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The History of Military Divination in China¹

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Introduction

The publication of Chen Songchang's 陳松長 *Mawangdui boshu "Xingde" yanjiu lungao* 馬王堆帛書《刑德》研究論稿,² in which the full transcriptions and analysis of the three versions (*jia* 甲, *yi* 乙, *bing* 丙) of the *Xingde* 刑德 manuscripts found at Mawangdui in 1973 were presented to the scholarly world for the first time, was an important event for the study of the Mawangdui manuscripts and of Chinese military history. These hitherto neglected texts throw much light on one complex system of military divination and complement the numerous studies that have appeared over the past thirty years on the other philosophical, medical, and historical manuscripts found in the tomb. This paper will offer some preliminary reflections on the history of Chinese military divination in general within the context of Chinese military practice. It will seek to demonstrate that, although ignored by most previous researchers on Chinese military studies (*bingxue* 兵學), divination for military purposes (*bingzhan* 兵占) was one of the fundamental features of warfare in pre-modern China. From

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² Chen Songchang (2001).

late Warring States times on, the Chinese structured their theory and practice of war on the tripartite cosmology of Heaven, Earth, and Man. As the Mawangdui silk manuscript text “The Features of Warfare” (“Bing Rong” 兵容) states:

兵不刑天，兵不可動，不法地，兵不可(昔)措。
刑法不人，兵不可成。

If warfare does not take its form from Heaven, warfare cannot be initiated. If it does not take Earth as its model, warfare cannot be managed. If its form and model do not rely on Man, warfare cannot be brought to a successful conclusion.³

Divination was placed in the ‘Heaven’ section of traditional military encyclopedias, and virtually no such encyclopedia from the Tang through the end of Ming failed to include a section on the topic. In addition, as is evident from Liu Shenning’s 劉申寧 catalogue of military works,⁴ military prognostication was an important genre of military writing from Warring States times right through to the end of the Qing dynasty. He lists 308 titles in total on military divination.⁵ In comparison, the genre of biographies of generals did not become an independent form of writing until the Song dynasty at the earliest, despite the fact that biographies of such men who contributed to the safety and welfare of the state had been included in the dynastic histories from the time of Sima Qian’s *Shi ji* in the Western Han dynasty.⁶ Thus the owner of the Mawangdui 馬王堆 tomb must have considered the silk manuscripts of Xing and De 刑德帛書 very valuable

³ Yates (1997a), p. 133. This view is echoed by the *Heguanzi* 鶡冠子 that states in section 14 “Administering the Military” (Bing Zheng “兵政”), p. 41, in the words of Pangzi 龐子, “The method of using the military is to model it on Heaven, on Earth, and on Man” (literally, “Heaven it, Earth it, Man it”) 用兵之法天之地之人之。

⁴ Liu Shenning (1990).

⁵ These titles he has culled from references in the bibliographic sections of the dynastic histories, encyclopedias, such as the early Song *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽, and catalogues of rare book collections in China. He does not include in this list chapters on the art of divination in military encyclopedias, nor passages from military prognostications that are included in the astrology treatises (*Tianwen shu* 天文書) of the dynastic histories, or other relevant texts, such as the Tang dynasty *Kaiyuan zhanjing* 開元占經, nor yet fragmentary works discovered at Dunhuang, among other sites, for example the text on clouds and vapors (*yunqi* 雲氣) studied by He Bingyu and He Guanbiao (1985). I have also discovered other titles in rare book collections that are not recorded in Liu’s catalogue.

⁶ As has been proved by the discovery of the Yinqueshan hoard of military texts in a tomb of Western Han date at Lin’yi 臨沂, Shandong, Sima Qian 司馬遷 incorporated into his history, the *Shi ji* 史記, an independently circulating story about Sunzi as his ‘biography’ of the great military theorist (*Shi ji* 65, pp. 2161-2162; Ames 1993). Peterson (1992a, 1992b) has recently suggested that Sunzi may not have been an actual historical figure.

possessions and just as important as the copies of *Laozi* and other manuscripts that have been the subject of intense research since their discovery.

Most of the early works in Liu's catalogue composed through the Song dynasty are no longer extant. However, the nature of their contents can be ascertained from Tang and Song military encyclopedias, surviving texts from the Ming, as well as from fragmentary prognostication texts that have fortuitously been recovered from archaeological sites, such as those of the Dunhuang library in the early twentieth century⁷ and the Western Han tombs at Yinqueshan, Lin'yi, Shandong,⁸ and Mawangdui, Changsha, Hunan, in the 1970's.⁹

Why Divination in Warfare?

However, before we turn to a brief review of the history of military divination, the first question to ask is why was divination practiced in warfare in China? And what were its origins? If one examines the texts that have come down to us as well as the newly discovered manuscripts of divination and almanac texts from such sites as Shuihudi 睡虎地, Fangmatan 放馬灘,¹⁰ and most recently Guanju 關沮,¹¹ we learn that administrative service, law cases, and the daily holding of the court by the ruler were treated as rites that were bounded by strict rules of performance, and carried out only at times that were deemed auspicious. In a similar fashion, it would appear that warfare was treated as a rite, and was thought especially appropriate to divine about, because it involved matters of life and death in which the outcome, and very survival itself, was in the hands of the ancestors, gods, and spirits, and subject to hemerological taboos like all culturally significant activities, in addition to being affected by human factors, such as the competence and morality of the general, the sufficiency of materiel, the level of training of the officers and the justice of the cause. The outcome of wars, therefore, was very hard to predict. As a consequence, and I emphasize this for all types of divination in China, prognostications were always performed within a ritual or ritualized context and setting. For a full understanding of the role and place of divination in Chinese society this context must be considered and appreciated. In this paper, therefore, I shall emphasize more the ritual aspects of

⁷ Huang Zhengjian (2001).

⁸ Ye Shan (1998); Yates (1994); Li Ling (2000a); Rao Zongyi (1993).

⁹ Kalinowski (1998-1999); Chen Songchang (1996); Chen Songchang (2001). See also the Mawangdui scroll with illustrations of astrological phenomena called "Tianwen qixiang zazhan" 天文氣象雜占 (Assorted Astronomical and Meteorological Prognostications) studied by Gu Tiefu (1978), translated by Harper (1979); Xi Zezong (1978); Wei Qipeng (1994); Wang Shengli (1994); Liu Lexian (1995); Liu Lexian (2004).

¹⁰ Qin jian zhengli xiao zu (1989); He Shuangquan (1989).

¹¹ Hubei sheng Jingzhou shi Zhou Liangyu qiao yizhi bowuguan (ed.) (2001).

military divination, rather than explicate in detail all the forms and types of divination that were practiced in the Chinese military through the ages.

The Origins of Military Divination

The origins of the application of techniques of divination and selection of timing in warfare are to be found in the early Bronze Age. Evidence for this is to be found in the oracle-bone inscriptions of the Shang and the bronze inscriptions of the Zhou, as well as in the formulations of later texts such as the *Zhou li* 周禮, and in the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳. I would argue that the fact that the Shang divined about success and failure of even the most minor of military engagements indicates that war was ritualized in those times in some fashion. The *Shang shu* 尚書 also records the oaths that the Zhou kings swore in a ritual at the beginning of their campaign to destroy the Shang.¹² This practice transformed in later centuries into the ritual pronouncement of prayers and sacrifices to various spirits and deities recorded in detail in many military encyclopedias. For example, the Song dynasty *Wujing zongyao* 武經總要 records the military sacrifice that the emperor Zhenzong 真宗 ordered to be made to Huangdi Xuanyuanshi 黃帝軒轅氏 in the fourth year of the Xianping reign period (1001).¹³

While divination in early China involved crack-making and recording of the oracles, scholars are still not in agreement as to whether or not the inscriptions record questions put to the ancestors or spirits. In the written record of military divination in subsequent times, no questions were *ever* asked, nor is there any evidence of a god or spirit speaking directly to or through a medium. Experts interpreted signs that were manifested in primarily the non-human world, or judged the appropriateness of any given activity on the basis of its occurrence on days whose auspicious or inauspicious qualities were pre-determined, known, and written down, despite the fact that many of the hemerological systems were mutually incompatible.

In Spring and Autumn times, it would appear that weapons, or at least the ones to be wielded by the generals, were stored in the ancestral temple and taken out only when war had been decided on by the head of state, a decision that was solemnly taken in the presence of the ancestral tablets in that same temple, a practice that continued through the centuries. The ruler also purified himself before issuing weapons to his troops.¹⁴ The *Zuo Zhuan* includes many fascinating details on rituals relating to the practices of war and divinations that took

¹² See “Tai shi” 泰誓 and “Mu shi” 牧誓, in *Shang shu zhengyi*, vol. 1, 11, pp. 182-183.

¹³ *Wujing zongyao*, chap. 5, vol. 3, pp. 212-214.

¹⁴ *Zuo Zhuan*, Duke Zhuang year 5; Legge (1970), p. 77.

place before engaging in battle,¹⁵ but perhaps no speech is more famous than the one recorded under Duke Cheng 成公 year 13 (576 BC). This firmly embeds warfare within the discourse and cultural practice of religious ritual:

劉子曰吾聞之民受天地之中以生所謂命也。是以有動作禮義威儀之則以定命也。能者養之以福，不能者敗以取禍。是故君子勤禮，小人盡力。勤禮莫如致敬，盡力莫如敦篤。敬在養神，篤在守業。國之大事在祀與戎。祀有執爓，戎有受脤，神之節也。

Liuzi said, “I have heard it said that the people receive [the region] between heaven and earth to live in, and this is what is called their fate (*ming*). From that they have the means to act and create—ritual and right behavior, and the rules of authority and deportment—so as to determine this fate. The able nurture these so as to secure good fortune, while those without ability contravene them and earn misfortune. For this reason superior men diligently observe ritual, and lesser men exhaust their physical strength. In diligently observing ritual, nothing is so essential as utmost respectfulness; in exhausting one’s strength, nothing is so essential as genuine sincerity. That respectfulness consists in nourishing the spirits, that sincerity in attending to duty. The great affairs of the state are sacrifice and warfare. At sacrifices one presides over cooked meat, and in war one receives raw meat: these are the great ceremonies of the spirits.”¹⁶

In short, warfare was a great ritual, a sacrifice essential for the maintenance of the existence of the dead ancestors and the spirits, as well as for the generation of good fortune for the living, perhaps a form of thanksgiving sacrifice for victory as well as an expiatory rite for engaging in the polluting act of killing.¹⁷ It was justifiable to wage war to preserve the state and the authority of the ruler. These attitudes towards warfare continued to be held throughout Chinese history. To the extent that the Chinese saw the person of the ruler as a religious figure, the Son of Heaven, who was responsible for maintaining the harmony of

¹⁵ Kierman (1974).

¹⁶ Kierman (1974), p. 28, with emendations; Legge (1970), text 379, trans., p. 381.

¹⁷ See Boileau (1998-1999), p. 91. Boileau points out that by late Warring States and Han times, the sacrifice of blood and raw meat was usually presented to Heaven and distant ancestors, whereas cooked meats that were tasty, or seasoned, were reserved for the more human, recently dead, ancestors. It was only the latter type of sacrifice that was shared in a commensal feast by the participants. However, as he notes, although ritual is conservative, it is not known exactly what the structure and symbolic meanings of sacrifice were in Western Zhou and early Eastern Zhou times.

the cosmos and for the continuation of the sacrifices to his ancestors and the preservation of the imperial line, to that extent warfare was also seen as a religious activity.

In addition, by at least the early Han, warfare was conceived to be a way of eliminating pollution that was harming good order in the world, as is clearly stated in the military chapter of the *Huainanzi* 淮南子: the sages (*shengren* 聖人) invented warfare in order

乃討強暴，平亂世，夷險除穢，以濁為清以危為寧。

To punish by attacking the forceful and violent, to pacify the disordered world, to smooth the rough, to exorcise pollution, to make the muddy clear, and make danger into peace and calm.¹⁸

This belief was continued for many centuries, for the Great Exorcism (Da Nuo 大儺) that was part of the New Year celebrations in the Han dynasty¹⁹ had become by Tang times one of the five official state military rituals as recorded in the *Da Tang Kaiyuan li* 大唐開元禮.²⁰

Most significantly, it was essential to purify oneself and avoid polluting sexual activity before attending court, carrying out one's official duties and engaging in such a ritual activity as warfare.²¹ This purification was a crucial, but not always necessary, marker that separated ordinary social practices from rituals. In many cases, only a slight modification of body movement or verbal inflection was necessary to mark a ritualized act.²² Separation of a particular set of actions from ordinary daily life, performed according to a fixed schedule separated from ordinary time, within a demarcated space, the performance being carried out with a certain demeanor, wearing certain types of clothing, and accompanied by certain forms of language, seems to mark off ritual actions from ordinary everyday activity.²³ Participants also embody the ritual and negotiate with their fellow

¹⁸ *Huainanzi*, 15, 1b.

¹⁹ Bodde (1975), pp. 75-138.

²⁰ *Da Tang Kaiyuan li*, Baji, 90, pp. 2b-4a.

²¹ Yates (1997b), pp. 507-512; cf. Schafer (1956).

²² See, for example, the many prescriptions in Book 10 of the Confucian *Analects* (*Lun yu*); Waley (1964), pp. 146-152.

²³ Depending on the circumstances and the means of the participants, of course. Most commoners could only afford two sets of clothing, if at all, one for winter and one for summer. They would not change clothes for ritual activity, but they would mark ritual activity in some fashion. Here, I mean to distance myself from those who would accept at face value the oft-repeated statement in the *Li ji* that rites (*li* 禮) did not go down to the common people. What the text is talking about is the type of ritual involving the worship of the ancestors with valuable bronze vessels. As Lévi-Strauss (1974) showed in his studies of the tribes of South America, there is no people or culture that did not or do not

participants to create new meanings and transform themselves in relationship to their community, both human and extra-human.

By late Warring States times, with the development of the many different esoteric *shushu* 術數 traditions, including Yin-Yang, the application of various types of prognostication techniques for use by the military must have been gaining popularity. This can be seen from the bibliography of extant works held by the Imperial Library at the end of the Western Han dynasty and preserved in the *Han shu* 漢書. Numerous examples of such texts have been discovered in Warring States and Han tombs in recent years, including Mawangdui. In addition, we can surmise its popularity by the virulence of the attack in the first section of the military text later incorporated into the Seven Military Canons (*Wujing qi shu* 武經七書) in the Northern Song dynasty (eleventh century), the *Wei (Yu) Liaozhi* 尉繚子, that is directed against those who employed Punishment and Virtue (*Xing De* 刑德) and the Heavenly Offices 天官 in determining when and how to fight.²⁴ It even appears in the material record: for example, the mid-Warring States Dagger-Ax 'Weapon to Avoid Tai Sui' (*bibing Tai Sui ge* 避兵太歲戈) preserves the image of Taiyi and another image of Taiyi is partially preserved on one of the silks discovered in the tomb at Mawangdui.²⁵ Techniques for avoiding the harmful effects of enemy weapons can be found in Chinese military medicine texts down to late imperial times.²⁶ Although most of the texts of early Yin-Yang specialists were lost in the course of transmission over the centuries, both at Yinqueshan and at Mawangdui, as well as other archaeological sites, late Warring States and early Han Yin-Yang military texts have been discovered.²⁷

engage in some kind of ritual activity, however attenuated. It is impossible for the peasants in Bronze Age China (Shang through Zhou dynasties) not to have had their own rituals. But since they were not recorded by the elite, it is difficult to know what they were precisely, despite the efforts of scholars such as Granet (1959) to reconstruct them.

²⁴ Sawyer (1993), p. 242. The ninth-century Tang dynasty poet and commentator on the *Sunzi bingfa* 孫子兵法 (Sunzi's Art of War), Du Mu 杜牧, quotes this section of *Wei Liaozhi* in its entirety in an effort to discredit the interpretations of Cao Cao 曹操 and Li Quan 李筮 who read much esoteric and Yin-Yang thought into the military classic. It is from Du Mu 杜牧 (803-852), and Du You's 杜佑 (735-812) views that today's accepted mode of understanding of Sunzi, which I would call the 'real politik' or 'secular' interpretation, derives. Their views were reinforced by Song Neo-Confucian scholars. See Yates (2005).

²⁵ There has been some debate about the identity of the figure on the dagger-ax *ge* 戈. See Rawson (1996), item 68, pp. 149-150; Li Xueqin (1991); Li Jiahao (1993); Li Jiahao (1996); Li Ling (1995-1996); Li Ling (2000b).

²⁶ See, for example, *Junzhong yifang beiyao* and *Xingjun fangbian bianfang* by Qiu Qingyuan.

²⁷ For example, the *Di dian* 地典 was recovered from the Yinqueshan tomb (see Ye Shan (1998), pp. 87-89), and, most recently, the *He Lü* 蓋 (闔) 廬 was found in Han tomb

As can be seen from Liu Shenning's catalogue, military specialists in divination used many different types of techniques. Some were based on prognostications of astral phenomena, such as the Sun (*ri* 日) and Moon (*yue* 月), the Five Planets (*wuxing* 五星), and the Twenty Eight Lunar Lodges (*ershiba xiu* 二十八宿); *Taisui* 太歲 (Counter-Jupiter); the Field Division System (*Fenye* 分野); comets, supernovae, thunder, lightning, rain, rainbows, mists and other anomalous heavenly apparitions.²⁸ Another tradition of using natural phenomena was the system of the Corners of the Wind (*Fengjiao* 風角) and their associated musical notes. Related to these methods was the so-called "Watching the Qi and Clouds (Ethers)" (*wang qiyun* 望氣雲) that had a venerable history from Warring States times down to the end of the Qing dynasty. I will provide a brief review of this technique later in this paper. A number of these forms of divination appear in the so-called A and B manuscripts of "Xing De" at Mawangdui 馬王堆帛書《刑德》甲乙篇. Many of these techniques were based on the flows, appearances, shapes, and textures of the cosmic vapor or *qi* 氣, as Ho Peng Yoke and He Guanbiao (1985) have argued. By Tang, Song, and Ming times, divination by physiognomy, tides, changes in grasses and trees, and the behavior of wild and domestic animals, birds, reptiles, water, fire, and earth, and the movement and positioning of the flags and weapons in the army had also been added to the list of unusual phenomena that were thought to be portents of future events.²⁹ Divination by tortoise shell was applied in the military sphere,³⁰ as was omenology from dreams, as can be seen from the following examples taken from Fan Jingwen's *Zhanshou quanshu*:

247, Zhangjiashan 張家山; see Zhangjiashan ersiqi hao Han mu zhujian zhengli xiaozu (2001), pp. 275-281.

²⁸ Loewe (1994); Schafer (1977), pp. 54-119; Ho Peng Yoke (1966), *passim*.

²⁹ For a number of these different techniques, see *Wubei zhi*, chap. 186, "Zhan" 占 39, pp. 7881-7913; *Zhanshou quanshu* 戰守全書, by Fan Jingwen (1587-1644), chap. 18. Fan was Vice-President of the Board of War (*bingbu shangshu* 兵部尚書) and wrote several military works, including a *Xu Wujing zongyao* 續武經總要 (Collection of the Most Important Military Techniques, Continued) the only copy of which is held in the Fudan University Library. Fan wrote this latter work because he thought that too many contemporary re-editions of the famous Song military encyclopedia *Wujing zongyao* 武經總要 failed to describe the latest military technology and techniques, especially gunpowder weapons imported from the West. Thus it is clear that Fan saw no inconsistency between employing the latest "scientific" technology and weaponry and using divination techniques in prosecuting a war and defending against the numerous enemies attacking the late Ming state.

³⁰ *Shenji zhidi Taibo yin jing* 神機制敵太白陰經, 10, pp. 738-742.

軍戎夢見水者，兵起吉。

When the soldiers in the army see water in a dream, when warfare arises, it will be auspicious.

將軍夢見入海，兵士欲行。

When the general sees [himself?] entering the sea in a dream, the troops will march.

夢見大魚及獸，必大戰。宜自守。

When you see large fish or wild animals in a dream, there will certainly be a great battle. It is appropriate to protect yourself.

夢見群鳥亂飛，有賊欲至。

When you see in a dream flocks of birds flying every which way (in disorder), bandits will arrive.

夢雷鳴震動，所夢之方戰大勝。

When you dream of rumbling thunder, at the site where you dream there will be a great victory.

夢槌鼓大鳴大勝，小鳴小勝，不鳴者凶。

When you dream of the drums being beaten, if it is a loud noise, there will be a great victory. If it is a small noise, it will be a small victory. If there is no noise, it is inauspicious.

臨敵夢兩白杖人，賊兵必強，戰必不勝損兵，宜固守。

If close to the enemy you dream of a man with two white staffs, the bandits will surely be strong. In battle, you certainly will not be victorious and you will lose soldiers. It is appropriate to mount a firm defense.

夢猛水濁而波濤，持兵不戰吉。

If you dream of violent waters roiling turbidly in great waves, if you grasp your weapons and do not fight, it is auspicious.

夢得大魚及獸肉，戰必大克。

If you dream you get the flesh of a large fish or a wild animal, if you fight you will surely achieve a great conquest.³¹

In addition, in the early seventeenth century, divination was taken from the procedure of sacrificing a cock by beheading it, and seeing the position and direction in which the head and body fell and whether the bird squawked or jerked its body.³²

Among the most important esoteric and arcane divination techniques in the cosmological armoury of military specialists were the Solitary and Empty (*Guxu*

³¹ *Zhanshou quanshu*, Zibu vol. 36 (vol. 121), 18, 37ab (36, 195-592); Liu Shenning (1990), no. 1546.

³² *Wubei zhi*, vol. 34, chap. 186, “Zhan jianji”占剪雞, pp. 7902-7910. In this divination procedure, the cock’s head represented the diviner’s forces and its body the enemy.

孤虛);³³ the *Dunjia* Method (遁甲法);³⁴ the Qi [Strange/Irregular] Gates (*Qimen* 奇門); the *Tai Yi* Method 太乙法;³⁵ the *Liuren* Method 六壬法,³⁶ the Hexagrams of the *Book of Changes* 易經 (from Song times on) and other related methods.³⁷ In Liu's catalogue, eighteen titles of books on the *Dunjia* method are recorded, and sixteen of the *Qimen* method, nine of which incorporate both *Qimen* and *Dunjia*. These seem to have been the most consistently popular of the arcane methods of divination. More simple "day selection" (*zeri* 擇日) was also used to determine the date when the army should, or should not, set out on campaign, to choose a date for battle, or location for an encampment, and predictions as to the outcome.³⁸

Watching the Qi

The military chapters of *Mozi* 墨子 contain one of the earliest references to the practice of "Watching the Ethers" *Wang qi* 望氣 (Watching the Qi), a technique, mentioned by Mark Edward Lewis,³⁹ that gained prominence in the Han and continued into the Qing. Also known as *Wang yunqi* 望雲氣, it has been studied by Derk Bodde,⁴⁰ the late Han legal authority A.F.P. Hulsewé,⁴¹ and most recently by Michael Loewe⁴² and Huang Yi-long and Chang Chih-ch'eng⁴³ especially in its judicial divinatory application in determining the arrival of the various *qi* throughout the year by means of twelve pitch-pipes (*shier lii* 十二律). It was intended that the technical experts would report the arrival of

³³ It is now clear from the *Guanju* almanac texts that the "Guxu" 孤虛 technique originated as early as the Qin dynasty; see Hubei sheng Jingzhou shi Zhou Liangyu qiao yizhi bowu guan, slips 355-360, p. 133, and slip 260, p. 119, where it is used for divining where a robber has gone and where he has hidden the stolen property. See also Ngo (1976), pp. 193-195.

³⁴ Kalinowski (1991), chap. 34, pp. 384-386, translates *Dunjia* as "La méthode du Cycle caché." For *Dunjia*, see pp. 198-201; for *Qimen*, pp. 201-204. See also pp. 104-105, p. 329, and p. 542, note 80, cf. Schipper and Wang Hsiu-huei (1986). For a detailed explanation of how the *Taiyi*, *Qimen*, *Dunjia* and *Liuren* methods worked, see Ho Peng Yoke (2003).

³⁵ He Bingyu (1996).

³⁶ Kalinowski (1983).

³⁷ In the Northern Song dynasty, Xu Dong 許洞 recorded many such methods in his *Huqian jing* 虎鈴經.

³⁸ Zhang Yincheng (2000).

³⁹ Lewis (1990), pp. 139-140, 143-144.

⁴⁰ Bodde (1981).

⁴¹ Hulsewé (1979).

⁴² Loewe (1994).

⁴³ Huang Yi-long and Chang Chih-ch'eng (1996).

the *qi* as it blew off ashes resting on a cloth covering the pitch-pipes and thus they would enable the ruler to correct the calendar. As such, it was closely tied to the ruler's ritual and religious function of harmonizing Heaven and Earth. In its military aspect, in the *Mozi*, the general is advised to exercise strict control of experts in the esoteric arts, such as ether-watchers (*wangqizhe* 望氣者) and shamans (*wu* 巫), to have them close at hand, and not to permit them to relate their prognostications to the soldiers and officers at large for fear that their mantric utterances might scare them. The experts are to report to the general or Defender (*shou* 守) in charge alone. In fact, experts in prognostications (*zhanshizhe* 占筮者) came to be regular participants in armies and they appear at least as late as the Wanli period of the Ming, for we find them listed with gunpowder and fuse experts (*huoyao xianjiang* 火藥線匠), carpenters (*mujiang* 木匠), ironsmiths (*tiejiang* 鐵匠), cannoneers (*dachong shou* 大銃手), sea-shell trumpeters (*poluo* 唢囉), horn-blowers (*laba* 喇叭), flute-players (*haodi* 號笛), drummers (*gu* 鼓), gong-beaters (*luoshou* 鑼手), cymbalists (*shuaiba* 摔鈸),⁴⁴ doctors (*yishi* 醫士), veterinarians (*shouyi* 獸醫), bowyers (*gongjiang* 弓匠), and arrowsmiths (*jianjiang* 箭匠), as indispensable members of a military camp in the famous general Qi Jiguang's 戚繼光 influential treatise *Jixiao xinshu* 紀效新書.⁴⁵

It is difficult to determine the extent of the belief in the esoteric arts and practices in the military, although occasionally we encounter known skeptics, such as Wang Chong 王充 in the Later Han and the scholar Du You 杜佑 in the Tang who rather reluctantly added an appendix on "Various Prognostications concerning Watching the Winds, the Clouds and Vapours" ("Fengyunqi hou zazhan" 風雲氣候雜占) to his section on the military in the *Tong dian* 通典, quoting in a note to the title a saying derived from the beginning of the early Confucian philosopher *Mengzi* 孟子, "The seasons of Heaven are not as good as the advantages of Earth; the advantages of Earth are not as good as the harmony among men; therefore I have appended it to the last section" 天時不如地利, 地利不如人和, 故附於末篇.⁴⁶ He then proceeds to quote extensively from the *Taigong* [*Bingfa*] 太公 [兵法] and other earlier texts, such as the as-

⁴⁴ *Wubei yaolue* 武備要略, chap. 5, pp. 23a-25a, explains how these various signals specialists gave commands to the army. Cheng Ziyi, the compiler of this work, also indicates that the sea-shell trumpets were adopted from the Japanese.

⁴⁵ *Jixiao xinshu*, 1, *pian* 1 "Shu wu" 束伍, pp. 11ab [91-92].

⁴⁶ *Mengzi* "Gongsun Chou xia" 公孫丑下, 2, p. 2693; *Tong dian*, chap. 162, "Bing" 兵, 15 (*Shitong* 十通 ed.), pp. 859-860. Du You also commented on "Sunzi's Art of War" (*Sunzi bingfa* 孫子兵法) in his book and this commentary was subsequently incorporated in the Song dynasty into *Shijia zhu Sunzi bingfa* 十家注孫子兵法 and *Shiyijia zhu Sunzi bingfa* 十一家注孫子兵法; see Li Ling (2000c), pp. 154-202. Compare the translation of the quotation from *Mencius* in Lau (1970), p. 85.

tronomical chapters of the *Jin Shu* 晉書.⁴⁷ Wang Zongyi 汪宗沂 (Taoluzi 韜廬子) at the end of the Qing included in his *Yunqi zhanhou* 雲氣占候 parts of Du's formulations but he omitted his skeptical comment.⁴⁸

A generation or two before Du You 杜佑 in the mid-eighth century, the Daoist Li Quan was of the opinion that prognostication techniques were not efficacious unless exploited by a sage or worthy who was acting in a righteous cause and he justified including these techniques in his encyclopedia in the following General Preface to "Various Prognostications" ("Za Zhan" 雜占) section.

經曰：天文者懸六合之休咎。兵書者著六軍之成敗。今約一戰之事編為篇目，其餘災變略而不書。夫天道遠而人道邇。人道謀而[於]陰。故曰神成於陽。故曰明人有神明謂之聖人。夫聖人與天地合其德，與日月合其明，與四時合其序，與鬼神合其吉凶。故曰先天而天弗違，後天而奉天時。天且弗違而況于人乎，況于鬼神乎。人若謀成策員⁴⁹則天地日月四時鬼神皆合之。人若謀缺策敗則雖使大撓《步歷》，黃帝《拔元》，甘德《占星》，巫咸《望氣》，務成《災變》，風后《孤虛》，欲幸其勝未之有也，蓋天道助順，所以存而不亡。若將賢士銳誅暴救弱以義征不義，以有道伐無道，以直取曲，以智攻愚，何患乎天文哉。可博而解，不可執而拘也。

The Canon states: 'Specialists in the Patterns of the Heavens manifest the good and ill fortune deriving from the Six Harmonies (*liuhe*).⁵⁰ Military texts write about the successes and defeats of the Six Armies.' Now I have tied together matters relating to a single battle and have arranged them into sections (*pian*) with headings. The remaining disasters and changes I have omitted and not written down.

Now the Way of Heaven is far off and the Way of Man is close by. The Way of Man is to strategize / plot in Yin. Thus it is said that the Numinous is completed in Yang. Thus it is said an intelligent person possessing numinous intelligence (*shenming*) is called a sage (*shengren*). Now a sage harmonizes his virtue / charisma (*de*) with Heaven and Earth. He harmonizes his intelligence with the sun and the moon. He harmonizes his sequences with the four seasons; he harmonizes his auspiciousness and inauspiciousness with the ghosts and spirits. Thus it is said that he precedes Heaven and yet Heaven does not defy him; he is behind Heaven and yet he respects Heaven's seasons and moreover Heaven does not defy him. How much more so with Man? How much more so with the ghosts and spirits?

⁴⁷ See also Wei Qipeng (1994), p. 81.

⁴⁸ *Yunqi zhanhou pian* (1894) (*Congshu jicheng xinbian* 叢書集成新編 (ed.) vol. 25; Taipei: Xinwen feng chubanshe).

⁴⁹ The Zhang edition reads *wan* 完.

⁵⁰ The 'Six Harmonies' are most likely Heaven, Earth, and the Four Directions.

If a man's strategies are fulfilling and his tactics perfect, then Heaven and Earth, the sun and the moon, the four seasons, and the ghosts and spirits all harmonize with him. If a man's strategies are deficient and his tactics failures, then, even though he may cause Da Nao's *Buli*, Huangdi's *Boyuan*, Gan De's "Prognostication of the Stars," Wu Xian's "Watching the Qi," Wu Cheng's "Disasters and Changes," and Feng Hou's "Solitary and Empty" to favour his victory, there has never been such a case [that he has gained victory]. That is probably because the Way of Heaven assists the compliant: that is the means whereby he survives and is not destroyed. If a general is worthy and the officers eager and they punish the violent and rescue the weak; attack the unrighteous with righteousness; punish those without Dao whilst possessing the Dao; seize the crooked in a straightforward manner; and attack the stupid with wisdom; what need would there be to worry about the patterns of Heaven? One can be broad and yet liberal; one cannot be grasping and restrictive.⁵¹

So, according to Li, knowledge and manipulation of technologies to reveal the arcana of the cosmos are of no use or value to someone who is attempting to employ them for illegitimate ends. The direct connection between, and interdependence of, the three realms of Heaven, Earth, and Man cannot be more clearly enunciated; only the sage, acting for the greater good, can harmonize his behaviour with the cosmos and have the cosmos respond to help him bring order to the world. All the esoteric knowledge gleaned from the traces of the ancient masters is not going to assist someone who fails to take care of the human side of military preparations. Thus knowledge of, and compliance with, both human activities and the natural order must be acquired for a general or ruler to be successful in warfare.

Li Quan in the Tang identifies the following categories of *qi*: "The Qi of a Fierce General" (*Mengjiang qi* 猛將氣); "The Qi of a Victorious Army" (*Shengjun qi* 勝軍氣); "The Qi of a Defeated Army" (*Baijun qi* 敗軍氣); "The Qi of City Walls and Ramparts" (*Chenglei qi* 城壘氣); "The Qi of Soldiers Hiding in Ambush" (*Fubing qi* 伏兵氣); "The Qi of Rebellious Soldiers" (*Baobing qi* 暴兵氣); "The Qi of Battle Formations" (*Zhanzhen qi* 戰陣氣); "The Qi of Hidden Plots" (*Yinmou qi* 陰謀氣); "The Qi of the Four Barbarians" (*Siyi qi* 四夷氣); and the "Far and Near Qi" (*Yuanjin qi* 遠近氣).⁵² These may

⁵¹ *Shenji zhidi Taibo yinjing*, 8, pp. 623-624.

⁵² *Shenji zhidi Taibo yinjing*, "Zhan yunqi" 占雲氣, *pian* 88, pp. 652-679. Xu Dong 許洞 in his *Huqian jing* 虎鈴經, chap. 17, pp. 371-390, devotes section 169 of his early Song military encyclopedia to the clouds and *qi*: after a general introduction, he lists only six different types of clouds and *qi*: those above cities; those of victorious troops; those of a general; those of soldiers hiding in ambush; those of treacherous murderers (*jianzei yunqi* 姦賊雲氣); and of defeated soldiers. The *Wujing zongyao*, "Hou ji", chap. 18, 3, pp. 1971-1996, drops two of Li Quan's categories, "The Qi of the Four Barbarians" and

be considered typical general categories of *qi* that could be interpreted in a military context, although by the end of the Qing, Taoluzi had expanded, divided, and refined the varieties of *qi* to produce a list of thirty alternatives.⁵³

When and how did one watch the *qi*? The Ming military expert Fan Jingwen quotes another Tang divination expert, Li Chunfeng 李淳風, who states:

凡候氣之法，常以平旦寅時及日晡夜半，或戊巳之日看候敵上。敵在東，日出候之，敵在南，日中候之，敵在西，日入候之，敵在北，夜半候之，乃知敵人動靜盛衰之兆。

The general method of observing the *qi* is one takes observations above the enemy always at the *yin* hour at dawn, in the afternoon [from 3-5 pm] or at midnight, or on the *wusi* day. When the enemy is to the east, observe it when the sun comes up; when they are to the south, observe it at midday; when they are to the west, when the sun sets; when they are to the north, at midnight. Then you will know the omens concerning the enemy's movement or rest, their rise or decline.⁵⁴

This method clearly shows the correlations that were thought to exist between the relative location of the observer (the ether watchers 望氣者), the enemy and the greater cosmos, the four directions, and the time of day. In other words, in watching the ethers, attention had to be paid to space-time coordinates of the action and those of the players (i.e., both the watcher and the enemy).

Although it seems clear that an individual general could generate *qi*, the early Song expert Xu Dong, opines:

臣聞百人已上勝敗之氣必俱焉，是以順之者昌，逆之者亡，天地無言，吉凶以象占，雲氣有異，必契災變。占氣之時，觀氣之初出，如甑上雲，勃鬱上騰，氣積而為霧，氣陰氣結為虹霓暈珥之屬，不積不結，散浸一方，不能為災。

Your subject has heard that the *qi* of victory or defeat inevitably accompanies [a group of] more than a hundred men.

the “Far and Near Qi,” and adds a final category “Various Prognostications of the Shapes of Qi” (*Qixiang zazhan* 氣象雜占).

⁵³ *Yunqi zhanhou pian*, A.

⁵⁴ *Qiankun bianyi lu* 乾坤變異錄 quoted in *Zhanshou quanshu* 18, p. 15b. The passage “When the enemy is to the east, observe it when the sun comes up; when they are to the south, observe it at midday; when they are to the west, when the sun sets; when they are to the north, at midnight” 敵在東，日出候之，敵在南，日中候之，敵在西，日入候之，敵在北，夜半候之 also appears in the *Taibo yinjing* section on “Far and Near Qi”, p. 667.

For this reason, if they accord with it, they will be glorious, but if they oppose it, they will be lost. Heaven and earth do not speak. Auspiciousness and inauspiciousness are prognosticated through signs. When there is strangeness in the clouds and *qi*, inevitably they portend changes and calamities.

As for the time for prognosticating *qi*, observe the *qi* when it first appears. Like clouds above a steamer, it suddenly billows up thickly, the *qi* accumulates and becomes mist *qi*, and the *yin qi* binds together and becomes a rainbow or a type of halo or ring. If it does not accumulate or does not bind together, but rather dissipates and soaks away in one direction or another, it cannot bring about a calamity.⁵⁵

In general, *qi* was conceived of appearing in the five colours of the Five Phases, white, green, vermilion, yellow, and black. There are a few combinations of colours, too. Also important was the direction the *qi* moved in, or whether it was stationary, whether it came out or entered in, and what shape it took. While He Bingyu and He Guanbiao, following Needham, explain watching the *qi* within the framework of “associative” or “coordinative thinking,” and suggest that it belongs to the realm of “natural magic which is science in its early form,” it seems to me that one has to stretch such thinking beyond the bounds of the possible or reasonable to explain statements such as the following from the late Ming military writer Fan Jingwen, quoting the Tang expert Li Chunfeng:⁵⁶

氣如蛇雀群走，此謂軍敗。

If the *qi* resembles a snake and a sparrow running together, this means that the army will be defeated.

And

氣或如死馬，或如人引手，或如雞兔驚怯，或如死狗，或如牽牛，或如人臥無首，或如捲席，或如覆斗，或如人老瘦，或如羅敷，或如掃帚，或赤色象人頭千萬，或如瓦礫石，或如灘，或如水波之狀，並是敗軍之氣，可以擒將。

⁵⁵ *Huqian jing* 虎鈐經, section 169, “General Discussion of Clouds and Qi” (Yunqi tonglun 雲氣統論), pp. 371-374. Clearly, Xu Dong is basing himself on Li Quan who states “In general with regard to *qi*, when it seems like *qi* rising up and billowing out from a steamer, and then accumulates outside and binds together into a shape, then you can make a prognostication” 凡氣欲似甑出炊氣勃勃而上升外積結成形而後可占 (*Taibo yinjing*, “Za zhan” 雜占, “Zhan yunqi” 占雲氣, “Yuanjin qi” 遠近氣, p. 667).

⁵⁶ *Zhanshou quanshu*, 18, 18b.

If the *qi* either resembles a dead horse; or a man pulling with his hands; or a frightened cock or rabbit; or a dead dog; or pulling an ox; or a man without a head lying down; or a rolled up mat; or an overturned dipper; or a thin old man; or a net that has been spread wide; or a broom; or is vermilion colored and in the image of a person with a thousand or ten thousand heads; or like tiles, gravel, or stones; or like a sandbank; or has the shape of waves in water; these are all the *qi* of a defeated army. You can capture the general.

In addition, Mao Yuanyi (1594-1640), the composer of the greatest and most comprehensive military encyclopedia, the *Wubei zhi*, who had extensive combat experience in the field, includes in his section on “Prognostications” (“Zhan” 占) a series of esoteric ritual performances and prayers (*Yanrang* 厭禳) to counteract baleful influences that a general might encounter in the course of his duties. These, he says in his preface, are not matters that a gentleman (*junzi*) speaks about (茅子曰厭禳君子所不道也). He describes a ritual to exorcize an epidemic (*ji* 疫) which involves the burning of the heads of captured enemy soldiers—we should not be surprised that such rituals were recommended by a late Ming literatus (*shidafu* 士大夫) like Mao Yuanyi, since in contemporary late imperial popular culture rituals to exorcize plague demons were quite common, witness the cult of the military deity Marshal Wen 溫元帥 in Zhejiang province analyzed by Paul Katz.⁵⁷ Mao describes another of these rituals that was intended to counteract the powerful influence of a royal *qi* emanating from an enemy general.

厭王氣法，敵之王氣久而不衰者，觀其氣王於何方，當六甲旬首正子時，於營中月空上，環三九步，以朱畫八卦壇法成三界，其內畫十二辰，及月將之名，東西南北相去等，前取黑狗雞各一，大將披素服，左手仗劍，右手按二畜，北面立，默誦敵將名氏，即殺之，埋於氣王一方，深三尺，氣衰則去之。

The method of suppressing a royal *qi* (*wang qi*): When an enemy's royal *qi* has long endured and not declined, observe the direction where his *qi* rules. Then just at the *zi* time at the beginning at the Six Jia weekly cycle, in the middle of the encampment beneath a moon in the void, circumambulate in twenty-seven paces, with vermilion draw the model of an altar of the Eight Trigrams, and create a triple boundary. Inside draw the twelve chronograms (*shier chen*), the name of the Moon General, the directions east, west, south, and north separated from each other, and so on. In front of

⁵⁷ Katz (1995).

the altar take each of one black dog and one black cock. The general puts on plain clothing, and in his left hand brandishes a sword, and in his right takes the two animals. He stands with his back to the altar, chants the given name and surname of the enemy general, and then kills the animals and buries them three feet deep in the direction where the *qi* rules. When the *qi* declines, you will be able to get rid of it.⁵⁸

This is a fascinating text that deserves a much fuller interpretation than I can give it here. Suffice it to say that in such a period of disorder as the late Ming, it was thought that a “royal *qi*,” evidently believed to be present independently in the cosmos or generated by an individual’s morally correct behavior, could attach itself to a rebellious general. A loyal general fighting on the side of the Ming emperors could destroy this “royal *qi*” by creating a powerful cosmic centered ritual space protected by the spirits of the Eight Trigrams, the powerful spirits of the months that we see in *Liu Ren*, *Qimen*, and *Dunjia* divination tradition,⁵⁹ and other astral deities, and, at the most auspicious moment and under the influence of Yin powers, symbolically kills the enemy general and forces his *qi* to dissipate. This cannot just be interpreted as natural magic leading toward science, but must be analyzed within the context of traditional Chinese religious and ritual beliefs and practices of exorcism, a burgeoning field of inquiry.⁶⁰ The late Ming general was, in fact, a powerful exorcist. We must analyze the actions of traditional Chinese armies and the symbolic meanings that they gave to their equipment if we are to understand what they thought that they were doing on the battlefield and on parade.

Concluding Remarks

A hand-copied manuscript preserved in the Rare Books Department of the Zhejiang Provincial Museum, the *Kedi wulüe Yinghuo shenji* 克敵武略熒惑神機 by the Ming military and firearms expert Liu Ji 劉基 bears a preface dated the eighth month of the third year of Hongwu (1370). This text does not appear with this same title anywhere in Liu Shenning’s bibliography of military works, but

⁵⁸ *Wubei zhi*, 188, “Zhan” 41, pp. 7959-7960.

⁵⁹ Each of the months was assigned one of the twelve *chen* 辰, starting with *hai* 亥 in the first month (*zhengyue* 正月), and each was given an esoteric name; *hai* 亥 was *Dengming* 登明; *xu* 戌 was *Hekui* 河魁; *you* 酉 was *Congkui* 從魁 and so on.

⁶⁰ See, for example, Edward L. Davis’s brilliant recent study (2001) that demonstrates that the interpretation that elite male neo-Confucian philosophers secularized Chinese thought and practice in the Song is entirely misleading. Richard J. Smith is doing the same for late imperial China. See Smith (1991).

appears to be essentially the same as that reproduced in the *Huolong jing* 火龍經 published under the Yongle 永樂 emperor in the early Ming,⁶¹ providing as it does a fairly complete overview of the latest contemporary developments in gunpowder technology. What is interesting to me in the present context is that Liu begins his treatise on these destructive weapons by placing the use of fire in general within a cosmological framework that could only be interpreted by a general who was a master of divination theory and practices.

火攻之法以風為勢，風猛則火烈，火熾則風生，風火相搏，斯能勝。故為將者當知風候，以月行之度準之。月行於箕軫張翼四星（箕在天十度半軫在天十七度張在天十七度翼在天十八度），則不出三日必定有大風，數日方止。仰觀星宿，光搖不定，亦不出三日必有大風，終日而止。黑雲夜蔽斗口，風雨交作（雲自北方起者，風必大）。黑雲飛塞天河，大風數日（雲如豬形者，名天豕渡河）。月暈而青色數圍主風無雨（青主風黑主雨）。日沒，黑雲相接，來朝風作。風來十里，揚塵動葉。風來百里，飛砂飄瓦。風來千里，力能走石。風來萬里，能拔木。如天之時而善用之，斯萬戰而萬勝矣。

The standard method of attacking by fire uses the wind as its situational advantage [or ‘propensity’ as François Jullien translates the term⁶²]. When the wind is fierce, fire rages; when fire is intense, then the wind grows. Wind and fire rely on each other and they can [be used] to gain the victory. Therefore, a general must know about the conditions or periodicities of wind. Measure them by means of the degrees that the moon travels. If the moon travels in the four constellations Ji, Zhen, Zhang, and Yi,⁶³ then within three days there inevitably will be a great wind and only after several days will it stop.

Look up and observe the constellations and the lunar lodges. If they tremble and are not stable, then also within three days there definitely will be a great wind that will stop at the end of the day. If black clouds cover the Mouth of the Dipper at night, then wind and rain will be produced together (note: if the clouds arise from the north, the wind will certainly be great). If black clouds fly and block up the Heav-

⁶¹ Compare with the hand-written manuscript *Huolong shenqi zhenfa* 火龍神器陣法 reprinted in the *Zhongguo bingshu jicheng*, vol. 17, pp. 1-170.

⁶² Jullien (1992).

⁶³ The note reads: Ji is 10.5 degrees in the heavens; Zhen is 17 degrees; Zhang is 17 degrees; Yi is 18 degrees.

only River, there will be a great wind for several days (note: if the clouds resemble the shape of pigs it is called the Heavenly Pig fording the River). If there is a moon that is haloed with several rings of green light, there will be mainly wind without rain (note: green is in charge of wind; black is in charge of rain).

If when the sun sinks, black clouds assemble together, at dawn a wind will rise. If the wind comes from ten *li*, it will raise the dust and shake the leaves. If it comes from 100 *li*, it will carry sand and blow off tiles. If the wind comes from a 1000 *li*, the force will be capable of tumbling stones. If the wind comes from 10,000 *li*, the force will be capable of uprooting trees. If one follows Heaven's seasons and is expert at using them, then one will be victorious ten thousand times in ten thousand battles.

The text goes into great detail concerning the generation of wind and how one can forecast its arrival and length of duration on the basis of the appearance of astral and *qi* phenomena. It concludes by reiterating the necessity of comprehending and harmonizing one's activities with the cyclic movement of the Heavens.

How did traditional Chinese achieve such harmonization with the rhythms and patterns of the cosmos? They organized their camps and formations according to the patterns of the stars and constellations in the sky. They emblazoned their flags and pennons with the signs of the constellations, the images of astral deities, and the Eight Trigrams. They coloured these flags and the uniforms of the soldiers according to the primary symbolic colours of the Five Phases 五行. Their generals were embodiments of traditional social morality as well as experts in esoteric patterns and ritual performance. And they employed experts in military divination to ensure that the movements and the rituals accorded with greater cosmic patterns. Of course, they also had to be conversant with latest military techniques and technologies, had to provide adequate logistical support for their armies, and had to be sufficiently literate and politically astute to maneuver within the political whirlpool of the Chinese bureaucracy if they were to rise to positions of power and survive the attacks of both internal and external enemies.

I would also like to note that early military divination texts were attributed to ancient sages and spirits, such as the Yellow Thearch (Huangdi 黃帝) and the Lord of the Wind (Fengbo 風伯), as Li Quan mentions in the passage quoted above, in addition to being anonymously written, as it seems the Mawangdui "Xing De" texts were. These practices continued in later ages. But from Song times on, many works on military divination were attributed to famous generals who were best known for their tactical and strategic skill as well as their literary abilities, individuals such as Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 of the Three Kingdoms pe-

riod, Li Jing 李靖 of the early Tang,⁶⁴ Liu Ji 劉基, the gunpowder expert of the early Ming, and Qi Jiguang 戚繼光 (1528-1587) of the late Ming. It is not clear whether these attributions have any historical basis, although they are consonant with the accepted notion that brilliant generals had to have such arcane knowledge if they were to be successful.

Finally, I want to point out that many, if not most, techniques of military divination, were the same as those used in other spheres of cultural life. *Qimen Dunjia* 奇門遁甲, for example, as the Ming scholar Gan Lin 甘霖 records, was used for divining the weather, starting buildings and gardens, success in the examinations, visits to superiors, farming, silkworm production (a woman's activity), capturing escaped slaves and bondservants, hunting, wealth generation, travel, involvement in law cases, robbery, marriage, conception and birth, loss of articles, eating and drinking, and so on.⁶⁵ However, some techniques, like Watching the Ethers and Xing De, and divination by means of cock-killing and observing the behavior and movements of animate and inanimate objects in or near an army or its encampments, were particular to the practice of military divination.

With the full publication of the Mawangdui "Xing De" texts, we are in a much better position to understand the development of military divination in the period of the establishment of the first Chinese empires, when it underwent its first major expansion. However, this paper has but skimmed the surface of what is a very long and complex tradition, one that deserves much fuller treatment than I have been able to give it here. The significance of military divination should be recognized not only within the history of China's military tradition, but also within the tradition of China's esoteric arts and techniques, itself deserving of greater study, especially in the Tang and post-Tang period. Professor Ho Peng Yoke has led the way in exploring this tradition and I look forward to many more of his erudite studies in the coming years.

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⁶⁴ See, for example, *Li Weigong Wang Jiangnan* 李衛公望江南.

⁶⁵ *Qimen dunjia miyao* 奇門甲祕要, chap. A.

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