

Historiography and Narratives of the Later Tang (923-936)
and Later Jin (936-947) Dynasties in Tenth- to Eleventh-
century Sources

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ABSTRACT

Historiography and Narratives of the Later Tang (923-36) and Later Jin (936-47)
Dynasties in Tenth- to Eleventh-century Sources

Maddalena Barenghi

This thesis deals with historical narratives of two of the Northern regimes of the tenth-century Five Dynasties period. By focusing on the history writing project commissioned by the Later Tang (923-936) court, it first aims at questioning how early-tenth-century contemporaries narrated some of the major events as they unfolded after the fall of the Tang (618-907). Second, it shows how both late-tenth-century historiographical agencies and eleventh-century historians perceived and enhanced these historical narratives. Through an analysis of selected cases the thesis attempts to show how, using the same source material, later historians enhanced early-tenth-century narratives in order to tell different stories. The five cases examined offer fertile ground for inquiry into how the different sources dealt with narratives on the rise and fall of the Shatuo Later Tang and Later Jin (936-947). It will be argued that divergent narrative details are employed both to depict in different ways the characters involved and to establish hierarchies among the historical agents.

Table of Contents

List of Rulers.....	ii
Aknowledgements.....	iv
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Notes on the Sources.....	9
Chapter 2: Chronicling the Tenth Century.....	45
2.1. The <i>biannian</i> Genre and Medieval Chronicles.....	48
2.2. Building the Chronology: The <i>Linian tu</i> and the <i>Mulu</i>	55
2.3. Building the Annals.....	62
Chapter 3: Narratives on the Later Tang.....	80
3.1. Representations of the ‘Pact of Yunzhou’ between the Prince of Jin and Abaoji.....	82
3.2. The Tang Legacy: Different Portrayals of the Enthronement of Li Cunxu.....	104
3.3. The ‘Events of Weizhou’ and the Exile of Li Conghou.....	118
Chapter 4: Shifting Perspectives on the Rise of the Later Jin.....	134
4.1. Eminent Ancestry and Prophecies about the Uprising.....	136
4.2. The Uprising of Shi Jingtang in the Early Song Sources.....	146
Chapter 5: Sang Weihhan and the Later Jin.....	172
5.1. Life and Early Career at the Court of Later Jin.....	173
5.2. Sang Weihhan and Defense Policies.....	181
Concluding remarks.....	196
Bibliography.....	203

List of Rulers

Tang 唐 (618-907)

Zhaozong 昭宗, r. 889-904

Zhaoxuan 昭宣, r. 905-906

Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms 五代十國 (907-979):

Five Dynasties (907-959)

Later Liang 後梁 (907-923)

Zhu Wen 朱溫 (Taizu 太祖, r. 907-912)

Zhu Youzhen 朱友貞 (r. 912-922)

Later Tang 後唐 (923-936)

Li Cunxu 李存勳 (Zhuangzong 莊宗, r. 923-926)

Li Siming 李嗣源 (Mingzong 明宗, r. 926-934)

Li Conghou 李從厚 (Mindi 閔帝, r. 934)

Li Congke 李從珂 (r. 934-936)

Later Jin 後晉 (936-947)

Shi Jingtang 石敬瑭 (Gaozu 高祖, r. 936-942)

Shi Chongui 石重貴 (r. 924-946)

Later Han 後漢 (947-950)

Liu Zhiyuan 劉知遠 (Gaozu 高祖, r. 947-948)

Liu Chengyou 劉承祐 (Yindi 隱帝, r. 949-950)

Later Zhou 後周 (951-960)

Guo Wei 郭威 (Taizu 太祖, r. 951-954)

Guo Rong 郭榮 (Shizong 世宗, r. 954-959)

Early Liao 遼 (907-1125):

Yelü Abaoji 耶律阿保機 (Taizu 太祖, r. 907-26)

Yelü Deguang 耶律德光 (Taizong 太宗, r. 927-47)

Ten Kingdoms (902-979)

Wu 吳 (902-937)

Wu-Yue 吳越 (907-978)

Former Shu 前蜀 (907-925)

Min 閩 (909-945)

Southern Han 南漢 (917-971)

Jingnan 荆南 (924-963)

Chu 楚 (927-951)

Later Shu 後蜀 (934-965)

Southern Tang 南唐 (937-979)

Northern Han 北漢 (951-979)

Early Song:

Zhao Kuangyin 趙匡胤 (Taizu 太祖, r. 960-976)

Zhao Kuangyi 趙匡義 (Taizong 太宗, r. 976-997)

Zhao Heng 趙恆 (Zhenzong 真宗, r. 997-1022)

Zhao Zhen 趙禎 (Renzong 仁宗, r. 1022-63)

Zhao Shu 趙曙 (Yingzong 英宗, r. 1063-67)

Zhao Suo 趙瑣 (Shenzong 申宗, r. 1067-85)

Aknowledgements

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The present thesis examines tenth- to eleventh-century historical narratives of the rise and fall of two of the five regimes that ruled over the Central Plain in the first half of the tenth century, the Later Tang 後唐 (923-936) and Later Jin 後晉 (936-947) dynasties. The study investigates how the narratives of major events were shaped and it aims at showing how subsequent generations of historians and compilers reworked these early accounts, and how the narratives were eventually selected and enhanced in the late eleventh-century comprehensive chronicle, *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑.

The interest in the narratives recounting the rise and fall of two of the three Shatuo regimes,¹ the Later Tang and Later Jin,² comes not merely from the ethnic

¹ The Chinese sources agree on the undoubted historical link of the Shatuo, which literally means Sandy Slopes, with the Western Turks (*Xi Tujue* 西突厥) confederacies; nonetheless, no general agreement has been reached among historians as to the exact branch affiliation and original geographical location. Whereas the tenth-century official sources link the Shatuo's origins to the Bayegu 拔野古 (Bayirqu) and see the Shatuo already integrated into and part of the Tang system under Taizong 太宗 (r. 626-649), the most accredited hypothesis is the one promoted by eleventh-century historians according to which the Shatuo became part of the Tang provincial system only at the beginning of the ninth century; cf. Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072), *Xin Wudai shi* 新五代史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, [1974] 2011; hereafter *XWDS*) 4:39; Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019-1086), *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, [1956] 2010; hereafter *ZZTJ*) 210:6678. The term 'Sandy Slopes', which later became their ethnonym, was used to refer to the wasteland "which is now to the south of Jinsha 金沙 Mountains and to the east of Pulei 蒲類 sea," corresponding to the area of modern Barköl Lake in Xinjiang (*XWDS* 4:39). The peoples living in that area used to be called Shatuo. The tribal confederacies who eventually came to define themselves as Shatuo were linked to the Chong'al 處月 people, a minor tribal confederacy of the Western Turks (*XWDS* 4:40). For an identification of the Chong'al see Christopher Atwood, "The Notion of

nature of their ruling clan, but mostly because their power rose from their control over the peripheral Northern region, the reign of Jin 晉 and the provinces of Hedong 河東.³ With its political center in Jinyang 晉陽, Jin had been under direct control of the late Tang military leader Li Keyong 李克用 (856-908) since 883, the year that is regarded by modern scholars as the factual beginning of the period of division of the so-called Tang-Song transition.⁴ Although the political center will be relocated to Henan 河南, throughout the first half of the tenth century the

Tribe in Medieval China: Ouyang Xiu and the Shatuo Dynastic Myth,” in *Miscellanea Asiatica: Festschrift in Honour of François Aubin*, Denise Aigle and Isabelle Charleux eds. (Sankt Augustin: Institut Monumenta Serica, 2010), p. 602, n. 27. Atwood also proposes a different solution (see p. 600, n. 21). Although the term Shatuo is found in the sources already in relation to early eighth-century events, it disappears from the historical records for a century, only to resurface at the beginning of the ninth century. After being under Uigur and Tibetan rule, in 808 the Shatuo people came under Tang sovereignty and settled in the Ordos as part of the Chinese militia under the military governor Fan Xichao 范希朝. When in 809 Fa Xichao was transferred to Hedong, the Shatuo followed the governor and moved to Northern Shanxi. Thereupon, the Shatuo tribal confederation became the dominant non-Chinese element; from 830 onwards, were entrusted by the Tang with the defence of that part of the frontier; cf. Edwin G. Pulleyblank, “A Sogdian Colony in Inner Mongolia,” *T'oung Pao* (1952): 342-43. The traditional view that sees the Shatuo as a ‘nomadic group’ has thus been proven to be too simplistic; for this view see Wolfram Eberhard, *Conquerors and Rulers: Social Forces in Medieval China* (Leiden: Brill, 1952), pp. 140-156. For a discussion on this see also Christopher Atwood, “The Notion of Tribe in Medieval China,” pp. 593-621. See also Jonathan Karam Skaff, *Sui-Tang China and Its Turko-Mongols Neighbors: Culture, Power, and Connections, 580-900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 190-91.

² The third is the short-lived Later Han 後漢 (947-951).

³ For an exhaustive discussion on the control over the provinces of Hedong in the last two decades of Tang rule see Wang Gungwu, *Divided China: Preparing for Reunification 883-947* (Singapore: National University of Singapore, 2007), pp. 7-45. For a survey of the history of the provinces and the role of the military governor (*jiedu shi* 節度使) in the late Tang period at the verge of the Huang Chao 黃巢 rebellion see: Charles Peterson, “The Autonomy of the Northeastern Provinces in the Period Following the An Lu-shan Rebellion,” Ph.D. Thesis (University of Washington, 1966); Charles Peterson, “Court And Province in Mid- and Late T’ang,” in *Cambridge History of China, Volume 3: Sui and T’ang China, Part One*, Denis Twitchett ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 464-560; Nicolas Tackett, *The Destruction of Medieval Aristocracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014), pp. 147-186..

⁴ Wang Gungwu, *Divided China*, pp. 21-22.

prefectures of Hedong will constitute “the home of the tribal imperial power” and the “strategic centre” of the Later Tang and Later Jin dynasties.⁵

Li Keyong was the son of the prefect of Shuozhou 朔州 and imperial commissioner of the three Turkic tribes of Northern Shanxi,⁶ Zhuxie Chixin 朱邪赤心 (d. 883).⁷ The confederation was led by Shatuo chieftains, yet it included Sogdian, Tangut Turkic and Uighur elements.⁸ Historical evidence shows that the Sogdians “Nine Surnames Hu of the Six Prefectures” 九姓六州胡 had in fact become part of the tribal society under the leadership of the Shatuo and were referred to collectively as Three Tribes of the Shatuo 沙陀三部落.⁹ What the Chinese sources call ‘tribes’ were in fact by the early ninth century ‘protected’ prefectures or offices (*fu* 府) under imperial administration.¹⁰ Shi Jingtang 石敬瑭

⁵ Wang Gungwu, *Divided China*, p. 179.

⁶ On the use of the concept of tribe in the late medieval period see Christopher Atwood, “The Notion of Tribe in Medieval China: Ouyang Xiu and the Shatuo Dynastic Myth,” pp. 593-97.

⁷ In eleventh-century sources we always find Zhuxie 朱邪, whereas in other tenth to eleventh century sources, in historical works as well as in epigraphical material, 耶 alternates with 邪, so that scholars tend to prefer to read 邪 as *ye*. Christopher Atwood believes that 朱耶 is incorrect, for an explanation see “The Notion of Tribe in Medieval China,” p. 600.

⁸ The Chinese sources highlight the mixed nature of the Shatuo tribal society that is always referred as Three Tribes of the Shatuo. On the question of the applicability of the modern concept of ‘ethnicity’ to the historical context of the tenth century see Naomi Standen’s discussion in *Unbounded Loyalty: Frontier Crossing in Liao China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2007), pp. 26-32.

⁹ “A Sogdian Colony,” pp. 344-45. The historical sources define as Shatuo people whose surname was typically Sogdian such as An 安, Kang 康, Mi 米, Shi 史 and Shi 石 (“A Sogdian Colony,” pp. 345-47). On the composition of the Three Tribes of the Shatuo see also Fan Wenli 樊文禮, *Li Keyong pingzhuan* 李克用評傳 (Jinan: Shandong daxue chubanshe, 2005), pp. 1-17.

¹⁰ The governors of these offices were called *dudu* 都督 and the position was mostly passed on from father to son by hereditary rights (“A Sogdian Colony,” p. 344).

(892-942), the future Later Jin founder (Gaozu 高祖, r. 936-942), was a member of one of these families of Sogdian origins, the Anqing 安慶 Shis 石.¹¹

In 869 Li Keyong's father was bestowed with the imperial surname Li 李 and the name Guochang 國昌¹² by Tang Yizong 懿宗 (r. 859-873) for his merits in the suppression of the military mutiny of Pang Xun 龐勛 (d. 869).¹³ Thereafter, his family clan had been registered as member of one of the imperial family branches¹⁴ and a genealogy record of the Shatuo kinship group (*zongji* 宗籍) was created.¹⁵ By the late Tang period, the conferral of the Li surname to meritorious subjects had become a common practice;¹⁶ nevertheless, as noted by Richard

¹¹ More will be said in chapter four concerning the, real and forged, origins of the Anqing Shis. Another important surname of the Anqing prefectures is Shi 史. Evidence from the entombed epitaph of Shi Kuanghan 史匡翰 (d. 942), brother-in-law of Shi Jingtang, proves that the Anqing prefectures were called Anqing Nine Prefectures 安慶九府; see "A Sogdian Colony," pp. 343-44; Zhou Agen 周阿根, *Wudai muzhi huikao* 五代墓誌彙考 (Anhui: Huangshan shushe, 2012), p. 354; Chen Shangjun 陳尚君, *Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng* 舊五代史新輯會證 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2005), 8:2711. On the Anqing Nine Prefectures see also Atwood, "The Notion of Tribe in Medieval China," p. 613.

¹² Literally 'Glory of the Country'.

¹³ *ZZTJ* 251:8150.

¹⁴ The branch of one of the sons of Tang Gaozu, Li Yuanyi 李元懿 (d. 673), the Prince of Zheng 鄭王; cf. Xue Juzheng 薛居正 (921-981) et al., *Jiu Wudai shi* 舊五代史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976; hereafter *JWDS*) 25:332.

¹⁵ Wang Pu 王溥 (922-982) et al., *Tang huiyao* 唐會要 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1991), 65:1141. For an introduction to the Tang imperial kin see John Chaffee, *Branches of Heaven: A History of the Imperial Clan of Sung China*. Cambridge (Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999), pp. 8-9. Unofficial accounts on the event narrate that when Yizong 懿宗 (r. 859-873) asked about the origins of his ancestors, Li Guochang replied that they were people from Jincheng 金城 in Longxi 隴西; the Emperor commented "My ancestors and yours were fellow villagers" 我先與汝同鄉里; cf. Sun Guangxian 孫光憲 (900-968), *Beimeng suoyan* 北夢瑣言 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2002), 17:317. In this thesis I consistently translate Jin wang 晉王 as Prince of Jin.

¹⁶ The dynastic histories record many occurrences in which the Tang court bestows the imperial surname to families of foreign origins. Some of the most influential of these families

Davis, with the Shatuo-Li family clan this practice “acquired an added layer of cultural meaning as the Shatuo leaders became a symbolic extension of the ruling family and assumed its titles and offices.”¹⁷ The eleventh-century historian Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-72) states that following the conferral of the Li surname “the next generations of Li grew in importance and the barbarians considered the Shatuo as being of noble stock” 李氏後大，而夷狄之人遂以沙陀為貴種云。¹⁸ According to the Song historian, the family clan of Li Guochang acquired prestige by belonging to the aristocratic élite mostly among the Northern tribal confederations of Hedong ‘protected’ prefectures, as well as among the Northern neighboring peoples. Although never officially autonomous from central government, from this respected position Jin (or Taiyuan Jin, as it is referred in the sources) maintained a distinctive self-governing tradition from the last decades of the Tang.¹⁹ Li Guochang’s official position was transmitted to his son, Li Keyong,

who prospered in the late Tang and early tenth century are grouped in the “Shixi liezhuan” 世襲列傳 section of the *JWDS*, alternatively titled “Chengxi liezhuan” 承襲列傳, according to the textual reconstruction done by Chen Shangjun in his *Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng*. Two of the most important are the family clans of Li Maozhen 李茂貞 (856-924), military governor of Fengxiang 鳳翔, and of the Tuoba-Tangut Li Renfu 李仁福 (d. 933), military governor of Dingnan 定南, whose family claimed descent from the Tuoba rulers of the Northern Wei.

¹⁷ Richard Davis, *From Warhorses to Ploughshares: The Later Tang Reign of Emperor Mingzong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2014), pp. 11.

¹⁸ *XWDS* 4:40. My translation is adapted from Richard Davis’ translation in *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. 39. I translate the term *yidi* 夷狄 with “barbarians” as, here and elsewhere in the *XWDS*, it is used as a general term, and not as ethnonym.

¹⁹ Although little is known about the legacy of the Shatuo Li after the tenth century in the region of Hedong, it appears that by the end of the twelfth century the ǒ ngüt (White Tartar) ruler claimed descent from Li Keyong; for a discussion on this topic see Maurizio Paolillo, “White Tartars: The Problem of the Origin of the ǒ ngüt Conversion to Jingjiao and the Uighur Connection,” in *From the Oxus River to the Chinese Shores: Studies on East Syriac*

on the basis of the principle of hereditary succession, and the latter would exert control over the provinces of Hedong for the last two decades of Tang rule. In the last decades of the ninth century the Shatuo-Li became the natural counterpart for diplomatic relations with the Northern neighboring peoples, and in particular with the Kitan 契丹 - led Liao 遼 (907–1125).²⁰

The different historical narratives on the rise and fall of the Shatuo rulers, as well as their relations with the Kitan, are a main concern of this study. In order to examine the different understandings of the motives involved in the depiction of early tenth-century historical events, five cases will be examined. The selected cases are meaningful, I think, as far as both the representation of the events narrated and the richness of alternative narrative patterns are concerned. They document a certain degree of flexibility in basic data and narrative details. Furthermore, the depiction of the role of the characters involved in the events,

Christianity in China and Central Asia, Li Tang and Dietmar Winkler eds. (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2013), pp. 237-255.

²⁰ In this thesis I will consistently use the term Kitan to refer to the people, and the *pinyin* Qidan in the transcriptions of book titles. On the use of the term Kitan see Denis Sinor, “Western Information on the Kitans and Some Related Questions,” *Journal of American Oriental Society* 115.2 (1995): 263. For a discussion on the use of the dynastic title Liao for the early tenth-century period see Daniel Kane, “The Great Central Liao Kitan State,” *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 43 (2013): 27-50. For a general introduction to the Chinese sources on Liao history see Naomi Standen, “Integration and Separation: The Framing of the Liao Dynasty (907-1125) in Chinese Sources,” *Asia Major*, third series, 24.2 (2011): 147-198. As it will be discussed in chapter two, in some chapters of the *JWDS* the negative epithet *lu* 虜, or *beilu* 北虜, is equally used for Jin, Hedong, Shatuo Turks and Kitan. *Lu* is a slightly derogatory term used to address Northern peoples in general. See Chen Yuan 陳垣 (1880-1971), *Jiu Wudai shi jiben fayu* 舊五代史輯本發覆, in *Sui Tang Wudai zhengshi dingbu wenxian huibian* 隋唐五代正史訂補文獻彙編, v.3 (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2004), pp. 1-31. The term is used for the first time in *Jiu Tang shu* to refer to the Turks in the north (“A Sogdian Colony,” p. 335), and it implies some degree of cultural difference or even enmity, but it does not mean ‘barbarian’, for which the term *yidi* 夷狄 is generally used.

their motives as well as actions, is subject to significantly different interpretations. Each source shows similar recurring patterns, proving that these variations aimed at telling different stories.

Chapter three deals with three sets of historical narratives: the first set concerns ‘the pact of Yunzhou’, the earliest officially documented ‘diplomatic’ encounter between Yelü Abaoji 耶律阿保機 (Taizu 太祖, r. 907-26) and Li Keyong. The second case compares different accounts of the remonstrance presented by the eunuch Zhang Chengye 張承業 (846–922) against Li Cunxu’s 李存勳 (Zhuangzong 莊宗, r. 923–26) self-enthronement as first ruler of the Later Tang. The third case deals with different accounts on the exile of Li Conghou 李從厚 (Mindi 閔帝, r. 934) to Weizhou 衛州 and his murder at the hands of his step-brother, Li Congke 李從珂 (r.934-36). The chapter aims at showing how, in each of the three cases the *Zizhi tongjian* offers the most developed narrative and defines a clear hierarchical order among the different characters, thus picturing their responsibilities according to their position in this order. Chapters four and five deal with narratives on the rise and fall of the Later Jin. Chapter four narrates Li Congke’s fall from power at the hands of his brother-in-law, Shi Jingtang, with the support of the Kitan-Liao military intervention. Chapter five focuses on the role of Sang Weihuan 桑維翰 (898-947) in the diplomatic relations between the Later Jin court and the Liao dynasty; the son of a provincial reception officer, Sang Weihuan is the first of a generation of *jinshi* degree examinees from lesser bureaucratic families to become imperial official. Wang Gungwu remarks that

Sang Weihai represents the beginning of a new period of “recovery of the bureaucracy” against the new military élites of the early tenth century “who came to power in the ninth century and emphasized personal relationships in the organizations they controlled.”²¹ The chapter explores the discrepancies and variants in the different biographical accounts of Sang Weihai’s official career and his eventual dismissal from the Later Jin court. It aims at demonstrating that the emphasis on Sang Weihai’s role in border defence and in the diplomatic relations with the Kitan-led Liao is enhanced by eleventh-century narratives on the rise and fall of the dynasty of the *Zizhi tongjian* (and partially of Ouyang Xiu’s historical records, but with some differences).

This thesis examines how early tenth-century contemporaries understood some of the motives involved in the events that unfolded after the fall of the Tang and how subsequent generations of historians, ultimately Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019-86), used and reworked these early narratives. It thus deals with a number of relevant issues concerning the historiography of the *Zizhi tongjian* on the two tenth-century Northern dynasties. As its scope is limited to the regimes of the Central Plain, the literature on the Southern reigns will be only partially considered. In what follows, this introduction will present a survey of the tenth- to

²¹ Wang Gungwu, *Divided China*, p. 165. Wang mainly divides the history of North China during the Five Dynasties period into three segments: the first period of division from 883 to 926, characterized by a weak central government and by the struggle for power between military governors; from 926 to 936, a period of dominance in imperial government of groups of men who had risen from provincial service and from the governors’ personal entourage; from 936 to 946: a period characterized by the decline of provincial power, a stronger bureaucrat influence in imperial government that led to a process of centralization of government.

eleventh-century sources for the history of tenth-century North China. A separate chapter (chapter two) is devoted to the *Zizhi tongjian*.

Notes on the Sources

The following inquiry is a general overview into the sources for the history of the Later Tang and Later Jin, from the official documents compiled in the first half of the tenth century to the historical works compiled in the first half of the eleventh century. I shall analyze the origin and nature of the most important of these texts. All of these works are quoted in the *Zizhi tongjian kaoyi* 資治通鑑考異, the critical commentary compiled by Sima Guang, with some of them occupying significant portions of it and so pieces of information about their origins can be drawn from the commentary.²² Indeed, the description that follows bares certain limits as Sima Guang had access to a larger number of texts of which we have little evidence today. Four main groups of sources can be distinguished:

1. Early tenth-century history writing, and in particular the compilation projects of the Later Tang and Later Jin. Sima Guang and his team of historians drew from a greatly heterogeneous corpus of texts redacted in the first half of the tenth century, yet it is unquestionable that the official documents such as the *shilu* 實錄 (Veritable Records), the *liezhuan* 列傳 (Biographies) and the *nianji* 年紀 (Annals) constituted the main sources for the compilation of the Annals of the Five

²² For the sake of this research I shall consider only the sources mentioned in the *Kaoyi* starting from the first Annals of the Later Liang. Moreover, I shall only deal with the historical sources concerning the Northern dynasties; I will thus skip, or only occasionally mention, the sources of the Southern dynasties and reigns. On the historical sources for the Southern dynasties see Johannes Kurz, "Sources for the History of the Southern Tang (937-975)," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 24 (1994): 216-235.

Dynasties. The early Song historians prior to Sima Guang also relied on these sources, yet very little information on the work of the selection and comparison of the texts was left to posterity. On the contrary, in the *Kaoyi* Sima Guang informs the reader about the work of critical selection and provides many quotations from this early material. Since all the early tenth-century official documents are lost, the *Kaoyi* constitutes an invaluable source of reference on the nature of and interrelation between these works.

2. An early stage of Song historiography (960-974). Inevitably influenced by the political agenda and the need to legitimize the newly established Song rulers, historians in the first decade of the dynasty were committed to the construction and re-construction of comprehensive histories of the previous sixty years of disunity; a comprehensive history of the institutions, the *Wudai huiyao* 五代會要 (Essentials of the Five Dynasties) was edited under the supervision of Wang Pu 王溥 (922-982) and Fan Zhi 范質 (911-964) collected all the Veritable Records in his *Wudai tonglu* 五代通錄 (Comprehensive Records of the Five Dynasties). Last but not least, the first comprehensive history of the Five Dynasties, the *Wudai shi* 五代史 ([Old] History of the Five Dynasties, later known as *Jiu Wudai shi*, hereafter *JWDS*) was redacted under the supervision of Xue Juzheng 薛居正 (912-981).

3. Tenth- to eleventh-century historical miscellanies and records of hearsay (*wenjian* 聞見). This very heterogeneous bulk of material classified as *xiaoshuo* 小說 (lesser records) or *zashi* 雜史 (historical miscellanies), consists of collections

of brief and often unlinked narrative anecdotes providing different perspectives on the events narrated in the standard histories. The authors often identify with the persona of a historian and the collections are meant to be integrations to the previous comprehensive histories. Among the others, I will mainly draw from the *Wudai shi bu* 五代史補 of Tao Yue 陶岳 (?-1022) and the *Wudai shi quewen* 五代史闕文 of Wang Yucheng 王禹偁 (954-1001).

4. The *Wudai shiji* 五代史記 (better known as *Xin Wudai shi*) by Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072).

1. Early Tenth Century History Writing

Large projects to compile the official records of the preceding dynasties or Emperors were undertaken under each tenth century dynastic house according to the political agenda of the rulers. As in the Tang period, the compilation of the Veritable Records in the first half of the tenth century had clear political aims.²³

²³ Recent scholarship has pointed out the importance of the Veritable Records as a Tang innovation; moreover, it has highlighted their relevant political implications. Tang Taizong 太宗 (r. 626-649), ordered the compilation of the first Veritable Records of his reign in 640, after the death of his dethroned father. From then on, the Veritable Records will be systematically compiled for each successive reign. For a detailed description of the Veritable Records known to have been compiled during the Tang period see Denis Twitchett, *The Writing of Official History Under the T'ang* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) pp. 119-159. The only example of the genre that has been preserved is the *Shunzong shilu* 順宗實錄 (Veritable Records of Emperor Shunzong), redacted by Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824) and included in the supplement to his collection of writings *Han changli ji* 韓昌黎集 (Collection of Writing of Han Changli [Han Yu]). See Bernard S. Solomon, *The Veritable Record of the T'ang Emperor Shun-tsung (February 28, 805-August 31, 805) Han Yü's Shun-t-sung Shih Lu*, translated with introduction and notes (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1955); Edwin G. Pulleyblank, "The *Shun-tsung Shih-lu*," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 19 (1957): 336-44.

Through the records historians conveyed their judgements on the events of the preceding reigns that had important implications for contemporary politics.²⁴ The political instability and continuous military conflicts that characterized the first twenty years of the tenth century interfered with the historical operation. Only at the end of the second decade of the century did the writing of history regain its importance in the political agenda. The first fifty years of the tenth century saw two main stages in historiography: 1. The Later Tang compiling project: a great impetus was given to history writing by the restoration of the duties of the Historiography Office in 924 (second year of the Tongguang era 同光 of reign of Emperor Zhuangzong); 2. The Later Jin compiling project.

1.2. The *Liang Taizu shilu* and the *Da Liang bianyi lu*

Very scanty information is available on the first *shilu*, the *Liang Taizu shilu* 梁太祖實錄 (Veritable Records of the [Later] Liang), produced at the beginning of the tenth century. We know roughly that the board of compilers included Li Qi 李琪, a

²⁴The study of Guo Wuxiong and Wang Gungwu are by far the most exhaustive works on the historical writing at the court of the Five Dynasties; see Guo Wuxiong 郭武雄, *Wudai shiliao tanyuan* 五代史料探源 (Taibei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1987); Wang Gungwu, "The *Chiu Wu-tai shih* and History-writing during the Five Dynasties," *Asia Major* 6.1 (1957): 1-22. Denis Twitchett also devotes attention to the compilation project at the court of the Later Jin which will be discussed below in this chapter; cf. *The Writing of Official History Under the T'ang*, pp. 191-236. The Five Dynasties maintained the same system of historiography bureaus from the Tang period. The Veritable Records were redacted by the Historiographical Office (*shiguan* 史館) from a great variety of imperial documents, most important of all the Court Diaries (*qiju zhu* 起居注) redacted by the Court Diarists (*qiju lang* 起居郎 or *qiju sheren* 起居舍人), the Records of Administrative Affairs (*shizheng ji* 時政記) and a variety of information collected from the different administrative offices. The Historiographical Office was established as a separate bureau in 629 and maintained his duties almost unvaried until the Five Dynasties period (*The Writing of Official History Under the T'ang*, pp. 13-20 and pp. 120-121).

Minister at the Later Liang Imperial court, and other lesser known officials.²⁵ Seemingly none of these officials had ever engaged in historical writing and the record presented limits. The text was redacted between 915 and 921, during the reign of the second and last ruler of the Later Liang dynasty, Zhu Youzhen 朱友貞 (r.913-922). The Song historians almost unanimously blamed the *Liang Taizu shilu* for being too vague and for neglecting events that were unfavorable to the Later Liang.²⁶ Wang Yucheng 王禹偁 (954-1001) in his *Wudai shi quewen* 五代史闕文 complained that “there are no court diaries from the period of reign of Tang Zhaozong 昭宗 (r. 889-904). The first Emperor of the Later Liang dynasty reigned for six years, and [after him] the Prince of Jun ordered the historiographers to redact the *Veritable Records of Taizu of Liang*. [The text] erases the account of the attacks [to the Tang dynasty], and events are not recorded because they were too shameful.”²⁷

The text was followed by and integrated with the *Da Liang bianyi lu* 大梁編遺錄 (Records of the Omitted Parts of the Great Liang), redacted between 919 and 922 by the court official Jing Xiang 敬翔 (d.923).²⁸ This text has not

²⁵ Zhang Gun 張袞, Qi Yanxiang 郟殷象, Feng Xijia 馮錫嘉; cf. *JWDS* 24:250; Wang Qinruo 王欽若 (962-1025) et al., *Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 557:6689. No information on the compilation of the *Liang Taizu shilu* is available in the chapter on history writing (*juan* 18) of the *Wudai huiyao*.

²⁶ *JWDS* 18:250.

²⁷ 昭宗一朝，全無記注。梁祖在位止及六年，均王朝詔史臣修《梁祖實錄》，岐下繫鞋之事，恥而不書；cf. Wang Yucheng, *Wudai shi quewen*, in *Wudai shishu huibian* 五代史書彙編, Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮 ed. (Hangzhou: Hangzhou chubanshe, 2004), p. 2449. On the compilation of the *Wudai shi quewen* see below.

²⁸ *ZZTJ* 262:8542; the *JWDS*, *Cefu yuangui* and *Chongwen zongmu* all record a text in 30 *juan* (*Cefu yuangui* 557:6689).

been immune to criticism either; in particular, the *Kaoyi*, as well as Wang Yucheng, blame Jing Xiang for concealing the negative aspects of the Liang ruling house and for exaggerating the positive ones.²⁹

Due to the lack of official documents from the last decades of the Tang period, both texts were apparently compiled on the basis of a less authoritative variety of sources.³⁰ Nevertheless, the two records, combined with the *Liang gongchen liezhuan* 梁功臣列傳 (Biographies of the Meritorious Subjects of Emperor Taizu),³¹ constituted one of the few available sources relating to the last decades of the reign of the Tang dynasty from the Huang Chao 黃巢 rebellion (874-884) to the early years of the Later Liang dynasty.

1.3. The Compilation Project under the Later Tang Dynasty

Zhu Youzhen was dethroned in 923 by Li Cunxu 李存勖, the son of the Shatuo Turk ruler Li Keyong and future Zhuangzong 莊宗 (r. 923-926) of the Later Tang dynasty. The reign of Zhuangzong lasted only three years; in the subsequent era of Li Siyuan 李嗣源 (Mingzong 明宗, r. 926-933) the court

²⁹ *ZZTJ* 255:8293-94/8306. Jing Xiang was accused by the Song historians of been one of the people most responsible for the rise of Zhu Quanzhong.

³⁰ Court records for the reigns of the last Emperors of the Tang period, Xuanzong 宣宗 (r. 847-859), Yizong 懿宗 (r. 860-873), Xizong 僖宗 (r. 873-888), Zhaozong and the last Emperor puppet Zhaoxuan zong 昭宣宗 (r. 904-905) had not been compiled. The first official source covering these reigns is the *Jiu Tang shu*, compiled in the Later Jin period; cf. Wang Pu 王溥 (922-982), *Wudai huiyao* 五代會要 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2006), 18:303.

³¹ The *Kaoyi* reports that an edition of the *Liang gongchen liezhuan*, author unknown, was preserved in the Chongwen yuan 崇文院 library. The year of redaction is also not specified. It can be placed roughly at the end of the reign of Zhu Youzhen (*ZZTJ* 255:8305). The four quotes included in the critical commentary are all that remains of the text. See also *Song shi* 203:5086: the bibliographical catalogue reports a *Zhu Liang liezhuan* 朱梁列傳 in 15 *juan* redacted by Zhang Zhaoyuan.

historians devoted themselves to the reconstruction of the genealogical history of Li Cunxu's forefathers in order to trace his reign back to the Tang legacy.

The compilation of the official documents of the reign of Li Cunxu and his forefathers represented an important political act for the Later Tang Mingzong. The process to legitimize Zhuangzong and his ancestors was completed with the compilation of the *Tang Zhuangzong shilu* 唐莊宗實錄 (Veritable Records of Zhuangzong Emperor of [Later] Tang) and the three *jinian lu* 紀年錄 dedicated to Li Keyong and his forefathers Zhuxie Chixin 朱邪赤心 (Li Guochang 李國昌) and Zhuxie Zhiyi 朱邪執宜. The *Tang Taizu jinian lu* 唐太祖紀年錄 (Chronological Records of Taizu Emperor of [Later] Tang) commemorated the life and deeds of Li Keyong, the *Tang Xianzu jinian* 唐獻祖紀年錄 (Chronological Records of Later Tang Xianzu) of Li Guochang, and the *Tang Xizü jinian lu* 唐懿祖紀年錄 (Chronological Records of Later Tang Xizü) of Zhuxie Zhiyi.³² The *Zhuangzong shilu* covered the reign of the Later Liang until the end of the reign of Zhuangzong, from 907 to 927, while the three *jinian lu* chronicled the genealogical history of the ruling clan from the beginning of the ninth century to the early tenth century. The integration of the Later Liang period into the *shilu* and *jinian lu* had a double purpose. First of all, the compilation project compensated for the lack of historical records on the last decades of the ninth century. Secondly, in this way

³² *Wudai huiyao* 18:298-299; Wang Gungwu, "The *Chiu Wu-tai shih* and History-writing during the Five Dynasties," pp. 10-12.

the Later Tang rulers denied the legitimacy of the Later Liang dynasty and established a direct line of succession with the Tang.³³

Two important events contributed to the history writing project. First of all, the year 924 saw the restoration of the duties of the Historiography Office. The *Wudai huiyao* reports a memorial that was sent in 924 by the Historiography Office to the court and to the various bureaus requesting the revival of the system for collecting specific types of information from governmental agencies, a system that had fallen into disuse in the second half of the eighth century following the An Lushan 安祿山 (d.757) rebellion. It was certainly not active during the last decades of the Tang dynasty and the Later Liang dynasty. The memorial requested that the official documents redacted by the offices in charge be sent to the Office for the compilation of the records and included a detailed explanation of the rules to follow each different kind of record.³⁴ The work of compilation began in 928, after the Historiography Office presented a memorial to the court requesting the redaction of the Veritable Records of Zhuangzong and of the three *jinian lu*; the

³³ *The Writing of Official History Under the T'ang*, 192-193.

³⁴ The memorial *Zhusi song shiguan shili* 諸司送史館事例 (On How All Offices Should Send the Documents to the Historiographical Office) redefined the rules for the collection of specific information from the different offices: not only the Imperial Secretariat and the Imperial Chancellery (*qiju yuan* 起居院) were requested to send edicts, memorials and court diaries to the Historiographical Office, but also all the governmental agencies were regularly required to return specific types of information to the Office (*Wudai huiyao* 18:293-94; *Cefu yuangui* 557:6689-6693; for a partial translation of the memorial see Wang Gungwu, "The Chiu Wu-tai shih and History-Writing during the Five Dynasties," p. 10). From then on, the work of the Historiography Office continued uninterrupted until the end of the Later Zhou period without many substantial changes. On the system for the collection of specific information from the administrative offices see *The Writing of Official History under the T'ang*, pp. 27-30.

memorial was based on a request that was presented by the historian and bibliographer Zhang Zhaoyuan 張昭遠 (*jinshi* 877).³⁵

Secondly, the private collection of Zhang Zhaoyuan made a significant contribution to the sources used for the compilation. At that time Zhang was the Rectifier of Omissions of the Left (*Zuo buque* 左補闕) yet his qualities as a skilled historian and bibliographer enabled him to hold important roles in the Historiography Office from the Later Tang period until the early Song years. Early Song sources depict Zhang as a skilled scholar who had collected a great many documents from early periods; at that time he had devoted himself to the study of the reign of Zhuangzong and he was privately redacting the Records of the Tongguang era. Zhang's book collection provided a substantial basis for the historiographical operation. In 928 he was bestowed with an official title and actively participated in the redaction of the records. The Zhuangzong shilu in thirty juan and the three *jinian lu* (in all twenty *juan*) were completed in 929 under the supervision of the Chief Minister Zhao Feng 趙鳳.³⁶ In the year of the reign of Li Conghou (Min, r. 933-34) and in the following reign of Li Congke (Prince of Lu, r. 934-936), Zhang Zhaoyuan took part in the redaction of the *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan* 莊宗功臣列傳 (Biographies of Meritorious Subjects of the Reign of Emperor Zhuangzong) in thirty *juan*.³⁷ Under the supervision of Yao Yi 姚顛 (866-940), in 935 Zhang participated in the redaction of the *Tang Mingzong*

³⁵ *Wudai huiyao* 18:298-299.

³⁶ *Wudai huiyao* 18:298-299; "The *Chiu Wu-tai shih* and History-writing during the Five Dynasties," pp. 10-12; *The Writing of Official History Under the T'ang*, pp. 191-192.

³⁷ *ZZTJ* 254:8196; *Wudai huiyao* 18:299.

shilu 唐明宗實錄 (Veritable Records of Emperor Mingzong of [Later] Tang) in thirty *juan*.³⁸

The *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan* in particular deserves further attention. Although during the Tang period biographical material was constantly collected by the Historiographical Office for the compilation of the standard histories, it was uncommon to publish the collected biographies as independent works.³⁹ This was done for the first time by the Later Liang in 920 with the official publication of the *Liang gongchen zhuan*. With the compilation for the *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan* a more rigorous standard of organization of biographical chapters was introduced. According to a memorial reported in the *Wudai huiyao*, new rules for the use of biographical material were established and these new standards drew a clear distinction between real meritorious subjects “who had contributed to the restoration” (*zhongxing sheji zhe* 中興社稷者) and those who had not. The two categories of subjects had to be treated in different ways and their merits and demerits carefully checked.⁴⁰ This standard would greatly influence Song historiography, and it would be revived by Ouyang Xiu in the biographical section of his *Xin Wudai shi*. Although Ouyang Xiu’s set of categories might have been quite different from the concept of ‘meritorious’ and ‘not meritorious’ of the Later Tang, the Song historian was certainly inspired by the structural patterns of these early records.

³⁸ *Wudai huiyao* 18:299.

³⁹ *The Writing of Official History Under the T'ang*, pp. 65-66.

⁴⁰ *Wudai huiyao* 18:303. The memorial has been fully translated by Wang Gungwu in “The *Chiu Wu-tai shih* and History-writing during the Five Dynasties,” pp. 11-12.

From the quotations in the *Kaoyi* we know that the *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan* also included biographies of non-meritorious subjects or usurpers; among the others, the Later Liang family clan and the Kitan. The critical commentary mentions a “Zhu Wen zhuan” 朱溫傳 (Biography of Zhu Wen),⁴¹ a “Zhu Yougui zhuan” (Biography of Zhu Yougui), a “Zhu Youzhen zhuan” (Biography of Zhu Youzhen), a “Liu Shouguang zhuan” 劉守光傳 (Biography of Liu Shouguang) and a “Qidan zhuan” 契丹傳 (Biography of the Kitan).⁴² This classification reflects the denial of the legitimacy of the previous dynasty: the Later Liang rulers are listed among the subjects of the Later Tang dynasty as equals to their Northern neighbors Kitan.

Although early Song historians certainly drew from these texts, the few quotations from the three *jinian lu* contained in the *Kaoyi* are all that remains of the texts; as for the *Zhuangzong shilu* and *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan*, we will see in the following sections how a close comparison of the different narrative versions offered by these two texts highlights interesting aspects of their function and nature.

1.4. The Compilation of the Historical Records under the Later Jin, Later Han and Later Zhou Dynasties

The history-writing project undertaken by the Later Jin rulers did not include the redaction of the records of the last two Emperors of the Later Tang period. This neglect of the Later Tang dynastic history had two political implications. Firstly,

⁴¹ *ZZTJ* 266:8695.

⁴² *ZZTJ* 269:8809.

shortly before his rebellion in 934, Shi Jingtang had officially declared the illegitimacy of Li Congke and had asked for his abdication;⁴³ Shi Jingtang purposely reiterated his refusal of legitimizing the last Later Tang Emperor by denying the redaction of the Veritable Records of his reign. Secondly, the Later Jin rulers referred directly back to the Tang legacy for the legitimacy of their reign. A large scale compilation project of the *Tang shu* 唐書 (later known as the *Jiu Tang shu*) was thus commissioned by Emperor Gaozu in 941 and completed during the reign of Shi Chonggui (r. 943-946) in 945.⁴⁴

The first problem for historians dealing with Tang history was the lack of official sources for the decades of the ninth century, as no official records had been collated since the period of reign of Tang Wuzong 武宗 (r. 814-846).⁴⁵ At the beginning of the tenth century the Later Jin court issued orders throughout the empire for the retrieval of documents. Nevertheless, the search for books ended up being limited to the Central Plain because the Southern reigns refused to take part.⁴⁶ One of the main contributors to the search for documents was the Court Diarist and historian Jia Wei 賈緯 (d. 952), who memorialized to the court about the results of his search for the missing documents and redacted the *Tangchao buyi*

⁴³ *ZZTJ* 280:9143.

⁴⁴ The compilation was affected by the frequent changing of the director of the Historiographical Office, occupied by Zhao Yin 趙瑩 until 943, and then by Sang Weihai, who was substituted by Liu Xu 劉昫 (888-947) two years later. Tradition attributes the work to Liu Xu, yet he was only responsible for the final memorial of presentation to the court. The Song sources such as the *Kaoyi* consider Zhang Zhaoyuan and the court diarist Jia Wei 賈緯 (d. 952) as the main protagonists of the compilation project (*The Writing of Official History Under the T'ang*, pp. 160-187; *Cefu yuangui* 557:6693).

⁴⁵ Chen Zhensun 陳振孫 (ca.1186-ca. 1262), *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 直齋書錄解題 (Shanghai: Shangwu guji chubanshe, 1986), p. 126.

⁴⁶ *Wudai huiyao* 18:298.

lu 唐朝補遺錄 (Record of the Amended Lost [Documents] of the Tang Dynasty, or *Tang nianbu lu* 唐年補錄) in fifty five *juan*.⁴⁷ The *Tang nianbu lu* is now lost, yet fragments of it have been preserved in the *Kaoyi*. Sima Guang relies on it for the narrative construction of the last decades of the Tang and early tenth century period. According to the quotations reported by the *Kaoyi*, Jia Wei served as official at the four courts from the Later Tang to the Later Zhou and in his record he respected the taboo of referring to Li Keyong's name.⁴⁸

As for the records of the two Later Jin Emperors, during the reign of Emperor Yin 隱帝 (r. 949-950) of the Later Han period Dou Zhengu 竇貞固 (d. 969) compiled the *Jin Gaozu shilu* 晉高祖實錄 (Veritable Records of Emperor Gaozu of [Later] Jin) and the *Jin Shaodi shilu* 晉少帝實錄 (Veritable Records of Emperor Shao of [Later] Jin). According to the *Wudai huiyao*, the two records were completed around 951, after the general Guo Wei 郭威 (Taizu, r. 952-954) had assumed power and founded the Later Zhou dynasty.⁴⁹ The change in the ruling house apparently neither stopped nor interfered with the compilation process.

⁴⁷ According to Jia Wei's report, the *shilu* of the last Tang Emperor were completely missing with the exception of the Veritable Records of Emperor Wuzong. Nevertheless, other contemporary sources report different information (on this issue see *The Writing of Official History Under the Tang*, pp. 158-159 and 193; *Wudai huiyao* 18:298) *JWDS* 79:1046 reports sixty five *juan*. See also Jia Wei's biography in *JWDS* 131:1727; accordingly, in order to provide material on the last years of the later Tang period-presumably from Emperor Wuzong (814-846) to the first years of the tenth century. Jia Wei collected a great deal of unofficial material such as records based on hearsay and popular stories. The historian would have chronologically ordered all this material and edited it in the *Tang nian bu lu*. See also *XWDS* 57:657-658.

⁴⁸ *ZZTJ* 255:8297-98. The *Zhizhai shulu jieti* reports a *Tang nian bu lu* in 65 *juan* (p. 112).

⁴⁹ *Wudai huiyao* 18:299-300; *Zhizhai shulu jieti*, p. 127.

The compilation project undertaken by Shizong 世宗 (r. 954-959) also included the redaction of the *Han Gaozu shilu* 漢高祖實錄 (Veritable Records of [Later] Han Gaozu), supervised by the historian Su Fengji 蘇逢吉, the *Han Yindi shilu* 漢隱帝實錄 (Veritable Records of Emperor Yin of [Later] Han) and the *Zhou Taizu shilu* 周太祖實錄 (Veritable Records of Emperor Taizu of [Later] Zhou), which again saw Zhang Zhaoyuan as the main protagonist.

Among all the *shilu* redacted during the Five Dynasties period, the most problematic were probably the records of the two Later Tang rulers; the compilation was undertaken only at the end of the Later Zhou period. In 956 the Emperor Shizong commissioned Zhang Zhaoyuan and others to redact the *Mindi shilu* 愍帝實錄 (Veritable Records of Emperor Min of [Later] Tang) and *Feidi shilu* 廢帝實錄 (Veritable Records of the Deposed Emperor of [Later] Tang).⁵⁰ According to the *Kaoyi*, Zhang completed the two records at the beginning of the Song period.⁵¹ The quotations preserved in the *Kaoyi* are all that remains of the two texts.

It is necessary to mention here another historical text redacted during the period of reign of Emperor Gaozu: the *Beishi* 備史 by Jia Wei, presented to the court in 948. There is scant bibliographical information about this work which had probably already been lost by the end of the Song period. Quotations from it have

⁵⁰ *Wudai shiliao tanyuan*, pp. 40-43; *Zhizhai shulu jieti*, p. 127.

⁵¹ *ZZTJ* 268:8770.

been preserved in the *Kaoyi*. It basically narrated the events of the Later Jin dynasty, though it went back to the early Later Liang period of reign.⁵²

2. The Early Song Sources

2.1. The *Wudai huiyao* and the *Wudai tonglu*

The records of the last Later Zhou Emperor, the *Zhou Shizong shilu* 周世宗實錄, were redacted at the beginning of the Song period by Hu Meng 扈蒙 (915-986) under the supervision of the director of the Historiography Office Wang Pu.⁵³ At the same time, Wang was also engaged in supervising of the compilation work of the *Wudai huiyao*, in which the idea of ‘Five Dynasties’ was conceptualized for the first time, and of the *Tang huiyao* 唐會要.⁵⁴

⁵² The *Beishi* is not mentioned in any bibliographical catalogues after the Song period. *Song shi* 203:5096; *Wudai shiliao tanyuan*, p. 133.

⁵³ *Zhizhai shulu jieti*, p. 128.

⁵⁴ The *Tang huiyao* was presented to the throne in 961, the *Wudai huiyao* two years later in 963 (on the writing of institutional history and the *Tang huiyao* see *The Writing of Official History under the Tang*, pp. 114-118). There is very little information on the *Wudai huiyao* from the Southern Song period until the Qing period. The *Song shi* mentions it (*Song shi* 162:5299), yet already in the Southern Song bibliographical catalogues the text is rarely included. The *Junzhai dushu zhi* reports a *Wudai shi* by Wang Pu; the error in the title (but also of the *pu* character in the name of the author) was amended by Huang Pilie 黃丕烈 (1763-1825) in his notes to the catalogue (*Junzhai dushu zhi jiaozheng*, p. 260). After the Song period, the *Wudai huiyao* is not mentioned in any bibliographical catalogues of the official dynastic histories until the Qing period. The *Siku* editors lament that the text is not detailed enough on many important issues such as, for instance, on the publishing activity of the Five Dynasties period. (*Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 81:694). The *Congshu jicheng chubian* edition of the text reports in the preface the *tiyao*, it is thus presumable that it is the same edition of the *Siku quanshu*. It also reports a postface by Zhu Yizun’s 朱彝尊 (1629-1709) comments on comparing and collating the editions he possessed. Moreover, the post-face includes Hu Yujin’s 胡玉縉 (1859-19409) comments on the text included in his *Siku tiyao buzheng* 四庫提要補正. See *Congshu jicheng chubian*, vol.4 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, [1936]).

The *Wudai huiyao* is a collection of documents, divided into thirty chapters without overt editorializing. Following the model of the *huiyao* redacted in the Tang period, the material in the text is arranged according to straightforward institutional criteria, yet unlike other histories of institutions, the general structure and the sectional breakdown of the text suggest that the compilers did not put much effort into the systematizing of the subjects. A large part of the documents dates back to the Later Tang and successive dynasties; very little information on the activity of the governmental agencies of the Later Liang has been preserved. Conceived as a repository of collected documents, the *Wudai huiyao* apparently should present relatively few problems of implicit judgements and subjective interpretation of the facts as compared to the *shilu*. Moreover, the division into topic-oriented sections limited the narrative of the events to a bare chronology of the facts. Nevertheless, Wang Pu lived and served as a high ranking official at the courts of the last Emperors of the Later Zhou dynasty, until the first years of reign of the Song. He was thus influenced by the political discourse of his time. It will be shown below how the choices of narrative details and the use of the language were hardly completely immune from expressing historians' opinions. The *ZZTJ* largely drew on the *Wudai huiyao* and the *Kaoyi* often compares the narrative versions of the text with other sources.⁵⁵

Chao Gongwu 晁公武 (1105-1180) reports an interesting anecdote that may well reflect the opinion of the Song literati on this early text. After reading the *Wudai huiyao*, the father of the scholar Yan Ziruo 閻自若 told his son: “I

⁵⁵*Zhizhai shulu jieti*, p. 162; *Song shi* 207:5299.

personally witnessed and heard about all the events that occurred at the end of the Tang dynasty, those [accounts] that are different from what recorded in the histories and documents are many' He then told his son the old events that he had witnessed and heard, and ordered him to record them" 「唐末之事，皆吾耳目所及，與史冊異者多矣。」因話見聞故事，命自若誌之。⁵⁶ The text produced by Yan, the *Tang mo fanwen lu* 唐末汎聞錄 (Record of the Floating Hearsay from the End of the Tang) in one *juan*, was almost forgotten by the end of the Song dynasty. Nevertheless, the anecdote quoted above shows how the early official records of the Five Dynasties (both the *Wudai huiyao* and, as will be shown in the following sections, the *JWDS*) were commonly considered sometimes hardly reliable by the scholars of the early Song period.⁵⁷

Another early Song comprehensive work on the Five Dynasties period is the *Wudai tonglu* 五代通錄 (Comprehensive Records of the Five Dynasties) redacted under the supervision of the minister Fan Zhi 范質 (911-964).⁵⁸ There are considerable discrepancies in the bibliographical sources on the dates of redaction and the number of *juan* of the *tonglu*.⁵⁹ There is no mention of the text in the

⁵⁶ Chao Gongwu 晁公武 (1105-1180), Sun Meng 孫猛 (ed.), *Junzhai dushu zhi jiaozheng* 郡齋讀書志校證 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1990), p. 260.

⁵⁷ As far as I have been able to find, the *Kaoyi* preserves only one quotation from the *Tang mo fanwen* (ZZTJ 275:8997).

⁵⁸ On Fan Zhi see *Song shi* 249:8794-97. See also *Xu Zizhi tongjian changpian* 5:118-119, 132-33.

⁵⁹ Chen Zhensun records a *Wudai tonglu* in 65 *juan* (*Zhizhai shulu jieti*, p. 112); the same does Chao Gongwu in his *Junzhai dushu zhi* (*Junzhai dushu zhi jiaozheng*, p. 204) and the *Song shi* (*Song shi* 203:5091). Wang Yinglin 王應麟 (1223-1296) maintains that Fan Zhi amended and collated the *Wudai shilu* in 361 *juan* and called it *Wudai Tonglu* (for more details see *Wudai shiliao tanyuan*, pp. 1-6).

bibliographical catalogues after the Song period and it was plausibly lost well before the fall of the dynasty. Moreover, very scant information on the editorial work undertaken by Fan Zhi is available to us today. The bibliographer Chen Zhensun briefly mentions that Fan probably simplified and cut parts of the *shilu*.⁶⁰ From the quotations collected in the *Kaoyi* we can presume that Fan Zhi did not limit himself to assembling the *shilu* and he probably carried out some editing and corrections of the originals. He is also considered to be the author of the records of the last Emperor of the Later Liang dynasty, Zhu Youzhen, whose *shilu* had not been redacted by the subsequent rulers.

2.1. The *Jiu Wudai shi*

None of the rulers of the Central Plain in the first half of the tenth century engaged in the compilation of full-scale National Histories (*guoshi* 國史), nor were they committed to the reorganization of the imperial library holdings and the redaction of catalogues. Consequently, when almost a decade after the foundation of the Song dynasty the quest for legitimization of the imperial power led to the undertaking of a large compiling project of the Standard History (*zhengshi* 正史) of the previous dynasties, the main, and sometimes only, officially redacted material available to the Song historians were the Veritable Records and other administrative documents. In 973 Li Fang 李昉 (925-996) and his team of fellow historians supervised by the minister Xue Juzheng completed and presented to the throne the first official history of the Five Dynasties (*Wudai shi*, later known as the

⁶⁰ *Zhizhai shulu jieti*, p. 112.

Old History of the Five Dynasties).⁶¹ As in the case of the *Wudai huiyao*, over the following decades the *JWDS* was criticized by scholars and historians who did not like its over-systematization and idealization. The text was certainly used in the following centuries for didactic purposes, yet from the beginning of the thirteen century until its ‘rediscovery’ in the mid-Qing period, it remained almost completely neglected. The current edition is a late eighteenth-century reconstruction and amended version. Much of the content has been supplemented by other sources and pieces of information on the collation can be gathered from the *Jiu Wudai shi kaoyi* 舊五代史考異 (Critical Commentary to the *Jiu Wudai shi*). The main author of the collation is Shao Jinhan 紹晉涵 (1743-1796). The reknown bibliophile and scholar Lu Xinyuan 陸心源 (1838-1894) in his annotated catalogue *Yigu tang xu ba* 儀古堂續跋 (Continuation of the [Collection of] Colophons of the Hall of Honorable Past) registers a *Chongji Jiu Wudashi yuangao ba* 重輯舊五代史原稿跋 (Colophon to the Collected Edition of the Original Draft of the Old History of the Five Dynasties) and accordingly the original annotated reconstruction of the work by Shao Jinhan complete with the references to the sources.⁶² Lu Xinyuan mentions that, since the Yuan edition of

⁶¹ The board of historians included Lu Duosun 盧多遜 (934-985), Hu Meng 扈蒙 (915-986), Zhang Dan 張澹 (919-974) and others; the redaction work took less than two years (see *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 46: 410; “The *Chiu Wu-tai shih* and History Writing During the Five Dynasties,” pp. 1-22; *Wudai shiliao tanyuan*, pp. 98-111. On the early Song compilation of standard histories see Johannes Kurz, “The Consolidation of Official Historiography during the Early Northern Song Dynasty,” *Journal of Asian History* 46.1 (2012): 13-35.

⁶² As in the case of the *Wudai huiyao*, the text is not mentioned in any bibliographical catalogue after the Song period until its inclusion in the *Siku quanshu*. The modern edition of the *Jiu Wudai shi* is the result of the work of editing and re-compilation done by Shao Jinhan on the basis of the parts of the texts recovered in the *Yongle dadian*. According to the *Siku* editors,

the thirteen histories included the New History and not the Old History of the Five Dynasties, the latter went almost entirely neglected for centuries; there is no record of it in the Ming and early Qing bibliographies. In the late 1850s when Lu Xinyuan personally visited the private collections of Fujian and could not find any copy of the *JWDS*, he commented that “the territories of Min are full of moths, it is already a long time since [the book] has fed the stomach of bookworms” 閩地多蟲，飽蠹魚之腹久也。⁶³

The *benji* 本紀 (Basic Annals) of the Northern dynasties are grouped into five *shu* 書 (Books) sections. According to the *Siku* editors, the original *shu* were all recovered, except for the annals of Later Liang Taizu. Quotations from it have been preserved mainly in the *Kaoyi* and other Song sources.⁶⁴ Many parts of the text were amended on the basis of the *Liaoshi* 遼史 (History of the Liao). Derogatory epithets such as *lu* 虜 and *beilu* 北虜 used to address the Northern peoples and Northerners in general (Kitan, Shatuo, or generically tribal

the *Yongle dadian* portions correspond to eight- or nine-tenths of the whole work. On the basis of the quotations collected and preserved in Song texts from the early edition of the *Wudai shi* and following the original sectional breakdown (61 *juan* of Basic Annals, 12 *juan* of Treatises, 77 *juan* of Biographies) the Qing editor constructed the edition that would be included in the *Siku quanshu* (*Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 46:410). The *Chongji Jiu Wudai shi yuangao ba* included in Lu Xinyuan’s collection would attest the existence of surviving copies of the original Song edition in the early Qing period (Lu Xinyuan, *Yigu tang shumu tiba huibian* 儀顧堂書目題跋彙編, p. 329), yet there is no information on the diffusion and transmission of this edition and on the plausible work of comparison with the reconstructed version from the *Yongle dadian*. On the Qing edition of the *JWDS* see *Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng* 1:28-42.

⁶³ Li Xinyuan, *Yigu tang xu ba*, pp. 329-330.

⁶⁴ *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 46:410.

confederations and peoples living in the borderlands) were changed into ‘Kitan’, ‘Shatuo’, ‘Hedong’, ‘enemy’ (*di* 敵), ‘tribe’ (*buzu* 部族).⁶⁵

The *shu* sections include a biographical part on the family clan divided into “Houfei liezhuan” 后妃列傳 (Biographies of the Empresses and Imperial Concubines) and “Zongshi liezhuan” 宗室列傳 (Biographies of the Royal Clan [Members]). Unfortunately the chapters were mostly lost. The *Liang shu* 梁書 biographical section on the family clan, empresses and royal concubines was completely missing from the *Yongle dadian* edition. The same section in the *Tang shu* 唐書 (Book of the [Later] Tang) was partially recovered.⁶⁶ It includes the biography of the formal wives of Li Keyong.⁶⁷ The section on the sons of Li Keyong is almost completely lost and only a few entries have been preserved. The biographies of the formal wives and concubines of Zhuangzong are lost, as is the “Houfei liezhuan” section of the *Jinshu* 晉書 (Book of the [Later] Jin), while small portions of the *Zongshi liezhuan* have been recovered.⁶⁸ Small parts of the same section have been recovered in the *Hanshu* 漢書 (Book of [Later] Han),⁶⁹

⁶⁵ In his study on the Qing edition of the *JWDS*, Chen Yuan listed all the occurrences in which these terms were modified by the Qing scholars. See Chen Yuan, *Jiu Wudai shi jiben fafu, Sui Tang Wudai zhengshi dingbu wenxian huibian*, v.3 pp. 4-31. See *Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng* 1:1-2 and 28-42. Chen Shangjun recorded in the notes all the instances in which derogatory terms were modified (see for instance v.11, p. 4272 and 4274). On the use of derogatory epithets to address to foreigners in Song official writings see also Tao Jing-shen, “Barbarians or Northerners: Northern Sung Images of the Khitans,” in *China Among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and its Neighbors, 10th - 14th Centuries*, Morris Rossabi ed. (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), pp. 66-86.

⁶⁶ *JWDS* 49:671-680; 50:681.

⁶⁷ *JWDS* 49:673.

⁶⁸ *JWDS* 86:1131; 87:1137.

⁶⁹ *JWDS* 104:1381-1382; 105:1385.

while in the case of the *Zhoushu* 周書 (Book of [Later] Zhou) a small portion of the “Houfei liezhuan” has been recovered and the “Zongshi liezhuan” is completely missing.⁷⁰ The missing parts have been reconstructed on the basis of the *Wudai huiyao*, the *Beimeng suoyan* 北夢瑣言 (Trivial Tales from the North of Meng) by Sun Guangxian 孫光憲 (900-968), the *Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜 and the *ZZTJ*. The New History of the Five Dynasties by Ouyang Xiu was also consulted, yet rarely mentioned in the reconstruction. As we will see the setting of the biographies of the royal clan members in the *XWDS*, divided into “Jiaren zhuan” 家人傳 (Biographies of Households), is quite different from that of its predecessor.

The biography sections are grouped into three main parts: the “Shixi liezhuan” 世襲列傳 (Biographies of Hereditary Posts),⁷¹ the “Jianwei liezhuan” 僭偽列傳 (Biographies of Usurpers) and the “Waiguo liezhuan” 外國列傳 (Biographies of Foreign Reigns). The first section of the “Waiguo liezhuan” is devoted entirely to the history of the relations with the Kitan; according to Chen Shangjun the title “Waiguo liezhuan” for the section on the history of foreign reigns was possibly added by Qing scholars as there is no mention of a “Waiguo liezhuan” in Song times, and the account of the Kitan-Liao is always referred to as “Qidan zhuan.”⁷² Portions of this account were already lost by the Qing period.

⁷⁰ *JWDS* 121:1599-1600; 122:1607.

⁷¹ On the basis of evidences found in Song sources, Cheng Shangjun’s new compilation has *chengxi* 承襲 instead of *shixi* (*Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng* 11:4035).

⁷² *Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng* 11:4271. Nonetheless, the title “Qidan liezhuan” On early Song relations with the Kitan and the rethoric of foreign relations see Wang Gungwu, “The

Chen Shangjun in his *Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng* has recovered parts of it from other sources.⁷³

As in the case of the *Wudai huiyao*, the *JWDS* was compiled in very short time; Li Fang and his co-workers seemingly brought together the Veritable Records section by section and in some parts this still shows. The text includes ten treatises divided into twelve *juan* and there is no bibliographical treatise.⁷⁴ The Treatise on Rites is almost entirely devoted to the system of the imperial ancestral temples and to the debate that arose among the ceremonialists at the courts of the Later Tang and Later Jin Emperors, a clear indication of the importance placed by the two Shatuo courts on this issue.⁷⁵ The chapter consists of a collection of the memorials presented by officials to the court. The same material is to be found in the “Miaoyi” 廟儀 (Ceremonials of the Ancestral Temples) and “Miao zhidu” 廟制度 (System of the Ancestral Temples) sections of the *Wudai huiyao*,⁷⁶ as well as in the *Cefu yuangui* with slight variations. The memorials were plausibly drawn from the *shilu* and assembled into the form of a treatise without many additional changes. In the *Yongle dadian* edition of the *JWDS* some parts of the Treatise are missing, including the preface, and they were reconstructed on the basis of the

Rethoric of a Lesser Empire: Early Sung Relations with Its Neighbors,” in *China Among Equals*, pp. 47-65.

⁷³ *Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng* 11:4271-4311.

⁷⁴ As previously stated, no bibliographical records were redacted in the first fifty years of the tenth century. The first Song bibliographical catalogue was redacted roughly around 984, year in which Taizong ordered that the imperial library contents be checked against the *Kaiyuan siku shumu* 開元四庫書目 (Catalogue of the Four Repositories Redacted in the Kaiyuan Era).

⁷⁵ *JWDS* 142:1893-1907; 143:1893-1921.

⁷⁶ *Wudai huiyao* 2:26-37; 3: 39-42.

Wudai huiyao and the *Cefu yuangui*. Considering the number of reports preserved, the debate on the system of the ancestral temples constituted an important. Despite that, Song historians showed very little interest to expanding their inquiry into the matter. Some discussion on it can be found in the early fourteenth century *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考 of Ma Duanlin 馬端臨 (1254-1323).⁷⁷

3. Miscellanies and hearsay accounts

A few decades after the *JWDS* was presented to the court, the Hanlin scholar Wang Yucheng 王禹偁 (954-1001) compiled a *Wudai shi quewen* 五代史闕文 (Omitted Parts of the History of the Five Dynasties), a short (only one *juan*, seventeen anecdotes) collection of anecdotes on the first half of the tenth century. In the intention of its author, the *Wudai shi quewen* was meant to fill the gaps in the official histories. In the preface to the work, Wang states that he collected anecdotes that had been orally conveyed and not recorded by the historians.⁷⁸ As will be shown later, this work was the subject of strong criticism by the Qing scholars. The *Siku* editors describe it as “empty words that were at the time

⁷⁷ For the treatises of the *JWDS* see also Chen Shangjun, *Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng*, vol.12.

⁷⁸ *Zhizhai shulu jieti*, p. 149; *Junzhai dushu zhi jiaozheng*, p. 255. According to the *Siku* editors, Wang Yucheng redacted the *Wudai quewen* soon after Xue Juzheng presented the *Jiu Wudai shi* to the throne; it has thus been regarded as a complement to Xue’s work. Yet in his preface, Wang Yucheng states that he read a *Wudai shi* in three hundred and sixty *juan*, whereas Xue Juzheng’s work is only one hundred and fifty *juan*. To which text does he refer? The *Siku* editors leave the question unsolved; it could be suggested that different historical records on the Five Dynasties or different versions of the *JWDS* circulated at the beginning of the Song dynasty. As in the case of the *Wudai huiyao*, the *Siku* edition of the *Wudai shi quewen* does not come from the *Yongle dadian* but from an unspecified edition ‘gathered by the Imperial Inspectors in the region of Zhejiang’. On Wang Yucheng, see his biography in the *Song shi*. In the self-preface of the *Wudai shi quewen*, Wang does not report the year of compilation (*Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao*, pp. 1131-1132).

considered as credible history.”⁷⁹ In fact, Ouyang Xiu as well as Sima Guang made extensive use of the *Wudai shi quewen*.⁸⁰

Another similar work was compiled in 1012 by a scholar official from Xunyang 浚阳 (modern Jiangxi), named Tao Yue’s 陶岳 (?-1022). As Tao Yue stated in the preface, the work was entitled *Wudai shi bu* 五代史補 (Additions to the History of the Five Dynasties), although some Song bibliographical catalogues record it as *Wudai bu lu* 五代補錄 (Additional Records of the Five Dynasties). Tao Yue collected anecdotes from a large variety of oral and non-official written sources, in all more than one hundred brief accounts. The main subjects of these brief anecdotes were facts of usurpation of power and court events that had been omitted by the *JWDS*.⁸¹

As we shall see in the following chapters, the *Kaoyi* records several anecdotes from the *Wudai shi quewen* and the *Wudai shi bu*. The two collections were compiled on the basis of heterogeneous material other than the *shilu*, yet

⁷⁹ *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao*, pp. 1131-1132.

⁸⁰ For a survey on the use of the *Wudai shi quewen* in Ouyang Xiu’s *XWDS* see Zhang Minghua, *Xin Wudai shi yanjiu* 新五代史研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue, 2007), pp. 71-73.

⁸¹ The quotations collected in the *Kaoyi* always refer to a *Wudai shi bu*. The *Junzhai dushu zhi* and the *Zhizhai shulu jieti* record a *Wudai bu lu* in five *juan* by Tao Yue that should correspond to the *Wudai shi bu* (*Junzhai dushu zhi jiaozheng*, p. 260; *Zhizhai shulu jieti*, p. 149). According to the preface of the text in which Tao Yue talks about a *Wudai shi bu*, the *Siku* editors considered Chao Gongwu’s a mistake (*Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao*, p. 1132-33, see also the explanation for the missing parts). The edition of the *Wudai shi bu* included in the *Siku* is the edition collected in Zhu Yizun’s *Pushu ting* 曝書亭 (Pavilion of the Books Exposed to the Sun) private library. For the use of the *Wudai shi bu* in Ouyang Xiu’s *Xin Wudai shi* see Zhang Minghua, *Xin Wudai shi yanjiu*, pp. 73-75. In this thesis I use edition edited by Fu Xuancong: *Wudai shibu*, in *Wudai shishu huibian*, v.5 (Hangzhou: Hangzhou chubanshe, 2004).

there are no records on the work of selection of the sources, except for rare comments by the authors. In the case of the *Wudai shi quewen*, for instance, the author often comments on the inconsistencies of the *shilu*. A critical comparison with other sources will highlight their nature and origins. The *Siku* editors had already contributed valuable work along these lines, yet their conclusion as to the unreliability of the texts raises interesting problems of interpretation.

As is the case for many collections of stories and anecdotes on the Five dynasties period, Wang Yucheng and Tao Yue, by adopting the identity of self-declared historians, claimed that their accounts provided supplemental historical material to the official histories. As non-canonical historical collections, these records offer fertile ground for inquiry into the meaning and scope of history writing for the literati in a period of intellectual and political transition. The structure of the records often lacks homogeneity and chronological framing. As such they consist of collections of brief and unlinked records providing different perspectives of the events narrated in the officially commissioned histories. We can presume that the prospective audience was a specific group sharing the same perspective of the author concerning the true nature of the events narrated rather than an ideal reader.

Whereas the standard histories did not provide a feasible version of the events, Sima Guang, as well as Ouyang Xiu, looked to these collections for historical information. There is a great number of titles of tenth- to eleventh-

century collections of hearsay accounts.⁸² Those considered in this study are: the *Chunzhu jiwēn* 春渚記聞 (Records of Hearsay of the Spring Islet), compiled by He Yuan 何遠 in the eleventh century; the *Luoyang jinshen jiu wenji* 洛陽縉紳舊聞記 (Record of Old Sayings from the Literati of Luoyang), redacted by Zhang Qixian 張齊賢 (942-1014); the *San Chu xinlu* 三楚新錄 (New Records of the Three Kingdoms of Chu) redacted by Zhou Yuchong 周羽翀 at the beginning of the Song period; Qin Zaisi's 秦再思 (beginning of the 11th century ca.) collection of brief stories, the *Luozhong jiyi* 洛中紀異 (Record of the Extraordinary Events in Luozhong).

4. The *Wudai shiji*

Broadly speaking, the setting of the *Wudai shiji* 五代史記 (better known as *Xin Wudai shi*),⁸³ constitutes an innovation in the panorama of tenth-century history writing. From the sectional breakdown to the use of the language and the narrative construction, it differed consistently from other standard histories and from the *JWDS* in particular. Despite the request of the court to submit his work, Ouyang Xiu was all his life very reluctant to do so, and to present it to the readers in

⁸² Studies on tenth-century hearsay collections include the above mentioned Zhang Minghua, *Xin Wudai shi yanjiu* and: Glen Dudbridge, *A Portrait of Five Dynasties China: From the Memoirs of Wang Renyu (880-965)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), Zhang Qun 張群, *Tongjian, Xin Tang shu yinyong biji xiaoshuo yanjiu* 通鑑、新唐書引用筆記、小說研究 (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 1999); Fang Rui, "Sun Guanxian yu *Beimeng suoyan*" 孫光憲與北夢瑣言研究 (PhD Thesis, Sichuan Daxue, 2002); Fang Rui, "*Beimeng suoyan yu Wudai shilu*" 北夢瑣言與五代實錄, *Shixue shi yanjiu* 3 (2007): 109-114.

⁸³ For a recent study of the compilation of the *Wudai shi ji* see Sung Chia-fu, "An Ambivalent Historian: Ouyang Xiu and his *New Histories*," *T'oung Pao* 102-4-5 (2016): 358-406.

general, so that the work was published only after his death.⁸⁴ In 1207 the newly established Emperor of the Jin 金 dynasty (Zhangzong 章宗, r.1189-1208) ordered that the new history of the five dynasties had to be adopted as official history in place of the old one. In the same year the work was published by the Jin Imperial Academy (*guozi jian* 國子監) and used as a textbook in the imperial exams.⁸⁵

4.1. The Basic Annals and the Biographies

One innovation presented by the *XWDS* is that the work is not limited to the dynastic span. Instead, it presents the five dynasties in the context of the time frame of the first five decades of the tenth century. The Basic Annals of the five dynasties are in fact grouped together. This new sectional division was evocative of the historian's criticism of the legitimacy of the five Northern dynasties and it could hardly be expressed within the traditional boundaries of historical writing. Nevertheless, this attempt at overcoming the limitations of the dynastic histories was very much appreciated by the Southern Song historians, and in particular by those scholars who expressed quite critical views towards the traditional history writing system such as Zheng Qiao 鄭樵 (1104-1162).⁸⁶

⁸⁴ On the posthumous acquisition of the *XWDS* by the court see Sung Chia-fu, "Between Tortoise and Mirror," pp. 145-149. For a general introduction to the history of the compilation and a discussion about the reasons of Ouyang Xiu's unwillingness to publish see Chia-fu Sung, "An Ambivalent Historian: Ouyang Xiu and His *New Histories*," *T'oung Pao* 102-4-5 (2016): 358-388.

⁸⁵ *Jin shi* 12: 288 and 51: 1132.

⁸⁶ Zhang Xu 張須, *Tongzhi zongxu jian* 通志總序箋 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1934), pp. 18-19.

The *XWDS* was also appreciated by the *daoxue* 道學 scholars for its ‘meaningful categories’.⁸⁷ Ouyang Xiu anticipated a trend in history writing that would fully develop in the Southern Song period; in fact, the importance of picturing the events in the most thorough way possible, in order to express judgements in the *XWDS*, would lead to the primacy of a set of moral principles according to which the historical characters were judged as good or evil. In this new context the sectional breakdown of the biographies acquired an unprecedented importance for the historian. The Basic Annals are reduced to a sketchy chronicle of the major events and the largest bulk of the work is devoted to the biographies. The historian outlines different sections: the “*Jiaren zhuan*” 家人傳 (Biographies of the Hereditary Houses) and the “*chen zhuan*” 臣傳 (Biographies of [Loyal] Subjects) are subdivided under the five dynasties. The number of loyal and disloyal subjects could vary considerably from one dynasty to the other. The Later Jin dynasty, for instance, counts only three ‘[loyal] subjects’, while the Later Tang more than thirty. Another section of the biographies was dedicated to the “*Sijie zhuan*” 死節傳 (Biographies of Martyrs to Virtue), the “*Sishi zhuan*” 死事傳 (Biographies of the Martyrs in Service), the “*Tang liu chen zhuan*” 唐六臣傳 (Six [Loyal] Subjects of the Tang). Finally, the largest section is the “*zazhuan*” 雜傳 (Miscellaneous Biographies), where the officials whose morality was considered ambiguous are placed. Moreover, Ouyang Xiu creates the biographical section of

⁸⁷ For the translation of *yi lei* 義類 I follow Chia-fu Sung’s interpretation. For a general discussion on Ouyang Xiu’s meaningful categories see Chia-fu Sung, “An Ambivalent Historian: Ouyang Xiu and his *New Histories*,” *T’oung Pao* 102-4-5 (2016): 369-373.

the ‘righteous sons’ (*yier* 義兒), devoted to the ‘Army of Righteous Sons’ (*yier jun* 義兒軍), the multi-ethnic military force under the command of Li Keyong.⁸⁸ Finally, Ouyang Xiu devotes a section to the Southern ruling houses (*shijia* 世家), and more precisely to the Southern Tang, the Shu and Later Shu, the Southern Han, the Chu and Wu Yue, the Min and the Nanping; it also includes a chronological table of the Ten Reigns, the *Shiguo shijia nianpu* 十國世家年譜, that will be discussed below.

4.2. The *Shiguo shijia nianpu*

Finally, a few words should be devoted to another novelty of the *XWDS*; in order to identify the ‘ten kingdoms’ Ouyang Xiu creates the *Shiguo shijia nianpu* 十國世家年譜 (Genealogy of the Hereditary Houses of the Ten Kingdoms). The ten kingdoms are lined up in the following way: Jin is followed in the same line by what Ouyang Xiu calls the Eastern Han 東漢 (which corresponds to the Northern Han 北漢 of the Liu family clan), by the reign of Wu 吳 and, subsequently, the Southern Tang 南唐, Shu 蜀 and Later Shu 後蜀, the Southern Han 南漢, Chu 楚, Wu-Yue 吳越, Min 閩 and Southern Ping 南平. Ouyang Xiu lists Jin as one of the kingdoms that claimed from the Later Liang the mandate to rule, together with the Southern reigns. Upon the death of Li Keyong in 908 his son Li Cunxu succeeded him; the entry for this event follows the *Chunqiu* format of recording

⁸⁸ *Yi'er* has been also translated ‘surrogate sons’ (Richard Davis, *From Warhorses to Ploughshares*, p. 2).

the first month of a ruler exercising his authority: 正月，克用卒，子存勳立。⁸⁹

The *Shiguo shijia nianpu* is important as it displays Ouyang Xiu's vision of the early tenth century political situation.

The choice of lining up Jin among the ten kingdoms is explained by Xu Wudang 徐無黨 (1024-1086), a disciple of Ouyang Xiu and the author of the commentarial notes to the *XWDS*. Xu reports that “Jin regarded the Liang as state of rival status, and claimed the [legacy of the Tang] era Tianyou for twenty years, for this reason [Jin] has been listed first in the *Genealogy* [of the ten kingdoms]; as afterwards [Jin] destroyed the Liang and established the Tang, therefore [the Later Tang] has not been listed among the hereditary houses” 晉與梁為敵國，自稱天祐者二十年，故首列於年譜，其後遂滅梁而為唐，故不列於世家。⁹⁰

4.3. The Treatises

The late Qing scholars criticized Ouyang Xiu for reducing the number of the Treatises; following the argument of the Tang historian Liu Zhiji 劉知幾 (661-721) on the non-utility of some Treatises,⁹¹ Ouyang Xiu reduced their number to

⁸⁹ *XWDS* 71:874.

⁹⁰ *XWDS* 71:883.

⁹¹ *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 46:411. Liu Zhiji regretted the fact that from the Later Han on, the number of Treatises continued to increase. Sima Qian wrote eight Treatises, and Ban Gu added two. Afterwards Cai Yong 蔡邕 (133-192) produced, alone or in collaboration with others, more than ten treatises. Sima Biao 司馬彪 (240-306) gathered all this material together and arranged it into eight Treatises. In his *Weishu* 魏書 (History of the Wei), Wei Shou 魏收 (506-572) added a Treatise on Buddhism and Daoism (*Shilao zhi* 釋老志). Liu Zhiji maintained that at least three of the traditional monographs could be eliminated, namely those on Astronomy, Bibliography and on the Five Phases. Liu Zhiji saw instead

two and called them *kao* 考: the *Sitian kao* 司天考 (On Astronomy) and the *Zhifang kao* 職方考 (On Domains). To be sure, the *Siku* editors particularly disliked the historian's negligence of important issues such as the debate on the establishment of the imperial ancestral temples (*yi miao zhi* 議廟制) and on the number of ancestors, undertaken under the Later Jin period by the court officials Duan Yong 段颺, Liu Xu 劉昫 and Zhang Zhaoyuan. The reason behind his choice was plausibly political. Since the early years of Zhuangzong until the end of the Later Tang, the ceremonialists at court debated a series of details concerning the temples of the Tang Emperors, from the location to the number of ancestors with a full place in the temples.⁹² In 924 the court requested that the ancestral temple of the Tang be moved to the new capital Luoyang; two years later the court diarist Ma Gao 馬縉 proposed adopting the system of ancestral temples of Emperor Guangwu 光武 (r. 25-57) for the Later Han. Accordingly, Emperor Guangwu built a temple for the five Earlier Han Emperors.⁹³ At the end of 934, after the death of Zhuangzong, one ancestral temple including the spirit tablets of seven Emperors was built: four of the last Tang Emperors and three of Xianzu (Li

room for new monographs. He suggested a Treatise on Geography (*duyi* 都邑), including descriptions of palaces and court rituals, a Treatise on Clans (*shizu* 氏族), including a Treatise on Bureaucracy, and a Treatise on Local Products (*fangwu* 方物), including a Treatise on Economy. See Liu Zhiji, *Shitong tongshi* 史通通釋, annotated by Pu Qilong 浦起龍 (fl. 1730-1752) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1978), pp. 53-69.

⁹² *Wudai huiyao* 2:26-27.

⁹³ *JWDS* 142:1894; *Wudai huiyao* 2:26-27; Ouyang Xiu only mentions Ma Gao's memorial in his biography, while nothing is said about the ancestral temples in the basic annals (*XDWS* 55:633); *ZZTJ* 276:9012. On the system of ancestral temples at the time of Guangwu see Burchard Mansvelt Beck, *The Treatises of Later Han* (Leiden: Brill, 1990), pp. 105-108.

Guochang), Taizu (Li Keyong) and Zhuangzong (Li Cunxu).⁹⁴ In other words, the Later Tang seeing themselves as a continuation of the Tang, did not create a separate temple for their ancestors. The debate on the system of ancestral temples was a sensitive issue for the Later Jin rulers as well; in a report of 938, the scholar Duan Yong requested the establishment of the ancestral temple, appealing to the ancient Zhou system. The report was followed by a long debate at court among the ceremonialists on a number of details.⁹⁵ The Later Jin reconstructed their lineage back to the fourth generation of ancestors in the Later Han period and in 942 separate temples for the four Founders (*zu* 祖) were built in order to emphasize that their reign was not a mere continuation of the Tang but a restoration of its legacy.⁹⁶

The *Wudai huiyao* reports the memorials and the first part of the Treatise on Rites in the *JWDS* is devoted to the issue. On the other hand, Ouyang Xiu only lavishly mentions in the biographies that a debate was going on at court. His decision to eliminate the Treatise on Rites feasibly emphasizes his critical view of the legitimacy of all the Northern dynasties, and the sectional division of the Basic Annals according to the dynastic succession was solely for the sake of chronological simplicity.⁹⁷ Roughly the same attitude is adopted by Sima Guang; it will be shown in greater detail in chapter four how the historian does not mention the memorials presented at the court of the Later Jin on the establishment of the

⁹⁴ *Wudai huiyao* 2:29.

⁹⁵ *Wudai huiyao* 2:32-35.

⁹⁶ *Wudai huiyao* 2:30; *JWDS* 75: 977-78.

⁹⁷ Ouyang Xiu, “Zhengtong lun” 正統論, *Ouyang Xiu quanji* 歐陽修全集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 2:265-274. See *Wudai huiyao* 2:30-36; *JWDS* 142:1898.

ancestral temples and, in general, skips any reference to the kinship of Shi Jingtang.

Moreover, the Qing scholars lament that Ouyang Xiu kept silent about the memorial on the system of music presented by Wang Pu at the court of the Later Zhou.⁹⁸ Luckily, the *Siku* editors conclude, later official histories did not follow Ouyang Xiu's precedent and returned to the ancient format of Treatises.

4.4. The "Siyi fulu"

The *Siku* editors criticized, although not explicitly, the unflattering way of treating the Kitan, to whom the Qing Emperors were consciously linked by ancestral lineage. In fact, Ouyang Xiu relegates the history of the Kitan to the appendix, the "Siyi fulu" 四夷附錄 (Appendix of the Four Barbarians) and he does not restrain himself from referring to the Northern neighbors using the worst epithets. The same protest had been memorialized at the court of Liao Daozong 道宗 (r. 1055-1101) in the late eleventh century by Liu Hui 劉輝. In revenge, Liu proposed to the Emperor to compile an "Account of the Origins of the House of Zhao" and to append it to the national history of the Liao.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ See *Wudai huiyao* 6:111-116. The *ZZTJ* reports Wang Pu's memorial (*ZZTJ* 294:9591-9594).

⁹⁹ *Song shi* 104:1455; Denis Twitchett, "The Liao's Changing Perception of Its T'ang Heritage," *The Historian, His Readers, and the Passage of Time*, The Fu Ssu-nien Memorial Lectures (Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1996), pp. 32-33.

Though the Old and New histories are commonly used as complementary works, they differ substantially in setting and scope.¹⁰⁰ Sima Guang relied very little on the *XWDS*. Although both the historians drew on a great variety of sources and did not limit themselves to the official documents, Sima Guang reconsidered the work of selection and the narrative choices of his predecessor and frequently recorded his disagreement. To be sure, by the late eleventh-century, the *XWDS* was already much criticized by Song historians. As early as when the *XWDS* was published, Wu Zhen 吳縝 compiled a list of inaccuracies of the text in his *Wudai shiji zuanwu* 五代史記纂誤, followed by a similar work on the *Xin Tangshu*. By the Southern Song times, the sources report that Liu Shu's son, Liu Xizhong, engaged in the compilation of a book concerning the inconsistencies and inaccuracies of the *XWDS*.

¹⁰⁰ The idea of the complementary nature of the two texts is relatively new and it was enhanced by the *Siku* editors as they compared the two histories to the three *Chunqiu* commentarial traditions (*Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao*, 46:411).

Chapter 2: Chronicling the Tenth Century

The official request to compile a *lidai junchen shiji* 歷代君臣事跡, “deeds of successive rulers and ministers in past dynasties,” was delivered to Sima Guang in 1066, not long after the historian had been appointed Reader-in-Waiting 侍讀 of the young Yingzong 英宗 (r. 1063-67). What sort of book was Sima Guang expected to write? At that time, the terms *junchen shiji*, or, occasionally, *junchen guijian* 君臣龜鑑, were used in combination as titles for repertories of historical precedents for practical use in different forms. The most famous example is the *lidai junchen shiji* compiled under the reign of Zhenzong 真宗 (997-1022) in the form of encyclopedic compendium and bestowed with the title *Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜. By the time of Renzong 仁宗 (r. 1022-1063), a *Junchen guijian* 君臣龜鑑 in sixty *juan*, now lost, was compiled.¹ Moreover, the Song bibliographical catalogues record a *Lidai junchen tu* 歷代君臣圖, by author unknown. The latter, also lost, was presumably a historical

¹ In 1040, a *Junchen guijian* 君臣龜鑑 in sixty *juan* was submitted to the court. Its author, Zhan Xiang 詹庠, received a promotion as a reward; cf. Li Tao 李濤, *Xu Zizhi tongjian changpian* 續資治通鑑長編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), 123:2895. Similar instances of *junchen guijian* are recorded in other Song sources, revealing that the redaction of *junchen shiji* or *guijian* was quite a common practice in the Northern Song period. This tradition possibly looked back to the Tang and the *Qiandai junchen shiji* 前代君臣事跡 (Deeds of Rulers and Subjects in Past Generations), attributed to Tang Xianzong 憲宗 (r. 806-820; *Jiu Tang shu* 14:148; *Xin Tang shu* 59:1513). While the scope of these works was to provide historical examples, the form was not fixed. In the case of the *Qiandai junchen shiji*, now lost, it was most likely encyclopedic (*Song shi* 255:9792). See Johannes Kurz, “The Compilation and Publication of the *Taiping yulan* and the *Cefu yuangui*,” in Bretelle-Establet, Florence and Karine Chemla (eds.). *Qu’était-ce qu’écrire une encyclopédie en Chine?* (Paris: Presse Universitaire de Vincennes, 2007), pp. 39-73. For a comparison of the *Zizhi tongjian* and the *Cefu yuangui* see Chia-fu Sung, “Between Tortoise and Mirror: Historians and Historiography in Eleventh Century China,” Ph.D. Thesis (Harvard University, 2010).

digest in chart form. Did the Emperor have in mind a digest in encyclopedic form, just like the *Cefu yuangui*? Or did he expect a chronological chart? To be sure, we can only speculate about the kind of *lidai junchen shiji* that the court had in mind.² Sima Guang possibly asked himself the same question and, as a reply to the court, he put on the table his own *junchen shiji* project:

I myself am inept, [but] for a long time I wished to survey [history] from the Warring States to the Five Dynasties period, to use extensively other texts besides the standard histories,³ [so as] to embrace all achievements and losses of the Empire and track the fortunes and misfortunes of the people; good [deeds] can be used as rules to follow, and bad [deeds] can be used as examples to guard against; all that a ruler ought to know, [I wished to organize it] following the structure of the Commentary of Zuo to the *Spring and Autumn Annals* in a book in chronological style, and call it *Comprehensive Records*. As for all other kind of superfluous accounts, I shall cut them all out and not record them, with hope that the listening and reading are not [too] strenuous, yet the knowledge [that the reader gets from it] is very broad. [...] Your servant has recently submitted to the court an eight chapters [survey] of the Warring States and Your Majesty has kindly granted it a reading. As to the imperial order that I have now received, You servant is not sure whether it commands him to continue this book, or it concerns a compilation of a different sort. If it is about continuing this book, I wish to express my preference for keeping the title *Comprehensive Records*.

竊不自揆，常欲上自戰國，下至五代，正史之外，旁采他書，凡關國家之盛衰，繫生民之休戚，善可為法，惡可為戒，帝王所宜知者，略依左氏春秋傳體為編年一書，名曰「通志」，其餘浮冗之文，悉刪去不載，庶幾聽覽不勞，而聞見甚博。[...] 頃臣曾以戰國時八卷上進，幸蒙賜覽。今所奉詔旨，未審令臣續成此書，或別有編集？若續此書，欲乞亦以「通志」為名。⁴

² For a different interpretation of this memorial see Chia-fu, Sung, "Between Tortoise and Mirror," pp. 17-19.

³ *Zhengshi* 正史 is possibly intended in the broad meaning of the term as defined in the Song bibliographic catalogues, hence including all commentaries and critical works on the dynastic histories written up to that time. Under the category *zhengshi*, the *Chongwen zongmu* lists thirty-nine items, six only for the *Shiji*.

⁴ *Xu Zizhi tongjian changpian*, 208:5050.

Sima Guang proposes his compilation project to Yingzong in a way, in my reading, that the Emperor finds appealing: a digest of all that the Emperor ought to know, in the form of a chronicle and, above all, written in a simple but effective language, so that the reading would not be too difficult.

Setting aside for now all consideration regarding the *Chunqiu* legacy, the *Zuoshi zhuan* paradigm discloses the historian's project of a unified chronological framework organized in entries combined with long narrative sections. In the source quoted above the approval of the court immediately follows Sima Guang's reply, so that we can only speculate about the kind of *lidai junchen shiji* that the Emperor had first in mind. Sima Guang will complete his *lidai junchen shiji* two decades later, shortly before passing away. The work, bestowed by Shenzong 申宗 (r. 1067-1085) with the title *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑, is a comprehensive chronological survey of the exercise of authority by rulers and their courts from the division of the reign of Jin 晉 in 403 BCE, the twenty third year of reign of the King Wei Lie 威烈 (r. 425 BC-402 BC), to 959.

As to what followed the commissioning of the work, the subsequent career of Sima Guang and the details concerning the history of the compilation and its political unfolding, it is beyond the scope of this thesis and has been studied extensively elsewhere.⁵ It will be considered only if relevant to the purpose of the present study.

⁵ For a general introduction see: Ming K. Chan, "The Historiography of the *Tzu-chih T'ung-chien*: A Survey," *Monumenta Serica* 31 (1974-75): 1-38; Edwin G. Pulleyblank, "Chinese Historical Criticism: Liu Chi-chi and Ssuma Kuang," in *Historians of China and Japan*, William G. Beasley and Edwin G. Pulleyblank eds. (London: Oxford University Press, 1961); Xiao-bin Ji, *Politics and Conservatism in Northern Song China: The Career and Thought of Sima Guang (1019-1086 A.D.)* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University, 2005).

Likewise, I will not address questions of authorship. Moreover, this thesis makes the assumption that in the *ZZTJ* prescriptive standards play a secondary role in the narrative as a point of departure: they are intrinsic to the general framework because they establish the difference between the ideal government, the Zhou before the division of the reign of Jin into three vassal states, and the historical contingencies that led to the rise and fall of the subsequent dynasties, from the Eastern Zhou to the end of the Five Dynasties. Sima Guang looks into the history of court politics searching for recurring patterns of historical processes leading to paths of achievement and loss. In this sense, the chronological setting provides relevance to the first and last segments of the historical survey. Hence, this study takes over the traditional periodization of the Five Dynasties (907-959), a term that was conceptualized for the first time in the early 960s. The implications and limits of this concept have been studied thoroughly and are beyond the concern of this thesis.

2.1. The *biannian* Genre and Medieval Chronicles

Here below, I will attempt to frame the *ZZTJ* within the context of the development of the annalistic genre. As a general principle, the *Chunqiu* legacy advocated that the chroniclers, in their capacity as recorders of the deeds of the ruler in his exercise of authority, were expected to exert a certain degree of criticism and moral censorship of the Emperor's actions. Whereas the normative nature of chronicles was a conventional feature of the annalistic tradition, the degree to which this paradigm was applied varied significantly depending on the different branches in which the tradition evolved. Likewise, the relevance to narratives differed substantially. The legacy of

texts categorized as *gushi* 古史 (ancient histories) as early as the seventh century,⁶ and then as *biannian* 編年 (annals) in later catalogues, conventionally looks at the *Zuoshi zhuan* and Xun Yue's 荀悅 (148-209) *Hanji* 漢紀 as models. In the case of the *Zuoshi zhuan* and the *Hanji*, the complexity of the narrative takes precedence over deploying adamant normative categories. Their general structure consists of a month-by-month chronicle, defined by entries that open with the first year, season and month of a ruler's reign, combined with long narratives concerning key events. In the case of the *Zuoshi zhuan*, direct speeches form a relevant part of the narrative. As for the *Hanji*, Xun Yue inserted his discourses (*lun* 論) in the text.⁷

The *Zuoshi zhuan* and *Hanji* paradigms are echoed in medieval sources. The first occurrence of *biannian* appears at a relatively late date, in the mid-tenth-century history of the Tang, *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書, compiled at the Later Jin court. From then on, *biannian* will be used as a rubric for annals and chronicles in all the dynastic histories. The preface to the *biannian* section of the *Chongwen zongmu* 崇文總目, the

⁶ The *Sui shu* looks at the archeological discovery of the court annals of the states of Wei 魏 and Jin 晉, the *Jinian* 紀年 (also known as *Zhushu jinian* 竹書紀年), as the principal motive of historians for returning to “the standard archetype of the ancient way of chronicling history” 古史記之正法 (*Sui shu* 33:959). The text was found in the Ji tomb 汲冢 of King Xiang of Wei 魏襄王 (r. 318-296 BCE).

⁷ The *Hanji* is an adapted and shortened version of *Hanshu* 漢書, compiled in the form of a chronicle. The entries are based on the basic annals, whereas the anecdotes are drawn from the biographies and the treatises. The *Hanji* opens with an account of the birth of Gaozu 高祖 (r. 206-195 BC) and closes with a reference to the restoration of Guangwu 光武 (r. 25-57) and the foundation of the Later Han in 23AD (for a general introduction see Chi-yu Chen, *Hsun Yueh (AD 148-209): The Life and Reflections of an Early Medieval Confucian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 84-126; and Liang Dehua 梁德華, *Xun Yue Hanji xintan* 荀悅《漢紀》新探 (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2011).

descriptive catalogue of the imperial library holdings compiled in the 1140s, provides a definition of *biannian* as it was conceived in the eleventh century:⁸

It is the intention of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* to be most careful in recording the beginnings; whenever there are no affairs in one [period of] time, [the Annals] record the first month all the same, as to say that if the four seasons are not complete, a year cannot be considered fulfilled. [The Annals] thus above respect the heavenly chronology and below rectify human affairs. Since Xun Yue compiled the *Hanji*, and thus was the first to return to the annalistic form, scholars praised him. Among the following generations of writers, [the genre] was in circulation together with the standard histories.

《春秋》之義，書元最謹，一時無事，猶空書其首月，以謂四時不具則不足成年，所以上尊天紀，下正人事。自晉荀悅為《漢紀》，始復編年之體，學徒稱之。後世作者，皆與正史並行云。⁹

The sentence “recording the beginnings” refers to the practice of opening the chronicle with the first act of a ruler in the exercise of his authority in the first month of spring (*yuannian chun wang zhengyue* 元年春王正月). Leaving aside every consideration concerning the calendar, the correspondence of the ruler’s ordinances with the seasonal subdivision represents the thread between human affairs and heavenly manifestation. Ouyang Xiu’s notion of history writing based on a set of normative categories, along with his critical position on the *Zuoshi zhuan*, shows up in his choice of referring to the *Chunqiu* model, and not to its commentary. In this respect, the preface deals with Ouyang Xiu’s idea of what a chronicle ought to be, rather than with clarity in the classification of the genre. As a matter of fact, the list of

⁸ The board of compilers of the *Chongwen zongmu* included Wang Yaochen 王堯臣 (1001-1056) and Wang Zhu 王洙 (997-1057). The catalogue was submitted to the Emperor in 1042. During the reign of Huizong 徽宗 (r. 1101-1125) it was renamed *Bishu zongmu* 秘書總目 (General Catalogue of the Imperial Archives), and only during the reign of Gaozong 高宗 (r. 1127-1162) it its original title was restored (*Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao*, 1775-1776).

⁹ This preface is ascribed to Ouyang Xiu (*Ouyang Xiu quanji* 5:1885). Ouyang Xiu refers to Xun Yue as ‘Xun Yue of Jin’ 晉荀悅.

titles provided by the bibliographical catalogue document a bulk of heterogeneous texts that seemingly attests to a certain degree of diversification within the genre.

The present short overview of late medieval annals and chronicles is far from being comprehensive of all the questions concerning annalistic tradition: rather, its scope is to bring to light some questions concerning the diversification of the genre. Ultimately, I believe that this survey will help us to form a better picture of how Sima Guang built the chronicle of the first half of the tenth century.

The great many titles recorded in the Tang bibliographical catalogues attests that, by the early Tang period, chronicles were a feasibly popular format for private historical surveys.¹⁰ The consolidation of the system of Tang historiographical operation, followed by the development of more critical approaches towards the sources further influenced the increase in popularity of this and other genres of historical survey.¹¹ Most of the chronicles produced from the seventh century onwards were, nonetheless, partially or entirely lost by the Song period and the *Chongwen zongmu* records only thirty-six titles, from the late-second-century *Hanji* to the early-eleventh-century *Lidai junchen tu*, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. By the eleventh century nearly no pre-Tang chronicles were preserved in the imperial libraries.¹²

¹⁰The bibliographic catalogue of the *Jiu Tang shu* counts seventy five titles under the category *biannian*, of which more than fifty are pre-Tang texts (from the fall of the Han to the sixth century) and seven on the Han period. The equivalent section of the *Xin Tang shu* has sixty-nine titles.

¹¹As remarked by Denis Twitchett, official historians were by no means professional academicians in the modern sense: they were, above all, civil servants; see Denis Twitchett, "The T'ang Official Historian," in *The Historian, His Readers, and the Passage of Time*, The Fu Ssu-nien Memorial Lectures (Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1996), pp. 55-77.

¹²Some of these texts were neither fully lost nor handed down. Fragments of the texts have survived in Song compendia (the "gateways to lost medieval literature", as Dudbridge has rightly

Some of these chronological surveys were structured in diagrams and purported to serve as digests or summaries for didactic purposes. As such, they possibly did not circulate in printed form and were soon lost. This is the case, for instance, of the *Di wang jing lue* 帝王經略 by Liu Ke 劉軻 (ca. 835), a chronicle of Emperors from high antiquity to the early Tang period, patched together in four speeches and meant to serve as a textbook for the education of children.¹³ In other cases their accounts clashed with the officially sanctioned version of the events. The early censorship of Taizu on texts dealing with the history of the late Tang and Five Dynasties period apparently effected the circulation of some of these chronicles. This is the case of the *Xu Tongli* 續通曆 (Continuation of the Comprehensive Chronicle) by Sun Guangxian 孫光憲 (900-968), purportedly neglected by the *Chongwen zongmu*.¹⁴ In most cases

labeled them) and in Sima Guang's critical commentary to the *Zizhi tongjian* (see the following section of this introduction and chapter one). One of these Tang chronicles, the *Sanguo dianlue* 三國點略 (Summary Documents of the Three Kingdoms) has been partially reconstructed by Dudbridge and Zhao Chao 趙超 in a critical edition; see *Sanguo dianlue jijiao* 三國點略輯校 (Collected Collation of the Summary Documents of the Three Kingdoms), Taipei: Dongda tushu gongsi, 1998; see also Glen Dudbridge, *Lost Books of Medieval China*, The Panizzi Lectures (London: 1999), pp. 27-51.

¹³ Chao Gongwu, *Junzhai dushizhi jiaozheng*, p. 203; Chen Zhensun, *Zhizhai shulu jieti*, p. 112; the *Chongwen zongmu* reports a *Di wang li shu ge* 帝王歷數歌 in one chapter (*Chongwen zongmu*, p. 50).

¹⁴ The *Xu Tongli* was conceived as a continuation of the *Tongli* 通曆 redacted by Ma Zong 馬摠 (d. 823), a chronicle of events from the beginning of the empire to the Sui dynasty. The *Xu Tongli* covered the Tang and Five Dynasties period (*Junzhai dushu zhi jiaozheng*, 202-03; *Zhizhai dushu zhi*, 112). The censure against the *Xu Tongli* was probably still existent in Renzong's reign, as the *Chongwen zongmu* does not records the text. A modern critical edition including a collation of the quotation from the lost parts of the text has been edited by Zhou Zhengsong 周征松; cf. *Tongli*, in *San Jin guji congshu* 三晉古籍叢書 (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1992). Zhou Zhengsong believes that the *Xu Tongli* redacted by Sun Guangxian was lost following the censorship of Taizu and that the continuation of the *Tongli* was edited by an unknown author that lived a few decades after Taizu (see introduction, pp. 3-4). This edition is based on a copy collected in Ruan Yuan's 阮元 (1764-1849) *Wanwei biechang* 宛委別藏. The first three *juan* of the text are lost. From *juan* four to ten it consists in the Annals from the Jin to the Sui dynasty, complete of discussions (*lun*) and comments (*an*), it is the original text of Ma Zong. From *juan*

the transmission of these texts was, at a certain point, no longer carried on, presumably because of the costs of publication. Needless to say, the publication of the *ZZTJ* in the late 1180s is also a feasible cause of the general disinterest in early chronicles.¹⁵

Pieces of information concerning Tang and early Song chronicles can be gathered from the brief summaries of the works in the *Chongwen zongmu* and in the private catalogues of the Southern Song period. A sort of sub-categorization of the genre, arranged by periods, can be outlined: 1. Chronological accounts titled *li* 歷 (calendars) and limited to periods of reigns were feasibly popular in the eighth century. The structure of these chronicles can conceivably be likened to the veritable records (*shilu* 實錄). The *Tangli* 唐歷, a chronological account of the events from 617 to 778, by Liu Fang 柳芳 (*jinshi* ca. 741) is probably the most famous example; 2. Through the ninth and tenth century, the *tongli* 通歷 (comprehensive account encompassing the dynastic limits) genre seems to be quite popular. This is the case, for instance, of the *Tongli* by Ma Zong 馬摠 (d. 823), followed by the previously mentioned *Xu Tongli* by Sun Guangxian; 3. A consistent number of charts, or tables, comprehensive genealogies and summaries (*tu* 圖, *tongpu* 通譜, *mulu* 目錄) compiled by the early Song times would attest to the popularity of this table-like form of representation from the tenth century on. To mention a few titles, the *Yunli tu* 運曆圖 of Gong Ying 龔穎 is a chronicle of events from the third century BCE to the

ten to fifteen it records the events concerning the Huang Chao rebellion, Li Maozhen 李茂貞, Liu Shouguang 李守光, Abaoji and the Ten Kingdoms of the South.

¹⁵ Chia-fu Sung, "Between Tortoise and Mirror," pp. 11-12.

Yongxi 雍熙 era (984-987);¹⁶ the *Jinian tongpu* 紀年通譜 of Song Xiang 宋庠 (996-1066), presented to the court in roughly 1043-44, consists of a chronicle of events divided into two sections: the first one from Han Wendi 漢文帝 (195-188 BC) to 959, and the second one from 960 to the Qingli 慶曆 era (1041-48). The chronicle distinguishes between legitimate (*zheng* 正), intermediary (*run* 閏), usurpers (*wei* 偽), bandits (*zei* 賊), barbarians (*manyi* 蠻夷). The *Biannian tongzai* 編年通載 of Zhang Heng 章衡 (1025-1099), presented to the court in 1074, is even more ambitious. It consists of a comprehensive survey from the time of Emperor Yao to the Zhiping era, in all more than three thousand years.¹⁷

Considering the number of chapters we assume that these three Song works consisted of terse chronicles of events without long narrative passages. Of the three comprehensive chronicles, only a partial edition of the *Biannian tongzai* has been passed on to us.¹⁸ Zhang Heng was a court diarist and academician of the Jixian Academy during the era of Shenzong; the biography reports that “Zhang lamented that scholars did not know history, he thus edited a chronology of the generations of Emperors and called it *Biannian tongzai*.” Shenzong, who apparently could be very generous in positive assessments and rewards, had the work read and he praised it by saying that it was greater in quality than any other history.¹⁹

Chronological surveys encompassing the limits of a single dynasty and covering a long span of time generally dating back to remote antiquity are feasibly

¹⁶ The text, now lost, was highly appreciated by Ouyang Xiu who drew from it for the compilation of his *Jigu mulu* 集古目錄 (*Junzhai dushu zhi jiaozheng*, pp. 204-05; *Chongwen zongmu*, p. 51).

¹⁷ *Junzhai dushu zhi jiaozheng*, pp. 206-208; *Zhizhai shulu jieti*, p. 112; *Song shi* 203:5093.

¹⁸ Zhang Heng, *Biannian tongzai*, *Siku congkan sanbian*, vol. 31 (Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1966).

¹⁹ *Song shi* 347:11007.

distinguishing features of early Song chronicles. An inquiry into the details of the differences between the works listed above is beyond the scope of this thesis and it will be undertaken separately in a further study. My aim here is to give an inkling of the internal diversification of *biannian* from the early *Hanji* archetype to the eleventh-century works. Whereas Song historians seemed to be interested, like Sima Guang was, in building comprehensive chronicles from remote antiquity up to the Song, the historian's decision to model his chronological history on the structure of the *Zuoshi zhuan* was by no means a popular choice in the eleventh century.

2.2. Building the Chronology: The *Linian tu* and the *Mulu*

As part of the *ZZTJ* project, Sima Guang compiled several abridgements in the form of chronological tables and charts. Apart from the *Mulu* 目錄, these early works have not been handed down to us. Nonetheless, pieces of information can be gathered from the *biannian* sections of the Song private descriptive catalogues.²⁰ Like many scholar officials of his time and before him, while in office Sima Guang privately engaged in historical projects. Unlike some of his colleagues, the historian presented his works to the court as the compilation was completed. As shown above, it was not rare among

²⁰ Together with the *Kaoyi*, the *Mulu* was published as appendix to the *ZZTJ* in 1086 (*Zhizhai shulu jieti*, p. 113). Another example of abridgement compiled by Sima Guang is the *Tongjian juyao li* 通鑑舉要曆, a short digest that went lost soon after the Song period (after the bibliographical catalogue of the *Song shi*, it is not mentioned in later histories). The *Tongjian juyao li* was redacted soon after the *ZZTJ* as a shorter version of the text and its purpose was to facilitate its reading at court. Probably because it merely had the function of reading compendium, the *Tongjian juyao li* was not published; Chen Zhensun reports that a draft of it was kept and preserved in the house of Chao Shuozhi 晁說之 [Yidao 以道] (1059-1129), the uncle of Chao Gongwu. Although the *Song shi* does not dedicate a biography to Chao Shuozhi, we know that he was a member of the influential Chao family clan of Shandong, a cousin of Chao Buzhi 晁補之 (1053-1110, *Song shi* 255:13111-112) and uncle of Chao Gongwu. According to Chen, at the beginning of the Shaoxing era (1131-1162), Xie Kejia 謝克家 (*jinshi* 1097) came into possession of the draft and presented it to Gaozong. The *Mulu* probably had the same function as the *Tongjian juyao li*.

official historians and writers to engage in private compilation of chronicles and charts of past dynasties, and eventually to present them to the attention of the court. Depending on the case, the chronological framework and length of the texts could differ significantly. By Song times, historians more than ever seemed to be interested in the compilation of chronicles from remote antiquity. One of the limits they encountered was supposedly the lack of sources for the establishment of an absolute chronology prior to 841 BCE.²¹ In Han times, Sima Qian 司馬遷 (c. 145-89 BCE) was admittedly unable to reconstruct absolute dates prior 841 BCE. In the same manner, Song historians could not reach a consensus on the chronology of events from remote antiquity and a coherent year-by-year chronicle was possible only starting from the Gonghe Interregnum 共和 (841 BCE- 828 BCE). Starting from that period, a coherent chronology could be derived from Sima Qian's first systematic chronological table, the *Shier zhuhou nianbiao* 十二諸侯年表 (Chart of the Twelve Feudal Lords).²²

A few months before the commission of the *lidai junchen shiji*, Sima Guang had submitted to the court a chronicle of the events from 403 BCE to 207 BCE entitled

²¹ An absolute chronology is a precise chronology on which a general agreement has been reached, in contrast with a relative chronology. On the absolute date of the Gonghe interregnum see Edward Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western Zhou History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 217.

²² The 'Gonghe interregnum' is generally regarded as the period that marked the beginning of the downfall of the Western Zhou royal authority. Although Sima Qian seems to regard Gonghe as the name of an era, modern scholars agree in identifying Gonghe with Gong Bohe 共伯和 (Elder He of the State of Gong, in the bronze inscriptions Bo Hefu 伯穌父), the name of the regent that was installed by the feudal lords after King Li 厲 (r. c. 864-828 BCE) of Zhou was overthrown and forced into exile. Moreover, on the basis of data provided by archeological findings, it has been possible to establish that the date recorded in bronze inscriptions for the beginning of the exile of king Li correspond exactly to the first month of 841 BCE. See Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western Zhou History*, p. 272; *The Grand Scribe's Record* 2:70 and 72; Li Feng, *Landscape and Power in Early China: The Crisis and Fall of the Western Zhou, 1045-771 BC* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 102-107.

Tongzhi.²³ Two years earlier, Sima Guang proposed to the Emperor a chronological digest of the major events concerning the rise and decline of rulers from the Gonghe Interregnum (841 BCE) to 959, titled *Linian tu* 歷年圖 and structured on five diagrams and sixty sections.²⁴ A colophon to the *Linian tu* documents Sima Guang's first attempt at building a unified chronology and his concern for the dissemination of an early unfinished draft of the text:

I have been studying the [standard] histories for some time and I have always felt aversion to the fact that their texts were redundant and the events too extensively described, from which it was not possible to draw the decisive points. Moreover, because of the periods of division in different reigns, the chronological setting could not be unified. I thus outlined a chronicle of the great events leading to the rise and fall of dynasties from the Gonghe Interregnum (841 BCE - 828 BCE) to the Five Dynasties period (959 CE) and I grouped them into five charts. Each chart is subdivided into five sections, each one organized into sixty lines, each line recording the chronicle of one year. [...] In all one thousand and eight hundred years, and I entitled it *Chart of Successive Years*. As the text was not yet well organized, it was good for private discussion and I did not dare to disseminate it. Unexpectedly Zhao Jun [xi] had it published and disseminated it. Ling Mengjun from Liangshan of Shu gained possession of one complete edition of it in order to show it to me. When I started composing this work I thought it through, and in the case of periods of disunity, I simply followed the era name of one reign, absolutely leaving no room for discussion on the issue of legitimacy. On the contrary, Zhao Jun [xi] entitled it *Legitimate Emperors*. This was not my original intention. Zhao Jun [xi] has modified parts of the text; moreover, he has changed the order of the chapters and transmitted an edition with many lacking parts and errors. Now this superficial edition of the text cannot be hidden. For this reason I have amended it in order to restore its original shape.

光頃歲讀史，患其文繁事廣，不能得其綱要。又諸國分列，歲時先後，參差不齊，乃上采共和以來，下訖五代，略記國家興衰大跡，集為五圖。每圖為五重，每重為六十行，每行記一年之事。[...]凡一千八百年，命曰

²³ *Jin Tongzhi biao* 進通志表 (Memorial for the Presentation of the Comprehensive Records to the Court), in *Sima Guang ji* 司馬光集 (Chengdu: Sichuan daxue chubanshe, 2010), 2.1197-98; *Xu Zizhi tongjian changpian* 208:5050.

²⁴ The *Linian tu* was handed down to us as part of the *Jigu lu* 稽古錄 (Examination of the Ancient Period); see Ming K. Chan, "The Historiography of the *Tzu-chih T'ung-chien*: A Survey," p. 5.

《歷年圖》。其書雜亂無法，聊以私便於討論，不敢廣布于它人也。不意趙君乃摹刻於版傳之，蜀人梁山令孟君得其一通以相示。始光率意爲此書，苟天下非一統，則漫以一國主其年，固不能辨其正閏，而趙君乃易其名曰：《帝統》，非光志也。趙君頗有所增損，仍變其卷秩，又傳為多脫誤。今此淺陋之書，即不可掩，因刊正使復其舊而歸之。²⁵

The original idea behind the setting of the *Linian tu* was that the chronology would follow a reign title in order to provide a unified version of events which left no room for discussing the issue of legitimacy. Misregarding Sima Guang's scope, Zhao Junxi 趙君錫 had the title changed into *Ditong* 帝統 and parts of the content modified. In addition, Zhao disseminated the text against the will of its author.²⁶ This piece of information possibly explains why several editions of the *Linian tu* with different number of chapters circulated among scholars, as part of the *Jigu lu* 稽古錄 as well as in other editions.²⁷ And, to be sure, it proves that the chronological setting was a matter that Sima Guang pondered carefully. A further evidence of relevance for the matter is a conversation reported by Liu Shu 劉恕 (1032-1078), proving that the two historians debated extensively on the issue:

Sima Guang begins the chronicle of the *Zizhi tongjian* with the event of King Wei Lie of Zhou proclaiming Han, Zhao and Wei vassal states, and closes with the Five Dynasties. I once had a discussion with Guang on the reason why he did not begin [the chronicle] from remote antiquity, may be from Yao and Shun. Guang replied that it was not admissible to cover the [government] matters of the Spring and Autumn period. Moreover, as the Classics were not to be continued, he did not dare to start from the capture of the unicorn (479 BCE). I

²⁵ *Sima Guang ji* 3:1374.

²⁶ I have not been able to recover any other information on the relations between Zhao Junxi and Sima Guang. Officially, he left the team soon after his appointment and consequently to the death of his father. *Xu Zizhitongjian changpian* 208:5050. Zhao Junxi did not have a particularly outstanding career as an official and the *Song shi* do not dedicate a biography to him. The bibliographical catalogue registers a text written by Zhao (*Song shi* 162:5115).

²⁷ Chen Zhensun, for instance, registers a *Leidai linian* 累代歷年 (Chronicle of Past Generations); cf. *Zhizhai shulu jieti*, p. 113.

nonetheless was convinced that the work was incomplete, thus I redacted this book. The chronicle from the Three Emperors and Five Sovereigns period to the Gonghe Interregnum (841 BC) is a rough list of events. From the first year of Gonghe to the twenty second year of reign of the King Wei Lie [of Jin], in all 438 years are compiled in one unified chronicle. I entitled it *Outern Records*; like the *Discourses of the States* it is considered to be the *Outern Commentary of the Spring and Autumn Annals*.

司馬光作《通鑑》，託始於周威烈王命韓、趙、魏為諸侯，下訖五代。恕嘗語光：「曷不起上古或堯、舜？」光答以事包春秋，不可。又以經不可續，不敢始於獲麟。恕意謂闕漏，因撰此書。起三皇、五帝，止周共和，載其世次而已。起共和庚申，至威烈王二十二年丁丑，四百三十八年為一編，號《外紀》，猶《國語》稱《春秋外傳》。²⁸

Whereas the *Linnian tu* begins with the year 841 BCE, in the *ZZTJ* the Annals of Zhou open with the year 403 BCE, the twenty-third year of reign of King Wei Lie (r. 425 BCE - 402 BCE). Sima Guang provides an explanation for this choice: the chronicle of the *Chunqiu* begins in 722 BCE and ends in 481 BCE, from the first year of reign of Duke Yin of Lu 魯隱公 to the fourteenth year of Duke Ai of Lu 魯哀. The chronicle of the *Zuoshi zhuan* closes almost a decade later, in 468 BCE. Sima Guang chooses to open the annals a few decades after the *Chunqiu* in order to make it clear that his comprehensive chronicle is not a continuation of the *Chunqiu*. Seemingly, the *ZZTJ* was not meant to be a continuation of the *Zuoshi zhuan* either, as Sima Guang opens the annals a few decades after the conclusion of the chronicle.

The year 403 BCE is particularly significant as it officially marks the beginning of the 'three Jin'. The entry in the *ZZTJ* goes as follows: "At the beginning, [the Zhou court] bestowed the Grandees Si of Wei, Ji of Zhao and Qian of Han with the title of

²⁸ This quote is part of the preface to the *Tongjian waiji* 通鑑外記 (Outern Records of the Comprehensive Guide) of Liu Shu, a chronicle from remote antiquity to 403 BC divided into two sections: a rough chronicle from remote antiquity to 841 BCE and one set of annals from 841 BCE to 403 BCE (*Junzhai dushu zhi jiaozheng*, p. 211).

feudal lords” 初命晉大夫魏斯、趙籍、韓虔為諸侯。²⁹ In the Basic Annals of Zhou Sima Qian reports: “In the thirty-third year of reign of King Weilie, the Nine Tripods shook, the King appointed Han, Wei and Zhao as feudal lords” 威烈王二十三年，九鼎震。命韓、魏、趙為諸侯。³⁰ Sima Guang seems to follow the phrasing that appears in Sima Qian’s table, in which it is written that “[Han, Zhao and Wei] at the beginning were bestowed with the title of feudal lords” 初為侯 and that the state of Chu had started recording the three Grandees as feudal lords.³¹

Although the territory of Jin had been partitioned already half a century before, the year 403 BCE has an historical significance as it marks the official recognition of the three states by the Zhou.³² This is possibly what the phrase “at the beginning” is meant to unveil. Therefore, although the chronicle of the *ZZTJ* opens with 403 BCE, the narrative passage that follows the entry begins with the account of the defeat of the Earl of Zhi 知伯 at Jinyang 晉陽 in 453 BCE.

Another issue linked to the chronology was the adoption of a calendar. The original preface redacted by Sima Guang to the *Mulu* sheds some light on the choices available to the historian:

I learnt that chroniclers of ancient times, they would first inevitably make sure that they applied the [same] calendar to all affairs; therefore they called this Spring and Autumn. Liu Xisou, Examining Editor of the Hall in Honor of Literature, has edited a calendar of the previous dynasties and compiled the *Long Calendar* from the beginning of the Han to modern era. In the past I happened to gain possession of his book. Today I use Xishou’s [system of calculation for the] phases [of the five elements], the first day of the lunar month and the intercalary months, and the movements of the seven heavenly

²⁹ *ZZTJ* 1:2.

³⁰ *Shiji* 4:158; *The Grand Scribe’s Records* 1:79.

³¹ *Shiji* 15:709.

³² *Shiji* 15:696.

bodies³³ that are recorded in the historical records and locate them at the very top [of the chronicle]. As for the documents in annalistic form, they miscellaneously record the [state] matters of all reigns, [which] are unaligned [chronologically] and not ordered. Now following the model of Sima Qian's *Chronological Charts*, [in which] the years are the warp and the states the weft, I list them below [the calendar]. Moreover, if the structure of the narrative is too sketchy [as in the case of terse chronicles], the details of beginning and closure cannot be found; if it is too elaborated [as in the case of the annals] then the general principles mutually extinguish themselves and are difficult to understand. Now this compendium of essentials drawn from my new work [the *Zizhi tongjian*] should be something in between. I call it *General Outline*.

臣聞古之為史者，必先正其以曆同萬事，故謂之「春秋」。故崇文院檢討劉義叟徧通前代曆法，起漢元以來為《長曆》，臣昔嘗得其書。今用義叟氣朔並閏，及采七政之變著於史者，置於上方。又編年之書，雜記衆國之事，參差不齊。今倣司馬遷《年表》，年經而國緯之，列於下方。又敘事之體太簡，則首尾不可得詳；太煩，則義理相沒而難知。今撮新書精要之語，散於其間，以為《目錄》云。³⁴

The *Changli* 長歷 mentioned in the quote is the unified calendar created by Liu Xisou 劉義叟 (1015-1060), astronomer and calendar specialist. Following a recommendation by Ouyang Xiu, Liu became part of the team of scholars engaged in the compilation of the *Xin Tang shu* and was responsible for the redaction of the treatises on calendar and astronomy.³⁵ The *Changli* used by Sima Guang encompassed all the imperial history from the beginning of the Han (206 BCE - 220 CE) to 959 and

³³ *Qi zheng* 七政 are the seven astronomical agents (sun, moon and five planets).

³⁴ Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian mulu, Sibü congkan chubian* (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, [1965] 1997), 11:1a.

³⁵ *Xu Zizhi tongjian changpian* 173:4178. In 1044 Ouyang Xiu recommended Liu Xishou to the central government for his expertise in astronomy and chronology; see Chia-fu Sung, "An Ambivalent Historian: Ouyang Xiu and His *New Histories*", *T'oung Pao* 102-4-5 (2016): 394. Liu Xishou also took part to the compilation of the treatise on the five phases. His calendar received attention in modern times by historians such as Chen Yuan for the creation a Western-Chinese unified calendar; see Chen Yuan, *Ershi shi shuorun biao* 二十史朔閏表 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1978), pp. 1-4.

it might well correspond to the *Liu shi ji li* 劉氏輯曆 ascribed to Liu Xishou and mentioned in the Song standard history.³⁶

As described by Sima Guang in the preface, the charts of the *Mulu* are divided into two parts: following the setting of Sima Qian's charts, the framework of the chronicle in the upper section lists the successive years on the basis of the calendar devised by Liu Xishou, whereas in the lower section state matters are recorded according to the different periods of reigns. In this way, Sima Guang draws a difference between chronicle and annals, and uses the chart as a solution for the limits of the two genres. The chronicle, as a terse list of events, does not provide a well-marked beginning and closure. By contrast, the annals record all kind of events concerning the different states and thus are difficult to summarize in principle. The chart offers to the historian the possibility of representing a different story visually: the historian does not have to make a choice between the chronology of one reign or another because he can refer to the calendar system above as a unifying timeline of the different chronicles.

2.3. Building the Annals

Compared to the compilation of the early Song imperial digests in which the general guidelines were dictated from above to the compilers, Sima Guang benefitted of a relative freedom of action, both as far as the structure of the work and the selection of his co-workers is concerned. The historian feasibly chose his team rather for their

³⁶ *Song shi* lists three works attributed to Liu Xishou: *Liu shi ji li* 劉氏輯曆, *Shisan dai shizhi* 十三代史志 and *Chunqiu zaiyi* 春秋災異 (*Song shi* 432:12838).

competence as historians than for their official rank.³⁷ As shown above, Liu Shu and Zhao Junxi were hired in 1066, and Zhao Junxi was soon replaced by Liu Pin 劉放 (1023-1089). Like his brother and son, Liu Pin was a renowned specialist of the *Hanshu* and an expert in *Chunqiu* studies.³⁸ The annals from 403 to 207 BCE had already been completed by Sima Guang in 1066 when Liu Pin started working on the Han period. After only one year the first thirty chapters of the Annals of the [Former] Han were presented to the court. As the compilation of the annals of the Han period proceeded, Shenzong periodically requested Sima Guang to read the work at court.³⁹ As it is well known, the Emperor praised Liu Pin by saying that “in quality this work is far beyond the *Hanji* [of Xun Yue].”⁴⁰ The Emperor was so enthusiastic about the work that in 1070 the request to hire another scholar for the compilation of the annals of the Tang period was accepted without any objection. Fan Zuyu 範祖禹 (1041-1098) then became part of the working team.⁴¹ Despite the support of the Emperor, the project slowed down at the beginning of the 1070s when the influence of Wang

³⁷ On Sima Guang’s mistrust in the Historiographical Office see Sung Chia-fu, “Between Tortoise and Mirror,” pp. 283-297.

³⁸ Together with his brother Liu Chang 劉敞 (1019-1068) and his son Liu Jushi 劉奉世, Liu Pin had worked extensively on the *Hanshu*. Liu Chang is also famous as the author of one of the first collections of bronze inscriptions, *Xian Qin guqi tu* 先秦古器圖. The work is no longer extant; nonetheless, it is renowned for its influence on Ouyang Xiu’s *Jigulu bawei* 集古錄跋尾 (see Edward Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western Zhou History*, p. 9). The Song catalogue registers a *San Liu Hanshu biao zhu* 三劉漢書標注, a *Hanshu kanwu* 漢書刊誤 and a *Wudai Chunqiu* 五代春秋 (*Song shi* 162:5086). The biography of the three Liu is in *Song shi* 255:10383-89. Moreover, the early Southern Song bibliographical catalogues register a *Biannian jishi* 編年紀事 attributed to him. The text is now lost, yet it might well have been the rough chronicle of the annals of the Han period on which Liu Pin was working (*Junzhai dushu zhi jiaozheng*, p. 207). The bibliographical catalogue of the *Song shi* also records a *Neizhuan guoyu* 內傳國語 attributed to Liu Shu (*Song shi* 162:5059).

³⁹ *Xu Zizhitongjian changpian* 210:5112/5115.

⁴⁰ *Junzhai dushu zhi jiaozheng*, p. 113.

⁴¹ *Xu Zizhi tongjian changpian* 212:5155.

Anshi 王安石 (1021-1086) at court and the opposition of Sima Guang to the reforms caused the latter to be removed from his official position.⁴² In the autumn of 1070 Sima Guang was moved to Yongxing 永興, a military command post near Chang' An, and shortly afterwards the court ordered him to retire in Luoyang.⁴³

As some of their writings and epistolary exchanges have been handed down to us, the work of Liu Shu and Fan Zuyu is fairly well documented.⁴⁴ This bulk of material includes the renowned, and much debated, missive from Sima Guang to Fan Zuyu. The letter imparts instructions for the task of selecting the sources and guidelines for the redaction of the rough chronicle of the Tang, the *Changpian* 長篇 (Long Draft). The process of compiling of the Tang annals has been studied extensively elsewhere and it will not be discussed here. Likewise, I will not question

⁴² There is a great deal of literature on Sima Guang and Wang Anshi. For a general introduction see Xiao-bin Ji, *Politics and Conservatism in Northern Song China: The Career and Thought of Sima Guang (1019-1086 A.D.)*.

⁴³ *Xu Zizhi tongjian changpian* 215:5247-48; Sima Guang, "Liu Daoyuan *Shiguo jinian xu*" 劉道原十國紀年序 (Preface to the *Chronicle of the Ten Kingdoms* by Liu Daoyuan), in *Sima Guang ji* 3:1351. The whole office, including the library collection, was moved to the new location. The consequence of the transfer to the Western region was that Sima Guang and his team had to work from separate place for quite some time. Only Fan Zuyu reached Sima Guang in Luoyang. Liu Pin was sent to another provincial office and Liu Shu requested retirement to the military command post of Nankang 南康 in order to look after his parents. After only a few years Liu Shu was granted permission to be transferred to Luoyang in order to continue the compilation of the annals. Physically weakened by the long travel from the South to the Northwest, Liu Shu stayed in Luoyang for a few months and soon afterwards decided to head back South. On his way to home Liu Shu's illness worsened and he died shortly after (Sima Guang, "Liu Daoyuan *Shiguo jinian xu*," 3:1351-52).

⁴⁴ The merit goes partially to the son of Liu Shu, Liu Xizhong 劉義仲 (1059-1120), who collected the *Tongjian wenyi* 通鑑問疑 (Explanations of the Comprehensive Guide), a record of the discussions between Sima Guang and Liu Shu. Chen Zhensun reports that the text was originally an appendix to the *Xiushu tie* 修書帖 (Notes on the Redaction), a collection of missives that Sima Guang used to correspond with Liu Shu and Fan Zuyu. Besides the *Xiushu tie*, the Song private catalogue records a *Tongjian qianli* 通鑑前例 (Early Instances of the Comprehensive Guide) and a *Sanshiliu tiao si tu* 三十六條四圖 (Thirty Six Entries and Four Charts). The three texts, now lost, recorded the redaction of the comprehensive annals, which were collected and systematized by headings by Sima Guang's great grand-nephew (*Zhizhai shulu jieti*, p. 115).

the authenticity of the letter to Fan Zuyu; as its content is fairly plausible, I will consider its general principles.⁴⁵ Firstly, a rough chronicle Outline (*zongmu* 總目) based on the veritable records and the court diaries was established. The main task of the three scholars was to then assemble all the sources and arrange them into the chronological framework. Each step of selection of the sources had to be documented. If a date was not recorded, the event had to be appended to the year and recorded as ‘this year’ or ‘this month’. Sima Guang highlights the importance of furnishing the general Outline with explanatory notes. The differences in dates and place names, and any slight reference to an event had to be annotated. A selection of these notes to the draft will become part of the critical commentary, *Zizhi tongjian kaoyi*. Although the general framework followed the veritable records, the succession of some events needed to be adjusted forward or backward for the sake of the narrative. These changes also had to be annotated in the margin of the rough chronicle.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the daily diaries and the veritable records were in no way merely terse lists of events concerning the everyday work routine at court; indeed, the officials charged with the compilation exerted a considerable influence on the narrative choices. Therefore the

⁴⁵ “Da Fan Mengde shu” 答範夢得書, *Sima Guang ji* 3:1741-44. See Sung Chia-fu, “Between Tortoise and Mirror” on the authenticity of the letter. Although limited to guidelines for editing of the Annals of the Tang period, the letter provides us with a general picture of the process of compilation as conceived by Sima Guang. The letter has been partially translated and commented by Edwin Pulleyblank in his “Chinese Historical Criticism: Liu-chi Chih and Ssu-ma Kuang,” in *Historians of China and Japan*, William G. Beasley and Edwin G. Pulleyblank eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 160-166. According to Hu Sanxing 胡三省 (1230-1302), two letters addressed to Fan Zuyu and eleven to Liu Shu (“Yu Liu Daoyuan” 預留道原) were appended to the *Tongjian qianli*. In a couple of cases Hu Sanxing mentions the letters between Sima Guang and Liu Shu in the comments to the *ZZTJ*; this would prove that in the late thirteenth century the collection of missives was still circulating (*ZZTJ* 1:38; 99:3119). For a general introduction to Hu Sanxing’s commentary see Lin Song 林嵩. “*Zizhi tongjian* Hu Sanxing zhu yanjiu” 《資治通鑑》胡三省注研究, Ph.D. Thesis (Beijing: Beijing daxue, 2005).

⁴⁶ “Da Fan Mengde shu,” *Sima Guang ji* 3:1741.

inclusion or not of certain events could vary significantly from one record to the other. To mention a well-known example, the traditional interpretation of the founding of the Tang dynasty reported in the old and new histories of the Tang period that were redacted in 945 and 972 was mainly based on the *Gaozu shilu* 高祖實錄 and on the *Taizong shilu* 太宗實錄. Both records were edited roughly around the 640s and Taizong 太宗 (r.626-649) played a significant role in the redaction. According to the two *shilu*, the then young Taizong had masterminded the Taiyuan revolt in 618 and Taizu is depicted as a weak and powerless leader. By contrast, a coeval source, the *Da Tang chuangye qiju zhu* 大唐創業起居注 (Diary of the Founding of the Great Tang Dynasty) of Wen Daya 文大雅 (575-637), provides a different and apparently more reliable picture of Taizu.⁴⁷ The *ZZTJ* follows the official version of the standard histories and practically neglects the work of Wen Daya.

Among the three historians of the team, Liu Shu was probably the most influential. He personally supervised the redaction of the Long Drafts of Wei-Jin and Southern-Northern Dynasties period, and from 1071 to 1078 he possibly worked on the editing of the Long Draft of the Five Dynasties.⁴⁸ Liu Shu was a very prolific historian and the bibliographical catalogues record quite a number of items attributed

⁴⁷ The *Da Tang chuangye qiju zhu* is the only example of *qiju zhu* redacted in the Tang period that has been fully handed down to us. For a general analysis of these two different interpretations see the first chapter of Howard J. Wechsler, *Mirror to the Son of Heaven: Wei Cheng at the Court of T'ang T'ai-tsung*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 8-32.

⁴⁸ Cao Jiaqi 曹家齊, "Zizhi tongjian biao xiu kao" 資治通鑑編修考, *Wenshi* 5 (1978): 82-83. On Liu Shu's scholarship see also Wang Deyi 王德毅, "Liu Shu ji qi shixue" 劉恕及其史學, In *Songshi yanjiu lunji* 2 (Taipei: Dingwen, 1972), pp. 25-44.

to him, yet the only surviving one is the *Tongjian waiji*, mentioned previously.⁴⁹ The original idea of Liu Shu was to redact a supplementary chronicle also for the period from after 959 through the early Song and to entitle it *Houji*. He gave up undertaking the work following a period of illness that eventually caused his death in 1078.⁵⁰

Most of Liu Shu's efforts were put into the redaction of the Southern and Northern Dynasties period.⁵¹ The compilation of the Long Draft of the Southern and Northern dynasties was probably between 1071 and 1076, when Liu Pin had already concluded the Long Draft of the Sui dynasty, given that, according to the letter to Fan Zuyu, as early as 1070 Liu Shu was working on the Long Draft of the tenth century Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms. Sima Guang mentions an extract in two chapters, a *guangben* 廣本, from the Long Draft of the tenth century. The historian had the *guangben* sent to Fan Zuyu, together with samples of the Long Draft of the Sui dynasty edited by Liu Pin, as examples to follow for the Long Draft of the Tang.

The final drafts of the annals of the Five Dynasties were redacted on the basis of the material arranged by Liu Shu and on his *Shiguo jinian* 十國紀年 (Chronicle of the Ten Kingdoms), now lost. Pieces of information concerning the *Shiguo jinian* can be drawn from the preface written by Sima Guang. Liu's original idea was to append to the work two charts: one on officials (*baiguan* 百官) and the other on regional official posts (*fanzhen* 藩鎮); nonetheless, due to his deteriorating physical condition, he was

⁴⁹ Liu Shu redacted a *Yinian pu* 疑年譜, a chronicle from Baoxi 包羲 to Zhou Liwang 周厲王, a *Nian lue pu* 年略譜, from Gonghe to Xining, both lost (Sima Guang, "Liu Daoyuan *Shiguo jinian xu*," p. 1353). Chen Zhensun also lists a *Za nianhao* 雜年號 (*Zhizhai shulu jieti*, p. 115).

⁵⁰ *Zhizhai shulu jieti*, p. 115.

⁵¹ For an evidence of how the general principles for the selection of the sources were dictated by Sima Guang, see the letter addressed to Liu Shu, "Yu Liu Daoyuan shu 與劉導原書," in *Wen Guowen Sima gong wenji* 溫國文司馬公文集, *Sibu congkan chubian* (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1997 [1965]), p. 62.

unable to conclude the work.⁵² The *Zizhi tongjian kaoyi* collects about a hundred quotes and brief references from the *Shiguo jinian* concerning events between 880 and 959. As it will be shown in the next chapters, some narrative details provided by Liu Shu differ from the version provided in the *ZZTJ*.

2.3.1. Some Issues concerning the Annals of the Five Dynasties

Whereas in the case of the annals of the Southern and Northern dynasties of the fifth and sixth centuries Sima Guang had the freedom of mapping the chronology on the Han-ruled Southern reigns, for the more recent history of the first half of the tenth century Sima Guang presumably did not have a choice. The issue of Song legitimacy imposed a binding solution to the chronological succession of the five dynasties of the North: the ancestors of the founder of the Song, Taizu, had been loyal officials at the court of the Northern dynasties and Taizu himself had been a former general of Shizong 世宗 (r. 954-959), the last ruler of the Later Zhou dynasty. The officially sanctioned history of the Zhao family clan was based on its meritorious succession to the Later Zhou and a chronology based on the Southern reigns would have cast doubts on the Song's dynasty legitimacy to rule. Sima Guang thus follows the official chronological calculation of the *JWDS* based on the five Northern dynasties and opens the Annals of the Later Liang with the first regnal year of the Later Liang ruler, Taizu 太祖 (r. 907-912).

What Sima Guang could do and did, is to cast doubts on the legitimacy of the last rulers of the first three dynasties, the Later Liang and the two Shatuo-ruled Later Tang and Later Jin dynasties, by referring to them with their titles before

⁵² Sima Guang, "Liu Daoyuan Shiguo jinian xu", *Sima Guang ji* 2:1350-1354.

enthronement and not their posthumous temple titles.⁵³ In all three cases, the conventional father-to-son succession to the throne was contrasted by sibling rivalry that turned into fratricidal conflicts.⁵⁴ Zhu Youzhen 朱友貞 (r. 912-921), the third son of Taizu, is recorded as Prince of Jun 均王, Zhu Youzhen's title before enthronement.⁵⁵ As part of his act of restoration of the Tang legacy, in 923 Li Cunxu terminated the worship of the ancestral temple of Later Liang Taizu, downgraded his status to commoner and destroyed his spirit tablet.⁵⁶ As for Zhu Youzhen, according to the sources he had not even received a proper ritual burial. The burial of his corpse is narrated in the *ZZTJ* in the first Annals of the Later Tang: “[Zhuangzong] ordered Wang Zan 王瓚 to take the corpse of Zhu Youzhen, bury it in a Buddhist temple and, after having lacquered his head, to seal it in a case and conceal it under the Altar for Imperial Sacrifices (*taishe* 太社).”⁵⁷ As a result, Zhu Youzhen never received a posthumous title, and the *JWDS* calls him with the generic posthumous title of Last Emperor 末帝.

In a similar manner, Li Congke 李從珂 (r. 934-935), the last ruler of the Later Tang, is called by his former title, Prince of Lu 潞王.⁵⁸ In some tenth-century court documents Li Congke is addressed as Qingtai Emperor 清泰帝 after his reign era. On the other hand, Ouyang Xiu calls him with his posthumous title Feidi 廢帝, meaning

⁵³ See table, p. 72.

⁵⁴ Richard Davis, *From Warhorses to Ploughshares*, p. 22.

⁵⁵ *ZZTJ* 268:913.

⁵⁶ 毀其宗廟神主 (*ZZTJ* 272:8901).

⁵⁷ According to the *Kaoyi*, the narrative version of the *ZZTJ* follows the *Zhuangzong shilu* (*ZZTJ* 272:8900). The same episode is narrated in the *JWDS*, yet without the macabre emphasis of the *ZZTJ*.

⁵⁸ *ZZTJ* 278:9099.

“the deposed Emperor.” As mentioned earlier in this thesis, Li Congke’s family origins are unclear and the sources provide different information. Early in life, Li Congke’s surname was Wang 王 and his personal name as a child was Asan 阿三. His mother, née Wei 魏, was native of Zhenzhou 鎮州. The *Kaoyi* reports a dispute between Sima Guang and Liu Shu. The debate centered on the origins of birth of Li Congke. The *Wudai huiyao*, the *Jiu Wudai shi* and the *Xin Wudai shi* agree on the illegitimacy of Li Congke to rule on the basis of the fact that he was Li Siyuan’s adopted son. The *ZZTJ* follows this version of the facts. As noted previously, the *ZZTJ* reports that the historian Zhang Zhaoyuan attempted to persuade Li Siyuan to clarify the difference between the legitimate heir and his sons in order to prevent fratricidal conflicts. On the other hand, Liu Shu considers the *Feidi shilu* more reliable than the *Jiu Wudai shi*. The *Feidi shilu* reports that Li Congke was the eldest son of Li Siyuan, born from a concubine née Wei. When Li Siyuan came to power, he named his second son Congrong 從榮 as legitimate heir, instead of Congke. When Congrong died, the Emperor chose his third son Conghou 承祐 as heir to the throne, again instead of Congke. The reign of Li Conghou lasted less than a year and his reign was overturned by Li Congke. According to Liu Shu, the direct kin connection between Li Congke and Li Siyuan had been hidden from then on and only Zhang Zhaoyuan, the author of the *Feidi shilu*, reported these facts. Although Zhang had formerly been a subject of Li Siyuan, he wrote the records under the Later Zhou dynasty, many years after the facts had occurred. He thus felt free to break the taboos. Sima Guang objected to Liu Shu that if it was true that Congke was really the eldest son of Mingzong, then his claims

for legitimate power would have been justified; for this reason the *ZZTJ* accepted the version of Xue Juzheng.⁵⁹

Zhang Zhaoyuan and Wang Pu worked on the records of the Five Dynasties in roughly the same period, yet their versions of Li Congke's kinship are different. There might be a personal reason behind the decision of Zhang Zhaoyuan to report that Congke was in fact Li Siyuan's adopted son. Zhang appears in the *ZZTJ* in a single scene trying to persuade the emperor to adopt measures for the restoration of the hierarchical order established by the ancients for the choice of the legitimate heir in order to "clarify the difference between the legitimate heir and the other sons and to prevent the causes of disasters and rebellions" 明嫡庶之分，塞禍亂之源。Sima Guang concludes that "the Emperor appreciated and praised his words but could not make use of them" 帝賞歎其言而不能用，a sentence that provides Zhang Zhaoyuan's speech with prophetic meaning.⁶⁰

The last case is Shi Chonggui 石重貴 (r. 942-947), the second ruler of the Later Jin and son of Shi Jingtang's eldest brother Shi Jingru 石敬瑁, with the title of Prince of Qi 齊王.⁶¹ The *JWDS* calls him with his posthumous title, Emperor Shao 少帝, while the *XWDS* addresses to him as Emperor Chu 出帝.⁶²

Zhu Youzhen, Li Congke and Shi Chonggui had overstepped their power and came to the throne under obscure circumstances, and by eliminating the legitimate heir to the throne (an elder brother or step-brother). Zhu Youzhen secretly arranged

⁵⁹ *ZZTJ* 268:8770-1; *Wudai huiyao*, p. 4.

⁶⁰ *ZZTJ* 276:9026.

⁶¹ *ZZTJ* 284:9265.

⁶² *JWDS* 81:1067; *XWDS* 9:89-98. In his epitaph, Shi Chonggui is addressed to as king of Jin 晉王 (*Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng* 7:2664).

for the killing of his older brother, Zhu Yougui 朱友珪 (888?-913), when the latter had just ascended to the throne after the death of Taizu in 913.⁶³ For his part, Li Congke killed his step-brother and legitimate heir to the throne of Mingzong, Li Conghou 李從厚 (d. 934).⁶⁴ And finally, Shi Chonggui was put into power by high court officials against the will of the dying Gaozu in 942.⁶⁵

Table: Annals and dates of the Five Dynasties in *ZZTJ* and *JWDS*.

<i>ZZTJ</i>	<i>JWDS</i> <i>Liang shu</i>	<i>JWDS</i> <i>Tang shu</i> and <i>Jin shu</i>
	太祖紀一、二 唐僖宗乾符中 (874-879)/乾寧三年九月 (896) 光化元年正月 (898)/天祐三年 (906) 閏月	武皇紀上、下 唐僖宗乾符三年 (876)/唐大順二年十月 (891) 唐景福元年正月 (892)/ 天祐五年 (908)
後梁紀一 太祖，開平元年 (907) 春，正月 開平二年七月 (908) 後梁紀二 開平二年八月 (908) 乾化元年二月 (911)	太祖紀三 開平元年 (907) 元年正月 開平元年十二月 太祖紀四 開平二年正月 (908) 開平三年 (910)九月	莊宗紀一 天祐五年一月 (908) 春，正月 天祐九年十二月 (911)
後梁紀三 乾花元年三月 (912) 均王上，乾花三年十一月 (913) 後梁紀四 乾花三年十二月 (913) 貞明三年六月 (917)	末帝紀上 乾花二年六月 (912) 貞明二年六月	莊宗紀二 天祐九年一月 (912) 春，正月 天祐十五年十二月 (918)

⁶³ *ZZTJ* 268:8767.

⁶⁴ *ZZTJ* 279:9114.

⁶⁵ *ZZTJ* 283:9237.

後梁紀五 均王中，貞明三年七月(917) 貞明五年九月(919)	末帝紀中 貞明三年(917)春，正月 貞明五年春正月	莊宗紀三 天祐十六年(918)春，正月 同光一年九月(923)
後梁紀六 貞明五年十月(919) 均王下，龍德二年十一月(922)	末帝紀下 貞明六年(920)春，正月 龍德三年十月(923)	
後唐紀一 莊宗同光元年(923)春，二月 同光元年十二月	莊宗紀四 同光元年十月 朔，日有蝕之 同光三年十二月 朔 莊宗紀五 同光二年一月 同光二年五月 莊宗紀六 同光二年五月 同光三年六月	
後唐紀二 同光二年(924)春，正月 同光三年十月	莊宗紀七 同光三年七月 同光三年十二月 莊宗紀八 同光四年一月 天成一年七月	
後唐紀三 同光三年十一月(925) 明宗 天成元年三月(926)	莊宗紀七 同光三年七月 同光三年十二月 莊宗紀八	
後唐紀四 天成元年四月(926) 天成二年六月(927)	同光四年一月 天成一年七月 明宗紀一 天成一年四月 明宗紀三	

	<p>天成一年八月 天成一年十二月</p> <p>明宗紀四 天成一年 春，正月 天成二年十二月</p> <p>明宗紀五 天成三年 春，正月 天成三年十二月</p> <p>明宗紀六 天成四年 春，正月 天成四年十二月</p>
<p>後唐紀五</p> <p>天成二年七月 (927) 天成四年十二月 (930)</p>	<p>明宗紀七 長興元年 春，正月 長興元年十二月</p> <p>明宗紀八 長興二年 春，正月 長興二年十二月</p> <p>明宗紀九 長興三年 春，正月 長興三年十二月</p>
<p>後唐紀六</p> <p>明宗長興元年 (931) 春，正月</p> <p>長興三年六月 (932)</p>	<p>明宗紀十 長興四年 春，正月 長興四年十二月</p> <p>閔帝紀 應順 元年一月 (934) 應順 元年四月</p>

<p>後唐紀七</p> <p>長興三年七月 (932)</p> <p>(934) 春, 正月, 戊寅, 閔帝大赦, 改元應順</p> <p>潞王上, 清泰 元年 (934) 閏月</p>	<p>末帝 上</p> <p>末帝中 清泰二年 春, 正月 清泰二年十二月</p> <p>末帝下 清泰三年 (936) 春, 正月 清泰三年 閏月</p>
<p>後唐紀八</p> <p>潞王下, 清泰 元年二月 (935)</p> <p>清泰 二年十二月 (935)</p>	<p>高祖紀一 天祐十二年 (915)</p> <p>清泰三年十一月 (936)</p> <p>高祖紀二 天福元年十一月 天福二年十二月</p>
<p>後晉紀一</p> <p>高祖, 天福元年 (936) 春, 正月</p> <p>天福元年 (936) 十二月</p>	<p>高祖紀三 天福三年 春, 正月</p> <p>天福三年十二月</p>
<p>後晉紀二</p> <p>天福二年一月 (937) 春, 正月 日有食之</p> <p>天福三年十二月 (938)</p>	<p>高祖紀四 天福四年 春, 正月 天福四年十二月</p> <p>高祖紀五 天福五年一月 天福六年六月</p> <p>高祖紀六 天福六年七月 天福七年八月</p>
<p>後晉紀三</p> <p>天福四年 (939) 春, 正月</p> <p>天福六年十二月 (941)</p>	<p>少帝紀一</p> <p>天祐十一年 (914) 天福八年六月 (943)</p> <p>少帝紀二 天福八年七月 (943) 開運元年六月 (944)</p>

後晉紀四 天福七年 春，正月 齊王上 開運元年(944) 春，正月	少帝紀三 開運元年七月 開運二年四月 少帝紀四 開運二年五月 開運三年九月
後晉紀五 齊王中 開運元年二月 開運二年七月	少帝紀五 開運三年十月 開運三年十二月
後晉紀六 齊王下 開運二年八月 開運三年十二月	

2.3.2. Dates of the Foundation of the Liao

As is the case for modern and contemporary historians, the exact chronology of events that led to the foundation of the Kitan-led Liao dynasty was a matter of discussion for the eleventh-century Song scholars.⁶⁶ The *Kaoyi* reports that a mid-tenth-century source places the proclamation of Abaoji as Heavenly Ruler in the middle of the Qianning 乾寧 era (894-897) of the Tang dynasty. The *Kaoyi* questions this date and quotes other sources. In the “Qidan zhuan”, the *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan* places the event after the foundation of the Later Tang dynasty.⁶⁷ On the other hand, the *JWDS* mentions a non-specified date at the end of the Tianyou era (old calendar of the Tang), roughly around 919-921, shortly before the enthronement of Zhuangzong of

⁶⁶ It is not the purpose of the following discussion to determine the exact date of the foundation of the Liao. This issue has recently been discussed by Daniel Kane in his “The Great Central Liao Kitan State,” *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 43 (2013): 27-50. Some modern scholars, such as Richard Davis, still set the foundation of the Liao in 947 (*From Warhorses to Ploughshares*, p. 155).

⁶⁷ *ZZTJ* 269:8809.

the Later Tang.⁶⁸ The *Wudai huiyao* does not mention an exact date, yet it seemingly places it shortly after the ‘pact of Yunzhou’ and says that Abaoji “usurped the title of Emperor” 僭稱帝號.⁶⁹ Ouyang Xiu is silent on the event. Finally, the *ZZTJ* follows the version of the facts mentioned by the *Jinian tongpu* redacted by Song Xiang. Song Xiang mentions a *rili* 日曆 calendar of the Kitan that he would have personally recovered in Youji 幽薊, a district close to the Northern borders where Song was in office in 1036. According to his findings, the first year of the Shence 神策 reign era of Liao Taizu had to be placed in 916, the second year of the Zhenming 貞明 era of the last Later Liang Emperor, before Zhuangzong’s enthronement. This date has been traditionally considered as the official date of the beginning of Abaoji’s reign as Emperor of the Liao dynasty. Apart from the search for objective data, it would be interesting to inquiry as to why no early tenth-century source mentioned this date and all of them propose different accounts. It could be suggested that it was a precise narrative choice. Abaoji died in the first year of Mingzong (926); his successor, Yelü Deguang 耶律德光 (Taizong 太宗, r. 927-47), was enthroned after a few months later in 927, and the reign era changed to the Tianxian 天顯 era.⁷⁰ In the quotation reported by the *Kaoyi*, Song Xiang mentions a “Wudai Qidan zhuan” 五代契丹傳 that could presumably correspond to the Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan chapter; accordingly, since the time when Yelü Deguang was enthroned Emperor, the era name was changed to Tianxian; in need of legitimization of the newly established ruler, or afraid that Abaoji would not have a posthumous title, they bestowed on him the title of

⁶⁸ *JWDS* 137:1830.

⁶⁹ *Wudai huiyao* 29:455.

⁷⁰ *ZZTJ* 275:8989/8993/9001.

Heavenly Ruler.⁷¹ In the Later Tang period Abaoji was still regarded as a subject of the empire, thus the authors of the “Qidan zhuan” did not register his proclamation as Emperor.⁷²

⁷¹ ZZTJ 269:8809.

⁷² On the dynastic title see also Daniel Kane, “The Great Central Liao Kitan State,” *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 43 (2013): 27-50.

Chapter 3: Narratives on the Later Tang

By comparing the narratives of selected events in the *ZZTJ* with the accounts of other sources provided by the *Kaoyi*, this chapter aims at analyzing the flexibility of the historical discourses, their interrelation and, finally, the (implicit or explicit) selection criteria used by Sima Guang in the *ZZTJ*. These selections are meaningful as far as the representation of the events narrated in the *Kaoyi* and the richness of alternative narrative patterns are concerned. The *Kaoyi* gives more attention to troublesome passages in which a variety of different narrative versions of the same event is available to the historians and it is this richness that provides us with a great deal of material to work on. In a few cases the *Kaoyi* provides bibliographical information about the texts (authors and period of publication), but this is not done systematically for every source. At the end of the quotes from the different sources Sima Guang records his decision to keep the account (*jin cong zhi* 今從之) or reject it (*jin bu qu* 今不取); in some cases the historian accepts all the different versions of the same event (*jin zhu qu* 今諸取 or *jin cong zhongshu* 今從衆書). While no information about the broader principles of selection can be gathered from the commentary, brief and loosely connected comments on the sources if gathered together can nevertheless provide a consistent picture of the larger historiography. The three narrative segments are as follows:

1. The first narrative is the account of one of the events opening the Annals of the Later Liang. It is important because it deals with the earliest official records of relations between the Shatuo Turk leader Li Keyong and the ruler of the Kitan-led

Liao Abaoji 阿保機 (Taizu, r. 916-926) and also because it is given a long entry in the *Kaoyi*. The commentary compares the historical accounts of different early sources in order to establish the exact date of the ‘pact of Yunzhou’ (*Yunzhou zhi hui* 雲州之會) between the two leaders. The issue might seem a mere problem of a difference in basic data. Nevertheless, I wish to show how the choice of placing this event before or after the fall of the Tang has a function in the overall meaning that the authors wanted to convey in the narrative rather than being merely objective;

2. The second narrative segment deals with the foundation of the Later Tang dynasty and the ascent of the son of Li Keyong, Li Cunxu, and is drawn from the Last Annals of the Later Liang. The historical event concerns a remonstrance presented by the last eunuch of the Tang, Zhang Chengye 張承業 (846-922), against Li Cunxu’s ambition of becoming Emperor. The case is interesting in that the final narrative choice of the *ZZTJ* follows somewhat closely a non-official source, rather than the institutional records;

3. The third narrative deals with what could be labelled as the ‘events of Weizhou 衛州’, i.e. the exile of Li Conghou, son of Mingzong, whose reign lasted only four months, and is drawn from the Last Annals of Later Tang. The *Kaoyi* quotes passages from the *shilu* in which the narrative presents significant changes. This segment *per se* has very little historical significance, yet it has the function of introducing into the narrative of the *ZZTJ* certain narrative patterns concerning specific characters (Shi Jingtang and Li Congke) that will recur later in the accounts of the rebellion of Shi Jingtang.

3.1. Representations of the ‘Pact of Yunzhou’ between the Prince of Jin and Abaoji

The first mention in the *ZZTJ* of the establishment of diplomatic relations, based on family-ritual etiquette, with the Kitan-led Liao empire is the ‘pact of brotherhood’, also known as the ‘pact of Yunzhou’: a pact made between the Kitan ruler, Abaoji, and the Prince of Jin, Li Keyong, against the Later Liang, in the early tenth century. The covenant had at most a minor impact on the rise of the Later Liang: the Kitan soon realized that they could gain more privileges by recognizing themselves as subjects of the new rising dynastic house and they turned their back on the Jin. Although the terms of the pact were never accomplished, the descendants of Li Keyong (the Later Tang rulers) and the Kitan rulers periodically recurred to formal patterns recalling family-ritual etiquette. This practice was rooted mainly in interpersonal relations and was more concerned with the diplomacy between the two family lineages than the two courts.¹

The *Kaoyi* contains long quotes from sources providing different narrative versions of the dynamics of the events of Yunzhou. Although the interest of the commentary seems almost always limited to the difference in basic data, the case that will be shown below plausibly testifies to the fact that Sima Guang also pondered the narrative and linguistic choices offered by the different sources. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that, although the events occurred under the Later Liang reign, in the case of this particular entry the *Kaoyi* does not provide the versions of any of the sources redacted in that period. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the early Song

¹ See Pan Yihong, “Marriage Alliance and Chinese Princesses in International Politics from Han Through T’ang,” *Asia Major* 10.1-2 (1997): 95-131. On the marital diplomacy between Tang and Tibetan Empire see Brandon Dotson, “The ‘Nephew-Uncle’ Relationship in the International Diplomacy of the Tibetan Empire (7th -9th cent.),” in *Contemporary Visions in Tibetan Studies. Proceedings of the First International Seminar of Young Tibetologists, London 9-13 August 2007*, Brandon Dotson et al. eds. (Chicago: Serindia Publications, 2009), pp. 223-38.

historians as well as Sima Guang criticized the official records redacted under the Later Liang period for concealing the negative aspects of the Liang ‘usurpers’; the issue of the covenant between Li Keyong and the Kitan for the restoration of the Tang was certainly a very delicate one, as it threatened the legitimacy of the Later Liang and it might have been omitted or twisted in the Later Liang official records. Nevertheless, the lack of textual proofs does not allow us to assume that Sima Guang purposely ignored these sources.

3.1.1. Early Accounts

The first quotation, in chronological order, comes from the *Tang Taizu jinian lu*, the chronological records aimed at celebrating the deeds of Li Keyong. The narrative goes as follows:

As the clan led by Abaoji increased in power, Taizu summoned him [to court]. In the second year of the Tianyou era [905], Abaoji at the head of his militia of clansmen² of three hundred thousand men, reached the Eastern walls of Yunzhou.³ Inside the tent they discussed about the affairs [related to the Empire], they shook hands and they were extremely pleased. They established an alliance of brotherhood and after ten days [Abaoji] left. [Abaoji] left behind a young man, Gudu Sheli, and the

² Here I follow Christopher Atwood’s argument that *buzu* 部族 “combined the idea of a ‘local following’ or ‘militia settlement’ with that of a clan or patrilineal descent group.” *Bu* 部 means ‘unit’ or ‘division’, and *zu* means ‘descent group’. I thus translate *buzu* with ‘militia of clansmen’ in order to convey the idea that Abaoji’s followings were united by some kind of kinship affiliation. Atwood notes that the earliest occurrence of the term *buzu* appears in the narratives of the ‘Pact of Yunzhou’. He argues that the term was used for the first time to refer to the Kitans in the context of the compilation of the historical records at the Later Tang court. The purpose was to distinguish themselves from the Northern neighbors (Christopher Atwood, “The Notion of Tribe in Medieval China: Ouyang Xiu and the Shatuo Dynastic Myth,” pp. 394-95 and 613-14). Considering that the Qing editors heavily edited the *JWDS*, it is difficult to determine with certainty whether *buzu* was used in the first edition or if it is a later addition. For a discussion on the meaning of *buluo* and its possible translations see also Mihály Dobrovits, “The Thirty Tribes of the Turks,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 57.3 (2004): 257-62.

³ Yunzhou 雲州 is located a few miles West of modern Datong 大同 in Shanxi (Tan Qixiang, *Zhongguo lishi ditu ji* 5:85). Some sources use the old name of the commandery first established by King Wuling 武靈 of Zhao 趙 (r. 325-299 BCE), Yunzhong 雲中.

official Ju Bingmei as leverage.⁴ He agreed to raise his army and cross the River in order to restore the legitimate ruler at the beginning of winter. It then happened that Zhaozong met the bandits [Later Liang]⁵ and [the plan] was interrupted.

太祖以阿保機族黨稍盛，召之。天祐二年五月，阿保機領其部族三十萬至雲州東城，帳中言事，握手甚歡，約為兄弟，旬日而去。留男骨都舍利、首領沮稟梅為質，約冬初大舉渡河反正，會昭宗遇盜而止。⁶

The *Taizu jinian lu* marks the fifth month of the second year of the Tianyou era (905) as the date on which the covenant was made; according to this early source, the meeting between Abaoji and Li Keyong occurred before the foundation of the Later Liang dynasty and even before the ascent of the last Tang Emperor, Zhaoxuan 昭宣 (r. 905-906).

A few more details should be highlighted from this early narrative of the event. First of all, according to the text, Abaoji reached Yunzhou at the request of Li Keyong, who is mentioned with the honorific name of Taizu, in later sources

⁴ These two names are not mentioned in the quotes below and do not appear in any other source. The *JWDS* reports that Abaoji “bestowed Emperor Wu with four thousand horses and several hundred thousand of oxen and goats” (*JWDS* 26:360-61). The term Gudu 骨都 occurs for the first time in *Shiji* as a Xiongnu title (*zuoyou* Gudu hou 左右骨都侯, Gudu Marquis to the Left and Right; *Shiji* 110:2890; *The Grand Scribe’s Records* 9:261) and it refers to a high-ranking vassal of a different family than the ruling clan (*The Grand Scribe’s Records* 9:261, n. 157). Gudu Sheli was probably a young member of Abaoji’s military guards or entourage. According to Christopher Atwood, the term Shar/Sheli refers to one of the twelfth ‘tribes’ of the Eastern Türk empire that, together with Tuli 吐利, “formed an indirectly administered prefecture in Inner Mongolia after the Eastern Türk empire submitted to the Tang.” Atwood also notes that, on the basis of textual evidence from Kitan sources, the Shar were originally organized into military troops which formed the comitatus of the Türk imperial family itself. Shar troops became “one of the major components of the Kitan military forces and played an important role in the dynasty’s administration and political history.” Shar/Sheli is sometimes rendered with *langjun* 郎君 (Court Attendant) in the Chinese sources (Christopher Atwood, “Some Early Inner Asian Terms Related to the Imperial Family and the Comitatus,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 56 (2012/13): 57-60. On the other hand, the term *sheli* 舍利 refers to the relics of the Buddha, and it can be used to refer to an eminent monk (see William E. Soothill and Lewis Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, pp. 278b-279a).

⁵ The text refers to the killing of Zhaozong by Zhu Wen in 904.

⁶ *ZZTJ* 266:8679.

substituted with the posthumous title of Emperor Wu 武皇. Second, the Kitan and Li Keyong agreed to “raise their armies and cross the River” at the beginning of winter, but the text talks about a “restoration of the legitimate ruler” and purposely does not mention the attack on the Later Liang. Third, the Later Liang rulers are called ‘bandits’ (*dao* 盜). To sum up, the *Tang Taizu jinian lu* establishes a clear hierarchical order in which Li Keyong occupies a predominant position that allows him to summon the Kitan leader. Abaoji is treated in a fairly diplomatic way, with the Later Liang obviously described in an unflattering way.

Another source compiled during the Later Tang period, the *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan*, reports a slightly different version of the events. The quote preserved in the *Kaoyi* reports that Li Keyong sent his emissaries to meet Abaoji after “the Kitan plundered to a great extent on our [lands of] Yunzhong” 大寇我雲中:

The clan of Abaoji was growing in power and he claimed the title of ruler. In the second year of the Tianyou era [905], he plundered to a great extent our [lands in] Yunzhong. Taizu sent envoys to establish a covenant and met him at the Eastern walls of Yunzhou, he invited [Abaoji] to enter the tent⁷ and they established an alliance based on brotherhood. [Taizu] addressed him by saying: “The Tang ruling house has been usurped by the treacherous subjects, so this year in winter I will raise my army against them. You my younger brother will help me with an army of twenty thousand selected cavalymen, united we will take the territories of Bian and Luo. [A] Baoji accepted. When [A] Baoji went back, [Yelü] Qinde transferred to him the authority on state affairs.

阿保機族盛，自稱國王。天祐二年，大寇我雲中。太祖遣使連和，因與之面會於雲州東城，延入帳中，約為兄弟，謂曰：『唐室為賊

⁷ *Zhangzhong* 帳中 literally means “inside the tent”, but it might also have the broader meaning of military settlement or unit of armed men. In the *JWDS*, *zhangzhong* is sometimes used with reference to the soldiers of the army of the Shatuo Li (see for instance *JWDS* 55:739 and 743). In the *Liao shi*, *zhuzhang* 著帳 is used to refer to the ordos (*Liao shi* 45:702; Atwood, “Some Early Inner Asia Terms Related to the Imperial Family and the Comitatus,” p. 55). In *Liao shi*, *ordo* 斡魯朵 is glossed with *gongzhang* 宮帳 (*Liao shi* 16:1541).

臣所篡，吾以今冬大舉，弟助我精騎二萬，同收汴、洛。』保機許諾。保機既還，欽德以國事傳之。⁸

As shown in the introduction to the sources, the *jinian lu* and the *liezhuan* were compiled roughly in the same period and by the same committee of historians. Nevertheless, the attitude towards the relation between the Kitan and the then Prince of Jin is quite different. Whereas the narrative detail of the ‘great invasion’ by the Kitan is omitted in the *Tang Taizu jinian lu*, probably in order to put Li Keyong in a positive light, the *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan* (seemingly the passage is taken from the “Qidan zhuan”) is less sympathetic with the forefather of the Later Tang. Nevertheless, the quote from the *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan* included in the *Kaoyi* is incomplete and it reports only a partial account of the alliance of Yunzhou; it is thus impossible to carry out a complete analysis of the original version.

Another version of the facts is provided by the *Beishi*, a historical account redacted by Jia Wei at the court of Gaozu of the Later Han dynasty. The fraction of the *Beishi* reported in the *Kaoyi* offers interesting details of the exchange between Abaoji and Li Keyong. Even more intriguing are the words that Jia Wei puts in the mouths of the two rulers as the dialogue shifts attention from the covenant itself to the issue of the legitimate mandate:

Emperor Wu met [A] Baoji at the old walls of Yunzhou. They established a pact of brotherhood. At that time the two armies were stationed at a distance of five *li* one from the other. One dispatched men carrying ritual vessels on horseback to go back and forth in order to perform the ritual of friendly intercourse by wine libations. [A] Baoji was greatly pleased and told Emperor Wu: ‘In our border region the leader, according to an old rule, after three years must abdicate.’⁹ If I meet you, my lord, another day

⁸ ZZTJ 266:8677.

⁹ *Youzhang* 酉長 appears also in fragments of the JWDS in the *Cefu yuangui* in reference to Abaoji, as well as to Yelü Deguang (*Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng* 7:2272), whereas the Qing edition of the JWDS has Kitan zhu 契丹主.

in the future, will we repeat the same rituals or not?’ Emperor Wu replied: ‘I rule Taiyuan on the basis of an imperial order, which in the same way follows the system of relocating [military governors to other provinces]. We just don’t have to accept our replacement, than everything will be fine. Why do you worry about abdicating?’ Thereupon, [A] Baoji acted according to the words [of Li Keyong] and did not accept the replacement by the clan confederation.

武皇會保機故雲州城，結以兄弟之好。時列兵相去五里，使人馬上持杯往來，以展酬酢之禮。保機喜，謂武皇曰：『我蕃中西長，久法三年則罷，若他日見公，復相禮否？』武皇曰：『我受朝命鎮太原，亦有遷移之制，但不受代則可，何憂罷乎！』保機由此用其教，不受諸族之代。¹⁰

Jia Wei not only omits the attack of the Kitan reported by the *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan*, but he also adds more details to the narrative of the pact. An interesting dialogue reported as direct speech shows that Li Keyong, in response to the question of whether the Kitan ruler would be treated with the same respect after his three-year term of leadership, suggests that Abaoji follows Li’s example by ignoring the rules of replacement. As seen previously, Li Keyong was established as military governor of Hedong in 883 and from then on the position will be passed on to his son on a hereditary basis. Jia Wei seems to treat Li Keyong and Abaoji as equals, and mostly in a critical way, as neither ruler respected the rule of replacement.¹¹

The *Han Gaozu shilu*, redacted by Su Fengji at the court of Emperor Yin, the second ruler of the Later Han dynasty, reports roughly the same version as the *jinian lu*, yet it differs in some details. The *shilu* is now lost, yet, according to the considerable number of quotations on the Later Jin and earlier periods preserved in the *Kaoyi*, we know that its twenty *juan* were not limited to Gaozu’s reign (which lasted

¹⁰ ZZTJ 266:8677.

¹¹ Jia Wei, nicknamed “Jia the Iron-mouthed” (*Jia tiezui* 賈鐵嘴), was renowned for his trenchant criticisms that eventually caused his removal from the official post in 951 (*JWDS* 131:1728; *The Writing of Official History under the T’ang*, p. 193).

merely one year), for they also covered the last two Emperors of the Later Tang dynasty and the two Later Jin Emperors. A significant part of the quotations concerns the relation between the Kitan and the Jin, which makes the work an important source of reference for the first official relations with the Kitan:

During the period of reign of [the Tang] Emperors Xi[zong] and Zhao[zong], the [Kitan] ruler Yelü Abaoji relying on his own force and bravery, did not respect the rules of replacement [of the leadership] of the clans and proclaimed himself Heaven-like Emperor.¹² Afterwards, the clans solicited him to respect the old system. [A] Baoji could not have his own will and transmitted the flags and drums [symbols of the ruler's power], and proclaimed: "I have been the ruler for nine years and the Han people¹³ I attracted [to our lands] are a multitude, I wish to lead this kinship clan from the old Han fortified cities. I will lead the Han to guard it and to consider them as one unit." The clans agreed on this. Soon after Abaoji devised a strategy to annex all the clans, he falsely proclaimed himself Emperor and his territories grew larger day by day. In the Dashun era [890-891], Emperor Wu of the Later Tang dynasty sent envoys in order to establish a covenant with the Kitan. They met with a grand

¹² Chen Sanping argues that the title Tianwang 天王, 'Heavenly-like Ruler', as a formal title represented a Xiongnu heritage. Tianwang was never used by Chinese emperors from the Zhou until the collapse of the Western Jin in the early fifth century, and from the Sui onward, with the exception of Abaoji, who was called Tianhuang wang. The title Tianwang was first adopted by the Xiongnu military leader Shi Le 石勒 (274-333) of the Later Zhao 後趙 (319-351) and subsequently by the "Barbarian" rulers of the Northern dynasties from the fifth century until the Northern Qi rulers (pp. 550-577). Chen argues that Tianwang was the Chinese translation of the barbarian heaven-god Tägriit (p. 311). In general, the use of theophoric titles 'heaven-like' and 'born-from-heaven' would attest to the influence of Buddhism among the Türks (see Chen Sanping, "Son of Heaven and Son of God: Interactions among Ancient Asiatic Culture regarding Sacral Kinship and Theophoric Names," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3rd Series, 12.3 (2002): 309-311). In the case of the Kitan, Abaoji's support of Buddhism is well attested in the sources. When Abaoji first built his Southern capital near Youzhou, Xilou 西樓, he ordered the construction of three Buddhist monasteries, hosting a thousand monks. The people thus called him Heaven-like Ruler (*JWDS* 137:1830; *Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng* 11:4279). When Yelü Deguang ascended to the throne, he was also called by the formal title of Tianhuang wang. Empress Shulü was named Heaven-like Empress Dowager 天皇太后, and her niece Tianhuang wanghou 天皇王后 (*ZZTJ* 275:8993).

¹³ In tenth-century sources, the term 'Han' 漢 appears mostly in military titles referring to the mixed Chinese and tribal armies, such as *Neiwai fan han douzhi bingma shi* 内外蕃漢都知兵馬使 (Commander of the inner and outer tribesmen and Chinese army), see Wang Gungwu, *Divided China*, pp. 98-99. 'Han' is sometimes also used to refer to the people in the Central Plain, and probably more specifically to the educated elite.

assembly at the Eastern walls of Yunzhou, [Li Keyong] invited [Abaoji] to enter the tent and they established a pact of brotherhood.¹⁴

僖、昭之際，其王邪律阿保機怙強恃勇，距諸族不受代，自號天皇王。後諸族邀之，請用舊制。保機不得已，傳旗鼓，且曰：『我為長九年，所得漢人頗眾，欲以古漢城領本族，率漢人守之，自為一部。』諸族諾之。俄設策復併諸族，僭稱皇帝，土地日廣。大順中，後唐武皇遣使與之連和，大會於雲州東城，延之帳中，約為昆弟。¹⁵

An important detail that should be highlighted here is that the *shilu* shifts the date of the covenant back to the Dashun era (890-91) of the reign of Tang Zhaozong, one decade before the date reported by other sources.¹⁶ According to the *Kaoyi* this is a mistake, yet there might be a reason for shifting the covenant years to before the ascent of the Later Liang as it would imply that the pact between the Kitan and Li Keyong had nothing to do with the claims for the restoration of the Tang legacy of the Later Tang rulers. Consequently, by moving the encounter between the two leaders to before the foundation of the Later Liang, the author does not have to face the question of legitimacy.

The *Han Gaozu shilu* thus seems to adopt a rather diplomatic approach and the text is an expression of the historiography that developed in the last years of the Later Zhou dynasty. The late Later Zhou and early Song rulers had no interest in emphasizing the merits of Li Keyong or in questioning the legitimacy of the Later Liang ruling clan. As for the relationship with the Kitan, at the beginning of the Song period the rulers had every interest in maintaining peaceful relations with their Northern neighbors, thus official historical writings treated the Kitan with diplomacy.

¹⁴ On the use of the term *kun* 昆 instead of *xiong* see Chen Sanping, "Son of Heaven and Son of God," p. 313.

¹⁵ *ZZTJ* 266:8677.

¹⁶ The *Kaoyi* reports that the same date is mentioned by the *Tang yulu* 唐餘錄 (Additional Records of the Tang), a text redacted by Wang Hao 王皓 (?-1064).

The same diplomatic attitude can be detected in the *Wudai huiyao*, redacted by Wang Pu and presented to the throne in 963. Both the author of the *Han Gaozu shilu*, Su Fengji, and Wang Pu lived and served as high ranking officials at the courts of the last Emperors of the Later Zhou dynasty and the early Song court. Even though there is no specific section on foreign relations, the last chapters of the *Wudai huiyao* are devoted to the foreign populations and include a chapter on the Kitan. Most of the content was probably drawn from the *Han Gaozu shilu* and the account completely lacks the negative epithets usually reserved for the Northern neighbors. In the specific case of the events of Yunzhou, the *Wudai huiyao* is very vague about the details of the pact: it places the events before the foundation of the Later Liang dynasty, yet without providing a precise date; moreover, the text does not mention the invasion by the Kitan; finally, the *huiyao* adds that soon after the meeting, Abaoji proclaimed himself Emperor.¹⁷

3.1.2. The “Qidan zhuan”

The version of the facts that led to the alliance of Yunzhou provided by the *JWDS* seemingly follows the earlier *Tang Taizu jinian lu*, yet it differs in some details, including, for instance, the date of the pact.

Li Keyong died two decades before the foundation of the Later Tang; nonetheless, the emphasis on the legacy of the Prince of Jin was crucial for the legitimization of the dynasty. As it is the case for most of other historians of the early Song period, for Xue Juzheng and his collaborators the issue of legitimacy was a crucial matter. Although of Shatuo origins, Li Keyong is regarded by the early Song sources as the prototype of loyalty, the general who helped the Tang rulers to put

¹⁷ *Wudai huiyao* 29:455.

down the Huang Chao rebellion and who fought the Later Liang until his death. For this reason the *JWDS* dedicates the “Wu Huang ji” 武皇紀 (Annals of Emperor Wu) to Li Keyong as the founding father of the Later Tang dynasty.¹⁸ The anecdote of the pact with the Kitan is narrated in the Annals as follows:

In the spring of the second year of the Tianyou era [905], [the leader of the] Kitan Abaoji began to prosper. Emperor Wu summoned him to court. At the head of [his] militia of clansmen of three hundred thousand [soldiers],¹⁹ Abaoji arrived in Yunzhou and met Emperor Wu on the East side of Yunzhou. They were very pleased to shake their hands and they concluded a pact of brotherhood. Ten days after [Abaoji] left and bestowed on [Emperor Wu] one thousand horses and ten thousands of oxen and goats, waiting for the beginning of winter as the date for the great mobilization of troops to pass the River.

天祐二年春，契丹阿保機始盛，武皇召之，阿保機領部族三十萬至雲州，與武皇會於雲州之東，握手甚歡，結為兄弟，旬日而去，留馬千匹，牛羊萬計，期以冬初大舉渡河。²⁰

The same anecdote is recorded in the “Qidan zhuan”. Here the narrative is far more detailed and the source of reference is different. In fact, the first part of the text has possibly been drawn from the *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan*:

In the fourth year of the Tianyou era [907], [the Kitan] massively invaded the territories of Yun and Emperor Wu of the Later Tang sent envoys in order to establish an alliance. On this basis he personally met [Abaoji] at the Eastern wall of Yunzhong, he regaled [Abaoji] with a great banquet, he invited [Abaoji] to enter the tent and they established an alliance of brotherhood. He said to Abaoji: “The Tang dynasty has been usurped by traitors; I want to launch a massive attack this winter. You my younger brother, relying on twenty thousand elite troops, together [with me] could take the prefectures of Bian and Luo.”²¹ Abaoji accepted, and since he was bestowed with lavish gifts, he left three thousand horses in order to answer the kindness. His entourage attempted to persuade Emperor Wu to use the chance to take [Abaoji] prisoner, but Emperor Wu said: “As the bandits have yet not been destroyed, we cannot lose our trustworthiness

¹⁸ The *Kaoyi* calls it *Taizu ji* (*Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng* 2:623).

¹⁹ Chen Shangjun notes that the *Liaoshi* reports seven hundred thousand. According to Feng Jiasheng 馮家昇, the *JWDS* probably exaggerated the number of Kitan’s soldiers in order to aggrandize the power of the Prince of Jin (*Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng* 3:706).

²⁰ *JWDS* 26:360-61.

²¹ Bian corresponds to present-day Kaifeng, and Luo is Luoyang (Tan Qixiang, 1:17, 19).

among the local following. This would be a way to destroy ourselves.”²² Thereupon he completed the ceremonies and let him go. When the Liang ruling clan established the new dynasty, Abaoji also sent his envoys to endow them with precious horses, female musicians and furs of marten in order to seek title of enfeoffment.

天祐四年，大寇雲中，後唐武皇遣使連和，因與之面會於雲中東城，大具享禮，延入帳中，約為兄弟，謂之曰：「唐室為賊所篡，吾欲今冬大舉，弟可以精騎二萬，同收汴、洛。」阿保機許之，賜與甚厚，留馬三千匹以答貺。左右咸勸武皇可乘間擄之，武皇曰：「逆賊未殄，不可失信於部落，自亡之道也。」乃盡禮遣之。及梁祖建號，阿保機亦遣使送名馬、女樂、貂皮求封冊。²³

The most evident difference between the two versions is the date: the *Wuhuang ji* puts the event in 905, before the foundation of the Later Liang dynasty, while the “Qidan zhuan” sets it in 907. This internal discrepancy might be a mistake, yet it is plausible to think that it isn’t: in this way the Annals could avoid mentioning the attack on the Later Liang by the unified forces of Li Keyong and the Kitan and thus maintain a more diplomatic profile. On the other hand, in the *zhuan* section the historian was allowed to take the liberty of mentioning the usurpation of the Tang by the Later Liang. The “Qidan zhuan” adds another brief anecdote on the relations between the Kitan and the Prince of Jin which is not mentioned in other sources:

When Zhuangzong inherited the throne, he also sent envoys [to the Kitan] in order to announce the mourning [for the death of Li Keyong], presenting gifts of gold and silk, and asking for cavalry in order to rescue Luzhou [Liu Shouguang]. [The Kitan ruler] replied to the envoy as

²² Here I translate *buluo* 部落 with ‘local following’ to distinguish it from *buzu* ‘militia of clansmen’. As noted by Christopher Atwood, the two terms have different connotations: *buluo* refers to a sedentary or semi-sedentary settlement that in wartime could be used as a military unit. Individuals of the same *buluo* are not necessarily members of the same kinship group. On the other hand, *buzu* implies that there is some kind of kinship affiliation (Atwood, “The Notion of Tribe in Medieval China,” pp. 394-95). Chen Shangjun notes that this passage appears also in a fragment of the *JWDS* contained in *Cefu yuangui* where the term *yidi* 夷狄 instead of *buluo* is used (*Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng* 11:4274).

²³ *JWDS* 137:1828.

follows: “The late Prince and I were brothers, his sons are thus my sons, and there is no father that would not help his son!”

莊宗初嗣世，亦遣使告哀，賂以金繒，求騎軍以救潞州，答其使曰：「我與先王為兄弟，兒即吾兒也，寧有父不助子耶！」²⁴

According to the “Qidan zhuan”, the Prince of Jin and the Kitan were still in good relations soon after the death of Li Keyong, so that envoys were sent by Zhuangzong in order to announce the period of mourning to the Kitan.²⁵

As it will be shown below, the eleventh century sources provide a significantly contrasting portrait of Li Keyong; likewise, the hierarchical relation between the Kitan and the Prince of Jin is portrayed in a different way.

3.1.3. The *Wudai shi quewen*

One year after the betrayed alliance, the Prince of Jin, Li Keyong, felt seriously ill; shortly before his death, the Prince had a last intimate talk with his son, Li Cunxu. On the last words of the Prince, as well as on the portrayal of the betrayal, the Song sources present different narrative choices. The *Kaoyi* reports a quotation of an interesting anecdote from the *Wudai shi quewen* of Wang Yucheng that is not included in the *JWDS*. The narrative goes as follows:

It is transmitted among the contemporaries that when Emperor Wu was lying on his death bed, he showed [the future] Zhuangzong three arrows and said: “One is for the punishment of Liu Rengong: if you don’t conquer Youzhou first, it will not be possible to plan the conquest of the region South of the river. One is to attack the Kitan: Abaoji and I put on arms together and we swore allegiance of brotherhood. We made an oath to restore the altars of the Tang; but he betrayed the pact and attached

²⁴ *JWDS* 137:1828.

²⁵ As the current edition of the *JWDS* is a late Qing revised version of the *Yongle dadian* edition, some parts of the text were edited and changed by the Qing editors. Some narratives are doubtfully the original version, yet it is impossible here to determine to what extent the Qing have changed the text.

himself to the bandits;²⁶ so you necessarily have to attack him! One arrow will destroy Zhu Wen. If you will be able to keep a good mind, I will die without hate!” [After the death of Li Keyong] Zhuangzong put the arrows in the hall of the temple of Emperor Wu. When he was about to go on a punitive expedition against Liu Rengong, he ordered a commanding official to offer a *shaolao* sacrifice²⁷ to the temple, to request an arrow, to put it into a bag of brocade and to let a general who was a relative to carry it on his back in the vanguard [of the army]. On the day of the victory, he put the arrow back in the ancestral temple together with the left ear of the enemy. When he attacked the Kitan and defeated the clan of Zhu [Wen], he did the same thing.

世傳武皇臨棚薨，以三矢付莊宗曰：一矢討劉任恭，汝不先下幽州，河南未可圖。一矢擊契丹，且曰：阿保機與我把臂而盟，結為兄弟，誓復唐家社稷，今背盟約附賊，汝必伐之。一矢滅朱溫。汝能成善志，死無恨矣。莊宗藏三矢于武皇廟庭。及討劉仁恭，命幕吏以少牢告廟，請一矢，盛以錦囊使親將負之以為前驅。凱還之日，隨俘馘納矢于太廟。伐契丹，滅朱氏亦如之。²⁸

The *Wudai shi quewen* is the first early eleventh-century source explicitly referring to the Kitan as enemies and expressing strong feelings of resentment. These sentiments of anger are conveyed to the dying Li Keyong through the narration of the story of the pact of Yunzhou. Li Keyong tells his son that, the purpose of the alliance with Abaoji was the restoration of the Tang, but that Abaoji “betrayed the pact and attached himself to the bandits; so you necessarily have to attack him!” In the text praise is thus indirectly addressed to Li Cunxu, who will bravely accomplish his duties in dethroning the Later Liang ‘bandits’ and in defeating the Kitan betrayers.²⁹

²⁶ The *Kaoyi* has Liang, while the version of the text in the *Wudai shishu huibian* reports *zei*.

²⁷ The *shaolao* 少牢 consisted in the sacrifice of two animal victims, usually a swine and a ram (*Xin Tang shu* 13:346).

²⁸ *Wudai shi quewen* 4:2452.

²⁹ The *Wudai shi quewen* introduces in the shortlist of the enemies of Li Keyong another main character of the period: Liu Rengong 劉仁恭 (d. 914), military governor of Lulong 盧龍 (present-day North of Beijing) since the last years of the Tang dynasty. Together with his two sons, Liu Shouwen 劉守文, governor of Cangzhou 滄州 (South-East Hebei), and the younger

In the preface to the *Wudai shi quewen* Wang Yucheng states that the collected anecdotes had been orally passed down and not recorded by historians, yet he does not provide further information about the sources. The origins of the anecdote were possibly already unknown at the time of Sima Guang, as the *Kaoyi* states that it had been probably made up by non specified later historians in order to glorify the deeds of Li Keyong.³⁰ This anecdote did not fit the diplomatic purposes of the *JWDS* which generally speaking seems to be more positive about the Kitan. By contrast, both Ouyang Xiu and Sima Guang drew on it; nonetheless, as will be shown in the following paragraphs, they only considered those details that fitted their narrative purposes.

Liu Shouguang 劉守光 (d. 914), the Liu family members controlled the strategic Northern borders. Liu Rengong embodied perfectly the role of the cruel and unscrupulous enemy to be defeated; his son Liu Shouguang happened to fit the role even better. Almost in the same years of the pact between Li Keyong and the Kitan, the Liu family members were involved in a series of family affairs that lead them to a tragic ending. Liu Shouguang, was rejected as a son and expelled from home after having an affair with his father's concubine, a certain n \grave{e} e Luo 羅氏. But soon after, when Rengong was put under siege by the imperial armies, Shouguang protected the walled city, imprisoned his father and proclaimed himself Commander-in-chief of Lulong and Prince of Yan 燕王. Like most of the military governors during the Five Dynasties period, the aim of Liu Shouguang was to fulfill his ambition of becoming Emperor; although even his entourage discouraged him from doing so, in 911 he proclaimed himself Emperor of Great Yan. His father Liu Rengong had a more theatrical death, stabbed in the heart, his blood rendered as sacrifice on the grave of Li Keyong. The execution of Shouguang and Rengong led to the end of the kingdom of Yan. On Liu Shouguang see *ZZTJ* 268:8743-44/ 268:8769/ 268:8781/ 269:8808-09; *XWDS* 39:427. The case of Liu Shouguang is commonly regarded by the Song historians as an example of extreme lack of filial piety (see *ZZTJ* 266:8671/8686/8710); the *JWDS* includes the biography of Liu Shouguang in the section of the Biographies of Usurpers, "Jianwei liezhuan" 僭偽列傳. As is the case for criminals and traitors, he deserved a cruel and theatrical killing (*XWDS* 5:42). The *Wudai shi quewen* emphasizes a sharp rivalry between Liu Rengong and Li Keyong, while the real struggles for the control of the strategic Northern regions was between the two sons, Liu Shouguang and Li Cunxu. Nevertheless, according to the *Kaoyi*, at that time the future Zhuangzong did not consider the Kitan and Liu Shouguang as enemies and the account of the *Wudai shi quewen* was all made up after Li Cunxu ascended to the throne and became Emperor in order to emphasize his martial virtues and superiority. Hu Sanxing adds that, in reality, the aim of the Prince of Jin was to have good relations with the Kitan and Yan (Liu Shouguang) in order to conquer them in the future (*ZZTJ* 266:8688).

³⁰ *ZZTJ* 266:8688.

3.1.4. The “Siyi fulu”

The “Zhuangzong ji” 莊宗紀 almost entirely skips the account of the pact of brotherhood between the Kitan and Li Keyong. Ouyang Xiu simply records that “in the fifth year [of the Tianfu era, 906],³¹ [Li Keyong] met the Kitan ruler Abaoji in Yunzhou and they established a pact of brotherhood.”³² The historian chooses to omit all details about the pact and does not mention its betrayal in the Annals. Instead, the first part of the “Siyi fulu” is entirely devoted to the event. As seen in chapter one, the “Siyi fulu” occupies the last section of the *XWDS*, and, in spite of the generic title, two thirds of it focuses on the history of the rise of the Kitan and their relations with the Chinese Empire. The text does not mention a date for the event but by saying that “the Liang were about to usurp the Tang”, it places the events of Yunzhou before the Later Liang usurpation:

When the Liang were about to grab power from the Tang, Li Keyong, the Prince of Jin, sent envoys to ask support from the Kitan; Abaoji came with an army of thirty hundred thousand soldiers to meet [Li] Keyong on the East side of the walls of Yunzhou. They had a banquet, and when they had become intoxicated by it they shook hands and swore to become brothers. [Li] Keyong with extreme generosity presented him gold and silk, and they set a date for jointly raising troops to attack the Liang. Abaoji gave a thousand horses to the Jin. But when he returned home, Abaoji betrayed the pact and sent the recipient of gown and staff,³³ Meilao [Mogu],³⁴ as ambassador to the [Later] Liang.³⁵ The Liang sent

³¹When in 904 the Liang moved the emperor residence and the Tang capital to Luoyang, the era name was changed into Tianyou. Jin kept on using Zhaozong era name Tianfu until the fall of the Tang, as a sign of denial of Zhaoxuan’s legitimate emperor (*XWDS* 4: 38). When the Tang were destroyed, Jin took the Tianyou era name (*ZZTJ* 266:8675).

³²*XWDS* 4:38.

³³For the translation of *baowu* 袍笏 I follow Richard Davis, *Historical Records*, p. 15.

³⁴Meilao 梅老 was a Kitan envoy. His embassy of 906 is not mentioned in the *JWDS*. A Meilao Mogu 梅老沒骨 (seemingly the same person or a person of the same family) is mentioned for the embassy to the Later Tang court in 927 (*JWDS* 38:528; *Cefu yuangui* 972:11421) and a Turui Beimeilao 秃纳悲沒老, Kitan envoy sent to the Later Tang court in 928 (*JWDS* 39:534).

the Minister and Chamberlain for the Palace Revenue Gao Qing, the General Gongyuan and others to pay a return visit. One year later, when Gao Qing returned to the court, Abaoji sent his envoy [Yelü] Jieli to accompany him in order to pay a visit to the Liang with good horses, marten coats and beautiful silk brocades as gifts and to submit a memorial in which he called himself subject in order to demand title of enfeoffment. The Liang again sent two envoys, Gongyuan and Hunte, the Chief Minister of the National Granaries, in order to reward him for his efforts with an imperial decree in which [the Emperor] extended His regards [to the Kitan]; additionally, [the Liang] granted [the Kitan ruler] the memoranda [of court consultations]³⁶ and they agreed to jointly raise troops in order to extinguish Jin. Thereafter he would give him a title of enfeoffment as a state related as ‘nephew to uncle’. Moreover, [the Liang] let [Abaoji] send three hundred cavalymen consisting of his younger relatives to enter the capital as guards. When [Li] Keyong heard this, he was greatly enraged. That year, [Li] Keyong fell ill, and lying on his death bed he gave his son, [the future] Zhuangzong, one arrow, expecting him to extinguish the Kitan. When Hunte arrived in the [land of] the Kitan, Abaoji could not act according to the alliance; likewise, the Liang [on their part] did not bestow on the Kitan a title of enfeoffment. Throughout the whole time of the Liang, Kitan envoys four times came to [court].

梁將篡唐，晉王李克用使人聘于契丹，阿保機以兵三十萬會克用於雲州東城。置酒，酒酣，握手約為兄弟。克用贈以金帛甚厚，期共舉兵擊梁。阿保機遺晉馬千匹。既歸而背約，遣使者袍笏梅老聘梁。梁遣太府卿高頃、軍將郎公遠等報聘。逾年，頃還，阿保機遣使者解里隨頃，以良馬、貂裘、朝霞錦聘梁，奉表稱臣，以求封冊。梁復遣公遠及司農卿渾特以詔書報勞，

³⁵ Chen Shangjun identifies a fragment of the *JWDS* contained in the *Cefu yuangui*, according to which the Kitan envoys reached the Later Liang court in the fifth month of the first year of the Kaiping era. It also says that “The Kitan had not had relations with the Central Empire for long time, when they heard the awing sound of the Emperor, only then they headed their own people to come [to court] to pay respect” 契丹久不通中華，聞帝威聲，乃率所部來貢 (*Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng* 1:117). This fragment does not appear in the Qing edition of the *JWDS*.

³⁶ *Jishi* 記事 is a term used for the records of communications and consultations of various nature. Xu Wudang reports that the records included formal “consultations” (*zibao* 諮報), provided by the scholars of the Institute of Academicians, and the informal exchanges, known as “briefs” (*jiantie* 簡帖) (*XWDS* 24:257; Davis, *Historical Records*, p. 226). According to the *ZZTJ*, *jishi* were “memoranda” of requests from the chief ministers for the emperor that were made outside the hours of official audience and were collected through the Chongzheng Hall 崇政院 (Wang Gungwu, *Divided China*, p. 88; *ZZTJ* 266:8674).

別以記事賜之，約共舉兵滅晉，然後封冊為甥舅之國，又使以子弟三百騎入衛京師。克用聞之，大恨。是歲克用病，臨卒，以一箭屬莊宗，期必滅契丹。渾特等至契丹，阿保機不能如約，梁亦未嘗封冊。而終梁之世，契丹使者四至。³⁷

Ouyang Xiu describes the terms of the alliance with the Liang as another form of pact based on ‘familiar-rituals’ etiquette. According to the text, the Kitan submitted a tributary memorial (*biao* 表) in recognition of their status of vassals of the Later Liang ruling house; the two reigns established a subject-ruler relationship based on the pattern of ‘nephew-uncle’ (*fengce wei shengjiu zhi guo* 封冊為甥舅之國).³⁸

The ‘nephew-uncle’ relationship is used by Ouyang Xiu to subordinate the Kitan to the Liang, but it does not appear in other sources. Only in one instance, the *Cefu yuangui* refers to a ‘nephew-uncle’ relation between Zhuangzong and the Kitan. At the beginning of the Tongguang era Zhuangzong, some officials from the prefecture of Cangzhou 滄州 memorialized to the Emperor that a divination had been carried out concerning a possible relation with the Kitan. Yelü Sala'abo 耶律撒刺阿撥, a brother of Abaoji, had sent goats and horses as presents to Youzhou in order to establish an alliance.³⁹

Ouyang Xiu concludes that at the end of the Liang period, the Kitan envoys “four times came [to court].” As explained by Xu Wudang’s commentary in the Basic Annals, in accordance with the *Chunqiu* principle of recording, Ouyang Xiu does not

³⁷ *XWDS* 72:887.

³⁸ ‘Uncle-nephew’ diplomatic relationship were common between the Tibetan empire and the Tang. The terms ‘nephew-uncle’, which originally defined the relationship between father-in-law and bride-giver with son-in-law and bride-receiver in the intermarriages between Chinese and Tibetans was used as kinship term and described the relationship between the two countries (Brandon Dotson, “The ‘Nephew-Unlce’ Relationship in the International Diplomacy of the Tibetan Empire, 7th-9th Centuries,” pp. 224-225).

³⁹ *Cefu yuangui* 980:1158.

use the term *chao* 朝, “to come to audience.”⁴⁰ This reflects his critical viewpoint as to how the court was managing its relations with the Kitan from the very beginning.⁴¹

3.1.5. The *Zizhi tongjian*

The account on the ‘pact of Yunzhou’ in the *ZZTJ* goes as follows:

The Kitan sent one of their subjects, the recipient of gown and staff Meilao [Mogu] to establish friendly relations [with the Later Liang]. The Emperor sent Gao Qing, the Minister of the Imperial Treasury, to return the visit. [...] In that year [907], Abaoji at the head of a troop of three hundred thousand soldiers invaded Yunzhou. The Prince of Jin allied with him; they had a personal meeting at the Eastern walls and pledged to become brothers. The Prince of Jin invited Abaoji into the tent. After they had indulged in wine they shook hands in complete happiness and

⁴⁰ “[When] the barbarians come, one does not say that ‘they come to audience’, because one does not demand the ritual appropriate for an audience; one does not say that they bring tributes, because one does not value their products. For this reason it is written ‘they came’. The Five Dynasties was a period of disorder. We record their numerous comings as to show that the coming or not coming of the barbarians has nothing to do with order or disorder. But they come often in times of disorder is not worth being valued” 夷狄來，不言朝，不責其禮；不言貢，不貴其物。故書曰來。五代亂世，著其屢來，以見夷狄之來不來，不因治亂。而亂世屢來，不足貴也 (*XWDS* 2:13). In a passage of the “Tujue liezhuan,” the *Xin Tang shu* has a similar passage: “As for [the peoples from] the wild domains [one says that] their come, but one does not say that we go [there]” 荒服稱其來，不言往也 (*XTS* 215:6024). For a general discussion on the traditional cosmological theory of the *wufu zhi* 五服制 (Five Domains Model) see Yü Ying-shi, “Han Foreign Relations,” in *Cambridge History of China. Volume I: The Ch’in and Han Empires, 221 B.C.-A.D. 220*,” Denis Twitchett and Micheal Loewe eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 379-81.

⁴¹ As mentioned before, this and other narratives, together with the inclusion of the Kitan in the “Siyi” appendix, provoked the anger of the Liao official Liu Hui 劉輝: “When Ouyang Xiu of the Song compiled his history of the Five Dynasties he attached our dynasty to the Four Barbarians, thus recklessly denouncing and calumniating us. Moreover, the Song rely on the magnanimity of our court which has allowed them to be friendly related and to get the full rites pertaining to the relationship between elder and younger brother. Now they contrarily let a subject with reckless intentions compose a history and to satisfy their wrong intentions” 宋歐陽修編五代史，附我朝於四夷，妄加貶訾。且宋人賴我朝寬大，許通和好，得盡兄弟之禮。今反令臣下妄意作史，恬不經意。 Liu proposed to the Emperor to compile an account of the origins of the house of Zhao and to append it to the Liao national history (*Liao shi* 104:1455) See also Denis Twitchett, “The Liao’s Changing Perception of Its T’ang Heritage,” *The Historian, His Readers, and the Passage of Time, The Fu Ssu-nien Memorial Lectures* (Taibei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1996), pp. 32-33.

pledged to jointly attack the Liang that winter. Someone persuaded the Prince of Jin saying: “Taking advantage of the fact that he has come we should capture him.” The Prince replied: “The enemies have not yet been defeated and if we lose our trustworthiness among the barbarians, it would be the way to self-destruction.” Abaoji stayed for another day and then left; the Prince of Jin made him with a present of several thousand pieces of gold and silk-fabrics. Abaoji left three thousand horses and tens of thousands domestic animals as gift. When he returned, Abaoji betrayed the alliance and instead attached himself to the Liang; from then on the Prince of Jin greatly hated him.

契丹遣其臣袍笏梅老來通好，帝遣太府少卿高頎報之。[...] 是歲，阿保機帥眾三十萬寇雲州，晉王與之連和，面會東城，約為兄弟，延之帳中，縱酒，握手盡歡，約以今冬共擊梁。或勸晉王：「因其來，可擒也，」王曰：「讎敵未滅而失信夷狄，自亡之道也。」阿保機留旨日乃去，晉王贈以金繒數萬。阿保機留馬三千匹，雜畜萬計以酬之。阿保機歸而背盟，更附于梁，晉王由是恨之。⁴²

The *XWDS* and the *ZZTJ* are the only sources explicitly talking about a ‘betrayal’ (*beimeng* 背盟), yet the reason for the betrayal is not mentioned, and it is even less clear why this betrayal did not have any consequence on the future relations between the Prince of Jin and the Kitan. The *ZZTJ* adds the detail regarding the feelings of hate expressed by Li Keyong for the betrayal and it is possible to think that the aim of the historian here is to place emphasis on the extreme unreliability of the Kitan rulers; Li Keyong and his son were completely aware of the unreliability of their supposed alliance against the Later Liang, as they were aware of the strong ambitions of Liu Rengong. The *ZZTJ*, in other words, focuses on the strategic ability of the Prince of Jin:

An ulcer had grown at the head of the Prince of Jin and the disease had become serious. Zhou Dewei and his army had retreated and camped at Luanliu.⁴³ The Prince of Jin ordered his younger brother, Commander of

⁴² *ZZTJ* 266:8679.

⁴³ Luanliu 亂柳 was located in Southern Shanxi (Tan Qixiang 5:85).

the inner and outer tribesmen and Chinese Army⁴⁴ and military governor of Zhenwu,⁴⁵ [Li] Kening, the military commissioner Zhang Chengye, the great generals Li Cunzhang and Wu Qi, and the official Lu Zhi to declare his son Cunxu, Prefect of Jinzhou, as heir. He said: “This son’s determination and spirit are by far the greatest, so that he will surely be able to fulfill my affairs. You officials please guide and teach him well!” On the *xinmao* day, the Prince of Jin said to Cunxu: “Sizhao [General Li Sizhao] suffers from being surrounded by several layers [of Liang troops in Luzhou], and I will not be able to see him anymore. Wait until after my funeral. Then you together with Dewei have to exert all your force to help him!”

晉王疽發於首，病篤。周德威等退屯亂柳。晉王命其弟內外蕃漢都知兵馬使振武節度使克寧、監軍張承業、大將李存璋、吳琪、掌書記盧質立其子晉州刺史存勗為嗣，曰：「此子志氣遠大，必能成吾事，爾曹善教導之！」辛卯，晉王謂存勗曰：「嗣昭厄於重圍，吾不及見矣。俟葬畢，汝與德威輩速竭力救之！」⁴⁶

The narrative representation of the *ZZTJ* differs from the early Song sources mainly in the passage presented above in which Li Keyong has his final talk with his son and the heir of the throne, Li Cunxu. Li Keyong knows that he is about to die and he is concerned with the future affairs that Cunxu will have to deal with. The words that Sima Guang puts into the mouth of the Prince differ from those in the sources seen up to now as there is no mention of his hatred for rivalry with the Kitan. Instead, the concern of Li Keyong is for the Later Liang military attack on his territories, while, even more importantly, his interest in defending Hedong has nothing to do with the claims for the restoration of the Tang legacy.

3.1.6. Concluding Remarks

1) Flexibility in the basic data

⁴⁴ This was an army composed of ‘tribesmen and Chinese’, an army created by Li Keyong (see Wang Gungwu, *Divided China*, pp. 98-99).

⁴⁵ Zhenwu 振武 military governorship was located in present day Shuo 朔 prefecture (Tan Qixiang 5:84).

⁴⁶ *ZZTJ* 266:8688.

It has been shown that the *Tang Taizu jinian lu*, the *Zhuangzong shilu* and the *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan* place the events of Yunzhou in 904, the *Han Gaozu shilu* shifts it ten years earlier (890-891) and neither the *Beishi* nor the *Wudai huiyao* mention a date. The *Wu Huang ji (JWDS)* follows the *jinian lu*; on the other hand, the “Qidan zhuan” moves the event after the foundation of the Later Liang in 907. It is probably interesting to note that Ouyang Xiu keeps, considering it realistic, a date that is after the foundation of the Later Liang, although in the “Siyi fulu” it is reported that “the Liang were about to usurp the Tang” and presumably the historian puts the events of Yunzhou before the Later Liang ascent. Finally, the *ZZTJ* places the event in the same year as the foundation of the Later Liang, a few months afterwards.

On the basis of the little textual evidence available, one cannot prove that the different sources explicitly confused the dates of the covenant in order to confer a specific perspective to the narrative. Nevertheless, we can suggest that placing the ‘pact of Yunzhou’ before the foundation of the Later Liang puts Li Keyong, the mighty restorer of the Tang, in a positive light and the Kitan, those who did not respect the pact and turned to the Later Liang, in a very bad light. On the other hand, if the covenant is placed after the foundation of the Later Liang, then the perspective could be slightly different: Li Keyong has no interest neither in restoring the imperial order nor in the Tang legacy; he is just defending his own kingdom.

2) Narrative variations

The first source presented above, the *Tang Taizu jinian lu*, establishes a hierarchical order in which Li Keyong occupies a predominant position that allows him to request a meeting with the Northern neighbors. The Kitan, on the other hand, are not regarded

as equal yet are treated in a fairly diplomatic way. Finally, the Later Liang are mentioned only with the use of the negative epithet of ‘bandits’.

The *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan* shows a less diplomatic attitude towards the Kitan, mentioning that Abaoji had proclaimed himself ruler and using the term ‘invade’ (*kou*) to describe the military activity of the Kitan, a term generally used for the attacks from the Northern barbarians. The text is also not completely positive towards Li Keyong; although he addresses the Kitan ruler as “younger brother”, underscoring his superiority, he does not have the authority to request a meeting with the leader; instead he “sends envoys to establish a covenant.”

The *Beishi*, redacted a couple of decades after the *jinian lu* and the *liezhuan* in the period of reign of Emperor Gaozu of the Later Han, treats Li Keyong and Abaoji equally, and mostly in a critical way.

Besides shifting the date of the covenant back to the Dashun era (890-891) of the reign of Emperor Zhaozong and apparently confusing the chronological order of the events, the *Han Gaozu shilu*, redacted at the end of the Later Zhou period, omits to mention the role of the Later Liang in the events. In this way the texts avoid the problem of taking a position on the mandate of the Later Liang. The same diplomatic attitude can also be detected in the almost coeval *Wudai huiyao* and in the *JWDS*, where Li Keyong and Abaoji are treated as equals and the Kitan are painted in a fairly positive way.

The *Wudai shi quewen* introduces new details to the narrative on the ‘pact of Yunzhou’ and it provides a new perspective: the figure of Li Keyong is highlighted and both the Kitan and the Later Liang are depicted in a very negative way. The narrative was probably drawn from a source near to the Later Tang rulers and

describes Li Keyong as virtuous and the Kitanin a negative way. The same attitude can be detected in the *XWDS*.

Finally, the narrative in the *ZZTJ* is certainly the most developed. As for what attitude is shown towards Li Keyong, the historian not only underlines the superiority of the military leader over the Kitan, but also adds an inverted status: in the narrative Li Keyong is always addressed as “the Prince of Jin” in order to clarify that he did not recognize himself as a subject of the Later Liang. The last words of Li Keyong to his son show how the Prince is fairly concerned with the Later Liang attacks.

3.2. The Tang Legacy: Different Portrayals of the Enthronement of Li Cunxu

The narrative segments that will be analyzed below concern the remonstrance presented by the eunuch Zhang Chengye 張承業 (846-922) to Li Cunxu in the spring of 922, on the eve of the defeat of the last ruler of Later Liang and the subsequent enthronement of the first Later Tang ruler. Several features make of Zhang Chengye the ideal character through which historians can talk about the Tang legacy. First of all, Zhang had been involved in the past Tang dynasty political events, and he had lived the transition from the Tang dynasty to the Later Liang and Later Tang. Second, he had been loyal both to the Tang and later to Li Keyong. And third, Zhang Chengye was a survivor. He was one of the few eunuchs of the late Tang period that had been rescued by Li Keyong from the massive killing of the eunuchs ordered by Zhu Quanzhong in 903.⁴⁷ The extreme sense of loyalty that from that time had bounded

⁴⁷ Since the last decade of the dynasty, Zhang had served Li Cunxu's father, Li Keyong, on several occasions and in 894 he had been appointed as Supervisor of the Troops (*Jiu Tang shu* 20:754; *ZZTJ* 260:8473). When the future Emperor of Later Liang issued the order to kill all the eunuchs of the Empire, Li Keyong helped Zhang Chengye to escape. Sima Guang devotes a long and passionate comment to this event. Part of it has been reported and translated at the end of this chapter (*ZZTJ* 264:8594/8601; *ZZTJ* 266:8675). In 908, a dying Li Keyong asked his younger

Zhang Chengye to Li Keyong remained unbroken for Li's son Li Cunxu, until the latter announced his intention to proclaim himself Emperor. Zhang then offered a remonstrance to his ruler but his protest remained unheeded and the sense of frustration led Zhang Chengye to plead failing health and retire from office.

The remonstrations against the future first Emperor of the Later Tang dynasty is presented differently in the sources. The *Kaoyi* reports four different narrative versions of the event, among which the *Zhuangzong shilu* and the *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan* accounts undoubtedly represent the earliest sources.

3.2.1. The Representation in Tenth-century Sources

The *Zhuangzong shilu* reports:

When the Emperor first obtained the jade seal, the military commanders urged the Emperor to restore the Tang calendar. [Zhang] Chengye hurried from Taiyuan to pay respect to the Emperor and told him: “Your Highness and Your Highness’ respected father have fought for more than thirty years a bloody war, willing to repay the state and take revenge on its enemies, and build an ancestral line of the Tang. Today the prime criminals [Later Liang] have not been destroyed yet, the military taxes are not sufficient and in many regions North of the River people are exhausted by the burden of the provisions they have to provide. If you hurriedly put the [assumption] of a great dynastic name you use up the strength one should put into maintaining an army and [you] hardly press

brother, Li Kening, and Zhang Chengye to assist and guide his son in the leadership of the reign of Jin (*ZZTJ* 266:8688; see translation above). At that time Li Cunxu was in his early twenties and in the army there was concern for his young age. The *ZZTJ* emphasizes Li Cunxu’s fear of the reaction of the troops; seeing his willingness to leave the post to Li Kening, Zhang Chengye warns him that the highest expression of filial piety resides in not ruining what a father had founded. Thanks to the support of Zhang Chengye, in 908 Li Cunxu succeeded his father as military governor of Hedong and Prince of Jin (*ZZTJ* 266:8689). For the Shatuo rulers it was a common practice to adopt their soldiers or supporters as sons in order to reinforce the bonds between the rulers and the subordinates; Li Keyong himself had more than one hundred ‘adopted sons’ among the soldiers (*ZZTJ* 266:8689); the most powerful among them were not happy about Li Cunxu’s enthronement and, together with Li Kening, conspired against the new ruler. Zhang Chengye again intervened in order to protect him and Li Cunxu honored Zhang with the title of ‘elder brother’ (*ZZTJ* 266:8696). On the massacre of eunuchs see also Wong Kwok-yiu, “The White Horse Massacre and Changing Literati Culture in Late-Tang and Five Dynasties China,” *Asia Major* 3d ser. 23. 2 (2010): 33-75.

the living spirits who are in dire straits already. This is the first reason why I, your servant, humbly believe that this is still inappropriate. If Your Highness transforms the family [affairs] into a state affair, [Your Highness has to] newly create an [ancestral] temple and a court, [and] the standard and regulations for the ritual code need to be taken from the Grand Chamberlain. At present we do not see the appropriate people for the Ministry of Rituals and if we deviate from the ancient norms we will be taken lightly and derided by the people. This is the second reason why it is not appropriate [to assume power].” And on this his tears wetted his sleeves. The Sovereign replied: “This is not what I want! But what about the will of the military commanders?” Therafter [Zhang] Chengye often was ill. Day after day his physical condition worsened until he [finally] died in office.

上初獲玉璽，諸將勸上復唐正朔，承業自太原急趣謁上白：『殿下父子血戰三十餘年，蓋緣報國復仇，為唐宗社。今元凶未殄，軍賦不充，河朔數州弊於供億，遽先大號，費養兵之事力，困凋弊之生靈，臣以為一未可也。殿下即化家為國，新創廟朝，典禮制度須取太常準的。方今禮院未見其人，儻失舊章，為人輕笑，二未可也。』因泣下沾衿。上曰：『余非所願，柰諸將意何！』承業自是多病，日加危篤，卒官。⁴⁸

The quote in the *Kaoyi* begins with a general reference to the fact that “the Emperor acquired the jade seal” (*yuxi* 玉璽), the symbol of legitimate mandate. As it will be shown below, the later sources provide more details on the passing of the seal, yet none of them questions the veracity of the account. While a reconstruction of the history of the imperial seal would be beyond the scope of this work, suffice it to say that, already by the early Song period, different and contradicting accounts were

⁴⁸ ZZTJ 271:8863.

circulating. In the present chapter I will limit myself to providing a reading of how the different sources dealt with this issue.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ In the sixth Annals of the Later Jin Hu Sanxing adds a long note on the *guoxi*, or *guobao*, and he quotes from the “Baoxi” 寶璽 (Imperial Seal) chapter of the *Jianyan yilai chaoye zaji* 建炎以來朝野雜記 (Miscellaneous Records of the Court Affairs from the Jianyang Period Onwards) compiled by Li Xinchuan 李心傳 (1166-1243). Li Xinchuan reconstructs the history of the transmission of the imperial seal from the Qin 秦 period to the Song. The author maintains that the original Qin seal went lost after the Han period. Nevertheless, the succeeding Emperor claimed to possess the original seal forged by Li Si 李斯 (d. 208 BCE), the famous chancellor of the First Emperor. The author concludes that “during the disorders of the Kaiyun era [946, year of the invasion of the Kitan and destruction of the Later Jin], [the seal] ended up with Yelü [Deguang]. Therefore what the Jurchen acquired and kept as a precious treasure, is nothing else than the Jin seal [forged by] Shi [Jingtang]. In the sixteenth year of the Zhenguan era of Tang Taizong [642], a seal for the Imperial Mandate was forged. The inscription said: ‘the great mandate of the Emperor, those who are virtuous will prosper’. Afterwards [the seal] was obtained by Zhu Quanzhong and then destroyed by [Li] Congke; the seal then went lost. When [Yelü] Deguang entered in Bian, [Shi] Chonggui conferred it to him, [the inscription] said: ‘Carved by the previous Emperor’. This was the seal of [Shi] Jingtang” (*ZZTJ* 285:9324). According to Li Xinchuan, the imperial seal forged by the Tang was acquired by Zhu Quanzhong and later destroyed by the last Emperor of Later Tang, Li Congke. There is no mention of the seal being acquired by Li Cunxu. The aim of the historian was probably to prove that the Jurchen-Jin, who had acquired the seal from the Kitan, did not possess the real one. In another entry in the Annals of Later Zhou, Hu Sanxing quotes the *Tang liudian* 唐六典 (on the *Tang liudian* see Twitchett pp. 101-102), in which the version of the transmission is quite different. The *Tang liudian* says that (in the Tang period) eight imperial seals existed. All of them were handed down and, if lost, forged again by the succeeding Emperors. The seal forged in 642 by Taizong was called *xuanxi* 玄璽 (the mysterious seal), “made of white jade, the handle carved into the shape of a dragon.” The quotation continues into the Five Dynasties period and Hu Sanxing does not specify the source. In any case, it consists of an early Song source. According to the quote, a seal was forged in the Tongguang era at the beginning of the reign of Zhuangzong. An inscription reported: “Treasure of the Imperial Mandate”. In the third year of the Tianfu era of reign of Shi Jingtang another seal was forged and the inscription reported ‘the sacred treasure of the Emperor’. The quote adds: “both seals were forged by the officials at court, they did not have a decorated handle, nor an inscription in the ancient script nor did they respect the canonical size” (*ZZTJ* 291: 9491-92). Although too sketchy to provide historical evidences, this version of the story would prove that already in the early Song period different accounts of the alleged Tang imperial seal were circulating, yet mostly consisted of obscure and doubtful accounts. Nevertheless, it was generally believed that the seals circulating in the five dynasties period were forgeries. Hu Sanxing himself, at the end of the Song dynasty, says that he keeps all the quotes “waiting for someone who is able to understand” (*ZZTJ* 285:9325).

The *Zhuangzong shilu* adds that Li Cunxu's entourage urged him to restore the "Tang calendar" (*zhengshuo* 正朔). The reform of the Tang calendar possibly does not hint at changes in the calendar system, but it refers to the request to restore the Tang legacy and era names, as the Later Tang considered themselves the legitimate heir of the Tang legacy. This is what Zhang Chengye calls to establish a "great dynastic name."

Nonetheless, the details of Zhang Chengye's direct speech are the most interesting part of the anecdote. According to the *Zhuangzong shilu*, Zhang remonstrated against Li Cunxu's decision to assume power for two main reasons. First of all, the empire had not been completely pacified and the military forces were almost exhausted. While, secondly, after years of wars and destruction, a solid ritual system still needed to be established. According to the *shilu*, Zhang merely objected to the timing of the enthronement and did not question Li Cunxu's claim as the restorer of the Tang. On the other hand, Li Cunxu simply replies that the generals' will is much more compelling than all the good reasons presented by the eunuch.

The *Zhuangzong shilu* takes a quite diplomatic and almost neutral position towards Zhuangzong. The *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan* tells roughly the same story, yet some details are different:

The Emperor accepted the request received from all the provinces to assume power and he prepared to usurp the imperial throne. [Zhang] Chengye believed that the three generations of princes of Jin had merits for [their loyalty to] the empire; the late Prince [Li Keyong] had been enraged by the bandits who had rebelled and usurped power, [and wanted to] restore the old state. As the bandits had not been pacified yet, it was not appropriate to light handedly accept the leadership. At that time his illness had [already] begun, but he [nevertheless] was carried on a sedan chair to the imperial palace where he was received by the Emperor and forcefully remonstrated [against the decision to hasten the enthronement].

上受諸道勸進，將篡帝位。承業以為晉王三代有功於國，先王怒賊臣篡逆，匡復舊邦，賊即未平，不宜輕受推戴。方疾作，肩輿之鄴宮，見上力諫。⁵⁰

The text presents narrative patterns that are similar to the quote from the same source on the ‘pact of Yunzhou’: the *liezhuan* refers to Li Keyong’s hatred for and rivalry with the “bandits who had rebelled and usurped power” and to his intention to “restore the old state.” Nonetheless, as in the previous narrative, the authors do not spare Zhuangzong from hints of criticism. The *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan* reports that Li Cunxu “prepared to usurp the throne”. The use of the same term *cuan* 篡 (‘to usurp’) for Zhuangzong and for the Later Liang, is clearly in order to show the critical attitude of the author towards the intentions of the ruler. This detail appears to be even more interesting if we consider that the *shilu* and the *liezhuan* were compiled by the same team of historians and plausibly drawing on the same sources. It is thus possible to think that, while the traditional format of the *shilu* did not allow the historians to express disapproval towards Zhuangzong, in the *liezhuan* they found a more suitable space for criticism.

The version reported in the biography of Zhang Chengye in the *JWDS* is mainly based on the *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan*. The biography reports the term *cuan* to indicate the enthronement of Zhuangzong and the narrative does not present any relevant difference from this early source. On the other hand, the brief account in the *Annals of Zhuangzong*, “*Zhuangzong ji*”, seems to minimize the importance of the remonstrance against the ascent of the Emperor: the text barely mentions the death of the eunuch yet it remains silent concerning its circumstances and says nothing about

⁵⁰*ZZTJ* 271:8863.

his remonstrance.⁵¹ The Annals instead provide a significantly detailed account of the transmission of the jade seal:

In the first month of spring of the year eighteenth of the Tianyou era [922], the Chuanzhen master of the Kaiyuan temple in Weizhou, who had been keeping the imperial treasure, presented it to the Branch Department of State Affairs. An analysis of the inscription revealed the eight characters “this is the Mandate of Heaven, the sons and grandsons shall preserve it.” All the [Emperor’s] assistants congratulated. When the Chuanzhen master had been active in the Tang Guangming era [880-881], he had obtained it when disorder broke out in the capital and secretly kept it for forty years. Because it was written in the ancient style of the seal script, nobody understood the inscription. Now [the Chuanzhen master] presented it [to the court]. At that time Yang Pu from Huainan and Wang Yan from Sichuan⁵² all sent envoys to present memorials in order to urge the Emperor to succeed to the throne of the Tang, but the Emperor refused.

天祐十八年春正月，魏州開元寺僧傳真獲傳國寶，獻於行臺。驗其文，即「受命於天，子孫寶之」八字也，羣僚稱賀。傳真師於廣明中，遇京師喪亂得之，秘藏已四十年矣。篆文古體，人不之識，至是獻之。時淮南楊溥、西川王衍皆遣使致書，勸帝嗣唐帝位，帝不從。⁵³

The *JWDS* provides a description of the seal. According to the text, a Chuanzhen master from a Buddhist temple in Weizhou had mysteriously obtained the imperial seal during the Huang Chao rebellion. This detail possibly hints at the fact that the Tang had lost its legitimacy to rule already in that period. Another element worth mentioning is that nobody was able to decipher the inscription until the entourage of Zhuangzong received the seal from the Buddhist master. The reaction provoked by the discovery is also interesting, as the early sources only mention that the generals loyal

⁵¹ *JWDS* 72:952-53.

⁵² Yang Pu 楊溥 (901-938) was the fourth son of Yang Xingmi 楊行密 (842-905) of Wu. Yang Pu sent envoys to Luoyang to pay respect to Zhuangzong in 922 (*JWDS* 134:1783). Wang Yan 王衍 (d.926), eleventh son of Wang Jian 王建 (847-918), the founder of the Former Shu dynasty in Sichuan (*JWDS* 136:1829-31).

⁵³ *JWDS* 34:397.

to Li Cunxu urged him to assume power, while the *JWDS* says that even the rulers from the Southern (Huainan) and Western regions (Sichuan) sent their emissaries.⁵⁴

3.2.2. The *Wudai shi quewen*, *Wudai shi ji* and *Luozhong jiyi* Accounts

The narratives analyzed above show Zhuangzong in a positive light, though slightly criticized in the *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan*, and generally do not put too much emphasis on the intentions of Zhang Chengye's remonstrance. The *JWDS*, in particular, focuses on the detail of the imperial seal and it practically avoids the issue of the remonstrance. In the narrative segment of the *Wudai shi quewen* the position of Zhang Chengye changes significantly:

When Zhuangzong was about to ascend the throne in Weizhou,⁵⁵ Zhang Chengye came from Taiyuan and told Zhuangzong: "My Lord [and his forefathers] offered service to the Tang ruling house for many generations in the most loyal and filial way. Whenever since the Zhenguan era [627-650] the ruling house has been in trouble,⁵⁶ your [family] has always been in the entourage of [the Tang]. The reason why for more than thirty years your old slave for my Prince has collected goods and military taxes and called for supplementing [missing] horses for the troops has been that you swore to extinguish the Northern bandit Zhu Wen and to restore the temples and altars of our legitimate court. Today the lands at North of the River have barely been stabilized, and Zhu Wen is still there. Is it appropriate to hurriedly take the highest position?" etc. Zhuangzong replied: "What about the will of all the military commanders?" Only

⁵⁴ The *JWDS* records that another jade seal was discovered somewhere in the Southern side of the Zhide 至德 Palace in 925, three years after the ascent of Zhuangzong (*JWDS* 32:446). The Zhide Palace was the former residence of Zhang Quanyi in Luoyang and it will become one of the estates of the Later Tang emperors. Chen Shangjun notes that the event is also recorded in *Cefu yuangui* (*Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng* 3:925-6; *Cefu yuangui* 25:272-73).

⁵⁵ Weizhou 魏州, located northeast of modern Daming 大名 in south Hebei, was a small prefecture of the Tianxiong Commandery 天雄軍 that was conquered by Li Cunxu's army in 915 and subsequently became the center of his military and political power for about eight years (see Davis, *Historical Records*, pp. 35-36; Tan Qixiang 5:85). Weizhou will be renamed Eastern Capital and Xing Tang fu 東京興唐府 (Prefecture of the Restoration of the Tang; *JWDS* 29:404).

⁵⁶ As said before, in the second half of the ninth century the Shatuo Li were registered as members of the imperial family branch of the Prince of Zheng, who lived in the Zhenguan era. It is interesting to note that here the text traces the relations between the Shatuo and the Tang court back to that period.

when Chengye realized that by his remonstrance he would not be able to stop this, he wept in sorrow: “The bloody battles among the feudal lords originally were for the sake of the Tang family. If my Lord now seizes power himself, he is deceiving his old slave!” Then he went back to Taiyuan and starved himself to death.

[Wang Yucheng notes:] The narrative of the remonstrance of Chengye in the *Zhuangzong shilu* is very detailed. It only does not records the words “my Lord seizes [power] by himself.” This means that the Historiographical Office avoided mentioning it.

莊宗將即位于魏州，承業自太原至，謂莊宗曰：『吾王世奉唐家，最為忠孝，自貞觀以來，王室有難，未嘗不從。所以老奴三十餘年為吾王摺拾財賦，召補軍馬者，誓滅朔賊朱溫，復本朝宗社耳。今河朔甫定，朱氏尚存，吾王遽即大位，可乎？』云云。莊宗曰：『柰諸將意何！』承業知不可諫止，乃慟哭曰：『諸侯血戰，本為唐家；今吾王自取之，誤老奴矣！』即歸太原，不食而死。

《莊宗實錄》敘承業諫甚詳，惟「我王自取」之言不書，史官諱之也。⁵⁷

Here again the details play an important role in the overall rendering of the narrative. The *Wudai shi quewen* directly talks about a return to the Tang legacy intended as a restoration of the Tang ruling house; Zhang Chengye appears deceived by the hidden intention of Li Cunxu to seize the power. As we know, the feeling of betrayal will lead to Zhang's death. A comment by Wang Yucheng concludes by saying that the authors of the *Zhuangzong shilu* censured the last words of Chengye, “my Lord seizes [power] by himself.” Furthermore, it is interesting to note the last words of frustration pronounced by Zhang Chengye, “If my Lord now seizes power himself, he is deceiving his old slave!” which shed a negative light on Zhuangzong that did not appear in the previous narratives.

The narrative provided by Wang Yucheng stresses the position of Zhang Chengye through a long and emphatic direct speech in which the eunuch depicts himself as a loyal subject of the Tang. This version was very much appreciated by Ouyang Xiu and the historian glorifies Zhang's words even more stating that “Zhang

⁵⁷ *Wudai shishu huibian*, p. 2453; ZZTJ 271:8863.

Chengye singularly served with such dignity before the eyes and ears of men that elders still speak about him to this day. His oratory truly merits the characterization ‘intrepid’, hardly typical of a eunuch’s views.”⁵⁸ Again he maintains that “the statements of Chengye emerge as singularly venerable and splendid.” Here I quote the reply of Zhang Chengye to Zhuangzong’s assertion that his decision to seize the throne comes from a request from the generals:

Chengye replied: “It is not so, Liang is the enemy of Tang and Jin, and it is them that all the Empire hates. If you my Prince can truly for the sake of the empire remove the greatest evil and get a deep revenge for the sage [Emperors of the Tang], then you should search for a descendant of the Tang and establish him [as Emperor]. If sons or grandsons of the Tang exist, who will dare to oppose them? And if there does not exist a son or grandson of the Tang, who among the men in the empire will be able to compete with my Prince? Your servant is just an old slave of the Tang family! I honestly hope to see Your Great Majesty succeed and then I will retire to the countryside letting the one hundred officials accompany [You] out of the Eastern gate of Luoyang and ordering all the people on the street to point at you and sigh: ‘This is the commissioned envoy of our legitimate court, the military inspector of the late Prince [Li Keyong]’. How could this not be an honor for both the ruler and servant?”

承業曰：「不然，梁，唐、晉之仇賊，而天下所共惡也。今王誠能為天下去大惡，復列聖之深讎，然後求唐後而立之。使唐之子孫在，孰敢當之？使唐無子孫，天下之士，誰可與王爭者？臣，唐家一老奴耳！誠願見大王之成功，然後退身田里，使百官送出洛東門，而令路人指而歎曰『此本朝敕使，先王時監軍也』，豈不臣主俱榮哉？」⁵⁹

Sima Guang is not completely satisfied either with the two different versions of the events offered by the official records, or with the *Wudai shi quewen* version. In particular, the historian is disturbed by the words of praise for Zhang Chengye’s deeds. The *Kaoyi* thus quotes a third version of the facts drawn from a non-official

⁵⁸ XDWS 38:406; *Wudai shishu huibian*, p. 2453; ZZTJ 271:8863; Richard Davis, *Historical Records*, p. 320.

⁵⁹ XWDS 38:405.

record: Qin Zaisi 秦再思's (beginning of the 11th century) collection of brief stories, the *Luozhong jiyi* 洛中紀異 (Record of the Extraordinary Events in Luo). The text reads as follows:

Chengye remonstrated with the Emperor by saying: "Why you great Prince, do you not wait for the Liang to be punished and routed before you then pacify Shu and Wu, in order to transform the empire into one single family; moreover [Your Majesty] should first search for a son or grandson of the Tang dynasty and establish him or cede the Empire to someone who has merits; who would then dare to oppose him? If you wait one month then you will be one month more resolute, one year then one year more resolute. Even a reborn Gaozu or Taizong would not dare to step in. If you great Prince establish yourself all of a sudden, you will immediately lose the idea that one had before that you have led a punitive attack for reasons of justice. Then the feelings of the people will become weary. This old man is just a eunuch who does not cherish the wealth and rank that an office by your majesty may provide. Just because he has received the weight of a demand from the office of your Majesty's late father he for your late father wants to establish a foundation that will last for ten thousand years." Only when [he saw that] Zhuangzong was not able to follow his advices, Zhang Chengye excused himself on grounds of illness and went back to Taiyuan where he died.

承業諫帝曰：『大王何不待誅克梁，更平吳、蜀，俾天下一家，且先求唐氏子孫立之，復更以天下讓有功者，何人輒敢當之！讓一月即一月牢，讓一年即一年牢。設使高祖再生，太宗復出，又胡為哉！今大王一旦自立，頓失從前仗義征伐之旨，人情怠矣。老夫是閹官，不愛大王官職富貴，直以受先王府囑之重，欲為先王立萬年之基爾。』莊宗不能從，乃謝病歸太原而卒。⁶⁰

The narrative version of the *XWDS* draws from the *Luozhong jiyi*, yet this last version presents a few slightly different details that put Zhuangzong in an even more negative light. Zhang Chengye appeals to the will of Li Cunxu's late father to restore the Tang dynasty legacy. Zhang explicitly declares that his aim is to realize the idea of empire that Li Keyong had in mind. For this reason, Li Cunxu should first yield (*rang* 讓) and search for the legitimate heirs of the Tang; only when an appropriate and

⁶⁰ *ZZTJ* 271:8863-64.

legitimate ruler can be found, and the time is appropriate, should he propose himself as ruler.

3.2.3. The *Zizhi tongjian* Account

According to the *Kaoyi*, the narrative version of the *Luozhong jiyi* is closer than the others to the reality of the facts, or at least to the meaning that Sima Guang and his colleagues wanted to give the event. The *Luozhong jiyi* pictures Zhang Chengye as the last loyal subject of the Tang dynasty and, at the same time, the eunuch's remonstrance is an attempt to plan a wise strategy for Zhuangzong in order to assure Li Keyong's descendants a long lasting reign.

The *Kaoyi* reports a long explanation of the final selection of the sources:

Ouyang Xiu's history has taken the ideas both from the *Wudai shi quewen* and the *Luozhong jiyi*. According to the *shilu* and other [official] writings, Chengye just lamented that the expenses were too high and that ceremonial objects [for the new dynasty] were not prepared. This seems to be all too superficial and rustic. As to the version of the *Quewen*, Chengye had served Zhuangzong and his father, Li Keyong, for several decades. The close relatives of the Tang ruling house had all already died. So how could he possibly not have known that [Zhuangzong] wanted to take power himself? I fear that its praise for Chengye is a great exaggeration. If we, moreover, examine that [the] Chuanzhen [master] in the first month of the eighteenth year of the Tianyou era offered Zhuangzong a treasure [i.e. the imperial seal], and that Chengye died in the eleventh month of the nineteenth year, it can also not be true that he went back to Taiyuan and died of starvation [as the *Quewen* says]. As for the words of the *Luozhong jiyi*, Chengye was loyally making plans for Zhuangzong. This [version] is the nearest to the facts, so we follow it.

歐陽史兼采闕文、紀異之意。按實錄等書，承業止惜費多及儀物不備，太似淺陋。如闕文所言，承業事莊宗父子數十年，唐室近親已盡，豈不知其欲自取之意乎！褒美承業亦恐太過。又按傳真以天祐十八年正月獻寶，承業以十九年十一月卒，云即歸太原不食而死，亦非實也。如紀異之語，承業為莊宗忠謀，近得其實，今從之。⁶¹

⁶¹ ZZTJ 271:8864.

The anecdote of Zhang Chengye's remonstrance against Zhuangzong is one of the few cases in which the *Kaoyi* is not limited to the differences in basic data. On the contrary, it focuses on the general meaning provided by the different narratives. The final version of the *ZZTJ* is somehow a compromise among the different narratives:

As the high generals and assistants, as well as the officials from the border prefectures, were constantly persuading [the Emperor] to take the throne, he finally ordered to buy jade and make the legal objects. When Huang Chao destroyed Chang'an, a Chuanzhen master in Weizhou had entered into possession of the transmitted treasure of the state and concealed it for forty years. At this point [the] Chuanzhen [master], believing that it was an ordinary jade, wanted to sell it. But someone recognized it and said: "This is the transmitted treasure of the state." [The] Chuanzhen [master] then travelled to the palace and presented it. The generals and assistants all together rose their cups and congratulated. Zhang Chengye heard about this when he was in Jinyang, so he went to Weizhou and remonstrated: "Your lord's family has been loyal to the Tang ruling house for generations; you have rescued it from dangers, and for this reason for thirty years I, your old slave, have gathered goods and military taxes for the Prince. I swore to destroy the bandits just to restore the temples and altars of the legitimate dynasty. Today Hebei has barely been stabilized, and Zhu Wen is still there; Your Majesty is willing to step on the throne. This is absolutely not the original intention of the struggle [against the Liang]. Who in the Empire will [if you do this] not split apart from being a member of us? Why does Your Majesty not extinguish Zhu Wen first, take a deep revenge for the sage emperors, and then search for a descendant of the Tang and establish him? Then take Wu in the South and Shu in the West, swipe and clear everything within the realm and unite it as just one family. At this moment, although Gaozu or Emperor Taizong were alive again, who would dare to be superior to you? The longer your Majesty will yield, the steadier your power will be when you get it. There is nothing else in the intention of your old slave than that because he received the great mercy of the late Prince he just wants to lay for you, my lord, a foundation that will last ten thousand years." The Prince replied: "This is not my will, but what about the intention of my subjects?" Chengye then realized that he could not stop him. He then wept in sorrow and said: "The bloody struggle among lords was at the beginning meant to be for [the restoration of] the Tang; if Your Majesty now takes the power for himself he thus deceives his slave!" He then went back to the capital of the kingdom of Jin. He had an illness from which he never recovered.

即而將佐及藩鎮勸進不已，乃令有司市玉造法物。黃巢之破長安也，魏州僧傳真之師得傳國寶，藏之四十年，至是，傳真以為常玉，將鬻之，或識之，曰：「傳國寶也。」傳真乃詣行臺獻之，將

佐皆奉觴稱賀。張承業在晉陽聞之，詣魏州諫曰：「吾王世世忠於唐室，救其患難，所以老奴三十餘年為王捃拾財賦，召補兵馬誓滅逆賊，復本本朝宗社耳。今河北甫定，朱氏尚存，而王遽即大位，殊非從來征伐之意，天下其誰不解體乎！王何不先滅朱氏，復列聖之深讎，然後求唐後而立之，南取吳，西取蜀，汛掃宇內，合為一家，當是之時，雖使高祖、太宗復生，誰敢居王上者？讓之愈久則得之愈堅矣。老奴之志無他，但以受先王大恩，欲為王立萬年之基耳。」王曰：「此非余所願，柰群下意何。」承業知不可止，慟哭曰：「諸侯血戰，本為唐家，今王自取之，誤者奴矣！」即歸晉王邑，成疾不復起。⁶²

The rich quotations from different sources in the *Kaoyi* suggest that constructing this narrative caused Sima Guang some troubles. None of the accounts in the official records satisfied him, thus the historian turned to the description provided by the *Luozhong jiyi*. The *ZZTJ* takes the detail of the imperial seal transmitted to Zhuangzong from the *Zhuangzong shilu*, yet the quotation from the *Zhuangzong shilu* merely informs the reader that the seal was in the hands of Zhuangzong. Although we do not have textual proof, it is plausible to think that the *shilu* completely omitted the above passage: the story of an unsuspecting monk keeping for forty years the transmitted imperial seal does not seem to be particularly glorifying for an aspiring ruler. According to the *ZZTJ* version, the seal had been kept by a Buddhist master since the time of the Huang Chao rebellion; unaware of the value of the object, the monk was about to sell it, when someone told him that the jade was in reality the transmitted imperial seal. The monk then offered it to Zhuangzong. The *JWDS* mentions it, though without too much emphasis. We also find it in the *ZZTJ*, with the addition of some details regarding the context in which the imperial seal was recovered. In fact, the text reports that, in view of the forthcoming enthronement,

⁶² *ZZTJ* 271:8863.

Zhuangzong's officials were ordered to forge the imperial jade vessels. At that time the Buddhist master was trying to sell the jade he possessed for forty years, when "someone recognized it" as the imperial jade. Whenever the *ZZTJ* talks about an unidentified someone proclaiming something, the historian is generally warning the reader about a detail that deserves further thought and, eventually, conceals a judgement.

The general meaning of the *ZZTJ* is closer to the *Luozhong jiyi*. In the *ZZTJ* Zhang Chengye explicitly tells Zhuangzong that he does not have any other intentions than "to build for Your Majesty the basis for a power that lasts a hundred years." Accordingly, Zhang's extreme loyalty is given to Li Cunxu and not to the Tang, as proposed by the *Zhuangzong shilu* and Ouyang Xiu. Finally, the *ZZTJ* does not mention Zhang's death but only that he retired in failing health and never recovered.

In summary, the anecdote of Zhang Chengye's remonstrance shows Sima Guang's sometimes critical attitude towards the narrative choices of the official *shilu*, in this case towards the general meaning conveyed in the narrative by the *Zhuangzong shilu* and the *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan*, two of the main sources of reference for the history of the early Five Dynasties period. Whenever the official records offer narrative versions that are not convincing, the historian does not have any problem with drawing from non-official records.

3.3. The 'Events of Weizhou' and the Exile of Li Conghou

We turn now to another example of flexible narratives: the accounts of the 'events of Weizhou'.⁶³ The episode concerns the exile of Li Conghou, Emperor Min of the Later

⁶³ Weizhou was a small prefecture located in present day Weihui 衛輝 prefecture, Henan (Tan Qixiang 5:85).

Tang, and the killing of his entourage by the military forces of Shi Jingtang. Li Conghou was the third son of Mingzong and succeeded to his father after his death in the winter of 933. Li Conghou reigned only four months and was overthrown by a military rebellion led by his step-brother, Li Congke. He is remembered almost exclusively for the anecdote of his escape into exile to the Northern regions. The dynamic of the events appears quite obscure and the sources do not agree on a number of details. Basically the narrative can be divided into four segments: 1. Emperor Min escapes North while Shi Jingtang is moving South towards the capital and the two meet in Weizhou; 2. The Emperor asks Shi Jingtang to help him to plan a strategy for the restoration; 3. Shi Jingtang asks Wang Hongzhi 王弘贇, the prefect of Weizhou, for advice. Wang Hongzhi persuades Shi Jingtang not to help the Emperor; 4. The meeting degenerates into a fight between the followers of Shi Jingtang and those of Li Conghou, where the soldiers of the latter are all killed and the Emperor is left alone in Weizhou.

3.3.1. Early Accounts

The three passages quoted in the *Kaoyi* present different versions of the facts according to the, the *Jin Gaozu shilu*, the *Tang Mindi shilu* and the *Han Gaozu shilu*. As mentioned in the introduction to the sources, the *Jin Gaozu shilu* was compiled during the Later Han period the *Tang Mindi shilu* and the *Han Gaozu shilu* were compiled at the end of the Later Zhou period. The *Kaoyi* informs us that the accounts of both the *Han Gaozu shilu* and of the *Jin Gaozu shilu* glossed over and concealed negative aspects concerning the two rulers Shi Jingtang and Liu Zhiyuan. The *Jin Gaozu shilu* informs us that Li Conghou and Shi Jingtang had plans to regain power

over the troops under the leadership of Li Congke.⁶⁴ On the other hand, the *Han Gaozu shilu* describes Li Conghou as hostile to Shi Jingtang and provides a very detailed account of his plot to murder Shi Jingtang:

That night, [the future Emperor, Liu Zhiyuan] learnt from a spy that the Minor Emperor [Li Conghou] had soldiers hiding nearby and, together with his followers, wanted to plot the murder of Jin Gaozu; also, he falsely pretended to have withdrawn to talk with somebody while sitting in the corridor surrounding the hall. The Emperor [Liu Zhiyuan] secretly sent the imperial official Shi Gan to stand in the back with a mallet hidden in his sleeves. At some point all of a sudden the hidden soldiers rose. [Shi] Gan, who was a brave soldier, pushed Jin [Gao] zu [Shi Jingtang] into one of the rooms, blocking the entrance with a huge trunk. Bravely facing the enemy's spears he died for him. Liu Zhiyuan drew his saber and in the dark of the night he attacked them with a torch that was lying on the ground and had not yet been lit. The crowd thought that it was a short weapon and so they ran away. The Emperor [Liu Zhiyuan] then hid himself underneath a long wall, [from there] he heard General Li Hongxin, who was a relative of the Emperor [Liu Zhiyuan], telling someone: "The Grand Commander Shi is dead!" The Emperor [Liu Zhiyuan] from behind the wall shouted to [Li] Hongxin: "The Grand Commander is without harm!" Then he jumped over the wall, and went to the soldiers of [Li] Hongxin, and together they went to rescue Jin Gaozu. They killed the conspirers and delivered the Minor Emperor [Li Conghou] to Wang Hongzhi.

是夜偵知少帝伏甲欲與從臣謀害晉高祖，詐屏人對語，方坐庭廡。帝密遣御士石敢袖鎚立於後，俄頃伏甲者起，敢有勇力，擁晉祖入一室，以巨木塞門，敢力當其鋒，死之。帝解佩刀，遇夜晦，以在地葦炬未然者奮擊之。眾謂短兵也，遂散走。帝乃匿身長垣下，聞帝親將李洪信謂人曰：『石太尉死矣。』帝隔垣呼洪信曰：『太尉無恙。』乃踰垣出就洪信兵，共護晉祖，殺建謀者，以少主授王弘贄。⁶⁵

This fragment focuses on Liu Zhiyuan, the future Gaozu of Later Han and the event is narrated from his perspective. The quote from the *Kaoyi* does not include the depiction of the encounter of Shi Jingtang and Li Conghou, but instead it begins with

⁶⁴ *ZZTJ* 279:9114-15.

⁶⁵ *ZZTJ* 279:9115.

the scene of the night of the meeting between Li Conghou and Shi Jingtang in Weizhou. Accordingly, Liu Zhiyuan had come to know that Li Conghou planned the murder of Shi Jingtang, and he devised a plan in order to protect his ruler.

The *Kaoyi* mentions a short quote from the *Nan Tang Liezu shilu* 南唐烈祖實錄 (Veritable Records of Liezu of the Southern Tang) redacted by Gao Yuan 高远 that provides another (although partial) version of the events.⁶⁶

[Wang] Hongzhi said: “Today the capital is in peril, the one hundred officials have no ruler, they will certainly, one leading the other, carry the sacred vessels⁶⁷ and move West. My lord should better capture the Minor Emperor [Li Conghou] and welcome the Prince of Lu in the West. This is a strategy that is in all cases safe.” Jingtang consented to this advice. 弘贇曰：『今京國阽危，百官無主，必相率攜神器西向。公何不囚少帝西迎潞王，此萬全之計。』敬瑭然其語。⁶⁸

The three fragments presented above offer three fairly different perspectives on the dynamics of the event:

1. According to the *Jin Gaozu shilu*, Li Conghou and Shi Jingtang had previously agreed to meet on the way to Weizhou in order to devise a strategy against Li Congke. Although the quote is only a small portion of the whole account, the text provides a positive picture of both;
2. The *Han Gaozu shilu* describes Li Conghou plotting against Shi Jingtang. However, the plot is almost entirely focuses on the deeds of Liu Zhiyuan, the general of Shi Jingtang and future Gaozu of the Later Han, depicted as the brave and loyal general who rescues his ruler from peril;

⁶⁶ The *Nan Tang Liezu shilu* is mentioned in the *Kaoyi* very rarely; this is one of the few quotes providing a different narrative perspective from the other sources.

⁶⁷ These are the the seal and other insignia of imperial legitimacy.

⁶⁸ *ZZTJ* 279:9115.

3. The short quote from the *Nan Tang liezu shilu* highlights the role of Wang Hongzhi, regional governor of Weizhou. Hongzhi convinces Shi Jingtang to capture Li Conghou and to ally with the much stronger rebel Li Congke;

The *Kaoyi* reports that a fourth and more reliable version of the events is provided by the *Tang Mindi shilu*. Unfortunately the commentary does not preserve any quote from the original text; nevertheless, the Basic Annals of Emperor Min in the *JWDS* are based on this version and the *ZZTJ* mainly drew from it.

3.3.2. The *Jiu Wudai shi* Account

We now turn to the early Song sources. The *JWDS* shows internal inconsistencies as the same event is narrated differently in separate sections of the text. It is plausible to think that the three Basic Annals of Emperor Min of Later Tang (Li Conghou), Emperor Gaozu of Later Jin (Shi Jingtang) and Emperor Gaozu of Later Han (Liu Zhiyuan) respectively follow the accounts of the three *shilu* quoted above. The account in the “Gaozu ji” reports:

When the army of Qiyang⁶⁹ rebelled and proclaimed the Prince of Lu son of Heaven, Emperor Min urgently summoned the Emperor [Shi Jingtang] to go to the palace willing to entrust him with the [foundation of the] state. Emperor Min ran away from Luoyang to Wei and the two met on the way. Subsequently [Shi Jingtang] together with Emperor Min returned to and entered Weizhou. At that time the generals and assistants of Emperor Min were not favorable toward the Emperor [Shi Jingtang], and the Emperor felt that; thereupon, he captured his [Li Conghou’s] followings, in all more than one hundred cavalymen. Emperor Min knew that he could not help to resolve the situation and so he thoroughly expressed his regret to the Emperor and they separated. The Emperor [Shi Jingtang] sent the prefectural governor Wang Hongzhi to safely secure Emperor Min in a dwelling for officers and he left. When informed about the killing of [Emperor Min] by the Prince of Lu, the Emperor felt ashamed about this for long a time.

⁶⁹ Qiyang 岐陽 refers to the commandery of Fenxiang in Shaanxi (Tan Qixiang 5:84).

及岐陽兵亂，推潞王為天子，閔帝急詔帝赴闕，欲以社稷為託。閔帝自洛陽出奔於衛，相遇於途，遂與閔帝迴入衛州。時閔帝左右將不利於帝，帝覺之，因擒其從騎百餘人。閔帝知事不濟，與帝長慟而別，帝遣刺史王弘贄安置閔帝於公舍而去，尋為潞王所害，帝後長以此愧心焉。⁷⁰

A few details should be highlighted here: 1. The text is consistent with the version of the *Jin Gaozu shilu*, in which it is reported that Emperor Min and Shi Jingtang were initially willing to devise a plan together. Here the text reports that Emperor Min wants to entrust Shi Jingtang with the affairs of the state, probably meaning that he wants him to become Emperor; 2. Li Conghou knows that his entourage is not very favorable toward Shi Jingtang, yet he cannot do anything; 3. The text does not blame Wang Hongzhi for the plot against Li Conghou, but rather the Prince of Lu, Li Congke, is blamed. By contrast, Shi Jingtang orders Wang Hongzhi to secure Li Conghou in a safe place and afterwards, when the Emperor is murdered, Shi Jingtang feels ashamed at having left the Emperor alone in Weizhou. Finally, the figure of Liu Zhiyuan is practically unmentioned.

The account in the “Gaozu ji” of Later Han is mainly based on the *Han Gaozu shilu* and focuses on the heroic deeds of Liu Zhiyuan in attempting to save Shi Jingtang from peril.⁷¹

While the “Modi ji” 末帝紀 (Basic Annals of the Last Emperor), barely mention the event,⁷² the “Mindi ji” 閔帝紀 (Basic Annals of Emperor Min) provide a very detailed version of the facts (probably on the basis of the *Mindi shilu*):

During the night of the twenty-ninth day of that month [May 20th, 934], the Emperor [Li Conghou] arrived seven or eight *li* East of Weizhou where he met cavalymen riding from East who did not give way [to him]. Only when his assistants had shouted at them, they told him “This is

⁷⁰ JWDS 75:983.

⁷¹ JWDS 99:1322.

⁷² JWDS 46:629.

Shi Jingtang, military governor of Zhenzhou.” The Emperor rejoiced; Shi Jingtang paid him respect, the Emperor dismounted, sorrowfully wept and told him: “The Prince of Lu is endangering the altars of the state, Kang Yicheng has betrayed me by surrendering, and I don’t have any place where I can protect myself.⁷³ I was told by Princess Zhang that if I met you on the way we had to devise a full strategy for the altars of the state.” Jingtang replied: “Wang Hongzhi of Weizhou is an old acquaintance and he knows how to handle matters. Let us go to [Wang] Hongzhi and plan for this.” [Shi] Jingtang then urged his cavalymen to advance. When he met Hongzhi and asked him: “The ruler has been forced to migrate and has arrived here in danger; he is a relative of mine, how can we plan for our safety?” Hongzhi replied: “In antiquity there have also been cases of Sons of Heaven escaping from plunderers,⁷⁴ yet on their way to exile they would also be accompanied by generals and ministers, and they would carry the treasures of the state and legal vessels with them. By this the army commanders respectfully served him, so that nobody would realize that they had fled. Is the Emperor today followed by ministers and his close servants of the state? Are the precious jade [seal] and the legal vessels in his entourage?” [Shi Jingtang] inquired and [found out that] the Emperor did not have them. Hongzhi then said: “When a great tree is about to fall, a single rope will not preserve it. Now [the] ruler has escaped with fifty cavalymen, and not a single minister or general has followed him. How could it be possible to make a full strategy for the restoration! He is like a dragon that has lost its clouds and rain. Today the generals of the six armies are already at the residence of Lu. You My Lord will not get anywhere if you indulge in keeping relatives in mind for the old time’s sake!” Shi Jingtang, together with [Wang] Hongzhi, met at the post hostel and sat together in order to devise a strategy. When Shi Jingtang had made known what Hongzhi outlined, the archers Shao Shouhong and Ben Hongjin called on Shi Jingtang and told him: “His Majesty was Mingzong’s beloved son and you were his beloved son-in-law. You equally received wealth and rank, joy and sorrow should thus be shared. Now you have planned with a closely related king because you wanted to set a date for peace and restoration, but now you instead have inquired about the Emperor’s followers and the treasures of the state because you intend to use this as an excuse to refuse your support and treat the Son of Heaven for the sake of the usurper!” Then they took out their sabers and stabbed [Shi] Jingtang. Jingtang’s closest general Chen

⁷³ For the biography of Kang Yicheng see *JWDS* 66:879-80 and *XWDS* 27:296-98.

⁷⁴ A fragment of the *JWDS* in *Cefu yuangui* has *di* 狄 ‘barbarians’ instead of *kou* 寇 ‘plunderers’ (*Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng* 5:1510). Both terms are often used for the Northern barbarians.

Hui intervened to stop them. Shourong alone fought against [Chen] Hui and died while Hongjin also cut his own throat. That day [Shi] Jingtang executed all Emperor Min's cavalymen, in all more than fifty people, he left the Emperor alone at the post hostel, and then urged his cavalymen to hurry back to Luo[yang].

是月二十九日夜，帝至衛州東七八里，遇騎從自東來不避，左右叱之，乃曰：「鎮州節度使石敬瑭也。」帝喜，敬瑭拜舞於路，帝下馬慟哭，諭以「潞王危社稷，康義誠以下叛我，無以自庇，長公主見教，逆爾於路，謀社稷大計」。敬瑭曰：「衛州王弘贇宿舊諳事，且就弘贇圖之。」敬瑭即馳騎而前，見弘贇曰：「主上播遷，至此危迫，吾戚屬也，何以圖全？」弘贇曰：「天子避寇，古亦有之，然於奔迫之中，亦有將相、國寶、法物，所以軍長瞻奉，不覺其亡也。今宰執近臣從乎？寶玉、法物從乎？」詢之無有。弘贇曰：「大樹將顛，非一繩所維。今以五十騎奔竄，無將相一人擁從，安能興復大計！所謂蛟龍失雲雨者也。今六軍將士總在潞邸矣，公縱以戚藩念舊，無奈之何！」遂與弘贇同謁於驛亭，宣坐謀之。敬瑭以弘贇所陳以聞，弓箭庫使沙守榮、賁洪進前謂敬瑭曰：「主上即明宗愛子，公即明宗愛婿，富貴既同受，休戚合共之。今謀於戚藩，欲期安復，翻索從臣、國寶，欲以此為辭，為賊算天子耶！」乃抽佩刀刺敬瑭，敬瑭親將陳暉扞之，守榮與暉單戰而死，洪進亦自刎。是日，敬瑭盡誅帝之從騎五十餘輩，獨留帝於驛，乃馳騎趨洛。⁷⁵

A few elements should be highlighted in this passage: 1. Emperor Min and Shi Jingtang did not have a planned meeting. Instead the wife of Shi Jingtang, Princess Zhang, and sister of Li Conghou, told him to seek the help of Shi Jingtang. Shi Jingtang asks for the advice of Wang Hongzhi, but apparently his aim is to protect himself and not so much to rescue the Emperor; 2. Wang Hongzhi urges Shi Jingtang not to help the Emperor, yet he does not tell him to capture him as the *Nan Tang liezu shilu* reports. The text does not express judgements on the behavior of Wang Hongzhi. In general he plays a secondary role; 3. There is no mention of Liu Zhiyuan and the

⁷⁵ JWDS 45:621-22.

text reports that Shi Jingtang “killed all the cavalrymen”; 4. Finally, there is no mention of the killing of Emperor Min. Instead, the death is narrated as follows:

On the third day of the fourth month [May 23rd, 934], the Prince of Lu entered Luoyang. On the fifth day he ascended the throne. On the seventh day, the dethroned Emperor was renamed Prince of E. The son of [Wang] Hongzhi, the court attendant [Wang] Luan, was sent to Weizhou. At that time Hongzhi had already moved the Emperor into the prefect residence. On the ninth day when Luan arrived, the Emperor was poisoned and died. He was twenty years old. That day early in the morning a white rainbow covered the sun. The Empress Dowager née Kong was in her palace when Wang Luan returned; that day she and her four sons all met with harm.

四月三日，潞王入洛。五日，即位。七日，廢帝為鄂王。遣弘贄子殿直王巒之衛州，時弘贄已奉帝幸州廡。九日，巒至，帝遇鴆而崩。時年二十一。是日辰時，白虹貫日。皇后孔氏在宮中，及王巒迴，即日與其四子並遇害。⁷⁶

The present edition of the official history does not provide a biography of Wang Hongzhi. Nevertheless, in a note on the text the *Jiu Wudai shi kaoyi* mentions a quote from a “Wang Hongzhi zhuan” 五代薛史王弘贄傳 included in the *JWDS* of the *Yongle dadian* edition. This passage pictures Wang Hongzhi who, at the sight of the corpse of Emperor Min, asks himself why should he be buried with a yellow curtain over the coffin and draws a parallel between the death of Li Conghou and the killing of Li Jiji, the eldest son of Zhuangzong, former Prince of Wei and legitimate heir to the throne, who was strangled. This short passage is not mentioned in the biographical section dedicated to Wang Hongzhi in the *XWDS* nor in other sources.⁷⁷

As seen in the previous cases of the ‘pact of Yunzhou’ and the remonstrance of Zhang Chengye, the *JWDS* keeps a fairly neutral attitude towards the events and the final comments of the compiler is a further proof of this. The text possibly conceals

⁷⁶ *JWDS* 45:622.

⁷⁷ *JWDS* 45:622. Chen Shangjun inserts this passage as a biography of Wang Hongzhi in the biography section of the Later Jin (*Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng* 8:2965).

details of the real intentions of Wang Hongzhi in order to avoid confronting the negative aspects of Shi Jingtang.⁷⁸

3.3.3. The *Wudai shi ji* Account

Ouyang Xiu rarely has a positive attitude towards the rulers of the Five Dynasties period, yet in the case of Emperor Min the “benji” offers a fairly favorable picture, describing him as “in form and substance abundant and generous, who spoke little but loved ritual” 為人形質豐厚，寡言好禮。⁷⁹ The historian avoids mentioning the events that led to the killing of Li Conghou and, instead, simply says that he “entered Weizhou” 入衛州。⁸⁰ In the Basic Annals of the Deposed Emperor it is reported that “Emperor Min went out and found dwelling in Weizhou” 閔帝出居于衛州 and afterwards he was deposed as Emperor and bestowed with the title of Prince of E. The Annals report only that The Deposed Emperor “killed the Prince of E”.⁸¹ On the contrary, Ouyang Xiu sees Shi Jingtang as the main one culprit. The historian explicitly says that “Jingtang killed more than one hundred men of the Emperor’s entourage.”⁸²

A detailed narrative of the events is provided in the biography of Wang Hongzhi in the “zazhuan” section, the miscellaneous biographies of subjects whose conduct had been morally ambiguous. The account mostly follows the narrative patterns of the basic annals of Emperor Min, yet with a major difference: Ouyang Xiu enhances Wang Hongzhi’s responsibility for the killing of Emperor Min’s entourage

⁷⁸ *JWDS* 45:622-623.

⁷⁹ *XWDS* 7:69.

⁸⁰ *XWDS* 7:70.

⁸¹ *XWDS* 7:72.

⁸² *XWDS* 8:78.

and of the Emperor himself. The historian raises questions about Hongzhi's moral conduct and regards him as an example of disloyalty. Ouyang Xiu opens the biography reporting that his family origins were unknown. Apart from the events of Weizhou, no other details about his life and career are mentioned.⁸³ Whereas in the *JWDS* it is the son of Wang Hongzhi, Wang Luan, who was sent by Li Congke to poison Emperor Min, the *XWDS* adds details to the narrative that cast an even more negative light on Hongzhi:

In the beginning, when Emperor Min was in Weizhou, Hongzhi ordered the owner of a wine house in town to bring [the Emperor] some wine. When Emperor Min saw it, he was very frightened and threw it on the ground. When after some time [the Emperor] had come to sense again [Hongzhi] said: "The owner of the wine house wants to offer you wine in order to console your having no one to rely on." Emperor Min took it and from then on a cup of wine was offered to him daily. When [Wang] Luan arrived with the poison, they took the opportunity to order the owner to offer it to him. Emperor Min did not suspect anything and drank it. And so he died.

初，愍帝在衛州，弘贇令市中酒家獻酒，愍帝見之，大驚，遽殞于地，久而蘇，弘贇曰：「此酒家也，願獻酒以慰無繆。」愍帝受之，由是日獻一觴。及巒持醜至，因使酒家獻之，愍帝飲而不疑，遂崩。⁸⁴

3.3.4. The *Zizhi tongjian* Account

The account of the *ZZTJ* runs as follows:

In the fourth month of summer, on the day of the new moon [May 21st, 934], before sunrise Emperor Min arrived a few miles East of Weizhou where he met Shi Jingtang. The Emperor rejoiced and asked about his great plans for the altars of the state. Jingtang said: "I heard that Kang Yicheng has launched an offensive, out West, hasn't he? Why You Majesty have come here?" The Emperor replied: "Yicheng has also joined the rebels." Jingtang bowed his head in sign of submission and deeply sighted four times, and said: "The regional prefect of Weizhou, Wang Hongzhi is an old officer and very well acquainted with the affairs

⁸³ *XWDS* 48:544-545.

⁸⁴ *XWDS* 48:545.

[of Weizhou], I suggest that we devise a strategy with him.” Then he paid a visit to Hongzhi and asked him about the matter. Hongzhi replied: “In former ages there were many Sons of Heaven who had to leave and live a life of refugee, but they all were followed by generals and ministers and imperial guards, they would bring food storages and the treasures of the state, so that the people would respect them. Today [Emperor Min] has nothing of that. He is followed by fifty cavalymen and although you may have a sense of loyalty and appropriateness, how could you be of help?” Jingtang returned to meet the Emperor at the post hostel in Weizhou in order to inform him of Hongzhi’s words. The Archers and Storehouse Commissioners Sha Shourong and Ben Hongjin stepped in front of Jingtang and reproached him saying: “You were Mingzong’s beloved, you shared the same wealth and rank as him, and so you should support him in hardship as well. Now that the Emperor is fleeing in exile and he has entrusted you to make a strategy in order to plan for a restoration, you make excuses on the basis of these four thins. This means that you directly attach yourself to the traitors and just sell the Emperor!” When Shourong took out his saber in order to stab him, Chen Hui, a general close to Jingtang, came to his rescue. Shourong and Hui died and Hongjin cut his own throat. Liu Zhiyuan, general of [Shi] Jingtang entered with his soldiers and killed Emperor Min’s cavalymen and all his assistants. They left the Emperor alone and went away. Jingtang then quickly rushed to Luoyang.

夏，四月，庚午朔，未明，閔帝至衛州東數里，遇石敬瑭；帝大喜，問以社稷大計，敬瑭曰：「聞康義誠西討，何如？陛下何為至此？」帝曰：「義誠亦叛去矣。」敬瑭俛首長歎數四，曰：「衛州刺史王弘贇，宿將習事，請與圖之。」乃往見弘贇問之，弘贇曰：「前代天子播遷多矣，然皆有將相、侍衛、府庫、法物，使群下有所瞻仰；今皆無之，獨以五十騎自隨，雖有忠義之心，將若之何？」敬瑭還，見帝於衛州驛，以弘贇之言告。弓箭庫使沙守榮、奔洪進前責敬瑭曰：「公明宗愛，富貴相與共之，憂患亦宜相恤。今天子播越，委計於公，冀圖興復，乃以此四者為辭，是直欲附賊賣天子耳！」守榮抽佩刀欲刺之，敬瑭親將陳暉救之，守榮與暉死，洪進亦自刎。敬瑭牙內指揮使劉知遠引兵入，盡殺帝左右及從騎，獨置帝而去。敬瑭遂趣洛陽。⁸⁵

Whereas the initial intentions of Shi Jingtang are to help the Emperor, the governor does not personally take decisions and the events are not under his control. By

⁸⁵ ZZTJ 279:9114-9115.

contrast, the role of Liu Zhiyuan is enhanced and he is considered the main person responsible for the killing of the Emperor's entourage. When Shi Jingtang leaves Weizhou, the Emperor is kept by Wang Hongzhi in the government office and Li Congke sends Wang Hongzhi's son to poison the Emperor. In the passage that follows, Wang Luan arrives in Weizhou and meets the Emperor:

On the *wuyin* day, [Wang] Luan arrived at Weizhou to pay him a visit. Emperor Min asked about the reason of his visit, but [Luan] did not reply. Hongzhi repeatedly served him wine. Emperor Min knew that it was poisoned and refused to drink. Then Luan strangled him.

戊寅，巒至衛州謁見，閔帝問來故，不對。弘贄數進酒，閔帝知其有毒，不飲，巒縊殺之。⁸⁶

The last closing sentence of the entry is possibly a personal comment by Sima Guang on the destiny of Emperor Min:

Emperor Min was by nature kind and generous, he was in harmony with his brothers and, although he encountered the jealousy of the Prince of Qin, the Emperor dealt with him in a magnanimous way and so he in the end could escape trouble. When he inherited the throne, he also did not have any suspicion of the Prince of Lu; such people as Zhu Hongzhao and Meng Han, however heinously created suspicion and separation. Emperor Min could not avoid it and by this he brought about his own disaster and calamity.

閔帝性仁厚，於兄弟敦睦，雖遭秦王忌矣，閔帝坦懷待之，卒免於患。及嗣位，於潞王亦無嫌，而朱弘昭、孟漢瓊之徒橫生猜間，閔帝不能違，以致禍敗焉。⁸⁷

Sima Guang keeps on addressing the deceased Li Conghou as Emperor Min, while Li Congke is inconsistently referred to sometimes as Prince of Lu or Emperor.

Concluding Remarks

⁸⁶ ZZTJ 279:9116.

⁸⁷ ZZTJ 279:9116.

The fragments of narratives from the early tenth-century official sources provide a variety of slightly different versions of the events of Weizhou. According to the *Jin Gaozu shilu*, Shi Jingtang had planned to move West early together with the exiled Li Conghou in order to occupy the Northern Hu pass, and then move to the South in order to summon the troops of the provincial governors and launch an attack against the rebel Li Congke.

By contrast, the segment from the *Han Gaozu shilu* builds up a plot in which Li Conghou plans the killing of Shi Jingtang and the function of the narrative is to enhance the role of Liu Zhiyuan in rescuing his ruler. The *Nan Tang liezu shilu*, on the other hand, enhances the role of Wang Hongzhi in suggesting that Shi Jingtang capture Li Conghou and submit to the newly established Emperor. The *Kaoyi* only quotes these short segments of the *shilu* and we can thus only presume that the whole event is narrated differently in the sources.

The Basic Annals dedicated to the first Emperor of Later Jin present a slightly different version of the events from the *Jin Gaozu shilu*. Whereas the *shilu* sees Shi Jingtang as willing to resist the rebellion of Li Congke, in the Basis Annals the position of Shi Jingtang is fairly neutral. Both Li Conghou and Shi Jingtang are redeemed from all responsibility for the events. Shi Jingtang seizes but does not kill Li Conghou's soldiers on suspicion that they were plotting his own murder. On the other hand, Li Conghou recognizes that the military governor could do little but act in that manner. When the two separate, they are still on good terms; when Shi Jingtang is informed of the killing of Li Conghou, he feels sorry.

According to the *Kaoyi* comments, Sima Guang refutes the accounts reported by Dou Zhengu in the *Jin Gaozu shilu* and Su Fengji's *Han Gaozu shilu* because the two

authors were too favorable to the respective rulers and so the accounts “concealed their faults.”⁸⁸

⁸⁸ *ZZTJ* 279:9115.

Chapter 4: Shifting Perspectives on the Rise of the Later Jin

In the last chapter I focused on narrative variations presented by different sources. The three anecdotes selected dealt with events involving the Prince of Jin, Li Keyong, and the first and last Emperors of Later Tang, Li Cunxu and Li Congke. In each of the three cases the *ZZTJ* provides the most developed narrative and defines a clear hierarchical order for the different characters, thus picturing their responsibilities according to their position in this order. The historical accounts discussed below on the rise and fall of the Later Jin offer fertile ground for further inquiry into how different Song sources deal with narratives on rise and decline. Whereas in the case of the three historical anecdotes drawn from the Annals of Later Liang and Later Tang we could call upon sources redacted in the early tenth century and early Song sources for comparison, in the case of the Annals of Later Jin very little information about earlier sources has been preserved in the *Kaoyi*. The critical commentary is thus of little help to an analysis of the selection of the sources. I will compare the narrative of the *ZZTJ* mainly with the two old and new histories of the Five Dynasties, and eventually with accounts in historical miscellanies redacted by the early Song. The narratives concerning Shi Jingtang's origins and his uprising against the Later Tang will be analyzed.

After the early-tenth-century pact between Abaoji and Li Keyong, the former kingdom of Jin and the provinces of Hedong remained over the years the counterpart of the alliance with the Kitan. According to the *ZZTJ*, Li Cunxu himself served Abaoji

as his uncle 叔父 and the Empress Dowager Shulü as his aunt 叔母.¹ More than three decades later, the ‘pact based on filial respect to a father’ proposed to the Kitan-led Liao ruler Yelü Deguang, would formally appeal to this practice. The subsequent intervention of the Kitan in support of Shi Jingtang’s uprising against Li Congke, the last ruler of the Later Tang dynasty, led to the collapse of the dynasty in 936. Under the aegis of the Kitan, Shi Jingtang was crowned Emperor; as a reward, sixteen strategic provinces between Yan 燕 and Yun 雲 (present-day Beijing), including the districts of the Youzhou province and four districts in Hedong, were ceded to the Kitan, and merged into the Kitan-Liao empire as part of the Southern circuit. In addition to that, the Later Jin started paying annual tributes to the Kitan. In the tributary reports Shi Jingtang would address himself as Son Emperor 兒皇帝 and Yelü Deguang addressed himself as Father Emperor 父皇帝.²

Among the Song historical works concerning the first half of the tenth century, the *ZZTJ* offers the most vivid and richest narrative on the rise and fall of the Later Jin. More than in other sources the main historical personalities are presented through a comprehensive view that includes both praise and criticism; their moral attitude and political talent or inabilities are highlighted and enhanced by the frequent use of long direct speech and detailed descriptions constructed so as to lead the reader to think in a certain way on particularly sensitive issues.

¹ *ZZTJ* 269:8810.

² *ZZTJ* 281:9188. According to the *JWDS*, Yelü Deguang asked that that diplomatic relationship be based on family ritual etiquette and that no formal tributary reports had to be presented (*JWDS* 137:1833).

4.1. Eminent Ancestry and Prophecies about the Uprising

The account of the origins of Shi Jingtang in the *JWDS* is very brief. The lack of factual information about the provenance and history of the Shi family clan is compensated by a great deal of supernatural accounts on the Shi surname. These anecdotes are not found in other texts, except for one narrative segment in the *Wudai shi quewen*, and we have no clue as to the literary sources. While the *JWDS* patched together mythical accounts from early sources in order to legitimize the reign of the first ruler of the Later Jin, the later Song historians were almost completely unconcerned with Shi Jingtang's ancestry. As it will be shown below, the *XWDS* and the *ZZTJ* neither include them nor attempt to reconstruct the history of the family clan of Shi Jingtang. In other words, for different reasons, the Song historians did not engage in the reconstruction of the genealogy of the Shis.

The Later Jin's claim to multi-generational descent was probably forged to a much larger degree than that of the Later Tang. Although none of the official histories nor the *ZZTJ* mention the Sogdian origins of the Shis, it is very likely that Shi ancestors were part of a colony of 'Turkicized Sogdians' that settled within Chinese borders by the first half of the seventh century and then relocated to Hedong by the ninth century, two decades before the arrival of the Shatuo.³ Instead, the *JWDS*

³ Modern scholars have raised the hypothesis that the Shi family clan was originary from Shiguo 石國 (Tashkent, modern capital of Uzbekistan) in Central Asia. Shiguo is mentioned in *Suishu* 83:1850 ("Their king's surname was Shi") and *Xin Tang shu* 221:6246. The Shi clan might have been one of the nine clans of Zhaowu 昭武九姓 (Lien-sheng Yang, "A 'Posthumous Letter'," pp. 116-117; Edouard Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-kiue (Turcs) occidentaux*, pp. 132-147), also known as 九姓胡 'Hu of the Nine Surnames', where *hu* 胡 specifically refers to Sogdians. Nonetheless, as remarked by Pulleblank, there is no mention of the 'Nine Surnames' referring to Sogdians in texts before the eighth century. Pulleyblank notes that the earliest mention of the 'Nine Hu' 九胡 occurs in an early eighth century document and that it refers to the Six Prefectures of the Sogdian colony located in the Ordos ("A Sogdian Colony," pp. 320-22, n. 1

traces the origins of the Shi family clan to the Wei Grandee 衛大夫 Shi Que 石碯⁴ and the Han high official Shi Fen 石奮 (ca.219-124 BCE).⁵ Accordingly, after the fall of the Han, the Shi clan members left the Central Plain and settled in Ganzhou 甘州 (present-day Northwestern Gansu). The genealogical reconstruction in the *JWDS* has a gap of several centuries, up to the ninth century when, following the Northwestern Shatuo tribal confederation of Zhuxie, the Shi resettled in Hedong. As a further argument for the long genealogical history of the Shi clan, the *JWDS* goes on to list Shi Jingtang's ancestors and traces their honorific titles back four generations.⁶

and pp. 337-38, n. 4), and he remarks that “all occurrences of the expression that have been noted refer to Sogdians on the Chinese frontiers, not in their native land (p. 322, n. 4). By the late eighth century, following a Tibetan invasion the colony moved within the region of Shuozhou 朔州 and Yunzhou 雲州 (Datong 大同), under the protection of the military governorship of Hedong. A couple of decades later, the Shatuo relocated in the same area. “Other evidence shows beyond any doubt that the Sogdians had in fact been incorporated into a tribal complex under the leadership of the Sha-t’o and were referred to collectively as the Three Tribes of the Sha-t’o” (p. 343). Pulleyblank notes that, unlike what is stated in his biography, Shi Jingtang’s family had very likely relocated in Hedong from the Ordos a century before the arrival of the Shatuo (p. 346).

⁴ *Shiji* 37:1592; *The Grand Scribe’s Records* 5:245 and 246, n. 35.

⁵ Shi Fen holds a biography in *Shiji* as the ‘Lord of the Ten Thousand Bushels’ 萬石君, a honorific title that had been bestowed upon him by Emperor Jing (r. 157-141 BCE), since Shi Fen and his four sons all reached the rank position of two thousand bushels, the highest rank in early Han. See Shi Fen’s biography in *Shiji* 103:2763, *The Grand Scribe’s Records* 8.1:373, n. 2. Shi Fen is described in *Shiji* as somebody who “did not have the literary knowledge [of the Confucian scholars], but in terms of respectfulness and circumspection, none could be compared to him (*The Grand Scribe’s Records* 8.1:374). During the reign of Emperor Jing, Shi Fen reached the rank of Senior Grandee (*Shang daifu* 上大夫; *The Grand Scribe’s Records* 8.1:375, n. 21). A different story is told by the entombed epitaph of Shi Chonggui 石重貴 (r. 942-47), the eldest son of Shi Jingtang’s brother and last emperor of the Later Jin. Accordingly, the Shi descended from the Prince of Zhao 趙王, Shi Le 石勒 (274-333), the Xiongnu general who in 319 established the short-lived Later Zhao dynasty. Shi Le holds a biography in the *Jinshu* (*Jinshu* 104:2707-56). The tomb mound of Shi Chonggui and his adoptive son, Shi Yanxu 石延煦 was found in 2000 near Shaoyang in Liaoning province. A transcription of the two tomb inscriptions has been published in 2004 by Du Xingzhi 都興智 and Tian Likun 田立坤 on *Wenwu* (“Hou Jin Shi Chonggui Shi Yanxu muzhiming kao” 後晉石重貴石延煦墓誌銘考, *Wenwu* 11 (2004): 87-95). See also *Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng* 7:2664-65 and 8:2685-86.

⁶ The *Wudai huiyao* reports that a debate went on at court for the establishment of honorific titles for the Shi ancestors back to the fourth generation. Despite the unfavourable opinion of the

The early Song source tells us that the Shis were appointed to prominent offices for four generations in the Hedong military governorship and Shi Jingtang's ancestors are depicted as loyal subjects of the Zhuxie family clan, as well as of the Tang dynasty.⁷

Shi Jingtang was born in 892 in Fenyang 汾陽, near Taiyuan, the second son of Shi Shaoyong 石紹雍, a skilled archer in Li Keyong's personal army, possibly of Sogdian origins whose original name was Nielieji 梟揅雞.⁸ In all the sources he is depicted with the general features of a Shatuo. The *JWDS* reports that, as a young boy, Shi Jingtang “did not talk and laugh very much, he studied the art of military strategy.” In the early twenties of the tenth century, Shi Jingtang became a close and loyal member of Mingzong's personal army (*zuoshe jun* 左射軍) and married Mingzong's daughter.⁹ The lack of information on the genealogical history of the Shi family clan is further supplemented in the *JWDS* by riddles about his surname and prophecies about Shi Jingtang's upbringing:

At the beginning, in the first year of the reign of the [Later] Liang which corresponded to the fourth year of the Tianyou era of the earlier Tang dynasty, the commander of the field headquarters of Luzhou,¹⁰ Li Si'an [d.912], memorialized to the Emperor: “In the prefecture of the Hu Pass,

ceremonialists, the court ordered that the title of Founder be bestowed upon the four ancestors of the Shi family clan: Jingzu 靖祖 (Shi Jing 石璟), Suzu 肅祖 (Shi Chen 石榘), Ruizu 睿祖 (Shi Yu 石昱), Xianzu 憲祖 (Shi Shaoyong 石紹雍, Nielieji 梟揅雞) father of Shi Jingtang and former military general of Li Keyong (*JWDS* 75:977; *Wudai huiyao* 2:35).

⁷ As Chen Sanping pointed out in regard to the early medieval “Barbarians”, an analogy with the *Shiji* description of the Zhou can be drawn: although of noble origins, they lived among the barbarians for fourteen generations, during which they often abandoned agriculture (*Shiji* 4:122). Chen Sanping notes that “the Zhou's alleged family tree prior their coming into contact with the Shang reads amazingly similar to that of all medieval barbarian groups who crossed the Great Wall to settle in China's heartland” (Chen Sanping, “Son of Heaven and Son of God,” pp. 313-14).

⁸ According to the *Cefu yuangui*, Nielieji 梟揅雞 is the transliteration of a ‘tribal name’ 蕃字 (*Cefu yuangui* 1:16).

⁹ *JWDS* 75:978.

¹⁰ Luzhou 潞州 was located in southern Shanxi (Tan Qixiang 5:84).

someone among the people of the village of Shurang was cutting trees when a tree fell and cracked into two parts. Inside there were carved six characters written in ancient script that said: “In fourteen years of Heaven a *shi* [rock] will advance.” The Liang ancestor¹¹ ordered that the inscription be stored in the military storehouse, but nobody understood its meaning. But when the Emperor [Gaozu] ascended the throne, someone who recognized it said: “If you add to the character *tian* the two vertical strokes of *si*, then you get a *bing* character; if you take away from the character *si* the two central strokes and add the two strokes of *shi*, then you get a *shen*. The year of enthronement of the Emperor accordingly is *bingshen* [936]. Moreover, it is said in the *Changes, jin* [the name of the dynasty] corresponds to *jin*, “to advance.” The state is called Great Jin, and all this is like two halves of a tally to this. Moreover, the year preceding the ascent of the Emperor was the *yiwei* year [935]. West of Ye [Youzhou] there was a barrier called Ligu,¹² and the rivers Qi and Qing converged at its side. Over the barrier there was a bridge, under which a big mouse and a snake fought until the sun went into the constellation *shen*, when the snake lost and died. Hundreds of persons passing by witnessed the event; the experts recorded it. The Last Emperor [Li Congke] of the Later Tang was defeated on the *shen* year. Moreover, the Last Emperor [Li Congke] was a man from Changshan in Zhending; in that place there was the old hut of his ancestors, beside it an old Buddhist temple, and in the temple a stone statue that suddenly started shaking without stopping. Everybody was astonished by this. When Jinyang was under siege, He Fu rode on horseback along a narrow path to seek the aid of the Northerners. The ruler of the foreigners personally led his tribes to rescue the Emperor. Not for silk or for pearls or gold, as an echo answers to a sound he said to [He] Fu: “I already had a premonitory dream; all this is an order from the Gods on High, and not my own will.”

始梁開國之歲，即前唐天祐四年也，潞州行營使李思安奏：「壺關縣庶穰鄉人伐樹，樹倒自分兩片，內有六字如左書，云『天十四載石進』。」梁祖令藏於武庫，然莫詳其義。至帝即位，識者曰：「『天』字取『四』字中兩畫加之於傍，則『丙』字也，『四』字去中之兩畫，加十字，則『申』字也。」帝即位之年乃丙申也。又，易云：「晉者，進也。」國號大晉，皆符契焉。又，帝即位之前一年，年在乙未，鄴西有柵曰李固，清、淇合流在其側。柵有橋，橋下大鼠與蛇鬪，鬪

¹¹ Cefu yuangui has ‘Liang zhu’ 梁主 instead of ‘Liang zu’ 梁祖 (Cefu yuangui 21:231).

¹² This is the name of a small town in the prefecture of Wei (Weizhou 魏州; ZZTJ 157:8377).

及日之申，蛇不勝而死，行人觀者數百，識者志之。後唐末帝果滅於申。又，末帝，真定常山人也，有先人舊廬，其側有古佛剎，剎有石像，忽搖動不已，人皆異之。及重圍晉陽，何福徑騎求援北蕃，蕃主自將諸部赴之，不以繒帛，不以珠金，若響應聲，謂福曰：「吾已兆於夢，皆上帝命我，非我意也。」¹³

These three prophecies put the uprising of Shi Jingtang in an extremely positive light and combine all the elements needed to legitimize it. The first is a riddle concerning the Shi surname discovered by villagers the year after the usurpation of the Tang power by the Later Liang. The date of the discovery itself is symbolic.¹⁴ The second narrative reports a prophetic vision foretelling the decline of the Later Tang. The third is a dream foretelling the Kitan intervention. Some of the elements are based on historical narratives reported in later sources that will be analyzed in depth below, yet with considerable variations. For instance, the last segment reports that He Fu 何福 asked for the intervention of the Kitan. We do not find He Fu anywhere else in the sources and,¹⁵ instead, the *ZZTJ* reports that Sang Weihan personally took charge of the task. The *JWDS* itself is inconsistent on this detail.¹⁶

The idea of the predestination of Shi Jingtang's uprising is strengthened by two other anecdotes that associate it with the foundation of the reign of Zhuangzong, the first Emperor of the Later Tang. The anecdotes foretell the positive outcome of the military conflict with the Later Tang army of Li Congke, likened to the conflict

¹³ *JWDS* 75:987-88.

¹⁴ The same prophecy with significant narrative variants appears in the *Jishen lu* 稽神錄, a collection of stories compiled by Xu Xuan 徐鉉 (916-991) and preserved in the *Taiping guangji*; cf. Li Fang 李昉 (925-996) et al., *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, [1961] 1995) 163:1186.

¹⁵ The *Cefu yuangui* presents a slightly different account (*Cefu yuangui* 309:3649).

¹⁶ *JWDS* 75:984.

between Zhuangzong and the last Later Liang ruler by the same auspicious event.¹⁷

The three prophecies close the first Basic Annals of Gaozu, right after the chronicle of the enthronement of the Emperor and following the quotation *in extenso* of the official document redacted by the Kitan ruler (see below in this chapter) and the account of the Yan-Yun territories ceded to the Kitan-Liao.¹⁸

4.1.1. Omens and Prophetic Dreams in Historical Miscellanies

The *Wudai shi quewen* contains only a brief entry on Shi Jingtang that roughly corresponds to the account in the *JWDS*. On the other hand, the *Wudai shi bu*, in the single entry on the Later Jin entitled “The Omen predicting Gaozu” 高祖先兆 reports another anecdote concerning auspicious signs that occurred on the rise to power of Shi Jingtang and which appear to be less positive towards the future Later Jin ruler:

When Gaozu married the daughter of Mingzong, in the palace he was called Gentleman Shi. When he was about to mobilize troops in Taiyuan [heading to the Imperial Palace], in the capital in the middle of the night wolves were in packs going about. One after the other they entered the palace. Emperor Min¹⁹ feared them and ordered all [his] archers on duty to split into groups and hunt [them]; he called this ‘wolf shooting’. Someone met them on the road and asked: “Where do you come from?” They answered: “We have been watching wolf shooting.” A short time after Gaozu arrived, [so] *she* [to shoot] apparently also means Shi [the surname].

高祖尚明宗女，宮中謂之石郎。及將起兵於太原，京師夜間狼皆群走，往往入宮中。閔帝患之，命諸班射者分投捕遂，謂之射狼。或遇諸途，問曰：汝何從而來？對曰：看射狼。未幾高祖至，蓋射亦石。²⁰

¹⁷ *JWDS* 75:988.

¹⁸ *JWDS* 75:989.

¹⁹ It is impossible to determine here why the *Wudai shi bu* mentions Emperor Min and not the Deposed Emperor, but it is plausible to consider this a mistake.

²⁰ *Wudai shishu huibian*, p. 2498.

Shi Jingtang probably started as archer (*she* 射) in the Shatuo imperial troops, like his father. Later, he will be addressed as ‘Shi *lang*’.²¹ Shi and *she* are assonant; moreover, the Chinese titles *she* and *lang* (as well as the combinations *shelang* and *langjun*) seem to have a different meaning than Court Attendant. They are used for members of the imperial military guards who had a certain degree of kinship relation with the imperial clan.²²

4.1.2. Representation in the *Xin Wudai shi* and *Zizhi tongjian*

Ouyang Xiu denies that the Shi family clan had a long traceable past. The historian omits all anecdotes about the Shi surname, and instead he simply states that “[Shi

²¹ In light of this, Ouyang Xiu’s claim that he acquired the Shi surname only later in his life is probably true.

²² As noted by Christopher Atwood, this use of *langjun* is a possible heritage of the Turk culture and used in Chinese and Kitan context. The term *shelang* might be linked to the Turkic term *sheli* 舍利/Shar. *Sheli*/Shar was used in the early Kitan-led Liao Empire to refer to the imperial troops, which were “formed of men from the various divisions of the imperial family.” The term Shar was translated into Chinese by *langjun* ‘court attendant’. Moreover, the term appears in a Turkic tale contained in the *Taiping guangji* about Shemo/Zhama 射摩, the ancestor of the Turkic imperial lineage living by the Sheli/Shar 舍利 lake and the Ashide/Ashiteg 阿史德 cavern. See Christopher Atwood, “Some Early Inner Asia Terms Related to the Imperial Family and the Comitatus,” pp. 57-59; *Taiping guangji* 480:3956-57. On this see also Christopher I. Beckwith, “The Pronunciation, Origin, and Meaning of *A-shih-na* in Early Old Turkic”, *Central Asia in the Middle Ages. Studies in Honour of Peter B. Golden*. Edited by Istvan Zimonyi and Osman Karatay (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, 2016), pp. 39-46. The tale comes from the *Youyang zazu* 酉陽雜俎 by Duan Chengshi 段成式 (d.863). The *Taiping guangji* contains another tale about the ascent of Shi Jingtang from the *Yu tang xianhua* 玉堂閒話 (Casual Talks from the Hanlin Academy) by Wang Renyu 王仁裕 (880-956). On the *Yutang xianhua* and Wang Renyu see Glen Dudbridge, *A Portrait of Five Dynasties China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). Moreover, Chen Sanping notes that the term *lang* or *langjun* occurs also in Tuyuhun context: “The key to the Tuyuhun title is the character *lang*, originally meaning a (junior) government official. During the late Tang period, *lang* was more and more used in reference to refer to a “young lad of prominent descent” or a “noble’s son” (Chen Sanping, “Son of Heaven and Son of God,” p. 305). According to David Kane’s reconstruction of Kitan small script, the Kitan term for *langjun*, ‘court gentleman’ is *šari* David Kane, “Introduction, Part 2: An Update on Deciphering the Kitan Language and Scripts,” *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 43 (2013): 13.

Jingtang's] origins were rooted in the Western barbarians” 本出於西夷²³ and his family relocated within the empire following the Zhuxie family clan, and that “it is unknown when [the family] first obtained the surname [Shi]” 不知得其姓之始也。²⁴

In a similar manner, the *ZZTJ* avoids all reference to the family origins and merely states that he was of Shatuo origins. The first mention of Shi Jingtang is in the last Annals of the Later Liang and the future first Emperor of the Later Jin dynasty is introduced to the reader together with another main protagonist of the period: Liu Zhiyuan 劉知遠 (895-948), the future Gaozu 高祖 (r. 947-949) of the Later Han dynasty. Shi Jingtang and Liu Zhiyuan appear on the scene in a brief but theatrical description of companionship. The narrative runs as follows:

When the Prince of Jin entered Weizhou, he dispatched several ten thousand soldiers to enlarge the Northern fortifications of Desheng,²⁵ [the army of the Prince] was every day entering fights with the Liang, more than one hundred smaller or bigger battles in all; victories and defeats were equal in number for the two armies. The military archer Shi Jingtang²⁶ had a battle with the Liang on the bank of the river when the men of the Liang attacked him and broke his armor. The Unrestrained [crushing] the Enemies Military Commander Liu Zhiyuan gave the horse he had been riding himself to Shi Jingtang and he himself mounted the horse with broken armor and slowly proceeded in the rearguard; the Liang troops

²³ *XWDS* 8:77.

²⁴ *XWDS* 8:77.

²⁵ The Northern fortification of Desheng 德勝北城, located south of Weizhou (northeast Henan), consisted in two fortified towns built on the banks of the Yellow River. In the Southern fortification the Chanyuan Alliance will be signed in 1005 (Victor Cunrui Xiong, *Historical Dictionary of Medieval China*, p. 117; Tan Qixiang 5:84). For a general introduction to the treaty see Nap-yin Lau, “Waging War for Peace? The Peace Accord between the Song and the Liao in AD 1005,” in *Warfare in Chinese History*, Hans van de Ven ed. (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2000), pp. 180-219.

²⁶ The *zuo she jun* 左射軍 was Mingzong's personal troop composed of the best archers and cavalymen. In *JWDS* it is called *San tao jun* 三討軍 (*JWDS* 75:978). This title does not appear in any other context. It could be a title that Mingzong bestowed only upon Shi Jingtang. According to the *XWDS*, Shi Jingtang is named *zuo she jun* by Mingzong (*XWDS* 8:77), so by the time of the battles of Desheng, Shi Jingtang was not *zuo she jun* yet.

suspected an ambush and did not dare to press them; in this way they all were able to escape. For this reason, [Shi] Jingtang loved Liu Zhiyuan like a relative. Both [Shi] Jingtang and [Liu] Zhiyuan were of Shatuo origins. Jingtang was the son-in-law of Li Siyuan.

晉王如魏州，發徒數萬，廣德勝北城，日與梁入爭，大小百餘戰，互有勝負。左射軍使石敬瑭與梁人戰河壩，梁人擊敬瑭，斷其為馬甲，橫衝兵馬使劉知遠以所乘馬授之，自乘斷甲者徐行為殿；梁人疑有伏，不敢迫，俱得免，敬瑭以是親愛之。敬瑭、知遠，其先皆沙陀人。敬瑭，李嗣源之婿也。²⁷

The events that followed the battle of Desheng led to the fall of the Later Liang and to the rise of the Prince of Jin, Li Cunxu, as first Emperor of the Later Tang dynasty. From the episode of Desheng onward, the *ZZTJ* devotes long narratives to Shi Jingtang, yet no more is said either of his origins, other than the fact that his ancestors were Shatuo Turks, nor of his familial relationship to Li Siyuan. Shi Jingtang meets history on horseback in the middle of a battle and this is all that the historian tells us. Sima Guang recognizes the skills of Shi Jingtang as a good warrior and his ability to attract loyal companionship; nonetheless, the future ruler does not possess the essential qualities of birth to become an Emperor, and this might be the reason for the historian's neglect of the question of the origins of his family clan.

As shown above, the early Song historical sources are quite rich in anecdotes about prophecies linked to the surname of Shi Jingtang and to his rise to power, yet none of these prophecies are recorded in the *ZZTJ* or in the *Kaoyi*. The well-known letter of instructions for the compilation of the Long Draft of the Tang dynasty addressed to Fan Zuyu provides an explanation for this. According to the letter, popular practices and prophetic dreams had to be recorded only if they had specific didactic roles in the narrative or if they served as warnings for upcoming important

²⁷ *ZZTJ* 271:8850.

events.²⁸ In the case of the several prophecies and strange events recorded by the early sources which predicted the rise of Shi Jingtang, it is plausible to think that the historian and his collaborators did not consider them to be meaningful of the overall rendering of the narrative.

Only in one case does the *ZZTJ* mentions a prophetic dream. In the description of the relationship between Shi Jingtang and Yelü Deguang, the *ZZTJ* depicts Yelü Deguang telling his mother, Empress Dowager Shulü 述律后 (d. 947) about a dream in which the arrival of Gentleman Shi was predicted. The epithet Gentleman Shi is put in the mouth of Yelü Deguang probably in order to strengthen the idea that the Kitan leader treated Shi Jingtang as an equal.²⁹ The only other person who addresses Shi Jingtang in the direct speeches as Gentleman Shi is Li Congke. It will be shown from the samples of the narrative below how this choice of language encapsulates Li Congke's feelings of concealed mistrust and frustration towards Shi Jingtang. After the death of Mingzong in 933, Shi Jingtang had lost almost all the support from the central court; through accurate narrative choices, the *ZZTJ* depicts Shi's increasing sense of insecurity and danger. On the other hand, the last Emperor of the Later Tang period is described as a weak, suspicious and irresolute person, unable to take important decisions on his own and easily influenced. The *ZZTJ* builds a plot in which Li Congke's bad temper and his inability to rule is depicted as one of the main reasons that led Shi Jingtang to rebel.

²⁸ See translation in "Chinese Historical Criticism: Liu-chi Chih and Ssu-ma Kuang," p. 163.

²⁹ *ZZTJ* 279:9146.

4.2. The Uprising of Shi Jingtang in the Early Song Sources

As mentioned previously, the *Kaoyi* offers scant information about the selection of the sources for the redaction of the Annals of the Later Jin. From the brief quotations provided we come to know that Sima Guang drew mainly on the *Gaozu shilu*, redacted at the court of the Later Han, and on the *Feidi shilu*, commissioned to Zhang Zhaoyuan at the court of Shizong of Later Zhou, and completed at the beginning of the Song period. The *Kaoyi* records quotations from the *Feidi shilu* only in the first Annals of Later Jin. As will be shown below, although the *shilu* were compiled almost three decades after the death of Shi Jingtang, the records regard his personal name as taboo. It is interesting to note, however, that the almost coeval official history redacted under the supervision of Xue Juzheng does not respect the taboo.

In the *JWDS* the narrative of the uprising of Shi Jingtang and the Kitan intervention is scattered among the annals, the biographies and the “Qidan zhuan”. The first of the six annals dedicated to Gaozu opens with the origins of the Shi family clan and closes with the enthronement of Shi Jingtang. In Autumn 932, Mingzong appoints Shi Jingtang military governor of Hedong with control over the troops of Datong 大同, Zhenwu 振武, Zhangguo 彰國 and Weisai 威塞, as well as being in charge of foreign relations with the Kitan.³⁰ After the death of Mingzong, Li Congke ordered Shi Jingtang to move from Jinyang and relocate as military governor of Junzhou 軍州. According to the *JWDS* this is the event that will lead to Shi Jingtang’s uprising against Li Congke. The *JWDS* introduces its account of the uprising with a long direct speech in which the future Emperor reveals his doubts about the intentions of Li Congke which prompt his reaction:

³⁰ *Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng* 7:2264.

“The day I, the orphan, received the assignment to Taiyuan for the second time, the ruler and sovereign [Mingzong] proclaimed into my face: ‘I give you, my minister, the Northern gate, and there will be no discussion in all your lifetime to move you to another post.’” Couldn’t it be that all of a sudden [the current Emperor] has issued this order, because when last year in Xinzhou we were hard pressed by revolting troops, suspected one another too much? Moreover, when this year at the festival of thousand springs the Princess [Shi Jingtang’s wife] had an audience [with the Emperor] he said to her when she took leave: ‘You long for going back home so urgently. Do you want to rebel with Gentleman Shi?’ From this it is most sure and obvious that he suspects me!’ Now the Son of Heaven relies on the clan of his Empress and employs treacherous servants of the state, he is sunk in loss and doubts, the ten thousand affairs are obstructed and blocked, he gives the wrong punishments and rewards. He has not yet perished but for how long? Since the day when the Minor Emperor [Min] fled during the Yingshun era, I observed that the feelings of the people have left him greatly, and that he is not able to help in danger and hold power. It has already been three years that I am upset in my heart. Now if I do not change my mind, the court will cause its own disaster. We cannot calmly die on the road! How much more this is true since Taiyuan is a solidly protected place with an abundance of storages of grain. If [the court] is magnanimous to me, I will obey. If [the court] punishes me by means of [sending] troops [against me], I will outside announce this to our neighbors. In the North we will reach out to strong rivals.³¹ Then the destiny of victory or defeat will be clearly in the hands of Heaven. If now I hand in a memorial and claim illness in order to wait and see his intentions, what would you gentlemen think?”

孤再受太原之日，主上面宣云：『與卿北門，一生無議除改。』今忽降此命，莫是以去年忻州亂兵見迫，過相猜乎？又今年千春節，公主入覲，當辭時，謂公主曰：『爾歸心甚急，欲與石郎反耶？』此疑我之狀，固且明矣。今天子用后族，委邪臣，沈湎荒惑，萬機停壅，失刑失賞，不亡何待！吾自應順中少主出奔之日，覩人情大去，不能扶危持顛，憤憤於方寸者三年矣。今我無異志，朝廷自啟禍機，不可安然死於道路。況太原險固之地，積粟甚多，若且寬我，我當奉之。必若加兵我

³¹ *Cefu yuangui* has *lu* 虜 instead of *di* 敵, and *neigao* 內告 instead of *waigao* 外告 (*Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng* 7:2269).

則外告鄰方，北搆強敵，興亡之數，皎皎在天。今欲發表稱疾，以俟其意，諸公以為何如？³²

Shi Jingtang accuses the court of mistrusting him and of benefiting the interests of the family clan of the empress. He blames Li Congke for his weakness in dealing with important matters of governance. He thus decides to rebel against the Emperor's order, to claim ill health and to persist in his posting in Taiyuan.

In the narrative of the *JWDS*, the role of Shi Jingtang's loyal generals, Liu Zhiyuan and Sang Weihuan, appear to be secondary. It is said only that they agree to the plan out of loyalty to their leader. Shortly afterwards, a declaration is issued in which Shi Jingtang denies the imperial authority. The court, in response, removes Shi Jingtang's official ranking and sends the general Zhang Jingda at the head of an army to lay the provincial capital of Hedong, Jinyang, under siege. Shi Jingtang then orders Sang Weihuan to request the aid of the Kitan, and Yelü Deguang agrees on the appropriateness of the intervention (*fuyi* 赴義)³³ in the middle of autumn.

The Memoir of Foreign Countries provides a dry and diplomatic account of the intervention of the Kitan, from which we cannot derive a very satisfactory story:

At the end of the Changxing era, the Kitan pressed Yunzhou, Mingzong named [the future] Gaozu of Later Jin military governor of Hedong who at the same time was in charge of the office responsible for the tribes and

³² *JWDS* 75:983-84.

³³ For the translation of *yi* 義 with “appropriateness” I follow Wang Zhenping's argument on the pragmatic significance of *yi* in matters of diplomacy during Tang times. See Wang Zhenping, “Ideas Concerning Diplomacy and Foreign Policy under the Tang Emperors Gaozu and Taizong,” *Asia Major* 22.1 (2009): 239-285. Wang Zhenping translates *yi* as “appropriateness” 宜 of a planned foreign policy. Wang Zhenping states that “[*de* 德 and *yi*] involved shrewd calculation of one's own strength relative to that of competitors and enemies, careful examination of the timing for the action to be taken, and due consideration for the possible outcomes of the action. As pragmatic and utilitarian principles for undertaking events, they emphasized efficacy, expedience, and mutual self-interest. They were largely free of the Confucian moral constraints often discussed under the rubrics of trustworthiness, righteousness, and loyalty” (p. 239).

the Han in the North. In the third year of the Qingtai era (936), [the future] Jin Gaozu was attacked and surrounded by [the troops] of Zhang Jingda. The situation became very urgent so he sent [to the Kitan] the commander He Fu with a precise request for military intervention, adding that he was willing to become his subject or son.

長興末，契丹迫雲州，明宗命晉高祖為河東節度使兼北面蕃漢總管。清泰三年，晉高祖為張敬達等攻圍甚急，遣指揮使何福齋表乞師，願為臣子。³⁴

This brief account presents discrepancies with the version of the facts offered in the Basic Annals. The text avoids mentioning the events that led to the siege of Jinyang by the imperial army and does not refer to the role of Sang Weihuan as emissary to the Kitan. In general, the account devoted to the relation between the Kitan and the Later Jin almost completely omits the role played by Sang Weihuan. In addition, the account reports that Shi Jingtang was willing to “become a subject and son” 願為臣子 of the Kitan. The manner in which the account is rendered and the choice of the language is different from that of the basic annals, and, without pushing hypothesis into the realm of guesswork, it might be possible that the two sections of the *JWDS* were based on two different sources.

The account of the Kitan intervention in 936 is recorded briefly both in the Basic Annals and in the Memoir of Foreign Countries.³⁵ The Basic Annals report in its entirety the official proclamation of the enthronement of Shi Jingtang, redacted by Yelü Deguang. The document is not reported elsewhere in the sources and represents the highest point of diplomacy towards the Kitan in the early Song sources.

³⁴ *JWDS* 137:1833.

³⁵ In a fragment of the *JWDS* preserved in the *Tongli*, Yelü Deguang is called 契丹酋長, whereas in the Qing edition we find 契丹主 (*Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng* 7:2272). As noted previously, 酋長 is used for Abaoji in some early *shilu* compiled at the beginning of the tenth century and it seems to be the title with which the Kitan rulers were addressed.

“I recently became aware that the solitary fellow³⁶ [Li] Congke, [who] by origins is not of the same clan [of the Shatuo Li], secretly stole and relied on of the [imperial] treasures and maps, he gave up what is appropriate and forgot about mercy [that he had received], he went against Heaven and treated despotically the [ten thousand] things, exterminated and dismembered his own flesh and blood, and separated from the loyal and honest, listened to crafty flatterers and employed them, and ill-treated the most worthy of the people;³⁷ Chinese and *Yi* barbarians [living in the border territories] were horrified and fearful, within and without. All under Heaven was in ruin and had gone. I knew that you were innocent and harmed by him. You dared to levy a crowd to come urgently to protect the city walls and moats. Although the willing to swallow up and annex [territory] was extremely strong, how would you have turned your back [on the righteous cause] in dark or in light. When this came to my ears I was profoundly wrathful and startled.

朕昨以獨夫從珂，本非公族，竊據寶圖，棄義忘恩，逆天暴物，誅剪骨肉，離間忠良，聽任矯諛，威虐黎獻，華夷震悚，內外崩離。知爾無辜，為彼致害，敢徵眾旅，來逼嚴城，雖併吞之志甚堅，而幽顯之情何負，達於聞聽，深激憤驚。³⁸

Once again, Shi Jingtang is absolved of all suspicion of having betrayed the court. In this case it is the Kitan ruler who officially declares his integrity as Shi Jingtang is depicted as a brave and upright general who restored order in the empire, while the Kitan ruler is the sage Emperor who rescued him from peril. It is also interesting to note that the Kitan ruler officially denies the legitimacy of the last Later Tang Emperor. Yelü Deguang is aware of the fact that Li Congke was an adopted son of Mingzong and not the legitimate heir to the throne. On the other hand, the document

³⁶ The term *dufu* 獨夫 “solitary fellow” is very derogatory and it occurs in *Shangshu* 尚書, “Tai shi” 泰誓 (The Great Oath) chapter in reference to King Zhou 紂 (r. ca. 1060-27), the posthumous title of the last ruler of the Shang 商 dynasty. The “Tai shi” chapter records the oath made by King Wu 武 of Zhou (r. ca. 1073-1068 BCE) on the eve of his assault on King Zhou around 1045 BCE. See James Legge, *The Chinese Classics. Vol. III: The Shoo King* (Taipei: Southern Material Center Inc., 1985), pp. 299.

³⁷ *Lixian* 黎獻, “the most worthy of the people,” also appears in the “Tai shi” chapter of *Shangshu* (see Legge, *The Chinese Classics. Vol. III: The Shoo King*, p. 299).

³⁸ JWDS 75:984-989.

avoids mentioning the terms of the pact and the loss to the Kitan of the sixteen provinces between Yan and Yun, including the districts of the Youzhou province and four districts in Hedong. This detail is hidden in the last line at the end of the chapter, after the two long prophetic anecdotes discussed in the previous section.³⁹

4.2.1. Representation in the *Xin Wudai shi*

The *XWDS* provides a very terse chronicle of the invasion of the Kitan. Without mentioning the intervention of the foreign military force, the “Gaozu benji” merely reports that Shi Jingtang “ascended to the throne” probably in order to highlight the fact that Shi Jingtang would have taken power in any case, with or without the help of the Kitan.⁴⁰ This entry is followed by a list of the provinces ceded to the Kitan. Despite the terse narrative, the use of the language is extremely derogative towards both Shi Jingtang and the Kitan ruler. The official document redacted by the Kitan is mentioned in the “Siyi fulu” and simplified as follows:

This official letter is addressed to you, my son, the Prince of Jin. I treat you as my son and you will treat me as a father.

咨爾子晉王，予視爾猶子，爾視予猶父。⁴¹

According to the *XWDS*, Yelü Deguang addresses the enthroned Shi Jingtang with the old title of Prince of Jin, and not Emperor. In this way Ouyang Xiu establishes a different hierarchy in which the Later Jin ruler is declared inferior to Yelü Deguang. This idea is reiterated at the end of the account, where the historian registers the year according to the Kitan-Liao calendar, which was the ninth year of the Tianxian 天顯

³⁹ *JWDS* 75:987-88.

⁴⁰ *XWDS* 8:79.

⁴¹ *XWDS* 72:893.

era, instead of the first year of the Tianfu era according to the Later Jin calendar.⁴²

Moreover, Ouyang Xiu closes the biographical section dedicated to Sang Weihai and Jing Yanguang with a comment on the negative outcomes of the two generals that explicitly shows his derogatory attitude towards both the rebellion of Shi Jingtang and the Kitan:

Alas! The patterns of disaster and fortune, victory and defeat were never as clear as in the case of the [Later] Jin! The dynasty prospered with the help of the Kitan and was destroyed by the Kitan. Yet, when they [the future Later Jin] by rebellion opposed obedience and the great matters were not solved, their isolated [capital] city was put under siege without help from the outside. A single solicitation cast in the strident tongue [of Sang Weihai] gave the Kitan due cause to empty their own country in raising armies in relief. They responded like when two tallies are put together and so the [Jin] escaped danger and the difficult situation was solved. Thereupon the Jin ruling house was established. At this time Sang Weihai contributed most to this. When the minor ruler [of Later Jin Shi Chonggui] had newly been established, quarrels developed and troops joined, they broke the treaty and started to fight. All this was caused by [Jing] Yanguang. This means that the affairs of the Jin ruling house were enhanced by Sang Weihai and brought to destruction by Jing Yanguang. The two men, however different in intent, met the same fatal end. What was the reason for this? I guess that for those whose beginnings and ends are not smooth and who [therefore] make common cause with the barbarians calamity is the common outcome, but never good fortune. How could we not be warned! How could we not be warned!

嗚呼，自古禍福成敗之理，未有如晉氏之明驗也！其始以契丹而興，終為契丹所滅。然方其以逆抗順，大事未集，孤城被圍，外無救援，而徒將一介之命，持片舌之彊，能使契丹空國興師，應若符契，出危解難，遂成晉氏，當是之時，維翰之力為多。及少主新立，釁結兵連，敗約起爭，發自延廣。然則晉氏之事，維翰成之，延廣壞之，二人之用心者異，而其受禍也同，其故何哉？蓋夫本末不順而與夷狄共事者，常見其禍，未見其福也。可不戒哉！可不戒哉！⁴³

⁴² XWDS 72:893.

⁴³ XWDS 29:324. For this quote I follow partially the translation of Richard Davis, *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*, p. 245; all changes are my own.

For Ouyang Xiu the policies adopted by the Later Jin ruling house marked the low point in the history of military affairs, and the main reason was that they came to terms with the Northern barbarians.

4.2.2. Representation in the *Zizhi tongjian*

Whereas moral judgement plays a primary role in the *XWDS*, it will be shown below how the *ZZTJ* focuses on the long-term developments of historical events and on the importance of military strategies. The first Annals of Later Jin open with Li Congke (here named “the Tang ruler” 唐主) who, intoxicated by too much drinking, accuses the Princess of Jin 晉, the daughter of Mingzong and wife of Shi Jingtang, of being part of the rebellious plan of her husband. According to the source, this event convinced Shi Jingtang to leave Luoyang and to take all his goods back to Jinyang.⁴⁴

From this episode onwards, The Deposed Emperor repeatedly asks for the advice of his entourage about the right decisions to take in case of a rebellion by Shi Jingtang. The *ZZTJ* chooses to highlight the relevance of rumors and ambiguity in the representation of the events. Shi Jingtang never explicitly talks about rebellious plans, but the idea that at court “everybody knew” that he was inclined to sedition is a constant refrain in the narrative. Sedition and disloyalty of the subject towards the ruler were the worst sins that a subject could commit, even in cases where the ruler’s

⁴⁴ On the day *guichou* [Feb.2nd, 936], the Tang ruler [Prince of Lu] gave a banquet for the Thousand Springs festival; the Princess of Jin, after wishing the ruler’s long life, bid farewell and went back to Jinyang. The Emperor was drunk and said: “Why don’t you stay? You suddenly go back, isn’t it because you want to join Gentleman Shi’s rebellion?” Hearing these words, Shi Jingtang grew increasingly afraid [...]. Shi Jingtang took all the goods stored in Luoyang and other places and headed back to Jinyang; he falsely spread the word that it was in order to help the troops, when in reality everybody knew that he had different plans. 癸丑，唐主以千春節置酒，晉國長公主上壽畢，辭歸晉陽。帝醉，曰：「何不且留，遽歸，欲與石郎反邪！」石敬瑭聞之，益懼。[...]石敬瑭盡收其貨之在洛陽及諸道者歸晉陽，託言以助軍費，人皆知其有異志 (*ZZTJ* 279:9138).

decisions were wrong. Still the perspective of the historian on Shi's misdeeds seems to be quite ambiguous as Sima Guang does not blame him for his choices. The implicit blame goes to the wrong political response of the court. It is possible to think that the historian is criticizing a powerless court faced with the overwhelming power of the military governors. The irony lies in the fact that everybody at court was well aware of the potential of Shi Jingtang's actions ever since the period of Mingzong, yet the greediness of officials and inability to take strong political measures led to the uprising and the consequent collapse of the Later Tang.

In the *ZZTJ*, the real intentions of Shi Jingtang are disclosed through a complex plot, the events dating back to the first year of reign of Li Congke in 934. In the fifth month of that year, Shi Jingtang had been denied entry to the court during the ceremony of the burial for the deceased Mingzong. The motivation was disharmony between him and the newly established Emperor. Unsure about the intentions of the Emperor towards him, when the funeral rituals were over Shi Jingtang did not dare to go back to Hedong. At that time he was just recovering from a long period of illness and the Emperor, noticing his physical weakness, did not consider him as a threat. He then pretended to trust his old companion of military campaigns, Gentleman Shi, and allowed him to return to Hedong, while in reality he was extremely suspicious of his real intentions.⁴⁵ Well aware of this, when Shi Jingtang got back to Taiyuan, he secretly started arranging for his personal protection. He asked his relatives at court to spy on the Emperor's plans. Moreover, in order to mislead and avoid the suspicions of

⁴⁵ *ZZTJ* 279:9119-9120.

the court, he himself in front of his guests would often plead illness and complain that his physical weakness would not allow him to lead an army in battle.⁴⁶

The deception worked out well until repeated raids by the Kitan on the Northern borders forced Shi Jingtang and Zhao Dejun 趙德鈞 (d. 937), governor of Youzhou 幽州, to seek supplies for the troops.⁴⁷ The suspicions of the Emperor towards Shi Jingtang's intentions increased consequent to an event that occurred not long afterwards:

[Shi] Jingtang at the head of a big army was camping in Xinzhou,⁴⁸ when the court sent envoys to grant the soldiers summer clothes. When the decree with its cherishing message was transmitted, the soldiers shouted 'Long live [the Emperor]!' four times. [Shi] Jingtang was afraid, and his aid Duan Xiyao of Henei asked to punish those who had taken the lead, Shi Jingtang ordered his Administrator in charge Liu Zhiyuan to behead the Military Commander Li Hun together with thirty five other people as a warning [for the others]. Xiyao was from Huaizhou. When the Emperor heard this, his suspicion of Shi Jingtang increased even more.

敬瑭將大軍屯忻州，朝廷遣使賜軍士夏衣，傳詔撫諭，軍士呼萬歲者數四。敬瑭懼，募僚河內段希堯請誅其唱首者，敬瑭命都押衙劉知遠斬挾馬都將李暉等三十六人以徇。希堯，懷州人也。帝聞之，益疑敬瑭。⁴⁹

The events of Xinzhou are the last entry on Shi Jingtang in the Annals of Later Tang. The unexpectedly cruel reaction of Shi Jingtang casts doubts in the reader and increases the ambiguity surrounding his personality. The unpredictability of his

⁴⁶ ZZTJ 279:9131.

⁴⁷ On Zhao Dejun's attempt to take the throne and on the Kitan's alliance see Naomi Standen, "Who Wants to Be an Emperor? Zhao Dejun 趙德鈞, Youzhou 幽州 and the Liao 遼," in *Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms*, Peter Lorge ed. (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2011), pp. 15-45.

⁴⁸ Xinzhou 忻州 was located north of Taiyuan (Tan Qixiang 5:84).

⁴⁹ ZZTJ 279:9131-20

actions and the incapacity of the ruler to control him are, according to Sima Guang, the beginning of all disasters.

The last Annals of Later Tang closes with bad omens: floods and droughts hit the region and impoverish the people. The suffering of the population is a clear sign of the wrongdoing of the ruler. In that period the region had been hit by several natural disasters and the people were already starving. Shi Jingtang took severe measures in order to collect as many supplies as possible from the people. With Shi Jingtang's measures, the situation became even worse; myriads of people were obliged to leave their homes and were dislocated. Here the historian's judgement is rightly enforced by a brief comment from Hu Sanxing: the fact that the people were forced to leave their homes is a sign of the beginning of disorders.⁵⁰

The Annals of Later Jin open with the episode of the celebrations of the Thousand Springs Festival. Shi Jingtang's decision to take all his goods back to Jinyang convinced the Emperor's entourage that it was time to intervene. Whereas the *JWDS* omits the following event, it is reported by Ouyang Xiu in the miscellaneous biographies section, yet the language and the content of the direct speeches present some variants:

The Tang ruler at night talked with his entourage at ease and asked: "Gentleman Shi is a close relative of mine, somebody who cannot be doubted, yet there are continuous rumors. In the remote case that our peaceful relations are broken, how could we resolve the situation?" Nobody answered. [...] Li Song [d. 948], scholar of the Duanming Palace and Supervising Censor, withdrew and said to Lü Qi [894-943]: "We have received favors to a great degree. How could we like everybody else simply be waiting for things to develop? Where from could we come up with a plan?" Qi answered: "If [Shi Jingtang of] Hedong has hidden plans, he will certainly ask the aid of the Kitan.

⁵⁰ *ZZTJ* 279:9131.

Because [Li] Zanhua [899-936, elder son of Abaoji] is in the Middle Kingdom, the Kitan mother [Empress Dowager Shulü] has several times asked for a marital alliance, but as her request [had been made when] [Sheli] Zela and the other [Kitan officials] had not been captured yet, the alliance has never been concluded. If today we are really able to bring back Zela and the others and conclude a peace treaty with them, and we make an annual offering of over one hundred thousand strings, they will certainly be happy to accept. In this way, even if Hedong wants to carry on with his disruptive activities, he will not be able to do so.” [...] Another night, the two men told the Emperor about their plan during a secret talk. The Emperor was extremely pleased and exalted their loyalty. The two men secretly wrote a letter to the Kitan to wait for orders.

唐主夜與近臣從容語曰：「石郎於朕至親，無可疑者；但流言不釋，萬一失歡，何以解之？」皆不對。[...] 端明殿學士、給事中李崧退謂同僚呂琦曰：「吾輩受恩深厚，豈得自同眾人，一概觀望邪！計將安出？」琦曰：「河東若有異謀，必結契丹為援。契丹母以贊華在中國，屢求和親，但求薊刺等未獲，故和未成耳。今誠歸薊刺等與之和，歲以禮幣約直十餘萬緡遺之，彼必驩然承命。如此，則河東雖欲陸梁，無能為矣。」崧曰：「此吾志也。然錢穀皆出三司，宜更與張相謀之。」遂告張延朗，延朗曰：「如學士計，不惟可以制河東，亦省邊費之什九，計無便於此者。若主上聽從，但責辦於老夫，請於庫財之外捃拾以供之。」[...] 他夕，二人密言於帝，帝大喜，稱其忠，二人私草遺契丹書以俟命。⁵¹

Formerly a supporter of the promotion of Shi Jingtang to the governorship of Hedong, the scholar Li Song now plots against him. Together with Lü Qi, Li Song plans a preemptive action to avoid a possible Kitan intervention in favor of Shi Jingtang.⁵² The two officials urge the Emperor to accept the release of Sheli Zela,⁵³ and other military leaders of the Kitan troops, in all fifty prisoners who had been captured

⁵¹ ZZTJ 280:9139.

⁵² ZZTJ 278:9079. Ouyang Xiu places Lü Qi and Li Song in the Miscellaneous Biographies section, considering the two officials ethically compromised as they both served under different dynasties and their behavior was somehow ambiguous (XWDS 56:644-646 and 57:653-655).

⁵³ On Shar/Sheli troops see note above in this chapter and Christopher Atwood, “Some Early Inner Asian Terms Related to the Imperial Family and the Comitatus,” pp. 57-60.

several years earlier during the siege of Dingzhou.⁵⁴ For several years the Kitan Empress Dowager Shulü Ping 述律平 (d. 953) had been pleading for the release of the military leaders. Mingzong had repeatedly refused the request and executed all the Kitan envoys sent to court. This had frozen the diplomatic relations between the two courts and, at the same time, had kept the Kitan from raiding the border regions for several years. According to Lü Qi and Li Song, the return of the prisoners would have paved the way for an alliance based on the marriage of a Chinese princess to a Kitan - Liao member of the imperial clan,⁵⁵ in this way preventing an alliance between Shi Jingtang and the Kitan.

⁵⁴ Sheli Zela and several military commanders of the Kitan troops (Tiyin 惕隱, also called Leader Tiyin 酉長惕隱) had been captured by Zhao Dejun in 928 (ZZTJ 276:9022). The capture of Kitan military commanders was quite common already by the end of the Tang as a strategy to keep the Kitan from raiding the border territories (see the capture of Shulü Abo 述律阿鉢, the brother of Abaoji's wife, by Liu Shouguang, ZZTJ 266:8678). Despite the requests to execute them, Zhao Dejun suggested to Mingzong to keep them alive, in order to prevent the Kitan from raiding the border regions (ZZTJ 277:9067). Following the arrival of Yelü Tuyu at the Later Tang court 931, the Kitan military leaders and the Tiyin that had been held captive were bestowed with Chinese names (ZZTJ 277:9057; on this see also the footnote below). The Tiyin was the official in control of the Horizontal Tents, one of the four lineages in which the Yelü relatives were organized. The Tiyin, a title possibly derived from the Altaic *tegin* or *tigin* (brother of the Khan, Tegin 特勤), was an important Kitan figure responsible for the jurisdiction of tribal forces (on this see Wittfogel and Feng, "History of Chinese Society: Liao," p. 438, 443, 479-80; on the function of the Tiyin see also Jennifer Holgrem, "Marriage, Kinship and Succession under the Ch'i-tan Rulers of the Liao Dynasty (907-1125)," *T'oung-pao* 72 (1986): 51.

⁵⁵ The *heqin* 和親 ('harmonious kinship') intermarriage practice was first introduced in the early Western Han period by Gaozu 高祖 (r. 202-195 BCE) as a form of peaceful arrangement with the Xiongnu (*Shiji* 110:2894; *The Grand Scribe's Records* 9:268). It became a common practice of establishing peace treaties with the Tibetans, the Turkic empires, as well as the Kitan throughout all the Tang period. A similar practice was also commonly adopted among nomadic and semi-nomadic reigns themselves. For an overview of the *heqin* marriage alliances in the Tang period see Pan Yihong, "Marriage Alliance and Chinese Princesses in International Politics from Han through T'ang," pp. 95-131. Pan Yihong concludes that "in inter-state relations, the alliances were effected not just for economic and political support from China [...] using the marriages as a way to maintain independence by keeping a balance between competing powers.[...] Although the Chinese had their own tradition of using marriage to further political ends, when using that tradition among non-Chinese nomadic people they adapted it to the practices of those people." (p. 122). Whereas the Liao continued to adopt policies of diplomatic intermarriages with Korea and

The proposed member of the Kitan family clan was Li Zanhua, the elder son of Abaoji. As a matter of facts, Li Zanhua had already been married to a woman of Zhuangzong's family clan. Only a few years earlier, Mingzong had conferred upon Yelü Tuyu 耶律突欲, the eldest son of Abaoji, the title of Muhua 慕華 Prince of Eastern Dan 東丹王, together with the Li surname and the name Zanhua. A few months later, appealing to the pact of brotherhood between his father and Abaoji, despite the disagreement of the court, Mingzong conferred to Li Zanhua the title of military governor of Yicheng 義成.⁵⁶ A marriage between Li Zanhua and a woman *nèe* Xia, former concubine of Zhuangzong, was organized. The *ZZTJ* describes in details Zanhua's extravagant habit of drinking human blood from his concubines' bodies and of submitting his servants to cruel physical punishments. His inhuman behavior led Lady Xia to plead for divorce and to become a Buddhist nun.⁵⁷

the Xi Xia, the Song abandoned it, considering them a shameful and humiliating practice (p. 126). The *Cefu yuangui* holds a *heqin* section in the *waichen* 外臣 category. The text distinguishes among 'alliances by marriage' (*heqin*), 'diplomatic relations' (*tonghao* 通好) and 'alliances' (*mengshi* 盟誓). Whereas the *heqin* section collects the historical precedents of the alliances by marriages with the foreign tributary states from the Han period to Tang Muzong 穆宗 (r. 795-824), the *tonghao* section documents the history of the relations until the five dynasties of the tenth century (*Cefu yuangui* 980:11508). A perusal of the *tonghao* section on the five northern dynasties shows that some of the entries are not assembled in chronological order. The last entry of the Tang period recurs in the years 840s. No historical precedents from the last twenty years of the reign of the Tang are reported. The first entry of the early tenth century is dedicated to an event that occurred in 911, first year of the Qianhua era of Later Liang Taizu (*Cefu yuangui* 980:11534-542). In the Annals of the Han dynasty, one narrative concerning intermarriage alliances suggests Sima Guang's opinion against marriage allegiances based on the belief that the 'barbarians' should only be ruled (*ZZTJ* 4:383).

⁵⁶ Yelü Tuyu was the eldest son of Abaoji. Although he had been named heir in 916, Emperor Dowager Yingtian managed to get her second son enthroned as emperor. Following the enthronement of his younger brother, Yelü Tuyu fled to the Later Tang court. Mingzong bestowed on him the name Li Zanhua. His entourage was similarly bestowed with names and surnames. By that time, the military leaders captured a few years earlier had also received names and surnames (*XWDS* 72:891; *JWDS* 42:576).

⁵⁷ *ZZTJ* 277:9067-68 and 280:9140.

The Emperor is initially enthusiastic about the plan. Proud of their brilliant project, Li Song and his cohort decide to write a letter to the Kitan.⁵⁸ Unfortunately for the two officials, during another of his night talks with the entourage the ever irresolute Emperor abruptly changes his mind. This time he seeks the advice of the Auxiliary Academician of the Bureau of Military Affairs, Xue Wenyu. The official discourages the Emperor from following the advice of Li Song. The narrative runs as follows:

Long after that, the Emperor informed the Auxiliary Academician of the Bureau of Military Affairs Xue Wenyu about this plan. Xue said: “Considering the respect that a Son of Heaven should get, isn’t it too much of a humiliation to reduce your status in order to elevate the barbarians? Moreover, if the Northerners, according to the old practice, ask for the marriage of Princess Shang, how will we be able to reject [their request]?”[...] Thereupon the mind of the Emperor changed. The day after, he urgently summoned Li Song and Lü Qi in the back building, and in rising anger accused them saying: “As you ministers all know [the facts of] past and present, you want to assist the Ruler of Men in achieving peace; how could you now make such stratagem? I have a daughter who is still in her young age, and you ministers want to throw her to the sandy slopes? And what is your intent in giving the military supplies to the court of the Northerners?”

久之，帝以其謀告樞密直學士薛文遇，文遇對曰：「以天子之尊，屈身奉夷狄，不亦辱乎！又，虜若循故事求尚公主，何以拒之？」[...] 帝意逐變。一日，急召崧、琦至後樓，盛怒，責之曰：「卿輩皆知古今，欲佐人主致太平；今乃為謀如是！朕一女尚乳臭，卿欲棄之沙漠邪？且欲以養士之財輸之虜庭，其意安在？」⁵⁹

The narrative of the *ZZTJ* strengthens in its focus on the irresoluteness and incapability of Li Congke and his inability to face important strategic decisions. The night talks of the Emperor with his entourage and the clumsy court intrigue are the

⁵⁸ *ZZTJ* 280:9139. This long episode is reported by Ouyang Xiu in the section devoted to Lü Qi in the Miscellaneous Biographies, yet the detail of the document is not mentioned in the *XWDS* nor anywhere else in Song historical writings, and the *Kaoyi* is silent on the sources.

⁵⁹ *ZZTJ* 280:9139-9140.

sole response to such a delicate moment. Again, in the following episode, the Deposed Emperor gives blind confidence to the council of Xue Wenyu:

Some time before, Shi Jingtang wanted to sound out the plans of the [Later] Tang ruler, so he repeatedly memorialized to the Emperor pleading illness, requesting to discharge the army and for him to be moved to another prefecture. The Emperor discussed with the court officials the question of whether to grant his request and move him to Junzhou. Fang Gao, Li Song and Lü Qi all forcefully remonstrated against this decision and believed that it was not possible. For this reason, the Emperor hesitated for a long time. [...] In the fifth month, in the *gengyin* day by night, Li Song asked for permission to leave for an urgent matter outside the court, and only Xue Wenyu remained in charge, so the Emperor discussed with him the matters concerning Hedong. Wenyu said: “The proverb says: ‘If you build a palace on the street, three years will not be enough to finish it’. For this kind of matters, a decision about this matter [must] come from a sage mind, every subject [of your majesty] plans according to his own interests, how would they dare to tell you all! In my humble view, whether you move Hedong [Shi Jingtang] to another prefecture or not, [even] if Hedong [Shi Jingtang] is transferred [to another province] he will still rebel. It is just a matter of time. You’d better anticipate the events and plan something.”

初，石敬瑭欲嘗唐主之意，累表自陳羸疾，乞解兵柄，移他鎮；帝與報政議從其請，移鎮鄆州。房暉、李崧、呂琦等皆力諫，以為不可，帝猶豫久之。[...] 五月，庚寅夜，李崧請急在外，薛文遇獨直，帝與之議河東事，文遇曰：「諺有之：『當道築室，三年不成。』茲事斷自聖志；群臣各為身謀，安肯盡言！以臣觀之，河東移亦反，不移亦反，在旦暮耳，不若先事圖之。」⁶⁰

Until this point of the narrative, the position of the *ZZTJ* towards Xue Wenyu is still not very clear. There is no substantial biographical data about him in earlier Song sources and the representation of his talks with the Deposed Emperor appear only in the *ZZTJ*, it is thus not possible to compare what other historians thought about his role. However, the text provides a flashback that clarifies some doubts as to what Sima Guang thinks about the ruler’s inability to weigh up Xue’s advice:

⁶⁰ *ZZTJ* 280:9141.

Before these facts had occurred, some magicians had predicted that in that year of the reign sagely officials would appear; they would eliminate any type of plotting and stabilize the reign. The Emperor was convinced that Xue Wenyu was the elected one, and when he heard Wenyu's words he was greatly pleased and said: "You minister have expressed in an extremely clear way my intentions, victory or defeat will be the consequence of my decisions."

先是，術者言國家今應得賢佐，出奇謀，定天下，帝意文遇當之，聞其言，大喜，曰：「卿言殊豁吾意，成敗吾決行之」⁶¹

After months of hesitation, the Deposed Emperor was abruptly moved by the proverb quoted by Xue Wenyu and, without asking the advice of other officials, he took the decision to relocate Shi Jingtang. When the order was issued and the officials had read about it, "they stared at each other and their faces changed color."⁶²

Whereas the Tang court of Li Congke is depicted as unable to guide the ruler to act in the right way, Shi Jingtang is portrayed as a man relying upon the plans of loyal and brilliant generals. Neither Li Congke nor Shi Jingtang possesses the quality of birth of a ruler, yet Shi Jingtang is destined to overcome this because he has on his side the loyalty of his officials:

On the *jiawu* day [of the fifth month, 936], [when] the military governor of Jianxiong, Zhang Jingda was named Provincial Commander of the Northwestern Tribes and Chinese Army, he urged Shi Jingtang to reach Junzhou. Shi Jingtang was ill at ease and made a plan with his generals and assistants: "When I was appointed for the second time to Hedong, the Emperor to my face promised not to replace me for life, yet today he suddenly deliberated this order, isn't it true what the Princess said this year during the Thousand Springs Festival? If I do not rise up in revolt, the court set ou [troops], how can helplessly die on the road! Today I will submit a memorial to plead illness in order to understand what intention [the court has], if [the court] is magnanimous with me, I will serve [the ruler]; but if [the court] punishes me by means of [sending] troops, then I will change my plans."

⁶¹ ZZTJ 280:9141-42.

⁶² ZZTJ 280:9141-42.

甲午，以建雄節度使張敬達為西北蕃漢馬步都部署，趣敬瑭之鄆州。敬瑭疑懼，謀於將佐曰：「吾之再來河東也，主上面許終身不除代；今忽有是命，得非如今年千春節與公主所言乎？我不興亂，朝廷發之，安能束手死於道路乎！今且發表稱疾以觀其意，若其寬我，我當事之；若加兵於我，我則改圖耳。」⁶³

While the *JWDS* regards Shi Jingtang as the man responsible for the decision of rebelling against the court order, in the *ZZTJ* the advice of his generals, Liu Zhiyuan and Sang Weihan, drives him to the final decision:

The governor's Deputy⁶⁴ Liu Zhiyuan said: "My bright lord, you have led the troops in war for so a long time, you have the support of the soldiers; now you control a land strategically located and difficult to access, your generals and cavalries are strong and powerful, if you raise your troops and spread the word everywhere, you can fulfill the plan of becoming Emperor, how could you think to throw yourself into the mouth of the tiger just because of an order written on a piece of paper!" The Secretary Sang Weihan of Luoyang said: "When the Emperor assumed the throne, you my bright ruler presented yourself to the court, and how could it be possible that the Emperor wasn't aware of the danger of 'giving free reign to a flood dragon in adverse situations'? But still, in the end he appointed you again with the governorship of Hedong. This must be the will of Heaven that provides you with a useful weapon. Emperor Mingzong's moral integrity and benevolence was handed to the people, but the role of ruler was replaced with an illegitimate son from a collateral branch, the people do not feel obliged to him. You my lord were Emperor Mingzong's beloved and now the ruler treats you like a betrayer. This is not a situation that can be sorted out with a few apologetic kowtows. On the contrary, you should with all your energy make a plan to protect yourself. The Kitan had earlier concluded a pact of allegiance based on brotherhood with Emperor Mingzong, today their militia settlements are close to Yun and Ying. You my lord have the ability to treat them with sincerity and to stoop to their level, so, in the remote case that something happens, if you call them in the morning, in the evening they will come to

⁶³ *ZZTJ* 280:9140.

⁶⁴ The *du yaya* 都押牙 (or 都押衙) was established in the late Tang period and held military duties on behalf of the military governors. They were often responsible for the revenue administration of the provinces (Wang Gungwu, *Divided China*, pp. 138-39).

your rescue and all your troubles will be solved.” Hearing this, Shi Jingtang made up his mind.

都押牙劉知遠曰：「明公久將兵，得士卒心；今據形勝之地，士馬精強，若稱兵傳檄，帝業可成，奈何以一紙制書自投虎口乎！」掌書記洛陽桑維翰曰：「主上初即位，明公入朝，主上豈不知蛟龍不可縱之深淵邪？此乃天意假公以利器。明宗遺愛在人，主上以庶孽代之，群情不附。公明宗之愛，今主上以叛逆見待，此非首謝可免，但力為自全之計。契丹素與明宗約為兄弟，今部落近在雲、應，公誠能推心屈節事之，萬一有急，朝呼夕至，何患無成。」敬瑭意遂決。⁶⁵

The narrative of the *ZZTJ* presented above includes direct speeches that are not recorded in any other available sources. The *ZZTJ* puts in the mouth of Sang Weihan the plan of renewing the old ‘pact of brotherhood’ with the Kitan, while according to Ouyang Xiu these are Shi Jingtang’s own words.⁶⁶ Moreover, Sima Guang specifies that only after having heard his generals’ advice did Shi Jingtang make his mind up; this detail shifts the focus on to the role of the two generals.

This time the terms of the pact proposed by Sang Weihan put the Kitan ruler in a much higher position than the previous “pact of brotherhood” between Abaoji and Li Keyong. In fact, Sang Weihan drafts a document in which Shi Jingtang addresses himself as subject and offers to serve the Kitan ruler according to filial etiquette 以父禮事之. Shi Jingtang orders that another document denying the legitimacy to rule of Li Congke is redacted as a response to the imperial order that requested him to move from Hedong;⁶⁷ According to the narrative Shi Jingtang requests the court to enthrone the legitimate heir of Mingzong, Li Congyi; in this way, he demonstrates his loyalty to the former ruler of the Later Tang. The idea that his original intention was not to

⁶⁵ *ZZTJ* 280:9140-41. A similar account is found in *Cefu yuangui* (*Cefu yuangui* 309:3649).

⁶⁶ *XWDS* 8:79.

⁶⁷ *ZZTJ* 280:9143. On the dispute between Sima Guang and Liu Shu on the origins of birth of Li Congke, see chapter two.

overstep his power is reiterated here and it increases the complexity of the personality of Shi Jingtang as depicted by the *ZZTJ*.

Shi Jingtang's denial of the authority of Li Congke forces the ruler to take a final decision and to prepare for war. He names Zhang Jingda 張敬達 (d. 936) as governor of Hedong and orders him to put Jinyang under siege:⁶⁸

Shi Jingtang sent envoys through a secondary way to the Kitan requesting assistance. He ordered Sang Weihuan to draft up a document in which he addressed himself as subject of the Kitan ruler and pledged for an allegiance as father and son, they fixed the date of victory and established that the territories North to the way of Lulong and Yingmen passes would be bestowed to the Kitan. Liu Zhiyuan remonstrated: "To address oneself as subject is possible, but to pledge for the ritual of a father and son relationship is too much. If we favor them generously with gold and silk, he will be satisfied and will send his troops. We should not promise them lands, I'm afraid that on a future day it will become a great trouble for the Middle Kingdom and we will regret this decision when it is already too late." Shi Jingtang did not adopt his suggestions. The treaty document reached the Kitan, the Kitan ruler was greatly pleased, he paid a visit to his mother and said: "Your son has recently dreamt that Shi Jingtang was sending envoys to us, and today it happened, this is Heaven's will!" He then answered back, asking to wait for the middle autumn and then subvert the country and assist Shi Jingtang.

石敬瑭遣間使求救於契丹，令桑維翰草表稱臣於契丹主，且請以父禮事之，約事捷之日，割盧龍一道及鴈門關以北諸州與之。劉知遠諫曰：「稱臣可矣，以父事之太過。厚以金帛賂之，自足致其兵，不必許以土田，恐異日大為中國之患，悔之無及。」敬瑭不從。表至契丹，契丹主大喜，白其母曰：「兒比夢石郎遣使來，今果然，此天意也。」乃為復書，許俟仲秋傾國赴援。⁶⁹

The description of the beginning of the siege of Jinyang takes up the scene of companionship between Shi Jingtang and Liu Zhiyuan during the battle of Desheng.

The *ZZTJ* here presents an anecdote that once again humanizes the two personages

⁶⁸ *ZZTJ* 280:9143-44.

⁶⁹ *ZZTJ* 280:9146-47.

and depicts them as bound by a profound loyalty. General Liu Zhiyuan and his lord are sitting under the protective military wall and, observing through the holes in the wall the city under siege by Zhang Jingda set about devising a strategy.⁷⁰ Although Shi Jingtang is a rebel, on his side there is unity of intent and loyalty from his generals, whereas on the side of the army of Li Congke, confusion reigns. In the anecdote presented below the *ZZTJ* appeals again to natural disasters as a premonition of the defeat of the Later Tang. On the one hand, the generals of the imperial army underestimate the potential of Shi Jingtang's troops and of the Kitan intervention. Zhang Jingda's intention to attack Jinyang is useless because natural calamities thwart every effort.⁷¹ The long and detailed account of the siege of Jinyang is followed by an even longer and rich narrative on the Kitan intervention. Although the *Kaoyi* is silent on the sources, the *ZZTJ* roughly follows the narrative of the *Gaozu benji*; nonetheless some cases show differences in the use of the terminology and wording:

In the ninth month, the Kitan ruler at the head of a cavalry army of fifty thousand, called 'the three hundred thousand', from the Yangwu Pass headed to the South, a long line of flags was visible for more than fifty miles. [...] On the *xinchou* day [Oct. 10th, 936] the Kitan ruler arrived in Jinyang and passed through the Pass of Hubei, North of the Fen River. He sent a vanguard of envoys to report to Shi Jingtang the following words: "I aim to defeat the bandits today, would you allow me?" Shi Jingtang quickly sent back envoys with the message: "The Southern army is very strong, we should not underestimate it, I ask you to wait till the following day; it will not be too late for a proper battle." The envoys had not yet returned and the Kitan were already fighting with the Tang cavalry army generals Gao Xingzhou and Fu Yanqing; Shi Jingtang then ordered Liu Zhiyuan to raise his army in order to help them. Zhang Jingda, Yang Guangyuan and An Fanqi at the head of an infantry army passed through the foot of the mountains at North-West of the town, the Kitan sent a light cavalry of three thousand soldiers without armor. The Tang army saw that they were weak

⁷⁰ *ZZTJ* 280:9147.

⁷¹ *ZZTJ* 280:9147-48.

and chased them to the curve of the river Fen. The Kitan crossed the water and left, the Tang army approached following the coast, when an additional army of the Kitan approached from the Northeast into the Tang army dividing it into two parts, to the North the infantry was almost completely destroyed by the Kitan, the cavalry to the South was forced to retreat to the stronghold of Jin'an. The troops sent by the Kitan reached them and the Tang army was heavily defeated, among the cavalry the deaths were nearly ten thousand, only the cavalry army was preserved. Zhang Jingda and the other officials took the remaining army under their command to protect Jin'an and the Kitan headed back to the Pass of Hubei. As for the more than a thousand soldiers captured by Shi Jingtang, Liu Zhiyuan convinced him to kill them all [fearing for a rebellion]. That evening, Shi Jingtang went out from the Northern door in order to meet with the Kitan ruler. The Kitan ruler clasped Shi Jingtang's hand, and they both regretted meeting each other so late. Shi Jingtang asked: "Your Majesty has come from great distance. Considering that your soldiers and horses are exhausted, you fought and greatly overcome the Tang at once, how did you do it?" The Kitan ruler replied: "When I left the North, I was told that the Tang army would certainly cut off all the ways on the Yamen pass and put additional troops in the strategically located accesses, so that I would not have been able to enter. I then sent men to investigate and nothing of that was true. For this reason I entered very quickly, knowing that it was necessary to assist [you] in great trouble. When the two armies met, I was strong and they were blocked, if I had not taken this chance to attack them, the battle would have lasted longer and the victory would not have been so certain. This is my way of fighting hard and winning there is no need to indulge too much in theorizing." Shi Jingtang greatly admired the Kitan ruler for this.

九月，契丹主將五萬騎，號三十萬，自揚武谷而南，旌旗不絕五十餘里。[……] 辛丑，契丹主至晉陽，陳於汾北之虎北口。先遣人謂敬瑭曰：「吾欲今日既破賊可乎？」敬瑭遣人馳告曰：「南軍甚厚，不可輕，請俟明日議戰未晚也。」使者未至，契丹已與唐騎將高行周、符彥卿合戰，敬瑭乃遣劉知遠出兵助戰。張敬達、楊光遠、安審琦以步兵陳於城西北山下，契丹遣輕騎三千，不被甲，直犯其陳。唐兵見其羸，爭逐之，至汾曲，契丹涉水而去。唐兵循岸而進，契丹伏兵自東北起，衝唐兵斷而為二，步兵在北者多為契丹所殺，騎兵在南者引歸晉安寨。契丹縱兵乘之，唐兵大敗，步兵死者近萬人，騎兵獨全。敬達等收餘眾保晉安，契丹亦引兵歸虎北口。敬瑭得唐降兵千餘人，劉知遠勸敬瑭盡殺之。是夕，敬瑭出北門，見契丹主。契丹主執敬瑭手，恨相見之晚。敬瑭問曰：「皇帝遠來，士馬疲倦，遽與唐戰而大勝，何也？」契丹主曰：「始吾自北來，謂唐必斷鴈門諸路，伏兵險

要，則吾不可得進矣。使人偵視，皆無之，吾是以長驅深入，知大事必濟也。兵既相接，我氣方銳，彼氣方沮，若不乘此急擊之，曠日持久，則勝負未可知矣。此吾所以亟戰而勝，不可以勞逸常理論也。」敬瑭甚歎伏。⁷²

In the *JWDS* Yelü Deguang is always mentioned as *rongwang* 戎王 (“ruler of the barbarians”), while the *ZZTJ* refers to him in a perhaps more neutral way, *Kitan zhu* 契丹主 (“the Kitan ruler”). Moreover, Sima Guang enriches the account with details and anecdotes that were plausibly drawn from other sources and which were not included in the *JWDS*. In this narrative segment, Shi Jingtang addresses to the ruler of the Kitan as Emperor and he expresses words of admiration for the military skills of the Kitan. This passage is not mentioned in the *JWDS*.

The episode of the enthronement of Shi Jingtang is treated in the *ZZTJ* roughly following the same pattern of the *JWDS*, yet the narrative language presents significant changes from the official account and it suggests a more complex construction. The *ZZTJ* reports as follows:

The Kitan ruler told Shi Jingtang: “I travelled three thousand miles in order to help you, I was sure of our success. I observed your magnanimous appearance and mind: it is really that of a ruler of the Central Plain. I want to establish you as the Son of Heaven.” Shi Jingtang refused the offer four times, the generals and officials encouraged him to accept, and only then he accepted. The Kitan ruler redacted the official document and declared Shi Jingtang Emperor of the Great Jin. He took off his clothes and cap as a sign of acceptance, an altar was built at Liulin. On that same day he ascended to the throne. The prefectures of You, Ji, Ying, Mo, Zhuo, Tan, Shun, Xin, Wei, Ru, Wu, Yun, Ying, Huan, Shuo and Wei, in all sixteen prefectures were ceded to the Kitan. Moreover, an annual tribut of three hundred thousand bundles of silk was conceded to the Kitan. On the *yigai* day [Jan. 10th, 937], the seventh year of the Changxing era was changed to the first year of the Tianfu era. A great

⁷² *ZZTJ* 280:9148-49.

amnesty was declared. As for what concerned the administrative and legal affairs, they followed the old system of Mingzong.

契丹主謂石敬瑭曰：「吾三千里赴難，必有成功。觀汝器貌識量，真中原之主也。吾欲立汝為天子。」敬瑭亂讓者數四，將吏復勸進，乃許之。契丹主作冊書，命敬瑭為大晉皇帝，自解衣冠授之，築壇於柳林，是日，即皇帝位。割幽、薊、瀛、莫、涿、檀、順、新、媯、儒、武、雲、應、寰、朔、蔚十六州以與契丹，仍許歲輸帛三十萬匹。己亥，制改長興七年為天福元年，大赦；敕命法制，皆遵明宗之舊。⁷³

In the direct speech the Kitan ruler tells Shi Jingtang that he has come “in order to rescue him from difficulties” 赴難, whereas the Basic Annals of Gaozu (*JWDS*) reports the more diplomatic “moved by a sense of appropriateness” 赴義. Moreover, according to the *ZZTJ*, the Kitan ruler tells Shi Jingtang “I want to establish you as Son of Heaven” 吾欲立汝為天子, while the *JWDS* uses the official term *ce* 冊.

Another detail that has some relevance is the fact that, the old standard history places the ritual of the enthronement in Jinyang, headquarter of Shi Jingtang’s army, whereas the *ZZTJ* reports that “an altar was built in Liulin” 築壇於柳林, West of Jinyang, where the Kitan were camping their troops. The different location is reported in the *Feidi shilu* with the following wording: “the Hu established Shi as Son of Heaven in Liulin” 胡立石為天子於柳林.⁷⁴ Sima Guang did not entirely follow the *Feidi shilu*, yet by placing the enthronement at the military camp of the Kitan the historian shows his derogatory attitude. Moreover, the ritual becomes a mix of imperial tradition and non-Chinese elements: following tradition, Shi Jingtang refuses

⁷³ *ZZTJ* 280:9154.

⁷⁴ *ZZTJ* 280:9154.

four times, but then an altar is built and he takes off his clothes and cap.⁷⁵ The ritual loses its significance completely and is described as a mere act of power. Whereas the details concerning the enthronement show a negative assessment, other elements prove that the historian attempted to narrate the event in all its complexity. The use of date and era names is, in this case, meaningful in the narrative. The passage quoted above reports that the seventh year of the Changxing era (936), the name of the era of reign of Mingzong is changed into the first year of the Tianfu era, the first year of reign of the Later Jin. This detail reiterates the denial of the legitimacy of the last ruler of Later Tang, Li Congke. Moreover, the legal and bureaucratic administration is restored on the basis of the system established by Mingzong. Furthermore, as the next chapter will show, the high officials of Shi Jingtang's court are all names of loyal and capable subjects that had passed the *jinshi* examinations during the reign of Mingzong.

⁷⁵ References to the Later Jin non-Chinese origins are found scattered throughout the sources, but the information is so scanty that it is very difficult to trace their origins. Yang Lien-sheng attempted to piece together the description of a ceremony called *puma* 撲馬 or *puji* 撲祭 performed in 942, after the death of Gaozu and before his burial. In Hu Qiao's 胡嶠 *Xialu ji* 陷虜記 there is a reference to a Puma shan 撲馬山, located in Zuzhou 祖州 (fifty *li* from Xilou) where the tomb of Abaoji is located ("A 'Posthumous Letter'", p. 420-21, n.7; *ZZTJ* 287:9367).

Chapter 5: Sang Weihan and the Later Jin

Discussions over the dynamic of the rise and fall of the Later Jin recur often in court debates over war losses from the second half of the twelfth century onwards. Whenever inquiring into the historical factors that led to the losses resulting from wars fought in the 1120s and 1130s, scholars looked at the policies of the Later Jin as historical precedents. In a debate on military strategies between Zhang Jun 張浚 (1097-1164) and Chen Chengzhi 陳誠之 (1093-1170) recorded in the *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 建炎以來繫年要錄 in the year 1156, the two scholars present memorials to the court on military strategies and bring into the discussion the examples of Sang Weihan and Jing Yanguang.¹ We find a discussion on a similar topic in Wang Fuzhi's 王夫之 (1619-1692) *Du Tongjian lun* 讀通鑑論. Wang Fuzhi's judgement of the role of Sang Weihan is even more derogatory, calling him the "guilty one for [the future] ten thousand generations" 萬世之罪人 for having ceded the territories between Yan and Yun to the Kitan-Liao and, by doing so, bringing disaster to the people in the Central Plain.² Historians from the twelfth century onwards almost unanimously

¹ Li Xinchuan 李心傳 (1167-1240), *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 建炎以來繫年要錄 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1936), p. 2885.

² Wang Fuzhi, *Du Tongjian lun* 讀通鑑論 (Shanghai: Faxing zhe shijie shuju, 1936), p. 636. The main point of the discussion over the loss of territories during the Southern Song was that the Song had allied with the Jurchen Jin in order to recover the territories between Yan and Yun, which they did for a very brief time until the Jurchen, now supported by the Kitan, occupied Northern China. For a general discussion see Herbert Franke, "The Chin Dynasty," in *The Cambridge History of China: Alien Regimes and Border States, Volume 6* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 224-226. Besides the political spin of the interpretations provided by twelfth-century scholars, it is probably of some

regard Sang Weihān as the main person responsible for the alliance with the Kitan-Liao, whereas Shi Jingtang performs a secondary role. This chapter argues that the emphasis on Sang Weihān's role in diplomatic relations is enhanced by the narratives on the rise and fall of the dynasty in the *XWDS* and *ZZTJ*. As mentioned previously, both texts highlight Sang Weihān as the main responsible for the decision to request the Kitan intervention. The comprehensive chronicle even hints at the idea that Sang Weihān had become a sort of *protégé* of Liao Taizong at the Later Jin court. Whereas the Old History of the Five Dynasties highlights his alleged corruption and internal rivalry, in the *ZZTJ* the dismissal of Sang Weihān from court politics and his relocation as governor of Kaifeng is linked to matters of border defence.

5.1. Life and Early Career at the Court of Later Jin

Sang Weihān's historical relevance was such that several accounts of his career are available. Apart from the two biographies in the official histories, we have several anecdotal accounts recorded in tenth- and eleventh-century miscellanea. The earliest account of Sang Weihān's early life is included in his biography in the *JWDS*. His father, Sang Gong 桑拱, had served the governor of Heyang, Zhang Quanyi 張全義 (852-926), as reception officer (*kejiang* 客將), an administrative position in the residential garrison of the governor. Reception officers were 'protocol experts'³ in charge of arranging the reception of both imperial envoys and representatives of other

relevance to note that this highly negative depiction of Sang Weihān is still shared by some modern historians. Contemporary Chinese historians still describe Sang Weihān as "an incredibly shameless person" who "knelt in front of Yelü Deguang's tent, begging pitifully with all his might" in order to obtain the support of the Kitan; cf. Shu Fen 舒焚, *Liaoshi gao* 遼史稿 (Hubei: Hubei renmin chubanshe, 1984), pp. 241-242.

³ Wang Gungwu, *Divided China*, p. 138.

prefects, and they could also arrange audiences.⁴ The *JWDS* records that Sang was a native of Luoyang, although according to Oyang Xiu his family was originary from a different prefecture in Henan. Nothing else is known about his family background.

Sang Weihan had rather unusual physical features:

Weihan had a short body and a large face; he was certainly an unusual man; when he had become an adult, every time he looked in the mirror he consoled himself by saying: “A face one foot long is ways better than a body of seven feet!”

維翰身短面廣，殆非常人，既壯，每對鑑自歎曰：「七尺之身，安如一尺之面！」⁵

Sang Weihan’s unusual physical features are a recurring theme in the narrative segments that will be shown below.⁶ The *XWDS* reports that “Weihan’s physical appearance caused him to buttress himself through stringent sternness” 維翰狀貌既異，素以威嚴自持.⁷ His tiny, unsightly looking body and big head are regarded as marks of strong will and the biographies tell us that Sang Weihan was resolute in his aspiration to acquire examination credentials and to reach the highest ranks of officialdom. Between 923 and 925 he successfully passed the imperial examination.⁸ When Shi Jingtang became governor of Heyang, Sang Weihan served him as administrative secretary and from that time on he was bound by loyalty to Shi

⁴ Wang Gungwu, *Divided China*, p. 138.

⁵ *JWDS* 89:1161.

⁶ Short accounts on Sang Weihan physical features can be found also in *Wudai shi bu* and other Song collections of anecdotes (see *Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng* 8:2732 and 2744).

⁷ *XWDS* 29:321; Davis, *Historical Records*, p. 241.

⁸ The sources provide very little information about the examination during the Later Tang period. The imperial *jinshi* examination took place under Zhuangzong era for the first time after several years of interruption following the fall of the Tang. Through the entire Mingzong period of reign, several examinations were held. As remarked by Richard Davis, the examination system throughout the Five Dynasties period was generally not meant for the recruitment of officials, but rather conferred academic credentials to a small élite of literate people (Davis, *From Warhorses to Ploughshares*, pp. 143-44).

Jingtang until the latter's death. On his part, Shi Jingtang will appoint Sang as Chief Minister and Military Secretary.⁹

The eleventh-century *Chunzhu jiwēn* 春渚記聞 (Records of Hearsay of the Spring Islet) by He Yuan 何蘧 (1077-1145) records an anecdote that adds a detail to the official account concerning the circumstances of Sang's examination. According to the story, the examiner was suspicious of the *cognomen* Sang and dismissed him. When someone tried to persuade him to give up his aspiration to become a *jinshi* and to try to obtain official position through other means,

Weihan held up the iron ink stone in his hands and showed it to people saying: "My intentions will change when this ink stone shall be pierced" and he wrote the *fu* 'To the rising sun that buttresses the mulberry' in order to show his intentions.

維翰持鐵硯示人曰：「鐵硯穿，乃改業。」著日出扶桑賦以見志。¹⁰

The *XWDS* follows this narrative and adds a further detail concerning Sang Weihan's examination. Ouyang Xiu reports that "the examiner hated his *cognomen* because *sang* 'mulberry' is a homophone of *sang* 'mourning'" 主司惡其姓，以「桑」「喪」同音。¹¹

Ouyang Xiu includes the biography of Sang Weihan in the "Jin chen liezhuan" 晉臣列傳 (Biographies of the [Loyal] Subjects of the [Later] Jin). The historian regards Sang Weihan as one of the three loyal subjects of the Later Jin dynasty, together with Jing Yanguang and Wu Luan 吳巒 (d. 944) of Hedong. The biography is shorter than the *JWDS* biography and most of the events are briefly summed up. It

⁹ *JWDS* 89:1162.

¹⁰ *JWDS* 89:1161; *Zhizhai shulu jieti*, p. 333.

¹¹ *XWDS* 29:319. The *Wudai shihua* 五代詩話 records a *Zhutie yan* 鑄鐵硯 (Foundry Iron Inkstone) by Sang Weihan (*Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao*, p. 1795).

will be shown below that, in some cases, Ouyang Xiu ambiguously describes Sang Weihan as profiting from his power at court in order to enrich himself.

According to the sources mentioned above, Sang Weihan belongs to the first generation of tenth-century high officials who obtained academic credentials through the examination.¹² It is thus possible that Weihan's surname was derided by the examiners because he belonged to a lesser family. A different story about the circumstances in which Sang was enlisted among the successful examinees is provided by Zhang Qixian 張齊賢 (942-1014) in his *Luoyang jinshen jiu wenji* 洛陽縉紳舊聞記 (Record of Old Sayings from the Literati of Luoyang).¹³ In the biography devoted to the governor of Heyang, Zhang Quanyi,¹⁴ the “Zhang Qi wang quanyi waizhuan” 張齊王全義外傳 (Outern Biography of Zhang Quanyi, Prince of Qi),¹⁵ the author reports that when Sang Weihan was about to sit the imperial examinations, his father Gong took the chance to recommend his son to his patron, Zhang Quanyi. Zhang Quanyi asked the father to send in Weihan's writings and agreed to receive him. Upon reading Sang's essays, Zhang ordered that he be

¹² On this see also Wang Gungwu, *Divided China*, p. 154. In one occurrence the *ZZTJ* calls him scholar, *rusheng* 儒生 (*ZZTJ* 285:9301).

¹³ *Song shi* 265: 9150-60.

¹⁴ Zhang Quanyi was probably one of the most influential men of the last decade of the ninth and early tenth centuries. A former member of Huang Chao's army, he served under the Later Liang as governor of Henan and entrusted with the control of Luoyang. Zhang is credited for having rebuilt the city after the Huang Chao rebellion (Wang Gungwu, *Divided China*, p. 118-19). His biography is included in the *JWDS* among the subjects of the Later Tang (*JWDS* 63:37-844). His original name was Juyan 居言, and the Tang court bestowed on him the name Quanyi 全義. In order to avoid the taboo, in the Later Liang period he changed his name into Zongshi 宗奭, and Quanyi again in the Later Tang period.

¹⁵ The *Siku quanshu* includes the *Luoyang jinshen jiu wenji* in five *juan* under the *xiaoshuo* rubric, plausibly following earlier classification of the *Zhizhai shulu jieti* (p. 325). The book collects old stories and anecdotes about the city of Luoyang during the Later Liang and Later Tang period, and of the deeds of Zhang Quanyi.

addressed as *xiucai* 秀才, meaning “flourishing talent”, an unofficial designation for examination candidates, and agreed to grant him an audience. The story goes on by saying that Zhang Quanyi refused to receive him as a nominee for office (*gongshi* 貢士) and sent him back to the Bureau of Guests. He then told Sang’s father that other ways were possible and granted him an audience “according to guest ceremony” 以客禮見之. Upon seeing him, Zhang was amazed, possibly by his general physical features, and he treated him generously and favoured him greatly.¹⁶ Zhang then strongly recommended the promotion of Sang Weihan. In the same year, Sang Weihan was listed first among the successful examine candidates. When Sang became Chief Minister of the Later Jin, he requested that the posthumous titles of “loyal and honorable” 忠肅 be bestowed on Zhang Quanyi.¹⁷

Zhang Quanyi’s biography in the *Luoyang jinshen jiu wenji* was apparently written to supplement the brief official biography included in the *JWDS* and it provides alternative narrative versions of some events that plausibly shed a more positive light on the provincial governor. In the case of the story above, it enhances Zhang Quanyi’s role in promoting Sang Weihan for an official career. As a reward, Sang requested that an honorific title be bestowed upon him. Nonetheless, the ceremony for the bestowal of the title upon Zhang Quanyi was never performed due to unexpected events at court and the account closes with a request to the Song court for the fulfillment of the honorary recognition.¹⁸ We can presume that Zhang Qixian included the account in the biography of Zhang Quanyi in order to enhance the merits

¹⁶ *Luoyang jinshen jiu wenji*, 2:6b.

¹⁷ *JWDS* 89:1161-62.

¹⁸ *Luoyang jinshen jiu wenji*, 2:6b.

of his family clan as loyal subjects of the previous dynasties so as to claim certain privileges.¹⁹ The quote provides a different account of Sang Weihan's early career that is found in the *JWDS*. It was possibly his good skills in guest ceremonies that earned him the role of emissary to the Kitan. Sang Weihan was so talented in this respect that Liao Taizong had words of appreciation for him. The *ZZTJ* account stresses that in matters of diplomacy Taizong requested that Sang Weihan always be the mediator.

4.1.2. Sang Weihan at the Court of Shi Chonggui

The biography of Sang Weihan included in the old history is based on an earlier biographical account compiled by the historian Jia Wei as part of the compilation project of the Veritable Records of Gaozu in the Later Han period.²⁰ According to Jia Wei's own biography in the *JWDS*, the historian defamed Sang Weihan by implying that he had improperly accumulated a vast personal fortune. The reason for this is that when Sang Weihan was Director of the Historiographical Office, he disliked Jia Wei on a personal level and was very unkind to him. Jia Wei hated Sang and when writing his biography, he wrote that "after his death, [his holdings] amounted to eight thousand ingots of silver" 身沒之後，有白金八千錠. As his fellow colleagues

¹⁹ Zhang Qixian lived almost one century after Zhang Quanyi and in his biography in the *Song shi* there is no mention of their blood-relation. The biography mentions that when Qixian's father died, as their family was poor an official of Heyang took charge of the funeral expenses. In order to express his gratitude, Qixian "regarded him as an older brother" (*Song shi* 265:9158). After he retired from office, Qixian decided to assemble all the anecdotes and hear sayings he had collected from the officials in Heyang in order to provide a version of some events that was different from the official history. It is plausible to think that Qixian did that out of gratitude to the local government.

²⁰ *JWDS* 102:1357 and 1362.

believed this to be untrue, Wei wrote instead “several thousand ingots” 白金數千錠.²¹ In another instance the official biography reports that:

Yet since his position of power had become weighty, bribes and gifts from all four directions arrived at his door; therefore, over the course of several years he assembled goods worth millions. For this reason, those careerists who were in search of power could by this raise their words of slander.

然權位既重，而四方賂遺，咸湊其門，故仍歲之間，積貨鉅萬，由是澆競輩得以興謗。²²

Another set of stories sees Sang Weihan asking for compensation and consequently being ridiculed. In the early Song period, Zhou Yuchong 周羽翀 in his *San Chu xinlu* 三楚新錄 (New Records of the Three Kingdoms of Chu),²³ tells about an encounter between Sang Weihan and Ma Xifan 馬希範 (899-947). Ma Xifan, posthumous name Prince Wenzhao of Chu 楚文昭王 (r. 932-946), was the fourth son of the King of Chu, Ma Yin 馬殷 (852-930).²⁴ The story narrates that Ma Xifan was

²¹ Twitchett, *The Writing of History under the T'ang*, p. 195; *JWDS* 131:1728-29; *XWDS* 57:658; *Cefu yuangui* 562:11-12.

²² *JWDS* 89:1167. See *XWDS* 29: 320; Davis, *Historical Records*, p. 241. The *ZZTJ* reports instead that because Shi Chonggui received tributes and marvels from the four corners, and Sang Weihan remonstrated against his luxury and extravagancies (*ZZTJ* 285:9295-96).

²³ *JWDS* 89:1161. The *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* registers a *San Chu xinlu* in three *juan*. The *tiyao* questions the historicity of this anecdote, as when the alleged encounter between Ma Xifan and Sang Weihan took place, in the third year of the Tang Changxing era, the Jin had not been established yet and Sang Weihan was not a minister (*Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao*, p. 586).

²⁴ Ouyang Xiu includes his biography in the “Chu shijia” (Hereditary House of Chu; *XWDS* 66: 26-27. The biography of Ma Xifan in the “Shixi liezhuan” is almost entirely lacking in the modern edition of the *JWDS* based on the reconstruction from the *Yongle dadian*. The modern edition reports the reconstruction from the *Wudai shi bu* and other sources on the basis of the *Jiu Wudai shi kaoyi*. Both the *XWDS* and the *ZZTJ* report an entry on the richness of the state of Chu and Ma Xifan’s inability to manage it. The *ZZTJ* reports: “The state of Chu had great resources of gold and silver, and the profits made from the production of tea were also rich. For this reason the number of goods was increasing gradually. But [Ma] Xifan, the King of Chu, had extravagant wishes and was prone to exaggeration. He used to have spears and lances forged with gold, so that could be hold in hand but not used. He recruited young teenagers from the well-off families, in all eight thousand persons, and provided them with silver spears. His palaces and residences,

on his way to an audience at court when on the banks of the Huai River he met Sang Weihan who was travelling south. Sang Weihan attempted to obtain from Ma Xifan ten thousand ingots of silver as a sort of contribution towards the expenses of Ma's court visit. The story tells that:

At the sight of [Sang] Weihan's short size and long waist, [hearing] his rough way of speaking and, moreover, being ugly, [Ma Xifan] could not control himself and roared with laughter. Then he gave him several hundred silk bundles. Weihan was greatly enraged, he lifted his rope and left.

觀維翰形短而腰長，語魯而且醜，不覺絕倒而笑。既而與數百縑，維翰大怒，拂衣而去。²⁵

As a result, Sang Weihan issued the order to stop addressing Ma Xifan as General in chief by Heavenly Decree 天策上將軍 and Prince of Chu.²⁶ The 'three Chu' in the title of the *San Chu xinlu* refer to the three rulers that succeeded one another as the self-proclaimed King of Chu, Ma Yin, Zhou Xingfeng 周行逢 (?-962) and Gao Jixing 高季興 (858-929).²⁷ No other tenth- and eleventh- century source mentions the encounter between Sang Weihan and Ma Xifan and it is unclear what the reason might be for making up a story in which relations between the Prince of Chu and the Later Jin minister appear in an ambiguous light. The *Siku* editors doubt the historical accuracy of this anecdote and they possibly disliked the story because it ridicules Sang Weihan.

his gardens and pavilions, his furniture all was extremely extravagant. He built the 'Palace of the Nine Dragons' and had eight dragons carved encircling the pillars [...] [Ma] Xifan made the palace his residence and fancied himself as the ninth dragon." (*ZZTJ* 283:9258-59).

²⁵ *San Chu xinlu*, 1:2b-3a.

²⁶ For the bestowal of these titles to Ma Yin see *ZZTJ* 287:9368.

²⁷ The *JWDS* does not include a biography dedicated to Zhou Xingfeng, while the *XWDS* dedicates a biography in the *Chu shijia* (*XWDS* 66:830-832). The biography of Gao Jixing is included in the *Shixi liezhuan* 133:1751-55) of the *JWDS* and in the *Nanping shijia* of the *XWDS* (*XWDS* 69:855-861).

5.2. Sang Weihān and Defense Policies

As said in the previous chapter concerning Shi Jingtang, the *ZZTJ* focuses on Sang's public persona and provides no details about his early life and personality. In a similar manner, no information about his unusual features can be found in the *ZZTJ*. Instead, the comprehensive chronicle focuses on Sang's institutional role as intermediary in diplomatic relations with the Kitan and on more than one occasion it emphasizes his qualities as loyal subject of the ruler. Praise for Sang is provided by the words of Liao Taizong:

The Kitan ruler told the Emperor: "As Sang Weihān is loyal to the utmost to you, it is appropriate to appoint him as Chief Minister."

契丹主謂帝曰：「桑維翰盡忠於汝，宜以為相」²⁸

Liao Taizong, on another occasion, reveals himself as a sort of protector of Sang Weihān. Before heading back to the North, Taizong has a final talk with Gaozu. The *ZZTJ*, as it does elsewhere, depicts the farewell ceremony as an intimate moment by saying that Taizong and Gaozu, in tears, clasped their hands and for a long time they could not part from each other.²⁹ Taizong placed his own marten coat on Gaozu's shoulders, offered him two thousand war horses and urged the Jin Emperor to reward Liu Zhiyuan and Sang Weihān for their merits as loyal subjects who accomplished the task of founding the dynasty.³⁰ Sang Weihān will be entrusted with the double position of Chief Minister and Military Secretary in 936.³¹ Interestingly, Gaozu will

²⁸ *ZZTJ* 280:9158.

²⁹ *ZZTJ* 280:9161.

³⁰ *ZZTJ* 280:9162.

³¹ The position of Military Secretary was abolished soon after Sang Weihān's dismissal and its duties assigned to the Chief Minister. On the appointment of bureaucrats and academicians as Military Secretaries during Mingzong reign and the Later Jin see Wang Gungwu, *Divided China*, pp. 154-55. The *Wudai shi zuanwu* records a lengthy discussion on the dismissal of Sang Weihān

not be able to do as recommended and, following an internal rivalry, only two years after Sang Weihan will be dismissed to a provincial governorship. After a five years interval between 938 and 943, Sang Weihan will be appointed Military Secretary again by Shi Jingtang's successor, Shi Chonggui.³²

Sang Weihan's peace policy is covered extensively in the *ZZTJ*. In 937 the Kitan-led Liao dynasty established its Southern Capital in Youzhou.³³ The sixteen prefectures between Yan and Yun that were ceded to the Kitan, and also referred to as Da Liao 大遼, were integrated into the empire administrative system and jurisdiction.³⁴ Following the war and its excessive costs, governmental stores were empty and the people impoverished. Furthermore, as the Kitan were always unsatisfied with how their requests were answered, the discontent at the Jin court among those who wanted to break the pact with the Northern neighbors was growing. Although dismissed from the position of Military Secretary, Sang Weihan continued to influence Gaozu's decisions in matters of diplomacy. On several occasions Sang Weihan was able to persuade the Emperor to put resentment aside and "to pay respect to the Kitan with humble words and generous ceremonies" 卑辭厚禮以奉契丹, so as to pacify the Empire and restore its military defenses.³⁵ Although the requests from the Kitan-Liao put a strong pressure on the court, the peace policy supported by Sang Weihan and sanctioned by Gaozu led to a period of relative peace in the North. The

and notes internal discrepancies in the *XWDS* (Wang Gungwu, *Divided China*, p. 171; *Wudai shi zuanwu* 3:34-35).

³² *JWDS* 89:1167; *XWDS* 29:320.

³³ *ZZTJ* 281:9167.

³⁴ Initially the term Da Liao was used to refer only to the region of the sixteen prefectures, whereas in the rest of the territory the Kitan would refer to their empire as Da Kitan 大契丹; for a discussion on the topic see Daniel Kane, "The Great Central Liao Kitan State," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 43 (2013): 27-50, Karl Wittfogel and Feng Chia-sheng, "Liao," p. 38.

³⁵ *ZZTJ* 281:9168.

ZZTJ says that “in the space of a few years, the Central Kingdom was almost at peace” 數年之間，中國稍安。³⁶

Having the right men controlling the Northern borderland territories and administering the Northern military governorships was a core issue for up keeping peace. In 938 the military governorship of Chengde 成德, a strategic post in Hedong, was assigned to the official of Sogdian origins An Chongrong 安重榮 (d. 942), also known as An Tiehu 安鐵胡, “An the Iron Barbar.”³⁷ In 941 An Chongrong killed Liao emissaries; moreover, securing the support of several tribal leaders such as the Tuyuhun 吐谷渾 leader Bai Chengfu 白承福³⁸ against the Kitan, An Chongrong reported to the court his intentions of breaking the covenant with the Liao court.³⁹ Sang Weihai again persuaded Gaozu of the unfavorable military conditions and the possible risks to the stability of the empire from a conflict. He presented a secret memorial to the court explaining his seven reasons for not engaging in a war with the Kitan. The memorial is reported entirely in Sang Weihai’s biography in the *JWDS*, whereas Ouyang Xiu sums it up in a few words.⁴⁰ It is recorded partially and with few variations in the *ZZTJ*. Sang Weihai reminds the Emperor that thanks to the Kitan intervention the siege of Jinyang was put to an end and the Shi family clan had come

³⁶ *ZZTJ* 281:9168.

³⁷ *ZZTJ* 282:9228. As remarked by Pulleyblank, by the Tang period the word *hu* 胡 ‘barbarian’ became a term used to refer to central Asian people, and specifically to Sogdians (“A Sogdian Colony,” p. 318).

³⁸ Bai Chengfu was the leader of a T’u-yü-hun tribal confederation located near the prefecture of Jinyang. When in 936 the Yan-Yun territories were ceded to the Kitan-Liao, Bai Chengfu became a subject of the latter. In 941 Bai Chengfu, together with other tribes, fled from the Kitan territories and resettled inside the Jin frontiers; cf. Gabriella Molè, *The T’u-yü-hun from the Northern Wei to the Time of the Five Dynasties*. Serie Orientale Roman, vol. 41 (Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1970), xxiii-xxiv.

³⁹ *ZZTJ* 282:9222 and 98:1302-02; *Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng* 8:3005-6.

⁴⁰ *JWDS* 89:1167; *XWDS* 29:320.

to power. Although the terms of the pact were considered by some as shameful for the empire, from the time of the enthronement in 936 the Kitan-Liao and the Later Jin court had enjoyed amicable relations and the alliance had brought a period of relative peace and stability to the empire after decades of uninterrupted wars and ravages in the border regions. The annual tribute to the Kitan, Sang Weihan says, must thus not be considered shameful when compared to the damage that a war would bring to the people.⁴¹ The reasons provided by Sang Weihan successfully convinced Gaozu not to break the alliance.

Upon Gaozu's death, following the advice of somebody from Sang Weihan's entourage, Sang Weihan was recruited again as Military Secretary. Nonetheless, Sang's influence on the policy making of Shi Chonggui began to weaken and soon after he was dismissed as governor of Kaifeng.⁴² He claimed to be suffering from a foot disease and rarely ever appeared at court audiences. Subsequently, the peace policy was abandoned in favor of a more aggressive strategy. The rupture with the Liao and the consequent destruction of the Later Jin was caused by a change in diplomatic policy decided by the general Jing Yanguang 景延廣 (892-947). Upon the death of Shi Jingtang in 942, the announcement of a mourning period was sent to the Kitan; following a remonstrance presented by Jing, instead of the formal report the court sent an informal letter in which the Emperor addressed himself as "nephew"

⁴¹ *JWDS* 89:1163-66; *XWDS* 29:320-21; *ZZTJ* 282:9222-24.

⁴² The *ZZTJ* hints at another reason for the dismissal of Sang Weihan: somebody asks the then Chief Minister Feng Yu 馮玉 about the decision of dismissing Sang Weihan and replies that the court fears that he might rebel. When somebody objects that Sang Weihan, being a scholar, does not have the means to rebel against the court, Feng replies that he could teach other people to rebel (*ZZTJ* 285:9301).

孫.⁴³ Shortly after, Jing Yanguang arrested Qiao Rong 喬榮, the former military commander of Heyang who had fled to the Kitan and had been named by Liao Taizong as a *huitushi* 回圖使, an official who was given trading responsibilities with the Jin. Moreover, Jing Yanguang persuaded the Emperor to confiscate all the wealth collected in Qiao Rong's residence. In a similar manner, all the Kitan merchants who were doing business in Jin territories were killed and their properties confiscated. Eventually Qiao Rong was released and before his departure Jing Yanguang gave him a message for Liao Taizong in which he reiterated the intention of the Later Jin court to stop addressing as subjects of the Liao.⁴⁴

The reason for Sang Weihān's dismissal from court is connected in the *ZZTJ* to his disagreement with Shi Chonggui over the urgency to appoint trusted men as military governors in the border regions in order to avoid uprisings against the court. On the other hand, the *JWDS* associates Sang Weihān's dismissal with a matter of court rivalry.⁴⁵ Ouyang Xiu roughly follows the same narrative as the *JWDS* in describing Sang Weihān as corrupt and certainly acting in self-interest.⁴⁶ In the same manner, Shi Chonggui also appears in a negative light. The two official histories consider the dismissal of Sang Weihān as a matter of internal politics that have

⁴³ *ZZTJ* 283:9242; Lien-sheng Yang argues that the Dunhuang 'posthumous letter' (*yishu* 遺書) sent to the Liao from Emperor Chu in name of the dying Gaozu may well correspond to this disrespectful message, as it presents "a curious mix of respect and disrespect." The manuscript is part of the Stein Collection (S4473); it has been reproduced and published by Lionel Giles in 1940 and entirely translated by Lien-sheng Yang (see "A 'Posthumous Letter' from the Chin Emperor to the Kitan Emperor in 942," in *Excursions in Sinology*, 420-421 and 424; Lionel Giles, "Dated Chinese Manuscripts in the Stein Collection," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies* 10.2 (1940): 339. A transcription of the letter is also reported by Chen Shangjun (*Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng* 7:2500-2501).

⁴⁴ *JWDS* 85:1124-25; *Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng* 7:2656; *XWDS* 17:176-77; *ZZTJ* 283:2953.

⁴⁵ *JWDS* 89:1167.

⁴⁶ *XWDS* 29:320; Davis, *Historical Records*, p. 241.

nothing to do with foreign diplomacy and the urgent need to provide the Northern regions with trustworthy military governors. The *ZZTJ* instead offers a different picture of Sang Weihan's dismissal.

The governorship of another strategic post, Shunguo 順國, was assigned to Du Chongwei 杜重威 (d. 948), the brother-in-law of Gaozu.⁴⁷ Du was an official without particular merits who had been promoted only thanks to his kinship relation with the Emperor. The comprehensive chronicle reports that “his nature was greedy and cruel, and he was self-assured [thanks to his] noble kins” 性貪殘，自恃貴戚。⁴⁸ The *ZZTJ* also adds that all the wealth collected in his residence had been stolen from the people, and that

his fear and cowardly were so exasperated that every time some dozen cavalymen of the Kitan entered the borders, Wei⁴⁹ would lock the gates and climb on the top of the wall; if those few cavalymen passed under the wall driving away a hundred or a thousand of captive Chinese, Wei would merely stretch his neck and stare at them angrily without any intention of rescuing the captives. For this reason the caitiffs had nothing to worry or fear, and [the population in] many of the attached cities was massacred by them without Wei finally moving out one single soldier to rescue them. In a range of a thousand *li* bones bleaching in the sun were numerous as grass and the villages were almost completely deserted.

又畏懦過甚，每契丹數十騎入境，威已閉門登陴，或數騎驅所掠華人千百過城下，威但瞋目延頸望之，無意邀取。由是虜無所忌憚，屬城多為所屠，威竟不出一卒救之，千里之間，暴骨如莽，村落殆盡。⁵⁰

⁴⁷ The *JWDS* includes the biography of Du Chongwei in the section of biographies dedicated to the Later Han subjects, while Ouyang Xiu includes him in the miscellaneous biographies (*XWDS* 52:591-594).

⁴⁸ *ZZTJ* 284:9291-92.

⁴⁹ The *ZZTJ* has Du Wei in order to avoid the taboo name of the Emperor, Shi Chonggui.

⁵⁰ *ZZTJ* 284:9292.

When Du Chongwei saw that he had lost the support of his people and that the Kitan were about to invade, he repeatedly pled Shi Chonggui to let him enter the court, but the Emperor did not allow him. Chongwei did not wait for a response and rapidly left his post and entered the court. Sang Weihān remonstrated with the Emperor:

“Wei certainly disobeyed the imperial order. Acting on his own [without approval from the court] he has left the border prefectures. In ordinary circumstances he relied on his position as a meritorious subject to demand to indulge in pleasure, but when there were numerous incidents in the border territory, he did not show the slightest inclination to protect [them] and to ward off [evil]; it is appropriate to use the occasion to dismiss him, in order to make sure that we will have nothing to regret afterwards.” The Emperor was not pleased. [Sang] Weihān said: “If Your Majesty does not endure to discharge him, the appropriate thing to do is to appoint him to a minor official post close to the capital. Do not appoint him again to a strong border province.” The Emperor replied: “Wei is a close relative of mine, he certainly does not harbor second thoughts; he just desires to pay visit to the Princess of Song née Zhang, you should not doubt him!” From then on Weihān did not dare to talk about state affairs. Appealing to a foot disease he resigned from his post. On the *bingzhen* day [July 8th, 945], Wei arrived at Daliang.

「威固違朝命，擅離邊鎮。居常憑恃勳舊，邀求姑息，及疆場多事，曾無守禦之意；宜因此時廢之，庶無後患。」帝不悅。維翰曰：「陛下不忍廢之，宜授以近京小鎮，勿復委以雄藩。」帝曰：「威，朕之密親，必無異志；但宋國長公主切欲相見耳，公勿以為疑」維翰自是不敢復言國事，以足疾辭位。丙辰，威至大梁。⁵¹

According to the *ZZTJ*, the main reason for the dismissal of Sang Weihān is Shi Chonggui’s unwillingness of taking the right decisions. The quote above shows how the *ZZTJ* uses strongly critical words to describe Du Chongwei. In other passages the text reiterates those judgements: Du Chongwei is described as a coward that, when meeting with his military assistants and all the military commanders, he would “set

⁵¹ *ZZTJ* 284:9292.

out wine and enjoy himself, and he rarely discussed military matters” 置酒作樂，罕議軍事。⁵²

Generally speaking, in the *ZZTJ* Sang Weihan is judged much more positively than in Ouyang Xiu’s account. He is seen as the only person whose position would have saved the empire. While the two histories of the Five Dynasties do not mention Sang Weihan’s remonstrance against Du Chongwei,⁵³ the *ZZTJ* enhances Sang Weihan’s role in attempting to persuade the Emperor of the military inability and moral ambiguity of the general. According to the *ZZTJ*, Sang Weihan is well aware of the danger that Du Chongwei as military governor of a strategic frontier region might cause to the court. It is interesting to note that the *ZZTJ* recurs to the same wording in the answer that the Emperor gives to Sang Weihan as in the case of Li Congke’s answer on the eve of Shi Jingtang’s rebellion: “Wei is a close relative of mine, he certainly does not harbor second thoughts.” Moreover, in the following line the *ZZTJ* records the day of arrival of Du Chongwei at court, the same narrative pattern recurs in the last Annals of Later Tang.⁵⁴

The chronological account of Du Chongwei’s misdeeds, the record of the date of his arrival at court, and the dialogue between the Emperor and Sang Weihan in the form of direct speech, provide the prospective reader with all the necessary elements for guessing what is going to happen next: when in 946 the Kitan invade the empire,

⁵² *ZZTJ* 285:9315.

⁵³ The *XWDS* dedicates to Du Chongwei a biography in the Miscellaneous Biographies section. Chapter 52 of the *zazhuan* is dedicated to Du Chongwei, Li Shouzhen 李守貞 and Zhang Yanze 張彥澤, the three generals of the Later Jin whose ambiguous behavior contributed to the defeat against the Kitan. In particular, Ouyang Xiu comments, the cruel and theatrical death of Zhang Yanze is the ultimate proof of their unethical behavior (*XWDS* 51:591-95). The *JWDS* includes Du Chongwei as subject of the Later Han (*JWDS* 109:1434-37).

⁵⁴ “On the *yimao* day, Shi Jingtang entered the court” (*ZZTJ* 279:9117).

Du Chongwei is one of the first generals to defect to the Kitan with the false promise of being enthroned Emperor.

The last part of the Annals of the Later Jin is a long single entry concerning the chronicle of the invasion. The opening records the invasion in the eleventh month of the year 946, December 18th, as “the Kitan ruler massively raised [troops], entered and plundered [the territories]” 契丹大舉入寇,⁵⁵ and closes with the tragic death of Sang Weihai and Jing Yanguang. The time frame in which the *ZZTJ* places the chronicle is meaningful: although the conflict with the Kitan lasted more than two months, the *ZZTJ* symbolically closes the long entry with the last day of the twelfth month (January 24th, 947) and it reports that “the one hundred officials lodged at the temple for the *fen* and *shan* sacrifices” 百官宿封禪寺.⁵⁶ The construction of an ideal time frame for the chronicling of the events concerning the invasion aims to provide closure to the narrative. On the other hand, the Annals of the Later Han open the new chronicle with “in the first month of spring, on the *dinghai* day, first day of the new moon, the one hundred officials departed from the ruler of Jin North of the walled city [of Daliang]” 春，正月，丁亥朔，百官遙辭晉主於城北.⁵⁷

The central body of the entry is a long narrative of the conflict between the Later Jin army and the Kitan military forces at the Zhongdu Bridge 中度橋 on the

⁵⁵ *ZZTJ* 285:9315.

⁵⁶ Hu Sanxing comments: “They did so in order to meet and welcome the Kitan ruler. The office of the imperial sacrifices was located in the Eastern part outside of the walls of Daliang” (*ZZTJ* 285:9326).

⁵⁷ *ZZTJ* 286:9327. According to Shi Chonggui’s epitaph, the last emperor, together with his court, was moved by the Kitan to their Eastern Capital. The Kitan emperor bestowed upon him the title of king of Jin and the fortified city where he was relocated was named Anjin 安晉 (*Xnji huizheng* 7:2664).

Hutuo 滹沱 River⁵⁸ outside the city of Hengzhou 恆州. The scene describes the city of Hengzhou surrounded by the Kitan and the imperial army, camped outside the city walls, unable to attack. The narrative focuses on the unwillingness of the general Du Chongwei to carry out successful military strategies. The account is mostly narrated from the perspective of the officials under his command with a profusion of details concerning their feelings of frustration. The chronicle runs as follows:

- [22nd day of the 11th month, December 18th 946] The Kitan invade the borders and head towards the city of Hengzhou. At that time, the military governor of Zhangde 張德, Zhang Yanze 張彥澤, is located in Hengzhou. He sends troops to meet Du Chongwei, in order to tell him of a plan to defeat the Kitan. Du Chongwei returns to Hengzhou and names Zhang Yanze general of the military vanguard.⁵⁹
- On December 23rd 946, Du Chongwei reaches the Zhongdu Bridge. The Kitan have already taken the bridge and destroyed it.
- The Kitan and the Jin armies are encamped at the two sides of the Hutuo River. When the Kitan realizes that the Jin are not going to attack, they decide not to retreat.
- Li Gu 李穀 proposes a stratagem to cross the Hutuo River. All the officials and generals agree on the plan. Only Du Chongwei is reluctant.⁶⁰
- The Kitan with an army of one hundred cavalymen reach the front of the Jin army in order to clear the way for provisions and block a possible retreat.⁶¹
- On December 26th 946, Li Gu sends a secret memorial to the court about the situation of the army in Hengzhou and suggesting a military strategy to the Emperor.
- Only December 28th 946 [seven days after the attack] the Emperor hears about what took place at Zhongdu Bridge.⁶²

⁵⁸ The bridge was located on the Hutuo 滹沱 river in the Southeastern part of Hengzhou (*ZZTJ* 285:9315).

⁵⁹ The Kaoyi quotes a different version of the events as reported in Jia Wei's Beishi. According to Jia Wei, Zhang Yanze and Du Chongwei had already secretly allied with the Liao (*ZZTJ* 285:9315).

⁶⁰ *ZZTJ* 285:9316.

⁶¹ *ZZTJ* 285:9316.

⁶² *ZZTJ* 285:9317.

- On December 29th, Du Chongwei sends a memorial asking to increase the number of soldiers and the provisions. The work is carried out under considerable strain and the provisions are spilled and lost. One day after Du Chongwei again sends an urgent report to the court, but the envoy is captured by the Kitan. From that moment on, communication with the court is interrupted.⁶³
- Sang Weihan hurries to the court and asks to meet the Emperor. The Emperor is in the royal park, training hawks, and declines the visit.⁶⁴ Sang Weihan then reaches the high officials in order to talk to them about the situation, but the officials also decline the visit. As he returns, Sang Weihan talks with his closest friends and foretells the fall of the Jin.⁶⁵
- Several officials die in battle because Du Chongwei does not want to intervene. The feelings of mistrust and rage grow among the soldiers.⁶⁶
- On January 2nd the Kitan cut all the routes for provisions to the Jin military camp. The Kitan Emperor deceives Du Chongwei by promising to enthrone him Emperor if he surrenders. On the fourth of January Du Chongwei orders his troops to take off the armor and surrender.⁶⁷
- Previously, before the surrender of Du Chongwei, Guo Lin 郭璘, an official in Yizhou 易州, refused to surrender to the Kitan and died, killed by an envoy.⁶⁸
- The military governor of Meiwu, Li Gu and Fang Tai all surrender to the Kitan.
- The Kitan troops move to the South, together with the troops of Du Chongwei. Zhang Yanze is sent as vanguard to take Daliang.
- Zhang Yanze heads to Daliang. The Emperor learns that Du Chongwei has surrendered and that Zhang Yanze is about to reach the capital. He summons Li Song, Feng Yu and Li Yantao in order to devise a plan. The Emperor wants to order Liu Zhiyuan to intervene.⁶⁹
- Zhang Yanze enters the imperial palace. The Emperor surrenders and bestows the imperial seal upon him.⁷⁰

⁶³ ZZTJ 285:9317.

⁶⁴ This anecdote is probably based on an anecdote collected in the *Wudai shi bu* (*Wudai shi bu* 5: 2498; *Jiu Wudai shi xinji huizheng* 8:2742).

⁶⁵ ZZTJ 285:9317.

⁶⁶ ZZTJ 285:9317-18.

⁶⁷ ZZTJ 285:9318.

⁶⁸ ZZTJ 285:9319.

⁶⁹ ZZTJ 285:9320.

⁷⁰ On the forgery of the imperial seal see chapter three and below.

- Someone tells Sang Weihan to escape.
- Zhang Yanze pillages the city of Daliang.⁷¹
- On the 18th day of the 12th month [January 12th] Zhang Yanze moves the Emperor and the imperial clan to the temple of the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices.⁷²
- Fen Yu flatters Zhang Yanze and asks him to be sent to transmit the imperial seal, wishing to receive favors from the Kitan.⁷³
- “That night [Jan. 12th 947] Zhang Yanze kills Sang Weihan.”⁷⁴
- On the 23rd day of the 12th month [Jan 17th] the Kitan receive the imperial seal⁷⁵ and they suspect it to be a forgery.⁷⁶
- On the 30th day of the 12th month [Jan. 24th], the one hundred officials lodge at the temple for the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices.⁷⁷

While the official history simply mentions that Du Chongwei surrenders to the Kitan, the *ZZTJ* supplements the account with narrative details that put the general in an

⁷¹ *ZZTJ* 285:9322.

⁷² *ZZTJ* 285:9322-23.

⁷³ *ZZTJ* 285:9323.

⁷⁴ The account of the last encounter between Zhang Yanze and Sang Weihan, and the killing of this latter is possibly based on the anecdote recorded in the *Wudai shi bu* (*Wudai shi bu* 5:2499). A short story recorded by Wang Renyu 王仁裕 (880-956) in his *Yutang xianhua* 玉堂閒話 and collected in the *Taiping guangji*, sees Sang Weihan, after his demotion to Governor of Kaifeng and only a few years before his death, having dreams that foretell his death: “When Sang Weihan, the Duke of Wei, was governor of Kaifeng, he suddenly experienced, one day as he was sitting alone at midnight in his main chamber, a great shock of fear. It was as though he saw something, and he cried out in a powerful voice into thin air, ‘How dare you come here!’ This happened three or four times. For ten days, he experienced unrelieved indignation, and even those closest to him did not venture to ask about it. Before long he had a dream in which he was formally dressed and provided with a dignified carriage and outriders, preparing to set out on a visit. But at the point where he was going to mount, the horse he was to ride went missing, and though sought after could not be traced. Once awake again. He was disgusted by this dream. And before many days had gone by he met disaster.” 魏公桑維翰。尹開封。一日。嘗中夜於正寢獨坐。忽大驚悸。如有所見。向空厲聲云。汝焉敢此來。如是者數四。旬日憤懣不已。雖齊體亦不敢有所發問。未幾。夢已整衣冠。嚴車騎。將有所詣。就乘之次。忽所乘馬亡去。追尋莫知所在。既寤。甚惡之。不數日及難。出玉堂閒話 (translation by Glen Dudbridge, *A Portrait of Five Dynasties China*, p. 74-75).

⁷⁵ *ZZTJ* 285:9324-25. On the seals forged during the Later Tang and Later Jin see chapter three. On the transmission of Shi Jingtang’s forged seal to the Kitan see also *ZZTJ* 291:9491-92.

⁷⁶ *ZZTJ* 285:9325.

⁷⁷ *ZZTJ* 285:9326.

extremely negative light. Du Chongwei's worst sin is to have deceived his troops twice: the first time by suddenly ordering them to surrender to the Kitan and the second time by being cheated by the Kitan leader with the promise of becoming Emperor:

On the *jiazi* day, the Kitan surrounded the Jin military camp. Outside communications were interrupted and the food supplies inside the camp were finished. Du Wei planned together with Li Shouzhen and Song Li to surrender to the Kitan. Du Wei secretly sent one of his closest trustees to go to the tent of the Kitan asking for precious rewards. The Kitan ruler, deceiving him replied: 'Awe and prestige of Zhao Yanshou⁷⁸ have always been shallow. I am afraid he is not fit to rule the Central States. If you truly surrender I will let you do this.' Du Wei rejoiced and immediately organized a plan to surrender. On the *bingyan* day, he hid armored soldiers and called in the generals. Then he took out the memorial of his own surrender and showed it to them, letting them sign it. The generals were surprised and shocked but nobody dared to say anything. So they were just able to say "yes, yes" and observed the order. Wei sent the Imperial Audiences envoy Gao Dongzhai to go to the Kitan. The Kitan immediately granted him an edict in which they admitted him into their ranks. That day, Wei ordered all his officers to build a formation outside. All the officers jumped up, convinced that they were going to fight. [Du] Wei instructed them personally: "Today the food supplies are finished and our ways have come to an end, so I have to find a solution to survive together with you." And then he ordered them to take off the armor. All the officers were moved and cried, so that the sound shook the plain. Still Wei and Shouzhen proclaimed to the soldiers "The ruler above has slipped away from virtues, and has given his trust to evil subjects, suspecting [each other] and being hostile altogether." There was none among those who heard this who did not gnash their tooth out of anger. The Kitan ruler sent Zhao Yanshou in imperial dress to the Jin camp in order to comfort the officers and soldiers saying: "This is all yours." From Du Wei on downwards everybody greeted him in front of his horse. Though he had shown the imperial dress to the army of the Jin, he had in reality only made fun of them.

甲子，契丹遙以兵環晉營，內外斷絕，軍中食且盡。杜威與李守貞、宋彥筠謀降契丹，威潛遣腹心詣契丹牙帳，邀求重賞。契丹主

⁷⁸ On Zhao Yanshou 趙延壽 (d. 948) see Naomi Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty*, pp. 125-30, 133-42.

給之曰：「趙延壽威望素淺，恐不能帝中國。汝果降者，當以汝為之。」威喜，遂定降計。丙寅，伏甲召諸將，出降表示之，使署名。諸將駭愕，莫敢言者，但唯唯聽命。威遣閤門使高動齋詣契丹，契丹立賜詔慰納之。是日，威悉命軍士出陳於外，軍士皆踴躍，以為且戰，威親諭之曰：「今食盡塗窮，當與汝曹共求生計。」因命釋甲。軍士皆慟哭，聲振原野。威、守貞仍於眾中揚言：「主上失德，信任奸邪，猜忌於己。」聞者無不切齒。契丹主遣趙延壽衣赭袍至晉營，慰撫士卒，曰：「彼皆汝物也。」杜威以下，皆迎謁於馬前；亦以赭袍衣威以示晉軍，其實皆戲之耳。⁷⁹

The surrender of Du Chongwei marks the beginning of the defeat of the Later Jin and sets events in motion for the murder of Sang Weihan. It is again significant to see how the sources represent the death of Sang Weihan in different ways. The *JWDS* and *XWDS* report the same account, whereby the murder was commissioned by the Emperor and carried out by Zhang Yanze. Accordingly, the Emperor feared that, when meeting with Sang Weihan, the latter could inform Liao Taizong about his misdeeds. Shi Chonggui then decided that it was better to “eliminate the witness.”⁸⁰ By contrast, Sima Guang considers Zhang Yanzhe the only one responsible for the murder. Moreover, both the old and new histories of the five dynasties describe the death of Sang Weihan in a very theatrical way, while the short entry of the *ZZTJ* simply says that “Yanze killed Sang Weihan” 彥澤殺桑維翰.⁸¹

⁷⁹ *ZZTJ* 285:9318.

⁸⁰ *JWDS* 89:1168.

⁸¹ *ZZTJ* 285:9323.

Concluding remarks

This thesis questions how historical narratives of major events concerning two of the Northern regimes of the tenth century Five Dynasties period were constructed and how both late-tenth-century historiographical agencies and eleventh-century historians perceived and retold these early narratives. I have argued that the subsequent historians, using the same source material, enhanced early tenth-century narratives so as to tell different stories: divergent narrative details are useful in weighing in different ways the responsibilities of the characters involved, as well as in establishing hierarchies among the historical agents. Indeed, the analysis of the five case studies presented above bares certain limits. I first looked for evidence in the early tenth-century history writing project commissioned by the Later Tang. Although the surviving sources are fragmentary and have been edited and manipulated in later times, it is still possible, I think, to see how the Shatuo Li spared no effort in achieving political legitimacy by presenting themselves as having been loyal members of the Tang ruling house all along. The forgery of a genealogical history that showed the Shatuo as having always been part of the Chinese Empire is one of the results of this conscious effort. Though the Shatuo were not the only 'honorary Li' to build the foundation of their cultural and political legitimization upon their being awarded the imperial surname, they were able to construct a narrative that drew a clear line of distinction and hierarchy between them and their competitors. From my viewpoint, this is particularly evident in the case of the Kitan: by establishing an alliance with the

Kitan for the sake of the empire, the Shatuo Li on the one hand distinguished themselves from the Northern tribal world and on the other adopted diplomatic practices that had been until then a prerogative of the Tang court. The first account of diplomatic relations with the Kitan, as a product of the newly established Later Tang historiographical office, legitimizes Li Keyong, the Prince of Jin, as the counterpart of a brotherhood agreement with Abaoji. Although the terms of the agreement could be ambiguously interpreted by the two parties, the Later Tang narratives enhance the role of Li Keyong as the legitimate counterpart of a peace pact with a subordinate ally. Enmity between the two parties begins to surface in eleventh-century narratives. A clear depiction of the Kitan as barbarians appears in Ouyang Xiu's *New History*. Along the lines of the traditional historiographical definition of the term, Ouyang Xiu aligns the Kitan among the peoples culturally other and living in the 'wild domain'. Moreover, as it has been shown, Ouyang Xiu's narrative is rather concerned with how the relation between Jin and Kitan ought to be, according to ritual propriety, than with how it was. Though he used the same material, Sima Guang seems to apply different parameters in defining the (cultural and moral) hierarchy between Jin and Kitan. Unlike Ouyang Xiu, the historian gives little consideration to the ethnic characterization of the different historical agencies; instead, a careful focus on causes and consequences surfaces from the narratives of the *ZZTJ*. Sima Guang depicts Li Keyong as a capable military leader yet mostly interested in his own business, that of defending his power in Hedong, and not particularly concerned with matters of dynastic legacy. Similarly, the Kitan ruler is depicted as a leader of a foreign country yet equal in power, an ally in moments of need or else a betrayer. Further evidence of Sima Guang's approach to the early narratives of the Later Tang is provided by the

case of Zhang Chengye's remonstrance. Despite the dubious reliability of his source, the historian adopts the most pragmatic version of the events offered by an eleventh-century anecdotal collection, in which the eunuch is depicted in his role as advisor to Li Cunxu, without all the emphasis on the restoration of the Tang ruling house that is enhanced by earlier sources.

In the second part of the thesis I deal with the narratives concerning the ascent of the Shis and the foundation of the Later Jin. The case here appears to be more complex. First of all, as the Later Jin court focused on the compilation of the Tang standard history, the records of the reign of Shi Jintang were compiled under the Later Han. As a consequence, we have very little evidence of how the Later Jin themselves perceived and narrated the events as they unfolded. Nonetheless, I believe that a few narrative details can shed some light on how the relationship between the Shis and the Kitan-led Liao was perceived. First, as we previously saw in the case of the Shatuo Li, the first Later Jin ruler also spared no effort in concealing his ethnic origins. In light of the little evidence available, we can presume that stories related to the Sogdian origins of the Shi family were already circulating in the tenth century; nonetheless, the official records omit them completely and instead record omens and predictions of possible Buddhist influence, as well as related to the *Book of Changes*. Not only the Shis present themselves as 'Chinese', but also the Kitan are in some instances depicted as culturally akin. In the well-known official proclamation of the enthronement of Shi Jintang redacted by Yelü Deguang, the Liao Emperor here and there uses terms from one of the Confucian Classics, the "Taishi" (Great Oath) chapter of *Shu jing*. A not so subtle comparison is thus drawn between Yelü Deguang's intervention against the last ruler of the Later Tang, Li Congke, and the

assault of King Wu of Zhou on the last Shang ruler, King Zhou. Indeed, eleventh-century historians did not like the analogy and the document is carefully omitted by the *XWDS* and the *ZZTJ*. Instead, Ouyang Xiu overturns the affinity between Shis and Kitan by defining both as barbarians. Moreover, by declaring that “[Shi Jingtang’s] origins were rooted in the Western barbarians,” the historian also draws a clear distinction between the Shatuo Lis and the Sogdian Shis.

Although from the narratives shown in this thesis on the relation between Shi Jingtang and Yelü Deguang a close affinity between them seems to surface, generally speaking the *ZZTJ* shifts attention from the Kitan to the conflicting roles of court officials within the Central States and to the problem of border defense. Moreover, kinship connections of historical agents seem to play a secondary role in the *ZZTJ* and they acquire some relevance only in relation to their role and position in governmental administration. The *ZZTJ* only records people’s places of origin when they are mentioned in the narrative for the first time, but this is not done systematically for each person. Other biographical information is almost entirely avoided. In a similar manner, their degree of kin connection to the ruling clan is only mentioned if relevant to their career as officials. This is particularly evident in the depiction of the hierarchical relation between ruler and subjects. Instead, the *ZZTJ* carefully registers every change in one’s official position and, if meaningful to the narrative, the context in which those officials were moved from one post to another. Sima Guang’s portrayal of historical characters thus focuses on their public personas.

Rulers, whenever they take the throne, seem to play secondary roles in the narratives of the *ZZTJ*. Whereas Shi Jingtang plays a major role in events until 936, from his enthronement onwards the focus shifts to his ministers and military

governors. Throughout the *Annals of Later Jin*, Gaozu plays a secondary role, appearing in the chronicle only to approve or reject the policies of his entourage. Furthermore, very few details about the family members of the ruling houses are provided in the comprehensive chronicle and generally only when the private interests of the ruler's relatives interfere with public affairs.

To conclude the *ZZTJ* frames the survey of the first half of the tenth century as the last fragment of a chronicle that opened with the 'three Jin' at the outset of the Warring States period; though the annalistic style freed the historian from the limits of the dynastic span of time, Sima Guang chooses to close his comprehensive narrative before the foundation of the Song. At the beginning of chapter three I affirmed that the choice of this time frame purportedly defines the Five Dynasties as the end of an historical cycle. This idea can be further substantiated by a memorial presented to the court in the 1060s, in which the historian remarks to the Emperor that, since 'Hedong' has been pacified with the conquest of the Northern Han dynasty, the state has experienced a period of relative peace, and then goes on to state, "it can be said that from the Three Dynasties onwards, the present era has benefitted from an unprecedented situation of peace and stability" 三代以來，治平之世若今之盛者也。¹ In more than one thousand years of dynastic history, Sima Guang says, from the division into the 'three Jin' the periods of unity and relative stability for the empire were short in comparison to the eras of military uprisings, turmoil and foreign dominance, and the Five Dynasties mark the lowest point of disorder and decline. He thus urges the Emperor to learn from the historical developments of the past dynasties in order to understand the political contingencies of the policies adopted, while

¹ *Xu Zizhi tongjian changpian* 194:4693-97.

keeping in mind the gap between the ideal government of remote antiquity, and the subsequent periods of turmoil and relative peace that came later.² The *ZZTJ* focus on patterns of restoration and loss, military strategies and foreign policy will be criticized by twelfth-century Southern Song scholars as a lack of clarity in expressing moral principles. From the Southern Song *tongjian* studies onward, the narrative complexity of the comprehensive chronicle would gradually be leveled into radical judgements: the importance of picturing events in the most thorough way possible will lead the way to the primacy of a set of moral principles according to which the historical characters would be judged.

² *Xu Zizhi tongjian changpian* 194:4693-97.

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