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# Handbook of Divination and Prognostication in China

*Part 1: Introduction to the Field of  
Chinese Prognostication*

*Edited by*

Michael Lackner  
Zhao Lu



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Cover illustration: The king asks a diviner for the prediction of war. Taken from the famous novel “The Romance of the Three Kingdoms”.

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## Daoism and Divination

*Fabrizio Pregadio*

The “Procedures Concerning the Administration of Daoist Monasteries and Temples,” first formulated by the China Taoist Association (Zhongguo Daojiao xiehui 中國道教協會) in 1988 and officially issued in 1992, states in one of its sections:

Within monasteries and temples it is forbidden to practice feudal superstitious activities, including performing trance dances, exorcism, physiognomy, “fate calculation” (*suanming*), glyphomancy (*cezi*, divination through the analysis of written characters), divination by means of trigrams and hexagrams, topomancy (*fengshui*), and spirit-writing (*fuji*), which upset public security, defraud people, and harm the population’s physical and mental health.<sup>1</sup>

宮觀內不得搞跳神、趕鬼、看相、算命、測字、卜卦、看風水、扶乩等擾亂社會治安和騙人詐才、危害人民身心健康的封建迷信活動。

In the current statute, issued in 2010 and modified in 2015, this rule is phrased differently, but the wording is still broad enough to include the mantic arts.<sup>2</sup> Both versions would suggest that Daoism – under the control of the Chinese government and in agreement with it – not only prohibits the use of divination within its main institutions, but also dissociates itself from the mantic arts as a whole. Yet, while this is in several cases true, we also know that Daoism and

1 “Zhongguo Daojiao xiehui guanyu Daojiao gongguan banfa 中国道教协会关于道教宫观管理办法.” This document was published in the journal of the China Taoist Association, *Zhongguo Daojiao* 中国道教 1992.4.

2 The current statute does not mention specific divination techniques and does not use the word “superstition” (*mixin* 迷信). Emphasis instead is placed on “illegal and illicit activities” (*weifa luanji huodong* 違法亂紀活動), effectively delegating the whole matter to the PRC laws and regulations (both national and local) on this subject. As of this writing, the current statute is published under the title “Daojiao gongguan banfa 道教宮觀管理辦法” in the website of the Chinese Taoist Association ([www.taois.org.cn](http://www.taois.org.cn)), in the section “Rules and Regulations for the Chinese Daoist World” (“Zhongguo Daojiaojie guizhang zhidu 中國道教界規章制度”). I am grateful to several colleagues who have helped me to identify these sources.

various forms of divination have been in a close, though often controversial, relationship for almost two millennia.

This relationship has been noticed and discussed by several scholars. As Mark Csikszentmihalyi remarks, “the Daoist religion in both its worldview and practices derives to a large extent from the cosmology and mantic practices of the Han dynasty.”<sup>3</sup> The historical and intellectual relation between the techniques of the Han-dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) *fangshi* 方士, or “masters of the methods,” and some later Daoist practices has also been repeatedly pointed out. With regard to the works cited in relevant sections of the bibliographic chapters of the *Hanshu* 漢書 (History of the Han Dynasty), Csikszentmihalyi continues:

Many of the practices outlined in the texts also appear in later Daoist collections. This is true of two areas in particular: the complex of medical and immortality techniques and the techniques for determining auspiciousness that involve spirits and demons.... The Han interest in evaluating the best time or day for a given activity is at the center of the “Numerical Algorithms and Techniques” [*shushu* 數術] category, and some of these techniques also overlap with those found in later Daoist texts. The twelve spirits of the cosmic board [*shi* 式] are connected with the calendar in several texts in the Daoist Canon.<sup>4</sup>

With the class of practitioners designed as *fangshi* – a general definition of experts in various techniques, from divination and astronomy to medicine and “immortality practices” – we are indeed close to what Daoism would become in later times: rather than the “shaman” (with his or her ecstasies and trances), the diviner (who often fashions a “rational” world relying on images and emblems with precise meanings and functions) may be seen as the predecessor of the Daoist master and the Daoist priest – although, as we shall see, this is precisely one of the reasons of the Daoist conflict with divination.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Isabelle Robinet noticed with regard to the Daoist ritual space that “the schematic structure of this world is exactly the same as that found in the divination tablets [*shi* 式] of the Han ... [Daoist] ritual can thus be seen as drawing directly from the calendrical computations and speculations of the

3 Csikszentmihalyi, “Han Cosmology and Mantic Practices,” 53.

4 Ibid., 65. On the divination works cited in the *Hanshu*, see the article by Marc Kalinowski in the present volume. See also Kalinowski, “Technical Traditions in Ancient China and *Shushu* Culture in Chinese Religion,” and Raphals, “Divination in the *Han Shu* Bibliographic Treatise.”

5 For remarks on the figures of shaman, the diviner, and the Daoist priest, see Lagerwey, “Écriture et corps divin,” 282–83.

Han.”<sup>6</sup> As Anna Seidel demonstrated in a masterful work, the roots of Daoism in the Han-dynasty “weft texts” (*weishu* 緯書, or “apocrypha”) are another component showing that Daoism was ready to integrate several forms of divination and prognostication into its practices.<sup>7</sup>

This integration did indeed occur, and not only in domains proximate to religious cults and ritual practices. To give a few examples, Yan Zun 嚴遵 (first century BCE), one of the earliest known commentators of the *Laozi* 老子, was a professional diviner;<sup>8</sup> and more than one millennium later, the same is true of Hao Datong 郝大通 (1140–1213), an early master of the Quanzhen 全真 (Complete Reality) branch of Daoism.<sup>9</sup> The gift of predicting the future is one of the powers of Daoist immortals,<sup>10</sup> and even Laojun 老君 (Lord Lao, Laozi in his divine aspect) is said, in the earliest source that concerns him, to “observe the heavens and make prophecies” (*guantian zuochen* 觀天作讖).<sup>11</sup> Yet, as we shall see, Daoism and divination have often been in a conflictual relationship, culminating in the outright rejection and even the prohibition of the mantic arts.

The present chapter of the *Handbook of Divination and Prognostication in China* attempts to survey some of the main sources, subjects, and issues relevant to the relation of Daoism to divination. The first section is concerned with divination techniques represented in texts of the *Daozang* 道藏, or Daoist Canon. The subsequent sections examine different attitudes towards divination in the history of Daoism, ranging from integration to compromise to interdiction. In the conclusion, I return to some of the main points discussed in the article. The appendix contains short notes on works on divination included in the Canon and in other collections of Daoist texts.

Despite their importance, I will not deal with other themes relevant to this subject, also in consideration of the fact that some of them will be the subjects of studies forthcoming in the second volume of the *Handbook of Divination and Prognostication in China* or in related publications. Most important among them is the uses of the *Yijing* 易經 (Book of Changes) in Daoism, a vast subject

6 Robinet, *Taoism*, 170.

7 See Seidel, “Imperial Treasures and Taoist Sacraments.”

8 Chan, “The *Daode jing* and Its Tradition,” 12.

9 Boltz, *A Survey of Taoist Literature*, 165. Both Yan Zun and Hao Datong were versed in divination through the *Yijing* 易經 (Book of Changes).

10 Penny, “Immortality and Transcendence,” 125–26.

11 See the translations of the *Laozi ming* 老子銘 (Inscription for Laozi) in Seidel, *La divination de Lao Tseu dans le taoïsme des Han*, 123, and Csikszentmihalyi, *Readings in Han Chinese Thought*, 107.



that requires more than one separate study.<sup>12</sup> I also do not deal with prophecy, apocalypse, and millenarianism, three major interrelated subjects in the history of Daoism form the beginning of our era until at least the seventh century;<sup>13</sup> with “spirit-writing” (*fúji* 扶乩), which is at the origins of several Daoist texts from the Qing period onwards and possibly earlier;<sup>14</sup> with dream divination;<sup>15</sup> and with other minor prognostication practices in some ways related to Daoism, such as the use of the “divination blocks” (*gāo* 筮).<sup>16</sup>

Despite these and other limitations, this contribution will fulfill its main purpose if it helps to shed light on a simple but significant point: not only Daoist textual materials, but especially the Daoist views on divination – including those that are critical or thoroughly adverse – should be taken into account for an understanding of divination, its history, and its techniques in China.<sup>17</sup>

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- 12 In addition to Kalinowski, “La littérature divinatoire dans le *Daozang*,” 86–89, for brief notes on *Daozang* sources on the *Book of Changes* see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, esp. 1:79–82 and 2:746–51. The main work on this subject is Zhan Shichuang, *Yixue yu Daojiao sixiang guanxi yanjiu*. Surveys of the Daoist literature on the *Changes* and of the uses of the *Changes* in the Daoist ritual traditions are also found in Liu Shaojun, “*Daozang*, *Xu Daozang*, *Zangwai daoshu* zhong Yixue zhuzuo tiyao,” and Chen Yaoting, “*Daojiao keyi he Yili*,” respectively. Studies on these and related subjects are planned for publication in a forthcoming volume provisionally entitled *Divination in Chinese Religions*.
- 13 On prophecy, see the article by Stephen Bokenkamp in the present volume. See also Seidel, “Taoist Messianism”; Mollier, *Une apocalypse taoïste du Ve siècle*; and the detailed treatment of portents in Hendrichske, “Divination in the *Tai ping jing*,” 9–17.
- 14 For introductory but dependable remarks on this subject in relation to Daoism, see Esposito, “Daoism in the Qing,” 648–50. Studies concerned with spirit-writing in Daoism will be found in the above-mentioned volume on divination in Chinese religions and in a separate volume, edited by Elena Valussi and Matthias Schumann, containing papers read and discussed at the conference on “Spirit-Writing in Chinese History,” held in June 2019 at the Internationales Kolleg für Geisteswissenschaftliche Forschung (IKGF) in Erlangen, Germany.
- 15 On this subject, see Lin Fushi, “Religious Taoism and Dreams,” and the remarkable book edited by Zhan Shichuang, *Meng yu Dao* (I am grateful to Dimitri Drettas for bringing this work to my attention). It is worthwhile to add that the Daoist views of dreams include aspects that go beyond divination; see Radpour, “Daoist Views of the Dream State.”
- 16 While the faithful ordinarily use this simple divination tool by themselves when they visit temples and shrines, Adeline Herrou reports an interesting case in which a Daoist monk uses it in order to draw a *Yijing* hexagram on behalf of another person. See Herrou, *La vie entre soi*, 351.
- 17 I am grateful to Michael Lackner, who in the past several years has taught me much about the intellectual foundations of divination in China, and to Marc Kalinowski, who has read and patiently discussed with me an earlier draft of this article and has encouraged me to complete it. Needless to say, any error of perspective or detail is entirely my responsibility.

## 1 Mantic Arts in the Daoist Canon

As shown in the appendix to the present article, at least three dozen texts in the *Daozang* are entirely or substantially devoted to different divination techniques, including three varieties of calendrical divination, astrology, topomancy, physiognomy, meteoromancy, and divination by oracle slips. The present section contains brief notes on these techniques and provides, for some of them, examples of their uses in Daoism.

(1) *Hemerology*. Hemerology (*zeri* 擇日, “selecting days”) appears to be the only instance of a divination technique incorporated into Daoist practices without major adjustments, providing in this way “the knowledge, needed for all religious activities, of auspicious and unlucky days.”<sup>18</sup> Examples of its application are numerous. In early times, the identification of propitious times was deemed to be indispensable for Daoist practitioners in order to begin their periods of retirement and practice, the literal or metaphoric “entrance into the mountain” (*rushan* 入山). The intent was not the identification of lucky days in a generic sense, but of days that ensure support by benevolent deities and protection from evil entities: a practitioner who “enters the mountain” without selecting an auspicious time would be punished by the spirits.<sup>19</sup> In the “Inner Chapters” (“*Neipian* 內篇”) of his *Baopu zi* 抱樸子 (The Master Who Embraces Spontaneous Nature), Ge Hong 葛洪 (283–343) mentions several calendrical interdictions.<sup>20</sup> A related major source of early medieval Daoism contains more examples, including the following one:

To enter a mountain or [cross] a watercourse, the protective (*bao*), righteous (*yi*) and responsible (*zhuan*) days are very auspicious; you will easily attain the Dao. If you enter a mountain on a controlled (*zhi*) or a subdued (*fa*) day, you will certainly die.

入山水之日，當以保日及義日、專日，大吉，易得道。以制日、伐日入山，必死。<sup>21</sup>

18 Robinet, *Taoism*, 93. On Daoism and hemerology, see Kalinowski, “La littérature divinatoire,” 95–103; Sakade, “Divination as Daoist Practice,” 547–49 and 557–58; Andersen, “Talking to the Gods,” 6–8; Hendrichke, “Divination in the *Taiping jing*,” 43–44.

19 *Baopu zi neipian* (hereafter *Baopu zi*), 17.299 (see Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion in the China of A.D. 320*, 280).

20 *Baopu zi*, 17.301 (Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion*, 283).

21 *Lingbao wufu xu*, 3.8b–9a. See also the similar passage in *Baopu zi*, 17.303 (Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion*, 286–87). The earliest description of this hemerological method

Another hemerological method used in association with early Daoist practices was based on the so-called *wangxiang* 王相 (ruler and minister) relation between celestial stems and earthly branches (*tiangan* 天干 and *dizhi* 地支). Examples of its application include the transmission of practices, the collection of the *zhi* 芝 plants of immortality, and the ingestion of elixirs.<sup>22</sup>

The Daoist Canon contains several works entirely devoted to hemerology, or in which the identification of auspicious days plays a central function. Especially important among them is the collections of “petitions” (*zhang* 章) addressed to the highest deities found in the *Chisong zi zhangli* 赤松子章曆 (Petition calendar of Master Redpine), a work to which we shall return later in the present article. Other sources are concerned with the ordination of Daoist priests, the transmission of scriptural corpora, and the compounding of elixirs. Beyond these and other particular examples, however, the divination of a favorable day – often performed in conjunction with the selection of an auspicious place – is widespread in Daoist texts. In the present day, an example of the application of hemerology is the choice of days for performing rituals. Two passages of the “statement” (*shu* 疏) read by a Daoist priest in Tainan, Taiwan, to open an Offering (*jiao* 醮) ceremony state, in John Lagerwey’s translation:

We have selected by divination this month, the 11th, 12th, and 13th days, to go, leaning on the Way, to the palace in order to set up an altar.... For three days and nights we will execute rituals: at an auspicious hour, we will beat the drum for the first time and then flame the oil to drive away evil.<sup>23</sup>

Other uses of hemerology in present-day Daoism are documented by Adeline Herrou in her work on the Wengong ci 文公祠 (Shrine of the Lord of Literature), a Quanzhen temple in Hanzhong 汉中 (Shaanxi).<sup>24</sup>

(2) *Dunjia*. Another instance of the indebtedness of Daoist ritual practices to the mantic arts is the *dunjia* 遁甲 (Hidden Period, or Hidden Stem) method of calendrical divination. Originally used to identify the auspicious or inauspicious nature of certain days, the method became increasingly complex during

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is found in the *Huainan zi*, 3.277–78; see Major, *Heaven and Earth in Early Han Thought*, 131–32.

22 *Baopu zi*, 4.82 and 4.87 (Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion*, 89 and 96), 11.198 (Ware, 198), and 18.324–25 (Ware, 304), respectively; see also Pregadio, *Great Clarity*, 83–84. On other hemerological taboos for compounding the elixirs, see *ibid.*, 84.

23 Lagerwey, *Taoist Ritual in Chinese Society and History*, 62.

24 Herrou, *La vie entre soi*, 337–43.

its history and comprises several variants.<sup>25</sup> Early examples of its use are given by Ge Hong, who writes that “if one wants to enter a mountain, one must know the secret arts of *dunjia*.” For this reason, he adds, he compiled a collection of materials that amounted to no less than “sixty or more scrolls.”<sup>26</sup>

The purpose of the *dunjia* method consists in identifying the “irregular gate” (*qimen* 奇門), a position in the compass of space that is closely related to time as it changes in accordance with each ten-day cycle. The “irregular gate” is ruled by the Yin (female) spirits of the six days marked by the *ding* 丁 stem (the so-called *liuding* 六丁 or Six *ding*) and should be approached through the ritual steps known as Paces of Yu (Yubu 禹步).<sup>27</sup> In the form described by Kristofer Schipper and Wang Hsiu-huei, the spatial position corresponding to the *ding* stem is reached by walking six onward steps followed by three backward steps.<sup>28</sup> This practice is said to enable Daoist adepts to “hide themselves” (*yin-shen* 隱身, or *yinxing* 隱形), an expression that means both exiting the cosmic domain and becoming invulnerable to demons and other malevolent entities. Poul Andersen writes about the “irregular gate” and its spirits that they “represent the opening in the cycle of time, which leads to the world of nothingness beyond,” and “a ‘crack in the universe,’ so to speak, ... through which the adept may enter the emptiness of the otherworld and thereby achieve invisibility to evil spirits and dangerous influences.”<sup>29</sup>

The six *Daozang* works devoted to the *dunjia* method testify to its relevance in Daoism. What is important to note here is that these sources provide an

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- 25 On the general features of the *dunjia* method see Ho, *Chinese Mathematical Astrology*, 83–112; Ngo, *Divination, magie et politique dans la Chine ancienne*, 190–95; and Kalinowski, *Cosmologie et divination dans la Chine ancienne*, 384–86. On its adoption in Daoism, see Kalinowski, “La littérature divinatoire,” 91–95, and Sakade, “Divination,” 547–49.
- 26 *Baopu zi*, 17.301–2 (Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion*, 284). Ge Hong continues by giving examples of those methods. James Ware’s translation of these passages should be emended in light of the remarks in Schipper and Wang, “Time Cycles in Taoist Ritual,” 200–1, and Andersen, “The Practice of *Bugang*,” 33–34 and 35.
- 27 The Six *ding* spirits are also known as Six Yin (*liuyin* 六陰). They are matched by the Six Yang (*liuyang* 六陽), the male spirits of the six *jia* 甲 days. On the male spirits, see Mollier, *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face*, 114–20.
- 28 See figure 7 in Schipper and Wang, “Progressive and Regressive Time Cycles in Taoist Ritual,” 202. On the technical aspects of *dunjia* as a Daoist practice, see *ibid.*, 198–204, and Andersen, “The Practice of *Bugang*,” 33–37.
- 29 Andersen, “The Practice of *Bugang*,” 34, and his “*Bugang* 步罡,” 239, respectively. An example of the use of this method is found in Li Zhongfu’s 李仲甫 biography in the *Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳 (Biographies of divine immortals), translated by Campány in *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth*, 230–32. As practiced within Daoism, the *dunjia* method is closely related to the rite of Pacing the Celestial Net (*bugang* 步罡), studied by Andersen in his “The Practice of *Bugang*.” See also Schipper, *La religion de la Chine*, 214.

initial example of the significance of calendrical and other spirits in divination practices, and of the ritual features that characterize divination not only within Daoism, but in the Chinese mantic arts as a whole. With regard to the ritual features of the *dunjia* method documented by Daoist sources, Marc Kalinowski notes that, far from being independently created by Daoists, they were part of this method since its origins: “the entirety of the divinatory rites displayed in this literature is also found in the earliest treatises devoted to the *dunjia* method, testifying to the fact that the dependence of divination on ritual practices was a reality admitted by the diviners themselves.”<sup>30</sup>

(3) *Liuren*. The third system of calendrical astrology represented in *Daozang* texts, the *liuren* 六壬 or Six *ren* Celestial Stems, is based on the *shi* 式, which, as noted by Kalinowski, “progressively loses its concrete sense of ‘divination board’ to take on that of ‘model,’ ‘device’ (*dispositif*).”<sup>31</sup> The Daoist Canon contains three works specifically devoted to this method. Although they show traces of later editing and additions, they all originally date from the Six Dynasties. One of them, the *Huangdi jingui yuheng jing* 黃帝金匱玉衡經 (Book of the jade scales and the golden casket, transmitted by the Yellow Emperor), appears to be the earliest extant work on this practice.

(4) *Astrology*. Several *Daozang* works are concerned, in different ways and to different extents, with astrology. In addition to including the original source (now incomplete) at the basis of the later “star books,” these sources document the incorporation into Chinese astrology of concepts and techniques of Indian origin, and the existence of rites for the expulsion of inauspicious star influences.<sup>32</sup> Other texts are concerned with the *benming* 本命, the “fundamental” or “natal destiny” ruler by a star – in particular, one of the seven stars of the Northern Dipper (*beidou* 北斗).<sup>33</sup>

30 Translated from Kalinowski, “La littérature divinatoire,” 94.

31 Ibid., translated from p. 91, note 17. On the *liuren* method in Daoist texts, see *ibid.*, 91, and Sakade, “Divination as Daoist Practice,” 546. On its general features see Kalinowski, *Cosmologie et divination*, 382–84, and his “Les instruments astro-calendériques des Han et la méthode *liu ren*,”; and Ho, *Chinese Mathematical Astrology*, 113–38.

32 See Kalinowski, “La littérature divinatoire,” 103–6.

33 See Hou, *Monnaies d'offrande et la notion de trésorerie dans la religion chinoises*, esp. 106–26 on the Daoist notion of “fundamental destiny” and the related ritual practices in present-day Taiwan; and his “The Chinese Belief in Baleful Stars,” 193–228. Works describing rites for the deities ruling on one’s destiny include the *Wudou jinzhang shousheng jing* 五斗金章受生經 (Book of the Golden Emblems of the Five Dippers Conferring Life; DZ 653, Song dynasty) and the *Beidou benming yanshou dengyi* 北斗本命延壽燈儀 (Lamp Ritual for Extending Longevity in Accordance with the Individual Destiny of the Northern Dipper; DZ 201, ca. fourteenth century). The former text is translated in Hou,

(5) *Topomancy*. The widespread adoption of topomancy (*fengshui* 風水, or *kanyu* 堪輿) in Daoism is documented in a book-length study by Zhan Shichuang 詹石窗.<sup>34</sup> Here I will briefly mention only a few of the best-known instances. Two sections of the *Taiping jing* 太平經 (Book of Great Peace), a source made of multiple textual layers but generally datable to the Later Han period (first and second centuries CE), shed some light on early views and practices related to this practice.<sup>35</sup> One of them warns that digging up soil and obstructing springs damages the Earth, which as a consequence would bring on calamities.<sup>36</sup> Concerning the construction of tombs, the text maintains that if a grave is built on a “benevolent ground” (*shandi* 善地), the ancestor’s spirit will protect its descendants; if, instead, the ground is a “malevolent” one (*edi* 惡地), it will cause harm. The efficacy of the site is divined by planting a seed into the earth and observing the features of the plant that grows from it.<sup>37</sup>

Ge Hong describes two methods characterized by a significant feature: in both of them, the topomancy master is replaced in his function of identifying a propitious site by a text, namely the *Sanhuang wen* 三皇文, or *Writ of the Three Sovereigns*, the main “talismanic scripture” of early Daoism.<sup>38</sup> In the first method, the *Writ* enables its holder to determine auspicious places for both dwellings and graves, effectively making the role of the diviner and the selection of an auspicious day unnecessary:

If you obtain the method [of the *Writ of the Three Sovereigns*], you will be able to make alterations or begin construction work without inquiring about the correct site or choosing the right day, and your household will be free from calamities. If you wish to build a new house or a tomb, write several dozen copies of the [portion entitled] *Writ of the Earth Sovereign* and spread them all over the site. Inspect them on the following day. If

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*Monnaies d'offrandes*, 40–49. See also the entries on DZ 1288 and DZ 1289 in the Appendix, sec. 4.

34 Zhan Shichuang, *Daojiao fengshui xue*. This book contains an extended survey of Daoist views of topomancy and of Daoist works on this subject. On the *Daozang* sources on topomancy, see also Kalinowski, “La littérature divinatoire,” 107–8; Sakade, “Divination as Daoist Practice,” 549–50; and Song, “Topomancy (Fengshui) in China,” 103–15.

35 On topomancy in the *Taiping jing*, see Hendrischke, “Divination in the *Taiping jing*,” 41, and Song, “Topomancy (Fengshui) in China,” 30–35.

36 *Taiping jing*, 45.116 and 120 (sec. 61); see Hendrischke, *The Scripture on Great Peace*, 260 and 263.

37 *Taiping jing*, 182 (sec. 76); see Hendrischke, *Daoist Perspectives on Knowing the Future*, 100–2.

38 On these methods, see Song, “Topomancy (Fengshui) in China,” 106–9.

a yellow color is seen adhering to them, you may begin the construction work there and the household will assuredly be rich and prosperous.

得其法，可以變化起工，不問地擇日，家無殃咎。若欲立新宅及冢墓，即寫『地皇文』數十通，以布著地，明日視之，有黃色所著者，便於其上起工，家必富昌。<sup>39</sup>

In the second method, the portion of the *Writ* concerned with the Earth Sovereign (Dihuang 地皇) ensures that the grave's occupant grants protection to the person who performs a simple rite on its site. The rite consists in placing a copy of the text and a sheet of paper with his or her name written on it into the tomb. Ge Hong's summary concludes: "You will be free from calamities coming from the outside and from thieves. Anyone plotting against you will be sure to have their harm turned against themselves."<sup>40</sup> Protection from harm and malignant spirits is clearly the main purpose of both of these methods.<sup>41</sup> The same is true of two passages in Tao Hongjing's 陶弘景 (456–536) *Zhen'gao* 真誥 (Declarations of the perfected). Here the selection of auspicious places has the purpose of offsetting harmful influences sent forth by the spirit of the deceased or by minor demonic entities.<sup>42</sup>

Two works in the Daoist Canon are entirely concerned with topomancy. The first is the main Chinese classic on this subject, the *Huangdi zhaijing* 黃帝宅經 (Yellow Emperor's book of dwellings).<sup>43</sup> The second one is the *Rumen chongli zhezong kanyu wanxiao lu* 儒門崇理折衷堪輿完孝錄 (Records of the achievement of filial piety through the rectification of topomancy, in accordance with the principles esteemed by the Confucian School). This work is a

39 *Baopu zi*, 19.336–37 (see Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion*, 314–15). Yellow is the color of the earth in the system of the five agents (*wuxing* 五行), and its appearance on the *Sanhuang wen* scrolls signals the earth's positive response.

40 *Baopu zi*, 19.337 (see Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion*, 315).

41 In fact, even alchemical elixirs can perform this function with regard to dwellings for the living: "There is also the method of Xianmen zi 羨門子... This elixir can quell the hundred demons, the dead people from everywhere who bring calamities and harm living's dwellings, and those who harm people because they had dug into the earth. No harm will come to us if this elixir is hung pointing towards the sources of disaster." *Baopu zi*, 4.79 (see Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion*, 84).

42 *Zhen'gao*, 10.11b–12a and 10.16b–17a. Both passages are translated and discussed in Song, "Topomancy (Fengshui) in China," 110–13. See also Sakade, "Divination as Daoist Practice," 550.

43 A recent translation of this work is found in Paton, *Five Classics of Fengshui*, 135–59. The Dunhuang manuscript P. 3865 is to a large extent identical to the version in the Daoist Canon.

large compendium on topomantic theories and practices, as well as a major source on the integration of topomancy into Neo-Confucianism, based on the principle that providing proper burial to one's parents and ancestors is an act of filial piety.<sup>44</sup>

(6) *Physiognomy*. Although only one *Daozang* text is entirely concerned with physiognomy (*xiangshu* 相書), the role of this divinatory art in Daoism can be appreciated by looking at other sources, both within and outside the Canon.<sup>45</sup> One of them, the *Yuebo dong zhongji* 月波洞中記 (Central records of the Moon-Wave Cavern), probably dating from the late Tang period, is ascribed to Laojun himself and partly reflects the Daoist views of the human body.<sup>46</sup> Several other Daoist works mention the possession of the “bones of an immortal” (*xianqu* 仙骨) and other bodily features – in particular, thick eyebrows, high ears, square pupils, and a radiant complexion – as distinctive marks of transcendent beings. These accounts, which evoke not only the enumerations of the supernatural signs of the Buddha's body, but also the early descriptions of mythical rulers in the “weft texts,” culminate in the list of the eighty-one bodily marks of Laozi found in the *Sandong zhunang* 三洞珠囊 (The pearl satchel of the three caverns).<sup>47</sup>

Another remarkable instance of incorporation and adaptation of traditional physiognomic views into Daoism is found in the Shangqing 上清 (Highest Clarity) practice of “untying the knots” (*jiejie* 解結), in which an adept generates an immortal embryo in meditation in the course of one year. In the first nine months, he receives the “breaths of the Nine Heavens” (*jiutian zhi qi* 九天之氣), and each time one of his inner organs is turned into gold or jade. In the last three months, he visualizes the Original Father (*yuanfu* 元父) in his upper Cinnabar Field, and the Original Mother (*yuanmu* 元母) in his lower Cinnabar Field; as their Breaths (*qi*) conjoin in the middle Cinnabar Field, they generate an inner immortal body. As Stephen Bokenkamp has noted in his study of this method, in Chinese physiognomy the bones are the main bodily feature

44 On the contents of this encyclopedic work see Zhan Shichuang, *Daojiao fengshui xue*, 87–91; Schipper and Verellen, *Taoist Canon*, 754–55; and the detailed summary in Song, “Topomancy (Fengshui) in China,” 307–28. On the possible reasons for its inclusion in the Daoist Canon, see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 37–38.

45 On Daoism and physiognomy, see Kalinowski, “La littérature divinatoire,” 108; Sakade, “Divination,” 550–52; and Livia Kohn's studies cited in the next two footnotes.

46 See Kohn, “A Textbook of Physiognomy,” 251–54.

47 *Sandong zhunang*, 8.14a–15a. See the detailed analysis in Kohn, “The Looks of Laozi,” 207–25. For the “marks of immortality” (or “of transcendence,” *xianxiang* 仙相) listed in the late-fourth century *Housheng Daojun lieji* 後聖道君列紀 (Chronicle of the Lord of the Dao, Saint of the Latter Age; DZ 442), see Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 355–59.



related to one's destiny. In the method of "untying the knots," the bones of the newly generated embryo begin to be formed in the second month of gestation; it is also in that month that the deities take note of the destiny of the newly conceived embryo – that is, of the adept's new destiny as an immortal.<sup>48</sup>

(7) *Meteoromancy*. Two *Daozang* works are concerned with meteoromancy.<sup>49</sup> At least one of them, the *Yuyang qihou qinji* 雨暘氣候親機 (The atmospheric agents of rain and sunshine; DZ 1275), may have been included in the Canon because of its relation to the Daoist Shenxiao 神霄 (Divine Empyrean) school and its Thunder Rites (*leifa* 雷法).

(8) *Oracle Slips*. The remarkable *Daozang* corpus on the *lingqian* 靈籤 (lit., "numinous slips") consists of nine works, dating from the Song to the Ming periods.<sup>50</sup> As a whole, these works reflect the integration of deities of popular origin into the Daoist pantheon. Most of them contain between forty to one hundred oracles. Deities that bestow the oracles include the Four Saints (*sisheng* 四聖, i.e., Tianpeng 天蓬, Tianyou 天猷, Yisheng 翊聖, and Zhenwu 真武); Wenchang 文昌; and the Xu 徐 brothers, whose oracles are found in three different texts. This form of divination is still practiced in Daoist temples in the present day; a study by Carole Morgan documents the origins and use of oracular slips in a contemporary Hong Kong temple, the Wanshou guan 萬壽觀 (Abbey of Ten-Thousand-Year Longevity).<sup>51</sup> Mention should also be made here of the *Lingqi benzhang zhengjing* 靈棋本章正經 (Correct book of the original stanzas of the numinous tokens; DZ 1041), a work dating from the Six Dynasties that contains oracles obtained by casting a set of twelve two-sided tokens.<sup>52</sup>

(9) "*Fate Calculation*." Rather than a divination technique in the strict sense, *suanming* 算命 is a simple system for "calculating destiny," a literal translation of its Chinese name.<sup>53</sup> However, as one might also call it a system for divining the length of one's life span, it deserves a place in this survey. Once again, an early accessible discussion of this system is given by Ge Hong. At birth, each person receives a "personal cipher" (*benshu* 本數), which differs

48 Bokenkamp, "Simple Twists of Fate," 159–60.

49 Kalinowski, "La littérature divinatoire," 106–7; Sakade, "Divination," 545. On early meteoromancy, see Ngo, *Divination, magie et politique*, 186–90.

50 Kalinowski, "La littérature divinatoire," 89–91; Sakade, "Divination," 554–56.

51 See Morgan, "Old Wine in a New Bottle: A New Set of Oracle Slips from China," 1–20.

52 On this early work, containing commentaries by Yan Youming 顏幼明 (Jin 晉 dynasty) and He Chengtian 何承天 (370–447), see Morgan, "An Introduction to the *Lingqi jing*," and Kalinowski, "La littérature divinatoire," 90–91.

53 An exhaustive description of this system and its multiple variants is found in Kohn, "Counting Good Deeds and Days of Life." Kohn translates *suanming* as "quantifying destiny."

for each individual and determines his or her length of life. The best way to preserve and augment this endowment is to acquire merit. If, instead, one commits faults or sins, an amount of time – whose length varies according to the seriousness of the fault – is detracted from one's life span. The detraction occurs when the God of the Hearth (Caoshen 竈神) and the Three Corpses (*sanshi* 三尸) ascend to Heaven, the former every thirty days and the latter every sixty days, and report one's misdeeds to the Administrator of Destinies (Siming 司命).<sup>54</sup>

One of the developments of this system is found in the *Chisong zi zhongjie jing* 赤松子中戒經 (Book of the central precepts by Master Redpine; DZ 185), dating in its received version from the Song period but already known to Ge Hong in the early fourth century. According to this work, one's destiny is determined by the star under which one is born. At that time, the Administrator of Destiny and the Administrator of Emoluments (Silu 司錄) place a shining talisman on each person's forehead. Immoral acts and evil deeds cause one's life span – initially set to 120 years – to become shorter and the light of the talisman to grow faint, in parallel to the body's physical decline. When the light is extinguished, one dies.<sup>55</sup> Further variants of the *suanming* system are incorporated into several other Daoist texts.<sup>56</sup> The most important ones include the fourth-century *Nüqing guilü* 女青鬼律 (Demon statutes of Nüqing; DZ 790), the mid-sixth century *Fengdao kejie* 奉道科戒 (Rules and precepts for worshipping the Dao; DZ 1125), and the sixth-century *Xuandu liuwen* 玄都律文 (Statutes of the mysterious metropolis; DZ 188).<sup>57</sup> The main heirs of these works and of the *suanming* system as a whole are the “ledgers of merits and demerits” (*gongguo ge* 功過格), which began to be widespread from the Song period onwards.<sup>58</sup>

54 *Baopu zi*, 3.53 and 6.125 (Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion*, 66–67 and 115). See Mollier, *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face*, 101–5, and the discussion in Pregadio, “Seeking Immortality in Ge Hong's *Baopu zi neipian*,” 444–45. The Three Corpses are demonic parasites that live in different parts of one's body; see Kohn, “Kōshin,” part 2: “Historical Development,” 34–55.

55 See Kohn, “Counting Good Deeds,” 835–41, and the translation of the *Zhongjie jing* in her *Cosmos and Community*, 154–67.

56 Kohn, “Counting Good Deeds,” 847–52.

57 On the *suanming* system described in these three works see Kleeman, *Celestial Masters*, 146–58; Kohn, *The Daoist Monastic Manual*, passim (cf. table 4 in “Counting Good Deeds,” 856–58); and Kohn, *Monastic Life in Medieval Daoism*, 207–8, respectively.

58 See Brokaw, *The Ledgers of Merit and Demerit*, the first chapter of which (pp. 28–60) contains a survey of the earlier tradition.

## 2 Divination and the Diviner in the *Taiping jing*

This and the next sections of the present article are concerned with different subjects that exemplify the multiple attitudes of Daoism towards divination. The first source to be mentioned is the *Taiping jing*, or *Book of Great Peace*. Two brief remarks are necessary before we look at its views of prognostication. First, the textual history of this work is too complex to provide even a short summary of it in the framework of this essay; let it suffice to say that the *Taiping jing* is made of several textual layers, dating from the Later Han period (first and second centuries CE) onwards or possibly earlier, and that the received text was edited in the sixth century. Caution, in addition, is needed before defining as “Daoist” all views documented in this work: the *Taiping jing* is best read as “a link between what has been termed early China’s ‘common religion’ and the later Daoist tradition.”<sup>59</sup>

That said, the *Taiping jing* presents a compelling and in several respects unique view of divination and the figure of the diviner among works found in the Daoist Canon. As Barbara Hendrischke notes, the authors of the *Taiping jing* “attest to the omnipresence of divination in late-Han dynasty China, where divinatory activity amounted to an ongoing dialogue between men and superhuman beings”; in this perspective, they “encapsulated and reformulated prevailing late-Han dynasty sentiments and ideas rather than attempting to oppose them.”<sup>60</sup> In the *Taiping jing*, divination is seen not simply as a means of knowing the future or seeking good fortune: predictions are undertaken in the first place to determine the intention (*yi* 意) of Heaven and to integrate it into one’s own religious and moral consciousness.<sup>61</sup> Good fortune is the result of this integration:

Through undertaking a prediction (*zhan*) right and wrong become known.... Someone who peruses heaven’s meaning will share heaven’s intention and will be like a true spirit. This being the case, how should he not enjoy good luck?

占而是非即可知矣。... 審詳此意，與天同願，與真神為其安，得不吉哉？<sup>62</sup>

59 Hendrischke, *The Scripture on Great Peace*, 3. My notes on this work are substantially based on Hendrischke, “Divination in the *Taiping jing*,” and on the selections translated in her *Daoist Perspectives*.

60 Hendrischke, “Divination in the *Taiping jing*,” 2 and 46.

61 *Ibid.*, 5–6 and 32.

62 *Taiping jing*, 18 (from the *Taiping jing chao* 太平經鈔); trans. Hendrischke, “Divination in the *Taiping jing*,” 5–6.

Divination thus becomes a way of knowledge, and as such it suits multiple purposes: for the authors of the *Taiping jing*, it is “primarily a method of understanding, of ruling a state or community and of conducting one’s life, in a moral sense.... The great-peace doctrine of salvation was tightly interwoven with methods of divination, one shaping and supporting the other in that men needed prior knowledge of the arrival of a chance for great peace in order to be able to make the most of this chance.”<sup>63</sup>

In this endeavor, the figure of the diviner is ascribed a major role. Rather than mere expertise in techniques, the *Taiping jing* expects that “the diviner’s moral and spiritual excellence would provide him with the power to succeed.... [S]uch power was the result of a process of self-cultivation.”<sup>64</sup> This point requires attention. In other cases, as we shall see later in the present essay, emphasis on self-cultivation results in a rejection of the function of diviner and his techniques: the Daoist sage is supposed to know the future without making recourse to prognostication practices. In the *Taiping jing*, instead, the priority given to “moral and spiritual excellence” leads the authors to ascribe a valuable role to the diviner and his expertise: far from being a prophet, the diviner’s ability in disclosing Heaven’s intention relies on his techniques, and these are made effective by his self-cultivation. Indeed, the diviner of the *Taiping jing* is similar to the “spirit-like men” (*shenren* 神人) of the past, who were able to prognosticate without the assistance of a specialist:

The spirit-like men of the past sought in person through divination answers to what was right and wrong and what would bring success and what not. Instantly then affairs became transparent; not a single item remained in the dark; all was clear and bright.

古者神人自占是非，得與不得，其事立可觀也。不但闇昧，昭然清白。<sup>65</sup>

Hendrischke remarks that the process of attaining knowledge through divination “resembled the practice of meditation, in regard to both personal involvement and the outcome.” The assumed closeness of divination to

63 Hendrischke, “Divination in the *Taiping jing*,” 4–5.

64 Ibid., 38.

65 *Taiping jing*, 718 (from the *Taiping jing chao*); trans. Hendrischke, “Divination in the *Taiping jing*,” 33.

meditation – seen in the *Taiping jing* as the main practice leading to salvation – “helped to attach to divination the label of a great-peace orientated practice.”<sup>66</sup>

With regard to techniques, the *Taiping jing* focuses on topomancy, iatromancy, and especially divination by celestial stems and earthly branches.<sup>67</sup> We have seen above the text’s views on digging soil and on selecting auspicious sites for tombs. The correct observation of vessels (*mai* 脈) was deemed to be vital for healing illnesses, and while the treatment was based on acupuncture and moxa, a successful cure relied in the first place on what the *Taiping jing* cryptically calls “prognostic writings (*chenshu* 讖書) that match Heaven’s conduits and vessels.”<sup>68</sup> In a statement of interest for the study of Chinese iatromancy, the *Taiping jing* also describes the observation of the ruler’s own vessels as a mantic act that invests the whole cosmos: “The wise sovereign [of the past] ... observed the degrees in the flow of his vessels in order to predict (*zhanzhi* 占知) good and bad luck for all six directions.”<sup>69</sup>

The third technique – divination by celestial stems and earthly branches – is closely related to a view of destiny reflected in the *Taiping jing*, less prominent than its well-known theory of the “inherited burden” (*chengfu* 承負).<sup>70</sup> This view is summarized in the following passage:

The fate destined for everything under heaven follows categories [*lei*]. So we know the fate destined for someone.... [T]he life of an ordinary person relies on which [stage of] *qi* of a phase he or she resembles. Someone’s fate depends on the date of birth according to stems and branches. Since a prediction based on category never fails, wise men of the past followed everything back to its source. Thereby they knew someone’s situation.

凡天下之名命所屬，皆以類相從，故知其命所屬。… 凡人生者，在其所象何行之氣，其命者繫於六甲何曆，以類占之，萬不失一也，故古者聖人深原凡事，知人情者，以此也。<sup>71</sup>

66 Hendrichske, “Divination in the *Taiping jing*,” 33–34.

67 On these three techniques and their use in the *Taiping jing*, see *ibid.*, 40–46.

68 *Taiping jing*, 179 (sec. 74).

69 *Ibid.*, 180 (sec. 74). This passage and the previous one are translated in accordance with Hendrichske, *Daoist Perspectives*, 96 and 98, respectively.

70 On the “inherited burden,” see Hendrichske, “The Concept of Inherited Evil in the *Taiping jing*,” and Maeda, “Between Karmic Retribution and Entwining Infusion.”

71 *Taiping jing*, 424 (sec. 153); trans. Hendrichske, *Daoist Perspectives*, 152–53. Interestingly, an analogous passage is found in the sixth-century *Wuxing dayi* 五行大義 (Great meaning of the five agents), translated in Kalinowski, *Cosmologie et divination*, 419.

According to the *Taiping jing*, a deity named Administrator of Time (Sihou 司候) “makes a complete record” of each person’s time of birth and assigned life span. Individual destinies are dispensed according to the auspicious or inauspicious relation between the earthly branches associated with the year and the month of one’s birth. Only proper moral conduct, however, ensures that one can live for the whole extent of one’s destined span.<sup>72</sup>

### 3 Ge Hong’s View of the Mantic Arts

The hemerological taboos reported in the *Baopu zi*, mentioned earlier in this essay, were only one of several protective measures to be observed before “entering the mountain.” Ge Hong voices some skepticism about these and other methods when he says: “The conditions of Heaven and Earth, the good and bad luck depending on Yin and Yang, are so limitless that one can hardly examine them in detail. I do not say with certainty that these things exist, but I dare not maintain that they do not exist.” He adds, however, that the Yellow Emperor, the Duke of Zhou, Yan Zun (the above-mentioned diviner and early commentator of the *Laozi*), and Sima Qian 司馬遷 (the author of the *Shiji* 史記, or *Records of the Historian*) relied on those methods, and that calendrical interdictions are also mentioned in the Classics. He concludes that there is, therefore, an established tradition for this system.<sup>73</sup>

Here again, we should refrain from looking at Ge Hong as a representative of the whole Daoist tradition – a viewpoint only shared in China by Confucians, for whom Ge Hong was one of the few authors who deserved to be read in order to learn something about Daoism in contemporary or former times. Nonetheless, his complex view of divination deserves attention. To appreciate its context, we should first note that he subdivides the religious traditions of Jiangnan 江南 (the region south of the lower course of the Yangzi River) into three main classes. The two higher ones are alchemy – in the form of Waidan 外丹, or External Alchemy – and meditation on the inner gods. At the lower end, instead, Ge Hong places a broad group of practitioners whom he calls “coarse and rustic” (*zawei daoshi* 雜猥道士).<sup>74</sup> Ge Hong associates them with

72 For details on this rather complex prognostication method, see Penny, “A System of Fate Calculation in *Taiping jing*,” and Hendrischke, “How the Celestial Master Proves Heaven Reliable.”

73 *Baopu zi*, 17.301 (see Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion*, 283–84).

74 In Ge Hong’s usage, the term *daoshi* 道士 does not mean “Daoist master” and even less so “Daoist priest.” It is, rather, close in meaning to, or even synonymous with, the earlier term *fangshi* 方士, “masters of the methods.”

the “minor arts” (*xiaoshu* 小術), which in his view include healing methods, longevity techniques, and certain mantic practices:

It is clear that if the present-day coarse and rustic practitioners do not obtain the methods of the Golden Elixir, they will not obtain a long life. They may be able to heal illnesses and bring a dead person to life, to abstain from cereals and be free from hunger for several years, to command gods and demons, to be sitting at one moment and then suddenly disappear, to see one thousand miles away, to know the rise and fall of any person, to reveal the disasters concealed in what is obscure and hidden, and to know the fortunes and calamities awaiting what has not yet sprouted. All this, however, will be of no advantage to increase the length of their life.

今雜猥道士之輩，不得金丹大法，必不得長生可知也。雖治病有起死之効，絕穀則積年不飢，役使鬼神，坐在立亡，瞻視千里，知人盛衰，發沈崇於幽翳，知禍福於未萌，猶無益於年命也。<sup>75</sup>

In another discussion, Ge Hong again expresses distrust towards several types of divination, including the observation of the patterns of Heaven and Earth (*tianwen* 天文 and *dili* 地理, here probably meaning astrology and topomancy), prognostication by the winds (*zhan fengqi* 占風氣), various methods for computing destiny (*chousuan* 籌算), and the “examination of the eight trigrams” (*jian bagua* 檢八卦). Ge Hong’s assessment of these methods leaves few doubts: “All of these are inferior arts (*xiashu* 下術) and ordinary techniques (*changji* 常伎), troublesome and undependable.”<sup>76</sup>

Yet, Ge Hong’s view of other aspects of divination is by no means negative. Elsewhere in his work, he rejects the idea that the principles of “prolonging life” (*changsheng* 長生) were only known in the antiquity. This, he says, is an opinion held by worldly people, which persons of attainment should not share. To make his point, he continues with a remarkable passage where he mentions several ordinary and uncommon mantic arts:

We predict the mysterious ways of the celestial signs and measure the [cycles of] plenitude and recession of the Seven Governors (i.e., the Sun, the Moon, and the five planets); we discuss the infringements and

75 *Baopu zi*, 14.259 (see Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion*, 240).

76 *Baopu zi*, 15.272 (see Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion*, 254–55, whose translation contains inaccuracies). On these methods, see Andersen, “Talking to the Gods,” 11.

enchroachings [in the heavens] that occurred in the past and examine the prosperity and decline that will occur in the future; we look above for subtle signs in the clouds and look below for [intimations of] prosperity and calamity in the hexagrams and the [oracular] bones; we manipulate the three [sets of] tokens (*sanqi*) to determine the success or defeat of armies in march and study the nine tallies (*jiufu*) to find out areas of good or bad fortune; we calculate by multiplication and division in order to examine the dispositions of demons and spirits; and we combine the six lines [of the hexagrams] to one another in order to settle the good or evil of fortuitous events. The origins of all this can be analyzed, and their principles can be investigated.

夫占天文之玄道，步七政之盈縮，論凌犯於既往，審崇替於將來，仰望雲物之微祥，俯定卦兆之休咎，運三棋以定行軍之興亡，推九符而得禍福之分野，乘除一算，以究鬼神之情狀，錯綜六（情）[爻]，而處無端之善否。其根元可考也，形理可求也。<sup>77</sup>

Divinatory arts such as those mentioned above, concludes Ge Hong, afford a knowledge of the “recondite order” (*aozhi* 奧治) of the world and therefore provide ways of “prolonging life” in any time, including the present day. It seems clear, thus, that Ge Hong disapproves of divination when it is performed merely as a means of predicting the future. He accepts it, instead, when it is used as a means of knowing the Dao and its operation in the cosmos and the human world.

#### 4 Precepts and Codes: The Daoist Prohibition of Divination

Different mantic arts have been integrated into Daoism, and others have provided Daoism with conceptual frameworks for its practices. We also know, however, that Daoism and divination have often been in conflict with one another. This section presents the two main sources that document the Daoist prohibitions of divination.<sup>78</sup>

77 *Baopu zi*, 3.49–50 (see Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion*, 59–60, and Che, *La Voie des Divins Immortels*, 86–87). On this passage, see also Hendrischke, “Divination in the *Taiping jing*,” 35–36. For the emendation of *liuqing* 六情 to *liuyao* 六爻, I follow Wang Ming’s 王明 textual note to this passage (*Baopu zi*, 3.62, note 96).

78 On the subject of this section, see also Nickerson, “Shamans, Demons, Diviners, and Taoists,” 45–47, and Andersen, “Talking to the Gods,” 7–8.



The first source is the *Laojun shuo yibai bashi jie* 老君說一百八十戒, or *180 Precepts Spoken by Lord Lao*. Originally dating from the mid-fourth century, this work is extant in several complete or partial versions, the most important of which probably dates from the sixth century.<sup>79</sup> The work is addressed to Daoist priests rather than commoners. The context of the interdiction of divination also deserves attention. Kristofer Schipper has assigned most of the precepts to the following main categories: eating and dietary precepts; respect for women, seniors and juniors, family and worthy people, servants and slaves, and animals; proper sexual conduct; precepts concerning one's own possessions (e.g., avarice) and other people's possessions (e.g., theft); and precepts against killing living beings.<sup>80</sup> Several rules clearly derive from Buddhist precepts, including those against stealing, killing, and not eating meat; others concern the prohibition of cults that require sacrifice of animals.

Four precepts are directly related to prognostication:

You should not seek to know of state or military events or to prognosticate whether they will come to a lucky or unlucky conclusion.

不得求知軍國事及占吉凶。

You should not read the stars or prognosticate the Heaven's seasons (*or*: the Heaven's times).

不得干知星文，卜相天時。

You should not design graves, erect tombs, or raise buildings for other people.

不得為人圖山，立塚宅起屋。

79 *Taishang Laojun jingli*, 2a–20b. Quotations below are from this version, translated in Hendrichske and Penny, “The 180 Precepts Spoken by Lord Lao.” Another translation is found in Kohn, *Cosmos and Community*, 136–44. Other versions of the *180 Precepts* are found in *Yunji qiqian*, 39.1a–14b; *Yaoxiu keyijielü chao*, 5.14a–19b; and *Sanyuan pinjie gongde qingzhong jing*, 21b–31a. On the *180 Precepts*, see Penny, “Buddhism and Daoism in *The 180 Precepts Spoken by Lord Lao*”; Schipper, “Daoist Ecology: The Inner Transformation”; Schmidt, “Die Hundertachtzig Vorschriften von Lao-chün”; and Nickerson, “The Southern Celestial Masters,” 262–63. On the variant versions see Andersen, “Talking to the Gods,” 9.

80 Schipper, “Daoist Ecology,” 84–85.

You should not possess the prognosticatory writings of the lay people or the *Chart of the Eight Spirits* (*Bashen tu*). Also, you should not practice any of them.

不得畜世俗占事八神圖，亦不得習。<sup>81</sup>

The first precept is generic and does not seem to refer to particular techniques. The second one also is broad in scope, although it might refer to astrology and hemerology. The two other proscriptions are more explicit: one is concerned with topomancy for the living and the dead, and the other alludes to the method of the Eight Archivists, discussed later in the present article.

After the *180 Precepts*, the main source that documents an hostile relation of Daoism to divination is the *Daomen kelüe* 道門科略, or *Abridged Codes for the Daoist Community*, one of several works written in the mid-fifth century by Lu Xiujing 陸修靜 (406–77), the first major codifier of Daoist ritual.<sup>82</sup> Facing what he saw as a degeneration of Daoist priesthood and a decadence of ritual practices, his ideal was the restoration of the social and religious structures of the early Way of the Celestial Masters (Tianshi dao 天師道), including the regulation of ancestral cults. Addressing his work, once again, to Daoist priests, Lu Xiujing insists on the prohibition of so-called “licentious cults” (or “illicit,” “excessive” cults, *yinsi* 淫祀), which include rites performed by spirit mediums and blood sacrifices to popular deities.<sup>83</sup> In his discussion of these points, Lu Xiujing mentions healing and divination, two subjects closely related to one another in the Daoist views of the mantic arts.

Lu Xiujing’s advice on these subjects is presented in three passages of his *Codes*. The first set of rules consists in a reminder of the Pure Bond (*qingyue* 清約) between the Daoist priest and the deities: do not accept money for performing rites, and do not sacrifice animals. There follow rules against the belief

81 *Taishang Laojun jinglü*, 4b–5a, 7a, and 8b; trans. Hendrischke and Penny, “The 180 Precepts,” 22–25 passim (precepts nos. 16, 78, 77, and 114). On the “Chart of the Eight Spirits,” see Kalinowski, *Cosmologie et divination*, 387–88.

82 On the *Daomen kelüe* (DZ 1127) and its author, see Nickerson, “Abridged Codes of Master Lu for the Daoist Community.”

83 On the proscription of these cults in Daoism, see Kleeman, “Licentious Cults and Bloody Victuals.” Lu Xiujing presents a quite bleak image of the Daoist priesthood of his time, for instance by saying: “The things that in the Way are most tabooed, they eat! Then, having violated the prohibitions themselves, they go on to butcher chickens, pigs, geese, and ducks. They drink wine until they are wash in it, then in that condition go to send up petitions.” *Daomen kelüe*, 7b–8a; trans. Nickerson, “Abridged Codes,” 357–58.

in spirits and demons and the performance of ceremonies in their homage, and against sacrifices and prayers for blessings. A further important proscription concerns healing:

In curing illness one does not use acupuncture, moxa, or hot liquid medicines. One only ingests talismans, drinks [talismanic] water, confesses one's sins, corrects one's behavior, and sends a petition – and that is all.

治病不針灸揚藥，唯服符飲水，首罪改行，章奏而已。<sup>84</sup>

It is in this context that Lu Xiujing mentions two rules related to divination. The first is concerned with hemerology:

When choosing a site for a dwelling-place, installing a sepulcher, or moving house – when moving, coming to rest, or in all the hundred affairs – not divining for a lucky day or making inquiries concerning auspicious times, simply following one's heart, avoiding or inclining toward nothing is called the Bond (*or*: “is called restraint,” *yue*).

居宅安塚，移徙動止，百事不卜日問時，任心而行，無所避就，謂約。<sup>85</sup>

Second, one should not rely on spirits and deities to forecast the auspicious and the inauspicious:

Weighing the words of demons and gods in order to divine auspiciousness and inauspiciousness is called “calamitous.”

稱鬼神語，占察吉凶，謂之祲。<sup>86</sup>

An additional proscription concerns the dwellings for both the living and the dead:

84 *Daomen kelüe*, 8a; trans. Nickerson, “Abridged Codes,” 358. On this and the three passages quoted below, see also Andersen, “Talking to the Gods,” 8.

85 *Daomen kelüe*, 8a; trans. Nickerson, “Abridged Codes,” 358.

86 *Daomen kelüe*, 8a; trans. Nickerson, “Abridged Codes,” 358.

As for writing charts, and thus divining the baneful geomantic influences of the sites of sepulchers and dwellings, one ought instead to send up a petition to exorcise those influences. To persist in using calendars to pick days and choose times is even more stupidly obstreperous.

書是圖占、塚宅、地基、堪輿、凶咎之屬，須上章驅除。乃復有曆，揀日擇時，愚僻轉甚。<sup>87</sup>

In the passages quoted above, Lu Xiuqing also shows what, in his view, the correct attitude of the Daoist priest should be. Concerning hemerology, the priest should “follow his heart (*renxin* 任心), avoiding or inclining toward nothing.” As we shall see later in this essay, these words echo – in the substance, if not in the letter – those found in earlier and later Daoist works that reject divination in favor of an intuitive and immediate knowledge of the auspicious and the inauspicious. The rules on healing and topomancy are more detailed and remarkably similar: both require sending a “petition” (*zhang*) to Heaven in order to cure illnesses or to exorcise baneful influences. As we shall see in the next section, this point is of crucial importance to understand the attitude towards divination reflected in Lu Xiuqing’s work, as well as the role played by petitions in one of the few known attempts to consolidate the functions of the Daoist priest and the diviner.

## 5 From Antagonism to Complementarity: Mantic Diagnosis and Ritual Healing

A Daoist tomb ordinance (*muquan* 墓券) written on behalf of a deceased Tianshi dao priest in 433 – during Lu Xiuqing’s lifetime – suggests that Lu’s rejection of divination was not only his personal concern, but was shared by larger segments of the Daoist community. The ordinance underlines the fact that the burial had taken place without recourse to prognostication practices – hemerology and, apparently, topomancy – when it states: “In accordance with the Law of the Way of the Most High and all the Lords and Elders, [the family of the deceased] did not dare to select a time or choose a day, and they did not avoid the subterrestrial prohibitions and taboos. Their actions in the Way have been upright and perfect, and they have not inquired of the turtle or milfoil.”<sup>88</sup>

<sup>87</sup> *Daomen kelüe*, 8a–b; trans. Nickerson, “Abridged Codes,” 358.

<sup>88</sup> Nickerson, “Taoism, Death, and Bureaucracy in Early Medieval China,” 176; also in Andersen, “Talking to the Gods,” 7–8.

But more than any single mantic art per se, what is rejected in the *180 Precepts* and the *Abridged Codes* is the figure and the role of the diviner. The reason is apparent: not unlike the main competitor of the Daoist priest in the religious sphere – namely, the spirit-medium – the diviner operates in a domain closely related to the one in which the priest also operates, but on the basis of different principles and by means of different techniques, and therefore is seen by the priest as an antagonist. The prohibition of divination for healing purposes is the clearest example of this conflict. The early Way of the Celestial Masters, to which Lu Xiuqing ideally refers in his *Codes*, provided a fundamental model for dealing with misfortune in its healing rite. Since illnesses were seen as the result of sins or moral faults, and not of “destiny” per se, the priest, following a confession of the sin committed, addressed a written petition to the main deities asking for pardon on behalf of the ill person.<sup>89</sup> As Peter Nickerson points out, here lies the reason for the rejection of divination: “The notion that misfortune might be due to fate (and thus subject to divinatory discovery) directly undercut Taoists’ own notion that illness and other forms of misfortune were the results of sin.”<sup>90</sup>

Despite this, the solution found by the Celestial Masters in the sixth and seventh centuries made possible a shift from antagonism to complementarity: “The medium [here, the diviner] provided the diagnosis; the Taoist effected the cure.”<sup>91</sup> The main source on this development is the above-mentioned *Chisong zi zhangli*, a work dating from the Tang period but containing earlier materials. Nickerson’s analysis of this source highlights three main points. The role of the diviner is preliminary to the role of the Daoist priest; in this way, the mantic arts are subordinated to the Daoist rites; and by subordinating divination to the Daoist rites, the priest was able to incorporate the deities and spirits associated with the mantic practices into the Daoist pantheon, and therefore to obtain control on them.

Nickerson provides several examples of divinations followed by the Daoist rite of petitioning.<sup>92</sup> I will refer here only to one typical instance, concerning a man who was experiencing health issues. In the first part of the process, the diviner, using his “arts of calculation” (*suanshu* 算術), identifies the cause of the illness in one of the man’s ancestors, who was not receiving the proper

89 On the healing ritual in the early Way of the Celestial Masters, see Kleeman, *Celestial Masters*, 353–69. For parallels in the *Taiping jing*, see Tsuchiya, “Confession of Sins and Awareness of Self in the *Taiping jing*.”

90 Nickerson, “Taoism, Death, and Bureaucracy,” 489.

91 Ibid., 487. On this subject, see also Nickerson, “Shamans, Demons, Diviners, and Taoists,” which, however, omits most of the materials referred to below.

92 Nickerson, “Taoism, Death, and Bureaucracy,” 485–520 passim.

ancestral offerings. In the second part, the priest, through a petition, asks the deities to heal the supplicant's illness, and – for a final solution to the problem – that they grant the ancestor's soul permission to leave the netherworld and rise to Heaven.<sup>93</sup>

This two-stage process replicates instances visible in several forms of Chinese iatromancy, where the diviner's prognosis is followed by a ritual ceremony, an exorcist performance, or the cure by a physician.<sup>94</sup> With regard to our present subject, however, the relation between the mantic expert and the ritual master takes on a further important aspect. The subordination of the mantic arts to the Daoist rites did not merely occur by attributing a preliminary role to the diviner: as Nickerson notes, "divination and the principles on which it was based were hierarchically subordinated within a larger framework, whose overall import was determined by Taoist cosmology and ethical principles."<sup>95</sup> This larger framework consists of the Daoist pantheon and its bureaucracy. The priest's intention in cooperating with the diviner was to upgrade the spirits associated with the mantic practices to the rank of minor "celestial officials," and thus incorporate them into that system. This point clarifies the Daoist priest's perspective on this remarkable attempt of compromise between his functions and those of the diviner: it was only by incorporating the spirits related to divination into the Daoist celestial bureaucracy that the priest could obtain control on them and accept the related mantic practices.

## 6 "Visionary Divination" and the Eight Archivists

As we have seen, Ge Hong rejects several divination techniques as "inferior arts" (*xiashu*). In the same passage of his work, however, he gives details on five methods through which, he says, one can "enter the divine" (*rushen* 入神).<sup>96</sup> Remarkably, Ge Hong draws this expression from the "Xici 繫辭" (Appended Sayings) appendix of the *Book of Changes*, suggesting in this way that those methods were as effective as the consultation of the *Changes*. The five methods pertain to what Poul Andersen has called "visionary divination."<sup>97</sup> They

93 *Chisong zi zhangle* (DZ 615), 4.16b–17a; Nickerson, "Taoism, Death, and Bureaucracy," 502.

94 On iatromancy, see Harper, "Physicians and Diviners," and his "Iatromancy." Hendrichske, "Divination in the *Taiping jing*," 41, also notes that "for authors of the *Taiping jing* healing was supposed to be guided by a *chen* 識 'prognostic.'"

95 Nickerson, "Taoism, Death, and Bureaucracy," 513.

96 *Baopu zi*, 15.272 (see Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion*, 255).

97 Andersen, "Talking to the Gods," 11–12. See also Raz, "Time Manipulation in Early Daoist Ritual," 31–32, and Campany, *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth*, 96.

are not based on cosmological frameworks and do not rely on calculations or technical tools. Strictly speaking, in fact, they are not techniques of prediction, but different methods characterized by the same purpose: summoning deities and questioning them on various subjects, including the future.

Once again, the first of these methods relies on the *Sanhuang wen*, or *Writ of the Three Sovereigns*. Through its talismans, one is able to summon several divine beings who, requested by the practitioner, enable him to “know all things in advance”:

Some employ the *Celestial Writ of the Three Sovereigns* to summon the Administrator of Destiny (Siming), the Administrator of Dangers (Siwei), the Lords of the Five Sacred Mountains, the Borough Clerks of the Paths, and the Numina of the Six *ding* [celestial stems]. [The *Writ*] enables one to see them all and question them about any matter. Then the auspicious and the inauspicious will be as clear as if they were retained in the palm of one’s hand, and it will be possible to know all things in advance, no matter how far or near, obscure or profound.

或以三皇天文，召司命司危五岳之君，阡陌亭長六丁之靈，皆使人見之，而對問以諸事，則吉凶昭然，若存諸掌，無遠近幽深，咸可先知也。<sup>98</sup>

Remarkably, in this method one of the sets of divine beings that respond to the adept’s questions consists of the same female deities also active in the *dunjia* system, here called Numina of the Six *ding* (*liuding zhi ling* 六丁之靈). They are mentioned again under the name Six Yin (*liuyin* 六陰) in one of the three other methods, which consist in summoning by different means – including minor rites and the ingestion of drugs – divine beings that provide knowledge of the future:

Some summon the Jade Women of the Six Yin. This method is completed in sixty days; after its completion, one will be able to keep them under his command for a long time. Others perform a ceremony to make the Eight Archivists (*bashi*) arrive. The Eight Archivists are the essences (*jing*) of the eight trigrams. This too will suffice to obtain advance knowledge of what has not yet taken shape. Others ingest the tip of a spatula or an inch-square spoonful of flowers of kudzu (*ge*) and awns and seeds of hemp (*ma*). Experiencing a sudden urge to lie down, they hear someone

98 *Baopu zi*, 15.272–73 (see Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion*, 255).

who tells them about unsettled things: then good and bad fortune will be firmly determined.

或召六陰玉女，其法六十日而成，成則長可役使。或祭致八史，八史者，八卦之精也，亦足以預識未形矣。或服葛花及秋芒麻勃刀圭方寸匕，忽然如欲臥，而聞人語之以所不決之事，吉凶立定也。<sup>99</sup>

We shall presently return to the Eight Archivists. The fifth and most complex method involves visualizing Lord Lao, i.e., Laozi in his divine aspect. Like the “winged men” (*yuren* 羽人) of antiquity, he has the beak of a bird, an arched nose, bushy eyebrows, and long ears. He is attended by one hundred and twenty yellow lads and is surrounded by twelve green dragons on his left, thirty-six white tigers on his right, twenty-four vermilion sparrows before him, and seventy-two dark warriors behind him. With a clear allusion to his prognostic powers, “his feet bear the marks of the eight trigrams, and he lies on a divine tortoise.” Ge Hong concludes: “If you see Lord Lao, your years will be extended, your heart will be like the Sun and the Moon, and there will be nothing that you don’t know.”<sup>100</sup>

Before we continue, it is worthy of note that, in other cases, the power of summoning deities in order to “know all matters in the world” is granted not by meditation techniques, but by Ge Hong’s other favorite practice, namely the compounding and ingestion of alchemical elixirs. Ge Hong quotes the following method from an anonymous and now-lost source, which again mentions the female *dunjia* spirits:

Then there is the method of the Elixir of the Jade Pillar. Mix cinnabar with a Flowery Pond (*huachi*). Place it between powdered malachite and sulphur. Insert it into a bamboo cylinder and place it in sand. Steam it for fifty days. If you ingest it for one hundred days, jade women, [the deities of] the six *jia* and six *ding* [stems], and divine women will come to attend on you, and you can command them. You will know all matters in the world.

又玉柱丹法，以華池和丹，以曾青硫黃末覆之薦之，內笱中沙中，蒸之五十日，服之百日，玉女六甲六丁神女來侍之，可役使，知天下之事也。<sup>101</sup>

99 *Baopu zi*, 15.273 (see Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion*, 255).

100 *Baopu zi*, 15.273–74 (see Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion*, 255–57).

101 *Baopu zi*, 4.81–82 (see Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion*, 88). The Flowery Pond is a liquid compound based on vinegar.



In one of the methods seen above, Ge Hong refers to the Eight Archivists, whom we have already met under the name of Eight Spirits in the *180 Precepts Spoken by Lord Lao*. Elsewhere, he also cites a *Bashi tu* 八史圖 (Chart of the Eight Archivists), probably related to the *Chart of the Eight Spirits* mentioned in the *180 Precepts*.<sup>102</sup> The Eight Archivists are the spirits of the eight trigrams, which together with the twelve earthly branches form the cosmological framework of an elaborate ritual and meditative practice. Two main versions of the practice are described in *Daozang* texts. Andersen summarizes as follows the ritual described in one of them:

The spirits are said to be divided in couples.... Each couple descends into people's homes for a period of three days, followed immediately by the descent of the next couple, and so on through a cycle of twelve days. If one wishes to consult them, one must first fast for a period of one hundred days, then place a set of eight talismans written on wooden tablets in the eight directions, and on the day of the descent of a couple arrange offerings for the two spirits.... One must call out their names and may then ask them questions about all matters, including the future.<sup>103</sup>

The second version of the ritual is based on the same cosmological framework. After the establishment of the ritual area and a period of purifications, the Eight Archivists enter the house of the practitioner. "The spirits will then talk to you. You must ask the Eight Archivists about seeking the methods of spiritual transcendence and long life."<sup>104</sup>

## 7 Divination and Self-cultivation

The traditions based on self-cultivation practices bring to light other factors underlying the controversial relation of Daoism to divination. One of the most important among them has been pointed out by Michael Puett with regard to one of the *Guanzi* 管子 chapters devoted to self-cultivation, namely the "Neiye 內業" (Inner Training), dating from the late fourth century BCE. Whether this

102 *Baopu zi*, 333 (see Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion*, 382). In addition to the studies by Andersen and Raz cited in the two following footnotes, on the Eight Archivists see Steavu, *The Writ of the Three Sovereigns* 157-64.

103 Andersen, "Talking to the Gods," 20. This version of the ritual is found in the *Bashi shengwen zhenxing tu*, 1a-5a.

104 *Wucheng fu shangjing*, 2.2b; trans. Raz, "Time Manipulation," 40. Raz summarizes this version of the ritual on pp. 37-40.

is an actual “Daoist” source is not a question to address in the present article; what is certain is that this work prefigures themes at the basis of later Daoist works on meditation. As Puett remarks: “Far from internalizing a shamanistic practice, the ‘Neiye’ is rather an attempt to bypass the work of ritual specialists.... By claiming to be in possession of techniques that allow the practitioner to obtain the power of spirits without resorting to the art of divination patronized at the courts, the authors were making an argument for their own authority: instead of trying to divine the intentions of the spirits and to control them through sacrifices, they claim the ability to divinize themselves.”<sup>105</sup>

The most explicit passage of the “Neiye” on this subject is the following one:

Can you concentrate? Can you be one? Can you, without tortoise shell or divining stalks, foretell fortune and misfortune?

能搏乎？能一乎？能無卜筮而知凶吉乎？<sup>106</sup>

Essentially the same passage is found in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, which – in one of the “Miscellaneous Chapters” (“Zapian 雜篇”) attributed to the “anthologists” or the “later followers of Zhuangzi” – ascribes Laozi with these words: “Can you embrace Unity (*baoyi*)? ... Can you, without tortoise shell or divining stalks, foretell fortune and misfortune?” (能抱一乎？... 能無卜筮而知吉凶乎).<sup>107</sup> Harold Roth notes in his translation of the “Neiye”: “The text speaks not of some internal numen or spirit but, rather, of a spiritlike or numinous power that can foreknow.... This foreknowledge also occurs without relying on ghostly or numinous powers either outside or within oneself but, rather, because of ‘the utmost refinement of your essential vital energy.’”<sup>108</sup> Romain Graziani similarly observes in his French translation of the same text: “L’énergie spirituelle n’a rien de surnaturel.... On assiste dans ce passage à un remarquable acte de rupture avec la vision religieuse et mantique qui imprègne le rapport aux

<sup>105</sup> Puett, *To Become a God*, 116.

<sup>106</sup> “Neiye,” sec. XIX in the text edited and translated in Roth, *Original Tao*, 82–83. See also the translation in Graziani, *Écrits de Maître Guan*, 18. A slightly different version of the same passage is found in another chapter on self-cultivation of the *Guanzi*, the “Xinshu 心術” (Art of the Mind), part 2; trans. Graziani, *Écrits de Maître Guan*, 46–47.

<sup>107</sup> *Zhuangzi*, 23.785; trans. Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, 257. If one of the two texts is the direct source of the other, the *Zhuangzi* draws this passage from the “Neiye” and not vice versa.

<sup>108</sup> Roth, *Original Tao*, 107. Roth refers here to these sentences in sec. XIX: “It is not due to the power of the ghostly and the numinous, but to the utmost refinement of your essential vital breath” (非鬼神之力也，精氣之極也).

Esprits, aux *shen* [神].”<sup>109</sup> In another study, Graziani returns to the same *acte de rupture*, remarking that the “Neiye” and other early works on self-cultivation are “like a declaration of independence of the human mind from divinatory procedures.”<sup>110</sup>

In opposition to divination, self-cultivation is not a means to fathom the will of ghosts and spirits or to probe what they may know; it is rather a way of elevating oneself to the same level of apprehension, to the same degree of influential action on the world.... This idea first presented in the “Art of the Mind” [i.e, the “Xinshu 心術” chapters of the *Guanzi*] will gain popularity in texts imbued with Daoist thought and will challenge the traditional monopoly of court diviners and shamans over the spiritual world.<sup>111</sup>

In this perspective, divination is not the only branch of knowledge to be rejected: “External practices and knowledge (ritual, divination, study of texts) are discarded in favor of a personal intuition of the workings of the Way within the self.”<sup>112</sup>

Despite the different context and the six-century interval, this attitude is not far removed from the one at the basis of the “visionary divination” described by Ge Hong, where practitioners intend to achieve a state in which they directly “talk” to the gods in order to know what is impending. In a poetical description of a Daoist sage, Ge Hong himself alludes to the fact that such a person possesses an inner “turtle carapace” but carefully hides it, so that it is not used for divining the future through the ordinary mantic arts:

He stores his Shine-in-the-Night pearl in a cave on high,  
so that no stone from other mountains could grind it  
he hides his scaly carapace in a mysterious abyss

109 Graziani, *Écrits de Maître Guan*, 18, note 24.

110 Graziani, “The Subject and the Sovereign,” 469.

111 *Ibid.*, 499.

112 *Ibid.*, 512. In a different context, one can find a simple, unsophisticated example of the same claim in one of the stories found in the *Shenxian zhuan*, concerning the otherwise unknown immortal Li A 李阿, who merely divined by means of his facial expressions. “Some went to consult him on affairs, but Li A would say nothing... If he appeared happy, then their affairs were all auspicious; if he wore a sorrowful look, then they were all inauspicious; if he smiled, it meant there would be a great felicity; and if he sighed, it meant deep trouble was near.” We may read in this story an implied rejection of divination techniques in the strict sense. See Campany, *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth*, 212–15.

to prevent the calamity of being pierced and burnt.

藏夜光於嵩岫，不受他山之攻。沈鱗甲於玄淵，以違鑽灼之災。<sup>113</sup>

Elsewhere – and in spite of his ultimately favorable view of the mantic arts – Ge Hong writes that the meditation practice of “guarding the One” (*shouyi* 守一) makes divination unnecessary:

Anyone who can guard the One will travel ten thousand miles, enter among armed hosts, and cross large rivers with no need to divine the right day or select the right time. When beginning construction work, changing dwelling place, or entering a new home, one will never again depend upon topomancy (*kanyu*) and the star calendar, nor will one need to observe the taboos of the Great Year (*taisui*), the Moon (*taiyin*), the General (*jiangjun*) [star], the [day of] monthly establishment (*yuejian*), and the noxious spirits.

能守一者，行萬里，入軍旅，涉大川，不須卜日擇時，起工移徙，入新屋舍，皆不復按堪輿星歷，而不避太歲太陰將軍、月建煞耗之神。<sup>114</sup>

In the late-sixth century *Wushang biyao* 無上祕要 (Supreme secret essentials), an encyclopedic work that John Lagerwey does not hesitate to call “perhaps the most ambitious book ever produced by the Daoists,” the final chapter states, in Lagerwey’s summary, that “the ultimate perfection consists in changing one’s own divine light – changing oneself at the same rhythm as the universe – and *in forgetting any distinction between good and ill fortune*, in becoming one with the absolute, and in recovering the lost celestial perfection.”<sup>115</sup>

Not surprisingly, we find a similar attitude towards divination in the traditions of Neidan 內丹 (Internal Alchemy). In what became the main text of these traditions, the *Zhouyi cantong qi* 參同契 (Seal of the unity of the three, in accordance with the *Book of Changes*), we read that if a practitioner makes errors in the choice of the elixir’s ingredients, he would immediately die. At that time, “King Wen of the Zhou can sort out the [divination] stalks, Confucius

113 *Baopu zi*, 1.2 (see Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion*, 31). These verses in turn may allude to a passage in the *Zhuangzi*, 17.603–4; see Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, 188.

114 *Baopu zi*, 18.325 (see Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion*, 305).

115 Lagerwey, “Littérature taoïste et formation du Canon,” translated from pp. 482 and 484 (*italics mine*).

can divine with the images (*xiang* 象, i.e., trigrams and hexagrams),” but they would never be able to revive him.<sup>116</sup> In the second most important Neidan text, the *Wuzhen pian* 悟真篇 (Awakening to reality), we read: “Longevity and untimely death, exhaustion and accomplishment, no one can know beforehand.” The proper way of dealing with one’s destiny, according to this work, is by learning “celestial immortality” (*tianxian* 天仙).<sup>117</sup>

## 8 Conclusion

This survey has shown that the complex attitude of Daoism towards divination results from the existence of favorable, limiting, and adverse factors for its adoption. As a whole, and in general terms, divination is in some cases accepted as a “way of knowledge”: in the *Taiping jing*, it provides awareness of the incoming era of Great Peace; and according to Ge Hong (who, let me say it once more, rejects the more ordinary goals of the mantic arts), it is valuable when it affords an understanding of the “recondite order” of the cosmos and of the operation of the Dao within it.

In several other instances, instead, the picture is more complex. Daoists have incorporated a few mantic methods into their practices in a straightforward way – the main example is hemerology, as long as it was not proscribed. More frequently, however, they have adapted those methods to their own aims: their main interest is not in divination per se, but in the patterns of cosmological emblems underlying some of its techniques, which they use as abstract templates for purposes different from prognostication. Examples include the reproduction of the “diviner’s board” (*shi*) in the layout of the Daoist altar and the adoption of the spatio-temporal pattern at the basis of the *dunjia* system for ritual purposes.<sup>118</sup> Another example, different in its exterior forms but not with regard to attitude, is the use of physiognomy to determine not just the destiny of an ordinary individual, but the bodily “marks of immortality.”

At the opposite end of the spectrum, we have seen examples of a categorical rejection of divination. In early medieval times, the *180 Precepts Spoken by Lord Lao* and Lu Xiujing’s *Abridged Codes for the Daoist Community* prohibit such practices as hemerology, astrology, topomancy, and even the method of

116 *Zhouyi cantong qi*, sec. 67 of the text edited and translated in Pregadio, *The Seal of the Unity of the Three*, 107.

117 *Wuzhen pian*, “Lüshi 律詩” (Poems in Regulated Verses), poem no. 2.

118 Needless to say, the most important and widespread examples of the adoption of cosmological models at the basis of divination practices concerns the *Yijing*. See note 12 above.

the Eight Archivists, in spite of its earlier and later adoption in Daoism. Further down the scale, we find branches of Daoism – Internal Alchemy and, in general, the traditions based on self-cultivation – in which divination per se is not an issue worthy of consideration.

Beyond this broad picture, several other points deserve attention. One of the major features that invests the different Daoist views of divination is the role played, in virtually all techniques, by benevolent deities that one tries to approach and by malignant entities from which one intends to gain protection. As we have seen, Lu Xiuqing states in his *Codes* that “one should not rely on spirits and deities to forecast the auspicious and the inauspicious.” The purpose of hemerology is the identification of days that ensure support by divine beings and protection from evil spirits. Female deities are active in the *dunjia* system, and Ge Hong writes – with regard to the techniques that he accepts – that “we calculate by multiplication and division in order to examine the dispositions of demons and spirits.” In topomancy, auspicious places for the living and the deceased are selected – with the help of a major Daoist scripture – in order to offset harmful influences sent forth by the ancestor’s spirit or by minor demonic beings. In the methods of the Eight Archivists one consults the gods of the eight trigrams, and in “visionary divination” one visualizes Laojun and several other divine beings and questions them on a variety of subjects, including the future. Finally, oracular slips available for use in Daoist temples and recorded in Daoist texts reflect as a whole the integration of deities of popular origin into the Daoist pantheon.

While Confucians may have tried to limit or disregard the function of deities and spirits in divination, their active roles in the mantic arts have been observed several times.<sup>119</sup> With regards to the early “books of days” (*rishu* 日書), Marc Kalinowski has noted that “the aim of the divination is not so much to predict the future as to define and control the ritual protocols of prayer and exorcism which accompany the consultants’ requests.”<sup>120</sup> Similarly, “predictions concerning sickness always consist in determining the name of the spirit or demon causing the consultant’s illness. Once the source of the curse

119 Hendrischke, “Divination in the *Taiping jing*,” 8, remarks that Wang Chong 王充 (27–97 CE) contrasts “the foreknowledge of sages with that of divination experts who use ‘numbers and arts’ (*shushu* [數術]) and both of these with demonic prophesies involving spirit possession. Making these distinctions Wang Chong attempted to shrink the presence of spirits.” These words might apply to other thinkers as well within Confucianism and especially Neo-Confucianism.

120 Kalinowski, “Diviners and Astrologers under the Eastern Zhou,” 381.

(*sui* 祟) had been identified, it had to be exorcized by the appropriate rites and sacrifices in the hope of a possible cure.<sup>121</sup> As we have seen, with regard to deities mentioned in Daoist sources on the *dunjia* method, Kalinowski remarks that “the dependence of divination on ritual practices was a reality admitted by the diviners themselves.”<sup>122</sup>

In light of the above, it seems clear that one of the reasons for the partial or complete rejection of divination in Daoism is precisely the reliance of the mantic arts on deities and spirits, usually of a low rank (when divination is performed by Daoists, instead, higher gods such as the Three Sovereigns or Laojun himself are involved). The religious dimension of divination is an ascertained fact, and this creates issues to the Daoists, for whom religious practices should be addressed to different divine beings and should take quite different forms. Yet, the problem may not be primarily with divination per se – otherwise Daoists would not practice it at all – but with the figure of the diviner. The case of the *Taiping jing*, which values the role of the diviner as long as he also performs self-cultivation practices, is remarkable but appears to be unique. In other instances, when Daoists endorse or tolerate different forms of divination, they are conducted without the intermediation of a specialist: this is clearly visible in the use of the *Writ of the Three Sovereigns* in topomancy, in the use of oracular slips that the faithful draw by themselves in Daoist shrines and temples, and – perhaps the most extreme, but also the clearest example – in “visionary divination.”

This adds a further level of complexity to the subject that we have been discussing, already sufficiently intricate in itself. As Nickerson suggests with regard to the incorporation of prognostic arts by the medieval Celestial Masters, the view that they did so merely “in order to gain mass appeal” (in other words, in order to exploit the popularity of divination) is contradicted by a more elaborate but probably more precise view: “By allowing the use of divination to discover the ostensible causes of difficulties, Taoists perhaps made their own curative rites more effective by introducing into the healing process a sense of immediate, mantic contact with the supernatural. On the other hand, by relegating divination to a subordinate role, medieval Taoism managed to maintain its stance of superiority with respect to popular religion

121 Ibid., 353–54.

122 Translated from Kalinowski, “La littérature divinatoire,” 94. On the deities and spirits mentioned in the *Wuxing dayi*, see Kalinowski, *Cosmologie et divination*, 104–5 and 377–88. On their widespread presence in the “day books,” see Yan, “Daybooks and the Spirit World,” 207–47.

as a literate (and bureaucratized) tradition.”<sup>123</sup> To what extent, then, is the relation of Daoism to divination comparable to its relation to popular religion? And with regard to the figure of the mantic specialist – which, as I suggest, is the main problem for the Daoist priest – does the attitude of Daoism towards the diviner bear analogies with its relation towards the *fashi* 法師 (the “master of rites”) and the spirit-medium, his main competitors in the religious field? Both questions are worthy of further consideration; here I will only refer to one example, already discussed earlier in this essay, that may throw some light on this issue.

We know quite well that Daoists, since the time of the earliest religious movements in the Later Han period, have constantly tried to distinguish themselves from popular cults, most often with the rationale that the gods of popular religion are actually demons. In addition to labeling them as malignant and dangerous, however, there has also been another way to deal with the spirits of the popular cults: quite simply, it has consisted in upgrading them to the status of minor deities and incorporating them into the lower ranks of the Daoist pantheon. The *Chisong zi zhangli* offers clear examples of this strategy, and does so in direct relation to divination. The Daoist priest intends to subordinate the mantic arts to the Daoist rites. This does not simply occur by attributing a preliminary role to the diviner (who identifies the cause of the misfortune or the illness) and the primary role to the priest (who sends a written petition to the heavenly administration, a “literate” and “bureaucratic” act in itself): the priest is also able to obtain control over the deities and spirits associated with the mantic practices by assuring them a position in the pantheon. This is essentially the same strategy that Daoism used to deal with the gods of popular religion.

Quite interestingly, Daoism and Confucianism posit themselves in relation to divination in substantially similar ways: as literate traditions that reject, or attempt to limit, or at least try to qualify the scope and value of the mantic arts. As Michael Lackner writes in the introduction to the present volume, Confucians deemed – at least “officially” – the divination techniques to be examples of the deprecated “minor ways” (*xiaodao* 小道). The same can be said – here too, with due exceptions – of Daoism. The main difference in the respective attitudes may lie in the fact that while, on the one hand, the features of divination more overtly related to religious cults have been silently disregarded by Confucians, on the other hand they have constituted an issue

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123 Nickerson, “Taoism, Death, and Bureaucracy,” 491. On this subject, see also Raz, “Time Manipulation,” 57–58.



for the Daoists, who have tried to deal with them in accordance with the teachings of their religion.

### Appendix: Daoist Sources on Divination Techniques

With the exception of works concerned with “fate calculation” (*suanming* 算命) and with rites related to one’s “fundamental destiny” (*benming* 本命), this appendix lists Daoist sources entirely or substantially concerned with the divination techniques discussed in the first section of the present article. Several titles are cited in abbreviated forms. Where applicable, entries on works found in the *Daozang* provide references to more detailed descriptions found in Marc Kalinowski, “La littérature divinatoire dans le *Daozang*” (abbreviated as “K”) and Sakade Yoshinobu, “Divination as Daoist Practice” (“S”). Other descriptive notes on the *Daozang* texts cited below are found in Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang*, and in the Chinese annotated catalogues of the Daoist Canon.<sup>124</sup>

#### (1) *Hemerology*

- DZ 615 *Chisong zi zhangli* 赤松子章曆 (Petition calendar of Master Redpine). Tang dynasty (contains earlier materials). A collection of “petitions” (*zhang* 章) addressed to the celestial administration for a wide variety of purposes, also specifying the most propitious times for their delivery. Defined by Marc Kalinowski as “a valuable and unique document for the study of medieval hemerology.”<sup>125</sup> [K 96–99; S 557–58]
- DZ 1240 *Zeri li* 擇日曆 (Calendar to select the [auspicious] days). Zhang Wanfu 張萬福 (fl. 710–13). Concerned with the selection of auspicious days for the ordination of Daoist priests and the transmission of scriptural corpora. Originally part of a much larger work on ritual rules, now lost.<sup>126</sup> [K 95–96; S 557]
- DZ 1267 *Jiutian shangsheng bichuan jinfu jing* 九天上聖祕傳金符經 (Book of the golden talisman secretly transmitted by the supreme saint of the nine heavens).

<sup>124</sup> See especially Ren Jiyu and Zhong Zhaopeng, *Daozang tiyao*; Xiao Dengfu, *Zhengtong Daozang zongmu tiyao*; Ding Peiren, *Zengzhu xinxiu Daozang mulu*, also valuable for its entries on non-extant works; and Zhu Yueli, *Daozang fenlei jieti*.

<sup>125</sup> Kalinowski, “La littérature divinatoire,” translated from p. 97. On this work, see also Verellen, “The Heavenly Master Liturgical Agenda According to Chisong zi’s Petition Almanac.” In the context of this work, divination is especially important in order to diagnose the origins of illnesses and cases of demonic possession. See above the section “From Antagonism to Complementarity.”

<sup>126</sup> On Zhang Wanfu, the author of the main Tang-dynasty codification of Daoist ritual, see Benn, *The Cavern Mystery Transmission*. On the *Zeri li*, see *ibid.*, 146–48.

Late Song dynasty. Tables for the calculation of auspicious and inauspicious days according to their association with nine stars, followed by a calendar of propitious days for various activities.<sup>127</sup> [K 102]

- DZ 1268 *Tianhuang Taiyi shenlü bihui jing* 天皇太一神律避穢經 (Book of malefices to be avoided, according to the divine prescriptions of the Celestial Sovereign of Great Unity). Song dynasty (?). Calendrical interdictions for compounding elixirs.
- DZ 1480 *Xu zhenjun yuxia ji* 許真君玉匣記 (Records from the jade coffer of the True Lord Xu) and DZ 1481 *Fashi xuanzhai ji* 法師選擇記 (Hemerological notes of the ritual master). Fifteenth century. Although they are separately printed in the Daoist Canon, these two texts form a single work. After a list of anniversaries of Daoist, Buddhist, and popular deities, the first text lists auspicious and inauspicious days for asking favors to the gods. The second text contains a similar list concerned with Buddhist deities, followed by an extended collection of other hemerological materials. [K 102–3]

In addition to these works, see also DZ 1288 and DZ 1289 in section 4 below. The *Zangwai daoshu* 藏外道書 (Daoist texts outside the Canon, vol. 9) reproduces Huang Zongxi's 黃宗羲 (1610–95) *Shou shili yaofa* 授時曆要法 (Essential methods for implementing the calendar) from a collection entitled *Zhenxian shangsheng* 真仙上乘 (The superior vehicle of true immortality).

(2) *Dunjia* 遁甲 (Hidden Stem, or Hidden Period)

- DZ 581 *Liuding bifa* 六丁祕法 (Secret method [of the jade women] of the six *ding* days). Tenth century or later. With DZ 586, 587, 588, and 857 (see below), this is one of five works devoted to the “secret method” of the deities of the six *ding* days. [K 93–94]
- DZ 586 *Huangdi Taiyi bamen rushi jue* 黃帝太乙八門入式訣 (Instructions of the Yellow Emperor for entering the framework of the eight gates of the Great One). Tenth century or later. [K 93–94; S 557]
- DZ 587 *Huangdi Taiyi bamen rushi bijue* 黃帝太一八門入式祕訣 (Secret instructions of the Yellow Emperor for entering the framework of the eight gates of the Great One). Tenth century or later. [K 93–94]
- DZ 588 *Huangdi Taiyi bamen nishun shengsi jue* 黃帝太一八門逆順生死訣 (Instructions of the Yellow Emperor on the progression and regression of birth and death through the eight gates of the Great One). Tenth century or later. [K 93–94; S 557]

127 A large part of this work corresponds to *Fashi xuanzhaiji*, 14a–24a. On this text, see below in the present section.

- DZ 857 *Liuyin dongwei dunjia zhenjing* 六陰洞微遁甲真經 (True book of the hidden stem of the six Yin [spirits] of the cavern of tenuity). Late tenth century. [K 92–94; S 557]
- DZ 984 *Xuanjing bixia Lingbao juxuan jing* 玄精碧匣靈寶聚玄經 (Book of the accumulated mystery of the numinous treasure, from the jade casket of mysterious essence). Song dynasty. A unique work in style and content, containing a synthesis of *dunjia* and *liuren* methods. [K 92.]

In addition to these works, the *Dengtian jun xuanling bamen baoying neizhi* 鄧天君玄靈八門報應內旨 (Inner meaning of retribution through the eight gates of the mysterious numen, by the Heavenly Lord Deng; DZ 1266), related to the Shenxiao 神霄 (Divine Empyrean) school and dating from the Song period, contains portions based on the *dunjia* method.

(3) *Liuren* 六壬 (Six *ren* Celestial Stems)

- DZ 283 *Huangdi longshou jing* 黃帝龍首經 (Book of the dragon's head, transmitted by the Yellow Emperor). Originally dating from the Six Dynasties.<sup>128</sup> [K 91]
- DZ 284 *Huangdi jingui yuheng jing* 黃帝金匱玉衡經 (Book of the jade scales and the golden casket, transmitted by the Yellow Emperor). Originally dating from the Six Dynasties. Possibly the earliest extant work on the *liuren* method. [K 91]
- DZ 285 *Huangdi shou sanzi Xuannü jing* 黃帝授三子玄女經 (Book of the mysterious woman, transmitted by the Yellow Emperor to his three disciples). Originally dating from the Six Dynasties. [K 91]

Materials on the *liuren* method are also found in the *Taishang liuren mingjian fuyin jing* 太上六壬明鑑符陰經 (Book of the most high luminous mirror of the six *ren* celestial stems tallying with the Yin principle; DZ 861), 3,9b–15b, a work apparently dating from the Song period.

(4) *Astrology*

- DZ 287 *Tongzhan daxiang li xingjing* 通占大象曆星經 (Book of the stars, with a calendar of their basic divinatory images). Tang dynasty. A catalogue of 162 stars and constellations, with illustrations and oracular statements concerning politics and individual life. Despite its lacunose state, the *Daozang* edition of this work is at the basis of the later “star books.”<sup>129</sup>
- DZ 288 *Lingtai jing* 靈臺經 (Book of the numinous terrace). Tang dynasty. This text and the next one (DZ 289) attest to the incorporation into Chinese astrology

128 Detailed notes on this and the two works listed below are found in Kalinowski, “Les instruments astro-calendériques des Han,” 396–401.

129 For related works in the Daoist Canon, see Kalinowski, “La littérature divinatoire,” 103, note 60.

of concepts and methods of Indian origin, imported during the Tang period by Buddhist monks. The present work lacks about two thirds of its original content but is valuable for its quotations of lost texts. [K 104; S 554]

- DZ 289 *Chengxing lingtai biyao jing* 秤星靈臺祕要經 (Book of the secret essentials of the numinous terrace for appraising the [influence of] celestial bodies). Tang dynasty. See above, DZ 288. Includes the description of a rite for the expulsion of inauspicious star influences (1a–4b). [K 104; S 554]
- DZ 1288 *Yuanchen zhangjiao licheng li* 元辰章醮立成曆 (Practical calendar for the offering of the memorial of the original star). Tang dynasty. “[A] complete ritual of the Zhengyi [正一] tradition for the cult of a person’s life-star, which presides over one’s destiny. The second *juan* contains different tables for the calculation of a person’s destiny, and prayers for averting the evil elements that form part of one’s fate.”<sup>130</sup> See also the next entry. [K 99–101]
- DZ 1289 *Liushi jiazi benming yuanchen li* 六十甲子本命元辰曆 (Calendar of the fundamental destiny and the original star according to the sexagesimal cycle). Tang dynasty. An appendix to the previous work (DZ 1288). [K 101–2]
- DZ 1485 *Ziwei doushu* 紫微斗數 (Numbers of the [Northern] Dipper in the [palace of] purple sublimity). Song dynasty or later. Describes an early form of the homonymous method, traditionally attributed to Chen Tuan 陳搏 (ca. 920–89). [K 105]

Other *Daozang* texts containing materials on astrology include the *Beidou zhifa wuwei jing* 北斗治法武威經 (Book of martial power on the method of government of the Northern Dipper; DZ 870), probably dating from the Song period, and the *Taishang Dongshen wuxing zan* 太上洞神五星讚 (Hymns to the five stars, from the most high cavern of spirit; DZ 976), apparently dating from the Tang period.

(5) *Topomancy* (*fengshui* 風水, or *kanyu* 堪輿)

- DZ 282 *Huangdi zhaijing* 黃帝宅經 (Yellow Emperor’s book of dwellings). Late Tang dynasty or Five Dynasties. The earliest work on topomancy to be entirely extant. The first *juan* contains a general introduction to the subject, with quotations from several lost works. The second *juan* consists of explanations on two charts related to the Yang and the Yin dwellings (for the living and the deceased, respectively). [K 107; S 558]
- DZ 1471 *Rumen chongli zhezong kanyu wanxiao lu* 儒門崇理折衷堪輿完孝錄 (Records of the achievement of filial piety through the rectification of topomancy, in accordance with the principles esteemed by the Confucian School). Late sixteenth century. The first seven *juan* are devoted to different topomantic methods. The final eighth *juan* contains instructions for funerary rituals. [K 107–8; S 558]

130 Quoted from Kristofer Schipper’s abstract in Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 1135–36.

Materials on topomancy are also found in the *Shangqing xiuxing jingjue* 上清修行經訣 (Compendium of *Shangqing* practices; DZ 427). The *Zangwai daoshu* (vol. 1) contains a *Da Han yuanling bi zangjing* 大漢原陵祕葬經 (Secret book of burials in plains and hills, from the Great Han Dynasty), dating – in spite of its title – from between the twelfth and the fourteen centuries, reprinted from the extant portions of the *Yongle dadian* 永樂大典 (Great canon of the Yongle reign-period).<sup>131</sup>

(6) *Physiognomy*

- DZ 1425 *Lingxin jingzhi* 靈信經旨 (Instructions from canonical books on numinous signs). Tang or Northern Song dynasty. Contains a portion in rhymes (1a–5a) that defines the auspicious or inauspicious qualities of several bodily marks (e.g., the color and luminosity of the eyes), and a portion in prose (5b–8a), attributed to the immortal Liu Gen 劉根, that interprets several facial symptoms according to the times in which they appear.<sup>132</sup> [K 108; S 557]

(7) *Meteoromancy*

- DZ 1275 *Yuyang qihou qinji* 雨暘氣候親機 (The atmospheric agents of rain and sunshine). Song or Yuan dynasty. Possibly related to the Daoist Shenxiao school and its Thunder Rites.<sup>133</sup> The two main parts of this work are concerned with the influence played on weather conditions by atmospheric phenomena related to Sun, Moon, and other asterisms (1a–2b), and with weather predictions based on the shapes of clouds and their positions compared to the Sun and the Northern Dipper (3a–7b). The second part contains illustrations of the relevant phenomena.<sup>134</sup> [K 106–7]
- DZ 1276 *Pantian jing* 盤天經 (Book of celestial movements). Song dynasty or later. Concerned with predictions relevant to human activities and weather conditions, based on such phenomena as luminosity of asterisms, cloud formations, winds, and unusual shapes and colors of birds and animals. The commentary quotes several earlier prognostication works. [K 107]

131 On this work, see Ding Peiren, *Zengzhu xinxiu Daozang mulu*, 363–64.

132 On Liu Gen, see the hagiography translated from the *Shenxian zhuan* in Campamy, *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth*, 240–49, which, however, does not mention his physiognomic expertise.

133 This association is suggested in Ren Jiyu and Zhong Zhaopeng, *Daozang tiyao*, 1008, and Xiao Dengfu, *Zhengtong Daozang zongmu tiyao*, 1240.

134 Franciscus Verellen notes that the illustrations are similar to those found in a Mawangdui manuscript on astrology and meteoromancy, the *Tianwen qixiang zazhan* 天文氣象雜占 (Prognostications according to heavenly patterns and *qi* images). See Verellen, “The Dynamic Design: Ritual and Contemplative Graphics in Daoist Scriptures,” 162–63.

(8) *Oracle Slips*

- DZ 1298 *Sisheng zhenjun lingqian* 四聖真君靈籤 (Oracle slips of the four saintly true lords). Song dynasty or later. Forty-nine slips. Oracles governed by the Four Saints. Format: each oracle “provides an oracular poem in twelve verses of seven characters, a Holy Advice (*shengyi* 聖意) in prose ... a prognostic passage (*zhan* 占) in rhythmic prose, and a final poem in four verses of five characters.”<sup>135</sup> Closely related to, and possibly the source of, DZ 1482 (see below). [K 89; S 555]
- DZ 1299 *Xuanzhen lingying baoqian* 玄真靈應寶籤 (Mysterious and true precious slips of numinous response). Yuan or early Ming dynasty. A collection of 365 slips, related to the twelve earthly branches (*dizhi* 地支, thirty slips per branch) and the five agents (*wuxing* 五行). Oracles governed by Wenchang dijun 文昌帝君. Format: A short oracular formula, followed by an indication of the general nature of the prediction (e.g., *shangshang* 上上, “excellent”), a poem in five-character lines, and an explicative text. [K 89; S 555]
- DZ 1300 *Weifang shengmu yuanjun lingying baoqian* 衛房聖母元君靈應寶籤 (Precious slips of numinous response of the Primordial Princess, the Holy Mother Protecting the Bedchamber). Southern Song or Yuan dynasty. Ninety-nine slips. Oracles governed by the Holy Mother Protecting the Bedchamber, a deity associated with one of the main Shenxiao scriptures, the *Yushu baojing* 玉樞寶經 (Precious book of the jade pivot). Format: A poem in seven-character lines, followed by an “Explanation” (*jie* 解). [K 89; S 555]
- DZ 1301 *Hongen lingji zhenjun lingqian* 洪恩靈濟真君靈籤 (Oracle slips of the True Lords of Vast Mercy and Marvelous Succor). Song/Early Ming dynasty. Fifty-three slips. Oracles governed by the Xu brothers (Xu Zhizheng 徐知證 and Xu Zhi'e 徐知諤), canonized as True Lords of Vast Mercy and Marvelous Succor in the early fifteenth century. Format: Indication of the general nature of the prediction, followed by a poem in seven-character lines. See also the next entry.<sup>136</sup>
- DZ 1302 *Lingji zhenjun Zhusheng Tang lingqian* 靈濟真君注生堂靈籤 (Oracle slips of the Hall of Recording Births of the True Lords of Marvelous Succor). Song/Early Ming dynasty. Sixty-four slips. Same governing deities and format as DZ 1301. [K 90; S 555]
- DZ 1303 *Futian guangsheng ruyi lingqian* 扶天廣聖如意靈籤 (Wish-fulfilling oracle slips of the assembly of saints assisting heaven). Southern Song dynasty or later (?). A collection of 120 slips. Format: An indication of the general nature of the prediction, followed by two-character prognostics related to several circumstances (e.g., “Marriage: Great achievement” 婚姻, 大成). [K 90; S 555]

135 Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 2:1246.

136 On the Xu brothers, see Davis, “Arms and the Dao,” 149–64. For related works in the *Daozang*, see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 1210–16.

- DZ 1305 *Jiangdong Wang lingqian* 江東王靈籤 (Oracle slips of the Prince East of the River). Fu Ye 傅燁 (or Fu Yu 傅煜), 1225/1227. One hundred slips. Oracles governed by the Prince East of the River, a major Ganzhou 贛州 (Jiangxi) deity. Format: A poem in seven-character lines, followed by an “Explanation” (*jie* 解) and a “Holy advice” (*shengyi* 聖議) also in verses.<sup>137</sup> [K 90; S 555–56]
- DZ 1470 *Xuxian zhenlu* 徐仙真錄 (True records of the Immortal Xu [Brothers]). Fifteenth century. Among other materials related to the cult of the Xu Brothers, contains two different series of sixty-four slips (2.76a–95b). Format: An indication of the general nature of the prediction, followed by a poem in seven-character lines.
- DZ 1482 *Xuantian shangdi baizi shenghao* 玄天上帝百字聖號 (Holy appellations in one hundred characters of the Emperor of the Dark Heaven).<sup>138</sup> Song dynasty. Forty-nine slips. Oracles governed by Zhenwu, here called Emperor of the Dark Heaven. Format: An indication of the general nature of the prediction and a short oracular formula, followed by a poem in seven-character lines. This poem in turn is followed by other poems categorized under seven headings (wishes, family, marriage, etc.) and by an “Explanation” in prose. The text is closely related to DZ 1298 (see above). [K 90]

In addition to the works cited above, the *Zangwai daoshu* (vol. 17) reproduces a Ming-dynasty edition of the earlier *Lingji baozhang* 靈笈寶章 (Precious stanzas on the oracle slips).

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- Chisong zi zhangli* 赤松子章曆 [Petition calendar of Master Redpine]. Tang dynasty (contains earlier materials). *Daozang* 道藏, DZ 615.

137 This work is introduced by the transcription of a stone inscription by the famous literatus Song Lian 宋濂 (1310–81), dated 1371, which tells the story of the deity’s cult, separately printed in the *Daozang* as *Ganzhou shengji miao lingji li* 贛州聖濟廟靈跡理 (Inscription on miraculous events at the Shengji Temple in Ganzhou; DZ 1304). (The last graph in the title of this work is an error for *bei* 碑.)

138 The actual title of this work, found on page 2b, is *Xuantian shangdi ganying lingqian* 玄天上帝感應靈籤 (The all-responding oracle slips of the Emperor of the Dark Heaven).

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