

Integration and Separation: The Framing of the Liao Dynasty (907–1125) in Chinese Sources

The glories of material culture (combined with the shrewd public relations of today's Inner Mongolian archaeological hierarchy) are beginning to draw unprecedented attention to the Liao 遼 dynasty (907–1125). We might wonder why it has taken so long. The Liao was the dominant power in northeast Asia for most of the tenth century and played a leading role in the multi-state system that continued to prevail during the rest of China's Middle Period. Yet until the last few years, scholarship on the period has devoted itself largely to the Song 宋 dynasty (960–1276), and has cast the Liao sometimes as supporting actor but more usually in a bit part as the first of the “conquest dynasties,” and as such little more than the implacable enemy Other of the Song and its predecessors. This is not least due to the imbalance in surviving textual sources: whereas the Song has bestowed us with a wealth of private and governmental material of all kinds, for the Liao we have little more than official history and a few envoy reports. As a separate work from the *Song shi* 宋史 (Song History), the *Liao shi* 遼史 (Liao History) is easy to set aside unless we are specifically studying Liao-Song interaction.¹ This may be less of an issue regarding the mature Song dynasty of the eleventh century, when the discreteness of the two texts reflects the distinct political divisions of the time. However, for the earlier period of the Liao in the tenth century, largely cotermini-

THIS ARTICLE began as a conference paper for “Textual Afterlife: A Conference on the Uses and Manipulations of Texts,” September 3–4, 2004, at the University of St Andrews, organized by Sally Crumplin and Sumi David (then Ph.D. students). That paper emerged from a project to create parallel translations of the texts discussed here, developed into a grant proposal with a colleague in Translation Studies at Newcastle, Francis Jones. The roots of my work in this area lie in a paper given at the first conference on “The Medieval Chronicle” in Utrecht in 1996. My thanks to Sarah Schneewind, Bob Moore, and Mark Strange for comments and discussion, and to *Asia Major's* readers, especially Reviewer 2, for provoking me to sharpen my ideas; any remaining stubborn errors are my own.

¹ Toghto 脫脫, Ouyang Xuan 歐陽玄, et al., comp., *Song shi* 宋史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), 40 vols [hereafter *SS*] and *Liao shi* 遼史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974) [hereafter *LS*], 5 vols.

nous with the Song's predecessors the Five Dynasties 五代, the dearth of materials and the heavy reliance on official histories is common to all parties.² But those materials for the tenth century, although still formally separate, are in fact closely filiated texts, to the extent that a great deal of our information about the early Liao comes ultimately from the first official history of the Five Dynasties. Closer examination of this circumstance suggests how integral the Liao was to the Five Dynasties period. If this is so, and we also accept that the Song was the product of the Five Dynasties – as enshrined now in the Song volume of the *Cambridge History*: “The Sung Dynasty and its Precursors” – then it must also be the case that without the Liao there would not have been the Song as we know it.

This article starts from the obvious point that historical texts reflect the political circumstances – and particularly the political units or groupings – in which they were produced, and aims to show that the way that such texts pay attention to the various possible contemporary groupings is historically significant (affecting how we understand past events), and not just historiographically significant (affecting how we understand the production of the texts). In the case in question – the early tenth century north of the Huai River 淮水 – the titles and structure of the few surviving texts imply a sharp divide between northern and southern regimes that has been taken as an accurate representation of political and ethnic reality at the time. In particular, the separate dynastic histories of the Song and Liao dynasties have frequently been taken to reflect a real cultural and conceptual coherence in north China that is sharply opposed to the Liao “beyond the passes” and is held to have applied from the start of the Liao in the early tenth century.

Although both official histories were products of the late-Yuan 元 “Three Histories” project (1344–45), they have very different textual histories. Whereas the *Song History* was compiled from a fairly conventional set of Song government materials, the *Liao History* was put together from a sequence of mostly Song works, each of which borrowed extensively from its predecessors in the list. In the structure and content of surviving works of the eleventh and thirteenth centuries we can trace the intensification of differentiation between the Liao and its southern neighbors – including the Five Dynasties of the early tenth century – which becomes canonical in the historiographical divisions

² At least in the Central Plains. The Ten Kingdoms, largely in southern China, are not treated here. See Hugh Clark, “The Ten Kingdoms,” in Denis Twitchett and Paul Smith, ed., *The Sung Dynasty and Its Precursors, 907–1279*, Pt. 1, vol. 5 of *The Cambridge History of China* (New York: Cambridge U.P., 2009) [hereafter *CHC*].

selected by the Yuan court. Intertextual comparison of these texts reinforces our sense of how the legitimating bent of historical writing was strengthened in the Song and beyond, but more important is the comparison with the earliest work in the sequence, the *Jiu Wudai shi* 舊五代史 (Old History of the Five Dynasties) of 974, which was an ultimate or immediate source for much of what the later texts say about the early tenth century. Reading the *Old History* separately one might not notice, but reading it in close comparison with the later works that drew upon it, both structure and content of the history suggest that the Kitan 契丹 and the Liao were integrated more closely, and in a more varied and complex fashion, into the world of the Five Dynasties than their separate historical records immediately suggest.

Re-reading the earlier texts, in particular, in light of this, we may come to new views on the history they related. Such an extended re-reading is matter for another study; my purpose here is simply to draw attention to the importance of considering these historical texts as a set, and to the usefulness of intertextual analysis as a method for sharpening our understanding not only of the texts and their producers, but more importantly the effects of such an understanding on our approaches to the historical events they relate. Here I try to elucidate the structuring of the texts by their authors, in order to draw conclusions about the historical situations of which they wrote. This speaks to the wider issue of the way in which the construction, by historical actors, of the sources we use as primary materials can profoundly affect our framing of the history we are trying to study. Investigating the filiation of texts can also reveal different perceptions in different texts of such basics as political units and their attitudes to each other. A framework and boundaries that may well have been applicable by the fourteenth century were not necessarily so in the tenth century.

HISTORIOGRAPHICAL METHOD IN THE STUDY OF CHINESE HISTORY

In the anglophone sinological world “history” and “historiography” have often been used as synonyms to refer to textual evidence about past events that was recorded and collected by private scholars and government offices. More recently, there has been in this world a new burst of interest in historiography in the sense of the study of the writing of history. This has tended either to fall into a highly theoretical (though happily also comparative) mode and complements an earlier and ongoing thread in the field involving close studies of particular

historians or individual works in their historical context, sometimes at a forensic level of textual detail.³ What has not happened much yet – perhaps because there has been generally so little interest in the political history of the premodern dynasties – is a widespread application of historiographical concerns to our use of historical texts for historical (rather than historiographical) purposes. That is, scholars have studied why or how Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145–ca. 90 BCE) or Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–86) or other writers wrote what they wrote, and also the impact of their writings within their own political milieu, but not so much the implications of such critiques for the accounts we have received from the Simas et alii of the historical events they represent to us.⁴ If Sima Guang was writing his *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government) as – among other things – an element in contemporary arguments going on at court, then what effect does that

³ See the journal *Historiography East and West* and a thread of China-related essays in the journal *History and Theory*; recent monographic studies include David Schaberg, *A Patterned Past: Form and Thought in Early Chinese Historiography* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 2001) (on the pre-imperial period); Stephen Durrant, *The Cloudy Mirror: Tension and Conflict in the Writings of Sima Qian* (Armonk: SUNY Press, 1995); Grant Hardy, *Worlds of Bronze and Bamboo: Sima Qian's Conquest of History* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1999); and on Song historical writing and especially Sima Guang, Ari Levine, "A House in Darkness: The Politics of History and the Language of Politics in the Late Northern Song, 1068–1104" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2002); Ji Xiao-bin, *Politics and Conservatism in Northern Song China: The Career and Thought of Sima Guang (AD 1019–1086)* (Hong Kong: Chinese U.P., 2005); Mark Strange, "The Construction of *Zi zhi tong jian's* Imperial Vision: Sima Guang on the Southern and Northern Dynasties" (Ph.D. diss., Oxford University, 2008); and two notable collections of essays: Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer, Achim Mittag, and Jörn Rüsen, ed., *Historical Truth, Historical Criticism, and Ideology: Chinese Historiography and Historical Culture from a New Comparative Perspective* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005), and Thomas H.C. Lee, ed., *The New and the Multiple: Sung Senses of the Past* (Hong Kong: Chinese U.P., 2004). Shorter pieces on Song writings include, for example, Angela Schottenhammer, "Politics and Morality in Song China: Sima Guang as a Typical Example," in Paul van der Velde and Alex McKay, ed., *New Developments in Asian Studies: An Introduction* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1998), pp. 77–91; and Richard Davis's introduction to his translation of Ouyang Xiu, *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties* (New York: Columbia U.P., 2004). There were precursors in this vein, naturally; for our purposes notably the misleadingly titled Ming K. Chan, "The Historiography of the Tzu-chih T'ung-chien: A Survey," *MS* 31 (1974–75): 1–38. Intensive textual analyses, some ranging beyond the Song, include Charles Hartman, "A Textual History of Cai Jing's Biography in the *Songshi*," in Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Maggie Bickford, ed., *Emperor Huizong and Late Northern Song China: The Politics of Culture and the Culture of Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 2006), pp. 517–64 and "The Making of a Villain: Ch' in Kuei and the *Tao-hsüeh*," *HJAS* 58.1 (1998): 59–145; Sarah Schneewind, "Reduce, Re-use, Recycle: Imperial Autocracy and Scholar-Official Autonomy in the Background to the Ming History Biography of Early Ming Scholar-Official Fang Keqin (1326–1376)," *OE* 48 (2009); Naomi Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty: Frontier Crossings in Liao China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007).

⁴ One exception is Stephen West, "Crossing Over: Huizong in the Afterglow, or the Deaths of a Troubling Emperor," in Ebrey and Bickford, *Emperor Huizong*, pp. 565–608. Such questions are, perhaps, the kind that proponents of *histoire croisée* have in mind. See Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann "Beyond Comparison: *histoire croisée* and the Challenge of Reflexivity," *History and Theory* 45.1 (2006): 30–50.

have on the history that we are able to write on the basis of what he tells us in the *Mirror*?⁵

The criticism of sources and attention to the organisational frameworks of texts are integral parts of historical method. Although not yet commonplace among historians of China, this is an approach long since propounded by those studying medieval Europe, notably Gabrielle Spiegel, who calls on historians to take a deconstructive approach to reading their documents in order to identify not only the content in the form, or the narrative offered by the organisation and reorganisation of the text, but also the “social logic” within which the text was produced, which must then inform the researcher’s conclusions.⁶ What we learn from a suitably critical approach to these texts has historical and not just historiographical value.

Thus the issue in this article is not reliability, of using source criticism to verify or discount recorded information so as to give a firmer grounding for our own interpretations. Rather it is a matter of what insights we gain by considering not only the verifiable information provided in overtly historical works, but also how the writers have placed that information within a framework that does not merely organize the material but also generates meaning, both at the time of composition and for subsequent readers including us.⁷ In the case here, stuff happened, records were made at the time or close to it, subsequent historians wrote up these records again for their own purposes, and we (have to) use those works as primary sources. My purpose here is not to compare the transformation of information and interpretations at the sentence or character level (which has been done elsewhere),⁸ but to step back and look at the relationships between texts at an overall level,

⁵ Sima Guang 司馬光, et al., *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1956) [hereafter *TJ*], 20 vols.

⁶ Spiegel’s great virtue as a writer on theory is that she never forgets that she is a historian. *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1997); see also “Theory into Practice: Reading Medieval Chronicles,” in Erik Kooper, ed., *The Medieval Chronicle* (Amsterdam: n.p., 1999), and a helpful review article: Robert M. Stein, “The Task of the Historian,” *History and Theory* 40.2 (2001): 261–66. Chinese histories present distinctive issues in terms of narrative, due to their arrangement into different sections and their often multiple authorship, see analyses by Grant Hardy, “Can an Ancient Chinese History Contribute to Modern Western Theory? The Multiple Narratives of Ssu-ma Ch’ien,” *History and Theory* 33.1 (1994): 20–38, and Brian Moloughney, “Derivation, Intertextuality and Authority: Narrative and the Problem of Historical Coherence,” *East Asian History* 23 (2002): 129–48.

⁷ This insight is, of course, Hayden White’s, *The Content of the Form* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1987).

⁸ Notably in Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty* and, with tables of parallel passages, in the Ph.D. thesis on which it was based, “Frontier Crossings from North China to Liao, c. 900–1005” (University of Durham, 1994).

and in particular to consider the *structure* of the transmitted works: the organisation and reorganisation of sections, and the shapes of narrative created by omission, inclusion, sequence, and arrangement of events or details. My smaller units of analysis overlap to some degree with the larger units deployed in intensive textual studies, but my focus is the overall methodology of the writers considered here rather than the fine detail of their actual working practices. I am interested in the effects of these methodologies on our general perceptions of a particular overall presentation – in this case a set of presentations – not of one or a few individuals, but of a regime *tout court*.

THE SIDELINING OF THE LIAO

The regime in question – the Liao dynasty – was the dominant state in East Asia during the tenth century, particularly the first half.⁹ One of several regimes established amid the final extinguishing of the Tang 唐 dynasty (618–907), the Liao benefitted from a dynamic leader who was able to mobilize or demand the support of grassland aristocrats and border officials alike to create a steppe-based state with the additional economic and institutional resources provided by taxable farming and artisanal populations seized from the Hebei 河北 and Hedong 河東 regions. In their first quarter-century the Liao provided an important reservoir of additional armed forces for the warring provincial governors of the Five Dynasties, and during the 930s and 940s they were militarily superior to their southern neighbors.¹⁰ From mid-century the Later Zhou 後周 (950–60) and then the early Song rulers began to prove a match for the Liao in war, and after the two sides fought to a standstill they achieved a grudging understanding in the Treaty of Shanyuan 澶淵 of 1005. The Song agreed to pay the Liao a large but easily affordable annual subsidy, and by couching what was actually a relationship of equality in the language of supremacy and submission (both emperors implied their supremacy in their own letter of confirmation), the treaty

⁹ For the historical significance of the Liao see Denis Twitchett, “The Liao,” in Herbert Franke and Denis Twitchett, ed., *Alien Regimes and Border States, 907–1368*, vol. 6 of *CHC* (New York: Cambridge U.P., 1994), pp. 43–153; Shu Fen 舒焚, *Liao shi gao* 遼史稿 (Hubei: Hubei renmin chubanshe, 1984); and Yang Shusen 楊樹森, *Liao shi jianbian* 遼史簡編 (Shenyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 1984).

¹⁰ For detail that comes from or incorporates the Five Dynasties perspective, see Lü Simian 呂思勉, *Sui Tang Wudai shi* 隋唐五代史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959; rpt. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1984), chaps 12–14, and esp. chap. 15; Tao Maobing 陶懋炳, *Wudai shi lue* 五代史略 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1985) and Naomi Standen, “What Nomads Want: Raids, Invasions, and the Liao Conquest of 947,” in Michal Biran and Reuven Amitai, ed., *Mongols, Turks, and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Outside World* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005), pp. 127–74; idem, *Unbounded Loyalty*; and idem, “The Five Dynasties,” in *CHC* 5A.

enabled each side to acknowledge the other's right to exist. Maintaining the treaty through quick-footed diplomacy and pragmatic compromise, Liao and Song effectively shared the political dominance of East Asia for over a century until they expired in successive years at the hands of the Jurchen 女真-led Jin 金 dynasty (1115–1234).¹¹ The Liao received envoys from a large number of more-or-less distant regimes, ranging from the submitted chiefs of the pastoral world and independent rulers of oasis states, to Korea, Japan, and Persia. They ran an administration along Tang lines, including regular examinations and the education system to go with it, which became sufficiently institutionalized that it continued to function even when an incompetent drunk held the throne. Certainly the Liao were known throughout the region for their Buddhist piety, with their scholarship, printing, and pagodas receiving the highest praise from abroad.¹² On the secular side, elite tombs have revealed metalwork of outstanding skill and beauty, together with high-quality painting and calligraphy.¹³

¹¹ On these military and diplomatic relations, see Peter Lorge, "War and the Creation of the Northern Song" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1996); Christian Schwarz-Schilling, *Der Friede von Shan Yüan (1005 n. Chr.)* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1959); Christian Lamouroux, "De l'étrangeté à la différence: Les récits des émissaires Song en pays Liao (XI^e siècle)," in Claudine Salmon, ed., *Récits de voyages asiatiques – genres, mentalités* (Paris: EFEO, 1996), pp. 101–26; Lau Nap-yin, "Waging War for Peace? The Peace Accord between the Song and the Liao in AD 1005," in Hans Van de Ven, ed., *Warfare in Chinese History* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000), pp. 180–221; Melvin Thlick-len Ang, "Sung-Liao Diplomacy in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century China: A Study of the Social and Political Determinants of Foreign Policy" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1983); David C. Wright, *From War to Diplomatic Parity in Eleventh-Century China: Sung's Foreign Relations with Kitan Liao* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005). These all include citations to the extensive literature in Chinese. Hoyt C. Tillman, "The Treaty of Shanyuan from the Perspectives of Western Scholars," *Sungkyun Journal of East Asian Studies* 5.2 (2005): 135–55, surveys work by senior scholars through the 1990s, to which younger researchers, in items listed above, have since added a range of new perspectives.

¹² The indispensable work on Liao society (in any language) remains Karl A. Wittfogel and Feng Jiasheng, *History of Chinese Society: Liao (907–1125)* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1949), which lists "subordinate states," pp. 101–11. On political, social, and economic matters see also Chen Shu 陳述, *Qidan zhengshi shigao* 契丹政治史稿 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1986) and *Qidan shehui jingji shigao* 契丹社會經濟史稿 (Beijing: Shenghuo, Dushu, Xinzhi Sanlian shudian, 1963); Shimada Masao 島田正郎, *Ryōdai shakaishi kenkyū* 遼代社會史研究 (Kyoto: Sanwa Shobō, 1952) and "The Characteristic of Northern Region Liao Bureaucracy and the Significance of the Hereditary Official System," *Memoirs of the Research Department of Tōyō Bunko* 41 (1983): 33–62; Yang Ruowei 楊若薇, *Qidan wangchao zhengzhi junshi zhidu yanjiu* 契丹王朝政治軍事制度研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1991).

¹³ Material culture provides the most striking indications of Liao achievements. For example, Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, *Liao Architecture* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997); Tsao Hsingyuan, *Differences Preserved: Reconstructed Tombs from the Liao and Song Dynasties* (Portland: Reed College and Douglas F. Cooley Memorial Art Gallery, 2000); Shen Hsuehman, *Gilded Splendor: Treasures of China's Liao Empire (907–1125)* (New York: Asia Society, 2006). I omit here specific references to what is rapidly becoming an overwhelming quantity

The Liao are thus crucial to an understanding of the tenth century, yet we have had relatively little research about them. Interest in them has been growing rapidly in the last few years in China, but scholarly output is still under half of that on the Song.¹⁴ In European languages works on the Song spill off the shelves, whereas monographs on the Liao can be counted on the fingers of one hand, and several of those consider the southern regimes as well.¹⁵ There is, of course, vastly more source material for the Song than for the Liao. Whereas students of the Song benefit from the output of a commercial printing industry and the socio-political dominance of the scholar-gentry, the Liao elite, however literate many of them were, lacked both descendants minded to preserve a written tradition and a social and institutional framework to facilitate such preservation. When the Jin conquered the Liao, a large body of refugees migrated westwards and founded the Western Liao 西遼 (1124–1211), but the continuity of records was lost.¹⁶ Accordingly, the textual material on the Liao is overwhelmingly dominated by official or quasi-official histories, reports, and memorials. Archaeology continually adds inscriptions, but the pickings will remain ever slim in comparison to the bounty of the Song.

When researchers are compelled to be so reliant on the official sources and cannot be drawn to the Liao by the existence of a large body of private writings, then ignoring them is made easier by the separation between works dealing with the Liao and those on the Five Dynasties and Song. Official dynastic histories were, *inter alia*, claims to legitimacy that asserted the rightful place of both the recording and the recorded regime in a line of succession stretching back to antiquity. Such claims rest upon the formal premise that there is only ever one legitimate ruling house at a time. Yet for nearly half of China's imperial history the territory of "China proper" was divided between two or more regimes, more than one of which was granted an official history by its successors. Theory notwithstanding, overlapping official histories proliferate for the period from the third century through the

of Chinese archaeological reports on Liao contexts. Linda Johnson, *Women of the Conquest Dynasties: Gender and Identity in Liao and Jin China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 2011), has recently interpreted this evidence for the English-speaking audience.

¹⁴ For 2001, *Zhongguo shi yanjiu dongtai* 中國史研究動態 listed 3 pages of works on Liao-Xi Xia-Jin topics (2002.6) and 9 pages of Song items (2002.11), and by 2004 there were 7 pages of Liao-Xi Xia-Jin materials (2005.9) and 8 pages for Song (2005.12), but this is still comparing the combined materials for three dynasties with items on a single regime.

¹⁵ See notes provided in the previous paragraph.

¹⁶ On the Western Liao, see Michal Biran, *The Empire of the Qara Khitai in Eurasian History: Between China and the Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2005).

sixth, and again for the tenth to the thirteenth centuries. These works resolved particular issues for those who ordered their production, but later generations have not always approved of those decisions. Modern scholarship on the Middle Period still usually regards the Five Dynasties and Song as the single legitimate line of dynastic descent, whereas the legitimacy of the “conquest dynasties” of Liao, Jin, and Yuan (1260–1368) has often been problematic, if not outright dubious, since historical times.¹⁷

These three “alien regimes”, led by ruling clans based in the northern grasslands (the Kitan, Jurchen, and Mongols, respectively) are held

Table 1. Middle Period Dynasties with Official Histories

DYNASTY	DATES	HISTORY	DATE HISTORY COMPLETED		
Tang	618–907	<i>Old Tang History</i>	945		
		<i>New Tang History</i>	1060		
Liao (Kitan)	907–1125	<i>Liao History</i>	1344		
FIVE DYNASTIES:					
Later Liang	907–923	} <i>Old History of the Five Dynasties</i>	974		
Later Tang	923–936				
Later Jin	936–946			} <i>New History of the Five Dynasties</i>	1073
Later Han	947–950				
Later Zhou	951–960				
Northern Song	960–1126	<i>Song History</i>	1345		
Jin (Jurchen)	1115–1234	<i>Jin History</i>	1344		
Southern Song	1127–1276	<i>Song History</i>	1345		
Yuan (Mongols)	1260–1368	<i>Yuan History</i>	1370		

¹⁷ See Chan Hok-lam, *Legitimation in Imperial China: Discussions under the Jurchen-Chin Dynasty (1115–1234)* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984). The Ming founder insisted on the legitimacy of the Yuan because his own legitimation depended on it, but the problem remains that even on the most conservative datings (1271 when Qubilai decreed the dynastic name of Yuan, and 1276 when the Song emperor offered his submission to the Mongols), there remains at least a five-year overlap between the last years of Southern Song (1127–1276) and the opening years of the Yuan (from 1260). See Chan Hok-lam, “Chinese Official Historiography at the Yüan Court: The Composition of the Liao, Chin, and Sung Histories,” in John D. Langlois, ed., *China under Mongol Rule* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1981), pp. 56–106.

to have progressively conquered the Song.¹⁸ For the people of the Song, generations of armed hostility (if not always actual war) against the northern neighbors ingrained a habit (for which, of course, ancient precedent could readily be found) of regarding the northerners as uncouth and violent barbarians, who were contrasted with the cultured and civilized world in which the Song scholar-bureaucrats portrayed themselves as living.¹⁹ This is China's version of the age-old cleavage between literate, urban-agricultural societies and usually non-literate pastoral nomads,²⁰ but the problem for the Song – and later generations of more-or-less ethnocentric historians – was to reconcile the (supposed) barbarism of the conquerors with the unavoidable fact that for some four centuries they ruled all or part of what was or was claimed to be Song territory.

The problem is particularly acute for the tenth century, for the first half of which the Tang successor regimes, the Five Dynasties, occupied only the Central Plains. These successors (see table 1) suffered massive political instability, experienced many changes in territorial extent, and shared their immediate world with numerous neighbors who were, politically, culturally, and militarily, at least their equals. The societies of the Five Dynasties were also culturally varied to a high degree. They continued the cultural mingling characteristic of the preceding Tang and post-Han dynasties, to the extent that three of the five dynasties were headed by rulers identified as Shatuo 沙陀 Turks rather than as Chinese.²¹ Despite this, the Five Dynasties regimes have been seen as carrying not only the legitimate line of descent, but in much modern scholarship also the torch of Chinese cultural continuity, in contrast to the foreign character of the Liao.²²

¹⁸ These three are sometimes joined by the Xi Xia dynasty founded by Tanguts, which did not acquire its own dynastic history. This approach is adopted by *CHC* 6. On the Xi Xia see Ruth Dunnell, *The Great State of White and High: Buddhism and State Formation in Eleventh-Century Xia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996).

¹⁹ We see this, for instance, in the language used to speak of the Liao in internal Song documents, of which we have a large quantity. See Wang Gungwu, "The Rhetoric of a Lesser Empire: Early Sung Relations with its Neighbors," and Tao Jing-shen, "Barbarians or Northerners: Northern Sung Images of the Khitans," both in Morris Rossabi, ed., *China Among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th to 14th Centuries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 47–65, 66–86.

²⁰ For an excellent exposition of how this can happen in a related case, see James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 2009), chap. 4, esp. pp. 109–11.

²¹ The Later Tang 後唐 (923–36), Later Jin 後晉 (936–47), and Later Han 後漢 (947–50).

²² This is seen chiefly in work arguing for the sinicizing effects of the Five Dynasties on the Liao, in which it is implicit that the Chinese population of the Central Plains must have first sinicized the Shatuo Turks. For example, Cen Jiawu 岑家梧, "Liaodai Qidan he hanzu ji qita minzu de jingji wenhua lianxi" 遼代契丹和漢族及其他民族的經濟文化關係, *Minzu tuanjie* 民族團結 (1963.12): 25–31; Ren Chongyue 任崇岳, "Lun Liaodai Qidanzu dui Hanzu wenhua

The Song dynasty naturally had no interest in Liao records, and when both enemies were overthrown in short order by the Jin, it was left to the conquerors to preserve what records they might from the Liao. But when the Mongols conquered the Jin and then the Song, the Yuan court took over all the records retained by both defeated courts and after long and difficult debate finally decided to compile not only a history of the Song from whom they had conquered the southern portion of their realm, but also of the Jin from whom the north had been taken, as well as a record of *their* predecessors, the Liao. The Mongols sought, among their other modes of legitimation, to justify in Chinese terms their claim to succeed to the previous rulers of all the parts of their Yuan empire, even if their method produced a historiographical anomaly.²³ When the Ming took over from the Mongols, ethnically conscious Chinese literati rejected the three Yuan compilations and rewrote and recompiled histories of the Song to make them the sole bearers of legitimacy.²⁴

On top of this highly contested and fragmented set of sparse materials, modern Chinese scholars have found it difficult to pay attention to the Liao for nationalist reasons. Until recently the PRC laid claim to the histories of all political entities that had ever existed within the PRC's current geographical borders, and told their stories – when they told them at all – as quests for betterment by imitation of the advanced Chinese culture located in the core territory of the Central Plains.²⁵

de xishou he jicheng” 論遼代契丹族對漢族文化的吸收和繼承, *Zhongzhou xuekan* 中州學刊 (1983.3): 95–99, 88, both rpt. in Sun Jinji 孫進己, et al., ed., *Qidan shi lun zhu huibian* 契丹史論著匯編 ([Shenyang]: Beifang shi di ziliao bianweihui, 1988); Yan Yuqi 閻玉啓, “Lüe lun Liao chao de hanzu guanli he shiren” 略論遼朝的漢族官吏和士人, *Shixue pinglin* 史學評林 (1982.1): 25–30; Wang Chengguo 王成國, “Lun Liao chao de er Han” 論遼朝的二韓, *Dongbei difang shi yanjiu* 東北地方史研究 (1985.4): 88–91, 84; cf. Lin Ronggui 林榮貴 and Chen Liankai 陳連開, “Wudai Shiguo shiqi Qidan, Shatuo, Hanzu de zhengzhi, jingji he wenhua jiaoliu” 五代十國時期契丹、沙陀、漢族的政治、經濟和文化交流, in Chen Shu, ed., *Liao jin shi lunji* (Beijing: Shumu wenxian, 1987) 3, pp. 155–86; Yao Congwu 姚從吾, “Qidan hanhua de fenxi” 契丹漢化的分析, *Dalu zazhi* 大陸雜誌 4.4 (1952): 507–22, rpt. in *Qidan shi lun zhu huibian*; and a revival of this view: Zheng Weijia 鄭偉佳, “Tangmo Wudai chuqi beiqian hanren dui Qidan li guo de yingxiang” 唐末五代初期北遷漢人對契丹立國的影響, *Liaoning Gongcheng jishu daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 遼寧工程技術大學學報(社會科學版) (2008.3): 3 pages (unpaginated). For Ouyang Xiu's view on Five Dynasties legitimacy, see below.

²³ On the debate see Chan Hok-lam, “Chinese Official Historiography,” and Otagi Matsuo 愛宕松男, “Ryō Kin Sō sanshi no hensen to hokuzoku ōchō no tachiba” 遼金宋三史の編纂と北族王朝の立場, *Bunka* 文化 15.4 (1951): 22–50; also Herbert Franke, “Historiography under Mongol Rule: The Role of History in Acculturation,” *Mongolia Studies* 1 (1974): 15–26.

²⁴ See, for example, Jin Yufu 金毓黻, *Zhongguo shixue shi* 中國史學史 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1957, rpt. 1999), pp. 133–34, 139–44; Mary Ferenczy, “Chinese Historiographers' Views on Barbarian-Chinese Relations (14–16th Centuries),” *Acta Orientalia* 21 (1968): 360–61.

²⁵ See references in n. 22, above, which were part of a wave of such work in the 1980s. For

But as soon as the Liao were studied seriously it became apparent just how powerful they had been. This created an embarrassing contradiction to the orthodox interpretation, which is now being turned around to emphasize the glories of Liao cultural achievements.²⁶ Hence the historical tension felt by the Yuan and Ming is reflected in a modern tension, and both were occasioned by the existence of the avowedly non-Chinese Liao dynasty as the dominant power in the region for over forty years, for over twenty-five of which the Five Dynasties regimes granted legitimacy in “China” were also led by non-Chinese Shatuo Turks. In both cases, historical and present-day, the easiest way of addressing this problem was to ignore it. So historians, and especially Western historians, have not much studied the Liao, and when they have, it has been almost entirely in a context of their enmity with the

earlier trends see Wang Gungwu, “Pre-modern History: Some Trends in Writing the History of the Song,” in Michael Yahuda, ed., *New Directions in the Social Sciences and Humanities in China* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987), pp. 1–27.

²⁶ Among an output rising every year, examples include the analysis of foreign relations in Huang Fengqi 黃風岐, *Qidan shi yanjiu* 契丹史研究 (Chifeng: Neimenggu kexue jishu chubanshe, 1999), chap. 8; the Liao placed at the center of a network of envoy exchanges by Gu Yali 顧亞麗, “Waiguo shi jieshi Liao xiangguan” 外國使節使遼相關, *Neimenggu wenwu kaogu* 內蒙古文物考古 (2002.2): 67–72; and the power implicit in the ability to relocate tens of thousands of people between capitals, in Han Maoli 韓茂莉, *Caoyuan yu tianyuan: Liao Jin shiqi Xi Liao he liuyu nongmuye yu huanjing* 草原與田園—遼金時期西遼河流域農業與環境 (Beijing: Sanlian, 2006). Curiously, Zhu Ruixi 朱瑞熙, Zhang Bangwei 張邦煒, Liu Fusheng 劉復生, Cai Chongbang 蔡崇榜, and Wang Zengyu 王曾瑜 published *Liao Song Xi Xia Jin shehui shenghuo shi* 遼宋西夏金社會生活史 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe) in 1998, but the 2005 reprint was retitled *Song Liao Xi Xia Jin shehui shenghuo shi* 宋遼西夏金社會生活史, representing a retrenchment to the conventional dynastic sequence. The emphasis on cultural achievements may be seen in, for example, Feng Jiqin 馮繼欽, Menggu Tuoli 孟古托力, Huang Fengqi, *Qidan zu wenhua shi* 契丹族文化史 (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1994); Hu Lin 胡琳, “Cong beimingwen deng Liaodai wenxian kan Liaodai fojiao” 從碑銘文等遼代文獻看遼代佛教, *Suzhou Xueyuan xuebao* 宿州學院學報 (2007.2): 3 pages (unpaginated); but most notably in material culture, for which Liao entries in the “Archaeology” and “Cultural relics” categories of the annual Liao-Jin bibliography published by the *Chifeng Xueyuan xuebao* (*Hanwen zhexue shehui kexue ban*) 赤峰學院學報 (漢文哲學社會科學版) doubled proportionately from 5 per cent of the total in 2001 to 10 per cent in 2009. Liao metalwork and tomb paintings are particularly striking, as seen in Neimenggu zizhiqiu wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 內蒙古自治區文物考古研究所, *Liao Chenguo gongzhu mu* 遼陳國公主墓 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1993) and the small industry based on studying the Xuanhua tombs: Hebei sheng wenwu yanjiusuo 河北省文物研究所, *Xuanhua Liao mu: 1974–1993 nian kaogu fajue baogao* 宣化遼墓: 1974–1993 年考古發掘報告, 2 vols (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2001); and a host of others. This material makes for fabulous exhibitions, accompanied by well produced catalogues that contribute to the opulent feel, such as Tang Cailan 唐彩蘭, *Liao Shangjing wenwu xieying* 遼上京文物攝影 (Hohhot: Yuanfang chubanshe, 2005); Liu Bing 劉冰, *Chifeng bowuguan wenwu diancang* 赤峰博物館文物典藏 (Hohhot: Yuanfang chubanshe, 2006), and now in English notably Shen, *Gilded Splendor*, but also Tsao, *Differences Preserved*. English-language popularization now beckons: Jake Hooker, “Dynasty of Nomads: Rediscovering the Forgotten Liao Empire,” *Archaeology* 60.6 (2007): 29–35 (with thanks to Barbara Bennett for drawing this to my attention); and possibly a segment in a forthcoming BBC documentary currently under development.

Song, which sometimes provides justification for denigration of the Liao and certainly offers no incentive to study them in their own right.

Such China- or Chinese-centred approaches create an oppositional thinking that shapes the questions we can ask and the frameworks within which we can think.²⁷ It reinforces the barbarism-civilization antithesis to leave modern scholars, however unwittingly, still working within a paradigm wherein the issue is whether “barbarians” can ever be legitimate rulers of China. When the scholarship is divided, as it is for the tenth century, in accordance with the categories apparently defined by the surviving sources, then historical writing past and present reinforces unexamined assumptions and prejudices, and so helps to reproduce them.

But we should beware of supposing that contemporaries always shared later, let alone present-day, outlooks. Careful comparative use of the historical sources for the tenth century to analyse individual actions indicates a set of attitudes at work in the early tenth century (under the earlier Five Dynasties) different from those that developed during the latter half of the century.²⁸ But it is not only the life choices made by individuals that show us this change: the historiography itself reveals changing attitudes, not only through the way the portrayal of incidents and individuals is altered from one text to the next at the detailed level of phrases or single Chinese characters, but also – as examined here – in the structuring of the historical works as whole entities through the choice and arrangement of sections and subjects, and the shaping (or not) of smaller-scale narratives within the whole.

The earliest history for the tenth century is the *Old History of the Five Dynasties*.²⁹ The *Old History* was completed in 974, just fourteen years after the last of the events it describes. Over the next 370 years, however, this work was repeatedly plundered by successive generations of Middle-Period historians and recorders. These writers and compilers transmitted much wording verbatim while sometimes altering crucial details but, as we shall see, at the level of the whole text they also se-

²⁷ Scott, *Art of Not Being Governed*, chap. 4; Jörn Rüsen, “How to Overcome Ethnocentrism: Approaches to a Culture of Recognition by History in the Twenty-First Century,” *History and Theory* 43 (2004): 118–29. Rüsen builds on earlier work including “Some Theoretical Approaches to Intercultural Comparative Historiography,” *History and Theory* 35 (1996): 5–22. He is rightly concerned with the dominance of the western paradigm for the practice of (mainstream) history, and thus the discipline’s eurocentricity, but he understands very well that the answer is not to replace one center with another.

²⁸ Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty*.

²⁹ Xue Juzheng 薛居正, et al., *Jiu Wudai shi* 舊五代史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976) [hereafter *JW*], 6 vols.

lected material and reorganized their borrowings until the depiction of the Five Dynasties was quite transformed. The *Old History* addressed in one text all the complexities, ambiguities, and compromises of a multicultural borderland, so that the Liao were integrated into the text quite fully despite the dynastic history format. In the eleventh century, Sima Guang's composite chronicle, the *Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government*, included much about the Liao alongside material on the Five Dynasties. His contemporary Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–72), however, did his best to eliminate the Liao almost completely from his record, preserving only the actions of their more notable Chinese ministers. By the mid-fourteenth century Ouyang's view had won a victory of sorts, for there had developed a clear division into two sets of materials for two distinct political-cultural units: one for the Five Dynasties seen as the legitimate inheritors of the Chinese imperium and one for a Liao dynasty portrayed as their perpetual antagonist. In tracing the effect of the changing structures of the historical works for the early tenth century, we ultimately find ourselves tracing the development of a historiographical division that became necessary as parallel state formation demanded ever clearer distinctions between societies – and histories – that had previously been understood in a much more integrated way.

THE TENTH CENTURY ACCORDING TO THE *OLD HISTORY OF THE FIVE DYNASTIES*

The Five Dynasties are unusual in having not one but two official dynastic histories.³⁰ The political and moral functions of these works demanded that historians narrate their material as one round of the dynastic cycle, from virtuous founder to “bad, last ruler.”³¹ History itself demonstrated the eternal importance of virtuous behavior, especially by rulers, in the relationship between Heaven and humanity, while also establishing the legitimacy of this new dynasty in particular. Accordingly, in 973 the founding emperor of the Song dynasty ordered the compilation of his predecessors' official history. The history of the

³⁰ There is a great deal of literary material for this period, but all but a tiny amount comes from the Ten Kingdoms, which coexisted with each other and with the Five Dynasties but are not considered to have carried the line of legitimacy across the gap between the Tang and the Song. See Johannes Kurz, “A Survey of the Historical Sources for the Five Dynasties and Ten States in Song Times,” *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 33 (2003): 187–224.

³¹ See Yang Lien-sheng, “The Organization of Chinese Official Historiography: Principles and Methods of the Standard Histories from the T'ang through the Ming Dynasty,” in W.G. Beasley and E.G. Pulleyblank, ed., *Historians of China and Japan* (London: Oxford U.P., 1961), pp. 46–53.

great Tang dynasty had been completed in 945 under the Later Jin 後晉 (936–47), the third of the Five Dynasties, but neither the Jin nor their successor dynasties had ordered the completion of histories of their immediate antecedents.³² Thus a team of Song historians led by Xue Juzheng 薛居正 was charged to produce a history of all the five dynasties that had successively held the Central Plains between the demise of the Tang and the founding of the Song, and eighteen months later the finished work was presented at court. As the timescale suggests, the history was hastily compiled.

These early Song compilers used methods developed by the History Office of the Tang dynasty, and materials created or collected for the purpose.³³ From about the seventh century, Diaries of Activity and Repose (*qiju zhu* 起居注) were fairly consistently written up in annalistic form at the end of each reign, at which point some biographies would be added to make a Veritable Record (*shilu* 實錄). Biographies were prepared from materials collected by the court, such as Accounts of Conduct (*xingzhuang* 行狀), and narrative accounts usually provided by a friend or relative of the subject. Biographies were only written up after the subject's death, and those available had to be winnowed down to a manageable number for inclusion in the history. Selection for inclusion was influenced by the need to provide suitable moral exemplars (both good and bad) to assist in the presentation of a legitimizing dynastic cycle, and by the particular politics in operation at the point of compilation.

At moments deemed to be appropriate, a number of Veritable Records would be compiled into a History of the State (*guoshi* 國史) covering the reigns of one or more previous emperor, at which point treatises might be added. During the Five Dynasties, however, the History Office compiled almost a full set of Veritable Records but no Histories of the State.³⁴ This was a remarkable achievement in such tumultuous times, but despite periods of continuity in the staffing of the History Office, there was significant variation in what survived into the Song. For instance, the Veritable Records for “nine reigns” (which must mean the last emperors of Great Tang and perhaps the Later Liang 後梁 dynasty, 907–23) seem to have found their way to Chengdu in independent Si-

³² Each maintained and compiled records for itself and sometimes one or more previous regime. Wang Gungwu, “The *Chiu Wu-tai shih* and History-Writing during the Five Dynasties,” *AMNS* 6.1 (1957): 1–22.

³³ A comprehensive exposition of the relevant methods discussed hereafter is Denis C. Twitchett, *The Writing of Official History under the Tang* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1992), pt. 2.

³⁴ Wang, “Chiu Wu-tai shih.”

chuan (Former Shu 前蜀, 907–25). The Later Tang (923–36) devoted much effort to collecting historical material, and their own history is quite thoroughly recorded as a result, but in this case they recovered only some scrappy remnants.³⁵

Faced with these and a host of other problems, it is not surprising that the *Old History* appears to have been only loosely edited.³⁶ It treats each of the five regimes separately, with its own annals and biographies presented together before moving on to the annals and biographies of the next dynasty. The treatises are grouped at the end, and each discusses developments across all five dynasties in a single essay. Choosing this form made life much easier for the compilers, who did not have to integrate disparate material into a single set of annals and could simply select suitable biographies from among those in each Veritable Record. Since this approach placed five, very short, dynastic cycles on display, it also made clear the process of the formal transmission of the Mandate of Heaven from each of the five dynasties to the next, and ultimately to the Song. The annals have been fairly castigated for their lack of literary merit, and can sometimes seem like little more than a list of who received which official post. With every new reign came a new round of appointments, rewarding the followers of the new ruler and buying acceptance from former adherents of the old.³⁷ But read with care and patience, these lists can give a remarkably full account of institutional, military, and political events, and for all their ubiquity, they are heavily supplemented by considerable quotation from contemporary documents, apparent records of conversations at court, and numerous narrative passages (mostly brief, a few longer) hinting at the political and social complexity behind the facade of institutions.³⁸

³⁵ *JW* 37, p. 510.

³⁶ A further problem, potentially, is that the original history went out of circulation and then all copies were lost altogether, so that we have to work from a recompilation of eighty to ninety per cent of the text completed in 1775, chiefly from excerpts included in the *Yongle da dian* 永樂大典 of 1408. Hans van Ess, “*Ssu-k’u ch’üan-shu* Editions of Sung Dynasty Texts and the *Yung-lo ta-tien*,” *Asiatische Studien* 56 (2002): 635–46, suggests that Qing (1644–1911) recompilers may have frequently edited out “anti-barbarian” passages from works they took from the *Yongle da dian*, casting doubt on their reliability. The *Old History* is one of these, but wherever possible the editors of the modern edition of the *Old History* checked their Qing and later editions directly against the tiny portion of the *Yongle da dian* that survived at the time (*JW* p. 4, publisher’s note). As shall be seen, the argument of the present paper does not rest upon the absence of anti-barbarian passages from the *Old History* but on features of the text that it would have been difficult to create simply by omission.

³⁷ Examples are at *JW* 3, pp. 49–50; 8, p. 117; 29, pp. 403–4; 36, pp. 498–99; esp. 45, pp. 614–19 and 46, pp. 633–40 (Li Congke 李從珂 did little else for months); 76, pp. 991–95; 81, pp. 1069–77 *passim*; 99, pp. 1326–29; esp. 101, pp. 1343–46; 110, pp. 1460–62; 114, pp. 1511, 1514; 120, pp. 1591–96.

³⁸ Wang Gungwu, *The Structure of Power in North China during the Five Dynasties* (Kuala

The continual listing of appointments means continual attention paid to the relationships between people whose biographies, written in an overtly narrative mode, are available elsewhere in the text, and which may supplement, complement, or contradict the version in the annals. A notable example is the start of the four-year war between Liao and Later Jin that ended in the latter's destruction. In the *Old History* annals for the end of 943 we hear of a planned rebellion by the provincial governor (*jiedushi* 節度使) Yang Guangyuan 楊光遠 in Shandong and a week later about preparations against apparently unrelated Kitan raiding. It is only a month after this that reports of a gigantic Liao invasion force observe that Yang had summoned it.³⁹ There is no trace of a connected narrative, and no explanation until we turn to Yang Guangyuan's biography.⁴⁰ This provides the links between these events, but the connections remain inadequate to explain four years of determined campaigning. However, another biography presents an altogether different story, blaming the war on the provocations advised and committed by the Jin general Jing Yanguang 景延廣, who does not feature at all in the annals for these two months.⁴¹

As this example may suggest, the overall effect of annals and biographies taken together is to show us political volatility of the highest order: allegiances are transferred according to entirely pragmatic considerations and take borderlines with them.⁴² What is rarely noticed, however, is that in their matter-of-fact relaying of court business, the early Song compilers ensured that the *Old History* often pays remarkably detailed attention to neighboring regimes, their leaders, and their servants, most notably the Liao dynasty.

This probably was not the intention of Xue Juzheng and his colleagues, for the significance of Chinese history production to supporting dynastic legitimacy makes it understandable that the compilers organized their material in a way that specifically denied formal legitimacy to all those leaders and regimes that had competed or coexisted with the Song's five lineal ancestors. This included the regimes of the Ten Kingdoms 十國, the last of which had not yet been fully conquered in

Lumpur: University of Malaya, 1963), shows how much can be achieved with this material. This book has now been reissued as *Divided China: Preparing for Reunification 883–947* (Singapore: World Scientific Press, 2007), with a new polemical preface on the essential unity of China through the ages.

³⁹ *JW* 82, pp. 1083–84.

⁴⁰ *JW* 79, pp. 1290–93.

⁴¹ *JW* 88, p. 1144.

⁴² For a detailed account of the politics, see Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty*, chap. 3.

973-4, and all the governors who had divided the wreckage of the Tang empire between them around the turn of the ninth to tenth centuries. These competitors of the Five Dynasties were sidelined in the *Old History* through the use of form by placing their biographies in a group of seven chapters (*juan* 132-38) following the five sets of annals and biographies (see table 2). In the north, specifically, the Kitan founders of the Liao dynasty were confined to Chapter 137 under the heading “Foreign States” (*waiguo* 外國, ending with the death of the second emperor in 947), while the Tibetans, Uyghurs, Tanguts, and others shared a second such chapter. These follow two chapters on major regional families (*shixi* 世襲) and three on “False Claimants” (*zanwei* 僞僞). This element of structure sharpened the distinction between the line of legitimate succession and those deemed by the Song to be pretenders; devoting a scant seven chapters to the latter peripheral elements contrasts sharply with the 131 chapters on the Five Dynasties themselves and their servants.

Yet despite taking this approach, other structural elements worked in the opposite direction. The Liao government and mounted groups from the grasslands operating on their own recognizance – both called “Kitan” in the text – appear continually in the annals as military backup, raiders, and envoys, among other things, and are woven into the biographies of dozens of individual biographical subjects. Furthermore, just as if they were a notable minister, a connected account of their earliest history is always available to the reader in a whole chapter devoted to that purpose.⁴³ Accordingly, the story told in the annals and biographies taken together – as they would have been by most readers in imperial times – is one of manifold connections and relationships between the Kitan or Liao and the dynasty’s subjects, and the people of the Five Dynasties, that did not stick to a simple binary divide.⁴⁴

In this version of events the Kitan were just one of several regional powers arising during the final collapse of the Great Tang dynasty.⁴⁵ Like a number of other successor regimes, the Kitan founded their own dynasty, which was an integral part of the political scene in the northern borderlands during the first quarter of the tenth century, during the Later Liang. During the second dynasty, the Later Tang, which was an

⁴³ Even within the structure chosen by Xue Juzheng and his team, it is striking that the Kitan have an entire chapter to themselves, whereas all the remaining kings, governors, and foreign peoples share whichever chapter they are in with between one and three other significant players and a handful or more of lesser ones.

⁴⁴ Or even, in fact, between just two enemies. Many of the political situations described involve three or more parties.

⁴⁵ In *CHC* 5A, this analysis is developed on the basis of the events.

Table 2. The Internal Organisation of the Histories for the Tenth Century

The dynastic-history format typically presents information in annals, biographies and additional sections; contents overlap. The number of chapters is simply a proxy for the significance placed by the compilers on each structural element of their history.

NOTE: Because the *Old History* presents a complete set of annals and biographies for each of the Five Dynasties in turn, in this case the number of chapters for each dynasty is reported.

	<i>Old History</i>		<i>New History</i>		<i>Mirror</i>	<i>Record</i>		<i>Liao History</i>	
	150 juan		74 juan		294 juan	27 juan		116 juan	
	A	B	A	B		A	B	A	B
Number of chaps. (j.) in Annals (A) & Biographies (B)	10 Liang 24 Tang 11 Jin 5 Han 11 Zhou	14 Liang 26 Tang 13 Jin 6 Han 11 Zhou	12	45	28 (chron'l format)	12	4	30	44
Totals =	61	70	12	45		12	4	30	44
Number of chaps. (j.) in additional sections	• <i>treatises</i> • <i>kingdoms/governors</i> • <i>foreign states</i> (incl. 1 on Liao)	12 5 2	• <i>treat., tbl.</i> • <i>kingdoms</i> • <i>for. states</i> (incl. 2 on Liao)	4 10 3	none	• <i>docs.,</i> <i>treat.</i> 8		• <i>treat., tbl.,</i> <i>etc.</i> 40 • <i>for. states</i> 2	

attempt by the Princes of Jin 晉 in Hedong to restore the Great Tang, we see the Liao down to 936 apparently achieving a considerable degree of co-existence with their southern neighbor as both dealt with internal matters and pursued expansionist policies elsewhere. The annals provide a detailed account of the earlier history of these relations between Liao and the principedom of Jin, while the biographies show the considerable extent of individual and regional involvement with the Liao and Kitan right through to 936. Prefects, governors, and generals such as Li Siben 李嗣本, Lu Wenjin 盧文進, and Zhang Yanchao 張彥超 in northern Hedong and Hebei, Wang Chuzhi 王處直 and Wang Du 王都在 Yiwu 義武 province, Liu Shouguang 劉守光 in Youzhou 幽州 province, and Zhang Wenli 張文禮/Wang Deming 王德明 in Zhao 趙 province (Zhenzhou 鎮州) all had dealings with the Liao establishment that are related in their biographies.⁴⁶ Aside from these high-level contacts, in the dozen or so years of the Later Tang there seems to have been par-

⁴⁶ *JW* 52, pp. 709-10 (Li Siben); 97, pp. 1294-96 (Lu Wenjin); 129, pp. 1706-7 (Zhang Yanchao); 54, pp. 731-34 (Wang Du; this biography was originally preceded by that of his father Wang Chuzhi, now lost); 135, pp. 1799-1809 (Liu Shouguang); 62, pp. 829-31 (Zhang Wenli).

ticularly extensive interaction in the borderlands between pastoralists who grazed their animals in Later Tang districts for part of the year, and unofficial raiding parties who were as likely to be from Later Tang as Liao jurisdiction.⁴⁷

The period of closest interaction is seen to be under the Later Jin, founded in 936 with crucial assistance from a huge Liao army, sustained as close allies and formal subordinates of the Liao while the first Jin emperor lived and, as noted above, destroyed by the Liao after four years of war following the second Jin emperor's attempt to repudiate his formally subordinate status. The earlier Jin annals record mostly envoy exchanges and negotiated settlement of difficulties, while the latter recount the war effort. As already observed, the related biographies can carry significant parts of the story, not just in the cases of Yang Guangyuan and Jing Yanguang, but also including Zhao Dejun 趙德鈞, Zhao Yanshou 趙延壽, and Zhang Li 張礪 of Youzhou, An Shuqian 安叔千 and Wu Luan 吳巒 of Hedong, Sun Fangjian 孫方簡 of western Hebei and generals like Du Chongwei 杜重威, Li Shouzhen 李守貞, Wang Zhou 王周, Huangfu Yu 皇甫遇, and many others.⁴⁸

The annals for the three-year reign of the Later Han (947–50) offer certain details of the difficult Liao succession of 947 that do not appear in the imperial-clan centered *Liao History* account, with further supplementation from Zhao Yanshou's *Old History* biography, while the biographies of Du Chongwei and Li Shouzhen again record their Liao connections.⁴⁹ Subsequently we see less evidence than we might expect of the extensive Liao support for the Later Han's continuation as the Northern Han 北漢 (951–79) in the northwest borderlands, against the expansionism of the last of the Five Dynasties, the Later Zhou.

Then towards the end of the 950s we are shown clearly how Liao itself became the target of Zhou territorial ambitions, but the biographies for this period say surprisingly little about generals on northern campaigns.⁵⁰ There is plenty of evidence here for the view that the Zhou

⁴⁷ Naomi Standen, "Raiding and Frontier Society in the Five Dynasties," in Nicola Di Cosmo and Don Wyatt, ed., *Political Frontiers, Ethnic Boundaries, and Human Geographies in Chinese History* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), pp. 160–91, and references there.

⁴⁸ *JW* 98, pp. 1308–10 (Zhao Dejun), 1311–13 (Zhao Yanshou), 1313–16 (Zhang Li); 123, p. 1622 (An Shuqian); 95, pp. 1267–68 (Wu Luan); 125, pp. 1649–51 (Sun Fangjian); 109, pp. 1433–37 (Du Chongwei), 1437–41 (Li Shouzhen); 106, pp. 1391–92 (Wang Zhou); 95, pp. 1259–61 (Huangfu Yu).

⁴⁹ *JW* 99, p. 1329; 100, p. 1331; also one Later Jin biography, 98, p. 1313. Cf. *LS* 5, pp. 63–64, and biographies of figures mentioned there, including Shuogu 朔古 (76, pp. 1246–47), Jieli 解里 (76, pp. 1245–46) and Lihu 李胡 (72, pp. 1213–14).

⁵⁰ Many of these figures have their biographies in the *Song history*, and these do spend more time on military campaigning, both north and south.

is really the beginning of the Song dynasty by another name. In the wars and expeditions of Gaoping 高平 (954) and the Three Passes 三關 (959) we can see the origins of the later relationship between Liao and Song that was defined largely in terms of war or the potential for war. What the *Old History* shows us, however, is the historical development of this situation over a half-century of political and military change rather than the playing out of an eternal and inevitable enmity.

In social terms, the *Old History* suggests that this was a world that experienced cultural variation and mingling as a fact of life rather than inevitably a source of anxiety. It is striking, for instance, that even though we would expect Five Dynasties records to be rather tight-lipped about departing officials, the *Old History* records quite a number of cases. Up to the end of the Later Tang in 936 we see some half a dozen administrators of varying educational levels – mostly Chinese but also of other cultural affiliations – moving from southern regimes, often voluntarily, to make successful careers working for the Liao rulers.⁵¹ Some of these people moved more than once. Hence Lu Wenjin is said to have killed his governor and fled to the Liao in 917, whence he led a force to take the provincial seat at Xinzhou 新州 where he became the Liao governor. A decade later he returned to what was by then the Later Tang, and ten years after that he fled the destruction of that regime and went to the southern state of Wu 吳 (902–37).⁵² The wars of the next two decades allowed those with military command, and some administrators, more opportunity to shift their allegiance voluntarily between competing rulers regardless of whether they were Chinese, Shatuo, Kitan, or something else. The *Old History* says little about the many submissions during the Liao invasion and founding of Jin in 936, but does tell us of numerous offers of assistance or submission in the 940s. Among others, the disgruntled governor Yang Guangyuan in Qingzhou 青州 (Shandong) rebelled against Jin when the Liao invaded in 944, assisted by Zhou Ru 周儒 in southern Hebei. Zhang Yanze 張彥澤 surrendered, then led a Liao force to take the Jin capital. Li Song 李崧 took a senior post in the Liao administration, joining Zhang Li, who had left one Chinese-led regime to serve a Shatuo Turkish ruler, went from there to the Liao in 936, attempted to return to the south,

⁵¹ This is six individuals out of a total of 26 individual crossings recorded in all annalistic texts for the period. The *Jiu Wudai shi* also recorded three group crossings out of a total of ten for this period. See *Unbounded Loyalty*, table 2 (for figures) and appendix (for details and references).

⁵² *JW* 28, pp. 389–90; 37, p. 511; 97, pp. 1294–96; see also *JW* 37, pp. 1828–29. Also in *XW* 72, p. 887; *TJ* 269, p. 8812; 275, p. 8994; 280, p. 9166; *LS* 1, p. 11.

then settled permanently in Liao, where he had been working for their war effort.⁵³

After the punishing war ending in 947 with the Liao destruction of the Later Jin, the *Old History* shows us that the new southern rulers made efforts to sharpen cultural distinctions between themselves and the Liao in pursuit of their political ambitions. The evidence for this, such as a ban on the making of Kitan-style articles just after the end of the war, suggests that cultural or at least economic interaction was commonplace.⁵⁴ It also seems likely that a borderland culture continued to exist at a popular level despite the wishes of southern rulers, for as late as 952 we have a quotation from an edict issued by a Zhou ruler to ban his own people from raiding north against Liao subjects in a manner more conventionally associated with nomadic peoples, and in 955 improvements to frontier defences allowed the “people of the borderland” (*bianmin* 邊民) to “plant and pasture”.⁵⁵ If the Liao were structurally sidelined in the *Old History*, their presence was nevertheless an inextricable part of the record presented there, and their straightforwardly historical significance in relation to the Five Dynasties themselves was easy to see.

THE HISTORIANS OF THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

Ouyang Xiu and the New History of the Five Dynasties

The early Song compilers of the *Old History* had made only limited efforts to tidy up the fluid and fragmented picture conveyed by the Five Dynasties materials from which they produced their record, and within less than a century this was regarded as grossly inadequate, at least by some. During the 1030s Ouyang Xiu rewrote the *Old History* into what we now commonly call the *Xin Wudai shi* 新五代史 (New History of the Five Dynasties) or the *Wudai shiji* 五代史記 (Historical Records of the Five Dynasties).⁵⁶ Ouyang saw the Five Dynasties as a period of moral degeneracy expressed chiefly in terms of disloyalty: Five Dynasties officials disregarded their duty as the guardians of the Confucian moral tradition and changed their masters at the drop of a

⁵³ *JW* 82, pp. 1084, 1086; 85, pp. 1123–24; 99, p. 1324; 137, p. 1835. On Zhang Li, see Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty*, chaps 4–5, *passim*.

⁵⁴ *JW* 100, p. 1335.

⁵⁵ *JW* 112, p. 1484; 115, p. 1527.

⁵⁶ Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修, *Xin Wudai shi* 新五代史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974) [hereafter *XW*], 3 vols. The second title is used by Davis for his translation, *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*, and conveys more of Ouyang’s original intent in borrowing the title of Sima Qian’s *Shiji*.

hat.⁵⁷ Ouyang was shocked at this behavior, but also at its dispassionate portrayal in the official record. He was profoundly concerned at the absence of moral judgment in the *Old History* and determined to rectify the situation.

A standard method of historical compilation in Middle Period China was to copy sections directly from earlier sources and more or less verbatim. This was what was expected of the compilers of an official history and accordingly Xue Juzheng and his colleagues seem to have rewritten very little in producing the *Old History*. Ouyang Xiu, however, was enormously critical of the early Song compilers for what he felt was their excessive use of this technique, and for their reluctance to offer opinions and lack of clear exposition. For his own version he is said to have taken as his model the *Chunqiu* 春秋 (Spring and Autumn Annals), the exceptionally laconic entries of which were held in his time to convey moral judgments in the choice of one word over another as well as in what was included or omitted.⁵⁸ Thus for the *New History* Ouyang drew on some additional materials but mostly he cut, reducing the overall length to half that of the *Old History*. His principal aim was to produce the work he believed his predecessors should have written in the first place. His concern was to write history as we understand it: an analytical account making a case for a particular interpretation of events.

Ouyang achieved this through form and writing, starting with form (see table 2, above). He drastically cut down and rewrote the annals from 61 chapters to 12, producing an integrated account of all five dynasties together in an extremely economical style, which is good to read but of limited use as a primary source. Ouyang valued biography more highly. He reduced the *Old History's* 70 chapters only to 45, and he rewrote much less, transmitting much more material verbatim. He grouped together the biographies of all five dynasties and classified them into groups including: non-reigning members of the ruling houses (male and female), ministers associated with a particular dynasty,

⁵⁷ Ouyang's most famous lament on this score is his opening commentary before his biography of the famous side-changer Feng Dao 馮道, who served five dynastic houses including the Liao. Ouyang's outlook is discussed by James T. C. Liu, *Ou-yang Hsiu: An Eleventh-century Neo-Confucianist* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1967); Christian Lamouroux, "Entre symptôme et précédent. Notes sur l'oeuvre historique de Ouyang Xiu (1007-1072)," *Extrême-Orient, Extrême-Occident* 19 (1997): 45-72; Ari Levine, *Divided by a Common Language: Factional Conflict in Late Northern Song China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), pp. 47-56; and, via his writings (though not his historical writing) by Ronald Egan, *The Literary Works of Ou-yang Hsiu (1007-72)* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1984).

⁵⁸ Liu, *Ou-yang Hsiu*, pp. 107-10.

“martyrs to virtue” (*sijie* 死節) and “martyrs in service” (*sishi* 死事),⁵⁹ adoptive sons, court musicians and actors, eunuchs, and miscellaneous. These groupings were intended to highlight particular characteristics and contrasts and make moral points. For instance, Sang Weihān 桑維翰 and Jing Yanguang of Later Jin are portrayed in the other sources as a good and a bad minister, respectively. As already observed, the *Old History* blames the general Jing Yanguang at least partly for provoking the Liao-Jin war by his sanguinary advice, arrogant attitude, and belligerent responses. The highly educated chief minister Sang Weihān is credited with cleaning up government, trying to avoid military conflict, and (when that failed) leading an effective war effort whenever he was in power, while his upright conduct and straightforward advice won him many enemies. Ouyang acknowledges Sang’s role in the maturation of the Jin house, but still condemns both him and Jing as “those who collude with barbarians.” The criticism comes in one of Ouyang’s frequent commentaries, where he stands aside from the historical account and declares, “Alas!” (*wuhu* 嗚呼) before dealing out moral judgment.⁶⁰

This example gives a hint of Ouyang’s attitude towards “barbarians” and he pushes much further than Xue Juzheng’s team in marginalizing the Kitan/Liao role in Five Dynasties history. This is not immediately apparent because Ouyang expands the section dedicated to the Liao, by granting them (as the Kitan) two of his three appendices on the “Four Types of Barbarian” (Siyi fulu 四夷附錄) (*j.* 72–73). However, even he only extends the story by one reign to include the third emperor, who was killed in 951. He thus omits nearly a decade of rule by the notorious “drunken emperor” Muzong 穆宗 (951–69) during which the Later Zhou built up their military preparedness and expanded against their neighbors, including the Liao.

Accordingly, the extra material in these appendices comes chiefly from the biographies of officials such as those noted above, who started out employed by a Five Dynasties regime but also served the Liao for at least a time. Whereas about thirty of these people have full biographies

⁵⁹ These two terms are borrowed from Davis in Ouyang Xiu, *Historical Records*.

⁶⁰ *XW* 29, pp. 319–21 (Sang Weihān), 321–24 (Jing Yanguang). Davis provides a full translation of both biographies and the related commentary, Ouyang Xiu, *Historical Records*, pp. 239–45. He translates *wuhu* as “We lament”. Cf. *JW* biographies: 88, pp. 1143–46 (Jing), 89, pp. 1161–69 (Sang). Also see *TJ* 283, pp. 9237, 9242–43, 9253–54, 9262, 9264; 284, pp. 9266, 9268, 9270–75, 9280, 9292, 9294; 285, pp. 9295–96, 9300–1, 9317, 9321, 9323, 9325–26. For a comparison of the *Old* and *New History* taken as evidence for changes in Northern Song thinking about what constituted “China,” see Tze-ki Hon, “Military Governance versus Civil Governance: A Comparison of the *Jiu Wudai shi* and the *Xin Wudai shi* of the Five Dynasties,” in Kai-wing Chow et al., ed., *Imagining Boundaries: Changing Confucian Doctrines, Texts, and Hermeneutics* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), pp. 85–105.

in the *Old History*, recognizing the service they gave to the Five Dynasties before they went north and sometimes after they returned south, Ouyang Xiu denied them this honor. Instead, he picked the figures he seems to have found most notable or instructive and inserted carefully selected segments from their *Old History* biographies, or sometimes from one of his other sources, into his Kitan appendices. This makes his Kitan account longer than the same section of the *Old History*, but also skews the picture towards a portrayal of southern servants of the northern dynasty in its early years rather than depicting the actions of the Liao emperors as was usual for a dynastic history. The Liao, it seems, are to be understood in terms of their servants (and perhaps specifically their Chinese servants) rather than in their own right. In effect, the dynasty was granted historiographical existence only as an example of how upright officials could export the proper running of a state beyond the cultural core represented, in Ouyang's mind, by the Song dynasty and its literati elites.

The best example of this manoeuvre is Ouyang's presentation of Han Yanhui 韓延徽. Han has no biography in the *Old History*, and although it is possible that it has been lost, it is probably more significant that he took service with the Liao before he had a chance to make any impact in a Five Dynasties regime worthy of the court historians' notice. Our earliest record of him, therefore, comes from the Kitan appendices in the *New History*, where he is described as a crucial "planner" (*mouzhu* 謀主) to the Liao founder Abaoji 阿保機. At one point Han left Liao and served the Later Tang court, but then returned once more to Liao, confident that "Abaoji's loss of me has been like he has lost two eyes or destroyed a hand and foot, if he now regains me, he will certainly be happy." And indeed, Abaoji welcomed him as one who "had come down from heaven".⁶¹ One is clearly being invited here to understand that although Han Yanhui was wrong to serve the Kitan, without people like him the Kitan would never have amounted to anything. Indeed, Ouyang opens the Kitan appendices with remarks about the Liao founder Abaoji taking advice repeatedly from unspecified Chinese (*hanren* 漢人), and the Liao are seen to benefit markedly from their association with almost every Chinese mentioned. Lu Wenjin, noted above, here passes on siege techniques, which are not mentioned in his *Old History* biography, but Ouyang keeps quiet about Lu's destructive annual raids on his former province.⁶² On a related note, we also

⁶¹ *XW* 72, pp. 890–91. Han is discussed in detail in Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty*, chap. 4.

⁶² *XW* 72, pp. 887–88.

learn how the Liao lost those of their own who – it is implied – could have provided the same kinds of benefits. Ouyang tells us how Abaoji's eldest son Tuyu 突欲 (also known as Yelü Bei 耶律倍 or Li Zanhua 李贊華) rejected his people's propensity to drink human blood but enjoyed painting and was “knowledgeable about books.” But he was displaced as heir apparent and took refuge in Later Tang. He brought with him heterodox writings and medical classics unknown in the southern regime at the time, and we feel the tragedy when this cultivated man is summarily murdered at the southern court because a Liao army had assisted a rebel against the Later Tang.⁶³

But nearly half of the first chapter on the Liao is taken up with detailed accounts of the 936 transition from Later Tang to Jin and the Liao-Jin war of the 940s.⁶⁴ As told here, both stories revolve around the father and son Zhao Dejun, who held back the Later Tang's main field army from resisting the rebel and Later Jin founder Shi Jingtang 石敬瑭 in 936, and Zhao Yanshou, who led the Liao armies in the Liao-Jin war. In a long and detailed account they are blamed for rejecting loyal service to and suitable reward from the Later Tang, and for being willing to submit to Liao in order to obtain power for themselves. The Later Jin founder, Shi Jingtang, of course did just the same, and remained the formal subordinate of the Liao emperor until Shi died in 942, but Ouyang did not make that comparison. Instead, in just a few lines he portrays the relationship between Shi and his sponsor the Liao emperor Deguang 德光 as one of great courtesy and near equality, starting when Deguang “personally removed his gown and hat to enrobe” Shi and continuing in this vein until Deguang “agreed that [Shi Jingtang] should not call himself “subject” and changed his reports (from subordinate to superior) to letters (between equals).” Shi, meanwhile, “served (Deguang) most attentively.”⁶⁵ The Liao emperor does sometimes feature in his own right, but far more space is devoted to Shi Jingtang and especially to Zhao Yanshou. In particular, Zhao Yanshou in the 940s is portrayed at some length as a general who, unlike some others, is never given a battlefield scene showing him actually leading troops, and who “watched (the Later Jin) for an opportunity (to become ruler of the southern regime)” but exhibited obsessive fears about his own status in an incident in which he insisted on replacing the first-grade official's hat (*diao chan guan* 貂蟬冠) bestowed on him by

⁶³ *XW* 73, p. 901.

⁶⁴ Shi Jingtang 石敬瑭 rebelled against the Later Tang in 936, 5th lunar month, and was in power by the end of the year, which included an intercalary month.

⁶⁵ *XW* 72, pp. 893, 894.

Deguang with a prince's (*wang* 王) hat for an appearance at court.⁶⁶ The Kitan appendices tell us much less about the Liao rulers than they do about turncoat southerners.

In Ouyang's text the emphasis on the southerners working for the Liao means that one could read the history of the Five Dynasties without ever engaging closely with the role of the Liao itself in that history, despite its unavoidable political import at certain points. The emperors, their armies, and important figures in the ruling group are all secondary to the tales of their southern servants. As we have seen, Ouyang's material here is highly derivative but his reorganisation of it has something to tell us.⁶⁷

This diminution of Liao agency and significance is cemented by Ouyang's approach to them in the *New History's* annalistic account, which he drastically rewrote from the *Old History* version. The Kitan, as he calls them, do receive numerous mentions in Ouyang's annals, but where the *Old History* explains how they made deals and alliances with figures under Five Dynasties jurisdiction, the *New History* frequently reduces this political complexity to "The Kitan came to raid."⁶⁸ Hence Lu Wenjin's aforementioned departure to Liao and seizure of the provincial seat at Xinzhou, which occupies a long, detailed paragraph in the *Old History* annals, plus biographical material, becomes in Ouyang's hands, "The Kitan raided Xinzhou, and then raided Youzhou; Li Siyuan 李嗣源 drove them off."⁶⁹ On a much larger scale, Ouyang's annals make no connection between Shi Jingtang's rebellion against the Later Tang in 936 and a battle between the Later Tang general Zhang Jingda 張敬達 and the Liao at Taiyuan 太原. The only hint of something lying behind this one-liner is Zhang's appointment, four months and seven lines earlier, as pacification commissioner for Taiyuan, which follows on immediately from the report of Shi Jingtang's rising.⁷⁰ Extracting a larger narrative from such fragments is tough going.⁷¹ Not only does this conceal the political importance of the Liao in the first

⁶⁶ *XW* 72, pp. 895–99. For detailed discussion of Zhao Yanshou, see Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty*, chap. 5.

⁶⁷ As it happens, Richard Davis omits the appendices on the "Four Types of Barbarians" from his translation of about two thirds of the *New History* (Ouyang, *Historical Records*, p. lxiii). He has a sound rationale for this in that the text is every bit as flawed as he states, but one effect is that even the little that Ouyang offered on the Liao is denied to the modern non-specialist audience; a reminder that sometimes, for the best of intentions, a present-day scholarly choice can accentuate a tendency in the original materials.

⁶⁸ *XW* 5, pp. 43, 44; 6, pp. 55, 60; 7, p. 73; 8, p. 78; 9, pp. 96, 97; 11, pp. 111, 114.

⁶⁹ *XW* 5, p. 43.

⁷⁰ *XW* 7, pp. 74, 75.

⁷¹ Not every reader would have had access to other records, especially since Ouyang's di-

half of the tenth century, but without context or explanation Kitan actions readily appear elemental, the inevitable outcome of an uncivilized, violent nature.

With similar brevity and standardized language, Ouyang records – much more assiduously – the envoys sent by the Liao (and indeed, everyone else) to the Five Dynasties courts, together with a few of those sent the other way. We hear of at least forty from Liao to various Five Dynasties courts and a dozen or more the other way. Their timing reflects the needs that each court had of the other so that a large majority cluster in the Later Jin, during its alliance with the Liao and then the subsequent war. The language is so terse – “The Kitan sent Zhanmugu 粘木孤 to come (as an envoy),” “The prince of Xinghua 興化 of the Kitan came (as an envoy)”⁷² – that it offers few hints of whether we are supposed to read these as exchanges between equal courts or from subordinates paying “tribute” to a superior who responded with “gifts” in the historiographically conventional manner. Of course this would vary with the political circumstances, and the fact that almost all the envoys in both directions are named suggests the greater importance of this connection than the links with groups whose envoys are anonymous. But on the model of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, the threefold excess in the number Ouyang records of Liao envoys over Five Dynasties envoys may be a method of indicating a relationship of tribute and thus the subordinate status of the Liao. If so, then as in Ouyang’s Kitan appendices, but in contrast to the *Old History*, the Liao are mere hangers-on at the main event headlined by the Five Dynasties. Ouyang does not lie outright, but neither do his manipulations produce an entirely honest result.

Sima Guang and the Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government

Although largely written in the 1030s, Ouyang Xiu continued to revise the *New History* through the 1050s. His history was a private work, and he took pains to keep it that way, circulating it among friends but refusing court requests to submit it for publication.⁷³ By the time it came out in 1077, five years after Ouyang’s death, Sima Guang was already a decade into his own historical project, this time fully under court auspices. Sima’s history, the *Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Gov-*

dactic intent bore greater fruit than he had anticipated when, long after his death, his text replaced the *Old History* as the official version.

⁷² *XW* 8, p. 84.

⁷³ Liu, *Ou-yang Hsiu*, pp. 106–7; Davis in Ouyang, *Historical Records*, pp. xlvi–l.

ernment, covered the whole period 403 BCE–959 CE, so that the Five Dynasties formed the last section of a much larger work.⁷⁴ The *Mirror* did not follow the standard annals-biographies pattern of the official histories but was a “universal history,” a purely chronological account extending across more than one dynasty, in the manner of the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (Commentary of Zuo).⁷⁵ Sima’s historiographical approach was also very different from Ouyang’s. Sima was less interested in didacticism than Ouyang but deeply concerned with presenting evidence, and in all he used some 320 sources in compiling the *Mirror*. A famous feature of this work is the extra chapters known as the “Investigations into Differences” (*kaoyi* 考異), which are, in effect, detailed footnotes discussing discrepancies in the evidence, considering the reliability of particular sources, and explaining the decisions made in the main text.⁷⁶ Sima Guang, like Ouyang Xiu, sought to write history as we know it, but the results for the treatment of the Liao could hardly have been more different.

For the Five Dynasties section of the main text, Sima Guang drew upon everything available to him at the time, including the *Wudai huiyao* 五代會要 (Institutions of the Five Dynasties), *Beimeng suoyan* 北夢瑣言 (Gossip of the Northern Dreamer), and several works no longer extant, but his chief source was the *Old History*.⁷⁷ Like Ouyang Xiu, Sima Guang rearranged his material, but unlike Ouyang, Sima tended to stick fairly closely to the wording of the *Old History*, and was inclined to expand accounts regarding the Liao rather than reduce them. An incident related in a single line, or even completely ignored, in the annals of the *New History* can extend to one or more paragraphs in the *Mirror*. Because of the strict chronological order, a complete narrative can be broken up across many pages or even chapters, but each segment usually forms a coherent narrative unit in its own right.

⁷⁴ The Five Dynasties were given disproportionate coverage, with nearly ten per cent of the total number of chapters devoted to these 53 years – 1.9 years per chapter – compared to an average of 4.9 years per chapter for the remainder of the text.

⁷⁵ Stephen Durrant, “The Literary Features of Historical Writing,” in Victor H. Mair, ed., *The Columbia History of Chinese Literature* (New York: Columbia U.P., 2001), p. 497.

⁷⁶ The idea of a *kaoyi* was adopted by some of the Southern Song compilers of Northern Song history, but to partisan effect. See Levine, “House in Darkness,” pp. 146–48.

⁷⁷ Chai Degeng 柴德賡, *Shi ji juyao* 史籍舉要 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1982), p. 118. On the methods used in the project, and division of responsibilities between different members of the team, see E.G. Pulleyblank, “Chinese Historical Criticism: Liu Chih-chi and Ssuma Kuang,” in Beasley and Pulleyblank, *Historians of China and Japan*, pp. 151–59 and Shi Ding 施丁, “Lun Sima Guang zhujian *Zizhi tongjian*” 論司馬光主編《資治通鑑》, *LSYJ* 歷史研究 (1986.4): 133–50. It is clear that Sima Guang made all the final editing decisions.

Take, for instance, a sequence of events in 936, in which Zhao Dejun and Zhao Yanshou first hesitated to oppose Shi Jingtang and his Liao allies, then themselves sought an alliance with the Liao, and were ultimately taken into Liao captivity. As we have seen, this story contributes a significant chunk – just over two pages in the modern edition – of one of the *New History*'s appendices on the Kitan, but there we get just the bare bones, cut down from various accounts in the annals and biographies of the *Old History*.⁷⁸ Consolidated by Sima Guang, the details found in the *Old History* were then expanded with further information and scattered generously across the latter sixty per cent of a chapter (some fifteen pages in the modern edition, approximately half of which is about the Zhaos). Most notably, the *Mirror* recounts in nearly a whole page of detail the exchange between an envoy and the Liao emperor Deguang that persuaded him to reject the Zhaos' request for an alliance.⁷⁹ This passage elaborates greatly on a couple of lines in the *Old History* biography of the envoy, and a couple in the Kitan chapters of the *New History*.⁸⁰ In similar fashion, whereas Ouyang Xiu repeats almost verbatim the *Old History*'s account of Zhao Dejun's final interview with the Liao empress dowager, Sima expands the version in the *Mirror* to about three times the length of the earliest source.⁸¹

The great expansion of such incidents of interaction between those Sima Guang calls the Kitan and servants of the Five Dynasties illustrates the inclusiveness of Sima's approach to this issue compared with that of Ouyang Xiu. Where Ouyang Xiu paid as little attention as possible to the northerners and instead talked about their Chinese servants, Sima Guang tended to provide more rather than less information about the Liao (and their servants) even than his main source, the *Old History*. Furthermore, Sima Guang hesitated to be so categorical as Ouyang Xiu about the moral standing of the characters he portrayed. Where Ouyang Xiu condemned largely by omission, Sima Guang offered evidence, which he sometimes skewed to emphasize a point, but often recorded in all its ambiguity.⁸²

⁷⁸ *JW* 48, pp. 663–68; 75, pp. 984–85; 76, p. 992; 89, p. 1162; 92, p. 1216; 97, p. 1286; 98, pp. 1308–11 (biographies), 1315, 1318 (two commentaries); 106, p. 1396; 108, p. 1428; 127, pp. 1668, 1670; 137, p. 1833. *TJ* 280 deals with the 936 events; the Zhaos' role is found at pp. 9147–62 *passim*.

⁷⁹ *TJ* 280, p. 9156.

⁸⁰ *JW* 89, p. 1162; *XW* 73, p. 894. I have not attempted to identify the source of the new material in the *Mirror* as this is not pertinent to my purpose here. A Tang section of the *Mirror* has been treated like this: E.G. Pulleyblank, "The *Tzyhyyh Tongjiann Kaoyih* and the Sources for the Period 730–763," *BSOAS* 13 (1949): 448–73.

⁸¹ *JW* 98, p. 1310; *XW* 72, p. 894; *TJ* 280, pp. 9160–61.

⁸² Hoyt Tillman also notes that Sima Guang was not so objective as he is often claimed to be:

An example of skewed evidence comes from an incident during the Liao-Jin war of the mid-940s in which Liao forces were persuaded by a ruse not to besiege the poorly defended town of Xiangzhou 相州. The *Old History* original says that the Liao force consisted of “over ten thousand” cavalry, whose leader is not named. Ouyang Xiu omits the event altogether. Sima Guang, left to transmit the story, claims that there were not just ten thousand, but “several tens of thousands” (my emphasis) of Liao cavalry, and names their general as Zhao Yanshou, who was now commander-in-chief of the Liao armies.⁸³ The increased enemy numbers emphasize the courage of the southern defenders, while the involvement of Zhao Yanshou serves to condemn him as a traitor to his homeland even as he is outwitted.

As a more general point in this vein we should also note how Sima Guang often places increased emphasis on the private attachment to the south of those who gave their service to the Liao. The best example is Zhang Li, who entered Liao service after the destruction of Later Tang by Shi Jingtang and his Liao allies in 936. The full picture of a rounded “Confucian” official offered by the *Old History* is greatly trimmed and focused by Sima Guang, whose editing serves to emphasize an incident in which Zhang Li apparently sought to leave Liao and return to serve the Later Jin.⁸⁴ The *Mirror* quotes him saying “I am a *huaren* (Chinese), and (Chinese) food, drink, and clothes are not at all the same as those here; it would be better to die than to live, and I wish that (I) may soon be killed.”⁸⁵ This implication that southerners serving the Liao might retain an attachment to their old home and the regime in charge there is also found in the *Mirror* account of Li Huan 李澣. Li had been taken north after the Liao conquest of Later Jin in 947, and the account of him in the *Old History* speaks equally of his literary virtues and his surreptitious activities on behalf of the Later Zhou. This time Sima Guang adds rather than taking away: he picks up on reports of Li Huan’s drunkenness in the *New History* and adds more detail about Li Huan’s espionage, perhaps implying that Li’s general moral deficiency was balanced out by his clandestine allegiance to the Later Zhou.

“Textual Liberties and Restraints in Rewriting China’s Histories: The Case of Ssu-ma Kuang’s Re-construction of Chu-ko Liang’s Story,” in *The New and the Multiple*, pp. 61–106.

⁸³ It also adds that Zhao Yanshou first bypassed Xiangzhou, then turned back there for fear of being caught in the rear by a Jin army under Zhang Yanze; *TJ* 284, p. 9282.

⁸⁴ On Zhang Li, see Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty*, chaps 4–5.

⁸⁵ *TJ* 281, p. 9170.

But although Sima could heighten the implied judgment in particular incidents, we already see hints in the preceding examples that in the wider perspective he was also willing to convey a more complex picture. Hence he transmits from the *Old History* other incidents omitted from the *New History* such as Zhao Yanshou – that turncoat leader of Liao armies against his homeland – pleading for the lives of surrendered enemy (Later Jin) troops.⁸⁶ More significantly, he includes incidents showing Zhao Yanshou as a regular virtuous official, for instance, advising his master in the proper manner, such as coming up with a plan intended to save the day after an unsuccessful ambush.⁸⁷ In Sima Guang's hands even someone like Zhao Yanshou escapes stereotyping and can be seen as a complex character. Here Zhao Yanshou and his father Zhao Dejun are not simply icons of the disloyalty that Ouyang Xiu so deplored in the Five Dynasties, but two of many figures whose stories intertwine to produce events. In the *Mirror*, it is the relationships that are important. Thus we see that where Ouyang writes of the Liao role in Shi Jingtang's accession chiefly as the product of the Zhao family's ambitions, Sima offers additional nuance and complexity. He gives us, for instance, direct portrayals of the relationship between Shi Jingtang and the Liao emperor Deguang; a detailed account of the Liao siege of Jinyang 晉陽 (Taiyuan) showing the determination of the defender Zhang Jingda and the motives of those who displaced him and surrendered the city; and numerous other insights into the events from a variety of perspectives.⁸⁸

Other figures noted in Ouyang Xiu's Kitan appendices, like Han Yanhui, Zhang Li, and Li Huan, also enjoy notably fuller treatment in the *Mirror* than in either of the Five Dynasties *Histories*, and again the additional material serves to provide context, offer alternative perspectives and more nuanced interpretations, and to explore relationships, particularly by fleshing out the Liao side. Whereas Ouyang notes Han Yanhui's importance to Abaoji without saying for what Han was valued, Sima details how Han set up the Liao administrative system and, crucially, how he won the sponsorship of Abaoji's empress. Zhang Li is also shown by Sima to be one who, in his dealings with the Kitan ruling clans, lives (and dies) by his principles – and is not just the pretentious and blameworthy turncoat that he is in the *New History*. And in the *Mirror* there is a tale to tell about Li Huan as not just the irrev-

⁸⁶ *TJ* 286, p. 9331.

⁸⁷ *TJ* 284, pp. 9267–68. In the event, the opposition was greater than expected.

⁸⁸ *TJ* 280, pp. 9148–49, 9154, 9158–59; 281, pp. 9188–89; 282, p. 9210 (Deguang-Shi Jingtang relations) and 280, pp. 9157–58 (Zhang Jingda's tenacity).

erent drunk mentioned by Ouyang just twice, and very briefly. Sima Guang's Li Huan is connected to the highest levels of the Liao ruling group and has highly placed links in the Later Zhou as well, and it is these links that drive his story.⁸⁹

But perhaps the largest of the *Mirror's* expansions is the story of Zhang Yanze, a cruel and murderous general who surrendered to the Liao at the end of 946 and led the force that took over the Later Jin capital at Bianzhou 汴州 (Kaifeng 開封). The *Old History* provides a fairly long paragraph telling how Zhang appropriated the palace women and fine goods for himself and permitted his troops two days of pillaging, killed the chief minister Sang Weihai and took his property, abducted one of the former imperial consorts, conducted summary executions, and killed family members of Gao Xun 高勳, with whom he was on bad terms. Zhang is working for the Liao emperor Deguang at the time, but his crimes are his own, and when Deguang finds out about them, he has Zhang Yanze executed. Ouyang Xiu chose a slightly different set of incidents for Zhang's *New History* biography, and pared down the length of each: Zhang terrifies a minister and laughs at the result, appropriates goods and allows his troops to pillage, gets drunk and orders summary executions with a gesture of his hand, abducts the imperial consort, and kills people at Gao Xun's house.⁹⁰ The addition of the rather sinister laughing and the drunken gesture places the focus on Zhang and his personality rather than on what he did and in what context, so that even though Deguang has him killed in the end, the Liao are characteristically sidelined.

By contrast, in the *Mirror* we find seven paragraphs on Zhang's crimes, and Sima Guang retains the *Old History's* sense of Zhang as the wicked servant of a decent Liao ruler. Sima Guang relates and greatly reorganizes all the stories from the *Old* and *New Histories*, plus one further murder, and adds a wealth of extra detail, chiefly in the form of verbal exchanges between the protagonists.⁹¹ The conversations and reorganization further dramatize an already striking story, which is wrapped up in the next chapter, beginning with the Liao emperor Deguang expressing concern for the residents of the capital and say-

⁸⁹ *TJ* 269, p. 8810 (Han Yanhui); 287, p. 9365 (Zhang Li); 290, p. 9479. For detailed discussion see Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty*.

⁹⁰ *JW* 98, p. 1307; *XW* 52, p. 600 (in the Kitan appendices there is just one line: "(The Liao ruler) sent Fu Jiaer's 傅佳兒 administrator (*jian* 監) Zhang Yanze to lead 2,000 cavalry to go ahead and enter the capital," 72, p. 896).

⁹¹ *TJ* 285, pp. 9321–25 *passim*. Establishing sources for all the extra material, and particularly for the direct speech (which is notoriously open to rewriting and even outright invention) is a research project in itself.

ing that he wants to show them that he means them no harm and is, in fact, human. He then berates a man who had killed his own father and rebelled against Deguang, before meting out gruesome justice to Zhang Yanze.⁹² Sima Guang's rearranging does not materially alter the context in which the *Old History* locates Zhang's actions, but the juxtaposition of Deguang's consideration for the defeated with his punishment of Zhang Yanze highlights the moral that Zhang's actions were considered to be universally unacceptable even in time of war. Sima Guang usually allows the moral of each individual incident to speak for itself, which is what permits someone like the Liao general Zhao Yanshou to emerge as a complex personality, and would clearly show Zhang Yanze's unrelieved wickedness.⁹³ But in this case Sima Guang has gone further. He has – quite consciously, it seems – set aside any sense of complexity and carefully organized his text into a more extended narrative that makes a point of identifying sheer evil. And in order to make that point Sima has no difficulty with emphasizing the positive role of a foreign invader.

Ouyang Xiu and Sima Guang both saw the Five Dynasties as a period when moral failings had major political impact,⁹⁴ but where Ouyang sought to place the blame firmly at the feet of those within the Five Dynasties regimes themselves, Sima Guang preferred to see vice and virtue in the context of the relationships not only within the Five Dynasties but between them and their neighbors. Hence the *Mirror* not only details Five Dynasties interactions with the Liao, it also provides an extensive account of the southern kingdoms, from which we glean most of our information about these regimes.⁹⁵

The *Mirror*, then, was a universal history in more ways than one. As we know, Sima Guang took a radically different historiographical approach from that in the *New History*, in form, method, and content. Treatments of the early tenth century add some detail to this understanding. Ouyang Xiu's attempt to write the Liao and all other neighbors out of Five Dynasties history, so as to focus on the moral failings within, was challenged by a much more detailed and complex account that constantly drew attention to the Five Dynasties' engagements without. The

⁹² *TJ* 286, pp. 9328–29.

⁹³ As also noted by Thomas H.C. Lee in the introduction to *The New and the Multiple*.

⁹⁴ The famous passages in the two texts are *XW* 54, pp. 611–12, translated in Ouyang Xiu, *Historical Records*, 438, which was quoted and expanded in *TJ* 291, pp. 9511–13, translated in Wang Gungwu, "Feng Tao: An Essay on Confucian Loyalty," in Arthur Wright and Denis Twitchett, ed., *Confucian Personalities* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1962), pp. 123, 140.

⁹⁵ See Hugh Clark, "The Ten Kingdoms," in *CHC* 5A.

effect of this detailed picture of interactions between the Five Dynasties and the Liao, even down to the level of morally complex depictions of a Chinese minister working for a Kitan master, is to transmit the same kind of integrated picture of Five Dynasties history as we find in the *Old History*, with the added clarity of a writing style that emphasized narrative exposition of events, and the added authority of a meticulous empirical approach to the sources. Although it is easy enough for the reader to skip over paragraphs that declare themselves to be about the Kitan or a southern kingdom in search of information specifically about the Five Dynasties, such a reader runs a risk of bypassing information vital to understanding later events, a problem that does not arise when reading the *New History*. That Sima Guang challenged Ouyang Xiu's extreme didacticism is well known, but Sima also contested Ouyang's exclusionism. This aspect of the historiographical debate between the two reinforces the point that views about the proper historical relationship between the Central-Plains empires and their northern (and other) neighbors were not only subject to change, but that shifts of perception did not have to happen in a linear fashion.

HISTORIES OF THE LIAO

The Record of the Kitan State

Probably during the mid-thirteenth century, the material in the *Mirror* pertinent to the Liao dynasty was extracted to form the core of a new private compilation called the *Qidan guo zhi* 契丹國志 (Record of the Kitan State). Although the Liao court had maintained its own records since the late tenth century, and although its conquerors, the Jin dynasty, had worked at producing a history, the *Record* was the first finished work on the Liao to see the light of day (see figure 1, below).⁹⁶ It also borrowed from the *New History* and a number of other sources, all produced within the Song. The author, Ye Longli 葉隆禮, is notorious for his carelessness, but nevertheless, his work may still be taken as a reasonable representation of what the Southern Song 南宋 (1127–1276) knew about the Liao.⁹⁷ Since the *Record* covered the whole of the Liao and not just its period of coexistence with the Five

⁹⁶ Ye Longli 葉隆禮, *Qidan guo zhi* 契丹國志 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1985) [hereafter *QG*]. The paucity of private historical materials in this period is noted by Herbert Franke, "Some Aspects of Chinese Private Historiography in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries," in *Historians of China and Japan*, pp. 115–34. On Jin materials see Chan Hoklam, *The Historiography of the Chin Dynasty: Three Studies* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1970).

⁹⁷ Li Xihou 李錫厚, "Ye Longli he *Qidan guo zhi*" 葉隆禮和契丹國志, in *QG*, pp. 282–97.

Dynasties, whereas the *Mirror* stopped at 960, material for the later part of the Liao was drawn chiefly from the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑑長編 (Long Draft for a Continuation of the Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government), a work that dealt with the Northern Song in great detail and, in the spirit of the original *Mirror*, in the context of its neighbors.⁹⁸ But the understanding of that context had changed dramatically by the thirteenth century.

Ouyang Xiu and Sima Guang had lived in a world in which their own dynasty of Song coexisted with the Liao under the terms of the treaty agreed in 1005. Although the treaty kept the peace for over a century, the Song class of scholar-bureaucrats spent a significant portion of that time in heated dispute over whether the treaty was good for Song despite the fact that it involved annual payments to the Liao and enshrined their ownership of a small piece of territory by then claimed to be eternally part of the Chinese empire, or whether this loss and the annual payments were humiliations that could only be avenged by an irredentist war. But by the thirteenth century that old Song dynasty was no more, its northern third conquered by the Jin in 1126, and the Southern Song, following a century of mutually hostile coexistence with the Jin, were watching the rise of Chinggis Qan. In 1234 the Mongols conquered the Jin, and clearly intended to conquer the Southern Song too. In that regime, therefore, history was written under the influence of a very real threat to the continued existence of the dynasty.

Although generally dated to 1247, there remains some uncertainty about when the *Record* was written, and its exact purpose is a mystery. Evidently it aimed to provide a record of Liao history separate from that of the Five Dynasties and Song, but it is not clear why. It was largely in the annals-biographies style, with 12 chapters of annals and 7 of lives, and then a further 7 chapters without headings, including information that would normally be found in the treatises of a dynastic history (on administrative geography, the military system, the palaces, and clothing regulations, for example), alongside miscellaneous documentary material. The latter includes such items as the Later Jin surrender and abdication letters, the texts of the oath letters agreeing the Treaty of Shanyuan, lists of imperial birthday presents exchanged by Liao and Song emperors, envoy reports, and so on.

⁹⁸ Li Tao 李燾, *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), 20 vols.

(Outline History of the Eastern Capital) and the *Old History*.⁹⁹ Passages are copied almost completely verbatim – unlike the texts discussed so far, there are virtually no cases of even minor alterations of wording – but are also heavily abridged. Ye Longli was taking material from a universal history and rearranging it back into the annals-biography form in which much of it had been organized in the first place, and he seems to have been either in a great hurry or just not very careful in his work, because there is considerable duplication between the annals and biographies and sometimes from one biography to another. This is rarely exact – the author does change the odd character here and there and he makes different cuts in different locations – but the perspective of individual narrative segments tends to remain the same in both sections, so that although the text presents an inconsistent viewpoint when taken as a whole, its portrayal of particular events and individuals is internally coherent, sometimes to the point of being one-dimensional. So for example, Ye records the story first noted in the *New History* of Han Yanhui's refusal to make obeisance to the Liao emperor Abaoji together with the *Mirror's* addition of the Shulü empress's 述律后 intervention on Han's behalf. These events, copied from the *Mirror* version, feature briefly in the *Record* annals and more fully in the biographies of both the Shulü empress and Han Yanhui, in each of which the account is almost word-for-word identical.¹⁰⁰

In adopting this method, Ye Longli's work differs from those of his sources that we have compared here. The *Old History* exhibits the variety of standpoints that one expects in a regular dynastic history, reflecting the different attitudes and circumstances of a variety of writers and successive compilers in sections each produced by very different processes. As we saw in the case of Jing Yanguang and the start of the Liao-Jin war in 943, accounts and interpretations of a single event or person found in the annals, in one or more biographies and in the final compiler's commentary may all diverge significantly from the others. Ouyang Xiu, despite his didactic intent in the *New History*, cannot avoid presenting rather different stories by dividing his Liao subject matter between the ruthlessly pruned and rigidly court-focused annals and the biographical focus of the Kitan appendices. And in the *Mirror* we have noted Sima Guang's willingness to present a complex picture that permits different interpretations to be drawn from the information he provides. By contrast, the *Record* repeats essentially identical ver-

⁹⁹ Wang Cheng 王偁, *Dongdu shilue* 東都事略, reproduction of Shiyuan congshu edition (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1967).

¹⁰⁰ *QG* 1, p. 2 (annals); 13, p. 138; 16, p. 160 (biographies).

sions in different locations and as we shall see, the author also narrows the focus right down, sometimes to the extent of reducing an individual's story to a single incident that – if it is not simply careless – may perhaps be intended to be characteristic or to contribute to an overall point (albeit one obscure to posterity).

Although the *Record* copies the *Mirror*'s wording more closely than the other texts discussed here copy their sources, some small changes are still significant, even if hard to interpret in the context of the work as a whole. As a Song work we would expect the *Record* to use terms for the Liao monarchs that did not detract from the Song emperors' claim to be supreme, even terms that did not acknowledge the legitimacy of Liao rule. The *Mirror* was consistent in this regard, referring to Liao emperors as “the ruler of the Kitan” (*Qidan zhu* 契丹主) or using their personal names, and similar terminology was used for the rulers of the Ten Kingdoms. This is not how you refer to the legitimate emperor. Sima Guang occasionally refers to Five Dynasties rulers as “the emperor” (*di* 帝) (which of course asserts their legitimacy) or, when discussing an emerging new leader, “the ruler of Tang” (*Tang zhu* 唐主) or other regime, but this seems to be chiefly for purposes of clarity. For the most part the *Mirror* does not name the rulers of the Five Dynasties regimes in any way, and this is the strongest of all historiographical statements of legitimacy. This is because in Literary Chinese the subject of a sentence was in normal practice frequently omitted. In the annals of an official history, most sentences would be subjectless and can safely be assumed to be about the emperor, whose preeminent status is thereby reinforced by a haughty absence. In the *Mirror*, therefore, Sima Guang was quietly transmitting, by assumption, the view that the Five Dynasties carried the legitimate line of succession from dynasty to dynasty.

On many occasions, however, the *Record* has copied long passages word-for-word from the *Mirror*, except that it changes the designations of the ruler, which produces a rather odd effect. Sima Guang named the Liao rulers in ways that showed that he did not accept their imperial status and for the most part wrote subjectless sentences for the legitimate line. Ye Longli, copying Sima's text, and presumably not wishing to recast every sentence where the Liao are mentioned, simply changes the *Mirror*'s “the ruler of the Liao” (*Liao zhu* 遼主) to “the Liao emperor” (*Liao di* 遼帝) or uses the emperor's temple name (Taizu 太祖, Taizong 太宗, an so forth). The temple name was chosen posthumously, and use of it, and of the title “emperor,” implied legitimacy. In the

Record, then, the Liao is the legitimate dynasty, and by extension, the Five Dynasties emperors are called “the ruler of Tang” or “the ruler of Jin,” so designating their subordinate or secondary status. But the absence of the subjectless sentence, that pointed and powerful omission, creates an odd distance that subtly discomfits the reader. This turns to downright confusion on those occasions when the *Record* adds to an originally subjectless sentence by specifying that “the Kitan” did such and such, as if they were not legitimate at all. The author, then, is not entirely consistent in his approach to the status of the Liao and Five Dynasties as legitimate possessors of the Mandate of Heaven.

Ye Longli only used the *New History* occasionally, but he had one important thing in common with Ouyang Xiu, namely his emphasis on the civilizing role of those southerners who took service with the Liao. As we have seen, Ouyang Xiu elevated and simultaneously condemned these people by confining their stories to his appendices. Ye Longli raised their status by manipulating his sources, although it is not entirely clear whether this was deliberate or accidental. Zhang Li, for example, had in his earlier life, before his Liao service, been administrator to a chief minister who was murdered by the crown prince Li Jiji 李繼岌 on the orders of his grandmother, whereupon Zhang Li wept in protest at the scene of the crime. Ye Longli takes his account from a detailed paragraph in the *Mirror* that describes how the chief minister, Guo Chongtao 郭崇韜, had his head bashed in while climbing the stairs to meet with Jiji about campaign plans; that Guo’s sons were killed too; that Jiji’s staff, fearful that their action was unauthorized, forged an imperial decree to cover their tracks; and that administrator Zhang Li was the only member of Guo’s staff who did not go into hiding.¹⁰¹ Ye Longli, however, condenses this source so much that Zhang appears to be administrator to Jiji not Guo Chongtao, and it is Jiji rather than Guo who gets killed. Thus Zhang Li ends up mourning the wrong person: “When Jiji died, (Zhang) Li went to the prince’s palace and wept bitterly.”¹⁰² Zhang Li’s status is boosted by association with a prince rather than just a minister. More significantly, where the *Old History* had provided a detailed account of Zhang Li’s early life, showing his deep filial piety among a number of other virtues, the *Mirror* retains only two instances of virtue displayed, and the *Record* preserves only this example of principled weeping. This places more emphasis on Zhang Li’s

¹⁰¹ *TJ* 274, p. 8955.

¹⁰² *QG* 16, p. 161.

later demonstrations of civilizing influence when he is in Liao service, which seem to have been more consciously manipulated.

Taking an example from the Liao-Jin war, we find Zhang Li in the *Mirror* advising the Liao emperor that it would be most effective to govern the conquered Later Jin regime with Chinese officials rather than with Kitan nobles. The account quickly moves on to tell how the surrendered Later Jin general Zhang Yanze allowed his troops two days of savage plunder after taking the Later Jin capital, as discussed above. When this story appears in the *Record's* biography of Zhang Li, however, the sequence has been reversed, and the plundering is attributed not to Later Jin – that is, southern – troops, but to Kitan generals. Hence the *Record* implies that it was the plundering – and by the Kitan – that *provoked* Zhang Li to advise that Kitan appointees should not govern the newly conquered lands.¹⁰³ Whereas in the *Mirror* plundering by southerners sounds a discordant note after Zhang Li's advice, in the *Record* the altered text suggests that Zhang Li was greatly concerned for his homeland and was trying to defend it against the ravages of foreigners. In separating out the Liao into their own history, the *Record* simultaneously acknowledged their political significance while sometimes commenting adversely on their supposedly barbarous nature, which may suggest an increased desire to distinguish the Liao from the Five Dynasties on ethnocentric grounds, not just on the basis of political or military opposition.

On the other hand, a case strongly suggestive of deliberate manipulation in the *Record* highlights the barbarousness not of a Kitan ruler, but of the Chinese governor Liu Shouguang. Liu's biographies in the *Old* and *New Histories* and the *Mirror* all tell the story of an upright chief minister, Sun He 孫鶴, who boldly defied Liu Shouguang's efforts to prevent remonstrations from his officials, and was gruesomely executed for his pains. Ye Longli, however, downplays Sun He's actions and inserts Han Yanhui as the main character. In Ye's version Sun He is simply "killed", while we learn that Han Yanhui had remonstrated on a previous occasion and that this time he escaped because he was valued for his long service. This revised account is inserted at the beginning of Han's biography, where it greatly enhances the portrayal of his moral stature.¹⁰⁴ Here the issue is not defence of one cultural group against another, but condemnation of the abuse of power, and

¹⁰³ Curiously, this interpretation is carried forward into the *Liao History*, which preserves the sequence of events found in the *Record of the Kitan State*; *LS* 76, p. 1252. For detailed discussion see Standen, *Unbounded loyalty*, chap. 5.

¹⁰⁴ *QG* 16, p. 160, cf. *JW* 135, pp. 1804-5; *XW* 39, p. 426; *TJ* 268, pp. 8744-45.

this may also be at least partly the intention of recording Zhang Li's advice about Kitan appointees, as just discussed.

Unlike any one of its sources, the *Record* is able to take a view of the whole of the Liao dynasty in one text. Ye Longli knew where the story was going, and indeed that may be his chief interest. His annals show far more attention to some emperors than others, so where he romps through the reigns of Shengzong 聖宗 (982–1031) and Daozong 道宗 (1055–1101) at the rate of four or five years to the page, he spends far more time on Deguang (926–47) and the last emperor Tianzuo 天祚 (1101–25), who receive more than one chapter each and are recorded at the rate of over a page per year. The focus seems to be on consolidation (though not founding: Abaoji is covered at nearly three years to the page) and collapse as these were played out through interactions with the Liao's neighbors, with little interest in the dynasty's long middle to late period of relatively stable foreign relations mediated largely by the 1005 treaty. The *Record's* positive portrayal of the chief Liao negotiator of that treaty, the captured Song general Wang Jizhong 王繼忠, suggests that the author may have longed to return to a similar time of peace.¹⁰⁵ It is also curious that Ye suppresses information from his main source for this story, the *Long Draft*, that Wang repeatedly sought to return to the Song.¹⁰⁶ There are signs here that while Ye Longli was undoubtedly careless, he may also have had a specific set of concerns that, if they have not yet all been firmly identified, were at least not the same as those of his sources. Certainly it is clear that this text is worthy of a full study of its own.

Ye Longli in the *Record* was, albeit in a slapdash fashion, attempting to extract from a universal history only those elements relating to one specific regime. The universal was being transformed into the particular, and in the matter of royal titles the perspective seems to have been intended to be from within the Liao itself. Ye Longli in many respects seems to have been attempting to present a generally positive picture of the Liao, but he also seems concerned to show the civilizing efforts of at least some of the Liao's southern servants, which can involve falsely demonizing selected northerners. Ouyang Xiu had attempted to sideline the Liao along with all other non-legitimate regimes; in the *Record* the

¹⁰⁵ Wang does not receive a biography in the *Record of the Kitan State* but he features in extended narrative sections in the annals, which have been taken directly from the *Long Draft* version of the story. There are older variants, almost identical to each other but different from the *Long Draft*, in *Dongdu shi lue* 42, p. 647 and Zeng Gong 曾鞏, *Long ping ji* 隆平集, Qiyetang kanben facsimile of 1701 edn (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1967), 18, pp. 686–87 (Wang's biography).

¹⁰⁶ Li, *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 62, p. 1391.

Liao were being separated out in their own right, for the first time in an extant work. To do this it was not enough simply to adopt the form of an official history for a specific dynasty, terminology and interpretations had to be changed too. Ye Longli clearly lacked the capacity to produce a coherent result from his efforts, but we should consider the possibility that his work, whether it involved deliberate manipulation or simple carelessness, nevertheless represents an ambivalence about the appropriate way to treat the Liao at a time when Song officials were increasingly confronted with choices about how, whether, or to what extent they would resist or agree to serve the invading Mongols. Perhaps ironically, the *Record* also transmitted material about the Liao in a form that, by conveniently covering the whole dynasty, proved of great assistance to the compilers of the *Liao History* under the new dynasty established by the Mongols even before their conquest was complete, and just a dozen years after the likely completion of the *Record*.

The Liao History

Under the Mongols, then, the *Record* became one of the main sources for the official *Liao History*, which was eventually completed in 1344 in the court History Office of the Yuan.¹⁰⁷ Here we have a dynastic history in the annals-biography format, but one assembled in a distinctly unconventional manner. Very little survived of the materials compiled by the Liao court, so rather than writing the history of the Liao in the usual way – that is, using the Liao court’s own records – the Yuan compilers of the *Liao History* had little choice but to draw heavily upon Song material of various dates, and only to a lesser extent on Liao court records that came to Song filtered through the intervening Jin dynasty. The *Liao History* annals covering the early tenth century seem wholly unrelated to any of the other surviving sources, and may be a survival from the first Liao Veritable Records compiled in 991 but no longer extant (see figure 1, above). Comparison indicates that much of the early part of the *Liao History* biographies section, however, is derived ultimately from the *Old History*, via two routes. The *Old History* was (confusingly, and in the absence of original Liao materials) a source for a set of Veritable Records and other preliminaries to an official history – which must have included biographies – compiled by the Liao and Jin History Offices and bequeathed to the Yuan historians. The Yuan compilers probably also drew on the *Old History* itself, but since 1207 the *New History* had been the official version of Five Dynas-

¹⁰⁷ The most useful account remains Chan, “Chinese Official Historiography.”

ties history – set in the examinations – and the *Old History* was falling ever more into disuse.¹⁰⁸ Accordingly, it appears that the Yuan team drew more of their biographical material from *Old History* accounts as transmitted (with their alterations) in the *New History, Mirror*, and particularly the *Record*. The *Liao History* was one of the “Three Histories” compiled by largely separate teams under the overall direction of the Mongol chief minister, Toghto 脫脫, and his Chinese deputy Ouyang Xuan 歐陽玄, who held the post of Hanlin Academician (*Hanlin xueshi* 翰林學士).¹⁰⁹

These histories were late – indeed very late – and the particular form they took has exerted a powerful historiographical effect ever since. The Song, of course, had completed their historiographical legitimization when they compiled the *Old History*, and had no interest in making histories for either Liao or Jin, both of whom were deemed simply illegitimate challengers to rightful Song supremacy. The Jin certainly could regard the Liao as their predecessors, but then what of the Song, whom the Jin had also conquered?¹¹⁰ The principle of lineal succession from dynasty to dynasty demanded only one predecessor, but political reality required the acknowledgement of two. Debates that proved unable to resolve this issue prevented the Jin from completing a Liao history and the problem was only compounded for the Mongols, who had conquered the Jin in 1234, established a reign era in 1260 and declared the Yuan dynasty in 1271, but not received the submission of Southern Song until 1276. The solution came late in the day, three quarters of a century after the conquest of Southern Song, at what turned out to be almost the end of the Yuan, and the decision to give each predecessor a separate history simplified matters, since one team could work on each set of discrete materials.

But this historiographical separation also had a political effect: producing distinct, and frequently conflicting, histories did nothing less than to permanently enshrine a sharp distinction between Liao and Song, and in the context of a series of dynasties that had all been at war with the Song for some or all of their existence, that distinction could not but take the shape of an apparently implacable enmity. Since the first of these regimes in fact predated the Song, this same enmity was unavoidably read back into the relationships between the Liao and the Five Dynasties, so that tenth- and eleventh-century in-

¹⁰⁸ Wang, “*Chiu Wu-tai shih*,” p. 1.

¹⁰⁹ The others were the *Jin shi* 金史 (Jin History) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 5 vols, and *Song History*.

¹¹⁰ Chan, *Legitimation in Imperial China*, discusses the Jin perspectives on these issues.

ter-state interactions were all placed indiscriminately within the same antagonistic framework. This effaced the differences and complexities visible in the *Old History* account – itself a product of the tenth century – and set aside both Ouyang Xiu’s moralistic interpretations and Sima Guang’s nuances.

The nature of the shift that had taken place can once again be traced through the changes that the *Liao History* makes to its sources. In this case, for the first time, there is no major reorganization of material or change of form between the *Liao History* and its immediate antecedent, the *Record*, both of which are at least broadly in the annals-biography format. But there are, as ever, omissions and additions of detail and incidents and, although they are not the focus here, in the *Liao History* more than for the earlier texts it is frequent small changes in wording that produce significant differences in the interpretation of the events conveyed.

It is well known that the Mongol rulers of the Yuan dynasty appear to have been acutely conscious of the cultural and status differences between themselves and their subject population and reinforced these distinctions in various ways. For their part, the conquered population, and especially the literati classes, often felt the need to decide whether to serve the Mongols or to take a loyalist stand and refuse official positions. The Mongol rulers’ determination to set down the history of their predecessors was partly born out of a desire to win over the literati by adopting this most characteristically literary method of legitimating the regime. The history project also employed a largely non-Mongol staff who, three or four generations into Mongol rule, accepted the embrace of the conquerors with perhaps less need for agonized justifications than in earlier decades, but perhaps also with an increased consciousness of cultural difference.¹¹¹ It is easy to suppose that in putting together the histories the compilers were pulled in two directions simultaneously: the need to legitimize the dynasty that they had, by accepting employment, at least tacitly acknowledged, versus the desire to show the superiority and civilizing capacity of literati, or even Chinese, ways and persons. In fact we do not yet know how, or even if, this balance played out in reality. However, changes between the *Liao History* and its sources can be instructive. In the earlier materials there was a growing

¹¹¹ On the agonies of Song loyalists and the construction of a hagiographical tradition around them, see Jay, *Change in Dynasties*, esp. chap. 3, and “Memoirs and Official Accounts: The Historiography of the Song Loyalists,” *HJAS* 50.2 (1990): 589–612. On the politics of the project see Chan, “Chinese Official Historiography”; Qiu Shusen 邱樹森, “Tuotuo he Liao Jin Song san shi” 脫脫和遼金宋三史, *Yuanshi ji beifang minzu shi yanjiu jikan* 元史及北方民族史研究集刊 7 (1983): 10–21.

tendency to emphasize indications that southerners taking service with the Liao retained an emotional and cultural attachment to the south. This could find expression in attempts to return home or, when return proved impractical, efforts to improve the lot of southerners under Liao jurisdiction. One of the overall patterns visible in the *Liao History* is the downplaying or even removal of such emphases.

Han Yanhui, for example, is written off in the *New History*, by inclusion in the Kitan appendices, as someone who willingly returned to Liao after having left them once. But he is redeemed in the *Mirror* and *Record* by the addition of a letter explaining to his southern master that although he has returned to Liao, his heart remains in the south and he will work to ensure that the Liao never govern there. From the other side, the Liao ruler is shown to be surprised and delighted when Han Yanhui comes back, exclaiming that Han has “come down from heaven.”¹¹² But in the *Liao History* Han Yanhui does not promise to keep the Liao from governing the south, and instead of the delighted greeting found in its source texts, we have a matter-of-fact, “When he arrived, Taizu asked him his reasons,” although on hearing the explanation “[t]he emperor was greatly pleased...” and gave Han a Kitan name meaning “came back.”¹¹³ Zhang Li, for his part, continues to be seen as someone willing to speak his mind, but the complexity found in the earlier sources, and especially in the *Old History*, is lost as fewer incidents are covered, and he appears as just another stereotypically good minister, undifferentiated from any other.

In Zhang’s case, among others, we have already noted in the sources so far an increasing concentration on the civilizing effect of Five Dynasties *emigrés* on the Kitan “barbarians.” Even a character as morally dubious as Zhao Yanshou features in the occasional topos in the *Mirror* where he works to sponsor or protect southerners who are unrecognized by or under threat from ignorant or brutal Kitans. One example is Zhao’s plea on behalf of the Later Jin armies surrendered by their general Du Chongwei, which persuaded the Liao emperor De-guang to spare them from massacre.¹¹⁴ But despite Sima Guang’s nuances, Zhao is generally given a hard time in the southern sources, so it is striking, if unsurprising, that he is treated much more generously in the *Liao History*. Criticisms directed at him by contemporaries are simply omitted, notably a long speech by a Later Tang envoy to De-

¹¹² *TJ* 269, p. 8811; *QG* 16, p. 161.

¹¹³ *LS* 74, p. 1231.

¹¹⁴ *TJ* 286, p. 9331.

guang in the *Mirror* that complains of Zhao's and his father's disloyalty and dishonesty, and a dramatic accusation of treachery from the battlements of a besieged city reported in all the southern sources.¹¹⁵ Also missing is any mention of Zhao's disastrous attempt to succeed to the Liao throne in 947, which ended in his arrest at a drinking party by Deguang's son Wuyu 兀欲 (Liao Shizong 遼世宗, 947–51). These events are widely reported in the southern sources, but in the *Liao History* the only mention is a remark that "going to the lengths of presuming to the position of emperor was an error," found in the commentary to Zhao's biography.¹¹⁶ In the absence of other information, this refers merely to Zhao's earlier, intriguing request that Deguang make him heir apparent.¹¹⁷ These changes are combined with the careful transmission or addition of incidents showing Zhao as a good and suitably rewarded servant of the Liao,¹¹⁸ in some cases involving the retrieval of detail from the *Old History* that had been omitted from the intervening texts.¹¹⁹ Evidently the compilers of the *Liao History* were prepared to put in considerable work to ensure that they left Zhao with a much higher reputation than in the other texts.

The overall effect of these and many similar changes between the earlier sources and the *Liao History* is to demonstrate that the southern servants of the Liao during the Five Dynasties period were fully committed to Liao service, even in so problematic a case as Zhao Yanshou. The ambiguity reflected as late as the thirteenth century in the positions of these people, is removed in this last version of events. Political divisions had hardened, leading to reinterpretation of the highly politically significant histories of the Yuan dynasty's predecessors.¹²⁰ People whom it had been possible, in earlier centuries, to see as scions of a world of fluid politics and shifting borders were now re-presented as

¹¹⁵ Dishonesty and disloyalty: *TJ* 280, p. 9156, cf. *LS* 3, p. 38. Treachery: *JW* 95, pp. 1266–67; *XW* 33, pp. 362–63; *TJ* 284, p. 9284; *QG* 3, p. 28, cf. *LS* 4, p. 55.

¹¹⁶ *JW* 98, p. 1313; 99, p. 1329; 100, p. 1331; *XW* 73, pp. 901–2; *TJ* 286, pp. 9356–58; *QG* 4, pp. 42–43; 16, p. 165; cf. *LS* 76, p. 1253.

¹¹⁷ *LS* 76, p. 1248, and also *JW* 98, p. 1312; *XW* 72, p. 897; *TJ* 286, p. 9339; *QG* 3, p. 36.

¹¹⁸ For example, *LS* 4, p. 59; 5, p. 64; 76, pp. 1248–49.

¹¹⁹ *LS* 4, p. 59, with the titles of Zhao's posts taken from *JW* 17, p. 1835, having been omitted from *XW* 72, p. 897; *TJ* 286, p. 9339; *QG* 3, p. 37.

¹²⁰ Jennifer Jay notes that in real life there was a spectrum of responses to the Yuan take-over, but that in the *Song shi* this range of options was transformed into a sharp distinction between loyalist and turncoat; Jay, *Change in Dynasties*. The Three Histories continued to have political import into the Qing, when Hong Taiji had them translated into Manchu: see Pamela Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 190–91.

firmly on one side of a sharp borderline that had, in truth, only come into existence after those people were long dead.

The irony, perhaps, was that the rulers whose concerns brought about this final transformation were not, as one might have anticipated, Song dynasts seeking to bolster their position against their northern neighbors. Instead they were conquerors who needed to simultaneously preserve the distinctions upon which their privileged position rested, while yet encouraging literati originating in the former Southern Song realm (that is, those in the *nanren* 南人 class) into loyal service despite their being ranked lowest in the hierarchy of population categories imposed on their empire by the Mongols. Since the Mongol emperors under whom the *Liao History* was compiled were naturally concerned to obtain and keep the loyalty of their servants from among the conquered, it may not be surprising that attachment to the south was edited out of the stories presented in that work. But since at least some of this editing must have been done by the history project's *nanren* staff, the resultant changes raise questions about how they felt about their task, even if we cannot answer them here.

By the mid-fourteenth century, then, the Liao dynasty in its first half-century was again being depicted as an entity capable of capturing and keeping the unequivocal loyalty of even its earliest servants. This is a far cry from the complex picture presented in the *Old History* and the *Comprehensive Mirror*, and the confused presentation of the *Record*, although it may be prefigured – though from the opposite perspective – in the clear judgments of the *New History*.

CONCLUSIONS

The official record of the first half-century of the Liao dynasty is derived to a significant degree from the earlier official history of the Five Dynasties. When we trace the process by which this occurred, we see the impact of changes in both the political situation and attitudes towards that situation in the period between – at the latest – the compilation of the *Old History* in 974 and the completion of the *Liao History* in 1344. Read in the light of its subsequent transformation, the *Old History* conveys a very different impression of political organisation than do the later texts. During the second half of the tenth century it was still possible to write a history of the Five Dynasties period that took full account of the many complicated relationships between the imperial houses of the Five Dynasties and their many neighbors, whether independent governors, the founders of southern kingdoms, or northerners

like the Liao. As these relationships became increasingly focused onto a two-way militarized hostility between the Liao on the one hand, and the Song successors to the Five Dynasties on the other, so the history of the earlier period was rewritten.

The peculiar role of Chinese official historical writing in the legitimation of regimes meant that the changing political situation brought changes not just in the content of history but also in its format. The ability to incorporate the neighbors in a single, though multifaceted, work was both challenged and reinforced by competing historiographical schools in the eleventh century. The first revision, the *New History*, marginalized – largely through form – all but the lineal dynastic predecessors of the Song, but subsequently the *Mirror*, perhaps oddly, changed the form but retained the complexity of the *Old History* while placing increased emphasis on the private attachment to the south of those who gave their service to the north. Sima Guang was assisted in his presentation of complexity by his adoption of a strictly chronological format that allowed a de-emphasis of the legitimate line in terms of how much material was presented and in what sequence, even as it was clearly marked by language. Ouyang Xiu's aim of eliminating all non-legitimate strands from the Five Dynasties history was embraced in the thirteenth century, when the *New History* became the officially preferred version, by a Song establishment concerned not just for its legitimacy but its very existence.

But by a series of political and structural accidents, the Liao were not thus written out of history altogether. Instead, they held sufficient appeal for a thirteenth-century private author to treat the dynasty as a discrete unit of history, though we do not know why. By the thirteenth century the loyalties of Five Dynasties ministers were of less concern to historians than were the Liao themselves, whose similarities to the contemporary Mongol threat were much discussed at the time.¹²¹ It was no longer enough to marginalize the Liao by attempting to write their leaders out of history and preserve instead only accounts of their Chinese servants. The Liao as a regime could not now be ignored. Accordingly, the *Record's* response to the early years of the dynasty involved not only a change of form – a separate history for the Liao – but also substantive abridgement of contents taken more-than-usually verbatim from the *Mirror*. Most of the effects of Ye Longli's drastic reduction and rearrangement of his sources may well have been due to

¹²¹ Yu Jiaxi 余嘉錫, *Siku tiyao bianzheng* 四庫提要辨證 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), vol. 1, pp. 270–74.

mere carelessness, but on certain occasions he seems to be making more deliberate manipulations, some – though not all – of which appear to highlight the differences between the civilized literati servants of the Liao and their barbarian masters. More work remains to be done on this neglected text. The separation was sealed when the Mongol rulers of the Yuan decided to compile three distinct histories for the Liao, Song, and Jin. The transformation of the *Old History* was completed, and the sections of the *Liao History* dealing with the early tenth century simplified the relationships between Chinese officials and Kitan emperors to that of unalloyed loyalty and effective service from minister to ruler. Sometimes going to some lengths to depict the loyal service of ministers conveyed a strong message that the Liao were a legitimate regime, which was important for the Mongol masters of the history's compilers, but the completion – finally – of a separate official history for the Liao also reinforced the sense of separation – or better, division – between the Liao and its neighbor the Song – and by extension the Five Dynasties as well. The representation from the *Old History* and *Comprehensive Mirror* of one region inhabited by many disparate groups has been lost.

As for the Liao, its legitimacy was increased at the same time as paradoxically being undermined. Its historical significance experienced the same process. Separating out the Liao by granting it its own history was the ultimate accolade of legitimation. The *Liao History* is forever one of the “Twenty-Five Official Histories” and as such the regime must always take its place, by right, in lists of “the Chinese dynasties.” Yet the principle emphasized by the Song and later dynasties that there can be only one Son of Heaven means that the existence of the parallel history of the Song, which covers most of the same period, forever locks them and the Liao into an implicit contest for sole legitimacy, so that the two dynasties can only be seen to exist in the face of their antithetical relationship. Ultimately the Song wins the historiographical contest because it is seen as the bearer of the *true* legitimate line, which undermines, to say the least, the legitimating function of the *Liao History*. Furthermore, the neat separation of a dynasty of questionable legitimacy into its own history allows it to be marginalized by historians and, in fact, largely ignored. Even as the official history grants the Liao legitimacy, it simultaneously makes it easier for the dynasty to be side-

lined. It is no surprise, then, that the Liao has proved such a headache for the convention-bound historiography of the Middle Period.¹²²

The transformation of the *Old History*, still plainly visible as the ultimate source for much material in the *Liao History* as in the other texts, is entirely unsurprising in the political circumstances. It is problematical because the picture of sharp division conveyed by the later sources is read back into the earlier versions of the same material. Deconstructing the change, however, allows us to return to the *Old History* and read it in new and rewarding ways.

To recognize this we have to take historical sources more seriously and treat them with more care than has perhaps been commonplace in the study of Chinese history. The effort pays off by freeing us to see the Five Dynasties period in a much more complex and interesting light, and can also greatly improve our understanding of the processes by which the Liao-Song world came into being.

To reach this conclusion it has been necessary, methodologically, to *recover* the extent of Liao interaction by teasing out something of the intertextual relationships between a series of histories. Rather than reading the earlier texts in light of the later polarisation between Liao and Song, I have instead *compared* the earlier and later works without assuming that they all tell basically the same dichotomous story. This offers an alternative way of looking at the earlier texts that can not only alter the view of the story they tell but may also produce a transformation of the mental frameworks within which we are able to view this history. Instead of reading the later cleavage back into the earlier period, we are able to regard the earlier and later Liao as distinct in ways that then have to be explained. We are only at the beginning of explorations, but perhaps this method may enable us to gain new insights into the processes by which the undoubted Liao-Song dichotomy came into being, rather than presuming that it was always there.

¹²² Christian De Pee makes a related point about the tidiness of texts compared to the options for multiple readings inherent in material culture: "Material Ambiguity and the Hermetic Text: Cities, Tombs, and Middle-Period History," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 34 (2004): 81-94.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>CHC</i>	<i>The Cambridge History of China</i>
<i>JW</i>	<i>Jiu Wudai shi</i> 舊五代史
<i>LS</i>	<i>Liao shi</i> 遼史
<i>QG</i>	<i>Qidan guo zhi</i> 契丹國志
<i>SS</i>	<i>Song shi</i> 宋史
<i>TJ</i>	<i>Zizhi tongjian</i> 資治通鑑
<i>XW</i>	<i>Xin Wudai shi</i> 新五代史