Cross-cultural Studies: China and the World

A Festschrift in Honor of Professor Zhang Longxi

Edited by

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BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON

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CHAPTER 6

Cosmology, Divination and Semiotics: Chinese and Greek

Lisa Raphals

Many problems are framed in traditional humanities discourse as universal. Yet in many cases, their formulation arises from Western antiquity, and is "universalized," creating a discourse that claims to be value-neutral, but is not. This paper is a case study of one such example, from the comparative study of mantic practices in antiquity, suggesting the very different kinds of semiotics that arise from Chinese and Greek divination and cosmology.

In the first section I show how the supposedly neutral categories for the classification of divination derive from Plato and Cicero. I then turn to the contributions of Chinese and Greek divination to systematic cosmology and semiotics. The second section takes up the role of the mantic arts in the development of Chinese astronomy and cosmology, a topic that has no direct Greek counterpart. The third section takes up changing Greek views of divination and the understanding of causation, a topic that has no direct Chinese counterpart. I conclude with brief remarks on very different Chinese and Greek understanding of divination as a semiotic system.

Theorizing Divination

Many classifications of divination still in use begin with Plato. In the *Phaedrus* Socrates argues that madness (*mania*) is beneficial as long as it comes from the gods. His example is the madness of Sibyls and Pythias, which he considered

* Author's Note: The title of this contribution gives little indication of its, or my, debts to Professor Zhang Longxi through some twenty-five years of friendship. This paper is adapted from several sections of my book *Divination and Prediction in Early China and Ancient Greece* (Cambridge University Press, 2013). The project of which this paper is a part (see Raphals 2013, especially chapters 3 and 9) began during a fellowship at the Centre for Cross-Cultural Studies at City University of Hong Kong, at that time newly launched by Professor Zhang. More generally, he has been a formative and ongoing influence who quietly pushes us toward both exactitude and imagination.

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the true mantic art (*mantikē*). He contrasts it with *tekhnē*: studying signs of future events by the flight of birds and other methods (*Phdr.* 244a–e). This distinction is part of Plato's broader epistemological agenda: to contrast the self-conscious reflection of the philosopher with the inferior, unreflective activity of the seer and bard. Socrates plays on this distinction in his account of the oracle given to Chaerophon (that no man is wiser than Socrates) in the *Apology*, and argues that inspired seers and bards work not by wisdom (*sophia*) but by nature (*phusis*).[1] They are ignorant of what they create; they can describe sword and shield, but cannot wield them. Plato needs to deny *manteis* and bards self-consciousness reflection about their art in order to reserve this ability for philosophers. For Plato inspired divination is unlearned (*adidaktos*) and without skill (*atekhnos*), while technical divination is both learned (*entekhnos*) and skilled (*tekhnikos*).

Plato's distinction reappears in the oldest Western comparative study of divination: Cicero's *De Divinatione*. According to Cicero, there is a "consensus of antiquity," that there are two kinds of divination: by nature (*natura*) and by technical expertise (*ars, Cic. Div.* 1.6.12). For Cicero as for Plato, natural divination came from the gods and was the highest form of the mantic art. It came "without reason or consciousness" (*sine ratione et scientia*, Cic. *Div.* 1.2.4) and was inspired by frenzy or dreams. It occurred either when the soul was free of the body (in dreams or to those approaching death) or when the soul's natural power of prediction became overdeveloped, manifesting as frenzy or inspiration (as in the case of Cassandra). He explicitly excluded from natural divination both the use of reason and prediction by "natural law," for example, the predictions of physicians, pilots, or farmers.[2]

Thus for both Plato and Cicero, the power of prediction was a universal human potential, but was only realized fully in limited circumstances: in the grip of divine possession or when the soul was loosened from the hold of the body. They were only subject to study or mastery in the inferior form of technical divination by signs.

Starting in the mid-nineteenth century, classicists turned to anthropology to reconstruct the origins of Greek and Roman society. Central to their evolutionist models was the view that societies evolved in stages from the "primitive" to the "rational." Key in that evolution was the passage of ancient Greece

1 Pl. *Ap.* 22c. In the *Ion* (533e, cf. 534b–d) Socrates argues that epic and lyric poets create "not from *tekhnē*, but by being inspired and possessed" by the Muse (*ouk ek tekhnēs all' entheoi ontes kai katekhomenoi*).

2 Cic. *Div*. 1.49.111–1.50.112. He mentions Thales' prediction of an eclipse and Anaximander's prediction of an earthquake.

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"from myth to reason": a triumphal progress that included philosophy, historiography, medicine, technology and several sciences.[3]

Here, Plato and Cicero's classification took on a life of its own. It informs the structure of Auguste Bouché-Leclercq's history of divination in Greco-Roman antiquity as a distinction between "intuitive" (inspired) and "inductive" (technical) divination. His influence in turn propagated this dichotomy among later scholars.[4] In an evolutionist framework, intuitive divination became "primitive" and "inductive" divination became "rational" proto-science. The influence of Friedrich Schlegel, Erwin Rohde, and Friedrich Nietzsche propagated representations of an antinomy between Greek reason and "barbarian" Asian mystery cults.

We can now see something of how divination and prognostication have been theorized by contemporary scholars, and how the formulations of Plato and Cicero have informed (and possibly distorted) the entire history of the subject. The distinction between inspiration and technical expertise continues to reappear in general discussions of the history of divination.[5] An unfortunate effect of this typology is to reify categories derived from a particularly Greek mode of divination: oracular consultation, especially of Apollo at Delphi.

Divination, Anthropology and Comparison

The second key element was a renewed interest in anthropology and comparison. Anthropology reentered Classics in the work of Moses Finley, Louis Gernet, and Jean-Pierre Vernant. Finley shifted attention toward the "logic of institutions" such as marriage, slavery and citizenship.[6] Gernet, who had been

3 The phrase comes from Wilhelm Nestle's *Vom Mythos zum Logos: die Selbstentfaltung des griechischen Denkens von Homer bis auf die Sophistik*. Bruno Snell used it to title a chapter in *Die Entdeckung des Geistes* (1948), translated into English as *The Discovery of the Mind* (1953).

4 E.g. Halliday (1913: 55–57), Flacelière (1965: 7 and passim), Bloch (1984: 9), cf. Caquot and Leibovici (1968: v–xix).

5 For example, the entry on divination in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* distinguishes between inspired "intuitive divination" and set or flexible procedures for technical divination. "Inductive" divination uses completely set procedures (such as Chinese practices of using natal horoscopes to predict, and ensure, marital compatibility) while "Interpretive" divination allows for the special insights of the diviner (such as contemporary Mayan medical diviners in Guatemala). See Park and Gilbert 2003. In the *Encyclopedia of Religion*, the distinction is between technical "wisdom" divination and two varieties of inspired divination. Here "wisdom" divination decodes impersonal patterns of reality. "Intuitive" divination is spontaneous, whereas in "possession" divination, the diviner is a passive vehicle for divine communication. See Zuesse 1987.

6 Humphreys 1974: 24–26, Cartledge 1994: 4.

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relegated to a post in Algeria, returned to Paris in 1947. One of his few students, Jean-Pierre Vernant, combined Durkheimian sociology with Lévi-Straussian structuralism. Vernant began a comparative seminar whose membership included Classicists, anthropologists, and scholars of Assyria, Egypt, India, China and Africa. It became a focal point for comparative history, but slowly, and to the regret of Vernant himself, the focus of the center shifted towards the classical world.[7]

Comparison was central to Vernant's intellectual agenda, and the study of divination remained comparative under his influence. The result was the landmark volume *Divination et Rationalité* (1974). Vernant approached divination in the dual roles of mental attitudes and social institutions, in a context that was thoroughly comparative.[8] Although the ancient Mediterranean received more "space" than other areas, and the New World was not included, contributions addressed divination in Greece, Rome, Assyria, and China.[9]

Six Underlying Attitudes

Now let us turn to the intellectual attitudes underlying Chinese and Greek mantic hermeneutics. Let me introduce six key elements that informed the hermeneutics of Chinese and Greek mantic practices.

1. Chinese belief in the existence of gods and spirits (*shen*), including the possibility of human communication with them and even belief in the literal possibility of "self-divinization" through meditative and esoteric practices.
2. Greek belief in omniscient gods who knew the future and might be persuaded to share their knowledge.
3. Semiosis: the Greek belief that the gods used *signs* to communicate that knowledge to humans.
4. The Chinese belief in that certain times could be auspicious, or not (*ji xiong*) for particular activities, a belief central to Chinese mantic and ritual practice. Some of these techniques are still in use today.
5. A Chinese hermeneutics based on symmetry and number. From its beginnings, Chinese divination and cosmology make use of symmetry, numerical abstraction, and nuanced models of cosmic change. These were based

7 Detienne 2001: 104–105, Murray 2007.

8 Vernant 1974: 9.

9 Vernant 1974. Contributors include: Jean-Pierre Vernant, Luc Brisson, and Roland Crahay (Greece), Jean Bottéro (Mesopotamia), Jacques Gernet and Léon Vandermeersch (China), Denise Grodzynski (Rome), and Anne Retel-Laurentin (Africa).

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on a cosmic polarity between *yin* and *yang*, wherein all possible combinations of *yin* and *yang* were elaborated exhaustively in the 64 hexagrams of the *Zhou yi* (*Zhou Changes*, a precursor to the better known *Yi jing* or *Book of Changes*), and represented by numbers that abstracted patterns of change to a discrete number of types. These developments occurred hundreds of years earlier than the so-called "correlative cosmology" of the late Warring States, Western, or even Eastern Han dynasty. It featured the three elements of yin-yang, *qi* and the Five Agents (*wuxing*). Han theorizing on these subjects developed from the ideas and methods of the technical specialties, especially medicine, astronomy and the mantic arts.

6. Fate, necessity, and determinism. Corollary to the Greek idea that future was knowable was the idea that it was predetermined, a notion that first occurs in the Homeric poems. Concern *about* the future may be universal, but cultural understandings of the nature of time and causation vary widely.[10] Perhaps the most philosophically powerful fruits of that reflection were Greek ideas of fate and necessity that have so influenced Western cultures that they are taken as universal or inevitable. One purpose is to reconsider the cultural peculiarity and specificity of Greek notions of fate that were closely connected with the practice of divination.

Finally, my examples are "noncomparables." The role of the mantic arts in the development of Chinese astronomy and cosmology has no direct Greek counterpart, and changing Greek views of divination and the understanding of causation had no direct Chinese counterpart. (There were extensive debates about divination in early China, but with different foci and about different issues.) By contrast, medicine presents a comparable example. I then return to the comparative mode in the consideration of semiotics.

Chinese Systematic Cosmology

My first non-comparable example is the role of systematic cosmology in the development of the Chinese mantic arts, especially *Yi* divination (divination by the *Yi jing* and its predecessors) and astrocalendrics. Several elements contributed to the systematic and cosmological orientation of the Chinese mantic arts. Important aspects of pre-Han Chinese divination include:

10 See Lloyd 2007: 108–130 for a review of some of these differences.

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1. interest in symmetry, already visible in the oracle bone inscriptions;
2. the articulation of a *yin-yang* polarity, abstracted as patterns of change, represented by numbers. These patterns were elaborated and nuanced in the hexagrams of the *Zhou yi*; and
3. interest in astronomy and calendrics as systematic models of space and time. All were based on observation of natural phenomena. Eventually *yin* and *yang* were elaborated into *wuxing* methods and applied systematically (and perhaps arbitrarily) to a wide range of phenomena.

This information is technical and detailed. It can be framed as a visual argument that must skip over a great deal of detail. The important point is that from very early times Chinese mantic hermeneutics and speculative thought were abstract and oriented toward symbolic representation by numbers. They were also systematic in a sense distinct from later correlative cosmology.

1 *Symmetry: Shang Oracle Bone Inscription, Reign of Wu Ding* 武丁 (*r. 1250–1192*)

Our earliest evidence of systematic and cosmographic thinking is in the inscription of divination records in deliberately symmetrical layouts (Figure 6.1, Symmetrical Layout of a Turtle Plastron Divination, Heji 4264). Some scholars argue for the beginnings of cosmological thought in the oracle bone inscriptions, and much scholarly debate has surrounded the question of their purpose and their careful preparation and symmetry. David Keightley describes the Shang world view as a "proto-*yin-yang* metaphysics," a balanced, dualistic symbiosis of good and ill auspice, later echoed in the binary structures of the *Zhou yi*.[11]

Is this symmetry part of a common Shang-Zhou religious heritage, based on a shared belief in both predictability and in the mutability of fate? Léon Vandermeersch refers to a Shang "rationalisme divinatoire," and suggests that the symmetrical structures of early plastromancy had a profound influence on later Chinese notions of parallelism in poetics, rhetoric, and styles of reasoning and philosophical exegesis.[12]

11 Keightley 1988: esp 373–74, 386–87. Other examples: Heji 776r, 5658r, 6473, 6647r, 14198r. Other scholars see a "*sifang*" 四方 (four-direction) cosmology in which a circular heaven superimposed on a square earth creates a five-element, cruciform shape resembling the character ya 亞: a central square surrounded by four squares pointing to each of the cardinal directions. See Allan 1991: esp 75–77, Wang Aihe 2000: 26–34.

12 Poo Mu-chou 1998: 27–29; Vandermeersch 1974, 1980: 2.285–316, 1994.

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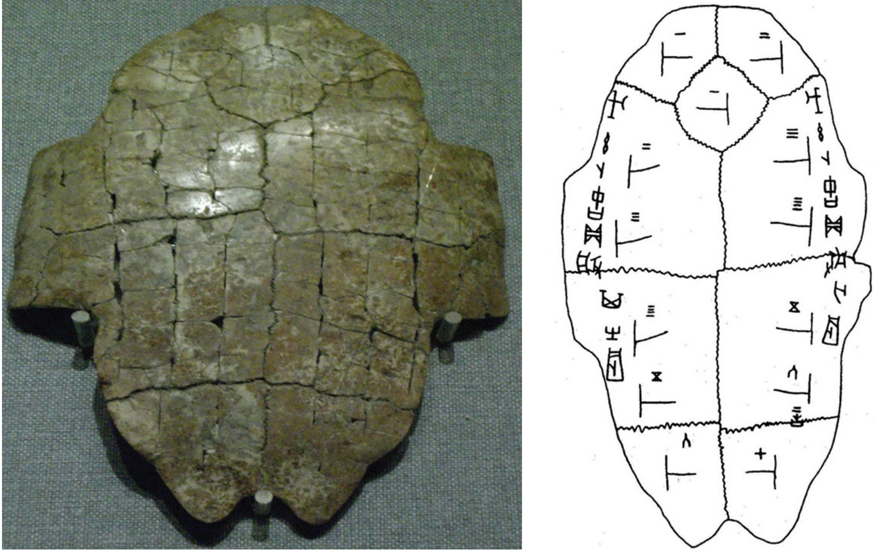

FIGURE 6.1 *Symmetry.*
Left: Plastron No. H3:9, c. 1300–1046. Henan Provincial Museum, Zhengzhou (exc. Anyang, 1991). Photo L. Raphals. Right: Symmetrical Layout of a Turtle Plastron (Heji 4264)

2 *Representation of Yin-yang Polarity as Numbers: Sipanmo and Qishan Omen Statements*

Oracle bone divination (like many Delphic oracles) answers a yes-no question. Recent archaeology has revealed a clear link between Shang and Western Zhou metaphysics in the early association of sequences of numbers with mantic statements in Shang and Western Zhou scapulae and plastrons from Sipanmo 四盤磨 (Anhui, late Shang, Figure 6.2) and Qishan 岐山 (Shaanxi) at what may have been the ancestral temple of the Western Zhou, the so-called "Zhouyuan oracle bones." In these bones we see sequences of numbers associated with statements.[13] Some of the Zhouyuan bones contain sequences of numbers in groups of six, resembling *Yi jing* hexagrams.[14] These six-number

13 Sipanmo: Zhang Zhenglang 1980: 81 n. 4 and 404 (dating), trans. Huber et al. 1980: esp 87. Original report: Li Xueqin 1956: 16–17. Milfoil: Zhang Yachu and Liu Yu 1981.

14 Numerical inscriptions appear on nine bones: H11:7, 81, 85, 90, 91, 108 (which has 4 numbers inscribed on the reverse side), 177, 235, and 263. See Cao Wei 2002: 7, 61, 65, 67, 76, 105, 123 and 130, cf. Chen Quanfeng 1988: 145–48. Magnified transcriptions: (back matter): 58 and 107–8. Qishan: These three hundred were out of a total of 17,000 bones. See Wang Yuxin 1984, Chen Quanfang 1988, Xu Xitai 1989, Shaughnessy 1985–1987. Hexagrams: Zhang Zhenglang 1979, 1980: 81 nn. 5–10, and 1984.

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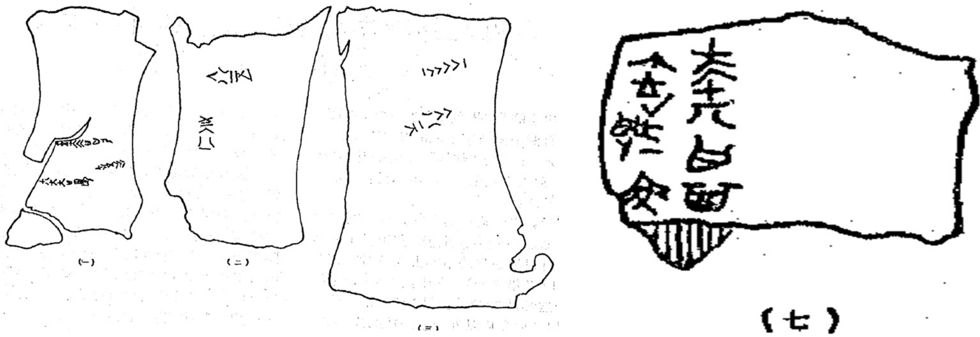

FIGURE 6.2 *Number: Associations of Omens with Numbers. Left: Scapulae from Sipanmo (Late Shang). Right: Qishan (Western Zhou) both after Zhang Yachu and Liu Yu 1981: 156*

sequences suggest some kind of divination by lots (cleromancy) using a more complex sortition than the binary results of oracle bone divination.

Numeric Representations of Yi Hexagrams: Baoshan (316 BCE)

The Baoshan records of milfoil divinations also record sequences of numbers. Each prognostication is a pair of six-number sequences, indicating the transformation of the right sequence into the left (Figure 6.3). For example, slip 201 (upper left) represents the transformation of the right-hand sequence 666166 (read bottom to top) into the sequence 116116 (also bottom to top). In the received tradition this corresponds to the transformation of Hexagram 19 (Yu 豫) into Hexagram 58 (Dui 兑).[15]

Yin-yang and *Yi* Divination: Numbers in the Xi ci

Four recently excavated *Yi* ("Changes") texts indicate something of the development of the *Yijing* as a cosmological text. (1) The oldest version, the so-called Shanghai Museum text—fragments of thirty-four hexagrams on bamboo slips—indicates that a stable version of something like the received *Zhou yi* was in circulation by 300. (2) A different *Yi* text associated with the Shang dynasty, the *Guicang* (Returning to the Treasury) has been excavated

15 *Baoshan Chu jian* 1991: 32, slip 201. The other hexagram number sequences occur in slips 210, 229, 232, 239, and 245. Zhang Zhenglang (1980) explains the numbering system: 1, 5 and 7 were *yang*; 6 and 8 were *yin*. The sequence in slip 229 is particularly difficult to read. The Baoshan editors take it as Gu 蠱 (18) transforming into Bo 剝 (23), through transformation of the two *yang* lines to *yin*, despite the *yang* 5 in the left-hand sequence, which would indicate Jin 晉 (35). See *Baoshan Chu jian* 1991: 57 n454.

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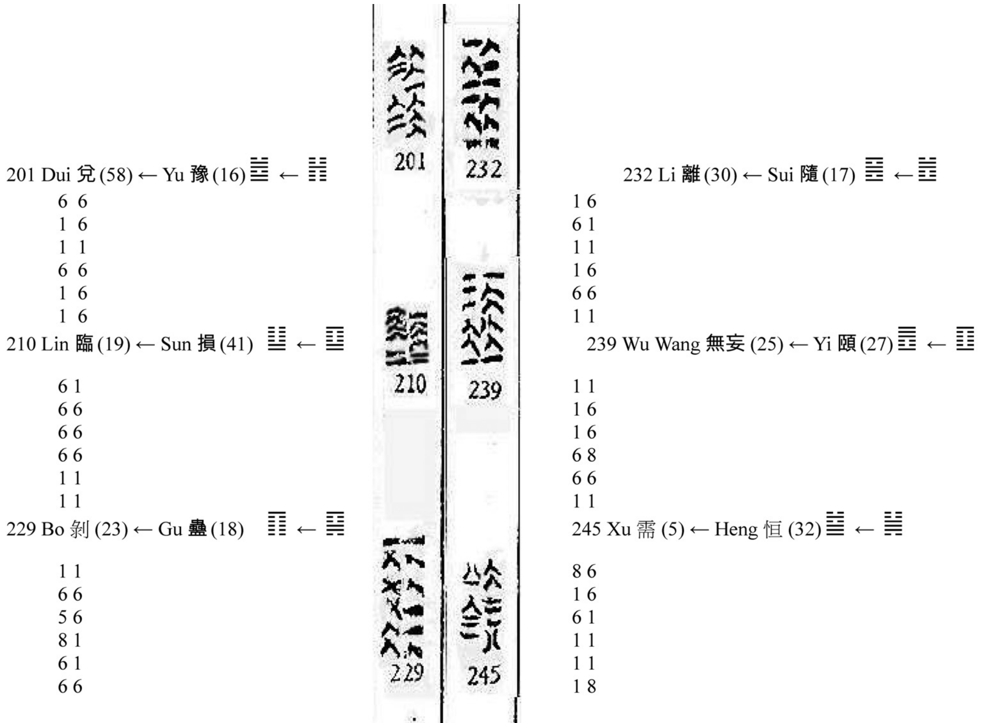

FIGURE 6.3 *Number: Hexagrams from Baoshan.* (*after* Baoshan Chu mu *1991: 68*)

from Wangjiatai Tomb 15 (Jiangling, Hubei, 278–207). (3) The so-called Fuyang *Zhou yi*, was excavated from Shuanggudui Tomb 1 (Fuyang, Anhui, 165). These two versions indicate the association of omens with numbers in early versions of the text. (4) The most complete version was excavated from a tomb at Mawangdui (Changsha, Hunan, 168). It includes the *Xi ci* and other commentaries. It also uses numbers (one and eight) to represent the hexagrams. Importantly, it includes the *Xi ci* commentary.[16] The *Xi ci* commentary in the

16 "Mawangdui boshu "Liushisi gua" shiwen" in *Wen wu* 1984.3: 1–8; Deng Qiubo 1987; Zhang Liwen 1991; Ikeda Tomohisa 1994: 111–207 and 1995: 1–105; Shaughnessy 1996. Variant Han readings prior to the Mawangdui version: Xu Qinting 1975. Other Mawangdui *Yi* texts: *Ersan zi wen* 二三子問 ("Several Disciples Asked") is a collection of quotations on the *Yi* attributed to Confucius. *Yi zhi yi* 易之義 ("Properties of the *Yi*") discusses *yin, yang* and many hexagrams. They resemble the *Wenyan* (Words on the Text) and *Shuo gua* commentaries of the received tradition. *Yao* 要 ("Essentials") gives indications of social

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Yi jing changes its scope entirely. It explains the organization of the hexagrams by numerical correlations between the *Zhou yi* and the structure of the world:

> 天一．地二．天三．地四．天五．地六．天七．地八．天九．地十．
>
> Heaven is one; earth is two; heaven is three; earth is four; heaven is five; earth is six; heaven is seven; earth is eight; heaven is nine; earth is ten (*Zhou yi* 7.20, Xi ci shang)

The *Xi ci* asserts that numbers order the world by dividing it into quantified, measurable units.[17] It ascribes the invention of the hexagrams to Fu Xi 伏犧, and claims that he invented the eight trigrams (*bagua* 八卦) from the images and models of Heaven and Earth and the patterns (*wen* 文) of birds and beasts.[18] In this account of the origins of divination, the trigrams are the first form of written record and the *Zhou yi* is a comprehensive microcosm of the universe.[19] (It is important to stress that *Zhou yi* itself contains none of these cosmological analogies.) The *Xi ci* thus describes the cosmos and the *Zhou yi* as two parallel systems of signs whose correspondences allow the *Zhou yi* to reveal hidden meanings and establish fate.

3 *Astronomy and Astrocalendrics*

My next example comes from astrocalendrics. A wide range of Chinese astrocalendric methods bespeak an early interest in the systematic mapping and observation of the heavens.[20] These methods depend on comprehensive and systematic symbolic representations of time (the sexagenary cycle)

---

and political attitudes toward mantic practices. For example, Confucius compares himself to mantic experts who use the same means for different ends. Other studies: Chen Songchang and Liao Mingchun 1993, Liao Mingchun 1993 and 2000, Wang Bo 1995, Xing Wen 1995, Wang Baoxian 1995.

17 Quantification: Raphals 2002. Numbers as signs of learning: Lloyd 1994: 155.

18 *Zhou yi zheng yi* 8.5a–8a ("Xi ci xia"), cf. *Baihu tong*, 51–52 ("San wang zhe" 三王者 2.1).

19 See Lewis 1999: 211–13 and 41–86.

20 Interest in astrocalendrics is attested by diviner's boards and hemerological texts excavated from tombs (e.g. Zhoujiatai, Fuyang, and Mawangdui) and in Western Han astronomical treatises. Later, we see the increasingly official character of Chinese astronomy in the creation of court institutions in the Western and Eastern Han. Although there is too little evidence to generalize, the presence of astrocalendric texts and instruments in combination with other official documents in the tombs of state officials also suggests state sponsorship of astrocalendric observation.

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and space (correlative divisions of heaven and earth), expressed in terms of *yin-yang* and *wuxing*.[21] We find evidence of these representations in several types of source: star prognostication, mantic astrolabes (diviner's boards) and *wuxing*-based cosmological systems. Let me give a few examples.

The Twenty-eight Lunar Lodges (ershiba xiu 二十八宿)

In the first systematic description of the heavens, the *Shi ji* Astronomical Treatise gives a detailed account of the stars and constellations of the Five Palaces (the four directions and the Circumpolar region), of planetary motion, and of the Twenty-eight Lunar Lodges, which it correlates with regions of the earth.[22] The oldest evidence for knowledge of the Twenty-eight Lunar Lodges dates from the fifth century BCE. The Lunar Lodges are clearly represented on the lid of a lacquer clothing case from the tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (Zeng Hou Yi 曾侯乙, Figure 6.4), excavated from his tomb at Leigudun 擂鼓墩 (Suizhou, Hubei, ca. 433).

Mantic Astrolabes (Diviner's Boards)

Mantic astrolabes model the cosmos for mantic purposes. They have been excavated from tombs at Wangjiatai, Zhoujiatai (a text), and Shuanggudui (Fuyang).[23] Different types have different elements and organizations, but they all superimpose a round Heaven Plate which can be rotated over a square, stationary Earth plate. Some make explicit use of *yin-yang* and *wuxing*. Most excavated Han diviner's boards are of two types: *Jiugong* 九宮 (Nine Palaces) and *Liuren* 六壬 (Six *Ren* Days). For example, the Liuren instrument from Fuyang (Figure 6.5) has a complex organization, and use a system of calculation based on the six *ren* days (*liuren*) of the sexagenary cycle.[24] The round Heaven plate shows the Northern Dipper at the center, surrounded by the Twenty-eight

21 From the fourth to second centuries, *wuxing* referred to several different things. In an astronomical context, it referred to the "Five Courses" (*wuxing* 五行) of planetary motion. In other contexts it referred to other groupings of five categories. See Nylan 2010: 403.

22 *Shi ji* 27.1331–42, Chavannes 3.385–401. The *Han shu* Astronomical Treatise (*Tianwenzhi, Han shu* 26.1273–1314) was probably written by Ma Xu 馬續 and finished by Ban Gu's sister Ban Zhao 班昭. It follows the organization of the *Shi ji*, but contains more detailed astronomical information, including of eclipses.

23 The definitive study of Han *Liuren* boards is Kalinowski 1983: esp 309–419. Recent archaeology: Yan Dunjie 1978, Kalinowski 1996: esp 62–64 and 69–72. Later history: Kalinowski 1991 and 2003, Ho Peng Yoke 2003.

24 That is, the six days denoted by a combination of *ren* (the ninth of the Ten Stems) and six of the Twelve Branches: Day 9 (*renshen* 壬申), Day 19 (*renwu* 壬午), Day 29 (*renchen* 壬辰), Day 39 (*renyin* 壬寅), Day 49 (*renzi* 壬子), and Day 59 (*renxu* 壬戌).

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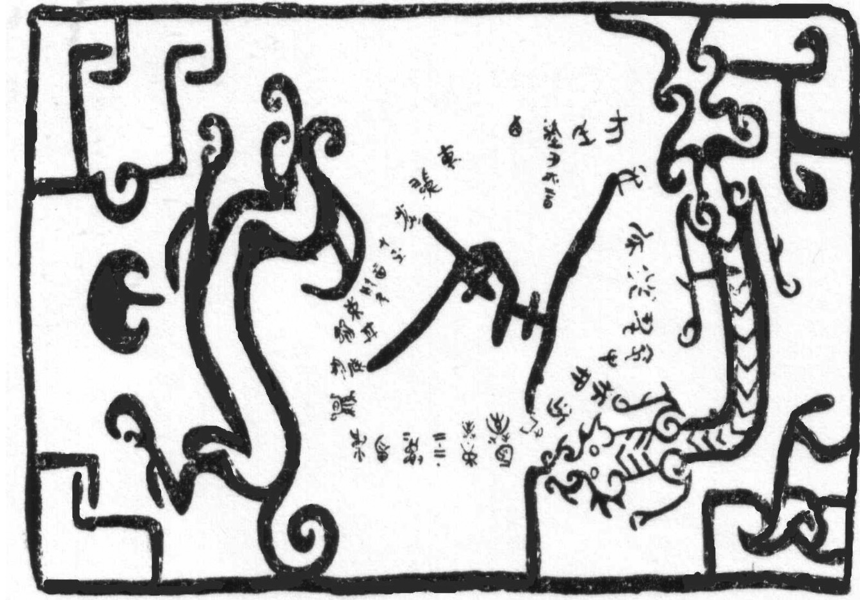

FIGURE 6.4 *The Twenty-eight Lunar Lodges.*
Decoration from the tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng 曾侯乙 (*after Wang Jianmin, Liang Zhu and Wang Shengli in* Wen wu *1979.7: 41*)

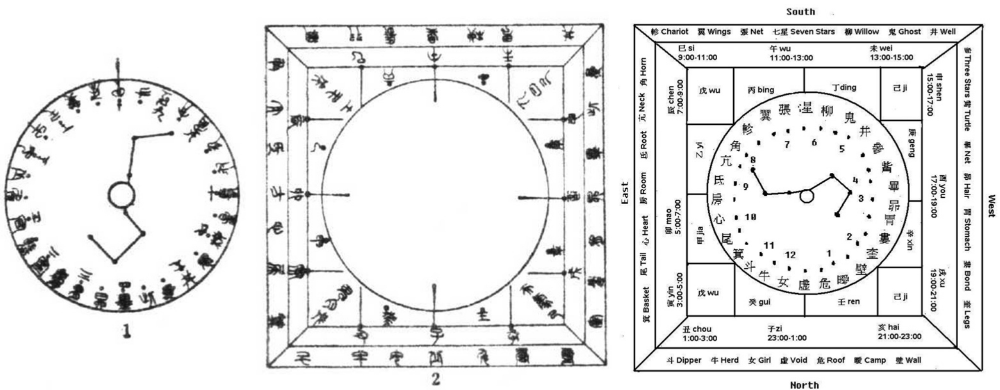

FIGURE 6.5 *The Fuyang Liuren Board.*
Left: after Wen wu *1978.8: 25, middle row. Right: Schematic Diagram* (*L. Raphals*)

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Lunar Lodges at the periphery of the circle. In this schematic diagram, the Dipper handle points to the Lunar Lodge Horn (*jiao*) in the southeast (the upper left hand corner), associated with the eighth month.

Another type of systematic thought about the cosmos is the application of *wuxing to* hemerology: in almanacs, daybooks and monthly ordinances. These are accounts of cosmic time. (By contrast, diviner's boards are spatial models of the cosmos.) Their methods differ, but hemerological texts all represent cosmic time and link cycles of time with human action, expressed either as good and ill auspice or as permitted and prohibited activities.

In summary, late Warring States and Western Han mantic discourse on number, *yin-yang*, astronomy, hemerology, and a range of *wuxing* systems illustrates a consistent interest in thinking systematically about the cosmos and how mantic knowledge fits into cosmic patterns. Their variations from the grand unification of correlative cosmology are especially interesting. The important point is the ongoing interest in applying cosmological speculation to thinking of this kind is distinct from the correlative cosmologies of the Eastern Han and their imperial motivations and preoccupations. It also has no clear Greek counterpart. Greek systematic theorizing about divination took a very different turn.

Greek Debates on Divination and Causation

The nature and implications of mantic activity become a topic of Greek systematic philosophical speculation, but in ways that are very different from its role in Chinese expertise traditions. Greek reflection on divination focused on areas that have no specific Chinese counterparts, especially problems of determinism and causality, and their ethical implications (this despite extensive Chinese debates about other aspects of the mantic arts). Again, in the interests of time, I will summarize longer arguments.

Philosophical Debates about Divination

In much Greek mantic discourse there is a recognition that knowledge of the future somehow implied its preexistence. An implicit tension between belief in the efficacy of divination and belief in inexorable fate first appears in Homer. The poets attempted to reconcile the plan of Zeus (with implied determinism) with divination, which implicitly rejected a determined future by seeking the aid of the gods. The philosophers' problem was the opposite: to create theories of divination that reconciled traditional religion with new theories of nature, cause and responsibility.

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With the exception of Xenophanes and Heraclitus, most pre-Socratic philosophers either affirmed some belief in divination or held beliefs compatible with it.[25] Xenophanes repudiated divination entirely (frs. 11–12, 14–16); Heraclitus rejected technical divination and oneiromancy, but respected the authority of the Sibyl and Pythia (frs. 92–93). He believed the Delphic oracle offered signs to humankind, and "neither speaks nor hides, but signifies."[26]

Other Presocratics may have been mantic practitioners. Diogenes (8.32) reports that Pythagoras instructed his students to "honor every kind of divination"; and that he was called "Pyth-agoras" because he outdid the Pyth-ia in the truth of his public pronouncements in the *agora* (8.21). The Purifications of Empedocles begins with a claim to be in high demand everywhere, to: "some seeking mantic arts, others seeking healing oracular speech for all kinds of diseases."[27]

What did Socrates believe about divination? This issue became important in his trial because of a claim that his philosophical activities were partly grounded in divination was central to his defense. He refers to the oracle to Chaerephon (no man is wiser than Socrates) as the source of his philosophical mission, and affirms his trust in his *daimonion* to warn him against error.[28] Commentators tend to disregard or belittle this regard for divination and the implication that Socrates' moral and philosophical convictions were religious at some level. But, as Brickhouse and Smith have argued at length, the *daimonion* provides Socrates with certainty about one thing—that he must serve the god by practicing philosophy in Athens—but not about anything else.[29] As a result, Socrates is certain that his philosophical activities are virtuous but cannot offer a *logos* to explain their virtue.[30] Thus in recommending the mantic arts he does not advocating any kind of shortcut or laziness, because divine knowledge was not a substitute for human knowledge.

And Plato and Xenophon attest that Socrates did recommend the mantic arts, bringing divination into the purview of philosophy. Plato and his successors continued that approach. Plato enjoined the city to consult the oracle on

25 Cic. *Div.* 1.5, cf. Fr. 166 and Plut. *Quaest. conv*. 735a–b, *Conv. sept. sap.* 3.2.

26 *Oute legei oute kruptei alla sēmainei*. fr. 93, Plut. *Pyth. orac.* 404d8.

27 Fr. 112, Clem. *Strom*. 6.30.

28 Pl. *Ap*. 22c. The term *daimonion*, literally something "*daimōn*-like" is often described as his "divine sign," what in earlier English might have been called his *weird*.

29 Brickhouse and Smith 1984. The *elenchus* (Greek *elenkhos*, "refutation") is a method of argument that refutes a proposition by proving the opposite of its conclusions. Socrates in particular used it to show that the consequences of a position or argument contradict some accepted position. The word derives from *elenkhein*, "to put to shame or refute."

30 Pl. *Ap.* 20e, 22c, 31d, 40a–b.

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matters of morality and religion, Respect for Delphi appears in his own philosophical claims in his distinction between divine madness and the *tekhnē* of interpreting signs. It contrasts the self-conscious reflection of the philosopher with the unreflective activity of the bard or seer. Both are ignorant of what they create, and operate by nature (*phusis*) rather than by wisdom (*sophia*): they can describe sword and shield but not wield them. Plato prefers to reserve self-consciousness reflection about their art for philosophers.[31]

Divination, Causality and Responsibility

This Greek consensus on divination coexisted with *ad hominem* attacks against individual practitioners. Divination itself became an object of debate in Hellenistic Greece because of its implications for fate, causality, necessity, and determinism. That debate had epistemological and ethical ramifications. It had no exact equivalent in China.

Unlike Plato, Aristotle rejects most divination: Plato tried to absorb science in revelation; Aristotle sought to absorb revelation in science.[32] In "On Divination through Dreams" (*De Divinatione per Somnum*), a work of medical oneiromancy, he emphasizes their clinical significance. But Aristotle's major influence on the philosophical history of divination was his view of choice as central to notions of human responsibility. His analysis of responsible human action was the starting point for Hellenistic debates about determinism and freedom, which linked divination to late Greek debates on fate, causality, necessity, and determinism.

Efforts to reconcile determinism and moral responsibility (contemporary philosophers' "soft determinism" or compatibilism) become a major issue in Stoic attempts to refute attacks by skeptics and Epicureans, including the so-called Master Argument and Lazy Argument.[33] Divination also informed a debate on modality and modal logic that preoccupied many Hellenistic philosophers. The ethical problem of human responsibility for events foretold by gods was not new, but it had not previously been perceived as a problem for Greek thinkers. The issue first appears in Homer; the mechanistic atomism of Democritus also raises issues of human responsibility; and Plato touches on the relation of destiny and human choice in *Republic* 10, but destiny and determinism are not a central issue. The first to suggest that determinism threatens human choice and human freedom was Aristotle. The earlier authors do

31 Xenophon: Xen. *An.* 3.1. Consultation: Pl. *Rep* 427b; *Leg.* 738b–d. Inspired divination: *Phaed.* 244c–e, cf. *Tim.* 71b–e, discussed in Raphals 2013, chapter 3.

32 Bouché-Leclercq 1879: 1.57.

33 See Hankinson 1998 and Bobzien 1998: 87–96.

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not seem to have cared about the issue. Aristotle does care because determinism precludes the morality and agency that were central to his concept of the good life.

Yet even Aristotle did not connect the notions of cause and necessity. He viewed events as ripples from a stone in a pond (not as chains of cause and effect). He also considered some events to result from chance rather than necessity, but his treatment of chance and coincidence did not rule out determinism. His primary interest was in the problem of explanation and the possibility that there may be chance events with no scientific explanation, without recourse to indeterminism.[34]

Hellenistic debates about determinism and freedom began as reactions to Aristotle's incomplete analysis of causation, determinism, and responsibility. The question of whether the future can be known is logically distinct from the question of whether the universe is deterministic, but in antiquity arguments about fate and prediction were considered related, perhaps because individual fate was so often the object of prediction.[35]

Stoic Responses

But there was general agreement that for a future event to be knowable, it must somehow be caused. The Stoics treated prediction under the rubric of divination, and used it to argue theories of fate, within an integrated systematic theory that included ethics, theology, and metaphysics. These debates begin with Chrysippus (c. 279–c. 206), the third head of the Stoic school, who attempted to prove that all things happen according to fate (*heimarmenē*) and devised a syllogism to prove that the gods exist and reveal the future:

> If there are gods and they do not declare the future to mortals, then either they do not love humans, or they do not know the future, or they think that knowledge of the future will not benefit humanity, or they think it against their own majesty to presignify to mortals what the future will be, or they themselves are not able to determine it (Cic. *Div.* 2.101).

34 Arist. *Met.* 1027a20–b14. For details see Sorabji 1980.

35 Here I follow Sorabji's (1980: ix) definition of determinism as the view that whatever happens has all along been necessary in the sense of fixed or inevitable. His definition uses necessity, rather than causation, and does not deny moral responsibility, as do "hard" determinists. Causal determinism is the idea that every event is necessitated by antecedent events and conditions.

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Chrysippus tried to develop new accounts of possibility and necessity that could accommodate both moral responsibility and the Stoic "fate principle."[36] (On a modern point of view, he was a soft determinist.)

Chrysippus and the Stoic defenders of divination made the empirical claim that divination worked, but denied any causal link between mantic "signs" and their signifiers. The reason is that a causal explanation would reduce divination to the level of any other science, and would remove its privileged metaphysical status as divinely inspired knowledge. The most significant epistemological element in these debates was skepticism. Despite a few empirical arguments, it is noteworthy that recorded accounts of tests of oracles all come from non-Greeks. Greeks may have considered testing an oracle unnecessary or even impious.[37]

Posidonius (ca. 135–51) theorized divination by a form of divine providence (*sumpatheia*), claiming that nature gave signs of future events that unfold over time like a cable unwinding.[38] By contrast, their Epicurean critics argued that chance, not fate, controlled events. Skeptics did not grant any role for providence. Plutarch, a middle Platonist, held that fate mixed and intertwined with chance. He defended inspired divination and the reputation of the Delphic oracle, but attacked Chrysippus for contradictions between his theories of possibility and fate.[39] For the middle Platonists, moral choice is not fated but fate affects the consequences of moral choice. All these arguments tried to address the moral dilemmas by advancing soft determinist accounts of fate.

Much of the Stoic account of divination survives in hostile sources. Cicero's *De Divinatione* reflects his hostility to Stoicism and bias toward Epicurean and Academic skeptic viewpoints. *De Divinatione* presents a dialogue between a skeptic (Cicero or Marcus) and a Stoic (his brother Quintus): at issue is the question of whether knowledge of the future is possible (1.1). In the first book, a defense of the mantic arts, Quintus presents the Stoic position that divination is communication from the gods. He relies on anecdotal examples that appeal to experience; the important point is that natural divination (the highest form of the mantic art) comes from the gods, and is not based in reason or

36 Theodoretus 6.14 = SVF 2.916, Diogenianus, in Eus. *Praep. Evang.* 6.261c = SVF 2.925.

37 Notably the "test" oracle of Croesus (Hdt. 1.46–55). Herodotus reports two other comments on the accuracy of oracles by non-Greeks: Amasis (2.174) and Xerxes and Mardonius (8.133–36).

38 Posidonius (c. 135–c. 50): Diog. Laet. *Vit.* 7. 149. Critique by Cicero: *Fat.* 5–7.

39 Plut. *Comm. not.* 1075e.

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prediction by natural laws.[40] For this reason, Cicero rejects technical divination (hepatoscopy, portents, lots, astrology and augury), which requires rationality (*ratio*) and intelligence (*intelligentia*) to interpret divine signs (1.70). Book 2 presents Cicero's skeptical refutation. He argues that there is no causal connection between signs and divine communication (2.29) and stresses empirical failures and disagreements between diviners. Finally, he argues that Stoic fatalism itself undermines divination, since a fixed future cannot be changed or avoided.

In summary, all the Hellenistic debates on divination center on ethics and metaphysics. They did not involve the inquiry into nature or theories of causation and change. One tendency in Greek divination may help account for this marginal position is the relative lack of interest in astronomy (in striking contrast to astronomy in China and Mesopotamia).[41]

Semiotics, Divination, and Systematic Thought

Both Chinese and Greek metaphysical assumptions led to beliefs in semiosis and hermeneutics: that mantic signs manifested hidden patterns, and could be read and interpreted by those with the correct expertise. But these beliefs (and debates about them) resulted from different assumptions, led in different directions, and changed over time.

Both Chinese and Greek metaphysics assumed the existence of gods or divine powers and the possibility of communicating with them. In both traditions there is debate over whether divine powers had benign interest in human affairs. In both traditions there are examples of economies of human-divine relations based on prayer and sacrifice. The ancient practices of Greek bird and weather divination and Chinese oracle bone divination offered ways for diviners to effectively negotiate with the gods by means of repeated questions. Both traditions also include ethical frameworks for divination, based on

40 E.g. the predictions of physicians, pilots, or farmers (1.49.111–1.50.112 and predictions of eclipses (by Thales) and earthquakes (by Anaximander).

41 Early Greek interest in astronomy is difficult to reconstruct. The Hellenistic period marked the beginning of extensive Greek interest in astronomy, astrology and calendrics, but that interest did not take the form of state sponsorship. Increased contact after Alexander's conquest of Persia (330 BCE) brought Greeks into contact with Mesopotamian ideas of the zodiac and the methods and data of Babylonian astronomy and astrology. These had profound effects on astronomy and astrological cosmology.

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presumed correlations between cosmic and human orders. Both Chinese and Greek philosophers emphasized the ethical role of divination as part of divine concepts of justice and retribution.

But the particulars of many Greek and Chinese understandings of the nature of these interactions were very different. Dominant Chinese models of divine-human relations were genetic (gods as royal ancestors) or bureaucratic (gods as a hierarchy of rulers and officials). Some Chinese mantic techniques addressed particular gods responsible for specific time periods and modes of activity, but they progressively de-emphasize direct communication or negotiation with divine powers.

A number of Greek assumptions about the benevolence and interest of the gods in humanity are more equivocal. Greek bird and weather diviners associated a wide range of phenomena with communications from particular gods and predictions of particular kinds, and omens were understood to systematically reflect divine intentions. These practices persisted into Hellenistic Greece, but the legacy of Plato and Cicero privileged oracular divination. The gods of Greek myth were notoriously fickle; the arbitrariness of human fates and the indifference of the gods are recurring themes from Homeric epic to Attic tragedy. Later Greek divinatory reflection shifted to the idea that the future was somehow predetermined and thence predictable. One result was a systematic and abstract reflection on problems of cause, necessity, and the logical preconditions that made divination possible and legitimate.

Starting in the late Warring States period, competing schemata began to link *yin* and *yang* (variously described) to phenomena in space (the directions), time (the calendar), notions of good and ill auspice, and the body. The eventual hermeneutics of Han correlative cosmology focused on elaborate microcosm-macrocosm correspondences between the three realms of Heaven, Earth, and humanity, and used numbers to express these symbolic correlations. Chinese correlative cosmology also provided "natural" explanations for the establishment and expansion of the Han dynasty. Scholar officials also used correlative cosmology and discourses on omens to define (and circumscribe) royal power through admonition.

These practices affected the growth of systematic thought and abstraction. They led to a perceived need for techniques for validating or rejecting interpretations, including in the context of oral performance. Divination also was associated with, and at times polemicized by a wide range of technical disciplines and empirical knowledge. For example, in China, the perceived need to record or verify divinations was associated with the development of writing. The ambiguity that was so central to Greek reflective narratives about

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divination is virtually absent in China, where theorizing cosmic regularity was a key goal of mantic activity.

Divination and Systematic Thought

Where do we place the Chinese and Greek mantic arts in the development of systematic inquiry? Did mantic theories and practices advance or impede intellectual experimentation and inquiry? Did they encourage political experimentation, mobility, or tyranny? The picture is mixed, and subject to intellectual and political microclimates. At times divination was a conservative and stultifying influence, but it cannot be dismissed as intellectual superstition or political or religious conservatism. A comparative perspective shows the areas in which it was linked to the observation of regularity, the development of techniques for observation and verification, and analyses of cause and effect. It was also a major vehicle for early speculation about cosmology and for the development of theories of hermeneutics and semiosis. Finally, it gave rise to the systematic expression of abstract concepts in formal systems. The particular concepts and system are, in many cases, not ones we would use today, despite the ongoing popularity of divination, but the importance of the ability to articulate such systems cannot be overstated.

It is immediately striking that many Chinese mantic techniques simply do not fit into Bouché-Leclercq's system of intuitive and inductive divination. Greek methods address the will of the gods, mediated through natural phenomena, but through no system of signs. Most Chinese methods keep a "respectful distance" from divine powers, and are abstract, systematic, and significantly based on number and calculation. Most Greek procedures presupposed a direct divine origin for divinatory signs that privileged spontaneous events, especially the movements of birds, thunder and lightning, involuntary motion, and dreams. Given these fundamental differences, it is no surprise that apparently similar techniques were understood very differently. Wind divination, physiognomy and cleromancy are cases in point.

Greek and Chinese divination methods also diverge in relation to naturalistic thinking. Again the key difference is the perceived proximity and involvement of divine powers. Chinese mantic methods and attitudes were compatible with naturalistic inquiry and offered opportunities for it. By contrast, a tension between naturalistic thinking and mantic practices that involved the gods directly seems peculiarly Greek. Although Greek medicine and mantic practices coexisted, the Greek formulation of explicit notions of nature and cause set them apart in a way that has no Chinese counterpart. Some of those practices became targets of invective for the *physiologoi*, a competition that

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became central to the positivist historiography of Greek science. Here again, comparison underscores the danger of broad historical generalization from limited and culturally specific Greek evidence.

Chinese and Greek mantic practice contributed to systematic thought in different ways, but there are two areas of which mantic discourse made unequivocal contributions to Chinese and Greek systematic thought.

In China the contribution was in an early and ongoing interest in symmetry, number, abstraction combined with empirical observation, especially in the areas of astronomy and hemerology. In several areas of mantic practice—omen texts, daybooks, and also physiognomy—we find what may have been initially unsystematic and possibly empirical observations grouped under classificatory headings that became progressively systematic and abstract. Thus Chinese notions of symmetry, number, and abstract patterns of change were central to the development of systematic medicine, astronomy, cosmology, and hermeneutics.

Thus Chinese divination broke away from the notions of either a determined future or a future dependent on divine powers; instead it sought to eliminate accident and tragic uncertainty by anticipating temporary conjunctions of cosmic forces. In this sense, destiny was "decodable," and, as Gernet argues, could be acted on by choosing actions appropriate to the circumstances as determined by judicious choices of names and of signs. In the words of Vandermeersch, the quasi-mathematical symbolic patterning of *Yi* divination displaced older ideas of a world governed directly by divine will.[42]

Elements from the mantic arts were systematized in a comprehensive cosmology based on *yin-yang* and *wuxing*, but it is not obvious that the cosmological step was an advance. The empirical basis of these theories in particular is open to question, and invites the charge of arbitrariness and superstition that has been levelled against traditional mantic practices, as well as certain aspects of traditional Chinese medicine. But it is worth noting that these early interests in symmetry, number, abstraction and observation had no clear Greek counterpart. Divination was central to comprehensive Stoic cosmologies and theories of causation and fate. It was also an important impetus to the growth of skepticism. Neither had a Chinese equivalent.

Greek debates about divination were central to the development of skepticism, logic, and theories of causation. In addition, the use of symbols in Greek mantic speech took a very different direction: in informing the development of the poetic devices of symbol, metaphor, and allegory.[43] Plutarch notes that ancient oracles used enigmas and allegories, which people held in

42 Gernet 1974: 54 and 67. Vandermeersch 1974: 28–30 and 50.

43 Struck 2004, esp 180–90.

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awe as manifestations of divine power. Later, they censured poetic language in oracles as obstructing true meaning and introducing vagueness and obscurity; and became suspicious of metaphor, enigma, and ambiguity as refuges for errors in prophecy.[44] Peter Struck argues that the "darkness" of oracular and poetic language informs a tension in Greek views of language and literary criticism between proponents of "dark" language and advocates of clarity. The one view takes the obscurity of oracular language, enigmas (*ainigmata*), symbols, and allegories as a necessary means to work around the inherent limitations of language, especially to express knowledge of the divine.[45] The other view, of Aristotle and of the rhetoricians, prized clarity and transparency.[46] If Struck is right, the legacy of the Greek mantic arts lies in an opposite direction from the scientists and systematizers.

Vernant has argued that in all the great "scriptural civilizations" graphic combinations and symbolic configurations oriented the early progress of rationality and science.[47] Early Chinese divination records bear out this argument better than their Greek equivalents. By contrast, in late imperial China, mantic practitioners were more likely to be hostile to new knowledge.

By contrast, Greek divination records did not take a systematic form that encouraged the development of symbolic systems for interpretation. Greek divination was in this sense culturally conservative, and became a source of opposition to the new techniques and claims of the *physiologoi* (although those oppositions have been greatly exaggerated.) Indeed, Greek written language carried a very different legacy from mantic speech into poetic language.

Intellectual Debate

The process of intellectual debate itself is also an impetus to the development of philosophy and science. Divination was an object of debate in both Greece and China, but the debates were of very different kinds. Both are significantly epistemological, and rejected divination as an inferior mode of knowledge. The early Daoists used this rejection rhetorically to argue for the superiority of understanding of *dao*; Plato used it rhetorically to argue for the superiority of philosophy. Greek critiques of divination were significantly and self-consciously skeptical, whereas skepticism is not a central argument in Chinese debates about divination.

44 Plut. *Mor.* 407a–b.

45 E.g. Heraclitus (DK 22 B1, B48 and B67), Plato's banishment of the poets from the Republic (*Rep*. 10 598b, 599a, 599d, 601b, 605c).

46 Arist. Poet. 1458a18, cf. Struck 2004: 23–24 and 59–68.

47 Vernant 1974: 24.

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Ethics was a significant factor in both Chinese and Greek debates, but in culturally very particular ways. Some Chinese critiques associated divination with acquisitiveness and inauthenticity; others rejected it as inferior to prediction on the basis of moral character. Greek ethical debates focus on divination as a concomitant of determinism, and the perceived conflict between the key value of moral choice and the determinism implied in certain accounts of necessity and causality. The extremely elaborate logical debate that ensued is peculiarly Greek, and goes hand in hand with other features of Greek debate, including emphasis on proof and the use of quasi-legal modes of argumentation. These debates honed logical skills that were an important contribution to Greek systematic thinking.

Both traditions shared the broad view that valid and authentic prognostication or divination derived from the skill and virtue (sagacity, wisdom, insight) of the seer. We find in both traditions the notion of a "right" reading of the "text" of the cosmos. Accounts of that "text" varied both between and within these two traditions, but both understood it to be hermeneutic, and in this sense, fundamentally the same as textual interpretation. (In other words, a "correct" reading is correct semiosis, however understood.)

Finally and in conclusions, this analysis has highlighted repeatedly a contrast between the lack of tension between human and divine realms in China and a strong tension between them in Greece. This contrast also informs a defining issue in twentieth-century discussions of Chinese thought; namely, the cultural uniqueness of Chinese cosmology or its commensurability with "Western" cosmologies. At one pole of the debate, Weber argued that the Chinese were limited by the lack of a notion of transcendence or tension between the human and divine realms.[48] At the other, Marcel Granet argued for the distinctiveness of Chinese cosmology because of the lack of demarcation of human and divine realms, including a notion of transcendence.[49] Granet's work in turn has informed (in very different ways) several important studies, especially the work of Joseph Needham, K.C. Chang, A.C. Graham, and David Hall and Roger Ames.[50] These all argue that radically different cosmologies distinguish China and the West.

Another example of this difference is the understanding of the boundary between humans and gods. In an influential study, Jean-Pierre Vernant argued

48 Weber 1951: esp 152–53, 196–200, 226–27, and 235–48.

49 Granet 1934.

50 Needham (1956: esp 216–17, 280–82), K.C. Chang (1963), A.C. Graham (1986 and 1991), and Hall and Ames (AC, xviii, 257). For discussion of this issue see Puett 2002: 8–22.

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that the ancient Greeks defined the human condition as the middle element in a triad of animals, humans and gods.[51] Chinese accounts also feature interdependent relations between humans and gods, but the boundary is far more fluid. On some accounts, divine-human relations were genetic (gods as royal ancestors) or bureaucratic (gods as a hierarchy of rulers and officials).

A different view is presented by Michael Puett, who argues that the term *shen* 神 ("spirit") refers to both spirits who reside in the extrahuman world and hold power over natural phenomena and to refined forms of *qi* within the human body.[52] He draws on a fourth-century self-cultivation literature, often associated with the sixteenth chapter of the *Guanzi* (*Nei ye* 內業), which describes the use of self-cultivation through *qi* to gain power over things in the world.[53] By contrast, the Greek boundary between mortals and immortals is absolute and defined by mortality; gods lived forever and could know the future.

Both Chinese and Greek metaphysics assumed the possibility of communicating with divine powers, but within both traditions there is disagreement over whether divine powers had a benign interest in human affairs. Both traditions provide examples of economies of human-divine relations based on prayer and sacrifice, for example, Greek bird and weather divination and Chinese oracle bone prognostication.[54]

My study also points toward a contrast between relations between humans and gods in China and Greece; however, (like Puett) I reject the dichotomy between evolutionist and cultural-essentialist models. In both China and Greece we see changing and contested relations between mantic practitioners and theories and the practitioners of science and philosophy. In both cases we see complex coexistence, negotiation, and mutual influence. Methodologically, the present study also ends by recommending nuanced approaches that are historically contextualized.

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51 Vernant 1980: esp 147–49.

52 Puett 2002: 21–22 and passim. However, rather than taking this wide semantic field as evidence of a smooth and porous boundaries between humans and gods, he takes that relationship as a point of contestation to be examined historically.

53 Guanzi 16: 1a–6b, Nei ye, trans. Rickett 1998: 39–55.

54 For more detailed discussion of these issues see Raphals 2013.

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