

The Dynastic Centre and the Provinces

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The Dynastic Centre and the Provinces

Agents and Interactions

Edited by

Jeroen Duindam and Sabine Dabringhaus



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Introduction

Jeroen Duindam

Throughout global history empires have been expanding and contracting, rising and declining. New dynasties challenged their predecessors, only to be ousted in their turn. Conquerors stunned their contemporaries by overrunning huge landmasses, but their successors frequently proved unable to maintain even a semblance of unity. Chinese history, at first glance the epitome of continuity, hides repeated and protracted phases of violent contestation and sweeping geographical reconfiguration. Many dynasties, moreover, show a pattern of alternation between centralising and regionalising phases. In Europe, never unified under one single political or religious authority, the same patterns can be observed on the smaller-scale level of its dynastic mosaic.

Traditionally, Europe and China were seen as opposites, with China standing for unity, harmony, and continuity, Europe for division, competition and dynamism. Echoes of this view can still be found in debates on the 'rise of the West' and to some extent they reflect real differences.¹ However, such essentialist perspectives on European and Asian history tend to be self-confirmatory; they can be re-examined only by adopting a radically different approach based on focused comparison of well-defined themes. Comparative history has been practiced largely at the level of secondary sources within a restricted field of languages: it almost inevitably reproduces clichés of the older literature. Mastering the languages and research traditions of Chinese as well as European history reaches beyond the lifespan and capabilities of most individual scholars. By bringing together specialists studying the connections between dynastic centres and the territories formally under their sway, mostly in Late Imperial China and Early Modern Europe, this volume explores the uncharted path towards comparison at a different level. The concentrated and detailed chapters are not themselves comparative in nature, but they powerfully suggest the intellectual potential of combining a global scope with a keen awareness of the complications of local sources. This introduction outlines the

1 See the elegant synthesis of discontinuous and continuous representations of Chinese history in Yuri Pines, *The Everlasting Empire. The Political Culture of Ancient China and its Imperial Legacy* (Princeton and Oxford, 2012), underlining the unchallenged persistence of unity, imperial power, literati leadership and hegemony over local life in a setting in practice repeatedly characterised by conflict and disunity.

themes under scrutiny; an epilogue elaborates some of the consequences of the contributions assembled here for further comparative research in this field.

Powers wax and wane—not only in terms of territorial scope but also in the degree to which the centre can control the provinces. Imperial centres can command respect and extract tribute without actively governing outlying regions; as soon as the authority of the centre wanes, however, tributaries tend to drift away. Loss of control and political cohesion threatens even modern states supported by a technology of communication and infrastructures beyond the wildest imagination of any pre-modern ruler. How could leaders hope to secure the acquiescence of populations they ruled, particularly in remote areas?²

This classic question, examined at length in Max Weber's influential typology of power,³ can be answered in many ways. Three different ingredients figure in most durable political arrangements, albeit in variously proportioned combinations: coercion, interests, and ideals. It is difficult to conceive of any political constellation binding together a variety of groups and territories without 1) the threat of violent retribution, 2) the promise of material rewards, and 3) the appeal to shared values and ideas. The French Revolution expanded greatly the potential of states in each of these respects, a development enhanced by a sequence of technological breakthroughs. Not only did the revolution entail a sharp polarisation of political ideas and an upsurge of popular political action; it also caused an explosion of the repressive apparatus, adopted voluntarily by restoration monarchs. The growth of state power throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries went hand in hand with a differentiating and expanding agenda of state activities, and—in democratic regimes—with a rise in the numbers of voters and stakeholders.

The protracted phase of change from the final decades of the *ancien régime* into our contemporary world powerfully suggested a more linear view of history; it has also shaped our perception of pre-revolutionary forms of power. Post-revolutionary critique underlined the omnipotence and arbitrariness of monarchical government as well as its disregard for the interest of its peoples.

2 See David Cannadine, 'Introduction' in David Cannadine and Simon Price, eds., *Rituals of Royalty. Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge, 1987) 1–19, 19: 'Yet for any society, in any age, the study of politics ultimately comes down to one elemental question: how are people persuaded to acquiesce in a polity where the distribution of power is manifestly unequal and unjust, as it invariably is?' Please note that for this brief general introduction references have been kept to a minimum.

3 Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundriss der verstehenden Soziologie* (Tübingen, 1922).

The legacies of dynastic power, in the form of palaces, images, and texts, likewise suggested strength, inflated self-importance, and detachment from public needs. With the demise of the moral underpinning of monarchical rule, it became difficult to differentiate its religious-hierarchical mandate from blatant abuse and self-enrichment. Amidst mostly negative associations one appreciative note remained: monarchy had triumphed over feudal anarchy and baronial power. In the national historiographies of Europe, particularly of France, monarchy appeared as an intermediate stage, with rulers laying the groundwork for the modern state by subduing their overmighty noble subjects.

This overstated and one-sided view of royal power firmly dominated European history textbooks until recently. A gradual revision of European 'absolutism' took shape in the last decades of the twentieth century largely on the basis of research in archives that added regional and elite perspectives to the top-down monarchical view.⁴ The language of fidelity and subservience went together with a keen defence of local corporate interests. While the monarchical state harshly punished open defiance, it accepted regional elites as necessary partners in government, as a rule accommodating local interests and rights. At the heart of the monarchical state a similar pattern predominated: open challenges were never tolerated, but loyal supporters were granted extensive rights. The household, long understood as a gilded cage where once-powerful nobles were captured in a contest for vain honours, was never wholly detached from governance. Louis XIV's successful attempt to attach the highest nobles to his court by rewarding them with prestigious offices and privileges created an aristocratic stronghold that would persist until the revolution. The rulers themselves, whether strong or weak, relied at least a part of their lives on the support and advice of confidants in their domestic environment. In addition to the qualification of the reach and force of royal power, it has become clearer that dynastic rulers, too, cherished a moral view of their responsibilities, even if in practice they often ignored the dictates of their mandate. The tension between the practices outlined in Machiavelli's

4 See e.g. R.J.W. Evans, *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy 1550–1700. An Interpretation* (Oxford 1979); William Beik, *Absolutism and Society in Seventeenth-Century France. State Power and Provincial Aristocracy in Languedoc* (Cambridge, 1985); Roger C. Mettam, *Power and Faction in Louis XIV's France* (Oxford and New York, 1988); Julian Swann, *Provincial power and absolute monarchy: the Estates General of Burgundy, 1661–1790* (Cambridge, 2003); a critical note on 'revisionism' in John J. Hurt, *Louis XIV and the Parlements. The Assertion of Royal Authority* (Manchester, 2002); on the court see e.g. Jeroen Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles. The Courts of Europe's Dynastic Rivals* (Cambridge, 2003); Leonhard Horowski, *Die Belagerung des Thrones. Machtstrukturen und Karrieremechanismen am Hof von Frankreich 1661–1789* (Stuttgart, 2012) Beihefte der Francia 74.

The Prince and the moral code voiced in numerous princely mirrors reflects the Janus-faced nature of political action in general.

Can this process of revision profitably be extended to Chinese dynastic power? The European perception of Asian dynastic constellations was encumbered not only by the generic legacies of revolution and dynastic propaganda: in addition it has been plagued by the clichés of ‘Oriental despotism’. While omnipotence, arbitrariness, luxury, and decadence can be found among the negative connotations of European dynastic rule, they have dominated the European view of Asian rulers from Montesquieu to Wittfogel.⁵ Montesquieu’s typology of the leading principles of despotism (fear), monarchy (honour), and republic (virtue), to some extent reflect the three categories outlined above: coercion, interests, and ideals. His understanding of monarchy, based on the distribution of ‘honours’ in the sense of advantages and titles as much as on the *principle* of honour, comes close to material interests. Montesquieu located the republican principle of virtue in antiquity and actually could no longer trace it in the republics of eighteenth-century Europe. The empires of Asia, finally, served as his main example of despotic rule based on fear. Montesquieu did not accept his Jesuit contemporaries’ appreciative view of China’s government and failed to see honour and virtue among the Chinese, ‘à qui’, he stressed, ‘on ne fait rien faire qu’à coups de baton’.⁶ Traditional Chinese dynastic histories, written from the perspective of the scholarly elite of officials, gave pride of place to wise advisers admonishing the emperor—their ideal role. On the whole, however, they too have underlined the unchallengeable powers of the emperor, corrupted only under weaker emperors by the malicious influence of eunuchs and dowagers—the scholars’ inner-court rivals. Will different sources, at court or in the regions, bring to light different perspectives? An abundant harvest of recent literature tends to answer affirmatively. The relatively small imperial magistracy ruling over huge and populous territories forcefully suggests that power necessarily was based on local co-operation and

5 See Montesquieu’s [Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de la Brède et de Montesquieu] classic view on ‘oriental despotism’ and the rule of fear in *De l’Esprit des Lois* (many editions), and the remarkable combination of lucid analysis and lopsided interpretations in Karl A. Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power* (New Haven, 1957), reviewed very critically by Arnold Toynbee in the *American Political Science Review* 52 (1958) 195–198. For more recent and balanced studies of European depictions of the Orient: e.g. Thomas Kaiser, ‘The Evil Empire? The Debate on Turkish Despotism in Eighteenth-Century French Political Culture’, *Journal of Modern History* 72, no. 1 (2000), 6–34, or the book-length study by Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Entzauberung Asiens. Europa und die asiatischen Reiche im 18. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1998).

6 Montesquieu, *De l’esprit des Lois*, in *Oeuvres Complètes* (Paris 1964), 576–577.

co-optation. At court, strong emperors wielding power actively and weaklings reigning without ruling can both be expected to have been influenced by their confidants and restrained by the accumulation of ritual responsibilities. No emperor escaped entirely from the pressures and restrictions dictated by his office and its socio-cultural embedding.

This preliminary discussion outlines some of the issues behind the initiative culminating in this volume:

- 1) One of the key questions of government can be found in the changing relationship between a political centre and the provinces under its authority.
- 2) The post-revolutionary stress on coercion as the key element in pre-modern dynastic states or empires needs to be re-examined, allowing more room for the interplay of coercion, interests and ideals.
- 3) The revision of 'absolutism' in the European context and the reconfiguration of the history of European dynastic states on the basis partly of new source materials raise the question to what extent these changing interpretations are relevant for Asian dynastic states and empires, notably Late Imperial China.
- 4) Recent publications on dynastic power in Late Imperial Chinese history likewise suggest a revision of traditional images of dynastic power—can they be understood as converging with European revisionism?

Only by bringing together specialists on European and Chinese history can we hope to effectively start answering such questions. Our effort took shape in two meetings, the first concentrating on *occasions* where rulers visited the regions or met regional representatives, the second focusing on *persons* representing the ruler in the provinces. These two poles form the sections of the current book: *agents & interactions*. While this introduction outlines the general themes of this volume, a more extensive and probing opening chapter by Jürgen Osterhammel examines the patterns recurring in the history of the ruler's most eminent representatives.

For some rulers travelling could substitute for the appointment of local agents. Dynastic rule long retained a mobile character, following a seasonal-liturgical-political calendar of movement. Most Early Modern European courts developed a single prominent winter residence but usually travelled to a sequence of hunting lodges in spring, summer, and early autumn. No Early Modern European court refrained from travel altogether—even the French court after its installation in Versailles moved to Fontainebleau for a six-week

sojourn every autumn and undertook shorter trips to various other palaces. These patterns echoed the tradition of *Reisekönigtum*, in which the ruler himself moved from province to province, being hosted by his various regional stalwarts who at the same time confirmed their loyalty. From the later seventeenth century onwards, however, most European monarchies could rely on a more developed system of regional government, reducing the political necessity for travel—or placing it on the shoulders of regional representatives, who in turn were expected to report to the centre. Chinese emperors had long since established a sedentary court in their various capitals, but this did not prevent them from moving on hunting expeditions, inspection tours, or visits to dynastic tombs and important shrines. The late Ming emperors were notorious homebodies, hiding behind the moat and walls of the Forbidden City, some to the point of refusing to face their outer-court officials.⁷ Conversely, their Qing successors proved more mobile, sometimes to the point of provoking the classic admonitions of their Confucian advisers.

Clearly in Early Modern Europe and in Late Imperial China the rulers' travels were an addition to, rather than a replacement for, a system of regional administration. Apparently, a network of regional agents supported by a system of government by paper, highly developed in the Chinese case and rapidly gaining pace in most European countries, did not necessarily take away the need to meet in person. The feudal hierarchy of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation still expected vassals to perform an act of homage to the emperor, although this ritual was increasingly performed by proxies. The highest office-holders in France pledged their oath to the king in person, 'entre les mains de sa majesté'. All European dynastic rulers expected a share of their elites to attend ritual highlights and festive occasions, wherever these took place. Personal attendance and notably access into the ruler's direct proximity retained great importance for elites. The numerous honorary servitors of the European court cultivated their rights of access even if they served at court only haphazardly. The persistent importance of personal interaction, or '*Anwesenheitsgesellschaft*', around dynastic rulers was extended into distant territories by sending out representatives who could be seen as the ruler's *alter ego*. Ambassadors and viceroys personally performed royalty in the name of their ruler. High-placed personal representatives could operate as the head

7 See an interesting counter-image in the more outgoing early and middle Ming, most recently elaborated by David Robinson, *Martial Spectacles of the Ming Court* (Cambridge Mass., 2013); on the Qing, Michael G. Chang, *A Court on Horseback. Imperial Touring & the Construction of Qing Rule, 1680–1785* (Cambridge Mass. and London, 2007) Harvard East Asian Monographs 287, as well as his contribution to this volume.

of a well-developed central administration in the region; often, however, they served first and foremost as a prestigious personal intermediary between the distant ruler and local elites. Most extended empires left room for various arrangements ranging from a closely monitored core territory, via outlying regions with more autonomy, to a frontier based mostly on tributary connections or alliances. The differentiated conditions shaped the forms of interaction and the status and functions of agents.

Did rulers distance themselves from the population at large in the course of the period under discussion here? There are major differences in this regard between Chinese and European traditions—but each also varied per period, per ruler, and in the European case also regionally. French kings cultivated and broadcast an accessible and familiar type of kingship, whereas their Habsburg rivals adopted a more distant posture. The image of royalty withdrawing from pageantry and processions in the urban context into the splendid isolation of their hunting lodges is surely overstated. Points of contact changed in place, format, and audiences, but remained important for all European dynasties. This argument cannot be elaborated here at length, but one example may clarify it. When from the 1760's onwards, the Habsburg court in Vienna reduced the dense sequence religious-ritual interaction with the city, it also invited unprecedented numbers of Viennese to its new-style festivities in the Hofburg, Belvedere, and Schönbrunn palaces. Joseph II, discontinuing the Maundy Thursday *pedilavium* or washing of the feet of elderly poor men as well as some other highly prized rituals, at the same time made a point of frequently chatting with 'lowly' people in the Hofburg's *Kontrolleurgang*, hearing their complaints and accusations.⁸ During his travels *al' incognito* he likewise cultivated connections with 'ordinary' people, on one celebrated occasion ploughing a furrow—mimicking a standard ritual of the Chinese court.

While petitioning was a recurring issue in Chinese imperial history as well,⁹ imperial Confucian rituals were not as a rule performed for popular audiences,

8 See Derek Beales, *Joseph II. In the shadow of Maria Theresa 1741–1780* (Cambridge, 1987); *Joseph II. Against the World, 1780–1790* (Cambridge, 2009), and more particularly his: 'Joseph II, petitions and the public sphere', in Hamish Scott and Brendan Simms, ed., *Cultures of Power in Europe during the Long Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2007) 249–268, mentioning the *Kontrolleurgang*—see *Anekdoten und Charakterzüge aus dem Leben Josephs des Zweiten, Römischen Kaisers* (Vienna, Neuwied, Leipzig, 1790), 143 for a contemporary account.

9 See e.g. the overview by Qian Fang, 'Hot potatoes: the Chinese complaint systems from early times to the late Qing (1898)', *Journal of Asian Studies* 68, no. 4 (2009), 1105–1135. Among numerous relevant publications on Chinese history not mentioned in the contributions following this introduction, Anita Chung, *Drawing Boundaries: Architectural Images in Qing China* (Honolulu, 2004); C. Patterson Giersch, *Asian Borderlands: The Transformation of*

and the ruler's mixing with urban or rural populations seems to have been minimal. Access even into the outer sections of the Forbidden City remained limited to the upper layers of scholar-officials. Did the aloofness of Chinese emperors reflect a less activist, more learned ideal of rulership than the ideals predominating in Europe? While this may well be the case, the dominant role of literati in redacting the documentary legacies of the Chinese court makes it difficult to ascertain to what extent they tailored the emperors' lives to fit their ideals. Memoirs, diaries, correspondences, and local views are necessary to complement and possibly correct the official histories. While such sources seem less abundant than in the Early Modern European setting, several of the contributions to this volume suggest there is a world to be discovered.

The contributions to this volume speak for themselves; each section has a strong internal consistency and starts with papers introducing some of the key issues. Some preliminary remarks suffice here.

Jürgen Osterhammel, choosing an encompassing framework in time and place, provides a magisterial overview and analysis of the viceroy as a 'type' recurring in very different settings. Metin Kunt, the single contributor dealing with West Asia in this volume, shows how the relations between centre and provinces in the Ottoman Empire changed shape over the long-term. He underlines unpremeditated *ad hoc* changes at the centre, partly under the pressure of war-time emergencies, which created opportunities for governors and local elites. Kent Guy provides a detailed example of one Chinese official's career, highlighting some of the key aspects of the Qing system of appreciating and rewarding governors' qualities by promotion. He demonstrates the relevance of regional differences for governors' careers and the central appreciation of a *cursus honorum* based on accumulated experience. Sabine Dabringhaus elaborates the Tibetan case, where the emperor's representative, even in the absence of a durable administrative system, could at times pursue an activist and successful policy. In the end, however, the personality of the governor or Amban was all-important, and under weaker personalities local elites surfaced as the dominant party. Yincong Dai explores another complication of the relations between the ruler and agents of power in the region: local trouble-shooting served as a testing ground and training school for the ruler's closest advisers. In this case, a failed regional mission led to important changes at the centre, with the Jiaqing emperor ending a long phase of implicit

Qing China's Yunnan Frontier (Cambridge, 2006); Joanna Waley-Cohen, *The Culture of War in China: Empire and Military under the Qing* (New York, 2006); Mark C. Elliott, *Emperor Qianlong: Son of Heaven, Man of the World* (New York etc., 2009) need to be mentioned here because of their relevance for the themes of this volume.

reliance on a favourite grand councillor. Christian Büschges' paper, discussing the intriguing ceremonial interactions between Spanish viceroys and regional institutions as well as dignitaries, provides a crucial bridge to the next section, by reminding us that ritual and cultural interactions with the personal representative of the ruler in the regions reflected many of the issues that recurred in the grand ceremonial occasions around the ruler himself.

Patricia Ebrey reconsiders the long tradition of scholar-officials remonstrating against royal extravagance in its multiple forms, reminding us that emperors frequently occupied a position differing markedly from that of their advisers—and thus warns us against an unquestioning reading of literati-sources. Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly traces the rapid expansion of printed descriptions of court festivals and ceremonies; she underlines that these texts, often printed before the occasion or commissioned afterwards to broadcast its conspicuous success to wider audiences, do not necessarily provide the 'wahrhafte Beschreibung' or true description they so unequivocally promised their readership. Michael Chang, focusing on the Kangxi emperor's inspection tour to Suzhou in 1684, reconsiders the event in the light of several descriptions, originating both at court and in the regions. His paper shows how we can try to move beyond the standard view of such events, using different sources suggesting more interaction than commonly found in the official descriptions. Neil Murphy explains in detail how the urban entries of French kings reflected not only a ritual show but entailed a renegotiation of urban privileges and royal rights. This point recurs in Margit Thøfner's careful analysis of the images of entries into late sixteenth-century Antwerp in different settings. These two papers underline how routes, dress, gesture, colours, allegories, gender, and many other details, reflect and to some extent even transform political relationships. They remind us, as did the paper by Christian Büschges, that the pragmatic layout of this volume should not be understood as a separation between 'political' actors and 'cultural' interactions: these domains, indeed, cannot effectively be separated. Nor is it easy to separate interests and ideals: ceremonial interaction, pervaded by the hierarchical conception of society, determined rules of access and had an immediate impact on the distribution of honours.

This collection of papers questions juxtapositions between pre-modern rulership as opposed to the modern world and between European and Asian rulership. It underlines some recurring patterns in the balance between rulers and regions, power wielders and populations, that deserve further focused comparative re-examination, crossing traditional period markers as well as cultural borders while relying on expert knowledge. We hope this starting point can help to bring together in a more lasting and productive way the results of scholarship in various regions looking at the same themes.

PART ONE

Agents



The Imperial Viceroy: Reflections on an Historical Type

Jürgen Osterhammel

Empires are spatially extended polities of a composite and hierarchical nature. They have a monarch at the top or, in exceptional instances, a collective body such as an oligarchical senate, a politburo, or an elected republican government. In any possible case they require agents, subordinate representatives, and ‘imperial intermediaries’.¹ Their composite parts, be they ‘provinces’, ‘colonies’, or ‘protectorates’, are invariably headed by elevated functionaries whose duty it is to project the centre’s authority into the periphery. The chief of the province or the colony, all-powerful as he may seem in the eyes of his subjects and staff, is himself inevitably a servant. His power is ultimately derived from an even higher source of sovereignty, and he is always liable to instant demotion, recall, and sometimes punishment. But he usually is the true master of his realm. His scope of action is enormous. He is able to develop and implement strategies of his own. The following remarks focus on that top echelon of peripheral governance which is indispensable for the running of empire and which is more visible than any other part of a regional apparatus of power. They attempt to portray a very special functional position which might succinctly be called that of an ‘imperial viceroy’.

I

It is difficult—and would be arbitrary—to confine the present observations to an ‘early modern’ period which, for purposes of comparison, may be said to begin somewhere in the fourteenth century and end in the decades around 1800. Whatever their effective power, dynasties did not disappear with the end of what we have come to call the early modern age.² The basic functional requirements of empire and imperial rule remained the same across the conventional historiographical divide around 1800. This is why evidence presented

1 Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford, 2010), 13–14.

2 Helmut Neuhaus, ed., *Die Frühe Neuzeit als Epoche* (Munich, 2009).

in this chapter is taken from the entire sweep of imperial history right up to decolonisation in the middle of the twentieth century.

During and after the ‘age of revolution’ monarchies and imperial systems continued to exist in a wide variety of different contexts.³ In China, the Qing carried on until 1911, surviving imperialist aggression and internal rebellion. No general history of monarchical court societies in Eurasia can ignore the amazing scene of the Empress Dowager Cixi during the Boxer Rebellion in full flight from her capital, taking parts of her court along. Cixi and the Emperor returned to Beijing in January 1902, and during the following couple of years the Qing government proved capable of launching a reform programme that impressively addressed many of China’s weaknesses.

Elsewhere in non-colonised Asia, monarchies gained in strength during the second half of the nineteenth century. The Meiji Renovation put the imperial institution at the centre of a revamped political system and invented a cult around the sacralised Tennō. His palace in Tokyo remained an important focus of power right up to the breakdown of imperial Japan in the summer of 1945. In Siam, two generations of reforming kings pushed the country towards modernity. Non-constitutional absolutism in present-day Thailand lasted until a *coup d’état* in 1932—just about as long as colonial absolutism in British India, where more than a modicum of Indian political participation was permitted only in the early 1930s.

In Europe, monarchs and more or less sovereign princes prevailed throughout the nineteenth century. Napoleon I was more powerful than any of his predecessors among French monarchs and unsurpassed in the speed with which he scattered the members of his own extended family across the thrones of Europe. His nephew, styling himself Emperor Napoleon III, resuscitated the elder Bonaparte’s political recipes under new circumstances. In Prussia and the Habsburg Monarchy, some kind of *ancien régime* weathered the revolutions of 1848–49. Even under constitutional conditions, especially in the time of William II (that is, from 1888), the Hohenzollern court offered the public spectacle of courtly performance and display, and the same is true for the more than thirty courts *en miniature* that dotted the German landscape from Munich in the south to Schwerin near the Baltic Sea. Between Lisbon and St Petersburg, Stockholm and Istanbul, Europe, right up to the First World War, remained a continent of dynasties and their courts. When, in 1851, Giuseppe Verdi and his librettist Francesco Maria Piave brought *Rigoletto* on to the stage,

3 Historians are beginning to take a broader view of the crucial period of transition from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. See David Armitage and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, eds., *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, c. 1760–1840* (Basingstoke, 2010).

an opera complete with a dissolute prince, courtiers, and a court jester, they knew that their audiences would not merely think of the past. Eurasian monarchy in the nineteenth century was more than just a 'legacy' of bygone ages. It deserves a full chapter in the history of dynastic power. Contemporary observers had no premonition that it would be the final one.

II

The focus of most contributions to this volume is more restricted than that of monarchy *tout court*. The authors are interested in dynastic power only as long as that power is wielded—or at least projected—over territory. That territory should be more than just the agrarian hinterland of a princely residence, as one finds it so often in the fragmented political landscapes of eighteenth-century Germany, Italy, Japan, Malaya, or southern India. In other words, the type of polity to be considered is something different from a city-state. It covers a space large enough for the existence of a network of cities, some of which serve as secondary or subordinate centres of power while still acknowledging the sovereignty of the centre. Our model state is thus endowed with an urban hierarchy and, in addition, with internal lines of communication long enough to require care and protection. This criterion distinguishes, for instance, France around 1700 from any of the numerous semi-autonomous duchies and margraviates across the 'German' border.

If a territorial power-structure of this kind shows two additional features, it is usually called an 'empire': First, the original core expanded through military conquest and/or peaceful colonisation, and memories of those centrifugal movements are preserved in the *imaginaire* at least of the elite. Second, the polity includes communities whose customs and worldviews differ recognisably from those of the core territorial unit. For the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, one is tempted to speak of 'ethnic differences', a concept more problematic for earlier times.⁴

It is perhaps unwise to get caught up, more deeply than in the brief observation at the beginning of this chapter, in the perennial question of how to define an 'empire'. Definitions are either so general as to be almost meaningless or too restricted to cover all or most of the prominent cases one wants to see included. Thus, the well-organised domain of the Yongzheng emperor around 1730, the

4 Samuel E. Finer, *The History of Government from the Earliest Times*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1997), vol. I, 8–9; Charles S. Maier, *Among Empires: American Ascendancy and Its Predecessors* (Cambridge, MA, 2006), 31.

jumble of places on four continents where, at the same time, subjects of King George II pursued some sort of 'British' interests, and the flimsy remnants of the Portuguese trading network shared very few common features. Moreover, there are empires without courts as in the case of early modern Venice⁵ or post-1870 France, and, of course, even major courts without empire.⁶

Still, we need a general idea of a basic constellation where four structural elements come together:

- (1) The court, seen as the fulcrum of power and the fountain of honour, prosperity, and worldly wisdom.
- (2) The periphery, consisting both of home-country provinces and of colonies, the latter being less tightly integrated into central administrative structures than provinces.
- (3) The frontier—a region of untamed volatility, irregular administrative institutionalisation, and often uncommon violence.⁷
- (4) The wider, as it were 'international', environment—a sometimes neglected aspect but a crucial one since no court was ever unaware of what took place outside its own jurisdiction.

Structural considerations of this kind are now less an end in themselves than they were half a century ago when S.N. Eisenstadt published his classic study *The Political Systems of Empires*.⁸ They are mere preliminary preparations of a field where an interest in processes predominates, so dear to that other supreme historical sociologist, Norbert Elias. In the theory of empire, those processes are often connected in a functionalist way to the question of the stability of empire. While some authors continue to be puzzled by the Polybian theme of the rise, decline, and fall of empires, other historians point to the intriguing durability of many of them. In any case, the central question is that about imperial coherence, about the integration and disintegration of empire. This concern with forces of coherence has not been entirely superseded by new imperial history's focus on identity and hybridity, contestation,

5 The central institution was the Grand Council. See Monique O'Connell, *Men of Empire: Power and Negotiation in Venice's Maritime State* (Baltimore, 2009), 39 seq.

6 For example the Tokugawa court, cf. Eva-Maria Meyer, *Japans Kaiserhof in der Edo-Zeit. Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Jahre 1846 bis 1867* (Münster, 1999).

7 David Ludden, 'The Process of Empire: Frontiers and Borderlands', in Peter Fibiger Bang and C.A. Bayly, eds., *Tributary Empires in Global History* (Basingstoke, 2011), 132–50: 'Frontiers are places and time where empire strives to incorporate people into orderly peripheries.' (147).

8 S.N. Eisenstadt, *Political Systems of Empires* (New York, 1963).

and negotiation. For comparative purposes, some kind of common framework and vocabulary beyond the close description of individual cases in a culturalist language remains indispensable.

The court and the provinces are connected through the circulation of personnel and resources. The suggestive term 'circulation' should not obscure the fact that those flows are rarely balanced and symmetrical, the specific kind and degree of asymmetry being a prime target for research and comparison. The court as an exporter of symbolic surplus is at the same time an importer and consumer of taxable wealth. Manpower is often channelled through the centre towards the periphery rather than recycled between them. Sometimes one periphery feeds into another, as in the case of the numerous Scots and Irishmen employed in the British overseas colonies. An exceptional level of genuine circulation seems to have been achieved in Qing China with its fairly open elite where the local gentry families, the hierarchy of titled degree-holders, the territorial bureaucracy, and the officials in the capital formed an integrated system with a less-than-absolute cleavage between Manchu and Han and between the civil and the military wings of the state apparatus. Almost invariably, circulation also occurs through spatial hierarchies. Formal positions of power are connected to different amounts of prestige and symbolic capital, similar to present-day diplomatic services. The perceived value of postings, including in terms of remuneration, ranged across a wide scale between hopeless imperial backwaters and prized 'jewels of the crown'.

Empires differ according to the degree to which members of peripheral elites are incorporated into the central power structure. The extreme case of the Roman empire, where this kind of promotion was easy, found no imitation in modern European empires.⁹ Articulated ranking systems as they existed in China or Rome seem to facilitate vertical mobility through a regulated passage of offices. A crucial variable is the manner of making appointments to offices: through competitive examinations, monarchical decisions, or patronage by other powerholders outside the sovereign's innermost circle, for instance high nobles. If a political order leaves room for competition, degrees of regulation have to be differentiated. Competition can strengthen a given order but can also tear it apart.

9 Eckhard Meyer-Zwiffelhofer, *Imperium Romanum. Geschichte der römischen Provinzen* (Munich, 2009), 118. On the governor in the Imperium Romanum see Andrew W. Lintott, *Imperium Romanum: Politics and Administration* (London and New York, 1993), 43–69; see also Raimund Schulz, *Herrschaft und Regierung. Roms Regiment in den Provinzen in der Zeit der Republik* (Paderborn, 1997); Werner Eck, ed., *Lokale Autonomie und römische Ordnungsmacht in den kaiserzeitlichen Provinzen vom 1. bis 3. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1999).

The spatial equations of power are variable and change over time. No political order is completely centralised; rarely is power projected unilaterally from the centre alone. Territorial polities go through cycles of centralisation and decentralisation. They always tap local resources of power, but they do it in characteristically different ways. They recruit soldiers and lower administrative staff on the spot and strike bargains with local elites, whether or not we call that 'collaboration', as in the older theory of empire. In the process, local knowledge may be used for imperial or dynastic strategies. Centres and peripheries are linked through such flows of knowledge. The management of information is among the most crucial and most difficult challenges for imperial headquarters. Archives in Seville or The Hague, London or Beijing testify to the enormous efforts undertaken to collect and process data. A lack of knowledge about conditions in the provinces and colonies can put a centre at a serious disadvantage, while an overabundance of information may drive a system beyond the limits of its processing capacity.¹⁰

Imperial systems differ in the degree to which connections are allowed to bypass the centre. Almost by definition, an empire is a radial configuration, the centre functioning like the hub of a wheel. The various peripheries are deliberately isolated from each other. The metropolis attempts to monopolise information, commodity flows, political agency, and distributive capacity. In rare cases of elevated complexity (and easiest to achieve in compact and contiguous realms), empires form two-dimensional networks.

Finally, one should pay attention to the finer sentiments that hold empires together and keep them going in addition to the permanent and always indispensable threat of coercion. 'Trust' has made a remarkable career as a key concept of social sciences, turning away from the arid abstractions of rational-choice theory. It certainly contributes to imperial cohesion, yet it should perhaps not be overrated. At least as important is legitimacy. Dynastic power draws on the sources of Max Weber's famous three types of legitimate authority. While it is closest to Weber's 'traditional authority', it can, under special circumstances, also partake of 'rational-legal authority' and even of 'charismatic authority', for example that of a warrior-king. The extraordinary success of Manchu imperial governance in the high Qing period is partly due to a combination of all these forms of authority. Peripheral elites maintain their bonds with the centre out of fear, self-interest, habit, and a basic feeling that the given order conforms to some idea of justice. Trust or loyalty is added

10 C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870* (Cambridge, 1996); idem, 'Knowing the Country: Empire and Information in India', *Modern Asian Studies* 27 (1993), 3–43.

as a further component, as is the idea of divine sanction. The shrewd monarch on his or her part knows that trustworthy agents are needed while unconditional trust is unrealistic to expect. The prince prizes loyalty but is aware of the need to nurture, buy, and manipulate it. Trust is a volatile medium of exchange rather than a fundamental anthropological underpinning of political order.

III

Centres are linked to peripheries through a rich repertoire of interaction. Interaction is shaped by groups and individuals occupying various positions both in social hierarchies and in systems of a functional division of labour. These two dimensions do not necessarily correspond. In European terms, a non-noble councillor or a medium-rank aristocrat can exercise more influence than someone higher up in the formal hierarchy. As late as the nineteenth century, the greatest defenders of dynastic rule were men such as Metternich and Bismarck, who came from lower or middle-ranking aristocratic families.

The most important functional position mediating between the ruler and his commoner subjects is the viceroy, loosely defined as the head of the political hierarchy in a given territorial unit at the periphery. In the context of a general discussion, there is no need for being fastidious about terminology. There were 'viceroys' under this designation in the Portuguese (*vice-rei*), Spanish (*virrey*), and Russian (*namestnik*) empires, in British India after 1858, in Ireland (where the Lord Lieutenant was styled viceroy from the 1870s onwards),¹¹ in nineteenth-century Egypt under nominal Ottoman overlordship (the *khedive*, more than a simple *wali*),¹² in the Japanese empire after 1895 and in Qing China (*zongdu*). Under different circumstances, the term 'governor-general' meant almost the same thing, as in Dutch Batavia since 1610 (*gouverneur-generaal*), in South Asia under the East India Company between 1774 and 1858, and, under modern republican auspices, in the Philippines under US rule, or in French

11 Anthony H.M. Kirk-Greene, *Britain's Imperial Administrators, 1858–1966* (Basingstoke and New York, 2000), 203.

12 See Felix Konrad, *Der Hof der Khediven von Ägypten. Herrscherhaushalt, Hofgesellschaft und Hofhaltung 1840–1880* (Würzburg, 2008). The term 'viceroy' is deceptive in the Egyptian case since the incumbent of that office was in effect the head of his own dynasty, in other words: a reigning monarch, as confirmed by the sultan's granting of hereditary governorship to Mehmed Ali in 1841 (168). See also Khaled Fahmy, *Mehmed Ali: From Ottoman Governor to Ruler of Egypt* (Oxford, 2009), 97. The khedive's representational relationship with the sultan was a purely nominal one.

Algeria and Indochina. The types of political system at home differed widely while the functional attributes of the office of governor-general showed a much greater similarity over time and space. He was always a peripheral autocrat, possessing virtually unchallenged authority.¹³ Without a king or emperor at home there could, of course, be no ‘viceroy’—a diplomatic problem for Dutch missions to the court of China.¹⁴

The British, who were fond of casting themselves in the role of latter-day Romans, preferred to speak of imperial ‘proconsuls’, a term of wider application than the rare title of ‘viceroy’ that was reserved for the crown’s chief official in India. The proconsul, according to nineteenth-century parlance, was the person at the top of a province or colony.¹⁵ Ironically, the man who was perhaps the most powerful representative of that species anywhere bore the modest title of a ‘Consul-General of Egypt’—Lord Cromer (formerly Evelyn Baring), who was Egypt’s near-absolute ruler between 1882 and 1907. It may be useful to sketch a simple portrait of a vice-regal office-holder. Such a conglomerate image owes much to sociological methodology and is far removed from the individual cases which historians carefully extract from their sources, and there is no single example in history to which the constructed ideal type ‘applies’ in a perfect fit. The concrete manifestations of the type vary in time and space and according to circumstances. Yet, it should be possible to pinpoint the typical viceroy’s peculiar location at the meeting-point of vertical hierarchy and horizontal functional differentiation and to identify a number of parameters apposite to comparing dynastic orders in this particular perspective. Imagining an empire or any large composite or federal polity *without* viceroys, proconsuls or governors will instantly illuminate their indispensability at crucial nodes in spatial networks of power.

13 For the quintessentially democratic system of modern times, the United States, see Robert M. Spector, ‘W. Cameron Forbes in the Philippines: A Study in Proconsular Power’, *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 7 (1966), 74–92; and, discussing more recent examples, Carnes Lord, *Proconsuls: Delegated Political-Military Leadership from Rome to America Today* (Cambridge, 2012).

14 John E. Wills, Jr., *Pepper, Guns and Parleys: The Dutch East India Company and China, 1662–1681* (Cambridge, MA, 1974).

15 John Benyon suggests a narrower concept: A proconsul in the British Empire is someone who controls one of the six or seven ‘strategic satellites’ in the British world system: India, South Africa, the Straits of Malacca, etc. He also is able to exert a measure of influence in British politics unavailable to ordinary governors. See John Benyon, ‘Overlords of Empire: British “Proconsular Imperialism” in Comparative Perspective’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 19 (1991), 164–202, at 168–71.

The Latin term *proconsul* clarifies the position: from the second century BCE, a proconsul was an official appointed to exert political authority outside the city of Rome, which he did *pro consule*, that is, as a representative of the consul.¹⁶ Later, he was an agent of the emperor charged with governing a province outside Italy. The right to nominate proconsuls was an important instrument in the power portfolio of the emperors whose dynastic credentials in Rome often were not all that strong. The important point to note is that a proconsul always is an appointee. The office rarely devolves by way of hereditary succession to a junior member of a royal house. The reason for that seems to be that imperial systems cannot afford to risk incompetence, indolence, or even malfeasance at positions of high strategic significance. The proconsul must be liable to recall or impeachment, following the famous precedent of the Roman magistrate Marcus Tullius Cicero, who took successful legal action against the proconsul Gaius Verres, a man who had plundered Sicily for the benefit of his own pocket.¹⁷ It is much more difficult to remove a prince of the blood than to get rid of an unwanted or unsuitable functionary whose tenure is insecure. Where appointments were guided by patronage, proconsular positions also had to be left available to be distributed as sinecures.

Another rule widely observed is not to select the chief officer from among local society or to promote him from the service on the spot. The Roman and the Chinese empires, and also Bourbon as well as Napoleonic France, operated extensive rotation and laws of avoidance. Of the thirty-three governor-generals of India since Lord Cornwallis in the 1780s, only two rose from the ranks of the colonial administration, and neither of them was considered a success.¹⁸ In monarchies, at least early-modern ones, delegated regional power tended to turn dynastic and sink roots into peripheral power bases. Imperial centres were constantly struggling against such centrifugal tendencies. A brief tenure of office and a continuous reshuffling of appointments kept the empire from settling down into structures of 'feudal' entrenchment, bureaucratic ossification, and territorial fragmentation.

16 See 'Proconsul', in *Brill's New Pauly*, <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/brill-s-new-pauly/proconsul-e1009260> (accessed 16 May 2012).

17 Wolfgang Schuller, *Cicero oder der letzte Kampf um die Republik. Eine Biographie* (Munich, 2013), 43–47.

18 Sir John Shore (1793–98) and Sir John Lawrence (1864–69), whose reputation rested on earlier stages of his career. The number 33 does not include *acting* governor-generals who usually came from the local political establishment. Lord Curzon himself saw it as a sign of rising esteem that from Lord Cornwallis on only 'statesmen' and 'men of public fame' were considered for the top office in India. George N. Curzon, *British Government in India: The Story of the Viceroys and Government Houses*, 2 vols. (London, 1925), vol. II, 167.

There are borderline cases. Members of a royal family sometimes find themselves installed on a throne in a subordinate part of the empire where they can do little harm. Depending on the incumbent, this may or may not have fortunate consequences. Thus, the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, with its capital at Florence, was ruled, very ably, by Peter Leopold, the third son of Empress Maria Theresa. From 1764 to 1790, he turned his small principality, meant to be a playground for a younger son of the Habsburg sovereign, into a showcase for enlightened improvement. After his brother's death, he went on to become Holy Roman Emperor Leopold II (1790–92).¹⁹ By contrast, in the British empire no overseas appointment ever went to a member of the royal family, with the sole exception of the very last viceroy of India in 1947, Viscount Mountbatten, a great-grandson of Queen Victoria who owed this vice-regal office to the fact that he was an experienced military commander.²⁰ The Chinese case, with its dual power elite of Manchu and Han, was unique in its own sense and raises a challenging problem for comparative analysis.

Whatever else he may be, the proconsul is a working official, a man in charge, though not always the effective head of his administration. The Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, residing in Dublin Castle, was assisted by a chief secretary, not appointed by himself but by the British government. By the 1770s, the chief secretary had become the central executive agent of the government of Ireland.²¹

Being a very lofty office, the proconsularship frequently was the penultimate or final stage of a career. There was little more to achieve, which coloured the ambition attached to the job. Paul Doumer, the famous governor-general of French Indochina around 1900, later became president of the French Republic—only to be assassinated after less than twelve months in office.²² Spanish viceroys could hope for a seat on the council of state. A few viceroys of India continued their careers as cabinet ministers or ambassadors, but none of them rose to be prime minister. Usually, the proconsul can entertain little hope of further reward and promotion. His aims are to discharge his duties honourably, to

19 Adam Wandruszka, *Leopold II. Erzherzog von Österreich, Großherzog von Toskana, König von Ungarn und Böhmen, Römischer Kaiser*, 2 vols. (Munich, 1963–65), on the Tuscan reforms especially vol. II, 173–85. A splendid description of the Leopoldine court is Orsola Gori, 'Una corte dimezzata. La reggia di Pietro Leopoldo', in Sergio Bertelli and Renato Pasta, eds., *Vivere a Pitti. Una Reggia dai Medici ai Savoia* (Florence, 2003), 291–349.

20 Philip Ziegler, *Mountbatten: The Official Biography* (London, 1985).

21 S.J. Connolly, *Divided Kingdom: Ireland, 1630–1800* (Oxford, 2008), 307.

22 Cf. Amaury Lorin, *Paul Doumer, Gouverneur Général de l'Indochine (1897–1902): Le tremplin colonial* (Paris, 2004).

avoid censure by the sovereign, to preserve his health under sometimes taxing tropical conditions, and, perhaps, to enter the historical record as standing out from among a crowd of more or less mediocre colleagues.

Regardless of the kind and amount of his effective power, the proconsul represents the monarch in a highly personal way not shared by anyone further down the hierarchy. He is alone in literally embodying the political centre. The Roman proconsul was the *alter ego* of the original consul; the Spanish viceroy was seen as ‘the king’s living image’ and even expected to re-enact his master’s body language;²³ and the Qianlong emperor, as quoted by Kent Guy, called his governor-generals and governors ‘Our arms and legs’.²⁴ The proconsul partakes of the royal aura and conveys it to a local audience. Under conditions of authoritarian rationalisation, he is, like the French prefect under Napoleon, an omnipotent commissioner, an emperor *en miniature*.²⁵ In less well-articulated autocratic systems he may be a specially empowered personal envoy of the ruler, communicating with the monarch on a more intimate footing than the ordinary governor. In such cases, the vice-regal mandate is likely to be tied to a particular individual charged with special tasks of imperial crisis management; authority is not delegated on a regular and institutional basis.²⁶

In his own court—a shadow of the central court, intended to provide a focus for local high society and to soften the mundane business of government—the viceroy and (if applicable) his wife²⁷ were the hub around which

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- 23 ‘Viva imagen del Rey’: Horst Pietschmann, *Die Einführung des Intendantensystems in Neu-Spanien im Rahmen der allgemeinen Verwaltungsreform der spanischen Monarchie im 18. Jahrhundert* (Cologne, 1972), 65; Alejandro Cañeque, *The King’s Living Image: The Culture and Politics of Viceregal Power in Colonial Mexico* (London and New York, 2004), strongly emphasising bodily representation; on the plurality of royal images see idem, ‘Imaging the Spanish Empire: The Visual Construction of Imperial Authority in Habsburg New Spain’, *Colonial Latin American Review* 19 (2010), 29–68.
- 24 R. Kent Guy, *Qing Governors and Their Provinces: The Evolution of Territorial Administration in China, 1644–1796* (Seattle and London, 2010), 96.
- 25 Vivien A. Schmidt, *Democratizing France: The Political and Administrative History of Decentralization* (Cambridge, 1990), 22; Jacques Godechot, *Les institutions de la France sous la Révolution et l’Empire* (2nd ed., Paris, 1968), 586–92; Stuart J. Woolf, *Napoleon’s Integration of Europe* (London and New York, 1991), 74–82, 100–1; Isser Woloch, *Napoleon and His Collaborators: The Making of a Dictatorship* (New York, 2001), 52–55; idem, *The New Regime: Transformations of the French Civic Order, 1789–1820s* (New York and London, 1994), 54–59.
- 26 An example from the Tsarist Empire in the 1840s: Anthony L. Rhineland, *Prince Michael Vorontsov: Viceroy to the Tsar* (Montreal, 1990), 143.
- 27 That subject is still in the hands of purveyors of anecdotes, cf. Penny Beaumont and Roger A. Beaumont, *Imperial Divas: The Vicereines of India* (London, 2010).

all courtly activity revolved. It was a lasting source of irritation when, as in Dublin, the town houses of the richest nobles easily outshone the austerity of the vice-regal residence.²⁸ Sometimes, proconsular pomp eclipsed the ostentation at the centre. There were governor-generals in Batavia who revelled in an opulence unknown in the metropolis, including the luxury of slaves—the familiar theme of ‘nabob’ profligacy.²⁹ Around 1800, the Marquess of Wellesley decided to build a palace in Calcutta, modestly called Government House, much bigger than any abode of the British monarchs.³⁰ In China, no *yamen* could remotely compete with the Forbidden City, but it was generally assumed that the governor’s residence would symbolically replicate the Imperial Palace.³¹

Proconsuls could literally wear the mantle of royalty. In 1903, Lord Curzon organised a huge ceremony for 150,000 people and with hundreds of maharajas and other Indian dignitaries in quasi-feudal attendance, on the occasion of the crowning of Edward VII and Queen Alexandra as Emperor and Empress of India. Since Queen Victoria’s successor refused to travel to India,³² Curzon himself assumed the role of the protagonist, the king’s brother taking second place to the viceroy.³³ Whether ritual and pageantry really managed to impress the locals anywhere in the world is open to question.³⁴ They were *meant* to

28 Connolly, *Divided Kingdom*, 307.

29 See Jean Gelman Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia: European and Eurasian in Dutch Asia* (Madison, WI, 1984), 69–71.

30 Jeremiah P. Losty, *Calcutta: City of Palaces. A Survey of the City in the Days of the East India Company 1690–1858* (London, 1990), 71–80.

31 On the functions of the *yamen* see John R. Watt, ‘The Yamen and Urban Administration’, in G. William Skinner, ed., *The City in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, CA, 1977), 353–90.

32 No senior member of the Spanish royal family ever travelled to Spanish America. The first globetrotting member of the British royal family was Queen Victoria’s second son, Alfred Duke of Edinburgh. In the years 1867 to 1868 he visited many British colonies including South Africa, India, Hong Kong, Australia, and New Zealand. See Brian McKinlay, *The First Royal Tour, 1867–1868* (Adelaide, 1970). The first reigning monarchs to visit India were George V and Queen Mary in 1911.

33 David Gilmour, *Curzon: Imperial Statesman* (London, 1994), 239–40. There were two other of those ‘Imperial Durbars’, in 1877 and 1911. See Julie Codell, ed., *Power and Resistance: Photography and the Delhi Coronation Durbars* (Ahmedabad, 2011); see also the famous article by Bernard S. Cohn, ‘Representing Authority in Victorian India’, in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), 165–209, and Alan Trevithick, ‘Some Structural and Sequential Aspects of the British Imperial Assemblages at Delhi, 1877–1911’, *Modern Asian Studies* 24 (1990), 561–78.

34 For a brief introduction to imperial ritual see Jörn Leonhard and Ulrike von Hirschhausen, *Empires und Nationalstaaten im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 2009), 19–50.

impress and to highlight the vice-regal presence as the source of a superior civilisation. Empires everywhere pursued civilising missions, and their senior representatives in the midst of barbarians and heathens were regarded as the foremost promoters of justice, progress, and refinement.³⁵

Empires and large states differed as to their degree of bureaucratisation. In the eighteenth century, the Sino-Manchurian empire possessed the most elaborate territorial administration in the world, while the British empire, apart from the East India Company, was somewhat undergoverned. In the same period, the Tsarist empire, according to one modern historian, 'gave an appearance of almost total lawlessness',³⁶ and found it difficult to fill the few posts available in the civil administration with men of the right calibre. The proconsuls differed in the degree of their formal and legal subordination to the centre. Were they allowed to make laws for their own domains? Did they command their own troops, or did they have to defer to an autonomous military wing of the government? Did they possess the authority to impose new taxes? Were they under pressure from the centre to raise revenue for the metropolitan treasury—as Spanish viceroys were for much of the time?³⁷

Communications were of crucial importance. The advent of the telegraph in the early 1870s marked a vital change. It made a huge difference whether it took several months, several days, or a couple of hours to receive an answer to a vice-regal query.³⁸ Until the 1830s, a letter from England arrived in India after five months at best. Railways and the Suez Canal later speeded up postal traffic. Even then a letter from London to Bombay was in transit for about a month. After the opening of cable communication, a telegram got there in as

35 Cañeque, *The King's Living Image*, 192–201; Jürgen Osterhammel, *Europe, the 'West' and the Civilizing Mission* (London, 2006); idem, "'The Great Work of Uplifting Mankind': Zivilisierungsmission und Moderne', in Boris Barth and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., *Zivilisierungsmissionen. Imperiale Weltverbesserung seit dem 18. Jahrhundert* (Konstanz, 2005), 363–425.

36 Janet M. Hartley, *A Social History of the Russian Empire 1650–1825* (London and New York, 1999), 124.

37 Cayetana Alvarez de Toledo, *Politics and Reform in Spain and Viceregal Mexico: The Life and Thought of Juan de Palafox, 1600–1659* (Oxford, 2004), 163.

38 Michael Wobring, *Die Globalisierung der Telekommunikation im 19. Jahrhundert. Pläne, Projekte und Kapazitätsausbauten zwischen Wirtschaft und Politik* (Frankfurt a.M., 2005), 260–65. On the speed of telegraphic transmission cf. Jorma Ahvenainen, 'The Role of Telegraphs in the 19th Century Revolution of Communications', in Michael North, ed., *Kommunikationsrevolutionen: Die neuen Medien des 16. und 19. Jahrhunderts* (Cologne, 1995), 73–80, at 75, and Roland Wenzlhuemer, *Connecting the Nineteenth-Century World: The Telegraph and Globalization* (Cambridge, 2013), 123–27.

little as five hours. And in the mid-1920s a cable sent from London circled the globe in eighty seconds.³⁹ Whenever and wherever telegraphy was introduced, it changed the parameters of a viceroy's professional activities.

Regardless of constitutional constructions, a centre could be passive or obtrusive depending on the personalities in charge. In exceptional cases there was no guiding metropolis at all, for instance after the collapse of the Spanish monarchy in 1808 when American viceroys were left to fend for themselves.⁴⁰ At exactly the same time, the will of Emperor Napoleon, criss-crossing Europe with his military court on horseback, flowed through a tight chain of command down to ground-level administrators in every part of the occupied continent.

Indian viceroys had enormous latitude as long as the secretary of state for India in London was a weak figure—which was the case more often than not. Cromer in Egypt enjoyed a free hand to a degree that made him a modern version of the famed 'oriental despot'. By contrast, Portuguese viceroys in Brazil were hardly more than royal commissioners, 'charged with the execution of the king's commands, or rather those of his dominant ministers.'⁴¹ Tsarist governors in the late nineteenth century were simultaneously personal envoys of the Tsar and local agents of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which often landed them in situations that were hard to negotiate.⁴² Much bargaining took place between centres and peripheries but mostly within a framework of power relations that was shifting in the long run, although not generally negotiable.

In their peripheral arena of action, proconsuls had to deal with at least four different groups of people: first, their colleagues and immediate subordinates in the provincial or colonial establishment such as governors (in the case of governor-generals), captains-general, military commanders, council members, high judges, ecclesiastical dignitaries, etc.; second, their servants and administrative staff who were needed for the daily running of the government; third, the mass of the people, that is, the ordinary subjects of the sovereign;

39 Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1981), 130.

40 Patricia H. Marks, *Deconstructing Legitimacy: Viceroys, Merchants and the Military in Late Colonial Peru* (University Park, PA, 2007), 150 seq. One has also to think of the wholesale transfer of the Portuguese court under Maria I and the Prince Regent to Brazil in the winter of 1807 to 1808. Cf. Kirsten Schultz, *Tropical Versailles: Empire, Monarchy, and the Portuguese Royal Court in Rio de Janeiro, 1808–1821* (New York and London, 2001).

41 Dauril Alden, *Royal Government in Colonial Brazil: With Special Reference to the Administration of the Marquis of Lavradio, Viceroy, 1769–1779* (Berkeley, CA, Los Angeles, and London, 1968), 43. Royal government had been established in Brazil in 1549.

42 Richard G. Robbins, Jr., *The Tsar's Viceroys: Russian Provincial Governors in the Last Years of the Empire* (Ithaca, NY and London, 1987), 4.

and fourth, the local non-official elite: nobles, gentry, and notables who, in the case of 'non-white' overseas colonies, divided sharply between European expatriates and the indigenous upper class. When we speak of 'the periphery', we ought to have all those various groups in mind.⁴³

A structural problem for viceroys and governors-general was what might be called their dilemma of superiority. On the one hand, they enjoyed higher prestige and better remuneration than provincial governors on a level slightly below them. On the other, their hold on territorial resources was more tenuous. The more general their brief, the less entrenched their authority, unless they possessed full plenipotentiary power like the viceroys of India after 1858, with eleven provincial governments within their purview.⁴⁴ Quite often (as in seventeenth-century Spanish America), a governor-general ruled effectively over only that limited piece of country where he exercised jurisdiction on the ground, perhaps the province surrounding his capital city. Elsewhere, he was armed only with some sort of delegated royal prerogative.⁴⁵ In remote areas, as on Philippine or Indonesian outer islands, and frequently in frontier constellations where the normal rules of action tended to be attenuated, subordinates established their own autonomous fiefdoms and cared little about instructions from the seat of government.⁴⁶ Responsibilities seem to have been better demarcated in Qing China where the ten governors-general were imperial trouble-shooters with powers of command over the military forces. Still, when a governor-general and a governor resided in the same city, conflicts could not

43 A dense analysis of these relations in Robbins, *The Tsar's Viceroys*, chapters 4–7.

44 The viceroy appointed the heads of all those governments apart from the governors of Bombay and Madras. None of the other lieutenant-governors and chief commissioners in the provinces had the right of direct access to the secretary of state for India, having to correspond via the Viceroy. Cf. Hugh Tinker, *Viceroy: Curzon to Mountbatten* (Karachi, 1997), 2. On the central government of India see also David Gilmour, *The Ruling Caste: Imperial Lives in the Victorian Raj* (London, 2005), 229–40.

45 Horst Pietschmann, *Die staatliche Organisation des kolonialen Iberoamerika* (Stuttgart, 1980), 120–21; idem, *Einführung des Intendantensystems*, 64–77. In the Ottoman Empire (at least in the sixteenth century), the governor-general simultaneously possessed a regional power base as a *sancakbeyi*. See Metin Kunt, *The Sultan's Servants: The Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government, 1550–1650* (New York, 1983), 27. See also Dina Rizk Khoury, 'The Ottoman Centre versus Provincial Power-holders: An Analysis of the Historiography', in Suraiya Faroqhi, ed., *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, vol. III: *The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603–1839* (Cambridge, 2006), 135–56.

46 David Joel Steinberg et al., *In Search of Southeast Asia: A Modern History* (Honolulu, HI, 1987), 87.

always be avoided.⁴⁷ From a different perspective, overlapping responsibilities were part of ‘an elaborate system of checks and balances designed to ensure effective central control over officials in the field’.⁴⁸

IV

Speaking of the proconsul in general, he is the classic intermediary bridging metropolis and periphery.⁴⁹ In structural terms, he functions as an instrument of elite integration, though an unpopular agent of the crown can also do a lot of damage to imperial cohesion.⁵⁰ A trustee of the centre and bearer of its values, once arrived at his outpost of empire, he nevertheless is largely left to his own devices. In his new world, he cannot expect much tangible help from a distant sovereign. If a court is a society of unmediated interaction (*Anwesenheitsgesellschaft*),⁵¹ an empire is its very opposite.

On the spot, however, the beleaguered proconsul is involved in all sorts of social relations. Local merchants lobby him for favours and privileges. The indigenous upper class wishes him to be a malleable ally while jealously

47 Guy, *Qing Governors*, 49–50; J.Y. Wong, *Yeh Ming-ch'ien: Viceroy of Liang Kuang 1852–8* (Cambridge, 1976), 38.

48 William T. Rowe, *China's Last Empire: The Great Qing* (Cambridge, MA and London, 2009), 38.

49 Apart from theories of ‘collaboration’ and ‘cultural brokers’, there is surprisingly little in the theory of empire on the functional use of intermediaries. See, for example, Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, 13–14.

50 The integrating function is brought out very well in Christian Büschges, ‘La corte virreinal en la America Hispanica durante la epoca colonial (periodo Habsburgo)’, in Eugenio dos Santos, ed., *Actas do XII Congresso Internacional de la Associação de Historiadores Latinoamericanistas Europeos* (Porto, 2001), vol. II, 131–40. A new kind of formal prosopographical analysis has been pioneered by Christoph Rosenmüller. See his article ‘The Power of Transatlantic Ties: A Game-Theoretical Analysis of Viceregal Social Networks in Colonial Mexico, 1700–1755’, *Latin American Research Review* 44 (2009), 7–36; see also idem, ‘Friends, Followers, Countrymen: Viceregal Patronage in Mid-Eighteenth Century New Spain’, *Estudios de Historia Novohispana* 34 (2006), 47–72; idem, *Patriots, Partisans and Palace Intrigues: The Court of Colonial Mexico, 1702–1710* (Calgary, 2008), a study of clientele politics in an age of expanding state power.

51 There is by now an extensive literature, e.g. Andreas Pečar, *Die Ökonomie der Ehre. Der höfische Adel am Kaiserhof Karls VI. (1711–1740)* (Darmstadt, 2003); see also Rudolf Schlögl, ‘Kommunikation und Vergesellschaftung unter Anwesenden: Formen des Sozialen und ihre Transformation in der Frühen Neuzeit’, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 34 (2008), 155–224.

defending its own entrenched position. Ordinary people flock to his audience chamber seeking redress of wrongs or relief of their misery from someone whom they expect to take decisions on the spot.⁵² The proconsul, as an all-round decider, may not possess an undisputed 'monopoly of violence', but he should be able to punish effectively and to demonstrate the caring nature of imperial benevolence. He has to deal with rebels and refugees, capricious local potentates, and recalcitrant city councils or provincial assemblies.⁵³ Initially unfamiliar with the country, its people and its customs, he is a prisoner of his clerks, often frustrated by their indolence and incompetence. Inspection tours are the only moment during the administrative year when he gains a freedom hard to find in his ordinary cage of duties.⁵⁴ Only while on the road does he get a temporary reprieve from correspondence and reporting.

The proconsul is a powerful man, and yet he labours under many different kinds of pressures and constraints. Bureaucratic stamina and political shrewdness are as indispensable for him as are tact, the arts of persuasion, and even the talents of an actor. The inhabitants of the periphery are unlikely ever to set their eyes on the sovereign himself. What they see is 'the king's living image'.

52 Robbins, *The Tsar's Viceroys*, 48.

53 This is the story of British governors in North America. During the middle decades of the eighteenth century, the strong position of the governor came to be eroded: 'Colonial Assemblies became the centres of power and effective Governors became political managers more than vice-regal executives.' Ian K. Steele, 'The Anointed, the Appointed, and the Elected: Governance of the British Empire, 1689–1784', in P.J. Marshall, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. III: The Eighteenth Century (Oxford, 1998), 105–27, at 118.

54 Cf. Robbins, *The Tsar's Viceroys*, 54–59; also Gilmour, *Curzon*, 211–15. Extended proconsular tours were no relic from a pre-modern past. In India, the Earl of Mayo (viceroy 1869–72) indulged 'in more frequent and longer tours, very often on horseback, than any of his predecessors had done; and thus in the short span of three years he created an impression of combined efficiency and power such as few of them have produced'. Curzon, *British Government in India*, vol. II, 236. Napoleon required his prefects to undertake an annual tour of their departments. See Woolf, *Napoleon's Integration of Europe*, 88.

Devolution from the Centre to the Periphery: An Overview of Ottoman Provincial Administration

İ. Metin Kunt

Wars change societies; long wars change them even more profoundly. During the long career of the dynastic empire (c. 1300 to 1922) Ottoman provincial administration was transformed in significant ways more than once. Perhaps the most significant changes—at least until the Europeanising reforms of the nineteenth century—occurred at the turn of the seventeenth century, after a period of about thirty years of warfare and internal ferment. Successfully concluding the conquest of Azerbaijan (1578–1590) from the Safavis torn by throne struggles, the Ottoman government turned its military might against the Habsburgs in central Europe in 1591, perhaps in accordance with the political wisdom of the age that ‘soldiers should be on campaign’. Victory in the East whetted the Ottoman appetite for conquest in the northwest, but the traditional Ottoman military organisation was found wanting against Austrian armies, with far-reaching consequences. Provincial cavalry supported by revenue grants was neither equipped nor trained sufficiently for changing European warfare, and when some of them were dismissed from active service, they triggered internal turmoil. Meanwhile, having settled their own internal problems, Safavi armies now under Shah Abbas regained territories recently ceded to the Ottomans. A stand-still peace was signed with Austria in 1606, and rebels in Anatolia and Syria were brought to heel in 1608, though the eastern front remained active until 1639. After more than thirty years of almost continuous action, sometimes simultaneously on three fronts, the Ottoman conception of government evolved to suit changing times.¹

1 I have written about this change in *The Sultan's Servants: the Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government, 1550–1650* (New York, 1983). Baki Tezcan considered the shift so momentous that his recent book is called *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge, UK, 2010), partly also as a reference to the short, unhappy reign of Osman II (1618–1622), the second after the eponymous founder of the dynasty (the third and last Osman reigned in 1754–1757). The nature of the change used to be considered the beginning of the long decline of the Ottoman Empire, but Ottomanists of the last generation have abandoned this misleading conception. For the Austrian War from the Ottoman perspective see Caroline Finkel, *The Administration of Warfare: the Ottoman Military Campaigns in Hungary, 1593–1606* (Vienna, 1988). For the internal situation see Karen Barkey,

I Provincial Governors to 1600

Having begun as a minuscule frontier society, the Ottoman realm expanded through raiding as well as by concerted military action. As territories came under Ottoman control they were left to the care of military commanders, *ghâzi* frontier lords, sometimes the same captains who in fact had led the conquest. The realm was divided into districts termed 'banners' (Ottoman Turkish *sancak*, pronounced 'sanjak'), and the governor was the 'banner commander' (*sancakbeyi*). In some fifteenth- and sixteenth-century district regulations (*kânûnnâme*) the governor is in fact referred to as the 'cavalry banner commander' (*atlı sancakbeyi*), leaving no doubt as to his essentially military function.² Narrative accounts, too, sometimes refer to 'banner' as a group of cavalymen, a battalion or regiment, rather than as a geographical district. The banner commander was, of course, responsible for the safety and order of his whole district, and the collection of revenues allocated to him in his district allowed him a measure of additional authority over the townsmen and peasants specifically within his revenue grant. He collected annual land rent, taxes on agricultural and artisanal production, commercial duties and fines for various types of transgressions. He was, then, an administrator of his district, and more closely of those parts of his district left in his personal care, but what defined him as an Ottoman official was the fact that he was a *military* administrator, the commander of the provincial cavalry who led his regiment to battle when ordered and presented his troops for muster when the army gathered. The banner then marched in formation with other banners of the same province, in a brigade or division, but nearer the front it might be given discrete tasks for reconnaissance, forward, or rear guard duty.

Early on, banner commanders were frontier lords, companions of the first few Ottoman rulers and similar if not quite equal to them in political and military stature, leaders of their own household men as well as of the independent

Bandits and Bureaucrats: Ottoman Route to State Centralization (Ithaca, 1994). On Ottoman warfare in general see Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare, 1500–1700* (London, 2002).

2 For books of regulations, including district regulations, see Halil İnalcık, 'Kânûnnâme', *Encyclopedia of Islam*, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, B. Lewis and Ch. Pellat, eds., Vol. 4 (Leiden, 1960; 2nd edition Leiden, 1978), 558–566, and Heath W. Lowry, 'The Ottoman Liva [sancak] Kanunnames Contained in the Defter-i Hakani [district census registers]', *Osmanlı Araştırmaları Dergisi* [Journal of Ottoman Studies] 2 (1981), 43–74. For references to 'cavalry banner commander' see Ö.L. Barkan, XV. V^e XVI. Asırlarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Zirâi Ekonominin Hukuki ve Mâli Esasları, I. Kanunlar [The Legal and Fiscal Bases of Agricultural Economy in the Ottoman Empire in the 15th and 16th Centuries, I: Regulations] (Istanbul 1943), 5, 27, 70, 180, 268, 396.

revenue-holding cavalrymen in their march-turned-district. Troop captains who served within the households of such lords as well as others who rose through the ranks of independent cavalrymen and minor district officers could hope to become banner commanders themselves someday. As the state evolved as a dynastic empire and expanded, the frontiers and the frontier lords became more distant from the centre and their political clout lessened, at least in relative terms. The sultan's own servitors, trained at the palace and then joining provincial administration, tended to have the fast-track of promotion, especially from the middle of the fifteenth century on. After serving no longer than two or three years in a certain district, the banner commander would be transferred elsewhere, usually in the same province; if he was deemed successful with each successive appointment he would be given a relatively more important command. Of the three hundred or so banner commanders in the sixteenth century a few rose to the rank of 'commander-of-commanders' (*beylerbeyi*), that is, governor-general of one of the twenty or so provinces in the realm, most of whom had been trained in the sultan's household. The top of the Ottoman *cursus honorum* was the imperial council which sat at the palace where there was room for a number of vezirs, seven in the sixteenth century, promoted from among the *beylerbeyi*.

An Ottoman official, even more than a Roman senator, was a man of the sword, a military commander first and an administrator second. This was so not only because he left the finer points of fiscal matters to the men of the pen in his own entourage but especially because provincial administration had a second, parallel but separate arm, made up of men of learning, the *kâdi* judge-magistrates. These two careers were known in Ottoman terminology in a rhyming duality, from the Arabic plurals of the men of the sword, the *ümerâ*, and the men of learning, the *ulemâ*. The men of the pen, the *küttâb* scribes, were somewhere between the two and not considered to constitute a separate career, at least not until after the seventeenth-century transformation. A scribe might be trained in a household like the *ümerâ*, or educated at a *medrese* college like the *ulemâ*, but in terms of career advancement his hope would be to achieve a district command after serving in the imperial palace or in the household of a governor.

In the provinces, while the banner commander kept the peace and went on campaign whenever required, the *kâdi* judge-magistrate stayed put for the duration of his appointment at a particular post, equally as short as that of a banner commander. There were no local roots for Ottoman administrators. The *kâdi* was a judge, but he was also assigned state business. Imperial decrees were very often addressed to both the banner commander and the judge-magistrate of a district, who were to cooperate and coordinate their efforts

to fulfill the tasks given them.³ The *ulemâ* career too had its own ladder from lesser appointments to larger cities, and their ladder too ended in the imperial council, as the two most senior judge-magistrates sat alongside the *ümerâ* vezirs at meetings led by the grand vezir. Since one of the main features of the seventeenth-century transformation is the relative civilianisation of Ottoman polity, we shall return to the enhancement of the position of judge-magistrates as well as the emancipation of the scribal career.

Princes as Banner Commanders

The Ottoman dynastic empire brought relatively little of its distant Inner Asian heritage to the territories it conquered, whether from the infidels or from fellow Muslims. These were agrarian lands; the original transhumant character of the minuscule Ottoman frontier enterprise was soon abandoned in favour of a proper sedentary empire. Tribal groups, Turkish or otherwise, were treated with suspicion, subdued, forced to migrate, broken up, and ultimately reduced to subject status. A few traces of Inner Asia remained, however, such as fifteenth-century writings in the Uygur script and even some runes. In addition to the Viking runic graffiti in Byzantine St Sophia there are Ottoman writings that hark back to the Göktürk runes in the Altai inscriptions and also Hungarian texts, themselves bearing traces of their Inner Asian roots. But it is especially in terms of the dynasty itself that Asia appears. Even when Ottoman rulers, at first styled simply *beys* and *ghâzis* like other commanders in the polity, were elevated above the others and adopted the Islamic 'sultan', the Persian 'pâdishâh' and even the Roman 'çâsâr' (caesar)—briefly, after the conquest of Constantinople—they always, up to the very end of empire, kept the Turkic 'khan' among their titles.⁴ The Inner Asian concept of dynastic rule was also reflected in the system of succession, though with modifications. When a ruling dynasty was established by a charismatic, eponymous leader, whether a simple chieftain or a world-conqueror, all male members of his family would participate in the rule. Succession depended not on primogeniture but on acclamation of any brother or son or cousin or nephew, either explicitly by

3 For the administrative and political role of a provincial *kâdi* in addition to his judicial function in the sixteenth century see Leslie Peirce, *Morality Tales: Law and Gender in the Ottoman Court of Aintab* (New York, 2003). As we shall see, as the *kâdi*'s role was elevated in the seventeenth century so has the literature on provincial courts increased in recent decades.

4 Halil İnalcık, 'Power Relationships Between Russia, the Crimea and the Ottoman Empire as Reflected in Titulature', in C. Lemerrier-Quellejey, G. Veinstein, and S.E. Wimbusch eds., *Turco-Tatar Past, Soviet Present: Studies Presented to Alexandre Bennigsen* (Paris, 1986), 175–211.

a gathering of all the leaders in the polity or implicitly by their acquiescence. This Inner Asian way might have appeared not so much as a system but as a chaotic and irrational process to sedentary societies because it often caused wide-scale throne struggles and even civil war. It did, however, have the advantage of ending up with the most capable leader, the one with political nous as well as military prowess.⁵ The implication of this system of succession is that all male members of the dynastic clan had an appanage during the lifetime of the ruling khan.

In the Ottoman case, probably not deliberately but as a result of *ad hoc* responses to historical situations, the ruling family was able to keep succession from father to one of his sons, a situation Cemal Kafadar termed monogeniture.⁶ The son who won, either through political acumen or military prowess, then killed his brothers and their sons; there were no more nephews and cousins. Nevertheless, as in the Inner Asian tradition, all the sons of the ruler were eligible for the throne and as such during the lifetime of the father they all were assigned banner commands when they came of age to prepare them for the struggle against their brothers and eventual accession as ruler if they won.⁷ To prepare the child-prince for the inevitable showdown and possible reign he was assigned a statesman as tutor. He was also given—loaned, might be a better term—a startup household chosen for him from among the personnel of the imperial palace. Similar to all *ümerâ* households but unlike the imperial palace, the prince's retinue did not include any musket-bearing janissary infantry but only cavalry troops. Unlike in the steppe environment, an Ottoman prince never ruled in his own name; his status of banner commander was relatively low, since there were many *ümerâ* of superior pasha (for governors-general) and vezir rank.⁸ It was a matter of historical circumstance how many princes

5 Joseph Fletcher borrowed a term from the Gaelic tradition, *tanistry*, to explain Inner Asian tradition, 'Turco-Mongolian Monarchic Traditions in the Ottoman Empire', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 3 (1979), 236–251; Halil İnalçık, 'The Ottoman Succession and its Relation to the Turkish concept of sovereignty', Halil İnalçık ed., *The Middle East and the Balkans under the Ottoman Empire: Essays on Economy and Society* (Bloomington, 1993) (originally in Turkish, 1959), 37–69.

6 Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: the Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley, 1996).

7 For dynastic reproduction see Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford, 1993).

8 The most comprehensive monograph on Ottoman princes is Haldun Eroğlu, *Osmanlı Devletinde Şehzadelik Kurumu* (Ankara, 2004) [The Institution Princship in the Ottoman State]; also see Feridun Emecen, *XVI. Yüzyılda Manisa Sancağı* (Istanbul, 1989) [The *sancak* of Manisa in the Sixteenth Century], important because Manisa had almost become the designated seat of the elder son at the time.

there might be biding their time in the provinces at any given moment. How many sons naturally survived to become of age and outlived the father, how long the father lived, how long he reigned: these were all factors in the situation. In the first decade of the sixteenth century five sons of the reigning sultan, Bayezid II, were banner commanders. When Bayezid died in 1512 at age sixty-five after a reign of thirty-one years not only his middle-aged sons but also his grandsons were banner commanders. Furthermore, daughters of the princes were married to some banner commanders; the prince's sons and his sons-in-law governed districts adjacent to the prince's own banner district. By 1512, the sons of Bayezid not only were themselves in charge of a relatively modest banner, but together with their sons and sons-in-law each prince controlled a sizeable region. In this exceptional situation the eventual struggle for Bayezid's throne was therefore especially fierce, until Selim I emerged victorious and eliminated all the others involved.

A prince as banner commander was an anomaly because of the dynastic implications, especially since his military activities were limited to the hunt and to hunting bandits for he was not to take part in imperial campaigns much less lead campaigns of his own. Nevertheless, in terms of provincial administration his banner functioned as any other. There were, of course, independent *kâdı* magistrates and the scribes in his own entourage who ran the day-to-day affairs. Revenues assigned to the prince were much higher than those allowed regular banner commanders, and therefore he had greater direct authority over a larger number of townsmen and peasants included in his own domain. He might have left his father's home at age ten or fifteen and then waited in the same or perhaps in several different districts for the next twenty or thirty years, not allowed back in the capital and not allowed to be an active participant in the political processes of the empire. At any rate, at about the same time that greater changes were wrought in Ottoman provinces, not related to these changes but once again due to the historical circumstances of the age of fathers and of sons, the practice of sending princes out to banners was given up.⁹ After Prince Mehmet went out to Manisa in 1582 and returned as Sultan Mehmet III in 1595 there was never another princely governor in the realm.

9 On the last prince to go out of the palace and the capital in 1582 to Manisa, Metin Kunt, 'A Prince Goes Forth (Perchance to Return)', in K. Barbir and B. Tezcan, eds., *Identity and Identity Formation in the Ottoman World* (Madison, 2008), 63–71. When Mehmet III died at age thirty-seven in 1603 his sons had not been of age yet to be sent out of the palace. The following few reigns also saw sultans dead at an early age, with children ascending the throne without provincial experience.

II The Period of Transition

New Conditions, New Arrangements

Already before the long wars at the end of the century the size of the imperial palace troops had increased considerably, partly by force of events, in the reign of Selim II (1566–1574) and partly by the deliberate policy of his son and successor Murat III (r. 1574–1595).¹⁰ Sultan Murat reversed the policy of his grandfather Sultan Süleyman, continued by Selim II, of allowing the emergence of a state bureaucracy, a machine to run the affairs of state routinely; he reasserted the supremacy of the sultan and his palace. In a sense, the Ottoman sultan was similar to the officers and officials of the realm. Like them he had revenues assigned to him and he had to maintain his own household out of these revenues. The imperial palace was, however, not only much bigger than other households, perhaps ten times the size of the grand vezir's three or four thousand men, it also had two distinctions: troops with firearms and the right to recruit from the Christian population of the realm. While the provincial cavalry brigades under the banner commanders practised traditional skills, imperial household troops, especially the janissary musket-bearing infantry, were able to train en masse. Military innovations, whether techniques or technology, were developed and applied in the janissary companies and in the armaments and cannon corps. At the end of the sixteenth century political and military considerations coincided: the provincial cavalry was downgraded and the imperial household troops increased. The sultan's expenditure on household personnel grew in turn.

The fiscal consequence of this decision was an effort to augment the sultan's revenues at the expense of lower-level revenue grants in the provinces. However, this shift could not simply be a matter of internal redistribution of resources—not that it was *simple* in any case. The Ottoman agrarian system produced tax revenues partly in kind, the tithe produce to be consumed or marketed by the holder of the right to collect. In smaller, lower-level revenue grants the proportion of revenues in kind was higher; in larger revenue holdings there were considerable commercial and trade taxes payable in cash. For central revenues to increase there was need also for a greater degree of monetisation in the realm, for greater amounts of silver for the coinage, and a greater degree of circulation. Otherwise if he only appropriated lower-level revenue grants, the sultan would end up with stores of produce in many small holdings, which

10 Metin Kunt, 'Turks in the Ottoman Imperial Palace', J. Duindam, T. Artan, M. Kunt, eds., *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires: A Global Perspective* (Leiden, 2011), 289–312.

would be of little use in paying his soldiers' wages in Istanbul. World-wide changes in the sixteenth century as a result of the expansion of Europe, more specifically Portuguese and Spanish activities across the oceans, as well as new directions of the Ottomans' own expansion provided the increased supply of silver, at least some of it, for Ottoman purposes.

In the Mediterranean the Ottomans exported more than they imported; there was a healthy balance of payments surplus. Not that the Ottomans were bullionists *avant la lettre*. Ottoman provisionism tried to limit exports and even banned them in certain cases. Nevertheless, some of the silver the Spanish brought over from Mexico and Peru found its way to the Ottoman realm, and then some of this silver left to the north and east to pay for Ottoman imports. American silver reached Ottoman shores in the sixteenth century *despite* Ottoman attitudes and their policy to encourage imports and discourage exports. It was only in the early eighteenth century that some Ottoman intellectuals bemoaned the monies spent on luxuries such as furs from Russia and silk and jewels from Iran and India, whether they had heard of bullionism or not.

On the southern front Ottoman policy was deliberate. In the year 1500 they had been strategic rivals of the Mamluk Sultanate that ruled in Egypt and Syria and therefore controlled the old spice route from the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea to the Syrian and Egyptian ports in the Mediterranean. Within a few years of Vasco da Gama's momentous journey around the Cape of Good Hope into the Indian Ocean Portuguese ships appeared in the Red Sea to threaten this lucrative trade. For the new route to the sources of the spice trade to be economically viable and successful the Portuguese needed to block the old route and not just to operate as a rival. The Mamluks did not have the naval and gunpowder know-how to resist the Portuguese threat, but their misfortune was also a blow to Venice, the primary trading partner of the Mamluk sultans, and even to the Ottomans, their erstwhile rivals, for part of this trade found its way north through Syria to Ottoman markets. Neither of these Mediterranean powers were able to help the Mamluks with ships or gunners. In the event, because of momentous changes in the power alignment in the Muslim world of West Asia as much as the Ottoman understanding of the greater, world-wide strategic implications of the Portuguese threat to the Spice Route, Selim I decided to conquer Mamluk lands for himself. This was accomplished in a long, continuous campaign over 1516–1517 when the Ottoman army, as it marched south through Syria and into the Sinai on its way to Cairo, was supported and supplied by the newly increased navy. Once Syria and Egypt were secured, one of the first acts of the new rulers of the region was to set up a naval command at

Suez to repel the Portuguese and carry the struggle to the Arabian Sea.¹¹ This southward expansion brought significant cash revenues. The tribute of Egypt, the surplus of revenues after local officers and troops were remunerated, went directly into the sultan's treasury. The customs revenues of Yemen, controlling the entrance to the Red Sea, also supplied considerable cash income.¹² Yet, neither the augmentation of cash revenues for the sultan nor the increased circulation of coin in the realm was sufficient to pay the household troops whose numbers swelled faster than money became available. In 1589 when the janissaries were paid in newly struck, copper-rich, silver coins, worth half of proper, sound coinage, they rebelled and had the sultan's chief financial officer executed. Indeed, most of the following sixty years or so of Ottoman central politics can be read as a struggle between the household cavalry and the janissary infantry over access to additional revenues to augment their nominal wages.¹³

The consequence of these developments for provincial administration was that the traditional arrangements gradually became obsolete. The revenue-grant system was not abandoned until the nineteenth century, and in some cases at least the provincial cavalry continued to attend campaigns, but at times when the sultan's central treasury needed cash infusion they were asked for money rather than service. This was done for the first time around 1650 under the rubric of *bedel-i timar*, "revenue-grant substitute", which would have been considered a contradiction in terms half a century earlier. A *timar* was the right to collect revenues, usually at the village level, consisting of peasant rent and tithe given to a cavalryman; by definition it was not itself taxed; a cash substitute was therefore an anomaly. But at the time, when war with Venice was raging over Crete, the need for cash, mostly for the navy, was paramount, and the *timar*-holders were not needed on campaign. What had been granted for military service was now taken back in lieu of service. The 'timar substitute' was not a tax as such, but another way to raise cash revenues for the centre was to turn what had been an extraordinary levy on the subjects, townsmen and peasants, into a routine tax. This was a levy called *avârız*, exceptional,

11 See, for example, Palmira Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower and Levantine Diplomacy in the Age of Discovery* (Albany, 1994).

12 See the collections of articles by Salih Özbaran, *Ottoman Expansion towards the Indian Ocean in the 16th century* (Istanbul, 1994) and *Ottoman Response to European Expansion: Studies on Ottoman-Portuguese Relations in the Indian Ocean and Ottoman Administration in the Arab Lands in the 16th century* (Istanbul, 1994). Also Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (Oxford, 2010).

13 The best overview of Ottoman money is Şevket Pamuk, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge, 2000).

collected in cash in emergencies. By the early seventeenth century *avâriz* came to be collected annually. For the revenue-grant substitute and for the now routine *avâriz* to be paid in cash agrarian produce had to be marketed, a process made possible by the increased amount of silver and quickened circulation of coin in the realm.

New Methods of Tax Collection

Peasant rent and the non-Muslim *cizye* tax, both for (nuclear-)family/households (*hâne*), were the main traditional collections in cash. The peasant rent per household remained as it was; in the case of *cizye* and *avâriz* the term 'household' though still employed, came to have a totally different meaning: instead of denoting a nuclear family it now meant a 'tax-unit' of a specific amount of tax, the *size* of the unit changeable according to ability to pay. This was a progressive, egalitarian feature of Ottoman taxation and fines. The ground rent for peasants, for example, was the same for all peasant households, but the *amount of land* each household held varied according to productivity of arable land: a smaller holding for well-watered bottom land, a larger one for middling quality of land, and one still larger for difficult to till stony, infertile land. The ideal was for peasant families to have equal production. A similar three-fold classification, this time of wealth was observed for fines: for the same transgression wealthier subjects were liable for double the amount owed by those of middling income who, in their turn, paid double what the poor owed. This ratio of 4:2:1 was the standard also for *cizye* payments. Now, in the seventeenth-century re-organisation, this principle of progressive taxation was introduced to the new concept of 'household' (*hâne*) as taxation unit for *cizye* and *avâriz* assessment: the number of real—nuclear—households (families) in an *avâriz* 'household' was smaller for richer subjects, greater for those considered middling, and still greater for poorer people, so that the tax burden was lighter on the poor and heavier on the relatively rich. In the new system *cizye* and *avâriz* tax liability fell on a collective rather than on individual, real households as in the case of peasant ground rent.

The centre decided on the amount of tax to be collected in a given locality; in the provinces communities decided how to apportion the tax burden in consultation with government officials. Of course there was need to consult locals from the very beginning of Ottoman rule. When taxing the agrarian economy was the main business of the government, registers were drawn up for each banner district by means of officials knowledgeable about the district. The first item was a code of regulations (*kânûnnâme*) for the locality which set what was to be taxed and at what rate as well as listing transgressions and fines to be collected. Ground rent, tithes, market dues, taxation of mills and fisheries,

in effect whatever was of economic value in the district, were here specified, as well as relations between the peasants and the holder of the revenue grant.¹⁴ Then peasant households were counted and production was estimated for each household. The result was what was called the detailed census register (*mufassal*), accompanied by the summary register (*icmal*) which showed the revenue grants. The officials preparing the district census registers talked to local community leaders about production estimates and about regulations in effect before the Ottoman conquest and harmonised the existing situation with Ottoman principles.¹⁵

Different Governors for Different Purposes

Two trends emerged in the new era in terms of provincial administration, linked to one another. One was the erosion of the status of the *sancakbeyi* banner commanders, until then the backbone of central presence in the realm; the second was the concentration of power in the hands of provincial governors, the *beylerbeyi*. The loss of status of the banner commanders was a result of their close identification with provincial cavalry; as the need for revenue-grant-holding cavalry on imperial campaigns diminished so did the position of the banner commanders. The second trend, making the provincial governors even more powerful than before was partly a result of the weakening of the *sancakbeyi*, but also of the deliberate policy of the centre to deal directly with about thirty or so *beylerbeyi* rather with over 300 *sancakbeyi*.¹⁶

The new-style provincial governors had different functions in different situations. In an interior province the governor was to raise cash revenues and transmit them to the centre. Such a governor was now styled a *nâzir-ı emvâl*, a supervisor of revenues, and placed above the *defterdâr* provincial treasurer, the traditional agent of the sultan, and all other revenue collectors and tax farmers. Writing in the late sixteenth century the famous historian and political critic Mustafa Âli complained that candidates would not hesitate to pay the treasury 40,000 gold pieces to be appointed a revenue-supervising governor in an important province such as Baghdad when their official allocation was much less, because they knew they could make a lot more for themselves. A governor as supervisor of revenues was responsible for significant amounts of cash, perhaps as much as ten times a governor's traditional allocation; by

14 See n. 2, above.

15 In addition to works cited in n. 2, see Colin Imber, 'How Islamic was Ottoman Law?', forthcoming in *2011 ISAM Papers*, and "An Illiberal Descent": Kemalism and Ottoman Law', *Eurasian Studies* IV/2 (2005), 215–243.

16 I have analysed these developments in *The Sultan's Servants* (New York, 1983).

the second half of the seventeenth century Mustafa Âli's figures do not seem exaggerated but plausible even in a lesser province such as Diyarbekir.¹⁷ The revenue supervisor collaborated not with the banner commanders of his province but with notables of various localities in this task. He allowed them a share of the revenues they raised, just as he himself was allowed a significant portion, nearly a half, of the cash he transmitted to the centre.

On the frontiers the situation was different. There the governor was styled a *muhafız*, a defender or keeper, indicating that his primary function was military. In regions bordering a potentially threatening external enemy the traditional provincial arrangements lasted longer.¹⁸ There both the revenue-grant cavalry and the banner commanders sustained their accustomed role and supported the *beylerbeyi*. In such areas revenue-raising too was left to treasurers. Indeed there would be an infusion of funds from the centre rather than the other way round. The reform movement starting with the Köprülü family of grand vezirs in the second half of the seventeenth century aimed at expansion to return to the glory days of Suleiman the Magnificent; this too helped to bolster the military administration in frontier regions to the north. Yet this policy proved unsustainable, certainly in the aftermath of the disastrous siege of Vienna in 1683. The term *beylerbeyi* eventually became more a rank than an office; provincial governors were designated by their true functions as revenue collectors or keepers of the frontiers.

III *Kâdı and Âyân*

In the new situation of the seventeenth century the centre was not interested in the peasant economy as such and left it to be resolved between the revenue holders and the peasants. The disinterest is evident even to the extent that the practice of updating the registers, both the detailed and the summary, at least once every generation, was abandoned. Instead there were now new registers, of *avârız* and *cizye* households; at the centre instead of daybooks (*rûznamçe*) of revenue-grant appointments and dismissals there were now daybooks of cash flow. Secondly, instead of dealing with peasants and townsmen as heads of

17 Metin Kunt, *Bir Osmanlı Valisinin Yıllık Gelir-Gideri, Diyarbekir 1670-71* [The Annual Income and Expenditures of an Ottoman Governor, Diyarbekir 1670-71] (Istanbul, 1981).

18 In general, Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare, 1500-1700* (London, 1999); on frontier fortresses in Hungary, Mark L. Stein, *Guarding the Frontier: Ottoman Border Forts and Garrisons in Europe* (London, 2007), but it would be better to follow the work of Gabor Agoston, Geza David, and Pal Fodor.

nuclear families, the centre left the apportioning to communities themselves in a given locality, whether these were denominational or guilds. With the district waning as the main administrative unit along with the district governor the need for official representatives of the government between the level of the provincial governor and the populace came to be filled by the *kâdı* magistrates. As the actors changed so did the scripts. Instead of the hundreds of census registers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries we have thousands of *kâdı* court records (*sicil* registers) from 1600 on. The change in sources changed the character of Ottoman studies itself. An earlier generation was preoccupied with publishing the detailed census registers and analysing them; in the last three decades social history based on court records has come to dominate the field.

Kâdı as Provincial Magistrate

Kâdıs were appointed throughout the realm, with a strict career structure: depending on the level of their *medrese* education their first post would be in a small town, rising through the grades to larger towns and cities. At the top of the profession were the two high magistrates, *kâdıaskers*, who sat in the imperial council (*dîvân*), one for each general region of the empire, Rumeli (European territories) and Anatolia (standing for all Asian territories). The two *kâdıaskers* drew up appointments of *kâdıs* in their respective regions; Ottoman *ulemâ* were no less a centrally administered army of state servants than their *ümerâ* counterparts.¹⁹ Whether in a small town or in a big city a *kâdı* heard cases and adjudicated, but he also acted as a notary, certifying and recording various documents. His court daybook, the *sicil* register, where all cases and documents were summarised also included any communication from Istanbul. Such orders might be on any state business, from supervising the processes of apportioning and collecting revenues due to the centre to provisioning of troops on campaign or the supply of architectural or ship-building materials. In terms of his function as a judge the *kâdı* was totally independent, the only higher court being the imperial council itself. Even when plaintiffs

19 The classic study of the *ulemâ* career is in İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlmîye Teşkilâtı*, [The Learned Career in the Ottoman State] (Ankara, 1965). Marshall G.H. Hodgson, in his great work on the Islamic world, *Venture of Islam, Vol. 3: Gunpowder Empires and Modern Times* (Chicago, 1977), discussed the bureaucratisation of the *ulemâ* in the Ottoman realm as opposed to their relative independence from political authority in other Islamic polities. See also Madeline C. Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety: Ottoman Ulema in the Post-Classical Age* (Minneapolis, 1988). Since then studies on *kâdıs*, courts and court records have proliferated.

or defendants in a given case appealed to Istanbul, the procedure would be to ask the *kâdı* to review the evidence and his decision rather than overturning it.

When the *kâdı* convened the court he was attended not only by lesser officials like deputies and bailiffs but also by a group of leading townsmen referred to as ‘witnesses’, *şuhûd el-hâl*. These were not witnesses to any specific case but rather as expert or character witnesses, knowledgeable about local society and its ways which the *kâdı*, an outsider who was there only for a year or two might not be aware of. These ‘witnesses’ testified also to reputations of people involved in various cases. Neither a proper jury nor proper witnesses, the *şuhûd el-hâl* in effect represented the conscience of the community.²⁰ Nor were they the common man; the composition of the group attending the court on any given day might be somewhat different, but they were all members of the town’s elite, the respectable people, the *âyân*. They were neither elected nor appointed, at least not before the eighteenth century, but everybody knew who they were. Because the *kâdı* listened to them, they could influence court decisions which further enhanced their social standing.

The Rise of the Âyân

Âyân were simply notables, the leaders of a community. When Evliya Çelebi, the seventeenth-century Ottoman official who travelled throughout the empire during his long career for public business or private purposes, wrote at the end of his life his travelling memoirs in ten huge volumes, he had a standard way of describing a locality he visited: its history, how its people look, how they dress, how they speak, their manners and their food, their delicacies, the various buildings, etc. At the beginning of such a list he entered the *âyân* notables: officials serving or retired, learned men, and others who are prominent for some reason or another. By 1800 the term had changed meaning completely, to indicate local dynasties, officially recognised and designated, some in effect rulers of vast stretches of land. How this transformation happened, how the *âyân* in effect displaced at least some of the imperial governors has been the major preoccupation of much current Ottoman historiography. Volume 3 of the recent *Cambridge History of Turkey, 1603–1839* has a whole section on the phenomenon in three chapters by three distinguished scholars,

20 The best discussion of the ‘witnesses’ is in Hülya Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town: ‘Ayntab in the 17th Century* (Leiden, 2007). Also Boğaç Ergene, *Local Court, Provincial Society and Justice in the Ottoman Empire: Legal Practice and Dispute Resolution in Cankiri and Kastamonu (1652–1744)* (Leiden, 2003).

each on a region or aspect.²¹ Here I will focus on the ways in which the provincial notables bolstered their standing so that by the mid-eighteenth century they came to receive diplomas of office as *âyân*, indicating imperial recognition of their status.

The people Evliya Çelebi noticed as the *âyân* of a town were probably the same people who sat as community witnesses in the court of 'Ayntab (now Gaziantep). Sitting at court and having the potential to influence its decisions and actions was one of the ways the notable persons of a town reinforced their social standing. Another channel of *âyân* influence was directly related to the decline of the status of the district banner commander and the fact that some districts were awarded as sinecure to officials with the rank of *beylerbeyi* without a proper posting. A governor, either a *beylerbeyi* travelling a long distance from one post to another, or even a *sancakbeyi* sitting out a period out of office before he achieved a new post, had to make preparations for the road and fit out his official household. This took some time, so the governor sent an agent ahead to his new assignment, to take over from the previous governor. This agent, in effect a deputy or interim governor, was called a *mütesellim*; he was a senior member of the governor's official household, a majordomo, a chief steward. He had important responsibilities for he inspected the financial and other registers of the province or district turned over by the previous governor and served as acting governor until his master arrived, perhaps weeks or months later. A *beylerbeyi* assigned a *sancak* as sinecure might not go there at all but leave his post in the hands of the agent.²² It also happened, increasingly more often, that instead of sending his chief steward, the nominal holder of the post might ask one of the local notables to act as his *mütesellim*; after all a person *in situ*, who was a native, would be able to take charge faster and with better knowledge of the local situation. By the eighteenth century each district had a few of the most important local families whose members took up this role of interim governor.

21 Edited by Suraiya N. Faroqhi, 2006; Part III: Chapters 7–9, Dina Rizk Khoury, 'The Ottoman centre versus provincial power-holders'; Fikret Adanır, 'Semi-autonomous forces in the Balkans and Anatolia'; Bruce Masters, 'Semi-autonomous forces in the Arab provinces'. The first monograph on the subject providing a basic overview is Yücel Özkaya, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Âyânlık* [The Institution of Âyân in the Ottoman Empire] (Ankara, 1977). A recent important volume is Antonis Anastasopoulos, ed., *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire* (Rethymno, 2005).

22 There is now a study of the institution: Fatma Şimşek, *Anadolu Sancaklarında Mütesellimlik Kurumu (XVIII. Yüzyıl)* [The Institution of *Mütesellim* in Anatolian Districts in the 18th c.] (Antalya, 2010).

Up to the 1680s provincial notables may have been content to wield their influence assisting at the *kâdi* court and occasionally serving as agents of a governor, but the long war that started after the siege of Vienna in 1683 changed the status quo. Once again war conditions forced *ad hoc* arrangements in Ottoman polity. The defeat and retreat from Vienna in 1683 started a war that lasted sixteen years until the Treaty of Karlowitz ended it in 1699. The Ottomans fought not only against the Austrians but also faced Poland, Russia, and Venice. As the war was prolonged, regular Ottoman armies had difficulty sustaining almost continuous campaigns. To be able to field troops year after year the centre decided to ask for contributions from the *âyân*. The more prominent among them were requested to supply, at their own expense, a number of men, fifty or one hundred or more, depending on the perceived means of the individual *âyân*.²³ The *âyân* obliged, the centre was obligated. Istanbul asked the provincial notables in effect to become more involved in military matters, to have their own men-at-arms, much like the official households of governors. The men recruited were mercenaries, bands of men gathered around captains, known collectively and quaintly as *levend*, well-built tough rogues, though originally the term referred to sailors.²⁴ Governors too made use of these mercenaries; it was cheaper contracting them seasonally rather than keeping their own troops the year round.²⁵ Even the centre had hired mercenaries on occasion since the end of the sixteenth century, but these were *sekbân* in larger groups, better trained and better disciplined. However, the long war of 1683–99 was the first time that provincial notables established ties with *levend* mercenaries, ties that were maintained into the eighteenth century.

Another feature of *ad hoc* reforms during the war years was the fiscal institution of *mâlikâne*, life-time tax-farms.²⁶ These were instituted primarily to raise funds quickly to meet war expenditures, but there was also a longer-term purpose. Being aware that short-term tax-farmers tended to recoup their purchase price and maximise profits in a year or two, the hope was that a long-term, indeed life-time tax-farmer would have an interest in the productive potential of their revenue source and the prosperity of their peasants. The original meaning of the term *mâlikâne* is ‘as if owned’; there could be no real ownership

23 The ground-breaking article by Halil İnalçık, ‘Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire, 1600–1700’, *Archivum Ottomanicum* 6 (1980), 283–337.

24 Mustafa Cezar, *Osmanlı Tarihinde Levendler* [*Levends in Ottoman History*] (Istanbul, 1965) provides a detailed study of the phenomenon.

25 Cf. n. 17.

26 The classic study of the institution is by Mehmet Genç, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Mâlikâne Sistemi* [*The Mâlikâne System in Ottoman Fiscal Administration*] (Ankara, 1975).

of land 'owned' by the sultan in the name of the transcendental 'state', but it is interesting to note that in modern Turkish it has come to mean an estate, or more specifically a mansion. The 'purchaser' of the life-time tax-farm put up a substantial amount initially and then paid the central treasury a yearly due. People who had the capital to be able to pay the initial purchase price tended to be members of the imperial family and grandees in Istanbul.²⁷ Even if there were rich enough merchants and financiers outside the political elite, they tended to do business through partners in palace or government service.²⁸ The result was that in many cases the Istanbul personages who bought the life-time tax-farms then sub-contracted them out to people on the spot, the *âyân*. The initial short-term receipts to the treasury were thus followed in the longer term by a flow of capital accumulation from the provinces to the centre. On the other hand, it allowed the power of the provincial notables in their localities to grow even stronger.

In the course of the eighteenth century local powerholders proliferated and came in different types and different sizes. In the literature there is sometimes an unfortunate tendency to group them all together under the rubric of *âyân*, but this practice unnecessarily obscures the divergent varieties. The more traditional, relatively small-scale provincial notables continued to exert influence in their towns and in the countryside through the mechanisms outlined above. They cooperated with the centre either directly through their tax-collecting activities or indirectly through their cooperation with representatives of the centre, chief among them the *kâdi* magistrates. Their growing importance was acknowledged first by granting them the honorary but nevertheless significant and coveted title of 'palace gatekeepers' (*kapucubaşı*). Such *âyân* sometimes dominated local politics to the extent of mobilising the townsmen to protest the appointment of a certain governor, in effect declaring the centre's nominee to be *persona non grata*. By and large, however, they were loyal to the central government. In addition to such *âyân* there were also janissaries serving in some provincial centres of economic importance, such as Belgrade and Aleppo, where they dominated the marketplace and ran the cities.²⁹

27 See another classic article by Halil İnalcık, 'Capital Formation in the Ottoman Empire', *Journal of Economic History* 29 no. 1 (1969), 97–140.

28 Linda Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy: Tax Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire, 1560–1660* (Leiden, 1996). See also her contribution to the *Cambridge History of Turkey*, Vol 3, 'Public Finances: the Role of the Ottoman Centre'.

29 See the various articles in Antonis Anastasopoulos and Elias Kolovos, eds., *Ottoman Rule and the Balkans, 1760–1850* (Rethymno, 2007) and Antonis Anastasopoulos, ed., *Political Initiatives 'From the Bottom Up' in the Ottoman Empire* (Crete, 2012).

Ottoman decentralisation reached a crisis point by the early nineteenth century only in part because of the activities of the first two groups. Far more dangerous for the integrity of the empire was a third group of provinces, more distant from the centre, with direct access to the outside world especially in the Mediterranean and therefore able to develop their own cash-crop agrarian systems for the export trade. North African provinces of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli had already in the seventeenth century been allowed to drift apart to establish their own political, economic, and even diplomatic arrangements in return for naval reinforcements to the centre especially during the long war with Venice in the process of the conquest of Crete (1645–1669). There the local military elected their own leaders and constituted a non-dynastic rule by captains. In the first half of the eighteenth century Baghdad and Damascus joined such provinces though through different routes. In Damascus the local family of al-Azm kept the governorships in various provinces of greater Syria for a considerable period.³⁰ A different kind of ‘family’, at first dynastic but continued through their military household, took over and held power in Baghdad and Basra from the early eighteenth century for more than a hundred years.³¹ In the second half of the eighteenth century Palestine became the domain of Cezzar Ahmet Pasha, originally an Ottoman official.³² At about the same time in Egypt local military households which had continued to flourish under Ottoman rule took over completely.³³ Perhaps the most famous of such regional rulers, at least in the European imagination because of his Lord Byron connection, is Ali Pasha of Yannina.³⁴

These examples went far beyond the petty *âyân* of yesteryear. From Greece, northern Bulgaria, Syria, Palestine, Baghdad, and finally to Egypt the provinces behaved independently from the centre both politically and economically. They established their own economic ties to outside powers and conducted their own diplomacy. Even in relatively quiet Anatolia some *âyân* controlled extensive lands. It is perhaps a charitable view to say that by 1800 the Ottoman Empire had become a commonwealth, a loose confederation of regional rulers throughout the realm who paid lip service to the sultan-caliph in Istanbul

30 Karl K. Barbir, *Ottoman Rule in Damascus, 1708–1758* (Princeton, 1980).

31 S.H. Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq* (Oxford, 1925), reprinted.

32 Amnon Cohen, *Palestine in the 18th Century* (Jerusalem, 1973).

33 Jane Hathaway, *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt* (Cambridge, UK, 1997) and M.W. Daly, ed., *The Cambridge History of Egypt, Vol. 2: Modern Egypt From 1517* (Cambridge, 1998).

34 Katherine Elizabeth Fleming, *The Muslim Bonaparte: Diplomacy and Orientalism in Ali Pasha's Greece* (Princeton, 1999).

and sometimes even cash tribute. This commonwealth might have established a *modus vivendi* and continued in its peculiar way, but it did not exist on its own. The various sections of the commonwealth as well as the centre itself were under increasing European pressure; the loose Ottoman network would have disintegrated under such external strain. That is why the first priority of the centre around 1800 was to reform its military capacity and even its politics in the European manner. The new-style army was used first against Napoleon in Palestine and Egypt, and then was directed against the more rebellious regional rulers. Facing external defeat at the hands of Russia, even the *âyân* conceded the need for military reform, in the realisation that they themselves could exist only within an Ottoman commonwealth. They therefore committed themselves to the unity of the realm in the 1808 'Deed of Alliance', *Sened-i İttifâk*, recognising the sultan as supreme. The greatest regional ruler of them all, Mehmed Ali Pasha of Egypt, even when he waged war on the centre in the 1830s claimed he did so to save the sultan and his state, not to depose him. It is significant that many Ottoman grandees of the centre believed him.

Finally we should note the two ironies of this story of extreme devolution. One is, that the Ottoman programme of centralisation at the turn of the seventeenth century carried the seeds of the rise of provincial power holders. The centre came to depend on them, and they took from the centre functions appropriate for their new role. The second irony came at the end of the process. In the second half of the eighteenth century it was the world outside Ottoman domains that encouraged and facilitated Ottoman decentralisation, through trade or political and military intervention, in the shape of France in the Mediterranean and Austria and Russia in the Danubian basin. Yet it was Britain, another outside actor, and the other Great Powers that stopped Mehmed Ali Pasha in the 1830s and shored up the Ottoman centre. The world-wide changes that had started in the sixteenth century had helped the Ottoman sultans in their political ambitions. By the nineteenth century these changes had reached such a pitch that the sultans were no longer independent actors even in the internal affairs of their realm.

Broken Passage to the Summit: Nayancheng's Botched Mission in the White Lotus War

Yingcong Dai

In ruling an extensive empire in pre-modern times, a monarch often delegated his authority to his representatives. In China, this practice reached its apogee during the Qing dynasty (1644–1912) when the Manchu rulers developed a sophisticated system of appointing both provincial governors and governors-general for its regular provinces and designated administrative commissioners for its protectorates. In addition to territorial administrators, the political centre of an empire also detailed special commissioners, from time to time, to inspect its territories and to accomplish special tasks, civil or military, which served as another means to cement the bonds between the centre and the provinces. During the Qing dynasty, special commissioners sent by the imperial court were often granted the *ad hoc* title, 'Qinchai Dachen' or 'Special Imperial Commissioner.' For some commissioners who were political upstarts, a successful mission could serve as a steppingstone to more prominent positions because the achievement, as well as the experience, enhanced their credentials. But a failed mission could well lead to disgrace, punishment, or worse.

This chapter sheds light on the story of an imperial commissioner in Qing China. In 1799, a Manchu aristocrat, Nayancheng (1764–1833), was appointed as a Special Imperial Commissioner to supervise the suppression campaign against a sectarian rebellion, the White Lotus Rebellion (1796–1805). Not only was he expected to inject new energy into the enervated campaign and promote the reform at the warfront, but it was also anticipated that he would prove his own worthiness so that he could be named to lead the Grand Council, the Qing monarch's key advisory body. Nevertheless, Nayancheng's mission ended in failure, with severe consequences for him as well as for the central government. Humiliated and stripped of almost all his numerous titles, Nayancheng fell so precipitously that he had to strive the rest of his life to re-prove himself but received only more denunciation and disgrace. At the same time, Nayancheng's downfall doomed the practice of the monarch relying on a single leading aide, which was a contributing factor to the reforms of the Qing central authorities during the transition from the Qianlong period (1736–1795) to the Jiaqing period (1796–1820).

I Nayancheng's Meteoric Rise

Nayancheng's failed mission occurred at a critical moment for the Qing. At the beginning of 1796, the Qianlong emperor abdicated the throne in favour of his son, the Jiaqing emperor, but continued ruling for three more years until he died at the beginning of 1799. While Qianlong's sixty-year reign was one of the golden ages in Chinese history, the successional transition was sullied by two sizeable rebellions. In 1795, the last year of Qianlong's reign, the Miao ethnic people in the southwest revolted, protesting Chinese immigrants' encroachment in their home areas. The intense fighting did not end until 1797. Several months after the start of the Miao Rebellion and several days after the new Jiaqing emperor's enthronement, the White Lotus Rebellion erupted.¹ Within the year of 1796, more than a dozen uprisings occurred in western Hubei, southern Shaanxi, and north-eastern Sichuan. Taking advantage of the rebels' vague political agenda, loose organisation, and poor military strategy and tactics, the Qing forces destroyed most of their strongholds by early 1797, and forced the rebels of Xiangyang in northern Hubei, one of the bastions of the sectarian movement, to leave Hubei for Sichuan. However, when they reached northern Sichuan in the summer of 1797, the insurgents of the two provinces failed to merge. Subsequently, about a dozen rebel groups, each numbering hundreds or thousands people, wandered and conducted guerrilla warfare in the border regions between Shaanxi and Sichuan, occasionally infiltrating into north-western Hubei and south-eastern Gansu.²

Although the rebellion itself did not pose a grave challenge to the Qing state, the suppression campaign had been lethargic and ineffective, failing to finish off the already disarrayed insurgents year after year. By the beginning of 1799 when Qianlong died, the campaign had hit an impasse. The bungled campaign revealed a number of serious problems in the empire's political and military

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- 1 First appearing in the twelfth century, the White Lotus teaching evolved into an amalgam of Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Manichaeism, and other teachings with distinctive millenarian characteristics. Although numerous sects had sprung from it, both the state and some sectarian members used 'White Lotus' as an umbrella name to refer to various sects. In the 1790s, the Qing state's pre-emptive actions against some of these sects prompted their leaders to plan an uprising. Meanwhile, social stresses caused by overpopulation and Qing crackdowns on salt-smuggling and coin-counterfeiting radicalised many in central China.
 - 2 I try to provide a comprehensive picture of the rebellion, the suppression campaign, and the high politics intertwined with the war in a book-length manuscript, "The White Lotus War: Late Imperial China in Crisis." Some of my findings have appeared in 'Civilians Go into Battle: Hired Militias in the White Lotus War, 1796-1805', *Asia Major*, Third series, Volume XXII, no. 2 (2009), 145-178.

structures. The Qing central authorities failed to exercise control over the field commanders and provincial viceroys, many of whom had exhibited an inclination to stall the campaign from the beginning and boldly misappropriated the war funds which had been amply supplied by the central government.

The Qing state did attempt to reverse this situation. More particularly, after his father's death, the Jiaqing emperor made strenuous efforts to get the derailed suppression campaign back on track. But at first the new emperor had to assert his own authority in the imperial court. Several days after Qianlong's death, Jiaqing purged Hešen (1750–1799), the leading grand councillor and Qianlong's primary aide, and Fuchang'an, Hešen's right arm and vice-minister of revenue. Being a skilful sycophant as well as a capable administrator, Hešen had won Qianlong's unreserved trust, and managed to dominate the imperial court for more than two decades beginning in the mid-1770s. Capitalising on his power, Hešen had amassed enormous property holdings by pressing for and accepting bribes, which earned him a reputation as the most corrupt person in the empire. To be sure, Hešen was not the first such figure in Qianlong's court. From the start of the Qianlong reign, the emperor had deliberately fostered one powerful courtier after another, allowing him tremendous authority over his bureaucracy. Typically, this person held the leading position on the Grand Council. When the Grand Council was created by Qianlong's father, the Yongzheng emperor (r. 1723–1735), it was no more than a temporary office to process military correspondence between the court and the frontline of the war against the Zunghar Mongols in the far northwest. Not until the early Qianlong period did the council become a permanent advisory body to aid the monarch in decision-making on critical issues. Meanwhile, Qianlong was inclined to rely on one leading grand councillor, making him a *de facto* chancellor or prime minister.³

The first such figure was Necin (d. 1749), a political upstart from a prominent Manchu family.⁴ The young Necin was appointed to the Grand Council as a junior member by the Yongzheng emperor a few years before the latter's

3 The most important work on the Grand Council remains that by Beatrice S. Bartlett, *Monarchs and Ministers: The Grand Council in Mid-Ch'ing China, 1723–1820* (Berkeley, 1991). On the leader of the Grand Council, see 173–177.

4 Necin's great grandfather, Eidu, one of the early followers of Nurhaci, was instrumental in the founding of the Qing dynasty. Eidu's youngest son and Necin's grandfather, Ebilun, had been one of the regents to the Kangxi emperor (r. 1662–1722). On the family, see Evelyn S. Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions* (Berkeley, 1998), 63–66, and Lai Hui-min, 'Qingdai de Niuhulu Shi yu Tatala Shi', in Lai Hui-min, *Qingdai de Huangquan yu Shijia* (Beijing, 2010), 177–208.

sudden death. Under the new Qianlong emperor, Necin rose to power quickly. He was given many titles and the highest noble rank, the duke of the first grade. Most importantly, Necin became the leading member of the Grand Council.⁵ In 1748, when the first Jinchuan war on the north-western marches of Sichuan province against a Gyalrong tribe did not go well, Necin was sent to the front to supervise the war as the Grand Minister Commander (*Jinglüe Dachen*), the highest *ad hoc* military position. However, Necin failed to break the impasse. In late 1748, Qianlong called Necin back to the capital. In addition to dismissal, Qianlong ordered that Necin be escorted to the Jinchuan front and commit suicide in front of the armies. For this purpose, Qianlong sent Necin a dagger left by his grandfather, Ebilun.⁶

After Necin was called back, Qianlong appointed Fuheng (1719–1770), the younger brother of Qianlong's first empress and a junior grand councillor at the time, as the new Grand Minister Commander.⁷ To Fuheng's advantage, the belligerent Jinchuan chieftain had begun seeking a truce due to the exhaustion of his resources. In early 1749, Yue Zhongqi, a talented general who was familiar with the local conditions in the rugged Jinchuan area and had personal connections with the rebellious local chieftain, volunteered to go to the chieftain's headquarters and negotiate with him, producing the chieftain's surrender. The satisfactory conclusion of the war paved the way for Fuheng's ascendance as the chief grand councillor. Unlike Necin who had often behaved condescendingly, Fuheng was modest and circumspect. After having held the position for two decades, Fuheng went on to lead another frontier war in the late 1760s against Myanmar. But this time, he failed to accomplish his task. In the inhospitable borderlands between China's Yunnan and north-eastern Myanmar, thousands of Qing troops died of disease, including Aligun, one of the deputy

5 On the concurrent positions of the grand councillors, see Bartlett, *Monarchs and Ministers*, 186–190. She holds that it was an indication of the expansion of the power of the Grand Council.

6 However, the war ended before his arrival. Necin was thus executed *en route*. Zhaolian, *Xiaoting Zalu* (Beijing, 1980), 14. On the first Jinchuan war, see Zhuang Jifa, *Qing Gaozong Shiquan Wugong Yanjiu* (Taipei, 1982), 116–128.

7 Fuheng was from the Fuca clan. His grandfather, Mishan, was the minister of revenue during the Kangxi reign. On the family, see Evelyn Rawsky, *The Last Emperors*, 86–87. R. Kent Guy notes the importance of military affairs in Fuheng's career. Guy, *Qing Governors and Their Provinces: The Evolution of Territorial Administration in China 1644–1796* (Seattle, 2010), 131–132.

commanders and the younger brother of Necin; Fuheng himself also fell ill and died in 1770, shortly after his return to Beijing.⁸

After having experienced a period of crisis in the wake of Fuheng's death, and without a leading aide to lean on, Qianlong began directing his trust to Hešen, a low-ranking courtier at the time. Despite his dominance at the court, Hešen did not become the leading grand councillor until 1797, when the *de jure* number one grand councillor, Agūi (1717–1797) died. The son of a high-ranking court official, Agūi rose to prominence through a different path than that of Necin and Fuheng. Whereas Necin and Fuheng centred their entire careers on the imperial court, Agūi first built his reputation as an outstanding general through many wars on the frontiers and proved his capacity as a territorial administrator as well in the provinces before he was summoned back to the capital in the late 1770s. After he became the leading member of the Grand Council, Agūi was, however, unwilling to challenge Hešen's power, often taking on tasks in the provinces.⁹ Although the true nature of Agūi's relationship with Hešen remains a question, the general impression among officials was that the two were enemies. Therefore, Hešen's opponents rallied around Agūi, even though Agūi had never openly associated himself with any attempt to discredit Hešen.

Not surprisingly, the Jiaqing emperor's purge of Hešen generated a great deal of excitement in the court and throughout officialdom. Many took it as a signal of a shift in court culture, from one dominated by cronies to one open to the input of upright and farsighted officials. But this did not seem to be Jiaqing's intention. For him, the removal of Hešen was simply a prerequisite to asserting and exercising his own authority, as Qianlong's crony Hešen had been disrespectful to Jiaqing, which had long annoyed the young emperor. Like the Kangxi emperor who purged Oboi, his overbearing regent, soon after he took the reins of government in 1669, Jiaqing could not allow Hešen to stay where he had been once Qianlong passed away. Indeed, Jiaqing compared Hešen to Oboi of the Kangxi reign, Nian Gengyao of the Yongzheng reign, and Necin of the Qianlong period. Among the three, Jiaqing thought, however, that Hešen's case was most similar to that of Necin. In his likening of Hešen to Necin, Jiaqing repeatedly asserted that Hešen's gravest 'crime' was that he

8 On the Myanmar war, especially Fuheng's role in the war, see Yingcong Dai, 'A Disguised Defeat: The Myanmar Campaign of the Qing Dynasty', *Modern Asian Studies* 38, no. 1 (2004), 145–188.

9 After having obtained a *juren* degree at the age of twenty-one, Agūi had served in the central government for a decade and became a secretary of the Grand Council. Starting with the first Jinchuan war, Agūi participated in and commanded numerous wars.

had hindered the military operations at the front by delaying forwarding the reports from the front to the throne and was therefore responsible for the slow and unsatisfactory progress of the campaign.¹⁰ He tried to justify his removal of Hešen as sanctioned by the precedent set by his father, by which the chief councillor could suffer capital punishment if he had hindered a military campaign from progressing to victory.

Nevertheless, there was no evidence to prove the accusation. Ironically, months earlier, the Qianlong emperor had lavishly praised Hešen and granted him the dukedom exactly for his able handling of military correspondence.¹¹ Perhaps aware of the weakness of his case, Jiaqing wanted to move quickly. He ordered Hešen to commit suicide by hanging himself but reduced the penalty to Fuchang'an from beheading as proposed by court officials to imprisonment. He did not dismiss or punish Hešen's protégés either in the central bureaucracy or in the provinces.¹² Jiaqing did not, however, condemn Hešen for dominating the Grand Council or usurping the power of the emperor, the man's most odious crime according to many people within and without officialdom. In other words, Jiaqing did not mean to reform the political centre. More specifically, Jiaqing did not intend, at this point, to alter Qianlong's practice of relying on a single chief grand councillor in managing critical state affairs. On the contrary, he tried to fill the void left by Hešen with a new leading grand councillor.

10 *Da Qing Renzong Rui Huangdi Shilu* (reprinted. Tokyo, 1937–1938; hereafter QSLJQ), 38/3a–b (number of *juan*/page number) and *Jiaqing Chao Shangyu Dang* (Guilin, 2008; hereafter JQCSYD), vol. 4, 16. Nian Gengyao had been the Yongzheng emperor's confidant, but he was not in the same position as Oboi and Necin; he was the governor-general of Sichuan when Yongzheng was enthroned. He was purged and ordered to commit suicide in 1726 when Yongzheng found him too overbearing.

11 *Qianlongdi Qijuzhu* (Guilin, 2002), vol. 42, 530–531. Bartlett has also doubted the validity of Jiaqing's accusation since there would have been little advantage for Hešen in withholding the correspondence from the campaign. Bartlett, *Monarchs and Ministers*, 235–236.

12 But Fuchang'an should be escorted to witness Hešen's suicide, as Jiaqing ordered. QSLJQ, 37/50b–51b; 38/2b–5a; JQCSYD, vol. 4, 31–34. Neither did Jiaqing further punish Hešen's family after the man's death and the confiscation of most of his property, although some of Hešen's household managers were punished. One exception for Hešen's family was that Jiaqing repudiated Helin, Hešen's younger brother who died of illness in the Miao campaign in 1796, ordering the stripping of Helin's noble title, the removal of his tablet from the imperial ancestral temple, and the dismantling of his shrine in his home. QSLJQ, 38/5a–6a. On the limited scope of the purge, also see David S. Nivison, 'Ho-shen and His Accusers: Ideology and Political Behavior in the Eighteenth Century', in David S. Nivison and Arthur F. Wright, ed., *Confucianism in Action* (Stanford, 1959), 241.

From Jiaqing's perspective, this new leading grand councillor should have been his own protégé, instead of a senior official from his father's reign, who had played a role as his mentor. Given that Agūi, even posthumously, had enjoyed the reputation of a leading rival of Hešen, Jiaqing was inclined to lean on either Agūi's associates or his relatives once he took power. Of Agūi's offspring, Nayancheng, his grandson, was the most hopeful to inherit Agūi's mantle. Two of Agūi's sons, including Nayancheng's father, Asida, had died, and Agūi's other son, Adisi, was mediocre (yet Adisi was appointed by Jiaqing as vice-minister of war).¹³ Therefore, while Jiaqing reshuffled both the inner court and the central bureaucracy in the wake of Hešen's death, filling key positions with people he trusted—in fact, several people appointed had close relationships with Agūi¹⁴—he started to foster and promote Nayancheng.

Unlike many other youngsters of Manchu noble families in his day who ushered themselves into officialdom by taking advantage of their privileges as the ruling elites or purchasing degrees, Nayancheng earned his degrees by succeeding in the examinations at all levels. In 1789, at the age of twenty-five, he became a *jinshi*, the highest degree from the Civil Service Examinations. Having held a position for several years at the Hanlin Academy, in 1792, he was called to the Qianlong emperor's service at the Imperial Study (Nanshufang), the privy consultative body of the emperor. In the last few years of the Qianlong reign, Nayancheng served as one of Qianlong's diarists, recording the emperor's daily activities and instructions. In 1795, he started to accompany the grand councillors, Agūi, Hešen, and others, in discussions with the emperor on important issues. Shortly after Agūi died in the autumn of 1797, Nayancheng was placed on the Grand Council as a probationary member (*Xingzou*).¹⁵ Working directly

13 JQCSYD, vol. 4, 44.

14 Jiaqing appointed Songyun, a Mongol bannerman, to head the Ministry of Revenue, which had been controlled by Hešen and Fuchang'an for many years. Songyun used to be on the Grand Council, but took the position of *amban* in Tibet in 1794 in order to keep his distance from Hešen. For Songyun's time and achievements in Lhasa, see Sabine Dabringhaus, *Das Qing-Imperium als Vision und Wirklichkeit. Tibet in Laufbahn und Schriften des Song Yun (1752–1835)* (Stuttgart, 1994). For the Ministry of Personnel, Jiaqing named Shulin, another Agūi associate but Hešen's enemy, as the head. Jiaqing also put his two brothers, Yongxing and Yongxuan, on the Grand Council and in charge of various departments in the central government. He called his teacher, Zhu Gui, back to the capital from the south, to become his chief advisor, and reinstated several grand councillors and grand secretariats who had taken leave.

15 The edict of the appointment cited his Hanlin Academy background, his intelligence, and the fact that he was Agūi's grandson. *Jiaqingdi Qijuzhu* (Guilin, 2006; hereafter JQQJZ), vol. 3, 39 and 45. If not otherwise noted, information on Nayancheng's life and

under Hešen, Nayancheng participated in processing the correspondence relating to the White Lotus war.¹⁶ In 1798, he was appointed as vice-minister of works, and deputy supervisor of commercial revenue collection in Beijing (the supervisor was Hešen). Nayancheng's debut in the inner court might have been one of the reasons for Agūi to avoid involving himself in any form of opposition against the powerful Hešen. Furthermore, Hešen might well have played the role of a mentor to the young Nayancheng, for Nayancheng's appointment to the Grand Council would not have been possible had Hešen opposed it.

Hešen's fall did not affect Nayancheng's career adversely. Instead, his career took off. Being Agūi's grandson, and a *jinshi* (Nayancheng was, in fact, the third Manchu or Mongol bannerman on the Grand Council who had the degree),¹⁷ and with his several years' experience in the inner court, Nayancheng was an ideal candidate for the number one place on the Grand Council.¹⁸ In merely seven months, between February and September in 1799, the Jiaqing emperor appointed Nayancheng to numerous positions, in addition to naming him a full member of the Grand Council, which placed the thirty-five-year-old in a status comparable to that of the fallen Hešen. Like Hešen, Nayancheng came to be in charge of several critical functions and agencies of the central government, such as the Hanlin Academy, the Ministry of Revenue, the Ministry of Works, the Ministry of War, the Institute of Historiography, the editorial committee of the imperial 'Veritable Records', the internal revenue collection in the capital city, the palace maintenance office, and the Imperial Household Department. He was also granted the privilege of riding horses inside the Forbidden City, an indication of his lofty status.¹⁹ Like Hešen, Nayancheng was the leader of more

career below is taken from several biographies: Zhao Erxun, *Qingshigao* (Beijing, 1977), 11458–11463; *Qingshi Liezhuan* (Reprinted. Taipei, 1985), vol. 5, 3–18; Arthur W. Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period* (Washington D.C., 1944), 584–587; *Zhuangao*, No. 5686 (housed in the National Palace Museum, Taipei).

16 Along with several other grand councillors, Nayancheng was commended by Qianlong for his effective handling of the war correspondence after a leading rebel chief was captured in the autumn of 1798. *Qianlongdi Qijuzhu*, vol. 42, 530–531.

17 The other two were Yinjishan, who became grand councillor in 1748, and Menglin, who joined it in 1756. Bartlett, *Monarchs and Ministers*, 374.

18 Jiaqing later said of Nayancheng: 'Nayancheng is a grand counselor . . . and he is fair, and conversant with both Manchu and Chinese.', *Qinding Jiaoping Sansheng Xiefei Fanglüe* (Reprinted. Taipei, 1970; hereafter cited as XFFL), 166/11b–12a (number of *juan*/page number).

19 He was first named as the president (*Zhangyuan*) of the Hanlin Academy on 12 February 1799 (JQCSYD, vol. 4, 13). Two weeks later, on 25 February, Nayancheng was appointed as the minister of works (Ibidem, vol. 4, 37). A few days later, he was given another title, the

than one banner.²⁰ Jiaqing had to take away some titles from Nayancheng, simply because he held too many of them concurrently. Compared with Hešen's relatively gradual ascent, Nayancheng's rise was meteoric.

As Jiaqing later admitted, he indeed had great expectations of Nayancheng and promoted him speedily for a purpose:

At the time when I took the reins of government and dealt with Hešen's case last year, Nayancheng was a grand councillor. I saw that he was intelligent in answering questions and discussing issues, seeming to be greatly promising. In addition, he was the grandson of the late Duke and Grand Secretary Agūi. I did expect him to carry on his family's fame, and to undertake important responsibility. Thus I repeatedly granted favour to him, promoting him to the positions of minister and banner commander-in-chief, and letting him take charge of the Ministry of Revenue, the Three Treasuries, and the revenue collection at the Chongwen gate, as well as other duties. It was true that he had been given more titles than others, for I intended to cultivate him to become someone useful. It was not because I was just partial to Nayancheng personally.²¹

Yet, there was one obstacle in the way of Jiaqing's catapulting Nayancheng to the status that Hešen had possessed: Nayancheng's empty slate of merits. For Nayancheng who had not been either a territorial administrator or a military commander, some battleground experience would make up for the gap in his credentials, qualifying him to be the chief grand councillor, and would quell the criticism among officials who were vigilant against the rise of a new crony.

After both Necin and Fuheng had been sent to lead military campaigns, successful or not, it became a tradition for Qianlong to baptise his chief grand

supervisor of the Chongwen Gate customs (*Ibidem*, vol. 4, 40). Then he was ordered to act as the minister of war while the minister was on sick leave (*Ibidem*, vol. 4, 46; QSLJQ, 39/6a). On 14 March, Nayancheng, along with Zhu Gui, was appointed as the deputy director of the Historiography Institute (*Ibidem*, vol. 4, 59). On 29 June, Nayancheng was named to be in charge of the Palace Maintenance Office (*Ibidem*, vol. 4, 182). On 25 August, Nayancheng was appointed as director of the Imperial Household Department, although his position as the president of the Hanlin Academy was taken away (*Ibidem*, vol. 4, 259).

20 In addition to his position as the vice-commander-in-chief of the Mongol Yellow Banner, Nayancheng was appointed as the commander-in-chief of the Chinese Bordered White Banner in 1799. QSLJQ, 39/4a.

21 Edict on JQ 05/05/25 (Jiaqing reign and year/month/date in the Chinese lunar calendar), JQJZ, vol. 5, 368.

councillor on the battlefield. In 1781, when the Salar Muslims revolted in Gansu, Qianlong sent Hešen, a courtier without any military orientation, as a 'Special Imperial Commissioner.' But he failed to score a victory. Not until Agūi, the campaign's commander-in-chief, arrived were the rebels routed and the uprising put down. Although Qianlong was not pleased with Hešen's performance at the front and called him back before long, the speedy suppression of the revolt gave Hešen a passing grade for his internship. He was soon appointed to act as minister of war.²² Apparently, the Qianlong emperor attached great importance to his primary aide's military capability and held it as a crucial qualification for leading the Grand Council. An avid student of the history of the Qing dynasty, Jiaqing had evidently read the 'Veritable Records' of all his predecessors. In many ways, Jiaqing consciously mimicked his father. If he invoked Necin's death when he ordered Hešen to commit suicide, he hoped that Nayancheng would become another Fuheng and bring an end to the ongoing campaign against the White Lotus rebels.

After the purge of Hešen, Jiaqing was, at first, hesitant to drastically revamp the leadership of the suppression campaign against the White Lotus rebels in central China. Nevertheless, when no breakthrough had been made for months, Jiaqing reshuffled the war leadership. He dismissed Lebao, the commander-in-chief, and appointed Eldemboo, a veteran Manchu general, as the new commander-in-chief bearing the title Grand Minister Commander. Meanwhile, he sent several high-ranking officials known for their integrity and outspokenness to the Sichuan theatre to take charge of war finances. For the Shaanxi theatre, Jiaqing was increasingly upset with Mingliang, a senior Manchu general who had been Agūi's deputy in many wars in the later part of the Qianlong period. Chiefly due to his infighting with Yongbao, the governor of Shaanxi, Mingliang deliberately delayed his operations, failing to finish off a rebel band led by Zhang Hanchao, a sectarian leader of Xiangyang. As a result, a few thousand of Zhang's men shuttled back and forth on the north bank of the Han River for more than a year.²³ Jiaqing thought it

22 The Salar Muslim uprising originated from an internal strife between the different Muslim schools. The Qing local authorities sided with the Old School and arrested and executed Ma Mingxin, the leader of the New School, which prompted the New School Muslims to attack Lanzhou, where Ma had been held. On Hešen's participation in the war, see his biography in *Qingshi Liezhuan*, vol. 5, 216–218.

23 Yongbao was the first commander-in-chief of the suppression campaign. He was dismissed and sent back to Beijing for trial at the end of 1796. However, he was reinstated in 1798 when his brother, Lebao, became the commander-in-chief. Because Mingliang was a colleague of their father, Wenfu, during the second Jinchuan war (1770–1776), Mingliang was loath to work under his former colleague's sons.



FIGURE 1 *Map of Qing China, adapted and translated from Barend J. Ter Haar, Het hemels mandaat: de geschiedenis van het Chinese keizerrijk (Amsterdam, 2009), 38f.*

therefore necessary to send a commissioner from the capital to Shaanxi to spur Mingliang to work harder.

Perhaps with all those considerations in mind, on 22 September 1799, Jiaqing appointed Nayancheng as a ‘Special Imperial Commissioner’ to Shaanxi. His primary duty was to supervise Mingliang in eliminating Zhang Hanchao’s band, but he was instructed to join the operations himself.²⁴ Concerned about Nayancheng’s lack of military background—Jiaqing once called him a ‘bookish scholar’,—Jiaqing told Mingliang that he could redeem his ‘crime’ if he successfully assisted Nayancheng and warned him not to take Nayancheng lightly or be jealous of him.²⁵ Before Nayancheng’s departure, Jiaqing granted his widowed mother an honourable title to commend her parenting Nayancheng

24 XFFL, 117/34a–41a, 119/20a–b, 120/20a–b; QSLJQ, 50/31a.

25 XFFL, 120/9a–11a, 140/34b, 154/46b–47a.



FIGURE 2 Map of Nayancheng's travels and major battles.

alone after the death of her husband Asida.²⁶ Jiaqing also placed Adisi, Agū's youngest son and Nayancheng's uncle, in the position of the Chengdu General, so that he would join the suppression campaign as well.²⁷ As Hengrui, the Xi'an General and Nayancheng's father-in-law, had been at the front since the start of the rebellion in 1796, there were now three of Agū's relatives in the leadership of the campaign.

II An Unpromising Debut

Nayancheng set out for Shaanxi province early in October 1799. Along with him was Taibu, a Mongol bannerman and the new governor of Shaanxi to succeed Yongbao, who had been cashiered. On their way to the front, the two tried to discover the reasons for the lacklustre state of the operations in the Shaanxi theatre. Having interviewed local officials, soldiers, military family members, and even servants and valets, they were convinced that the field commanders in Shaanxi had not committed themselves to the fight; indeed some might not have engaged the rebels for months. An upstart, Nayancheng was eager to exercise his authority and requested authority to impose capital punishment, before royal endorsement, on any generals on site, if he could confirm their serious misconduct. He argued that he was not lightheaded and reckless in requesting this authority, but he was determined to root out the entrenched warfront malpractice. However, Jiaqing bluntly rejected the request. Pointing out that one should not take high-ranking officials' lives lightly, he said that even the Grand Minister Commanders had never had this prerogative, let alone a Special Imperial Commissioner, who was lower in authority.²⁸ Despite his unwavering trust in Nayancheng, the emperor was concerned about the new commissioner's pretensions.

When Nayancheng arrived in Shaanxi, Mingliang had just won a battle against Zhang Hanchao, who committed suicide in the wake of his defeat. However, Jiaqing dismissed Mingliang and put him on trial anyway, because Yongbao had accused Mingliang of exaggerating his victories, and, much worse,

26 JQCSYD, vol. 4, pp. 158–159; QSLJQ, 44/22a–b.

27 XFFL, 119/20a–b.

28 Meanwhile, Nayancheng requested more elite bannermen from Manchuria, which was also rejected by Jiaqing, because he had just sent 3,000 bannermen from Shengjing and Jilin, and 1,000 Salar soldiers from Gansu, to Shaanxi. Nayancheng and Taibu's memorial, JQ 04/09/14, in *Qing Zhongqi Wusheng Bailianjiao Qiyi Ziliao* (Nanjing, 1981–1982), vol. 1, 428–430; XFFL, 121/1a–9a; QSLJQ, 52/4a–5a.

fabricating in his reports battles that had not been fought. With Mingliang gone, Jiaqing let Hengrui team up with Nayancheng and coach his son-in-law in his warfront apprenticeship.²⁹ Meanwhile, Nayancheng was poised to battle warfront corruption. Since rewarding troops had been one of the main loopholes for the commanders to misappropriate war funds, Nayancheng and Taibu proposed to take money out their own income for rewarding the troops and militiamen. Again showing his favour to Nayancheng, Jiaqing declined his request on the basis that Nayancheng had to support his widowed mother and family. Instead, he granted Nayancheng 6,000 taels of silver for the purpose. But Jiaqing granted Taibu's request.³⁰ In fact, Nayancheng had numerous salaries and subsidies due to his many concurrent positions; the sacrifice of one or two of them would not have greatly affected his family's livelihood. To Taibu, however, it was a substantial financial loss.

Having reached the frontline in the depths of the Qinling Mountains in southern Shaanxi, Nayancheng and Taibu took over Mingliang's army. Joined by 4,000 bannermen newly deployed from Manchuria, they had a sizeable army consisting of more than 10,000 men. Nayancheng's charge was to first clear out all Zhang's remnants, a few hundred or perhaps one thousand odd rebels, and then fight other insurgent bands in southern Shaanxi. Even though it was already December, the emperor pushed for completing the campaign before Chinese New Year at the end of January, 1800.³¹ Despite his superiority in military force, Nayancheng faced treacherous conditions in the mountains. While he tried to hide his concerns in front of his subordinates, he was candid with the emperor. In his first reports from the frontline—he did not send in his reports until weeks after his arrival, likely trying to figure out a strategy—Nayancheng confessed to the emperor many obstacles in the way. The snow and ice and lack of paths made it difficult for the Qing troops and their cumbersome logistical corps to move fast. The insurgents, however, were more conversant with the conditions in the mountains since they had trekked through them several times. In addition, they were burden free because they supplied

29 Unwilling to be commanded by his former colleague's grandson—Mingliang had been deputy to Agūi in several wars during the Qianlong reign—Mingliang had stepped up his operations in order to wipe out Zhang's band before Nayancheng's arrival. XFFL, 119/19a, 120/5b–9a, 122/1a–4a, 122/6a–13b, 122/19b–20b, 125/1a–7a, 125/17a–21b, 125/23a–b.

30 Nayancheng requested to take in advance five years of his stipend as minister of works (360 taels per year) and his 'silver to nourish virtue' allowance as the Manchu commander-in-chief (600 taels per year); the total amount was 4,800 taels. Taibu requested to take two years of 'silver to nourish virtue' allowance as the governor of Shaanxi. XFFL, 131/10a–12a, 133/14b–15b, 133/16a–b, 133/19a–20a.

31 XFFL, 131/3a–5a.

themselves by looting the refugees in the mountains. Nayancheng complained that it was not possible to surround the enemy and make use of pincer attacks and that the denseness of trees and bushes compromised the effect of firearms and bows. Apparently at a loss, Nayancheng requested more bannermen as his force had become smaller because he left troops to guard the passes.³²

Nayancheng's pessimism upset Jiaqing who was anxious for a triumph. Since sending Nayancheng to the front was virtually his last resort, Jiaqing was despondent: 'If even Nayancheng could not do the work on time, who else should I send? Do those petty bandits deserve an expedition led by myself?'³³ Blaming everything Nayancheng had done or suggested, the emperor explicitly verbalised his growing disappointment. He ended his edict to him with the rare expression, 'tearfully instructing.'³⁴ It was not unusual in Qing history for the monarch to be exacting on his field commanders. Both the Yongzheng and Qianlong emperors had often been so, when both tried to direct a war from their palace, far from the frontline. Back in the late 1740s, when the Qianlong emperor sent Fuheng to the first Jinchuan war, Qianlong was similarly demanding of the junior grand councillor, urging him to end the war immediately by sending him an edict almost every day. With the help of Yue Zhongqi, Fuheng had the luck to settle the war soon after he arrived at the front. Nayancheng, on the contrary, did not have such a person to help him. Mingliang was dismissed. Taibu was a civil official, and also new to the area. Hengrui was not a first-rate general. In his late fifties, Hengrui had become much slower than he used to be by the time Nayancheng came to the war.

But Nayancheng had his youthful courage and burning desire for success. After having encountered the insurgents eight times in ten days since his arrival at the frontline, he had not gained any decisive victory, save killing dozens to scores of rebels each time, as the insurgents immediately ran into the forest once they met the Qing forces. Convinced that the only way to deal with his enemies' guerrilla warfare was to adopt guerrilla warfare techniques himself, Nayancheng de-equipped his troops and sent them into the forest in dispatches. Leading one of the detachments, Nayancheng himself entered the forest as well. At times he had to dismount, and walk on foot where horses could not pass.³⁵ However, the Jiaqing emperor again disapproved, thinking that it was simply reckless for Nayancheng, or any major commander, to go into the primeval forest to pursue the rebels and unwise to position the elite

32 XFFL, 131/6a-10a, 133/12b-14b.

33 XFFL, 131/20a-b.

34 XFFL, 131/17b-20b, 132/30b-32a.

35 XFFL, 133/9b-12b, 135/18a-20b, 136/19b-23a.

Manchu bannermen in a place where their advantages were negated. Jiaqing ordered him to choose able troops to go into the forest and drive the rebels out so that the main Qing forces could finish them up in the open. He also suggested that they could even burn the forest to this end.³⁶

Despite Jiaqing's chagrin and repeated order that Nayancheng pull out of the forest, Nayancheng strenuously resisted the command.³⁷ But Jiaqing was adamant. Furthermore, he was annoyed that Nayancheng did not keep all the theatres in his purview. He could not help but utter that Nayancheng was 'unreliable.' Given that Nayancheng was fighting a small band of rebels with his massive force, Jiaqing ordered Nayancheng to transfer 1,000 Manchurian bannermen to Eldemboo, the commander-in-chief of the campaign who had been in the Sichuan theatre. Nayancheng refused, insisting that those banner-men were indispensable to him and that his own troops were not sufficient.³⁸

III The Mission Fails

At the beginning of 1800 thousands of insurgents from Sichuan penetrated the south-western corner of Shaanxi, from where they invaded Gansu, a province that had been largely free of unrest. Jiaqing immediately ordered Nayancheng to rush to Gansu and tackle the rebels there. At this time, Zhang's remnants numbering in the hundreds had moved out of the Qinling Mountains and run eastward rapidly to Shaanxi's borders with both Henan and Hubei. Although Nayancheng claimed that he had driven out the rebels, Jiaqing did not believe this claim but thought that the rebels had fled because they had run out of supplies. Beyond the Qinling Mountains, Nayancheng again failed to give his enemies a death blow. He instead pressed them in the direction of Henan and Hubei. Alarmed and enraged, Jiaqing reprimanded Nayancheng severely, ordering him to stop those insurgents from going to either Henan or Hubei. Not until Nayancheng managed to force the rebels to turn westward, away from Shaanxi's south-eastern borders, did Jiaqing relax, and again order him to hurry to the Gansu front.³⁹ Nayancheng obeyed this time. Leaving Taibu and several lesser generals in Shaanxi to finish off the last of Zhang's men,

36 XFFL, 133/16b-19a, 135/20b-22b.

37 XFFL, 138/20a-24a, 138/25a-b.

38 XFFL, 138/27a-31b, 142/12a-14b.

39 XFFL, 138/7b-12a, 139/9b-10a, 139/13b-14a, 140/8b, 140/10b-12b, 140/16a-18a, 142/18a-20a.

he and Hengrui set out for Gansu at the beginning of February.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, Eldemboo also headed to Gansu from Sichuan.

Learning of Nayancheng's move to Gansu, Jiaqing must have felt relieved, as he had been under mounting pressure in the capital, where Nayancheng's meteoric rise had triggered heated speculations and suspicion. The emperor's censures of Nayancheng through official communication conduits only encouraged the further questioning and scrutiny of the probable successor to the fallen Hešen. Jiaqing had been hearing many rumours against Nayancheng. As Hešen's subordinates had been attacked in order to discredit Hešen before his fall, some in the court accused Nayancheng's retainers of having pressed the local officials for bribes during Nayancheng's trip to Shaanxi, although it had been a widespread practice for the local officials to send gifts, including money, to travelling high-ranking officials. When Jiaqing sent an edict criticising Nayancheng for failing to discipline his retainers, Nayancheng vehemently defended himself, arguing that he had been extra careful, for he knew the importance of image-building.⁴¹ Alone, one night late in the February, Jiaqing wrote a few lines on Nayancheng's self-defence memorial, confessing to the commissioner his high expectations and the pressure he was under:

What you have done after you were sent to Shaanxi has trapped you in a dead-end; you have not achieved any success after you went into the forest, despite your hard work, trekking in the mountains, and wetting your clothes by wading through rivers. I have been worried about you days and nights. My heart has followed you without a moment of parting you! There have been so many talks [about you], some saying that you are supercilious, the others saying that you are incapable. But I always brush them aside with a smile, because I am waiting for your news of victories. [When they come] all the rumours can be silenced. If you fail to repay such a great favour from me, you do not deserve to be the grandson of the empire's prime minister.

40 Nayancheng and Taibu's memorial, *Gongzhongdang*, No. 19771 (housed in the National Palace Museum, Taipei; hereafter cited as *GZD*); JQ 05/01/06, Nayancheng and Hengrui's memorial, JQ 05/01/12, *GZD*, No. 4738. XFFL, 141/28b–29b, 144/12b–13b, 142/20b–26a, 144/12b–13b.

41 Nayancheng argued that he had notified the local officials along his way not to send him gifts and that he instructed them not to come out to greet him once he entered the mountains to fight the rebels. He also sent back 20 sedan-chair carriers who had served him after he had arrived at the front. After one of his retainers had had a confrontation with soldiers and local residents while purchasing liquor, he submitted him to the legal commissioner of the province for punishment. QSLJQ, 58/28b–29a.

At the end, Jiaqing added: 'I wrote the above under the lamp in secret, and nobody is beside me. You should place this memorial [with Jiaqing's handwritten comments] in a safe place, and return it to me in person when you come back to Beijing.'⁴² The confidential communication between the emperor and Nayancheng was reminiscent of the story that the Yongzheng emperor had maintained intimate and frequent correspondence with Ortai, one of his most trusted officials as well as his consultant, in the 1720s when Ortai was the governor-general in the far southwest. In that case, the emperor had discussed many state issues with Ortai through the long-distance correspondence along with the exchange of personal feelings.⁴³ But Jiaqing was uncertain and even nervous about his relationship with the would-be first aide. Although Jiaqing made clear his intention of placing Nayancheng in Hešen's position in his message, he could not help but show that it would be difficult should Nayancheng fail to prove himself in this mission. The emperor's growing vexation would, in turn, put more pressure on the commissioner to achieve significant victories.

After he arrived in the north-western border region of Gansu via Shaanxi's Baoji, Nayancheng finally produced two victories late in February. In fact, Nayancheng was lucky in both battles. In the first battle in Qin'an, the Qing forces easily crushed their enemies because the latter had been burdened by carrying with them thousands of coerced civilians as well as large numbers of draft animals and livestock. Nayancheng claimed that his troops killed and captured more than 3,000, with only a couple of his troops slightly injured. In the second battle near the seat of Fuqiang county, Delengtai, a Mongol bannerman and another leading general in the suppression campaign, happened to arrive and give a hand to Nayancheng. Whatever Nayancheng's personal contribution to the victories may have been, the pleased Jiaqing praised Nayancheng loudly and rewarded his troops with a one-month stipend, which was the first time that the emperor had granted any reward to Nayancheng's forces since his arrival at the frontline in late 1799.⁴⁴

42 QSLJQ, 58/29b–30a. Those few sentences were in addition to a more formal rescript, which might have been drafted by the grand councillors. This private note was included in the Jiaqing emperor's 'Veritable Records', most likely by mistake because the confidential correspondence should not have been included.

43 On the intimate relationship between the Yongzheng emperor and Ortai, see Guy, *Qing Governors and Their Provinces*, 334–348; Lai Hui-min, 'Lun Qianlongchao Chuqi zhi Mandang yu Handang', in *Qingdai de Huangquan yu Shijia*, 157–161, and Yingcong Dai, *The Sichuan Frontier and Tibet: Imperial Strategy in the Early Qing* (Seattle, 2009), the fourth chapter, 'Realignment in the Yongzheng Period, 1723–1735', 91–116.

44 Like all other Qing commanders, Nayancheng also executed most of the captured. Yet he had a novel way of doing it; he sent several dozen captives to the villages which had been

But Eldemboo's arrival in Gansu shortly after complicated Nayancheng's agenda. Although Eldemboo was the commander-in-chief of the entire campaign, bearing the paramount military *ad hoc* title, the Grand Minister Commander, he was from a humble Manchu family and illiterate in Chinese, a contrast with Nayancheng's noble pedigree and *jinshi* degree. In fact, Jiaqing had been concerned about this discrepancy. Thus he had repeatedly instructed Nayancheng to cooperate with Eldemboo and not be arrogant or unwilling to obey him.⁴⁵ Yet Nayancheng could not hide his haughtiness. He demanded from the throne another *ad hoc* title, *Canzan Dachen*, or 'Grand Minister Consultant', which would make him a deputy to the Grand Minister Commander. Jiaqing agreed, but without enthusiasm. After Nayancheng and Eldemboo joined forces on 4 March, Jiaqing let Nayancheng lead all the troops in Gansu, including Eldemboo's because the latter was ill. However, Jiaqing did not back Nayancheng's bid for the top place in the campaign leadership.⁴⁶ After their meeting in Gansu, the two cooperated in a couple of battles, but Eldemboo did not hand the reins of his troops over to Nayancheng. Although Nayancheng deliberately sent a memorial to reassure the emperor of his good relationship with Eldemboo, the two separated soon, going different directions in Gansu.⁴⁷

looted and burned by the rebels, and let villagers kill them in whatever ways they chose. Nayancheng's memorial, JQ 05/01/27, GZD, No. 4859; Nayancheng, Delengtai and Hengrui, JQ 05/02/05, GZD, No. 4972; XFFL, 147/35a-40a; 151/1a-7b.

- 45 When Nayancheng stated in a memorial that he and Eldemboo had been good friends since he was small, and it was unlikely that he would get into conflict with him, Jiaqing replied: 'Friendship from the time of being poor and humble might not last when people become wealthy and noble.' Nayancheng's memorial, JQ 05/01/06, GZD, No. 19773; XFFL, 138/7b-12a, 139/13b-14a, 140/8b, 142/28b.
- 46 Ignoring Nayancheng's overtures, Jiaqing let Eldemboo keep his seal of Grand Minister Commander but did not give Nayancheng a new seal of Grand Minister Consultant. Instead, Jiaqing wanted him to continue using his seal of Special Imperial Commissioner. Eldemboo and Nayancheng's memorial, JQ 05/02/11, GZD, No. 5023; XFFL, 147/38b-39a, 147/48b-49b, 152/1a-2b, 152/7a-9a.
- 47 In his memorial, Nayancheng said: 'Eldemboo has long been experienced in military and wars, and is fair and loyal. He and I have been good friends. I have consulted him on all the military matters and listened to his careful directions. This is my first time to be in a war. I have benefited greatly from learning from him.' JQ 05/03/03, GZD, No. 5267. It is unusual for Nayancheng to send a memorial just for claiming his good terms with Eldemboo, which in fact indicates some discord between them. Only one week later, the two separated. For their brief cooperation and abrupt separation, see Eldemboo and Nayancheng's memorial, JQ 05/03/03, GZD, No. 5266; Eldemboo and Nayancheng's memorial, JQ 05/03/09, GZD, No. 5315; XFFL, 157/1a-6a.

The departure of the crack Qing forces for Gansu left the Shaanxi theatre vulnerable; more rebel bands arrived from Sichuan, precipitating Shaanxi into crisis. Jiaqing sent first Hengrui and then Eldemboo back to Shaanxi, and charged Nayancheng with finishing off the remaining rebels in Gansu.⁴⁸ With Hengrui leaving for Shaanxi, Nayancheng paired with Qingcheng, a Chinese bannerman and a seasoned general.⁴⁹ Early in April, they caught the disarrayed rebels in Wen county bordering Sichuan's Longan prefecture and routed them while the rebels were attacking a make-shift castle that sheltered over 10,000 local residents. However, the core of the rebel band in the hundreds escaped into the forests on the borders between Gansu and Sichuan. As the focus of the campaign had shifted to Shaanxi, Nayancheng was eager for opportunities to distinguish himself there. So he requested to go back to Shaanxi and to let the troops in Sichuan mop the remaining rebels up. Jiaqing agreed. Yet he was 'very unhappy' about Nayancheng's leaving the band alive, so much so that he did not give any rewards for their victory.⁵⁰

Indeed, Nayancheng's premature departure from Gansu upended his two-month campaign there. The remnants of the rebel force, including several key leaders of the White Lotus Rebellion, soon crossed the border to Sichuan's Longan and Songpan prefectures, and swelled their ranks with new recruits.⁵¹ As Chengdu, the provincial capital, was threatened by the rebels, the deeply concerned Jiaqing harshly criticised Nayancheng and Eldemboo in one after another edict. To Nayancheng, he was relentless: he ordered the reduction or elimination of Nayancheng's records of merit earned in the victories in Gansu.⁵² The resurrection of this rebel band in northern Sichuan was the last straw that crushed Jiaqing's lingering confidence in him. However, another exigency

48 XFFL, 154/46a–48a, 155/1a–7b, 156/40a–41b, 158/1a–2b, 158/14a–20b, 160/12b–17a, 160/20a–23b, 162/8b–10b. Eldemboo instantly headed back to Shaanxi upon receiving the edict in early April. XFFL, 161/11a–14b.

49 Qingcheng's last name was Sun, and he was the great grandson of Sun Sike, a renowned Chinese general during the Kangxi period. Being Mingliang's deputy in the lacklustre operations against Zhang Hanchao before Nayancheng's coming, Qingcheng was dismissed and exiled to Xinjiang. When he passed Gansu, the rebels came, so that he was reinstated and ordered to join the operations in Gansu.

50 Again, many of the more than 1,000 who had reportedly been killed or captured were women and children. Jiaqing did not punish Nayancheng for his not chasing the rebels to Sichuan, citing the hardship he had endured, and the fact that he had at least killed many rebels and rescued the civilians in the castle. XFFL, 163/1a–9a, 163/29b–30a, 167/13b–15a.

51 Songpan used to be part of Tibet's Kham area. There were also Tibetans and other non-Chinese ethnic peoples in Longan. XFFL, 165/1a–7a, 166/40a–41a.

52 XFFL, 165/13b–16b, 165/30a–33b, 166/5b–12b, 167/11a–b, 167/13b–15a.

prolonged Nayancheng's mission for one more month. After Nayancheng returned to Shaanxi at the beginning of May, the rebels in south-eastern Shaanxi were poised to cross the borders to Henan, which temporarily diverted the emperor's anger with Nayancheng. Both Nayancheng and Eldemboo were hurried to the border. Once again, Nayancheng failed to score any decisive victory but was keen in competing with Eldemboo.⁵³ Finally, it was Eldemboo who forced all the rebels away from Shaanxi's borders with Henan late in May. The crisis was solved.⁵⁴

IV The End of a Tradition

As soon as he knew that Henan was secured, Jiaqing called off Nayancheng's mission on 7 June 1800, ordering him to hand over all his troops to Eldemboo and return to the capital. As for the reason, Jiaqing only briefly stated that Nayancheng 'has not expeditiously completed the operations.'⁵⁵ However, when the news arrived on the following day that Shi Jin, a meritorious senior Chinese general, along with several other officers, had been killed in a battle in Sichuan's Longan by the rebels who had escaped from Gansu, Jiaqing lost his composure. Attributing Shi Jin's death to Nayancheng's early withdrawal, he harshly repudiated Nayancheng, reiterating all the mistakes he had committed in his mission. More particularly, he blamed Nayancheng for trying to compete with Eldemboo by returning from Gansu prematurely. Therefore he deprived Nayancheng of most of his titles, including his positions on the Grand Council,

53 In mid-May, Nayancheng had fought an all-day battle with a group of 20,000 rebels, killing hundreds, but Jiaqing was not pleased, as Nayancheng once again allowed the band to escape without eliminating it. Jiaqing did not grant him and his troops any reward. XFFL, 170/18a–22b, 170/25a–26b. Because the emperor had tried to give 1,000 or 2,000 of Nayancheng's troops to Eldemboo, who had had a smaller force, Nayancheng pushed Eldemboo to join him to request reinforcements. Having not granted any when the two had asked for reinforcements when they were in Shaanxi, this time Jiaqing reluctantly agreed to send 6,000 reinforcements to Shaanxi. XFFL, 157/6a–8b, 157/18a–20b, 159/13a–14b, 161/14b–19a, 167/24a–33a. Jiaqing was irate at both Eldemboo and Nayancheng, criticizing both severely, and stripping them of their feather trappings, the emblem of their status. XFFL, 168/16b–24b, 168/30b–32b.

54 At this time Jiaqing gave back the feather trappings to Eldemboo and Nayancheng. XFFL, 171/1a–6a, 172/1a–9b.

55 It was included in a long edict criticising both Nayancheng and Eldemboo for their having no overall and workable plan when he received a joint memorial from them. XFFL, 173/22b–33b.

at the Imperial Study, and in the Imperial Household Department, and the privilege of riding horses inside the Forbidden City. Yet, Jiaqing maintained Nayancheng in three positions: minister of war, vice-commander-in-chief of the Chinese Bordered White Banner, and the lectureship at the Classics Colloquium. He explained that he would have felt sorry if none of Agūi's offspring had been in the high rank, given that he had just cashiered Adisi, Nayancheng's uncle, and exiled him to Xinjiang, due to his incompetent performance in the Sichuan theatre.⁵⁶

Completely demoralised, Nayancheng did not request to stay at the front, as the emperor had expected. He immediately packed and went home. In the middle of July, ten months after he was sent to the war, Nayancheng returned to Beijing. For several days Jiaqing met privately with him, in a faint attempt to salvage him from total downfall if Nayancheng put on a convincing self-defence. However, overwhelmed by his own calamity, Nayancheng did not offer any useful analysis of the warfront situation and his strategy to wrap up the lingering campaign. Instead, he was negative, uninterested, and, at times, disoriented. He told the emperor that the rebels were like locusts that were too numerous. He also said that the rebellion was due to a predestined doom; if fate had not yet run its course, even the most brilliant generals could not do much. When Jiaqing told him of a critical victory Eldemboo had achieved immediately after he had left, he shrugged it off in a gesture of disbelief. Displeased by these responses, Jiaqing made up his mind to sacrifice Nayancheng.⁵⁷ On 17 July 1800, Jiaqing stripped Nayancheng of his last three positions. Again, the fact that he was Agūi's grandson saved him from being exiled to Xinjiang. Reduced to being merely a member of the Hanlin Academy who would partake in editing the emperor's 'Veritable Records', Nayancheng returned to where he started his career a decade earlier.⁵⁸

A number of factors contributed to Nayancheng's failure at the warfront. He was inexperienced in war, let alone operating in extremely inhospitable terrain. He was opinionated and intractable, which had alienated him from his colleagues and, more importantly, the emperor. Moreover, Nayancheng's rivalry with Eldemboo, driven by his eagerness for achievements and, perhaps, his contempt for the latter, only made his isolation worse. In the edict to ostracise Nayancheng, Jiaqing said: 'Outwardly, Nayancheng seems to be bright, but

56 Jiaqing also allowed Nayancheng to keep the feather trappings that had been just returned to him. XFLL, 174/6a–13a, 174/19b–23b, 174/32a–34b. For Adisi's dismissal and punishment, see JQQJZ, vol. 5, 183–184, and 289–290.

57 JQQJZ, vol. 5, 368–373; QSLJQ, 68/11b–24b.

58 JQQJZ, vol. 5, 374–375.

he has no strength of mind. Not being sharp in his views, he is indecisive when it comes to critical matters. He is conceited, and unable to listen to others.⁵⁹ Although it might not be a true reflection of his inner feelings for Nayancheng, this comment catches well Jiaqing's frustration.⁶⁰

His haughty personality aside, Nayancheng faced a difficult situation at the front. Having capitalised on the campaign for personal gains for years, many commanders and local officials in the war zones were resistant to reform and hostile to the reform-minded leaders sent by Jiaqing. By the beginning of 1800, the warfront reform had hit a dead-end. Conservative and diffident in nature, the Jiaqing emperor had been neither willing, nor able, to risk upsetting the *status quo*. In fact, his calling off Nayancheng's mission was part of a full-scale retreat from his bold but ephemeral reform. Besides Nayancheng, Jiaqing also dismissed or transferred from the front several other reformers. By the time of Nayancheng's dismissal, all new leaders sent to the war in the wake of Hešen's purge had left (one of them was given the death penalty due to military debacles in the Sichuan theatre).⁶¹ During the remaining years of the suppression campaign, which did not end until the middle of 1805, Jiaqing sent no other commissioner from the court to the warfront; he basically bowed to the delaying tactics of the old guard, as well as their squandering and siphoning off of war funds.

Nayancheng's downfall can be charged to the changed political climate in the post-Hešen era. Riding the momentum of denouncing Hešen's domination of the court, which often bordered on implicating Qianlong's connivance at it, the officials and courtiers had openly questioned and opposed Jiaqing's intention of making Nayancheng another royal crony. In order to quell criticism, Jiaqing had to sacrifice Nayancheng. Had the opposition not been so strong, Jiaqing could have anointed Nayancheng into the position left by Hešen no matter what he had or had not accomplished at the front, given that Hešen's pathetic performance in the Muslim campaign had not impeded his further ascent. Early in 1802, Jiaqing was still on the defensive, claiming in an edict

59 JQJZ, vol. 5, 374.

60 Jiaqing might have still thought highly of Nayancheng. After Nayancheng was reinstated, Jiaqing wrote to him in 1804, saying of him: 'You are truly one of the officials who are the pillars of the country, having both ability and virtue.' But he also warned him not to be too arrogant but to listen to others' opinions. Zhao Erxun, *Qingshigao*, 11460.

61 The official who received the death penalty was Kuilun, the governor-general of Sichuan. Lebao, the dismissed commander-in-chief and the mastermind of delaying tactics, was reinstated to succeed Kuilun. I detail the warfront reform and its failure in the fourth and fifth chapters of my book manuscript, 'The White Lotus War.'

that both the Qianlong emperor and he had never given too much power to any grand councillor, but had tightly held the power in their own hands.⁶² As Beatrice S. Bartlett has pointed out, this statement discloses the pressure from the bureaucracy on Jiaqing to reduce the dominance of grand councillors in the central government.⁶³ It was also aimed at, in this author's opinion, mending his fences and obliterating his failed attempt at catapulting Nayancheng to the summit, which had aroused potent dissension from officials.

In the spring of 1801, Nayancheng was humiliated one more time when Jiaqing sent to him a memorial by Eldemboo reporting his elimination of the rebel band that Nayancheng had allowed to escape to Sichuan. Nayancheng kowtowed and reflected, again, on his own incompetency and failure. This act, however, turned out to be the last chapter of the disgrace. As the Qing political norm went, dismissed officials could sometimes return to office.⁶⁴ Nayancheng was soon reinstated. After a successful mission to the south to investigate two cases involving provincial officials, he was named the head of the Ministry of Rites in 1803.⁶⁵ During the rest of the Jiaqing period and the following Daoguang period (1821–1850), he served mainly as a territorial administrator in provinces and frontiers but also as a ranking official in the central government on occasion. More than once he distinguished himself through significant achievements. In 1813, again in the capacity of the 'Special Imperial Commissioner', he commanded the suppression campaign against the Eight Trigrams Uprising in north China.⁶⁶ In the early 1820s he settled violent conflicts between the Mongols and Tibetans in Qinghai. Nevertheless, he was never able to climb back to the same height he had reached in 1799 and never had the chance to serve on the Grand Council.⁶⁷ Moreover, he suffered more

62 JQ 07/02/24, JQCSYD, vol. 7, 46–47.

63 Bartlett thinks that the opposition was mainly against the Grand Council's right of edict-drafting. Bartlett, *Monarchs and Ministers*, 239–240. But Jiaqing certainly meant to defend his father and himself in a broader sense.

64 JQCSYD, vol. 6, p. 130. Two days later, Jiaqing pardoned him, granting him the title of Vice Commander-in-Chief (*Dutong*). Ibidem, vol. 6, 132–133. For the practice of reinstating dismissed officials during the Qing, see Guy, *Qing Governors and Their Provinces*, 160–163.

65 One case involved a provincial official in Jiangxi. The other involved the governor-general of Guangdong and Guangxi for his mishandling of a Triad uprising in Guangdong. In Guangdong he acted as the governor before Jiaqing summoned him back to Beijing.

66 On the Eight Trigrams Uprising in 1813, see Susan Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion in China: The Eight Trigrams Uprising of 1813* (New Haven, 1976). For Nayancheng's role in the suppression campaign, see 245–264.

67 He was again named to be a probationary member of the Grand Council in mid-1804 (JQCSYD, vol. 9, p. 213), but his subsequent appointment to Shaanxi made him unavailable to serve. Likely, Jiaqing was again pressured to give it up.

censure and downfalls. In 1806, he was cashiered and exiled to Ili for his mishandling of pirates in Guangdong. In 1816, accused of financial fraud, he was imprisoned and given the death penalty (which was later commuted). A few years before his death, he was again deprived of all his titles and ranks when he was blamed for his alleged mismanagement in Xinjiang following a frontier crisis there. In 1833 he died at home as a commoner.

It was virtually impossible for Jiaqing to foster another leading grand councillor after he failed with Nayancheng. Reluctantly, he had to seek an alternative way to manage the Grand Council. During the rest of his reign, he did not lean on a single grand councillor, but made the Grand Council more oligarchic, letting its four to half a dozen members share the responsibility. In the selection of the grand councillors, military quality and merits were deemphasised, while the *jinshi* degree was given more weight, which favoured Chinese scholar-officials at the cost of the battlefield-baptised bannermen. In 1805, relatives of high-ranking officials, including grand councillors, lost their easy access to positions as the council's clerks. Instead, experience and capacity became criteria for serving on the council.⁶⁸ With the rise of factional politics in the nineteenth century, it became increasingly difficult for the emperor to follow the precedents of Necin, Fuheng, and Hešen, patronising and delegating his authority to one leading grand councillor.⁶⁹ Meanwhile, the banner aristocrats were losing their advantages in the competition with their non-aristocratic counterparts for the top rungs of the political hierarchy. To a great extent, Nayancheng's downfall in 1800 marks the end of a political tradition of the high Qing period, ushering in an era when the monarch's relationship with his privy aides was considerably different.

68 But the ban on the relatives of the high-ranking officials serving as clerks on the Grand Council was dropped later during the Daoguang period. For an in-depth discussion of the changes to the Grand Council during the Jiaqing period, see Bartlett, *Monarchs and Ministers*, 239–247.

69 The only grand councillor in the first half of the nineteenth century who enjoyed considerable influence was Mujangga (d. 1856) during the Daoguang period. Yet there were significant differences between him and his eighteenth-century counterparts. With a *jinshi* degree, Mujangga had been a civil official without any military background. His ascent to become the leading grand councillor was gradual after having served on various agencies in the central government. Most importantly, his power and influence had been seriously checked by the factional struggles of his time. On the factional struggles in the Daoguang period, see James M. Polachek, *The Inner Opium War* (Cambridge, MA, 1992), especially 205–287.

Routine Promotions: Li Hu and the Dusty Byways of Empire

R. Kent Guy

In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson writes of the imperial functionary's experience of geography:

He sees before him a summit rather than a centre. He travels up its corniches in a series of looping arcs which, he hopes, will become smaller and tighter as he nears the top. Sent out to township A at rank V, he may return to the capital at rank W; proceed to province B at rank X; continue to vice-royalty C at rank Y; and end his pilgrimage in the capital at rank Z. On this journey there is no assured resting-place; every pause is provisional. The last thing the functionary wants is to return home, for he has no home with any intrinsic value. And this: on his upward-spiralling road he encounters as eager fellow-pilgrims his functionary colleagues, from places and families he has scarcely heard of and surely hopes never to have to see. But in experiencing them as travelling-companions, a consciousness of connectedness ('Why are we . . . here . . . together?') emerges, above all when all share a single language-of-state.¹

Anderson means here to contrast the experience of the imperial functionary with, on the one hand, the feudal official, who makes one trip to the capital to be invested in office and then returns to his native place; and, on the other hand, with the popular representative, who makes repeated trips to the capital serving the interests of those he represents. Elements of Anderson's picture are of course inappropriate to Chinese officials of the late-imperial era. No Chinese official would ever have publicly admitted that he had no home of any intrinsic value, and not every Chinese official's career ended in the capital. But Anderson's arresting description is nonetheless valuable for the historian of China in so far as it turns our attention to the lessons Chinese officials learned as they journeyed down the dusty byways of empire.

For Anderson's purposes, the looping arcs and corniches are random, but from the point of view of officials making the journeys, they seldom were. Most empires, including late-imperial China, had ladders and hierarchies,

¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London, 1983), 55.

particularly in territorial governance, which functionaries climbed as their careers advanced. These hierarchies were spelled out in broad terms in official documents, like the *Collected Statutes of the Qing* (*Da qing hui dian*). But these regulations served more to express parameters than determine careers; the interesting issue is how choices were made within these parameters and what these choices tell us about the goals of the empire. The purpose of this article is to show that the biographies of officials prepared by the State Historiographical Commission, read carefully, provide a telling view of the logic of official careers in China.² There are of course limits to this approach. The interpersonal interactions, gift giving, and social networks so highlighted in existing accounts of literati life, do not appear in the State Historiographical Commission biographies. However, focus on these elements tends to obscure the encompassing structure, legal, official and economic, which actually constrained bureaucratic life.

The career of Li Hu (1715–1785) is particularly useful for this reading. His career was not entirely typical nor unique, but significant in its length. It is possible to trace his ascent from the first magistracy he was assigned in 1748 at the age of 33, until he died in his last posting as governor of Guangdong Province in 1785. This account will focus on the first twenty-three years of his career, when he rose from the rank of magistrate to provincial governor, broadly exploring the issue of how an eighteenth-century empire chose its agents. It will argue that the eighteenth-century Qing state favoured officials with general rather than specialised knowledge, despite the existence of regional contexts requiring quite specialised functions. It tolerated associations among officials, particularly when they organised themselves around common tasks rather

2 These biographies were prepared after an official died, according to the following procedure. First an agency of the Qing government memorialised the throne requesting that an official biography be prepared. If the request was approved, the State Historiographical Commission communicated with relevant agencies of the Qing government to assemble career details and the most important state papers of the individual. A draft biography was then written which was reviewed and very carefully edited. These biographies today exist in two collections. In the mid-nineteenth century, Li Huan a junior official in Beijing, methodically copied out the state biographies of the most important officials, and published them in his *Guochao qixian leizheng* (*Xiangyin 1884–190*, hereafter *GCJXLZ*). In this collection, State Historiography Commission biographies are labeled as ‘Guo shi guan ben zhuan’, ‘Original biographies from the State Historiographical Commission’. Some state biographies were also printed in *Qing shi lie zhuan* in the twentieth century. Since the State Historiographical Commission was established only in the 1730s, most of its subjects were eighteenth- or nineteenth-century officials. For a discussion of these biographies and how they were produced, see Feng Er kang, *Qingdai renwu chuanji shiliao yanjiu* (Beijing, 2004).

than common interests. Finally it will show how the central government used the circulation of officials to solve specific regional problems.

I Li Hu and the Road to Fat City

Tales of high officials who began their careers studying for the examinations by the light of a sputtering candle were as common in late-imperial Chinese literature as such individuals were rare in practice. Indeed the task of rising through the ranks of examination students to join the 'stars in the heavens' must have seemed a daunting one, particularly for someone like Li Hu, who began with few connections in the official world. Even for those who passed the examinations, mobility was not assured. John Watt has suggested that those whose first appointment was as magistrate inhabited a bounded career stratum with limited opportunities for promotion.³ The case of Li Hu demonstrates, however, that an ascent to and through the ranks of magistrates could be accomplished. The personnel sections of the Qing code, particularly the post-designation system, outlined the terms under which such an ascent could be made. The post-designation system assigned degrees of difficulty and importance to all the posts in the empire based on the functions its occupants usually performed and accorded provincial officials a larger role in filling posts of greater importance.⁴ Establishing the tasks commonly associated with a post and how they were assessed is crucial to reading the record of transfers that often marked the beginning of an official career.

Li Hu's family were urbanites who resided within the walls of Nanchang, the capital city of Jiangxi province, probably working either in the official establishment or in the pottery industry that dominated the city's economy in the eighteenth century. Li Hu was the first member of his family to hold a civil degree, although one Li from Nanchang received his military *jinshi* in 1720, and served as a second captain in a battalion stationed at Zhangzhou in southern Fujian. Li Hu received the coveted highest *jinshi* degree in 1739, the fourth year of the Qianlong reign, ranking 172nd in a class of 328.⁵

3 John Watt, *The District Magistrate in Late Imperial China* (New York, 1972), 76.

4 On the history of the post-designation system, see R. Kent Guy, *Qing Governors and their Provinces: The Evolution of Territorial Administration in China 1644–1796* (Seattle, 2010), 97–108.

5 Wei Yuanguang, comp., *Nanchang xian zhih* (Nanchang, 1918, rep. Chengwen, Taipei, 1969), I, 451. The gazetteer does not identify Li Yuan as a relative of Li Hu's, although two out of the eight Lis from Nanchang city who received degrees in the eighteenth and nineteenth

While the early Qianlong years were a good time for examination takers, they were not a good time for job seekers. Special examinations marking the ascension of the new emperor to the throne, together with the relatively large graduating classes in the regular exams of 1736 and 1739, meant that there were nearly 700 new *jinshi* produced between 1735 and 1740.⁶ In this large cohort Li's ranking meant that he needed to wait in line for appointment. Connections could have helped—seven graduates with ranks below Li's in the 1739 examination received appointments in the Hanlin Academy in 1740. But Li was left to seek office through routine procedures for the appointment of new *jinshi* to local office. These provided that the names of five new *jinshi* in even-numbered months, and four new *jinshi* in odd-numbered months, be placed in a pool of twenty-three names from which were selected by lot the men who would fill any vacant magistracies. There was some bias in the early eighteenth century for older magistrates so the fact that Li Hu was only twenty-four at the time he received his degree probably worked against him. Whatever the factors involved, Li had to wait nine years for his first posting as magistrate of Wucheng county in Shandong in 1748 (fig. 1).⁷

Li Hu probably found his first posting to have been worth the wait. Although Wucheng was counted a magistracy of only middling importance in the Qing personnel system, the advantages of its location compensated for its modest formal status.⁸ Wucheng was situated in north-west Shandong, squarely within the north China economic core. The Grand Canal, which flowed through the centre of the county, brought a regular stream of commerce and official visitors past the county magistrate's office. By the 1750s, as Susan Mann has argued, western Shandong had experienced nearly two hundred years of economic growth, interrupted briefly by the dynastic transition. As a result, by 1750 the Grand Canal trade centres of western Shandong had 'ceased to be primarily exporters of raw material, dependent on southern grain imports and manufactured items', becoming instead 'nodes of a highly differentiated, locally specialised trading system characterised by a mix of agricultural products and

centuries are identified as relatives of Li Hu. On the pottery industry in Nanchang see *Nagel's Encyclopedia Guide to China*, Anne L. Destenay trans. (Geneva, 1978), 1110.

6 William Hung, Comp., *Chün Shih T'i Ming Pei Lu of the Ch'ing Dynasty* (Harvard Sinological Index Series, Supplement #10 Beijing, 1940, rep. Taipei, 1965), 79–86. On the routine procedures for the appointment of new *jinshi* to magistracies, see Watt, *The District Magistrate*, 45–47. Li's age of twenty-four placed him distinctly at the young end of the *jinshi* class.

7 '(Li Hu) Guo shi huan ben zhuan', in *GCJXLZ*, 179.24a.

8 This information is drawn from *Que zhi quan lan* (1904, rpt. Wemhai, Taipei, 1967), I, 346. This was a privately published list providing critical information for each posting in the empire, This guide would have constituted an official's introduction to his new posting.

handicraft industry.' Wucheng in particular had developed a merchant community that was prosperous enough and sufficiently well organised to have undertaken to pay the commercial tax quota of the county, so that goods could be traded tax-free in the county seat.⁹

Wucheng also offered advantages to a young magistrate without political connections. The county was in the commercial hinterland of the provincial capital of Jinan and well within the political horizons of Shandong provincial governors, who were in the eighteenth century a rather powerful and well-connected lot. The nine officials who governed Shandong during Li Hu's thirteen years of service as magistrate in the province included one Chinese and six Manchu bannermen, most of whom had long records of service at court or in the Manchu military establishment. Only two regular Chinese civil officials served as governor of the province; together they served only seventeen months. Wucheng also bordered on Zhili, which was governed by another powerful group of officials, well known and trusted by the court. Li Hu served at least the standard

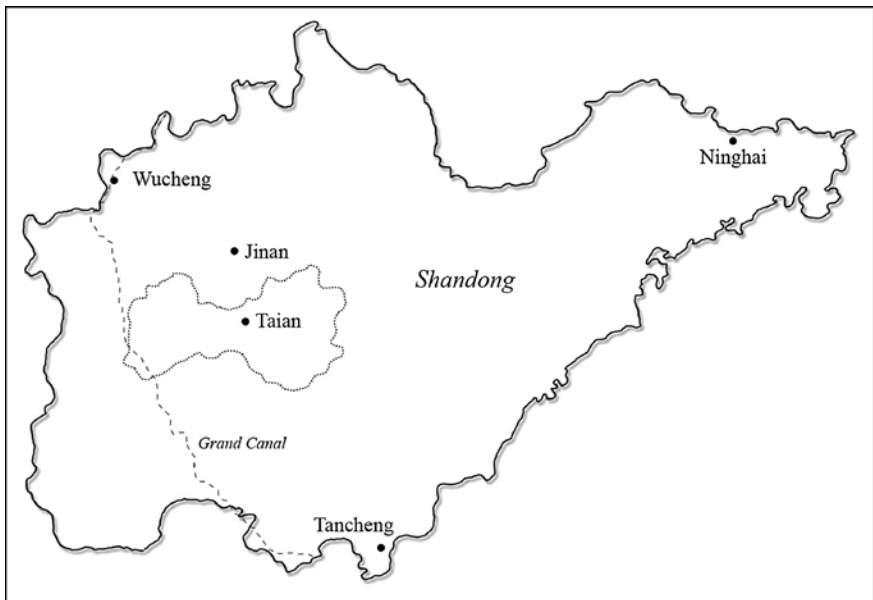


FIGURE 1 *Map of Li Hu's posts in Shandong. Adapted from: Tan Qixiang, Zhongguo lishi dituji [The Historical Atlas of China], Vol. 8 (Beijing, 1982), 22–23.*

9 Susan Mann, *Local Merchants and the Chinese Bureaucracy, 1750–1950* (Stanford, 1987), 53. See also G. William Skinner, 'The Structure of Chinese History', *Journal of Asian Studies* 44, no. 2 (1985), 271–74. For Wucheng's official status, see *Que Zhih Quan Lan*, I, 446.

three-year term in Wucheng and is credited with having successfully organised a subscription campaign to renovate a local temple.¹⁰

Li Hu's second posting took him to a very different quarter of Shandong province. Tancheng, in the south of the province, was a poor county well outside the economic mainstream, susceptible to floods and famines and near enough to the provincial border to serve as refuge to bandits and fugitives. A magistrate who had served there seventy years before Li Hu had written that many of its people 'held their lives to be of no value for the area was so wasted and barren, the common people so poor and had suffered so much that they essentially knew none of the joys of being alive.'¹¹ Tancheng was not only a less desirable place to live than Wucheng, it was in financial terms a less important one. While Wucheng had a tax quota of 23,800 ounces of silver, Tancheng was only required to remit 18,500 ounces of silver. Moreover, there was a difference in the *yang-lian*, or 'nourishment of virtue' stipend associated with each position; the magistrate of Wucheng received 1400 ounces of silver per year, while the magistrate of Tancheng received 1200 ounces.¹² As Madeleine Zelin has pointed out, *yang-lian* should not be conceived of as salary in the western sense; it was meant to cover a wide range of public expenses, including pay for the magistrates' clerks, assistants and runners, other office expenses and even official entertainment. Differences in *yang-lian*, therefore, reflected not so much the different values of a post to the occupant, as western salaries might, as differences in the assessment of a post's needs and expenses.¹³

It is hard to imagine how Li Hu could have welcomed his transfer to this land of ghosts and nightmares, so vividly described by Jonathan Spence in *The Death of Woman Wang*. And yet within the logic of the Qing personnel system Li probably did welcome his appointment, if not the new challenges it posed. Probably because of its long history of calamity, Tancheng was rated by the Qing government as a 'difficult' post, and an important one. Because of this designation it was one of twenty-six magistracies, out of the ninety-six in the province, which were filled not by the Board of Personnel in Beijing but by

10 On the Shandong governorship see Guy, *Qing Governors and Their Provinces*, 188–192. Li's achievements as Wucheng magistrate are documented in *Nanchang Xian Zhi*, II, 948. My impression—and it is only that—is that in counties where there was a strong merchant presence and where the mercantile community contributed to the maintenance of order, the civil official's role was regarded as less difficult and consequently less important.

11 Huang Liu-hung, quoted in Jonathan D. Spence, *Death of Woman Wang* (New York, 1978), 14.

12 On Tan-cheng's status, see *Que zhi quan lan* I, 438.

13 Madeleine Zelin, *The Magistrate's Tael: Rationalizing Fiscal Reform in Eighteenth Century Ch'ing China* (Berkeley, 1985), 116–166, *passim*.

the Shandong provincial governor.¹⁴ In the case of Tancheng, the governor was limited in his selection to individuals who had served as magistrate without incident for at least three years. In this context, Li's appointment in Tancheng meant that he had attracted the attention and earned the confidence of the Shandong governor. Once in Tancheng, Li addressed rather different tasks than he had in Wucheng, proposing the construction of eight new granaries and encouraging peasants to reclaim lands for agriculture that had previously been devoted to animal husbandry.¹⁵

It was perhaps with relief that Li Hu received word of his next posting, in 1755, as magistrate of Ninghai Department, also in Shandong.¹⁶ This appointment brought Li his first promotion in rank, from 7b, the rank of country magistrates, to 5B, the rank of department magistrates. It also brought him somewhat greater and different responsibilities than he had held previously. While all Qing magistrates were reviewed by provincial governors, county magistrates reported first to prefects, and then to governors. Departments, however, were not incorporated into prefectures, and their magistrates were directly supervised by provincial governors. As G. William Skinner has noted, ordinary departments tended to be somewhat more peripherally located than counties, and this was the case in Ninghai, which was situated on the north-east coast of the Shandong peninsula near Yantai. The department was 375 kilometres away from Jinan and was the easternmost official posting in Shandong. Although the tax quota of the Department and the official salary of its magistrate were equal to those of Wucheng, Li Hu was able and required to act more independently than he had ever done before. To be sure, nothing in his previous experience had prepared him for life on a sea coast or the administration of a sea port, much less the delicate task of dealing with the increasing, if illegal, seaborne migration to Manchuria which used Yantai as a point of departure. However, Li Hu had shown himself to be trustworthy, able to handle the demands of Confucian administration in both wealthy counties and poor, and to merit the promotion that went with the Ninghai appointment.¹⁷

Li served in Ninghai for six years, longer than he had served in any post in his official life; when his next appointment came in 1761 it was probably the most

14 On the Shandong governor's prerogative to fill magistracies, see Guy, *Qing Governors and their Provinces*, 101–102, and 196.

15 On Li's work in Tancheng, see *Nanchang Xian Zhi*, II, 948.

16 '(Li Hu) Guo shi guan ben zhuan', *GJXLZ* 179.24a.

17 On the status of ordinary Departments, see G. William Skinner, 'Cities and the Hierarchy of Local Systems', in G. William Skinner, ed., *The City in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, 1977), 320–331, *passim*. On Ninghai's administrative status, see *Jue Zhih Quan Lan*, I, 452.

important of his official career. Li's next post as prefect at Tai'an, Shandong, not only entailed an increase in salary and responsibility and recognition of Li's ability by the central court in Beijing, but took him back to Shandong's agricultural heartland. Li's new post was comprised of seven magistracies and was located directly to the south of Jinan Prefecture in which the provincial capital was located. While tax collection was not Li's direct responsibility, the magistrates under Li had a collective tax quota of 176,710 ounces of silver, and Li's *yang-lian* salary as prefect was 3000 ounces of silver, more than double what he had been paid in Ninghai. The greater responsibility Li held was also reflected in an increase in rank, from 5B to 4A.¹⁸

Although the Qing code stipulated that successful department and county magistrates could be promoted to prefect, the occurrence could hardly have been routine. There were in Qing China some 1553 magistracies, including counties, departments and autonomous departments, but there were only 85 prefectures. Above the prefectural level in local administration, there were 92 circuit intendancies, and 18 provincial judgeships. The odds of a magistrate being promoted to prefect were approximately 1 in 18; whereas the odds of being promoted into a provincial judgeship from a prefecture were slightly better than one in five. Because of the importance of prefectural positions, the central court much more closely controlled them than the lower-level posts within the local administration. When the post of prefect of Tai'an became vacant, the fact was reported to the emperor who then chose the new appointee from among the officials known to him. Since Li had never served at the capital, the emperor's knowledge of him was probably not personal, but founded on recommendations of Shandong governors. Nonetheless, the fact the Li's name came up, and that he was ultimately selected for the post at Tai'an must be taken as a sign of his growing stature within Qing bureaucracy. Tai'an was a post to be coveted: after nine years of waiting for office and thirteen years in subordinate and peripheral posts, Li administered a prefecture containing a magistracy whose name, *Fei cheng*, could be somewhat facetiously if not inaccurately translated as 'Fat City'.

Li's journey to 'Fat City' was not marked by any signal achievement, but by a steadily accumulating record of competence in positions of increasing responsibility, observed by multiple governors in contexts emphasising tax collection, policing and independent judgment. Historians have tended to see all magistrates as the same, neophytes from the capital with only privately published works of advice and a few legal secretaries to help them out. But as

18 *Que Zhih Quan Lan*, I, 426. The Qing administrative system had nine ranks, each divided into two subgrades, with 9b the lowest rank and 1a the highest.

Li's career suggests, occupants of different magistracies had varying degrees of experience and different relations with their superiors. Although the knowledge magistrates like Li possessed was general rather than specialised, it was their capacity to apply such knowledge in varying contexts that determined their advancement.

II Life in the Fast Lane: The Logic of Competence and the Logic of Connections

Li Hu's career took a rather different direction after his appointment in Tai'an. First, he served in different geographical venues. While all of his appointments before Tai'an were in Shandong, none of his subsequent appointments were. In Shandong, Li held four positions in fifteen years and increased his rank by two grades. During the ten years following his appointment in Tai'an, Li was appointed to seven posts, rising two more grades and moving rapidly through the middle reaches of provincial administration. Underlying both of these changes was a shift in the logic of Li's appointments. In Shandong, Li's competence apparently attracted the attention and earned the confidence of several provincial governors, who appointed him to posts of gradually increasing responsibility. Beginning in the 1750s, however, Li's career was shaped by and identified with the commitments of specific group of officials, and their needs dictated his appointments. Li had, in short, acquired a patron.

The first sign of the workings of a patron in Li's career was his transfer in 1763 to Daming, the southernmost prefecture of Zhili, which bordered Shandong province on the east, and Honan on the west (fig. 2). Judging from its tax quota of 341,561 ounces of silver, which was more than twice that of Tai'an, Daming was a wealthier district than Li had served in before. Moreover, it was a district with historical associations, having once served as the seat of the provincial governor of Zhili. But the most significant feature of the appointment, from Li's point of view, was probably that it was one of the prefectures in Zhili for which the governor-general's *yamen* was allowed to recommend an appointee.¹⁹ His next appointment, to Baoding prefecture brought him directly into contact

19 Provincial governors were allowed to recommend appointments for magistracies designated as important, or very important. In the case of prefectures, the central court reserved for itself the right to appoint men to important and very important posts, and governors were allowed to recommend appointees to a relatively few less important posts. However, there were a certain number of postings which were, as a result of negotiations between provinces and the state, fixed at the provincial level.

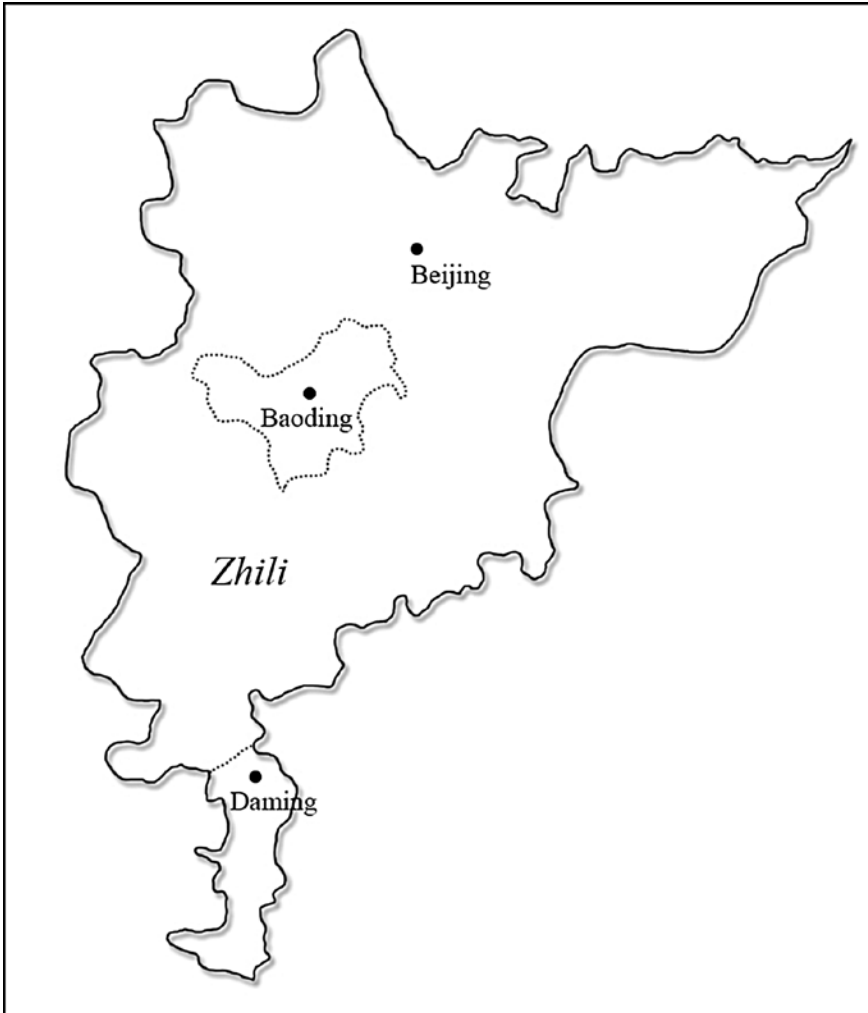


FIGURE 2 *Map of Li Hu's posts in Zhili. Adapted from Tan Qixiang, Zhongguo lishi dituji [The Historical Atlas of China], Vol. 8 (Beijing, 1982), 7–8.*

with the governor-general, since that prefecture served as his official seat. In 1768, Li was appointed intendant of the Qinghe circuit in northern Zhili, and in 1771, he was promoted to provincial judge for Zhili.²⁰

20 Baoding was a 'petition post'. Governors were allowed to petition the emperor requesting that a given official be appointed. This differed slightly from a 'transfer post' like Tancheng in Shandong, in which a governor's recommendation was routinely accepted without the

As he rose through Zhili administration, Li Hu followed the path of senior officials in the province. For over a third of the Qianlong reign, the governor-generalship of Zhili was in the hands of Fang Guancheng and his protégé Zhou Yuanli, who were serving respectively as governor-general and provincial judge when Li Hu arrived in Baoding in 1765. All three officials held a similar sequence of positions in Zhili administration. Fang Guancheng was first appointed in the province in 1742, as intendant of the Qinghe circuit, and rose to be governor-general in 1749. Zhou Yuanli was appointed prefect of Baoding in the 1760s and intendant of the Qinghe circuit from 1764–1768. He was promoted to provincial judge in 1769 and to lieutenant governor in 1770.

A crucial position in each of these cases may have been the Qinghe circuit intendency. The role of circuit intendant was a rather unusual one in eighteenth-century China. While most territorial officials had responsibility for the performance of all the functions of government within a territorially defined jurisdiction, circuit intendancies were usually functionally defined, with the intendant responsible for travelling over a wide area and assuring that one matter was performed correctly. In the case of the Qinghe circuit, whose geographical scope consisted of most of the province, the issue was water control. The area of Zhili constituted the northeast extremity of the delta of the Yellow River and as such was crossed by numerous rivers and streams that rose in the Daxing Mountains along the western border of the province and flowed east.²¹ The peril inherent in these rivers was suggested by the alternate name for the Yongding River, Hunhe, or 'River of Chaos'. Modern readers would know this river as the one spanned by Marco Polo Bridge, where the Sino-Japanese War began in 1937. When excessive rain beginning in the spring of 1725 brought flooding to the areas due south of Beijing, the Yongzheng emperor ordered his younger brother Prince Yi to investigate the water conservancy projects of Zhili. The outgrowth of this investigation was the creation of a new circuit intendant in central Zhili, who had the responsibilities of overseeing local administration in the eight magistracies nearest Baoding and supervising the river works in the area.²² In addition to maintaining these crucial hydraulic works, the Qinghe intendant and his superiors were responsible for the main-

need for the emperor to approve a petition. On the difference between 'petition' and 'transfer' posts, see Guy, *Qing Governors and their Provinces*, 101–02.

21 This division of Zhili watercourses follows the account provided by Wu Bangqing in *Jifu hedao guanjian*, which is reprinted in the same author's *Jifu hedao shuili congshu* (1824).

22 See *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period* (1943; rpt. SMC, Taipei, 1991) 923. Prince Yi's memorials to the throne on the situation in central Zhili are collected in *Jifu hedao shuili congshu*.

tenance of the imperial travelling lodges in the precincts around the capital. The Qianlong emperor in particular liked to make frequent trips outside the capital; the most famous of these excursions were, of course, his journeys to the south, but he also made frequent shorter journeys to sites in north China and even used the travelling lodges on his yearly trips to the summer palace at Rehe. Fang and Zhou Yuanli acquired a reputation for maintaining the sites of imperial visits, and greeting the emperor appropriately on his travels, and it seems likely that in the course of these journeys, Li Hu would have met the emperor or those close to him.

Fang Guancheng inhabited a stratum of the Qing bureaucracy in which who one knew was as important as what one knew.²³ Born into a family tainted in the early eighteenth century by allegations of treason, Fang had not taken the civil service examinations but had served instead as a Chinese amanuensis to a Manchu general and a clerk in the nerve centre of Qing government, the Grand Council. His own rise was clearly dependent on patrons and connections, and once he had achieved high office, he used it to further the careers of younger officials he trusted, Li Hu and Zhou Yuanli (1705–1775). However, Fang was also a very competent official, as Pierre-Etienne Will has shown. Regulations he evolved became the basis for Qing famine relief policies in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The political reputations of Fang, Zhou, and Li rested both on their connections and on their reputations as competent officials. The third quarter of the eighteenth century was a relatively prosperous period in north China, with the regional economy growing and the White Lotus uprisings of the later years of the century still far away. In such ‘periods of peace’, wrote the editors of *Qingshigao* in their assessment of Fang and his followers, ‘shepherding the people consists of providing for their prosperity, maintaining the irrigation works, and encouraging agricultural production’.²⁴

III Regional Needs and Central Policies: Two Jurisdictions

The death of Fang Guancheng in September of 1768 was only one of a number of deaths of senior officials, most of whom had served the emperor since he ascended the throne. Initially, the court’s reaction to all this change, in Zhili

23 *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, 133–135, *Qing shi gao* (1927, rpt. Guofang, Taipei, 1961) 4275–76. See also Pierre-Etienne Will’s study of Fang’s contribution to Qing famine relief policies, *Bureaucracy and Famine in Eighteenth Century China* (Stanford, 1990), passim, particularly 14–16.

24 *Qing shi gao* 4284.

as elsewhere, was to turn to senior statesmen whose abilities were known and whose standing was secure. Yang Tingzhang, a hereditary commander of the Chinese Bordered Yellow Banner Army who had served as governor of Zhejiang, governor-general of Min-zhe and Liang-guang, and president of the Board of Punishments, was appointed governor-general of Zhili in 1768. As the moment of crisis passed, however, the central government turned to rising Chinese stars in the provincial bureaucracy. The cohort of officials that had surrounded Fang Guancheng dispersed to positions of leadership throughout the empire. Between 1770 and 1775, thirteen Chinese, many of whom had come up through the ranks of provincial administration, received their first appointments as governor.²⁵ As they dispersed, their careers came to be determined more by central than local needs, more by historical contingency than by the logic of local promotions.

In 1771, Li Hu was promoted from the provincial judgeship in Zhili to the lieutenant governorship of Jiangsu. The change of venue was not particularly unusual; most of those who moved up through the ranks of provincial administration were appointed governor in a different region from where they had served as provincial subordinates. But the post represented a mark of confidence in Li Hu. The Jiangsu finance commissionership, with its responsibility for the tax revenue and grain tribute of one of the empire's most productive provinces, was in the eighteenth century a post for officials of experience and proven competence. Li's immediate predecessor in the position, Sazai, also became his superior. A Manchu of the Imperial Household Department, Sazai had spent his life in Jiangsu and was to serve as governor of the province for five years before being promoted to the post of director of the River Conservancy for the southern provinces. A second indication of the importance of the Jiangsu finance commissionership was the character of the officials appointed to it. While it was in theory possible for finance commissioners to have been promoted from the ranks of provincial judges, very few Jiangsu commissioners were. In the twenty years before Li Hu's appointment (1750–1770) only four of fourteen appointees were promoted from the office of provincial judge, and three of these were Jiangsu provincial judges who served in the Jiangsu Finance commissioner's office very briefly before moving on to other appointments. Half of Li Hu's predecessors had served as finance commissioners in other provinces before taking office in Jiangsu, and five of Li Hu's fourteen predecessors were promoted to governorships on the conclusion of their service.

The need for specialised personnel in Jiangsu was probably dictated by the special contributions of the province to the empire. Although a relatively small

25 On this transition see Guy, *Qing Governors and Their Provinces*, 134–137.

province in size, Jiangsu was required to remit a tax quota of 2,836,593 ounces of silver annually, the largest tax quota in the Qing empire. In addition, the province also had to provide a major portion of the annual grain tribute, which fed the armies and officials of north China. Governing in Jiangsu thus inevitably entailed the vital but delicate task of extracting revenue from a prosperous, well-established and often recalcitrant local landholding elite who, by virtue of the province's success in the civil service examinations, were often well connected at the capital. It is perhaps not surprising that the task was not left to neophytes or that eighteenth-century Jiangsu governors who had shown themselves capable like Sazai tended to remain in place for a long time.²⁶

It was while he was in Jiangsu that Li wrote his first memorial on policy to the Qianlong Emperor.²⁷ The proposals Li offered earned the emperor's approval, but perhaps as important, the memorial earned Li the respect of his fellow officials and was reprinted in the privately edited early-nineteenth-century compendium of administrative writings *Huangchao jingshi wenbian* (Essays on statecraft in our times). The subject of Li's memorial was a rather vexed issue for late-eighteenth-century officials, the proper role of imperial appointees in the management of community granaries. Community granaries were one of three institutions where grain was stored for emergency relief and other purposes in Qing China, the other two being charitable granaries, privately endowed granaries located for the most part in urban settings, and the 'ever normal granaries' where the tax and tribute grain collected by the state was stored. Community granaries were located in rural communities and funded by private contributions, and in theory they were not subject to state regulation. In the early eighteenth century, however, officials concerned that government stocks of grain were inadequate to meet emergency needs had encouraged private contributions to community granaries, and even used state funds in some cases to purchase grain for community granaries. By the latter

26 On the difficulties of collecting revenue in Jiangnan, see James Polachek, 'Gentry Hegemony: Soochow in the T'ung Chih Restoration', in Frederic Wakeman and Carolyn Grant, eds., *Conflict and Control in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley, 1985) particularly 217–228; Zelin, *The Magistrate's Tael*, 221–264; Lawrence Kessler, 'Chinese Scholars and the Early Manchu State', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 31 (1971), 179–200.

27 It is the practice in the field of Chinese history to refer to all communications to the emperor as 'memorials'. They were broadly of two sorts, routine (*tiben*) and secret (*zouzhe*). Routine memorials could be submitted by any official and were reviewed by the relevant bureaus in Beijing. Secret memorials could be submitted only by officials of the rank of lt. governor or higher, and were read by the emperor or his staff in the Grand Council. When they were first used, secret memorials concerned primarily military matters, but by the 1770s they were used for many purposes. Li Hu's was a secret memorial.

third of the eighteenth century the Qing state was having difficulty monitoring the supplies of community granaries, which were often located far from official *yamens*, and the fairly full community granaries were increasingly vulnerable to requisition by officials whose straightened budgets left them little flexibility in the areas of relief and public works.²⁸

In his memorial, Li Hu made three proposals to improve the management of community granaries. First he proposed that the rule which required that the private managers of community granaries be changed yearly be revised to allow one manager to serve for up to three years, as long as he served competently. Second, Li proposed that local magistrates be required to check the account books of community granary managers yearly and that magistrates' subordinates be sent into villages after the harvest to compare household registrations with the granary managers' reports of grain disbursed. Third, if such inspection showed corrupt management, Li proposed that local managers be punished severely.²⁹ Although the memorial was concerned exclusively with the technical details of granary management, this earliest of Li's preserved official writings served to locate Li in official time and space in interesting ways. Li's writing betrayed an activist optimism about the ability of local officials to monitor community granary management that was more characteristic of the early eighteenth century than its last years. By the later third of the eighteenth century, Qing officials no longer had such an optimistic view. In 1799, the Jiaqing Emperor decided that the problems of official supervision of community granaries outweighed the advantages and decreed that henceforth community granaries would be freed from official supervision.³⁰

Perhaps as interesting were the sources and potential audiences of Li's memorial. It was a proposal based on somewhat limited experience of life in Jiangsu: Li was appointed lieutenant governor in the third lunar month of 1770, and it probably took him some weeks to take up his appointment. Since he signed the memorial with the title 'Acting Governor of Jiangsu' it was written after the tenth lunar month, when Li temporarily held the governor's office while Sazai was summoned to Beijing for official consultations. It could not,

28 See R. Bin Wong, 'Decline and Its Opposition: 1781–1850', in Pierre-Etienne Will and R. Bin Wong, eds., *Nourish The People: The State Civilian Granary System in China, 1650–1850* (Ann Arbor, 1991), 86–89. The definitions of the three types of granaries given here are from the same author's 'Introduction' to Part I of this volume.

29 The memorial is summarised in Li's official biography, in G CJXLZ 179.24a; and printed in full in *Huangchao jingshi wenbian* (1826, n.p.) rpt. Guofang (Taipei, 1964) 1023–24 (40.30a–32a).

30 Wong, 'Decline and Its Opposition: 1781–1850', 86–89.

however, have been written any later than the twelfth lunar month, when Li was promoted to the governorship of Guizhou. In essence, Li's memorial was based on the experience of one agricultural cycle in Jiangsu. Also, community granaries do not appear to have been particularly important in Jiangsu. In the year in which Li Hu wrote his memorial, almost 200,000 of the 375,000 *shi* of grain theoretically in Jiangsu granaries was actually in arrears. Peter C. Perdue and R. Bin Wong have argued that Jiangsu was one of six provinces in which, for political and economic reasons, 'little or no grain' was held in rural and community granaries.³¹ Charitable and community granaries were, however, important in Zhili, and particularly so for the officials of Fang Guancheng's circle. Between the time of Fang Guancheng's appointment in 1748 and his death in 1768, the amount of grain stored in charity granaries in Zhili grew from 206,688 *shi* to 594,328 *shi*, and Fang himself is credited with having compiled a volume of maps of charity granaries, *Jifu yicang tu*, perhaps to celebrate his accomplishment in this respect. The volume listed a total of 1005 granaries designed to serve 39,687 villages.³² At the very least, Li's memorial appears to have been an attempt to apply expertise gained in one jurisdiction to administrative realities in another.

But perhaps, in view of the limited importance of charity granaries in Jiangsu, the memorial had another purpose: to share Li's own views and expertise with the Qing court, in effect to make a contribution more to a national-level discourse about grain administration than to a local one. In so memorialising, Li Hu was perhaps advertising his arrival on the eighteenth-century political stage. The right to address secret memorials to the throne and hence command the emperor's attention on an issue one perceived to be significant was limited to officials who held the rank of lieutenant governor or higher. If this hypothesis is correct, one might further speculate that Li was announcing his arrival at senior rank and doing so in a way that called attention to the particular group of officials from which he had emerged. In this sense Li's memorial pointed to a past dominated by the regional concerns of Zhili and a future on the national political stage. Li Hu had made his transition.

31 R. Bin Wong and Peter C. Perdue, 'National Patterns of Granary Activity', in Will and Wong, eds., *Nourish the People*, 305; the figures on Jiangsu grain arrears are from 69 of the same volume.

32 R. Bin Wong, 'The Grand Structure: 1736–1780', in Will and Wong, eds., *Nourish the People*, 70; figures on grain stored in Zhili's granaries are from 313 of the same volume.

IV Governor of Guizhou

Three events shaped Li Hu's next transfer, to the governorship of Guizhou Province along China's southern border. The first was likely the arrival of Li Hu's memorial in the capital, and the emperor's subsequent endorsement of the memorial in principle. Second, there was the increasingly troubling corruption of mining and military matters in the south-west; allegations of corruption had ended the terms of three recent governors of Guizhou: Gong Zhaolin (governed 1770) who was executed for his part in south-west corruption and Liang Qing (governed 1768–1769) and Fang Shijun (governed 1764–1767) who were allowed to commit suicide for their parts in corrupt activities. Finally, Governor Sazai had an audience with the emperor, the purpose of his trip to Beijing, during which he would have reviewed the capacities of many of his provincial subordinates, and particularly his lieutenant governor. It was at this audience that Li Hu's new appointment was decided upon; Sazai reported in a memorial in early February, 1771, that he had received an oral edict that Li Hu be transferred to Guizhou.³³

The long-standing concerns of the Guizhou governor, with the mining industry in the western part of the province and the troubled relations of Han immigrants with Miao in south-east Guizhou, were very different from those with which Li Hu had been confronted either in north China or in the lower Yangtze valley. The Qing expansion to the south-west, which culminated in the establishment of a regular administration there in the late 1720s, had been accompanied by the opening of copper, silver, and lead mines, and trouble with the indigenous peoples. Mining operations were particularly complex; precious metals had to be extracted from the earth, collected for transport and then distributed to mints throughout the empire. A large network of miners, transport workers, and middlemen had to be coordinated. As many of the transactions in this process were carried out far from official inspection and the amounts of money were not small, the possibility of corruption was great. It was a single case of corruption in one Guizhou mining county that brought down three of Li Hu's predecessors, and Li Hu arrived in Guiyang, the provincial capital, just in time to mop up the case.³⁴ He also began a process

33 Sazai's memorial acknowledging receipt of Li Hu's appointment is in the Number One Archive, Beijing, in the 04-01-12-0140 category.

34 In this case, Governor Liang Qing accused the Prefect of Wei Ning of having deficits in his treasury. The prefect responded with a long, detailed, and documented list of the instances in which Liang Qing and his predecessors extorted money from him. The case led to the downfall of the prefect but also to that of three governors accused of extortion.

of research, interviewing local officials and reviewing record books and regulations, which allowed him to produce within three months of his arrival an extremely long and thoughtful report on mining and distribution.³⁵ Within a further two weeks, he produced a second lengthy report on provisioning the armies which were necessary to secure the south-west and protect its industry. Li Hu had no experience in either of these areas, but the combination of diligent research and patient sincerity allowed him to produce assessments that the State Historiographical Commission found appropriate to record.³⁶

In replacing Gong Zhaolin, whom the court had come to see as a specialist with narrow capacities,³⁷ with Li Hu, the court was opting for a generalised competence over specialised crisis-management in Guizhou. This choice was informed by the perceived short-term needs of the province, but it also served the dynasty's long-term policy goals in the south-west. Recent studies of the region have argued that Qianlong policy in the south-west was one

The documents for this case are published in *Qianlong chao cheng ban tanwu dang'an* (Beijing, 1994), Vol. 1, 103–208.

- 35 The memorial is summarised in Li Hu's biography, '(Li Hu) Guo shi guan ben zhuan', *GCJXLZ*, 179.24b–25a. The original, lacking the first several pages, is in the Number One Archives, Beijing, document # 04-01-30-0481-021. A copy of the memorial, made for recordkeeping in Beijing, is in the National Palace Museum Archives, Taipei, Junji chu dang # 014514.
- 36 This memorial is summarised in Li's biography, '(Li Hu) Guo shi guan ben zhuan', *GCJXLZ*, 179.24b. The original is in the Number One Archives, Beijing, document # 04-01-35-1279-032.
- 37 After a career in local administration, Gong had been appointed provincial censor of Hunan in 1767. He first attracted central attention when he provided crucial information, as Hunan provincial censor, to imperial investigators in a complex case of financial speculation, official collusion and murder in late 1766. Ultimately, the case led to the cashiering of three Hunan officials and the execution of the former governor of Hunan Li Yinpei. Impressed with Gong's forthrightness, the court rushed him to Guangxi to replace a governor indicted on charges of corruption, then to Hunan, and finally to Guizhou to deal with a Miao uprising. After the moment of crisis in Guizhou had passed, however, the court began to have concerns about Gong's ability to handle the routine demands of civilian administration. Doubts mounted when Guanyinbao, the finance commissioner of the province, reported in an imperial audience that Gong was boastful, rash of speech, and so brusquely dismissive of others' concerns that the people of the province had taken to calling him 'iron lips'. Finally, when the Board of Revenue memorialised indicting Gong for failing to report a change in the arrival date of a shipment of precious metal from the Guizhou mines to the capital, and the Board of Civil Appointments reported that such an offense merited cashiering, the emperor decided that Gong should be relieved of his duties and ordered to report to the capital. See *Qing shi gao*, 4388–4389.

of acculturation, the imposition of Confucian norms of society and government on a complex and difficult border region.³⁸ One way in which the central government advanced this goal was to send officials with solid credentials acquired in other parts of the empire into Guizhou to serve and bring to the south-west the benefits of established Confucian governance. Two circumstances, however, almost certainly limited the central government's options in Guizhou. First, the province did in fact have special needs which not every official could be expected to understand or address. Moreover, the province's distance from the centres of power and policy made it unattractive to senior governors whose careers had been established elsewhere.

The journey from the classical gardens and whitewashed estates of Suzhou to the mountains of Guiyang was a long one for Li Hu. But it was a journey eighteenth-century Confucian officials had to be prepared to make. The ambitious goals of the Qianlong court of extending regular Confucian governance to the borderlands required that officials accustomed to governing in the heartlands also serve a season in the south-west. But perhaps as important, the nature of Confucian government itself was at stake in the south-west. Founded as it was on principles presumed to be universal, Confucian government had to work everywhere if it was to work anywhere. It was perhaps a mark of the optimistic idealism of eighteenth-century government that it could routinely transfer officials from the central provinces of the empire to its peripheries and assume their successful service there.

But if it was mark of optimism that officials were sent to the south-west, it was an optimism tempered by realistic recognition of regional differences. Jiangsu and Guizhou represented two fairly acute cases of provinces requiring special treatment, and the Qianlong court's policies toward them suggested the pragmatism which the Qing government brought to its rule in China in the eighteenth century. The source of Jiangsu's claim for special treatment lay in its contributions to the financial foundations of empire. As the argument above suggests, the eighteenth-century government was willing to acknowledge a certain legitimacy to this claim, for the revenue of Jiangnan supported the empire as a whole. Guizhou's claim for special treatment, its troubled minorities and inadequately supervised mines, undermined the legitimacy if not the

38 Christine Lombard-Salmon, *Un Exemple d'Acculturation Chinoise* (Paris, 1972); John E. Herman, 'National Integration and Regional Hegemony: The Political and Cultural Dynamics of Qing State Expansion, 1650–1750' (Ph.D dissertation, University of Washington, 1993), and William Rowe, 'Education and Empire in Southwest China: Ch'en Hung-mou in Yunnan, 1733–38', in Alexander Woodside and Benjamin A. Elman, eds., *Education and Society in Late Imperial China, 1600–1900* (Berkeley, 1994), 417–457.

order of the empire as a whole. Where the dynasty tolerated specialisation in Jiangsu, it fought against the compartmentalisation of Guizhou. In both cases, policy was dictated by the needs of state; both provinces were incorporated into the routine personnel system, but to very different ends.

Conclusion

Aside from highlighting the standards by which Li Hu was judged at various points in his career, the criteria of 'successful stewardship', the narrative above has demonstrated the ways in which the routine promotions system of the Qing structured the careers and mental horizons of Qing civil servants. Part I argued that it was possible for magistrates to be promoted to higher office. But to move up in the Qing civil service, one had to move out; hence the promoted magistrate had to have confronted the tasks of government in several, often quite different, environments and measured local needs against central Confucian standards. The evidence of Part II suggested how the promotions system of Qing civil service structured factions within the Qing provincial bureaucracy. The central government required assessments of officials in order to promote them, but assessments had to come out of a regional context. Therefore in a sense the court was dependent on regional factions and could be said, in fact, to have created them, even as it refused to acknowledge their existence in any but the most perfunctory sense. Finally Part III has shown how regional needs were balanced within a national personnel system and highlighted the demands for mobility and loyalty this placed on civil servants required to journey to distant and sometimes disparate jurisdictions.

Ceremonial Demarcations. The Viceregal Court as Space of Political Communication in the Spanish Monarchy (Valencia, Naples, and Mexico 1621–1635)

Christian Büschges

In political and political-historical pamphlets of the Enlightenment and the nineteenth century as well as in traditional political history, ceremony has been seen as an embellishing, vain, and superfluous accessory of the ‘real’, rational, political acts that were regulated by legal norms and institutions. Modern historiography, on the other hand, taking into account sociological and ethnological approaches, emphasises the specific rationality and political nature of ceremony, which is, in turn, only a form of expressing the symbolic dimension inherent in every political communication and interaction.¹

At the early-modern court the function of ceremony, which stood out from the spontaneous, individual, everyday acts, lay in making visible the system of monarchical rule and the social and political ranks inherent in it. Ceremony granted the courtiers a visible position in the oft-disputed curial ranking and at the same time fitted external visitors into this symbolic representation of hierarchy.²

Using the example of the court of Louis XIV of France, Norbert Elias, in his study on the ‘court society’ (*Die höfische Gesellschaft*), which sparked the revival of modern court research, considered ceremony as an exclusive instrument of power of monarchical absolutism.³ While Elias coined the image of the court as a ‘golden cage’ used by the absolutist ruler to domesticate the nobility, he also pointed out the ‘very specific network of interdependencies’ that connected the king as *primus inter pares* to the noble court society and

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- 1 Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, ‘Zeremoniell als politisches Verfahren. Rangordnung und Rangstreit als Strukturmerkmale des frühneuzeitlichen Reichstags’, in Johannes Kunisch, ed., *Neue Studien zur frühneuzeitlichen Reichsgeschichte* (Berlin, 1997), 91–4; cf. Maria Antonietta Visceglia, ‘Il ceremoniale come linguaggio politico. Su alcuni conflitti di precedenza alla corte di Roma tra Cinquecento e seicento’, in Maria Antonietta Visceglia and Catherine Brice, eds., *Cérémonial et rituel à Rome (XVI^e–XIX^e siècle)* (Rome, 1997), 117–176.
 - 2 Stollberg-Rilinger, ‘Zeremoniell als politisches Verfahren’, 95; cf. Volker Bauer, *Hofökonomie. Der Diskurs über den Fürstenhof in Zeremonialwissenschaft, Hausväterliteratur und Kameeralismus* (Vienna, 1997), 34f.
 - 3 Norbert Elias, *Die höfische Gesellschaft. Untersuchungen zur Soziologie des Königtums und der höfischen Aristokratie* (2nd ed., Frankfurt/M., 1994).

thus included him in the representation and competition of social and political ranks that were concentrated at the court.⁴

In more recent time, several scholars have made clear that ceremony, absolutism, and domestication of the nobility were not firmly joined together in the framework of practice of early-modern rule and that there were clear differences between royal courts. A highly distinguished court ceremonial, on the one hand, could point towards a not fully realised and recognised kingship, while, on the other hand, it could be an expression of and compensation for the progressive loss of power of an established ruler.⁵

For this reason, court ceremony should be looked at from the perspective not only of the ruler but also from that of other participants, especially the court nobility. Ceremonies gave all persons taking part a chance to represent, defend, or improve their social and political rank at court and beyond.⁶

The complex character of the social and political representation and interaction at court becomes clear when we look at the royal court of the Spanish Habsburgs in Madrid, where in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries court and ceremony underwent several changes. Since 1584 the Spanish holding of court had followed the Burgundian court ceremonial introduced by Charles V.⁷ Under his son Philip, the Spanish court assumed a less public, distanced, and rather bare, religious character and was distinguished by the extreme formality of its ceremony.⁸ Under Philip III, however, a splendid life at court developed under the direction of the king's favourite duke of

4 Elias, *Die höfische Gesellschaft*, 12, 312–14; cf. Aloys Winterling, ‘“Hof”. Versuch einer idealtypischen Bestimmung anhand der mittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Geschichte’, in Aloys Winterling, ed., *Zwischen ‘Haus’ und ‘Staat’. Antike Höfe im Vergleich* (Munich, 1997), 24. With regard to Elias’ concept of the court in general Jeroen Duindam, *Myths of power. Norbert Elias and the early modern European court* (Amsterdam, 1995).

5 See e.g. Aloys Winterling, *Der Hof des Kurfürsten von Köln 1688–1794. Eine Fallstudie zur Bedeutung ‘absolutistischer’ Hofhaltung* (Bonn, 1986), 151–170; Olaf Mörke, ‘Stadtholder’ oder ‘Staetholder’? *Die Funktion des Hauses Oranien und seines Hofes in der politischen Kultur der Vereinigten Niederlande im 17. Jahrhundert* (Münster, 1997), 21–28; Werner Paravicini, ed., *Zeremoniell und Raum* (Sigmaringen, 1997).

6 See e.g. the case of Vienna in Andreas Pecar, *Die Ökonomie der Ehre. Der höfische Adel am Kaiserhof Karls VI. (1711–1740)* (Darmstadt, 2003).

7 Ludwig Pfandl, ‘Philipp II. und die Einführung des burgundischen Hofzeremoniells in Spanien’, *Historisches Jahrbuch* 58 (1938), 1–33.

8 John H. Elliott, ‘The court of the Spanish Habsburgs: a peculiar institution?’, in John H. Elliott, *Spain and its world 1500–1700. Selected essays* (New Haven and London, 1989), 142–161; Christina Hofmann, *Das spanische Hofzeremoniell 1500–1700* (Frankfurt/M., 1985); Regine Jorzick, *Herrschaftssymbolik und Staat. Die Vermittlung königlicher Herrschaft im Spanien der frühen Neuzeit (1556–1598)* (Munich, 1997), 152–188.

lerma, a life in which the king, however, was pushed from his position as head and centre of the court to the margins by the noble court society, who used the court to display their own positions and power.⁹ Under Philip IV, it was again a favourite, the count-duke of Olivares, who extended the court and its ceremony as a propagandistic instrument of monarchical sovereignty.¹⁰ Olivares tried to turn the court into the model and centre of the aristocratic culture of Spain before, under the weak and frail Charles II (1665–1700), the factions of the Spanish nobility could strengthen their position at court again.

The examples mentioned above show how court ceremony responded to changing patterns of rulership, in particular to the political relationship between the prince and the other political actors around the court. In this article I broaden this discussion to the cases of the viceregal courts of the Spanish monarchy, concentrating on the realms of Valencia, Naples, and New Spain (Mexico). Research concerning the ‘composite monarchy’ (J.H. Elliott) of the Spanish Habsburgs and the political relationship between the royal court at Madrid and the different territories of the monarchy in Europe and America has elucidated the role of the viceroy within the complicated arrangement of institutional and personal relations that characterised the government of the vast transatlantic empire during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, only in recent years has the viceregal court been analysed as a topographical and political space in its own right, where political ranks and interests were communicated and negotiated.¹¹ This is especially true with regard to the ceremonial rules and practices that both reflected and shaped the political relationship between the viceroy and other social and political actors with access to the viceregal court.

I begin by describing the role of the Spanish viceroy and the viceregal court within the royal government in the three realms under consideration. Secondly, I will address the extent and function of ceremonial rules within the three viceregal courts. Thirdly, I will discuss ceremonial disputes as a part of the political communication at these courts. This comparative approach highlights differences and similarities in political communication at these different viceregal courts. While these variations were related to the social and

9 Antonio Feros, *Kingship and favoritism in the Spain of Philip III, 1598–1621* (Cambridge, 2000).

10 John H. Elliott, ‘Staying in Power: The Count-Duke of Olivares’, in John H. Elliott and L.W.B. Brockliss, eds., *The World of the Favourite* (New Haven and London, 1999), 112–122.

11 Francesca Cantú, ed., *Las cortes virreinales de la Monarquía española: América e Italia* (Rome, 2008); Pedro Cardim and Joan Lluís Palos, eds., *El mundo de los virreyes en las monarquías de España y Portugal* (Frankfurt/M and Madrid, 2012).

political importance of the three realms within the Spanish monarchy, they also depended on the local social contexts and traditions. Finally, this paper underlines the relevance of the individual skills of the viceroys in dealing with competing interests at court and in the viceregal capital.

I The Viceroy and the Viceregal Court of the Spanish Monarchy

As the representative of the king, the viceroy exercised political power delegated by the monarch, while he was legitimised as well as limited by law and tradition.¹² In his everyday business at his seat of power he had to deal with different individuals, groups, and institutions all with their own specific and partially competing social and political interests. At the same time, the viceroys were—as were the other royal as well as clerical office-holders and institutions in the respective kingdoms—under the control of the king and his councillors in Madrid.

Thus the viceroy was not a sovereign but a subject in the service of the king. On the one hand, he represented the monarch in the viceregal territory of jurisdiction, and, on the other, he exercised temporally, spatially, and substantially limited power delegated by the monarch. In the kingdom handed over to him, the viceroy was the head of the royal government and legal administration, captain-general, and vice-patron of the dioceses belonging to the royal church patronage. The viceroy was also in charge of part of the royal patronage. To a degree that varied according to which kingdom he headed, the viceroy himself was able to appoint officers, fill vacant positions temporarily, or make suggestions to the king as to whom he should appoint to office. He also made recommendations and gave advice to the king and the responsible royal councils in Madrid regarding the awarding of noble titles and other favours.

From the late sixteenth century the viceroys came, as a rule, from the Castilian high nobility. The position of the viceroy was one of the most important posts during the career of these noblemen, which started at the king's court and led, in the ideal case, through a range of military and political positions at court and outside of it to a seat in the council of state.

12 On the viceregal government see José Montero Alonso, *Los virreyes españoles en América* (Barcelona, 1991), Lillian E. Fisher, *Viceregal Administration in the Spanish-American Colonies* (Berkeley, 1926); Christian Büschges, 'La corte virreinal como espacio político. El gobierno de los virreyes de la América Hispánica entre monarquía, élites locales y casa nobiliaria', in Pedro Cardim and Joan Lluís Palos, eds., *El mundo de los virreyes en las monarquías de España y Portugal* (Frankfurt/M and Madrid, 2012), 319–343.

Whereas the viceroys had enjoyed especially extensive powers and a high degree of responsibility until the middle of the sixteenth century, Philip II limited their power in favour of various specialised administrative institutions and expert officials (*letrados*). From the late sixteenth century the tasks of the viceroy centred on counselling the king and implementing his royal policies at the local level. In spite of this concentration of political power in Madrid, the court of the viceroy, because of the political necessity of tying the local authorities to the monarchy, remained an important centre of political representation and interaction.

Following the model of the king's court, the viceroy as *alter ego* of the monarch and highest political authority in matters of government and administration was supported by a council (e.g. the Consejo in Valencia, the Consiglio Collaterale in Naples, or the Real Acuerdo in Mexico) and by committees (*juntas*) created to deal with specific matters. The councils, which were made up of royal officials of the highest ranks coming from the capital of the kingdom, not only served the viceroy by giving advice, but they also controlled his activities in office. All members of the council were, however, bound to execute the viceregal orders even if they violated law or tradition. In such cases, the councillors had to inform the king, who alone had the right to take action against the viceroy if he considered it necessary.

Apart from the royal officials subordinate to him, the most important individuals and institutions that the viceroy had to deal with in governing his kingdom included city councillors, institutions of the church, and the inquisition. The king's absenteeism and the viceroy's lack of sovereignty led to frequent disputes between the different secular and clerical institutions about administrative and especially legal competences, often involving the viceroy.¹³ The arbitration proceedings available for reaching a peaceful agreement on jurisdictional matters had only limited success since the regulations were often ambiguous and only the monarch had the right to make a final decision—a process which could take several weeks or months or even, as sometimes in the case of Spanish America, over a year. The king, therefore, urged his viceroys to seek consensus with secular and clerical authorities and to settle conflicts developing among them.

As the symbolic expression of their double function as highest royal official and *alter ego* of the monarch, the viceroys of the Spanish monarchy lived in a

13 Cf. for the case of Mexico, Christian Büschges, '¿Absolutismo virreinal? La administración del marqués de Gelves revisada (Nueva España, 1621–1624)', in Anne Dubet and José Javier Ruiz, eds., *Las monarquías española y francesa (siglos XVI–XVIII) ¿Dos modelos políticos?* (Madrid, 2011), 31–44.

representative building called the royal palace (Casa Real in Valencia, Palazzo Reale in Naples, and Palacio Real in Mexico). All three royal palaces accommodated, besides the viceroy and his household, a viceregal guard and various palace officials. In addition to the rooms used by the viceroys for public audiences and festivities, other parts of the palaces were reserved for meetings of various administrative institutions. The royal officials did not live in the palace since it was reserved for the representative of the monarch, his personal *entourage*, and servants. The high officials of the king did come under the viceroy's political authority and can be seen, therefore, as belonging to the viceregal court, but they were appointed by the king and thus had a certain degree of independence, which sometimes became visible in disputes over jurisdiction.

The private rooms of the viceroys were always on the first story of the palaces while the viceregal guards and most of the servants were accommodated on the ground floor. As far as can be seen from the sources, a staircase led to the upper story and access to the private rooms of the viceroys was achieved by passing through a sequence of rooms as was the practice in most European courts. The structure of the palaces and the usage of the rooms were partially adapted by the different viceroys to fit their individual needs and likings.

The royal palace of Valencia, built in Aragonian time, was situated outside the city walls and was reached from the town through the Portal del Real and over the Pont del Real, which spanned the river Uria. The palace was surrounded by elaborate, artfully designed gardens.¹⁴ The viceroys of Naples had lived until the middle of the sixteenth century in the Castel Nuovo, a medieval castle built by Charles I of Anjou, which lay right outside the city walls near the port. The viceroy Pedro de Toledo, duke of Alba (1532–1553), had a new royal palace built inside the city walls, finished in 1565, near the Castel Nuovo. At the beginning of the seventeenth century construction was begun on a new, bigger royal palace. This new building, sited next to the Pedro de Toledo's palace, suited the requirements of early-modern life at court much better. Its basic structure was finished in 1616, and its façade was completed in 1631.¹⁵

The building of the royal palace, situated in the centre of Mexico City, had originally belonged to the Aztec ruler Moctezuma before the conquistador Hernán Cortés received it as a present from Emperor Charles V and altered it to accommodate his needs. Cortés' descendants gave it back to the Crown, and, with Luis de Velasco (1590–1595), the first viceroy moved into the building. He then altered it further to suit the needs of his household and of the

14 *Cartografía Valenciana (siglos XVI–XIX)* (Valencia, 1997); Pilar de Insausti, *Los jardines del Real de Valencia. Origen y plenitud* (Valencia, 1993).

15 Cesare de Seta, *Napoli fra Rinascimento e Illuminismo* (Naples, 1997).

governmental institutions that were accommodated in the palace. The palace and adjacent garden were situated on the east of the Plaza Mayor, the main market place of the town, on whose northern side stood the cathedral.¹⁶

The viceregal courts did not form spaces that were strictly separated from the town and its social life.¹⁷ This holds true even for the viceregal palace of Valencia, which was situated outside the city walls on the west bank of the river Uria, but which could be reached easily by the inhabitants of the town. On the side of the palace the banks of the river formed a public, tree-lined boulevard stretching from the Pont del Real, which linked the forecourt of the palace with the town, to the Pont del Mar situated further north. This boulevard, the Alameda, was very popular not only with the urban nobility but also with the common people especially on weekends.¹⁸ The viceroys, in turn, accompanied by their *entourage* took part in the social life of their capital cities at various events.

By the sixteenth century, especially in Valencia and Naples, the royal palaces had developed into centres of aristocratic sociability, which had a decisive influence on urban culture in the capitals of the kingdoms. Since the first half of the sixteenth century many families of the traditional feudal nobility of these two kingdoms had settled in the capital, where they formed, together with the old-established patricians, an extensive courtly-aristocratic environment. In Mexico, on the other hand, there had not been such a development until the beginning of the seventeenth century. In the sixteenth century the Crown had prevented the development of feudal nobility in New Spain and all of Spanish America. Thus, only in the course of the seventeenth century and especially in the eighteenth century, did a local nobility develop, furthered by an increasing awarding of noble titles and memberships in clerical orders of knights that were clearly recognisable by outer attributes and concentrated in

16 Artemio Valle-Arizpe, 'Doctor Isidro Sariñana', in Artemio Valle-Arizpe, *Historia de la ciudad de México según los relatos de sus cronistas* (Mexico, 1977), 349–363.

17 This is not a particular attribute of the Mexican court, as Pietschmann argues, Horst Pietschmann, 'La corte de México en el siglo XVII en sus dimensiones jurídico-institucionales, sociales y culturales: aproximación al estado de la investigación', in Monika Bosse, Barbara Potthast and André Stoll, eds, *La creatividad femenina en el mundo barroco hispánico. María de Zayas—Isabel Rebeca Correa—Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz* (Kassel, 1999), vol. 2, 481–497.

18 Manuel Sanchis Guarnier, 'Aspecte urbà de València al segle XVI', in *La Corona de Aragó en el siglo XVI* (Valencia, 1973), vol. 3:1, 100–102.

the capital of the kingdom.¹⁹ The role of the viceregal court in the spreading and deepening of aristocratic culture within the Mexican upper class has yet to be investigated.²⁰

In Valencia the viceroy and duke of Calabria Ferdinand of Aragon (1526–1550) had played a pioneering role in the development of a stately court and urban culture.²¹ The duke with his nobles, artists, writers, and musicians present at the court established an extensive, aristocratic cultural life, which after his death was continued also outside the court by various urban noble academies.²² The courtly and patrician culture of Valencia experienced a further aristocratisation when it became the site of the 1599 wedding of King Philip III, organised by his favourite and viceroy at the time, the duke of Lerma.²³

The high social standing of the Valencian and, particularly, the Neapolitan viceroys, in part, accounted for the aristocratic sociability and ceremonial nature of those courts. The court of Naples was a particularly attractive post for titled nobles and even grandees, which was not the case with the courts of Spanish America. Furthermore, distinguished social and political personalities of the Spanish monarchy were often guests in the royal palaces of Valencia and Naples but not in faraway Mexico. In the royal palaces of Valencia and Naples festivals and balls in which numerous members of the local nobility participated were frequent events.

II Court Life and Ceremony

Life at court, including the viceroy's formal public appearances in the capital, was characterised by various ceremonial acts, standardised by law and tradition, in which the viceroy as the representative of the monarch was the centre of attention. Among these, the everyday events in the viceregal residence can

19 Cf. Christian Büschges, 'Don Quijote in Amerika. Der iberamerikanische Adel von der Eroberung bis zur Unabhängigkeit', in Friedrich Edelmayr, Bernd Hausberger and Barbara Potthast, eds., *Lateinamerika, 1492–1850/70* (Vienna, 2005), 154–170.

20 Cf. Xavier Gil Pujol, 'Una cultura cortesana provincial. Patria, comunicación y lenguaje en la Monarquía Hispánica de las Austrias', in Pablo Fernández Albaladejo, ed., *Monarquía, imperio y pueblos en la España moderna* (Alicante, 1997), vol. 1, 225–257.

21 Francesc Almela y Vives, *El Duc de Calabria y la seua Cort* (Valencia, 1958); Juan Oleza Simó, 'La Valencia virreinal del Quinientos: una cultura señorial', in M.V. Diago Momgholi, ed., *Teatro y prácticas escénicas*, vol. 1., *Quinientos valenciano* (Valencia, 1984), 61–75.

22 Oleza Simó, 'La Valencia virreinal del Quinientos', 64–67.

23 Oleza Simó, 'La Valencia virreinal del Quinientos', 69–70.

be distinguished from the special political ceremonies within the palace and at other places in the capital.

Within the complex framework of the Spanish monarchy, these ceremonies symbolically represented the splendour of the king's dynasty, the unity of monarchy and kingdom, and the social and political rank of the individuals, groups, and institutions participating. Ceremony at the viceregal courts was not based on written regulations (at least until the middle of the seventeenth century), nor was the ceremonial of the Spanish royal court officially used as a standard and model for the viceregal courts. The king, however, issued concrete laws and orders concerning particular ceremonial questions at the viceregal court. Clearly, not only the political functioning, but also the viceroy's style of court life was formally under the control of the monarch. A *maestro di cerimonia* and an *usciera maggiore*, appointed by the king, kept an eye on compliance with Neapolitan court ceremonial during all public acts the viceroy conducted or attended in the palace or in town.²⁴ In Naples as well as in Valencia elements of the holding of court from Aragonian times were possibly passed down to the time of the Spanish Habsburgs. This aspect still awaits investigation, as does the possible input of indigenous traditions into the symbols of power of the viceregal courts in Spanish America.

As at other European courts, not all aspects of the ceremony at the viceroys' court were political in nature or aimed at the illustration of the structure of monarchical rule and its social and political ranks. Ceremonies also permeated everyday life at court. At the same time, however, certain everyday ceremonial acts could have a political meaning. This holds especially true for the official viceregal audiences, during which the inhabitants of the kingdom could bring forward their concerns or requests to the viceroy in person.

In the case of Naples and Mexico some contemporary writings give an idea of the political meaning of ceremony at the viceregal court and of the viceroy's public appearances in the capital. The 'Reglas y Advertencias' addressed to the duke of Alcalá in 1628, whose authorship has not been recorded, urge the designated viceroy of Naples to go to Mass held in the royal palace on a regular basis. When he attends Mass, he is escorted from his rooms to the chapel by high-ranking royal officials and judges, the majority of the urban nobility, military captains, and viceregal favourites, 'with the result that his appreciation and the respect shown to him' are increased.²⁵

24 Giulio Cesare Capaccio, *Il Forastiero* (Naples, 1634), 410–1.

25 'Reglas y advertencias al duke of Alcalá para el gobierno de Nápoles' (Madrid, 8.10.1628), Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid (BN/Ma), Manuscritos, no. 6938/5, 123–198.

Furthermore, the 'Reglas y Advertencias' emphasised, as did the Neapolitan author Giulio Cesare Capaccio in his 1634 work *Il Forastiero* dedicated to the viceroy count of Monterrey, the special meaning of the viceregal audiences, where the viceroy represented the king in a very direct way and should, therefore, according to the 'Reglas y Advertencias', respond to the petitioners with few, dignified words.²⁶ In this way the audience and its ceremonial organisation could serve the viceroy as an opportunity to demonstrate his high political standing through symbolic acts and words, which served the purpose of distancing himself from others.

For New Spain, an unofficial instruction provides an insight into court life. This instruction was given to the designated viceroy marquis of Montesclaros before he left for Mexico in 1603 by Pablo Laguna, president of the council of Indies.²⁷ The preserved parts of the text deal with the person and the office of the viceroy and with the viceregal household, referring in some points to the practice of former viceroys. The rules of behaviour suggested to the New-Spanish viceroy also aim at maintaining a certain appearance in front of royal officials and favourites and the public of the capital. This appearance was modelled after the image of the monarch and was designed to command respect by keeping a dignified distance. Additional suggestions regarding the viceroy's political rank are given for ceremonial dining in the palace, indicating the social and political ranks of the participants.

From available sources we have only a single case to indicate to what extent these rules and suggestions for viceregal behaviour were actually followed. One must not forget, however, that the character and the personal preferences of the several viceroys played an important role in determining behaviour. Whereas the public appearance of the New-Spanish marquis of Gelves (1621–1624) was unanimously judged by his contemporaries as conscientious, distanced, and strict, critics accused his successor, the marquis of Cerralbo (1625–1635), of a demeanour unworthy of his office. A royal official questioned during a customary judicial investigation (*juicio de residencia*) following his time in office accused the marquis, among other things, of having been present at the meetings of the Real Acuerdo with rolled-up sleeves.²⁸ Compared to

26 'Reglas y advertencias', 128–129, 140.

27 'Advertencias de las cosas en que ha de tener particular cuidado el virrey de la Nueva España' (Madrid, 14.1.1603), BN/Ma, Manuscritos, no. 3207, 679–688.

28 Testimony of Don Francisco de Samaniego, 'Información de testigos seguida en la pesquisa secreta de la residencia que Don Pedro de Quiroga y Moya tomó al marquis de Cerralbo, sus criados y allegados' (Mexico, 28.9.1635), Archivo General de Indias, Seville (AGI), Audiencia de México, legajo 32, 678v–941v.

this charge, the accusation of having abused symbols of power and rank was far more serious. Among other things, the marquis was said to have introduced golden and black keys for his personal servants and a mace for his *mayordomo mayor* in the royal palace. In addition, he used several six-in-hand coaches brought in from Spain, which were lavishly designed and had glass windows and golden handles, although this type of vehicle was reserved for the monarch and his diplomats. The public appearance of the marquis of Cerralvo, apparently complemented by excessive festivals and balls, deviated conspicuously from the suggestions that the president of the council of the Indies had given to one of Cerralvo's predecessors before his departure to Mexico and in which the four-in-hand coach meant for viceroys is mentioned. The case of the marquis of Cerralvo also makes clear that viceregal court life and ceremony served not only to represent the monarch but also provided the viceroys an instrument for demonstrating—and enlarging—the political and social standing of themselves and their families.²⁹

In addition to the ceremonies at the viceregal court described above, the viceroy as *alter ego* of the king was also the centre of attention during various public occasions in his respective kingdom. During such ceremonies, the political system of the Spanish monarchy was staged on the streets and market places and in the churches of the town.

Philip IV's visit to Valencia in 1632 remained the king's only journey before 1635 to one of the kingdoms investigated here. In 1629, however, Philip's sister Maria of Austria stayed in the city of Naples for a few months. Apart from these visits of the royal family, which in Naples and Valencia were a rare exception and never took place in New Spain and the rest of Spanish America, the ruling dynasty was present through various events celebrated in the kingdoms' capitals. The funeral processions for a dead monarch and the proclamation of a new king were prime examples of such events as were the celebrations of births and weddings of members of the royal family.

From the local perspective, however, the most important ceremonies usually took place on the occasion of the solemn entries of the viceroys. Sometimes the death of a viceroy or that of his wife was the occasion for official, formally celebrated funeral ceremonies. In Naples the viceroy also opened and closed the corporative assemblies (*parlamenti generali*) of the kingdom,

29 Cf. the viceroy Duque de Alba who rearranged the chambers of the royal palace of Naples in 1622 using paintings representing his own family, *Libro en que se trata de los Virreyes lugartenientes de estos reinos y de las cosas tocantes a su grandeza, compilado por José Raneó, año MDCXXXIV, é ilustrado con notas por D. Eustaquio Fernandez de Navarrete, parte I, Colección de documentos inéditos, vol. 23* (Madrid, 1853), 420–421, 427.

occurrences which were repeated every few years. In addition, the viceroy was a pre-eminent guest at urban and church festivities on various occasions. Most of these festivities featured political ceremonies along with social events.³⁰

Ceremonies taking place outside the royal palace, in which the viceroy as the king's representative participated, were usually organised by the town council or, on some occasions, by the chapter of the cathedral. Like the viceregal holding of court, these ceremonial events did not adhere to written regulations but relied on traditions of different urban, royal, or church ceremonies.

III Ceremonial Ranks and Conflicts at the Viceregal Court

As an analysis of the various ceremonial practices shows, the political ceremonies held in the capitals of the kingdoms of Valencia, Naples, and New Spain were not one-sided representations of an 'absolute' monarchy; they reflected the ranks of individuals, groups, and institutions integrated within the complex political system of the Spanish monarchy. In the ceremony, the town council, which was recognised by royal writ as the political 'head' (*cabeza*) of the whole kingdom, faced the viceroy as an eminent institution in its own right. This standing became especially clear on the occasion of the viceregal entries, during which the viceroy in front of the political representatives of the capital of the kingdom was sworn in and vowed to honour and to defend the privileges of the kingdom. This ceremonial act held in the cathedral also symbolised the legitimacy of the monarchy through divine right. The viceroys were usually accompanied at these ceremonies by royal officials. The representatives of the nobility of the kingdoms, who assembled around the viceroys at these events, used these opportunities, in turn, to present themselves as loyal subjects of the monarchy.

Considering the complex political system of the Spanish monarchy and the fact that the viceroy as the highest political authority did not hold any sovereign rights, ceremonial interaction provided an especially appropriate space for competition and conflict of rank among the authorities of the king, the town, and the church. In addition, because the ceremonial rules and traditions observed at the viceregal courts and in the capitals of the kingdoms were not systematically regulated and fixed in writing, there was room for interpretation. At ceremonies organised by the town council or the church, viceroys

30 Regarding the public ceremonies in the viceregal capital of Valencia see María Pilar Monteagudo Robledo, 'El espectáculo del poder. Aproximación a la fiesta política en la Valencia de los siglos XVI–XVII', *Estudis: Revista de historia moderna* 19 (1993), 151–164.

sometimes encountered unexpected innovations that often led to fierce conflicts, particularly when the information on possible precedents that could be used to solve the conflict, was too little, ambiguous, or contradictory. On the other hand, changes of the ceremonial order that were allegedly or actually against the law could easily become precedents for later rulings on similar conflicts of rank if the disadvantaged party was not able to protest successfully. For this reason, ceremonial acts regarding the viceregal court have to be interpreted not only as mere representations of the ranks and relations inherent in the political system of the Spanish monarchy but have to be understood also as a political procedure aimed at shaping the system they purport to represent.³¹

In the kingdoms investigated here, it was, in principle, the viceroys who as the highest political authorities made decisions on conflicts of rank concerning themselves or other groups and institutions. The viceroys, however, usually stayed in office for a few years only, arriving in the kingdom without specific knowledge about local norms and traditions. Therefore, they had to rely on the advice of local royal officials to judge in uncertain cases and appealed to the king in especially contentious cases.

Since the viceroy as royal governor exercised power delegated to him by the king and restricted in temporal and thematic scope, his possibilities to use ceremony for the manifestation and securing of his political authority were clearly limited. Thus, the viceroys, when carrying out ceremonial acts, had to rely not only on the king's approval but also on a consensus with the different social and political actors of the capital of the kingdom. This political consensus, however, could evaporate and thus needed to be re-established over and over again.

Some of these conflicts over rank arose in the framework of the viceregal holding of court and administration and concerned royal officials, nobles, and the personal *entourage* of the viceroy. For instance, in April 1621, Philip IV ordered the Neapolitan viceroy Cardinal Zapata to take back an order issued by some viceroys in the past, according to which the Spanish *grandees* had preference over the titled nobility and holders of the kingdom's honorary posts of the *Sette Uffici* at ceremonial acts in the royal palace.³² The cardinal was to

31 Cf. Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, 'Zeremoniell, Ritual, Symbol. Neue Forschungen zur symbolischen Kommunikation in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit', *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 27, no. 3 (2000), 389–405.

32 The Norman king of Sicily and Naples, Roger II (1095–1154), originally had established the *Sette Uffici* as his royal council. The posts were traditionally reserved to the feudal aristocracy. During the reign of the Anjou (13th to 15th centuries) these posts were reduced to honorary and ceremonial functions.

return to the 'old custom' in effect since the times of the viceroy duke of Alcalá (1559–1571) and give both sides the same rank in order to prevent other 'new claims and difficulties' ('nuevas pretensiones y embaraços').³³ These orders from the king had been preceded by several letters of protest addressed to the king by the Neapolitan titular nobility and the Sette Uffici, who complained that since the issuing of an order during the time of the viceroy count of Lemos (1610–1616) the Spanish grandees had been assuming a preferred rank in the chapel and in the royal palace at the expense of the protesters.³⁴ This conflict shows that, given the lack of systematic ceremonial regulations, order and ranking at the viceregal court left room for contradictory interpretations, out of which precedents for changes in the existing order could develop. The conflict shows also that even the king was not free to change or confirm ceremonial changes that disadvantaged one party or the other without running the risk of disturbing the social and political order.

Sometimes it was the contradiction between the rank by birth and the rank in the hierarchy of offices that caused conflicts as can be seen from an episode at the viceregal court of Naples. In November of 1621, the political representatives (*eletti*) of the town of Naples complained in a letter to Philip IV that the viceroy Cardinal Borja, governing as an interim appointee in 1620, had denied the *eletti*, who did not belong to the titular nobility, entry to the so-called 'chamber of the titled nobility'. Apparently, until that time, not only the *eletti* belonging to the titled nobility but also the other *eletti* waited in this room for the audiences granted to them by the viceroy to discuss general matters of town government.³⁵ After the protests of the *eletti* against the changes he had introduced, the cardinal had referred to an order by Philip III. The *eletti*, in contrast, pointed out to Philip IV that it was appropriate to the dignity of the town that its *eletti* continue to enjoy this prerogative. The *eletti* represented the town and therefore the titled nobility, the Sette Uffici, and the Spanish grandees of the kingdom. Therefore, the *eletti* enjoyed pre-eminence over the kingdom's feudal aristocracy at the parliament general; for the same reason, the *eletti* had the right at meetings of the viceregal council (Consiglio Collaterale), in which they participated to discuss matters relevant for the town, of sitting down and covering their heads in the presence of the viceroy. Given their high political rank, the *eletti* asked the king, therefore, not to deny them entry to the

33 Letter of King Philip IV to Cardinal Zapata (Madrid, 15.4.1621), Archivo General de Simancas (AGS), Estado, leg. 1883, no. 390.

34 *Consulta* of the Council of Italy (Madrid, 29.5.1621), AGS, Secretaría de Nápoles, leg. 13.

35 Letter of Fabio Caracciolo to Philip IV (Madrid, 19.10.1621), AGS, Secretaría de Nápoles, book 623, 102–102v.

chamber 'of the titled nobility'. Five years later, however, the king confirmed the decision made by his father in February of 1620 and implemented by Cardinal Borja to allow only members of the titular nobility entry to the chamber.³⁶

In December 1631, at the request of the new Neapolitan viceroy count of Monterrey, the king ruled again on a conflict of rank between legal experts and noblemen, this time concerning the extended viceregal council (*Consiglio di Stato e Guerra*).³⁷ The duke of Alcalá had reported to the king in a letter from February of that year that the councillors (*consiglieri*) belonging to the titled nobles claimed a principal preference over the legal experts (*togati*) belonging to the council, who did not have a title of nobility, independent of the seniority criterion. Because of this unsettled order of rank, many noble *consiglieri* stayed away from the meetings of the Consiglio and also from public occasions. The duke had, therefore, asked the king to let him know the criteria to be observed for the order of rank and seating arrangements. Philip IV then ruled that precedence and seating arrangements in the Consiglio were determined only by seniority and that any contestations had to be brought to the king, who alone was to decide about them. Thus, Philip IV reversed the previously prevailing order and gave priority to position over birth. In these two disputes, the decisions of Philip IV reflect a general tendency noticeable since the times of king Philip II (1556–1598): within the institutions of royal government, including the Consiglio di Stato e Guerra, the rank emanating from royal office prevailed increasingly over the privileges associated with social origin.³⁸

One of the most frequent conflicts of rank fought out in ceremony involved the relationship of the viceroys to the archbishops and inquisitors, who, not least because of their position as representatives of the church and the pope, had a special sense of their political authority independent of the viceroys and who did not shy away from open conflicts with them. On the eve of a Mass said on April 15, 1621 in the cathedral of Valencia on the occasion of the Ascension of Christ, to which the chapter of the cathedral had invited, as usual, the viceroy marquis of Tavara (1619–1622), he learned that Archbishop Isidoro de

36 'Al Virrey de Nap.s. Renobando la orden que se dio p.a que no entren en la sala de los Titulados quien no lo es y reservando V. M.d asi solo el conceder esta gracia' (Madrid, 26.12.1625), AGS, Secretaría de Nápoles, book 435, 237v–238.

37 'Al conde de Monterrey. Respuesta en materia de precedencia entre los del Consejo Collateral Togados y de capa y espada' (Naples, 12.12.1631), AGS, Secretaría de Nápoles, book 437, 267–267v.

38 José María García Marín, 'El dilema ciencia-experiencia en la selección del oficial público de la España de los Austrias', in José María García Marín, ed., *Teoría política y gobierno en la monarquía hispánica* (Madrid, 1998), 17–41.

Aliaga had removed from the church the stone pulpit the archbishop usually used to give his sermons. Instead the archbishop had put up a podium decorated with carpets, tapestries, a canopy, various chairs, and an especially elaborate armchair (*sitial*).³⁹ The marquis asked the archbishop then to refrain from this novelty ('novedad'). To avoid a conflict he suggested to Aliaga to let the king decide this matter. The archbishop, however, rejected this suggestion, and the marquis, after talking to the royal master of ceremonies (*maestre de ceremonias*), insisted on his position.

The next morning, the viceroy tried again to get the archbishop to reconsider. The archbishop, however, called various armed theology students and lower-ranking clerics to Mass to defend him against possible action by the viceroy. After this, the marquis consulted with various royal officials, who all agreed that the viceroy was right. On the officials' advice, the viceroy abandoned his previous decision of confronting the archbishop personally in the church. To prevent an escalation of the conflict, the viceroy finally decided to stay away from Mass. On the following day, he informed the king about the incident in writing and asked for a ruling. He pointed out to Philip IV that in 1615 Aliaga had been reprimanded by the viceroy of that time, marquis of Caracena (1606–1615), for similar behaviour. In addition, a minion of the archbishop was taken into custody by order of the local royal court of justice on the same day. On the previous day this individual had, together with students armed with pistols, made sure that the *sitial* put up by the archbishop was not removed from the church.⁴⁰

The archbishop justified his claim to the right to sit under a canopy and on a *sitial* even in the presence of the viceroy in a letter sent to the king through the marquis by saying that this practice agreed with the Roman ceremonial and with the traditional practice of the Roman Church.⁴¹ The viceroy and his advisors, however, insisted that all of the former Valencian archbishops at the Masses said by them had needed only a simple chair ('silla movil') put on a carpet and a cushion lying in front of it, which, in turn, agreed with the Roman ceremonial.⁴² A change of this old tradition would create a note of discord.

39 Letter of the marquis of Tavera to Philip IV (Valencia, 25.4.1621), Archivo de la Corona de Aragón, Consejo de Aragón (ACA/CA), Secretaría de Valencia, leg. 682, doc. 58/1–2.

40 *Coses evengudes en la ciutat y regne de Valencia. Dietario de mosen Juan Porcar, capellán de San Martín (1589–1629)* (Madrid, 1934), vol. 1, 46.

41 Letter of Archbishop Isidoro de Aliaga to Philip IV (Valencia, undated), ACA/CA, Secretaría de Valencia, leg. 682, doc. 57/6–9.

42 'Racones por donde no pertenece al Arcobispo de Valencia predicar en la forma que pretende' (Valencia, undated), ACA/CA, Secretaría de Valencia, leg. 682, doc. 57/23–24.

In the town of Valencia it was an 'established fact' ('cosa asentada') that in the presence of the royal governor during public occasions the archbishop was entitled only to a simple chair and a cushion. The archbishop was not even allowed to put up a *sitial* in the presence of the members of the town council (*jurats*). Such a prohibition holds all the more true for the viceroy. If the *jurats* met with the viceroy who was seated on a *sitial*, they, in turn, would be allowed to sit down only on the pews. The archbishop's present claim, the viceroy argued, was based on his imagination alone and contradicted both the Roman ceremonial and the practice in Valencia.

After an extensive investigation of the matter lasting more than a year, the king agreed with the viceroy's protest and gave the archbishop two alternatives for future Masses, practiced by his predecessors, to choose from: he was to hold his sermon either from a simple chair without a canopy on a small podium or from the normal pulpit decorated with a silk cloth.⁴³ At the same time, the bishop of Teruel was, at Philip's IV request, put in charge of a papal commission to start investigating those clerics who had been present at the Mass on April 15, 1621.⁴⁴

This conflict was only one of the matters of dispute between the viceroy and the archbishop. In the year since he had taken up his office the marquis of Tavera had been engaged in various conflicts of jurisdiction with Aliaga, especially with regard to the prosecution of clerics accused of possessing illegal weapons.⁴⁵ Since the ecclesiastical court of Valencia refused to initiate legal proceedings against the clerics, the royal court (Audiencia) ordered their arrest in June 1620. As a consequence, the vicar-general of the ecclesiastical court declared the excommunication of the royal officials who had carried out the arrest. Since Aliaga rejected the viceroy's demand to intervene in the dispute, the marquis and the judges of the Audiencia, following an order of King Philip III, initiated legal proceedings against the properties of the archbishop, who answered with a declaration of an interdict.

Although the dispute was settled a few days later and was followed in 1622 by an ecclesiastical visitation ordered by Philip IV and approved by Pope

43 'Al Virrey de Val.a con aviso de la resolucion q.e tiene tomada V. M.d respecto de la forma en que ha de predicar el Arçobispo de aquella ygla. Consultado' (Madrid, 23.6.1622), Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN), Madrid, Consejo de Aragón, book 2409, 108v–109.

44 *Consulta* of the Council of Aragon (Madrid, 2.11.1625), ACA/CA, Secretaría de Valencia, leg. 650, doc. 5/1–3.

45 Letter of the marquis of Tavera to Philip III (Valencia, 2.8.1620), ACA/CA, Secretaría de Valencia, leg. 682, doc. 94/1–2.

Gregory XV,⁴⁶ political conflicts between Aliaga and the viceroy continued during the period of office of viceroy Távora's successor, the marquis of Pobar (1622–1627).⁴⁷ Again, ceremonial disputes accompanied jurisdictional conflicts, as the viceroy and the archbishop were central elements of political communication and interaction within the political system of the Spanish monarchy.

The role of ceremonial acts and jurisdictional affairs as opportunities and means of political competition among various political authorities at the viceregal court and in the capital of the kingdom become even more conspicuous in the case of the New-Spanish viceroy marquis of Gelves (1621–1624). In 1623, Philip IV ruled on a conflict between the marquis and the royal judges (*oidores*) acting as members of the viceregal council (Real Acuerdo), who at public events in the cathedral decorated their knee benches with cushions, which was, according to the existing regulations, a right of the viceroy alone. In response to a query by Philip IV, the marquis pointed out that this abuse had been practiced already during the term of the viceroy marquis of Guadalcázar (1612–1621). In August 1623, the king ordered the *oidores* to stop using cushions immediately. Existing regulations specified that the presiding senior *oidor* was entitled to a chair covered with velvet and a cushioned knee bench only if the position of the viceroy was vacant.⁴⁸ Thus, the king confirmed the ceremonial priority of the viceroy over the other royal officials, with whom the marquis had disputed questions of jurisdiction for quite some time as had his predecessor.

The special position of the viceroy as the monarch's *alter ego* and as the head of the capital of the kingdom also led to various conflicts at ceremonial events. In 1622 the marquis of Gelves (1621–1624), who made special efforts to maintain his authority in office, even banished two councillors (*regidores*) from town after they had refused to escort him together with the other members of the town council from the royal palace to the cathedral on the occasion of a Mass for the Día de la Candelaria.⁴⁹ The town council (Cabildo) informed

46 Papal brief of Gregory XV (copy, Madrid, 20.9.1622), ACA/CA, Secretaría de Valencia, leg. 682, doc. 67.

47 Letter of Archbishop Isidoro de Aliaga to Philip IV (Valencia, 5.7.1622), ACA/CA, Secretaría de Valencia, leg. 707, doc. 83/1–3.

48 'A la Aud.a de Mex.co dandole la forma en q.e a de tener los asientos en los actos publicos y en los que no lo fuesen' (Madrid, 12.8.1623), AGI, Audiencia de México, leg. 1065, book 7, 84v–85.

49 'Cargos del marq.s de Gelves en 46 fol.s' (Mexico, 23.10.1626), in: 'Proceso imcompleto de la Visita hecha en Megico por D.n Martin Carrillo Alderete: año 1627', AGI, Audiencia de México, leg. 329.

the king about this incident and insisted that the *regidores* were not obliged to accompany the viceroy to the cathedral. Moreover, the town had been represented in the cathedral by several *regidores*. No final ruling by the king about this incident can be found in the documentation. However, Philip IV ordered the marquis in March 1623 to let the *regidores*, who had been banished because of this incident, return to town immediately and to let them take up their offices awaiting further decisions on the case.⁵⁰

During his period of office the marquis of Gelves engaged in conflicts over rank and jurisdiction with almost all the urban, royal, and clerical institutions.⁵¹ Although the marquis has long been identified in historiography as an outstanding protagonist of the 'absolutist' politics of reform of Philip IV and his favourite, the count-duke of Olivares,⁵² the documentation of the various political conflicts the viceroy was engaged in, which reached their climax in the declaration of an interdict and the excommunication of the viceroy by Archbishop Juan Pérez de la Serna followed by an attack on the royal palace by the populace in January 1624, tells another story. The sources on ceremony and jurisdiction show the marquis, an experienced servant of the king, as a distinguished member of the titled nobility of Castile, resolutely defending his rank against persistent challenges by various local political actors.

The Marquis and the Archbishop were both finally relieved from office by the king in 1624. Gelves' successor, the marquis of Cerralvo (1625–1635), tried to prevent ceremonial and jurisdictional confrontations with Pérez de la Serna's successor, Francisco de Manso y Zúñiga, by being more open to compromises or by not attending ceremonial occasions in the cathedral. Nonetheless, conflicts of ceremony and jurisdiction between viceroy and archbishop went on for several more years until both were relieved from office in 1635.

IV Final Remarks

The conflicts of rank between the individuals, groups, and institutions all integrated within the political system of the Spanish monarchy make clear that

50 'Al Virrey de nueva esp.a que en el entretanto que se determina en el consso la caussa que le a remetido de ocho regidores de la ciu.d de Mex.co los haga bolber a ella alçandoles la carceleria sin fianzas' (Madrid, 20.3.1623), AGI, Audiencia de México, leg. 1065, book 7, 54v–55v.

51 Büschges, '¿Absolutismo virreinal?', 36–40.

52 Richard Boyer, 'Absolutism versus corporatism in New Spain. The administration of the marquis of Gelves, 1621–1624', *International History Review* 4, no. 4 (1982), 475–503.

ceremonial acts were seen by all participants as important elements of political communication and interaction. Therefore, the ceremonies at the viceregal court are not only to be interpreted as symbolic representations of a system of rule that concentrated on the monarch but have to be considered as part of the execution and shaping of this multifaceted system. The viceroy and the other actors around the viceregal court, without denying the king's sovereignty, sought to manifest, defend, and enhance their positions within the political system. In this context, ceremony and its attendant conflicts not only made manifest the tensions in the multi-layered political elite, but also defined and recreated the relationships among the political actors. The disputes over ceremony and jurisdiction that the Spanish viceroys had with other royal, ecclesiastical or municipal authorities did not differ in substance from the situation at European royal courts. Nonetheless, the absence of the king and the limited power of the viceroy made these conflicts sometimes especially severe and long lasting, particularly in the remote areas of Spanish America.

However, the distance of the Spanish American realms from the Iberian Peninsula and the royal court at Madrid cannot be taken as a general indicator for differentiating the European viceregal courts from their American counterparts. On the one hand, personal skills of particular viceroys were always a decisive element in dealing with the social and political tensions inherent within the composite monarchy of the Spanish Habsburgs on both sides of the Atlantic. On the other hand, differences with regard to institutional settings, political traditions, and social relations existed also within the European context and had a decisive impact on ceremonial practice and dispute.

The Ambans of Tibet—Imperial Rule at the Inner Asian Periphery

Sabine Dabringhaus

In the eighteenth century, China experienced an exceptional flourishing of dynastic government. The Qing emperor ruled successfully over an empire consisting of China proper and the Inner Asian regions of Mongolia, Xinjiang, and Tibet. The Qing state was a fairly typical example of an early-modern land-based Eurasian empire.¹ Its state apparatus was relatively small compared to the size of Qing society and economy. In China proper, the low level of governmental presence was compensated by many quasi-governmental tasks entrusted or left to the indigenous elites of gentry, local headmen, militia leaders or commercial brokers and different social groups like lineages or villages. The emperor used campaign-like initiatives in local governments to mobilise men and resources across the divide of formal and informal institutions of rule.² In the newly conquered regions of the Inner Asian periphery such a process of power-balancing between central and local (bureaucratic and sub-bureaucratic) government was more difficult to achieve. The Qing government developed new administrative structures for political control. To consolidate central rule over the multi-ethnic frontier entities new bureaucracies and new formal and informal relationships had to be created. Imperial administrators interacted between the dynastic centre and a multitude of local identities in the peripheries. Like viceroys, proconsuls or governors in other empires of the early modern world, such imperial manpower was indispensable at crucial points in the spatial networks of the polity. In Tibet, representatives of the Qing court, the imperial *ambans* (*zhu Zang dachen*), fulfilled the important task to embody the imperial centre at the periphery.

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- 1 Peter C. Perdue, 'Empire and Nation in Comparative Perspective: Frontier Administration in Eighteenth-Century China', in Huri Islamoglu and Peter C. Perdue, ed., *Shared Histories of Modernity: China, India and the Ottoman Empire* (London, New York, and New Delhi, 2009), 21–45, here 21.
 - 2 R. Bing Wong, 'Formal and Informal Mechanisms of Rule and Economic Development: The Qing Empire in Comparative Perspective', in Huri Islamoglu and Peter C. Perdue, ed., *Shared Histories of Modernity: China, India and the Ottoman Empire* (London, New York, and New Delhi, 2009), 231–54, here 246–251.

The Tibetans had originally gained the attention of the Qing government because of their close contacts with the Mongolian peoples.³ Dynastic historiography interpreted the imperial award of an honorific title to the Dalai Lama during his visit at the Qing court in 1652 as the foundational event of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet.⁴ During the eighteenth century, when the consolidation of imperial power in Inner Asia proceeded apace, Tibet evolved into a protective buffer on the south-western border of the Qing state. Like Mongolia in the north and Xinjiang in the north-west, Tibet was turned into an important frontier region of the expanding Sino-Manchurian empire.

Officially, the Qing government justified its multiple interventions into Tibetan affairs during the eighteenth century by citing the crises frequently occurring in the region.⁵ The institutional form of the imperial government over Tibet grew out of the specific historical context of repeated needs for military intervention when the region was thrown into turmoil by Mongolian raiders or as a result of aristocratic power-struggles. The stationing of two grand minister residents in Tibet, the 'ambans' (meaning 'officials' in Manchu), can be best understood as a conscious response of the Qing emperor to those specific historical problems at an increasingly sensitive frontier of his empire.⁶

I

Like the governors of Chinese provinces the *ambans* acted as intermediaries bridging metropolis and periphery.⁷ In the wide field of Tibetan regional interests, they represented the emperor's eyes and ears. Through their political activities, indigenous elites were groomed to act as trusted imperial subjects. Like European proconsuls, imperial ambans functioned as an instrument of

3 In the early seventeenth century, Mongol tribes had extended their influence over Tibet. With their khan's military support, the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617–82) destroyed the power of his religious rivals and founded a centralised Tibetan state in 1642. For the rest of the century, Mongol khans represented the de facto rulers of Tibet.

4 Sabine Dabringhaus, *Das Qing-Imperium als Vision und Wirklichkeit. Tibet in Laufbahn und Schriften des Song Yun (1752–1835)* (Stuttgart, 1994), 45–48.

5 Elliot Sperling, 'Awe and Submission: A Tibetan Aristocrat at the Court of Qianlong', *The International History Review* 20, no. 2 (June 1998), 325–335, here 325f.

6 Yingcong Dai, *The Sichuan Frontier and Tibet. Imperial Strategy in the Early Qing* (Seattle and London, 2009), 99–111.

7 Li Fengzhen, 'Shizhi Qingdai Xizang zhezheng guanzhi de yuanqi [Origins of the political administration of Qingtime Tibet]', *Xizang minzu xueyuan xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 2 (2010), 15–18.

elite integration. As executive agents of the central government, the *ambans* were responsible for the preservation of order, the provision of disaster relief, the maintenance of frontier defence and all diplomatic negotiations in the region. Together with the military generals (*jiangjun*) in other frontier regions of the Qing empire, the *ambans* belonged to the emperor's multiethnic corps of imperial governors. Their office reflected the dual structure of the Qing for they served simultaneously as masters of the routine processes of local administration and as trouble-shooters for the imperial centre at the periphery. As emissaries of the central government and, at the same time, heads of the local administration, the *ambans* embodied an ambiguous identity. Their leading role in local government was the result of the imperial recognition that a remote frontier region like Tibet could not be permanently secured by military means but only in cooperation with the Tibetan elites, both the lamaist leadership of the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama and the secular aristocracy.⁸

The first imperial *amban* was sent to Tibet in 1728, when a power-struggle among aristocratic factions within the Tibetan leadership had provoked the intervention of the Qing army. His main task was to monitor the local government and to back the one-man rule of the Tibetan aristocrat Polhanas (1689–1747).⁹ In 1751, the political position of the *ambans* was further strengthened when, after yet another political crisis in Lhasa, the Qing emperor decided to re-install the Dalai Lama as theocratic ruler above a council of four ministers of equal rank. As official advisers to the Dalai Lama's government, the *ambans* were more strongly involved in Tibetan affairs than before. Finally, after two invasions by the Nepalese Gurkhas, the Qianlong emperor instructed the *ambans* to interfere directly in the government of Tibet.¹⁰ The 'Twenty-Nine Article Ordinance of Government' of 1793 placed the Tibetan religious and political hierarchies under the supervision of the *amban* (who always came with a deputy, also called 'amban'). He received full authority over all administrative, political, economic, and financial affairs and a legal status equal to that of the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama.¹¹

8 Wu Fengpei and Ceng Guoqing, eds., *Qingdai zhu Zang dachen zhuanlüe* [Short biographies of the Qing ambans of Tibet] (Xuchang, 1988), 1–4; Chen Boping, 'Qingdai zhu Zang dachen de shezhi jiqi lishi zuoyong' [The establishment of the Qing amban of Tibet and his historical role], *Qinghai minzu yanjiu* 1 (2005), 79–82.

9 Chen Zhigang, 'Lun Qingdai qianqi Puoluonai zongli Zangzheng de lishi yuanyin' [Historical reasons why Polhanas ruled Tibetan politics during the early Qing period], *Shehui kexue jikan* 6 (2005), 145–150.

10 Yingcong Dai, *Sichuan Frontier*, 135–138, 145f.

11 Cao Xinbao, "'Qinding Xizang zhangcheng" de lishi jiazhi yanjiu' [Research on the historical value of the Imperial Tibet-Statut], *Jinzhong xueyuan xuebao* 1 (2008), 87–90;

All Tibetan officials had to be appointed and replaced jointly by the theocratic leaders and the *amban*. The *amban's* power of control over religious affairs included the supervision of the Tibetan monasteries and of the 'drawing of lots from the Golden Ballot-Box' for choosing higher reincarnations.¹² In the case of Tibetan defence policy, the *amban* commanded the imperial garrison forces, consisting of thirteen hundred Green Standard soldiers stationed at Lhasa. Every year he had to lead two patrol tours into the border areas.¹³ Being the sole authority in charge of Tibet's foreign relations, he was empowered to control the correspondence of the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama. The *amban* was the only person in Tibet entitled to communicate directly with the Qing emperor by way of palace memorials.¹⁴ Only through him were the two theocratic rulers of Tibet able to address the central government in Beijing.¹⁵

The implementation of such a new and extensive competence of the *amban* could be accomplished only by an experienced and loyal official. The Qianlong emperor chose Song Yun for this difficult task.¹⁶

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- Niu Lühua, 'Luelun "Qinding Xizang zhangcheng" jiqi lishi yiyi' [Concerning the historical role of the Imperial Tibet-Statut], *Qinghai minzu yanjiu* 1 (2009), 86–90; Li Fengchen, 'Shizhe Qingdai Xizang shezheng guanzhi de yuanqi' [The origins of the Qing regency administration of Tibet], *Xizang minzu xueyuan xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 2 (2010), 15–18.
- 12 Chen Qingying, 'Qingdai jinping cheqian zhidu de zhiding jiqi zai Xizang de shishi' [The creation and realisation in Tibet of the system of drawing of lots from the Golden-Box], *Xizang minzu xueyuan bao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 3 (2006), 1–7; Sun Zhenping, 'Tan Qingdai "Jinben baping" zhiqian zhidu' [The system of 'drawing lots out of the ballot-box' of the Qing period], *Zhengfa luntan* [Discussions on politics and law] 6 (1998), 108–117.
- 13 Dabringhaus, *Qing-Imperium*, 187f.
- 14 There were two ways to communicate with the imperial centre: regular memorials sent to the Qing court by officials through the Office of Transmission, with copies sent to relevant agencies, thus immediately known throughout the court, and secret memorials, which were sent by high officials and imperial bond servants directly to the emperor being opened only by the ruler personally. See F. W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900–1800* (Cambridge, Mass. 1999), 883f.
- 15 Guo Qing, 'Qingdai zhu Zang dachen guangui' [Administrative rules of the amban office in Tibet in the Qing period], *Zhongyang minzu xueyuan zangzu yanjiusuo* (1985), 171–184; Zhang Zhirong, 'Zangnei shanhou zhangcheng' ershijiu tiaode falue diwei [The legal status of the 29-articles-statut after the pacification of Tibet], *Xizang yanjiu* 1993.1, 107–115; Luo Bu, 'Xinzheng gaige yu dachen tizhi' [New politics of reform and the amban system], *Xizang daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 1 (2010), 74–83.
- 16 See Qianlong's commentary in: *Junjichu* [state council], *Lufu zouzhe (minzu lei)* [Reports of the court (peoples affairs)], 1148 (1792), *Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'anguan*, Beijing.

II

Song Yun (1752–1835) belonged to a group of special imperial appointees who were selected regardless of their rank or location in the empire as imperial trouble-shooters. Song Yun had just started his official career at the Qing court when he first caught the attention of Qianlong who transferred him to the grand secretariat (*neike*). During his long career, Song Yun came to be appointed to all conceivable senior offices of Qing frontier management—in the Northeast, in Mongolia, in Eastern Turkestan, and in Tibet.

Song Yun was born into a Mongolian banner family living north-west of Beijing. His ancestors belonged to a Mongolian tribe that was among the first to serve the Qing dynasty. Song Yun was educated in a banner school and trained as a translator. During his later career he also studied the Confucian classics. In 1776, he entered the Qing court as secretary in the Grand Council of State. Members of this important organ of the central government had frequent and direct access to the emperor. They were selected for their intelligence and their ability to handle 'high-level discretionary tasks'.

Both characteristics applied to Song Yun. His further career showed him as an agent of the centralising impulse emanating from the Qing court and as a representative of the new military emphasis during the Qianlong reign.¹⁷ After 1783, Song Yun was entrusted with various offices of great responsibility such as Supervisor of Jilin province (1783) and High Commissioner of Kunlun in Mongolia (1785), where he solved a crisis in Chinese-Russian border trade.¹⁸ In 1793, he escorted the first British diplomatic mission to China under Lord Macartney on their return journey from Beijing to Hangzhou.¹⁹

The Qianlong emperor appreciated Song Yun for his outstanding qualities as a trustworthy and honest servant of the Qing state. Only in his forties, Song Yun had already reached high official rank and gained a lot of experience in imperial frontier politics. This was the reason why, in 1794, Qianlong decided to send him as *amban* to Tibet with the special task of reforming the Tibetan government according to the imperial ordinance of 1793. During his four years in office, Song Yun introduced a whole set of reforms concerning politics,

17 Mark C. Elliott, *Emperor Qianlong. Son of Heaven, Man of the World* (New York, 2009), 86–106.

18 Zhao Ersun, ed., *Qingshi gao* [Short history of the Qing] (Beijing, 1928), Vol. 37, Chapter 342, 1113f. See also Rosemary Quedsted, *Sino-Russian Relations: A Short History* (Sydney, London, and Boston, 1984), 59.

19 J.L. Cranmer-Byng, ed., *An Embassy to China. Being the Journal Kept by Lord Macartney during the Embassy to the Emperor Ch'ien-lung, 1793–1794* (London, 1962), 160.

traditional customs, the economy, and frontier defence. His first task, however, was to convince the Tibetans that they would benefit from a stronger involvement of Qing representatives in their own affairs.

Political and Administrative Reforms

Song Yun started his reform initiative by elaborating an historical argument. He interpreted the repeated military interventions of the eighteenth century as acts of imperial benevolence.²⁰ This propaganda line echoed the Qing emperor's self-image as protector of the Buddhist world. Imperial supremacy over Tibet had been expressed through feudal titles given to the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama and manifested by the presence of an imperial standing army. Song Yun portrayed the emperor as a merciful overlord of all Tibetans, knowing that only in cooperation with the Tibetan elite would the *amban* be able to build an effective government and carry out successful reforms. With the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama he managed to establish good relations which he regarded as an important prerequisite for any successful imperial policy in Tibet. While Song Yun used the charisma of the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama to introduce his reform policies, his active role in the Tibetan government restricted the theocratic rulers, by and large, to their religious tasks in society. In a report to the emperor he explained: 'It is indeed their way that they know only how to spread the knowledge of reading the holy scriptures. Furthermore, from the beginning they had no understanding in which way to educate their subjects and to sustain them.'²¹

Supporting his reformist strategies, the *amban* used the critical post-war situation in Tibet to demonstrate the emperor's benevolence. Above all, he initiated an extensive programme of relief. Song Yun involved the Dalai Lama in this project prompting him to contribute funds from his private treasury. Throughout Tibet, the *amban* ordered the registration of the suffering population and the distribution of aid to the needy. His immediate success in performing the new key role of the imperial *amban* was based on the fact that Song Yun did not stay immured in his residence in Lhasa, as his predecessors had done, but travelled around the country and communicated with many different groups in Tibetan society.²²

20 See his memorial of May, 19th, 1795, in: Song Yun, ed., *Weizang tongzhi* [Local gazetter of Central Tibet], (Lhasa, 1982), 463f.

21 Song Yun, *Xizang tulue* [Plans and Strategies for Tibet], 1798, Wu Fengpei, ed. (Lhasa, 1982), if.

22 Dabringhaus, *Qing-Imperium*, 169–183.

According to the new constitutional framework authorised by the imperial ordinance, Song Yun strengthened institutionalisation at all levels of the administration. In order to discipline officials and to fight widespread corruption, he introduced a strict penal code. The Chinese system for ranking officials was transferred to Tibet. In contrast to China proper, Tibetan officials did not have to pass official examinations because they were not schooled in the Confucian classics. They were appointed directly by the Dalai Lama and the *amban* acting in cooperation. Though all 175 secular officials of the Tibetan government were deliberately excluded from the knowledge of Chinese Confucianism, they were ruled by imperial representatives who propagated Confucian values to educate and lead them. Most of the Tibetan officials worked at the district level. Song Yun obliged them to send regular reports and subjected them to frequent controls by his own staff.²³

However, two important contradictions weakened the reformed Tibetan government directed by an imperial *amban*: There was a *cultural* contradiction between the *amban* as a representative of the idea of a Confucian way of imperial rule and the Tibetan clerical and secular bureaucracy adhering to Lamaism. A *structural* contradiction existed between the principle of checks and balances, so successful in the governance of China proper, and the quasi-despotic position of the imperial *amban*, who himself stood outside any control or censorship, at least in a Tibetan context.

Interference with Tibetan Customs

After the Gurkha Wars (1788, 1791/92), the role of the *amban* was strengthened in order to bring peace and order to Tibet and to consolidate the region as a protective shield of the Qing empire. At the same time, the imperial representatives propagated a civilising mission for non-Han-Chinese peoples at the empire's periphery. In the eyes of an *amban*, the Tibetans belonged to the frontier peoples of the Qing empire, who were invariably categorised as 'barbarians'. Therefore, they had not only to be introduced to structures of imperial governance. They also were in need of being educated and civilised.

Two local customs in particular enraged the imperial *ambans*: the celestial burial rites and the exposing of people afflicted by smallpox. Already Song Yun's predecessor He Lin (1753–96) had strictly prohibited both customs. Cemeteries were built to prevent any further celestial burials. In order to rescue smallpox patients from starvation in the wilderness, special villages in remote areas of the country were founded and supplied with food. In the eyes of the Qing officials, these customs were evidence of the barbarian mindset of the Tibetans.

23 Dabringhaus, *Qing-Imperium*, 167f.

They were interpreted as bad behaviour and signs of weakness. Under such circumstances, no understanding and trust between the Qing representatives and Tibetans of all classes was likely to develop.

Cultural interference was also practiced vis-à-vis the Tibetan aristocracy. The Qing government banned any further discovery of reincarnations within aristocratic families. Economic privileges such as tax relief were abolished as well as the automatic rise of men of noble birth to high positions in the local government. Nevertheless, the *ambans* still had to rely on aristocrats as their main source of local officialdom. Song Yun admonished his successors to respect the secular nobility as a powerful factor in Tibetan society but also to keep them more strictly in check than had been done in the past.

Similar policies of restraint were practiced towards the Tibetan clergy, the second pillar of the Tibetan elite. Monks were even harder to place under imperial control. The invention of the ballot box for higher reincarnations was only one attempt to tighten the imperial grip.²⁴ Two additional instruments were the introduction of a ranking system for ecclesiastical officials and the imperial supervision of the private treasuries of the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama. However, Qing strategy towards Tibetan Lamaism was highly contradictory: On the one hand, Lamaism was generously supported. The Qing facilitated the expansion of monasteries, sponsored the translation and printing of religious texts, etc. On the other hand, the Qing government tried to subject religious institutions and personnel to strong imperial control.²⁵ Any form of Tibetan resistance would have been resolutely suppressed. However, no local opposition is mentioned in the sources, which are dominated by authors from the Qing government and its representatives in Tibet.

Economic Consolidation

After the Gurkha Wars, Tibet suffered badly from the effects of economic destruction by the invading army. Many Tibetans living in the frontier region had fled to Lhasa, where they formed a roaming and starving crowd of beggars. Their numbers were increased by runaway slaves and tenants, who were unable to pay rent and taxes to the three local types of landlord—monastic, noble, and governmental. The *amban* was shocked by the poverty in the Tibetan countryside. In detailed reports to the central government, Song Yun

24 In 1792, the Qing government introduced the system of choosing high lamaist reincarnations by ballot boxes to control the transfer of theocratic leadership in Tibetan society. Names of possible candidates were written on a piece of paper and thrown into a box. The selection of one slip occurred in the public to prevent manipulations.

25 Dabringhaus, *Qing-Imperium*, 154–162.

mentioned examples collected during his frequent personal investigations throughout the country:

There were more than fifty families in Ciung-tui at the beginning. Now, only eight families still live there, but taxes are continued to be demanded yearly according to the number of the original families. Originally more than a thousand families lived in one of the tributary districts of Sera; today, although only three hundred families are left, taxes and levies are collected according to the old number of families. Because this happens in all districts, the people are left in a state they cannot endure.²⁶

In order to solve both problems—the suffering of the war victims and the tax burden of the ordinary people—Song Yun introduced an economic reform programme consisting of four main measures:

- (1) The *amban* ought to control the entire tax income of the Tibetan government as well as the governmental right to distribute all tax obligations.
- (2) The tax system had to be readjusted and tax arrears cancelled.
- (3) The unpaid transportation *corvée*, the so-called ‘u-lag’, was reduced and partly transformed into paid services.
- (4) The rent system was placed under the control of the local government in order to prevent further exploitation and corruption by Tibetan landlords.²⁷

Song Yun wanted to appease Tibetan society by enforcing law, order, and stability. His economic reforms reduced aristocratic privileges and improved the living conditions of the ordinary people, from whom he tried to win loyalty towards the Qing government. This policy corresponded to the imperial strategy in China proper, where living conditions for farmers were improved in order to maintain peace and order at the local level.²⁸

Because of its extreme geographic position, Tibet depended on commercial exchange, which for a long time had been dominated by merchants from neighbouring regions in the Himalaya. The imperial *ambans* tried to redirect Tibet’s trade towards China. They introduced Tibet’s own money to replace the Nepalese currency that had been in use. Though Tibetan foreign trade with

26 Song Yun, *Weizang tongzhi*, 458.

27 Dabringhaus, *Qing-Imperium*, 177–182.

28 See Pierre-Étienne Will and R. Bin Wong, *Nourish the People. The State Civilian Granary System in China, 1650–1850* (Ann Arbor, 1991).

non-Chinese neighbours could not be totally prohibited, the Qing government placed it under restriction and severe control.²⁹

The Construction of a Tibetan Frontier Defence

Qing armies had interfered four times in Tibetan affairs during the eighteenth century: In 1718, a conflict between two Mongolian tribes, who both attempted to control Tibet, had triggered the first Qing intervention. In 1727 and in 1751, internal conflicts within the aristocratic government at Lhasa had led to two further imperial expeditions. Then, in the early 1790s, two Gurkha invasions into the Tibetan borderlands justified, in the eyes of the Qianlong emperor, yet another phase of military engagement.³⁰ The appearance of two envoys of the British-Indian government in 1774 and 1783 in Tibet indicated the growing influence of another imperial power in the Himalayan region. In the context of the confrontation of competing empires in Central Asia, Tibet's importance as a protective shield for the Qing provinces of Qinghai, Sichuan, and Yunnan grew significantly. Therefore, the Qianlong emperor decided not only to reform the Tibetan political order but also to demarcate a clear borderline protected by an imperial defence system.³¹

Tibet's own army, created by Polhanas, consisted of an untrained peasant militia ignorant of military discipline. These Tibetan soldiers had proved totally incompetent during the Gurkha Wars and had suffered heavy losses. Song Yun set up a standing army of 3,000 Tibetan soldiers commanded by six military governors who were chosen by the Dalai Lama and the *amban*. They were supported by over 1,300 Chinese Green Standard troops stationed at important strategic points throughout Tibet. In his description of the main principles of Tibet's frontier defence Song Yun emphasised the priority of domestic policy:

- (1) All kinds of trouble had to be prevented from occurring. This required the improvement of living conditions in Tibet in order to strengthen

29 Chen Zhigang, 'Qingdai Xizang yu Nanya maoyi jiqi yingxiang' [Tibet of the Qing period and the influence of trade with South Asia], *Sichuan daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue)* 2 (2012), 21–28.

30 Deng Ruiling, 'Qing Qianlong chao dierci Guoerke qin Zang zhanzheng (1791–1792) shishang de jige wenti' [Some questions in the history of the second invasion of the Gurkha in Tibet 1791–1792 during the Qianlong reign], *Zhongguo zangxue* 1 (2009), 20–30.

31 Dabringhaus, *Qing-Imperium*, 183–186. See also the two articles of Feng Zhi, 'Qingchu zhu Zang dachen tongling Qingjun jiqi tixi' [The early Qing system of commandment over the Qing army by the Tibet-Amban], *Xizang yanjiu* 1 (2009), 27–34 and 'Qingdai zhi Zang junshi zhidu de lishi pingjia' [Historical analysis of the Qing military system to rule over Tibet], *Xizang daxue xuebao (hanwen ban)* 4 (2007), 41–49.

the local society in its ability and willingness to resist any foreign invasion. It also meant the restriction and control of any cross-border movements including pilgrimages and religious exchanges with other subjects of the Qing empire.

- (2) The main force of any defence system in the region had to come from the Tibetan people themselves. Therefore, their own troops had to be trained and educated regularly in order to strengthen their combat readiness.

Song Yun travelled throughout Tibet investigating its topography and examining all strategic points. He produced some highly valuable reports and a first detailed collection of maps. His publications belong to a burgeoning body of writings on principles and practices of imperial administration in the eighteenth century.³²

Based on his growing knowledge of Tibet, Song Yun ordered regular patrol tours along the Tibetan border. The *amban* personally supervised the military manoeuvres and organised the payment and the logistic needs of his troops. Song Yun's military reforms were characterised by structural creativity and a high concern for bureaucratic sanctions. They were closely connected with his reform projects in other areas of Tibetan society. In his eyes, economic recovery and growth represented key factors of any defence strategy because only a stable society would have the strength and willingness to defend itself against foreign invasion.³³ In fact, even during the nineteenth century, when the Qing government had to concentrate on China proper, foreign troops did not enter Tibet again or were—as in the case of the Nepalese invasion of 1855—swiftly expelled by the Tibetan forces.

III

Shortly after the Qianlong emperor's death in 1799, Song Yun was recalled to Beijing. The Qing government's immediate concern turned to uprisings in China proper. The new Jiaqing emperor wanted to deploy the successful and experienced trouble-shooter Song Yun in his campaigns against the White Lotus rebels (1796–1804) in Central China.³⁴

³² Dabringhaus, *Qing-Imperium*, 119–132.

³³ Dabringhaus, *Qing-Imperium*, 194–204.

³⁴ William T. Rowe, *China's Last Empire: The Great Qing* (Cambridge, MA, 2009), 155–157.

Nineteenth Century Tibet: The Slow Retreat of the Empire

The two wars against the Gurkhas marked the end of a frontier activism that the Qing dynasty had been pursuing since the late seventeenth century. The inclusion of the Gurkha kingdom in the Qing tributary system did not stimulate further Qing interest in the Himalayan region. Qianlong's successors lost any interest in Tibet. Therefore, Song Yun's reform projects did not survive into the nineteenth century—as we learn from reports of eyewitnesses like the French traveller Abbé Huc (1813–1860).³⁵ He described Tibetan monks as parasites who exploited the poor. The lamaist elite had regained its dominant position in society. The role of the *amban* was reduced to the control of external relationships. Thus, the acting *amban* Qi Shan (died 1854) forced Huc in 1846 to leave Tibet.³⁶ Most of Song Yun's successors neglected the multiple administrative tasks attached to their office. The structural weakness of the concentration of power in the hands of an *amban* was obvious. Moreover, the *amban's* pivotal role was not supported by any durable administrative system. Qing policy had strengthened the political influence of the Tibetan clergy by providing monks with ranks and offices. During the nineteenth century, competing monastic powers increasingly filled the void left by weak and inefficient *ambans*. Although Qing rule over Tibet became progressively less effective in the nineteenth century, the Tibetan local elite of monks and aristocrats showed no interest in turning against the Qing because the dynasty had no real impact on their activities. Nevertheless, they remained loyal to the dynasty until the downfall of the Qing in 1911. One important reason for this loyalty was the successful imperial instrumentalisation and multiple promotion of the theocratic Tibetan leadership. The Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama supplied the cultural legitimation that the Qing emperor needed for securing the loyalty of the Tibetan periphery.

Qing Officials: Generalists and Trouble-Shooters of the Empire

During his five years in office as imperial *amban* of Tibet, Song Yun had introduced an unprecedented degree of administrative organisation in this far-away periphery of the Qing empire. The financial and economic aid provided by the Qing government had improved the reputation of the dynasty in the eyes of the Tibetans who remained loyal to the Manchu court until its downfall in 1911. It seems that Song Yun had successfully attained his goal of improving

35 Peter Bishop, *The Myth of Shangri-La. Tibet, Travel Writing and the Western Creation of Sacred Landscape* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1989), 63ff.

36 Evariste Régis Huc, *Travels in Tartary, Thibet and China during 1844-5-6*, Translated from French by W. Hazlitt, Vol. 2. (London, 1852), ch. 5.

the structures of local government. Backed by the social-institutional envelope of a strong dynastic centre, an efficient official was able to start a process of early-modern state-building even in a remote frontier region like Tibet. In contrast to Nayancheng, who failed in his mission to the White Lotus war and was never able afterwards to regain his former high position at court, Song Yun continued his career as an effective trouble-shooter at the periphery of the empire.

His biography demonstrates how intense the identification of a Mongol official with the Qing state could be. At the same time, his career as an imperial frontier manager proves that Qing China's centralising process during the eighteenth century was not just the product of a single autocratic will emanating from a long-lived ruler like Qianlong but also the result of initiatives taken by men of varying positions in the hierarchy and of different generations. Song Yun's career offers another example of how the Qing government used the circulation of officials around the empire to solve specific regional problems. This practice was combined with another pattern in the promotion to higher office: to move up in the Qing civil service, one had to move out from the centre to the periphery. The Ottoman strategy of having different governors for different purposes did not work in the Qing empire. Imperial agents like Song Yun had to be generalists who were confronted with a wide range of tasks of government in often different local environments.

PART TWO
Interactions



Remonstrating Against Royal Extravagance in Imperial China

Patricia Ebrey

Soon after the Wanli emperor (r. 1572–1620) came to the Ming throne as a boy of nine, his tutor Zhang Juzheng (1525–1582) compiled an illustrated book about the good and bad actions of past rulers, chronologically arranged, titled *The Emperor's Mirror, Illustrated and Discussed*.¹ It consisted of seventy-two examples of wise actions taken by kings and emperors and thirty-six examples of unwise actions. Each started with a picture, followed by a passage in classical Chinese drawn from original sources, and ended with a paraphrase and discussion of the case in vernacular language, a rare concession to the ruler's age. The examples of good and bad acts range in date from high antiquity to the Song dynasty (960–1276). The admirable practices included accepting advice, rewarding critics, dismissing flatterers, inviting scholars to lecture on the classics, paying respect to the elderly, and maintaining good relations with brothers. Many of the negative examples revolved around extravagance or self-indulgence of one sort or another, including indulging the whims of a favourite concubine, building huge palaces, giving valuables to favourites, and taking long hunting trips or other travels. Some of the acts condemned were truly evil, such as killing people for no reason; at the other extreme we find peccadillos, such as being overly fond of music or sneaking out of the palace incognito.

Let me translate three of the shorter examples. The first concerns the emperor whom Chinese scholars found easiest to condemn, the Legalist unifier of China, the First Emperor of Qin (reigned as ruler of all of China, 221–210 BCE):

The Qin histories relate: The First Emperor considered the palaces he had inherited from the earlier kings [of Qin] to be cramped, so he built palaces south of the Wei River and in Shanglin park. He first built the front hall for Epang palace. It was 400 paces east to west, and 500 feet north to south. It could accommodate ten thousand people inside, and

1 On this book see Julia K. Murray, 'From Textbook to Testimonial: The Emperor's Mirror, and Illustrated Discussion (Di jian tu shuo/Teikan Zusetsu) in China and Japan', *Ars Orientalis* 31 (2001), 65–101 and Julia K. Murray, 'Didactic Illustration in Printed Books', in Cynthia J. Brokaw and Kai-wing Chow, ed., *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley, 2005), 417–50.

in the courtyard could display banners 50 feet tall. All around it he built elevated walled walkways, planning to extend them from the palace to South Mountain, on the top of which he would put a gate tower. The elevated walkways crossed over the river to Xianyang [Palace]. Altogether he had 300 palaces, all filled with banners, musical instruments, and beautiful women, each of them assigned to a fixed place.²

After paraphrasing this passage in colloquial Chinese, Zhang Juzheng drew the moral lesson:

Since antiquity, rulers have had to treat the people's strength carefully and not lightly make use of it. By understanding the people's feelings, they can know whether they will keep or lose Heaven's Mandate. The First Emperor exhausted the people's strength to build palaces and lavishly adorn them for his own pleasure. But the hearts of the people turned away from him and they rebelled, and [his palaces] were in the end reduced to ashes by [the rebel general] Xiang Yu. Take warning!³

Clearly, any ruler who presses the people to build palaces for no purpose other than his own pleasure risks losing the people's support and even his throne.

One of the shortest passages in the *Mirror for Emperors* concerns a more recent emperor, the Tang emperor Zhongzong (r. 683–84 and 705–710), who reigned twice. Not long after taking the throne, he was deposed by his mother Empress Wu. Then twenty-two years later when he was returned to the throne, he let his wife, Empress Wei, have her way more than critics approved:

The Tang histories record: In the first month of spring [during the lantern festival], Zhongzong and his Empress Wei left the palace secretly to view the lanterns in the city.

Perhaps because the evil in this incident is not obvious, Zhang Juzheng elaborates at some length:

2 Zhang Juzheng 張居正 (1525–1582), *Dijian tushuo* 帝鑒圖說 (Beijing, 2001), 360, based on Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145?–86? BCE), *Shiji* 史記 (Beijing, 1962), 6.239, 256. On the First Emperor's palaces, see Mark Lewis, *The Construction of Space in Early China* (Albany, 2006), 171–72, and Jack Chen, *The Poetics of Sovereignty: On Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty* (Cambridge, MA, 2010), 284–87.

3 Zhang Juzheng, *Dijian tushuo*, 361.

It is highly unsuitable for someone as noble as the Son of Heaven to view lanterns in the city, to mix with low-born commoners, and moreover, to walk together with the empress. First, such acts ignore differences in rank. Second, they go against safety precautions. Third, they violate palace rules. And fourth, they are dissolute. For one action to violate four important prohibitions makes this a cautionary example for ten thousand generations!⁴

Zhang Juzheng's language here is so strong that one almost suspects that he thought Wanli would like nothing more than some time off from his duties as emperor.

The third example of royal misconduct in the *Emperor's Mirror* concerns a ninth-century Tang ruler, Jingzong (r. 824–826), who came to the throne at the age of fourteen (16 *sui*).

The Tang histories record: When Jingzong first took the throne, he would go out and amuse himself with no sense of restraint. In the palace, he would play polo and perform music. He made uncountable gifts to his attendant musicians. He also selected strong young men to stay by his side morning to night. He liked to hunt foxes, shooting them himself. Only two or three times a month would he hold audiences; consequently his top officials rarely got to bring matters to his attention.⁵

Although the illustration (fig. 1) puts its emphasis on playing polo in the palace grounds, the text itself does not distinguish among Jingzong's offenses, suggesting that they were all equally bad: a ruler who spent his time with boon companions (rather than his much older officials) would waste his time on amusements, such as playing polo within the palace grounds and hunting outside them, while avoiding the officials trying to govern for him. Even his enjoyment of music was detrimental because it led him to spend exorbitantly on musicians. Zhang Juzheng, in his elaboration, pointed out that Jingzong was assassinated after only two years on the throne. He added that it was a great pity that Jingzong had not studied hard when he was young and so was misled by petty people.

4 Zhang Juzheng, *Dijian tushuo*, 441, based on Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086), *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (Beijing, 1956), 209.6639.

5 Zhang Juzheng, *Dijian tushuo*, 455, based on Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, 243.7833, 7851.



FIGURE 1 'Playing Polo in the Palace Grounds.' From the *Dijian tushuo* (1573) Hou 82, East Asian Library and Gest Collection, Princeton University.



I have started with a primer for a sixteenth-century boy emperor because I want to underline that the ideas I discuss in this essay were still considered eternal truths in the early modern period. Although the ideas can be traced back to the Warring States (403–221 BCE) and the Han period (206 BCE–220 CE), Zhang Juzheng and other Confucian scholar-officials still considered them of utmost importance in the late Ming.

Zhang Juzheng felt authorised to address the emperor in this moralising way because of the long tradition of royal remonstrance. Chinese rulers, like rulers elsewhere, were frequently flattered, but admonishing them was considered a much nobler activity.⁶ The *Analects* quotes Confucius as saying no one is truly loyal to another unless he admonishes him (14.8), and Mencius said the person who loves his lord restrains him (1.2). In the primer for Wanli, Zhang Juzheng picks up on these ideas when he declares that loyal officials urge their rulers to be frugal and restrained, even when the ruler does not want to hear their message. Those who tell the ruler what he wants to hear and encourage his wilfulness are treacherous and can do unlimited harm.⁷

The Chinese critique of royal extravagance and pleasure-seeking is relevant in more than one way to the effort to think comparatively about Chinese and European courts in the early modern period. The force of this rhetoric may have moderated the actions of Chinese rulers, who seem to have spent proportionally less on magnificence than European rulers did. They also spent less of their time travelling and as a consequence were seen by their subjects less often. From the tenth century on, non-Han dynasties ruled substantial parts of north China (the Kitan Liao and Jurchen Jin dynasties) and twice all of China (the Mongol Yuan and Manchu Qing dynasties), and their rulers were regularly on the move. Maintaining their traditions as mounted warriors, they took frequent trips to hunt, lead armies, or move among their multiple capitals. The Chinese dynasties of the same era, the Song (960–1276) and Ming (1368–1644) dynasties, were different. Song and Ming court officials worked hard to keep their rulers inside the palace grounds and out of view. Equally important, the critique of royal extravagance shaped how royal activities were discussed and recorded during these dynasties. Historians of Chinese courts thus need to know when accusations of extravagance can be taken literally and when they

6 On the early history of remonstrance, see David Schaberg, 'Remonstrance in Eastern Zhou Historiography', *Early China* 22 (1997), 133–79. For a famous forthright critic, see Howard J. Wechsler, *Mirror to the Son of Heaven: Wei Cheng at the Court of Tang T'ai-tsung* (New Haven, 1974). For the institutional basis of remonstrance in the Ming, see Charles O. Hucker, *The Censorial System of Ming China* (Stanford, 1966).

7 Zhang Juzheng, *Dijian tushuo*, 469.

should be understood as political gestures. They also need to recognise which types of royal expenditures would be less likely to evoke charges of extravagance. Spending on a lavish but classically sanctioned ritual was an approved way to add lustre to the throne, but long trips to visit relatives or scenic spots were not.

Rhetoric

The trope of the ruler who loses his throne because of his personal indulgence was an ancient one. In the classic commentary, the *Zuo zhuan*, even an interest in fashionable dress or decorated carriages could lead to the destruction of a state, never mind grandiose construction projects requiring conscripted labour.⁸ In the *Analects*, Confucius eulogises the ancient sage king Yu because he was frugal to the point of parsimony:

The Master said, 'I can find no fault with Yu. He was sparing in his food and drink, yet served the spirits and gods with utmost filial piety. His ordinary clothes were shabby, but his sacrificial garments and hats were of the finest beauty. He lived in humble rooms and halls, devoting his entire energy to opening irrigation ditches and channels. I can find no fault with Yu.' (8.21)

Yu, thus, would not dream of building himself an elegant palace when there still was much he could do that would directly help the common people, such as constructing waterworks.

The early thinker who put the greatest weight on frugality was Mozi (fifth century BCE), who charged that when the ruler decorates his houses, carriages, and clothing, he not only takes from his hard-working subjects to pay for ostentation, but also encourages others to imitate him, resulting in even more hardship, since ordinary people in the end supply everything. All a building really needs is to keep out wind, rain, and cold; yet rulers of his day put heavy tax demands on the people so that they can 'make palaces, dwellings, towers and pavilions of intricate appearance, and to adorn them with green and yellow engravings.'⁹ Mozi's own influence declined after a couple of centuries, but his critique of extravagance was largely absorbed into Confucianism.

8 David Schaberg, *A Patterned Past: Form and Thought in Early Chinese Historiography* (Cambridge, MA, 2001), 224–28.

9 Ian Johnston, trans., *The Mozi: A Complete Translation* (New York, 2010), 39.

The emperor most frequently cited for his excessive building was the First Emperor of Qin. Despite the opprobrium heaped on him, several later rulers built with comparable abandon, including the second Sui emperor, Yangdi (r. 604–618). In justifying building a second capital at Luoyang, Yangdi embraced the discourse against extravagance and asserted that frugality would characterise his construction project. The *Sui History*, nevertheless, asserts that the official given charge of the project knew that Yangdi did not really want something modest, so he designed the city to be ‘absolutely splendid and spectacular’, to Yangdi’s great joy.¹⁰ The eleventh-century historian Sima Guang (1019–1086) wrote of Yangdi:

Not a single day passed without the emperor getting involved in some palace project. Although there were numerous parks, gardens, pavilions and basilicas in the two capitals and the Jiangdu area, [Yangdi] grew tired of them over time. When he toured these places for pleasure, he would look right and left. Not satisfied with any of these, he would be at a loss where to go. In consequence, he gathered maps of mountains and rivers under Heaven, and personally examined them, in search of places of beauty for palaces and parks.¹¹

Many memorials were written over the centuries to urge royal moderation or even austerity. The emperor was directly addressed in the memorials, but the intended audience included other officials and the educated class more generally. Memorials could be read in the widely circulated court gazette. They were also included in officials’ collected writings and outstanding examples were published elsewhere as well. In 1416, for instance, a 350-chapter compilation of hundreds of model memorials was published.¹²

Sometimes emperors adopted the rhetoric of royal moderation themselves. The second Tang emperor, Taizong (r. 626–649), who killed his elder brother and deposed his father to take the throne, worked hard to present himself as a conscientious, morally aware ruler. In the preface to a series of poems he wrote, he associates imperial extravagance with the ruin of empires, singling out construction projects and travels as especially ruinous:

10 Victor Cunrui Xiong, *Emperor Yang of the Sui Dynasty: His Life, Times, and Legacy* (Albany, 2006), 78–79.

11 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, 181.5639; trans., Xiong, *Emperor Yang*, 102.

12 Yang Shiqi 楊士奇 (1365–1444), *Lidai mingchen zouyi* 歷代名臣奏議 (Siku quanshu ed.).

Back in the days of the [ancient sage kings] the Yellow Emperor [Xuan], Fuxi [Hao], Shun, and Yu, there were truly no failings whatsoever. But when it came to the Qin Emperor and King Mu of Zhou, then to Han Wudi and Wei Mingdi, their lofty domes and graven walls showed the utmost excess and decoration in the extreme. Their taxes and exactions depleted the universe; the tracks of their carriages covered the whole world. China's nine regions had no way to meet their exactions, and all the rivers and seas could not satiate their desires. Was it not fitting that they were overthrown and collapsed in ruin?¹³

Taizong also wrote about the reasons to avoid extravagance and uphold frugality in his *Plan for an Emperor*, addressed to his heir. Two of the twelve injunctions were to guard against excess and esteem frugality. Among the examples of activities to avoid are travelling for pleasure, adding decoration to either clothing or buildings, and stocking hunting parks. Properly modest rulers are satisfied with buildings made of rough-hewn timbers and roofs of thatch. Unchecked desires invariably lead to ruin.¹⁴

Naturally, there were also cultural logics that encouraged rulers to spend lavishly on palaces. With the unified empire, the palace came to stand for the centre of the empire and even the centre of the cosmos. Given their symbolic role, palaces needed to be as grand as the empire. The Han dynasty rulers who followed the First Emperor in time built palace complexes that would rival the First Emperor's.¹⁵ The great historian Sima Qian, writing about 100 BCE, recorded a conversation between the first Han emperor and his chief minister concerning the construction of his palace. When the emperor objected to the excessive scale of the project during a time of war, the minister reportedly told him that creating an impressive palace would help stabilise his rule. 'It is precisely because the fate of the empire is not yet settled that we need to build palaces and halls like these. The true Son of Heaven treats the four quarters as his family estate. If he does not dwell in magnificent quarters, he will have no way to display his authority, nor will he establish the foundation for his heirs to

13 Stephen Owen, 'The Difficulty of Pleasure', *Extrême-Orient, Extrême-Occident* 20 (1998), 9–30 (quote at 15). In a similar vein, Chen, *Poetics of Sovereignty*, 76, translates a passage in which Taizong is quoted as saying that the rulers' immoderate desires lead to oppressive taxation and eventually to the ruin of the state.

14 Denis Twitchett, 'How to be an Emperor: T'ang T'ai-tsung's Vision of His Role', *Asia Major* 3rd series 9 (1996), 1–102, esp. 76–79.

15 See Chen, *Poetics of Sovereignty*, 287–91; Wu Hung, *Monumentality in Early Chinese Art and Architecture* (Stanford, 1995), 165–76, Lewis, *The Construction of Space*, 177–78.

build on.¹⁶ These sorts of justifications did not work in the case of ‘detached’ palaces outside the city walls, sometimes at a considerable remove, more commonly associated with pleasure-seeking.¹⁷ When Tang Taizong planned a trip to one of his detached palaces, a court official objected, ‘Excursions to visit detached palaces were the deeds of the Qin emperor and Han Wudi and certainly not the behaviour of [the ancient sage kings] Yao, Shun, Yu and Tang.’¹⁸

It would be easy to offer many more examples of complaints about overly ornate or costly palaces, but the other charges in the *Emperor’s Mirror* are also worth some discussion. The second one cited above concerned an emperor sneaking out to amuse himself and mix with people at the Lantern Festival. Incognito excursions are recorded for many rulers, but I have not found any writers who justify the practice. No one argued that the ruler who wanted to know what people really thought should disguise himself to mingle with them. Rulers attracted to the lively amusement quarters were especially suspect. Even if the ruler was merely trying to visit one of his officials without all the bother of going with a large retinue, officials would object. In the early twelfth century, a censor was quick to condemn Huizong (r. 1100–1125) when he learned that the emperor had visited his grand councillor Cai Jing in his home five or six times in the past year. The emperor should never leave the palace without a full formal retinue.¹⁹ It was a cliché for officials or the emperor to say that he lived behind nine layers of walls and could not witness everything that went on in the empire. Finding surreptitious ways to see more for himself, however, was not an acceptable solution. Rather, an emperor should depend on his officials to serve as his eyes and ears.

Most royal excursions were not done in secret, of course. Trips taken with a full complement of guards and retainers could be justified on several grounds: to lead troops into battle, to review troops in peacetime, to make inspections of local conditions, and to hunt, though even these reasons could provoke protest. Because the classics refer positively to ‘tours of inspection’, such tours offered the best excuse for an excursion. Mencius holds up for admiration the Son of Heaven who makes tours of inspection to the lands of his vassals so that he can see for himself ‘if new lands are being reclaimed and the fields well cultivated, if the old are cared for and the good and wise honoured, and

16 Cited in Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Cambridge Illustrated History of China*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2010), 67.

17 On Tang detached palaces, see Chen, *Poetics of Sovereignty*, 283, 293–95, 348–49.

18 Chen, *Poetics of Sovereignty*, 293.

19 Tuo Tuo 脫脫 (1313–1355) et al. ed., *Song shi* 宋史 (Beijing, 1977), 352.11128–9.

men of distinction are in positions of authority.²⁰ Mencius is offering an idealised vision of the way true kings travelled that was at the same time a critique of more usual practices of his day. In the *Record of Ritual*, the Son of Heaven makes a tour of the fiefs every fifth year, going in a different direction in each season.²¹ The *Bohu tongyi*, of 79 CE, adds the qualification that such tours are made only after 'great peace' is attained.²²

Confucian critics judged some emperors' tours excessive. Again an extreme case was the First Emperor, who travelled back and forth across the newly unified country, in the end expiring on one of his journeys. After the second reunification in 589, Sui Yangdi (r. 604–618) became almost as great a traveller. Arthur Wright characterised Yangdi as a restless man who abhorred routine and loved travel. He reportedly criticised the rulers of the Southern Dynasties for not making tours of inspection: 'They sat in the innermost palaces without ever meeting their people face to face', as though they were women.²³ In 605 Yangdi travelled by boat to Yangzhou on a huge, four-deck dragon boat, accompanied by thousands of lesser ships, the procession reportedly extending about 100 km and requiring 80,000 men to tow. After his return, he took an overland trip to the northern border to meet with the khan of the Turks, finding many opportunities to go hunting on the way.²⁴ The early Tang emperors were not quite as active in touring and tried their best to make their trips seem acts of benevolence. On some of his trips, Taizong made gifts of grain and silk to the elderly, widows, widowers, orphans, and the childless. Emperors on the road also would sometimes pardon crimes, remit taxes, and visit the elderly.²⁵ Still, in 669 when Gaozong proposed a lengthy trip west into Gansu, his officials said such a tour would not be appropriate. When he countered that the classics said he should take a tour every five years, most of his officials fell silent, but one did step forward to say that, by touring, the emperor would be putting too great a burden on his soldiers, still recovering from the Korea

20 *Mencius* VI 2.7.

21 James Legge, trans., *Li Chi, Book of Rites*. 2 vols. (New York, 1967 reprint of Oxford 1885 Sacred Books of the East ed.), 1:217. A similar passage is found in the *Book of Documents*. See James Legge, trans., *The Chinese Classics* (Hong Kong, 1961 reprint of Oxford, 1865–1895 ed.), 3:35–37.

22 Tjan Tjoe Som, trans., *Po hu t'ung: The Comprehensive Discussions in the White Tiger Hall*, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1952), 501–2.

23 Arthur F. Wright, *The Sui Dynasty* (New York, 1978), 165.

24 Xiong, *Emperor Yang*, 35–42.

25 Howard J. Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk: Ritual and Symbol in the Legitimation of the Tang Dynasty* (New Haven, 1985), 166.

campaign, and also on the thinly settled population of the area, who would have to supply provisions.²⁶

Another legitimate reason for rulers to leave the capital was to perform rituals in distant places. In Han times, such rituals took rulers in several directions, with the longest journey to Mount Tai in Shandong to perform the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices.²⁷

Hunting trips are in some ways special cases. According to Thomas Allsen, 'the vast majority of the royal houses and aristocracies of Eurasia made some use of the chase in the pursuit and maintenance of their social and political power.'²⁸ In Chinese rhetoric, however, these events were still problematic, even though they are mentioned in the classics. According to David Keightley, the Shang king 'displayed his power by frequent travel, hunting, and inspecting along the pathways of his realm . . . sacrificing to the local spirits, giving and receiving power at each holy place, and thus renewing the religious and kin ties that bound the state together.'²⁹ By Han times, however, criticisms of royal hunting were regularly voiced. Sima Xiangru expressed his objections to the hunting parties of Emperor Wu.³⁰ He also wrote a rhapsody on the imperial hunt which first describes its joys but then points out its negative side:

Gallop and riding all day long,
Tiring the spirit, straining the body,
Exhausting the utility of carriages and horses,
Sapping the energy of officers and men,
Wasting the wealth of treasuries and storehouses,
While depriving the people of generous beneficence;
Striving only for selfish pleasure;
Not caring for the common people,
Ignoring the administration of the state,

26 Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk*, 165–67.

27 See Mark Edward Lewis, 'The Feng and Shan Sacrifices of Emperor Wu of the Han', in Joseph P. McDermott, ed., *State and Court Ritual in China* (Cambridge, UK, 1999), 50–80.

28 See Thomas T. Allsen, *The Royal Hunt in Eurasian History* (Philadelphia, 2006), 14.

29 David Keightley, 'The Late Shang State: When, Where, and What?', in David Keightley, ed., *The Origins of Chinese Civilization* (Berkeley, 1983), 523–564, here 552. For Western Zhou, see Herrlee G. Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China: The Western Chou Empire* (Chicago, 1970), 389–96.

30 Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, 117.3053–54.

Craving only a catch of pheasants or hares:
These are things a benevolent ruler would not do.³¹

Condemnation of hunting as pleasure-seeking was often mixed with condemnation of the waste of land set aside for huge hunting parks and stocked with animals, especially the Shanglin (Supreme Forest) park initiated by the First Emperor and expanded under Han Wudi to a circumference of about 100 km (200 *li*). It had woods, streams, marshes, ponds, observation towers, palatial lodges, trees of all kinds, rare animals, including elephants and camels, and a staff of game keepers. Even at the time the court official Dongfang Shuo argued that the park was too large, its facilities too extensive, and that such lavish expenditure often brought ruin.³² A tactic for remonstrating with the ruler developed in this period was to describe something in such elaborate detail that what appeared to be praise was at the same time a warning to the ruler.³³

A century later Yang Xiong criticised Emperor Wu's imperial hunting on the grounds that the hunting lodges, the carts and horses, the weapons, all were 'excessively ostentatious and grandiose.'³⁴ In the Later Han period, a critic described the emperor's hunting as 'wanton wilfulness.' He claimed that the moral heroes Yao and the Duke of Zhou had warned against 'idle excursions' and finding pleasure in hunting trips.³⁵

Similar objections were voiced many times during the Tang and Song periods.³⁶ Wei Zheng, in 640, was brought along on one of Taizong's hunting

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- 31 David R. Knechtges, *Wen Xuan or Selections of Refined Literature by Xiao Tong*, vol. 2 (Princeton, 1987), 113.
- 32 See Edward H. Schafer, 'Hunting Parks and Animal Enclosures in Ancient China', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 11 (1968), 318–43; Allsen, *Royal Hunt*, 41–46.
- 33 David R. Knechtges, 'The Emperor and Literature: Emperor Wu of the Han', in Frederick P. Brandauer and Chun-chieh Huang, ed., *Imperial Rulership and Cultural Change in Traditional China* (Seattle, 1994), 51–76; idem, 'Criticism of the Court in Han Dynasty Literature', in Lin Yaofu, ed., *Selected Essays on Court Culture in a Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Taipei, 1999), 51–77.
- 34 Knechtges, 'Criticism of the Court', 56. The rhapsody concerned a hunt held in 10 BCE by Emperor Cheng, which is contrasted with Emperor Wu's, but still is described as lavish, until the emperor turns away from extravagance. See Knechtges, *Wen Xuan*, 2: 115–36.
- 35 Yang Shiqi, *Lidai mingchen zouyi* 歷代名臣奏議, 287.1b; cf. Michael G. Chang, *A Court on Horseback: Imperial Touring and the Construction of Qing Rule, 1680–1785* (Cambridge, MA, 2007), 47.
- 36 Yang Shiqi, *Lidai mingchen zouyi*, 287.5bff.

trips and used the occasion to criticise the practice of hunting, bringing up Sima Xiangru's protests and adding that a ruler who put the country first would not indulge himself in that way.³⁷ In 725, when Emperor Xuanzong took time out to hunt on a trip to the sacred Mount Tai, an official objected because the emperor was exposing himself to danger.³⁸ In 1101, during Huizong's second year on the throne, a censor warned Huizong against hunting. He reported that he had heard a rumour that someone had entered the Rear Garden with falcons for hunting birds. 'How could a ruler who is benevolent busy himself with going hunting?' He shouldn't have the leisure to seek the pleasure of hunting. As the censor saw it, the only justification for hunting in the classics is to obtain meats for ancestral offerings. Not only is the activity dangerous, it is also expensive. 'When someone gets a bird, there is a lot of congratulating and gift-giving, ignoring expense.' Such extravagance shows no respect for the hard work of ordinary people, the source of all government funds. He told the story that the Tang founder Gaozu loved to ride and shoot. A critic submitted a remonstrance that said this was merely something that young princes should do. 'Since you are the emperor, should you still be doing it?' The censor concluded his memorial by urging the ruler to do his hunting in the fields of benevolence and righteousness and to take his excursions in the gardens of the Six Classics.³⁹

Arguments against hunting and other pleasure trips draw not only on the distrust of pleasure, already discussed, but also on ideas about how to manage the ruler. Already in the Warring States period, political thinkers were discussing how court officials could manage the ruler and limit the damage an inept ruler could cause. Yuri Pines, in *Envisioning Eternal Empire: Chinese Political Thought of the Warring States Era*, argues that in the third century BCE, some political thinkers who saw an absolute monarch as essential still wanted ways to keep him from active involvement in policy-making. 'Just like his teacher, Xunzi, Han Feizi promulgates the vision of the ruler, whose symbolic presence is important but whose personal impact should be reduced to the minimum.'⁴⁰ Han Feizi turns the ruler into a 'nullity, a non-persona', with no 'possibility of exercising his true will.' Pines sees the resulting contradiction between the

37 Wu Jing 吴兢, *Zhenquan zhengyao* 真觀政要 (Siku quanshu ed.), 10.7b–8b.

38 Yang Shiqi, *Lidai mingchen zouyi*, 287.5a.

39 Zhao Ruyu 趙汝愚 (1140–1196), *Songchao zhuchen zouyi* 宋朝諸臣奏議 (Shanghai, 1999), 11.101–3.

40 Yuri Pines, *Envisioning Eternal Empire: Chinese Political Thoughts of the Warring States Era* (Honolulu, 2009), 105–6.

ruler's theoretical omnipotence and the limits on his political involvement as a source of tension that 'plagued the Chinese empire ever afterward.'⁴¹

One way to keep a ruler from active policy-making was to convince him of the superiority of ruling through non-action (*wuwei*). As Mark Lewis notes, in the *Laozi*, several passages suggest that 'the ruler, the sage, and the Way are powerful because they are hidden from the knowledge of ordinary men.' Han Feizi, similarly, argues that the ruler can protect himself by concealing himself and his desires.⁴² The First Emperor adopted these ideas and went further than anyone before or after him in keeping out of sight. He had elevated walkways built so that he could walk from one palace to another without revealing his location. He even decreed death to anyone who revealed his location. Lewis remarks that this 'withdrawal of the emperor from the gaze of the populace and even of the court became a principle of imperial political power. Throughout the imperial era, the Chinese ruler was sequestered behind a series of walls.'⁴³ Michael Nylan suggests that keeping the Han ruler out of sight might have been in part because 'the ruler invisible' 'can be all things to all people' and also that 'the hidden ruler' motif might have been 'devised to screen from view the everyday realities of the Han court', such as power in the hands of maternal relatives.⁴⁴ One probably should distinguish between cases like the First Emperor, who himself chose to remain concealed, and later emperors who were pressured to stay inside the palace complex by their court officials and would themselves have happily moved about more freely, either openly or incognito.

When Song and Ming officials opposed imperial travel, they could make several sorts of arguments. One was that unforeseen events might occur which those attending the emperor could not fully control. In other words, the emperor might be accidentally injured or even killed. After all, the closer the emperor got to subjects the more difficult it would be to prevent assassination plots. Besides these worries that critics could openly cite, they often seem to have had other concerns. A ruler who saw conditions outside the capital region might form his own opinions and want to change routines in ways officials might not approve. The more varied the experience of the emperor, the harder

41 Pines, *Envisioning Eternal Empire*, 25–111, quote at 14.

42 Lewis, *Construction of Space*, 155.

43 See Mark Edward Lewis, *The Early Chinese Empires: Qin and Han* (Cambridge, MA, 2007), 79–80.

44 Michael Nylan, 'The Rhetoric of 'Empire' in the Classical Era in China', in Fritz-Heiner Mutschler and Achim Mittag, ed., *Conceiving the Empire in China and Rome Compared* (Oxford, 2008), 39–64, here 59.

he might be to manage. Court officials who did not want to get the country into war seem to have worried that a ruler with a taste for hunting might relish the chance to go to war. Thomas Allsen argues that Tang officials decried the chase in order to prevent ‘emperors from spending extended periods away from the capital and the influence of the literati, and spending it in the company of “undesirables”—military men, frontier officials, and foreigners.’⁴⁵

Practice

Did the long tradition of cautioning rulers about their tendencies toward extravagance and self-indulgence have any impact on royal behaviour? Especially when an author seemed merely to be repeating time-worn arguments, it would be easy for the sovereign to tolerate the criticism but then do as he pleased. Strong emperors—especially dynastic founders—would not have found these objections much of an impediment to pursuing their own plans. This discourse of frugality certainly had an impact on what emperors said (or officials said drafting their edicts), which we have seen already in the pronouncements of Tang Taizong.

Still, I think there may have been some impact on what rulers did. In Song and Ming times both palaces and excursions seem to have been scaled back considerably. After the extensive palace-building of Han Wudi, the palace complex in Chang’an seems to have reached the size of about 5 km².⁴⁶ The Tang palace complex was even larger. Chang’an’s Palace City was 4.2 km² before Daming Palace was built, and 7.5 km² afterwards.⁴⁷ The Northern Song palace in Kaifeng, by contrast, amounted to only about 0.4 km² until 1113 when Huizong built an addition to the north, expanding the palace grounds to perhaps 0.6 km². Moreover, Song did not have any detached palaces like Tang had. By and large, the Ming and Qing dynasties kept their Beijing palaces to the scale of Song ones (the Beijing Forbidden City is 0.72 km²), though there were also summer palaces.

What about imperial travel? The objections of court officials did not keep emperors from sneaking out, though it is likely that they had officials or eunuchs helping them. Certainly when they left to visit an official at his home, that official was cooperating. Publicly recognised travel seems to have been

45 Allsen, *Royal Hunt*, 109. See also Chen, *Poetics of Sovereignty*, 35–36.

46 See the map in Wu Hung, *Monumentality*, 150.

47 Heng Chye Kiang, *Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats: The Development of Medieval Chinese Cityscapes* (Honolulu, 1999), 137.

more extensive in the earlier Chinese dynasties (again, not counting non-Chinese dynasties). In Former Han times, emperors from Wudi on did quite a bit of travelling, despite officials' protests. They often left the palace to go hunting or travelled to other parts of the country for any of a number of reasons, with leading troops, moving to another palace, and visiting holy places probably the most common. Michael Loewe mentions trips by Emperor Wu in 134, 122, 119, 116, 113, 110, 108, 107, 106, 104, 102, 100, 99, 98, 94, 93, 90, 89, 88 BCE and by his successors in 61, 56, 55, 45, 44, 40, 39, 38, 37 BCE. In some of these years there were multiple trips.⁴⁸ Later Han emperors also took many trips, even several decades after the founding. One emperor died on a tour in 125 CE.⁴⁹ In Tang times, with two capitals (Chang'an and Luoyang) that were regularly used, moving from one capital to the other was a recurrent reason for major expeditions. The Tang rulers also had detached palaces at a considerable distance from the capitals that they visited with some regularity. In the early Tang, in Howard Wechsler's view, the political return on such imperial tours made them worthwhile. People in the regions traversed would see or hear about 'the glorious transit of the Son of Heaven, in magnificent train, making solicitous inquiries about the disadvantaged or freely dispensing largesse, and evoking potent images of and identification with revered political ancestors, who, in the course of performing similar rituals, had also passed this way so long ago.'⁵⁰

Dynasties were, of course, not founded by cloistered emperors—they were founded by military men who had campaigned across the realm, defeating rivals far and near. The first three Song emperors did travel. Taizu (r. 960–976) and Taizong (r. 976–997) were generals and subjugating the other rival states took much of their energy. Zhenzong was raised in the palace, but made several trips outside of the capital district—in 1004 to Shanyuan, nominally at least to lead the troops resisting the Khitan, in 1008 to Mount Tai to perform the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices, in 1111 to Fenyin to sacrifice to earth, and in 1114 to Bozhou to visit the shrine to Laozi there.⁵¹ Subsequent emperors did much less travelling. In 1047, when Renzong (r. 1022–1063) wanted to go out hunting a

48 Michael Loewe, *The Men Who Governed Han China* (Leiden, 2004), 569, 605–6.

49 Hans Bielenstein, 'The Restoration of the Han Dynasty, Part IV: The Government', *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 51 (1979), 41–49.

50 Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk*, 161, 169.

51 See Lau Nap-yin and Huang K'uan-chung, 'Founding and Consolidation of the Sung Dynasty under T'ai-tsu (960–976), T'ai-tsung (976–997), and Chen-tsung (997–1022)', in Denis Twitchett and Paul Jakob Smith, ed., *The Cambridge History of China* vol. 5, part one, *The Sung Dynasty and Its Precursors, 907–1279* (Cambridge, UK, 2009) 206–278, here 260–72.

second time, many officials submitted memorials objecting till he finally cancelled his plans.⁵² From Renzong on, the Song emperors largely stayed in the capital and its environs. The Song officially had four capitals, one for each of the cardinal directions, but the emperors did not pay regular visits to them, remaining in the Eastern Capital, Kaifeng, for decades at a time. Officials tried to negate the rhetoric of the kingly 'tour of inspection', which they declared a practice of high antiquity that could not be restored. In their own day, they asserted, inspections were carried out by specially appointed officials.⁵³ This was true even though in the larger society travel had become quite common in Song times. Literati and officials travelled to the capital for schooling, to take civil service examinations, and if successful to posts anywhere in the country. They also enjoyed tourism, taking side trips to notable places, often for the scenery or historical associations.⁵⁴ In Song and Ming times, the emperor was being denied the sorts of experiences that had become common for the elite of his land.

In Ming times, similarly, the founder, the Hongwu emperor (r. 1368–1398), and his fourth son, the Yongle emperor (r. 1402–1424), were military men who did not stay put. Yongle made Beijing the main capital, but made regular visits to Nanjing, reduced to the secondary capital, and spent much of his time on the road. Ming emperors were proud enough of their hunts and military campaigns that they had paintings made showing them far from the palace accompanied by large retinues. Nevertheless, Ming court officials tried to discourage travel, especially after the Zhengtong emperor (r. 1436–1449) took to the field with his army and was captured by the Mongols. When his successor wanted to travel, officials expressed concerns about his safety and the strain his trips put on the populace. In 1519, 146 high officials protested when the Zhengde emperor (r. 1506–1521) wanted to lead an army; in the end eleven of the protesters were executed.⁵⁵

52 Li Tao 李燾 (1115–1184), *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑒長編 (Beijing, 1985), 160.3866–67; Zhao Ruyu, *Songchao zhuchen zouyi*, 11.95–96.

53 Xu Song 徐松 (1781–1848) et al., *Song huiyao jigao* 宋會要輯稿 (Beijing, 1957), Zhiguan 2.13.

54 Cong Ellen Zhang, *Transformative Journeys: Travel and Culture in Song China* (Honolulu, 2011).

55 Chang, *Empire on Horseback*, 65–70. See also Susan Naquin, *Peking: Temples and City Life, 1400–1900* (Berkeley, 2000), 151–52. For some paintings, see Craig Clunas, *Empire of Great Brightness: Visual and Material Cultures of Ming China, 1368–1644* (Honolulu, 2007), 161–167, 168.

Ray Huang, in *1587: A Year of No Significance*, emphasises the constraints on Ming emperors' mobility. He notes that bureaucrats shared 'the notion that the emperor's place was in the palace', and by 1500 were remarkably successful in curbing imperial travel. The eleventh Ming emperor, Jiaqing (r. 1521–1566), who was not raised in the palace but adopted as an heir after reaching adulthood, was able to visit his birthplace in 1539, but never left the capital during the subsequent twenty-seven years. His successor, the Longqing emperor (r. 1566–1572), in his six years on the throne got away from the capital only once for a four-day trip to the imperial tombs. His successor, the Wanli emperor, did make a few trips to the imperial tombs in his earlier years, but during the last thirty-one years of his reign never left Beijing.⁵⁶ Ray Huang characterises him as 'less the Ruler of All men than a prisoner of the Forbidden City'. He described 'an effort to dehumanise the monarchy' since the bureaucracy 'needed only a cloistered sovereign to act as its presiding officer.'⁵⁷

Keeping emperors within the palace complex also meant that ordinary subjects did not get to see them. Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), in the early seventeenth century, was struck by how little the residents of Beijing saw the Ming emperor. Concerned about safety, 'the kings of modern times abandoned the custom of going out in public.' In the past when the ruler had made rare excursions, he was hidden from public view in one of many sedan chairs, and secret service men secured his route. 'One would think he was making a journey through enemy country rather than through multitudes of his own subjects and clients.'⁵⁸

How could a ruler who sought magnificence get around the rhetoric of royal frugality? Given this rhetoric and the bureaucratic techniques to render emperors harmless, what could a ruler who wanted to display his greatness do? There were certain strategies widely available to emperors and their advisors. The most direct was to make use of the more spectacular of the rituals specified for kings in the classics and laid out in detail in successive dynasties' ritual codes. When these involved the transit of the emperor, they were done in a very visible and colourful way. The grandest sacrificial offering ceremony was the sacrifice to Heaven held at the winter solstice in an altar in the southern suburbs. In Song times about twenty thousand men participated in the procession, most

56 Ray Huang, *1587: A Year of No Significance* (New Haven, 1981), 121.

57 Huang, *1587*, 93, 86.

58 Louis J. Gallagher, trans., *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci: 1583–1610* (New York, 1953), 88.

wearing bright colours.⁵⁹ Even within the palace there were opportunities to make a great show. The New Year's audience involved banqueting for hundreds of officials and foreign envoys, with an orchestra and dancers all providing entertainment. Rituals were not the only avenue for demonstrating greatness. Ambitious emperors could sponsor literary projects or assemble collections, in both cases creating something that would outlast them and add lustre to their reputation.⁶⁰ The many Buddhist and Daoist temples built in the capital by the throne provided royal grandeur that ordinary people would have opportunities to observe.⁶¹

Implications

By way of conclusion, let me consider the historiographical implications of the rhetoric against royal extravagance. The first is to recognise that Chinese authors rarely wrote positively about royal magnificence. Actions that may well have been motivated by the desire for magnificence had to be framed differently. If one wanted to praise the emperor, acts such as building new palaces had to be presented as ways to fulfil obligations to the ancestors, display virtue, perform rituals, 'recover antiquity', and the like. If one wanted to criticise the ruler, of course, such acts could be called profligate and extravagant.

One should be careful not to assume that the surviving memorials criticising the spending habits of a ruler are a good sign of how much he in fact spent. The truly loyal subject/minister should do his best to urge restraint on his ruler, no matter how cautious the ruler might already be. Officials in posts where admonishing the ruler was part of the job would warn even quite circumspect rulers against doing anything dangerous or costly. Thus the number of extant memorials warning against extravagance usually has more to do with the fame or literary ability of the author and the tolerance of the ruler for criticism than with his spending habits. To give an example, the fourth Song emperor, Renzong, was considered the most tractable of Song emperors, respectful to his officials and willing to listen to lectures on the Confucian classics. Zhang Juzheng, in the *Emperor's Mirror*, includes nine examples of Renzong's good practices, putting him second after Tang Taizong in admirable traits. Perhaps

59 Patricia Ebrey, 'Taking Out the Grand Carriage: Imperial Spectacle and the Visual Culture of Northern Song Kaifeng', *Asia Major* 12, no. 1 (1999), 33–65.

60 For royal collections, see Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Accumulating Culture: The Collections of Emperor Huizong* (Seattle, 2008).

61 See Naquin, *Peking: Temples and City Life*, 144–61.

because he did not become irate when criticised, many memorials submitted to him to protest costly projects survive. Several even asked to have the lantern festival suspended. The eminent official Ouyang Xiu charged that construction was always going on, without a day's rest, to the exhaustion of the people and the treasuries, and hinted that eunuchs had probably promoted the projects.⁶² Clearly anyone doing research on court life needs to keep this rhetoric in mind and find other sources to assess the material culture of imperial sovereignty.

62 Zhao Ruyu, *Songchao zhuchen zouyi*, 92.999–1000; 128.1406–11.

‘True and Historical Descriptions’? European Festivals and the Printed Record

Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly

European festivals, whether staged by cities, courts, nobles, or the church, are often primarily known to posterity through the official printed accounts that have come down to us. Such printed festival books begin to appear already in the late fifteenth century, but the festival book really becomes a recognisable genre around 1520 during the reign of the emperor Charles V. He published official accounts of his coronation in Aachen in 1519 as Roman King, the peace celebrations in Madrid in 1526 after the Treaty with Francis I, King of France, his entry into Seville in the same year after his wedding to Isabella of Portugal, his entry into Bologna in 1529 and double coronation there in 1530 as King of Lombardy and Holy Roman Emperor, his entries into Messina and Naples in 1535, into Florence, Lucca, Rome, and Siena in 1536, into Nice in 1538, into Mallorca and Utrecht in 1540, as well as his progress through France in 1539. Indeed, he published multiple accounts, each in a different language, of the same event. The coronation in 1519 was the subject of at least five festival books in German and Latin, the entry into Rome in 1536 was published in Italian, German, and French, and the progress through France in 1539 appeared in Italian, French, and Spanish. The double coronation was so important that it was the subject of festival books in German, Latin, and Italian.

Though festival books do not become numerous until around 1550, from then on for the next 200 years they are an essential element of most princely, civic and religious festivals and are preserved today in their thousands in such libraries as the Herzog August Bibliothek, the British Library, the New York Public Library, and the Library of the Getty Research Institute.¹ One of the

1 See Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, ‘Festival Books in Europe from Renaissance to Rococo’, *The Seventeenth Century* 3 (1988), 181–201 and idem, ‘The Early Modern Festival Book—Function and Form’ in J.R. Mulryne, Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, and Margaret Shewring, eds., *Europa Triumphans. Festivals and Festival Books of the Renaissance and Baroque*, 2 vols. (London, 2004), vol. 1, 3–17; also Thomas Rahn, ‘Fortsetzung des Festes mit anderen Mitteln. Gattungsbeobachtungen zu hessischen Hochzeitsberichten’, in Jörg Jochen Berns and Detlef Ignasiak, eds., *Frühneuzeitliche Hofkultur in Hessen und Thüringen*, Jenaer Studien Bd.1 (Erlangen and Jena, 1993), 233–48 and idem, *Festbeschreibung. Funktion und Topik einer Textsorte am Beispiel der Beschreibung höfischer Hochzeiten (1568–1794)* (Tübingen, 2007). An idea of the number, variety, and geographical spread of festival

first questions the historian asks is whether festival books give, as they claim, a faithful and accurate account of the festivals they purport to describe.

Most festival books consist of plain unadorned text which narrates the events of the festival in sequence and, by means of such typical titles as 'Recit veritable de tout de qui s'est fait et passé', 'Warhaffte und historische Beschreibung', 'Diario esatto e veridico' or 'Klare und eigentliche Beschreibung' lay claim to complete and truthful narration. Many festival books in all European languages appear to make good this claim to historical accuracy, for they are chronicles that, in an often simple and brief narrative, give the precise date, list the principal participants with their names and titles, describe their costumes, and narrate the events of the festival and the manner in which they took place, all without much comment. This holds good whether the accounts are in prose—the commonest type—or in rhymed doggerel couplets according to the older German tradition.

It is very important that the reader should be convinced of the factual accuracy of what he is reading. In the account of a ceremony as significant as a coronation, for instance, the festival book should confirm for the reader that the coronation was carried out according to the pre-ordained ceremonial, for this is what makes the coronation valid and gives it its binding power. Equally important in a festival book is to describe who stood and who sat, who walked towards whom, who was bare-headed in whose presence. Such matters were vital indicators of rank and power and therefore essential pieces of political information which needed to be recorded. This need for particular details explains the pages of lists to be found in many festival books: of who followed whom in a procession, of how many there were in each group, of what they were wearing, and of what floats accompanied them. In accounts of tournaments we are often told who scored what and who won the prizes. It is therefore easy for the modern reader to imagine that festival books intend, like modern war or sports reporting, to tell us exactly what happened blow by blow.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Early modern courtly historiography is meant to be biased, and so are festival books.² Just as official histories were commissioned by a dynasty to demonstrate how the great deeds of that

books can be gained from Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly and Anne Simon, *Festivals and Ceremonies. A Bibliography of Printed Works relating to Court, Civic and Religious Festivals in Europe 1500–1800* (London, 2000), which describes 3000 works in twelve languages. A corrected and augmented version of this bibliography is now available online as a searchable database: festivals.mml.ox.ac.uk.

2 See, for instance, Birgit Studt, *Fürstenhof und Geschichte. Legitimation durch Überlieferung* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 1992), and Horst Wenzel, *Höfische Geschichte. Literarische*

dynasty led up to the present moment and the present ruler, and then how his actions amply fulfilled the traditions of his house and the promise of his own early years, so festival books fit alongside the other kinds of text commonly produced by early modern courts—histories and chronicles, genealogies, books of heraldry, mirrors for princes, and panegyric poetry, aspects of all of which they sometimes contain. Festival books often present the event they are describing—the solemn entry, the wedding celebration, the tournament—as one of the great deeds, the *res gestae*, of the prince who is the central figure. The whole purpose of these works is to present events from the standpoint of whoever has commissioned the festival book and give them the desired official interpretation. The first questions to ask of a festival book, therefore, are who commissioned it and whose interests does it serve, for the authors of such works see their task as presenting the festival with a certain slant and see no problem in amending or altering events in their narration to suit the political purpose of the moment. Mark Greengrass discusses the way in which Blaise de Vigenère's account of Henri III's entry into Mantua in 1574, published two years later in 1576, alters the historical record in order to take account of the changed political situation.³ Vigenère does this not just by omitting elements that are no longer politically convenient but by substituting, in his description of the triumphal arch, a painting that was not there for a statue that was! It is possible to uncover Vigenère's textual manoeuvres because, exceptionally, we have not only other printed accounts of the same event but Vigenère's own marked-up manuscript copy for the printer. As Richard Cooper has shown, Maurice Scève, the author of the description of the entry of Henri II into Lyons in 1548, changed some of the inscriptions and suppressed other material when writing his account.⁴ Here it is comparisons with ambassadors' dispatches that enable us to spot Scève's departures from the historical fact. We must constantly remind ourselves, therefore, that the early modern chronicler's task was qualitatively different from that of the modern historian and that his description cannot therefore be regarded as factual truth in the way in which we understand it today.

Tradition und Gegenwartsdeutung in den volkssprachigen Chroniken des hohen und späten Mittelalters (Bern, Frankfurt am Main, and Las Vegas, 1980).

- 3 Mark Greengrass, 'Henri III, Festival Culture and the Rhetoric of Royalty', in J.R. Mulryne, Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, and Margaret Shewring, ed., *Europa Triumphant. Festivals and Festival Books of the Renaissance and Baroque*, 2 vols. (London, 2004), vol. 1, 105–115.
- 4 Maurice Scève, *The Entry of Henri II into Lyon, September 1548*, Richard Cooper ed. (Tempe, AZ, 1997), Introduction, 128–9.

We also need to ask where the authors of festival books got their information. In many cases, they were surely not reporting what they saw because they cannot have got close enough to see much at all. They were not important enough to sit in the front of the stands at a tournament, and they were certainly not looking over the shoulder of the king at a banquet. Indeed, festival books were often printed beforehand in order to be distributed at the festival itself, so, no matter what their titles claim, such works cannot be a description of what happened on the day. The account of the carousel held at Versailles in 1685, for instance, states that it was printed in advance, so that it could be read while waiting.⁵ In addition, it is clear, if we compare a number of works describing the same event, that festival books often plagiarise each other, transcribe a common source, or translate each other's texts, without some of the writers ever having witnessed the event or even visited the city where the festival took place. Two accounts of the coronation in 1697 of Friedrich August I, Elector of Saxony, as King of Poland are so similar that they must either be copying each other or else both be based on a common source.⁶

Who the writer was—his education and interests and his function within the court—also affects the whole tenor of his account. A classical scholar will dwell on the learned aspects of the event he is describing, such as the Latin inscriptions or the allegorical emblems. The singer Massimo Troiano, who was a member of the Munich court chapel under the baton of Orlandus Lassus, devotes considerable space, in his account of the wedding of Wilhelm V, Duke of Bavaria, and Renée of Lorraine in Munich in 1568 to the music performed for the occasion.⁷ Troiano could also see the food being served, perhaps from the minstrels' gallery, so he describes that too. Other accounts of the same festival scarcely mention music but devote a great deal of space to the tournaments, which were of no interest to Troiano, probably because he never got to see

5 *La brillante journée ou le Carrousel des Galans Maures, entrepris par Monseigneur le Dauphin avec la comparse, les courses, Et des Madrigaux sur les Devises* (Paris, 1685).

6 *Bericht von dem Königlichen Bolnischen Einzug in Crackau/ Nebst andern Particularien aus selbigem Königreich. Anno 1697* (n.p., n.d.) and *Beschreibung/ was zu Crakau vor und nach der Krönung Sr. Königl. Majst. In Pohlen Friderici Augusti Churfürstlichens zu Sachsen vorgegangen* (n.p., n.d.).

7 M. Troiano, *Discorsi delli trionfi, giostre, apparati e delle cose più notabili fatte nelle sontuose nozze dell'illustrissimo & eccellentissimo Signor Duca Guglielmo. Primo genito del generosissimo Alberto Quinto, Conte palatino Del Reno, e Duca della Bauiera alta e Başa, nell'Anno 1568, à 22. Di Febrar[i]o . . .*, (Munich, 1568). There is a modern edition edited by Horst Leuchtman: *Die Münchner Fürstenhochzeit von 1568: Massimo Troiano: Dialoge italienisch/deutsch* (Munich, 1980).

them.⁸ An account of a tournament by a horseman or of a firework display by an artillery specialist is equally detailed on technical matters that are usually scarcely mentioned, perhaps because of lack of understanding of these matters on the part of learned authors.⁹

Another important function of the festival book was to praise the prince who was God's representative on earth and therefore a central figure in the divinely ordained system of the universe. Praise of the prince is only one notch below praise of God and just as much of a duty. If the prince is admirable, this demonstrates that God's plan for his people is working as it should, so festival books (and festivals) often present the ruler as the perfect Christian prince. The festival book can then put him forward as a model for others, on the lines of the 'mirrors for princes' so prevalent in Europe in the early modern period. If a prince was not so perfect in reality, then the organisers of the festival and the authors of the festival book could at least present him as having those virtues they hoped he would acquire. The prince must also be placed within the long line of his heroic ancestors and shown to be heir to the heroes and rulers of antiquity.

Festival books can also be couched in many different forms. They can be plain narrative or chronicle, whether in prose or in verse; they can be phrased as fictitious letters or dispatches; they can be in the form of urbane dialogue; they

8 The two other accounts of the same wedding are: Heinrich Wirre, *Ordenliche Beschreybung der Fürstlichen Hochzeyt/ die da gehalten ist worden/ durch den Durchleüchtigen Hochgebornen Fursten und Herrn/ Herrn Wilhelm Pfaltzgraf beim Reyn . . . Mit dem Hochgebornen Fräwlein Renata/ geborne Hertzogin auß Lothringen/ den 21. Tag Februarij/ des 1568. Jars/ in der Fürstlichen Statt München . . .* (Augsburg, 1568); and Hans Wagner, *Kurtze doch gegründte beschreibung des Durchleuchtigen Hochgebornen Fürsten vnnnd Herren/ Herren Wilhalmen Pfaltzgrauen bey Rhein . . . Und derselben geliebsten Gemahel/ der Durchleuchtigisten Hochgebornen Fürstin/ Frewlein Renata gebornne Hertzogin zu Lottringen vnd Pari/ &c. gehalten Hochzeitlichen Ehren Fests . . .* (Munich, 1568).

9 The equestrian expert Alessandro Massari Malatesta, *Compendio dell' Heroica Arte di Cavalleria* (Venice, 1600), includes a very precise account of the movements of the riders in a tournament and horse ballet which he staged in 1599 in Tivoli. The account by the artillery specialist, August Adolf von Drandorff, of a firework display he put on in Leipzig in honour of Johann Georg II, Elector of Saxony, in 1667 is equally exact in detailing the kind of ordnance fired and the numbers of rockets and other explosives let off: August Adolf von Drandorff, *Augenschein und Positur Derer Feuer-Wercks Stücken/ Welche Der . . . Churfürst zu Sachsen Hertzog Johann George der Andere in Gegenwart . . . Hertzogen Augusti zu Sachßen . . . Hertzogen Mauritii zu Sachßen . . . Hertzogen Johann Adolphen/ zu Holstein . . . jenseit der Pleiße bey der Vestung Pleißenburgk den 8. Julii Anno 1667 gnädigst angeordnet An statt Einer Feuerwercks-Probe . . . abgeleget und gehorsamst verrichtet worden durch Augustum Adolphum von Drandorff/ der Zeit bestalten Fendrich bey der Vestung Pleißenburgk vor Leipzigk* (n.p., 1667).

can include poetry; they can consist of an extensive allegory. Festival books can embed the account of the festival in a fictional framework or themselves be an actual courtly romance.¹⁰ They can take the form of an illustrated libretto¹¹ or can be used by the author as the occasion for a series of lengthy moral and philosophical reflections, as we can see from two hefty German examples. One is Johann-Augustin Assum's *Warhafft Relation und Historischer/ Politischer/ Höfflicher Discours* relating to the christening in Stuttgart in 1616.¹² A much more extreme example is Gabriel Tzschimmer's account of the meeting of Johann Georg II, Elector of Saxony, and his three younger brothers and their families in Dresden in 1678, the so-called *Durchlauchtigste Zusammenkunft*. The actual account is already huge, consisting of 316 folio pages with thirty huge fold-out plates depicting tournaments, hunts, processions, ballets, and theatrical scenes.¹³ There is, however, a discursive second part which is roughly

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- 10 For example, *Le romant des chevaliers de la gloire contenant plvsieurs havtes & fameuses aduentures des Princes, & des Cheualiers qui parurent aux courses faictes à la Place royale pour la feste des alliances de France et d'Espagne...* (Paris, 1612), which is François de Rosset's account of the festivals held in Paris in 1612 for the wedding of Louis XIII with the Spanish Infanta, Anna of Austria, and of Louis's sister Elisabeth with Anna's brother, the future Felipe IV, King of Spain.
- 11 For instance, the libretti by Pietro Paulo Bissari for a tournament opera (*Antiopa Giustificata*), an opera (*Fedra Incoronata*) and a firework drama (*Medea Vendicativa*) staged in Munich in 1662 to mark the christening of Maximilian II Emanuel, the son of Ferdinand Maria, Elector of Bavaria and published collectively as: *Attione... De gli Applausi fatti nell' Elett[ora]le Città di Monaco per la Nascita Dell' Altezza... Di Massimiliano Emanuele, Primo Genito Elettorale Delle... Alt[er]ze di Ferdinando Maria & Henrieta Maria Adelaide, Duchi dell' vna e l' altra Bauiera* (Munich, 1662)... The libretti are illustrated with seventeen, twelve and eight engravings, respectively.
- 12 Johann-Augustin Assum, *Warhafft Relation und Historischer/ Politischer/ Höfflicher Discours Vber Deß...Herren Johann Friderichen/ Hertzogen zu Würtemberg vnd Teck...I.F.Gn. Jungen Sohns Printz Friderichen...KindTauf: Sampt darbey begangnem... Ritterlichem FrewdenFest zu Stuttgardten: Den 8.9.10.11.12.13.14. [et]c. Martij/ Anno 1616. / Auff I.F.Gn. gnädigen Bevehl/ verfertiget Durch Philopatrida Charitinum* (Stuttgart, 1616).
- 13 Gabriel Tzschimmer, *Die Durchlauchtigste Zusammenkunft/ Oder: Historische Erzehlung/ was der Durchlauchtigste Fürst und Herr/ Herr Johann George der Ander/... Bey Anwesenheit Seiner... Herren Gebrüdere/ dero Gemahlinnen/ Prinzen/ und Princessinnen/ zu sonderbahren Ehren/ und Belustigung/ in Dero Residenz und Haupt=Vestung Dresden im Monat Februario, des M.DC.LXXVIIIsten Jahres An allerhand Aufzügen/ Ritterlichen Exercitien, Schau=Spiele/ Schiessen/ Jagten/ Operen, Comoedien, Balleten, Masqueraden, Königreiche/ Feuerwercke/ und andern/ Denkwürdiges aufführen und vorstellen lassen... , Nürnberg/ In Verlegung Johann Hoffmanns/ Buch: und Kunsthändler/ Gedruckt daselbst bey Christian Sigismund Froberger. Anno MDCLXXX.*

twice as long and which consists wholly of moral and philosophical reflections on a whole range of topics loosely related to the events of the festival.¹⁴

Another important type of festival book, again very characteristic of the German tradition, consists wholly or largely of plates, and this genre owes much to the influence of the Emperor Maximilian I. Maximilian I (1459, r. 1493–1519) came to power just when the office of Emperor and the Habsburg claim to the Imperial throne needed to be affirmed. With the help of a team of historians, genealogists, writers, and artists Maximilian set about weaving round himself a myth of power, virtue, and culture.¹⁵ A vital element in his self-mythologisation was a series of ideal paper blueprints for festival architecture and floats: Dürer's 192 woodcuts for the *Triumphal Arch* (1515), the 136 woodcuts by Burgkmair, Altdorfer, Dürer, and others which constitute the *Triumphal Procession* (1517) and Dürer's *Great Triumphal Car* (1522). These ideal (or, in modern parlance, 'virtual') festivals and their representation functioned as models down the centuries both for actual festivals and for their depiction in festival books.

This influence is one of the reasons why books emanating from the German-speaking courts far outstrip those produced by the north Italian courts in the quality and number of their illustrations. The other reason, of course, is the quality and sophistication of German woodcuts and copper engravings. No matter that Italian festival culture led Europe in its sophistication; the history of printing and the development of book illustration in a particular territory determine whether a festival book is illustrated or not and the quality and number of the illustrations, not the level of its festival culture. So the Germans, who developed the art of the woodcut and of the copper engraving at the same time as they discovered the art of printing with moveable type, who had a number of excellent artists such as Dürer and Cranach the Elder to develop the form, and who had the prestigious works produced by Maximilian as models, were producing beautifully illustrated festival books at a time when this was not at all common elsewhere. The most magnificent examples of this type of festival book are the festival books produced in Stuttgart in 1609 (214 plates), 1616 (77 plates) and 1617 (92 plates) respectively.¹⁶ (Fig. 1) It is not

14 For an analysis of this text see Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, 'Gabriel Tzschimmer's *Durchlauchtigste Zusammenkunft* (1680) and the German Festival Book Tradition', *Daphnis* 22 (1993), 1–12.

15 The classic study is still Jan-Dirk Müller, *Gedechtnus. Literatur und Hofgesellschaft um Maximilian I.* Forschungen zur Geschichte der älteren deutschen Literatur 2 (Munich, 1982).

16 Balthasar Küchler, *Repraesentatio Der Fürstlichen Aufzug und Ritterspil* (Schwäbisch-Gmund, 1611); Esaias von Hulsen and Matthaeus Merian, *Repraesentatio Der Fürstlichen Aufzug und Ritterspil* (Stuttgart, 1616) and Esaias von Hulsen, *Aigentliche Wahrhaffte Delineatio unnd Abbildung aller Fürstlichen Aufzug und Rütterspilen* (Stuttgart, 1617) resp.

until Louis XIV's Royal Press in Paris produces illustrated accounts of some of Louis's festivals in the 1660s and 1670s that illustrated festival books of comparable magnificence are to be found.

Who constituted the readership for these early modern European festival books? This depends on who commissioned the festival and who it was designed to honour. When a city such as Paris puts on a firework display in honour of Louis XIII's victory at La Rochelle in 1628, then the festival book, like the festival, is directed at the King, and its aim is to remind him of the city's homage after the fireworks themselves have vanished. Sometimes the language of a festival book is the clue. One account of the entry of the Cardinal Infante of Spain into Genoa in 1633, written in Spanish rather than Italian, is meant to be read in Spain in order to demonstrate to the Spanish king the goodwill and desire for peace of the Republic of Genoa. When Friedrich August I, the Lutheran Elector of Saxony, converted to Catholicism in order to be crowned King of Poland in 1697, he had to convince both his German subjects back in Saxony and his new subjects in Poland that his disputed election as King had now been made good by his coronation. He also had to convince the rest of Europe. So there are three accounts in German, one in Italian, and one in Polish.



FIGURE 1 *Felicitas and Concordia*, from: *Esaias van Hulsens, Aigentliche Wahrhafftē Delineatio vnnd Abbildung [...] Bey Deß Durchleüchtigen Hochgebornen Fürsten vnnd Herren, Herren Johann Friderichen Hertzogen [...] Kindtauff [...] gehalten, In der Fürstlichen Hauptstatt Stuetgartt Den 13. 14. 15. 16 vnnd 17. Iulÿ Anno 1617 (Stuttgart, 1617).*

But while the necessity of putting important events in the life of a court or the history of a dynasty on record may be a sufficient justification for the many plain, factual accounts, it does not explain the sizeable minority of festival books that are published in a much more lavish way. The point of these works is that a lavishly illustrated festival book quite literally provides a fuller picture of the festival for posterity. But this could be achieved just as well by means of a manuscript that no one outside the court itself and its guests would ever see, and many courts do produce such manuscripts. Large folios, sometimes with huge foldout plates, cannot be directed at the prince's ordinary subjects, since they would not have been able to afford them. Instead, it is clear that they are meant to impress other courts, whether allies or rivals. (Fig. 2) Princes saw to it that their ambassadors disseminated copies of the festival book at the courts to which they were accredited, and it is clear from the inventories of princely libraries that princes collected accounts from other courts.¹⁷ Again, the language in which the festival book is written gives an indication of the addressees. In 1670, Louis XIV had an account of the running at the ring and at the head, staged in Paris in 1662 to mark the birth of his son, published by the Royal Press in a magnificent volume illustrated with ninety-seven engravings designed by Israel Silvestre and François Chauveau. One version of the text is in French by Charles Perrault,¹⁸ but since French was not yet an international court language, the book was also produced in Latin, with Perrault's text in a Latin translation by Bishop Fléchier.¹⁹ This volume broadcast to all the other important European princes the splendour and magnificence of Louis's celebration of the fact that for the first time in many decades there was a young and vigorous king on the throne of France who now had a male heir.

Conclusion

Early modern European festival books can tell us much about the complex festive culture of early modern courts and cities, their historical context, and their

17 For instance, the manuscript inventory of the library of Elector August of Saxony compiled in 1575: 'Registratur der bücher in des Churfürsten zu Saxon Liberey zu Annaburg'. Sächsische Landesbibliothek, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Dresden, Bibl.Arch.I B vol. 20.

18 Charles Perrault, *Courses de Testes et de Bague Faittes par Le Roy et par Les Princes et Seigneurs de sa Cour En l'Année 1662* (Paris, 1670).

19 Valentin Esprit Fléchier, *Festiva ad capita annulumque Decursio, a Rege Ludovico XIV. Principibus, Summisque aulae proceribus edita anno 1662* (Paris, 1670).



FIGURE 2 *The arrival of Neptune. From: Francesco Maria Piccioli, L'Orologio dell'Piacere: che mostra lore del diletteuole soggiorno hauto dall'altrezza serenissima d. Ernesto Augusto, vescouo d'Osnabruc, duca di Bransuich, Luneburgo, &c. Nel luoco di Piazzola di S.E. il signor Marco Contarini, procurator di S. Marco, consacrato all' A.S. dalla medemna eccellenza / del dottor Piccioli. (Piazzola, 1685).*

artistic achievements, but what they tell us is very often not what we expect them to tell us. Instead of the festival book narrating what actually happened on the day and providing a reliable, factually accurate source, it tells us rather about the political aims, the allegiances, and rivalries as well as the fears and anxieties of a particular court or city as they are expressed in that festival. It tells us how the body that commissioned the festival and the festival book wished the festival to be interpreted and how that body wanted to be seen in present and future times. The concept of *fama*, of reputation in the eyes of posterity, is one of the main aims of much courtly writing. It is precisely this that festival books seek to influence.

Ceremonial Entries and the Confirmation of Urban Privileges in France, c. 1350–1550

Neil Murphy

In late November 1465, Charles of France arrived at the monastery of Saint-Catherine, situated at the summit of a hill overlooking Rouen. He was due to make his ceremonial entry into the town on St. Catherine's Day (25 November), where he was to be formally installed as the new duke of Normandy. Charles's appointment to this position came as a result of his participation in the princely rebellion against his brother, King Louis XI, known as the War of the Public Weal. In the summer of 1465, Charles had joined a coalition of princes led by Charles the Bold and Francis, duke of Brittany, who forced the king to make major territorial concessions to the princes. Francis dominated Charles, using him as a pawn to increase his own power. Charles's appointment as duke of Normandy was largely due to the actions of Francis, who wanted a pliable duke in control of the strategically important duchy of Normandy. However, as Francis waited with Charles for the townspeople of Rouen to prepare the ceremonial reception, he began to fear that Charles's installation as duke of Normandy would weaken Francis's control over the prince, and thus Francis planned to escort Charles into Brittany before he could make his public entry into the town.

Thomas Basin, then bishop of the neighbouring town of Lisieux, writes that on the afternoon of 25 November Rouen's town council received word from John of Lorraine, count of Harcourt, regarding Francis's intention to prevent Charles from making his inaugural entry into the town.¹ The renewal of Rouen's rights and liberties were dependent on Charles formally entering the town and confirming these grants as part of an entry ceremony.² In a bid to increase its power over the surrounding countryside, Rouen's town council had opened their gates to League forces in October 1465, forcing Louis XI to separate Normandy from the French crown. As a result of this action, the

1 T. Basin, *Histoire de Louis XI*, C. Samaran, ed., 3 vols. (Paris, 1963–72), i. 235–41; P. de Commynes, *Mémoires*, J. Blanchard, ed., 2 vols. (Paris, 2007), i. 80–81; J. Duclercq, *Mémoires*, J.A. Buchon, ed. (Paris, 1827) 85–87; *Journal de Jean de Roye: connu sous le nom de Chronique scandaleuse, 1460–1483*, B. de Mandrot, ed., 2 vols. (Paris, 1894–96), i. 141–42.

2 For the text of the oaths taken at Rouen see: A. Chéruef, *Histoire de Rouen pendant l'époque communale 1150–1382*. 2 vols. (Rouen, 1843), ii. 7–8.

success and prosperity of Rouen were dependent on Charles of France confirming the town's privileges and taking up the position of duke. On the evening of 25 November, Rouen's town council sent a troop of armed bourgeois, accompanied by John of Lorraine, to the monastery to compel Charles to participate in the ceremonial entry. Francis, unable to prevent the townspeople from reaching Charles, fled the monastery for the safety of Brittany. The armed townspeople hastily bundled Charles onto a horse with no saddle and, without permitting him to change into ceremonial clothing, led the new duke down the hill to make his inaugural entry. Charles passed through the main gate and was led along the customary processional route in the glare of torchlight until he reached the cathedral, where a service was held before he was escorted to his lodgings. The ceremonies were completed the following day when he was formally installed as duke of Normandy in the cathedral, during which he confirmed the liberties and privileges of both town and duchy. The actions of Rouen's townspeople on this occasion were unusual, and while they may have been prepared to force a weak and ineffectual prince like Charles to make a ceremonial entry, it is highly unlikely that they would have led the French king to enter the town at the end of pike. However, exceptional this event may have been, it does vividly demonstrate that entry ceremonies, providing the moment at which a town had its rights, liberties, and customs confirmed, were important legal events for the urban populations of later medieval and Renaissance France.

Oath-Taking and Ceremonial Entries

Between the mid-fourteenth and mid-sixteenth centuries the French ceremonial entry underwent significant change, as new elements, such as dramatic performances, were added to the basic processional structure to transform it into a lavish feast for all the senses.³ Rituals are distinct from ceremonies in

3 For the development of the French ceremonial entry during this period see: L. Bryant, *The King and the City in the Parisian Royal Entry Ceremony: Politics, Ritual, and Art in the Renaissance* (Geneva, 1986); J. Chartrou, *Les Entrées solennelles et triomphales à la renaissance, 1484–1551* (Paris, 1928); G. Kipling, *Enter the King: Theater, Art, and Liturgy in the Medieval Civic Triumph* (Oxford, 1998); P. Lardellier, *Les miroirs du paon: rites et rhétoriques politiques dans la France de l'ancien régime* (Paris, 2003); N. Murphy, 'Receiving Royals in Later Medieval and Renaissance France: Ceremonial Entries into Northern French Towns, c.1350–1570', (Ph.D dissertation, University of Glasgow, 2009); M. Wintroub, *A Savage Mirror: Power, Identity and Knowledge in Early Modern France* (Stanford, 2006).

that they effect a change or transformation, and the incorporation of the oath-taking element within the structure of an entry transformed it into a ceremony with a ritual at its centre.⁴ Although the theatre, decorations, and display all had important roles to play in the entry, it was the swearing of oaths and confirmation of urban privileges that had a lasting effect. Following the death or removal from power of a town's ruler, there was a period of instability where the bond between the two was broken. This bond was restored during an entry ceremony, when the ruler swore to uphold urban rights, liberties, and customs in return for the mayor swearing loyalty on behalf of the townspeople.⁵ The precise nature and extent of the rights confirmed at an entry varied from town to town, with the oaths taken designed to include the full range of grants and franchises amassed by the town over time. For example, the text of the oath sworn at Dijon confirmed the 'libertéz, franchises, immunitéz, chartres et privilèges et confirmations' of the town contained in the 'lettres, ès chartres, données de nos devanciers ès habitans de notre dicte ville de Dijon.'⁶

Confirmation of urban rights and liberties was embedded within a ceremonial entry in some Flemish towns from the twelfth century. When King Louis VI of France entered Bruges with William of Normandy, count of Flanders, in 1127, he swore to uphold the rights and liberties of the townspeople.⁷ As French monarchs claimed to be the feudal overlord of the count of Flanders, this act permitted the king to give a demonstration of his authority over the county, and it is the earliest example I have found of a French monarch confirming urban privileges during a ceremonial entry. The swearing of oaths was not unique to Bruges, and other towns, such as Arras and Saint-Omer, lying within the urban belt which extended across northern France and Flanders, also had

4 See Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York and Oxford, 1992), especially 69–93.

5 J.D. Hurlbut, 'The Duke's First Entry: Burgundian Inauguration and Gift', in K. Ashley and W. Hüskén, ed., *Moving Subjects: Processional Performance in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Amsterdam, 2001), 157–61.

6 '... liberties, freedoms, immunities, charters and privileges and confirmations [of the town council contained in the] letters, and charters, given by our predecessors to the inhabitants of our said town of Dijon'. For the full text of this oath see: T. Dutour, *Une société de l'honneur. Les notables et leur monde à Dijon à la fin du Moyen Age* (Paris, 1998), 108.

7 J.B. Ross, ed., *The Murder of Charles the Good, Count of Flanders, by Galbert de Bruges* (New York, 1960), 227. See also: A. Brown, 'Civic Ritual: Bruges and the Counts of Flanders in the Later Middle Ages', *English Historical Review* 112, no. 446 (April, 1997), 296; J.M. Murray, 'The Liturgy of the Count's Advent in Bruges, from Galbert to Van Eyck', in B.A. Hanawalt and K.L. Reyerson, ed., *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe* (London, 1994), 137–52.

their privileges confirmed at a ceremonial entry from the twelfth century.⁸ This custom spread from the north-east of the kingdom during the thirteenth century. It was first used at La Rochelle in 1224, while the text of the oath sworn by John II at his entry into Châlons-sur-Saone in 1362 suggests that the swearing of oaths to uphold communal liberties as part of an entry was already a well-established custom in the town by this date.⁹ It was during the later fourteenth century, however, that the ceremonial entry came to be the principal occasion on which urban rights and liberties were confirmed. This reflects the expansion in urban government taking place during this period.¹⁰ Oaths were first incorporated into Parisian entries for John II's post-coronation entry in 1350, though in contrast to other French towns, where the king was asked to uphold municipal liberties, the oath taken at Paris was initially ecclesiastical, with the king promising to defend the privileges of the church and to protect the clergy from oppression.¹¹ The scope of the oath taken at Paris was expanded during the fifteenth century, and by the time of Charles VII's entry in 1437, the Parisians, at least, considered the oath taken by the king to be a wider confirmation of rights and liberties.¹²

The form of the oath at Paris was largely set by the time of Louis XII's entry into the capital in 1498. Once he had sworn to defend the church and maintain its liberties, he 'entretiendrait les nobles, aussi les laboureurs, ensemble les marchans en leurs bonnes loix et coustumes anciennes'.¹³ In this way, the king swore to protect all his subjects alike, both noble and commoner, townsperson and country dweller, religious and secular.

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- 8 M. Populer, 'Les entrées inaugurations des princes dans les villes. Usage et signification. L'exemple des trois comtés de Hainaut, Hollande et Zélande entre 1417 et 1433', *Revue du Nord* 76, no. 304 (1994), 29–30.
- 9 D. Rivaud, 'L'accueil des souverains par les corps de villes les entrées royales dans les "bonnes villes" du centre-ouest (XV^e–XVI^e siècles)', in R. Favreau, R. Rech and Y.-J. Riou, ed., *Bonnes villes du Poitou et Charentais (XII^e–XVIII^e siècles): actes du colloque tenu à Saint-Jean-d'Angély (Poitiers, 2002)*, 273; B. Guinée, and F. Lehoux, ed., *Les entrées royales françaises de 1328 à 1515* (Paris, 1968), 141.
- 10 G. Small, *Later Medieval France* (Basingstoke, 2009), 158.
- 11 B[ibliothèque] n[ationale] de F[rance] Collection Français 23934, fol. 1; Guinée and Lehoux, *Entrées royales françaises*, 50–51.
- 12 L. Bryant, 'The Medieval Entry Ceremony at Paris', in J. Bak, ed., *Coronations: Medieval and Early Modern Monarchic Ritual* (Oxford, 1990), 56.
- 13 '... maintained the nobles, [and] also the labourers, together with the merchants in their good laws and ancient customs...': Guinée and Lehoux, *Entrées royales françaises*, 134.



FIGURE 1 Charles VII's entry into Paris in 1437. BNF 5054, fol. 93v.

Political Authority and the Confirmation of Privileges

During the later Middle Ages, both kings and dukes swore to confirm privileges at their entries. The ability to take an oath was a mark of authority, and French dukes competed with the king to confirm privileges at their entries. When the duke of Brittany made his pre-coronation entry into Rennes, he took oaths to defend both the church and people of the duchy as part of a ceremony that imitated the French king's post-coronation entry into Paris.¹⁴ The confirmation of urban privileges also figured prominently in the entries made by the dukes of Burgundy, who ruled over a patchwork of territories, including a number of important towns in the Low Countries. In these territories, ceremonial entries functioned as 'local inaugurations' for the duke, who received oaths of loyalty from the townspeople recognising his right to rule.¹⁵ While the duke of Burgundy could claim to be the principal political power in his lands in the Low Countries, the situation was more complex in France. Although Burgundian dukes could and did confirm the privileges in their territories in the kingdom of France, the rights and customs of towns such as Dijon and Arras were ultimately dependent on the authority of the French king. During the weak monarchy of Charles VI some towns in Burgundian France had dared to close their gates to the king, but with the resurgence of royal power under Charles VII and Louis XI in the fifteenth century, French monarchs used the confirmation of liberties, especially those regarding the issuing of pardons, as a means to assert power over often hostile urban populations.¹⁶

The pardoning of criminals was a regular feature of royal and princely entries in later medieval and Renaissance France. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries many French towns had obtained the right to have those people guilty of serious crimes exempted from receiving pardons at a ceremonial entry. While French monarchs tended to respect municipal privileges in this

14 M. Jones, 'The ritual and significance of the ducal civic entries in late medieval Brittany', *Journal of Medieval History* 29, no. 4 (December, 2003), 289.

15 For Peter Arnade the form of the oath ceremony taken at Ghent was a demonstration of the city's 'power to actualize the count's new rule only upon recognition of the city's legal rights': P. Arnade, *Realms of Ritual: Burgundian Ceremony and Civic Life in Late Medieval Ghent* (Ithaca, 1996), 30. For texts of the oaths sworn by dukes of Burgundy at their entries into their towns in the Low Countries see: Hurlbut, 'Duke's First Entry', 169–70; E. Lecuppre-Desjardin, *Les villes des cérémonies: essai sur la communication politique dans les anciens Pays-Bas bourguignons* (Turnhout, 2004), 142–44.

16 When Charles VI pursued John the Fearless across northern France in 1414, towns such as Soissons and Bapaume closed their gates to the French king: R.C. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue: Crisis at the Court of Charles VI, 1392–1420* (New York, 1986), 140–48.

matter, pardons could be a source of tension when there was a bad relationship between a king and a town. In the mid-thirteenth century, the town of Arras, which lay in the north-east of the kingdom, received the right to have only criminals guilty of minor crimes pardoned during a ceremonial entry.¹⁷ Although dukes of Burgundy had upheld this right, the pro-Burgundian citizens of Arras had a fractious relationship with Louis XI, and they were not certain that the French king would honour the town's liberties regarding the banished when he entered in January 1464. Shortly after the news began to circulate that Louis intended to enter Arras, the municipal council learned that many of the banished were gathering at the edge of the town's jurisdiction in the hope of receiving the king's pardon. The *échevins* sent a letter to the duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good, in which they asked him to appeal to Louis to uphold the town's liberties regarding the pardoning of criminals at his entry.¹⁸ Louis refused to give a definite answer to both town and duke, saying that he intended to examine the matter with his council. When he arrived at Arras, Louis delayed making his entry into the town for two days, while he examined the town's privileges with his council. It was only when the ruling administration of Arras presented him with the keys of the city on the morning of the entry that Louis informed them that he would respect their rights and confirm the town's privileges at his entry. By means of this act Louis could demonstrate that while Arras lay within the Burgundian dominions, it was a French town and their rights and liberties were dependent on his good favour. Two years later, Louis gave the population of Arras a demonstration of the consequences of losing his good favour. Following the death of Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy, in 1477, Arras rebelled against Louis's rule, thus breaking the oath of loyalty which they had taken to the king at his entry in 1464. Louis retook Arras by siege before making a triumphal entry into the town through a hole that his artillery had blown in the walls.¹⁹ This was a striking image of royal power triumphing over a rebellious town, and following this entry he expelled the entire population, renamed the city Franchise and attempted to repopulate it with people from across France.²⁰

17 'Registre-Mémorial de la ville d'Arras, de 1354 à 1383', *Mémoires de l'académie impériale des sciences, lettres et arts d'Arras* 3 (1869), 259.

18 Municipal deliberations cited in: A. Proyart, 'Louis XI à Arras', *Mémoires de l'académie des sciences, lettres et arts d'Arras* 34 (1861), 102.

19 J. Molinet, *Chroniques*, G. Doutrepoint and O. Jodogne, eds., 3 vols. (Brussels, 1935–37), i. 189.

20 This project ultimately ended in failure, and in 1482 Louis had to allow the original inhabitants to return: H. Sée, *Louis XI et les villes* (Paris, 1891), 287–90.

The Act of Confirmation

The confirmation of liberties was the most important element of the entry ceremony for the townspeople. An urban delegation went to meet the dignitary and discuss the town's privileges in advance of the entry, so that any problems could be worked out beforehand. Prior to the entry of Louis of Male, count of Artois, into Arras in 1382, the town council sent a delegation to his castle at Avesnes, where they explained to the count that it was customary to swear the oath to the commune before entering the town. They informed Louis that the entry gate would remain closed until he had made this public confirmation of their rights and liberties and asked that he not take offence at this.²¹ Some towns placed an obstacle along the processional route, which was removed only after the oath confirming urban liberties had been taken. At La Rochelle a silk ribbon was placed across the king's path, though at other towns the barrier could be more substantial.²² When the king made his post-coronation entry into Paris, he was given the text of the oath before he entered the city. As the monarch approached Notre-Dame, the doors were closed before him and opened again only after he had sworn the oath in front of the bishop of Paris.²³

Pre-entry discussions were an effective means of resolving points of contention, and I have found no instance of a French king or prince refusing to confirm municipal liberties at an entry. However, disputes could arise in those towns where bishops were required to swear to uphold municipal liberties at their inaugural entries. The taking of oaths to respect urban privileges was important in towns such as Beauvais where the bishop possessed extensive territorial and judicial rights. Beauvais had a long history of conflict between the municipal council and the bishop regarding the extent of the rights held by each.²⁴ In a bid to have their authority and liberties recognised, the town council had the incumbent bishop swear to uphold municipal rights before permitting him entry to the town. When Odet de Coligny, new bishop of Beauvais, entered the town in 1536 he came to a barrier blocking the processional route, where he was met by the municipal council. He raised his hand and

21 'Registre-Mémorial d'Arras', 259–60. For the text of the oath taken at Arras see: E. Lecesne, *Histoire d'Arras depuis les temps plus reculés jusqu'en 1789*, 2 vols. (Arras, 1880), i. 226.

22 Rivaud, 'Accueil des souverains', 273.

23 BnF Collection Français 23934, fol. 1; T. Basin, *Histoire des règnes de Charles VII et de Louis XI*, J. Quicherat, ed., 4 vols. (Paris, 1855–59), ii. 15–16; *Entrées royales françaises*, 50–51; C. Couderc, 'L'Entrée solennelle de Louis XI à Paris', *Mémoires de la société de l'histoire de Paris et l'Île-de-France* 23 (1896), 129, 139.

24 C. Fauqueux, *Beauvais son histoire (des origines à nos jours)* (Beauvais, 1939), 23–24, 30–32.

swore to uphold the 'droits, prumineneurs, prerogatives et privileges donnés par les rois de france aux maire, manans et habitans dicelle ville'.²⁵ After the oath taking, the barrier was removed, and the new bishop was able to enter the town. Should the bishop fail to take the oath, the ceremony was aborted. When Gilles de Luxembourg came to Châlons-en-Champagne as new bishop on 24 January 1504, he was met in an extramural greeting by the municipal council, who stood in front of a wooden barrier which had been placed across the processional route.²⁶ The bishop told the *échevins* that he wanted a canopy to be raised above him during the entry, but they refused to do so as this was a mark of honour reserved for the king alone. Gilles then refused to take the customary oath to the town and the ceremony stopped, leading to a period of ill-feeling between the bishop and the municipal council.²⁷

The customary location for the reconfirmation of urban liberties was directly outside the entry gate.²⁸ When Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy, entered Abbeville in 1466 he was met outside the entry gate by the town council who requested him to 'entretenir la ville et les subgetz en leurs drois, franchises et libertez'.²⁹ Charles took the oath before entering the town, swearing to confirm the townspeople in 'tous leurs drois, usages, franchises et libertes ainsy que ses predecesseurs ... avoient fait'.³⁰ Gates were symbolic of urban liberties and featured prominently on municipal seals. During an entry, these structures were ornately decorated and covered with civic emblems. When Henry VI entered Paris in December 1431 as king of France, a herald dressed as *Fama* came out of the gate to greet the king and extol the virtues of the town, while the gate itself was the location for a pageant based around the arms of

25 '... rights, jurisdictions, prerogatives and privileges given by the kings of France to the mayor, residents and inhabitants of this town ...': B[ibliothèque] M[unicipale] Beauvais, Collection Bucquet aux Cousteaux 57, 559–60; R. Rose, *Ville de Beauvais. Inventaire sommaire des archives communales antérieures à 1790* (Beauvais, 1887), 1.

26 P. Pélicier, *Ville de Châlons-sur-Marne. Inventaire sommaire des archives communales antérieures à 1790* (Châlons-sur-Marne, 1903), 27; G. Clause and J.-P. Ravaux, *Histoire de Châlons-sur-Marne* (Roanne-le Coteau, 1983), 130.

27 Pélicier, *Inventaire sommaire, Châlons-sur-Marne*, 54.

28 J. de Pas, ed., *Entrées et receptions de Souverains et Gouverneurs d'Artois à Saint-Omer XV^e, XVI^e et XVII^e siècles* (Saint-Omer, 1908), 11.

29 '... maintain the town and subjects in all their rights, customs, freedoms and liberties that his predecessors had made ...': A. Ledieu, *Ville d'Abbeville. Inventaire sommaire des archives municipales antérieures à 1790* (Abbeville, 1901), 10.

30 '... all their rights, customs, freedoms and liberties in the way that his predecessors had done ...': BnF Collection Picardie 37, p. 289; Ledieu, *Inventaire sommaire, Abbeville*, 111.

Paris.³¹ Aside from gates, other emblems of civic power were highlighted during an entry ceremony. Oaths at Arras were taken with a hand held out towards the town hall, while Louis XI swore to confirm the liberties of La Rochelle with his hands clasped round those of the mayor.³² If the town hall was the ultimate symbol of urban liberties, the mayor was the individual most strongly invested with municipal power and such gestures reinforced the legitimacy of the town council's rule.³³ Devotional objects were also used during the swearing of the oath. John II confirmed the liberties of Châlons-sur-Saone with one hand placed on the gospels, while oaths at Saint-Omer were taken on a reliquary containing the relics of the saint after whom the town was named.³⁴ Relics were also carried out of the town in the extramural procession by the clergy to create a temporary sacred space outside the gate of entry, where the power of the saints was invoked to bless the oath-taking ceremony.

The creation of a sacred space formed part of the efforts by the town council to raise the value of the bond created between ruler and ruled to that of a sacred oath. It was important for urban populations that bonds established at an entry be permanent. The text of the oath sworn by Louis XI at his entry into La Rochelle in 1472 stated that the townspeople had the right to resist any attempts by the king or his successors to give away possession of the town to another ruler.³⁵ Such concerns were especially important to towns lying on the frontiers of the kingdom. Amiens's position on the strategically important river Somme meant that the townspeople had the misfortune of being placed at the centre of the Franco-Burgundian conflicts of the 1460s and 1470s, with the two sides fighting for control of the town. Following a renewal of the conflict between the king and duke, on 4 January 1471 Antoine de Chabannes, the count of Dammartin, arrived at the walls of Amiens at the head of a royal army and ordered the town to surrender. He told the mayor that the town would be destroyed if it refused to admit him. At a hastily convened meeting of the municipal council, the *échevins* decided to open their gates to the count rather than risk destruction. Dammartin entered Amiens the following day in the

31 *La chronique d'Enguerran de Monstrelet*, L. Douët-d'Arcq, ed., 6 vols. (Paris, 1857–62), vii, 44; J. de Wavrin, *Anchiennes chroniques d'Angleterre*, M. Dupont, ed., 3 vols. (Paris, 1858–63), ii, 5–6; Guinée and Lehoux, *Entrées royales françaises*, 62.

32 Lecesne, *Histoire d'Arras*, i, 226.

33 C. Petit-Dutallis, *Les communes françaises: Caractères et évolution des origines au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1947), 233.

34 Pas, *Entrées et réceptions à Saint-Omer*, 17; Guinée and Lehoux, *Entrées royales françaises*, 141–42.

35 Rivaud, 'Accueil des souverains', 273.

place of the king, receiving the oaths of loyalty from the townspeople and confirming the rights and liberties of the town on the king's behalf. On 27 May 1471 Amiens's municipal council then received a further letter from Louis XI in which the king promised that the town would never be alienated from the crown again. Such assurances were designed to encourage and maintain the loyalty of urban communities, especially those frontier towns such as Amiens which could feel remote and cut-off from the crown. However, seven months after assuring the people of Amiens that they would never be separated from the crown, Louis planned to return the city to the duke of Burgundy.³⁶ This was disastrous news for the townspeople, as without Charles the Bold's consent they had received an army within their walls and taken oaths of loyalty to the duke's bitter enemy. Urban communities feared Charles because of his proclivity for destroying cities, with his sacking of Dinant in 1466 and Liège in 1468 carrying a loud message about the consequences of resisting his rule. The destruction of Liège and Dinant was well known in towns across the Burgundian dominions through songs and poems written at the time endorsing Charles's destruction of the cities.³⁷ In 1471 Amiens's municipal council feared that their town would be destroyed 'comme ilz avoient fait de la ville de Dynant, laquele ils avoient arse en feu et en flambe'. The matter was so serious that the mayor of Amiens, Philippe de Morvilliers, journeyed to the king, who was then at Tours, to plead the town's case to him in person. After hearing his case Louis assured him that he would not permit Amiens to pass back into Burgundian control.³⁸

Conflict and Urban Liberties

Some French towns took advantage of the instability created during periods of conflict to increase their rights and liberties in return for opening their gates and taking oaths of loyalty. England, France, and Burgundy competed for mastery of northern France during the first half of the fifteenth century. The year 1429 marked a shift in the balance of power, and, following the successful raising of

36 A[rchives] M[unicipales] Amiens BB 11, fols. 4–5, 16v, 51. Quote on fol. 16v; *Journal de Jean de Roye*, i, 254–55.

37 These poems can be found in L. de Lincy, ed., *Chants historiques et populaires du temps de Charles VII et de Louis XI* (Paris, 1857), 116–45. See also: C. Thiry, 'Les poèmes de langue Française relatifs aux sacs de Dinant et de Liège', in *Liège et Bourgogne. Actes du colloque tenu à Liège les, 28, 29 et 30 octobre 1968* (Liège, 1972), 101–27.

38 '... as they had done to the town of Dinant, which they had burned in fire and flame ...': AM Amiens BB 11, fol. 63.

the siege of Orléans, Joan of Arc and Charles VII fought their way across Champagne to have Charles crowned king of France at Reims. One of the first towns to submit to Charles on the campaign was Troyes, where the king's entry in July 1429 led to the redefinition of the town's privileges.³⁹ During his stay at Troyes, Charles VII received delegations from the neighbouring towns of Châlons-en-Champagne and Reims, who came to offer him the keys to their gates and take oaths of loyalty to the king. As they offered the keys as a sign of submission, the delegates were instructed by their municipal councils to try and persuade the king to travel from Troyes and make entries into both towns and thus provide an opportunity to extend their privileges.⁴⁰ While Reims, Troyes, and Châlons offered their submission to Charles, the *échevins* of Compiègne initially held back from opening their gates while they successfully negotiated with the king to obtain new rights to levy taxes on wine.⁴¹ They insisted that Charles confirm both their existing privileges and these new rights before permitting him to enter the town. It was desirable that these liberties be confirmed in advance of an entry, as the municipal council's bargaining position was considerably reduced once the king and his soldiers had entered the town.

As well as leading to an expansion of urban privileges, a ceremonial entry could also be an occasion when municipal liberties were abolished. The late fourteenth century was a period of discord in France, when urban populations often placed themselves in opposition to the crown. Amongst the most serious of these disturbances were the revolts that took place in Rouen and Paris in 1382 in response to Charles VI's levying of new taxes.⁴² The levying of these taxes contravened the municipal charter which Louis X had granted to Rouen

39 G. Small, 'Municipal Registers of Deliberations in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries: Cross-Channel Observations', in Jean-Philippe Genet and Joseph Ruggiu, ed., *Les idées passent-elles la Manche? Savoirs, représentations pratiques (France-Angleterre, X^e-XX^e siècles* (Paris, 2007), 57. For the town's preparations for this entry see: A. Roserot, 'Les plus anciens registres des délibérations du conseil de ville de Troyes (1429-33)', in A. Roserot, ed., *Collections de documents inédits du conseil de la ville de Troye* 3 (Troyes, 1886), 233.

40 C. Petit-Dutaillis, *The French Communes in the Middle Ages*, trans. Joan Vickers (Oxford, 1978), 141; *Chronique d'Enguerran de Monstrelet*, iv, 337; Clause and Ravaux, *Histoire de Châlons-sur-Marne*, 106.

41 H. de Lépiniois, 'Notes extraites des archives communales de Compiègne', *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes* 4 (1863), 484; J. Randier, 'Le gouvernement de la "bonne ville" de Compiègne et ses hommes au temps de la reconstruction (1468-1500)', *Bulletin de la société historique de Compiègne* 38 (2002), 81-82.

42 S.K. Cohn, *Lust for Liberty: The Politics of Social Revolt in Medieval Europe, 1200-1425* (Cambridge, 2006), 82-83; H.S. Miskimin, 'The Last Act of Charles V: The Background of the Revolts of 1382', *Speculum* 38, no. 3 (July, 1963), 433-42.

in 1315, and the issue of municipal privileges was at the forefront of the revolt which erupted in late February 1382 when a group of disgruntled townspeople attacked the abbey of St. Ouen, which had amassed a number of economic privileges at the expense of the town.⁴³ Resentful of the grants that the crown had made to the abbey, the rioters tore up the privileges of the abbey in front of the abbot and compelled him to make a new charter renouncing these former rights.⁴⁴ As soon as he received word of the events at Rouen, Charles VI left Paris at the head of an army in order to quell the disturbances. Arriving outside Rouen on 28 March, he was met by the municipal council who protested their innocence in the revolt and implored the king to show mercy to the town. Rather than giving definite assurances, the king told the delegation that those who were innocent would receive mercy, while those guilty of participation in the revolt would be punished. On the following day he made his ceremonial entry into Rouen, with the town council coming out to greet him in procession and leading him through the decorated streets which were lined with townspeople calling out 'Noel'. The townspeople presented the king with the customary gifts provided at inaugural entries but rather than make the usual confirmation of municipal privileges, Charles used the occasion to strip Rouen of its right and liberties. The municipal administration was suspended, six of the ringleaders of the revolt executed, and the town placed under the control of a royal officer.⁴⁵ Charles had the gate through which he entered partly demolished and ordered that the communal bells—which had been used to call the population to revolt—be confiscated and placed inside the royal castle in Rouen. Along with gates, bells were symbolic of municipal liberties and the right to possess a municipal bell was granted in a town's charter. Bells were objects of mass communication. They set working hours, sounded the alarm in case of danger, and underpinned urban festivities, including royal entries.⁴⁶

43 M. Wolfe, *Walled Towns and the Shaping of France: From the Medieval to the Early Modern Era* (Basingstoke, 2009), 61.

44 Cohn, *Lust for Liberty*, 82–3. This charter is printed in: S.K. Cohn, ed., *Popular Protest in Late Medieval Europe: Italy, France and Flanders* (Manchester, 2004), 306; Chéruef, *Rouen*, ii, 544–46.

45 *Chronique des quatre premiers Valois (1327–1393)*, S. Luce, ed. (Paris, 1863), 300–01; *Chronique des règnes de Jean II et Charles V*, R. Delachenel, ed., 4 vols. (Paris, 1910–20), iii. 14; *Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denys*, M.L. Bellaguet, ed., 6 vols. (Paris, 1839–52), i. 145; *Choix de pièces inédites relatives au règne de Charles VI*, L. Douët-d'Arcq, ed., 2 vols. (Paris, 1863–1864), i. 31.

46 C. Billen, 'Dire le Bien Commun dans l'espace public. Matérialité épigraphique et monumentale du bien commun dans les villes des Pays-Bas, à la fin du Moyen Age', in E. Lecuppre-Desjardin and A.-L. Van Bruaene, ed., *De Bono Communi Discours et pratique*

Bells symbolised the authority of the municipal government to rule, and the absence of the sound itself would have been a lasting reminder for the population of the king's displeasure with the town.⁴⁷

Charles made a similar example out of Paris, which had also rebelled in 1382 and failed to give him adequate support in his campaign against the Flemish. Returning to Paris in January 1383 after his victory over the towns of Flanders at Roosebeke, Charles was met outside the walls by five hundred of the municipal elite, who came seeking mercy from the king. Disregarding their pleas, Charles entered Paris like a military conqueror, wearing armour and riding at the head of his army. Following his ceremonial entry, Charles placed the capital under military occupation, ordered the execution of several bourgeois, and had the gates of the town destroyed. The king then stripped Paris of its privileges and franchises, suppressed the guilds, abolished the municipal government, and placed control of the capital in the hands of the royal *prévôt*.⁴⁸ Under normal circumstances a royal entry provided a favourable moment of contact between the king and his towns; at Rouen and Paris, however, Charles subverted the purpose of the ceremony. By making it the occasion for the abolition of municipal liberties, Charles could give a nuanced demonstration of royal power. He made it clear to the elites who lay at the forefront of urban society that their power and authority were dependent on him. Should they fail to maintain law and order on his behalf or should they act in opposition to the crown, then they could not expect to have their privileges and position confirmed.

Changing Patterns in the Confirmation of Urban Liberties, 1460–1560

Between the mid-fourteenth and mid-fifteenth centuries ceremonial entries were the principal occasions during which urban privileges were confirmed. However, in a trend which began during the reign of Louis XI and which

du Bien Commun dans les villes d'Europe (XIII^e au XVI^e siècle) (Turnhout, 2010), 78–80; C. Pattart, *Les cloches de civiles de Namur, Fosses et Tournai: recherches sur l'histoire de la communication de masse en milieu urbain* (Brussels, 1976), 141–44. For the importance of bells to French communities see also: A. Corbin, *Village Bells: Sound and Meaning in the Nineteenth-Century French Countryside* (London, 1999).

47 The bells were returned to Rouen when Charles VI restored the administration and privileges of the town in 1389: Chéruef, *Rouen*, ii. 475.

48 L. Mirot, *Les insurrections urbaines au début du règne de Charles VI (1380–1383)* (Geneva, 1974), 184–95; J. Favier, *Paris au XV^e siècle, 1380–1500* (Paris, 1974), 140–41.

gathered momentum in the sixteenth century, towns moved to have their privileges confirmed at the beginning of a king's reign, rather than waiting until the inaugural entry. The town of Beaune, for example, had its liberties confirmed at an entry right through to the reign of Louis XI, from which point they were confirmed by letters patent at the beginning of a new monarch's rule.⁴⁹ In many respects it was preferable for urban populations to have their liberties confirmed in this way, as there could be a long gap between the ascension of a ruler and his first entry, especially in more remote parts of the kingdom. The opportunity to have urban privileges confirmed at the start of a reign reduced the period of uncertainty following a monarch's death, when the bond between town and crown was broken. There was little negotiation to be done in this part of the confirmation of liberties, as it was just a general renewal of urban rights. Medieval town councils often asked for rights and liberties as they stood at the time of Louis IX to be confirmed. From the later fifteenth century, however, right through to the reign of Henry II and beyond, town councils asked that the king confirm their rights and privileges as they stood during the reign of Louis XI. This would suggest that while Louis XI has often been portrayed as the great destroyer of urban rights and liberties, for municipal elites his reign actually represented the greatest expansion of urban privileges since the reign of Louis IX.⁵⁰

The move by towns to have their privileges confirmed at the beginning of a reign was hastened by the onset of the Italian wars from 1494, when French monarchs tended to go on campaign at the beginning of their reign. Once Henry II came to the throne in 1547, for example, he delayed making the customary post-coronation entries into northern towns, including Paris, until he had returned from Italy two years later. In spite of these changes, the swearing of an oath to maintain urban privileges remained a prominent feature of an entry ceremony throughout the sixteenth century, with the key difference being that it was a reconfirmation, rather than a confirmation, of urban liberties. When Henry II entered Dijon in 1548, he swore an oath to uphold the municipal liberties that he already confirmed by letters patent following his ascension to the throne in 1547.⁵¹ Townspeople also insisted that the king's representatives, particularly provincial governors, swear to uphold urban liberties when making their inaugural entries. When Francis, duke of Longueville,

49 AM Beaune, Carton 1, no. 24 (Louis XI), 27 (Charles VIII), 28 (Francis I), 35 (Henry II), 37 (Francis II), 39 (Henry III), 42 (Henry IV).

50 Sée, *Louis XI et les villes*, passim.

51 M. de Gouvenain, *Ville de Dijon. Inventaire sommaire des archives communales antérieures à 1790*, 5 vols. (Paris, 1867), ii. 67.

entered Amiens in 1541 as governor of Picardy, the municipal council requested that he take an oath to uphold the privileges of the town.⁵² Motivated by the same concerns that had led municipal councils to ask bishops to swear to respect municipals privileges, urban elites were acting to ensure that their liberties were not threatened by the governor, who stood as a potential local rival to their authority.

The trend by towns to have their privileges confirmed at court also reflects the growing power of the French monarchy during the sixteenth century, which led to changes in the form of the royal entry ceremony. Rather than have as the main focus of the entry the king's procession through the town past the townspeople, during the sixteenth century his urban subjects instead filed past the monarch during the extramural greeting. A dais was constructed outside the walls, from where the king could sit in state and watch thousands of townspeople march past him in procession. For Henry II's entry into Paris in 1549, the town council made a wooden stand at the end of the rue Saint-Laurent. In contrast to later medieval monarchs who met the urban delegation on horseback, addressed them in person, and took oaths to maintain the liberties of the town, Henry II sat immobile and silent on this dais and had the chancellor speak on his behalf when the *prévôt-des-marchands* offered the keys to the town and asked for a confirmation of the city's privileges.⁵³

As well as serving as a demonstration of the monarch's power, the public reconfirmation of urban liberties in front of the multitude of townspeople at the extramural greeting enforced the legitimacy of the municipal council's claim to govern the town on the king's behalf.

Gift-Giving and the Winning of New Liberties

Ceremonial entries were also occasions when towns could win new grants and liberties beyond those confirmed at the beginning of a reign. While the confirmation of existing liberties took place outside the town, the winning of new rights was closely linked with the gift presentation which took place following the public entry. In addition to the basic gifts of food and wine common to all entries, the town also presented a valuable piece of silverware as part of an

52 AM Amiens BB 24, fol. 53. Bayonne also insisted that governors swear to uphold the privileges of the town at their inaugural entry: E. Dularens, *Ville de Bayonne. Inventaire sommaire des archives communales antérieures à 1790* (Bayonne, 1894), 15.

53 *Registres des délibérations du Bureau de la ville de Paris. Tome troisième, 1539-1552*, P. Guérin, ed. (Paris, 1886), 64.



FIGURE 2 *Charles VI greeted on horseback by the municipal council at his inaugural entry into Paris in 1380. BNF 138, fol. 260v.*

inaugural entry. This was commonly in the form of a cup or plate, which was engraved with the arms of the town in the hope that it would serve as a future reminder of the town's hospitality.

Amiens's municipal deliberations state that they placed the arms of the town on the silver fountain presented to Anne of Brittany in 1493 'affin que ladite Roynne puist, en gardant ladite fontaine, avoir mémore dudit don pour le bien d'icelle ville'.⁵⁴ As the design of the gifts became more elaborate from the late fifteenth century, so the costs of commissioning them increased. For Henry II's post-coronation entry into Paris in 1549 the town council presented a decorative silver statue costing 10,000 l., while the following year Rouen's town council set aside almost 15,000 l. just to buy the presents to be given at the entries of Henry II and Catherine de Medici.⁵⁵ Although gifts could be very expensive, it was hoped that they would serve as a lasting symbol of the town's warm welcome and generosity for many years to come. An entry ceremony was transitory by its nature, but a solid gift of silverware could survive in royal collections for generations and serve as a lasting reminder of the political bond that king and town had entered into during the entry. For Jesse Hurlbut the item of silverware was given in return for the confirmation of the existing rights and privileges of the city and 'in material terms alone, the first entry constituted an exchange that was always to the disadvantage of the city'.⁵⁶ However, while town councils spent large sums of money on these gifts, entries were occasions when towns could win significant new grants and privileges. This result would more than balance out the money spent on the gift, as in order for the king to reaffirm his superiority over the townspeople, he was expected to give gifts of greater value as a demonstration of his wealth and power.⁵⁷

For Pierre Bourdieu it was essential that a time gap exist between the gift and counter-gift as 'the interval had the function of creating a screen between the gift and the counter gift and allowing two perfectly symmetrical acts to appear as unique and unrelated acts'.⁵⁸ However, rather than make the two acts appear unconnected, towns in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century France

54 '... in order that the said queen could, in keeping the said fountain, have memory of the gift for the good of this town ...': AM Amiens BB 16, fol. 234.

55 *Registres, Paris (1539–1552)*, 181; AM Rouen A 16, fol. 119.

56 Hurlbut, 'Burgundian Inauguration and Gift', 173.

57 M. Mauss, *The Gift*, trans. Ian Cunnison (London, 1954), passim.

58 P. Bourdieu, *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (Oxford, 1998), 94. For the application of Bourdieu's methodology to gift-giving in entry ceremonies see: M. Damen, 'Princely entries and gift exchange in the Burgundian Low Countries: a crucial link in late medieval culture', *Journal of Medieval History* 33, no. 3 (September, 2007), 237.

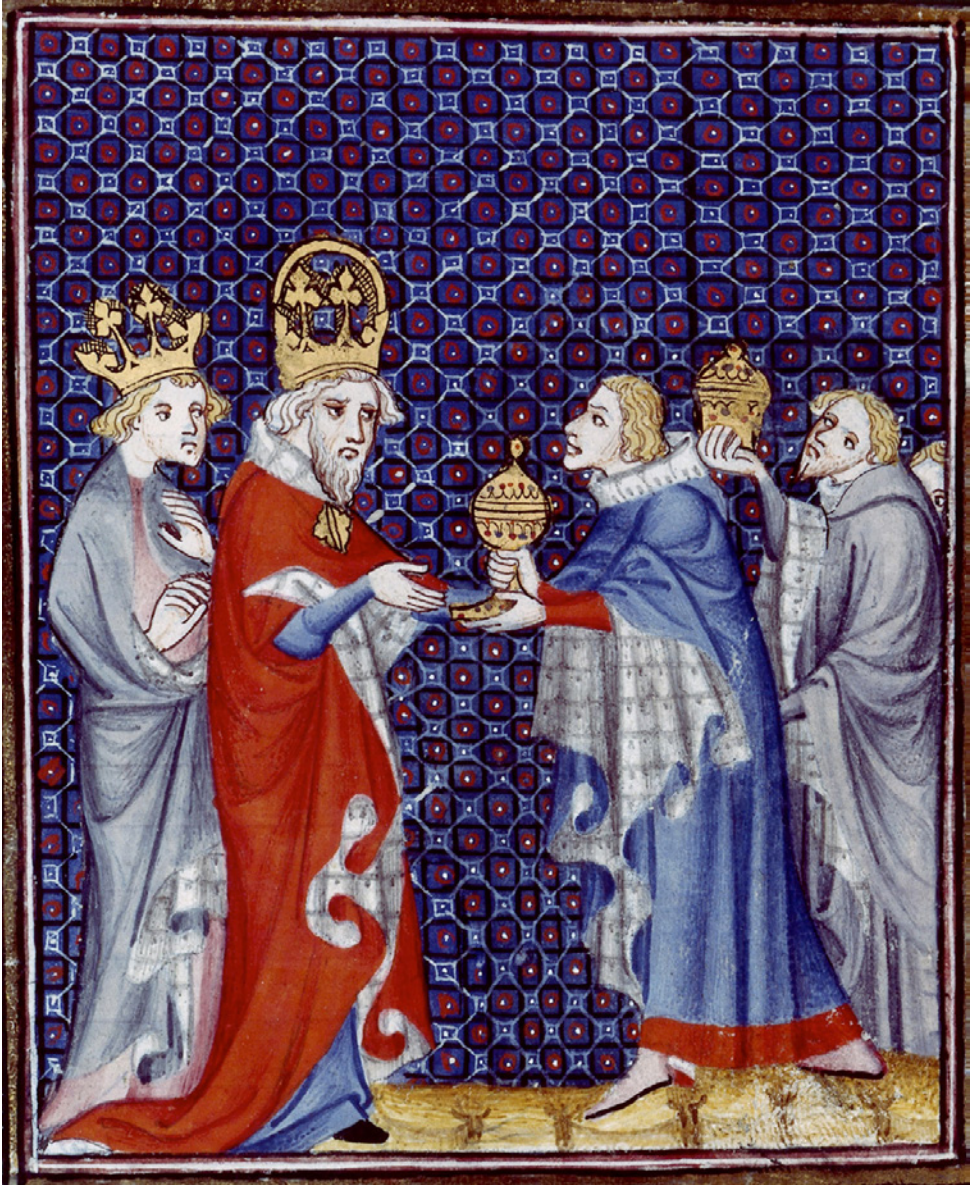


FIGURE 3 *The presentation of gifts of silverware to King Charles V of France and the Emperor Charles IV following their joint entry into Paris in 1378. BNF 2812, fol. 478v.*

deliberately timed their requests for further grants to coincide with their presentation of gifts. There was an explicit link between the provision of the gift of silverware and the granting of new liberties to the town. When Louis XII entered Troyes in 1510, the gift of silverware commissioned by the municipal council was not ready in time for his departure. When it was completed they sent deputies to Dijon to present it to the king, and immediately upon receiving the gift Louis granted the people of Troyes their requests made at the entry.⁵⁹ It is significant that Louis waited until he had received the delayed gifts before making the expected grants, leaving no doubt that there was a direct correlation between the offering of the municipal gift and the counter-gift.

The gift presentation generally took place in the visitor's lodgings after the public entry. It was important that the act itself involve only the king and municipal elite and be hidden away from public gaze, as this allowed for the creation of a more personal relationship with the king in contrast to the distance between the monarch and urban elite in the extramural reception. The gift-giving ceremony provided a point of direct contact when municipal councillors were able to gain an audience with the king, during which they presented him with one or more requests for new grants. While the chancellor spoke on Henry II's behalf at the extramural greeting at his entry into Paris in 1549, the king spoke with the town council himself when he met them in private afterwards to receive their gift and hear requests for new grants. It was very unusual for a king not to grant any of the town council's requests once the gift had been presented, and the *échevins* had a good chance of winning some major benefits for the town, including the reduction of taxes. The most significant reductions in taxes were often made during inaugural entries, when it was expected that the new monarch would make substantial economic concessions to his *bonnes villes*. General remissions of taxes were unusual, and it was more common for the town to ask for the abolition of specific taxes or that the profits generated from these taxes be made over to the municipal council.⁶⁰ Grants were commonly made by the king when the money was to be used to maintain the fortifications of the town, especially in frontier regions of the kingdom, such as Picardy and Champagne.⁶¹ When Charles VIII entered Compiègne in 1486 the

59 A. Babeau, *Les rois de France à Troyes au seizième siècle* (Troyes, 1880), 35.

60 For example, when Francis I and the queen entered Beauvais in 1520, they asked the king to permit them to collect the revenue generated from the sale of salt and fish in the town: BM Beauvais, Coll. Bucquet, vol. 57, 422.

61 For royal grants to fortify *bonnes villes* see: P. Lardin, 'Le Financement des Fortifications en Normandie Orientale à la Fin du Moyen-Age', in *Les Normands et le fisc: XXIX^{ème} Congrès des sociétés historiques et archéologiques de Normandie, Elbeuf-sur-Seine, 20–23 octobre*

town council successfully petitioned him to collect revenues on certain goods to be used for the fortifications, while Abbeville, situated closer to the frontier, managed to gain the significant economic concession of exemption from paying the *taille* for ten years following his entry into the town in 1493.⁶²

Ceremonial entries not only provided the town council with direct access to the king, they also gave the *échevins* the opportunity to meet important members of the court and persuade them to support the town in winning grants from the king. In this way the benefits of an entry could pay off for years to come in the winning of new rights and liberties. When the Parisian town council gave Georges d'Amboise wine, spices, and torches at his entry into Paris in 1502, they asked him to 'tousjours lad. ville pour recommandée envers le Roy'.⁶³ Georges d'Amboise was chancellor of France and one of Louis XII's closest friends, putting him in a good position to influence the king in favour of the town. In their speeches of thanks, dignitaries told municipal councils that they would act on the behalf of the town, thus making an explicit connection between the gift and the winning of friends at court. After receiving the gift from the people of Paris at a banquet held with the town council after her entry, Eleanor of Austria thanked the delegation for the gifts and declared that she would 'faire plaisir à icelle Ville' in the future.⁶⁴ Such declarations were more than just empty rhetoric, as the rules of courtesy dictated that the recipient of a gift had an obligation to return the favour.⁶⁵ When Claude of France, wife of Francis I, entered Arles in 1515, the town council approached her with requests for additional rights. The queen did not have the authority to grant such requests, but as soon as Francis returned from Italy into Provence, Claude told the king of the requests she had received from the townspeople. The king then sent a letter to the municipal council, in which he told the *consuls* that not only was he confirming their existing privileges, he was also granting them the right to levy taxes on grain sold in the town. Francis explained that these grants

1994 (Elbeuf-sur-Seine, 1996), 47–58; A. Rigaudière, 'Le financement des fortifications urbaines en France du milieu du XIV^e siècle à la fin du XV^e siècle', *Revue Historique* 273, no. 1 (January, 1985), 19–95.

62 AM Compiègne BB 10, fol. 34v; A. Ledieu, 'Première entrée de Charles VIII à Abbeville (17 juin 1493)', *Bulletin Archéologie du Comité des Travaux historiques et scientifiques* 1 (1888), 57.

63 '... always recommend the said town towards the king...': *Registres des délibérations du Bureau de la ville de Paris. Tome Premier, 1499–1526*, F. Bonnardot, ed. (Paris, 1883), 67.

64 '... make pleasure to this town...': *Ibid.*, 117.

65 S. Kettering, 'Gift-giving and patronage in early modern France', *French History* 2 (1988), 146–47.

were made 'en faveur du bon recueil et reception qu'ilz ont fait en ladictte ville à ladictte dame la Royne'.⁶⁶

Demonstrating an awareness of practical politics, municipal councils also targeted the wives of dignitaries at an entry. Tournai lavished gifts upon the wife of the chancellor when Louis XI entered the town in 1463 in the hope of gaining her favour, while the duchess of Longueville was presented with a sculpture of the head of John the Baptist when her husband, then governor of Picardy, entered Amiens in 1541. When this gift was offered to the duchess by the town council she told them: 'emploiez-moi tous pour voz affaires vers Monseigneur, car je suis à vostre commandement'.⁶⁷ Towns competed with each other to win the favour of dignitaries by means of gift presentation. In return for these gifts, the town council hoped that the recipients would act as brokers for the town at court.⁶⁸ When the lieutenant general of Paris, Des Chanetz, described to the Parisian *échevins* the expensive gift given to Claude of France when she entered Lyon, they worked to outdo their rivals and present the queen with a gift so sumptuous that she would not forget the 'honneur et don' made by the town.⁶⁹ As well as seeking to gain influence at court in the future, municipal councils also used royal entries as an opportunity to reward members of the court for past efforts in helping them win new grants.⁷⁰ By rewarding their friends at court, municipal councils could hope to maintain the services of a proven advocate for the town.

Negotiations with Royal Officials

While the presentation of gifts to the king, his wife, and the dignitaries who rode in his entourage was common in the later Middle Ages, the number and lavishness of the gifts provided increased during the second half of the fifteenth century along with the development of the drive towards centralisation taken by the crown against the princely states of France. The provision of gifts

66 '... in favour of the good reception and welcome that they had made in the said town to the said lady the queen...': *Ordonnances des rois de France. Règne de François Ier*, 8 vols. (Paris, 1902), i. 337.

67 '... make use of me in all your business towards my lord [the duke], because I am at your command...': AM Amiens BB 40, fol. 23.

68 S. Kettering, 'The Historical Development of Political Clientelism', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18 (1988), 425–26.

69 '... honour and gift...': *Registres, Paris (1499–1526)*, 238.

70 See, for example, payments made to officials at the entry of Francis I in 1539 for efforts they had made on behalf of the town: AM Amiens BB 23, fol. 3v.

to royal officers, ministers, *parlementaires*, and religious figures formed a normal part of the system by which the town won *octrois*, the remission of a tax, or favours.⁷¹ As with the provision of presents to other members of the royal family, the impetus behind the offering of gifts to those who accompanied the king was to gain influence with the royal officials who were key in the day-to-day running of the kingdom. By the sixteenth century, the details of the grants which the town would seek from the king were worked out in negotiations with royal officials before the urban delegation took their requests to the king. As it was customary for the monarch to grant the requests that were made to him following an entry, royal officials preferred to review municipal requests in advance. This was particularly important when the grants sought by the town involved a reduction in royal revenue. It was also essential for the town to have these officials on board. Should the municipal delegation approach the king without consulting the royal officials first, there was a good chance that these officials would obstruct any grants made by the monarch at the entry. While the municipal council of Poitiers was granted a tax remission by Louis XI when he entered the town, their efforts to obtain the money were hindered by royal officials, and they never received the sum due to them.⁷²

Members of the royal household sought to exploit the power they had in controlling access to the king in order to extort money from town councils. Prior to Henry II's entry into Amiens in 1558, one of the *échevins*, Julien Legay, told his fellow members that he had been approached by an official calling himself the 'cappitaine de la porte du Roy', who told him that the municipal councils of all the towns which the king had entered had given him a gift in return for which he had provided access to a private council with the king.⁷³ Not wanting to risk losing the chance of winning new grants from the monarch, Amiens's town council ruled that they would provide this gift. The ability to travel with the king greatly benefited members of his household, who received gifts of money from town councils. This custom also increased the prestige of the king, who was seen as a source of wealth and prosperity for those close to him. By the mid-sixteenth century, town councils were expected to provide gifts for a whole range of household officials, with the size and nature of the gift corresponding to an official's position in the household. The king's house-

71 J.P. Leguay, 'Banquets, cadeaux alimentaires et autre présents aux visiteurs de marque dans les villes françaises à la fin du moyen âge', in *Jeux, sports et divertissements au moyen âge et à l'âge classique: actes du 16e congrès national des sociétés savantes* (Paris, 1993), 197.

72 The continuator of Monstrelet in *The chronicles of Enguerrand de Monstrelet*, T. Johnes, ed., 12 vols. (London, 1810), x. 373.

73 AM Amiens BB 31, fol. 124v.

hold had doubled in size between 1480 and 1522 and had over sixty categories of officials.⁷⁴ These gifts were customary, and if they were not given, town councils could find it more difficult to gain access to the king. Gaining access was becoming more restricted by the reign of Henry II. When Henry II came to Rouen in 1550, the town council first approached royal officials seeking to gain access to the monarch. These officials formally introduced the urban delegation to the king, who granted their request to have the royal *aides* remitted.⁷⁵ Gaining access to the king could be especially important when town councils were competing with other rival urban groups for grants. When Louis XII entered Beauvais in 1514, the abbot of the local monastery of Saint-Pierre won grants that contravened municipal privileges. It was only after being brought into Louis's presence by royal officials that the mayor was able to plead the town's case before the king.⁷⁶

* * *

French royal entries have traditionally been seen as an expression of royal power and propaganda over urban populations. In a recent article on French royal entries of the sixteenth century, Robert Knecht writes that they were a 'most effective form of royal propaganda' designed to 'instil into the king's subjects feelings of awe and submissiveness'.⁷⁷ In contrast to such top-down studies, this paper has sought to demonstrate that ceremonial entries were cultural encounters between court and city, not courtly ritual forms imposed on urban communities. Although the king or duke provided the focus to the entry, virtually every aspect of the ceremony was controlled and implemented by the citizens of the town, who prepared multifaceted symbolic programmes to promote local concerns to their rulers. The public confirmation of municipal liberties lay at the heart of the programme of the entry. By means of highlighting symbolically important buildings, which were invested with civic power, and creating a sacred space for the swearing of the oaths, municipal councils

74 R.J. Knecht, *The French Renaissance Court* (London, 2008), 34–35.

75 AM Rouen A 17, fol. 79; AM Rouen A 16, fol. 116.

76 BM Beauvais, Coll. Bucquet, vol. 57, 374.

77 R.J. Knecht, 'Court Festivals as Political Spectacle: The Example of Sixteenth-Century France', in J.R. Mulryne, Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, and Margaret Shewring ed., *Europa Triumphans: Court and Civic Festivals in Early Modern Europe*, 2 vols. (Aldershot, 2004), i. 19, 21. See also: Ralph E. Giesey, 'Models of Rulership in French Royal Ceremonial', in Sean Wilentz ed., *Rites of Power: Symbolism, Ritual, and Politics Since the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 1985), 53.

sought to ensure that they would achieve a lasting confirmation of urban rights and liberties. While the move to have these liberties confirmed by letter at the beginning of a new monarch's rule was largely complete by the reign of Henry II, French monarchs were still expected to make a public reconfirmation of urban liberties at their inaugural ceremonial entries. Although the central institutions of government came to be permanently located in Paris during this period, the monarchy remained peripatetic right through the sixteenth century. Royal entries were an effective means of closing the distance between the king and the provincial elites, who often had cause to feel cut-off from the administrative centre at Paris. Public ritual was at the very heart of public power in later medieval and Renaissance France, and a ceremonial entry gave a visual confirmation of the legitimacy of the rule of the municipal council. Ceremonial entries were primarily designed and produced by the town council, who negotiated with the king and royal officials to win additional grants following the entry. The ability of urban elites to design and produce impressive civic receptions and obtain new liberties reflects their increasingly important role in the life of the realm during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Royal entries were not spectacles where urban populations stood speechless in awe of the majesty of French royalty, but occasions when French townspeople participated in a dialogue with the monarch. These negotiations between crown and town reflected the pragmatic workings of the state in later-medieval and early-modern France, which was built on good will and cooperation between the king and local elites by the mid-fifteenth century. Royal entries were not just representations of the theoretical workings of the state; they were the very occasions during which the political bond between the king and his urban subjects was brought into being. A bond implied reciprocal obligations and French legists of the later sixteenth century continued to insist on the maintenance of urban rights and liberties in the face of growing royal power.⁷⁸

78 L. Bryant, 'Parlementaire Political Theory in the Parisian Royal Entry Ceremony', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 7, no. 1 (April, 1976), 22–23.

‘Willingly We Follow a Gentle Leader . . .’: Joyous Entries into Antwerp

Margit Thøfner

This essay explores the ritual circumstances that surrounded the first visit of an early modern European ruler to a subject city. Customarily, this was a carefully choreographed and highly formalised encounter. In the city of Antwerp in the southern or Habsburg Netherlands—which serves the present argument as a highly apposite case study—such visits were known as ‘Blijde Intreden’ or ‘Joyous Entries’.

As I have argued elsewhere and as recently noted by Stijn Bussels, it is still all too common for scholars to assume that rituals such as Joyous Entries were a kind of propaganda, vehicles for promoting ‘absolutism’ or some equally overweening form of princely authority.¹ Such interpretations are not helpful. Instead, these events should be seen as first encounters between two mutually dependent centres of power: the princely court on the one side and the urban community on the other. Sometimes the court had the upper hand, sometimes the city did, but neither was ever without some sort of say in how a Joyous Entry was performed. Even so, it is important to note that Joyous Entries were not courtly spectacles *per se*. Usually they were funded, organised, and staged from within each host city, most often under direct municipal supervision.² On the other hand, this supervisory role sometimes involved one or more individuals with experience of life at court, thus complicating the relationship further.³

1 See Margit Thøfner, *A Common Art: Urban Ceremonial in Antwerp and Brussels during and after the Dutch Revolt* (Zwolle, 2007), 22–23 and Stijn Bussels, ‘Making the Most of Theatre and Painting: The Power of *Tableaux Vivants* in Joyous Entries from the Southern Netherlands’, *Art History* 33, no. 2 (2010), 236–247.

2 For an account of how all of this worked in practice, see Thøfner, *A Common Art*, 71–75. For an excellent analysis of the organisational challenges involved in a specific Entry, see Ann Diels, ‘Van opdracht tot veiling: Kunstaanbestedingen naar aanleiding van de Blijde Intrede van aartshertog Ernest van Oostenrijk te Antwerpen in 1594’, *De Zeventiende Eeuw: Cultuur in de Nederlanden in interdisciplinair perspectief* 19 (2003), 25–54. Finally, a good sense of the costs involved may be gleaned from A. Gielens, ‘De Kosten van de Blijde Intrede van den Hertog van Anjou (1582)’, *Antwerpen’s Oudheidkundige Kring* 16 (1940), 93–105.

3 For example, Joannes Bochius, a city secretary who supervised several Joyous Entries into Antwerp, was a former employee of Alexander Farnese. See Anna Sarrazin, ‘Joannes Bochius (1555–1609)’, *Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis* 27 (1939), 241–267.

Whatever the case, the customary role of the ruler and his or her court was to participate, and the exact manner in which this was done was of considerable importance. As this essay will demonstrate, for the incoming prince, deft ceremonial improvisation—or perhaps ritual adaptation is a better term—was both a means of soliciting and gaining civic support.

In the early modern period, the Habsburg dynasty had a particularly complex relationship with the cities of the Netherlands. Since the early Middle Ages, most of these cities had formed part of complex, international trade routes and, as a consequence, had become populous, affluent, and quasi-independent. That was especially true for the great mercantile city of Antwerp, which, by the mid-sixteenth century, was really a kind of city republic. Accordingly, in 1567, the Florentine Ludovico Guicciardini observed that ‘Antwerp has as her lord and prince the Duke of Brabant, Margrave of the Holy Roman Empire, but with so many and so great privileges, obtained from antiquity onwards, that she governs and rules herself almost in the way of a free city and republic.’⁴ As this comment suggests, in most of the cities of the Low Countries, sovereign authority was contingent, contractual, and constitutionally bounded.⁵ This situation, in turn, generated a very particular ritual logic when, by means of a Joyous Entry, a Habsburg prince or princess was formally recognised and sworn in as the ruler of such a city.

In general, under the Habsburgs, the Netherlands were essentially a federal and devolved state; the reigning sovereign had no over-arching status or title. Sovereignty itself was construed as local. For example, in Antwerp and Brussels the Habsburgs were the Dukes of Brabant whilst in Lille and Ghent they ruled as the Counts of Flanders, in Arras as Counts of Artois, and in Valenciennes as Counts of Valenciennes. Moreover, for each city, there was a specific set of rights and privileges, negotiated and re-negotiated in the course of the Middle Ages, sometimes by means of warfare, sometimes by political and economic horse-trading. In effect, the relationship between overlords and their urban subjects was variable, flexible, and unstable. And the Joyous Entry ritual formed a vital part of this relationship: it was the embodiment of the political contract. For at its heart lay a mutual taking of oaths, in which the incoming Habsburg prince promised to recognise and uphold local rights and privileges and, in return, the citizenry and the magistrature vowed due fealty and obedience.⁶

4 Here quoted after Martin van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt, 1555–1590* (Cambridge, 1992), 24. The original passage may be found in Lodovico Guicciardini, *Descrittioni di tutti i Paesi Bassi* (Antwerp, 1581), 312.

5 For a more detailed account of this, see Thøfner, *A Common Art*, 37–46.

6 For an account of this system, see Thøfner, *A Common Art*, 37–46.

In Antwerp, mutual oaths were taken twice, once outside the city walls and once inside the city, on the Town Hall Square. These two moments sandwiched a grand procession through specially decorated streets, filled with elaborate pageantry and temporary architecture, by means of which the municipality and the citizens voiced their expectations of the new reign. The Joyous Entry was therefore the chief—because most visible—means by which the relationship between princes and cities was invoked, defined, performed, maintained, negotiated, and re-negotiated.⁷

An important point follows from this: the role of the common citizenry should not be underestimated. There remains a scholarly tendency to see Joyous Entries as essentially elitist, full of learned imagery and rich textual allusions much too complex for ordinary folk.⁸ This interpretation, however, is rather problematic. First, it runs counter to the high levels of literacy documented for the cities of the Low Countries during the early modern period.⁹ Besides, men of the middling sort, such as weavers and shearers, might play active roles in the so-called 'Chambers of Rhetoric' which, in turn, often contributed to Joyous Entry pageantry.¹⁰ Finally, as Victor Morgan has argued in a different context, even the illiterate amongst the early modern urban populace could display quite high levels of visual sophistication. A seemingly menial task such as shifting barrels or bales of cloth in the marketplace involved identifying complex heraldry. Just finding a specific address demanded a measure of iconographic skill.¹¹ For houses were not identified by number in early modern Europe. Instead, they had names such as 'Samson' or 'The Sign of Fortune'; in Antwerp the best known example is probably that of the Plantin press, operating under 'The Sign of the Golden Compasses'. In keeping with such considerations, in what follows I have credited all participants with a certain measure of intelligence rather than assuming straightaway that Joyous Entries were really only for the social elites within the urban community.¹²

7 Thøfner, *A Common Art*, 51–57.

8 For a reiteration of this view, which is also a summary of earlier versions, see J. Ronnie Mulryne et al., *Europa Triumphans: Court and Civic Festivals in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot, 2004), vol. I, 95–96.

9 See Hilde de Ridder-Symoens, 'Education and Literacy in the Burgundian-Habsburg Netherlands', *Canadian Journal of Netherlandic Studies* 16, no. 1 (1995), 6–12.

10 See, for example, Anne-Laure van Bruaene, 'Brotherhood and Sisterhood in the Chambers of Rhetoric in the Southern Low Countries', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 36, no. 1, 11–35. On the role of Chambers of Rhetoric in Joyous Entry ceremonial, see Thøfner, *A Common Art*, 72–75.

11 Victor Morgan, 'The Construction of Civic Memory in early modern Norwich', in Marius Kwint et al., eds., *Material Memories* (Oxford, 1999), 183–197.

12 For a further elaboration of this argument, see Thøfner, *A Common Art*, 93–113.



FIGURE 1 Monogrammist MHHH, The Duke of Anjou before the Triumphal Arch on the Sint-Jansbrug mounted for his Joyous Entry, c. 1582, oil on panel. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



FIGURE 2 *Detail of figure 1, The Duke of Anjou before the Triumphal Arch.*

In addition, it should be noted that my frame for re-examining Joyous Entries into Antwerp is, in part, derived from recent anthropological work. For example, Daniel Seabra Lopes has argued that ritual should be understood as fluid and unstable, both serious and playful, both formal and flexible and 'logically connected with the movement of social reproduction *and* transformation'.¹³ Seabra Lopes also helpfully suggests that ritual ought to be studied primarily as a set of interactions or encounters, and emphatically not as texts.¹⁴ He himself draws on the ternary terminology first defined by Erving Goffman to describe the participants in any given ritual: there are the actors, those who actually perform; the receptors, those who are transformed by the ritual; and finally the spectators, whose role is to witness. Crucially, these roles are interchangeable and overlapping in any given ritual performance.¹⁵

That this is a helpful way of approaching Joyous Entries is evident from an anonymous painting showing a particular moment during the first visit of François, Duke of Anjou, into Antwerp, held in 1582 (fig. 1 & 2). In itself, this ritual moment represented one extreme of the relationship between Habsburg overlords and their urban subjects. After protracted conflict, the city of Antwerp

13 Daniel Sebra Lopes, 'Retrospective and Prospective Forms of Ritual: Suggestions of Social Transformations in a Portuguese Gypsy Community', *Anthropological Quarterly* 83, no. 4 (2010), 721–752.

14 The confusion of ritual with text is the core problem of one otherwise excellent recent article: Tamar Cholcman, 'The Merchant Voice: International Interests and Strategies in Joyeuses Entrées. The Case of Portuguese, English, and Flemish Merchants in Antwerp (1599) and Lisbon (1619)', *Dutch Crossing* 35, no. 1 (March 2011), 39–62.

15 Sebra Lopes, 'Retrospective and Prospective Forms of Ritual', 723–724.

had formally repudiated its ruler, then King Philip II of Spain.¹⁶ The image represents one moment of the inaugural ceremony held for his chosen successor, a French Valois prince. Here, the Duke of Anjou is certainly the receptor; the whole point of the ceremony is to transform him into a Duke of Brabant, overlord of Antwerp. But, as the painting suggests, he is also an actor. For he is shown having reined in his horse in response to an armed man—identifiable by his sash as the captain of an urban militia guild—kneeling before him in the street. The captain, for his part, is simultaneously a spectator and an actor. Charged with keeping order along the processional route, he has broken rank to perform his very own act of fealty. In this, he also becomes a receptor: his kneeling transforms him into a willing and loyal subject of the Duke of Anjou. The painting has several passages like this; note, for example, the man on the far left who has taken off his hat to greet the new sovereign. By such a gesture he, again, unites all three roles of spectator, actor, and receptor.

From these passages alone it may be concluded that the painting is far from neutral despite its apparently descriptive mode. It was clearly devised by and for somebody who approved of the ceremony and all that it stood for: the repudiation of King Philip and the election and inauguration of the Duke of Anjou in his stead. This is particularly so because a recent analysis of a later Joyous Entry has suggested that common gestures of courtesy, such as kneeling and hat-lifting, were considered particularly affective by all participants, whether princes or citizens.¹⁷ More broadly, the painting also demonstrates the usefulness of Goffman's ternary model for the purposes of the present argument; it both indicates and helps us to attend to the inherent dynamism and flexibility of Joyous Entry rituals. This is extremely important. We clearly need to dispense with the notion of 'absolutism' and become much more subtle and careful when we try to understand what happened when an early modern court came to visit a subject city.

This point may be explored further on the basis of a slightly later Joyous Entry into the city of Antwerp, performed on 27 August 1585 for Alexander Farnese, governor-general of the Habsburg Netherlands on behalf of his uncle, King Philip II of Spain. The significance of this Entry is that it reinstated Philip

16 On this crucial ceremony, see Emily Peters, 'Printing Ritual: The Performance of Community in Christopher Plantin's *La Joyeuse et Magnifique Entrée de Monseigneur Francoys' d'Anjou*', *Renaissance Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (2008), 370–431.

17 See Inge van Bamis, *Een nieuw begin? Een studie van de remissieverlening tijdens de Blijde Intrede van aartshertogen Albrecht en Isabella (1599)* (MA dissertation, Katholieke Universitet Leuven, 2011), 39. (http://www.scriptiebank.be/sites/default/files/575948675_a3d8fd9a08ea86312f735.pdf, consulted 10 March 2014).

as the Duke of Brabant after Farnese had reduced the rebellious city of Antwerp to obedience by force, by two long and bitter years of trench warfare.¹⁸ Taken at face value, this ceremony may seem to contradict Goffman's model because, at this moment, the Habsburgs definitely held the whip hand. But, even in such a situation the ritual was a complex encounter.

In essence, Farnese's Joyous Entry into Antwerp was not an inaugural ceremony but rather a victory parade. However, the surrender of Antwerp had not been unconditional. One of the conditions for capitulation was that the city should retain all its rights and privileges as they had been before 1566, that is, before the first outbursts of warfare in the Low Countries.¹⁹ As follows quite logically from this, Farnese had been induced to perform a Joyous Entry to make clear to all and sundry that the rights and privileges of the city were still in force. In other words, already from the negotiations preceding it, it is clear that this Joyous Entry was a collaboration between court and city.

Not much is known about Farnese's Entry. Yet what is known suggests that it is worth studying because it deviates in significant ways from both earlier and later ceremonies.²⁰ First, Farnese was not welcomed at the designated point of entry by the urban militia guilds, as was customary.²¹ Nor did they serve as his guard of honour throughout the procession. Instead, he came with his own retinue.²² A whole urban grouping which usually performed as actors in Joyous Entries had now been reduced to spectators. This deviation from custom would have been a clear sign to the locals that the Habsburgs were in ascendance.

18 For a fuller account of this Entry, see Thøfner, *A Common Art*, 149–157.

19 Léon van der Essen, *Alexandre Farnèse, Prince de Parme, Gouverneur Général des Pays-Bas (1545–1592)* (Brussels, 1933–1937), vol. 4, 112–138.

20 The account given here is based on the following primary sources: an account by Joannes Clingermans preserved in the Tongerlo archives and transcribed in A. Erens, 'Literarische Archivalia voor Antwerpen', *Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis* 24 (1933), 241–281; Joannes Bochius, *Panegyrici in Antverpianam sibi et regi obsidione restitutam. Per magnum illum atque invictum Alexandram Farnesium . . .* (Antwerp, 1587); that of Emmanuel van Meteren, transcribed in Bert Meijer, 'The Re-emergence of a Sculptor: Eight Lifesize Bronzes by Jacques Jonghelinck', *Oud Holland* 93 (1979), 116–135; a short but important manuscript account written by one of Farnese's courtiers: *Liber relationum gestorum Ducis A. Farnesii* (MS II 1155, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, Brussels), f. 186v; and, finally, that given in Michael Aytzinger, *De Leone Belgico, eiusq[ue] topographica atq[ue] historica descriptione liber* (Cologne, 1985), 690.

21 On the customary format of a Joyous Entry into Antwerp, see Thøfner, *A Common Art*, 51–57.

22 *Liber Relationum*, f. 186v.

On the other hand, it is quite clear that Farnese entered into Antwerp through the customary gate—the Emperor’s Gate—and there is a great deal of evidence to suggest that this act, in itself, carried constitutional significance (fig. 3).²³ Elsewhere in the Low Countries, most notably in Ghent in Flanders, the shared ancestors of both King Philip and Alexander Farnese had been known to demolish city gates to punish rebellious cities.²⁴ Conversely, the rebuilding of such gates seems to have stood for renewed civic self-determination. In the city of Brussels, just to the south of Antwerp, the city gates were so closely associated with urban rights and privileges that the most important of these were displayed on plaques on the gates.²⁵ Moreover, in the case of Antwerp, the Emperor’s Gate was closely linked to an earlier Joyous Entry, that performed in 1549 by the then Infante Philip together with his father, the Emperor Charles V.²⁶ On that occasion, the Habsburgs had readily accepted and confirmed the rights and privileges of the city of Antwerp, as was customary. Now Farnese, himself a grandson of Charles V, re-enacted that poignant moment. Here then, the city as a whole becomes a receptor, transformed yet again into a loyal Habsburg polity.

Immediately after he had entered through the Emperor’s Gate, Farnese was greeted by an entirely traditional form of pageantry. A young woman personifying Antwerp came to greet him and, in the name of the city, presented him with the keys to its gates.²⁷ In this context, the city remained an actor within the encounter, as embodied in one young female inhabitant. Now, usually this kind of pageantry suggested that the relationship between the incoming prince and the subject city was a kind of mystic marriage, that is to say, that it was akin to a sacrament and predicated upon mutual love rather than force.²⁸ Moreover, in early modern Europe, marriage was the least unequal of unequal relations and, crucially, it was not legally valid without the freely given consent of both parties.²⁹ So, by staging this highly traditional pageant, the

23 Bochius, *Panegyrici*, 67; *Liber Relationum*, f. 186v.

24 See, for example, Peter Arnade, *Realms of Ritual: Burgundian Ceremony and Civic Life in Late Medieval Ghent* (Ithaca and London, 1996), 116, 133–135 and 206.

25 See [editors unknown], *Clés et défense d'une ville: Bruxelles et son histoire / Sleuten en verdediging van een stad: Brussel en haar geschiedenis* (exhibition catalogue, Brussels, 1984), 39 and 51.

26 On this Entry, see Stijn Bussels, *Spectacle, Rhetoric and Power: The Triumphal Entry of Philip II of Spain into Antwerp* (Amsterdam and New York, 2012).

27 Bochius, *Panegyrici*, 67.

28 For a more detailed discussion of this tradition, see Thøfner, *A Common Art*, 55–56.

29 See Margaret R. Sommerville, *Sex and Subjection: Attitudes to Women in early-modern Society* (London and New York, 1995), 174–178, 181–188. See also Irven M. Resnick, ‘Marriage



FIGURE 3 *Edmond Fierlants, The Keizerspoort or Gate of St. George and surrounding ramparts, 1860, photograph. Collection Ronny van de Velde, Antwerp.*

surrendering city of Antwerp clearly insisted on its political status, on its right to remain a ritual actor within the Joyous Entry, even if the urban militia guilds had been stripped of this right. In turn, this gesture quite literally transformed Farnese into a receptor. By the gift of the key, Antwerp had turned him into her overlord.

When Farnese encountered this pageant he did something quite unexpected. Normally, an incoming prince would return the keys to 'Antwerpia', to the young woman embodying the city, thus acknowledging her continuously active role in the relationship. However, Farnese did not. Instead, he attached the keys to the collar of the Order of the Golden Fleece which he was wearing, having recently been made a knight of the Order by his grateful master, King Philip II.³⁰ This was an extremely shrewd move. On one level, Farnese bound Antwerp to himself and, in the process, turned the tables: now he again became the ritual actor and the city the receptor. But the means of binding was crucial. The Golden Fleece was an ancient chivalric order, first instituted

in Medieval Culture: Consent Theory and the Case of Joseph and Mary', *Church History* 69, no. 2 (June 2000), 350–371.

30 Aytzinger, *De Leone Belgico*, 690.

in 1430 by Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy. It was closely associated with the Habsburg dynasty but also with general notions of virtue, courtesy, and chivalry.³¹ That is to say, vanquished Antwerp was to be bound to its victor by a chain of chivalry, not simply outright force. This deft intervention in the customary ritual staged a new version of the relationship between court and city. Victorious Farnese certainly had the upper hand but it was as a knightly champion, not simply as a conqueror. Even at this tense moment, when the Habsburgs had forcibly reasserted their rights over Antwerp, the Joyous Entry ceremonial remained a flexible means for articulating and negotiating the relationship between ruler and the ruled. It was never about 'absolutism' but rather a mutual recognition and re-negotiation of civic and courtly powers.

Fourteen years later, on 10 December 1599, the city of Antwerp staged a sumptuous Joyous Entry with a very different ritual logic.³² This time the incoming princes were the Infanta Isabel of Spain in her capacity as the new sovereign of the Habsburg Netherlands and her husband and cousin, the Archduke Albert of Austria, who was to be her co-ruler. It is worth noting that this Entry took place under substantially different political circumstances than those pertaining to Farnese's Entry. Isabel had been nominated the heir to the Habsburg Netherlands by her father, King Philip II. She and her husband were thus to be welcomed as legitimate rulers, not as conquerors.³³ To quite a considerable extent, Isabel and Albert actually depended on cities such as Antwerp to transform them into legitimate sovereigns. In many ways, at this event, the city had the upper hand.

Albert and Isabel aimed to make their Entry into Antwerp on 8 December, the Feast Day of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary.³⁴ By arriving near the city on 7 December, they had hoped to put a neat piece of ritual improvisation into play. For, as is well known, the Spanish Habsburgs were particularly devoted to the Immaculate Virgin; Albert actually used her image as one

31 For a helpful overview of the history of this Order, see H. Fillitz, ed., *Tresors de la Toison d'Or* (exhibition catalogue, Brussels, 1987), 22–40.

32 For a detailed account of this Entry, see Thøfner, *A Common Art*, 206–222.

33 On the political complexities surrounding the transfer of power to Albert and Isabel, see Henri Lonchay, 'Philippe II et le mariage des archiducs Albert et Isabelle', *Académie royale de Belgique, Bulletin de la Classe des Lettres et des Sciences Morales et Politiques et de la Classe des Beaux-Arts* 6 (1910), 364–388.

34 This is noted in the anonymous manuscript transcribed by E. Geudens, 'Blijde Inkomst der Aartshertogen Albertus en Isabella te Antwerpen in 1599', *Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis bijzonderlijk van het aloude Hertogdom Brabant* 10 (1911), 120–140, here 121–122.

of his two battle standards.³⁵ For him and his wife, it would have been a highly significant and auspicious day to perform a Joyous Entry. However, the municipality of Antwerp thought otherwise. They would not honour this traditional Habsburg devotion. Pleading that they were not yet ready, Antwerp's officials succeeded in delaying the Entry for two further days.³⁶ Again, right from the beginning, the Joyous Entry was a negotiation between court and city, and part of that negotiation focused around ritual improvisation and adaptation.

In this context, it is particularly striking that the Infanta Isabel seemed to make special efforts to please her new subjects. For example, when she finally emerged for the beginning of the Entry, she was wearing 'violet velvet, richly adorned and embroidered' according to an anonymous if evidently local chronicler.³⁷ This left the chronicler wondering 'whether it was by coincidence or that she wanted to please [those of] the city, who were wearing such a colour' too.³⁸ As is borne out by the official festival book, published by the city of Antwerp to commemorate the occasion, the entire magistrature, its secretaries, scribes, and other assorted civic servants were indeed all wearing violet for the occasion.³⁹ So the anonymous chronicler was left wondering whether the Infanta's choice of dress was mere chance or an elaborate compliment, showing that she, too, was of the city, joined to it by a shared uniform even before her formal inauguration. This, in turn, is surely another instance of deft ceremonial improvisation, of a Habsburg sovereign demonstrating her skilful understanding of existing ritual forms.

This time, the incoming princes were greeted entirely according to custom, that is, outside the city walls by the civic militia guilds. Then they had to swear their first inaugural oath. Helpfully, an illustration survives of this moment (fig. 4). Again, this image comes from the official festival book, published under the auspices of the municipality of Antwerp to commemorate the Entry. Of course, as such, it needs to be taken with a pinch of salt. The image shows not

35 This is evident from Jacques Francart and Erycius Puteanus, *Pompa Funebris Optimi Potentissimiq[ue] Principis Alberti . . .* (Brussels, 1623), plate XXXI. For a broader discussion of the Habsburg engagement with this particular devotion, including that of Philip III, the Infanta Isabel's brother, see Suzanne L. Stratton, *The Immaculate Conception in Spanish Art* (Cambridge, 1994), especially 35–39 and 67–87.

36 The contretemps between court and city is described in some detail in Geudens, 'Blijde Inkomst', 121–122.

37 'in fiolet fluweel, ryckelyck geciert ende geborduert'. Geudens, 'Blijde Inkomst', 125.

38 'tsy by gevalle oft dat sy de stadt, dye sulcke couleur was gebruyckende, daermede heft willen believeen'. Geudens, 'Blijde Inkomst', 125.

39 See Joannes Bochius, *Historica narratio projectionis et inaugurationis Serenissimorum Belgii Principum Alberti et Isabellae, Austriae Archiducum . . .* (Antwerp, 1602), 175–176.

what happened but rather what the municipality thought should have happened. Even so, it is a valuable source for understanding the ritual logic of Joyous Entries. First, the image emphasises the importance of the spectators, the witnesses to the ritual action. Throngs of male citizens, most of them on horseback, surround the central pavilion. The Antwerp militia guilds are also out in force, visible in the right foreground. Together, this assemblage articulates civic power very strongly: it is as if the spectators are both more important and more powerful than the actual ritual actors. Interestingly, Isabel and Albert are figured first and foremost as receptors: they are shown within a pavilion, in the act of taking the oath, of being transformed by the ritual into legitimate rulers. By their very participation they are also actors but, crucially, they are not in control of how the ceremony is staged.

Once they had taken their oath, Isabel and Albert remounted and rode through the customary gate into the city. There they were met by the usual personification of the city. In the words of the anonymous chronicler:

... on behalf of the city, she presented to the aforementioned Lady Infanta a white lily of fine gold enamelled and otherwise adorned according to its nature, having above in the uppermost flower a heart with golden flames springing out from it, to designate the pure and burning fondness with which the municipality and the commonalty of the city wanted to serve her, and it was lovingly received by the aforesaid Lady Infanta and [she] promised to keep it with care.⁴⁰

This, in effect, is a reversal of the chivalric logic performed in the exact same spot during Farnese's Entry. Isabel is presented with a flower as a token that the citizens want to serve, as if they were all her champions, her devoted knights. She, in turn, is the receptor, transformed by the gift of the flower into the chosen lady. Moreover, as least as far as the chronicler was concerned, she was happy to play along with this construction.

It therefore comes as something of a surprise to see how this event is depicted in the official festival book (fig. 5). There, the power balance between city and princes is much less straightforward. On one level, it is quite clear that,

40 '... vander stadts wegen, de voors. vrouwe Infante heft representeert een witte lelie van fyn gout geaimmaelieert ende anderssints verciert nae dleven, hebbende boven inde opperste bloeme een hert met vuyspringende goude vlammen, designerende de suyvere ende vierige affective dye de heeren met al de gemeynte waeren dragende tot haeren dienste, ende is byde voors. vrouwe Infante minnelyck ontfangen ende belast dye te bewaeren mette custodie.' Geudens, 'Blijde Inkomst', 130.



FIGURE 4 *Anonymous after Joos de Momper, 'Inauguratio extra urbem', engraving. (Bochius, Historica Narratio, 1602.). Plantin-Moretus Library, Antwerp.*



FIGURE 5 *Anonymous after Joos de Momper, 'Introitus in urbem', engraving. (Bochius, Historica Narratio, 1602.). Plantin-Moretus Library, Antwerp.*

before Albert and Isabel rode in, the young woman embodying Antwerp was seated high up on an elaborate throne, accompanied by several other young women personifying various civic virtues.⁴¹ Yet, in the image, 'Antwerpia' is now kneeling before the incoming princes, offering up her lily as if to give it to the Archduke. 'Antwerpia' is very much an actor but, within the visual logic of the image, that role has been vitiated, in part by the slightly smaller scale given to her, the kneeling figure in the centre of the image.

The point here is that the image shows something of the complexity of this particular ritual moment. As already noted, traditionally, it was understood as a kind of mystic marriage, a moment when both city and sovereign were both actors and receptors (in Catholic Christian theology, marriage is a sacrament that groom and bride bestow on each other).⁴² However, that ritual logic could not quite work when the incoming sovereign was female; it is this anomaly which the illustrator had to struggle with and somehow accommodate. Certainly, in the accompanying Latin text, it is made quite clear that the gilded lily was in fact given to the Infanta Isabel.⁴³ But, visually, she could not be the husband of the city. Put differently, either the city could not find a way of commemorating this ritual straightforwardly or the aim was to retain some sense of ambiguity.

That cultivated ambiguity was an essential part of this particular Joyous Entry is perhaps most evident in a pageant staged about halfway through the procession (fig. 6). Superficially, this pageant may seem to stand for aspirations to absolute princely power since it represents the figure of Hercules and to him are chained seventeen young women, representing the seventeen provinces of the Habsburg Netherlands. Interestingly, this seems to be how it was understood by one decidedly anti-Habsburg writer, who quickly after the Joyous Entry published a deeply critical anonymous tract on the ceremony.⁴⁴ Even so, this critique actually represents a creative, even wilful misunderstanding, another act of ceremonial improvisation. For, in the pageant in question, the act of chaining is not straightforward. The chains run from the waists of the young women to Hercules's tongue, a tender organ not at all suitable for such

41 See Bochiuss, *Historica Narratio*, 185–188.

42 A helpful summary of the sacramentality of marriage in the Roman Catholic tradition may be found in John Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract: Marriage, Religion and Law in the Western Tradition* (Louisville, 1997), 16–41. See also Resnick, 'Marriage in Medieval Culture', 353 and 357.

43 Bochiuss, *Historica Narratio*, 185–188.

44 [Anonymous], *Cort ende warachtich verhael va[n] de incomste des Eertshartoch Albertus / met de Infante van Spaengien syn Huysvrouwe . . .* ([Antwerp?], 1600), unpaginated.

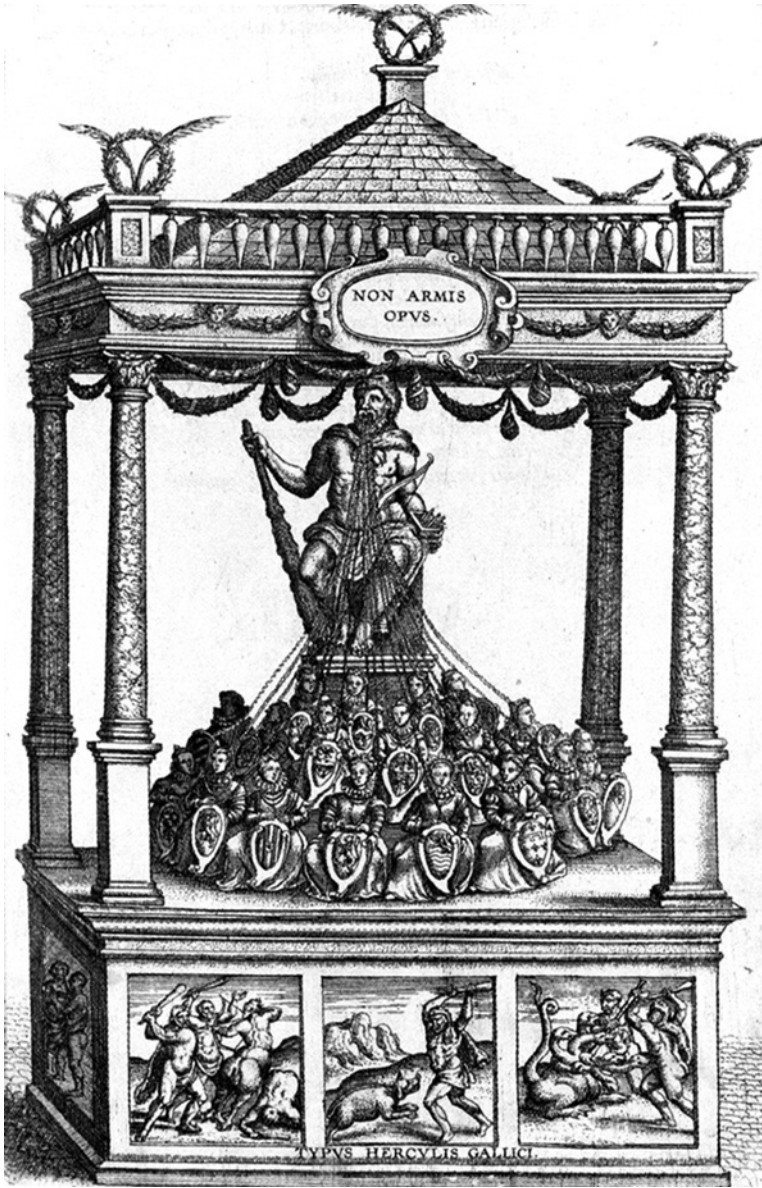


FIGURE 6 Anonymous after Joos de Momper, 'Typus Herculis Gallici', engraving. (Bochius, *Historica Narratio*, 1602.). Plantin-Moretus Library, Antwerp.

treatment. The sheer strangeness of this pageant is explicated in the official festival book. It depicts the Gallic Hercules, who conquers not by force but by rhetoric, not by warfare but by sweet talk.⁴⁵ This was made clear by a Latin inscription above the pageant, which reads:

There is no need for Herculean arms, nor for an avenging sword
Willingly we follow a gentle leader, and to kindly admonitions
We open our ears. [We are] with him who will have led us [thus].
For you and your spouse's commands, Albert, voluntarily
We stand by, so that we may follow wherever you call [us] and call again.⁴⁶

Again, the relationship between rulers and the ruled is staged as mutual and reciprocal: gentle governorship will make loyal subjects. Here, princes and the citizens are cast as both actors and receptors. As if in marriage, they are transformed by mutual, ritual work into a new entity, a stable polity based not on violence but on consent. Yet, because this inscription was in Latin, it could clearly be ignored by those inclined to be critical of Habsburg overlordship. The relative semantic openness of pageants such as the Gallic Hercules meant that the Joyous Entry ceremony catered for—indeed solicited—a wide range of civic views, from delight in the Infanta's violet dress to disgust with Habsburg political aspirations. Perhaps this semantic openness was a consequence of the ritual logic underpinning Joyous Entries: there had to be space for manoeuvre precisely because they were re-negotiations rather than mere affirmations of political power.

The Joyous Entry performed for Albert and Isabel was both lengthy and extremely elaborate; the city of Antwerp had set aside a budget of 50,000 guilders for the event.⁴⁷ The point of this enormous outlay is perhaps most evident from the final illustration in the official festival book (fig. 7).

This image shows the moment immediately after the final, inaugural oath sworn by Albert and Isabel, when money was distributed to the masses. Only, it is actually almost impossible to see the two newly minted overlords of the city of Antwerp. Far more visual attention is given to the amassed citizens,

45 On the iconography of the Gallic Hercules, see Corrado Vivanti, 'Henry IV: The Gallic Hercules', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 30 (1967), 176–197.

46 Non armis opus Herculeis, non vindice ferro est, [/] Sponte ducem sequimur placidum, monitisq[ue] benignis [/] Præbemus patulas quo nos deduxerit aures. [/] Imperiis, Alberte, tuis & coniugus ultrò [/] Adsumus, ut quocumque vocas revocasq[ue] sequamur.' Bochius, *Historica Narratio*, 268.

47 Diels, 'Van opdracht tot veiling', 27.



FIGURE 7 Anonymous after Joos de Momper, 'Inaugurationis apparatus in foro,' engraving. (Bochius, *Historica Narratio*, 1602.). Plantin-Moretus Library, Antwerp.

both male and female, and to the great town hall and the guild houses which, to this day, grace the central square in Antwerp. So, despite the fact that the new sovereigns are shown throwing money to the citizens, Albert and Isabel are rendered virtually insignificant. Here they are definitely receptors within the ritual logic of the Entry, in so far as they are the individuals whose status is substantially transformed. Ostensibly, throwing coins would also seem to make them actors. Yet, at least within the logic of the image, it is in fact the spectators who are the most important actors now. That is, in part, because this is the moment just after the assembled crowds had acknowledged Albert and Isabel as their overlords by taking the civic oath and then proclaiming 'Long live the Archdukes'.⁴⁸ What this image makes absolutely explicit is that, at this moment, it was the city which made its overlord—not the other way around.

Interestingly, Albert and Isabel had requested an important ritual innovation at this point. They explicitly wished the Bishop of Antwerp to be present,

48 'Vivent les Archiducs'. Geudens, 'Blijde Inkomst', 135. French was probably used to ensure that Albert and Isabel would understand.

'... for greater reverence'.⁴⁹ That, however, is not at all visible in the illustration in the festival book; as far as the city was concerned, the bishop's presence was not germane to this transformative moment.⁵⁰

By now it should be evident that terms like 'absolutism' and 'propaganda' are not helpful when analysing early modern ritual encounters between princely courts and their subject cities. Such encounters may have been highly formalised, but they were also very unstable, open to all sorts of opportunistic improvisation on behalf of both princes and citizens. So we need to pay careful attention to the acts of negotiation and improvisation which took place during such encounters and also—and this is crucial—their commemoration, in terms of the visual and textual evidence that we have for them. I also hope that I have demonstrated how helpful it is to think with and through the three related and overlapping ritual categories of 'actors', 'receptors', and 'spectators'. This analysis allows us to be quite precise about the exact political relationships that were set into play during rituals like Joyous Entries. Here, as elsewhere, we need to observe the maxim that power relationships are hardly ever one-sided.

49 '... tot meerdere reverentie'. Geudens, 'Blijde Inkomst', 135.

50 It was, however, mentioned in the official festival book: Bochius, *Historica Narratio*, 306.

Historical Narratives of the Kangxi Emperor's Inaugural Visit to Suzhou, 1684

Michael G. Chang

Introduction

Almost every student of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) and of Chinese history more generally is familiar with the ‘southern tours’ of the Kangxi and Qianlong emperors.¹ These were political spectacles of the first order which facilitated the consolidation of Qing rule in China proper and spawned a number of narrative accounts.² The purpose of this essay is to recapture the dynamic negotiations between various historical actors that were inherent to the consolidation of Qing rule. In particular, it focuses on knowledge production and the writing of historical narratives as both a mode and a means of political participation and negotiation.

The Kangxi emperor's inaugural southern tour was a relatively short affair, lasting only sixty days from early November through December of 1684.³ During this time, the emperor engaged in a wide range of endeavours. In Shandong province, he performed sacrifices at the sacred peak of Mount Tai and paid homage to the Confucian Temple in Qufu. In northern Jiangsu province, he inspected critical hydraulic infrastructure and ‘inquired about the people's hardships.’ Once south of the Yangtze River, the Kangxi emperor ‘observed local customs’ particularly in the prosperous city of Suzhou, the southernmost point on the imperial itinerary in 1684 (fig. 1).

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- 1 The Kangxi emperor (Aisin Gioro Xuanye; 1654–1722, r. 1661–1722) embarked on six southern tours in 1684, 1689, 1699, 1703, 1705, and 1707. His grandson, the Qianlong emperor (Aisin Gioro Hongli; 1711–1799, r. 1736–1795) also embarked on six southern tours in 1751, 1757, 1762, 1765, 1780, and 1784. For more on the former see Jonathan D. Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi Emperor, Bondservant and Master* (New Haven, 1966), 124–57; for more on the latter see Michael G. Chang, *A Court on Horseback: Imperial Touring and the Construction of Qing Rule, 1680–1785* (Cambridge, MA, 2007).
 - 2 The southern tours were highly publicised undertakings, celebrated at the time in vast official compendia, outpourings of courtly verse, monumental court paintings, and more recently, in serialised television dramas.
 - 3 On average, each of the Kangxi emperor's six southern tours lasted about three months (86.7 days). Chang, *A Court on Horseback*, 116.

These activities form a central part of the historical record, and the Kangxi emperor and his officials repeatedly cited them as justifications for his first (and subsequent) southern tour(s). As documented in official sources, the southern tours fit squarely within a venerable tradition of Confucian rule and statecraft which emphasised, and indeed demanded, the emperor's 'reverence for Heaven' (*jing tian*), his 'administrative diligence' (*qin zheng*), and his 'cherishing of the people' (*ai min*).

In ideological terms, such phrasing alluded to the rule of ancient sage-kings, as recorded in the classical texts of Chinese political philosophy. Modern scholars have cited this rhetorical accommodation of Confucian values, ideals, and expectations as evidence of the Qing court's 'sinicisation', 'acculturation', and more recently, its 'continuation of ruling orthodoxy and political identity'.⁴ However, as suggested elsewhere and reiterated below, the Kangxi emperor's southern tours were not simply one-way exercises in cultural or political accommodation, nor should they be treated as such.⁵

A close and careful reading of available sources reveals that the meaning and significance of the Kangxi emperor's first southern tour of 1684 were neither self-evident nor agreed upon. The Kangxi emperor's first visit to Suzhou in late 1684 was a momentous 'event', the precise meaning of which was always open to interpretation by a range of historical actors, both at court and beyond.⁶ These historical actors produced narrative accounts which sometimes overlapped, but not always and never completely. Equally important, these narratives functioned not as reflections of an *a priori* reality, but rather as discursive

4 Chang Jianhua, 'Xin jiyuan: Kangxi di shouci nanxun qiying Taishan xunshou shuo' [Beginning of a New Era: the Justification of the Kangxi Emperor's First Southern Tour as an Eastern Tour to Taishan], *Wenshizhe* 2 (2010); and idem, 'Guojia rentong: Qingshi yanjiu de xin shijiao' [National identity: a new perspective on the study of Qing history], in Liu Fengyun, Dong Jianzhong, and Liu Wenpeng, eds, *Qingdai zhengzhi yu guojia rentong* [Qing dynasty politics and national identity] (Beijing, 2012), 35–61.

5 Michael G. Chang, 'Kangxi's Southern Tours: A Historical Reconsideration', in *Reign of the Kangxi Emperor: Conference Proceedings* (Singapore, 2010), 20–35; and 'On Civil-Military Tensions during the Kangxi Emperor's First Southern Tour', *Frontiers of History in China* 6, no. 1 (March 2011), 26–52.

6 The analysis here builds upon the ideas of Marshall Sahlins who argues that 'an event is not simply a phenomenal happening... apart from any given symbolic scheme. An event becomes such as it is interpreted. Only as it is appropriated in and through the cultural scheme does it acquire an historical *significance*' (xiv). In more succinct terms, 'The event is a happening interpreted—and interpretations vary.' Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of History* (Chicago, 1985), 153.

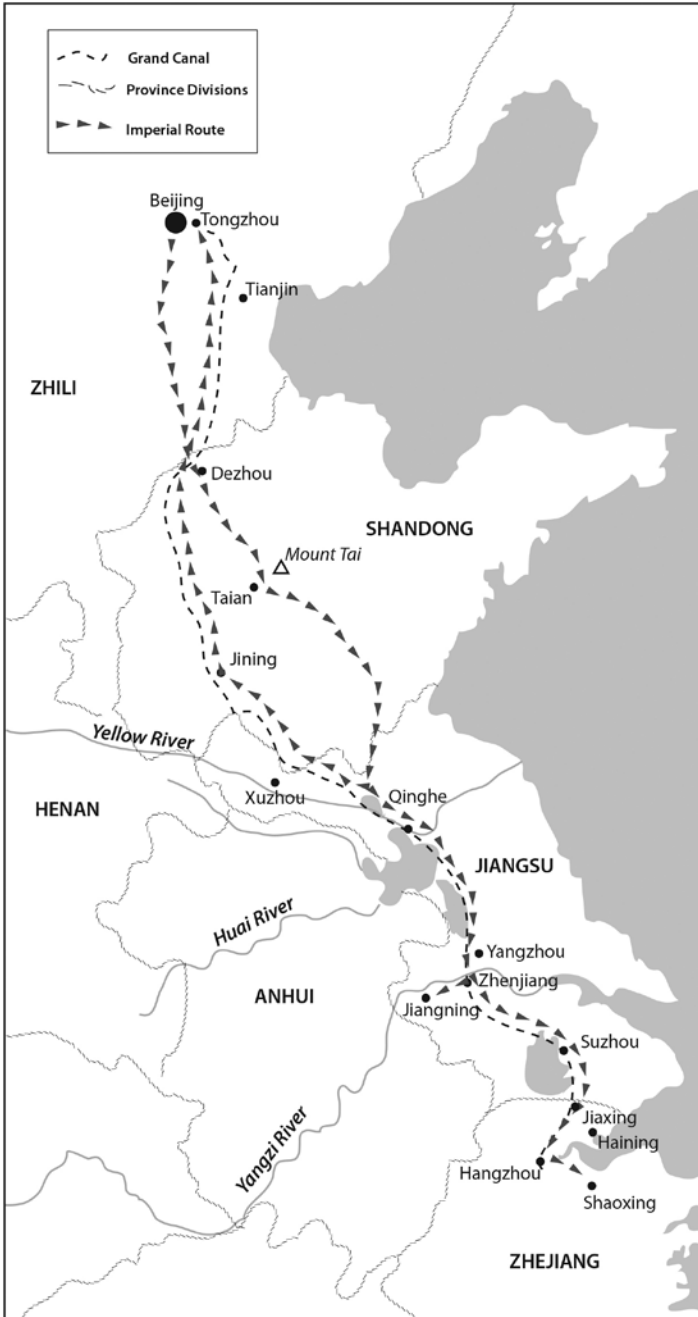


FIGURE 1 *Map of the Kangxi emperor's southern tours.*

claims to knowledge about the imperial court and, by extension, about the meaning and nature of Qing rule.

The prospect of an imperial visit to Suzhou in late 1684 was a delicate matter for at least two reasons. First there was popular sentiment, particularly as it related to the specific timing of the trip. Qing forces had only recently quelled the rebellion of the Three Feudatories (1673–1681) and scored decisive victories over the maritime forces of the Zheng family based in Taiwan, in December 1681 and in October 1683 respectively. Expressions of lingering anti-Manchu sentiment and/or local discontent during an imperial visit might embarrass the emperor and his officials. A second issue was the reputation of Suzhou in particular, and of the Lower Yangtze region more generally, as a centre of economic prosperity and cultural refinement as well as of luxuriant and leisurely lifestyles. This posed the problem of what attitude the Kangxi emperor should assume in relationship to his immediate surroundings while on tour. The authors of the narrative accounts discussed below were all keenly aware that the portrayal of the Kangxi emperor's disposition towards Suzhou and its inhabitants was a matter of great symbolic and political significance.

Court Narratives

Two court sources—the *Imperial Diaries* (Qijuzhu)⁷ and an imperial essay entitled 'Notes on a Southern Tour' (Nanxun biji)⁸—complement each other and together form the court's official account of the Kangxi emperor's first visit to Suzhou in 1684. The *Imperial Diaries* is a daily and contemporaneous record of the emperor's public activities, including his movements and speech.⁹ As a contemporaneously composed record that was intended to provide raw data for the posthumous compilation of the so-called *Veritable Records* for each

7 Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'anguan, comp., *Kangxi qijuzhu* [The Kangxi Era Imperial Diaries] (Beijing, 1984) [hereafter cited as *KXQJZ*], 1244–1245.

8 Qing Shengzu [The Kangxi Emperor], 'Nanxun biji' [Notes on a Southern Tour] in *Kangxi di yuzhi wenji* [Collected Writings of the Kangxi Emperor] (Taipei, 1966) [hereafter cited as *KXYZWJ*], 316–321.

9 The establishment of the Office of the Imperial Diaries in 1671 was in fact intended to mollify Chinese officials who had objected to (and effectively stymied) the Kangxi emperor's initial attempt to embark on a patrol of northern border regions in late 1668. This fact alone indicated that the king's body and dispositions—his actions and movements, his active speech and writing, his conduct and comportment—were points of intense ideological interest and contention.



FIGURE 2 *The Kangxi Emperor and his retinue in Shandong province during his second southern tour in 1689.*
YANG JIN, © RMN-GRAND PALAIS (MUSÉE GUIMET, PARIS).

emperor's reign,¹⁰ the *Imperial Diaries* would have been read and circulated only among a privileged group of courtiers and official historians. Besides providing a daily record upon which later court histories might be based, the imperial diarists were also preoccupied with the task of imperial legitimisation which entailed the discursive production of a properly 'ritualised body' of a sage-king.¹¹ This broader agenda directly informed the diarists' decision to restrict their coverage of the first imperial visit to Suzhou to two emblematic scenes of the emperor's arrival and departure.

As recorded in the *Imperial Diaries*, the imperial procession arrived in Suzhou on 2 December 1684. In their entry for this day, the imperial diarists painted a portrait of a diligent and compassionate monarch who tended to matters of local administration by meeting with local civil and military officials and who showed his empathy for porters, boat trackers, and members of the imperial guard, all of whom had provided security and logistical support during the imperial procession's swift, but arduous, overnight journey from Danyang to Suzhou (a distance of over 190 km).¹² In the next day's entry, the imperial diarists described how the imperial procession immediately departed the city proper and visited Tiger Hill, located in Suzhou's north-western suburbs, about four kilometres outside the city wall.¹³ Here they directly quoted the Kangxi emperor, who turned to an unnamed official¹⁴ and said:

Previously [We] had heard that the Chang Gate [district] of Suzhou is prosperous.¹⁵ Now seeing its social customs, in general they [merely] valorise empty ostentation and leisurely ease. Those who engage in com-

10 Feng Erkang, *Qingshi shiliao xue* [Study of Qing historical documents] (Taipei, 1993), 34–44; and Qiao Zhizhong, *Qingchao ganfang shixue yanjiu* [Research on official historiography in the Qing dynasty] (Taipei, 1994), 159–176. In fact, the account of the Kangxi emperor's first visit to Suzhou found in the *Veritable Records* of the Kangxi period (published in 1731) closely follows that of the *Imperial Diaries*.

11 Angela Zito refers to this inextricable intertwining of 'ritualization' and knowledge production as 'text/performance.' Angela Zito, *Of Body & Brush* (Chicago, 1997), 51–64.

12 *KXQJZ*, 1244–1245.

13 For more on Suzhou's suburbs, commercial districts, and markets during the Ming period (1368–1644) see Michael Marme, *Suzhou: Where the Goods of All Provinces Converge* (Stanford, 2005), 29–39.

14 According to Zhao Erxun et al., *Qingshi gao* [Draft History of the Qing Dynasty] (Beijing, 1998) [hereafter cited as *QSG*], the Kangxi emperor made this remark to Tang Bin, who was then serving as the provincial governor of Jianguo. *QSG*, 9930.

15 One of Suzhou's six main gates in the Ming-Qing period, Chang Gate was located in the north-western sector of the city, on the western part of the city wall, and was a focal point

merce are legion, while those who till the fields are few, all of which results in lavish and wealthy households, but also superficial and duplicitous social relations. Those serving as local officials should encourage the elimination of extravagance and a return to simplicity. All attention and energy should be devoted to agriculture, only then will each household have sufficient means and the decadent mood be reversed. Then gradually after some time, there will be happiness and harmony.¹⁶

The inclusion of this pronouncement conveyed that the Kangxi emperor was visiting Suzhou simply to 'observe local customs' and that he preferred the time-honoured virtues of farming and frugality to the urban attractions of commerce and conspicuous consumption.

This rendering of the Kangxi emperor's first visit to Suzhou was certainly meant to bolster his image as a hard-working, compassionate, and frugal ruler, but it was also quite abbreviated. Its narrative structure tends towards temporal compression and social distancing. By starting their account with a rather vague statement that 'His Majesty spent the night inside Suzhou's city wall', the imperial diarists effectively truncated the narrative and insulated the ruler from the city. It was as if the emperor arrived, went immediately to his temporary quarters (where he received local officials and rewarded members of his retinue), and then quickly departed the next day, but not before registering his disapproval of the city's extravagant and ostentatious ways. Here the imperial diarists sought to show that the imperial procession did not linger in Suzhou and that the emperor's overarching concern was to keep local officials focused on improving local customs. Indeed, the Kangxi emperor's brief one-night stay in Suzhou along with his hurried pace while travelling south of the Yangtze River were presented as further manifestations of this imperial attitude and disposition. This rather dispassionate public image was well suited for a court chronicle, but might also impart a certain aloofness or even disdain on the part of the throne, which might have, in turn, risked offending Suzhou's local elites, a number of whom had served at the Kangxi court in the early 1680s.¹⁷

of Suzhou's vibrant commercial district which extended to Tiger Hill in the north-western suburbs.

16 *KXQJZ*, 1245.

17 Indeed, Wang Wan, one of Suzhou's best-known scholars had served in the Hanlin Academy from 1679–1682 and led a group of retired officials, including seven other former Hanlin Academicians, to greet the imperial procession at the Hushu Customs House, about 25 km northwest of Suzhou proper. Feng Guifen et al., *Suzhou fuzhi* [Gazetteer of Suzhou Prefecture, c. 1883] (reprint Taipei, 1970), *juanshou*, 1a.

This last dilemma may explain the composition of an imperial essay entitled 'Notes on a Southern Tour.' Authorship of this piece is attributed to the Kangxi emperor, and it employs the first-person pronoun 'zhen' 朕 which was reserved exclusively for imperial use. However, the essay was in all likelihood revised and edited, if not entirely ghost-written, by the emperor's personal secretary Gao Shiqi (1645–1703)¹⁸ shortly after the imperial procession's return to Beijing in early January 1685.¹⁹

In 'Notes on a Southern Tour' the emperor appears to be more open and actively engaged with Suzhou and its residents. Where the imperial diarists offered only allegorical snapshots, the author(s) of this imperial essay produced a slightly more developed narrative account punctuated by scenes of popular acclamation. Foremost among these was the imperial rite of entry, which drew a large and enthusiastic crowd:

On the twenty-seventh day [3 December 1684] [His Majesty] entered Chang Gate via Maple Bridge²⁰ and climbed the city wall to get a better view of local scholars and commoners. Everybody was dancing and waving, and some presented laudatory poems.²¹

In addition to taking in such expressions of popular sentiment, the emperor also seemed more willing to partake of Suzhou's material abundance and renowned scenery. For instance, he apparently deemed Suzhou's local produce

18 Arthur W. Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period* (Washington, DC, 1943–44; reprint Taipei, 1991) [hereafter cited as *ECCP*], 413–414. Gao entered the Kangxi court in 1671 and served as an imperial companion throughout the 1670s. He accompanied the Kangxi emperor on his numerous imperial tours in the early 1680s, including this first southern tour.

19 The Kangxi emperor's collected writings appeared in four 'parts', and those from the first southern tour of 1684 appear at the very end of 'part one'. (The last imperial edict included in part one was addressed to local officials in Jiangnan and dated 9 December 1684, while the first imperial edict in part two was addressed to metropolitan officials and dated 4 January 1685, just one day after the imperial procession's return to Beijing.) This internal arrangement of material suggests that the first southern tour of 1684 was a major turning point and that the court hoped to promulgate its own account of these events sooner rather than later. Zhu Saihong, comp., *Qingdai yuzhi shiwen pianmu tongyan* [Comprehensive index to imperial poetry and prose of the Qing dynasty] (Beijing, 2007), 5, 8, and 10.

20 Maple Bridge (Fengqiao) was the best known of Suzhou's 390 bridges and was located about 5 km outside of (to the west of) Chang Gate. Shi Weile, *Zhongguo lidai diming da cidian* (Beijing, 2005), 1499.

21 *KXYZWJ*, 319.

worthy of being used as a form of imperial largesse: 'On this day [We] spent the night in the city. Considering that the service personnel [porters, boat trackers, etc.] had toiled over such a great distance, [We] bestowed silver upon all *and allowed each to take some local products* as an expression of [Our] solicitude.'²² Additional and more detailed descriptions of imperial visits to well-known sites and scenic vistas at Tiger Hill stood as further evidence of the emperor's cultural curiosity and receptiveness.²³ Finally, 'Notes on a Southern Tour' even detailed how, on the day of his departure from Suzhou, the Kangxi emperor continued his regular habit of spending two to three hours every evening composing poetry, reading and discussing classical and literary texts, and considering the rise and fall of ancient and more recent dynasties with the imperial favourite and travelling companion Gao Shiqi.²⁴ Given its generic form and its specific contents, 'Notes on a Southern Tour' was clearly aimed at promoting a more scholarly and culturally conciliatory imperial image that might appeal to the region's men of culture and learning.

Such expressions of imperial openness to literati culture and learning as well as to Suzhou's scenic beauty, however, were always offset by more critical assessments. For instance, after detailing his daily studies with Gao Shiqi, the Kangxi emperor remarked, 'The meanings of the Classics are indeed profound, [but] not as good as [one's own] ears and eyes, and it is easy to grow tired of them.'²⁵ In similar fashion, the emperor's appreciative descriptions of Tiger Hill's scenic sites were counterbalanced with more negative comments about the highly commercialised and ostentatious social milieu just outside the temple's main gate. However, instead of exhorting local officials to 'eliminate extravagance and return to simplicity', as he had done in the *Imperial Diaries*, in 'Notes on a Southern Tour' the Kangxi emperor simply declared that 'the vain pursuit of extravagant luxury in obliviousness to agriculture cannot compare to the simple and honest customs of the northeast.'²⁶ Here the emperor was no longer preoccupied with the administrative diligence of local and regional officials, nor the improvement of local customs, but rather with making a regional (and implicitly ethnic) comparison between the prosperous but extravagant southeast (Jiangnan) and the simple but frugal northeast (Manchuria).

22 KXYZWJ, 319 (emphasis added).

23 The sites visited included 'Thousand Person Stone Terrace' (Qianren shi), 'Nodding Head Rock' (Diantou shi), 'Sword Pond' (Jian chi), and Pingyuan Pavilion (Pingyuan tang).

24 KXYZWJ, 319.

25 KXYZWJ, 319.

26 KXYZWJ, 319.

The Kangxi emperor (and/or his imperial ghost-writers) might exhibit curiosity about, or even an appreciation of, China's textual tradition as well as Suzhou's local products, scenery, and customs. However, as a Manchu monarch who hailed from the 'simple and honest' northeast, he was compelled to maintain a certain degree of distance. Not surprisingly, the Kangxi emperor was quick to disavow Suzhou's lifestyle of luxurious ease, especially the practice of leisurely sightseeing:

On this trip... [Our] first daily duty was to inquire about the people's hidden [hardships] and to check on local administration. In [spare] moments on the road, We might also view the local scenery and visit historic sites. [...] We have taken up a brush and recorded this in order to convey that We do not vainly embark upon leisurely pleasure tours.²⁷

The Qing court, then, strove to balance demands of cultural accommodation, on the one hand, with the equally pressing requirements of maintaining dynastic authority through gestures of disavowal and distancing on the other. As such, court accounts of the Kangxi emperor's first visit to Suzhou are marked not only by symbolic displays of administrative diligence, imperial benevolence, and even cultural receptiveness; but also by expressions of social and cultural distancing.

Local Narratives

In contrast to the court sources discussed above, local narratives provide more detail about the Kangxi emperor's activities within Suzhou proper. Take, for example, the 'Record of an Imperial Visit' (*Xunxing jishi*) which was written by the local magistrate of Wu county, Liu Zi,²⁸ and included in the 1691 edition of the *Wu County Gazetteer*.²⁹ This local account details the Kangxi emperor's

²⁷ KXYZWJ, 321.

²⁸ Liu Zi was a native of Ren county in Zhili province, who earned his metropolitan (*jinshi*) degree in 1661. He served as the magistrate of Wu county from March 1683 until 1686, when he was appointed to an official post in the capital. Magistrate Liu's entry into the metropolitan bureaucracy came at the behest of his superior, Jiangsu Provincial Governor Tang Bin, who recommended him for promotion in 1685. Sun Ming'an et al., comp., *Wuxian zhi* [*Wu County Gazetteer*, c. 1691] (reprint Yangzhou, 1989) [hereafter cited as *WXZ*], *juan 2*, 37a–b and *juan 41*, 15a; as well as *QSG*, 9932.

²⁹ *WXZ*, *juan shou*, 1a–6b. Wu county was located in Suzhou prefecture.

face-to-face interactions with local denizens inside the city wall and situates these episodes within a broader framework of the ruler's taking symbolic possession of Suzhou. By oscillating between imperial assertions of symbolic dominion over the city, on the one hand, and gestures of cautious conciliation with local residents, on the other, Magistrate Liu conveys a more dynamic sense of imperial engagement and interaction with the local populace, which is largely absent from the court sources discussed earlier.

According to Magistrate Liu, upon its arrival the imperial procession 'proceeded to Suzhou's western suburbs, [where] His Majesty mounted a horse and entered Chang Gate.' However, before doing so, 'His Highness ordered that pedestrians not be kept away [from the imperial procession] and that marketplaces carry on business as usual.' As a result, 'scholars and commoners all responded cheerfully by setting up [altars for burning] incense and candles, and knelt along the left side of the roadway to greet [the emperor].'³⁰

This record of events suggests that both the Kangxi emperor and local officials were quite conscious of the symbolic import of this moment and sought to stage-manage the imperial rite of entry. The emperor's decision to enter the city on horseback may have stemmed from a desire not only to better see and be seen, but also to be seen as a symbolic conqueror. Here the sight of a Manchu ruler entering the city on horseback via Chang Gate, which was historically associated with military expeditions,³¹ would have presumably heightened the overall effect.

Interestingly enough, neither of the official court sources discussed above mention the Kangxi emperor's entry into Suzhou on horseback. This discrepancy between court and local sources may indicate that local officials were perhaps more willing (or even obliged) to acknowledge the emperor's status as a triumphant ruler on horseback. As a corollary, literati courtiers may have been less inclined (or obliged) to incorporate such a highly charged and martially inflected scene into their accounts. In any case, official knowledge production at the local level seems to have required (or allowed for) a slightly different portrayal of the Kangxi emperor entering the city on horseback.

30 *wxz, juan shou*, 2b–3a.

31 According to a late Tang (eighth or ninth century) source, Chang Gate was also known as 'Destroying Chu Gate' (*po Chu men*). This designation referred to the fact that during the early Warring States period (475–256 BCE), troops from the Kingdom of Wu (based in Suzhou) set out from Chang Gate in 506 BCE to attack the neighbouring Kingdom of Chu and victoriously re-entered the city at the same place in 505 BCE. Lu Guanghui, *Wudi ji [Record of Suzhou Place Names]* (Nanjing, 1999), 17.

Of course, the visual impact of this imperial rite of entry depended on having an audience, which may explain why the Kangxi emperor ordered local officials to refrain from keeping ordinary residents away and to make sure that local markets remained open. The promulgation of this imperial edict may have also been in response to overly cautious officials who wanted to orchestrate and control every detail of the imperial visit.³² Unexpected mishaps or occurrences were bound to reflect poorly on local administration, which may have informed Magistrate Liu's decision to describe the general mood not as one of spontaneous acclamation or unbridled reverie on the part of the joyous masses, but rather that of quiet reverence and respect expressed by enthusiastic yet orderly subjects.

If the imperial rite of entry was an act of symbolic conquest, the Kangxi emperor's encounter with an elderly bystander symbolised local acceptance of Qing rule. According to Magistrate Liu's account, 'His Majesty halted [the procession] upon encountering a white-haired [man] with a cane, whom [He] summoned forward.' The emperor, as Magistrate Liu noted, then 'personally inquired about [the man's] age and whether he had any descendants and then politely refused [the man's] offering of fruit and cakes [as local tribute].'³³ Official accounts of later tours herald the presence of elderly commoners as an emblem of a peaceful and prosperous age. Such individuals usually received rewards in recognition of their longevity, and their ages were publicised (usually eighty, ninety, or even one hundred *sui*—the older the better). The 'white-haired man' whom the Kangxi emperor encountered in Suzhou in 1684 was clearly advanced in years, but (judging from his cane) was also somewhat frail, or at least not in the best physical condition. Moreover, Magistrate Liu recorded neither the man's exact age nor how many descendants he might have—two key indicators of a healthy and prosperous life. Assuming this white-haired man was in his fifties at the time, he would have been a child or a young adult in the 1640s and 1650s and would have witnessed first-hand the wars of dynastic transition. All of this suggests that the appearance of this elderly subject was not necessarily intended as a sign of peace and prosperity, but rather as a *tableau vivant* of Suzhou's submission to Qing rule, hence the presentation of local tribute.

Magistrate Liu's descriptions of the Kangxi emperor's dealings with Suzhou's Buddhist clergy also capture the locally negotiated aspects of Qing rule. Immediately after his encounter with the elderly resident, the Kangxi emperor vis-

32 On 4 December 1684, Jiangsu Provincial Governor Tang Bin admitted to having ordered the assembly of commoners to welcome the imperial procession. *KXQJZ*, 1245.

33 *WXZ*, *juan shou*, 3a.

ited Ruiguang Temple in the south-western corner of the city. After entering the temple's main gate, the emperor 'asked the abbot Jie Xuan [about his] sectarian affiliation, and [Jie] Xuan kowtowed and answered.'³⁴ Magistrate Liu's account of this exchange ends rather abruptly without revealing the abbot's religious leanings. The meaning of this episode is more readily apparent when compared to the description of an imperial audience with another monk which took place at Tiger Hill on the following day:

On the *jiwei* day [3 December 1684], the imperial procession set out from Chang Gate and visited Tiger Hill [where] the monk Yuanshi [literally 'original era'] knelt and greeted [the emperor].

His Majesty asked, 'What sect are you?'

[Yuan]shi answered, 'The Linji [sect of Chan Buddhism].'

[His Majesty] bestowed upon [Yuanshi] a new name of 'Chaoshi' [literally 'transcending eras'].³⁵

Here the monk's reply was apparently to the throne's liking and thus warranted both inclusion in the written record and the bestowal of a new name by the emperor. By juxtaposing these imperial meetings with two different members of Suzhou's Buddhist clergy, Magistrate Liu was perhaps sending a message to members of the local *sangha* and their lay patrons: one's sectarian affiliations and theological inclinations mattered to the Qing court. Exactly how and why one's religious orientation may have mattered deserves further study.³⁶ For now, we may simply note that Magistrate Liu's account reflected the willingness of local officials to at least acknowledge and record the court's ongoing (and ostensibly successful) efforts at winning the hearts and minds of Suzhou's broader populace.

34 *WXZ, juan shou*, 3a.

35 *WXZ, juan shou*, 3a.

36 This may have been related in some way to the fact that many Han Chinese literati who harboured anti-Manchu sentiments or who simply feared for their safety under the new regime opted to take the tonsure during the wars of dynastic transition and fled to nearby Buddhist monasteries, many of which continued to provide refuge for such disaffected individuals into the 1680s. Perhaps the most prominent example of this phenomenon was Zhu Da (aka Bada Shanren; 1626–1705), the early Qing 'individualist' master and descendant of the Ming royal house who first found sanctuary in a Buddhist temple in 1648 and did not return to secular life until 1680. Joseph Chang, 'The Life and Painting of Bada Shanren', in idem, *In pursuit of heavenly harmony: paintings and calligraphy by Bada Shanren from the Estate of Wang Fangu and Sum Wai* (Washington DC, 2003), 1–10.

This endeavour to broker a *modus vivendi* with Suzhou's local residents, however, was always framed by more assertive gestures of imperial authority. For instance, after describing the Kangxi emperor's visit to Ruiguang Temple, Magistrate Liu continued:

[His Majesty] passed through Pan Gate [at the western end of Suzhou's southern wall] and mounted the city wall [in order to] survey the surrounding ramparts and battlements. [He] descended at Qi Gate [at the eastern end of Suzhou's northern wall] and visited the Garden of the Humble Administrator. [He then] reached Feng Gate [at the southern end of Suzhou's eastern wall] via Lindun Road and spent the night at the Silk Commissioner's residence.³⁷

As we may recall, the imperial essay 'Notes on a Southern Tour' also described how the Kangxi emperor 'climbed the city wall', in order 'to get a better view of local scholars and commoners.'³⁸ However, in the local gazetteer Magistrate Liu depicted the emperor's mounting of Suzhou's city wall as a martially inflected effort to 'survey the surrounding ramparts and battlements' that would have also included inspecting the surrounding terrain while circling from Pan Gate in the southwest to Qi Gate in the northeast. This circumambulation of Suzhou's city wall was a demonstration of imperial domination and reflected the mind-set of a military strategist, which was also on full display during the emperor's visit to the provincial capital of Jiangning just four days later (7 December 1684).³⁹

In terms of describing the Kangxi emperor's first visit to Suzhou, Magistrate Liu's 'Record of an Imperial Visit' in the *Wu County Gazetteer* is lengthier and more detailed than official court sources. However, it is still very much an 'official' account, produced under the auspices of regional and local officials who sought to enhance their own standings and reputations both at court and in

37 *WXZ, juan shou*, 3a.

38 *KXYZWJ*, 319.

39 While in Jiangning (present-day Nanjing) the Kangxi emperor composed an imperial essay in which he assessed the former Ming capital's natural defences. The title of this essay was 'On Passing through Jinling' (Guo Jinling lun), and the relevant passage reads, 'Although Jinling [Jiangning] has the advantage of the Yangtze River as Heaven's Moat, its terrain is weak, possessing nothing on which it can depend.' *KXQJZ*, 1247; and Jonathan Hay, 'Ming Palace and Tomb in Early Qing Jiangning: Dynastic Memory and the Openness of History', *Late Imperial China* 20, no. 1 (1999), 17–19.

the provinces by informing local residents and observers about the negotiated but ultimately legitimate nature of Qing rule in Suzhou.

At least one local observer, a native of nearby Shanghai named Yao Tinglin (b. 1628),⁴⁰ seems to have been familiar with this official perspective, but he did not necessarily agree with it. On the contrary, Yao produced an unofficial account that implicitly undermined the official portrayal of the Kangxi emperor's first visit to Suzhou. This counter-narrative appears in Yao's 'Record of Bygone Years' (*Linian ji*), a draft manuscript that is partly a memoir of daily life and partly a contemporaneous record of significant events in the lower Yangtze delta during the late seventeenth century.⁴¹ 'Record of Bygone Years' begins with Yao's birth in 1628; however, judging from internal evidence Yao began writing only in 1668 at the age of forty and continued to work on the text over the next three decades through 1697.⁴²

In Yao's description of the first imperial visit to Suzhou, the Kangxi emperor appears as a savvy and politically astute Manchu ruler, who is mindful of the political implications of his every movement and gesture, but who cannot help but indulge himself in performances of local opera and popular music. In addition, Yao presents local officials—namely, Jiangsu Provincial Governor Tang Bin (1627–1687)⁴³ and the Suzhou Silk Commissioner—as being engaged in a rather sycophantic competition for imperial recognition and favour, usually at the expense and to the detriment of the local community.

40 Yao Tinglin belonged to a once prominent but declining lineage based in Shanghai district (Songjiang prefecture). He was in his teens and twenties during the wars of dynastic transition and witnessed the ruination of his family, which was vulnerable to the whims and predations of both Ming loyalist forces and early Qing officials. As such, modern scholars have characterised Yao Tinglin as 'an impoverished but prideful member of the lower intelligentsia.' Lynn Struve, *The Ming-Qing Conflict* (Ann Arbor, 1998), 247; and Kishimoto Mio, 'Rekinen ki ni miru Shinsho shakai no seikatsu' [A View of Early Qing Social Life as Seen in *Record of Years Past*], *Shigaku zasshi* 95, no. 6 (June 1986), 54.

41 Yao Tinglin, 'Linian ji' ['Record of Bygone Years'] in *Qingdai riji huichao* [Collectanea of Qing diaries] (Shanghai, 1982), 37–168. Yao's depiction of the Kangxi emperor's first southern tour in 1684 can be found on pages 118–121. This text was never formally published but presumably circulated in manuscript form among Yao's immediate circle of relatives, friends, and acquaintances. It is now held in the rare book section of the Shanghai Library.

42 Yao, 'Linian ji', 42 and 156.

43 *ECCP*, 709–710. Tang Bin served in the post of Jiangsu Provincial Governor for only two years (1684–1686) before he was recalled to the capital to serve as a tutor to the Heir Apparent.

In terms of its general structure, Yao Tinglin's account closely follows that written by Magistrate Liu in the *Wu County Gazetteer*. Yao claims to have been 'an eye-witness to the auspicious presence of the phoenix-emperor' when the imperial procession arrived in Suzhou on 2 December 1684. According to Yao, after disembarking from the imperial boat, the Kangxi emperor:

... entered Chang Gate on horseback, crossed the large bridge, and then proceeded south to Ruiguang Temple, [where he] entered the temple gate, dismounted, burned incense, bowed three times, and left. At this time, the imperial retinue, along with the provincial governor, lieutenant-governor, and other officials, [followed] on a total of sixty to seventy horses. At Pan Gate, [the emperor] mounted the city wall, proceeded north past Xu Gate and Chang Gate. In the northwest [he] passed by Qi Gate and turned east, arriving at Lou Gate [at the northern end of Suzhou's eastern wall], where [he] descended from the city wall and was invited to enter a temporary palace which had been set up next door.⁴⁴

This temporary palace was none other than Suzhou's famed Garden of the Humble Administrator (Zhuozheng yuan, a.k.a. Garden of the Unsuccessful Politician), located in the north-eastern corner of the city.

The garden was a well-known monument not only to literati values and culture, but also to the vicissitudes of Qing conquest and occupation. Originally built by a Ming censor in the early sixteenth century, the Garden of the Humble Administrator gained iconic status in 1533 when the well-known Ming literatus Wen Zhengming (1470–1559) executed an album of paintings and poems celebrating its various vistas. During the Qing conquest, however, the Garden of the Humble Administrator was occupied by a Manchu general and then sold in 1653 to Chen Zhilin (1605–1666), a scion of the famed Chen lineage from Haining, Zhejiang.⁴⁵ When Chen was beset by political difficulties in 1656,⁴⁶ the Qing court confiscated his estate, including the Garden of the Humble Administrator which then served as the office and residence for a succession of Qing garrison commanders in the early Kangxi period. Soon after

44 Yao, 'Linian ji', 119.

45 For more on the Chen clan see Lai Huimin, *Qingdai de huangquan yu shijia* [Qing imperial power and great families] (Beijing, 2010), 37–75.

46 Chen Zhilin was the first in his family to surrender to the Qing and was first appointed to the metropolitan bureaucracy in 1651. He quickly rose to the post of Grand Secretary but was cashiered in 1656 on charges of factionalism and protecting southerners. Chen spent the last decade of his life (1656–1666) in exile in Liaodong, north of the Great Wall.

Chen Zhilin's death in 1666, the garden was returned to his son, who then sold it to Wang Yongning, the son-in-law of General Wu Sangui (1612–1678) a former Ming general who had aided the Manchus in their conquest of China.⁴⁷ When General Wu rebelled against Qing rule in 1673, his son-in-law Wang Yongning committed suicide, whereupon the Qing state once again confiscated the Garden of the Humble Administrator.⁴⁸ This long and complicated history made the garden a 'fruitful site' of symbolic negotiation and contestation.⁴⁹

As we may recall, Magistrate Liu's account in the *Wu County Gazetteer* made note of, but did not detail or explain, the Kangxi emperor's visit to the Garden of the Humble Administrator in 1684.⁵⁰ In other words, Magistrate Liu effectively confirmed the veracity of this event, but left its meaning and significance open to interpretation.

Local residents in Suzhou and beyond were well aware of the garden's rather fluid symbolic status, especially in the recent past.⁵¹ Moreover, in Yao Tinglin's eyes the Garden of the Humble Administrator was no longer a monument to the aesthetic and cultural values of Han Chinese literati, but rather a symbol of both Manchu occupation and Han Chinese collaboration. Yao described the garden as 'the residence of Wu Sangui's son-in-law, Wang *efu*.' His use of the Manchu term for son-in-law (*efu*) indicates that he considered both General Wu and his son-in-law to be members of the Qing imperial clan. Such views were not entirely baseless. In 1645 the Qing court had granted General Wu the title of first-degree prince of the blood (*qinwang*) in honour of his military contributions to the Qing cause; then in the early 1650s General Wu's eldest son (Wu Yingxiong, d. 1674) was granted a title of nobility (viscount, third-class) and allowed to marry a Manchu princess.⁵² As such, the Garden of the Humble Administrator might have been considered the property of the Qing imperial household when General Wu's son-in-law, Wang Yongning, purchased it from

47 *ECCP*, 877–880.

48 Ye Mengzhu, *Yueshi bian* (Beijing, 2007), 84; and Gu Gongxie, *Danwu biji* (Nanjing, 1999), 61 as cited in Wang Gang, 'Qingchu Suzhou baqi zhufang tanxi' [An analysis of the Suzhou banner garrison in the early Qing], *Qingshi yanjiu*, no. 2 (May 2013), 104.

49 Craig Clunas, *Fruitful Sites: Garden Culture in Ming Dynasty China* (Durham, NC, 1996), 23–59.

50 *WXZ*, *juan shou*, 3a.

51 According to one Ye Mengzhu (b. 1623), a contemporary observer and denizen of Shanghai, at the start of the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories in 1678 the Superintendent of the Suzhou-Songjiang-Changzhou circuit, Zu Zeshen, donated funds to repurchase the garden estate and converted it back into a government office (presumably his own official headquarters). Ye Mengzhu, *Yueshi bian* (Beijing, 2007), 84.

52 *ECCP*, 878.

the Chen family in the late-1660s. However, General Wu's eventual rebellion against Qing rule (1673–1681) once again cast doubt upon the cultural and political status of this well-known garden.

According to Yao's narrative, Jiangsu Provincial Governor Tang Bin had treated the Garden of the Humble Administrator as 'the confiscated property of a traitor' and had spared no expense in renovating it to serve as the Kangxi emperor's temporary palace in 1684.⁵³ In the eyes of local residents, however, Governor Tang's initiative seemed to be in violation of publicly promulgated imperial orders which, again according to Yao, explicitly forbade 'the demolition of ordinary homes in order to construct temporary palaces.'⁵⁴

Here Yao Tinglin was most critical of Governor Tang for having reprised the historic role of Wang Yongning, the rebellious General Wu's son-in-law and the last private owner of the Garden of the Humble Administrator. If local lore is to be believed, Wang was a profligate wastrel who renovated the property as a venue for the lavish banquets which he frequently threw. The Kangxi emperor, for his part, appears to have deftly avoided any direct association with Governor Tang's reclamation of the garden under imperial auspices by deciding on the spot to spend the night in the Suzhou Silk Commissioner's quarters instead.

Here we may pause to note Yao's penchant for repeatedly drawing attention to the ethnic identity of the emperor and members of his retinue. Yao freely employed Manchu terms such as *efu* (son-in-law) and *hafan* (official), and his descriptions of the imperial procession were both martially and ethnically inflected:

On this day [2 December 1684], the officials following the imperial procession all arrived and spent the night in the vicinity of the Silk Commissioner's residence. The Zhenjiang [garrison] commander General Yang (note [in original]: This is Yang Fengxian, a Manchu)⁵⁵ rode in front of the Imperial Father's horse in order to protect the imperial procession, as if he was [a scout] riding point. At this time all of the offi-

53 Yao, 'Linian ji', 119. According to Yao's description, 'all the halls and pavilions were renovated to look like the inside of a Buddhist temple.'

54 Yao, 'Linian ji', 119.

55 General Yang Fengxiang (d. 1691) was actually a Han-martial bannerman, not a Manchu, who served as the Jingkou [Zhenjiang] banner garrison commander from 1678 to 1690. Qian Shifu, ed., *Qingdai zhiguan nianbiao* [Tables of Qing officials] (Beijing, 1980), 2236–2242.

cial [following in retinue] assembled within the walls of Old Suzhou; how crowded it was!⁵⁶

For Yao, however, the main problem was neither the ethnicity of the Kangxi emperor and his officials, nor the crowding and disruption associated with the bivouacking of emperor and his retinue, but rather the behaviour of local officials such as Tang Bin and the Suzhou Silk Commissioner. As Yao recounts, the latter played host to the Kangxi emperor and tried to curry imperial favour by entertaining him with opera performances by local troupes which lasted past midnight. The next morning, as the Kangxi emperor was about to set out for Tiger Hill, the Suzhou Silk Commissioner suggested that the emperor first have something to eat and once again arranged for more local opera performances which dragged on into the afternoon. In the end, the emperor and his entourage did not mount their horses and set out for Tiger Hill until much later in the day.

According to Yao Tinglin, Governor Tang Bin, not to be outdone, arranged for local commoners to kneel along the roadside and greet the imperial procession as it passed through the city. The Kangxi emperor added to the spectacle by ordering one of his high-ranking Manchu officials (again Yao uses a Chinese transliteration of the Manchu term for 'official', *hafan*) to allow all residents, both men and women, to come gaze upon the imperial procession. In addition, the imperial edict stated that large and small shops were to remain open and not allowed to close. The result was an extravaganza of popular enthusiasm and *réclame* in which commoners filled the streets and women crowded onto balconies to watch and shout 'Long live the emperor!'⁵⁷

As Yao tells it, the imperial procession arrived at Tiger Hill where the festivities and excitement continued unabated. The Kangxi emperor presented sacrifices in the main Buddha hall and at a shrine honouring local worthies and then enjoyed performances of local music arranged by Governor Tang Bin. The emperor then summoned his own court musicians—whom Yao describes as sixteen 'young foreigners' all of whom were 'attractive and intelligent boys, aged 15–16 *sui*', dressed in 'crimson court robes and red fur hats'—and ordered them to play some northern tunes for the crowds that had gathered. As Yao notes, this impromptu performance went on for two hours, until dusk. As he began to leave, the Kangxi emperor encountered another throng of onlookers at Tiger Hill's famed Thousand Person Stone Terrace. Because this crowd had not seen the earlier performance, the emperor ordered his foreign court

56 Yao, 'Linian ji', 120.

57 Yao, 'Linian ji', 120.

musicians to play another set. According to Yao, the emperor himself picked up a drum and personally joined the act which lasted until the second watch (9–11 p.m.). Only then did the imperial procession leave Tiger Hill and continue on its way from Suzhou to Wuxi.⁵⁸

As most critical readers both then and now would notice, a number of details in Yao Tinglin's account seem like rather fanciful embellishments, added for dramatic and narrative effect. For example, Yao included direct quotations of face-to-face conversations between the emperor and his officials in both the Garden of the Humble Administrator and the Suzhou Silk Commissioner's residence, to which he was certainly not privy. That being said, Yao's vivid and detailed descriptions of the imperial procession's passage through the city's streets as well as of the emperor's activities in the more publically accessible spaces at Tiger Hill seem more plausible, not simply because they roughly coincide with the basic outlines of the account in the *Wu County Gazetteer*, but also because Yao may have conceivably borne witness to such scenes in person. In the end, however, questions about the veracity and reliability of this unofficial source may be irresolvable and perhaps beside the point.

The value of Yao's unofficial account lies not in its truthfulness or empirical accuracy, but rather in its alternative and implicitly critical perspective, especially vis-à-vis officially sponsored accounts. In Yao's private narrative the Kangxi emperor is neither insulated from his surroundings nor critical of Suzhou's local customs. Nor is he in any particular rush; on the contrary, he is easily and repeatedly delayed. Furthermore, he revels in the city's raucous atmosphere and embraces various forms of popular entertainment, even attempting to impress the local populace with performances by his foreign court musicians. This depiction of a Manchu ruler who is fully immersed in an urban spectacle stands in stark contrast to the more solemn portrayals of the imperial presence found in officially sponsored sources, which suggests that the latter are not only formulaic and overly idealised, but also highly sanitised.

Concluding Remarks

In the preceding pages, I have treated the Kangxi emperor's first visit to Suzhou in late 1684 as what Marshall Sahlins has dubbed a 'structure of conjuncture'—that is, as an occasion for the 'practical realisation of cultural categories in a specific historical context, as expressed in the interested action of historic agents.'⁵⁹ Here the historical agents under consideration include a

58 Yao, 'Linian ji', 120.

59 Sahlins, *Islands of History*, xiv.

range of individuals—court scribes and imperial diarists, the emperor and his ghost-writers, a county magistrate and a more distant observer—all of whom produced narrative accounts of the imperial presence in Suzhou in late 1684. These accounts are not merely descriptions of an event, but are also claims to knowledge about the imperial court and its officials, and by extension, active interpretations (and, in the case of Yao Tinglin, an implicit critique) of Qing rule.

The Kangxi emperor's varying degrees of openness and receptivity to his immediate surroundings during his first visit to Suzhou in 1684 was a common point of concern that informs each of the narratives. The authors all share an underlying assumption that their portrayals of the emperor's general disposition towards Suzhou—its residents, its scenic sites, as well as its local habits, customs, and culture—might shape broader perceptions and thus affect, positively or negatively, the legitimacy of Qing rule.

The official account in the *Imperial Diaries* reinforces a stereotyped image of the Kangxi emperor as a living embodiment of time-honoured virtues of diligence, benevolence, and frugality who had little reason or desire to linger in Suzhou. The imperial essay 'Note on a Southern Tour' presents a more scholarly and culturally conciliatory imperial image, but always balances expressions of cultural accommodation with acts of disavowal and distancing. Both the *Imperial Diaries* and 'Notes on a Southern Tour' tend towards brevity and narrative compression and studiously avoid describing any of the emperor's activities inside of Suzhou proper. In short, these courtly sources conceal as much as they reveal.

Locally produced narratives provide more information regarding the Kangxi emperor's activities within the inner precincts of Suzhou's city wall, including his personal interactions with local inhabitants. The account found in the 1691 edition of the *Wu County Gazetteer* reflects the efforts of local officials to balance symbolic assertions of imperial dominion over Suzhou, on the one hand, and gestures of cautious reconciliation with local residents, on the other. Here the author of this text, Magistrate Liu, acknowledged the negotiated nature of Qing rule and, in doing so, sought to reaffirm and, indeed, to discursively *constitute* the emperor's steadily increasing legitimacy.

Of course, not everyone was necessarily so sanguine. The unofficial narrative written by a local observer named Yao Tinglin is of great value and interest, not necessarily because it provides more direct access to what 'really' happened, but rather because it provides an alternate vantage point—that of the popular imagination—from which we might more readily register not only Yao's critical attitude towards imperially appointed provincial officials as representatives of Qing rule, but also the very real limits of official sources. In

Yao's personal account, the Kangxi emperor appears not as a stolid paragon of imperial virtues, but rather as a highly animated and self-consciously political performer who embraced his role as a *Manchu* ruler at the centre of an urban spectacle. Insofar as Yao's portrayal of events might point to more widespread perceptions of both the emperor and his local agents, it stands as an important reminder of the limits of official ideology as well as of the inventiveness and historical agency of those outside the court's charmed circles of power. The diversity of narrative accounts discussed in the pages above—especially as exemplified by Yao Tinglin's personal account—might also serve to remind us that the consolidation of Qing rule was a complex and contested historical process that involved the production of knowledge by a range of actors, not just the emperor and his officials.

Towards a Comparative Understanding of Rulership: Discourses, Practices, Patterns

Jeroen Duindam

The preceding chapters have focused on connections between centres and peripheries, rulers and populations. Notwithstanding the routines of government-by-paper, particularly developed in China, these connections necessarily also took shape in two characteristic forms: agents representing the ruler and direct interactions between rulers and their populations.

High-profile trouble-shooters personally representing the ruler operated in distant territories or carried special responsibilities for solving crises; routine administrators administered core lands, where standard patterns of governance prevailed. Agents could rise through steady and competent loyal service or be catapulted into power because of their lineage and the ruler's favour. The career patterns systematically examined by Kent Guy for Qing China show an established practice of bureaucratic evaluation; in addition Guy underlines the impact of local connections and recommendations as well as the personal involvement of the ruler and his advisors. Metin Kunt's discussion of the Ottoman case suggests that the balance among these factors could shift dramatically, with central leadership's choices indirectly causing devolution and the rise of local elites. In Europe, a similar mixture of rulers' personal initiatives, administrative procedure, and localised responses determined the changing patterns of centre and periphery—only in the course of the seventeenth century, however, did the standards of administrative procedure in Europe approach those of Imperial China. Moreover, the persistence of nobilities in the upper layers of executive office in Europe and the marked presence of semi-hereditary high office in some countries set the European experience apart from most Asian examples.¹

1 During the 2011 Leiden conference on 'Servants and Administrators: from the Court to the Provinces' Julian Swann (Birkbeck) presented a paper on the Condé princes as governors of Burgundy, Joseph Bergin (Manchester) gave a paper on French clergy at court and in the provinces. On French governors and Estates, see Julian Swann, *Provincial power and absolute monarchy. The Estates General of Burgundy, 1661–1790* (Cambridge, 2003); on the Condé, Katia Béguin, 'Louis XIV et l'aristocratie: coup de majesté ou retour à la tradition', *Histoire, économie et société* 19, no. 4 (2000), 497–512 and her *Les princes de Condé. Rebelles, courtisans et mécènes dans la France du grand siècle* (Paris, 1999).

Dynastic power can be examined effectively only with combined political and cultural perspectives—it is difficult to draw a line between these overlapping domains. The cultural clichés of rule, didactically presented in discourses opposing good and bad examples of rulership or in moral codices outlining the ideal ruler, set standards for rulers and permeate the literary legacy of the court. This normative worldview also affected the representation of rulership to wider audiences, in interactive practices such as sacrifices, ceremonies, processions, and tours but also in buildings, printed media, or visual arts. The ideals of rulership, reflected in numerous tracts across the Eurasian continent, clearly show similarities as well as marked differences. There is some consensus on the key responsibility of rulership, protecting harmony and shielding the weak against the predations of the mighty, inherent in the mandate of heaven, in the Islamicate idea of sultanic power protecting the vulnerable against the wrongdoings of the powerful (*zulm*), or in the European notion of the prince as guardian of the *bonum publicum* and religious concord. This compelling idea, rarely a neat match with the actual behaviour of rulers, did underline the importance of access and petitioning or at least some form of an ‘ombudsman’-system that allowed the populace to voice its grievances.² This shared ideal structured as well as restricted the forms of princely representation. Chinese literati, Patricia Ebrey points out, were keen to remind the emperor of his heavy ritual and moral responsibilities, censuring overly spendthrift, martial, or peripatetic lifestyles. While similar attitudes can be found among religious advisors around kings and sultans, most ‘princely mirrors’ leave far more room for generous display as well as for military leadership.³ Rulers are universally

2 See e.g. Edward A. Kracke Jr., ‘Early Visions of Justice for the Humble in East and West’, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 96, no. 4 (1976), 492–498; J.R. Perry, ‘Justice for the Underprivileged: The Ombudsman Tradition of Iran’, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 37, no. 3 (1978), 203–215; Linda T. Darling, ‘Do Justice, Do Justice, For That is Paradise. Middle Eastern Advice for Indian Muslim Rulers’, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 22, no. 1–2 (2002), 3–19; Qiang Fang, ‘Hot Potatoes: Chinese Complaint Systems from Early Times to the Late Qing (1898)’, *Journal of Asian Studies* 68, no. 4 (2009), 1105–1135; Nimrod Hurvitz, ‘The Contribution of Early Islamic Rulers to Adjudication and Legislation: the Case of the *Mazalim* Tribunals’, in Jeroen Duindam, Jill Harries, Caroline Humfress, Nimrod Hurvitz, eds., *Law and Empire: Ideas, Practices, Actors* (Leiden, 2013), 135–156.

3 On Islamicate advice literature in general see Louise Marlow, ‘Advice and advice literature’, in Gudrun Krämer et al., ed., *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Brill Online, 2012); Marlow, ‘Kings, Prophets and the ‘Ulamā’ in Mediaeval Islamic Advice Literature’, *Studia Islamica* 81 (1995), 101–120; also see the introduction to Sajida Alvi, *Advice on the Art of Governance: An Indo-Islamic Mirror for Princes (Mau‘izahi Jahangiri) of Muhammad Baqir Najmi Sani Persian Text* (Albany, 1989).

advised to heed their councillors, particularly those offering candid criticism, yet the Chinese position on the whole seems to depict the ruler as a relatively passive figure, authorising government by others rather than actively governing himself. European and Islamicate West Asian rulers were expected to take a more active stance, and valour ranked high among princely virtues.

How do such cultural codes relate to practices? Ebrey shows that we should not take at face value the admonishments of gentlemen-scholars at court: their stylised complaints were not even necessarily intended to influence the emperor, who, moreover, could to some extent ignore them in practice.⁴ Nevertheless, the contrast with the world of splendour depicted—or constructed—in the festival books critically examined by Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly is remarkable. Indeed, European court life has often been depicted in terms of ‘conspicuous consumption’. Imposing palaces and rich court celebrations created an image of courtly extravagance, broadcast by lavishly produced tomes, medals, paintings, and other media. The image was taken up eagerly by revolutionary propagandists and on the whole accepted at face value by later historians. Looking behind the scenes by examining court ordinances, we glimpse a different world where making ends meet was a permanent concern: ordinances reiterate rules designed to control costs and prevent waste or embezzlement. Great festivals and ceremonies overawed the beholder, suggesting magnificence and wealth—yet ceremonial agents were specialists in recycling materials and reducing costs.⁵ Neither their strenuous efforts nor the contestations frequently disturbing the show of splendour and hierarchy necessarily found their way into the festival descriptions that conveyed the image of an untroubled world of court entertainments to more distant audiences.

No historian will be surprised to hear that different sources create different perspectives; in a comparative study, however, this age-old wisdom gains unexpected significance. Literary traditions in Europe, China, and elsewhere have exerted a powerful influence on our understanding of courts and rulers in history. Sources circumventing, complementing, and correcting these normative and idealised court-based literary legacies are essential if we are to approach

4 See David Robinson, *Martial Spectacles of the Ming Court* (Cambridge Mass., 2013) reflecting many of the tensions discussed in Ebrey, but showing the continuity of hunting and other ‘martial’ practices under many Ming emperors.

5 See Jeroen Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles. The Courts of Europe’s Dynastic Rivals ca. 1550–1780* (Cambridge, 2003), outlining court routines; W.R. Newton, *Derrière la façade. Vivre au château de Versailles au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris, 2008) details the less than magnificent living conditions in Versailles.

more closely the actual lives of emperors, their agents, and the wider popular perceptions of those in power. The turn towards unpublished and hitherto frequently ignored sources has substantially changed the historiography of European rulers and their courts. Michael Chang shows how the juxtaposition of several court-based and local sources on the Kangxi emperor's 1684 visit to Suzhou raises all sorts of intriguing questions. We can expect a shift in Late Imperial Chinese history when a greater variety of sources becomes available to qualify and sometimes question the immutable world of the *Veritable Records*.

The interaction between the dynastic ruler and the population at large assumed many forms, the extremes ranging from folksy figures mingling freely with the commonest among their subjects to rulers living in almost total seclusion in the palace. Finding a position along the continuum between accessibility and withdrawal was relevant for all courts as well as for all individual rulers. This universal aspect of court life was dictated by various influences and requirements, relating to the cultural codes of rulership, the ruler's personality, concerns of security, and strategies of representation. How much of the population in Imperial China, the Ottoman empire, or—say—early modern France ever actually set eyes on the ruler with his retinue? Did the dynastic centre play a conspicuous role in the lives of ordinary subjects? Popular tales and proverbs powerfully suggest that kings and emperors were present in the mental map of their subjects, but outside of the capital and its immediate surroundings their imagined presence can only rarely have been reinforced by actual meetings. Such events, as the papers by Michael Chang, Margit Thøfner, and Neil Murphy remind us, could have a significant and lasting impact. At the same time the visits, processions, and entries were always to some extent improvised, reflecting the preparations, expectations, and intentions of various parties. In the European context we know that ceremony, often thought to follow a wholly rigid choreography, in practice left much to the initiative of the participants.⁶ Thøfner gives some remarkable examples of ceremonial improvisation by the main participants in Joyous Entries. Her careful examination of the written and visual representation of Joyous Entries warns against misreading such events as an uncomplicated show of sovereign power. Murphy highlights how the format of the entries embodied and influenced the connections between cities and the prince: entries '... were not just representations of the theoretical workings of the state; they were the very occasions during

6 See chapter 6, 'Ceremony and order at court: an unending pursuit', Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles*, 181–219.

which the political bond between the king and his urban subjects was brought into being'.⁷ Christian Büschges, in another context, makes clear that ceremonial and political action cannot be separated: ceremony not only made visible ranks and relationships, it had the potential to change them. *Rangs et séances* were more than a sideshow.

These authors make explicit an aspect equally relevant for the contributions on agents: power is a relationship rather than the attribute of a single person or party. Local interests, regional patronage networks, the agents shuttling back and forth between centre and peripheries, different competing groups at the centre, and finally the ruler: at each level the balances among various groups determined outcomes. A forceful figure—first emperor, talented monarch—could operate so effectively that dissent at the centre remained muffled, securing the smooth operation of the chain of command of officeholders and a relatively unchallenged authority in the localities. Yet the resentment generated by periods of concentrated—and periodically violent—authority made likely a backlash within the ruler's lifecycle, when his grip weakened in old age. Otherwise succession, always a critical point for dynastic power, would bring change: either wreaking havoc through the contestations among rivals or simply by introducing mediocre leadership. A sequence of highly talented dynastic rulers such as that of the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong emperors remains a rare exception.

Similar patterns become clear in Yincong Dai's analysis of Nayancheng's career and the responses of the Jiaqing emperor. Here, too, we see the impact of a tradition, the role of divided central elites, the performance of an individual agent, and finally the shifting attitude of the emperor himself gradually moving towards a different political setup. Change did not start with unambiguously clear policy choices but emerged as the consequence of a long and muddled process, an accumulation of *ad hoc* responses. However, in the end a new pattern of ruling without a favourite grand councillor became accepted practice, relocating power to a somewhat wider circle of grandees and ministers. Metin Kunt's paper on the Ottoman provincial governors likewise questions the notion of the ruling elite's predetermined choices. Some of the fundamental changes he describes (the change in the role of princes; the rise of local agency) reflect a series of impromptu adaptations as well as the interference of contesting groups at many levels. Apparently high policy

7 See Neil Murphy in this volume, and his 'Royal Grace, Royal Punishment: Ceremonial Entries and the Pardoning of Criminals in France, c. 1440–1560', in Duindam et al., eds., *Law and Empire: Ideas, Practices, Actors*, 293–311.

choices, seen from the ground, more often are unintended consequences than premeditated outcomes.

* * *

For this volume, we invited the contributors to consider our general themes in the context of their specific cases: the implicit confrontation of these different but interconnecting examples, we hoped, would itself trigger comparative speculation even if we did not choose to provide a ready comparative framework. Yet does this volume as a whole contribute to a comparative understanding of rulership, political agency, and ritual interaction? From the preceding *tour d'horizon* some closely connected suggestions about comparison can be inferred.

First of all, the normative worlds of dynastic power need to be put into a comparative perspective before we can effectively evaluate the structures and practices of power. The discourses generated by court life across the globe show sufficient interconnection to be measured against one another. Understanding the discrepancies in such views on rulership is an important goal, but it also represents a necessary condition for further comparative study. The comparative knowledge of the *topoi* of rulership makes it easier to put sources into context and to differentiate between standard discourses and individual variations. Moreover, such knowledge will be of prime importance in locating and using sources supplementing and correcting the familiar images of dynastic power and ceremonial order: only then can we move from discourses to practices.

Secondly, dynastic power can best be approached through a combination of cultural and political perspectives. In other words: we should consider the political relevance of ritual and ceremonial occasions as well as the cultural conventions involved in political interaction. Moreover, many occasions cannot be compartmentalised in either of these categories. The ritual dimension of dynastic rule was of foremost importance. Without a doubt, rulers could be astute politicians using magnificence and ritual to demonstrate their power; yet they at least at times took very seriously the burden they carried. The dissonance between the ruler's celestial mandate and his own standards of behaviour as well as that between the high-minded ideals and political trafficking of the court elites created tensions that, to some extent, are an inevitable component of any political system.

Thirdly, there is little reason to restrict political agency to the ruler, who nominally stood at the heart of the political setup. The elevated position of the dynastic ruler more often than not circumscribed the freedom of manoeuvre

of the incumbent; at the same time, it empowered those around him—or occasionally her. The competition among different groups around the ruler, often shaped in ‘inner’ or domestic and ‘outer’ or administrative domains, with an innermost core of spouses and concubines, resonates in the history of the court. However, agency did not stop at the palace gates: corporations and individuals, in the capital, in the provinces, and on the frontier defined their own aims and strategies. Only a comparison that takes into account major differences in cultural representation and the problems of the dominant sources can effectively test the assumption that countervailing forces or *corps intermédiaires* were much stronger and more vocal in the European than in the Ottoman or Chinese settings. This volume strongly suggests that we cannot take this classic position for granted.

Dynastic power, theoretically in the hand of a single figure, in practice emerged as an ongoing tussle among many groups and layers. This contestation could be open and violent but more often was muted, with the contenders packaging their attacks in cultural clichés and the polite formulae of hierarchical society. Moreover, ritualised encounters were as formative for the political constellation as administrative procedure.

The themes discussed here invite more systematic follow-up. The recruitment, training, and career patterns of agents demand a comparative examination, which probably can be done only on the basis of painstaking long-term research such as the work of Kent Guy on the Qing governors, research that remains undone for many states and empires.⁸ Likewise a comparative analysis of control mechanisms used by rulers to secure the loyalty of agents over time, from Carolingian *missi dominici* and Chinese censors to variants of the job carousel and evaluation, ranking or remuneration systems, needs more preliminary work. The global catalogue of rulers’ virtues calls for comparison, made somewhat easier by the availability of numerous translations of Arabic and Chinese texts.⁹ Rules defining and regulating access are present in most court archives, and the same holds true for arrangements for outward movement and travel. They invite further comparison, for which this volume provides a modest initial effort. Visits and entries, confirming, re-enacting and redefining the ties with cities in the realm, form a focus of this volume that

8 See R. Kent Guy, *Qing Governors and Their Provinces: The Evolution of Territorial Administration in China, 1644–1796* (Seattle, 2010); Metin Kunt, *The Sultan’s Servants: The Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government, 1550–1650* (New York, 1983), and the works cited in note 1 above. For most states and empires, we lack comprehensive prosopographical works.

9 See the works cited in note 3, and e.g. Theodore Wm. De Bary, ed., Huang Zongxi, *Waiting for the dawn: a plan for the prince Huang Tsung-his’s Ming-i-tai-fang-lu* (New York, 1993).

can easily be extended to other examples. The multiplication of cases can assist the formulation of more probing comparative questions.¹⁰ By juxtaposing papers on closely related themes, each based on direct knowledge of the relevant sources, on agents of dynastic power as well as on the ritual connections between centre and periphery, we hope to have given a foretaste of and a modest starting point for comparison that combines contextual regionalised knowledge with a global horizon.

10 See e.g. Tülay Artan on procession, 'Royal Weddings and the Grand Vezirate: Institutional and Symbolic Change in the Early Eighteenth Century,' in Jeroen Duindam, Metin Kunt and Tulay Artan, ed., *Royal courts in dynastic states and empires: a global perspective* (Leiden and Boston, 2011), 339–399; Jenny Rahel Oesterle, *Kalif und König. Herrschaftsrepräsentation der Fatimiden, Ottonen und frühen Salier an religiösen Hochfesten* (Darmstadt, 2009) *Symbolische Kommunikation in der Vormoderne. Studien zur Geschichte, Literatur und Kunst*, Gerd Althof, Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, Horst Wenzel, ed.

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