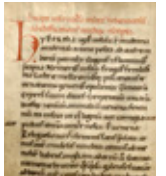




INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM
for Research in the Humanities

Schicksal, Freiheit und Prognose. Bewältigungsstrategien in Ostasien und Europa



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Conference “End(s) of Time(s)”



Editorial (Prof. Dr. Michael Lackner)

The IKGF at the Leopoldina

The IKGF and Contemporary Prognostics

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Fate, Freedom and Prognostication. Strategies for Coping with the Future in East Asia and Europe

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INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM
for Research in the Humanities



INTERNATIONALES KOLLEG
für Geisteswissenschaftliche Forschung

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Dear Readers,

Can science help us to predict the future? IKGF Director Michael Lackner addresses this question in his editorial that reports on a symposium organized by the German National Academy of the Sciences Leopoldina, which relates to an upcoming conference on the "Future of Prognostics" at the IKGF. In *Focus*, we go back in time again and proudly present to you the first complete and commented German translation of the *Visio Tnugdali*, a bestseller of the Middle Ages on the afterlife, that has been published by IKGF Research Fellow Dr. Hans-Christian Lehner and Maximilian Nix.

This issue further contains summaries of papers delivered during the IKGF Lecture Series of winter term 2017/18 as well as short reports of workshops and conferences. *The Yijing. Alternative Visions and Practices* was a workshop that explored the role of the Yijing as a manual of divination. Together with the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin, we organized a further workshop, *Unlocking Skills: Gaining and Performing Expertise in Pre-1911 China*, that investigated the topic of expert knowledge. Finally, scholars working in the fields of Europe, Byzantine, Islam, Tibet, and China gathered at the Consortium to participate in the comparative conference, the *End(s) of Time(s)*, that attempted to shed light on the millennialist thought and movements in different cultures.

As usual, I wish you a pleasurable reading experience and welcome your comments and suggestions!

Dr. Rolf Scheuermann
(Research Coordinator)

Title page: China Watercolour Illustrating Silk Production in the 1800s, Art and Architecture Collection, Public domain; source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/At_a_spinning_wheel_making_a_skein_of_silk.jpg.

The IKGF at the Leopoldina

The IKGF and Contemporary Prognostics



Prof. Dr. Michael Lackner, director of the IKGF

In the ten years since its inception, the IKGF has dealt intensively with the traditional methods and techniques of interpreting the future, prophecies, and views on fate. Our research has focused on China, Japan, Tibet, and particularly pre-modern Europe but visiting scholars have also looked at Africa, India and Mesoamerica. The term “pre-modern,” however, only applies to the time of origin of these phenomena, whereas a number of these methods and techniques remain in widespread use – here one could take Chinese fate calculation or astrology as an example.

With partially ironic undertones, comparisons have been drawn with contemporary forms of prognostication, likening the emergence of the German “economic wise men” (*Wirtschaftsweise*) and their public resonance to the oracle priests of Mesopotamia or Chinese Antiquity. Regardless of the respective theoretical justifications and practical methods concerned, the importance of prognostication in providing guidance and decision-making tools permeates the whole history of humanity up until the present day. The only thing that matters is plausibility – as has been proven numerous times, particularly by Stefan Maul, a member of our scientific advisory board.

However, a systematic investigation of contemporary techniques of prognostication, which are based on the prevailing view of science, has not yet been undertaken by the IKGF due to the abundance of historical materials that needed to be analyzed. Now, a first step in this direction has been undertaken by three members of the German National Academy of the Sciences Leopoldina (Alfons Labisch, Stefan Maul, and the signatory) at the conference held in Halle on October 8-10, 2018. This conference was entitled “Kann Wissenschaft in die Zukunft sehen? Prognose in den Wissenschaften” (Can science look into the future? Prognostication in the sciences) and a detailed report in German can be found online: <https://www.hsozkult.de/searching/id/tagungsberichte-8096?title=kann-wissenschaft-in-die-zukunft-sehen-prognosen-in-den-wissenschaften&q=Kann%20die%20wissenschaft%20in%20die%20zukunft%20sehen&sort=&fq=&total=720&recno=16&sub-Type=fdkn>.

Here, I will only mention a few contributions that are particularly relevant to the work of the IKGF.

Are there “reliable” and “unreliable” prognoses, and is such a differentiation at all permissible? Through predictions of the movement of the earth’s magnetic field (pole migration), geophysicist Karl-Heinz Glassmeier concluded that it were, above all, the “low-dimensional” models that opened up a “space of possibilities” within which qualitative rather than quantitative predictions were realistic. Alfons Labisch similarly pointed to the “action spaces” that prognostication is able to create. Predictions indicate tendencies and thus undermine a strictly deterministic view of the world, because they give the questioner the opportunity to “negotiate” with the future or with fate already in the here and now. Examples drawn from Tibet (Brandon Dotson), China (Michael Lackner) and Africa (Klaus Hock) clearly substantiate this hypothesis.

The more complex the object of prognostication, the more difficult – if not outright impossible – it will become to

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account for all of the factors involved; this fact has already been bemoaned by Albertus Magnus (†1280), the Chinese philosopher Zhu Xi (1130-1200) as well as the French religious scholar and sociologist Georges Dumézil (1898-1986). Numerous presentations at the Leopoldina conference debated this issue, although the degree of individual trust in the “credibility” of a prognostication differed greatly from presentation to presentation, ranging from cautious optimism to critical distance. Especially dependent on the trustworthiness of predictions – either favorable or unfavorable in nature – was the physician in antiquity, as his reputation was at stake (Karl-Heinz Leven). Klaus-Dieter Herbst, in turn, showed how the trust in astrology, that had lasted for centuries, was ultimately shattered through debates within the discipline regarding the solar eclipse of 1654, which caused its decline as the leading discipline of prognostication.

Several lectures critically dealt with the issue of “big data”: Klaus Fiedler argued that, despite the astonishingly reliable predictions made based on large amounts of data, the empirical world remains multi-causal in nature. This limits the significance of the statistical models as long as one does not deal with the underlying concept of causality. A majority of contemporary prognostics deals with the future of collectives, considering for example climate research (including bio diversity, Christian Hof), demographics, economics, and much more. However, the fate of the individual remains the object of predictions as well: this was emphasized in the presentations of Stefanie Ritz-Timme and Henning Sass, who examined the prognostic nature of forensic science. In their presentations, too, there were parallels to traditional forms of prognostication.

The concluding discussion was mainly dedicated to ethical questions related to prognostication; only a communication that relentlessly addresses the uncertainties involved in any prediction and the “realm of possibilities” thus created can initiate a rational reception of its more or less plausible nature and, thus, will foster an open discussion.

The IKGf will continue the debate about prognostication in July 2019 with a conference entitled “The Future of Prognostics. What we can predict today and tomorrow”, which will be organized by Christof Niederwieser (IKGF fellow) and myself. At this conference, renowned experts in both the theory and

the practical application will show how they make prognoses and how these shape their strategic decisions about the future. In doing so, they provide insight into topics such as election forecasts, demographics, climate research, meteorology, artificial intelligence in genetics and psychiatry, scenario development and innovation management in a large global corporation, experiences from trend research and futurology, as well as risk management in reinsurance. Further insights will be provided by geological history concerning the possibility of predicting environmental developments as well as social psychology and decision-making concerning the relationship between complex and “simple” (see above: “low-dimensional”) predictions. The lectures and panel discussions will not only highlight the major developments and challenges of modern prediction methods and techniques, but also venture to give an outlook on what forecasting in 2050 might look like.

The IKGf’s long research experience, in dialogue with the scientists present, will hopefully allow for reflections on the continuities and breaks within the history of prognostication as an anthropological constant. In turn, questions about the “certainty” or “uncertainty” of forecasts, the ethical responsibility of the forecaster and the consideration of different techniques, the problem of “big data” in connection with stochastic models, as well as the relationship between producers and “recipients” of prognoses will be our focus. From a long-term perspective, the IKGf wishes to contribute to developing the elements of a comprehensive theory of prognostication. This requires both a certain historical depth and a better knowledge of current forms of prediction.

Prof. Dr. Michael Lackner
(IKGF, Director)

Annotated translation of the *Visio Tnugdali*

Marcus von Regensburg, *Visio Tnugdali*, ed./transl./comm. by Hans-Christian Lehner & Maximilian Nix, Freiburg i. Br. 2018 (Fontes Christiani 74).

The *Visio Tnugdali*, a text created in the mid-12th century, was a medieval bestseller. It is not just the sheer number of copies (more than 150 manuscripts, numerous vernacular translations) that makes this vision of the afterlife worth studying. The journey of the Irish knight Tnugdál through otherworldly places, as related by the monk Marcus, who probably worked in Regensburg and about whom little is known, is an impressive testimony to collective ideas about the last things that await every human being in the hereafter. The way through fire and sulfur to the heavenly places thereby becomes an expression of the human curiosity to illuminate the arcane itself and nevertheless shows through the theological foundation of the text how such a daring transfer of knowledge – since it ultimately moves on the borders of heresy – can succeed. From the research at the IKGF Erlangen results, for the first time, a complete, extensively annotated German translation of this intensive expression of medieval beliefs, which is based on a new edition of the Erlangen manuscript of the Latin text.

The *Visio Tnugdali* is one of the most outstanding journeys to the afterlife. Due to its religious theme, it can be understood as the vehicle of its time-bound culture, giving an insight into the imaginings of the 12th century. The powerful visual language remains fascinating to this day and may have had an even bigger effect on its contemporaries. In addition, the complex combination of theological content and various other knowledge systems of the time, as the edition tries to show in the annotations, demonstrates the (religious) richness of the text, which thus makes seemingly forgotten aspects of reality accessible to the modern recipient. There are 16 manuscripts that have been written in relative temporal proximity to the emergence of the *Tnugdál-text*. In accordance with all early manuscripts, the *Visio Tnugdali* is dated to 1149. For the translation, an edition of manuscript Ms. 231 of the University Library Erlangen was produced; the edition refers in doubtful cases to other readings of early manuscripts of the *Visio*. The

Erlangen manuscript, probably dating to the 1170s or 80s, is one of the earliest 12th century textual witnesses.

The protagonist of the *Visio* is the Irish knight Tnugdál. He is described as proud, easy-going and not very faithful. One day, he visits a friend, who owed him money, in order to collect his debts. Since the friend was unable to pay off his debt, to appease Tnugdál, he invited him to dine with him. While eating, the knight collapsed in the middle of the conversation, showing all signs of death, with only a slight warmth emanating from the left side of his body preventing the bystanders from burying him. For three days, he lay unconscious, while his soul was led by an angel through the spaces of the afterlife. From the house of the debtor, they travel to the “deepest depths”, visit all kinds of penitentiaries, in which he also must suffer, until they reach Lucifer, the prince of shadows. From there, they continue their journey to the spheres of heavenly wages until Tnugdál’s soul finally must return to the body. From then on, Tnugdál leads a purified, godly life. Thus, the didactical message of the text is that the immediate future was neither contingent nor preordained, but could instead be influenced by recognizing past behaviors and reforming them.

The text is written in a strict, chapter-wise form. In addition, the work is constructed in the manner of a scholastic doctrinal conversation in which Tnugdál’s soul assumes the role of the disciple, putting brief questions to the angel, who then replies in the role of the teacher.

The author of the *Visio* refers to himself as Frater Marcus and thus does not reveal any more in his complete work than that he was a monk named Marcus. Due to the impact of his work, many attempts have been made to develop a clearer idea of this person, but in vain. Due to the very limited information that the author gives about himself, scholars could only draw conclusions about the person from his text. Thus, in some of the information associated with the *Visio Tnugdali*,

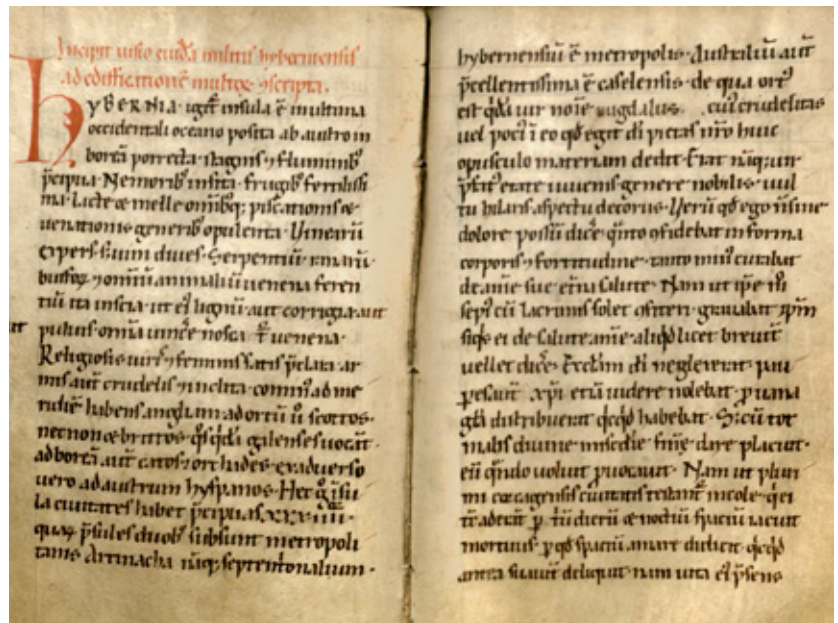
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autobiographical messages from Marcus were detected. This concerns, first and foremost, the description of the meeting with the former King of Munster, Cormac Mac Carthaig (d. 1138), in the chapter *De Cormacho rege*, from which it has been concluded that Marcus had been employed at the royal court in Cashel: following the death of the king, he had supposedly received the vision from the mouth of Tnugdál and had then, via Clairvaux, arrived in Regensburg.ⁱ

It seems most likely that Marcus was a native Irishman because, in his *Visio*, he explains that Tnugdál reported his experiences in the vernacular language (*barbarico eloquio*). His knowledge of the land, such as in the exuberant description of the island at the beginning of the text, and the description of the “peculiarities” of the people, such as, for example, their use of the battle axe, might suggest that Marcus himself was of Irish descent. On the other hand, his Latin contains no clues that would indicate in any way the Latin of an Irishman of the 11th or 12th centuries, wherefore it has been suggested that Marcus was instead a monk of the continent. Possibly, he was an itinerant monk who had been trained at one of the Irish monasteries on the continent.ⁱⁱ Furthermore, as the edition shows, the information about Ireland – and in part also about Irish events – is not necessarily to be described as exclusive, but is found either in other texts or is even a quotation itself.

The South German monk Alber of Windberg provides information about the location of the recording in his vernacular adaptation of the *Visio*, made around 1191. Alber notes that Marcus wrote the report in the Regensburg Nunnery St. Paul.ⁱⁱⁱ In research, however, the view has prevailed that the recording took place in the Regensburg *Schottenkloster* St. Jakob.^{iv} This is also supported by the fact that the Irish kings mentioned in the text have a close relationship with the abbots of St. Jacob and that King Cormac is remembered in the obituary of this monastery. In any case, the text was most widely disseminated in Southern Germany.

This new and extensively annotated translation provides an in-depth insight into historical notions of the individual and collective future after an earthly death. It also contributes to ongoing research on the role of the visionary, since journeys to the afterlife provided information about the future and therefore functioned to some degree as a medium of prophecy. Accordingly, these texts provide information about the future by revealing otherworldly certainties (in the case of Tnugdál, we find information about a number of historical persons in the hereafter). In this regard, the visionary received the authority of a prophet by revealing divine secrets.



Ms. 231 fol. 158v., University Library of the FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg

- i) John Drelincourt Seymour, *Studies in the Vision of Tundal*, in: *Proceedings of the Irish Academy*, 37C (1926), pp. 88–90.
- ii) Jean-Michel Picard/Yolande de Pontfarcy, *Vision of Tnugdál*, Dublin 1989, p. 82.
- iii) Cf. *sīt brāht ez ein münich quot / ze Regensburg in die stat. / dō wīsete in daz phat / ze einer samenungen, / dā sint vrouwen nunnan, / von sante Paul ist ez genannt: – Albrecht Wagner*, *Visio Tnugdali*, Erlangen 1882, p. 122.
- iv) Herrad Spilling, *Die Visio Tnugdali. Eigenart und Stellung in der mittelalterlichen Visionsliteratur bis zum Ende des 12. Jahrhunderts*, Munich 1975, p. 12.

LECTURE SERIES WS 2017/18

Overview of the lectures in the winter semester 2017/18

17.10.2017: Between Contingency and Predestination: Prognostication, Hermeneutics, and Narrative Structure in Diary-Novels of Republican China **Carsten Storm** (*Chinese Studies, FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg; IKGf Visiting Fellow*)

07.11.2017: Old Uyghur Divination Literature and Its Relationship with the Chinese Tradition
Yukiyo Kasai (*Turkish Studies, Ruhr-University Bochum*)

14.11.2017: Fortuna Maris - and How to Handle Her: Strategies to Cope with the Dangers of the Sea in Renaissance Italy
Benjamin Scheller (*History of the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period, University of Duisburg-Essen*)

28.11.2017: When Astrologers Fail: Effects of and Approaches to Erroneous Prognostications in the Late Middle Ages
Klaus Oschema (*History of the Middle Ages, Ruhr-University Bochum*)

05.12.2017: Divination in Mesoamerica: A Case of Reading Maize among the Mixe of Oaxaca, Mexico
Araceli Rojas Martinez Gracida (*Archaeology; IKGf Visiting Fellow*)

19.12.2017: Games, Chance, and Prediction in Medieval Everyday Life
Matthias Heiduk (*Medieval History; IKGf Research Fellow*)

09.01.2018: Adapting versus Conforming: Two Models of Agency in the Context of Early Chinese Divination Practice
Mercedes M. Valmisa Oviedo (*Chinese Studies, Princeton University; IKGf Visiting Fellow*)

16.01.2018: Spirit-Writing Communities and the Uncertainty of the Future in Late Imperial Sichuan
Elena Valussi (*Chinese Religions, Loyola University Chicago; IKGf Visiting Fellow*)

23.01.2018: Face to Face with the Gods: Rituals for Obtaining Knowledge and Power in the Magical Papyri from Roman-Period Egypt
Svenja Nagel (*Egyptology, Heidelberg University*)

06.02.2018: The Beheaded Astrologer: Ramon Llull on the Epistemological Foundations of Astrology
Alexander Fidora (*Medieval Studies, Catalan Institution for Research and Advanced Studies/Autonomous University of Barcelona*)

LECTURE SERIES

Tuesday Evenings 6:15 - 7:45 p.m.

During the semester, the IKGf holds a lecture series at which the visiting fellows are given the opportunity to present results of their research and invited guests lecture on the topic of the consortium from the perspective of their respective expertise. In the following the presenters of the past winter semester 2017/18 summarize their contributions. The lectures of the summer semester 2018 will be part of the next issue of *fate*.

LECTURE SERIES WS 2017/18

Between Contingency and Predestination: Prognostication, Hermeneutics, and Narrative Structure in Diary-Novels of Republican China

Carsten Storm (*Chinese Studies, FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg; IKGf Visiting Fellow*)

The genre of diary novels reflects the conception of the modern human being: an exodus from the old society into individualism, subjectivity, progress and an open future for the individual. Optionality and the open future raise uncertainty; an uncertainty with which the individual must somehow cope.

For this, the diary novel appears to be the optimal form. It focusses on the single individual who is the center of his or her world and tries to make sense of it and develops a meaningful worldview. It borrows the notions of authenticity, immediacy, intimacy, and truthfulness, but also contingency and an open

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future, from the real diary, especially from the European type of the *journal intime*, that was vividly perceived by the May-Fourth authors, among many others Lu Xun, Lu Yin, and Shi Pingmei, with whom this lecture will deal.

Lorna Martens, in her volume *The Diary Novel*, writes: “The diaristic in medias res implies a state of turmoil or excitement, **an inability to predict the future**, [...]” (3) However, in this lecture, I argue that the diary novel is nonetheless obsessed with the attempt to predict the future.

As novels, these texts establish narrative structures which do not merely lay out an overall theme but also a telos that applies to the author, the reader, and the fictional writer of the diary (Walhout). The assumption of a narrative telos turns the story, together with the story world as a whole, into a reservoir of signs that are interpretable in relation to this telos. In this sense, we can say that a teleological structure of narration turns the narrated story-world into a principally predictable one. This effect can be seen on two levels: the intra-textual one and the perceptual one.

On the intra-textual level, that is the story-world in which the writer composes his/her diary, the protagonists are coping with a modern, optional fate and are thus frantically seeking signs and indications of their future in the present in order to be able to act. Fictionalizing the diary form thus results in transforming the quotidian and contingent into a teleological narrative structure. Thereby, the story-world is charged with an increased density of meaning. Paradoxically, the fictional form of the diary provokes a re-enchantment of the world. The writers are set in a world that is full of signs which need to and can be interpreted. The juvenile writers on the quest for a modern self

(and against tradition) are the high priests of modernity and adequate diviners on their own behalf.

On the perceptual level, we as readers do read and interpret the signs or textual signals and make assumptions regarding what exactly the telos might be and which path the plot and the characters may take. That is a usual hermeneutic process in reading fiction of any kind. As much as hermeneutics refers to the ongoing process of understanding the text while reading in the present, so much it aims at the future in which the meaning in a more comprehensive and coherent form than it exists at present will become manifest. This is probably one of the issues that link literature and divination. Both provide signs, more or less hidden, that need to be revealed and interpreted in order to make sense and at least try to predict what the closure of the single narration or of the single fate might be. In this sense, interpreting signs is a method or possibility to manipulate the effects of chance and coincidence by integrating them into a sense of coherence.



Carsten Storm (Photo: author)

Old Uyghur Divination Literature and its Relationship with the Chinese Tradition

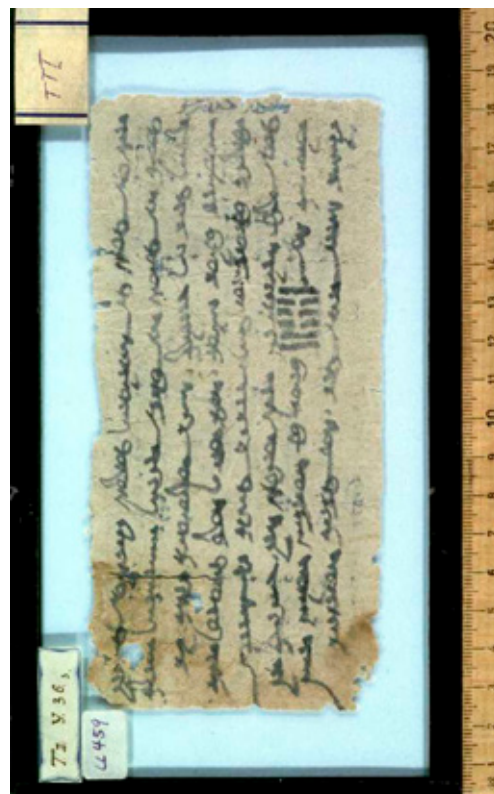
Yukiyo Kasai (*Turkish Studies, Ruhr-University Bochum*)

Uyghur communities in Central Asia, who originally stem from today's Mongolia, first worshipped their own traditional religion but, due to their changing cultural environment, came to accept different religions over the course of time. Those changes are also reflected in their literature, which was most-

ly written in their own language (Old Uyghur) and script (Uyghur script). The main part of the surviving corpus was found in the Tianshan 天山 area (today: Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Re-

gion of the People's Republic of China) where the Uyghurs founded their kingdom in the mid-9th century. Those materials, which can generally be dated to between the mid-9th and the 14th century, are fragmentary and have come down to us by chance, but they are still the richest sources of information about the religious and spiritual world of the Uyghurs.

Among the Old Uyghur sources, Buddhist texts, including various commentaries and praises, form the strong majority, and the Chinese influence on many of them is clear. This situation also applies to the divination texts, although the number of the latter is significantly smaller. One Old Uyghur text, for example, shows many similarities with the most famous Chinese divination text, the *Yijing* 易經, while another forms part of the *Yuxiaji* 玉匣記, a kind of calendar book that contains useful information about everyday life, including simple divination. The general problem with those Old Uyghur divination texts, with a very probable Chinese origin, is, however, that none of them corresponds to their Chinese counterpart word by word. This is already well known through the study of Old Uyghur Buddhist texts. Although it is possible that there had once been a Chinese original corresponding exactly to its Old Uyghur version, a more convincing assumption is that these differences indicate how far the Uyghurs included their own ideas in the translation process and made the divinatory texts more suitable to their own cultural background. In that regard, divination texts also show the rich culture of the Turkish-speaking people at that time.



Old Uyghur Text showing similarities to the *Yijing*, U 459 (T II Y 36.3), Depositum der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung.

***Fortuna Maris* - and How to Handle Her: Strategies to Cope with the Dangers of the Sea in Renaissance Italy**

Benjamin Scheller (*History of the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period, University of Duisburg-Essen*)

This lecture focused on the strategies that the merchants of the late Medieval Mediterranean pursued in order to cope with the dangers of the sea. It approached the strategies themselves, their effectiveness, their specific logic, and the interrelations between them, thus placing them in the history of man's dealings with contingency. Shipwrecks and piracy, after all, were nothing other than contingent damage that was perceived as such by contemporaries.

The state of research on both the history of shipwrecks and piracy in the Mediterranean of the later Middle Ages is quite disparate, not least because references to shipwrecks and capture by pirates, corsairs, or the captains of enemy fleets are irregularly documented and scattered across very different

types of sources. Yet, sources from fifteenth-century Venice allow us to paint a relatively detailed picture of the maritime perils existing at that time and the strategies that were pursued to handle them.

Military surveillance by squadrons of galleys and the organization of convoys were preventive strategies regarding the maritime peril of piracy. The Venetian sources show that, by the standards of the time, they were

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remarkably efficient. A particular and very important practice, however, was marine insurance. It dealt not only with the danger of piracy but also with that of shipwrecks and the extremely rare instances of ships catching fire. In handling maritime hazards in all of its manifestations, marine insurance had a particular logic. It was not based on the concept of prevention, which strives to prevent damage occurring as far as possible. Rather, it was based on the idea of financial compensation for damage that had already occurred.

Yet, marine Insurance as a business could only function as long as the hazards that were insured materialized rarely and earnings from the insurance-premiums were higher than the expenses for the financial compensation of damage. Holding pirates at bay, the Venetian squadrons and convoys lowered the danger levels and allowed the Venetian merchants to make the residual hazards the objects of their financial calculations.

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Benjamin Scheller at the IKGF (Photo: IKGF)

When Astrologers Fail: Effects of and Approaches to Erroneous Prognostications in the Late Middle Ages

Klaus Oschema (*History of the Middle Ages, Ruhr-University Bochum*)

Over the last two to three decades, a series of detailed studies (by J.-P. Boudet, M. Azzolini, D. Hayton, H. Carey, G. Mentgen, to name but a few) has convincingly demonstrated that late medieval astrologers played an important and prominent role (or, indeed, roles) in a wide variety of contexts, including the courts and the universities. My presentation builds on these

contributions and proposes to analyze late medieval astrologers, who had often been educated at the universities and practiced as physicians or scholars in mathematics, as experts and scientific political advisers. In this specific context, I ask, why moments of «failure» (e.g. through erroneous prognostications) did not apparently hinder astrologers either as individuals and also as a group from acquiring and retaining important positions in which they functioned as advisers to princes etc. This question seems all the more important and intriguing, since documented cases about erroneous prognostications – let alone severe consequences for their authors – appear to be relatively rare.



Klaus Oschema at the IKGF (Photo: IKGF)

In order to develop an answer that allows for the inclusion of several potential reasons, I propose a categorical framework, which distinguishes several levels and dimensions of expertise, its function, and its perception. A first set of «casuistic» distinctions mainly considers the use of expertise about the future for orientation in the present as well as the socio-political dynamics that the reliance on experts creates in the setting of the late-medieval courts. A second set of distinctions relies more heavily on recent research on modern (contemporary) expertise and forecasts (P. Tetlock, M. Spiwoks) and seeks to explain the low numbers of documented astrologers who failed, together with the series of psychological effects that resulted in a reduced perception and recollection of pertinent cases.

Divination in Mesoamerica: A Case of Reading Maize among the Mixe of Oaxaca, Mexico

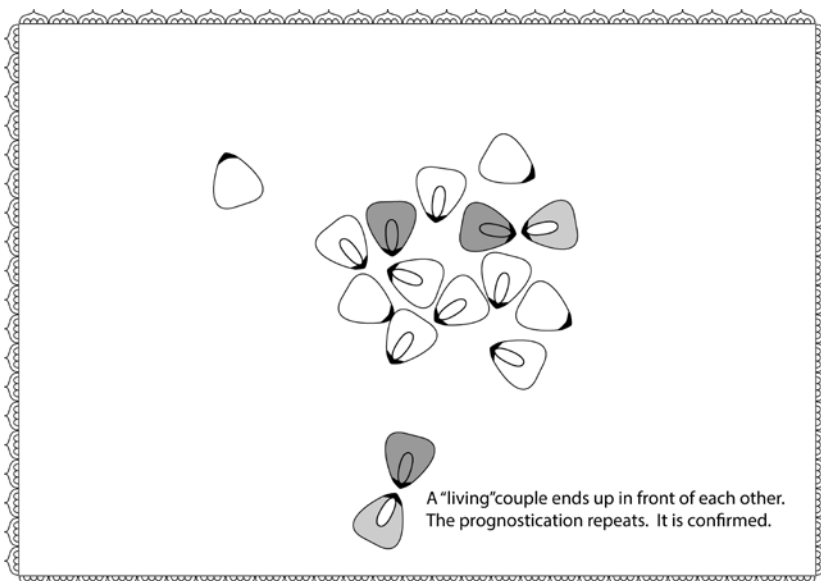
Araceli Rojas Martinez Gracida (Archaeology; IKGf Visiting Fellow)

The calendar of 260 days, made up of a combination of 20 signs and 13 numbers, was one of the essential traits of ancient Mesoamerican civilizations. It scheduled festivities, market days, and ceremonies for the gods, gave name to persons, and was used to prognosticate, cure illnesses, and perform rituals for achieving different goals. Fascinatingly, this calendar system persists in several contemporary communities in Mexico and Guatemala, where it is still used by day-keepers who are also experts in ritual, divination, and medicine. This talk offered a brief account of one of these calendars, among the Ayöök (Mixe) people of Oaxaca, Mexico. Derived from this, an analysis was presented, designed to illuminate each of the combination of signs and numbers, 260 in total, which offer four different layers of general prognostication, ritual prescription, tendencies of personality depending on the time of birth, and the intensity of each of these features.

Furthermore, this talk showed that the consultation of the calendar, which is usually undertaken by those under affliction due to a loss of money or possessions, bad dreams, omens, and fortune, sickness, inquiries regarding matrimonial unions, fertility problems, and the outcome of travels or new enterprises, is intrinsically connected to the practice of casting maize seeds. This mantic technique is a tool


used by the day-keepers, *xëë maypë* in the Ayöök language, as a confirmation of the diagnosis already given by the prognostications of time using the 260-day calendar. Afterwards, the *xëë maypë* will prescribe the best cure for illnesses or a method for mitigating the announcement of danger originating from a lack of ritual norms and disrespect to the Earth, deities, and ancestors. Reading maize is here approached as a tool that provides images that can be read with its own rules of syntax and as a means of gaining consciousness of oneself. Therefore, it is considered a therapeutic tool which offers relief and triggers action.

The above data shed light on the use of the 260-day-calendar and mantic techniques which were used in precolonial times by the *tonalpouhque*, among the Aztec, experts in creating and consulting the pictorial manuscripts with calendrical, ritual and oracular content, such as what are now known as the Borgia Group codices. Along these lines, historical and colonial accounts, origin narratives, visual culture, the archaeology surrounding divination, and the ethnographic data recently recovered were used to examine the ancient uses of the 260-calendar and maize divination. Finally, this investigation attempted to honor the wisdom of the contemporary Ayöök day-keepers, who resist the onslaught of a colonized and globalized world.



In this throw, the couple ends up separated. One of them clearly moves away from the other and even encounters other "living" seed. The image occurs twice in the same throw. It may be indication of infidelity.

Casting Maize Seeds (Image: author)

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Fate, Freedom and Prognostication. Strategies for Coping with the Future in East Asia and Europe

Games, Chance, and Prediction in Medieval Everyday Life

Matthias Heiduk (*Medieval History; IKGf Research Fellow*)

Where are the boundaries between games and divination? Is it even possible to draw a clear dividing line between them or are both categories inextricably inter-linked? These questions might appear strange as, in many cultures, divination is counted among the central religious and sometimes even state-supporting rituals. Hence, the comparison with childish or leisure activities such as games appears absurd. However, material artefacts indicate an inextricable similarity between the two: dice, card games, and lots were used for both purposes, for joint amusement as well as for predicting the future. This talk showed that, for games and divination, there existed in Medieval Latin Europe a common semantic field consisting of concepts such as contingency, chance, risk, speculation, and calculation. The “Book of Games” of King Alfonso X of Castile (d. 1284) served as a main thread for the talk. Its exquisite illuminations illustrate the importance of games for all groups in medieval societies and its categorization of games reflects the contemporary notion of contingency in gaming as well as in real life.

This talk differentiated its historical examples into three areas: 1) the etymological and metaphorical connections between games and divination, 2) contingency and medieval game culture, and 3) playful practices of divination. The etymology of many words in Latin and the Western vernacular languages indicates the common semantics of contingency, games, risk, and prediction (e.g. *alea*, *sors*, *chance*, *venture*, *losen*, *hazard*). The Medieval literature ex-

pressed this verbal connection also in its metaphors. The courtly poetry of Wolfram of Eschenbach (d. ca. 1220) is a striking example; especially his “Percival” identified the whole existence as a knight with the imponderability of dice gaming. From a modern perspective, people in Medieval times enjoyed an incredible amount of leisure time, because the Christian calendar prohibited work on nearly every third day. All social groups in Medieval societies used most of this time for excessive feast-

ing and gaming, particularly for gambling with dice and, at the end of the Middle Ages, also for playing cards. Players often lost all of their possessions, as Rutebeuf (d. ca. 1285) impressively shows when he laments his destructive addiction to gambling. The church and later secular powers tried to forbid or at least control this mania for games but without success (e.g. Southern German “Weisthümer” from the late Middle Ages). The connection of games and divination in medieval practices is best demonstrated by books of fate which use randomizing mechanisms like dice or playing cards to indicate oracles or emphasize their playful character through their features and their invitation

to amusement (e.g. “Sortes Sanctorum” from late antiquity, book with cards from Mainz (late 15th century), book of Konrad Bollstatter (d. ca. 1483)). The anonymous author of “De vetula” (13th century) used his tables of dice combinations to show that the throwing of dice could be calculated based on probabilities. The outstanding example of the “chess of spheres” from



Chess of Spheres
 (“Libro de los Juegos”, El Escorial Ms. T.j.6, fol. 96v; Photo: public domain,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:F96V.jpg>)

King Alfonso's "Book of Games" indicates the didactical use of games to teach the basics of astrology.

The examples of mantic practices presented during the talk not only used game artefacts like dice but also featured several characteristics typical of games. They served as a form of amusement, similarly feature an element of suspense due to the uncertainty of the outcome, and sometimes fulfilled didactical as well as agonal functions, like, for example, the

"chess of spheres." The boundaries with gaming are blurred in such a way that mantic practices could be described as games of fortune telling. Considering these similarities, the concluding questions remain: Does divination also provide the function of imitation used in games? Is divination sometimes just pretending? Can the origins of divination possibly be found in the playful imitation of coincidence caused by the cosmic and metaphysical forces to which people felt they were subject?

Adapting versus Conforming: Two Models of Agency in the Context of Early Chinese Divination Practices

Mercedes Valmisa (*Chinese Studies, Princeton University; IKGf Visiting Fellow*)

This talk deals with the problems of coping with the future and decision-making from the perspective of Early Chinese philosophy. In response to these problems, I distinguish two distinct models of human agency: *adapting* (adaptive agency) and *conforming* (prescriptive agency). Adaptation is the process whereby the agent purposively adjusts to the context in order to deal with an arising situation in the

most efficacious way possible. For an adaptive agent, the situation and overall circumstances, including the agent's features, becomes the only parameters through which to judge the best course of action, given certain intended goals. In contrast, prescriptive agents behave in conformity with certain pre-established, non-negotiable, fixed guidelines for action that are given to them (i.e. cyclical cosmic patterns, as reflected in transmitted calendars or daybooks).

Narratives about divinatory practices in *Hanshu* 漢書 and *Zuozhuan* 左傳 provide me with a common ground and context for contrasting the two models of agency. As it happens, whereas users of mantic methods are overwhelmingly qualified as conforming agents, diviners or interpreters of mantic methods are often represented as adaptive agents. I distinguish two different kinds of adaptability in interpreting the divination results: minimal adaptability, namely adapting the mantic message to a particular context and the overall problem at hand, which is a question of professional expertise; and radical adaptability, which not only involves interpreting the results contextually but also tailoring them to the needs or desires of the user, interpreter, or both. The latter points at a use of divination as expedient means that takes advantage of the users' belief in the mantic system to send a persuasive message, regardless of the results obtained through divination.

The representation of divinatory practices in these narratives are not about obtaining prophetic results, but about what to do with them in order to affect the future, to modify the state of affairs in a particular direction. If this is the case, we should ask whether these are examples of mantic practice, or whether they should be accounted as a sort of political action.



Mercedes Valmisa at the IKGf (Photo: IKGf)

Fate, Freedom and Prognostication. Strategies for Coping with the Future in East Asia and Europe

Spirit-Writing Communities and the Uncertainty of the Future in Late Imperial Sichuan

Elena Valussi (*Chinese Religions, Loyola University Chicago; IKGf Visiting Fellow*)

Spirit writing in China is a religious technique that connects a person, or more often a community, gathered around an altar to a specific divinity in an effort to respond to personal requests, seek positive outcomes, and obtain general moral guidance. The divinity responds by dictating scriptures through the body of a medium.



Spirit-written text ascribed to Lü Dongbin (Photo: author)

This practice forms part of a larger context of 'divine revelations', which have a long history in Chinese religions, especially Daoism. This specific practice has an attested beginning in the 11th century, with the Zigu 紫姑 cult, but it flourished and developed in specific ways in the late Imperial and Republican periods.

Until a decade ago, much research focused on contemporary practices in Taiwan while very few works had appeared on mainland China. In the past few years, the research has increased

and been focused on the area of Hong Kong and Guangdong, where this practice remains very active. Most of this research, however, is of an anthropological and sociological nature and focuses on the contemporary period. Only in the past few years has attention been paid to the historical development of spirit writing in certain regions of China, still mainly in southern China, where materials are more readily available and the tradition remains strong. Lü Dongbin is one of the most common divinities to descend onto spirit writing altars, both historically and today.

In my presentation, I built upon this work and focused on the Sichuan case which so far has not been investigated or discussed in a comprehensive manner. In this context, I addressed the following questions: Was there a cult of Lü Dongbin in Sichuan in the mid to late Qing (1644-1911) and, if so, how was it connected to the larger context of Lü Dongbin worship activities in China? Did the cult of Lü Dongbin in Sichuan develop within the circuit of Daoist monasteries and/or did it attract wide support outside the monastery community? Were there active spirit writing communities receiving texts from Lü in Sichuan and, if so, were these in any way connected to other such communities across China? Finally, how can we define these lay communities?

My research traces the diffusion of Lü Dongbin worship from the coastal areas to Sichuan in the nineteenth century. This transmission is linked to different but intertwined processes:

- The widespread diffusion of spirit writing and local printing presses in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries
- The mass migration to Sichuan from the coastal areas throughout the Qing and especially in the nineteenth century
- The popularity of the Lü cult, and the Emperor's canonization of Lü Dongbin in 1804
- The popularity of charitable activities like the *xizi* 惜字 practice among the Confucian literati, spreading from the coastal areas throughout China

In my presentation, I discussed three examples of spirit writing communities in Sichuan.

These examples are very different in terms of the composition of the communities, the gods they worshipped, and the literature they produced. However, they display commonalities. One of the preliminary findings of this survey is that, while there is certainly widespread evidence of Lü worship in Sichuan, this did not develop as early as it did in the coastal areas. One reason for this, and another important finding, is that, in some cases, the Lü cult was connected to communities of migrant merchants originating from the coastal areas, especially Jiangxi, where the Lü cult first spread, who brought their religious beliefs and practices with them to Sichuan. Thus, these local cults, even

when developed by local agents, in fact display features, as evident in the texts received and collected, that connect them to a wider context. In Sichuan, these new communities existed side by side with older local cults, such as those dedicated to river-gods, which were slowly supplanted by, or continued to exist side by side with, the Lü cult.

Much still remains to be uncovered about the religious practices of Sichuan. For this reason, my colleague, Stefania Travagnin, and I jointly applied for and received a grant from the Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation to study religious diversity in Sichuan. The ongoing results of this project are available online at: <https://sichuanreligions.com>.

Face to Face with the Gods: Rituals for Obtaining Knowledge and Power in the Magical Papyri from Roman-Period Egypt

Svenja Nagel (*Egyptology, Heidelberg University*)

Within the framework of an interdisciplinary project, I have studied the divination rituals in the Greek and Demotic magical papyri (PGM and PDM), together with my colleague Dr. Ljuba Bortolani. The sources are instructions for complex rituals which are contained in large papyrus handbooks from Roman Egypt, most of them dating from the 2nd to the 5th centuries CE, but with some earlier forerunners. These handbooks comprise various types or genres of magical spells, and divination rituals constitute one of the largest groups.

Under the superordinate term “divination rituals,” we understand all of the different techniques that are employed to establish contact with the divine, or supernatural, world for the purpose of gaining knowledge, decision help, or mystical power – whether from a god or other supernatural being. The focus of our work is especially on those rituals that aim to evoke a direct manifestation of the deity or other supernatural being, who then communicates with the diviner or medium (= “inspired divination” or “apparition rituals”). The rituals of this type contained in the magical papyri can be roughly subdivided according to the different ritual techniques and the central medium used to produce the intended contact with the divine:

- Direct Visions
- Dream Oracles
- Bowl Divination
- Lamp Divination
- Sunlight Divination
- Divination with a medium (which is applicable to the majority of the techniques)



Fate, Freedom and Prognostication. Strategies for Coping with the Future in East Asia and Europe

Furthermore, there are spells for multiple purposes which can also be used for divinatory ends, e.g. necromantic techniques. A detailed, synoptical study of all the spells belonging to each divination technique, as demonstrated by the example of lamp divination, often allows us to draw up a tentative stemma of the pertaining spells, to trace back their diverse cultural influences, and to explain – at least in some cases – how they have

converged. A close observation of the described ritual techniques and recitations demonstrate that the main focus of the divination rituals in the magical papyri was the establishment of a ritual environment in which an encounter with the divine world and its higher beings became possible.

The Beheaded Astrologer: Ramon Llull on the Epistemological Foundations of Astrology

Alexander Fidora (*Medieval Studies, Catalan Institution for Research and Advanced Studies/Autonomous University of Barcelona*)

In his encyclopedic work, *Arbor scientiae* (Rome 1296), the Catalan philosopher and lay theologian Ramon Llull formulated a full-blown critique of astrology that he illustrates with a short story: Once, an astrologer made a prediction to a king that, within a year, he would die of an illness. The ruler's condition indeed worsened every day – because of the emotional pain, as Llull explains. A knight, who was able to see through the deceit, tried to pacify the king, but in vain. Finally, he approached the astrologer in the king's company and enquired how long he (the astrologer) would live. The astrologer replied that he would live for another ten years. Thereupon, the knight drew his sword and beheaded the astrologer. Since the prognosis of his own state thus failed, without the possibility of correction, the prognosis concerning the king was roundly rejected.

In the first place, the paper reconstructed the literary sources of this “exemplum”, showing that it is probably a direct reply to the famous *Secretum secretorum* which may have reached Llull in a Catalan vernacular version that was included in King James' *Llibre de doctrina*. Subsequently, the paper enquired into Llull's epistemological arguments, which motivate his harsh rejection of astrology, which he characterizes as the most unreliable of all sciences (*magis incerta est scientia quam alia*). Among these arguments, one deserves particular attention, namely Llull's emphasis on the historicity of our access to knowledge. Thus, while astrology may have been epistemologically well-founded in ancient times, this was no longer the case by Llull's time. For, according to Llull's “historical epistemology”, our epistemic conditions have changed over time and the rich net of experience, which is required for astrological predictions, is no longer available. In the absence of such experience, says Llull, the science of the stars needs, in his time, another foundation; namely, that of

principles. Providing these principles, which shall compensate for the lack of a thorough experiential basis, is the declared aim of his *Tractatus novus de astronomia*.



Alexander Fidora at the IKGF (Photo: IKGF)



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CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

The *Yijing*: Alternative Visions and Practices

Convenors: Prof. Dr. Michael Lackner (IKGF, FAU),
Prof. Dr. Hon Tze-ki (IKGF, FAU)

October 24-25, 2017

On October 24-25, 2017, Michael Lackner and Hon Tze-ki hosted a workshop dealing with alternative uses of the *Yijing* in Chinese history. Since the publication of Kidder Smith et al.'s *Sung Dynasty Uses of the I Ching* in 1990, there have been many illuminating studies of *Yijing* commentaries. In these studies, commentaries are read as historical documents, revealing the changing identity of the literati and the constant interplay between culture and politics. What is lacking in the research, however, is a close study of *Yijing* divination. While it is true that the *Yijing* had been transformed from a collection of oracles into a moral and philosophical text at the dawn of imperial China, it was still (including in its earlier form as the *Zhouyi*) often used as a manual of divination. In fact, *Yijing* divination was even more deeply-rooted and widespread if we consider as divination not only the mantic arts which seek guidance from gods, spirits and ancestors, but also the manifold human efforts to alleviate the fear of the uncertainty of life.

To demonstrate the significance of *Yijing* divination, this workshop examined the various ways in which the *Yijing* text and its 64 hexagrams were used to address the serendipity of life. It covered divination practices from the Western Zhou (1046-771 BCE) up until contemporary times, including examples such as stalk divination, numerology, and the cosmic charts. In examining these divination practices, this workshop highlighted the importance of divination



The Convenors at the IKGF (Photo: Max Kruse)

to a broad spectrum of inquirers, ranging from high officials at the imperial court to farmers and labourers in small towns. From predicting the future to prescribing medicine to an ill person, this workshop showed that the *Yijing* was indeed part of the everyday life of the Chinese people, especially when they faced ups and downs. A conference volume is planned.

PROGRAM

October 24, 2017

Welcome Addresses – Introduction

Michael Lackner and Hon Tze-ki

Placing the *Zhouyi* in BCE Stalk Divination Traditions: Views from Newly Discovered Texts

Constance A. Cook and Andrea Bréard; Discussant: Zhao Lu

Predicting Success: The Song Literati Uses of *Yijing* in Divination

Liao Hsien-huei; Discussant: Stéphane Feuillas

Prediction based on the Past: Yang Wanli's Commentary on the *Zhouyi*

Stéphane Feuillas; Discussant: Liao Hsien-huei

Body, *Yijing*, and Medicine: A Case Study on the Mingmen (Gate of Life) in Song-Ming China

Chang Chia-Feng; Discussant: Constance A. Cook

Simplified Procedure and Extended Divination Objects: Explosion to Plum Blossom Yi Numerology

Tao Yingna; Discussant: Chang Chia-Feng

October 25, 2017

Predicting a Regime Change: The *Yijing* Studies in Early-Twentieth Century China

Hon Tze-ki; Discussant: William Matthews

Reducing Uncertainty: Six Lines Prediction in Contemporary China

William Matthews; Discussant: Hon Tze-ki

Roundtable Discussion

Discussant: Michael Lackner

Continued Roundtable Discussion

Unlocking Skills: Gaining and Performing Expertise in Pre-1911 China

Convenors: Prof. Dr. Michael Lackner (IKGF, FAU),
Prof. Dr. Dagmar Schäfer (MPI, Berlin)

November 21-22, 2017

On November 21-22, 2017, Prof. Dr. Michael Lackner and Prof. Dr. Dagmar Schäfer convened a workshop entitled “Unlocking Skills: Gaining and Performing Expertise in Pre-1911 China” to examine the topic of experts and expertise in traditional China. At the center of the workshop were questions about the conditions for obtaining and transmitting expertise in relation to the practices covered under Chinese categories such as *yi* 藝, *fa* 法 and *gong* 工.

The workshop was structured into the five panels of “Divination”, “Artisanship”, “Technology and Administration”, “Martial Arts, Health, and Religion”, and “Architecture.” In their introductory remarks, the convenors pointed to the difficulties associated with defining and situating expertise and experts in the light of often highly-differentiated Chinese terms. Yet, they also identified important aspects which guided the following workshop. Among them were the role of certain qualities which are often associated with expertise, such as moral adequacy, explanatory depth, and faithful memory. In addition, they pointed to the role of written sources in the transmission of expertise, but also to the potential discrepancies between the depiction of experts and expertise in written materials and their actual place within the Chinese “Lebenswelt.”

The individual talks, despite their differing subjects and time periods, uncovered a number of related aspects and issues which will be important for further explorations of the topic. Among these was the recurrent attempt of institutional bodies to confer legitimacy and to impose canons or models for expertise. In many cases, these institutional bodies were associated with the government and institutional control took the form of laws or judicial procedures. In other cases, expertise and legitimacy were defined and assigned by communities of practitioners or lineages. Especially thought-provoking were questions about the visibility of experts in the sources in different periods of time. It was discovered that, even for relatively recent periods, the experts who possess the practical and technical knowledge, be they hydraulic experts, miners, weavers, or spirit-writing hands, rarely feature in the written sources which we have at our disposal. More prominent than the actual practitioners are the social elites who define legitimate knowledge and practices and try to integrate them into a certain intellectual and cultural framework. Another common theme was the relative scarcity of sources that touch on the practical dimension and the procedures of expertise. Many of the sophisticated techniques

discussed, such as divination or inner alchemy, would not have been understandable from reading the available sources alone. This highlights that expert knowledge often seems not to have been transmitted through written sources but rather through performance or oral transmission within lineages, families, or master-disciple relationships.

Matthias Schumann



China Watercolour Illustrating Silk Production in the 1800s, Art and Architecture Collection, Public domain; source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ac/At_a_spinning_wheel_making_a_skein_of_silk.jpg.



Impression of the workshop (Photo: IKGf)

PROGRAM

November 21, 2017

Welcome and Introduction

Dagmar Schäfer and Michael Lackner

Section I: Divination

Oracle Bone Procedures of Decision-Making:

Diviner's Inquiries as a Process

Adam Schwartz (*Hong Kong Baptist University*)

Self-made Diviners? Text Learning and its Limitations in the Case of the "Stalk Divination" (Shifa 筮法)

Zhao Lu (*MPI Berlin*)

Section II: Artisanship

“錫金”與“擇吉金”—銅料選擇和銅器鑄造的社會意義

(Awarding metal and selecting good metal, with comments on the social function of casting bronze vessels)

Xu Fengyi (*Hong Kong Baptist University*)

Making Artisans Accountable: Silk and State in Tang China

BuYun Chen (*MPI Berlin*)

November 22, 2017

Section III: Technology and Administration

Silver Mining in the Far Southwest of Ming and Qing China: Technologies and Specialists in a Grey Zone

Nanny Kim (*Heidelberg University*)

Hydraulic Planning and Hydraulic Expertise in Late Imperial China: The Case of the Yellow River in Shandong

Iwo Amelung (*Frankfurt University*)

Section IV: Martial Arts, Health, and Religion

Medical Practice during the Twelfth-century Song Dynasty - Canons and Experience

Asaf Goldschmidt (*Tel Aviv University*)

Religious Expertise? Learning and Legitimacy in Republican Spirit-Writing

Matthias Schumann (*IKGF Erlangen*)

Texts and Expert Knowledge in Inner Alchemy

Fabrizio Pregadio (*IKGF Erlangen*)

Is the Pen Mightier than the Sword? Inventing the Image of the Scholar Warrior in the 18th Century

Israel Kanner (*Tel Aviv University*)

Section V: Architecture

An Approach to the Expertise of Construction in Ming Times: The Figure of Miaofeng, Monk and Architect

Caroline Bodolec (*EHESS Paris*)

Concluding Discussion

Fate, Freedom and Prognostication. Strategies for Coping with the Future in East Asia and Europe

End(s) of Time(s)

Convenors:

Prof. Dr. Michael Lackner (IKGF, FAU),

Prof. Dr. Klaus Herbers (IKGF, FAU)

December 11-13, 2017

From December 11–13, 2017, the IKGF brought together a group of international scholars to reflect on perceptions of the “end of time” in different eras and cultural contexts. The presentations explored the textual traditions related to apocalyptic or millenarian thought, but also the movements that aimed to put this thought into action. Special emphasis was placed on the relationship between apocalyptic and “normal” times as well as on the social and political ramifications of the end of time. In their introductory remarks, convenors Michael Lackner and Klaus Herbers emphasized the novelty of the conference’s approach in assembling scholars working on Europe, Byzantine, the Islamic World, Tibet, and China (with last-minute cancellations from scholars working on Africa and Japan) and expressed a hope that commonalities and differences might be identified across these different cultural settings.

The conference began with a talk by Richard Landes (Boston) who made use of his long-standing engagement with millenarianism to clarify several of the main terms and concepts and make them available for further exploration during the following days. In particular, he distinguished between millennialism, eschatology, and apocalypticism. For him, millennialism refers to the coming of a perfect society on earth – and is therefore always political – while eschatology signifies the complete end of history. Apocalyptic thought, on the other hand, more generally relates to the end of time, which can take many different forms. In his talk, he paid particular attention to the varieties of millennial movements, differentiating between particularistic and universalistic as well as progressive and restorative cases. What proved of particular benefit to the ensuing conference was Landes’ attempt to classify apocalyptic movements and describe the role of prophets within them. This provided a clear frame of reference for the following speakers, but also invited debate from the different cultural contexts from which the speakers drew their conclusions.

The conference was structured into five panels, the first of which provided overviews of end time thought from different regions and time periods. In their talks, speakers working on the Latin Middle Ages, Tibet, and Sunnist Islam spoke about concepts of the apocalypse and the eschatology in these different cultural contexts. The second panel approached the end of time through the concepts of cultural transfer, heterodoxy, and syncretism. The topics ranged from the Christian-inspired apocalyptic movement of the Taiping in China,



Michel Wolgemut, Wilhelm Pleydenwurff (Hartmann Schedel, editor), public domain; source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nuremberg_chronicles_f_262v_\(septima_aetas\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nuremberg_chronicles_f_262v_(septima_aetas).jpg)

over millenarian thought in 9th and 10th century Tibetan manuscripts from Dunhuang to the perception of Christians and Muslims in Joachim of Fiore’s (1135-1202) apocalyptic eschatology. The third panel turned to the practices and figures related to the end of time. The speakers discussed the role of messianic figures in early Daoist sources as well as satanic metaphors in two tracts of the “Anonymous Bambergensis.” The fourth panel engaged with the textual dimension of the end of time. Of special relevance in several talks was the timing of the apocalypse and its moral connotations. In medieval Europe and Byzantium numbers were often perceived as symbols, indicating that the end of times could not be properly predicted but also that everyone must be prepared for it at any moment. The last panel finally explored

the relationship between the end of time and modernity, indicating both how new apocalyptic visions continue to emerge as well as how traditional apocalypticism was transformed in the wake of modern ideas.

The conference ended with a concluding discussion, during which the convenors and participants highlighted some of the unifying threads of the previous talks. Especially striking was the prominent use of apocalyptic scenarios to urge people toward repentance and reinforce the social mores to which the participants attested across a wide range of cases. It seems plausible that such an interpretation of apocalyptic ideas is closely related to the social background of the writers, many of whom were drawn from the social elites. In addition,

it seems important whether the end of time is interpreted on an individual or a collective level. In the former case, self-reform might be an appropriate consequence while, in the latter, collective action might follow. With regard to the millennium, the presentations showed that it mattered greatly whether the eventual utopia were envisioned on earth or in the other world. The Chinese Taiping may be one of the most radical examples of a movement that imagined their paradise on earth and the way of realizing

PROGRAM

Welcoming Address and Introduction

Michael Lackner (*Erlangen*) and Klaus Herbers (*Erlangen*)

Keynote Lecture

Apocalyptic Millennialism: The Most Powerful, Volatile, Imaginary Force in Human History

Richard Landes (*Boston*)

Panel 1: Overviews of the End of Times in Different Eras and Areas

End of Times: Christian Perspectives on History, Eschatology, and Transcendence in the Latin Middle Ages

Klaus Herbers (*Erlangen*)

Tibetan Buddhist Dystopian Narratives and their Pedagogical Dimension

Rolf Scheuermann (*Erlangen*)

Presence, not likeness: Presentist eschatology in Muslim topography, architecture and ritual

Christian Lange (*Utrecht*)

Panel 2: The End of Times as Cultural Transfer, Heterodoxy, and Syncretism?

Competing Eschatological Scenarios during the Taiping War, 1851-1864

Vincent Goossaert (*Paris*)

Millenarianism in the Tibetan Dunhuang Manuscripts

Brandon Dotson (*Georgetown*)

Mohammed, Mahdi, Antichrist: Christians and Muslims in Joachim of Fiore's Apocalyptic Eschatology

Julia Eva Wannenmacher (*Bern*)

Panel 3: Practices, Rituals, and Figures of the End of Times

Eschatology and Messianism in Early Medieval China: The First Apocalypses

Christine Mollier (*Paris*)

The Infernal Trinity Does the Mole – Satan's Eschatological Activity in the Two Tracts *De principe mundi* and *De semine scriptorium* of the Anonymous Bambergensis

Matthias Kaup (*Berlin*)

Panel 4: Texts and Commentaries about the End of Times

Beatus of Liebana and the Spiritualized Understanding of Apocalypse in Medieval Iberia

Gaëlle Bosseman (*Paris*)

The End of Time in Medieval Historiography

Hans-Christian Lehner (*Erlangen*)

Byzantine Calculations of the End of Times (CE 500, 800, 1000, 1496)

Wolfram Brandes (*Frankfurt am Main*)

Making the Great Peace Up: Chinese Apocrypha in the First Two Centuries CE

Zhao Lu (*Berlin*)

Panel 5: The End of Times and Modernity

Facing the Modernity of the Others: Eschatological Fears for the Nation and the Race in China, 1895-1920

Rudolf Wagner (*Heidelberg*)

The Final Struggle: The "Islamic State" and the Enacting of the End of Time

Jörn Thielmann (*Erlangen*)

The Messianic Quest for the Earthly Paradise in the Modern World

Jürgen Gebhardt (*Erlangen*)

Fate, Freedom and Prognostication. Strategies for Coping with the Future in East Asia and Europe

it as a violent struggle between radically opposed forces. However, it was also pointed out that the strict Western separation between the sacred and the profane cannot be readily applied to other contexts, such as China. Other important transcultural factors related to the end of time were the role of prophets as well as textual evidence – often from canonical sources – based on which apocalyptic scenarios can be interpreted. Apart from the obvious differences concerning the sources used – whether the Bible, the Koran, or the Confucian canon – the presentations highlighted the ingenious strategies of reading and interpreting canonical texts in reference to apocalyptic scenarios. The participants expressed their hope that the exploration of the end of time would continue across different eras and cultural contexts, and in a more systematic way compared to some of the above-mentioned aspects. A publication is planned.

For a more comprehensive conference report, see:
<http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/index.aspx?id=7622&view=pdf&pn=tagungsberichte&type=tagungsberichte>

Matthias Schumann & Hans-Christian Lehner



Group photo of the participants (Photo: IKGF)

IN BRIEF

- On the occasion of the *Long Night of the Sciences* (Lange Nacht der Wissenschaften) on October 21, 2017, the IKGF organized an exhibition at which members of staff gave presentations to a general audience. The exhibition allowed students to try specific methods of divination, such as *Yijing*-divination, Fengshui and Tibetan divination, by themselves. Presentations by Hans-Christian Lehner, Rolf Scheuermann, and Philipp Balsiger, in turn, explained the philosophical and cosmological background of these practices.
- In January 2019, Michael Lackner was interviewed by the German radio broadcaster *Deutschlandfunk Kultur* and spoke about the cultural and social settings of astrology in European and East Asian religions. You can find the interview online: https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/astrologie-und-religion-in-den-sternen-sieht-man-den.1278.de.html?dram:article_id=437515.
- The first two volumes of our Brill publication series, “Prognostication in History,” will appear in September and October. *Divination with Achi and Tārā. Comparative Remarks on Tibetan Dice and Mālā Divination* (Volume 1), by Jan-Ulrich Sobisch, explores the manual for a divination practice that involves dice and prayer beads. It also offers a thorough discussion of the Chinese, Indian, Turkic, and Tibetan traditions of divination, its techniques, rituals, tools, and poetic language. *Glimpses of Tibetan Divination. Past and Present* (Volume 2), edited by Petra Maurer, Donatella Rossi, and Rolf Scheuermann, is a collection of articles presented at the workshop, “Divination in Tibet and Mongolia. Past and Present,” held at the IKGF, December 2-3, 2014, and the follow-up panel entitled “Tibetan Divination,” held at the fourteenth seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Bergen, June 22, 2016.

VISITING FELLOWS



Prof. An Yanming, Professor of Chinese and Philosophy, Clemson University (USA); research stay (sabbatical): September-December 2017; research topic: Two Patterns of the Cyclical View of History



Prof. Dr. Chen Hao 陳昊, Assistant Professor, School of History, Renmin University of China; research stay: January-June 2018; research topic: Divination by the Canon of Change and Varied Prognoses on Monstrous Transformations in Medieval China



Alexandra Fialkovskaya, Ph.D. candidate; research stay: January-December 2018; research topic: Studies on the Present Status of Mantic Arts in China



Dr. Carola Föller, History Department, University of Erlangen-Nürnberg; research stay: January-September 2018; research topic: Strategies for Coping and Arguing with the Future in Early Medieval Italy



Dr. Jeffrey Kotyk, Leiden University (Netherlands); research stay: January-June 2018; research topic: The Evolution of Chinese Horoscopy from the Tang to the Ming



Prof. Dr. Araceli Rojas Martinez Gracida, Associate Professor, Heritage of Indigenous Peoples, Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University (Netherlands); research stay: October 2017-March 2018; research topic: The concepts of fate among indigenous peoples of Mesoamerica: a comparative approach with Chinese and European philosophies



Prof. Dr. Alexander Kingsbury Smith, research stay: September 2017-February 2018, research topic: Rope, silver, and lapis: the unique mythology and prognostic technique of *ju thig*



Dr. Mercedes Valmisa, Princeton University (USA); research stay: October 2017-June 2018; research topic: Changing Along with the World: Adaptive Agency in Early China



Prof. Elena Valussi, Advanced Lecturer, the Department of History, Loyola University, Chicago (USA); research stay: October 2017-June 2018; research topic: Spirit-writing and the uncertainty of the future in Late Imperial China



Dr. Brigid E. Vance, Assistant Professor at the History Department, Lawrence University (USA); research stay: April-July 2018; research topic: Dreaming in Chinese: Explanation, Exorcism, and Divination in the Late Ming

Schicksal, Freiheit und Prognose. Bewältigungsstrategien in Ostasien und Europa

Please register on
www.ikgf.uni-erlangen.de/zukunft-der-prognostik

23./24. July
2019



Jutta Gampe



Matthias Horx



Wolfgang Kießling



Michael Lackner



Detlev Majewski



Manuel Mattheisen



Corinna Mayerl



Thomas Mölg



Hansjörg Neth



Christof Niederwieser



Günther Ogris



Nazar Rasul



Rainer Sachs

Location:
Heinrich-Lades-Halle, Kleiner Saal
Rathausplatz 91052 Erlangen

DIE ZUKUNFT DER PROGNOSTIK

Was wir heute und morgen
vorhersagen können

CONFERENCE

THE NEXT fate

The next issue of *fate* will contain:

- An introduction to the new peer-reviewed book series, "Prognostication in History"
- An introduction to the peer-reviewed "International Journal of Divination and Prognostication"
- News from the exhibition on the material culture of prediction in East Asia and Europe in cooperation with the Germanische Nationalmuseum Nürnberg



International Consortium for Research in the Humanities

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