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1 Summary: Fate, Freedom, and Prognostication in East Asia and Europe

Prognostication and prediction are a pervasive anthropological phenomenon found in all cultures, but with different characteristics. It remains omnipresent in contemporary western societies, even though it may seem that the issue of collective and individual “fate” or “destiny” and the quest for strategies to cope with them is no longer a current topic in the Humanities in the West. Terms such as “trust” or “risk” have replaced traditional reflections on fate, and prediction – in the sense of “forecast” – is only accepted within the bounds of acknowledged “scientific” parameters. Western civilizations are interpreted as “societies of contingency” (Greven 2000) and the structures of contemporary worldviews are seen to operate along the lines of a “logic of uncertainty” (Gamm 1994), with forms of life determined by ambivalence. However, these diagnostic theories often tend to ignore the existence of entire civilizations that have dealt with the European Enlightenment in their own modern ways by preserving and modifying their views of individual and collective destiny. The common notion that describes East Asians as people responding in a more “equanimious” and “composed” way to the vicissitudes of life has not been thoroughly investigated in terms of their ideas of destiny and fate; it seems that in East Asia, methods of prognostication and prediction possess a more distinctive psycho-hygienic function than in Western societies.

The International Research Consortium “Fate, Freedom, and Prognostication in East Asia and Europe” presents an antidote to the Eurocentrism of Western Humanities: the participation of a large number of researchers from East Asia ensures the systematic confrontation with different cultures of knowledge; a topic that has emerged from within a specific area of study will be embedded in a transdisciplinary and comparative research network. In contrast to most of the current European research networks, Chinese Studies will act as the guiding discipline. The comparative approach encompassing related European phenomena is all the more imperative for locating the concept of freedom with its – possibly – different representations in East Asia (Kaelble 1999; Rothermund 2003). Rather than referring to European Antiquity, the comparison will focus on medieval and early modern periods. The inquiry into the history of the intersections of various cultures and religions (e.g. Southern Italy, Spain) will enable us to contour the developments that led to modernity in a more precise way.

The International Research Consortium will make a contribution to uncover the historical foundations of prognostication with their impact on our immediate present and our way of “coping with the future” (Maul 1994). This approach will enable us to find new answers to the question of whether different views on fate and strategies of coping with destiny in Chinese (or indeed East Asian) modernity constitute a characteristic difference to Western modernity.

2 International Research Colloquium Agenda

2.1 Leading Research Questions

Whilst there has been extensive research on mantic traditions in China, on their origin, methods and dissemination (Kalinowski 1983, 1986, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1994, 1996, 1999, 2002; Harper 1988, 1999, 2001; Richard Smith 1991; Loewe 1988, 1994; Strickmann 1977, 1983, 1989, 1990, 2002, 2005), relatively little attention has been afforded to the question of understanding fate as a concept and to its status in Chinese life-worlds (“Lebenswelten”) and worldviews (“Weltanschauungen”) both in the past and the present (Fu Sinian; Raphals 2002; Chen Ning 1997). Yet the mantic tradition presents an excellent departure point from which to investigate the peculiarities of Chinese civilization with regard to the question of freedom.

This issue is a highly topical one, since individual and collective blueprints, concepts and plans for life in China in the 20th and at the beginning of the 21st century have not yet been sufficiently described in terms of classical theories of modernisation. The presence of divination as part of the ideational underpinnings of institutions of governance and the cult of the state (key terms: “tian ming“, “tian zi“) is indicative of its social-historical relevance and deserves particular emphasis in this context. In particular we intend, taking a ‘circuitous’ route via fate and mantic, to address the problem of freedom and of free will in Chinese civilization, which will represent a leitmotiv in all fields of research and we will contrast this with a variety of designs from European intellectual history (literature on the mantic tradition and on miracles versus works such as *De libero arbitrio* or *De iudiciis astrorum*). In so doing, we shall also include the debates on predestination and freedom which have been conducted since late antiquity and, especially, in the 9th and 16th centuries in the Latin West. There is, indeed, no other civilization in which prediction, mantic and divination practices have had and continue to have such singular status as in China. The Chinese written tradition begins in the 13th century BC with the so-called oracle bones (jiaguwen), which largely record questions posed to the oracle and indications on mantic and interpretative methods. One of the five canonical books of the Confucian tradition is the “Classic of Changes“ (Yijing or Zhouyi), whose oldest layer consists of a collection of oracular symbols or pictures – a set of 64 hexagrams containing mantic formulas. There is much to support the idea that the origin of the Chinese commentary tradition is very closely linked to early divinatory exegesis; and in later times the classics could also be read as sources of prophecy (Henderson 1999). Despite the fact that elites within the empire may have judged mantic practices differently at different points in time (Kalinowski 2003; Liao 2001) and mantic statements became part of a political rhetoric (Jean Lévi 1999), it can, however, be concluded that a radical rejection of the possibility of prophecy using mantic methods was inconceivable before the 20th century, since divination formed part of an imperial metaphysics

of the Empire, whose comparison with the provision of counsel to rulers in the European sphere promises to produce fruitful insights.

The lack of an enlightenment which would have systematically – in different stages beginning roughly with Aristotle’s reception in the 12th and 13th centuries, from Humanism through to the “emergence of the modern conscience” (Kittsteiner 1991) – called into question the foundation of basic beliefs in an ability to predict collective or individual fates, led to a situation in which such practices were, within the context of the Chinese version of enlightenment in the 20th century, mostly dismissed as “superstition” and the problem of fate was thus not dealt with. “Contingency”, a term which would have no meaning without the context of occidental philosophy and theology (Makropoulos 1997, 1998; Luhmann 1992) and the terms “risk” and even “chance”, associated with contingency, play at most a very marginal role in Chinese intellectual history.

The replacement of “fate”, “Fatum” and “Fortuna” by “risk” and “trust” in Western Modernity, as attested to by Giddens (1991), has not occurred in China in any radical sense (Raphals 2002). Understanding and coping with fate are, therefore, inseparable from a belief in mantic practices. We must, however, also consider that there was or, indeed, is now something akin to sublimated or “secularised” forms of mantic practices, which are intrinsically connected to concepts of fate; for example, in the “tian ming” concept or indeed in many other aspects of Chinese historical thought. The question which must then be asked is to what extent and in what way can pre-modern European worlds of the imagination with their rich forms, for example, the medieval miracle (Heinzelmann/Herbers 2002), magical practices (Kiekhefer 1992), liturgical and deprecatory sacramental rites (Angenendt) contribute to an understanding of the East Asian as compared with the Western version of modernity. This historicisation might, at the same time, also contribute to an understanding of the perhaps more complicated structure of contingency in “Western societies”. This is all the more relevant as the diversity of Europe and the numerous, historically tangible processes of disintegration become increasingly prominent (Schneidmüller 1997; Borgolte 2002; Herbers 2007).

The concept of the fundamental knowability of the world (the “optimism” asserted by Max Weber) which is firmly rooted in the Confucian tradition, has also had – despite the occasional appearance of an element of scepticism which tends towards a predetermination of sorts – far-reaching consequences for Chinese notions of fate and coping with destiny, which thus presents numerous possible points of contact with European ideas on predestination. Even though early forms of a “folk religion” may well have been different – especially as regards the distinct tendency towards fortune-telling – to official state cults (Mu-chou Poo 1995, 1998), the members of the educated and political elite were nonetheless firmly rooted in their local communities and had contact– albeit sometimes in a seemingly schizophrenic manner in our view – with religious practices from other social spheres; it is most likely that members of the

elite were not ever able to bring themselves to entirely negate mantic practices, and the priority was, therefore, to “control” such practices as regards both worldview and political opinion. This often disconcerting dissociation, disconcerting from the standpoint of a classic Western understanding of ‘rationality’ and a dissociation which we might be tempted to disparage as exhibiting a lack of ‘consistency’, has in more recent times, been held to be one of the characteristics of (South)East Asian blueprints, concepts, and plans for life within the framework of theory construction around composite social schemes (Kipp 1996).

The International Research Consortium will incorporate a wide range of disciplines, each of which will address the research questions outlined above: Philosophy and Intellectual History; History of Science; Social History; History of the European Middle Ages and of the Early Modern Age; the study of religions; Ethnology; Study of Literature. Some of these subject areas will take a contemporary view, whilst others will work from an historical perspective, comparing civilizations. The participation of researchers from East Asia will lend a particular dynamic to the comparison of civilizations, a dynamic which will have a “subjective factor” which at this time cannot yet be assessed.

It should be noted from the start that despite the fact that the core research focus will be on the Chinese world as compared with Europe of the Middle Ages and Early Modern period, there are several points at which comparisons will also be made with Japan (Leinss 2005, 2006; Maekawa 2001; Fukasawa 1996, 1997, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2007), Korea (Andrew Kim Eungi and Lee Eun-Jeung 2003) and Vietnam (Alexei Volkov). A possible consideration could then be – if the research undertaking proves successful – to include other areas of the world (for example, Africa, South Asia, Latin America) in a second phase of the project. In the following section, several research areas will be outlined in which questions of the continuity of concepts of fate and coping with destiny could be examined.

2.2 Research Areas

2.2.1 Philosophical Foundations (Philosophy, Intellectual History)

What place does “fate” hold in Chinese civilization? A key research aim of the project is an enquiry into the extent to which we can speak of “transcendence” or rather “contingency” in the Chinese context. As part of this enquiry, we will question how comparatively “transcendent” Western societies for their part actually were and, indeed, still are. The initial focus here will be on an examination of the terms used to describe “fate”: Ming, yun, xing, fen, yuan and the combinations of these and similar such terms. Our research will cover not only knowledge of cosmology which might possibly be necessary for an investigation in the narrow sense, but will also look at affirmation or negation of the essential mutual dependency of “human nature” (xing) and “destiny” (ming). Which forms of freedom are envisioned in a belief system, which has shaped the inseparable, merely aspectually differentiated unity of the “natural destiny”

(xingming, or, to use a term borrowed from Heidegger, “Wesensgeschick”) from “human nature” and “destiny”? In contrast to more recent studies and following the ground-breaking work by Fu Sinian (Fu 1952) to differentiate between meanings of ming, a) fate (fatum), b) moral calling c) lifespan and d) calling (mandate) from Heaven (Chen Ning 1997; Schaberg in Lupke, 2005), the focus of the analysis will be much more on the semantic field of the term, which quite clearly has a consistent background. Chinese traditions privilege a way of thinking in their reflection on fate and even beyond the bounds of this reflection, which places the “incipient elements” (ji) of change, with their “subtle and germ-like” (miao) elements in the foreground (Lackner 1992). Such ideas produce the possibility of reconstructing the foundations of a world view; a view which does not have the break presupposed by the – occidental - acceptance of contingency, but rather thinks much more in terms of transitions, whose various stages each refer to an outcome, or indeed “prefigure” it. This, therefore, requires an examination of the quintessential terms used in Chinese divination, such as “consultation”, “taking the oracle”, “reckoning”, “coming true”, “verification”, “forecast”, “evidence of the prognosis” etc. (Lackner 2007; Drettas 2007). A central role is played here by the systematic place which “time” is afforded. An examination of Buddhist concepts of fate would also fall within this sphere; whilst the importance of these ideas for the mantic tradition is somewhat marginal, the influence on moral attitudes to predetermination was all the more powerful (Zhou Qi).

We will seek support in clarifying terminology against the background of occidental philosophy (Forschner; Speer; Hoffmann). The intellectual-historical background would, however, be incomplete if we were not also to take into consideration the Arab world (both Islamic and pre-Islamic). Although “prophecy” (for example, by way of the prophet and seer) plays a much more significant role by far in the Near East as compared with China, reflections on the relationship between “fate” and “time” in the Arab world (Tamer 2006) do, in fact, hold a position, which would be of service, not only in its original form, but also in the Western adaptation since the 13th century, in the elucidation of this relationship for the East Asian world. This is also the case for questions of terminology: In pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, the oldest remaining testimony of Arabic culture, the term dahr means both “infinite time” and “fate”. Semantically, it is barely possible to differentiate between these two meanings: infinite time and fate together create an ominous combination of hidden power. The close link between time and fate in the term dahr is also sustained in a most interesting way in the Koran. Certainly in Islam, Arabs continued to uphold the conviction that they were subject to the inescapable power of dahr. If such a view elevates the complex of time and fate to the status of a challenger to Allah, so does a statement ascribed to the prophet Mohammed that Allah is dahr. This interesting pronouncement should not be interpreted as anything other than the attempt to deal with fate at a basic level through identification with God. It is not dahr, but rather Allah to whom you should devote yourself – a fundamental belief within Islam, which means “dedication” (“surrender”) in Arabic.

2.2.2 Authorities, Agencies, Places

How are the authorities that have a bearing on fate conceived of? Is it heaven, or ghosts and demons, or the ancestors (Friedrich 1995)? We still know much too little about the authorities (“The Lord on High”) and tian (“Heaven”) mentioned together in the “Book of Documents” and which are usually treated in philology as successive moments. This question must necessarily be addressed with close attention to the discussion on the philosophical history of concepts as outlined in section 1; however, there are many overlaps with the history of religion and ethnology. The possibility of the ancestors influencing individual fate relatively independently of mantic practices requires investigation. Indeed, in this area, too, the extent of divination is not insubstantial, if we consider, for example, the method of choosing a suitable burial place, fengshui. The process of consulting the oracle is itself essentially sacral (accompanied by preparations such as fasting or prayer), and this reveals possibilities for comparison with European traditions (see Minois 1996 et al. for a comprehensive account) and the cult of relics (Angenendt 2007; Heinzelmänn 1979; Swinarski 2000; Herbers 2000), since miracles and supernatural interventions occurred, above all, at the graves of holy men; but the places in which divination is practised are also usually temples or are located near to temples. In the case of so-called Planchette writing or “spirit writing”, the intervention of sacred authorities is at its most conspicuous: Guandi or some other deity enters the medium; the medium gives a written account of the revelations made by the deity, sometimes via an intermediary (Smith; Xu Dishan 1946/1999). Although shamanist practices were common in those times, clearly very few of the Shaman were able to write, which is why the association between writing and the medium did not develop until the time of the Song dynasty (see Tiziana Lipiello 2001 on “miracles”). The relationship between divination and games also presents an important perspective (Lillian Tseng 2004). Yet how are we to determine the agency that causes dreams; which ideas were associated with the dividing of yarrow stalks? Such ideas as the quality of the moment in time, as in the case of chronomancy? Within the occidental tradition, dream and vision are classic forms of establishing contact with the powers from the beyond and particular actions, such as fasting, prayer and others promote visions (Dinzelbacher 2002; Moreira 2000; Burger 2003). Yet how can subjective experience and reported accounts be opened up to a comparative scientific enquiry?

Those who do not believe in the immutability of fate may resort to strategies for influencing fate; these could range from magical (exorcist or apotropaic) practices (Angenendt 2000) to a type of philosophical stoicism (Zhang Jianguo 2004). On this point, we intend to examine traditional concepts of “magic”, which, of course, often amount to a disjunction with the predictable, in particular, then, the relationship of magic to the dangerous and, above all, to the uncontrollable. In the Latin West there are some very prominent places which were centres of astrological knowledge, such as Toledo, which, in particular since the beginning of the 13th century, also gained itself a reputation as being a centre of hermetism and mantic (Sylvie Roblin 1989). Pope

Gregory VII is even said to have learned nigromancy in Toledo. Stories from exempla literature and various sources from vernacular literature, for example, Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* (Ferreiro Alemparte 1983) reinforce the idea that there was a nigromantic school in Toledo (Herbers 1999 and 2000). The Toledo "nigromancy topos" essentially demonstrates a two-fold reaction to new science and knowledge: alongside the fear and scepticism, new opportunities also presented themselves. Due to the introduction of Arabic writings, magic arts were also partly integrated – at least in several philosophical works since around the 13th century – into the scientific canon (Frank Fürbeth 1999). Ever since Al-Farabi, translated by Dominicus Gundisalvus, magic and mantic were considered by some taxonomists to belong to the "scientia physica", mantic arts were also partly associated with the artes liberales, as in the 12th century "Pseudo-Turpin" chronicle (Herbers/Santos 1998). Undoubtedly, an analysis of the topography of places used for divination in China (on a macro as well as on a micro level) will offer many parallels with the morphology of the oracle in Ancient Greece, and we hope to study these phenomena at an advanced phase of the project.

2.2.3 Divination and Rationality

There is now broad consensus that ways of thought underlying prediction based on extrapolating or interpreting sets of data (chronomancy; entrail examination; bird flight; number combinations) differ only very slightly from modern forms of prognostication, for example, weather forecasts, economic forecasts and medical prognosis (Vernant 1994; Chemla and Kalinowski 1999). The influence of mantic methods on political life in the Chinese Empire is equally beyond dispute (Loewe 1994). Kalinowski, therefore, also refers to "China's traditional sciences". From a strictly historical-scientific perspective, Nathan Sivin concludes that the majority of astronomers of the Yuan Dynasty had been working as soothsayers prior to their appointment to the court (Sivin 2008). This would be the point at which to look, for instance using the example of calendars (Lü Lingfeng/Shi Yunli 2002), at the relationship between divination and the state, as well as the issue of which historical reading determined the nature of the engagement with collective fate at different periods prior to the 20th century (Schaberg 2005; Lewis 1999). With reference to selected examples, we will pursue the question of whether there were differing degrees of rationality and systematic penetration in the various forms of divination.

A comparison suggests itself here between methods that are based on mathematical calculation (Manfred Kubny's concept of the "traditional Chinese personality profile") and, for example, the interpretation of dreams (Lackner 1985; Drettas), in which it is considerably more difficult to establish a system. Equally significant will be an investigation into the relationship between medical and mantic practices (Marta Hanson, Sebastià Giral), especially as prognosis also plays an important role in modern-day medicine. A significant systematic location in determining the relationship between divination and rationality will be sought in the comparison to

Babylonian classification of natural phenomena (Francesca Rochberg). From this perspective, mantic arts would be considered as artes and thus a comparison with the “soft” methods of interpretation of the “Arts / Humanities“, which in the Anglo-Saxon world are still known as “liberal arts“ would seem to make admirable sense.

There is also scope here for approaches based on material evidence and the respective translations: a systematic investigation of the development of the Chinese almanac has been undertaken (Morgan 1998; Smith 1992), Marc Kalinowski’s translation of the Wuxing dayi is another good example, but many other works (e.g. highly influential writings from the Yuan dynasty) still await translation, annotation and commentary. A significant contribution in this area is expected to come from the inclusion of material from Vietnam, which will help to illustrate the relationship between mathematics and divination (Volkov). Even in Latin Western traditions many desiderata remain, such as the edition and interpretation of several works on predestination, or calendars and works on chronology in the Arabic, Latin and vernacular literature.

It is clear that we need to know more about the interrelationship between all pre-modern forms of knowledge or “science” and the mantic arts. Medicine with its impact on physiognomy and other facets of divination; mathematics, which provides models for calculation; “diagrammatology” as an art encompassing, among others, philosophy, mathematics, and cartography (in the broadest sense) are only the most striking illustrations of the place mantic arts occupies in the performative system of learned practices.

The use of mantic practices in the economy is an aspect which has as yet been afforded little research attention – apart from fengshui, which also in the West has achieved at times dubious popularity - but it is an issue with direct relevance for today’s society. We know a relatively large amount about the use of divination in connection with the Chinese examination system (Elman 2000), and yet we understand little about its application in the economic life of China. Although the terms “wealth“ or “prosperity“ are ubiquitous in popular handbooks on the subject, we do not yet have a sufficient understanding of the relationship between economics and mantic practices either in the “West“ or in China.

2.2.4 Judgements on Mantic Practices by the Elite

The comparatively high level of mobility within Chinese society, where origins generally played a smaller part than in the Europe of the pre-modern and early modern periods, allowed much more scope for the individual fate (or that of a family) – and thus also for a questioning of fate. The advance and decline of individuals and families are often conceived of in, relatively short, cycles.

Here we find – also and, indeed, especially with regard to the pre-modern era – the starkest contrast between occidental and Chinese civilizations. Whereas even generous assessments in

the West had to acknowledge the limits of divination, as determined by the contingency of God's will ("quia multum est Deus potest facere quod non vult facere", Ockham), in a civilization which has no notion of transcendence, at least not in the European sense of the term, (and, furthermore, even included an oracle book in the canonical works of its elite) there are no fundamental reservations as regards the knowability of fate.

We do have evidence of scepticism (Wang Chong, 1st century), but this is defined much more by a fundamental fatalism, which writes off the knowability of fate as pointless since there is nothing to be done about it in any case. An alternative attitude arises amongst some representatives of so-called "neo-Confucianism", for instance when Zhu Xi (1130-1200) associates the insight into one's own fate with the possibility of also achieving an insight into the workings of cosmic principles by means of this insight. Linked to this is the hope, that through understanding these principles it might be possible to reach an ideal of humanity which could, in a manner of speaking, stand above one's own fate and thus enable a coming to terms with fate and contingency. Special attention must also be afforded to those scholars who remained sceptical in the face of the knowability or predictability of fate (Wang Chong, Lü Cai, as well as scholars from the time between the end of the Ming Dynasty and the beginning of the Qing Dynasty, such as Lü Kun and Wang Tingxiang). A further possibility – very widespread in the area of "folk religion" – was to influence one's fate using insights gained through divination. We will have to take into account the vast literature on exorcist practices, on the ways to negotiate with fate, and make fruitful use of Benjamin Elman's analysis of the close relationship between elite practices and "folk" belief systems in connection with the Civil Examinations (Elman 2005). Fu Sinian has recorded the various forms of meaning of fate (and thus also the various approaches to dealing with fate) in traditional China. It is indicative that he is the sole representative of the Chinese enlightenment, who has ventured such an undertaking (Fu Sinian).

The reserved attitude towards divinatory practices since the Song Dynasty has been mostly determined by social factors – as has been the case in the Latin West: The relationship between state orthodoxy and mantic practices varied over the centuries: in the Han era one of the important tasks of the new group of scholars was to systematise the relationships between mantic and cosmology (Loewe). Bans on prohibited practices would often include lists of recognised methods of divination; in many cases even private possession of works related to divination (e.g. calendar systems) was forbidden – control and not a fundamental rejection was the priority; the Dunhuang texts in particular show that both erudite and simplified handbooks were often compiled by the same people who were active in the court or who held high-ranking positions in local politics (Kalinowski 1993).

Divination literature constitutes its own field (outside Buddhism, Taoism and folk religion), since it belongs to a continuum with the written scholarly tradition, which has been passed on both in

the Han catalogues as well as through burial site discoveries from the Warring States Period. Added to this is the often institutional framework in which divination had been forced to function, and, furthermore, its embedded position both in local religion and in “popular Confucianism” (Kalinowski 2003). We will seek to clarify, primarily in a comparative perspective, how uniform was the viewpoint of elites in Europe and in East Asia. The critical viewpoint of the European elites was in no sense uniform, differing not only according to either Platonic and Aristotelian positions, but also exhibiting – especially in the points of contact with the Arabic-Muslim tradition, an area which also deserves research attention within the framework of a “history of encounter” – a great many nuances and differentiated positions. For instance, were *miracula contra* or *praeter naturam*? Not *contra*, according to Augustine. Did that then mean that the Christian miracle, as conceived of by Augustine, represented an overhaul of ancient notions of magic? A bitter debate was led by figures, such as Anselm of Canterbury, Abaelard, Thierry of Chartres, Adelard of Bath, William of St-

Thierry and continued by others. Thomas Aquinas believed that a miracle was, in fact, *supra naturam* and excluded the idea of a Godly intervention *contra naturam*, thus defining the Christian miracle in a relatively narrow sense. Yet, to what degree did the recorders of late medieval *miracula* adhere to the theories of their scholastic predecessors (Boureau 1995)? A fruitful comparison can be made here between a rich tradition and statements made by Chinese elites. Here, it is interesting that authors of theoretical propositions or advocates of the idea of a Christian miracle, who criticise mantic practices, indicate indirectly just how widespread forms of divination also were in the Latin West (e.g. Caesar of Heisterbach). The works of the physician Hans Hartlieb describe the seven “forbidden” arts (in Eisermann/Graf, 1989) (1455/56): nigromancy, geomancy, hydromancy, aeromancy, pyromancy, chiromancy, spatulamancy. The occidental mantic tradition itself, which belonged to the *artes magicae*, was primarily based on ancient and Arabic traditions and enjoyed an understandable revival after the 13th century. As regards astrology, the 13th century Scholastics clearly distinguished between “natural” astrology, which had a bearing on the seasons, the weather and other natural events through the influence of the stars, and a “superstitious” astrology (Robert Grosseteste), (Speer 2007) that was based on human actions. Individual scholars, such as Albertus Magnus or Roger Bacon actually valued the human-related variety of astrology. It will also be important here to clarify which justifications and non-justifications were determined by such divided opinions amongst Church representatives.

Fortune-telling was, however, considered by the Church to be *superstitio* and, as such, was banned, although the practice remained widespread (Harmening 1979, Bonney 1971, Bologne 1993/1995 and others); this is still the case today. A comparative analysis will be undertaken of the forms and reasons for these rejections of methods of prophecy, and of the Church bans.

Once having crossed over the boundaries between “elite” practices and “popular” beliefs, it will be important to take a close look at the divination specialists, their training, educational background, and the networks through which they tried to assure their success, including their activities relating to the spread and the publication of their art. Our knowledge about these people is still too limited to draw conclusions to the same extent that we can based on what is known about the practitioners of mantic arts in Ancient Greece.

2.2.5 Counsel to Rulers

Sovereign and mantic power have been inseparable in the Chinese tradition since the Shang era (i.e. since the oldest recorded examples of Chinese writing, the so-called oracle bones dating from the 13th century BC). From the archaic forms of prophecy on wars, hunts, the health of the ruling family (Rédouane Djamouri 1999) to the counsel of rulers as a sort of pre-modern political advising from the Han era to the Tang dynasty (Loewe, Kalinowski 1991) through to a “rationalised” calendric system in the mid to late Empire, divinatory methods remained a substantive component of the concept of political order. Corresponding entries can be found (under a variety of headings and titles) in all the official histories of the various dynasties. Yuan Shushan goes beyond these sources in the collection of accounts contained in his biographies of diviners (Lidai buren zhuan). Divinatory techniques as an integral element of political prognostication, military tactics and counsel to princes even featured in a prominent work of narrative fiction in the late Empire, namely in the History of the Three Kingdoms (a description of the wisdom and achievements of Zhuge Liang). In this, divination plays an important role within the context of providing counsel to rulers in achieving paragon status and authority, and, at the same time, political and military success (Fröhlich 2006). As regards the meritocratic model of the good ruler, which remained dominant in China into the 20th century, the advising of rulers and the belief in the ability to predict political history play a central role. A key aim of research in this regard would be to look at whether the “classical” political concepts in Confucianism, and also from other trends, in which good intentions and/ or just actions would necessarily bring about good results, are based upon, as it were, a divinatory paradigm. An investigation is still awaited into the question of whether over the course of history there was a type of rationalisation in the Weberian sense (in spite of his generalising judgement against the “magic garden”) in the advising of rulers in China. A further remaining question relating to the final centuries of the Chinese Empire would be that of the effect that the increasing “publicity” of astronomical data as made available by Western specialists had on calendric practice (and its theoretical self-concept), which had, essentially, been considered an occult practice (Marianne Bastide).

Even today, fortune-tellers and clairvoyants are friends to rulers. It is interesting to look for specific connections between totalitarianism and a self-proclaimed political mantic. This would also appear to be important in the Chinese context, because since Popper at the latest, there

has been discussion about the connection between totalitarianism and such thinking that is aimed at absolute truth and absolute knowledge (into which category divination and mantic also fall to some extent).

Along with sacred places, the stars also played a significant role against the backdrop of an ancient Arabic tradition. Astrology, widely established in the Latin West since the time of Macrobius (Carmody 1956), became an important part of counsel to rulers even beyond the sphere of influence of Alfonso X ("the Wise") of Castile, although naturally the translation of numerous works from Arabic in Toledo and elsewhere played an important role (d'Alverny 1982; Tolan 1996 and 2000; Burnett 1996 and 2004; Benito Ruano 2000; Maser 2006; see 2.2.2).

Frederick II and his learned advisor, Michael Scot (Morpurgo 1984; Burnett 1994) ensured that Sicily, in addition to "al-Andalus" and the "Toledo School", became an important hub for the reception and dissemination of Arabic and Greek knowledge. It was as a commissioned work that Scot came to write his "Liber introductorius" (ca. 1230/35), an encyclopaedic compendium of Medieval astrology, which was not only an integral part of courtly representation at Palermo, but was also, above all, a central guiding force in the practice of rulership, for instance, in deciding on important dates (the marriage of Frederick, the foundation of the city Victoria) (Caroti 1994, Manselli 1979, Rapisarda 2000, and in print).

2.2.6 Fate and Prognostication in Modernity

The Chinese Enlightenment, which began towards the end of the 19th century, turns against the hierarchical ideas of Confucianism, strives (without success in the long run) to establish an egalitarian society in the fields of language and education, and positions "science" as the most significant substitute for lost unity in the world. Especially following the foundation of the Republic in 1912 and the dissolution of the "sacral" backdrop of dynastic institutions (with ideas such as, the "Decree/Mandate of Heaven", "Son of Heaven", "state cult"), the belief in the omnipotence of science, even in the field of politics came to the fore (Fröhlich 2000). The appeal of Marxism at that time was also tied to the historio-philosophical claim of historical materialism to offer an interpretation for the future course of history (Fröhlich 2006) – this was in fact a "political" task, which in previous centuries had been accomplished through divinatory methods and mantic practices. These endeavours, however, only touch on the very edges of the core of traditional concepts of fate. What happens then when traditional forms of coping cease to exist, such as, for example the Confucian concept of "self-cultivation" or even mantic practices which had become a self-evident part of the life-world? If we look at the introductions to "Register of Fates" (mingpu) by Yuan Shushan, the most important representative of mantic theory and techniques from the time of the Republic (cf. Smith; Smith's work of 1991 is based to a large extent on Yuan's biographies of famous diviners, Zhongguo lidai buren zhuan), it is easy to identify attempts to distinguish the study of fate as an independent field of "knowledge", separate from "science" as determined by the West (see also Liu Jianrong 2007). In this

context, we will first look at “enlightening” popular science publications from the beginning of the 20th century (Gezhi huibian, Dianshizhai huabao) which contain numerous readers’ letters, highly significant for our study, which provide repeated testimony to the continued durability of traditional concepts of fate even in the face of “new”, “Western” sciences (Liu Yishan, PhD diss., forthcoming).

One of the key aims of Chinese Communism – particularly during the so-called “Cultural Revolution” – was to rid the country of mantic practices as part of the elimination of the “Four Olds”, and yet these practices continued to exist in secret (Bruun 2003). The abundance of biographical material on the “Cultural Revolution” which has since become available provides a veritable “mine” of information for the study of forms of coping with individual and collective fates in Chinese Modernity (Lupke in Lupke, 2005; Wang Liying, forthcoming).

For historians of the People’s Republic of China, traditional mantic practices have meanwhile become a highly sought-after area for research (see, for example, the remarkably popular “Chinese culture of dreams” Liu Wenying; Lu Ying 2005), and, yet, the nearer this research comes to the present, the more prevalent is the verdict of “superstition”, a term also found in the titles of monographs and articles. Our question now concerns the degree to which the Chinese tradition of dealing with fate stretching over more than three thousand years also affects the present. This will require, amongst others, field studies, some of which have already been carried out (for example, John Lagerwey on aspects of folk religion). An essential addition, however, would be a study of insurance companies in China, which are currently in high demand. A large amount of polemical literature is also available (cf. Bibliography, section: “Entlarvung” = “unmasking” or “debunking” of swindlers). On the subject of life-worlds, the Erlangen Department of Japanese Studies (Peter Ackermann) will provide valuable material for comparative analysis (cf. also Leinss and Fukasawa). Furthermore, material from Taiwan and Hong Kong relating to this topic is easily accessible since no Communist inspired enlightenment took place there and the practices, the works on and the number of fortune-tellers is also legion. Contemporary sources from the People’s Republic of China warning against mantic practices will also be consulted, as these are indicative of their ubiquitous presence (Guo Chunmei 2001); special attention must be given here to the publication Kexue yu wushenlun (“Science and Atheism”), almost every edition of which claims to “expose” various present-day “superstitions” connected either with mantic beliefs or with beliefs generally associated with fate (Li Zonghua 2005; Tang Libiao 2006; Wu Kui 2006; Wang Chunhua 2007). The critical review of magic and mantic – from witch-hunts (Behringer 2004, Lorenz 1995, 2004) to numerous theoretical debates and legal reports – accompanies the history of the Early Modern period. It is also instructive that despite numerous attempts to eliminate them, certain practices in Christian churches of a deprecatory and also of a divinatory nature continue and sometimes indeed increase even into the 20th century.

Our critical research will thus encompass both Chinese academia and the practitioners of divination and will involve a possible interplay between these two groups on the basis of the restoration of “Chinese culture”. We plan to do some fieldwork among present-day Chinese fortune-tellers.

In addition (and to complement this study on prediction and modernity), one might consider shedding some light on the spread of “East Asian Wisdom” in contemporary Western societies. Collaboration with experts in modern religious studies is required for the purposes of this undertaking.

2.2.7 Historical Thought

The Western academic engagement with the past since the 19th century has led to the development of various interpretative strands, which seek to overhaul previous teleological or cyclical patterns. Although the theory of the historical present has essentially rendered these older ideas obsolete, they nevertheless continue to exist in certain theoretical constructs. Against the background of the reception of Western historical philosophy in Japan (Kleinschmidt 1997 and 1999) the question arises as to which trends have primarily found reception in the Chinese world since the 20th century (Lackner 2001 and 2003). Only then is it possible to recast these and Marxist influences as effective forces of modern Confucianism and describe them in terms of teleological or cyclical models. The most productive direction within political philosophy in China in the 20th century along with Marxism was so-called Modern Confucianism. Representatives of Modern Confucianism began, from the mid-20th century, a critical examination of Marxism and thereby developed concepts of social modernisation and modernity, which were, for their part, underpinned by historical philosophical support. What is remarkable about this is the fact that China’s modernisation or modernity is understood quintessentially as a process of catching up, which can be achieved in a specific manner by the central controlling element, the “state”. In this view, modernity appears not, as it does in mainstream Western theories, as a necessary consequence of structural and / or motivational factors to which direct access is ultimately withdrawn from collective actors and, in that respect, experienced as unavailable and contingent. This Confucianist notion of the political viability of modernity achieved through the actions of a “moral” state breaks with previous cyclical views of history, and, indeed, creates a new concept of a human polity, which is aware of itself as the subject of its own history (Fröhlich 2003 and 2007). This form of overcoming or suppressing of historical contingency reveals a characteristic of historical thought, which in the Chinese context can be understood particularly against the background of older divinatory ideas. It might then be assumed that this manifestation of historical thought and theory of modernity extends far beyond the boundaries of modern Confucianism in contemporary East Asian philosophy.

3 International Composition, Organization, Timetable

If we accept as true the hypothesis that the place of fate in the individual and collective blueprints, concepts, and plans of life of East Asia has a particular weighting in modernity, then the inclusion of researchers from the region is essential, not only for reasons of research politics, but also in terms of research theory (Lackner/Werner: “Research with, rather than research on”). Especially in such a sensitive area, brimming with potentially explosive intercultural taboos, we can expect joint research undertakings to produce results that go well beyond purely historical materialist insights.

This approach equally defines the profile of the Research Colloquium at the University: comprising three positions (C4, C3 and a junior “tenure track” professorship as of 2009), the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg Department of Chinese Studies is part of two Research Training Groups and has attracted a substantial amount of third-party funding, thus securing for itself a prominent position at the School of Humanities. Erlangen University also has three positions dedicated to research on the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period (C4, C3 for Medieval History and Historical Aids, C4 for the Early Modern period). Research activities, outstanding by any measure, include a remarkable number of third-party funding projects and participation in both a Research Training Group and a German Research Foundation (DFG) Priority Programme on questions of cultural transfer and processes of integration. The main focus here is on points of contact between Christianity and Islam, as well as processes of sacralization. The interaction of these subject areas under the auspices of an innovative research project, investigating, on the one hand, the historical foundations of prognostication, and the peculiarities of the East Asian approach to fate on the other, is likely to have a significant international and national impact. Our intention is to include our doctoral students in weekly meetings of the research team.

The strongly international composition of the Research Consortium clearly distinguishes our undertaking from that of a classical collaborative research project; this naturally also creates logistical problems in managing the research agenda. On this point, however, we can rely on experience gained from a four-year “International Quality Network“ project funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in Erlangen, which welcomed more than 25 researchers from China, Japan and Europe for both short and long research stays. Furthermore, Michael Lackner has been involved intensively with the question of ‘Area Studies’ and the connection to the humanities and social sciences. Klaus Herbers has been coordinating extensive international research projects for several years now, focusing particularly on the issue of sacrality and an investigation of the intersection of Christian and Muslim traditions in medieval Europe, especially on the Iberian Peninsula and in Italy. Thomas Fröhlich is spokesman for the Asia-Pacific section of the Central Institute for Regional Research at the

University; the other co-applicants for this research project are also members of different sections within this Institute. Thomas Fröhlich leads several research projects focusing on Chinese Modernity. We have also taken great care to achieve a balance between the different age groups in our research team.

The research to be undertaken by the Research Consortium will need to take place over several phases, both for systematic reasons and as a result of a key desideratum, that is, to integrate as many comparative aspects as possible. The following phases are planned:

Phase 1 will involve an examination of the areas relating to the terminological and, where possible, theoretical apparatus that underlies the relationship between fate and mantic (2.2.1). An integral part of this investigation will be the question of the sacrality of divination, its place within religious practices, influences on and places suited to divinatory practices (2.2.2). In Phase 1, researchers versed in early Chinese intellectual and conceptual history will work together with representatives from occidental philosophy, as well as from intellectual history of the Arab world on the foundations of fate and prognostication. A collaboration with Professor Philipp Clart, a newly appointed Professor of Chinese Studies at the University of Leipzig is planned at this stage.

Phase 2 will focus primarily on “divination and rationality“ (2.2.3), the views of the elites on prognostication (2.2.4), as well as the closely related problem of political counsel (2.2.5). We hope that a parallel approach to these three areas will produce insights into the connections between the individual, society and the state in the pre-modern period under the auspices of our general research question and an investigation into the counsel of rulers in the courts of Alfonso X (the “Wise”) and Frederick II.

Phase 3 will be directed towards those aspects central to our statements on a possible “other“ form of modernity: the continued influence or the modification of views on fate and prognostication into the present, as well as conceptions of “history” in the 20th century. Here we will look at issues, such as the transition into the modern age and the problematic sedimentation of the Western Enlightenment, as well as biographical material relating to the Cultural Revolution to determine what evidence can be gleaned (2.2.6, 2.2.7).