



Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia

Scuola Dottorale di Ateneo  
Graduate School

Dottorato di ricerca  
in Lingue Culture e Società  
Ciclo XXVI  
Anno di discussione 2014

*Historiography and Narrative Construction of the Five  
Dynasties Period (907-960) in the Zizhi tongjian and its  
Sources.*

Settore scientifico disciplinare di afferenza: L-OR/21, L-OR/23  
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## Chronology

### Tang 唐 (618-907)

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

##### Five Dynasties (907-960)

Later Liang 後梁 (907-923)

Zhu Quanzhong 朱全忠 (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 (936-946)

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

Shi Chonggui 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)

##### 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

Qidan led- Liao 遼 (907-1125)

Early Tenth-Century Emperors:

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)

Song 宋 960-1279

Northern Song Emperors:

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)

Zhao Xu 趙煦 (Zhezong 哲宗, r. 1085-1100)

Zhao Ji 趙佶 (Huizong 徽宗, r. 1100-1126)

Zhao Huan 趙桓 (Qinzong 欽宗, r. 1126-27)

## Introduction

### *Writing Historical Guides for Proper Government in the Eleventh Century*

The compilation of a *Lidai junchen shiji* 歷代君臣事跡 (Deeds of Emperors and Officials in Past Dynasties) was officially given as a commission to Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019-86) in 1066 on the occasion of the presentation at court of his *Tongzhi* 通志 (Comprehensive History), a chronicle of the events from 403 to 207 BC.<sup>1</sup> The historian was at that time appointed Academician of the Dragon Diagram Hall (*Longtu ge* 龍圖閣), a section of the emperor's private library established in 979,<sup>2</sup> and the redaction of comprehensive digests for the education of the then newly established emperor, the young Yingzong 英宗 (r. 1064-67), was allegedly part of his duties. In 1064 he submitted the *Linian tu* 歷年圖 (Chart of the Past Chronicles) to the court, a chronological account of the major events concerning the rising and decline of the dynasties from 841 BC to 959 AD. The text was structured around five diagrams and sixty sections, each one recording the chronicle of the events of one year. This early work would be the basis for the redaction of the *Lidai junchen shiji*, a comprehensive chronicle covering more than one thousand years (1362) of history of the Chinese empire, from the first period of disunity (the Warring States) to the last one (the Five Dynasties) before the Song reunification in 960. The compilation project would continue under the patronage and sanction of Shenzong 申宗 (r.1067-1085), who bestowed it with the title *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (Comprehensive Exemplary Guide for Aid in Government).

The chronological framework established by the historian provides relevance to the representation of the events from 907 to 960, presenting them as the closure of a story of the rise and decline of the previous dynasties. This thesis investigates the process of constructing this last historical segment with a focus on the narrative

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<sup>1</sup> *Jin Tongzhi biao* 進通志表 (Memorial for the Presentation of the Comprehensive History at Court), *Sima Guang ji* (Chengdu: Sichuan daxue chuban she, 2010), 2: 1197-98. Li Tao 李濤 (1115-1185), *Xu Zizhi tongjian changpian* 續資治通鑑長編 (Long Draft of the Continuation of the Comprehensive Exemplary Guide for Aid in Government), (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, [1979] 1995), 210: 5050.

<sup>2</sup> Taizong established his private collection in the Building of Great Purity (*Taiqing lou* 太清樓). Another private library built in the palace grounds was the Palace of Treasures (*Yuzhen dian* 玉宸殿) Wang Yinglin, *Yuhai*, 160: 25; Wu, Kwang-tsing, "Scholarship, Book Production and Libraries in China, 618-1644", 119.

discourse concerning two of the five northern dynasties of the early tenth century, the Later Tang 後唐(923-936) and Later Jin 後晉 (936-947), and their strategies in dealing with the rising power of the Qidan 契丹-led Liao dynasty 遼 (907-1125).

As an enterprise governed by imperial patronage, the whole editing enterprise stood in the tradition of imperially commissioned literary works inaugurated by Taizong 太宗 (r.976-997) with the redaction of the three large imperial digests based on earlier literature.<sup>3</sup> Regarding its scope and function, it was similar to the enterprise undertaken by Zhenzong 真宗 (r. 998-1022) with the compilation of a political-historical comprehensive guide for governance, a *Lidai junchen shiji*, redacted between 1005 and 1013 and later given the title of *Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜 (Models from the Archives).<sup>4</sup>

Although different in structure and form, the *Cefu yuangui* and the *Zizhi tongjian* can be assimilated, both as far as the original title and the historical circumstances in which they were redacted are concerned.

The compilation of a guide for aiding government had been given as a commission to Wang Yinruo 王欽若 (962-1025), charged by the emperor at the newly established official post of Academician of the Palace for Aid in Governance (*Zizheng dian* 資政殿), a hall located in the eastern wing of the Dragon Diagram Hall,<sup>5</sup> in the aftermath of the ‘Accord of Shanyuan 澶

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<sup>3</sup> The three encyclopedias, redacted between 960 and 987, are the *Taiping yulan* 太平禦覽 (Imperial Digest), the *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (Extensive Records of the Reign of Great Tranquillity) and *Wenyuan yinghua* 文苑英華 (Finest Flowers of the Preserve of Letters). Johannes Kurz, “The compilation and publication of the *Taiping yulan* and *Cefu yuangui*, *Entrême-Orient Entrême-Occident*, v.1 (2007): 39-76, and “The politics of collecting knowledge: Song Taizong’s compilation projects”, *T’oung pao* 87 (2001): 289-316.

<sup>4</sup> The redaction of records of the deeds of subjects and rulers of the previous generations as historical precedents for guides for governante, occupied a tradition that looked back to the Tang period, with the compilation of the *Qiandai junchen shiji* 前代君臣史跡 (*Records of Relations Between Rulers and Officials in Past Generations*) ordered by Tang Xianzong 憲宗(r.806-820) in the early ninth century reign. While the scope of these works was clearly to provide historical examples, the form was not fixed. In the case of the *Qiandai junchen* it is likely that it was encyclopedic in form (*Songshi* 255: 9792). See J.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), 40-65.

<sup>5</sup> *Songshi* 162: 3817.



淵' of 1005 between the Song and the Qidan, the peace treaty that brought a relatively long-term period of peace and stability at the borders of the empire. Between 998 and 1004, at the beginning of his mandate, Zhenzong was very much inclined to war. Nevertheless, his efforts to strengthen the military forces of the north in order to recover the rich and strategically important territories of the Yan-Yun region that had been lost in 936 had lead the Qidan to undertake a military strategy based on periodic attacks aimed at ravaging and devastating the lands of the empire within a limited zone beyond the frontier. The policy of Zhenzong then met with opposition at court in the form of a strong faction of scholarly officials who were keen on a peaceful solution. After several failed attempts to redact a peace act, a final negotiation in seven articles was presented to Zhenzong who finally accepted it. The general conditions of the agreement were unfavorable for the Song (besides the annual payment of tributes to the Qidan, the court had to officially recognize the Qidan as equals), but these were diplomatic solutions that did not represent something particularly new in the history of foreign relations.<sup>6</sup> The pact belied the fact that the purpose of Zhenzong to recover the Yan-Yun territories had failed.

For Zhenzong the large compilation project served the double function of recovering credibility in the empire and providing the court with a systematized collection of historical precedents concerning practical matters of governance.<sup>7</sup> The setting of the compendium was rather similar to the structure of the *huiyao* (essential documents) than to the early Song digests, leaving no room for sections on the natural world.

The urgency of the court to regain prestige and credibility within the borders of the empire and among the officials (allegedly the prospective

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<sup>6</sup> Lau, Nap-yin. "Waging war for peace? The peace accord between the Song and the Liao in AD 1005." In Hans van de Ven, *Warfare in Chinese History* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2000): 180-221. 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 Press, 1983): 66-86.

<sup>7</sup> For a general overview of the efforts of Zhenzong to restore the prestige of the Zhao family clan, see chapter three 'Culture and Confinement' in John Chaffee, *Branches of Heaven: A History of the Imperial Clan of Sung China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999): 37: 63.

readers of the compendium) is detectable from the sectional division. As in the case of earlier *huiyao*, the last section is dedicated to the foreign reigns; in the *Cefu yuangui* it is entitled *waichen* 外臣 (foreign subjects), in order to strengthen the idea of the superiority of the Song over their neighbors, and in particular over the Qidan.<sup>8</sup>

When Yingzong (the son of Zhenzong's younger brother) ascended to the throne, already sixty years had passed from the historical pact and one hundred years from the official date of the reunification of the empire under Taizu. The name of the new era, Zhiping 治平 (1064-67), allegedly hinted at the difficult task of preserving the peace and the desire for it to be realized in the following cycle of reigns. Moreover, the emphasis on the legacy of Zhenzong was probably due to the fact that Yingzong, belonging by birth to a collateral branch of the Zhao 趙 family clan, was more concerned at the beginning of his reign with the private interests of his natural relatives than with matters of public governance.

What the court had in mind for the *Lidai junchen shiji* was possibly a guide to aid governance along the lines of the encyclopedic structure of the *Cefu yuangui*. Nonetheless, the project proposed by Sima Guang in the renowned memorial of 1066 was neither a technical guide for practical matters of governance nor celebrative in nature.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>The section is the longest and most detailed of the genre. It is divided into thirty four parts; the first one entitled *zhongzu* 種族 (family clans, or tribes) collocates the Qidan in the last brief entry. It begins tracing the origins of the Qidan back to the Xiongnu 匈奴 (*Cefu yuangui* 956: 11254-55). Compared with the earlier *Wudai huiyao* 五代會要 (Essential Documents of the Five Dynasties) section on the Qidan that will be analyzed in the first chapter, this entry is very short and shallow. It is hard to imagine how it could have a practical usage in matters of governance. The use of *waichen* includes the Qidan as part of the tributary system of the empire and puts the court in a position of superiority. The text is obviously directed to shape the mind of officials as to how to deal with foreign relations. For a study of the different rhetorical devices adopted by the early Song court in foreign and internal policies, see Wang Gongwu, "The rhetoric of a lesser empire: Early Sung relations with its neighbors," in *China Among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and its Neighbors, 10th - 14th Centuries*. Morris Rossabi, ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983): 46-65. A long entry of the *waichen* section is dedicated to historical precedents of *heqin* 和親 (alliances).

<sup>9</sup>The memorial has been analyzed and partially translated in different studies by Pulleyblank, Ming K.Chan and M. Strange. See E.G. Pulleyblank, "Chinese Historical Criticism: Liu-chi Chih and Ssu-ma Kuang", in W.G. Beasley and E.G. Pulleyblank (Eds.), *Historians of China and Japan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961): 151-160; Ming K.Chan, "The Historiography of the *Tzu-chih T'ung-chien*: A

The historical-political guide that Sima Guang intended for the emperor was different from the encyclopedic approach of the digests produced in the past. Sima Guang's efforts aimed at educating the court to develop the necessary wisdom for recognizing the signs leading up to disorder and turmoil, and thus from the prosperity of a dynasty to its own destruction. The *Tongzhi* and the *Linian tu* all purported to provide this lesson, and apparently Sima Guang put great efforts into conveying this message. In the early 1060s Sima Guang in his role of imperial censor (諫官) repeatedly presented to the court a series of memorials aimed at making the emperor aware of the potential consequences of his political authority over his actions:

臣竊觀自周室東遷以來，王政不行，諸侯並僭，分崩離析，不可勝紀，凡五百有五十年而和與秦。秦虐用其民，十有一年而天下亂，又八年而合於漢。漢為天子而百有六年而失其柄，王莽盜之，十有七年而復為漢。更始不能自保，光武誅除僭偽，凡是有四年，然後能一之。又一百五十有三年，董卓擅朝，州郡瓦解，更相吞噬。至于魏氏，海內三分，凡九十有一年而合於晉。晉得天下纔二十年，惠帝昏愚，宗室構難，群胡乘釁，濁亂中原，散為六七，聚為二三，凡二百有八年而合於隋。隋得天下纔二十有八年，煬帝無道，九州幅裂，八年而天下合於唐。[...]肅、代以降，方鎮跋扈，號令不從，朝貢不至，名為君臣，實為讎敵。陵夷衰微至于五代，三綱頹絕，五常殄滅，懷璽未煖，虺宮未安，朝成夕敗，有如逆旅；過亂相尋，戰爭不息，血流成川澤，聚骸成邱陵，生民之類，其不盡者無幾矣。 [...]

由是觀之，上下千七百餘年，天下一統者，五百餘年而已，其間時時小有禍亂，不可悉數。國家自平河東以來，八十餘年內外無事。然則三代以來，治平之世未有若今之盛者也。[...]臣願陛下夙興夜寐，兢兢業業，思祖宗之權業，至王業之不易，援古以鑒今，知太平之世難得而易失，則天下生民至於鳥獸草木，無不幸甚矣！

Your humble subject has observed that, since the Zhou ruling house moved eastward the governance has not functioned in the proper way, the regional lords have overstepped the power, the state of affairs collapsed to the point that it was impossible to record all the instances. Five hundred and fifty years had passed when the empire

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Survey". *Monumenta Serica* 31(1974-75): 1-38; Mark Strange, "A Reading of Hou Jing's Rebellion in *Zizhi tongjian* (Comprehensive Mirror to Aid and Government): The Construction of Sima Guang's Imperial Vision", in Berg, Daria (ed.). *Reading China: Fiction, History and the Dynamics of Discourse. Essays in Honour of Professor Glen Dunbrige* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

was pacified under the Qin. Because the Qin ill-treated the people, after eleven years the empire was again in turmoil. Eight years after the empire was again unified under the Han. After one hundred and six years in power the Han lost their power and Wang Mang overstepped it. After seventeen years it was back to the Han. Gengshi was not able to guard his reign, Guangwu eliminated all the conspirers and after fourteen years he was able to restore unity. Again one hundred and fifty three years had passed when Dong Zhuo monopolized the power. The provinces of the empire collapsed and were one against the other. Untill when the Wei got to power and the territories within the seas were split into three reigns. After ninety one years the empire was reunited under the Jin. The Jin kept the power on the empire for twenty years. Because of emperor Hui's weakness, the members of the ruling clan were one against the other and the barbarians profited of the situation to invade the central plan, the reigns were split and unified several times. This went on for two hundred and eight years, until the empire was unified under the Sui. The Sui kept the power for twenty eight years. Emperor Yang was incapable to rule, the nine provinces united against him. After eight years the empire was reunited by the Tang. [...] During the reigns of Xu and Dai until the collapse of the dynasty, the regional governors were domineering and unwilling to follows the imperial orders so that the court was unable to exercise control on them; they called themselves subjects but in reality they were enemies of the emperor. When the northern barbarians brought the empire to the decline into the Five Dynasties period, moral virtues and principles were not respected anymore, the imperial seal was not forged and the palace never in peace, dynasties rised and collapsed from the morning to the evening, every state of affair was very transitory. In the continual disasters and turmoils, in the neverending wars in which the blood would flow into rivers and piles of bodies like ills, among the people those who did not perished can be counted.[...]

From the observation of the past we can say that in more than one thousand seven hundred years of history, the periods of unity of the empire are no more than five hundred years, among which periodical small turmoils cannot be counted. Since Hedong was pacified, in more than eighty years the empire has not had major problems. It can thus be said that from the Three Dynasties until now, the present era benefits of an unprecedented situation of peace and stability. Your humble subject trusts in the assiduous and careful commitment of Your Majesty in pondering the legacy of the ancestors, the unchanging rules of the rulers, to embrace the past as a guide for the present, and to understand that eras of great peace are hard to

establish and easy to loose, all the creatures of the empire hope that!  
10

It was over a century since Taizu (r. 960-976) reunified the empire and put an end to the period of disunity of the Five Dynasties era. The rulers of the early Song period had been greatly interested in learning the lesson that this period had to teach them. The later generations of emperors who had not been personally involved in the events of a century before, probably had less expertise and were mostly disinterested in the history of the transformations of institutions and policies. Sima Guang urged that the mind of the emperor be refreshed about one of the most important lessons of the past: although the Song were enjoying an unprecedented period of prosperity and unity, the legacy to rule of the Zhao family clan depended on the stability of the empire and was always exposed to the risks of turmoil and rebellion. The historian aimed to demonstrate that a thorough understanding of long-term historical developments was necessary to solve current policy matters.

Neither the static knowledge of an encyclopedia nor the rigid structure of the annals-biographies framework could provide a suitable tool for educating the court about understanding institutional and political transformations through historical precedents. As an alternative, the chronicle framework provided the ideal setting and the narrative structure of the *Zuoshi zhuan* 左氏傳 (Commentary of Master Zuo) offered a model for the didactic purposes of the historian. As shown in the long historical summary provided in the memorial above, and as will be analyzed in this

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<sup>10</sup> The memorial is extremely long and I have thus only translated a short portion of it. It was presented to the court of Renzong in the autumn of 1061 (sixth year of the Jiayou 嘉祐 era). On that occasion the historian presented to the attention of the emperor a guideline in five principles (*wugui* 五規) concerning proper governance. The notes have not been transmitted to us, yet we can guess from the titles that their content was related to the questions of the preservation of the legacy to rule (*baoye* 保業), of the respect of the right timing in political decisions (*xishi* 惜時), on the relevance of long-term strategies (*yuanmou* 遠謀), of paying attention to details and small signs (*zhongwei* 重微), putting effort into solving practical matters (*wushi* 務實). We can presume that each section presented historical precedents as examples to be followed or not, and that the long historical overview translated above served as a general introduction (see *Xu Zizhi tongjian changpian* 194: 4700-10). In the same year, Sima Guang presented to the court the *San zhazi shang dian* 三劄子上殿 (Three Notes) on three topical matters concerning the power of governing of the ruler (*junde* 君德), the proper position and obligations of the officials (*yuchen* 禦臣) and the management of the military force (*jianjun* 揀軍). See *Xu Zizhi tongjian changpian* 194: 4693-97.

work, the chronological survey provided by the comprehensive guide consists of narratives of declining systems. Sima Guang traces a path of cyclical collapses, marked by brief periods of restoration, that started in the Eastern Zhou with the beginning of the Warring States period and progressed along its course of deterioration and disorder with the establishment of military governors in the late Tang period. It then reached its climactic point of decline in the Five Dynasties period with the establishment of foreign dominance over the empire.

The compilation of a comprehensive chronicle stood in the well-established tradition of the widely recognized prominence of annalistic writing that dated back to the *Zuoshi zhuan* and had been carried on in the ensuing dynasties through the compilation of the court daily diaries (*qiju zhu* 起居注). In the late second century the compilation of a chronicle that covered the span of a dynasty, the *Hanji* of XunYue 荀悅(148-209), gave further prestige to this time-honored practice that survived through the Tang dynasty with the redaction of the veritable records (*shilu* 實錄) limited to single reigns. The great many titles recorded in the Tang bibliographical catalogues presents evidence of the flourishing of annalistic writing in the seventh and eight centuries and proves that the genre was generally preferred to the format of the standard histories for officially committed and private compilations of historical accounts.<sup>11</sup> Most of these works were lost in the Song period and the Song catalogue records only thirty-six titles redacted between the fourth and the early eleventh century. The post-face by Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072) to the *biannian* section of

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<sup>11</sup>The bibliographic catalogue of the *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 (Old History of the Tang) counts seventy five titles under the category *biannian ti*, 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 Tangshu* 新唐書 (New History of the Tang) counts sixty nine titles. The monograph on literature included in the *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 (Old History of the Tang) is a summary of the extensive catalogue of the books stored in the imperial library commissioned by Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r.712-756) in the third year of the Kaiyuan 開元 era (715). It consists of 200 *juan* and was produced between 715 and 721. The bibliographic catalogue counts 75 titles under the category *biannian ti*, of which more than fifty are pre-Tang texts (from the fall of the Han to the sixth century), 7 on the Han and Han and Later Han period. The equivalent section of the *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 (New History of the Tang) counts 69 titles. The monograph on literature included in the *JTS* is a summary of the extensive catalogue of the books stored in the imperial library commissioned by Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r.712-756) in the third year of the Kaiyuan 開元 era (715). It consists of 200 *juan* and was produced between 715 and 721.

the descriptive catalogue redacted in the 1140s provides the officially sanctioned interpretation of the genre:<sup>12</sup>

昔春秋之後，繼以戰國，諸侯交亂，而史氏廢失，策書所載，紀次不完。司馬遷始為紀、傳、表、志之體，網羅千載，馳騁其文，其後史官悉用其法。《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。

In the turmoil among the warlords that followed the Springs and Autumns era, the Warring States period, the traditions of historical recording went lost. What had been collected in the documents did not report the complete chronicles. Sima Qian for the first time adopted the structure Annals-Biographies-Charts-Treatise comprehensive of all the eras and developed his own narrative structure; the historians that followed all adopted this structure. It is the correct intention of the Annals to be most careful in recording the beginnings; if there are no affairs in one season it still records its first month, in order to say that if the four seasons are not registered than a year cannot be considered complete. In this way [the Annals] respect the heavenly signs and rectify the human affairs. Since Xun Yue from Jin redacted the *Hanji*, the annalistic style has been revived and appreciated by the scholars. The following generations of historians all regarded this genre at the same level of the official histories.<sup>13</sup>

Whereas annals seemed to have had something peculiar to report of the age when they were produced, it is interesting to note how these works fell quickly out of favor (or fashion) and how very few of them survived to the Song period.<sup>14</sup> In the case

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<sup>12</sup> *Chongwen zongmu* 崇文總目 (Bibliographic Catalogue of the Library of the Honorable Literature): 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* 祕書總目 (General Catalogue of the Imperial Archives), and only during the Gaozong reign its original name was restored. Yong Rong (ed.), *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao*, 1775-1776. John H. Winkelman, "The Imperial Library in Southern Sung China 1127-1279. A Study of the Organization and Operation of the Scholarly Agencies of the Central Government", *Transaction of the American Philosophic Society* Bd. 64, n8 (1974): 27-32. The *Xin Tang shu* was commissioned by the Song Emperor Renzong 仁宗 (r.1023-1063) in 1045 and completed in 1060. The bibliographical monograph included in it is mainly based on Wu Jiong's *Gujin shulu*, which was still existing in the eleventh century catalogued as *Kaiyuan siku shumumu* 開元四庫書目 (Catalogue of the Four Sections of the Kaiyuan Era). The bibliographical monograph thus includes a list of the works that were collected in the Imperial Library before 724, roughly coinciding in content with Wu's catalogue (even though some parts have been added or modified), and a second list of works probably derived from biographies and other accounts in the *Xin Tangshu*.

<sup>13</sup> *Ouyang Xiu quanji* 5: 1885.

<sup>14</sup> Some of these texts were neither fully lost nor transmitted. Fragments of the texts have survived in Song compendia (the 'gateways to lost medieval literature', as Dudbridge has rightly 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

of their transmission, their accounts often clashed with the officially inspired version of the events. Some of these annals were structured in diagrams and purported to serve as digests or summaries for didactic purposes.<sup>15</sup> As such they did not need to be published and thus were soon lost. The early censorship of Taizu on texts dealing with the history of the late Tang and Five Dynasties period apparently effected the transmission of some of these chronicles but, at the same time, conferred on them an additional value and so the southern Song book collectors put effort into transmitting them. This is the case of the *Xu tongli* 續通曆 (Continuation of the Comprehensive Chronicle) of Sun Guangxian 孫光憲 (900-968), purportedly neglected by the *Chongwen zongmu*.<sup>16</sup> In most cases the transmission of these texts was at a certain point not carried on anymore because of the costs of publication. Needless to say, the publication of the comprehensive annals of Sima Guang in the late 1180s is also a feasible cause of the general disinterest in earlier chronicles.

Most of the annals redacted in the Tang period, with very few exceptions, were limited to chronicles of short periods or reigns. On the contrary, the eleventh-century historians seemed to privilege comprehensive annals covering a long span of time not limited to a single dynasty and generally dating back to high antiquity. Just to mention

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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): 27-51.

<sup>15</sup> It is the case, for instance, of the *Di wang jing lue* 帝王經略 of 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 textbook for the education of children (Chao Gongwu, *Junzhai dushizhi jiaozheng*, 203; Chen Zhensun, *Zhizhai shulu jieti*, 112); the *Chongwen zongmu* reports a *Di wang li shu ge* 帝王歷數歌 in 1juan (*Chongwen zongmu*, 50).

<sup>16</sup> The *Xu Tongli* was conceived as a continuation of the *Tongli* 通曆 (Comprehensive Chronicle) redacted by Ma Zong 馬摠 (?- 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 on 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, see *Tongli*, in *San Jin guji congshu* 三晉古籍叢書 (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chuban she, 1992). Zhou Zhengsong maintains that the *Xu Tongli* by Sun Guangxian was soon 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 阮元's (1764-1849) *Wanwei biechang* 宛委別藏. The first 3 juan of the text are lost. From 4 to 10 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 10 to 15 it records the events concerning the Huang Chao 黃巢 rebellion, Li Maozhen 李茂貞, Liu Shouguang 李守光, Abaoji 阿保機 and the Ten Kingdoms of the south.



a few titles, the *Yunli tu* 運曆圖 (Diagram of the Chronicles) of Gong Ying 龔穎 is a chronicle of events from the third century BC to the Yongxi 雍熙 era (984-987).<sup>17</sup> The *Jinian tongpu* 紀年通譜 (Comprehensive Chart of the Annals) of Song Xiang 宋庠 (996-1066), presented to the court roughly in 1043-44, consists of a chronicle of events divided in 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), illegitimate (*run* 閏), usurpers (*wei* 偽), bandits (*zei* 賊), barbarians (*manyi* 蠻夷). The *Biannian tongzai* 編年通載 (Comprehensive Annals) of Zhang Heng 章衡 (1025-1099), presented to the court in 1074, is even more ambitious: it consists of a comprehensive chronicle from emperor Yao to the Zhiping era, in all more than three thousands years.<sup>18</sup>

From the number of *juan* we can assume that these 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 transmitted to us.<sup>19</sup> 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 *Comprehensive Annals*.’ Shenzong, who apparently could be very generous in positive assessments and rewards, had the work read and praised it by saying that it was greater in quality than any other history.<sup>20</sup> Interestingly enough, Sima Guang never mentions Zhang’s work.

#### *Chronological Framework of the Zizhi tongjian*

A substantial difference of the *Linian tu* from the chronicles produced previously is that the chronology followed a reign title only for the sake of a unified recording of the events (*nianjing guowei* 年經國緯) and left no room for discussion of

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<sup>17</sup> The text, now lost, was allegedly highly appreciated by Ouyang Xiu who drew from it for the compilation of his *Jigu mulu* 集古目錄 (Chao Gongwu, *Junzhai dushu zhi jiaozheng*, 204-05); see also *Chongwen zongmu*, 51.

<sup>18</sup> Chao Gongwu, *Junzhai dushu zhi jiaozheng*, 206-208; Chen Zhensun, *Zhizhai shulu jieti*, 112; *Songshi* 203: 5093.

<sup>19</sup> *Biannian tongzai*, 4 *juan*, in *Siku congkan sanbian*, v.31 (Taipei: Taipei shangwu yinshu guan, 1966).

<sup>20</sup> *Songshi* 347: 11007.

the issue of legitimacy. The same setting would be kept in the *Zizhi tongjian*. In a colophon to the *Linian tu* Sima Guang clarifies his idea of chronicle:

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《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。始光率意為此書，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。

I have been studying history for quite some time and I have always felt aversion towards flourishing texts and extensive descriptions of events from which it was not possible to draw general principles. Moreover, because of the periods of divisions among different reigns, the chronological setting could not be unified. I thus outlined a chronicle of the great events that lead to the rise and fall of dynasties from the Gonghe era (841 BC) to the Five Dynasties period (959 AD) 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 eight hundred years, and I entitled it *Chart of the Past Chronicles*. As the text was not yet well organized, it was good for private discussions and I did not dare to spread it around. Unexpectedly Zhao Jun[xi] had it published and disseminated it. Ling Mengjun from Liangshan of Shu entered in possession of one complete edition of it in order to show it to me. When I started working on it, I really thought it through; in the case of periods of disunity, I simply followed the era name of one reign, yet 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.<sup>21</sup>

Zhao Junxi 趙君錫 is one of the first co-workers hired by Sima Guang in 1066. 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 and which gave no scope for discussing the issue of legitimacy. Misunderstanding the scope of Sima

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<sup>21</sup> *Sima Guang ji* 3: 1374. Chen Zhensun registers a *Leidai linian* 累代歷年(Chronicle of Past Generations) in *2juan* that, according to the bibliographer, corresponds to the *Linian tu* (*Zhizhai shulu jieti*, 113).

Guang, Zhao Junxi had the title changed into *Ditong* and parts of the content modified. Moreover, he published and disseminated the text against the will of the author.<sup>22</sup>

The time frame of the comprehensive chronicle was also a matter that Sima Guang chose carefully. His peer, Liu Shu 劉恕 (1032-1078), reports a discussion of this issue:

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》。

Sima Guang begins the chronicle of the *Zizhi tongjian* with the event of king Wei Lie [of Jin] proclaiming Han, Zhao and Wei vassals 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 the high antiquity rulers Yao and Shun. Guang replied that it was not possible to include in the chronicle the Springs and Autumns period and that, as the Classics were not to be continued, he did not dare to start from the capture of the unicorn (479 BC). I 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 era (841 BC) is a rough list of events. From the first year of the Gonghe era (*gengshen*) to the twenty second year of reign of king Wei Lie [of Jin] (*dingchou*), in all 438 years in one unified annal. I entitled it *Outern Records*, like the *Discourses of the States* it is considered to be the *Outern Commentary of the Springs and Autumns Annals*.<sup>23</sup>

This quote is part of the preface to the *Tongjian waiji* 通鑑外記 (Outern Records of the Comprehensive Guide) by Liu Shu, a chronicle from high antiquity to 403 BC divided into two sections: a rough chronicle from high antiquity to 841 BC and one set of annals from 841 BC to 403 BC.

Whereas the *Linnian tu* begins in 841 BC (the end of the Springs and Autumns period), in the *Zizhi tongjian* (from here on *ZZTJ*) the Annals of Zhou open with the year 403 BC, the twenty second year of reign of king Wei Lie of Jin (r. 425 BC-402 BC). The chronicle of the *Chunqiu* begins in 722 BC and ends in 479 BC, shortly

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<sup>22</sup> I have not been able to recover any other information on the relation between Zhao Junxi and Sima Guang. Officially, he left the team soon after his appointment and consequently on the death of his father. *Xu Zizhitongjian changpian* 208: 5050. Zhao Junxi did not have a particular outstanding career as an official and the *Songshi* do not dedicate a biography to him. The bibliographical catalogue registers a text allegedly written by Zhao (*Songshi* 162: 5115).

<sup>23</sup> *Junzhai dushu zhi jiaozheng* 5: 211.

before the date that has been traditionally considered for the death of Confucius and labeled with the ‘capture of the unicorn’. The chronicle of the *Zuo zhuan* closes almost a decade later in 468 BC. Sima Guang chooses to open the annals a few decades after the *Chunqiu* to make it clear that his comprehensive chronicle is not a continuation of the *Chunqiu*. The first events recorded in the Annals of Zhou is ‘[king Wei Lie of Jin] bestowed the Wei Si, Zhao Ji and Han Lu as vassals’.<sup>24</sup> Seemingly the *ZZTJ* was not meant to be a continuation of the *Zuo zhuan* either, as Sima Guang opens the annals a few decades after the conclusion of the chronicle of the *Zuo zhuan*. The historian starts the chronicle with an event that marks the beginning of disunity for the kingdom of Jin, the division into the ‘three Jin’.

Another issue that the historian considered carefully was the calendrical calculation to be adopted. The original preface redacted by Sima Guang to the *Mulu* 目錄(General Outline), a skeleton version of the *ZZTJ* in chronological form lacking well-marked narrative closure, sheds some light on the intention of the historian:

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。

In ancient times those who committed to the redaction of historical works would first establish the calendar setting for the sake of a unified narrative of the events. This is what is called a chronicle, ‘Springs and Autumns’. Liu Xishou (1015-60), official of the Hall in Honor of Literature, has edited the calendar of the previous dynasties from the beginning of the Han in a unified calendrical system. I came to get an edition of this book in the past. Today I used Xishou’s calendrical system and I gathered together all those events concerning the changes in government that are recorded in the histories. I put the chronicle in the top section [of the charts]. On the other hand, the annals register all kind of events concerning the different states; the framework for the succession of events is thus not unified. I then take as example the *Charts* of Sima Qian, redacted according to the principle of following an era name for the sake of a unified chronicle and leaving no room for discussion on legitimacy. I put these records beneath [the chronicle]. When the narrative structure is too sketchy [as in the case of a dry chronicle] it does not have a well-marked beginning and closure; if it is too elaborated [as in the case of the annals] than the general principles are

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<sup>24</sup> *ZZTJ* 1:2.

difficult to understand. This compendium of essentials drawn from my new work [the *Zizhi tongjian*] should be something in between. I thus call it *General Outline*.<sup>25</sup>

The new calendrical system mentioned in the preface is the *Chongtian li* 崇天曆 (Calendar in Honor of Heaven), in use during the reign of Renzong until 1065, when another calendrical system was adopted, the *Mingtian li* 明天曆 (Calendar to Comprehend Heaven); the *Chongtian li* was restored by Shenzong in 1070.<sup>26</sup>

The charts of the *Mulu* are divided into two parts: the chronicle framework in the upper section reports the comprehensive calendar ideated by Liu Xishou, while in the lower section the events are recorded chronologically following the era names of the different states. Interestingly, Sima Guang draws a clear difference between chronicle and annals, and he indicates the charts as a solution in between that mediates the limits of the two genres. The chronicle, as a dry list of events, does not have 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. By contrast, 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 collocate the calendrical system above as a unifier of the different chronicles. The visual message of the charts in the *Mulu* appended to the *ZZTJ* thus is a good representation of Sima Guang's idea of history.

### *Structure of the Annals*

The project undertaken by Sima Guang in 1066 and completed nineteen years later is not only the last imperially commissioned work of the northern Song period, it also represents one of the last strongholds of imperial control over the compilation of large literary and historical works. Compared to the strong control of the court over the process of compilation of the early imperial digests and encyclopedias in which

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<sup>25</sup> Sima Guang, Wang Yunwu (ed.), *Zizhi tongjian mulu, Sibū congkan chubian*, v.11 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshu guan, 1997 [1965]): 1a.

<sup>26</sup> (*Songshi* 431: 12825). Liu Xishou contributed to the redaction of the treatises on calendar and astronomy of the *Xin Tangshu* (*Songshi* 432: 12838). Song Taizu had established the *Ying Tianli* 應天曆, based on the calendrical system of the Southern Tang dynasty. During the reign of Renzong Liu Xishou's *Chongtian li* was adopted, in 1065 changed into the *Mingtian li* 明天曆 and in 1070 the *Chongtian li* was restored (*Songshi* 82: 1929).

the general guidelines were dictated from above to the compilers and the emperor would periodically supervise the work of redaction, Sima Guang benefited from relative freedom of action, both as far as the structure of the work and the selection of his co-workers is concerned.

In 1066 Sima Guang hired Liu Shu and Zhao Junxi; this last was soon substituted by Liu Pin 劉攽 (1023-1089), a renowned expert in *Chunqiu* studies and a specialist of Han history. The early southern Song bibliographical catalogues register a *Biannian jishi* 編年紀事 (Annals of Past Events) attributed to him.<sup>27</sup> The text is now lost, yet it might well have been the rough chronicle of the annals of the Han period on which Liu Ban was working.<sup>28</sup>

Whereas Yingzong never really expressed particular interest in the compilation, Shenzong, on the contrary, in the early years of his reign was fully committed to the project. The emperor would periodically request Sima Guang to read at court the Annals of the Han period that had been redacted.<sup>29</sup> He personally bestowed upon the work the title of *ZZTJ* and praised it by saying that “in quality this work is far beyond the *Hanji*”.<sup>30</sup> Shenzong was so enthusiastic about the work that in 1070 the request to hire another scholar for the redaction of the annals of the Tang period was accepted without any problem. The historian Fan Zuyu 範祖禹 (1041-1098) then became part of the working team,<sup>31</sup> and he worked on the Annals of the Tang period roughly between 1071 and 1078.<sup>32</sup>

As some of their writings have been transmitted to us, the work of Liu Shu and Fan Zuyu are fairly well documented. The merit goes partially to the son of Liu Shu,

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<sup>27</sup> Chao Gongwu, *Junzhai dushu zhi jiaozheng* 5: 207. The bibliographical catalogue of the *Songshi* records a *Neizhuan guoyu* 內傳國語 attributed to him (*Songshi* 162: 5059). Together with his brother Liu Chang 劉敞 and his son Liu Jushi 劉奉世, Liu Pin worked extensively on the *Hanshu*, and the Song catalogue registers a *San Liu Hanshu biao* 三劉漢書標注, a *Hanshu kanwu* 漢書刊誤 and a *Wudai Chunqiu* 五代春秋 (*Songshi* 162: 5086). The biography of the three Liu is in *Songshi* 255: 10383-89.

<sup>28</sup> *Songshi* 10388.

<sup>29</sup> *Xu Zizhitongjian changpian* 210: 5112/5115.

<sup>30</sup> Chao Gongwu, *Junzhai dushu zhi jiaozheng* 4: 113.

<sup>31</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changpian* 212: 5155.

<sup>32</sup> We have a transmitted edition of the *Tangjian* 唐鑑 (Comprehensive Guide to the Tang), an early draft of the Annals from Gaozu 高祖 (r. 618-626) to Zhaoxuan 昭宣 (r. 904-907) presented to the court in 1086. *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 4: 116; *Songshi* 337: 10794-800. The *Tangjian* has been transmitted to us as part of his collected work prefaced by Wang Yinglin 王應麟 (1223-96). *Fan Taishi wenji* 範太史文集 (Collected Works of the Historian Fan [Zuyu]). On the process of redaction of the Annals of the Tang see Pulleyblank, 154-159.

Liu Xizhong 劉羲仲 (1059-1120), who collected the *Tongjian wenyi* 通鑑問疑 (Explanations of the Comprehensive Guide), allegedly a record of the discussions between Sima Guang and Liu Shu. Chen Zhensun reports that the text was originally an appendix of the *Xiushu tie* 修書帖 (Notes on the Redaction), a collection of missives that Sima Guang used to exchange 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 instances of the redaction of the comprehensive annals which were collected and systematized into headings by Sima Guang's great grand-nephew.<sup>33</sup>

The renowned missive to Fan Zuyu was originally part of the *Tongjian qianli*. The letter imparts directions for the work of selection of the sources and guidelines for the redaction of the rough chronicle of the Tang, the *Changpian* 長篇 (Long Draft).<sup>34</sup> 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 main task of the three scholars was to assemble all the sources and organize them into the chronological framework.<sup>35</sup> Firstly, a rough chronicle Outline (*zongmu* 總目) based on the veritable records and the court diaries was established. This task was relatively easy for periods of imperial unity when the era names were already standardized. We can presume that the existence of annalistic works such as the *Hanji*

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<sup>33</sup> Chen Zhensun, *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 4: 115.

<sup>34</sup> *Da Fan Mengde shu* 答範夢得書 (Letter in Reply to Fan Mengde), *Sima Guang ji*, 3: 1741-44. The letter has been partially translated and commented by Pulleyblank. 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). Also see Pulleyblank, "Chinese Historical Criticism: Liu-chi Chih and Ssu-ma Kuang". In W.G. Beasley and E.G. Pulleyblank (Eds.), *Historians of China and Japan*. London: Oxford University Press, 1961: 160-166.

<sup>35</sup> This brief introduction to the compilation of the *ZZTJ* is not meant, of course, to be exhaustive. The topic is too big for an introduction; general aspects of the process have already been studied elsewhere in Pulleyblank, "Chinese Historical Criticism: Liu-chi Chih and Ssu-ma Kuang", Wang Yucheng 王曾瑜, *Guanyu bianxie Zizhi tongjian de jige wenti*, 85-91, Cao Jiaqi 曹家琪, "Zizhi tongjian biao xiu kao" 資治通鑑編修考, *Wenshi* 5 (1978): 82-83. For a complete list of articles produced in China and Taiwan from the 1970s to the 1990s on the process of compilation and on debates concerning the division of the labor and authorship see: Shi Ding 施丁, Shen Zhihua 深志華 (eds.), *Zizhi tongjian da cidian* 資治通鑑大辭典 (Jilin: Jilin renmin chubanshe, 1994).

and *Hou Hanji* 後漢紀 (Annals of Later Han) of Yuan Hong 袁宏 (328-376) also simplified the work. For the periods of division the establishment of a unified framework was more painstaking because the chronicles of each independent state provided different titles for the reigns. The historians thus had to make a choice. As we have seen previously, Sima Guang justifies it as purely for the sake of a unified chronicle. In the case of the Southern-Northern Dynasties, Sima Guang decided to follow the chronology of the reigns of the south, while for the Five Dynasties period the chronology was based on the northern dynasties.<sup>36</sup>

Although the general framework followed the veritable records, the succession of some events needed to be adjusted forward or back for the sake of the narrative. These changes had to be annotated in the margin of the rough chronicle.<sup>37</sup>

Furthermore, the daily diaries and the veritable records were not at all simply dry lists of events concerning the everyday work routine at court; instead, the officials charged with the compilation exerted a considerable influence on the narrative choices and could also exercise sophisticated criticism. Therefore the 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 redacted in 945 and 972 was mainly based on the *Gaozu shilu* 高祖實錄 (Veritable Records of Gaozu) and on the *Taizong shilu* 太宗實錄 (Veritable Records of Taizong). Both records were edited roughly around the 640s and Taizong exerted 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 chuanyue 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.<sup>38</sup> When Fan Zuyu started

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<sup>36</sup> The *Tongjian wenyi* reports a discussion between Sima Guang and Liu Shu on the choice of a unified calendrical system for the Southern and Northern dynasties, see *Tongjian wenyi*, *San Liu jiaji*, *Siku quanshu*.

<sup>37</sup> *Da Fan Mengde shu*, *Sima Guang ji*, 3: 1741.

<sup>38</sup> The *Da Tang chuanyue qiju zhu* is only example of *qiju zhu* redacted in the Tang period than has been fully transmitted. For a general inquiry on these two different interpretations see the first chapter of H. 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): 8-32.



working on the general draft of the annals of Tang he thus had to make an important narrative choice between two different interpretations. Interestingly enough, the letter is limited to practical tips for redaction and does not mention any suggestions for the general historiography. The fact that the *ZZTJ* follows the official version of the standard histories and almost neglects the work of Wen Daya would be an interesting topic for further inquiry into the Song vision of the Tang annalistic literature, yet it is beyond the scope of this introduction.

The second part of the work consisted in including in the Outline the items drawn from the dynastic histories and from all kind of miscellaneous sources. The basic annals themselves were set chronologically, but the biographies and treatises more often than not included anecdotes without a precise time frame. If the date was not recorded, the event had to be appended to the year and registered as ‘this year’ or ‘this month’. Sima Guang strengthened 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. It is plausible to think that a selection of these notes to the draft would afterwards become part of the critical commentary.

Most of the notes were adjusted and integrated in the narrative version of the Long Draft. In the letter Sima Guang requests that all the additional material concerning events before 618 and after 907 had to be recorded in separate drafts and sent to Liu Pin and Liu Shu in order to enable them to include the items respectively in the Long Draft of the Sui and the Five Dynasties periods for the sake of a unified narrative.<sup>39</sup>

The annals from 403 to 207 BC had already been completed by Sima Guang in 1066 when Liu Pin started working on the Annals of the Han period. The compilation went on without particular problems and after only one year the first thirty *juan* of the *Hanji* (Annals of the [Former] Han) were presented to the court. Despite the support of the emperor, the project slowed down at the beginning of the 1070s when the influence of Wang 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.<sup>40</sup> In

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<sup>39</sup> *Dan Fan Mengde shu*, 3: 1742.

<sup>40</sup> There is a large literature on Sima Guang and Wang Anshi. See 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.

the autumn of 1070 Sima Guang was sent to Yongxing 永興, a military command post near Chang'an, and soon after the court requested him to retire in Luoyang.<sup>41</sup> 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 co-workers had to work from separate posts 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. Only after a few years Liu Shu was accorded permission to be displaced in Luoyang in order to continue the compilation of the annals.<sup>42</sup>

Considering that the historians were working in places quite far apart from each other, the process of keeping track of each others' work must have been quite difficult. This factor slowed down the editing process and the compilation of the annals from the Southern-Northern Dynasties to the Five Dynasties period went on for more than one decade.

Among the three historians who helped Sima Guang in the enterprise, Liu Shu was certainly the most influential. He personally supervised the redaction of the Long Drafts of Wei-Jin and Southern-Northern Dynasties period and he certainly worked on the editing of the Long Draft of the Five Dynasties from 1071 to 1078.<sup>43</sup> Liu Shu was a very prolific writer and the bibliographical catalogues record quite a number of items attributed to him,<sup>44</sup> yet the only one delivered to us completely is the *Tongjian waiji*, mentioned previously. The original idea of Liu Shu was to redact a supplementary chronicle also for the period after 959 through the early Song and to entitle it *Houji* 後紀 (Later Records). He renounced undertaking the work following a period of illness that eventually caused his death in 1078.<sup>45</sup> Most of Liu Shu's efforts

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<sup>41</sup> 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.

<sup>42</sup> Physically weakened by the long travel from the south to the north west Liu Shu stayed in Luoyang for a few months and soon decided to head back south. On his way to home Liu Shu's illness worsened and he died soon after Sima Guang, "Liu Daoyuan *Shiguo jinian xu*", 1351-52.

<sup>43</sup> Cao Jiaqi, "Zizhi *tongjian biaoixiu kao* 資治通鑑編修考", *Wenshi* 5 (1978): 82-83.

<sup>44</sup> 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*", 1353. Chen Zhensun also registers a *Za nianhao* 雜年號, *Zhizhai shulu jieti*, 4: 115.

<sup>45</sup> *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 4: 115.

were put into the redaction of the Southern and Northern dynasties period. In a missive Sima Guang wrote to him:

光少時惟得《高氏小史》讀之，自宋訖隋正史並《南》、《北史》，或未嘗得見，或讀之不熟。今因修南北朝《通鑑》，方得細觀。乃知李延壽之書，亦近世之佳史也。雖於襍祥詼嘲小事無所不載，然敘事簡徑，比於《南》《北》正史，無煩冗蕪穢之辭。竊謂臣手之後，惟延壽可以亞之也。渠亦當時見眾人所作五代史，不快意，故別自私著此書也。但恨延壽不作志，使數代制度沿革，皆沒不見。道原《五代長篇》若不費功，計不日即成。若與沈約、蕭子顯、魏收三《志》，依《隋志》篇目刪次補葺，別為一書，與《南》、《北史》、《隋志》並行，則雖正史遺逸，不足患矣。不知道原肯有意否？其符瑞等皆無用，可刪。《後魏•釋老志》取其要用者，附於《崔浩傳》後。《官氏志》中氏族附於《宗室》及代初《功臣傳》後。如此，則《南》《北史》更無遺事矣。今國家雖校定摹印正史，天下人家共能有幾本？久遠必不傳於世。[...] 以此欲告道原，存錄其律曆、禮樂、職官、地理、食貨、刑法之大要耳。不知可否。如何如何？

In my young age I only read the *Short History of Mr. Gao*,<sup>46</sup> as for the standard histories, the *History of the Southern dynasties* and the *History of the Northern dynasties* for the period from the Song to the Sui, I either was not able to access to them or did not read them thoroughly. Now that we are editing the annals of the Southern and Northern Dynasties for the *Comprehensive Guide* I get to study them in depth. Only now I know that the history of Li Yanshou can well be considered an invaluable source for the history of recent times. Although it records all kinds of humorous and strange short stories, the narrative is simple, clear and it avoids the use of lengthy and tedious sentences. I believe that Yanshou can be second only to Chen Shou [*Sanguo zhi*]. [Yanshou] privately redacted these histories because he was not satisfied with the histories of the five dynasties produced by his peers. Nevertheless, I disapprove the fact that Yanshou did not redact the *Treatises*, leading to the loss of documents concerning the course of change of the institutions through the generations of rulers. This *Long Draft of the Five Dynasties* of yours, if it is not for some time consuming labor it should be completed quickly. As for the *Treatises* of Shen Yue [*History of Song*], Xiao Zixian [*History of Southern Qi*] and Wei Shou [*History of Northern Qi*], please patch up or cut the content following the same setting of the *Treatise* of the *History of Sui* and redact it in a single document, so that it is uniformed to the *Treatises* of the Sui and of the *History of Southern Dynasties* and *Northern Dynasties*, so that the lacking parts of the standard histories will not cause big troubles. I don't know if you agree or not. Auspicious omens should not be recorded, you can skip them. As for the *Treatise on Buddhism and Daoism* of Wei Shou, you'd rather record the summarizing principles of it and append it to the *Biography of Cui Hao*. Please append the part

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<sup>46</sup> Gao Jun 高峻, *Gaoshi xiao shi*, 110 juan (*Chongwen zongmu* 2: 59; *XTS* 58: 1458).

concerning family clans of the *Treatise of Officials and Clans* to the [*History of Northern Qi*] after the *Royal Clan* and *Meritorious Subjects* sections. In so doing the Southern and Northern *Histories* will be further completed. Today the court has collated and published the standard histories, but how many editions are circulating among the privates in the empire? [So few that] in the future these editions will not be transmitted to the posterity. [...]With the present letter I wished to tell you to keep record of the general principles concerning the issues of calendar, rites and music, officials, place names, food and supplies, law and penalties. Please let me know if this is feasible for you.<sup>47</sup>

From the missive we come to know that Liu Shu was working on a Long Draft of the Southern and Northern dynasties called *Wudai changpian*. The work went on probably between 1071 and 1076, when Liu Pin had already concluded the Long Draft of the Sui dynasty. According to the letter to Fan Zuyu, as early as 1070 Liu Shu was working on the Long Draft of the Five Dynasties. Sima Guang mentions an extract in two *juan*, *guangben* 廣本, from the Long Draft. Sima Guang had them 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.

#### *Lessons from a Period of Disunity*

Whereas the comprehensive chronicles produced in the eleventh century mostly included the early reigns of the northern Song period, Sima Guang decided to close the annals with the year 959. The annalistic style freed the historian from the limit of the dynastic span of time; nevertheless, he ended the chronicle before the reunification of Taizu. The historian and his trusted peer, Liu Shu, allegedly had some discussion about the issue of the chronological framework. Liu Shu considered the work incomplete and he was working on the *Houji*, which was intended as a sequel of the *ZZTJ*. Sima Guang, for his part, was also collecting notes in preparation of a chronicle of events from Taizu to Shenzong, later transmitted as the *Dongshui jiwen* 涑水記聞 (A Record of Rumors from the Frozen Waters).<sup>48</sup> On this draft of notes Li Tao 李燾 (1115-1184) reported:

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<sup>47</sup> Sima Guang, “Yu Liu Daoyuan shu 與劉導原書”, *Wen Guowen Sima gong wenji* 溫國文司馬公文集, 62, *Sibu congkan chubian* (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshu guan, 1967[1965]).

<sup>48</sup> The original title was *Sima Wengong jiwen* 司馬溫公記聞, later changed into *Dongshui jiwen*. This text is one of the first cases of private histories banned in the 1140s by Qin Gui 秦檜 (1090-1155). On

文正公初與劉道原共議取《實錄》、《國史》，旁採異聞，作《資治通鑑後紀》，今所傳《記聞》及《日記》、《朔記》，皆《後紀》之具也

Sima Guang and Liu Daoyuan [Shu] had discussions about the idea of redacting an *Outern Record of the Comprehensive Guide for Aid in Government* on the basis of the veritable records and the national history, and to record aside all kind of different rumors. Today the *Record of Rumors*, the *Diary* and the *Preliminary Records* were all meant to be the rough material for the *Outern Records*.<sup>49</sup>

According to this quote, Sima Guang and Liu Shu had in mind a continuation of the *ZZTJ*. Nevertheless, it is plausible to think that when Sima Guang presented the comprehensive guide to the court in 1084 he considered the work complete. It has been shown previously with the case of the publication of the *Linian tu* how the historian was cautious in publishing unfinished works. He thus would never have presented to the court the *ZZTJ* if he was convinced that it was not yet complete.

The historian opened the chronicle in 403 BC with the division into the ‘three Jin’, an event that marked the beginning of disunity. We can argue that Sima Guang purportedly closed the chronicle with the last ruler of the Five Dynasties period in order to provide a particular lesson to the Song rulers. This precise choice provides relevance to the annals from 907 to 959 as the closure of a cycle.

Almost no information on the process of redaction of the Long Draft of the Five Dynasties of the first half of the tenth century has been transmitted to us. Sima Guang allegedly redacted the final edition of the annals of the Five Dynasties on the basis of the draft arrangements of the sources prepared by Liu Shu.

During the last years of his life Liu Shu edited the *Shiguo jinian* 十國紀年 (Chronicle of the Ten Kingdoms), now lost. The original idea of Liu Shu was to append to the work two charts, one on officials (*baiguan* 百官) and the other on regional official posts (*fanzhen* 藩鎮) but because of his deteriorating physical condition he was not able to conclude the work and asked Sima Guang to mention it in the preface to the *Shiguo jinnian*.<sup>50</sup>

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the transmission and publication of the text through the 1140s see H. de Weerdt, “The Discourse of Loss in Song Dynasty Private and Imperial Libraries”, *Library Trends* 55:3 (2007): 415-416.

<sup>49</sup> *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao*, 1189.

<sup>50</sup> Sima Guang, *Liu Daoyuan Shiguo jinian xu*, *Sima Guang ji* 2: 1350-1354.

The *Zizhi tongjian kaoyi* 資治通鑑考異 (Critical Commentry to the Comprehensive Exemplary Guide for Aid in Government, from now on *Kaoyi*) collects about a hundred quotes and brief references from the *Shiguo jinian* concerning events between 880 and 959, and nine quotes from the *Guangben*. The two works were possibly checked by Sima Guang during the revision of the annals and in some cases the narrative version provided by Liu Shu was adjusted or changed, and the original text of the historian included in the *Kaoyi*.

Whereas in the case of the annals of the Southern and Northern dynasties of the fifth and sixth centuries the historian had the liberty of mapping his chronology upon the Han-ruled southern reigns, for the more recent history of the first half of the tenth century he presumably did not have a real choice. The issue of the 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 a former general of the capable 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 the meritorious succession to the Later Zhou. A chronology based on the southern reigns would have cast doubts on the legitimacy of the Song. Sima Guang thus stuck to the official chronological setting and begun the annals of the Later Liang 後梁 (907-921) with the first year of reign of the Later Liang ruler, Taizu (r. 907-912).

What the historian could do, and did, was to deny the legitimacy of the last rulers of the first three dynasties, namely the ‘usurpers’ Later Liang and the two Shatuo-ruled Later Tang and Later Jin dynasties.

The period of reign of Zhu Youzhen 朱友貞 (r. 912-921), the third son of Taizu, starts in the middle of the third Annals of the Later Liang and the ruler is addressed as king of Jun 均王.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, the last ruler of the Later Tang, Li Congke 李從珂 (r. 934-935), is addressed with his former title, king of Lu 路王,<sup>52</sup> and the last ruler of the Later Jin, Shi Chonggui 石重貴 (r. 942-947), with the title of king of Qi 齊王.<sup>53</sup> All

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<sup>51</sup> *ZZTJ* 268: 913.

<sup>52</sup> *ZZTJ* 278: 9099.

<sup>53</sup> *ZZTJ* 284: 9265. *Hou Liang ji*, 6 *juan* 太祖開平元年(907) to 均王龍德二年(922); *Hou Tang ji* 8 *juan* 莊宗同光元年(923) to 路王清泰二年(935); *Hou Jin ji* 6 *juan* 高祖天福元年(936) to 齊王開運

the three rulers had overstepped the power and got to the throne in obscure situations. Zhou Youzhen secretly arranged for the killing of his older brother, Zhu Yougui 朱友珪 when the latter had just ascended to the throne after the death of Taizu in 913.<sup>54</sup> Li Congke kidnapped and killed his step-brother and legitimate heir to the throne of Mingzong 明宗 (r.925-934), Li Conghou 李從厚 (r.934).<sup>55</sup> And finally, Shi Chonggui was put into power by high court officials against the will of the dying Shi Jingtang 石敬瑭 (892-942) in 942.<sup>56</sup>

As shown previously, the setting of the *Mulu* further speaks for the principles of historical presentation as conceived by Sima Guang. In the case of periods of disunity such as the early tenth century, the annalistic form, consisting of a list of events ordered in chronological sequence, imposed to choose the predominance of the chronology of one state. The chart, by contrast, offered the setting for telling a different story. In the case of the *Mulu*, the chronicles of the northern and southern reigns are disposed in parallel lines, each chronicle arranged according to the era name proper of the state. The calendrical system collocated on the top of the page functioned as a unifier of the different chronicles.

The redaction of the annals of the history of the early tenth century was a delicate task for another reason. The ‘Accord of Shanyuan’ had brought a period of relative peace in the northern territories at the border with the Qidan-Liao empire, yet the loss of the Yan-Yun region in 936 and the failure of the military strategies of Shenzong in recovering the territories were an issue still on the agenda of court debates.

The *Ping Yan yi* 平燕議 (On How to Pacify Yan) presented to the court in 1060 by the prefectural governor of Yingzhou, Guo Zi 郭諮, is indicative of the discontent among officials of the outcomes of the peace treaty of 1005. The position expressed by Guo Zi that the failure to recover the northern territories had left uncomplete the reunification of Taizu, was shared by many at court.<sup>57</sup>

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三年(946); *Hou Han ji* 4 juan 高祖天福元年 (947) to 隱帝乾祐三年(950); *Hou Zhou ji* 5 juan 太祖廣順元年(951) to 世宗顯德六年(959).

<sup>54</sup> *ZZTJ* 268: 8767.

<sup>55</sup> *ZZTJ* 279: 9114.

<sup>56</sup> *ZZTJ* 283: 9237.

<sup>57</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changpian* 191: 4622-24.

Another relevant issue was the appointment at the official posts in the northern regions of trustworthy officials who had the strategic function of keeping direct relations with the Qidan and assuring that the terms of the pact were respected. The peace treaty had restored several border markets from which the local officials could easily gain profits, often by violating the terms of the pact.<sup>58</sup> The case of Zhao Zi 趙滋, appointed at Xiongzhou 雄州 (Hebei), who had taken personal initiatives in trading with the Qidan is symptomatic of the general risks. In 1061 Sima Guang wrote a memorial to the court in order to alert the emperor of the importance of respecting the terms of agreement established sixty years earlier by Shenzong for the sake of the stability of the empire. By reminding the emperor of the great losses caused by the ravages of the Qidan before 1005, the historian expressed his adverse position to the pro-war factions and maintained that the annual tribute to the Qidan had not to be considered shameful when compared to the damage that a war would have brought to the people of the border regions.<sup>59</sup>

While the *Cefu yuangui*, conceived as a systematized collection of historical precedents concerning practical matters of governance, failed to or avoided talking about the historical reasons that had led to the period of turmoil and foreign dominance of the early tenth century, the *ZZTJ* purportedly faced the task of narrating those causes.

This thesis mainly focuses on the process of narrating the rise and fall of the two northern dynasties, the Later Tang and Later Jin, and their strategies in dealing with the rising power of the Qidan.

The Qidan presence at the northern borders had been threatening the empire peripheral regions since the late Tang period with minor incursions, robberies and attacks, yet it is only at the beginning of the tenth century that their military power began to affect the internal political balances of the empire. Since their establishment, the Later Liang paid regular diplomatic visits to the Qidan court on the basis of the official recognition of equality.<sup>60</sup> Nonetheless, the peripheral northern prefectures had

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<sup>58</sup> Lau Nap-Yin, "Waging war for peace?", 213-14.

<sup>59</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changpiang* 195: 4720-21.

<sup>60</sup> The development of the Liao 遼 (907-1125) empire is not the focus of the present work; my concern lies in considering the interest the Song historians had in the northern neighbors within the framework of the relations with the empire. Much of the scholarship has focused on the relationship between the Qidan and the Song, in recent years a quite large body of secondary literature has been produced on the



acquired a certain degree of autonomy from the central government that enabled them to engage in autonomous relations with the Qidan. This is the case of the king of Jin and governor of Hedong, Li Keyong 李克用 (856-908), a former general of the Tang.

The first attempt at establishing diplomatic relations with the Qidan was undertaken by Li Keyong in 907; this is the date when the *ZZTJ* officially introduced the northern reign in the chronology of the annals.

As it will be shown in more depth in the first and second chapters of this work, Sima Guang had at his disposal a variety of sources that represented the events from different perspectives and allegedly for different purposes. The criterion for the selection and arrangement of the sources is thus the first step for an analysis of the narrative choices of Sima Guang.

In 936 the then governor of Hedong, Shi Jingtang, renewed the pact with the Qidan in order to overthrow the last ruler of the Later Tang, Li Congke. Under the aegis of the Qidan, Shi Jingtang was enthroned emperor. As a reward, the border territories of between Yan and Yun were to be ceded to the Qidan. The terms of the pact, labeled as the ‘pact based on filial respect to a father’, officially recognized the superiority of the Qidan and obliged the Later Jin to pay annual tributes to the northern empire. Despite the unfavorable terms of the pact, the peace policy inspired by the then minister Sang Weihan 桑維翰 (898-947) and supported by the emperor, led to a decade of relative economic development and stability.

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origins and development of the Qidan and their relations with the early tenth century rulers of the Chinese empire. See, for instance, the work of Naomi Standen: “The Five Dynasties”. *The Cambridge History of China* (v.5): 39-132; “(Re) Constructing the frontiers of tenth-century north China”, in *Frontiers in Question: Eurasian Borderlands, 700-1700* (N. Standen & D. Power, eds. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999): 55-79; “Who Wants to Be an Emperor? Zhao Dejun 趙德鈞, Youzhou 幽州 and the Liao 遼”. In *Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms* (ed. by Lorge, Peter. The Chinese University Press, Hong Kong: 2011): 15-45; “Raiding and Frontier Society in the Five Dynasties”, in *Political Frontiers, Ethnic Boundaries and Human Geography in Chinese History*, edited by N. Di Cosmo, Don J. Wyatt (Routledge Curzon, 2003): 160-191. On the early Song diplomatic relations with their northern neighbors see Tao Jing-shen, “Barbarians or Northerners: Northern Song images of the Khitans”, in *China Among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and its Neighbors, 10th - 14th Centuries* (Morris Rossabi, ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983): 66-86; Wang Gungwu, “The rhetoric of a lesser empire: Early Song relations with its neighbors”, in *China Among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and its Neighbors, 10th - 14th Centuries* (Morris Rossabi, ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983): 46-65; Lau, Nap-yin, “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): 180-221.

In 942, on the death of the emperor, the pro-war faction lead by Jing Yanguang 景延光 broke the terms of the pact and refused to officially recognize the northern neighbor. Four years later the Qidan placed the city of Jinyang in Hedong under seige and invaded the capital, putting an end to the Later Jin dynasty.

The two invasions of 936 and 946 are pictured by the eleventh-century historians as the highest point of disorder of the Five Dynasties period and in the history of the empire.<sup>61</sup> Sima Guang dedicates almost two entire annals (the first and the last of the Later Jin) to the story of the invasion of the Qidan that lead to the rise and fall of the Shi family clan. The complexity of the narrative process and the relevance of picturing these events in the most throughout way is the focus of the enquiry in the third chapter of this thesis. This complexity will gradually lead to more radical judgments in the southern Song *tongjian* studies: the importance of detailed narratives in order to express judgments will leave the way open to the primacy of a set of moral principles according to which the historical characters were judged as good or evil.

### *Recent Scholarship*

Recent scholarship on the historiography of the *ZZTJ* has focused mainly on two aspects: the compilation process and the inquiry into the political ideology of Sima Guang, mostly on the basis of the comments of the author included in the text and rarely analyzing how Sima Guang selected and used the sources, and often ignoring the narrative itself.<sup>62</sup> The first western scholar to undertake an analysis of the sources is Pulleyblank (1950). He analyzes the quotations from different sources included in the *Kaoyi* for the thirty years between 730-763.<sup>63</sup> Johannes Kurz, in a series of articles and a recently published book, has explored the accounts on the

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<sup>61</sup> Ouyang Xiu, *XWDS* 29: 324.

<sup>62</sup> See Pulleyblank, "Chinese Historical Criticism: Liu-chi Chih and Ssu-ma Kuang", *Historians of China and Japan*, 151-160; Anthony Sariti, "Monarchy, Bureaucracy and Absolutism in the Political Thought of Ssu-ma Kuang", *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol.32 (1972), 53-76; Xiao-bin Ji, "Mirror for Government: Ssu-ma Kuang's Thought on Politics and Government in *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien*", in *The New and the Multiple*, 1-31. See also Xiao-bin Ji's *Politics and Conservatism in Northern Song China: The Career and Thought of Sima Guang (1019-1086 A.D.)*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University, 2005.

<sup>63</sup> Pulleyblank, E.G. "The *Tzzyjh Tongjiann Kaoyih* and the Sources for the History of the Period 730-763." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 13 (1950), 448-73.

Southern Tang dynasty (937-976) in the context of the creation of the notion of ‘faction’ and he has translated the related parts in the *ZZTJ*. Although Kurz does not just focus on the *ZZTJ*, his main achievement is to have explored the high degree of flexibility of the narrative in different Song sources.<sup>64</sup>

Much of the recent scholarship on the *ZZTJ* has nonetheless focused on the annals dedicated to the Han and Three Kingdoms periods.<sup>65</sup> Hoyt C. Tillman and, more recently, Mark Strange have endorsed in a re-examination of the use of the sources for the compilation of the annals of the Six Dynasties period (220-589). Tillman focuses on the narrative of Zhu Geliang 諸葛亮 (181-234), while Strange deals with the rebellion of Hou Jing 侯景 (?- 552), that took place in 549 during the Southern Liang dynasty period (502-577).<sup>66</sup> In contrast to the almost universally accepted claim of the objectivity of Sima Guang in the choice of the sources, by a critical comparison of the sources that Sima Guang had at his disposal with the narrative choices in the *ZZTJ*, Tillman suggests a far more complex picture of historiography.<sup>67</sup> Through his analysis of the rebellion of the general Hou Jing, Mark Strange further explores the criterion for the selection of the sources behind the scope

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<sup>64</sup> J. Kurz, “The Invention of a ‘Faction’ in Song Historical Writings on the Southern Tang”, *JSYS* 28 (1998), 1-35, and *China’s Southern Tang Dynasty (937-976)*. London and New York: Routledge, 2011.

<sup>65</sup> For obvious reasons no scholar has ever endorsed in an integral translation of the *ZZTJ*. The only extant translations of entire chapters are Rafe de Crespigny’s translation of chapters 54 to 59 on emperor Huan and emperor Ling (157-189 A.D.) Faculty of Asian Studies, ANU, 1989((internet edition 2003); chaps 56-59, *To Establish Peace, Being the Chronicle of Later Han for the Years 189-220 AD*, Rafe de Crespigny, tr. And annotated, ANU 1997. Achilles Fang’s *The Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms (220-265): Chapters 69-78 from the Tzu chih t-ung chien of Ssu-ma Kuang (1019-1086)*, edited by Glen W.Baxter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952). Fang’s annotated translation is useful in that the focus is Sima Guang’s sources for this period, thus providing a detailed view of his method of compilation. Other partial translations of anecdotes and commentaries are included in articles and books. See for example the translation of the narrative on Hou Jing’s rebellion by Mark Strange in “A Reading of Hou Jing’s Rebellion in *Zizhi tongjian* (Comprehensive Mirror to Aid and Government): The Construction of Sima Guang’s Imperial Vision”. In Berg, Daria (ed.). *Reading China: Fiction, History and the Dynamics of Discourse. Essays in Honour of Professor Glen Dunbridge* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

<sup>66</sup> Hoyt.C. Tillman. “Textual Liberties and Restraints in Rewriting China’s Histories”, in *The New and the Multiple* . Edited by Thomas H.C. Lee. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2004. Tillman’s argument has been criticized, see Xiao-bin Ji. *Scholarship on Sima Guang’s historiography* 5-10. Mark Strange in “A Reading of Hou Jing’s Rebellion in *Zizhi tongjian* (Comprehensive Mirror to Aid and Government): The Construction of Sima Guang’s Imperial Vision”. In Berg, Daria (ed.). *Reading China: Fiction, History and the Dynamics of Discourse. Essays in Honour of Professor Glen Dunbridge* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

<sup>67</sup> H.C. Tillman, “Textual Liberties and Restraints in Rewriting China’s Histories”, 67.

of the *Kaoyi* and he questions the claim to historical authenticity of the *ZZTJ*.<sup>68</sup> While Strange focuses on the narrative structure, the interest of Tillman's inquiry deals mainly with the use of the language. The question raised by the two scholars is whether Sima Guang and his collaborators altered the accounts in the textual sources on the basis of other material not mentioned in the *Kaoyi* and no more extant or they subjectively manipulated those sources in order to confer specific meanings to narrative.<sup>69</sup> A universally accepted answer based on definite textual proof is far from being reached. In particular, Tillman's claim that Sima Guang knowingly employed a 'judgmental language' seems to clash with the historian's rejection of the method of praise and blame (*baobian* 褒貶) proper of the *Chunqiu*.<sup>70</sup> Sima Guang adopted the annalistic style purposely recalling the *Chunqiu* tradition, yet he claimed that his aim was not to set up judgmental norms. Nevertheless, some narrative choices seem to imply subjective assessments.

Taking into account the outcome of recent scholarship, this thesis investigates the historiography of the annals of the Five Dynasties with a focus on the process of narrating the events concerning the northern dynasties Shatuo-ruled Later Tang and Later Jin, and their relation with the Qidan.

Chapter one aims at providing a critical overview of the sources. It does not purport to be exhaustive of the whole range of sources available to the historians; in contrast, it focuses on the process of redaction of the veritable records of the early tenth century and the early Song historiography. The overview attempts to show the complexity of the sources available for the redaction of the Long Draft.

Chapter two investigates the flexibility of the historical discourses, their interrelation and the (implicit or explicit) criterion of selection sources. Chapter three describes the process of narrating the uprising and the defeat of the Late Jin. I will mainly focus on the account on the relation between Yelü Deguang and Shi Jingtang as I believe this is an interesting case study in which the narrative around key personages is enriched and manipulated; specific textual and narrative choices reveal

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<sup>68</sup> M. Strange, "A Reading of Hou Jing's Rebellion in *Zizhi tongjian* (Comprehensive Mirror to Aid and Government): The Construction of Sima Guang's Imperial Vision", 204.

<sup>69</sup> One criticism to Tillman work is that he attributed to Sima Guang the entire authorship, without considering that much of the work had been done by his team of collaborators. See Tillman, "Textual Liberties and Restraints in Rewriting China's Histories", 71-72.

<sup>70</sup> Tillman, "Textual Liberties and Restraints in Rewriting China's Histories", 68.

the interest of the author in directing the readership in his judgment on certain issues. The contribution of the *Kaoyi* is very limited in the case of this part of the annals: Sima Guang quotes from early sources often without attribution. Whereas the sources are still extant, such as in the case of the standard histories, it is possible to examine the way in which Sima Guang altered earlier narratives and thereby it is possible to gain some hints on the relationship between transmission and more creative historiography. Even when the historian does not add a single word to the sources, there are always differences in the choice of the language, which are certainly meaningful.

The principal goal of chapter four is to investigate the narrative choices of the comprehensive guide concerning imperial institutions, with a focus on the control of the family clan and the system of ancestral temples.

One year before Sima Guang was commissioned by the court the redaction of a comprehensive guide for aid in government, the calendrical system conceived by Liu Xishou in use during the reign of Renzong, the *Chongtian li*, had been substituted by the *Mingtian li*. Nevertheless, Sima Guang chose to keep to the previous calendar for the chronological setting of his work. This move allegedly purported to emphasize the legacy of Renzong and to warn Yingzong against the risks of privileging the private interests of the collateral branch of his natural father and brother of Zhenzong, rather than paying respect to the legacy of his adopted father. The narrative construction of the system of ancestral temples in the *ZZTJ* reflects Sima Guang's position on this institutional issue. By a comparison of the documents collected in the *Wudai huiyao* and the entries in the *ZZTJ*, chapter four investigates the narrative discourse on the system of ancestral temples of the Later Tang and Later Jin dynasties.

#### *Abridgments*

Sima Guang himself redacted several abridgments and summarizing charts of the *Zizhi tongjian*. The *Tongjian juyao li* 通鑑舉要曆 (Chronicle of the Main Events in the Exemplary Guide) went lost soon after the Song period; after the bibliographical catalogue of the *Songshi*, it is not mentioned in later histories. This chronicle was redacted soon after the *ZZTJ* as a shorter version of the text and

allegedly its purpose was to facilitate the reading at court. Probably because of its mere function of reading compendium, the *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), uncle of Chao Gongwu.<sup>71</sup> According to Chen, at the beginning of the Shaoxing era (1131-1162) Xie Kejia 謝克家 (*jinsshi* 1097) came into possession of the draft and presented it to Gaozong.

The *Mulu* probably had the same function as the *Tongjian juyao li*. Together with the *Kaoyi*, it was published appended to the *ZZTJ* in 1086.<sup>72</sup> It is the only chart that has been transmitted to us in several editions.

The sources provide very little information on the early transmission of the *ZZTJ*. After the work was presented to the court in 1084, the text was published for the first time in Hangzhou 杭州 in 1086.<sup>73</sup> For almost two decades the faith of the text depended on the influence at court of the circle of people who was committed in its transmission. The sources provide evidence of a wide circulation until the late 1090s.<sup>74</sup> The publication and circulation of the *ZZTJ* was then forbidden by imperial

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<sup>71</sup> The *Songshi* does not dedicate a biography to Chao Shuozhi; we know that he was a member of the influent Chao family clan of Shandong, cousin of Chao Buzhi 晁補之(1053-1110, *Songshi* 255: 13111-112) and uncle of Chao Gongwu, from whom we come to know a great deal of information.

<sup>72</sup> Chen Zhensun, *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 4: 113.

<sup>73</sup> Chao Gongwu, *Junzhai dushu zhi jiaozheng*, 209; Chen Zhensun, *Zhizhai shulu jieti*, 113.

<sup>74</sup> The late Qing bibliographer Lu Xinyuan 陸心源 (1834-1894) registers a *Bei Song Shu shi Jinxiu Tang da zi ben Tongjian ba* 北宋蜀費氏進修堂大字本通鑿跋 (Colophon to the Northern Song Shu Edition of the *Exemplary Guide* in Big Characters Printed by the Hall of Refinement of Mr. Fei), corresponding to what the Song people called 'royal edition' (*longzhao ben* 龍爪本), published by the Hall of Refinement of Mr. Fei in Guangdu (Sichuan). According to the colophon redacted by Lu, this edition included philological comments to the texts that were very similar to the *Shiwen bianwu* 釋文辯誤 (Discussion on Mistakes in the *Explanation of the Text*). Lu Xinyuan, *Yigu tang tiba* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009): 49-50. A former salt commissioner in Fujian 福建 province and bibliophile, Lu Xinyuan is renowned for owning one of the biggest collections of Song-Yuan editions of the late Qing period, the Bisonglou 皕宋樓 collection (Chamber of the Two Hundred Song Editions). The library of Lu Xinyuan was best known as one of the 'four national great collections of books', together with the Tieqintongjianlou 鐵琴銅劍樓 of the Ju 瞿 family in Changshu 常熟, the Baqianjuanlou 八千卷樓 (Chamber of the Eight Thousand Scrolls) of the Ding 丁 family in Hangzhou 杭州 and the Haiyuange 海源閣 (Pavilion of the Sea Sources) Yang 楊 family in Liaocheng 聊城. The story of the collection is well-known: the library was sold by the son of Lu Xinyuan, Lu Chunbai 陸純佰, to the Japanese baron Iwasaki. The entire library became thus part of his Seikadō bunko 靜嘉堂文庫 (Collection of the Jingjia Hall) in Tokyo; see Kan Shimasa 島田翰, *Bisong lou cangshu yuanliukao* 皕宋樓藏書源流考 (Study on the Origin and Development of the Chamber of the Two Hundred Song Editions) (Shanghai: Gudian wenxue chubanshe, 1957): 1. The concerns of the history of the Bisonglou collection can be traced through the catalogue compiled by Lu himself, the *Bisonglou cangshu zhi* 皕宋樓藏書志 (Treatise on the Books of the Chamber of the Two Hundred Song Editions) and *Xuzhi* 續

order for a certain period of time and until the early 1130s we do not have information about its transmission. After the invasion of Kaifeng in the 1120s, the imperial archives and libraries were almost completely taken away by the Jurchen-Jin. The early edition of the comprehensive chronicle kept in the imperial libraries was taken away by the Jin.<sup>75</sup>

Following the Jin invasion, the remainings of the imperial holdings were moved to the south and in 1132 the imperial libraries were rebuilt in Lin'an 臨安 (Hangzhou). Through the 1130s and 1140s Gaozong 高宗 (r.1127-1162) promoted throughout campaigns for the retrieval of lost items and the revival of study traditions of the northern Song period. Following the imperially sanctioned publication, the second after 1086, and the diffusion of the text, the southern Song saw the flourishing of different traditions of studies of the text, later labeled as *tongjian* studies.<sup>76</sup>

The brief overview provided below on the different branches of *tongjian* studies does not intend to be an exhaustive introduction to the topic but provides some hints about the differences between eleventh-century historiography and developments through the twelve and thirteen centuries. The difference between the *ZZTJ* and the *tongjian* studies provide interesting issues to be considered.

The first branch of *tongjian* studies consists in the production of historical works inspired by the *ZZTJ* and meant to be the continuation of it, such as the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑑長編 (The Long Draft of the Continued Comprehensive Mirror for Aid In Government) of Li Tao 李濤 (1115-1184)<sup>77</sup> and the

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志(Continuation of the Treatise), collected in the *XXSKQS* with a preface by Li Zonglian 李宗連. The Lu Xinyuan's library was divided into two sections housed in two different places; the first place was divided into two sections: the Shiwanjuanlou 十萬卷樓(Chamber of the Hundred Thousand Scrolls), where he stored a collection of Ming rare editions and manuscripts copies, and the Bisonglou 甬宋樓 collection (Chamber of the Two Hundred Song Editions), where Lu Xinyuan kept Song and Yuan editions. For what concerns the history of the Bisonglou collection, it can be traced through the catalogue compiled by Lu himself, the *Bisonglou cangshu zhi* 甬宋樓藏書志(Treatise on the Books of the Chamber of the Two Hundred Song Editions) and *Xuzhi* 續志(Continuation of the Treatise).

<sup>75</sup> For a general discussion on the losses caused by the Jin invasion and the reconstruction of the libraries collections during the reign of Gaozong see Hilde de Weerd, "The Discourse of Loss in Song Dynasty Private and Imperial Book Collecting", in *Library Trends*, vol.55, n.3 (2007): 404-419.

<sup>76</sup> Lin Song 林嵩's "Zizhi tongjian Hu Sansheng zhu yanjiu" 《資治通鑑》胡三省注研究 (Monographic Study on Hu Sansheng's Commentary to the *Zizhi tongjian*) (Beijing: Beijing daxue, 2005): 48-49.

<sup>77</sup> *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao*, p.1036; general information on the life and work of Li Tao can be found in Tsong-han Lee's "Different Mirrors of the Past: Southern Song Historiography" (Harvard Univ., 2008), 29.

*Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 建炎以來繫年要錄 (Annual Record of the Most Important Events Since the Jianyan Era, 1127-1130) of Li Xinchuan 李心傳 (1167-1240).

A second large tradition, and probably the most influential in the field of the examination teaching traditions, consists in the reworking of the text represented by *Tongjian gangmu* 通鑑綱目 (Outline and Details of the Comprehensive Mirror for the Aid in Government) of Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), first published in 1219.<sup>78</sup> Zhu Xi brought the structure of the text back to the restriction of attention to the didactic lessons of single isolated events proper of the traditional annalistic style.<sup>79</sup> As Wang Yinglin 王應麟 (1223-1296) noted in his *Tongjian dawen* 通鑑答問 (Questions and Answers on the Comprehensive Mirror):

或問：《通鑑》何以不續《春秋》？曰：《春秋》，經也；《通鑑》，史也。經不可續也。《左氏》終于智伯，《通鑑》始于三晉，蓋以續《左氏》也。及朱子為《綱目》之書，綱仿《春秋》，目仿《左氏》，以經法為史法，聖人復起筆從這矣。學者潛心司馬公之編年，參以朱子之筆削，此窮理致知之要，明《春秋》之義，以讀《通鑑》，其庶幾乎！

Someone could ask: why the *Tongjian* is not a continuation of the Annals of the *Chunqiu*? I would answer: the *Chunqiu* belongs to the category of Classics, while the *Tongjian* is an historical work. The Classics cannot be continued. The *Zuoshi* terminates with Zhi Bo, while the *Tongjian* begins with the Three Jin, as a continuation of the *Zuoshi*. As for Zhu Xi's *Gangmu*, the *gang* (outline) imitates the *Chunqiu*, while the *mu* (details) imitates the *Zuoshi*. The norm of the Classics is transformed into history writing. When a Sage shall again rise, he will certainly follow this path. Scholars concentrate on the annalistic history of Sima Guang, and then immerse in Zhu Xi's improvement of the text. These are the essential elements for extending knowledge and probing thoroughly their principles. Understanding the norm of the *Chunqiu* through the reading of the *Tongjian*, isn't it almost all?<sup>80</sup>

Only at the end of the Song period Yuan Shu 袁樞 (1131-1205) in his *Tongjian jishi benmo* 通鑑紀事本末 (Reporting Origins and Results of the Events Narrated in

<sup>78</sup> Tsong-Han Lee, *Different Mirror of the Past: Southern Song Historiography*, 74.

<sup>79</sup> The commentarial tradition is linked with the growing importance of the discourse on war and peace at the Southern Song court. See Lin Song 林嵩's "Zizhi tongjian Hu Sansheng zhu yanjiu", 50-51. Lin Song's division into commentarial branches considers the form more than the content of the commentaries and disti. See *Nan Song Tongjian zhu kaolun* 南宋《通鑑》注考論, 古代文明, 2007, vol.1n.1, 74-81.

<sup>80</sup> Wang Yingling, *Tongjian dawen* 通鑑答問 (Questions and Answers on the Comprehensive Mirror)... Shi Ding 施丁 and Shen Zhihua 深志華 eds., *Zizhi tongjian da cidian* 資治通鑑大辭典 (Great Dictionary of the *Zizhi tongjian*), vol. 2., 151.



the Comprehensive Mirror) attempted to reorganize the *ZZTJ* into topic-oriented chapters; in so doing Yuan Shu focused on the narrative construction of entangled events and purposely tried to overcome the limits imposed by the annalistic style in which the chronological form obliged the author to scatter the narration of events over pages filled with unrelated events.<sup>81</sup> Nevertheless, the effort of Yuan Shu was limited to the reorganization of material and lacked of any critical apparatus.

The third branch of *tongjian* studies is represented by the commentarial tradition and can be further split into three categories: commentaries on specific sections, represented by the *Lu Zhuangyuan baijia zhuzi Zizhi tongjian xiangjie* 陸狀元集百家諸子資治通鑑詳節 (Lu Zhuangyuan's Collection of Detailed Sections of Commentaries to the Comprehensive Mirror from the Hundred Masters) of Lu Tanglao 陸唐老 (*jinsi* 1190); full-text commentaries, represented by the *Zizhi tongjian shiwen* 資治通鑑釋文 (Explanation of the Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government) of Shi Zhao 史炤 (1190- ?) and the moralistic commentary *Dushi guanjian* 讀史管見 (My Limited Insights into Reading History) of Hu Yin, redacted between 1142 and 1149.<sup>82</sup> The *Dushi guanjian* became widely known mostly thanks to Zhu Xi, who greatly appreciated the moral judgments expressed by Hu Yin and inserted part of the commentary in the *Tongjian gangmu*. Western scholars rarely refer to the commentary redacted by Hu Yin as representative of the Southern Song commentarial tradition. The reason for this neglect is that the work of Hu is a collection of critical comments inspired by the text yet sometimes independent from it rather than a commentary. Hu Yin selected those entries and narratives on which he had something to say. At the beginning of the Qing period, Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619-1692) with his *Du Tongjian lun* 讀通鑑論 (On the Reading of the Comprehensive Mirror) will develop this form of moralizing commentary into a piece of historical criticism.

A fourth tradition of studies consists of commentaries on 'special topics', represented by the *kaozheng* 考證 (evidential research) studies of the *Tongjian dili tongshi* 通鑑地理通釋 (General Explanation on the Geography of the Comprehensive

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<sup>81</sup> *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao*, 1069-70.

<sup>82</sup> Hu Yin, *Dushi guanjian*, Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 2011.

Mirror) of Wang Yinglin 王應麟 (1223-1296). This last tradition of studies is a direct consequence of the analysis of the differences in specific data (in Wang Yinglin's case in places names, but also in proper names, dates and official titles) proper to Sima Guang's *Zizhi tongjian kaoyi*, which in the period of Song-Yuan transition culminated in the *Zizhi tongjian yinzhū* 資治通鑑音注 (Commentary to the Comprehensive Mirror for the Aid in Government) of Hu Sanxing 胡三省 (1230-1302) and was recovered by the evidential research tradition of the Qing period, represented by Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613-1682) and Quan Zuwang 全祖望 (1705-1755).





## Chapter One

### The *Zizhi tongjian* and its Sources for the History of the Five Dynasties

This chapter aims at providing a general inquiry into the sources available to Sima Guang for the redaction of the Annals of the Five Dynasties, from the official documents combined at the court of the northern dynasties in the first half of the tenth century to the historical works compiled in the first half of the eleventh century.<sup>83</sup> I shall analyze the origin and nature of some of the more important of these texts. All the works are quoted in the *Kaoyi*, with some of them occupying significant portions of it and so pieces of information about their origins can be drawn from the commentary.

Four main periods of historiography can be distinguished:

(1) An early stage of history writing at the court of the five northern dynasties. Sima Guang and his co-workers 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 (Chronological Annals) constituted the main sources for the compilation of the Annals of the Five Dynasties.<sup>84</sup> The early Song historians prior to Sima Guang also relied on these sources, yet very little information on the work of selection and comparison of the texts was left to

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<sup>83</sup> The Annals of the Five Dynasties period correspond to the last twenty-eight chapters (*juan* 266-294) of the *ZZTJ*; Sima Guang collocates the beginning of the first Annals of the Later Liang in 907, first year of reign of emperor Taizu 太祖 (r. 907-912). For the sake of convenience I shall follow Sima's division and consider only the sources mentioned in the *Kaoyi* from that date. Moreover, for the scope of this work I shall only deal with the historical sources concerning the northern ruling houses; I will thus skip, or occasionally mention, the sources of the southern dynasties and reigns. On the historical sources for the southern dynasties see Johannes L. Kurz, "Sources for the History of the Southern Tang (937-975)", *JSYS* 24 (1994): 216-235.

<sup>84</sup> The study of Guo Wuxiong 郭武雄 is by far the most exhaustive work on the historical writing at the court of the Five Dynasties; see *Wudai shiliao tanyuan* 五代史料探源 (Analysis of the Historical Sources on the Five Dynasties), Shangwu yinshu guan: 1987. As for western scholarship on the official records redacted at the court of the five northern dynasties, the only complete study is an article from the late 'fifties by Wang Gongwu ("The *ChiuWu-tai shih* and history-writing during the Five Dynasties", *Asia Major*, vol.VI, n.1, 1957, 1-22). Denis Twitchett in his book on the historiography of the Tang dynasty also dedicates some attention to the topic, and in the specific to the compilation project at the court of the Later Jin dynasty that will be discussed below in this chapter (see D. Twitchett, *The Writing of Official History Under the T'ang*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

posterity. On the contrary, in the *Kaoyi* Sima Guang informs the reader about the work of critical selection and preserves many quotations from this early material. Since all the early tenth century official documents are lost, the *Kaoyi* thus constitutes an invaluable source of reference about 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*, from here on *JWDS*) was redacted under the supervision of Xue Juzheng 薛居正 (912-981).

(3) Early eleventh century integrations to the previous comprehensive histories: the *Tang yu lu* 唐餘錄 (Additional Records of the Tang), a text redacted by Wang Hao 王皓 (?-1064), 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 *Xin wudai shi* 新五代史 (New History of the Five Dynasties) of Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072), concluded in 1060.

### 1. Early Tenth-Century History Writing

Large projects to compile the official records of the preceding dynasties or emperors were undertaken under each 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;<sup>85</sup> through the records the historians conveyed judgments on the events

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<sup>85</sup> Recent scholarship has pointed out the importance of the Veritable Records as a Tang innovation; moreover, it has highlighted the relevant political implications of the *shilu*. Emperor Taizong 太宗

of the preceding reigns that had relevant implications for contemporary politics.<sup>86</sup> The first fifty years of the tenth century saw three main stages of historiography:

- (1) 905-922: The political instability and continuous military conflicts that characterized the first twenty years of the tenth century, dominated by the Later Liang rulers, interfered with the historical compilation; only at the end of the second decade of the century did the writing of history regain its importance in the political agenda of the rulers.
- (2) 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).
- (3) The Later Jin compiling project.

### 1.1. 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

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(r.626-649) of the Tang, ordered the compilation of the first Veritable Records of his reign in 640, after the death of his dethroned father. Since then, 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 D. Twitchett, *The Writing of Official History Under the T'ang*, 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]). The text was presented to the throne in 815. The *Kaoyi* reports quotations from two versions of the same text (ZZTJ 236.7608); the history of the transmitted text has thus created many disputes. See Solomon, Bernard S. *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; Pulleyblank, E.G. "The *Shun-tsung Shih-lu*". *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 19 (1957): 336-44; Dull, Jack L., "Han Yu: A Problem in T'ang Dynasty Historiography", in *Proceedings of the Second Conference of Historians in Asia*, pp.71-99. Taipei: International Association of Historians of Asia, 1964.

<sup>86</sup> Basically the Five Dynasties maintained the same system of historiography bureaus of the Tang period. The Veritable Records were redacted by the Historiographical Office (*shiguan* 史館) on the basis of 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 (see Twitchett, *The Writing of Official History Under the T'ang*, 13-20 and 120-121).

tenth century; we roughly know that the board of compilers included Li Qi 李琪, minister of the Later Liang Imperial Secretariat, and other lesser known officials.<sup>87</sup> Seemingly none of these officials had ever engaged in historical writing and the record presented consistent limits. The text was redacted between 915 and 921, during the period of reign of the second and last ruler of the Later Liang dynasty, Zhu Youzhen 朱友貞 (r.913-922).<sup>88</sup> The Song historians almost unanimously blamed the *Liang Taizu shilu* for being too vague and neglecting events that were unfavorable to the Later Liang.<sup>89</sup> Wang Yucheng 王禹偁 (954-1001) in his *Wudai shi quewen* 五代史闕文 (Lacking Parts of the History of the Five Dynasties)<sup>90</sup> also complained that ‘there are no court diaries from the period of reign of emperor Zhaozong (r.889-904); the first emperor of the Later Liang dynasty reigned merely for six years, [after him] the king of Jun ordered the historiographers to redact the *Veritable Records of Taizu of Liang*; [The text] eliminates the reality of the attacks [on the Tang dynasty], these events are not recorded because they were too shameful’.<sup>91</sup>

The text was followed and integrated by 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 (?-923).<sup>92</sup> This text has

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<sup>87</sup> Zhang Gun 張袞, Qi Yanxiang 郟殷象, Feng Xijia 馮錫嘉 (*JWDS* 24: 250; *Cefu yuangui* 557: 6689). No information on the redaction of the *Liang Taizu shilu* is available in the chapter on history writing (*juan* 18) of the *Wudai huiyao*.

<sup>88</sup> The *ZZTJ* does not recognize Zhu Youzhen as a legitimate ruler, thus the narration of his reign does not start with a new Annals and it is inserted in the last Annals of the first emperor of the Later Liang. Moreover, although in the text Zhu Youzhen is addressed as ‘emperor’, in the names for the different era of reign it always appears as ‘king of Jun’, Youzhen’s title before enthronement (*ZZTJ* 268: 8765/271: 8878). Early sources, such as the *JWDS*, address to Zhu Youzhen with the generic posthumous title ‘last emperor’. The same is done for the last emperor of the Later Tang dynasty, Li Congke (r. 934-936), adopted son of Li Siyuan (emperor Mingzong, r.926-934). While the *JWDS* uses the generic ‘last emperor’, the *ZZTJ* refers to him as king of Lu. In some early sources Li Congke is addressed as Qingtai emperor after the name of the era of reign. On the other hand, Ouyang Xiu calls him emperor (on the legitimacy of emperor Fei see the discussion in the next section). Finally, the second and last ruler of the Later Jin dynasty, Shi Chonggui (r.942-946), son of Shi Jingtang’s eldest brother Jingru, is addressed as king of Qi (*ZZTJ* 283: 9243/285: 9346). The *JWDS* calls him with his posthumous title, emperor Shao, while the *XWDS* addresses to him as emperor Chu (*JWDS* 81: 1067; *XWDS* 9:89-98).

<sup>89</sup> *JWDS* 18: 250.

<sup>90</sup> On the compilation of the *Wudai shi quewen* see below.

<sup>91</sup> *Wudai shishu huibian*, 2449.

<sup>92</sup> *ZZTJ* 262: 8542; the *JWDS*, *Cefu yuangui* and *Chongwen zongmu* all record a text in 30 *juan* (*Cefu yuangui* 557: 6689). *Zhizhai dushu jieti records* a text of 20 *juan*. (*JWDS* 18: 250).



also not been immune to criticism; in particular, the *Kaoyi*, as well as Wang Yucheng, blamed Jing Xiang for concealing the negative aspects of the Liang ruling house and for exaggerating the positive ones.<sup>93</sup>

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.<sup>94</sup> Nevertheless, the two records, combined with the *Liang gongchen liezhuan* 梁功臣列傳 (Biographies of the Meritorious Subjects of Emperor Taizu),<sup>95</sup> 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.

## 1.2. 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 李克用 (856-908)<sup>96</sup> and future emperor

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<sup>93</sup> *ZZTJ* 255: 8293-94/ 8306. Jing Xiang was accused by the Song historians of been one of the main responsible for the raise of Zhu Quanzhong.

<sup>94</sup> The records of the last emperors of the Tang period, emperor Xuanzong 宣宗 (r. 847-859), Yizong 懿宗 (r.860-873), Xizong 僖宗 (r.873-888) and Zhaozong 昭宗 (r.889-904) and the last emperor puppet Zhaoxuan zong 昭宣宗 (r.904-905) did not exist until the compilation of the *Jiu Tang shu* in the Later Jin period (*Wudai huiyao* 18: 303).

<sup>95</sup> The *Kaoyi* only reports that the *Liang gongchen liezhuan* at the time of the compilation of the *ZZTJ* was included in the Chongwen yuan 崇文院 library and that the authors were not recorded; the year of redaction is also not specified and can be roughly placed at the end of the reign of Zhu Youzhen (*ZZTJ* 255: 8304). The four quotes included in the critical commentary are the only remains of the text. See also *Songshi* 203: 5086: the bibliographical catalogue reports a *Zhu Liang liezhuan* 朱梁列傳 in 15 *juan* redacted by Zhang Zhaoyuan.

<sup>96</sup> The surname Li and the title of king of Jin had been bestowed to Li Keyong by the late Tang court as a reward for his military merits in the suppression of the Huang Chao 黃巢 rebellion in 884. In the same year Li Keyong was also named military governor of Hedong, with his political center in Jinyang 晉陽 (modern Taiyuan 太原). When the Later Liang rose to power, Li Keyong kept calling himself an official of the Tang and using the Tang time system (together with the governorship of Fengxiang 風翔 and Huainan 淮南, Hedong continued to use the Tianyou 天祐 era; for this reason the first emperor of the Later Liang removed his imperial titles (*ZZTJ*, first year of the Kaiping era, 907). During the five dynasties period, the Hedong region became a highly strategic center of power and the direct connection with the northern neighbors Qidan. Li Keyong was considered an example of loyalty to the Tang court and the titles of king of Jin and military governor of Hedong passed on to his forebears until the Later Tang period. Nevertheless, because of their Shatuo Turk origins, Li Keyong and Li Cunxu were hardly seen by many officials who had served under the Tang as the legitimate descendents of the Tang.

Zhuangzong (莊宗, r. 923-926) of the Later Tang dynasty 後唐 (923-935).<sup>97</sup> The reign of emperor Zhuangzong lasted only three years; in the subsequent era of emperor Li Siyuan 李嗣源 (Mingzong 明宗, r.926-933) the court historians committed 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 historians. The process to legitimize emperor 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 Zhuye Chixin 朱邪赤心 (Li Guochang 李國昌)<sup>98</sup> and Zhuye 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) stepped back to Li Guochang, and the *Tang Xizü jinian lu* 唐懿祖紀年錄 (Chronological Records of Later Tang Xizü) traced back the origins of the Later Tang dynastic house to Zhuye.<sup>99</sup> The *Zhuangzong shilu* covered the period of reign of the Later Liang until the end of the reign of Zhuangzong, from 907 to 927, while the three *jinian lu* covered 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 projected compensated for the lack of historical records about the last decades of the ninth century. Secondly, in this way the Later Tang rulers denied the

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<sup>97</sup> Among the rulers of the Five Dynasties period, Zhuangzong's popularity can be matched only by the last emperor of the Later Zhou dynasty, Shizong 世宗 (r.954-959), Guo Rong 郭榮. Although Li Cunxu was of Shatuo origins, Sima Guang puts him at the top of his personal classification of the 'wise rulers', second only to emperor Shizong (ZTTJ 294: 9599-9600).

<sup>98</sup> The surname Li was bestowed by the Tang court to the Shatuo leader in 869 (ZTTJ 251: 8149)

<sup>99</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 18.298-299; Wang Gongwu, "The *ChiuWu-tai shih* and history-writing during the Five Dynasties", *Asia Major*, vol.VI, n.1, 1957, 10-12.

legitimacy of the Later Liang dynasty and established a direct line of succession with the Tang.<sup>100</sup>

Two main factors gave a great motivation to the large compiling project. First of all, the year 924 saw the restoration of the duties of the Historiography Office; the *Wudai huiyao* reports a memorial sent in 924 by this office to the court and to the various bureaus requesting the revival of the system for collecting specific types of information from the governmental agencies, a system that had fallen into disuse in the second half of the eighth century following the period of turmoil caused by 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 predisposed offices be sent to the Office for the compilation of the records and included a detailed explanation of the rules to follow for the different records.<sup>101</sup> 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 emperor Zhuangzong and the three *jinian lu*; the request was based on an argument in favor of it presented by the historian and bibliographer Zhang Zhaoyuan 張昭遠 (*jinshi* 877).<sup>102</sup>

The second factor that largely contributed to providing sources for the compilation was the private collection of Zhang Zhaoyuan. At that time Zhang was in charge as Rectifier of Omissions of the Left (*zuo buque* 左補闕), yet his qualities as a skilled historian and bibliographer led him to conduct important roles in the Historiography Office from the Later Tang period until the early Song years. The early Song sources depict

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<sup>100</sup> Twitchett, *The Writing of Official History Under the T'ang*, 192-193.

<sup>101</sup> From then on, the work of the Historiography Office continued uninterrupted until the end of the Later Zhou period without many substantial changes. The memorial *Zhusi song shiguan shili* 諸司送史館事例 (On how all the 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, memorial and court diaries to the Historiographical Office, but also all the other governmental agencies and ministries were required to return regularly to the Office specific types of information (*Wudai huiyao*, 18.293-94; *Cefu yuangui* 557: 6689-6693; for a partial translation of the memorial see Wang Gongwu, p.10). On the system for the collection of specific information from the administrative offices see Twitchett, *The Writing of Official History Under the T'ang*, 27-30.

<sup>102</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 18.298-299.

Zhang as a skilled scholar who had collected a great many documents from early periods; at that time he had committed himself to the study of the period of reign of Zhuangzong and was privately redacting the Records of the Tongguang era. Moreover, according to his biography in the *Songshi* 宋史 (History of the Song), Zhang had privately collected a great many official documents on the relationship between emperor Zhaozong of the Tang dynasty and Li Keyong, and he was willing to redact a *Sanzu zhi* 三組志 (Treatise on the Three Ancestors). Zhang's collection subsequently provided a great basis for the compilation work; 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.<sup>103</sup> In the year of the reign of Li Conghou (emperor Min, r.933-34) and in the following reign of Li Congke (r. 934-936), Zhang Zhaoyuan participated 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 some sources simply *Zhuangzong liezhuan*) in thirty *juan*.<sup>104</sup> Under the supervision of Yao Yi 姚顛 (866-940) in 935 he participated in the redaction of the *Tang Mingzong shilu* 唐明宗實錄 (Veritable Records of emperor Mingzong of [Later] Tang) in thirty *juan*.<sup>105</sup>

The *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan* in particular deserves further attention. The work of collecting biographical material for the compilations of the biographies to be included in the dynastic histories was already developed in the Tang and early periods, yet it was not a common praxis for the Historiography Office to publish the biographies as independent works.<sup>106</sup> 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 of the *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan* a more rigorous

<sup>103</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 18.298-299; Wang Gongwu, "The *ChiuWu-tai shih* and history-writing during the Five Dynasties", 10-12; Twitchett, *The Writing of Official History Under the T'ang*, 191-192.

<sup>104</sup> *ZZTJ* 254: 8196; *Wudai huiyao* 18: 299.

<sup>105</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 18: 299.

<sup>106</sup> Twitchett, *The Writing of Official History Under the T'ang*, 65-66.

standard of organization of the 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, their merits and demerits carefully checked out.<sup>107</sup> This standard would greatly influence Song historiography, and in particular would be revived by Ouyang Xiu in the biographical section of his *Xin Wudai shi*. Although Ouyang Xiu’s set of rigorous duties and his idea of ethically compromising might have been quite different from the concept of ‘meritorious’ and ‘not meritorious’ during the Later Tang period, the Song historian was certainly greatly inspired by the structural patterns of these early records.

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 Qidan. The critical commentary mentions a *Zhu Wen zhuan* 朱溫傳 (Biography of Zhu Wen),<sup>108</sup> 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 Qidan).<sup>109</sup> It is interesting to note that the Later Liang rulers are numbered among the subjects of the Later Tang dynasty as equals to the northern neighbors Qidan; this implicit classification thus reflects the willing denial of the legitimacy of the previous dynasty.

The *Qidan zhuan* represents the first case of biography dedicated to the northern neighbors. The *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan* treats the Qidan as subjects of the empire, and only from the early Song period will the historiographers begin to draw a clear distinction between the Qidan as ‘foreign reign’ and the empire. The *Wudai huiyao*, presented to the court in 963,

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<sup>107</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 18.303; the memorial has been fully translated by Wang Gongwu, “The *ChiuWu-tai shih* and history-writing during the Five Dynasties”, 11-12.

<sup>108</sup> *ZZTJ* 266: 8695.

<sup>109</sup> *ZZTJ* 269: 8809.

dedicates a terse and brief chapter to the Qidan.<sup>110</sup> The first clear definition of a section for the Qidan as ‘foreign’ is the diplomatic *Waiguo liezhuan* 外國列傳 (Biographies of Foreign Countries) included in the *Jiu wudai shi*. It would be followed by the definitely less diplomatic *Siyi fulu* 四夷附錄 (Appendix on the Four Barbarians) by Ouyang Xiu in his *Xin Wudai shi*.

In conclusion, although the early Song historians certainly drew from these texts, the few quotations from the three *jinian lu* preserved in the *Kaoyi* are the only 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.

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

The large project of history writing 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, soon before his rebellion in 934, Shi Jingtang (emperor Gaozu, r.936-942) had officially declared the illegitimacy of Li Congke and had asked for his abdication;<sup>111</sup> Shi Jingtang purposely reiterated his denial of legitimizing the last Later Tang emperor by omitting to allow 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 *Tangshu* (later known as the *Jiu Tangshu*) was thus commissioned by emperor Gaozu in 941 and concluded during the reign of Shi Chonggui (r.943-946) in 945.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 27: 455-462.

<sup>111</sup> *ZZTJ* 280: 9143.

<sup>112</sup> Most of the content of the *Jiu Tang shu* is based on the *Guoshi* 國史 (National History) completed by Liu Fang 柳芳 in 759-60. The project was effected by the continuous changes in the director of the Historiographical Office, occupied by Zhao Yin 趙瑩 until 943, and then by Sang Weihuan 桑維翰 (898-947), who was substituted by Liu Xu 劉昫 (888-947) two years later. The tradition attributes the work to the then director Liu Xu, yet Liu was only

The very first problem for the historians dealing with the Tang history was the lack of official sources for the last centuries of reign. No official records had been collated since the period of reign of emperor Wuzong 武宗 (r. 814-846);<sup>113</sup> at the beginning of the tenth century the Later Jin court released orders among the empire for the retrieval of documents concerning the last Tang emperors for the redaction of the records. Nevertheless, the search for books ended up to be limited to the central plain territories because the southern reigns refused to participate.<sup>114</sup> 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 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*.<sup>115</sup> 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 Li Keyong's name.<sup>116</sup>

As for the records of the two Later Jin emperors, during the reign of emperor Yin (r.949-950) of the Later Han period Dou Zhengu 竇貞固(?-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

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responsible for the final memorial of presentation to the court. The Song sources such as the *Kaoyi* consider Zhang Zhaoyuan and the Diarist Jia Wei as the main protagonists of the compilation project. (see Denis Twitchett, *The Writing of Official History Under the T'ang*, 160-187; *Cefu yuangui* 557:6693).

<sup>113</sup> Chen Zhensun, *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 4: 126.

<sup>114</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 18: 298.

<sup>115</sup> 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 Twitchett, 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.

<sup>116</sup> *ZZTJ* 255:8297-98. The *Zhizhai shulu jieti* reports a *Tang nian bu lu* in 65 *juan* (4:112).

(Veritable Records of Emperor Shao of [Later] Jin). According to the *Wudai huiyao*, the two records were roughly concluded in 951, after the general Guo Wei 郭威 (r.952-954) had assumed power and founded the Later Zhou dynasty.<sup>117</sup> The change of ruling house apparently neither stopped nor interfered with the compilation process.

The compilation project undertaken by emperor Shizong 世宗 (r.954-959) also included the redaction of *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), that 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 Emperor Fei of [Later] Tang).<sup>118</sup> According to the *Kaoyi*, Zhang completed the two records at the beginning of the Song period.<sup>119</sup> The quotations preserved in the *Kaoyi* are the only remains of the two texts.

The *Kaoyi* reports a dispute between Sima Guang and one of his closest co-workers and friends, the historian Liu Shu. The discussion develops around the origins of birth of Li Congke. The *Wudai huiyao*, the *Jiu Wudai shi* and the *Xin Wudai shi* agreed on the illegitimacy of Li Congke to rule on the basis of the fact that he had been adopted by emperor Mingzong. The *ZZTJ* follows this version of the facts.<sup>120</sup> On the other hand, Liu Shu considers the *Feidi shilu* more reliable than the *Jiu*

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<sup>117</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 18: 299-300; Chen Zhensun, *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 4: 127.

<sup>118</sup> *Cefu yuangui*, 6697; *Wudai shiliao tanyuan*, 40-43; *Zhizhai shulu jieti*, 4: 127.

<sup>119</sup> *ZZTJ* 268: 8770.

<sup>120</sup> *ZZTJ* 268: 8771; *Wudai huiyao*, 4.



*wudai shi*. The *Feidi shilu* reports that Li Congke was the eldest son of emperor Mingzong, born from a concubine née Wei. When emperor Mingzong stepped into power, he named his second son Congrong 從榮 as legitimate heir, instead of Congke. When Congrong died, again the emperor chose his third son Conghou as heir to the throne instead of Congke. The reign of Li Conghou lasted less than a year and his reign was overturned following the rebellion of Li Congke.

According to Liu Shu, the direct kin connection of Congke with emperor Mingzong had been hidden since then and only Zhang Zhaoyuan, the author of the *Feidi shilu*, reported these facts. Although Zhang had been formerly a subject of emperor Mingzong, he wrote the records many years after the facts had occurred under the Later Zhou dynasty. He thus felt free to break the taboos.<sup>121</sup> 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.<sup>122</sup>

Zhang Zhaoyuan and Wang Pu worked almost in the same period on the records of the Five Dynasties, 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 the son of emperor Mingzong and his concubine. Zhang appears in the *ZZTJ* in a single scene trying to persuade emperor Mingzong 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'. Sima Guang concludes that 'the emperor appreciated Zhang Zhaoyuan's words but was not able to apply them to the court affairs', a sentence that provides Zhang Zhaoyuan's speech with a prophetic meaning.<sup>123</sup>

Finally, it is necessary to mention here another historical text redacted during the period of reign of emperor Gaozu: the *Beishi* 備史 (Complete History) by the

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<sup>121</sup> *ZZTJ* 268: 8770.

<sup>122</sup> *ZZTJ* 268: 8770.

<sup>123</sup> *ZZTJ* 276: 9026.

historian Jia Wei, presented to the court in 948. There is scant bibliographical information about this work that probably became lost already by the end of the Song period. Quotations from it have been preserved in the *Kaoyi*. It basically narrated the events of the Later Jin dynasty, yet it ranged back to the early Later Liang period of reign.<sup>124</sup>

## 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 (Veritable Records of Emperor Shizong of Later Zhou), were redacted at the beginning of the Song period by the historian Hu Meng 扈蒙 (915-986) under the supervision of the director of the Historiography Office Wang Pu.<sup>125</sup> In the same period of time Wang was also engaged in the supervision of the compilation work of the *Wudai huiyao*, in which the idea of ‘Five Dynasties’ was for the very first time conceptualized, and of the *Tang huiyao* 唐會要 (Essentials of the Tang).<sup>126</sup>

The *Wudai huiyao* is a collection of documents in 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 historians did not put much effort in the systematization 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 recipient of collected

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<sup>124</sup> The *Beishi* is not mentioned in any bibliographical catalogues after the Song period. *Songshi* 203:5096; *Wudai shiliao tanyuan*, 133.

<sup>125</sup> *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 4: 128.

<sup>126</sup> The *Tang huiyao* was presented to the throne in 961, while the *Wudai huiyao* two years later in 963 (on the writing of institutional history and the *Tang huiyao* see Twitchett, 114-118). There is very little information on the transmission of the *Wudai huiyao* from the southern Song period until the Qing period. The *Songshi* mentions it (*Songshi* 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 黄丕烈 (1763-1825) in his notes to the catalogue (*Zhunzhai dushu zhi jiaozheng* 6: 260). After the Song period, the *Wudai huiyao* is not mentioned in any bibliographical catalogues of the official dynastic histories until the Qing period (*Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 81: 694).

documents, the *Wudai huiyao* apparently should present relatively few problems of implicit judgments and subjective interpretation of the facts than 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 the historian opinion. The *ZZTJ* largely drew on the *Wudai huiyao* and the *Kaoyi* often compares the narrative versions of the text with other sources.<sup>127</sup>

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 personally witnessed the facts that occurred at the end of the Tang dynasty, and they are very different from what is narrated here’. He then told his son the stories he had witnessed and heard, and ordered him to record them.<sup>128</sup> The text produced by Yan, the *Tang mo fanwen lu* 唐末汎聞錄 (Record of the Floating Hear-sayings 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

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<sup>127</sup> *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 5: 162; *Songshi* 207: 5299. The bibliographical treatises included in the dynastic histories after the Song period do not mention the *Wudai huiyao*. The *Siku* edition of the *Wudai huiyao* is a non specified ‘edition presented to the throne by the governors of Jiangnan’ (*liang Jiang zongdu caijin ben* 兩江總督採進本, *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 81.694). Seemingly the *Wudai huiyao* edition included in the *Siku* was not recovered from the *Yongle dadian* as in the case of the *JWDS*. 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. 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 朱彝尊’s (1629-1709) comments on the work of comparison and collation of the editions he possessed. Moreover, the postface includes Hu Yujin 胡玉縉’s (1859-19409) comments on the text included in his *Siku tiyao buzhen* 四庫提要補正 (Amendments and Corrections of the *Siku tiyao*). See *Congshu jicheng chubian* (829-832), vol.4. Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, Minguo 25 [1936].

<sup>128</sup> *Zhunzhai dushu zhi jiaozheng* 6: 260.

commonly considered incomplete and sometimes hardly reliable by the scholars of the early Song period.<sup>129</sup>

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).<sup>130</sup> There are considerable discrepancies in the bibliographical sources on the dates of redaction and the number of *juan* of the *Tonglu*.<sup>131</sup> There is no mention of the text in the 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. The bibliographer Chen Zhensun briefly mentions that Fan probably simplified and cut parts of the *shilu*.<sup>132</sup> From the quotations collected in the *Kaoyi* we can presume that Fan Zhi did not limit himself to assembling the *shilu* and he probably did 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.

## 2.2. The *Jiu Wudai shi*

None of the rulers of in the first half of the tenth century engaged in the compilation of a full-scale National History (*guoshi* 國史), nor were they committed to the reorganization of the imperial library holdings and the redaction of catalogues; the Veritable Records and other administrative documents were thus the main, and sometimes only, officially redacted material available to the Song historians. Besides this limitation, almost a decade after the foundation of the Song dynasty the quest for legitimization of the imperial power led to the engagement in a large compiling project of the Standard History (*zhengshi* 正史) of the previous dynasties; in 973 Li

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<sup>129</sup> As far as I have been able to inquire, the *Kaoyi* preserves only one quotation from the *Tang mo fanwen* (ZZTJ 275: 8997).

<sup>130</sup> On Fan Zhi see *Songshi* 249: 8794-97. See also *Xu Zizhi tongjian changpian* 5: 118-119;132-33.

<sup>131</sup> Chen Zhensun registers a *Wudai tonglu* in 65 *juan* (*Zhizhai shulu jieti* 4.112); the same does Chao Gongwu in his *Junzhai dushu zhi* (*Junzhai dushu zhi jiaozheng* 5.204) and the *Songshi* (*Songshi* 203.5091). Wang Yinglin in his *Yuhai* 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*, 1-6).

<sup>132</sup> *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 4: 112.

Fang 李昉 (925-996) and his board of co-workers supervised by the minister Xue Juzheng concluded and presented to the throne the first official history of the Five Dynasties (*Wudai shi*, later known as the Old History of the Five Dynasties, from here on *JWDS*).<sup>133</sup> As in the case of the *Wudai huiyao*, in the following decades the *JWDS* was well appreciated by the Qidan for its diplomacy in treating sensitive issues yet, for the same reason, it was disapproved of by scholars and historians who did not like its over-systematization and idealization; the text was certainly used by the Jurchen Jin for didactic purposes, yet from the beginning of the thirteenth century until its ‘re-discovery’ in the mid-Qing period, the text remained almost completely neglected. The current edition is a late eighteenth-century reconstruction and amended version of the original; much of the content has been integrated from other sources and pieces of information on the work of comparison can be gathered from the *Jiu Wudai shi kaoyi* 舊五代史考異 (Critical Commentary to the *JWDS*).<sup>134</sup> The main author of the work of collation is the scholar Shao Jinhan 邵晉涵 (1743-1796). 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 Wudai shi yuangao ba* 重輯舊五代史原稿跋

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<sup>133</sup> 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 lasted less than two years (see *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 46: 410; Wang Gongwu, “The *Chiu Wu-tai shih* and History Writing During the Five Dynasties”, 1-22; *Wudai shiliao tanyuan*, 98-111).

<sup>134</sup> 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 the scholar Shao Jinhan 邵晉涵 (1743-96) on the basis of the parts of the texts recovered in the *Yongle dadian*. According to the *Siku* editors, the *Yongle dadian* portions correspond to eight to 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 will be included in the *Siku quanshu*. (*Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 46: 410). Imprecise and contradictory accounts would prove the circulation of an early Song edition among bibliophiles in the early Qing period. The *Chongji Jiu Wudai shi yuangao ba* 重輯五代史原稿跋 (Colophon to the reconstructed edition of the original manuscript of the Old History of the Five Dynasties) included in Lu Xinyuan 陸心源 (1838-1894) 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*. The lack of clear information on the editorial work done by the Qing scholars leave us with many doubts as to the authenticity of significant parts of the current edition. For the scope of this research, in Part II I will consider the quotations collected in the *Kaoyi* and, if need be, compare them with the current edition.

(Colophon to the Collected Edition of the Original Draft of the Old History of the Five Dynasties), accordingly the original annotated reconstruction of the work by Shao Jinhan complete with the references to the sources. Lu Xinyuan mentions that since the Yuan edition of the thirteen histories included the New History and not the Old History, the latter went almost neglected for centuries; there is no record of it in the Ming and early Qing important bibliographies. In the late fifties of the nineteenth century when Xinyuan personally visited the private collections of Fujian (Min) 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’.<sup>135</sup>

The Basic Annals dedicated to the legitimate northern ruling houses are grouped into five *shu* 書 (Books) sections. According to the *Siku* editors, the original *shu* were all recovered, except for the annals of Taizu of the Later Liang; quotations from it have been preserved mainly in the *Kaoyi* of Sima Guang and other Song sources.<sup>136</sup> Many parts of the text were amended on the basis of the *Liaoshi* 遼史 (History of the Liao Dynasty); in particular, the negative epithets ‘barbarians’ or ‘bandits’ used for the Qidan were changed.

The *shu* sections dedicated to each dynastic house in the *JWDS* include a biographical part on the family clan members 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 of the text. The same section in the *Tangshu* (Book of the [Later] Tang) was partially recovered;<sup>137</sup> it includes the biographies of the formal wives of Li Keyong (posthumous name emperor Huangwu), though he never ruled as emperor of the Later Tang.<sup>138</sup> The section on the sons of Li Keyong is almost completely lacking and only a few entries have been preserved. The biographies of the

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<sup>135</sup> Li Xinyuan, *Yigu tang xu ba* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009): 329-330.

<sup>136</sup> *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 46: 410.

<sup>137</sup> *JWDS* 49: 671-680; 50: 681:699.

<sup>138</sup> *JWDS* 49: 673.

formal wives and concubines of Zhuangzong are absent,<sup>139</sup> as well as the *Houfei liezhuan* section of the *Jinshu* 晉書 (Book of the Jin), while small portions of the *Zongshi liezhuan* have been recovered.<sup>140</sup> Small parts of the same section have been recovered in the *Hanshu* 漢書 (Book of [Later] Han),<sup>141</sup> while in the case of the *Zhoushu* 周書 (Book of [Later] Zhou) a small portion of the *Houfei liezhuan* has been transmitted and the *Zongshi liezhuan* is completely missing.<sup>142</sup> 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, the *Cefu yuangui* and the *ZZTJ* accounts. The New History of the Five Dynasties by Ouyang Xiu was also consulted, yet rarely mentioned in the reconstruction. The setting of the biographies of the royal clan members in the *XWDS* is quite different from its predecessor, divided into *Jiaren zhuan* 家人傳 (Biographies of Households).

As in the case of the *Wudai huiyao*, the *JWDS* was compiled very hurriedly; Li Fang and his co-workers seemingly brought together the Veritable Records section by section and in some parts of the text the joins still show. The text includes ten treatises divided into twelve *juan* and there is no bibliographical section.<sup>143</sup> The monograph section begins with the Treatise on Rites and it is almost entirely dedicated to the system of the imperial ancestral temples and to the debate that developed at the courts of the Later Tang and Later Jin emperors among the ceremonialists, a clear indication of the importance placed by the two Shatuo courts on this issue.<sup>144</sup> The bulk of this chapter consists in a collection of long memorials presented by the scholars 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)

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<sup>139</sup> *JWDS* 49: 674-675.

<sup>140</sup> *JWDS* 86: 1131; 87: 1137.

<sup>141</sup> *JWDS* 104: 1381-1382; 105: 1385.

<sup>142</sup> *JWDS* 121: 1599-1600; 122: 1607.

<sup>143</sup> 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 emperor Taizong ordered that the imperial library holdings be checked against the *Kaiyuan siku shumu* 開元四庫書目 (Catalogue of the Four Repositories Redacted in the Kaiyuan Era); Wang Yinglin registers a *Taiping xingguo san guan siku shuji* 太平興國三館四庫書籍 (Books of the Four Repositories and the Three Halls of the Taiping xingguo Period), see Wang Yinglin, *Yuhai*, 52: 30-31/35-36.

<sup>144</sup> *JWDS* 142: 1893-1907; 143: 1893-1921.

sections of the *Wudai huiyao*.<sup>145</sup> 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 were missing, including the preface, and were reconstructed on the basis of the *Wudai huiyao*. Considering the number of reports preserved, the debate on the system of the ancestral temples constituted an important issue in the five dynasties period; nevertheless, very little interest was shown by the Song historians in deepening inquiry into the matter. Some discussion on it can be found in the early fourteenth century *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考(1254-1323) of Ma Duanlin 馬端臨 (1254-1323).

The biographies are grouped into three main sections: the *Shixi liezhuan* 世襲列傳 (Biographies of Hereditary Posts), 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 entirely dedicated to the history of the relations with the Qidan.

### 3. Integrations of the Official Histories

A few decades after the *JWDS* was presented to the court, the Hanlin scholar Wang Yucheng 王禹偁 (954-1001) redacted the *Wudai shi quewen* 五代史闕文 (Omitted Parts of the History of the Five Dynasties), a small (only one *juan*, seventeen anecdotes) collection of anecdotes meant to be an integration of a not better specified history of the Five Dynasties. In the preface to the work, Wang states that he collected ‘those anecdotes that had been orally transmitted and not recorded by early historians’; this could well refer to the *JWDS* yet for some scholars it indicates the *Wudai tonglu* if not the *shilu* in general.<sup>146</sup> The *Siku* editors describe it as ‘empty words that were at

<sup>145</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 2: 26-37; 3: 39-42.

<sup>146</sup> *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 5:149; *Junzhai dushu zhi jiaozheng* 6:255. 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 has read a *Wudai shi* in three hundred and sixty *juan*, when 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 *Songshi*. In the self-preface of the *Wudai shi quewen*, Wang does not reports the year of compilation (*Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 1131-1132).



the time considered as credible history'; one of the main reasons why the Qing emphasized the unreliability of this brief collection of anecdotes is that in the Song period it was very much appreciated by Ouyang Xiu.<sup>147</sup>

Another important supplement to the official history of the Five Dynasties by Xue Juzheng was redacted in 1012 by a scholar official from 浚阳 Xunyang (modern Jiangxi), 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 register 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*.<sup>148</sup>

As we will see in the following chapters, the *Kaoyi* considers many of the entries of the *Wudai shi quewen* and the *Wudai shi bu* and quotes entire passages from the texts. Basically the two historical works were compiled on the basis of heterogeneous material other than the *shilu*, yet there are no records on the work of selection of the sources, except for rare comments by the authors.<sup>149</sup> A critical comparison with other sources shall highlight their nature and origins. The *Siku* editors already contributed valuable work along these lines, yet their conclusion as to the unreliability of the texts raise interesting problems of interpretation.

#### 4. The *Xin Wudai shi*

Generally speaking the setting of the *Wudai shiji* 五代史記 (History of the Five Dynasties, later known as *Xin Wudai shi*, from here on *XWDS*),<sup>150</sup> completed in 1063

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<sup>147</sup> As will be shown later, the work of the historian was subject of strong criticism by the Qing scholars. Ouyang Xiu also drew from the text for his *Xin Tang shu* (*Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 1131-1132).

<sup>148</sup> The quotations collected in the *Kaoyi* always refers to a *Wudai shi bu*. The *Junzhai dushu zhi* and the *Zhizhai shulu jieti* register a *Wudai bu lu* in five *juan* by Tao Yue that should correspond to the *Wudai shi bu* (*Junzhai dushu zhi jiaozheng* 6.260; *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 5.149). 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.

<sup>149</sup> In the case of the *Wudai shi quewen* for instance, the author often comments on the inconsistencies of the *shilu*.

<sup>150</sup> *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 81: 694.

and published posthumously, constituted an innovation in the panorama of history writing; from the sectional breakdown to the use of the language and the narrative construction, it differed enormously from the *JWDS* and the *Wudai huiyao*. Ouyang Xiu did not present the work to the court immediately and the work was only published after his death. In 1207 the newly established emperor of the Jin 金 dynasty (emperor Zhangzong 章宗, r.) ordered that the new history of the five dynasties had to be adopted as official history instead of the old one. In the same year the work was published by the Jin Imperial Academy (*guozhi jian* 國子監) and used as a textbook in the imperial exams.<sup>151</sup> Since then and until the late Qing period, the *JWDS* remained almost neglected.

It is interesting to note that all the *Siku* entries for the historical works on the Five Dynasties period end up criticizing the *XWDS*. Firstly, the late Qing scholars accused the historian of having reduced the number of the Treatises; following the argument of Tang historian Liu Zhiji 劉知幾 (661-721) on the non-utility of some Treatises,<sup>152</sup> Ouyang Xiu reduced them to two and called them *kao* 考 (studies): the *Sitian kao* 司天考 (On Astronomy) and the *Zhifang kao* 職方考 (On Domains), basically consisting in a sketchy table and a list of the territories of the empire.<sup>153</sup> 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 段顥, Liu Xu 劉昫 and Zhang Zhaoyuan. The reason behind his

<sup>151</sup> *Jinshi* 金史(History of the Jin), 12: 288/51: 1132.

<sup>152</sup> *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 made 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 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 (General Explanations of *On History*), annotated by Pu Qilong 浦起龍 (fl.1730-1752) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1978), 53-69.

<sup>153</sup> Sima Qian called his Treatises *shu* 書, Ban Gu *zhi* 志, Cai Yong 蔡邕 (A.D. 133-192) *yi* 意, Hua Qiao 華嶠 (?-293) *dian* 典, He Fasheng 何法盛 *shuo* 說. Just to add one term to the list, Zheng decided to name them *lüe* 略.

choice was plausibly political. Since the early years of emperor Zhuangzong until the end of the Later Tang, the ceremonialists at court had started debating 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.<sup>154</sup> 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.<sup>155</sup> 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 Guochang), Taizu (Li Keyong) and Zhuangzong (Li Cunxu).<sup>156</sup> In other words, the Later Tang changed the location and the number of tablets in the temple of the Tang ancestors but, considering themselves a continuation of the Tang, they did not create a second temple for their ancestors. The debate on the system of ancestral temples was a sensitive issue also for the Later Jin rulers; 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.<sup>157</sup> 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.<sup>158</sup>

The *Wudai huiyao* reports the integral versions of the memorials and the first part of the Treatise on Rites of the *JWDS* is dedicated 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 served to emphasize 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 just for the sake of

<sup>154</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 2: 26-27.

<sup>155</sup> *JWDS* 142: 1894; *Wudai huiyao* 2: 26-27; Ouyang Xiu only mentions Ma Gao's memorial in his biography, 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 emperor Guangwu see Mansvelt Beck, *The Treatises of Later Han* (Leiden: Brill, 1990): 105-108.

<sup>156</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 2: 29.

<sup>157</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 2: 32-35.

<sup>158</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 2: 30; *JWDS* 75: 977-78.

chronological simplicity.<sup>159</sup> Roughly the same attitude is adopted by Sima Guang; it will be shown more in 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 ancestral temples and, in general, skips any reference to the kinship of Shi Jingtang.

Moreover, the Qing scholars lament that Ouyang Xiu was silent on the memorial on the system of music presented by Wang Pu 王朴 (?-959) at the court of the Later Zhou.<sup>160</sup> Luckily, the *Siku* editors conclude, later official histories did not follow Ouyang Xiu's example and returned to the ancient setting of Treatises.<sup>161</sup> Secondly, the *Siku* editors asserted that 'the text followed the *chunqiu* principle of praise and blame, thus it applied very severe moral judgments'; nevertheless, the Qing scholars criticized his unreliability on the exactitude of historical data. The editors compared it to the *Zuozhuan*. Last but not least, the *Siku* editors disliked, although not explicitly, the unflattering way of treating the Qidan, to whom the Qing emperors were consciously linked by ancestral lineage. In fact, Ouyang Xiu relegates the history of the Qidan 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.

Despite the invaluable work of comparison undertaken by the Qing scholars, the emphasis put on the alleged truthfulness of the *JWDS* and the unreliability of Ouyang Xiu's work sounds suspect; moreover, the harsh criticism and the strong assessments against the historical work raise interesting interpretative problems.

One innovation of the *Xin Wudai shi* is that the work is not limited to the narrow dynastic span; instead it presents the five dynasties in the context of the time frame of the early fifty years of the tenth century. The Basic Annals of the five dynasties are in fact grouped together. This new sectional division was merely evocative of the historian's criticism of the legitimacy of the five northern dynasties and it could hardly be expressed through the traditional boundaries of historical writing. Nevertheless, this attempt at overcoming the limitations of the dynastic histories was

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<sup>159</sup> See his *Zhengtong lun* 正統論 (On Legitimacy), in *Ouyang Xiu quanji* 歐陽修全集 (Complete Collection of Ouyang Xiu's Writings) (Beijing: Zhonghuashuju, ...), v.2, 265-274. See *Wudai huiyao* 2: 30-36; *JWDS* 142:1898.

<sup>160</sup> See *Wudai huiyao* 6: 111-116. The *ZZTJ* reports Wang Pu's memorial (*ZZTJ* 294: 9591-9594).

<sup>161</sup> *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 46: 411.

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).<sup>162</sup>

The *XWDS* was also appreciated by the *daoxue* 道學 (Learning of the Way) scholars for its moralistic approach toward history. Ouyang Xiu anticipated a trend in history writing that would fully develop in the southern Song period; in fact, the importance of picturing in the most thorough way the events in order to express judgments in the *XWDS* leads the way 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 part of the work is dedicated 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 collocated. Moreover, Ouyang Xiu creates the biographical section of the 'righteous son' (*yier* 義兒), dedicated to the 'army of righteous sons' (*yier jun* 義兒軍) of Li Keyong. Finally, Ouyang Xiu dedicates 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 (*Shiguo shijia nianpu* 十國世家年譜). On the contrary, the *JWDS* almost entirely neglected the history of the southern reigns and dynasties.

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<sup>162</sup>Zhang Xu 張須, *Tongzhi zongxu jian* 通志總序箋 (Explanations of the General Introduction of the Comprehensive Treatise) (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1934): 18-19.

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 registered his disagreement. A close comparison of the narratives in chapter two and three will highlight the different historical approaches of the two historians.

## Chapter Two

### Flexible Narratives and the *Zizhi tongjian kaoyi*

By critically comparing the narrative representation of single 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) criterion of selection used by Sima Guang and his co-workers in the *ZZTJ*. These selections are meaningful both as far as the representation of the events narrated and the richness of alternative narrative patterns in the *Kaoyi* is concerned. Allegedly the *Kaoyi* provides 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 which 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 registers the 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 larger principles of selection can be gathered from the commentary, nevertheless, brief and loosely connected comments on the sources if gathered together can provide a consistent picture of the larger historiography.

The historical accounts selected broadly deal with a common theme: the issue of the hierarchical order and the way in which the rulers of the early tenth century coped with the rise of a foreign power, the Qidan, that was challenging the legitimacy of a hierarchical order that had ruled the relation empire-vassal states and ruler-subjects for centuries. 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 both as far as it deals with the earliest officially recorded relation between the Shatuo Turk ruler Li Keyong and the ruler of the Qidan-led Liao empire Abaoji 阿保機 (the future Liao Taizu, r.916-926) and it occupies 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 alleged ‘pact of Yunzhou’ (*Yunzhou zhi hui* 雲州之會) between the two leaders. The issue might seem a mere problem of difference in basic data; nevertheless I wish to show how the choice of placing the event before or after the fall of the Tang was allegedly a function of the overall meaning that the authors wanted to convey in the narrative rather than merely objective. Moreover, through the representation of the ‘pact of Yunzhou’ the *ZZTJ* officially introduces the Qidan in the chronicle;

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 (Zhuangzong) and is drawn from the Last Annals of the Later Liang.<sup>163</sup> 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 rather 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’, i.e. the exile of Li Conghou, son of Mingzong, whose reign lasted merely four months, and is drawn from the Last Annals of Later Tang.<sup>164</sup> 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 narrative of the rebellion of Shi Jingtang.

#### 1. Representation of the ‘Pact of Yunzhou’ Between the King of Jin and Abaoji

The first mention in the *ZZTJ* of the establishment of a diplomatic relationship based on family-rituals etiquette with the Qidan-led Liao empire, is the ‘pact of brotherhood’, also known as the ‘pact of Yunzhou’, between the Qidan ruler Abaoji and the king of Jin, Li Keyong, against the Later Liang armies which occurred in the first years of the tenth century.<sup>165</sup> The covenant had minor if no impact at all on the

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<sup>163</sup> *ZZTJ* 271: 8850-8878.

<sup>164</sup> *ZZTJ* 279: 9103-9137.

<sup>165</sup> The diplomatic pattern based on family-rituals etiquette was possibly derived from the common practice among the northern populations, such as the Shatuo Turks, of adopting their soldiers or



rise of the Later Liang: the Qidan soon realized they could gain more privileges recognizing themselves as subjects of the new rising dynastic house and turned their back on the Jin. Although the covenant lasted only a few days and the terms of the pact were never accomplished, the descendants of Li Keyong (the Later Tang rulers) and the Qidan rulers periodically recurred to formal patterns (or at least the rhetoric of it) recalling family-ritual etiquette. This practice was rooted mainly in inter-personal relations and was more concerned with the diplomacy between the two family lineages than the two courts.

The *Kaoyi* presents 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 particular case of this 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 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 Qidan for the restoration of the Tang was certainly a very delicate issue because 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 maintain that Sima Guang purposely did not consider these sources.

### 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, forefather of the Later Tang dynasty and redacted during the reign of his son, Li Cunxu. The narrative is as follows:

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supporters as sons in order to reinforce the bonds between the rulers and the subordinates (see Lien-sheng Yang, 'A "Posthumous Letter" from the Chin Emperor to the Khitan Emperor in 942'. In *Excursions in Sinology* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969): 420-421.

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、首領沮橈梅為質，約冬初大舉渡河反正，會昭宗遇盜而止。

When Taizu realized that the tribe of Abaoji was increasingly powerful, he requested to meet him. On the second year of the Tianyou era (905), Abaoji at the head of his tribe of three hundred thousand people arrived at east of Yunzhou. They met in the tent in order to discuss about affairs, they shook their hands and were very pleased of each other. They established an alliance of brotherhood. After ten days [Abaoji] left. [The Qidan] ruler left his son, the young Gudu, and the official Ju Bingmei as proof of the pact.<sup>166</sup> They planned to raise their armies and cross the River in order to restore the legitimate ruler at the beginning of winter. It then happened that Zhaozong was dethroned by the usurpers and [the plan] was interrupted.<sup>167</sup>

The *Taizu jinian lu* marks the fifth month of the second year of the Tianyou era (905) as the date in which the covenant took place; according to this early source, the meeting between Abaoji and Li Keyong thus occurred before the alleged foundation of the Later Liang dynasty and even before the ascent of the last Tang emperor, Zhaoxuan 昭宣 (r. 905-906).<sup>168</sup> Accordingly, the plan of restoration shared by the Shatuo leader and the Qidan leader was arrested by the ascent of the ‘usurpers’ Later Liang.

A few more details should be highlighted from this early version of the event: first of all, according to the text Abaoji arrived at Yunzhou following the request of Li Keyong; the last detail is mentioned in the text using the honorific name of Taizu, while in later sources it is substituted with the posthumous title of Wuhuang 武皇, the Warring Emperor; second, the Qidan and Li Keyong agreed to ‘raise their armies and

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<sup>166</sup> 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 (Li Keyong) with four thousand horses and several hundred thousand of oxen and goats (*JWDS* 26: 360.61). The *Liaoshi* gives *shali* 沙里 instead of *sheli*, the term (derived from the Sanskrit *Śarīra*) is used as honorific epithet for Abaoji (*A zhu shali* 阿主沙里) and possibly also for his sons. According to the *Liaoshi*, Abaoji had four sons, none of them was called Gudu Sheli (*Liaoshi* 8: 973). Moreover, the name Ju Bingmei does not appear in other sources; it was probably the name of a minor official.

<sup>167</sup> *ZZTJ* 266:8679.

<sup>168</sup> On the exact date of the alliance the sources present different versions: the *JWDS* collocates the event in 906 (*JWDS* 26: 360); the same date is reports by the *XWDS*, although Ouyang Xiu refers to the calendar in use in the kingdom of Jin and reports the fifth year of the Tianfu 天復 era, which should correspond to the third year of the Tianyou era (906; *XWDS* 4: 38). The *ZZTJ* on the other hand postpones the events of Yunzhou to the first year of the Kaiping 開平 era (907), thus after Zhu Quanzhong had declared himself emperor of the Later Liang. The *Xin Tang shu* reports the meeting in 904, the first year of the Tianyou 天祐 era and last year of reign of emperor Zhaozong. The *XWDS* reports the fifth year of the Tianfu 天復 era, according to the calendar in use in the kingdom of Jin which should correspond to the third year of the Tianyou era (906; *XWDS* 4: 38).

pass 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; and third, the Later Liang rulers are called ‘usurpers’. To sum up, the *Tang Taizu jinian lu* establishes a clear hierarchical order in which Li Keyong (Taizu) occupies a predominant position that allows him to request a meeting with the Qidan, Abaoji is treated in a fairly diplomatic way with the Later Liang obviously considered as bandits.

Another source redacted 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 Qidan had launched a great attack on our lands in Yunzhong’ (*da kou wo Yunzhong* 大寇我雲中):

[...]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。

The tribe of Abaoji was growing in power, and he proclaimed himself ruler. In the second year of the Tianyou era, he greatly attacked our lands in Yunzhou. Taizu sent envoys to establish a covenant with him, they met at the eastern part of the walled city in Yunzhou, he was invited to enter the tent and they established an alliance of brotherhood. [Taizu] addressed to him saying: “The Tang ruling house has been usurped by the bandit subjects, 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 cavaliers, united we will take the territories of Bian and Luo. [A]Baoji accepted. When [A] Baoji went back, [Yelü] Qinde transmitted to him the leadership of the national affairs.<sup>169</sup>

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 board of historians. Nevertheless, the attitude towards the relation between the Qidan and the then king of Jin is quite different. Whereas the narrative detail of the ‘great invasion’ by the Qidan 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 ancestor of the Later Tang. Nevertheless, the quote from the *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan* included in the *Kaoyi* is

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<sup>169</sup> ZZTJ 266: 8677.

not complete and reports only parts of the account of the allegiance 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* shows 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:

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。

Emperor Wu met [A] Baoji at the city wall of Yunzhou. They established a pact of brotherhood. At that time the two armies were stationed at a distance of five kilometers one from the other, the troops carrying ritual cups were dispatched from both parts as guests in order to perform the ritual of friendly intercourse. [A] Baoji was greatly pleased and told emperor Wu: 'According to the ancient norms of my tribe, after three years in government [the ruler] has to leave the throne. If another day in the future I am going to meet You my lord, will we repeat the same rituals or not?' Emperor Wu replied: 'I became ruler of Taiyuan on the basis of an imperial mandate. [In the empire] there is also the norm according to which the governors are periodically moved to other provinces, but I don't respect this rule of substitution. Why should you worry about giving up!' From then on [A]Baoji acted according the words [of Li Keyong] and did not respect the norm of succession.<sup>170</sup>

Jia Wei not only omits the alleged attack of the Qidan reported by the *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan*, but he also adds more details to the description of the event. An interesting dialogue reported as direct speech shows that Li Keyong, in response to the question of whether the Qidan ruler would be treated with the same respect after the three years term of leadership established by the rules, suggests that Abaoji follow his example by ignoring the rules of succession. Li Keyong was established as military governor of Hedong in 883 and from then on until his death he would keep it.

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<sup>170</sup> ZZTJ 266: 8677.

Jia Wei seems to treat the Shatuo leader Li Keyong and Abaoji as equal, and mostly in a critical way as neither ruler respected the rule of succession to power.<sup>171</sup>

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 of the *jinian lu*, yet it differs in some details. The records are 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 emperor Gaozu's reign (which lasted merely one year) and instead 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 Qidan and the 'Jin', which makes the work one of the most important sources of reference for the first official relations with the Qidan:

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。

During the periods of reign of emperor Xi and emperor Zhao [of the Tang], the king Yelü Abaoji relying on his own force and bravery, did not respect the rules of substitution to the throne and proclaimed himself Heavenly Ruler.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Jia Wei, nicknamed "Jia the Iron-mouthed" (*Jia tiezui* 賈鐵嘴), was renowned for his trenchant criticisms that eventually caused his removal from his official post in 951 (*JWDS* 131: 1728, Twitchett, *The Writing of Official History under the T'ang*, 193).

<sup>172</sup> In another entry of the *Kaoyi*, the *Han Gaozu shilu* 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 the exact date of the self-proclamation and quotes other sources. In the *Qidan zhuan*, the *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan* places the event after the foundation of the Later Tang dynasty (*ZZTJ* 269: 8809); on the other hand, the *JWDS* (137: 1830) 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 emperor Zhuangzong of the Later Tang. The *Wudai huiyao* does not mention an exact date, yet it seemingly places it early after the 'pact of Yunzhou' and says that he 'falsely proclaimed himself emperor' (*Wudai huiyao* 29: 455). Ouyang Xiu is silent on the event (*XWDS* 72: 887-888). Finally, the *ZZTJ* follows the version of the facts mentioned by the *Jinian tongpu* (General Chronological Genealogy) redacted by Song Xiang (996-1066) in the early Song period. Song Xiang mentions a *rili* 日曆 (calendar) of the Qidan reign that he would have personally recovered in Youji 幽薊 (locality near the northern borders) where he was in office in 1036. According to his findings, the first year of the Shence 神策 era of reign of Liao Taizu (Abaoji) had to be placed in the second year of the Zhenming 貞明 era of the last Later Liang emperor (916). This date has been traditionally considered the official date of the beginning of Abaoji's reign as emperor of the Liao dynasty. Song Yang specifies that 'the old histories do not mention the foundation of the first year of reign of Abaoji'. Apart from the search for objective data, it would be interesting to inquiry on the reason why any early tenth century sources

Afterwards, the nobles solicited him to respect the old system. [A] Baoji did not abandon his aspiration, he summoned the flags and drums [symbols of the tribes] and proclaimed: “I have been in charge for nine years and I attracted [in our lands] a multitude of Han people, [for this reason] I desire to lead our people according to the old rules of the Han, I will lead the Han to protect our people and to consider themselves as one unique tribe.” All the nobles accepted his words. Soon after A Baoji planned a strategy in order to annex all the nobles, he falsely proclaimed himself emperor and his land was day by day larger. In the Dashun era (890-891), the Warring Emperor of the Later Tang dynasty sent envoys in order to establish a covenant with the Qidan. They met at the eastern part of the walled city of Yunzhou, encountered in [A Baoji’s] tent and establish a pact of brotherhood.<sup>173</sup>

According to the *Han Gaozu shilu*, Li Keyong ‘sent his envoys in order to establish an alliance [with the Qidan] and they met in the eastern part of Yunzhou’. The Qidan leader and Li Keyong then established a pact based on brotherhood (*yue wei kundi* 約為昆弟)<sup>174</sup> An important detail that should be highlighted here is that the *shilu* shifts the date of the covenant back to the Dashun era (890-891) of the reign of emperor Zhaozong, one decade before the date reported by other sources<sup>175</sup>. According to the *Kaoyi* this is a mistake, yet there might be a meaning in shifting the covenant years before the ascent of the Later Liang as it would imply that the pact between the Qidan 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

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mentioned this date and all of them propose different stories. As in the case of the ‘pact of Yunzhou’, it could be suggested in some cases it was a precise narrative choice. Abaoji died in the first year of reign of emperor Mingzong (926); his successor, Yelü Deguang 耶律德光, was enthroned after a few months in the same year. In 927 the era of reign changed into Tianxian 天顯 era (*ZZTJ* 275: 8989/8993/9001). The date mentioned in the *Qidan zhuan* chapter of the *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan* for the enthronement of Abaoji almost overlaps this date. In the quotation reported by the *Kaoyi* Song Yang 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 into Tianxian; in need of legitimization of the newly established ruler, or afraid that Abaoji would not have a posthumous title, they bestowed him with the title of Heavenly Ruler (*ZZTJ* 269: 8809). In the Later Tang period Abaoji was still regarded as subject of the empire, thus the authors of the *Qidan zhuan* did not register his proclamation as emperor.

<sup>173</sup> *ZZTJ* 266: 8677.

<sup>174</sup> *ZZTJ* 266: 8677.

<sup>175</sup> 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 foundation of the Late Liang, the author does not have to face the question of the legitimacy.

The *Han Gaozu shilu* seems thus to adopt a quite diplomatic approach and the text is an expression of the historiography that developed in the last years of the Later Zhou dynasty. The political agenda of the late Later Zhou and early Song rulers had no interest in emphasizing the skills of Li Keyong or in questioning the legitimacy of the Later Liang ruling clan. As for the relationship with the Qidan, 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 Qidan respectfully. 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 about foreign relations, the last chapters of the *Wudai huiyao* are dedicated to the foreign populations and include a chapter on the Qidan. Most of the content was probably drawn from the *Han Gaozu shilu* and the account lacks completely 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 Qidan; finally, the *huiyao* adds that soon after the meeting, A Baoji proclaimed himself emperor.<sup>176</sup>

## 1.2. The Biography of the Foreign Countries

The version of the facts that brought to the alliance of Yunzhou provided by Xue Juzheng seems to follow the version of the earlier *Tang Taizu jinian lu*, yet it differs from this source in some details, including the fact that the date, for instance, is different.

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<sup>176</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 29: 455.

The former king of Jin, Li Keyong, died two decades before the rise of Li Cunxu as first emperor; nonetheless the reconstruction of a direct lineage with Li Keyong was crucial for the legitimization of the Later Tang. As with most of the historians of the early Song period, for Xue Juzheng and his collaborators the issue of legitimacy was a crucial matter. Although from Shatuo origins, Li Keyong is the prototype of loyalty, who helped the Tang rulers defeat the Huang Chao rebellion and fought the ‘bandits’ 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. The anecdote of the pact with the Qidan is narrated in the Annals as follows:

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。

In the spring of the second year of the Tianyou era (905), the leader of the Qidan, Abaoji started his ascent; emperor Wu [Li Keyong] convoked him through imperial decree. At the head of an army of thirty hundred thousand soldiers, A Baoji arrived in Yunzhou and met emperor Wu in the eastern part of Yunzhou. They were extremely pleased to shake their hands and they concluded a pact of brotherhood. The day after [Abaoji] left and bestowed [emperor Wu] with four thousand horses and several hundred thousand of oxen and goats, waiting for the beginning of winter in order to launch the great attack and pass the River.<sup>177</sup>

The same anecdote is narrated also in the *Waiguo liezhuan* where the narrative is not only more detailed, but also the source of reference is different. In fact, the first part of the text has possibly been drawn from the *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan*:

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、貂皮等求封冊。梁祖與之書曰：「朕今天下皆平，唯有太原未伏，卿能長驅精甲，徑至新莊，為我翦彼寇讎，與爾便行封冊。」

In the fourth year of the Tianyou era (907), [the Qidan] greatly invaded Yunzhong, emperor Wu of the Later Tang sent envoys in order to ally to him. For this reason they met at the eastern part of Yunzhou and performed the ritual performance of the subjects in visit to the court, [emperor Wu] was invited in the

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<sup>177</sup> *JWDS* 26: 360-61.



tent and they established an allegiance of brotherhood. Emperor Wu told Abaoji: ‘The Tang has been usurped by the traitors, I personally want to greatly attack them this year in winter, and you my little brother with your best cavalry of two hundred thousand [could join me], and obtain the prefectures of Bian (present-day Kaifeng) and Luo (in Shanxi). Abaoji accepted, and bestowed him with reach bribes, left three thousand horses as grant. The entourage of Emperor Wu attempted to persuade that the chance was there to capture him, but emperor Wu said: “The bandits have not been destroyed yet, we cannot lose the trust of the tribes”. When the Liang ruling clan established the new dynasty, Abaoji sent his envoys to bestow them with precious horses, dancers and furs of marten in order to seek for privileges reserved to the feudal lords. The Later Liang emperor Taizu sent an official missive in which it was declared: “Today I have pacified all the empire, only Taiyuan has not submitted yet. You [my] high official would be able to lead for long time picked troops and to direct to a new way. If you will wipe away and destroy the enemy in my behalf I will reward you with feudal titles.”<sup>178</sup>

The most evident difference between the two versions is the date: the *Annals* put the event in 905, before the foundation of the Later Liang dynasty, while the *Waiguo liezhuan* in 907. This internal discrepancy might be a mistake, yet it is plausible to think that it isn't: in this way the *Annals*, as well as the *shilu*, could avoid mentioning the alleged attack on the Later Liang by the unified forces of Li Keyong and the Qidan and thus maintain a more diplomatic profile. On the other hand, in the *liezhuan* section the historian was allowed take the liberty of mentioning the usurpation of the Tang by the bandits. The *Waiguo liezhuan* adds another brief anecdote on the relation between the Qidan and the king of Jin which is not mentioned in other sources:

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！」

When emperor Zhuangzong ascended to the throne, he sent envoys [to the Qidan] in order to announce the mourning [for the death of Li Keyong], presenting bribes of gold and silk and asking for cavalry in order to rescue Luzhou [Liu Shouguang]. The Qidan ruler replied to the envoy as follow: “I and the former king were brothers, his sons are my sons, and there is no father that would not help his son!”<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> *JWDS* 137: 1828.

<sup>179</sup> *JWDS* 137: 1828.

According to the text, the king of Jin and the Qidan still had 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 Qidan.<sup>180</sup>

### 1.3. The Praise for Li Keyong: Narrative in the *Wudai shi quewen*

The king of Jin, Li Keyong, felt seriously ill the year after the betrayed alliance, and, shortly before his death, he had a last intimate talk with his son, Li Cunxu. On the betrayal and on the last words of the king, 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:

世傳武皇臨夢，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，今背盟約附梁，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？，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。

It is said that when the Warrior Emperor [Li Keyong] was lying in his bed of death, he showed the future emperor Zhuangzong three arrows and said: “One is for Liu Rengong: if you don’t conquer Youzhou first, it will not be possible to plan the conquest of the Southern regions. One is for the Qidan: I and A Baoji were close and we had established an allegiance on brotherhood, we swore to restore the Tang legacy; but today he has betrayed the pact and submitted to the authority of the bandits [the Liang],<sup>181</sup> you must defeat him! One arrow is for Zhu Wen. If you will be able to complete your mission, I will die without hate!” [After the death of Li Keyong] Zhuangzong put the arrows in the hall of the temple of Warrior Emperor. When he was about to go on a punitive expedition against Liu Rengong, he ordered an official to offer sacrifices of animals to the temple and pledge [the god] for the arrow, put it into a pouch of brocade, he then let his generals to carry it. On the day of the victory, he put the arrow back in the temple together with the left ear of the enemy. When he attacked the Qidan and defeated the Liang, he did the same thing.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> It must be kept in mind that the edition of the *JWDS* transmitted to us is a late Qing revised version of the *Yongle dadian* edition, some parts of the text were edited and changed by the Qing editors. What we can do here, for the moment, is to ascertain that the great flexibility of the narratives in different texts had certainly political implications.

<sup>181</sup> The *Kaoyi* has Liang, while the version of the text in the *Wudai shishu huibian* reports 賊.

<sup>182</sup> *Wudai shi quewen*, in *Wudai shishu huibian*, 2452.

This short piece of literature reaches a peak of praise for Li Keyong. The *Wudai shi quewen* is the first available source explicitly referring to the Qidan as the enemies and expressing the feelings of hate that moved Li Keyong. He tells his son that the purpose of the pact with A Baoji was the restoration of the Tang, but ‘today he has betrayed the pact and submitted to the authority of the bandits, you must defeat him!’ In the text the praise is thus indirectly addressed to Li Cunxu, who bravely accomplished his duties in dethroning the ‘bandits’ Later Liang and in defeating the betrayers Qidan.<sup>183</sup>

In the preface to the *Wudai shi quewen* Wang Yucheng states that the anecdotes collected had been orally transmitted and not recorded by historians, yet he does not provide further information about the sources.<sup>184</sup> 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

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<sup>183</sup>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. CE 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 Liu Shouguang 劉守光 (d. C.E. 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;<sup>183</sup> his son Liu Shouguang happened to fit even better in the role. Almost in the same years of the pact between Li Keyong and the Qidan, the Liu family members got 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 the father’s concubine, a certain nǚ 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 king 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.<sup>183</sup> Two years after he was captured and murdered by the king of Jin. His father Liu Rengong ran into 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 occurred between the two sons, Liu Shouguang and Li Cunxu. Nevertheless, according to the *Kaoyi*, at that time the future Zhuangzong did not consider the Qidan 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 king of Jin was to pretend good relations with the Qidan and Yan (Liu Shouguang) in order to conquer them in the future (*ZZTJ* 266: 8688).

<sup>184</sup> See the introduction to the sources.

of Li Keyong.<sup>185</sup> This anecdote did not fit the diplomatic purposes of the *JWDS*, however, on the contrary, both Ouyang Xiu and Sima Guang drew on it but, as will be shown in the following paragraphs, they recovered only those details that fitted their narrative purposes.

#### 1.4. The Appendix of the Four Barbarians

The *Zhuangzong ji* 莊宗紀 (Annals of Zhuangzong) almost entirely skips the account of the pact of brotherhood between the Qidan and Li Keyong; Ouyang Xiu simply mentions that ‘in the fifth year [of the Tianfu era, 906],<sup>186</sup> [Li Keyong] met the Qidan ruler Abaoji in Yunzhong 雲中 and they established a pact of brotherhood’.<sup>187</sup> The historian chooses to omit all details of the pact and does not mention the betrayal in the Annals; instead, he narrates the entire anecdote in the first part of the *Siyi fulu* (Appendix to the Four Barbarians). The Appendix occupies the last sections of the *XWDS*, and, in spite of the generic title, two third of it are focused on the history of the rise of the Qidan 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:

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，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。

When the Liang forces were about to usurp the Tang dynasty, the king of Jin, Li Keyong, sent envoys to ask support from the Qidan; Abaoji came in rescue with an army of thirty hundred thousand soldiers, and met Keyong on the eastern side of the walls of Yunzhou. They had a banquet; the wine was sweet and they shook their hands as sign of brotherhood allegiance. Keyong bestowed him with gold

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<sup>185</sup> *ZZTJ* 266: 8688.

<sup>186</sup> The king of Jin did not recognize Tianyou 天祐 as a legitimate era name of the Tang period, as it had been imposed by Zhu Quanzhong, and kept calculating the years on the basis of the Tianfu era (*XWDS* 4: 38).

<sup>187</sup> *XWDS* 4: 38.

and silk in conspicuous quantities, expecting that, their forces united, they will attack the Liang. Abaoji gave to the Jin four thousand horses. Back to his reign, Abaoji betrayed the pact and sent the envoy Meilao to be appointed by the Liang. The Liang sent the high officer Gao Qing, the general Gong Yuan and others to pay a return visit. One year after, when Gao Qing returned to the court, Abaoji sent his envoy [Yelü] Jieli to accompany him in order to pay visit to the Liang with good horses, marten coats and beautiful silk brocades as gifts; [the Qidan ruler] presented a memorial to the emperor in which he called himself ‘subject’ and asked for the privileges reserved to a feudal lord. The Liang again sent two envoys, Gongyuan and the Chief Minister of the National Granaries, Hun Te in order to present an imperial decree in which [the emperor] extended His regards [to the Qidan]; additionally, [the Liang] bestowed [the Qidan ruler] with the chronicle records and they agreed to rise their armies jointly in order to destroy the Jin, and then to establish a feudal relation between the two reigns as ‘nephew and uncle’. Moreover, the Liang accorded with the Qidan to let three hundred cavaliers, treated as sons and younger brothers, enter the capital and protect it. When Keyong heard these facts, he was greatly upset. That year, Keyong got seriously ill, and lying on his death bed gave his son, the future Zhuangzong, one arrow, expecting him to destroy the Qidan. When Hunte arrived to the Qidan, Abaoji did not respect the pacts and the Liang [from their part] did bestow the Qidan with the privileges of feudal lords. At the end of the Liang period, the Qidan envoys had paid visit to the court four times.<sup>188</sup>

Ouyang Xiu describes the terms of alliance with the Liang as another form of pact based on ‘familiar-rituals’ etiquette. The Qidan 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 relation based on the pattern of ‘nephew and uncle’ (*fengce wei shengjiu zhi guo* 封冊為甥舅之國). Nonetheless, the Qidan did not respect the terms of the pact and the requests were never accomplished. The detail of a diplomatic practice between the Qidan and the Liang recalled by a nephew-uncle relationship does not appear in other sources. Moreover, Ouyang Xiu addresses both reigns as *guo* and in so doing the historian possibly puts the two on the same level in a negative way. Ouyang Xiu concludes that ‘at the end of the Liang period, the Qidan envoys had paid visit to the court four times’, and he uses the term *lai* 來, ‘come’. This might reflect his critical viewpoint as to how the court was managing its relations with the

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<sup>188</sup> XWDS 72: 887.

Qidan since the very beginning. The inclusion of the Qidan chapter in the Appendix to the Four Barbarians also defines his clear stance towards the Qidan.

### 1.5. The Account in the *Zizhi tongjian*

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

契丹遣其臣袍笏梅老來通好，帝遣太府少卿高頌報之。[...]  
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。

The Qidan sent one of their subjects, the official Meilao, to establish friendly relations [with the Later Liang]. The emperor sent Gao Qing, the Minister of the Imperial Treasury, to reply the visit.[...]

In that year (907), Abaoji with an army of thirty hundred thousand soldiers invaded Yunzhou. The king of Jin allied to him; they met at the eastern capital and established a covenant based on brotherhood. Abaoji invited the king of Jin in his tent. Wine was given free reign and they agreed to unite in order to attack the Liang. Someone urged the king of Jin saying: “Taking advantage of the fact that he has come we should capture him.” The king replied: “The enemies have not yet been defeated and we lose the support of the northern barbarians, it would be the way to self-destruction would we lose.” Abaoji stayed for another day and then left; the king of Jin honored him with gold and silk-fabrics for several thousands. Abaoji left as gift three thousand horses and ten thousand domestic animals. When he went back, Abaoji betrayed the alliance and submitted to the Liang; from then on the king of Jin greatly hated him.<sup>189</sup>

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 reflection on the future relations between the king of Jin and the Qidan. 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 place emphasis on the extreme unreliability of the Qidan 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 king of Jin:

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<sup>189</sup> *ZZTJ* 266: 8679.

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！」

The king of Jin was dying; the disease had reached his brain. Zhou Dewei and his army had to retreat and stand on the defensive at Luanliu. The king of Jin ordered his younger brother, the military governor of Zhenwu, [Li] Kening, the supervisor of troops Zhang Chengye, the great generals Li Cunzhang and Wu Gong, the official Lu Zhi to declare his son Cunxu, official of Jinzhou, as the future king of Jin. He said: “This son’s cleverness and spirit are enormous, he will surely be able to take up my post and reign, you officials have to guide and teach him!” On the *yinmao* day, the king of Jin said to Cunxu: “Sizhao [General Li Sizhao] is in great difficulty surrounded by the Liang troops [in Luzhou 路州], I will be not here anymore shortly. Wait after my funeral and then you together with Dewei will go and help him!”<sup>190</sup>

The narrative representation of the *ZZTJ* differs from the early Song sources mainly for the passage presented above in which Li Keyong has his final talk with the son and heir of the throne, Li Cunxu. The king knows he is dying 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 king are different from the sources seen up to now as there is no mention of his hatred rivalry with the Qidan. 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.

## 1.6. Concluding remarks

### 1) Flexibility in the basic data

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 (presumably before the Later Liang usurpation), 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 *Waiguo liezhuan* moves the event after the foundation of the Later Liang in 907. It is probably interesting to note

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<sup>190</sup> *ZZTJ* 266: 8688.

that Ouyang Xiu keeps as realistic a date 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 he collocates the events of Yunzhou before the Later Liang usurpation. Finally, the *ZZTJ* places the event in the same year of the foundation of the Later Liang, a few month after it.

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 Qidan (those who did not respect the pact and turned to the Later Liang) in a very negative position. 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) Flexibility in the narrative

The first source presented above, the *Tang Taizu jinian lu*, establishes a hierarchical order in which Li Keyong (Taizu) occupies a predominant position that allows him to request a meeting with the northern neighbors. The Qidan, 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 Qidan, mentioning that Abaoji had ‘self proclaimed king’ and using the term ‘invade’ (*kou*) to describe the military activity of the Qidan, a term generally used for the attacks from the northern barbarians. The text is also not completely positive towards Li Keyong; although he addresses to the Qidan ruler as ‘younger brother’, showing off 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, treat the Shatuo leader 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 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 Qidan 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 Qidan 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 Qidan in 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 Qidan, but also adds an upside down status: in the narrative Li Keyong is always addressed to as ‘the king of Jin’ in order to clarify that he did not recognize himself as subject of the Later Liang. The last words of Li Keyong to his son show how the king is fairly concerned with the Later Liang attacks.

## 2. Different Portrayals of the Enthronement of Li Cunxu and the Tang Legacy

The narrative segments that will be analyzed below concern the remonstrance by 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 Zhang Chengye the ideal character through which the historians can talk about the Tang legacy. Firstly, he was a eunuch who had been involved in the past Tang dynasty political events, and second, he was loyal both to the Tang and to the family clan of Li Keyong. Zhang was, in fact, one of the few eunuchs of the late Tang period that had been saved by Li Keyong from the massive killing of the

eunuchs ordered by Zhu Quanzhong in 903.<sup>191</sup> The extreme sense of loyalty that from that time had bounded 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 illness and retire from office.

The remonstrance against the future first emperor of the Later Tang dynasty is represented 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.

## 2.1. The Representation in Early Sources

The *Zhuangzong shilu* reports:

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。

At the beginning, when the emperor acquired the jade seal, all the generals urged him to restore the Tang calendar. Chengye came quickly to pay respect to the emperor and told him: 'Your Highness and Your Highness respected father have

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<sup>191</sup> Since the last decade of the dynasty Zhang had served Li Cunxu's father, Li Keyong, in several occasions and he had been appointed as Supervisor of the Troops in 894 (*Jiu Tang shu* 20: 754; *ZZTJ* 260: 8473). When the future emperor of Later Liang issued the order to capture all the eunuchs of the empire, Li Keyong helped Zhang Chengye to escape. Sima Guang dedicates 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 brother, Li Kening, and Zhang Chengye to assist and guide his son at 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 concerning for his young age. The *ZZTJ* emphasizes the fear of Li Cunxu for the reaction of the troops; in front his willing to leave the post to Li Kening, Zhang Chengye warned him that the highest expression of filial piety resided in not ruining what a father had founded. Thanks to the support of Zhang Chengye, Li Cunxu in 908 succeeded his father as military governor of Hedong and king 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).

fought for more than thirty years a bloody war, willing to render service and revenge the legitimate ruler, and in order to restore the Tang legacy. Today the prime criminals [the usurpers Later Liang] have not been exterminated yet, the supplies collected from the people for the military forces are not sufficient and in many regions at north of the River the people are exhausted by the burden of the supplies they have to provide; accelerating the designation of a new emperor means to use up the strength one should put in maintaining an army and to put into trouble the people exhausted. I humbly believe that this is the first reason why it is still not appropriate to undertake the path of proclaiming the emperor. Your highness should transform his house into his reign, build the ancestral temples and the ritual system needs steady norms. Today the ministry of rituals still does not have its men, if we lose the ancient norms we will be ridiculed by the people. This is the second reason why it is not appropriate to step into power.” And then Zhang burnt into tears of sorrow. The emperor replied: ‘It is not my intention! It is the intention of all the generals!’ From then on Zhang Chengye fell ill many times, day after day his physical conditions got worse until he died in office.<sup>192</sup>

The quote in the *Kaoyi* opens with a general reference to the fact that ‘the emperor acquired the jade seal’ (*yuxi* 玉璽), the symbol of the legitimate mandate. As will be shown below, the later sources provide more details on the transmission of the seal but none of them questions the veracity of the account. While a reconstruction of the history of the transmitted seal would be beyond the scope of this work, suffice it to say that already at the beginning of the Song period different and contradicting accounts circulated, an assumption based on the long note provided by Hu Sanxing’s

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<sup>192</sup> *ZZTJ* 271: 8863.

commentary to the *ZZTJ*. In the present chapter I will limit myself to providing a reading of how the different sources dealt with this issue.<sup>193</sup>

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 prosecutors of the Tang.

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 of stepping into power for two main reasons.

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<sup>193</sup> 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) redacted by Li Xinchuan 李心傳 (1166-1243). Li Xinchuan reconstructs the history of the transmission of the imperial seal from the Qin 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. The author concludes that 'during the disorders of the Kaiyun era (946, year of the invasion of the Qidan and destruction of the Later Jin), [the seal] went lost to Yelü [Deguang]. Therefore what the Jurchen acquired and keep 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 acquired by Li Cunxu. The aim of the historian was probably to prove that the Jurchen-Jin, who had acquired the seal from the Qidan, 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 transmitted 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; plausibly he refers to Song Bai 宋白 (936-1012), i.e. the *Taiping yulan* 太平禦覽 (Imperial Digest of the Taiping Era) or the *Wenyuan yinghua* 文苑英華 (Blossoms and Flowers of the Literature Garden) ?. In any case, it consists in 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, neither an inscription in the ancient script nor they respected 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 on the alleged Tang imperial seal were circulating, yet mostly consisted in 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).

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

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。The emperor accepted the request received from all the provinces to step into power and prepared to usurp the throne. [Zhang] Chengye believed that the three generations of kings of the reign of Jin had done a lot for the empire; the previous king [the late Li Keyong] was enraged against the subjects bandits who had rebelled and usurped the power, [and wanted to] restore the old legacy; but the rebellion of the bandits had not been pacified yet, it was thus not appropriate to recklessly accept the leadership. At that time his illness had [already] broke out. Lying on a palanquin he headed to the imperial palace where he was received by the emperor and he forcefully remonstrated [against the decision of hasten the enthronement].<sup>194</sup>

The text presents narrative patterns similar to the quote from the same source on the 'pact of Yunzhou': the *liezhuan* refers to Li Keyong's hatred rivalry with the 'subjects bandits who had rebelled and usurped the power' and to his intention to 'restore the old legacy'. 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 board of historians (Zhang Zhaoyuan played a major role in the redaction) and plausibly drawing on the same sources.<sup>195</sup> It is thus possible to think that, while the

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<sup>194</sup> ZZZJ 271: 8863.

<sup>195</sup> On the redaction of the *Zhuangzong shilu* and the *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan* see chapter I.

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 the 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 about his remonstrance.<sup>196</sup> The Annals instead provide a significantly detailed account of the transmission of the jade seal:

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。

In the first month of spring of the year eighteenth of the Tianyou era (922), the monk Chuanzhen 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, that the forebears preserve it”. All the [emperor’s] assistants rejoiced. Chuanzhen was active as master in the Tang Guangming era (880-881), when the capital was upset by disorders he acquired it and secretly kept it for forty years. Written in old style of the seal script, nobody understood the inscription, until when [Quanzhen] presented it [to the court]. At that time Yang Bo from Huainan and Wang Yan from Sichuan all sent envoys to present memorials in order to urge the emperor to succeed to the throne of the Tang, but the emperor refused.<sup>197</sup>

The *JWDS* provides a description of the seal, but unfortunately the account on the inscription was not included in the original text and was recovered by Shao Jinhan from a quotation from the *Cefu yuangui*, plausibly on the basis of the *shilu*. According to the text, Chuanzhen mysteriously obtained the imperial seal during the turmoil in the capital caused by the Huang Chao rebellion. This detail could be a hint at the fact that the Tang had lost its legitimacy to rule in that period. Another

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<sup>196</sup> *JWDS* 72: 952-53.

<sup>197</sup> *JWDS* 34: 397.

element worth mentioning is that nobody was able to decipher the inscription until the entourage of Zhuangzong received the seal from Chuanzhen. The reaction provoked by the discovery is also interesting, as the early sources only mention that the generals loyal to Li Cunxu urged him to step on power, while the *JWDS* says that even the rulers from the southern (Huainan) and western (Xichuan) regions sent their emissaries.

## 2.2. The *Wudai shi quewen*, the *Xin Wudai shi* and the *Luozhong jiyi* Accounts

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

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捃拾財賦，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。

When Zhuangzong was about to ascend the throne in Weizhou, Zhang Chengye from Taiyuan reached [the emperor] and told Zhuangzong: “My Lord [and his forefathers] has offered service to the Tang ruling house for many generations and [my Lord] has proved to be the most loyal and filial. Since the Zhenguan era whenever the ruling house was in troubles, You my lord would assist [the emperor]. The reason why for more than thirty years Your humble servant has collected goods and recruited armies for my Lord is that You swore to destroy the bandit Zhu Wen in order to restore the Tang legacy. Today the lands north of the River have been almost pacified, yet Zhu Wen is still in power. Does my Lord believe that it is the appropriate time to accelerate the enthronement?”. (Wang Yucheng: the following part is the *Zhuangzong shilu*). Zhuangzong replied: “But what about the willing of all the generals?” Chengye then realized that he would have not been able to stop the emperor, so he suddenly burnt into tears and said: ‘The bloody battles among the lords originally were for the sake of the Li clan. If my Lord today seizes the power, You will deceive Your humble servant!’ Chengye went back to Taiyuan and starved himself to death.

[the author adds] The narrative of the remonstrance of Chengye in the *Zhuangzong shilu* is very detailed. The only detail that the historians have censured is ‘my king takes [the power] itself’.<sup>198</sup>

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. The feeling of betrayal will lead Zhang to a tragic death. A commentary by the author concludes the texts saying that the authors of the *Zhuangzong shilu* censured the last words of Chengye, ‘my Lord today seizes the power’ (*wo wang zi qu* 我王自取). Furthermore, it is interesting to note the last words of frustration pronounced by Zhang Chengye, ‘you deceived your old servant’ (*wu laonu* 誤老奴), 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 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 eunuch views’.<sup>199</sup> 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:<sup>200</sup>

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？」

Chengye replied: “It is not so, the hatred enemies of the Tang and the [kingdom of] Jin are the Liang, and it is them that all the empire hatred. Today Our king can truly eliminate the great evil for the sake of the empire and get even with the very rivals of the past emperor, and then search for the heir of the Tang and establish him [as

<sup>198</sup> *Wudai shishu huibian*, 2453; *ZZTJ* 271:8863.

<sup>199</sup> *XDWS* 38: 406; *Wudai shishu huibian*, 2453; *ZZTJ* 271:8863; Davis, *Historical Records*, 320.

<sup>200</sup> Davis, *Historical Records*, 322.



emperor] . If the forebears of the Tang exist, who will deare to be [emperor]? And if it doesn't exist, among the cavaliers in the empire who will deare to compete with My king? Your subject is a servant of the Tang ruling house! I honestly hope to see that Your Great Majesty succeed and then I will retire in the countryside. When the one hundred officials will accompany [You] out of the eastern gate of Luoyang and all the people on the street will indicate and sight with admiration 'this are the officials of the dynasty, the guards of the previous ruler', will it not be an honor for both the ruler and the subjects?"<sup>201</sup>

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 appraisal directed towards Zhang Chengye's deeds. The *Kaoyi* thus quotes a third version of the facts drawn from a non-official record: Qin Zaisi 秦再思's (beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century ca.) collection of brief stories, the *Luozhong jiyi* 洛中紀異 (Record of the Extraordinary Events in Luozhong). The text reports it as follows:

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。老夫是闖官，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。

Chengye remonstrated to the emperor saying: "Why Your Majesty does not wait for the Liang to be completely defeated and the reigns of Shu and Wu pacified, in order to transform the empire into a family; [Your Majesty] should first search for the legitimate heirs of the Tang dynasty and, if need be as alternative strategy, give in the government of the empire to the meritorious ones; in this way who would dare to undertake the task? If you yield 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 [at your place]. If Your Majesty proclaims yourself emperor all of a sudden, the original aim that led to the punitive expedition moved by a sense of justice will be lost, and the people will not treat you with the proper respect. This old fellow eunuch is not fond of the wealth and rank of Your majesty's high official posts, he just takes on the important matters of the willing of your Majesty's later father, and wants to build the basis for Your later father's long lasting reign". Seeing that Zhuangzong was not able to follow his advices Zhang Chengye excused himself on ground of illness and went back to Taiyuan where he died.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> XWDS 38: 405.

<sup>202</sup> ZZTJ 271: 8863-64.

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

### 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 the Sima Guang and his co-workers wanted to confer on the event. The *Kaoyi* interprets the *Luozhong jiyi* Zhang Chengye as the last loyal subject of the Tang dynasty but, on the contrary, the eunuch's remonstrance is an attempt to plan a wise strategy for Zhuangzong in order to assure Li Keyong's forebears a long lasting reign.

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

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。

Ouyang Xiu's *Xin Wudai shi* follows the *Wudai shi quewen* and the *Luozhong jiyi*. According to the *shilu*, Chengye just lamented that the expenses were too high and that the system of rituals [for the new dynasty] had to be established yet. This explanation seems to be too narrow. According to the version of the *Quewen*, since Chengye served Zhuangzong and his father, Li Keyong, for more than ten years, and since the close relation with the Tang ruling house was already extinct, how could he possibly not have known that [Zhuangzong] wanted to grab the power himself? [I believe that] the praise for Chengye is too exaggerated. Moreover, according to the records, in the first month of the eighteenth year of the Tianyou era a certain monk Chuanzhen offered Zhuangzong the imperial treasure [imperial seal], Chengye died in the tenth month of the nineteenth year, so it is not true that he went back to Taiyuan and died of starvation [as the sources report]. According to the version of the

*Luo zhong jiyi*, Chengye was honestly trying to propose a plan [to Zhuangzong]. This version is the nearest to the reality of facts, so we keep it.<sup>203</sup>

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:

蜀主、吳主屢以書勸晉王稱帝，晉王以書示僚佐曰：「昔王太師亦嘗遺先王書，勸以唐室已亡，宜自帝一方。先王語余云：『昔天子幸石門，吾發兵誅賊臣，當是之時，威振天下，吾若挾天子據關中，自作九錫禪文，誰能禁我！顧吾家世忠孝，立功帝室，誓死不為耳。汝他日當務以復唐社稷為心，慎勿效此曹所為！』言猶在耳，此議非所敢聞也。」因泣。

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拊拾財賦，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。

The rulers of Shu and Wu repeatedly asked the king of Jin to step on the throne and self proclaim emperor. The king of Jin showed the memorials to his assistant in government and said: 'In the past the Grand Tutor of the king also once gave the late king [Li Keyong] a document requesting him to make himself Emperor, as the Tang dynasty had already been destroyed. The late king said to me: 'When the Son of Heaven visited the Stone Gate I raised my army in order to punish the bandits. At that time my might shook the empire. Would I have taken the Son of Heaven and relied on the land between the passes, forged the nine presents and a letter of transfer of power, who could have stopped me? But I considered that our family for generations had been loyal and filial, had established merits for the imperial house, so I swore by my death that I would not do it. You should in future days keep in mind to restore the Tang. Please do not imitate what these people do! The words are still there and I do not dare to listen to those suggestions.' And then he burnt into tears.

But then the high generals and officials endlessly required the emperor to step on the throne, and an official was ordered to forge with jade the imperial vessels. When the Huang Chao destroyed Chang An, the master of a Buddhist monk from Weizhou called Chuanzhen entered into possession of the imperial seal and kept

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<sup>203</sup> *ZZTJ* 271: 8864.

it for forty years; now Chuanzhen, believing that it was an ordinary jade, wanted to sell it. But someone recognized it and said: ‘This is the imperial seal.’ Chuanzhen then went to the king’s palace and offered him the jade. The generals all together rose their cups and congratulated [for the auspicious finding]. Zhang Chengye heard about this when he was in Jinyang, so he went to Weizhou and remonstrated with the king saying: ‘You my lord have been loyal to the Tang ruling house for generations; you have rescued the Tang from dangers, and for this reason for thirty years I have gathered goods and obeyed to my military duties in respect to the king. I swore to destroy the bandits just to restore the legacy of the Tang ruling house. Today Hebei has just been pacified, but Zhu Wen is still in power; 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 not abandon Your Majesty! Why does Your Majesty not destroy Zhu Wen first, get even with the great enemies of the previous rulers, and then search and enthrone the Tang legitimate heir; and then get back the southern territories of Wu, the western territories of Shu, bring them back under the imperial domain and restore the imperial family. When acting in this way, although an emperor Gaozu and an emperor Taizong were alive again, who would dare to be your superior? The longer Your Majesty will yield, the steadier Your power will be when you get it. My humble suggestion has not hidden intentions, because I received the mercy of the late king I just want to lay a foundation for you.’ The king replied: ‘This is not my will, but what about the will of my subjects?’ Chengye then realized that he could not stop him. He then burst into tears and said: ‘The bloody struggle among lords was at the origin meant to be for [the restoration of] the Tang; today Your Majesty wants to take the power for himself and thus deceiving his humble subject!’ He then went back to the capital of the kingdom of Jin. He shortly claimed to be ill and never recovered.<sup>204</sup>

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 representation provided by the *Luo zhong 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 unaware 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 monk called Chuanzhen since the time of the Huang Chao rebellion; unaware of the value of the object, Chuanzhen was about to sell it, when someone told the monk that the jade was

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<sup>204</sup> *ZZTJ* 271: 8863.

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 funny details regarding the context in which the imperial seal was recovered. In fact, the text reports that, in view of the forthcoming enthronement, Zhuangzong's officials were ordered to forge the imperial jade vessels. At that time Chuanzhen was trying to sell the jade he possessed for forty years, when 'someone recognized it' as the imperial jade. Whenever the *ZZTJ* talks about a non-identified 'someone' proclaiming something, the historian is generally warning the reader about a detail that deserves further thought and, eventually, it hides a judgment.

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 thousand hundred years'. Accordingly, Zhang's extreme loyalty is directed to Li Cunxu and not to the Tang, as prospected by the *Zhuangzong shilu* and Ouyang Xiu. Finally, the *ZZTJ* does not mention Zhang's death but only that he retired 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 in drawing from non-official records.

### 3. The 'Events of Weizhou' and the Exile of Li Conghou

We turn now to another example of flexible narratives in the sources: the accounts of the 'events of Weizhou'. The episode concerns the exile of Li Conghou (emperor Min of the Later Tang) and the mysterious killing of his entourage by the soldiers of Shi Jingtang. The reign of Li Conghou lasted merely four months and ended up being overturned by a military rebellion led by his step-brother, Li Congke. Li Conghou 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 could not agree on a number of important details, but basically the narrative

can be divided into four segments: 1. Emperor Min escapes to the north, Shi Jingtang is coming south directed 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, the regional governor of Weizhou, for advice. Wang Hongzhi convinces Shi Jingtang not to help the emperor; 4. The meeting degenerates into a fight between the followers of Shi Jingtang and Li Conghou where the soldiers of the latter one are all killed and the emperor is left alone in Weizhou.

### 3.1. Early Accounts

The three passages quoted in the *Kaoyi* present different versions of the facts according to the *Tang Mindi shilu*, the *Jin Gaozu shilu* and the *Han Gaozu shilu*. The *Kaoyi* informs us that both the accounts of 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. A very short quote from the *Jin Gaozu shilu* has been preserved:

始，帝欲與少主俱西，斷孟津，北據壺關，南向徵諸侯兵，乃啟問康義誠西討作何制置。

Previously, the emperor (Shi Jingtang) wanted to move westerly together with the ruler (Li Conghou) in order to cut off [the route to] Mengjin, to occupy the Hu pass at the north and then to move south in order to summon the troops of other dignitaries. He then asked information about the military attacks of Kang Yicheng at west, in order to make a plan.<sup>205</sup>

This short fragment informs us that emperor Min and Shi Jingtang had specific plans: to regain power over the troops under the leadership of Li Congke. On the other hand, the *Han Gaozu shilu* describes Li Conghou as hostile to Shi Jingtang and provides a very detailed account of the alleged plot organized by emperor Min in order to murder Shi Jingtang:

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

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<sup>205</sup> ZZTJ 279: 9114-15.

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，以少主授王弘贇。

That night, [the emperor, Liu Zhiyuan] came to know from a spy that emperor Shao [Li Conghou] had concealed soldiers and, together with his followers, wanted to plot the murder of Jin Gaozu, that he had put up a trick in which soldiers with shields pretended to be talking to each and sitted in the corridors around the buildings. The emperor [Liu Zhiyuan] secretly sent the soldier Shi Gan to stand behind him with a mallet hidden in the sleeves, and wait until the moment in which those who were concealing the weapons would have taken them out. Gan was a brave soldier, he pushed the emperor into one of the rooms, blocking the entrance with a huge trunk, bravely faced the spears and was killed by them. Liu Zhiyuan drew his saber and in the dark of the night he attacked [the soldiers of Li Conghou] who were guarding the torches on the ground in a moment when they did not expect it. All of them thought that there was an army of soldiers with short weapons and thus they escaped. Liu Zhiyuan hid himself behind a long wall, from where he heard the general Li Hongxin telling his men: ‘Gentleman Shi is dead!’ Liu Zhiyuan shouted from behind the wall: ‘The gentleman is not injured!’ Then he came out from behind the wall and reached the army of Hongxin, and together went to rescue Jin Gaozu. They killed the conspirers and delivered Li Conghou to Wang Hongzhi.<sup>206</sup>

This fragment is focused 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 opens with the scene of the night of the meeting between Li Conghou and Shi Jingtang in Weizhou. Accordngly, Liu Zhiyuan had come to know that Li Conghou had planned the murder of Shi Jingtang, and so he organized a strategy 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:<sup>207</sup>

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。

[Wang] Hongzhi said: “Today the capital is in peril, the one hundred officials have not a ruler, [the ruler] is certainly moving westward the government. My lord should better capture the ruler [emperor Min] and receive the king of Lu at

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<sup>206</sup> ZZTJ 279: 9115.

<sup>207</sup> 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.

west. In this way [my Lord]'s plan will be unshakable." Jingtang acted according to his advice.<sup>208</sup>

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

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 organize a strategy against the rebel 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 focused on the deeds of Liu Zhiyuan, general of Shi Jingtang and future Gaozu of the Later Han, depicted as the brave and loyal general who rescues his ruler from peril;
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 on it.

### 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 distinct sections of the work. It is though 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 benji* reports:

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，

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<sup>208</sup> *ZZTJ* 279: 9115.



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。

When the army of Qiyang provoked the turmoil and proclaimed the king of Lu as emperor, emperor Min urgently called the emperor [Shi Jingtang] for an audience, willing to entrust him with the state affairs. Emperor Min from Luoyang escaped into exile in Wei and the two met on the way. Subsequently [Shi Jingtang] entered Weizhou. At that time the emperor [Shi Jingtang] had the impression that the assistants of emperor Min were not favorable to him. For this reason he captured his cavaliers in all more than one hundred people. Emperor Min then knew that he could not help to resolve the situation, he extensively expressed his regret to the emperor and they separated. The emperor [Shi Jingtang] ordered the regional governor Wang Hongzhi to safely secure emperor Min in a dwelling for officers and then he left. When he was informed that [emperor Min] had been killed by the king of Lu, the emperor felt ashamed for long a time.<sup>209</sup>

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 plan a strategy 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. The text explicitly says that Li Conghou ‘escaped into exile’; 3. Li Conghou knows that his entourage is not very favorable to Shi Jingtang, yet he cannot do anything; 4. The text does not blame Wang Hongzhi for the plan against Li Conghou, instead the king 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 almost 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.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> *JWDS* 75: 983.

<sup>210</sup> *JWDS* 99: 1322.

While the *Modi ji* 末帝紀 (Basic Annals of emperor Mo), barely mentions the event,<sup>211</sup> the *Mindi ji* 閔帝紀 (Basic Annals of emperor Min) provides a very detailed version of the facts (probably on the basis of the *Mindi shilu*):

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。

During the night of the twenty-ninth day of that month [May 20<sup>th</sup>, 934], the emperor (Li Conghou) arrived seven-eight *li* at east of Weizhou where he met cavaliers riding from east that he could not avoid. His assistants shouted at them: "This is Shi Jingtang, military governor of Zhenzhou" someone answered. The emperor rejoiced, Shi Jingtang paid him respect on the way, the emperor dismounted, burnt into tears and told him: "The king of Lu is endangering the empire, Kang Yicheng has surrendered and betrayed me, and I don't have any place where I can protect myself."<sup>212</sup> I was told by Lady Zhang that if I met you on the way we had to plan a strategy". Jingtang replied: "Wang Hongzhi of Weizhou is an old acquaintance and he knows how to deal with these matters, I am about to reach Hongzhi and plan a strategy". Jingtang then raced away quickly. He met Hongzhi and asked him: "The ruler is moving away and he has arrived here in danger; he is a relative of mine, how should I protect myself?" Hongzhi replied: "In the past there have been cases of emperors escaping from the bandits, yet in their way to exile they would be accompanied by generals and ministers, and they would

<sup>211</sup> *JWDS* 46: 629.

<sup>212</sup> For the biography of Kang Yicheng see *JWDS* 66: 879-80 and *XWDS* 27: 296-98.

carry the imperial treasure and vessels with them, all that would make the army commanders respectfully serve him, so that nobody would think that he has not lost [his mandate]. Is the emperor followed by ministers and high officials? What about the imperial jade and the vessels?" [Shi Jingtang] inquired and he did not have. Hongzhi then said: "When a great tree is about to fall, a single rope will not preserve it. The ruler is followed by fifty cavaliers, not a single minister or general is with him, how could be possible to plan a strategy for the restoration! He is like a dragon that has lost its clouds and rain [his force]. Today the generals of the six armies are all in the hands of Gentleman Lu. You My Lord will not get anywhere if you indulge in keeping relatives in mind for the old time's sake!" Shi Jingtang then, together with Hongzhi, met at the postal hostel and set together in order to plan a strategy. When what Hongzhi had told to Shi Jingtang was heard, the archers Shao Shouhong and Ben Hongjin called on Shi Jingtang and told him: "His Majesty was Mingzong's beloved son as well as You were his beloved son-in-law. You equally received wealth and rank, joy and sorrow should thus be shared. Now [the emperor] relies on his next of kin ruler in order to plan a peaceful restoration, you are inquiring on the emperor's followers and imperial vessels because you intend to use this as an excuse to refuse your support and treat the emperor for the sake of the usurper!" Then they took out their sabers in order to stab Jingtang. Jingtang's close general Chen Hui intervened to stop him. Shourong and Hui died in the fight and Hongjin cut his own throat. That day Jingtang killed all the cavaliers of emperor Min, in all more than fifty people, then left the emperor alone at the post and hurried back to Luoyang.<sup>213</sup>

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, Lady 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 suggests that Shi Jingtang should not help the emperor, yet he does not tell him to capture him as in the *Nan Tang liezu shilu*. The text does not express judgments on the behavior of Wang Hongzhi. In general his character is practically nonexistent; 3. There is no mention of Liu Zhiyuan and the text reports that Shi Jingtang 'killed all

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<sup>213</sup> JWDS 45: 621-22.

the cavaliers'; 4. Finally, there is no mention of the killing of emperor Min. Instead, the death is narrated as follows:

四月三日，潞王入洛。五日，即位。七日，廢帝為鄂王。遣弘贇子殿直王巒之衛州，時弘贇已奉帝幸州廡。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。

In the third day of the fourth month [May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 934], the king of Lu entered Luoyang. In the fifth month he ascended to the throne. In the seventh month, the dethroned emperor was renamed king of E. The son of Hongzhi, the court attendant Luan, was sent to Weizhou. At that time Hongzhi was already serving the [new] emperor in his government office in Xingzhou. In the ninth day when Luan arrived, the emperor got poisoned and died. That day early in the morning a white rainbow passed through the sun. The empress dowager née Kong was in her palace when Wang Luan returned; that day she and her four sons all were killed.<sup>214</sup>

The present edition of the official history does not provide a biography of Wang Hongzhi. Nevertheless, in a note on the text *Jiu Wudai shi kaoyi* the mentions a quote from a *Wang Hongzhi zhuanwen* 五代薛史王弘贇傳 included in the *JWDS* of the *Yongle dadian* edition:

「帝崩，殮於郡齋東閣，覆以黃帕。弘贇嗟嘆之，徐謂方大曰：『吾前於秦川，見魏王死渭南驛，殮於東閣，黃帕覆之，正如今日之事，吾未明其理也。』」<sup>215</sup>

When the emperor died, his corpse was dressed for burial in the eastern chamber of the residence for the governors. The corpse was covered with a yellow curtain. Hongzhi sighted and leisurely made a comparison: “When I was in Qinzhou, I saw the king of Wei dying at the postal hostel south of the river Wei. His corpse was dressed for burial at the eastern residence and covered with a yellow curtain, exactly as today, I have never understood the reason [behind this].”<sup>216</sup>

This passage pictures Wang Hongzhi who, at the sight of the corpse of emperor Min, asks himself why he should be buried with a yellow curtain over the coffin and draws a parallel between the death of Li

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<sup>214</sup> *JWDS* 45: 622.

<sup>215</sup> *Yongle dadian*, *juan* 6851(膠卷) *JWDS* 45: 622.

<sup>216</sup> The king of Wei is Li Jiji 李繼岌, the eldest son of Zhuangzong, *JWDS* 45: 622.

Conghou and the killing of Li Jiji, the eldest son of Zhuangzong, and former king of Wei and legitimate heir of the throne, who was strangled. This speech is not mentioned in the biographical section dedicated to Wang Hongzhi in the *XWDS* nor in other sources.

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 further proof of this. The text possibly conceals details of the real intentions of Wang Hongzhi in order to avoid confronting the negative aspects of Shi Jingtang:

史臣曰：閔帝爰自冲年，素有令問，及徵從代邸，入踐堯階，屬軒皇之弓劍初遺，吳王之几杖未賜，遽生猜問，遂至奔亡。蓋輔臣無安國之謀，非少主有不君之咎。以至越在草莽，失守宗祧，斯蓋天命之難謀，土德之將謝故也。

The historian says: since emperor Min was enthroned in his early teens, he always had a good reputation, he was enthroned and stepped into the ranks of Yao and, [as early] as the sword and bow of the Yellow Emperor that went lost at the beginning and the verges of king Wu that had not been bestowed yet, estrangement caused by sentiments of suspect unexpectedly grew and he consequently went in exile and perished. It is not the emperor that has to be blamed for not behaving as a ruler, but the subjects who did not plan for the peace in the empire. Disappeared in the wildness and without his ancestries, this is really the hard call of the Heavenly mandate!<sup>217</sup>

### 3.2. The *Xin Wudai shi* 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 positive picture of him, describing him as ‘extremely gifted, of few words but fairly acquainted with the rituals’.<sup>218</sup> The historian avoids mentioning the events that led Li Conghou to be killed, and instead merely says that he ‘entered Weizhou’ (*ru Weizhou* 如衛州).<sup>219</sup> In the Basic Annals of emperor Fei it is reported that ‘emperor Min found dwelling in Weizhou’ (*Mindi chuju yu Weizhou* 閔帝出居于衛州) and afterwards he was deposed as emperor and bestowed with the title of king of E. The Annals merely

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<sup>217</sup> *JWDS* 45: 622-623.

<sup>218</sup> *XWDS* 7: 69.

<sup>219</sup> *XWDS* 7:70.

report that emperor Fei ‘killed the king of E’.<sup>220</sup> On the contrary, Ouyang Xiu sees Shi Jingtang as the main one responsible; he explicitly reports that ‘Jingtang killed more than one hundred men of the emperor’s entourage’ (*Jingtang sha di congzhe bai yu ren* 敬瑭殺帝從者百餘人).<sup>221</sup>

A detailed narration of the events is provided in the biography of Wang Hongzhi in the *zazhuan* section, the miscellaneous biographies of subjects whose behavior 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 and of the emperor himself. The historian raises questions about Hongzhi’s ethics 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; something which probably indicates that Hongzhi was a minor official.<sup>222</sup> Whereas in the *JWDS* it is the son of Wang Hongzhi, Wang Luan, who is sent by Li Congke to poison emperor Min, the *XWDS* adds details to the narrative that cast an even more negative light on Hongzhi:

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，願獻酒以慰無憯。」愍帝受之，由是日獻一觴。及巒持酖至，因使酒家獻之，愍帝飲而不疑，遂崩。

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 greatly frightened and threw it on the ground. After some time [Hongzhi] tried again saying: “The owner of the wine house wants to offer You wine in order to console Your being with anybody to rely on.” Emperor Min took it and from then on a cup of wine was offered to him daily. When Luan arrived with the bird poison, similarly they ordered the owner to offer it to him. Emperor Min did not suspect anything and drank it. He died soon after.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> *XWDS* 7: 72.

<sup>221</sup> *XWDS* 8: 78.

<sup>222</sup> *XWDS* 48: 544-545.

<sup>223</sup> *XWDS* 48: 545.

### 3.3. The *Zizhi tongjian* Account

The account of the *ZZTJ* runs as follows:

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。

In the fourth month of summer, on the day of the new moon [May 21<sup>st</sup>, 934], before the sunrise emperor Min arrived a few kilometers east of Weizhou where he met Shi Jingtang. The emperor rejoiced and asked about his great plans for the empire. Jingtang said: "I heard that Kang Yicheng has launched an offensive, out west, hasn't he? Why Your Majesty have you come here?" The emperor replied: "Yicheng also has joined the rebels". Jingtang bowed his head in sign of submission and deeply sighed four times, then he said: "The regional governor of Weizhou, Wang Hongzhi is a veteran officer and very acquainted with the affairs [of Weizhou], I suggest that we plan a strategy with him." Then he paid visit to Hongzhi and asked him about the matter. He replied: "In the past there were many emperors 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 imperial vessels, in order that the people would respect them. Today [emperor Min] has nothing of that, he is followed by fifty cavaliers, although You have loyal and righteous intentions, how could you be of help?" Jingtang returned back to meet the emperor at the postal 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 accused him saying: "You were Mingzong's beloved, you [and the emperor] similarly received wealth and rank, you should support each other in hardship. Now that the emperor is fleeing in exile and he is trusting You to plan the restoration, You refuse on the basis of these for excuses, in this way You are intentionally adhering to the usurper's authority and selling the emperor!" When Shourong took out his saber in order to stab him, Cheng Hui, a general close to Jingtang, defended him. Shourong and Hui died and Hongjin cut his own throat. Liu Zhiyuan, general of the army of Jingtang, entered with the army and killed emperor Min's cavaliers and all his assistants. They left the emperor alone and went away. Jingtang then went to Luoyang.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> *ZZTJ* 279: 9114-9115.

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 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:

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

On the *wuyin* day, Luan arrived at Weizhou to pay him visit. Emperor Min asked him about the reason of his visit. He did not reply. Hongzhi repeatedly served him wine. Emperor Min knew that it was poisoned and refused to drink. Then Luan strangled him.<sup>225</sup>

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

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。

Emperor Min had a loyal and devoted temper, he was in harmony with his brothers and, although he provoked the jealousy of the king of Qin, the emperor dealt with him in a magnanimous way... When he stepped in power, he did not have any suspicion on the king of Lu; Zhu Hongzhao, Meng Han and their faction created the haste, emperor Min could not avoid it and he faced a disastrous end.<sup>226</sup>

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

### 3.4. Concluding Remarks

The fragments of narrative 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 westerly together with the exiled Li

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<sup>225</sup> ZZTJ 279: 9116.

<sup>226</sup> ZZTJ 279: 9116.



Conghou in order to occupy the northern pass of Hu, and then move south in order to summon the troops of the provincial governorns 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 presents 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 way. When the two separate, they are still in good relations; when Shi Jingtang is informed of the killing of Li Conghou, he feels sorry.

The quotations from different sources reported by the *Kaoyi* would suggest that the last narrative choice of Sima Guang is based on the objectivity of data. 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'.<sup>227</sup> The account of the *ZZTJ* thus follows the *Mindi shilu*, but the information is limited to the basic data of the encounter between Shi Jingtang and emperor Min. As for the rest of the narrative, none of the sources mentioned in the *Kaoyi*, nor the two histories of the Five Dynasties, report the details mentioned in the account of the *ZZTJ*. According to the *Kaoyi* comments, Sima Guang refutes the accounts reported by Dou Zhengu in

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<sup>227</sup> *ZZTJ* 279: 9115.

the *Jin Gaozu shilu* and Su Fengji's *Han Gaozu shilu* because the two authors were too favorable to the respective rulers and the accounts 'concealed their faults'.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> *ZZTJ* 279: 9115.



### Chapter Three

#### Uprising and Decline: Narrative Discourses of the Rise and Fall of the Later Jin

In the last chapter I focused mainly on the flexibility of the narratives presented by the different sources and on the work of selection made by Sima Guang. I attempted to analyze how details are added, modified or eliminated from the accounts in order to build up historical discourses bearing different meanings. The three events selected dealt with anecdotes involving the king 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 that allegedly defines a clear hierarchical order among the different personalities and thus pictures their responsibilities according to their position in this order. The historical accounts proposed below on the rise and fall of the Later Jin offer fertile ground for a further inquiry into how the *ZZTJ* constructs narrative patterns of victory and defeat.

After the early tenth-century pact between Abaoji and Li Keyong, the former kingdom of Jin and governorship of Hedong through the years remained the natural counterpart of the alliance with the Qidan. More than three decades after the pact of Yunzhou, the ‘pact based on filial respect to a father’ proposed to the Qidan ruler Yelü Deguang by Shi Jingtang, formally appealed to this alleged tradition. The following intervention of the Qidan in support to the rebellion of Shi Jingtang 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 Qidan, Shi Jingtang was crowned emperor; as a reward, sixteen strategic provinces of the Yan-Yun region along the great wall were ceded to the Qidan. Moreover, the Later Jin started paying annual tributaries as vassal state. In the formal tributary reports (*biao* 表) the emperor would address to the Qidan ruler as ‘Emperor Father’ (*fu huangdi* 父皇帝) and to himself as ‘Emperor Son’ (*er huangdi* 兒皇帝).<sup>229</sup>

The pact assured a period of relative peace and wealth to the Later Jin empire. Sang Weihuan, was one of the main supporters of the pro-peace policy, yet his influence at court was about to decline. With the accession of Shi Chonggui, the second and last ruler of the Later Jin, the alliance with the Qidan was broken. The

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<sup>229</sup> *ZZTJ* 281: 9188.

rupture with the Qidan and the consequent destruction of the dynasty was allegedly caused by a change in diplomatic policy decided by the general Jing Yanguang. Following the death of Shi Jingtang in 942, an announcement of grieving was sent to the Qidan; following a remonstrance moved by Jing, instead of the formal report the court sent a simple letter (*shu* 書) in which the emperor addressed himself as ‘nephew’.<sup>230</sup> Nevertheless, following several incidents that occurred in the border regions, the relation between the Later Jin and the northern neighbors had already deteriorated in the previous years. The main problem for the emperor was thus keeping strong control over the peripheral provinces. In 941 An Chongrong 安重榮, the newly established military governor of border province of Chengde 成德, ordered the murder of one of the Qidan envoys that periodically visited the province.<sup>231</sup> Another reason that plausibly aroused the anger of the Qidan was the creation of the ancestral temples to the four founders of the dynasty; this move served not only to emphasize that the Later Jin dynasty was a restoration of the Tang legacy, but also to establish distance from the Qidan patronage. The policy adopted led to a disruptive and fatal invasion by the Qidan in 946, and signalled the end of all diplomatic relations with the Qidan which would remain frozen until 974.

Among the Song historical works about the first half of the tenth century, the *ZZTJ* offers the most vivid and rich narrative on the rise and fall of the Later Jin. Sima Guang never directly expresses his judgments on the events; nevertheless his influence on the text goes beyond mere selection of sources. The narrative choices suggest the construction of a rather complex historiography than just unlinked and scattered accounts patched together from earlier texts. More than in other sources the main historical personalities are presented through an all-round 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 speeches and detailed

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<sup>230</sup> *ZZTJ* 283: 9242. An interesting Dunhuang manuscript features an epistle addressed to the Qidan ruler from the emperor Chu to the Qidan ruler announcing the predecessor’s demise. In doing so it witnesses the change of diplomatic approach towards the northern neighbors. The missive is an *yishu* 遺書 (posthumous letter) written in the name of the dying Shi Jingtang and may well correspond to the document redacted under the supervision of Jing Yanguang. 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 in the late sixties (see ‘A “Posthumous Letter” from the Chin Emperor to the Khitan Emperor in 942’, in *Excursions in Sinology*, 420-421.

<sup>231</sup> *ZZTJ* 828: 9222.

descriptions constructed in order to lead the audience, the northern Song rulers, to think in a certain way on particularly sensitive issues.

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 have been preserved in the *Kaoyi*; the commentary is thus of little help for an analysis of the selection of the sources. This chapter will compare the narrative of the *ZZTJ* mainly with the *JWDS* and *XWDS*, and occasionally with other non-official historical accounts redacted in the early Song period. Three narratives will be analyzed:

1. The accounts on the origins of Shi Jingtang;
2. The uprising of Shi Jingtang and the decline of the Later Tang in 936;
3. The role of Sang Weihuan the defeat of the Later Jin in 946.

#### 1. The origins of the Shi Surname and the Prophecies of the Uprising

The account of the origins of Shi Jingtang in the *JWDS* is brief and untrustworthy; the lack of factual information about the provenance and history of his family is compensated for by a great deal of legendary accounts. These anecdotes are not found elsewhere (except for one narrative segment in the *Wudai shi quewen*) and we have no clue as to the literary sources. As will be shown below, the *XWDS* and the *ZZTJ* neither include these legendary and supernatural accounts nor attempt to reconstruct the historical personal background of Shi Jingtang. In other words, for different reasons the Song historians did not engage in the reconstruction of the Shi family history. The early Song sources plausibly patched together mythical accounts from early sources in order to legitimize the reign of the first ruler of the Later Jin, while the later historians were almost completely unconcerned with the issue of his ancestry.

##### 1.2. The Account in the *Jiu Wudai shi*

The first Annals of the Later Jin open tracing the origins of the Shi family clan back to the Eastern Han (25-220) period. According to the text, the Shi ancestors left the central plain after the fall of the dynasty and established in Ganzhou 甘州 (present

north-western Gansu) until the beginning of the ninth century when, following the northwestern Shatuo troops of the Zhuye family clan (the ancestors of Li Keyong), they relocated themselves within the borders of the empire; thereupon they were appointed to prominent offices for four generations in the Hedong military governorship. Although of uncertain origin, the ancestors of Shi Jingtang are depicted as loyal subjects of the Zhuye family clan and of the Tang dynasty. As a further argument for the long-lasting family history of the Shi clan, the *Annals* go on to list Shi Jingtang's ancestors and trace their honorific titles back to the fourth generation.<sup>232</sup> These sparse data are the only pieces of information we can obtain from the available sources on the origins of the Shi family clan. We are not informed about the work of selection from the early tenth-century sources, yet we can presume that nothing else was said on the issue. The compilers of the *JWDS* seemingly attempted to integrate the scarcity of information on the origins of his family and on the history of his early life by including in the *Annals* riddles on his name and a mythical account on his birth:

帝即孝元之第二子也，以唐景福元年二月二十八日生於太原汾陽里，時有白氣充庭，人甚異焉。及長，性沈澹，寡言笑，讀兵法，重李牧、周亞夫行事。唐明宗為代州刺史，每深心器之，因妻以愛女。  
The emperor was the second son of Xiaoyuan. He was born in the second month of the first year of the Jingfu era (April 3<sup>rd</sup> 892) in the village of Fenyang, near Taiyuan. At the time of his birth, a white cloud of pure energy filled up the room so that everybody was astonished. When he grew up he developed a gentle temper and he was not inclined in seeking fame and wealth, he did not talk and laugh very much, he studied the art of military strategies. Mingzong of Later Tang named him regional governor of Daizhou. In any situation Mingzong heartedly considered him very talented, and for this reason he married his daughter to him.<sup>233</sup>

According to the *JWDS* the Shi surname had been bestowed to the family lineage already since the early ninth century; nevertheless, neither the *JWDS* nor any other early Song source provide historical evidence of

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<sup>232</sup> *JWDS* 75: 977; *Wudai huiyao* 2:35.

<sup>233</sup> *JWDS* 75: 978.

it.<sup>234</sup> The only coherent information that we have is that the career of Shi Jingtang started at the court of Mingzong; the Later Tang ruler appreciated his military skills and gave his daughter to him in marriage. The dearth of historical facts about the origins of Shi Jingtang is further supplemented by prophetic accounts of his rise and riddles about the Shi surname:

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，其側有古佛刹，刹有石像，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。」

In the year of founding of the Liang, corresponding to the fourth year of the Tianyou era of the preceding Tang dynasty, the commander of the field headquarters of Luzhou, Li Si'an, memorialized to the emperor: "In the prefecture of Huguan, someone among the people of the village of Shurang was cutting trees when a tree cracked into two parts. Inside there were carved six characters written in ancient script which said: 'According to [the mandate of] Heaven in fourteen years there will be a *shi* (rock) coming'. The Liang ruler ordered to store it in the military storehouse; at that time nobody was able to understand its meaning. Until the time when Gaozu ascended to the throne, the oracle 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 is *bingshen*. Moreover, according to the *Classic of Changes*, *jin* (the name of the dynasty) corresponds to *jin*, 'to enter'. The name great Jin is thus conform to the prophecy. Again, the year preceding the

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<sup>234</sup> One hypothesis raised by modern scholars is that the family clan may have come from Shiguo 石國 (Tashkent) in central Asia. Shi guo is mentioned in the *Suishu* 83: 1850, 'Their king's surname was Shi' and *Xin Tang shu* 221: 6246. Moreover the Shi clan might have been one of the nine clans of Zhaowu 昭武, descendants of the Yuezhi 月支. There is no way of proving the validity of this theory (see Lien-sheng Yang, 'A "Posthumous Letter"', 116-117). The Song sources all agree that the Shi surname was not the original surname of the family. See also E.Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-kiue (Turcs) occidentaux*, 132-147.



ascent of the emperor was the *yiwei* year. At west of Ye there was a fence called Ligu, at its side the rivers Qi and Qing converged. Over the fence there was a bridge, under which a big mouse and a snake fought until the *shen* day, when the snake lost and died. Hundreds of persons witnessed the event; the experts knew what that meant. Emperor Mo of the Later Tang was defeated in the *shen* day. Again, emperor Mo was a man from the mountain of Chang in Zhending; in that place there was an old hut of his ancestors, at its side an old Buddhist temple, in the temple a carved stone that suddenly started shaking without stopping. Everybody was astonished in front of this event. When Jinyang was under siege, the emperor sent the trusted He Fu (?), riding on horseback through a narrow path, to seek for the aid of the northern foreign reign. The ruler personally leading his tribes rushed in rescue of him. Not for silk or precious gifts, as an echo he answered to He Fu: "I already had a premonitory dream; all this is an order from the Gods, it is not my will".<sup>235</sup>

This narration puts the uprising of Shi Jingtang in an extremely positive light and it combines all the elements necessary in order to legitimize it. The first one is a riddle concerning the Shi surname discovered by villagers the year after the alleged usurpation of the Tang legacy by the Later Liang; the date of the discovery itself is, of course, symbolic. The second segment reports a prophetic vision foretelling the decline of the Later Tang, and the third one a dream foretelling the Qidan intervention. Some of the elements are based on historical facts reported in other later sources that will be analyzed in dept below, yet a few details are different. For instance, the last segment reports that Shi Jingtang sent a certain He Fu to ask for the intervention of the Qidan. We do not find He Fu anywhere else in the sources and the *ZZTJ* reports that Sang Weihan personally took charge of the mission. The *JWDS* itself is inconsistent on this detail.<sup>236</sup>

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

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<sup>235</sup> *JWDS* 75: 987-88.

<sup>236</sup> *JWDS* 75: 984.

Zhuangzong and the last Later Liang ruler by the same auspicious event.<sup>237</sup> It is interesting to note that the *JWDS* inserts these prophetic anecdotes to close the narrative of the enthronement of Shi Jingtang, after the quotation *in extenso* of the official document redacted by the Qidan ruler (see below) and the account of the territories ceded to the Qidan that ends the annals.<sup>238</sup>

### 1.3. Representation in the *Wudai shi quewen* and the *Wudai shi bu*

The *Wudai shi quewen* reports 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 auspicious omen of Gaozu’, reports another anecdote concerning auspicious signs that occurred on the rise to power of Shi Jingtang which appear to be less positive towards the future Later Jin ruler:

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，命諸班射者分投捕逐，謂之射狼。或遇諸 *yu*，問曰：汝河從而來？對曰：看射狼。未幾高祖至，蓋射亦石。

When emperor Gaozu married the daughter of Mingzong, he was bestowed with the surname Shi (*Shi lang*) by the court. When he was about to rise his armies from Taiyuan [heading to the imperial palace], at the capital in the middle of the night a pack of wolves entered the imperial palace. Worried about it, emperor Min [of Later Tang, Li Conghou] ordered that all the officials in charge that were skilled archers should divide into groups and capture them. The mission was called ‘shooting the wolves’ (*she lang*). Someone met those who followed them and asked: ‘from where are you coming back?’ and they answered: ‘to see shooting the wolves (*kan she lang*)’. A short time after, Gaozu got to the palace, so that was considered an omen for his arrival.<sup>239</sup>

It is impossible to determine here why the *Wudai shi bu* mentions emperor Min (Li Conghou) and not emperor Fei (Li Congke), but it is plausible to consider this a mistake. It is interesting to note that the text provides an alternative answer to the question raised by the *JWDS* on the origins of the Shi surname. According to this, Shi Jingtang was bestowed with the Shi surname only after his marriage to the daughter of Li Siyuan, an assumption that contradicts the reconstruction of the ancestral lineage of the Shi family back to the fourth generation mentioned by the early Song sources;

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<sup>237</sup> *JWDS* 75: 988.

<sup>238</sup> *JWDS* 75: 989.

<sup>239</sup> Fu Xuancong, *Wudai shishu huibian*, 2498.

furthermore, instead of tracing back his family clan loyalty to the Tang, this element binds the merits and power of Shi Jingtang to the recognition and the privileges conferred on him by Mingzong. Finally, the wordplay with the assonance of *shi lang* (lord Shi) to *she lang* (shooting the wolves) expresses a derogatory attitude towards the ancestral lineage of Shi Jingtang. The title itself, ‘the auspicious omen of Gaozu’, acquires an ironical connotation. As in the case of the *JWDS*, the origins of this anecdote are unknown.

#### 1.4. Representation in the *Xin Wudai shi* and *Zizhi tongjian*

Clearly in disagreement with the early Song historians, Ouyang Xiu omits all anecdotes about the Shi surname, and instead the historian simply states that ‘his origins were rooted in the western barbarians tribes’ (*xiyi* 西夷),<sup>240</sup> yet he adds that ‘it is unknown when Jingtang took the surname Shi’.<sup>241</sup>

The *ZZTJ*, on the other hand, avoids all references to the family origins and merely says that he was of Shatuo origins. The text mentions for the first time Shi Jingtang 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, the future Gaozu (r.947-949) and first emperor 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:

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。When the king of Jin entered Weizhou, he dispatched several thousands of soldiers to enlarge the northern city wall of Desheng; [the army of the king] was every day engaged in battle with the Liang, more than one hundred conflicts in all, small or big; victories and defeats were almost the same in number for the two armies. The military official and archer Shi Jingtang was fighting the Liang on the riverside of the River when he was hit and his horse armor was broken. The military commander Liu Zhiyuan gave his horse to Shi Jingtang and he himself riding the horse with broken armor proceeded in the rearguard; the Liang troops suspected an ambush and did not dare to approach them; in this way they

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<sup>240</sup> *XWDS* 8: 77.

<sup>241</sup> *XWDS* 8: 77.

all were able to avoid danger. From then on, Shi Jingtang profoundly appreciated Liu Zhiyuan. Both Shi Jingtang and Liu Zhiyuan were of Shatuo origins. Jingtang was Li Siyuan's son-in-law.<sup>242</sup>

The events that followed the battles of Desheng led to the fall of the Later Liang ruling clan and to the rise of the king of Jin, Li Cunxu, as first emperor of the Later Tang dynasty.<sup>243</sup> From the episode of Desheng on, the *ZZTJ* dedicates a large literature to Shi Jingtang, yet no more is said either about his origins (other than the fact that his ancestors were men of the Shatuo tribes, or Shatuo Turks), nor about his parental relationship to Li Siyuan. Shi Jingtang meets history on horseback in the middle of a battle and that is all 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 did not possess the essential qualities of birth in order 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 *ZTTJ* or in the *Kaoyi*. Pieces of information about the reason for this rejection can be drawn from the well known letter of instructions for the compilation of the Long Draft of the Tang dynasty addressed to Fan Zuyu. In this missive Sima Guang suggests that Fan record only 'strange and uncanny events which give warnings' (*miaoyi you suo jingjie* 妙異有所儆戒). According to the instructions, popular practices and prophetic dreams had to

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<sup>242</sup> *ZZTJ* 271: 8850.

<sup>243</sup> The reign of Zhuangzong, marked by uninterrupted fights with the former Later Liang military forces and internal uprisings in the peripheral regions, lasted merely a couple of years (*ZZTJ* 272: 8881-8954). One of the uprisings took place in the state of Shu 蜀 and it brought about the events that lead to the ascension of Li Siyuan (emperor Mingzong). Initially the emperor had sent his man of trust, the general Guo Chongtao 郭崇韜, to put down the rebellion; not long after, the internal struggles between Guo Chongtao and the eunuchs had lead to the murder of the general. A number of other executions followed, and as a result there was considerable confusion in the provinces. Li Siyuan was entrusted with the imperial troops in order to lead against the rebels. His ascent is thus the direct consequence of the way in which the court reacted to the uprising in the state of Shu (see *ZZTJ*, p.8952-53). Soon after his enthronement and for the whole period of his reign, Mingzong had to deal with the power of local officers who had risen from tribal or provincial armies. When Li Siyuan died in 934, his fifth son, Li Conghou (emperor Min), was enthroned. His reign was so short (less than one year) that the *ZZTJ* does not even dedicate separate annals to him and the events are narrated as part of the annals about emperor Mingzong. The last and most controversial ruler of the Later Tang is Li Siyuan's adopted son, the king of Lu, Li Congke (emperor Fei).

be recorded only if they had specific didactic roles in the narrative or if they worked as warnings for upcoming important events.<sup>244</sup> 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 for the overall rendering of the narrative. These anecdotes were possibly not rejected because they did not depict historical facts, but because they were not functional to the narrative.

Only in one case does the *ZZTJ* mention a prophetic dream. In the representation of the relation between Shi Jingtang and Yelü Deguang, the *ZZTJ* depicts Yelü Deguang telling his mother about a dream in which the arrival of ‘gentleman Shi’ (*Shi lang*) was predicted. The epithet ‘gentleman Shi’ is put in the mouth of Yelü Deguang probably in order to strengthen the idea that the Qidan leader treated Shi Jingtang as equal, if not in a friendly way.<sup>245</sup> The only other character 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 encloses 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; the *ZZTJ* through accurate narrative choices 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

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<sup>244</sup> ‘All national disasters recorded in basic annals should be retained, but it is not necessary to do so in the case of matters in the relevant monograph which are forcibly made to fit events of the time. (...) Ones which wantonly try to show coincidences such as the idea that a ‘tree’ entering a ‘peck measure’ would make the surname Zhu 朱 need not to be recorded. Cases of physiognomizing where it is said: ‘This [man] should be avoided by men’, ‘This [man] should be joined by other men’; cases of auspicious objects where the ruler is fond of such things and flatterers have made them fraudulently, or where there have really been credible examples-these should be retained. The rest need not be. If uncanny occurrences give warnings such as the spirit writing on Wu Sansi 武三思’s door, or if as result of them something is started, as when Yang Shenjin 楊慎矜’s tomb shed blood, they should be retained. The rest need not be *Da Fan Mengde shu* (Letter in Response to Fan Mengde [Fan Zuyu]’s Missive) , in *Sima Guang ji*, vol.3, pp.1741-1744. Translation by Pulleyblank, “Chinese Historical Criticism: Liu-chi Chih and Ssu-ma Kuang”, *Historians of China and Japan*, 163.

<sup>245</sup> *ZZTJ* 279: 9146.

in which the bad temper of Li Congke and his inability to rule is depicted as one of the main reasons that led Shi Jingtang to rebel.<sup>246</sup>

## 2. The Uprising in the Song Sources

As mentioned previously, the *Kaoyi* offers scant information about the work of selecting the sources for the redaction of the Annals of the Later Jin; from the brief quotations provided we come to know that Sima Guang and his team mainly drew 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. We find quotations from the *Feidi shilu* only in the first Annals of Later Jin; as will be shown below, although the *shilu* were redacted 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. The *JWDS* is the third and main source for the redaction of the Annals of the Later Jin.

The narrative of the uprising of Shi Jingtang and the Qidan intervention is scattered among the annals, the biographies and the Biography on Foreign Countries. 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. The *JWDS* introduces the account on the uprising of Shi Jingtang with a long direct speech in which the future emperor reveals his doubts about the intentions of Li Congke. An imperial order urging Shi Jingtang to move from Jinyang and relocate as military governor of Junzhou 軍州 is the event that prompts the reaction of Shi Jingtang:

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

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<sup>246</sup> As adoptive son of emperor Mingzong, the *ZZTJ* does not recognize emperor Fei as the legitimate heir. Part of the seventh and the eighth Annals of Later Tang concern with two section entitled 'king of Lu'.

然死於道路。況太原險固之地，積粟甚多，若且寬我，我當奉之。必若加兵我則外告鄰方，北構強敵，興亡之數，皎皎在天。今欲發表稱疾，以俟其意，諸公以為何如？

The day I received again the office in Taiyuan, the emperor [Mingzong] declared in front of me: ‘This post I convey to you at the northern gate, there will be no issues in all you life time in order to move you to another post’. Today suddenly this imperial order has been released, maybe it is like the case of last year in Xinzhou when the troops were put in disorder and was in an urgent situation, and we exceeded in suspecting each other? But this year again, at the feast of the thousand springs, the princess [Shi Jingtang’s wife] had an audience [with the emperor] and at the time of her departure the emperor addressed to her saying: ‘You hurry to go back, isn’t it because you want to join gentleman Shi in his rebellion?’. It is extremely clear in this case that the court has doubts about me! Today the emperor employs relatives of the family branch of the empress and appoints fraudulent officials, he indulges in things that give him absentminded state and the numerous affairs of the state are suspended and delayed, the distinction between punishments and rewarding is deviated [from the normal way], he has not perished but for how long? Since the day when emperor Shao [Min] escaped in exile in the Shunning period, I witnessed that the people feelings are greatly leaving [the court], and [the court] is not able to rescue the country from difficulties, it has already been three years that [the people] are discontent in their heart. I am not willing to rebel, the court itself is provoking disasters and I cannot calmly die on the road. The territories of Taiyuan are solidly protected and have abundant storages of grain, if the situation turns against me, I will occupy it. And if it will be the case that armies will intervene, I will inform the neighbors. In the northern reaches there are strong enemies, the destiny of victory or defeat is clearly in the hands of Heaven. Today I will claim illness in order to wait and relate the intentions of the court, what do you think about this plan?’<sup>247</sup>

In the account provided by the *JWDS*, probably drawn from the *Gaozu shilu*, Shi Jingtang accuses the court of mistrusting him and of privileging the interests of the family clan of the empress and the emperor himself of being a weak ruler unable of dealing with the important matters of governance. Shi Jingtang thus takes the decision to rebel against the emperor’s order, to declare himself ill and persist in his post in Taiyuan.

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<sup>247</sup> *JWDS* 75: 983-84.

The role of his loyal generals, Liu Zhiyuan and Sang Weihan, appear to be secondary. They agree on the plan out of loyalty to their leader. Shortly after, 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 put the provincial capital of Hedong, Jinyang, under siege. Shi Jingtang then orders Sang Weihan to request the intervention of the Qidan; the Qidan ruler agrees to intervene (*fuyi* 赴義 'magnanimous act undertaken for the good of the empire') in the middle of autumn.

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

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。

At the end of the Changxing era, the Qidan attacked Yunzhou, Mingzong named [the future] Gaozu of Later Jin military governor of Hedong in charge of the office responsible for the northern frontiers and the relations with the barbarians. In the third year of the Qingtai era (936), [the future] Gaozu was attacked and surrounded by [the troops] of Zhang Jingda; he thus sent the commander He Fu with an accurate request for military intervention, and willing to consider himself as subject.<sup>248</sup>

This brief account presents discrepancies from the version of the facts offered in the Basic Annals. The text avoids mentioning the events that brought to the siege of Jinyang by the imperial army and does not refer to the role of Sang Weihan as emissary to the Qidan. In general, the account dedicated to the relation between the Qidan and the Later Jin almost completely omits the part played by Sang Weihan. In addition, the account reports that Shi Jingtang was willing to 'consider himself as subject' of the Qidan. The manner in which the account is rendered and the choice of language is different from the basic annals' arrangement, and, without pushing hypothesis into the realm of guesswork, it might be

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<sup>248</sup> JWDS 137: 1833.



possible that the two sections of the *JWDS* were based on two different primary sources.

The account of the Qidan intervention in 936 is recorded briefly both in the *Basic Annals* and in the *Biography of Foreign Countries*. The *Basic Annals* report in its entirety the official document allegedly redacted by the Qidan in which Shi Jingtang is enthroned emperor:

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。

I was aware that the bad ruler Congke was not of honorable origins, he usurped the imperial vessels, he gave up justice and neglected mercy, he went against [the will of] Heaven and devastated the ten thousand things, exterminated his close relatives and set the loyal and honest subjects one against the other, entrusted the flatterers, ill-treated those among the people who are sage; the people living in the border territories were terrified, inside and outside the empire they are dispersed and separated from one the another. I know that you did not commit any crime; because you were harmed by him, you dared to summon a troop of myriad [of soldiers] and come urgently to protect the city walls and moats, although the willing to resist was resolute, I heard the rumors about you been under difficult circumstances and I was profoundly wrathful and startled.<sup>249</sup>

Once again, Shi Jingtang is redeemed from all suspicion of having betrayed the court; nonetheless in this case it is the Qidan ruler that officially declares his integrity as Shi Jingtang is depicted as a brave and upright general who restored the order in the empire, while the Qidan ruler is the sage emperor who rescued him from peril. It is also interesting to note that the Qidan ruler officially denies the legitimacy of the last Later Tang emperor. Yelü Deguang declares himself 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 avoids mentioning the terms of the pact and the loss to the Qidan of the sixteen provinces between Yan and

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<sup>249</sup> *JWDS* 75: 984-989.

Yun, including the districts of the Youzhou province and four governorships of 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; the second one, in particular, compared the positive outcome of the military enterprise of the joint forces of the Qidan and the Later Jin with the conflict against the Later Liang and the ascent of Zhuangzong of Later Tang.<sup>250</sup>

The official document of the enthronement of Shi Jingtang is not reported elsewhere in the sources and represents the highest point of diplomacy towards the Qidan in the early Song sources.

### 2.1. Representation in the *Xin Wudai shi*

The *XWDS* provides an extremely dry chronicle of the invasion of the Qidan. 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 over power in any case, with or without the help of the Qidan.<sup>251</sup> This entry is followed by a list of the provinces ceded to the Qidan. Despite the dry narrative, the use of language is extremely derogative towards both Shi Jingtang and the Qidan ruler. The official document redacted by the Qidan is mentioned in the *Siyi lu* and simplified as follows:

咨爾子晉王，予視爾猶子，爾視予猶父。

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

According to the *XWDS*, Yelü Deguang addresses the enthroned Shi Jingtang as ‘the king of Jin’, and not as emperor. In this way Ouyang Xiu establishes a different hierarchy in which the Later Jin ruler is declared inferior to the northern neighbors. This idea is reiterated at the end of the account, where the historian registers the year according to the Qidan-Liao

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<sup>250</sup> *JWDS* 75: 987-88.

<sup>251</sup> *XWDS* 8: 79.

calendar, ‘that was the ninth year of the Tianxian 天顯 era’, instead of the first year of the Tianfu era according to the Later Jin calendar.<sup>252</sup>

Finally, Ouyang Xiu closes the the biographical section dedicated to Sang Weihan 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 Qidan:

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！

We lament! The patterns of disaster and fortune, victory and defeat were never so clear as in the case of the [Later] Jin! The dynasty prospered with the help of the Qidan and was destroyed by the Qidan. Likewise the legitimacy was defied with rebellion so that the great matters were not solved, isolated towns were put under siege without help from the outside. A single solicitation cast in the strident tongue [of Weihan] gave the Qidan due cause to empty their own country in raising armies in relief, as if they were responding to the common cause of rescuing from perils. Thereupon the Jin ruling house was established. The power of Sang Weihan most enabled all this to come into being. Until when the last ruler of Later Jin [Shi Chonggui] got to the throne, the perpetual quarrels between the two armies were brought again to war by the abrogated alliance. All this was caused by Jing Yanguang. The affairs of the Jin ruling house was thus accomplished by Sang Weihan and brought to destruction by Jing Yanguang. The two men, however different in intent, met the same fatal end. For which reason? Because for those who deal with the barbarians without having a clear picture of causes and consequences, calamity is the common outcome, but never good fortune. We must be mindful, we must take heed!<sup>253</sup>

The reference to the ‘strident tongue’ of Sang Weihan should be kept in mind because, as it will be shown in the last section of this chapter, this element and his physical features recur in other early Song sources.

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<sup>252</sup> XWDS 72: 893

<sup>253</sup> XWDS 29: 324. For this quote I partially follow the translation of R. Davis, *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*, 245; the changes are my own interpretation of the text.

For Ouyang Xiu the policies adopted by the Later Jin ruling house marked a nadir in the history of military affairs, and the main reason was that they came to terms with the ‘northern barbarians’. Whereas moral judgment 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 military strategies.

## 2.2. Representation in the *Zizhi tongjian*

The first Annals of Later Jin open with Li Congke (here named ‘the Tang ruler’, *Tang zhu* 唐主) in a drunk state of mind accusing the princess Zhang of Jin, wife of Shi Jingtang, of being part of the rebellious plan of his husband. This event convinced Shi to leave Luoyang and to take all his goods back to Jinyang:

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。

On the day *guichou* [Feb.2<sup>nd</sup>, 936], the Tang ruler [king of Lu] gave the feast of the Thousand Springs, the princess Zhang of Jin after the congratulations for the ruler’s birthday were ended, 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?” Heard these words, Shi Jingtang was increasingly afraid. [...] Shi Jingtang took all the goods stored in Luoyang and other places and headed back to Jinyang; he falsely spread the voice that it was in order to help the troops, when in reality everybody knew that he had different plans.<sup>254</sup>

From this episode onwards, emperor Fei repeatedly asked 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 to the ruler were the worst sins that a subject could commit, even in the case that the ruler’s 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

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<sup>254</sup> *ZZTJ* 279: 9138.

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 emperor Mingzong, yet the greediness of officials and the lack of strong political measures led to the uprising and the consequent collapse of the Later Tang.

The real intentions of Shi Jingtang are disclosed through a complex plot, the events dating back to the first year of reign of emperor Fei 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 alleged motivation was disharmony between him and the newly established emperor. Unsure about the intentions of the emperor regarding 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 in his old companion of military campaigns, 'gentleman Shi' (again here the epithet has not a neutral value), and allowed him to return to Hedong, while in reality he was extremely suspicious towards his real intentions.<sup>255</sup> Well aware of this, when Shi Jingtang got back to Taiyuan, he secretly started organizing for his self protection. He asked his relatives at court to spy on the emperor's plans. Moreover, in order to mislead and avoid the suspicions of the court, he himself in front of his guests would often plead illness and complain that his physical weakness did not allow him to lead an army in battle.<sup>256</sup>

The camouflage worked out well until repeated attacks by the Qidan on the northern borders forced Shi Jingtang and Zhao Dejun 趙德鈞, governor of Youzhou, to seek supplies for the troops.<sup>257</sup> The suspicions of the emperor towards Shi Jingtang's intentions increased consequent to an event that occurred not longer after:

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<sup>255</sup> ZZTJ 279: 9119-9120.

<sup>256</sup> ZZTJ 279: 9131.

<sup>257</sup> Standen, Naomi. "Who Wants to Be an Emperor? Zhao Dejun 趙德鈞, Youzhou 幽州 and the Liao 遼", in *Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms*, ed. by Lorge, Peter (The Chinese University Press, Hong Kong: 2011).

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，幕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。

Shi Jingtang at the head of a big army was camping in Xinzhou, when the court sent envoys to provide the soldiers with summer clothes. When the order spread among the soldiers, they rejoined of relief and screamed ‘*wan sui!*’ for four times. Shi Jingtang was scared about this, his aid and staff Duan Xiyao of Henei asked to punish those who had spread the voice, and Shi Jingtang ordered Liu Zhiyuan to behead Li Hun and other thirty five people. Xiyao was from Huaizhou. When the emperor heard this, his suspects on Shi Jingtang increased even more.<sup>258</sup>

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 actions and the incapability 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. Shi Jingtang had taken severe measures in order to collect as many supplies as possible from the people. In that period the region had been hit by several natural disasters and the people were already starving to death. Following Shi Jingtang’s measures, the situation became even worst; myriads of people were obliged to leave their homes and became dislocated. Here the historian’s judgment is rightly enforced by a brief comment by Hu Sanxing: the fact that the people were forced to leave their homes is a clear sign of the beginning of disorders.<sup>259</sup>

The Annals of Later Jin open with the episode of the celebrations of the Thousand Springs Festival (emperor Fei’s birthday). Shi Jingtang’s decision to take all his goods back to Jinyang convinced the emperor’s entourage that it was time to intervene. The following episode is also reported by Ouyang Xiu in the miscellaneous biographies section, yet the language and the content of the direct speeches are different; on the other hand, the *JWDS* completely omits it:

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<sup>258</sup> *ZZTJ* 279: 9131.20

<sup>259</sup> *ZZTJ* 279: 9131.

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，但求煎刺等未獲，故和未成耳。今誠歸煎刺等與之和，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，請於庫財之外拮拾以供之。」[...]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。

The Tang ruler during an ordinary night talk with his entourage asked: “Gentleman Shi is a very close relative of mine, there is nothing to doubt about his conduct, 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, scholar of the Duanming Palace and Supervising Censor, had an intimate talk with Lü Qi and said: “We are favored and deeply respected, could we ever be as everybody else simply waiting for things to develop? How could we come out with a plan?” Qi answered: “If Hedong has hidden plans, he would certainly ask the aid of the Qidan. The empress dowager of the Qidan, through Zanhua [elder son of A Baoji] who is staying the Middle Kingdom, has repeatedly attempted to cement relations with rulers by marriage, but because she has got refusals to her request of returning of Zela and cohort, the allegiance was never concluded. If today we are really able to return back Zela in order to get to a peace treaty with them, and we propose an annual offering of bribes corresponding to more than hundred thousands of string of coins, they will certainly be happy to accept. In this way, even if Hedong wants to carry on disruptive activities, he will not be able to do.” [...] 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 the *Lost Book of the Qidan* as a sign of Heaven’s will.<sup>260</sup>

The court official Li Song, who had formerly supported the candidature of Shi Jingtang as governor of Hedong, now plots a strategy against him. Together with Lü Qi, they plan a preemptive action in order to avoid the Qidan intervention in favor of Shi Jingtang.<sup>261</sup> They propose to the emperor that he accept the release of the Qidan generals that had been kept captive in the capital in order to create the ground for an allegiance based on marriage (*heqin* 和親) with the Qidan plus an annual payment of

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<sup>260</sup> ZZTJ 280: 9139.

<sup>261</sup> 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).

gold and silk.<sup>262</sup> Emperor Fei is initially enthusiastic about the plan. Proud of their brilliant project, Li Song and his cohort decide to redact a book in secret called *Yi Qidan shu* 遺契丹書 (The Secret Book of the Qidan) as proof of Heaven's will.<sup>263</sup> Unfortunately for the two officials, during another of his night talks with his entourage the ever irresolute emperor Fei 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 and his peer. The narrative runs as follows:

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？」[...]帝意遂變。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？」二人懼，汗流浹背，曰：「臣等志在竭愚以報國，非為虜計也，願陛下察之。」拜謝無數，帝詬責不已。呂琦氣竭，拜少止，帝曰：「呂琦強項，肯視朕為人主邪！」琦曰：「臣等為謀不臧，願陛下治其罪，多拜何為！」自是群臣不敢復言和親之策。丁巳，以琦為御史中丞，蓋疏之也。

Long after that, the emperor informed about this plan the Auxiliary Academician of the Bureau of Military Affairs Xue Wenyu. Xue said: "Considering the respect that an emperor should get, isn't it too much an humiliation to reduce Your status in order to elevate the barbarians? Moreover, if the barbarians like in the past ask for the marriage of the princess, how will we be able to stop them?"[...]Thereupon the Emperor changed his mind. The day after, he called in urgent audience Li Song and Lü Qi at the back building, and in rising anger accused them: "All the subjects know the facts of past and present, and they desire to serve their ruler in order to restore the peace; today how could you make such plans? Did you really thought of giving my daughter to the send tribes? And to give the goods for the soldiers to the court of the barbarians? Which was your intent?" The two men got scared, kowtowed in tears and said: "Your subjects just humbly wanted to protect the country, not to favor the barbarians, we ask your majesty to inspect." They expressed their excuses innumerate times, but the emperor did not stop to accuse them. Lü Qi was exhausted and almost

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<sup>262</sup> For several years the Qidan had been pleading for the return of their high ranking generals kept captive at the Later Tang capital and asked for peace treaties. Emperor Mingzong had repeatedly refused the request and executed all the Qidan envoys. This delicate situation had kept the diplomatic relations between the two reigns frozen, yet at the same time had avoided the Qidan invasion for several years (*ZZTJ* 277: 9067).

<sup>263</sup> *ZZTJ* 280: 9139. This long episode is reported by Ouyang Xiu in the section dedicated to Lü Qi in the Miscellaneous Biographies, yet the detail of the forged document is not mentioned in the *XWDS* nor anywhere else in Song historical writings, and the *Kaoyi* is silent on the sources.



about to stop kowtowing when the emperor said: “Lü Qi you stubborn, you still do not recognize me as your ruler!” Lü Qi said: “Our plan was not good, we ask for the right punishment, what for to ask for peaty?” The emperor’s anger decreased. He ordered them to stop kowtowing, he offered them a cup of wine and then dismissed them. From that episode on, no one among the subjects dared to talk about peace allegiances anymore. On the *dingyi* day, Lü Qi was named deputy censor, and moved away from the court.<sup>264</sup>

Alliances based on intermarriages between imperial princesses and members of the ruling clans of the northern ‘barbarians’ had been a common practice since the Han period and continued through the Tang and Five Dynasties period. In 932 Mingzong, appealing to the alleged pact of brotherhood between his father and A Baoji, renewed the alliance by conferring to the king of Eastern Dan 東丹 and elder son of A Baoji, Li Zanhua 李贊華, the governorship of Yicheng 義成, despite the disagreement of the court. The pact was further reinforced by a marriage between Li Zanhua and a woman nèe Xia, former concubine of Zhuangzong. 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.<sup>265</sup> The *Cefu yuangui* dedicates an entire section to historical precedents of alliances based on intermarriages and seemingly by the time of the Song period the practice was still in use, although considered shameful by most of the officials.<sup>266</sup>

Although the critical position of Sima Guang against alliances based on intermarriages is quite explicit throughout the *ZZTJ*, it is not the main point here. The narrative strengthens in its focus on the irresoluteness and incapability of emperor Fei in facing important strategic decisions. The night talks of the emperor with his

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<sup>264</sup> *ZZTJ* 280: 9139-9140.

<sup>265</sup> *ZZTJ* 277: 9067-68 and 280: 9140. In the annals of the Han dynasty the narrative on a case of intermarriage suggests Sima Guang’s opinion against marriage allegiances based on the belief that the ‘barbarians’ should only be ruled (*ZZTJ* 4: 383).

<sup>266</sup> The *Cefu yuangui* distinguishes among *heqin*, *tonghao* 通好 (diplomatic relations), *mengshi* 盟誓 (alliances). 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 relation from 601 BC, opening with a quote from the *Zuozhuan*: 魯宣公八年白狄及晉平 ‘in the eighth year of Duke Xuan of Lu, the white barbarians established peace with the Jin’ (*Cefu yuangui* 980: 11508) and closing with historical precedents of relations with the five dynasties of the north. This means that the relation between the Qidan and the five dynasties are all categorized as ‘diplomatic relations’. The compendium mostly draws from the *Waiguo liezhuan* section of the *JWDS* (*Cefu yuangui* 977-979: 11472-11486).

entourage and the clumsy court intrigue are the unique response to such a delicate moment. Again, in the following episode, emperor Fei gives blind confidence to the council of Xue Wenyu:

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。」 Some time before, Shi Jingtang wanted to sound out the plans of the Tang ruler, so he repeatedly memorialized to the emperor pleading illness, requesting to discharge the army [cavalry troops under the responsibility of the military commission of the northern areas] and for him to be moved in another prefecture. The emperor discussed with the court officials the issue of according his request and moving him to Junzhou. Fang Gao, Li Song and Lü Qi unanimously remonstrated with force against this decision and believed that it was not possible. For this reason, the emperor hesitated for 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, only your majesty can take a decision, every subject of your majesty plans according to his own interests, how would they tell your majesty all! According to my humble viewpoint, either You move Hedong [Shi Jingtang] to another prefecture or not, he will rebel in any case. It is just a matter of time, you would better anticipate the events and plan something.”<sup>267</sup>

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 on him in earlier Song sources and the representation of his talks with emperor Fei appear only in the *ZZTJ*, it is thus not possible to compare what other historians thought about his role. However, the text introduces a flashback that clarifies some doubts as to what Sima Guang thinks about the ruler’s inability to weigh up Xue’s advice:

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」

Before these facts had occurred, some magicians had predicted that in that year in the reign sagely officials would have appeared, they would have eliminated any strange tentative of plotting and stabilized the reign. The emperor was

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<sup>267</sup> *ZZTJ* 280: 9141

convinced that Xue Wenyu was the elected one, and when he heard Wenyu's words he was greatly pleased and said: "You have expressed in extremely clear way my intentions, victory or defeat will be the consequence of my decisions."<sup>268</sup>

After months of hesitation that had frayed Shi Jingtang's nerves, emperor Fei is abruptly moved by the proverb quoted by Xue Wenyu and, without asking the advice of other officials, he takes the decision to move Shi Jingtang to another province. When the order is published and the officials read about Shi Jingtang's name, 'they stared at each other and their faces changed color'.<sup>269</sup>

Whereas the Tang court of emperor Fei 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. Both emperor Fei and Shi Jingtang do not possess 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:

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。」

On the *jiawu* day, the governor of Jianxiong Zhang Jingda was named commander in chief of the cavalry and responsible for foreign relations in the north-west. He urged Shi Jingtang to reach Junzhou. Shi Jingtang was in apprehension and discussed the decision with his high officials: "When I was appointed for the second time to Hedong, the emperor before my face promised not to substitute me lifelong, today he suddenly deliberated this order, isn't it truth what the princess said this year during the Thousand Springs celebration? If I do not rebel, the court is going to send people, I could I be captured and die on the way! Today I want to plead illness in order to understand which is the position of the court in my regards, if they treat me gently, I will then submit myself as subject; but if they move the army against me, then I will have to change my plans."<sup>270</sup>

While the *JWDS* and *XWDS* both consider Shi Jingtang as the man responsible for the decision of rebelling against the court order, the *ZZTJ* puts in Shi Jingtang's

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<sup>268</sup> *ZZTJ* 280: 9141-42.

<sup>269</sup> *ZZTJ* 280: 9141-42.

<sup>270</sup> *ZZTJ* 280: 9140.

mouth words of hesitation and fear.<sup>271</sup> Thus the advice of his generals, Liu Zhiyuan and Sang Weihan, drove him to the final decision, they urged Shi Jingtang to go further and to take advantage of his military force:

幕僚段希堯極言拒之，敬瑭以其朴直，不責也。節度判官華陰趙瑩勸敬瑭赴鄆州；觀察判官平遙薛融曰：「融書生，不習軍旅。」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，今主上以反逆見待，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。

Liu Zhiyuan said: "My bright lord, you have led the troops in war for so long time, you are able to get support from the soldiers; now you control a land strategically located and difficult to access, your generals and cavalries are strong and powerful, if you rise your troops and spread the voice everywhere, you can fulfill the plan of becoming emperor, how could you think to through yourself in the mouth of the tiger just because of an order written on a piece of paper!" Sang Weihan said: "When the emperor got to the throne, you my bright ruler presented to the court, 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 at the end he charged 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 through a few apologetic kowtows. On the contrary, you should with all your energy make a plan to protect yourself. The Qidan had earlier concluded a pact of allegiance based on brotherhood with emperor Mingzong, today their tribes are closed to Yun and Ying. You my lord have the capability of treating them with sincerity and to stoop to their level, so, in the remote case that something happens, if you call them from the morning to the evening they will come in rescue and all your troubles will be solved." Hearing this, Shi Jingtang made up his mind.<sup>272</sup>

The narrative of the *ZZTJ* presented above includes direct speeches that are not recorded in any other sources available. The *ZZTJ* puts in the mouth of Sang Weihan

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<sup>271</sup> *JWDS* 983-984.

<sup>272</sup> *ZZTJ* 280: 9140-41.

the plan of renewing the old ‘pact of brotherhood’ with the Qidan, while according to Ouyang Xiu these are Shi Jingtang’s own words.<sup>273</sup> 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 Weihuan puts the Qidan ruler in a much higher position than the previous ‘pact of brotherhood’ between A Baoji and Li Keyong. In fact, Sang Weihuan drafts a document in which Shi Jingtang addresses himself as subject and offers to serve the Qidan ruler according to filial etiquette (*yi fuli shi zhi* 以父禮事之). Shi Jingtang orders that another document denying the legitimacy to rule of emperor Fei is redacted as a response to the imperial order that requested him to move from Hedong:<sup>274</sup>

戊戌，昭義節度使皇甫立奏敬瑭反。敬瑭表：「帝養子，不應承祀，請傳位許王。」帝手裂其表抵地，以詔答之曰：「卿於鄂王固非疏遠，衛州之事，天下皆知；許王之言，何人肯信！」

In the same month, the *wuxu* day, the military governor of Zhaoyi, Huang Fuli, memorialized to the court that Shi Jingtang had rebelled to the imperial order [of transferring to another prefecture]. Shi Jingtang presented a remonstrance to the court saying: “The emperor is an adopted son, he thus should have not inherited the throne, I beg the ruler to renounce to his title in favor of the prince of Xu [Li Congyi, emperor Mingzong’s son]”. The emperor tore the remonstrance up with his hands and threw it on the ground. He then ordered to answer in this way: “You, my minister, were a close relative of the prince of E [Li Conghou]. Everybody in the reign knows the events of Weizhou. Who could trust the words of the prince of Xu!”<sup>275</sup>

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

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<sup>273</sup> *XWDS* 8: 79.

<sup>274</sup> On the dispute between Sima Guang and Liu Shu on the origins of birth of Li Congke, see chapter two.

<sup>275</sup> *ZZTJ* 280: 9143.

Shi Jingtang's denial of the authority of emperor Fei brought the ruler to take a final decision and to prepare for war. He named Zhang Jingda 張敬達 as governor of Hedong and ordered him to put Jinyang under siege.<sup>276</sup>

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。

Shi Jingtang sent envoys through a secondary way to the Qidan seeking for assistance. He ordered Sang Weihuan to draft up a document in which he addressed himself as subject of the Qidan 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 guan would be bestowed to the Qidan. Liu Zhiyuan remonstrated: "To address as subject is possible, but to pledge for the ritual of father and son relation is too much. If we favor them generously with gold and silk as bribes, he will be himself satisfied and will send his troops. We should not promise them lands, I'm afraid that in a future day it will become a great trouble for the reign and we will regret this decision when it will be already too late." Shi Jingtang did not adopt his suggestions. The treaty document reached the Qidan, the Qidan ruler was greatly pleased, he paid 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.<sup>277</sup>

The description of the beginning of the siege of Jinyang, capital of Hedong, 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 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 in order to plan a strategy:

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<sup>276</sup> *ZZTJ* 280: 9143-44.

<sup>277</sup> *ZZTJ* 280: 9146-47.

知遠曰：「觀敬達輩高壘深塹，欲為持久之計，無他奇策，不足慮也。願明公四出間使，經略外事。守城至易，知遠獨能辦之。」敬瑭執知遠手，撫其背而賞之。

Zhiyuan said: 'Observing the height of the walls and the depth of the trench, Zhang Jingda plans to keep the siege as long as possible, he does not have other strategies, we don't have reasons to worry. I ask my bright lord to pass from secondary ways in order to manage and plan the external affairs. In cases of evolution of the siege, I will be able to manage by myself the situation'. Shi Jingtang shook his hand and embraced him in sign of appreciation.<sup>278</sup>

Although Shi Jingtang is a rebel, on his front there is unity of intents and loyalty from his generals, whereas on the front of the army of emperor Fei the 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 Qidan intervention. On the other, Zhang Jingda's intentions to attack Jinyang are useless because natural calamities destroy every effort:

唐主使端明殿學士呂琦至河東行營犒軍，楊光遠謂琦曰：「願附奏陛下，幸寬宵旰。賊若無援，旦夕當平；若引契丹，當縱之令入，可一戰破也。」帝甚悅。帝聞契丹許石敬瑭以仲秋赴援，屢督張敬達急攻晉陽，不能下。每有營構，多值風雨，長圍復為水潦所壞，竟不能合。晉陽城中日窘，糧儲浸乏。The Tang ruler sent the scholar of the Duanming Palace Lü Qi to reward with food and drink the field quarters in Hedong, Yang Guangyuan told Lü Qi: "I desire to report to the throne to take it easier with the state affairs. If the bandits do not have assistance, in a short while the peace will be established; if they get to be assisted by the Qidan, we just let them come in and it will be possible to defeat them in one battle. The emperor was greatly pleased to hear that. When the emperor heard that the Qidan agreed with Shi Jingtang to wait for middle autumn and then intervene for assistance, he supervised several times that Zhang Jingda quickly started to attack Jinyang, yet the order could not be fulfill. Every time a construction was undertaken, rain and wind would start greatly, and the long dike destructed by the water flowing, at the end it could not be finished. The situation inside the city of Jinyang for worst day by day, the food supplies were increasingly diminishing.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> *ZZTJ* 280: 9147.

<sup>279</sup> *ZZTJ* 280: 9147-48.

The long and detailed account of the siege of Jinyang is followed by an even longer and rich narrative on the Qidan intervention. Although the *Kaoyi* is silent on the sources, the *ZZTJ* roughly follows the narrative of the *Gaozu benji* (Basic Annals of emperor Gaozu); nonetheless some cases show differences in the use of the terminology and wording:<sup>280</sup>

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。

In the ninth month, the Qidan ruler at the head of a cavalry army of fifty thousand, from the Pass of Yangwu headed south, a long line of flags was visible for more than fifty miles. [...] On the *xinchou* day [Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>, 936] the Qidan ruler arrived to 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 the following day, it will not be too late for a right battle." The envoys had not got back yet that the Qidan 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 feet of the mountains at north-west of the town, the Qidan sent a light cavalry of three thousand soldiers without armor. The Tang army saw that they were weak and chased them to the curve of river Fen. The Qidan crossed the water and left, the Tang army approached following the coast, when an additional army of the Qidan approached from north-east into the Tang army diving it into two parts, at north the infantry was almost completely killed by the Qidan, the cavalry at south was

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<sup>280</sup>JWDS 984



forced to retreat at the stronghold of Jin'an. The troops sent by the Qidan reached them and the Tang army was heavily defeated, among the cavalry the deaths were near to 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 Qidan 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 Qidan ruler. The Qidan ruler clasped Shi Jingtang's hand, and they both regretted to know each other so late. Shi Jingtang asked: "Your Majesty has come from the distance, even considered that your soldiers and horses are exhausted, you fought and greatly overcome the Tang at once, how could you make it?" The Qidan ruler replied: "When I left the north, I was told that the Tang army would certainly cut all the ways on the Yamen pass and put supplementary troops in the strategically located accesses, so that I would not have been able to enter. I then sent men for inspection and nothing of that was real. For this reason I entered very quickly, knowing that it was necessary to assist [you] in the 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 last for longer and the victory would have not 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 Qidan ruler for this.<sup>281</sup>

In the *JWDS* Yelü Deguang is always mentioned as *rongwang* 戎王 ('king of the barbarians'), while the *ZZTJ* refers to him in a perhaps more neutral way *Qidan zhu* 契丹主 ('the Qidan ruler'). Moreover, Sima Guang enriches the account with details and anecdotes that were plausibly drawn from other sources and that were not included in the *JWDS*. In this narrative segment Shi Jingtang addresses to the ruler of the Qidan as 'emperor' and he expresses words of admiration for the military skills of the Qidan ruler. This passage is not mentioned in the *JWDS*.<sup>282</sup>

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* runs as follows:

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

<sup>281</sup> *ZZTJ* 280: 9148-49

<sup>282</sup> The *Jiu Wudai shi kaoyi* reports that the same passage is mentioned in the *Qidan guozhi* 契丹國志 (National History of the Qidan, redacted by Ye Longli 葉隆禮 (*jinshi* 1247); *JWDS* 75: 985.

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。

The Qidan 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 Qidan ruler redacted the official document and declared Shi Jingtang emperor of the Great Jin. He took off his clothes 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 Qidan. Moreover, an annual bribe of silk of three hundred thousand scrolls was conceded to the Qidan. On the *yigai* day [Jan. 10<sup>th</sup>, 937], the seventh year of the Changxing era was changed in the first year of the Tianfu era. A great amnesty was declared. As for what concern the administrative and legal affairs, they followed the old system of Mingzong.<sup>283</sup>

In the direct speech the Qidan ruler tells Shi Jingtang that he has come ‘in order to rescue him from difficulties’ (*fu nan* 赴難), whereas the Basic Annals of Gaozu (*JWDS*) reports the more diplomatic ‘moved by a sense of justice’ (*fu yi* 赴義). Moreover, according to the *ZZTJ*, the Qidan ruler tells Shi Jingtang ‘I want to establish you as emperor’ (*wo yu li ru wei tianzi* 吾欲立汝為天子), while in the *JWDS* uses the official term *ce* (*ce er wei tianzi* 冊爾為天子). The Basic Annals show a positive attitude towards Shi Jingtang and the Qidan rulers. Another detail that has some relevance is the fact that, whereas the old standard history places the ritual for the enthronement in Jinyang, capital of Hedong and headquarter of Shi Jingtang’s army, the *ZZTJ* reports that ‘an altar was built in Liulin’, west of Jinyang where the Qidan were camping their troops. The different location is reported in the *Feidi shilu* with the following wording: ‘in the *dingmao* day of the intercalary month [Jan.2<sup>nd</sup>, 937], the barbarians established Shi Hui as emperor in Liulin (*Hu li Shi Hui wei Tianzi yu Liulin* 胡立石諱為天子於柳林).<sup>284</sup> Sima Guang did not entirely follow the *Feidi shilu*, yet by placing the enthronement at the military camp of the Qidan the

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<sup>283</sup> *ZZTJ* 280: 9154.

<sup>284</sup> *ZZTJ* 280: 9154.

historian shows his derogatory attitude. Moreover, the ritual becomes a mix of imperial tradition and non-Chinese elements: following the tradition, Shi Jingtang refuses four times the ritual, but then an altar is built and he takes off his clothes. 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 overall legal and bureaucratic administration is restored on the basis of the system established by Mingzong. Furthermore, the high officials of Shi Jingtang's court are all names of loyal and capable subjects that had passed the *jins* examinations during the reign of Mingzong: Shi Jingtang nominates Sang Weihuan, Zhao Ying 趙瑩 and Dou Zhengu 竇貞固 as Hanlin academicians and Liu Zhiyuan and Jing Yanguang as military governors and commander in chief.<sup>285</sup>

### 3. The Role of Sang Weihuan and the Decline of the Later Jin

The four central annals dedicated to the Later Jin cover the years from 937 to 945. In 937 the Qidan established Youzhou as the Southern Capital of the empire.<sup>286</sup> From the last years of the thirties until the reign of Song Taizong, the Southern Tang would contend with the northern dynasties the power over the empire. In particular, under the reign of the son of Li Bian, Li Jing 李景 (r.943-960), the Southern Tang would claim the legitimacy to rule over the empire.

From the second Annals of Later Jin onwards Sima Guang chiefly follows two tracks: the chronicle of the relation between the Qidan and the Later Jin in the north and the grasp for power of Li Bian in the south.

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<sup>285</sup> ZZTJ 280: 9155.

<sup>286</sup> ZZTJ 281 : 9167.

Although the requests of the Qidan exercised a strong pressure on the court, the peace policy supported by the then minister Sang Weihan and sanctioned by Gaozu led to a period of relative peace in the north.

Nevertheless, Sang Weihan had to struggle against the opposition of strong factions that urged the court to break the peace pact. The administration of the border military governorships of the empire was a core issue for up keeping the peace. The governorship of the strategic posts were assigned to Liu Zhiyuan, military governor of Guide 歸德, and to Du Chongwei 杜重威, the brother-in-law of Gaozu, an official without particular merits who had been promoted only because of his kinship relation with the emperor. The military governorship of Chengde 成德, another strategic post in the northern territories, was assigned to An Chongrong 安重榮. In 941 An Chongrong ordered the killing of an emissary of the Qidan and shortly after reported to the court his intentions of breaking the pact with the foreign neighbors and of engaging in war. The intervention of Sang Weihan convinced Gaozu of the unfavorable military conditions and the possible risks of a conflict for the stability of the empire. Nevertheless, at the death of the emperor, Sang Weihan lost all support at court and the peace policy was abandoned in favor of more aggressive strategies.

The last Annals of the Later Jin is entirely dedicated to the detailed and dramatic account of the Qidan invasion of 946. The annals close with the defeat of Luoyang and the death of Sang Weihan.

This last section of the aims at analyzing the process of narrating the defeat following the chronicle of the role of Sang Weihan.

The pattern of the rise and fall of the Later Jin and the forced alliance with the Qidan recur in the discourses on war and loss at the court of the Southern Song undertaken by scholar officials from the second half of the twelfth century onwards. When remembering and inquiring into the historical reasons that led to the losses resulting from warfare in the 1120s and 1130s, the scholars looked back to the policies of the Later Jin. The debaters disagreed on the responsibilities of the main protagonists of the scene and the figure of Sang Weihan was fairly central.<sup>287</sup>

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<sup>287</sup> The *Jianyan yilai xinnian yaolu* reports a debate between Zhang Jun 張浚 (1097-1164) and Chen Chengzhi 陳誠之 (1093-1170) that took place in 1156, the twenty six year of the Shaoxing era of emperor Gaozong. The two present memorials to the emperor on military strategies. The terms of

Chen Liang 陳亮 (1143-1194) in his *Zhuo gu lun* 酌古論 (On Thinking Over the Past) dedicates short paragraph to Sang Weihan a in which he reports the following:

借夷狄以平中國，此天下之末策，生民之大患，而推原其事，蓋啓於唐高祖，成於郭子儀，而極於桑維翰，或難於創業而資為聲援，或急於中興而勇為輔翼，或迫於拘命而倚為先驅，皆以權宜濟變而速一時之功，後世被其患蓋有不可勝道者，此所謂慮不及遠也。然此三者，特速一時之功，亦不知禍患之至於此極。由是觀之，舉大事者，果不可以欲速成也。

Relying on the barbarians in order to pacify the reign is an ill-advised policy for the empire and causes enormous disasters to the people. If we inquiry the origins of this policy, it began with Tang Gaozu, it grew with Guo Ziyi and it was brought to the extremes with Sang Weihan. The first one because of the hard task of stepping into power, gathered support for the rebellion. The second one hurried to restore his power and relied on his bravery. The third one urged to reject the imperial mandate [of Li Congke] and chose to rely [on the Qidan]. In all the three cases, they used an expedient in order to force the change and they quickened a momentary result. The following generations all suffered the results of these policies, this is thus called lack of foresight. In all the three cases, they quickened momentary results and did not realize that bad consequences could reach to these extremes. The lesson to learn is that those who are responsible for great affairs definitely cannot desire to get quick results.<sup>288</sup>

In the second half of the seventeenth century the *Du Tongjian lun* 讀通鑑論 (On Reading the Comprehensive Mirror) of Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619-1692), the judgment of the role of Sang Weihan becomes even more derogatory:

萬世之罪人，自生民以來，惟桑維翰當之，劉知遠決策以勸石敬瑭之反，倚河山之險，恃士馬之疆，而知李從珂之淺輒，無難摧拉，其計定矣。而維翰急請屈節以事契丹。敬瑭智劣膽虛，遽從其策，稱臣割地，授予奪之權于夷狄，知遠爭之而不勝，於是而生民之肝腦。

Since the existence of the human kind, Sang Weihan is the only person that should be considered guilty for ten thousand generations. Liu Zhiyuan planned a strategy that persuaded Shi Jingtang to rebel, relying on the protecting of rivers and mountains and on the force of their cavaliers and horses, knowing the weakness of Li Congke, it was not difficult to destroy him, and his plan was

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comparison are Sang Weihan and Jing Yanguang. Zhang Jun is pro-peace and defends Sang Weihan. (*Jiyan yanlai xinian yaolu*, 2885).

<sup>288</sup> Chen Liang, *Zhuo gu lun Sang Weihan* 酌古論桑維翰, *Chen Liang ji* 陳亮集, 8 juan. Chen Liang's comment is included in the *Lu Zhuangyuan baijia zhuzi Zizhi tongjian xiangjie*, a commentary to the *ZZTJ* by Lu Tanglao.

solid. On the other hand, Weihan rushed to request to stoop [to their level] in order to serve the Qidan. Jingtang was not particularly intelligent and he had not courage, he immediately followed his strategy to submit as subjects and bestow them with territories, Zhiyuan fought against [the plan of] depriving the reign of power and giving it to the Qidan but he lost, and that caused disasters for the people.<sup>289</sup>

Besides the political spin of the interpretations provided by Chen Liang and Wang Fuzhi, it is probably of some importance to note that this highly negative verdict towards Sang Weihan is still shared by some modern historians.<sup>290</sup> Whereas Sang Weihan is depicted in an extremely derogatory way, it will be shown below how the northern Song sources provide a much more complex description of him. By contrast, the narrative construction of the *ZZTJ* has its focus on his role in foreign policy and the general image provided is fairly positive.

### 3.1. Life and Early Career at the Court of Later Jin in the Song Sources

A few accounts on the early life of Sang Weihan can be found in several Song sources, the earliest and by far the most diplomatic and neutral account is included in the biography of Sang Weihan in the *liezhuan* section of the *Jinshu* (*JWDS*):

桑維翰，字國僑，洛陽人也。父拱，事河南尹張全義為客將。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！」由是慨然有公輔之望。唐同光中，登進士第。

Sang Weihan, personal name Guoqiao, from Luoyang. His father Gong served as provincial military officer under the governor of Heyang Zhang Quanyi. Weihan had a short body and a large face, he was certainly an unusual man, and he was fairly robust as well. Every time he looked in the mirror he praised himself saying: “A face one foot long is ways better a body of seven feet!”. He then

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<sup>289</sup> Wang Fuzhi, *Du Tongjian lun*, 636.

<sup>290</sup> Contemporary Chinese historians still describe him as ‘an incredible shameless person’ who ‘kneeled in front of Yelu Deguang’s tent, begging pitifully with all his might’ in order to obtain the support from the Qidan. Shu Fen, *Liaoshi gao* (Hubei renmin chubanshe, 1984): 241-242.

deeply desired to become an high imperial official. In the Tang Tongguang era he successfully passed the *jishi* examination.<sup>291</sup>

The unusual physical features of Sang Weihan are a recurring pattern in many of the narrative segments that will be showed below. His pint-sized ugly looking body and big head are usually seen as marks of sharp thinking and strong will. The *JWDS* does not mention his early career, the text merely reports that he successfully passed the imperial exams sometimes between 923 and 925. The *Chunzhu jiwen* 春渚記聞 (Records of Ear sayings of the Spring Islet) redacted by Yuan 何遠 in the early Song period integrates the official account with a detail:

桑維翰試進士，有司嫌其姓，黜之。或勸勿試，維翰持鐵硯示人曰：「鐵硯穿，乃改業。」著日出扶桑賦以見志。

When Sang Weihan tried the exam to become a *jinshi*, an official disliked his surname and dismissed him. Someone tried to persuade him not to do the exam, but Weihan held up the iron ink stone and showed it to everybody saying: “If this ink stone can be pierced than I will change my mission”. He wrote the *fu* ‘to the rising sun that buttresses the mulberry’ in order to show his talent.<sup>292</sup>

A completely different story about Sang Weihan’s examinations is included in 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).<sup>293</sup> In the biography dedicated to the king of Wei and military governor of Heyang Zhang Quanyi 張全義 (852-926),<sup>294</sup> the *Zhang Qi wang quanyi*

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<sup>291</sup> *JWDS* 89: 1161.

<sup>292</sup> *JWDS* 89: 1161. *Zhizhai shulu jieti*, 333. We are not told the reason why the Sang surname could be disliked, it could be plausible the it was associated with the figure of Sang Hongyang 桑弘羊 (152-80 B.C.) see Michael Loewe, *Cambridge History of China*. Sang Hongyang was also originary from LuoYang. The biography of Sang Hongyang is not included in the *Hanshu*. He was executed under suspicion of rebellion.

<sup>293</sup> *Songshi* 265: 9150-60.

<sup>294</sup> Zhang Quanyi is one of those personalities that in the framing of the official histories passes almost unnoticed. Nonetheless he was probably one of the most influential men of the last decade of the ninth and early tenth centuries. He is credited for having rebuilt Luoyang after the Huang Chao rebellion. His

*waizhuan* 張齊王全義外傳 (Outern Biography of Zhang Quanyi, king of Qi),<sup>295</sup> the author reports:

桑魏公將應舉，父乘間告王云：「某男粗有文性，今被同人相率，欲取解，俟王旨。」齊王曰：「有男應舉，好事，將卷軸來，可教秀才來。」桑相之父趨下再拜。既歸，令子侵早投書 啟，獻文字數軸。王令請桑秀才，其父教之趨階，王曰：「不可，既應舉，便是貢士，可歸客司。」謂魏 公父曰：「他道路不同，莫管他。」終以客禮見之，王一見奇之，禮遇頗厚。是 年王力言于當時儒臣，且推薦之，由是擢上第。至晉高祖有天下，桑魏公在位， 奏曰：「洛陽齊王生祠未有額，乞賜號『忠肅』。」可之。廟敕已下，會朝廷有故，遂中輟之。

When Sang Weigong was about to sit for the imperial examination, his father, taking advantage of his position, told the king: "This son of mine has little talent for learning, yet he has been persuaded by his pairs and now he desires to get selected for an official position, I trust in Your Majesty's opinion." The king of Qi replied: "It is a good thing to have a son that is willing to answer to the call for examination, let him send me his scrolls of writing and it will be possible to make of him a scholar." The father of minister Sang hurried to go back and paid his obedience. When he returned home, he made his son early in the morning to throw himself into composing letters, several scrolls of writings were offered [to the king]. The king ordered to call him Sang Xiucan, but the king said: "Not in this way as the imperial examination is a way for recommending talents to the court" [Sang Weihan then was examined in] treating the guests. When the king saw him performing he was greatly surprised, in dealing with the rituals he was extremely talented. That year the king

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biography is included in the *JWDS* among the subjects of the Later Tang (*JWDS* 63: 837- 844). His original name was Juyan 居言, the Tang court bestowed him with the name Quanyi 全義. In order to avoid the taboo, in the Later Liang period he changed again his name into 宗奭 Zongshi and returned to Quanyi in the Later Tang period.

<sup>295</sup> The *Siku quanshu* includes the *Luoyang jinshen jiu wenji* in 5 *juan* in the category of the *xiaoshuo*, plausibly following earlier classification of the *Zhizhai shulu jieti* (p.325). The personal name of Zhang Qixian was Shiliang, he was from Caozhou 曹州人 and had moved to Luoyang. Qixian became *jinshi* in the second year of the Taiping era. According to the preface included in the book, Zhang Qixian redacted it in the second year of the Jingde era of Zhenzong, when he was appointed as minister of the military bureau in Qingzhou. The book reports old stories and anecdotes on the city of Luoyang during the Later Liang and Later Tang period, in all twenty one anecdotes divided into five *juan*. The *Siku* editors also add that 'many of the narratives are based on transmitted stories that provides admonishments based on recorded realities. Those accounts that present differences with the official histories are preserved, and divided into inner and outhern records'. Moreover, the *tiyao* reports that the book provides a fairly complete record of the deeds of Zhang Quanyi, while other accounts are not detailed enough. It can be read together with the *Wudai shi quewen*.



strongly recommended him to the scholars, and for this reason he was successfully promoted. When Gaozu of Jin conquered the empire and Sang Weigong was in office he memorialized to the emperor: “The king of Qi of Luoyang does not have a tablet for the life-time shrine, I request to bestow him with the honorific title of ‘loyal and honorable’, the emperor accepted. The tablet for the temple had already been prepared and released when unexpected events happened at court and the practice had to be suspended.”<sup>296</sup>

The *waizhuan* of Zhang Quanyi was written in order to integrate the brief official biography included in the *JWDS*. Moreover, the text provides alternative narrative versions of some events that plausibly shed a more positive light on the local governor. In the case of the passage quoted above, it enhances Zhang Quanyi’s role in promoting Sang Weihan for an official career. According to the text, Sang Weihan subsequently wanted to reward Zhang Quanyi by bestowing on him the title of ‘loyal and honorable’, but the official ceremony was never performed due to unexpected events at court. The text concludes with a request to the Song court for the fulfillment of the honorary recognition;<sup>297</sup> we can presume that Zhang Qixian included the account in the biography of Zhang Quanyi in order to enhance his merits as loyal subject of the previous dynasties.<sup>298</sup> The quote provides a different account of Sang Weihan’s early career from the *JWDS*, yet it still does not have any negative connotations.

Ouyang Xiu includes the biography of Sang Weihan in the *Jin chen liezhuan* 晉臣列傳 (Biographies of Subject of the [Later] Jin). The account of his early life and career provides an answer to the question of the unpleasant surname:

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<sup>296</sup> *JWDS* 89: 1161-62.

<sup>297</sup> *Luoyang jinshen jiu wenji*, 2: 6b.

<sup>298</sup> Zhang Qixian lived almost one century after Zhang Quanyi and in his biography in the *Songshi* 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’ (*Songshi* 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 different from the official history. It is plausible to think that Qixian did that out of gratitude to the local government.

初舉進士，主司惡其姓，以「桑」「喪」同音。人有勸其不必舉進士，可以從佗求仕者，維翰慨然，乃著日出扶桑賦以見志。又鑄鐵硯以示人曰：「硯弊則改而佗仕。」卒以進士及第。晉高祖辟為河陽節度掌書記，其後常以自從。

At the beginning when he was about to sit for the imperial examinations, an official disliked his surname because it sounded like *sang*, ‘burial’ or ‘mourning’. Someone persuaded him that he did not need to do the examination and that he could follow other paths to ask for an official position, Weihan was resolute, he then wrote the *fu* ‘to the rising sun buttressed by the mulberry’ in order to show his talent. Moreover, he took the ink stone and showed it to the people saying: “Only when this ink stone will corrode I will get an official position through other ways!” At the end he successfully passed at the imperial examination. Gaozu of Jin appointed him as chief secretary and governor of Heyang, and from then on he often followed his own path.<sup>299</sup>

The assonance between the surname Sang and *sang* for ‘burial’ or ‘mourning’ is an explanation provided by Ouyang Xiu to the question rising in the *Chunzhu jiwen*. Apart from this detail, the *XWDS* presents Sang Weihan in a fairly positive way. The biography is shorter than that of the *JWDS* and most of the events are briefly summed up. The historian regards Sang Weihan as one of the three loyal subjects of the Later Jin dynasty, together with Jing Yanguang and Wu Luan. Thanks to the support and loyalty of Sang Weihan, Shi Jingtang was able to ascend to the throne. Nevertheless, it will be shown below that Ouyang Xiu in some cases ambiguously describes Sang Weihan as profiting from his power at court in order to enrich himself. Still, the real matter of importance for Ouyang Xiu and the only explicit criticism of Sang Weihan is that he reached pacts with the ‘barbarians’.

Another brief account of the early career of Sang Weihan is reported by 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:<sup>300</sup>

<sup>299</sup> *XWDS* 29: 319. The *Wudai shihua* 五代詩話 records a 《鑄鐵硯》 Foundry iron inkstone by Sang Weihan (*Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao*, 1795).

<sup>300</sup> *JWDS* 89: 1161. The *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* registers a *San Chu xinlu* in three *juan*. The *tiyao* says: the text reports that when Ma Xifan was about to enter the court, Sang Weihan was travelling between Chu and Si. [Sang Weihan] unsuccessfully begged him for goods, he thus took up his dress and left. It means that when Xifan became ruler, Weihan was already a minister, and he had

馬希範入覲，途經淮上，時桑維翰旅遊楚、泗間，知其來，遽謁之曰：「僕聞楚之為國，挾天子而令諸侯，其勢不可謂卑也；加以利盡南海，公室大富。足下之來也，非傾府庫之半，則不足以供芻粟之費。今僕貧者，敢以萬金為請，惟足下濟之。」希範輕薄公子，覩維翰形短而腰長，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。及殷…，希範立，時維翰為宰相，奏削去半仗，止稱天策上將軍、楚王而已。其卿相臺閣皆罷之。然希範性剛愎，好意誇大為事，雖去半仗，而軍國制度皆擬乘輿。

Ma Xifan entered the court for an imperial audience, on his way he passed on the Huai river. At that time Sang Weihuan was travelling between Chu and Si, he knew that [Ma Xifan] was coming and paid visit to him. He said: “Your servant has heard that Chu as a reign supports the emperor and leads the aristocrats, its power cannot be disregarded; moreover, the state greatly profits from [the commerce on] the southern sea and has rich palaces and residences. As for the visit of you humble servant, half of the storages of the reign would not be enough, not even for the expenses of the provisions for the soldiers. Being your servant in poor conditions, I dare to request ten thousand [strings] of gold, only to help your servant [to pay the visit]”. Xifan was the frivolous son of an high official, at the sight of Weihuan’s short size and long face, his rough way of speaking and his ugly appearance, he could not control and roared with laughter. Afterwards, he bestowed [Weihuan] with a few hundred silk scrolls. Weihuan was greatly enraged, he took up his vest and left. [Weihuan]. Ma Yin died and Xifan inherited the official post and noble title; when Weihuan became minister, he released the order to cut off half of the weaponry and only the king of Chu would be called generalissimo.<sup>301</sup>

The ‘three Chu’ of the title refer to the three rulers that followed one another and self-proclaimed king of Chu, Ma Yin 馬殷 (852-930), Zhou Xingfeng 周行逢 (?-962) and Gao Jixing 高季興 (858-929).<sup>302</sup> As in the case of

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memorialized to reduce half of the military weapons etc... but Xifan became ruler in the third year of the Tang Changxing era, at that time the Jin had not been established, how could it be possible that Weihuan was already a minister! These are certainly defaming words. (*Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 586).

<sup>301</sup> *San Chu xinlu*, 1: 2b-3a, *Xuehai leibian*, *Yiwen yinshu guan yinxing*,... The *JWDS* reports that in the fourth year of the Tianfu era the military governor of Hunan was named generalissimo (*JWDS* 78: 1029; *ZZTJ* 282: 9202).

<sup>302</sup> 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).

the *Luoyang shenjin jiu wenji*, the *San Chu xilu* was redacted as an integration of the official history of the five dynasties. Ma Xifan(899-947), posthumous name Wenzhao king of Chu 楚文昭王(r. 932-946), was the fourth son of Ma Yin.<sup>303</sup>

None of the sources available to us mention the encounter between Sang Weihan and Ma Xifan, and the *Siku* editors doubt the historical accuracy of this anecdote. It is nevertheless unclear what the reason is for making up a story in which the relation between the king of Chu and the Later Jin minister appear in an ambiguous light. We know that in 937 Gaozu appointed Ma Xifan commander in chief of Jiangnan and two years later generalissimo, thus it is possible that Sang Weihan did not have any resentment. The quotes presented above show how the *JWDS* and the later biographical integrations convey Sang Weihan's career as a high official in all its aspects, some of them being positive and some less so. Nevertheless, none of these early sources put particular emphasis on his role in the rebellion of Shi Jingtang and in the peace pact with the Qidan. I have not found in the mid-tenth and early eleventh-century sources any alternative account to the official one about Sang's support of the rebellion. On the other hand, it will be shown below how in the eleventh-century historical works his choice and his role in the relation with the Qidan has influenced almost all subsequent considerations of his life and career.

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<sup>303</sup> Ouyang Xiu includes the biography of the *Chu Shijian*, Hereditary House of Chu, *XWDS* 66: 826-27. (*JWDS* 133: 1756-1764). The biography of Ma Xifan in the *Shixi liezhuan* is almost entirely lacking in the modern edition 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, the profits made from the production of tea were also rich, for this reason the number of goods was increasing gradually. But the king of Chu, Xifan, had extravagant wishes and loved to exaggerate himself. 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, 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...Xifan made the palace his residence and fancied himself as the ninth dragon.(*ZZTJ* 283: 9258-59).

### 3.2. Sang Weihan and Foreign Policy: the Representation in the *Zizhi tongjian*

As shown at the beginning of this chapter in the case of Shi Jingtang, the *ZZTJ* provides no details on the early life of Sang Weihan. Instead the text focuses mainly on his foreign policy at the court of the Later Jin. It is interesting to note that all the appreciation of his unusual talents that in the early sources are shown through his physical features, find no space in the *ZZTJ*. By contrast, the text on more than one occasion places much emphasis on his qualities as a loyal subject of the ruler, Shi Jingtang, and the praise is provided through the words of the Qidan ruler:

契丹主謂帝曰：「桑維翰盡忠於汝，宜以為相。」丙寅，以趙瑩為門下侍郎，桑維翰為中書侍郎，並同平章事；維翰仍權知樞密使事。

The Qidan ruler told the emperor: “As Sang Weihan is extremely loyal to you, the right thing to do is to appoint him as minister.” On the *bingyin* day, Zhao Ying was named assistant minister, and Sang Weihan was named Attendant Gentleman in charge of the common peace. Moreover Weihan was appointed Military Affairs Commissioner.<sup>304</sup>

The Qidan ruler again in another situation reiterates his regard for Sang Weihan. Before heading back to the north, he has a last talk with Gaozu:

與帝執手相泣，久之不能別，解白貂裘以衣帝，贈良馬二十匹，戰馬千二百匹，曰：「世世子孫勿相忘。」又曰：「劉知遠、趙瑩、桑維翰皆創業功臣，無大故，勿棄也。」

[The Qidan ruler and] the emperor clasped their hands in tears and for long time could not take their leave, [the Qidan ruler] took off his marten coat in order to dress it up to the emperor. Twenty good horses and two thousand two hundred horses were left as bribes for the emperor.[The Qidan ruler] said: “From generation after generation sons and grand-sons should not forget.” He added: “Liu Zhiyuan, Zhao Ying and Sang Weihan are all meritorious subjects who have accomplished their mission, if not for a serious reason you should never dismiss them.”<sup>305</sup>

At the same time, the *ZZTJ* provides positive comments on the policy of peace promoted by Sang Weihan:

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<sup>304</sup> *ZZTJ* 280: 9158.

<sup>305</sup> *ZZTJ* 280: 9161.

時晉新得天下，藩鎮多未服從；或雖服從，反仄不安。兵火之餘，府庫殫竭，民間困窮，而契丹徵求無厭。維翰勸帝推誠棄怨以撫藩鎮，卑辭厚禮以奉契丹，訓卒繕兵以脩武備，務農桑以實倉廩，通商賈以豐貨賜。數年之間，中國稍安。

At that time the Jin had just conquered the power over the empire, yet many of the provinces had still not been submitted; and even if some of them had been subjugated, there were repeatedly internal disorders. Following the excesses of the war the governmental storages were exhausted, the people were in poverty and the Qidan were never satisfied with their requests. Weihan persuaded the emperor to forget the resentment and to deal with him in a whole-hearted way in order to pacify the provinces, to pay respect to them with humble words and rich bribes, to train the soldiers and provide them with food supplies in order to restore and build up the military defense, to put much effort in farming and sericulture in order to fill up the granaries, to build up routes for the merchants in order to create exchange goods and richness. In the range of a few years, the reign was almost pacified.<sup>306</sup>

The peace policy adopted by Sang Weihan showed its effects and the reign between 937 and 942 was almost peaceful; nevertheless, the discontent at court among those who wanted to break the pact with the northern neighbors was growing. In 941 Sang Weihan presented a secret memorial to the court explaining his seven reasons for not engaging in a war with the Qidan. The memorial is reported entirely in the biography of the *JWDS* dedicated to Sang Weihan, while Ouyang Xiu merely mentions it in a few words. It is recorded in the *ZZTJ* partially reworded. Sang Weihan reminds the emperor that it is thanks to the Qidan intervention if the siege of Jinyang was put to an end and the Shi family clan came to power. Since the enthronement in 936, the Qidan and the Later Jin court had developed peaceful relations; although the terms of the pact were considered by some a shame for the empire, the alliance had brought a period of relative peace and stability to the empire after decades of uninterrupted wars and ravages of the border regions. The annual tribute to the Qidan, Sang Weihan says, had thus not to be considered shameful when compared to the damage that a war would bring to the people. He suggests to appease the armies and feed the people, to store

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<sup>306</sup> *ZZTJ* 281: 9168.

up grains and reinforce the agriculture. Moreover, the minister urges the court to consider the military forces of the northern neighbors.<sup>307</sup>

The reasons provided by Sang Weihai successfully convinced Gaozu not to break the alliance. However, after the death of the emperor, the influence of Sang Weihai on the policy making of the newly established emperor, the nephew of Gaozu Shi Chonggui, began to weaken. The pro-peace policy was substituted by Jing Yanguang's more aggressive strategy. When Shi Chonggui ascended to the throne, his ministers discussed the issue of presenting a memorial to the Qidan in order to inform him about the grievance concerning the death of Gaozu. Jing Yanguang asked to send a document in which the court addressed him as 'nephew' and not 'subject'. Moreover, instead of the formal tributary memorial the court sent a simple letter (*shu*). The adopted policy led to a disruptive invasion by the Qidan in 946, and signaled the end of all diplomatic relations with the Qidan.<sup>308</sup>

On the eve of Qidan's great invasion and the destruction of the dynasty, Sang Weihai claimed to be suffering from a foot disease and retired from the court. The reason for his leaving is associated in the *ZZTJ* to his disagreement with the emperor on the urgency of appointing trusted men as military governors at the border regions in order to avoid uprisings against the court. The early Song official history nevertheless reports a different motivation:

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。未幾，內客省使李彥韜、端明殿學士馮玉皆以親舊用事，與維翰不協，間言稍入，維翰漸見疏忌，將加黜退，賴宰相劉昫、李崧奏云：「維翰元勳，且無顯過，不宜輕有進退。」少帝乃止。尋以馮玉為樞密使，以分維翰之權。後因少帝微有不豫，維翰曾密遣中使達意於太后，請為皇弟重睿擇師傅以教道之，少帝以此疑其有他。俄而馮玉作相，與維翰同在中書，會舍人盧價秩滿，玉乃下筆除價為工部侍郎，維翰曰：「詞臣除此官稍慢，恐外有所議。」因不署名，屬維翰休假，玉竟除之，自此維翰與玉尤不相協。俄因少帝以重睿擇

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<sup>307</sup> *JWDS* 89: 1163-66; *XWDS* 29: 320-21; *ZZTJ* 282: 9222-24.

<sup>308</sup> *ZZTJ* 283: 9242.

師傅言於玉，玉遂以詞激帝，帝尋出維翰為開封府尹，維翰稱足疾，罕預朝謁，不接賓客。

As his power and position were considerable, the bribes sent from all over the four corners accumulated in front of his door, for this reason in the course of one year he collected goods for several thousand. Consequently some dishonest officials of the same rank could make the slanders prosper. Not long after, Li Yantao and the Duanming scholar Feng Yu, thanks to the aid of old connections, came to power, they were in disagreement with Weihan. When the words of the two slightly entered [the court], Weihan gradually saw himself distanced and suspected, until when he would have been relieved from his post. Thus he relied on the words of Liu Xu and Li Song, who told the emperor: “Weihan is a man of great merit. Besides there are no evidences of crimes, it is not right to dismiss him in this swallow way.” The emperor then did not take any decision. Feng Yu was appointed Palace Secretary in order to share the power of Weihan. Afterwards it occurred that the emperor was not feeling well, Weihan secretly sent an envoy to confer with the empress dowager, requesting to appoint a master for the younger brother of the emperor in order to teach him. Because of this the emperor suspected that Weihan had other intentions. Soon after, Feng Yu became minister, so that he was in office together with Weihan. It happened that the term office of Lu Jia expired, Yu then wrote in order to remove Jia and rename him Vice Director of the Ministry of Works. Weihan said: “It is rather late for the subject to be removed from this post, I am afraid that outside the court someone could complain” For this reason he did not sign up the official document. When Weihan was on leave, Yu finally removed [Lu Jia]. From then on Weihan and Feng Yu were even more in disagreement. Soon after the emperor told Feng Yu the fact of Chongrui choosing a master for his own education, Yu subsequently persuaded him to move Weihan to the post of official in Kaifeng. Weihan pleaded having a foot disease and from then on rarely paid a visit to the court or received guests.<sup>309</sup>

Ouyang Xiu roughly follows the narrative of the *JWDS*:

維翰權勢既盛，四方賂遺，歲積鉅萬。內客省使李彥韜、端明殿學士馮玉用事，共讒之。帝欲驟黜維翰，大臣劉昫、李崧皆以為不可，卒以玉為樞密使，既而以為相，維翰日益見疎。帝飲酒過度得疾，維翰遣人陰白太后，請為皇弟重睿置師傅。帝疾愈，知之，怒，乃罷維翰以為開封尹。維翰遂稱足疾，稀復朝見。

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<sup>309</sup> *JWDS* 89: 1167.



The power and influence of Sang Weihan were growing, from the four corners of the empire the people would send him bribes and every year he accumulated them in great number. The officials of the Palace Visitors Bureau Li Yantao, the Duanming scholar Feng Yu were in power and defamed him. The emperor wanted to dismiss him as soon as possible, but the high officials Liu Shu and Li Song all opposed this decision. At the end Feng Yu was appointed Palace Secretary and soon after minister. Weihan felt day after day more that he was distanced. [Taking advantage of the fact that] the emperor once drank too much and felt sick, Weihan secretly sent his men to talk to the empress dowager in order to request a master for the education of the younger brother of the emperor. When the emperor recovered, he came to know that and got enraged. He then dismissed Weihan as official in Kaifeng. Weihan afterwards, pleading a disease to his feet, rarely paid a visit to the court.<sup>310</sup>

Ouyang Xiu roughly follows the same narrative of the *JWDS*, yet from the choice of language we can presume that the historian thought of Sang Weihan as probably corrupt and too powerful, and certainly acting in self-interest. At the same time, the emperor also appears in a negative light. The two official histories consider the dismissal of Sang Weihan as a matter of internal politics that have nothing to do with foreign policy and the urgent need to provide the northern regions with a trustworthy military governor. The *ZZTJ* instead offers a different version of the facts:

順國節度使杜威，久鎮恒州，性貪殘，自恃貴戚，多不法。每以備邊為名，斂吏民錢帛以充私藏。富室有珍貨或名姝、駿馬，皆虜取之；或誣以罪殺之，籍沒其家。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。威見所部殘弊，為眾所怨，又畏契丹之強，累表請入朝，帝不許；威不俟報，遽委鎮入朝，朝廷聞之，驚駭。桑維翰言於帝曰：「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。

The military governor of Shunzhou, Du [Chong]Wei, had for long time governed in Hengzhou (since 942). He had a greedy and evil temper, and his power relied on his connections [with the emperor, he married the younger sister of Gaozu], in

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<sup>310</sup> *XWDS* 29: 320.

many of his acts he did not follow the rules. Often with the pretext of protecting the borders he would collect money and silk from the common people and keep them in private storage. In his rich palace precious goods, famous beauties and fine horses, all had been stolen. Some accused him of guilt in order to have him executed and his house goods confiscated. Moreover, his fear and cowardly were so exasperated that every time ten cavaliers of the Qidan entered the borders, Wei would lock the gates and climb on the top of the parapet wall; if those few cavaliers 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 captors had nothing to worry or fear, many of the cities had been occupied and Wei still had not moved one soldier to rescue them. In a range of a thousand *li* humans remains were numerous as the grass, the villages were almost completely empty and destroyed. When Wei saw that the troops under his command had been devastated and that he was hatred by the people, and, moreover, he was afraid of the force of the Qidan, he repeatedly plead the emperor to let him enter the court, but the emperor did not allow him. Wei did not wait for a response and rapidly left his post and entered the court. When the court heard about that, there was great panic. Sang Weihan told the emperor: “Wei has definitely disobeyed the imperial order and he has left his official post at the frontiers. The principles teach to rely on meritorious subjects, but the tolerance has led to the point that the border regions are in many troubles because he was not willing to defend the borders; for these reasons the right thing to do is to discharge him, and there will be no bad consequences.” The emperor was not pleased. Weihan added: “If Your Majesty does not want to discharge him, than the right thing to do is to appoint him in a minor office near the capital, please do not appoint him again to a strategist post.” The emperor replied: “Wei is a close relative of mine, he certainly has not hidden intentions; he just desire to pay visit to the princess of Song née Zhang, you should not doubt him!” From then on Weihan did not dear to talk about state affairs, appealing to a foot disease he resigned from his post. On the *bingzhen* day [July 8<sup>th</sup>, 945], Wei arrived at Daliang.<sup>311</sup>

According to the text, the main reason for the dismissal of Sang Weihan is related to his remonstrations with the emperor against the military governor of Hengzhou and husband of the younger daughter of Gaozu, Du Chongwei (d. 948); in spite of his lack of military skills, Du Chongwei had been appointed to a highly strategic military post thanks to his kinship connections.<sup>312</sup> The quote above shows how the *ZZTJ* uses strongly critical words to describe Du Chongwei (in the *ZZTJ* Du Wei in

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<sup>311</sup> *ZZTJ* 284: 9292.

<sup>312</sup> 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 (*JWDS* 109: ; *XWDS* 52: 591-594).

order to avoid the taboo name of the emperor, Shi Chonggui). In other passages the text reiterates the judgments: Du Chongwei is described as ‘a coward and when meeting with the assistant generals and all the military commanders, he would invite them to drink and sing, rarely he discussed about military affairs’.<sup>313</sup>

While the Song official histories do not mention the intervention of Sang Weihan in order to convince the emperor to dismiss Du Chongwei,<sup>314</sup> the *ZZTJ* enhances Sang Weihan’s role in attempting to persuade the emperor of the military inability and moral ambiguity of the general. 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 at the eve of Shi Jingtang’s rebellion: ‘Wei is a close relative of mine he certainly has not hidden intentions’. Moreover, in the following line the *ZZTJ* registers the day of arrival of Du Chongwei at court, the same narrative patterns recurred in the last Annals of Later Tang (‘on the *yimao* day, Shi Jingtang entered the court’).<sup>315</sup>

### 3.3. Chronicle of a Foretold Defeat

The chronological account of the misdeeds of Du Chongwei and the record of the date of his arrival at court implemented by 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 Qidan invade the empire, Du Chongwei is one of the first generals to surrender with the false promise of being enthroned emperor.

The last part of the annals is a long unique entry about the invasion. The opening registers the invasion in the eleventh month of the year 946 (December 18<sup>th</sup>, 946), ‘the Qidan ruler rose a great army and invaded the borders’ (*Qidan zhu daju*

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<sup>313</sup> *ZZTJ* 285: 9315.

<sup>314</sup> The *XWDS* dedicates to Du Chongwei a biography in the *zazhuan* section. Chapt. 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 Qidan. 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 the biography of Du Chongwei in the *Han shu* *JWDS* 109: 1434-37.

<sup>315</sup> *ZZTJ* 279: 9117.

*rukou* 契丹主大舉入寇), and it closes with the tragic death of Sang Weihuan and Jing Yanguang. The temporal framework in which the *ZZTJ* encloses the narrative is meaningful: although the conflict with the Qidan lasted more than two month, the *ZZTJ* symbolically closes the long entry with the last day of the twelve month (January 24<sup>th</sup>, 947) and it reports ‘the one hundred officials lodged at the office for the imperial sacrifices to Earth and Heaven’ (*baiguan su fengshan si* 百官宿封禪寺).<sup>316</sup> 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 Later Han open a new chronicle with ‘in the first month of spring, in the *dinghai* day, first day of lunar eclipse, the one hundred officials departed from the ruler of Jin at north of the walled city [of Daliang]’ (*chun zhengyue, dinghai shuo, baiguan yaoci Jin zhu yu chengbei* 春，正月，丁亥朔，百官遙辭晉主於城北).<sup>317</sup>

The central body of the entry is a long narrative about the conflict at the Zhongdu 中度 bridge on the Hutuo 滹沱 river outside the city of Hengzhou 恆州 between the Later Jin army and the Qidan military forces. The scene describes the city of Hengzhou kept by the Qidan and the imperial army, camped outside the city walls, unable to attack. Allegedly, most of the narrative is an allegory of the unwillingness of the general Du Chongwei to enact 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:

- [22<sup>nd</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month, December 18<sup>th</sup> 946] The Qidan invade the borders and move towards the city of Hengzhou. The military governor of Hedong, Du Chongwei, and the military governor of Zhangde, Zhang Yanze, meet outside Hengzhou. Zhang Yanze reports to Du Chongwei that the Qidan can be defeated. Du Chongwei names him general of the military vanguard;
- On the *jiayin* day [27<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month, December 23<sup>rd</sup> 946] Du Chongwei reaches the bridge of Zhongdu. The Qidan have already occupied the bridge and destroyed it;

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<sup>316</sup> Hu Sanxing comments: ‘They did so in order to meet and welcome the Qidan ruler. The office of the imperial sacrifices was located at the eastern part outside of the walls of Daliang’ (*ZZTJ* 285: 9326).

<sup>317</sup> *ZZTJ* 286: 9327.

- (*flashback*)The Qidan and the Later Jin armies are camped at the two sides of the Hutuo river. When the Qidan realize that the Later Jin are not willing to attack, they decide not to retreat;
- The officials and generals agree on the urgency of finding a way to cross the river in order to reach the city. Only Du Chongwei is reluctant;
- The Qidan send their general at the head of one hundred cavaliers to reach the rearguard of the Later Jin army in order to cut the way for provisions and block a possible retreat;
- On the twelfth month, *dingyi* day, new moon[ first day of 12<sup>th</sup> month, December 26<sup>th</sup> 946], the official Li Gu sends a secret memorial to the court alerting on the situation of the army in Hengzhou and suggesting a military strategy to the emperor;
- Only in the *yiwei* day [seven days after the attack, 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month, December 28<sup>th</sup> 946], the emperor hears about the facts of Zhongdu;
- On the *gengshen* day [December 29<sup>th</sup>], Du Chongwei sends a memorial requesting to increase the soldiers and the provisions. The supervision of the work is in strained circumstances and the provisions are spilled out. On the *xinyou* day [December 30<sup>th</sup>], Du Chongwei again sends an urgent report to the court, but the envoy is captured by the Qidan. From that moment on the communication with the court is interrupted;
- Sang Weihuan hurries to the court and requests to meet the emperor. The emperor is in the garden hunting with hawks and declines the visit. Sang Weihuan then reaches the high officials in order to talk with them about the situation, but the officials also decline the visit. At his return home in a speech with his closest friends, Sang Weihuan foretells the end of the Later Jin;
- Several officials die in battle because Du Chongwei does not want to intervene. The feelings of mistrust and rage grow among the soldiers.
- [January 2<sup>nd</sup>] The Qidan cut all ways for provisions to the Later Jin military camp. The Qidan ruler cheats on 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.
- (*flashback*) Before the surrender of Du Chongwei, Guo Lin, official in Yizhou, refused to surrender to the Qidan and died, killed by an envoy;
- The military governor of Meiwu, Li Gu and Fang Tai all surrender to the Qidan
- The Qidan 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. On the *renshen* day the emperor comes to know that Du Chongwei has surrendered and that Zhang Yanze is reaching the capital. He convokes Li Song, Feng Yu and Li Yantao in order to plan a strategy. The emperor wants to order Liu Zhiyuan to intervene;
- Zhang Yanze enters the imperial palace. The emperor surrenders and bestows the imperial seal (that had been forged by Shi Jingtang) upon him.
- Someone tells Sang Weihang to escape.
- Zhang Yanze pillages the city of Daliang
- On the 18<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month [January 12<sup>th</sup>], Zhang Yanze moves the emperor to the office of the imperial sacrifices
- Fen Yu flatters Zhang Yanze and asks him to be sent to transmit the imperial seal, wishing to be appointed by the Qidan.
- ‘That night [Jan. 12<sup>th</sup> 947] Zhang Yanze kills Sang Weihang’
- On the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month [Jan 17<sup>th</sup>] the Qidan receive the imperial seal. But it is a fake.
- On the 30<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month [Jan. 24<sup>th</sup>], the one hundred officials lodge at the Altar for the Sacrifices to Heaven and Earth.

While the official history simply mentions that Du Chongwei surrenders to the Qidan, the *ZZTJ* integrate the account with narrative details that put the general in an 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 Qidan and the second time by being cheated by the Qidan leader with the promise of becoming emperor:

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。威遣閤門使高勳齎詣契丹，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。以威為犬傅，李守貞為司徒。

On the *jiazi* day, the Qidan from the distance surrounded the Jin camp. The communication with the outside was interrupted, the food supplies inside the camp were over. Du Wei, Li Shouzhen and Song Yanjun planned to surrender to the Qidan. Du Wei secretly sent an envoy to deliver a secret missive to the Qidan to solicit for a reach reward. The Qidan ruler, cheating on him replied: ‘The prestige of Zhao Yanshou is too shallow, I am afraid he is not apt to rule the empire. If you surrender I will make you emperor.’ Du Wei rejoiced and immediately fixed the plan of surrender, to show up [to the Qidan]. On the *bingyan* day, he gave the unexpected order to the generals to surrender, to show up [to the Qidan] and sign up. The generals were surprised but nobody dared to say anything, and respectfully observed the order. Wei sent the envoy Gao Xun to reach the Qidan. The Qidan immediately welcomed him and ordered to appoint him. That day, Wei ordered the troops to go out [from the camp]. All the soldiers jumped up, convinced that they were going to fight. Du Wei instructed them personally: ‘Today the food supplies are finished, I must we all have to find a solution to survive’. And then he ordered them to take off the armor. All the soldiers started crying from sadness, the sound spread all over the fields. Still Wei and Shouzhen spread the voice among the soldiers saying: ‘The emperor has lost his virtue to rule, he has entrusted evil subjects and their suspects have lead us at this point.’ Those who heard this saying gnash their tooth for the anger. The Qidan ruler sent Zhao Yanshou with the imperial dress to the Jin camp in order to comfort the troops. The envoy reported to them: ‘This is all yours’. Du Wei’s officials all gathered in front of the horse and dress him with the imperial dress in order to show it to the troops. In reality they [the Qidan] were making fun of them.<sup>318</sup>

The surrender of Du Chongwei marks the beginning of the defeat of the Later Jin and the murder of Sang Weihuan. It is again significant to see how the sources represent the death of Sang Weihuan in different ways. The *JTS* and *XTS* report the same account, whereby the murder was commissioned by the emperor to Zhang Yanze.<sup>319</sup> By contrast, Sima Guang believes that Zhang Yanze acted out of imperial order and considers him as the only one responsible for the murder. Moreover, both the old and new histories of the five dynasties describe the death of Sang Weihuan in a

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<sup>318</sup> *ZZTJ* 285: 9318.

<sup>319</sup> 帝思維翰在相時，累貢謀畫，請與虜和，慮戎主到京則顯彰已過，欲殺維翰以滅口，因令張彥澤殺之。The emperor thought about the facts of the plot of the accumulated tributes when Sang Weihuan was a minister and his request to establish a peace alliance with the bandits, he then worried that once the ruler of the north reached the capital his own guilt would have become manifest. So he decided to eliminate Weihuan in order to shut his mouth and ordered Zhang Yanze to kill him.

very theatrical way, while the short entry of the *ZZTJ* simply says that ‘Yanze killed Sang Weihan’.

#### 4. Concluding Remarks

The representation of the rise and fall of the Later Jin in the old standard history of the Five Dynasties redacted at the outset of the Song period shows a diplomatic approach in dealing with the history of the relations between the Qidan and the Later Jin. As it was conceived, the *JWDS* is a repository of official documents patched together rather than an historical work; whereas the Basic Annals of Later Jin were mostly redacted on the basis of the *Gaozu shilu*, internal discrepancies in basic data show that the *Waiguo liezhuan* was probably redacted on the basis of other official documents. The overall narrative keeps a fairly diplomatic profile, both towards the Qidan and the Later Jin ruler. The standard history was presented to the court in the early 970s, when the Song court was about to establish the first official peaceful contacts since the rupture in 946.

The later integrations of the standard history, by contrast, provide a range of alternative narratives. The structure of these records lacks homogeneity and chronological framing; they are neither organized into the annals-biographies structure of the official dynastic histories nor into the annalistic form. As such they consist of collections of brief and unlinked records providing different perspectives of the events narrated in the officially commissioned histories. Allegedly 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. In his *Wudai shibu*, redacted almost a decade after the pact of Shanyuan that marked the failure of Zhenzong to recover the sixteen northern provinces between Yan and Yun, Tao Yue recovers short anecdotes from non-officials sources that provide a more disrespectful picture of the rulers of the five Dynasties period, and in our case, of Shi Jingtang.

In the early 1160s at the court of Renzong, Ouyang Xiu engages in the reorganization of the imperial libraries holdings and in the compilation of a new officially inspired history of the Five Dynasties that levels off the different representations into a unique judgment-oriented narrative of the events.



On the other hand, ten years later Sima Guang attempts to bring the attention of the readers back to the relevance of understanding the historical developments. In the *ZZTJ* moral judgments play a secondary role and the complexity of the narrative aims at showing the historical transformations in all its detail.

The chronological surveys of the *ZZTJ* attempt to narrate a path of decline marked by long periods of disunity and brief moments of restoration. The historian starts the chronicle with an event that marks the beginning of disunity for the kingdom of Jin, the division into the ‘three Jin’, and closes it with the last era of disunity before the Song. In the context of the comprehensive chronicle, the first half of the tenth century represents the highest point of degeneration of institutions and military affairs. The events leading to the rise and decline of the Later Jin constitute the apex of this process. The last dramatic and endless account on the military invasion of the Qidan army, the siege of Jinyang and the cowardice of the generals of the imperial militia to defend the city, the disinterest of the court, the surrender of the generals, the pillages and the killing of loyal subjects, represent the climax of degeneration and disorder of the comprehensive guide conceived by Sima Guang.

Sima Guang describes the events that lead to the uprising of Shi Jingtang against the legitimacy to ruler of emperor Fei in a long-term development. Shi Jintang is described as a powerful regional military governor with a large professional militia and capable generals that simply does his job: protecting his power against whoever threatens it. In this respect, he is similar to Yelü Deguang, the Qidan ruler. Whereas in the case of the Qidan intervention and the enthronement of Shi Jingtang of 936 the narrative hints at a moment of relative peace, with the restoration of the legacy of Mingzong and the whipping off of the iniquitous government of emperor Fei, the invasion of 946 definitely signals the highest point of decline.

This path is narrated through the deeds of the high officials. In this regard, the narrative of the *ZZTJ* enhances the figure of Sang Weihan as one of the tragic protagonists and victims of the process. In this chapter I have analyzed the narrative segments provided by different narratives on Sang Weihan. The variety of sources prove that Sang Weihan was undoubtedly a powerful yet controversial figure. Sima Guang ignores all accounts on his early career, dedicates very few information on his role in internal policies and, by contrast, focuses on his role as counselor of the

emperor in matters of military strategies and foreign policy. In this regard, Sang Weihan is described as a wise and straightforward advisor. His main concerns are to assure that the terms of the peace pact are respected and also to assure the control of the court over the power of the military governors of the border regions.





## Chapter Four

### Family Clan and the System of Ancestral Temples

In the previous sections I attempted to show how Sima Guang selects and uses the different narratives of the early tenth-century sources on the basis of a selection of single cases of important events. In the present chapter I intend to undertake a slightly different task and to analyze how the historian dealt with a specific bulk of material: the documents and memorials concerning the system of ancestral temples. As the *Kaoyi* hardly provides any quotations from the original *shilu* or other sources, in this case the unique source for comparison is the institutional history redacted at the beginning of the Song period, the *Wudai huiyao*; it is thus on this text that the present chapter will primarily focus.

A close perusal of the *Wudai huiyao* shows how some of the institutional issues such as the system of ancestral temples, the major imperial sacrifices and the royal clansmen administration occupied a fairly relevant space in the court debates of the first half of the tenth century. A great part of the long memorials collected date back to the Later Tang and Later Jin, so it is with these two dynasties that this chapter will deal mostly. The documents and memorials were collected and roughly systematized in chapters at the beginning of the Song period in the *Wudai huiyao*, yet afterwards they were almost completely neglected by later historians. In general, the debates about institutional policies that went on at the beginning of the tenth century had been almost disregarded until the Qing period. As it will be shown in detail below, this neglect can be read as a consequence of the circumspect approach adopted by the late eleven-century historians. In fact, in the last half of the eleventh century when the historians felt the need to reconsider the histories of preceding dynastic periods in order to create new historical models, this bulk of material on ritual matters was almost completely disregarded. As I have shown in the introduction to the sources, the *Siku* editors lamented the fact that Ouyang Xiu did not leave room for the treatises on rites and music; they complained that he did not mention the debate on the establishment of the imperial ancestral temples (*yi miao zhi*) undertaken by the court officials Duan Yu, Liu Xu and Zhang Zhaoyuan and on the music system by Wang Pu

in the Later Zhou period.<sup>320</sup> The rhetoric of the barbarian origins of Later Tang, Later Jin and Later Han could be one of the reasons for this circumspect attitude, yet I believe that there is something more. The issue of the rituals of the early tenth century was a fairly delicate matter for the late eleventh-century Song court and thus it had to be treated properly or avoided at best.

In the following I will show how Sima Guang carefully chooses how to talk (or not talk) about the issue. In the *ZZTJ* he dedicates very few and brief entries to matters concerning rituals, and in each case he carefully constructs each sentence. Understanding how Sima Guang approached the issue and how he made use of the source material is the main goal of the chapter. I will first offer a general overview of the system of ancestral temples from Han to Song before analyzing the position of Sima Guang in the court debates on the system of ancestral temples. In light of this, I will inquire into the memorials collected in the *Wudai huiyao* and, finally, through a comparison with the entries in the *ZZTJ*, attempt to speculate on the narrative choices made by Sima Guang.

### 1. The System of Ancestral Temples from Han to Tang

Since the early Han period the Suburban Sacrifices, i.e. the ritual sacrifices to Heaven and Earth (*jiao* 郊),<sup>321</sup> and the rituals linked to Imperial Ancestral Temples (*zongmiao* 宗廟 or *taimiao* 太廟) constituted the highest expression of the legitimacy of a dynasty. The system of ancestral temples, in particular, was more than that: it also established the royal lineage and thus was the basis for the institutional policies

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<sup>320</sup> The *Siku* editors interpreted the choice of the historian as an implementation of the theory of Liu Zhiji on the reform of the setting for the traditional treatises. Nevertheless, if we consider that in his second important work, the *Xin Tang shu*, there are no significant differences from the previous dynastic histories, Ouyang Xiu's silence on the ritual institutions of the five northern dynasties sounds more like something else. We come to know his intentions from the preface to the *Si Tian kao* in which the historian briefly explains: 嗚呼！五代禮樂文章，吾無取焉。其後世有欲知之者，不可以遺也。 'We lament! As for the documents on rites and music of the Five Dynasties period, I don't draw from this material. In the case of later generations who will be interested in knowing them, it will be impossible because of the losses' (*XWDS* 58: 669). Ouyang Xiu thus purposely does not consider this bulk of material and he is perfectly conscious of the fact that his choice will lead to the loss of these documents in the subsequent generations. As the scope of this chapter is limited to analyzing Sima Guang's attitude towards one of the major imperial ritual practices, i.e. the system of ancestral temples, Ouyang Xiu's viewpoint will be considered only marginally.

<sup>321</sup> On the *jiao* sacrifice in the Western Han period see Marianne Bujard, *Le sacrifice au Ciel dans la Chine ancienne: Théorie et pratique sous les Han occidentaux* (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2001).

concerning imperial kin and the mourning rules. The countless details on which the court officials were called to debate (the location and size of the temple, the number of rooms and of spirit tablets to be included, the system of deposition and the number of sacrifices to be performed each year) are not to be seen as mere ritual formalities but as components of an institution made of people (more often than not royal clansmen) who claimed privileges and material support from the court on the basis of the degree of their ritual relationship with the ancestors.

From the end of third century and through all the succeeding dynasties the interpretation provided by Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127-200) of the seven halls canon (*Tianzi qi miao* 天子七廟) recorded in the chapter *Wang zhi* 王制 (Royal System) of the *Liji* 禮記 (Memories of Rites) and its political implications would be the ground for discussion in any court debate concerning the system of ancestral temples. The *Tianzi qi miao* canon essentially limited to seven the number of spirit tablets of the imperial ancestors for each emperor. Zheng Xuan envisaged a system that referred back to the Zhou lineage (*zong* 宗). He established a room for the Great Founder (*taizu* 太祖) and two for the two Great Ancestors (*er tiao* 二祧) and four rooms for the spirit tablets of the ancestors back to the fourth generation, the *qin miao* 親廟. Accordingly, the spirit tablets of the Great Founder and the two Ancestors were not to be deposed, while in the case of the four ancestors of the *qinmiao*, as a new ancestor was added, an older one had to be deposed and moved to a separate room.<sup>322</sup>

Beyond the question of the interpretation of the classical texts at the basis of his systematization, Zheng had in mind a reform of the Han imperial ancestral system and,

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<sup>322</sup> According to Zheng Xuan the canon consisted of the Zhou system of ancestral temples; it included a separate hall for Taizu (Hou Ji 後稷) and two halls for the Great Ancestors (king Wen and king Wu) that were never to be deposed, plus the ancestors back to the fourth generation (*gaozu* 高祖) of the *qinmiao*. The Shang instead had a system of six halls temple and the Xia a system of five. *Liji zhengyi* 禮記正義 (Correct Meaning of the Memoires of Rites), in *Shisan jing zhengyi* 十三經正義 (Correct Meaning of the Thirteen Classics), Li Xueqin 李學勤 (ed.), Beijing : Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1999, v.6, 382-385. The dispute over the system of ancestral temples was part of the political debate developed at the Han court between the *jinwen* 今文 (School of the New Text) and *guwen* 古文 (School of the Old Text). Basically the main issue was the problem of the deposition, i.e. which spirit tablets could be removed from the temple and which were never to be removed. For a detailed account on the political background and debate, see Hans van Ess, *Politik und Gelehrsamkeit in der Zeit der Han (202 v. Chr. -- 220 n. Chr.): Die Alttext/Neutext-Kontroverse*, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1993): 208-217. On the case of the Eastern Han system of ancestral temples see also the study on the Treatise on Sacrifices of the *Hou Hanshu* in B.J. Mansvelt Beck, *The Treatises of Later Han: Their Author, Sources, Contents and Place in Chinese Historiography*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990): 105-108.

in practice, his model attempted to limit to the fourth generation the ancestors of the direct imperial blood lineage. The establishment of new rules for the ancestral temples rose from important institutional urgencies: the need to reduce the burden of this ever growing and costly apparatus and the control of the central government over the numerous branches of the royal clan.

The need for canonical rules in ritual and sacrificial matters had become particularly pressing in the Eastern Han period. According to the records of Sima Biao 司馬彪 (ca. 240-306) in the Treatise on Sacrifices, in his second year of reign emperor Guangwu 光武 (25-57) had established two ancestral temples in Luoyang: an imperial ancestral temple for the spirit tablets of the five Earlier Han emperors and, in the following year, a *huangkao miao* 皇考廟 for the spirit tablet of his father and the ancestral worship of his branch of the Liu family clan.<sup>323</sup> In his almost obsessive attempt to construct an image of the reign of his father as a restoration and not a mere continuation of the Han, Liu Zhuang 劉莊 (Mingzong 明宗, r.57-75) ordered the construction of a second ancestral temple for the spirit tablet of emperor Guangwu.<sup>324</sup> Since then in the reigns of the succeeding emperors the system had kept growing and never kept below the canonic number of seven.

After the Han period the solution set up by Wang Su 王肅 (195-256) in contraposition to Zheng Xuan was probably more pragmatic. Wang rejected the distinction between *qinmiao* and the two Great Ancestors as not conforming to the canon; he instead proposed a different interpretation that plausibly better fitted the political needs of his time and contemplated a *qinmiao* back to the sixth generation of ancestors of the imperial lineage. He thus stood for a system that provided a separate hall for the Great Founder and six halls for the Ancestors (*san zhao san mu* 三昭三穆). The fact that practically no permanent halls for Taizu were established in the succeeding dynasties and all six spirit tablets could be deposed in order to leave place for new ones meant that the royal clan status was to be defined by the mourning relation with the ancestor and that this status was limited to a certain degree of relation. The principle of the five mourning relations (*wufu* 五服) that would be

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<sup>323</sup> HHS 30: 3193.

<sup>324</sup> Mansvelt Beck, *The Treatises of Later Han*, 20-21 and 106.



established in the Tang period for the control of the royal family clan can be seen as a direct consequence of Wang Su's reform.<sup>325</sup>

A broad conceptual difference between the systems enhanced by Zheng and Wang can perhaps be drawn as follows: Zheng Xuan looked back to the concept of a royal lineage (*zong*) stigmatized as the Zhou progeny, so that the system of imperial ancestry created a broader and more composite group united by a common genealogy. On the other hand, the system of ancestral temples developed from the assimilation of the canon transmitted by Wang Su substantiated a clan status defined by the degree of relationship with the ancestor, and thus enhanced the relevance of close blood kinship. The status was not to be permanent for the family clan, yet 'expired' after a few generations; after that, the members of the clan were to be considered as commoners.

In the centuries that followed the emperors would order the officials and ceremonialists to engage in debates in order to find textual proofs in support of one or the other interpretation.<sup>326</sup> During the period of reign of Li Shimin 李世民 (Taizong 太宗, r.626-649), Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574-648) edited the *Liji Zhengyi* 禮記正義 (The Correct Meaning of the Memoires of Rites) and redacted a sub-commentary to Zheng Xuan's commentary. The canon established an authoritative interpretation of the *tianzi qimiao* based on the system of Wang Su. Li Shimin would follow Kong Yingda's advice (or more likely Kong Yingda conformed to the emperor's wish of creating an eminent pre-imperial clan history).<sup>327</sup> At the death of emperor Gaozu in 630 he had his spirit tablet included in the *qinmiao*. Moreover, in order to fulfill the

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<sup>325</sup> In support to his solution, Wang Su quotes from the *Li qi* 禮器 (Rites in the Formation of Character) and *Jifa* 祭法 (Rules for the Sacrifices) chapters of the *Liji*, in which the *tianzi qimiao* canon is explained in a slightly different way. According to the text, the imperial ancestral temple included a *kao miao* 考廟 (father), a *wangkao miao* 王考廟 (grandfather), a *huangkao miao* 皇考廟 (great-grandfather), a *xiankao miao* 顯考廟 (great-great-grandfather) and a *zukao miao* 祖考廟 to be offered ritual sacrifices every month, plus the *er tiao*, the two ancestors back to the sixth generation (*Liji zhengyi*, v.6, 1300-1303).

<sup>326</sup> In his first year of reign, Li Yuan 李淵 (Gaozu, r.618-626) built an ancestral temple for the spirit tablets of his four ancestors: his father, Li Bing 李昞, was bestowed with the honorific title of Yuan Huangdi 元皇帝 and with the posthumous name of Shizu 世祖; his grandfather Li Hu 李虎 with the title of Jing Huangdi 景皇帝 and the posthumous name of Taizu 太祖; and his two ancestors of the third and fourth generation, Li Tianci 李天錫 with the title of king Xi 懿王 and Li Xi 李熙 with the title of Xuanjian gong 宣簡公. As the number of seven had not been fulfilled, the spirit tablet of Taizu was included in the *qinmiao*, and the room for the Founder eliminated (*JTS* 25: 941).

<sup>327</sup> *Liji zhengyi*, 383-384.

number of six, the spirit tablet of Li Zhonger 禮重耳 (Li Xi's father) was included in the *qinmiao* as the sixth ancestor.<sup>328</sup>

The succeeding emperors, pressured by their own political tasks, did not keep below the canonical limit; the number rose to eleven in the last years of the dynasty, and the room for the Great Founder remained empty.<sup>329</sup>

As will be shown below, the private aspect of the imperial cult was exacerbated in the early tenth century when, over a brief period of fifty years, different clans of unclear origins followed one another in claiming the right to rule over the empire (or part of it). The sense of loyalty to a dynasty often overlapped with the sense of belonging to a family clan, so that the emperors of the northern dynasties assimilated the private family clan worship into the system of ancestral temples. For instance, although formally the *Taichang si* was in charge of the Imperial Ancestral Temples, during the five dynasties period its duties and the role of the *Zongzheng si* often overlapped, especially in the conduct of the imperial mounds (*ling* 陵) that had traditionally been the prerogative of the *Taichang si*. This is particularly well documented in the case of the Shatuo rulers of the Later Tang and Later Jin.<sup>330</sup> Moreover, the family's pre-imperial history of the five northern dynasties of the early tenth century and their desperate need for eminent ancestors did not differ much from their predecessors'. In the same way, for the five dynastic houses the creation of an eminent ancestry was a political urgency; yet, unlike the Tang, in all

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<sup>328</sup> *JTS* 25: 942. On the opinion expressed by Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574-648) on the system of ancestral temples see *Liji zhengyi*, 384.

<sup>329</sup> At the death of Li Hong 李弘 in 705 (Yizong 義宗, r.652-675), the number of spirit tablets had reached the number of seven and at the time of emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712-756) ritual sacrifices to nine spirit tablets of the ancestors were performed four times a year. Zhu Yi 朱溢, *Tang Song shiqi Taimiao miaoshu de bianqian* 唐宋時期太廟廟數的變遷 (The Number of Chapels in the Imperial Ancestral Temple in Tang and Song Period), *中華文史論叢* 2010(2): 127-130.

<sup>330</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 4: 59. During the reign of Tang Xuanzong 玄宗 (r.685-762) the administration of the system of the Imperial Ancestral Temple traditionally under the supervision of the *Taichang si* 太常寺 (Court of Imperial Sacrifices), passed under the control of the *Zongzheng si* 宗正寺 (Court of Imperial Clan Affairs), the office predisposed for keeping up the genealogy of the royal clan and for controlling the activities of the imperial relatives.<sup>330</sup> This move led to deep changes in the general expression of the institutional ritual: it combined both the private ritual activities linked to the lineage of the royal family clan with the institutional system of ancestral temples for the spirit tablets of the past emperors.<sup>330</sup> Moreover, the *Zongzheng si* was staffed principally with imperial relatives, so that from the period emperor Xuanzong until the Song period the members of the royal clan had direct control of the system of ancestral temple (Zhu Yi, *Tang zhi Bei Song shiqi Tai Miao jisi zhong sijia yinsu de cheng zhang*, 42).

five cases the imperial clans did not last more than three generations of emperors and thus never achieved the glory of important kinships.

## 2. Court Debates in the Early Tenth-Century

I will now turn to the core question of the present chapter which is to ask how in the compiling process of the *ZZTJ* Sima Guang evaluated and made use of the bulk of documents concerning the system of ancestral temples of the five dynasties collected in the early Song sources.

The task in this case is quite challenging as the sources available for comparison are limited. The Treatise on Rites of the *JWDS* basically corresponds to the material included in the *huiyao*. The memorials collected in the first part of the Treatise match without relevant differences to the *Miao yi* 廟儀 (Rituals of the Ancestral Temples) chapter of the *Wudai huiyao*; this suggests that the material was collected from the *shilu* and other official documents redacted at court and joined together almost without any editorial work. As the original preface to the Treatise is lacking and no commentarial apparatus is provided, there is no information on the view point of the compilers. The second section of the Treatise is more heterogeneous as it collects memorials that roughly correspond to the same material found in the *Dixia* 禘祫 (Ritual Sacrifices to the Ancestors), *Jiqi* 祭器, *Shenglao* 牲牢 chapters of the *huiyao* and mainly concerns the practice of the ritual sacrifices. It is interesting to note that, as in the *huiyao*, very little room is left in the Treatise for other imperial rituals such as the Suburban Sacrifices. This might suggest the relevance afforded ancestral worship by the northern dynasties and also the urgency of the early Song historians in building up an eminent ancestry for their predecessors.<sup>331</sup>

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<sup>331</sup> Eight Treatises (including the two sections on Rites) were fully recovered in the *Yongle dadian* edition (Wang Gung-wu, “The *ChiuWu-tai shih* and history-writing during the Five Dynasties”, 3), yet the fact that some parts are almost identical with the *Wudai huiyao* is suspicious. It is impossible to say if the edition of the *JWDS* available to Sima Guang did not include the Treatise on Rites or if the historian simply did not consider it and drew merely from the Biographies and the Annals. The *Yuhai* quotes from the *Zhongxing guange shumu*, the descriptive catalogue redacted in 1178 (see Piet van der Loon, 17-18), and mentions a *JWDS* in 150 *juan* including the twelve *juan* of the treatises (*Yuhai*, 915); from this information it is possible to say with certainty that Sima Guang had the complete version of the text at his disposal. Nevertheless, the historian decided not to draw on it. Most of the information about the system of the ancestral temples was probably drawn from the biographies and annals.

The *Kaoyi* is of very little help as it neither mentions the Treatise and the *huiyao* (the quotations from the text were added by Hu Sanxing) nor does it, except in rare cases, offer samples of narrative from the *shilu* for comparison. Sima Guang plausibly had at his disposal all the sources mentioned, yet he almost entirely avoided the court debates on the system of ancestral temples. In order to attempt to explain this, I will first analyze the material collected in the *huiyao* and then compare it to the narrative solutions of the *ZZTJ*.

The *Miao yi*, *Miao zhidu* and the *Dixia* chapters of the *Wudai huiyao* are dedicated to the system of state ceremonies and to the imperial/royal clan ancestral temples. The memorials are collected chronologically for each of the three and the division into chapters is almost irrelevant: the *Miao yi* is probably the most homogeneous as it is dedicated to the debate over the number of the spirit tablets and the posthumous titles, while the other two parts include memorials on a number of other details related to the debates (such as the position and size of the halls, the frequency and mode of the ritual sacrifices, the rules for participation of the mourning-kin). Very scanty information is provided about the real frequency of the ritual sacrifices.<sup>332</sup>

## 2.1. The Debate at the Court of the Later Tang According to the *Wudai huiyao*

The only information we can gather from the *Wudai huiyao* about the system of ancestral temples of the Later Liang is that a *qinmiao* for the spirit tablets of the forefathers of the Zhu family clan was built in Xijing 西京 (Western Capital, Chang'an) in 907.<sup>333</sup> The later Liang basically followed the model of the early Tang temple built by Li Yuan and had the room for the Great Founder eliminated. At the death of Zhu Quanzhong, he was conferred with the posthumous name of Great Founder and his spirit tablet was added to the *qinmiao*, though apparently without

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<sup>332</sup> Apparently Zhuangzong and Minzong performed them only once and the Later Liang Taizu twice; the Later Jin seemingly never really performed them (*Wudai huiyao* 2: 26).

<sup>333</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 2: 26. In the first year of the Kaiping four ancestral temples for the spirit tablets of the four Founders of the Later Liang were built. Their tomb moulds were all located in Danzhou 單州, Dangshan 碭山縣; Suzu 肅祖 (Emperor Xuanyuan 宣元皇帝) was buried at Xingji ling 興極陵; Jingzu 敬祖 (Emperor Guangxian 光獻祖), eldest son of emperor Xuanyuan, buried in Yong'an ling 永安陵; Xianzu 憲祖 (Emperor Zhaowu huang 昭武皇帝), eldest son of Guangxian, buried at Guangtian ling 光天陵; Liezu 列祖 (Emperor Wenmu 文穆); *Wudai huiyao* 1:9-10.

moving older tablets to a separate room, so that at the end of the Later Liang dynasty the *qinmiao* had reached five in number.

In contrast, the *Wudai huiyao* provides a great deal of material about the Later Tang system of ancestral temples. The first memorial collected in the *Miao yi* chapter concerns the request presented to the Ministry of Rites in the sixth month of the second year of the Tongguang era (924) for the relocation of the temple of the family clan from Jinyang, renamed capital of the North (Beidu 北都),<sup>334</sup> to the new capital of the empire Luoyang. According to the ritual system, the old temple had to be deposed and destroyed.<sup>335</sup> There are some small details in this first memorial which are of particular interest because they have not been transmitted previously (the memorial itself is omitted by other sources). Accordingly, the court called in a diviner to clinch the matter and the divination came out favorably for the relocation. This detail is not mentioned in any other source (except from the Treatise on Rites of the *JWDS*). Another interesting element is that the official announcing the verdict, Wang Zhengyan 王正言, apparently was a weak and inept man who had been removed from previous offices due to his dubious capacities (it will be shown below how this detail is important in the narrative of the *ZZTJ*). Zhengyan reports the following:<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> At the beginning of his reign Zhuangzong had the prefecture of Zhending 真定 (north to today Shijia zhuang) renamed Beidu (*ZZTJ* 272: 8883). A few month later Beidu was again downgraded to the level of commandery, Chengde jun 成德軍 (*ZZTJ* 272: 8905) and Jinyang from Xijing 西京, capital of the West, renamed Beidu. Luoyang had been initially named Luodou 洛都 and in 924 renamed Dongdou 東都, capital of the East (*JWDS* 29: 404; *ZZTJ* 273: 8929/8932). The memorial mentioned above was redacted in the sixth month of the second year of the Tongguang era (924), thus the text plausibly refers to Jinyang as Beidu. The memorial says that ‘at the beginning of the foundation of the state it had already been established a temple in Beidu. Today [Your Majesty] has conquered the empire and moved the capital to Luoyang

<sup>335</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 2: 26-27.

<sup>336</sup> The biography of Wang Zhengyan in the *JWDS* does not mention this memorial (*JWDS* 69: 914-916). 正言在職，主諾而已，權柄出于孔謙。正言不耐繁浩，簿領縱橫，觸事遺忘，物論以為不可，即以孔謙代之，正言守禮部尚書。In office [as official responsible for collecting taxes], Zhengyan limited himself at approving decisions, while the real power was in the hands of Kong Qian. Zhengyan was not able to handle numerous and big [affairs], he would lose and forget official records in length and breadth and office duties, all the officials believed that he was not adapt. For this reason Kong Qian substituted him and Zhengyan received the post of Minister of Rites (*JWDS* 69: 915). The *JWDS* says that Wang Zhengyan was first named the official responsible for collecting the taxes and afterwards Minister of Rites, while according to the *ZZTJ* he was dismissed from the Ministry of Rites and named tax retainer.

伏以宮室之制，宗廟爲先。今卜洛居尊，開基禦宇，事當師古，神必依人。北都先置宗廟，不宜並設。況每年朝享，禮有常規，時日既同，神何所據。竊聞古道，例亦從權，於神主已修，迎之藏於夾室，若廟宇已崇，虛之以爲常制。[...]況本朝故事，禮院具明，洛邑舊都，嵩丘正位，豈宜遠宮闕之居，建祖宗之廟。事非可久，理在從長，其北都宗廟，請准太常禮院申奏，宜從廢停。

I humbly believe that among the system of palaces, the ancestral temple comes first. Today we performed a divination in the site for the temple, and established the basis for the control of the empire; the affairs have to be conform to the teachings of the past [so that] the spirits certainly will be at the side of men. An ancestral temple had been established in Beidu previously, thus it is not right to have two at the same time. Furthermore, where would the spirits reside if the annually performed court rituals, according to the perpetual rules, are undertaken [in both temples] at the same time? I humbly heard that in the way of the ancients examples likewise followed what was right, and when a spirit tablet was already deposited it would be placed in a separate room; in the same way when the [worship of] the temple of a dynasty had already come to an end it would be left empty according to the everlasting norms.[...] The old practices of this dynasty are well known to the Ministry of Rites, the city of Luo was the ancient capital, Song (Xiao Song) and Qiu (Wang Zhongqiu) established the correct site [for the ancestral temple],<sup>337</sup> how could it be right that a place far away [from the court] be the location for building a temple to the ancestors? This matter cannot be prolonged for long, the reason resides in following what is valuable; thus the temple in Beidu should be destroyed and dismissed according to the request of the Ritual Academy.<sup>338</sup>

The decision to move the temple from the old clan territories to the new capital had a clear political significance. According to the system, only the imperial ancestral temple could be placed in the capital; and so by relocating the spirit tablets of the family clan ancestors, Zhuangzong elevated them to the rank of imperial ancestors and founders. The request was accorded and the ancestral temple moved to Luoyang.<sup>339</sup>

The ancestral temple in Beidu (Jinyang) mentioned in the memorial possibly corresponded to the family clan temple. In the late Tang period the court conferred on the Zhuye Chixin the Li surname for his merits of loyal subject and had his family

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<sup>337</sup> Xiao Song and Wang Zhongqiu are the authors of the *Da Tang kaiyuan li* 大唐開元禮 (Rituals of the Kaiyuan Era of the Great Tang), see *ZZTJ* 213: 6798.

<sup>338</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 2: 26-27.

<sup>339</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 2: 26-27.

clan included in the imperial genealogy (*zongji* 宗籍).<sup>340</sup> The conferral of the Li surname to meritorious subjects was a common practice for the Tang emperors; it not just conveyed inclusion in the rather broad (although regulations established some limits) imperial family clan but also the conferral of important offices and privileges.<sup>341</sup> The Li family clan thus acquired the right of establishing its own temple for the private worship of the clan ancestors.

The surname Li had been bestowed to the clan only starting from Zhuye Chixin (Li Guochang), the third generation of ancestors of Zhuangzong; Chixin's father, Zhuye Zhiyi, apparently had not gained particular merits as subject of the Tang and plausibly he had been registered in the clan genealogy only posthumously. Nevertheless, he was bestowed with the title of Founder (Xizu). Following the early Tang precedent, Li Guochang was also conferred the title Founder (Xianzu) and Li Keyong of Great Founder (Taizu).<sup>342</sup> Roughly in the same period, chronological records of the three Founders were redacted by the Historiography Office, mostly on the basis of the genealogical records of the Li family clan originally kept in the Tang archives and collected by Zhang Zhaoyuan.<sup>343</sup>

There is no mention in the memorial about the spirit tablets of the Tang dynasty ancestors. In another chapter of the *Wudai huiyao* it is reported that at the time of Zhuangzong the spirit tablets of the ancestors reached three in number, yet an anonymous note to the text states that according to the *Zhuangzong shilu* the Tang ancestors Gaozu, Taizong, Yizong and Zhaozong were worshipped in the same system, fulfilling the number of seven.<sup>344</sup> The different interpretation of the three or seven spirit tablets is probably not without meaning. Some Song historians tended to consider the Li family blood lineage to have been closed by the death of Li Cunxu, as the future emperor Mingzong, Li Siyuan, was one among the multitude of soldiers adopted by Li Keyong and bestowed

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<sup>340</sup> *Tang huiyao* 65: 1141.

<sup>341</sup> For an introduction to the Tang imperial kin see John W. Chaffee, *Branches of Heaven: A History of the Imperial Clan of Song China*, 8-9.

<sup>342</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 1: 10. Xizu, Zhaolie huangdi 昭列皇帝 (the sixth son of Baye 拔野), official at the prefecture of Shatuo), buried at Daizhou, Yanmen 鴈門縣 Xianzu, Li Guochang (eldest son of Zhaoli huangdi), emperor Wenjing 文景 Taizu, Li Keyong, emperor Wuhuang.

<sup>343</sup> On the redaction of the three *jinian lu* see the introduction to the sources.

<sup>344</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 1:10.

with the Li surname.<sup>345</sup> Siyuan had no clear origins of birth nor had he been chosen as his heir apparent; moreover, he stepped into power in an obscure and much discussed way, probably taking advantage of a military uprising. The fulfilling of the limited number of seven ancestors before Siyuan's reign might have had a double meaning as it emphasized the Later Tang as a continuation of the Tang dynasty and established the era of Zhuangzong as the ending of the Li royal clan. This possible explanation is further supported by the policy adopted by Li Siyuan after his enthronement and by the creation of a unique system of ancestral temples.

When Li Cuxu died, although he had effectively been the first emperor of the Later Tang, he received the title Exemplar, as the title of Founder had already been bestowed to his father and forefathers. According to the *Ai cewen* 哀冊文 (Grievance document) included in the *Zhuangzong shilu* the tomb mound of Li Cuxu was placed in Yongling 雍陵 (Henan, prefecture of Xin'an).<sup>346</sup> Immediately following the death of Li Cuxu and the ascent to the throne of Li Siyuan, the Secretariat Drafter Ma Gao requested the construction of a *qinmiao* for the real father and forefathers of Li Siyuan.<sup>347</sup> Ma appealed to the Eastern Han system of ancestral temples created by Guangwu and followed by the succeeding rulers.<sup>348</sup> Guangwu had created a separate temple for the worship of the ancestors of the Liu family clan and so his model was different from any canon established by the classics, yet it perfectly fitted Li Siyuan's agenda. The precedent of the Later Han guaranteed its conformity to the norm. The issue was amply discussed by the court officials and just one year later Li Siyuan deliberated on a final decision. The location of the *qinmiao* and the choice of posthumous names to be conferred were the two main problems presented to the attention of the officials. In both cases Li Siyuan forced the officials to deliberate according to his own wishes, so that the debate appeared to be a pure formality. As

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<sup>345</sup> Nine of Li Keyong's adopted sons are known and occupied important military positions that often were transmitted to their sons. Li Sizhao 李嗣昭, born in a Han 韓 family from Fenzhou 汾州, became a high ranking military official. He died in battle during the period of reign of Zhuangzong. He had seven sons who also occupied military positions. Li Siben 李嗣本, born Zhang 張; Li Sien 李嗣恩, born Luo 駱; Li Cunxin 李存信, born Zhang; Li Cunxiao 李存孝, born An 安; Li Cunjin 李存進, born Sun 孫; Li Cunzhuang 李存璋, Li Cunxian 李存賢, born Wang 王. All of them died during emperor Zhuangzong's reign or soon after (XWDS 36: 385-396).

<sup>346</sup> ZZTJ 275: 8990.

<sup>347</sup> Wudai huiyao 2:27;

<sup>348</sup> HHS 30: 3193.



the *qinmiao* of the Later Tang ancestors already existed in the capital, the emperor opted for Yingzhou 應州, apparently near to the old residence of the original family clan of Li Siyuan. This choice contravened the canon that the emperor could build only one single *taimiao* in the capital, yet apparently the court officials did not forward any strong objections. The choice of the emperor can be read as a political strategy undertaken in order to keep his original family clan influence away from the court by granting them ceremonial postings in Yingzhou; nevertheless, we do not know if these people were considered to be an integral part of the imperial family clan and thus admitted to attend the rituals of the imperial ancestral temple.<sup>349</sup>

Furthermore, the emperor ordered the court ceremonialists to open a debate on the posthumous titles for his natural forefathers and their respective wives; specifically the issue was whether to use the title *xiao huangdi* 孝皇帝 or *xiao huang* 孝皇.<sup>350</sup> The scholar Ma Gao attempted to convince the emperor that only *huang* or *di* was appropriate, but not the two terms together. The emperor insisted that the officials find textual precedents for the title *huangdi* and finally these were found: during the reign of Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 685-762) of Tang, the ranks of eminent ancestors was enlarged and Li Hao 李暉 (351-417) was conferred the titles of Xingsheng huangdi 興盛皇帝; Gao Yao 臯陶 was conferred the title of Deming huangdi 德明皇帝 and Lao zi 老子 of Xuanyuan huangdi 玄元皇帝.<sup>351</sup> On the basis of these examples, Li Siyuan's ancestors back to the fourth generation were thus granted the title of *huangdi* and the titles of Founders, and their wives the title of *huanghou* 皇后 (Empress Dowager). The four ancestors were of unclear origins, as they had not gained particular merits as subjects of the empire nor they had a proper surname, thus the Li surname was conferred by officials at that time: Li Yu 李聿 (Xiaogong huangdi 孝恭皇帝, Huizu 惠祖), Li Jiao 李教 (Xiaozhi huangdi 孝質皇帝, Yizu 毅祖), his grandfather Li Yan 李琰 (Xiaojing huangdi 孝靖皇帝, Liezu 列祖) and emperor Mingzong's real father Li Ni 李霓 (Xiaocheng huangdi 孝成皇帝, Dezu 德祖).<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>349</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 2: 27-28.

<sup>350</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 2: 27-28.

<sup>351</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 2: 28; At this point the ancestral temple of the Tang had reached nine tablets and no system of deposition was respected (*JWDS* 25: 967).

<sup>352</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 2: 28-29.

Shortly after, the spirit tablet of Zhuangzong was located in the imperial ancestral temple in the capital, the tablet of Xizu moved to a separate room and his posthumous name changed into Xizong, so that at the end of the Later Tang period ritual sacrifices were performed to the four Tang emperors and the three Later Tang emperors, plus ritual sacrifices to the four *huangdi* of the ancestral temple in Yingzhou.<sup>353</sup>

In 927 the ceremonialists proposed building a temple for the spirit tablet of the last Tang emperor (Zhaoxuan). This emperor had been very unpopular because he was believed to be a puppet in the hands of Zhu Quanzhong, and there was some reluctance to grant him a title; nevertheless, an ancestral temple was built in Caozhou 曹州 and he was bestowed with the title of Exemplar (Jingzong 景宗). A few months later the title was removed following a remonstrance saying that those emperors who were bestowed the title Exemplars had to be placed in a unique temple with the Founders.<sup>354</sup>

When Li Siyuan died, the spirit tablet of one of the older ancestors had to be moved (*tiaoqian* 祧遷) to a separate room dedicated to the remote ancestors in order to leave the place to his spirit tablet. Again the *Wudai huiyao* reports a long memorial testifying the debate that developed at court on the issue. The dispute was whether it was proper to move Xianzu (Li Cunxu's forefather) or emperor Xizu of the Tang.<sup>355</sup> As the Later Tang considered the four Tang emperors and the three ancestors as a unique system of ancestral rituals, the choice between Xianzu (who factually had never ruled and was instead an expression of royal clan worship rather than a symbol of the throne succession) and Xizu was an important political move. At last, the position of those officials who were closest to the family clan finally won out and the spirit tablet of Xizu was moved to a secondary room in the *taimiao*.<sup>356</sup>

According to the account of the *Wudai huiyao*, during the reign of Mingzong eleven spirit tablets of the four Tang emperors, the three Later Tang founders and the four ancestors of Li Siyuan's family branch, plus the spirit tablets of their wives, were

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<sup>353</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 2: 29.

<sup>354</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 3: 39-40.

<sup>355</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 2: 29-30.

<sup>356</sup> An anonymous comment at the end of the memorial points out that the Later Tang should have kept the worship of the four Tang emperors and the Three ancestors separated (*Wudai huiyao* 2:30).

to be offered regular ritual sacrifices. One cannot tell from the available records the frequency of the ritual sacrifices performed during the Later Tang. A memorial issued by the Ministry of Rites in 930 is the only evidence we have. The ministry reminded that in the first month of summer of the following year the *di* sacrifice had to be performed at the *taimiao*. According to the norm, the *di* sacrifice was performed every three years at the beginning of summer, while the *xia* sacrifice every five years in the first month of winter.<sup>357</sup> Although not very informative about the practice of the sacrifices, the memorial reveals a detail concerning the system of temples created by Mingzong that proves is uniqueness. This detail was not mentioned in the previous documents and, I imagine that the compilers of the *huiyao* were also puzzled and did not know how to explain it and so finally put it in a separate chapter. The Ministry of Rites invited the officials to open a debate on the proper rituals for Jing Huangdi (Taizu), the grandfather of Li Yuan (emperor Gaozu of Tang). But from where does Jing Huangdi stem from now? We know that Zhuangzong established an ancestral temple for the worship of the four Tang emperors (Gaozu, Taizong, Xizong and Zhaozong) and the three Later Tang Founders. Mingzong added a *qinmiao* in Yingzhou for the ancestors of his family branch. We have no information about the spirit tablet of Tang Taizu after the Later Liang period. As mentioned earlier, at the beginning of the Tang his spirit tablet had been placed in the *qinmiao* and the room for the Founder had been left empty because seven had not been reached, as was proper for the beginning of a dynasty. It had subsequently been moved to a separate room probably sometimes in the Tang. Still, according to the aforementioned memorial, his worship as the Founder of the dynasty was somehow reinstated in 930,<sup>358</sup> a decision that fits well with the almost obsessive urgency of Li Siyuan to create, or exhume, eminent ancestors for his royal clan.

The rising number of spirit tablets in the *taimiao* did not just mean that the amount of respective ritual sacrifices to be performed periodically increased vertically, but also that the royal family clan enlarged tremendously. Although from the available records we cannot know the number of clan members, it is plausible to say that the Later Tang exacerbated the broad Tang concept of ancestral worship and kinship.<sup>359</sup> If

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<sup>357</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 3: 43-44.

<sup>358</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 3: 44.

<sup>359</sup> See John W. Chaffee, *Branches of Heaven*, 8-9.

we also consider the families of the soldiers adopted by Li Keyong who had been bestowed with the Li surname, the kin clan at the end of the Later Tang must have been quite large. Part of the problem was eliminated by Mingzong through the killing of four among Li Keyong and Li Cunxu's natural sons during and after the military uprising that dethroned Zhuangzong (the fate of the rest of the others is unknown, except for the eldest son of Zhuangzong).<sup>360</sup>

## 2.2. The *Zizhi tongjian* Account

The *ZZTJ* reports that in 923, in his first year of reign, Zhuangzong first built a unique ancestral temple with seven rooms (*shi* 室) for the spirit tablets of the three ancestors of the later Tang and the last four Tang emperors in Jinyang, the capital of the kingdom of Jin. Although according to the tradition only the first emperor was supposed to receive the title of Founder, in the case of the three Later Tang ancestors they all were called *zu*. Sima Guang reports that the four Tang emperors Gaozu, Taizong, Xizong and Zhaozong 'slipped back' (*ji* 洎) after the three Later Tang Founders.<sup>361</sup> In the same year the status of the two Later Liang emperors was downgraded to commoners and their spirit tablets deposed and destroyed.<sup>362</sup>

Moreover, the *ZZTJ* registers the fact that, at the end of 923, 'Zhang Quanyi 張全義 requested that the emperor move the capital to Luoyang'.<sup>363</sup> The *Kaoyi* quotes a slightly different version of the fact provided by the *shilu* (plausibly the *Zhuangzong shilu*) referring to the court debate on the building of the ancestral temple to the new capital (*yi xiu Luoyang taimiao* 議修洛陽太廟). Although this last version might correspond to the information provided by the *Wudai huiyao* and to the memorial reported by Wang Zhengyan, the date is different (the *huiyao* reports that the debate went on in 924). One cannot tell from the little piece of evidence provided if the two sources correspond but nevertheless both the *shilu* mentioned in the *Kaoyi* and the *huiyao* agree on the fact that a debate went occurred at court among the officials and thus a decision was taken following the traditional procedures. While the *Wudai*

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<sup>360</sup> *XWDS* 14: 155.

<sup>361</sup> *ZZTJ* 272: 8884; *Wudai huiyao* 1: 2-3.

<sup>362</sup> *ZZTJ* 272: 8901.

<sup>363</sup> *ZZTJ* 273: 8905.

*huiyao* registers the official documents redacted in respect of the institutional roles of the various offices, Sima Guang maintains that the decision followed the request of one single official: Zhang Quanyi, one of the most influential figures in Luoyang.<sup>364</sup>

From these little pieces of textual evidence we can suppose that Sima Guang and the authors of the *Wudai huiyao* drew from different sources, which is a plausible hypothesis (I have shown in the previous sections how the narrative versions provided by the *shilu* could vary significantly). Moreover, Sima Guang offers different biographical data about Wang Zhengyan than the early Song sources. The *ZZTJ* in a single entry (in the eighth month of the second year of the Tongguang era, a date that corresponds to the time when Wang's memorial was redacted) says that 'the official in charge of collecting taxes, Wang Zhengyan, suffered from numbness, he was absentminded and unable to handle his office duties; (the actor) Jing Jin several times reported this [to the emperor].'<sup>365</sup>

We can try to guess why the historian reached a different decision about recording the event than the compilers of the early Song institutional history. One possible explanation is that, as Sima Guang believes, although a debate went on at court, the decision was taken elsewhere outside the institutional discussion arena, i.e. inside the palaces of Zhang Quanyi in Luoyang.

It is interesting here to mention another event that Sima Guang associates with the issue of the system of ancestral temples. The *ZZTJ* reports that in 924, when the emperor decided to relocate the court to Luoyang, his stepmother and formal wife of Li Keyong, the lady of Qin 秦 嬪 Liu 劉 and future Huang Taifei 皇太妃 refused to leave Jinyang owing to the fact that nobody would have taken care of the mounds and ancestral temple of the Li family clan there. Lady Liu was then left behind in the old capital where she died soon after.<sup>366</sup> This information clearly contradicts the *Wudai*

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<sup>364</sup> When Zhaozong of Tang was forced to move east and relocate in Luoyang by Taizu of Later Liang, he and the Tang courtiers moved into the palaces rebuilt by Quanyi (renamed Zongshi 宗奭). He surrendered to Li Cunxu and the Empress named him 'righteous father' or 'father Yi'. The capital was moved to Luoyang because Zhang Quanyi permitted it and not because a debate went on at court. The *ZZTJ* records that the empress requested the emperor to be permitted to call Zhang Quanyi 'Yi father', while according to the *JWDS* it is the emperor that, in a drunken state, wanted the empress to call him 'Yi father' (*XWDS* 45: 489-492; *ZZTJ* 273: 8928; 273: 8935).

<sup>365</sup> *ZZTJ* 273: 8924.

<sup>366</sup> *ZZTJ* 273: 8913. According to the *JWDS*, Li Keyong had virtuous and wise wives and concubines. The lady of Wei, née Chen was a former concubine of emperor Zhaozong, given as reward to Li Keyong. When Li Keyong died, lady Chen shaved her head and became a monk.

*huiyao*, in which it is reported that, according to a request by the Ministry of Rites, the temple in Jinyang was dismissed in order to build a new imperial temple in Luoyang.<sup>367</sup> Why did Sima Guang, through the words of Huang Taifei, hint at the fact that the *qinmiao* of the Li family clan ancestors remained in Jinyang? Neither the *ZZTJ* nor the *Kaoyi* provide any explanation and we are left with that question unresolved. In order to attempt an explanation we have probably to step back through a few entries in the same Annals of the first year of Zhuangzong. As mentioned before, the lady of Qin nèe Liu was the formal wife of Li Keyong but she was childless. Her servant and concubine of Keyong, a lady nèe Cao 曹 from a family of Taiyuan probably of non-Han origins (*langjia* 狼家), mothered the future Zhuangzong.<sup>368</sup> When Zhuangzong assumed power, he privileged his natural mother instead of his stepmother, and thus conferred the title of Huang Taifei to lady Liu and the title of Huang Taihou to his real mother. Following Hu Sanxing's comment we come to know that Sima Guang deplored the decision of Zhuangzong. This position of the historian would be perfectly in line with his argument (see below the *Puyi* 濮議 affair, Dispute over the Prince of Pu) against policies that privileged the private interests of a family branch rather the interests of the public institution.<sup>369</sup>

Returning to the original question, the narrative choice of Sima Guang in this case might plausibly be a critical hint at the emperor's choice of privileging his natural mother (and thus taking her and her family clan to the new court in Luoyang) and of leaving the formal wife of Li Keyong and legitimate Empress Dowager, Lady Liu, back in the kingdom of Jin. This policy, according to the historian, did not conform to the duty of a ruler.

The following entry in the *ZZTJ* concerns the system of ancestral temples created by Li Siyuan. Again Sima Guang limits himself to hinting at some details that apparently were significant as, possibly negative, examples. He mentions the memorial presented by Ma Gao:

中書舍人馬縞請用漢光武故事，七廟之外別立親廟；中書門下奏請如漢孝德、孝仁皇例，稱皇不稱帝。帝欲兼稱帝，群臣乃引德明、玄元、興聖皇

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<sup>367</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 2: 26.

<sup>368</sup> *JWDS* 49: 671.

<sup>369</sup> *ZZTJ* 272: 8881.

帝例，皆立廟京師；帝令立於應州舊宅，自高祖考妣以下皆追諡曰皇帝、皇后，墓曰陵。

The *zhongshu sheren* Ma Gao memorialized to the emperor the request of building a *qinmiao* other than the seven halls imperial ancestral temple, on the basis of the example of emperor Guangwu of the [Eastern]Han. Moreover, the *zhongshu men xia* requested that [the emperor's ancestors] had to be conferred the title *huang* and not *di*, according to the example of Han Xiaode [the father of emperor An of Han] and Xiaoren Huang [the father of emperor Ling of Eastern Han]. The emperor wanted to conferred both names, thus all his subjects mentioned the cases of [the three ancestors of the Tang who were all conferred the title *huangdi*] Deming 德明 [Gao Yao], Xuan Yuan 玄元 [Laozi] and Xingsheng Huangdi 興聖皇帝[...]. A temple had been built in the capital [for their spirit tablets]. The emperor ordered to build a temple in Yingzhou, at the former residence [of the family clan], and to confer the title of *huangdi* and *huanghou* to his ancestors and their wives from the generation of his father [back to the fourth], their tombs to be called *ling*, 'imperial mounds'.<sup>370</sup>

The warning that the policy adopted by Li Siyuan glorifies the ancestry of his family clan yet it is of no help to the people of the empire comes from the bad sign registered in the following entry: 'in that year, at the border between Wei and Dai one *dou* of millet was not worth more than ten coins' (是歲，蔚、代緣邊粟斗不過十錢).<sup>371</sup> Hints that the impoverishment of the people was admonishment for the ruler recur frequently in the *ZZTJ* and are a characteristic pattern of the *chunqiu* tradition. In this case, Sima Guang is clearly alerting that abuses of the private interests against the public can lead to disasters for the empire.

The well-known *Pu yi* affair might give a sense of what private and public interests of the ritual practices meant for Sima Guang. The case has already been much discussed by other scholars, and so here below I will simply summarize the dispute and provide the translation of some parts of the verbose memorials that the historian submitted to the court.

At the outset of the dynasty, the early Song rulers essentially had followed the path of their predecessors in matters of ancestral rituals without substantial differences. Signs of detachment from the policies of the previous dynasties can be detected in the tone and modes of the court debates at the dawn of the reign of Zhao Shu 趙曙

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<sup>370</sup> *ZZTJ* 276: 9012.

<sup>371</sup> *ZZTJ* 276: 9011.

(Yingzong),<sup>372</sup> when some details of the ritual institution needed to be adapted to the political situation of the time. Sima Guang was about to work on the Annals of the *Zhanguo* period of the *ZZTJ* when the *Pu yi* affair began. The issue of debate was the proper title and position in the ancestral temple to be conferred to the natural father of Yingzong, Zhao Yunrang 趙云讓 (995-1059).<sup>373</sup> The Zhao collateral branch of Yunrang was quite influent and powerful at court; the father of Yunrang, Zhao Yuanfen 趙元份 (969-1005) the prince of Shang 商, was the fourth son of Taizong and brother of Zhenzong.<sup>374</sup> Zhao Yunrang covered the important position of director of the Great Office of Clan Affairs (*dazong zhengsi* 大宗正寺) during almost all the period of the reign of Renzong. As the natural father of Zhao Shu, when the latter assumed power in 1063 the ritual imposed a debate at court on the proper title and position in the imperial ancestral rituals to be conferred to his spirit tablet. Beyond the hoary debate over the interpretation of the ancient canonical models that occupied the court agenda henceforth, the issue was more political and institutional than exegetical. The main problem raised by the *Pu yi* affair was essentially the control of royal clansmen, and in particular the collateral branch of Yunrang.<sup>375</sup>

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<sup>372</sup> In 960 Zhao Guanyin 趙匡胤 (Taizu, r.960-76) inaugurated the newly established dynasty with a debate among court officials on the building of the imperial ancestral temple. Zhang Zhaoyuan [...] proposed a *qinmiao* system for the spirit tablet of the Zhao ancestors back to the fourth generation. As in the case of the early Tang temple, the room for Taizu had to be left empty. When Zhao Guanyin passed away, he was conferred the title of Taizu and his spirit tablet was included in the *qinmiao* without deposing any of the other tablets, so that the *qinmiao* reached the number of five. Problems started rising at the death of Zhao Gui 趙昀 (Taizong, r. 976-997); Guanyin and Gui were brothers, thus the son of Taizong, Zhao Heng 趙恆 (Zhenzong 真宗, r.1022-63) engaged the officials in a court debate over the proper title and position in the ancestral temple to be conferred to Taizong; at last, the decision of considering Taizu and Taizong as the same generation was taken, although their spirit tablets were placed in different rooms. *Songshi* 106: 2566-2567; *Xu Zizhi tongjian changpian* 20: 467. The problem of deposition was not considered in court debates until the end of Zhao Zhen 趙禛 (Renzong 仁宗, r.1022-63). When the emperor died, the court proposed the construction of a supplementary room in the ancestral temple. In the memorial *Fu miao yi* 祔廟儀, Sima Guang argues against this possibility and supports the idea of deposing one of the older spirit tablets. This solution would keep the number at six and avoid the construction of a supplementary room.<sup>372</sup> He reiterates the idea in a second memorial, the *Yi tiaopian zhuang* 議祧遷狀 (*Sima Guang wenji*, 662-663).

<sup>373</sup> The personal name of Zhao Shu was Zongshi 宗實, the name Shu was conferred to him in 1062 after his ordinance as heir apparent (*Xu Zizhi tongjian changpian* 197: 4773-74).

<sup>374</sup> As a child Yunrang was moved into the imperial palace and grown as heir apparent until the birth of the future emperor Renzong. *Songshi* 245: 8708; Chaffee, *Branches of Heaven*, 65-66.

<sup>375</sup> There is a large secondary literature on the dynamics of the debates of the *Puyi* affair. See John Chaffee, *Branches of Heaven*, 66. By far the most exhaustive studies are Carney Fisher, "The Ritual Dispute of Sung Ying-tsung", *Papers on Far Eastern History*, 35: 109-135, and Christian Meyer, *Ritendiskussionen am Hof der nördlichen Song-Dynastie (1034-1093): Zwischen Ritengelehrsamkeit, Machtkampf und intellektuellen Bewegungen*, (Sankt Augustin: Monumenta Serica Monograph Series



The discussion saw two main positions adopted: the emperor and the Grand Councilor Han Ji 韓琦 maintained that Zhao Yunrang was to be named *qin* 親 (parent) and conferred the posthumous title of *huang*, while the Hanlin scholar Wang Gui 王珪, Fan Zhen 范鎮, Lü Hui 呂誨 and Sima Guang himself stood for the honorific title of *huangbo* 皇伯 (imperial uncle).<sup>376</sup> A substantial difference existed between the two choices, not only in terms of ritual sacrifices and posthumous recognition, but also in terms of rewards and privileges for the members of the collateral branch of the Zhao lineage. If Zhao Yunrang was conferred the name of *qin* and the title of *huang*, his progeny of twenty eight sons would have achieved a number of privileges and official titles.<sup>377</sup> Sima Guang maintained that the inclusion of the spirit tablets of the natural relatives from a secondary branch of the royal lineage did not conform to the norm. The example of those emperors of the Han and the subsequent dynasties who, coming from a secondary branch of the imperial clan, erected ancestral temples to their natural relatives and ancestors were thus not to be followed:

The government [Han Ji] mentions the passage in the *Yili*, the ordinances and the *Wufu nianyue chi* 五服年月敕 (Imperial Ordinances on the period of Mourning According to the Five Degrees of Parental Relation) in which it is said that ‘To be a descendent of someone means to treat him as father and mother’, thus an adopted son should consider as parents both the adopted and natural parents. I would add that the rules for rituals have to clarify the reality and establish the correct meaning, in order to make the people understand better. Now the government wants to discuss the mourning rules [for the king of Pu] on the basis on the principle ‘to be a descendent of someone means to treat him as father and mother’, as if not calling [the king and his wife] mother and father Your Majesty would not know how to establish the correct meaning [of the relation between the emperor and his natural father]; if it is like this I say that those people in government who are cheating the empire, they all don’t get the meaning of what they read. Again they say: emperor Xuan and Guangwu of Han all conferred the title of *huangkao* to their natural parents. You subject would add that

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LVIII, 2008): 254-288. Li Tao, *Xu Zizhitongjian changpian* 205: 4971-76 and 206: 4984- 5014. *Sima Guang wenji*, v.2, 662-663, 800-802, 809-811, 818-819, 878-879, 934-938 .

<sup>376</sup> When the Yingzong ordered the court officials to open a debate, Sima Guang personally redacted a memorial on behalf of the Hanlin scholar Wang Gui and others who did not dare to remonstrate against the emperor’s will. *Xu Zizhi tongjian changpian*, 205: 4971-73; 206: 4998-99.

<sup>377</sup> The second son, Zongpu 宗樸, was very close to Yingzong and was named the direct successor as king of Pu. The ninth son, Zongsheng 宗晟, was renowned at the time as a book collector and expert in the ancient texts whose library had been praised by Renzong and used to improve the collection of the Imperial College; *Songshi* 245: 8711.

[...]emperor Guangwu rose from a condition of commoner and defeated Wang Mang , fighting in person in the forefront. He called his reign a restoration and he really built up the foundation of a new dynasty. The fact that he fulfilled the number of seven [spirit tablets] for his ancestral temple is not to be considered wrong. Furthermore, the fact that he called [his ancestor] *huangkao* demonstrates his extreme humility.<sup>378</sup>

One of the arguments supported by the court was that among the Han emperors there had been some, such as emperor Xuan and Guangwu, who had conferred the title of *huangkao* to their natural parents and thus included their spirit tablets in the imperial ancestral temple. Whereas the faction that advocated the policy of conferring to the king of Pu the title of *huang* purported the system of ancestral temples created by emperor Guangwu as historical model, Sima Guang is firmly convinced that the two cases are different. As restorer of the Han legacy against the usurper Wang Mang, Guangwu gained merits that allowed him to adopt certain policies in the system of ancestral temples. Yingzong, on the other hand, was included in the imperial family from a collateral branch of the Zhao and had stepped into power simply following the will of his adoptive father Renzong.

In the autumn of 1065, a few months after the debate had begun without reaching any conclusion, tremendous floods hit the empire. The event was particularly ill-omened as it occurred as the performance of the Suburban Sacrifices and of the sacrifices to the Ancestral Temple were imminent. Hinting that the policies adopted by the government were the cause of the disasters,<sup>379</sup> Sima Guang reiterates his rejection of the Han as models to be followed:

I heard rumors everywhere on the streets and I am not sure if I have to believe or not. Some people say that the court wants to confer to the king of Pu, Anxi, the honorific title of Emperor Anxi. If it is like that, I am afraid that this cannot be permitted. Since Your Majesty is the heir of Renzong, according to the rituals You cannot look after Your natural relatives. Previously Your subject already explained thoroughly [the reason], I do not dare to disturb the Sage again to listen. Today I do not know which are the thoughts of Your Majesty, the fact

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<sup>378</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changpian* 205: 4975-76.

<sup>379</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changpian* 206: 4984. The ministry of Rites then proposed a stratagem in order to avoid the emperor being considered culpable: the Empress Dowager (Renzong's formal wife and Yingzong's stepmother) was asked to personally redact the document attesting to the decision of conferring the title of *qin* to the king of Pu (*Xu Zizhi tongjian changpian* 207: 5025-29).

that You firmly desire to honor the king of Pu, is it for honor? Or for profit? Or is it for the benefit [the progeny of] the king? Since emperor Ai of Han there were cases in the past dynasties in which members from collateral branches became emperors and honored their natural father with the title of *huang*. Emperor An, Huan and Ling all did it. Emperor Ai honored his father Gong 恭 [Liu Kang 劉康, second son of emperor Yuan] the king of Ding Tao 定陶 as Emperor Gong. The decision of conferring to the king of Pu the title of Emperor Anxi follows as correct rule the example of emperor Ai. [Nevertheless,] Your Majesty has the example of Yao and Shun and of Yu and Tang and does not consider it as a rule, how could it be sufficient to be called honorable the [example of the] muddle-headed Han rules?<sup>380</sup>

The historian harks to the Han models as negative examples of emperors from collateral branches of the imperial clan making use of the system of ancestral temples for the private interests of their original families. Unlike other court debaters in previous dynasties, the historian does not stress the need for the implementation of the canonical rules; instead he is concerned with the problem of the assimilation of the private aspect of the ancestral worship into the system of imperial ancestral temples. According to the historian, the Song emperors should instead look beyond the political contingencies of the past dynasties and refer back to the ideal of imperial progeny (*zong*) stigmatized in the model of Yao and Shun, whereas the allusion to the mythological ancestors was reminiscent to the Song rulers of the institutional role of the system of ancestral temples.<sup>381</sup>

### 2.3. The Debate at the Court of the Later Jin According to the *Wudai huiyao*

The *Wudai huiyao* reports in two different chapters the memorials concerning the system of ancestral temple of the Later Jin: in the *Miao yi* it collects the series of memorials concerning the debate for the construction of the *qinmiao* (dedicated to the ancestors of the Shi family clan) in 938, while the *Miao zhidu* reports the memorial issued in 940 by the Ministry of Rites for the construction of a temple for the spirit tablets of the Tang and Later Tang emperors. One cannot tell why the compilers of the *huiyao* decided to split the material (which could simply have been organized

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<sup>380</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changpian* 207: 5030.

<sup>381</sup> For a much broader discussion on the need for redesigning the system of ancestral temples in the eleventh century see Patricia Ebrey, *Confucianism and Family Rituals in Imperial China*, 45-67 .

chronologically) into two different chapters. The reason might be a rushed attempt at systematizing the material available; yet information from one chapter to another is sometimes contradictory. In fact, if one reads the first *juan* of the *huiyao*, it says that ‘the Jin established honorific titles [for the spirit tablets] of four ancestors (*simiao*)’,<sup>382</sup> while, as will be shown below, a couple of *juan* ahead the number of tablets and temples changes.

The debate among the ceremonialists Duan Yu, Liu Xu and Zhang Zhaoyuan at the court of the Later Jin is reported completely both in the *Wudai huiyao* and in the Treatise on Rites of the *JWDS*. In 938, two years after the ascent to the throne of Shi Jingtang, Duan Yu presented a memorial to the court requesting to establish a system of seven ancestral temples. Duan mentioned the *Jifa* chapter of the *Liji*; accordingly, the number of ancestral temples for the emperor should be from four to seven. The title of Founder should be bestowed on the ‘meritorious ones’ (*yougong* 有功), while the title of Exemplar to the ‘virtuous one’s’ (*youde* 有德). The number of Founders and Exemplars should not be fixed, yet it should respect the rule of no less than four and no more than seven. Duan Yu then suggested the creation of a temple with seven halls. Moreover, he requested that the Founder should be called *shizu* 始祖 (First Founder) and his spirit tablet worshipped in a separate temple.<sup>383</sup> The historians Liu Xu and Zhang Zhaoyuan, on the contrary, argued that at the beginning of a dynasty the system had to be limited to four halls. Moreover, Zhang Zhaoyuan demonstrated how the title *shizu* had never been bestowed on an ancestor in the past; the only case was that of Wu Zetian 武則天, who bestowed the king of Wen of the Zhou dynasty the title of First Founder, and for this reason scholars and ceremonialists ‘until today still laugh at her’. Zhang Zhaoyuan also maintained that the system of ancestral temples of the Later Jin should follow the rules established at the beginning of the Tang dynasty when the debate on rites developed in the Wude 武德 (618-626) era among scholars of the intellectual capacity of Wei Zheng 魏徵(580-643), Wen Daya 溫大雅 (572-629) and Yan Shigu 顏師古 (581-645).<sup>384</sup>

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<sup>382</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 1: 11.

<sup>383</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 2: 30-31.

<sup>384</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 2: 31-34.

Following the memorials presented by Liu and Zhang, the honorific title of Founder was bestowed on the four ancestors of the Shi family clan: Jingzu 靖祖 (honorific title of Shi Jing 石璟), Suzu 肅祖 (honorific title of Shi Chen 石郴), Ruizu 睿祖 (honorific title of Shi Yu 石昱), Xianzu 憲祖 (honorific title of Shi Shaoyong 石紹雍, father of Shi Jingtang) and former military general of Li Keyong. Biographical data about the first three ancestors are almost non-existent; the Song historians thus suspected that the surname Shi had been attributed to them only in the Later Jin period in order to construct a genealogy of the Shi royal clan. The *Wudai huiyao* only mentions the location of the tomb molds of Shi Jing, Shi Chen and Shi Yu, while Shi Shaoyong was buried in the prefecture of Jinyang.<sup>385</sup>

When Shi Jingtang died, he was bestowed with the title of Gaozu and his spirit tablet was placed in the ancestral temples without removing the tablet of an older one.<sup>386</sup>

The Later Jin also built a temple in five rooms for the spirit tablets of the two Tang emperors Gaozu and Taizong, and the three Later Tang emperors Zhuangzong, Mingzong and emperor Min, though this last did not receive the title of Exemplar because his reign lasted only four months and he did not gain particular merit. Li Congke, the last emperor of the Later Tang, had been declared illegitimate by Shi Jingtang and was thus excluded from the ritual system.<sup>387</sup>

The result was that during the reign of the second and last emperor of the Later Jin rituals for ten spirit tablets were performed in two separate systems of ancestral temples.

The debate over the system of the ancestral temples developed at the court of the Later Tang and Later Jin rulers also included a number of details concerning the ritual and sacrifices.<sup>388</sup> These debates that animated the court throughout the period of reign of the dynasty testify to the great relevance given by Shatuo rulers both to the expression of the legal succession of the throne and to the worship of the royal clan.

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<sup>385</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 1: 11.

<sup>386</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 2: 35.

<sup>387</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 3: 40.

<sup>388</sup> *Wudai huiyao* 3: 39-44.

#### 2.4. The *Zizhi tongjian* Account

Sima Guang does not dedicate an entry to the construction of the ancestral temple in 938, yet the event is mentioned in the following way:

追尊四代考妣為帝后。己卯，詔太社所藏唐室罪人首聽親舊收葬。初，武衛上將軍婁繼英嘗事梁均王，為內諸司使，至是，請其首而葬之。  
[The emperor] conferred the honorific titles of *di* and *hou* to his deceased mother and father, and back to the fourth generation of his ancestors. In the *yimao* day, [the emperor] ordered to bury the head of the relatives of those who had usurped the Tang ruling house. In the past the high general Lou Jiying had served the king of Jun of the Later Liang [Zhu Youzhen] as *neizhu sishi*. [this is the reason why] at this time he asked for his head in order to bury it.<sup>389</sup>

The burial of Zhu Youzhen is narrated in the first Annals of the Later Tang: '[Zhuangzong] ordered Wang Zan 王瓚 to take the corpse of Zhu Youzhen, bury the body at the Buddhist temple and, after having lacquered his head, to seal it in a case and conceal it under the Altar for the Sacrifices to the Earth (*taishe*)'. The same episode is narrated in the *JWDS* yet without the macabre emphasis of the *ZZTJ*. Xue Juzheng reports that '[Zhuangzong] ordered the governor of Henan Zhang Quanyi to bury it'. According to the *Kaoyi*, the narrative version of the *ZZTJ* follows the *Zhuangzong shilu*. It is perhaps interesting to note that in the *shilu* the executor of the order of the emperor is someone called Zan, literally 'the ceremonial libation cup of the king', while in the *JWDS* is someone called Quanyi, literally 'the completion of justice'.<sup>390</sup> In a single terse entry Sima Guang registers both the conferral of honorific titles to the Shi family clan ancestors and the burial of the lacquered head of the progeny of the 'usurper' Later Liang emperor. Empty glorifying names for the ancestors and the ending of a progeny are combined together in order to create an example that should be a warning to the emperor. In the few entries of the Annals of Later Jin in which the historian hints at the system of ancestral worship, he seems to associate it deliberately to the 'usurpers' Later Liang.

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<sup>389</sup> *ZZTJ* 281: 9173.

<sup>390</sup> *ZZTJ* 272: 8900.

The second entry concerning the ancestral temple of the Later Jin registers the request to move the imperial ancestral temple to the new capital presented to the attention of Shi Jingtang by the Ministry of Rites. It possibly refers to the court debate that involved Duan Yu, Liu Xu and Zhaong Zhaoyuan (see pp.16-17), yet none of the issues discussed by the ceremonialists are mentioned:

太常奏：「今建東京，而宗廟、社稷皆在西京，請遷置大梁。」敕旨：「且仍舊。」

The official in charge of rituals [Duan Yu] memorialized: “Today the Capital of the East (Bianzhou 汴州, Kaifeng fu 開封府) was established, yet the imperial temple and the altars to the earth and soil are still in the Capital of the West (Luoyang). We request to replaced them to Da Liang”. The imperial order proclaimed: “The old [system] should be kept.”<sup>391</sup>

Bianzhou was renamed Daliang by the Later Liang who made it the capital. When the Later Tang defeated the Zhu family clan, Bianzhou returned to be a prefecture, while Luoyang was named Capital of the East and Chang’ An Capital of the West. The Later Jin brought the Capital of the East back to Bianzhou, and renamed Luoyang Capital of the West.<sup>392</sup> In the quotation reported above, when Duan Yu says that the ancestral temples and sacrificial altars are still in the Capital of the West (Luoyang), he possibly refers to the temple built by Zhuangzong of the Later Tang and not to the *qinmiao* erected by Mingzong in Yingzhou. The answer of the emperor possibly means that the ancestral temple of the Shi royal family clan has to be built following the example of the previous dynasty. Or it could also hint at the fact that the Later Jin brought back the capital to Daliang, where Zhu Quanzhong had established it; this last explanation would also be in line with the interpretation of the passage mentioned above, in which the conferral of honorific titles to Shi Jingtang’s ancestors is associated with the burial of Zhu Youzhen’s lacquered head. Sima Guang possibly alludes to the fact that the uprising of Shi Jingtang against the last emperor of

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<sup>391</sup> ZZTJ 281: 9190.

<sup>392</sup> Chang’An was transformed in a military commandery (Jinchang jun 晉昌軍) ZZTJ 281: 9191. During the first half of the tenth century the capital city was often changed and the prefectures created and dismissed quite frequently. For a discussion on the territorial control during the five dynasties period see Ruth Mostern “The Usurper’s Empty Names”, in *Five Dynasties and the Ten Kingdoms*.

the Later Tang was a usurpation of power as well as the defeat of the last Tang emperor by Zhu Quanzhong.

One cannot tell from the available records if the Later Jin ever performed the ritual sacrifices to the ancestral temples; nevertheless, the last prophetic words pronounced by Sang Weihan on the eve of the destruction of the Later Jin by the Qidan, ‘Helas! No ritual sacrifices will be for the Shi ancestors!’,<sup>393</sup> could be read as an allusion to the fact that ritual sacrifices to the spirit tablet of Gaozu (Shi Jingtang, to whom Sang Weihan had been sincerely loyal) and the Later Jin ancestors had never been performed since the creation of the ancestral temple, and never would be in the future as the Shi clan terminated disastrously in 946.

In order to better understand what Sima Guang criticizes about the institutional policy of the Later Jin we have to peruse through the Annals and momentarily skip to an entry concerning the southern reigns, and in particular the Southern Tang 南唐 (937-960/976):

唐群臣江王知證等累表請唐主復姓李，立唐宗廟，乙丑，唐主許之。群臣又請上尊號。唐主曰：「尊號虛美，且非古。」遂不受。其後子孫皆踵其法，不受尊號，又不以外戚輔政，宦者不得預事，皆他國所不及也。二月，乙亥，改太祖廟號曰義祖。己卯，唐主為李氏考妣發哀，與皇后斬衰居廬，如初喪禮，朝夕臨凡五十四日。江王知證、饒王知諤請亦服斬衰，不許。李建勳之妻廣德長公主假衰經入哭盡禮，如父母之喪。

The king of Jiang, [Xu] Zhi Zheng, and other subjects of the Tang repeatedly memorialized to the ruler requesting [that the royal clan] return to the Li surname and to establish the ancestral temple for the Tang emperors. In the *yichou* day, the Tang ruler accorded to do so. The subjects again asked the emperor to take an honorific title, but the Tang ruler said: “Honorific titles are empty and self-praising [names], it is not according to the ancients. He thus did not accord to do so. His progeny all followed his rules and they were not conferred honorific titles; moreover, they did not appoint the relatives from the part of the empress dowager in the administration of the government, and the eunuchs were not allowed to participate to the public affairs either. This policy was something that the other states were not able to adopt.

In the second month, in the *yihai* day, the title of the spirit tablet of Taizu [Xu Wen 徐溫] was changed into Yizu 義祖 (the Righteous Founder). In the *yimao* day the Tang ruler performed the mourning rituals for his deceased father and mother of the Li family clan; together with the empress, they wore the mourning sackcloth and took place inside the funeral chamber, according to the ancient

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<sup>393</sup> ZZTJ 285: 9317.



mourning rituals day and night for almost fifty four days. The king of Jiang, Zhizheng and the king of Rao, Zhi'e [the sons of Xu Wen] similarly requested to wear the mourning sackcloth, but they were not permitted. The wife of Li Jianxun, the princess of Guangde [Xu Wen's daughter], made herself mourning cloths and entered [in the chamber] crying until the completion of the ritual as if it was for her parents.<sup>394</sup>

The first ruler of the Southern Tang, Li Bian 李昇 (r.937-943), assumed the surname Xu and the personal name Zhigao in his youth after being adopted by Xu Wen 徐溫 (862-927).<sup>395</sup> When in 937 Xu Zhigao, appealing to the Tang legacy recovered the Li surname, Xu Wen was bestowed the title of Righteous Founder (*Yizu* 義祖) of the Southern Tang royal clan.<sup>396</sup> In 939 Li Bian claimed himself descendant of the fourth generation of the king of Wu 吳, Ge 恪, the eighth son of the Tang emperor Xianzong 憲宗 (r.778-820). According to the quotations collected in the *Kaoyi* on the record of this event, the sources presented discrepancies on the origins of birth of Li Bian and apparently some discussion went on among Liu Shu 劉恕 (1032-1078) and Sima Guang on this topic. As has been shown in the previous chapters, Liu Shu's contrasting opinions on certain matters are often registered in the *Kaoyi*. In this case Liu Shu was firmly convinced that Li Bian was not a descendant of the Li royal family.<sup>397</sup>

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<sup>394</sup> *ZZTJ* 282: 9197.

<sup>395</sup> *ZZTJ* 260: 8467.

<sup>396</sup> The Southern Tang ruler Xu Zhigao originally a subject from the state of Wu 吳, had declared himself emperor in 937 and restored the Li surname. From the last years of the thirties until the foundation of the Song dynasty, the Southern Tang would contend for power with the northern dynasties over the empire. In particular, under the reign of Li Zhigao's son, Li Jing 李景 (r.943-960), the Southern Tang claimed legitimate ruler ship over the empire (see J. Kurz, "The Invention of a 'Faction' in Song Historical Writings on the Southern Tang"; for an analysis of the sources on the history of the Southern Tang see J. Kurz, "Sources for the History of the Southern Tang (937-975)"). As I mentioned in the first chapter on the sources, the scope of this work is limited to the northern ruling houses; nevertheless, starting with the Annals of the Later Jin the narrative alternate two main tracks: the representation of the uprising of Shi Jingtang in the north and the grasp for power of Li Bian in the south. Sima Guang somehow draws a parallel between the two narratives. The Annals are entitled to the Later Jin and the historian refers to Shi Jingtang as emperor, while Li Bian is referred to as 'Tang ruler' (although in one entry he calls him 'emperor'). Nevertheless, the first entry of the Annals of Later Jin is about Xu Zhigao. Sima Guang uses the formula 'in spring, in the first month' *chun, zheng yue* 春, 正月, that in the *chunqiu* tradition registered the activity of the ruler in the first month of the year, to say that Xu Zhigao (Li Bian) created the *da yuanshuai fu* (*ZZTJ* 280: 9138).

<sup>397</sup> According to the *Zhou shizong shilu* and to the *JWDS*, Li Bian was the descendant of the sixth son of Lin 璘, the king of Yong 永王; the *Jiannan lu* 江南錄 redacted by Xu Xuan 徐鉉 (917-992) and Tang Yue 湯悅, reports that Li Bian was the descendant of the eighth son of the king of Jian 建王, Ge (on the *Jiangnan lu* see Kurz, 1994); the *Wu Yue beishi* 吳越備史 reports that Li Bian was originally

Besides the different opinions on the origins of Li Bian, what Sima Guang seemingly wants to highlight here is that, unlike their northern neighbors a couple of decades before, the Southern Tang rulers were able to keep the collateral branches of the family clan and the natural relatives away from government administration. In this way the hierarchy among the different branches of family clan was maintained and the southern Tang did not witness the inter-lineage strife that characterized the court politics of their northern neighbors. According to the historian, the administrative policy of the Southern Tang was successful because the court respected the ritual. When performing the mourning rituals for the Li clan father and mother, Li Bian did not permit his adoptive brothers (the sons of Xu Wen) to participate. Moreover, Li Bian decided not to accept honorific titles for himself. The good example of Li Bian positively influenced the members of his family clan and his progeny. This ensured the court had political stability as well as the good functioning of the administrative apparatus and prevented them sharing the excesses of the northern dynasties.

The Southern Tang, as well as the other small southern states were traditionally not ascribed by the Song historiography as legitimate dynasties and thus neither the *Wudai huiyao* nor the *JWDS* dedicate any attention to the issue of ancestral worship. Sima Guang himself, stressing the need for a single scheme of dates, chose to follow the transmission of dynastic power and thus to follow the chronology of the five northern dynasties,<sup>398</sup> nevertheless he dedicates several entries to the occurrence of the building of ancestral temples for these reigns.<sup>399</sup> In particular, the record of the Southern Tang's institutional policies is probably the first case of positive example of

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born in a family surnamed Pan 潘 from Huzhou 湖州, his father was a commander at a military post in Anji 安吉. Accordingly, Li Bian had been taken away from his family by a general from Wu in order to make him a slave and afterwards had been adopted by Xu Wen. The text says that Li Bian changed his surname into Li in order to adapt to a prophecy. Finally, Liu Shu maintains that Bian's choice of returning to the Li surname is without any basis and he was certainly not a descendant of the Li family clan. Bian had survived the turmoil in his childhood and nobody knew his origins, his father's name was Zhao and his grand-father names was Zhi, thus he was not either a descendant of the Tang or of Xu Wen (*ZZTJ* 282: 9199). In 939 the king of Wu, Ge, was bestowed the honorific title of Dingzong xiaojing huangdi 定宗孝靜皇帝 and the spirit tablets of the ancestors of his branch of the Li family clan back to the fourth generation were included in the ancestral temple. At the same time Xu Wen was bestowed the title of Righteous Founder and his spirit tablet put in the ancestral temple erected for the Tang emperors together with Gaozu and Taizong as for permanent ritual sacrifices (*ZZTJ* 282: 9198).

<sup>398</sup> The historian made a different choice in the case of the Northern and Southern Dynasties (*ZZTJ* 69: 2185-8).

<sup>399</sup> For the reign of Shu 蜀 and the reign of Min 閩 see *ZZTJ* 281: 9190; 282: 9197-99; 282: 9204-06; 283: 9240; 283: 9256; 284: 9269.

administrative policy so far. The proper implementation of institutional and administrative policy is thus not assimilated to the idea of legitimacy. Sima Guang thus subverts the division into legitimate and illegitimate dynasties used by the early Song historiographers. Whereas the ritual system is correctly implemented as a mean of ensuring political stability and not as a tool for privileging the interests of a family branch, then the ruling court can claim legitimate rulership. In this case, the Southern Tang rulers did it better than the northern dynasties.

### 3. Concluding Remarks

I started my investigation questioning how Sima Guang regarded and used the great deal of material on imperial ritual sacrifices redacted in the first half of the tenth century. In the light of the cases analyzed above, I will now attempt to draw some concluding remarks which can be listed as follows: 1) whereas in the cases analyzed in the previous sections the *ZZTJ* conveys a much richer picture of the events including material left out from the standard histories, in this case the entries are brief and many details are not considered; 2) Sima Guang is concerned with the administrative and institutional aspect of the ritual system of the ancestral worship rather than with the proper implementation of the ritual norms; 3) whereas the historian dedicates an entry to the system of ancestral temples, this has a derogatory connotation:

- a. The decision to move the ancestral temple of the Later Tang Li family clan in 923 is associated with the anecdote of Lady Liu, the formal wife of Li Keyong and step-mother of Zhuangzong, who is left behind in Jinyang, while his natural mother reaches Luoyang. Sima Guang criticizes the fact that Zhuangzong privileged his natural mother and conferred to her the title of Huang Taihou, while Lady Liu was named Huang Taifei (Great Concubine). Moreover, Sima Guang discharges the version of the *huiyao* in which it is reported the memorial of the then Minister of Rites, Wang Zhengyan. Sima Guang not only avoids mentioning the memorial, but also provides different biographical information about Wang. In addition, the historian links the building of the ancestral temple in Luoyang to Zhang Quanyi and the Empress.

- b. Mingzong's decision to confer exaggerated honorific titles to his natural relatives is associated with the record of the impoverishment of the people at the borders between Wei and Dai. The historian reprimands Li Siyuan for not being able to control the Li family branch (in the previous sections I have shown how Zhang Chengye similarly criticized the emperor for being unable to establish order among his progeny and to name a legitimate heir) and for conferring exaggerated honorific titles to his natural father and ancestors;
- c. The conferral of honorific titles to the ancestors of the Shi family clan in 938 is associated to the burial of the last remain of the progeny of the 'usurper' Later Liang Taizu, the lacquered head of Zhu Youzhen;
- d. Another allusion to the Later Liang could come from the record of the request to move the imperial ancestral temples to the new capital, Bianzhou. The memorial is followed by the comment of the emperor "the old [system] should be kept" which could hint at the fact that Bianzhou was formerly the capital of the Later Liang;
- e. Explicit criticism of the policies adopted by the Later Jin comes through a comparison with the positive example of the first Southern Tang ruler, Li Bian, who did not accept any empty honorific title for himself and was able to control the branches of the royal clan and keep the relatives away from the role of the empress dowager in the administration of the government. The historian states that 'this policy was something that the other states were not able to adopt'.



## Conclusion

The term ‘Five Dynasties’ was conceptualized for the first time in the early 960s with the *Wudai huiyao*, the institutional history of the first half of the tenth century, which consisted of a repository of documents put together without overt editorializing. It followed the *Wudai shilu* of Fan Zhi and the standard official history redacted under the supervision of Xue Juzheng. These early comprehensive histories of the institutions of the first half of the tenth century bore the ideological limits of the time in which they were produced and soon fell into general neglect. The *Wudai huiyao* and the *JWDS* would subsequently only be re-discovered in the eighteenth century by the *Siku* editors, while the *Wudai shilu* was soon lost.

As political products aimed at legitimizing the power to rule of the newly established dynastic houses, the official histories were commonly considered to be over-systematized and often unreliable by the scholars of the time. Moreover, the historical development of the Ten States of the south was marginalized. In the early eleventh century other forms of privately redacted chronicles and collections of historical anecdotes provided different versions of the events of the rise and fall of the five dynasties of the north, while at the same time historical works on the southern reigns were produced. As stated in the introduction, the scope of this work is limited to the northern rulers and their relation with the Qidan and thus I only partially considered the literature produced relating to the southern dynasties.

In the sixties of the eleventh century Ouyang Xiu produced a substantially different standard history for the Five Dynasties period that would replace the old one in the curricula for imperial examinations at the beginning of the thirteenth century, with the Jin dynasty, and would maintain its predominance throughout the rest of the imperial history. The *XWDS* (also known as *Wudai shiji*), published posthumously, differed from the old standard history as far as the sectional breakdown and the narrative construction was concerned. In it Ouyang Xiu explicitly neglects the documental sources on rituals and music, and his standard history does not include the monographs on institutional matters. The same circumspect attitude can also be detected in the *ZZTJ*, and chapter four of this thesis investigated the narrative choices

made by Sima Guang concerning the system of ancestral temples. Another aspect that substantially differentiated the *XWDS* from the old history is the unflattering attitude towards the Qidan it displayed. Special biographical sections on the northern neighbors had been redacted since the early tenth century and in chapter one I gave the example of the *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan* (early 930s), in which a section of non-meritorious subjects also included a *Qidan zhuan*. The description of the northern neighbors as subjects or as an independent reign depended on the state of diplomatic relations at the time; whereas the section on the Qidan in the *Wudai huiyao* is almost nonexistent and the *JWDS* diplomatically included the northern neighbors in the *Waiguo liezhuan*, the *Cefu yuangui* compiled after the ‘Accord of Shanyuan’ returns to call the Qidan ‘subjects’ (*Waichen*). In the 1060s Ouyang Xiu created an appendix (not even an integral part of the dynastic history) dedicated to the barbarians of the four corners (*Siyi fulu*). The sectional division of the biographies of the new history of the Five Dynasties also constituted an evolution of the early tenth-century *gongchen liezhuan*.

The *ZZTJ* is the last comprehensive history of the early tenth century produced in the Song period. It frames the survey of the fifty years of disunity that preceded the traditional date established for the Song reunification as the last fragment of a chronicle that opened with the division into the ‘three Jin’ at the outset of the Warring States period.

The general survey on annalistic writing in the eleventh century provided in the introduction aimed to show how the production of comprehensive chronicles and chart that covered all the dynastic history was fairly developed among the Song historians. The purpose of these works was to provide a general survey of the events in chronological order: as such, they consisted of terse chronicles almost without any long narrative passages. The annalistic style freed the historians from the limit of the dynastic span of time and most of the comprehensive chronicles redacted in the eleventh century closed with the early years of the Song. By contrast, Sima Guang chose to close his comprehensive survey before Taizu. I believe that the time frame imposed by the historian to the chronicle purportedly defines the year 959 as the ideal end of a cycle and the last fifty years of the chronicle as the nadir of a path of decline.

The focus of Sima Guang on the long-term historical developments of rise and decline is further proven by the memorial presented to the court in the 1160s (see introduction). In the memorial Sima Guang maintains that, since the Eastern Zhou period, the Song have benefited from an unprecedented period of unity. He urges the Song emperors to learn from the historical developments of the past dynasties in order to understand the political contingencies of the policies adopted, yet keeping in mind the gap between the ideal government of the high antiquity before the beginning of divisions, and the subsequent periods of turmoil and relative peace that came later. In more than one thousand years of dynastic history, from the beginning of disunity of the kingdom of Jin and the division into the ‘three Jin’, the periods of unity and relative stability for the empire were relatively short in comparison to the eras of military uprisings, turmoil and foreign dominance. From this perspective, the Five Dynasties marked the lowest point of disorder and decline.

Whereas in the case of the Tang period the letter of Sima Guang to Fan Zuyu provides some insights on the redaction of the Long Draft of the Tang period, very little information on the selection of the sources for the redaction of the annals of the first half of the tenth century has been preserved. It is plausible to think that the first general chronological outline was redacted on the basis of the official documents compiled at the court of the five northern dynasties and by reconsidering all the material that had been left out or partially reworked for the redaction of the *JWDS*. Chapter one investigated the system of compilation of the official records and chapter two offered insights on the flexibility of these documents and the criteria for selection of the sources.

The compilation of the official documents of the previous reigns represented an important political act for a ruler. For instance, it has been shown that the *Zhuangzong shilu* redacted in the late 920s covered the period of reign of the Later Liang in order to establish a direct line of succession with the Tang. Official records redacted by the same group of historians but for different purposes could offer distinct depictions of the events. By a comparison of narrative passages from the *Zhuangzong shilu* and the *Zhuangzong gongchen liezhuan*, I aimed to direct attention to the use of the language and of different narrative details in order to offer a peculiar historical perspective or



convey judgments. Differences in basic data could also, according to my investigation, imply a precise narrative choice of the authors.

The three narrative cases presented in chapter two show how the *shilu* and the *jinian lu* compiled at the court of the five dynasties of the north could depict the same event in significantly different ways through an accurate use of the language and of narrative details. The sources for the redaction of the annals of Later Liang, in particular, were fairly heterogeneous. The primary sources for the history of the last decades of the Tang dynasty and the first decade of the tenth century represented a problem for the historian. The *shilu* produced at the court of the Later Liang and Later Tang dynasties covered the last years of the Tang in order to legitimize their one period of power. Whereas the *shilu* produced at the court of the last emperor of the Later Liang were generally considered to be incomplete, the chronological accounts on the deeds of Li Keyong and his ancestors were also hardly reliable and too favorable to the Later Tang rulers.

The relevance of the *Kaoyi* as a repository of information about early works that have not been delivered to us and of fragments of texts partially transmitted, has already been pointed out by scholars of Chinese medieval literature and history. What I have attempted to do here is to draw a comparison based on the quotes from the different sources in order to understand the rationale behind the choice of keeping or rejecting the narrative segments. Whereas none of the official sources offered a satisfying picture of the events, Sima Guang resorted to other literary sources. From a close comparison of the variety of sources it is sometimes hard to say if the final choice of the historian is based on historical objectivity. I would argue instead that different elements from the sources are put together for the sake of the narrative construction that the historian aimed to provide.

Generally the narrative construction provided by the *ZZTJ* is the most developed and detailed. This is particularly evident in the process of narrating military strategies and battles scenes, and in the depiction of the hierarchical relation between ruler and subjects.

Whereas the sources widely describe the ambition of the Li family clan to rule as a claim for the restoration of the Tang legacy, Sima Guang depicts Li Keyong as a capable military leader yet mostly interested in his own business, defending his power

in Hedong, and not particularly concerned with matters of legacy. Similarly, the Qidan ruler is depicted as a leader of a foreign country yet equal in status, an ally in moments of need or a betrayer. In the same way, the sense of loyalty that bonded the eunuch Zhang Chengye to his ruler, Li Cunxu, originated from loyalty to Li Keyong and did not have anything to do with the claims for the restoration of the Tang.

Little space is left over for biographical data. The *ZZTJ* only registers the place of origin of characters when they are introduced in the narrative for the first time, but this is not done systematically for each person. Other biographical information is almost entirely avoided. On the other hand, the *ZZTJ* carefully registers every change of official position and, if meaningful for the narrative, the context in which officials are moved from one post to another. Information about the life and career of the subjects is relevant only in relation to their role and position in the governmental administration and the degree of relationship with the ruler is only mentioned if it affected the official career.

Chapter three analyzed the case of Shi Jingtang. The first part of the chapter surveyed the accounts on the origins of Shi Jingtang in the standard histories and later abridgments, and the final narrative provided by the *ZZTJ*. All anecdotes and riddles on the Shi surname and predictions of the uprisings are left out from the comprehensive annals and Shi Jingtang appears in the chronicle in a battle scene. The non-Chinese origins of the future Later Jin emperor also seem to play a secondary role. The historian highlights only one aspect: he was a loyal warrior of his ruler, Mingzong of Later Tang. Moreover, the figure of Shi Jingtang is pictured in a very humanized way. Although he did not possess the quality of birth in order to become a ruler, he was guilty of rebellion against the ruling house and sometimes acted with extreme cruelty, the *ZZTJ* recognizes in him the good qualities of a strategist and a leader. Most important, Shi Jingtang was able to choose his officials wisely and acknowledged the importance of relying on the support of men of worth and loyalty, such as his generals Sang Weihuan and Liu Zhiyuan.

Sima Guang analyzes the reasons that led to the uprising of Shi Jingtang from a long term perspective. The chronicle of the events that brought the Qidan invasion starts in 934 and it is scattered all along the last Annals of the Later Tang.

Whereas Shi Jingtang plays the main role in the 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.

In the third part of chapter three I investigated the narrative construction of the events from 942 to 946 that brought the second invasion of the Qidan, this time against the Later Jin, and the consequent destruction of the dynasty. The arrangement in entries of the annalistic structure allows us to follow different stories of the same event and their interrelations. My inquiry follows the entries concerning the career of Sang Weihai. Whereas the *JWDS* and the *XWDS* dedicate space to his career and role in the internal affairs at the Later Jin court, the *ZZTJ* focuses on his role in foreign policy and his relation with the Qidan. According to the account of the standard histories, Shi Jingtang masterminded the uprising against the last illegitimate ruler of the Later Tang; by contrast, according to the *ZZTJ* Sang Weihai himself convinced the hesitant Shi Jingtang to revolt in order to sweep away the inept Li Congke and ask for the Qidan intervention. The same words pronounced by Shi Jingtang in the official histories, are rephrased in the *ZZTJ* and put in the mouth of Sang Weihai.

It is plausible to think that in the *ZZTJ* Sang Weihai represents the pro-peace position of Sima Guang. From the outset of the Later Jin dynasty until its destruction in 946, Sang Weihai pursues the cause of the peace with the Qidan and would eventually die in a tragic way as a result of his resolution. The old and new histories describe him as a greedy and powerful minister who accumulated bribes from all over the empire and was, at a certain point, accused of corruption. Following the death of Shi Jingtang in 942, Sang Weihai lost the support he had at court and was distanced from the capital. The standard histories associate his dismissal with his prosecution for corruption, whereas the *ZZTJ* links it with a remonstrance to the court against the appointment of the emperor's brother-in-law, Du Chongwei, as military governor of a strategic post in the northern borders. The report enrages the emperor and Sang Weihai leaves the court. He only returns to the capital in 946, during the invasion of the jointed forces of the Qidan and the surrender imperial troops lead by Zhang Yanze. In a scenario of pillage and devastation, Sang Weihai is urged to leave because an order of execution is pending on his head. The old and new histories report that the

emperor, before escaping into exile, ordered Zhang Yanze to kill the former minister, but the Qidan looked for Sang Weihai in order to negotiate with him. The emperor knew that Sang Weihai had always supported a peaceful solution and good relations with the northern neighbors and, according to the standard histories, he ordered he be killed in order to 'shut his mouth' about the court's misdeeds.

Very few details about the family clan of the ruling house are delivered in the chronicle and generally only when the private interests of the relatives of the rulers interfered with public affairs. One of the institutions in which private and public interest mostly overlapped is the imperial system of ancestral temples. The private aspect of this costly system was exacerbated every time the ruling house in power looked to exert control over the different branches of the family clan. In the first half of the tenth century, private family clan worship was assimilated into the system of ancestral temples. Chapter four showed how the *ZZTJ* very carefully acknowledges to the reader certain aspects of the system. I argue that Sima Guang is concerned with the assimilation of the private interests of the worship into the public institution of the ancestral rituals rather than with the implementation of the canonical rules.

When talking about the comprehensive history, the several abridgments produced by Sima Guang and Liu Shu should also be taken into account. Sima Guang himself redacted short digests of his work. The critical commentary on the sources, the *Kaoyi*, is the remaining results of the compilation process. As early as the second half of the thirteenth century, the best and most widespread edition of the comprehensive chronicle was the one used by Hu Sanxing for the redaction of his commentary. The modern edition of the *ZZTJ* is based on this edition and it includes the commentary of Hu Sanxing and the *Kaoyi*.

I showed in the introduction how the chronological chart, *Mulu*, is conceived as an attempt to overcome the limits of the chronicles and the annals. Sima Guang was well aware of the narrative complexity of the *ZZTJ*. Particularly for the periods of disunity such as the first half of the tenth century, the annalistic style imposed a chronological order on the occurrence of events, so that the account of one event would be scattered throughout several pages. The annals lack a narrative closure and the general principles are difficult to sum up. Although Sima Guang is far from

theorizing these limits, we can see his critical approach to the problem and his attempt, through the *Mulu*, to create different narrative devices.

I opened the introduction of this thesis by drawing a comparison between the political-historical compendium redacted by Wang Qinruo between 1005 and 1013 and the comprehensive chronicle of Sima Guang compiled sixty years later. I intend to conclude with some further questions regarding the similarities and differences between the two texts. The compilation of the *Cefu yuangui* and the *ZZTJ* represent the last large imperially commissioned literary enterprises of the Song period. In this regard, they are representative of an era in which the central government essentially had control over literary production, whereas in the southern Song period the dissemination of knowledge would become a prerogative of different literati élites.

Although different in structure, both texts were meant to provide a guide for aid in governmental matters to the court and to the officials. The *Cefu yuangui* was produced in the form of a repository of historical precedents on institutional and administrative issues organized topically; the *ZZTJ* in the form of a chronological survey.

This aspect brings us to the question of why Sima Guang never once quotes from the *Cefu yuangui*. The *Kaoyi* is completely silent on it and never even expresses any statement about the compendium. Given that Sima Guang did not use it as a source, a comparison of the quotes from the *Cefu yuangui* and the narrative of the *ZZTJ* would have been too much for this thesis. Nonetheless, I would like to focus briefly here on this comparison by way of conclusion.

Referring back to a note in chapter three,<sup>400</sup> the *Cefu yuangui* distinguishes among ‘alliances by marriage’ (*heqin*), ‘diplomatic relations’ (*tonghao*) and ‘alliances’ (*mengshi*). 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, the *tonghao* section documents the history of the relation from 601 BC. It opens with a quote from the *Zuozhuan* and it closes with historical precedents of relations with

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<sup>400</sup> Chapter three, n.39, 21.

the five dynasties of the north.<sup>401</sup> The compendium mostly draws from the *Waiguo liezhuan* section of the *JWDS*.<sup>402</sup>

A perusal of the *tonghao* section on the five 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 (the Huichang era of reign of Wuzong). 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 occurred in 911, first year of the Qianhua era of Later Liang Taizu.<sup>403</sup> The second entry to the ‘pact of Yunzhou’; the brief quote is taken *verbatim* from the *Waiguo liezhuan* and the date of the covenant placed in 907. The only difference is in the epithet used for the Qidan. As shown in chapter two, the *Waiguo liezhuan* reports:

The entourage of emperor Wu attempted to persuade that the chance was there to capture him, but emperor Wu said: “The bandits have not been destroyed yet, we cannot lose the trust of the tribes”<sup>404</sup>

Whereas the *Waiguo liezhuan* uses the more diplomatic ‘tribes’, the same sentence in the *Cefu yuangui* is rendered ‘we cannot lose the trust of the barbarians’.

In the entry dedicated to the enthronement of Shi Jingtang and the Qidan intervention against the last ruler of Later Tang, the *Cefu yuangui* mentions the alliance, yet the loss of the territories of Yan and Yun is left out. Given the context of the ‘Accord of Shanyuan’, Zhenzong evidently preferred to erase from the imperial compendium the memory of the loss in 936 in order to avoid remembering his failure in recovering those territories.

Moreover, the entry dedicated to the enthronement of Shi Chonggui in 942 does not mention the rupture of the diplomatic relations between the northern dynasties and the Qidan and instead it reports:

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<sup>401</sup> *Cefu yuan gui* 980: 11508.

<sup>402</sup> *Cefu yuangui* 977-979: 11472-11486.

<sup>403</sup> *Cefu yuangui* 980:11534-542

<sup>404</sup> See chapter two.

八月宣喚契丹王母使舍利共一十二人宴於崇德殿

In the eight month [the emperor] ordered that the empress mother of the Qidan send her son and others, in all twelve people to have a banquet at the Palace in Honor of Virtue.<sup>405</sup>

After this entry, the compendium skips directly to the Later Han.

The *Cefu yuangui* was meant to be read inside the empire by the scholar officials, and it probably was not accessible to the northern neighbors. It thus develops a discourse on the history of foreign relations that purports to shape the memory of its prospective readers. The Qidan are categorized as ‘foreign subjects’ and occasionally as ‘barbarians’, while the memory of the losses, the shame of the unfavorable alliances and the disastrous consequences of the rupture of the pact are erased.

As an imperially sanctioned product aimed at shaping the collective memory of the new class of scholar officials, the *Cefu yuangui* bore the ideological limits of its time. Already in the seventies of the eleventh century the compendium was out of favor and after the northern Song it almost fell into neglect. In the twelfth century, when the central government would start to lose its grip on literary control and the dissemination and transmission of knowledge would become a prerogative of literati élites, the *Cefu yuangui* quickly run out of favor.

By contrast, the historical discourse of the *ZZTJ* has its focus on the patterns of restoration and loss, military strategies and foreign policy rather than on institutions, an aspect that greatly attracted the interest of the southern Song literati. In the early twelfth century, Hu Yin in his *Dushi guanjian* critically comments that Sima Guang does not rely on ‘the reality of moral principles’ (*yili zhi shi* 義理之實) but describes events ‘according to victory and defeat’ (*yi chengbai lun shi* 以成敗論事).<sup>406</sup> Normative standards *per se* play a secondary role in the narrative of the *ZZTJ*. They are intrinsic to the general framework of the chronicle as they establish the difference

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<sup>405</sup> The term *sheli* to refer to the son of the Qidan ruler appears in the *Tang Taizu shilu*, see the quote in chapter two. *Cefu yuangui* 980: 11500-08.

<sup>406</sup> Hu Yin is especially critical towards the use of the language Sima Guang. For instance, in one of the first entries of the Annals of Later Liang, Hu points out that Sima Guang used a language that deliberately devalued the status of the king of Jin (Li Keyong) and that recognized the legitimacy of the Liang. Although Li Keyong was of Shatuo origins, he had demonstrated loyalty to the Tang in the suppression of the Huang Chao rebellion; Hu laments that Sima Guang did not treat him with the respect he deserved. In fact, the historian uses the term ‘invade’ (*kou*) to describe the military activity of the Jin, a term generally used for the attacks from the northern barbarians or foreign countries. Hu Yin, *Dushi guanjian*, 992.

between the ideal of government and the political contingencies that led to the rise and decline of the dynasties. Nonetheless, the main focus of the annals is to describe in detail the complexity of historical processes rather than to set up judgments. The narrative model of the *Zuo zhuan* set the standard for the didactic purpose of Sima Guang. This complexity would gradually be leveled into radical judgments from the southern Song commentaries onward. The importance of picturing events in the most thorough way possible in order to express judgments will lead the way to the primacy of a set of moral principles according to which the historical characters would be judged as good or evil.







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## Estratto per riassunto della tesi di dottorato

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Dottorato: LINGUE, CULTURE E SOCIETA'

Ciclo: 26

Titolo della tesi: Historiography and Narrative Construction of the Five Dynasties Period (907-960) in the *Zizhi tongjian* and its Sources

### Abstract:

The *Zizhi tongjian* (Comprehensive Guide for Aid in Government) is the largest comprehensive annals of the history of the empire prior to 1000 A.D.. Conceived as a historical-political guide for aid in governance, the comprehensive annals aimed at describing in detail the complexity of historical processes. The chronological framework established by its author, Sima Guang (1019-86), provides relevance to the representation of the events of the Five Dynasties period (907-960), presenting them as the closure of a story of the rise and decline of the dynasties before the Song. This thesis investigates the process of constructing this last historical segment with a focus on the work of selection of the sources and the construction of the narrative discourses concerning two of the five northern dynasties of the early tenth century, the Later Tang (923-936) and Later Jin (936-946), and their strategies in dealing with the rising power of the Qidan-led Liao dynasty (907-1125).

Lo *Zizhi tongjian* (Guida comprensiva per l'aiuto al governo) è la principale opera annalistica della storia dell'impero fino al 1000 d.C.. Finalizzata a fornire una guida storico-politica per l'aiuto al governo, lo scopo dell'opera nell'intenzione dell'autore, Sima Guang (1019-86), era educare la corte Song a comprendere gli sviluppi storici delle ere precedenti. La struttura cronologica stabilita da Sima Guang pone in rilievo la rappresentazione degli eventi riguardanti il periodo delle Cinque Dinastie (907-960) come chiusura di un ciclo storico di ascesa e declino delle dinastie precedenti. Questa tesi analizza i criteri di selezione delle fonti e la costruzione narrativa degli eventi riguardanti due delle cinque dinastie del nord, i Tang Posteriori (923-936) e i Jin Posteriori (936-946), e le rispettive strategie nel confrontarsi con la potenza nascente dei Qidan e della dinastia Liao (907-1125).

Firma dello studente

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