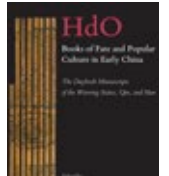




INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM
for Research in the Humanities

Schicksal, Freiheit und Prognose. Bewältigungsstrategien in Ostasien und Europa



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**Workshop “Accounting for Uncertainty:
Prediction and Planning in Asia’s History”**

Editorial (Prof. Dr. Klaus Herbers)

Prognostication and the many “futures”

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

IMPRINT

Publisher



INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM
for Research in the Humanities



INTERNATIONALES KOLLEG
für Geisteswissenschaftliche Forschung

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The whole newsletter has been proofread by Dr. Sue Casson.
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‘Käte Hamburger Center (KHC) – Advanced Study in the Humanities’

is the official name of the ten ‘International Consortia for Research in the Humanities’ that are funded by the German Ministry of Education and Research. We are therefore sometimes referring to the ‘IKGF’ (Internationales Kolleg für Geisteswissenschaftliche Forschung) as KHC in our publications.

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ISSN (Print) 2364-2580
ISSN (Online) 2364-2661

Design and Layout
Masami Hirohata

Circulation and Print

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Dear Readers,

How do varying notions about the future in different cultures relate to prognostic techniques? This is a question that IKGF Deputy Director Professor Klaus Herbers addresses in the editorial of this fourteenth issue of *fate*, the IKGF newsletter. With great pleasure, we further introduce to you a recent IKGF publication in *Focus*, which reports on the launch of a publication by Donald Harper and Marc Kalinowski that introduces daybooks in ancient China.

During the summer term of 2017, the Consortium organized a multidisciplinary lecture series, and we present summaries of all of the related papers, covering Jesuit, African, Tibetan, and, of course, also Chinese and Medieval Studies. This section is followed by a report on the second workshop on *Mantic Arts in China* that was held in preparation for the first volume of our handbook. We further report on the workshop entitled *Accounting for Uncertainty: Prediction and Planning in Asia’s History*, which formed part of a series of events organized in cooperation with the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin.

Finally, as always, I hope that you will enjoy browsing these pages, and look forward to your comments and suggestions!

Dr. Rolf Scheuermann
(Research Coordinator)

Title page: *Apocalypse flamande* - BNF Néerl3;
Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7d/Apocalypse_flamande_-_BNF_N%C3%A9erl3_f.7r_Four_Horsemen.jpg

Prognostication and the many “futures”

What do we understand nowadays by the terms ‘prognostication’ and ‘future’? They are connected, but how? In all societies, prognostication tends to be practiced, and almost everywhere techniques were developed to be able to foresee the future. This variety of practices will be documented by the shortly to be published handbook entitled “Prognostication in Medieval European and Mediterranean Societies,” which will also encompass other areas beyond the Latin-Christian Western world. The wide range of related practices makes it almost impossible to determine their concrete usage. Therefore, the handbook offers space for discussing the development of the ideas and conceptions underlying these practices. The individual aspects and the correlation between them were discussed during several intensive workshops, as described in the focus-article of *fate* no. 12.

Naturally, the relationship between theory and practice is not a simple one. The following two quotes from the 9th century of the Latin Middle Ages show how differently the end of the world and the imminent future can be interpreted:

“As the end of the world approached with increased subversion and reliable, palpable signs that appeared to many, we swore to go to Rome in order to pray.”

This was written around 870 by the Breton, Duke Salomo, and ostensibly addressed to Pope Adrian II. (867–872). Salomo continues his letter by explaining that the reason why he would not be completing his journey to Rome was the threat of the heathen (in this case, the Normans), that prevented him from setting out. Instead, he sends a valuable statue and other gifts to Rome in order to request relics for the new monastery on his peninsula. The short text contains the explicit notion of the imminent end of the world, interprets the Norman raids as clear signs (*signa manifesta*) which herald the end and denotes his own oath to pray in Rome as their practical consequence.

Such signs could also lead to a completely different assessment, such as the following, that occurred just four years earlier. At the end of 866, pope Nicholas I. (858–867) writes in a letter to the eastern patriarchate:

“Keep an eye on the future, but be aware of coming troubles; You are doctors, predict the threatening diseases based on the signs that precede them; [...] You are the watchmen, climb the spiritual heights to identify from afar the most ferocious animal as it descends upon the Lord’s flock; raise your voice like a trumpet and announce their crimes to God’s chosen people; [...] be steady and strong, [...] resist – with whatever force possible – those who act wrongly: and so it shall transpire, that you may not be accused of your silence like mute dogs nor be compelled to justify your accountability to the Lord for hiding the money.”

Both of these sources demonstrate how the future can be understood differently, i.e., the future in the sense of the end of the world or a relatively near future that can be shaped as a doctor does. Both of these concepts result from practices and are based on biblical notions.



Prof. Dr. Klaus Herbers, deputy director of the IKGF, presented Pope Francis the new edition of the “Regesta Pontificum Romanorum” during an official audience at the St. Peter’s Square, Vatican. The “Regesta” are an essential tool for the research on decision-making at the medieval papal court, but they also contain relevant material on the notions of time and the papal policy regarding aspects of prognostication like the prohibition of divination. Photo: Klaus Herbers

Our handbook is insufficiently large to address these differences in detail, but it can raise awareness of these junctures between notions and practices, and intimate that the relationship between them is not always clear-cut, but often polyvalent in nature.

Prof. Dr. Klaus Herbers
(IKGF, deputy Director)

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

FOCUS

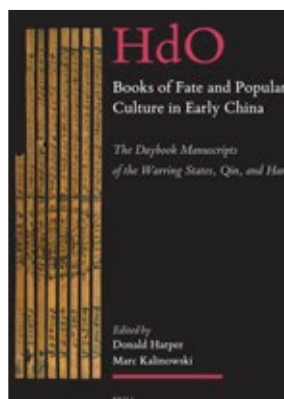
Book Launch on June 5, 2018:

Books of Fate and Popular Culture in Early China. The Daybook Manuscripts of the Warring States, Qin, and Han edited by Donald Harper and Marc Kalinowski

The study of ancient China, which roughly covers the period from the 5th century BCE to the 2nd century CE, has fundamentally changed during the past five decades due to the discovery of manuscript texts. Many of these manuscripts are preserved on bamboo scrolls, some also on silk fabric or wooden tablets, and many have been found in tombs as burial objects. These manuscripts equip us with a better understanding of how previously known texts were transmitted, but, more importantly, also about what has not been transmitted. They show the bias within the traditional reception, which focused on certain types of events and literature respectively. In contrast, recent discoveries have yielded entire new genres of texts, texts which clearly played a role not only in the lives of the elites, but also those of lower-status people, and which reflect the lives of these people, at times even giving them a voice.

One of these previously unknown types of texts are the daybooks (*rishu* 日書), a kind of miscellany related, among other things, to the identification of propitious days for different types of activities. When, in 1975, archaeologists for the first time unearthed two daybook manuscripts, they were baffled by the contents, as can be seen from their excavation report. Since then, however, a sizeable corpus of daybook manuscripts has been discovered in different parts of China, from different periods, covering at least the three last centuries BCE and giving us a far clearer idea of this genre. The growing size of the excavated corpus eventually prompted Marc Kalinowski (École Pratique des Hautes Études and Chair of the IKGf advisory board) and Donald Harper (University of Chicago) to initiate a long-term project dedicated to Chinese daybook manuscripts, conceived at and sponsored by the IKGf.

It is to the great merit of Marc Kalinowski and Donald Harper that they have recognized the importance of this new genre for the study of popular culture in early China and the advancement of the interdisciplinary study of hemerology. The authors understand hemerology as a concern with “the ideas, practices, and texts in all cultures that relate time as expressed in the calendar to daily fortune in the collective experience of a people.” Despite the fact that daybook manuscripts were discovered over a period of more than four decades, this volume is the first book-length study to tackle hemerological materials from China in a systematic manner. The book brings together eleven of the foremost Chinese and Western specialists, who examine the daybooks from different perspectives, showing their significance as manuscript-objects intended for everyday use and situating them within the material and religious culture of the period. At the same time, the editors understand hemerology as a transcultural phenomenon that occurs similarly in the ancient Near East and medieval Europe.



When Assyrian hemerological materials were first discovered in the 19th century, a primary concern of scholars, as recounted in the introduction to the volume, was to study their significance regarding contemporary concerns, such as identifying the precursors to the Judeo-Christian calendrical traditions. It would have been possible to understand the Chinese daybooks similarly only from the perspective of the almanacs of the late imperial and contemporary Chinese periods, a type of ephemeral literature which played, and continues to play, a ubiquitous role in everyday life. It is one of the many merits of the volume that, while fully acknowledging these aspects of the historical legacy, the main focus is on studying the daybooks in their own right, as *realia* and real-world objects within the context of the literacy and manuscript culture of

ancient China. They show how daybook manuscripts were produced locally as technical literature and used in the daily lives of people from different social levels. Also, the authors draw comparisons with the hemerological literature from medieval Europe and ancient Babylon, to which individual chapters are devoted. Thereby, the authors situate Chinese daybooks within the popular culture of ancient China but also establish a firm foundation for the global study of hemerological literature.

The book is published by Brill, and forms part of the book series entitled *Handbuch der Orientalistik / Handbook of Oriental Studies* (<https://brill.com/abstract/title/23783>).

Michael Lüdke & Matthias Schumann



Marc Kalinowski at the IKGf; Photo: IKGf.

LECTURE SERIES SS 2017

Overview of the lectures in the summer semester 2017

- 02.05.2017: Flirting with Figurism: Typology as a Strategy for Accommodation in Early Jesuit Writings on China **Daniel Canaris** (*Italian Studies, University of Sydney; IKGf Visiting Fellow*)
- 16.05.2017: Serving a Higher Purpose: Divination and the Reform of Spirit-Writing in Republican China **Matthias Schumann** (*Chinese Studies, FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg*)
- 30.05.2017: Decision-Making by Prognostic Disclosure: Epistemology and Cosmology in African Divination **Klaus Hock** (*History of Religion, University of Rostock; IKGf Visiting Fellow*)
- 13.06.2017: How to Deal with Prophecies in Late Antiquity: The Case of Dracontius **Maria Jennifer Falcone** (*Classical Philology, Catholic University of Milan; IKGf Visiting Fellow*)
- 27.06.2017: Achi-Mo: A Tantric Tibetan Dice Divination **Jan-Ulrich Sobisch** (*Tibetan Studies; IKGf Visiting Fellow*)
- 04.07.2017: Power and Fate in 19th- to 20th-Century China **Pablo Blitstein** (*Intellectual History, Heidelberg University*)
- 11.07.2017: The Tiger and Other Animals as Symbols in Tibetan Geomancy (*sa dpyad*) **Petra Maurer** (*Tibetan Studies, Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities / LMU Munich; IKGf Visiting Fellow*)
- 25.07.2017: Mantic Echoes in Daoist Ritual Texts of the Six Dynasties Period **Stephen Bokenkamp** (*Chinese Studies, Arizona State University; IKGf Visiting Fellow*)

LECTURE SERIES

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

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

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LECTURE SERIES SS 2017

Flirting with Figurism: Typology as a Strategy for Accommodation in Early Jesuit Writings on China

Dr. Daniel Canaris (*Junior Research Fellow in Enlightenment Studies, University of Sydney, IKGf Visiting Fellow*)

The Jesuit China mission remains one of the most intriguing episodes of cultural exchange. Under the tutelage of Alessandro Valignano (1539–1606), Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) proposed that the evangelization of China ought to be conducted, not through the uprooting of the traditional Chinese culture, but through the reinterpretation of the Confucian classics in light of Christian doctrine. Ricci portrayed Christianity as a restoration of the theological and moral principles which had been lost in China with the arrival of Buddhism and the materialism of Song dynasty Neo-Confucianism. Although, in 16th century Europe, it was widely held that vestiges of the primitive Noahide revelation featured within all pagan religious traditions, Ricci never insinuated that the Chinese received any special prophetic revelation or linked their monotheism to Noah. Rather, he insisted on a rationalist hermeneutic, akin to that which Scholastic authors employed in order to accommodate Platonic or Aristotelian monotheism. According to the Thomistic principles, by which Ricci was informed, natural reason was a sufficient explanation for the presence of monotheism in ancient China.


From the second half of the 17th century onward, Ricci's rational concordance increasingly gave way to esoteric interpretations of Chinese monotheism. Jesuits, such as Martino Martini (1614–1661) and Philippe Couplet (1623–1693) drew tentative links between Noah and the Chinese patriarchs, even on occasion suggesting that Chinese monotheism was the result of God's special providential concern for the Chinese people. In the late 17th and early 18th centuries, this process culminated in a comprehensive esoteric interpretation of the Chinese classics, which came to be known as "Figurism." The movement's founder, Joachim Bouvet (1656–1730), held a particular fascination for the *Yijing* 易經 and assimilated the prophetic interpretations of this Chinese classic into the medieval anagogical exegesis of the Bible and, notably, the Cabbalism that was popularized

during the Renaissance by figures such as Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494). The intellectual genesis of Bouvet's Figurism has been discussed in depth by scholars, notably Claudia von Colani and Richard Smith.

It has been widely assumed that the esoteric interpretation of the Chinese classics was a phenomenon that developed only from the mid-17th century onward under the towering influence of Athanasius Kircher and the revival of the *prisca theologia* in the writings of Paul Beurrier (1608–1696) and Pierre-Daniel Huet (1630–1721). In this talk, it was demonstrated that overtures toward an esoteric interpretation of Chinese religion emerged during late 16th century Jesuit writings. It considered, in particular, the manuscripts of the first Jesuit missionary to China, Michele Ruggieri (1543–1607) which, due to the hostility of Valignano and Ricci, were only partially published in the *Bibliotheca selecta* (1593) of Antonio Possevino (1533–1611). At the time when Possevino published this encyclopedia of Jesuit learning, a plethora of leading Jesuit theologians had written against Renaissance esotericism. Although many Counter-Reformation theologians, such as Caesar Baronius (1538–1607), had embraced the Ancient Theology as a tool for combatting Protestantism, the Jesuit theologians, informed by a rigorous scholastic rationalism, were generally more skeptical. While the focus of their ire was the magical and astrological undercurrents of Hermeticism, their attacks nonetheless undermined the foundations of Ancient Theology.

Remarkably, however, Possevino's *Bibliotheca selecta* exhibits a cautious acceptance of these esoteric traditions that were eschewed by his Jesuit confrères, including Agostino Steuco's perennial philosophy, the Kabbalah and Ancient Theology. As this talk discussed, these hermetic notions were also reflected in Possevino's chapter on China, which presented aspects of the Chinese intellectual tradition as a divinely-seeded *praeparatio*

evangelica. While Possevino's account was limited to Confucian texts, Ruggieri's original manuscripts attempted to present striking typological readings of Buddhist deities as a prophetic foreshadowing of the Trinity and the Virgin Mary. The suppression of Ruggieri's writings ensured that this proto-Figurism had little influence on the development of Jesuit accommodationism. Nonetheless, the profound hermeneutic differences between Ricci and his senior within the China mission, revealed in these manuscripts, provide several tantalizing clues that explain, at least in part, Valignano and Ricci's hostility toward Ruggieri.

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Daniel Canaris at the IKGF; Photo: IKGF

Serving a Higher Purpose: Divination and the Reform of Spirit-Writing in Republican China

Matthias Schumann (*Chinese History and Culture, Goethe University Frankfurt am Main; currently an IKGF Research Fellow*)

In my talk, I discussed the changes that spirit-writing (Chin. *fujī* 扶乩) underwent as a divinatory technique during the Republican period (1912–1949). Spirit-writing is a practice used to communicate with supernatural beings through a wooden stick which is wielded over a tray of sand in order to write characters. This practice has a history stretching back at least a thousand years but was significantly reshaped during the early 20th century. This period witnessed extensive social, cultural and political changes which impacted on the evaluation and legitimacy of religious practices. While the state offered new legal spaces for religious organizations, reform-minded intellectuals sought to “modernize” China by eradicating what they perceived to be “superstitious” beliefs. In that context, both spirit-writing as well as its relation to divination were markedly transformed.

To illustrate these changes I considered the example of the Spiritualist Society (Lingxuehui 靈學會) from Shanghai, which was founded in late 1917 and centered on a local spirit-writing altar. It soon became one of the most popular spirit-writing organizations in Shanghai, attracting prominent figures such as the revolutionary Wu Zhihui 吳稚暉 (1865–1953) and the founder of Zhonghua Bookstore, Lufei Kui 陸費逵 (1886–1941; see image). To set itself apart from competing altars, but also to adapt to the changing social context, the Society presented itself as a scientific organization, complete with its own constitution, membership fees, regular meetings, and a journal. Claiming the British

Society for Psychical Research as its model, the Spiritualist Society wished to overcome the materialist tendencies in science and scientifically explain the existence of supernatural beings. In this context, spirit-writing was re-configured as a technique of “experimentation,” capable of empirically demonstrating the existence of spirits and deities. To this end, the Society equated the practice with spiritualist techniques that were popular elsewhere in the world, but also redirected spirit-writing inquiries to questions that were considered of philosophical and social value. The members were further admonished to behave respectfully, and chatting and laughing near the spirit-writing altar were prohibited. Presented in such a way, spirit-writing seemed attractive to many Shanghai residents—including members of the modernizing elites—who sought instructions on moral self-cultivation and answers related to the basic issues of human life, such as life after death and the existence of deities. At the same time, the Society

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carefully balanced its scientific reform with the interests of the public. Thus, on Saturdays, visitors could freely ask questions about personal “happiness and misfortune” (*xiujiu* 休咎) and Lufei Kui even used spirit-writing to address the financial difficulties of his Zhonghua Bookstore.


From mid-1918 onward, however, the practice of spirit-writing became increasingly institutionalized and restricted. During this time, the Society faced mounting pressure from radical intellectuals who criticized spirit-writing as superstition. Therefore, the Society chose to strengthen its “scientific” reform of spirit-writing and prohibit its use for divining about personal questions and the obtaining of medical advice. Only inquiries about the relatively vaguely defined category of “scientific principles” were still permitted. This institutionalization did not produce the intended results. Not only did the criticism of spirit-writing continue unabated, but many members were also at a loss regarding what to ask at the altar and turned their back on the Society. By the middle of 1920, the Society was bereft of most its funds and members, and almost forced to close completely. The fate of the Society only revived when the practice of spirit-writing and its use for divination was again liberalized in early 1921. The Society once again allowed questions about personal “happiness and misfortune” and medical advice, while not completely abandoning its engagement with science. As expected, the members and visitors returned in droves, and the Society was able to open additional altars and survived well into the 1940s.

The case of the Spiritualist Society sheds light on the practice of divination during a period that witnessed both the rise of “scientism” as well as a resurgence of religious activity. Besides indicating the persistent popularity of divination, even among the modernizing elites of Republican society, we can see that practitioners sought to reform spirit-writing and divination in order to accommodate the changing context. Only a scientific form of spirit-writing seemed to provide a legitimate and rational way to address basic questions about human life or issues of personal interest. However, the scientific reform



Lufei Kui;
Photo: <http://www.zhbc.com.cn/zhsj/fg/news/info.html?newsid=40288596593e-0f740159575ea5c600e6>

of spirit-writing had to be carefully balanced with the interests of the larger public, who were often concerned with rather personal issues. The Spiritualist Society was only one among the many organizations that sought to “modernize” existing religious practices and its turbulent history during the late 1910s and early 1920s clearly shows the intricacies associated with such an endeavor.

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Decision-Making by Prognostic Disclosure: Cosmology and Epistemology in African Divination

Prof. Dr. Klaus Hock (*History of Religion, University of Rostock; IKGf Visiting Fellow*)

Ifá divination is one of the most prominent examples of the inductive-(geo)mantic forms of divination – that is: procedures that are based on the practice of decoding the meaning of randomly produced patterns or figures. For many centuries, Ifá

has been the very glue of “traditional” Yoruba society, polity, culture, and everyday life. Conversely, it has been moulded by Yoruba cosmology – a specific concept of the world and its general structure, its “set up”, and its particular characteristics as

well as, deriving from this, by a specific rationale for the formation and circulation of knowledge, pre-shaping an elaborate knowledge system that is applied during the performance of Ifá divination. Rooted in cosmology, mediated by mythology, and enacted by ritual performance in highly diversified settings, comprising the entirety of Yoruba spheres of life, Ifá served as a universal device for “keeping together” the contingent, ambiguous, and disruptive forces by “explaining” their interplay. It thereby provided what could be referred to as a kind of “open” orientation, including prospects of conceivable control and prediction. Consequently, even in its established contexts, the main aim of Ifá divination was decision-making. In this regard, Ifá divination has, as a tool for knowledge production, provided its “belief community” with a “belief system,” based on knowledge drawn from a contextual epistemology. It was creative both in terms of reproducing well-proven or established (“traditional” African) knowledge as well as absorbing unfamiliar or external knowledge (mainly of Christian or Muslim provenance) knowledge and in producing new or innovative knowledge, thereby serving as a reliable resource of decision-making based on the allocation and appropriation of vital knowledge.

While Ifá divination has been the backbone of “traditional” Yoruba culture, society and polity, it has, nevertheless, with the globalization of Yoruba culture, transmuted into a transnational Ifá that, by negotiating change and continuity, provides for the repositioning of identities in individual and collective terms. Both anamnesis and diagnosis, Ifá divination offers consultation and “treatment” by sensitizing for external conditions and internal dispositions, thereby paving the way for thoughtful decision-making.

From the perspective of the Academic Study of Religion, the idea emerges that Ifá divination and religion may be closely inter-related and mutually self-explicatory. However, it is particularly from the perspective of the Academic Study of Religion that we should exercise extreme caution. While it is a trivial truism that the precise nature of the rela-

tionship between religion and Ifá divination depends largely on the definition or understanding of “religion” adopted, both the broadest possible and most sharply bounded demarcation of “religion” may lead us astray if immediately applied to the problem of the interplay between Ifá and religion. While Ifá divination - both in its theoretical foundation and in its practical application - seems to have been endowed with religion since time immemorial, it may – and, in fact, can work equally effectively without any reference to religion. This may lie at the very heart of the amazing flexibility, translatability and resilience of Ifá divination in entirely new contexts. While religions may die more or less easily, Ifá divination can survive, as it continues to provide what has been metaphorically called a “Sacred Compass for Reading the Self and the World.” If we delete the term “sacred”, this definition works as well. This is mainly due to the fact that, during the course of the on-going globalization processes, Ifá divination gradually increased its characteristic potential for “switching” between different, even conflicting epistemological frames of reference and for smoothly interacting with various modes and cultures of knowledge, faith, and reasoning.



Divination tray;
Photo:https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ifá#/media/File:Jogo_de_Ikin_Orossi.JPG

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How to deal with Prophecies in Late Antiquity: The Case of Dracontius

Dr. Maria Jennifer Falcone (*Classical Philology, University of Pavia; IKGf Visiting Fellow*)

The poems of the Late Antique period are characterized by a complex allusive relationship between, on the one hand, the poetic words of classical authors and, on the other, biblical texts and the works of the Church Fathers. The case of prophecies and dreams is paradigmatic in this regard. In particular, the poet Dracontius (Vandal Africa, V. century AD) appears to be a fascinating case study due to his twofold production, within both a pagan and a Christian framework. In fact, in his Christian works (*Laudes Dei* and *Satisfactio*), there exist references both to the Old Testament prophecies and also the theme of God's omniscience and the complex relationship between his foreknowledge and human free will. At the same time, one can perceive a change in perspective toward the classical prophetic scenes and figures depicted in his pagan works. A significant case is the scene of prophecy in the poem entitled *De raptu Helenae* (*Romul.* 8, vv. 119–210). Here, the traditional prophetic voices of the *vates* Helenos and the *furibunda sacerdos* Cassandra, who speak about the future destiny of Troy, are apparently contradicted by Apollo himself (vv. 188 f.: *quid virgo canit? cur invidus alter / exclamat? Helenus deterret Pergama verbis?*). The classical god, hypostasis of the Christian God as elsewhere in Dracontius' pagan production, is the only one who can truly prophesize (v. 191: *stant iussa deorum*), and his prophecy is characterized by ambiguity and strategies of omission.

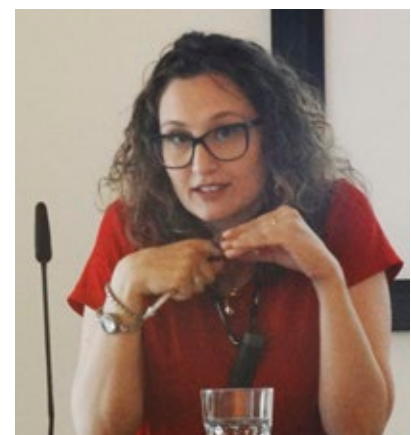
In *Medea* (*Romul.* 10, vv. 287–301), another goddess, Diana, combines the traditional marriage omen with a curse against her priestess, who abandoned her in order to marry Jason. The fulfillment of her words *non omine fausto / coniungatur* (vv. 290–291) forms the frame of the story narrated in the whole epyllion.

The *Orestis tragoedia*, vv. 515–627 describes Agamemnon's apparition in the dream of both Orestes and his friend, Pylades. According to the previous literary tradition, Agamemnon's ghost appears, looking as he did at his death. At the same time, this dream justifies Orestes' matricide as a familial purification which is also the reason why Dracontius does not mention the divine oracle.

Among the Christian works, of particular interest is the *Satisfactio*, a poem addressed to God and King Gunthamund, which Dracontius wrote in order to be freed from captivity. At vv. 19–26 and later, in a long section at vv. 53–92, the poet recurs to the rhetorical defensive strategy known as *remotio criminis*: he admits to his responsibility but, at the same time, justifies his action on the grounds that he had been "pushed" by God (*deus ... pellit ad illicita*). His reasoning, related to the contemporary discourses on human free will, is that

no one can avoid sin, because everyone is part of creation, which is marked by a combination of *mala* and *bona* (*et bona mixta malis et mala mixta bonis*).

These short observations on a selection of Dracontius' poems confirm that Late Antiquity was a crucial turning point in the new interpretation and allusive utilization of the traditional poetic prophecies and new thoughts on human freedom and God's will.



Maria Jennifer Falcone at the IKGf. Photo: IKGf

Achi-Mo: A Tantric Tibetan Dice Divination

Prof. Dr. Jan-Ulrich Sobisch (*Tibetan Studies, IKGf Visiting Fellow*)

My study of the 17th cent. divination text of the Tibetan deity, Achi (Tib. *a phyi*), once again demonstrated the high mobility of texts, structures, and techniques in the world of divination. We can follow many elements as they interweave across different languages, cultures, and religions as well as across great distances.

The text of the Achi dice divination consists of three elements:

1) A Tantric ritual (Skt. *sādhana*) for evoking the deity and blessing the dice throw; 2) a general interpretation, which constitutes the core of the divination text; and 3) a detailed elaboration of the prediction regarding specific questions, together with respective recommendations on which rituals should be used as antidotes, i.e., as means of combatting unfavorable conditions.

The core of the divination text and detailed elaboration on the predictions related to individual questions are almost identical to at least two later Tibetan divination texts on another Tibetan deity, Magzor Gyarmo (Tib. *dmag zor rgyal mo*), so it may be assumed that earlier, hitherto undiscovered versions of the text still exist. The essential elements of this divination technique can, therefore, be adapted to suit different traditions of Tibetan Buddhism through exchanging the deity and possibly favoring other rituals that serve as antidotes. The evocation of a deity is given the highest priority: the text explicitly mentions that the *sādhana* must be carried out “until the highest signs [of success] come to light.” Originally, this text was probably not intended for domestic use, therefore, but for use by a tantric specialist. However, interviews with Tibetan Lamas show that the condition mentioned above can be replaced by “great faith in the deity” and intensive mantra recitation.

The technical part of the text identifies this method as a typical dice divination, in which the production of signs is randomized

by three six-sided dice. The sixteen possible results (3 to 18 pips) lead to a first general interpretation, usually written in poetic form. The possible results are not “balanced”, and positive results are more likely by a ratio of approximately two to one. However, if the result is worse than “good”, i.e., only “predominantly good”, etc., then ritual antidotes are already recommended in the first general analysis.



Drawing of the Achi Chökyi Dölma by Drupön Lama Sonam Jorphen; Photo provided by the author

Besides the specifically emphasized position of the Tantric deity in this form of Tibetan divination, the highly detailed antidotes play an outstanding role in the context of specific questions. Often listed with several alternatives, they include simple methods, such as refuge to the “three jewels”, as well as other methods of spiritual merit accumulation, practicable by laypeople. However, a large number of ritual antidotes require the services of a tantric specialist since, especially if the prognosis is bad, highly complex offerings and extensive rituals of the higher Tantra classes are necessary.

In general, this divination can answer questions on spiritual topics, e.g., concerning the best time for a meditation retreat. Despite its eminently spiritual framework of Tantric *sādhana* and the multitude of tantric rituals that are mentioned in the text and serve as antidotes however, the text is chiefly a guide concerning very general questions, as they can also be found in numerous other divination texts of other cultures. The topics listed individually include household, life force, undertakings, diseases, trade, travel, enemies, prosperity, friends, land for house building and grazing, lost objects, evil spirits, offspring, guests, the suitability of a doctor, his medicine and his method of treatment, and disputes, also of a legal nature. Today, the *Achi Mo* still enjoys great popularity among the followers of the Drikung Kagyu tradition of Tibetan Buddhism.

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Power and Fate in 19th- to 20th-Century China

Dr. Pablo Blitstein (*Intellectual History, Heidelberg University*)

The work-in-progress that I presented at the Consortium concerns a key concept of political legitimation in imperial China: the mandate of Heaven (*tianming*), used to justify the monarch's privileged position. In this lecture, I dealt with a question that a political scientist once asked me: did the concept of the "mandate of Heaven" share any features with our modern concepts of "representation" and "representative government"? In order to answer this question, I analyzed two dimensions of the mandate of Heaven in 19th - to early 20th century China. First, I explained both its common features as well as its radical differences with the modern concepts of representation. Second, I analyzed the intimate relation between the mandate of Heaven and political conceptions of human fate. More particularly, I focused on a controversy within a traditional field of learning, the "study about the nature and the mandate" (*xingming zhi xue*), and demonstrated how the idea of a mandate of Heaven unites concepts of human fate with those of "representation" that I discussed before. As a preliminary conclusion, I pointed to the possible historical continuities between the modern concepts of representation and earlier ideas about the mandate of Heaven.



Pablo Blitstein; Photo: Pablo Blitstein

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The Tiger and Other Animals as Symbols in Tibetan Geomancy (*sa dpyad*)

Prof. Dr. Petra Maurer (*Tibetan Studies, Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities / LMU Munich; IKGf Visiting Fellow*)

The tiger is not widespread on the Tibetan Plateau and has never lived in large numbers at high altitudes. This animal, however, makes a surprisingly large and diverse number of appearances in Tibetan divination (*nag rtsis*) and especially geomancy (*sa dpyad*), which is among the divination techniques that have had the most profound influence on Tibetan culture.


The primary sources for my research were three illuminated Tibetan manuscripts on geomancy (*sa dpyad*) which the Bavarian State Library acquired several years ago (Cod. Tibet. 895, 896, 897) and which originate in Mongolia. These texts were written, by an unknown author, probably in the 19th or 20th centuries. An initial analysis of the three manuscripts revealed the origin of the texts: they are based on chapter 32 of the *White Beryl* or *Vaiḍūrya dkar po*, written by Desi

Sanggye Gyatso (1653–1705), regent of the Fifth Dalai Lama. Moreover, these texts cite and illustrate complete passages of this work. The first accounts of the transmission of geomancy from China to Tibet date it to the Yarlung Empire period under Songtsen Gampo (ca. 505–649) or, as in the 14th century historiographical source "The Mirror Illuminating the Royal Genealogies" (*rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long*), to the time of his father Namri Songtsen (ca. 570–618).

The main focus of the talk was the various roles the tiger plays in Tibetan cultural contexts and it sought to explain how it ended up in Tibetan divinatory texts. The talk began with a brief introduction to Tibetan geomancy (*sa dpyad*) and the culturally complex and ambivalent terminology used to describe it. It explained furthermore the relationship between Chinese geomancy, here *feng shui* 風水, and Tibetan geomancy, describing the elements of the Chinese tradition that are essential to understanding the Tibetan concept of *sa dpyad*. The talk further presented the various contexts in which the tiger is introduced in the Tibetan tradition and considered the Tibetan adaption of the Chinese geomantic theories associated with the animal. In the Chinese *feng shui* tradition, these theories include the well-known model of complementary forces related to four animals: the dragon, bird, tiger, and turtle. Tibetans adapted this spatiotemporal system and created further variations of it. They also borrowed the topographical forces that were specifically significant in geomancy, called the “dragon and tiger.” The central part of the talk concerned chapter 32 of the aforementioned *White Beryl* and demonstrated the tiger’s functions in this spatiotemporal model, together with its various modifications found in Tibetan culture. It presented, furthermore, the various shapes of land that are described using the tiger’s body parts. This is interesting as it is one of the methods applied in Tibetan geomancy to interpret the topographical features of an area. The technique could also be called topomancy and was studied, for example, at the Medical-Astrological-Institute (sMan rtsis khang) in Lhasa. There, future astrologers and diviners (*rtsis pa*) were trained by modeling shapes of areas in the sand. These models followed the descriptions in the text: a place is compared not only to a tiger and its body parts but also to other living beings, such as an old woman running downhill, an old man crying, or a demon. Moreover, the talk elucidated the tiger’s astrological and divinatory functions more broadly and its symbolism more generally. It showed the tiger’s descriptive or metaphorical use in topographical explanations and its application and function in rituals related to Tibetan geomancy.



Cod. tibet. 896, Bavarian State Library.

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Mantic Echoes in Daoist Texts of the Six Dynasties Period

Prof. Dr. Stephen R. Bokenkamp (*Chinese Studies, Arizona State University; IKGf Visiting Fellow*)

My goal in this talk was twofold. First, I wished to discuss our contemporary perceptions of the role of prophecy as a mode of divination. While modern researchers follow the traditional

model of including prophecy as one of the mantic techniques, it seems that its status has diminished in the modern world. Second, I argued that prophecy was valued in medieval China and,

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at least in the case of some Daoists, even explicitly replaced modes of divination that relied on the manipulation of objects.

In book two of Cicero's (106–43 BCE) *De Divinatione*, he puts into the mouth of the Stoic Quintus' "two kinds" of divination—natural and artificial—that become the object of discussion. While Cicero refutes the utility of both kinds, his Stoic interlocutor clearly values the "natural," which is "obtained, from a source outside itself—that is, from God" over the "artificial" which "depend[s] entirely upon premonitory signs," such as the entrails of beasts.

Modern scholars provide a different valuation; for example, Gerald T. Sheppard and William E. Herbrechtsmeier, in their entry on "Prophecy: An Overview" in the *Encyclopedia of Religion*, list first "diviners who practiced a variety of studied techniques," followed by their characterization of Cicero's "natural" method: "the gods were also believed to communicate their will through oracles, that is, in human language through the mouth of an inspired person." Their bias is implicit and subtle, but easily detected. For them, the "artificial" were "studied" interpretations, while the "natural" were "believed" to be the accomplishment of certain inspired persons. The passive construction belittles, especially when compared to the active voice of the previous definitions, leaving us unsure who exactly might have believed such things. The same privileging is evident in the work of other modern scholars.



Stephen Bokenkamp on Wutai shan;
Photo: Stephen Bokenkamp

This higher valuation accorded "artificial," humanly-constructed, studied means of divination over the more unknowable and mysterious "natural" means of direct communication with the gods maps well onto other preferences of the modern intellect. We might mention the hierarchies of analytical/emotional, prose/poetry, or science/religion. As scholars, we tend to favor the former.

This was not the case in China. Many diviners employed shells, stalks or other artificial methods, but prophets and seers were employed by the imperial court; the rise and fall of dynasties were regularly foretold by shamans whose pronouncements were recorded in the official histories, and we know of a number of Daoist and Buddhist priests who also made a living through prophecy. The example I used is that of Yang Xi 楊羲 (330–386?), a Daoist medium who served the family of the minor Jin dynasty official, Xu Mi 許謐 (303–373?).

Yang foretold Xu Mi's death. The dense prophetic verse he received from a goddess was, in fact, interpreted by another god in a subsequent communication. This appeal to a higher authority is a feature of Yang's use of what Cicero termed "artificial" divination methods. Yang's "artificial" methods are reliable because they are explained by the gods; for instance, a geomancer siting a grave must consult books and a diviner's compass. Yang accomplishes the same thing by channeling a successful, deceased diviner. Oneiromancy requires manuals or at least traditions of interpretation. Yang has his dreams interpreted directly by the gods who sent them originally. In these ways, the revelations Yang received actually make reference to "artificial" divinations but encompass them within "natural" divination.

From this, we can hypothesize that early and medieval Chinese views of "natural" and "artificial" divination were more like those of the Stoics than like those of Sheppard and Herbrechtsmeier.

WORKSHOPS

Mantic Arts in China II - Handbook Series June 21–22, 2017

Convenors: Prof. Dr. Michael Lackner (IKGF, FAU), Dr. Zhao Lu (IKGF, FAU)

On June 21–22 2017, the IKGF hosted a workshop on *Mantic Arts in China (II)*. The mantic arts have long been dismissed as “superstitious” or “irrational,” but this “rejected knowledge” not only sheds light on the history of science and technology, but also helps us to understand the wide range of human activities that are yet to be seriously considered in many scholarly fields. In July 2016, the IKGF organized the first “Mantic Arts in China” conference in order to launch its publication series: *Handbooks of Prognostication and Prediction in China* [see *fate* no. 12, pp. 26–29].

The follow-up workshop in June 2017 focused specifically on the introductory volume of the series: *Part 1: Introduction to the Field of Chinese Prognostication*. The purpose of this volume is to open up the field of Chinese prognostication as well as answer the question of why prognostication matters in various fields of Chinese studies and the humanities in general. The volume contains two parts: 1. General introductions to aspects of Chinese prognostication (its history, significance, etc.); and 2. Surveys of research on prognostication in various fields, or “states of the field.” This workshop was particularly dedicated to the general issues and difficulties that the contributors encountered while writing their respective chapters.



Periodical Transfer of the Earth God (Tugong 土公), ms. Pelliot Chinois 2964; Photo: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8302295m/f3.image.r=pelliot%20chinois%202964>

PROGRAM

June 21, 2017

Welcome Addresses – Introduction

Michael Lackner (*Director of the International Research Consortium, FAU*)

Thought and Prognostication

Zhao Lu (*IKGF Research Fellow*); Discussant: Andrew Schonebaum (*University of Maryland*)

The Living Traditions of Prognostication

Stéphanie Homola (*École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales*); Discussant: Hon Tze-ki (*State University of New York at Geneseo*)

Politics and Prognostication

Hon Tze-ki (*State University of New York at Geneseo*); Discussant: Michael Lackner (*FAU*)

Prognostication in Early Chinese Excavated Texts

Constance Cook (*Lehigh University*); Discussant: Marc Kalinowski (*École Pratique des Hautes Études*)

Popular Religion and Prognostication

Philip Clart (*University of Leipzig*); Discussant: Fabrizio Pregadio (*FAU*)

Daoism and Prognostication

Fabrizio Pregadio (*FAU*); Discussant: Philip Clart (*University of Leipzig*)

June 22, 2017

Medicine and Prognostication

Marta Hanson (*Johns Hopkins University*); Discussant: Chang Chia-Feng (*National Taiwan University*)

Literature and Prognostication

Andrew Schonebaum (*University of Maryland*)

Sketch of the History of Prognostication

Chang Chia-Feng (*National Taiwan University*); Discussant: Zhao Lu (*FAU*)

Taxonomy, Classification, Terminology

Marc Kalinowski (*École Pratique des Hautes Études*)

Prophecy Prognostication

Stephen Bokenkamp (*Arizona State University*)

Handbook of Divinatory Techniques

Stephan Kory (*College of Charleston*)

Roundtable Discussion

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Accounting for Uncertainty: Prediction and Planning in Asia's History II

Michael Lackner (IKGF), Dagmar Schäfer (MPIWG)

May 3, 2017 to May 4, 2017

As part of an ongoing collaboration between the IKGF and the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin (Department III, Artefacts, Action, and Knowledge, Director: Prof. Dagmar Schäfer), the Consortium hosted a workshop on prediction and planning on May 3–4 2017. The workshop was one of a series of events organized for the project entitled *Accounting for Uncertainty: Prediction and Planning in Asia's History*, which focuses on the varied methods and rationalities, as well as material tools, that actors employ when planning and predicting nature, matters of state, and their own lives. The overall goal of this project is twofold. On the one hand, it responds to a current trend in the field of the history of science and tries to find a research language and methodologies to study subjects that are conventionally marginalized in the field, such as divination. On the other hand, it intends to examine these subjects with the help of material culture and cultural archaeology. It seeks to juxtapose prognostication with other methods of predicting and planning the future in order to find common denominators of predictive methods in different societies throughout history. The workshop on May 3–4 constituted the fourth meeting of the project. Following up on former discussions about terminology, the workshop invited the participants in the project to present terms that were relevant to prediction as well as the scholarship related to them. The participants, who come from a variety of disciplines, drew on their ongoing research on topics such as medicine, environmental dynamics, spirit-writing, divination, and earthquake prediction. Based on the existing scholarship, they discussed central terms, such as 'complexity', 'safety' and 'expertise' in order to make them applicable to the overall project. For more information on the project and its participants, please visit: <https://www.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/research/projects/accounting-uncertainty-prediction-and-planning-asian-history>.



PROGRAM

May 3, 2017

Complexity Theory

David Bello (*Washington & Lee University/MPIWG*)

Formation of Expertise & Evaluation Systems (I)

Anna Andreeva (*Universität Heidelberg/IKGF*)

Formation of Expertise & Evaluation Systems (II)

Stéphanie Homola (*École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales/MPIWG*)

Safety (安全 vs 安心) & risk society

Kerry Smith (*Brown University/MPIWG*)

Evidence (zheng 證)

Daniel Burton-Rose (*North Carolina State University/IKGF*)

Propitious Signs (ruixiang 瑞相) & Sympathetic Responses (ganying 感應)

Chen Jinhua (*British Columbia University/IKGF*)

May 4, 2017

Zhu Xi 朱熹 and Divination

Michael Lackner (*IKGF/FAU*)

Sericulture Planning

Dagmar Schäfer (*MPIWG*)

Roundtable Discussion

IN BRIEF

- During the summer term, the IKGF hosted two editorial workshops dedicated to the ongoing compilation of a handbook entitled “*Prophecy and Prognostication in Medieval European and Mediterranean Societies*.” The workshops took place on May 9–10 and July 13–14 2017, respectively, and featured presentations by scholars working on medieval Europe, Byzantine, the Islamic world as well as the Jewish tradition.
- IKGF fellows Matthias Heiduk, Martin Kroher, Philip Balsiger and Zhao Lu contributed to a joint panel held at the 6th conference of the European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism which took place in Erfurt on June 1–3 2017. The overall theme of the conference was “*Western Esotericism and Deviance*.” The panel, which was organized by Matthias Heiduk, was dedicated to the topic “*From Norm to Deviance - Accepted and Rejected Knowledge in Asian and European History*.”
- Esther-Maria Guggenmos and Rolf Scheuermann organized a panel at the 18th Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, which was held at the University of Toronto on August 20–25 2017. The panel was entitled “*Concepts and Techniques of Prognostication*” and featured presentations by Petra Maurer (LMU Munich), Alexander Smith (École Pratique des Hautes Études), Kelsey Seymour (University of Pennsylvania), and Rolf Scheuermann (IKGF). This panel aimed to investigate Buddhist concepts regarding prognostication and related approaches for coping with individual and collective futures that emerged from joint research trajectories at the IKGF.
- **News from our former fellows and staff:** Former IKGF research fellow Zhao Lu joined the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science (2017–2018) as a visiting fellow. Unfortunately, he will not return to Erlangen. Nevertheless, it is our great pleasure to congratulate him on his appointment as a tenure-track assistant professor at New York University, Shanghai.



Participants in the *Prophecy and Prognostication in Medieval European and Mediterranean Societies* workshop held on May 9–10 2017
Photo: IKGF

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VISITING FELLOWS



Dr. Anna Andreeva, Cluster of Excellence “Asia and Europe in a Global Context, University of Heidelberg (Germany); research stay (joint project with the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science): May-July 2017; research topic: Childbirth and the Arts of Judgement in Medieval Japan



Prof. Dr. Stephen R. Bokenkamp, School of International Letters and Cultures, Arizona State University (USA); research stay: May-August 2017; research topic: Divination and Early Daoism



Dr. Daniel Burton-Rose, Department of History, North Carolina State University Raleigh (USA); research stay (joint project with the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science): May-July 2017; research topic: Elite Religiosity in Late Imperial Suzhou: Peng Dingqiu (1645-1719) and Self-Fashioned Literati Piety



Prof. Dr. Charles Burnett, The Warburg Institute, London; research stay: July-August 2017; research topic: Medieval Latin Translations of Works on Astronomy and Astrology, Early Medieval Latin Astrological Prognostica.



Prof. Dr. Jinhua Chen, Department of Asian Studies, University of British Columbia (Canada); research stay (joint project with the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science): May-July 2017; research topic: Prognosticating the Uncertain: Ruixiang-related Ideas and Practices in Medieval China



Prof. Dr. Constance Cook, College of Arts and Sciences, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, Lehigh University (USA); research stay: June-July 2017; research topic: Myth, History, and Music in the Creation of the Excavated Bamboo Guicang 歸藏 Hexagram Text.



Prof. Dr. Brandon Dotson, Department of Theology, Georgetown University (USA); research stay: June-July 2017; research topic: Divination, Fortune, and Kingship in Tibet



Prof. Dr. Michael Grünbart, Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, research stay: April-September 2017; research topic: Signs and prodigies at the Byzantine Court: Their Significance and Function in Political Prognostication from the 6th to 15th centuries



Dr. Anke Holdenried, Bristol University (UK); research stay: June–August 2017; research topic: Prophecy and Visions in the Latin Tradition



Dr. Stephan N. Kory, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, Swarthmore College (Cleveland, USA), research stay: June 2016–May 2017, research topic: Letting the Right Ones In: State-Sanctioned Memories of Diviners, Healers, and Artisans in Five Mid-seventh-century Dynastic Histories



Prof. Dr. Petra Maurer, Institute of Indology and Tibetology, University of Munich, Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities; research stay: May–July 2017; research topic: Tibetan Geomancy (*sa dpyad*)



Dr. Kunze Rui, Department of Chinese Culture and Society, University of St. Gallen (Switzerland); research stay: July–September 2017; research topic: Fantasizing Science: Science Fiction in the People's Republic of China (PRC): 1955–85



Dr. Shao Jian, Institute of History, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences; research stay: July–September 2017; research topic: Zheng Guanying's Thoughts on Daoism and Daoist Practice



Prof. Dr. Jan-Ulrich Sobisch, Institute of Cross-Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen; research stay: May–October 2017; research topic: The Dice Divination of the Tibetan Protectress A phyi Chos kyi sgröl ma



Prof. Dr. Carsten Storm, Department of Middle Eastern and Far Eastern Languages and Cultures, Chinese Studies, FAU; research stay: April 2017–March 2018; research topic: Prediction and the Narrative Order in Fictional Diaries of the Republican Era

OUTLOOK

The two handbook projects have formed the core focus of our recent activities. While the handbook on the field of Medieval Studies is nearing completion, the initial volume of the handbook series in the field of Chinese Studies is currently under preparation. In addition to signing a contract for the handbook series, it was also agreed at a recent meeting with Brill Publications to commence a bi-annual, thematically-focused peer-reviewed journal and also a book series. Furthermore, preparations for a couple of conferences are under way, including an international conference on spirit-writing as well as a joint conference with the SDAC elite master program on “*Rethinking Interdisciplinary Approaches to Decision-Making: Choice, Culture, and Context*” that will take place in early summer 2019.

THE NEXT fate

The next issue of *fate* will contain reports on:

- The *Unlocking Skills: Gaining and Performing Expertise in Pre-1911 China* workshop
- The *Yijing: Alternative Visions and Practices* workshop
- The *End(s) of Time(s)* International Conference

