

Names of operations in ancient China:

Which hints can we read from them?

15 June 2012, seminar SAW

Karine Chemla
REHSEIS—SPHERE
UMR 7219 (CNRS & University Paris Diderot)
ERC Advanced Grant — Project SAW

In the course of the year 2011-2012, I devoted several talks to the hypothesis of a change that occurred in ancient China between the 2nd century BCE and the 1st century CE with respect to the practice of division. This talk approached the change about division from the perspective of a shift in the terminology of division. The manuscripts recently excavated and the classic of the 1st century BCE or CE *The Gnomon of Zhou* bear witness to prescriptions of division by means of similar expressions whereas the prescription of division evidenced in *The Nine Chapters* testifies to new uses of an ancient term. Further, the shift in terminology seems to allow us to distinguish between different chapters in *The Nine Chapters* and show that some could be more recent than others.