly auspicious, I suspect that the prognostication about military affairs was put first not because it was the most important topic (after all, the divination was about hunting, which is the last of the three prognostications), but rather because the last word of the phrase, *cong* 從 (\*dzon) “to be in accord,” rhymes with the main rhyme of the oracle.<sup>32</sup> This may also have been a feature of prognostications found in the *Zhou Changes*, though as we will see in the next section, these prognostications are found in various formulas.

### 3 The Prognostications

While the omens and oracles are the portion of line statements that stimulate the most interest in readers of the *Zhou Changes*, almost all line statements also contain various types of formulaic language that represent prognostications of the auspiciousness of the oracle or of more specific advice derived from it. In the discussion of the oracles above, we have already encountered many of these prognostications. For instance, the six line statements of *Ding* 鼎 “Caldron” hexagram contain a representative sample (here indicated in boldface type).

初六：鼎顛趾。利出否。得妾以其子。无咎。

First Six: A caldron's upturned legs: Beneficial to expel the bad, Getting a consort with her child. **Without trouble.**

九二：鼎有實。我仇有疾。不我能即。吉。

Nine in the Second: A caldron having substance: Our enemy has an illness, It will not be able to reach us. **Auspicious.**

32 Kunst, “The Original *Yijing*,” 54 notes that “It is possible, though not yet proven, that even some of the one or two word prognosticatory formulas of the *Yi*, especially many cases of the phrase *wú jiù* (\*g'iôg) 无咎, ‘no misfortune,’ are related by rhyme to the phrases preceding them.” He further notes (p. 55) that August Conrady, “Yih-king-Studien,” 426 says that divination terms were inserted into the text in order to rhyme.

九三：鼎耳革。其行塞。雉膏不食。方雨虧。悔終吉。

Nine in the Third: A caldron's ears stripped: Its motion is blocked. Pheasant fat uneaten, Border rains diminish. **Regret, in the end auspicious.**

九四：鼎折足。覆公餗。其形渥。凶。

Nine in the Fourth: A caldron's broken leg: Upsets a duke's stew, Its shape glossy. **Ominous.**

六五：鼎黃耳金鉉。利貞。

Six in the Fifth: A caldron's yellow ears and metal bar. **Beneficial to affirm.**

上九：鼎玉鉉。大吉。无不利。

Top Nine: A caldron's jade bar. Greatly auspicious. **Nothing not beneficial.**

"Auspicious" (*ji* 吉) is by far the most common prognostication, both in the *Zhou Changes* itself and in other divination contexts in ancient China. In the *Zhou Changes*, it occurs 147 times. Its opposite, "ominous" (*xiong* 凶), which occurs here in the Nine in the Fourth line statement, occurs 58 times. In addition to the "without trouble" (*wu jiu* 无咎; 93 occurrences, as well as 2 occurrences of "without great trouble" [*wu da jiu* 无大咎]), "regret" (*hui* 悔; 4 occurrences, as well as 3 occurrences of "having regret" [*you hui* 有悔]), and "nothing not beneficial" (*wu bu li* 无不利; 13 occurrences) seen in these line statements, other general prognostications include "dangerous" (*li* 厲; 25 occurrences), "stinted" (*lin* 吝; 20 occurrences), "regret gone" (*hui wang* 悔亡; 19 occurrences), and "nowhere beneficial" (*wu you li* 无攸利; 10 occurrences).<sup>33</sup>

33 In my 1983 doctoral dissertation, I suggested that these technical divination terms could be divided into two types: prognostications, which predicted the auspiciousness of the oracle; and verifications, that were added after the fact to indicate what had actually happened; Shaughnessy, "The Composition of the *Zhouyi*," 152–158. I suggested that "auspicious" (*ji* 吉), "ominous" (*xiong* 凶), "dangerous" (*li* 厲), and "stinted" (*lin* 吝) are prognostications, while "without trouble" (*wu jiu* 无咎), "nothing beneficial" (*wu you li* 无有利), "nothing not beneficial" (*wu bu li* 无不利), "regret" (*hui* 悔) and "without regret" (*wu hui* 无悔) or "regret gone" (*hui wang* 悔亡) are verifications. I suggested two principal reasons to distinguish these technical divination terms. First, whereas "auspicious," "ominous," "dangerous," and "stinted" routinely follow the word "affirming" (*zhen* 貞), "nothing beneficial," "nothing not beneficial," and "regret" never do, and "without trouble" does so only once in its 93 occurrences, and "regret gone" does so only once in 19 occurrences. Second, according to the "Yiwen zhi" 藝文志 "Record of Arts and Letters" chapter of the *Han shu* 漢書 *History of Han*, the "ancient text" (*guwen* 古文) version of the *Zhou Changes* "occasionally deleted 'without trouble' and 'regret gone'" (*huo tuoqu wu jiu hui wang* 或脫

There is one other technical divination term that occurs regularly in both hexagram and line statements, and which is virtually unique to the *Zhou Changes*, at least within the received Chinese literary tradition: *fu* 孚. The word occurs 42 times, 26 of which are in the bound phrase “there is *fu*” (*you fu* 有孚). In other cases, the word seems to be part of the syntax of sentences, such as the following cases (in the latter three of which the word is translated as “captive”):

泰 ䷊ (#11): 九三：无平不陂，无往不復。艱貞无咎。勿恤其孚，于食有福。

*Tai* “Positive”: Nine in the Third: Nothing smooth that does not slope, nothing going that does not return. Affirming about difficulty. Without trouble. **Don’t worry about their trust, in eating there is fortune.**

泰 ䷊ (#11): 六四：翩翩不富，以其鄰，不戒以孚。

*Tai* “Positive”: Six in the Fourth: Flutter-flutter, not enriched by their neighbors, **not warned by captives.**

大有 ䷍ (#14): 六五：厥孚交如威如。吉。

*Dayou* “Greatly Having”: Six in the Fifth: **Their captives exchanged-like, awed-like.** Auspicious.

夬 ䷪ (#43): 夬：揚于王庭。孚號。有厲。告自邑。不利即戎。利有攸往。

*Guai* ䷪ “Resolute”: **Resolute:** Raised up in the king’s court. **Captives crying out.** There is danger. Announcing from the city. Not beneficial to approach the warriors. Beneficial to have somewhere to go.

In the *Yijing* tradition, this word is routinely glossed as “sincere” or “reliable” (*xin* 信), however, many adherents of the “New Changes Studies” of the twentieth century made it almost a *cause célèbre* in their new interpretation of the text. Two of the greatest scholars of the century, Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892–1978) and Wen Yiduo 聞一多 (1899–1946), in their first published studies of the *Zhou Changes* almost simultaneously and apparently independently made use

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去無咎悔亡). I continue to think that there is a difference between these terms, but I am not confident enough about the difference to argue for it in a book such as this.

of Shang oracle-bone inscriptions to suggest that the graph 孚 should be read as the protograph of 俘 “capture” or “captive.”<sup>34</sup> They were followed in this by most of the significant scholars of “New Changes Studies,” including by me in my early work on the *Zhou Changes*.<sup>35</sup>

Despite this consensus, it now seems that the traditional reading was better informed than the modern reading, though the best demonstration of this also comes from new insights into Shang oracle-bone inscriptions. Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭 was apparently the first to suggest that the graph 𠄎 commonly seen in Shang oracle-bone inscriptions should be identified as 孚 孚 and that this graph serves as a sort of prognostication indicating that the result of the divination either did or did not confirm the intentions of the diviner.

丙戌卜，內：翌丁亥不其雨。丁亥雨。

Crack on *bingxu* (day 23), Nei: On the next day *dinghai* (day 24), it is not anticipated to rain. On *dinghai* it rained.

茲不孚，雨。

This is not confirmed, it rained.<sup>36</sup>

These two statements were inscribed on either side of a single crack, with “This is not confirmed” (*zi bu fu* 茲不孚) apparently serving as a sort of “verification” (referred to as a *yanzi* 驗辭 in Chinese studies of oracle-bone inscriptions). This differs from a prognostication in that it is an after-the-fact report of what

34 Guo Moruo 郭沫若, “*Zhou Yi shidai de shehui shenghuo*” 周易時代的社會生活, *Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌 25.21 (10 November 1928): 73–93; reprinted as Chapter One of his celebrated *Zhongguo gudai shehui yanjiu* 中國古代社會研究 (Shanghai, Xiandai shuju, 1931), 27–68. Wen Yiduo 聞一多, “*Zhou Yi yizheng leizuan*” 周易義證類纂, *Qinghua xuebao* 清華學報 13.2 (1928); rpt. in *Wen Yiduo quanqi*, 3–65.

35 A brief but more systematic explication of this reading was given by Xu Shida 徐世大, “Shuo fu” 說孚, *Shuo wen yuekan* 說文月刊 4 (1944): 84–88. This was followed, eventually, by the two greatest “New Changes Studies” scholars: Li Jingchi and Gao Heng; see Li Jingchi, “*Zhou yi shici xukao*”. Gao Heng’s acceptance of this reading was rather more indirect. In his celebrated *Zhou Yi gu jing jin zhu*, he consistently glossed 孚 孚 as 浮 “floating,” but understood as a phonetic loan for 罰 “to punish”; it was only in his much later work *Zhou Yi da zhuan jin zhu* 周易大傳今注 (Jinan: Qi-Lu shushe, 1979) that he systematically changed his gloss to 俘 俘 “captive.” In the West, the most detailed discussion of the word is found in Kunst, “The Original *Yijing*,” 150–159, in which he supports the reading as 孚 俘 “captive.” For my own early interpretation, see Shaughnessy, “The Composition of the *Zhouyi*,” 118, 264.

36 Guo Moruo, *Jiaguwen heji*, 12357. Li Xueqin 李學勤, Qi Wenxin 齊文心, and Ai Lan 艾蘭 (Sarah Allan), *Yingguo suo cang jiagu ji* 英國所藏甲骨集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), 1017.

really did happen. Since many verifications that confirm the intention of the divination begin formulaically with the word *yun* 允 “really,” it is interesting to note that in the early Chinese synonymicon *Erya* 爾雅 *Nearing Eloquence*, the entry for *xin* 信 “sincere; reliable” begins with the synonyms *yun* 允 and *fu* 孚. Thus, in the *Zhou Changes*, it would seem that *fu* 孚 and *you fu* 有孚 do serve as either a type of prognostication or verification, more or less as traditional glosses suggest. Nevertheless, the English translation of “you are sincere” given in the Wilhelm/Baynes translation is doubtless misdirected; it is not the diviner who is sincere, but the spirits speaking through the milfoil: “it (i.e., the result of the divination) is trustworthy,” i.e., the result coincides with the intention of the divination. As in the cases of the other technical divination terms, it is difficult to determine whether this term should be regarded as a prognostication (i.e., a prediction based on the result of the divination) or as a verification (an after-the-fact report of whether it was reliable).<sup>37</sup> In this regard, the usage

37 Further evidence of this usage of *fu* 孚 can be seen in a recently unearthed text in the collection of the Shanghai Museum entitled by the editors \**Jian dawang bo han* 東大王泊汗 \**Great King Jian Afflicted by Drought*. The text concerns in part a divination performed on behalf of King Jian of Chu 楚簡王 (r. 431–408 BCE), who was suffering with a “dry itch” (*sao* 癢).

王以問釐尹高：「不穀癢甚病，驟夢高山深溪，吾所得地於虜中者，無有名山名溪；欲祭于楚邦者乎？尚謔而卜之於大夏。如麇將祭之。」釐尹許諾，謔而卜之，麇。釐尹致命于君王：「既謔而卜之，麇。」王曰：「如麇，速祭之，吾癢鼠病。」

The king asked Xi Yin Gao about it: “My dry-itch is very painful. Just now I dreamt of high mountains and deep ravines, but the lands I took from Fu do not have any famous mountains or famous ravines; should I sacrifice in the country of Chu? Would that you determine and divine by turtle-shell about it with the Great Xia. If it is confirmed, I will sacrifice about it.” Xi Yin agreed, determined and divined by turtle-shell about it; it was **confirmed**. Xi Yin presented the charge to the ruling king: “Having determined and divined by turtle-shell about it, it is **confirmed**.” The king said: “If it is **confirmed**, quickly sacrifice about it. My dry-itch is biting painful.”

See Ma Chengyuan 馬承源, ed., *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu* 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2004), 4:45–67 (plates) and 4:193–215 (transcription and notes); the editor of the manuscript was Pu Maozuo 濮茅左. Note that the transcription given here follows that of Chen Jian 陳劍, “Shangbo zhushu Zhao Wang yu Gong zhi Shui he Jian dawang bo han duhouji” 上博竹書《昭王與龔之雎》和《東大王泊旱》讀後記, <http://www.jianbo.org/admin3/2005/chenjian002.htm>, and differs dramatically from that presented in *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu*. For further discussion of the text, see Jeffrey Riegel, “Curing the Incurable,” *Early China* 35–36 (2012–2013), 230–232. The text repeatedly mentions the graph 麇, which can be identified with the word *biao*/\*pau? 表; Chen Jian argues convincingly that this word is phonetically interchangeable with *fu*/\*phu 孚, and should be read here as “confirmed.”

seems to be shared by the “Jun Shi” 君奭 “Lord Shi” chapter of the *Shang shu* 尚書 *Exalted Scriptures*, one of its rare occurrences elsewhere in traditional Chinese literature:

故一人有事于四方，若卜筮罔不是孚。

Therefore, when the One Man has service in the four quarters, as in turtle-shell and milfoil divination there are none that are not truly trustworthy.<sup>38</sup>

Another example of the word *fu* 孚 being used in connection with divination has recently come to light in a Tsinghua University manuscript called *Yin Gaozong wen yu San Shou* 殷高宗問於三壽 *High Ancestor of Yin Asked of the Three Aged Ones*. It again shows that the traditional understanding of the term as indicating “sincerity” or “trustworthiness” is indeed well warranted.

龜筮孚忒，五寶變色，而星月亂行。

The trustworthiness of the turtle-(shell) and milfoil was mistaken, the five treasures changed colors, and the stars and moon moved chaotically.<sup>39</sup>

The question of whether these technical divination terms originally served as prognostications or as verifications, almost impossible though it is to determine from the context, is important because of the question of whether the line statements’ oracles and their images had any intrinsic significance or if, following the understanding of the text suggested by Gao Heng and his adherents, the images were neutral and required divination to determine their auspiciousness. Richard Kunst has given a spirited defense of this understanding of the text:

[T]hat the contradictions in prognosticatory judgments so frequently to be found in the text, which have led to so many forced readings in order to avoid them, result from amalgamating the results of many separate divinations over a long period of time; that we see in the diviners’ remarks in *Zuozhuan* and *Guoyu*, which sometimes coincide with the modern text

38 *Shang shu Kong zhuan* 尚書孔傳, in Ruan Yuan 阮元, ed., *Shisan jing zhushu* 十三經注疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009), 476.

39 Li Xueqin 李學勤, ed.-in-chief, *Qinghua daxue Chutu wenxian yanjiu yu baohu zhongxin*, ed. *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian (Wu)* 清華大學藏戰國竹簡 (伍), Vol. 5 (Shanghai: Zhong-Xi shuju, 2015), 91 #11.

of the *Yi*, sometimes diverge from it or extrapolate on it, the continuation of the process of accumulation of *ad hoc*, impromptu diviners' verse and prognostications which formed much of the *Yi* text itself; that the anecdotes embedded in the text are probably all based on actual divinations, rather than being historical allusions used only for rhetorical effect and added prestige, as is the case with the *shén qián* 神籤 "divine oracle slips" of later times; or that the stress laid by the ancient Chinese on the special significance of the correlation of two or more different omens for determining good and bad fortune led to the practice of divining an omen after it was observed to clarify its meaning—combining the interpretation of natural signs with divination by turtle shells or yarrow stalks being felt to be a double guarantee of accuracy—and that in the case of the *Yi*, if a certain hexagram and line were encountered upon manipulation of the stalks, that omen or the verification of its result was often noted in connection with the line in the text.<sup>40</sup>

It is true that there is evidence in the text of "the contradictions in prognosticatory judgments so frequently to be found in the text, which have led to so many forced readings in order to avoid them." The two following cases are the most obvious (highlighting the divination terms).

晉 ䷢ (#35): 上九：晉其角，維用伐邑。厲。吉。无咎。貞吝。  
*Jin* "Advancing": Top Nine: Advancing its horns, It is used to attack a city.  
**Dangerous. Auspicious. Without trouble. Affirming: Stinted.**

家人 ䷤ (#37): 九三：家人嗃嗃。悔。厲。吉。婦子嘻嘻。終吝。  
*Jiaren* "Family Members": Nine in the Third: Family members *ha-ha*.  
**Regret. Dangerous. Auspicious.**  
 Wives and children *hee-hee*.  
**In the end stinted.**

However, these two cases are anomalous among the 386 line statements of the *Zhou Changes* for their abundance of—and the contradictory nature of—technical divination terms. More common are examples such as the following (again highlighting the divination terms):

<sup>40</sup> Kunst, "The Original *Yijing*," 27–28.

- 乾 ☰ (#1): 九三：君子終日乾乾，夕惕若。厲。无咎。  
*Qian* “Vigorous”: Nine in the Third: A lord’s son to the end of the day so vigorous, In the evening apprehensive-like.  
**Dangerous. Without trouble.**<sup>41</sup>
- 師 ☷ (#7): 九二：在師中。吉。无咎。王三錫命。  
*Shi* “Army”: Nine in the Second: In an army’s midst.  
**Auspicious. Without trouble.**  
 The king thrice awarding commands.<sup>42</sup>
- 大過 ☱ (#28): 上六：過涉滅頂。凶。无咎。  
*Daguo* “Greater Surpassing”: Top Six: Surpassing the ford wiping out the crown of the head.  
**Ominous. Without trouble.**<sup>43</sup>

It may be that these multiple divination terms, whether contradictory or not, “result from amalgamating the results of many separate divinations over a long period of time,” or it may be, as I suggested in my 1983 doctoral dissertation, that there is a fundamental distinction between the terms “auspicious” (*ji* 吉), “ominous” (*xiong* 凶), “dangerous” (*li* 厲) and *lin* 吝 “stinted,” which I suggested function as “prognostications”, and terms such as “Without trouble” (*wu jiu* 无咎) which I suggested function as “verifications.” There is certainly good evidence from later periods that different diviners could offer different prognostications. Both the *Shi ji* story concerning Liu Heng’s divination about becoming emperor of the Han dynasty and the *Zuo zhuan* story concerning Sun Wenzhi’s divina-

41 This line is often interpreted as “In the evening is apprehensive as if danger. Without trouble” (*xi tiruo li. Wujiu* 夕惕若厲。无咎。). Similar juxtaposition of “Dangerous. Without trouble” (*li wu jiu* 厲无咎) can be seen in the Six in the Third line of *Fu* 復 ☱ “Returning” (#24), the Nine in the Fourth line of *Kui* 睽 ☱ “Cross-Eyed” (#38), and, as “Determining: dangerous. Without trouble” (*zhen li wu jiu* 貞厲无咎) in the Six in the Fifth line of *Shike* 噬嗑 ☲ “Biting and Chewing” (#21).

42 Similar juxtapositions of “Auspicious. Without trouble” (*ji wu jiu* 吉无咎) can be seen in the Top Six line of *Lin* 臨 ☱ “Looking Down” (#19), the First Nine line of *Yi* 益 ☱ “Increase” (#42), the Six in the Second line of *Cui* 萃 ☱ “Gathering” (#45), the Nine in the Fourth line of *Sheng* 升 ☱ “Rising” (#46), the Nine in the Second line of *Ge* 革 ☱ “Rebellion” (#49), and the Nine in the Second line of *Xun* 巽 ☴ “Presenting” (#57). The Nine in the Fourth line of *Cui* 萃 ☱ “Gathering” (#45) has a case of “Greatly auspicious. Without trouble” (*da ji wu jiu* 大吉无咎).

43 Similar juxtapositions of “Ominous. Without trouble” (*xiong wu jiu* 凶无咎) can be seen in the Nine in the Third line of *Guai* 夬 ☱ “Resolute” (#43), the Nine in the Second line of *Kun* 困 ☱ “Bound” (#47), and the Top Six line of *Zhen* 震 ☳ “Shaking” (#51).



tion about counter-attacking the state of Zheng recounted at the beginning of this chapter suggest at least that there was uncertainty concerning prognostications. Also with respect to turtle-shell divination, we have seen in Chapter Three that the *\*Bu shu* 卜書 *\*Document on Turtle-shell Divination* among the Shanghai Museum manuscripts suggests that three or four different diviners may have described a crack in wildly different ways. Another story from slightly later in the *Shi ji* notes—seemingly sarcastically—even greater disagreements among diviners. In his addendum to the “Rizhe liezhuan” 日者列傳 “Biographies of the Chronomancers” chapter, Chu Shaosun 褚少孫 (c. 104–30 BCE) concludes by recounting a story he had heard from the Grand Diviner (*Tai bu* 太卜) when he first entered service in the imperial palace:

孝武帝時，聚會占家問之，某日可取婦乎？五行家曰可，堪輿家曰不可，建除家曰不吉，叢辰家曰大凶，曆家曰小凶，天人家曰小吉，太一家曰大吉。辯訟不決，以狀聞。制曰：『避諸死忌，以五行為主。』人取於五行者也。

At the time of Emperor Wu (r. 141–187), he assembled the prognosticators and asked them if he could take a consort on a certain day. The Five Phases expert said it was acceptable, the Canopy and Chassis (i.e., geomancy) expert said it was not acceptable, the Establish and Remove (i.e., chronomancy) expert said it was not auspicious, the Thicket of Constellations (i.e., astrology) expert said it was greatly ominous, the Calendar expert said that it was slightly ominous, the Heaven Person (i.e., astronomy) expert said that it was slightly auspicious, and the Grand One expert said that it was greatly auspicious. The deliberations being inconclusive, he asked her appearance, and directed saying: “Avoiding the many death taboos, I will take the Five Phases as paramount,” and so people accepted the Five Phases.<sup>44</sup>

It is also possible that rather than seeing these multiple, and possibly contradictory, divination terms as “the continuation of the process of accumulation of *ad hoc*, impromptu diviners’ verse and prognostications,” we should see them as corruptions that have entered the text of the *Zhou Changes*. Of course, in traditional China, the *Zhou Changes* was seen as the creation of the sages King Wen of Zhou 周文王 and the Duke of Zhou 周公, and so presumably is incorruptible. But regardless of who the original author or authors may have been, texts were certainly subject to corruption in the long process of copying and recopying.<sup>45</sup>

44 Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, 3222.

45 Early manuscripts of the *Zhou Changes* reveal numerous mistakes in the received text,

The “Yiwen zhi” 藝文志 “Record of Arts and Letters” chapter of the *Han shu* notes that the “ancient text” (*guwen* 古文) version of the *Zhou Changes* differed from other texts in the absence of such terms as “Without trouble” (*wu jiu* 无咎) and “Regret gone” (*hui wang* 悔亡), and the Shanghai Museum manuscript

some of these also allowing us to see how they must have come about. Here I will mention just two of these. In the received text, the Top Six line statement of *Shi* 師 ䷆ “Army” (#7) reads:

上六大君有命開國承家小人勿用

Top Six: The great lord has a command, To open the kingdom and relieve the families.

Petty persons ought not use it.

The phrase “open the kingdom and relieve the families” (*kai guo cheng jia* 開國承家) contains two words that are well known as Han-dynasty replacements for words that came to have a taboo against them because they were the names of Han emperors. Both the Shanghai Museum and the Fuyang 阜陽 *Zhou Changes* manuscripts write the phrase as 啓邦承家, with *qi* 啓 “to initiate” instead of *kai* 開 “to open” and *bang* 邦 “state” instead of *guo* 國 “kingdom.” *Bang* 邦 was the name of Liu Bang 劉邦 (i.e., Han Gaozu 漢高祖; r. 206–195 BCE) and *qi* 啓 was the name of Liu Qi 劉啟 (i.e., Han Jing di 漢景帝; r. 157–141 BCE), and so both words came to be replaced during the Han dynasty, replacements that persisted in the text even after the fall of the dynasty. It is worth noting that the Mawangdui 馬王堆 manuscript, probably copied in the 170s BCE, that is after the death of Liu Bang and before the accession of Liu Qi, writes this phrase as “initiates the kingdom and relieves the families” (*qi guo cheng jia* 啓國承家); for the Mawangdui manuscript, see Fu Juyou and Chen Songchang, *Mawangdui Han mu wenwu*, 113, and for the Fuyang manuscript, see Han Ziqiang 韓自強, “Fuyang Han jian *Zhou Yi* shiwen” 阜陽漢簡周易釋文, *Daojia wenhua yanjiu* 道家文化研究 18 (2000), 20.

There is another instance of the word *guo* 國 “kingdom” in the received text for which the Shanghai Museum manuscript reveals an even more interesting corruption. In the received text, the Top Six line of *Qian* 謙 ䷎ “Modesty” (#15) hexagram reads:

上六：鳴謙可用行師征邑國。

Top Six: Calling modesty. It can be used to put the army in motion to campaign against the city and kingdom.

The Shanghai Museum manuscript reads similarly (allowing for standard orthographic differences), but with one important difference:

上六：鳴蹙可用行市征邦

Top Six: Calling modesty. It can be used to put the army in motion to campaign against the state.

Here too it is clear that the *guo* 國 of the received text was originally written as *bang* 邦. However, it would seem that the “city” signfic of *bang* (i.e., 邑) left a vestige in the received text in the form of the word *yi* 邑 “city” before *guo*. The Mawangdui manuscript quotes this line as reading simply “*zheng guo*” 征國 “to campaign against the state.” Indeed, as Liao Mingchun 廖名春, “*Chu jian Zhou Yi jiao shi ji* (yi)” 楚簡《周易》校釋記 (一), *Zhou Yi yanjiu* 周易研究 2004.3, 14 notes, there is other textual evidence indicating that the word *yi* 邑 “city” was an intrusion into the text. The *Jingdian shiwen* of Lu Deming says of this line: “*Zheng guo*’ *ben huo zuo* ‘*zheng yi guo*’ *zhe, fei*” 征國本或作征邑國者非 “For ‘To campaign against the state’ there are texts that read ‘to campaign against the city and state,’ which is incorrect”; *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, 209.

of the *Zhou Changes*, incomplete as it is, differs from the received text in almost twenty places in its technical divination terms.<sup>46</sup> In a similar vein, in the *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 *History of Latter Han* biography of Wang Jing 王景 (1st c. A.D.), we read:

初，景以為六經所載皆有卜筮，作事舉止，質於蓍龜，而眾書錯糅，吉凶相反，乃參紀眾家數術文書，冢宅禁忌，堪輿日相之屬，適於事用者，集為《大衍玄基》云。

At first, Jing thought that the Six Classics all contained turtle-shell and milfoil divination records and that acting or not was determined by the milfoil and turtle. However, since the many books were confused, and the auspicious and ominous were contradictory, he consulted the texts of all the experts in calculations and arts, the prohibitions and avoidances for tomb and domicile, Canopy and Chassis day signs, and the like, and taking what was suitable for practical use collected them into the *Dark Foundation of the Great Expansion*.<sup>47</sup>

On the other hand, we ought not exaggerate the contradictory nature of the prognostications contained in the *Zhou Changes*. While the symbolic meanings of many of the oracles and their images remain enigmas to us today, many others are transparent, and the prognostications attached to them are consistent with what we would expect. The following paired examples from single hexagrams are more or less representative.

復 ䷗ (#24): 六二：休復。吉。  
*Fu* “Returning”: Six in the Second: Successful returning. **Auspicious.**

復 ䷗ (#24): 上六：迷復。凶。  
*Fu* “Returning”: Top Six: Confused returning. **Ominous.**

鼎 ䷱ (#50): 九二：鼎有實，我仇有疾，不我能即。吉。  
*Ding* “Caldron”: Nine in the Second: A caldron having substance: Our enemy has an illness, It will not be able to reach us. **Auspicious.**

46 For a complete listing of these variants, see Shaughnessy, “A First Reading of the Shanghai Museum Bamboo-Strip Manuscript of the *Zhou Yi*,” 11 Table 1.

47 Fan Ye, *Hou Han shu*, 2466; cited at Harper and Kalinowski, *Books of Fate and Popular Culture in Early China*, 95.

鼎 ䷱ (#50): 九四：鼎折足，覆公餗，其形渥。凶。  
*Ding* “Caldron”: Nine in the Fourth: A caldron’s broken leg: Upsets a duke’s stew, Its shape glossy. **Ominous.**

節 ䷻ (#60): 九五：甘節。吉。往有尚。  
*Jie* “Moderating”: Nine in the Fifth: Sweet moderation. **Auspicious.** Going has elevation.

節 ䷻ (#60): 上六：苦節。貞凶。悔亡。  
*Jie* “Moderating”: Top Six: Bitter moderation. Affirming: **Ominous.** Regret gone.

While Kunst is justified in viewing much of traditional *Yijing* scholarship as containing “so many forced readings in order to avoid” the contradictions in these technical divination terms, the images were certainly heavily value laden, and much of the symbolism is recoverable.

In addition to these technical divination terms, whether they should be understood as just prognostications or perhaps both prognostications and verifications, there is also another type of formulaic prognostication in the line statements: advice as to what should be done in particular circumstances. This advice is often, though not invariably, introduced with the word *li* 利 “benefit; beneficial.” In Chapter Eight, this word and especially its use in the hexagram statements was discussed at some length. There it was noted that in hexagram statements, other than the phrase *li zhen* 利貞 “beneficial to affirm,” several other formulaic phrases occur predominantly, if not exclusively, in hexagram statements. These include “beneficial to see a great person” (*li jian da ren* 利見大人), “beneficial to ford a great river” (*li she da chuan* 利涉大川), and “beneficial to have somewhere to go” (*li you you wang* 利有攸往).<sup>48</sup> In line statements, these “beneficial to” phrases of advice tend to be more individuated, as in the following examples.

蒙 ䷃ (#4): 初六：發蒙。利用刑人。用說桎梏。以往吝。  
*Meng* “Shrouded”: First Six: Projecting a shroud. **Beneficial to use a punished man, herewith removing the shackles.**  
 In going: Stinted.

48 Four of seven occurrences of “beneficial to see a great man,” eight of ten occurrences of “beneficial to ford a great river,” and nine of twelve occurrences of “beneficial to have

- 蒙 ䷃ (#4): 上九：擊蒙。不利為寇，利禦寇。  
*Meng* “Shrouded”: Top Nine: Striking a shroud. **Not beneficial to be bandits, beneficial to drive off bandits.**
- 師 ䷆ (#7): 六五：田有禽。利執言。无咎。長子帥師，弟子輿尸。貞凶。  
*Shi* “Army”: Six in the Fifth: In fields there are fowl. **Beneficial to grasp prisoners.** Without trouble. An elder son leading an army, a younger son carting corpses. Affirming: Ominous.
- 謙 ䷎ (#15): 六五：不富以其鄰。利用侵伐。无不利。  
*Qian* “Modesty”: Six in the Fifth: Not enriched by their neighbors. **Beneficial herewith to invade and attack.** Nothing not beneficial.
- 謙 ䷎ (#15): 上六：鳴謙。利用行師征（邑國）邦。  
*Qian* “Modesty”: Top Six: Calling modesty. **Beneficial herewith to set in motion an army and campaign against a country.**
- 觀 ䷓ (#20): 六四：觀國之光。利用賓于王。  
*Guan* “Looking Up”: Six in the Fourth: Look up at the kingdom’s radiance. **Beneficial herewith to be hosted by the king.**
- 大畜 ䷙ (#26): 初九：有厲。利已。  
*Dachu* “Greater Livestock”: First Nine: There is danger. **Beneficial to change.**
- 益 ䷗ (#42): 初九：利用為大作。元吉。无咎。  
*Yi* “Increase” : First Nine: **Beneficial herewith to undertake a great action.**  
 Prime auspiciousness.  
 Without trouble.

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someplace to go” come in hexagram statements. When it is considered that there are six times as many line statements as hexagram statements, these ratios are still more striking.

困 ䷮ (#47): 九二：困于酒食：朱紱方來。利用亨祀。征凶。无咎。  
*Kun* "Bound": Nine in the Second: Bound in wine and food. The Red-Kneepads country comes. **Beneficial herewith to offer and sacrifice.** Campaigning: Ominous. Without trouble.

In Chapter Eight above, I noted that these phrases of advice for which it is beneficial (or not beneficial) to do something are also seen in other types of divination texts from ancient China and there quoted from the *Shuihudi 睡虎地 Ri Shu 日書 Day Book*. The parallels are striking enough to bear repeating.

害日，利以除凶厲，敝不祥。祭門行，吉。以祭，最眾必亂者。

陰日，利以家室。祭祀、嫁子、娶婦、入材，大吉。以見君上，數達，毋咎。

達日，利以行師出征、見人。以祭，上下皆吉。生子，男吉，女必出於邦。

On Harmful days, it is beneficial to remove inauspiciousness and danger, and to dispel what is not lucky; sacrificing and moving gates will be auspicious; sacrificing in great number will certainly be disorderly.

On Shady days, it is beneficial to marry and start a household; sacrificial offerings, marrying a son, taking a wife, and contributing resources will be greatly auspicious; in seeing the lord or superiors, if you reach them several times, there will be no trouble.

On Reaching days, it is beneficial to set the army in motion and go out on campaign and to see others; in sacrificing, the high and low will all be auspicious; in giving birth to children, males will be auspicious, while females will certainly leave the country.

There is one other source from about the same time as the *Shuihudi* bamboo strips that potentially allows even greater insight into the nature of prognostications and the effect they may have had on a divination manual: the manuscript of the *Zhou Changes* with appended prognostications that was excavated at Fuyang 阜陽, Anhui, in 1978. This source, which was probably copied at the very beginning of the Han dynasty and was buried in 165 BCE, is too late to have influenced the composition of the original text of the *Zhou Changes* or even its transmission. Nevertheless, it is suggestive of how such a text was used—and how similar use may have influenced the wording of the text at an earlier time. As described in Chapter One, the most important feature of this manuscript is that each hexagram or line statement of

the *Zhou Changes* is followed by one or more prognostications. Even though the manuscript is frustratingly fragmentary, it is still possible to see this feature, as in the following example that comes from *Tongren* 同人 ䷌ “Together with People” (#13) hexagram; the added prognostications are indicated in bold.

58. 戰斷遶強不得志卜病者不死乃瘳・九四乘高唐弗克  
 58. ... **battling; the enemy will be strong but will not obtain its will; divining about someone who is sick: if they do not die then they will get better.** • Nine in the Fourth: Astride a high platform, Not able ...

Although there are two minor textual variants, “Nine in the Fourth: Astride a high platform, Not able” (*jiu si cheng gao tang fu ke* 九四乘高唐弗克) obviously corresponds with the Nine in the Fourth line of *Tongren* hexagram, which in the received text reads:

九四：乘其墉，弗克攻。吉。  
 Nine in the Fourth: Astride its wall, Not able to attack it. Auspicious.<sup>49</sup>

Therefore, it is clear that the preceding prognostications pertain to the Nine in the Third line of the same hexagram, which reads in the received text:

九三：伏戎于莽，升其高陵，三歲不興。  
 Nine in the Third: Crouching warriors in the weeds: Ascending its high peak, For three years not arising.

Given the image of this oracle, “crouching warriors in the weeds,” the divination that produced it must have pertained to a military context, presumably concerning an attack. Thus, it seems natural that what is apparently the first of the prognostications attached to this line also concerns warfare: “battling; the enemy will be strong but will not obtain its will.”

There are several other similar examples in the Fuyang manuscript. Here I will cite just two. First, the prognostication attached to the First Nine line state-

49 The Fuyang manuscript differs from the received text in reading *gao* 高 instead of *qi* 其 and *tang* 唐 instead of *yong* 墉. It seems clear that both of these differences are a result of graphic similarity, but since all four of the readings potentially make sense, it would seem that there is no way to determine which reading or readings is preferable.

ment of *Shike* 噬嗑 (written *Shi zha* 筮闈 in the Fuyang manuscript) ䷔ “Biting and Chewing” (#21) hexagram reads (supplying missing text from the received text of the *Zhou Changes*):

98. • 初九屢校威(趾无咎)  
 99. 馘囚者桎梏吉不兇 • 六二筮膚威  
 98. ... • First Nine: Wearing shackles and amputating (a foot; without trouble).  
 99. ... **Tying a prisoner in fetters and handcuffs: auspicious, not ominous.** • Six in the Second: Biting flesh and amputating ...

It is easy to see that the added prognostication about shackling prisoners corresponds exactly with the contents of the line statement. Consider too the Six in the Second line of *Fu* 復 ䷗ “Returning” (#24) hexagram.

120. 六二休復吉卜  
 121. 出妻皆復 • 六三頻  
 120. ... Six in the Second: Successful returning; auspicious. **Divining ...**  
 121. ... **departing wives all return.** • Six in the Third: Repeated ...

Prognostications such as “the enemy will be strong but will not obtain its will” and “divining about someone who is sick: if they do not die then they will get better” attached to the Nine in the Third Line of *Tongren* hexagram in the Fuyang manuscript read so much like lines from the *Zhou Changes* itself that occasionally if it were not for the word “divining about” (*bu* 卜) that usually comes before them in that manuscript, it would be difficult to know where the line statement ended and the prognostication began. Indeed, there are numerous line statements in the received text of the *Zhou Changes* that contain one or more phrases strikingly similar to the divination statements of the Fuyang manuscript. Here I will cite just three examples (highlighting the relevant wording).

- 屯 ䷂ (#3): 六二：屯如遭如，乘馬班如。匪寇婚媾。女子貞不字，十年乃字。  
*Zhun* “Sprouting”: Six in the Second: Sproutingly, spinningly, Teams of horses aligned-like. Non-bandits’ in marriage meeting. **Affirming about a young girl: Not pregnant; in ten years then pregnant.**



豫 ䷏ (#16): 六五：貞疾，恆不死。  
 Yu “Excess”: Six in the Fifth: **Affirming: Sickness, in the long-term, not dying.**

隨 ䷐ (#17): 初九：官有渝。貞吉。出門交有功。  
 Sui “Following”: First Nine: An office having deterioration. **Affirming: Auspicious. Going out a gate to exchange having results.**

If we proceed from these parallels to one final example taken from the Fuyang manuscript itself, we might be able to hazard a guess as to why some such divination formulas were incorporated into the received text of the *Zhou Changes*. Text on four separate fragments corresponds to the Nine in the Second line statement of *Daguo* 大過 *Greater Surpassing* hexagram, including an oracle about the “withered poplar growing shoots.” In the received text, it reads:

大過 ䷛ (#28) 九二：枯楊生稊。老夫得其女妻。无不利。  
*Daguo* “Greater Surpassing”: Nine in the Second: Withered poplar growing shoots: An old husband getting his maiden wife. Nothing not beneficial.

In the Fuyang manuscript, the line is supplied with the following prognostications:

- 140. 得之 • 九二枯楊
- 141. 生第老夫得
- 142. 女妻无不利卜病者不死戰鬪
- 140. ... **gets it.** • Nine in the Second: Withered poplar
- 141. growing shoots, an old husband getting ...
- 142. maiden wife. Nothing not beneficial. **Divining about someone who is sick: he will not die; about warfare: ...**

It is easy to see how the image of this line, a withered tree growing a new sprout and an old man taking a young bride, would suggest the formula in the *Zhou Changes* “nothing not beneficial.” There is nothing intrinsically different about that formula and the Fuyang prognostications about sickness and warfare except perhaps their degree of specificity; it may have been nothing more than its all-encompassing generality that won “nothing not beneficial” inclusion in the final text of the *Zhou Yi*. But perhaps there was one other feature about the phrase that made it especially appropriate: the rhyme (or near rhyme) between *ti*/\*dî 第 (written 稊 in the received text) “sprout,” *qi*/\*tshəih 妻 “wife,” and *li*/\*rih 利 “beneficial.”

A comparison of this line with the parallel Nine in the Fifth line of the same hexagram supplies further evidence of this literary quality.

大過 ䷛ (#28) 九五：枯楊生華。老婦得其士夫。无咎无譽。  
*Daquo* “Greater Surpassing”: Nine in the Fifth: Withered poplar growing a flower, An old wife getting her sire husband. Without trouble, without praise.

Whether the equivocation of this prognostication is only incidental or if it perhaps reflects some gendered criticism of an older woman taking on a young lover is hard to say. However, especially in comparison with the Nine in the Second line it seems likely that part of the prognostication’s appeal lay in the rhyme between *hua*/\*wrâ 華 “flower,” *fu*/\*pa 夫 “husband,” and *yu*/\*la 譽 “praise.”

## Intra-hexagram and Inter-hexagram Structures of Hexagram Texts

As explained in the last three chapters and as can be deduced from the English term “hexagram,” the basic texts of the *Zhou Changes* are organized, in the first place, in groups of six statements attached to the lines of the hexagram. As also explained in the last chapter, each statement begins with a two-character tag first indicating its position in the hexagram, from the bottom line to the top line, and then its nature as a solid or broken line. This bottom to top organization is also evident, to a greater or lesser extent, in the organization of the images of the oracles. The hexagram texts generally—though not invariably—pertain to a single image throughout all six lines of the text, usually the name of the hexagram, often—though again not invariably—differing according to the location of the line within the hexagram. Thus, the first line, at the bottom of the hexagram, often pertains to the bottom of an image or otherwise places it in a low-lying position, while the top line pertains to the top of the image or places it in a high position, with intermediate descriptions distributed throughout the intervening lines. This organizational structure is sufficiently pervasive throughout all sixty-four hexagram texts that it should probably be assumed even in cases where the meaning of the images is not particularly transparent, and cases that deviate from the pattern might be assumed to derive either from an uneven editorial process or from corruptions in the text.

A second organizational principle informing the hexagram texts is often thought to provide a key to understanding the general structure of the text: this is that hexagrams are paired two-by-two throughout the text. In twenty-eight cases (i.e., involving fifty-six hexagrams), the hexagram pictures of the two hexagrams in a pair are inversions of each other. Thus, for *Lin* 臨 ䷒ “Looking Down” (#19) and *Guan* 觀 ䷓ “Looking Up” (#20), the First Nine line of *Lin* becomes the Top Nine line of *Guan*, the Nine in the Second line becomes the Nine in the Fifth line, and so on through the Top Six line of *Lin*, which becomes the First Six line of *Guan*. In the case of the eight hexagrams for which such inversion would result in the same hexagram, such as *Qian* 乾 ䷀ “Vigorous” (#1) or *Yi* 頤 ䷚ “Jaws” (#27), the hexagram is paired with the hexagram whose hexagram picture is a conversion of all six lines, yang or solid lines becoming yin or broken lines and vice versa. Thus, *Qian* ䷀ is paired with *Kun* 坤 ䷁ “Compliant” (#2) and *Yi* ䷚ “Jaws” (#27) with *Daguo* 大過 ䷛ “Greater Surpassing” (#28). As

seen in the cases of the names of *Lin* 臨 “Looking Down” and *Guan* 觀 “Looking Up” hexagrams, this principle of inversion often seems to be explicitly written into the names and the texts of the hexagrams. Even in cases where the names suggest only implicit relationships, such as with *Qian* 乾 “Vigorous” and *Kun* 坤 “Compliant,” the two hexagrams are still usually considered to be a pair. We will see that this principle occasionally—though far less pervasively—is also manifested even in the wording of respective lines of the two hexagrams of a pair. Thus, in the cases of *Jiji* 既濟 ䷾ “Already Across” (#63) and *Weiji* 未濟 ䷿ “Not Yet Across” (#64), which are related both as inversions of each other’s hexagram picture and also explicitly by their hexagram names, the Nine in the Third line of *Jiji* and the Nine in the Fourth line of *Weiji* share what seems to be a common oracle:

既濟 ䷾ (#63): 九三：高宗伐鬼方，三年克之。小人勿用。  
*Jiji* “Already  
 Across”: **Nine in the Third: The High Ancestor attacking the Guifang, In three years conquering them.** A petty person ought not use.

未濟 ䷿ (#64): 九四：貞吉。悔亡。震用伐鬼方，三年有賞于大國。  
*Weiji* “Not Yet  
 Across”: **Nine in the Fourth: Affirming: Auspicious. Regret gone. Zhen herewith attacking the Guifang, In three years having an award from the great state.**

Throughout the later *Yijing* tradition, beginning already with the canonical commentaries *Wen yan zhuan* 文言傳 *Commentary on the Words and Sayings* and *Xu gua zhuan* 序卦傳 *Commentary on the Sequence of the Hexagrams*, the association of these hexagram pairs has been assumed to be a fundamental organizational principle of the text.

In this chapter, we will explore in more detail these intra-hexagram and inter-hexagram relationships with an eye toward determining whether the arrangement of the text may have been motivated by some editorial principle.

## 1 Intra-hexagram Structures

The bottom-to-top organization of line statements is the fundamental organizing principle within a single hexagram text. There are several paradigmatic examples of this structure, which are pointed to in most discussions of the organization of the text. One of the most graphic of these was already illus-

trated in Chapter Seven above, *Ding* 鼎 ☱ “Caldron” (#50) hexagram. The line statements of this hexagram have already been examined in several different contexts, but it is worth considering them again.

初六：鼎顛趾。利出否。得妾以其子。无咎。

First Six: A caldron's upturned legs: Beneficial to expel the bad, Getting a consort with her child. Without trouble.

九二：鼎有實。我仇有疾。不我能即。吉。

Nine in the Second: A caldron having substance: Our enemy has an illness, It will not be able to reach us. Auspicious.

九三：鼎耳革。其行塞。雉膏不食。方雨虧。悔終吉。

Nine in the Third: A caldron's ears stripped: Its motion is blocked. Pheasant fat uneaten, Border rains diminish. Regret, in the end auspicious.

九四：鼎折足。覆公餗。其形渥。凶。

Nine in the Fourth: A caldron's broken leg: Upsets a duke's stew, Its shape glossy. Ominous.

六五：鼎黃耳金鉉。利貞。

Six in the Fifth: A caldron's yellow ears and metal bar. Beneficial to affirm.

上九：鼎玉鉉。大吉。无不利。

Top Nine: A caldron's jade bar. Greatly auspicious. Nothing not beneficial.

Isolating just the images of the oracles, then writing them such that the First Six line is placed at the bottom of the English text and the Top Nine line at the top, and finally placing the lines side-by-side with an illustration of a Western Zhou *ding* 鼎 caldron, the structure is obvious, even if not without certain exceptions.

The First Six line's reference to the caldron's legs and the Six in the Fifth line's reference to its ears are particularly easy to visualize, and the substance of the caldron in the Nine in the Second line is certainly intelligible, while the Top Nine line's "jade bar" can be imagined even if it is not an integral part of the caldron itself. To be sure, the Nine in the Third line's references to ears and the Nine in the Fourth line's "broken leg" seem to be out of place, though it is possible that the location of these images derives from or somehow pertains to an understanding of the hexagram as composed of two trigrams, in which case the third line would represent the top of the bottom trigram, appropriate for



FIGURE 10.1 Lines of *Ding* 鼎 ☱ “Caldron” (#50) hexagram juxtaposed with a caldron

the ears of the caldron, and the fourth line would represent the bottom line of the top trigram and thus appropriate for the legs of the caldron.<sup>1</sup>

While *Ding* 鼎 ☱ “Caldron” is certainly the most visually satisfying example of the bottom-to-top organization of the *Zhou Changes* hexagram texts, it is by no means unique in this respect. Two other frequently cited examples are *Xian* 咸 ☱ “Feeling” (#31) and *Gen* 艮 ☶ “Stilling” (#52) hexagrams, both of which contain images based on the human body. Although there are different possible interpretations of the words used for both of these hexagram names, which also recur throughout the line statements of the respective hexagrams,<sup>2</sup> there

1 Richard Kunst notes this type of anomaly among line statements, and says that he finds the implications regarding a possible role for trigrams to be “disconcerting,” since there is “certainly no evidence of trigram thinking reflected in the *Yijing* text itself”; Kunst, “The Original *Yijing*,” 40. I agree that there is no evidence of trigram thinking reflected in the text itself, and note, as did Kunst, that the much quoted claim by Qu Wanli 屈萬里 that the word *zhong* 中 “middle” usually appears in second and fifth lines, i.e., the middle lines of the bottom and top trigram of a hexagram, is demonstrably false; while the word *zhong* appears four times in Second lines, it appears only once in a Fifth line, and three times in both Third and Fourth lines. For Qu’s argument, see Qu Wanli 屈萬里, “*Zhou Yi guayaoci cheng yu Zhou Wu Wang shi kao*” 周易卦爻辭成於周武王時考, *Wenshizhe xuebao* 文史哲學報 1 (1950): 61–100, rpt. in Qu Wanli 屈萬里, *Shuyong lunxueji* 書傭論學集 (Taipei: Taiwan Kaiming shudian, 1969), 14–15, and for the distribution of this word, Kunst, “The Original *Yijing*,” 44 Table 6.

2 In early Chinese, the word *xian* 咸, the name of *Xian* “Feeling” hexagram, is a particle meaning

can be no doubt about the meaning of the rest of the line statements and their relationships to parts of the body. As I did in the case of *Ding* “Caldron” hexagram, with these two hexagrams I will also begin by quoting the entirety of the line statements, and then, again as I did with the hexagram text of *Ding* “Caldron” and the picture of the Western Zhou *ding* caldron, I will pair them with an ancient Chinese jade figurine of a human person dating to the mid-Western Zhou, more or less contemporary with the creation of the text.<sup>3</sup> In both cases, only five of the six line statements adhere to the same grammar and imagery, though the case of *Gen* “Stilling” is anomalous in also having the hexagram statement read like a line statement.<sup>4</sup>

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“in all cases.” In the *Yijing* tradition, however, it is typically understood as the protograph for *gan* 感 “feeling,” though the *Za gua zhuan* 雜卦傳 *Commentary on Mixed Hexagrams* glosses it as *su* 速 “quick.” I earlier understood *gan* to be the protograph of *jian* 減 “to reduce” and translated it “to cut”; Shaughnessy, “The Composition of the *Zhouyi*,” 162. Richard Kunst likewise translated it as “to cut,” though he understood the graph to be a phonetic loan for *kan* 砍; Kunst, “The Original *Yijing*,” 300. Nevertheless, for want of any better compelling evidence to the contrary, I now follow the traditional understanding of “feeling.”

There is even more disagreement about the meaning of the word *gen* 艮, the name of the hexagram *Gen* “Stilling.” *Gen* is one of the eight trigrams, ☶, wherein it is routinely associated with “mountain.” In both the *Tuan zhuan* 彖傳 *Commentary on the Judgments* and *Xu gua zhuan* 序卦傳 *Commentary on the Sequence of the Hexagrams*, it is glossed as *zhi* 止 “to stop,” and most Chinese commentators have been content to follow this gloss. In the Mawangdui 馬王堆 manuscript, the name of the hexagram is written as *gen* 根 “root,” whereas recensions of the *Gui cang* 歸藏 write it as *hen* 狠 “fierce.” The *Shuo wen jie zi* 說文解字, based on the component parts of the character, *mu* 目 “eye” and *bi* 匕 (in this context) “crosswise,” defines the word differently as *hen* 很 “to glare,” though the *bi* 匕 component was a deformation of an original *ren* 人 “man” component (in Shang oracle-bone inscriptions, the graph was written as 𠄎). In my earlier work, I followed this *Shuo wen* definition in translating the word as “glare”; Shaughnessy, “The Composition of the *Zhouyi*,” 162. Other English-language translations have offered a range of different meanings, not all of them equally well supported. Arthur Waley offered “to gnaw” (“The Book of Changes,” 134), Richard Kunst “to cleave” (“The Original *Yijing*,” 343), and more recently John Minford “to tend” (apparently in the sense of a medicinal curing; *I Ching*, 721). Since there is insufficient context in the hexagram text to determine what the word may have originally meant, I here follow the *Yijing* tradition in translating it as “stilling,” more or less in line with James Legge (“to rest”; *The Yi King*, 175) and Richard Wilhelm (“keeping still”; *The I Ching*, 200).

3 For this figurine, which is in the British Museum, see: The British Museum, “Figure” (Museum number 1945.1017.39, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/A\\_1945-1017-39](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/A_1945-1017-39), [accessed May 30, 2018]). I am grateful to Richard Smith for calling it to my attention.

4 The hexagram statement of *Gen* 艮 ☶ “Stilling” (#52) reads:

艮其背，不獲其身。行其庭，不見其人。无咎。

Stilling its back, Not bagging its body. Walking into his court, Not seeing his person. Without trouble.

As pointed out in Chapter Eight, in the hexagram statements of only *Tongren* 同人 ☶

*Xian* 咸 ☱☵ “Feeling” (#31) hexagram reads as follows:

初六：咸其拇。

First Six: Feeling its toe.

六二：咸其腓。凶。居吉。

Six in the Second: Feeling its calf. Ominous. Residing: Auspicious.

九三：咸其股。執其隨。往吝。

Nine in the Third: Feeling its thigh, Grasping its torn flesh. Going: Stinted.

九四：貞吉。悔亡。憧憧往來。朋從爾思。

Nine in the Fourth: Affirming: Auspicious. Regret gone. Pitter-patter going and coming, Friends follow you in thought.

九五：咸其脢。无悔。

Nine in the Fifth: Feeling its spine. Without trouble.

上六：咸其輔頰舌。

Top Six: Feeling its cheeks, jowls, and tongue.

*Gen* 艮 ☶☶ “Stilling” (#52) has a similar structure, though with some differences in wording other than just the name of the hexagram, which is also repeated in almost every line.

初六：艮其趾。无咎。利永貞。

First Six: Stilling its foot. Without trouble. Beneficial to affirm about the long-term.

六二：艮其腓。不拯其隨。其心不快。

Six in the Second: Stilling its calf: Not saving its marrow, Its heart unhappy.

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“Together with People” (#13) and *Gen* “Stilling” does the name of the hexagram enter into the grammar of the following statement. There is reason to suspect that both of these cases are misplaced line statements. In the case of *Gen* “Stilling,” presumably it should have come between the Six in the Fourth and the Six in the Fifth line statements; i.e., the hexagram statement should have been placed at the Six in the Fifth position, with the present Six in the Fifth line statement elevated to the Top Nine position. This would also serve to explain the anomalous nature of the current Top Nine line statement, the image of which which reads *dun gen* 敦艮 “thick stilling.”



<i>Xian</i> 咸 ䷞ “Feeling”	Western Zhou jade figurine	<i>Gen</i> 艮 ䷳ “Stilling”
咸其輔頰舌 Feeling its cheeks, jowls and tongue		艮其輔 Stilling its cheeks
咸其脢 Feeling its spine		艮其身 Stilling its torso
咸其股 Feeling its thigh		艮其限 Stilling its midsection
咸其腓 Feeling its calf		艮其腓 Stilling its calf
咸其拇 Feeling its toe		艮其趾 Stilling its foot

FIGURE 10.2 Lines of *Xian* 咸 ䷞ “Feeling” (#31) and *Gen* 艮 ䷳ “Stilling” (#52) hexagrams juxtaposed with a jade figurine of the human body; figurine from The British Museum, “Figure” (Museum number 1945,1017.39); used with permission of The British Museum

九三：艮其限。列其夤。厲薰心。

Six in the Third: Stilling its midsection: Arraying its spinal-meat, Dangerously smoking the heart.

六四：艮其（身：）躬。无咎。

Six in the Fourth: Stilling its torso. Without trouble.

六五：艮其輔。言有序。悔亡。

Six in the Fifth: Stilling its cheeks, Sayings have sequence. Without trouble.

上九：敦艮。吉。

Top Nine: Generous stilling. Auspicious.

To illustrate the structures of these two hexagrams, it is helpful to juxtapose just the images of the body parts in them with a more or less contemporary image of the human body: a jade figurine from the Western Zhou period.

While no other hexagram text exhibits such systematic bottom-to-top organization, a similar structure is partially evident in a number of other hexagrams. For instance, all other occurrences of the word *zhi* 趾 “leg” or “foot,” seen in the First Six line statements of both *Ding* “Caldron” and *Gen* “Stilling,” also come in bottom line statements.

噬嗑 ䷔ (#21): 初九：履校滅趾。无咎。  
*Shike* “Biting and Chewing”: First Nine: Wearing shackles and amputating a **foot**. Without trouble.

賁 ䷖ (#22): 初九：賁其趾，舍車而徒。  
*Bi* “Ornamented”: First Nine: Ornamenting his **foot**: Leaving the cart and walking.

大壯 ䷗ (#34): 初九：壯于趾。征凶。有孚。  
*Dazhuang* “Great Maturity”: First Nine: Strength in the **foot**. Campaigning: Ominous. There is trust.

夬 ䷪ (#43): 初九：壯于前趾。往不勝為。吝。  
*Guai* “Resolute”: First Nine: Strong in the front **foot**. Going does not succeed in an undertaking. Stinted.

Similarly, other than in the hexagram *Lü* 履 ䷉ “Stepping” (#10), for which it is the hexagram name and in which it occurs in each line statement, all occurrences of the word *lü* 履 “to step” come in bottom line statements.

坤 ䷁ (#2): 初六：履霜，堅冰至。  
*Kun* “Compliant”: First Six: **Stepping** on frost. Hard ice is arriving.

離 ䷄ (#30): 初九：履錯然。敬之。无咎。  
*Li* “Netted”: First Nine: **Stepping** crosswise. Be warned of it. Without trouble.

歸妹 ䷵ (#54): 初九：歸妹以娣：跛能履。征吉。  
*Guimei* “Return-lame Maiden”: First Nine: Returning maiden with younger sister, The lame able to **step**. Campaigning: Auspicious.

The inverse of this is true as well: words referring to the “head” (*shou* 首), “crown of the head” (*ding* 頂), “horns” (*jiao* 角), and “face” (*mian* 面), as well as the various parts of the face (*fu* 輔 “cheeks,” *jia* 頰 “jowls,” and *she* 舌 “tongue”) seen

above in the Top Six line of *Xian* “Feeling” hexagram, almost invariably come in top line statements.<sup>5</sup>

乾 ☰ (#1) : 用九：見群龍无首。吉。  
*Qian* “Vigorous” : Use the Nine: Seeing a flock of dragons without **heads**. Auspicious.

比 ☶ (#8) : 上六：比之无首。凶。  
*Bi* “Alliance” : Top Six: Allying with them without a **head**. Ominous.

離 ☲ (#30) : 上九：王用出征，有嘉折首，獲其匪丑。无咎。  
*Li* “Netted” : Top Nine: The king herewith going out campaigning: Having the joy of cutting off **heads**, Capturing not their chief. Without trouble.

5 Kunst, “The Original *Yijing*,” 39–43 has several tables showing the distribution of words with “low,” “high” and “middle” valences in the line statements. For instance, on p. 40, his list of words with “low” meaning and their distribution throughout a hexagram provides the following distribution in line statements (“1” being the First line, and “6” being the Top):

6	2
5	2
4	7
3	6
2	5
1	25

On the other hand, on pp. 41–42, words with “high” meaning show the following distribution (with “o” being the hexagram statement, and “7” the Use the Nine (*Yong Jiu* 用九) line of *Qian* 乾 ☰ “Vigorous” [#1]):

7	1
6	26
5	11
4	4
3	14
2	3
1	1
(o)	2

Although some of these words and their usages could be questioned, the general distribution of the words is quite striking, though as in the discussion in n. 1 above, there is a spike in usage of “high” meaning words in Third lines, which would represent the top line of the bottom trigram.

- 明夷 ䷣ (#36): 九三：明夷于南狩，得其大首。不可疾貞。  
*Mingyi* “Calling Pheasant”: Nine in the Third: Calling pheasant in the southern hunt, Getting its great **head**. One cannot affirm about sickness.
- 既濟 ䷾ (#63): 上六：濡其首。厲。  
*Jiji* “Already Across”: Top Six: Wetting its **head**. Dangerous.
- 未濟 ䷿ (#64): 上九：有孚于飲酒。无咎。濡其首。有孚失是。  
*Weiji* “Not Yet Across” : Top Nine: There is trust in drinking wine. Without Trouble. Wetting its **head**. There is trust losing this.
- 大過 ䷛ (#28): 上六：過涉滅頂。凶。无咎。  
*Daguo* “Greater Surpassing”: Top Six: Surpassing the ford wiping out the **crown of the head**. Ominous. Without trouble.
- 大壯 ䷡ (#34): 九三：小人用壯，君子用罔。貞厲。羝羊觸藩，羸其角。  
*Dazhuang* “Great Maturity”: Nine in the Third: A petty person using strength, A lord’s son using naught. Affirming; Dangerous. A male goat butting a fence, Breaking its **horn**.
- 晉 ䷢ (#35): 上九：晉其角，維用伐邑。厲。吉。无咎。貞吝。  
*Jin* “Advancing”: Top Nine: Advancing its **horns**, It is used to attack a city. Dangerous. Auspicious. Without trouble. Affirming; Stinted.
- 革 ䷰ (#49): 上六：君子豹變，小人革面。征凶。居貞吉。  
*Ge* “Rebellion”: Top Six: A lord’s son changes like a leopard, A petty person with leathery **face**. Campaigning; Ominous. Affirming about residing; Auspicious.

This bottom-to-top organizing principle is also evident, for instance, in the distribution of the word *tian* 天 “heaven; sky”: it appears in this sense six times,<sup>6</sup> four times in the Top line and twice in the Fifth line.

6 The character *tian* 天 occurs two other times, once in the bound form *tianzi* 天子 “Son of Heaven” in the Nine in the Third line of *Dayou* 大有 ䷍ “Greatly Having” (#14), and once in the meaning of “shaving-punishment” (i.e., *kun* 髡) in the Six in the Third line of *Kui* 睽 ䷥ “Cross-Eyed” (#38).

- 乾 ☰ (#1): 九五：飛龍在天。利見大人。  
*Qian* “Vigorous”: Nine in the Fifth: Flying dragon in the **heavens**. Beneficial to see a great person.
- 大有 ☱ (#14): 上九：自天佑之。吉。无不利。  
*Dayou* “Greatly Having”: Top Nine: From **heaven** blessing it. Auspicious. Nothing not beneficial.
- 大畜 ☱ (#26): 上九：何天之衢。亨。  
*Dachu* “Greater Livestock”: Top Nine: What **heaven’s** thoroughfare. Receipt.
- 明夷 ☱ (#36): 上六：不明晦，初登于天，后入于地。  
*Mingyi* “Calling Pheasant”: Top Six: Not bright or dark: First ascending into the **heavens**, Later entering into the earth.
- 姤 ☱ (#44): 九五：以杞包瓜含章。有隕自天。  
*Gou* “Meeting”: Nine in the Fifth: With a willow wrapping a gourd containing a pattern, There is something fallen from the **heavens**.
- 中孚 ☱ (#61): 上九：翰音登于天。貞凶。  
*Zhongfu* “Inner Trust”: Top Nine: Winged sounds ascending into the **heavens**. Affirming: Ominous.

The bottom-to-top organizing principle within the text of a single hexagram is also evident in descriptions of motion, especially of birds and animals, that are frequent topics of *Zhou Changes* oracles. One oracle that we have had occasion to examine in Chapter Nine above is the wild goose (*hong* 鴻) that features as the principal image of *Jian* 漸 ☱ “Progressing” (#53) hexagram. In Chapter Nine, we focused on the Nine in the Third line statement as a fully developed example of an oracle. The line statements of the hexagram also include at least one other excellent example of an oracle (the Nine in the Fifth line statement) and several other partial oracles, but the most important feature of the hexagram text is that each line begins with a description of a wild goose’s progression from one point to another.

初六：鴻漸于干：小子厲。有言。无咎。

First Six: A wild goose progressing to a bank.<sup>7</sup> For a petty son dangerous, There are sayings. Without trouble.

<sup>7</sup> For the word *gan* 干 “bank” in the First Six line, there have been two different explanations.

六二：鴻漸于磐。飲食衎衎。吉。

Six in the Second: A wild goose progressing to a boulder: Drinking and eating happy-happy. Auspicious.

九三：鴻漸于陸。夫征不復。婦孕不育。凶。利禦寇。

Nine in the Third: A wild goose progressing to a mound: A husband campaigning but not returning, A wife pregnant but not giving birth. Ominous. Beneficial to drive off bandits.

六四：鴻漸于木。或得其桷。无咎。

Six in the Fourth: A wild goose progressing to a tree: Now getting its perch. Without trouble.

九五：鴻漸于陵。婦三歲不孕。終莫之勝。吉。

Nine in the Fifth: A wild goose progressing to a peak: A wife for three years not pregnant, In the end nothing overcomes her. Auspicious.

上九：鴻漸于陸。其羽可用為儀。吉。

Top Nine: A wild goose progressing to a crag:<sup>8</sup> Its feathers can be used for a ceremony. Auspicious.

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The *Zhou Yi zhengyi* interprets it as “bank of a river,” cognate with the word *yan* 岸 “bank.” Another interpretation (attributed to Wang Su 王肅 [195–256] and Yu Fan 虞翻 [164–233]) suggests that it is “a small stream flowing down a mountain” (*xiao shui cong shan xia liu* 小水從山下流). For both of these suggestions, see Li Dingzuo 李鼎祚, Wang Fengxian 王豐先, ed., *Zhou Yi jijie* 周易集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2016), 325. There is evidence in the *Shi jing* 詩經 that supports the first reading. For instance, the line “*kao pan zai jian*” 考槃在澗 “Building a hut on the stream” in the poem “Kao pan” 考槃 “Building a Hut” (Mao 56) is written as “*kao pan zai gan*” 考槃在干 in the Han 韓 tradition of the *Poetry*.

- 8 Several scholars have demonstrated that the *lu* 陸 “mound” of the received text is almost certainly a corruption of an original *e* 阿 “crag.” Yu Yue 俞樾 (1821–1907) has given the most complete discussion of this:

On the basis of the rhyme, the character here should be *e* 阿 “crag.” Moreover, on the basis of usage in ancient texts, *lu* 陸 “mound” and *e* are always linked, as for example in the poem “Kao pan” 考槃 “Building a Hut” (Mao 56), the second stanza of which reads “*kao pan zai e*” 考槃在阿 “Building a hut on the crag,” while the third stanza reads “*kao pan zai lu*” 考槃在陸 “Building a hut on the mound.” *E* is also linked with *ling* 陵 “hill” in the poem “Jing jing zhe e” 簞簞者莪 “So Flourishing the Artemisia” (Mao 176), in which the first stanza reads *zai bi zhong e* 在彼中阿 “In the middle of that crag,” while the second stanza reads *zai bi zhong ling* 在彼中陵 “In the middle of that peak.” In this hexagram, the Nine in the Third line reads “The wild goose progresses to the mound,” the Nine in the Fifth line reads “The wild goose progresses to the peak,” so that if the Top Nine line were to

The general motion of the wild goose from lower to higher points is plain to see, even if two of the locations are not unambiguous (for discussions of which, see notes 7 and 8).<sup>9</sup> The movement begins from the *gan* 干, which whatever it

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read “The wild goose progresses to the crag,” it would be entirely consistent with ancient precedent. That the received text reads *lu* “mound” here is a mistaken repetition of the Nine in the Third line.

See Yu Yue 俞樾, *Lianghuan “Yi” shuo* 良宦易說, in *Yu Yue zuan* 俞樾纂, *Xuxiu Siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書, 34 fascicles (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 2002), 192.

- 9 It is interesting to note that this same sort of bottom-to-top motion of birds is also evident in the structure of some *Shi jing* 詩經 or *Classic of Poetry* poems. For instance, the poem “Fuyi” 鳧鷖 or “The Wild Duck” (Mao 246) of the *Da Ya* 大雅 section includes five stanzas, each of which takes the location of a wild duck (*fuyi* 鳧鷖) as its *xing* 興 or arousal motif introducing a lord’s sacrifice and the blessings that he receives. The wild duck moves from being “on the Jing River” (*zai Jing* 在涇), “on the sand” (*zai sha* 在沙), “on the sand-bar” (*zai zhu* 在渚), “on the bluff” (*zai zhong* 在渚), to “on the cliff” (*zai men* 在臺).

鳧鷖在涇。 The wild duck is on the Jing River.  
 公尸來燕來寧。 The ducal Corpse comes to feast, comes to rest.  
 爾酒既清。 Your wines being all clarified,  
 爾殽既馨。 Your meats being fragrant.  
 公尸燕飲。 The ducal Corpse feasts and drinks:  
 福祿來成。 Blessings and rewards come complete.

鳧鷖在沙。 The wild duck is on the sand.  
 公尸來燕來宜。 The ducal Corpse comes to feast and be proper.  
 爾酒既多。 Your wines being many,  
 爾殽既嘉。 Your meats being enjoyed.  
 公尸燕飲。 The ducal Corpse feasts and drinks:  
 福祿來為。 Blessings and rewards come and act.

鳧鷖在渚。 The wild duck is on the sand-bar.  
 公尸來燕來處。 The ducal Corpse comes to feast and reside.  
 爾酒既滑。 Your wines being well strained  
 爾殽伊脯。 Your meats are sliced.  
 公尸燕飲。 The ducal Corpse feasts and drinks:  
 福祿來下。 Blessings and rewards come and descend.

鳧鷖在渚。 The wild duck is on the bluff.  
 公尸來燕來宗。 The ducal Corpse comes to feast, to the temple.  
 既燕于宗。 Having feasted in the temple,  
 福祿攸降。 Blessings and rewards have been sent down.  
 公尸燕飲。 The ducal Corpse feasts and drinks  
 福祿來崇。 Blessings and rewards come and are exalted.

鳧鷖在臺。 The wild duck is on the cliff.  
 公尸來止熏熏。 The ducal Corpse comes and stops, overcome.

means here is certainly related to water, which is of course located in a low spot and which is why it is used in the bottom line of the hexagram. As the wild goose moves ever higher, it goes first to the “boulder” (*ban* 磐) of the second line, then to the “mound” (*lu* 陸) of the third line, then to the “tree” (*mu* 木) of the fourth line, then to the “hillock” (*ling* 陵) of the fifth line, and finally to the “crag” (*lu* 陸, which, however, should be read as *e* 阿) of the top line, the goose’s position in each line a little higher than the line below.

Before concluding this discussion of the bottom-to-top organization within single hexagrams, it is appropriate to consider the case of *Qian* 乾 ☰ “Vigorous” (#1) hexagram, the first—and best known—hexagram in the *Zhou Changes*. The line statements of this hexagram are organized around the image of a dragon or dragons (*long* 龍), the descriptions of the dragon changing from line to line based on its position in the hexagram. Since these images are the best known line statements in the entire text, and have motivated countless metaphors throughout Chinese literature and culture, they merit detailed discussion here.<sup>10</sup> We can begin with a simple translation of the hexagram text.

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- 旨酒欣欣 ◦ The fine wine is so tasty,  
 燔炙芬芬 ◦ The roasts and broils so savory.  
 公尸燕飲 ◦ The ducal Corpse feasts and drinks:  
 無有後艱 ◦ May there be no trouble after.

For a detailed discussion of this poem and its relationship with the *Zhou Changes*, see Xia Hanyi 夏含夷, “Shi zhong: Jianlun Mao Shi de xungu fangfa yi ze” 釋詁：兼論毛詩的訓詁方法一則, *Zhonghua wenshi luncong* 中華文史論叢 2006.3: 77–85.

- 10 The following discussion of *Qian* “Vigorous” hexagram and of the image of the dragon is adapted from Shaughnessy, “The Composition of the *Zhouyi*,” 266–287 and 342–349 (notes), and was first presented publicly as Edward L. Shaughnessy, “The Dragons of Qian: Concrete Symbolism in the *Zhouyi*,” at the 34th Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Chicago, Illinois, 3 April 1982, and was first drafted, in both English and Chinese, in the spring of 1981; Kunst, “The Original *Yijing*,” 646, includes in its bibliography the following item:

Edward L. Shaughnessy, “*Zhouyi* Qian gua liu long jie” 周易乾卦六龍解. Manuscript, dated May 5, 1981, Stanford, California. (Chinese version of “The Dragons of Qian.”).

I regret that it is here necessary to note this history of my own work, but in a pair of recent publications, David W. Pankenier has not only presented essentially the same interpretation, passed off as his own, but has implied—through citations of later publications of my own—that I appropriated his work; see David W. Pankenier, *Astrology and Cosmology in Early China: Conforming Earth to Heaven* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 44–55, and David W. Pankenier, “Cheng long yu tian de shidai” 乘龍御天的時代 (added English title: “Riding on Dragons to Rule Heaven”), *Jiaquwen yu Yin Shang shi* 甲骨文與殷商史 6 (2016): 167–182. I do not object to Pankenier’s presentation of this material; indeed, I am heartened that he has seconded my interpretation. However, I resent the implication that I somehow took from his work, and thus it seems necessary here to note this history.



初九：潛龍。勿用。

First Nine: Submerging dragon. Don't use.

九二：見龍在田。利見大人。

Nine in the Second: Seeing a dragon in the fields. Beneficial to see a great person.

九三：君子終日乾乾。夕惕若。厲。无咎。

Nine in the Third: A lord's son to the end of the day so vigorous, In the evening apprehensive-like. Dangerous.<sup>11</sup> Without trouble.

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This is not to claim that this interpretation originated with me. In my “The Composition of the *Zhouyi*,” 345–346 n. 137, I provided the following lengthy history of scholarship on this question (adding detailed citations to the scholarship):

This is not to say that I am the first to have noticed the astronomical significance of “Qian’s” dragon image. As early as 1911 the Swiss historian of Chinese astronomy Leopold de Saussure said of the dragon constellation, “in the course of the months a larger and larger part of the dragon emerged at twilight; by the end of Spring the entire dragon was found above the horizon and seemed to take flight in the sky,” to which he appended the note, “this process of the dragon’s Spring appearance is manifest in the first pages of the *Yijing*, a book in which the developments of the ethical order always repose on an astronomical canvas” and continued by citing Legge’s translation of lines 1/1, 1/2, 1/4 and 1/5 of “Qian” hexagram (Leopold de Saussure, *Les Origines de L’Astronomie Chinoise* (1911, rpt. Taipei: Chengwen, 1967), 378). Unfortunately, Saussure did not expand on this insight.

In China it was not until 1941 that Wen Yiduo made a similar association (Wen Yiduo, “*Zhou Yi yizheng leizuan*,” 45–48). However, Wen did not perceive the relationship among the lines and the process they describe, but rather interpreted each line as an individual omen. Correlating them with the *Shuowen* (11B.21b) definition, “at the spring equinox the dragon rises into the skies, and at the autumn equinox submerges into the depths,” he was led to interpret the bottom line, “submerged dragon,” as an omen of autumn, the second (“see the dragon in the fields”) and fifth (“flying dragon in the skies”) lines as omens of spring.

Twenty years later the calendrical development of the lines was finally related systematically to the astronomical phenomena by Gao Wence (Gao Wence 高文策, “*Shilun Yi de chengshu niandai yu fayuan diyu*” 試論《易》的成書年代與發源地域 (*Guangming ribao* 光明日報 2 June 1961: 4)). Unfortunately again, Gao was unaware of the sidero-lunar nature of pre-Chunqiu astronomy and this led him to interpret “Qian” as being related to the winter months and “Kun” as related to the summer months. The first line of “Kun” (2/1), “*li shuang: jian bing zhi*” 履霜堅冰至 (treading on frost: the solid ice is coming) suffices to demonstrate the incongruity of this argument; cf. below p. 278. Despite this, Gao’s essay was a significant step forward in interpreting this imagery; only a proper understanding of the history of Chinese astronomy is necessary to return the lines of “Qian” to their proper seasonal associations.

11 The interpretation of this phrase is much debated, with an alternative reading: “in the evening is apprehensive as if there is danger” (i.e., understanding *li* 厲 “danger” as part

九四：或躍在淵。无咎。

Nine in the Fourth: Now jumping in the depths. Without trouble.

九五：飛龍在天。利見大人。

Nine in the Fifth: Flying dragon in the heavens. Beneficial to see a great person.

上九：亢龍。有悔。

Top Nine: Throttled dragon.<sup>12</sup> Having regret.

用九：見群龍无首。吉。

Use the Nine:<sup>13</sup> Seeing a flock of dragons without heads. Auspicious.

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of the phrase rather than as an independent prognostication). I see advantages to both readings, and here simply make a choice between them.

- 12 The word *gang* 亢 in this line is usually understood to mean something like “arrogant.” However, the word itself refers to a restricted channel; for instance, in topography, it can be a “gully” (i.e., *keng* 坑), in physiognomy, it refers to the throat or “gullet.” In Chinese astronomy, it is the name of the lunar lodge *Gang* 亢, which as I will show below, is the second grouping of stars in the eastern quadrant of the sky identified as the Dragon constellation; it corresponds to the throat or gullet of the dragon. I believe the use of this word in this line cannot be a coincidence, but surely refers to the particular location in the night sky of the *Gang* lunar lodge.

It perhaps bears noting that the interpretation of Wen Yiduo, mentioned in passing in the preceding note, failed in particular in its treatment of this line statement and that of the Use the Nine line statement. According to Wen, *gang* 亢 here means “straight” (*zhi* 直), and thus that the line describes the Dragon constellation appearing to be straight. By contrast, he says that in the Use the Nine line statement the word *qun* 群, which normally means “group” (here translated as “flock”), is a phonetic loan for *juan* 卷 “curved, curled,” such that the line statement would mean “See the curled dragon without a head”; see Wen Yiduo, *Zhou Yi yizheng leizuan*, 46–48. Wen gives no evidence for either of these readings, which are also astronomically impossible; the stars of the constellations are fixed in their positions vis-à-vis each other, such that the Dragon constellation could not sometimes appear “straight” and sometimes “curled.”

- 13 As noted in Chapter Nine, *Qian* 乾 ☰ “Vigorous” (#1) and *Kun* 坤 ☷ “Compliant” (#2) hexagrams, the first two hexagrams of the *Zhou Changes*, are unique in each having one additional line, called the *Yong* 用 “Use” line (*Yong jiu* 用九 “Use the Nine” and *Yong liu* 用六 “Use the Six” respectively), in the Mawangdui manuscript written as 迴六 and 迴九 i.e., *tong liu* 通六 and *tong jiu* 通九. One can only speculate as to the origin of these lines. According to the traditional *Yijing* explanation, one would refer to this line in a divination that resulted in all six lines of either one of these two hexagrams being “changing” lines. Since it is virtually impossible that this would ever happen, regardless of how the milfoil stalks were manipulated, a different explanation might be desirable. In the case of *Qian* “Vigorous” hexagram, since only five of the six principal line statements concern the major image of the “dragon,” with the Nine in the Third line statement anomalously

It can be seen that the “dragon” is the principal image of the First, Second, Fifth, Top, and Use lines of this hexagram. Moreover, although the dragon is not mentioned in the Nine in the Fourth line statement, that it is implicitly present can be heard in the rhyme between the *yuan*/\*ʔwîn 淵 “depths” in this line and the *tian*/\*lîn 田 “fields” and *tian*/\*thîn 天 “heavens,” the last words of the four-character phrases beginning the Nine in the Second and Nine in the Fifth line statements.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the dragon figures in six of the line statements. Traditional interpretations of the *Zhou Changes* view the dragon as a metaphor for the life force of nature or for the king or superior man in the human realm, with the different lines tied to different moments either in the seasons or in the life of the person. This interpretation is well stated by Richard Wilhelm:

The power represented by the hexagram is to be interpreted in a dual sense—in terms of its action on the universe and of its action on the world of men. In relation to the universe, the hexagram expresses the strong, creative action of the Deity. In relation to the human world, it denotes the creative action of the holy man or sage, of the ruler or leader of men, who through his power awakens and develops their higher nature.<sup>15</sup>

According to this interpretation, the lines of the hexagram represent different moments in the life experience of this sage or ruler, who at the beginning of his career first submerges himself within society before rising through the ranks to soar above it, but who eventually loses his place through arrogance. There has been resistance among “New *Changes* Studies” scholars to the personification

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mentioning a “lord’s son” (*junzi* 君子) being “so vigorous” (*qianqian* 乾乾), I suspect that this line was originally extraneous—perhaps a sort of commentary—and displaced the statement “see the flock of dragons without heads” (*Jian qun long wu shou* 見群龍无首), which however was retained as an appended “Use the Nine” line statement. Needless to say, this is no more than a guess.

- 14 The *Shuo wen jie zi* definition of *long* 龍 “dragon” says that “at the spring equinox it rises into the heavens, and at the autumn equinox it **submerges** into the **depths**” (*chun fen er deng tian, qiu fen er qian yuan* 春分而登天，秋分而潛淵), plausibly linking the “**submerged** dragon” (*qian long* 潛龍) of the First Nine line statement with the “**depths**” (*yuan* 淵) of the Nine in the Fourth line statement. There are also parallels in the *Shi jing* relating *yuan* 淵 “depths” with *tian* 天 “heavens.” One couplet of the poem “Han lu” 旱麓 “Dry Foothill” (Mao 239) reads *yuan fei li tian, yu yue yu yuan* 鳶飛戾天，魚躍于淵 “The kite flies across the heavens, The fish leaps in the depths.”
- 15 Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, 3.

of this image, which they rightly point out derives from philosophical ideals that were first elaborated only in the Spring and Autumn period, and which would be more or less anomalous within the Western Zhou context of the *Zhou Changes*. As I argued in Chapter Nine above, the images of the *Zhou Changes* largely derived from natural portents, so that it would be reasonable that the dragon or dragons of *Qian* “Vigorous” hexagram should also be sought in nature rather than within human society. On the other hand, prominent scholars such as Gao Heng 高亨 have argued that there is no internal logic to these images, and each line statement should be understood as the result of a random divination.<sup>16</sup> Because I believe this to be a serious misunderstanding of the nature of the *Zhou Changes*, I propose herewith to explore these line statements in depth.

It is true that the dragon is a mythological creature, in China as well as in the West, but it is not, for that, at all imaginary, at least in China. In China, from a very early period, what is now identified as a dragon has been portrayed as a creature featuring especially two bottle horns and a long curling tail. In Shang oracle-bone inscriptions, the character for *long* 龍 “dragon” is written as 𪛗, showing both of these features. Although no such animal walked the ground of ancient China, a constellation of stars made up of six different lunar lodges (*xiu* 宿) has long been identified in China as the “Dragon” (*long* 龍 or *canglong* 蒼龍) constellation. This constellation begins with the two stars Spica  $\alpha$  and  $\zeta$  of the lunar lodge “Horns” (*Jiao* 角), and continues through lodges with such names as “Neck” (*Gang* 亢), and “Heart” (*Xin* 心), before finally ending with the lunar lodge “Tail” (*Wei* 尾), which is in its own right made up of eight stars that extend in a long curl (and which in the West is identified as the constellation Scorpio).

16 Gao Heng, *Zhou Yi gu jing jin zhu*, 2. Among Western scholars, Gao’s foremost proponent has been Richard Kunst. In this context, see Kunst, “The Original *Yijing*,” 381:

Dragons have been sighted throughout Chinese history, and belief in their existence continued until modern times. According to one survey at the beginning of the twentieth century (cited in *Nagel’s Encyclopedia-Guide: China*, 170–171, entry “Long”), when a hundred people were asked whether they believed that dragons exist, 82 replied that they did. (*Nagel’s Guide* contains an excellent summary of what it refers to as the “popular zoology” of dragons.) This point is worth making because the sighting of dragons, as referred to in this hexagram, made excellent omens, which needed interpretation. It is natural that when someone spotted a dragon, he would consult the oracle to fathom its significance. The omens recorded in the line texts here, with their prognostications, represent the distillation of centuries of diviners’ experience with such omens and their aftermaths. No further explanation of their meaning or symbolism is required to justify their appearance in the *Yi*.

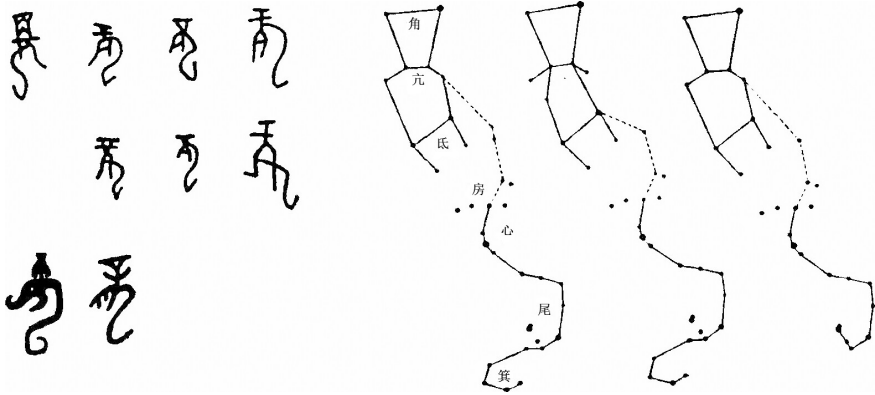


FIGURE 10.3 Comparison of Shang oracle-bone forms of the character for *long* 龍 “dragon” and the composition of the seven lunar lodges that compose the “Dragon” constellation; from Feng Shi 馮時, *Zhongguo tianwen kaoguxue* 中國天文考古學 (Beijing: Shehui kexue chubanshe, 2007), 416; used with permission

This Dragon constellation is usually associated with the eastern quadrant of the sky, since in antiquity it first became visible in the night sky in the spring, and then would pass out of sight beneath the western horizon at dusk in autumn. Indeed, this seasonal aspect is mentioned prominently in the definition of “dragon” (*long* 龍) given in the *Shuo wen jie zi* 說文解字:

鱗，蟲之長。能幽，能明，能細，能巨，能短，能長；春分而登天，秋分而潛淵。

“Dragon,” the head of the reptiles. It can be dark, it can be bright, it can be tiny, it can be giant, it can be short, it can be long; at the spring equinox it rises into the heavens, and at the autumn equinox it submerges in the depths.<sup>17</sup>

Once we identify the dragon of *Qian* “Vigorous” hexagram with the Dragon constellation of China’s night sky, it is then a simple matter to correlate the various lines with the Dragon’s movement across the night sky throughout the year. The First Nine line, “Submerging dragon,” refers to the winter season when, at dusk (which is when astronomical sightings were taken), the Dragon constellation was still out of sight beneath the eastern horizon, in what in Chinese mythology

17 Xu Shen 許慎, Wang Ping 王平, and Li Jianting 李建廷 eds., *Shuowen jiezi biaodian zhengliben* 《說文解字》標點整理本 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2016), 307.

was regarded as the watery depths. In explanations of the *Zhou Changes* correlating the hexagrams and lines with months of the year, this line was always correlated with the *zi* 子 month, the month containing the winter solstice, more or less equivalent to December or early January. The Nine in the Second line, “Seeing a dragon in the fields,” refers to the first appearance of the Dragon constellation, which in about 800 BCE took place in early March. At this time, only the lunar lodge “Horns” (*Jiao* 角) would have been visible above the horizon. From the perspective of one looking off into the distance, it would appear that the Dragon constellation was just above the horizon, hovering in the fields. Indeed, there has long been a saying in China: “On the second day of the second month, the dragon lifts its head” (*eryue er long tai tou* 二月二龍抬頭). The Nine in the Fourth line, “And now jumping in the depths,” describes the next major step in the dragon’s progress across the night sky. From the first appearance of the horns in early March until late in April, little more of the dragon’s body was visible at dusk. However, in about twenty-five days between late April and mid-May, the entire torso of the dragon (the lunar lodges *Di* 氐 [which in this context seems to refer to the shoulder structure], *Fang* 房 [which seems to refer to the chest cavity], and *Xin* 心 “Heart”) suddenly became visible, leaving only the tail still submerged beneath the horizon. The Heart lodge includes the important Fire Star (*Huo* 火 or *Da Huo* 大火), Antares, which in ancient China, as in ancient Egypt, was the marker of the beginning of the growing season. The Nine in the Fifth line, “Flying dragon in the heavens,” corresponds to the summer solstice, mid-June to early July, when the entire body of the Dragon constellation was arrayed across the night sky. The final two lines, “Throttled dragon” and “Seeing a flock of dragons without heads,” appear to represent the same astronomical phenomenon. As of mid-August, the constellation “Throat” (*Gang* 亢) was located at dusk on the western horizon, with the important “Horns” constellation already hidden under that horizon. The word *gang* 亢 of the line statement “*gang long*” 亢龍 has traditionally been interpreted as “arrogant,” referring to someone who has stayed too long in his position. My own translation “Throttled dragon” may be inelegant, but it cannot be a mere coincidence that this relatively rare word is also the name of the lunar lodge that corresponds to the neck or throat of the Dragon, which at this point in the Dragon’s annual procession is being cut by the western horizon. The final line statement, Use the Nine, refers to the phenomenon of the entire head of the Dragon disappearing under the western horizon.<sup>18</sup> The reason that the line statement refers to a “flock of dragons” (*qun long* 群龍) is easy to explain. Just

18 Gao Heng, *Zhou Yi gu jing jin zhu*, 5 explains that the reason that the dragon appears headless here is because its head was covered by clouds at the time of the divination. About

as ancient Chinese mythology conceived of ten suns, with one in the sky during the day, moving from east to west, and another one swimming from west to east through the underworld depths, and eight other suns hanging on the Fusang 扶桑 tree in the east,<sup>19</sup> so too would it seem that there were six dragons, one flying at night, one swimming, and four more in the east awaiting their turns to make the nocturnal trip west.

Explicit as this astronomical imagery would seem to be, it has passed almost unnoticed by Chinese commentators on the *Zhou Changes*.<sup>20</sup> To be sure, many commentators have remarked on the calendrical implications of the different lines of *Qian* “Vigorous” hexagram.

The period of the Dragon constellation’s visibility coincided so perfectly with the agricultural growing season in ancient China that the progress of the

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this, Richard Kunst remarked “Gao’s concern with explaining how dragons could appear to lack heads is ingenious but scholastic and unnecessary. If there can be dragons, then there can be headless dragons”; Richard A. Kunst, “Oral Formulas in the *Yijing* and *Shijing*,” paper presented to the 34th Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Chicago, 3 April 1982, 35. Actually, I find Kunst’s explanation as unnecessary as Gao’s; that the ancient Chinese dragon was an astronomical apparition made it no less real than if it were a beast with flesh and blood.

19 The famous silk banner found draped over the innermost coffin of Mawangdui 馬王堆 tomb 1 depicts the Fusang tree on the right-hand side of the upper T-register of the banner, upon which are drawn eight circles depicting these eight suns. For one early discussion of this banner and its iconography, see Michael Loewe, *Ways to Paradise: The Chinese Quest for Immortality* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1980), 17–59.

20 Actually, the *\*Ersanzi wen* 二三子問 *\*The Two or Three Disciples Asked* commentary included on the Han-dynasty Mawangdui 馬王堆 manuscript begins with a discussion of the nature of the dragon, attributed to Confucius, which leaves little doubt that he understood it to be the heavenly constellation.

二三子問曰：易屢稱於龍，龍之德何如？

孔子曰：龍大矣。龍形遷假，賓于帝，倪神聖之德也。高上齊乎星辰日月而不曜，能陽也；下淪窮深瀟之淵而不昧，能陰也。上則風雨奉之，下淪則有天口□□。窮乎深淵則魚蛟先後之，水游之物莫不隨從。陵處則雷電養之，風雨避嚮，鳥獸弗干。

The two or three disciples asked saying: “The *Changes* often mention dragons; what is the virtue of the dragon like?” Confucius said: “The dragon is great indeed. The dragon’s form shifts. When it approaches the lord in audience, it manifests the virtue of a spiritual sage; when it rises on high and moves among the stars and planets, the sun and moon, that it is not (*sic*) visible is because it is able to be yang; when it descends through the depths, that it does not drown is because it is able to be yin. Above, the wind and rain carry it; below, there is heaven’s ... Diving into the depths, the fishes and reptiles move before and after it, and of those things that move in the currents, there are none that do not follow it. In the high places, the god of thunder nourishes it, the wind and rain avoid facing it, and the birds and beasts do not disturb it.”

Chen Songchang and Liao Mingchun, “Boshu *Ersanzi wen Yi zhi yi Yao shiwen*,” 424.

dragon was equated with the maturation of the crops. The *Tuan zhuan* 象傳 *Commentary on the Judgments* says:

大哉乾元。萬物資始，乃統天。雲行雨施，品物流形。大明終始，六位時成，時乘六龍以御天。

Great indeed is the primalness of *Qian*. The ten-thousand things materially begin and it is arrayed across the heavens; the clouds move and the rain falls and all things take shape. The Great Brightness (i.e., the moon) ends and begins again; the six positions are seasonally formed, and the seasons ride the six dragons to drive the heavens.

While a certain astronomical significance can be detected in this passage, there is no doubt that its author was more concerned with *Qian* “Vigorous” hexagram’s seasonal implications. To him, *Qian* was important because it relates to the growing season: the birth of things in the spring, their growth through the summer, and final maturity in the autumn.

## 2 Inter-hexagrammatic Relationships

Having examined the intra-hexagrammatic relationships of the line statements of *Qian* “Vigorous,” it is perhaps appropriate to turn from that hexagram and those relationships to *Kun* 坤 ☷ “Compliant” (#2) hexagram and the topic of inter-hexagrammatic relationships. Within the *Yijing* tradition, *Qian* and *Kun* have always been read as a pair. For instance, the *Wenyan zhuan* 文言傳 *Commentary on the Words and Sayings*, one of the canonical commentaries to the classic, addresses only these two hexagrams. Most of this brief commentary explains individual lines of the two hexagrams, but two passages that address the hexagrams in general leave little doubt that its author considered them to be a pair:

大哉乾乎！剛健中正，純粹精也。六爻發揮，旁通情也。「時乘六龍」、以「御天」也，「雲行雨施」、天下平也。君子以成德為行，日可見之行也。

Great indeed is *Qian*. Firm and vigorous, centered and upright, pure is its essence. The six lines develop, extensive is their condition. That “the seasons ride the six dragons across the heavens” is to “drive the heavens,” and that “the clouds move and the rain falls” is to equalize all under heaven. That the gentleman conducts himself with completed virtue is that the conduct is daily visible.



《坤》至柔而動也剛，至靜而德方，後得主而有常，含萬物而化光。坤道其順乎，承天而時行。

*Kun* is softest and yet its movement is firm, is calmest and yet its virtue is square, and afterwards it obtains supremacy and is lasting, encompassing the ten-thousand things and transforming radiance. The way of *Kun* is compliant, receiving heaven and moving seasonally.

Only one line statement of *Kun* “Compliant” reprises the imagery of the Dragon of *Qian* “Vigorous,” and its astronomical significance is not nearly as explicit as that of the images of *Qian*. Nevertheless, I think it is possible to show that the two hexagrams can indeed be read together as one integral whole. The Top Six line statement reads as follows:

上六：龍戰于野，其血玄黃。

Top Six: A dragon battling in the wilds, Its blood is black and yellow.

As one might expect, the image of a dragon engaging in a bloody battle in the wilds has stimulated considerable discussion among commentators on the text, and wildly different explanations, which I will not even attempt to review here.<sup>21</sup> For our present purposes, I will note simply that the *Shuo wen jie zi* quotes this Top Six line of *Kun* “Compliant,” apparently associating it with the direction north, and thus—since space and time were intimately connected in the ancient Chinese worldview—also with the tenth month of the year.

王位北方也，陰極陽生，故《易》曰：「龍戰于野」。戰者接也。象人褻妊之形。承亥王以子，生之敘也。

The position of *ren* is to the north with yin at its extreme and yang coming to life. Therefore, the *Changes* says “A dragon battling in the wilds.” “To battle” means “to conjoin.” It resembles the form of a pregnant woman and, following *hai* and *ren* with *zi*, means the expression of giving birth.<sup>22</sup>

I will return below to the possible calendrical significance of this definition. Even though the *Shuo wen* definition does not seem to mention astronomy,

21 For my interpretation of the line, see Shaughnessy, “The Composition of the *Zhouyi*,” 278–287. See too, Xia Hanyi 夏含夷, “*Zhouyi* Qian gua liulong xinjie” 周易乾卦六龍新解, *Wenshi* 文史 24 (1986): 9–14, and Edward L. Shaughnessy, “The Composition of ‘Qian’ and ‘Kun’ Hexagrams of the *Zhouyi*,” in Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Before Confucius: Studies in the Creation of the Chinese Classics* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1996), 197–220.

22 Xu Shen, *Shuowen jiezi biao dian zhengliben*, 387.

the great Dutch Sinologist Gustaaf Schlegel (1840–1903), the first professor of Chinese at Leiden University and the founder of the journal *T'oung Pao*, showed why the characterization of the dragon's "battle" as a "conjoining" should have taken place in the heavens (or, better, in the watery depths beneath the earth). In a work entitled *Sing Chin Khao Youen: Uranographie Chinoise*, Schlegel quoted two different traditional sources in this context: first, the *Erya yi* 爾雅翼 *Wings of Approaching Eloquence*, and then the *Shi shi Xing jing* 石氏星經 *Mr. Shi's Star Classic*:

介潭生先龍，先龍生元龜。

The great pond gives birth to the first dragon, and the first dragon gives birth to the prime turtle.

北方玄武七宿，斗有龍蛇蟠結之象。

In the seven lunar lodges of the Dark Warrior of the northern quadrant, (the lunar lodge) *Dou* has the appearance of a dragon and snake coiled together.<sup>23</sup>

To these quotations, Schlegel added the observations: "The tail of the dragon touches the head of the celestial turtle, a fact which, without any doubt, has given birth to this fiction that 'water produces the dragon and the dragon the turtle,'" and "It is easy to know the astronomical reason for this explanation, because the head of the constellation of the turtle, *Dou* or  $\phi$  Sagittarius, touches the tail of the constellation of the dragon, *Wei* or the tail of Scorpius, and has probably given birth to the popular belief in the carnal union of the dragon with the turtle."

The most prominent grouping of stars in the Dark Warrior constellation includes fourteen stars in Corona Australis referred to in China as *Bi* 鰲 "Turtle." It is not hard to see how this constellation got its name:

23 Gustave Schlegel, *Uranographie Chinoise* (Leiden: Brill, 1875), 64 and 172 respectively. It would seem that the second of these quotes is a paraphrase. Ma Duanlin 馬端臨, *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考 quotes the *Song Zhongxing zhi* 宋中興志 as saying:

石氏云，北方黑帝，其精玄武為七宿。斗有龜蛇蟠結之象。

Mr. Shi said: "The Black Thearch of the Northern Quadrant, its essence is the seven lodges of the Dark Warrior, (the lunar lodge) *Dou* having the appearance of a turtle and snake coiled together."

Ma Duanlin 馬端臨, Shanghai Shifan daxue Guji yanjiusuo, and Huadong Shifan daxue Guji yanjiusuo eds., *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011), 7626. I am grateful to Jiang Wen for pointing out this discrepancy.

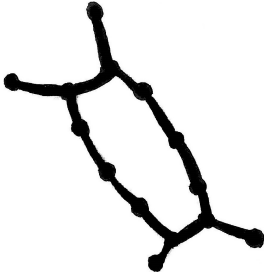


FIGURE 10.4

The fourteen stars in Corona Australis, referred to in China as *Bi* 鳖 “Turtle”; from Gustave Schlegel, *Uranographie Chinoise* (Leiden: Brill, 1875), 172

*Bi* is located very near the tail of the Dragon. In antiquity this location would have taken on a special meaning toward the end of autumn. In the tenth month, roughly November, *Bi* joined the Dragon beneath the western horizon, the hidden nature of those watery depths apparently thought to be an appropriate place for their amorous union. The Top Six Line statement, “A dragon battling in the wilds, Its blood is black and yellow,” would seem to be a fitting climax to *Qian* “Vigorous” hexagram’s story of the dragon’s rise from the depths into the heavens, and then its descent back into the depths, only to give birth to another dragon for the next year.

The other five line statements of *Kun* “Compliant” hexagram do not make reference to the dragon, but it may be possible to relate them to the top line in terms of the season of the year. As we have seen, the Top Six line seems to refer to the tenth month of the agricultural calendar, the very end of the harvest season in north China. The first five line statements share a common format for their oracles, each being of two characters, and all five rhyming in the key of *yang* 陽,<sup>24</sup> which also rhymes with the final word of the Top Six line statement, *huang* 黃 “yellow” (\*gwâŋ).

初六：履霜，堅冰至。

First Six: Stepping on frost (*shuang*/\*sraŋ): Hard ice is arriving.

六二：直方，大不習。无不利。

Six in the Second: Inspecting the country (*fang*/\*paŋ). Greatly not repeated.<sup>25</sup> Nothing not beneficial.

24 I adapt this expression, which refers to the *yang* 陽-rhyme class, from Haun Saussy, “Repetition, Rhyme, and Exchange in the *Book of Odes*,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 57.2 (1997), 540. Saussy’s points that these rhymes are musical and that many words in this “key of *yang*” are “metaphors of royal power” are particularly well taken.

25 This line statement is usually read as “*Zhi fang da, bu xi*” 直方大，不習, the first three characters all understood as adjectives: “straight, square, big.” The punctuation and inter-

六三：含章。可貞。或從王事，无成有終。

Six in the Third: Containing a pattern (*zhang/\*taŋ*). One can affirm. Now following the king's service, Without completion but having an ending.

六四：括囊。无咎无譽。

Six in the Fourth: Tying a sack (*nang/\*nâŋ*). Without trouble, without praise.

六五：黃裳。元吉。

Six in the Fifth: Yellow skirts (*chang/\*daŋ*). Prime auspiciousness.

The oracles of these five line statements are obviously related at least in terms of format. I would suggest that they are also related in terms of content, all of them pertaining to the autumn harvest, beginning in the ninth month of the agricultural calendar. The most direct reference to this season comes in the First Six line: "Stepping on frost: Hard ice is arriving" (*lǚ shuang: jian bing zhi* 履霜堅冰至). The impending arrival of "hard ice" (*jian bing* 堅冰) suffices to show that the mention of "frost" (*shuang* 霜) here pertains to autumn. Several ancient "stars-and-seasons" texts, such as the *Lǚ shì chūnqiū* 呂氏春秋 *Mr. Lü's Springs and Autumns* and the *Huainanzi* 淮南子, indicate that frost was expected in the ninth month, a seasonal association mentioned also in the *Shi jīng* 詩經 poem "Seventh Month" (*Qī yuè* 七月; Mao 154).

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pretation offered here, "*Zhi fang*" 直方 "examining the country," is based on three different pieces of evidence. First, the *Xiang zhuan* 象傳 *Commentary on the Images*, the oldest commentary to this line, does not include the word *da* 大 "big," suggesting that it may not originally have been present in the line.

《象》曰：六二之動，「直」以「方」也。「不習。无不利」，地道光也。

The *Image* says: The movement of Six in the Second is to be "straight" through "squareness." "Not repeated. Nothing not beneficial" is the radiance of the way of the earth. Second, "*Zhi fang*" 直方 matches the format and rhyme of the oracles of the other line statements, being composed of two characters ending with a *yang* 陽-class rhyme. Third, as Wen Yiduo, *Zhou Yi yizheng leizuan*, 41, has argued, this two-character phrase doubtless derives from the phrase *zhi fang* 直方 commonly seen in Shang oracle-bone inscriptions. Although Wen Yiduo himself transcribed this phrase as *xing fang* 省方, his understanding of it as "to inspect the country" is correct; see Paul L.-M. Serruys, "Towards a Grammar of the Language of the Shang Bone Inscriptions," in *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan Guoji Hanxue huiyi lunwenji* 中央研究院國際漢學會議論文集 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1981), 359 n. 1. This last point suggests that the wording of the *Zhou Changes* preserves an ancient idiom that later came commonly to be expressed as *xing fang* 省方.

九月肅霜，十月滌場。  
 In the ninth month shriveling frost,  
 In the tenth month cleaning the yard.<sup>26</sup>

The other line statements also seem to pertain to the harvest: “inspecting the country” (*zhi fang* 直方) perhaps referring to the inspection of agricultural fields, “containing a pattern” (*han zhang* 含章) perhaps indicating that the crops were ripe,<sup>27</sup> “tying a sack” (*kuo nang* 括囊) easily understood as the baling of the harvest,<sup>28</sup> and “yellow skirts” (*huang chang* 黃裳) evoking the auspicious clothing worn at the harvest festival. In this respect, more lines from the *Shi jing* poem “Seventh Month” may relate the harvest festival clothing to the “black and yellow” (*xuan huang* 玄黃) of the Top Six line statement.

八月載績，載玄載黃。  
 我朱孔陽，為公子裳。  
 In the eighth month cutting and weaving,  
 Now black, now yellow.  
 Our crimson dye so grandly bright,  
 Making skirts for the lord’s sons.<sup>29</sup>

In the discussion of *Qian* “Vigorous” hexagram, I suggested that the line statements described the seasonal procession of the Dragon constellation from about the eleventh month, when it was under the eastern horizon, until about the eighth month, when it descended again beneath the western horizon. This describes most of a single year, but seems to neglect the critical ninth and tenth

26 *Mao Shi Zheng jian*, 836.

27 Compare the Nine in the Fifth line of *Gou* 姤 ䷫ “Meeting” (#44):

九五：以杞包瓜含章。有隕自天。

Nine in the Fifth: With a willow wrapping a gourd containing a pattern. There is something fallen from the heavens.

28 Compare the following lines from the *Shi jing* poem “Gong Liu” 公劉 “Duke Liu” (Mao 250):

篤公劉，    So stalwart was Duke Liu,  
 匪居匪康，    Neither residing nor passive.  
 迺場迺疆。    Now making lines, now making bounds,  
 迺積迺倉，    Now collecting, now storing,  
 迺裹餼糧，    Now wrapping up the dry grains,  
 于橐于囊。    In bales, in sacks.  
 思輯用光。    May the collecting herewith be bright.

29 *Mao Shi Zheng jian*, 832.

months of autumn. If I am not mistaken, *Kun* “Compliant” hexagram complements *Qian*, extending from the “frost” of the ninth month through the Dragon’s coupling with the Turtle constellation in the tenth month.<sup>30</sup>

As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, in the received text of the *Yijing* the sixty-four hexagrams are arranged in thirty-two pairs. The hexagram pictures of *Qian* ☰ “Vigorous” and *Kun* ☷ “Compliant” are marked by the conversion of all yang lines into yin lines, or conversely all yin lines into yang lines. This process of conversion holds as well for six other hexagrams: *Yi* 頤 ☶ “Jaws” (#27) and *Daguo* 大過 ☱ “Greater Surpassing” (#28), *Xikan* 習坎 ☵ “Repeated Pits” (#29) and *Li* 離 ☲ “Netted” (#30), and *Zhongfu* 中孚 ☱ “Inner Trust” (#61) and *Xiaoguo* 小過 ☱ “Lesser Surpassing” (#62).<sup>31</sup> In all of these cases, if the hexagram picture were inverted, i.e., turned upside down, it would produce the same picture. The other fifty-six hexagrams are formed into twenty-eight pairs by a process of inversion. Thus, it can be seen that the hexagram pictures of *Zhun* 屯 ☳ “Sprouting” (#3) and *Meng* 蒙 ☶ “Shrouded” (#4) are inversions of each other; that is, turning the hexagram picture of *Zhun* ☳ upside down, the First Nine of *Zhun* becomes the Top Nine of *Meng*, the Six in the Second of *Zhun* becomes the Six in the Fifth of *Meng*, and so on until the Top Six of *Zhun* becomes the First Six of *Meng*, or vice versa. One way to visualize this relationship would be to view the two hexagrams as sharing a single hexagram picture simply viewed from two different perspectives.

This sharing of a single hexagram picture by the two hexagrams of these twenty-eight pairs can explain one apparent anomaly in the organization of the received text of the *Zhou Changes*. In all received editions, the text is divided into two sections. However, rather than dividing the text evenly into two sec-

30 I am well aware that within the *Yijing* tradition, *Qian* “Vigorous” and *Kun* “Compliant” have usually been viewed as relating to an equal number of months, with some explanations attributing the first six months of the year to the six lines of *Qian* and the last six months to the six lines of *Kun*, and other explanations seeing the months alternating between the lines of the two hexagrams. Perhaps consistent with the suggestion here that the Top Six line of *Kun* is to be correlated with the tenth month of the year, Xun Shuang 荀爽 (128–190) offered the following comment:

消息之位，坤在於亥，下有伏乾，為其兼于陽，故稱龍也。

The position of decline and growth. *Kun* is located in *hai* beneath which there is the sunken *Qian*. Because it is simultaneously in yang, therefore it refers to the “dragon.”

See Li Dingzuo, *Zhou Yijijie*, 2.8a (69).

31 *Jiji* 既濟 ☵ “Already Across” (#63) and *Weiji* 未濟 ☲ “Not Yet Across” (#64) could also be described as convertible, since each of their six lines convert to their opposite nature. However, because these two hexagram pictures are also inversions of each other, the inversion producing a different hexagram picture, they are usually grouped among the twenty-eight pairs of invertible hexagrams.

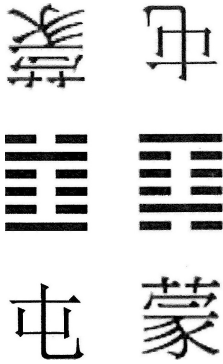


FIGURE 10.5

The invertible pair *Zhun* 屯 ☳ ☴ “Sprouting” (#3) and *Meng* 蒙 ☵ ☴ “Shrouded” (#4) hexagrams conceived as sharing one hexagram picture

tions of thirty-two hexagrams each, in these editions the first section contains thirty hexagrams, while the second contains thirty-four hexagrams. The reason for this is that six of the eight “convertible” hexagrams come in the first section, while only two “convertible” hexagrams come in the second section. If the twenty-eight pairs of “invertible” hexagrams are counted as single hexagrams, as displayed above, then there are eighteen hexagrams in each section of the text.

That these invertible pairs of hexagrams were conceived of as sharing more than just a single hexagram picture can be seen in many of the names of the hexagrams in the *Zhou Changes*. The most obvious cases are the three pairs *Jiji* 既濟 ☵ ☲ “Already Across” (#63) and *Weiji* 未濟 ☲ ☵ “Not Yet Across” (#64), *Sun* 損 ☲ ☱ “Decrease” (#41) and *Yi* 益 ☱ ☲ “Increase” (#42), and *Tai* 泰 ☱ ☳ “Positive” (#11) and *Pi* 否 ☷ “Negation” (#12). It is not hard to see as well similar relationships between the pairs *Qian* 謙 ☱ ☷ “Modesty” (#15) and *Yu* 豫 ☱ ☳ “Excess” (#16) (the latter of which seems originally to have been written with the homonym *yu* 余<sup>32</sup>), *Lin* 臨 ☳ ☱ “Looking Down” (#19) and *Guan* 觀 ☱ ☳ “Looking Up” (#20), and *Bo* 剝 ☶ ☱ “Paring” (#23) and *Fu* 復 ☱ ☳ “Returning” (#24). Numerous commentators have also seen a similar inverted relationship between *Ge* 革 ☱ ☲ “Rebellion” (#49) and *Ding* 鼎 ☱ ☲ “Caldron” (#50), noting that in ancient China the caldron was a symbol of political legitimacy, so that inverting it was tantamount to overturning the government; i.e., “rebellion.”

Other connections between the two hexagrams of these pairs can also be seen in their respective line statements. At the beginning of this chapter, I

32 Both the Shanghai Museum and Mawangdui manuscripts of the *Zhou Yi* write this hexagram name as *Yu* 余. The Wangjiatai 王家台 *Gui cang* 歸藏 manuscript writes it as *Jie* 介, while medieval quotations of the *Gui cang* write it as *Fen* 分, both of which are presumably mistakes for the graphically similar *yu* 余.

noted the relationship between the Nine in the Third line statement of *Jiji* “Already Across” and the Nine in the Fourth line statement of *Weiji* “Not Yet Across.”

既濟 ䷾ (#63): 九三：高宗伐鬼方，三年克之。小人勿用。  
*Jiji* “Already  
 Across”: **Nine in the Third: The High Ancestor attacking the Guifang, In three years conquering them.** A petty person ought not use.

未濟 ䷿ (#64): 九四：貞吉。悔亡。震用伐鬼方，三年有賞于大國。  
*Weiji* “Not Yet  
 Across”: **Nine in the Fourth: Affirming: Auspicious. Regret gone. Zhen herewith attacking the Guifang, In three years having an award from the great state.**

Other line statements of these two hexagrams also share imagery.

既濟 ䷾ (#63): 初九：曳其輪，濡其尾。无咎。  
*Jiji* “Already  
 Across”: **First Nine: Dragging its wheel, wetting its tail.** Without trouble.

未濟 ䷿ (#64): 初六：濡其尾。吝。  
*Weiji* “Not Yet  
 Across”: **First Six: Wetting its tail.** Stinted.

未濟 ䷿ (#64): 九二：曳其輪。貞吉。  
*Weiji* “Not Yet  
 Across”: **Nine in the Second: Dragging its wheel.** Affirming: Auspicious.

既濟 ䷾ (#63): 上六：濡其首。厲。  
*Jiji* “Already  
 Across”: **Top Six: Wetting its head.** Dangerous.

未濟 ䷿ (#64): 上九：有孚于飲酒。无咎。濡其首。有孚失是。  
*Weiji* “Not Yet  
 Across”: **Top Nine: There is trust in drinking wine. Without trouble. Wetting its head.** There is trust losing this.

The Six in the Fifth line of *Sun* 損 ䷨ “Decrease” (#41) and the Six in the Second of *Yi* 益 ䷗ “Increase” (#42) read similarly.

損 ䷨ (#41): 六五：或益之十朋之龜，弗克違。元吉。



*Sun* “Decrease”: **Six in the Fifth: Now increasing it, ten double-strands of turtle-shells cannot be disobeyed.** Prime auspiciousness.

益 ䷗ (#42): 六二：或益之十朋之龜，弗克違。永貞吉。王用享于帝。吉。

*Yi* “Increase”: **Six in the Second: Now increasing it, ten double-strands of turtle-shells cannot be disobeyed.** Affirming about permanence: auspicious. The king herewith makes offering to Di. Auspicious.

*Tai* 泰 ䷊ “Positive” (#11) and *Pi* 否 ䷋ “Negation” (#12) hexagrams reveal numerous relationships, beginning with the hexagram statements and then continuing with the first line statements of both hexagrams.

泰 ䷊ (#11): 小往大來。吉。亨。  
*Tai* “Positive”: **Little going, great coming.** Auspicious. Receipt.

否 ䷋ (#12): 否之匪人。不利君子貞。大往小來。  
*Pi* “Negation”: Negation’s non-human. Not beneficial to affirm about a lord’s son. **Great going, little coming.**

泰 ䷊ (#11): 初九：拔茅茹，以其夤。征吉。  
*Tai* “Positive”: **First Nine: Plucking *mao*-grasses and madder, with their stems.** Campaigning: auspicious.

否 ䷋ (#12): 初六：拔茅茹，以其夤。貞吉。亨。  
*Pi* “Negation”: **First Six: Plucking *mao*-grasses and madder, with their stems.** Affirming: Auspicious. Receipt.

泰 ䷊ (#11): 九二：包荒。用馮河，不遐遺，朋亡，得尚于中行。  
*Tai* “Positive”: **Nine in the Second: Wrapping waste, herewith to float a river.** Not left afar, Friends gone. Getting elevated in the central ranks.

否 ䷋ (#12): 六二：包承。小人吉，大人否。亨。  
*Pi* “Negation”: **Six in the Second: Wrapping what is received.** For a petty person auspicious, for a great person not. Receipt.

否 ䷋ (#12): 六三：包羞。  
*Pi* “Negation”: **Six in the Third: Wrapping sacrificial-meats.**

There are also structural similarities in the line statements of *Qian* 謙 ䷎ “Modesty” (#15) and *Yu* 豫 ䷏ “Excess” (#16).

謙 ䷎ (#15): 六二：鳴謙。貞吉。  
*Qian* “Modesty”: Six in the Second: **Calling** modesty. Affirming: Auspicious.

豫 ䷎ (#16): 初六：鳴豫。凶。  
*Yu* “Excess”: First Six: **Calling** excess. Ominous.

Kunst has noted a couple of cases where similar line statements occur in successive hexagrams that are not paired in this way.

豫 ䷎ (#16): 上六：冥豫。成有渝。无咎。  
*Yu* “Excess”: Top Six: Dark excess. Completion **having deterioration**. Without trouble.

隨 ䷐ (#17): 初九：官有渝。貞吉。出門交有功。  
*Sui* “Following”: First Nine: An office **having deterioration**. Affirming: Auspicious. Going out a gate to exchange having results.

旅 ䷷ (#56): 九四：旅于處，得其資斧，我心不快。  
*Lü* “Traveling”: Nine in the Fourth: Traveling in residence: **Obtaining his wares and axe**, Our hearts unhappy.

巽 ䷴ (#57): 上九：巽在牀下，喪其資斧。貞凶。  
*Xun* “Presenting”: Top Nine: Presenting under a bed, **Losing his wares and axe**. Affirming: Ominous.

I suspect that these similarities are simple coincidences, which in the totality of the *Zhou Changes* are not very significant.<sup>33</sup> However, it seems important to note them here in the context of this discussion.

33 Rutt, *The Book of Changes (Zhouyi)*, 103, arguing that the relationship between hexagram pairs “appears to be haphazard and coincidental,” notes that one could find relationships between hexagrams that are not paired at all. He notes, for instance, that the hexagram statements of both *Cui* 萃 ䷬ “Gathering” (#45) and *Huan* 渙 ䷺ “Dispersing” (#59) contain the phrase “the king enters into the temple” (*wang jia you miao* 王假有廟). This point is well taken, but does not seem to be sufficient to offset the important relationships seen in many of the hexagram pairs.

### 3 Conclusion

It is probably the case that the focus in this chapter first on intra-hexagrammatic relationships and then on inter-hexagrammatic relationships overstates the degree of structural regularity in the *Zhou Changes*. Thus, Gao Heng, generally acknowledged to have been the foremost twentieth-century authority on the *Zhou Changes*, could say of the text in one of the last things that he ever wrote about it:

The *Yijing* was created in the early stage of the Western Zhou as a book of divination. How could the six line statements have any so-called “internal logic”?<sup>34</sup>

Gao was doubtless responding to the other great twentieth-century authority on the text, Li Jingchi 李鏡池 (1902–1975), who held a decidedly different view of the way in which the *Zhou Changes* came together. He introduced one of his final studies with the following general characterization of the text.

The *Zhou Yi* was culled from many different materials and then, through a process of analysis and organization, was edited into this type of divination text. Within this redaction, the editor brought together historical experiences, life experiences, and based on many past and contemporary facts, consciously appended other materials, composing them into the hexagram and line statements. In this selection and organization is included the thoughts of the editor.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, we have two authorities on the early history of the text, one viewing it as a random compilation of divination records, and the other seeing in it the “thoughts of the editor.” I suspect that both of these two statements are too extreme. It is hard to read the entirety of *Qian* “Vigorous” hexagram without recognizing an “internal logic” within the line statements. And yet, the suggestion that one editor, or even one group of editors, was responsible for the final structure of the text and “consciously” composed the hexagram and line statements doubtless goes too far. The analysis provided in this chapter has mentioned fewer than half of the hexagrams and a much smaller percentage of the line statements. These examples were consciously chosen because they exhibit relationships that might be regarded as paradigmatic for a certain structure. Other readers might point to the other more than half of the hexagrams

34 See Gao Heng 高亨, “*Zhou Yi* ‘Gang long you hui’” 《周易》‘亢龍有悔’, *Shehui kexue zhanxian* 社會科學戰線 1980.4: 59–60.

35 Li Jingchi, *Zhou Yi tanyuan*, 3.

and much larger percentage of line statements to argue that this structure is fragmentary at best. I would not deny the force of such an objection.

It would seem that the text was never “edited” definitively, and so although it does have its full complement of 384 line statements (or, indeed, even 386), still it remains incomplete. However, far from being a flaw in the text, this incomplete nature has become a unique advantage, allowing each new reader to complete the text according to his or her own understanding of what would be appropriate. Thus, one of the oldest texts within the long Chinese literary tradition is also one of the newest, being created anew by each new reader.

## The Hexagram Sequence

In received texts of the *Yijing*, the sixty-four hexagrams are arranged in a set sequence, beginning with *Qian* 乾 ☰ “Vigorous” (#1) and *Kun* 坤 ☷ “Compliant” (#2), and ending with *Jiji* 既濟 ☵☲ “Already Across” (#63) and *Weiji* 未濟 ☲☵ “Not Yet Across” (#64). As noted above in the preceding chapter, the intervening sixty hexagrams follow in pairs based on either inversion or conversion of the hexagram picture. As far as I can understand, the sequence has otherwise defied attempts at a logical or mathematical sequence.<sup>1</sup> The earliest artifactual evidence of this sequence is found in the *Xiping* 西平 *Stone Classics*, carved between A.D. 175 and 183; although only fragments of the text of the *Yijing* have been recovered, they suffice to show that the text was already arranged in the sequence found in texts thereafter.<sup>2</sup> This sequence also matches that given in the *Xu gua zhuan* 序卦傳 *Commentary on the Sequence of the Hexagrams*, one of the canonical commentaries included in the *Yijing*. This commentary provides

1 Immanuel Olsvanger, *Fu-hsi, The Sage of Ancient China* (Jerusalem: Massadah Ltd., 1948) demonstrates some interesting mathematical correspondences when the sixty-four hexagrams are enumerated according to binary numbers (i.e., with yin representing 0 and yang 1, and with the First line of a hexagram representing the 1's place, the Second line the 2's place, the Third line the 4's place, the Fourth line the 8's place, the Fifth line the 16's place and the Top line the 32's place). Thus, the last two characters of the first three groups of eight characters (thus, hexagram 7, 8, 15, 16, 23 and 24) are all composed of just one yang line and thus make up the six places of the binary counting system through 32 (i.e., numbers corresponding to 1, 2, 4, 8, 16 and 32). He also demonstrates other regularities, but all of these are predicated upon his free alternation of the sequence of either hexagram within a pair of convertible or invertible hexagrams.

Richard Sperling Cook, *Classical Chinese Combinatorics: Derivation of the Book of Changes* (Berkeley, Cal.: Sino-Tibetan Etymological Dictionary and Thesaurus Project, 2006) is a much more ambitious attempt to demonstrate a mathematical logic behind the traditional sequence of the hexagrams. Cook's analysis is based on treating the twenty-eight invertible hexagram pairs as single entities. Unfortunately, despite my best efforts to follow his analysis, which is clearly based on an impressive command of both traditional Chinese *Yijing* exegesis and also the history of Western theories of combinatorics, I am unable to follow the logic.

2 For convenient presentations of these fragments, see Qu Wanli 屈萬里, *Han shi jing* Zhou Yi *canzi jizheng* 漢石經周易殘字集證, Zhongyang yanjiuyuan Lishi yuyan yanjiusuo zhuan 中央研究院歷史語言研究所專刊 46 (1961; rpt. Taipei, 1999); Pu Maozuo 濮茅左, *Chu zhushu* Zhou Yi *yanjiu: jian shu Xian Qin Liang Han chutu yu chuanshi Yi xue wenxian ziliao* 楚竹書《周易》研究：兼述先秦兩漢出土與傳世易學文獻資料 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 2006), 648–683.

a quasi-cosmogony, starting with heaven and earth and proceeding through the birth of the ten-thousand things and experiences encountered in their lives. The explanations for the first twelve hexagrams suffice to give a fair sense of the entirety of the commentary:

有天地，然後萬物生焉。盈天地之間者唯萬物，故受之以屯。屯者盈也。屯者，物之始生也。物生必蒙，故受之以蒙。蒙者，蒙也，物之穉也。物穉不可不養也，故受之以需。需者，飲食之道也。飲食必有訟，故受之以訟。訟必有眾起，故受之以師。師者，眾也。眾必有所比，故受之以比。比者，比也。比必有所畜，故受之以小畜。物畜然後有禮，故受之以履。履而泰，然後安，故受之以泰。泰者，通也。物不可以終通，故受之以否。

There being heaven and earth, only then are the ten-thousand things born in them. What fills heaven and earth are only the ten-thousand things; therefore, it follows it with *Zhun* "Sprouting." Sprouting means to fill. Sprouting is the first birth of things. When things are born, they are necessarily shrouded; therefore, it follows it with *Meng* "Shrouded." Shrouded means shrouded, the infancy of things. When things are infants they cannot not be nurtured; therefore, it follows it with *Xu* "Awaiting." Awaiting is the way of drinking and eating. With drinking and eating, there is necessarily litigation; therefore, it follows it with *Song* "Lawsuit." With lawsuits, necessarily the masses arise; therefore, it follows it with *Shi* "Army." Army means the masses. With the masses there is necessarily that which allies; therefore, it follows it with *Bi* "Alliance." Alliance means to ally. In allying there is necessarily that which is reared; therefore, it follows it with *Xiaochu* "Lesser Livestock." When things are reared only then is there ritual, therefore it follows it with *Lü* "Stepping."<sup>3</sup> Stepping positively, only then is there peace; therefore, it follows it with *Tai* "Positive." Positive means to succeed. Things cannot succeed to the end; therefore, it follows it with *Pi* "Negation."

The sequence of the *Xu gua zhuan* commentary was traditionally accepted as the original and proper sequence of the hexagrams, even though other arrangements of the hexagrams were proposed for different heuristic purposes, including a very different sequence in another of the canonical commentaries: the *Za gua zhuan* 雜卦傳 *Commentary on Mixed Hexagrams*. This commentary, little

3 *Lü* 履 "Treading" is routinely glossed within the *Yijing* tradition with the homophone *li* 禮 "ritual," which explains this usage here.

noted in most studies of the *Yijing*, reads as follows, in its entirety (noting also the number of the hexagram in the traditional sequence):

乾剛坤柔。比樂師憂。臨觀之義，或與或求。屯見而不失其居。蒙雜而著。震，起也，艮，止也。損益，盛衰之始也。大畜，時也，无妄，災也。萃聚而升不來也。謙輕而豫怠也。噬嗑，食也，賁，无色也。兌見而巽伏也。隨，无故也，蠱則飭也。剝，爛也，復，反也。晉，晝也，明夷，誅也。井通而困相遇也。咸，速也，恒，久也。渙，離也，節，止也。解，緩也，蹇，難也。睽，外也，家人，內也。否泰，反其類也。大壯則止，遯則退也。大有，眾也，同人，親也。革，去故也，鼎，取新也。小過，過也，中孚，信也。豐，多故，親寡旅也。離上而坎下也。小畜，寡也，履，不處也。需，不進也，訟，不親也。大過，顛也，頤，養正也。既濟，定也，未濟，男之窮也。歸妹，女之終也，漸，女歸待男行也。姤，遇也，柔遇剛也。夬，決也，剛決柔也。君子道長，小人道消也。

*Qian* ☰ “Vigorous” (#1) is hard, *Kun* ☷ “Compliant” (#2) is soft. *Bi* ☶ “Alliance” (#8) is happy and *Shi* ☷ “Army” (#7) is sad. The meaning of *Lin* ☴ “Looking Down” (#19) and *Guan* ☶ “Looking Up” (#20) is that sometimes one gives and sometimes one seeks. *Zhun* ☳ “Sprouting” (#3) is visible but does not lose its place, and *Meng* ☶ “Shrouded” (#4) is mixed and apparent. *Zhen* ☳ “Shaking” (#51) means to arise and *Gen* ☶ “Stilling” (#52) means to stop. *Sun* ☱ “Decrease” (#41) and *Yi* ☱ “Increase” (#42) are the beginning of fullness and decline. *Dachu* ☰ “Greater Livestock” (#26) means the seasons, and *Wuwang* ☱ “Without Folly” (#25) means disaster. *Cui* ☴ “Gathering” (#45) brings together and *Sheng* ☱ “Rising” (#46) means not to come. *Qian* ☰ “Modesty” (#15) is light and *Yu* ☱ “Excess” (#16) means lazy. *Shike* ☲ “Biting and Chewing” (#21) means eating, and *Bi* ☶ “Ornamented” (#22) means without color. *Dui* ☱ “Expressing” (#58) is visible and *Xun* ☴ “Presenting” (#57) means to hide. *Sui* ☱ “Following” (#17) means without reason, and *Gu* ☱ “Pestilence” (#18) then means to strengthen. *Bo* ☱ “Paring” (#23) means spoiled, and *Fu* ☱ “Returning” (#24) means to turn back. *Jin* ☱ “Advancing” (#35) means daylight, and *Mingyi* ☱ “Calling Pheasant” (#36) means to punish. *Jing* ☱ “Well” (#48) penetrates and *Kun* ☷ “Bound” (#47) meets with it. *Xian* ☱ “Feeling” (#31) means fast, and *Heng* ☱ “Constancy” (#32) means long-lasting. *Huan* ☱ “Dispersing” (#59) means to leave, and *Jie* ☱ “Moderating” (#60) means to stop. *Jie* ☱ “Released” (#40) means slow, and *Jian* ☱ “Lame” (#39) means difficult. *Kui* ☱ “Cross-Eyed” (#38) means outside, and *Jiaren* ☱ “Family Members” (#37) means inside. *Pi* ☱ “Negation” (#12) and *Tai* ☱ “Positive” (#11) oppose their categories. *Dazhuang* ☰ “Great Maturity”

(#34) then stops, and *Dun* ䷗ “Retreating” (#33) then withdraws. *Dayou* ䷌ “Greatly Having” (#14) means the masses, and *Tongren* ䷌ “Together with People” (#13) means intimate. *Ge* ䷌ “Rebellion” (#49) means to dispel the old, and *Ding* ䷌ “Caldron” (#50) means to accept the new. *Xiaoguo* ䷌ “Lesser Surpassing” (#62) means to surpass, and *Zhongfu* ䷌ “Inner Trust” (#61) means to believe. *Feng* ䷌ “Fullness” (#55) has many reasons, and when relatives are few means *Lü* ䷌ “Traveling” (#56). *Li* ䷌ “Netted” (#30) is above and *Kan* ䷌ “Pit” (#29) is below. *Xiaochu* ䷌ “Lesser Livestock” (#9) means few, and *Lü* ䷌ “Stepping” (#10) means unsituated. *Xu* ䷌ “Awaiting” (#5) means not advancing, and *Song* ䷌ “Lawsuit” (#6) means not intimate. *Daguo* ䷌ “Greater Surpassing” (#28) means to overturn, and *Yi* ䷌ “Jaws” (#27) means to nourish the upright. *Jiji* ䷌ “Already Across” (#63) means settled, and *Weiji* ䷌ “Not Yet Across” (#64) means the exhaustion of the male. *Guimei* ䷌ “Returning Maiden” (#54) means the end of the female, and *Jian* ䷌ “Progressing” (#53) means that the female returns to await the motion of the male. *Gou* ䷌ “Meeting” (#44) means to encounter, the soft encountering the hard. *Guai* ䷌ “Resolute” (#43) means determined, the way of the gentleman growing and the way of the petty person diminishing.

It can be seen that the *Za gua zhuan* commentary maintains the principle of hexagram pairs, whether convertible or invertible, though the sequence within these pairs is occasionally the inverse of that of the received text. Beyond just the difference in the sequence of hexagrams within these pairs, the over-all sequence is also dramatically different from that of the received text. This sequence can be most efficiently illustrated by means of a table with the names of the hexagrams and hexagram pictures, followed by the numbers in the traditional sequence, arranged horizontally in groups of eight:<sup>4</sup>

TABLE 11.1 Sequence of Hexagrams in the *Za Gua* 雜卦 *Mixed Hexagrams* Commentary

<i>Qian</i>	<i>Kun</i>	<i>Bi</i>	<i>Shi</i>	<i>Lin</i>	<i>Guan</i>	<i>Zhun</i>	<i>Meng</i>
乾	坤	比	師	臨	觀	屯	蒙
☰	☷	☶☱	☷☱	☳☶	☶☱	☳☷	☶☱
1	2	8	7	19	20	3	4

4 The received text of the commentary breaks off just before the last six hexagrams, the reconstruction of which is necessarily a matter of conjecture.



TABLE 11.1 Sequence of Hexagrams in the *Za gua* (cont.)

<i>Zhen</i> 震 ䷲ 51	<i>Gen</i> 艮 ䷳ 52	<i>Sun</i> 損 ䷨ 41	<i>Yi</i> 益 ䷗ 42	<i>Dachu</i> 大畜 ䷙ 26	<i>Wuwang</i> 无妄 ䷘ 25	<i>Cui</i> 萃 ䷬ 45	<i>Sheng</i> 升 ䷭ 46
<i>Qian</i> 謙 ䷎ 15	<i>Yu</i> 豫 ䷏ 16	<i>Shike</i> 噬嗑 ䷔ 21	<i>Bi</i> 賁 ䷖ 22	<i>Dui</i> 兌 ䷹ 58	<i>Xun</i> 巽 ䷸ 57	<i>Sui</i> 隨 ䷐ 17	<i>Gu</i> 蠱 ䷑ 18
<i>Bo</i> 剝 ䷖ 23	<i>Fu</i> 復 ䷗ 24	<i>Jin</i> 晉 ䷢ 35	<i>Mingyi</i> 明夷 ䷣ 36	<i>Jing</i> 井 ䷯ 48	<i>Kun</i> 困 ䷮ 47	<i>Xian</i> 咸 ䷞ 31	<i>Heng</i> 恆 ䷟ 32
<i>Huan</i> 渙 ䷺ 59	<i>Jie</i> 節 ䷻ 60	<i>Jie</i> 解 ䷧ 40	<i>Jian</i> 蹇 ䷦ 39	<i>Kui</i> 睽 ䷥ 38	<i>Jiaren</i> 家人 ䷤ 37	<i>Pi</i> 否 ䷋ 12	<i>Tai</i> 泰 ䷊ 11
<i>Dazhuang</i> 大壯 ䷡ 34	<i>Dun</i> 遯 ䷠ 33	<i>Dayou</i> 大有 ䷍ 14	<i>Tongren</i> 同人 ䷌ 13	<i>Ge</i> 革 ䷰ 49	<i>Ding</i> 鼎 ䷱ 50	<i>Xiaoguo</i> 小過 ䷽ 62	<i>Zhongfu</i> 中孚 ䷛ 61
<i>Feng</i> 豐 ䷶ 55	<i>Lü</i> 旅 ䷷ 56	<i>Li</i> 離 ䷄ 30	<i>Kan</i> 坎 ䷜ 29	<i>Xiaochu</i> 小畜 ䷈ 9	<i>Lü</i> 履 ䷉ 10	<i>Xu</i> 需 ䷄ 5	<i>Song</i> 訟 ䷅ 6
<i>Daguo</i> 大過 ䷛ 28	<i>Yi</i> 頤 ䷚ 27	<i>Jiji</i> 既濟 ䷾ 63	<i>Weiji</i> 未濟 ䷿ 64	<i>Guimei</i> 歸妹 ䷵ 54	<i>Jian</i> 漸 ䷴ 53	<i>Gou</i> 姤 ䷫ 44	<i>Guai</i> 夬 ䷪ 43

Despite the manifest differences between the *Xu gua zhuan* and *Za gua zhuan* canonical commentaries, it was only with the discovery of the Mawangdui 馬王堆 manuscript of the *Zhou Changes* in 1973–1974 that the sequence of the hexagrams attracted real attention. This manuscript was written on a roll of silk, so that the sequence of the text was fixed. As explained in Chapter One above, it presented the text in a completely different sequence from that of either the received text or even the *Za gua zhuan* commentary. The manuscript is arranged according to systematic combinations of the hexagrams' constituent trigrams. Each of the eight trigrams forms a set of eight hexagrams all sharing the same top trigram, according to the following order (using the names of the trigrams as given in the manuscript):

☰	☱	☲	☳	☴	☵	☶	☷
<i>Jian</i>	<i>Gen</i>	<i>Gan</i>	<i>Chen</i>	<i>Chuan</i>	<i>Duo</i>	<i>Luo</i>	<i>Suan</i>
鍵	根	贛	辰	川	奪	羅	筭

They combine in turn with trigrams of the bottom trigram in the following order (except that each of the top trigrams first combines with its same trigram):

☰	☴	☱	☳	☲	☵	☶	☷
<i>Jian</i>	<i>Chuan</i>	<i>Gen</i>	<i>Duo</i>	<i>Gan</i>	<i>Luo</i>	<i>Chen</i>	<i>Suan</i>
鍵	川	根	奪	贛	羅	辰	筭

These combinations produce the sequence of hexagrams seen in Table 11.2. In this table, the sequence number and name (in both Romanization and Chinese characters) above each hexagram picture refer to the Mawangdui manuscript, while those below refer to the received text.

It will be seen at a glance that the sequence of hexagrams within the Mawangdui manuscript is radically different from that of the received text, or even from that of the *Za gua zhuan*. One of the notable differences is that hexagram pairs are broken up in this sequence. For instance, whereas *Qian* 乾 ☰ “Vigorous” (using the name of the hexagram in the received text; in the Mawangdui manuscript, this hexagram is called *Jian* 鍵, which I have translated as “Key”) is again the first hexagram in the sequence, *Kun* 坤 ☷ “Compliant” (called *Chuan* 川 “Flow” in the Mawangdui manuscript), the second hexagram in the received text, is the thirty-third hexagram in the manuscript. Similarly, *Jiji* 既濟 ☵☲ “Already Across” (#63) and *Weiji* 未濟 ☲☵ “Not Yet Across” (#64), two other hexagrams that have been shown to share both elements of the hexagram name and also wording of individual line statements, come in

very different places in the Mawangdui sequence: the twenty-second and fifty-fourth hexagrams, respectively.

TABLE 11.2 Sequence of Hexagrams in the Mawangdui Manuscript







1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<i>Jian</i>	<i>Fu</i>	<i>Yuan</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Song</i>	<i>Tongren</i>	<i>Wumeng</i>	<i>Gou</i>
鍵	婦	掾	禮	訟	同人	无孟	狗
							
乾	否	遯	履	訟	同人	无妄	姤
<i>Qian</i>	<i>Pi</i>	<i>Dun</i>	<i>Lü</i>	<i>Song</i>	<i>Tongren</i>	<i>Wuwang</i>	<i>Gou</i>
1	12	33	10	6	13	25	44
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
<i>Gen</i>	<i>Taixu</i>	<i>Bo</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Meng</i>	<i>Fan</i>	<i>Yi</i>	<i>Gu</i>
根	泰畜	剝	損	蒙	繁	頤	箇
							
艮	大畜	剝	損	蒙	賁	頤	蠱
<i>Gen</i>	<i>Dachu</i>	<i>Bo</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Meng</i>	<i>Bi</i>	<i>Yi</i>	<i>Gu</i>
52	26	23	41	4	22	27	18
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
<i>Gan</i>	<i>Ru</i>	<i>Bi</i>	<i>Jian</i>	<i>Jie</i>	<i>Jiji</i>	<i>Zhun</i>	<i>Jing</i>
贛	襦	比	蹇	節	既濟	屯	井
							
坎	需	比	蹇	節	既濟	屯	井
<i>Kan</i>	<i>Xu</i>	<i>Bi</i>	<i>Jian</i>	<i>Jie</i>	<i>Jiji</i>	<i>Zhun</i>	<i>Jing</i>
29	5	8	39	60	63	3	48
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Taizhuang</i>	<i>Yu</i>	<i>Shaoguo</i>	<i>Guimei</i>	<i>Jie</i>	<i>Feng</i>	<i>Heng</i>
辰	泰壯	余	少過	歸妹	解	豐	恆
							
震	大壯	豫	小過	歸妹	解	豐	恆
<i>Zhen</i>	<i>Dazhuang</i>	<i>Yu</i>	<i>Xiaoguo</i>	<i>Guimei</i>	<i>Jie</i>	<i>Feng</i>	<i>Heng</i>
51	34	16	62	54	40	55	32

TABLE 11.2 Sequence of Hexagrams in the Mawangdui Manuscript (cont.)

33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
<i>Chuan</i>	<i>Tai</i>	<i>Qian</i>	<i>Lin</i>	<i>Shi</i>	<i>Mingyi</i>	<i>Fu</i>	<i>Deng</i>
川	泰	謙	林	師	明夷	復	登
䷁	䷊	䷎	䷒	䷆	䷣	䷗	䷖
坤	泰	謙	臨	師	明夷	復	升
<i>Kun</i>	<i>Tai</i>	<i>Qian</i>	<i>Lin</i>	<i>Shi</i>	<i>Mingyi</i>	<i>Fu</i>	<i>Sheng</i>
2	11	15	19	7	36	24	46
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
<i>Duo</i>	<i>Guai</i>	<i>Zu</i>	<i>Qin</i>	<i>Kun</i>	<i>Le</i>	<i>Sui</i>	<i>Taiguo</i>
奪	訣	卒	欽	困	勒	隋	泰過
䷖	䷧	䷗	䷒	䷮	䷖	䷐	䷊
兌	夬	萃	咸	困	革	隨	大過
<i>Dui</i>	<i>Guai</i>	<i>Cui</i>	<i>Xian</i>	<i>Kun</i>	<i>Ge</i>	<i>Sui</i>	<i>Daguo</i>
58	43	45	31	47	49	17	28
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56
<i>Luo</i>	<i>Dayou</i>	<i>Jin</i>	<i>Lü</i>	<i>Guai</i>	<i>Weiji</i>	<i>Shike</i>	<i>Ding</i>
羅	大有	潛	旅	乖	未濟	筮嗑	鼎
䷖	䷍	䷗	䷷	䷮	䷿	䷔	䷱
離	大有	晉	旅	睽	未濟	噬嗑	鼎
<i>Li</i>	<i>Dayou</i>	<i>Jin</i>	<i>Lü</i>	<i>Kui</i>	<i>Weiji</i>	<i>Shike</i>	<i>Ding</i>
30	14	35	56	38	64	21	50
57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64
<i>Suan</i>	<i>Shaoshu</i>	<i>Guan</i>	<i>Jian</i>	<i>Zhongfu</i>	<i>Huan</i>	<i>Jiaren</i>	<i>Yi</i>
算	少蕪	觀	漸	中復	渙	家人	益
䷖	䷖	䷓	䷴	䷗	䷺	䷤	䷩
巽	小畜	觀	漸	中孚	渙	家人	益
<i>Suan</i>	<i>Xiaochu</i>	<i>Guan</i>	<i>Jian</i>	<i>Zhongfu</i>	<i>Huan</i>	<i>Jiaren</i>	<i>Yi</i>
57	9	20	53	61	59	37	42

When the Mawangdui manuscript was unearthed in 1974, it touched off a vigorous debate about the original sequence of the *Yijing* hexagrams. According to some scholars, the manuscript sequence should be accorded priority as the earliest artifactual evidence then extant.<sup>5</sup> These scholars noted that the Mawangdui sequence was reminiscent of other arrangements of the hexagrams generally associated with *Yijing* interpreters of the Han dynasty, especially the “Eight Palaces” (*ba gong* 八宮) arrangement of Jing Fang 京房 (77–37 BCE), and that this should be reflective of a long tradition. On the other hand, other scholars objected that this sort of mechanistic arrangement is characteristic of Han exegeses, and should not represent the original sequence of the *Zhou Changes*.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, at least two of the commentaries included in the Mawangdui manuscript, *\*Ersanzi wen* 二三子問 *\*The Two or Three Disciples Asked* and *Zhong* 衷 *Centrality*, with only one or two exceptions, discuss the hexagrams and line statements in the order in which they are found in the received text.<sup>7</sup>

The issue here is not simply one of deciding between two different hexagram sequences. As indicated above, even within the Mawangdui manuscript there are two of them. In the Han dynasty, several other sequences of hexagrams are also attested: the most influential of these were those of Meng Xi 孟喜 (c. 90–40 BCE), which correlates the hexagrams with the twenty-four fortnightly periods of the year and the five noble titles; and that of Jing Fang, which organizes the sixty-four hexagrams into “eight palaces” (*ba gong* 八宮), more or less similar to the arrangement of the Mawangdui manuscript; the sequence is different, but the mechanical arrangement is similar.<sup>8</sup>

The debate about the original sequence of the hexagrams was reprised in 2004, when the Shanghai Museum manuscript of the *Zhou Changes* was first published.<sup>9</sup> Although this manuscript was written on bamboo strips that

5 See, for example, Liu Dajun 劉大鈞, “Bo Yi chutan” 帛易初談, *Wenshizhe* 文史哲 4 (1985): 53–60.

6 Representative of this viewpoint is Li Xueqin, *Zhou Yi jingzhuang suyuan*, 206.

7 The commentary *\*Ersanzi wen* 二三子問 *\*The Two or Three Disciples Asked* treats *Zhongfu* 中孚 ䷛ “Inner Trust” (#61) and *Xiaoguo* 小過 ䷛ “Lesser Surpassing” (#62) between *Yu* 豫 ䷏ “Relaxed” (#16) and *Heng* 恆 ䷟ “Constancy” (#32), perhaps suggesting that for the author of this commentary this pair of hexagrams was found in a different place in the sequence of hexagrams.

8 For a thorough presentation of these different sequences and an analysis of the sequence of the Mawangdui manuscript, with citations of studies published in the 1980s, see Xing Wen, *Bo shu Zhou Yi yanjiu*, 65–93. See, too, Smith, *Fathoming the Cosmos and Ordering the World*, 62–77.

9 Ma Chengyuan, *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu*, Vol. 3, 11–70 (Plates), 133–260 (Transcription). Pu Maozuo 濮茅左, editor of the manuscript, also published a two-volume study of the Shanghai Museum *Chu Zhou Yi* manuscript and its context: Pu Maozuo, *Chu zhushu* *Zhou Yi yanjiu*.

had long since become disassembled, scholars nonetheless used various sorts of evidence available on the strips to try to discern their original order. The most peculiar features of the Shanghai Museum manuscript are symbols found immediately after the hexagram name and again after the last character of the last line statement of each hexagram. These symbols were introduced briefly in Chapter One above, but because several scholars have used them to propose implications for the sequence of the hexagrams,<sup>10</sup> it seems important here to review the evidence and their analyses in somewhat more detail.<sup>11</sup>

Pu Maozuo 濮茅左, the editor of the manuscript, identified six symbols, the first four occurring more or less frequently and the latter two occurring only sporadically: a solid red square (■); a solid black square (■); a three-sided hollow red square with an inset smaller solid black square (◻); a three-sided hollow black square with an inset smaller solid red square (◻); as well, perhaps, as a solid red square with an inset hollow black square (◻), and a three-sided hollow black square (◻). These had never before been seen in connection with *Yijing* hexagrams.<sup>12</sup> In all, there are seventeen hexagrams with both parts of these symbols; in fourteen cases the symbols are identical, while in three cases they differ. There are thirteen other hexagrams in which only one part or the other is visible (in all of these cases, the part of the hexagram text where the other symbol would appear is missing due to a broken or missing strip). The distribution of these symbols is illustrated in the table on the following page.

10 The first of these studies is by Pu Maozuo, in Ma Chengyuan, *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu*, Vol. 3, 134, 251–260. In addition, see Li Shangxin 李尚信, “Chu zhushu Zhou Yi zhong de teshu fuhao yu guaxu wenti” 楚竹書《周易》中的特殊符號與卦序問題, *Zhou Yi yanjiu* 周易研究 2004.3, 24; Jiang Guanghui 姜光輝, “Shangbo cang Chu zhushu Zhou Yi zhong de teshu fuhao de yiyi” 上博藏楚竹書《周易》中的特殊符號的意義, *Zhongguo sixiang shi yanjiu tongxun* 中國思想史研究通訊 2004.6: 15–17; Fang Zhensan, “Zhu shu Zhou Yi caise fuhao chutan,” 22; Chen Renren 陳仁仁, “Lun Shang bo Yi teshu fuhao de leixing yu fenbu ji qi biaooshi yuanze” 上博易特殊符號的類型與分布及其標識原則, *Hunan daxue xuebao (Shehui kexue ban)* 湖南大學學報(社會科學班) 22.4 (2008): 123–130; and He Zeheng, “Lun Shangbo Chu Zhu shu Zhou Yi de Yi xue fuhao yu guaxu.”

11 The presentation here is taken largely from Shaughnessy, *Unearthing the Changes*, 43–47.

12 The identification of these six different symbols follows that of Pu Maozuo; at Ma Chengyuan, *Shanghai bowuguan cang Chu zhushu*, Vol. 3, 134, 251–260. As will be discussed below, it is likely that the last two of Pu’s symbols (the solid red square with an inset hollow black square and the three-sided hollow black square) occur only exceptionally and only on strips copied by a different copyist than those of the other symbols, and probably should not be analyzed together with the other four symbols.

TABLE 11.3 Distribution of Red and/or Black Symbols in the Shanghai Museum Manuscript

Hexagram	Head	Tail
<i>Meng</i> 蒙 ䷃ “Shrouded” (#4)		■ (faded)
<i>Xu</i> 需 ䷄ “Awaiting” (#5)	■	■
<i>Song</i> 訟 ䷅ “Lawsuit” (#6)	■	■
<i>Shi</i> 師 ䷆ “Army” (#7)	■	■ (faded)
<i>Bi</i> 比 ䷇ “Alliance” (#8)	■	■
<i>Dayou</i> 大有 ䷍ “Greatly Having” (#14)		■
<i>Qian</i> 謙 ䷎ “Modesty” (#15)	■	■
<i>Yu</i> 豫 ䷏ “Relaxed” (#16)	■	■
<i>Sui</i> 隨 ䷐ “Following” (#17)	■	■
<i>Gu</i> 蠱 ䷑ “Pestilence” (#18)	■	■
<i>Wuwang</i> 无妄 ䷘ “Without Folly” (#25)	■	
<i>Dachu</i> 大畜 ䷙ “Greater Livestock” (#26)	■	□
<i>Yi</i> 頤 ䷚ “Jaws” (#27)	■	■
<i>Xian</i> 咸 ䷞ “Feeling” (#31)	□	■
<i>Heng</i> 恆 ䷟ “Constancy” (#32)	■	■
<i>Dun</i> 遯 ䷠ “Retreating” (#33)	■	■
<i>Kui</i> 睽 ䷥ “Cross-Eyed” (#38)	■	■
<i>Jian</i> 蹇 ䷦ “Lame” (#39)	■	■
<i>Jie</i> 解 ䷧ “Released” (#40)	■	
<i>Guai</i> 夬 ䷪ “Resolute” (#43)		■
<i>Gou</i> 姤 ䷫ “Meeting” (#44)	■	■
<i>Cui</i> 萃 ䷬ “Gathering” (#45)	■	
<i>Kun</i> 困 ䷮ “Bound” (#47)		■
<i>Jing</i> 井 ䷯ “Well” (#48)	■	■
<i>Ge</i> 革 ䷰ “Rebellion” (#49)	■	
<i>Gen</i> 艮 ䷳ “Stilling” (#52)	■	■ (faded)
<i>Jian</i> 漸 ䷴ “Progressing” (#53)		■
<i>Feng</i> 豐 ䷶ “Fullness” (#55)	■	
<i>Lü</i> 旅 ䷷ “Traveling” (#56)	■	
<i>Huan</i> 涣 ䷺ “Dispersing” (#59)	■	■
<i>Xiaoguo</i> 小過 ䷽ “Lesser Surpassing” (#62)		■
<i>Jiji</i> 既濟 ䷾ “Already Across” (#63)		■

(For the sake of consistency with the rest of the present book, I convert the names of hexagrams used in the manuscript to those found in the received text.)

As can be seen from this table, there is a decided (though not invariable) tendency to group these symbols with hexagrams in the sequence of the received text. Thus, *Xu* 需 ☵☱ “Awaiting” (called 乳 “Suckling” in the manuscript), *Song* 訟 ☱☲ “Lawsuit,” *Shi* 師 ☱☷ “Army” and *Bi* 比 ☱☱ “Allying,” the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth hexagrams in the received sequence, are all marked with a solid red square (■) at both the head and tail, while *Dayou* 大有 ☱☲ “Greatly Having” (#14) through *Gu* 蠱 ☱☶ “Pestilence” (#18), the fourteenth through eighteenth hexagrams in the received sequence, all feature a solid black square (■) at the head and tail (though only the final portion of *Dayou* and the opening portion of *Gu* are extant). There are three exceptions to this pattern.

- There are three hexagram texts exhibiting mixed symbols at the head and tail: *Dachu* 大畜 ☱☰ “Greater Livestock” (#26), *Yi* 頤 ☱☶ “Jaws” (#27), and *Xian* 咸 ☱☵ “Feeling” (#31).
- The hexagrams *Ge* 革 ☱☲ “Rebellion” (#49) through *Lü* 旅 ☱☷ “Traveling” (#56) all have the same symbol—a hollow three-sided black square with an inset solid red square (◻) —as hexagrams *Heng* 恆 ☱☵ “Constancy” (#32) through *Kui* 睽 ☱☲ “Cross-Eyed” (#38).
- *Xiaoguo* 小過 ☱☲ “Lesser Surpassing” (#62) hexagram also has this same three-sided black square with an inset solid red square symbol (◻), even though in the received sequence of hexagrams it comes between hexagrams—*Huan* 渙 ☱☵ “Dispersing” (#59), and *Jiji* 既濟 ☱☵ “Already Across” (#63)—both of which have a different symbol (a solid red square with an inset hollow three-sided black square [■]).

Pu Maozuo suggested that the hexagrams with mis-matched symbols must mark a transition between two different groups; thus, *Dachu* 大畜 ☱☰ “Greater Livestock” (#26) with a ■ symbol at the head and ◻ at the tail must follow immediately after a ■ group and come immediately before a ◻ group; as he puts it, this hexagram simultaneously belongs to both groups. Similarly, *Xian* 咸 ☱☵ “Feeling” (#31), with a hollow three-sided black square (◻) at the head and a hollow three-sided black square with an inset solid red square (◻) at the tail must follow after a ◻ group and come before a ■ group. On the basis of this premise, Pu concluded that there must be a sequence in which the ◻ group precedes the ■ group, and thus that *Xian* “Feeling” (#31) must follow after *Dachu* “Greater Livestock” (#26).<sup>13</sup> From this, he concluded that a ■ group, including hexagrams from *Dayou* 大有 ☱☲ “Greatly Having” (#14) through *Wuwang*

13 However, he uses only three brief sentences to explain away the third hexagram with mis-matched symbols, *Yi* 頤 ☱☶ “Jaws” (#27), which intervenes between these in the received sequence of hexagrams. Since this hexagram has a ◻ symbol at the head and a ■ symbol at the tail, Pu says that it must follow after a ◻ group and come before a ■ group.



无妄 ䷘ “Without Folly” (#25), is concluded by *Dachu* “Greater Livestock,” which serves as a transition to *Xian* “Feeling,” which then is followed by a ䷘ group, represented in the extant manuscript by hexagrams from *Heng* 恆 ䷟ “Constancy” (#32) through *Xiaoguo* 小過 ䷛ “Lesser Surpassing” (#62). Pu explained this distribution by noting that the *Yijing* has traditionally been divided into two scrolls (*pian* 篇), the first containing hexagrams *Qian* 乾 ䷀ “Vigorous” (#1), through *Li* 離 ䷄ “Netted” (#30), and the second *Xian* 咸 ䷞ “Feeling” (#31) through *Weiji* 未濟 ䷿ “Not Yet Across” (#64). Since *Xian* “Feeling” is the first hexagram in the second scroll, Pu surmised that the ䷘ symbol at the head of the hexagram in the manuscript indicates a new scroll. By the same token, the same ䷘ symbol at the tail of *Dachu* “Greater Livestock” should indicate that it comes at the end of the first scroll. Pu further suggested that the four intervening hexagrams in the received sequence, *Yi* 頤 ䷚ “Jaws” (#27), *Daguo* 大過 ䷛ “Greater Surpassing” (#28), *Kan* 坎 ䷜ “Doubled Pit” (#29), and *Li* 離 ䷄ “Netted” (#30), must have come at some other point in the text.

Pu Maozuo also proposed that the interplay between the black and the red in the symbols corresponds with the interplay between yin and yang in the hexagrams, black corresponding with yin and red with yang. According to Pu, when solid yang (䷔) has spent its force, it gives rise to yin (䷚) within it. When yin matures, it reaches solidity (䷔), but then begins to wane and gives way to an incipient yang (䷔). According to Pu, ䷔ represents “a transitional process, simultaneously indicating that events are turning within the transformation of yin and yang, that events are developing within the transformation of yin and yang, that events are entering a new cycle within the transformation of yin and yang.”<sup>14</sup> He concluded his analysis by saying:

Due to missing strips in the Chu bamboo-strip *Zhou Yi*, I have only made an exploration and hypothesis of the circumstances presently available; if this is reasonable, then the Chu bamboo-strip *Zhou Yi* had a different sequence of hexagrams.<sup>15</sup>

The sequence that he proposed is, as mentioned above, in two scrolls as seen on the facing page.

We owe Pu Maozuo a great deal for his careful editing and presentation of the manuscript. He was faced with an entirely new type of symbol, never before seen in the long tradition of *Yijing* exegesis, and it was of course his responsibility as editor of the text to try to determine what meaning it might hold.

14 Ma Chengyuan, *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu*, Vol. 3, 259.













15 Ibid, 260.

TABLE 11.4 The Shanghai Museum Hexagram Sequence according to Pu Maozuo

Scroll One	Scroll Two
<i>Meng</i> 蒙 ䷃ “Shrouded” (#4)	<i>Xian</i> 咸 ䷞ “Feeling” (#31)
<i>Xu</i> 需 ䷄ “Awaiting” (#5)	<i>Heng</i> 恆 ䷟ “Constancy” (#32)
<i>Song</i> 訟 ䷅ “Lawsuit” (#6)	<i>Dun</i> 遯 ䷠ “Retreating” (#33)
<i>Shi</i> 師 ䷆ “Army” (#7)	<i>Kui</i> 睽 ䷥ “Cross-Eyed” (#38)
<i>Bi</i> 比 ䷇ “Alliance” (#8)	<i>Ge</i> 革 ䷰ “Rebellion” (#49)
<i>Jian</i> 蹇 ䷦ “Lame” (#39)	<i>Gen</i> 艮 ䷳ “Stilling” (#52)
<i>Jie</i> 解 ䷧ “Released” (#40)	<i>Jian</i> 漸 ䷴ “Progressing” (#53)
<i>Guai</i> 夬 ䷪ “Resolute” (#43)	<i>Feng</i> 豐 ䷶ “Fullness” (#55)
<i>Gou</i> 姤 ䷫ “Meeting” (#44)	<i>Lü</i> 旅 ䷷ “Traveling” (#56)
<i>Cui</i> 萃 ䷬ “Gathering” (#45)	<i>Xiaoguo</i> 小過 ䷽ “Lesser Surpassing” (#62)
<i>Kun</i> 困 ䷮ “Bound” (#47)	<i>Huan</i> 渙 ䷺ “Dispersing” (#59)
<i>Jing</i> 井 ䷯ “Well” (#48)	<i>Jiji</i> 既濟 ䷾ “Already Across” (#63)
<i>Yi</i> 頤 ䷚ “Jaws” (#27)	<i>Weiji</i> 未濟 ䷿ “Not Yet Across” (#64)
<i>Dayou</i> 大有 ䷍ “Greatly Having” (#14)	
<i>Qian</i> 謙 ䷎ “Modesty” (#15)	
<i>Yu</i> 豫 ䷏ “Relaxed” (#16)	
<i>Sui</i> 隨 ䷐ “Following” (#17)	
<i>Gu</i> 蠱 ䷑ “Pestilence” (#18)	
<i>Fu</i> 復 ䷗ “Returning” (#24)	
<i>Wuwang</i> 无妄 ䷘ “Without Folly” (#25)	
<i>Dachu</i> 大畜 ䷙ “Greater Livestock” (#26)	

However, it seems to me that the caution expressed in his conclusion is well warranted. It is plain to see that any of the missing strips could contain evidence that would overturn, or at least complicate, Pu's analysis. Not only are both symbols missing for thirty-four hexagrams (middle portions of some of these hexagrams are available in the manuscript), but there are also thirteen cases in which either the head or tail symbol is missing (due to a broken or missing strip); in his analysis of these symbols, Pu Maozuo seems to have assumed that in all thirteen of these cases the symbol must match that of the surviving symbol. The three cases with mis-matched symbols might suggest that other hexagrams also had symbols that did not match.<sup>16</sup>

16 Li Shangxin, “Chu zhushu Zhou Yi zhong de teshu fuhao yu guaxu wenti” offers a system-

It seems to me that the most reasonable analysis of these symbols published to date is also the simplest. This is the analysis of He Zeheng 何澤恒.<sup>17</sup> Based on two different calligraphic hands that can be detected in the manuscript,<sup>18</sup> He showed that forty-five strips of the manuscript were written by one scribe, while the other thirteen strips were written by other scribes. On the strips written by the first scribe, there are only four different symbols (following Pu Maozuo's ordering): , , , and .<sup>19</sup> He suggested re-ordering these, such that the group of hexagrams with symbol , the solid black square, would follow immediately after the group with , the solid red square; and that those with  would precede those with symbol . Then, similar to Pu Maozuo's suggestion that, like the traditional arrangement of the *Zhou Changes*, the manuscript was also separated into two scrolls, He further suggested that  and  belong exclusively to the first scroll, while  and  belong exclusively to the second scroll. This produces a sequence of hexagrams in the manuscript essentially the same as found in the received text, though with hexagrams *Heng* 恆 ䷟ “Constancy” (#32) through *Kui* 睽 ䷥ “Cross-Eyed” (#38) apparently out of order.


In an early study of the Shanghai Museum manuscript, I proposed that it may also be possible to use some aspects of the physical nature of the bamboo strips to come to some very provisional conclusions about the sequence of the manuscript.<sup>20</sup> If we assume that the strips were buried in a bound bundle or bundles, as the traces of the binding straps on the bamboo strips would

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atic critique of Pu Maozuo's presentation, demonstrating several discrepancies between descriptions given in Pu's study of the text (*shiwén* 釋文) and in the appendix devoted to the symbols. Li suggests a still more complicated analysis of the use of these symbols, proposing a sequence essentially the same as that of the received text, and arguing that all hexagram pairs (i.e., the four convertible pairs and the twenty-eight invertible pairs) always share the same symbol. To explain hexagrams with mis-matched symbols, he presented an analysis too complicated to reproduce here, an analysis, moreover, susceptible to the same criticisms that he leveled against Pu Maozuo's analysis.

17 This is suggested, for instance, in He Zeheng, “Lun Shangbo Chu zhu shu *Zhou Yi* de Yi xue fuhao yu guaxu,” 29.

18 These two different calligraphic hands were first pointed out by Fang Zhensan, “Zhu shu *Zhou Yi* caise fuhao chutan,” 22.

19 According to He, one of the two other symbols detected by Pu Maozuo, , is found only on strips written by the second scribe, who apparently either did not understand the function of the symbols or else was using a different set of symbols. Thus, they are not included within his analysis.

20 The following presentation is essentially identical with Xia Hanyi 夏含夷, “Shilun Shangbo *Zhou Yi* gua xu” 試論上博《周易》卦序, *Jianbo* 簡帛 1 (2006): 97–105, and with Shaughnessy, “A First Reading of the Shanghai Museum Bamboo-Strip Manuscript of the *Zhou Yi*.”

suggest, we might also assume a greater than average possibility that contiguous strips would be preserved or lost together. Table 11.5 presents the physical circumstances and contents of the fifty-eight strips presently known.

Some observations are possible from Table 11.5. First, whenever there is a break, either at the beginning or the end of a given hexagram text, the hexagram preceding or following it in the received sequence of hexagrams is missing. For instance, the manuscript includes the final strip of *Meng* 蒙 ䷃ “Shrouded” (#4), but not its first strip; it does not include any of *Zhun* 屯 ䷂ “Sprouting” (#3). Similarly, it includes the final strip of *Dayou* 大有 ䷍ “Greatly Having” (#14), but not its beginning strip; neither does it include any text of *Tongren* 同人 ䷌ “Together with People” (#13). It includes the first strip of *Gu* 蠱 ䷑ “Pestilence” (#18), but not its last strip; neither does it include any text of *Lin* 臨 ䷒ “Looking Down” (#19). This is true in every case in which a hexagram text is incomplete, except for the single case of *Xiaoguo* 小過 ䷽ “Lesser Surpassing” (#62), and *Jiji* 既濟 ䷾ “Already Across” (#63); the second strip of *Jiji* is present, but not its first strip, while the third of what must originally have been three strips of *Xiaoguo* is present. As noted above, it is also the case that the symbol that comes at the end of *Xiaoguo* seems to be out of sequence with the hexagrams that precede and follow it in the received sequence (see Table 11.3).

By the same token, when the beginning or final strip of a hexagram text is present, there is a much better than average chance that the preceding or following hexagram in the received sequence is also present. For instance, the manuscript includes both the beginning and end of *Xu* 需 ䷄ “Awaiting” (#5); it also includes the final strip of *Meng* 蒙 ䷃ “Shrouded” (#4), and the first strip of *Song* 訟 ䷅ “Lawsuit” (#6). The manuscript includes both the beginning and end of *Qian* 謙 ䷎ “Modesty” (#15); it also includes the end of *Dayou* 大有 ䷍ “Greatly Having” (#14), and the beginning of *Yu* 豫 ䷏ “Excess” (#16). In fifty such cases, there are only ten in which the text that would be contiguous in the received sequence is not present. Despite the problem of double counting here (the single correlation between the end of *Qian* and the beginning of *Yu* gets counted twice, once for *Qian* and once for *Yu*), these statistics suggest to me the probability that these bamboo strips were indeed contiguous.

Refining this analysis somewhat, noting that many of the bamboo strips in the manuscript were broken at some point during their burial, we might also assume that these strips would have been broken in much the same place with other strips that were contiguous in the same bundle. Evidence of this is to be seen, for instance, in the case of strips 20 and 21, the first of which is broken 29.1cm from the top and the second of which is broken at 28.8cm from the top (and also at 22.1cm from the top)—these two strips contain the entirety of *Wuwang* 无妄 ䷘ “Without Folly” (#25), the contents of which show that the

TABLE 11.5 Physical Circumstances of the Shanghai Museum *Zhou Yi* Manuscript Bamboo Strips

Strip	Hexagram name	Contents	Length (cm.)
1	<i>Meng</i> 蒙 ䷃ “Shrouded” (#4)	( <i>Liu san</i> to end)	16.7+12.4+9.6
2	<i>Xu</i> 需 ䷄ “Awaiting” (#5)	(Beginning to <i>Liu si</i> )	23.1+20.4
3	<i>Xu</i> 需 ䷄ “Awaiting” (#5)	(Last character plus symbol)	gap—20.8
4	<i>Song</i> 訟 ䷅ “Lawsuit” (#6)	(Beginning to <i>Jiu er</i> )	23.2+20.6
5	<i>Song</i> 訟 ䷅ “Lawsuit” (#6)	( <i>Liu san</i> to <i>Shang jiu</i> )	43
6	<i>Song</i> 訟 ䷅ “Lawsuit” (#6)	( <i>Shang jiu</i> to end)	43.3
7	<i>Shi</i> 師 ䷆ “Army” (#7)	(Beginning to <i>Liu si</i> )	43.6
8	<i>Shi</i> 師 ䷆ “Army” (#7)	( <i>Liu si</i> to end)	34.7
9	<i>Bi</i> 比 ䷇ “Alliance” (#8)	(Beginning to <i>Liu san</i> )	43.5
10	<i>Bi</i> 比 ䷇ “Alliance” (#8)	( <i>Liu san</i> to end)	43.7
11	<i>Dayou</i> 大有 ䷍ “Greatly Having” (#14)	( <i>Liu si</i> to end)	43.8
12	<i>Qian</i> 謙 ䷎ “Modesty” (#15)	(Beginning to <i>Liu wu</i> )	12.4+8.7—gap— 10.8
13	<i>Qian</i> 謙 ䷎ “Modesty” (#15)	( <i>Liu wu</i> to end)	43.8
14	<i>Yu</i> 豫 ䷏ “Relaxed” (#16)	(Beginning to <i>Liu wu</i> )	43.3
15	<i>Yu</i> 豫 ䷏ “Relaxed” (#16)	( <i>Liu wu</i> to end)	43.8
16	<i>Sui</i> 隨 ䷐ “Following” (#17)	(Beginning to <i>Jiu si</i> )	42.7—gap
17	<i>Sui</i> 隨 ䷐ “Following” (#17)	( <i>Jiu si</i> to end)	43.5
18	<i>Gu</i> 蠱 ䷑ “Pestilence” (#18)	(Beginning to <i>Jiu san</i> )	43.5
19	<i>Fu</i> 復 ䷗ “Returning” (#24)	( <i>Liu wu</i> )	gap—7—gap
20	<i>Wuwang</i> 无妄 ䷘ “Without Folly” (#25)	(Beginning to <i>Liu er</i> )	29.1—gap
21	<i>Wuwang</i> 无妄 ䷘ “Without Folly” (#25)	( <i>Liu san</i> to end)	22.1+6.7+15
22	<i>Dachu</i> 大畜 ䷙ “Greater Livestock” (#26)	(Beginning to <i>Liu si</i> )	43.7
23	<i>Dachu</i> 大畜 ䷙ “Greater Livestock” (#26)	( <i>Liu si</i> to end)	43.7
24	<i>Yi</i> 頤 ䷚ “Jaws” (#27)	(Beginning to <i>Liu san</i> )	43.4
25	<i>Yi</i> 頤 ䷚ “Jaws” (#27)	( <i>Liu san</i> to end)	43.7
26	<i>Xian</i> 咸 ䷞ “Feeling” (#31)	(Beginning to <i>Jiu si</i> )	36.5—gap
27	<i>Xian</i> 咸 ䷞ “Feeling” (#31)	( <i>Jiu wu</i> to end)	43.6
28	<i>Heng</i> 恆 ䷟ “Constancy” (#32)	(Beginning to <i>Liu wu</i> )	43.6
29	<i>Heng</i> 恆 ䷟ “Constancy” (#32)	( <i>Liu wu</i> to end)	43.8
30	<i>Dun</i> 遯 ䷠ “Retreating” (#33)	(Beginning to <i>Jiu si</i> )	31.5+12
31	<i>Dun</i> 遯 ䷠ “Retreating” (#33)	( <i>Jiu si</i> to end)	31.1—gap
32	<i>Kui</i> 睽 ䷥ “Cross-Eyed” (#38)	(Beginning to <i>Liu san</i> )	21.8+9.2—gap
32a*	<i>Kui</i> 睽 ䷥ “Cross-Eyed” (#38)	( <i>Liu san</i> to <i>Jiu si</i> )	?
33	<i>Kui</i> 睽 ䷥ “Cross-Eyed” (#38)	( <i>Jiu si</i> to <i>Shang jiu</i> )	30.8—gap
34	<i>Kui</i> 睽 ䷥ “Cross-Eyed” (#38)	( <i>Shang jiu</i> to end)	43.5

TABLE 11.5 Physical Circumstances of the Shanghai Museum Bamboo Strips (*cont.*)

Strip	Hexagram name	Contents	Length (cm.)
35	<i>Jian</i> 蹇 ䷦ “Lame” (#39)	(Beginning to <i>Jiu wu</i> )	43.6
36	<i>Jian</i> 蹇 ䷦ “Lame” (#39)	( <i>Shang liu</i> to end)	36—gap
37	<i>Jie</i> 解 ䷧ “Released” (#40)	(Beginning to <i>Jiu si</i> )	43.5
38	<i>Guai</i> 夬 ䷪ “Resolute” (#43)	( <i>Jiu er</i> to <i>Jiu si</i> )	43.7
39	<i>Guai</i> 夬 ䷪ “Resolute” (#43)	( <i>Jiu si</i> to end)	43.7
40	<i>Gou</i> 姤 ䷫ “Meeting” (#44)	(Beginning to <i>Jiu san</i> )	13+30.5
41	<i>Gou</i> 姤 ䷫ “Meeting” (#44)	( <i>Jiu san</i> to end)	43.8
42	<i>Cui</i> 萃 ䷬ “Gathering” (#45)	(Beginning to <i>Chu liu</i> )	43.6
43	<i>Kun</i> 困 ䷮ “Bound” (#47)	( <i>Jiu wu</i> to end)	43.8
44	<i>Jing</i> 井 ䷯ “Well” (#48)	(Beginning to <i>Jiu er</i> )	43.7
45	<i>Jing</i> 井 ䷯ “Well” (#48)	( <i>Jiu er</i> to <i>Shang liu</i> )	43.6
46	<i>Jing</i> 井 ䷯ “Well” (#48)	( <i>Shang liu</i> to end)	43.5
47	<i>Ge</i> 革 ䷰ “Rebellion” (#49)	(Beginning to <i>Jiu san</i> )	43.7
48	<i>Gen</i> 艮 ䷳ “Stilling” (#52)	(Beginning to <i>Jiu san</i> )	13.4—gap—23.8
49	<i>Gen</i> 艮 ䷳ “Stilling” (#52)	( <i>Jiu san</i> to end)	43.8
50	<i>Jian</i> 漸 ䷴ “Progressing” (#53)	(Beginning to <i>Jiu san</i> )	12.6+31.1
51	<i>Feng</i> 豐 ䷶ “Fullness” (#55)	( <i>Jiu san</i> to <i>Shang liu</i> )	23.1+20.5
52	<i>Feng</i> 豐 ䷶ “Fullness” (#55)	( <i>Shang liu</i> to end)	43.5
53	<i>Lü</i> 旅 ䷷ “Traveling” (#56)	(Beginning to <i>Jiu si</i> )	43.8
54	<i>Huan</i> 渙 ䷺ “Dispersing” (#59)	(Beginning to <i>Liu si</i> )	43.5
55	<i>Huan</i> 渙 ䷺ “Dispersing” (#59)	( <i>Liu si</i> to end)	gap—42.7
56	<i>Xiaoguo</i> 小過 ䷽ “Lesser Surpassing” (#62)	( <i>Liu wu</i> to end)	31.6—gap
57	<i>Jiji</i> 既濟 ䷾ “Already Across” (#63)	( <i>Jiu san</i> to end)	43.6
58	<i>Weiji</i> 未濟 ䷿ “Not Yet Across” (#64)	( <i>Chu liu</i> to <i>Jiu si</i> )	gap—21—gap

(For the sake of consistency with the rest of the present book, I convert the names of hexagrams used in the manuscript to those found in the received text.)

two strips must have been contiguous. Similar evidence can be seen in the cases of strips 30 and 31, the first of which is broken at 31.5 cm from the top and the second at 31.1 cm from the top—these two strips contain the entirety of *Dun* 遯 ䷠ “Piglet” (#33); and strips 32 and 33, the first of which is broken at 31 cm from the top and the second at 30.8 cm from the top—these are the first two strips of *Kui* 睽 ䷥ “Cross-Eyed” (#38). In these two cases as well, the content of the strips shows that they must have been contiguous.

More important, strips pertaining to more than a single hexagram might be susceptible to the same type of analysis. Thus, we might note that strips 2-3-

4 were all broken in roughly the same place, at about the point of the middle binding notch: strip 2 being broken 20.4 cm from the bottom, strip 3 20.8 cm from the bottom, and strip 4 20.6 cm from the bottom. The first two of these three strips would have contained the entirety of the text of *Xu* 需 ䷄ “Awaiting” (#5),<sup>21</sup> while the third contains the opening of *Song* 訟 ䷅ “Lawsuit” (#6). The similar point of breakage suggests that these strips, and thus the two hexagrams, were contiguous in the manuscript sequence, just as they are in the received sequence.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, both the distribution of extant strips among the hexagrams and especially this last example of similar points of breakage of strips belonging to two different hexagrams suggests to me that the Shanghai Museum manuscript of the *Zhou Yi* may well have been more or less in the same sequence as that of the received text. Sometime after I published this analysis, Sun Peiyang 孫沛陽, then a student in Peking University’s Institute of Archaeology and Museology (*Kaogu wenbo xueyuan* 考古文博學院), proposed a much more audacious—and to my mind—much more convincing demonstration that the original sequence of hexagrams of the Shanghai Museum manuscript was the same as that of the received text.<sup>23</sup> Sun assumed that the text of the *Zhou Yi* was written on 142 bamboo strips, which agrees with my own reconstruction of the original manuscript. He reproduced these in cardboard strips 45 cm long by .6 cm wide and with a thickness of .11–.12 cm (i.e., the dimensions of the manuscript’s bamboo strips), pasting onto fifty-eight of these full-size cardboard strips photographs of the surviving text. He colored these strips grey, while the strips entirely missing from the manuscript were colored white. He then bound these all together, with thin silk thread, in the order of the received text, and rolled them into a scroll, rolling from back (i.e., what would correspond to *Weiji* 未濟 ䷿ “Not Yet Across” [#64] hexagram) to front, so that *Qian* 乾 ䷀ “Vigorous” (#1) would be the last hexagram on the outside of the scroll. This initial experiment produced a scroll that can be depicted as in Figure 11.1.

21 The top of strip 3, about 23 cm long, is missing. Presumably it would have carried the last two characters of the Six in the Fourth line, the eight characters of the Nine in the Fifth line, and the first sixteen characters of the Top Six line.

22 A similar analysis might hold for strips 48 and 50, the first of which is broken at 13.4 cm from the top and the second at 12.6 cm from the top—the beginnings of *Gen* 艮 ䷳ “Stilling” (#52) and *Jian* 漸 ䷴ “Progressing” (#53) hexagrams (the intervening strip 49 is intact and contains the final portion of *Gen* “Stilling”).

23 Sun Peiyang 孫沛陽, “Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhu shu *Zhou Yi* de fuyuan yu guaxu yanjiu” 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書《周易》的復原與卦序研究, *Gudai wenming yanjiu tongxun* 古代文明研究通訊 46 (2010): 23–36.



FIGURE 11.1

Sun Peiyang's Initial Reconstruction of Shanghai Museum *Zhou Yi* Manuscript; from Sun Peiyang 孫沛陽, "Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhu shu *Zhou Yi* de fuyuan yu guaxu yanjiu" 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書《周易》的復原與卦序研究, *Gudai wenming yanjiu tongxun* 古代文明研究通訊 46 (2010), 31; used with permission

This diagram is already quite suggestive, with the surviving strips (once again, pictured in grey) all segregated on one side of the scroll. However, Sun then proposed a slight modification. Noting that the seventy-seven strips of the *Yongyuan qiwu pu* 永元器物簿 discovered at Juyan 居延 about 1930, one of the only early scrolls that survived burial intact, included two blank strips that mark divisions within the text,<sup>24</sup> Sun surmised that if the Shanghai Museum manuscript had been divided—as the *Yijing* has been traditionally divided—into two sections, then perhaps it would have included one or more blank strips bound into the scroll. Since the *Yijing* has traditionally been divided between *Li* 離 ☲ “Netted” (#30) and *Xian* 咸 ☱ “Feeling” (#31) hexagrams, Sun placed four extra strips at that point in the scroll. This produces the hypothetical scroll seen in Figure 11.2 (the four blank strips marked by cross-hatching).

In his discussion of this reconstruction, Sun was very careful to note its hypothetical nature. Especially problematic is the insertion of four blank strips into the middle of the scroll. Nevertheless, the result is particularly satisfying, suggesting forcefully not only that the Shanghai Museum *Zhou Yi* manuscript was indeed bound in the order of the received text, but also that it was divided into two separate sections (though bound as a single text).

As noted in Chapter One above, there is some other archaeological evidence, much earlier in time, that seems to bear on the sequence of the hexagrams. This evidence comes in the form of two pottery paddles, pestle-shaped pottery tools used in the making of other pottery vessels, recovered in 2001 from the site of a

24 For this scroll of seventy-seven strips, written between A.D. 140–142, see Lao Gan 勞幹, *Juyan Han jian: Tuban zhi bu (san)* 居延漢簡：圖版之部(三), Zhongyang yanjiuyuan Lishi yuyan yanjiusuo zhuan kan 中央研究院歷史語言研究所專刊 21 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan, 1957), 570–575.



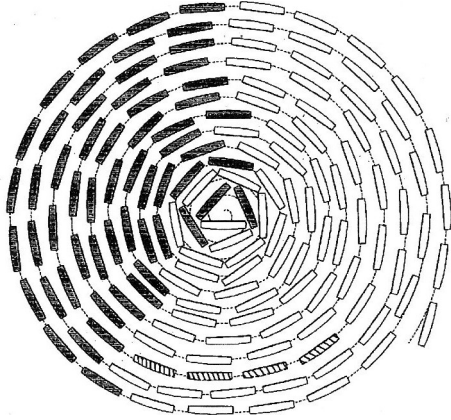


FIGURE 11.2

Sun Peiyang's Revised Reconstruction of Shanghai Museum *Zhou Yi* Manuscript; from Sun Peiyang 孫沛陽, "Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhu shu *Zhou Yi* de fuyuan yu guaxu yanjiu" 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書《周易》的復原與卦序研究, *Gudai wenming yanjiu tongxun* 古代文明研究通訊 46 (2010), 32; used with permission

late Western Zhou pottery kiln excavated at Xiren Village 西仁村, Huangliang County 黃良鄉, near Chang'an 長安, Shaanxi.<sup>25</sup> On the first of these (CHX 採集: 1; for illustrations of the paddle and its inscription, see Fig. 1.1, p. 31), two columns of numbers or numerical symbols are incised. The numbers read (the right-hand column, reading from top to bottom)  $\Lambda$ — $\Lambda$ — $\Lambda$ —, which can be read as 六一六一六一 or 6-1-6-1-6-1, and (the left-hand column, again reading from top to bottom)  $\Lambda$ — $\Lambda$ — $\Lambda$ —, which can be read as 一六一六一六 or 1-6-1-6-1-6. Converting these numbers to the solid and broken lines of a hexagram would produce the two hexagram pictures  $\text{䷆}$  and  $\text{䷇}$ , which in the *Yijing* are the hexagrams *Jiji* 既濟 "Already Across" and *Weiji* 未濟 "Not Yet Across," the sixty-third and sixty-fourth hexagrams in the traditional sequence.

The numerical symbols engraved on the second pottery paddle (CHX 採集: 2; see Fig. 1.2, p. 32) are by no means as easy to see or to "read" as those on the first. Indeed, it is only from a rubbing of the inscription and a line drawing of that rubbing that the numbers become more or less clear.

What is clear is that there are four sets of six numerals (though one number of the left-hand most set has been effaced) that run entirely around the circumference of the paddle handle: two oriented vertically (in the rubbing) and two oriented horizontally, though the two horizontally oriented sets seem to run in opposite directions from each other. Reading these from right to left, top to bottom, produces the following "hexagrams":

八 八 六 八 一 八       $\text{䷆}$     *Shi* 師 "Army" (#7)  
8 - 8 - 6 - 8 - 1 - 8

25 Cao Wei, "Tao pai shang de shuzi gua yanjiu."

八一六六六六 ䷇ *Bi* 比 “Alliance” (#8)  
8 - 1 - 6 - 6 - 6 - 6

一一六一一一 ䷋ *Xiaochu* 小畜 “Lesser Livestock” (#9)  
1 - 1 - 6 - 1 - 1 - 1

一一一六一 [一] ䷉ *Lü* 履 “Stepping” (#10)  
1 - 1 - 1 - 6 - 1 - [1]

These are the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth hexagrams in the traditional sequence of the *Yijing*. As Li Xueqin 李學勤 has pointed out, even if one or another of these symbols was the result of an actual divination, it is almost inconceivable that a pair of divinations could produce “changing hexagrams” in exactly this sequence.<sup>26</sup> Thus, it would seem that the numerical hexagrams on this pottery paddle must have some other explanation, the most likely being that they represent a segment of some complete sequence of hexagrams—the sequence evidently being that of the received *Yijing*. While it is not clear why numerical hexagrams should have been incised into the handles of these pottery paddles (the suggestion by Cao Wei, the excavator of the paddles, that these inscriptions were notations of divinations performed just before producing other pottery implements does not seem very convincing), the inscriptions on the two paddles do constitute hard evidence that suggests that the received sequence of hexagrams was already available for quotation during the late Western Zhou dynasty.

## 1 Conclusion

Although both within the *Yijing* tradition itself and especially also in unearthed manuscripts of the text, there are different arrangements of the sixty-four hexagrams, nevertheless there is substantial evidence that the sequence found in the received text, which is to say beginning with *Qian* 乾 ䷀ “Vigorous” and *Kun* 坤 ䷁ “Compliant” hexagrams and continuing through *Jiji* 既濟 ䷾ “Already Across” and *Weiji* 未濟 ䷿ “Not Yet Across” as the final two hexagrams, was already more or less standard as early as the Warring States period, and perhaps even as early as the late Western Zhou dynasty. It is also possible that at

<sup>26</sup> Li Xueqin, “Xin faxian Xi Zhou shi shu de yanjiu.”

an early period, the text was already divided into two separate scrolls. While the rationales behind this sequence given in what would become canonical sources such as the *Xu gua zhuan* commentary are not very convincing, that the sequence is based primarily on pairs of hexagrams—paired either by conversion or inversion of the six lines of the hexagram picture—would seem to be important for understanding the structure of both individual hexagrams and also of the text in general.

## From Divination to Philosophy

It has been my sole purpose throughout this book to discuss the origin of the *Zhou Changes* and its first uses in the performance of milfoil divination. I have not by any means set out to write a general history of the text that has come to be known as the *Yijing* 易經 *Classic of Changes*, a topic that would require several more volumes.<sup>1</sup> Even a full accounting of how the seven canonical commentaries, the so-called “Ten Wings” (*Shi yi* 十翼) that have been part of the text since at least the Eastern Han dynasty, came to be composed and included in the text would require a volume at least as large as the present one. Nevertheless, I am not insensitive to the expectations of many readers that a book such as this should consider to at least some extent how this early divination manual came to be considered as China’s greatest wisdom text.

Chinese tradition has long credited Confucius (551–479 BCE) with the authorship of the “Ten Wings,” and for the “philosophical turn” in the use of the *Zhou Changes*. There are two passages in the *Lunyu* 論語 *Analects* hinting at Confucius’s use of the *Zhou Changes*. The first of them suggests something of this philosophical turn.

子曰：「南人有言曰：人而無恆，不可以作巫醫。善夫！『不恆其德，或承之羞。』」子曰：「不占而已矣。」

The Master said: “The men of the south have a saying, saying: ‘Men without constancy cannot serve as magicians or doctors.’ Excellent. ‘Not making constant his virtue, now receiving its offering.’” The Master said: “One does not just prognosticate and nothing more!”<sup>2</sup>

1 For one such general history in Chinese, see Zhu Bokun, *Yi xue zhexueshi*; and for an only slightly less ambitious history in English, see Smith, *Fathoming the Cosmos and Ordering the World*.

2 *Lunyu* 論語 13/22. In the *Analects*, the word *xiu* 羞, translated in this book as “offering,” is usually understood in another of its senses: “shame.” The second passage is still more problematic:

子曰：「加我數年，五十以學易，可以無大過矣！」

The Master said: Adding some years to my life, with fifty to study the *Changes* I could really be without any great mistakes! *Lunyu* 7/16

There has long been a debate about the proper reading of this passage since the *Jingdian shiwen* of Lu Deming says:

“Not making constant his virtue, now receiving its offering” (*bu heng qi de, huo cheng zhi xiu* 不恆其德，或承之羞) matches exactly part of the Nine in the Third line statement of *Heng* 恆 ䷟ “Constancy” (#32) hexagram. It is one of the lines of the *Zhou Changes* most susceptible to two very different interpretations. A good case can be made that the word *de* 德 that features in the first phrase, and which usually means “virtue,” should here be read as the cognate *de* 得 “to get, to obtain,” and refer to the catch of a hunt.<sup>3</sup> In this context, the word *heng* 恆 “constancy” would pertain to the curing of the meat, while the words *cheng* 承 and *xiu* 羞 “(meat) offering” in the second phrase would refer to the offering of that meat in the ancestral sacrifice. However, *xiu* 羞 has another meaning, now more common: “shame.” It is thus easy to read this line as a moral maxim: “Not making constant his virtue, one then receives its shame.” Indeed, it can be seen that by juxtaposing his quotation of this line statement with the “saying of the men of the south” (*nan ren you yan* 南人有言) commenting on “constancy” as a human virtue, it is clear that Confucius not only understood *xiu* as “shame,” but more importantly that he understood *de* 德 in its normal sense of “virtue.” His conclusion that “One does not just prognosticate and nothing more!” suggests that he certainly knew of the divinatory nature of the text, but also that he regarded divination as insufficient. It would seem that for Confucius the *Zhou Changes* was worth quoting primarily for what it said about morality.<sup>4</sup>

This move from divination to philosophy is also to be seen in one of the commentaries included in the Mawangdui 馬王堆 manuscript of the *Yijing*, self-titled as *Yao* 要 *Essentials*. It too centers on Confucius, portraying him as performing divinations, but doing so only rarely. Instead, he claims to seek “virtue” (*de* 德), the same word seen above in the quotation of the Nine in the Third line statement of *Heng* “Constancy” hexagram.

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「魯讀『易』為『亦』，今從古」。

The Lu [edition] reads *yi* 易 “change” as *yi* 亦 “also.” Now I follow the Ancient [text]. See *Lun yu zhengyi* 論語正義, in Ruan Yuan 阮元, ed., *Shisan jing zhushu* 十三經注疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009), 5397. Li Xueqin, *Zhou Yi jingzhuang suyuan* (Zengding ben), 63–82, gives a thorough account of this debate, arguing compellingly that the received reading is correct.

3 The Nine in the Fourth line statement of the same hexagram reads simply: “Fields without fowl” (*tian wu qin* 田无禽).

4 I am not insensitive to the arguments of many scholars, especially Western sinologists, that some of the quotations of “Confucius” contained in the *Lunyu*, including perhaps this one about *Heng* 恆 ䷟ “Constancy” (#32) hexagram, may not have actually been uttered by the historical Confucius. However, that too is a topic for a different book.

後世之士疑丘者，或以《易》乎？吾求其德而已。吾與史巫同塗而殊歸者也。君子德行焉求福，故祭祀而寡也。仁義焉求吉，故卜筮而希也。祝巫卜筮其後乎？

If men of later generations doubt me, Qiu [i.e., Confucius], perhaps it will be because of the *Changes*. I seek its virtue, and nothing more. I am on the same path with scribes and shamans, but we have different destinations. How can the virtuous conduct of the gentleman be intended to seek fortune? Thus, his performance of sacrificial worship is infrequent. How can his humaneness and sense of duty be intended to seek auspices? Thus his performance of turtle and milfoil divination is rare. Does not the turtle and milfoil divination of the priests and shamans come after this?<sup>5</sup>

The recognition of this turn to philosophy at the time of Confucius is not at all new. Indeed, over eight hundred years ago it was clearly stated by Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), perhaps the greatest figure in all of Chinese intellectual history after only Confucius himself.

今人讀易，當分為三等：伏羲自是伏羲之易，文王自是文王之易，孔子自是孔子之易。讀伏羲之易，如未有許多象象文言說話，方見得易之本意，只是要作卜筮用。如伏羲畫八卦，那裏有許多文字言語，只是說八箇卦有某象，乾有乾之象而已。其大要不出於陰陽剛柔、吉凶消長之理。然亦嘗說破，只是使人知卜得此卦如此者吉，彼卦如此者凶。今人未曾明得乾坤之象，便先說乾坤之理，所以說得都無情理。及文王周公分為六十四卦，添入『乾元亨利貞』，『坤元亨利牝馬之貞』，早不是伏羲之意，已是文王周公自說他一般道理了。然猶是就人占處說，如卜得乾卦，則大亨而利於正耳。及孔子繫易，作象象文言，則以『元亨利貞』為乾之四德，又非文王之易矣。到得孔子，盡是說道理。然猶就卜筮上發出許多道理，欲人曉得所以凶，所以吉。

When modern people read the *Changes*, they should divide it into three levels: Fuxi's *Changes*, King Wen's *Changes*, and Confucius's *Changes*. In reading Fuxi's *Changes*, it is as if there were still no sayings of the "Judgments," "Images," and "Words and Sayings," but just that to get the basic meaning of the *Changes* all you needed to do was to divine. For example with Fuxi's drawing of the eight trigrams, where is there any text or sayings? It just says that the eight trigrams have whatever images of the eight trigrams; that *Qian* has the image of *Qian* and that is all. The main points do not depart from the principles of yin and yang, hard and soft, auspi-

5 See Shaughnessy, *I Ching: The Classic of Changes*, 240–241 (translation modified).

cious and ominous, growth and decay. Still, trying to explain it, it was only to let people know that if they divine and encounter this hexagram it will be auspicious like this or that hexagram will be ominous like that. Modern people, even before understanding the images of *Qian* and *Kun*, want to talk first about the principles of *Qian* and *Kun*, and thus what they have to say is all lacking in substance.

Coming to when King Wen and the Duke of Zhou made the sixty-four hexagrams, they added texts such as “*Qian*, first receipt, beneficial to affirm,” or “*Kun*, first receipt, beneficial for a mare’s affirmation,” which was already very different from Fuxi’s meaning, and was King Wen’s and the Duke of Zhou’s own general philosophy. Nevertheless, it was still according to divination. For instance, if you divined and got *Qian* hexagram, then it would be a great receipt and beneficial to be upright.

Coming to Confucius’s making the *Judgments, Images and Words and Sayings*, then “Originating, Receptive, Beneficial, Upright” was understood as “four virtues,” which was not the same as King Wen’s *Changes*. With Confucius, everything was philosophy, but he still used divination terms to develop these many philosophies, wanting people to understand why things were ominous or auspicious.<sup>6</sup>

For the third of these developments regarding the *Zhou Changes*, that involving Confucius, Zhu Xi mentions only the *Judgments*, i.e., the *Commentary on the Judgments* (*Tuan zhuan* 彖傳), the *Images*, i.e., the *Commentary on the Images* (*Xiang zhuan* 象傳), and the *Words and Sayings*, i.e., the *Commentary on the Words and Sayings* (*Wen yan zhuan* 文言傳), three of seven different commentaries that would come to be included within the canonical text. Together, these seven commentaries, organized in ten separate scrolls, would come to be known as the “Ten Wings” (*shi yi* 十翼).

## 1 The “Ten Wings”

There is also an old tradition that Confucius authored the “Ten Wings” (or at least most of them). The *locus classicus* for this tradition is probably the “Kongzi shijia” 孔子世家 “Genealogy of Confucius” chapter of the *Shiji* 史記 *Records of the Historian*:

<sup>6</sup> Li Jingde, *Zhuzi yulei*, 1629–1630.

孔子晚而喜《易》，序〈彖〉、〈繫〉、〈象〉、〈說卦〉、〈文言〉。讀《易》，韋編三絕。曰：『假我數年，若是，我於《易》則彬彬矣。』  
Late in life Confucius enjoyed the *Changes*, putting in sequence the *Judgments, Appended, Images, Discussion of the Trigrams, and Words and Phrases*. Reading the *Changes*, the leather binding straps thrice broke; he said: "If I had more years, like this then with respect to the *Changes* I would be so refined."<sup>7</sup>

Probably only the most committed believer in the veracity of Chinese traditional history actually believes that Confucius authored these commentaries, or even had much of anything to do with the *Zhou Changes*. Nevertheless, it seems to be the case that it was more or less about when Confucius lived that the *Zhou Changes* began to be understood as a font of ancient wisdom. The "Ten Wings," whoever may have written them, singly or collectively, may have had some role in this development, though there were surely also other texts—now lost—that also contributed to it.<sup>8</sup> In this concluding chapter, I will try to trace the steps involved in this transformation, beginning with a few texts already examined in Chapter Five above, but then moving on to focus on the "Ten Wings" themselves. I will comment on only four of the seven discrete "Wings": the *Tuan zhuan* 彖傳 *Commentary on the Judgments*, *Wenyan zhuan* 文言傳 *Commentary on the Words and Sayings*, *Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳 *Judgment on the Appended Statements*, and the *Shuo gua zhuan* 說卦傳 *Commentary Discussing the Trigrams*, though not in this order.<sup>9</sup>

7 Sima Qian, *Shiji*, 1937.

8 The Mawangdui manuscript of the *Yijing* contains several commentaries that were subsequently lost. In addition to much of the *Xici* 繫辭 *Appended Statements*, the manuscript also contained five other commentaries: \**Ersanzi wen* 二三子問 \**The Two or Three Disciples Asked*, *Zhong* 衷 *Internal*, *Yao* 要 *Essentials*, \**Mu He* 穆和 and \**Zhao Li* 昭力. The manuscript was probably copied about 175 BCE, but the texts were doubtless originally composed sometime before that date. The existence of these commentaries provides every reason to think that there were also other commentaries, and perhaps quite a few others, circulating during the fourth and third centuries BCE. While one might imagine a sort of Darwinian "survival of the fittest" texts of the time as an explanation for why the "Ten Wings" survived and others did not, a critical reading of all but the *Xici* would quickly disabuse one of this notion. As has been recognized since at least the time of Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–1072), much of the "Ten Wings" is of such triteness that it is hard to credit them to sagely authorship. I suspect that the transmission of the seven texts that make up the "Ten Wings," as opposed to other texts discussing the *Zhou Changes*, was almost entirely fortuitous.

9 In Chapter Eleven, I discussed the *Xu gua zhuan* 序卦傳 *Commentary on the Sequence of the Hexagrams* and the *Za gua zhuan* 雜卦傳 *Commentary on Mixed Hexagrams*, and have nothing more to say about them. As for the *Xiang zhuan* 象傳 *Commentary on the Images*,



2 *Shuo Gua Zhuan* 說卦傳 *Commentary Discussing the Trigrams*

In Chapter Five above, I examined ten cases of milfoil divination cases using the *Zhou Changes* found in the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 *Zuo Tradition*. My purpose there was to understand what the cases show about the performance of milfoil divination and the extent to which milfoil divination using the *Zhou Changes* may have been similar to or different from other types of milfoil divination. I analyzed these cases for four different topics that had been shown to be fundamental in divination in general, including both turtle-shell and other forms of milfoil divination: the command, the hexagram, the oracle, and the prognostication. Some of the cases of divination using the *Zhou Changes* reported in the *Zuo zhuan* also include more or less lengthy explanations of the prognostications. Because these explanations have no counterparts in the other types of divination, I passed over them there without much comment. However, given their prominence within exegesis of the *Yijing*, it is important to return to these cases, at least briefly.

The cases examined in Chapter Five were taken up in the chronological order in which they appear in the *Zuo zhuan*, even though it is clear that several of them were interpolated into the narrative of the text sometime after—and sometimes quite a lot after—the year in which they are found. The first account (#5.1) is an excellent example of this. It is found in the twenty-second year of Duke Zhuang of Lu 魯莊公 (r. 693–662 BCE), i.e., 672 BCE. Although the divination was about the fate of a baby born in that year, because the diviner, said to be “a scribe of Zhou” (Zhou *shi* 周史), accurately predicted events that took place five and then eight generations later, it seems clear that this narrative marks a later interpolation. Nevertheless, it illustrates well the first basic technique used in the explanation of the *Zhou Changes*. I will quote once again the relevant portion of the narrative, but then will focus on the explanation.

陳厲公，蔡出也，故蔡人殺五父而立之。生敬仲。其少也，周史有以《周易》見陳侯者，陳侯使筮之，遇觀䷓之否䷋，曰：「是謂『觀國之光，利用賓于王。』」此其代陳有國乎？不在此，其在異國；非此其身，在其子孫。光，遠而自他有耀者也。坤，土也；巽，風也；乾，天也。風為天於土上，山也。有山之材，而照之以天光，於是乎居土

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which comments on both the hexagram and line statements, I have nothing at all to say; with respect to the hexagram statements, it adds little to the exegetical techniques we will see in the *Tuan zhuan*, and its comments on phrases in the line statements are entirely predictable, though one interesting feature is that its comments on the six line statements of an individual hexagram are generally internally rhymed.

上，故曰『觀國之光，利用賓于王』。庭實旅百，奉之以玉帛。天地之美具焉，故曰『利用賓于王』。猶有觀焉，故曰其在後乎！風行而著於土，故曰其在異國乎！若在異國，必姜姓也。姜，大嶽之後也。山嶽則配天。物莫能兩大。陳衰，此其昌乎！」及陳之初亡也，陳桓子始大於齊；其後亡也，成子得政。

Duke Li of Chen was born of a woman from Cai. Therefore, men of Cai killed Wufu and established him (i.e., Duke Li, as ruler). He fathered Jingzhong. When (Jingzhong) was young, the Scribe of Zhou used the *Zhou Changes* to have an audience with the Lord of Chen. The Lord of Chen had him divine by milfoil (about Jingzhong), meeting *Guan* ䷛ “Looking Up”’s *Pi* ䷋ “Negation,” and said: “This says, ‘Looking up at the kingdom’s radiance. Beneficial herewith to be hosted by the king.’ Will this one not come to replace Chen’s rulers? If not here, it will be in a different state. If not by himself, it will be his descendants. ‘Radiance’ is distant and shines from something else. *Kun* ䷁ is ‘Earth,’ *Xun* ䷲ is the ‘Wind,’ and *Qian* ䷀ is ‘Heaven.’ ‘Wind’ becoming ‘Heaven’ above ‘Earth’ is ‘Mountain’ ䷳. Having the resources of a mountain, and shining on it with heavenly radiance is to reside above ‘Earth’; therefore, it says, ‘Looking up at the kingdom’s radiance. Beneficial herewith to be hosted by the king.’ The court’s goods are displayed by the hundreds, presented with jades and silk. The beauties of heaven and earth are all complete among them. Therefore, it says: ‘Beneficial herewith to be hosted by the king.’ And yet there is ‘looking up’ in it, and therefore I said it will be with his descendants. The ‘Wind’ moves and strikes upon the ‘Earth,’ therefore I said that it will be in another state. If it is in another state, it surely will be of the Jiang family. The Jiangs are the descendants of Grand Peaks. Mountain peaks then match Heaven. Among things, nothing can be of equal greatness. When Chen declines, this one will flourish.” Coming to the time when Chen was first being lost, Chen Huanzi for the first time was great in Qi. Later when (Chen) was lost, Chen Heng gained the government.<sup>10</sup>

The result of the divination was “*Guan* ䷛ ‘Looking Up’’s *Pi* ䷋ ‘Negation,’” which is to say, the Six in the Fourth line of *Guan* ䷛ “Looking Up” hexagram:

六四：觀國之光。利用賓于王。

Six in the Fourth: Looking up at the kingdom’s radiance. Beneficial herewith to be hosted by the king.

10 *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 3852–3854.

The scribe begins with a quasi etymology of the word *guang* 光 “radiance.” Since radiance is light reflected from some other more distant object, this suggests that the “hosting by the king” (*bin yu wang* 賓于王) will take place in another place and at another time from the present. The scribe then explains the symbolism of the constituent trigrams in the two hexagrams used to indicate this line: *Kun* ☷ and *Xun* ☴ in *Guan* ䷛ “Looking Up,” and *Kun* ☷ and *Qian* ☰ in *Pi* ䷔ “Negation.”

坤，土也；巽，風也；乾，天也。風為天於土上，山也。有山之材，而照之以天光，於是乎居土上，故曰『觀國之光，利用賓于王』。  
*Kun* ☷ is “Earth,” *Xun* ☴ is the “Wind,” and *Qian* ☰ is “Heaven.” “Wind” becoming “Heaven” above “Earth” is “Mountain” ☶. Having the resources of a mountain, and shining on it with heavenly radiance is to reside above “Earth”; therefore, it says, “Looking up at the kingdom’s radiance. Beneficial herewith to be hosted by the king.”

The first three of these symbols are stated explicitly: *Kun* ☷, the bottom trigram of both hexagrams, is “Earth,” *Xun* ☴, the top trigram of *Guan* “Looking Up,” is the “Wind,” and *Qian* ☰, the top trigram of *Pi* “Negation,” is “Heaven.” “Wind” becoming “Heaven” is traditionally said to be a result of *Guan* “Looking Up” hexagram “changing” (*bian* 變) into *Pi* “Negation” hexagram. Even though there is no evidence that milfoil divination at this time involved such “changing” hexagrams, it is clear that the diviners could make use of both hexagrams indicating the result of the divination to explain that result. There is one other symbol that is not quite as explicit: “‘Wind’ becoming ‘Heaven’ above ‘Earth’ is ‘Mountain.’” “Mountain” is the standard association of the trigram *Gen* ☶, which however is not one of the four constituent trigrams of the two hexagrams. For this reason, it has been explained as a “joint body” (*huti* 互體) trigram made up of the second, third and fourth lines of *Pi* ䷔. There is some evidence in the Tsinghua manuscript \**Shifa* 筮法 suggesting that such “joint body” trigrams were already a feature in the milfoil divination of this period,<sup>11</sup>

11 In the tenth section of this manuscript, entitled “Nan nü” 男女 “Male or female,” which apparently concerns divinations about the gender of a child about to be born, the result given as *Kun* ☷ trigram above *Gen* ☶ trigram is explained as follows:

凡男，上去式，下去式，中男乃男，女乃女。

In all cases of males, if the top removes two and the bottom removes one, if the middle is male then it will be male, if female then female.

Removing the top two lines *Kun* ☷ and the bottom line of *Gen* ☶ produces *Kan* ☵ trigram, the middle line of which is a yang or “male” line.

and there does not seem to be any other explanation for the scribe's use of this symbolism here.

The fullest exposition of the various symbolisms of the eight trigrams is contained within the *Shuo gua zhuan* 說卦傳 *Commentary Discussing the Trigrams* commentary. This commentary as found in the received text of the *Classic of Changes* is clearly an amalgamation of different texts. The first three paragraphs, which describe how the hexagrams were created, is out of place in this commentary, and in fact in the Mawangdui 馬王堆 manuscript are found in an entirely different text, originally called by the manuscript's editors \**Yi zhi yi* 易之義 *The Properties of the Changes*, but subsequently found to be self-titled as *Zhong* 衷 *Internal*. The remainder of the text presents lists of different attributes of the eight trigrams: forces of nature, animals, family members, parts of the human body, directions, colors, etc. It is not at all systematic, so that some trigrams contain certain types of attributes that are wholly missing in others. Some attributes are general, such as *Qian* ☰ being "Vigorous," *Kun* ☷ being "Compliant," etc; other images can be very specific, indeed. Thus, while *Qian* ☰ signifies various types of "horses" ("fine horses" [*liang ma* 良馬], "old horses" [老馬], "skinny horses" [*sou ma* 瘠馬], "piebald horses" [*bo ma* 駁馬]), 震 ☳ signifies other types of "horses" (horses "that neigh well" [*shan ming* 善鳴], "with White Hindlegs" [*zhu zu* 鼻足], or "with White Foreheads" [*di sang* 的顙]), even though the principal animal image of 震 ☳ is the "dragon."<sup>12</sup> A

12 The authorship of the *Commentary Discussing the Trigrams*, like that of the other of the "Ten Wings" of the *Classic of Changes*, is traditionally credited to Confucius (551–479 BCE), though this is almost certainly fictional. On the other hand, that neither this commentary nor any of the other of the "Ten Wings" is included in the Shanghai Museum manuscript of the *Zhou Changes* would not seem to be definitive evidence against the possible existence of the text before that time (i.e., c. 300 BCE). Li Xueqin, *Zhou Yi jingzhuan suyuan* (*Zengding ben*), 56–63 makes a strong case that a text like the *Commentary Discussing the Trigrams*, if not that text itself, may have been in circulation already shortly after the birth of Confucius. In the *Zuo zhuan* under the 2nd year of Duke Zhao 昭 (540 BCE), there is the following record:

二年春，晉侯使韓宣子來聘，且告為政，而來見，禮也。觀書於大史氏，見《易象》與魯《春秋》，曰：「周禮盡在魯矣。吾乃今知周公之德與周之所以王也。」

In the second year, spring, the lord of Jin sent Han Xuanzi to come pay court and also to report on his taking over governance. His coming to visit was according to the rite. Shown books by the Grand Scribe, seeing the *Images of the Changes* and the *Springs and Autumns* of Lu, he said: "The rites of Zhou are complete indeed in Lu. Now I know of the Duke of Zhou's virtue and why Zhou had the kingship."

According to Li, the "Yi Xiang" 易象 *Images of the Changes* here should refer to some sort of precursor to commentaries such as the *Shuo gua zhuan*, with their description of trigram symbolism. Although some readings of this passage understand this to be a reference to

complete tabular listing of these attributes, omitting only redundancies and attempting to justify only the first row of images, follows below.

TABLE 12.1 Attributes of the Eight Trigram Contained in the *Shuo gua zhuan* 說卦傳 *Commentary Discussing the Trigrams*

乾 ☰	坤 ☷	震 ☳	巽 ☴	坎 ☵	離 ☲	艮 ☶	兌 ☱
天 Heaven	地 Earth	雷 Thunder	風 Wind	雨 Rain 水 Water	日 Sun 火 Fire	山 Mountain	澤 Marsh
君 To Rule	藏 To Store	動 To Move	散 To Scatter	潤 To Moisten	烜 To Warm	止 To Stop	說 To Please
西北 NW		東 E	東南 SE	北 N	南 S	東北 NE	正秋 Autumn
		動 To Move	撓 To Bend	潤 To Moisten	燥 To Warm	終始 To End and Begin	說 To Please
健 Vigorous	順 Compliant	動 Moving	入 Entering	陷 Sinking	麗 Shining	止 Stopping	說 Pleasing
馬 Horse	牛 Ox	龍 Dragon	雞 Chicken	豕 Pig	雉 Pheasant	狗 Dog	羊 Sheep
首 Head	腹 Belly	足 Feet	股 Thighs	耳 Ears	目 Eyes	手 Hands	口 Mouth
父 Father	母 Mother	長男 Eldest Son	長女 Eldest Daughter	中男 Middle Son	中女 Middle Daughter	少男 Youngest Son	少女 Youngest Daughter
圓 Round	布 Cloth	玄黃 Blackish- Yellow	木 Trees	溝瀆 Channel and Ditch	電 Lightning	徑路 Byway	巫 Shamaness

two separate texts, the *Yi* 易 *Changes* and the *Xiang* 象 *Images*, Li argues that the *Zhou Changes* had long been available for quotation before this date, including in the state of Jin, so that it is unlikely that Han Xuanzi 韓宣子 would have been impressed by seeing it. On the other hand, as we will see, by this time trigram symbolism was beginning to be widely used in explaining the results of divination. Such an early date for the existence of a text like the *Shuo gua zhuan* would mark a significant development in the exegesis of the *Changes*.

TABLE 12.1 Attributes of the Eight Trigram Contained in the *Shuo gua zhuan* 說卦傳 (cont.)

乾 ☰	坤 ☷	震 ☳	巽 ☴	坎 ☵	離 ☲	艮 ☶	兌 ☱
君 Lord	釜 Pot	敷 Spreading	繩直 Plumbline	隱伏 Hidden Prostrate	甲冑 Armor and Helmet	小石 Little Rock	口舌 Mouth and Tongue
玉 Jade	吝嗇 Frugality	大塗 Highway	工 Carpenter's Square	矯輮 Straight and Bent	戈兵 Dagger-axe and Weapon	門闕 Gatehouse	毀折 Smashing and Breaking
金 Metal	均 Evenness	決躁 Angry Decision	白 White	弓輪 Bow and Wheel	大腹人 Man with Big Belly	果蓏 Fruits and Seeds	附決 Dropping and Bursting
寒 Cold	子母牛 Cow and Calf	蒼筤竹 Green Bamboo Shoots	長 Growing	加憂人 Man that is Anxious	乾卦 Drying Trigram	闔寺 Gatekeeper	剛鹵地 Earth that is Hard and Salty
冰 Ice	大輿 Big Cart	萑葦 Reeds and Rushes	高 High	心病人 Man that is Heartsick	鱉 Tortoise	指 Finger	妾 Concubine
大赤 Bright Red	文 Striped	善鳴馬 Horse that Neighs Well	進退 Entering and Exiting	耳痛人 Man with Earache	蟹 Crab	狗 Dog	
良馬 Fine Horse	眾 Multitudes	彘足馬 Horse with White Hindlegs	不果 Unfruited	血卦 Blood Trigram	贏 Snail	鼠 Rat	
老馬 Old Horse	柄 Handle	的頰馬 Horse with White Forehead	臭 Stinky	大赤 Bright Red	蚌 Mussel	黔 Panther	
瘠馬 Skinny Horse	黑 Black	反生稼 Crops that are Legumes	寡髮人 Man that is Balding	美脊馬 Horse with Beautiful Back	龜 Turtle	喙之屬 Those that are Beaked	
駮馬 Piebald Horse		健 Vigorous	廣頰人 Man with Wide Forehead	亟心馬 Horse with Quick Heart	科上槁木 Trees that are Hollow and Dead at Top	堅多節木 Trees that are Strong with Many Branches	

TABLE 12.1 Attributes of the Eight Trigram Contained in the *Shuo gua zhuan* 說卦傳 (cont.)

乾 ☰	坤 ☷	震 ☳	巽 ☴	坎 ☵	離 ☲	艮 ☶	兌 ☱
木果 Tree Fruit		蕃鮮 Flourishing and Fresh	多白眼人 Man with Much White of the Eye	下首馬 Horse with Lowered Head			
			近利市三倍 Those that Nearly Triply Profit	薄蹄馬 Horse with Tiny Hooves			
			躁卦 A Forceful Trigram	曳馬 Horse that Stumbles			
				多眚輿 Cart with Many Prob- lems			
				通 To Connect			
				月 Moon			
				盜 Thief			
				堅多心木 Trees with Strong and Big Core			

Extensive though they are, the images found in the *Shuo gua zhuan* by no means exhaust all of the images associated with the eight trigrams. Although very few of these images appear in the *Zuo zhuan* accounts of divination using the *Zhou Changes*, nevertheless there are still other images in those accounts that are not found in the *Shuo gua zhuan*. Consider, for example, Account #5.7, which purports to predict the fate of Shusun Bao 叔孫豹 (d. 538 BCE), the head of the Shusun 叔孫 lineage of the state of Lu 魯, at the time of his birth. The divination met with *Mingyi* ䷗ “Calling Pheasant”’s *Qian* ䷀ “Modesty,” that is the First Nine line of *Mingyi* 明夷 ䷣ hexagram (#36). The diviner, named Bu Chuqiu 卜楚丘, used various exegetical techniques, including especially quotations of the line statements and trigram symbolism, to explain the result. His explanations would prove to be uncannily prescient, suggesting of course that

the account of the divination and especially its explanation represent a post facto insertion into the text. Shusun Bao was eventually starved to death by Shu Niu 豎牛, a son by a secondary consort who also killed Bao's sons by his primary consort. "Niu" 牛 is the Chinese word "ox," which would feature prominently in the detailed explanation of the prognostication. The first part of the prognostication draws primarily on wording in the First Nine line statement of *Mingyi* "Calling Pheasant" hexagram, which however here is apparently understood as "Brightness Wounded." The understanding of this hexagram name as involving brightness seems to derive both from the word *ming* 明 "brightness," which is part of the hexagram name, and also from its bottom trigram, 離 ☲, the primary associations of which are the sun, brightness, and fire, but which also has a secondary association with a pheasant (perhaps because of one apparent meaning of the word *yi* 夷 in the name of this hexagram, since *yi* 夷 can be understood as the protograph of *yi* 鷓 "pelican," but is also an attested allograph of *zhi* 雉 "pheasant"<sup>13</sup>). After considering each phrase of the line statement, the exegesis then takes up the trigram symbolism of *Li* 離 ☲ and *Gen* 艮 ☶ trigrams, the latter of which is the bottom trigram of *Qian* 謙 ☶ "Modesty" hexagram.

初，穆子之生也，莊叔以《周易》筮之，遇明夷☱之謙☶，以示卜楚丘，楚丘曰：是將行，而歸為子祀。以讒人入，其名曰牛，卒以餓死。明夷，日也。日之數十，故有十時，亦當十位。自王已下，其二為公、其三為卿。日上其中，食日為二，旦日為三。明夷之謙，明而未融，其當旦乎，故曰「為子祀」。日之謙，當鳥，故曰「明夷于飛」。明而未融，故曰「垂其翼」。象日之動，故曰「君子于行」。當三在旦，故曰「三日不食」。離，火也；艮，山也。離為火，火焚山，山敗。於人為言。敗言為讒，故曰「有攸往。主人有言」。言必讒也。純離為牛，世亂讒勝，勝將適離，故曰「其名曰牛。」謙不足，飛不翔；垂不峻，翼不廣。故曰「其為子後乎」。吾子，亞卿也；抑少不終。

Earlier, when Muzi (i.e., Shusun Bao 叔孫豹) was born, [his father] Zhuang Shu divined by milfoil about it with the *Zhou Changes*, meeting *Mingyi* ☱ "Calling Pheasant"'s *Qian* ☶ "Modesty." Showing it to Diviner Chuqiu, Chuqiu said: "This one will travel, but will return to perform a son's sacrifices. Bringing a slanderer to enter, whose name will be Ox, in the end he will starve to death. 'Calling Pheasant' is the 'Sun.' The num-

13 For this explanation of the meaning of *yi* 夷, see Li Jingchi, *Zhou Yi tanyuan*, 39–47; Gao Heng, *Zhou Yi gu jing jin zhu*, 124.



ber of the sun is ten, thus there are ten hours, also corresponding to the ten positions. From the king on down, the second is the duke, and the third is minister. When the sun is at its highest it is the center; Breakfast is the second (hour), and Dawn the third. As for 'Calling Pheasant's 'Modesty,' it is bright but not yet at the brightest, which should correspond to dawn; thus, I said he will 'perform a son's sacrifices.' The 'Modesty' of the sun corresponds to a 'Bird'; thus, it says 'Calling pheasant in flight.' Being bright but not yet at its brightest, thus it says 'Dipping its wing.' Giving image to the movement of the sun, thus it says 'A lord's son in motion.' Corresponding to the third hour at dawn, thus it says 'For three days not eating.' *Li* ☲ is 'Fire,' and *Gen* ☶ is 'Mountain.' *Li* being 'Fire,' fire burns the 'Mountain,' and the mountain is ruined. With respect to humans it is 'Words,' and ruinous words are slander; thus it says 'Having somewhere to go. The master has sayings.' Sayings will certainly be slanderous. Pure *Li* is 'Ox'; with the world disordered and slander prevailing, it will go to *Li*, thus I said his name will be Ox. Modesty is insufficient, and flying but not soaring, dipping not high, the wings are not broad, thus I said 'Might it be your descendant.' My son will be a secondary minister; oh, slightly not ending well."

The associations of *Li* ☲ with "Fire" and *Gen* ☶ with "Mountain" are perfectly standard and easy to understand here. However, other associations are not so easy to understand. For instance, "With respect to humans it is 'Words'" (*yu ren wei yan* 於人為言) would not seem to match any standard trigram association, which normally associates "Words" (*yan* 言) with the trigram *Dui* 兌 ☱. No matter how one might analyze the hexagram pictures of either *Mingyi* ☱☲ "Calling Pheasant" or *Qian* ☶☶ "Modesty," there is no *Dui* ☱ in them. Strangely, when the exegesis then seeks to explain why the killer will be *Niu* 牛 "Ox," it turns from trigram symbolism back to analyzing a completely different hexagram statement of the *Zhou Changes*, that of *Li* 離 ☲☲ "Netted" (#30) hexagram:

離 ☲☲：利貞。亨。畜牝牛吉。

*Li* "Netted": Beneficial to affirm. Receipt. Raising a cow: Auspicious.

It would seem to have been a simple matter to draw on *Kun* 坤 ☷, the top trigram of both *Mingyi* ☱☲ "Calling Pheasant" and *Qian* ☶☶ "Modesty" hexagrams and the primary animal association of which is none other than "ox." However, it is probably unrealistic to expect complete consistency in these explanations; already with diviners quoted in the *Zuo zhuan*, and especially with those of later periods, such as Yu Fan 虞翻 (164–233), diviners used whatever technique

would work to get them to the desired explanation.<sup>14</sup> Trigram symbolism was a very powerful tool in their exegetical toolboxes, but it was only one among many tools.

### 3 *Wen Yan Zhuan* 文言傳 *Commentary on the Words and Phrases*

Account #5.5 examined in Chapter Five above, the account of the imprisonment of Mu Jiang 穆姜 (d. 564 BCE), is generally regarded as one of the most important developments in the understanding of the *Zhou Changes*. The *Zuo zhuan* recounts how she had been imprisoned for taking part in a conspiracy to overthrow her own son, Duke Cheng of Lu 魯成公 (r. 590–573 BCE), and how she had a milfoil divination performed to determine whether she would be able to get out of prison. This divination apparently used some milfoil divination technique other than the *Zhou Changes*, but the scribe then used that text to explain the result that he desired. The account deserves to be quoted yet again.

穆姜薨於東宮。始往而筮之，遇艮 ䷳ 之八。史曰：「是謂艮之隨 ䷐。隨，其出也。君必速出！」姜曰：「亡！是於《周易》曰：『隨，元、亨、利、貞，無咎』。元，體之長也；亨，嘉之會也；利，義之和也；貞，事之幹也。體仁足以長人，嘉德足以合禮，利物足以和義，貞固足以幹事。然故不可誣也，是以雖隨無咎。今我婦人，而與於亂。固在下位，而有不仁，不可謂元。不靖國家，不可謂亨。作而害身，不可謂利。棄位而姤，不可謂貞。有四德者，隨而無咎。我皆無之，豈隨也哉？我則取惡，能無咎乎？必死於此，弗得出矣。」

Mu Jiang passed away in the Eastern Palace. When she first went there, she divined by milfoil about it, meeting the “eight” of *Gen* ䷳ “Stilling.” The scribe said: “This is called *Gen* ䷳ ‘Stilling’'s *Sui* ䷐ ‘Following.’ ‘Following’ means getting out. Milady will certainly quickly get out.” Jiang said: “Not so! In the *Zhou Changes* this says:

Following: Prime, Receipt, Benefit, Affirmed. Without trouble.<sup>15</sup> ‘Prime’ is the leader of the body; ‘Receipt’ is the gathering of enjoyment; ‘Benefit’ is the harmony of propriety; and ‘Affirmed’ is the trunk of endeavors. Embodying humaneness suffices to lead people, enjoying virtue suffices to join the rites, benefiting others suffices to harmonize propriety,

14 For one example of Yu Fan 虞翻's exegesis, see above, Chapter Seven, p. 303.

15 I here translate this hexagram statement according to the interpretation given by Mu Jiang, even though I translate the same words differently elsewhere in this book.

and affirming sturdiness suffices to strengthen endeavors. Thus, there can be no deception even if in this way it is 'Following. Without trouble.' Now I am a woman and have taken part in disorder. Solidly in a lowly position, I was also inhumane; this cannot be said to be 'Prime.' Not bringing peace to the state cannot be said to be 'Receipt.' Acting and harming my person cannot be said to be 'Benefit.' And abandoning my position to indulge in licentiousness cannot be said to be 'Affirmed.' With these four virtues, one might 'Follow' and be 'without trouble.' But since I have none of them, how could I 'Follow'? And since I have taken up evil, how could I be 'without trouble'? I will surely die here, and will not be able to get out."

In addition to the discussion of this account of milfoil divination in Chapter Five above, I also considered it in Chapter Eight in the discussion of the words *yuan heng li zhen* 元亨利貞 in hexagram statements. I suggested there that Mu Jiang's interpretation of these four words as marking "four virtues" (*si de* 四德) cannot be supported either linguistically or by the context of milfoil divination. Nevertheless, it has been especially influential in the traditional understanding of the *Yijing*. In fact, a passage very similar to it begins the *Wen yan zhuan* 文言傳 *Commentary on the Words and Sayings*, another of the canonical commentaries of the *Yijing*.

「元」者，善之長也。「亨」者，嘉之會也。「利」者，義之和也。「貞」者，事之幹也。君子體仁足以長人，嘉會足以合禮，利物足以和義，貞固足以幹事。君子行此四德者，故曰「乾，元、亨、利、貞」。

"Prime" is the leader of abilities. "Receipt" is the gathering of enjoyment. "Benefit" is the harmony of propriety. "Affirmed" is the trunk of endeavors. The gentleman embodies humaneness sufficient to lead people, has enjoyment sufficient to meld the rites, benefits things sufficient to harmonize propriety, and affirms solidity sufficient to strengthen endeavors. The gentleman practices these four virtues; therefore it says "*Qian* Prime, Receipt, Benefit, Affirmed."

The *Commentary on the Words and Phrases* is a very short commentary that addresses only *Qian* 乾 ☰ "Vigorous" (#1) and *Kun* 坤 ☷ "Compliant" (#2) hexagrams. The comments on *Qian* "Vigorous" are the more extensive of the two, not only commenting on the hexagram statement as above, but also going through the six line statements four different times, the first time providing an almost systematic moral program for the gentleman (*junzi* 君子), and the other three

times giving much shorter remarks on each line.<sup>16</sup> For *Kun* hexagram, there is only a single paragraph.

Taken in its entirety, the *Commentary on the Words and Phrases* has two important themes: the need for the “gentleman to advance virtue and cultivate the patrimony” (*junzi jin de xiu ye* 君子進德修業), and to do so in accord with timeliness (*shi* 時). The text combines both of these themes in its first comment on the Nine in the Fourth line statement of *Qian* “Vigorous”:

九四曰：「或躍在淵，无咎。」何謂也？子曰：「上下無常，非為邪也。進退無恆，非離群也。君子進德修業，欲及時也，故无咎。」

Nine in the Fourth says: “Now jumping in the depths. Without trouble.” What does this mean? The Master said: “Above and below being without regularity is to not act awry. Advancing and retreating without constancy is not to separate from the multitudes. The gentleman advances virtue and cultivates the patrimony wishing to be together with the times, therefore he is ‘without trouble.’”

As we will see in the final section of this chapter, “virtue” (*de* 德) and “patrimony” (*ye* 業) are two of the crucial terms in one section of the *Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳 *Commentary on the Appended Statements*. The notion of timeliness is one that is basic to all understandings of the *Zhou Changes*. With regard to *Qian* “Vigorous,” the wording of the *Commentary on the Words and Phrases* in this respect is strikingly similar to that seen in the *Tuan zhuan* 彖傳 *Commentary on the Judgments*, the commentary of the “Ten Wings” that comments exclusively on the hexagram statements. The first quotation below is from the *Commentary on the Words and Phrases*, the second from the *Commentary on the Judgments*.

大哉乾乎，剛健中正，純粹精也。六爻發揮，旁通情也，時乘六龍，以御天也。雲行雨施，天下平也。

How great indeed is *Qian*! Hard and vigorous, centered and upright, its nature is pure and unadulterated. The six lines developing is its nature of communicating widely. Time rides the six dragons to drive the heavens, and the clouds move and the rains fall and all under heaven is at peace.

16 It is curious that the *Commentary on the Words and Phrases* makes no mention of either the Use the Nine 用九 line of *Qian* “Vigorous” or the Use the Six 用六 line of *Kun* “Compliant.”

大哉乾元，萬物資始，乃統天。雲行雨施，品物流形。大明始終，六位時成。時乘六龍以御天。乾道變化，各正性命，保合大和，乃利貞。首出庶物，萬國咸寧。

Great indeed is the *Qian* “prime.” The ten-thousand things coming into being then it controls heaven. The clouds move and the rains fall, and the types of things flow into shape. The great brightness begins and ends and the six positions are seasonally completed. Time rides the six dragons in order to drive the heavens. The way of *Qian* alternates and transforms, each thing making upright its nature, protecting the great harmony and then being “beneficial to affirm.” The head comes out from the many things, and the ten-thousand kingdoms are all tranquil.

#### 4 *Tuan Zhuan* 象傳 *Commentary on the Judgments*

The *Commentary on the Judgments* is perhaps the most under-appreciated commentary of the “Ten Wings.” At its best, as for instance in the comment on *Qian* “Vigorous” above or on *Kun* “Compliant,” it is beautifully written in rhyming four-character phrases that manage to incorporate the wording of the relevant hexagram statement into a broader philosophical perspective.

至哉坤元，萬物資生，乃順承天。坤厚載物，德合無疆。含弘光大，品物咸亨。牝馬地類，行地無疆，柔順利貞。君子攸行，先迷失道，後順得常。西南得朋，乃與類行；東北喪朋，乃終有慶。安貞之吉，應地無疆。

Far-reaching indeed is the *Kun* “prime.” The ten-thousand things coming into life, it then complies with supporting heaven. *Kun* broadly carries things, its virtue combining without limit. Holding extensiveness within and radiating greatly, the types of things are all “received.” The “mare” is of the category of earth, and travels the earth without limit, softly complying, “beneficial to affirm.” The gentleman’s travels are first confused and lose the way, but later comply and gain regularity. “To the southwest gaining friends,” then it travels together with its category; “to the northeast losing friends,” then in the end it has felicity. The “auspiciousness” of “peaceful affirmation” corresponds with the earth without limit.

The *Commentary on the Judgments* contains scattered within its sixty-four comments virtually all of the exegetical techniques that later commentators would draw upon to explain both the hexagram statements and the line statements. Perhaps the most important of these techniques is seen in the comment on

*Qian* “Vigorous” above: “the six positions are seasonally completed” (*liu wei shi cheng* 六位時成). This views the lines of the hexagrams as marking moments in time, growing from the First line to the Top line. In addition to this association with time, the lines are also correlated with place—from low to high—and then by extension with social status, the low lines being humble and the high lines exalted (except for the Top line, which is often exposed as being too high). Of course, this understanding of the structure of the hexagram is now so commonplace that its occurrence in the *Commentary on the Judgments*, which as far as we know is the earliest statement of it, can pass almost unnoticed.<sup>17</sup> Equally commonplace—but equally influential within all later *Yijing* exegetics, are such notions that the yin and yang lines are “soft” (*rou* 柔) and “hard” (*gang* 剛); that the Second and Fifth lines are “centered” (*zhong* 中); that odd lines (i.e., the First, Third and Fifth) should properly be yang, and even lines (i.e., the Second, Fourth and Top) should properly be yin, and when they are they are said to be “upright” (*zheng* 正) or to “obtain their place” (*de wei* 得位); that lines in similar positions in the bottom and top trigrams “correspond” (*ying* 應), and do so best when they are of different natures (i.e., yin and yang); that correspondence between these lines “goes out” (*wang* 往) from the bottom trigram to the top trigram, and “comes” (*lai* 來) in reverse; that the bottom trigram represents the “interior” (*nei* 內) and the top trigram the “exterior” (*wai* 外), both in terms of location and also social terms (i.e., within the family and outside in society). The *Tuan zhuan* also makes systematic use of trigram symbolism, even if, with but a few exceptions, it uses only the most elementary associations: *Qian* 乾 ☰ stands for “heaven” (*tian* 天) and “vigor” (*jian* 健); *Kun* 坤 ☷ for “earth” (*di* 地) and “compliant” (*shun* 順); *Zhen* 震 ☳ for “thunder” (*lei* 雷) and “movement” (*dong* 動); *Xun* 巽 ☴ for “wind” (*feng* 風) and “retreating” (*xun* 遜); *Kan* 坎 ☵ for “water” (*shui* 水) and “danger” (*xian* 險); *Li* 離 ☲ for “brightness” (*ming* 明) and “shining” (*li* 麗); *Gen* 艮 ☶ for “mountain” (*shan* 山) and for “stopping” (*zhi* 止); and *Dui* 兌 ☱ for “marsh” (*ze* 澤) and “pleasing” (*yue* 說).

To illustrate these types of exegesis, and also to introduce something of the philosophical turn that the *Commentary on the Judgments* is witness to, I propose to examine six more comments, taken from the second octet of hexagrams, from *Tai* 泰 ☰☷ “Positive” (#11) through *Yu* 豫 ☱☳ “Excess” (#16). These represent three pairs of hexagrams, for which the *Tuan zhuan* gives complementary comments. I will quote first the hexagram statement and then follow

17 I will not attempt by way of quotation to substantiate each and every exegetical technique to be mentioned below. Suffice it to say that they are used pervasively—even if unsystematically—throughout the *Commentary on the Judgments*. However, after cataloging the techniques, I will quote further examples that show many of them.

that immediately with the *Commentary on the Judgments* comment for each of these three pairs. In each case, I will explain the different techniques being used, though I will let the philosophy speak for itself.

泰 ䷊：小往大來。吉。亨。

泰，小往大來。吉。亨，則是天地交，而萬物通也。上下交，而其志同也。內陽而外陰，內健而外順，內君子而外小人，君子道長，小人道消也。

*Tai* 泰 ䷊ “Positive”: Little going, great coming. Auspicious. Receipt.

*Tai* “Positive”: If “Little going, great coming. Auspicious. Receipt,” then this is heaven and earth joining together and the ten-thousand things communicating. When above and below join together, their intentions are the same. With inside yang and outside yin, inside vigorous and outside compliant, inside a gentleman and outside a petty man, the way of the gentleman grows and the way of the petty man declines.

否 ䷋：否之匪人。不利君子貞。大往小來。

否之匪人，不利君子貞。大往小來，則是天地不交，而萬物不通也。上下不交，而天下无邦也。內陰而外陽，內柔而外剛，內小人而外君子：小人道長，君子道消也。

*Pi* 否 ䷋ “Negation”: Negation’s non-human. Not beneficial to affirm about a lord’s son. Great going, little coming.

If “Negation’s non-human. Not beneficial to affirm about a lord’s son. Great going, little coming,” then this is heaven and earth not joining together and the ten-thousand things not communicating. When above and below do not join together, all under heaven is without a country. With the inside shaded and the outside sunny, the inside soft and the outside hard, inside a petty person and outside a gentleman, the way of the petty person grows and the way of gentleman declines.

The comments to these two hexagram statements explicitly begin with the hexagram statement itself, and then make use of the symbolism of the trigrams and their positions within the hexagrams to make a philosophical statement. These two hexagrams, *Tai* 泰 ䷊ “Positive” and *Pi* 否 ䷋ “Negation,” are both inversions of each other and also conversions (i.e., with all lines changing to their opposite nature). In this case, it is clearly the inversion that informs the complementary meanings of the two hexagrams. Both hexagrams are made up of the trigrams *Qian* ䷀ and *Kun* ䷁, in the case of *Tai* 泰 ䷊ “Positive” *Qian* being at the bottom and *Kun* at the top, and vice versa in the case of *Pi* 否 ䷋ “Negation.” The inversion is written into the hexagram statements themselves, with *Tai* “Pos-

itive” saying “Little going, great coming” (*xiao wang da lai* 小往大來) and *Pi* “Negation” saying “Great going, little coming” (*da wang xiao lai* 大往小來). Even though in the *Commentary on the Judgments* “going” (*wang* 往) and “coming” (*lai* 來) usually indicate movement upward and downward respectively, here this rule is suppressed. For *Tai* “Positive,” the top *Kun* ☷, corresponding to “little,” “goes” down to join together with the bottom *Qian* ☰ the “great” “coming” up to meet it. In this “Positive” hexagram, the two natures “join together” (*jiao* 交, which could also be translated as “copulate”) to produce everything under heaven, and thus the “way of the gentleman grows” (*junzi dao zhang* 君子道張). The comment for *Pi* “Negation” simply reverses this.

☱ 同人于野。亨。利涉大川。利君子貞。

同人，柔得位，得中、而應乎乾，曰同人。同人，曰同人于野，亨。利涉大川，乾行也。文明以健，中正而應，君子正也。唯君子為能通天下之志。

☱ Together with people in the wilds. Receipt. Beneficial to ford a great river. Beneficial to affirm about a lord's son.

“Together with People”: When the soft obtains position, obtains the center, and responds to *Qian* ☰, this is called “Together with People.” “Together with people,” saying “Together with people in the wilds. Receipt. Beneficial to ford a great river,” is the motion of *Qian*. The pattern being bright through vigor, centrally upright and responsive, is the uprightness of the gentleman. Only the gentleman is able to communicate with the intention of all under heaven.

大有 ☱：元亨。

大有，柔得尊位、大中，而上下應之，曰大有。其德剛健而文明，應乎天而時行，是以元亨。

*Dayou* ☱ “Greatly Having”: Prime receipt.

*Dayou* “Greatly Having”: When the soft obtains the exalted position and above and below correspond with it is called “greatly having.” Its virtue is hard and vigorous and its pattern bright, corresponding with heaven and moving with the times; this is why it is “prime receipt.”

These two hexagrams, *Tongren* 同人 ☱ “Together with People” (#13) and *Dayou* 大有 ☱ “Greatly Having” (#14), are also both composed of the same two trigrams: *Qian* 乾 ☰ *Li* 離 ☲, which are associated with their secondary characteristics “vigor” and “brightness.” The two hexagrams, being inversions of each other, have only a single yin line, in the Second line of *Tongren* “Together with People” and the Fifth line of *Dayou* “Greatly Having.” In the case of *Tongren*,



since the Second line should properly be a yin line, it is said to “obtain position,” and also to be both “centered” and in correspondence with the yang Fifth line. Being bright and vigorous, properly centered and responsive is truly to be a gentleman; i.e., a gentleman—here surely meant to be a minister who has the ear of the ruler—and only he can communicate with all of the people. With the hexagram *Dayou* “Greatly Having,” the single yin line is now found in the Fifth position, the most exalted position in any hexagram. Although this line would normally be regarded as out of position, since it has correspondence not only with the Second line, but also with the Fourth and Top lines immediately below and above it, this hexagram is also auspicious. This explanation of *Dayou* “Greatly Having” is more or less *ad hoc*, trying to explain why the hexagram statement says “Prime receipt” even though according to most principles of *Yijing* exegesis the hexagram should point to danger. However, the *Commentary on the Judgments* would certainly not be the last commentary to bend its explanation in a desired direction.

謙 ䷎：亨。君子有終。

謙，亨，天道下濟而光明，地道卑而上行。天道虧盈而益謙，地道變盈而流謙，鬼神害盈而福謙，人道惡盈而好謙。謙尊而光，卑而不可踰，君子之終也。

*Qian* ䷎ “Modesty”: Receipt. A lord’s son having an end.

*Qian* “Modesty,” “Receipt”: The way of heaven is below but radiates brightness, while the way of earth is humble but moves above. The way of heaven subtracts from the superfluous and adds to modesty, while the way of earth alternates from the superfluous and flows to modesty; ghosts and spirits harm the superfluous and bless modesty, while the way of man hates the superfluous and loves modesty. For Modesty to be exalted and radiant, lowly and yet unchangeable is the end-point of the gentleman.

豫 ䷏：利建侯行師。

豫，剛應而志行，順以動，豫。豫，順以動，故天地如之，而況建侯行師乎！天地以順動，故日月不過，而四時不忒。聖人以順動，則刑罰清而民服。豫之時義大矣哉！

*Yu* ䷏ “Excess”: Beneficial to establish a lord and set in motion an army.

*Yu* (“Excess,” but here read as) “Relaxed”: When the hard responds and intends to set things in motion, and complies in order to move is “relaxed.” Relaxed, moving compliantly, therefore if even heaven and earth are like this, then how much more so for establishing a lord and setting in motion the army! Since heaven and earth move compliantly, therefore the sun and moon do not transgress and the four seasons are not errant. If the

sage moves compliantly, then punishments and fines will be light and the people will still obey. Great indeed is the time of “Relaxed”!<sup>18</sup>

There is little that needs to be said about the exegesis of these two hexagram statements (though the association of the trigram *Gen* 艮 ☶ with “heaven” in 謙 ☶ “Modesty” hexagram is highly unusual). What is striking about both of them is the simulacrum portrayed between the natural world (“heaven and earth”) and the world of man. Indeed, whether to be credited to Confucius or not, understanding of the *Zhou Changes* in terms of human society is what transformed the *Zhou Changes* into the *Classic of Changes*. As we will see in the final section on the *Commentary on the Appended Statements*, it would have both immediate and also far-reaching consequences for the history of all Chinese thought.

## 5 *Xici Zhuan* 繫辭傳 *Commentary on the Appended Statements*

The *Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳 *Commentary on the Appended Statements* is widely regarded as one of the most influential pieces of writing in all of Chinese philosophical expression. Especially since the Song dynasty, for many thinkers it was the key to understanding the *Yijing*, and they paid more attention to it than to the hexagram and line statements of the *Zhou Changes*. I will not attempt to provide a systematic overview of either the text of the *Commentary on the Appended Statements* itself or of the scholarship that has been devoted to it. Rather, I propose to present only my own understanding of how the text effected this crucial transformation of an incidental divination manual into a book of wisdom for the ages.<sup>19</sup>

18 Here it has been necessary to alter the translation of the hexagram name and the hexagram statement from that suggested elsewhere in this book so as to be consistent with the understanding given in the *Commentary on the Judgments*.

19 The following portion of this chapter derives in large part from a paper, first entitled “The Authorial Context of the *Yijing’s Xici Zhuan*,” presented to the Conference on Intellectual Lineages in Ancient China, University of Pennsylvania, 27 September 1997, and then in a revised form and with the revised title “The Ever-Changing Text: The Making of the *Tradition of the Appended Statements* and the Making of the *Yijing*,” presented as the Herrlee G. Creel Memorial Lecture at the University of Chicago, 29 May 1998. A revised version was published informally as “The Writing of the *Xici Zhuan* an (*sic*) the Making of the *Yijing*,” in *Measuring Historical Heat: Event, Performance, and Impact in China and the West: Symposium in Honour of Rudolf G. Wagner on His 60th Birthday* (Heidelberg, November 3rd–4th 2001, <http://www.sino.uni-heidelberg.de/conf/symposium2.pdf>). Unfortunately, in this version the Chinese characters failed to appear.

I also presented these materials in a Chinese version, entitled “*Xici zhuan de bianzuan*”

The discovery and eventual publication of the Mawangdui 馬王堆 manuscript of the *Yijing* together with most of the *Commentary on the Appended Statements* brought renewed attention to the text in China,<sup>20</sup> especially concerning its authorship and philosophical orientation: whether the text is Confucian (whether written by Confucius himself or not), or whether—and to what extent—it preserves elements more properly called Daoist. Because the Mawangdui manuscript contained certain significant variations from the received text of the *Appended Statements*, scholars such as Chen Guying 陳鼓應 and especially Wang Baoxuan 王葆玟 argued that the manuscript reveals a Daoist viewpoint.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, Liao Mingchun 廖名春 argued that the manuscript was the product of Confucian scholars.<sup>22</sup> The textual differences between the Mawangdui manuscript and the received text of the *Xici* do indeed suggest that there is a need to reconsider how the text may have been created. Nevertheless, I do not propose here to engage in the argument over philosophical schools. Instead, I believe it is possible to use linguistic features of the text—features to be seen in both the received text and also the Mawangdui manuscript—to detect at least two very different attitudes toward the *Zhou Changes*.

The received text of the *Commentary on the Appended Statements* is divided, more or less evenly, into two parts. In most editions, these two parts are further sub-divided into chapters (*zhang* 章), most of which can be seen to mark natu-

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繫辭傳的編纂，at the conference celebrating the centennial of Peking University, Beijing, 5 May 1999; this Chinese version was published, under that title, in Beijing daxue Zhongguo chuantong wenhua yanjiu zhongxin, ed., *Wenhua de yizeng: Hanxue yanjiu guoji huiyi lunwenji; Zhexue juan* 文化的饋贈：漢學研究國際會議論文集；哲學卷 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000), 262–267; and under the title “Boshu Xici zhuan de bianzuan” 帛書繫辭傳的編纂, *Daojia wenhua yanjiu* 道家文化研究 18 (2000): 371–381.

20 For an introduction in English to this discovery, including a complete translation of the manuscript, see Shaughnessy, I Ching: The Classic of Changes.

21 For Chen Guying's first published statement of this view, see Chen Guying 陳鼓應, “Yi zhuan Xici suo shou Laozi sixiang yingxiang—Jianlun Yi zhuan nai Daojia xitong zhi zuo” 易傳繫辭所受老子思想影響：兼論易傳乃道家系統之作, *Zhexue yanjiu* 哲學研究 1989.1: 34–42, 54; for more developed statements, see Chen Guying 陳鼓應, *Yi zhuan yu Daojia sixiang* 易傳與道家思想 (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshuguan, 1994), esp. 163–243; and Chen Guying 陳鼓應, *Daojia Yi xue jiangou* 道家易學建構 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2010). For Wang Baoxuan's views, see Wang Baoxuan 王葆玟, “Cong Mawangdui boshu ben kan Xici yu Laozi xuepai de guanxi” 從馬王堆帛書本看繫辭與老子學派的關係, *Daojia wenhua yanjiu* 道家文化研究 1 (1992): 175–187; Wang Baoxuan 王葆玟, “Boshu Xici yu Zhanguo Qin Han Daojia Yi xue” 帛書繫辭與戰國秦漢道家易學, *Daojia wenhua yanjiu* 3 (1993): 73–88.

22 See Liao Mingchun 廖名春, “Lun boshu Xici yu jinben Xici de guanxi” 論帛書繫辭與今本繫辭的關係, *Daojia wenhua yanjiu* 3 (1993): 133–143.

ral divisions within the text. There are two different enumerations of chapters within the *Appended Statements* in customary use: that of the *Zhou Yi zhengyi* 周易正義 *Correct Meaning of the Zhou Changes* of Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574–648), with twelve chapters in the first part and nine in the second part; and that of the *Zhou Yi benyi* 周易本義 *Basic Meaning of the Zhou Changes* of Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), which also has twelve chapters in the first part (though with some different divisions between chapters), but with twelve chapters in the second part. It is important to note that there is no significant textual difference between the two editions, the differences being only in the way chapters are combined or separated. In the numbering below, I will follow the enumeration of the *Zhou yi zhengyi*, the older of the two editions, with chapters of the first or *shang* 上 *zhuan* 傳 indicated as “A” and those of the second or *xia* 下 *zhuan* as “B,” and then numbered sequentially.<sup>23</sup>

It seems clear that the *Commentary on the Appended Statements* is a composite text, not written by a single individual, whether Confucian or Daoist. This composite nature was first noted over one thousand years ago by Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–1072), in his text *Yi tongzi wen* 易童子問 *A Child's Questions about the Changes*, which says of the *Commentary on the Appended Statements*:

（繫辭... 非聖人之作，而眾說淆亂，亦非一人之言也。昔之學《易》者，雜取以資其講說，而說非一家，是以或同或異，或是或非，其擇而不精，至使害經而惑世也。然有附托聖經，其傳已久，莫得究其所從來而核其真偽。

[The *Xici*] ... is not the work of the Sage, but is a mass of sayings jumbled and confused, not even the words of a single individual. Those who studied the *Changes* in antiquity selected (quotations) at random to support their teachings, but the teachings were not of a single school. For this reason some are the same, some are different, some right, some wrong. What they chose not being to the point, it ended up doing harm to the classic and confusing the ages—and yet they were appended to the sagely classic, and their transmission has already been long-lasting, and no one has been able to discern whence they came or to discriminate what is authentic or artificial about them.<sup>24</sup>

23 The one place where I would diverge from the chapter divisions of the *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, and would accept the emendation of Zhu Xi, comes between chapters A<sub>3</sub> and A<sub>4</sub>, putting the three sentences beginning with *Yi yu tiandi zhun* 易與天地準 “The *Changes* are on a level with heaven and earth” at the beginning of A<sub>4</sub> rather than at the end of A<sub>3</sub>.

24 Ouyang Yongshu ji 歐陽永叔集 (Guoxue jiben congshu ed.), 9.62.

Among Western scholars, probably the finest study of the *Commentary on the Appended Statements* was published by Willard Peterson in 1982, after the Mawangdui manuscript had been discovered but before it had been published. He too regarded the text, which he referred to as the “Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations,” as having been written by different people at different points in time.

My view is that the “Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations” is not the product of a single act of creation, whether by an author or compiler, but was accumulated over a certain period, beginning approximately a generation before the Ch'in dynasty was proclaimed and hardening by the first century BCE into the form that was taught by Fei Chih [i.e., Fei Zhi 費直 (1st c. BCE)] and later engraved on the stone tablets.<sup>25</sup>

Unless we mean by the *Commentary on the Appended Statements* the full twenty-four chapters of the received text, the Mawangdui manuscript would seem to show Peterson's dating of the text almost certainly to be too late. Nevertheless, his and Ouyang Xiu's view of the text as a composite creation is doubtless correct.

I too detect different authorial hands within the text, but my criteria for differentiating them are largely linguistic rather than philosophical. I will examine two of these strata here, which I believe to comprise the greater part of the early versions of the text, and certainly the most interesting parts for the transformation of the *Zhou Changes* from a divination manual to a wisdom text.

One stratum, which I will refer to as the “Essay on *Qian* and *Kun*” (*Qian kun lun* 乾坤論), is far and away the better known portion of the text, since it includes the famous first chapter arguing for a simulacrum between *Qian* and *Kun* trigrams or hexagrams and the dual forces comprising the universe. It presents a tightly developed argument with three main steps: that the world, both natural and human, is made up of differences, which in crude terms break down to opposites; that the world achieves its unique efficacy by constantly changing, each change being produced by the union of the two opposites and in turn producing a result, thus serving to create the world anew, allowing it to be fruitful and permanent; and that the *Changes* is the intellectual key that allows man to realize his place in the world. It is beautifully written in what

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25 Willard J. Peterson, “Making Connections: ‘Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations’ of the *Book of Change*,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42.1 (1982), 77.

has now come to be known as Interlocking Parallel Style,<sup>26</sup> a prose genre posing thesis and antithesis, eventually brought together in a synthesis. Indeed, the style of writing is an excellent instantiation of the argument being made, not only demonstrating how these two forces combine to produce the world but even drawing the reader into the production.

The second stratum, which I will refer to as the “Essay on the Appended Statements” (*Xici lun* 繫辭論), is written in a very different style, composed largely of what is known in classical Chinese grammar as Equational Sentences (N N *ye* 也), presenting definitions of individual vocabulary items. In contrast with what I have termed the “Essay on *Qian* and *Kun*” stratum, the writing of this stratum is quite prosaic, one might even say clumsy. And yet the irony is that the author uses these static definitions to make a very sophisticated argument about how the *Zhou Changes* is a uniquely dynamic form of writing, and that it is divination that sets the text in motion. This stratum comprises the great bulk of the *Commentary on the Appended Statements* and may well have been its original text. Consequently, I will devote more attention to it than to the “Essay on *Qian* and *Kun*.”<sup>27</sup>

26 For this term, see Rudolf G. Wagner, “Interlocking Parallel Style: Laozi and Wang Bi,” *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* 34.1 (1980): 18–58.

27 A third distinct stratum, which, however, I will not discuss in this study, includes chapters A6 and A7, B2, and the first half of B4; of all of the chapters of the *Xici*, these are the ones tied most explicitly to the text of the *Yi*, providing comments on individual line statements or explaining the significance of individual hexagram pictures, the comments put in the words of Confucius (*zi yue* 子曰). In this it is quite similar to portions of the *Commentary on the Words and Sayings*, or to the Mawangdui commentary *Zhong* 衷 *Internal*. Chapter A6 is perhaps the best example of this stratum. Like the second stratum mentioned just above, it too focuses on the role of language, but in this case the concern seems to be with ethics rather than epistemology. An introductory passage to the chapter concludes “Only after deliberating does one speak, and only after consulting does one move—deliberating and consulting in order to complete its alternations and transformations” (*ni zhi er hou yan, yi zhi er hou dong, ni yi yi cheng qi bian hua* 擬之而後言，議之而後動，擬議以成其變化). It then presents a series of quotations of line statements from the *Zhou Yi*, beginning with the Nine in the Second line of *Zhongfu* 中孚 “Inner Trust” hexagram (#61):  
鳴鶴在陰，其子和之。我有好爵，吾與爾靡之。

Calling crane in the shadows, Its child harmonizes with it;

We have a fine chalice, I will drain it together with you,

This is then provided with a quotation from Confucius (*Zi yue* 子曰) stressing the necessary effect that one's speech has on others, concluding “Speech and action are the means by which the gentleman moves heaven and earth; can one not be cautious about them!” (*yan xing, junzi zhi suoyi dong tian di ye; ke bu shen hu* 言行，君子之所以動天地也，可不慎乎). Other statements in this chapter attributed to Confucius and stressing the importance of speech include “Words of the same heart, their fragrance is like an orchid's” (*tong xin zhi yan, qi xiu ru lan* 同心之言，其臭如蘭) and “As for whence disor-

Since the argument I will make regarding these two strata depends on a close analysis of the text, demonstration will require quotation of fairly extended passages. The translation being intended to display formal aspects of the text, I will strive to make it rigorously literal, even at the expense of whatever eloquence I might otherwise be able to bring to it (a loss to be felt especially in the case of chapter A<sub>1</sub>, which is quite eloquent in the original). I should note as well that I will provide annotations for only those readings that derive from variant characters in the Mawangdui manuscript.

## 6 The “Essay on *Qian* and *Kun*” (乾坤論): The *Changes* as a Microcosm of the Universe

What I term the “Essay on *Qian* and *Kun*” includes one of the most famous passages in all of Chinese philosophical writing: Chapter A<sub>1</sub> of the *Commentary on the Appended Statements*. Nevertheless, the essay makes up only a relatively minor portion of the entire commentary: chapters A<sub>1</sub>, A<sub>4</sub>, A<sub>5</sub> and probably A<sub>10</sub>. It uses a recurrent vocabulary focusing on how it is through “ease” (*yi* 易) and “simplicity” (*jian* 簡), which are the generative qualities of *Qian* and *Kun*, that “virtue” (*de* 德) and “patrimony” (*ye* 業) are produced. *Qian* ☰/☰ and *Kun* ☷/☷ are of course the “pure” trigrams and hexagrams (i.e., made up of all yang or all yin lines) that are considered in the *Yijing* tradition to be the father and mother of all the other trigrams and hexagrams.

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der is generated, words and conversation are the steps” (*luan zhi suo sheng ye, ze yan yu yi wei jie* 亂之所生也，則言語以為階). Despite the shared interest in “speech” between this stratum and what I have termed the “Essay on the Appended Statements,” the dramatic difference in format between them leads me to doubt that they derive from the same authorial milieu.

In addition to these chapters, which I regard as a third independent stratum, my analysis does not include the following chapters: A<sub>8</sub>, the second half of B<sub>4</sub>, B<sub>5</sub> B<sub>6</sub>, B<sub>7</sub>, and B<sub>8</sub>, which are not included in the Mawangdui manuscript, and A<sub>6</sub>, A<sub>7</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, and the first half of B<sub>4</sub>, which address line statements and hexagrams. Chapters B<sub>5</sub>–B<sub>7</sub> are found in the *Zhong* 衷 text of the Mawangdui manuscript, and it does seem that they are more appropriate within that context. As for A<sub>8</sub> (the so-called “Da yan” 大衍 or “Great Exposition” chapter), in Chapter Five above I suggested that the text does not represent an ancient divination technique. Zhang Zhenglang 張政烺 (1912–2005), the editor of the Mawangdui manuscript, suggested that it was added to the text sometime later in the Han dynasty; Zhang Zhenglang, “Shishi Zhou chu qingtongqi mingwen zhong de Yi gua,” 406. This seems convincing to me.

天尊地卑，乾坤定矣。	Heaven being venerable and earth base, <i>Qian</i> and <i>Kun</i> are settled.
卑高以陳，貴賤位矣。	The base and high being arrayed, the noble and mean are positioned.
動靜有常，剛柔斷矣。	Motion and rest having constancy, the hard and soft are separated.
方以類聚，物以羣分，吉凶生 矣。	The regions being gathered according to cat- egory, and things being divided according to groups, the auspicious and ominous are generated.
在天成象，在地成形，變化見 矣。	In the heavens completing images, and on earth completing forms, alternations and transformations are apparent.
是故	This is why
剛柔相摩，八卦相盪，	the hard and soft rub against each other, and the eight trigrams stir each other.
鼓之以雷霆，潤之以風雨，	Drumming them with thunder and light- ning; moistening them with wind and rain,
日月運行，一寒一暑。	the sun and moon move in cycles, once cold once hot.
乾道成男，坤道成女；	The way of <i>Qian</i> completes the male, the way of <i>Kun</i> completes the female.
乾知大始，坤作成物；	<i>Qian</i> knows the great beginning, <i>Kun</i> does the completing of things.
乾以易知，坤以簡能；	<i>Qian</i> through exchange knows; <i>Kun</i> through its opening is capable. <sup>28</sup>

28 My translation of this couplet is indubitably unprecedented, and calls for more than just a brief note. It is based to some extent on the variant *jian* 間, “crack, interstice, opening,” for *jian* 簡, “simple,” found in the Mawangdui manuscript. *Jian*, “crack, interstice, opening” is the protograph for *jian*, “simple,” and could be a meaningless graphic variant. However, as Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200) notes with respect to this context (see n. 30 below), the “male” and “female” of this passage are the concrete instantiations of *Qian* and *Kun*, yin and yang, and so it seems reasonable to find some concrete meaning for the terms here. Support for my interpretation is found in the word that I translate “capable”: *neng* 能, which could, I believe, equally well be translated “pregnant” (in the physiological sense as well as in the extended sense of latent capacity). *Neng* is routinely glossed in early dictionaries and commentaries with the word *ren*, whether written 任 or 忍, which means “to bear; to har-



易則易知，簡則易從；	Exchanging it is easy to know; <sup>29</sup> opening it is easy to follow.
易知則有親，易從則有功；	Being easy to know there is closeness; being easy to follow there is accomplishment.
有親則可久，有功則可大；	There being closeness it can be long-lived; there being accomplishment it can be great.
可久則賢人之德，可大則賢人之業。	Being long-lived it is the virtue of the worthy man; being great it is the patrimony of the worthy man.
易簡而天下之理得矣。	Through exchange and the opening the order of all under heaven is obtained.
天下之理得，而成位乎其中矣。	The order of all under heaven being obtained, one completes position in its midst.

While the translation given here derives from a more explicitly sexual interpretation of the chapter than will be found elsewhere,<sup>30</sup> I do not think it is at all radical to consider the main theme of the chapter to be the union of *Qian*

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bor within." I think it is important that *ren* 妊, a cognate word written with the "female" classifier, is the standard word for physical pregnancy. This being so, I would suggest that my interpretation of it being through the "opening," i.e., the vaginal canal but represented optically by the interstice between the yin lines of the trigram and hexagram pictures: ☵ / ☷, that the female becomes pregnant, and thus "makes completed beings," makes far better sense than the various discussions of "simplicity" one usually finds with respect to this line.

I should go on to offer, though I do so with less confidence, a similar explanation of the preceding clause, "*Qian* through exchange knows" (*Qian yi yi zhi* 乾以易知). The original graphic form of *yi* 易, "to change," depicts liquid spilling or being poured out of a vessel: 𠄎; for this form of the graph, see the early Western Zhou *De fangding* 德方鼎 inscription; Zhongguo Shehui kexueyuan Kaogu yanjiusuo, ed., *Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng* 殷周今文集 成 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986–1994), #2405. The standard early form of the graph, 𠄎, is surely a simplification of this fuller form, whence come both the general meaning "to change" and the closely associated meaning "to award, to bestow" (i.e., *xi* 錫 or *ci* 賜). Needless to say, it is liquid spilling from the male member that initiates the female's pregnancy.

29 The two words *yi*, "change, exchange," and *yi*, "easy," which in the received text are written with the same graph 易, are disambiguated in the Mawangdui manuscript of the *Xici*, "easy" being written as 𠄎; see Shaughnessy, *I Ching: The Classic of Changes*, 188 and 325 n. 5.

30 This understanding is also implicit in many later discussions of the *Yijing*. For instance, the note to this line by Zhu Xi is relevant to the interpretation that I am presenting here. After having noted in the preceding line that the mention of "male" and "female" is "a fur-

and *Kun*—male and female—and that this union produces a “result” (*gong* 功), termed euphemistically the “virtue” (*de* 德) of being long-lived (*jiu* 久) and the “patrimony” (*ye* 業) of being great (*da* 大),<sup>31</sup> that is, I believe, simply the procreation of life. This entails a radical optimism both in the goodness of the natural world and also about man’s ability to partake in that goodness. Indeed, according to my understanding of this portion of the text, simply by reproducing themselves men and women participate in the changes of the world and thus fulfill their basic responsibility in life.

This theme is maintained throughout two other chapters of what I perceive to be this stratum of the *Commentary on the Appended Statements*. Chapter A4 includes the succinct definition “one yin and one yang is what is called the Way” (*yi yin yi yang zhi wei dao* 一陰一陽之謂道), while chapter A5 begins with three other related definitions: “richly having it is called the great patrimony” (*fu you zhi wei da ye* 富有之謂大業), “daily renewing it is called full virtue” (*ri xin zhi wei sheng de* 日新之謂盛德), and “generating life is called Change” (*sheng sheng zhi wei yi* 生生之謂易). It then proceeds through a graphic description of sexual union and concludes, after recalling from chapter A1 that the *Changes* (or, perhaps, simply “change”) moves in the midst of these opposites, that “to create the inner-nature and to maintain it and to maintain it again is what is called the gate of the property of the Way” (*cheng xing cun cun, dao yi zhi men* 成性存存，道義之門). This is, to be sure, a radical distillation of the theme of these chapters. Moreover, it does not do any justice to the intricacy with which the theme is interwoven through them (in part by way of recurrent vocabulary, acting almost like notes of music). I hope that the following translation of just chapter A5 will serve to demonstrate further the style of this author.

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ther illustration of the *Yi*’s appearance in concrete form” (*you ming yi zhi li yu shi ti zhe* 又明易之理於實體者), he says here:

蓋凡物之屬乎陰陽者，莫不如此。大抵陽先陰後，陽施陰受。

As a general rule, of all beings that belong to the yin and yang, none is not like this: generally, the yang precedes and the yin follows, the yang gives and the yin receives.

- 31 *Ye* 業, usually translated as “achievement,” is a term that entails not just a one-time event but rather an on-going result. Stephen Owen has defined it cogently: “*yeh* is ‘patrimony,’ something one stores up and transmits to one’s posterity; it is a term used for capital, property, learning, merit (the accumulated merit, *yeh*, of an official might be passed on to his children and increased or dissipated by their own acts). In later ages *yeh* is Buddhist *karma*, an accumulation of good or evil deeds that determines one’s next life”; Stephen Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1992), 68–69.

顯諸仁，藏諸用	Manifested in humaneness, and stored in use,
鼓萬物而不與聖人同憂	encouraging the ten-thousand things and yet not sharing the troubles of the sage,
盛德大業至矣哉！	the full virtue and great patrimony is perfect indeed!
富有之謂大業，	Richly having it is called the great patrimony;
日新之謂盛德，	daily renewing it is called full virtue;
生生之謂易。	generating life is called Change.
成象之謂乾，	Completing images is called <i>Qian</i> ;
效法之謂坤，	imitating patterns is called <i>Kun</i> ;
極數知來之謂占，	going to the limits of numbers to know what is to come is called prognosticating;
通變之謂事，	penetrating alternations is called affairs;
陰陽不測之謂神。	the unfathomableness of yin and yang is called spirituality.
夫易，廣矣！大矣！	The <i>Changes</i> is vast indeed, great indeed.
以言乎遠則不禦，	In speaking in terms of the distant, it is not repelled;
以言乎邇則靜而正，	in speaking in terms of the near, it is quiescent and upright;
以言乎天地之間則備矣！	in speaking in terms of what is between heaven and earth, it is complete.
夫乾，其靜也專，其動也直，	As for <i>Qian</i> , in quiescence it is curled, in motion it is straight;
是以大生焉。	this is how greatness is generated by it.
夫坤，其靜也翕，其動也闢，	As for <i>Kun</i> , in quiescence it is shut, in motion it is open;
是以廣生焉。	this is how vastness is generated by it. <sup>32</sup>

32 For a discussion of this reading, see Xia Hanyi 夏含夷 (Edward L. Shaughnessy), "Shuo Qian zhuan zhi Kun xi pi xiang yi" 說乾專直，坤翕闢象義, *Wenshi* 文史 30 (1988): 24, and Xia Hanyi 夏含夷, "Zai shuo Xici Qian zhuan zhi, Kun xi pi" 再說《繫辭》乾專直坤翕闢, *Wenshi* 文史 91 (2010.2): 273–275. It seems to me that most of the imagery of these lines is quite straight-forward. In the first of the two articles mentioned above, I noted that

廣大配天地， 變通配四時，	Vast and great it matches heaven and earth; alternating and penetrating it matches the four seasons;
陰陽之義配日月，	the propriety of the yin and yang matches the sun and moon;
易簡之善配至德。	the goodness of exchange and openness matches perfect virtue.
子曰：易其至矣乎！	The Master said: "Isn't the <i>Changes</i> perfect indeed!"
夫易，聖人所以崇德而廣業 也，	As for the <i>Changes</i> , it is that by which the sages raise virtue on high and make patri- mony vast.
知崇禮卑，崇效天，卑法地。	Knowing the heights and embodying the lowly, the heights imitate heaven and the lowly is patterned on earth.
天地設位，而易行乎其中矣。	Heaven and earth give it place and the <i>Changes</i> moves in their midst;
成性存存，道義之門。	Completing the inner-nature and preserving it over and over again, it is the gate to the propriety of the way.

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the Tang dynasty *Jingdian shiwen* gives as a variant of *zhuan* 專 “concentrate” the word *tuan* 搏 (i.e., *zhuan* with the addition of a “hand” classifier) “to roll with the hand,” or, as defined by the *Shuo wen jie zi* 說文解字, “circular”; *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, 163. That this variant is to be preferred would now seem to be assured by the Mawangdui manuscript version of the *Xici*, which reads here *juan* 卷, “curled”; see Shaughnessy, *I Ching: The Classic of Changes*, 193, 327 n. 35. In the second article, I noted an explicit description of coitus in the *Can tong qi* 參同契 *The Concordance of the Three Samenesses* that paraphrases this passage of the *Xici*; see *Zhou Yi Can tong qi kao yi* 周易參同契考義 (Wuqiubei zhai Yi jing jicheng ed.), 18b. These come in the context of a description of the beginning of life, progressing through the union of yin and yang, and ending finally in the maturation of the body. The explicit allusion reads as follows:

爰斯之時，情合乾坤。乾動而直，氣布精流。坤靜而翕，為道舍廬。剛施而退，柔化以滋。九還七返，八歸六居。男白女赤，金火相拘，則水定火，五行之初。

At this time, the emotions bring together the yin and yang. *Qian* being in motion is straight; the *qi* expands and the semen flows. *Kun* being at rest is closed; it is the sanctuary of the Way. The hard acts and then retreats, the soft transforms with wetness. Nine circulations and seven turnabouts, eight returns and six stops. The male is white and the female red. When metal and fire take hold of each other, water settles fire, the beginning of the Five Phases.

At least in this core portion of this first stratum, there is very little mention of any ethical notions; simply participating in the life of the world is regarded as good. It is doubtless this attitude toward the natural world that has led some to characterize the *Commentary on the Appended Statements* as a “Daoist” text. On the other hand, this sort of optimism with respect to the nature of the world is by no means uncharacteristic of texts usually considered to be Confucian. It underscores, for instance, theories of the transformative effects of music, as seen in the “Yue ji” 樂記 “Record of Music” chapter of the *Li ji* 禮記 *Record of Ritual*.

樂者，天地之和也。禮者，天地之序也。和故百物皆化，序故群物皆別。

Music is the harmony of heaven and earth, and ritual is the sequence of heaven and earth. Being harmonious therefore the hundred things all transform, and being in sequence therefore the groups of beings are all differentiated.<sup>33</sup>

Even if the author of the “Record of Music” were not to go on to paraphrase the opening chapter of the *Commentary on the Appended Statements*, it would still be clear that these arguments share the commentary’s notion that man and the universe are on a par and that things are both differentiated and also harmonious. But the connection between the two texts becomes unmistakable in the next passage of the “Record of Music”:

天尊地卑，君臣定矣。卑高已陳，貴賤位矣。動靜有常，小大殊矣。方以類聚，物以群分，則性命不同矣。在天成象，在地成形。如此，則禮者天地之別也。地氣上齊，天氣下降，陰陽相摩，天地相蕩，鼓之以雷霆，奮之以風雨，動之以四時，暖之以日月，而百化興焉。如此，則樂者天地之和也。

As heaven is lofty and earth base, ruler and minister are settled. Base and high being ranked, noble and mean are positioned. Motion and stillness having constancy, the small and great are differentiated. The regions being grouped by category, and beings being divided by type, then natures and fates are not the same. In heaven it forms images and on earth it forms shapes; in this way then ritual is the differentiation of heaven and earth. The earthly vapor rises up, while the heavenly vapor descends. The yin

33 *Li ji Zheng zhu* 禮記鄭注, in Ruan Yuan 阮元, ed., *Shisan jing zhushu* 十三經注疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009), 3317.

and yang rub each other, and heaven and earth stir each other. Drumming them with thunder and lightning, and rousing them with the wind and rain, moving them with the four seasons, and brightening them with the sun and moon, the hundred transformations arise in it. In this way then music is the harmony of heaven and earth.<sup>34</sup>

## 7 The “Essay on the Appended Statements”: Divination as a Language of Change

What I identify as the second stratum of the *Commentary on the Appended Statements* (which I term the “Essay on the Appended Statements”) marks the predominant style of writing in the text. It certainly includes chapters A2, A3, the first part of A6, A9, A10, A11, B1, B3, and probably A12 and B9 (the concluding chapters of the two parts of the received text). As noted above, it is written in large part in equational sentences (i.e., the standard declarative form of classical Chinese: Noun Noun *ye* 也) or is otherwise concerned with providing definitions. It is overwhelmingly concerned with describing the *Zhou Changes* as a divination text, and thus recurrently uses the terms “alternation” (*bian* 變), “penetration” (*tong* 通), “prognostication” (*zhan* 占), and especially “image” (*xiang* 象), and through these terms introduces a notion of thought and language within which the *Zhou Changes* serves as a meta-text that transcends the limitations of ordinary fixed writing. It is in these chapters that the expression *xi ci* 繫辭 “appended statements” is used repeatedly,<sup>35</sup> including in the very first sentence of A2, which I regard as the first chapter of this stratum:

34 *Liji Zheng zhu*, 3319–3320. In addition to suggesting a process by which Confucian thinkers undertook appropriation of the *Commentary on the Appended Statements*, this “Record of Music” passage is potentially important for helping to establish the date of this “Essay on *Qian* and *Kun*.” The *Record of Ritual* is notoriously difficult to date. It almost surely was not put into final form until well into the Han dynasty. The “Record of Music” is traditionally attributed to Gongsun Nizi 公孫尼子, supposed to have been a contemporary of Zi Si 子思 (482–402 BCE), the grandson of Confucius. While there are also other traditions and especially other viewpoints regarding the authorship of the text, it seems likely that it dates to the mid-Warring States period, no later than about 300 BCE. For a judicious treatment of the “Yue ji” and the context of its composition, concluding that most of the text should indeed date to the mid-Warring States period, see Scott Cook, “Yue Ji 樂記—Record of Music: Introduction, Translation, Notes, and Commentary,” *Asian Music* 26.2 (1995): 1–96. Since at least the lengthy passage quoted above seems clearly to be drawing from the opening of the *Commentary on the Appended Statements*, it is reasonable to conclude that at least that opening section was in circulation in the fourth century BCE.

35 The expression occurs six times in A2, A6, A11, A12 [2×], and B1.

聖人設卦觀象，繫辭焉而明吉凶。

The sages, setting up the hexagrams and viewing the images, **appended statements** to them and illustrated the auspicious and ominous.

I suspect that at some stage in the creation of the text, this may well have been the first sentence in the text and gave the name to the text. For this reason, I refer to this stratum as the “Essay on the Appended Statements.”

After this first sentence, Chapter A2 goes on to provide a chain of definitions regarding terms occurring in or associated with the *Zhou Changes*. It then states that this is why the gentleman (*junzi* 君子) uses the text, before concluding by quoting the Top Nine line statement of *Dayou* 大有 ䷍ “Greatly Having” hexagram: “From heaven blessing it. Auspicious, Nothing not beneficial” (*Zi tian you zhi, ji wu bu li* 自天祐之，吉无不利), which becomes something of a mantra later in the text.<sup>36</sup>

吉凶者，失得之象也。

“Auspicious” and “ominous” are images of loss and gain;

悔吝者，憂虞之象也。

“regret” and “stinting” are images of sorrow and concern;

變化者，進退之象也。

alternation and transformation are images of advance and retreat;

剛柔者，晝夜之象也。

hard and soft are images of day and night;

六爻之動，三極之道也。

and the motion of the six lines is the way of the three extremes.

是故君子所居而安者，易之序也。

This is why what the gentleman rests and takes comfort in is the sequence of the *Changes*,

所樂而玩者，爻之辭也。

and what he takes pleasure in and manipulates is the statements of the lines.

是故君子居則觀其象而玩其辭，

This is why when the gentleman rests he views its images and manipulates its statements,

動則觀其變而玩其占。

and when he moves he views its alternations and manipulates its prognostications.

36 This line statement is quoted three other times in the *Commentary on the Appended Statements* (A11 [two times], and B2), all coming in what I have termed the “Essay on the Appended Statements.”

是以自天祐之，吉无不利。      Thus, “From heaven blessing it. Auspicious,  
Nothing not beneficial.”

Chapter A3 maintains the same grammar and also the same philosophical argument:

象者，言乎象者也。	The Hexagram [Statements] are what speak of images.
爻者，言乎變者也。	The Line [Statements] are what speak of alterations.
吉凶者，言乎其失得也。	“Auspicious” and “ominous” are what speak of loss and gain.
悔吝者，言乎其小疵也。	“Regret” and “stinted” are what speak of small blemishes.
无咎者，善補過也。	“Without trouble” is what is good at repairing mistakes.
是故列貴賤者存乎位，	This is why what arrays the honored and mean resides in position;
齊小大者存乎卦，	what equalizes the small and great resides in the hexagrams;
辯吉凶者存乎辭，	what distinguishes “auspicious” and “ominous” resides in the statements;
憂悔吝者存乎介，	what worries over “regret” and “stinted” resides in the boundaries;
震无咎者存乎悔。	and what shakes up “without trouble” resides in “regret.”
是故卦有小大，	This is why of hexagrams there are great and small,
辭有險易。	and of statements there are dangerous and easy. <sup>37</sup>
辭也者，各指其所之。	As for statements, each points to where it goes. <sup>38</sup>

37 Note that the word *yi* 易 “easy” here is used in a different sense than that of what I have termed the “Essay on *Qian* and *Kun*.” There it is paired with *jian* 簡 (or 間), usually understood as “simple” or “simplicity,” but for which I have suggested “interstice” or “crack”; I have suggested that *yi* there derives from its original sense of “flow.” Here it is paired with *xian* 險 “danger,” such that it clearly has a sense of “ease; easy.”

38 As noted above (n. 23), I break the chapter here in accordance with the chapter divisions



The final chapter of what has traditionally been identified as the first half of the *Commentary on the Appended Statements*, A12, presents something of a conclusion to this stratum, providing an ethical rationalization for this interest in divination. Another series of definitions comprises the central portion of this chapter. This series begins with a definition of the Way or *dao* 道 as “that which is above forms” (*xing er shang* 形而上) as opposed to “implements” (*qi* 器) which are “those which are below forms” (*xing er xia* 形而下), apparently the *locus classicus* for these expressions that would come to be so important in later Chinese metaphysics. It then moves through such terms as *hua* 化 “transformation,” *bian* 變 “alternation,” and *tong* 通 “penetration,” that are central to describing the dynamic nature of the *Changes*, before returning to the word *xiang* 象 “image,” with which this stratum started in chapter A2, and then coming back finally to the “appended statements” (*xi ci* 繫辭).

是故形而上者謂之道，	This is why what is above forms is called the
	Way,
形而下者謂之器，	and what are below forms are called imple-
	ments.
化而裁之謂之變，	To snip a transformation is called an alterna-
	tion; <sup>39</sup>
推而行之謂之通，	to push and put it into motion is called penetra-
	tion;
舉而錯之天下之民謂之事業。	and to raise it up and distribute it to the people
	under heaven is called service and achieve-
	ment. <sup>40</sup>
是故夫象，聖人有以見天	This is why images are what the sages used to
下之蹟，	display the vestiges under heaven,
而擬諸其形容，象其物	and imitating them in their shape and form gave
宜。	image to the properties of things.

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of Zhu Xi. The *Zhou Yi zhengyi* text of this chapter continues for another three sentences, but since they are parallel in both structure and content with the opening sentences of chapter A4 it seems clear that they belong there.

39 My understanding of this difficult sentence is that whereas “transformation” (*hua* 化) is an ongoing process, an “alternation” (*bian* 變) entails a momentary change between two extremes (in the case of the *Classic of Changes*, from yin to yang or vice versa), the isolation of these moments producing apparent differences. To “snip” (*cai* 裁) a transformation means to stop its process, producing a momentary difference of appearance or nature.

40 Note that the word *ye* 業 here, especially as paired as a compound with *shi* 事, “service,” is clearly used in a different sense from that in the “Essay on *Qian* and *Kun*” (where I translated it as “patrimony”); to underscore this difference, I here translate it as “achievement.”

是故謂之象。

聖人有以見天下之動，

而觀其會通，以行其典禮，

繫辭焉以斷其吉凶。

是故謂之爻。

This is why they are called images.

The sages used them to display the movements of all under heaven,

and observed their convergence and penetration in order to give motion to their canons and rituals,

and **appended statements** to them in order to decide their auspiciousness and ominousness.

This is why they are called line statements.

Divination is crucial to the author of this stratum of the *Commentary on the Appended Statements* not, I think, because he was interested in divination *per se*, but rather because it is his contention that it was the use of the *Zhou Changes* in divination that makes it unique within the entire textual tradition of ancient China (the *dian li* 典禮, “canons and rituals” of the final sentence here). Like other texts, the *Zhou Changes* is constituted of pictures (*gua* 卦) and statements (*ci* 辭). But unlike other texts, which are fixed for all time, the *Zhou Changes* is dynamic, is alive, changing with each new use, each new reading. Divination is what puts the text into motion, causing it to “transform,” to “alternate” and to “penetrate,” making its images changeable. This argument, implied in the passages already translated above, is made explicit in a passage at the beginning of this chapter A12. It is in the form of a dialog between Confucius and some unidentified interlocutor:

子曰：「書不盡言，言不盡意。」然則聖人之意，其不可見乎？子曰：「聖人立象以盡意，設卦以盡情偽，繫辭以盡其言，變而通之以盡利，鼓之舞之以盡神。」

The Master said: “Writing does not fully express speech, and speech does not fully express thought.”

“This being so, then can the thoughts of the sages not be seen?”

The Master said: “The sages established images in order to express fully their ideas, set up hexagrams in order to express fully the characteristics (of things), appended statements to them in order to express fully their words, (alternated and penetrated =) caused them to change in order to express fully their benefit, and drummed them and danced them in order to express fully their spirit.”

In making this argument, the author of this stratum of the *Commentary on the Appended Statements* was participating in a debate about the nature of language and writing that, based on the evidence currently available, seems to

have emerged toward the end of the fourth century BCE and then became quite ubiquitous by the middle of the following century. Perhaps the best known examples of this linguistic turn are found in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, arguing that writing is but a fossilized vestige of an earlier intellectual moment. Particularly relevant to the relationship between “thought” (*yi* 意), “speech” (*yan* 言) and “writing” (*shu* 書) in the above passage from the *Commentary on the Appended Statements* is the *Zhuangzi*’s well known analogy between speech and fish-traps and rabbit snares.

荃者所以在魚，得魚而忘荃；蹄者所以在兔，得兔而忘蹄；言者所以在意，得意而忘言。吾安得夫忘言之人而與之言哉！

The trap exists for the sake of fish; once you have gotten the fish, you can forget the trap. The snare exists for the sake of the rabbit; once you have gotten the rabbit, you can forget the snare. Words exist for the sake of the idea; once you have gotten the idea, you can forget the words. Where can I find someone who has forgotten words, so that I might have a word with him?<sup>41</sup>

This passage explicitly points only to the incommensurability of thought and speech. However, *Zhuangzi*’s tongue-in-cheek conclusion to the passage recognizes that speech is in some sense “alive,” that being able to speak with someone allows the sort of interaction that can render thought intelligible. Other passages of the *Zhuangzi* make clear that writing, on the other hand, does not share this flexibility; once something is written, it is fixed in place, and thus becomes “dead.” For instance, consider this apocryphal dialog between Confucius and Laozi 老子 found in the “Tian yun” 天運 “Heavenly Motion” chapter.

41 *Zhuangzi*, 9.6a. The famous essay by Wang Bi 王弼 (226–249), “Ming xiang” 明象 “Illustrating Images,” one chapter of his *Zhou Yi lüeli* 周易略例 *General Principles of the Zhou Changes* develops these two passages from the *Commentary on the Appended Statements* and the *Zhuangzi* in an interesting way. He begins with the *Commentary*’s positive notion about the possibility for “images” (*xiang* 象) and “words” (*yan* 言) to be dynamic, but then dismisses this in favor of the *Zhuangzi*’s negative view; see Wang Bi 王弼, Lou Yulie 樓宇烈, ed., *Zhou Yi lüeli* 周易略例 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011), 414–415. However, the second half of this essay makes clear that Wang Bi was participating in a very different debate about language from that seen in either the *Commentary on the Appended Statements* or the *Zhuangzi*, his essay being a polemic against the types of *Classic of Changes* exegesis that had developed in the intervening period, and especially in the two or three centuries preceding his time.

孔子謂老聃曰：「丘治《詩》、《書》、《禮》、《樂》、《易》、《春秋》六經，自以為久矣，孰知其故矣；以奸者七十二君，論先王之道而明周召之迹，一君无所鈎用。甚矣夫！人之難說也，道之難明邪！」

老子曰：「幸矣，子之不遇治世之君也！夫《六經》，先王之陳迹也，豈其所以迹哉！今子之所言，猶迹也。夫迹，履之所出，而迹豈履哉！」

Confucius said to Lao Dan: "I have put in order the six classics, the *Poetry, Documents, Ritual, Music, Changes, and Springs and Autumns*, considering myself that I have done so for a long time and that I know well their reasons? Having sought out seventy-two lords, I have discoursed on the way of the former kings and the footprints of (the dukes of) Zhou and Shao, but it has gone so far that not a single lord has accepted what I have had to say. Is the difficulty in persuading people because of the difficulty in understanding the Way?"

Laozi said: "It is fortunate indeed that you have not met with a lord who puts in order the world. The six classics are the old footprints of the former kings; how could they be what made the footprints? What you are now speaking about is nothing more than footprints. Footprints are what are produced by shoes; how could they be the shoes?"<sup>42</sup>

In a related chapter, the "Tian dao" 天道 "Heavenly Way," which Chen Guying and others have seen as closely related with the *Commentary on the Appended Statements*,<sup>43</sup> the same attitude toward writing is stated in a more systematic fashion.

42 *Zhuangzi*, 5.26a–b.

43 This chapter of the *Zhuangzi* (5.14b) includes the following passage that seems to share ideas and wording with chapter A1 of the *Commentary on the Appended Statements* (highlighting the shared passages):

君先而臣從，父先而子從，兄先而弟從，長先而少從，男先而女從，夫先而婦從。夫尊卑先後，天地之行也，故聖人取象焉。天尊地卑，神明之位也。春夏先，秋冬後，四時之序也。萬物化作，萌區有狀；盛衰之殺，變化之流也。夫天地至神，而有尊卑先後之序，而況人道乎！

The lord precedes and the minister follows, the father precedes and the son follows, the elder brother precedes and the younger brother follows, the elder precedes and the younger follows, the male precedes and the female follows, and the husband precedes and the wife follows. Venerable and base preceding and following are the motion of heaven and earth. Therefore, the sages took images from them. That heaven is venerable and earth base are the positions of spiritual brightness. That spring and summer precede and autumn and winter follow is the sequence of the four seasons. That the ten-thousand beings transform and act, their sprouts and types having shape—the death of fullness and decline—is the flow of alternation and transformation. Heaven

世之所貴道者書也，書不過語。語有貴也。語之所貴者意也。意有所隨。意之所隨者，不可以言傳也，而世因貴言傳書。世雖貴之哉，猶不足貴也，為其貴非其貴也。故視而可見者，形與色也；聽而可聞者，名與聲也。悲夫，世人以形色名聲為足以得彼之情！夫形色名聲果不足以得彼之情，則知者不言，言者不知，而世豈識之哉！

The way that is valued by the world is writing, but writing does not surpass speech. Speech has something of value. That which speech values is ideas. Ideas have that which they follow. That which ideas follow cannot be transmitted through words. And yet because the world values words it transmits writings. Although the world values them, that they are not worth being valued is because what it values is not their value. Therefore, what you look at and can see are shape and color; what you listen to and can hear are names and sound. What a pity that people of the world take shape and color, names and sounds to be sufficient to get the characteristics of that (i.e., the Dao or Way). Since shape and color, words and sounds are certainly not enough to get the characteristics of that, then the one who knows does not word, and the one who words does not know, and yet does the world record this!<sup>44</sup>

The conclusion of this passage—“the one who knows does not word, and the one who words does not know” (*zhizhe bu yan, yanzhe bu zhi* 知者不言，言者不知<sup>45</sup>)—clearly alludes to the *Laozi* 老子, famous for the notion that language is an insufficient medium to transmit understanding of the Way. Thus, the usual interpretation of the famous first sentence of the *Laozi, dao ke dao, fei chang dao* 道可道，非常道, is “the way that can be spoken of is not the eternal way.” However, it is interesting to note that another text probably also written in the third century BCE, the *Wenzi* 文子,<sup>46</sup> offers a very different inter-

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and earth are perfectly spiritual and yet still have the sequence of **venerable and base**, preceding and following; how much more so is this true of the way of man!

44 *Zhuangzi*, 5.18a. As in the case of the first passage from the *Zhuangzi* cited above, the analogy between language and fishtraps and rabbit snares, this passage too ends with an ironic pun: the phrase *er shi qi zhi zhi zai* 而世其識之哉 could be interpreted to mean simply “and yet does the world recognize this,” reading 識 in its most common usage of *shi*, “to recognize.” However, this graph has a second, regular reading of *zhi* (synonymous with 志), “to inscribe, to record.” Thus, the passage concludes its dismissal of writing and language with a lament that the world does not put this conclusion into writing.

45 I translate the verbal *yan* 言 as “to word” to maintain the distinction between *yu* 語 “speech” and *yan* 言 “word” introduced at the beginning of this passage.

46 Suspicions about the authenticity of the *Wenzi*, first suggested by Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773–819) in the Tang dynasty, had hardened by the first decades of the twentieth century to the point that the text was almost universally considered to be a forgery, copied

pretation. In the context of a discussion of laws needing to change with the times—the political corollary of this linguistic debate—the *Wenzi* quotes this line with the sense: “A way that can lead is an inconstant way,” meaning that it must constantly change to adapt to new situations; as soon as a way has any fixed characteristic, it becomes finite. For the same reason, the *Wenzi* goes on to say that “a name that can name is not stored in writings”; once it is written down, it becomes fixed, and thus dead.

苟利於民，不必法古，苟周於事，不必循俗。故聖人法與時變，禮與俗化。衣服器械，各便其用，法度制令，各因其宜，故變古未可非，而循俗未足多也。誦先王之書，不若聞其言，聞其言，不若得其所以言，得其所以言者，言不能言也，故「道可道，非常道也」。

If you are to be of benefit to the people, you do not necessarily have to take antiquity as a law; if you are to be well-rounded in affairs, you do not necessarily have to follow the customary. Therefore, the laws of the sages changed with the times and their rituals transformed with the customs. Clothing and tools all were convenient for their use, laws and ordinances were each based on what was appropriate for it. Therefore, changing the ancient cannot yet be rejected, and following the customary is not yet sufficient. Reciting the books of the former kings is not as good as hearing their words; hearing their words is not as good as getting that which they were speaking (lit. “wording”) about. Getting that which they were wording about are words that cannot be worded. Therefore, “a way that can lead is an inconstant way.”<sup>47</sup>

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after the *Huainanzi* 淮南子. However, this consensus was shaken when a text of the *Wenzi* was discovered in 1973 (though not published until 1995) in the first-century BCE tomb 40 at Dingxian 定縣, Hebei; for a transcription and preliminary studies, see the articles in *Wenwu* 文物 1995.12; for further studies of how this manuscript affects the debate about the text's authenticity, see the articles in the special issues of *Zhexue yu wenhua* 哲學與文化 267–268 (August–September 1996). Two studies in Western languages, Charles LeBlanc, *Le Wenzi à la lumière de l'histoire et de l'archéologie* (Montreal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2000) and Paul van Els, *The Wenzi: Creativity and Intertextuality in Early Chinese Philosophy* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), have addressed the *Wenzi* in the context of the Dingxian discovery. My own view, which is admittedly different from the conclusions given in these two Western language studies, is that the received *Wenzi*, though not without important textual problems, is in large measure ancestral to the *Huainanzi*, and should date to the second half of the third century BCE.

47 Liu Dianjue 劉殿爵, ed., *Wenzi zhuzi suoyin* 文子逐字索引 (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshuguan, 1992), 55. A similar notion with respect to the same passage of the *Laozi* appears in the “Dao yuan” 道原 chapter of the *Wenzi* (ibid. 2):

As one final example of this attitude toward writing, let me cite what is usually regarded as the earliest commentary on the *Laozi*, the “Yu Lao” 喻老 “Illustrating *Laozi*” chapter of the *Han Feizi* 韓非子 (c. 281–233 BCE). Ironically, Han Feizi was a stutterer and was forced by this circumstance to put his philosophy into writing to have it accepted at the court of Zheng, King of Qin 秦王正, better known by his subsequent title of Qin Shi huangdi 秦始皇帝, the First Emperor of Qin (r. 246/221–210 BCE). In the anecdote, the protagonist is so persuaded of the uselessness of his books that he burns them and then dances on them—a perhaps chilling presentiment of the “burning of the books” that Li Si 李斯 (280–208 BCE), a onetime classmate of Han Fei, proposed in a memorial to the Qin court in 213, just twenty years after Li had engineered Han Fei’s own suicide.

王壽負書而行，見徐馮於周塗。馮曰：「事者為也，為生於時。知者無常事。書者言也，言生於知，知者不藏書。今子何獨負之而行？」於是王壽因焚其書而儻之。故知者不以言談教，而慧者不以藏書篋。 Wang Shou was walking along carrying books, and saw Xu Feng on the road to Zhou. Feng said: “Service is doing, and doing is born from time-ness. One who knows is without any constant service. Books are words, and words are born from knowing. One who knows does not store books. Now why do you alone walk along carrying them?” With this Wang Shou accordingly burned his books and danced on them. Therefore, the knowing don’t use word-talk to teach, and the wise don’t store books.<sup>48</sup>

After this somewhat lengthy detour through the linguistic turns of the fourth and third century BCE, let us now return to the *Commentary on the Appended Statements*. The author of what I perceive to be the “Essay on the Appended Statements” stratum of the text seems to accept the *Zhuangzi*’s notion of the fixed nature of books. However, he does not accept that this pertains to the *Zhou Changes*. For him the *Zhou Changes* is a book of a very different sort, made

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老子曰：夫事生者應變而動，變生於時，知時者無常之行。故「道可道，非常道，名可名，非常名。」書者言之所生也，言出於智。智者不知，非常道也；名可名，非藏書者也。

Laozi said: “The generator of affairs moves in response to alternations; alternations are generated in time, and those who know the time have no constant motion. Therefore, ‘The Way that can lead is not a constant way; the name that can name is not a constant name.’ Writing is what is generated by words, and words come out of wisdom. That the wise do not know is because it is not a constant way; the name that can be the name is not what is stored in writings.

48 *Han Feizi* (Sibu beiyao ed.), 7.4a, incorporating the textual emendations suggested at Chen Qiyou 陳奇猷, *Han Feizi jishi* 韓非子集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1958), 405–406.

up not of written words but rather of changing—and thus living—images. That is why in Confucius's riposte to his interlocutor, after noting that the sages established the images and hexagrams and appended statements to them, they then "(alternated and penetrated =) caused them to change in order to express fully their benefit, and drummed them and danced them in order to express fully their spirit." This too, I would suggest, is why the author of this stratum of the *Commentary on the Appended Statements* insists on the divinatory nature of the *Zhou Changes*: if one simply reads it, it is dead just like any other book of wisdom; but if one uses it in divination, setting its changes in motion, then it comes alive, changing so as to comment on each new situation addressed to it. For the author of this stratum of the text, the interaction between the user of the *Changes* and the *Changes* itself results in a constant process of creation and recreation: the recreation of the text.

## 8 Conclusion

In this final chapter of this book on the origin and early development of the *Zhou Changes*, I have examined four of the seven commentaries that make up the canonical "Ten Wings" of the *Yijing*: the *Shuo gua zhuan* 說卦傳 *Commentary Discussing the Trigrams*, the *Wenyan zhuan* 文言傳 *Commentary on the Words and Sayings*, the *Tuan zhuan* 彖傳 *Commentary on the Judgments*, and the *Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳 *Commentary on the Appended Statements*, and have examined how they worked to transform the ancient divination text into the classic *Yijing*. I have intentionally refrained from any but the most general statements about the dates and possible authors of these texts, which Chinese tradition attributes to Confucius, which is to say about 500 BCE. These four texts—not to mention the other three texts that make up the remainder of the "Ten Wings"—are disparate enough both linguistically and conceptually that it is almost inconceivable that they were written at the same time, much less by a single person. On the other hand, it seems to me that there is sufficient evidence, both linguistic and conceptual, that these four texts at least must have been written not too much later than the fifth century BCE, and they may well have been written by people who took their intellectual inspiration from Confucius. I appreciate that this is such a nebulous conclusion as to be almost no conclusion at all. Yet, until such time as further manuscripts from the Warring States period are unearthed, it seems to me to be the only conclusion that is intellectually defensible.

The philosophical turn that these commentaries effected was based on an understanding of the *Zhou Changes* as a microcosm of the world, with its var-



ious components constituting a system of associations encompassing all the individual phenomena of that world. The *Commentary Discussing the Trigrams* associates the eight trigrams with the fundamental forces of nature: heaven and earth, lightning and wind, water and sun, and mountains and marshes, but also with family members, with domestic animals, and numerous other aspects. Accounts of divination in the *Zuo zhuan* in which these associations of the trigrams are used give detailed explanations of prognostications that diviners had made. Since most of these prognostications proved to be uncannily prescient, predicting events that would occur only generations or even centuries later, it seems clear that these accounts—and especially the detailed explanations of the prognostications—do not derive from the original divinations (if there even were original divinations), but rather represent much later literary fabrications, presumably from the time that the *Zuo zhuan* itself was being written. It is probably impossible to say whether the *Commentary Discussing the Trigrams* drew on the accounts of divination in the *Zuo zhuan*, systematizing them, or if the *Zuo zhuan* accounts drew on the *Commentary Discussing the Trigrams*, or—as is most likely—that both of these literary creations drew on a steadily expanding body of knowledge regarding divination that was more or less in the common domain.

The *Commentary on the Words and Phrases* also shares language with an account found in the *Zuo zhuan*, and it too has prompted considerable conjecture about which text may have been quoting which text. I see no reason to add to the conjecture here. It suffices to note that reading the hexagram statement *yuan heng li zhen* 元亨利貞 as representing “four virtues” marked an important step along the way to understanding the *Zhou Changes* as a guide to leading a moral life.

The *Commentary on the Words and Phrases* shares much more of its language with the *Commentary on the Judgments*. This latter commentary provides an even more ambitious system explaining the sixty-four hexagrams than does the *Commentary Discussing the Trigrams* for the eight trigrams. It is not always appreciated that almost all of the techniques that would be used for the next two millennia or more to explain how to understand the hexagrams and their texts can be found already in this one commentary. These techniques are not always explicit, and occasionally they are even contradictory. But they do serve to bring the trigram and hexagram pictures, the hexagram statements, and the six lines and their line statements into one general theory that can explain the entire world, and all of its changes.

Finally, I examined several chapters of the *Commentary on the Appended Statements*, the commentary of the “Ten Wings” that is usually credited with the philosophical turn to the *Yijing*. It uses the *Zhou Changes* to make at least two

very sophisticated arguments: first, that humankind can participate in the constant creation of life in the world, and second, that the text of the *Zhou Changes* is the unique key to understanding this process of creation and re-creation. It constitutes a clarion call not only to read the text, but to read it dynamically. This is done by using it to perform divinations, which takes us back to the first chapters of this book. For the philosophers of ancient China, divination was never considered to be simple fortune telling. Instead, it entailed determining one's own intentions. The authors of the *Commentary on the Appended Statements* developed this further to urge readers to use the *Zhou Changes* to take their proper place in the world.



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