

the strategy pursued, which manages to teach us something about Chinese writing in general – or rather forces us to unlearn some lessons subtly inculcated by centuries of standardized printed texts. One is almost persuaded that some of the arguments on this topic brought to bear by Elizabeth L. Eisenstein on European printing may have yet more force in China, though perhaps the impact of printing – which Galambos, writing outside his own area of expertise, only alludes to in somewhat general terms – would have been much less without the progressive intervention of the state. Thus though Galambos refers in passing (p. 94) to the printed Daoist and Buddhist canons as vehicles for enforcing standardization, Lewis Lancaster, in Susan Whitfield (ed), *Dunhuang Manuscript Forgeries* (London: The British Library, 2002), p. 223, points out that early printed editions of the Buddhist canon were not standardized until the Southern Song. This of course is an entirely separate area of research, though it is gratifying to learn from Peter Hessler that Galambos is learning Tangut, a little known language that can throw much light on early Buddhist xylography.

It must also be admitted that though the volume under review clearly deserves to reach a second printing on merit, one hopes that when this goal is achieved it will prove possible to carry out a little more standardization within this text, too. On p. 38, for example, the appearance of an “asterix” (*sic*) might almost have been deliberately engineered to illustrate the nature of orthographic variation in contemporary English, and certainly attests to the author’s breadth of reading in French. But on p. 78 almost a line of text has dropped out of the quotation, reducing it to nonsense, and one suspects that similar errors have marred one or two other passages as well. On p. 39 a wrong cross-reference to a table is certainly given. But taken as a whole, a rather complex work involving not only standard Chinese characters but also a whole array of manuscript forms has been produced with remarkably little mishap, and the layout is just as clear and attractive as the argument. To judge from this initial publication, both the author and the series can look forward to further successes.

T. H. Barrett

ENNO GIELE:

Imperial Decision-Making and Communication in Early China: A Study of Cai Yong’s Duduan.

(Opera Sinologica.) x, 367 pp. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006. €68. 3 447 05334 8.

Enno Giele has given us a remarkable book about Cai Yong’s 蔡邕 (133–192) *Duduan* 獨斷 (usually rendered as *Solitary Decisions*, but possibly *Ministerial Decisions*, since the court’s three highest officers were dubbed “they who sit alone”). At one time or another, every scholar in the early China field consults *Duduan* to solve a particular problem of definition, but few have troubled to read it from cover to cover. I wager this is because they guess that Cai’s account must make for pretty dull reading, insofar as it concerns the “proper classification of documents that went in and out of the Han court” (p. 5) and a compilation of precedents. Giele’s approach is innovative, however: he uses Cai’s text as a medium through which to provide an “integrated review of the

traditional and epigraphic materials at our disposal” and even if, by his own account, Giele applies “rigid textual criticism” to the *Duduan* (p. 17), he none the less manages to overturn the conventional wisdom both on the *Duduan* itself and on the entire Han administration. Cai and Giele in partnership show that the emperor was hardly – apart from the flowery rhetoric of the period – the sole judge and arbiter in many bureaucratic and legal matters. As Giele says, “Many, if not most decisions were reached only after routine consultation with ... top-ranking officials and ... close advisors in the emperor’s entourage or ... even larger groups of socially diverse participants” (p. 46). Policy rulings could be framed by an emperor, after consultation with advisors, or they could originate with members of the bureaucracy (pp. 236–7). Precedent was hardly binding, though it did have some weight (pp. 240, 242). There were venues through which the populace memorialized the emperor, though such petitions were screened by bureaucrats before sending them up (p. 73). (The foregoing has long been known, but the Oriental Despot model dies hard.) In Giele’s view, the emperor or members of his court gained and retained power to the extent that they remained the “hub of all information-gathering” (p. 300). To develop this hypothesis, Giele relies on Cai Yong’s account, and Cai is a good man to trust, since he was often reporting the activities of the very offices in which he himself had worked – offices where archives were kept and bureaucratic decisions made.

Following the lead of Wang Guihai 汪桂海 *Handai guanwenshu zhidu* 漢代官文書制度 (*System of Administrative Writings in the Han*) (Guangxi: Guangxi jiaoyu, 1999) and others, Giele has carefully assembled variant editions of the *Duduan* and argued skilfully for certain readings. In all but a few cases, so far as I can see, his judgements are indisputably sound. He has thereby shown the consistent use of rhetorical formulae in petitions and memorials to the throne (as on pp. 123, 125), and nicely distinguished between the different genres of *zhang* 章, *biao* 表, and *zou* 奏. To this reader’s astonishment, Giele has also proven that the *Han zashi* 漢雜事 (long deemed a questionable source) is “clearly of Han origin”, since the text is “more consistent” with other Han sources than the current editions of *Duduan* (p. 300). Perhaps most interesting of all, Giele outlines the procedures by which the Han court dealt with dissenting opinions (pp. 183–200), and the role that old inscriptions played in the evolving Realpolitik (see esp. p. 194). Meanwhile, Giele quietly lays the groundwork for understanding the major institutional differences between Western and Eastern Han, though there are moments when Giele casts *Duduan* as a work broadly applicable to both Han dynasties.

Giele may be applauded for his noteworthy attempt to stick to the “parameters derived from the communicative process itself to analyze communication” in early times (p. 256), though postmodern theory would suggest that such parameters are hardly transparent and immune to misinterpretation or change. His translations are generally fluent and accurate and his discussions focused and sharp. In a few passages, however, Giele has inexplicably introduced elements of confusion into his own communications to readers. For example, Giele calls the Han ruler at some points an “Emperor” and at others a “Thearch”, an “August Being”, or a “Deified” (as on p. 195), without explaining criteria for usage. Another translation becomes unduly tortured due to Giele’s failure to see that *ai* 愛 as often means “sparing in the use of” as “loving to use” (p. 168). And, in a mere handful of instances, Giele fails to appreciate the importance of oft-cited classical allusions, as with the *Gongyang* phrase *qinqin* 親親 (“treat as close kin those worthy of such treatment”) (p. 290). I suspect, too, that *jiushi* 舊事 refers to “precedents”

rather than “events under the old [dynasty]” (p. 38); that *bianshi* 變事 has more to do with “palace unrest” or “coups” than with “weird affairs” (p. 176); and that the *xianguan* 縣官 was not the “prefectural offices” but the “local representatives of the throne” (p. 243). Some will query Giele’s reliance upon anachronistic phrases, including talk of: (1) “orthodoxy” (as on p. 69); (2) “Confucian scriptures” (i.e. texts commanding religious authority) for the Five Classics as common cultural coin of the realm; and (3) “votes” by the emperor and his court. None the less, this is one of the best books to cross my desk recently, a book full of useful information and trenchant observations, a book with wide-ranging implications for the study of political life in China, early or modern, also for comparative history. The “Asian values” crowd positing a “distinct model” for development in “East” and “West” may have to modify their stances, after all.

The book opens up new avenues of research. This reviewer is hungry for more information on the complex academic and political relations between Cai Yong and members of the Wang family (Wang Can 王粲 and Wang Ye 業, father of Wang Bi 弼, among them). Cai was no client of Yuan Shao – unlike Ying Shao 應劭 (fl. 203), who devoted many works to bureaucratic matters. Perhaps more comparisons between the *Dudian* and the (fragmentary) *Fengsu tongyi* or Ying Shao’s commentaries would further illumine the last decades of Eastern Han, which have hitherto drawn so little scholarly attention. But for now, Giele’s book provides a feast whose riches will take most of us a little time to digest.

Michael Nylan

MARTIN W. HUANG:

Negotiating Masculinities in Late Imperial China.

vii, 284 pp. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2006. \$57. 0 8248 2896 8.

In the last few years, studies on masculinities (Edwards, McMahon, Louie, Song, Zhong) have been among the most interesting, and long overdue, results of the application of gender as an analytical, non-descriptive tool to investigate Chinese culture. Building upon this scholarship, notably upon the notion of *wen* (literary, intellectual) and *wu* (military, physical) manliness, Martin Huang has produced a fine study of masculinity discourse(s) and male gender awareness/assertion in Ming and Qing China. Scrutinizing an impressive array of elite and popular sources – Confucian classics, political writings, vernacular novels and normative literature – this work explores how a number of diverse models of manhood were described, imagined, prescribed and adapted.

Aptly employing gender as a relational concept, Huang examines the ways in which, by analogy or differentiation, the feminine “other” “shaped the construction of masculinities” (p. 2). Were “traditional” Chinese men effeminate, as a long-standing vulgata born out of local modernizing agendas and foreign prejudice would have it? Huang rightly refrains from attempting to answer this question, but demonstrates instead how the notions of feminine and masculine are culturally and historically relative so that, for instance, very feminine features (seen with a present-day eye) may validate and underscore men’s virility. Moreover, he convincingly highlights the fluid and multifaceted character of masculinity, illustrating its pluralistic, contingent and prescriptive