

On the Origin of “Shendu”

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This article is a reinterpretation of the concept of “shendu” in pre-Qin philosophical texts, using excavated texts from Early China discovered in the second half of the twentieth century. It argues that the concept of “shendu” in the School of Zi Si (i.e. Kong Ji, 483–402 BCE) and Mencius (i.e. Meng Ke, 372–289 BCE) of the Warring States period should not be interpreted moralistically, as the Eastern Han scholar Zheng Xuan did, meaning “be cautious about one’s behavior while alone,” with an emphasis on external surveillance. Instead, it was a method of inner self-cultivation with close link to the meditative practices and other occult arts of Early China. Zheng Xuan and others were misled by Xunzi (i.e. Xun Kuang, ca. 313–ca. 238 BCE), who in order to ridicule Zi Si, Mencius, and their followers painted a negative picture of them amid a heated philosophical debate.

The present article also discusses the methodology of textual interpretation, pointing out that, on the level of individual words or characters, we should not rely too much on the so-called “original meaning” of the characters, but instead we should look for the specific meanings of the words among their synchronic usages. On the level of textual interpretation, we should critically read the text against of its historical, philosophical, and intellectual contexts.

Keywords: the concept of “shendu,” meditative self-cultivation, occult arts, textual interpretation, textual criticism

Between Numbers and Images: the Many Meanings of Trigram *Li* 離 in the Early *Yijing*

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This paper examines the images of trigram *Li* 離 in the *Yijing* 易經, with a focus on images in the *Shuogua* 說卦 commentary. The *Shuogua* presents images either found in or to be extrapolated from the base text within a structured and highly interpretive system that forms “image programs” for each of the eight trigrams. I argue the *Shuogua*’s image programs have a defined architecture, and its images are not random lists of words collected without an agenda and devoid of relationships and mutual interaction with others. My main thesis is a high percentage of images in the *Changes* developed through a simple and direct pictographic method, like the one used in a recently discovered Warring States period divination guidebook called **Shifa* 筮法 (Method of milfoil divination), that was done by matching the graphic shapes of individual numbers and the overall shapes of numbers in three-line combination to shapes of real objects and logographs. If a diviner could see so many pictographic images in single numbers and sequences of numbers in combination, like what we now see in operation in the *Shifa*, then we ought to assume that a deeper repository of subjective and innovative images could be observed in number combinations at the multiline, trigram, and hexagram levels. Stated directly, trigram and hexagram diagrams were not pictorially meaningless; numbers produced images, and images produced the words and judgments that formed early layers of text. Professional diviners had an expert knowledge of the tradition and Warring States use of the *Changes* continued to develop and explain image programs for the eight trigrams along these guidelines.

Keywords: Warring States divination, expert knowledge, *Shifa*, *Yijing*, Trigram *Li*

1. Introduction

New discoveries related to the practice of divination by numerical manipulation have fundamentally altered our view on the composition of divination manuals generally referred to as *Changes* (*Yi* 易).¹ Sortilege and casting divination by plant stalks, stones, corn kernels and related materials

- 1 Throughout the paper I use the following terms: *Changes* 易 refers to the *Three Changes* 三易 divination manuals: The *Zhou Yi* 周易, *Guicang Yi* 歸藏易, and *Lianshan Yi* 連山易, and to sortilege divination manuals with hexagram or trigram results. The term *Zhou Yi* refers solely to the 64 hexagram core text of the *Yijing* without any canonical commentary, and the term *Yijing* refers to the *Zhou Yi* plus its attached canonical commentary called the *Ten Wings*. When speaking about the *Zhou Yi* I use the term “hexagram picture” (*gua hua* 卦畫) in reference to the six-line diagrams that precede each of the 64 hexagram names. I refer to prognostications after the hexagram name as “hexagram statement” (*gua ci* 卦辭), and refer to prognostications found in the six individual lines as “line statement” (*yao ci* 爻辭). I refer to line statements by their placement in the hexagram picture, from bottom to top, that is, Initial Line, Line 2, Line 3, Line 4, Line 5, and Top Line, and do not use number (9 and 6) plus line number terms like Nine in the First, Six in the Second, etc. The transcription of numerical trigrams and hexagrams starts with the initial bottom line and moves upwards. Numerical trigrams and hexagrams are also referred to as “numerical trigram pictures” and “numerical hexagram pictures”.
- Li Dingzuo’s 李鼎祚 (8th century) *Zhou Yi jijie* 周易集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2016) is the base text. Commentaries outside of the canonical ones attached to the *Zhou Yi* are cited as references. Excavated manuscripts of the *Zhou Yi* and *Guicang* used in this paper are the Shanghai Museum Warring States *Zhou Yi*, the Mawangdui Western Han *Zhou Yi*, and the Wangjiatai Qin *Guicang*; the *Lianshan* is no longer extant: *Shanghai Bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu* 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書, vol. 3, eds. Ma Chengyuan 馬承源 et al. (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2003), 1–70 (magnified photographs), 131–260 (transcription); *Mawangdui Han mu wenwu* 馬王堆漢墓文物, vol. 1, eds. Fu Juyou 傅舉有 and Chen Songchang 陳松長 (Changsha: Hunan chubanshe, 1992), 106–17; Wang Mingqin 王明欽, “Wangjiatai Qin mu zhujian gaishu” 王家台秦墓竹簡概述, in *Xinchu jianbo yanjiu* 新出簡帛研究, eds. Ai Lan 艾蘭 (Sarah Allan) and Xing Wen 邢文 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2004), 26–49. Edward Shaughnessy, *Unearthing the Changes: Recently Discovered Manuscripts of the Yi Jing (I Ching) and Related Texts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014) provides an introduction, transcription, and annotated translation of the Shanghai Museum *Zhou Yi*, Wangjiatai *Guicang*, and Fuyang *Zhou Yi*; an earlier work by Edward Shaughnessy, *I CHING: The Classic of Changes* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996) does the same thing for the Mawangdui *Yijing*. Both of Shaughnessy’s books include a transcription and translation of the received version of the *Zhou Yi* on opposite pages from the manuscript counterparts, as well as bibliographies. For the numerical trigram and hexagram examples used in this paper, see Pu Maozuo 濮茅左, *Chu zhushu Zhou Yi yanjiu: jian shu Xian Qin Liang Han chutu yu chuanshi Yi xue wenxian ziliao* 楚竹書《周易》研究：兼述先秦兩漢出土與傳世易學文獻資料 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2006); Zhang Jinping 張金平, *Kaogu faxian yu Yi xue suyuan yanjiu* 考古發現與易學溯源研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2015).

produced numerical outcomes (1, 4–9) that were recorded as “lines” and stacked in a vertical orientation to form trigrams, tetragrams (rare), and hexagrams, the latter by the Late Shang period (ca. 1300–1046 BCE) seems to have become normative.² Numerical hexagrams first appear in Late Shang and Western Zhou (1045–771 BCE) material culture inscribed on divination materials and commemorative objects both individually, and in inverted pairs and cluster sequences that match traditional orderings of the *Zhou Yi*’s sixty-four hexagram pictures. New evidence discussed in this paper implies that at the end of the Western Zhou numerical hexagrams were already being converted out of actual divination-result sequences into a formulaic system that only utilized two of the possible numeric values, either 1 or 7 and either 6 or 8, because they occurred with the highest frequency.³ In this simplified

- 2 To date, the number 4 only appears in Tsinghua University’s **Shifa* 筮法 (Method of milfoil divination) manuscript (see footnote 12 for full citation) and is not seen in any actual divination records. “4” seems to have become eligible for use in written divination results as late as the Late Spring and Autumn period, and once its graphic form changed from four deictic horizontal strokes 𠄎 to something more abstract—likely a rebus borrowed from *si* 𠄎. The numbers 2 and 3 are never used because they never got taken out of their deictic composition of multiple horizontal lines. The multiple horizontal lines in the graphic forms of the numbers 2 to 4 seem to have been left out of hexagram recording because they caused confusion building hexagram pictures and reading the divination outcome. For the discovery of numerical hexagrams, see Zhang Zhenglang 張政娘, “Shi shi Zhou chu qingtongqi mingwen zhong de Yi gua” 試釋周初青銅器銘文中的易卦, *Kaogu xuebao* 考古學報, no. 4 (1980): 403–15; translated, by Horst W. Huber, Robin D.S. Yates et al., as “An Interpretation of the Divinatory Inscriptions on Early Zhou Bronzes,” *Early China* 6 (1981): 80–96.
- 3 This refers to the *Ding hexagram dagger-axe inscription* discussed in part two of this paper. Li Xueqin 李學勤, *Zhou Yi suyuan* 周易溯源 (Chengdu: Ba Shu shushe, 2011), 231, proposes and reconstructs two hypothetical systems of milfoil divination for the Western Zhou period that he labels “System-1” (“B” system) and “System-7” (“A” system). System B produces the numerical outcomes 1, 5, 6, 8, 9, but not 7, and System A produces the numerical outcomes 5–9 but not 1. The outstanding issue here is the instances where 1 and 7 occur in the same sequence; see too the Western Han example in footnote 17. Jia Lianxiang 賈連翔, “Shi lun chutu shuzigua cailiao de yongshu tixi” 試論出土數字卦材料的用數體系, *Zhou Yi yanjiu* 周易研究, no. 6 (2014): 29–32, tabulates the following distribution for 64 occurrences of “System-1” numerical combinations on 31 Shang-Western Zhou artefacts: 1:49.6%; 6:25.9%; 8:17.6%; 5: 5.2%; 9: 1.7%; 4: 0%. He tabulates the following distribution for 47 occurrences of “System-7” on 30 Shang-Western Zhou artefacts: 7:35.5%; 6:42.2%; 8: 15.1%; 5:6%; 9:1.2%; 4:0%. Jia Lianxiang, “Qinghua jian *Shifa* yu Chu di shuzigua yansuan fangfa de tuiqiu” 清華簡《筮法》與楚地數字卦演算方法的推求, *Shenzhen daxue xuebao* (Renwen shehui kexueban) 深圳大學學報 (人文社會科學版) 31, no. 3 (2014): 58, tabulates the numbers seen in the hexagram pictures from Warring States divination records recovered from Tianxingguan 天星觀, Baoshan 包山 and Xincai Geling 新蔡葛陵, finding the following distribution: 4: 7, 5: 13, 6: 323, 1: 308, 8: 10, 9: 23. Jia notes that “System-1” shows closer affinities to the *Zhou Yi*. What seems relatively clear is that each of these systems used three even numbers (4, 6, 8) and three odd numbers (1/7, 5, 9).

system, which delimits the possible six-line outcomes to just sixty-four, 1 or 7 stands for all odd numbers and 6 or 8 for all even numbers. The conversion of hexagrams into even and odd lines regulated hexagram divination systems, and ultimately led to a codified set of hexagram pictures like those in the *Zhou Yi*, which is the only one of the *Changes* texts to have been transmitted intact. What have been since at least the Warring States period conventionally referred to as yin and yang lines and male and female trigrams began as the numbers 6 or 8 and 1 or 7.⁴ This is how the lines and hexagram pictures of the *Zhou Yi* evolved to look as they do. In this paper I take the following three positions: one, the *Zhou Yi* is a Western Zhou text;⁵ two, hexagram pictures began as numbers;⁶ and three, hexagram pictures contain the images (*xiang* 象) that led to the composition of the *Zhou Yi*'s text.

The process of recording and recopying hexagram pictures during and after actual bouts of divination, that is as it concerns the orientation, layout, and written style of these consciously arrayed numerical outcomes, must have played a key role in numerology and image recognition. This, in turn, led to predictions, injunctions, hexagram labels or names, and various statements based on the divinatory experience. Late Shang and Western Zhou diviner groups and the scribes working collectively with them on behalf of their patron-clientele, who at this time were probably confined to the king, royal family, and elite lineages, must have been the keepers of this professional knowledge and the ones responsible for making the earliest divination manuals. The putative assignment of the creation of sixty-four systematized hexagram

- 4 Li Ling 李零, *Zhongguo fangshu zhengkao* 中國方術正考 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), 184–215, says the lines of the *Zhou Yi* evolved into yin and yang lines from the numbers 8 and 1. Lines comprised of 1/7 and 6 are already referred to as “yin” and “yang” in the *Shifa* (strips 13–15). The same text also refers to the gender of trigrams as female or male. The method of gender detection follows the same rules outlined in the *Shuogua* commentary. Male and female trigrams are ascertained by counting the total number of lines/strokes that comprise the trigram, with yin or even lines counting as two. Of the 228 total lines in the *Shifa* 85% are either 1 or 6. These statistics imply that the numbers 4, 5, 8, 9 served a special function in the divinatory process and that 1/7 and 6 were the two constants.
- 5 Based on the *Ding hexagram dagger-axe inscription* presented later in the paper, the *Zhou Yi* in the 9th–8th centuries BCE consisted, at a minimum, of a regulated set of sixty-four hexagram pictures and text. The text included an overall hexagram judgment and individual line statements.
- 6 Jao Tsung-i 饒宗頤, “Yindai Yi gua ji you guan zhanbu zhu wenti” 殷代易卦及有關占卜諸問題, in *Jao Tsung-i ershi shiji xueshu wenji* 饒宗頤二十世紀學術文集 (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2009), 4: 10–25.

pictures to King Wen of Zhou, and the making of text to go along with them to his son Dan, the Duke of Zhou, simply means that a divination manual like the *Zhou Yi* was traditionally understood to have been created between the end of the Shang and beginning of the Western Zhou. The archaeological record is fragmented and cannot confirm this, but it does validate that the environment and constituent elements were there to do so. What is certain however is that Late Shang and Early Zhou culture was using sortilege divination in conjunction with oracle bone divination. Those with access would have had experience reading both oracle bone cracks and numerical hexagram pictures. As Shang diviners used notebooks for reference with oracle bone divination records, we have to assume that the same was true for coexisting hexagram divination records as well.⁷

Given that hexagram pictures had a numerical origin, the highest frequency combinations 1–6, 1–8, 7–8, and 7–6 would have been catalysts for image recognition at the line, trigram, and hexagram levels. Let us take the first two combinations as an example. The hexagram pictures ䷱ *Ding* 鼎 (Cauldron) and ䷔ *Yi* 頤 (Jaws) are commonly referred to in *Yijing* scholarship as examples of “pictographic images”, which means that the shape of a hexagram picture as a whole resembled the image of an object that, in turn, inspired the creation of its text.⁸ The process of observing a “cauldron” and “jaws” in a hexagram picture could seemingly only have come out of these combinations.⁹ The same holds true for trigram images like *Kan* 坎 as water, *Gen* 艮 as mountain, gate, and the hand, *Xun* 巽 as objects with legs and a horizontal top such as a table

- 7 David N. Keightley, “The Diviners’ Notebooks: Shang Oracle-Bone Inscriptions as Secondary Sources,” in *Actes du colloque international commémorant le centenaire de la découverte des inscriptions sur os et carapaces*, eds. Shun-chiu Yau and Chrystelle Marchal (Paris: Éditions langages croisés, 2001), 11–25.
- 8 For the term “pictographic images” (*xiangxing zhi xiang* 象形之象), see Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610–1695), *Yixue xiangshu lun* 易學象數論 (Beijing: Jiuzhou chubanshe, 2007), 129. Most *Yijing* handbooks make reference to these two hexagrams as paradigms of this category; see for instance, Liu Dajun 劉大鈞, *Zhou Yi gailun* 周易概論, rev. and ext. ed. (Chengdu: Ba Shu shushe, 2016), 34. When talking about image recognition from a hexagram picture, I use the terms “whole-bodied” or “single-bodied” and “two-bodied” (i.e. divided into trigrams); for the champion of this terminology, see Zhu Zhen 朱震 (1072–1138), *Hanshang Yizhuan* 漢上易傳 (Beijing: Jiuzhou chubanshe, 2012).
- 9 *Yi* 頤 (頤) is composed of a “human head” (頁) and “jaws” with teeth. The word is first seen in Western Zhou script without the 頁 classifier. The graph illustrated here comes from the Shanghai Museum *Zhou Yi*. The hexagram’s text originated in a resemblance between the hexagram picture and a visual or pictorial image of “jaws”.

and the area of a person's thighs to midsection, and *Dui* 兌 as objects with an open or separated top such as an open mouth, the horns of a ram (*yang* 羊), and the number 8 (*ba* 八).¹⁰ This of course does not mean images were not observed in other numerical combinations at the trigram and individual number line levels, for now we know they most certainly were.¹¹

A recently discovered Warring States guidebook for sortilege divination called **Shifa* 筮法 (Method of milfoil divination) contains precisely this kind of information. The text, written in the form of tables and illustrations on sixty-three numbered bamboo strips, contains information on how to interpret upper and lower trigrams within a numerical hexagram. Based on specific divination rubrics trigrams are explained individually and by how they interact within a cluster of four (i.e. two hexagrams). In one section of the guidebook (section 29/30; strips 52–59) called “Line Images” (*yao xiang* 爻象) individual numbers have their own associated images like those listed in the canonical *Shuogua* 說卦 commentary.¹² Below are the images listed under the numbers four (strips 58–59) and eight (strips 52–53):

四之象為地為員為鼓為耳為環為踵為雪為露為霰

Four's images is earth, is circle, is drum, is ear, is ring, is heel, is snow, is dew, is hail.

10 *Kan* (Pit) is associated with water because its trigram picture, 三, resembles the archaic graph for “water” (see Fig 1). It is unlikely that a numerical combination other than 8-1-8 would have inspired the same connection; support for this interpretation now comes from the *Shifa* which says 8 has the line image of “water”. *Xun* is associated with legged-objects such as tables and people because its whole-bodied trigram picture resembles legs and a tabletop; for this interpretation, see Huang Zongxi, *Yixue xiangshu lun*, 155. The association between mountain and *Gen* almost certainly derives from two 6s in Lines 1 and 2 of its trigram picture (6-6-1), and four 6s in Lines 1–2 and 4–5 of its hexagram picture (6-6-1-6-6-1). Scholars have noted that the *Changes* manual *Lianshan* (Connected mountains) got its name because its first hexagram picture was *Gen*. The name *Lianshan* originated from the image of connected mountains observed in the hexagram picture *Gen*.

11 A prime example is the association between *Kun*, 6-6-6 三三三, and the graph *chuan* 川 (川) “river”, which is the hexagram's name in the Mawangdui version. This hexagram name appears to have been born out of the resemblance between the shape of the numerical combination and the logograph.

12 Qinghua daxue [i.e. Tsinghua University] Chutu wenxian yanjiu yu baohu zhongxin, ed. (Li Xueqin as editor-in-chief), *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhu jian (si)* 清華大學藏戰國竹簡 (肆) (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2013): *Shifa* is found on pages 2–9 (full-size photographs), 21–52 (magnified photographs), 75–123 (transcription). Line images are only listed for 4, 5, 8, 9, which as I mentioned above were of low frequency and mostly unwanted outcomes.

凡肴 (爻) 象八為風為水為言為非 (飛) 鳥為 脹為魚為罐筒才上為 醪下為汰

In all cases of line images: eight is wind, is water, is speech, is flying bird, is swelling, is fish, is container; above it is wine's dregs, below it is rinse.

The number four in the *Shifa*'s numerical hexagram combinations is written as 四, and a comparison with Warring States period allographs like 四, 四, and 四 that have marks on the inside and lines traversing its outline makes it evident that all of its so-called “images” listed above obtained their associations through a simple connection to the number's *graphic shape*. All of four's visualized images are circular and are matched because their shape shows a resemblance to four's written form. Images range in size and aside from the abstract “circle” are all tangible objects—two are related to the body, three are related to the sky, one is related to land, one is an instrument, and one is jewelry. The method of image recognition here is that a diviner in encountering 四 “observed images” of objects that reminded him of this shape. This atypical writing of “four” with an empty inside and nothing piercing its outline appears to have been utilized specifically for clearer image recognition—we might call it its “divinatory form”; and there are others.¹³

The line images for number eight, on the other hand, derive largely through pictorial resemblances made between the number's *graphic form* 八 (*ba* 八) and logographs. Fig. 1 demonstrates how a certain part of each logograph shows a resemblance to the shape of the number's graphic form.

13 The writing of 4 with an empty middle does occur on some Warring States seal inscriptions from the state of Yan 燕. As early as the Shang dynasty, the graphic form of the numbers 5 (五) and 6 (六) were manipulated for use in numerical trigram and hexagram recording by abbreviating strokes so as to avoid confusion with the numbers 8 (八) and 1 (一). In the *Shifa* and outside of the numerical hexagram examples 4 is written in its more regular form 四. The same holds true for 9, which in numerical trigram combinations is written in its “divinatory form” 九, but elsewhere in the manuscript in its more regular form 九. *Jiu* 九 (9) is a pictograph of the right arm with a bend at the elbow and is the archaic form of *zhou* 肘 “elbow”. The divinatory form, which straightens out the arm and does not include the bend in the elbow, shows resemblance to 1. Like the images of 4, some of 9's line images in the *Shifa* (strips 56–57), for instance “snake” (*she* 蛇 [蛇]), “bow” (*gong* 弓 [弓]), and “bend” (*qu* 曲 [曲]) clearly originate from an iconographic play on objects with a bend or natural curve. The *Xici* in the Mawangdui *Yijing* makes the same shape association between 9 and “snake”.







eight	wind	water	flying ¹⁴	fish	container ¹⁵
					

Fig 1: Shape resemblance between 8 and its “images” in the *Shifa*

The ones that do not draw their associations in this way, swelling, speech, wine dregs, and rinse, clearly play on things that are open at the top and fanning or swelling out at the bottom. “Speech” is connected here through trigram *Dui*. The prime image of *Dui* listed in the *Shuogua* is the mouth and what comes out it, namely speaking of various kinds. The name of the trigram itself appears to have originated through a pictorial resemblance between its picture (as 1-1-8) and the shape of the graph to write *dui* 兌 (兌), which is the ancestral form of *shui/shuo* 說 “to talk” (see Fig 3).¹⁶

The *Shifa*’s method of obtaining images at the line level by matching the graphic shapes of numbers to shapes of real objects and logographs is in fact the simplest and most direct approach to image recognition. Being that the structure and language of the text here is so similar to the lists of trigrams and their images in the *Shuogua* commentary, we now have firm reason to believe that many more images than just the occasional or coincidental ones derived this same way. What this means of course is that a large number of the *Zhou Yi*’s images were *observed from within* trigram and hexagram pictures. If a diviner could see so many pictographic images in the graphic form of a single number, we can now assume that a deeper repository of subjective and innovative images could be seen in multiple number combinations (i.e. trigrams and hexagrams), especially in those high frequency combinations mentioned earlier.

The numerical combinations or “alloforms” of trigram *Li* in the *Shifa* are

- 14 The graph *fei* 非 is to be read as a phonetic loan for *fei* 飛. The Mawangdui *Yijing* writes *fei* 飛 as *fei* 翡.
- 15 The graph *tong* 洞 is to be read as a phonetic loan for *tong* 筩 (筒) “container”.
- 16 *Ba* “eight” occurs once in the *Zhou Yi*, in the hexagram statement of 三 *Lin* 臨, “*Zhi yu bayue xiong* 至於八月兇” (Arriving to the eighth month, ominous). The lower trigram of *Lin*’s hexagram picture is *Dui*; see Yu Xingwu 于省吾, *Shuang jian chi Yijing xin zheng* 雙劍謄易經新證 (Peiping: Daye yinshuaju, 1937), 1.11b–13b.

1-6-1, 9-8-1, and 1-8-9.¹⁷ 1-8-1, which is not recorded in this text, is ancestral to the yin and yang trigram picture in the received version of the *Zhou Yi*. We know this mainly because of the existence and evolution of numerical hexagrams from the Late Shang onwards, and because hexagram pictures in the unearthed Shanghai Museum (Warring States) and Mawangdui (Western Han) versions look just like 1 and 8.¹⁸ The Shanghai Museum bamboo text version in particular confirms the existence of a stable core text in circulation circa 300 BCE. This paper applies the *Shifa*’s model of image recognition at the line level to reevaluate trigram *Li*’s images listed in the canonical commentaries. I analyze the trigram’s composition by reconsidering how its lines work in combination, and focus on the role its prominent second line with an empty space in the middle (*zhong xu* 中虛) plays in image recognition. In this regard how the *Shifa* makes image connections with the number eight is exceptionally useful. This approach puts us in a better position to critique and explain how trigram *Li* acquired the images it has in the *Zhou Yi*, and to search for “lost images” (*yi xiang* 逸象) that are either not included or misclassified in the commentaries. Hexagrams structurally related to trigram *Li* such as *Zhongfu* 中孚 (Capture in the middle), *Ding* 鼎, *Kui* 睽 (Crossed eyes) are singled out for a more detailed analysis.

The *Shuogua* (Set 1) and *Xici* (Set 2) commentaries list the following images as being associated with trigram *Li*:

Set 1

Li is fire, is the sun, is lightning, is the middle daughter, is body armor and helmet, is dagger-axe and weapon, it in the person, is the belly, is *Qian*

- 17 These combinations aside, the section (26/30; strips 43–51) of the *Shifa* called “Hexes” (*sui* 祟) alludes to a 5-4-5 trigram *Li* sequence that is judged unlucky, and mentions a sequence comprised of one 4 and one 5, also judged unlucky. These combinations are not seen in diagram form anywhere in the manuscript but their reference means both were actual results. See Li Xueqin, *Zhou Yi suyuan*, 242–49, for a discussion of a numerical hexagram in the sequence 9-8-1-7-8-1(9?) inscribed on a Western Han pottery jar discovered in a tomb in NW Sichuan province that converts to hexagram *Li*.
- 18 I use the term “protoform” to denote the evolution of the *Zhou Yi* lines and trigrams from numbers to yin-yang lines, and am not suggesting that we read lines in either the Shanghai manuscripts or received versions in this way; see Li Ling, “Zaoqi bu shi de xin faxian” 早期卜筮的新發現, in *Zhongguo fangshu zhengkao*, 204; and “Tiaochu Zhou Yi kan Zhou Yi” 跳出周易看周易, in *Zhongguo fangshu xukao* 中國方術續考 (Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 2000), 319.

trigram, is soft-shell turtle, is crab, is snail, is clam, is turtle, it in wood, is a hole in decayed wood.

離為火為日為電為中女為甲冑為戈兵其於人也為大腹為乾卦為鰲為蟹為羸為蚌為龜其於木也為科上槁

As for *Li*, it is brightness (light), all things see each other; the trigram for direction south. [...] *Li* means fastened [...] *Li* is pheasant [...] *Li* is the eye(s)

離也者明也萬物皆相見南方之卦也 離麗也 離為雉 離為目

Set 2

Sun, fire, net

Based on these sets and level of prominence in the core text, I classify all images either as prime images, images, and sub-images, and regroup them. What I term sub-images are mainly functions, characteristics, outputs, or organic derivatives of base images.

1. Prime image: Net (name of both the trigram and hexagram)

Sub-images: pheasant, fastened

2. Prime images: Sun, fire

Sub-images: light, brightness, lightning, resplendent, direction south

3. Prime image (from system—parts of the human figure): Eye(s), belly with navel

4. Image (from system—Father, Mother, and Six children): Second daughter

5. Image: Hard shell with soft inside and opening in the middle

Sub-image 1: Armor (helmet, body)

Sub-image 2: Snail, clam, turtle, crab

6. Image: Weapons (hard edges; forged from fire)

7. Image: Decayed wood with hole(s)

The images from these two sets form a basic image guide for trigram *Li*. However, why are some of the images like armor and shellfish listed here are not seen in the *Zhou Yi*? The same situation occurs with other trigram images as well. I suggest the two most reasonable explanations are: one, images not found in the received version of the *Zhou Yi* belong to other *Changes* manuals like the *Guicang* or *Lianshan*; two, images not found in the received version



of the *Zhou Yi* imply that they were there in alternate versions of the text. The logic of the first explanation implies the *Shuogua* is actually a comprehensive guidebook meant for consultation with other *Changes* manuals as well.¹⁹

Let's assume the *Shuogua* was circulating during the Warring States period. Based on what we know about how the *Shifa* makes image connections with individual numbers, what approach would we take to interpret images in the *Shuogua*? Regardless of whether the trigram was understood at this time to be a yin-yang picture or combination of numbers, the *Shifa*'s method of image associations to real objects and logographs all originate in shape resemblance. A diviner encounters the number 4 in a numerical outcome and observes "dewdrop" because it has a similar shape; he encounters the number 8 and observes "wind" either because the shape of the number leads to a visualization of the wind, or more likely because the graph used to write this word has a similar shape in it. The *Shifa* confirms this was a predominant Warring States method of image recognition and image interpretation.

What we find is that the majority of *Li*'s image base can be explained in this same way, with the difference being that diviners now had multiple lines in combination to work with in addition to single lines, including "half images" (*banxiang* 半象) which are images obtained from two lines of a trigram.²⁰ Stated directly, net, eye, belly with navel, fire, sun, and objects with hard shells and openings in the middle originated through a pictographic resemblance between the trigram picture and either a concrete object or a logograph. Fig 2 illustrates the resemblance between the trigram picture and a couple of *Li*'s prime images as they were written in Warring States script; we can easily go back to the Western Zhou and make similar connections. It is not impressionistic in the least to see elements in these graphs that resemble the numbers 1, 6, and 8; the sequence 1-6-1 in particular has direct affinities with "eye". In the *Shifa* the tail of "fish" (Fig 1) was a visual or pictorial match to the graphic form of number 8. A similar shape occurs in the bottom part of fire. Thinking in numbers, the graphic form of fire as a whole resembles a 6-8-7 sequence. In fact, "fire" has always been written in a way where a \wedge (6) shape is visible.²¹

19 This is also the conclusion of Jin Jingfang 金景芳, *Zhou Yi Xicizhuan xinbian xiangjie* 《周易·繫辭傳》新編詳解 (Shenyang: Liaohai chubanshe, 1998), 184–91.

20 Yu Xingwu, *Shuang jian chi Yijing xin zheng*, 1.2b–4b.

21 "Fire" in oracle bone script is a pictograph written ; the middle resembles "6". The "fire" classifier in words like *han* 𤇗 "drought" and *hei* 𤇗 "black" are abbreviated \wedge in Shang script. *Yan* 炎 "scorch", which doubles fire, is written  in the Mawangdui silk manuscripts; "6" is even more pronounced.



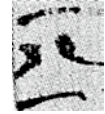




Trigram <i>Li</i> in the received <i>Zhou Yi</i>	Trigram <i>Li</i> in the Shanghai Museum's <i>Zhou Yi</i>	Numerical trigram 1-8-1 in Warring States divination records	Numerical trigram 1-6-1 (<i>Li</i>) in the <i>Shifa</i>	“Sun” 日 in Warring States script	“Eye” 目 in Warring States script	“Fire” 火 in Warring States script
						

Fig 2: Trigram *Li* compared with 1-6-1 and 1-8-1 and associated images in graphic form

“Fastened” appears to be a pun that plays on the fact that the mesh basket of a net is attached to a frame. As I will discuss below the trigram picture has the image of two types of nets, a hand net and a spread net. “Pheasant” is the net’s object.²² All of the sub-images listed under the prime images of the sun and fire are organic derivatives or featured characteristics.

During the Warring States period at the latest diviners were already interpreting *Li*’s trigram picture in a 1-6-1 combination as a pictorial representation of the belly with navel. The *Shifa* divination guidebook contains a diagram of the human figure (section 24/30) where trigrams, in eight different 1-6 combinations, are iconographically matched to parts of the body. *Li* is the belly (Fig 3)²³. The *Shuogua* commentary contains the same list with the only difference being that the eyes are associated there with trigram *Li*. The *Shuogua* actually does list the belly as an image of trigram *Li*, only it does so outside of this system, and the *Shifa* actually does acknowledge the eyes as

22 Another possible way that “pheasant” became an image of *Li* is through the sun. Edward Shaughnessy’s comment to my paper here says: “Once trigram *Li* was associated with the sun, it would have been natural for it also to be associated with the pheasant, which from an early time was associated with the sun (one of the four spiritual animals). The pheasant did not need to be depicted in the character for this association to have been operative in the minds of early diviners.”

23 The association of the belly as a prime image of trigram *Li* is best exemplified by hexagram *Li*’s Line 4 which describes a woman giving birth; see Zeng Xiantong 曾憲通, “*Zhou Yi* ‘*Li*’ gua guaci ji Jiu-si yaoci xinquan” 《周易·離》卦卦辭及九四爻辭新詮, *Guji zhengli yanjiu xuekan* 古籍整理研究學刊, no. 4 (2004): 45–48. Sub-images of belly are big-bellied earthenware (*Li*, Line 3; *Zhongfu*, Line 3) and eating (*Jiaren*, Line 2).

an image of *Li*, but just in a different section of the manuscript.²⁴ This implies both parts of the body were images of trigram *Li* and that the compilers of the two works simply made different editorial choices at this point. But what is far more important for our purposes here is the shape connection between all three—the trigram picture, belly, and eye(s), and the role the *empty space* plays in image recognition when \wedge (6) is sandwiched between — (1). Once the connection to the eye and navel is made, we see how sun fits into *Li*’s image base.²⁵ The circular shapes of the sun, eye’s iris, and belly with navel all resemble the shape that forms inside of \wedge when it is over —. In the *Shifa* diagram *Dui*’s image of the “mouth and nose” is illustrated in this same way. Whether another diviner recognized the sun first, at the same time, or afterwards at a later date is inconsequential. The pattern of image recognition is well defined.

What we have done above is to apply the *Shifa*’s interpretation model of line image recognition to classify trigram *Li*’s prime image base as having a visual-object or pictographic origin at both the single line and trigram levels. We will come to see how the rest of its images, including the name of the trigram and hexagram, Net, fit neatly into this model as well. A key to trigram *Li*’s image associations is the *empty space* in the middle line when sandwiched

24 1-6-1 has the image “to cry” 哭 in the *Shifa*, “Life and Death” 死生 (1/30), strips 1–2, Case 1.

25 The association of the sun as a prime image of trigram *Li* is best exemplified by hexagram ䷄ *Li*’s Line 3: “*Li*’s falling sun” (*rize zhi li* 日昃之離), and various statements in hexagram ䷶ *Feng* 豐 (Abundance) such as its hexagram statement “Suitable when the sun is at the center (i.e. during the middle of the day)” (*yi ri zhong* 宜日中), and Lines 2 and 4 which both say “In the middle of the day seeing the Dipper” (*ri zhong jian dou* 日中見斗). Commentators interpret the appearance of the statement about the falling sun occurring in the Top line of trigram *Li* as the reason the sun is going down. As such, the empty space in the middle line of trigram *Li* is the sun itself; see comment of Xun Shuang 荀爽 (128–190), in Li Dingzuo, *Zhou Yi jijie*, 195. See too Huang Zongxi, *Yixue xiangshu lun*, 142 n39, which notes the role of the sun in the hexagram pair *Mingyi* 明夷 (Brightness injured) and *Jin* 晉 (Advancing). The association of the eye as a prime image of trigram *Li* is found most notably in Line 5 of *Li*: “Letting out tears, stream like” (*chu ti tuo ruo* 出涕沱若), and Line 4 of ䷋ *Xiao chu* 小畜 (9): “Husband and wife cross eyes” (*fu qi fan mu* 夫妻反目); trigram *Li* is embedded (called *hu gua* 互卦) in Lines 3–5 of *Xiao chu*. Moreover, the word *miao* 眇 “nearly blind” (the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 says “one eye smaller than the other”) occurs only twice in the entire book, in the phrase “nearly blind but able to see” (*miao neng shi* 眇能視), and both are related to the appearance of trigram *Li* in the hexagram pictures; see hexagrams ䷵ *Gui mei* (Returning girl; 54) (Line 2) and ䷴ *Lü* (Travelling; 56) (Line 3). See Xu Shen 許慎, *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注, annot. Duan Yucai 段玉裁 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1988), 135. Divination records in the *Zuozhuan* (Duke Xi 僖公 25) associate trigram *Li* with the sun.

in between two solid lines (1 or 7) that form its outline, shell, or frame.²⁶ For the number 8, it is the space in between ㄣ or --, and for 6, it is the space inside 人. This is how the *Shuogua*'s string of shellfish and reptile images works.



Fig 3 Diagram of trigrams and the human body

Let me clarify here why the *Shuogua* lists “turtle” (*gui* 龜; 龜 in Warring States script) as an image of trigram *Li*. This word appears three times in the *Zhou Yi*: in the line statements of ䷮ *Sun* 損 (Decrease; 41), ䷩ *Yi* 益 (Increase; 42), and ䷮ *Yi* 頤. The first two hexagrams are listed one after the other in the received version of the *Zhou Yi* and form a pair, because taking either of the hexagram pictures and turning it upside down produces the other. According to the *Shuogua* the appearance of the “turtle” in these line statements is because of the enlarged trigram *Li* in their hexagram pictures.²⁷ This point is important in that it confirms reading hexagram pictures as enlarged trigrams was a method of Warring States interpretation as well. Based on the *Shifa*'s

26 The lyrics of Zhu Xi's 朱熹 (1130–1200) “Song of How the Eight Trigrams Obtained Their Images” (*Bagua quxiang ge* 八卦取象歌) calls out trigram *Li*'s “empty middle” (*zhong xu* 中虛). See Zhu Xi, *Zhouyi benyi* 周易本義, annot. Su Yong 蘇勇 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1992), 188.

27 Lai Zhide 來知德 (1526–1604), *Zhou Yi jizhu* 周易集注 (Beijing: Minzhu yu jianshe chubanshe, 2015), 228.

method of image recognition, whoever made the connection between “turtle” and trigram *Li* did so through shape resemblance. Either the bottom and top yang lines of the trigram picture were taken to resemble the back (carapace) and belly (plastron) shells and the empty space in the middle line was taken to resemble an opening for the head, or the picture of enlarged trigram *Li* was taken to pictorially resemble a turtle's shell, which is the characteristic feature of the turtle. I return to the idea of characteristic features and image recognition later in the paper when discussing hexagram *Ding*. Han commentary agrees that the turtle is an image of trigram *Li*. It explains that image recognition derived through a visualization of objects with a hard outside and a soft or empty inside.²⁸

2. “Empty space” and ䷮ *Zhongfu* 中孚 “Capture in the Middle” (61)

The *Shuogua*'s association of a “hole in decaying wood” makes the image-connection through the empty space in the middle line as well. Rotating ䷮ ninety degrees (|||) makes it easier to see how the two solid yang lines form the outline of an “abbreviated” tree trunk or log. The “hole”, or idea of decaying, derives from the space in the middle. The canonical *Tuan* commentary uses the empty space in the two middle lines of the hexagram picture *Zhongfu* 中孚 to make a similar association using wood. *Zhongfu* has the hexagram injunction “beneficial to cross a big river” (*li she da chuan* 利涉大川), and the commentary says, “It is riding in a wooden boat's space” (*cheng muzhou xu ye* 乘木舟虛也). A comment by the Six Dynasties scholar Wang Su 王肅 (195–256) collected in the Tang dynasty *Zhou Yi jijie* (Collected explanations on the *Zhou Yi*) further explains it as, “The image of *Zhongfu*, hard on the outside and empty on the inside, contains what seems to be a boat of hollowed wood that can be ridden” (*Zhongfu zhi xiang wai shi nei xu you si ke cheng xumu zhi zhou ye* 中孚之象外實內虛有似可乘虛木之舟也).²⁹ Rather than explaining the hexagram composition of *Zhongfu* as being comprised of two trigrams *Dui* under *Xun*, it is clear that this early commentary

28 Li Dingzuo, *Zhou Yi jijie*, 225. In my opinion, Shang Binghe 尚秉和, *Zhou Yi Shang shi xue* 周易尚氏學 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2016), 193, incorrectly associates “turtle” as image of trigram *Gen*.

29 Li Dingzuo, *Zhou Yi jijie*, 369.

sees a form of trigram *Li* embedded within the picture.³⁰ Reduplicating each of the three lines of trigram *Li* results in an expanded space in the middle, and produces what is called *Li*’s pure “enlarged image” (*da xiang* 大象).³¹

According to Wang Su, what the *Tuan* commentary means by *xu* (虛) is the empty hollow space in the middle of the hexagram picture (in Lines 3 and 4). This empty middle space, this opening, is crucial to identify the image of a boat used to “cross a great river.” Although the *Tuan* is the only canonical commentary attached to the *Zhou Yi* to use the term “space” in reference to an even-numbered line, similar reference in the newly discovered *Shifa* means it was very much part of the exegetical discourse on trigram interpretation during the Warring States period, if not earlier.³²

Zhongfu’s boat image is an example of how Pre-Qin commentary explained the relationship between a single-bodied hexagram picture, a “hidden image”, and the base text that mentions it being beneficial to cross a big river. The *Tuan* commentary implies that the injunction in the base text was born out of this image. Fig 4 provides a couple of early examples of how the boat image in trigram *Li* might have “appeared” to a diviner. The first fragment is a Late Shang dynasty wine vessel pottery mold inscribed with a pair of numerical hexagrams unearthed at Anyang and published in a 1937 collection. The second fragment is an inscription on a late Shang-early Western Zhou pottery jar fragment unearthed at the Feng-Hao site in Shaanxi province in 1997.³³ The numerical hexagram 7-7-8-6-7-5 on the right side of the first fragment equals *Zhongfu* when converted to yin (8) and yang (1) lines; the numerical combination 6-6-1-8-1-5 on the second fragment can be converted to hexagram ䷵ *Jian* 漸, which contains an embedded trigram *Li* in Lines 3–5. The numerical combinations 1-8-1 and 7-8-6 in Fig 3 show a pictographic resemblance to contemporary Late Shang graphs to write “boat”, “roofed enclosure” *mian* 冂, and “net”, all of which are part of the image base of

30 The *Xici* commentary mentions the “hollowing out wood to make boats” (*ku mu wei zhou* 剡木為舟) as being associated with ䷵ *Huan* 渙. This appears to be a veiled reference to trigram *Li*’s enlarged image occurring in Lines 2–5 of *Huan*’s hexagram picture. *Huan*’s hexagram statement also contains the prognostication “beneficial to cross a big river”.
31 Attributed to Lai Zhide, *Zhou Yi jizhu*.
32 The term *xu* “empty space; ruins” is used in the *Shifa* (strips 1 and 4), “Life and Death” 死生 (1/30), examples 1–2, in reference to the number 6 and trigram *Zhen* 震. For “ruins” as an image of *Zhen*, see Yu Xingwu’s “Preface” to Shang Binghe, *Zhou Yi shangshi xue*, 15–16.
33 Huang Jun 黃濬, *Ye zhong pian yu* 鄴中片羽 (Beiping: Zunguzhai, 1937), 2.47. For the latter, see Xu Lianggao 徐良高, “1997 nian Feng xi fajue baogao” 1997 年豐西發掘報告, *Kaogu xuebao*, no. 2 (2000): 227.

trigram *Li*.³⁴ While I am not saying these numerical combinations or any others had fixed names at this time, examples such as these illustrate the types of “pictures” divinations produced and the type of “images” diviners and scribes must have been looking at daily. What we can be certain of is that the elements for compiling a divination manual were manifest and numerical combinations such as these were to play a direct role in numerology and image recognition.






7-7-8-6-7-5 (right)	6-6-1-8-1-5	<i>zhou</i> 舟 “boat”	“Roofed enclosure” <i>mian</i> 冂 in <i>jia</i> 家 “pen-raised pig; house”	<i>li</i> 離 (罕) “net”; semantic component in <i>qin</i> 禽 “birds”; <i>qin</i> 擒 “capture”
				

Fig 4: Image associations from numerical variations of trigram *Li*

Variant names for *Zhongfu* in excavated manuscript versions of the *Zhou Yi* and related texts are *Return to the Middle* (*Zhongfu* 中復), *Middle* (*Zhong* 中), and *Wrapping the Middle* (*Zhongbao* 中). All of these names clearly originate from images connected to the empty middle space created by Lines 3

34 “Roofed enclosure” is a radical used for example in the writing of the words *zong* 宗 “ancestral temple”, *jia* 家 “pen-raise pig” > “house” and *lao* 牢 “pen-raised bovine”. Animal rearing occurs in *Li*’s hexagram statement and of course ䷵ *Small Rearing* 小畜 and ䷶ *Big Rearing* 大畜. *Small Rearing*’s hexagram picture contains an embedded trigram *Li* in Lines 3–5, and *Big Rearing*’s hexagram picture contains an enlarged and embedded trigram *Li* in Lines 3–6. *Big Rearing* is called *Great Storage* 泰蓄 in the Mawangdui version, and *Big Enlargement*(?) 大篤 in the Shanghai Museum version; *Small Rearing* is called *Small Harvest* 小熟 in the Shanghai Museum version. “Ancestral temple” occurs twice in the *Zhou Yi*, in Line 2 of ䷌ *Tong ren* 同人 and Line 5 of ䷌ *Kui* 睽, and both times it occurs in the middle line of trigram *Li*. “House” (meaning a structure and not to marry or family) only occurs in hexagram pictures with trigram *Li* (as upper or lower trigram or embedded); see hexagram statement of *Big Rearing*, the Initial Line, Line 4, and Line 5 of ䷵ *Jia ren* 家人, and the Top Line of *Feng* 豐.

and 4 when bordered by yang lines above and below.³⁵

The following section on nets and birds clarifies why I translate *fu* 孚 in the hexagram's name as "capture".

3. Nets and birds

Net is an image fundamental to the interpretation of *Li* because it is the name for both the hexagram and trigram picture. This image is left out of the *Shuogua* but included in the *Xici*, which says that in high antiquity Fu Xi 伏羲 "twined cords to make nets for hunting and fishing. This may have come from *Li*" (*zuo jiesheng er wei wanggu, yi dian yi yu, gai qu zhu Li* 作結繩而為罔罟，以佃以漁，蓋取諸離). The chief function of net (both as noun and verb), by extension, engendered the sub-images of capture and gain. This is the same mode by which the characteristics of *Li*'s other prime images, eye(s), sun, and fire led to sub-images like "to see" (*jian* 見), "to cry" (*ku* 哭), "to tear" (*ti* 涕), "to peek" (*kui* 窺), "nearly blind" (*miao* 眇), "brightness" (*ming* 明), and "culture" (*wenming* 文明). The phrase "*Li*'s eye(s) see" (*Li mu jian* 離目見) found throughout Yu Fan's 虞翻 (164–233) commentary, and the canonical *Xiang* (Image) commentary to hexagram *Li* which interprets the hexagram picture as "Brightness rising twice" (*ming zuo liang* 明作兩), that is having the image of two suns one in each trigram, are examples of how diviners and commentators made these sorts of associations and built these types of relationships.

Li 離 is called *Luo* 羅 "net" both in the *Mawangdui Yijing* and the *Shifa* guidebook, which adds a statement about why it has this name,

Why is it called *Luo*? It controls storing, this is why it is called *Luo*.³⁶
奚古謂之羅司藏是古謂之羅

35 See Shaughnessy, *Unearthing the Changes*, 169, Table 4.1; for *Middle*, see *Biegua* 別卦 (Hexagram list), in *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhu jian (si)*, strip 8. The association with wood in *Zhongfu*, *Huan* 渙 (Dispersing; 59) and *Yi* 益 (Increase; 42) is usually attributed to trigram *Xun*. I mentioned earlier how images of *Xun* are objects with legs, here wood 木.

36 "Storing" is generally ascribed in *Yi* commentary to trigram *Kan* through its associations to the winter, water, and direction north. There are other occasions in the *Shifa* where images and associations of *Kan* and *Li* are reversed, like associating *Kan* with the south and *Li* with the north. However storing is very much associated with *Li*'s prime images. I therefore agree with Liao Mingchun 廖明春, "Qinghua jian Shifa pian yu Shuogua zhuan" 清華簡《筮法》篇與《說卦傳》, *Wenwu* 文物, no. 8 (2013): 70–72, that the association of trigram *Li* with "controlling storage" is not an error at all.

Li 離 is called *Li* 麗 "Fastened; resplendent" in the Wangjiatai *Guicang*, and this is how the *Tuan* commentary paronomastically glosses it. That both *luo* and *li* have identical archaic pronunciations (*lai*-initial *ge*-rhyme) have lead modern commentators to read the former as a simple phonetic loan for the latter.³⁷ Yet this implies that the two words were only related through sound. The situation is in fact more complicated and meaningful than that, for both words also have a primary meaning of net. Specifically, *li* is a hand net (Fig 3) used to catch things in the air like birds (hence the semantic function of the short tailed bird [*zhui* 隹] in its composition), and *luo* is a spread net ("attached" to a frame) to catch things on the land and in the sea like animals, birds, and fish. Perhaps these two graphs, which at some point split into two different words, originally wrote the same word.³⁸ Archaic graphic forms distinguish the two by which direction the net faces. In *li* the net faces upward (𠂔) and has a handle (十, which resembles the graphic form of 7; compare 7–8 in Fig 4), while the net in the writing of *luo* faces downwards (𠂔/𠂔). The "silk" radical in *luo* defines its semantic category as something made of thread. Commentary as early as the Han dynasty on the *Xici* statement cited above about how *Li* obtained its image of net plays on the connection between "*Li*'s eyes" and the many mesh "eyes of the net".³⁹ *Li*'s netting with its derivative meaning of capture is alluded to in *Li*'s Initial Line statement which warns, "Step crisscross, respect it" (*lü cuoran jing zhi* 履錯然敬之).

The appearance of a bird in a *Zhou Yi* line statement is related to the appearance of trigram *Li*.⁴⁰ As mentioned earlier, the flying bird is a line image of number 8. This association was made by matching the number's graphic form either with the visualization of the spread wings of a bird in flight, or through its resemblance to the word *fei* 非 (飛) "flying". The pheasant

37 Li Xueqin, "Qinghua jian Shifa yu shuzigua wenti" 清華簡《筮法》與數字卦問題, in *Xia Shang Zhou wenming yanjiu* 夏商周文明研究 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2015), 253.

38 See Liu Dajun, *Zhou Yi gailun*, 316–17.

39 See Yu Fan's comment in Li Dingzuo, *Zhou Yi jijie*, 452.

40 A notable exception is the text of ䷛ *Xiao guo* 小過 (62) that thrice mentions a flying bird. According to commentators like Yu Fan, in Li Dingzuo, *Zhou Yi jijie*, 372–78, that the reason for the appearance of the bird is because enlarged *Kan* is the converse of enlarged *Li* as *Zhongfu*, which precedes and forms a pair with *Xiao guo*. In addition to explaining all instances of the flying bird in *Xiao guo* as *Li*, Yu Fan goes on to deem "absurd" the folk interpretation that *Xiao guo*'s hexagram picture also contains the image of a flying bird with wings (the *yin* (/8) lines 1,2 and 5,6) and body (Lines 3–4). The *Shifa* says the number 8 has the image of a flying bird. The *Shuowen jiezi* defines *li* 離 as an oriole. See *Shuowen jiezi zhu*, 142.

is an image associated with *Li* in the *Shuogua* commentary. Two of the more prominent instances are seen in the texts of hexagram ䷄ *Mingyi* 明夷 (Brightness wounded/Calling pheasant) (36) and ䷆ *Lü* 旅 (Travelling) (56).⁴¹ The former, comprised of trigram *Li* (hence the use of “brightness” in the name) under trigram *Kun*, constructs a unified narrative around a flying bird, while the latter, comprised of trigram *Li* over trigram *Gen*, mentions “shooting a pheasant” and “burning a bird’s nest” in Lines 5 and 6.⁴² The connection between the hexagram names *Li* and *Luo* with birds runs even deeper than this through its association to the words *qin* 禽 “bird” and *qin* 擒 “capture”. The former is comprised of the pictograph “net” plus the phonetic *jin* 今 “today” and is the protoform of the latter (that add a “hand” classifier), which frequently appears as a sentence coda in hunting divinations as early as Shang oracle bone inscriptions. The image of a net leads to organic associations with its object and function: birds, animals, fish, humans, and capture. This is how the *Xici* explains the origin of trigram *Li*.

Zhongfu’s hexagram statement that “pigs and fish are auspicious” (*tun yu ji* 豚魚吉) is almost certainly the outcome of observing “*Li*’s net” in its hexagram picture. Coupling this with *Zhongfu*’s line statements “auspicious for the gamekeeper” (*yu ji* 虞吉) (Line 1),⁴³ “obtaining the enemy” (*de di* 得

41 The translation of *Mingyi* as “Calling Pheasant” is from Shaughnessy, *I CHING*, 113. Commentators agree that the object in flight in the line statement narrative is a bird, and that the image is due to the appearance of trigram *Li* in the lower trigram of its picture ䷄. At the same time, the word *ming* “brightness” in the hexagram name is also generally understood as originating from the appearance of the trigram *Li* but with a focus on the sun. The image of the sun in *Mingyi*’s opposite ䷢ *Jin* 晉 “Advancing” (35), *Li* over *Kun*, supports the connection. A wild goose is the featured image in the text of hexagram ䷴ *Jian* 漸 “Progressing” (53), and trigram *Li* is embedded within its hexagram picture (Lines 3–5); Han commentators point out this association; see Li Dingzuo, *Zhou Yi jijie*, 325.

42 Commentators like Lai Zhide, *Zhou Yi jizhu*, 306–7, and Shang Binghe, *Zhou Yi Shang shi xue*, 254–55, associate the empty space in trigram *Li*’s middle line to the image of this nest. This is yet another image of hollowed out wood or wood with a hole in it. Another instance of a bird shooting occurs in the Top Line of hexagram ䷧ *Jie* 解 “Untangled” (40), “The Duke herewith shoots a falcon on top of a high wall, capturing it” (*Gong yong she sun yu gao yong zhi shang huo zhi* 公用射隼于高墉之上獲之). Trigram *Li* is embedded in Lines 2–4 of *Jie*’s hexagram picture.

43 The other occurrence of the word “gamekeeper” is ䷌ *Zhun* 屯 (3), Line 3: “approaching deer (/or foot of mountain) without a gamekeeper” (*ji lu wu yu* 即鹿无虞). Lines 1–5 of the hexagram picture are enlarged *Li*. The word *zhun* means “to fill up; to store”. Additional images in *Zhun* related to trigram *Li* are giving birth (Line 2; belly) and “crying tears of blood” (Top Line; eyes).

敵) (Line 3), and “there will be capture all bound up” (*you fu luan ru* 有孚攣如) (Line 5) justifies reading *fu* 孚 in this hexagram as “capture” and not as “trust” or “sincerity”.⁴⁴ Netting game (i.e. gain) and capturing objects (i.e. profit) like people and war booty has been a preoccupation and quotidian topic of divination since the beginning of China’s historical period. It is not difficult or abstruse to see how net found its way into divination manuals as a rubric. As I will go on to discuss in the next section, all diviners needed was a resemblance, however evident, slight, subjective, or esoteric, to make image connections between objects and trigram/hexagram pictures. Hexagram *Li* in the received version of the *Zhou Yi* should unquestionably be translated “Net”, and read either as a noun or verb.⁴⁵

In summary, the connection of trigram *Li* with its images appears to have been made through simple shape associations between picture and ordinary objects or logographs. While the names of both the trigram and hexagram were produced through a single image connection to net (with its mesh eyes), it is only one of several prime images observed in its many trigram pictures (alloforms). The key to image recognition is related to the prominent empty inner space in the middle line(s). When bordered by a bottom solid line (for instance number 1 or the horizontal line in 7) or fastened in between two solid lines the shapes formed out of the empty space in the middle gave rise to a plethora of images. These images included net, sun, fire, eye(s), belly with navel, and things with a frame or hard cover and opening, hollowed out wood, and roofed enclosures like a pen, ancestral temple, and house. This last group is lost images.

The names *Li* and *Luo* for both the trigram and hexagram picture simply means that whoever named it saw the image of a net therein and the name

44 The graph *fu* 孚 depicts grabbing (爪) a child (子). Its earliest usage in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions occurs in narrating events associated with battle and plunder, and specifically takes material objects (booty) and humans as its object. *Fu* 孚 is the ancestral form of *fu* 俘 “human capture”. The fact that *fu* is written with the homophonous *fu* 復 “to return” throughout the Mawangdui *Zhou Yi* complicates things for either reading.

45 Liu Dajun, *Zhou Yi gailun*, 316–17, translates it this way. In translating the *Guicang* hexagram name *Li* 麗 as “Fastening”, Edward Shaughnessy says, “the original sense of which is ‘to be caught in a net,’” see his *Unearthing the Changes*, 208. Support for this reading comes from the sentence “feiniao li zhi” 飛鳥離之 in Line 6 of the received version of hexagram *Xiao guo*’s text, written “feiniao lu zhi” 飛鳥羅之 (The flying bird is netted) in both the Shanghai Museum and the Mawangdui versions. Compare *Shijing* 詩經, *Xintai* 新臺 (New tower), “Yu wang zhi she hong ze li zhi” 魚網之設鴻則離之 (A fish net was set, and in it we bagged a goose). See too Liao Mingchun, “Qinghua jian Shifa pian yu Shuogua zhuan,” 72.

stuck with it, at least in the *Zhou Yi* tradition. It does not mean that it was not called other names in other traditions, nor does the name implicitly suggest that other images do not exist or cannot coexist with its headline image. The openness of the core text as a whole is one of its hallmarks. The relationship and associations between trigram and hexagram pictures and images within the context of divinatory practice and scribal culture are fundamental to the study of the origin, composition, and development of the *Zhou Yi* and related texts. The first part of this paper has looked at one way in which line, trigram, and hexagram images got produced or might have drawn their inspiration for doing so. I continue in the second part of the paper to examine the process of how a hexagram picture led to the creation of text. In doing so, we will also have a look at how competing images of the same trigram work together within a text, and how in some cases trigrams have what I call “false images”.

4. How a hexagram picture got its text: The case of the *Ding* hexagram dagger-axe inscription

The most definitive and possibly the earliest example of a hexagram picture with a corresponding text is an inscription on bronze dagger-axe in a private collection that dates to the transition between the Western and Eastern Zhou periods, circa the 8th century BCE.⁴⁶ This genuine inscribed artifact undoubtedly belongs to the *Changes* tradition and is an extremely important historical link with regard to the origin and composition of the *Zhou Yi*.

46 Dong Shan 董珊, “Lun xinjian Ding gua ge” 論新見鼎卦戈, in *Chutu wenxian yu guwenzi yanjiu* 出土文獻與古文字研究 4 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2011), 68–88. The Early Western Zhou period oracle bone inscribed with a numerical hexagram plus text discovered at Fengchu village, Qishan, Shaanxi (H11:85) is too fragmented and cannot be contextualized enough to qualify; see Cao Wei 曹瑋, *Zhouyuan Jiaguwen* 周原甲骨文 (Beijing: Shijie tushu chubanshe, 2002), 65. Jao Tsung-i, “You buzhaio jishu tuijiu Yin ren dui yu shu de guannian” 由卜兆記數推究殷人對於數的觀念, in *Jao Tsung-I ershi shiji xueshu wenji*, 4: 72, notes that the form of this oracle bone inscription looks like a hexagram plus a line statement. It does indeed resemble the form of the inscription discussed here. See too Shaughnessy, *Unearthing the Changes*, 12–13. One of the notable characteristics of the Wangjiatai *Guicang* is that it begins hexagram statements with “says” (yue 曰).



六——一六一曰
鼎止 (趾) 真 (顛)
鼎黃耳莫止 (趾)
八五——六五
拇 (吝)

6-1-1-1-6-1 says:
The cauldron's legs overturned.
The cauldron's yellow ears; setting down its legs.
8-5-1-1-6-5
Distress

Fig 5: The *Ding* hexagram dagger-axe inscription (rubbing, transcription, translation)

The *Ding* hexagram dagger-axe inscription (Fig 5) consists of two numerical hexagram pictures and accompanying text. When converted into yin and yang lines the two numerical hexagram pictures 6-1-1-1-6-1 and 8-5-1-1-6-5 both equate to hexagram *Ding* (Cauldron), the name of a hexagram in both the *Zhou Yi* and *Guicang*. After the first hexagram picture are “line statements” that show a striking resemblance to line statements in the Initial Line and Line 5 of *Ding*'s text in the *Zhou Yi*. A second hexagram picture comes after these line statements and is followed by the prognostication “distress” (*lin* 吝), which while not found in the *Zhou Yi* text does occur in the *Guicang*. It remains uncertain whether both hexagram pictures were results of an actual divination or whether the latter was the result of an actual divination that was then converted into the former (in 1-6 combination) for display purposes.⁴⁷ I agree with this latter interpretation mainly because it accords in time with the evolution of numerical hexagrams into a regulated system, and second, because of the orientation and writing style of the inscription. The size of the second hexagram picture is similar to the size of the words, but the first hexagram picture is written in a bigger and more pronounced style. The number 6 in the two hexagrams is written in different ways and the calligraphic flair of hexagram one seems to indicate that it was commemorative. Additional support for this interpretation doubts the low probability of drawing two *Ding* hexagrams in a row, although obviously that cannot be ruled out. What does seem certain is that the line statements correspond to the two *even numbers*

47 Jia Lianxiang, “Shuzigua de mingcheng gainian yu shuzigua zhong de Yixue siwei” 數字卦的名稱概念與數字卦中的易學思維, *Guanzi xuekan* 管子學刊, no. 1 (2016): 101–3.

and are clearly related to the method of divination.

To be sure, this example of a hexagram picture and text is the result of sortilege divination that produced a numerical hexagram output, and a firm expression of professional knowledge concerning its interpretation. While it does not prove the *Zhou Yi* as we know it was in circulation as a manual at this time, it does prove quite emphatically that hexagram judgments and line statements were in circulation and that diviners knew about them. If this was true for *Cauldron* then the same must have been true for others. Based on available evidence, *Changes* manuals were either already available in some form or in the process of being created during the Late Western Zhou period (877–771 BCE). The earliest mention of a book called the *Zhou Yi* is recorded in the *Zuozhuan*, Year 22 of Duke Zhuang of Lu (672 BCE).




<i>Ding</i> 's hexagram picture in the <i>Zhou Yi</i>	6-1-1-1-6-1 in the dagger-axe inscription	"Cauldron" in the dagger-axe inscription
		

Fig 6: The *Ding* hexagram

For our purposes here I want to call attention to the obvious iconographic connection between the hexagram picture in a 1-6 combination, the object cauldron, and the hexagram's name. Fig 6 provides a comparison between the hexagram picture in the *Zhou Yi*, the hexagram picture of *Ding* in 1-6 combination, and the word "cauldron" which features most prominently in the inscription's text.⁴⁸ The scribe who engraved the hexagram picture seems to have intentionally curled the ends of number 6 to mimic the contour of the cauldron's legs.⁴⁹ This deliberate scribal flair reveals, from the emic vantage point of whoever wrote the inscription, that *the image* of a cauldron was seen in *the picture*. The inscription as a whole provides first-hand evidence that the hexagram picture must have eventually been named *Cauldron* for this reason—

48 The graph actually writes the word *zhen* 貞 "to certify", to be read as a phonetic loan for *ding* "cauldron".

49 Dong Shan, "Lun xinjian Ding gua ge", mentions the unique writing of "6" but does not make the connection. Jia Lianxiang, "Shuzigua de mingcheng gainian yu shuzigua zhong de Yixue siwei," clearly working off Dong Shan's study, mentions it too but does not make the connection to its image either.

that is because this object-image was observed in the numerical combination 6-1-1-1-6-1 once produced as an actual result of divination. It establishes well-defined associations between the cauldron as a material object, its character form, and a hexagram picture. Once the picture was identified and labeled (whether it happened orally or in writing is of no importance here), line statements taking "cauldron" as the main topic would have naturally followed in progression. Since it is highly unlikely that this inscription was the source of *Ding* as picture plus text, we have to assume that the numerical hexagram picture in 6-1-1-1-6-1 combination with text was circulating during the late Western Zhou period, if not earlier. Based on the content of the dagger-axe inscription it is entirely possible that the initial layer of *Ding*'s text was comprised of the picture, line statements that gradually progress upwards tracing the shape of the cauldron and its distinctive parts, and an overall judgment.

Edward Shaughnessy has on several occasions discussed the composition of *Zhou Yi* hexagram texts by using the hexagram *Ding* as a model explanation,

Chinese commentators of all periods have seen in the broken bottom line of the hexagram picture a representation of the legs of the cauldron; in the three solid lines in the second, third, and fourth positions (counting from the bottom) its solid belly section; in the broken line in the fifth position the cauldron's two handles or "ears"; and in the solid top line a representation of the pole by which a cauldron was carried. The images or omens of the line statements of *Ding* hexagram in the text of the *Yijing* suggest that whoever composed the line statements must have also had these associations in mind. Thus, the first line statement, corresponding to the broken bottom line of the hexagram picture, refers to the cauldron's legs ("the cauldron's upturned legs"); the second line statement, corresponding to the first of the three solid lines perceived to figure the belly of the cauldron, refers to the contents of the cauldron ("the cauldron has substance"); the fifth line statement, corresponding to the broken line figuring the handles of the cauldron, refers to those handles or "ears" ("the cauldron's yellow ears"); and the solid top line refers to the solid bar used to carry it ("the cauldron's jade bar"). These images *qua* omens may have derived naturally from the shape of the hexagram picture. In turn, they evoked omen-verses similar to those examined above that must have derived from the contexts of specific divinations. [...] This, I I think, is the process by which individual line statements of the *Yijing* were produced, and how they must have originally been understood.⁵⁰

50 Shaughnessy, *I CHING*, 12–13.

Shaughnessy’s reference to “Chinese commentators of all periods” presumably starts with the *Zhou Yi*’s canonical commentaries, and specifically the *Tuan* commentary which states quite emphatically that “*Ding* is an image” (*Ding xiang ye* 鼎象也). The force of this terse interpretive statement gets even more underscored when we see that it is the only one of its kind in the entire commentary.⁵¹ While Shaughnessy’s statement that “images *qua* omens may have derived naturally from the shape of the hexagram picture” is surely correct, new manuscript discoveries like the *Shifa* add levels of complexity to image origins that we have only just began to realize. Images were observed at the individual line level (i.e. single number), at the trigram level (three number combinations), at the hexagram level (i.e. six number combinations), and at places in between. Multiple images could be observed in a single number and image recognition proliferated in variant combinations. For instance, and this was unfathomable prior to the *Shifa* discovery with its sentence “Four’s image is earth” (*si zhi xiang wei di* 四之象為地), is it possible that the divinatory form of the number 4 is the reason trigram *Kun* has the image of earth? My point here is simply that each of the eight trigrams and sixty-four hexagrams as we know them existed for centuries in numerical variations, and images observed through actual divination results played a fundamental role in the creation and development of a hexagram’s text. One reason the *Zhou Yi*’s text can be so enigmatic is the fact that images remain hidden in the pictures of these forgotten numerical combinations. Reconstructing archaic trigram and hexagram alloforms would presumably be a way to rediscover some of the lost ones.⁵²

51 Noted by Yu Fan, in Li Dingzuo, *Zhou Yi jijie*, 308, who further emphasizes that hexagram and line statements are a result of images observed in hexagram pictures.

52 We can try one such example here. The numerical hexagram ䷊ (1-8-8-6-1-1), that when converted to *yin* and *yang* lines equals hexagram ䷊ *Yi* 益 “Increase” (42), is inscribed in a band along with ten other numerical hexagrams on an Early Western Zhou pot discovered in Chunhua, Shaanxi in 1987; see Yao Shengmin 姚生民, “Chunhua xian faxian Xi Zhou Yi gua fuhao wenzi tao guan” 淳化縣發現西周易卦符號文字陶罐, *Wenbo* 文博, no. 3 (1990): 55–57. I note here two of several images that can be observed in the numerical lines of the picture. The first is in the lower trigram (Lines 1–3) — reduplicated 8 over 1. The shape of the numerical combination resembles the archaic form of the graph used to write what would later become the hexagram’s name *yi* 益 “increase” (Late Shang oracle bone script). The matching of the two shapes comes from the resemblance to the “two 8s” in the logograph, illustrated here in Late Shang oracle bone script. A second image seen in Lines 1–4 form a different picture — an arrow-headed stone tablet called *gui* 圭 “tessera” (Late Shang oracle bone script). The phrase “use tessera” (*yong gui* 用圭) occurs in Line 3 of *Yi*’s text, precisely in the heart of this image. Commentators from all periods are at a loss to explain the relationship between the hexagram picture and its name, and its name and corresponding text. Commentators force the image of the tessera onto various trigrams (*Zhen* or *Qian*), and can only be resigned to define the object by its ritual function.

Resemblance to characteristics or iconic features is all one needed to make image associations with trigram and hexagram pictures.⁵³ How pictographs in the Chinese script like “cauldron” (*ding* 鼎), “elephant” > “image” (*xiang* 象), and “horse” (*ma* 馬) got abbreviated based on certain characteristics or iconic features present an accurate illustration of how this trend occurred in ancient scribal practice (Fig 7). As early as Shang oracle bone inscriptions scribes had already thought to write a variant and abbreviated form of “cauldron” with only its legs and ears and not its defined body. This was apparently because they were the only parts needed to identify the word as *ding*. By the Warring States period an allograph of elephant abbreviated the animal’s body and left only its characteristic nose, tusk(s), and tail. The writing of horse during the Eastern Zhou period started to get written in a variant form that reduced the animal’s body and legs to two abbreviation marks and preserved only its characteristic eye (as phonetic) and mane.












cauldron 鼎	 Oracle bone	 Western Zhou bronze	 Oracle bone variant
elephant 象 > image	 Shang bronze emblem	 Western Zhou bronze	 Warring States variant
horse 馬	 Western Zhou bronze	 Eastern Zhou bronze variant	 <i>Qian</i>
	 Shanghai Museum <i>Zhou Yi</i>	 Warring States variants	

Fig 7: Illustrations of image characteristics seen in graphic variants

Looked at this way, and although there are certainly other ways to explain it, it is entirely possible that the image association of trigram *Qian* 乾 with numerous horses listed in the *Shuogua* commentary originated out of a connection between the picture’s three solid lines and the horse’s mane written in Zhou and Warring States period script with three solid horizontal strokes.

53 Cf. the *Xicizhuan* statement “images are resemblances” (*xiang ye zhe xiang ye* 象也者像也).

Let's assume based on the dagger-axe inscription that the “legs” in Line 1 and “ears” in Line 5 were the key features used to identify this object in the hexagram picture in the first place. Doing so highlights the composition and function of the lower trigram *Xun*, and reveals what can only be understood as a false image for *Li*.

As mentioned earlier, *Xun* has images associated with *things with legs* in the *Shuogua* commentary. This is yet another play between a trigram's shape with real objects and logographs. The Initial Line of *Xun* as either 8 or 6 organically forms the legs of an object, while the following solid lines (1-1) are the tabletop, and midsection of person from the thighs to waist. This is why *Xun* has the image of the thighs (*gu* 股) in both the *Shuogua* and *Shifa*. It is not enigmatic by any means to observe the numerical combination 6-1 or 8-1 in the lower part of the graph to write *ding* 鼎, here illustrated in a Western Zhou bronze form that dates slightly earlier to the casting of the dagger axe inscription. In fact, the trigram and hexagram name *Xun* 巽 (an allograph of 巽) itself almost certainly originated from the resemblance between the trigram picture 巽 (from the Shanghai Museum *Zhou Yi*) and the “table” (*ji* 几) in the word's graphic composition 巽 (in Warring States script). This is precisely why the “table” (or “bed”) is the featured image in hexagram *Xun*'s line statements. Another important connection to one of *Xun*'s prime images can be made in this way as well. Based on the earlier discussion of the *Shifa*'s line images for the number 8, *Xun*'s association with wind seems due to the number 8 in its Initial Line (Fig 1).

The dysfunction of *Li* in the hexagram picture *Ding* is the same type of thing that happens with trigram *Dui* as the lower trigram in the hexagram picture 睽 *Kui* (38). The hexagram name and text of “Crossed eyes”, the focus of the following section, is likely based on an image association with trigram *Li*,⁵⁴ just like the name and text of *Cauldron* either originated in or was stimulated by an initial image connection with the image of an object with legs in trigram *Xun*. In *Kui*, *Dui* simply gets co-opted into having the false image of an “inward turned eye” (i.e. the “misaligned eye”) because of this particular combination with trigram *Li*, just like how *Li* in *Ding* gets co-opted into having images (belly, ears, and lifting pole) that it does not otherwise ever get associated with solely because of this particular combination above *Xun*. The identification of a cauldron in the hexagram picture disjoints trigram *Li*'s “body”, and detaches it from its normal image base. The only image associated

54 Identifying “*Li*'s eyes” in *Kui*'s picture is one of Shang Binghe's happiest discoveries; see his *Zhou Yi Shang shi xue*, 13–19, 177–81.

with trigram *Li* in the text comes in the form of the phrase “pheasant fat is not eaten” (*zhi gao bu shi* 雉膏不食) in Line 3, which serves the dual function of calling attention to the forthcoming occurrence of trigram *Li* in the hexagram picture while referencing one of the cauldron's primary functions, cooking food.

In summary, an iconographic origin is the more compelling explanation for *Ding*'s hexagram name and the layered-creation of its text, notwithstanding the fact that the combination of wood, fire, and metal (embedded trigram in Lines 2–4) embodying its chemical composition and the elemental materials needed to use it provide a reasonably crafted sub-interpretation.⁵⁵

5. The “lost image” in hexagram 睽 *Kui* (Crossed eyes)

Hexagram *Kui* 睽 “Crossed eyes” contains the strangest and most grotesque images in the *Zhou Yi*, and quite possibly in the entire *Changes* tradition. I argue here how the hexagram name and text was created in the same way as *Cauldron*. The name *Kui*, written in Pre-Qin script with two eyes over the phonetic *gui* 睽 (睽), was inspired by the observation of “*Li*'s eye” in the top trigram of the hexagram picture (Fig 8). Once this correctly aligned “good eye” (Line 5) in the top trigram was observed, trigram *Dui* in the lower trigram was co-opted out of its image base to have the false image of a misaligned “wandering eye” (Line 3). Whether viewed vertically or horizontally the hexagram as a single-bodied picture resembles the image of crossed eyes, or as the *Shuowen jiezi* says, “two eyes not following each other” (*mu bu xiang ting* 目不相聽).⁵⁶ One of the root meanings of words with *kui* as phonetic involves measuring distance. The inability to see clearly and accurately judge depth is precisely the issue with the lower trigram *Dui*, the misaligned eye. Alignment and measure is restored and good things start to happen when the text reaches *Li*'s “good eye” in the upper trigram.

55 As early as the Early Western Zhou period there existed an association between trigram *Li*, fire, and cast bronze objects like dagger-axes and cauldrons. Aside from the *Ding hexagram dagger-axe inscription* discussed here, a series of three Early Western Zhou period dagger-axes that only carry a trigram *Li* inscription were discovered in Luoyang, Henan Province between the years 1964–1972; see Liu Yu 劉雨 and Lu Yan 盧岩, eds., *Jinchu Yin Zhou jinwen jilu 近出殷周金文集錄* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2002), #1074–1076. As referenced earlier, both fire (prime image) and weapons (sub-image) are listed in the *Shuogua* commentary; see Dong Shan, “Lun xinjian Ding gua ge”, for an in-depth discussion.

56 Xu Shen, *Shuowen jiezi zhu*, 132.

The most distinctive feature of the text as a whole is how outcomes do not play out like one might expect, for instance, encountering a dangerous or bad situation does not cause harm or lead to failure. The overall hexagram fortune says that small affairs will have a good outcome, and we find nothing inauspicious at all in any of the line statement injunctions. What is philosophically remarkable about *Kui* is that a pair is made despite differences and out of it happiness follows. Disparity finds harmony but relishes in its singularity.

The earliest instance of a numerical hexagram (1-1-6-1-8-1) that can be converted to *Kui* is inscribed along with ten other numerical hexagram combinations in a band around the neck of the same Early Western Zhou pottery vessel discussed earlier in the section on *Zhongfu* (Fig 8).⁵⁷ The word *kui* is ubiquitous in Western Zhou script (ca. 10th century) and was certainly eligible for use. I am not concerned whether or not *Kui* was the original name of the hexagram, only the genesis of how it got its name and under what circumstances its text was produced. Whoever gave the hexagram picture its name or tag and wrote its text must have been aware that the eye was an image of trigram *Li*.

Names for this hexagram picture shows variation in manuscript copies of the *Zhou Yi*, *Guicang*, and related texts from the Warring States, Qin and Han periods. The Shanghai Museum *Zhou Yi* has *Kui* 睽 (Fig 8), the Tsinghua University hexagram list *Biegua* has *Kui* 僇 (Fig 8), the Wangjiatai *Guicang* has *Ju* 瞿 “frightening”, *Guicang* excerpts collected from various received sources has *Ju* 瞿 (Fig 8), and the Mawangdui *Zhou Yi* has *Guai* 乖 “going opposite ways”.



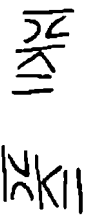

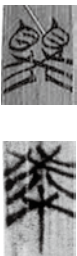


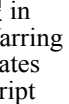
<i>Li</i> ’s “eyes”	<i>Kui</i> ’s “crossed eyes”	1-1-6-1-8-1 (Early Western Zhou)	睽 in Western Zhou script	睽 / 僇 in Warring States script	僇 in the <i>Biegua</i>	懼 in Warring States script
						 

Fig 8: Crossed eyes and frightening

57 Yao Shengmin, “Chunhua xian faxian Xi Zhou Yi gua fuhao wenzi tao guan.”

The graph in the Shanghai Museum version writes a “wood” classifier and not an “eye” classifier, while the *Biegua* writes a “person in profile” and not an “eye” classifier, and adds “heart” at the bottom. *Kui* 睽 is defined in the *Shuowen jiezi* as a type of tree,⁵⁸ and *kui* 僇 is likely an early form of *kui* 懼 “frightened”. That the phonetic values in these two graphs are the same confuses the situation and seems to favor reading both as phonetic loans for the word in the received version.⁵⁹ Although this may very well be the case, graphic variation can matter.⁶⁰ While *kui* 睽 is undoubtedly a phonetic loan intended to be read *kui* 睽, I prefer to take the hexagram name in the *Biegua* as it is written, that is as a synonym of *ju* 瞿 (懼). This latter reading seems more compelling than to avoid the heart classifier as semantically meaningless, especially given the fact that many of the hexagram names in the *Biegua* hexagram list show a closer correspondence with names of hexagrams in the *Guicang* than they do with names of hexagrams in the *Zhou Yi*.⁶¹

Both *Ju* 瞿 and *Guai* 乖 write different words and appear to be variant names for this hexagram, although we equally cannot rule out that the former was a scribal error and the latter another phonetic loan.⁶² The graph used to write *guai* 乖 in particular does not appear in the script prior to this occurrence and its appearance in a Western Han period manuscript copy appears to be related to its interpretation in the canonical commentaries that water below and fire above “move in opposite directions”, that is water flows downwards and fire burns upwards. This meaning differs from two things crossing each other. The graph used to write *ju* “frightened” is similar to *kui* in that its base element is the eyes. Given the fact that the *Guicang* and *Zhou Yi* both belong to the *Changes* tradition and in antiquity could be used collectively, variation in hexagram naming between the two seems intentional and based on the other. This appears to be the situation with *Kui* and *Ju*.

The earliest mention of *Kui* as a hexagram name outside of the *Yijing* comes from two references in the *Zuozhuan*, in Duke Xi 僖公 years 15 and 25. The first instance includes an excerpt from *Kui*’s Top Line that says “The cross-eyed orphan. The bow the robber draws” (*kui gu, kou zhang zhi hu* 睽

58 Xu Shen, *Shuowen jiezi zhu*, 240.
59 The Editors of *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian (si)*, 134, read both graphs as phonetic loans for *kui* 睽.
60 Shaughnessy, *Unearthing the Changes*, 57–66.
61 Li Xueqin, “Guicang yu Qinghua jian Shifa, Biegua” 《歸藏》與清華簡《筮法》、別卦, in *Xia Shang Zhou wenming yanjiu*, 270–73.
62 Yu Xingwu, *Shuang jian chi Yijing xinzheng*, 3.6a–6b.

孤寇張之弧).⁶³ While this does not in any way diminish the validity of the excavated manuscript counterparts, nor suggest that the received text of the *Zuozhuan* was never edited for style and content, it does establish a historical precedence for the hexagram name in the received version. More importantly, the name in the received version completely accords with the view here that the hexagram name originated in the image of “*Li*’s eye” and that the overall theme has to deal with seeing and intersecting with things from an abnormal perspective and with lack of measure.

Given the fact that the graph in the Shanghai Museum *Zhou Yi* is a phonetic variant and the *Biegua* is probably not a *Zhou Yi* hexagram list at all, we have no reason not to give primacy to *Kui* 睽.⁶⁴ The Mawangdui hexagram name *Guai*, and the gloss in the canonical *Xugua* commentary that “*kui* means *guai*” (*kui guai ye* 睽乖也) are likely related to the natural element system of trigram interpretation and a Han dynasty exegetical pun. In the *Guicang*, on the other hand, a hexagram called “Frightening” appears to have been circulating during the Warring States and Qin. The relationship between the two names is in the *Zhou Yi* and *Guicang* is an illustration of cooperation and rivalry in hexagram naming, hexagram borrowing, and textual word play.

Explaining the hexagram picture through individual trigram relationships the way the canonical commentaries do betrays key “whole-bodied” associations between hexagram picture, hexagram name, and an otherwise consistent image pattern that interconnects the text. Images do not move in opposite and contrary directions from the point of view of the diviner (i.e. reader) but rather *intersect and crisscross the other*.⁶⁵ The repeated appearance

63 *Kui*’s Top Line statement says “a bow first drawn” (*xian zhang zhi hu* 先張之弧) and not “*kou zhang zhi hu*” (寇張之弧). In the received version of *Zhou Yi*, *Kou* 寇 belongs to another sentence in Top Line statement “It is not robbers in marriage” (*fei kou hun gou* 匪寇婚媾). Either the speaker (a “Diviner Shi”) in this *Zuozhuan* passage combined the two into an abbreviated reference to both, or *kou* 寇 is a graphic error for the structurally comparable *xian* 先.

64 Liao Mingchun, “Chu jian Zhou Yi Kui gua xinshi” 楚簡《周易》睽卦新釋, *Zhou Yi yanjiu*, no. 4 (2006): 32–38.

65 The *Tuan* and *Xiang* canonical commentaries interpret *Kui* based on the relationship between trigrams as separate units. It is explained both through natural images, i.e. fire and marsh, and based on the hexagram’s female gender. As mentioned above, fire above marsh portrays a contrary motion, fire burning upwards and water flowing downwards. As such, the text of *Kui* is organic but disjointed — images and outcomes move in opposite and contrary directions. In this same light, “two girls” (*Li* is the middle daughter and *Dui* is the younger daughter) have different aspirations and move in opposite directions contrary to one another.

of the verb *jian* 見 “see” throughout *Kui*’s text places emphasis on the image of the eyes, while the word *kui* lets us know that the reason such peculiar images are being seen is due to a misaligned condition of the eyes.⁶⁶ A study of the composition, literary aspects, and image-set of *Crossed Eyes* will have to be the topic of another paper. I will say here that any approach to reading the text should preserve a focus on the eyes as the primary image. This hexagram picture was taken at some point a long time ago to resemble the image of crossed-eyes. Once recognized, a story-like text of prophecies got created that is quite unlike any other in pre-Classical Chinese.⁶⁷

6. Conclusion

This paper has used new material documents to review the image base of trigram *Li* as it is listed in the *Shuogua* commentary. The *Shuogua* was likely compiled during the Warring States period and is a guidebook to assist reading the *Zhou Yi*. The images it lists were collected from occurrences in hexagram and line statements with the sole purpose of providing readers a convenient place to check which images were associated to which trigrams. The *Shuogua*

66 Line 1 contains a hidden pun on the eyes. All commentators are at a loss to explain the prognostication “Losing a horse, do not pursue it, it will return on its own” (*sang ma wu zhu zi fu* 喪馬勿逐自復) mainly because of the appearance of the horse, an image that according to the *Shuogua* commentary is associated to trigram *Qian*, which is not part of *Kui*’s hexagram picture. So then how does the horse and losing a horse that will return on its own make it into the text? First, the overriding image of *Kui* is the eyes, and the relationship between the good eye in the upper trigram and the one that does not function properly in the lower trigram. The phrase “losing a horse” (*sang ma* 喪馬) is a verbal play on the phrase “losing an eye” or “losing eyesight” (*sang mu* 喪目). Oracle bone inscriptions (*Jiaguwen heji* 甲骨文合集 21037) record “The sick eye(s) is (/are) not going to lose their brightness” (*ji mu bu sang ming* 疾目不喪明), and “Eyes are losing (their vision)” (*mu sang* 目喪) (*Huayuanzhuang Dongdi jiagu* 花園莊東地甲骨 59.2). “Eye” is the phonetic element in “horse” (see Fig 7) and the two words were homophonous. The phonetic pun here is in reference to the wandering or lost eye, the false image of *Dui* in the lower trigram. That the prognostication says, “not to pursue it for it will return on its own” refers to the properly aligned “good eye” in the upper trigram. The horse (i.e. eye) will eventually return to its correct position as the text progresses to trigram *Li* starting in Line 4.

67 Li Jingchi 李鏡池, *Zhou Yi tongyi* 周易通義 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2015), 75–77, calls it a travel diary. Gao Heng 高亨, *Zhou Yi gujing jinzhushu* 周易古經今注, rev. ed. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 270–72, says the hexagram records several ancient stories concerning the Xia dynasty king Shao Kang 少康.

is not comprehensive and makes its own interpretive decisions. There remain images still unidentified (*yi xiang* 逸象), classified improperly, and not adequately explained.

The recovery of the *Shifa* in the Tsinghua University collection of Warring States bamboo manuscripts validates the importance of images in *Changes* interpretation and places the *Yijing* commentary within the context of a larger and active Warring States commentarial tradition. We have long known from anecdotal records in the *Zuozhuan* and *Guoyu* how diviners read and interpreted hexagrams, but having an authentic Warring States period divination guidebook like the *Shifa* simply transforms what we know about the subject. It contains a trove of professional knowledge and a new lexicon of technical vocabulary. For our purposes here, the most significant features are its sequence of “line images” and diagram of the human body and its associated trigrams. Image recognition was based on a visual association between the shape of a number and an object that resembled it, or between the shape of a number and a logograph. Looking back, in the 1930s the great paleographer Yu Xingwu 于省吾 (1896–1984) was spot on when he said in the introduction to his *Shuang jian chi Yijing xin zheng* 雙劍謠易經新證 that the *Zhou Yi*’s images came from real objects and logographs observed in its hexagram pictures. The *Changes*, he declared, is a study of images.

The *Xici* commentary elucidates the association between the net and trigram *Li*’s picture, and I have now proposed that this image originated in a numerical combination that either resembled the object itself or its graphic representation. The other images in *Li*’s image set developed in this same way. As I stated at the opening, if a diviner could see so many pictographic images in the graphic form of a single number, we have to assume that a deeper repository of subjective and innovative images would be seen in multiple number combinations (i.e. trigram and hexagram). I have provided illustrations throughout the paper of some possible Western Zhou candidates. There are many others to consider, and not just for trigram *Li* but for the other trigrams and hexagrams as well.

The *Ding* hexagram is distinctive amongst the sixty-four hexagrams because of the one-to-one resemblance between hexagram picture and object. A resemblance to an object or its graphic representation was all a diviner needed to make image associations. Images could be observed in single lines, double lines (called “half images”), trigrams, enlarged and embedded trigrams, hexagrams as a single-bodied picture, and everywhere else in between. Prime images led to derivative sub-images based on their function and characteristics. That so many images could be found in the lines of six-line diagram is what

makes the *Zhou Yi* so unique and special, and why it consistently defies being codified or essentialized.

Another reason images in the *Zhou Yi* and related divination manuals are generally considered so enigmatic is due in part to the subjective nature and specific divinatory context from which these image associations were observed in the first place. The core text with all of its images comes without any notes or rules. This is where the later canonical commentaries come in and try to make sense of it all with ingeniously constructed interpretative systems. Some of these systems work in large parts of text yet no one system can adequately explain everything. This includes pictographic images. During the Shang and Zhou periods sortilege and oracle bone divination were frequently used in conjunction and served to certify the other. Based on what we know about oracle bone divination, diviners worked in close collaboration with scribes. The same has to have been true with actual bouts of sortilege divination. Unlike oracle bone cracks that appeared directly on the medium used for divination, the results of sortilege divination had to get recorded onto a stationery of some kind in order for a diviner to interpret and pass judgment for his patron or client. To say hexagram pictures were pictorially meaningless and could not in any sense be visually representational to those with a professional knowledge of the subject lacks emic perspective. The discovery of the *Shifa* confirms that individual line numbers were not pictorially meaningless, which of course leads to us now knowing that lines in combination forming numerical trigram and hexagram pictures were impregnated with pictorial meaning. Oracle bone diviners made their judgments based on crack shapes that appeared on burnt bone, and sortilege diviners made their judgments through images seen in numerical combinations recorded onto stationary either by them or in cooperation with a scribe. New discoveries like the ones reviewed in this paper highlight the fundamental role scribal and material culture played in observing images like those found in the *Zhou Yi*. Orientation, layout, and the written style of these numerical outcomes during and after these divination events played a key role in image recognition, which in turn led to text in the form of predictions, injunctions, names and tags, and various kinds of statements.

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象數之間

——離卦在早期《易經》的多重意涵

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本文探討《易經》離卦代表的象，尤其是 說卦 所列出的各種意象。 說卦 把基礎文本中提到或引申出來的意象，放進一個結構井然、高度詮釋性的系統下闡述，而八卦各自的「意象程式」正是由此系統生成。本文提出 說卦 的意象程式具備明確的架構，所載卦象並非毫無章法地隨意羅列，象與象之間實不乏關聯和互動。我的主要論點是《易》類文獻裡為數甚夥的意象是由簡單而直觀的方式生發出來，譬如新近發現的戰國占筮書《筮法》，成象的方式是通過將單爻象，以及三爻組合裡數字卦畫的整體形象，跟萬物的形狀或文字的字形互相配對。假如占卜者能從單一數字或數字序列的組合中看到如許之多「象形之象」，如《筮法》所示者，我們有理由相信可以從數爻、單卦和重卦的數字組合裡，觀察出更深層次的主觀和創新意象。一言蔽之，單卦和重卦之象絕非無所取義；數生卦，卦生象，象生辭，數、卦、象、辭則共同構成最早的《易》類文本。專業占卜人掌握筮卦傳統的專門知識，而戰國時期的《易》占在沿用傳統筮法的同時，對八卦的意象程式加以發揚和闡釋。

關鍵詞：戰國占卜 專門知識 《筮法》《易經》 離卦