

CATEGORIZING LABORERS:
GLIMPSES OF QIN MANAGEMENT
OF HUMAN RESOURCES FROM AN
ADMINISTRATIVE DOCUMENT FROM
LIYE, HUNAN PROVINCE

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Abstract

The excavation of the Qin wooden documents from Well No. 1 at Liye 里耶, Hunan province has significantly reshaped our knowledge of Qin history. This article examines a multi-slip manuscript from Liye on the Qin management of human resources in a newly conquered area, Qianling County. The manuscript is the best example of the multi-layered structure of a Qin administrative document; it also sheds new light on the difficulties the Qin encountered in resource management during the early years of unification. The manuscript shows that the responsible officials in Qianling County had failed to engage *tuli* 徒隸 (laborer-servants)—a major labor source in the Qin—in agricultural production, which appears to have deviated from the Qin strategy of managing human resources. To minimize the harmfulness that this deviation might cause, the Qin heavily relied upon a system of supervision and punishment. This article offers a contextualized study of the manuscript with an analysis of the related Qin excavated sources.

Introduction

夫地大而不墾者，與無地者同；

民眾而不用者，與無民者同。

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After all, when the territory is large but is not cultivated, it is as if you have no territory;

when the people are numerous but are not used, it is as if you have no people.¹

The above quotation, from the chapter “Calculating the Land” (Suan di 算地) of the *Book of Lord Shang* (Shangjun shu 商君書), represents the conventional understanding of the Qin 秦 view on management of resources. The Qin were well aware of the importance of land and human resources during wartime and believed that a state would only become strong by incorporating such resources into agricultural production, also known as the “fundamental occupation” (*benye* 本業). A ruler should maintain a balance between human and land resources according to “the standard of utilizing territory and being ready for battle” (*rendi daiyi zhi lu* 任地待役之律).² In the chapter “Attracting the People” (Laimin 徠民), the author states that the problem faced by the Qin at the time was that “there are not sufficient people for the land” (*ren bu chen tu* 人不稱土). The only solution to this problem was not to conquer more lands, but rather to attract people to come to Qin from the other states and to encourage them to engage in land cultivation.³ In sum, these chapters highlight that a ruler should engage all available resources in agricultural production in order to support warfare and maintain a balance between two fundamental resources—land and labor—according to a well-designed scale.

Although Sima Qian 司馬遷 claimed that he had read some of the chapters of the *Book of Lord Shang* and found the details in them to correspond well with Shang Yang’s deeds, the authorship and the reliability of the transmitted version have been debated for centuries.⁴

1. *Shangjun shu zhuizhi* 商君書錐指, ed. Jiang Lihong 蔣禮鴻 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1986), 44. Translation after Yuri Pines, *The Book of Lord Shang: Apologetics of State Power in Early China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 159.

2. *Shangjun shu zhuizhi*, 44; Pines, *The Book of Lord Shang*, 159.

3. *Shangjun shu zhuizhi*, 87; Pines, *The Book of Lord Shang*, 266.

4. *Shi ji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1959), 68.2237. For the various opinions on the authorship of the *Book of Lord Shang*, see *Shangjun shu zhuizhi*, appendix “Shangjun shu fukao” 商君書附攷. Note that the modern concept of authorship did not exist in ancient China. It was common among early Chinese texts that the compilation of a text spans a long period of time and the disciple(s) or follower(s) of the person to whom the text is attributed are the person(s) who actually compiled the text. As Li Ling 李零 suggests, it seems inappropriate to apply the concept “forged text” (*weishu* 偽書) to describing these texts. See his *Jianbo gushu yu xueshu yuanyou* 簡帛古書與學術源流 (Beijing: Sanlian, 2008), 208–16. Yuri Pines also suggests that most of the extant texts of the Warring States period bear the imprint of at least four contributors: the original author, his disciples and followers, later editors, and the manifold copyists and transmitters. See his *The Book of Lord Shang*, 34.

A multi-slip document recently excavated at Liye 里耶 in Hunan shows that Qin had maintained a system of resource management that appears to be consistent with some of the ideas seen in the *Book of Lord Shang*. In addition, the document also shows us the difficulties the Qin local government encountered during the early stages of unification on the southern edge of the empire. This article aims to offer a contextualized study of this document with an analysis of the related Qin sources.⁵

The document was excavated from Well No. 1 at Liye in 2002. Archaeologists divided Well No. 1 into 18 levels. Between the fifth and seventeenth levels, they found more than 30,000 Qin slips and tablets, about half of which are inscribed with Chinese characters.⁶ This is the greatest number of Qin texts ever discovered in mainland China. Dated between the twenty-fifth year of the First Emperor of Qin (222 BCE) and the second year of the Second Emperor of Qin (208 BCE), most of the Liye Qin slips were the actual administrative documents kept in the office of Qianling 遷陵 County, Dongting 洞庭 Commandery before they were discarded in a well.⁷ This group of materials is significant for

5. For a study of this document, see Yu Hongtao 于洪濤, “Liye jian ‘sikong Yan fu lingtian dangzuo’ wenshu yanjiu” 里耶簡「司空厭弗令田當坐」文書研究, *Gudai wenming* 10.1 (2016.1), 68–75. However, Yu fails to explore the historical value of this document and therefore has left many important issues unaddressed.

6. For the archaeological report on the Liye site, see Hunan sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 湖南省文物考古研究所, ed., *Liye fajue baogao* 里耶發掘報告 (Changsha: Yuelu, 2007). Up to 2017, the excavators officially had published 6,050 pieces or fragments of Qin slips and tablets from the 5th, 6th, 8th and 9th levels of Well No. 1. See Hunan sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, ed., *Liye Qin jian (yi)* 里耶秦簡(壹) (Beijing: Wenwu, 2012); id., *Liye Qin jian (er)* 里耶秦簡(貳) (Beijing: Wenwu, 2017). All the transcriptions of the Liye materials in this paper follow these two volumes unless otherwise stated. Notably, the excavators are currently using two types of slip numbers: a transcription number and an archaeological number. This paper mainly uses the transcription number except in cases when no transcription number is provided by the excavators. In such cases, I will use square brackets [] to distinguish the archaeological number from the transcription number. Also note that the graph + between two slip numbers is not part of the original transcription or archaeological numbers but employed by scholars to associate fragmentary slips. In addition to those Qin slips and tablets excavated from Well No. 1, 51 fragments of Qin wooden registers were found in Pit No. 11 located in the north of the site in 2005. See *Liye fajue baogao*, 203–10.

7. Concerning the dating of Well No. 1, Liu Rui 劉瑞 questions the common assumption that it was discarded in the late Qin. He observes that there is a semi-circular roof tile (*tongwa* 筒瓦) (J1[17]:1) dated to the Western Han 漢 period discovered in the 17th level of Well No. 1. That is to say, all the 16 levels above the 17th level could not have been discarded earlier than the Western Han period. Liu has asked the excavators about the details of that roof tile, but unfortunately has received no reply from them. See Liu, “Liye gucheng J1 maicang guocheng shitan” 里耶古城 J1 埋藏過程試探, in *Liye gucheng Qin jian yu Qin wenhua yanjiu* 里耶古城·秦簡與秦文化

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the reconstruction of Qin history not only because of its unprecedented size, but also because of the light it sheds on the local administration of a newly conquered area in the Qin state and empire.

Based on a thorough examination of the document and other related Qin sources, I argue that the Qin attempted to manage its human resources through a process of categorizing laborers. The main concern of the Qin government was to put all the available human resources in the appropriate place for production. By evaluating the nature of each labor unit, the Qin government would assign it to a category that could reach its highest productivity. As I will show below, this categorization process functioned alongside a system of supervision and punishment.

Materiality and Text

Most of the Liye Qin wooden slips and tablets made public so far are self-contained and not bound together with other slips or tablets. In the terminologies of the Japanese scholars, they belong to the category of “single slips” (*tandoku kan* 单独簡) in contrast to the “binding slips” (*hentei kan* 編綴簡).⁸ The document examined in this article, however, is of the latter category. Written on six wooden slips (8-755, 8-756, 8-757, 8-758, 8-759 and 8-1523), it had been bound together by two sets of cords. Although the cords had decayed when they were found in the eighth level of Well No. 1, we can still identify the positions where the cords had threaded through from the traces of binding. In addition to

研究, ed. Zhonggou shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo 中國社會科學院考古研究所 (Beijing: Kexue, 2009), 92, 97, n. 7.

8. The dichotomy of *jian* 簡 and *du* 牘 is a common way to categorize bamboo and wooden slips and tablets in the existing scholarship. Most scholars consider that a *du* is of greater width compared to a *jian*. For instance, Michael Loewe considers a *du* to be of 4 cm width or more. See his “Wood and Bamboo Administrative Documents of the Han Period,” in *New Sources of Early Chinese History: An Introduction to the Reading of Inscriptions and Manuscripts*, ed. Edward L. Shaughnessy (Berkeley: Society for the study of Early China and the Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1997), 166. However, Sumiya Tsuneko 角谷常子 observes that some of the slips named *du* from Liye are less than 2 cm wide. She therefore refers to *du* as “single slip” (*tandoku kan*) which is not bound with other slips and is to be used individually. See her “Riya Shin kan niokeru tandokukan nitsuite” 里耶秦簡における単独簡について, *Nara shigaku* 奈良史学 30 (2012), 107–9. For more on the difference between single-slip and multi-slip documents, see also Thies Staack, “Single- and Multi-Piece Manuscripts in Early Imperial China: On the Background and Significance of Terminological Distinction,” *Early China* 41 (2018), 245–95.

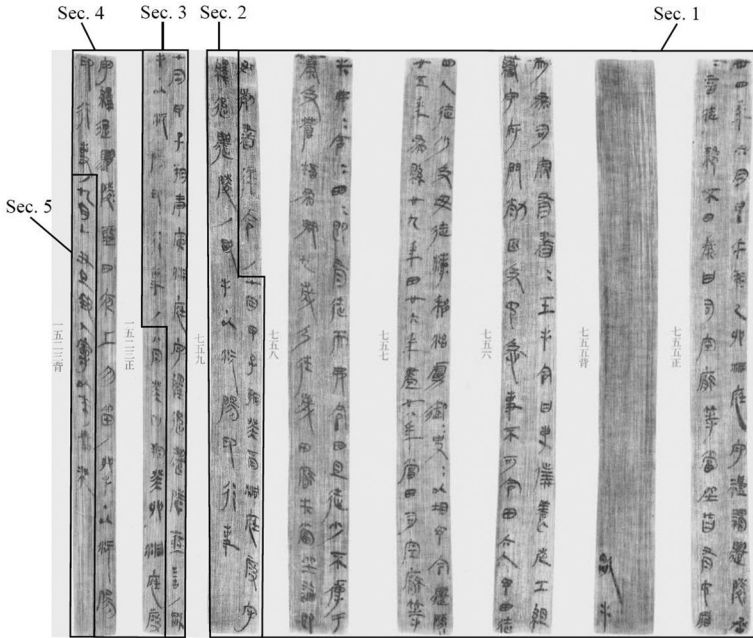


Figure 1. From right to left: slips 755 (recto), 755 (verso), 756 (recto), 757 (recto), 758 (recto), 759 (recto), 1523 (recto) and 1523 (verso). Adapted from *Liye Qin jian (yi)*, 109–10 and 194.

the marks,⁹ the total number of characters on the document amounts to 239. The characters on each slip are written in two vertical-lines and each line comprises 12 to 22 characters. Each of the slips is about 23 cm long, which is equivalent to one Han foot, and ranges between 1.8 cm and 2.4 cm wide. Except for the first and sixth slips (8-755 and 8-1523), the rest are inscribed with characters only on the recto side (Figure 1).

The transcription below follows the annotated version by Chen Wei 陳偉 and his research team at Wuhan University,¹⁰ and the association of

9. For the use of marks on bamboo and wooden slips, see Li Junming 李均明 and Liu Jun 劉軍, *Jiandu wenshu xue* 簡牘文書學 (Nanning: Guangxi jiaoyu, 1999), 60–88. See also Anthony J. Barbieri-Low and Robin D. S. Yates, *Law, State, and Society in Early Imperial China: A Study with Critical Edition and Translation of the Legal Texts from Zhangjiashan Tomb no. 247* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 58–62.

10. Chen Wei, ed., *Liye Qin jiandu jiaoshi (diyi juan)* 里耶秦簡牘校釋 (第一卷) (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue, 2012), 217. For the materials from the 9th level, see id., *Liye Qin jiandu jiaoshi (dier juan)* 里耶秦簡牘校釋 (第二卷) (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue, 2018). All the associations of the fragments of Liye materials follow these two volumes unless otherwise stated.

the six slips is suggested by Chen Yinchang 陳垠祖.¹¹ For the convenience of discussion, I divide my translation into five sections according to the content:

Section 1

卅四年六月甲午朔乙卯，洞庭守禮謂遷陵丞¹² [8-755 Recto line 1] :

In the thirty-fourth year [of the First Emperor of Qin], on the day Yimao of the sixth month, of which the first day is Jiawu (July 16, 213 BCE),¹³ Governor Li of Dongting informs the Assistant Magistrate of Qianling:¹⁴

(丞)言徒隸不田，奏曰：「司空厭等當坐，皆有它罪[8-755 Recto line 2]，耐為司寇。」有書=，(書)王手。

You (the Assistant Magistrate) said that laborer-servants did not cultivate the land, and submitted a report stating that, “[Bailiff of] Convict Labor Yan and others match¹⁵ [the punishment of] being held liable [for a crime], and they are all guilty of other crimes [matching

11. Chen Yinchang, “Liye Qin jian 8-1523 bianlian he 5-1 judou wenti” 里耶秦簡 8-1523 編連和 5-1 句讀問題, *Jianbo wang* 簡帛網 (www.bsm.org.cn/show_article.php?id=1794), accessed on February 6, 2018. For another proposal of the reconstruction of this document, see Miyake Kiyoshi 宮宅潔, “Guanyu Liye Qin jian 8-755-759 jian yu 8-1564 jian de bianlian” 關於里耶秦簡 8-755-759 簡與 8-1564 簡的編聯, trans. Chen Jie 陳捷, *Jianbo* 18 (2019), 29–36.

12. The two horizontal lines (=) placed below or to the right of a character indicate that such a character should be read twice. But in some contexts, it can also indicate a ligature (*hewen* 合文). See Li and Liu, *Jiandu wenshu xue*, 64–69; Barbieri-Low and Yates, *Law, State, and Society*, 61.

13. All the conversions from Chinese lunar to Western corresponding dates in this article are based on the conversion tables in Xu Xiqi 徐錫祺, *Xi Zhou (gonghe) zhi Xi Han lipu* 西周(共和)至西漢曆譜 (Beijing: Beijing kexue jishu, 1997), 1257–58, complemented by Zhang Peiyu 張培瑜, “Genju xin chu liri jiandu shi lun Qin he Han chu de lifa” 根據新出曆日簡牘試論秦和漢初的曆法, *Zhongyuan wenwu* 2007.5, 73. For a reconstruction of the Qin calendar based on the Liye materials, see Zhao Yan 趙岩, “Liye Qin jiri jiandu zhaji” 里耶秦紀日簡牘劄記, *Jianbo* 8 (2013), 250.

14. Unless otherwise stated, all the translations of official titles in this article follow Barbieri-Low and Yates, *Law, State, and Society*, sec. 1.6.

15. Barbieri-Low and Yates convincingly argue that *dang* 當 (matching) was a specific legal process in which the appropriate punishment was “matched” to the crime. The word *dang* acts as both a verb and a noun in the Zhangjiashan legal texts. See Barbieri-Low and Yates, *Law, State, and Society*, 164, n. 218. But considering the various usages of the word *dang* in transmitted and excavated texts, I will only translate it into “to match” or “matching” when it appears as a legal process. For the other usages of the word *dang* in classical Chinese, see Hanyu da zidian bianji wei yuanhui 漢語大字典編輯委員會, ed., *Hanyu da zidian* 漢語大字典 (Wuhan: Hubei cishu; Chengdu: Sichuan cishu, 1986–1990), 2546–48.

the penalty of] shaving and being made robber-guards.” There is a document [detailing this matter],¹⁶ on which [the record] “Ren handled” was written.

令曰：「吏僕、養、走、工、組[8-756 line Recto 1]織、守府門、[肖+力]匠及它急事不可令田，六人予田徒[8-756 line Recto 2]四人。徒少及毋徒，薄(簿)移治虜御=史=，(御史)以均予。」

An ordinance¹⁷ states, “One must not order officials’ servants and cooks, runners, artisans, weavers, office door guards, carvers,¹⁸ and those who are employed on urgent matters to engage in cultivation. Every six men [of such statuses] are given four field laborers¹⁹ [to take their place in cultivation]. If there is a shortage of laborers or if no laborers are available, forward the account book [of laborers] to the Censor for Managing Captives. The Censor will assign [the laborers] evenly based on it.”

今遷陵[8-757 Recto line 1]廿五年為縣，廿九年田。廿六年盡廿八年當田，司空厭等[8-757 Recto line 2]失弗=令=田=。(弗令田)，即有徒而弗令田，且徒少不傳(數)于[8-758 Recto line 1]奏。

Now, Qianling was made a county in the twenty-fifth year [of the reign of the First Emperor] (222 BCE) and its agricultural fields [started to be] cultivated in the twenty-ninth year (218 BCE). These fields should have been cultivated from the twenty-sixth year (221 BCE) through the twenty-eighth year (219 BCE), [Bailiff of] Convict Labor Yan and the others are amiss for not ordering [laborers] to cultivate the land. Not ordering [laborers] to cultivate land [means] that even though there are laborers, one does not order them to cultivate the land or state the shortage of laborers in the submitted report.²⁰

16. This “document” (*shu* 書) is referred to as “earlier document” (*qianshu* 前書) in the later part of section 1.

17. An ordinance (*ling* 令) was one of the major forms of Qin laws. See Barbieri-Low and Yates, *Law, State, and Society*, 72–74.

18. The character composed of *xiao* 肖 and *li* 力 can be read as *xue* 削 (to scrape off). The similar term *xue gong* 削工 can be seen in the Han wooden slips discovered from Juyan. Wang Guihai 汪桂海 suggests that it refers to those craftsmen whose job was to produce bamboo and wooden slips by using a writing knife (*shu dao* 書刀). See Wang Guihai, “Handai guanfu jiandu de jiagong, gongying” 漢代官府簡牘的加工、供應, *Jianbo yanjiu* 2009 簡帛研究2009 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue, 2010), 144–45.

19. For field laborers (*tian tu* 田徒), see also Chen Songchang 陳松長, ed., *Yuelu shuyuan cang Qin jian (liu)* 嶽麓書院藏秦簡(陸) (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu, 2020), 171, slips 1870-1+1870-2 and 1612.

20. I follow Chen Wei and his research team who read *fū yu zhou* 傅于奏 as *fū yu zhou* 數于奏 (to state in the submitted report). See *Liye Qin jiandu jiaoshi (diyi juan)*, 217, n. 8.

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及蒼梧為郡九歲乃往歲田。厭失，當坐論，即[8-758 Recto line 2]如前書律令。[8-759 Recto line 1]/歌手[8-755 Verso]

In addition, in the nine years after Cangwu was made a commandery, [Yan and the others ordered laborers to] to go there to cultivate only for a year.²¹ Yan [and the others]²² had made a mistake. They match the penalty of being held liable and sentenced, as [stated in] the earlier document and the statutes and ordinances.²³ Xie handled [the document].

Section 2

七月甲子朔癸酉，洞庭段(假)守[8-759 Recto line 1]繹追遷陵。/歌手·以沅陽印行事。[8-759 Recto line 2]

On the day Guiyou of the seventh month (August 3), of which the first day is Jiazi, Acting Governor Yi of Dongting pursues Qianling [to report on the punishment].²⁴ Xie handled [the document]. [Acting Governor Yi] is conducting affairs using the seal of Yuanyang.²⁵

Yet, it is also possible to read it as *fū yu zhou* 附于奏 (to attach to the submitted report). For the various readings of *fu* 傅, see *Hanyu da zidian*, 201.

21. It is also possible that the word *sui* 歲 means “annual” and that *suitain* 歲田 refers to a kind of annual agricultural task that Bailiff of Convict Labor Yan and the others were ordered to perform. Nevertheless, this is possibly the “other crime” (*tazui* 它罪) committed by Yan and the others as mentioned earlier in the document. An alternative interpretation is to read *wangsui* 往歲 as a compound noun, referring to the “previous year.” But it would be hard to explain why it was relevant to the present case and Yan and the others matched the punishment for it.

22. There should be a missing character *deng* 等 after the character *yan* 厭. Yan was not the only official charged with dereliction of duty. Throughout the document, Yan was usually suffixed with the character *deng* 等. See also my discussion in the later sections.

23. The “earlier document” (*qianshu* 前書) refers to the one that had been submitted by the Assistant Magistrate of Qianling for proposing appropriate punishment for Bailiff of Convict Labor Yan and the others.

24. Note that an entry of the “Statutes on the Forwarding of Documents” (*xingshu lü* 行書律) in the Shuihudi materials states that “for those [documents] which should have arrived but have not, pursue them” 宜到不來者，追之. See Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian zhengli xiaozu 睡虎地秦墓竹簡整理小組, *Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian* 睡虎地秦墓竹簡 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1990), 61. A statute of the similar content also appears in the Qin legal documents held by the Yuelu Academy. See Chen Songchang, ed., *Yuelu shuyuan cang Qin jian (si)* 嶽麓書院藏秦簡(肆) (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu, 2015), 142, slip 1271. For a recent study on this issue, see Liu Ziyin 劉自隱, “Liye Qin jian zhong de zhuishu xianxiang: Cong Shuihudi Qin jian yize xingshu lü shuoqi” 里耶秦簡中的追書現象——從睡虎地秦簡一則行書律說起, *Chutu wenxian yanjiu* 16 (2017), 147–64.

25. The record shows that Yuanyang could have been the location of the office (*zhisuo* 治所) of Dongting Commandery where Yi was acting the position of Governor by the county’s seal. You Yi-Fei 游逸飛 raises another possibility, suggesting that

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Section 3

七月甲子朔庚寅，洞庭守繹追遷陵亟言。/歇[8-1523 Recto Line 1]手・
以沅陽印行事。/[8-1523 Recto Line 2]

On the day Gengyin of the seventh month (August 20), of which the first day is Jiazi, [Acting]²⁶ Governor Yi of Dongting pursues Qianling to report [on the punishment] immediately. Xie handled [the document]. [Acting Governor Yi] is conducting affairs using the seal of Yuanyang.

Section 4

八月癸巳朔癸卯，洞庭段(假)[8-1523 Recto Line 2]守繹追遷陵，亟日夜上勿留。/卯手・以沅陽[8-1523 Verso Line 1]印行事。[8-1523 Verso Line 2]

On the day Guimao of the eighth month (September 2), of which the first day is Guisi, Acting Governor Yi of Dongting pursues Qianling to submit [a report on the punishment] immediately and without delay, regardless of whether it is day or night. Mao handled [the document]. [Acting Governor Yi] is conducting affairs using the seal of Yuanyang.

Section 5

/九月乙丑旦，郵人曼以來。/翥發。[8-1523 Verso Line 2]

In the morning of the day Yichou of the ninth month (September 24), courier Man arrived with [the document]. Zhu opened [the sealed document].

Yuanyang could be the county where the Governor was visiting during his inspection. See his "Liye Qin jian suojian de Dongting jun: Zhanguo Qin Han junxian zhi ge'an yanjiu zhi yi" 里耶秦簡所見的洞庭郡：戰國秦漢郡縣制個案研究之一, *Journal of Chinese Studies* 61 (2015), 33.

26. There should be a missing character *jia* 假 between the characters *Dongting* 洞庭 and *yi* 繹. Yi was the Acting Governor of Dongting on August 3 and September 2 in 213 BCE. It seems unlikely that he was promoted to the position of Governor of Dongting on August 20 or earlier, and then suddenly demoted to the original position in less than a month. Besides, although Yi's title on August 20 was Governor of Dongting, he was still using the seal of Yuanyang for acting the position. He should have used the seal of Dongting if he had been promoted to Governor of Dongting. See also You, "Liye Qin jian suojian de Dongting jun," 32, n. 22.

This multi-slip manuscript was sent from Dongting Commandery to Qianling County on September 2, 213 BCE. It contains the earlier documents that had been passed from Dongting Commandery to Qianling County from July through August about the penalty to be meted to a group of officials and a record about the arrival of the document in Qianling on September 24 in the same year. It is excellent material for looking into the formation of Qin local administrative documents and the written communications between Qin commandery and county governments.

This multi-slip manuscript indicates that written communications under the Qin required a sender of a document to refer to related earlier documents in the document that he would be sending (much like including an email trail in a modern business correspondence). The purpose of sending this multi-slip document was to ask Qianling County to report on the implementation of the punishment of a group of officials. Since July 16, when the instruction on the punishment was passed down from Dongting Commandery to Qianling County, the commandery had sent three follow-up documents asking the county to report on it. Comparing the wordings in these three documents, one can sense that Dongting Commandery was becoming increasingly impatient with the late reply from Qianling County.²⁷

First follow-up document: “pursues Qianling [to report on the punishment]” 追遷陵

Second follow-up document: “pursues Qianling to report [on the punishment] immediately” 追遷陵亟言

Third follow-up document: “pursues Qianling to submit [a report on the punishment] immediately and without delay, regardless of whether it is day or night” 追遷陵·亟日夜上勿留

To remind the county of its responsibilities with regard to the matter, the commandery restated the original instruction (Section 1) and the two previous follow-up documents (Sections 2 and 3), and placed them in front of the third follow-up document (Section 4). The whole document was then delivered by a courier (*youren* 郵人) named Man 曼 and finally reached the county on September 24 (section 5). The multi-layered structure of this document can be recovered in [Table 1](#).

27. The delay of responses (*bao* 報) appears to be quite common in the Liye materials. See Liu, “Liye Qin jian zhong de zhuishu xianxiang,” 152–61; Tong Chun Fung 唐俊峰, “Qin dai Qianling xian xingzheng xinxi chuandi xiaolü chutan” 秦代遷陵縣行政信息傳遞效率初探, *Jianbo* 16 (2018), 191–230.

Table 1. The layers of a multi-slip manuscript sent from Dongting Commandery to Qianling County in 213 BCE

Section	Date	Content	Handled/opened
1	July 16	An instruction about punishing a group of officials sent from Governor Li of Dongting to the Assistant Magistrate of Qianling	Xie handled
2	August 3	The first follow-up document sent from Acting Governor Yi of Dongting to Qianling pursuing them to report	Xie handled
3	August 20	The second follow-up document sent from Acting Governor Yi of Dongting to Qianling pursuing them to report	Xie handled
4	September 2	The third follow-up document sent from Acting Governor Yi of Dongting to Qianling pursuing them to report	Mao handled
5	September 24	A record regarding the delivery of the document to Qianling by a courier named Man	Zhu opened

Apparently, the key to the success of the Qin written communication system was to keep a good record of all the sent and received documents. Since the Liye materials were made public, many scholars have debated the format and the multi-layered structure of single slip-documents.²⁸ Due to the loss of the cords that were used to tie up multi-slip documents, the association of the scattered slips remains unclear, and therefore, scholars seldom pay attention to the formation of such multi-slip documents. This set of six slips is one of the few examples that bear incontrovertible evidence that the slips had been bound together. As Chen Yinchang indicates, the content, size, word count, and format

28. For a synthesis on this issue, see Shan Yuchen 單育辰, "Liye Qin gongwen liuzhuan yanjiu" 里耶秦公文流轉研究, *Jianbo* 9 (2014), 199–209.

of these six slips appear to be highly consistent. Chen also observes that the handwriting of Section 5 is slightly different than other sections (Figure 1).²⁹ This observation conforms to my analysis on the multi-layered structure of this document. It is conceivable that the record of the delivery of the document was made by another hand after the document had arrived. The main content of the document (Sections 1–4) was very possibly completed by the same person, Mao 卯, an official of Dongting Commandery. Mao then rolled up the document from right to left, with the verso side of the last slip facing out. When the document arrived in Qianling County, the official named Zhu 翥 opened it and made the record (Section 5) on the verso side of the last slip about its arrival.

One of the major differences between single-slip and multi-slip manuscripts is that the size of a single-slip manuscript limits the area of the written surface. On the other hand, the area of the written surface of a multi-slip manuscript can be extended horizontally by adding slips at the end of the document as long as it can be rolled into a scroll. The longest multi-slip administrative manuscript that has been discovered so far is the one that was excavated from the site A27 at Juyan 居延 in the 1930s. It was an account book composed of 77 wooden slips recording the weapons held by the southern Headquarters (*bu* 部) of Guangdi 廣地 from 93 to 95 CE.³⁰ As Sumiya Tsuneko suggests, from the perspective of administration, using single-slip documents could be safer than using multi-slip documents, as there is no need to worry about misplacing or losing the slips. It might be the reason why single-slip documents appear so frequently in the Liye materials.³¹

A newly discovered format of a Qin single-slip manuscript is that the responsible administrative official was required to record his given name with the character *shou* 手 (lit. hand) on the bottom left of the verso side to acknowledge his accountability for handling the manuscript.³² Chinese and Japanese scholars commonly call this phrase

29. Chen, "Liye Qin jian 8-1523 bianlian he 5-1 judou wenti."

30. For a detailed examination on the material features of this document, see Hsing I-tien 邢義田, "Handai jiandu de tiji, zhongliang he shiyong: Yi Zhongyanyuan shiyusuo cang Juyan Han jian wei li" 漢代簡牘的體積、重量和使用：以中研院史語所藏居延漢簡為例, in his *Di bu ai bao: Han dai jiandu* 地不愛寶：漢代簡牘 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2010), 8–9. New evidence from the Yuelu Academy's collection suggests that the maximum number of slips in a multi-slip document is around one hundred. See Staack, "Single- and Multi-Piece Manuscripts," 23–26.

31. Sumiya, "Riya Shin kan niokeru tandokukan nitsuite," 126.

32. The phrase *X shou* on the notched wooden tallies (*quan* 券) does not follow this rule. Each tally was supposed to be split into two matching pieces and therefore the inscription would only appear on one side. See Zhang Chunlong, Ohkawa Toshitaka 大川俊隆, and Momiyama Akira 末山明, "Liye Qin jian kechi jian yanjiu: jianlun Yuelu

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mou shou 某手 (such-and-such handled).³³ In Section 1 of the document I translated above, Governor (*shou* 守) Li 禮 of Dongting mentioned that there was a record of *Ren shou* 壬手 (Ren handled) on the “earlier document” (*qianshu*) he received from the Assistant Magistrate (*cheng* 丞) of Qianling. The record clearly states that the document was handled by Ren. It is expected that Governor Li of Dongting would rely on this record to trace the accountability of the written content if he noted any mistakes.

It appears that the position of the bottom left side of a slip or tablet has significant meaning to this format. It can be seen that slip 8-219+8-310 was used for scribal practice. Except for the character *wu* 無 on the top-right corner, the practice inscriptions appear to have followed some pattern. The three characters on the top have the same radical *shou*, and those four in the middle are composed of the same component *ke* 可. Obviously, the scribe apprentice was practicing two groups of characters that share some common elements.³⁴ Moreover, the apprentice also practiced writing the phrase *Lü shou* 履手 (Lü handled) on the bottom left side and then repeated the character *shou* two times on the right side (Figure 2). *Lü shou* frequently appears in the Liye materials to indicate Lü’s accountability for handling documents (slips 8-143, 8-768, 8-1561, and 8-2001). It is uncertain whether or not Lü was the apprentice who actually practiced writing the phrase *Lü shou* on slip 8-219+8-310,³⁵ but it is quite clear that he consciously put it in the position of bottom-left side. I would take this as an administrative model form (*shi* 式)³⁶—that is, a format that the apprentice visualized in his mind as he practiced writing

Qin jian shu zhong de wei jiedu jian” 里耶秦簡刻齒簡研究——兼論嶽麓秦簡《數》中的未解讀簡, *Wenwu* 2015.3, 53–69, 96; Tsang Wing Ma, “Scribes, Assistants, and the Materiality of Administrative Documents in Qin-Early Han China: Excavated Evidence from Liye, Shuihudi, and Zhangjiashan,” *T’oung Pao* 103.4–5 (2017), 325–27.

33. For the meaning of the word *shou*, see Ma, “Scribes, Assistants, and the Materiality of Administrative Documents,” 322–29.

34. He might be copying from a lexical list in which the graphs are organized in sequence based on some principles such as meaning, sound, or shape. For a discussion of lexical lists from a comparative perspective, see Wang Haicheng, *Writing and the Ancient State: Early China in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 280–86.

35. The apprentice could have copied the phrase from a document that was handled by Lü.

36. For model forms, see Hsing I-tien, “Cong jian du kan Han dai de xingzheng wenshu fanben: ‘shi’” 從簡牘看漢代的行政文書範本——「式」, in his *Zhiguo anbang: fazhi, xingzheng yu junshi* 治國安邦：法制、行政與軍事 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2011), 450–72; Anthony J. Barbieri-Low, “Model Legal and Administrative Forms from the Qin, Han, and Tang and Their Role in the Facilitation of Bureaucracy and Literacy,” *Oriens Extremus* 50 (2011), 125–56.

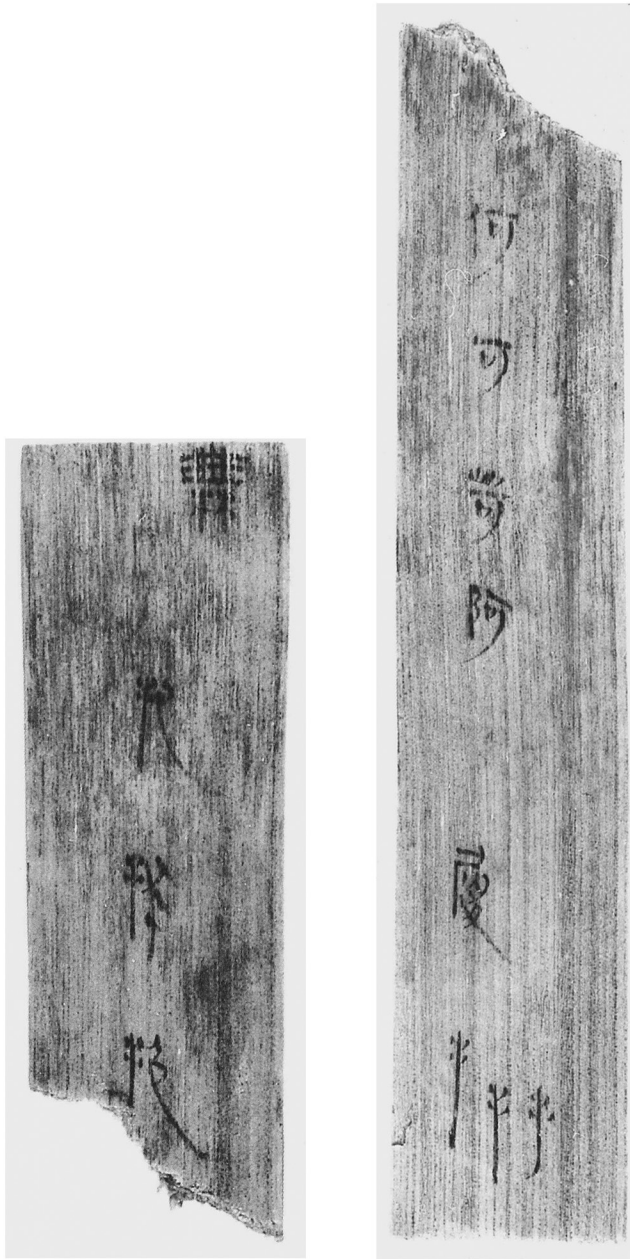


Figure 2. 8-219 (left) and 8-310 (right). After *Liye Qin jian (yi)*, 50 and 57.

the phrase. Apparently, the position of the phrase within the layout of a slip was a significant part of the format.

Considering again the multi-layered structure of the manuscript, the original instruction from Dongting (Section 1) and the two previous follow-up documents (Sections 2 and 3) were copied by Mao and placed in front of the third follow-up document (Section 4). Notably, after finishing copying the original instruction on the first five slips of the multi-slip manuscript, Mao followed the format of most single-slip manuscripts, turned over the manuscript and copied the phrase *Xie shou* 歇手 (*Xie* handled) on the bottom-left corner of the verso side of the first slip (Section 1). He then turned over the manuscript again and continued to copy the two previous follow-up documents with a sloping line / and the phrase *Xie shou* following each of them on the recto side (Sections 2 and 3).³⁷ *Xie* was probably the official who composed the original instruction and the two previous follow-up documents. Instead of stating his own name, Mao merely copied the phrase *Xie shou*, which means that he would not take responsibility for those portions. Finally, he composed the third follow-up document as he was instructed to do. As usual, he made the sloping line / following the follow-up document and put down his given name with the character *shou* to acknowledge his accountability for Section 4.

It is important to note that only the first instance of *mou shou* was written on the bottom-left corner of the verso side of the manuscript and the rest does not follow the same rule. This layout is exactly the same as those single-slip manuscripts which have similar multi-layered structure.³⁸ A typical example is a set of twelve slips (from 9-1 to 9-12) concerning the location of twelve conscripts (*zu* 卒) who owed fines (*zi* 贖) or redemption fees (*shu* 贖) to Yangling 陽陵 County.³⁹ Each of the twelve slips includes four sections, and there is a *mou shou* for each, which indicates the person's accountability for the written content. Just

37. Here the sloping line was used to separate the phrase from the notice. For more on the uses of this mark, see Li and Liu, *Jiandu wenshu xue*, 69–73.

38. One can also argue that Mao might have originally copied the first three sections from a self-contained single-slip manuscript and the format of the present multi-slip manuscript was actually an imitation of the format of single-slip manuscript.

39. For an annotated transcription of these twelve slips, see Ma Yi 馬怡, "Liye Qin jian xuanjiao" 里耶秦簡選校, *Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan lishi yanjiusuo xuekan* 4 (2007), 62–80. Charles Sanft terms these documents as "debt reckoning." See his "Population Records from Liye: Ideology in Practice," in *Ideology of Power and Power of Ideology in Early China*, ed. Yuri Pines, Paul R. Goldin, and Martin Kern (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 260–66.

as in the multi-slip manuscript analyzed in this article, the responsible official only wrote the first instance of *mou shou*—in this case, *Jing shou* 敬手 (Jing handled)—on the bottom-left corner of the verso side and put remaining *mou shou* with the sloping line / following each of the sections. Hence, I suggest that the material difference between a single-slip document and a multi-slip document does not necessarily influence the format of the Qin administrative documents as seen in the Liye materials. In this sense, we can regard an unrolled multi-slip document as a horizontal extension of a single-slip document.

Qin Agricultural Production in a “New Land” (*Xindi*)

Turning now to the analysis of the content, the original instruction was sent from Governor Li of Dongting to the Assistant Magistrate of Qianling in response to an earlier proposal regarding the punishment of Bailiff of Convict Labor (*sikong* 司空) Yan and the others. They were charged with failing to order laborer-servants (*tuli* 徒隸) to cultivate agricultural fields. In the instruction, Governor Li referred to an ordinance (*ling* 令) on the agricultural use of laborers and approved the punishment proposed by the assistant magistrate of Qianling. He mentioned that Qianling County and Cangwu 蒼梧 Commandery⁴⁰ were both established in the twenty-fifth year of the First Emperor of Qin (222 BCE), a year before Qin’s final unification. The record accords with the account in the *Shi ji* 史記 in which Sima Qian says that Qin General Wang Jian 王翳 suppressed the Chu region and the southern region of the Yangzi river (*Jing Jiang nan di* 荆江南地) in the same year.⁴¹ Chen Wei and his research team suspect that Dongting Commandery may have been established in the same year.⁴²

40. Cangwu Commandery had already been established for nine years when the document was sent in 213 BCE, which means that it was established in 222 BCE, the same year as Qianling County.

41. *Shi ji*, 6.234.

42. *Liye Qin jian du jiaoshi (diyi juan)*, 5; *Liye Qin jian du jiaoshi (dier juan)*, 3–4. There is no record concerning Dongting and Cangwu as Qin commanderies in transmitted texts. The earliest record about Cangwu as a commandery is from the “Treatise of Geography” (*Dili zhi* 地理志) of the *Han shu* 漢書, in which it is noted that Cangwu became a commandery in the sixth year of Yuanding 元鼎 (111 BCE) in the reign of Emperor Wu 武. See *Han shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1962), 28b.1629. For an inference on the territory of these two commanderies, see Chen Wei, “Qin Cangwu, Dongting er jun chulun” 秦蒼梧、洞庭二郡芻論, *Lishi yanjiu* 5 (2003), 168–72. As for the record of *Cangwu xian* 蒼梧縣 in a Qin legal case of the *Zouyan shu* 奏讞書 from the Zhangjiashan Han tomb, Chen Wei reads it as “the counties of Cangwu [Commandery].” See *ibid.*, 169–70.

Notably, Bailiff of Convict Labor Yan and the others only began to order laborer-servants to cultivate agricultural fields after Qianling had already been established for four years. It is also significant that Bailiff of Convict Labor Yan and the others were supposed to order laborer-servants to cultivate lands in Cangwu Commandery, beyond the jurisdiction of Dongting Commandery.⁴³ In light of the passages from the *Book of Lord Shang* discussed at the beginning of this article, the dereliction of duties on the part of Bailiff of Convict Labor Yan and others was definitely intolerable, since they wasted the available resources of agricultural production and upset the ideal proportion between land and human resources. Yet, on the other hand, the incident shows that during the early years of a newly conquered area, not all commands could be implemented efficiently and smoothly. To maintain its governance over the area, the Qin government had to rely on a system of punishment and supervision. The document examined in this article is the best proof of the existence of this system. Before I turn to discuss Qin management of human resources, it is necessary to briefly examine agricultural production in Qianling so as to provide a context in which this multi-slip document was generated.

During the process of unification, Qin regularly called the newly conquered areas “new lands” (*xindi* 新地), where “new lands’ officials” (*xindi li* 新地吏) were set up to govern the “new black-headed ones” (*xin qianshou* 新黔首) according to the legal regulations.⁴⁴ Commoners were allowed to clear land after seeking approval from

43. I suspect that during the early phase of Qin’s unification, the local governments of surplus laborers-servants were required to send their laborers to those with insufficient laborers to assist in agricultural production. In fact, Qianling County had owned a certain number of laborers who were originally from other commanderies. Slip 8-136+8-144 shows that a bondservant in Qianling County was originally from Xunyang 旬陽 County of Hanzhong 漢中 Commandery. See also You, “Liye Qin jian suojian de Dongting jun,” 64. The newly published Yuelu Qin legal manuscripts attest that the central government would send convicts to Dongting and Cangwu Commanderies and the governors were requested to settle these convicts in an underpopulated or undercultivated area to achieve the balance of human and land resources. See Chen Songchang 陳松長, ed., *Yuelu shuyuan cang Qin jian (wu)* 嶽麓書院藏秦簡(伍) (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu, 2017), 44, slips 0921 and 0898.

44. These terms frequently show up in the Qin legal documents held by the Yuelu Academy. See Yu Zhenbo 于振波, “Qin lüling zhong ‘xin qianshou’ yu ‘xindi li’” 秦律令中「新黔首」與「新地吏」, *Zhongguoshi yanjiu* 3 (2009), 69–78. The term “new lands’ officials” also appears in slip 8-1516 from the Liye archive. Some of these officials may have been demoted or transferred from Qin’s “original lands” (*gudi* 故地). See Zheng Wei 鄭威, “Liye Qin jian du suo jian Ba Shu shidi santi” 里耶秦簡牘所見巴蜀史地三題, *Sichuan shifan daxue xuebao* 12 (2015), 148–49. See also Zhang Menghan 張夢晗, “‘Xindi li’ yu ‘wei li zhi dao’: yi chutu Qin jian wei zhongxin de kaocha” 「新地吏」與「為吏之道」——以出土秦簡為中心的考察, *Zhongguo shi yanjiu* 3 (2017), 61–70.

the local government (see slips 9-15 and 9-2344), but the newly conquered areas were usually underpopulated. Slip 9-2119 states: “the district [an unknown district of Qianling County] has plenty of land for cultivation, but there is a shortage of black-headed ones” (鄉多田宇，少黔首). In response, the Qin ruler deliberately channeled the use of laborers predominantly to agricultural production. Slips 9-2283, [16-5] and [16-6] record a lost ordinance regarding Qin’s policy on the conscription of commoners:

令曰：「傳送委輸，必先悉行城旦舂、隸臣妾、居賞贖債，急事不可留，乃興繇。」⁴⁵

An ordinance states: “[When levying laborers for] delivery and transportation, one must first mobilize all the wall-builders and grain-pounders, bondservants and bondwomen, and those who are [in residence of government facilities] paying off fines, redemption fees or debts [by labor]. Only when there is an urgent matter that cannot be delayed can one levy [commoners] for government service.”

The recto sides of slips 9-2283 [16-5] and [16-6], which concern the transportation of armaments (*jiabing* 甲兵) from Dongting Commandery to the Capital Area (*neishi* 內史), Nan 南 and Cangwu Commanderies in 220 BCE, indicates that the same legal rationale is at play.⁴⁶ Governor Li of Dongting Commandery referred to the above ordinance when giving his instruction to the affiliated counties and his subordinates. He then added: “At the time of cultivating the fields, I do not wish to levy the black-headed ones” (田時殿(也)，不欲興黔首).⁴⁷ This largely contradicts the traditional view that the Qin brutally exploited commoners as well as potential agricultural workers,⁴⁸ but it does conform to our

45. For slips [16-5] and [16-6], see Ma, “Liye Qin jian xuanjiao,” 143 and 149.

46. For the relationship of these three slips, see Tsang Wing Ma 馬增榮, “Qin dai jiandu wenshuxue de ge’an yanjiu: Liye Qin jian 9-2283, [16-5] he [16-6] sandu de wuzhi xingtai, wenshu goucheng he chuandi fangshi” 秦代簡牘文書學的個案研究——里耶秦簡9-2283、[16-5]和[16-6]三牘的物質形態、文書構成和傳遞方式, *Bulletin of Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica* 91.3 (2020), 349–418.

47. Governor Li gave his instruction on March 30, only four days after the vernal equinox (*chunfen* 春分). It was right in the middle of a peak season in agricultural production. See Xu, *Xi Zhou (gonghe) zhi Xi Han lipu*, 1243. More legal regulations on mobilizing commoners during the season of agricultural production can be seen in the Yuelu Academy’s collection. See Chen Songchang, “Yuelu shuyuan cang Qin jian zhong de yaolü lishuo” 嶽麓書院藏秦簡中的徭律例說, *Chutu wenxian yanjiu* 11 (2012), 162–66; Ou Yang 歐揚, “Yuelu Qin jian ‘wuduo tianshi ling’ tanxi” 嶽麓秦簡「毋奪田時令」探析, *Hunan daxue xuebao* 29.3 (2015), 25–30.

48. This traditional view is also one of the most influential explanations for the fall of Qin. Scholars have now started to question this stereotypical explanation. See, for

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understanding of Qin's dedication to agricultural production.⁴⁹ As Anthony Barbieri-Low argues, "the government made conscious cost-benefit analysis when employing various pools of labor for a given project, taking into account the nature of the work, the season of the year, and the overall cost to the peasant-based economy."⁵⁰ The Liye materials enable an investigation into the implementation of Qin agricultural policy at the county level.

The Office of the Agricultural Fields (*tianguan* 田官)⁵¹ was the agency in charge of "government-owned fields" (*guantian* 官田) or "public fields" (*gongtian* 公田)⁵² and grain production in Qianling County. Slip 8-672, a document submitted by the Office of the Agricultural Fields in 217 BCE, mentions the *guantian zishi bu* 官田自食簿. This type of account book records the details about the grain supplies disbursed to those who were

example, Jack L. Dull, "Anti-Qin Rebels: No Peasant Leaders Here," *Modern China* 9.3 (1983), 285–318; Gideon Shelach, "Collapse or Transformation? Anthropological and Archaeological Perspective on the Fall of Qin," in *Birth of an Empire: The State of Qin Revisited*, ed. Yuri Pines et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 116–17.

49. See also slip 8-1622+8-1699 in which agricultural production is referred to as *dashi* 大事 (great matter).

50. Anthony J. Barbieri-Low, *Artisans in Early Imperial China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), 26.

51. Wang Yanhui 王彥輝 suggests that the Office of the Agricultural Fields was a metropolitan office (*duguan* 都官), which is proved untenable by Chen Wei. Yet they both agree that along with the Office of the Agricultural Fields, there was another agency named *tian* 田 or *tianbu* 田部, which was also in charge of the matters of agricultural fields in Qianling County. The relationship of these agencies to the Office of the Agricultural Fields in Qianling remains uncertain from the limited materials published so far. See Wang Yanhui, "Liye Qin jian (yi) suo jian Qin dai xian xiang jigou shezhi wenti lice" 《里耶秦簡》(壹)所見秦代縣鄉機構設置問題蠡測, *Gudai Wenming* 6.4 (2012.10), 50–53; Chen Wei, "Liye Qin jian suo jian de 'tian' yu 'tianguan'" 里耶秦簡所見的「田」與「田官」, *Zhongguo dianji yu wenhua* 87 (2013), 145–46.

52. Slip 8-63 mentions the official title *zuo gongtian* 左公田. Robin D. S. Yates suspects that these *gongtian* might have been rented out (*jia* 假) to ordinary commoners for farming. See his "Bureaucratic Organization of the Qin County of Qianling in the Light of the Newly Published *Liye Qin jian (yi)* and *Liye Qin jian du jiaoshi (diyi juan)*," presented at the Fourth International Conference on Sinology, Institute for History and Philology, Academia Sinica June 20–22, 2012, 26. Note that the term *you gongtian* 右公田, which appears to be a parallel to the *zuo gongtian* in the Liye materials, is seen in a Qin seal. See Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭 "Cong chutu wenzi ziliao kan Qin he Xi Han shidai guanyou nongtian de jingying" 從出土文字資料看秦和西漢時代官有農田的經營, in *Zhongguo kaoguxue yu lishixue zhi zhenghe yanjiu* 中國考古學與歷史學之整合研究, ed. Zang Zhenhua 臧振華 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 1997), 431. Recently, Li Mian 李勉 and Jin Wen 晉文 propose that the shift from the use of *gongtian* to *guantian* was part of the reform of terminologies implemented after the Qin unification. See their "Liye Qin jian zhong de 'tianguan' yu 'gongtain'" 里耶秦簡中的「田官」與「公田」, *Jianbo yanjiu er ling yi liu* 簡帛研究二〇一六 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue, 2016), 126.

authorized to obtain rations from the Office of the Granaries (*cang* 倉) of Qianling when they were on a business trip. As stated in slips 8-50+8-422, 8-169+8-233+8-407+8-416+8-1185 and 8-1517, within the territory of Qianling County the authorized persons “can feed themselves with [the grain grown from] the fields of Qianling” (遷陵田能自食).⁵³

The Office of the Agricultural Fields not only produced grain, but also had access to granaries and was responsible for disbursing rations like the Office of the Granaries and other offices. Judging from the fact that some of the ration receivers are garrison conscripts (*tunshu* 屯戍) or men charged with garrison duty (*fashu* 罰戍), one might wonder whether the Office of the Agricultural Fields was related to the “agricultural garrison” (*tuntian* 屯田) system as seen in the Han administrative documents from Juyan and Dunhuang 敦煌.⁵⁴ Although the relationship between the Office of the Agricultural Fields and agricultural garrisons remains unclear, it is evident in a “Tabulation on Evaluations of the Commandant” (*weike zhi* 尉課志) (slip 8-482) that Qianling County did engage garrison conscripts in agricultural production. A newly published slip (9-1247) also testifies that the Qianling government would recruit conscripted soldiers to cultivate the fields.

In newly conquered area, such as Qianling County, the Qin government was very concerned that the land resource should be properly used. Slip 9-1865 shows that the Office of the Agricultural Fields had to submit the “Evaluation of Opened-up Fields” (*kentian ke* 垦[墾]田課) to Qianling County for review. Slip 9-40 is a legal regulation on the opened-up fields which accords well with the early Han statutes from the Zhangjiashan tomb:

律曰：「已垦（墾）田，輒上其數及戶數，戶嬰之。」

The Statute states: “When the opening-up of the fields is completed, immediately report to higher authorities their number and the number of households, with the households attached to them.”⁵⁵

53. For a study of these documents, see Aoki Shunsuke 青木俊介, “Riya Shin kan no ‘zoku shoku bunsho’ ni tsuite” 里耶秦簡の「統食文書」について, *Meidai Ajia shi ronshū* 明大アジア史論集18 (2014), 25–27.

54. See Wang, “*Liye Qin jian (yi) suo jian Qin dai xian xiang jigou shezhi wenti lice*,” 51; Chen, “*Liye Qin jian suo jian de ‘tian’ yu ‘tianguan’*,” 146. Yates, “Bureaucratic Organization of the Qin County of Qianling,” 26, also argues that some of the fields in Qianling were used to supply the needs of the garrison conscripts.

55. Translation after Barbieri-Low and Yates, *Law, State, and Society*, 223, n. 23, with modifications.

Slip 8-1764 also shows that there was even a targeted number of opened-up fields for the Qianling officials to achieve:

☐當豨（墾）田十六畝。

☐已豨（墾）田十九畝。

16 *mu* of fields should have opened up.

19 *mu* of fields have opened up.

The official(s) who undertook the task succeeded beyond expectation. Unfortunately, due to the fragmentary nature of the account, we do not have the context of the document. To have an overall idea concerning the opened-up fields in Qianling, it is necessary to look at slip 8-1519:

Recto side

遷陵卅五年豨（墾）田輿五十二頃九十五畝，稅田四頃☐☐ [Line 1]

Qianling: thirty-fifth year (212 BCE): opened-up fields recorded [on the cadastral map] are 52 *qing* 95 *mu*; taxable fields 4 *qing* ...

戶百五十二，租六百七十七石。衛（率）之，畝一石五 [Line 2]

152 households; tax 677 *shi* calculating (at a rate of) 1 *shi* 5 per *mu*

戶嬰四石四斗五升，奇不衛（率）六斗 [Line 3]

To each household is attached: 4 *shi* 4 *dou* 5 *sheng*; the remainder that was not calculated: 6 *dou*

Verso side

Row 1

啓田九頃十畝，租九十七石六斗 [Line 1]

Qi [ling] fields: 9 *qing* 10 *mu*; tax: 97 *shi* 6 *dou*

都田十七頃五十一畝，租二百卅一石 [Line 2]

Du [xiang] fields: 17 *qing* 51 *mu*; tax: 241 *shi*

貳田廿六頃卅四畝，租三百卅九石三 [Line 3]

Er [chun] fields: 26 *qing* 34 *mu*; tax: 339 *shi* 3

凡田七十頃卅二畝，租凡九百一十 [Line 4]

In total: fields: 70 *qing* 42 *mu*; Tax: in total, 910 [*shi*]

Row 2

六百七十七石 [Line 1]

677 *shi*⁵⁶

The level of detail in the records of opened up fields and taxes were kept at Qianling County is impressive, and it is surprising how few fields were opened up before the thirty-fifth year of the First Emperor (212 BCE). The year 212 BCE seems a quite productive year. Of the only 70 *qing* 42 *mu* of total opened-up fields, this year saw the opening up of 52 *qing* 95 *mu* of fields. As the manuscript examined in this article states, Qianling began to be a Qin county in 222 BCE, and that suggests that in ten years only 17 *qing* 47 *mu* of fields were opened up, accounting for a mere one-third of the fields opened in a single year of 212 BCE!

The number of opened up fields in this document might suggest why the dereliction of duties on the part of Bailiff of Convict Labor Yan and others was so intolerable from the point of view of the Governor of Dongting Commandery. In essence, they wasted both the human and land resources that might yield income either from cultivation or leasing to peasants. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that the year 212 BCE, which saw the remarkable increase in opened up fields, is perhaps not coincidentally the year just after the Governor of Dongting's instruction of punishment was passed down to Qianling. I would suggest that the punishment of Bailiff of Convict Labor Yan and others may have had a positive impact on the agricultural production in Qianling County, and this may explain why the Qin believed that the operation of a state should function with a system of supervision and punishment.

56. Translation after Yates, "Bureaucratic Organization of the Qin County of Qianling," 21–22, with modifications.

Qin Management of Human Resources

Questions about the content of this multi-slip manuscript remain: Who was Bailiff of Convict Labor Yan? Who were the others? Why were they but not other officials held responsible for not ordering *tuli* (laborer-servants) to farm? Equally important, who were the *tuli*? How did the Qin incorporate them into production? Above all, how could answering these questions shed light on Qin's general strategy of managing human resources? This section attempts to answer these questions.

Bailiff of Convict Labor (*sikong*)

Regarding the official title *sikong* 司空, Ru Chun 如淳, a third century annotator of the *Han shu*, refers to a statute (*lü* 律) stating that: “*Sikong* is in charge of irrigation works and convicts” (司空主水及罪人).⁵⁷ In the Shuihudi Qin legal documents, there is a group of Qin rules that can be identified as “Statutes on Convict Labor” (*sikong lü* 司空律),⁵⁸ from which we can see that *sikong* was primarily responsible for managing convicts and administrating government-owned equipment. In fact, *sikong* was a common official title in the Qin central and local governments.⁵⁹ This article focuses only on those *sikong* who worked at the county level.

Like many official titles in the Qin and Han official systems, the title *sikong* in Qianling County can refer to an office as well as the person who was in charge of that office. When it refers to a person, the full title should be *sikong sefu* 司空嗇夫 (Bailiff of Convict Labor) (slip 8-1445).⁶⁰ According to Nakayama Shigeru's 仲山茂 theory on the parallel structure of Qin and Western Han county administration, Convict Labor

57. *Han shu*, 19a.730.

58. *Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian*, 49–54. See also A. F. P. Hulswé, *Remnants of Ch'in Law: An Annotated Translation of the Ch'in Legal and Administrative Rules of the 3rd Century B.C., Discovered in Yün-meng Prefecture, Hu-pei Province, in 1975* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 66–76. For parallel passages of the “Statutes on Convict Labor” in the Yuelu Academy collection, see Zhou Haifeng 周海鋒, “Cong Yuelu shuyuan cang *sikong lü* kan Qin *lü wenben de bianzuan yu liubian qingkuang*” 從嶽麓書院藏《司空律》看秦律文本的編纂與流變情況, *Chutu wenxian* 10 (2017), 149–55.

59. For studies on *sikong* during the Qin and Han periods, see Miyake Kiyoshi 宮宅潔, *Chugoku kodai keiseishi no kenkyū* 中国古代刑制史の研究 (Kyoto: Kyōto Daigaku, 2011), chap. 5; Song Jie 宋杰, “Qin Han guojia tongzhi jigou zhong de ‘sikong’” 秦漢國家統治機構中的「司空」, *Lishi yanjiu* 2011.4, 15–34; Zou Shujie 鄒水杰, “Ye lun Liye Qin jian zhi ‘sikong’” 也論里耶秦簡之「司空」, *Nandu xuetan* 34.5 (2014), 1–7.

60. Slip [10-15] mentions the term *sikong youzhi chengche* 司空有秩乘車. While *youzhi* represents an official's rank, *chengche* indicates that the official is allowed to ride in carriages. Neither term is part of an official title. See Liye Qin jian bowuguan 里耶秦簡博物館, et al., eds., *Liye Qin jian bowuguan cang Qin jian* 里耶秦簡博物館藏秦簡 (Shanghai: Zhongxi, 2016), 196.

(*sikong*) was an office (*guan* 官) headed by a bailiff with the assistance of a group of scribes (*shi* 史) and assistants (*zuo* 佐). A number of scribe directors (*lingshi* 令史) at the court (*ting* 廷) were assigned to the Bureau of Convict Labor (*sikong cao* 司空曹) to supervise the performance of the Office of Convict Labor.⁶¹ This relationship can be seen in the “Inventory of the Accounts of the Bureau of Convict Labor” (*sikong cao jilu* 司空曹計錄) (slip 8-480). The scribe director assigned to the Bureau of Convict Labor managed the accounts (*ji* 計) of the performance of the Office of Convict Labor, which covered boats (*chuan* 船), equipment (*qi* 器), redemption fees (*shu* 贖), fines (*zi* 贖) and debts (*zhai* 責[債]), and laborers (*tu* 徒). As the chief of the Office of Convict Labor, the bailiff held the major responsibility if the scribe director from the court noticed that the Office failed to achieve its assigned tasks.

According to the multi-slip manuscript examined in this article, in 218 BCE (twenty-ninth year of the First Emperor) Bailiff of Convict Labor Yan and the others began to order *tuli* to cultivate the lands which were supposed to be cultivated between 221 and 219 BCE (twenty-sixth to twenty-eighth year of the First Emperor). In addition to that record, there are only two fragments (9-228 and 9-609) that mention Bailiff of Convict Labor Yan. Both of them merely tell us that a certain number of forced laborers were assigned the task of “accompanying Bailiff of Convict Labor Yan to buy horses” (與司空厭偕買馬). That is to say, there is no concrete evidence showing which year Yan served as bailiff of Convict Labor. Apart from Yan, from 221 to 219 BCE, De 得, Jiu 糲, Chāng 昌, and Zhang 長 were also bailiffs of Convict Labor, and only Jiu was serving on probation during that time (see Appendix).

It is worth mentioning that almost all of the bailiffs of Convict Labor served only a short term, and reappointment in the same position appeared to be a common practice.⁶² However, there is no evidence that any of the men in the group of Yan, De, Jiu, Chāng, and Zhang had been reappointed to the same position after the charge was brought in 213 BCE (the thirty-fourth year of the First Emperor). It is also important that throughout the multi-slip document, Bailiff of Convict Labor Yan is often suffixed with the word *deng* 等, which means that he was not the only person accused of not ordering the laborers to farm. I would suggest that De, Jiu, Chāng, and Zhang—all bailiffs of Convict Labor from 221 to 219

61. Nakayama Shigeru, “Shin Kan jidai no ‘kan’ to ‘sō’: ken no bukyoku soshiki” 秦漢時代の「官」と「曹」—県の部局組織—, *Tōyō gakuho* 東洋学報 82.4 (2001), 35–65. See also Zou, “Ye lun Liye Qin jian zhi ‘sikong,’” 1–7.

62. For example, Se 色 had been reappointed to the position of Bailiff of Convict Labor three times (see Appendix).

BCE—might have also been accused with the same charge in 213 BCE.⁶³ As proposed by the assistant magistrate of Qianling, they would have undergone shaving and been made robber-guards. This may explain why their punishment had to wait until 213 BCE, because the legal case involved many officials in Qianling County and the investigation and interrogation had to take many years to complete.⁶⁴

Management of Laborer-servants (*tuli*)

According to the multi-slip document translated above, Bailiff of Convict Labor Yan and the others were charged with failing to order *tuli* (laborer-servants) to farm. One might wonder what exactly they were supposed to do with *tuli* and farming. One of the major responsibilities of the bailiff of Convict Labor was to manage the convict-laborers, but the term *tuli* does not seem to refer to regular convict-laborers. The controversy over the term *tuli* began with an article written by Li Xueqin 李學勤, who indicates that slips [16-5] and [16-6] use the term *tuli* to refer to bondservants and bondwomen (*lichenqie* 隸臣妾), wall-builders and grain-pounders (*chengdan chong* 城旦舂), and gatherers of firewood for the spirits and sifters of white grain (*guixin baican* 鬼薪白粲). Li Xueqin argues that from the Han perspective, they were all convict-laborers.⁶⁵ This observation once again brought scholar's attention to the discussion of the nature of bondservants and bondwomen.⁶⁶

Since the discovery of the Shuihudi Qin legal documents in the 1970s, many scholars have debated whether bondservants and bondwomen were slaves. Li Li 李力 has argued that the term *lichenqie* carries a variety of meanings in the Qin. As a legal term, the meaning of *lichenqie* underwent a transition from slaves to convicts, which conforms to the trend that hard-labor punishment gradually became the major form of sentencing during the Qin and Han periods. As reflected in the Shuihudi Qin legal documents that cover the period in which the Qin was transforming from a state to an empire, the term

63. Note that Zhang was also held liable for another crime in 219 BCE, but the punishment for his crime is not clear. See *Liye Qin jian bowuguan cang Qin jian*, 164, slip [7-304].

64. For this point, see also Ye Shan 葉山 (Robin D. S. Yates), "Qianling xian dang' an zhong Qin fa de zhengjiu: chubu de yanjiu" 遷陵縣檔案中秦法的證據——初步的研究, trans. Hu Chuan-an 胡川安, *Jianbo* 10 (2015), 140.

65. Li Xueqin, "Chudu Liye Qin jian" 初讀里耶秦簡, *Wenwu* 1 (2003), 78.

66. See, for example, Yates, "The Changing Status of Slaves in the Qin-Han Transition," in *Birth of an Empire*, 223.

lichenqie appears to be unstable and can refer to slaves or convicts in different contexts.⁶⁷

The term *tuli* is a compound noun composed of the characters *tu* 徒 (laborers) and *li* 隸 (servants). Most scholars agree with Li Xueqin's reading of *tuli* as a generic term referring to three types of forced laborers: bondservants and bondwomen, wall-builders and grain-pounders, and gatherers of firewood for the spirits and sifters of white grain.⁶⁸ Yet, neither the transmitted texts nor the newly excavated texts have specified what type of laborers the term *tuli* refers to in a given context. Besides, Li Xueqin is inaccurate in saying that *tuli* was equivalent to convict-laborers. Slip 8-154 records that the county governments "always report to higher authorities on the first day of the month the number of laborer-servants that have been bought" (恒以朔日上所買徒隸數).⁶⁹ Slip 9-1406 shows that the Office of Revenue (*shaonei* 少內) paid more than 33,000 cash to purchase *tuli*. These materials indicate that the local government could purchase *tuli* on the market, which contrasts with our understanding that most convict-laborers were criminals sentenced to hard-labor punishment.⁷⁰

The official title "Censor for Managing Captives" (*zhilu yushi* 治虜御史) in the ordinance quoted by Governor Li of Dongting in the multi-slip document indicates another source of *tuli*. The ordinance states: "If there is a shortage of laborers or if no laborers are available, forward the account book [of laborers] to the Censor for Managing

67. Li Li, "Lichenqie" *shenfen zai yanjiu* 「隸臣妾」身份再研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo fazhi, 2007), 681–85. For a comprehensive review on the scholarship of *lichenqie* in the past few decades, see *ibid.*, 134–220.

68. See, for example, Li Li, "Lun 'tuli' de shenfen: Cong xin chutu Liye Qin jian rushou" 論「徒隸」的身份——從新出土里耶秦簡入手, *Chutu wenxian yanjiu* 8 (2007), 33–42; Jia Liying 賈麗英, "Liye Qin jiandu suo jian 'tuli' shenfen ji jianguan guanshu" 里耶秦簡牘所見「徒隸」身份及監管官署, *Jianbo yanjiu er ling yi san* 簡帛研究二〇一三 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue, 2014), 68–81; Shen Gang 沈剛, "Liye Qin jian (yi) suo jian zuotu guanli wenti tantao" 《里耶秦簡》(壹)所見作徒管理問題探討, *Shixue yuekan* 2 (2015), 22–29.

69. Translation after Barbieri-Low and Yates, *Law, State, and Society*, 73, n. 16. See also 8-664+8-1053+8-2167: "On the first day of the month report to the office of Commandery Governor the number of laborer-servants that have been bought" 以朔日上所買徒隸數守府.

70. Li Xueqian suggests that a legal model (*shi*) of interrogation titled "Denouncing a Slave" (*Gaochen* 告臣) in the Shuihudi Qin documents can be taken as an example of purchasing convicts. Yet, Li Li disagrees. The slave was made a wall-builder because of his violation of Qin laws. Since the hard-labor sentence had to be executed in government facilities, the money given to the master of the slave was to redeem his loss of property. See Li Xueqin, "Chudu Liye Qin jian," 78; Li Li, "Lun 'tuli' de shenfen," 34. For a general description of the hard-labor punishment during the Qin and Han periods, see Barbieri-Low and Yates, *Law, State, and Society*, 193–99.

Captives. The Censor will assign [the laborer-servants] evenly based on it.” The Censor for Managing Captives should be a subordinate to the Chief Prosecutor (*yushi dafu* 御史大夫), which shows that there was a specific office in the central government in charge of the supply and assignment of *tuli*.⁷¹ On the other hand, the term *lu* 虜 implies that captured prisoners of war (*fulu* 俘虜) were one of the sources of *tuli*. In fact, it is evident in a Shuihudi Qin rule that “enemies who surrender are made bondservants” (寇降，以為隸臣).⁷²

Division of Laborers: The Offices of the Granaries (*Cang*)
and Convict Labor (*Sikong*)

Despite the ambiguity of the term *tuli*, a group of documents from Liye titled “account books of laborers” (*tubu* 徒簿)⁷³ provide important clues to the understanding of the management of *tuli* at the county level. These account books detail the number of *tuli* working at the offices (*guan*) on daily or monthly basis and the duties assigned to them. Based on the Liye materials excavated from the 5th, 6th, 8th and 9th levels of Well No.1, many scholars have indicated that among the offices in Qianling County, only the Offices of the Granaries and Convict Labor could have their own group of *tuli*. While the Office of the Granaries was in charge of the bondservants and bondwomen, the Office of Convict Labor was in charge of the wall-builders and grain-pounders, and gatherers of firewood for the spirits and sifters of white grain.⁷⁴ The other offices and the districts (*xiang* 鄉) had to submit

71. New evidence from the Yuelu Academy’s collection suggests that the duties of Censor for Managing Captives in Qin labor management might have been shared with a type of officials called “Law Enforcer” (*zhifa* 執灑). See Chen Songchang, “Yuelu Qin jian zhong de jige guanming kaolue” 嶽麓秦簡中的幾個官名考略, *Hunan daxue xuebao* 29.3 (2015.5), 8–9; *Yuelu shuyuan cang Qin jian (liu)*, 171, slips 1612 and 1611. See also Tsuchiguchi Fuminori 土口史記, “Yuelu Qin jian ‘Zhifa’ kao” 嶽麓秦簡「執法」考, trans. He Dong 何東, *Falishi yiping* 6 (2018), 50–71.

72. Translation after Hulsewé, *Remnants of Ch’in Law*, 117. In addition, slip 8-1677 records that a person was assigned the duty of accompanying Assistant Dai to submit an “Evaluation of Captives” to Xinwulin County 一人與佐帶上虜課新武陵, which shows that Qianling County also owned a certain number of captives. As Chen Wei and his research team suggest, Xinwulin could have been the location of the office (*zhisuo* 治所) of Dongting Commandery. See *Liye Qin jian du jiaoshi (diyi juan)*, 190–91, slip 8-649, n. 3. The office of Dongting Commandery appears to have moved several times during the Qin. See You, “Liye Qin jian suo jian de Dongting jun,” 32–33.

73. This type of account book is also mentioned in two legal cases in the *Zouyan shu*. See Barbieri-Low and Yates, *Law, State, and Society*, 1245–55.

74. Gao Zhenhuan 高震寰, “Cong *Liye Qin jian (yi)* ‘zuo tu bu’ guankui Qin dai xingtu zhidu” 從《里耶秦簡(壹)》「作徒簿」管窺秦代刑徒制度, *Chutu wenxian yanjiu* 12 (2014), 133–40; Jia, “Liye Qin jian suo jian ‘tuli’ shenfen ji jianguan guanshu,”

footnote continued on next page

request through the court of Qianling County when they were in need of *tuli*. Once the work was done, they had to send back all the *tuli* (slips 8-199 and 8-1515). These observations are verified by a full collection of the account books of laborers from the Liye materials published by the excavators in 2013.⁷⁵

Two account books of laborers can give us an idea about the number of *tuli* managed by the Offices of Convict Labor and the Granaries. The following is a selected translation of slip 9-2289 (Figure 3):

Row 1

卅二年十月己酉朔乙亥，司空守囹徒作簿 [Line 1]

In the thirty-second year [of the First Emperor of Qin], on the day Yihai of the tenth month, of which the first day is Jiyou (December 19, 216 BCE); Probationary [Bailiff of] Convict Labor Hun's account book of [the duties performed by] laborers.

城旦司寇一人 [Line 2]

Robber-guards of wall-builders: 1 person

鬼薪廿人 [Line 3]

Gatherers of firewood for the spirits: 20 persons

城旦八十七人 [Line 4]

Wall-builders: 87 persons

仗（丈）城旦九人 [Line 5]

Senior wall-builders: 9 persons

隸臣馵（繫）城旦三人 [Line 6]

73–81; Shen, “*Liye Qin jian (yi) suo jian zuotu guanli wenti tantao*,” 25–27; Maxim Korolkov, “Convict Labor in the Qin Empire: A Preliminary Study of the ‘Registers of Convict Laborers’ from Liye,” in *Jianbo wenxian yu gudaishi: Di er jie chutu wenxian qingnian xuezhe guoji luntan lunwenji* 簡帛文獻與古代史：第二屆出土文獻青年學者國際論壇論文集, ed. Fudan daxue lishixuexi 復旦大學歷史學系 et al. (Shanghai: Zongxi, 2015), 132–56.

75. Hunan sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 湖南省文物考古研究所, “Longshan Liye Qin jian zhi ‘tubu’” 龍山里耶秦簡之「徒簿」, *Chutu wenxian yanjiu* 12 (2013), 101–31.



Figure 3. Slip 9-2289 upper (right) and lower (left) sides. After *Liye Qin jian (er)*, 244.

Bondservants who are detained [with] wall-builders: 3 persons

隸臣居費五人 [Line 7]

Bondservants who are [in residence of government facilities] paying off fines [by labor]: 5 persons

• 凡百廿五人 [Line 8]

In total: 125 persons (the sum of adult male *tuli*)

Row 4

□□【八】人⁷⁶ [Line 1]

... ? persons

□□十三人⁷⁷ [Line 2]

... ? persons

隸妾壘（繫）舂八人 [Line 3]

Bondwomen who are detained [with] grain-pounders: 8 persons

隸妾居費十一人 [Line 4]

Bondwomen who are [in residence of government facilities] paying off fines [by labor]: 11 persons

受倉隸妾七人 [Line 5]

Bondwomen received from the Granaries: 7 persons

• 凡八十七人 [Line 6]

In total: 87 persons (the sum of adult female *tuli*)

76. *Liye Qin jiandu jiaoshi (dier juan)*, 460, slip 9-2289, n. 26, suggests that the two untranscribed characters should be *baican* 白粲 (sifters of white grain).

77. *Liye Qin jiandu jiaoshi (dier juan)*, 460, slip 9-2289, n. 27, suggests that the two untranscribed characters should be *chong wu* 舂五. The whole sentence should be read as “grain-pounders: 53 persons.”

Row 7

- 小城旦九人 [Line 1]

Underage wall-builders: 9 persons (the sum of underage wall-builders)

- 小春五人 [Line 6]

Underage grain-pounders: 5 persons (the sum of underage grain-pounders)

Bailiff of Convict Labor Hun 阡 submitted the account book to Qianling County on December 19, 216 BCE. The total number of *tuli* held by the Office of Convict Labor at the moment amounts to 226 persons. It is worth mentioning that Rows 1 and 4 record the numbers of bondservants and bondwomen who were originally from the Office of the Granaries but were now working at the Office of Convict Labor. Of these, seven bondwomen were received from the Office of the Granaries. Besides, bondservants and bondwomen who were charged with fines (*zi* 贖) or sentenced to serve an additional term of wall-builders or grain-pounders (*xi chengdan* 繫城旦 or *xi chong* 繫春) both had to work at the Office of Convict Labor.

Slip [10-1170]⁷⁸ is a summary (*zui* 取) for the *ji* 積 (lit. cumulative) number of *tuli* held by the Office of the Granaries in a month:

Row 1

■ 卅四年十二月倉徒簿（簿）取 [Line 1]

Summary for the account books of [the Office of] the Granaries' laborers in the twelfth month of the thirty-fourth year (213 BCE)

■ 大隸臣積九百九十人 [Line 2]

Adult bondservants accumulated: 990 persons

■ 小隸臣積五百一十人 [Line 3]

Underage bondservants accumulated: 510 persons

■ 大隸妾積二千八百七十六 [Line 4]

Adult bondwomen accumulated: 2,876 persons

78. *Liye Qin jian bowuguan cang Qin jian*, 197–98.

■ 凡積四千三百七十六 [Line 5]

In total accumulated: 4,376 persons

Of these 1,085 bondservants and bondwomen from the Office of the Granaries were working in the Office of Convict Labor:

Row 3

男百五十人居費司空 [Line 1]

150 men are [in residence of government facilities] paying off fines [by labor] at the [Office of] Convict Labor

男九十人（繫）城旦 [Line 2]

90 men are detained [with] wall-builders

Row 4

男卅人付司空 [Line 1]

30 men are given to the [Office of] Convict Labor

女百卅五人（繫）舂 [Line 6]

145 women are detained [with] grain-pounders

女三百六十人付司空 [Line 7]

360 women are given to the [Office of] Convict Labor

女三百一十人居費司空 [Line 8]

310 women are [in residence of government facilities] paying off fines [by labor] at the [Office of] Convict Labor

Compared to the numbers recorded in slip 9-2289, these numbers are apparently too large at any one time (Table 2). Current studies suggest that the *ji* numbers in slip [10-1170] are not the numbers of *tuli* held at the Office of the Granaries in the twelfth month of the thirty-fourth year. Rather, they are possibly indicative of the number of *tuli* multiplied by the number of days of the month.⁷⁹ At any rate, these two account

79. See Tong Chun Fung, “Liye Qin jian suo shi Qin dai de ‘jianhu’ yu ‘jihu’: jian lun Qin dai Qianling xian de hushu” 里耶秦簡所示秦代的「見戶」與「積戶」——兼論秦代遷陵縣的戶數, *Jianbo wang* (www.bsm.org.cn/show_article.php?id=1987), accessed

footnote continued on next page

Table 2. Comparison of the numbers of bondservants and bondwomen working at the Offices of Convict Labor as seen in slips 9-2289 and [10-1170]

Types of laborers	9-2289	[10-1170]
Bondservants detained with wall-builders at the Office of Convict Labor	3 persons	90 persons
Bondwomen detained with grain-pounders at the Office of Convict Labor	8 persons	145 persons
Bondservants paying off fines at the Office of Convict Labor	5 persons	150 persons
Bondwomen paying off fines at the Office of Convict Labor	8 persons	310 persons
Bondservants given to the Office of Convict Labor	0 persons	30 persons
Bondwomen given to the Office of Convict Labor	7 persons	360 persons

books show that although all the bondservants and bondwomen were supposed to work at the Office of the Granaries, when they were charged with fines and sentenced to serve an additional term, they would have to work at the Office of Convict Labor. This may suggest that the tasks performed by *tuli* in the Office of Convict Labor were harsher than those in the Office of the Granaries. Otherwise, it would seem meaningless to have those bondservants and bondwomen with additional punishment transferred to the Office of Convict Labor.⁸⁰

The records in the account books of the laborers can give us some hints of what the charge of “not ordering [laborers] to cultivate land” (*fu ling tian* 弗令田) means. As seen in slip 9-2289 above, the *tuli* of the Office of Convict Labor were categorized into four groups. **1) 125 adult male *tuli*** (including robber-guards of wall-builders, gatherers of firewood for the spirits, wall-builders, senior wall-builders, bondservants who were detained with wall-builders and who were paying off fines); **2) 87 adult female *tuli*** (including

on February 2, 2018; Wang Wei 王偉 and Sun Zhaohua 孫兆華, “‘Jihu’ yu ‘jianhu’: Liye Qin jian suo jian Qianling bianhu shuliang” 「積戶」與「見戶」：里耶秦簡所見遷陵編戶數量, *Sichuan wenwu* 2 (2014), 64; Naomi Suzuki 鈴木直美, “Riya Shin kan ni mieru ‘mi to’ to ‘seki to’: Shin dai Sen-ryō kenka ni okeru kosū no tegakari to shite” 里耶秦簡にみえる「見戶」と「積戶」—秦代遷陵県下における戸数の手がかりとして—, *Meidai Ajia shi ronshu* 明大アジア史論集 18 (March 2014), 1–13; Gao Zhenhuan, *Cong laodongli yunyong jiaodu kan Qin Han xingtu guanli zhidu de fazhan* 從勞動力運用角度看秦漢刑徒管理制度的發展 (Ph.D. dissertation, National Taiwan University, 2017), 78–79.

80. The tasks performed by the laborers in the Office of Convict Labor were more focused on collecting and manufacturing raw materials and repairing government properties, which are considered harsher than those in the Office of the Granaries. See Gao, *Cong laodongli yunyong jiaodu kan Qin Han xingtu guanli zhidu de fazhan*, 67.

sifters of white grain, grain-pounders, bondwomen who were detained with grain-pounders and who were paying off fines, and bondwomen received from the Granaries); 3) **9 underage wall-builders**; and 4) **5 underage grain-pounders**. In each category, a significant number of *tuli* was given to the Office of the Agricultural Fields:

1) 125 adult male *tuli*

Row 2

廿三人付田官 [Line 5]

23 persons are given to [the Office of] the Agricultural Fields

2) 87 adult female *tuli*

Row 4

廿四人付田官 [Line 9]

24 persons are given to [the Office of] the Agricultural Fields

3) 9 underage wall-builders

Row 7

六人付田官 [Line 3]

6 persons are given to [the Office of] the Agricultural Fields

4) 5 underage grain-pounders

Row 7

其三人付田官 [Line 7]

Of which 3 persons are given to [the Office of] the Agricultural Fields

The number of the *tuli* given to the Office of the Agricultural Fields amounts to 56 persons, which is about 25 percent of the total number of *tuli* held by the Office of Convict Labor at the time. Slip 8-1566 confirms that the major labor force of agricultural production in Qianling was from the Office of Convict Labor. The verso side of the slip lists the types of laborers working in the Office of the Agricultural Fields in 217 BCE, which is the year right after Qianling County began to cultivate its fields:

Recto side

卅年六月丁亥朔甲辰，田官守敬敢言之：「疏書日食牘北（背）上」
[line 1]

In the thirtieth year [of the First Emperor of Qin], on the day Jiashen of the sixth month, of which the first day is Dinghai (July 26, 217 BCE), Probationary [Bailiff of the Office of the] Agricultural Fields ventures to state that “the [details of those who received] daily rations are listed on the back side [of this tablet].”

敢言之 [line 2]

I venture to state it.

Verso side

Row 1

城旦、鬼薪十八人 [Line 1]

Wall-builders and gatherers of firewood for the spirits: 18 persons

小城旦十人 [Line 2]

Underage wall-builders: 10 persons

舂廿二人 [Line 3]

Grain-pounders: 22 persons

Row 2

小舂三人 [Line 1]

Underage grain-pounders: 3 persons

隸妾居費三人 [Line 2]

Bondwomen who are [in residence of government facilities] paying off fines [by labor]: 3 persons

戊申，水下五刻，佐王以來/尚半 逐手 [Line 3]

On the day Wushen (July 30), [when] the water reached the fifth mark of a clepsydra, Assistant Ren arrived [with the document]. Shang split [the sealed document]. Zhu handled [the document].

The Office of Convict Labor held all these 56 laborers. The Office of the Granaries did provide laborers for the Office of the Agricultural Fields,⁸¹ but the number appears to be fewer than that from the Office of Convict Labor. Slip [10-1170] records that the Office of the Granaries sent 510 bondwomen to the Office of the Agricultural Fields in a month, but this is the *ji* (lit. cumulative) number. If we divide it by the number of days in that month, there were only 17 bondwomen sent to the Office of the Agricultural Fields.⁸²

More importantly, it appears to be a regular practice that a significant number of laborers held by the Office of the Granaries were exempt from the agricultural duties. Slip 8-130+8-190+8-193 states that “those laborer-servants who should work as servants or cooks for the officials all belonged to [the Office of] the Granaries” (諸徒隸當為吏僕養者皆屬倉).⁸³ According to the ordinance quoted in the multi-slip manuscript, Qianling County was not allowed to engage laborers who had already been assigned to the tasks of working as servants (*pu* 僕) and cooks (*yang* 養) for the officials in agricultural production.

In addition, a Shuihudi Qin law shows that skilled bondservants and bondwomen could become artisans (*gong* 工).⁸⁴ Slips 8-1490+8-1518 and 8-1560 reveal that the Office of the Granaries could provide runners (*zou* 走) for the scribe director at the court. Slip 9-1408+9-2288 records a case that indicates that the Office of Convict Labor could not provide skilled laborers for the Office of the Armory (*ku* 庫) for making a weaving machine (*zu yong ji* 組用機) and the bailiff of the Armory had to request the laborers from the Office of the Granaries through the court. Notably, the artisans, runners, and weavers were all exempt from agricultural work according to the ordinance quoted in the multi-slip manuscript.

Given the evidence presented above, it is safe to argue that the labor force of agricultural production in Qianling County relied mainly on the labor pool held by the Office of Convict Labor. Slip 9-2289 notes that Bailiff of Convict Labor Hun submitted the account book in 216 BCE, which was the seventh year since the establishment of the Qianling County and the third year that Qianling began to cultivate its land. Hun sent 56 laborers,

81. It is evident in a Shuihudi Qin statute that bondservants who were engaged in agricultural production (*lichen tianzhe* 隸臣田者) were allowed to receive grain ration from the government. See *Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian*, 32.

82. See *Liye Qin jian bowuguan cang Qin jian*, 198. See also Li and Jin, “Liye Qin jian zhong de ‘tianguan’ yu ‘gongtain’,” 128.

83. As stated in the “Statutes on the Granaries” (*cang liu* 倉律) in the Yuelu Academy’s collection, only the bondservants were allowed to be servants and cooks for the officials. This corresponds to the record in slip [10-1170] in which only the bondservants were assigned to the task of being cooks for the officials. See *Liye Qin jian bowuguan cang Qin jian*, 197.

84. *Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian*, 46.

which is about a quarter of the laborers held by his office at the time, to the Office of the Agricultural Fields. Bailiff of Convict Labor Yan and the others were also supposed to provide laborers for the Office of the Agricultural Fields to perform agricultural tasks between 221 and 219 BCE—as Hun did in 216 BCE. However, they only started to do this in 218 BCE.

Conclusion

This article has been a contextualized study of a multi-slip administrative document on the Qin resource management in a newly conquered area. The document sheds new light not only on the actual practice of the Qin written communications and management of laborers, but also on the Qin general strategy of managing human resources. The ordinance quoted by Governor Li of Dongting in the document stipulates that “one must not order officials’ servants and cooks, runners, artisans, weavers, office door guards, carvers, and those who are employed on urgent matters to engage in cultivation.” Apparently, the intention of this ordinance was to make sure that the laborers would not be overwhelmed with multiple tasks. Closer attention should be paid to those skilled laborers, such as artisans and weavers, as they were always exempt from harsher work. A Shuihudi Qin law states, “When bondservants have skills and could be made artisans, they must not be made servants or cooks of other people.”⁸⁵ The Qin were well aware of the significance of putting these laborers in a position that could maximize their productivity.

Although the Qin always emphasized the priority of employing resources in agricultural production, they did not neglect the significance of other types of production. The idea about maintaining the balance between human and land resources in the *Book of Lord Shang* is an ideological representation of the Qin strategy for managing resources. In practice, the Qin had to maintain this balance through a categorization process of laborers. In order to determine the tasks to be assigned to each labor unit, this process involved not only the evaluation of the skills required for each task, but also the onerousness of the task. An order from the Chief Prosecutor (*yushi* [dāfu] lǐng 御史[大夫]令) seen in slip 8-1514 indicates that the Qin put much effort into categorizing laborers according to the difficulty of the tasks they performed:

各第(第)官徒丁【糶】⁸⁶ ... (劇)者為甲，次為乙，次為丙，各以其事(劇)易次之。

85. *Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian*, 46.

86. I follow Chen Wei and his team who gloss the term *dīnglín* 丁糶 as *dīnglǐng* 丁齡. See *Liye Qin jian du jiaoshi (diyì juan)*, 342.

Rank each of those official laborers who reached adulthood ... those capable of taking the most onerous tasks as *jia*, the next as *yi*, and the next as *bing*. Range each of those according to the difficulty and the easiness of their tasks.⁸⁷

By doing so, the Qin government could make full use of human resources by assigning each of the labor units to a position that would allow it to reach its highest productivity.

However, in reality, the Qin government always encountered resistance in the process, especially during the early stages of its occupation of newly conquered land. As the document examined in this article reveals, the resistance often came from the inside: the officials who were familiar with the daily routine in the administrative system.⁸⁸ Bailiff of Convict Labor Yan and others failed to follow the instruction on the use of laborers in agricultural production that was clearly stated in the ordinance. The dereliction of duty on their part wasted both the usable human and land resources, which is intolerable from the perspective of a ruler. To minimize the harmfulness of such resistance, the Qin heavily relied upon a system of supervision and punishment. I argue that the remarkable increase of the number of opened-up fields in the year following that the passing of the Governor of Dongting's instruction of punishment down to Qianling might suggest the effectiveness of this system, which might, in turn, explain why the Qin would be inclined to rely on it for the operation of the state.⁸⁹

87. The same order is also quoted in slip 9-699+9-902 in which the character *ling* 令 is written as *shu* 書, suggesting that this was not an ordinance but just an order from the Chief Prosecutor.

88. For a discussion of different forms of resistance that the state power might have encountered during the Qin and Han periods, see Barbieri-Low and Yates, *Law, State, and Society*, 216–19.

89. However, the famous story about Chen Sheng's 陳勝 rebellion during the late Qin period reminds us that the excessive reliance on such a system may have finally led to the collapse of the Qin Empire. See *Shi ji* 48.1949–50.

Appendix: Bailiffs of Convict Labor of Qianling County mentioned in the Liye materials from 221 to 210 BCE

Reigns	Years (BCE)	Months ⁹⁰	Names	Probationary ⁹¹	Slip nos.
First Emperor	26th (221)	3rd	De 得	No	8-133
		8th	Jiu 繆	Yes	8-135
	27th (220)	11th	Chāng 昌	No	8-1665
	28th (219)	6th	Zhang 長	No	[7-304], ⁹² 8-985
	29th (218)	12th	Se 色	No	8-1524
		2nd	Se 色	No	9-283
	30th (217)	4th	Wen 文	Yes	8-44
		5th	Chāng 敞	Yes	8-666+8-2006
		6th	Zi 茲	Yes	8-1647
	31st (216)	7th	Zi 茲	Yes	9-1078
		1st	Zeng 增	Yes	8-212+8-426+8-1632, 8-474+8-2075
		7th	□ ?	Yes	8-648
8th		Ang 印	No	9-465+9-1412	
9th		Se 色	No	[11-249] ⁹³	

(Continued)

90. The tenth month was the first month of each year during the Qin and early Han periods. Note that this table does not convert all the months from Chinese lunar to Western calendars. For the conversions, see Xu, *Xi Zhou (gonghe) zhi Xi Han lipu*, 1241–66.

91. For the title *shou sefu* 守畜夫 (Probationary Bailiff), see *Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian*, 79, n. 3.

92. See *Liye Qin jian bowuguan cang Qin jian*, 164.

93. See *Liye Qin jian bowuguan cang Qin jian*, 105.

Reigns	Years (BCE)	Months	Names	Probationary	Slip nos.
	32nd (215)	Latter 9th ⁹⁴	Se 色	No	9-630+815
		10th	Hun 鬲	Yes	9-2289
		1st	Se 色	No	8-478
		7th	Zi 茲	No ⁹⁵	9-590
	33rd (214)	8th	Zi 茲	Yes	9-323
		3rd	Se 色	No	8-1135
		5th	Zui 冓	Yes	9-2314
		7th	Yi 阨	Yes	9-816 ⁹⁶
	34th (213)	12th	Shen 沈	Yes	9-2314
		8th	Zi 茲	Yes	8-1635
		Latter 9th	Cuo 瘞	Yes	8-838+9-68
	Second Emperor	35th (212)	8th	Ju 俱	Yes
1st (210)		6th	Ba 罷	Yes	9-1146+9-1684

94. The latter ninth month was an intercalary month (*runyue* 閏月) in the Qin calendar.

95. There could be a missing character *shou* 守 after the title *sikong* 司空. It is unlikely that Zi had been suddenly demoted to Probationary Bailiff of Convict Labor in one month.

96. The year on this slip is not clear. *Liye Qin jiandu jiaoshi* (*dier juan*), 210, slip 9-816, n. 1, suggests that it was in the thirty-third year of the First Emperor.

秦代的人力資源管理：
從湖南里耶遺址出土的一份冊書說起

馬增榮

提要

里耶出土的秦代文書檔案極大地重塑我們對秦代歷史的認識。本文旨在深入討論該遺址出土一份關於「新地」人力資源管理的冊書。該份冊書不但如實反映了秦代文書的多重結構，而且透露了秦在統一初期在資源管理上遇到的困難。從這份冊書所見，遷陵縣的負責官員未有命令當時的主要勞動力——徒隸——投入耕種活動。然而，這顯然有違秦的人力資源管理策略。為了把其損害減至最低，秦依靠監察和懲罰作為兩種並行不悖的手段。結合其他秦代史料，本文將仔細討論此份冊書，以及復原其歷史脈絡。

Keywords: Qin, Liye, Qianling County, *tuli*, resource management, multi-slip manuscript

秦, 里耶, 遷陵縣, 徒隸, 資源管理, 冊書