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A Brief History of Daring

> The person who speaks with understanding (*xun noōi*) must insist upon what is shared (*xunōi*) by all, as a city insists upon its laws and customs. – Heraclitus fr. 114 Diels-Kranz
>
> The institutions and policies of the former kings are the tools the ruler uses to share with (*gong* 共) the crowd. His orders are the tools he, a single person (*du* 獨), uses to rule others. 先王之政所以與眾共也, 己之命所以獨制人也. – Wang Fu, *Qianfu lun* ("Shuai zhi" 衰制 chap.).

In early China, the idea of superior knowledge, so essential to the conception of sage rule, ran counter to the value placed on shared experience and understanding. For insofar as any claim to know was a claim to special insight and personal authority, it defied conventions of sharing and ran the risk of appearing imperious and inciting resentment. Therefore, common courtesy virtually required people to say of themselves that they "did not dare [claim to] know" (*bu gan zhi* 不敢知); this self-deprecating formula in essence signaled, "I dare not claim to command any special knowledge that you yourself may not know." Indeed, the ubiquitous phrase "not daring," while appearing in many disparate contexts, most often was intended to convey the polite speaker's reluctance to claim any monopoly on knowledge, understanding, or insight. The more powerful the well-educated person, the more incumbent it was for him or her to experience and duly perform a sense of trepidation when venturing to speak. To mitigate the threat, cultural norms provided highly ritualized ways to avoid seeming to act so as "to monopolize" discussions and decision-making (*zhuan* 專); taking action "alone," i.e., "on one's own authority" (*du* 獨), or acting "selfishly" (*si* 私), on privileged information or insights was taboo. Part and parcel of high cultural learning was an extraordinary sophistication in confronting psychological and sociopolitical dilemmas whose parameters we trace in this essay.[1]

1 For those who continue to embrace the myth that the early Chinese could not think in abstract terms, we urge consideration of He Xiu's theories of the Three Ages for the Gongyang which approach in complexity, abstraction, and counter-abstraction the sci-fi *The Three Body Problem*. In Chinese, Huang Pumin (1998) provides a basic introduction to this theory; in English, one may consult Arbuckle (1991), Hsiao (1979), and Liu (2014). See also the large body of Karine Chemla's work on mathematical computations. Sophistication is also evident in the *Shangshu dazhuan* assertion that the allotted time of a particular dynasty may expire without the need for any outrageous misbehavior on the part of any "bad last sovereign"; dynasties might simply shift like the seasons. For further information, see Arbuckle (1991) 116. Han Ying, another Ru master from Yan, agreed.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110784312-004

Always, as the Wang Fu epigram suggests, impulses to share authority had to be squared with the requirements of hierarchy, undergirded by ritual propriety. After all, there was but one ruler and a small circle of advisors at court, but the administration of a vast empire depended on many activities besides sharing ideas, sometimes in messy and protracted deliberations. As Sheldon Wolin has observed, the central problematic of governing has always been "how to render politics compatible with the requirements of order, so as to reconcile the conflicts created by competition under conditions of scarcity with the demands of public tranquility" [aka "harmony," "concord," or security].[2] The administration also needed institutions designed to ensure efficient order, so that, in the best of all possible worlds, "not a single person in the crowds of officials and functionaries would ever dare to follow the ruler's commands less than wholeheartedly" 群臣百吏莫敢不悉心從己令矣.[3] This profound tension between shared (*gong*) deliberations and singular (*du*) powers and privileges reserved for the highest-ranking members of court[4] created a dynamic arena for negotiation within early Chinese politics. The motif of "undaring" was crucial to that structure, which, in theory, allowed the experienced person to strike a careful balance between claiming knowledge and authority, on the one hand, and alleviating suspicions that the claims were self-aggrandizing in any way.

This essay consists of four parts. The first examines the rhetoric of "undaring" in the *Documents* classic (*Shangshu* 尚書), undoubtedly the most influential repository of political theory in early and middle-period China. The second part turns to the prescriptive teachings urging the person of immense privilege to "not dare to monopolize" (*bu gan zhuan*), where passage after passage urges the reader *not* to claim special insight, even when the person is highly, even uniquely placed as a sage, king, or sage-ruler. Since all good political theory is to some degree diagnostic[5] (and Chinese political theory unabashedly so), part three provides good examples of direct remonstrance in which a Han emperor was reportedly taken aback by an officer's "daring" to interject unpalatable counsel into polite court assemblies. The fourth and final part looks briefly at some of the institutions in the early empires in China designed to foster the ideal "sharing" of knowledge. These institutions, we argue, relieved some portion of the emotional burdens of "daring to know" by providing occasions when personal views were solicited on behalf of the common good. As we see

2 Wolin (2004) 10–11.

3 *Qianfu lun, juan* 5, 317.

4 *Du* does not necessarily refer to the ruler alone, according to *Du duan*. See Giele (2006).

5 Sluga (2014) mentions five aspects of the "diagnostic turn," which require philosophers to study history.

it, in setting up such institutions of shared authority, the emperor and his chief advisors sought to spare themselves the obvious dangers attending claims to autocratic authority in decision-making. Precedent and custom – Wang Fu's "institutions of the former kings" – weighed as heavily on the highest-ranking members of the court, it seems, as upon the lowly, perhaps much more so, given that their reputations would be scrutinized by later generations.[6] As the *Odes* puts it,

> They say heaven is high, but 謂天蓋高
> I **dare** not *not* crouch. 不敢不蹐
> They say earth is firm ground, but 謂地蓋厚
> I **dare** not *not* tread lightly. 不敢不蹐
> Pitiful are we of recent times, 哀今之人
> Forced to confront these snakes! 胡為虺蜴
> At a minimum, one never **dares** take a stand in the world, 本不敢立於人間
> How much worse, for anyone **daring** to take a stand at court! 況敢立於朝乎
> Guarding oneself never means escape from harm! 自守猶不免患
> How much worse, for anyone **daring** to protect himself from his peers! 況敢守於時乎
> The faultless are still slandered, and 無過猶見誣枉
> How much worse, for anyone who **dares** to offend! 而況敢有罪乎
> Shutting one's mouth never brings relief from calumny 閉口而獲誹謗
> How much worse, for anyone who **dares** to talk straight! 況敢直言乎

Before proceeding to Part I, we would like to outline our thinking, in particular what we see as the intellectual stakes of this ongoing project of ours. Initially we chose this particular topic for three cogent reasons:

1. "Daring" and "undaring" are neutral terms that convey admirable and despicable feelings and actions, and hence come with fewer entrainments;[7]
2. Always the language of daring is deployed within the context of real-life dilemmas, and so it immediately alerts us to the knottier problems of socio-political co-existence in antiquity, unlike the fashionable platitudes, virtue words, and abstractions of their period or ours;[8]

6 Ban Gu's *Hanshu*, which spends a great deal of time outlining the difficulties of balancing the need to be courteous with the need to be forthright and upright, shows us that emperors in many cases also faced impossible dilemmas squaring the two incommensurate needs (e.g., *Hanshu* 82.3371–74). That officials were acutely aware of this is clear from the story of Wang Feng and Du Qin. See Loewe (2000) 81–82, 520–21; also *Hanshu* 67.2922: 鳳專勢擅朝; cf. *Hou Hanshu* 60A.2006.

7 On methodological issues, we are guided by Schäfer (1986); Fischer (1970); Geuss (2008); and Chappel (2014).

8 Here, we admire the bracing observations by Anderson (2018).

3. At the same time, the early texts define morality, good governance, and sometimes even civilizational order in terms of what those with access to power and privilege can or cannot bear to do and dare or do not dare to do.[9] Accordingly, tracing such ideas supplies a far better picture of the "social glue" (their metaphor) they believed bound their early "emotional communities" in China.[10]

For these reasons, this brief history of daring promises deeper probes into the emotional lives of members of the governing elite in the early empires than any conventional list of set "emotions."[11] Earlier secondary studies have noted the conventions of status and hierarchy displays, yes, but many Sinologists have dismissed the powerful rhetoric of "daring" and "undaring" outright, seeing it as "mere meaningless politesse," not worth a second look. Closer examination of the history gets us closer to the continual adjustments made to unfolding situations in real time, with some skirting of tricky moral issues. Discerning how social divisions within society were construed, constituted, and maintained through authoritative performances in pre-industrial societies far more reliant than we on bonds of personal trust also gives us moderns a more fine-grained sense of how far one could go to challenge others' authority.[12]

As David Graeber notes, all formulae indicate, establish, and so reaffirm the hierarchies.[13] The interlocking structures provided by the rival hierarchies in China's early empires required continual reaffirmations, insofar as they tended to be unstable, with that instability doubtless exacerbated by the era's limited facilities for transportation and communication.[14] Factions, families, and individuals alike experienced rapid upward and downward mobility to a degree almost unimaginable today. Meanwhile, the values of the old warrior aristocracy needed to be adapted to the new realities of the centralized empires, necessitating frequent re-adjustments to the longstanding roles assumed by power-holders, functionaries, experts, and visionary masters. No wonder that

9 See, e.g., *Shiji* 126.3213.

10 Examples that come readily to mind are *ke* 可 ("I consent") and *zhi* 制 ("The rules say . . . "). For the phrase "emotional community," see Rosenwein (2017).

11 We all can cite our favorite stories about the "emotions" in early China, and most of us can supply "lists" of the four, five, or more "emotions" (which actually refer to what "moves the heart" and often refers more to inclinations than to emotions).

12 See Johnstone (2011).

13 Graeber's most relevant texts here are Graeber (2015) and Graeber/Sahlins (2017).

14 Nylan's forthcoming essay for *The Cambridge History of China* describes no fewer than eleven separate hierarchies in play in early China.

nearly all early texts, regardless of genre, reveal the intense scrutiny directed to acts of daring and undaring, in light of the post-facto praise or blame attached to them.[15] We figure we must be on to something since nearly every text we have read for the early empires circles 'round the issues we summarize here. To give the reader some idea of the enormous source base we have explored, we have prepared a sample set in Tables 1a-b.

Al Pacino once remarked, a good actor is "always looking for that thing that's going on besides the words." We students of history, much like the historical agents whose regimes we study, must remain alert to the subtexts informing the standard writings and scripted gestures, the court institutions and conventional practices. For that reason, our paper mulls over the single concept cluster centered on daring and undaring, sketching the perennial yet highly situation-specific problems relating to trust and mistrust, in the belief that this concept cluster certainly had wide-ranging ramifications then, and perhaps tells us something worth knowing even today.

1 The *Documents* Classic and Daring

Most modern scholars writing about imperial China predicate their hypotheses on an autocratic emperor who issued top-down directives to "those below" (subjects who had no say in the matter).[16] Abundant counter-evidence exists to challenge this presumption, in both the prescriptive and descriptive texts compiled during pre-Han and Han.[17] Therefore, this part focuses on the *Documents* classic, as the "crown" of the Five Classics,[18] whose early readings define sages, rulers, and regents in unambiguously non-autocratic terms.

15 The *Shitong* is full of passages attesting the lengths to which post-facto praise and blame could go, e.g., *Shitong*, 12:2/47, the story of Wei Shou.

16 Such claims tally with many of the religious scholars' arguments, beginning with Weber, that "teachers" in Asia command unusual authority that brooks no dissent from students. See Weber ([1922] 1993) rpt. 52.

17 Prescriptive and descriptive passages exist in nearly all of our sources. NB: most of our work emphasizes the differences between Western and Eastern dynasties, but here those may be less germane, especially as so few of our sources can be precisely dated. Nylan (2008) has defined "early empires" as late Zhanguo (and more specifically, after 323 BC) through AD 316, i.e., the pre-Buddhist world.

18 See *Shitong* 7:26/5, for the *Documents* classic as crown. Nylan (2021) shows that it was the *Documents* classic – and not the *Analects* or the *Mencius* – that was considered *the* main classical source of Han political thinking. Second only to the *Documents* classic in importance was the *Xunzi* 荀子.

In the Han-era *Documents*, all effective rulers by definition (a) readily acknowledge their dependence on a huge range of factors and forces, including cosmic conjunctions, the gods and ancestors in heaven, and a host of subjects whose thoughts and feelings are not just hard to ascertain but ultimately unknowable;[19] (b) accordingly, endeavor to ascertain the views of as many interest groups as possible through wide consultation via a range of methods, including direct inquiry, repeated divinations, court audiences held in the capital and provinces, and even invitations to speak issued to such low-status subjects as fodder- and fuel-gatherers, widows and orphans;[20] and by this means (c) good rulers were to carefully avoid the appearance that they are, in fact, the deciders, in the full knowledge that such prudential acts occasioned by fear may sometimes constrain them, although they also offer undeniable benefits to the body politic on which all rely.[21] Close reading of the earliest traditions relating to the *Documents* classic confirms this picture, point by point, as do a host of masterworks portraying good governance, under the influence of the *Documents* (see below).[22]

The early empires celebrated the *Documents* for its ample supply of instructive scenes modeling the ruler's trust in wide consultation prior to undertaking new policy initiatives. By the early readings, it was incumbent upon the ruler not to monopolize power (*bu gan zhuan* 不敢專), just as the leading members of his court should never arrogate to themselves the powers and privileges reserved for their superiors (*bu gan shan* 不敢擅). Riffing on the antique rhetoric of intimate friendship, one Han authority remarked, "I have heard that each and every one of the wise rulers of antiquity searched high and low for worthy men to support and protect him."[23] By a second source, even the ruler's use of a specific pronoun for the "royal we" raises a problem: all rulers and their administrators, based on

19 Hence Yang Xiong's resort to the Mystery 玄 as synonym for "the way things are." Cf. Hannah Arendt's "we are in no position ever to know all causes that come into play" (Arendt [1961] 144), or even what motivates our own actions, as noted in Fingarette (1969). *Hanji, juan* 16 (Xun Yue's comment on Zhaodi's reign), puts it vividly: "This explains why in antiquity the enlightened kings all were terrified, as if they were stepping on a tiger's tail" 是以昔者明王戰戰兢兢如履虎尾.

20 "Da gao": 遺我大寶龜. That this was the standard reading in Han times is suggested by the "Qi lue" (Seven Summaries), quoted in *Quan Hanwen, juan* 41: 尚書, 直言也.

21 In general, modern accounts of antiquity reflect an overly individualistic idea of power; power in the antique world is rooted in families and communities, rather than in autonomous rational beings. The continuance of the dynasty and thus of sacrifices rests upon the support of many constituencies, which is widely acknowledged across the early sources.

22 As the dating of so many of the relevant passages cannot be ascertained, given the activist editing practices in early manuscript culture, we leave this as unverified conjecture.

23 *Hanshu* 49.2292: 臣竊聞古之賢主莫不求賢以為輔翼.

the antique models, should be working side-by-side in a common endeavor to achieve a stable and just order of lasting benefit to all.[24]

Let us look first, then, at a sampling of passages that utilize the language of daring and undaring to portray the good ruler's frank acknowledgment of his own limitations. One of the most striking comes from the "Lord Shi" 君奭 chapter, where the sage Zhougong 周公, speaking either as king or on behalf of the king, says:

> Lord Shi, merciless Heaven has sent ruin down upon Yin [the previous dynasty], and Yin has already forfeited its charge. Our house of Zhou then received the mandate. *We dare not presume to know and claim* that at the beginning a ruler can always trust in Heaven's favor continuing for a long period of time, for Heaven, it seems, is not to be relied upon in that regard. Likewise, *we dare not presume to know or claim* that any dynastic change always derives from misconduct . . . We, for our part, *dare not slack off* with regard to the charge from the Lord on High. We should always keep in mind Heaven's awesome might and our leading men, so that nothing untoward is done.. This depends on having the right people in place.[25]

The "Shao gao" chapter echoes these sentiments in nearly identical language. Once again the sage Zhougong disavows any clear understanding of recent events:

> *We dare not presume to know and claim* that the Yin rulers were given Heaven's mandate for a limited term of years. Nor *dare we presume to know and claim* that it [their mandate] could not be extended. It *seems* they did not attend to cultivating their characters, and so they lost their mandate early.[26]

Why does Zhougong refuse to claim credit for knowing Heaven's will after his recent string of victories over Yin, which secured Western Zhou legitimacy? He refuses for cogent reasons. First, as mere mortal he does not fully understand Heaven's intention, the operations of the dynastic cycle in history (or if this cycle really exists), or the terms of the mandate the Zhou have been granted. Secondly, Zhougong cannot imagine proceeding to govern without being duly

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24 *Du duan*: 古者尊卑共之. Cai Yong's point is that only later did *zhen* become a monopoly of the ruler. In the ideal ancient times, high and low shared it. Far too little attention has gone meanwhile into considering the import of the rhetorical formula by which a ruler names himself as "but a young child" (*xiaozi* 小子) or a helpless "orphan" (*guaren* 寡人), too inexperienced to be confident in his decision-making powers, no matter what his age. *Xiaozi* appears in the following Han-era *Documents* chapters: "Tai shi" (3x); "Jin teng" (2x); "Da gao" (3x); "Kang gao" (6x); "Jiu gao" (4x); "Luo gao" (2x); "Duo shi" (1x); "Jun shi" (3x); "Gu ming" (1x); and "Wen hou zhi ming" (1x). *Guaren* never appears in the Han-era *Documents*, although it does appear in related traditions.

25 This is the opening speech in the chapter by Zhougong. Full annotations for the translation will appear in a forthcoming translation by Michael Nylan and He Ruyue (Shaanxi Normal University), scheduled for publication two years hence.

26 This is the second speech in the "Shao gao."

mindful both of Heaven's awesome might and the consequent necessity to surround himself with the right sort of competent and well-intentioned men in office. As Zhougong warns,

> Should our descendants one day find that they cannot pay due reverence to those above and below, they will cut off their forebears' glorious examples. Should they fail to recognize how hard it is to retain the mandate of Heaven . . . Our rule will not be able to last for many generations.[27]

It is therefore at once prudent and right for those above and below to be shown due deference by the members of the ruling family. At a minimum, to respect others is a first step toward dignity and justice, righting the obvious wrongs and ameliorating the hardships of others.[28] Hence the warning delivered in the "Proclamation to Kang" 康誥 that no ruler shall "dare to mistreat widowers and orphans," as synecdoche for the realm's most disadvantaged subjects. Meanwhile, good rulers are to "diligently put to use any useful people [who can be found]," in order to stabilize their realms.[29] By the "Gao Yao mo" 皋陶謨, good governing rests simply in "knowing others," and then employing the best men in office "to settle the people." Of course, the wise ruler is not merely deferential to others.[30] He works exceedingly hard on their behalf, never "daring" to engage in such leisure activities as hunting and touring the countryside because his position is nominally higher.[31]

The three-part "Pan Geng" 盤庚 chapter supplies one of the best illustrations of the lengths to which a ruler or his representatives should go to register that respect. As the court has already determined through divination that the ruling house must move its capital to a new location or face extinction, the chapter's protagonist spends a great deal of time persuading disgruntled groups to cleave to the auspicious model set by their illustrious forebears, who to a man "shared the rule" with all right-minded others, including the dead ancestors in heaven. Pan Geng acknowledges that two alternatives exist, if he cannot manage to persuade the people to trust to the collective wisdom of the spirits expressed through turtle divination: either Pan can force others to do what he believes is

27 This is the second half of the first speech by Zhougong in the "Jun shi" chapter.

28 "Tang shi" chapter: 予畏上帝。不敢不正.

29 See the opening speech in the "Kang gao" chapter for both these passages.

30 The *Bohu tong*, for example, demonstrates that the ruler may not "regard as subjects" several classes of people, including the senior members of the consort clans and the emperor's own teachers. He is to show deference to any worthy, as well (for the latter point, see Tjan [1949–52] 139h).

31 This is the main message of the "Wu yi" chapter, contra Michael Hunter, in Kern/Meyer (2017). For "work and worry" as the key duty of the sage-king in the *Documents*, see Nylan (2011) chapter 3.

best for them or he can take the course of least resistance, allowing people to stay in place, knowing that the latter course in the end only "poisons" the present and blights their future prospects, in that it breaks community and blithely ignores the best available information regarding their situation.[32]

"I had only planned to make things easy and comfortable for you," Pan Geng insists. Ergo, his outright refusal to resort to violence to impose the throne's will on its subjects ("How would We ever dare to impose irregular and unjust punishments on you?"). Instead Pan – by turns reasoning and cajoling, dangling the carrot and the stick – insists that "the good of the country" relies on the crowd working in tandem with the ruler to effect a solution. Pan exhibits the utmost patience as he seeks to encourage the recalcitrant populations "to move with one heart and mind" to the new site, lest calamities rain down on those who disregard spirit communications and past precedents.[33] "We would fain have there be no disrespect . . ., so that we always pull together as one, with one heart and one mind" 永肩一心, for a better life is only possible through this combination of mutual aid and fond regard.

Many *Documents* chapters emphasize this necessity for the true king of supreme wisdom to consult widely. For example, the "Li zheng" 立政 (Establishing Rule) chapter has this to say about the two archetypal sage-kings of Western Zhou:

> King Wen, an able judge of people's characters . . . *never once took on* 罔攸兼 another's responsibilities in addition to his own, whether it be a policy advisor's, a trial judge's, or those of the person issuing rulings on taboos. He paid attention only to whether those in charge of their respective bureaus acted well or not. As for the trial judges and those issuing taboos, *King Wen never once dared to presume that he understood what they did* 罔敢知于茲, even as King Wu, for his part . . . *never once dared to outdo* his father's dutiful character 不敢替厥義德. King Wu only thought to heed their good counsels, with gracious mien, and thus it came to pass that *through joint efforts* they received these vast, vast territories, as a solid basis for good rule and order.[34]

Thus King Wen worked in concert with his many officers, avoiding the appearance or even the thought that he knew best, and King Wu sought only to cleave to his glorious legacy. Naturally, worthy officials must feel safe enough to deliver forthright remonstrance early and often.[35] Hence the "Li zheng" chapter

32 This argument appears in "Pan Geng, A" but continues in "Pan Geng, B."

33 "Pan Geng, B": 暨余/予一人猷同心. "Pan Geng, C" emphasizes the will of heaven, as expressed through divinations.

34 The phrase "outdo" in reference to the family model relies on *Hanshu* 81.3338.

35 These include the "straight men" (aka the "upright figures") (*zhi ren* 直人) (Ruan Yuan (1815 preface/1980) 67–1). See Fahr (2021).

places great weight on providing a number of posts expressly charged to deliver unpalatable truths, while cautioning the ruler, in company with multiple other *Documents* chapters, against sycophants and glib analysts.[36]

In such passages, the *Documents* classic exhibits a highly sophisticated awareness of the push-pull that characterizes effective administrations, an admiration for efficient administration (or rationalization without initiative) offset by a keen awareness of the perennial need for introducing minor tweaks and even major adjustments to policy-making to meet the exigencies of the time. After all, good governance rested on the correct analysis of multiple factors, as well as coordination between disparate groups, with no one person capable of commanding all.[37] Clearly, the goal of wide consultation was to devise better policies with fewer unintended consequences, since all interested parties have been encouraged to express their views during the decision-making process.[38] By design, wide consultation also provided a measure of plausible deniability for the ruler and his court, should a policy initiative go badly awry. Han thinkers took it for granted that, even with sages, it took considerable probing to elicit good ideas through dialogue.[39] And underlying this approach was something far more profound: a widespread consensus that "growth and development depends upon a blending (judicious) of things that are dissimilar, whereas too much similarity and conformity (*tong* 同) leads to exhaustion and decline."[40] Seeking a diversity of views would therefore likely not only conduce to present order, but also serve to sustain it over the long run.

Crucially, the Han-era *Documents* never aimed for perfection, acknowledging this to be unattainable by human beings.[41] Rather the *Documents* readings

36 Cf. "Yao dian," "Punishments," and "Qin shi" 秦誓 chapters, for examples (Ruan Yuan (1815 preface/1980) 43–1, 303–1, 315–1).

37 For example, *Hanji, juan* 2 (comment on Gaozu).

38 Thus clearer heads and balanced emotions are foundations for more effective acts in service to the community. Compare the Nine Virtues of two *Documents* chapters with the *Nichomachean Ethics*, both of which cast the highest virtue as a balance of two virtues. *Xunzi* is, of course, the master on "unintended consequences," and had we more time, we would explore this fully.

39 See, e.g., *Lunheng*, "Wen Kong" 問孔 chap. which speaks of a lengthy exchange between Gao Yao, Shun, and Yu, saying that while Gao Yao explained his statements to Shun, it was only when Yu questioned Gao Yao further that his advice became deeper and more incisive 淺言復深, adducing the appropriate historical precedents.

40 Gentz (2020), 45, summarizing sources both received and unprovenanced ("found").

41 We suspect, but do not know enough to prove, that the image of perfection retrojected onto the sages and their institutions owes more to Buddhist notions and to conventions of court rhetoric than to the *Documents* or to any pre-Buddhist writings we now have. The figure of 70% is given for the best doctors and the best diviners in the early administrative documents. Meanwhile, the "ethical demand" is simply to hold oneself to a higher standard, while

sought to nudge those in power to accept a system of institutional and personal checks and balances (see below), in the hopes that the best and most balanced outcome could be achieved when all committed themselves to work toward a common goal. No one doubted that this process represented a curb on autocratic decision-making; that was obvious to all. Not coincidentally, then, two *Documents* chapters highlighted the sage-king Yao's acceptance of his officers' consensus opinion, even when he entertained grave doubts about its inherent wisdom.[42] Nor did it go unnoticed that in the oft-cited "Gao Yao mo" chapter, the protagonist, a minister, teaches his sage-ruler how to govern.[43]

The "Great Plan" chapter outlines two successive procedures by which the ruler may consult varied interest groups.[44] In the first, the ruler consults the spirit world (presumably Heaven and the ancestors) regarding a proposed policy initiative.

> If one would deduce the appropriate changes, one sets up the leading experts . . . and has them divine by turtle and milfoil. If three men divine about an issue, then one follows what two say.[45]

However, this procedure does not suffice when serious doubts arise as to the best course of action:

> If you then have grave doubts, you consult your own heart, you consult your ministers and officers, you consult your commoners, you consult your diviners by turtle and milfoil. If you think it a good plan to follow, as do the turtle and milfoil, your ministers and officers, and your commoners, this is called the Perfect Concord . . . But if you think it a good plan to follow, as do the turtle and milfoil, but your ministers and officers disagree, as do your commoners, this is still auspicious. If your ministers and officers agree, as do the turtle and milfoil, but you yourself along with the commoners disagree, this is still auspicious. If your commoners agree, as do the turtle and milfoil, but you and your ministers and officers disagree, this remains auspicious. And if you agree, as does the turtle, but the milfoil, your ministers and officers, and the commoners disagree, to make domestic decisions may be auspicious but to deal with outside matters [i.e., diplomacy and war]

being tolerant and forgiving toward others. "It's shameful to be a *junzi* alone," we are told, which echoes the *Analects* 4.25 line, "Virtue always brings neighbors" (德不孤, 必有鄰). Does virtue ever stand on its own two feet in the *Documents*? No, and why should it?.

42 "Yao dian," 1A.3, concerning the employment of Gun to control the floodwaters.

43 Many Han texts also construed Pan Geng as first minister and then ruler, with his excellence as much in evidence in the former post as in the latter.

44 See Section 7 of the "Hong fan," where the ruler's view can be outweighed by other important stakeholders in the decision-making process, the spirits and ancestors, officials of every rank, and commoners.

45 Section 7, "Hong fan."

> is inauspicious. If the divination by turtle and milfoil both disagree with the men in the three groups, then it is auspicious to do nothing and inauspicious to act.[46]

Note first, the surprising fact that, in resolving doubtful cases, high-ranking ministers are equal to commoners and kings. Note, too, that the same *Documents* chapter prescribes watching signs in the heavens and on earth to seek confirmation that the right course of action has been adopted and implemented, even when there are sages on the throne and in the ministerial posts.[47] (Han sources, following the Great Plan, lay particular stress on this.)[48]

In sum, the sage-kings, ranging from Tang the Victorious down to Kings Wen and Wu, supposedly insisted that good rule required them to forego "acting on their own authority" and "privileging their own kin."[49] The empire is held in trust for the ancestors (who rely on dynastic houses for their sacrifices) and for the group the *Documents* calls "the little people." In order to serve them, the most prudential course is to abide by the models, principles, and institutions that have worked well in the past (ergo, the continual calls to examine the antique heroes), except when new situations demand innovations and adaptations, negotiated via wide consultation.

That people in Western Han "got" the message that the wise ruler would never dare to rule autocratically is clear from a verbal map sketched in the *Yi Zhoushu*, the para-classic for the *Documents*. There a total of nine people "face south" and eight (all but the emperor) "wear the pearl crown" associated with superior insight.[50]

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46 Section 7, "Hong fan."

47 Section 8, "Hong fan."

48 The "Meaning of Sacrifice" 祭義 chapter in the *Rites Record* (*Liji* 禮記), for example, explains the significance of divination rituals in this way: "The Son of Heaven, cap in hand, faced north as a subject. *Even if the ruler is enlightened and wise, he must still approach the turtle to [help him] decide on the proper decision to be made. For he must show that he does not dare to monopolize power, and by doing so he expresses his reverence for heaven.* When the outcome is good, such a ruler claims it is due to others, whereas when the outcome is unsuccessful, he claims it was due to him. In this way he teaches [two lessons]: not to act aggressively and to revere worthy advisors."

49 This is argued implicitly against a competing *Annals*' dictum, "treating kin as close kin" *qin qin* 親親, invoked in many Han writings, often in association with Zhougong.

50 This image, based on Song-era ritual manual manuscripts, has been altered to conform with the description given for early Western Zhou court rituals (doubtless imagined) in the "King's Meeting" (Wang hui 王會) chapter of the *Yi Zhoushu* 逸周書 (*Surviving Zhou Documents*). In that chapter's portrayal, the Zhou king appears as but *primus inter pares*. For he rules, from the upper dais, with his four legendary advisors, the most famous being Taigong wang and the Duke of Zhou. All but the king himself wear the pearl crown signifying supreme sovereignty, and all five face south (i.e., in the ritual direction of rulers). Below, on a lower

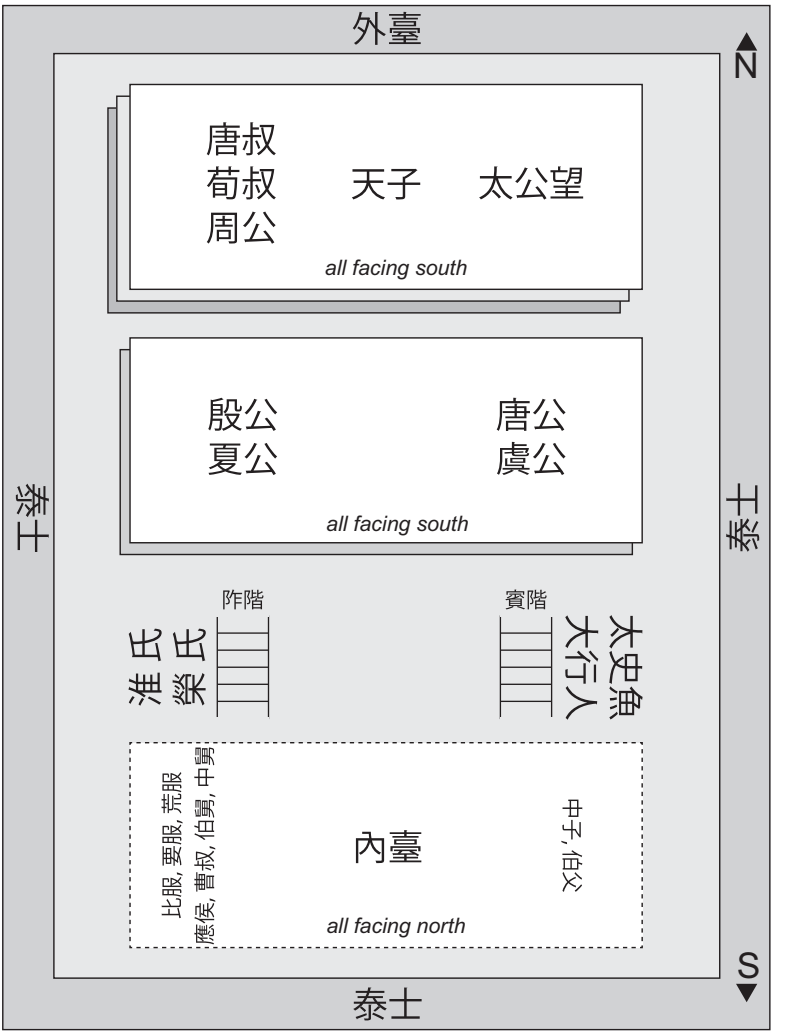

Figure 1: Map generated on the basis of the *Yi Zhoushu*, "Wang hui" chapter.

dais, four additional figures wear the pearl crown and face south. To the sides of the daises are ranged the highest-ranking knights, and facing north, as subjects, are lesser officials, including the scribes who supposedly transcribed the scene and liturgy. The *Yi Zhoushu* literary portrait aptly conveys the early aspirations for ideal governance, wherein hereditary ruler and worthy advisers "share the rule" with "dispersed responsibilities."

This general picture is confirmed by multiple masterworks, including the *Zuozhuan* and *Guoyu*, as Joachim Gentz has demonstrated.[51] True harmony results not from the uniformity of views, let alone mindless conformity or coercion; it requires exquisite skill in balancing disparate views, creating a community stronger than the sum of its parts. For much the same reason, the early histories applaud the wisdom of those who refuse to take credit for their own achievements, regardless of how exalted their positions.[52] No evidence supports the widespread notion that the *Documents* enjoins anything approaching the "divine right of kings" theory championed for centuries in Europe, let alone the autocratic systems championed by the "Asian Values" crowd today.[53]

The focus here on the *Documents* stems from the limitations of the present essay format. But other Classics convey similar messages, with both the *Odes* and *Changes* famously emphasizing that bold action is liable to end in disaster for all parties. Hexagram 1 and Hexagram 64, the bookends for the *Changes* classic, are typical in this regard. Hexagram 1 illustrates the lesson that pride goeth before the fall, with "the soaring dragon" crashing down, while Hexagram 64 says that the successful completion of any enterprise depends upon proceeding with salutary fear, like an old fox warily "crossing the ice," on the lookout for fissures and cracks.[54] Hexagrams 5, 6, 13, 18, 26, 27, 42, 59, 61, and 64 liken the conduct of court business to "crossing a great river" in a gale force.[55] Ode 253 insists that only villains entertain "no fears" of retribution, while Ode 192, as we have seen, protests against the "snakes" in power who oppress their subordinates ("Who says Heaven is high?").[56] The *Zuozhuan* features exchanges such as that between Ran Ming 然明 and minister Zichan, where Ran Ming's impulse is

51 Gentz (2020). One of the clearest examples comes from *Guoyu*, "Lu yu, xia,"5.20 (p. 206), which says that the sage kings always attributed their achievements to antiquity (先聖王之傳恭, 猶不敢專, 稱曰自古, 古曰在昔, 昔曰先民). *Hanshu* and *Hanji* concur: for an official, no matter how high-ranking, to *zhuan* ("monopolize") control in a locality is a capital crime (*Hanshu* 81.3346; *Hanji*, Chengdi's reign, year 3).

52 E.g., *Hanshu* 81.3338.

53 For one very clear statement in Western Han that the emperor serves High Heaven by protecting the least of his subjects, see *Hanshu* 72.3089, 3091. The closest theory comes in the early empires in China to the "divine right of kings" is Ban Biao's "Wang ming lun," but even there, the anointed king must demonstrate his worth by multiple actions before ascending to the throne.

54 Hexagram 64.

55 *She da chuan* 涉大川, a motif taken up in many Han-era texts, including the *Yantie lun*. *Bohu tong*, section 6 ("Li yue" 禮樂) ties this to the great humility of the noble man or ruler (*junzi* 謙謙君子). The variant "crossing the great abyss" (*she yuan* 涉淵水) appears in the "Da gao" chapter of the *Documents* and in *Hanshu* 6.161, 84.3428.

56 See *Hanji*, *juan* 25, speaking of the misuse of power.

to dismantle the ritual centers, knowing that the locals "gather there to debate the merits of their administrators." Zichan's wise response to this suggestion is swift: the debaters are his own respected "teachers," allowing him to quickly see what will or not work in his policies. Besides, says Zichan, a demonstration of force can never staunch sharp criticisms for long.[57]

Finally, the *Rites* classics are meant to school one in the arts of social cultivation required to communicate effectively and well with a wide range of people ready to take offense. Perhaps the best example comes from one lengthy passage in the *Yili*, where guest and host identified as peers compete to abase themselves, lest either party feel aggrieved. The passage (included in the Appendix for reference) begins *in media res*: "Etiquette for audiences between gentlemen: As for the gift, in winter use a pheasant. In summer use dried pheasant meat. The guest presents it with its head to the left, saying, "I have long wished to present myself before you, but I have had no reason to come. So-and-so has ordered me to present myself before you."[58] Well over ten lengthy exchanges between guest and host are needed to create a ritualized space that permits an amicable visit between the two peers. The protracted process seems ludicrous to us, but it was deadly serious to them. By the protocols, the exchange can be completed only when the guest has persisted so long with his courtesies that the host is virtually forced to obey by taking the gift and welcoming the visitor, lest he humiliate the guest and risk his lasting enmity. Since impeccable classical precedents made nearly everyone equal in some circumstances, the scope of the issue is much wider than it seems.[59]

2 "Even if one has the knowledge and understanding of a sage . . . "

The set phrase in Chinese "not daring [to monopolize knowledge or authority]" "gave one pause." The uneasiness it signified "made one stop in one's tracks, or caused one to reverse one's course." Like *religio* in Latin, it was associated with "feelings of being bound, restricted, inhibited, stopped short."[60] "Not daring to monopolize" was associated with a concept cluster that included such

57 *Zuozhuan*, Lord Xiang, Year 31.11 (*Zuo Tradition*, p. 1285).

58 Zheng Xuan: 言久無因緣以自達也。某子, 今所因緣之姓名。We have consulted the available translations, but the translation is our own.

59 *Analects* 20/1 shows that it is not only Shun, as emperor, who orders Yu, his official, but also Yu who orders Shun: 禹亦命舜.

60 For this analysis and quotations, see Barton/Boyarin (2016), esp. 19–21.

emotions and attitudes as "fear" (*kong* 恐) or worse, being "wide-eyed with fear" (*ju* 懼), "reverence" and "reverent attention to duty" (both *gong* 恭), and a sense of being tied (*xi* 繫) to something older and finer than oneself, all sentiments that tended to foster an awareness of one's tenuous hold on authority. "Not daring to monopolize" means that the person in power rightly senses that his or her privileges and powers are hardly self-made; they trace back invariably to an antecedent that has priority in both senses of the word: "the institutions of the former kings," the spirits of deceased ancestors, the old laws, or, most abstractly, the "origin" and the "Way."

For example, Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (fl. 141–ca.114), glossing the first graph in the *Annals* classic, speaks of "tying the myriad things back to the origin" (*xi zhi yuan* 繫之元).[61] Out of reverence, then, the ancient sage kings "did not dare to entertain the thought that they were rulers *over* the people" (*bugan you junmin zhi xin* 不敢有君民之心); rather they were to work hard on the behalf of others.[62] The ruler's very legitimacy stemmed, in fact, largely from his willingness to subject himself to the preeminent and prior authorities (and not only from the perspective of self-described Confucian devotees). To claim to be "the decider" was indisputable evidence of malfeasance or worse.

By his refusal to act on his own authority, the sage, marked by his feeling of "undaring," shows his mindfulness of the sources of his legitimacy, as one anecdote from *Advice from the States* (*Guoyu* 國語) makes plain. As the various components of our argument are in view and at play in this anecdote dramatizing the difference between the imperious but mediocre ruler and his sage-officer, we translate it in full:

> King Ling of Chu was cruel. Baigong Zizhang repeatedly remonstrated with him. The king was troubled by this and told the Diviner Lao: "I want to put an end to Zizhang's remonstrations. How can I do it?" The diviner replied, "It would be difficult to employ his advice, but it would be easy to put an end to it. When he remonstrates, you should say to him, 'I possess, in my person, the ghosts on my left and the untimely dead on my right. I have heard all of the hundred remonstrations. What else do I need to hear?'"
>
> Baigong remonstrated again and the king responded to him in the way the Diviner Lao had suggested, to which Baigong replied,
>
> In the past, the [exemplary] Shang king Wuding was able to elevate his virtues, until he became god-like. He moved to the Yellow River area, and from the River he went on to

61 Cf. his "reverently upholding the origin" (*feng yuan*奉元).

62 *Gongyang yishu*, 11. Later He Xiu 何休 (129–182) comments on the same line, "The enlightened king should be an heir to heaven and reverently uphold the origin" (*ji tian feng yuan* 繼天奉元).

> Hao. For three years, he remained silent, meditating on the Way. His high-ranking ministers and counsellors were upset by this and they said, 'The king must speak to issue his commands; otherwise, there is no way for us to receive the commands.'
>
> Wuding then wrote down the following note: 'I fear my virtue is not yet of the sort that would allow me to put the realm in order. This is the reason I have not yet spoken. So I have drawn an image of the figure who appeared to me in a dream. I would have you seek everywhere for this worthy man." They found Fu Yue, brought him back, and he was appointed prime minister. Wuding had him admonish him day and night.
>
> Were I a piece of metal, you would be the whetstone;
> Were I to cross the water, you would be the boat;
> Were I to experience a drought, you would be the rain.
>
> Open your heart to me to cleanse mine. As they say, 'If the medicine does not cause dizziness, the illness will not be cured.' And 'If a person walks without looking at the path, he will injure his foot.'
>
> Wuding was godlike in his perspicacity; his sagely insight was vast, and his knowledge unimpeachable. And yet he still said of himself that he was not yet ready to rule. He spent three long years in silence meditating on the Way. And once he had attained the Way, he still did not dare to monopolize the rule (*bu gan zhuan zhi*). Instead, he had them search everywhere for a sage [to instruct him]. And once he got the sage to assist him, he was still afraid that he would falter or forget. And so he tasked the sage with teaching and remonstrating with him day and night: "You must correct me! Do not forsake me!" Now, you, perhaps, do not measure up to Wuding, and yet you opposed any teaching and remonstration. Does that not defy logic?"[63]

Diviner Lao, anxious to please, proposed that the king claim perfect knowledge and command of the spirit realm. Baigong deployed an example from history to show how self-defeating this would be. For in legend, Wuding's special access to the gods in dreams did not lead him to boast of his authority. Rather it sent him to seek assistance and instruction. Wuding, "even though his knowledge was unimpeachable," then begged his new advisor to constantly remonstrate with him. The moral of the story is obvious: even if King Ling had had perfect knowledge and god-like powers, he should *not* have tried to have his own way. Real authority conducing to real success readily acknowledges the duty to heed and defer to other authorities. That King Ling did not do so simply advertises how mediocre a ruler he really was.

Many rationales for divination in the early empires were structured in identical ways with the *Guoyu*: "*even though* X person had attained the Way [or was "unusually perspicacious"], he *still* should not dare monopolize" the decision-making

63 *Guoyu*, "Chu yu," 1:08, in *Guoyu jijie juan* 1, 502–4.

power. *Hanshu* 75, for example, includes Ban's withering Appraisal of a group of erudite classicists who used their expertise to advance their own agendas.[64]

One passage by Wang Chong 王充 (27–97) highlights the purported function of wide consultation. For Wang, the best way to secure others' trust is to show others (*shi* 示) that one has no intention of monopolizing the decision-making processes:

> When the sages undertake any affair, they first establish what is their duty. Once the right course of action has been ascertained, they then proceed to test their belief through turtle and milfoil divination, in this way showing that they would never make a decision on their own authority. This clearly demonstrates that they agree with the spirit realm and share its end goals. By this, they hope to cause their subjects to trust them and to obviate mistrust.[65]

While a cynical reading of this passage was not only possible in theory but also in real life – with the institution of divination manipulated in such a way that it rubber stamped the ruler's every whim[66] – the key to this passage lies in the role the spirits play in *persuading* the masses to entrust their fates to the wise ruler. Even for the sage, it was not enough simply to be right. In addition, the best leader, be he king, minister, or village head, must know how to act in social situations, lest he appear tyrannical or suspicious.[67] Showing one's own reluctance to monopolize the decision-making powers was thus a smart acknowledgement that any form of power must be consensual, and therefore explained to the public in intelligible ways.

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64 "It *seemed* they had a single starting point [in the Dao]; they made use of the Classics to set up what they deemed right, relying on images and categories [in their analyses]. Did they not sometimes fail to avoid the situation where they "hit the target by dumb luck after a million tries"? (*Hanshu* 75.3195). Many other examples could be adduced, for instance, Sima Qian's injunction to "show the Way of having the power but refusing to monopolize" it 明有而不專之道也; also Liu Xiang's *Shuoyuan*: the diviners of the past "had recourse to their arts in order to assist their Way and investigate doubtful matters, showing that there are others who take precedence and one does not dare assume sole power" 凡古之卜日者, 將以輔道稽疑, 示有所先而不敢自專也; and Wang Fu's *Qianfu lun* "even though sages and worthies have penetrating insight, they do not act on their own authority; thus they divine in order to inquire of the spirits" 聖賢雖察不自專, 故立卜筮以質神靈.

65 *Lunheng, juan* 24, *pian* 72, 1009 ("Bian sui" 辨祟 chap.).

66 In their discussions about divination, Ruan Kan 阮侃 and Ji Kang 嵇康 disagreed on whether there is any element of deception or trickery in the sages' use of divination and prayer. For Ruan Kan's view, see Ji Kang (2014) 494; for Ji Kang's response, see Ji Kang (2014) 491–532.

67 A parallel distinction comes up in legal discussions; it is not enough for the judge to be fair and right, when dispensing justice. Far better is it for the fair judge to be seen as fair (as was the case with Yu Dingguo).

Being supremely cognizant of the effect one's judgments and actions will have on the wider viewing public is a major theme in the Confucius legend. When Confucius as Minister of Justice in Lu was adjudicating cases, he was mindful of what he knew and what he could or could not do and say.[68] The *Shuoyuan* account of Confucius the sage-judge fits the tried-and-true motif of knowing-but-not-daring:

> When Kongzi was Minister of Justice in Lu, he always rendered judgments in front of large groups of people [to make his legal opinions "teaching moments"]. All would gather around and he would come forward, saying: "X, believing the situation to be like this, has made such-and-such a statement, and Y, believing the situation to be like this, has made such-and-such a statement." He would then give his analysis of the statements. Did Kongzi really need to go through the statements in this way? If he knew something, why did he feel the need to go through this lengthy process before he [decide he] knew how and why to decide the case? Because a noble man like Kongzi is both reverent and yielding. And his phrasing has what it can share (*gong* 共) with others. He would never keep his knowledge to himself alone (*du* 獨).[69]

This notion of justice for the people required that the people be apprised of their superior's reasoning, in order to attain consent and trust without coercion. While the wisdom and knowledge of the sage might not be fully shared by all, the sage was human after all, and so he could use his pronouncements to bring others in line with his way of thinking.

That judgments should be perceived as "shared" and not arbitrary was a powerful idea, frequently invoked to defend those "straight-shooters" whose admonitions had infuriated the emperor, as we see from a typical speech delivered by a general Xin Qingji 辛慶疾 (fl. 50–11 BCE), who came to Liu Fu's 劉輔 defense in a tense exchange that happened ca. 16 BCE:

> We have heard that the wise king listens with open-mindedness and values those officials charged with remonstrance and argumentation. As he would expand opportunities for the truly loyal, he refuses to criminalize [even] wild speeches . . . In our humble opinion, Liu Fu came to assist the ruler, and he was fortunate to join the ranks of the remonstrating officials, thanks to his belonging to the imperial clan. He came from a remote backwater and so he does not understand the court conventions. He offended a taboo, yes, but his offense hardly merits harsh condemnation. If his crime is minor, it should be overlooked and tolerated. And even if he did commit a major crime, it would be fairest to ex-

68 See below for the attitude ascribed to Kongzi in compiling his great history, the *Annals* 春秋 classic.

69 *Shuoyuan* 14.21 ("Zhi gong" 至公).

> pose it, and then have it judged by the proper authorities in such a way that the findings can be shared with the crowd (*yu zhong gong zhi* 與眾共之).[70]

General Xin strongly urges the emperor to show his openness to "sharing" in two ways. First, the ideal ruler is to leave himself open to all sorts of comments, even "wild" and reckless talk. Second, in the unlikely event that a serious offense is committed, the ruler should not dominate or even intervene in the judicial process; instead, he should rely on the designated authorities to judge the merits of the case, with their judgment subject to further review, in the court of public opinion. We know of cases where the Han emperors accepted such judgments, even when the findings contradicted their own preferences, lest they appear to "monopolize" the decision-making process.[71] The dual failures to tolerate speech and to circumvent the *shared* procedures for adjudication would tarnish the emperor's image, in his own era and afterwards. *Even if* the ruler's judgment was sound, only shared deliberations could ensure widespread acceptance of the rulings.[72] And the same goes for high-ranking officials: *even if* the remonstrants showed little understanding, so long as they did not intend to do harm, they must be forgiven, as another official pled, successfully.[73] The lengths to which forthright remonstrances could go in real life is illustrated by the story of Xue Guangde 薛廣德, who threatens to pollute the imperial carriage, if the emperor fails to heed his advice.[74]

Wang Su 王肅 (195–256), during the reign of Emperor Ming of Wei (206–239), spelled out the only alternative to such complex processes premised on ritualized acts of yielding authority: a bad emperor might seek out advice but swiftly eliminate those with whom he disagreed. "With the words still in their mouths, the heads [of the remonstrants] would be severed already from their bodies" 言猶在

70 *Hanshu* 77.3252. It is "our humble opinion," because Xin Qingji says unnamed others share his point of view.

71 *Hanshu* 80.3323: 有司請廢, 朕不忍。又請削, 朕不敢專. *Hanshu* records two nearly identical statements (*Hanshu* 53.2432, 2435).

72 A spirited debate considered the issue whether the *sangong* (three members of the Executive Council) or the tutors to the emperor were equal to the Son of Heaven himself; see *Wujing yi yi* (2012) 170.

73 E.g., *Hanji, juan* 2, *pian* 25 (Xun Yue's own comment on Chengdi): "Even if Wang Shang's discussion of water was not the best, and it was not a speech that displayed his wisdom, his speech was not used to harm Wang Feng; he wanted to be loyal to the ruler and settled the people . . . but Wang Feng took it [wrongly] as a pretext for ire" 王商言水不至, 非以見智也, 非以傷鳳也, 欲將忠主安民 . . . 而鳳以為慨恨.

74 *Hanshu* 71.3047.

口。身首已分.[75] Wang Su objected to such arbitrary acts, in a studiously polite but trenchant way:

> True, the people whom your Majesty has executed all deserved to die. Still, the masses do not know this to be so; *they* deem your actions too hasty. I would have your Majesty refer these cases to the proper legal authorities, who may then expose their crimes. True, in each case, the outcome is the same. But acting as I suggest will prevent pollution in the private apartments of the palace, obviate hyper-caution within the ranks of the officers, and forestall mutual mistrust by those near and far [the court and its subjects].[76]

Wang's persuasion piece, conceding the emperor's good judgment, deploys the same "even if you are right" logic seen above, arguing that it is not enough for anyone, regardless of rank or status, to assess a situation correctly and to act on his assessment, without wider consultation. Achieving consensus on important decisions depends upon a lengthy process: information and views are to be shared with the proper authorities and interested parties; the evidence at hand is often to be divulged and its significance explained. The alternative is mutual mistrust, upon which once-stable dynasties have foundered.

In each of the texts cited here, "knowledge and understanding" (*zhi*), and even the perspicacity of the "sage" (*sheng*), may threaten orderly rule, if such wisdom is acted upon without due consideration for the feelings of the ignorant and aggrieved. Thus the rhetoric of "undaring" was seen as one way to temper the attitudes of those who prided themselves on their immense powers and capacities. Accordingly, the ritual texts and historical anecdotes about the exemplary figures of the remote past sought to cast this attitude as a prime political virtue, a good in itself. Quite cleverly, the rhetoric of "undaring" circumvented the dangerous question of whether the person in power was a sage or not by using the concessive language of "even if," as seen in Wang Su's deft plea.

3 Testing the Limits of Speech

Clearly, the good emperor was expected to be open-minded, or at least to tolerate any and all rebukes, even those couched in overwrought and offensive language. Below, we provide two fairly representative episodes, one each from Western and Eastern Han, where an official deemed it his duty to publicly challenge the emperor in a way calculated to provoke him. Evidently, such episodes

75 *Jinshu* 30.916 ("Xingfa zhi" 刑法志).
76 *Jinshu* 30.916 ("Xingfa zhi" 刑法志).

proved immensely edifying to the members of the governing elite, nearly all of whom would have identified with the remonstrant, whether or not they themselves had exhibited comparable bravery in fulfilling their assigned duties.

In the first scene of instruction, during the reign of Chengdi 成帝 (r. 33–7 BC), an official named Zhu Yun 朱雲, who had already tangled with the law several times before, confronted the emperor and his favorite, the Chancellor Zhang Yu:

> During Emperor Cheng's reign, Chancellor Zhang Yu, the former Lord of Anchang, was given special privilege on account of being the emperor's teacher and was greatly esteemed. Zhu Yun submitted a memorial requesting to be seen. In front of the high-ranking nobles and ministers, Zhu Yun said: "The court's great officials are unable to correct the emperor and do nothing to benefit the people. They take their salaries and idle away their days. Confucius referred to this kind of court, saying, 'it's impossible to serve a ruler alongside these vulgar men . . . They only fear losing their positions. Hence they will do anything to keep them.' I wish to be given a fine sword crafted by the palace artisans for butchering horses, so that I may cut down one sycophant so as to admonish the rest." The emperor asked: "Who are you talking about?" Zhu replied: "Zhang Yu, Lord of Anchang."

The emperor was furious: "A petty underling slanders me and humiliates my own teacher in front of everyone at court. This is a crime punishable by death from which there can be no reprieve." The officials went to take Zhu Yun away, but he latched onto the balustrade so that he broke it in the process. Zhu cried out: "It's enough if I can join the entourage of Longfeng and Bi Gan [two legendary loyalists] in the underworld! But then who knows what may become of the imperial court!" At this the officials swiftly removed him. Xin Qingji, General on the Left, then removed his cap and his official seal, and began kowtowing on the palace floor: "For a long time that fellow has been known for his wild but upright speeches. If what he says is correct, he cannot be executed. And if his words are incorrect, in fact you ought to accept him as he is. I, your servant, dare to offer my life as substitute for his by way of defense." Xin Qingji then kowtowed until the blood flowed. The emperor relented and only afterwards became more self-possessed. Later, when they were about to fix the balustrade, the emperor said: "Do not fix it! Leave it be! This is the way to advertise the virtues of a forthright minister."[77]

Xin Qingji essentially repeats the argument we have seen others make. "Wild straight talk," even if it is incorrect, had best be tolerated; certainly, it may not be punished, without causing harm. So here Xin offers himself as substitute, intending to shame the emperor into seeing how counter-productive acting on his own authority would be. Drawing upon good classical precedents, Xin's rhetorical

77 *Hanshu* 67.2915.

Figure 2: "Chu Yun [Zhu Yun] Breaks the Balustrade." Anonymous. Southern Song painting.[78]

78 Anonymous, "The painting about Chu Yün breaking the balustrade" (中文: 折檻圖), 12th or 13th century; Medium ink and light color on silk. Height: 173.9 cm (68.4 in); Width: 101.8 cm (40 in). In the National Palace Museum, Taipei. Wikidata: Q540668; Accession number 故畫 000181N000000000. In the public domain, with permission of the Museum.

clarity forces the emperor to relent, regardless of his own feelings. And eventually, like the good emperor he is, Chengdi goes so far as to advertise his own lapse of judgment, when he refuses to have the unsightly broken balustrade replaced or repaired.

This refusal had impeccable classical precedents, not coincidentally. An anecdote found in two masterworks, the *Han Feizi* (compiled before 233 BC) and the *Huainan zi* (compiled ca. 139 BC), records a violent encounter between the blind music-master Kuang and his liege lord, Duke Ping of Jin, in which Kuang attempts to strike the duke with his instrument after the duke made an inappropriate remark. Kuang, being blind, slams his valuable instrument against the wall, damaging both in the process, and the duke refuses to have the wall fixed, so the damage can remind him of the error of his ways. In the *Han Feizi* version, the ruler starts by claiming that the best part of being a ruler of men is "no one disagrees with what you say."[79] The sage Kongzi, who turns up only in the *Huainan zi* version, heaps praise on the less-than-exemplary Duke Ping for "intending to welcome remonstrators to his court." Emperor Cheng's gesture, which surely recalls this famous story, ensured his renown as a ruler unusually "tolerant of direct admonitions" 容受直辭. Determined to foster broader deliberations, deliberations worthy to be *shared* with a wider public not only in his own day but in later ages,[80] he in essence devised a safe space in which his officials could do their utmost in service to the realm.[81] That explains the Han sources' praise for the members of his court as well: supposedly, his "nobles and ministers carried out their duties, sending memorials and participating in court debates in model ways" 公卿稱職, 奏議可述.[82]

79 *Huainanzi*, Chapter 11, "Qi su xun" 齊俗訓, 439. *Han Feizi*, Chapter 36, "Nan yi" 難一, 354–55.

80 See Liu (2014), for a full translation of the Gu Yong memorial. Because of the limitations of space in this essay, we have chosen to focus here on a small number of examples. We could cite many others, if space permitted.

81 It would take another essay to show our evidence for this characterization, so ubiquitous is it. But repeatedly our early sources tell us that the "empire" is not the possession of the ruling house. *Shangshu dazhuan* 4.2, for example, tells us plainly that "The position of Son of Heaven can be occupied, correctly, only by those who have the Way. Now, as we all know, the realm is not the possession of one family. Only those who have the Way may have it [the throne]. Only one who has the Way ought to assume that position" 此天子之位, 有道者可以處之矣。夫天下、非一家之有也。唯有道者之有也。唯有道者宜處之.

82 *Hanshu* 10.330.

While the bulk of the extant anecdotes from the early empires reveal conventions for handling direct speech at court, there also survive anecdotes describing the type of elaborate courtesies the ideal emperor was to use when inviting worthy men of special insight to his court. In the next story a certain Fan Ying 樊英 (fl. 121–130) has refused repeated invitations to serve the court; meanwhile, he has dabbled in the occult arts, especially rain-making and divination. Fan's story skillfully plays on the presumed connections established between the spirit realm, full of enlightened beings, and the preeminent earthly advisors. For by longstanding practice, the Han courts summoned promising candidates for high office in much the same way that a devotee would summon a god through acts of propitiation, lest the emperor appear like an autocrat "ordering children about."[83] To perform his perfect humility, the emperor was to "choose an auspicious day, fast and purify himself, set up an altar, and make all the ritual preparations" 擇良日, 齋戒, 設壇場, 具禮,[84] ardently waiting to receive the candidate's assent to take up a post. Under Emperor Shun, the process broke down; although the emperor was determined to appoint Fan Ying, all his efforts were to no avail.[85] The emperor, finally enraged, shouted, "I can make you live and I can make you die. I can raise you high and I can bring you down. I can make you wealthy and I can make you poor. On what basis do you ignore my commands?" To which Fan calmly retorted,

> Your servant receives his commands from heaven. If I live out my allotted days, that is due to heaven, and if I die early, that is also due to heaven. So how can Your Majesty make me live or die? I view a tyrant like a bitter enemy. I would not think of making a career in such a court, so how can you raise me high? Even though I am a commoner and live in a shack, I am relaxed and at ease; I would not exchange my life for that of a lord of a great land. So how, pray tell, would you bring me low? . . . If an offer of employment is not given with the required courtesies, I would never accept the highest salary. If, however, by it I could achieve my aims, I would never be upset with the most meager food. So how can Your Majesty make me rich or poor?[86]

83 The appointment of Han Xin 韓信 (f. 206–197 BCE) provides a remarkable example of a ruler "not daring to monopolize." The Han founder Liu Bang 劉邦 (d. 195 BCE) was criticized for "appointing generals the way one summons children." The founder's advisor Xiao He 蕭何 (fl. 209–193 BCE) advised him how to summon a potential official with the due courtesies.

84 *Shiji* 92.2611*; Hanshu* 1.30 and 34.1863.

85 After repeated invitations had failed, Emperor Shun, "sparing no ritual" (*bei li* 備禮), issued him formal robes," yet Fan declined again, on the pretext of illness. Finally, the emperor, predictably annoyed by the rebuff, had the provincial officials haul him unceremoniously to the capital, but to no avail. Fan continued to plead illness and refused to come to court. When forcibly carried into the palace, Fan still refused to "submit" (*qu* 屈).

86 *Hou Hanshu* 82A.2723.

Unable to humble Fan and subdue his will (*qu*), the emperor decided on a different tactic: to humble himself. He began by sending the imperial physician to care for Fan's "illness," offering him mutton and wine monthly. A full two years later, the emperor pulled out all the stops: he had a dais built and a mat installed on it, just "as if Fan were a god."[87] He had an official carriage sent to bring him in state to the palace; he had the Director of the Secretariat usher him in, at which point Fan was offered a table and cane, and treated with all the ritual due to one's own master and teacher, and invited to speak on the court's successes and failures. Fan Ying, after all this, acquiesced, and he was appointed, with no prior experience, to a fairly high position.[88]

Little matter that Fan proved to be useless as an administrator. The emperor had shown his mettle, and we, at this remove, see the parallels constructed between a person's teacher and a person's god. Setting aside Fan's own remarkable mediocrity, the imperial gesture was celebrated as an exemplary act by a successful ruler "deploying rituals to gain [the service and allegiance] of a crowd [of worthy men]" (*li zhi yi de zhong* 禮之以得眾).[89] Indeed, from his perch in the fifth century, the historian Fan Ye feared that civilization itself would be at risk, as soon as such laudable generosity and tolerance were replaced by jealousy, suspicion, and vulgar quid pro quos. Fan's assessment presumes the same critique of know-it-alls and deciders. Taking his cue from the *Analects,* Fan decided that the goal of all court institutions and leaders was to "make a path to follow" rather than to strive for perfect awareness or knowledge.[90] To "dare not to monopolize" even when one believed he "knew" the correct course or suspected the motives of certain political actors was a good way to deal with the institutional complexities of a functioning empire. The ritual gesture of "undaring" was a willingness to engage in the world of men in the face of intractable uncertainty. It is not hard to see why Fan Ye saw *that* as the very thing than separated his beloved culture from the barbarians.

87 *Hou Hanshu* 61.2032: 朝廷設壇席, 猶待神明; cf. *Hou Hanshu* 82A.2724 朝廷若待神明.

88 *Hou Hanshu* 61.2032.

89 *Hanshu* 75.4924.

90 Contrast A.C. Graham's reading of the *Zhuangzi*, which highlights the modern elite preoccupation with superior awareness. On this, see Nylan 2016.

4 Institutional Checks and Balances

Knowing, on the one hand, how quickly people tend to take offense and, at the same time, how little knowledge and understanding any single person, no matter how well-intentioned or learned, commands, the prudent person in power (aka the sage or worthy) deduced a third "hard fact" as corollary: that the individual virtues of a few power-holders would hardly suffice to promote civilized conduct (*jiaohua* 教化) throughout the realm. Institutions were needed to encourage awareness and prevent mistakes, especially the court institutions, since the ruling elites, for good or for ill, provided the most powerful models for emulation.[91] Accordingly, the court mandated elaborate procedures for a host of activities, including the selection of candidates for office and the promotion or demotion of advisors; provisions for experts airing their views in relative comfort; and rules forbidding bureau heads from interfering with others' work[92] before regular checks on office-holders were conducted. The stated purpose of many such institutions was to form ethical leaders who "felt compelled to communicate what they had learned" (literally, "did not dare to not communicate"),[93] despite the palpable risks of doing so.

Ideally, throughout his tenure, the ruler or regent would "refrain from aligning himself with any one proposed solution to a problem. He must personify "the universal spirit, which was perfect but neutral."[94] To foster the impartiality identified with the celebrated "King's Way"[95] – impartiality being the most basic precondition for any careful deliberation – four constraints were placed on the imperial person, to bolster the lessons from the Classics and the histories:[96] (1) many channels existed for expressing dissent, collective and individual,[97] via

91 See, e.g., *Hanshu* 85.3447: 夫治遠自近始 . . . 未有左右正而百官枉者也.

92 In the *Documents,* the "Gao Yao mo" ("Counsels of Gao Yao") and "Li cheng" chapters emphasize this point, which was picked up by a number of Han-era texts, including *Yantie lun*, *juan* 2, *pian* 10; Gale (1967) 61 ("Ci fu" 刺復 chapter). Bureau chiefs and even rulers are enjoined not to interfere with their subordinates, lest they complicate the execution of their tasks.

93 Liu Xiang's remark in a doubly-sealed memorial (*Hanshu* 36.1947).

94 Huang (1981), 100 before the ellipsis, 110 after; cf. Michael Loewe on *wuwei* (not "non-action," but rather a conscious refusal to not take the initiative needlessly).

95 *Documents,* cited in *Hanshu* 85.3443–50.

96 For a sophisticated view of history as anecdote collections, see Els/Queen (2017).

97 In one typical dissent, Li Xun rebuked the emperor, saying, "The emperor may well find that he cannot help himself [in feeling a depth of gratitude], and so it may be right for him to confer cash or goods upon someone, but *it is not permissible for him*, for selfish reasons, to confer an official position [upon anyone]" 陛下 . . . 良有不得已, 可賜以財貨, 不可私以官位 (*Hanshu* 75.3186).

such routine communications as memorials, legal and administrative files, and omen reports,[98] not to mention the frequent court conferences convened to discuss policy initiatives; (2) the rituals stipulated several categories of "teachers and models" (*shi* 師) to whom the emperor must publicly perform his ritual obeisances;[99] (3) multiple administrative positions were charged to admonish superiors; and finally (4) the historian's solemn responsibility was to render just praise and blame, making any throne subject to higher standards and authorities.[100] Good rulers were defined largely by the trust they placed in officials who were ready to speak truth to power.[101] They knew they had to "earn [others'] support in governing," through repeated acts signaling their humility and desire to serve, and their concomitant willingness to heed harsh rebukes.[102] So it perhaps should not surprise us that we find emperors confessing their inabilities and sense of powerlessness, fearful lest they acquire a reputation for monopolizing power.[103]

Of course, human beings have never yet managed to invent institutional checks and balances that are immune to malfeasance of one sort or another.[104] That said, some regimes with robust institutions clearly seem better equipped to acknowledge failings and repair mistakes through a process of wide consultation. We claim here, contra the common wisdom, only that the early empires in China were blessed with robust institutions, which often (not always) prevented the worst follies, once someone had the gumption to deliver the "bitter pill" to the court.[105]

98 For omens as Heaven's warnings delivered by upright officials, see *Hanshu* 85.3450 (Gu Yong's remonstrance), for example. The Han emperors, on Heaven's model, issued "warning rescripts" that inform administrative units that they were being surveilled for possible misconduct. See Hou Xudong (2019).

99 BHT talks of five discrete *bu chen* 不臣 categories, two of which look very similar, the *sanlao* and *wugeng*. I use the word "publicly" in the limited sense: that many other were meant to learn of the performance (not that the performance was open to the public).

100 Ergo the fierce debates over whether Sima Qian's history was "treasonous" or not.

101 See, e.g., *Hanshu* 75.3158. One can see that this is why debates raged over Wudi's rule forever afterwards.

102 *Documents,* "Wu yi," 20.3, cited in *Hanshu* 85.3445 for Chengdi: 惟正之共.

103 *Hanshu* 80.3323.

104 That always and everywhere even the best institutions can be corrupted is a lesson that should be clear to residents of the United States today. Cf. *Shiji* 112.2950, which calls out Zhufu Yan for being a "yes-man" for his emperor; the same charge is leveled at Gongsun Hong: that he abdicated his responsibilities as high-ranking official to provide independent advice to his emperor. Cf. Qin Tao (2018) esp. 135–36.

105 *Hou Hanshu* 35.1145, 1145n2. A famous case occurs under Zhangdi, who rather than overturn the consensus views of the White Tiger Hall conference, some of which he opposed, decided to

With that important caveat in mind, we begin with the staffing of the imperial administration, a vast undertaking, given that some 130,000 officials took salaries from the court. The small percentage of the empire's population who were sufficiently skilled in rudimentary literacy and numeracy virtually ensured that the vast majority of entry-level posts in the bureaucracy (60–70% by some guestimates) were allotted to the sons or nephews of mid- to high-ranking officials, their families being able to hire tutors for professional training and privileged access to valuable colleagues and allies. A smaller proportion of officials came to paid positions in the administrative after slowly climbing through the ranks, having started as low-level functionaries (*wen li* 文吏) and drafters of documents (*wen xue* 文學) in unpaid or poorly paid posts.[106] While such men could acquire influential backers along the way, often their reputations for efficiency impeded full integration into the highest ranks of the administration, where greater finesse was expected. For a third "fast track," office-holders at the 2,000 bushel-rank (essentially generals, commandery governors, and ministers) were annually to recommend roughly a hundred or so outstanding candidates with proven skills and good memories.[107] Those candidates who tested well in the palace examinations were usually promptly assigned to such coveted posts as Academicians (*boshi* 博士), keepers of the precedents (*zhanggu* 掌故), remonstrating counsellors (*jian dafu* 諫大夫), advisory courtiers (*yi lang* 議郎), and palace courtiers (*lang* 郎), with the courtiers enjoying daily access to the emperor. From their first appointments in the middle ranks of the administration, many advanced to the highest offices in the land.[108] These "fast-track" positions had

commission one of his officers to devise new rituals for his court; once completed, Zhangdi still hesitated to foist them on an unwilling court, and he went to his death without publicizing them.

106 For edicts discussing the reasons for setting up these offices, see Ma Shiyuan 2014, 432–33, some of which specifically invite "straight-talkers" to court. Crucially, these first two tracks were not entirely exclusive. Two prime examples of minor functionaries who went on to become high-ranking officials are Bing Ji 丙吉 and Wang Zun 王尊. At the same time, Zhu Bo's biography (*Hanshu* 83) illustrates just how difficult it was to move from the second track to the first, especially when gaps in class and in status were to the fore; cf. the biography of Zhou Kan 周堪 (*Hanshu* 79B.2579).

107 Bielenstein (1980) 140. Most assume that Wudi and Gongsun Hong essentially invented this third track, but there are some signs that the track existed before Wudi.

108 Hsu Fu-kuan (2002), 72, rightly characterizes the *boshi* as "consultants" invited to advise emperors. Zhang Handong 1984 supplies some numbers: among the 50 *boshi* whose first promotion is documented, 36 were promoted directly to posts ranking 2000 bushels or equivalent, and 8 to posts ranking at more than 800 bushels. See Zufferey (2003) 207–8. A word of caution: there is no sign of a meritocracy here, with all the problems that that word drags in.

somewhat overlapping duties, in that all were supposed to offer advice and admonitions on formal and informal occasions.[109] (Most capital posts had counterparts in the staffs in the kingdoms and commanderies.)[110]

Our essay, given the limitations of space, focuses below on one institution designed to facilitate a free exchange of views at court. The court conferences, whose sole purpose was to determine the optimal policy going forward, had four striking features: the diverse make-up of the conference conveners and participants; the open-ended nature of the questions sometimes posed to the participants; the circulation of draft position papers subject to multiple revisions; and the provision for a "majority vote" that in most cases seems to have been binding.[111] In any given year, the court might encounter the sort of problems whose resolution seemed to require a consensus before undertaking any action, often because failures were likely to be costly, in all senses of the word. These issues included water control measures, diplomatic exchanges with hostile powers, decisions to designate a legitimate heir, the adjudication of tricky legal questions, and questions where to locate the main cult sites, in order to please the gods and reduce expenses. Faced with several options, the court convened a conference of experts, usually between 50 and 100 stakeholders, in order to solicit a range of views on the initial plans generated within the imperial administration. Significantly, the ruler or regent, the members of his Executive Council, or one or more ministers had the authority to propose that such a conference be called. This was not the ruler's sole prerogative, in other words, and the instructions that summoned participants to the palace admitted that in

109 Of course, we tend to think of the Academicians by analogy to modern academics, whose primary job is, supposedly, to teach students. But Academicians from Qin and Han were routinely consulted by the emperor considering different policy proposals, as those equipped with knowledge of the past, and hence what worked and did not. The *Han guan yi* says of the *boshi* that they were to participate in court discussions and prepare to answer the chief advisors' questions: 預朝廷大議. 備左右問. See *Shiji* 6.236, 242; cf. Qi Juesheng. Zhang Handong (1984), 436, knew that Academicians were policy advisors before Han Wudi, but he seems to think that changed afterwards. That is far from clear. To the group listed above, we should, of course, add diviners. Cf. Loewe (2019).

110 For example, see *Shiji* 59.2104 for the local *boshi*. Clearly, *xueguan* 學官 are mentioned in the localities, for example, in Shu (Sichuan) (*Hanshu* 89.3626). One wonders if the *wenxue* are trained there, in these places which seem to be ritual centers (*Hanshu* 76.3211n). Kingdoms were denied this privilege under Jingdi, in 145 BC (*Hanshu* 19.741), as part of a larger crackdown on their autonomy.

111 Indeed, Giele (2006), on *Du duan*, 85, characterizes these conferences as "convening for voting."

some cases "the imperial instructions had to be overturned," if justice was to prevail or the appropriate action was to be determined.[112]

Invitations to the conference (usually issued in the form of edicts by the emperor or the chancellor) were apt to be fairly open-ended. One edict by Wendi, for example, in commenting on a string of recent natural disasters, asked if it were Heaven's intention to indicate that either the imperial policies themselves or the procedures to implement those policies were at fault. "Should the administration's official salaries and expenses be reviewed? How are we to feed the people in such parlous times, and where does the blame lie, when the people are starving"?[113] Typically, the participants represented a broad mix of officials and experts ("different interest groups or constituencies," in today's parlance), on the understanding that the high-ranking would be inclined to favor the status quo and those still anxious to advance in their careers would be more likely to find the flaws in the current situation. As the surviving histories attest, those who spoke up in intelligent ways could move up the career ladder very quickly, both generalist and specialist knowledge being admired.[114] And often the invited participants, whether *wenxue, xianlang*, or Academicians, were the very people whom the court had dispatched to inquire into local conditions, who could then speak with greater authority to the topic at hand.[115] Position papers were drawn up and the drafts circulated to many interested parties and government agencies; the papers were then subjected to oral arguments, in a lengthy process that sometimes took months. All positions papers were subjected to repeated revisions before the final vote was called.

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112 One of the most spectacular cases involves Xiahou Sheng, whose upright remonstrance inflamed the emperor (*Hanshu* 75.3156). NB: the excavated texts reveal comparable discussions held at the local level, though the evidence is sparse; sometimes the received texts gesture in that direction (e.g., *Hanshu* 83.3340).

113 *Hanshu* 4.128. 吾未能得其中。其與丞相列侯吏二千石博士議之.

114 Here we think of Zufferey (2003), 189, a proposal to translate Ru as "generalist." Appeals to the "great Way" or "most fitting solution" are everywhere thought to supersede mere technique. Zufferey adduces the example of Gongsun Hong, who is described as "having all the advantages of Zhougong and Shaogong," and "who proceeded to establish an example for the empire to follow by never dressing in two colors and never dining on more than two dishes, with no noticeable benefit to the administration" (*Yantie lun*, chap. 10; Gale (1967) 63; Zufferey (2003). The sarcasm drips. While much of the controversial literature of the period is no longer extant, we know that such conference proceedings were compiled in compendia labeled *dan shi* 彈事 (Shots Thrown) or *dan wen* 彈文 (Projectiles in Writing), something not likely to happen if the court discussions were innocuous.

115 E.g., *Hanji*, *juan* 2, *pian* 13, on Xu Yan 徐偃 and others. Such envoys were meant to counter or rectify the situation where the members of the court paid no heed to the burdens of the laboring masses (as in *Yantie lun*, *juan* 2, *pian* 10: 但居者不知負載之勞, 從旁議者與當局者異憂).

Notably, throughout this potentially contentious process, the participants were admonished not to "fight to get ahead." As Xuandi acidly remarked,[116] the men in service who were quick to triumph over and lambaste one another abdicated their responsibility to emulate the exquisite courtesy displayed by the sage Zhougong, which brought to Zhou to nearly perfect rule. "Butting heads" confrontations (*kangli* 亢禮) were no-win situations, and the best men, regardless of position, extended the same politeness to everyone, regardless of station and standing in life (*jun li* 鈞禮).[117]

Often the histories record the numbers of those who favored one proposal over another, suggesting that a strong consensus and majority rule were not so easily overturned.[118] Apparently, the decisions reached during the court conferences gained added force and legitimacy when the numbers and often the identities of officials who supported a certain decision were put on record.[119] And although all formal decisions reached by the ad hoc consultative body could be re-litigated many decades after the initial conference, the court conferences established binding precedents until over-turned by a similarly protracted process.[120] Significantly, the participants frequently cited classical precedents when reporting their votes to the emperor and the members of his Executive Council: "We have heard that when you broadly solicit plans from the crowd, this accords with Heaven's heart. Therefore, when the 'Great Plan' speaks of following two out of three, saying that 'the minority should follow the majority,' it means that the conclusion ought to accord with the past and suit the masses" 論當往古, 宜於萬民.[121] Significantly, too, the "best" policy had to meet many

116 Xun Yue, *Hanji*, *juan* 1 for Xuandi.

117 *Hanshu* 71.3042, speaking of the exemplary Yu Dingguo's stress on the "classical arts" (*jingshu* 經術). Bing Ji is another celebrated figure who acts similarly (*Hanshu* 74.3413).

118 See, e.g., *Shiji* 118.3079, 3094; *Hanshu* 25B.1254–55 (2x), 73.3125, 84.2142–43, 86.3501. Nylan (2013/2020) demonstrates that the Han empire adopted nearly all Qin institutions, including that of the court conferences. The Qin stele erected in Kuaiji describes the court ideals in this way (*Shiji* 6.262): "The Sovereign Lord opens the realm, attending to the myriad affairs . . . He has good and bad explained to him, so nothing is hidden 皇帝開宇. 兼聽萬事 . . . 善否陳前.靡有隱情." The Qin emperor convened numerous court conferences; see *Shiji* 6.235, 238, 242 (2x), 266, 99.2720.

119 See Loewe (1994), 288–90, 294 and 296, for records of views credited to 70, 44, 28, 8, 18, 53 and 147 persons.

120 Re-litigation (literally, "debating again" 復議) could occur long after the initial decision was reached, and it was especially likely to happen when the vote did not reflect consensus. See, e.g., *Hou Hanshu* 30 (*zhi*).3035.

121 *Hanshu* 25B.1254–55.

incommensurate goals, not necessarily in conformity with the emperor's own views.[122]

The foregoing may upon first reading seem irrelevant to those entertaining a very narrow view of the "emotions" in early China (basically the lists that start with "delight" and "disgust"), and equally so to those who feel that "For ancient Chinese historians it was not the mimetic representation of past reality that was at issue, but the elucidation of good and evil."[123] Yes, those lists exist, as do the moralizing histories. However, what compels our interest are the texts exploring in sophisticated ways how trust is built, so that a real consensus may emerge, free of fears, to supplant the craven urges and mindless conformities. Often the workings of the governing elite becomes clearest when we see them under stress, responding to situations that leave them sore afraid, and what is striking is the complexity of their responses. In one passage, for example, Chengdi (r. 33–7 BC), who was well-trained in the Classics, professes himself to be "wild-eyed with terror." Treating the Classics as rich repositories of models for criticism, Chengdi then asks the commanderies and kingdoms near the capital to recommend for his court straight-talking and stridently critical candidates (with "no holds barred"), even as he solicits from the northwestern frontier zone men well trained in and knowledgeable about the military arts.[124] The best offense is a panoply of defensive plays, it seems, that required him to rethink his court and his place in it from the ground up. When all was said and done, "One cannot be too careful!" 不可不慎也.[125]

122 That much is apparent from the Bohu (White Tiger) conference of AD 79. Convened by the emperor, the conference participants' eventual consensus views clearly did not please the emperor, and yet the emperor duly signed off on those views, giving them his formal assent. Six years later, in AD 85, Zhangdi thought he had found a way to maneuver past some of the conference decisions he found most irksome. He therefore asked a trusted ritual expert to devise a new set of court rituals over the objections of several of his officials, who wanted a new conference convened. In the end, however, Zhangdi, a very powerful emperor, decided that it was simply not worth it to foist his views on an unwilling court full of doubters and dissenters. Accordingly, Zhangdi went to the grave without introducing the changes he wanted to see put in place, so cognizant was he of the social dynamics in play. See, e.g., *Hou Hanshu*, 35.1202–3; *Hou Hanshu zhi* 志 2.3026. Worth considering is Tjan (1949–52) Vol. 1, 164.

123 This assertion comes from a very smart essay by Kai Vogelsang (2005) 151. We problematize it because it applies to certain authoritative histories in early China, but not to others.

124 *Hanshu* 10.326.

125 *Hanshu* 89.3638 (more literally, "One cannot but be careful!").

5 Final Complications and First Conclusions

Later commentators to the *Analects* did not always find it easy to square the Supreme Sage's knowledge with his humble appearance and behavior. The discrepancy crops up in many passages in the *Analects*, but never more prominently than in this passage:

> The Master entered the great ancestral temple, where he inquired about everything. Someone commented [snidely], "Who says the man from Zou knows ritual? When he enters the great temple, he inquires about everything." Upon hearing of this, the Master observed, "That *is* the ritual."[126]

There are, of course, different ways to interpret Kongzi's reply. It might be read as, "Even though I know the protocols, the ritual requires me to *perform* my lack of knowledge," as in one standard early reading stressing the prudential quality of Kongzi's actions.[127] Or perhaps Kongzi was really afraid that he did not know every last detail; that he might annoy others by any show of erudition, arrogant or not; or even that less-erudite men might display unwarranted self-confidence, if they tried to model themselves on his conduct. The last reading was, as it happens, skewered by Wang Chong in an essay demonstrating that sages never have perfect "foreknowledge" 先知:[128]

> Kongzi/Confucius says: "When in doubt, inquire." Doesn't this mean that one should ask *only* when in doubt? If, in fact, Confucius already knew everything but needed to inquire again to serve as a model for others, then shouldn't he have done the same when his students came to ask about the Five Classics? Why, in that case, did he teach his students so *authoritatively*, brooking no opposition (*zhuan* 專)? . . . How is it possible that the sage's use of his heart and mind could be so inconsistent?[129]

The notion that "even if the sage knew, he still did not dare" received impeccable support from the Classics, masterworks, and early histories; what compels attention is the ever-present potential for adjustments to be made to the standard injunctions warning against acts and attitudes that "dare to monopolize." Wang Chong's objections to Kongzi's reply had important ramifications, of

126 *Analects* 3/15, commentary by Huang Kan 皇侃 (2017) 65.

127 Citing Kong Anguo 孔安國 (attributed to Han, but later); *Analects* 3/15, commentary by Huang Kan 皇侃 (2017) 65: "*Even though* he knows these things, he should still continue to ask about it. This is the height of prudence/caution" 雖知之, 當復問, 慎之至也.

128 Of course, the entire question of the sage's foreknowledge or prescience was hotly debated in Han, as to whether it had any divine quality to it. See *Fayan* 9/1; also *Wujing yi yi* (2012) 168.

129 *Lunheng*, *juan* 9, *pian* 28, 397 ("Wen Kong" 問孔 chap.).

course. For to query the claim that Kongzi's show of unknowing was *mere* performance was to invite an alternative mode of action: that of "inquiring and challenging" (*wen nan*問難), in the belief that "it is hardly necessary to await explicit precepts from the sages before one dares to speak."[130] For Wang, it seems, a "shared" 共 notion of inquiry is appreciably better than an unthinking parroting of precepts attributed to one sage or another.[131] Indeed, the admission that even the sage may experience self-contradictions is for Wang the beginning of true understanding. Note, not coincidentally, how well Wang's rhetoric is suited to appeal to his readers, who have already been primed by innumerable stories to concede the dangers of asserting any monopoly on knowing, whether moral or political.

A second rhetorical move toying with the language of "daring to monopolize" as "acting alone" with equal deftness uses the charge of arrogance to undermine bold actions undertaken to defend sound principles. When, for instance, Wang Chang 王暢 (d. 169 CE), as Governor of Nanyang, sought to rein in the extravagance of the local elites under his jurisdiction, he began his campaign thinking that he would lead by example: wearing commoner's clothing, he rode in an old cart pulled by a worn-out nag. Wang's student swiftly came forward to chide him:

> One should not usurp the privileges of one's superiors by extravagance, nor should one use frugality to coerce those below. In following the way and acting with ritual decorum, it is best to reside in the "narrow space between the permissible and the impermissible." They say Qu Boyu was ashamed to be a noble man alone (*du*). The governor does not long to embody the enlightened precepts of the sage Kongzi. Instead he emulates the inferior principles of Boyi and Shuqi [who refused to acknowledge the sober realities and changed circumstances of their time]. Are you completely free of the impulse to so dazzle the world that it deems you better than the common run of men?[132]

For the governor to embody frugality was nothing short of a rash and imperious attempt to humiliate any local who dared to dress more extravagantly. But how, then, was suasive example ever to effect gradual improvements? The dilemma was hardly lost on Xunzi 荀子 (d. ca. 221 BCE), easily the most influential thinker in the early empires, who remarked: "The man in service wants to cultivate his person in a discriminating way (literally *du* 獨), and yet he [also] wants not to offend the vulgar" 夫士欲獨修其身, 不以得罪於比俗之人也.[133]

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130 *Lunheng*, *juan* 9, *pian* 28, 397 ("Wen Kong" 問孔 chap.): 非必須聖人教告乃敢言也.

131 *Lunheng*, 26, *pian* 78, 1083 ("Shi zhi" 實知 chap.).

132 *Hou Hanshu* 56.1825. The line about residing "between the permissible and the impermissible" (*ke fou zhi jian*) is a reference to *Fayan* 11/23.

133 *Xunzi*, *juan* 1, *pian* 2, 30 ("Xiu shen" 修身 chap.).

In this paper, we have merely begun to scratch the surface of the culture of "daring" and "undaring" in the early empires in China.[134] The rhetoric used in this culture tended to generate complex calculations eliciting a mixture of due deference and singular pride, expressed in elevated language and elegant gestures (see the Appendix). We would end simply by reiterating what should be evident by now: always in the early empires in China, men and women with access to power had to weigh the relative importance of their own health and well-being as individuals and as family members, the potentials for honor versus disgrace in this life and in future generations, concerns for the court's administrative efficiency and standing with its subjects, and hence the very grounding of civilized order. Long-term "knowing what to do" and when and how to act, whether in the court's pay or not, proved not only to be the ultimate test of supreme cultivation,[135] but also – more surprisingly to us – a mark of great privilege, something to which mere functionaries and those not "in the know" could never aspire. By our reconstruction, then, to "conquer the self and submit to ritual" 克己復禮 during the tense negotiations that inevitably attended court business and domestic affairs was hardly a sign of slavish capitulation, as many have construed it.[136] It represented an enviable triumph of good sense, decorum, and breeding, and was widely regarded as such.

134 In a further study, we intend to pursue the larger cultural grammars through which people negotiated claims of authority to create that narrow social space between the permissible and the impermissible, in a climate where acting without authorization or authority could prove fraught, or even deadly.

135 We recall here Timothy Chappell's book (2014) by that name; also *Hanshu* 72, which celebrates the courage and wisdom of high-ranking officials who knew when it was time to quit. Many of the discussions swirl around timing, and the particular obligations a person owes if he or she is currently taking a court salary when the decision to act must be made.

136 This four-character phrase (*Analects* 12/1; *Shiji* 47.2187) is found in several histories, including *Zuozhuan*, Lord Zhao, Year 12, which ascribes it not to Confucius but an "old record"; the *Hanji*, *pian* 33 (Xun Yue's comments on Yuandi's reign); *Hanshu* 27B(c).1418, 85.3463; *Hou Hanshu* 40B.1361, 50.1677, 52.1720, *zhi* 2.3297.

Tables 1a-1b: We have provided for the reader a small sampling of excavated texts that use the language of "daring" and "not daring." While the administrative language is hard to parse, absent an understanding of the discourse and stakes of the discourse, Tables 1a-1b show readers versed in classical Chinese how the newest sources relate to the oldest sources in the received tradition.

Shuihudi 睡虎地 (Qin kingdom, terminus ad quem 217 BC)[137]

Dare	Violation/Sanction	Statute	Strip Nos.
毋敢	到七月而縱之	田律	4–7
百姓犬入禁苑中而不追獸及捕獸者, 勿敢殺	其追……殺之	田律	4–7
毋敢	有不從令者有辠	田律	12
毋敢增積	增積如律令	廄苑律	26–27
毋敢異		金布律	65
毋敢擇行錢、布	擇行錢、布者, ……皆有辠	金布律	68
其責毋敢逾歲	逾歲而弗入及不如令者, 皆以律論之	金布律	81
縣毋敢擅壞更公舍官府及廷	其有欲壞更殿, 必讞之	徭律	115–124
毋敢之市及留舍闌外	當行市中者, 回, 勿行	司空	147–148
所不當除而敢先見事, 及相聽以遺之	以律論之	置吏律	159–160
勿敢留	留者以律論之	行書	
非史子殿, 毋敢學學室	犯令者有辠	內史雜	191
毋敢從史之事		內史雜	192
侯、司寇及群下吏毋敢為官府佐、吏及禁苑憲盜		內史雜	193
非其官人殿, 毋敢舍焉	有不從令而亡、有敗、失火, 官吏有重辠, 大啬夫、丞任之	內史雜	195
毋敢以火入臧府、書府中		內史雜	198
勿敢行	行者有辠	尉雜	200
縣毋敢包卒為弟子	尉貲二甲, 免	效律	

137 Chen Wei 陳偉, ed., *Qin jiandu heji* 秦簡牘合集, **vol. 1** (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue chubanshe, 2014).

Tables 1a-1b (continued)

Dare	Violation/Sanction	Statute	Strip Nos.
敢深益其勞歲數者	貲一甲, 棄勞	效律	
非歲紅(功) 及毋命書, 敢為它器	工師及丞貲各二甲	效律	
毋敢炊飭	犯令, 貲一盾	效律	27–29
敢為詐偽者		效律	32–33
署勿令為它事……敢令為它事	使者貲二甲	效律	42

Yuelu Academy 岳麓書院 (unprovenanced)[138]

Dare	Violation/Sanction	Source
廿六年十二月戊寅以來, 禁毋敢謂母之後夫叚父, 不同父者, 毋敢相仁為兄、姊、弟	犯令者耐隸臣妾而毋得相為夫妻, 相為夫妻及相與奸者, 皆黥為城旦舂。	(5) 1–8
	母更嫁, 子敢以其財予母之後夫、後夫子者, 棄市, 其受者, 與盜同瀌	(5) 1–8
敢有挾舍匿者	皆與同辠	(5) 20
新地吏及其舍人敢受新黔首錢財酒肉它物	皆坐其所受	(5) 39–41
令曰: 御史節發縣官吏及丞相、御史、執瀌發卒史以下到縣官佐、史, 皆毋敢名發	不從令, 皆貲二甲, 其丞、長史、正、監、守丞有(又) 奪各一攻(功), 史與為者為新地吏二歲。	(5) 128–130
X敢令其奴婢、私屬、免婢市販馬牛犢為賈	不從令者, 黥奴婢、私屬、免婢為城旦舂黥其【顏額】禁市販。	(5) 163–164
吏自佐以上毋敢罰黔首	不從令者貲二甲, 免	(5) 209
禁毋敢為旁錢	為旁【錢】者, 貲二甲而廢	(5) 211
令曰: 諸有案行縣官, 縣官敢屏匿其所案行事及壅塞止辭者	皆耐之。所屏匿辠當遷若耐以上, 以其所屏匿辠論之, 有(又)駕(加) 其辠一等	(5) 218–19

138 Chen Songchang 陳松長, ed., *Yuelu shuyuan cang Qin jian, si* 岳麓書院藏秦簡.肆, vol. 4, (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2015). Chen Songchong, ed., *Yuelu shuyuan cang Qin jian, wu* 岳麓書院藏秦簡.伍, vol. 5 (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2017). The column, "Source" marks the volume number (4) or (5) followed by the cardinal number assigned to the strip in that volume.

(continued)

Dare	Violation/Sanction	Source
敢為人解去此一物, 及吏徒主將者擅弗令傅衣服, 及智(知) 其弗傅衣服而弗告劾論	皆以縱自爵皋論之, 弗智(知), 貲二甲	(5) 220–223
令曰: 毋以隸妾及女子居貲贖者為吏僕、養、老、守府, 及毋敢以女子為葆庸, 令炊養官府、寺舍]	不從令, 貲二甲, 廢。丞、令、令史、官嗇夫弗得, 貲二甲。	(5) 255–256
XX毋敢過壹	【隕計】過者, 令、丞以下均行, 詐避者皆為新地吏二歲	(5) 268
令曰: 諸有乘馬者, 毋敢步遠行衝道	行衝道過五日(百)里, 貲一甲	(5) 293–294
令曰: 黔首、徒隸名為秦者更名之	敢有、有弗更, 貲二甲	(5) 306
齋者, 祠未闋*而敢奸, 若與其妻、婢並X,	皆棄市	(5) 307
令曰: 縣官官令、丞、尉毋敢除它縣	不從令, 貲	(5) 313
發(?)傳, 縣道官令、丞、官長皆聽為封, 勿敢留, 事(使)毋傳及諸吏毋印者, 毋敢擅寄封,	不從令及	(5) 337
黔首居田舍者毋敢醢(酤)酒	不從令者遷之	(5) 115
金布律曰: 禁毋敢以牡馬、牝馬高五尺五寸以上, 而齒未盈至四以下, 服　車及墾田、為人就(僦) 載, 及禁賈人毋得以牡馬、牝馬高五尺五寸以上者載以賈市及為人就(僦) 載,	犯令者, 皆貲二甲, 沒入馬縣官。	(4) 127–131
尉卒律曰: 縣尉治事, 毋敢令史獨治, 必尉及士吏與	身臨之, 不從令者, 貲一甲	(4) 139
為它里典、老, 毋以公士及毋敢以丁者。	丁者為典、老, 貲尉、尉史、士吏主者各一甲, 丞、令、令史各一盾。	(4) 142–146
毋敢事(使) 叚(假) 典居旬于官府		(4) 155
勿敢擅興, 及勿敢擅事*(使) 敖童、私屬、奴及不從車牛, 凡免老及敖童未傅者, 縣勿敢事(使)		(4) 156–159
仗城旦勿將司, 舂城旦出徭者, 毋敢之市及留舍闉外	當行市中者, 回, 【勿行】	(4) 167–168
劾己而敢弗遣拾日	貲尉、尉史、士吏主者各二甲, 丞、令、令史各一甲	(4) 186–187

(continued)

Dare	Violation/Sanction	Source
毋敢令公士、公卒、士伍為它事, 必與繕城塞		(4) 188–191
毋敢令年未盈十四歲者行縣官恆書	不從令者, 貲一甲	(4) 196
縣請制, 唯故徼外盜, 以郵行之, 其他毋敢擅令郵行書		(4) 1417
黔首賣馬牛勿獻 (讞) 廷, 縣官其買殿(也), 與和市若室, 勿敢強		(4) 198–206
敢任除戰北、臾、故徼外盜不援及廢官者以為吏及軍吏、御右、把鉦鼓志及它論官者	其任有辠刑辠以上, 任者貲二甲而廢; 耐辠、贖辠, 任者貲一甲; 貲辠, 任者弗坐。	(4) 215–219
居貲贖責而敢為人僕、養、守官府及視臣史事若居隱除者	作日六錢為盜。吏令者, 耐。	(4) 270–272

Longgang 龍崗 (near SHUIHUDI site in Hubei)[139]

Dare	Violation/Sanction	Source
驅入禁苑中, 勿敢擅殺	擅殺者	23/11/11/183
諸禁苑為臾, 去垣冊里, 禁毋敢去臾中獸	取者X罪X盜禁中【獸】	27/12/12/274
毋敢毒殺魚	敢毒殺魚	28/19/19/207A
敢行馳道中者	皆遷之	54/63/62/179
黔首犬入禁苑中而不追獸及捕獸者勿敢殺	其追獸及捕獸者殺之	77/48A/48A/238, p. 54
而毋敢射殺	射殺	85/50/50/165
諸馬牛到所, 毋敢穿阱及置它機	敢穿阱及置它機能害人馬牛者, 雖未有殺傷殿, 貲二甲	103/85A/83A/212 p. 62

139 Chen Wei 陳偉, ed., *Qin jiandu heji* 秦簡牘合集**, vol. 2** (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue chubanshe, 2014).

ZHANGJIASHAN 張家山 (terminus ad quem 186 BC)[140]

Daring	Violation	Statute	Source
懷子而敢與人爭鬬	人雖毆變之, 罰爲人變者金四兩	賊律	31
治獄者: 各以其告劾治之。敢放訊、杜雅, 求其它罪, 及人毋告劾而擅覆治	皆以鞫獄故不直論。	具律	113
毋敢以投書者言繫治人	不從律者: 以鞫獄故不直論	具律	118
毋敢X界而環(還)		捕律	140–141
逗留畏耎弗敢就	奪其將爵一級, 免之	捕律	142
吏六百石以上及宦皇帝, 而敢字(子)貸錢財者	免之	襍律	184
諸有責而敢強質者	罰金四兩	襍律	187
敢擇不取行錢、金者	罰金四兩	錢律	197–198
官各有辨。非其官事勿敢為。非所聽勿敢聽。諸使而傳不名取卒、甲兵、禾稼志(識)者: 勿敢擅予		置吏律	216
非當發傳所也, 毋敢發傳食焉。為傳過員, 及私使人而敢為食傳者	皆坐食臧為盜。	傳食律	230
禁諸民吏徒隸: 春夏毋敢伐		田律	249
諸馬牛到所, 皆毋敢穿		田律	251
令勿敢逐夫父母及入贅, 及道外取其子財		戶律	339
	縣道官敢擅壞更宮府寺舍者: 罰金四兩, 以其費負之	徭律	410
縣道勿敢徭使		徭律	411–415
縣道官毋敢擅用		金布律	430
毋敢擅史卜	吏擅弗除事者, 與同罪	史律	482–483

140 Anthony J. Barbieri-Low and Robin D.S. Yates, *Law, State, and Society in Early Imperial China: A Study with Critical Edition and Translation of the Legal Texts from Zhangjiashan Tomb no. 247*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2015). Peng Hao, Chen Wei and Kudō Motoo, eds., *Ernian lüling yu zouyanshu* 二年律令與奏讞書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2007). The number referred to in the "Source" column is the strip number.

Fenghuangshan 鳳凰山 (at Jiangling, Hubei (burial dated 167 BC)[141]

正為市陽戶人嬰家稱錢衡以錢為纍, 劾曰四朱兩疏第十, 敢擇輕重衡及弗用劾論罰繇里家十日

Xuanquan 懸泉 Site, near Dunhuang (late Western Han/Wang Mang era)

諸吏宦官及比者同秩而敢詈之殿、官、廷中至其上秩, 若以縣官事毆詈五大夫以上, 戍一歲。[142]

Gurendi古人堤 (Eastern Han)

敢盜之及私假人者若盜充重以封及用偽印皆各以偽寫論[143]

Liye 里耶 (Qin period, 222 BCE-209 BCE) (selection)[144]

Speaker	Daring	Addressee	Other	Daring	Source
洞庭叚尉	謂	遷陵丞	其以律令從事		LY2 9–1
洞庭叚尉	謂	遷陵丞	以律令從事		LY2 9–2
洞庭叚尉	謂	遷陵丞	以律令從事		LY2 9–3
洞庭叚尉	謂	遷陵丞	以律令從事	敢言之	LY2 9–4
洞庭叚尉	謂	遷陵丞	以律令從事		LY2 9–5

141 Chen Zhenyu 陳振裕, "Jiangling Fenghuanshan: liuba hao Han mu" 江陵凤凰山一六八号汉墓, *Kaogu xuebao* 考古學報 4 (1993): 494.

142 IIT0215(1):76. See Zhang Junmin 張俊民, "Xuanquan Han jian suojian lüling wen yu Zhangjiashan Ernian lüling" 懸泉漢簡所見律令文與張家山《二年律令》, *Qin Han yanjiu* 秦漢研究 5 (2011).

143 Hunan sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 湖南省文物考古研究所 and Zhongguo wenwu yanjiusuo 中國文物研究所, "Hunan zhangjiajie gurendi jiandu shiwen yu jianzhu" 湖南張家界古人堤簡牘釋文與簡注, *Zhongguo lishi wenwu* 中國歷史文物 2 (2003): 76.

144 Chen Wei, ed., *Liye Qinjian jiaoshi* 里耶秦簡校釋, vol. 2 (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue chubanshe, 2018).

(continued)

Speaker	Daring	Addressee	Other	Daring	Source
洞庭叚尉	謂	遷陵丞	以律令從事		LY2 9–6
洞庭叚尉	謂	遷陵丞	其以律令從事		LY2 9–7
洞庭叚尉	謂	遷陵丞	其以律令從事		LY2 9–8
洞庭叚尉	謂	遷陵丞	其以律令從事		LY2 9–9
洞庭叚尉	謂	遷陵丞	其以律令從事		LY2 9–10
洞庭叚尉	謂	遷陵丞	其以律令從事		LY2 9–11
洞庭叚尉	謂	遷陵丞	其以律令從事		LY2 9–12
洞庭叚守	謂	遷陵丞	其聽書從事, 它如律令		LY2 9–23
遷陵丞	謂	倉嗇夫	以律令從事		LY2 9–30
告尉	謂	鄉守嗇夫			LY2 9–260
遷陵	謂	都鄉嗇夫	以律令從事		LY2 9–986
洞庭叚守	謂	縣丞	它如律令		LY2 9–1861
洞庭叚守	謂	遷陵丞			LY2 9–1864
遷陵守丞	謂	覆獄獄史			LY2 9–2203
洞庭守	謂	縣嗇夫、卒史嘉、叚卒史穀、屬尉			LY2 9–2283

(continued)

Speaker	Daring	Addressee	Other	Daring	Source
洞庭叚守	謂	縣丞	聽書從事		LY 7–11[149]
遷陵守丞	告				LY2 9–21
遷陵丞	告	少內主	以律令【從事】		LY1 8–60+8-656+8-665+8-748
遷陵守丞	告	司空主	以律令從事		LY2 9–23
遷陵守丞	告		聽書亟言		LY2 9–368
遷陵守丞	告	尉主			LY2 9–453
遷陵守丞	告	廄主			LY2 9–756
遷陵丞	告	少內主	其聽書入		LY2 9–1089
遷陵丞	告	少內主	X聽書入貲		LY2 9–1089
遷陵守丞	告	倉	以律令從事		LY2 9–1114
遷陵守丞	告	倉	以律令從事, 報之		LY2 9–1408+9-2288
遷陵守丞	告	司空、尉主	以律令從事		LY2 8–1538+9-1634
遷陵守	告	尉官主	聽書從事		LY 7–11

145 7–1 and 7–11 were recently published online. Chen Wei, "Qin Canwu, Dongting jun yanjiu de zhongyao ziliao" 秦蒼梧、洞庭郡研究的重要資料, Jianbo 簡帛, published 9–10-2019, http://www.bsm.org.cn/show_article.php?id=3415.

(continued)

Speaker	Daring	Addressee	Other	Daring	Source
X陵守丞	敢告、告	X	亟以律令從事		LY2 9–470
	敢告、告	尉	以律令從事		LY2 9–477
遷陵守丞	敢告、告	尉	以律令從事		LY2 9–1112
遷陵守丞	敢告、告	尉、鄉官主	以律令從事		LY2 9–1861
遷陵丞	敢告、告	尉, 司空、倉主	聽書從事, 它如律令		LY2 9–2283
遷陵守丞	敢告、告	尉、倉、啟陵、貳春鄉主	聽書		LY 7–1
南郡軍叚守	敢告……謂	洞庭主			LY 7–1
臨漢丞	敢告	遷陵丞主		敢告主	LY2 9–21
夾道	敢告	遷陵丞主		敢告主	LY1 8–60+8-656+8-665+8-748
少內	敢告	司			LY2 9–35
X陽守丞	敢告	遷陵丞主	令史可以律令從事		LY2 9–470
貳春鄉守	敢告	倉主		敢告主	LY2 9–811
酉陽守丞	敢告	遷陵丞主	令史可聽書從事	敢告主	LY2 9–986

(continued)

Speaker	Daring	Addressee	Other	Daring	Source
遷陵守丞	敢告	酉陽丞主		敢告主	LY2 9–1095
鄢將奔命尉	敢告	貳春鄉主		敢告主	LY2 9–1114
酉陽丞	敢告	遷陵丞主		敢告主	LY2 9–1454
遷陵守丞	敢告	枳丞主			LY2 9–1851
酉陽丞	敢告	遷陵丞主		敢告主	LY2 9–1863
貳春鄉丞	敢告	遷陵主		敢告主	LY2 9–1871+9-1883+9-1893+9-2469+9-2471
遷陵守丞	敢告	庫主	聽書, 以律令從事		LY2 9–1871+9-1883+9-1893+9-2469+9-2471
遷陵邦候守	敢告	遷陵主		敢告主	LY2 9–1874
	敢告	遷陵丞主			LY2 9–2207
尉	敢告	庫主	可以律令叚	敢告主	LY2 9–2209+9-2215
酉陽	敢告	遷陵主		敢告主	LY2 9–2289
陽陵守丞	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–1
陽陵守	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–1
司空	敢言之	洞庭尉		敢言之	LY2 9–2
陽陵守丞	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–2
陽陵	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–2

(continued)

Speaker	Daring	Addressee	Other	Daring	Source
司空	敢言之	洞庭尉		敢言之	LY2 9–3
陽陵守丞	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–3
陽陵	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–3
司空	敢言之	洞庭尉		敢言之	LY2 9–4
陽陵守	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–4
陽陵守丞	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–4
司空	敢言之	洞庭尉		敢言之	LY2 9–5
陽陵守丞	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–5
陽陵	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–5
司空	敢言之	洞庭尉		敢言之	LY2 9–6
陽陵守丞	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–6
陽陵	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–6
司空	敢言之	洞庭尉		敢言之	LY2 9–7
陽陵守丞	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–7
陽陵	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–7
司空	敢言之	洞庭尉		敢言之	LY2 9–8

(continued)

Speaker	Daring	Addressee	Other	Daring	Source
陽陵守丞	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–8
陽陵	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–8
司空	敢言之	洞庭尉		敢言之	LY2 9–9
陽陵守丞	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–9
陽陵	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–9
司空	敢言之	洞庭尉		敢言之	LY2 9–10
陽陵守丞	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–10
陽陵	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–10
司空	敢言之	洞庭尉		敢言之	LY2 9–11
陽陵守丞	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–11
陽陵	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–11
司空	敢言之	洞庭尉		敢言之	LY2 9–12
陽陵守丞	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–12
陽陵	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–12
貳春鄉	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–15
都府守	敢言之			敢言之	LY1 8–60+8-656+8-665+8-748

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Speaker	Daring	Addressee	Other	Daring	Source
貳春鄉	敢言之				LY2 9–22
啟鄉守	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–30
啟鄉守	敢言之				LY2 9–30
貳春鄉守	敢言之				LY2 9–31
啟陵鄉守	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–48
遷陵守丞	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–49
貳春鄉守	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–50
貳春鄉	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–165+9-473
遷陵守丞	敢言之				LY2 9–298
啟陵鄉守	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–450
丹陽將奔命尉	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–452
司空	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–470
遷陵將計叚丞	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–651+9-2470
益陽守丞	敢言之				LY2 9–672+9-701
田	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–699+9-802
倉守	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–700+9-1888

(continued)

Speaker	Daring	Addressee	Other	Daring	Source
田	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–710
田官守	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–982
都鄉守	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–1088+9-1090+9-1113
啟陵鄉	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–1095
唐亭叚校長	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–1112
貳春鄉	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–1114
啟陵鄉守	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–1204
遷陵守丞	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 8–653+9-1370
遷陵守丞	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 8–653+9-1370
庫守	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–1408+9-2288
貳春鄉	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–1411
遷陵丞	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–1417+9-1691
貳春	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 8–673+8-2002+9-1848+9-1897
倉	敢言之				LY2 9–1851
倉	敢言之				LY2 9–1856
畜官守	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–1857

(continued)

Speaker	Daring	Addressee	Other	Daring	Source
倉	敢言之				LY2 9–1860
遷陵守丞	敢言之				LY2 9–1864
田官守	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–1865
庫守	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–1871+9-1883+9-1893+9-2469+9-2471
庫守	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–1871+9-1883+9-1893+9-2469+9-2471
庫守	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–1871+9-1883+9-1893+9-2469+9-2471
庫守	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–1871+9-1883+9-1893+9-2469+9-2471
庫守	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–1871+9-1883+9-1893+9-2469+9-2471
少內守	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–1872
發弩守	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–2299+9-1882
庫守	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–1887
畜官守	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 8–199+8-688+8-1017+9-1895
鄧守丞	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–2076
貳春鄉守	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–2284
司空守	敢言之			敢言之	LY2 9–2289

Juyan 居延 (Western Han) (selection)[146]

Date	發官	敢/謂	收官	敢	Source
		叩頭死罪		謹拜奉書叩頭死罪白	JY 1: 4.3
	故甲渠候長	叩頭死罪			JY 1: 4.9
		叩頭死罪敢言之			JY 1: 4.31
十一月丙戌	宣德將軍張掖大守、長史丞	告	督郵掾……		JY 1: 16.4A
	得倉丞吉兼行丞相事	敢告	部都尉卒人	敢告卒人	JY 1: 12.1A-1D
二月戊寅	張掖大守、庫丞、兼行丞事	敢告……謂	張掖農都尉護田校尉府卒人		JY 1: 4.1
午朔辛酉	渠井隧長	敢言之			JY 1: 3.14
	史	敢言之			JY 1: 3.35
元康二年二月庚子朔乙丑	左前萬世隧長破胡	敢言之			JY 1: 255.22+5.18
五鳳二年九月庚辰朔己酉	渠候漢疆	敢言之		敢言之	JY 1: 6.5
五鳳二年八月辛巳朔乙酉	甲渠萬歲隧長	敢言之		敢言之	JY 1: 6.8
二月丙子	肩水候	敢言之			JY 1: 10.4
元康二年九月丁酉朔庚申	肩水候長	敢言之		敢言之	JY 1: 10.11
地節五年正月丙子朔丁丑	肩水候	敢言之			JY 1: 10.35A
永始五年閏月己巳朔丙子	北鄉嗇夫	敢言之		敢言之	JY 1: 15.19A
元康元年十二月辛丑朔壬寅	東部候長	敢言之			JY 1: 20.12A

146 Jiandu zhengli xiaozu 簡牘整理小組, *Juyan Hanjian* 居延漢簡, vol. 1 (Taipei: Zhongyanyuan shiyusuo, 2015).

(continued)

Date	發官	敢/謂	收官	敢	Source
居攝三年十月甲戌朔庚子	累虜隨長	敢言之		敢言之	JY 1: 25.4
辛巳	第二十三候長	敢言之			JY 1: 26.6
陽朔三年十二月壬辰朔癸巳	第十七候長	敢言之			JY 1: 28.1
陽朔元年十一月甲辰朔戊午	第廿三候長	敢言之		敢言之	JY 1: 28.4
月庚戌朔己卯	甲渠鄣候	敢言之		敢言之	JY 1: 28.15
鴻嘉三年閏月庚午朔癸酉	安民鄉酉秩	敢言之			JY 1: 32.17
陽朔三年九月癸亥朔壬午	甲渠鄣守候塞尉	敢言之		敢言之	JY 1: 35.8A
地節二年六月辛卯朔丁巳	肩水候	謂			JY 1: 7.7A
				臣請布, 臣X昧死以聞	JY 1: 5.10
				敢言之	JY 1: 6.13
				數毋狀當坐罪當死	JY 1: 27.2
				頭死罪死罪職事毋狀當坐罪當……	JY 1: 33.5A

New Strips from Juyan 居延新簡 (Wang Mang to early Eastern Han) (selection)[147]

Date	發官	敢/謂	收官	敢	Source
建武黍年六月庚午	領甲渠候職門下督賊	謂	第四守候長恭等		EPF22:166

147 Ma Yi 馬怡 and Zhang Rongqiang 張榮強, eds., *Juyan Xinjian shijiao* 居延新簡釋校 (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 2013).

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Date	發官	敢/謂	收官	敢	Source
建武五年五月乙亥朔壬午	甲渠守候	謂	第二隧長臨		EPF22:247A
建世二年正月甲子朔癸酉	甲渠守候	謂	將軍		EPF22:277
建世二年正月甲戌	甲渠守候	告	令史		EPF22:335
建武五年八月甲辰朔丙午	居延令丞	告……謂	尉		EPF22:56A
建武三年十二月癸丑朔丁巳	甲渠鄣候	叩頭叩頭死罪敢言之		獲教勅要領放毋狀當並坐叩頭死罪死罪敢言之	EPF22:187–201
建武四年十一月戊寅朔乙巳	甲渠候官守候	叩頭死罪敢言之		領職教吏毋狀叩頭死罪死罪敢言之	EPT22:126–132
新始建國地皇上戊四年十一月丁丑朔甲申	甲溝鄣候	叩頭死罪敢言之			EPF22:273A-274
	甲渠鄣守候			免冠叩頭死罪, 奉職數毋狀, 罪當萬死, 叩頭死罪死罪……毋狀當伏重誅, 靡為灰土, 叩頭死罪	EPT16:36–38
				失期, 職事毋狀, 罪當死, 叩頭死罪	EPT59:541
				獲教勅要領, 放毋狀, 當並坐, 叩頭死罪死罪敢言之	EPF22:200–201
				誠教勅吏毋狀, 罪當死, 叩頭死罪死罪敢言之	EPF22:424
				謹案部吏毋犯者敢言之	EPF22:39
				謹案部吏毋作使屬國秦胡盧水士民者敢言之	EPF22:43
建武四年五月辛巳朔戊子	甲渠塞尉放行候事			謹移正月盡六月財物簿一編敢言之	EPF22:55A
				叩頭死罪敢言之	EPF22:62A

(continued)

Date	發官	敢/謂	收官	敢	Source
	甲渠鄣守候			免冠叩頭死罪死罪奉職數毋狀罪法重疊身死/厚妻子從隨眾死不足報	EPF22: 286–287
建五六年七月戊戌朔				一編敢言之	EPF22:323
				叩頭死罪死罪敢言之	EPF22:351
				領職毋狀……	EPF22:390
				叩頭死罪敢言之	EPF22:406
				數毋狀當坐罪當死叩頭	EPF22:415
				叩頭死罪敢言之	EPF22:417
				誠教勅吏毋狀罪當死叩頭死罪死罪敢言之	EPF22:424
				免叩頭死罪死罪職事數毋狀當……	EPF22:517
	甲渠鄣候			免冠叩頭死罪死罪職事毋狀當坐	EPF22:548
				叩頭死罪死罪職事毋狀當坐	EPF22:592
				叩頭死罪敢言之	EPF22:771
建武三年十二月癸丑朔辛未	都鄉嗇夫	敢言之		叩頭死罪死罪敢言之	EPF22: 29–32
建武六年七月戊戌朔乙卯	甲渠鄣守候	敢言之			EPF22:38A
建武四年五月辛巳朔戊子	甲渠塞尉放行候事	敢言之			EPF22:45A
建武四年五月辛巳朔戊子	甲渠塞尉放行候事	敢言之		謹案部吏毋屠殺馬牛者敢【言之】	EPF22:47A
建武四年五月辛巳朔戊子	甲渠塞尉放行候事	敢言之		謹案部吏毋伐樹木者敢言之	EPF22:48A
建武四年五月辛巳朔戊子	甲渠塞尉放行候事	敢言之		謹案部吏毋犯四時禁者敢言之	EPF22:50A

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Date	發官	敢/謂	收官	敢	Source
建武六年七月戊戌朔乙卯	甲渠鄣守候	敢言之		謹案部吏毋犯四	EPF22:51A
建武四年五月辛巳朔戊子	甲渠塞尉放行候事	敢言之		謹移四月盡六月賦錢簿一編敢言之	EPF22:54A
建武三年七月乙酉朔丁酉	萬歲候長	敢言之			EPF22:61
建武三年三月丁亥朔己丑	城北隧長	敢言之			EPF22:80
三月丁亥朔辛卯	城北守候長	敢言之			EPF22:82
建武五年八月甲辰朔	甲渠鄣候	敢言之		謹案毋應書敢言之	EPF22: 163–165
建武肆年六月庚午	領甲渠候職門下督賊	敢言之		謹驗問隆辭……敢言之	EPF22: 169–172
建世二年三月甲子	甲渠鄣守候	敢言之			EPF22: 292–295
建武四年三月壬午朔己亥	萬歲候長	敢言之			EPF22:329
新始建國地皇上戊四年肆月己卯朔乙巳	甲溝守候	敢言之			EPF22:334A
建武肆年三月甲午朔庚申	甲渠鄣候	敢言之			EPF22: 430A
建武四年十一月戊寅朔乙酉	甲渠鄣守候	敢言之		敢言之	EPF22: 453
更始二年七月癸酉朔己卯	甲渠鄣守候	敢言之		謹移應書一編敢言之	EPF22: 455
漢元始廿六年十一月庚申朔甲戌	甲渠鄣候	敢言之		謹移……敢言之	EPF22: 460A
建武肆年十月辛酉朔壬戌	主官令史譚	敢言之			EPF22: 700

Wuyi Guangchang 五一廣場 (Eastern Han)[148]

Date	Speaker	Daring	Addressee	Daring	Source
十一月九日乙未	長沙大守、行丞事益陽守	謂	臨湘		WY 2: 576
延平元年三月戊寅朔六日癸未	行長沙大守文書事大守丞	謂	臨湘		WY 2: 671
閏月十日乙亥	長沙大守行文事大守丞	謂	臨湘		CW J1(3):325-1-140
三月七日辛未	長沙大守	告……謂	兼賊曹掾、史、東西部勸農掾督郵書掾、上湘賊捕掾、督盜賊		WY 1: 355+357
二年正月八日丙戌	長沙大守、丞	告……謂	兼中部勸農督郵書掾育		WY 2: 694
		告	中部督郵書掾常謂		WY 1:105
	府	告	兼賊曹史湯		CW J1(3):285A
永初三年八月戊午朔十六日癸酉	待事掾	叩頭死罪敢【言之】			WY 1:88
永X十X年七月	令君丞X	叩頭死罪敢……			WY 2: 551
永初四年三月乙酉朔廿五日己酉	書佐	叩頭死罪敢言之		脩叩頭	WY 1:4

148 Changsha shi wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 長沙市文物考古研究所, ed., *Changsha Wuyi guangchang Dong Han jiandu* 長沙五一廣場東漢簡牘, vols 1–2 (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2018). References from volume 1 and 2 are marked WY 1 and WY 2, respectively. Material cited using only document identification number – e.g., CW J1(3):285A – comes from Huang Puhua 黃樸華, "Hunan Changsha Wuyi guangchang Dong Han jiandu fajue jianbao" 湖南長沙五一廣場東漢簡牘發掘簡報,*Wenwu* 文物 6 (2013): 4–26.

(continued)

Date	Speaker	Daring	Addressee	Daring	Source
延平元年十月乙巳朔八日壬子	兼獄史封行丞事	叩頭死罪敢言之			WY 1:123
永初二年七月乙丑朔廿七日辛卯	北部賊捕掾、游徼	叩頭死罪敢言之			WY 1:128
永初元年正月癸酉朔廿日壬辰	東部勸農賊捕掾、游徼、騩望亭長	叩頭死罪敢言之			WY 1:230
永初二年五月丙寅朔十八日癸未	未直符右倉曹史	叩頭死罪敢言之			WY 1:341
永初二年閏月乙未朔四日戊戌	東部郵亭掾	叩頭死罪敢言之			
永初四年正月丙戌朔十八日癸卯	東部勸農賊捕掾、游徼	叩頭死罪敢言之			WY 2:412
永元十六年十月丁亥朔廿日戊午	南部游徼	叩頭死罪敢言之			WY 2:426
永元十四年六月庚午朔廿四日癸巳	長賴鄉嗇夫、助佐	叩頭死罪敢言之			WY 2: 537+786
永元十六年六月戊子朔廿八日乙卯	廣亭長、	叩頭死罪敢言之			WY 2: 664+542
六月十七日辛亥	臨湘令守丞	叩頭死罪敢言之		宮惶恐叩頭死罪死罪敢言之	WY 2: 682
永初元年八月庚子朔廿一日庚申	廣成鄉有秩、佐、助佐	叩頭死罪敢言之			CW J1(3):325-1-45A

(continued)

Date	Speaker	Daring	Addressee	Daring	Source
延平元年二月己酉朔廿七日乙亥	左部勸農賊捕掾、游徼、庾匀亭長	叩頭死罪敢言之			CW J1(3):325-1-54B
永元十五年閏月丙寅朔八日癸酉	武陵大守伏波營軍守司馬	叩頭死罪敢言之		朱郢誠惶誠惶叩頭叩頭死罪敢言之	CW J1(3):325-1-140
元興元年六月癸未朔六日戊子	沮鄉別治掾	叩頭死罪敢言之		倫職事無狀惶恐叩頭死罪死罪敢言之	CW J1(3):264–294
				奐惶恐叩頭死罪死罪敢言之	WY 1:84
				無狀惶恐叩頭死罪敢言之	WY 1:87
				錯甫戎叩頭死罪敢言之	WY 1:95
七月八日壬申白				愚戇惶恐叩頭死罪死罪	WY 1:291
永初四年四月乙卯朔				死罪敢言之	WY 1:315
				復言信X職惶恐叩頭死罪死罪敢言之	WY 1:319
				職事留遲無狀惶恐叩頭死罪死罪敢言之	WY 1:326
				職事無狀惶恐叩頭死罪死罪敢言之	WY 1:328
				良叩頭死罪死罪謹案文	WY 1:364
				忠叩頭死罪死罪，得閎豐徑移	WY 1:369
				就惶恐叩頭死罪死罪敢言之	WY 1:372
				叩頭死罪死罪	WY 1:399

(continued)

Date	Speaker	Daring	Addressee	Daring	Source
				牧躬鮪种惶恐叩頭死罪死罪敢言之	WY 2: 402+417
				復言郎泓均職事惶恐叩頭死罪	WY 2:404
				酆、爨*惶恐叩頭死罪死罪敢言之	WY 2:410
				酆純叩頭死罪死罪, 奉得書	WY 2: 435+434
				惶恐騜尚皋職事無狀叩頭叩頭死罪死罪敢言之	WY 2:459
				職事惶恐	WY 2:461
				譚宮職事無狀惶恐叩頭死罪死罪敢言之	WY 2: 472+505
正月十二日白				愚戇惶恐叩頭死罪死罪	WY 2: 482
				處言馮、蒼、元叩頭死罪死罪	WY 2: 520
				職事無狀惶恐叩頭死罪死罪敢言之	WY 2: 524
				實核辭有增異正處復言奉配竇惶恐叩頭死罪死罪敢言之	WY 2: 528
				向、汎、淩叩頭死罪敢言之	WY 2: 546+548
				異正處言遷、尚、熊職事無狀惶恐叩頭死罪死罪敢言之	WY 2: 577
					WY 2: 591
				復處言暉職事留遲惶恐叩頭死罪死罪敢言之	WY 2: 655

(continued)

Date	Speaker	Daring	Addressee	Daring	Source
				种、渠職事惶恐叩頭死罪死罪敢言之	WY 2: 672
				考實明分別正處言向汎梵叩頭死罪……	WY 2: 686
				考實正處言不敢出十X月	WY 2: 768
				吞*、种、賜叩頭死罪死罪, 奉得記, 即訊	CW J1(3):325-2-3
				復言伉、寶、廣惶恐叩頭死罪死罪……白	CW J1(3):325-4-43B
永初二年三月丁卯朔		惶恐叩頭死罪敢言之			WY 1:201
永初七年八月乙丑朔二日丙子	南鄉有秩、佐、助佐	敢言之		選均衰叩頭死罪敢言之	WY 1:36
永初二年七月乙丑朔十九日癸未	桑鄉守有秩、佐、助佐、	敢言之			WY 2:414
永初三年正月壬辰朔 日	臨湘令、守丞	敢言之		敢言之	WY 2:437
永元十七年四月甲申朔十二日乙未	書佐	敢言之		敢言之	WY 2:441
永初三年正月壬辰朔十二日壬寅	直符戶曹史	敢言之		敢言之	CW J1(3): 281–5A
永元十六年七月戊午十九日丙子	曲平亭長	敢言之臨湘獄		敢言之	WY 1:257

Appendices

Chinese Sources for "A Short History of Daring" (Nylan and Wilson)

Documents, "Jun shi" (p. 5–6)
君奭。弗弔天降喪于殷。殷既墜厥命。我有周既受。我不敢知曰厥基永孚于休。若天棐忱。我亦不敢知曰其終出于不祥。嗚呼。君已曰時我。我亦不敢寧于上帝命。弗永遠念天威越我民。罔尤違。惟人。

Documents, "Shao gao" (p. 6)
我不敢知曰有殷受天命。惟有歷年。我不敢知曰不其延。惟不敬厥德。乃早墜厥命。

Documents, "Jun shi" (p. 6)
在我後嗣子孫。大弗克恭上下。遏佚前人光在家。不知天命不易。天難諶。乃其墜命。弗克經歷。

Documents, "Li zheng" (p. 7)
文王惟克厥宅心……罔攸兼于庶言。庶獄庶慎。惟有司之牧夫是訓用違。庶獄庶慎。文王罔敢知于茲。亦越武王……不敢替厥義德。率惟謀從容德。以並受此丕丕基。

Documents, "Hong fan" (p. 9)
稽疑……立時人作卜筮。三人占。則從二人之言。

Documents, "Hong fan" (p. 9)
汝則有大疑。謀及乃心。謀及卿士。謀及庶人。謀及卜筮。汝則從。龜從。筮從。卿士從。庶民從。是之謂大同。身其康彊。子孫其逢。汝則從。龜從。筮從。卿士逆。庶民逆吉。卿士從。龜從。筮從。汝則逆。庶民逆。吉。庶民從。龜從。筮從。汝則逆。卿士逆。吉。汝則從。龜從。筮逆。卿士逆。庶民逆。作內吉。作外凶。龜筮共違于人。用靜吉。用作凶。

Guoyu, "Chu yu" (p. 12)
靈王虐。白公子張驟諫。王患之。謂史老曰。吾欲已子張之諫。若何? 對曰。用之實難。已之易矣。若諫。君則曰。余左執鬼中。右執殤宮。凡百箴諫。吾盡聞之矣。寧聞他言? 白公又諫。王若史老之言。對曰。昔殷武丁能聳其德。至于神明。以入于河。自河徂亳。于是乎三年。默以思道。卿士患之。曰。王言以出令也。若不言。是無所稟令也。武丁于是作書。曰。以余正四方。余恐德之不類。茲故不言。如是而又使以象夢旁求四方之賢。得傅說以來。升以為公。而使朝夕規諫。曰。若金。用女作礪。若津水。用女作舟。若天旱。用女作霖雨。啟乃心。沃朕心。若藥不瞑眩。厥疾不瘳。若跣不視地。厥足用傷。若武丁之神明也。其聖之睿廣也。其智之不疚也。猶自謂未乂。故三年默以思道。既得道。猶不敢專制。使以象旁求聖人。既得以為輔。又恐其荒失遺忘。故使朝夕規誨箴諫。曰。必交修余。無余棄也。今君或者未及武丁。而惡規諫者。不亦難乎。

Lunheng “Bian sui” (p. 13)
聖人舉事。先定於義。義已定立。決以卜筮。示不專己。明與鬼神同意共指。欲令眾下信用不疑。

Shuoyuan “Zhi gong” (p. 14)
孔子為魯司寇。聽獄必師斷。敦敦然皆立。然後君子進曰。某子以為何若。某子以為云云。又曰。某子以為何若。某子曰云云。辯矣。然後君子幾當從某子云云乎。以君子之知。豈必待某子之云云。然後知所以斷獄哉？君子之敬讓也。文辭有可與人共之者。君子不獨有也。

Hanshu 77.3252 (p. 14)
臣聞明王垂寬容之聽。崇諫爭之官。廣開忠直之路。不罪狂狷之言……臣等愚。以為輔幸得託公族之親。在諫臣之列。新從下土來。未知朝廷體。獨觸忌諱。不足深過。小罪宜隱忍而已。如有大惡。宜暴治理官。與眾共之。

Jinshu 30.916 (p. 15)
陛下之所行刑。皆宜死之人也。然眾庶不知。將為倉卒。願陛下下之吏而暴其罪。均其死也。不汙宮掖。不為縉紳警惋。不為遠近所疑。

Hanshu 67.2915 (p. 16)
至成帝時。丞相故安昌侯張禹以帝師位特進。甚尊重。雲上書求見。公卿在前。雲曰。今朝廷大臣上不能匡主。下亡以益民。皆尸位素餐。孔子所謂鄙夫不可與事君。苟患失之。亡所不至者也。臣願賜尚方斬馬劍。斷佞臣一人以厲其餘。上問。誰也？對曰。安昌侯張禹。上大怒。曰。小臣居下訕上。廷辱師傅。罪死不赦。御史將雲下。雲攀殿檻。檻折。雲呼曰。臣得下從龍逢、比干遊於地下。足矣。未知聖朝何如耳？御史遂將雲去。於是左將軍辛慶忌免冠解印綬。叩頭殿下曰。此臣素著狂直於世。使其言是。不可誅。其言非。固當容之。臣敢以死爭。慶忌叩頭流血。上意解。然後得已。及後當治檻。上曰。勿易。因而輯之。以旌直臣。

Hou Hanshu 82A.2723 (p. 18)
朕能生君。能殺君。能貴君。能賤君。能富君。能貧君。君何以慢朕命？

Hou Hanshu 82A.2723 (p. 18)
臣受命於天。生盡其命。天也。死不得其命。亦天也。陛下焉能生臣。焉能殺臣。臣見暴君如見仇讎。立其朝猶不肯。可得而貴乎？雖在布衣之列。環堵之中。晏然自得。不易萬乘之尊。又可得而賤乎？陛下焉能貴臣。焉能賤臣。臣非禮之祿。雖萬鍾不受。若申其志。雖簞食不厭也。陛下焉能富臣。焉能貧臣。

Analects 3/15 (p. 24)
子入大廟。每事問。或曰。孰謂鄹人之子知禮乎？入大廟。每事問。子聞之曰。是禮也。

Lunheng “Wen Kong” (p. 24)

孔子曰。疑思問。疑乃當問邪? 實已知。當復問。為人法。孔子知五經。門人從之學。當復行問。以為人法。何故專口授弟子乎? 不以已知五經復問為人法。獨以已知太廟復問為人法。聖人用心。何其不一也?

Hou Hanshu 56.1825 (p. 25)
夫奢不僭上。儉不逼下。循道行禮。貴處可否之閒。蘧伯玉恥獨為君子。府君不希孔聖之明訓。而慕夷齊之末操。無乃皎然自貴於世乎?

Yili passage, as written*

* The underlying logic of this passage, upon first reading totally obscure, is easy enough to parse once one realizes how difficult peer-to-peer exchanges prove to be, as compared with those within well-defined hierarchies of superior-subordinate relations.

Etiquette for audiences between gentlemen: As for the gift, in winter, use a pheasant. In summer use dried [pheasant] meat. [The guest] presents it with its head to the left. [The guest] says: "I have wished to present myself [before you], but I have had no reason to come.[149] So-and-so has ordered me to present myself [before you]." 士相見之禮。摯, 冬用雉, 夏用腒。左頭奉之, 曰: 某也願見, 無由達。某子以命命某見。

The host replies: "So-and-so has ordered me to see you. Milord has humiliated himself [by coming here]. I beg that milord return home and I will make haste to appear before him."

主人對曰: 某子命某見, 吾子有辱。請吾子之就家也, 某將走見。

The guest replies: "I am unworthy, so do not disgrace yourself by giving me orders. I beg that you will finally grant me this audience."[150] The host replies: "I dare not put on such a display of authority. I persist in asking my lord to return home, where I will make haste to appear before him." 賓對曰: 某不足以辱命, 請終賜見。主人對曰: 某不敢為儀, 固請吾子之就家也, 某將走見。

The guest replies: "I dare not put on a display of authority, I persist in begging you." The host replies: "I have persisted in declining, but this has not been allowed (lit. "ordered"). I will come out to see you. I hear that milord has brought a gift. I dare to decline the gift." 賓對曰: 某不敢為儀, 固以請。主人對曰: 某也固辭, 不得命, 將走見。聞吾子稱摯, 敢辭摯。

The guest replies: "Without the gift, I dare not show myself." The host replies: "Do not engage in these rituals – I am not worthy. I dare to persist in declining the gift." The guest replies: "Without

149 Zheng Xuan: 言久無因緣以自達也。某子, 今所因緣之姓名。We have consulted the available translations (Couveur, p. 58; Harlez, p. 47; and Steele, p. 42), here and below.
150 The phrase *ruming* 辱命 appears in *Yili* "Shi hun li" 士昏禮 (p. 159). The phrase *ruming* also appears in *Liji* 禮記 "Tan gong xia" 檀宮下: 君無所辱命. Also in the *Zuozhuan*, see Lord Xi, Year 24: 何辱命焉. Translation, 24.1b, p. 375: "Why condescend to issue an order for me to depart?" Lord Xiang, Year 3, 何辱命焉. Translation, 3.7, p. 905: "Why deign to issue a command?".

the support of this gift, I dare not show himself. I persist in begging." 賓對曰: 某不以摯, 不敢見。主人對曰: 某不足以習禮, 敢固辭。賓對曰, 某也不依於摯, 不敢見, 固以請。

The host replies: "I also persist in declining, but have not been allowed. Dare I not respectfully obey!" The host goes out the gate to meet the guest. He bows twice. The guest responds by bowing twice. The host salutes and enters the right side of the gate. Carrying the gift, the guest enters the left side of the gate. The host bows twice and then accepts [the gift]. The guest bows twice and offers the gift. The guest then attempts to exit. The host begs for an audience. The guest returns for the audience. When the guest departs, the host sees him out the gate. The host bows twice. 主人對曰: 某也固辭, 不得命, 敢不敬從! 出迎於門外, 再拜。賓荅再拜。主人揖, 入門右。賓奉摯, 入門左。主人再拜受, 賓再拜送摯, 出。主人請見, 賓反見。退, 主人送於門外, 再拜。

The [former] host now pays a return visit, taking the gift with him. He says: "Earlier, when milord humiliated himself [by visiting me], he demanded that I appear before him. I beg to return this gift to the usher."[151] The host responds: "I already had an audience. I dare to decline." The guest responds: "It is not that I would ever dare to request an audience; rather, I [simply] beg to return the gift to the usher." 主人復見之, 以其摯, 曰: 曩者吾子辱, 使某見。請還摯於將命者。主人對曰: 某也既得見矣, 敢辭。賓對曰: 某也非敢求見, 請還摯於將命者。

The host says: "I have already had an audience. I dare to persist in declining." The guest responds: "I dare not request to be heard.[152] I persist in begging through the usher." The host responds: "I persist in declining, but have not been permitted to do so. Would I dare to disobey?" The guest presents the gift and enters. The host bows twice and accepts the gift. The host bows twice and gives the gift. He then exits. The host sees him out the gate. He bows twice. 主人對曰: 某也既得見矣, 敢固辭。賓對曰: 某不敢以聞, 固以請於將命者。主人對曰: 某也固辭, 不得命, 敢不從? 賓奉摯入, 主人再拜受。賓再拜送摯, 出。主人送於門外, 再拜。

References

Chinese texts

Analects: References are to the standard paragraphing in Ruan Yuan (ed.); also to Huang Kan 皇侃, *Lunyu yishu* 論語義疏, Beijing, 2013; rpt. 2017.

Changes: References are to Richard John Lynn (trans.), *Yijing*, New York, 1994.

Du Duan 獨斷, by Cai Yong 蔡邕. References are to the standard paragraphing found in the CHANT ICS Concordance Series (aka CHANT); also to Enno Giele, *Imperial Decision-making and Communication in Darly China: A Study of Cai Yong's Duduan*, Wiesbaden, 2006.

151 Steele, p. 44, uses "usher."

152 The Tang subcommentary suggests that the *wen* 聞 is a further elaboration of the *jian* 見 from the first line: 上云'非敢求見', 已是不敢當, 此云'不敢以聞', 耳聞疏於目見, 故云'又益不敢當'也。(p. 172).

Guoyu 國語, Anon. References are to *Guoyu jijie* 國語集解, compiled Xu Yuangao 徐元誥, rpt. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2002.

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