Journal of Chinese Studies
No. 73 (July 2021)

Male Tears in Song China (960–1279)

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It may slightly unsettle a modern Western mind to think of crying as a public event, but the display of tears was prominent in social activities prior to the twentieth century in numerous regions of the world.[1] In medieval China, Muslim Iberia,[2] and early modern France,[3] for example, tears were often desirable and deeply meaningful. And many public weepers in the pre-twentieth-century world were men, such as a twelfth-century English bishop,[4] a thirteenth-century Italian nobleman,[5] and Denis Diderot (1713–1784).[6] A

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1 Take the Anglo-American world for example. Historians have discovered that strong wariness of intense emotional display (e.g., crying) is mainly a twentieth-century phenomenon and often does not apply to other periods. The United States in the 1920s witnessed a "growing aversion to emotional intensity," see Peter N. Stearns, *American Cool: Constructing a Twentieth-Century Emotional Style* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), p. 11. In Britain, according to Thomas Dixon, strong disapproval of tears is mainly a post-1950s phenomenon. Dixon, *Weeping Britannia: Portrait of a Nation in Tears* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 69.

2 See Linda G. Jones, "'He Cried and Made Others Cry': Crying as a Sign of Pietistic Authenticity or Deception in Medieval Islamic Preaching," in Elina Gertsman, ed., *Crying in the Middle Ages: Tears of History* (New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 102–35.

3 See Anne Vincent-Buffault, *The History of Tears: Sensibility and Sentimentality in France* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991).

4 See Katherine Harvey, "Episcopal Emotions: Tears in the Life of the Medieval Bishop," *Historical Research* 87.238 (2014): 591–610.

5 See Carol Lansing, *Passion and Order: Restraint of Grief in the Medieval Italian Communes* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).

6 Vincent-Buffault, *The History of Tears*, esp. pp. 1–76.

"venerated excretion,"[7] tears demonstrated values shaped by different cultures and performed functions specific to varied societies.

In this article, I offer a social history of tears embedded in the circumstances specific to Song China. Particularly, I focus on the phenomenon of elite male lachrymation, a key social action operative in a wide range of contexts. Song men wept when they were performing official duties, discussing policies, and fighting on the battleground, among other activities essential to the running of the regime. In the accounts narrated by elite men themselves, male tears and critical socio-political issues closely correlated and signified one another. A social history of male tears in the Song is, thus, simultaneously a history of the essentials of Song politics through the lens of tears.

It was in this particular cultural context that Song men wept in abundance. They did not simply lapse into tears, nor were they particularly apologetic.[8] Instead of participating as secondary actors, Song men claimed ownership of lachrymation as a male prerogative which addressed interests and goals unique to the male gender and elite status. By placing gender at the centre of my analysis, I argue that lachrymation facilitated the male elite in exercising their masculinity by lubricating internal power negotiations, tightening the structure of political dominion, and pronouncing moral strength.

I. The Rise of Tears in the Song

The Song period marks an early high point of lachrymosity in Chinese history, as evident in the numerous extant representations of tears.[9] Compared to the

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[7] Dixon, *Weeping Britannia*, p. 8.

[8] In a number of premodern European contexts, men cried with a simultaneous sense of uneasiness. For example, Carol Lansing discusses how medieval Italian scholars gradually associated grieving tears with womanly weaknesses. See Lansing, *Passion and Order*, esp. pp. 187–202. This type of self-consciousness, as I will show in this article, barely bothered Song men due to their successful appropriation of lachrymation as a male privilege.

[9] Lachrymation in this article corresponds with what multiple Chinese terms stood for, most notably, "wailing" (*ku* 哭) and "weeping" (*qi* 泣). When used in ways deliberately distinguished from each other, *ku* referred to a more public action (e.g., at rituals) with an emphasis on the acoustic effect, and *qi* described a private, quiet release of tears. For

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bygone Tang (618–907) or any other previous dynasty, the Song produced substantially more writings in varied genres on the topic of crying. Across the Song textual world, tears were profuse and in plain sight. As part of a continued practice since antiquity, tears were referenced in official histories, personal letters, and memorials, genres that bore essential social functions in the Song world. Multiple genres featured tears as a central theme, such as ritual commentaries, sacrificial litanies (*jiwen* 祭文), funerary writings (including *muzhiming* 墓誌銘 and *shendaobei* 神道碑), and *biji* 筆記 (notebooks).[10] Though all of these

(Note 9—*Continued*)

a detailed investigation of the two terms in classical texts, see Christoph Harbsmeier, "Weeping and Wailing in Ancient China," in Halvor Eifring, ed., *Minds and Mentalities in Traditional Chinese Literature* (Beijing: Culture and Art Publishing House, 1999), pp. 317–422. However, the distinction between *ku* and *qi* should not be overstated in the Song period because they were highly transposable in social narratives on lachrymation, often including both the sound and release of the bodily fluid.

Another reason for de-emphasizing the distinction is methodological. I perceive ritual wailing and emotional crying in social contexts on a continuum rather than as categorically distinct entities. It may be tempting to distinguish the two with the assumption that ritual wailing is deprived of an emotive foundation (i.e., insincere). Scholars from multiple disciplines have refuted this simplified demarcation. For example, "constructionist" psychologists consider the emergence of emotions as constructs of culture/concepts and/or brain/body. See Lisa Feldman Barrett, *How Emotions Are Made: The Secret Life of the Brain* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017), p. 35. That is, one cannot separate a culturally specific gesture of an emotion from the actual experience of that emotion. For Western historians' reflections on this point, see William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. xii; and Christopher Swift, "A Penitent Prepares: Affect, Contrition, and Tears," in Gertsman, ed., *Crying in the Middle Ages*, p. 80. In her comparison of Chinese and Western modes of expressing emotions, Haiyan Lee characterizes the relation between a ritual action and the emotion it buoyed as presentational instead of representational, thus ruling out sincerity as a proper category in analysing emotions at premodern Chinese rituals. See Lee, "Chinese Feelings: Notes on a Ritual Theory of Emotion," *The Wenshan Review of Literature and Culture* 9.2 (Jun. 2016): 1–37.

[10] To conduct this study as a project of the history of emotions, I focus on genres less explicitly literary—what I call functional texts—rather than on poetry with its distinctive tradition of lauding emotions. This principle also applies to the survey I mention next in the main text.

genres had earlier origins, they experienced unprecedented growth in the Song and, thus, presented tears more frequently and in greater detail.[11] A numerical comparison helps put the increase of tears in perspective. A survey of 392 Song *biji* texts yields 1,287 accounts of crying, each an independent narrative.[12] In contrast, in the entire pre-Song archive, lachrymose narratives number in the hundreds. That is, a single genre in the Song produced a quantity greater than the total of all previous accounts.

The rise of tears in the Song is not merely reflected in the greater number of writings, as the quantitative growth could arguably be the natural outcome of the general expansion of the Song archive. More importantly, the Song witnessed a qualitative change, i.e., a prominent recognition of crying as an important social activity. The massive compendium, *Imperial Collectanea of the Taiping [Xingguo] Era* (*Taiping yulan* 太平御覽, hereafter *Taiping Collectanea*), an encyclopedic effort to catalogue the universe, devoted unprecedented space to assembling old writings on tears. Lachrymation occasionally appeared in Tang encyclopedias as a single entry, e.g., under the rubric "wailing" (*ku* 哭), and the compilers often chose to collect rules for crying in mourning rituals or literary prose describing lachrymation.[13] Not only did the compilers of the

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[11] On the growth of *biji* and funeral writings in the Song, see, respectively, Hilde de Weerdt, *Information, Territory, and Networks: The Crisis and Maintenance of Empire in Song China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2016), p. 284; and Patricia B. Ebrey, Ping Yao, and Cong Ellen Zhang, "Introduction," in idem, *Chinese Funerary Biographies: An Anthology of Remembered Lives* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2019), pp. 12–17.

[12] I conducted the survey on the basis of Zhu Yi'an 朱易安, Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮, and Zhou Changlin 周常林, eds., *Quan Song biji* 全宋筆記, sers. 1–10 (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 2003–2018) and included only narratives in the result (that is, no laconic references to lachrymation absent informative contexts). The survey was a combination of digital search and close reading. I searched the corpus of texts by eight keywords, namely *ku*, *qi*, *lei* 淚, *ti* 涕, *ti* 啼, *hao* 號, *geng* 哽, and *ye* 噎, and identified a relatively small pool of data, which I narrowed down to the final selection by close reading.

[13] For example, *Baishi liutie shilei ji* 白氏六帖事類集, an encyclopedia compiled by Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846), had one section on tears under the title *ku*. In *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚, a Tang compendium, tears appeared in the entry "*qi.*" See Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 (557–641), comp., *Yiwen leiju* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1965), *juan* 35, section 19; and Bai Juyi, comp., *Baishi liutie shilei ji* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1987), *juan* 19, section 21.

Taiping Collectanea include as many as six terms representing lachrymation, such as "wailing," "weeping" (*qi* 泣), and "bawling" (*ti* 啼), among others, they also shifted the focus to narratives on crying in social contexts.[14] From this point onward, tears became a highly visible category in Song cultural taxonomies, and readers appreciated crying as a versatile behaviour richer in social relevance than a mourning routine or a literary trope. This preference also motivated Song authors to produce contemporary social narratives on tears.

II. Tears as a Historical Subject

Before delving into Song tears, let me first address a historiographical question modern readers may be tempted to ask: did those men really cry or was it literary hyperbole?[15] This question calls for a balanced method of approaching historical reality, alert to the pitfalls of linguistic naïveté or extreme postmodernism.

To fulfil this goal, I propose to foreground the ontological complexity of tears and recognize them as an aggregate of distinctive items: empirical reality, general textual reality, and genre-specific textual reality. Song men shed tears—a empirical fact. Song men also wrote about tears—a textual reality. And some genres provide more abundant and elaborate records of tears—a textual reality with traits specific to the genre.

All three realities bear on the same historical world and remain constantly connected. Historians inevitably approach empirical reality through textual representation, hence the link between the first two. To be sure, textual representation does not simply duplicate a fact, but representations do *relate* to facts. An account of a crying man should be *about* something in empirical reality.[16]

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[14] See Li Fang 李昉 (925–996), et al. comp., *Taiping yulan* (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1968), *juan* 387, 487, and 488. For a detailed analysis of lachrymation in the *Taiping Collectanea*, including differences among these terms, see Ya Zuo, "Collecting Tears: Lachrymation and Emotions in the *Taiping Collectanea*," forthcoming.

[15] Indeed, scholars should ask these questions for every historical subject, not just ones foreign to modern tastes.

[16] For "aboutness" between historical representation and the represented, see Frank Ankersmit, *Meaning, Truth, and Reference in Historical Representation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), pp. 79–81.

Textual representation varies and presents a spectrum of "aboutness" bearing on empirical reality, hence the necessity of considering a genre-specific reality. An account of tears could be a straightforward report of a lachrymose event, an empirically verifiable description. An author, for instance, witnessed an official crying at the emperor's death and recorded it. Or the account could be a recurrent motif in certain narrative structures. For example, in three different accounts, officials A, B, and C wailed upon hearing news of the emperor's death; in other words, if a loyal official was expected to cry at an imperial death, the author would present such a detail. A reference to tears could also be a *topos*, something even more conventional than a motif.[17] For instance, official D wrote to the emperor to show appreciation for his promotion, and he began the letter by describing his "tears streaming down" (*ti ling* 涕零).[18] *Ti ling* was the conventional language used to express strong gratitude (especially to a person of authority), and D could use the phrase without having had cried.

Although in the latter two cases the textual representation of tears does not warrant a mirroring correspondence in experience, these cases pertain to empirical reality in a different way. They speak squarely to an ease of Song authors in writing about tears and their general acceptance of lachrymose gestures in linguistic representations of certain emotions. These references, even if completely hyperbolic, would not happen with the same frequency in a culture where male tears invited nothing but suspicion and censure. Their wide presence likely emerged from a close proximity to actual historical experience, namely, that Song men indeed cried in abundance.

In this article, I focus on the *biji*; therefore, the textual reality of crying particular to this genre is central to my inquiry. I make this choice mainly because *biji* best documented crying as a social activity. Compared to other writings with crying as a salient theme, e.g., sacrificial litanies and ritual commentaries, *biji* narrated crying at length instead of merely invoking relevant vocabularies. They

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[17] I follow Barbara H. Rosenwein in my discussion of the relationship between reality and *topoi*. See Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), pp. 28–29.

[18] *Song Da zhaoling ji* 宋大詔令集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), *juan* 44, p. 230. This is one among a myriad of examples.

also set their stories in various social contexts beyond death and mourning. The diverse, elaborate accounts in *biji* illuminated the emotions that caused tears by detailing the origin, process, and effects of a lachrymose event.

To be sure, the *biji* genre is known for its flexibility, which renders it prone to hyperbole. To maximize the value of *biji* in this study, I conduct my analysis constantly alert to the fusion of the three levels of reality, and I maintain a two-pronged approach which analyses the content of crying narratives as well as the representational filters their authors might apply. I aim to present a holistic picture that combines acts, rhetoric, and beliefs, all legitimate parts of history. The sources inevitably shift on a scale between reportage and *topoi*, and my consistent goal is to discern how diverse representations cohere with one another in the same historical moment, and how they jointly inform us of shared emotional norms characteristic of the time.[19] In a specific community at a precise historical moment, its members must have shared "crying rules" when they engaged lachrymation in action or in words. My analytical strategy assumes that it is neither possible nor productive for a modern reader to ascertain whether each case is straight fact or textual fact. Fixation on a simple demarcation is an impoverished way to write history, as it either completely invalidates the concept of historical reality, or it rules out the varied degrees of "aboutness" embedded in textual representation.

III. Male Tears, Masculine Tears

In this article I focus on male tears because crying men were highly visible in Song texts, and also because these men indeed perceived lachrymation as a gendered experience of being men. The majority of the Song archive on lachrymation was about men and written by men. The largest extant Song

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[19] In the past two decades, exploration of the emotional norms, or "feeling rules," of a community has been a central line of inquiry in the history of emotions. For the pioneering discussion of "feeling rules," see Arlie R. Hochschild, "Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure," *American Journal of Sociology* 85.3 (Nov. 1979): 551–75. For the most representative conceptualizations, see William M. Reddy's "emotional regime," in idem, *The Navigation of Feeling*, p. 129; and Barbara H. Rosenwein's "emotional community," in idem, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, esp. p. 24.

biji, Record of the Listener (*Yijian zhi* 夷堅志), nicely showcases the salience of male tears. The author Hong Mai 洪邁 (1123–1202), a male scholar-official, recorded 200 incidences of crying, 84 of them (42%) by men. In comparison, women accounted for 25% of the instances of tears, and children 4%.[20]

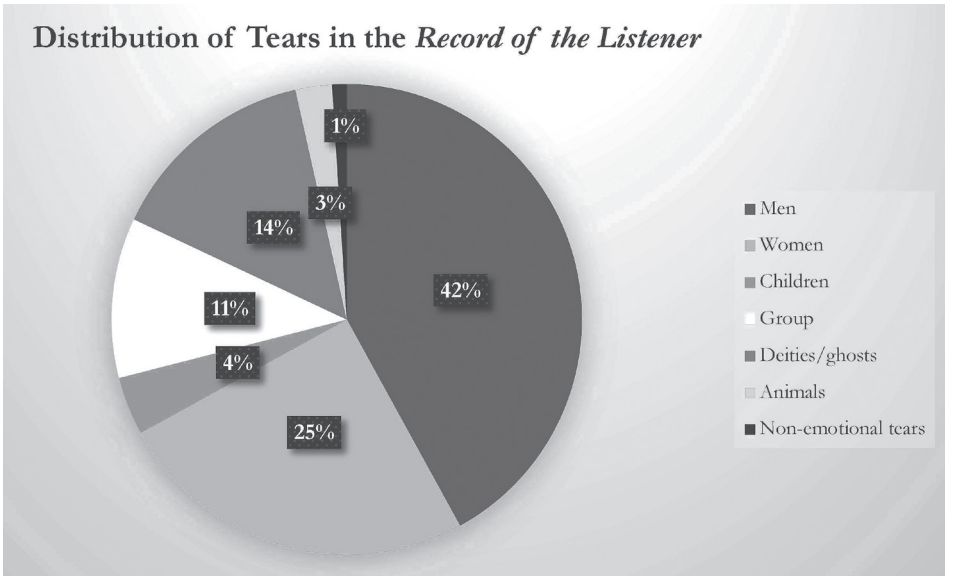

Fig. 1. Distribution of Tears in the *Record of the Listener*. Based on Hong Mai, *Yijian zhi*, in Zhu, Fu, and Zhou, eds., *Quan Song biji*, ser. 9, vols. 3–7.

Certainly, this textual phenomenon does not prove that men, in fact, cried more often than women. The predominance of crying men directly reflects the gender imbalance in literary representation as well as a gendered appropriation by men of the lachrymose behaviour, a point I will elaborate next.

The visibility of male tears was also associated with a particular empirical practice, the death rituals (*sang li* 喪禮) and their elaborate "crying decorum."[21]

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[20] The data and the following table are based on a survey of the *Record of the Listener* following the methods I explicate in note 12.

[21] The death rituals originated in the classics, e.g., *Liji* 禮記, and experienced a renaissance in the Song when numerous scholars and the state devoted efforts to updating them for contemporaneous needs. For a comprehensive study of this phenomenon, see Mihwa

(*Continued on next page*)

According to ritual protocols, Song men were obligated to cry in certain contexts, with some men (e.g., the household head) expected to lead in wailing, crying earlier and more often than female members of the family.[22] The leading role men took in ritual wailing was not unconventional, as rituals of most kinds remained a male enterprise where women participated in supplementary roles (if they participated at all). Mourning rituals provided an empirical context where the sight of men wailing was commonplace and an authoritative framework which defined tears in accordance with male roles and power.

It should be evident from the example of death rituals that tears associated with men carried distinctive positive values. Indeed, I argue that male lachrymation was a gendered experience denoting masculinity. Masculinity, as Mark

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(Note 21—*Continued*)

Choi, *Death Rituals and Politics in Northern Song China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017). For some Song examples of the crying decorum, see programmes of death rituals stipulated by Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086) and Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), where specific wailing rules were widely present from section to section. See Sima Guang, *Sima shi shuyi* 司馬氏書儀, in *Congshu jicheng chubian* 叢書集成初編, vol. 1040 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1935–1940), *juan* 5–10; and Zhu Xi, *Yili jingzhuan tongjie* 儀禮經傳通解, in vols. 2–5 of *Zhuzi quanshu* 朱子全書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe; Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 2002).

[22] For example, see Sima Guang, *Sima shi shuyi*, *juan* 5–8, and Zheng Juzhong 鄭居中 (1059–1123), *Zhenghe wu li xin yi* 政和五禮新儀, in vol. 647 of *Jingyin Wenyuange Siku quanshu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書 (Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1983–1986), *juan* 215–20.

For clarification, wailing (*ku*) in mourning rituals was different from *ku sang* 哭喪 (funeral laments), a popular phenomenon in late imperial and modern times. *Ku sang*, indeed, was led by women singers. See Elizabeth L. Johnson, "Singing of Separation, Lamenting Loss: Hakka Women's Expressions of Separation and Reunion," in Charles Stafford, ed., *Living with Separation in China: Anthropological Accounts* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), pp. 27–51; and Anne E. McLaren, "Lamenting the Dead: Women's Performance of Grief in Late Imperial China," in Grace S. Fong, and Ellen Widmer, eds., *The Inner Quarters and Beyond: Women Writers from Ming through Qing* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 49–77. Regular wailing was led by men, as clearly stipulated in ritual texts from antiquity through the Song; this earlier period lacks sufficient textual evidence to ascertain the existence of *ku sang*.

Stevenson adroitly puts, is "men being men in the knowledge that they are doing well or better at what other men aspire to do."[23] The version of masculinity I currently discuss is that of elite men in the Song, the literati who replaced the aristocracy to become a new elite competing for a fine education rather than a pedigree. They were simultaneously scholars who defined the cultural norms of the times and statesmen with dominant political power. The literati's masculinity was a system which configured social practices to confer their version of manhood, and lachrymation was one among these practices.

Two general characteristics are noteworthy of this model of masculinity and the male tears it prescribed. The first characteristic concerns power. Masculinities in a certain society are plural and hierarchical, and the manhood of those who hold power and pose as the standard of the society stands out as the so-called hegemonic masculinity.[24] The literati exercised enormous sociopolitical clout over other Song subjects, including women and "lesser" men, and their self-image was indeed hegemonic over other types of Song manhood.[25] Power lay at the heart of the literati masculinity, because it was designed by "a man *in* power, a man *with* power, and a man *of* power."[26] Thus, contrary to the modern association of tears with weakness, male lachrymation in the Song acted to articulate and reinforce a position of dominance. Tears

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[23] Mark Stevenson, "Theater and the Text-Spatial Reproduction of Literati and Mercantile Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Beijing," in Kam Louie, ed., *Changing Chinese Masculinities: From Imperial Pillars of State to Global Real Men* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016), p. 68.

[24] For the definition and history of this concept, see R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept," *Gender and Society* 19.6 (Dec. 2005): 829–59.

[25] For scholarship on other types of manhood in premodern China, see, for example, Matthew H. Sommer, "Dangerous Males, Vulnerable Males, and Polluted Males: The Regulation of Masculinity in Qing Dynasty Law," in Susan Brownell and Jeffery N. Wasserstrom, eds., *Chinese Femininities / Chinese Masculinities: A Reader* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 67–92; and Giovanni Vitiello, *The Libertine's Friend: Homosexuality and Masculinity in Late Imperial China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

[26] Michael S. Kimmel, "Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame, and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity," in Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman, eds., *Theorizing Masculinities* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994), p. 125.

often occurred where the male elite most actively exercised their dominion, such as the imperial government and battlegrounds, the two central contexts I discuss in this article.

One nuance I wish to foreground regarding the literati's hegemonic power concerns its relationship with the monarch. Certainly, the emperor and the literati both belonged to the class of elite men I discuss, and they displayed a common hegemonic masculinity from time to time. After all, they worked jointly to maintain and enforce the imperial dominion. As I will show in Section V, the emperor indeed shared lachrymose moments with the literati and orchestrated the same masculine values.

However, I recognize a primary role of the literati in enacting this hegemonic masculinity, hence my designation of it as the "literati masculinity." The scholar-officials were the main creators and enactors of the values that culminated in this manhood. Moreover, the power distinction between the monarch and the literati was one factor shaping this masculinity and its enactment. Simultaneously servants of the monarch and executors of imperial power, the literati exercised dominant power from a subordinate position. In some cases, the emperor was part of the circumstances rather than a co-actor of the hegemonic masculinity, a point I will show in Section IV.

The second general characteristic of the literati masculinity was that it was a homosocial enactment. A consensus among scholars who study Chinese masculinities holds that men in premodern China sought approval mostly from other men to establish their manhood. As Susan Mann points out, premodern elite men "spent most of their sociable time with other men, *not* with women."[27] As a result, masculinity was "articulated by male voices from the male perspective,"[28] which barely engaged the presence or opinions of women.[29] This was precisely the case for lachrymation. As Song sources

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[27] Susan Mann, "The Male Bond in Chinese History and Culture," *The American Historical Review* 105.5 (Dec. 2000): 1603.

[28] Geng Song, *The Fragile Scholar: Power and Masculinity in Chinese Culture* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004), p. 3.

[29] Womanhood/femininity existed merely as a metaphor in the articulation of masculinity. See Martin W. Huang, *Negotiating Masculinities in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), p. 2; see also Paul Rouzer, *Articulated Ladies: Gender and Male Community in Early Chinese Texts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001), p. 8.

demonstrate, most tears shed by men addressed a male audience and conveyed meanings defined by men in accordance with masculine interests. Thus, male lachrymation by no means signalled a softening of patriarchy nor indicated that Song men should be hailed as "sensitive modern men."[30]

These general characteristics aside, Song male tears constituted a cultural regime, one which valorized certain aspects of the lachrymose behaviour and defined meaningful crying in terms specific to the male gender and the literati class. The literati wedded tears to circumstances closely associated with their socio-political roles (e.g., an imperial minister) and values particular to their ideological agendas (e.g., Confucianism). They instilled certain values and disvalues in the physiological phenomenon of crying and thereby appropriated it as their prerogative.

The elite men exalted male tears at the expense of some Others, such as women and men of lower background. The marginalized became associated with some undesirable ways to cry—such as mindless howling and manipulative fake tears—behaviours excluded outright from the paradigm of meaningful crying.[31] In the *Taiping Collectanea*, for example, the compilers singled out "bawling" (*ti*) as a demeaning term, which described animalistic howling devoid of intellectual content. Those who "bawled," according to this text, included women, children, midgets, apes, and pigs, all inferior to a normative man.[32] In one account, a group of female attendants howled out of panic, which demonstrated nothing more than deplorable weakness.[33] Elite male discourse also relegated to women and lesser men morally dubious tears, such

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[30] For another example of male tears affirming, instead of challenging, patriarchy, see Thomas Dixon's analysis of *The Man of Feeling*, in idem, *Weeping Britannia*, pp. 100–101.

[31] This is not to say that no individual elite man ever bawled or faked crying; rather, the lachrymose model that represented the elite male *as a group* did not include these behaviours. Exceptions exist to any rule. For example, Wang Zeng 王曾 (978–1038), a literatus, faked tears to manipulate the tyrannical minister, Ding Wei 丁謂 (966–1037). See Wang Zhi 王銍, *Moji* 默記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), *juan* 1, p. 9. In narratives of this kind, the authors described fake tears knowingly as something different from meaningful, genuine lachrymation.

[32] Li Fang, *Taiping yulan*, *juan* 488, pp. 2235b–36a.

[33] Ibid., *juan* 488, p. 2235b.

as those lacking a genuine emotional foundation or bespeaking weakness. Some stereotypes had women crying out of fear or shedding crocodile tears. As Zigao 子高 (*c.* 550–470 B.C.E.) famously claimed, "women and cowards weep to seek pity" (婦人懦夫以泣著愛).[34]

The separation of "us" from Others did not indicate a rigorous demarcation, as crossovers indeed happened when some women released meaningful tears and some cowardly men were frightened into weeping. As a general pattern, however, the Others might be admissible into the regime of meaningful tears if they strove to play by the rules, which often meant reiterating elite male values in subordinate roles assigned by elite men.[35] As examples in this article will show, women and commoners made lachrymose presences often in auxiliary positions led by the elite male. A "sagely" emperor might shed tears in a moment of concern for the government to demonstrate his accountability. An empress, as the wife and "sage mother,"[36] might step in to perform these teary gestures as a substitute (see section IV). Simi-larly, common folks could shed patriotic tears during an interstate war, but often did so as a background to the male leaders' lachrymosity (see section V).

Occasionally, a female Other became an exemplary moral wailer, such as Meng Jiang 孟姜, a woman who cried for her husband killed in a war and who brought down the Great Wall with her tears. Her story was an ancient tale reproduced in numerous iterations and known to the Song audience.[37] Her famous tears did not transcend the aforementioned limitations, however. The reason for Meng Jiang's wailing varied from one interpretation to

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[34] Kong Fu 孔鮒 (*c.* 200s B.C.E.), *Kongcongzi* 孔叢子, in *Sibu congkan chubian* 四部叢刊初編 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1926), vol. 318, *juan* 13, p. 2a. This example is particularly compelling because Zigao pointed to "women and cowards" as the precise opposite of meaningful tears associated with male values.

[35] Here I am not suggesting that *in reality* women and commoners were completely passive and unable to enact positive values via lachrymation; instead, I am describing the limited roles elite men assigned Others in the male-centred discourse.

[36] Keith McMahon, *Celestial Women: Imperial Wives and Concubines in China from Song to Qing* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), p. 32.

[37] Meng Jiang was a legendary figure emerging from a number of historical narratives. For this history, see Wilt L. Idema, "Meng Jiangnü: The Development of a Legend," in idem., *Meng Jiangnü Brings down the Great Wall: Ten Versions of a Chinese Legend* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2008), particularly pp. 5–7.

another. The earlier accounts present it as a protest against the inappropriate ritual behaviours of the ruler in mourning her husband, while later accounts tend to depict it as profound sadness for losing a family member.[38] The first explanation rehearsed an established motif concerning male tears; Meng Jiang's gender made her a noteworthy performer of the theme yet certainly not an equal owner of it.[39] As for the second, male authors described her sadness as coming from a distinctively subordinate and wifely position, lamenting on her behalf that "women must have someone to depend on" (婦人必有所倚者) and Meng Jiang unfortunately had lost hers.[40]

An analysis of lachrymation as a masculine subject also requires a nuanced use of gender concepts, especially the masculine/feminine binary. For tears to become masculine, the feminine surely had to become Other, but this did not entail a simple flight from femininity. As Martin Huang insightfully points out, the construction of Chinese masculinity involves complex negotiations between the masculine and the feminine, and the latter oscillates between enhancing and contravening the former.[41]

This theoretical finesse is important for a study of crying partly because the association between tears and certain feminine qualities was as true in the Song as it is in modern times. A sheer display of vulnerability/weakness was indeed considered feminine, as in the examples of panicking women and pity-seeking cowards. Male authors slighted these lachrymose moments as nothing but reflexes from innate flaws.

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[38] The earliest account in *Zuozhuan* 左傳, for example, emphasized ritual inappropriateness. See Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, annot., *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* 春秋左傳注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), pp. 1084–85. The version in *Lienü zhuan* 列女傳 invested rich language in describing her sadness. See Zheng Xiaoxia 鄭曉霞 and Lin Jiayu 林佳鬱, eds., *Lienü zhuan huibian* 列女傳彙編, vol. 1 (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2007), pp. 126–28.

[39] The examples are numerous, and I will name the most prominent. Kongzi (Confucius) 孔子 (551–479 B.C.E.) often appeared in the *Liji* as one who protested inappropriateness at death rituals with his own lachrymose rectifications. Multiple examples of Kongzi existed in the same chapter where Meng Jiang was mentioned ("Tan gong" 檀弓), for instance, see *Liji zhengyi* 禮記正義, in Ruan Yuan 阮元, ed., *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), *juan* 7, p. 55.

[40] Zheng and Lin, eds., *Lienü zhuan huibian*, vol. 1, p. 126.

[41] Huang, *Negotiating Masculinities in Late Imperial China*, p. 2.

The construction of exalted male tears did not deny the association between lachrymation and vulnerability, however. Masculine tears were complex entities reflecting a palette of qualities. This is akin to how a social majority is often *not* simplified, in contrast with how minorities are commonly reduced to stereotypes defined by a few "innate flaws."[42] A feminine quality, such as vulnerability, was one ingredient among many in the articulation of a masculine tear. As examples in Section V will show, the emperor would not hide his vulnerability when crying during a dynastic crisis. He would simultaneously demonstrate his passionate care for his subjects and, therefore, claim the ultimately masculine position of an accountable ruler. One imperial tear provided a prism of many and predominantly positive characteristics.

Thus, the prominent representation of male tears in Song writings came from a gendered perspective, one which appropriated lachrymation as an expression of masculine, hegemonic power. Tears certainly highlight the idiosyncratic style of literati politics, in which power asserted itself through persuasion rather than brute force. The Song elite manhood and its unique style of power were not isolated historical phenomena. As a general observation of manhood in China, Kam Louie extrapolates two models of Chinese masculinity as *wen* 文 (culture), a man of cultural attainment, and *wu* 武 (martial), a man of martial valour.[43] Throughout premodern history, the scholar consistently superseded the warrior in the hierarchy of manliness.[44] The Song elite manhood featured predominantly *wen* qualities, and Song male tears often appeared in contexts related to *wen* manhood, such as imperial politics and moral philosophy.[45]

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[42] A sociologist definition of a stereotype centres oversimplification as its key feature. See Allan G. Johnson, *The Blackwell Dictionary of Sociology: A User's Guide to Sociological Language*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), p. 312.

[43] Kam Louie, *Theorising Chinese Masculinity*: *Society and Gender in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 4.

[44] Ibid., pp. 17–21.

[45] The Song literati were particularly invested in cultural capital as a token of manhood. See Bret Hinsch, *Masculinities in Chinese History* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013), pp. 91–110. The two models were not supposed to be mutually exclusive, for sure. See Louie, *Theorising Chinese Masculinity*, p. 11. As I will show in Section V, a Song literatus could have martial qualities and fought as a general.

Neither the literati nor male tears were unique to the Song. Yet the lachrymose power functioned especially well in the Song circumstances, as evident in the wealth of tears and intriguing narratives about them in Song writings. In the following I present two clusters of examples occurring amid factional struggles and border crises respectively, the two contexts most befitting an inquiry into male tears. These circumstances exhibited an unusual abundance of tears due to the association between male lachrymation and masculine power. Political infighting and interstate warfare were central to Song politics and constituted two main arenas where the literati materialized their dominion. In the attendant intricate situations, lachrymation offered a special force conducive to exercising power in trying times.

IV. Loyal Tears

In this section, I discuss how tears articulated loyalty as the literati exercised their power as imperial officials amid factional struggles. The Song was known for its relentless factional politics. Since the centrifugal forces of the aristocracy had passed into history, the Song monarchs appointed literati in a highly centralized bureaucratic state and entrusted them with generous executive power. The literati managed the empire with world-changing ambitions and varied agendas, an intellectual diversity soon turned into scathing factional competition.

As polarization escalated in national politics, the relationship between the emperor and his ministers became increasingly pivotal and yet precarious to navigate. Both parties had developed greater stakes in the monarch-minister bond, which led to structural interdependence and power sharing. The emperor now worked with the literati in an ever closer and direct manner, developing a great dependence on the imperial bureaucracy. The literati, on the one hand, pursued imperial favour as the warrant of their political success, and, on the other, envisioned the monarch as a facilitator—with limited power—of the new agendas designed and directed by the literati themselves.[46]

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[46] See Peter K. Bol, "Whither the Emperor? Emperor Huizong, the New Policies, and the Tang-Song Transition," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 31 (2001): 133. Bol makes the point using examples from the New Policies period, which is precisely the context of my next discussion.

The opposing factions and the throne, thus, constituted a triangle, in which the monarch simultaneously arbitrated and participated in the factional competition. Since all bureaucrats were in service to the emperor, they looked to the throne for endorsement of their respective agendas. The competition for imperial favour became increasingly intense starting from the eleventh century, when emperors began to publicly favour one faction over the other.[47] The monarch could never take his power for granted, however, and he had to keep the power of any faction within limits.[48] To achieve this goal, he would participate in the factional strife by tactically taking and changing sides.

In the Confucian discourse, ministerial loyalty was a basic requirement for the male elite, whose supremacy resided precisely in their roles as the acting agents of monarchical power. For Song literati, the conventional pledge of loyalty took on complications, because officials on opposing sides of the partisan line no longer had equal access to the claim of loyalty. It would be strenuous, to say the least, for a member of a disfavoured faction to prove his devotion. In addition, the triangular power structure, to a great extent, indicated that ministerial loyalty was not a one-way submission; instead, it was a product of constant negotiations between the monarchical and ministerial powers along vertical and horizontal lines. Loyalty from a member of the winning faction to the monarch was, in essence, a confirmation of a power alliance.

Against this background, lachrymation stood out as a common action and a characteristic expression of loyalty popular among literati officials. Due to the ability to convey authenticity and ambiguity at once, tears became an efficacious strategy for self-proclaimed loyal ministers to assert power amid factional vagaries.

The epicentre of Song factionalism resided in the so-called New Policies, a sweeping movement intended to reform the Song through an expanding state apparatus. The architect of the reform, Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021–

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[47] See Ari D. Levine, *Divided by a Common Language: Factional Conflict in Late Northern Song China* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), pp. 1–2.

[48] See Xiao-bin Ji, *Politics and Conservatism in Northern Song China: The Career and Thought of Sima Guang (A.D. 1019–1086)* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2005), p. 183.

1086) recruited a special group of officials to oversee its implementation.[49] The breadth and perceived invasiveness of Wang's policies, however, incited criticism from literati outside the reform bloc. The roll-out of the New Policies created a schism between the Wang-led reformists and anti-reformists, initiating two centuries of factional strife.

The records on factional struggles were awash in tears. In the following, I present three weepers, representing a hard-line anti-reformist, a milder critic, and a reform advocate. The first is Sima Guang, the most vocal antagonist of Wang and the leader of the anti-reform coalition. The story of his tears was narrated by Zhou Hui 周煇 (1127–1198) in *Qingbo Miscellany* (*Qingbo zazhi* 清波雜志). Sima held fundamental misgivings about Wang's expansion of the state and found many of Wang's policies baneful. But to his chagrin, Emperor Shenzong (r. 1067–1085) gave the reform a full-throated endorsement.[50] After protracted, fruitless struggles against Wang, Sima resigned from his ministerial position in the capital and took up a sinecure in Luoyang in 1071. The year 1074 witnessed the first setback of the reform. After receiving a slew of protesting memorials, Emperor Shenzong softened his stance and announced his intention to scale back some excessive policies. In an edict, he confessed that his judgement had gone awry and called for honest opinions from officials outside the Wang coalition.[51]

At the time, Sima Guang was in semi-retirement and had for years kept his lips sealed on politics. According to Zhou Hui, as soon as Sima read the emperor's edict, "tears streamed down" (*qi xia* 泣下) his face.[52] Sima also

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[49] For an introduction to the New Policies, see Paul J. Smith, "Shen-tsung's Reign and the New Policies of Wang An-shih, 1067–1085," in Denis Twitchett and Paul J. Smith, eds., *The Cambridge History of China. Volume 5, Part 1: The Sung Dynasty and Its Precursors*, 907–1279 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 347–483.

[50] See Peter K. Bol, "Government, Society, and State: On the Political Visions of Ssu-ma Kuang and Wang An-shih," in Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer, eds., *Ordering the World: Approaches to State and Society in Sung Dynasty China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 128–92.

[51] Throughout the *Qingbo Miscellany*, Zhou consistently characterized Sima as a paragon of moral strength. For an example of his praise of Sima's integrity, see Zhou Hui, *Qingbo zazhi*, in Zhu, Fu, and Zhou, eds., *Quan Song biji*, ser. 5, vol. 9, *juan* 11, p. 123.

[52] Zhou Hui, *Qingbo zazhi*, *juan* 11, p. 123.

described this emotional moment himself. In a memorial he wrote after hearing the news, he stated to the emperor that "your subordinate read the edict in prostration and burst into tears of extreme happiness [*xi ji yi qi* 喜極以泣]."[53] Zhou's account was likely based on Sima's self-statement.

Sima meant to communicate to the emperor his deep belief in the anti-reform mission, a readiness to serve again, and, most important, his intense loyalty to the emperor, all messages effectively delivered via tears. Zhou Hui, the narrator who held great respect for Sima, duly relayed the moral weight of his tears to the readers.[54] By incorporating this crying episode, Zhou cast an elucidating light on Sima's loyalty—one which stood the test of adversity—and invited readers to join with him in admiration.

The second weeper is Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101), a contemporary of Sima and a slightly less acerbic critic of the reform.[55] An anecdote narrated by Shao Bo 邵博 (?–1158) in his *Sequel to the Records of Seeing and Hearing by Mr. Shao* (*Shaoshi wenjian houlu* 邵氏聞見後錄) describes a meeting that presumably occurred in the fifth month of 1086, a transitional year in Song politics.[56] Emperor Shenzong had died a year earlier, and the succeeding ruler, Empress Xuanren (1032–1093; Grand Empress Dowager, 1085–1093), was ready to roll back the New Policies. Su Shi had been in exile since 1079 due to his anti-reform stance. As soon as the regent assumed governing power, Su received a major promotion to return to the capital. At the time when the crying took place, he served in a key advisory position as a Hanlin Academician and was half-drunk—merrily.

The empress summoned Su for a conversation. She asked about the official posts Su had held in the past few years. Su answered that a year earlier he had been Vice Military Training Commissioner in Ruzhou (*Ruzhou tuanlian fu-shi* 汝州團練副使), a low-ranking position in stark contrast to the prestigious

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[53] Li Tao 李燾 (1115–1184), *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑒長編, 2nd ed. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), *juan* 252, p. 6160.

[54] Zhou Hui, *Qingbo zazhi*, *juan* 6, p. 73; *juan* 10, p. 111.

[55] For Su's protests against Wang Anshi, see Ronald C. Egan, *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1994), pp. 54–85.

[56] Shao Bo, *Shaoshi wenjian houlu*, in Zhu, Fu, and Zhou, eds., *Quan Song biji*, ser. 4, vol. 6, *juan* 21, pp. 142–43.

title he now held. The empress asked how Su thought he had obtained this promotion. Su responded by paying gratitude to the empress herself, to the young emperor (Zhezong, r. 1085–1100), and to the ministers who might have recommended him. After negating all his guesses, the empress told the following story:

> I have long wished to let academician [i.e., you] know that [the promotion] was Emperor Shenzong's intention. When the emperor put down his chopsticks in the midst of eating and turned to read a piece of writing, the attendants whispered to one another: "This must be work by Su Shi." The emperor often exclaimed: "Incredible genius, incredible genius!" But he passed away before he could promote the academician [i.e., you].
>
> 久欲令學士知此，是神宗皇帝之意。帝飲食停匕箸，看文字，宮人私相語：必蘇軾之作。帝每曰：「奇才，奇才！」但未及進用學士，上僊耳。[57]

After hearing this, Su Shi "could not help himself but wail out loud" (不覺哭失聲). The empress and Zhezong also began to weep; attending officials and servants joined them in shedding tears. Finally, Empress Xuanren exhorted Su Shi:

> Academician, you should exhaust your heart-mind to serve the [current] emperor so as to repay the late emperor.
>
> 學士直須盡心事官家，以報先帝。[58]

Similar to Sima Guang's teary outburst, Su Shi's weeping pronounced his passionate loyalty to the new leadership and, in this case, his commitment to the restorative agenda. Su's tears proved contagious, drawing first the empress and then the entire room into a bout of crying. This choir of weeping certainly had to do with memories of the late emperor, a loss felt by all present, and yet the empress's tears were also a clear response to Su's expression of loyalty. According to Shao's narrative, the empress's reciprocal crying folded their exchange into a contract between a loyal minister and an accountable ruler,

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[57] Shao Bo, *Shaoshi wenjian houlu*, p. 142.

[58] Ibid.

a mutual commitment witnessed and celebrated by the weeping attendants. The empress made a request for unconditional devotion—"to exhaust your heart-mind"—precisely the action implied by Su's teary vow of loyalty. Shao's characterization of this exchange accorded well with Su's own writings. In a memorial of gratitude to the empress, Su articulated his commitment in similar language, that he intended to "reinvigorate myself in the late stretch of life and sharpen my original heart-mind" (激勵晚節，砥礪初心), and that "life or death would not shake my resolve to pay back with loyalty and righteousness" (忠義之報，死生不移).[59]

The third weeper came from the reformist coalition. Lu Dian 陸佃 (1041–1102) cried profusely about the ill-health and eventual death of Emperor Zhezong. Lu You 陸游 (1125–1210), Dian's grandson, narrated the story in a *biji* entitled *Old Tales of [My] Clan* (*Jiashi jiuwen* 家世舊聞).

Throughout his career Lu Dian rode a political rollercoaster driven by factional struggles between New Policies advocates and anti-reformists. In his early years, Lu worked for the reform, but his partisan association became increasingly unclear as the New Policies unravelled in the 1080s. In 1086, after the death of Emperor Shenzong, the imperial court summoned an editorial board to compile the *Veritable Records of Shenzong* (*Shenzong shilu* 神宗實錄), the standard chronicle of the past reign. At first, the board consisted mainly of reform advocates, including Lu Dian. Soon enough, however, all the reformists except Lu left the committee for a variety of reasons, and anti-reformists led by Sima Guang eventually took over its leadership.[60] This certainly had to do with Empress Xuanren's active opposition to Shenzong's reform legacy. As soon as she died in 1093, the young monarch Zhezong reverted to Shenzong's agenda and summoned the reform coalition back to the centre of power. Viewing Lu as a renegade collaborating with anti-reformists, the new emperor exiled him to a small town in modern Hunan as Prefect of Caizhou.[61]

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[59] Su Shi, *Su shi wenji* 蘇軾文集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), *juan* 23, p. 666.

[60] See Cai Chongbang 蔡崇榜, *Songdai xiushi zhidu yanjiu* 宋代修史制度研究 (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 1991), p. 82.

[61] Tuotuo 脱脱 (1315–1355), et al., *Song shi* 宋史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), *juan* 342, p. 10919.

The crying episode was set in Caizhou, where Lu learned that Emperor Zhezong had fallen ill and was taking medication. Lu went to petition all deities and organized Daoist rituals to pray for the emperor's health. Zhezong soon died, however, and his last edict reached Lu along with an amnesty, the first granted by the new emperor, Huizong (r. 1100–1126).

Lu responded to the news with abundant tears. When he opened the edict, he "wailed ferociously" (*tong ku* 慟哭). This was the moment when Lu's family "just came to realize his concern for the dynasty" (始知其為國卹也). Under his influence, his son-in-law, Yang Yanzhang 楊彥章 (*c*. eleventh century), also "covered his face and wailed" (*yanmian ku* 掩面哭). In the following days, Lu greeted visiting prefectural officials with "loud wails" (*hao ku* 號哭).[62] He pronounced the last edict to local bureaucrats and called for a day-long complete fast as well as a three-day partial fast.

In Lu You's narration, Dian's tears delivered an overdue self-disclosure of ideological conviction and an admirable loyalty. Prior to this moment, it was unclear to his peers—and even to his family—whether Dian had indeed betrayed the reformist bloc. Lu Dian's crying revealed his unmistakable "concern for the dynasty," that is, a persistent loyalty to the throne and to the reformist agenda. According to Lu You, Dian was unwilling to break his silence despite decades of misunderstanding he had suffered. Other parts of *Old Tales of [My] Clan* mentioned that Dian refused to enunciate his political association. For example, while working for the project on *Veritable Records of Shenzong*, Dian had disagreements with the anti-reform ministers, but he did not clarify his stance even when asked to speak for himself.[63] Eventually, Dian's unrestrained wailing offered a lucid self-statement, which demonstrated his ideological consistency and an uncompromised loyalty to the late emperor. His personal devotion to the monarch was particularly awe-inspiring due to his long endurance of unjust punishment amid frequent power transitions.

In all three cases, tears constituted a pledge of loyalty, and, judging by the narratives, the weepers seemed to place lachrymation above words as the better expression of loyalty. They might have had cogent reasons for this choice.

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[62] For the four quotations above, see Lu You, *Jiashi jiuwen* 家世舊聞, in Zhu, Fu, and Zhou, eds., *Quan Song biji*, ser. 5, vol. 8, *juan* 1, p. 234.

[63] Ibid., *juan* 1, p. 231.

Generally speaking, tears appear more genuine than speech as a clarification of the loyal sentiment. Indeed, non-verbal emotional expressions can be seen as more spontaneous and thus more authentic than verbal communication. Tears occupy a privileged place in the non-verbal category because crying, more so than other emotional gestures, succeeds in "transcending theatricality and expressing something 'true'."[64]

While tears may project emotional clarity in an authentic manner, they simultaneously remain ambiguous, which constitutes the second and more important reason for their efficacy. From a psychological point of view, the meaning of emotional tears may be slippery because emotions are elusive. A complex of "loosely aggregated thought activations,"[65] emotion motivates actions "without disclosing much about itself."[66] A feeling is a "verdict mysteriously reached" because it antecedes one's awareness of the underlying reasons.[67] Tears further complicate the interpretation of meaning because they may spring from multiple—even conflicting—emotions. As "an intrinsically ambiguous act,"[68] crying naturally encourages pluralistic interpretations.

The ambiguity inherent in lachrymation rendered it a better means than words to express loyalty for at least two reasons. For one, some ambiguity was necessary to accommodate the awkwardness and uncertainties caused by political polarization. The situation Su Shi faced provides a good example. Despite the polarized stances held by the empress dowager and emperor, Su was expected to swear loyalty to the empress dowager—and per her recommendation—to express gratitude to the late emperor. Nothing Su might have *said* would be appropriate, because it was impossible to be loyal in the same way to two rulers who disagreed with each other. In Lu Dian's case, he had made a choice to abandon verbal explanations long ago. It could be that he wished to take the high road and avoid appearing defensive, as Lu You

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64 Swift, "A Penitent Prepares," p. 90.

65 Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, p. 94.

66 David Pugmire, *Sound Sentiments: Integrity in the Emotions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 3.

67 Ibid., p. 21.

68 Elina Gertsman, "Introduction: 'Going They Went and Wept': Tears in Medieval Discourse," in idem, ed., *Crying in the Middle Ages*, p. xii.

suggested. It is also evident that Lu handled a challenge similar to Su's in that he owed loyalty to three monarchs occupying contrasting ideological positions.

The ambiguity of tears also accommodated the nuanced power dynamics between monarch and minister, because loyalty arose from negotiations under a submissive façade. From the literati's perspective, crying might be the most appropriate response in a moment when they were recognizing subordination and yet gaining actual power. In point of fact, the lachrymose moment in all three cases was simultaneously a "winning" moment, with Sima gaining the upper hand over the reformists, Su Shi back to the centre of power, and Lu Dian free from accusation of perfidy and able to return to the capital.

For Sima and Su particularly, their pledge of loyalty confirmed a power allegiance with the monarch, a moment when they returned to their position as an acting agent of imperial power. At first sight, their successes were made possible by the emperor's change of heart or the ascendance of a like-minded new ruler, but, in fact, all the ideological reorientations resulted from constant monarch-minister negotiations rather than the personal caprice of the emperor. Take Sima Guang for example. His presence as an outspoken opponent gave the emperor indispensable leverage over the reformists, whose aggressive power expansion concerned the monarch despite his ideological support for the reform bloc. In power or in exile, Sima remained a key negotiator in the orientation of Song politics.[69] While Sima was certainly unique in his unusually prominent influence over the imperial clan, the monarch's high reliance on consulting ministers and the literati's ability to persuade the throne were patterns that applied across the board in politics at this time. Not every individual official had leverage against imperial authority, but taken as a whole, all literati navigated in the triangle where the monarch and ministers negotiated power in interdependent collaboration.

In other words, putting forth a claim of triumph in a submissive gesture of loyalty was a small drama that reflected the general ways in which the literati exercised their power. A retreat into the subordinate position vis-à-vis the monarch was part of the power negotiations; it necessarily anteceded a literatus's

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[69] This is the overall argument of Xiao-bin Ji's study of Sima Guang. See idem, *Politics and Conservatism in Northern Song China*.

access to greater power and eventual domination over the imperial subjects. With characteristic ambiguity, tears afforded a persuasive yet uncontroversial way to express this complex loyalty without sacrificing the nuances required in the precarious power balance navigated by both parties. We might describe the ambiguity in this context as a mix of the masculine and feminine qualities inscribed in male tears. That is, lachrymation allowed one to weave a soft, yielding gesture into a process of actualizing power, which proved to be a unique and efficacious way to exercise dominance.[70]

V. Bonding Tears

In this section, I discuss how the literati perceived tears as a bonding force to defend their power during the twelfth-century border crisis. Persistent territorial conflicts constituted a fundamental aspect of Song politics. Unlike the Tang, the Song was no longer the universal empire which dominated neighbouring states in a China-centric interstate system; instead, it occupied a smaller territory and was one among several important powers in East Asia.[71] Since the inception of the dynasty, the Song had to cope constantly with military threats from Eurasian steppe regimes. In 1127, the Jurchen Jin dynasty (1115–1234), the formidable north-eastern neighbour, waged war and sacked the Song capital. Known as the Jingkang incident, the calamity forced the Song to concede its northern territory to the Jurchens and become a regional power centred in the south. Song history was, thus, divided into northern and southern phases. The Jurchen army captured the last two Northern Song monarchs, Huizong and Qinzong (r. 1126–1127), and kept them until the end of their lives.

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[70] For the mix of the masculine and feminine in the trope of the loyal minister, see Martin Huang's discussion of a man's self-comparison to a woman as his strategy of re/masculinization, idem, *Negotiating Masculinities in Late Imperial China,* pp. 2–3 and 13–32. In a similar vein, Beverly Bossler discusses how men appropriated female fidelity into male loyalty, idem, *Courtesans, Concubines, and the Cult of Female Fidelity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2013), pp. 424–25.

[71] See Nicolas Tackett's discussion of "the East Asian World Order," idem, *The Origins of the Chinese Nation: Song China and the Forging of an East Asian World Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 16–23.

Later historiography portrayed this incident as the height of humiliation in the Song.[72]

The loss to the Jurchens hastened a crisis of not only dynastic security but also masculinity. As a number of scholars point out, the invasion of nomadic peoples posed a threat to the manhood of Song literati, who prided themselves as men of civilization and dismissed the Jurchen conquerors as uncivilized subhumans.[73] For example, in a Song man's description, the Jurchen males were "brave and tough" (*yonghan* 勇悍) and "loved to fight" (*xi zhandou* 喜戰鬬), with a high tolerance for hunger/thirst; they climbed cliffs with uncanny speed and relied on muscles instead of boats to cross rivers.[74] The focus on animal qualities contrasted sharply with the self-portrait of Song literati, who excelled in civil power and cultural refinements. The Jurchen masculinity posed a highly alien menace,[75] which behooved Song men to defend their own brand of manhood, a war synecdochic with that between civilization and barbarism.[76]

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[72] For an introduction to the Jingkang incident, see Ari D. Levine, "The Reigns of Hui-tsung (1100–1126) and Ch'in-tsung (1126–1127) and the Fall of the Northern Sung," in Twitchett and Smith, eds., *The Cambridge History of China. Volume 5, Part 1*, pp. 639–43.

[73] See Patricia B. Ebrey, *The Inner Quarters: Marriage and the Lives of Chinese Women in the Sung Period* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 32–33; Hinsch, *Masculinities in Chinese History*, p. 9; Song, *The Fragile Scholar*, p. 66; Harriet Zurndorfer, "Polygyny and Changing Masculinity among the Elite in Mid-Imperial China," paper presented at the Second Middle-Period China Humanities Conference, 14–17 September 2017; author's permission to cite granted on 26 November 2017.

[74] Yuwen Maozhao 宇文懋昭 (*c.* thirteenth century), attri., collated by Cui Wenying 崔文印, *Da Jin guo zhi jiaozheng* 大金國志校證 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), *juan* 39, p. 551.

[75] Although the Jurchen manhood appeared martial, it did not belong to the *wu* type because both *wen* and *wu* were reserved for "civilized" Chinese men. See Louie, *Theorising Chinese Masculinity*, pp. 12–13.

[76] The civilization/barbarism binary was a longstanding framework defining the interstate relationship between China and other regimes from a Chinese perspective. For a recent critical review of the history of the framework, see Shao-yun Yang, *The Way of the Barbarians: Redrawing Ethnic Boundaries in Tang and Song China* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2019), pp. 7–15.

In addition to the foreign threat, a domestic crisis was also looming over the literati's manhood, as their status as the dominant political class faced challenges from other interest groups. The hegemonic power that defined the literati masculinity started to crumble. Divisions in and beyond the literati block became unprecedented amid the escalating Song-Jurchen contestation. To start with, the literati were never able to form a unitary war response due to constant sparring between hawks and doves, an issue aggravated by the emperor's vacillating stance.[77] The chaos worsened as eunuchs and some members of the military class secured imperial trust and posed serious challenges to the literati's control over the state.[78] The pride and poise of the literati were gradually shattered as some of them repeatedly failed in military endeavours and others fled their civil duties in terror and panic.[79]

Much writing on the Jingkang incident featured the literati's woeful rumination over their bruised manhood, and crying became a prominent motif in these textual reflections. The tears were not just about fear nor sadness. In contrast, crying was a hardy element of Song men's self-defence. Especially for resistance activists, lachrymation operated to restore the literati's political dominion by mending key power relations, including those between ruler and minister, elite and commoner, human and supra-human cosmic forces. In literati's narration of the crisis, tears flowed extensively among deities, the monarch, officials, and commoners, reinforcing their mutual relations and strengthening the structure of elite male dominance.

As the Song walls crumbled, the emperor let out the leading wail. The accounts on Huizong and Qinzong featured a wealth of monarchical tears. In

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[77] For a detailed account of divisions throughout the Song-Jurchen war, see Gu Hongyi 顧宏義, *Tian lie: Shi'er shiji Song Jin hezhan shilu* 天裂：十二世紀宋金和戰實錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2000).

[78] For an analysis of the competition between literati and eunuchs, see Patricia B. Ebrey, *Emperor Huizong* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), pp. 339–41.

[79] For a series of Song defeats leading to the Jingkang incident, see Gu Hongyi, *Tian lie*, pp. 145–73. Officials fleeing their posts became increasingly a common phenomenon since the Fang La uprising (1120) and continued throughout the end of Northern Song. See Ebrey, *Emperor Huizong*, p. 399 and Levine, "The Reigns of Hui-tsung and Ch'in-tsung," p. 624.

Records on Furies over the Theft (*Qie fen lu* 竊憤錄), a *biji* allegedly penned by Xin Qiji 辛棄疾 (1140–1207), the author documented the Jurchens' imprisonment of the two Song emperors and portrayed the monarchs' misfortune as a trail of tears. According to this text, Qinzong and Huizong "often flowed tears when looking at each other" (每每相對泣下); sometimes when sinking deep into nostalgia, they would "hold each other and wail" (相持大哭).[80] Another similar text, *Records of Southern Ashes* (*Nan jin jiwen lu* 南燼紀聞錄), even claimed that Huizong went blind in one eye because of excessive crying.[81] After Huizong died in captivity, the Jurchen court moved Qinzong to a new location. The *Records on Furies over the Theft* described his journey as follows:

> The emperor cries ceaselessly every single day in tattered clothes. He and his attendants all look like ghosts.
>
> 帝日日哭泣不止，衣裾破敝，隨行人及帝皆如鬼形狀。[82]

A poignant realism characterizes these descriptions, and the emperors divulged their vulnerability just like anyone beset with fear and anxiety.

In many contemporaneous narratives, the lachrymose lament of the emperor was joined by tears from his subjects. In *Records during Jingkang* (*Jingkang jiwen* 靖康紀聞), another *biji* concentrating on the Jingkang incident, Ding Teqi 丁特起 (*c*. 1138) documented multiple occasions of group crying. For instance, in the twelfth month of 1126, Jurchen troops broke through the walls of Bianjing to put the Song on the verge of collapse. Emperor Qinzong was forced to go to the Jurchen camp for negotiations. Large groups of Song subjects gathered along his path. They were "all sighing and weeping, with tears flowing wildly" (皆嘆惋感泣，涕泗橫流). The emperor also wept. When he reached the Zhou Bridge on the Bian River, "his handkerchief was soaked with tears" and he "could barely utter a word" (淚已沾浥帕子，殆不能言). The Song officials who escorted him, Zheng Jianxiong 鄭建雄 (*c*. eleventh century) and Zhang Shuye 張叔夜 (1065–1127), held their horses and "wept loudly" (*haoqi* 號泣). Not until they reached the Xuande Gate did the emperor manage to muster a few words: "I think I will not see my ten thousand people again"

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[80] Xin Qiji, *Qie fen lu*, in Zhu, Fu, and Zhou, eds., *Quan Song biji*, ser. 4, vol. 4, p. 60.

[81] Xin Qiji, *Nan jin jiwen lu*, in Zhu, Fu, and Zhou, eds., *Quan Song biji*, ser. 4, vol. 4, p. 54.

[82] Xin Qiji, *Qie fen lu*, p. 71.

(朕將謂不與萬民相見). He then burst into tears, and all listeners "wailed ferociously" (*tong ku*).[83]

The narrator Ding Teqi was known for his active involvement in military strategizing against the Jurchens.[84] In describing the instance of group lachrymation, he presented a bonding moment which precisely befitted the imagination of a resistance activist. The narrative distributed lachrymosity to everyone in their distinctive, laddered roles and presented an encompassing solidarity defined along the hierarchical lines. The ruler-subject relation occupied the centre of the scene. The monarch led by releasing the first tears, and his teary communication with people lining the street served to open and end the crying episode. The emperor expressed deep distress at being torn from the "ten thousand people," and the repeated exchange of tears renewed the bond between the ruler, struggling to fulfil his responsibilities, and his subjects, who rallied behind him amid catastrophic circumstances. Among the ten thousand people, the two wailing officials stood out in spotlight. Their solo lachrymosity reaffirmed the special bond between the monarch and the literati class and pronounced a public reminder of the privileged identity of the literati as the guardian of the empire.

In the preface to *Records during Jingkang*, Ding Teqi articulated his general purpose in composing this text, a statement well corroborated by his use of tears. He professed that he aimed to "exhort the hearts-minds of loyal ministers and righteous gentlemen" (激忠臣義士之心), to "rectify the wrongdoings by treacherous ministers and insidious men" (正亂臣賊子之罪), and to make it public knowledge that "our monarch was benevolent, sagely, concerned, and diligent" (知吾君仁聖憂勤).[85]

Taken together, Ding uttered a clear message. While lamenting the downfall of the dynasty, he highlighted some unified efforts of resistance led by devoted literati and an emperor who supported them. Ding emphasized to readers the mutual commitments between the monarch and subjects, wishing

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[83] For the five quotations above, see Ding Teqi, *Jingkang jiwen* 靖康紀聞, in Zhu, Fu, and Zhou, eds., *Quan Song biji*, ser. 4, vol. 4, p. 107.

[84] See, for example, Xu Mengshen 徐夢莘 (1124–1207), *San chao bei meng huibian* 三朝北盟會編 (Taipei: Dahua shuju, 1978), vol. 2, *juan* 41, p. 91.

[85] Ding Teqi, *Jingkang jiwen*, p. 94.

that these accounts would provoke further support from Song subjects to defend the imperial order. For that purpose, he assigned a specifically active role to the ministers, who ought to fiercely guard the system (with "loyalty" and "righteousness") and combat harmful deviances (e.g., "treachery" and "insidiousness").

In other words, Ding intended to reinforce—if not to reinstate—literati's dominance, something he could no longer take for granted at the time of writing. The years that led to the Jingkang calamity witnessed further deepening of political divisions. The contestations between hawks and doves peaked as the Jurchens pressed near the Song capital. While some literati—like Zhang Shuye (one of the two wailers)—aggressively fought to deter Jurchen's further penetration, others, such as Grand Councillor Tang Ke 唐恪 (?–1127), still aimed to negotiate in the hope of buying peace with the Jin.[86] The appeasers in power aroused deep mistrust from protesting Song subjects at large.[87] The credibility of the literati further tanked as some officials in the pan-capital area publicly abandoned their posts, and one former minister, Zhang Bangchang 張邦昌 (1081–1127), even became the figurehead emperor of the puppet regime the Jurchens installed on former Song soil.[88]

The circumstances also rendered an undivided monarch-literati solidarity more aspiration than fact. For one, Emperor Qinzong had never made up his mind between the stances of appeasement and aggression vis-à-vis the Jurchens. For another, the tensions between the courts of Huizong and Qinzong rose after Qinzong took over, and an ongoing persecution of Huizong's officials (literati and eunuchs included) fed into the already convoluted power struggles.[89] Ding's account on the monarch-minister bonding was half retrospective wish and half preaching; he was envisioning an ideal solidarity which would repair the

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[86] Gu Hongyi, *Tian lie*, pp. 161–63.

[87] Ibid., p. 170.

[88] For an analysis of Zhang and the contemporaneous perception of him as a violator of ministerial loyalty, see Lu Yusong 路育松, "Shi lun Beisong zhongjie guan jianshe de chengxiao: yi Chu zhengquan he Nansong jianli wei zhongxin de kaocha" 試論北宋忠節觀建設的成效——以楚政權和南宋建立為中心的考察, *Qiushi xuekan* 求是學刊 36.6 (Dec. 2009): 142–47.

[89] For a detailed discussion of the struggles between the two courts, see Ebrey, *Emperor Huizong*, pp. 442–46.

literati's relation with the emperor and thus restore their privileged position. Ding made tears a salient motif as he repeatedly chose to highlight this central purpose in lachrymose terms.

In addition to tending to the monarch-minister relation, Ding's account also bore an auxiliary point. The lavish use of moral terms implied that the ideal Song man who stood up against alien aggressors was known for his exceptional character: loyal, righteous, and a real man marked by moral excellence. By Song standards, moral strength was indeed a masculine trait, which I will elaborate in the next section.

The integration enabled by lachrymation was not limited to human hierarchies; it could reach as high as supra-human beings and facilitate the mundane-divine connection. In a story featuring Jia Gongwang 賈公望 (fl. 1120s), crying became an important means to garner support from deities. Lu You included the anecdote in his *Notes from the Laoxue Study* (*Lao xue an biji* 老學庵筆記), a treatise he completed between the 1170s and 1190s.[90] At the time of the story, Jia was Prefect of Sizhou (between modern Anhui and Jiangsu), a frontier region rife with Song resistance to the Jurchens. According to Lu, Jia was a competent general and a hawk. Lu You, a visceral anti-Jurchen himself, recorded Jia's story with perceptible admiration.[91]

After the Jingkang incident, Jia faced a new challenge as the area he governed was adjacent to the puppet regime nominally led by Zhang Bangchang. When Zhang's inaugural amnesty reached Jia Gongwang, the prefect called for all prefectural officials to gather at the Temple of Heavenly Felicity (*Tianqing guan* 天慶觀), the official Daoist shrine the Song court established in every prefecture. The crew "wailed" (*ku*) in front of the "Sacred Ancestor" (*Shengzu* 聖祖), the divine forefather of the imperial lineage who was incarnated in the founding emperor of the Song.[92] With tears, Jia burned the amnesty in front of everyone. Zhang and his puppet regime were eventually

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[90] Lu You, *Laoxue an biji*, in Zhu, Fu, and Zhou, eds., *Quan Song biji*, ser. 5, vol. 8, p. 3.

[91] For Lu's anti-Jurchen stance, see Qiu Minggao 邱鳴皋, *Lu You pingzhuan* 陸游評傳 (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 2002), pp. 64–83, 116–66, 218–24, and 245–59.

[92] For a summary of scholarship on the "Sacred Ancestor" and his connection with the Zhao lineage, see Zhu Yongqing 朱永清, "Shenge yu zhengzhi: Zhao Song Shengzu chongbai xin lun" 神格與政治：趙宋聖祖崇拜新論, *Ningxia shifan xueyuan xuebao* 寧夏師範學院學報 40.8 (2019): 73.

unable to conquer Sizhou, which, as Lu You implied, was likely the result of this lachrymose resistance.[93]

The location of the event indicated Jia's intention to appeal to supra-human forces for divine support. The Temple of Heavenly Felicity was a state-funded institution where imperial officials regularly made offerings to deities and attended public festivals/functions.[94] Jia's crying campaign clearly addressed the Sacred Ancestor, who represented the heavenly origin of the reigning imperial family and sustained their legitimacy to rule. The tears of Jia and followers were partly an expression of loyalty and partly a plea for divine intervention in their current plight.

Jia's lachrymose plea to celestial forces might have been an adaptation of an old practice with a new twist. Classical records documented a ritual in which the ruler organized group wailing to solicit favour from a range of higher beings, such as "Heaven and earth, mountains and rivers, and the altars of ancestors" (*tiandi shanchuan sheji* 天地山川社稷).[95] One concrete example of this ritual shares striking similarities with Jia's campaign. Wang Mang 王莽 (45 B.C.E.–23 C.E.), the ruler of the Xin dynasty (9–23), organized a massive ritual in which he and his subjects performed prolonged wailing to Heaven (*tian* 天) in the hope that the deity would save his short-lived regime from imminent demise.[96] In Jia's case, he continued the tradition of making a teary request, and yet directed it to a deity who took a most active interest in the destiny of the Song—the divine forebear himself.

Thus, in the literati's narration of the dynastic crisis, lachrymosity operated at every level to consolidate the relationships that defined the Song order: between the monarch and the wide base of commoners, the ruler and ministers, humans and deities. The last extension to the supra-human realm was a

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[93] Lu You, *Lao xue an biji*, *juan* 2, p. 26.

[94] Under state sponsorship, the Temple of Heavenly Felicity hosted many functions that addressed the state's interests within the Daoist liturgical framework. See Kristofer Schipper, "Taoism: The Story of the Way," in Stephen Little, et al., eds., *Taoism and the Arts of China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), p. 49.

[95] *Zhouli zhushu* 周禮注疏, in Ruan, ed., *Shisanjing zhushu*, *juan* 19, p. 129.

[96] Ban Gu 班固 (32–92), *Han shu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), *juan* 69, pp. 4187–88.

logical extension of the mainstream cosmological imagination since antiquity, which posited that humans and supra-human beings (e.g., Heaven) existed in an interdependent continuum rather than in separate ontological realms. The coherence of the human community, therefore, constantly relied on and included a harmonious connection to cosmic forces.[97] Jia's wailing campaign exemplified the literati's effort to reach the cosmological foundation of the regime, i.e., the top of the hierarchy in which the elite men organized their power.

Lachrymation was not a random choice of action in Jia's effort to evoke the supra-mundane; tears indeed had a special communicative ability given how emotions were understood to work in cosmological terms. Emotion, a movement driven by cosmic *qi*, was supposed to circulate from one entity to another in the interdependent and interconnected universe.[98] It travelled via "resonance" (*gan* 感), the central cosmological mechanism responsible for all movements among all entities, including humans, animals, inanimate objects, and supra-mundane beings.[99] As a result, everything could have feelings, and everything from a small flower to august Heaven could be moved to emotional tears through resonance.

As much evidence shows, Song people saw crying not as an exclusively human behaviour but as an emotional expression common to animals, plants,

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[97] Scholars have examined this continuum from various angles, one of which concerns the correspondence between the human and the supra-human. For example, see John B. Henderson, *The Development and Decline of Chinese Cosmology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), pp. 1–53.

[98] Everything was supposed to be formulated by the cosmic *qi,* and in medical discourse emotion was specifically characterized as movements of *qi* in reference to the visceral systems. See Angelika C. Messner, "Making Sense of Signs: Emotions in Chinese Medical Texts," in Paolo Santangelo and Donatella Guida, eds., *Love, Hatred, and Other Passions: Questions and Themes on Emotions in Chinese Civilization* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), p. 96. For a comprehensive analysis of the phenomenology of emotion in terms of *qi*, see Ya Zuo, "Collecting Tears."

[99] Also known as "resonance between [things of] the same category" (*tonglei ganying* 同類感應). For an introduction to the resonance mechanism, see Robin R. Wang, *Yinyang: The Way of Heaven and Earth in Chinese Thought and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 83–96.

and supra-human beings. *Record of the Listener*, for instance, recorded twenty-nine instances of crying ghosts and deities; it also discussed several cases in which monkeys, pigs, and snakes shed tears for emotional reasons (see Fig. 1). During the Jingkang incident, not only did many humans dissolve into tears, but deities also cried. According to *Records of Southern Ashes*, a deity's tears presaged the imminent catastrophe: the Goumang God cried and left tear stains on his face at the outbreak of the Song-Jin war.[100]

The cosmological workings of emotion rendered crying a universal language, one spanning the mundane and the celestial. Thus, lachrymation facilitated not only human communication but also human-divine connectivity. From commoners to elites, ministers to rulers, and humans to higher beings, tears permeated the entire span of order that structured the Song existence. Crying could certainly be a response to a crisis in a moment of vulnerability; the literati, nevertheless, weaponized tears into something more active than reactive. For Song elite men, shedding tears was an aggressive move with which they repaired power relations, reinstated leadership, and, on such basis, guarded civilization against barbarism.

VI. Moral Tears

In the previous two sections I discussed the efficacy of lachrymation in facilitating the exercise of power by elite men. Evidently, these functions had strong moral implications. Enacting ministerial loyalty and defending one's homeland were essentially moral projects, and tears, as a consequence, became a de facto expression of moral virtues. Was the connection between the lachrymose and the virtuous contingent or philosophically sanctioned? In this section, I explore the theoretical grounds for moral tears. No Song philosopher issued a systematic verdict about crying, but the Confucian and neo-Confucian discourses indeed provided ample support for the claim that lachrymation carried positive meanings in terms of moral psychology.

The connection between crying and ethics is another important aspect of the gendered meaning of male tears. The hegemony of the literati consisted of political power and moral supremacy, and what modern taxonomy categorizes

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[100] Xin Qiji, *Nan jin jiwen lu*, p. 18.

as political philosophy and ethics were mutually embedded in one coherent Confucian discourse. That is, the cultural elite asserted dominance partly through stipulating moral values in close coordination with their political practices.

A number of scholars have noticed that moral strength was a critical marker of the *wen* type of masculinity. Bret Hinsch points out that filial piety was a "preeminent masculine ideal" as a general characteristic of premodern Chinese manhood.[101] With a focus on Song men, Martin Huang and Ronald Egan concur that vigilant adherence to moral ideals became a standard by which a man defined and negotiated his manhood.[102] Beverly Bossler specifically points out that one moral virtue, loyalty, held special meaning for a Song man who aspired to perfect manhood. In the wake of the border crisis, more men stressed moral uprightness—especially fidelity—over cultural capital as the central measure of manliness. An ideal male was impervious to sexual pleasures (fidelity on a personal level) and loyal to the troubled Song regime (fidelity to the state).[103]

Thus, if tears reflected the moral strength of a man, they certainly made him look more manly, a proposition indeed supported by much philosophical evidence. To start with, emotion (*qing* 情) was a key concept in Confucian moral philosophy, which set the foundation for lachrymation—an emotional behaviour—to claim a moral status. In the Confucian programme of self-cultivation, emotion was a critical factor, which often appeared in a binary together with "nature" (*xing* 性). As one lived his life, he constantly aspired to realize the cosmically endowed moral perfection embedded in nature, and, meanwhile, he inevitably responded to external stimuli by way of having emotions. The role emotion played remained an issue of controversy, and thinkers from the classical through the Song presented a gamut of opinions. A prominent view deemed emotion a disturbance to the tranquility of nature and,

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[101] Hinsch, *Masculinities in Chinese History*, p. 7.

[102] See Martin Huang, *Negotiating Masculinities in Late Imperial China*, pp. 13–86; and Ronald Egan, *The Problem of Beauty: Aesthetic Thought and Pursuits in Northern Song Dynasty China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), pp. 369–76, esp. p. 374.

[103] Bossler, *Courtesans, Concubines, and the Cult of Female Fidelity*, pp. 421–25.

thus, a distraction to moral cultivation.[104] In this critique, emotion opposed moral nature in a sharp dichotomy and was relegated to dubiety.

While some Song thinkers concurred with the negative appraisal of emotion, others rebutted the scepticism by highlighting its possible contributions to moral cultivation. This was primarily done through relaxing the rigid dichotomy between emotion and nature/moral goodness. Su Shi, one of the weepers under discussion, argued that universal, enduring dispositions of human emotion formed the foundation for a moral order.[105] Zhu Xi, the most representative figure of neo-Confucianism and a contemporary of many *biji* authors cited in this article, argued strongly to debunk the nature-emotion demarcation. For Zhu, nature and emotion were components in a continuous process, because the former inevitably became manifest in the latter. Zhu even granted "ethical priority" to emotions because they afforded tangible clues necessary for self-cultivation.[106] He also valued how emotion prompted action and boldly argued that emotion was the only motivating agent in moral life.[107]

Zhu was not alone in identifying emotion as a manifestation of nature, a point long established in a classical argument. Mengzi (Mencius) 孟子 (372–289 B.C.E.) made a case for the so-called Four Sprouts (*si duan* 四端), namely, "commiseration" (*ceyin* 惻隱), "disdain" (*xiu'e* 羞惡), "deference" (*cirang* 辭讓), and "approval and disapproval" (*shifei* 是非) (*Mengzi* 2A:6). Mengzi conceived of the "sprouts" as feelings, and as incipient expressions of nature that required further development. Song literati made the Four Sprouts theory a centrepiece of neo-Confucianism, reinterpreting the "sprouts" as momentary revelations of nature, often obscured but demanding recovery.[108] In either model, the four

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[104] The philosophical introduction to *qing* above is a paraphrase of arguments by Stephen Angle and Justin Tiwald. See Angle and Tiwald, *Neo-Confucianism: A Philosophical Introduction* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2017), pp. 90–93. For scholars' criticisms of emotion, see Curie Virág, "Emotions and Human Agency in the Thought of Zhu Xi," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 37 (2007): 64–75.

[105] Angle and Tiwald, *Neo-Confucianism*, p. 94.

[106] For all points above on Zhu Xi, see Virág, "Emotions and Human Agency in the Thought of Zhu Xi," esp. pp. 75–85, cited p. 83.

[107] Angle and Tiwald, *Neo-Confucianism*, p. 102.

[108] For Mengzi's "development" model and Song literati's (represented by Zhu Xi) "recovery" model, see Philip J. Ivanhoe, *Confucian Moral Self Cultivation* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2000), pp. 18 and 46.

feelings were intrinsically moral; more important, morality depended on these emotions for expression, and, on occasion, for the best possible expression. Although this argument focused on the four feelings as a specific subset of emotion, it inevitably challenged the negative view which pitched emotion against nature. Because if some emotions served to manifest moral nature, why not others?[109]

As for lachrymation, Zhu Xi indeed made a case for crying as an expression of moral nature in the particular context of mourning. Since the classical times, crying at funerals was intended to "thoroughly actualize sadness" (*jin ai* 盡哀).[110] Zhu, among other Song thinkers who wrote about mourning rituals, diligently carried this point forward. Zhu asserted that "wailing, weeping, and thoroughly actualizing sadness" (*ku qi jin ai* 哭泣盡哀) was the first and foremost component in mourning rituals, one that "makes upright" (*zheng* 正) the "great framework" (*dagang* 大綱) of moral order.[111] That is, crying allowed a thorough enactment of sadness, which anteceded the realization of moral order. This statement placed lachrymation and sadness in direct, unmediated contact with the ultimate grounds of morality and, thereby, made tears an expression of moral nature.

Therefore, for thinkers who advocated for a positive connection between emotion and moral cultivation, crying would stand out as an exemplary concrete example. Tears, indeed, could evince moral virtues, a point thinkers like Zhu Xi not only theorized about but also practised. Among many other things Zhu was famous for, he was generous with his virtuous tears. For example, he cried at the death of his major intellectual contender, Lu Xiangshan 陸象山 (1139–1192), a sign of his passion for learning and intellectual open-mindedness, both commendable virtues lodged in moral nature.[112]

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[109] This was a long-term philosophical issue that concerned Chinese literati and neo-Confucians in East Asia in general, and it culminated in the famous "Four-Seven Debate" in Joseon Korea. For a recent summary of the debate, see Philip J. Ivanhoe, *Three Streams: Confucian Reflections on Learning and the Moral Heart-Mind in China, Korea, and Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 78–89.

[110] *Jin ai* frequently appeared in instructions on wailing in the classics. For one example among many others, see *Liji zhengyi*, *juan* 56, p. 428.

[111] Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), *juan* 55, p. 1310.

[112] See ibid., *juan* 124, p. 2979.

Conclusion

Song men indeed dropped hefty tears. They wept extensively across various public spaces and in lines of activity strategic to their own success and the well-being of the empire. Their tears placed highlights on critical moments in Song life and drew together a history that annotated socio-political stakes with lachrymosity. The central thread running through this history was the role of lachrymation in consolidating the status of literati as men who held dominant power. Tears lubricated power negotiations between literati and the monarch, ensuring the former's special position as the acting agent of supreme authority. Lachrymosity provided cohesiveness to the overarching power structure, where elite men served as patriarchs over all Others, guardians of civilization, and intermediaries between human affairs and cosmic forces. To further justify this dominance in philosophical terms, the literati rendered tears a pronouncement of moral superiority, a kind of ethical excellence scaffolded on the hierarchical socio-political system. Far from a revelation of vulnerability, Song men shed tears as an enactment of power and an affirmation of ultimate might.

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Male Tears in Song China (960–1279)

(Abstract)

Ya Zuo

This article focuses on the phenomenon of abundant male tears in Song China (960–1279). It examines how Song literati appropriated lachrymation as a male prerogative in the service of interests and goals unique to the male gender and elite status. I argue that lachrymation facilitated the literati in exercising their dominant power and enhancing their brand of manhood. The efficacy of tears was particularly visible in conditions essential to Song politics, such as factional struggles and the Song-Jin border disputes. In these specific circumstances, lachrymation lubricated internal power negotiations, reinforced the structure of political dominion, and evinced moral superiority. Contrary to the conventional association in modern times of crying with weakness, in the Song, crying became an enactment of power and a marker of masculinity.

Keywords: Song literati lachrymation power masculinity

男性的眼淚：以宋代為例

（提要）

左　婭

宋代的文獻，由官書到尺牘，自正史至筆記，有關男性泣下、號哭、涕流的記載豐富多彩，然而現代史家卻未曾訴諸系統研究。本文擬以情感史和性別史的角度剖析男性哭泣的社會政治意義。與現代西方對哭泣的想像不同，宋代菁英男性，即士大夫的眼淚常常是權力的表述手段。與社會政治權力的緊密聯繫使哭泣非但不是婦孺軟弱之表現，反而是男性氣質之彰顯。士大夫在言行之間建立了一套範式，將涕淚與權謀以及德性緊密聯繫起來，在菁英男性的世界裏，把哭泣塑造成一種男性特權。本文以宋代黨爭和宋金之戰為背景，對這種特權和它的社會政治意義進行具體和深入的分析。

關鍵詞：　宋代　士大夫　哭泣　權力　男性氣質