What If Zhào Dùn Had Fled? Border Crossing and Flight into Exile in Early China

Newell Ann Van Auken
University of Iowa

According to the *Zuǒ zhuàn*, in 607 BCE Zhào Chuān murdered Lord Líng of Jìn, but the *Spring and Autumn* ascribes the assassination to Zhào Dùn, senior member of the Zhào lineage and chief minister of Jìn. Remarks attributed to Confucius defend the ascription to Zhào Dùn, stating that had he fled across the border, he would have avoided blame. That Zhào Dùn was assigned responsibility for a crime he did not commit has been a source of much discussion and has been described as "false" or "inaccurate." An overview of flights into exile (*bēn* 奔) in Spring and Autumn-period China indicates that although flight sometimes provided a practical mechanism for escaping difficulties, crossing the border without official sanction had substantial political and religious ramifications, including loss of position in the ancestral temple. Confucius's remark may be understood as framing Zhào Dùn's failure to flee across the border in terms of ritual or legal rules, implying that crossing the border would have removed him from a position of responsibility. Later versions of the story do not mention border crossing, focusing instead on moral responsibility, and their explanations of why blame was assigned to Zhào Dùn were attempts to rationalize recording practices that were based on earlier, Spring and Autumn-period norms, which no longer made sense in later times.

INTRODUCTION: THE STORY AND THE PROBLEM

An entry in the *Spring and Autumn* (*Chūnqiū* 春秋) from the second year of Lord Xuān 宣 of Lǔ 魯, 607 BCE, records the assassination of the ruler of the ancient Chinese state of Jìn 晉:

> 秋．九月．乙丑．晉趙盾弒其君夷皐．
> Autumn. The ninth month. *Yǐchǒu*. Zhào Dùn of Jìn assassinated his ruler, Yígāo. (*CQ*, Xuān 2.4, 650)[1]

Yet the corresponding story in the *Zuǒ zhuàn* is somewhat different. That account tells us that Jìn ruler Lord Líng 靈公 (whose personal name was Yígāo 夷皐) was murdered not by Zhào Dùn 趙盾, senior member of the Zhào lineage and chief minister of Jìn, but by one Zhào Chuān 趙穿, his junior kinsman. This discrepancy creates a problem, as the *Spring and Autumn* pins the assassination on an ostensibly innocent man.

I was inspired to take up this topic after hearing the late Raymond Westbrook, an authority on Ancient Near Eastern legal history, present a paper on exile at the 2008 plenary session of the national meeting of AOS in Chicago, later published as "Personal Exile in the Ancient Near East," *JAOS* 128 (2008): 317–23. I would like to express my appreciation for the plenary sessions at the national meetings, which give us a chance to hear about other parts of the non-Occidental ancient world, and in my case, inspired me to take a fresh look at an aspect of ancient China that I had previously taken for granted. I also thank Garret Olberding and the anonymous readers for thoughtful comments. All remaining errors are my own.

1. References to *Spring and Autumn* records are marked *CQ* (*Chūnqiū*) and refer to *Chūnqiū Zuǒ zhuàn zhù* 春秋左傳注, ed. Yáng Bójùn 楊伯峻 (1981; reprint, Taipei: Fùwén, 1991).

According to the *Zuǒ zhuàn*, Lord Líng was a capricious and unfair ruler, and when his chief minister Zhào Dùn (also known as Xuānzǐ 宣子) remonstrated with him, he did not change but instead dispatched someone to kill Zhào Dùn. The would-be killer was so awed by Zhào Dùn's righteousness that he opted to commit suicide rather than fulfill his mission. Zhào Dùn fended off further assassination attempts in which Lord Líng first set a large dog on him, and then sent armed men to carry out a surprise attack on him. Previously, Zhào Dùn had fed a starving man in the wilderness, and when he was in danger, this man mysteriously appeared and saved his life.[2] Despite these attacks, ultimately, it was not Zhào Dùn but his younger relative, Zhào Chuān, who killed Lord Líng.[3] Zhào Dùn himself is not directly implicated in the killing in the *Zuǒ zhuàn* narrative, and accounts in other texts concur that he did not personally commit the murder.

The *Zuǒ zhuàn* narrates as follows:

> 乙丑．趙穿攻靈公於桃園．宣子未出山而復．
> 大史書曰：「趙盾弒其君」以示於朝．宣子曰：「不然．」對曰「子為正卿，亡不越竟，反不討賊，非子而誰?」宣子曰：「嗚呼！詩曰：『我之懷矣，自詒伊慼．』其我之謂矣！」
>
> *Yǐchǒu*. Zhào Chuān attacked Lord Líng in the Peach Garden. Before Xuānzǐ [Zhào Dùn] had emerged from the mountains [across which he was fleeing], he turned back.
> The court scribe recorded, saying, "Zhào Dùn assassinated his ruler," and showed it to the court.
> Xuānzǐ said, "It is not so!" He responded, saying, "You serve as the chief minister. You fled but did not cross the border; you returned but did not punish the offender. If it is not you, then who is it?"
> Xuānzǐ said, "Alas! The *Odes* say, 'It is what I cherish, he has brought this grief.'[4] These words refer to me!" (*Zuǒ*, Xuān 2, 663)[5]

By recording Zhào Dùn as the assassin, the court scribe assigned responsibility to him, despite the fact that he did not actually commit the murder. The scribe then displayed the record in the Jìn court, presumably to make public his judgment that Zhào Dùn bore responsibility for the assassination. (Although a similar record appears in the *Spring and Autumn*, the official record of Lǔ, the *Zuǒ zhuàn* account refers to the Jìn record.) At no time were the facts of the murder disputed. That is, the court scribe did not allege that Zhào Dùn had personally killed his ruler but observed that he had neither crossed the border nor punished the offense upon his return. Apparently, these failures rendered him culpable for the crime.

2. As Ronald Egan and Kai Vogelsang have both observed, the *Zuǒ* account is probably a composite passage employing material from at least two sources. The "flashback" regarding the stranger who saved Zhào Dùn particularly stands out as of a different provenance from the surrounding material. Ronald C. Egan, "Narratives in *Tso Chuan*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 37.2 (1977): 345–46; Kai Vogelsang, "From Anecdote to History: Observations on the Composition of the *Zuozhuan*," *Oriens Extremus* 50 (2011): 102–5.

3. The precise relationship of Zhào Chuān to Zhào Dùn is unclear; see Fāng Xuànchēn 方炫琛, "*Zuǒ zhuàn* rénwù mínghào yánjiù" 左傳人物名號研究 (Ph.D. dissertation, National Chengchi Univ. Taipei, 1983), entries 1956 and 1957. One *Shǐ jì* 史記 version of the story refers to them as "brothers" 昆弟 but no other version so identifies them; *Shǐ jì* (Beijing: Zhōnghuá, 1959), 39.1675.

4. *Shījīng*, "Xióng zhì" 雄雉 (Máo no. 33). The standard text has *zǔ* 阻, 'obstruction' for *qī* 慼, 'grief'; *Máo Shī zhèngyì* 毛詩正義, *Shísānjīng zhùshū* (*SSJZS*) 十三經注疏 ed. (1815; rpt. Taipei: Yǐwén, 1973), 2:2.4a (86). Although the phrase that Zhào Dùn quotes refers to his junior relative, whose alleged murder of Lord Líng caused such woe, it is also noteworthy that the final lines of this ode (which he does not quote) assert the speaker's good conduct and bewail the failure of others to recognize his virtue. One wonders if Zhào Dùn invoked this ode in part because he expected the audience to be familiar with the remaining lines and mentally complete it, and thus understand it as an allusion to Zhào Dùn's assertion of innocence and acknowledged virtue.

5. *Zuǒ zhuàn* citations refer to Yáng Bójùn, *Chūnqiū Zuǒ zhuàn zhù*.

This account is followed by a remark ascribed to Confucius:

> 孔子曰：「董狐，古之良史也．書法不隱．趙宣子，古之良大夫也．為法受惡．惜也，越竟乃免．」
> Confucius said, "Dǒng Hú was a good scribe of old; his rules for recording did not conceal [responsibility]. Zhào Xuānzǐ was a good nobleman of old; on account of these rules [of recording] he accepted humiliation.[6] What a pity, had he crossed the border, he would have avoided blame!" (*Zuǒ*, Xuān 2, 663)

This remark, and in particular the closing reference to crossing the border, will serve as the point of departure for this study.

Over the centuries much has been made of the obvious fault lines between assignment of blame in the *Spring and Autumn* and the "true story" given in other works such as the *Zuǒ zhuàn*. To some extent, such discrepancies are unsurprising, since in origin and nature, the *Spring and Autumn* differs substantially from the *Zuǒ zhuàn*. The *Spring and Autumn* is a register of selected events recorded from the perspective of the ancient Chinese state of Lǔ, covering 722 to 479 BCE.[7] It almost certainly originated as an official record of Lǔ, but the provenance of the current text is disputed. Tradition ascribes it to Confucius, and much of the associated body of commentary assumes that many of its records conveyed his "praise and blame" (*bāobiǎn* 褒貶) by means of "subtle words" (*wéiyán* 微言), that is, slight variations in phrasing. An alternative view associates the *Spring and Autumn* with religious practice, including ritual announcements (*gào* 告) and the ancestral cult.[8] This understanding of the *Spring and Autumn* is attested quite early—the earliest surviving references to it appear in a set of commentarial passages embedded in the *Zuǒ zhuàn*—but it never became the dominant view.[9] Nonetheless, the connection of the *Spring and Autumn* with religious practice appears to be supported by its highly regular structure and formulaic language together with its attention to hierarchy and apparent ritual avoidances.

The *Zuǒ zhuàn* is one of the three primary commentaries or "traditions" (*zhuàn* 傳) to the *Spring and Autumn* and, as such, is closely related to the *Spring and Autumn*, but it diverges significantly in form and content. Whereas *Spring and Autumn* records are brief, formulaic notations, as illustrated by the record of Lord Líng's assassination, the bulk of the *Zuǒ zhuàn* comprises narrative accounts, many (but not all) of which correspond to *Spring and Autumn* records, albeit with significantly more detail. The two works do not always agree; that is, there are cases in which the information given in the *Spring and Autumn* appears to conflict with that in the *Zuǒ zhuàn*. Among these discrepancies, perhaps the best-known category is that of death records of Lǔ rulers: although other early historical accounts, including the *Zuǒ zhuàn*, maintain that some were murdered, the *Spring and Autumn* records these (and indeed all) deaths of Lǔ rulers as natural deaths. Such discrepancies may be the result of ritual avoidances—for example, prohibitions against recording murders or subjugations of Lǔ

6. Various interpretations have been proposed for this line. I understand 法 in 為法受惡 to refer to the "rules" or "models" of recording employed by Dǒng Hú; for an alternative reading, see Vogelsang, "From Anecdote to History," 104 n. 26.

7. The version accompanying the *Zuǒ* ends in 479 BCE; the *Gōngyáng* and *Gǔliáng* versions continue to 481 BCE.

8. Representative scholarship includes Piet van der Loon, "The Ancient Chinese Chronicles and the Growth of Historical Ideals," in *Historians of China and Japan*, ed. W. G. Beasley and Edwin G. Pulleyblank (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1961), 25; Jacques Gernet, *A History of Chinese Civilization*, tr. J. R. Foster (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1982), 84; and Yuri Pines, "Intellectual Change in the Chunqiu Period: The Reliability of the Speeches in the *Zuozhuan* as Sources of Chunqiu Intellectual History," *Early China* 22 (1997): 83.

9. On the *Zuǒ* commentarial passages, see Van Auken, *The Commentarial Transformation of the* Spring and Autumn (Albany: SUNY Press, 2016), 41–64.

rulers—rather than diverging views of events or deliberate attempts to deceive or mislead. As I propose in this paper, it is likely that similar religiously based conventions determined how Lord Líng's assassination was recorded and what Zhào Dùn's role was said to have been.

Much ink has been spilled concerning the discrepancy between the details of what allegedly happened—Zhào Dùn never touched the murder weapon, nor did he instigate the plot—and what was recorded, and it has been claimed that the record treated Zhào Dùn as morally culpable because, as chief minister, he failed to punish the actual killer. This much seems reasonable: it corresponds to what the scribe said, and (as discussed below) it is echoed in other versions of this story. But Dǒng Hú also said, "You fled but did not cross the border," and in his comments recorded in the *Zuǒ zhuàn*, Confucius does not mention Zhào Dùn's failure to punish Zhào Chuān but instead laments that he did not flee, "What a pity, had he crossed the border, he would have avoided blame!" The statement ascribed to Confucius clearly implies that if Zhào Dùn had left Jìn, he would not have been assigned blame.

Recent scholarship concerning Zhào Dùn (discussed below) focuses primarily on the apparent problem of an innocent man being assigned responsibility for a crime committed by someone else and tends to accept the suggestion, implicit in Dǒng Hú's comments, that he was held responsible because he failed to uphold his obligation to punish the actual criminal. But the question "what if Zhào Dùn had fled?" remains unexamined. Would flight have simply provided Zhào Dùn an escape from the problems created by his junior relative? Or is there more to it than that?

To address this and related questions, the first part of this paper examines *Zuǒ zhuàn* accounts of Spring and Autumn-period flights into exile together with practices associated with crossing borders between states. Border crossing had religious ramifications, and flight into exile, that is, crossing into another state without the proper ceremonial steps, entailed political and religious consequences for the person who fled. I propose that the case of Zhào Dùn likely involved formal rules that connected flight (or in Zhào Dùn's case, failure to flee) with assignment of responsibility in official records such as the *Spring and Autumn* or the Jìn record referred to in this account, and that Confucius's remark was aimed at pointing out that both the record made by the good scribe Dǒng Hú and Zhào Dùn's begrudging acceptance of that record complied with these rules.[10]

The second part of this paper explores other versions of this story and its early reception, and reveals a shift in emphasis from lamenting Zhào Dùn's failure to flee to asserting that he bore responsibility because he did not punish the true murderer. This shift points to a broader transformation in *Spring and Autumn* interpretation. Although its records were originally made by Lǔ scribes in accord with recording rules that were probably connected to religious practice, they came to be understood as having been composed or edited by Confucius in order to convey moral judgments on events and actors. The reception history of the story of Zhào Dùn illustrates how, as cultural and religious practices changed, the understanding of particular events was transformed and early recording practices were forgotten and displaced.

RECORDING REGICIDE AND ASSIGNING RESPONSIBILITY

In commenting on the case of Zhào Dùn, many scholars have been primarily concerned with the question of truth, and much ink has been spilled attempting to reconcile Confu-

10. A contrasting case is that of Qí nobleman Cuī Zhù 崔杼, who killed two scribes in an attempt to avoid being recorded as an assassin; *CQ*, Xiāng 25.2, 1094 and *Zuǒ*, Xiāng 25, 1099; on the stigma associated with being recorded as an assassin, see Van Auken, "Killings and Assassinations in the *Spring and Autumn* as Records of Judgments," *Asia Major* (3d series) 27.1 (2014): 20–22.

cius's praise of Dǒng Hú with the scribe's "inaccurate" record. For example, Burton Watson claimed that he "is shown falsifying the record in order to make a moral point" and that Confucius "fully approved of this type of falsification," describing Confucius's praise of the scribe as "one of the dark sayings" of the *Zuǒ zhuàn*.[11] Similarly, Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer writes that the scribe Dǒng Hú "conceals, or deliberately misrepresents, the facts" and suggests that he may have done so "with certain political motives" in mind.[12] Other criticism of this story is based on contemporary conceptions of objectivity in historiography, which are seen as conflicting with Confucian notions of moral responsibility. On Cho Ng and Q. Edward Wang thus query, "Why did Dong Hu blame Zhao Dun for something he did not do? Why would Confucius [. . .] endorse Dong's apparent falsification of the record?" They emphasize the "moral position" of Confucius, namely, that Zhào Dùn bore responsibility because he did not prosecute Zhào Chuān and propose that Confucius's praise of Dǒng Hú shows that he did not value "objectivity" as we understand it today; they conclude that "Confucian historiography," of which they consider the *Spring and Autumn* an example, aimed at "setting a moral example for posterity."[13] Similarly, Mark Edward Lewis mentions "diverging from the facts to record a true judgment" in connection with this case, and, invoking the *Gōngyáng* 公羊 commentary, proposes that for Zhào Dùn, failing at his "obligation to avenge a murdered lord" was equivalent to having committed the murder himself.[14]

To a great extent, these views reflect and respond to early imperial interpretations of this account, which embody the view that history endeavors to use the past to provide moral models to guide future actions. Yet the *Spring and Autumn* itself was produced by a different and earlier historiographic tradition, and in analyzing Zhào Dùn's case, it is necessary to take the characteristics of this tradition into account. (This tradition is presumably also represented by the official records of Jìn referred to in the *Zuǒ zhuàn* account.) The record concerning Zhào Dùn is but one of many in which the *Spring and Autumn* assigns responsibility to a person whom the *Zuǒ zhuàn* leads us to view as innocent, at least by most contemporary Western standards. Thus, before taking up flights into exile, it is worthwhile first to discuss briefly how the *Spring and Autumn* recorded instances of regicide, in which a subject killed his own ruler, and to consider how these recording practices may bear on our understanding of Zhào Dùn's case.

First, *Spring and Autumn* records of killings or assassinations never identify multiple killers but inevitably assign responsibility to a single person. Thus, no matter how many people were involved in an act of regicide, the pertinent *Spring and Autumn* record could name only one. The fact that not a single *Spring and Autumn* record identifies more than one killer indicates the existence of a rule prohibiting the record-keepers from identifying multiple assassins. Assuming that similar rules applied to the Jìn records, this means that when the scribe Dǒng Hú recorded Lord Líng's murder, naming both Zhào Dùn and Zhào Chuān would not have been an option. He had to choose one.

11. Burton Watson, tr., *The Tso Chuan: Selections from China's Oldest Narrative History* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1989), 80.

12. Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer, "Preface" to *Historical Truth, Historical Criticism, and Ideology: Chinese Historiography and Historical Culture from a New Comparative Perspective*, ed. Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer, Achim Mittag, and Jörn Rüsen (Leiden: Brill, 2005), xiii–xiv.

13. On Cho Ng and Q. Edward Wang, *Mirroring the Past: The Writing and Use of History in Imperial China* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 27–28.

14. Mark Edward Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), 131; idem, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990), 81.

This leads to an important question: when multiple people were potentially implicated in an assassination, what was the basis for assigning blame? Comparison of *Spring and Autumn* records with corresponding *Zuǒ zhuàn* accounts of regicide reveals no clear rule. The assassin identified in the *Spring and Autumn* was often not the person who, according to the *Zuǒ zhuàn*, actually wielded the murder weapon, and he was not necessarily present when the killing took place. Regicide could also be ascribed to the individual who instigated the assassination plot, to someone who benefited from the death, or to the highest-ranking person involved, even if that person had little or no direct involvement.[15] The prohibition on naming more than one assassin resembles *Spring and Autumn* recording practices for events such as diplomatic missions or military actions. These events involved multiple participants, but the records identified a single leader, the highest-ranking individual involved.[16] It is thus not particularly surprising that Zhào Dùn was named the assassin and assigned responsibility for his ruler's murder, for not only had he been the target of several murder attempts initiated by Lord Líng and thus benefited from his death, but perhaps more significantly, he was the chief minister of Jìn and also the senior male relative of the killer. Although Zhào Dùn's case has attracted special notice because of his protests and because of the comments ascribed to Confucius, it is not unique; the *Spring and Autumn* contains other cases in which an ostensibly innocent person is recorded as an assassin.

Nonetheless, Confucius's remark suggests that flight into exile did allow individuals such as Zhào Dùn (that is, individuals who were deemed responsible by early Chinese standards, even if not by contemporary norms) to avoid being assigned responsibility for their crimes. This is indeed perplexing: why would crossing the border and leaving the state have affected whether or not someone was assigned blame for a crime? In most contemporary legal systems, running away does not allow criminals to be absolved of guilt, and even in early China, as shown by the case of Sòng 宋 nobleman Wàn 萬 described below, flight was not always a way to succeed at getting away with murder. But if Confucius is to be believed, running away did sometimes result in an "innocent" verdict in the official records, or at least, the absence of a record indicating guilt.

Confucius's remarks concerning the potential effects of flight on Zhào Dùn's responsibility have received attention from a few contemporary scholars. Burton Watson noted that this remark seems "to imply that by simply stepping outside the territory of one's state one could thereby dissolve the ties of duty that bind a subject to his prince," but he also observed that commentators have understood this passage to mean that if Zhào Dùn had been abroad when Lord Líng was assassinated, he would not have been implicated because he would have been distant from the location at the time of the crime.[17] Wai-yee Li expresses agreement with the interpretation that being abroad would have proven that Zhào Dùn was not guilty and is dismissive of the possibility that a "technical detail of location would have absolved [Zhào Dùn] even if he were guilty."[18] An alternative assessment appears in the work of Zhāng

15. For examples, see Van Auken, "Killings and Assassinations," 16–17 nn. 54–59.

16. On naming only one leader in military actions or diplomatic missions, see Van Auken, "Who Is a *rén* 人? The Use of *rén* in *Spring and Autumn* Records and Its Interpretation in the *Zuǒ*, *Gōngyáng*, and *Gǔliáng* Commentaries," *JAOS* 131 (2012): 559–60; for discussion of *rén* in records of killings, see 566–69.

17. Watson, *The Tso Chuan*, 80. This suggestion may be related to the *Chūnqiū fánlù* 春秋繁露 reference to Zhào Dùn's "being abroad" 在外 during the assassination as evidence of his innocence; see discussion of *Chūnqiū fánlù* and n. 65 below.

18. Wai-yee Li, *The Readability of the Past in Early Chinese Historiography* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Asia Center, 2007), 409. See David Schaberg's analysis in *A Patterned Past: Form and Thought in Early Chinese Historiography* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Asia Center, 2001), 262–65; and Q. Edward Wang, "Objectivity,

Sùqīng 張素卿, who follows the traditional interpretation in maintaining that Confucius's comment "on account of these rules he accepted humiliation" 為法受惡 refers to the fact that Zhào Dùn "returned but did not punish the offender" 反不討賊, but she also observes that in early China, flight into exile was sometimes intended as an act of protest against a ruler's misconduct.[19] But missing from these evaluations is the examination of what flight into exile entailed in Spring and Autumn-period China and of the ramifications of exile as set forth in other accounts. Such an analysis will throw additional light on Confucius's lament, and will help us come closer to answering the question posed by the title of this study, "what if Zhào Dùn had fled?"

FLIGHT INTO EXILE

In exploring the significance of flight into exile, we might first ask what flight into exile entailed. Who fled, and under what circumstances? Comparison of *Spring and Autumn* records of flight into exile and corresponding *Zuǒ zhuàn* accounts shows that not all individuals who fled did so for the same reasons, nor did all who fled receive the same treatment in the *Spring and Autumn*.[20] The *Spring and Autumn* employs three different patterns to record flights, and which pattern was used seems to have been contingent on the rank of the individual who fled, and, if he fled to Lǔ, perhaps also on the reception he received.[21]

The first pattern was employed when a state was annihilated and the ruler left. In the *Spring and Autumn*, such records often follow records of annihilation and simply note that the ruler "fled" (*bēn* 奔):

> 冬．十有二月．吳滅徐．徐子章羽奔楚．
> Winter. The twelfth month. Wú annihilated Xú. The Zǐ of Xú, Zhāngyǔ, fled to Chǔ. (*CQ,* Zhāo 30.4, 1505)

Given that the reason for the flight is that the ruler had no state in which to remain, such cases are typically not associated with negative evaluation in the *Zuǒ zhuàn*, nor is the ruler considered a criminal.

A second pattern was employed when a nobleman from another state fled to Lǔ; in such cases, the *Spring and Autumn* records that he "came fleeing" (*lái bēn* 來奔):

> 宋司城來奔．
> The Minister of Works of Sòng came fleeing.[22] (*CQ,* Wén 8.8, 565)

Truth, and Hermeneutics: Re-Reading the Chunqiu," in *Classics and Interpretations: The Hermeneutic Traditions in Chinese Culture*, ed. Ching-i Tu (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2000), 162–63.

19. Zhāng Sùqīng, *Xùshì yǔ jiěshì: Zuǒ zhuàn jīng jiě yánjiù* 敘事與解釋：左傳經解研究 (Taipei: Shūlín, 1998), 155–62; her analysis compares the three interpretive traditions. For her comments about flight as protest, see 157 n. 46.

20. Zhāng Yánxiū 張顏修 ("Chūnqiū chū bēn kǎo shù" 春秋出奔考述, *Shǐxué yuèkān* 1996.6: 21–25) attempts to tabulate all instances of "going out in flight" recorded in the *Zuǒ zhuàn* and *Guóyǔ* 國語, and is primarily concerned with flight as a societal phenomenon involving movement of human capital. See too Qín Guólì 秦國利, "Chūnqiū shíqī guìzú chūben kǎolùn 春秋時期貴族出奔考論," *Shǐxué yuèkān* 2009.6: 46–52.

21. Records using these three patterns are tabulated in Gù Dònggāo 顧棟高 (1679–1759), *Chūnqiū dàshìbiǎo* 春秋大事表 (1873; rpt. Taipei: Guǎngxué, 1975), 13.15a–23b (4: 1795–1812). By my count, the *Spring and Autumn* contains eighty-four records of flights into exile 奔; of these, fifty-five record "going out in flight" 出奔; twenty record "coming in flight" to Lǔ 來奔, and nine simply record that someone "fled" 奔.

22. The *Zuǒ* account conveys that he had been treated unfairly before fleeing but was received by Lǔ with the honor appropriate to his office; *Zuǒ*, Wén 8, 567–68. For a similar case, also involving a Sòng official, see *CQ*, Wén 14.10, 601 and *Zuǒ*, Wén 14, 606. See too *CQ*, Wén 12.1, 585 and *Zuǒ*, Wén 12, 586–87 concerning Lǔ's reception of a deposed heir.

Corresponding *Zuǒ zhuàn* accounts indicate that individuals who "came fleeing" to Lǔ enjoyed formal reception and official recognition. By contrast, no record was made of the flight of a Jǔ 莒 prince who attempted to flee to Lǔ but who was turned away shortly after his arrival; we may speculate that this was because he was not received in Lǔ.[23] Cases of individuals "coming in flight," like those of rulers who "fled," are not associated with criticism; presumably the fact that Lǔ accepted these fugitives meant that Lǔ did not view them as criminals, even if their home state regarded them in a different light.

The third and most common pattern records cases in which individuals were said to have left their home states and "gone out in flight" (*chū bēn* 出奔). These records are frequently associated with wrongdoing on the part of the individual who fled. For example, in the following case, a record of Sòng nobleman Wàn's flight immediately follows a record stating that he had assassinated his lord:

秋．八月．甲午．宋萬弒其君捷及其大夫仇牧．
Autumn. The eighth month. *Jiǎwǔ.* Wàn of Sòng assassinated his lord, Jié, and his nobleman, Qiú Mù. (*CQ*, Zhuāng 12.3, 190)

冬．十月．宋萬出奔陳．
Winter. The tenth month. Wàn of Sòng went out fleeing to Chén. (*CQ*, Zhuāng 12.4, 190)

Although not all records of "going out in flight" are preceded by records of the fugitive's alleged misconduct, many correspond to *Zuǒ zhuàn* narratives that reveal that the person who fled had engaged in wrongdoing or was facing punishment in his home state. More generally, records of "going out in flight" are often associated with criticism or negative evaluations of the fugitive, in contrast with records using the two other patterns.

During the Spring and Autumn period, flight provided a practical mechanism for escaping difficulties in one's home state, and those who fled were typically escaping a bad situation rather than being drawn to a good situation elsewhere. Individuals who "went out in flight" did so for a variety of reasons. Some noblemen, like Wàn of Sòng, had committed a crime and, facing the expectation of execution, opted to flee. After succession struggles, unsuccessful contenders for the throne and their supporters were often killed, and thus some fled to escape retribution. Individuals who had been slandered also sometimes chose to flee, whether as a protest against being unfairly maligned or simply to avoid being killed. Yet not all who fled into exile did so of their own volition; a few noblemen who had engaged in misconduct were not killed but instead were driven away. The *Spring and Autumn* still records most of these cases as "flights."[24] On at least one occasion, someone who fled was not only permitted to do so, but his household members and belongings were later sent after him.[25] Thus some flights were surreptitious escapes by the fugitive without the state's knowledge or consent, others were punishments enforced by the government, and still others may have been instances in which a fugitive was quietly allowed to flee, with the government's tacit consent.

Yet for individuals accused of crimes, flight was not a foolproof way to escape trouble, and some fugitives were turned away or captured and sent back to their home states. Thus the *Zuǒ zhuàn* recounts cases in which a nobleman fled to another state, but his home state requested his return, as in the case of Wàn of Sòng, who fled after murdering his ruler but

23. *Zuǒ*, Wén 18, 633; see subsequent discussion and n. 28.

24. See for example the case of Huà Ruò 華弱 of Sòng; according to the *Zuǒ*, the ruler "drove him away" 逐之, but the *Spring and Autumn* says that he "came fleeing"; *CQ*, Xiāng 6.2, 945 and *Zuǒ*, Xiāng 6, 946. The *Spring and Autumn* records only two instances of "banishment" 放; *CQ*, Xuān 1.5, 646 and Zhāo 8.9, 1300.

25. *Zuǒ*, Wén 6, 552–53; but this unusual account may be a moral tale aimed at illustrating the value of not holding a grudge.

was forcibly returned to Sòng, where he was executed.[26] States were also criticized for harboring fugitives, and taking in someone whom another state deemed a criminal could generate discord.[27] When the deposed heir to the Jǔ throne, Pú 僕, fled to Lǔ after killing his father and ruler, Lǔ turned him away precisely because they did not wish to leave themselves open to charges of harboring a fugitive.[28] On one famous occasion, Jìn heir apparent Shēnshēng 申生, who had been slandered by his stepmother, was encouraged to flee, yet he instead chose to commit suicide, stating that other states would believe the slander and not receive him.[29] Apparently, flight was a punishment less severe than death, but it was not always an option, and because receiving welcome in a foreign state was not always assured, those branded criminals who had the option to flee did not always do so.

Some individuals fled after being accused of crimes such as assassination or fomenting rebellion, but others offended their rulers by speaking too freely and admonishing their rulers or disagreeing with their decisions. For them, flight may have been a pragmatic mechanism that allowed the fugitive to avoid retaliation from an angry ruler, but—as observed by Zhāng Sùqīng and mentioned above—such flights were also framed as ministerial protests against misconduct. For example, the *Zuǒ zhuàn* records that the Wèi 衛 ruler silently acquiesced to the murder of Wèi nobleman Níng Xǐ 甯喜, who had previously been his strong supporter. Subsequently, the ruler's younger brother Zǐxián 子鮮 (also called Zhuān 鱄) fled in protest, saying:

> 賞罰無章．何以沮勸．君失其信．而國無刑．
> Reward and punishment have no standard! How can [bad] be blocked and [good] be encouraged? The lord has lost his trustworthiness and the state is without [appropriate] punishment. (*Zuǒ*, Xiāng 27, 1128)

While Zǐxián's flight certainly may have involved practical considerations concerning his own fate, he explicitly framed it as a protest, criticizing the situation and admonishing the ruler for his failures.[30] After Zǐxián fled, his ruler sent someone to urge him to turn back, but he refused to do so. Later, when asked to take office in Jìn, he also refused, saying that this would cause others to suspect he had fled Wèi to take office elsewhere, and he did not wish his motive to be questioned. As the events are narrated in the *Zuǒ zhuàn*, this flight constituted a very public protest and admonishment of the ruler's misconduct.

Another account associated with protest concerns the flight of Sòng minister Huà Yuán 華元, an account that bears some resemblance to that of Zhào Dùn. Like Zhào Dùn, Huà Yuán was a powerful minister in his home state who fled but later returned. In both cases, a murder was committed by a nobleman, who (at least initially) went unpunished. The crime in Sòng was not regicide but the murder of the late ruler's son, and unlike Zhào Dùn, Huà Yuán was not kin to the criminal. Indeed, he stated that he wished to punish the criminal yet

26. *Zuǒ*, Zhuāng 12, 189; Zhuāng 13, 191–93.

27. Raymond Westbrook discusses the connection between political sovereignty and giving asylum vs. granting extradition in "Personal Exile in the Ancient Near East," 319–20. Accounts of Chinese extraditions were typically framed in moral terms, but surely the relative power of states and their need to maintain some level of autonomy were also considerations.

28. For a speech defending this position, see *Zuǒ*, Wén 18, 633–43. Similarly, Qí nobleman Qìng Fēng 慶封 fled to Lǔ; when Qí reprimanded Lǔ for receiving him, he fled again and was killed by Chǔ; *CQ*, Xiāng 28.6, 1139 and *Zuǒ*, Xiāng 28, 1145–49; and *CQ*, Zhāo 4.4, 1245 and *Zuǒ*, Zhāo 4, 1253.

29. *Zuǒ*, Xī 4, 299.

30. *Zuǒ*, Xiāng 27, 1127–29; *CQ*, Xiāng 27.4, 1126. Zǐxián may bear some blame for events, but does not suggest that his flight was motivated by his own wrongdoing. See notes, Takezoe Shin'ichiro 竹添進一郎, *Saden Kaisen* 左傳會箋 (1911; rpt., Taipei: Tiāngōng, 1986), Xiāng 27, 1232.

was powerless to do so. Declaring that his crime was great for not correcting the situation, Huà Yuán fled to Jìn. Eventually he was convinced to return, but he consented only under the condition that he be allowed to avenge the crime, which he did upon his return.[31] In this case, Huà Yuán fled to protest his own situation, that of being unable to punish wrongdoing. He leveraged requests for his return to achieve a desired outcome, namely, permission to avenge a murder. This sort of self-imposed exile differs from flight after committing a crime or in fear for one's life. Individuals who fled in protest often expected to be asked to return, unlike those who fled in disgrace or fear.

Returning to Zhào Dùn, we might ask, what motivated him to flee? The *Zuǒ zhuàn* narrative leaves this question open, and different aspects of the story allow for several of the possible motives described above to fit. Zhào Dùn had been persecuted by Lord Líng, who had attempted to murder him on multiple occasions, and so Zhào Dùn may have fled in fear for his life. The reason that Zhào Dùn was persecuted was that he had openly admonished Lord Líng for his immoral conduct, and Lord Líng had made it clear that he would not change his ways. Thus it is also possible that Zhào Dùn realized his counsel would not be heeded, and his flight may have been an act of overt protest. It is unlikely that he fled to distance himself from Zhào Chuān's murder of Lord Líng—the *Zuǒ zhuàn* account suggests the regicide occurred after he had departed but before he had crossed the border—and (unlike Huà Yuán of Sòng) he certainly did not flee because he was not permitted to punish the murderer for his crime.

A question we would like to answer is how fleeing might have affected someone who had been implicated in an instance of regicide, but it is often difficult to determine what happened to assassins after their crimes. We know that punishments of assassins were not consistently recorded in the *Spring and Autumn* since, in several cases, the *Zuǒ zhuàn* tells us that an assassin was executed, yet this goes without mention in the *Spring and Autumn*.[32] Moreover, although some assassins who fled into exile were sent back and executed, the ultimate fate of most who fled is unknown. In short, outcomes varied, and (as in the case of Wàn of Sòng) flight did not necessarily allow criminals to avoid punishment. Zhào Dùn's case was particularly unusual since, although he was recorded as an assassin in the official record of his home state, he was not executed, and after his return he continued to play an active role as a Jìn official.

Although comparison with other cases of flight does not permit us to arrive at a definitive answer to the question posed in the title of this article, "what if Zhào Dùn had fled?," examining the fate of individuals who crossed the border into other states may illuminate the remark ascribed to Confucius, "What a pity, had he crossed the border, he would have avoided blame!" Thus we will now turn to cases of border crossing, both sanctioned and unsanctioned, and will examine what border crossing entailed and why crossing the border might have permitted Zhào Dùn to escape blame.

CROSSING THE BORDER

Two significant features appear in many *Zuǒ zhuàn* narratives concerning flight into exile. First, they often refer explicitly to the fugitive's crossing the border (*jìng* 竟 or 境) of his home state. Second, many mention ancestral sacrifices and assert that a consequence of flight into exile was abandoning the altars or cutting off ancestral sacrifices. Finally, they indicate

31. *Zuǒ*, Chéng 15, 874, corresponding to *CQ*, Chéng 15.8–9, 872.

32. Seventeen assassination records name the assassin; of these, five assassins are later recorded as having been killed by their home states.

that flight—that is, crossing the border without official sanction—resulted in change of status or loss of official position.

Obviously, traveling across the border of a state was necessary on some occasions, as for diplomatic visits or military expeditions. Such border crossings had to be approved by the ruler, who gave his sanction (*mìng* 命), and officially sanctioned border crossings had religious significance and were accompanied by various rites and were reported (*gào* 告) to the ancestors.[33] According to the "Pìn lǐ" 聘禮 section of the *Yí lǐ* 儀禮, as part of the preparations for interstate diplomatic travel, an emissary announced his departure and presented offerings at the ancestral shrine.[34] The *Lǐ jì* 禮記 notes that when a regional ruler set out to see the Son of Heaven (*tiān zǐ* 天子), a series of reports was made to the father's shrine, the altars of grain and earth, the lineage temple, and the mountains and streams, and when one regional ruler visited another, preparations entailed a similar series of activities; likewise, offerings and reports were made when a ruler set out on a military expedition.[35] The requirement that undertakings requiring crossing the border and leaving the state be reported to the spirits confirms that these activities were not merely political in nature but were closely bound up with religious practice. Arrival in another state was also accompanied by ritual activity; upon arrival, a visiting ruler or nobleman was greeted with a special ceremony to acknowledge his arrival and "the toil of his travels" (*jiāoláo* 郊勞).[36] Return to one's home state involved yet another instance of border crossing, and returns were also announced and accompanied by ceremonial activities. Indeed, one of the most common types of *Spring and Autumn* record states that the Lǔ ruler had "arrived from" 至自 abroad, and the *Zuǒ zhuàn* tells us that the ruler's return was announced in the ancestral temple.[37] In short, crossing the border and leaving one's home state required the ruler's sanction, and all kinds of sanctioned border crossing, including leaving and returning to one's home state and arriving in another state, had religious significance and were accompanied by religious activity.[38]

When a ruler or nobleman fled, he crossed the border without official sanction and without completing the ceremonial steps regularly required when one left his home state.[39] *Zuǒ zhuàn* commentator Dù Yù 杜預 (222–284) stated that *bēn* entailed "going out [of the state] without

33. Reports to the spirits were a part of Spring and Autumn-period religious practice, attested in ritual handbooks and in the *Zuǒ*. "Reporting" or "announcing" as a ritual activity directed at the gods is evident in Shāng oracle bone inscriptions (late second millennium BCE); Ken'ichi Takashima, "Some Ritual Verbs in Shang Texts," *Journal of Chinese Linguistics* 30.1 (2002): 97–141, esp. 109–12.

34. *Yí lǐ*, "Pìn lǐ," *SSJZS* ed., 19.5b (228).

35. *Lǐ jì jíjiě* 禮記集解, comm. Sūn Xīdàn 孫希旦 (b. 1736) (Taipei: Wénshǐzhé, 1990), "Zēng Zǐ wèn" 曾子問, 2:510–11; 2:524–25. See also Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence*, 23 and 254 n. 30.

36. For a description of the rites involved when a *pìn* mission crossed the border into another state, see *Yí lǐ*, "Pìn lǐ," *SSJZS*, 19.9ab (230). *Zuǒ*, Zhāo 28, 1490–91 records that when Lǔ Lord Zhāo fled to Jìn, he requested to be received without the regular border ceremonies but was told to return to the border and then be greeted properly. For other instances of 郊勞, see *Zuǒ*, Xī 33, 496 and Zhāo 2, 1229. Another hint that border crossing held special importance appears in an account of a diplomatic mission that turned back after hearing of an insurrection at home; it explicitly notes that they had "not yet crossed the border" 未出竟; *Zuǒ*, Zhāo 1, 1223.

37. *Zuǒ*, Huán 2, 91.

38. Perhaps related, the account of a nobleman who was dispatched to deliver the household members and belongings of a fugitive avers that he delivered them only to the border; *Zuǒ*, Wén 6, 552–53 and n. 25 above. We may speculate that the fugitive was not permitted to return and that the nobleman was likewise prohibited from crossing the border to him.

39. Cases such as that of the nobleman whose household was later sent after him seem to have involved tacit acceptance of the flight but did not necessarily involve the ruler's official sanction.

the proper rites" 不以禮出.[40] Unsanctioned border crossings had specific consequences for those who fled, whether rulers or nobility. This is indicated by *Zuǒ zhuàn* narratives and by formal variations in the phrasing of *Spring and Autumn* records.

Whether or not the person who fled had crossed the border determined his status, and in the case of a ruler, whether he was still considered the ruler. The *Zuǒ zhuàn* narrates that one Gōngsūn Qīng 公孫青, a nobleman of Qí 齊, was dispatched to make a diplomatic visit to Wèi. Shortly after setting out, he learned that the Wèi ruler had left the capital because of an insurrection. Upon hearing this, Gōngsūn Qīng sent an inquiry to the Qí ruler asking to whom his visit should be made, that is, whether he should visit the Wèi ruler or whoever held power in the capital. In response he was told, "if he is still within the borders, then he is the Wèi ruler" 猶在竟內，則衛君也.[41] Gōngsūn Qīng thus paid his visit to the ruler, even though he had left the capital and was camping in the wilderness. The instructions given to Gōngsūn Qīng imply a corollary, namely, that if the ruler had crossed the borders and left his state, he would no longer be the ruler. This is confirmed by the account of an earlier Wèi ruler, Lord Xiàn 獻, who also fled but who did cross the border. After his departure, a Lǔ visitor to Wèi stated that the Lǔ ruler had "heard that your ruler is not in charge of the altars of earth and grain and has crossed the borders into another realm" 聞君不撫社稷而越在他竟.[42] Both accounts display concern with whether the ruler continued to maintain the altars of earth and grain, and both equate crossing the border with abandonment of the state altars, that is, with abdication of religious responsibilities as head of state. Similar language was used in reference to nobility, but instead of abandoning the state altars, a nobleman was said to have "failed to keep watch over the ancestral temple" 失守宗廟.[43] Crossing the border (*yuè jìng* 越竟) seems to have been the point at which a ruler's status changed, and as shown below, a similar standard apparently applied to nobility.

Flights, like officially sanctioned border crossings, were also subject to ceremonial reports or announcements (*gào*) in the ancestral temple, although we do not know if all flights were reported to the ancestors, and the reason for the report seems to have been different. When Lord Xiàn fled, upon reaching the border, he dispatched an official to return to the Wèi capital to announce his exile in the temple. In this case, the exiled ruler seems to have intended to control the news received by the ancestors, since the official was instructed to "report his departure, and moreover to report that he was without blame" 告亡且告無罪. Lord Xiàn's consort responded to this as follows:

> 定姜曰：「無神，何告？若有，不可誣也．有罪，若何告無？ [. . .] 告亡而已．無告無罪！」
>
> Dìng Jiāng said, "If there are no spirits, then to whom does he make this report? But if there are, then they cannot be deceived. If he is guilty, then how can you report that he is not? [. . .] Report only that he has fled and that is all. Do not report that he is without guilt!" (*Zuǒ*, Xiāng 14, 1013–1014)

40. Dù Yù, *Chūnqiū shìlì* 春秋釋例 (1802; rpt., Taipei: Zhōnghuá), 4.5b. See also the remarks of Kǒng Yǐngdá 孔穎達 (574–648), *Chūnqiū Zuǒ zhèngyì* 春秋左傳正義, *SSJZS*, 21.2a (360).

41. *Zuǒ*, Zhāo 20, 1411.

42. *Zuǒ*, Xiāng 14, 1010–13. The phrase "has failed to maintain the altars of earth and grain, and has ventured out into the weeds and wilds" 失守社稷，越在草莽 also appears in Dìng 4, 1548 in reference to the Chǔ ruler's flight.

43. *Zuǒ*, Xuān 10, 706; see additional discussion below. Another case linking flight and ancestral sacrifices is *Zuǒ*, Āi 14, 1686; the Sòng ruler tried to stop a nobleman from fleeing, saying that he did not want the nobleman's ancestral sacrifices to be extinguished.

This incident indicates that flight affected a ruler's standing with regard to the ancestors, and the fact that Lord Xiàn found it necessary to assert his innocence in his report suggests that flight was closely associated with misconduct.

Ceremonial reports of flights were also sent to other states. The *Zuǒ zhuàn* asserts that when a nobleman fled his home state, an announcement was made to the regional rulers:

> 凡諸侯之大夫違，告於諸侯曰：「某氏之守臣某，失守宗廟．敢告．」
> In any case of a nobleman of the regional lords departing, it was reported to the regional lords, saying, "The lineage head, So-and-so of Such-and-such a lineage, has failed to keep watch over the ancestral temple. We dare report it."[44] (*Zuǒ*, Xuān 10, 706)

These reports were framed in religious terms and castigated the individual who fled, not for the misconduct of which he was accused, but for the act of abandoning his obligations to the ancestors.[45] The *Zuǒ zhuàn* asserts that such reports formed the basis of many *Spring and Autumn* records.[46] Reports directed at rulers of other states may have been aimed at ensuring that the fugitive was not received elsewhere and in this respect may have been political in nature, but they explicitly invoke the fugitive's responsibilities to the ancestral temple, emphasizing the religious ramifications of flight.

In short, crossing the border without sanction, that is, flight into exile, was of far greater significance than simply escaping punishment and going to live in a new place; it also involved leaving one's position within one's state and lineage, with attendant political and religious consequences for oneself and perhaps one's kin. Perhaps most significantly, it entailed abandoning one's obligations to the ancestors. For a ruler, this meant loss of status as head of state, and for the senior member of a lineage, such as Zhào Dùn, we may surmise that crossing the border would have resulted in loss of status as lineage head as well as loss of political office.

Zhào Dùn's aborted flight was not the only case in which someone fled but did not leave the state. At least two other *Zuǒ zhuàn* narratives concern noblemen who fled only as far as the border. Both of these accounts indicate that if a nobleman fled, as long as he had not crossed the border, the ruler could stop him and request his return, and presumably his status would be unaffected. One account tells us that when Gōngzǐ Dì 公子地 of Sòng offended his ruler, his brother gave him the following advice:

> 「子為君禮．不過出竟．君必止子．」
> "You should act with ritual courtesy for the sake of the ruler. [Flee but] do not go as far as going out of the borders. The ruler will certainly stop you." (*Zuǒ*, Dìng 10, 1582–83)

This seems to have been a strategy aimed at allowing the ruler to forgive Gōngzǐ Dì and call him back before he crossed the border. Unfortunately for Gōngzǐ Dì, his brother miscalculated. The ruler did not stop him and subsequently refused to heed his brother's pleas on his behalf. In the end, both brothers fled the state.

A similar account notes that several Sòng noblemen fled in protest of misconduct. Rather than leaving the state, they "went out and lodged at the Jū River" 出舍於雎上, at the Sòng

44. This concerns the flight of Qí nobleman Cuī Zhù 崔杼 and is immediately preceded by the assertion that because he was not to blame, his name was neither used in the report nor recorded in the *Spring and Autumn*; *Zuǒ*, Xuān 10, 706. (This Cuī Zhù is almost certainly not the same man who was said to have killed his ruler in Xiāng 25, over five decades later; see n. 10 above.)

45. For a similar report concerning the guilt of an individual who was killed by his home state, see *Zuǒ*, Xuan 14, 753; and Van Auken, "Killings and Assassinations," 11–14.

46. On the relations of reports to records, see Van Auken, *Commentarial Transformation*, 43–52.

border.[47] Twice, delegations were dispatched to attempt to convince them to return, but they refused. Eventually the Sòng government closed the gates and they lost any chance to return, and ultimately they fled to Chǔ. Significantly, only after they had fled across the border were others appointed to their offices. This suggests that, despite their having left the capital and ceased to fulfill their political duties, they did not fully abdicate their positions until after they had crossed the border and left Sòng.

These accounts show that in practical terms, crossing the border was the point of no return. In the case of a nobleman who fled, as long as he remained within the state, even if he had left the capital, if permitted by the ruler he could return with impunity. Noblemen retained their offices until they left the state, and similarly, rulers who left the capital but remained within the borders were still treated as rulers by other regional lords. But once an individual fled across the border, his status underwent a fundamental change.

That flight into exile led to a fundamental change in status is confirmed by the *Spring and Autumn* and its commentaries, which indicate that events concerning noblemen who had left their home states without sanction were recorded with phrasing that marked them as categorically different from noblemen who had not done so. This distinction is clearly manifested in *Spring and Autumn* records of killings and assassinations. By way of background, we must first note that *Spring and Autumn* records of cases in which a ruler or heir was killed abroad typically use phrasing different from that used when the killing took place in his home state. Similarly, if the killer was from a different state, the record uses *shā* 殺 'kill' instead of *shì* 弑 'assassinate, commit regicide', a verb whose use is restricted to the killing of a ruler by his own subject. Apparently, a similar distinction applied to killings of noblemen. The majority of killings of noblemen are recorded in the *Spring and Autumn* with the phrase "killed their nobleman" 殺其大夫. In such cases, the nobleman was from the same state as his killer.[48] When a nobleman was killed by someone from another state, the phrase "their nobleman" 其大夫 was omitted.[49]

Curiously, the *Zuǒ zhuàn* notes that records also omit the phrase "their nobleman" when the victim "came from abroad" (*zì wài* 自外), as here:

> 晉人殺欒盈．
> Someone from Jìn killed Luán Yíng. (*CQ,* Xiāng 23.12, 1072)

Commenting on this record, the *Zuǒ zhuàn* tells us the following:

> 晉人克欒盈于曲沃，盡殺欒氏之族黨．欒魴出奔宋．
> 書曰：「晉人殺欒盈．」不言「大夫」，言自外也．
> The people of Jìn overcame Luán Yíng at Qūwò, and killed everyone in Luán's lineage and clique. Luán Fáng went out fleeing to Sòng. It was recorded, "Someone from Jìn killed Luán Yíng." [The record] did not say "nobleman." This was saying he came from outside [the state]. (*Zuǒ,* Xiāng 23, 1084)[50]

47. *Zuǒ*, Chéng 15, 873.

48. Similar phrasing includes "killed his prince" 殺其公子, *CQ*, Zhuāng 22.3, 219 and Zhāo 14.6, 1363; and "killed his Heir Apparent" 殺其世子, *CQ*, Xī 5.1, 300 and Xiāng 26.6, 1110.

49. There are five such records. *CQ*, Xuān 11.5, 710; Zhāo 8.4, 1299; and Zhāo 8.9, 1300 record killings of Chén 陳 noblemen by Chǔ 楚; Zhāo 4.4, 1245 records the killing of a Qí nobleman by Chǔ; and Huán 6.4, 109 records the killing of a Chén nobleman by Cài.

50. Similarly, *Zuǒ*, Xiāng 30, 1177, commenting on the killing of nobleman who had fled and then returned, states "[the record] did not designate him 'nobleman'; this was saying he entered the state from abroad" 不稱大夫，言自外入也; see too *CQ*, Xiāng 30, 1169.

What is strange about this case is that Luán Yíng was in fact a Jìn nobleman. *Gōngyáng* lays out a similar explanation for the absence of the phrase "killed his nobleman" in commenting on this record:

> 曷為不言「殺其大夫」？非其大夫也．
> On account of what did they not say "killed their nobleman"? It was because he was not their nobleman. (*Gōngyáng*, Xiāng 23, 20.11a–11b)[51]

At first reading, this claim appears to defy logic, for Luán Yíng most certainly was a nobleman of Jìn, and the *Gōngyáng* commentators definitely knew this, since he is referred to as such in the record of his flight from Jìn in Xiāng 21, two years prior. Unlike the *Zuǒ zhuàn*, *Gōngyáng* does not explicitly link the missing phrase "their nobleman" to Luán Yíng's "coming from outside" Jìn; we may speculate that underlying the *Gōngyáng* remark is the assumption that by fleeing the state, Luán Yíng had relinquished his status as Jìn nobility.[52]

The omission of the phrase "their nobleman" is not an isolated irregularity or error; in at least five *Spring and Autumn* records, the killing of a nobleman by his own state is recorded without this phrase. Comparison with corresponding *Zuǒ zhuàn* accounts shows that each of these noblemen was killed after fleeing his state and then returning.[53] These cases included flight after committing an assassination, flight during a succession struggle, or fleeing only to return to lead an insurrection. Cases in which a nobleman engaged in similar misconduct, did not flee, and was killed are recorded with the words "his nobleman"; instances lacking the words "his nobleman" differ only in that the victim was killed after fleeing to another state. Thus, it was not the case that the phrase "their nobleman" was omitted as a consequence of the misconduct itself. Rather, the very act of fleeing affected the nobleman's status together with the form of the record.

In this connection, we may also observe that names (*míng* 名) of regional rulers were not included in the majority of *Spring and Autumn* records, and the subset of records that employ rulers' names should be considered a special or "marked" group.[54] The two types of record that regularly include rulers' names are deaths and assassinations.[55] Interestingly, records of rulers' flights into exile also often give their names. Flights into exile thus seem to belong to the same general category as deaths and assassinations. Perhaps these records should be understood as indicating the "death" of a ruler with respect to his ancestral and state obligations.

51. Citations of *Gōngyáng* refer to *Chūnqiū Gōngyáng zhuàn Hé shì jiěgǔ* 春秋公羊傳何氏解詁, comm. Hé Xiū 何休 (129–182), *SBBY* ed.

52. A *Gǔliáng* remark on a similar case (mentioned in n. 50 above) implies rejection but without explicitly mentioning going abroad, stating, "it does not say 'nobleman' because they loathed him" 不言「大夫」，惡之也; *Gǔliáng*, Xiāng 30, 16.15b; citations of *Gǔliáng* refer to *Chūnqiū Gǔliáng zhuàn Fàn shì jíjiě* 春秋穀梁傳范氏集解, comm. Fàn Níng 范甯 (339–401), *SBBY*.

53. These five cases are *CQ,* Yǐn 4.6, 35; Zhuāng 9.6, 178; Xiāng 30.7, 1169; and Āi 14.14, 1681, plus Xiāng 23.12, 1072 (translated above). Zhuāng 9.1, 177 also uses this pattern, but it is uncertain whether the victim had left the state. In a previous publication, I proposed a link between the omission of the phrase "their nobleman" and diachronic changes in *Spring and Autumn* recording practices, but I was wrong; Van Auken, "Could 'Subtle Words' Have Conveyed 'Praise and Blame'? The Implications of Formal Regularity and Variation in *Spring and Autumn* (*Chūn qiū*) Records," *Early China* 31 (2007): 102.

54. This contrast applies only to rulers; no parallel contrast exists for noblemen, although there are a few irregular cases such as that of Cuī Zhù, identified in the record of his flight as "someone of the Cuī lineage"; see preceding discussion and n. 44.

55. Van Auken, "Subtle Words," 63, 76–78. Names were also often used in recording restorations to power ("return home to [power]" 歸于, "enter into" 入于).

We may conclude that fleeing into exile was more than simply running away and removing oneself from physical danger of capture and punishment. The *Spring and Autumn* and *Zuǒ zhuàn* evidence shows that fleeing across borders had specific, formal consequences. An individual who left his home state and crossed the border without the proper ceremonies experienced a change of status, both political and religious, among the living and among the ancestors. A ruler who fled ceased to be recognized as the ruler, and a nobleman who fled was no longer considered a nobleman of his home state, and those who fled were understood to have abandoned their obligations to the ancestors.

The way in which crossing the border would have permitted Zhào Dùn to have escaped blame may be understood in light of this change of status. Presumably, the crime was ascribed to him not because of his active complicity but because of his official position in the court and his status as senior male kinsman of the actual assassin. We may speculate that underlying Confucius's lament, "What a pity, had he crossed the border, he would have avoided blame!," lies the assumption that if Zhào Dùn had indeed crossed the border, the formal mechanism that would have relieved him from responsibility would have been the ensuing change in status, whether as lineage head, as prime minister of Jìn, or both. According to this interpretation, the remark ascribed to Confucius frames the situation as a matter of formal ceremonial rules that linked position within the politico-religious system to assignment of responsibility. Thus his remark may be paraphrased as follows: "A good scribe such as Dǒng Hú followed the rules in assigning responsibility, and a good nobleman such as Zhào Dùn accepted responsibility as assigned by those rules. What a pity that Zhào Dùn did not cross the border into another state, as this would have removed him from the position that required the crime to be assigned to him."

At first glance, this may appear to be an instance in which Confucius advocated an escape through a technical loophole, but if border crossing entailed a fundamental loss of status vis-à-vis the ancestors, then Zhào Dùn's contemporaries would have viewed this not as a mere technicality but as a very serious matter. This interpretation implies that, for reasons we no longer fully understand, Confucius deemed relinquishing one's position in the government and lineage to be preferable to being recorded as an assassin in the official records. But later retellings of this incident regard it in a substantially different way. They are not concerned with formal rules but with moral responsibility as evidenced in Zhào Dùn's failure to punish the criminal, or perhaps his failure to protest Lord Líng's misconduct in sufficiently strong language and actions.

RECEPTION IN PRE-IMPERIAL AND EARLY IMPERIAL TEXTS

Narratives concerning Zhào Dùn and the assassination of Lord Líng appear in a number of early works, including (in addition to the *Zuǒ zhuàn*), *Guóyǔ* 國語, *Gōngyáng zhuàn*, *Gǔliáng zhuàn*, *Shǐ jì*, and *Kǒngzǐ jiāyǔ* 孔子家語, and references to these events appear in other works, including *Chūnqiū fán lù* 春秋繁露, *Hàn shū* 漢書, and *Hòu Hàn shū* 後漢書. These accounts differ in length, and some works contain more than one version.[56] They vary

56. Zhào Dùn also receives passing mention in accounts of the plot by an enemy of the Zhào lineage to annihilate his descendants, later adapted as the drama "The Orphan of Zhao" 趙氏孤兒. See *Shuō yuàn* 說苑, comp. Liú Xiàng 劉向 (ca. 77–ca. 6 BCE), *SBCK*, "Fù ēn" 復恩, 6.13a–15b; *Lùn héng* 論衡, comp. Wáng Chōng 王充 (27–97?), *SBCK*, "Jí yàn" 吉驗, 2.21a; *Xīn xù* 新序, comp. Liú Xiàng, *SBCK*, "Jié shì" 節士, 7.15a–17b; *Shǐ jì* 45.1865 and 43.1782–83. See too Schmidt-Glintzer, "Preface," in Schmidt-Glintzer, Mittag, and Rüsen, *Historical Truth*, xiii–xiv.

significantly with respect to whether they mention Zhào Dùn's flight, and if so, what they say about it.

The simplest version appears in *Guóyǔ*:

> 靈公將殺趙盾，不克．趙穿攻公于桃園．逆公子黑臀而立之，實為成公．
> Lord Líng was going to kill Zhào Dùn, but he did not succeed. Zhào Chuān attacked the lord in the Peach Garden. [He] greeted Gōngzǐ Hēitún and established him. He became Lord Chéng [of Jìn].[57]

This version does not mention Zhào Dùn's flight but makes many of the same factual assertions as other versions, that Lord Líng intended to kill Zhào Dùn, that Zhào Chuān killed Lord Líng, and afterward, that Lord Líng's successor was established with Zhào Dùn's support.[58] It differs from other versions in that it neither refers to Zhào Dùn's guilt or innocence in Lord Líng's death nor does it mention the act of recording the assassination. Nonetheless, this account is significant precisely because, even given its lack of concern with acknowledging the guilt or innocence of Zhào Dùn and his junior relative, it describes Zhào Chuān as the actual murderer, thus establishing that this was the accepted view of events. There is no alternative version in which Zhào Dùn wielded the murder weapon.

The *Zuǒ zhuàn* version, translated at the outset of this study, not only mentions Zhào Dùn's flight but also narrates Zhào Dùn's interaction with the Jìn scribe Dǒng Hú and quotes Confucius's commentary. Two other versions, one in *Shǐ jì* and the other in *Kǒngzǐ jiāyǔ*, closely resemble the *Zuǒ zhuàn* narrative in content and phrasing, and likewise quote both the Dǒng Hú and Confucius. As in the *Zuǒ zhuàn*, the scribe observes that Zhào Dùn neither crossed the border nor punished the criminal, and Confucius laments that if only he had crossed the border, he would have avoided blame.[59] Unlike other versions of this story, these three are all concerned with how the scribe recorded the assassination and assigned the crime to Zhào Dùn along with his flight and failure to cross the border, and they are surely derived from a common source.

The emphasis of the *Gǔliáng* account differs from that of the *Zuǒ zhuàn* and related versions. Confucius's comment does not occur, and although *Gǔliáng*, like *Zuǒ zhuàn*, includes the dialogue between Zhào Dùn and the scribe Dǒng Hú, the phrasing is somewhat different, and Zhào Dùn's flight is presented not as an attempt to escape but as a protest in response to Lord Líng's failure to heed his admonition.

> 穿弒也．盾不弒而曰「盾弒．」何也？以罪盾也．其以罪盾何也？
> 曰：「靈公朝諸大夫，而暴彈之，觀其辟丸也．趙盾入諫，不聽，出亡，至於郊．趙穿弒公而後反趙盾．史狐書賊，曰：『趙盾弒公．』盾曰：『天乎！天乎！予無罪．孰為

57. *Guóyǔ*, comm. Wéi Zhāo 韋昭 (d. 273), *SBBY*, "Jìn yǔ 5" 晉語五, 11.3a–3b. The subject of "greet" is unspecified, and so it is unclear who greeted Gōngzǐ Hēitún. I have provisionally translated the subject as "he" (i.e., Zhào Chuān, subject of the preceding sentence) but it could also be translated "they," to include Zhào Dùn.

58. *Zuǒ*, Xuān 2, 663 also refers to Zhào Dùn's support in establishing Lord Líng's successor.

59. *Shǐ jì* 39.1675; for a different version, see *Shǐ jì* 43.1782–83, which ascribes to the Gentleman (*jūnzǐ* 君子) words that are elsewhere spoken by the scribe, and omits Confucius's response, resulting in a tone more critical of Zhào Dùn. For a discussion comparing the *Shǐ jì* versions to the *Zuǒ* account, see Dorothee Schaab-Hanke, "The *Junzi* Prior to Confucius in the *Shiji*," paper presented at the 17th conference of the Warring States Group, Leiden, September 17–18, 2003; www.schaab-hanke.de/vortraege/Schaab-Hanke_WSWG17-paper.pdf, last accessed April 25, 2019; and Schaab-Hanke, "The *Junzi* (Gentleman) in the *Shiji* and the Quest for Moral Authorities," in *Der Geschichtsschreiber als Exeget: Facetten der frühen chinesischen Historiographie*, ed. Dorothee Schaab-Hanke (Gossenberg: Ostasien Verlag, 2010), 117–19. *Kǒngzǐ jiāyǔ*, comm. Wáng Sù 王肅 (195–256), in *Xīnbiān zhūzǐ jíchéng* 新編諸子集成, new 5th ed., vol. 1 (Taipei: Shìjiè, 1991), "Zhènglùn jiě" 正論解, 96. Despite very minor variations in phrasing the *Zuǒ* and *Kǒngzǐ jiāyǔ* accounts are basically similar and emphasize crossing the border.

盾而忍弒其君者乎？』史狐曰：『子為正卿，入諫不聽，出亡不遠，君弒，反不討賊則志同．志同則書重．非子而誰？故書之．』」
曰「晉趙盾弒其君夷皋者」過在下也．

It was Chuān who assassinated him. Dùn did not assassinate him, yet the record says "Dùn assassinated him." Why is this? It is in order to assign blame to Dùn. For what reason does it assign blame to Dùn?

They say, "Lord Líng called the noblemen to court and violently shot at them to watch them avoid the pellets. Zhào Dùn entered and admonished him, but he was not heeded. Zhào Dùn went out fleeing and arrived at the outskirts. Zhào Chuān assassinated the lord and then caused Zhào Dùn to return. Scribe Hú recorded the crime, saying, "Zhào Dùn assassinated the lord." Zhào Dùn said, "Heaven! Heaven! I am without offense! Who takes it that I, Dùn, am one who has assassinated his lord?" Scribe Hú said, "You serve as the principal minister. You went in and admonished the ruler but were not heeded. You went out and ran away but did not go far. When the ruler was assassinated, you returned but did not punish the crime; thus your intent was the same [as the assassin]. If the intent is the same, then the record must be severe. Were it not you, then who would it be? Therefore I wrote it."

That the *Spring and Autumn* says, "Zhào Dùn of Jìn assassinated his ruler, Yígāo," is because the transgression lies with an inferior. (*Gǔliáng*, Xuān 宣 2, 12.3a–3b)

Like the *Zuǒ zhuàn*, *Gǔliáng* describes Lord Líng's misconduct and his refusal to heed Zhào Dùn's admonition, together with Zhào Dùn's flight and his failure to punish the assassin after his return. *Gǔliáng* does not mention Lord Líng's attempts to murder Zhào Dùn; this omission is highly significant, as it effectively eliminates the possibility of understanding Zhào Dùn's flight as an effort to save his own life.

Another contrast appears in the language used to describe Zhào Dùn's flight. No mention is made of his failure to cross the border, and instead he is said to have gotten to the "outskirts" (*jiāo* 郊), that is, the suburbs or area lying beyond the capital.[60] Parallel language in the narrative is employed to link Zhào Dùn's unheeded admonition of Lord Líng to his flight; he is said to have "gone in and admonished" (*rù jiàn* 入諫) and "gone out and fled" (*chū wáng* 出亡). Scribe Hú's criticism echoes this phrasing, pointing out that Zhào Dùn "went in and admonished but was not heeded, and went out and ran away but did not go far" 入諫不聽，出亡不遠. By presenting Zhào Dùn's remonstration and flight in parallel language, the *Gǔliáng* version frames his flight not as an attempt to escape punishment for a crime, but as the protest of an unheeded critic of the ruler. Scribe Hú also suggests that surely a good minister who returned would have punished the actual murderer. Thus Zhào Dùn is criticized for neither going far and thereby completing his protest against Lord Líng, nor punishing the murderer after his return; both of these actions are understood by *Gǔliáng* as ways that Zhào Dùn could have properly discharged his ministerial obligations.

The *Gǔliáng* commentary thus implies that Zhào Dùn's flight was neither an escape to avoid punishment or murder nor an abandonment of the altars, but it was intended as a conspicuous act of protest designed to send a message chastising the ruler, albeit a deficient one, since he did not go far. The notion of flight as a method of voicing protest or even a ministerial obligation is not restricted to this account in *Gǔliáng*. It was mentioned above in conjunction with the flights of Zǐxián and Huà Yuán in the *Zuǒ zhuàn*, and also appears in a number of other early works, including *Gōngyáng* and the *Lǐ jì*. The *Lǐ jì* invokes this principle in reference to a minister's proper conduct toward his ruler, stating, "if after three

60. The word *jiāo* 郊 is often translated "suburbs." Strictly speaking, this translation is not inaccurate, but (especially in contemporary America) the term "suburb" has socio-cultural connotations that are certainly not indicated by Classical Chinese *jiāo*.

attempts at admonishment, one is not heeded, then run away from him" 三諫而不聽則逃之.[61] Elsewhere, *Gōngyáng* also mentions that unheeded ministers should flee, but it does not apply this principle to Zhào Dùn's case.[62]

Curiously, the *Gōngyáng* version of Zhào Dùn's story does not appear in conjunction with the record of Lord Líng's assassination in Xuān 2. Instead, it is placed to correspond to a later but unrelated record that mentions Zhào Dùn, in Xuān 6. Typically, an individual who has been recorded as having committed a crime is not mentioned again in subsequent *Spring and Autumn* records, and thus *Gōngyáng* includes the story in order to explain the unexpected reference to Zhào Dùn. Unlike *Zuǒ zhuàn* and *Gǔliáng*, the *Gōngyáng* account does not suggest that flight—whether crossing the border or simply going far—would have permitted Zhào Dùn to avoid being identified as the assassin. After stating that the one who "personally assassinated the ruler" was Zhào Chuān, *Gōngyáng* asserts that the crime was ascribed to Zhào Dùn because he did not punish the assassin:

> 親弒君者趙穿，則曷為加之趙盾？不討賊也．何以謂之不討賊？晉史書賊曰：「晉趙盾弒其君夷獋．」趙盾曰：「天乎！無辜！吾不弒君，誰謂吾弒君者乎？」史曰：「爾為仁為義，人弒爾君，而復國不討賊．此非弒君而何？」
> Given that the one who personally assassinated the ruler was Zhào Chuān, then for what reason was the crime attached to Zhào Dùn?
> It was because he did not punish the offense.
> Why is he referred to as the one who did not punish the offense?
> The Jìn scribe recorded, saying, "Zhào Dùn of Jìn assassinated his ruler, Yíháo." Zhào Dùn said, "Heaven! I am without blame! I did not assassinate the ruler. Who called me one who assassinated the ruler?" The scribe said, "You would act as one who is humane and principled, but when another assassinated your lord, you returned to the state and did not punish the crime. If this is not assassinating the lord, then what is it?" (*Gōngyáng*, Xuān 6, 15.6b–7a)[63]

Gōngyáng is mainly concerned with Zhào Dùn's failure to punish the criminal, and asserts that this failure was the reason he was recorded as the assassin. Zhào Dùn's flight is acknowledged by the passing reference to his "return to the state" but no connection is made between flight and culpability. Instead, the scribe invokes the moral qualities "humane" and "principled" in chastising Zhào Dùn for not punishing his ruler's killer, displaying a concern with moral responsibility that is not present in the *Zuǒ zhuàn* account.

The *Gōngyáng* passage translated above is followed by a somewhat longer narrative that recounts Lord Líng's misconduct, Zhào Dùn's admonitions, and Lord Líng's repeated yet unsuccessful attempts on Zhào Dùn's life. This narrative is similar to the story told in the *Zuǒ zhuàn*, but it is not integrated with the account of Lord Líng's assassination. Instead, it is presented separately, as part of the response to the question, why did Zhào Dùn return?[64] *Gōngyáng* suggests that Zhào Dùn's flight was precipitated by Lord Líng's murderous

61. *Lǐ jì jíjiě*, "Qǔ lǐ xià" 曲禮下, 147.

62. *Gōngyáng*, Zhuāng 24, 8.8a, which reads in part, "After three attempts at admonishment, his words were not followed; subsequently [the minister] left [his ruler]." 三諫不從，遂去之.

63. For an alternative translation, see Göran Malmqvist, "Studies on the *Gongyang* and *Guuliang* Commentaries, Part 1," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 43 (1971): 181–83. See also discussion in Joachim Gentz, "The Past as a Messianic Vision: Historical Thought and Strategies of Sacralization in the Early *Gongyang* Tradition," in Schmidt-Glintzer et al., *Historical Truth*, 233–35. *Gōngyáng* gives the assassinated ruler's name as Yíháo 夷獋; *Zuǒ* has Yígāo 夷皐.

64. That the account of Lord Líng's assassination and Zhào Dùn's flight and that of Lord Líng's attempts on Zhào Dùn's life appear separately in *Gōngyáng* lends confirmation to Vogelsang's proposal that the two accounts were originally independent and were later combined. See n. 2 above and Vogelsang, "From Anecdote to History," 104 n. 29.

attempts, and that Zhào Dùn returned only after Lord Líng had been killed and no longer posed a threat. *Gōngyáng* understands Zhào Dùn's flight as an effort to preserve his own life, and in this respect differs from *Zuǒ zhuàn*, which does not unambiguously state the reason for Zhào Dùn's flight, and from *Gǔliáng*, which treats Zhào Dùn's flight as a righteous protest against an unvirtuous ruler.

Still another reference to these events appears in *Chūnqiū fán lù*. Not surprisingly, the *Chūnqiū fán lù* passage resembles *Gōngyáng* in that it is primarily concerned with the fact that Zhào Dùn did not personally assassinate his ruler but was still recorded as the assassin, and elaborates on the *Gōngyáng* assertion that this judgment was made because Zhào Dùn bore moral responsibility as a consequence of his failure to punish Zhào Chuān. Yet it contains an interesting implied reference to Zhào Dùn's flight, noting that "when Lord Líng was assassinated, Zhào Dùn was not there" 靈公弒，趙盾不在, and it subsequently asserts that this fact mitigated the seriousness of his offense; that is, his level of responsibility would have been greater if he had been present when Lord Líng was murdered. *Chūnqiū fán lù* thus repurposes Zhào Dùn's flight as a way to prove that he was not Lord Líng's actual assassin and at the same time uses it to demonstrate how the attribution of the assassination to Zhào Dùn in conjunction with references to him in later records exemplified Confucius's use of subtle words to convey moral judgments.[65]

Several allusions to this story appear embedded in other narratives in the *Hàn shū* and the *Hòu Hàn shū*, although neither work contains a full account. These allusions all criticize Zhào Dùn for his failure to avenge the crime and, like *Gōngyáng*, assert that this failure was the reason that Lord Líng's assassination was ascribed to him. The *Hàn shū* reads "Zhào Dùn did not punish the criminal, and [the record] refers to him as having assassinated his lord" 趙盾不討賊，謂之弒君.[66] Similarly, the *Hòu Hàn shū* tells us, "Zhào Dùn was recorded [as assassin] because he let the criminal go" 趙盾以縱賊而見書.[67] This interpretation emphasizes Zhào Dùn's moral obligation to punish the assassin and understands the *Spring and Autumn* record as passing judgment on him for failing to do so, but neglects the question of Zhào Dùn's flight. These allusions suggest that by early imperial times, this interpretation had become the common and conventional one, and it is this view that is addressed by and reflected in most of the contemporary scholarly views set forth at the outset of this paper.

CONCLUSIONS: ZHÀO DÙN AND *SPRING AND AUTUMN* HISTORIOGRAPHY

Whether or not the *Spring and Autumn* is a record of moral judgments has been a topic of lengthy debate. What cannot be disputed is that *Spring and Autumn* records did assign responsibility for actions, including meritorious achievements and criminal acts, by simply naming the responsible individual. Responsibility was assigned selectively; this is evidenced by the fact that one and only one individual could be identified as a killer or assassin, or as the leader of a military action or a diplomatic mission, or as making a covenant or participating in a meeting. In such cases, even if multiple individuals participated, only one was identified—and thus assigned responsibility—in the pertinent *Spring and Autumn* record. Anecdotal evidence from the *Zuǒ zhuàn* suggests that state scribes may have had some

65. *Chūnqiū fánlù*, Dǒng Zhòngshū 董仲舒 (ca. 179–104), *SBBY*, "Yù bēi" 玉杯, 1.9a–12a; see also translation and notes in Sarah A. Queen and John S. Major, trs., *Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2016), 86–90, and discussion in Queen, *From Chronicle to Canon: The Hermeneutics of the Spring and Autumn, According to Tung Chung-Shu* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), 139–41.

66. *Hàn shū* (Beijing: Zhōnghuá, 1962), 93.3736.

67. *Hòu Hàn shū* (Beijing: Zhōnghuá, 1973), 48.1615.

leeway in how they recorded events in official histories such as the *Spring and Autumn*, and perhaps in whom the records held accountable for particular actions.[68] Yet the records were fundamentally based on rules, a point supported by the formal regularity of the records, Confucius's reference to "rules" or "models" (*fǎ* 法) for recording, and all three commentarial traditions associated with the *Spring and Autumn*.

One of the mysteries of *Spring and Autumn* interpretation has been the question of what those rules were and how records assigned responsibility. As noted at the outset of this study, assignment of responsibility was clearly not contingent on physical involvement, yet it is perhaps because of the lack of physical involvement that records such as the one ascribing Lord Líng's murder to Zhào Dùn were later described as false, as misrepresenting facts, or ascribing the crime to an innocent party, and elaborate attempts were made to justify and explain these records as reflecting moral responsibility or intent. Yet just as assignment of responsibility was not based on physical involvement, blame likewise may not have been assigned based primarily on moral intent, despite later commentarial assertions to the contrary. The *Spring and Autumn* records themselves display deep concern with relative hierarchy and with ritually significant events, and many common types of records, such as those of the Lǔ ruler's return from abroad, are connected to religious ceremonies but have no obvious connection with morality or intent. This in turn suggests that the conventions that served as the basis for the *Spring and Autumn* and similar state records may have been primarily concerned with formal religious practice and ceremonial activities rather than with the moral interior of individuals or with their actions as expressions of intent.

Had Zhào Dùn fled across the border, that is, if he had violated formal ritual rules and had crossed the border without completing the proper ceremonies or receiving official sanction, he would have lost his ministerial position and would in turn have been absolved of the responsibilities associated with that position. He likewise would have lost his position in his lineage and would have been considered to have abandoned his obligations to the ancestors and failed to keep watch over the temple. As a consequence, he also would have been released from his obligation to punish Zhào Chuān, the junior member of his lineage who killed his ruler. (It is uncertain whether this obligation was related to his position in the government, to his kinship to the assassin, or both.) If Zhào Dùn had crossed the border, perhaps the formal rules that resulted in scribe Dǒng Hú identifying him as Lord Líng's assassin would not have applied to his case. That is, as Confucius remarked, "Had he crossed the border, he would have avoided blame!"

Over time, retellings of this story increasingly emphasized Zhào Dùn's intent and his moral position as an official who was obligated to punish the guilty party yet failed to do so. *Gǔliáng* frames his unfinished flight as the protest of a virtuous minister whose remonstrations had not been heeded by his lord and criticizes him for neither going "far"—presumably, making his protest complete—nor punishing the assassin upon his return. In the *Gōngyáng* version of the story, Zhào Dùn's failure to punish the criminal is explicitly depicted as a moral failing, and the scribe invokes the words "humane" and "principled" in chastising him for not punishing the killer. Yet neither *Gōngyáng* nor *Gǔliáng* suggests that he could have escaped blame by crossing the border. Presumably the connection between crossing the border and loss of position was part of a system of formal ritual practices that pertained to the multistate system of the Spring and Autumn period, but this system was no longer fully

68. In addition to Zhào Dùn's protest of Dǒng Hú's record, see also *Zuǒ*, Xiāng 25, 1099, referring to the Qí scribe's record stating that Cuī Zhù had assassinated his lord, and Cuī Zhù's subsequent protests and retaliation against the scribe.

understood by the time *Gōngyáng* and *Gǔliáng* were written down. Their explanations of why blame was assigned to Zhào Dùn can thus be viewed as a series of attempts to rationalize recording practices that were based on Spring and Autumn-period norms that had been forgotten or that no longer made sense in a later cultural context and as part of a broader trend to reframe the rules-based historiography of the *Spring and Autumn* in terms of moral judgment and responsibility.