

New Frontiers in Translation Studies

Lintao Qi
Shani Tobias *Editors*

Encountering China's Past

Translation and Dissemination
of Classical Chinese Literature

 Springer

New Frontiers in Translation Studies

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Monash University
Clayton, VIC, Australia

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Editors and Contributors

About the Editors

Lintao Qi is Lecturer in the Masters of Interpreting and Translation Studies at Monash University, Australia. His research interests include literary translation theory and practice, translation and cultural diplomacy, and sexuality and censorship in translation. He is the author of *Jin Ping Mei English Translations: Texts, Paratexts, and Contexts* (Routledge, 2018) and co-editor (with Leah Gerber) of *A Century of Chinese Literature in Translation: English Publication and Reception* (Routledge, 2020). Lintao has published widely in internationally recognized journals such as *Target*, *Translation and Interpreting Studies*, and *Perspectives*. He is a NAATI-certified translator and Co-editor of *New Voices in Translation Studies*.

Shani Tobias is a Lecturer in the Master of Interpreting and Translation Studies at Monash University, Australia. Her Ph.D. explored the translation of metaphor, and her recent publications and research interests encompass the cultural and stylistic aspects of literary translation, Japanese-English literary translation, and translator and interpreter pedagogy.

Contributors

Vibeke Børdahl Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS), University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark

Quangong Feng Zhejiang University, Zhejiang, China

Pierre Kaser IrAsia Aix Marseille Univ, CNRS, IrAsia, Marseille, France

Weirong Li Yuelu Academy, Hunan University, Changsha, China

Wenyan Luo The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hung Hom, Hong Kong

Jindan Ni RMIT University, Melbourne, VIC, Australia

William H. Nienhauser University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI, USA

Lucie Olivová Department of Chinese Studies—Center of Asian Studies, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

Lintao Qi Monash University, Clayton, VIC, Australia

David L. Rolston University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, USA

Mark Stevenson The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shatin, Hong Kong

Shani Tobias Monash University, Clayton, VIC, Australia

Ondřej Vicher Department of Asian Studies, Palacký University, Olomouc, Czech Republic

Yunhong Wang Jinan University, Guangzhou, China

Sophie Ling-chia Wei The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shatin, Hong Kong

Nicholas Morrow Williams Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ, USA

Binghan Zheng Shanxi University, China & Durham University, Durham, UK

Striving for the “Original” Meaning: A Historical Survey of *Yijing*’s English Translations



Weirong Li 

Abstract From James Legge’s first attempt to translate the *Yijing* in the English speaking world in 1854, to the latest translation, *The Original Meaning of the Yijing*, by Joseph A. Adler in 2019, the process of translating the *Yijing* into English has been continuing for nearly 170 years, and there are countless translations by numerous translators. Historically, these English translations of the *Yijing* reveal five trends: first, the translations rely on the authoritative, traditional commentaries on the *Yijing*; secondly, some translations rely on the personal help and interpretations of *Yijing* scholars in China; thirdly, some translations depend on recently unearthed documents of the *Yijing*; fourthly, Yili and Xiangshu are more or less involved in these translations, although the focus of each translation is not always the same; fifthly, most translations strive for the “original” meaning of the *Yijing*, especially with the unearthed documents of the *Yijing* since the 1970s. It could be safely concluded that the ultimate goal of the English translators of the *Yijing* is to provide English readers with the *Yijing* that is closest to the original/authentic meaning so that people in the West can truly understand the essence of Chinese philosophy represented by the *Yijing*.

Keywords The *Yijing* · The history of English translations · Striving for the original · Chinese philosophy

¹ Zhou 周 usually has two meanings. It refers to the Zhou dynasty on the one hand. On the other, it relates to the sentence in the Ta zhuàn 大傳 (the Great Treatise), 知周乎万物, 道济乎天下, 故不过, meaning “embrace”, “immerse”, and “universal(ly)”. James Legge’s translation is “His knowledge embraces all things, and his course is (intended to be) helpful to all under the sky; and hence he falls into no error.” (See Legge, James trans. *The Yi King [The Texts of Confucianism from Sacred Books of China]*, vol. 16, Part II). Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1892: 354) Richard Wilhelm’s translation is “His wisdom embraces all things, and his tao brings order into the whole world; therefore he does not err” (See Richard Wilhelm, trans. *I Ching or Book of Changes. Rendered into English by Cary F. Baynes*. Penguin Books. 1989: 295) Edward L. Shaughnessy’s translation is “Knowing universally among the ten-thousand beings, the Way is equal with all under heaven; therefore, it does not go too far.” (See Shaughnessy, Edward L. *I Ching: The Classic of Changes*. New York: Ballantine Books. 1996: 191).

W. Li (✉)
Yuelu Academy, Hunan University, Changsha, China
e-mail: leewrcn@hnu.edu.cn

1 Introduction

The *Yijing* 易经 (or Yi King, I Ching, Book of Changes, Classic of Changes, Law of Changes, Law of Mutations, etc.) is an ancient Chinese text with two main sections. The older section is usually named the *Zhouyi* 周易¹ (The Yi of the Zhou [State/Dynasty]), which includes 64 hexagrams. Each hexagram has three parts. The first one is *guahua* 卦画, the image of each hexagram, which is represented by 8 trigrams with 6 divided (—) and undivided (—) lines, the former signifies *yin* and the latter *yang*. The second one is *guaci* 卦辞, the hexagram statements, i.e., the interpretations of each hexagram. The third one is *yaoci* 爻辞, the line statements, each of which provides omens or prognoses and recommendations for action, especially further or future action. Therefore, the *Zhouyi* is usually treated as a book of divination/oracle. Traditionally, the *guahua* is attributed to Fu Xi 伏羲, a legendary emperor in ancient China; and the hexagram and line statements are attributed to 周文王 King Wen of Zhou State, who founded the Zhou dynasty. The latter section, usually called *Yi zhuan* 易传 (Commentaries on the *Zhouyi*), is traditionally attributed to 孔子 Kongzi (Confucius). The *Yi zhuan* consists of ten parts, *Tuan zhuan* 彖传 (Commentaries on the Hexagram Statements) I and II, *Daxiang zhuan* 大象传 (Commentaries on the Images of the Hexagrams), *Xiaoxiang zhuan* 小象传 (Commentaries on the Images of Hexagram Lines), *Xici zhuan* 系辞传 (Great Commentaries/Treatises on the Appended Phrases) I and II, *Wenyan zhuan* 文言传 (Commentaries on the Words of the *Zhouyi*), *Shuogua zhuan* 说卦传 (Remarks on Trigrams), *Xugua zhuan* 序卦传 (Remarks on the Sequence of Hexagrams), and *Zagua zhuan* 杂卦传 (Remarks on the Miscellany of Hexagrams) (Hon 2004: 3). Because it contains ten parts, it is also called *Ten Wings* 十翼. The *Yi zhuan* mainly intends to give philosophical explanations and interpretations to the phenomena in the *Zhouyi*. The *Yijing*, therefore, is regarded as a book of wisdom.

The *Yijing* is one of the most important books in China. Together with the *Book of Poetry*, *Book of Documents*, *Book of Rites*, *Annals of the Spring and Autumn Periods*, and *Book of Music*, they are regarded as the Six Confucian Classics, with the *Yijing* ranking as the first.

As the “first of the Chinese Six Confucian Classics,” the *Yijing* has been the most frequently translated and discussed of Chinese classics in the Western world. The first mention of it can be traced back to the Jesuit missionaries. Lin Jinshui 林金水 (1946–) proposed that Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) may have been the first person who had access to and read the *Yijing* in the West (Lin 1988: 367). Ricci’s student Nicolas Trigault (1577–1628) was the first person who introduced and partially translated the *Yijing* into Latin in *Pentabiblion Sinense*, which, however, was unfortunately lost (Collani 2007: 233). In 1642, the title of the book 易经 (*Yijing*) was translated as *Yekim* in Portuguese (Semedo 1642: 75). Martino Martini (1614–1661) also introduced the *Yijing* to the West and translated the terms, such as *Yeking*, *Yn*, *Yang*, *principia*, *signa quatuor*, and *octo formas*, etc., as well as the diagrams of 64 hexagrams although without their names (Martini 1659: 14–18), 27 years earlier than *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* in 1687 (Intorcetta et al 1687: xlv). Gabriel de

Magalhães (1610–1677) also introduced the books such as *V kim* (Five Classics), *Ye kim* (Yijing, aka, Classic of Changes), and the name Cùm fú cius (or Cum fu cius, aka, Confucius) in 1668 (Magalhães 1688: 110–121). David R. Knechtges (1942–) maintained that Claude de Visdelou (1656–1737) was the first person who translated the *Yijing* into a European language, even though he only translated Hexagram 15, and that one of Visdelou’s contributions was the creation of “trigramme” and “hexagramme” to designate the three-lined and six-lined *gua* 卦 of the *Yijing* (Knechtges 2004: 126).

The first complete translation of the *Yijing* into a European language was finished by Jean-Baptiste Régis (1664–1738) in 1736 (Régis 1834: xi), but it was not published until 1834–39. Régis translated the *Yijing* based on two forerunners, Joseph de Mailla (1669–1748) and Pierre-Vincent de Tartre (1669–1724) (Régis 1834: xv). The first complete English translation of the *Yijing* was done by Rev. Canon Thomas McClatchie (1813–1885) in 1876, but it did not prevail. Paul-Louis-Felix Philastre (1837–1902) published his translation of the *Yijing* in French in 1885 and 1893, together with the commentaries of Cheng Yi 程颐 (1033–1107) and Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200). Charles-Joseph de Harlez (1832–1899) published the complete translation of the *Yijing* in French in 1889 from Manchu, which was translated from French into English by Jean-Pierre Val d’Eremo in 1896 (Knechtges and Chang 2014: 1894).

Apart from the translations of the *Yijing*, Joachim Bouvet’s (1656–1730) Figurist interpretation of the *Yijing* (Mungello 1985: 17–19) and Gottfried Wilhelm (von) Leibniz’ (1646–1716) binary system, which was noticeably inspired by the *Yijing* (Ryan 1996: 59–90), helped increase the influence of the *Yijing* in the West.

The aforementioned translations and studies of the *Yijing* in Latin, French, German, and other languages have surely played their part in of the dissemination of the *Yijing* into the Western world. These translators evidently knew that the *Yijing* was a classic with a very important role in ancient China. They were the pioneers in introducing Chinese philosophical books to the West which gained much attention among later missionaries and scholars. However, the most important role has been played by the English translations of the *Yijing* since McClatchie’s first complete translation in 1876, partly because of the global prominence of English as a lingua franca. This chapter intends to give a historical overview of the *Yijing*’s English translations through five perspectives.

2 The *Yijing* Traditional Commentaries: Hidden Clues in Understanding and Translating the *Yijing*

McClatchie’s complete translation of the *Yijing*, including both the text and its appendixes, was published in 1876, and Terrien de Lacouperie’s (1844–1894) partial translation of the *Yijing* came out in 1892. Lacouperie called the *Yijing* the oldest one of the Chinese books and a mysterious classic (Lacouperie 1882: 784).

In 1882, James Legge (1815–1897) published his complete translation of the *Yijing*, which turned out to be an epic work. Even though it came out later than McClatchie’s translation, it usurped the former work and became the first dominant translation in the history of the English translations. It was the most influential and read translation of the *Yijing* before Cary F. Baynes (1883–1977) rendered Richard Wilhelm’s (1873–1930) German translation of the *Yijing* into English in 1950.

It is worth noticing that James Legge translated the *Yijing* early in 1854, but because he thought that he “knew very little about the scope and method of the book,” he laid it aside and hoped that one day he should get hold of “a clue that would guide him to a knowledge of the mysterious classic.” It was not until 1874 when he began to feel that he had obtained such a clue. Unfortunately, in 1870 his original translation was soaked in the Red Sea, so he had to start over (Legge 1892: xiii). He agreed with the Imperial edition of 1715, i.e., *Balanced Annotations of the Zhouyi*, that the *Zhouyi* text should be complete in itself, keeping the text and its appendixes separate (Legge 1892: xiii–xiv). Both the Imperial editions of *Daily Lectures on the Yijing* in 1682 and *Balanced Annotations of the Zhouyi* were the two main editions which Legge frequently referred to in his translation:

I have not had the help of able native scholars, which save time and was otherwise valuable when I was working in the East on other classics. The want of this, however, has been more than compensated in some respects by my copy of the “Daily Lectures on the Yi.” (Legge 1892: xx)

I am under great obligations ... also to the *Zhou Yi Zhe Zhong*, the great imperial edition of the present dynasty, first published in 1715. I have generally spoken of its authors as the Kang-xi editors. Their numerous discussions of the meaning, and ingenious decisions, go far to raise the interpretation of the *Yi* to a science. (Legge 1892: xxi)

From the two quotations above, we can clearly see how important a part these two books, the Imperial editions of *Daily Lectures on the Yijing* and *Balanced Annotations of the Zhouyi*, played in his translation.

In 1950, Legge’s translation was challenged by the Wilhelm/Baynes translation of the *Yijing*. The latter was originally translated from Chinese to German by Richard Wilhelm (1873–1930) in 1924, and later was rendered from German to English by Cary F. Baynes in 1950. Like Legge, Richard Wilhelm also based his translation primarily on the Imperial edition of *Balanced Annotations of the Zhouyi* in 1715 (Wilhelm 1975: 257 n. 2).

Minford also contends that the 1715 Imperial Compendium became the “standard” edition of the *Yijing* for over two centuries and that it was the one used by Régis, Legge, Philastre, and Wilhelm. He says that he also refers to it when he translates (Minford 2014: 783).

Since the 1990s, the translation of the *Yijing* has come to prominence again, and this is demonstrated by two facts: one is that more and more translations of the *Yijing* by *Yijing* scholars in the English world have been published, and the other is that these translators have been assisted by research conducted by *Yijing* scholars such as Wang Bi, Zhu Xi, and Cheng yi. Richard J. Lynn (1940–) based his translation on Wang Bi’s *Annotations of the Zhouyi* (*Zhouyi zhu* 周易注) (1994), Thomas Cleary (1949–) on Cheng Yi’s *Commentaries on the Yijing* (*Chengshi yizhuan* 程氏易传) (1995),

Joseph A. Adler on Zhu Xi’s *Introduction to the Study of the Classic of Change (I-hsüeh ch’i-meng)* (Yixue qimeng 易学启蒙) (2002) and *The Original Meaning of the Zhouyi* (Zhouyi benyi 周易本义) (2020), and L. Michael Harrington on Cheng Yi’s *The Yi River Commentary on the Book of Changes* (Yichuan yizhuan 伊川易传) (2019). Edward L. Shaughnessy’s (1952–) translation (1996) was markedly different from other translations because it was based on the Mawangdui Silk Manuscript of the *Yijing*, together with the received texts of the *Yijing* interpreted by Li Jingchi 李镜池 (1902–1975) (Li 2020: 93).

In any case, all the translations mentioned above were based on authoritative commentaries and annotations which demonstrate the evolution of *Yijing* scholarship in China. In the beginning stage, the translators, such as James Legge and Richard Wilhelm mainly relied on the anthologies of the *Yijing*, but later on, the translators sought to base their translations on the work of individual researchers of the *Yijing*, such as Wang Bi, Zhu Xi, and Cheng Yi, etc., as they had good knowledge of the hermeneutic history of the *Yijing* in China since the 1990s.

Interestingly, though there are many English translations of the *Yijing*, they are not of equal importance in how the *Yijing* is understood in the Anglophone sphere. Some are more influential than others, partly because the translator has consulted more authoritative anthologies and partly because they have benefited heavily from personal help from *Yijing* scholars and interpretations in China which will be discussed in Sect. 3.

3 Chinese *Yijing* Scholars’ Help and Interpretation: Main Factors in Promoting *Yijing*’s Translations

Many learned scholars of the *Yijing* in China provided significant assistance in the translations of the *Yijing*. Wang Tao 王韜 (1828–1897) contributed a great deal to James Legge’s translation of the Chinese Classics, especially the *Yijing*.

Legge also mentioned an anonymous scholar whose notes in the book, which Legge bought with the help of a friend in Canton, helped him a lot with his translation of the Chinese classics. “It was possible, from his punctuation, interlineations, and many marginal notes, to follow the exercises of his mind, patiently pursuing his search for the meaning of the most difficult passages. I am under great obligations to him” (Legge 1892: xx–xxi). Lee notes that Legge translated the *Confucian Analects*, *Great Learning*, *Doctrine of the Mean*, and the works of *Mencius* with the assistance of Huang Sheng 黄胜 and Lo Hsiang 罗祥, and the other translations of Chinese Classics, including the *Yijing*, were completed with Wang Tao’s assistance (Lee 1973: 223); Wang wrote ten books in the field of Confucian Classics, including one on the *Yijing* (Lee 1973: 224), i.e., *Collected Commentaries on the Yijing* (Zhouyi jishi 周易集释) (Lee 1973: 122, 240).

Likewise, Richard Wilhelm received much help from the Chinese scholars, especially Xing Kechang 邢克昌 and Lao Naixuan 劳乃宣 (1843–1921). The former

helped him understand and translate the Confucian classics such as the *Analects* and *Book of Poetry* (Jiang 2004: 99), and the latter mainly helped him understand and translate the *Yijing* (Smith 2012: 31). From the translation process described in his biography, we could see how significant a role Lao Naixuan played in Wilhelm's translation of the *Yijing*:

Master Lao suggested that I should translate *The Book of Changes*. ... Accordingly we proceeded to work upon the book. We worked accurately. He explained the text in Chinese and I made my notes. I then translated the text for myself into German. I thereupon translated my German text without the original into Chinese, and he compared it to see if my translation was correct in all particulars. The German text was then gone over to improve the style, and it was discussed in detail. I then wrote three to four other versions and added the most important commentaries. (Wilhelm 1928: 180–181)

Wilhelm said that they translated accurately because Lao steered him in the right direction, and there was harmonious collaboration between them. This is an ideal scenario in translation in that Lao was a master of the *Yijing* and Wilhelm was an expert in the German language and culture. Wilhelm and Lao's translation process could be clearly observed, which was not the case for Legge and Wang because Legge did not describe how he translated the *Yijing* with the help of Wang Tao.

Although Legge and Wilhelm have made significant contributions in bringing the *Yijing* to audiences worldwide, Kunst criticizes them for relying too heavily on Wang Tao and Lao Naixuan so that their translations are extremely rich in metaphorical understanding but do not properly reflect the original meaning of the text (Kunst 1985: vi). He also notices and criticizes that Legge depends heavily on Zhu Xi, Cheng Yi, and other Song scholars when he translates, without referring to the original text at all. (Kunst 1985: vi).

When Shaughnessy translated the Mawangdui Silk Manuscript of the *Yijing*, he also had much assistance from excellent scholars in contemporary China such as Qiu Xigui 裘锡圭 (1935–), Chen Guying 陈鼓应 (1935–) (Shaughnessy 1996: x), Aisin-Gioro Yuyun 爱新觉罗毓璠 (1906–2011), Zhang Zhenglang 张政烺 (1912–2005), and Li Xueqin 李学勤 (1933–2019), etc. (Li 2020: 91).

Richard A. Kunst gained much help from Li Jingchi, Gao Heng 高亨 (1900–1986), Wang Li 王力 (1900–1986), and Lou Yulie 楼宇烈 (1934–), etc. (Kunst 1985: xiii).

John Minford (1946–) also mentioned that his translation and interpretation of the *Yijing* benefited enormously from three commentators in particular. The first is Liu Yiming 刘一明 (1734–1821), “who brought to his reading of the *I Ching* insights from his lived experience as a Master in the Dragon Gate School of Complete Reality [Quanzhen] Taoism” (Minford 2014: 5). The second is Chen Guying 陈鼓应, a contemporary Taiwanese philosopher and Daoist scholar, whose commentary helped Minford with his translation of the *Yijing* into English. The third commentator is Mun Kin Chok (Cantonese pronunciation of Min Jianshu 闵建蜀, 1935–), Professor Emeritus of Marketing at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (Minford 2014: 6–7). Meanwhile, other Chinese scholars' research on the *Yijing* such as Gao Heng, Li Jingchi, and Wen Yiduo 闻一多 (1899–1946) helped him a great deal with his translation (Minford 2014: 502).

It is difficult to clearly identify how the commentaries of all these *Yijing* scholars helped Minford with his translation because he has not written about his translation methods or whose commentaries were particularly helpful. But, he provided their commentaries after the translation, in the same way as the ancient commentators dealt with the *Yijing* in their commentaries, for example,

Yang line in Yang place. An Advance will plunge one recklessly into Danger, writes Legge. Withdraw, return, wait for a better time, and one will be received with Joy. Do away with the Human Heart-and-Mind, writes Magister Liu. Hold fast to the Heart-and-Mind of the Tao. The Leader, writes Professor Mun, should return to a more secure place. He should preserve his Strength for the future. (Minford 2014: 316)

After translating the line statements of the third line of Hexagram # 39 Jian 蹇 (Adversity), Minford gives his commentaries above. Liu Yiming applies the *Yijing* in self-cultivation, so he gives first priority to the Heart-and-Mind. Mun Kin Chok applies classic Chinese philosophy, especially the *Yijing*, in modern management studies, so he always takes the Leader into consideration.

In translating Cheng Yi’s 程颐 *The Yi River Commentary on the Book of Changes*, L. Michael Harrington collaborated on the introduction with Robin B. Wang 王蓉蓉, a professor of philosophy at Loyola Marymount University. Wang received her education in philosophy (both BA and MA) at Peking University over 7 years, and she authored the monograph entitled *Yinyang: The Way of Heaven and Earth in Chinese Thought and Culture* (2012) published by Cambridge University Press, so she is an expert on the *Yijing*. It would be safe to suggest that Harrington got some help from her since they co-authored the introduction of this translation.

To sum up, in the early stage, the translators relied mostly on the Chinese *Yijing* scholars’ interpretations, as was the case with Legge and Wilhelm; later translators could consult Chinese *Yijing* scholars when necessary in order to broaden their knowledge and understanding of the *Yijing*, as was the case with Shaughnessy, Kunst, and Harrington, etc.

4 Mutual Corroboration of the “Received Texts” of the *Yijing* and the Unearthed Documents: An Important Perspective

Following the 1973 excavation of the Han tombs in Mawangdui, Hunan Province, the Silk Manuscript of the *Yijing* attracted much attention from *Yijing* scholars both in China and abroad, so much so that for two decades in the 1980s and 1990s, there was much public enthusiasm or “*Yijing* fever” (*Yijing re* 易经热), in China. Richard J. Smith points out that new and creative *Yijing* scholarship, fueled in part by dramatic archaeological discoveries on the Mainland, generated intense scholarly controversies throughout the country (Smith 2008: 5). Smith continues to point out that growing numbers of contemporary scholars, Chinese and Westerners alike, have come to think that the *Yijing* deserves a more prominent place in world literature, not

simply as a cultural curiosity but as a significant work in its own right, one that can help us understand what the category “world literature” itself might mean (Smith 2008: 5).

What we knew and thought about the *Yijing* would be challenged after the archaeological discoveries were made since the 1970s because chronological and spatial boundaries have been redrawn, attributes of authorship and editorship have been questioned or debunked, and traditional intellectual lineages have been deconstructed and usually radically reconstructed (Smith 2008: 7–8).

Bent Nielsen points out that in China, the discovery of the oracle bones in the 1900s led to a new approach to the classics in general and the *Yijing* in particular. The new approach—often referred to as context criticism or contextual studies—in turn, meant a shift from relying on Han commentators to interpretations based on knowledge of grammar, syntax, and vocabulary obtained from studies of the oracle-bone and bronze inscriptions (Nielsen 2003: xvi). Academically, it is a paradigmatic shift that has dramatically changed the focus of the *Yijing* study. Further, this approach is more objective because it relies on knowledge of grammar, syntax, and vocabulary, and it is possible for the researchers to be freed from the heavy commentaries of the *Yijing*, which were made by individual *Yijing* scholars and would inevitably be subjective.

Li Xueqin, a leading contemporary authority on all aspects of the cultural history of early China, (Shaughnessy 2014: 281) observes that

The Mawangdui Silk Manuscript of the Yijing has both the *Zhouyi* and its Appendixes. Upon careful reading, the text of the *Zhouyi* has been rearranged into the hexagram sequence according to the theory of yin and yang, starting from Hexagram Qian 乾卦 and ending in Hexagram Yi 益卦, based on the received text which starts from Hexagram Qian 乾卦 and ending in Hexagram Weiji 未济卦; the text of the Appendixes was not created by a specific person at a specific time with many places disordered and fractured. It is not difficult to imagine that the original copy, which was scribed in the early years of Emperor Hanwen 汉文帝, originated from a school of *Yijing* scholars in the State of Chu. After the Qin fire, the scholars of this school spared no effort to collect the remnants and assemble them into a book. However, the remnant copies obtained were disordered and it was not easy to recover. A considerable part of the *Commentary on the Appended Statements* (Xici 系辞) was separated and included in other texts of the Appendixes. How to split, how to leak, can now be seen very clearly.

From the classics of the Bamboo Slips and Silk Manuscripts, we have come to realize that the system of the studies on the classics in the Western Han Dynasty is much more complicated than what has been known in the records by the scholars in the Han Dynasty. For example, the Silk Manuscript *Zhou Yi* mentioned above is obviously outside of Tian He's 田何² school of the *Yijing*³ (Li 2000: 4)

² According to Biographies of Confucian Scholars (Ruilin liezhuan 儒林列传) in Sima Qian's 司马迁 *Grand Scribe's Records* (Shiji 史记), Shang Qu 商瞿 from the State of Lu learned the *Yijing* from Confucius; after the death of Confucius, Shang Qu taught the *Yijing* thereafter and this tradition of interpreting the *Yijing* passed on six generations to Tian He 田何, and then Tian He passed on this tradition to Wang Tong 王同, and then from Wang Tong to Yang He 杨何. (See Sima, Qian. *Biographies of Confucian Scholars from Grand Scribe's Records*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company. 2010: 7172).

³ Some *Yijing* scholars disagree with Li Xueqin's observation, i.e., Liu Dajun thinks that the most important and valuable aspect is that the excavated Silk Manuscript of the *Zhouyi*, including the

It is possible to draw at least three conclusions: that the hexagram sequence of the Mawangdui Silk Manuscript of the *Yijing* is different from that of the received text, that the *Xici* of the Mawangdui Silk Manuscript of the *Yijing* is different from that of the received text, and that it doesn't belong to Tian He's school of the *Yijing*.

Kunst regards the Mawangdui manuscript of the *Yijing* unearthed in 1973 as one of the dazzling archaeological discoveries (Kunst 1985: iv), and he believes that a photographic reproduction of the transcription of the Mawangdui manuscript of the *Yijing* discovered in 1973 was used to reconstruct the original text and its meaning (Kunst 1985: 604–611).

Shaughnessy thinks that the archaeologist excavating Han tomb #3 at Mawangdui made probably the greatest discovery of early Chinese manuscripts since the opening of cave #17 at Dunhuang 敦煌 in 1900. Importantly, by far the earliest manuscript copy of the *Yijing* was excavated at Han tomb #3 (Shaughnessy 1996: 14). Therefore, Shaughnessy produced the first translation of the Mawangdui Silk Manuscript of the *Yijing* in the world. Furthermore, Shaughnessy also translated the Shanghai Museum Manuscript of the *Zhou Yi* (Shaughnessy 2014: 67–139), the Wangjiatai Bamboo-Strip Manuscripts of the *Gui cang* Fragments (Shaughnessy 2014: 171–187), and the Fuyang *Zhou Yi* Manuscript (Shaughnessy 2014: 213–279), each of which has something different to teach us about the development of the *Yijing* and its traditions: The Shanghai Museum *Zhou Yi* reveals that the text of the *Changes* had achieved virtually its definitive shape by no later than 300 BC. Whether the Shanghai Museum manuscript suggests that the *Changes* was in relatively widespread circulation by 300 BC or not, the Wangjiatai *Gui cang* manuscripts do show conclusively that the *Changes* was by no means the only divination text in existence at the time; and the Fuyang manuscript confirms the traditional view that the *Changes* originated and developed in the context of divination (Shaughnessy 2014: 281–283).

Richard Rutt contends that “the Mawangdui manuscript encourages us to read the received text of *Zhouyi* with an eye to the use of loan characters and phonetic variants; but its greatest interest lies in the light it seems likely to throw on the history of the Ten Wings.” (Rutt 2002: 37) and that it also improved “our knowledge of Old Chinese” (Rutt 2002: 43).

Minford states that “over the past decades, the unearthing of an increasing number of early versions of the *I Ching* and associated texts, written on bamboo strips and on silk, has opened the door to ever more radical rereadings of the Oracle and of

text of the sixty-four hexagrams and the texts of the Appendixes such as A Couple of Disciples (Er san zi 二三子), Commentary on the Appended Statements (*Xici* 系辞), and The Essentials (Yao 要), etc., retained completely the original text of the *Zhouyi* in the New Text scholarship in the early Han Dynasty in the clerical script, which has been dust-laden for more than 2,000 years. After careful investigation, we firmly believe that the Mawangdui Silk Manuscript of the *Yijing* is exactly the *Yijing* in the New Text scholarship which was passed on from Tian He 田何 in the early Han Dynasty. (See Liu, Dajun. The Mawangdui Silk Manuscript of the *Yijing* and the *Yijing* in the New Text Scholarship in Han Dynasty. *Study on Confucian Classics and Thoughts*. 2009: 1). Shaughnessy also holds that Commentary on the Appended Statements is the only one of the manuscript commentary texts that is also found in the received text of the *Yijing*. (See Shaughnessy, Edward L. *I Ching: The Classic of Changes*. New York: Ballantine Books. 1996: 20).

the society in which it evolved.” Among them, “the most famous one was the silk manuscript copy unearthed in 1973 at Mawangdui, Changsha” (Minford 2014: 502).

Paul G. Fendos, Jr. also believes that recent archaeological discoveries do offer at least some evidence of the origins of the *Book of Changes*, allowing for the formulation of a speculative chronology of its development (Fendos 2018: 6).

The unearthed texts of the *Yijing* are quite important for modern *Yijing* scholars both in China and elsewhere, partly due to the May Fourth spirit of skepticism in contemporary China which was pioneered by Gu Jiegang 顾颉刚 (1893–1980), inspired considerably by a Qing scholar Cui Shu 崔述 (1740–1816) who held skeptical opinions on the authenticity of ancient Chinese classics, and partly because the unearthed texts could evidently provide some new insights in understanding the *Yijing* and other ancient classics. Influenced and inspired by this spirit of skepticism, non-Chinese *Yijing* scholars such as Shaughnessy, Kunst, and Rutt, etc., interpret the *Yijing* with reference to the unearthed texts of the *Yijing*.

5 *Yili* and *Xiangshu*: Two Intermingled Approaches

According to the *Annotated Catalog of Complete Collection of the Four Treasuries* (Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao 《四库全书总目提要》), the study of the *Yijing* falls into two schools: one is the School of Meanings and Principles (yili xuepai 义理学派), and the other the School of Images and Numbers (xiangshu xuepai 象数学派). The School of Meanings and Principles mainly regards the *Yijing* as a source of Daoist philosophical issues (or Huang-Lao Daoist issues), the Confucian philosophical issues, and historical issues, while the School of Images and Numbers regards the *Yijing* as a source of divination (zhanbu 占卜), prognostication (jixiang 襍祥), and diagram (yitu 易图). The former approach mainly deals with scholarly issues, while the latter approach mainly deals with divinatory issues (Smith 2013: 156–157).

Throughout most of the Zhou period, the *Yijing* was only used for divination, and only since the late Zhou period, especially when it became one of the “Confucian” classics in the second century BCE, did the *Yijing* obtain the reputation of being a book of wisdom, i.e., repository of profound moral and metaphysical truths (Smith 2008: 7). Therefore, the translators would naturally think the *Yijing* is either a book of divination or a book of wisdom, or both.

Wilhelm maintains that the *Yijing* is unquestionably one of the most important books in the world’s literature: on the one hand, at the outset, it was a collection of linear signs to be used as oracles, and on the other, of far greater significance than the use of the *Yijing* as an oracle is its use as a book of wisdom (Wilhelm 1975: xlvii–liv).

John Blofeld aims to “produce a version in the simplest language containing clear instructions for its use in divination, so that any English-speaking person who approaches it sincerely and intelligently can use it as an infallible means of choosing

good and avoiding evil.” But he does not think it was “one of those ordinary fortune-telling books which forecast future events and leave us to sit back passively awaiting them”; rather “it makes suggestions, based on an analysis of the interplay of universal forces, not about what WILL happen but what SHOULD be done to accord with or to avoid a given happening.” Thus, “it makes us the architects of our own future, while helping us to avoid or minimize disasters and to derive some benefit from every possible situation.” Therefore, “it is a book for those who prize virtue and harmony above benefit.” Blofeld says that he doesn’t intend to compete with or duplicate Wilhelm’s translation, but his version mainly differs from Wilhelm’s in this way: his version is almost wholly concentrated on the aspect of divination, whereas Wilhelm’s version is to some extent a textbook suggesting how the words of the text are derived from the symbolic diagrams to which they refer (Blofeld, 1968: 15–16).

Even though Kunst focuses his study on the linguistic aspects in the *Yijing*, he “tried as much as possible to determine from both internal and external evidence the meaning that each word had in the Early Old Chinese language (EOC) in which the *Yijing* diviner and his client conduct their oracular consultation, ...” (Kunst: viii).

Shaughnessy agrees that the *Yijing* was first used as a diviner’s prompt book, and Confucius was not content to use the book just for divination, but rather saw in it a more general philosophical significance and that these are both important aspects of the *Yijing* tradition (Shaughnessy 1996: 2). Further, Shaughnessy holds that the turtle-shell divination accounted for two of the types of divination: an omen-verse (*zhou* 繇), which resulted in the creation of the line statements, and an advisory interpretation (Shaughnessy 1996: 7–13).

John Minford maintains that “the roots of the Chinese classic the *I Ching*, or the *Book of Changes*, lie in ancient practices of Divination” (Minford 2014: ix). Later on, “a growing apparatus of quasi-philosophical commentaries was nonetheless already growing up around the untext of the Oracle.” Therefore, “it continued to occupy this central spiritual space, as Book of Wisdom and Power, for over two thousand years” (Minford 2014: xiii). To Minford, the *Yijing* has evolved from divination to oracle, and then from oracle to a book of wisdom (Minford 2014: ix–xviii). Basically, the book of oracle refers to the *Zhouyi* 周易 (Legge refers to it as the Text) and the book of wisdom refers to the *Ten Wings* 十翼 (Legge refers to it as the Appendixes). When translating the *Yijing*, Minford takes these two aspects into consideration.

Minford’s translation of the *Yijing* has two versions, with Version 1 standing for the book of wisdom, and Version 2 the book of oracle. Version 2 is extremely simple, only conveying the original meaning of the line statements, but English Version 1 is quite different. First of all, in Version 1 the interpretation of the line statements is different from Version 2, “An Advance meets with Adversity, *Si eat, Erit periculum*. Hold back, Return.” is more concrete than “Stumbling there, Ambling gently back.” Version 1 also includes the Remarks on the Image because it extends to interpret the line statements. Meanwhile, Version 1 translates “九三” into “Yang in Third Place,” while Version 2 translates it into “Nine in the Third Place.” The former is more meaningful and illuminating than the latter because Yin and Yang have been the two fundamental and interconnected binary polarities, or planes, of Chinese thought even since late Zhou times, and they do not feature in the core text of the Oracle,

but are basic to any understanding of the *Yijing* as a book of wisdom, and feature prominently in the Great Treatise and all subsequent commentaries (Minford 2014: 614).

In the most recent translation of Zhu Xi's *The Original Meaning of the Yijing: Commentary on the Scripture of Change* (Zhouyi benyi 周易本义), Joseph A. Adler agrees with Zhu Xi that "the *Yi* was originally created for divination" (Adler 2019: 11), and he also maintains that "it is difficult to overstate the historical significance of the *Yijing* in Chinese thought and religion. It was venerated and used in Confucianism, Daoism, popular religion, and even Buddhism" (Adler 2019: 21). Therefore, Adler thinks that the *Yijing* is unique in becoming a "book of wisdom" and a manual of divination (Adler 2019: 2).

6 Striving for the "original" Meaning of the *Yijing*: The Ultimate Aim of Translating the *Yijing* into English

Most translators try their best to strive for the "original" meaning of the *Yijing*, even though they don't include the word "original" in the title of their translations or publicly discussed it in their translation paratexts.

Kunst claims that he "submitted this study to the readers as a kit of tools for the future analysis of the original *Yijing*" (Kunst: viii).

Shaughnessy translated the Mawangdui Silk Manuscript of the *Yijing* with the help of the received text so that he could try his best to strive for the "original" meaning of the *Yijing*. In order to illustrate how he deals with it, we will look at Hexagram #60 Jian 渐卦 as an example.

From Table 2, we can see clearly that Shaughnessy makes good use of the received text of the *Yijing*. Wherever the Mawangdui Silk Manuscript of the *Yijing* is missing, replaced with the graphic □, he would refer to the received text and try to make the translation reasonable, logical, and readable. He would replace the missing parts with the received text, but he would put the translation into brackets, indicating that something is missing in the Mawangdui Silk Manuscript of the *Yijing*. On the other, Shaughnessy translates the text as it is written (Shaughnessy 1996: 320), which is one of his principles of translation, because he thinks that a translator would surely not do justice to the text and the possibility of phonetic loans does not give the translator license to change the text as well (Shaughnessy 1996: 30). There are many problems when interpreting the Mawangdui Silk Manuscript of the *Yijing*. The most important problem is to see whether the excavated text and the received one are the same or different. The difference deserves more attention. In Table 1, we could see in the received text, the goose advances to a riverbank (gan 干), to a boulder (pan 磐), to high land (lu 陆), to trees (mu 木), to a ridge (ling 陵), and then to high land (lu 陆) again in turn (Kunst 1985: 344–345), while in the Mawangdui Silk Manuscript of the *Yijing*, the goose advances to the depths (yuan 渊), to the slope (ban 坂), to the land (lu 陆), to the tree (mu 木), to the mound (ling 陵), and then

Table 1 Line Statements of Third Line of Hexagram #39 Jian 蹇

Chinese	English version 1	English version 2
九三，蹇往来反	Yang in Third Place An Advance Meets with Adversity, <i>Si eat,</i> <i>Erit periculum</i> Hold back, Return. (Minford 2014: 315–316)	Nine in the Third Place Stumbling there, Ambling gently back. (Minford 2014: 669)
《象》曰	On the Image	
往蹇来反，内喜之也。	There is Joy Within the Lower Trigram, <i>Intus gaudet.</i> (Minford 2014: 316)	

to the land (lu 陆) again (Shaughnessy 1996: 157). Apparently, it is more logical for people to see the goose from the depths to the slope, to the land, to the tree, and to the mound. The places from the lowest to the highest illustrate the process of the goose’s movement in a reasonable way. In this way, we can see that the copyist of the Mawangdui Silk Manuscript of the *Yijing* arranged the text more logically, compared to the random way the goose’s movement was given in the received text. Though the goose finally advances to the land again in both texts, which would confuse the readers, the translator and interpreter, Shaughnessy doesn’t change it because of the aforementioned principle of translation that he adheres to: translating a manuscript “just as it is written” (Shaughnessy 1996: 30). From the way in which the goose advances, the last place it advances should be higher than the ridge, rather than the land. Therefore, Li Jingchi thinks the last place Lu 陆 is a mistake; it should be E 阿, which means mountain (Li 1981: 105).

Rudolf Ritsema (1918–2006), director of the Eranos Foundation for more than thirty years, translated the *Yijing* in the early 1990s, partly on his own, and partly in collaboration with others. Finally, he translated *The Original I Ching Oracle; or, the Book of Changes* with Shantena A. Sabbadini in 2007, which was revised and published in 2018.

Adler is a prolific scholar whose academic interests focus on the *Yijing* and Chinese philosophy, especially on Zhu Xi’s interpretation of the *Yijing*. He translated two main books of Zhu Xi’s studies on the *Yijing*: *Introduction to the Studies of the Classic of Changes (I-Hsüeh ch’i-meng)* (Yixue qimeng 易学启蒙) in 2002 and *The Original Meaning of the Yijing: Commentary on the Scripture of Change* in 2019, respectively. The former deals with the diagrams in the *Yijing*, and the latter translates the interpretation Zhu Xi made of the *Yijing*.

Margaret J. Pearson claims that her translation is both original and authentic because it is “faithful to the oldest layer of the text” (Pearson 2011: 15). She thinks that the *Yijing* could be feminist because she noticeably follows Wang Bi’s assumption that “the paired concepts of *yin* and *yang* were gendered” (Pearson 2011: 19).

Table 2 Hexagram Jian 漸 and its Translation (Shaughnessy 1996: 156–157)

Chinese	English translation
漸 60 漸女歸吉利貞 初六 鴻漸于淵小子厲有言无咎 六二 鴻漸于坂酒食衍衍吉 九三 鴻漸于陸口口口復婦繩不口凶利所寇 六四 鴻漸于木或直其寇 載无咎 九五 鴻漸于陵婦三歲不繩終莫之勝吉 尚九 鴻漸于陸其羽可用為宜吉	60. <i>Jian</i> , “Advancing” Advancing: For the maiden to return is auspicious; beneficial to determine Initial Six: The wild goose advances to the depth: for the little son dangerous; there are words; there is no trouble Six in the Second: The wild goose advances to the slope: wine and food so overflowing; auspicious
漸 53 漸女歸吉利貞 初六 鴻漸于干小子厲有言無咎 六二 鴻漸于磐飲食衍衍吉 九三 鴻漸于陸夫微不復婦孕不育兇利禦寇 六四 鴻漸於木或得其桷無咎 九五 鴻漸于陵婦三歲不孕終莫之勝吉 上九 鴻漸於陸其羽可用為儀吉	Nine in the Third: The wild goose advances to the land: [The husband campaigns but does not] return, the wife is pregnant but does not [give birth]; inauspicious; beneficial to have that which robs Six in the Fourth: The wild goose advances to the tree: perhaps getting what the robbers rejected; there is no trouble Nine in the Fifth: The wild goose advances to the mound: The wife for three years does not get pregnant; in the end nothing overcomes it; auspicious Elevated Nine: The wild goose advances to the land: its feathers can be used to be emblems; auspicious

In conclusion, the translators of the *Yijing*, no matter where they come from and what language they use, try to strive for the “original” meaning of the *Yijing*. Some scholars have used “original” in the titles of their translations, but in any case it is evident that they are trying to get closer and closer to the “authentic” meaning of the *Yijing*. because the “authentic” *Yijing* is the base for everything: for research and translation. In the very beginning, back in the sixteenth century, the Jesuit translators mainly learned from the Chinese scholars together with books of the *Yijing*; later on, the missionary translators such as James Legge and Richard Wilhelm received much help from the Chinese Confucian scholars when they translated. Wang Tao helped James Legge with translating the *Yijing* into English, and Lao Naixuan helped Richard Wilhelm with translating the *Yijing* into German.

With the Mawangdui Silk Manuscript of the *Yijing* excavated in 1973 and with its publication in the archaeologist journal *Cultural Relics* (Wenwu 文物) in 1984, more and more scholars were attracted to study and translate the *Yijing*. Edward L. Shaughnessy’s first translation of the Mawangdui Silk Manuscript of the *Yijing* made it accessible to academia worldwide, which surely helped its dissemination. Other manuscripts of the *Yijing* and related texts were excavated since the 1970s, for example, another manuscript of the *Yijing* was found at Shuanggudui 双古堆 in

Fuyang 阜阳 of Anhui Province, *Gui cang* 归藏, or *Returning to be Stored*, were unearthed at Wangjiatai 王家台 of Hubei Province, and there is also the Shanghai Museum Manuscript of the *Zhouyi*, etc. All the translations of these manuscripts of the *Yijing* help people understand the *Yijing* in a deeper and more comprehensive way and contribute to the spread of the *Yijing* in the Western world.

The translators of the *Yijing* also rely on the authoritative commentaries on the *Yijing*. First, they relied on the authoritative anthologies such as the Imperial editions of *Daily Lectures on the Yijing* and *Balanced Annotations of the Zhouyi*, and then they began to rely on Wang Bi's *Annotations of the Zhouyi*, Cheng Yi's *Commentaries on the Yijing* (or *The Yi River Commentary on the Book of Changes*), and Zhu Xi's *Introduction to the Study of the Classic of Change (I-hsüeh ch'i-meng)* and *The Original Meaning of the Zhouyi*.

With more and more translations of the *Yijing* in English and other languages, especially since the 1990s, the *Yijing* came to have more and more influence globally, and become part of world literature. Smith thinks this “globalization” of the *Yijing* was in part the product of its exalted reputation in China and its many alluring special features, and the spread of the *Yijing* was also facilitated by the self-conscious strategies employed by those who sought to use it in various environments for their own political, social, intellectual, or evangelical purposes (Smith 2008: 4). The translators surely have played a great part in this process of globalization.

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Weirong Li has a PhD in Comparative Literature and is Professor of history in Yuelu Academy, Hunan University, China. His research interests focus mainly on the interpretation of the Confucian classics, especially the *Yijing*, in the West.