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**A Book of Wisdom or a Manual of Divination? Examining  
the Paratexts in Three Spanish Translations of the *I Ching***

**¿Un libro de sabiduría o un manual de adivinación?  
Examinando los paratextos en tres traducciones al español  
del *I Ching***

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**Abstract:** Previous studies have indicated that different translations of the *I Ching* present varying value judgments regarding this influential classical Chinese text. However, little attention has been paid to how this book is recognized and interpreted in the Spanish-speaking world through translation. This article focuses on the paratextual elements of three direct Chinese-Spanish translations of the *I Ching* published in Spain, aiming to explore the value orientations conveyed by these translations regarding the book and their potential impacts. The findings reveal their differing positions on the essence and practical significance of the *I Ching*: (1) emphasising its cosmic consciousness as a repository of wisdom, respecting annotations from historical authority, Confucius, while deliberately distancing it from divinatory practices; (2) simultaneously valuing philosophical and moral implications of the *I Ching* and its divinatory applications, but considering the former as a prerequisite for the latter; (3) highlighting the practical utility of divination in the *I Ching*, while viewing its accumulating commentaries during its historical evolution as distortions of the original core text. The diverse perspectives from each of the three versions, contextualized within their respective historical and social backgrounds, have all played distinct but important roles in the translation history of the *I Ching* in Spain. This research holds significance in offering valuable insights into cross-cultural exchange and intellectual discourse related to the dissemination and interpretation of this classical Chinese text on a broader global scale.

**Keywords:** *I Ching*, Chinese philosophy, Divination, Paratext, Chinese-Spanish translation, Cross-cultural interpretation

**Resumen:** Los estudios previos han indicado que diferentes traducciones del *I Ching* presentan diversos juicios de valor acerca de este influyente texto clásico chino. Sin embargo, se ha prestado poca atención a cómo se reconoce e interpreta este libro en el mundo hispanohablante a través de la traducción. Por ende, este artículo se enfoca en los elementos paratextuales de tres traducciones directas chino-español del *I Ching* publicadas en España, con el objetivo de explorar las orientaciones de valor transmitidas por las traducciones sobre este libro y el posible impacto que estas han causado. Los hallazgos revelan diferentes posiciones en relación con la esencia y el significado práctico del *I Ching*: (1) al enfatizar su conciencia cósmica como depósito de sabiduría, respetando anotaciones de la autoridad histórica, Confucio, mientras se distancia de forma deliberada de las prácticas adivinatorias; (2) al poner en valor con simultaneidad las implicaciones filosóficas y morales del *I Ching* y sus aplicaciones adivinatorias, pero considerando que lo primero es un requisito previo para lo segundo; (3) al resaltar la utilidad práctica de la adivinación en el *I Ching*, al tiempo que se considera que los comentarios acumulativos durante la evolución histórica distorsionan el texto original. Las diversas perspectivas de cada una de las tres versiones, contextualizadas dentro de sus respectivos antecedentes históricos y sociales, han desempeñado roles distintos, pero importantes en la historia de la traducción del *I Ching* en España. Esta investigación resulta de gran importancia al ofrecer valiosas perspectivas sobre el intercambio intercultural y el discurso intelectual relacionado con la difusión y la interpretación de este texto clásico chino a nivel global.

**Palabras clave:** *I Ching*, Filosofía china, Adivinación, Paratexto, Traducción chino-español, Interpretación intercultural

#### INTRODUCTION

The *I Ching*, also known as *Yi-Jing* (“易经”, *Book of Changes*), holds a prominent position as one of the oldest and most influential texts in Chinese culture. On one hand, throughout its historical trajectory, the *I Ching* has been used as a book for divination, carrying a hint of mystery. On the other hand, it is also widely recognised as an extraordinary repository of profound wisdom, constituting the origin of Chinese philosophy, and exerting a profound influence on schools of thought such as Confucianism and Daoism (see Cheng, 2003).

Since the late 17th century, the *I Ching* was translated into Latin by European missionaries in China, thus beginning its journey into the Western world (see Jiménez-Martín, 2021; Zhao, 2021). Over the following two centuries, this book has been translated into numerous languages, such as

German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch. Furthermore, in many of these languages, there are multiple versions of translations available. Interestingly, scholars (e.g., Chan, 1968; Hughes, 1951; Wu, 2017) have discovered that different versions of English translations present interpretations of this ancient text from distinct perspectives, considering it as a Confucian classic, a book of wisdom, a divination manual, a historical document, a tool for psychological assistance, and so on (see Wu, 2017, p. 65-80), reflecting the multi-faceted nature of this ancient text. Crucially, whether explicitly or implicitly, these translations have presented their own values and assessments about the *I Ching*, that may shape the target language readers' comprehension and views of this ancient Chinese classic, consequently influencing its usage and scholarly inquiries (Wu, 2017, p. 84). However, to date, research on whether or how the numerous Spanish versions of the *I Ching* have presented specific value judgements of preferences towards the book remains extremely scarce. Given the widespread usage of the Spanish language around the world, relevant studies deserve more attention, as this will further contribute to our understanding of the global dissemination and reception of this ancient Chinese classic.

As the paratext is deemed crucial in comprehending and interpreting texts (Nord, 2012, p. 401), this paper analyses the paratextual elements in three different Spanish versions of the *I Ching* directly translated from Chinese. The objective is to examine the value that judgments in each version place on the book and their impacts on its reception in Spain. Specifically, this discussion revolves around the two major research directions historically argued by scholars of the *I Ching*, namely, whether it is a book of cosmological wisdom or a numerological guide for divination. The significance of this study resides in the valuable insights that it provides into the transmission of this most important Chinese classical text in the Spanish linguistic, social, and cultural framework, as well as the potential conflicts, integration, and impacts during this process.

The following section offers a concise introduction to the *I Ching*, including its fundamental concepts, book structure, historical evolution, and related studies. Section 2 provides a brief overview of the translation and reception of the *I Ching* within the Western context. Section 3 presents the research materials and methods employed in the study. Section 4 conducts a thorough analysis of the paratextual elements of the selected Spanish translations, and the concluding section will summarise and discuss the principal findings.

## 1. THE I CHING IN HISTORY

### 1.1. Overview of the *I Ching's* Origin and Structure

Although there has been a legend attributing the creation of the *I Ching* to the figure Fu Xi (伏羲) in Chinese mythology (Cheng, 2003, p. 518), scholars generally agree that the *I Ching* was composed or edited by the King Wen during the early Zhou Dynasty in the 12th century BCE (Cheng, 2008, p. 201).

The *I Ching* is built upon two fundamental concepts: hexagrams (“卦”, *gua*) and lines (“爻”, *yao*), which constitute the foundation of its symbolic language and interpretive framework. Hexagrams consist of six horizontally arranged lines, where each line represents either *yin* (drawn as a broken line) or *yang* (drawn as a solid line), symbolising the interplay and balance between opposing forces. Through the binary combinations of *yin* and *yang*, the six lines can be arranged in 64 different ways, generating the 64 hexagrams of the *I Ching*. Each of them possesses unique but interrelated symbolic meanings, revealing the ever-changing nature of reality and illustrating the interconnectedness and balance among all things (see Cheng, 2003, p. 518).

To understand the structure of this book, we can start from its name. The Chinese term “易经” (*Yi-Jing*) is composed of two parts: “易” (*Yi*) representing the meaning of ‘change’ and “经” (*Jing*) referring to a classical text that holds a canonical status due to its significance in the construction of moral education (Vilá & Galvany, 2019, p. 19). In fact, the structure of this book can also be divided into two main components. The first part consists of the 64 hexagrams diagrams and the explanatory texts for each hexagram (known as “卦辞”, *guaci*) and each line (known as “爻辞”, *yaoci*). Each hexagram has its unique name that describes or indicates its symbolic meaning, which is associated with an interpretation, judgement, or evaluation of a particular situation to give a divination diagnosis. Similarly, each line within the hexagram is also numbered and provides individual predictions and evaluations, implying recommended actions. This section was previously known as the “周易” (*Zhou-Yi*), since it was the original version established by King Wen of Zhou. As a system of symbolic understanding of change, it was used for divination practices, providing integrated interpretations for the purpose of guiding human actions (Cheng, 2009, p. 201). Importantly, “周易” (*Zhou-Yi*) is the only surviving one among the three “易” (*yi*) that existed in ancient China. The other two, “连山易” (*Lianshan-Yi*) and “归藏易” (*Guicang-Yi*), have both been lost. (Zhu, 2009, p. 5).

The second part is the “经” (*Jing*), also known as *Shi-yi* (“十翼” *Ten Wings*). This part consists of ten segments, namely, *Tuan* (“象上、下” “line commentaries I and II”), *Xiang* (“象上、下” “image commentaries I and II”), *Wen-yan* (“文言” “Commentary on Words”) (only for the first two hexagrams, *Qian* and *Kun*), *Xu-guan* (“序卦”, “Sequence of the Hexagrams”), *Za-gua* (“杂卦” “Miscellaneous Hexagrams”), *Xi-ci* (“系辞上、下” “attached statements I and II”) and *Shuo-gua* (“说卦” “Explanations of the Trigrams”) (see Zhao, 2021, p. 70). They are widely regarded as the commentaries on the “周易” (*Zhou-Yi*) made by Confucius (551-479 BCE) and his disciples (see Cheng, 2003, 2009). Over time, these additional commentaries have been incorporated into the core text, offering explanations of the hexagrams and cosmological insights into the relationship between humanity and nature (Hon 2021, pp. 1-2). From Confucius’s perspective, the most important thing is how individuals can develop personal wisdom and moral judgment in life and behaviour through the study of *change*. Therefore, he no longer viewed the *ji* (“吉” ‘fortune’) or *xiong* (“凶” ‘misfortune’) evaluations obtained through divination as external authoritative revelations from diviners or deities. Instead, he advocated a “post-divinatory rational consciousness”, emphasising introspective personal wisdom and virtue based on facts and past experiences, aiming for realising *ren* (“仁” ‘benevolence’) and *yi* (“义” ‘righteousness’) (see Cheng 2009, pp. 97-99). Therefore, Confucius’ understanding of the “周易” (*Zhou-Yi*) is considered a significant revolution and marked the transition of the *I Ching* from a book of divination to a book of wisdom. Later scholars, such as Confucius’ disciples, Wang Bi (226-249) of the Wei-Jin Dynasty, and Neo-Confucius scholars of the Song Dynasty (960-1279), continued to make important contributions to the development and evolution of the *I Ching*.

### 1.2 The Two Main Schools of *I Ching* Studies

In fact, due to the *I Ching*’s ancient origins, extensive scope across various fields, and the highly symbolic language with profound polysemy and complexity, the book has been given diverse interpretations by many academic schools in different eras (Fu, 2006, p. 108). However, the various schools of thought that hold different viewpoints on the study of the *I Ching* can be broadly classified into two major factions: the Image-Number School (“象数” *xiang-shu*) and the Meaning-Principles School (“义理” *yi-li*) (Yong & Ji, 1933, as cited in Hon, 2004, p. 453). The former emphasises the use of symbolic imagery and numerical calculations within the text for divination purposes, seeking to obtain the guidance of actions. The latter focuses on extracting underlying moral implications and philosophical concepts in broader contexts beyond divination, considering their relevance to political

and social changes (see Cheng, 2003; Hon, 2004; Schöter, 2009). Clearly, the positions held by these two factions are closely linked to the themes that this article is concerned with, namely, the *divination* and *wisdom* within the *I Ching*. Therefore, it is necessary for us to understand their historical development.

Indeed, there has been a continuous dynamic tension between these two major factions. As mentioned earlier, prior to Confucius, the *I Ching* functioned as a symbolic system for understanding changes and was primarily used for divination purposes. However, Confucius' interpretation and commentaries transformed the book into a wisdom guide for seeking personal virtue. At the same time, this revolutionary interpretation also prompted researchers from the traditional Image-Number School to develop more complex and intricate methods of deduction based on imagery and numerical elements (Cheng, 2009, p. 101). During the Han Dynasty, the *I Ching* was widely employed for prediction and governance, and its cosmological perspective on the harmony of *yin* and *yang* was intricately associated with the empire's understanding of heavenly will and the regulation of human affairs (see Zhao, 2021). However, by the Wei-Jin period, divination practices associated with the *I Ching* had become heavily steeped in determinism and fatalism, accompanied by strong superstitions (Cheng, 2009, p. 101). It was during this period that the scholar Wang Bi, inspired by the *Tao Te Ching*, embarked on a reinterpretation of the *I Ching*. He discarded the methods of the Image-Number School and established a longstanding tradition of studying the *I Ching* from a philosophical perspective, laying the foundation for the flourishing study of Meaning-Principles within the Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism (Cheng, 2009, p. 101; Vilà & Galvany, 2019, pp. 70-73). In the late Qing Dynasty, with the archaeological discoveries of oracle bone inscriptions, attention shifted back to the interpretation of the *I Ching* text itself, gradually away from the abstract theories explained by the Song Dynasty (Nielsen, 2003). Additionally, during the May Fourth Movement, scholars resisted and rebelled against traditional Confucian teachings, leading to a resurgence of interest in the Image-Number School (Kunst, 1985, p. 2). It was not until the archaeological discovery of Silk Manuscripts of the *I Ching* in the 1973 that scholars realised the possibility of multiple interpretations of the hexagrams, as its order of the hexagrams is different from that in the received version (Cheng, 2009, p. 94). The study of the Image-Number School once again captured the interest of researchers, emphasising practical applications and individual purposes.

In general, throughout history, the Image-Number School and the Meaning-Principles School have coexisted with distinct stances but they have both made significant contributions to the development and study of the *I*

*Ching*. Therefore, when investigating the dissemination and reception of this Chinese text in Spain, a pivotal inquiry is which path it has pursued? The next section will provide valuable clues and context to explore this inquiry.

## 2. TRANSLATION OF THE *I CHING*

Given the scarcity of research on Spanish translations of the *I Ching*, this section will begin with a concise review of the translations and related studies of this classic work in Europe and the United States. This allows us to understand how the book has been introduced to Western readers and what impact those translations have had.

In the early 18th century, the first complete Latin version of the *I Ching* emerged in Europe. Among the subsequent translations, three stand out for their significance. In 1882, James Legge produced the first direct translation of *I Ching* from Chinese to English, viewing it as a vital carrier of Confucian culture (Wu, 2017, p. 135). Notably, although Legge recognised the *Yi* section's historical association with divination during the Zhou Dynasty, he did not hold later Chinese divination practices in high regard, attempting to dissociate this classic from such usage (Wu, 2017, p. 138). In 1924, Richard Wilhelm translated the *I Ching* from Chinese to German, illustrating how it provides guidance in a world of perpetual change and in situations of perplexity or moral dilemmas (Hughes, 1951, pp. 73-76). This translation established the *I Ching's* image as the *Book of Wisdom* in the Western world (Nielsen, 2003) and affirmed its role as a practical manual for divination (Wu, 2017, p. 182). In 1950, Cary F. Baynes, a student of the renowned psychologist Carl Jung, translated this German version into English. The significant impact of this indirect English translation published in the United States secured this version's position as a classic in the English-speaking world (Jiménez-Martín, 2021; Wu, 2017, p. 175). In the preface of this version, Jung highly valued the divination aspects of the *I Ching* and connected it with the concept of the *collective unconscious*, thereby introducing a psychological perspective to the interpretation of this Chinese classic. Importantly, this approach has influenced numerous subsequent translations of the *I Ching* (see Wu, 2017, p. 62).

Regarding the translation of the *I Ching* in the Spanish-speaking world, its inception was relatively late, and currently, there is very limited research on its translations. The first Spanish version of the *I Ching* was translated by Mirko Lauer in 1971. Lauer, not a Sinologist himself, mentioned in the preface that he had consulted other translations of this book, including Legge and Wilhelm's versions. Melis (1997, p. 363) confirmed Legge's profound influence on Lauer through comparing their texts. However, in contrast to Leger's passive attitude toward divinatory activity, Lauer (1971) denoted that

the *I Ching* is basically a “libro de consultas (book of consultations)” (p. 13). Besides, Lauer (1971, p. 22) explicitly stated that his version includes all the necessary content for conducting consultations. Therefore, it is not an academic work but serves to offer Spanish-speaking readers their very first encounter with this Chinese classic.

The second Spanish version of the *I Ching* was translated by D. J. Vogelmann. It was published first in Buenos Aires, in 1976, and later in Barcelona the following year (see Melis, 1997, p. 363). The translator indicated in the presentation part that it was translated strictly based on Wilhelm’s German translation. It was not until 1983 that the Spanish-speaking world saw its first direct translation from Chinese, completed by Carmelo Elorduy, a Spanish priest, missionary and Sinologist. In the following four decades, several indirect translations of the *I Ching* were published in Spain. During this period, in 2006, Spain had the second direct Chinese-Spanish translation of *I Ching*, completed by Jordi Vilà and Albert Galvany. Both are Sinologists, especially in the field of classical Chinese culture. Later in 2017, the Spanish Sinologist Gabriel García-Noblejas produced another direct translation.

Clearly, from the early 1980s to the present day, the enthusiasm for translating the *I Ching* in Spain has not diminished. However, there has been a significant lack of research output regarding these translated texts. In contrast, since James Legge’s English translation in 1882, the English academic community has engaged in substantial critical studies of various translations of the book (see Wu, 2017, p. 12). Furthermore, in the 1990s, a new generation of American scholars proposed a *historical turn* in this field, shifting the focus from translation to exploring the evolution of the *I Ching* in different historical periods and its cultural contexts (see Hon, 2021, pp. 3-6). In comparison, the studies of the *I Ching* and its translation in the Spanish-speaking world presents a certain lag. Nonetheless, with the increasing interest in Chinese culture within Spanish society and the development of Spanish Sinology, it becomes crucial to understand the bridge of cultural exchange built by Spanish translations of the *I Ching* and the destination to which it will lead Spanish readers.

### 3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The preliminary preparation for this study relies on the TXICC (Traducción del Chino al Catalán/Castellano) (Rovira-Esteva *et al.*, 2022), an open-access database established by the TXICC research group at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. This project has systematically collected empirical data on the translation of Chinese literature and films in Spain, providing researchers with detailed paratextual and extratextual information



about various translated versions, making it currently the most comprehensive database in the relevant field (Casas-Tost *et al.*, 2020, p. 33). However, the database currently only includes Chinese literature translated into Spanish, Catalan, Basque, and Galician published in Spain, excluding those published in Latin American countries, Andorra, or China (see Casas-Tost *et al.*, 2020, p. 30). As a result, the scope of this paper will be limited to the *I Ching's* Spanish translations published in Spain.

To date, the database contains a total of 15 Spanish translations of the *I Ching*. Among them, four entries are identified as direct translations from Chinese to Spanish. After verifying the physical books, we verified that two of them, both translated by Gabriel García-Noblejas, are identical in text and paratext. The only difference lies in that, one version was published in 2017, as an independent book, available in both physical and electronic formats, while the other version was included in a set called *Sabidurías orientales* ("Oriental Wisdoms") by the same publisher in 2018, along with Spanish translations of Sunzi's *Art of War* and Laozi's *Tao Te Ching*, also produced by the same translator. Indeed, the incorporation of the translation in a newly released set in 2018 might have resulted in certain changes in its extratextual elements, such as reader's comments. However, the two editions will be treated as a single translation for the scope of this study, focusing primarily on the inherent value conveyed by the paratextual elements rather than the commercial aspects.

In addition, when searching for another direct translation of the *I Ching* published in 2006 that is included in the database, we found that the edition currently available in the Spanish market is a reedited one in 2019. The publication information page and the publisher's official website for the book only mention it as the fourth edition, without providing any details about the second and third editions or any indications of revisions. Hence, the 2019 edition has been chosen for our analysis.

Certainly, according to the TXICC database, the indirect translations of the *I Ching* into Spanish are still dominant in terms of quantity, which is in line with the general situation of Chinese literature translated into Spanish (see Marin-Lacarta, 2018). However, the indirect translations may be influenced to a large extent by the intermediary language and its social context (see Marin-Lacarta, 2017), resulting in more complexities in their background information. Due to space constraints, the analysis in this paper will focus solely on the three direct translations collected in the database, which were first published in 1983, 2006 and 2017, respectively.

After determining the research materials with the assistance of the TXICC database, the study will no longer rely solely on the information

provided by the database but will examine directly the three selected translations. The analysis will focus on their paratexts, encompassing elements such as prefaces, translators' introductions, postscripts, and back cover information. Additionally, some important extratextual aspects, such as the book review provided by the publisher on the official website, will also be considered to gain more in-depth insights into the interpretation of the *I Ching* and its value orientation regarding the book's usage.

#### 4. ANALYSIS

In Table 1, basic information of the three direct translations and their essential paratextual elements for our analysis have been listed:

Data	TT1	TT2	TT3
<b>Title</b>	<i>Libro de los cambios</i>	<i>Yijing. El libro de los cambios</i>	<i>I Ching o El libro de los cambios</i>
<b>Translator(s)</b>	Carmelo Elorduy	Jordi Vilà and Albert Galvany	Gabriel García-Noblejas
<b>Year</b>	1983	2006 (reedition in 2019)	2017
<b>Publisher</b>	Editora Nacional	Atalanta	Alianza Editorial
<b>Num. of pages</b>	317	604	128
<b>Key Paratexts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduction by translator (Preface)</li> <li>- Translator's notes on each hexagram</li> <li>- Back cover</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Book cover</li> <li>- Introduction to the study of the <i>I Ching</i></li> <li>- Introduction to the work of Wang Bi</li> <li>- Wang Bi's general comments on the <i>I Ching</i></li> <li>- Divination through the <i>I Ching</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Editor's note</li> <li>- Introduction: Some necessary indications to use and understand this book</li> <li>- Afterword (<i>I Ching</i> in historical context)</li> <li>- Translator's notes</li> <li>- Back cover</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Translator's notes throughout the book</li> <li>- Translators' Profile</li> <li>- Back cover</li> </ul>	
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**Table 1. Basic information of the materials**

Source. Elaborated by the author

#### 4.1 *A Wisdom Book Vilified by Divination*

The translator of TT1, Carmelo Elorduy, was a priest and a Sinologist with profound knowledge of Chinese literature and culture. In TT1, Elorduy provides the reader with an introduction of 22 pages, which can be divided into six sections: an overview of the *I Ching* (including its origins, historical background, and how the 64 hexagrams are constructed), the symbolism of the hexagrams and how they are interpreted, the *I Ching's* ideology, the *I Ching's* valuation, references consulted during the translation, and a general commentary.

Throughout the introduction, we can see Elorduy repeatedly praising the *I Ching* for the leading role it plays in wisdom, ethics, and humanism. For instance, in the second section, Elorduy (1983, p. 12) affirms the *I Ching* as a “libro sapiencial (sapiencial book),” emphasising its practical purpose. Nevertheless, his notion of practicality does not pertain to divination but rather to the cultivation of great individuals with strong, stable, and enduring virtues. Furthermore, he believes that the heights reached by classical Chinese ethics needed to be attributed to the *I Ching*.

Although recognising that historically the *I Ching* has been used for divination activities, Elorduy (1983) holds a skeptical attitude towards this usage. Elorduy (1983, p. 21) argues that the concept of *Zhan* (“占” ‘divination’) refers to the wisdom of individuals based on deductive reasoning, namely, individuals carefully discern outcomes by considering the underlying causes according to natural and social processes, rather than relying on random predictions of mundane divination. Elorduy further cautions readers that the esteemed text once faced vilification due to its use of *auspicious* and *inauspicious* terms when evaluating various life situations. To illustrate this point, he recounts the invasion of the Eight-Nation Alliance to China in 1900. According to his account, the *I Ching* was consulted for divination when China needed to decide whether to declare war and two consecutive auspicious

results inspired them to involve themselves in the disastrous war. He concludes that the reason for this misguided decision lies in the diviners' failure to grasp the wise advice provided by the resulting hexagrams and to reflect on how to take appropriate action in such a perilous situation. Instead, they solely focused on the *I Ching's* auspicious and inauspicious judgments.

Based on this negative stance towards divination activities, the translator only briefly mentions once the use of 64 stalks of yarrow straw for divination in the introductory part, without providing any specific methods or steps for readers to conduct a divination practice. Besides, Elorduy (1983, p. 23) states his surprise about that a book written as a manual for soothsayers has turned out to be a book of remarkable philosophical wisdom, perfect ethics, and high humanism. In the concluding remarks of the introduction, regarding whether the *I Ching* should be regarded as a divination book, Elorduy mentions that, as a translator, he does not seek to make the final judgment in the relevant debate, but he still hopes that his reflections on this matter can be helpful to the readers. In fact, the back cover of this version implicates a message consistent with the translator's attitude. This part of the paratexts highlights that both Confucius and the famous psychologist Carl Jung considered the *I Ching* to be a significant contribution to human wisdom. However, notably absent from the back cover is any reference to divination, despite Jung's appreciation of the *I Ching's* divinatory function as a guide for human actions.

In brief, the 1983 version appears to distance Spanish readers from the Image-Number School by criticising people's misunderstanding and misuse of divination principles. Simultaneously, it strongly appreciates the cosmic consciousness inherent in the *I Ching* and respects Confucius as a prominent interpreter, thus indicating a clear inclination towards the Meaning-Principles School that enables individuals to comprehend the development of natural and societal processes. Nevertheless, despite the detailed notes of the philosophical implications provided by the translator for each of the 64 hexagrams in *Yi* text, it is noteworthy that this version does not fully include the content of the *Jing* part, namely, the *Ten Wings*. It solely provides translations for the *Tuan*, *Xiang*, and *Wen-yan* sections that appear alongside the main text of the *Yi*. The translator did not offer explanations on this matter, simply stating that he only translated the text itself of the *Book of Changes* (Elorduy, 1983, p. 21). Consequently, it fails to provide Spanish readers with a detailed textual vehicle for a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of change and the relationship between humans and the cosmos in the *I Ching*.

#### 4.2 *Wisdom as a Premise for Divination*

Compared to TT1, TT2 contains more extensive paratextual information. Regarding the two translators, their professional profiles can be found at the end of the book, both of whom have deep roots in Chinese traditional culture. Jordi Vilà has a profound background in Traditional Chinese Medicine and Daoist study and is proficient in Qigong, Tai-Chi, and acupuncture. Albert Galvany specialises in Classical Chinese and the history of ancient Chinese thought, and he translated *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu before.

Jordi Vilà provides a thorough introduction to the title, origins (mythological and historical), structure, and related studies of the *I Ching*, in which he emphasises the multifaceted nature of this classical text, regarding it as “an excellent historical record that allows to know the history, religion, philosophy, traditions, proverbs, and language of the times of the oldest Chinese dynasties” (Vilà, 2019, p. 16)<sup>1</sup>. Besides, he specifically made some clarification of the translation of the book, mentioning that they have consulted various versions of the Chinese source text in order to contemplate the diverse possibilities of interpreting this canonical text, and they have added many notes throughout the book to help readers’ understanding. Crucially, in TT2, not only the text of the *Yi* but also the *Jing* has been fully translated. Furthermore, this version has included Wang Bi’s annotations on each hexagram and line, which are placed in parentheses to distinguish them from the original text of the *I Ching*.

In the second part of the preface, Albert Galvany has provided detailed information about Wang Bi’s historical background and this figure’s understanding of the *I Ching* from a Taoist perspective. In the third part, Galvany has translated Wang Bi’s overall observations on the *Yi Jing* and has added 38 detailed endnotes. All this information occupies 42 pages, a considerable portion of the 92-page preface. As mentioned in section 2.2 of this paper, Wang Bi (226 – 249) was a scholar of the Wei-Jin Dynasty. Inspired by the *Tao Te Ching*, he departed from the prevailing Image-Number approach of his time and focused on the philosophical aspects of the *Yi Jing*, becoming a pivotal figure in the Meaning-Principles School.

Evidently, through comprehensively translating the commentaries by Confucius and later scholars and integrating Wang Bi’s perspectives, TT2 has reinforced its acknowledgment of the *I Ching* as a book of wisdom. Specifically, its guiding principle aims to facilitate a nuanced understanding of

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<sup>1</sup> Original text in Spanish: “... un excelente registro histórico que permite conocer la historia, la religión, la filosofía, las tradiciones, los proverbios y el lenguaje de los tiempos de las dinastías chinas más antiguas.”

individuals' circumstances, offer deeper insights into the origins and dynamics of changes in the universe, and help individuals recognise the opportunities and inherent limitations at a specific moment (Vilà & Galvany, 2019, p. 73-75). This comprehension empowers individuals to formulate precise and well-considered strategies for real-life actions.

When it comes to divination, this version exhibits a rational and moderate attitude of acknowledgment. After the main text of the *I Ching*, the translator Jordi Vilà (2019) offers a 16-page introduction to divination through the *I Ching*. This section begins with him suggesting that the *I Ching* does not empower us to predict the future, but rather teaches us to face the future by being well informed. Vilà then denotes that the textual content (*i.e.*, comments on each line) and hexagram images together constitute a repository of information. By approaching this storehouse with a proper mental state, individuals can increase their knowledge of a specific situation, thus minimising false conclusions, and predicting upcoming changes in a given system (Vilà & Galvany, 2019, p. 584). More importantly, the core concepts of the *I Ching* are *change* and *impermanence*, in which favourability ominousness, benefit, and humiliation are not absolute concepts, but rather relative states of affairs and will eventually transform into their opposites. After clarifying these notions, Jordi Vilà reminds the reader that in traditional Chinese culture, divination activities often require some specific solemn preparatory rituals and maintaining a calm and focused mind, with respect, humility, and sincerity. But he also understands that it can be difficult for Western readers to accomplish these rituals, and therefore points out that readers should at least remain sincere and reject distractions during divination. He then provides comprehensive instructions for formulating an appropriate question, constructing a hexagram, utilising two distinct divination methods (*i.e.*, the use of yarrow sticks or three coins), and interpreting the results of divination.

Evidently, the paratextual content provided by the translators conveys the idea of integrating the philosophical interpretation and the application of numerical symbols while studying the *I Ching*. However, the fact that the observations by Wang Bi are placed in the preface while the divination content is presented in the afterword still implies a hierarchical distinction, suggesting that the philosophical interpretation serves as a prerequisite for divination in the *I Ching*. This aspect is also validated and reinforced in its book reviews and back cover content.

The book cover cites a review by Isidoro Reguera (2006) published in the prestigious Spanish newspaper *El País*, highlighting it as the first direct and complete translation from Chinese to Spanish, emphasising the inclusion of Wang Bi's comments and praising the translators' introductions and notes

as exemplary<sup>2</sup>. Yet, the term *divination* is absent in this excerpt. Moreover, the other five book reviews (or excerpts) provided by the publisher on the book's official website, which serve as important extratextual elements, also make no reference to any content related to divination. On the back cover, the *I Ching* is briefly mentioned as originally being a divination manual, but the focus quickly shifts to its philosophical significance in history. Later, in line with the book cover, it once again emphasises the expertise of the two translators in the Chinese language and culture and the importance of Wang Bi's perspective. Evidently, these two paratextual elements aim to establish the professionalism and authority of this version as a rendition of the "Chinese philosophical classic" for Spanish readers without resorting to the use of *divination* as a promotional tactic to attract potential readers.

Overall, the rich paratextual content provided by TT2 presents a perspective that combines the approaches of the Image-Number and the Meaning-Principles Schools to understand the *I Ching*. Nevertheless, it is also evident that this version does not expect readers to overly focus on the divinatory practices advocated by the Image-Number School. Rather, it guides readers to contemplate more deeply the insights that the Meaning-Principles faction within this ancient Chinese text can offer us about the relationships between human life, nature, and the entire cosmos.

#### 4.3 *A Divinatory Book with Annotations Distorting its Original Meaning*

The TT3 features a two-page editor's notes section preceding the translator's preface, which provides valuable information for our analysis. Throughout the notes, there is no mention of any philosophical and moral aspects of the *I Ching*. Instead, the section begins by establishing the *I Ching* as a divinatory text that has been transmitted through millennia and applied by millions of people worldwide. It also accentuates the reader's autonomy in using the *I Ching* for divination, stating that while ancient divination required a specialised interpreter, each individual in the 21st century can interpret the results for themselves. It is noteworthy that the notes here indicate that such divination activity can serve as a perfect pretext for enjoyable moments among friends, a completely different attitude from the seriousness expressed in TT2. Towards the end, the notes draw a parallel between the *I Ching's* inner journey and the ancient Greek oracle of Delphi: "Know yourself". The notes strategically build connections with familiar elements from Western cultural backgrounds to bridge the psychological gap between the Spanish readers

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<sup>2</sup> The original book cover content: "Primera traducción directa y completa del chino al castellano [...]. En ella, por primera vez también, se introduce los legendarios comentarios de Wang Bi a las distintas partes del texto, así como sus "Observaciones generales". Las introducciones y notas de los traductores son modélicas." (Reguera, 2006)

and the *I Ching*, thereby encouraging them to embark on an inward exploration applying this classical Chinese text.

The subsequent translator's preface addresses three topics: the structure of the *I Ching*, the purpose of using it, and the method for utilising it, all of which strongly indicate the practical value orientation of the translator towards the book. García-Noblejas (2017) notes that the structure of the *I Ching* resembles more of a dictionary rather than a philosophical essay, and it does not aim to support, argue, elaborate, or derive specific viewpoints. Therefore, readers should approach this book as they would use a dictionary, consulting it whenever they need particular information (p. 13). In the second part, the translator confirms the book's purpose as revealing the future, as it did many centuries ago (p. 15)<sup>3</sup>. The third part constitutes a detailed explanation of the process of divination using three coins and presents practical scenarios as teaching examples. Besides, the translator specifically emphasises that the divination method taught here is the simplest one.

Regarding the main text of the *I Ching* in TT3, there are only names and explanatory texts for each hexagram (“卦辞” *guaci*) and each line (“爻辞” *yaoci*)—collectively known as the *Yi* section, the core text of the original *I Ching*. García-Noblejas (2017) provided some annotations to explain certain concepts but did not translate any content from the *Jing* part. In the translator's postscript, the reason for such a complete omission was elucidated. In García-Noblejas's (2017, p. 98) opinion, the *Jing* part reflects various personalised viewpoints from different schools that significantly diverged from the original core text's perspectives, ultimately leading to obscurity and distortion of the original meaning and content<sup>4</sup>. As a result, the translator chose to translate only the *Yi* section, which has historically served as a guide for decision-making since the Zhou Dynasty.

Subsequently, the translator not only emphasised the *I Ching's* continued usage as a divinatory book in contemporary Chinese cultural-influenced areas, but also presented various divination methods used in Chinese history. Most importantly, in the translator's description, the divination constitutes a means of communication established between humanity and the divine. Besides, the content on the back cover of this book

<sup>3</sup> See the original text: “de modo que el *Libro de los cambios* sigue sirviendo para lo mismo que hace muchos siglos: para desvelar el futuro” (García-Noblejas, 2017, p. 15).

<sup>4</sup> See the original text: “Dado que las adiciones oscurecen y desvirtúan el sentido y el contenido originales, hemos traducido aquí la versión recibida, que el emperador Kang Xi hiciera pública en 1715 y que se empleaba ya en la dinastía Zhou a modo de libro para saber cómo actuar en función de un futuro conocido” (García-Noblejas, 2017, p. 98).



continues to emphasise that the *I Ching* enables individuals to attain wisdom in the realm of divination.

In summary, in contrast to the other two versions examined in this paper, TT3 takes a critical stance towards the *Jing* component that normally has been considered a crucial vehicle for the moral, philosophical, and wisdom aspects of the *I Ching*. It asserts that the added comments and annotations by later generations constitute a distortion of the *Yi* core text, thereby fundamentally rejecting the approach of the Meaning-Principles School. On the other hand, by introducing in detail the application of the simplest three-coin method, the book guides Spanish readers in foreseeing the future in daily life and conveys the notion that *divination* can be seen as entertainment. Nevertheless, this pocket-sized book of only 128 pages does not provide detailed explanations of the intricate changes, derivations, and multiple symbolic meanings within the traditional Chinese divinatory systems. Therefore, while completely negating the study of the Meaning-Principles School, the 2017 version demonstrates a practical inclination toward the Image-Number School, rather than a theoretical one.

#### DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

By analysing the paratexts in three direct Chinese-Spanish translations of the *I Ching*, this paper has revealed their different value orientations towards this classical text. While the three versions acknowledge the *I Ching* as an ancient Chinese repository of wisdom, they manifest varying inclinations towards the cosmological and numerological schools of thought on the *I Ching*. That is to say, their interpretations of the book diverge regarding the interrelation between this *wisdom* and the practice of *divination*. Considering the respective social and historical contexts in which they were produced, these three versions also have generated varied impacts on the dissemination and reception of this classical Chinese text *I Ching* in Spain.

In the 1980s, after the end of Franco's dictatorship, Spain accelerated its democratisation process. This societal transformation facilitated a more active embrace of foreign cultures and the establishment of diverse channels of exchange (Chang, 2020, p. 131). Notably, this era witnessed the first significant increase in the translation (especially direct translation) of Chinese literature in Spain (Casas-Tost, 2022), reflecting Spain's growing interest in learning about Chinese society. The first direct translation of the *I Ching*, published in 1983, emerged precisely under this background. With an extremely limited number of Spanish speakers proficient in Chinese at that time, a group of Spanish Sinologists and translators played a pivotal role in bridging these two distant thoughts, with Carmelo being undoubtedly among them (see Chang, 2020, p. 133). It is reasonable to believe that the translator,

Carmelo, closely related his interpretation of the *I Ching* to his role as a priest. In concrete, his profound theological and philosophical background led him to exhibit a preference for the cosmology of the book, while cautioning readers not to place their life's expectations in the random decisions and guidance of divination. Translating the *I Ching* directly from Chinese to Spanish, as Melis (1997, p. 367) stated, was a daunting task, yet it embodies a genuine *mission*: to directly link readers with the spark of divinity, establishing a connection between themselves and the universe, temporality, and eternity. As a Spanish Sinologist well-versed in both the Chinese language and classical Chinese philosophy, Carmelo's translation facilitated the first direct *divine* dialogue between Spanish readers and the *I Ching*. This positioned the 1983 Spanish version prominently within the history of translations. Therefore, Carmelo's cautious and prudent perspective on the numerology likely exerted a lasting influence on Spanish readers, fostering a belief in the unparalleled value of the book in cultivating decent personal morality, while avoiding its use for divination.

Regarding the 2006 version (reedition in 2019), despite the cautious and distant attitude towards divination presented in the book covers and book reviews, it actually maintains an open, moderate, and integrative stance, advocating the combination of the two different approaches to interpret the book. In other words, the *I Ching*, as a repository of wisdom, does not necessarily conflict with its role as a guide for divinatory practices. Based on this notion, this book attempts to convince readers that a profound understanding of the ethical and philosophical principles embedded in the *I Ching* is a prerequisite for engaging in serious and dignified divination. In fact, the release of the 2006 version in the Spanish market coincided with the second substantial surge in translations of Chinese literature in Spain during the first decade of the 21st century, with a volume nearly tripled compared to the 1980s (Casas-Tost, 2022), which was largely influenced by the Nobel Prize in Literature awarded to Chinese author Gao Xingjian in 2000 (Marin-Lacarta, 2012, p. 214). The 2019 reedition of the book also corresponds to Spain's continued enthusiasm for Chinese literature in the 2010s. However, as noted by Marin-Lacarta (2018), despite this trend, the Anglophone, and Francophone literary systems still have a dominant influence over the translation and reception of modern and contemporary Chinese literature in Spain, whether through indirect translation or the selection of works (both direct and indirect). Considering the confirmed influences of the English and German versions of the *I Ching* on its previous indirect Spanish translations (see section 2) and the number of *I Ching*'s indirect translations (see section 3), this dominance is also evident in the translation of this classical Chinese text. In the context of the continued marginalization of Chinese literary translations (especially Chinese direct translations) in the Spanish-translated

book market (Wang, 2016, p. 77), this comprehensive direct translation of the *I Ching* is indeed remarkable. In the various paratextual elements of this book, there is a strong emphasis on the profound Chinese language, cultural, and philosophical backgrounds of the two translators. Additionally, this edition, compared to the 1983 version by Carmelo, includes a complete translation of the *Jing* section, and offers extensive introductions to the historical development of the *I Ching*. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that this translation has taken into account the latest archaeological discoveries on the *I Ching* made within China in recent decades. This effort clearly aims to build a direct, solid, and up-to-date connection between Spanish public and this remote and ancient Chinese wisdom. Therefore, this version can indeed be seen as the kind of “new faction (nueva escuela)” of *I Ching* translation advocated by Melis (1997 p. 367) back in 1997, appealing to a new generation of Spanish readers seeking deeper insights into this repository of classical Chinese culture. Moreover, the extensive relevant references in this book could hold considerable academic value for Spanish-speaking scholars conducting studies in this field.

Regarding the 2017 version, it negates the crucial role of the *Jing* part as the carrier of the philosophical and ethical values of the *I Ching*, thereby cutting off the path to the Meaning-Principles school. This unconventional, even somewhat radical value judgement appears as a deviation from the canon. Nevertheless, this viewpoint can find resonance among earlier Western scholars of *Yi* studies. For instance, Legge (1963, pp. 41-43), Shaughnessy (1983, p. 14), and Kunst (1985) attempted to separate the study of *Yi* from *Jing*, focusing solely on the *Yi* itself, as they consider the *Ten Wings* an obstacle to correctly understanding the original meaning of the *Yi* (Wu, 2021, p. 52). However, since the translator García-Noblejas (2017) did not mention similar viewpoints or reference materials from those Western scholars in the paratext, the book’s Spanish-speaking readers would encounter significant difficulties if they wished to delve deeper into the origin of this perspective. On the other hand, at the beginning, this version establishes an association between this ancient Chinese mystical text and ancient Greek divine will, bridging the mental gap between the text and Spanish readers. Importantly, the approach of infusing entertainment into *I Ching* divination undoubtedly brought the book’s usage into the realm of popular mass culture, encouraging individuals to lay down their burdens and overcome their reservations and apprehensions towards the ancient civilization. Consequently, it carries the potential to alleviate the idea of the *I Ching* as an obscure, inscrutable, and ancient text of oriental philosophy among Spanish readers, thus initiating an intriguing cultural journey. Simultaneously, it introduces an element of entertainment to the divination practice and empowers contemporary individuals with the autonomy to

interpret the results. Indeed, this practical viewpoint aligns with today's growing emphasis, as mentioned in section 1.2 of this paper, on the personal application of *I Ching* numerology in daily life and the potential enlightenment it may bring. In the current context of increased need for mutual exchange between Spain and China across various domains, this method of practical *I Ching* reading, and utilisation proposed by a Spanish Sinologist could indeed serve as a meaningful step in mitigating cultural barriers between China and Spain.

Indeed, intending to view the *I Ching* in a unified way may be inherently challenging. The meaning of the *I Ching* has been changing constantly, adapting to the needs of different historical and social contexts (Hon, 2021, p. 6). Whether Confucius, Wang Bi in Chinese history, or Jung in the Western context, their innovative interpretive approaches have generated fresh insights into this ancient classical text. Therefore, instead of criticising the interpretive perspectives of any one of these Spanish versions of *I Ching*, a more reasonable approach would be to comprehensively consider their roles and impacts on Spain within their respective historical and social contexts. However, due to this paper's focus solely on three direct Spanish translations of the *I Ching*, it still lacks the ability to present a comprehensive picture of the reception and dissemination of this Chinese classic in Spain. To enhance and complete this work, further in-depth research involving other indirect translations needs to be conducted in the future. Despite this limitation, as a pioneering study in the field, this research reveals the dynamic and manifold representations of the *I Ching* during its journey in the Spanish-speaking world, laying the foundation for future investigations. Crucially, it offers the potential to illuminate broader implications for cross-cultural communication and knowledge exchange, aiding in the continuous exploration of the relevance of the *I Ching* across various global contexts.

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