

Writing as a Threshold between the Worlds: Glyphomancy in China

Brigitte Baptandier

Abstract

This article addresses how the meaning of life, the unconscious desire, or, to put it another way, destiny, is sought. It raises the question of decrypting a hidden, unconscious meaning, causing it to emerge by means of divination that examines the body, dreams and, specifically here, writing, seen as a “threshold between the worlds,” in other words a way of questioning, of bringing out the difference, the distance between our two registers of language: the conscious and the unconscious. Entirely dedicated to different mantics, amongst which the incubation of dreams, Shizhu shan is dedicated to the Nine Immortal Lords (transformed into) Carps, Jiuli xianjun 九鯉仙君, whose legendary life illustrates this quest. From the practice of a soothsayer that performs the divination with the Secret Book of Zhuge’s Divine Numbers, *Zhuge miben shenshu* 諸葛祕本神數,

Brigitte Baptandier is an anthropologist and a sinologist. She is Director of Research *emeritus* at CNRS. She has taught Chinese anthropology at the Department of Anthropology (University of Paris West Nanterre La Défense), and at the Department of Chinese (INALCO). She is currently General Secretary of the Ethnology Society, co-director of the collection “Recherches sur la Haute-Asie” (“Research on Upper Asia”) and director of the “Écritures” (“Writings”) collection. Her research, first in Taiwan, and then in China, in Fujian, focused on the representations of the feminine in local Chinese religion, through myths and rituals. She is interested in the Lushan Daoist tradition, which borrows many characteristics from Tantric Buddhism, and features healing and exorcism rituals similar to those of shamanism. She has notably published *The Lady of Linshui: A Chinese Female Cult* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), and *Du corps au texte: Approches comparatives (From the Body to the Text: Comparative Approaches)* (Nanterre: Société d’ethnologie, 2008).

we examine the question of what constitutes a text? How to approach its practice, its coding and deciphering? What makes a community consider a text to be “true,” even when it is apocryphal?

Keywords: writing, divination, deciphering, destiny, unconscious meaning,
Zhuge shenshu

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