



Shaughnessy, Edward L., *The Origin and Early Development of the Zhou Changes*

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Sutong HAO¹

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One cannot properly understand Edward L. Shaughnessy's new book without putting it in the context of the modern history of the *Zhouyi* 周易 (*Book of Changes*) studies. In the middle years of the 20th century, the initial fervor of the movement of “doubting antiquity” (*yigu yundong* 疑古運動) had subsided before the full force of the conservative backlash that characterizes much of contemporary Chinese scholarship on the *Zhouyi* could make itself felt (24). The movement of the “new *Yi* studies” (*xin Yixue* 新易學), led by scholars such as LI Jingchi 李鏡池 (1902–1975), GAO Heng 高亨 (1900–1986), and ZHANG Zhenglang 張政烺 (1912–2005), criticized the old paradigm of the traditional *Zhouyi* studies, which interpreted the *Zhouyi* in light of the *Yizhuan* 易傳 (*Commentaries on the Book of Changes*), assuming that the *Zhouyi* was primarily a philosophical work. The starting point of the new paradigm set up by the new *Yi* studies is that the *Zhouyi* was originally and primarily a manual for divination (an idea anticipated by the Song 宋 Confucian ZHU Xi 朱熹). Shaughnessy accepts this starting point, while challenging many other specific ideas and arguments made by the scholars of the new *Yi* studies. In addition to extensively consulting the research of Chinese and Western scholars and synthesizing the archaeological findings excavated in recent decades, Shaughnessy adopts the research methodologies of archaeology, paleography, and historiography to examine the intellectual world of the Zhou 周 time in which the *Zhouyi* was formed. As a result, this new book can be seen as the climax of more than forty years of the *Zhouyi* studies.

At the beginning of the Preface, Shaughnessy demonstrates a reconstruction of a Western Zhou temple at Shaochen 召陳 achieved through the methodology of archaeology. He compares the *Zhouyi* to another temple of the Western Zhou and proposes to reconstruct the *Zhouyi* just as archaeologists have reconstructed the Zhou temple. This great project, centered around the *Zhouyi*'s origin and early

✉ Sutong HAO
sutong.hao@campus.lmu.de

¹ Institute of Sinology, Department of Asian Studies, University of Munich, Kaulbachstr. 51 a, 80539 Munich, Germany

development, began with Shaughnessy's doctoral dissertation in 1983. Although this dissertation was never published, it has been very influential among scholars of the *Zhouyi*, both in Western and Chinese academia. In many ways, this new book is an updated version of Shaughnessy's dissertation. Shaughnessy explicitly tells his readers which of the ideas and arguments he made in 1983 he still believes to be correct, adducing new arguments and new evidence to support them, and which ones he no longer accepts because of new evidence speaking against them. It is amazing to see that some of Shaughnessy's original working hypotheses were vindicated by new archaeological evidence. What is also noteworthy is that the Chinese translation of his new book was published around the same time when the original version came out. The Chinese translation is by JIANG Wen 蔣文, a brilliant young scholar from Fudan 復旦 University. This provides readers interested in the *Zhouyi* with two versions of equal quality (viii–xii, 29).

In the Introduction, Shaughnessy lays out the book's general structure. The first half consists of six chapters, which aim to penetrate the successive layers that grew over time around the original nucleus of the *Zhouyi*. According to Shaughnessy, the *Zhouyi* presents an instability in the macro-structure of its text. Also, in the text's micro-structure, a similar instability presents as a polysemy concerning the interpretation of the *Zhouyi*. Therefore, concerning different exegetical traditions in the *Zhouyi*'s interpretative history, Shaughnessy prioritizes an examination of the historical context within which the *Zhouyi* was formed (16–17). In Chapter 1, Shaughnessy introduces the received text of the *Zhouyi* and the three different manuscripts that were excavated in the last half of the century. His focus is on the development of the *Zhouyi* text throughout the eight hundred years of the Zhou dynasty. According to Shaughnessy, the *Zhouyi* could not have been written much before about 800 BCE, and the final editing of the text may well have been a century or even two centuries later than this date. Additionally, the text of the hexagram and line statements (*guayao ci* 卦爻辭) seen in the early manuscripts is largely similar to that of the received text. Therefore, it is argued that the text of the *Zhouyi* was more or less fixed by no later than 300 BCE (37, 51). What is also noteworthy is that the variant characters (*yiwen* 異文) in the received text of the *Zhouyi* represent some sort of interpretive process, being simply the interpretation of some scribe. This kind of reading perhaps has been based on some teaching traditions. Textual variants and different commentarial explanations in the early history of the *Zhouyi* clearly show that there have been different, sometimes apparently even wildly different, teaching traditions. Therefore, Shaughnessy argues that the *Zhouyi* is very much a product of its own cultural and intellectual context. The better we understand that context, the better we will be able to understand how the creators of the text meant it to be understood and how the earliest users understood it (59–63).

Chapters 2 to 5 examine various aspects of divination in an attempt to understand how it may have influenced the origin and early development of the *Zhouyi*. Chapter 2 considers the conceptual foundation of divination and examines the common philosophy in ancient China. Chapters 3 to 5 turn to three mechanics of divination, namely the turtle-shell divination (*guibu* 龜卜), the milfoil divination (*shizhan* 筮占), and the divination especially using the *Zhouyi*. According to Shaughnessy, the turtle-shell divination and milfoil divination are essentially the same in the way

in which the topic of the divination is addressed to the divination medium, and through it to the spirit world (197). Also, these two types of divination are generally identical in form. Namely, both begin with a command (*mingci* 命辭) and both include a simple prognostication (*zhanqi* 占辭) and an oracle (*yaoci* 繇辭). What is noteworthy is that based on the research of RAO Zongyi 饒宗頤 (1917–2018), Paul Serruys (1912–1999), and David Keightley (1932–2017), Shaughnessy agrees that commands should be understood as a form of prayer, expressing the wish that the outcome desired by the diviners be blessed and assisted by the spirits. Their understanding of divination would provide a firm foundation on which to understand later Chinese divination, and indeed much of later Chinese religious practice (121–122). Moreover, Shaughnessy argues that these two types of divination seem to have involved a two-step procedure, and he is in the good company of several scholars here, such as LI Xueqin 李學勤 (1933–2019), LI Ling 李零, and SHEN Pei 沈培 (206–208). However, one difference between turtle-shell divination and milfoil divination is that milfoil divination is often supplied with a sophisticated interpretive apparatus to explain the significance of the divination result. Much of this apparatus owes to literary embellishments introduced by the writers of the accounts, but their presence attests to a developing tradition of exegesis that would come to its first systematic expression in the *Yizhuan* (213). Compared with the above-mentioned two types of divination, the fundamental components of divination especially using the *Zhouyi* are rather similar. However, the results differ radically from those of turtle-shell divination and other forms of milfoil divination. Therefore, Shaughnessy argues for the theory of a two-step procedure of *Zhouyi* divination. Namely, the first step produces a hexagram and the second step determines one of the six lines of that hexagram whose line statement serves as the oracle of the divination (239, 264). Chapter 6 examines the contemporary poetry of the *Zhouyi*, especially the *Shijing* 詩經 (*Classic of Poetry*), to learn about how natural omens were viewed at the time that the *Zhouyi* was created. Through the symbolism of these natural omens, the *Zhouyi* employs a very different grammar of signs seen in the natural world to interpret the oracles (273).

The second half of the book turns from the context of the Zhou dynasty to the text of the *Zhouyi* in an attempt to find mark-points in the text to show how it was constructed. Chapters 7 to 9 examine the three integral parts of the *Zhouyi*: the hexagrams, hexagram statements, and line statements. According to Shaughnessy, the hexagrams are seen as images of natural or human creations or as iconic representations of actions or emotions. Their sixty-four different themes are thought to encapsulate the entirety of the human experience. Moreover, their hexagram names (*guaming* 卦名) may have in many cases derived from the composition of hexagram pictures (*guhua* 卦畫) and characterized the major themes of the hexagram and line statements (298, 305). As far as the differences between hexagram statements and line statements are concerned, they display very different forms and also seem to have played very different roles both in the creation of the text and in its subsequent use. Therefore, Shaughnessy proposes to interpret the *Zhouyi* within the context of divination. For instance, the occurrence of the word *heng* 亨 in the hexagram statements of the *Zhouyi* is an important indication of the two-step divination process. Furthermore, the hexagram statement *yuan heng li zhen* 元亨利貞 should be read as

“prime receipt” and “beneficial to affirm” (314, 320, 333, 342). As far as the line statements are concerned, it is easy to see that they are largely composed of two different types of language: descriptions of events or situations, namely the image statement (*xiang* 象), and terminologies associated with divination, namely the prognostication. The first type, image statement, is a part of a full oracle. The line statement contains either a complete oracle or at least phrases that appear to derive from an oracle. The remaining words of the line statement reflect a secondary composition in an attempt to specify the significance of the oracle (350, 353, 357). Notably, the image of the oracle may lead to some relationship between some hexagram picture and the hexagram name. It would have required only one such association for an eventual editor to infer the organizational structure (370–371). The second type, prognostication, contains some multiple, and possibly contradictory, technical divination terms that the received *Zhouyi* differs from other manuscripts in the absence of such terms. In addition, some formulaic prognostications give advice as to what should be done in particular circumstances. These formulas can also be found in other ancient divination manuscripts. However, only those with all-encompassing generality could be included in the received *Zhouyi* (386–389, 394).

Chapters 10 and 11 examine the micro and macro structures of the *Zhouyi* as a whole: first the organization of both a single hexagram text and pairs of hexagrams considered together; then the organization of the sixty-four hexagrams considered as a whole. According to Shaughnessy, the arrangement of the *Zhouyi* may have been motivated by editorial principles. However, it is necessary to recognize the incompletely edited state of the received text of the *Zhouyi*. The first organizational principle concerns the bottom-to-top organization, which is evident in the organization of the images of the oracles throughout the six lines of a hexagram. This is also the principle of the intra-hexagram structure of hexagram texts. The cases that deviate from this pattern might be assumed to derive either from an uneven editorial process or corruption in the text. A second organizational principle informing the hexagram texts is often thought to provide a key to understanding the inter-hexagram structure of the text: hexagrams are paired two-by-two throughout the *Zhouyi*. This principle of invertible pairs of hexagrams conceived of as sharing more than just a single hexagram picture can be seen in many of the hexagram names. Other connections between the two hexagrams of these pairs can also be seen in their respective line statements (396–397, 424, 429). As far as the hexagram sequence (*guaxu* 卦序) is concerned, there are different arrangements of the sixty-four hexagrams, as is evident in the sequence found in the received text and other manuscripts (451). Chapter 12 is devoted to some canonical commentaries found in the *Yizhuan*, namely the *Tuanzhuan* 象傳 (*Commentary on the Judgments*), *Xicizhuan* 繫辭傳 (*Commentary on the Appended Statements*), *Wenyanzhuan* 文言傳 (*Commentary on the Words of the Text*), and *Shuoguanzhuan* 說卦傳 (*Commentary on Discussion of the Hexagrams*). These four texts are disparate enough both linguistically and conceptually. Shaughnessy examines them to know how they may have worked to transform the ancient divination text into the classic *Yijing* 易經 (*Classic of Changes*). According to Shaughnessy, they must at least have been written not too much later than the 5th century BCE, and they may well have been written by people who took their intellectual inspiration from Kongzi 孔子 (551–479 BCE). In addition, the philosophical

turn that these commentaries effected was based on an understanding of the *Zhouyi* as a microcosm of the world, with its various components constituting a system of associations encompassing all the individual phenomena of that world (497–498).

The main content of the book has been briefly summarized above. Readers will be impressed by Shaughnessy's excellent academic merits, diverse research visions, and bold and rigorous arguments. For example, according to Shaughnessy's understanding of the commands as prayers, he argues that the ancient graphs transcribed as *xin* 囟 should be the protographs of the character *si* 思, which means "to think" or "to wish." Also, the word *shang* 尚, which is also used in the commands of milfoil divination, should be read as *shuji* 庶幾, meaning "to wish" (124, 126). A second example concerns the overview of past interpretations of the hexagram statement *yuan heng li zhen*. Shaughnessy summarizes not only three kinds of representative views in Chinese and Western academia but also various understandings from different translations of the *Zhouyi*. He argues that GAO Heng's understanding of both the grammar and semantics of the phrase are almost certainly mistaken (320). A third example is the relationship between hexagrams Qian 乾 and Kun 坤. Shaughnessy suggests that the line statements of the hexagram Qian describe the seasonal procession of the Dragon constellation from about the 11th month until about the 8th month. In addition, the hexagram Kun complements Qian, extending from the frost of the 9th month through the Dragon's coupling with the Turtle constellation in the 10th month. Obviously, only with the help of knowledge of ancient Chinese astronomy and calendar science could Shaughnessy put forward such a brilliant hypothesis (422–423). A final example is that Shaughnessy examines the *Xicizhuan* and divides the text into two strata, namely the *Qiankunlun* 乾坤論 (*Essay on Qian and Kun*) and *Xicilun* 繫辭論 (*Essay on the Appended Statements*), according to certain linguistic principles (478–479). In addition to the serious academic atmosphere, Shaughnessy's wild imagination, rooted in rigorous scholarship and unique visions, will undoubtedly help to create wonderful experiences for readers.

What is also noteworthy is that readers will find in this new book arguments adopting the viewpoints of Western cultures. For instance, philology derives from the ancient Greek *φιλολογία*. As an essential part of ancient Greek scholarship, philology is the study of linguistics, rhetoric, grammar, and textual philology. Undoubtedly, some philological principles still deserve to be mentioned today. There are two widespread rules written in Latin which concern the textual criticism that serve to identify authentic readings. The first rule is "*Lectio difficilior potior*" that proposes the more difficult reading is the more probable reading because a scribe is more likely to simplify a passage than increase its difficulty through complicated formulations. The second rule is "*Lectio brevior potior*" that proposes the shorter reading is the more probable reading because it is more likely that the copyist has added rather than removed material from a text that the copyist regards as sacred. However, these two criteria should be treated with caution in practical usages. Shaughnessy argues that by some principles of traditional textual criticism, whenever there is a difference between an early manuscript and a received text, the manuscript reading should be given priority as the oldest extant witness (44). In regard to this criterion, it is evident. The older the manuscript, the more likely it is to reproduce the original form of the text, as it will have passed through the hands of fewer copyists than a

later text. Therefore, there are likely to be fewer mistakes. However, this criterion has its problems. It is possible that later manuscripts are copies of a manuscript that predates the earlier witness (David R. Law. 2012. *The Historical-Critical Method: A Guide for the Perplexed* [London: T & T Clark], 101).

Scholars will be inspired by Shaughnessy's intriguing arguments and try to come up with their own hypotheses about the *Zhouyi*. For example, in the discussions of the *Dayan* 大衍 (*The Great Exposition*) passage of the *Xicizhuan*, Shaughnessy agrees with ZHANG Zhenglang that this passage was composed after the date of the Mawangdui 馬王堆 silk manuscript of the *Zhouyi*. Also, it presumably reflects more of the Han 漢 dynasty's uses and conceptions of the *Zhouyi* than those of the Zhou dynasty (245–246). Questions arise concerning this hypothesis: does the composition date of the *Dayan* passage necessarily correspond to the date when the *Dayan* divination method was widely used in ancient divination? If so, why could the hexagram sequence in the received text of the *Zhouyi* be found in the Western Zhou pottery paddles? What is the relationship between the Mawangdui silk manuscript of the *Zhouyi* composed after the convergence of the *Yi* traditions in the early Han and the received text of the *Zhouyi* finalized after the designation of erudites for the Five Classics (*wujing boshi* 五經博士) during the reign of the Han emperor Wu 武 (r. 141–87 BCE)? All these questions are open to any scholar who is trying to sort out where history has rambled and recover the truth from the ambiguities of time. To sum up, Shaughnessy's new book, *The Origin and Early Development of the Zhou Changes*, includes many authoritative and intriguing ideas and hypotheses about the *Zhouyi*, and is a major synthesis of the *Zhouyi* studies in the last forty years. It is a must read for anyone interested in the *Zhouyi*.

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