THE CONSTRUCTION OF *ZI ZHI TONG JIAN*'S IMPERIAL VISION: SIMA GUANG ON THE SOUTHERN AND NORTHERN DYNASTIES

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MERTON COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

D.PHIL. THESIS

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The great drama of China has been the repeated attempts to bring under single control and preserve the unity of its vast territories, so varied ethnically, socially, and geographically. Han Chinese confidence in the integrity of their own identity has been lastingly unsettled by long periods of fragmentation into regional states, and even in times of political unity the heart-searching has continued: what went wrong? What lessons could be learned for the future?

The Southern and Northern Dynasties' era (317-589 AD) was the longest period of political fragmentation in the imperial era. Its political and social confusion gave rise to differences in later accounts of it. In the eleventh century, scholar-officials intensively debated the issue of imperial rule during this period. At stake was the integrity of the Han Chinese state. On one side were historians who accorded legitimacy to the barbarian dynasties of the north; on the other were those who favoured the southern Han Chinese-ruled dynasties. By the time Song's power base transferred south in 1127, a strong sense of a Han Chinese identity had developed and pro-Southern opinion predominated.

This study approaches the Southern and Northern Dynasties's era indirectly. It examines it through the most prominent work of eleventh-century historiography, the keystone written history of early imperial China, Sima Guang's 司馬光 *Zi zhi tong jian* 資治通鑑 – the main focus of this study. That text has played a central role in shaping later understanding of imperial China's political traditions and, as a corollary, has contributed to the formation of a Han Chinese self-identity. Yet Sima Guang's representation of China's past, though well-researched and written, was inevitably coloured by personal political and social experiences, and by his current commitments – by spin, in fact.

This study will argue that at the heart of Sima Guang's representation of the Southern and Northern Dynasties was a concern for the political survival of the eleventh-century state under which he served. He needed to understand and explicate the political and moral lessons of the earlier period in order to present an imperial vision that would avoid its frailties. This study therefore investigates and demonstrates the previously unexplored extent to which contemporary political concerns informed Sima Guang's account. By developing a reading of *Zi zhi tong jian* as an ideological and textual construct, and more than just a simple account of the past, this study affords insights into the composition of historical writing in imperial China, as well as the complexities of the political environment that spawned it. It shows that works of historiography like *Zi zhi tong jian* served a more nuanced function than later scholarship suggests, and it brings into focus important questions of historical and literary authority.

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1

READINGS OF *ZI ZHI TONG JIAN*

An imperial preface

On 18 November 1067 Song Emperor Shenzong summoned his reader-in-waiting, Sima Guang 司馬光, to an imperial seminar, one of the first of the new reign.[1] He ordered him to read from his current work-in-progress, a chronological history that he had been researching for the past three years and more. Before Sima Guang even started reading, though, Shenzong did what many busy book reviewers have done: he offered comments on a text he had never read. He ordered Sima Guang to insert them as a preface once he had completed his new work.

> I believe that 'the gentleman nurtures his virtue by gaining a large acquaintance with the words and deeds of those who have gone before.'[2] He is able 'to remain firm and resolute and to retain integrity and substance; his light and clarity are renewed daily.'[3] The *Book of Documents* also says that 'as sovereign, one should seek to learn much from others and to establish one's business in timely fashion.'[4] The *Book of Odes*, *Book of Documents*, and *Spring and Autumn Annals* are all sources that shed light on the evidence of gain and loss, preserve the trueness of the sovereign way, and leave exemplary warnings for later generations.
>
> Sima Qian 司馬遷 of Han 'stitched together works from the stone rooms and metal caskets.'[5] He based himself on Zuo's *Guo yu*, and consulted *Shi ben*, *Zhan guo ce*, and *Chu Han chun qiu*. He 'selected from the classics and gathered from the commentaries,'[6] and 'gathered up old anecdotes that the empire had abandoned and

[1] Sima Guang received his appointment as reader-in-waiting on 4 November 1065, *Xu Zi zhi tong jian chang bian* 續資治通鑑長編, Li Tao 李燾, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1979-1995 (hereafter *XCB*), 206.5003.
[2] *Zhou yi zheng yi* 周易正義, *Shi san jing zhu shu* edn., 3.28b.
[3] An incomplete quotation from *ibid* 3.28b.
[4] *Shang shu zheng yi* 尙書正義, *Shi san jing zhu shu* edn., 10.63c. The quotation continues: 'One makes gains by studying from the lessons of antiquity. I have not heard of anyone who has sustained his business for many generations without taking antiquity as his teacher.'
[5] Works from the imperial libraries and archives. The phrase is Sima Qian's own, from his autobiography on *Shi ji* 史記, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1959, 130.3296.
[6] *Han shu* 漢書, Ban Gu 班固, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1962, 62.2737.

lost.'[7] With 'the actions and events that he examined,'[8] he 'galloped through several thousand years of history,'[9] starting his record with [the Yellow Emperor] Xuanyuan and ending with the unicorn [captured in 122 BC, during the reign of Han Emperor Wu].[10] He put it all into annals, tables, biographies of hereditary houses, monographs, and individual biographies. Those who later provided accounts of [the period] were unable to change this structure. Since 'his values of right and wrong did not contradict the sages,'[11] and his assignment of praise and blame proceeded from the epitome of precise judgement, he had the qualities of an excellent historian.

One like my father Yingzong, who studied antiquity, would dwell upon records and documents and always keep a scroll to hand while attending to everything from the myriad tasks of governance on down. He commissioned Sima Guang, an Auxiliary Academician of the Dragon Diagram Hall, to discuss and set in order the affairs of rulers and ministers of past ages from King Weilie of Zhou down to the Five Dynasties. He had him go and look through the imperial archives and supplied him with clerks, scribes, writing brushes, and paper. Guang's intention was [to show that] the house of the sovereign was weak during Zhou's decline. Rites, music, and military campaigns all proceeded from the feudal lords. Only when King Ping moved east did Qi, Chu, Qin, and Jin eventually expand, and [Dukes] Huan and Wen in turn became hegemons. Yet they still cited respect for the sovereign as their pretext for subduing the world. King Weilie proclaimed himself a vassal and declared Han [Qian] 韓虔, Zhao [Ji] 趙籍, and Wei [Si] 魏斯 feudal lords. Although Zhou had not yet been destroyed, sovereign control was at an end. This indeed is where the ancients' accounts of the origins of their intentions came from. Clear-sighted rulers and competent ministers' exchanges on the path to orderly rule; the choice words from debates and discourses; the competent application of grace and punishment; the points of contact in the relationship between Heaven and Man; the sources of the various evidence for fortune and misfortune; the roots of the rises and falls of those in power; proof of the advantages and disadvantages of social regulations; the stratagems of skilful commanders; the prescriptions of upright officials: these are what he records. He judges them in terms of heterodoxy and orthodoxy, and distils them into cases of orderly rule or negligence. I can fairly say that the profound forms of speeches and the deep significance of remonstrations are all here. There are sixteen eras in all, arranged into 296 *juan*. The work places itself among the various doctrinal schools and covers all the reigns of past and present. It is wide-ranging but captures the essentials. It is economical but extends to all matters. It is also an assemblage of regulations and punishments, a pool, a forest, of documentation. Xun Qing 荀卿 once said: 'If you want to observe the traces of the sages then look where they are clearest – at later sovereigns, that is.'[12] With Han Emperors Wen and Xuan or Tang Emperor Taizong, 'I can find no flaw in them,' as Confucius put it.[13] With the other periods of orderly rule and sovereigns who flourished, there were anxieties of pain and loss, and doctrines of loyalty and profit. Some knew about people and were skilled at employing them; they were respectful, frugal, hard working, and humble. Each also achieved one aspect of a sage or worthy and was what Meng Ke referred to when he said 'I would only accept one or two strips from the 'Wu cheng' [chapter of the *Book of Documents*], but nothing more.'[14] When we come to periods of decline, fraught with the danger of being

[7] *Shi ji* 130.3319.
[8] *Ibid*.
[9] Echoes *Han shu* 62.2737.
[10] The phrase comes from *Shi ji* 130.3300.
[11] Echoes *Han shu* 62.2737-8.
[12] *Xun zi ji jie* 荀子集解, Xun Qing 荀卿, Wang Xianqian 王先謙, ed., *Zhu zi ji cheng* edn., 3.51. 'The later sovereigns': Kings Wen and Wu, and the Duke of Zhou. Xun Qing elsewhere uses the term to refer to the Three Dynasties.
[13] *Lun yu zhu shu* 論語注疏, *Shi san jing zhu shu* edn., 8.32a: The original reference is to Yu 禹.
[14] *Meng zi zhu shu* 孟子注疏, *Shi san jing zhu shu* edn., 14A.109b.

> toppled, we can see the cart tracks of those who have come before and veered from the proper way. With insubordinate rebels and treacherous men there are the early traces of 'treading on frosty ground.'[15] The *Book of Odes* says: 'An exemplary mirror for Shang was not far off; it lay in the time of Xia Hou [the lord of Xia].'[16] I therefore bestow upon this work the title *Zi zhi tong jian* precisely to show my intentions for it.[17]

Of course Shenzong was not writing a review, or even a preview. It is unfair to bracket him with the unscrupulous book reviewer. This is an outline of what he expected (and, by imperial prerogative, demanded) from Sima Guang's completed work. The prescriptive tone is in his final claim to 'bestow upon this work the title *Zi zhi tong jian* precisely to show my intentions for it.' Sima Guang seems to lose authority over his work's composition; Shenzong directs its content and function instead. By usurping authorial control and setting out his expectations for Sima Guang, Shenzong also offers insights into the work that will form the focus of the present study.

'*Zi zhi tong jian*' 資治通鑑. Shenzong's choice of title is important. With the prescriptive tone of his preface *nomen est omen*, the name is portentous. The canonical principle of making the name true to what it describes, *zheng ming* 正名, comes into play. His will is to take Sima Guang's text as a 'mirror.' That term, *jian* 鑑, has rich layers of meaning. A verbal sense underlies its nominal one: 'to reflect on,' 'to draw on experience.' This is relevant to the project that Shenzong has in mind. 'Mirror' serves well as a translation, though, because it conveys some of the multi-layered implications of the original and also has useful connotations outside the immediate Song setting of this work. Here is a way of politicising the past that is recognisable elsewhere in the world – in the *specula* of medieval Europe, or the Indo-Islamic and Byzantine 'mirrors for princes,' for example. Shenzong's intentions

[15] *Zhou yi zheng yi* 1.6a: i.e. one can see from early portents how future events will unfold.
[16] *Mao shi zheng yi* 毛詩正義, *Shi san jing zhu shu* edn., 18/1.286a.
[17] *Zi zhi tong jian* 資治通鑑, Sima Guang 司馬光, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1956 (hereafter *ZZTJ*), pp.33-4.

for *Zi zhi tong jian* fit that global context. It will be a text that uses the past to 'reflect' for the ruler on present political problems.

The image of the text as a political 'mirror' also finds support earlier in Shenzong's title. It will 'assist orderly rule,' *zi zhi* 資治. There is a practical point to be made here: for seventeenth-century scholar Wang Fuzhi 王夫之, '"*zi zhi*" 資治 is not just knowledge of order and disorder; it is the resources through which one acts powerfully and seeks order' – it assists rulers in learning from past mistakes and in avoiding them in their own conduct.[18] The phrase shapes the rest of the title – grammatically, it modifies what follows – and it emphasises the didactic function that Shenzong assigns to the work. Present political exigencies frame the title and show themselves to be uppermost in the Song emperor's mind here.

Embedded in this political focus is another important prescription for Sima Guang's work. This 'mirror' that will 'assist orderly rule' will also be comprehensive in its scope, *tong* 通. There are nuances of meaning here too. As well as 'comprehensive' or, as a full verb, 'to have a comprehensive knowledge,' *tong* has the corollary meanings of 'to penetrate,' 'to flow through,' 'to connect with.' They are all at work here. Sima Guang will compose a chronicle (although Shenzong makes little of that). It will trace an unbroken line of years from 'King Weilie of Zhou down to the Five Dynasties': it will flow through and connect chronological developments. It will also be comprehensive in the details that it records. Shenzong declares earlier in his preface that it will 'extend to all matters.' The claim of 'comprehensiveness,' both chronological and thematic, will strengthen Sima Guang's authority. If the text is to draw definitive political lessons from the past, as Shenzong demands, then it must be supported by the full weight of available

[18] *Du Tong jian lun* 讀通鑑論, Wang Fuzhi 王夫之, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1975, p.1113.

historical evidence. The view is a product of its time. A concern made itself felt during Song with archiving knowledge; the imperially commissioned encyclopaedic compilations of the late-tenth century set the standard for a wider intellectual trend. In relation to the past, Shenzong's hope for an archival control over the events of the preceding millennium implies a belief that those events *could* be brought together and fashioned into one account. In other words, they inherently formed a coherent, unified whole and represented an unbroken tradition (here the other meanings of *tong* make themselves felt: 'to penetrate,' 'to flow freely'). It is in much the same vein that we use the term 'China' today, with its implications of a single, comprehensive, and enduring political entity. That is the vision that Shenzong tries to impose on his imperial heritage in the eleventh century. Through its immediate context an unobtrusive modifier, *tong*, returns us to political concerns.

Shenzong's title does not appear until the end of his preface. He delays its unveiling for rhetorical effect but also to deliver a long justification for his eventual choice. He gives sharp focus in this preamble to the roles he assigns to Sima Guang's work. His title, *Zi zhi tong jian*, hints indirectly at the work's focus on the past: '*jian*', 'to draw on experience,' is the clue. The past also confronts us at every turn of Shenzong's preface. In particular, it supplies a model for the present, a 'mirror to aid governance.' Canonical references are both explicit and in the fabric of Shenzong's phrasing. The opening sets the tone. The past serves the moral demands of the present. The idealised trope of the 'gentleman' acquires his moral authority through a close understanding of the conduct of his predecessors. A quotation from the *Book of Documents* follows. With it Shenzong's focus narrows from broad moral concerns to specifically political ones. He turns his gaze from the Confucian gentleman, an abstract moral exemplar for all people, to the individual sovereign. He looks to the

past for guidance in his own particular social and political role. He develops the theme by skimming through a rich canonical tradition of reflection on the past. The *Book of Odes*, *Book of Documents*, *Spring and Autumn Annals* all appear in quick succession. There is no need for quotation here. The titles alone serve as shorthand for the practice of identifying and interpreting the lessons of successful and failed predecessors. The distinction between the exemplary and the minatory is important for Shenzong. He soon gives it expression through the voices of Xun Qing, Confucius, and Mencius. They make rapid appearances to exhort moral clarity in judging past rulers and, more important, in analysing representations of those rulers. Finally, Shenzong revisits the *Book of Odes*. Here is his ultimate canonical authority for using the past as a model for the present: '"An exemplary mirror for Shang was not far off 商鑑不遠; it lay in the time of Xia Hou [the lord of Xia]."' It is from this phrase that he draws the 'mirror' of his title: 'I therefore bestow upon this work the title *Zi zhi tong jian*.' The connective 'therefore,' *gu* 故, links the authority of the ancient text and his aspirations for the present one.

The other model, more recent though still part of the literary canon, is Sima Qian. Shenzong quotes often from his *Shi ji* 史記 and from Ban Gu's 班固 later biography of him in *Han shu* 漢書; he shows himself well versed in the keystones of the imperial historiographical tradition. Sima Qian serves in both the structure and the thematic concerns of the preface as a bridge between high antiquity and Shenzong's more immediate political heritage. This is the model of imperial historiography against which *Zi zhi tong jian* (hereafter *ZZTJ*) will be measured. Like Sima Qian, Sima Guang has access to imperial archives and will also 'stitch together' the works that he finds there. Like Sima Qian, he will be wide-ranging in the type of sources that he consults. And like Sima Qian too, he will 'gallop through'

large swathes of the past: *ZZTJ*, we are promised, is 'wide-ranging but captures the essentials. It is economical but extends to all matters. It is also an assemblage of regulations and punishments; a pool, a forest of documentation' – 'comprehensive,' in fact. True, there are also contrasts between the two historians. They adopt different historiographical structures for their works: Sima Guang does not follow the annals-biography form that attracts approval here. That does not seem to concern Shenzong, though. He overlooks divergence (the result of not having heard or read the new work, perhaps?) in favour of implied points of convergence. More important than historiographical technicalities of form are the moral values that he identifies in Sima Qian's work. Sima Qian was an excellent historian, says Shenzong, not only because of his ability to marshal vast and complex source materials but mainly because he was clear in his judgement of right and wrong and in his assignation of praise and blame. Shenzong expects the same of Sima Guang. *ZZTJ*, he tells us, records (or will record) the dynamic in the fortunes of rulers and ministers of successive generations. Interactions between rulers and ministers; arguments of court debates; ministerial advice; rewards and punishments; the effects of policy decisions; changes in political fortune; military tactics: his summary list of its contents is political in its focus. It is also general and it even includes the most general theme of all, 'the points of contact in the relationship between Heaven and Man.' *ZZTJ* will abstract principles that transcend the individual events of the past; it will judge them 'in terms of heterodoxy and orthodoxy and distil them into cases of orderly rule or negligence.' It will be didactic in its purpose, in other words, the product of both subjective moral judgments and concerns of universal relevance. This process of moral abstraction will enable Shenzong to apply the past to his own present, to emulate the examples of his sagely predecessors and to avoid the cart tracks of those who have failed

before him. Right and wrong, praise and blame, heterodoxy and orthodoxy, order and disorder: these are the canonical values that draw close attention in Shenzong's preface and give shape to his understanding of historiography as a source of moral guidance. That understanding of *ZZTJ* also furnishes the present study with several of its central features. It will look for the ways in which the past was fashioned to reflect upon the present. It will identify the political focus of Sima Guang's work. It will assess its claims to comprehensiveness, and the authority of *ZZTJ*'s moral, political, and historical vision.

Ideological underpinnings

Rich implications suggest themselves before ever reading a column of *ZZTJ*'s text. These are the preconceptions that played in Shenzong's mind of what a representation of the past should be. They are also the expectations that he placed on Sima Guang – what *ZZTJ* would be. And they are the assumptions that he planted for us, future audiences of the work, before we too have arrived at the work's beginning. Shenzong did not write his preface in complete ignorance of the plans for *ZZTJ*'s content and style, though. He makes himself the puppet in an act of ideological ventriloquism. Despite all appearances in this imperial preface, Sima Guang in fact retains control over his work. By the time of the first court reading on 18 November 1067, he had already laid the ground for *ZZTJ*'s use in the imperial seminar and had prepared the emperor well for what he would hear and even how to interpret it. He did that through a sequence of close discussions of its composition, which accompanied each stage of its incremental development. These appeared in public

textual settings: in memorials to the throne; in prolegomena to the publications of early incarnations of the work. The project first took shape in the late 1050s and early 1060s, in discussions between Sima Guang and his later assistant on *ZZTJ*, scholar-official Liu Shu 劉恕.[19] It bore its first fruit in 1064: Sima Guang presented to the throne *Li nian tu* 歷年圖, a chronological table in five *juan* of events from 403 BC to 959 AD. It was accompanied by an extensive preface that detailed the principles of its composition.[20] When it was printed soon after without Sima Guang's knowledge (under the title *Di tong* 帝統), Sima Guang responded with 'After Recording *A Chart of Annual Chronology*' 記歷年圖後, a brief document that revisited many of the themes of the work's original preface.[21] Two years later, on 14 May 1066, Sima Guang outlined to Emperor Yingzong his plans for a new work, *Tong zhi* 通志. That chronicle provided an account of the period between 403 and 207 BC. It was presented to the throne in the same year, accompanied by a formal presentation document.[22] *Tong zhi* later formed the first eight *juan* of *ZZTJ*. Then came Shenzong's preface the following year, and with it a letter of thanks from Sima Guang.[23] After this early flurry of communication, the next seventeen years were punctuated by a steady stream of readings at imperial seminars and the presentation of the accounts of each period as work was completed on them.[24] It was

[19] *Zi zhi tong jian wai ji* 資治通鑑外紀, Liu Shu 劉恕, *Si bu cong kan* edn., '*Tong jian wai ji* yin' 通鑑外紀引, 3a-b.
[20] *Li nian tu* was later incorporated into Sima Guang's *Ji gu lu* 稽古錄, of which if forms most of *juan* 11-15. Its preface appears on *Sima Wen gong Ji gu lu* 司馬溫公稽古錄, Sima Guang 司馬光, *Si bu cong kan* edn., 16.83a-87b.
[21] *Wen guo Wenzheng gong wen ji* 溫國文正公文集, Sima Guang 司馬光, *Si bu cong kan* edn. (hereafter *SMWJ*), 66.7a-b
[22] *XCB* 208.5050; *SMWJ* 57.12a-b.
[23] *SMWJ* 57.12b-13b.
[24] Sima Guang gave readings from *ZZTJ* at imperial seminars on these dates: 18 November 1067 (for dating, see *ZZTJ* p.34; *San chao ming chen yan xing lu* 三朝名臣言行錄, Zhu Xi 朱熹, *Si bu cong kan* edn., 7A.16a; *Yu hai* 玉海, Wang Yinglin 王應麟, Taibei: Hua wen shu ju, 1964, 26.33a), 23 March 1068 (*Xu Zi zhi tong jian chang bian shi bu* 續資治通鑑長編拾補, Huang Yizhou 黃以周 et al., Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 2004, 3A.90; *San chao ming chen yan xing lu* 7A.25b; *Yu hai* 26.33a dates the reading to 17 March), 3 December 1069 (*Xu Zi zhi tong jian chang bian shi bu* 6.259-60; *Song chao shi shi lei yuan* 宋朝事實類苑, Jiang Shaoyu 江少虞, Shanghai:

accompanied, behind the scenes, by correspondence and discussion between those involved in the construction of *ZZTJ*'s account.[25] By the time Sima Guang presented the complete *ZZTJ* to the throne in December 1084, little remained to be written about it that had not been written already. The document that accompanied the text's presentation – the true preface, in many ways, since it came from Sima Guang himself – offers few new insights.[26] Its interest instead lies in its familiarity and in its consistency with the vision that he had developed over the previous two decades. It consolidates and confirms the ideological foundations of his work. It also sharpens the focus of the close analysis of *ZZTJ*'s text that is the business of this study.

An enduring concern runs through Sima Guang's prefatory material: to secure authority for the vision of history that he shaped from his sources. The truth claims of *ZZTJ* – its validity as a work of historiography – rest on the success of that enterprise. There are four types of authority that Sima Guang seeks. First, that of the Song emperors, with whose support *ZZTJ*'s account takes shape. We have heard something of this already in Shenzong's preface, although it will recur in what follows. Second, the authority of the canonical texts on which Sima Guang draws for his model in representing the past. Third, a corollary, the source histories whose authority he contests and on whose narratives he claims to improve. Fourth, the authority of his own judgement, the basis for improving on his predecessors by modifying their accounts. To establish *ZZTJ*'s authority in these four areas, Sima Guang emphasises several features of his representations of the past: their relevance

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Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1981, 15.181-2; *Yu hai* 26.33a), 5 June 1070 (*XCB* 210.5112; *Song hui yao ji gao bu bian* 宋會要輯稿補編, Xu Song 徐松, ed., Beijing: Quan guo tu shu guan wen xian suo wei fu zhi zhong xin, 1988, 5278.64a-b; *Yu hai* 26.33a dates the reading to 4 June), 8 June 1070 (*XCB* 210.5115, *Yu hai* 26.33a). On Sima Guang's presentation to the throne of *ZZTJ*'s completed sections, see *Song chao shi shi* 宋朝事實, Li You 李攸, *Guo xue ji ben cong shu* edn., 3.41; *Song chao shi shi lei yuan* 15.185.

[25] See, for example, Sima Guang's response to Fan Zuyu on *Chuan jia ji* 傳家集, Sima Guang 司馬光, *Ying yin Wen yuan ge Si ku quan shu* edn., 63.16a-20a (cf. *Gu jin tu shu ji cheng* 古今圖書集成, Taibei: Wen xing shu dian, 1964, 'Jing ji dian' 399.71837b-c); a letter to Liu Shu on *SMWJ* 62.14a-b; and the conversations with Liu Shu recorded in *Tong jian wen yi* 通鑑問疑, Liu Xizhong 劉羲仲, *Jin dai bi shu* edn.

[26] *ZZTJ* pp.9607-8.

to the political environment of the present; the comprehensive scope of their coverage; their objectivity. The appearance of all of these in Shenzong's preface shows how well Sima Guang had primed his emperor. Guided by Sima Guang, those are the themes that will also shape our analysis here.

Shenzong intended that the past be used as a model for the present. Sima Guang concurs. To establish that vision, he bases himself on the same canonical sources as Shenzong. The *Book of Odes*, *Book of Documents*, and *Spring and Autumn Annals* are all prominent in his discussions of *ZZTJ* and its antecedents. They serve a similar function as in Shenzong's preface: to establish a tradition of preserving the moral prescriptions of antiquity. Sima Guang omits from his accounts the historical periods covered by these works; he picks up where they have left off.[27] He therefore assumes (as Shenzong would have him assume) a canonical responsibility to record the political and moral heritage of the past, to give it relevance to the present, and to transmit it all to later generations. These are heady ambitions but, by aligning himself with this tradition, Sima Guang also benefits from its weighty authority to support his insistence on the didactic value of history.

The *Book of Documents* speaks first and loudest. The way into *Li nian tu*'s preface – the first in the sequence of prefaces to *ZZTJ* and its antecedents – lies through dense scriptural maxims. They force us to recognize Sima Guang's ideological focus. First, a quotation from the 'Tai Jia' 太甲 section of the 'Book of Shang':

[27] The chronological span for *ZZTJ* – with its starting point after the Spring and Autumn period – seems to have been fixed in early discussions with Liu Shu; Sima Guang's explicit reason for choosing 403 BC as his point of departure was to avoid re-covering the ground of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, *Zi zhi tong jian wai ji*, '*Tong jian wai ji* yin' 3a-b; *Jun zhai du shu zhi jiao zheng* 郡齋讀書志校證, Chao Gongwu 晁公武, Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, repr.2006, 5.211. In the preface to his annotated edition of *ZZTJ*, thirteenth-century scholar Hu Sanxing 胡三省 notes that *ZZTJ* continues where the Zuo commentary to *Spring and Autumn Annals* ends, *ZZTJ* p.28.

> I have heard that the 'Book of Shang' [of the *Book of Documents*] says: 'By following the same way as [those who] ruled in orderly fashion, one will always prosper. By engaging in the same business as [those who] ruled in disorderly fashion, one will always perish. Those who, from beginning to end, are careful about whom they follow are enlightened rulers.'[28]

At its simplest, this is an exhortation to learn from the past. That is its immediate function here. It comes into sharper focus, though, when restored to its original setting. The 'Tai Jia' section traces the relationship between the chief minister of Shang, Yi Yin 伊尹, and his young sovereign. It narrates a political *rite de passage* in three stages. The Shang sovereign first neglects Yi Yin's counsel. Removed from a court setting to mourn for his grandfather, he develops in virtue and soon returns to court to oversee government as a reformed man. In the third stage, the source of this quotation, the king actively solicits Yi Yin's advice on how to rule. That is the role that Sima Guang accords his text too. It will serve as a source of moral lessons from the past, and more, will also offer political counsel to his Song sovereign.

A second quotation from the *Book of Documents* follows, this time from the 'Announcements of Shao' 召誥 in the 'Book of Zhou.' Again its first focus is on the lessons to be learnt from the past. Again, in its original setting, it has a strong political focus; this is one of several core chapters of the *Book of Documents* that uses a laconic account of a historical event to deliver a homily on the principles of government. The Grand Guardian of the Zhou state, the Duke of Shao, urges his sovereign to cultivate a personal ethic of respect to ensure political longevity. To make his point, he uses the rise and fall of the earlier states of Xia and Shang as a precise, practical illustration in a discussion on the importance of sovereign duties. It provides Sima Guang with his quotation:

[28] *Ji gu lu* 16.83a. The original quotation appears on *Shang shu zheng yi* 8.53a-b.

> The 'Book of Zhou' [in the *Book of Documents*] says: 'We cannot but use the experiences of those who possessed Xia to reflect on 監 ourselves. We also cannot but use the experiences of those who possessed Yin to reflect on ourselves.[29] We do not venture to know about it and say that those who possessed Xia accepted Heaven's mandate for a certain span of years. We do not venture to know about it and say that they could not prolong it. It was only that they did not treat virtue with respect and so they prematurely let their mandate fall. We do not venture to know about it and say that those who possessed Yin accepted Heaven's mandate for a certain span of years. We do not venture to know about it and say that they could not prolong it. It was only that they did not treat virtue with respect and so they prematurely let their mandate fall.'[30]

Another minister addressing his ruler, like the Duke of Shao, Sima Guang also moves between moral abstracts and historical particulars. Here he shifts from the exemplars of the first quotation to two minatory examples. He offers the familiar pairing of Xia and Shang, which also appears in Shenzong's preface as the canonical precedent for using the past to 'reflect upon' the present; the *Book of Documents*' '*jian*' 監 in Sima Guang's quotation here is cognate with the *Book of Odes*' '*jian*' 鑑 in Shenzong's preface.

In both quotations the past serves its most superficial function as a model for the present. It lacks nuance. Sima Guang demands no subtle understanding of the mechanisms of historical events: 'we do not venture to know about it,' the duke of Shao (and, through him, Sima Guang) repeats to his ruler. All that matters is an acknowledgement that such mechanisms exist and produce consistent results. It is important that the *Book of Documents* frames things in abstract and absolute rhetoric, which does not allow for challenges to its basic assumption that things will always – literally, 'never not' 罔不 – follow the prescribed pattern. The virtue of the sovereign and his cultivation of order will ensure the preservation of his Heaven-endowed mandate to rule. Failure to observe moral propriety will result in the loss of his state. These are the constant chains of cause and effect. The moral burden therefore falls on

[29] 'Yin,' i.e. Shang, the capital of which was at Yin from 1350 BC on.
[30] *Ji gu lu* 16.83a. The original quotation appears on *Shang shu zheng yi* 15.101a.

the ruler's judgement in selecting apposite political exemplars from the past, those that might direct him to the enduring model of successful sovereignty. That of itself is enough to produce an 'enlightened ruler,' an idealised type who appears often in Sima Guang's writings. Simplistic it may be, but it is a powerful message for those who produce history. The past is not questioned but followed. Absolute authority therefore falls upon those who represent for the ruler the models of past – men like the author of the *Book of Documents* in antiquity, and like Sima Guang in the eleventh century.

In his *Li nian tu* preface Sima Guang draws the material for a long discourse on the dynamic of dynastic rise and fall from 'the main and important traces' of the period between the Warring States and the end of the Five Dynasties.[31] An analysis of the past is the sole source of his authority; he maintains ignorance (perhaps too self-effacingly) of the more theoretical 'grand structures of the dynasty.' By implication, all of his subsequent political statements proceed from an understanding of 'what is recorded in the documents and the evidence of former ages' – in documents much like his own *Li nian tu* and the later *ZZTJ*.[32] The past serves as a testing ground for moral and political ideology; *ZZTJ* and its antecedents are repositories of empirical data against which to measure general principles.

With that emphasis on the use of the past as a sourcebook for the present, the Song emperor is urged to read Sima Guang's work to learn crucial political lessons. In 1066 he phrases it in blunter terms: 'one cannot but give thought to what has been noted down in the written record.'[33] Elsewhere he urges the emperor to 'learn only

[31] *Ji gu lu* 16.86b.
[32] In *ZZTJ*'s presentation document he also claims that the work was intended to serve the emperor in the one area where Sima Guang felt he had knowledge and competence, 'the business of writing.' *ZZTJ*'s composition therefore appears as a political act, *ZZTJ* p.9608. He had made a similar claim already on 11 November 1067, *SMWJ* 38.10b (for dating, see *Chuan jia ji* 41.14a); and again on 2 April 1070, *SMWJ* 41.6b-7a (for dating, see *Chuan jia ji* 43.13b).
[33] *SMWJ* 57.12a.

from antiquity, from the old regulations of Yao and Shun, and to trust only in the histories, in the established models of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*.' He recommends his own historical writings for this purpose.[34] The newly acceded Shenzong therefore attracts praise on the occasion of *Tong zhi*'s presentation to the throne for pursuing the lessons of the past.[35] This sounds like political flattery but, even if it is only that, it at least reflects an idealized conduct that Sima Guang sought in his emperor, a yardstick for the inexperienced Shenzong.[36]

There is a yardstick too, more personal and weighty, in the precedent set by Shenzong's father and imperial predecessor, Yingzong. Shenzong was sensitive to this in his preface to *ZZTJ*. In its presentation document Sima Guang also presented Yingzong as a model of an astute and clear-sighted ruler – the enlightened ruler of the *Book of Documents* echoes here – who 'was minded to give thorough consideration to the affairs of the past and to use it to expand the great plan.'[37] The implication here is that Yingzong's other qualities result from his close examination of the past. It also enables him to expand on the imperial legacy that he has inherited. The past governs not only the present but also the future. That is the model for Shenzong too, for whom the obligation to attend to Sima Guang's work becomes a burden of imperial traditions and ancestral duties.

[34] In the presentation memorial for *Ji gu lu*, ap. *Huang Tingjian quan ji* 黃庭堅全集, Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅, Chengdu: Sichuan da xue chu ban she, 2001, 20.509.
[35] *SMWJ* 57.12b.
[36] See also Sima Guang's declaration to the newly acceded Emperor Zhezong in 1086 that 'the ruler must needs examine works of history. … Ever since the birth of humanity, no emperor or sovereign has prospered like Yao and Shun. The *Book of Documents* praises their virtue, and always talks in terms of 'studying antiquity'. How can those who rule over the empire therefore not take antiquity as their teacher?' *SMWJ* 51.10a-b. In the thirteenth century, Hu Sanxing chimed with Sima Guang's claims: 'If one acts a ruler without knowing *Tong jian*, then one will want to rule in orderly fashion without knowing the sources of how orderly rule come about, and one will hate disorder without knowing the means of preventing disorder. … This is essential stuff,' *ZZTJ* p.28.
[37] *Ibid* p.9607. Sima Guang restates Emperor Yingzong's fondness for historical study elsewhere too: *SMWJ* 65.6b. The emperor's official biography in *Song shi* presents a similar picture, of a ruler particularly concerned with judging present policy according to the precedents of antiquity, *Song shi* 宋史, Tuotuo 脫脫, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1977, 13.261.

ZZTJ and its antecedents are therefore political as much as historical works. Historiographical account and discussion mix with political theory. There is an early sense of that political focus in the quotations from the *Book of Documents* that open the preface to Sima Guang's earliest work of historiography, *Li nian tu*. True, their function is neither immediately nor explicitly political, but both trace back to accounts of ministers' wise counsel to their rulers and would have been understood in that context. That, too, is how Sima Guang conceives of *ZZTJ* and its antecedents. He casts *Li nian tu* as a form of political memorial and likens it to his statements submitted as an official of the Remonstrance Bureau.[38] A similar political slant makes itself felt in his declaration on 14 May 1066 that *Tong zhi* 'would contain what an emperor or sovereign ought to know 帝王所宜知者.'[39] He confirms the political focus of his historiography and emphasizes that his intended audience is his Song emperor. Note too the prescriptive tone of that inconspicuous but ideologically weighted modal 'ought to' 宜. Shenzong is not the only one to impose his will over *ZZTJ*. Sima Guang offers a sharp reminder that this is political counsel, shaped by personal opinions. The moral and political lessons intrinsic to the past do not offer themselves up freely. Instead they have to be processed into a palatable and significant form and focused on the requirements of the present sovereign: they are 'what an emperor or sovereign *ought to* know.' Power again devolves upon the minister-historian, the individual who best understands the past and who is best able to extract its didactic essence for his ruler.

After receiving Shenzong's preface on 18 November 1067, Sima Guang began reading at imperial seminars from early drafts of *ZZTJ*. The Song emperor was the unambiguous audience for the work here. That was Shenzong's stated intention

[38] *SMWJ* 36.3a, 46.3b.
[39] *XCB* 208.5050.

for *ZZTJ*, after all – as a source of moral and political lessons from which he could learn how to fulfil his function as emperor. These readings were more than respectful, formalised exchanges between ruler and his minister. They shaped the fabric of Sima Guang's texts. In *ZZTJ* he prefaces his personal comments as historian with the formulaic 'your Minister Guang says 臣光曰….' Note the textual persona he chooses for himself. He is a minister; the audience for these passages of exegesis must, by implication, be the other actor in that cardinal relationship, the ruler. Compare that with Sima Guang's famous precedents for historiographical commentary. In the historiographical model that he claimed for *ZZTJ*, *Zuo zhuan* 左傳, the moralist's voice is usually preceded by a formulaic and impersonal 'the gentleman says 君子曰….' And with 'the Grand Historian suggests 太史公曰 …' Sima Qian gives only a neutral institutional title.[40] Unlike Sima Guang's epithet, they lack all sense of an addressee, of anyone standing beyond these comments in *Zuo zhuan* and *Shi ji* waiting to hear or to respond to them. These historians could have been talking to anyone. Sima Guang would have been aware that his audience extended beyond the emperor, of course; his textual readings in the imperial seminar reached at least senior ministers and imperial attendants too. That, if anything, accords even greater significance to the narrow focus of the target audience that he claims for his text, and the political function that he accords it as a result.

[40] In the early eighth century Liu Zhiji 劉知幾 offered a critical survey of the practice of appending moralising comments to historical texts and traced it to the commentaries of *Spring and Autumn Annals* tradition, *Shi tong tong shi* 史通通釋, Liu Zhiji, Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1978, 4.81-7. Much scholarly attention has since been directed at these moralising formulae and their later influence. Two particularly useful studies of their historical and historiographical developments are Lu Yaodong's 逯耀東, 'Shi zhuan lun zan xing shi yu *Zuo zhuan* 'jun zi yue'' 史傳論贊形式與左傳'君子曰', in *Wang Renguang jiao shou qi zhi song qing lun wen ji* 王任光教授七秩崧慶論文集, Taibei: Wen shi zhe chu ban she, 1988, pp.79-94; and David Schaberg's 'Platitude and Persona: *junzi* comments in *Zuozhuan* and beyond,' in *Historical Truth, Historical Criticism, and Ideology: Chinese Historiography and Historical Culture from a New Comparative Perspective*, Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer, Achim Mittag and Jörn Rüsen, eds., Leiden: Brill, 2005, pp.178-96.

Sima Guang's choice of audience shapes his thematic concerns. He traces the fluctuating fortunes of the imperial institution and, as a corollary, variation in the relationships between rulers and their ministers.[41] He takes as his subject the major figures of the past, the political leaders and the dynastic figureheads who were responsible for making government function, not low-level bureaucrats and local officials; those with greatest power expose themselves to the processes of political unity and disunity, and of dynastic rise and fall. Vested imperial interests underlie this and Sima Guang writes with his audience in mind. On 14 May 1066 Emperor Yingzong ordered Sima Guang to edit 'the traces of the business of rulers and ministers of past ages 歷代君臣事跡' in his composition of *Tong zhi*.[42] In November 1067 Shenzong demanded the same thematic focus in his preface to *ZZTJ*. And Sima Guang himself acknowledged the imperially determined focus of his task in *ZZTJ*'s presentation document.[43]

Sima Guang has his own slant on this political history, though. It is marked by polarities. The past teaches a double-edged lesson. His ambivalent vision of state rule is signalled by his choice of 403 BC as the starting date for *ZZTJ* and its antecedents: images of the political fragmentation of the house of Zhou greet the reader, not descriptions of a strong, unified state. In his choice of quotations from the *Book of Documents* at the head of his *Li nian tu* preface, the exemplary and the minatory also stand side by side. That antithetical balance receives powerful expression in a phrase that appears first in the *Li nian tu* preface, then throughout the following sequence of prefaces, and culminates in the memorial that accompanied

[41] *Ji gu lu* 16.86a-b; *SMWJ* 57.12b.
[42] *XCB* 208.5050. This was also the phrase that Song Emperor Zhenzong used to commission the early eleventh-century encyclopaedia *Ce fu yuan gui* 冊府元龜, a work with similarly didactic aims, *XCB* 61.1367. Modern scholar Wang Debao 王德保 draws perceptive parallels between the two works, Wang Debao, *Sima Guang yu* Zi zhi tong jian 司馬光與資治通鑑, Beijing: Zhongguo she hui ke xue chu ban she, 2002, pp.29-37.
[43] *ZZTJ* p.9607; *SMWJ* 57.12b.

ZZTJ's presentation to the throne in 1084. 'The good could be taken as models, the bad as warnings 善可爲法惡可爲戒,' Sima Guang urges Yingzong in 1064, Shenzong two decades later, Zhezong in 1086, and all his future readers.[44] We have a familiar, reassuring rhetoric of paired oppositions here, and Sima Guang gives precedence to the positive by placing it first. While *ZZTJ* offers examples of how rulers have got things right in the past, though, it also supplies rich evidence for how far wrong individual emperors could go.[45] Sima Guang will not only represent the strength of dynastic control but also its frailty: the imperial institution is seen to be in constant, fraught danger.

The double-edged appeal to consider both the good and the bad of the past is by no means unique to *ZZTJ*. The standard rhetoric – canonically endorsed, even – is why the implications of Sima Guang's phrase pass without attracting undue notice, let alone serious protest. It was well worn in the discourse of traditional Chinese historiography. Its *locus classicus* is the canonical *Zuo zhuan* – Sima Guang's historiographical model for *ZZTJ*.[46] It also traces back more broadly to that celebrated earlier antithetical coupling, the 'praise and blame' method of representing the past in *Spring and Autumn Annals* and its commentaries.[47] It finds a canonical echo too in *Lun yu* 論語, where Confucius is reported to have declared that 'when I walk with two others, they will invariably serve as my teachers: I will select

[44] *Ji gu lu* 16.86b; *XCB* 208.5050; *ZZTJ* p.9607; *SMWJ* 51.10b (for dating, see *XCB* 371.8993, which omits this phrase). See also Sima Guang's use of the phrase in relation to *ZZTJ* in his preface to Liu Shu's *Shi guo ji nian* 十國紀年, *SMWJ* 65.6b.

[45] Compare this with *Ce fu yuan gui*, which focuses on the positive features of imperial rule: according to Wang Debao, 59 of the 64 *juan* of its 'Di wang bu' 帝王部 section record accounts of virtuous governance, *Sima Guang yu* Zi zhi tong jian, p.32. There is a distinction to be made, though, between the general principles of the imperial institution (which Sima Guang accorded sacrosanct status) and the actions of individual emperors.

[46] *Chun qiu Zuo zhuan zheng yi* 春秋左傳正義, *Shi san jing zhu shu* edn., 27.211c. Unlike Sima Guang, the author of *Zuo zhuan* reverses the terms of the opposition to place minatory examples first and positive exemplars second.

[47] This reading is clearly at odds with early-twentieth century scholar Zhang Binglin's 章炳麟 suggestion that 'the theories of 'praise and blame' and of making adjustments to the record were not something that Duke Wen [Sima Guang] practised', Zhang Binglin, *Guo xue liie shuo: Zhang Taiyan xian sheng yan jiang* 國學略說: 章太炎先生演講, Sun Shiyang 孫世揚, ed., Hong Kong: Xianggang huan qiu wen hua fu wu she, 1972, p.116.

the good to follow and the bad to alter.'[48] It was a common formulation at the time of *ZZTJ*'s composition: in the late tenth century, for example, the compilers of *Tai ping yu lan* 太平御覽 expressed a similar didactic purpose to offer both moral encouragement and warning;[49] Sima Guang's contemporary Zeng Gong 曾鞏 suggested that his *Wu chao guo shi* 五朝國史, an official account of the first five reigns of the Song dynasty, would 'write in detail about good and bad, which could be used to encourage or warn, and right and wrong, which later generations should examine';[50] late-twelfth/early-thirteenth century scholar Fei Gun 費袞 suggested that 'historical works record the business of disaster and fortune, of recompense and retribution; they should show their intention to offer encouragement and warnings.'[51] And it even stands squarely within worldwide traditions of didactic historiography. Writing in a Benedictine monastery in Northumbria in the early eighth century, for example, the Venerable Bede gives us a close parallel to Sima Guang in the preface to his *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*. He recommends his history (and all history) to his patron on the grounds that 'should [it] tell of good men and their good estate, the thoughtful listener is spurred on to imitate the good; should it record the evil ends of wicked men, no less effectually the devout and earnest listener or reader is kindled to eschew what is harmful and perverse.'[52] *ZZTJ* finds itself once more among global traditions of the 'mirror' genre of historical writing both in its name and in the aspirations of its content.

[48] *Lun yu zhu shu* 7.27a.
[49] *Tai ping yu lan* 太平御覽, Li Fang 李昉 et al., eds., Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, repr.1998, 'yin' 引 2a.
[50] *Nanfeng xian sheng Yuan feng lei gao* 南豐先生元豐類稿, Zeng Gong 曾鞏, *Si bu cong kan* edn., 31.6b.
[51] *Liangxi man zhi* 梁谿漫志, Fei Gun 費袞, Taiyuan: Shanxi ren min chu ban she, 1986, 5.52.
[52] *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors, eds. and trs., Oxford: Clarendon Press, repr.1991, pp.2-3. Bede, unlike Sima Guang, claimed to write to 'instruct posterity' *ad instructionem posteritatis*, though (*ibid*, pp.6-7); Sima Guang's first concern lay in the present.

None of this political didacticism would be possible without a belief in basic continuities between past and present. The quotations from the *Book of Documents* that open *Li nian tu*'s preface point up such continuity through their rhetoric of historical absolutism. The patterns of cause and effect they present are inevitable and unchanging: one will 'always' prosper or perish depending on the historical model that one chooses to follow. Sima Guang interprets the quotations in just those terms: 'they are probably saying that a single thread links the Way of orderly and disorderly rule in the past and the present, and that over the course of a certain span of years virtue is all that one should keep an eye on.'[53] The idea of 'a single thread' 一貫 running through past and present prefigures the titles of his later historiographical works, *Tong zhi* and *ZZTJ*: common to both is that idea of 'comprehensiveness,' *tong*, with its corollary meanings of 'to flow freely' and 'to connect with.' Enduring historical structures and functions of government draw Sima Guang's notice, not localised administrative tasks or institutional and cultural changes. *ZZTJ* even appears as an attempt to understand political affairs through the prism of cosmological machinations: the rises and falls of states are seen to result from larger cosmic principles that are universal and eternal.[54] In this view, the ruler's function and responsibilities never change; for Sima Guang, 'the possession of a dynasty will never fall outside these principles' – the principles established by the overarching patterns of the past.[55] The moral rectitude with which government is practised and the success with which general principles are applied to present circumstances do vary, though. That is what determines political longevity.

[53] *Ji gu lu* 16.83a. Two years later, in 1066, he claimed too that 'the origins of orderly and disorderly rule have taken the same form in both the past and the present,' *SMWJ* 57.12a.
[54] A reading proposed by Song scholar Zhang Dunshi 張敦實 in his general discourse on Sima Guang's *Qian xu* 潛虛, *Si bu cong kan san bian* edn., 37a-38a.
[55] *Ji gu lu* 16.86a-b. Cf. Sima Guang's claim elsewhere to extract the essentials from history – its general principles, in other words: *SMWJ* 57.12b; *Huang Tingjian quan ji* 20.509.

Study of the past addresses both what is particular to a specific time and place and what endures and transcends local detail. An ethic of successful sovereignty emerges from a comparative, diachronic analysis of previous regimes. Against this broad perspective, the separate actions of individual actors instruct on the practical ways in which general principles should or should not be applied to the present. Sima Guang offers that with *ZZTJ* in its function as political sourcebook. Much of his greatness as a historian – of *ZZTJ*'s greatness as a work of history, too – stems from his subtle handling of the tension between looking back to specific episodes in the past and an enduring concern with what is eternal and universal in human experience, and therefore relevant to the present. He does not attend to the past for its historicity, for its difference to and distance from the present. He uses it to respond to present exigencies. It is fundamental both to his historiography and to his political ideology. We hear this message in the document that accompanies his presentation of *Tong zhi* to the throne.[56] It also recurs often in his memorials on eleventh-century policy. Above all, it forms the basis for his opposition to his great political rival, Wang Anshi 王安石. Wang Anshi believes that the salvation of the dynasty lies in sudden reform and a sharp break with the imperial past. He fails to acknowledge the constant structure and function of the imperial institution and so attempts damaging changes to what, for Sima Guang, does not change. Against this, Sima Guang urges minimal, gradual change to the imperial institution and sees its long-term structures as sound. He offers a vision of an ongoing and continuous imperial tradition in which the emperor undertakes political and social duties that transcend immediate circumstances. He places great weight on imperial decisions: they relate both to the here and now and also bear responsibility to the legacy of the past. Sudden and

[56] *SMWJ* 57.12a.

radical changes to imperial institutions fly in the face of the full weight of tradition.[57] The shadow of the past serves as a check to individual whims and rash responses to present political exigencies. That vision rests on a fundamental belief in the past's relevance to the concerns of the present.

Sima Guang's choice of historiographical form underpins the ideological significance that he invests in the past. *ZZTJ* and its antecedents all have a chronological structure, the result of deliberations with Liu Shu: *Li nian tu* is an annal; *Tong zhi* and *ZZTJ* are full chronicles.[58] The monographs of annals-biography histories; the genre of what has been called 'presentational historical models,'[59] which interspersed brief historical narratives with exegesis and statements of ideology; the thematically-based *ji shi ben mo* 紀事本末 genre, which developed after (and in response to) *ZZTJ* to 'record events from beginning to end'; the *gang mu* 綱目 form that Zhu Xi 朱熹 developed in the twelfth century, also in response to *ZZTJ*: all these could have lent themselves to Sima Guang's use of historiography as political statement. The chronological form serves his agenda with greater power, though. It lies at the heart of his sense of continuity between past and present that gives *ZZTJ* and its antecedents their relevance to the eleventh century. It is therefore

[57] Sima Guang's use of *ZZTJ* to preserve the imperial status quo makes itself felt in a reading of the text at an imperial seminar on 3 December 1069. The following court debate folded into a discussion two days later of Wang Anshi's reform policies: *Song chao shi shi lei yuan* 15.181-5; and an edition of *Zeng guang Sima Wen gong quan ji* 增廣司馬溫公全集 held in the Naikaku Bunko, *Zōkō Shiba On kō zenshū*, Sima Guang, Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 1993, 1.3a-9b.

[58] For Sima Guang's discussions with Liu Shu on the form and scope of *ZZTJ* and its antecedents, see *Jieqi ting ji wai bian* 鮚埼亭集外編, Quan Zuwang 全祖望, *Xu xiu Si ku quan shu* edn., 40.20b. Cf. his correspondence with Fan Zuyu on the composition of *ZZTJ*, in which he refers to the chronological model of *Zuo zhuan*, *Chuan jia ji* 63.16a-20a. I follow the distinction between annals and chronicles here and in what follows that Hayden White develops in his essay 'The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality,' in *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1990, pp.1-25.

[59] Hartwell, Robert M., 'Historical Analogism, Public Policy, and Social Science in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century China,' *The American Historical Review* 76.3, 1971: 690-727.

essential to his use of *ZZTJ* as a political sourcebook for the Song emperor. It is also central to his claim to provide a comprehensive political and historical vision.[60]

Sima Guang's choice starts with his imitation of the *Zuo zhuan* model of historiography.[61] Here, at the most fundamental textual level, is the canonical authority that he sought for his accounts. On 14 May 1066 he declared that *Tong zhi* would be 'a chronological work roughly along the lines of *The Zuo Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals*.'[62] This was a seam of canonical discourse that was concerned above all with sovereignty and the exercise of state government. It converged with Sima Guang's own purpose in the production of historiography. It also has other implications for our reading of *ZZTJ* and its antecedents. Ronald Egan has argued that *Zuo zhuan*'s representation of the past as chronicle allowed its author to avoid explicit interpretation of the causes – and therefore the significance – of events. For *Zuo zhuan* to realise its didactic aims, the picture it gave of the past had to appear as absolute truth. It gives the illusion of the inevitable progress of history. There is no clear perspective from which its narrative is told; it seems impersonal and omniscient. The intrusion into the text of an explicit narrator, of open expressions of opinion or directions to the reader on how to interpret the text, would undermine its sense of objectivity and therefore its authority. *Zuo zhuan* does not appear as a textual construct, Egan argues, because the events that it describes have

[60] *ZZTJ*'s place in the development of the chronicle form attracted much scholarly attention in the twentieth century: Zhang Xuhou 張煦侯, Tong jian *xue* 通鑑學, Hefei: Anhui jiao yu chu ban she, repr.1982, pp. 1-18; Lin Xiaosheng 林校生, '*Zi zhi tong jian* yu bian nian ti' 資治通鑑與編年體, in Zi zhi tong jian *cong lun* 資治通鑑叢論, Liu Naihe 劉乃和 and Song Yanshen 宋衍申, eds., Henan: Ren min chu ban she, 1985, pp.79-94; Lai Kehong 來可泓, '*Zi zhi tong jian* yu bian nian ti' 資治通鑑與編年體, in *Sima Guang yu* Zi zhi tong jian 司馬光與資治通鑑, Liu Naihe 劉乃和 and Song Yanshen 宋衍申, eds., Changchun: Jilin wen shi chu ban she, 1986, pp. 325-46; Xu Zaiquan 許在全 and Fan Chuanxian 范傳賢, 'Shi lun Sima Guang yu bian nian ti – jian tan *Zi zhi tong jian* yu *Tong jian ji shi ben mo*' 試論司馬光與編年體 – 兼談"資治通鑑"與"通鑑紀事本末", in *Sima Guang yu* Zi zhi tong jian, pp.347-63. None of these studies fully considers the effects of form on *ZZTJ*'s construction and, more particularly, on our interpretation of the text.

[61] Wang Mingsheng 王鳴盛 offers a summary discussion of Sima Guang's use of *Zuo zhuan* as his historiographical model on *Shi qi shi shang que* 十七史商榷, Wang Mingsheng, Beijing: Shang wu yin shu guan, 1959, 100.1141-2.

[62] *XCB* 208.5050.

not been obviously re-arranged from their real-time chronological sequence. Any moral principles that we infer do not seem to proceed from authorial intervention; they inhere to the events themselves. Rather than openly narrate the world, *Zuo zhuan*'s author therefore tries to make the world of the past speak for itself.[63] That shifts the burden of interpretation from narrator to reader, who has to engage constantly in a process of identifying the text's meaning, establishing connections between the events that comprise its narrative, and formulating personal moral judgements.[64] Sima Guang creates much the same effect in *ZZTJ* and its antecedents. They contain few strong ideological statements. In *ZZTJ*, for example, Sima Guang's 119 explicit comments as historian constitute a tiny fraction of the total text.[65] Issues of genre and function are at play here. We have heard from both Sima Guang and Emperor Shenzong that *ZZTJ* was meant as a sourcebook for the emperor during imperial seminars. It provided the raw material from which Sima Guang could extract the political and moral lessons that he presented to the throne. True, he accompanied his readings of *ZZTJ* with personal interpretation and discussions of political theory, but he needed an incontestable representation of the past on which to base them. History had to appear to yield moral lessons of its own accord and

[63] The distinction is one that Émile Benveniste makes in *Problems in General Linguistics*, Mary E. Meek, tr., Coral Gables, FA: University of Miami Press, 1971, p.208.
[64] Egan, Ronald, 'Narratives in Tso Chuan,' *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 37.2, 1977: 339.
[65] Much scholarship on *ZZTJ* is misrepresentative in this respect. It builds the foundations of its analysis on these comments, the most obvious and easily accessible ideological elements in the text. They provide useful insights into Sima Guang's political vision but there is much more material to be mined from the fabric of Sima Guang's main account. A single, recent example makes the point. In one of the longest studies of *ZZTJ* to date, Robert Lafleur claims to show 'many layers of "intrusion" in the text' in addition to Sima Guang's explicit commentaries as historian, Lafleur, Robert A., 'A Rhetoric of Remonstrance: History, Commentary, and Historical Imagination in Sima Guang's *Zizhi tongjian*,' Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1996, pp.21-2. The study is filled with reminders to the same effect – that commentary only occupies a small part of a larger narrative construct. These are admirable sentiments. Lafleur fails to put them into practice, though. His study focuses almost exclusively on Sima Guang's comments as historian and affords relatively little attention to main the fabric of the text; when he does examine the main text he focuses almost entirely on its narrative set pieces, in particular the long memorials presented by actors within the text.

without explicit manipulation because that was the sole authority on which Sima Guang's political ideology rested.[66]

Chronicle offers an alternative to the annals-biography form. Sima Guang's focus is political; the annals-biography form is impractical for political study. Here is his reflection on the composition of *Li nian tu*:

> Over recent years I have read the histories and worried that, because their writing is elaborate and the affairs that they record are wide-ranging 文繁事廣, one cannot grasp their essential points. They are also inconsistent in the way they divide and order the various states and in the sequence of their chronologies.[67]

'Their writing is elaborate', *wen fan* 文繁: Sima Guang voiced this complaint throughout the sequence of prefaces to *ZZTJ* and its antecedents. In a statement on *Tong zhi* that Sima Guang presented to Emperor Yingzong on 14 May 1066 he suggested that in the annals-biography form of existing histories 'the writing is elaborate and prolix 文字繁多.' Even ordinary scholars, whose sole occupation was historical study, would have difficulty in gaining a profound understanding of the past from such works, he continued. What hope, then, for 'an emperor or sovereign who deals with a multitude of matters every day and inevitably wants a comprehensive knowledge of the gains and losses of former generations'?[68] The same rhetoric appears in *ZZTJ*'s presentation document to Emperor Shenzong two decades later. It runs counter to Shenzong's praise in his preface to *ZZTJ* for the structure of Sima Qian's *Shi ji*, a structure that he maintained later historians were 'unable to change.' It is a further point of tension between the two men, though one

[66] See, for example, Sima Guang's response on 5 December 1069 to Lu Huiqing's accusation that he used *ZZTJ* to attack Wang Anshi's reform policies. He played down his own role as interpreter of the past and claimed to let the past speak for itself, *Xu Zi zhi tong jian chang bian shi bu* 6.260-5; *Song chao shi shi lei yuan* 15.182-5.
[67] *SMWJ* 66.7a-b.
[68] *XCB* 208.5050; cf. *Tong zhi*'s presentation document on *SMWJ* 57.12a-b. Sima Guang was not the first chronicler to make this complaint when faced with the task of adapting materials from annals-biography histories. In a general discourse on his *Song lüe* 宋略 the late fifth/early sixth-century historian Pei Ziye 裴子野 also took the *Spring and Autumn Annals* tradition as a model to rework earlier annals-biography histories into chronicle form by 'pruning elaborate text 繁文 and extracting the essentials,' *Wen yuan ying hua* 文苑英華, Li Fang 李昉 et al., Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1966, 754.8a.

that Shenzong again appears to overlook. Against Shenzong, Sima Guang offers this familiar contrast between the two historiographical forms:

> I have more or less devoted myself exclusively to histories from the past. From childhood through to old age I have delighted in them tirelessly, but I have always deplored that, from [Sima] Qian and [Ban] Gu on, their writing is elaborate and prolix 文字繁多. Even a scholar-commoner would not be able to read them all, so how much more a ruler who deals with a multitude of matters every day – what time would he have to read them completely?[69]

ZZTJ, Sima Guang goes on to suggest, would provide a convenient alternative to the unwieldy and impractical dynastic histories available at the time, one that would 'cut out the superfluous and select the essential.'[70] The practical, political concerns of his target audience are again uppermost.

Here lies a paradox, though. While canonical chronicles offered a historiographical form that appeared objective, they also occupied a preeminent place in a tradition that, at least since Mencius, was thought to explain not just what had happened but also what it meant.[71] In the second-century BC exegetical scholar Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 put it like this: 'The *Spring and Autumn Annals* record the gains and losses of the world, and reveal the reasons why they are so.'[72] And again: 'As an object of study the *Spring and Autumn Annals* shed light on what is to come by speaking of the past. … If, when we deal with the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, we therefore make multiple connections from a single feature or string together diverse links when we see a single omission, then the full significance of the world will emerge.'[73] A single omission could resonate with great ideological significance; even the phrasing of the text was held to have ideological implications. The links were

[69] *ZZTJ* p.9607; cf. *SMWJ* 65.6b.
[70] See also his declaration that he presented *Li nian tu* to the throne 'in order to cut down the mass of verbiage and to make it convenient to read,' *SMWJ* 51.10b-11a.
[71] *Meng zi zhu shu* 6B.50c; cf. *Shi ji* 47.1493.
[72] *Chun qiu fan lu yi zheng* 春秋繁露義證, Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒, Su Yu 蘇輿, ed., Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1992, 2.56.
[73] *Ibid* 5.96-7.

there for the reader to forge. There was therefore a tension between surface objectivity and latent subjectivity. That understanding of the past makes itself felt repeatedly in the eleventh century. And, despite Sima Guang's claims to diverge from the tradition of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, 'which set up the norm for praise and blame in order to rectify a disorderly age,' it also underlies *ZZTJ*.[74] In the presentation document that accompanied the work's presentation to the throne Sima Guang declared that the chronicle form both provided a clearer representation of the past and 'disentangled the refined from the coarse.'[75] Sima Guang concerns himself here with making value judgments on the past, with distinguishing between (and showing his emperor) what *was* refined and what *was* coarse. It is the same sense of moral subjectivity that suggests itself in his earlier claim to address 'what an emperor or sovereign *ought to* know.' It is these moral lessons, Sima Guang implies, that lose themselves in the verbal elaborations and structural intricacies of the annals-biography form. By contrast, Sima Guang's chronicle will achieve greater concision and clarity in its account – it too will be manipulated, represented rather than just shown, in other words – to enable the eleventh-century ruler to take in the whole panorama of his imperial heritage, and to do so with relatively little effort.[76] The interest and utility of *ZZTJ* was that it preserved knowledge, and more, made it accessible for political use in court discourse.

A chronicle uses time as its unifying force. More precisely, it uses a *system of measuring time*. That carries moral and political implications. A coherent calendrical system was a symbol of unified authority. Within *ZZTJ*'s text, there are frequent accounts of attempts to establish a calendar during periods of political disunity. The

[74] *ZZTJ* 69.2187. It is clear from Lu Huiqing's comments at the imperial lecture on 5 December 1069 that Sima Guang's contemporaries saw *ZZTJ* as an expression of his personal political opinions, and not as an objective record of the past: see above, n.65.
[75] *ZZTJ* p.9607.
[76] See, too, his comments in the preface to *Li nian tu* that 'by observing and listening [to *Li nian tu*'s account], you will grow extremely erudite in your learning without making any effort,' *Ji gu lu* 16.86b.

act is identified with a Han Chinese social and political system, a mark of Han Chinese ethnic identity in times of barbarian threat.[77] The same values apply on an external, meta-textual level. The use of a coherent and continuous chronology affirms the authority of Sima Guang's historical vision and, at the same time, the enduring unity of the political and cultural identity of the Han Chinese people.

One problem looms large over the issue of political authority and unity, though, first for Sima Guang as historian and then for us as readers of his work. When the calendar is bound up with political authority, as it was in traditional China, it begs the question: if there is no single political system nor, as a corollary, a single system of recording time, then on what should the chronicler base the structure of his account? That was the question that faced Sima Guang. It was unavoidable. He had been commissioned by Emperor Yingzong 'to edit the traces of the business of rulers and ministers of past ages' and therefore had to focus on the issue of political legitimacy. To compound the matter, periods of political disunity constituted much of *ZZTJ* and its antecedents. Sima Guang recognized the problem: writing on the political division of the first half of the tenth century, he complained that his source materials were full of lacunae and errors, and that 'calendrical systems superseded one another,' making his task as historian difficult.[78] The question will be of particular concern to the present study, which will focus on an earlier period of political fragmentation in *ZZTJ*'s account. Between the early fourth and the late sixth centuries, two or more states contested political power and legitimacy at any one time. That forced Sima Guang to choose between the year titles of two or more rulers

[77] For example, *ZZTJ* 126.3965.
[78] *SMWJ* 53.11b-12a.

as the governing structure for his account.[79] How did it affect his historiography and his political ideology? And how do his choices influence our reading of his works?

The discourse of political authority, or 'true rule' 正統, assumed particular intensity during the eleventh century. It has attracted much scholarly attention since then, too. Sima Guang has appeared often. We will not rehearse the arguments here,[80] but it is worth considering the effect that the issue has on a reading of *ZZTJ* and its antecedents. This was Sima Guang's solution, as he worked through the problem in *Li nian tu*:

> For periods when the empire was riven, I have placed the year titles of one state above and have written that state's rulers in red. When it comes to the first year [of a different state's reign period], I have attached it below and if you thus calculate the various states' year titles it is possible to know them all.[81]

[79] He discussed the problem with Liu Shu, who was responsible for producing draft accounts of two periods of political fragmentation: the Southern and Northern Dynasties between the fourth and sixth centuries – the object of the present study – and the Five Dynasties in the tenth century, *Tong jian wen yi* 1b-6a. Chronology was not the only issue that faced Sima Guang in this regard. In the historiographical tradition of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* with which he aligned himself, historical judgement based itself on the precise use of terminology. Nomenclature therefore plays an important role in *ZZTJ* and its antecedents. A single example makes the point. During the period of the Southern and Northern Dynasties, Sima Guang follows the year titles of the rulers of the southern states to structure his account. He uses the term 'emperor,' *shang* 上, for those southern rulers. For rulers in the north, though, he more often uses the term 'ruler,' *zhu* 主, immediately slanting his representation of the relative political status of north and south. The issue of nomenclature and its attendant implications for the phrasing of the text receive brief notice in *ibid* 7b-8a, 17a-b.

[80] There are a number of general studies on theories of 'true rule.' *Gu jin tu shu ji cheng* 170.769-80 provides an overview of the issue by tracing the transmission of rule through a sequence of states. Liang Qichao 梁啓超 offers a useful, though often negative, examination of the debates on 'true rule' in his essay 'Lun zheng tong' 論正統, *Yin bing shi wen ji* 飲冰室文集, Hong Kong: Tian xing chu ban she, 1949, 3.105-110. More recent scholarship includes: Chen Fangming 陳芳明, 'Song dai zheng tong lun de xing cheng bei jing ji nei rong' 宋代正統論的形成背景及內容, *Shi huo yue kan* 食貨月刊, 1971.8: 16-28; Zhao Lingyang 趙令揚, *Guan yu li dai zheng tong wen ti zhi zheng lun* 關於歷代正統問題之爭論, Hong Kong: Xue lu chu ban she, 1976, esp. pp.4-35, 77-108; Rao Zongyi 饒宗頤, *Zhong guo shi xue shang zhi zheng tong lun* 中國史學上之正統論, Hong Kong: Long men shu dian, 1977; Wang Xiaoqing 王曉清, 'Song Yuan shi xue de zheng tong zhi bian' 宋元史學的正統之辨, *Zhongzhou xue kan* 中州學刊 6, 1994: 97-102; Lai Min 賴晻, 'Guo shi de zheng tong yi dao tong wei zhong xin' 國史的正統以道統爲中心, in *Guo ji Han xue she hui yi lun wen ji: li shi kao gu zu (xia ce)* 國際漢學會議論文集: 歷史考古組 (下冊), Taibei: Academica Sinica, 1981, pp.1123-45; Chan, Hok-lam, *Legitimation in Imperial China: Discussions under the Jurchen-Chin Dynasty (1115-1234)*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984, pp.19-48. Sima Guang made explicit statements on this issue in three texts. The earliest is a comment on *Li nian tu*, 'After Recording *A Chart of Annual Chronology*,' probably written soon after *Li nian tu*'s presentation to the throne in 1064, *SMWJ* 66.7a-7b. The second appears in *ZZTJ*: Sima Guang inserted a personal commentary into his account of the events of 221 to explore the legitimacy of the Cao-Wei state, *ZZTJ* 69.2185-8. Finally, a letter that Sima Guang wrote to an editor in the Palace Library, Guo Chun 郭純, probably while he was in Luoyang, between May 1071 and December 1084, *SMWJ* 61.7a-61.9b.

[81] *Ji gu lu* 16.86b.

This was his first attempt to grapple with the issue of recording time in the context of historical representation. It is a practical response to a theoretical problem. It sidesteps knotty political issues. They are issues that Sima Guang never wanted to address in the first place, though. Here he is again, reflecting on the composition and subsequent publication of *Li nian tu*:

> If the empire was not unified under single rule, then I tentatively took one state and used its years as a header, but I was certainly not able to distinguish the true from the intercalary. Yet Mr. Zhao changed the title to *The Reigns of Emperors*. That was not my intention.[82]

For Sima Guang, casting himself here in the role of practical historian and not of imperial counsellor, the use of year titles is a convenient historiographical device, an attempt to sustain chronological progression through his account. It does not of itself reflect his assignment of political authority. He emphasises the point on several later occasions: first in a discussion on the subject in *ZZTJ*, and again in a personal letter to an otherwise unknown editor in the Palace Library, Guo Chun 郭純.[83] His response to Mr. Zhao, his first publisher of *Li nian tu*, serves as a warning to us all against the misinterpretation of his chronology – a warning that seems to have passed unheeded in the majority of scholarship on the subject.

So what effect does his choice of one set of year titles over another have during periods of political division, if not to mark legitimacy? Sima Guang does not help us here and to probe further his original intentions would be to move into the realm of conjecture. What we can analyse, though, is the ultimate impact on his account and, more particularly, on the way we read *ZZTJ* and its antecedents.

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[82] *SMWJ* 66.7b.
[83] *ZZTJ* 69.2185-8; *SMWJ* 61.7a-61.9b, esp. 61.7a-b.

The use of year titles as a structuring principle, supported by the precise nomenclature of the text, creates a focus of empathy for the reader. For the period between the fourth and the sixth centuries, for example, when power was contested by states that split along a north-south geographical divide – the period of our present focus – Sima Guang follows the year titles of the southern states, even against the prevailing practice of the time.[84] It is no coincidence that those states found themselves in similar political circumstances to Sima Guang's own eleventh-century Song. They were ruled by emperors of Han Chinese ethnicity. They faced political threats from non-Han Chinese regimes in the north. They aspired to bring under unified control territory that had once belonged to a strong imperial predecessor. Sima Guang's use of their year titles to structure *ZZTJ*'s account converges with the didactic aims of his text. It directs his Song emperor's attention (as it directs our attention too) to the main objects of his political and moral judgements: the southern states' political shortcomings provide 'warnings' from which eleventh-century rulers must learn if they are to avoid the same short-lived, violent fates. Chronological choices may not have a direct bearing on the issue of political authority, if we take Sima Guang at his word, but they still have a significant textual and political effect.

[84] In the first decade of the eleventh century *Ce fu yuan gui* traced an uninterrupted line of legitimacy running through the northern states of Wei, Jin, Northern Wei, Northern Zhou, and Sui, *Ce fu yuan gui* 冊府元龜, Wang Qinruo 王欽若 and Yang Yi 楊億, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1960, 1.15b-25a. Early eleventh-century scholar Zhang Fangping 張方平 also favoured the northern states, although he included Eastern Jin in his political genealogy, *Lequan ji* 樂全集, Zhang Fangping, *Ying yin Wen yuan ge Si ku quan shu* edn., 1.13b-15a. Similarly, Song Xiang 宋庠 supported the northern states in his *Ji nian tong pu* 紀年通譜, a work that no longer survives but seems to have circulated widely during the eleventh century; *Zhi zhai shu lu jie ti* 直齋書錄解題 notes that it 'talks about legitimate states, those that fell outside the line of legitimacy, usurpers, rebels, and barbarians. It takes the legitimate states as the principal ones and appends the others in a secondary position' – much like Sima Guang's approach in *ZZTJ* and its antecedents, *Zhi zhai shu lu jie ti*, Chen Zhensun 陳振孫, Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1987, 4.112. Ruan Tingzhuo 阮廷焯 has collated the transmitted fragments of Song Xiang's work in 'Song dai you guan zheng tong lun zhi shi ji zhi yi' 宋代有關正統論之史籍摭佚, *Zhong guo wen hua yan jiu suo xue bao* 中國文化研究所學報 15, 1984: 117-26. Many other eleventh-century scholars remained ambivalent on the issue. Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修, for example, with whom Sima Guang agreed on several points of historiographical principle, considered the claims of both northern and southern states without decisively favouring either: see especially Ouyang Xiu's discussions of Eastern Jin and Later Wei in *Ouyang Xiu quan ji* 歐陽修全集, Ouyang Xiu, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 2001, 16.283-5. And Su Shi 蘇軾 claims to have followed the way in which Ouyang Xiu accorded legitimacy, although on different theoretical grounds, *Su Shi wen ji* 蘇軾文集, Su Shi, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1986, 4.122.

Care is needed here, though. Other demands compete with chronology in *ZZTJ* and its antecedents. True, the overarching structure of a unified chronicle is fundamental to their historiographical and ideological construction, but once Sima Guang has chosen his governing chronology he does not preserve a smooth sequence of dates and time. That suggests itself in anachronistic leaps, dislocations in the organizing structure, which Sima Guang weaves into the textual fabric. Especially in *ZZTJ*, the external narrator uses temporal expressions to signal changes in time sequences or to fill in background knowledge for readers – a practice that traces back, as so often, to *Zuo zhuan*. If the chronicle form helps to conceal authors' identities and motivations, then these slips in chronological progression give the clearest sense that the text has been ordered according to an external design; they draw notice to authorial interventions in the text, point up the deliberate development of causality, and suggest ideological motives. Sima Guang's manipulation of chronicle breaches the unity of time in favour of other agendas.[85]

The first of those agendas is to develop a comprehensive historical vision. We have already heard about this: it is implicit in Shenzong's use of '*tong*' in *ZZTJ*'s title; the same implications are there in Sima Guang's own choice of title for the earlier *Tong zhi*; he repeats that his political vision depended on an authoritative grasp of the past. These claims trace back to the chronicle form. Other historiographical forms reveal their textual construction through explicit authorial intervention and manipulation. The historian selects events for inclusion on the basis of thematic concerns. Sub-headings in the text or frequent commentary focus the reader's attention. The historian also excludes much material that does not fit with

[85] Ronald Syme's observation of Tacitus's *Annals* applies well to *ZZTJ*: 'The annalistic framework, it might seem, is a primary obstacle: it breaks and disperses a genuine theme or sequence, it juxtaposes unrelated items in mere enumeration. Examples abound, some very striking. Tacitus himself deplores the restriction; and he can adduce reasons (some sentimental, others practical) for overstepping the annual limits,' *Tacitus*, vol. 1, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958, p.305.

his thematic categories, though. By contrast a continuous and coherent chronicle, with the immutable and all-inclusive concept of time as its organizing principle, gives the appearance of a systematic, and therefore a comprehensive coverage of the past. By including an account of every year, Sima Guang claims sovereign control over the whole of pre-eleventh century imperial history. Through the chronicle form he conceals the textual structure of *ZZTJ* and its antecedents, and so papers over (misleadingly) their omissions and lacunae; everything of significance has been included, he implies. By providing a single, linear account of the past, the chronicle form also avoids the disparate views that emerge from different sections of annals-biography histories. Each event makes only one appearance in *ZZTJ* and its antecedents. Factual conflicts are therefore impossible. It produces an absolutist view of the past, which allows only one interpretation of events. The result is an increase in the appearance of historical authority.

Sima Guang revisits the point in his prefaces to *ZZTJ* and its antecedents. On *Li nian tu*, he offsets the initial difficulties of the chronicle form with the suggestion that 'if you calculate the various states' year titles it is possible to know them all 皆可知矣.'[86] The sacrifice of convenience for comprehensive coverage suggests its importance. There is no political bias in his account because all regimes receive equal and full attention. Similarly, *Tong zhi* 'covers everything relating to the rise and fall of states 凡關國家之盛衰, the ups and downs in the welfare of the common people.'[87] And Shenzong claims of *ZZTJ* that 'the profound forms of speeches and the deep significance of remonstrations are all here 良謂備焉.'[88] 'To know them all', 'to cover everything', 'to be all here': the comprehensive appearance of *ZZTJ* that

[86] *Ji gu lu* 16.86b; *SMWJ* 66.7b.
[87] *XCB* 208.5050.
[88] *ZZTJ* p.33.

finds expression in these documents gave it political authority both in the eleventh century and over the next millennium.[89] Sima Guang may have only read small sections of the text in imperial lectures, but the whole work – the whole sweep of imperial institutional history – loomed behind him in support of his political vision. He selected those sections that best illustrated his point but the obvious implication was that there were many more he could have drawn from this extensive work in service of his political purpose. Sima Guang derived authority for his ideology by surpassing his political rivals in the scope and depth of his analysis of political history. And it was the chronicle form that offered him the framework in which to create that comprehensive and systematic account of the past.

Sima Guang's second agenda is to provide an account of the past relevant to the present. Although he may claim that *ZZTJ* is comprehensive, it is not complete. The distinction is an important one. Narrative history deals with a world that is putatively finished. Dynastic histories are a good example: their accounts necessarily deal with a finished past because they were written by the succeeding dynasty. Their moral and political conclusions therefore appear removed from the present and that diminishes the force of their didacticism. Contrast that with *ZZTJ*. As a chronicle, it lacks a clear resolution to its account. It finishes at the end of a reign period, on the eve of Song Emperor Taizu's declaration of his new state. There is no tying up of thematic loose ends, nor any moral statement that draws together and lends explicit cohesion to what has gone before. The open-endedness of *ZZTJ*'s account instead

[89] See, for example, Hu Sanxing's claim that 'everything on the Way is here,' *Zi zhi tong jian* p.28; and Ma Duanlin's 馬端臨 preface to *Wen xian tong kao* 文獻通考: '[Sima Guang] took the traces of the business of over 1,300 years and the records of the 17 histories, and assembled them in a single work. Only then could scholars, once they had opened the work, find everything from past and present there,' *Wen xian tong kao*, Ma Duanlin, *Wan you wen ku* edn., 1a. There are many examples of *ZZTJ*'s authority as a historical text in the centuries after its composition. Particularly striking is seventeenth-century scholar Gu Yanwu's 顧炎武 comment that, from the beginning of Ming down to the end of the *zheng de* period (1506-21), there was a severe scarcity of published texts readily available to the public and most published works were confined to princely and official collections. Yet even under such circumstances, *ZZTJ* remained one of only four works in common circulation, *Gu Tinglin shi wen ji* 顧亭林詩文集, Gu Yanwu, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1959, 2.31-2.

gives a sense of ongoing business. The past has not finished here. It does not lie at great remove from the present. It extends its moral lessons to include the Song state.

Chronicle also serves this aim as the only historiographical form that draws out long-term historical patterns. It shows causes and effects, both within single events and between seemingly disparate events. Both the annals-biography form and even the later *ji shi ben mo* genre at most reveal causality within a single historical sequence; *ZZTJ* shows the multiple consequences of any one political decision. That enables what this study has already called 'the comparative, diachronic analysis of previous regimes.' This is how Sima Guang put it in the third lunar month of 1086:

> Considering the lengthy span of years and the vast range of documents, it is not something that one can read in its entirety and know all about in a day or two. What would be appropriate would be to draw out the main threads and collate its essence. Only then would one be able to see the major outlines of order and disorder, survival and fall.[90]

Sima Guang's construction of historiography therefore produces not single, self-contained lessons but universal political principles – the 'major outlines of order and disorder, survival and fall' – that take their place in a larger moral fabric comprising hundreds of individual events. Sima Guang provides similar lessons over the full sweep of the imperial past, though each in a subtly different historical context. The governing chronology moves forward but these lessons appear immune to change; they are the products not of particular circumstances of time and place, but of abstract and eternal moral values. The result prompted the claim from Qing scholar Zhang Zhidong 張之洞 that 'if you want to gain a comprehensive knowledge of the great dynamic of historical dynasties, nothing is better than *Zi zhi tong jian* and *Xu*

[90] *SMWJ* 51.10b (for dating, see *XCB* 371.8993, which omits the quoted passage).

Tong jian.'[91] *ZZTJ* again draws its authority from the implications of its chronicle form.

There is another negotiation between textual style and political ideology in operation here. Sima Guang sacrifices the thematic coherence of other historiographical forms in order to replicate the imperial experience on the page with greater verisimilitude. In the real-life situation of court, as in Sima Guang's text, a flurry of information on a wide range of different events and political issues bombarded the ruler and his ministers. Responses to each had to be made concurrently. In this ideological melting pot, a decision on one policy might affect the formation and development of others. From these nodal points, unexpected chains of consequence might arise. The chronicle form reflects that process. There is no apparent mediation or ordering of material: it comes to our notice in the text as it might have done in real life, had we been there when the events that Sima Guang describes originally unfolded. It therefore offers the 'mirror' of *ZZTJ*'s title. And it enhances the impression that his text has immediate and direct relevance to his audience at the eleventh-century court.

In all this talk of historical authority, political ideology, and moral didacticism, the issue of objectivity is problematic. We have already seen the fundamental tension between objectivity and subjectivity that the chronicle form entails. Sima Guang gives the issue little attention in his prefaces to *ZZTJ*'s antecedents, though. It was not until the time of *ZZTJ*'s composition that it became a central issue. Behind-the-scenes discussions with his co-compilers are filled with the business of source criticism and of finding a version of events that rings true.[92] This to Fan Zuyu 范祖禹 in the autumn of 1070: 'if there are contradictions or

[91] *You xuan yu* 輶軒語, Zhang Zhidong 張之洞, Changsha: Haoshang shu zhai, 1877, 17b-18a.
[92] *Chuan jia ji* 63.16a-20a; *SMWJ* 62.14a-b.

disagreements between this or that account over years or events, then I would ask you to choose one where the evidence is clear and the principles of things come close to the truth, and build it into the main text. Record the others below in a note and also provide an account of the reason why you have accepted one account and rejected another.' [93] The same theme appears in *ZZTJ*'s presentation document. In an understated tone, Sima Guang draws attention to the meticulous historiographical analysis on show in the text's *kao yi* 考異 commentary.[94] Comprehensiveness and authority are at stake here once again. Sima Guang's vision of the past is seen to be based on the most rigorous standards of documentation. He takes into account all available evidence.[95] Even if that evidence does not appear in *ZZTJ*'s account, it is not through oversight; we are reassured that Sima Guang has at least considered all sides of the argument. The *kao yi* commentary therefore strengthens the authority of *ZZTJ*'s main text. By showing rival historical accounts it suggests that the one ultimately chosen is the result of a systematic and comprehensive process.

That is what Sima Guang would like us to think. That is what many commentators on the text over the past millennium *have* thought. Things are not so simple. True, on its most superficial level *ZZTJ*'s *kao yi* commentary does suggest

[93] *Chuan jia ji* 63.18a (I follow Edwin Pulleyblank for the dating of this letter, 'Chinese Historical Criticism: Liu Chih-chi and Ssu-ma Kuang,' in *Historians of China and Japan*, W.G. Beasley and E.G. Pulleyblank, eds., London: Oxford University Press, 1961, p.166).

[94] *ZZTJ* pp.9607-8. The concept of providing a source critical commentary originated with Pei Songzhi's 裴松之 *San guo zhi zhu* 三國志注 and Sun Sheng's 孫盛 now-lost *Wei yang qiu yi tong* 魏陽秋異同, but Sima Guang was the first historian to supply commentary on his own work (*Si ku quan shu zong mu* 四庫全書總目, Yong Rong 永瑢, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, repr.1983, 47.421c-442a). There is also a distinction to be drawn between Pei Songzhi's aim to 'collect all the different accounts 備異聞' (Pei Songzhi, 'Shang *San guo zhi zhu* biao' 上三國志注表, ap. *San guo zhi* 三國志, Chen Shou 陳壽, Pei Songzhi, annot., Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1973, p.1471) and Sima Guang's more analytical design in 'examining differences 考異.'

[95] Sima Guang was granted access to the imperial archives as well as 2,400 *juan* from the collection of Shenzong's former princely residence at Yingdi, *Song shi* 336.10767; *Shao shi wen jian hou lu* 邵氏聞見後錄, Shao Bo 邵博, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1983, 24.189-90. Scholars have failed to agree on the total number of sources that fed into *ZZTJ*. Late twelfth/early thirteenth-century scholar Gao Sisun 高似孫 set the number at 222 (excluding official histories), but that figure is likely to be a product of scribal error, *Wei lüe* 緯略, Gao Sisun, *Mo hai jin hu* edn., 12.11a. Early twentieth-century scholar Zhang Xuhou puts the figure at 332 in his *Tong jian xue* (pp.38-71), although Chen Guangchong 陳光崇 later supplemented this in 'Zhang shi *Tong jian xue* suo lie *Tong jian* yin yong shu mu bu zheng' 張氏"通鑑學"所列"通鑑"引用書目補正, in Zi zhi tong jian *cong lun*, pp.173-82. The debate continues. These are all minimum estimates, in any case: *kao yi* only recorded volumes consulted in case of textual inconsistencies and so does not provide a complete list in the first place.

objectivity, but there is a familiar paradox: while suggesting the scientific rigour of his source criticism, Sima Guang also shows himself alert to his subjective role as historian.[96] He notes his selection of sources. He acknowledges the changes that he makes to those sources that he chooses for inclusion in his text. He locates himself through citation with certain traditions of historical writing and, as a corollary, rejects rival traditions. He claims unique personal insights into the events that he recounts through personal interjections. He fashions his discourse, and he is self-conscious of his fashioning activity. The textual apparatus that supports his objectivity at the same time points up the manipulation that underlies *ZZTJ*'s construction.[97] We relive the painstaking processes of source analysis and the historical judgements that faced Sima Guang as he sat down to construct his account. In that evocation of the historian's work, we cannot escape the subjective choices that had to be made at every turn of the work's composition.

There is more. The *kao yi* commentary does not provide a full picture of *ZZTJ*'s textual construction. It restricts itself to differences in dates, names, and statistics – to discrepancies in basic historiographical data. It remains silent on the larger choices that underpin *ZZTJ*'s construction and that make themselves felt in close analysis of its text. That is why the *kao yi* commentary has misdirected much critical analysis: readers have claimed historical objectivity for Sima Guang's work, while ignoring the larger textual manipulations that form the basis of its account.[98] Sima Guang's decision to align himself with the commentarial tradition of the *Spring*

[96] See too his explicit recognition of this in discussion with Emperor Shenzong at an imperial seminar of 23 March 1068, *San chao ming chen yan xing lu* 7A.25b-26a.

[97] With the term 'manipulation,' I do not mean to cast Sima Guang as Orwellian in the political implications that his use of his sources had: this is no *Nineteen Eighty-Four* scenario. Instead I use 'manipulation' in its original sense of 'treatment' or 'handling', rather than with the more sinister, Machiavellian connotations that it often has now. It is at the level of Sima Guang's treatment of the past – and the ways in which his audience's interpretation is manipulated by that treatment – that his ideology emerges.

[98] For typical claims of the *ZZTJ*'s objectivity, citing the *kao yi* commentary as evidence, see Wang Deyi 王德毅, 'Sima Guang he *Zi zhi tong jian*' 司馬光和資治通鑑, in *Song shi yan jiu ji* 宋史研究集, v.4. Taibei: Zhong hua cong shu, 1969, p.61; Pulleyblank, 'Chinese Historical Criticism,' esp. pp. 157-8.

and Autumn Annals takes effect again here. Like those canonical works, *ZZTJ* depends for political didacticism on its audience's sensitivity to passages included or omitted, to words altered and endowed with new ideological significance. All this is a form of translation – not a cross-linguistic one but a cross-temporal one, between the historically specific agendas of his source texts and his own concerns in the eleventh century. Translation, with its manipulation, omission, recreation, and recasting of source material, here appears as a form of power.[99] Sima Guang exercises political control over his emperor and the Song court by translating the past into a form relevant to and accessible for his contemporary audience and, in doing so, he sets the parameters for future historical discourse. His selective use of sources in these basic cases of source translation tends to pass undocumented in the *kao yi* commentary. They are there for the alert reader to trace and uncover their inherent significance. It would have been an instinctive task for an emperor and officials who shared a textual training in the corpus of canonical and historical texts that formed the curriculum for the civil service examinations. It is harder for modern historians who no longer deal in the textual currency of the eleventh century. Yet these are the nuances on which *ZZTJ*'s ideology rests and they are fundamental to Sima Guang's claims to an authoritative understanding of the past. It is our task to identify and interpret them.[100]

[99] For a perceptive analysis of the relationships between translation and political power, see the essays in *Translation and Power*, M. Tymoczko and E. Gentzler, eds., Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002, especially the introductory comments on pp.xi-xxviii.

[100] Modern scholarship has rarely acknowledged *ZZTJ*'s textual construction beyond the scope of the *kao yi* commentary and Sima Guang's explicit comments as historian. Rare exceptions include: Zhang Yuan 張元, '*Tong jian* zhong de nan bei zhan zheng' 通鑑中的南北戰爭, in *Ji nian Sima Guang Wang Anshi shi shi jiu bai zhou nian xue shu yan tao hui lun wen ji* 紀念司馬光王安石逝世九百周年學術研討會論文集, Taibei: Wen shi zhe chu ban she, 1986, pp.65-96; Tillman, Hoyt Cleveland, '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: Sung Senses of the Past*, Thomas H.C. Lee, ed., Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2004, pp. 61-106 (based on an earlier article in Chinese: Tian Hao 田浩, 'Shi xue yu wen hua si xiang: Sima Guang dui Zhuge Liang gu shi de chong jian' 史學與文化思想: 司馬光對諸葛亮故事的重見, *Zhong yang yan jiu yuan li shi yu yan yan jiu suo ji kan* 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊 73.1, 2002: 165-95.

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Certain features of Sima Guang's vision of the past open this study because they will bear on what follows. *ZZTJ* and its antecedents drew their authority from a canonical tradition that took as its primary focus the workings of sovereignty. There, history was made to serve political ends. It offered lessons to the present, both in the form of exemplars and warnings. Sima Guang shared this political focus. His business was the general principles that determined the success or failure of the imperial institution; the eleventh-century emperor was his intended audience. To secure political authority among his contemporaries, though, he needed to establish continuities between past and present, and to show that what had been relevant once remained relevant now. He was well served in this by the chronicle form. The formal model of the canonical *Zuo zhuan* suited his aims better than the prevalent annals-biography structure. It offered a comprehensive historical vision from which he could abstract a universal and comparative ethic of imperial conduct for his Song emperors. That was how he hoped to establish his political ideology in the heated factional environment of the eleventh-century court. The same canonical model also left a difficult legacy, though, one in which formal objectivity belied subjective judgement. Source selection, manipulation, and analysis – some of which is openly documented in *ZZTJ*'s *kao yi* commentary – were the cornerstones of Sima Guang's historical accounts and the means by which he fashioned the past to suit his present political commitments. The practical implications of all this for a reading of *ZZTJ* need not concern us further here. We will revisit them with a sharp focus in later chapters. They will direct our analysis of Sima Guang's text. For now, it is worth

turning attention from the historiographical approaches that informed Sima Guang's work to the historiographical approaches that inform this work.

This study's reading of *ZZTJ* proceeds from Sima Guang's own claims. *ZZTJ* (like all historiography) is a textual construct. Personal agendas shape its account of the past and its underlying ideology. Identifying the process of textual manipulation that transforms ideology into historiography is a slippery critical task, and not just because of our chronological and cultural distance from the circumstances of its composition. We must also distinguish between different voices in the text, remain alert to the authority that they carry, and sensitive too to the ideological significance that they will bear. That challenge will present itself throughout what follows.

'In the whole period of over 1,700 years [from the end of Western Zhou to the early eleventh century], there have only been 500-plus years when the empire has been under single rule,' wrote Sima Guang in a memorial to the throne on 3 September 1061. He continued: 'I hope that Your Majesty will rise at dawn and go to sleep late at night, that you will think carefully and reverentially of your forebears' hard work and the difficulty of bringing about the sovereign enterprise, and that you will take antiquity to reflect on the present. If you know that an age of great peace is difficult to attain yet easy to lose, then the people of the empire, and even the birds and the beasts and the grass and the trees, will all be extremely fortunate.'[101] This is an appeal for political circumspection and restraint in order to preserve Song's imperial heritage. Sima Guang points up in threatening terms for his emperor the imbalance between the few periods of order and unity that have emerged from the past and the far greater number of regimes marked by disorder and disunity. As well as attracting his attention in political memorials on the eleventh century, political

[101] *SMWJ* 18.11a-b (for dating, see *XCB* 194.4703-4). See also Sima Guang's comments on 3 April 1070, with a specific focus on the content of *Li nian tu*, *SMWJ* 41.12a (for dating, see *Chuan jia ji* 44.1a).

division also occupies much of his historiography. The longest of these periods in Sima Guang's accounts of the past – the period of the Southern and Northern Dynasties between the fourth and the sixth centuries – will provide the focus of the present study. It offers a minatory example to the eleventh-century emperors of what to avoid politically. It is a shocking, sobering corrective to the exalted, rose-tinted examples of Han Emperors Wenzong and Xuanzong and Tang Emperor Taizong – all rulers of strong, unified states – that Song Emperor Shenzong preferred for his preface to *ZZTJ*. It also has the potential to be subversive. It puts the emperor in his place; absolute and untrammelled power is not an option if the state is to survive and prosper. There is tension between imperial expectations and Sima Guang's own political agenda in composing *ZZTJ* and its antecedents.[102] That will be our point of interest here: not the conventional vision of political order that the Song emperors wanted and expected to hear (and that has attracted much of the scholarly attention directed at *ZZTJ* ever since) but the dark, threatening picture that Sima Guang also gave of political turmoil and dynastic failure; not the good that could be taken as models, but the bad that should be taken as warnings.

Guided by *ZZTJ*'s chronicle form, the structure will be chronological. Three dynasties will be used to sample the 'warnings' of *ZZTJ*'s text. Western Jin held unified control between 260 and 317 before collapsing through internecine conflict and rebellion by internal barbarian clients. Song's rulers held power in the south between 420 and 479 and, throughout the middle of the fifth century, tried to expand their military and political dominion over the north. Liang power centred on its founder, Emperor Wu (r. 502-49), who sought unified political and social control by

[102] This jars with the picture of Sima Guang's unqualified personal loyalty to Song Emperors Yingzong and Shenzong that modern scholar Xiaobin Ji offers in his biographical study, *Politics and Conservatism in Northern Song China: The Career and Thought of Sima Guang (A.D. 1019-1086)*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2005.

adopting the transcendental doctrines of Buddhism; his state fell in 557, though, eight years after his own death at the hands of rebels. This study will not, of course, seek to detail every aspect of *ZZTJ*'s account of these dynasties, just as Sima Guang did not attempt to read the whole of his text in imperial seminars. Instead, like Sima Guang, it will pick out sequences of events and thematic strands that demand particular attention, as we retrace his steps in identifying the dynamics of dynastic rise and fall. We will have to move outside *ZZTJ* for this purpose, though. His historian's comments in *Li nian tu* will suggest our governing themes. This underused resource offers the clearest and most systematic assessments of whole dynasties, made from a long-term historical perspective. It differs from Sima Guang's comments as editor-historian of *ZZTJ*, which only draw their large moral conclusions from individual events. It better serves our present purpose as a result. It will direct our attention (as it sought to direct the attention of Sima Guang's eleventh-century audience) to three institutional concerns: ethnic policy; military policy; religious policy. There lies the chronological and thematic framework for the present study.

As much as it touches on political ideology, though, this study is about historiography. It approaches Sima Guang's political statements through his accounts of the past, in the belief that the two shed valuable light on one another. But the studies that follow have been chosen above all because they lend themselves to strategies of reading that have wider implications for our understanding of *ZZTJ* and of imperial Chinese historiography as a whole. The point here, then, is not to build up knowledge of the events of the Southern and Northern Dynasties, with all the documentation that Sima Guang includes on them in his account. That is not to deny the real value to be gained from analysis of fragments of now-lost texts that survive

as citations in the *kao yi* commentary.[103] *ZZTJ* is also a convenient repository of historical references. That, after all, was Sima Guang's original intention: to enable his ruler to gain a convenient handle on the past, and to offer a readily-mined seam of evidential ore, from which apposite political lessons could be extracted. It accounts for much of the text's later popularity. Scholars for a millennium have turned to *ZZTJ* for historical reference and the historical signposting that its chronological form affords them. Those are the least interesting features of the text, though. There is greater value to be found in the way Sima Guang represented events of the past, in the reflection that his text offers of eleventh-century ideology, and in its relationship to the political views that Sima Guang expressed elsewhere. In this context, *ZZTJ* functions as an extended memorial to the throne that, in a complex and reiterating process of exchange, both fed into, validated, and reflected Sima Guang's political commitments; the general political principles that he advocated in the eleventh century are seen to define the course of history *as it appears in* ZZTJ. This will draw us deep into issues of historical authority and authenticity. It is not a cause for concern, though, as much recent soul-searching amid professional historians, faced with the vertiginous uncertainties of post-modern theory, might suggest. Rather it will shift the value that we accord *ZZTJ* in forming our historical judgements and will open up new possibilities for our use of the text. Instead of *ZZTJ* as a simple record of the past, it will now become a response to the circumstances in which it was constructed. This demands that it be understood in its fullest textual and intellectual environment. We will therefore seek a sense of why Sima Guang

[103] For example, Edwin Pulleyblank's 'The *Tzyjyh Tongjiann Kaoyih* and the Sources for the History of the Period 730-763,' *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 13.2, 1950: 448-73; and the critical reconstruction of Qiu Yue's 丘悅 *San guo dian lüe* 三國典略, which draws heavily on *ZZTJ*'s *kao yi* commentary, *San guo dian lüe ji jiao* 三國典略輯校, Du Deqiao 杜德橋 and Zhao Chao 趙超, eds., Taibei: Dong da tu shu gong si, 1998.

represented the past as he did and why his text held power for its immediate audience.

Practical applications

> On the *jia shen* day Hanlin Academician Sima Guang read from *Zi zhi tong jian* on Jia Shan's 賈山 submission to the throne of a statement that declared 'the [First] Emperor of Qin lived among the annihilation and destruction [of his state] without knowing about it himself.'[104] He thereupon talked about the excellence of heeding remonstrance and the calamity of blocking remonstrance. 'Yan zi 晏子 said that "harmony and sameness are two different things, and that water and fire, vinegar and pickle, salt and plums are all opposites. Assistant ministers of state supplement [a ruler's] deficiencies and dispel his excesses. If one were to add more salt to a broth that is already salty or more plums to one that is already sour, then would it even be edible?"[105] Yi Yin warned Tai Jia: "If you come across things that run counter to your will, you must always seek their sense in the Way."[106] As a basic human emotion, who does not want others to comply with him and hate those who run counter to him? Only sages and worthies know about the harm done by compliance and the benefits of resistance. To take an analogy, it is like a sweet wine, able to intoxicate people by appealing to their tastes. But it is medicine that cures illnesses, though it is bitter to the taste. As a result, in ministers' relationships with their ruler, if he stands firm then they will be in harmony with him, but if he is malleable then they will lead him. If he is clear-sighted then they put him in the dark, but if he is in the dark then they make things clear for him. It is not that they deliberately oppose him. They simply want to cut back his excess and make up for his inadequacies, and to approach regal perfection in that way. If you demote those who run counter to you and select out of turn those who comply with you, then specious sycophants will advance by the day and the loyal and those with true integrity will grow daily more distant. That will be infelicitous for the imperial ancestral temple and the altars of the soil.'
>
> The emperor said: 'Shun "hated specious talkers and those who destroyed [proper] conduct."[107] If officials from the Censorate and the Remonstrance Bureau deceitfully produce specious words, then how could I do anything but dismiss them?'
>
> Guang said: 'I merely touched on it in presenting my reading, but would not venture a full discussion of contemporary affairs.'[108]

The date was 5 June 1070. Two and a half years after Emperor Shenzong had first summoned Sima Guang to the imperial seminar and bestowed an imperial preface on

[104] Jia Shan's memorial appears on *ZZTJ* 13.448-50.
[105] *Chun qiu Zuo zhuan zheng yi* 49.391b-392c, in a passage the censures ministers' obsequiousness; cf. *Yan zi Chun qiu ji shi* 晏子春秋集釋, Wu Zeyu 吳則虞, ed., Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1962, 7.442-4.
[106] *Shang shu zheng yi* 8.53b.
[107] *Shang shu zheng yi* 3.20a , a passage that describes Shun's choice of ministers and organization of government on coming to power.
[108] *XCB* 210.5112; cf. *San chao ming chen yan xing lu* 7A.23a; *Song hui yao ji gao bu bian* 5278.64a-b; *Zōkō Shiba On kō zenshū* 1.1a-b.

ZZTJ, Sima Guang gave another reading from that work. It had already become a familiar fixture at court. After the seminar finished, Emperor Shenzong dismissed its other attendants but detained Sima Guang. Together they continued their discussion in private. One by one, they assessed the characters of a sample of senior government ministers. Their particular focus was the institutions of the Censorate and the Remonstrance Bureau. Sima Guang voiced his personal judgement as Emperor Shenzong weighed up the reliability of recent advice to the throne. He ended as he had begun: he urged Emperor Shenzong to consider the widest possible range of opinion when deciding policy and not to follow the advice of a powerful minority. On that note, he withdrew.

On the face of it, a straightforward and commonplace exchange. A reading takes place at the imperial seminar. There follows an elaboration of the text's broad themes. A minister at first evades issues of contemporary policy. A private discussion afterwards draws him onto contemporary matters of court governance. That masks the complexity of all this as a textual construct. Several voices speak here. The earliest in chronological sequence is Jia Shan's, who presented his statement to Han Emperor Wen in 178 BC. That document does not survive in its original form. We learn of its contents from the first-century AD historian Ban Gu, who recorded it over two hundred years later in its earliest extant form in his *Han shu*.[109] Sima Guang speaks next, at a further remove of nine hundred years. He edited Ban Gu's version of Jia Shan's statement for inclusion in *ZZTJ*. That is also how the attendants of the imperial seminar on 5 June 1070 would have heard Jia Shan's voice. For us, their eleventh-century voices respond to the version of Jia Shan's statement that confronts them. Loudest of all is Emperor Shenzong's, who adds his

[109] *Han shu* 51.2327-36.

interpretations of Sima Guang's reading and its themes. Then Sima Guang speaks again as our final informant for what happened: he describes the reading and subsequent discussions in his diary, from where it was transmitted in its surviving forms.[110] To understand what is going on here, and in particular to understand *ZZTJ* in its richest sense – the concern of the present study – it is the job of the modern historian to distinguish these voices, to identify the fluid relationships between them, and to recognize their effects both on conveying Sima Guang's ideology and on the ways in which we read his text.

The first voice that *we* hear – a reversal of the chronological sequence of textual construction given above – is Sima Guang's. He has chosen to include the meeting between ruler and minister in his diary. The whole event is subject to his interpretation of what happened; he is our sole extant source of authority for the private conversation that followed the imperial reading. His diary will not serve us much in what follows, but it affords insights here into the way Sima Guang conceived of the use of *ZZTJ* in a court setting. It therefore offers a chance to test his theoretical statements of authorial intent.

Sima Guang suggests that his reading of *ZZTJ* is the direct cause of the following discussion with Emperor Shenzong on the value of court remonstrance. The anaphoric 'thereupon' 因 makes the link: after reading from *ZZTJ*, he 'thereupon talked about the excellence of heeding remonstrance and the calamity of blocking remonstrance.' His political ideology proceeds from historical study. Ideological influence flows the other way too, as we will see – Sima Guang's ideology shapes

[110] There is a further textual filter here: Sima Guang's diary does not survive in its original form. It is available only through inclusion in intermediate works: I have used *XCB* as the basis for my translation here; the same episode also appears in *San chao ming chen yan xing lu*, (attributed to Sima Guang's diary, *ri lu* 日錄) and *Zōkō Shiba On kō zenshū* (attributed to his personal notes, *shou lu* 手錄). These extra voices, those of the editors who chose to include Sima Guang's account in their works, do not touch closely upon how we read *ZZTJ*, though – they relate more to our reading of Sima Guang's diary – and so they need not concern us further.

his representation of the past – but he does not make the two-way connection here. He must draw his political authority from an interpretation of history that appears self-evident and unbiased. The past yields lessons of itself and he cannot be seen to intervene in its presentation, only elucidate its inevitable conclusions.

There is a familiar tension between the specific and the universal, between Sima Guang's account of specific events in the past and what this study has earlier called 'an enduring concern with what is eternal and universal in human experience, and therefore relevant to the present.' Through that same anaphoric 'thereupon,' Sima Guang shifts from a historically-specific account of Jia Shan's second-century BC statement – rooted in a particular time, place, and political environment – to an abstract level of discussion that applies to all time. The transition comes through a series of scriptural maxims: they are drawn from *Zuo zhuan* and *The Book of Documents*, the two texts that stand out in Sima Guang's prefaces to *ZZTJ* and its antecedents.[111] They at once evoke images of the distant past and create a sense of timeless moral values. They sustain Sima Guang's overarching theme, which he has already identified as the value of remonstrance.

With these canonical foundations, Sima Guang proposes general principles of his own. He moves into the realm of the psychological. He establishes the behaviour of sages and worthies, not that of ordinary people, as the yardstick for the Song emperor (he is addressing the 'Son of Heaven,' after all). To practise successful governance, he suggests, personal pride will have to be set aside for the greater moral good. This is of greatest importance in a ruler's relationship with his ministers. Here is his grand conclusion. He frames it in terms of a familiar rhetoric of exhortation and admonition, the same antithetical coupling that shaped *ZZTJ*'s composition.

[111] There are also canonical echoes in the phrasing that Sima Guang uses. There is no need to trace them all here. It is enough to note that they serve the same purpose as the explicit quotations – to ground historical particulars in larger canonical moral context.

After the positive examples of sages and worthies, the final note that he sounds is threatening and minatory: should Emperor Shenzong fail to heed Sima Guang's advice and (in a circular argument) solicit remonstrance from loyal ministers, then the survival of the dynasty will come under threat. *ZZTJ* paves the way for a broad political discourse, just as Sima Guang intended that it would in his theoretical statements on the work.

At the last minute, just as Sima Guang appears to have won over the emperor, he demurs: 'I merely touched on it in presenting my reading, but would not venture a full discussion of contemporary affairs.' Disingenuous, maybe, but it is key to *ZZTJ*'s function. Sima Guang feigns not to put a contemporary spin on his account of the past, but it is precisely because his historiography is informed by a personal political agenda that Emperor Shenzong is impelled to draw certain conclusions from it. This is not the past speaking for itself. Sima Guang has orchestrated both the representation of the past and Shenzong's interpretation of it. That crucially produces a private audience with the emperor. At a formal, ritual remove from *ZZTJ* he opens up on the same themes that his text has just raised but he now applies them freely to an eleventh-century setting. This is where *ZZTJ*'s immediate political value lies for Sima Guang: as a conduit for his counsel to reach the emperor, overcoming the personal divides and factional oppositions of the Song court. Sima Guang's opinions will still carry weight because they find their support in the incontestable authority of recurrent historical patterns. Despite a disclaimer that he will not discuss current affairs, his reading of *ZZTJ* does stimulate a discussion of contemporary business. When we examine the text for its political spin, we excavate some of its original impact at the Song court: how *ZZTJ* enabled Sima Guang to shift focus from past to present, and how it made Shenzong receptive to what Sima Guang had to say.

The text that prompts all of this subtle political manoeuvring – Sima Guang's account of Jia Shan's second-century BC statement to the Han throne – survives in *ZZTJ*. We must be clear from the outset, though, that it is not Jia Shan's voice we hear in the text. That is lost to us in a complex of later representations of his original words. Instead we hear Sima Guang. That is *ZZTJ*'s real claim to authority for modern historians: on how Sima Guang interprets the past and, as a corollary, on how he wants us to interpret it too. Its construction affords an opportunity to speak (though indirectly) to Emperor Shenzong even before he offers his explicit moral and political conclusions. And in order to guarantee that Shenzong's interpretation will be the right one – the one that will accord with Sima Guang's own – he narrows the range of possible interpretations in *ZZTJ* before Jia Shan is ever given a voice. The immediate context that Sima Guang supplies for Jia Shan's statement steers our understanding of its textual and ideological function. He predetermines our reading of what Jia Shan has to say.

The chronicle form has an important role to play. Jia Shan's statement appears in *ZZTJ*'s chronological sequence after an imperial ordinance in which Han Emperor Wen demands that his ministers speak out on his faults and inadequacies:

> 'All you ministers should give thought to my faults and failings, and the areas in which my knowledge falls short. I beseech you to inform me of them. To assist me with my shortcomings you should also recommend worthy and competent men, men who are direct and true, and who can speak directly and do everything in their power to offer remonstrance.' He thereupon ordered each of them to take responsibility for their own posts, and to devote themselves to reducing corvée labour and taxes for the benefit of the common people. He dismissed the General of the Guards. He retained only the horses that he needed from those presently in the Imperial Stud and gave all the rest to the postal relay stations.[112]

This is conventional stuff: we recognize the trope of the enlightened ruler. Already we should be on the alert for editorial intervention, though. Comparison with Sima

[112] *ZZTJ* 13.448; cf. *Shi ji* 10.422; *Han shu* 4.116.

Guang's sources reveals a focus on Emperor Wen's solicitation of remonstrance. He omits all other narrative details, to telling effect. In his sources, *Shi ji* and *Han shu*, these imperial edicts are direct responses to a solar eclipse: Emperor Wen is concerned that it is a sign of heavenly opprobrium of his rule. The solar eclipse appears in *ZZTJ* too, but it appears detached from any context there, not as a causal explanation for Emperor Wen's ordinance. In Sima Guang's sources, we witness a hurried and anxious political response to a possible portent of dynastic collapse; in *ZZTJ* Emperor Wen is proactive and acts on his own terms, as a ruler eager to improve his governance. The shift in tone is confirmed by the brief account that *ZZTJ*'s external narrator offers of the other virtuous policies that Emperor Wen implements to benefit his people. Sima Guang is about good governance and at the centre of that is the willingness to accept remonstrance. It is the focus of Jia Shan's statement too: the phrasing that Emperor Wen is given here resonates with Jia Shan's rhetoric in what follows.

Skip to the end of Jia Shan's statement in *ZZTJ* and a similar case of textual manipulation presents itself. It serves the same effect. We hear from *ZZTJ*'s external narrator that Emperor Wen 'was pleased and accepted [Jia Shan's] words,' and that he continued to encourage comments from courtiers on each occasion of holding court. These phrases are drawn from *Shi ji*, and Sima Guang splices them with the account of Jia Shan's statement in *Han shu*. This free mixing of sources is common in Sima Guang's construction of *ZZTJ*. It always serves ideological ends. It is more than just a process of mix-and-match, though. The descriptions of Emperor Wu's ongoing receptiveness to remonstrance appear in *Shi ji* in a different textual setting. No longer a response by the external narrator, they now appear in direct speech, in a comment by Jia Shan's near contemporary, Han minister (and prolific remonstrator)

Yuan Ang 袁盎.[113] The shift in speaker creates a shift in textual authority. The weak authority of Yuan Ang's personal opinion in *Shi ji* gives way to the weight of the objective-seeming opinion of the external narrator in *ZZTJ*. Emperor Wen is an exemplary ruler, not just according to individual moral standards but also on the basis of an impersonal, universal set of moral values. It is the same emperor, too, whom Song Emperor Shenzong was predisposed to take as an imperial exemplar: in his preface to *ZZTJ*, he declared that 'with Emperors Wen and Xuan of Han or Tang Taizong, 'I can find no flaw in them,' as Confucius put it.'

Our reading is already prejudiced to seek out the exemplary and to learn moral and political lessons from it. But the exemplary in what? If we approach the text through Sima Guang's diary, then we already have a sense of the main theme of Jia Shan's memorial: 'the excellence of heeding remonstrance and the calamity of blocking remonstrance.' Within *ZZTJ*, there is also a hint in Emperor Wen's ordinance. Sima Guang leaves nothing to chance, though. He forces our focus before we have yet to turn to Jia Shan's statement. The text's external narrator tells us that '[Jia Shan] sent up a letter to the throne talking about the way of orderly and disorderly rule.' This is not integral to *ZZTJ*'s narrative; a simple 'he sent up a letter to the throne saying 上書曰 …' would have served all the requirements of the text's plot. The prefatory remark serves an ideological purpose instead. We should be looking out for models of dynastic success and failure that, we sense from Emperor Wen's earlier ordinance, are bound up with a ruler's ability to solicit remonstrance. Sima Guang layers further interpretative prejudices onto his text.

We finally reach the memorial itself. It follows a well-worn structure. It consists of three phases. Jia Shan is seen to open with statements of general principle,

[113] *ZZTJ* 13.450; cf. *Shi ji* 101.2741-2.

moral values that transcend time and place. He establishes a close relationship between dynastic survival and a ruler's willingness to solicit remonstrance and criticism, important as a balance to imperial power. Conversely, state governance will be threatened by a ruler's misplaced belief in his own infallibility and authority, and his failure to heed direct remonstrance. General principles find support in specific events of the recent past. The personal delusion of Qin Shihuang and the moral and political corruption of the Qin state supply Jia Shan's historical focus. If his claims are to carry weight for Han Emperor Wen, though, he has to give them contemporary relevance too. A temporal shift to the present, *jin* 今, marks the final third of his statement. For Jia Shan, imperial obduracy has precipitated dynastic decline in the past; it remains a danger in the present. The familiarity of all of this draws notice. Much of what Jia Shan has to say in *ZZTJ* echoes the political ideology that Sima Guang expressed in his own voice in statements on eleventh-century governance. It even does so in similar rhetorical terms, as we will see. What stands out is Jia Shan's attempt in *ZZTJ*, like Sima Guang's after him, to establish a universal relevance for his interpretation of the past. A tension between historical specifics and what is morally transcendent; a concern with making the past resonate with the present: these are also ubiquitous in Sima Guang's historiographical concerns in the eleventh century.

Close reading of Jia Shan's statement *as it appears in ZZTJ* brings out a welter of specific parallels between past and present, text and reality. Here is Jia Shan in *ZZTJ*:

> Even under those rulers who seek remonstrance by opening up channels for it, who receive it with a tranquil bearing, and who use [the remonstrators'] words and bring them personal acclaim, men are still afraid and do not venture to unburden themselves

> fully. How much more so with those who are unrestrained in their desires, and cruel and vicious, and who hate hearing about their faults?[114]

Compare that with Sima Guang on the same theme on 5 April 1066, as he worked on the early stages of *ZZTJ*'s composition. The reference is now to the eleventh century, not the second-century BC. Little else changes:

> I have heard that the calamity of the ruler lies in not hearing about his faults, and that the calamity of the minister lies in not being able to be absolutely loyal. For this reason, loyal, and direct ministers who dare to speak out are the most valuable treasures that the state has. Yet even when a ruler, with all the honour due to him, oversees his ministers and seeks remonstrance with a tranquil bearing, heavily rewarding them with titles in order to encourage them, ministers are still afraid and do not venture to put themselves forward. If, further to this, he strikes fear into them with rebukes and censures them with punishments, then where will good words come from?[115]

There are parallels in content, of course: both men demand free access to present remonstrance to their ruler; they contrast the ideal of a ruler receptive to remonstrance with one who suppresses it. Both men also apply these abstract rhetorical types to the specific circumstances of their own times: Jia Shan as a precaution to a ruler who has already solicited criticism of his own governance; Sima Guang as criticism of the punishment meted out to Song remonstrance officials. The rhetorical echoes between the two men strike us as much as similarities of content. They confirm the link between past and present, and transfer our attention from *ZZTJ*'s text to Sima Guang's political memorials on the eleventh century. This reached its culmination in a later memorial from Sima Guang. In the fourth lunar month of 1085, not long after *ZZTJ*'s presentation to the throne, he submitted to the newly acceded Emperor Zhenzong 'A Request To Open The Route To Free Speech'

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[114] *ZZTJ* 13.448.

[115] *SMWJ* 35.3b (for dating, see *XCB* 207.5038). See also a similar statement dated to the twelfth lunar month of 1050/51, *SMWJ* 16.6b-7a; and, at the other end of his political career and after completing *ZZTJ*, in the fourth lunar month of 1085, *ibid* 47.6b. The chronological span of these documents, which both pre- and post-date *ZZTJ*'s composition, supports the idea that Sima Guang's political ideology both fed into and drew authority from his study of history.

乞開言路狀, an impassioned statement on the importance of remonstrance. A long quotation from Jia Shan's statement in *ZZTJ* lay at the heart of his argument.[116]

The parallels run on. When Jia Shan repeats his assertion that a ruler's failure to heed criticism of his own faults would jeopardise dynastic security, he does so with a phrasing that Sima Guang would echo in the imperial seminar of 5 June 1070 and throughout his discussions of Song emperorship. Jia Shan demands that Han Emperor Wen employ 'worthy and competent men, those with true integrity' who would be willing to offer direct criticism of their ruler – a trope with which he identifies himself. In doing so, he takes his place in a common seam of discourse in *ZZTJ* and also prefigures Sima Guang's near-identical exhortations to his Song emperor over a millennium later.[117] Jia Shan contrasts the hedonism of Han courtiers with the abstemiousness and political focus of ministers of antiquity – a theme that recurs both in *ZZTJ* and in Sima Guang's criticisms of the eleventh-century bureaucracy.[118] Even these few examples of the convergences between *ZZTJ*'s text and Sima Guang's political memorials make the point: we are dealing with an ideological statement of Sima Guang's political commitments as much as a representation of the past.

That is how Sima Guang represents Jia Shan's statement. His source, the first-century historian Ban Gu, puts quite a different spin on things, though. This is the next, and final, voice still available to us; Ban Gu includes a version of the statement in *Han shu*. Comparison shows that Sima Guang has altered his source. The context is different. Ban Gu includes the statement in his biography of Jia Shan. It dominates that setting. A brief summary of Jia Shan's family background serves as

[116] *Ibid* 47.6b (for dating, see *Chuan jia ji* 46.1a); cf. the appearance of Jia Shan too in a statement of 12 June 1070, *SMWJ* 43.2b (for dating, see *Chuan jia ji* 44.9b).
[117] For a sample of Sima Guang's many statements on the issue, see *SMWJ* 21.10a, 25.4a-5b, 35.3b, 40.8a, 45.3a, 57.18b, 71.3b.
[118] For Sima Guang's clearest statement of this in an eleventh-century context, see *ibid* 69.3b-5b.

a preface. It is followed by a laconic summary, in indirect speech, of Jia Shan's other remonstrations to the throne. Nothing matches the space dedicated to this statement. For Ban Gu, it is the defining moment of Jia Shan's life. That is confirmed by a statement from *Han shu*'s external narrator, which picks out for particular commendation Jia Shan's directness and his skill in identifying the nub of an argument – the main qualities of this statement of 178 BC, in fact. In comparison with the context that Sima Guang supplies in *ZZTJ*, though, it is Ban Gu's silence on Han Emperor Wen's actions that stands out. There is not a word on his solicitation of remonstrance, or even on his response to this statement by Jia Shan. Ban Gu focuses on the qualities of an individual; Sima Guang's concern is the conduct of the ruler and the relationship between ruler and minister.

Sima Guang omits much from his source text. He mutes Ban Gu in this sequence of textual voices that we have established. His version of Jia Shan's memorial is under a third of the length of *Han shu*'s. There are omissions of canonical allusion and quotation, a common historiographical strategy of Sima Guang's. The variation here is likely to be a result of generic differences: between a strong ideological statement to the throne, in which appeals to canonical authority were part of the standard rhetoric, and a work of history where the focus is *realpolitik*. We will examine this in greater detail later on.

Sima Guang also omits from Ban Gu's version of the statement much of the detail on Qin Shihuang's misrule. Gone, too, is Jia Shan's claim early in his statement – part of a longer introduction that Sima Guang omits – that 'I do not venture to use distant analogies; I wish to take Qin as my analogy, solely so that Your Majesty will pay some attention it.'[119] There are two ways of reading this;

[119] In *Han shu*, immediately before Jia Shan's statement opens, the external narrator draws the reader's particular attention to its use of Qin as an analogy. Sima Guang omits this from *ZZTJ*.

determining which the text will bear is part of the 'slippery critical task' that this study has already identified. It has a possible ideological significance. By omitting many of the close historical references to Qin, Sima Guang gives Jia Shan's statement a more open-ended and wide-ranging relevance than a critique of a single dynasty, even a single ruler. Another explanation, just as justified, would be the simple issue of textual economy. Jia Shan's statement in *Han shu* stands alone in the context of his biography; Ban Gu does not provide a direct historical account of Qin in his work. Much of the dense historical reference that Jia Shan offers in *Han shu*'s version of his statement has already received notice in *ZZTJ*'s text, though. At imperial seminars, Sima Guang read from his text in chronological sequence and his audience would already have been familiar with his representation of Qin misrule. For Sima Guang to revisit it here would have been superfluous. It would also have distracted attention from his main point.

When Ban Gu makes him speak, Jia Shan divides his attention equally between a minister's obligation to offer remonstrance and a ruler's duty to solicit remonstrance. That fits with the context of Jia Shan's statement in *Han shu*: in a biography of a minister whose life is defined by his remonstrations to the throne. Jia Shan serves Ban Gu as a model for ministerial conduct, in other words. In *ZZTJ*, though, the onus for political action falls on the ruler. Sima Guang therefore shifts Jia Shan's emphasis. Dynastic survival now rests with a ruler's ability to employ those who will offer remonstrance and to heed their criticisms. As a corollary, Jia Shan is seen to place little stress on the minister's responsibility.

These intertextual comparisons take on a clearer significance when we locate them in the eleventh-century political environment of *ZZTJ*'s composition. With the fraught tensions of court factionalism, Sima Guang needed to make his voice heard

in order to gain political power. He also needed to be sure that Emperor Shenzong would hear his opinions with an open mind. It is no coincidence, then, that Jia Shan's dominant message in *ZZTJ* is one that urges the emperor to welcome remonstrance from all quarters, including from those who opposed his personal ideologies – from the likes of Sima Guang, in fact.

There is a clear act of doubling between (past) text and (present) experience. Jia Shan is seen to do with his statement to the throne what Sima Guang does with his reading of *ZZTJ*: he uses the past as a warning for the present. It was a common form of political rhetoric in imperial China, of course, but here it assumes a particular resonance. In *ZZTJ*, more acutely than in *Han shu*, Jia Shan's account of Qin Shihuang's self-delusion and failure to heed remonstrance serves as a warning to Han Emperor Wen. At the imperial seminar at the eleventh-century court, in a different textual setting and with a subtly different slant on its content, the same account serves as a warning to Song Emperor Shenzong. With historical hindsight, though, there are now further lessons to be learned. Shenzong is not only to avoid the precedent set by Qin; he is also to aspire to the model of Han Emperor Wen. Both the exemplary and the minatory make the same political point: that the ruler should remain open to remonstrance if he is to enhance the morality of his rule. And that too is Sima Guang's underlying argument when the discussion moves on first to universal principles and then to contemporary issues. Past and present 'mirror' one another. From his turns of phrase, from the sentiments that he expresses, and from the sheer textual weight that his statement is accorded, Jia Shan emerges in *ZZTJ* as Sima Guang's textual puppet. The voice attributed to him in that text is no longer his own. It has been reshaped to serve an eleventh-century political agenda. That process of manipulation in itself offers valuable insights into Sima Guang's political ideology,

so long as we remain sensitive to the task of separating the cacophony of voices that speak from the text.

Other voices, silent here, will also sound later in this study. In particular, Sima Guang will assume an explicit role as *ZZTJ*'s editor-historian. It will be necessary to distinguish between them as they come up for analysis, since each will find a different place in the text, and will apply a different ideological force in shaping our historical judgements. Even the small sample of voices that feed into Jia Shan's statement in *ZZTJ* has provided a sense of this study's analytical design, though. The point is that each type of voice within *ZZTJ*'s text demands a different reading strategy. Historical actors, like Jia Shan here, serve as our primary informants, although their voices are subject to all the influences of textual spin that we have already identified. Then there is the action of the text's plot, supplied second-hand by its external narrator. That provides the framework for Jia Shan's statement here. Elsewhere the external narrator offers explicit moral judgements, discrete from descriptive or narrative passages, and based on a system of values that originates outside the world of the text. And there are comments that Sima Guang makes in his role as historian and editor of *ZZTJ*, which speak on the themes of the text but are at the same time detached from it. The constant shifts of focaliser between these different voices shape our interpretation of *ZZTJ*'s ideology: as we have seen already, for example, a claim made by a character in the text will carry weaker authority than the objective-seeming statements of the text's external narrator. Each voice also has a distinct historical value. Only the last – Sima Guang's statements as historian-editor – deals entirely in the terms of an eleventh-century ideology. The others offer a dual interest: they further our understanding of what

happened in the past; they also afford insights into how Sima Guang represented what happened.

On an external level of reading, there is much to be gained from locating *ZZTJ* in its broadest possible intertextual setting. Sima Guang's use of Ban Gu's *Han shu* offers a particularly pure example. His voice stands in relation to those of other historians, especially (but not exclusively) those of his acknowledged sources. There are also comparisons to be made between Sima Guang's political commitments in *ZZTJ* and the concerns expressed in his other political writings, as well as the statements of his eleventh-century contemporaries.

There are two reasons to study these intertextual and ideological relationships. The first is, of course, to discover something of *ZZTJ*'s aetiology. That in turn leads to a second aim. Sima Guang's many theoretical statements on *ZZTJ*'s political function suggest that it was a response to specific political problems. Intertextual comparison locates it among the prevailing ideologies of eleventh-century political discourse. Such comparison therefore aims to develop an insight into the ideological context in which Sima Guang operated and to glimpse the textual and intellectual forces that exerted themselves upon him as he composed *ZZTJ*. With a sense of the direction and force of *ZZTJ*'s arguments, we can infer some of the questions that Sima Guang sought to address through the construction of his text.

Numerous voices speak at once and clamour for attention. It is our task to remain sensitive in our handling of them all if *ZZTJ* is to yield its rich ideological significance and offer insights into its eleventh-century function. That task will now take on a sharp focus with close examination of the text itself.

2

THE FALL OF WESTERN JIN

For Sima Yan 司馬炎, founder of Western Jin, the conquest of the eastern state of Wu in the third lunar month of 280 marked the unification of his empire. It was an ambition that he had held for over a decade. Later that year he issued an official statement: 'Before, from the end of Han on, the area within the four seas was divided. … Today the empire has become one.'[1] As an indication of Western Jin dominance he disbanded regional armies and established in their place a system of military administration based on the precedent of the Han state. Among these grandiose gestures and celebrations at court, though, cautionary voices already made themselves heard. The state's control was far from comprehensive. There remained a danger from those not allied to Western Jin and from the large numbers of non-Han Chinese ethnic groups that resided as its internal clients. A reduction in the numbers of regional troops would weaken the state.[2] These warnings would prove prescient. Within twenty years, the Western Jin ruling house felt its authority threatened. At the start of the fourth century, it faced a series of barbarian-led insurrections. Against the background of these simultaneous uprisings, political misjudgement and internecine conflict among imperial princes caused the main line of the dynasty to fall to its

[1] *ZZTJ* 81.2575. Sima Guang traces Emperor Wu's ambition to pacify Wu to early 269 (*ibid* 79.2509), three years after he had ascended the imperial throne on 8 February 266.
[2] *Ibid* 81.2575.

barbarian enemies in 317.[3] The territory that Sima Yan had unified would descend once more into political disunity for over two and a half centuries.

These events offered a warning to later generations. Throughout the eleventh century, the Song dynasty felt its sovereignty endangered by the Kitan and Tangut peoples whose states bordered its territory to the north. Parallels between Western Jin and Song suggested themselves: both were ruled by emperors of Han ethnicity; both had unified the territory under their control; both faced political threats from non-Han Chinese regimes in the north.

From this eleventh-century context, Sima Guang reviewed the rise and fall of the earlier state. In 1064, in his annalistic *Li nian tu*, he identified barbarian aggression and fratricidal conflict as the main causes of its downfall:

> The tragedy sprang from the inner chambers and developed in the imperial household. There was infighting among the imperial family. The Hu, Jie, Di, Qiang, and Xianbei barbarians contested to take advantage of its weakness. It divided the central plains and threw the common people into turmoil. For almost three hundred years mountains of human bones piled up and blood flowed into deep pools. How could this be anything but a tragedy?[4]

A paradox emerges that will shape what follows. For Sima Guang there is tension between internal and external politics: the survival of the dynasty rests as much upon its own integrity and stability as upon the strength of a barbarian threat. The resolution of this paradox drives Sima Guang's vision of the political dynamic between barbarians and Han Chinese, both at home and abroad – what this chapter will call his ethnic policy.

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[3] The term 'barbarian' appears here with its original, Hellenic significance. It refers to peoples whose languages and cultural identities differ from those of the defining civilization, in this case that of the Han Chinese. Two levels of discourse are at work here. The first roots itself in the terms that the Han Chinese used for outsiders; the second is the terms that barbarians used about themselves. This chapter works with the Han Chinese discourse – its focus is a historical text written by a man who was ethnically Han Chinese, for a Han Chinese audience – but the terms that emerge as a result are only relative. The mutability of this terminology has implications for our reading of *ZZTJ*: it is from the fluid, permeable boundaries between definitions of 'Han Chinese' and 'barbarian' that Sima Guang develops many of his thematic concerns.

[4] *Ji gu lu* 13.124a.

The interplay in *Li nian tu* between dynastic instability and ethnic tensions anticipates Sima Guang's later representation of Western Jin in *ZZTJ*. Ironies bristle through that text and shape its representation of the conflicts between Western Jin and its barbarian enemies. They direct our interpretation of the past. They emerge above all from the tensions between *ZZTJ*'s internal aspects – its plot, what appears entirely within its pages – and its external, editorial features – how Sima Guang manipulates his sources to achieve his desired slant on the events he describes. To identify these ironies, fundamental to the development of *ZZTJ*'s ideology, we will have to remain alert to the different voices already sampled in Chapter 1: those that speak as characters within the text, and those that emerge from intertextual comparison between *ZZTJ* and its rival representations of the past.

There is a discrepancy between Sima Guang's personal view of the fourth-century barbarians (the external, editorial view) and the perceptions that the Western Jin ruling classes are seen to hold in *ZZTJ* (the internal view). This produces situational irony: while Western Jin ministers are seen to make the decisions that ultimately precipitate their downfall, textual subtleties alert us at all times to the error of their political and moral misjudgements. There is also the irony of historical retrospect. We are aware through hindsight that the dynasty ended in violence, death, and destruction, and that its barbarian rebels were successful in wresting away power in the north of Western Jin territory. The tensions that emerge from these dual ironies in *ZZTJ* offer an indication of Sima Guang's view of barbarians and the threat that they posed to Han Chinese sovereignty. And there is even more at stake here than the immediate political survival of Western Jin and Song: the moral and social values

that Sima Guang seeks to defend from a barbarian threat ultimately hint at his sense of a Han Chinese identity.[5]

This chapter therefore undertakes three tasks: to examine the representation of Western Jin ethnic policies in *ZZTJ*; to identify Sima Guang's personal view of those policies through an analysis of textual ironies and ideological spin; to locate the political commitments that inform *ZZTJ* in the context of eleventh-century foreign relations, and to establish a relationship between Sima Guang's textual account of imperial activity in the past and his response to the exigencies of the present.

Western Jin ethnic policy

Sima Guang gives us two basic Western Jin responses to barbarians. Both are marked by xenophobia. The first is distrust. In *ZZTJ* Western Jin ministers are seen to equate ethnic difference with the potential for rebellion. In 279, despite a nominal policy to tolerate barbarian customs, a debate developed at the Western Jin court over the suitability for official employment of the Xiongnu chieftain Liu Yuan 劉淵. Liu Yuan would eventually establish an independent regime in Western Jin territory and was one of those responsible for the state's collapse. In 279, though, he still

[5] Useful work has been done on the way in which European societies have formed and defined themselves in opposition to a barbarian 'other': Colley, Linda 'Britishness and Otherness: An Argument,' *The Journal of British Studies* 31.4, 1992: 309-29; Sahlins, Peter, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989, esp. pp.267-76; Hall, Edith, *Inventing the Barbarian*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989; Cartledge, Paul, *The Greeks: A Portrait of Self and Others*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. The theme has been the subject of lively discussion in China for at least a thousand years, although new work on it is still appearing, now influenced by discussions of the European experience: see, for example, Naomi Standen's *Unbounded Loyalty: Frontier Crossing in Liao China*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007. Standen suggests that the issue of ethnicity came into sharp focus as a marker of political allegiances with the Treaty of Shanyuan between Song and Liao in 1005, and that the terms of its discourse crystallised from the eleventh century on. The echoes of that process reverberated in the nation-building and national consciousness of recent times (esp. pp.26–32).

served it well and there is no sense at this stage of his later role in its downfall. The court debate appears in *ZZTJ* like this:

> [The Western Jin ministers] Wang Hun 王渾 and his son Ji 濟 both thought highly of [Liu Yuan] and recommended him on several occasions to the emperor. The emperor summoned him for a talk and was delighted with him. Ji said: 'Yuan has strong talents in both civil and military spheres. Wu would hardly even require the effort of pacification if Your Highness were to give him responsibility for the business of the south-east.' Kong Xun 孔恂 and [Yang] Yao 楊珧 declared: 'If he is not of our people, his loyalties will necessarily lie elsewhere. True, few can match Yuan for talent, but we should not give him heavy responsibility.'[6]

What begins as a discussion of political merit assumes ethnic implications. Liu Yuan is ultimately rejected for official employment because he is not Han Chinese, and that carries connotations of disloyalty.[7] Such ethnic stereotyping of Liu Yuan persisted at least into the early seventh century. During the *zhen guan* period (627-49) Tang Grand Astrologer Fu Yi 傅奕 used similar rhetoric – 'the Qiang and Hu barbarians are of a different type 羌胡異類' – to draw an implicit connection between Liu Yuan's overthrow of Western Jin and his non-Han Chinese ethnicity.[8]

Careful reading is required to determine where Sima Guang stands in all this. Complex ironies are at work. Sima Guang frames the court debate in the context of

[6] *ZZTJ* 80.2554-5. Cf. *Jin shu* 晉書, Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 et al., Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1974, 101.2646 (in which Wang Ji is seen to qualify his praise for Liu Yuan); *Shi liu guo chun qiu* 十六國春秋, Cui Hong 崔鴻, *Ying yin Wen yuan ge Si ku quan shu* edn., 1.3b-4a, although not in the citation of *Shi liu guo chun qiu* on *Tai ping yu lan* 119.2b. It does not appear elsewhere. In detailing the ethnic prejudices of the Western Jin court, Sima Guang draws heavily from the seventh-century *Jin shu*. It is the only one of his extant sources that contains much of this material. It is also particularly alert to issues of ethnicity. Its authors worked under a dynasty that had an ethnically diverse ancestry. Their work also betrays opposition to an activist foreign policy that was motivated by contemporary commitments, Rogers, Michael, *The Chronicle of Fu Chien: A Case of Exemplar History*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968, esp. pp. 40-51, 69-73.

[7] Compare Western Jin minister Ji Lang's 吉朗 characterization of the subjects of Liu Yuan's regime as 'rebellious caitiffs' 賊虜, *ZZTJ* 89.2834. And in 314 Western Jin ministers are seen to claim of Sogdian leader Shi Le 石勒 that 'the barbarian is avaricious and untrustworthy: he will inevitably harbour deceitful schemes,' *ibid* 89.2812. In *Li nian tu*, though, Sima Guang himself describes Shi Le as duplicitous in his dealings with Wang Jun, *Ji gu lu* 13.123a. After the initial epithet of 'Jie barbarian,' Shi Le is soon given the label 'rebel commander' in that text. Shi Hu also appears there with 'greedy and crafty intentions' and his rise to power is linked with deceit and hedonism, *ibid* 13.129b. There is no such support for these characterizations in *ZZTJ*: the divergence with *Li nian tu* points up the slant that Sima Guang gave his later text.

[8] *Tong dian* 通典, Du You 杜佑, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1988, 200.5495. Fu Yi's anti-barbarian agenda was wide-ranging. He was a vocal opponent of Buddhist doctrine, for example, and in two memorials of 621 and 624 targeted its barbarian origins. These memorials are studied in Chapter 4.

an introduction to Liu Yuan, which emphasises his outstanding scholarly and military attainments. When young, he appears unusually talented and has 'a comprehensive and familiar understanding of the classics and histories.' By the time he has grown up, he is skilled at shooting from horseback, has exceptional strength, and is 'imposing and powerful in his bearing.'[9] We will revisit these traits in what follows. It is enough for now to note that Wang Ji's positive assessment of Liu Yuan – especially the description of his 'strong talents in both civil and military spheres' – corresponds closely to that of *ZZTJ*'s external narrator. Conversely, Kong Xun and Yang Yao's distrust of Liu Yuan goes against the grain of his characterization at this stage of the text. Sima Guang alerts us to the purely ethnic basis for these ministers' (and the Western Jin court's) rejection of Liu Yuan as a suitable candidate for official employment; even they acknowledge his exceptional talents.

There is a difficulty here. Kong Xun and Yang Yao invoke canonical authority for their argument through the phrase 'if he is not of our people, his loyalties will necessarily lie elsewhere 非我族類, 其心必異.' As so often in *ZZTJ*'s text it traces back to *Zuo zhuan*, where a similar alliance with a barbarian leader is under consideration. There too ethnic differences override political and military expediency in the court's deliberations. This phrase clinches the argument.[10] The canonical echo that rings through the Western Jin court's debate lends weight to the expressions of distrust since they appear consonant with the canonical foundations of Han Chinese ethnic assumptions.

The irony of hindsight also comes into play. The immediate textual setting suggests that ministers who offer a positive characterization of Liu Yuan are perceptive; the advice of those who distrust him on purely ethnic grounds is

[9] *ZZTJ* 80.2554.
[10] *Chun qiu Zuo zhuan zheng yi* 26.199b. The phrase reappears in a similar context on *ZZTJ* 84.2653, where Sima Guang follows *Jin shu* 120.3023-4; it does not appear in his other extant sources.

unfounded. Our reading of that opposition gradually breaks down in *ZZTJ*. As Liu Yuan's power grows in the text, Kong Xun and Yang Yao's suspicions seem increasingly prescient. They appear vindicated in 304 when Liu Yuan leads a rebellion against Western Jin.

How are we to interpret the episode, then? And how do we identify its underlying ideology? Sima Guang ultimately leaves the resolution of the debate over Liu Yuan's character open to the future. It duly plays itself out in his text and finally proves both sides in the argument right: Liu Yuan does have outstanding ability but, at the same time, he cannot be entirely trusted. What is most suggestive is therefore the common ground between these two characterizations: an image of Liu Yuan that points up his readiness to cross ethnic boundaries and warns against underestimating his abilities.

Complacency is the second reaction of the Western Jin ruling classes to a barbarian threat. In 279, even before the state has reached its full territorial extent, Xianbei commander Tufa Shujineng 禿髮樹機能 threatens its borders. A court minister requests a force to oppose the invading barbarians, but 'those who debated it in court all decided that sending out troops was a serious matter and that the caitiffs 虜 were not worth the trouble.' The Western Jin Emperor Hui refers to Tufa Shujineng with the same derogatory term, as 'this caitiff' 此虜. It appears in *ZZTJ* as an act of political and military misjudgement: Xianbei forces capture the region of Liangzhou in the northwest, leaving the emperor to regret his earlier condescension and complacency.[11]

[11] *ZZTJ* 80.2553-4. Cf. *Jin shu* 41.1190, 54.1554-5.

In 313 Western Jin faces the danger of Sogdian commander Shi Le's 石勒 expanding political and military power.[12] Six years later in *ZZTJ*'s chronology he establishes an independent state in Western Jin territory. Despite the obvious threat, which Sima Guang makes clear in his text, an aide of Western Jin minister Wang Jun 王浚 is seen to dismiss Shi Le's threat to Han Chinese sovereignty by emphasising Wang Jun's own authority, an authority that he claims over both Han Chinese and barbarians. 'Since antiquity there have been barbarians who have become close aides and renowned ministers,' Wang's aide says, 'but never one who has become emperor or sovereign.' [13] Another grave political mistake: established ethnic hierarchies are the source of solace in the face of a barbarian threat, but they fatally fail to take account of the changing political dynamic. Within three months Shi Le has captured Wang Jun, who nonetheless continues to abuse his captor as 'a barbarian slave' 胡奴 and associates him with rebelliousness.[14]

The Western Jin court's disparagement of barbarians and its complacency in the face of the threat that they pose to Han Chinese sovereignty appear as *leitmotifs* in *ZZTJ*'s text. The court fails to take pre-emptive action against its barbarian enemies. It also ignores wise advice that might offer peaceful solutions to their

[12] Shi Le's surname is one of nine that by Tang times were recognized as Sogdian. It originated from the place we now know as Tashkent: *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書, Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 and Song Qi 宋祁, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1975, 221B.6243, 6246; Pulleyblank, Edwin, 'A Sogdian Colony in Inner Mongolia,' *T'oung Pao* 41, 1952: 318-9, 320-3. The label 'hu' 胡, which is commonly applied to Shi Le in *ZZTJ*, might also indicate that he belonged to the Iranian peoples of Central Asia, and specifically the Sogdians, although during Western Jin it still functioned as a more general reference to barbarians from the north and west, Wu Zhen 吳震, 'Asitana – Halahezhuo gu mu qun kao gu zi liao zhong suo jian de hu ren' 阿斯塔那 – 哈拉和卓古墓群考古資料中所見的胡人, *Dunhuang Tulufan yan jiu* 敦煌吐魯番研究 4, 1999: 245-6.

[13] *ZZTJ* 88.2805.

[14] *Ibid* 89.2813. With Shi Le, this rhetoric of contempt translates itself into actual enslavement: he was an agricultural labourer (some sources suggest a slave) under the Western Jin regime. The claim is well-documented: *ibid* 86.2709; *Jin shu* 104.2708; *Wei shu* 魏書, Wei Shou 魏收, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1974, 95.2048; *Shi liu guo chun qiu* 11.2b-3a; *Shi Le bie zhuan* 石勒別傳, ap. *Tai ping yu lan* 338.2a, 822.10a; *Ye zhong ji* 鄴中記, Lu Hui 陸翽, ap. *Tai ping yu lan* 500.7b; *Shi liu guo jiang yu zhi* 十六國疆域志, Hong Liangji 洪亮吉, Changsha: Shang wu yin shu guan, 1938, 2.38. Sima Guang also describes him in *Li nian tu* as 'a starving Jie barbarian slave,' *Ji gu lu* 13.129a. A consideration of Shi Le's enslavement appears in Wang Hongxin 王洪信, 'Shi Le yu bei fang shi zu' 石勒與北方士族, *Xingtai shi fan gao zhuan xue bao* 邢台師範高專學報 2, 1996: 47-50. The veracity of Wang Jun's claims is of little importance here, though. It is his contempt of Shi Le as a barbarian that is striking in Sima Guang's text.

political threat. In his account of the final three decades of the third century Sima Guang includes a series of remonstrations from Western Jin ministers to the throne. They all warn of possible barbarian insurrection. They appear in *ZZTJ* as exemplars of ethnic policy, yet the Western Jin court refuses to act on any of them. Sima Guang's representation of these remonstrations bears close analysis. It offers an insight into the function of irony in *ZZTJ*. It also brings into sharp focus the thematic concerns of his account of the period and hints at his contemporary ideological commitments.

In 271 Western Jin senior commander Chen Qian 陳騫 expresses his concern over the vulnerability of Western Jin's northern borders. He identifies two regional administrators as the source of the weakness. He characterises them as obstinate and lacking the strategic oversight necessary to negotiate local ethnic tensions. He also warns that 'they will bring shame upon the state 將爲國恥.'[15] This is the first remonstration in *ZZTJ* that addresses the barbarian threat of this period, and it is typical in its rhetoric and themes of what follows. Chen Qian identifies a lack of strategic preparation in the north: the Western Jin mentality that 'the caitiffs were not worth the trouble' makes itself felt again here.[16] The reaction to Chen Qian's advice is commonplace in Sima Guang's account too. The emperor suspects factional discord between Chen and one of the regional administrators whom he criticises. He ignores the advice. *ZZTJ*'s external narrator describes how, in response, '[Chen] Qian sighed to himself, believing that there would be a certain defeat 以爲必敗. As he had predicted, the two administrators failed to secure peace with the Qiang

[15] *ZZTJ* 79.2515-6.
[16] Western Jin strategic shortcomings also draw notice outside *ZZTJ*. In his 'Ode on the Territory within the Passes' 關中詩, for example, the late third-century official PanYue 潘岳 (*zi*: Anren 安仁) claims that at the time of the barbarian insurrections 'the commanders had no strategies of their own and the troops were untrained,' *Wen xuan* 文選, Xiao Tong 蕭統, ed., Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, repr.2005, 20.8b.

barbarians 失羌戎之和. Their troops were defeated and they themselves perished. Military campaigns dragged out over successive years before it was finally possible to settle things.'[17] A minister identifies failings in contemporary ethnic policy; he is ignored; his warnings are bourne out by the eruption of ethnic tensions and conflict (events unfold 'as he had predicted'); the state finds itself under threat as a result: the same pattern of cause and effect recurs in *ZZTJ*. The prescience of ministers such as Chen Qian identifies them as the individuals who offer us models of political conduct and who should guide our interpretation of the events around them. They assume by proxy the voice of the silent historian – there is no need for Sima Guang to offer explicit comment here – and they acquire moral authority as a result. Their predictions introduce a situational irony into the text: they appear as certainties and belie the fact that these Cassandras speak before events that they foretell; the more other characters' actions diverge from the predictions, the more we are made alert to their imminent downfall. That is what happens here. As with his later failure in 279 to suppress Tufa Shujineng, the emperor is once more left to regret his own complacency and failure to heed remonstration.

Textual repetition links Chen Qian's advice to the next substantial remonstration. In 278 the Western Jin commander Ma Long 馬隆 tells the emperor that 'the regional inspector of Liangzhou, Yang Xin 楊欣, has failed to secure peace with the Qiang barbarians. He will inevitably suffer defeat 失羌戎之和, 必敗.'[18] Textual repetition mirrors thematic parallels. The emperor fails to act on Ma Long's advice and Yang Xin suffers defeat and dies in battle. Here is evidence of Sima Guang's editorial intervention in *ZZTJ*. The textual echo of Chen Qian's warning

[17] *ZZTJ* 79.7516.
[18] *Ibid* 80.2549.

does not appear in his sources: neither *Jin shu* 晉書 nor *Ce fu yuan gui* 冊府元龜 offers Ma Long's remonstration in direct speech.[19] Sima Guang introduces its contents into his account to provide a specific slant on the episode. The parallels with Chen Qian's advice create a sense of dramatic irony by preparing us for Yang Xin's defeat. They also suggest that the Western Jin court's failure to heed perceptive advice was symptomatic of its failure in dealing with barbarians. And by putting Ma Long's advice into direct speech, Sima Guang lends a sense of immediacy to the whole incident and gives it greater prominence in his text.

Textual repetition also points up the far-reaching practical consequences of the Western Jin court's lack of political percipience. In 297 military defeat again appears as a product of Western Jin arrogance when the court sends out a small force of five thousand against the ethnically Di commander Qi Wannian's 齊萬年 army of seventy thousand. This, despite protests from the commander in charge, Zhou Chu 周處, that 'the army has no backup and will inevitably be defeated 必敗; not only will we lose our lives, but we will also bring shame upon the state 爲國取恥.'[20] The textual echoes suggest that the repeated failure of the Western Jin government to follow wise advice from ministers such as Chen Qian and Zhou Chu is causally linked to their military defeat against rebelling barbarian leaders.[21]

The most extensive remonstration is by the Crown Prince's Frontrider, Jiang Tong 江統. In 299 he wrote 'Essay on Re-locating the Barbarians' 徙戎論 as a

[19] *Jin shu* 57.1554; *Ce fu yuan gui* 378.5a, 796.23a.
[20] *ZZTJ* 82.2617.
[21] Other significant remonstrations warning of a foreign threat are: Attendant Censor Guo Qin's 郭欽 remonstration of 280 (*ibid* 81.2575-6. cf. *Jin shu* 97.2549; *Tong dian*, 195.5354-5); Secretariat Director Chen Zhun's 陳準 advice of 296 (note the textual echo of the phrase '其敗必也': *ZZTJ* 82.2616; *Jin shu* 58.1570-1); Regional Inspector of Yizhou Geng Teng's 耿滕 warning in 300 of the threat of rebelling Ba migrants in Shu (*ZZTJ* 83.2647; *Huayang guo zhi jiao bu tu zhu* 華陽國志校補圖注, Chang Qu 常璩, Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1987, 8.445; *Jin shu* 120.3023).

warning to the Western Jin court.[22] As *ZZTJ*'s external narrator puts it, he 'believed that, since the northern and eastern barbarians were creating turmoil in Han Chinese territory, it would be best to cut off the source [of the problem] early.'[23] The 'turmoil' to which Sima Guang refers here is Qi Wannian's rebellion and the rise of the Li clan in present-day Sichuan. A prediction of the establishment of Liu Yuan's state in Bingzhou also appears in Jiang Tong's essay. Descriptions of these barbarian threats occupy Sima Guang's account of the previous year. In *ZZTJ*'s chronological structure, they are the direct stimuli for Jiang Tong's essay.

Sima Guang's source is *Jin shu*.[24] He has manipulated its account. There is no significant variation in wording. Instead, it is the omissions that stand out: *ZZTJ*'s version of 'Essay on Re-locating the Barbarians' is approximately half the length of what we find in *Jin shu*. The omissions fall into two types. There are dangers in interpreting both, and we must negotiate them with care if we are to identify *ZZTJ*'s underlying ideology. The first, which comprises the majority, is of historical detail. Sima Guang excises from his account most of the numerous references to pre-Han ethnic policy that appear in the *Jin shu* version of Jiang Tong's essay. It is possible to read ideological significance into these omissions: a shift from historical particulars to universal values, for example. As we have seen already with our sample of Jia Shan's statement in Chapter 1, though, they can equally be attributed to textual economy. The dense complex of historical examples that Jiang Tong

[22] *ZZTJ* 83.2623-8.
[23] *Ibid* 83.2623.
[24] *Jin shu* 56.1529-34. Two broad versions of 'Essay on Re-locating the Barbarians' appear in extant sources. One follows *Jin shu*: 1) *Zhong jia Jin shi* 眾家晉史, Huang Shi 黃奭, ed., *Xu xiu Si ku quan shu* edn., 71b-77b follows *Jin shu* with some textual variation; 2) *Ce fu yuan gui* 990.1b-7a; 3) *Tong zhi* 通志, Zheng Qiao 鄭樵, *Wan you wen ku* edn., 124B.1929a-30b; 4) *Tong dian* 189.5142-8 follows *Jin shu* with some omissions (although different from *ZZTJ*); 5) *Wen xuan bu yi* 文選補遺, Chen Renzi 陳仁子, Changsha: Xiao lang huan shan guan, 1845, 22.19a-23b; 6) *Li dai ming chen zou yi* 歷代名臣奏議, Huang Zhun 黃准 and Yang Shiqi 楊士奇, eds., Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1989, 340.18a-21b. The other version follows the omissions that Sima Guang makes to *Jin shu*'s text: 1) *Yu hai* 25.19a-b contains part of *ZZTJ*'s text; 2) *Da xue yan yi bu* 大學衍義補, Qiu Jun 丘濬, Beijing: Jing hua chu ban she, 1999, 144.1250-1, follows the *Yu hai* text; 3) *Zhong yong yan yi* 中庸衍義, Xia Liangsheng 夏良勝, *Si ku quan shu zhen ben qi ji* edn., 12.38a-39a; 4) *Bai bian* 稗編, Tang Shunzhi 唐順之, Taibei: Xin xing shu ju, 1972, 97.8a-11b.

supplies in his essay has already appeared in *ZZTJ*'s text. To include them again here would be repetitious.

The second type of omission is the *sententiae* that Jiang Tong weaves through his historical references. Again, it is tempting to identify ideological motives behind Sima Guang's editorial decisions. Caution is required in drawing such conclusions: the omissions could also be the product of variations in genre as well as, once again, the demands of textual economy. Jiang Tong presents an essay, a form in which strong ideological statements based on canonical reference were rhetorical convention. Such *sententiae* are superfluous to *ZZTJ*, where there is a close focus on the practical business of government. Early in the essay, therefore, Sima Guang omits a statement of broad principle founded in the *Spring and Autumn Annals* tradition but includes immediately afterwards an equally canonical reference that examines the practical implementation of ethnic policies and their effects under Yu the Great.[25] There are two lessons to be learned here. First, the omission confirms Sima Guang's practical political focus in his construction of *ZZTJ*'s text. This is a work expressly aimed to 'assist orderly rule'; vague moral comments have no place if they do not have a direct bearing on the business of imperial governance. Second, even when we have identified the textual manipulation discussed in Chapter 1, we must still guard against imputing too great a significance to it when the text will not sustain simple ideological interpretations.

Where does that leave us with Jiang Tong's essay? Through the concision of the text that Sima Guang retains from his source, he focuses on two themes. The first is the potential threat that barbarians pose to imperial integrity. There are rhetorical echoes from Kong Xun and Yang Yao's earlier suspicion: Jiang Tong draws on the

[25] Compare *ZZTJ* 83.2623 with *Jin shu* 56.1529-30.

same canonical phrase, 'if they are not of our people, their loyalties will necessarily lie elsewhere 非我族類, 其心必異.'[26] If barbarians are allowed into Han Chinese territory, he suggests, they will grow strong and rebel. In *ZZTJ*'s version of his essay Jiang Tong traces this cyclical process of barbarian rise and fall back to Han's *jian wu* period (25-56 AD) and beyond. He ends by speculating that Cao Cao's 曹操 re-location of Di barbarians to the Han Chinese region of Qinzhou as a defensive measure against the rival state of Shu 'was probably a plan of exigency, but was not of long-lasting benefit.'[27] For Jiang Tong, this earlier lack of long-term planning and failure to recognize the potential for a barbarian threat are sources of Western Jin's present ethnic troubles. And in *ZZTJ*, we are shown that a similar complacency towards barbarians continues to exist at the time Jiang Tong wrote his essay. Better to maintain strict geographical and ethnic divides, Jiang Tong suggests, by evicting all barbarians from Han Chinese territory.

Second, Sima Guang retains in Jiang Tong's essay successful examples of past rulers' treatment of barbarians. They deal with barbarians as a serious threat to Han Chinese sovereignty, take pre-emptive action against them, and enforce internal civil and military control:

> As a result, when rulers with the Way governed the barbarians, all they did was deal with them fully prepared and guard against them constantly. Although [the barbarians] kowtowed and presented gifts in greeting, yet the castles along the border did not let down their steady guard. While the powerful and the ruthless acted as bandits, the military were not sent on distant campaigns. They simply waited until the lands within their borders were at peace and the frontiers were not invaded.[28]

This is the practical model for the Western Jin emperors (and for *ZZTJ*'s readers). They should emulate the actions of their successful imperial predecessors – 'rulers

[26] *ZZTJ* 83.2625.
[27] *Ibid*.
[28] *Ibid* 83.2624.

with the Way' – in avoiding a belligerent relationship with their barbarian neighbours, in limiting their potential threat by keeping them at a distance, and in focusing on the development of political strength and stability among their own subjects. Above all, they should address these issues early and in pre-emptive fashion: later in his essay, Jiang Tong declares that 'when sages and worthies planned matters, they acted before something developed and they brought order before there was turmoil.'[29] Remember too that Sima Guang introduces Jiang Tong's essay as a product of the belief that 'it would be best to cut off the source [of the problem] early.'[30] Circumspection lies at the heart of its message in *ZZTJ*.

These policies attracted support from later generations who sought to avoid the barbarian threat caused by Western Jin negligence. In a court debate of 630 Tang scholar-official Wei Zheng 魏徵 cited Jiang Tong (as well as his Western Jin contemporary, Guo Qin 郭欽) and echoed his analysis of the western and northern barbarians of antiquity that 'when they were feeble, then they were cowardly and submissive. When they were strong, they invaded and rebelled.'[31] Drawing from *Han shu* a more derogatory rhetoric than later appeared in *ZZTJ*'s version of Jiang Tong's essay, Wei Zheng suggested that 'barbarians possess human faces but animal hearts 人面獸心. When they are weak, then they beg to submit. When they are strong, then they rebel and cause turmoil.' As a result, he urged that members of recently defeated Turkic tribes be deported to their native territory and not be allowed to remain under Tang administration.[32] Like Jiang Tong, though, his advice went unheeded. In 696 the Left Rectifier of Omissions Xue Deng 薛登 also cited

[29] *Ibid* 83.2626.
[30] *Ibid* 83.2623.
[31] *Ibid*.
[32] *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書, Liu Xu 劉昫, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1975, 194A.5162; *ZZTJ* 193.6076. The *locus classicus* for '人面獸心' is *Han shu* 94B.3834. Compare Fu Yi's contemporary arguments against the residence of barbarians among Han Chinese on *Tong dian* 200.5495. Sima Guang would use the same phrase in the eleventh century, *SMWJ* 20.8b.

Jiang Tong in support of a remonstration to Empress Wu to return Turkic and other barbarian tribes to their places of origin. He drew a causal link between Liu Yuan's usurpation of Western Jin and his residence among Han Chinese and familiarity with their customs: in other words, his ability to transgress ethnic divides, an ability that would also make itself felt in *ZZTJ*. Xue Deng suggested that the Western Jin court's failure to heed these ministers' perceptive advice was the cause of its downfall although, ironically, his own advice would also go unheeded.[33] Similar arguments were voiced by his contemporaries, Liu Kuang 劉貺 and Du You 杜佑.[34] And they also received notice in the eleventh century, from Sima Guang's co-compiler of *ZZTJ*, Fan Zuyu, although without specific reference to Western Jin's barbarian usurpers.[35]

Sima Guang's use of Jiang Tong's essay stands firmly within this discourse. In *ZZTJ* Jiang Tong's views correspond closely to Sima Guang's personal ideology revealed through his editorial interventions elsewhere in the text. The values that inform 'Essay on Re-locating the Barbarians' – alertness to the realities of ethnic relations, diplomatic circumspection, and the importance of internal order and integrity over external conflict – also ring throughout Sima Guang's political memorials on ethnic policy in the eleventh century. That textual and ideological resonance will concern us later on: intertextual comparison will show Jiang Tong as Sima Guang's textual puppet in *ZZTJ*. For readers familiar with events of the twentieth century his essay carries sinister connotations of ethnic cleansing. In *ZZTJ*, though, its words appear in positive terms. They serve as a moral and political

[33] *Tong dian* 200.5495-7; *Ce fu yuan gui* 532.9a-11a and 544.1a-4a; *Xin Tang shu* 112.4170-1. The fullest version of the memorial appears in the early nineteenth-century *Quan Tang wen*, although the lack of any earlier testimony to this version raises critical problems: *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文, Dong Gao 董誥 et al., eds., Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1983, 281.15b-18a.
[34] *Tong dian* 200.5498-5502, 5503.
[35] *Tang jian* 唐鑑, Fan Zuyu 范祖禹, Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1984, 2.4b-5a, 3.13a.

yardstick and guide our interpretation of the text. When the Western Jin court is 'unable to use' Jiang Tong's warning to take precautions against a barbarian threat, a situational irony makes itself felt since it is already clear that his essay's advice is perceptive. We prepare for the dynasty's imminent downfall.

Ironic subversion

There is an ironic tension between the representation of the Western Jin court's attitude towards its barbarian usurpers – an attitude that bases itself on ethnic difference and superiority, moral contempt, cultural rejection, and political and military complacency – and the characterizations of those same barbarians that *ZZTJ*'s external narrator supplies. The barbarian leaders appear as credible alternatives and real threats to an integral Han Chinese regime because they are able to cross ethnic divides – those divides that Jiang Tong identifies as fundamental to its survival – and are little different from their Han Chinese counterparts. This is where irony comes alive in *ZZTJ* and has a significant impact on our interpretation of its governing agenda: not so much as a comment on the barbarians, but rather on the Western Jin ruling classes and their short-sighted ethnic policy.

In the tenth lunar month of 304 the Xiongnu chieftain Liu Yuan – the same individual that the Western Jin court had rejected for official promotion two and a half decades earlier – officially established an independent state and broke away from Western Jin rule.[36] This is how Sima Guang represents his attempt to confer legitimacy upon his actions:

[36] I follow Sima Guang's chronology on *ZZTJ* 85.2702. There is a discrepancy between Sima Guang's extant sources over the dating of Liu Yuan's declaration of an independent state. Fang Xuanling offers the *xin chou* day

> 'In the past, Han possessed the empire for a long time and bonded with the people through its grace. I am descended from Han through the female line and am bound to it in a relationship of elder and younger brother. Is it not permissible for the younger brother to carry on when the elder brother has passed away?' He then established his state under the title of Han. Liu Xuan and others requested that he take the imperial title, to which Yuan replied: 'Everywhere remains unsettled at present and so, for the time being, I shall follow Gaozu [Liu Bang] in proclaiming myself King of Han.' Upon this, he ascended the throne as King of Han. He proclaimed a general amnesty and changed the year title to *yuan xi*. He posthumously honoured the Duke of Anle, Chan, as Emperor Xiaohuai. He instituted the ancestral tablets of the three founders and five ancestors of Han, and sacrificed to them.[37]

A barbarian leader assimilates himself into Han Chinese social and political traditions: it is a common feature of *ZZTJ*'s representation of this period, and one that makes itself felt particularly strongly here. It functions on two levels of Sima Guang's text. We must remain alert to both if we are to identify the full ideological implications of this passage. On the internal level of *ZZTJ*'s plot, Liu Yuan identifies himself in a relation of kinship with the Han dynasty in an attempt to justify his local usurpation of Western Jin rule. He claims matrilineal descent from that dynasty. He also imitates its founding emperor, Emperor Gaozu, upon whose surname, Liu, his family have modelled their own. In making these associations he looks back to the last unified Han Chinese polity. This appears in *ZZTJ* as a conscious attempt to give himself political legitimacy by emphasising kinship and, by implication, ethnic similarity.[38] At the same time Liu Yuan appears to ignore alternative justifications

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of the eleventh lunar month (20 December 304), *Jin shu* 4.104. *Shi liu guo chun qiu* (1.8b-9a), Xiao Fang's 蕭方 *San shi guo chun qiu* 三十國春秋 (reference to this event exists only in *ZZTJ*'s commentary), and *Jin chun qiu* 晉春秋 (no full record of the event survives in *ZZTJ*'s commentary, only the date of its occurrence) assign this event to the tenth lunar month. Sima Guang claims to have followed these final three sources in his account. Gan Bao's *Jin ji* also refers to Liu Yuan's self-proclamation as King of Han but does not offer a precise date, *Jin ji* 晉紀, Gan Bao 干寶, ap. *Wen xuan* 49.8b.

[37] *ZZTJ* 85.2702. Sima Guang traces the Lius' claims of kinship with the Han dynasty to before 251 on *ibid* 75.2391. Liu Yuan's self-proclamation as King of Han appears, with textual variation, on *Jin shu* 101.2649-50, as well as the other sources already cited in n.36.

[38] David Honey explores the alternative, barbarian genealogies ascribed to Liu Yuan in 'Lineage as Legitimation in the Rise of Liu Yuan and Shih Le' in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 110.4, 1990: 616-621, esp. 617-8. The contemporaneous rebellion by another barbarian, Zhang Chang 張昌, parallels Liu Yuan's self-identification with the Han dynasty. He installs as emperor a local clerk, Qiu Shen 丘沈, having first changed Qiu's surname to Liu and claimed for him descent from Han. Qiu's investiture also follows Han precedents, *ZZTJ* 85.2680. Cf. *Jin shu* 100.2613; *Sou shen ji* 搜神記, Gan Bao 干寶, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, repr.1980, 7.101.

for power that base themselves on a barbarian, Xiongnu identity. The statements in support of Liu Yuan's claim to power by his great-uncle, Liu Xuan 劉宣, that appear elsewhere in *ZZTJ* suggest that Sima Guang recognized the presence of a strong Xiongnu ethnic consciousness at this time.[39] He also represents Liu Yuan as Xiongnu in *Li nian tu*.[40] For *ZZTJ*, though, he selects the genealogy that Liu Yuan chose to highlight his connections with the Han dynasty. Liu Yuan is seen to represent himself as ethnically Han Chinese. This intersects with the editorially determined themes of *ZZTJ*'s text, themes that are governed by values external to its plot. By detailing Liu Yuan's establishment of a genealogy that traces back to a Han Chinese dynasty, Sima Guang serves his own editorial purposes. He blurs ethnic divides and suggests that convergence made itself felt more strongly than divergence during Western Jin. It ironically subverts the statements of ethnic difference and, as a corollary, the assumption of the inviolability of Han Chinese integrity that are seen to receive the support of members of the Western Jin court.

Convergence in ethnic identity recurs in Sima Guang's representation of barbarian leaders during Western Jin. He follows his source materials in supplying their basic personal details but he is notably less insistent on their barbarian identity or 'otherness.'[41] One of the most immediate, vivid markers of ethnic difference in Sima Guang's sources is the description of the barbarian leaders' physical

[39] *ZZTJ* 85.2699.
[40] *Ji gu lu* 13.126a.
[41] The treatment of Liu Yuan is a good example. Sima Guang formally identifies his ethnic background on *ZZTJ* 80.2544. His ancestry can be traced still earlier in *ZZTJ* to at least 188. This earlier information is scattered in the text, though, and has no immediate association for the reader with Liu Yuan. The details that Sima Guang supplies on 80.2544 – those immediately associated with Liu Yuan in *ZZTJ*'s structure – follow in broad outline Fang Xuanling's *Jin shu* and Cui Hong's *Shi liu guo chun qiu*, but comparison between the sources brings to light omissions in the details of Liu Yuan's ancestry. *Jin shu*'s account, for example, is over ten times the length of that in *ZZTJ*, cf. *Jin shu* 101.2645-6; *Shi liu guo chun qiu* 1.1a-2a. The omissions have thematic implications in muting Liu Yuan's non-Han Chinese ethnicity. Such textual manipulation can also be found in Sima Guang's account of the Sogdian commander Shi Le, who founded the state of Later Zhao in 319. Compare *ZZTJ* 86.2709 with *Jin shu* 104.2707-8, *Wei shu* 95.2048, and *Shi liu guo chun qiu* 11.1a. For Liu Yao, who took the Former Zhao throne in 319, Sima Guang also omits references to his Jie ethnicity that appear in his sources: compare, for example, *ZZTJ* 87.2763 with the reference to the 'Jie rebel' 羯賊 in Wang Yin's 王隱 *Jin shu* 晉書, cited in the commentary to 'Quan jin biao' 勸進表, Liu Kun 劉琨, ap. *Wen xuan* 37.24b.

appearance. In *Jin shu* and *Shi liu guo chun qiu* 十六國春秋, Liu Yuan appears as 'eight *chi* four *cun* tall. He had a beard over three *chi* in length, in the centre of which there were three fine red hairs, each three *chi* six *cun*.'[42] In *ZZTJ* Sima Guang omits these striking details and follows only *Jin shu*'s description of Liu Yuan as 'imposing and powerful in his bearing 姿貌魁偉.'[43] Sima Guang also omits Emperor Wu's delight in Liu Yuan's striking appearance that appears in *Shi liu guo chun qiu*. In *Jin shu* Liu Yuan's foster son, Liu Yao 劉曜, is 'nine *chi* three *cun* in height, with hands hanging below his knees. When he was born, he had white eyebrows and his eyes emitted a red light. His beard comprised no more than a hundred-plus hairs, yet each was five *chi* in length.'[44] *Shi liu guo chun qiu* and *Ce fu yuan gui* contain only minor textual variations from *Jin shu*.[45] In *ZZTJ*, by contrast, Sima Guang only includes a description of Liu Yao's unusual eyes and then echoes the phrase that he uses of Liu Yuan: Liu Yao appears 'imposing and powerful in his demeanour 儀觀魁偉.'[46] Similarly, Sima Guang omits descriptions that appear in his sources of the unusual physical appearance of 'that barbarian' Shi Le, of Liu Cong's 劉聰 remarkable physical appearance, of Murong Wei's 慕容廆 height, and of Li Te's 李特 height.[47]

[42] *Jin shu* 101.2646; *Shi liu guo chun qiu* 1.3a; *Ce fu yuan gui* 220.1b. *Shi liu guo chun qiu*'s reference also appears on *Tai ping yu lan* 374.4a in a section dedicated to beards, in which He Fasheng 何法盛's *Jin zhong xing shu* 晉中興書 associates Jie barbarians of this time with the physical traits of 'high noses and full beards.' The compilers of *Ce fu yuan gui* also used this description of Liu Yuan in a section on appearance 形貌.

[43] *ZZTJ* 80.2554. There is a slight textual variation with *Jin shu*'s '姿儀魁偉,' but it has little impact on the argument presented here.

[44] *Jin shu* 103.2683.

[45] *Shi liu guo chun qiu* 5.1a-b; *Ce fu yuan gui* 220.2a.

[46] *ZZTJ* 85.2703.

[47] A physiognomy expert assesses Shi Le's appearance on *Shi Le bie zhuan* 石勒別傳, Wang Du 王度, ap. *Tai ping yu lan* 991.1b-2a. It is one of several portentous connections that appear in Sima Guang's sources between the physiognomy of the barbarian leaders and their potential to rule. Shi Le is again the subject of such a prediction on *Jin shu* 104.2707. Li Xiong's appearance marks him out as 'undoubtedly surpassing the Three Dukes in noble status' on *Shi liu guo chun qiu* 77.4b; *Shu Li shu* 蜀李書, Chang Qu 常璩, ap. *Tai ping yu lan* 363.3a. Western Jin minister Zhang Hua predicts Murong Wei's potential for leadership on the basis of his appearance on *Shi liu guo chun qiu*, ap. *Tai ping yu lan* 121.1b, 444.5b; *Jin shu* 108.2803-4; *Yan shu* 燕書, Fan Heng 范亨, ap. *Tai ping yu lan* 478.4a, 688.4a. The omission of these predictions from *ZZTJ* fits with Sima Guang's tendency to exclude the supernatural and superstitious from his account, but it also contributes to his general muting of ethnic differences between the barbarian leaders and their Han Chinese counterparts. For descriptions of Liu Cong's appearance in Sima Guang's sources, see *Jin shu* 102.2657; *Shi liu guo chun qiu* 2.1a.

The result in *ZZTJ* is a series of vague generic descriptions of barbarian leaders that avoids any ethnically suggestive physical descriptions.

This is not to suggest that Sima Guang ignores ethnic differences entirely. They appear as a pressing issue for the Western Jin ruling classes, as a means of reinforcing their superior political status. Sima Guang's account also shows evidence of ethnic self-consciousness among the invading barbarians themselves. In 304 Liu Yuan's uncle, Liu Xuan, rallies support for his nephew through an expression of Xiongnu solidarity.[48] And having declared the state of Later Zhao in 319 Shi Le appears sensitive to his ethnic background by enforcing a strict taboo on the word 'barbarian 胡.'[49] *ZZTJ*'s account of this taboo appears to alert us to Shi Le's barbarian ancestry: that is what drew Hu Sanxing's 胡三省 attention in the thirteenth century, with the response that 'Le was originally a barbarian and imposed this taboo as a result.' It has a more complex function, though, one that again works on the levels of both plot and editorial comment in *ZZTJ*. In its plot, Sima Guang brings to our notice Shi Le's insecurities as a barbarian. Through the taboo, Shi Le attempts to legislate against ethnic differences; he does not want to project himself too obviously as a barbarian. Liu Yuan superimposes a Han Chinese ancestry onto his actual Xiongnu identity, but Shi Le tries a different tactic: to suppress all reference to his ethnic identity. On the level of editorial comment, both serve Sima Guang's purpose in pointing up barbarian successes in assimilating with a Han Chinese ethnic identity – or, with Shi Le at least, in suppressing any significant ethnic differences – which he establishes throughout his account of this period.

For Murong Wei, see *Shi liu guo chun qiu*, ap. *Tai ping yu lan* 121.1b, 444.5b; *Jin shu* 108.2803. For Li Te, see *Jin shu* 120.3021 and *Shi liu guo chun qiu* 76.3b.

[48] A fuller examination of this episode appears below.

[49] *ZZTJ* 91.2884; *Jin shu* 105.2737; *Shi Le bie zhuan*, ap. *Tai ping yu lan* 469.5b-6a. On the specific ethnic connotations of the term 'hu' 胡, see above, n.12.

Sima Guang's blurring of the divides between different ethnic identities reveals itself strongly in his insistence on the barbarian leaders' cultural sophistication. There is a marked, ironic contrast with Western Jin ministers' perceptions of their secure cultural dominance over their uncouth barbarian usurpers. Liu Yuan appears in *ZZTJ* to be aware of Han Chinese imperial ritual traditions and imitates them in the foundation of his own state, but the barbarian leaders' cultural aspirations do not stop at simple imitation. They appear as credible rivals to their Western Jin counterparts in their grasp of Han Chinese elite culture. The Lius are good examples. To emphasise their scholarly talents Sima Guang uses textual repetition in his account. It guides our reading of the Lius' characterization. Liu Yuan has already appeared in this study with 'a comprehensive and familiar understanding of the classics and histories 博習經史.' He berates earlier Han Chinese scholars over their inadequacies and, on a visit to Luoyang, is seen to earn the respect of the Western Jin emperor and high officials of the court.[50] Liu Yuan's son and successor, Liu Cong, is described in similar terms as having 'a comprehensive and penetrating understanding of the classics and histories, and was skilled at literary composition 博涉經史, 善屬文.' Like his father, Sima Guang shows Liu Cong on a trip to the metropolitan area while still young, where all of the famous scholars of the day talk with him.[51] Liu Yao is also seen as 'fond of reading,

[50] *ZZTJ* 80.2554. The phrase '博習經史' does not appear in Sima Guang's extant sources to describe Liu Yuan. In other details, Sima Guang follows *Jin shu* 101.2645-6 and *Shi liu guo chun qiu* 1.2b-3a.

[51] *ZZTJ* 85.2698. The phrase '博涉經史' does not appear in Sima Guang's extant sources on Liu Cong. *Jin shu* 102.2657 and *Shi liu guo chun qiu* 2.1b use the phrases '究通經史' and '究通經書' respectively (although there is a textual discrepancy here with the citation of the *Shi liu guo chun qiu* that appears on *Tai ping yu lan* 119.3b, which uses '究通經史'). The sense is the same but Sima Guang's variant phrasing reinforces similarities between the Lius in their scholarly attainments. Note this textual echo again on *ZZTJ* 84.2663 – '博通經史' – in reference to Liu Yin who, like Liu Yuan, came from Xinxing, and later had close personal and political connections to Liu Cong. *Shi liu guo chun qiu* omits Liu Cong's skill at composition and his trip to the capital, which Sima Guang draws from *Jin shu* with textual variations.

and skilled at literary composition 好讀書, 善屬文.'[52] When his sources point explicitly to a lack of barbarian cultural sophistication – Shi Le's illiteracy – Sima Guang expunges such references from *ZZTJ*'s account.[53] All this contrasts starkly with the explicit, blunt statements by *ZZTJ*'s external narrator that the Western Jin Imperial Crown Prince was 'not fond of study' and, later in the text, that imperial prince Sima Ying 司馬穎 was ignorant and illiterate.[54] The effect of this editorial manipulation is to highlight the barbarian leaders' skill in matters of Han Chinese education and to point up cultural similarities between these individuals and the Han Chinese elite of Western Jin.

Sima Guang provides firm evidence of barbarian leaders' cultural similarities to the Han Chinese by showing their concern with basing their educational, social, and political institutions on Han Chinese models. When he establishes the state of Cheng in the sixth lunar month of 306 Li Xiong 李雄 follows the advice of Yan Shi 閻式, the Director of his Imperial Secretariat, to take 'due consideration of the precedents of the Han and Jin dynasties' in creating an official bureaucracy.[55] Hu Sanxing also comments on Sima Guang's representation of the Liu-Han regime that 'in all cases Liu Yuan employed the Han system of officialdom,' part of his project of legitimation through self-identification with a Han Chinese dynasty.[56] Similarly, Sima Guang details barbarian leaders' establishment of centres of education based

[52] *ZZTJ* 85.2703. Again, there are variations with Sima Guang's extant sources, *Jin shu* 103.2683 and *Shi liu guo chun qiu* 5.1b. Most notably, Sima Guang omits Liu Yao's 'particular love of military books' that appears in *Jin shu*, an editorial decision that detracts from Liu Yao's military skill but places his cultural abilities in the foreground of *ZZTJ*'s account.
[53] Cf. Deng Can 鄧粲, *Jin ji* 晉紀, ap. *Shi shuo xin yu jian shu* 世說新語箋疏, Yu Jiaxi 余嘉錫, ed., Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1983, 7.392; *Shi liu guo chun qiu* 13.17b-18a.
[54] *ZZTJ* 83.2632, 84.2663.
[55] *Ibid* 86.2721. *Jin shu* 121.3036 supplies a longer account of Yan Shi's advice in direct speech. Sima Guang follows the briefer description on *Shi liu guo chun qiu* 77.8a.
[56] *ZZTJ* 85.2702. On *ibid* 86.2738, the Liu-Han regime also preserves existing (Han Chinese) social structures, allowing 'the old and the weak to live in peace as before.' On 89.2809, too, Liu Cong makes appointments based on the Han Chinese administrative practices. Having established Later Zhao, Shi Le also adopts Han institutional practices, *ibid* 91.2871.

on Han Chinese traditions. This ties in closely the presentation in *ZZTJ* of the barbarian leaders' own educational attainments. The Lius again appear pre-eminent in this respect: they offer plentiful evidence to support earlier descriptions by *ZZTJ*'s external narrator of their fondness for Han Chinese learning. Liu Yao, for example, establishes a *tai xue* 太學, an institution that traces back to the Han state. He selects five hundred individuals whom he deems amenable to education, and employs learned ministers to teach them.[57] Compare that with the earlier account of Western Jin minister Dong Yang's 董養 visit to his own state's *tai xue*, where he 'ascended the hall and sighed: 'The court built this hall. What is to be done with it? … What is the point of senior ministers and officials deciding policy or refining points of etiquette and models of behaviour when it comes to this? Now that imperial order has been destroyed, great disorder will set in.''[58] Education is linked to political success by a perceptive minister; speaking through Dong Yang, Sima Guang supplies a causal explanation for relative barbarian strength and Han Chinese weakness.

Sima Guang's blurring of divides between different ethnic identities does not stop there. He even represents many fourth-century barbarian leaders as *more* refined in their understanding and appreciation of Han Chinese social and cultural institutions than the Western Jin political elite. In particular, he shows barbarian leaders as equal (and often superior) to the Western Jin ruling classes in observance of codes of etiquette and moral principles. The point is made by his characterization

[57] *Ibid* 91.2881.
[58] *Ibid* 82.2607. For an analysis of Dong Yang's prediction, see *Du Tong jian lun* 12.364. It finds support in an account of the disintegration of the official examination system on *ZZTJ* 84.2652. Sima Guang also shows the destruction of Western Jin's cultural heritage when Emperor Hui leaves his Luoyang palace on 14 December 304, in which 'objects amassed [in the imperial storehouses] during Wei and Jin were destroyed and completely lost to transmission,' *ZZTJ* 85.2704. Later in the same passage Sima Guang makes explicit the obvious historical echo of Dong Zhuo's 董卓 destruction of Han cultural heritage in 190. The episode appears on *Jin shu* 4.103 and *Jin si wang yi qi shi* 晉四王遺起事, Lu Lin 盧綝, ap. *Tai ping yu lan* 803.7a-b and 817.8a (under the title *Jin si wang qi shi* [晉]四王起事). Neither source is as explicit as *ZZTJ* in their sense of loss of Han Chinese cultural legacy, though, and neither contains historical reference to Dong Zhuo.

of Murong Wei, ancestor of the Xianbei state of Former Yan. Like the barbarian leaders that are their contemporaries, the Murongs model their political systems on Han Chinese precedents.[59] When Murong Wei has a direct cultural and social exchange with Western Jin he reveals his superiority in *ZZTJ*:

> Murong Wei sent an envoy to request that he be allowed to surrender. In the fifth month, [the emperor] issued an order appointing Wei as Xianbei Commander-in-chief. Wei paid an official visit to He Kan 何龕. Using the etiquette appropriate for a senior minister, he made his visit dressed in official clothing. Kan deployed troops to meet him. Wei thereupon changed into military attire before entering. Someone asked him his reason, to which Wei replied: 'If the host does not observe etiquette in dealing with his guest, what is the guest supposed to do?' When Kan heard of this, he was deeply ashamed, and greatly respected and marvelled at [Wei].[60]

He Kan's behaviour is paradigmatic for Western Jin ministers in *ZZTJ*: his instinctive reaction towards a barbarian is one of suspicion. It sets up a clash between barbarian and Han Chinese, significantly within a Han Chinese cultural framework. Despite He Kan's cultural home advantage, the barbarian Murong Wei appears the more culturally sophisticated and morally proper of the two. It is he, not He Kan, who should serve as our moral exemplar here: the external narrator's conclusion points us towards that interpretation of the episode. Western Jin confidence in its own superiority is put to shame on the most literal level here, and Sima Guang emphasises the sense of shame to a greater degree than his source, *Jin shu*.[61] The result of such an approach towards barbarians, he suggests, is a weakening of Han Chinese ritual and moral integrity.

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[59] The titles that Murong Wei accords Western Jin defectors are all based on Han Chinese models: see, for example, *ZZTJ* 88.2797. Twentieth-century scholar Tang Changru 唐長孺 examines the Murongs' adoption of Han Chinese institutions on *Wei Jin Nan bei chao shi lun cong* 魏晉南北朝史論叢, Beijing: San lian shu dian, 1955, pp.177-8. The example that he cites – *Jin shu* 110.2838 – does not appear in *ZZTJ*, though.

[60] *ZZTJ* 82.2593.

[61] *Jin shu* 108.2804. Shame is the focus of Hu Sanxing's comment on the episode. He offers a different interpretation to the reading offered here, though it is one based on values that lie outside the text and in the thirteenth-century environment in which Hu Sanxing produced his commentary: 'Receiving surrender is like receiving an enemy. There is no fault in a border commander deploying troops to meet with a guest from one of the four foreign ethnic groups. What need had he for shame?'

The barbarian leaders' cultural attainments – especially their moral virtues – attract able ministers into their service. Many are Han Chinese who had previously served under Western Jin. These defections are common and freely made in Sima Guang's account of this period. Moral propriety is seen to transcend ethnic differences in the issue of official loyalties. There is an implicit criticism of Western Jin in all this and, as a corollary, a suggestion of relative barbarian strength.

In 313 Western Jin minister Pei Yi 裴嶷 and his nephew, Kai 開, pass through Murong Wei's territory. The Xianbei leader treats them with respect and bestows parting gifts upon them. The two travellers subsequently find that the road to their destination has been blocked by local fighting. Despite his nephew's protests, Pei Yi urges that they return to Murong Wei:

> 'The central state is in decline and turmoil. If we were to go there now, we would be leading each other into the tiger's mouth. … Duke Murong has cultivated his conduct, and he is humane and righteous. He has the will to become a hegemonic sovereign. In addition, he has enriched his state and brought peace to the people. If we go and join him now, it will be possible to establish meritorious achievement and reputation on a higher level, and on the lower level it will be possible to protect our ancestral integrity. Why are you in any doubt about it?' Kai thereupon followed his advice. When they arrived, Wei was delighted.[62]

Sima Guang's source is Cui Hong's 崔鴻 *Shi liu guo chun qiu*, whose account he follows with little textual variation.[63] His other sources for this period refer to Pei Yi's defection too, but all omit his long speech in support of Murong Wei's virtues.[64] Its inclusion in *ZZTJ* signals editorial manipulation. It has a dual effect. First, it points up the social turmoil under Western Jin and offers a powerful criticism of the collapse of that state's domestic governance. Structurally, Pei Yi's defection is juxtaposed with an account of inept Western Jin administration in the north: refugees

[62] *ZZTJ* 88.2798.
[63] *Shi liu guo chun qiu* 31.1a-b.
[64] *Jin shu* 108.2811; *Ce fu yuan gui* 228.13a (the focus in this account seems to be Pei Yi's sense of etiquette, not Murong Wei's virtue as a ruler).

from the disorder in the central plains (also the result of Western Jin misrule) turn to local official Wang Jun for succour; he fails to protect them and local law and order dissolve; many of the refugees move on in search of a more stable social environment.[65] Escape from a disintegrating Western Jin regime appears as the prime motive for Pei Yi and others' defection to Murong Wei.[66] Second, the inclusion of Pei Yi's speech – specifically, his identification of Murong Wei's possession of two virtues central to the Confucian (Han Chinese) moral canon, humanity 仁 and righteousness 義 – offers support for the account of Murong Wei's moral goodness that *ZZTJ*'s external narrator gives in the same passage: 'only Murong Wei's governance was prudent and enlightened, and he cared for and respected people. Many of the common people turned to him as a result. Wei selected heroic and courageous men, and employed them on the basis of their talents.'[67] And we hear echoes of the same qualities (with the same effects) in *Li nian tu*, this time in Sima Guang's own voice as historian.[68] It is on these moral grounds that Pei Yi chooses Murong Wei over both Western Jin and his neighbouring barbarian rivals. That is the focus of *ZZTJ*'s criticism: a barbarian leader can appeal to the sensibilities of a Han Chinese minister and is even a more attractive political and moral choice than his own Western Jin regime. Ethnic divides blur; established moral order breaks down.

The fluid transfer of political loyalties, made according to moral rather than ethnic criteria, extends beyond the official bureaucracy in *ZZTJ*. It is a universal phenomenon in the text. Popular support offers a further indication of barbarian leaders' potential to rival Western Jin morally and politically. Early in his account of

[65] *ZZTJ* 88.2797.
[66] Sima Guang supplies a list of seventeen other ministers who entered Murong Wei's service with Pei Yi, for similar reasons.
[67] *Ibid*.
[68] *Ji gu lu* 14.1b.

the rise of the ethnically Ba Li clan in the region of Shu, Sima Guang describes Li Te and his brothers' assistance of refugees from the turmoil of Qi Wannian's rebellion (another barbarian challenge to Western Jin rule). He draws a causal link between the help that they provide to the impoverished migrants and the popular support that they receive in return: he uses the phrase 'consequently' 由是 to make the link explicit.[69] There is further evidence of Li Te's sense of duty to the common people later in *ZZTJ*'s chronological sequence, when his advisors oppose attempts to console the people of Shu: 'the main issue has already been settled,' he responds. 'All we should do is calm the people. Why add to their suspicions and cause them to rebel?'[70] These are astute and responsible political values – popular support for the Lis' regime is the clearest index of that – but they come from a barbarian leader, not a Han Chinese minister. And intertextual comparison shows that Sima Guang has selected material from his sources to construct a favourable image of the Lis, one in which they consistently act in the interests of the common people: their assistance of the refugees from Qi Wannian appears in *Shi liu guo chun qiu* but not elsewhere;[71] Li Te's insistence on the welfare of the people over military gain appears only in *Huayang guo zhi* 華陽國志 and *Shi liu guo chun qiu*.[72] It is on the foundations of popular support, the strongest possible foundations, that the Lis offer a moral and political challenge to the negligent Han Chinese political elite of Western Jin.

There is an unstated paradox in all of this. Barbarians challenge Western Jin sovereignty in *ZZTJ*, but their ability to do so derives always from their moral and

[69] *ZZTJ* 82.2621-2.
[70] *Ibid* 85.2678. Sima Guang offers a similar account of Liu Yuan. On *ZZTJ* 87.2742, when Liu learns of the massacre of 'over thirty thousand men and women' by one of his commanders, Liu Jing, he is seen to make this angry response: '"How does [Liu] Jing have the gall to come and face me? And how can the way of Heaven permit it? I only want to get rid of the Sima clan, that's all. What crime have the common people committed?"' The speech does not survive in Sima Guang's extant sources.
[71] *Shi liu guo chun qiu* 76.3b (*Tai ping yu lan* 123.5b cites *Shi liu guo chun qiu* but omits references to the Lis' rescue of the migrants). Cf. *Jin shu* 120.3022; *Huayang guo zhi jiao bu tu zhu* 8.445.
[72] *Ibid* p.459; *Shi liu guo chun qiu* 76.16a. Cf. *Jin shu* 120.3029-30.

cultural attainments *in a Han Chinese context*. Sima Guang does not propose barbarian culture as a rival to Han Chinese culture. Barbarian leaders can only succeed politically by adopting Han Chinese traits and, by implication, abandoning their barbarian characteristics (as Liu Yuan does most vividly in his legitimacy claims). They are powerful because they are more like Han Chinese than barbarians. The legitimacy that they contest with Western Jin is based on canonical values rooted in the ethnic identity of the Han Chinese people. In this view, Han Chinese culture *per se* remains dominant. Instead it is the rightful arbiter and guardian of that culture, the Western Jin court, that is the focus of Sima Guang's criticism. It weakens itself through its failings in cultural practice, through allowing itself to be displaced as the representative of the values that underpin Han Chinese ethnic identity, and through its inability to acknowledge barbarian leaders' mastery of Han Chinese culture while insisting upon its own cultural superiority. Once it loses control over the source of its integrity and strength, its fall appears inevitable.

One marker of Sima Guang's belief in an inherent Han Chinese superiority is the culturally unassailable position that he accords the Western Jin emperors as long as they retain political power. In the second lunar month of 312 of *ZZTJ*'s chronology he records this conversation between Liu Cong, then ruler of the state of Han, and Emperor Huai of Western Jin:

> [Liu] Cong said to the emperor in a leisurely manner: 'Previously, when you were Prince of Yuzhang, Wang Wuzi 王武子 and I came to you. Wuzi introduced me to you, and you said that you had heard of my reputation for a long time. You presented me with a fine bow made of wood from the *zhe* tree, and a silver ink-slab. Do you not remember?'[73]

A generous gesture by an imperial prince to his celebrated guest: that is what appears in *ZZTJ*. The hierarchy between the two men is defined by the bestowal of gifts; the

[73] *Ibid* 88.2777

verb that Sima Guang gives Liu Cong, 'to present,' *ci* 賜, is a weighted one and implies Emperor Huai's seniority. That is the internal level of the text. Compare it with *ZZTJ*'s main source, *Jin shu*.[74] Sima Guang has manipulated his account. Most striking is his omission of a reference to Liu Cong's cultural and martial superiority over the Western Jin emperor. Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 describes the praise that Liu receives from the emperor for an improvised *yue fu* composition, and his victory in an archery competition. It influences the emperor's choice of gifts to Liu Cong, otherwise left as an unexplained textual detail in *ZZTJ*. Sima Guang allows barbarian leaders to embrace and excel in the traditions of Han Chinese learning, but they never surpass the figurehead of that tradition. The emperor's integrity as the ultimate symbol of a Han Chinese cultural heritage remains intact.

That picture is still too simple. Sima Guang identifies the barbarian leaders' attainments in Han Chinese culture and morals but he does not represent them as moral exemplars. In *Li nian tu* Liu Cong appears as 'boastful, debauched, reckless, cruel, and unfeeling.'[75] In *ZZTJ*, he realises in 310 that he has enthroned himself out of turn and in his jealousy he murders his rival for the throne, Liu Gong 劉恭.[76] The principles of imperial succession that Liu Cong violates are ones that derive from a Han Chinese canonical moral code. Early indications of corruption are confirmed in *ZZTJ* by this account of Liu Cong's court in 316:

[74] *Jin shu* 102.2660. These texts follow the *Jin shu*'s account with few textual variations: *Shi liu guo chun qiu* 2.8b; *Jin chun qiu*, ap. *Tai ping yu lan* 588.2b-3a. (In the last case, there are bibliographical inconsistencies concerning the text to which the *Tai ping yu lan* refers: the editors of *Xu xiu Si ku quan shu* include the episode under their edition of Xi Zaochi's 習鑿齒 *Han Jin chun qiu* 漢晉春秋 (48a-b); Nie Chongqi 聶崇崎 suggests that the work in question is Sun Sheng's 孫盛 *Jin yang qiu* 晉陽秋, *Tai ping yu lan yin de* 太平御覽引得, *Harvard-Yenching Sinological Index Series*, no.23, Beijing: Hafo Yanjing xue she, 1935, p.122. No other versions of the text survive and so there is no evidence that allows us to determine which claim is correct). *San shi guo chun qiu* 三十國春秋, Xiao Fang 蕭方 et al., ap. *Chu xue ji* 初學記, Xu Jian 徐堅 et al., Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1963, 21.518 prefigures *ZZTJ* in the scope of its content, but with textual variations suggest a relationship with *Jin shu*.
[75] *Ji gu lu* 13.126a.
[76] *ZZTJ* 87.2757. Sima Guang also reports in *Li nian tu* Liu Cong's usurpation of power, *Ji gu lu* 13.122b. Liu Gong's murder appears on *Shi liu guo chun qiu* 2.3a, but not in Sima Guang's other extant sources.

> The Palace Attendants of Han, Wang Shen 王沈, Xuan Huai 宣懷, and the Chief Administrator of the Empress, Guo Yi 郭猗, were all [court] favourites and wielded power. The lord of Han, Cong, indulged in entertainment and banqueting in the rear palaces. He sometimes did not get up for three days, and at other times he did not emerge for a hundred days. Since the previous winter he had not attended court in person and he entrusted all business of governance to the chief minister of state, [Liu] Can 劉粲.[77] Only in cases of capital punishment or official dismissals did he have Shen and the others come in to inform him. There was much that Shen and the others did not tell him, deciding matters instead in accordance with their private wills. As a result, a number of the hard-working former ministers did not take their place in the official hierarchy, and the numbers of treacherous and base sycophants grew to two thousand within a few days. The army was mobilised annually, but the commanders and troops did not receive rewards of cash and cloth. Instead, the families of members of the rear palaces, even down to the servants and lackeys, were bestowed [with gifts]; this gesture extended to huge numbers of people. In their transport, clothing, and residences, Shen and the others surpassed the princes. Meanwhile, among their youthful thugs, the thirty or more who had been designated leaders were all greedy and cruel, and harmed the common people.[78]

The authority of the text's criticism comes from the voice of the text's external narrator. It is also a recognisable criticism: this is the standard imagery of political corruption, one that recurs in *ZZTJ*'s text. That lends it weight too. We will hear later in this chapter of Sima Guang's belief that court favouritism and corruption, the results of a ruler's lack of active participation in state affairs, were prevalent in Western Jin court politics; he employs a similar set of images to make his point there. Here, though, he extends the criticism to include barbarian regimes. And it is not just an isolated case: Sima Guang shows a continuation of this Liu-Han misrule through Liu Cong's successor, Liu Can. The usual pattern suggests itself: political corruption is soon followed by a fall. In *ZZTJ*, the result of these rulers' political inactivity is Liu Yao's usurpation of power in 319 and a change of state title to Zhao.

Sima Guang's general political ideology is at stake. His presentation of the Lius' corruption suggests a more complex political dynamic than the opposition between barbarian moral strength and Western Jin moral decline. On one hand, by

[77] In *Li nian tu*, Sima Guang also ascribes to Shi Hu (another barbarian usurper who seizes power by murdering those rightfully in line to the throne) an addiction to wine and sex, and a readiness to delegate the duties of leadership, *Ji gu lu* 13.127a.
[78] *ZZTJ* 89.2826-7. *Jin shu* 102.2669 omits many of the details of this description.

developing in his account thematic parallels between the Western Jin ruling classes and the barbarian leaders, Sima Guang suggests that it is precisely these moral and cultural similarities that pose a threat to Western Jin. This can also work the other way, though: if the barbarian leaders resemble the Han Chinese in their strengths (even to the point of surpassing them), they are also vulnerable to the same flaws. Sima Guang's political warning underpins the whole of *ZZTJ*'s account of the period. In applying the same moral and political standard to all ethnic groups, he offers a critique of state rule that offers universal lessons.

The threat to a Han Chinese regime is realised at two points in *ZZTJ*, when the barbarian leaders usurp Western Jin political power. Sima Guang gives sharp focus to these episodes in his representation of the capture and humiliation of two Western Jin emperors. On 14 July 311 Liu Cong captures Emperor Huai and the seals of state.[79] He relocates these symbols of Han Chinese imperial power to his own capital at Pingyang. On the internal level of *ZZTJ*'s plot, Liu Cong seeks political legitimacy (based on Han Chinese symbolism) for his Xiongnu regime. On the external, thematic level, Sima Guang alerts the reader to a decisive shift in the political dynamic between Western Jin and its barbarian usurpers. Then, on 12 February 313, Emperor Huai is forced to attend a banquet held by Liu Cong:

> The ruler of Han, Cong, held a banquet for all the ministers in the Guangji Hall. He ordered Emperor Huai to wear base clothing and to serve the wine. Yu Min 庾鋐 and Wang Juan 王儁 could not contain their grief and burst out crying. Cong despised them. On the *ding wei* day of the second month [14 March 313] Cong killed over ten former Jin ministers, including Min and Juan. Emperor Huai was also murdered.[80]

[79] In *Li nian tu* Sima Guang describes the Western Jin emperor's defeat in the rhetoric of humiliation: Emperor Huai is 'shrouded in dust' 蒙塵, a well-worn euphemism for imperial defeat, flight, and disgrace, *Ji gu lu* 13.122b. The *locus classicus* for the phrase is *Chun qiu Zuo zhuan zheng yi* 15.116c.
[80] *ZZTJ* 88.2791. The episode also draws Sima Guang's notice on *Ji gu lu* 13.123a, suggesting its importance in his account of Western Jin's political decline.

Comparison with Sima Guang's sources shows that he has drawn together details of Emperor Huai's humiliation, emphasising his degrading role as Liu Cong's servant.[81] Soon after creating a sense (through omission) of the emperor's inviolability as a Han Chinese cultural symbol, Sima Guang now shows his personal, political, and symbolic downfall. The sharp contrast gives immediacy and force to his account. In the individual dynamic between Emperor Huai and Liu Cong, he represents a microcosm of a general contrast in *ZZTJ*'s account between Western Jin political weakness and relative barbarian strength.

These events are seen to repeat themselves four years later. Early in the eleventh lunar month of 316 the succeeding Emperor Min sends a request for surrender to Liu Cong. On 11 December 316 he emerges on a goat-drawn cart from the east gate of Chang'an. He is dressed in his undergarments and carries the seals of state and a coffin. He offers his surrender in person.[82] In the eleventh lunar month of the following year Liu Cong goes out hunting. He arms the emperor and places him at the head of the hunting party as a guard. The humiliation draws the notice of the inhabitants of Chang'an and causes several of the emperor's former ministers to weep in distress. In the twelfth lunar month Liu Cong holds a banquet for ministers and, as with Emperor Huai, demands Emperor Min's attendance:

> In the twelfth month Cong held a banquet for all the ministers in the Guangji Hall. He ordered Emperor Min to serve the wine and to wash the wine vessels. When he had finished, [Liu Cong] had him change clothes and, further to this, ordered him to carry the serving dishes. Many of the Jin ministers wept and some lost their voices. Sobbing loudly, the Secretarial Court Gentleman, Xin Bin 辛賓 from Longxi, stood up and embraced the emperor. Cong ordered that he be led out and beheaded.[83]

[81] *Jin shu* 5.125, 102.2663; *Shi liu guo chun qiu* 2.14b-15a.
[82] *ZZTJ* 89.2834.
[83] *Ibid* 90.2851. The historical importance that Sima Guang attaches to both Emperor Huai and Emperor Min's humiliation suggests itself from his inclusion of these episodes in *Li nian tu*, *Ji gu lu* 13.123a and 13.124a.

We approach this second episode alert to the direction in which Sima Guang is taking us. He achieves this in two ways. The first is through the manipulation of *ZZTJ*'s governing chronology: here is an example of thematic concerns overriding the unity of time. Sima Guang establishes the title of the year in which this banquet took place as the first year of Emperor Yuan of Eastern Jin's *jian wu* period. He does not declare Emperor Min's death until the *mao xu* day of the twelfth lunar month of that year (7 February 318), almost the end of the lunar year. Emperor Yuan does not take the imperial title until the *bing chen* day of the third month of the *following* lunar year (26 April 318). The dating signals the imminent end of Emperor Min's rule – and of Western Jin – before Sima Guang states it explicitly. The reader approaches *ZZTJ*'s account of the banquet expecting the emperor's downfall and death because the calendar – the index of imperial power – has already moved on. Second, Sima Guang strengthens those expectations through parallelism in his accounts of the two banquets. By forging a textual link between the two episodes, which appear five years apart in *ZZTJ*'s chronological structure, Sima Guang readies us for a re-enactment of Emperor Huai's earlier humiliation. He emphasises the repeated usurpation of the Western Jin emperors by a barbarian regime. Hu Sanxing's reaction to Emperor Min's humiliation echoes our own and shows the hold of Sima Guang's textual conditioning over this thirteenth-century reader: 'by having [the emperor] hold a lance and lead the way, by ordering him to serve wine and wash the wine vessels, and by making him carry the serving dishes – that was how he humiliated him to such an extreme degree!'[84] The Western Jin regime as personified in the figures of the two emperors appears doomed. For Sima Guang, the threat from barbarian regimes to a Han Chinese state was a real one.

[84] *ZZTJ* 90.2851.

Internal disorder

In the first volume of his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* of 1776, Edward Gibbon offered this analysis of Roman imperial collapse:

> From the reign of Augustus to the time of Alexander Severus, the enemies of Rome were in her bosom: the tyrants, and the soldiers; and her prosperity had a very distant and feeble interest in the revolutions that might happen beyond the Rhine and the Euphrates. But when the military order had levelled, in wild anarchy, the power of the prince, the laws of the senate, and even the discipline of the camp, the barbarians of the north and of the east, who had long hovered on the frontier, boldly attacked the provinces of a declining monarchy. Their vexatious inroads were changed into formidable irruptions, and, after a long vicissitude of mutual calamities, many tribes of the victorious invaders established themselves in the provinces of the Roman empire.[85]

For Gibbon, internal political decay lay at the heart of the fall of the Roman Empire. Barbarian strength developed from this, and the tribes that subsequently invaded Roman territory were catalysts in the process of decline, not its principal cause. A similar dynamic suggests itself with the fall of Western Jin. Twentieth-century historian Tang Changru 唐長孺 has argued that although ethnic tensions existed during the second half of the third century, it was not until internal disorder broke out in the imperial house and the regional garrisons that the problem of the state's barbarian clients intensified.[86] That, in outline, is the account that Sima Guang offers us too. In *Li nian tu* he traces Western Jin's downfall to 'the inner chambers' of the palace: only after the eruption of internecine conflict between members of the

[85] Gibbon, Edward, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, David Womersley, ed., London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1994, vol. 1, p.213.

[86] Tang Changru, *Wei Jin Nan bei chao shi lun cong*, p.145. Thomas J. Barfield adopts a similar view of barbarian opportunism in the political dynamic of this time in *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989, pp.91-2, 97-101. He cites Sima Guang as the main source for his analysis of this period. For this modern scholar, the subtlety of Sima Guang's editorial manipulation seems to have been successful in silently imposing the interpretation of barbarian regimes that this chapter signals.

imperial family do the barbarians take advantage of the state's weakness. He offers the same causal explanation in *ZZTJ*.

On 3 February 301 the imperial prince Sima Lun 司馬倫 deposed Emperor Hui and declared himself emperor. This usurpation marked the climax of several years of political manoeuvring at court. Within two months, though, another imperial prince, Sima Jiong 司馬冏, had made plans to attack Sima Lun. He gathered a force that included the armies of other members of the imperial family and, later that year, deposed Sima Lun. By the summer of 302 Sima Jiong himself had gained an autocratic hold over state affairs and had become arrogant and profligate. He erected private mansions that rivalled the imperial palace in scale and design. He gave himself over to banqueting and entertainments, and neglected his duties at court. He was erratic in his employment of ministers: he delegated power to his favourites and tortured his critics. His governance produced a loss of morale both at court and in the provinces.[87] Despite the dangers of a volatile political environment, a retired scholar, Zheng Fang 鄭方, spoke out:

> 'Your Majesty is presently at ease and does not worry about danger. You feast and indulge in music to an excessive degree. This is the first fault. Among the close-knit relations of the imperial house there should be no petty animosities and divisions. That is not so at the moment. This is the second fault. The barbarian tribes are unsettled. Your Majesty declares that your achievements and enterprises are already great, but does not give this any thought. This is the third fault. After military campaigns, the common people are suffering poverty and hardship but have received no word of being rescued. This is the fourth fault. Your Majesty had an agreement with the volunteer troops. After the troubles had been settled, you should not have delayed in rewarding them. There are still men whose achievements even now have not received due recognition. This is the fifth fault.'[88]

[87] Hu Sanxing identifies in Sima Guang's account of Sima Jiong's misrule an aetiological motivation: 'whenever historians write about someone on the verge of defeat, they inevitably first describe the causes that lead to that defeat. This [follows] the *Zuo zhuan* model.' The comment is just as apt for the decline of Western Jin as a whole as for Sima Jiong's personal demise.

[88] *ZZTJ* 84.2671. Zheng Fang's remonstration is the first of several that Western Jin ministers are seen to present to Sima Jiong in 302. And on 88.2801, eleven years later in *ZZTJ*'s chronology, Sima Guang uses similar rhetoric in the criticisms of Western Jin commander Zu Ti 祖逖. The textual overlaps between Zheng Fang's remonstration and Zu Ti's speech cannot be considered formal parallelism – the two speeches appear too far apart

Zheng Fang's remonstration is rejected, a typical response in *ZZTJ* to the perceptive advice of a Western Jin minister. As the text's readers, though, we cannot afford to dismiss it so easily. Like Jiang Tong before him, Zheng Fang guides our interpretation of *ZZTJ*'s ideological commitments. He brings out familiar themes: the presence of a barbarian threat; the complacency of the Western Jin court when faced with political and military danger; the government's failure to alleviate the suffering of its people.[89] What stands out is the rhetorical order in which these themes appear. The primary causes of Western Jin's difficulties are internal failures. Accusations of moral and political shortcomings open the speech: of the holder of actual power, Sima Jiong (not the titular head of state, although the emperor's absence from Zheng Fang's speech is telling in itself), and of the factionalism of the Western Jin court. In its rhetorical and aetiological sequence, the mismanagement of a barbarian threat follows these internal shortcomings. To achieve this effect Sima Guang has manipulated his source text, Fang Xuanling's *Jin shu*. He focuses the reader's attention more sharply on Sima Jiong's personal faults by excising suggestions of merit in his actions.[90]

No less significant is the location of Zheng Fang's remonstration in *ZZTJ*'s chronological structure. We approach it through descriptions by the text's external narrator of Sima Jiong's corrupt autocracy. The authority of those statements reinforces and is reinforced by Zheng Fang's speech: external and internal voices converge. The external narrator's statements themselves follow an account of the

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in *ZZTJ*'s account to have that effect – but it does suggest recurrent themes in Sima Guang's account of this period.

[89] Modern scholar Cai Xuehai 蔡學海 estimates at least 300,000 died during this period of internecine conflict among the Western Jin imperial princes, 'Xi Jin zhong zu bian luan xi lun' 西晉種族變亂析論, *Guo li bian yi guan guan kan* 國立編譯館館刊 15.2, 1986: 55.

[90] *Jin shu* 59.1611-2.

early stages of Li Te's rebellion in Shu; Hu Sanxing refers to this event in his commentary on Zheng Fang's remonstration.[91] And the whole sequence – Li Te's rebellion, the external narrator's statements, and Zheng Fang's remonstration – is soon followed by a reference to the rise of the Xianbei. It conforms to a recognizable paradigm in *ZZTJ*'s structure: the barbarian-led rebellions of Liu Yuan, Shi Le, Li Xiong, and Zhang Chang 張昌 all appear in the context of factional conflicts between Western Jin imperial princes.[92] Here, as elsewhere, *ZZTJ*'s plot and Sima Guang's editorial manipulation of his text's structure come together to point up a causal link between Western Jin's internal disunity and the burgeoning of barbarian regimes. A close reading of *ZZTJ*'s different voices, those that we have identified as both 'internal' and 'external' to the text, draws out Sima Guang's ideological point.

The link between Western Jin's internal political chaos and barbarian successes makes itself felt in Sima Guang's representation of the development of barbarian power. In 301, the same year as Sima Lun usurped imperial power, the court demanded the return home of migrants who had fled from political and social unrest in the central plains to the western region of Shu. Since much of the empire remained in disorder, the migrants objected to their relocation. After negotiation, their barbarian leader, Li Te, managed to postpone their move until later in the year. When the second deadline arrived in the seventh lunar month, the migrants' harvest had not yet ripened and they were still unable to make the journey. Li Te requested a second postponement. Corrupt local officials refused and instead planned to kill the leaders of the migrants. They also established checkpoints along the migrants' route

[91] *ZZTJ* 84.2671.
[92] Liu Yuan and Shi Le are seen to take advantage of in-fighting between Sima Ying and Sima Yue, *ZZTJ* 85.2698, 86.2709-10, 86.2728. Li Xiong's rise has structural associations in *ZZTJ* with Sima Yue and Sima Yong's conflict, *ibid* 86.2720. Zhang Chang's rise is linked to factionalism between Sima Xin and Sima Yi, *ibid* 85.2681.

to seize their possessions.[93] In his account of these fraught negotiations Sima Guang avoids explicit ethnic references, though his sources suggest that the migrants comprised individuals of Qiang and Di ethnic origin as well as Han Chinese. There is one exception. It is clear in *ZZTJ* that the leader of the migrants, Li Te, is not Han Chinese: he is of Ba ethnicity.[94] As a result, the court's policy of forced migration, further exacerbated by the corruption of local officials, appears as the cause of popular, multi-ethnic support for a barbarian leader. Sima Guang is explicit on this point. The migrants first turn to Li Te because he requests the postponement of their relocation. When local officials put a bounty on his and other barbarian leaders' heads, *ZZTJ*'s external narrator tells us that 'the migrants were consequently terrified. Increasing numbers turned to [Li] Te. Within ten days, they numbered over twenty thousand. [Li] Liu also gathered a host of over several thousand.'[95] The familiar conjunction, 'consequently' 於是, does the damage here: it links failed Western Jin policy to popular discontent and from there, by implication, to the strength of support for barbarian leaders. Hu Sanxing draws a similar causal conclusion in his commentary: 'the migrants had settled down in Shu territory. Although there was a court order forcing them to return to their places of origin, there were still fears that they would not leave, especially if there were an intention of installing checkpoints and seizing their valuables. This accelerated the onset of rebellion.' Western Jin misrule, in particular its mistreatment of a vulnerable migrant population, provides impetus for a barbarian-led uprising against the state. The barbarians take advantage of, but do not cause, the disintegration of Western Jin authority.

[93] *Ibid* 84.2664-8, following *Huayang guo zhi jiao bu tu zhu* 8.453 with minor textual variations. The forced migration appears in more subdued tones in Sima Guang's other sources: *Jin shu* 120.3025; *Shi liu guo chun qiu* 76.9a-10a (the citation that appears on *Tai ping yu lan* 119.6a omits reference to the initial court order); *Ce fu yuan gui* 222.10a-b.
[94] *ZZTJ* 83.2647.
[95] *Ibid* 84.2666.

The establishment of the Lis' regime in Shu on the foundations of a disaffected local population is not an isolated case in *ZZTJ*. Two years later in its chronology, in 303, Sima Guang suggests through the use of juxtaposition in his text that Zhang Chang, a barbarian from the southern county of Yiyang, draws support for his uprising from among local barbarians disaffected by 'the harsh, rash governance' of Western Jin imperial prince Sima Xin 司馬歆.[96] And in 304 Liu Yuan's uncle, Liu Xuan, assembles members of his clan and urges Liu Yuan's promotion to the status of *shan yu* with this call to arms:

> 'Ever since the fall of Han, our *shan yu* have merely held hollow titles and no longer possess even the smallest patch of territory. The other princes and dukes have dropped to the level of common folk. Even though our forces have declined, we still have a good twenty thousand. Why have we grovelled as caitiffs for what has rapidly turned into over a hundred years? The Worthy King of the Left [Liu Yuan] has exceptional bravery and martial virtue. If Heaven had not intended to elevate the Xiongnu, then it certainly would not have given birth to this individual for nothing. The Simas now fight among themselves and the empire seethes in turmoil. Now is the time to restore the enterprise of Huhanye 呼韓邪!'[97]

Unlike the multi-ethnic support that the Lis receive, which transcends the divides between barbarians and Han Chinese (to the benefit of the barbarians), there is no ambiguity over ethnic identity here. Sima Guang frames Liu Xuan's speech in the rhetoric of Xiongnu solidarity. It does not appear with the same strength in his sources. It is a rare example – all the more potent because it is rare – of a character within *ZZTJ*'s text giving open expression to the issue of ethnic identity, and it is an exception to Sima Guang's muting of ethnic differences elsewhere. Intertextual comparison shows that he has manipulated his sources, but it also suggests that the marking of ethnic difference is not the only function of Liu Xuan's speech in *ZZTJ*.

[96] *Ibid* 85.2680.
[97] *Ibid* 85.2699. Sima Guang echoes this rhetoric in a second speech that Liu Xuan gives later in the same year: '"The people of Jin have enslaved and oppressed us, but they are now fighting among themselves. This is a case of Heaven abandoning them and enabling us to restore the enterprise of Huhanye",' *ibid* 85.2701.

Neither *Jin shu* nor *Shi liu guo chun qiu*, the only two extant sources that contain this speech, makes reference to Han Chinese subjugation of the Xiongnu.[98] By contrast, it is the central theme of Sima Guang's version of Liu Xuan's speech. The implication is that such oppression provides a rallying point for the Lius' regime in the early stages of their political development. And more explicitly here than ever, barbarians are seen to take direct advantage of the internecine conflict between the Western Jin imperial princes.[99]

The failings of the Western Jin government – its complacency when faced with foreign military and political threats, its mistreatment of barbarian immigrants, and its internal divisions – finally trace back to the personal failings of the emperor. In a statement of 1062, in his 1064 comment on Western Jin in *Li nian tu*, in a memorial of 1085, and again in a statement of 1086, Sima Guang identifies the beginnings of the dynasty's decline in the complacency and recklessness of its founder, Emperor Wu, and his failure to make long-term plans for dynastic survival.[100] These shortcomings reappear in his representation of the subsequent years of Western Jin rule.

The state's insecure foundations are further undermined by the incompetence of Emperor Wu's successor, Emperor Hui, whose political vulnerability Sima Guang points up in *Li nian tu*.[101] The decline of Western Jin power appears as a gradual process, but its most immediate and compelling causes emerge during his reign. By contrast, Sima Guang does not deal with Emperors Huai and Min in his *Li nian tu* comment. The implication is that imperial intervention could not save the dynasty

[98] *Jin shu* 101.2647; *Shi liu guo chun qiu* 1.5b. *Wei shu* 95.2044 refers to Liu Xuan's support for Liu Yuan's promotion to *shan yu* but omits his speech.
[99] See also Sima Guang's comments in *Li nian tu* on Liu Yuan's rise to power, *Ji gu lu* 13.126a.
[100] *SMWJ* 23.2b (dated to the seventh lunar month of 1062: *Chuan jia ji* 25.2a), 47.3a (dated to the fourth lunar month of 1085: *XCB* 355.8499), 52.10a (dated to the third lunar month of 1086: *Chuan jia ji* 52.7a); *Ji gu lu* 13.123b.
[101] *Ibid* 13.123b-124a.

from destruction by the time of these last two Western Jin emperors. And, to revisit Gibbon's analysis of the collapse of Roman imperial power, the barbarian regimes are not seen as active agents in any of this: they only predate on – or, at most, act as catalysts for – Western Jin self-destruction.

This representation endures in *ZZTJ*. Early in its account of Emperor Hui, still Crown Prince at this stage, there are signs of the future emperor's political incompetence. In 274 of its chronology, we hear that 'Emperor [Wu] realised that the Crown Prince [Emperor Hui] was not intelligent, and feared that he would not be up to acting as heir to the throne 不堪爲嗣.'[102] In 289 Emperor Wu 'knew that the Crown Prince lacked talent.'[103] We hear both statements in the voice of the external narrator, which lends them a certain authority, but both are ultimately filtered through Emperor Wu's judgement. Such observations are not only attributed to Emperor Wu, though; they receive weighty support from other voices in the text. The portrait of Emperor Hui's stupidity is strengthened by a sweeping statement, again made by the external narrator but now with a wider range of perspective (and, with it, a greater authority), that 'at that time, everyone at court and in the provinces knew that the Crown Prince was deluded and foolish, and would not be up to acting as heir to the throne 不堪爲嗣.'[104] Sima Guang emphasises Emperor Hui's unsuitability as heir to the Western Jin throne through textual repetition for emphatic effect – a common rhetorical strategy in his text – and through a shift between

[102] *ZZTJ* 80.2535.
[103] *Ibid* 82.2595.
[104] *Ibid* 80.2551. For a specific example of this, see He Qiao's claim on *ibid* 82.2603, for which Sima Guang follows (with some textual variation) Gan Bao's *Jin ji*, ap. *Shi shuo xin yu jian shu* 5.289. The episode also appears in Wang Yin's *Jin shu*, ap. *Tai ping yu lan* 148.3a, but is omitted from other extant sources. It would seem that Sima Guang collated examples of Emperor Hui's stupidity. Even barbarians appear alert to Western Jin imperial weakness: Zhang Xuanzi, a Xiongnu from Liu Yuan's home town of Xinxing, tells a friend that 'Emperor Wu did not give consideration to the large issues of national concern and, since the heir to the throne is not up to the burden of the task … one should imminently expect disorder in the empire,' *ZZTJ* 82.2602-3.

different voices, with the resultant variations in authority that have come up already in Chapter 1.[105]

These early warnings are realised when he ascends the throne. In 299, soon after Jiang Tong's analysis of a barbarian threat to Western Jin sovereignty and with Qi Wannian's rebellion still in progress (the textual proximity to these events creates an impact), Sima Guang offers this farcical image of the emperor:

> He was once in the Hualin Garden when he heard some toads. He asked his aides: 'Are these croaks public or are they private?'

What follows has strong resonance for readers familiar with the anecdote of Marie Antoinette's response to bread shortages in a socially tumultuous and disaffected *ancien régime* France, her dismissive 'qu'ils mangent de la brioche.' It creates a similar rhetorical effect too:

> At that time, the empire was suffering famine and the common people were dying of starvation. The emperor heard of it and said: 'Why don't they eat meat gruel?' Power consequently lay with those below him, and governance issued from numerous quarters. Moreover, families in positions of influence promoted each other and delegated responsibility among themselves, as if they were bartering with one another.[106]

The context of the two anecdotes suggests their textual function. They serve as examples of the emperor's stupidity: they are prefaced by a blunt statement from *ZZTJ*'s external narrator that 'the emperor was stupid by nature.' Detached-seeming and objective in tone, this carries all the authority that we have already identified with this textual voice. It confirms earlier characterizations of Emperor Hui. It also

[105] The traits of stupidity and political incompetence endure in a wide range of later characterizations of Emperor Hui. Influenced by Sima Guang's account, Wang Fuzhi writes in *Du Tong jian lun* that 'Emperor Hui's stupidity was without parallel at any time in history and was responsible for downfall of state,' 12.363. And in chronological tables appended to *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, a work of 1686, Philippe Couplet offers a terse description of Emperor Hui as 'stupid and dull-witted,' *Tabula chronologica Sinicæ monarchiæ*, ap. *Confucius Sinarum philosophus, sive Scientia Sinensis Latine exposita*, Intorcetta, Prospero, et al., Paris: Daniel Horthemels, 1687, p.44.

[106] *ZZTJ* 83.2629. Cf. *Jin shu* 4.108; *Jin shu*, Wang Yin, ap. *Tai ping yu lan* 499.1b.

guides our interpretation of what follows. Because of his stupidity the emperor fails to engage with either his court or the society over which he rules. That appears as a cause of Western Jin's political divisions. As so often, Sima Guang emphasises the causal relationship through his use of the phrase 'consequently' 由是. He is more explicit in this than his extant sources. An account of the emperor's observation of the toads in the Hualin Garden appears in Wang Yin's 王隱 *Jin shu* 晉書 but, through recontextualization of the surviving fragments of this work by later editors, it lacks a firm context. It also omits the preceding statement of Emperor Hui's stupidity by *ZZTJ*'s external narrator. The result is a less forceful characterization.[107] In Fang Xuanling's *Jin shu*, a context does survive (although still no statement by *ZZTJ*'s external narrator) and it seems that Sima Guang followed this text as his source for the two anecdotes. But Fang Xuanling does not make the same explicit verbal connections as Sima Guang between the emperor's stupidity and the social and political disintegration of the Western Jin regime. At most, it is left to the reader's inference.

There is a paradox in this representation of Emperor Hui. It is notable in *ZZTJ*'s account of his rule how infrequently he appears to exercise active power and how rarely he even appears in the text. That in itself is significant. The emperor's absence from the business of state serves as implicit criticism against him, since it is the clearest indication of his political weakness and the usurpation of his authority.

As a foil to Emperor Hui, the succeeding Emperor Huai appears in *ZZTJ* in a comparatively positive light. After his predecessor's ignominious death from food poisoning, he revisits the founding principles of the state's rule: the text's external

[107] It is classified in *Tai ping yu lan* as an example of 'genuine stupidity 真愚,' a crude but useful indication of the way it was interpreted by a Song readership. With the editorial imposition of this thematic focus in *Tai ping yu lan* – the only source in which Wang Yin's account of the episode survives – the original textual setting of the anecdote is no longer available.

narrator tells us that he assumes active control over governance and attends to the concerns of his subjects. Those claims find support from a voice within the text, as a senior Western Jin minister associates Emperor Huai with Emperor Wu and the political dynamism that underlay the state's foundation.[108] It is a model for successful rule. The emperor's active involvement in state affairs soon drives from court men who had previously benefited from court factionalism and political neglect under Emperor Hui. He receives endorsement from members of the court. Sima Guang quotes Xun Song's 荀崧 characterization of Emperor Huai as 'pure and fine in his natural disposition and, when he was young, he devised heroic schemes. Had he encountered a period of peace, this would have been sufficient for him to be a good ruler who safeguarded the prescribed laws. Yet he followed in the wake of the chaos and disorder of Emperor Hui.'[109] Personal and political interests inform this assessment: Xun Song was a former minister of Emperor Huai. Sima Guang distances himself as editor from these interests by formally and explicitly citing the author of this view. Despite the use of this textual apparatus, though, the inclusion of such an assessment without any other critical framing or apparent editorial manipulation, and the sheer length that it is accorded in *ZZTJ*, suggests that it corresponds at least in general outline to Sima Guang's own view. Xun Song acts as proxy for Sima Guang – a common rhetorical strategy in the text – and in doing so offers us a guideline for the intended interpretation of *ZZTJ*'s ideology.

These positive accounts of the early days of Emperor Huai's rule do not amount to a general endorsement of him in *ZZTJ*'s narrative. Nor is that their textual function, which is instead to offer an immediate and powerful contrast between examples of active, involved imperial rule and Emperor Hui's passivity in, or even

[108] *ZZTJ* 86.2723, 86.2727.
[109] *Ibid* 88.2791. cf. *Jin shu* 5.125; *Jin yang qiu*, ap. *Tai ping yu lan* 98.3b.

absence from, the business of state. Sima Guang suggests that Emperor Huai has already been politically handicapped in his role as emperor by his predecessor's incompetence. He overwhelms the few positive examples of Emperor Huai's rule with evidence of political disintegration throughout the Western Jin state. Emperor Huai and Emperor Min after him ultimately appear politically impotent. Like Emperor Hui, their absence from *ZZTJ* is telling: courtiers and members of the imperial family are seen to usurp both their actual power and, with it, their rightful textual position at the centre of *ZZTJ*. One of Sima Guang's final assessments of Western Jin in *ZZTJ*'s text is another citation of an essay by a minister of that state, Gan Bao 干寶 – another textual puppet for his own ideology. By the time it appears in *ZZTJ*'s chronological sequence it functions as a retrospective look at its rise and fall:

> Even with a talent in the doctrine of the mean or a ruler who preserved the standards [of former sovereigns] in power, I still fear that turmoil would have come. How much more so, then, when our Emperor Hui oversaw the empire with a sense of reckless abandon. Emperor Huai inherited this turmoil when he ascended the imperial throne but was restrained by powerful ministers. After Emperor Min went into exile, all he preserved was a hollow name. Once the momentum of the empire's power had gone, unless there had been someone with a heroic talent of great renown, no one would have been able to recapture it![110]

We measure the final three Western Jin emperors – Emperors Hui, Huai, and Min – against the standard of a 'heroic talent of great renown' that Gan Bao (and, through him, Sima Guang) sets up here. All of them fall short in *ZZTJ*. They are therefore unable to prevent a collapse that Sima Guang shows to have originated from their own failings and those of their imperial predecessors. As a result, Western Jin falls to its barbarian rivals. A month after the inclusion of Gan Bao's essay in *ZZTJ*'s chronological sequence, Emperor Min's year title changes to that of Sima Rui 司馬

[110] *ZZTJ* 89.2837. Sima Guang seems to have followed the version of Gan Bao's essay on *Jin shu* 5.132-7, esp. 5.137. A fuller version of the essay appears in *Jin ji zong lun* 晉紀總論, ap. *Wen xuan* 49.4b-18b, esp. 49.17a- b.

睿, the first emperor of the Eastern Jin. Sima Guang's simple editorial gesture symbolises the end of Western Jin imperial rule in *ZZTJ*.

Eleventh-century parallels

Sima Guang's representation of a strong barbarian threat to Western Jin sovereignty finds support in the eleventh-century context of *ZZTJ*'s composition. References to the usurpation of Western Jin by its barbarian enemies appear in the memorials, speeches, and essays of his contemporaries: Lü Tao 呂陶 notes in the eleventh century that 'debaters discuss the rebellions and downfall of Jin on numerous occasions.'[111] Two major themes emerge from the discourse. First, the barbarian usurpers of Western Jin appear as powerful rivals to that state. Their leaders are individuals of outstanding ability. They command strong military forces and employ dedicated and loyal ministers.[112] They are also political predators and will wrest away Han Chinese power at any opportunity.[113] Second, in counterpoint to these representations of barbarian strength is the suggestion that Western Jin's downfall results from internal disorder. Factional conflict and rebellion undermine court politics.[114] Rulers and ministers err from true governance to embrace lifestyles of frivolity and luxury.[115] They even adopt barbarian customs and become

[111] *Jingde ji* 淨德集, Lü Tao 呂陶, *Si ku quan shu zhen ben bie ji* edn., 16.8b.
[112] *Ibid*; *Ouyang Xiu quan ji* 16.272; *Keshan ji* 柯山集, Zhang Lei 張耒, *Si ku quan shu zhen ben si ji* edn., 35.6a-b; *Su Shi wen ji* 9.287; *Luancheng ji* 欒城集, Su Che 蘇轍, Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1987, 'ying zhao ji' 2.1588.
[113] *Fan Wenzheng gong ji* 范文正公集, Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹, *Si bu cong kan* edn., 8.15b; *Luancheng ji* 'ying zhao ji' 2.1588, although Su Che extends the trait of treachery to Han Chinese ministers as well as barbarians.
[114] *Jingde ji* 16.9b-10a; *Jingyusheng ji* 景迂生集, Chao Yuezhi 晁說之, *Ying yin Wen yuan ge Si ku quan shu* edn., 3.36b-37a; *Keshan ji* 35.6a.
[115] *Luancheng ji* 'ying zhao ji' 2.1587-8 (note, too, Su Che's sententious statement on the need to eliminate indolence and arrogance in order to ensure dynastic strength); *Jingde ji* 16.8b-9a; *Er Cheng ji* 二程集, Cheng Hao 程顥 and Cheng Yi 程頤, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1981, 18.236.

indistinguishable from their barbarian usurpers.[116] They neither ensure domestic stability nor take adequate precautions to ward off the barbarian challenge.[117]

Personal political agendas make themselves felt here and produce variations in the spin that each author gives his account. A common agenda overarches minor differences, though: there is correlation between representations of a strong barbarian threat to Han Chinese integrity in the fourth century and demands for circumspection in eleventh-century foreign relations. Conversely, there is silence on the barbarian usurpation of Western Jin power from those Song ministers who, as this chapter will show, adopted aggressive policies towards barbarians in the eleventh century.[118]

ZZTJ claims a pre-eminent place in this discourse. It shows the same correlation between a view of the fourth-century barbarians as a threat to Han Chinese sovereignty and its author's cautious ethnic policy in his own time. Put simply, the basic themes of Sima Guang's account of Western Jin's downfall in *ZZTJ* run through his attempts to shape his own dynasty's relations with its barbarian neighbours.

Before we address these fundamental convergences, though, there is an apparent divergence between the past as it appears in *ZZTJ*'s text and Sima Guang's policy formation in the eleventh century. Compare his representation of the fourth-century barbarian challenge to Western Jin sovereignty and the rhetoric that he uses to describe Song's foreign rivals in the eleventh century. In *ZZTJ* barbarian regimes

[116] This claim received expression in the eighth century (*Tong dian* 200.5502) but was revisited during the eleventh century by Song Qi 宋祁, *Jingwen ji* 景文集, *Guo xue ji ben cong shu* edn., 44.549-50.
[117] *Su Shi wen ji* 9.286; *Jingyusheng ji* 3.36b-37a.
[118] The use of Western Jin as a minatory example for later dynasties extends beyond the eleventh century. In the twelfth century, for example, scholar Chen Liang 陳亮 drew parallels in a letter to the emperor between the usurpers of Western Jin and the northern barbarian regimes that had forced his own state to flee south, *Chen Liang ji zeng ding ben* 陳亮集增訂本, Chen Liang, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1987, 1.18. Fifteenth-century scholar Qiu Jun 丘濬 suggested to the readers of his *Da xue yan yi bu* that 'the business of Jin can reflect on 鑑 [the present],' *Da xue yan yi bu* 144.1251. In the late seventeenth century, Wang Fuzhi, a prominent opponent of the recently-installed Manchu Qing dynasty, traced a succession of failures in ethnic policy that started with Western Jin, included Song, and extended by implication to his own time, *Du Tong jian lun* 12.364-5.

usurp Western Jin authority because they are able to make themselves morally and culturally similar, and even superior to their Han Chinese counterparts. In his writings on eleventh-century ethnic policy, by contrast, Sima Guang establishes an opposition between Han Chinese and barbarians. It contributes to a literary conceit, familiar by the eleventh century, of homesickness and separation in his poetic response to Wang Anshi's contemporaneous 'Ming fei qu' 明妃曲 . Climatic, linguistic, and cultural alienation all receive expression as the Xiongnu ruler Huhanye (the same individual that Liu Xuan invokes in his calls for Xiongnu solidarity in 304) captures the Han Chinese concubine of Emperor Yuan of Han, Wang Zhaojun 王昭君, and forces her to leave her master and her home.[119] True, there are generic differences here with Sima Guang's political statements but, if anything, that makes the basic antithesis of Han Chinese and barbarian that gives the poem its emotional force even more notable: it is an enduring theme for Sima Guang, one that transcends literary settings and rhetorical conventions. Of course, it acquires a more immediate and practical significance in an expressly political context, when Sima Guang contrasts bellicose barbarian customs with Han Chinese unfamiliarity with warfare. Like Western Jin's usurpers in *ZZTJ*, he characterises eleventh-century barbarians as skilled at shooting from horseback, courageous in battle, and hardened by tough living and privation.[120] Unlike their fourth-century predecessors, whose military and cultural attainments receive equal attention, Song's barbarian rivals

[119] *SMWJ* 3.23b. The two parts of Wang Anshi's original poem appear on *Wang Jingwen gong shi jian zhu* 王荊文公詩箋註, Wang Anshi 王安石, Li Bi 李壁 annot., Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1958, 6.66-7. Ouyang Xiu and Mei Yaochen 梅堯臣 also produced responses to the poem, see *Ouyang Xiu quan ji* 8.131-2; *Mei Yaochen ji bian nian jiao zhu* 梅堯臣集編年校注, Mei Yaochen, Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1980, 30.1143. Similar sentiments of estrangement are common in the writings of Song envoys to foreign states. Su Che revisits this topos in a series of poems that he composed on his envoy mission to Liao in 1090, for example, *Luancheng ji* 16.393, 395, 396, 398, 399, 400.

[120] *SMWJ* 38.4a, 46.11a. Cf. *Song shi* 192.4780, where '戎狄之民' is replaced by either '遠方之民' or '敵人,' or omitted altogether. See also the characterization of belligerent barbarians and peaceful Han Chinese that Sima Guang ascribes to Pang Ji 龐籍 on *Sushui ji wen* 涑水記聞, Sima Guang 司馬光, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, repr.1997, 11.207.

appear to lack appreciation for the concepts of humanity, righteous behaviour, ritual, and music.[121] This is where they differ from Han Chinese society, which is seen to found itself on just such moral precepts and a peaceful, agrarian lifestyle.[122]

Sima Guang frames the opposition in negative terms. He draws on rhetoric of inferiority. Barbarians appear socially subordinate to their Han Chinese counterparts. The author of the early twelfth-century *Yuan cheng yu lu* 元城語錄, Ma Yongqing 馬永卿, records Sima Guang's analogy of the relationship between a rich man (Han Chinese) and a pauper (barbarian) living side by side.[123] In Sima Guang's own eleventh-century memorials the followers of Zhao Yuanhao 趙元昊, Tangut leader of the state of Xia, are 'northern barbarian lackeys,' and those under Tu ethnic leader Nong Zhigao 儂智高 appear as 'base southern barbarian types.' The term 'base' 微 is also used to describe barbarians in general.[124] When he does not use a specific ethnic label, the most pervasive term in Sima Guang's memorials is 'caitiffs' 虜, despite Emperor Zhenzong's abolition of its use in several Song place names on 6 February 1005.[125] To emphasise the rhetorical distinction between superior and inferior, Sima Guang also represents the Han Chinese sovereign exercising direct control over all barbarians, who hold the same relationship of dependency on the

[121] *SMWJ* 38.4a. Cf. Hua Zhen's 華鎮 comments on *Yunxi ju shi ji* 雲溪居士集, Hua Zhen, *Si ku quan shu zhen ben chu ji* edn., 18.12a.
[122] *SMWJ* 38.4a, 46.11a, 74.6a.
[123] *Yuancheng yu lu* 元城語錄, Ma Yongqing 馬永卿, *Ji fu cong shu* edn., B.1a. See also the parallels that Fan Zuyu draws between Han Chinese and gentlemen, and barbarians and base individuals on *Tang jian*, 3.12b.
[124] *SMWJ* 18.6b, 50.3b.
[125] *XCB* 58.1301. Emperor Zhenzong also banned the use of the character 'barbarian' 戎. For a sample of Sima Guang's use of the term to refer to barbarians in an eleventh-century context, see *SMWJ* 25.3a (*XCB* 198.4796 replaces '虜' with '彼' and '敵人') 38.4a, 5b, 7b, 40.1a-b, 50.2b, 3a-b, 5a-b; *Sushui ji wen* 9.169, 9.176 (quoting Song official Chong Gu 种古), 11.205. Despite Emperor Zhenzong's earlier decree, the term seems to have been common during the second half of the eleventh century. Even someone as familiar with the Liao court as Su Che frequently used it in his writings on barbarians: *Luancheng ji* 15.350, 16.398-9, 36.793, 36.799, 37.808, 38.845, 41.904-9, 42.938, 46.1004, 47.1028, 'hou ji' 1.1106, 'hou ji' 11.1279. The trope of a master-servant relationship was common in eleventh-century discourse on barbarians: see, for example, the juxtaposition that Shao Yong 邵雍 makes in his poem 'Thoughts on the troubles' 思患吟, *Yichuan ji rang ji* 伊川擊壤集, Shao Yong, *Si bu cong kan* edn., 16.79b.

'superior state' as an infant suckling its mother.[126] And not only do barbarians appear socially inferior to and dependent on Han Chinese; with a well-worn bestial analogy to 'dogs and goats' 犬羊, he dehumanizes them altogether.[127] It is resonant of the Western Jin discourse that we have already identified in *ZZTJ*.

The eleventh-century barbarians of Sima Guang's memorials appear with different characteristics to those in *ZZTJ*. He casts them as arrogant: the terms '*jiao*' 驕 and '*man*' 慢 recur in his descriptions of their actions and attitudes. They are most common in his accounts of barbarian responses to Han Chinese provocation or signs of weakness.[128] The terms emerge from a wider discourse among Sima Guang's contemporaries. In a memorial of 2 June 1042 Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 characterised the barbarians as 'arrogant and indolent' 驕怠 and identified this as a weakness from which the Han Chinese state might profit.[129] Twenty years later, in 1063, Su Shi 蘇軾 traced barbarian arrogance back to the Treaty of Shanyuan in 1005.[130] In a speech of 22 April 1075 Han Qi 韓琦 identified similar traits of barbarian arrogance and

[126] Han Chinese sovereignty over barbarians: *SMWJ* 40.1b. Han Chinese state as 'mother' to barbarians: *ibid* 50.6a. Sima Guang was not the first to use this image: he records Pang Ji's use of the same analogy on *ibid* 76.7b.
[127] *Ibid* 20.8b (in which Sima Guang also draws on *Han shu* 94B.3834 to characterise barbarians with 'human faces but animal hearts' 人面獸心; see above, n.32), 26.6a ('犬羊之心' changes to the more neutral '戎人之心' on *XCB* 199.4823), 42.5b, 50.5b. Sima Guang likens the relationship between Han Chinese and barbarians to that of a herd of sheep in conflict with wolves and hyenas on *SMWJ* 46.11a (the analogy is omitted from *Song shi* 192.4780). Bestial characterizations of barbarians were common in eleventh-century discourse: *Lequan ji* 18.31a; *Luo Yuzhang xian sheng wen ji* 羅豫章先生文集, Luo Congyan 羅從彥, *Guo xue ji ben cong shu* edn., 5.59; *Luancheng ji* 'hou ji' 11.1279 (in which Su Che also suggests that the barbarians have 'the hearts of dogs and goats' 犬羊之心), 'ying zhao ji' 5.1621. In this last essay, though, Su Che also introduces a nuance into his argument that does not appear in Sima Guang's writings. True, he characterises northern barbarians as bestial in both nature and custom, but he offers this qualification: 'Yet when it comes to the reasons why they protect their kin, take care of their own lives, raise cattle and horses, bring up their descendents, reside carefree and in peace, and want to protect their leaders, they are probably no different to those of Han Chinese' (5.1621). Fan Zuyu offers a similarly nuanced view. He asserts the inherent superiority of Han Chinese over barbarians but claims a similarity between the two on a fundamental, human level, *Tang jian* 3.12b. See also Wang Anshi's suggestion that, despite fundamental differences between ethnic groups, sovereigns of antiquity treated all with equal humanity, *Zhou guan xin yi* 周官新義, Wang Anshi, *Yue ya tang cong shu* edn., 13.10a. For the reader familiar with European literature, these views resonate with arguments proposed in the fifth century BC by the sophist writer Antiphon (Barnes, J., 'New Light on Antiphon,' *Polis* 7.1, 1987: 5) and, more famously, by Shakespeare's Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, John Russel Brown, ed., London: Arden Shakespeare, third series, repr.2006, p.73 (III.1.52-62).
[128] *SMWJ* 26.6a, 27.10b, 33.5a (although the Song court fails to recognize barbarian arrogance on 33.5b), 48.3a, 80.7a; *Sushui ji wen* 5.89, 8.162, 11.207 (quoting Pang Ji). Sima Guang also points up barbarian arrogance with different rhetoric but similar force on *SMWJ* 33.10b, 36.4a, and 50.6b.
[129] *Xu Zi zhi tong jian chang bian*, ap. *Yong le da dian* 永樂大典, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1986, 12399.20b.
[130] *Su Shi wen ji* 4.115.

self-aggrandisement 驕大 in response to Song belligerence. Unlike Ouyang Xiu, though, he saw this as a threat to, not an opportunity for, Han Chinese sovereignty.[131] For Sima Guang, barbarian arrogance produces savagery and ruthlessness, an extension of the topos of bestiality.[132] It fits well with Sima Guang's representation of relative barbarian inferiority: these traits ultimately stem from a reaction to Han Chinese superiority. They also carry a sense of political threat since they accompany barbarians' natural tendency to deceit and insubordination – the same traits attributed to them by Western Jin ministers in *ZZTJ*, although that distrust of barbarians is the subject of implicit criticism there.[133]

The divergence between *ZZTJ*'s representation of the fourth-century barbarians and Sima Guang's statements on the eleventh century does not create ideological inconsistency, though. Far from it: as usual, a close reading of one type of document produces rich insights into others. When we set a critical analysis of *ZZTJ*'s governing ideology beside Sima Guang's explicit political statements, we gain a fuller and more nuanced understanding of Sima Guang's ethnic policy as a whole. True, Sima Guang emphasises different barbarian characteristics in his different writings, but his underlying political message remains the same throughout. He is at once contemptuous of barbarians' inherent nature and customs – that is what we hear in his eleventh-century memorials, and in *ZZTJ* too barbarians are only

[131] *XCB* 262.6386. Similar claims of barbarian arrogance as a threat appear widely in Song discourse, although in different rhetorical guises: for example, Liu Chang's 劉敞 *Gongshi ji* 公是集, *Guo xue ji ben cong shu* edn., 40.476 and Su Che on *Luancheng ji* 'ying zhao ji' 5.1623.

[132] *SMWJ* 20.8b (note the bestial etymology of Sima Guang's choice of phrase to describe barbarians, '桀驁鴟張'), 26.6a, 36.4a.

[133] Deceit: *SMWJ* 26.6a, 33.4b, 38.4a, 50.4a. Insubordination: *SMWJ* 27.10b, 33.4b, 77.6a; *Sushui ji wen* 8.162. In his 'Qi wei jin si shi xian she xi ren di er zha zi' 乞未禁私市先赦西人第二劄子 of 4 March 1086, Sima Guang supports these claims with examples of successful barbarian rebellions against Song, *SMWJ* 50.9a (for dating, see *XCB* 366.8787). Both traits appear commonly in Song discourse. In 991, for example, Emperor Taizong described barbarians as 'crafty,' *XCB* 32.714. There are also frequent characterizations of barbarians as untrustworthy and changeable in the writings and speeches of eleventh-century scholars and officials: Ouyang Xiu on *ibid* 141.3382; *Su Shunqin ji* 蘇舜欽集, Su Shunqin 蘇舜欽, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, repr.1962, 11.156; *Wenzhuang ji* 文莊集, Xia Song 夏竦, *Si ku quan shu zhen ben chu ji* edn., 13.18b; Su Song 蘇頌 on *XCB* 284.6953; *Luancheng ji* 42.939, 'ying zhao ji' 5.1621.

successful when they adopt Han Chinese traits – and wary of their potential to destabilise the political integrity of the Han Chinese state and even threaten its cultural and ethnic identity – the warning that Western Jin serves us in *ZZTJ*. We are on familiar ground here. This is an identifiable species-wide reaction to a powerful 'other,' well-documented in social and political environments remote from Sima Guang's Song state. Just this combination of contempt and cautious fear marked Christian Europe's response to the rise and spread of the barbarian religion of Islam, for example.[134] These apparently paradoxical emotions also shape much of the Orientalist discourse that modern scholar Edward Said identified as a recurrent European (and, more recently, North American) response to the Near East.[135]

For Sima Guang the Han Chinese state (in the eleventh century as in the fourth) is the superior power in its dealing with barbarians. They are opportunistic, though. They can absorb Han Chinese customs and, if allowed to transgress boundaries between ethnic identities, are able to elevate themselves culturally and morally. They also react with devastating results to signs of domestic disorder.[136] As a result, they pose a serious threat to Han Chinese sovereignty. Not all the blame lies with the barbarians, though. Writing to Song Emperor Taizong in protest against an invasion of Liao territory in the winter of 980 a remonstrance official from the Chancellery, Zhang Qixian 張齊賢, had put it like this: 'since antiquity, the

[134] In his ninth-century *Historia Langobardorum Beneventanorum*, a monk from the abbey of Monte Cassino, Erchempertus, used derogatory bestial imagery to describe Arab invaders of Sicily but, at the same time, closely documented their power and the destruction that they visited upon the local area, *Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum saec. vi-ix*, Georg Waitz, ed., ap. *Monumenta Germaniae historica inde ab anno Christi quingentesimo usque ad annum millesimum et quingentesimum*, Hannover: Impensis bibliopolii Hahniani, 1878, p.239. It happens that Erchermpertus' analogy to a swarm of bees ('ad instar examen apum') is common in Song discourse on barbarians.

[135] See, for example, Said's comments that the 'Orient at large, therefore, vacillates between the West's contempt for what is familiar and its shivers of delight in – or fear of – novelty. Yet where Islam was concerned, European fear, if not always respect, was in order. … Not for nothing did Islam come to symbolize terror, devastation, the demonic, hordes of hated barbarians. For Europe, Islam was a lasting trauma,' Said, Edward W., *Orientalism*, London: Penguin, repr.2003, p.59.

[136] See, for example, Sima Guang's establishment of barbarian invasions as a reaction to natural disasters (*SMWJ* 18.5b, 23.2a, 24.1b), social turmoil (*ibid* 32.8b, 35.7b, 36.4a, 45.10a), and military mismanagement (*ibid* 18.5b, 27.10a-b, 31.3b).

difficulties of the frontier have not all come from enemy states. Many have also been precipitated by border officials creating turmoil.'[137] For Sima Guang too, a barbarian threat only made itself felt when Han Chinese officials erred from their political and moral obligations in both ethnic policy and domestic governance, and allowed their barbarian rivals to achieve parity. If ethnic divides blur, Han Chinese sovereignty – even its identity – is jeopardised. The echoes from *ZZTJ* sound clearly.

Three cases of Song political negligence drew Sima Guang's notice during the 1060s. For him, they threatened to undermine the integrity and strength of the Han Chinese state. His responses offer explicit statements of his views on ethnic policy. They have far-reaching implications and Sima Guang revisits the themes of these memorials in his statements on Song ethnic policy over the following two decades. They also span the period in which Sima Guang developed the textual and ideological foundations for *ZZTJ*.[138] They complement that work and lend clarity to its basic commitments: to acknowledge a barbarian threat to Han Chinese integrity; to warn against undue arrogance and complacency among Han Chinese officials; to emphasise the need for peaceful diplomatic relations with barbarian states; to demonstrate the value of internal political stability over a confrontational ethnic policy.[139]

In the fifth lunar month of 1061 an imperial ordinance prohibited Kitans from sailing on the River Jie, which marked the border with (but lay just inside) Song

[137] *Song shi* 265.9151.
[138] Modern scholar Cao Jiaqi 曹家琪 dates the composition of *ZZTJ*'s account of Western Jin to between May 1071 and the autumn of 1076, Cao Jiaqi, '*Zi zhi tong jian* bian xiu kao' "資治通鑑"編修考, *Wen shi* 文史 5, 1978: 82-3. As we have seen, though, *ZZTJ*'s outlines took shape in *Li nian tu*, which he presented to the throne in 1064.
[139] Sima Guang's ethnic policy is examined in Mu Qin 木芹, 'Shi lun Sima Guang de min zu guan' 試論司馬光的民族觀, in *Sima Guang yu* Zi zhi tong jian 司馬光與資治通鑑, Liu Naihe 劉乃和 and Song Yanshen 宋衍申, eds., Changchun: Jilin wen shi chu ban she, 1986, pp.124-43; Cui Fanzhi 崔凡芝 and Xiao Shuzhen 蕭淑貞, 'Lüe lun Sima Guang de min zu si xiang' 略論司馬光的民族思想, *Min zu yan jiu* 民族研究 3, 1995: 88-91, 93. The second article is based on a brief consideration of the three incidents that follow. Their importance to Sima Guang's political career suggests itself from their appearance in his biographical report of conduct, *xing zhuang* 行狀, by Su Shi, *Su Shi wen ji*, 16.481, 16.483.

territory. It followed reports from local officials that Kitan commoners had used the river illicitly to fish, gather reeds, and transport salt. A vigorous and able official, Zhao Zi 趙滋, was appointed to enforce the prohibition. On arrival in the area, though, he acted without authorization and dispatched patrol troops to arrest and kill all Kitans on the river. He also burnt their boats. The Kitans issued a formal plaint. Senior Song administrators in the area, as well as several court officials, accused Zhao Zi of inciting border tensions and demanded his removal from office. The court lent its support to Zhao Zi and even increased his official responsibilities on 11 November.[140] Sima Guang responded on the same day with a powerful criticism of the treatment of the Kitans.[141] He followed this on 17 October 1063 with a second memorial, in response to the court's decision to promote Zhao Zi yet again.[142] In a third, broad statement of 1065 on ethnic relations, he attributed border troubles in the north to Zhao Zi's belligerence.[143]

In 1064 the other major barbarian threat to Song sovereignty, the Tanguts, sent an emissary to offer congratulations to the newly acceded Song emperor. An escort, Gao Yi 高宜, was dispatched by the Song court to accompany the emissary from the border to the capital. Gao Yi was arrogant and insulted the Tangut ruler. On reaching the imperial palace he barred the emissary from entering and left him for an evening without food. Only after a long impasse, during which the two men traded insults, did the emissary gain entrance to the palace. He lodged a complaint with the Song court, accusing Gao Yi of having humiliated him and threatened an invasion of Tangut territory. The court ignored these protests and instead criticised the emissary for failing to show due respect to the Song emperor. Sima Guang and his fellow

[140] Kitan activity and imperial response: *XCB* 193.4671-2; *Song shi*, 324.10496-7. Appointment of Zhao Zi: *Song shi* 312.10233, 324.10496. Protests against Zhao Zi's actions: *XCB* 195.4720-1; *Song shi* 318.10368, 324.10497.
[141] *SMWJ* 24.10b-11b (for dating, see *XCB* 195.4721).
[142] *SMWJ* 26.9b-10a.
[143] *Ibid* 33.10b-11b.

remonstrance official, Lü Hui 呂晦, urged that Gao Yi be punished for his conduct. Their advice went unheeded. That autumn the Tanguts invaded Song territory to the northwest. In the depredation that ensued tens of thousands died or were captured.[144] In the ninth lunar month Sima Guang presented an account of tensions along the northern borders, which he traced to Gao Yi's actions. He restated this view in a second analysis of Song ethnic relations, produced on 2 August 1065.[145]

Five years after Gao Yi's abuse of the Tangut emissary, in 1069, Song border official Chong E 种諤 attempted to win over a disaffected Tangut commander, Wei Mingshan 嵬名山. Several ministers, including Sima Guang, urged caution. Chong E did not wait for the court's orders. He raised troops and surrounded the Tangut camp. Through political manoeuvre he quickly forced Wei Mingshan's submission. He seized the Tangut prefecture of Suizhou and subdued tens of thousands of its local people. The Tanguts responded by killing a Song official. This prompted the court to consider abandoning its newly acquired territory.[146] A swell of criticism was levelled at Chong E's recklessness and insubordination.[147] Sima Guang was among the critics. In a memorial of the sixth lunar month he suggested that Chong E had broken a tradition of peaceful diplomacy with Song's barbarian neighbours.[148] Chong E was temporarily dismissed from office, but later regained a border posting and launched

[144] *XCB* 202.4905-6; *Song shi* 336.10760, 485.14002. Reference to Sima Guang and Lü Hui's protest also appears on *SMWJ* 31.3a-b.
[145] 1064 statement: *ibid* 31.3a-4a. 1065 statement: *ibid* 33.10b-11b, esp. 10b.
[146] Attempts to win over Wei Mingshan and aides: *Song shi* 335.10745; *Sushui ji wen*, 11.209-10. Advice of caution: *Song shi* 332.10681 (Lu Shen 陸詵), 336.10763 (Sima Guang). Chong E's attack and surrender of Suizhou: *Song shi* 328.10586, 332.10681, 332.10683, 335.10745; *Sushui ji wen* 11.210; *Sima Guang ri ji* 司馬光日記, ap. *XCB* 235.5709. Tangut response: *Song shi* 209.9724.
[147] *Ibid* 328.10586, 332.10683; *Fan tai shi ji* 范太史集, Fan Zuyu 范祖禹, *Si ku quan shu zhen ben chu ji* edn., 40.8b. Specific criticisms were made by Lu Shen (*Song shi* 332.10681), Han Qi 韓琦 and Ceng Gongliang 曾公亮 (*ibid* 312.10226-7), Zheng Xie 鄭獬 (*ibid* 321.10418-9; *Yunxi ji* 鄖溪集, Zheng Xie, *Si ku quan shu zhen ben san ji* edn., 11.13b-16a), Guo Shenxi 郭申錫 (*Song shi* 330.10621; *Zhongsu ji* 忠肅集, Liu Zhi 劉摯, *Ji fu cong shu* edn., 11.16b), Li Shizhong 李師中 (*Song shi* 332.10678), Jia Kui 賈逵 (*ibid* 349.11052), Wen Yanbo 文彥博 (*Lu gong wen ji* 潞公文集, Wen Yanbo, *Si ku quan shu zhen ben liu ji* edn., 18.4b-5a) and Yang Hui 楊繪 (*Fan tai shi ji* 39.10a). Xue Xiang 薛向 defended Chong E's actions, though, claiming that he had served the state without thought for personal safety, *Song shi* 328.10586-7.
[148] *SMWJ* 40.1a-2a.

campaigns into Kitan territory. Sima Guang continued his opposition. In his 'Last testament' 遺表, which he wrote after a debilitating stroke in the autumn of 1082, he picked out Chong E's actions for censure as a threat to dynastic welfare and stability.[149]

That, sketched in broad outline, was the fragile state of Song's ethnic relations as Sima Guang approached the composition of *ZZTJ*. Familiar themes run through his responses to the three incidents. He represents Song border officials as arrogant. Repetition underlines their common characterization. Zhao Zi is 'stubborn and arrogant' 剛慢 or 'stubborn and wilful' 剛愎 by nature.[150] He behaves imperiously towards the Kitans, fails to observe traditional diplomatic form, and 'lords it over their emissaries' 傲使人.[151] This characterization, and the rhetoric that frames it, finds support in later accounts: his official fourteenth-century biographer in *Song shi* describes him as 'imperious and wilful' 傲愎 and prone to bragging.[152] It also echoes Sima Guang's representation of Gao Yi who, like Zhao Zi, 'lords it over [the Tangut] emissaries' 傲其使者.[153] His humiliation of the barbarians appears as the cause of their aggression.

Others also come under Sima Guang's scrutiny for showing similar traits. In 1061, shortly after his criticism of Zhao Zi, he directed a similar tirade at the Military Commissioner of the Qinfeng circuit, Zhang Fangping 張方平, in which he proposed his punishment 'as a warning to the officials enfeoffed in the border prefectures, causing them all to make preparations in advance and not dare to be arrogant and lax

[149] *Ibid* 57.15a-19a, esp. 17a.
[150] *Ibid* 24.10b, 26.9b. The modern editors of *Quan Song wen* offer identical phrasing for both texts: 'stubborn and wilful' 剛愎, *Quan Song wen* 全宋文, Chengdu: Ba Shu shu she, 1988, 1183.640, 1184.663.
[151] *SMWJ* 24.11a.
[152] *Song shi* 324.10497. Cf. *XCB* 201.4884.
[153] *SMWJ* 31.3a.

驕傲懈弛 like Fangping.'[154] He also identified arrogance as a general weakness of the Song military stationed along the border and, in a 1086 analysis of the state of Xia, saw it as a stimulus for barbarian aggression.[155] The view found support from Sima Guang's contemporaries. In a memorial of 6 June 1043 Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 complained that Song military men stationed along the border boasted about their own courage (which they mostly lacked) and misled the emperor over their true abilities.[156] Later in the century Su Che 蘇轍 also characterised the inhabitants of Song territory as 'arrogant, extravagant, and indolent 驕奢怠墮' and lacking in courage.[157]

All this echoes Sima Guang's characterization of barbarians themselves, for whom Sima Guang used a similar rhetoric of arrogance. Song officials sink to the same moral level as their uncouth rivals and so lose their moral and cultural superiority. A blurring of the divides that define different ethnic stereotypes (the result of Han Chinese standards being lowered rather than barbarian ones raised) is what creates the barbarian threat to Han Chinese sovereignty. Here are parallels with the causal link in *ZZTJ* between Western Jin courtiers' derogatory treatment of barbarians and their subsequent humiliation and political overthrow.

Further similarities suggest themselves between the fourth-century past as it appears in *ZZTJ* and the eleventh-century present. Sima Guang criticizes all three Song ministers for complacency in their relations with barbarians. Gao Yi, for example, is rash in his exchanges with Tangut diplomats.[158] Chong E is seen to

[154] *SMWJ* 20.11a.
[155] *Ibid* 50.3a (for dating, see *XCB* 365.8749). Cf. *SMWJ* 32.8b and 33.6a-b, in which Sima Guang demands that the emperor suppress 'the spirit of arrogance and indolence 驕惰之氣' among Song civil and military officials.
[156] *Xu Zi zhi tong jian chang bian*, ap. *Yong le da dian* 12399.23b.
[157] *Luancheng ji* 'ying zhao ji' 5.1621.
[158] *SMWJ* 31.3a

engage barbarians in military conflict 'as if it were all just a child's game.'[159] And elsewhere Sima Guang levels similar charges of arrogance and complacency against the whole Song court as barbarians encroach on its sovereign territory.[160] In *ZZTJ*, in 279 of its chronology, Western Jin courtiers are seen to decide unanimously that 'sending out troops was a serious matter and that the caitiffs were not worth the trouble.'[161] In the eleventh century Sima Guang confronts a similar situation, one that was serious enough also to cause concern among his contemporaries.[162] He shows that Song's complacency is misplaced, just like Western Jin's was over seven hundred years earlier. When Song military officials adopt a 'demeaning and arrogant mentality' 輕慢之心 towards barbarians, their armies are obliterated and castles under their control are razed to the ground.[163] The warnings are there in the past, and Sima Guang shows them clearly in *ZZTJ*; present political failure is the result of ignoring them.

Sima Guang can draw on personal experience as well as close analysis of the past for his statements on eleventh-century ethnic policy. In 1055 his political patron, Pang Ji 龐籍, was appointed Military Commissioner and Inspector-general of the Hedong circuit and administrator of Bingzhou.[164] Sima Guang followed him to take up a post as vice-administrator. Under Pang Ji's jurisdiction in Hedong was an area

[159] *Ibid* 57.17a.
[160] *Ibid* 31.3b-4a (dated 2 August 1065: *XCB* 202.4906). In 'Qi wei jin si shi xian she xi ren di er zha zi,' submitted to the throne on 4 March 1086, Sima Guang claims that the court believed its barbarian rivals to be submissive and in decline, and so had failed to take prompt action against them, *SMWJ* 50.9b (for dating, see *XCB* 366.8787); cf. *SMWJ* 50.4a. These criticisms reflect the policies of Wang Anshi, who on 14 October 1072 told Emperor Shenzong that their barbarian rivals were at that time the weakest they had been for several hundred years, *XCB* 238.5788. Chen Guan 陳瓘, a near contemporary of Sima Guang and Wang Anshi, is right to point up inconsistency in Wang Anshi's claims, though. On 17 August of the same year, Wang had suggested that 'the size of the barbarian population and the expanse of their territory has never been greater than the Kitans' today,' *XCB* 236.5726. For Chen Guan's objections, see *Song Zhongsu Chen Liaozhai Siming Zun Yao ji* 宋忠肅陳了齋四明尊堯集, Chen Guan, *Si ku quan shu cun mu cong shu* edn., 6.1a-2a.
[161] See above, n.11.
[162] See, for example, Ouyang Xiu's comments on 8 July 1043 on Song ministers' apparent air of calm despite lacking real control over areas to the north of the Yellow River. Ouyang Xiu also characterises them as lax in their administration and arrogant, *XCB* 141.3383.
[163] *SMWJ* 50.3a.
[164] *XCB* 180.4354; *SMWJ* 17.5a-b; *Ouyang Xiu quan ji* 85.1245; *Wengong ji* 文恭集, Hu Su 胡宿, *Si ku quan shu zhen ben bie ji* edn., 25.6b-7a.

of Linzhou that was the subject of a dispute with Xia.[165] In 1057 he sent Sima Guang to discuss a resolution to the dispute with local prefect Wu Kan 武堪. On his return, Sima Guang advanced Wu Kan's plan to take advantage of perceived Xia military weakness to construct two fortresses on the disputed land, drive out Xia farmers from the area, and destroy their crops. Pang Ji adopted it despite reports of a large enemy military presence. Song armies were ambushed as they moved into the disputed area and over a quarter of the troops perished. Soon after, Sima Guang identified the source of the disaster: he had treated barbarians without due circumspection and forethought, and (prefiguring Zhao Zi's later treatment of barbarian conflict 'as if it were all just a child's game') had 'discussed a matter of great import as if it were insignificant.'[166] After an official investigation, Pang Ji was demoted. Sima Guang produced successive documents in which he claimed personal responsibility for the defeat, but he ultimately went unpunished.[167]

After this episode his ethnic policy shows a marked change. Already in a letter of the following year to the former Controller-general of Linzhou (then Assistant Director of the Palace Library), Xia Yi 夏倚, he suggests a reversal in his ethnic policy. He advocates a tolerant approach to dealing with barbarians, which he had previously considered unfavourable. By implication, he rejects the belligerent stance that he had proposed to Pang Ji.[168]

By the early 1060s, and the composition of *ZZTJ* and its antecedents, he sees Song officials' use of military force as a direct stimulus for barbarian retaliation and therefore as a threat to the stability of the Han Chinese state. He couches his

[165] Wang Gui 王珪 describes Xia's occupation of the area on *Huayang ji* 華陽集, Wang Gui, *Si ku quan shu zhen ben si ji* edn., 57.13b, 58.7a.
[166] *SMWJ* 17.4b.
[167] *XCB* 185.4476-8, 186.4494-5; *Song shi* 336.10758; *Su Shi wen ji* 16.476; *Huayang ji* 48.7b-8a. Sima Guang's version of these events and admissions of guilt appear in: *SMWJ* 17.3a-5a, 17.5a-b, 24.4b-5b (in which Sima Guang also suggests that he discussed the proposals to build fortifications with Xia Yi), 59.6b-7b, 76.8a.
[168] *Ibid* 59.6a.

warnings in sententious rhetoric: 'Although they may be bestial hordes, with human faces but animal hearts,' he declares of barbarians on 15 November 1061, 'if one placates them they become arrogant, and if one provokes them they rebel. … If they live peacefully and without incident, then disturbing them causes them to rebel.'[169] There are echoes of both the rhetoric and the content of Jiang Tong's essay in *ZZTJ*. All three of the Song ministers who later fall under Sima Guang's critical gaze will be implicated by their failure to observe the fundamental political dynamic that he establishes here. They appear quick to resort to force, which they employ inappropriately and to excess. They provoke retaliation from barbarians, and the massacre and pillage of Song frontier communities ultimately traces back to their actions.[170] Zhao Zi is 'wild and disruptive' 狂妄 in his behaviour.[171] He contests trivial matters, best resolved by non-violent means, and his gains are only minor. He is motivated by 'temporary renown among his contemporaries, without paying heed to the long-term damage that it will do to the state.'[172] His belligerence causes bitter resentment among the Kitan and provokes retaliation after decades of peaceful relations. It also draws the antipathy of his Song colleagues.[173] So, too, Chong E's unauthorised campaign against the Tanguts in 1069: 'For a hundred and more years the state has treated barbarians as vassals and nurtured them through trust and righteous conduct,' Sima Guang declares. 'The other day, Chong E and others abandoned all this.'[174] These individuals' actions contribute to a general pattern in Song policy towards its barbarian neighbours. In the early 1080s, for example, Song military commanders seize territory from Xia. They make few gains but provoke

[169] *SMWJ* 20.8b (for dating, see *Chuan jia ji* 22.10b).
[170] *SMWJ* 33.10b-11a.
[171] *Ibid* 26.9b.
[172] *Ibid* 24.11a.
[173] Kitan retaliation: *ibid* 24.11a. Cf. *ibid* 20.8b, in which Sima Guang attributes the large number of border skirmishes of the early 1060s to Song officials' provocation of barbarians during times of peace. Song antipathy: *ibid* 24.10b, 26.9b-10a.
[174] *Ibid* 40.1b.

devastating campaigns of retaliation, and the foundations of relations between the two states are disrupted as a result.[175] There are serious political implications from all this. The continued and unnecessary use of force against barbarians ultimately endangers the stability of the Song state, Sima Guang suggests. Border skirmishes lead to full-scale wars in which Song troops face annihilation; the common people suffer economic hardship because of the demand for military supplies; starvation afflicts the whole state; bandits take advantage of social disorder; there is the threat of rebellion from within as well as invasion from without.[176] For Sima Guang the issue transcends local geographical, social, and political settings: it is 'a concern for the altars of state, not just a disaster for the border prefectures.'[177] The survival of the dynasty is under threat – the lesson to be learned from Western Jin, in fact.

Short-term territorial gain and long-term dynastic security: that is what lies on either side of the political balance here. Zhao Zi, Chong E, and the Song commanders of the 1080s are all seen to act out of personal interest. It causes them to disregard their own weaknesses and the barbarians' relative strengths.[178] Their achievements appear insubstantial and temporary, the result of arrogance and scant political forethought. These are specific examples of a general type that Han Qi identifies in the fourth lunar month of 1075 as 'individuals who favour advancing without taking heed of the relative benefit or damage that it will do to the state. They only think that we will initiate matters on the border and that they can plan for prosperity and nobility. They inevitably declare that the caitiffs' power is already in

[175] *Ibid* 40.1b, 50.2b-3a.
[176] *Ibid* 50.9b.
[177] *Ibid* 40.2a. There are textual and ideological echoes between this memorial and statements of the second lunar month of 1086 in which Sima Guang urges the newly-instated Emperor Zhezong to pardon the barbarians' diplomatic misdemeanours, *ibid* 50.8a, (for dating, see *XCB* 365.8754), 50.8a (*XCB* 365.8771), 50.8b-9a (*XCB* 366.8786).
[178] See, for example, *SMWJ* 24.11a, 57.17a.

decline and that they only appear proud and arrogant on the outside.'[179] And from *ZZTJ* we see too that they fit readily into a longer historical trend of arrogant and complacent Han Chinese ministers, barbarian retaliation, and dynastic collapse.

Against these negative images of personal greed, aggression and, above all, contempt for barbarians, Sima Guang draws on a seam of discourse that had developed during the eleventh century in the aftermath of the Treaty of Shanyuan in 1005. He appeals to a long-term vision of Song's relations with its foreign neighbours. Since a contemptuous and aggressive ethnic policy undermines political stability, any apparent short-term gains that it may bring should be abandoned in the long-term interests of state survival.[180] To support his argument, he establishes as a political ideal an enduring relationship of peace between Han Chinese and barbarians, one based on mutual trust and righteous conduct.[181] The historical accuracy of this ideal is questionable – no such relationship of harmony and trust existed between Song and its barbarian neighbours during the eleventh century, as Sima Guang claims – but it serves to draw a sharp contrast with the diplomatically and economically unprofitable policies of Song warmongers.

Sima Guang offers a means to this ideal ends and, by implication, a solution to the current failings of Song ethnic policy. He draws on two sources of authority. The first takes in the full scope of the past, through canonical and historical references to both rulers of antiquity and the consolidation of a unified polity under the Han state.[182] *ZZTJ* has a powerful role to play here. The second appeals to a more recent and personal genealogy: the emperor's imperial predecessors of the Song

[179] *XCB* 262.6390; *Shao shi wen jian lu* 邵氏聞見錄, Shao Bowen 邵伯溫, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1983, 4.33.
[180] See, for example, Sima Guang's statements in 1086 on *SMWJ* 50.5a and 53.7a-8a.
[181] Similar representations of the relationship between Song and its barbarian rivals appear in *Lequan ji* 18.31b; *Shao shi wen jian lu* 4.33 (attributed to Han Qi); *Luancheng ji*, 16.401, 42.939. Su Che's comments on *Luancheng ji* 'hou ji' 11.1279 suggest that they functioned as justification for the Treaty of Shanyuan: for those who favoured diplomacy with Liao, the terms of that treaty were cast as the foundation of stable imperial rule.
[182] *SMWJ* 31.3a, 33.10b, 38.4a, 50.4b, 57.17b-18a.

dynasty. Its founder, Emperor Taizu, is particularly prominent, but so too are Emperors Zhenzong and Renzong, the immediate forebears of the Song rulers whom Sima Guang addresses.[183] His arguments therefore encompass both public values – the (ethnically Han Chinese) value system of a core canon of authoritative texts, as well as the legitimacy of Han Chinese imperial tradition – and the emperor's personal responsibilities – the ancestral duties of dynastic heritage.

Sima Guang demands that relations with Song's barbarian rivals be based on cautious diplomacy, a theme that will come into sharp focus in Chapter 3 of this study. The aggressive policies of the likes of Zhao Zi and Chong E, and Gao Yi's disparagement of a Tangut diplomat, provoke barbarians. That, too, is the effect of Western Jin ministers' misrule of their barbarian clients in the late third and early fourth centuries. The results, Sima Guang repeatedly shows, are disastrous for the stability of the Han Chinese polity. Sima Guang therefore urges the emperor to criticise barbarians for their diplomatic failings in the past but, at the same time, to pardon them and re-establish tribute relations.[184] In a statement of 10 August 1063 he points up the merits of engaging in diplomacy with barbarians:

> I have humbly heard that over the past few days the emissary sent by the state of Xia was unwilling to have an audience at the gate, but insistently sought entrance for a meeting face-to-face. The court did not allow it and forced him to return to his lodgings. In my bumbling way I believe that when Your Majesty first succeeded to power, members of all the barbarian tribes wanted to behold your heavenly countenance and to steal a glimpse of your sagely virtue. Further to this, I have heard that when things were not stable in former times, it was argued that they could not visit the court and that this was why their bestial minds ventured to grow so cruel and cunning. If we now shut them out completely and stubbornly refuse them [entry], not allowing them in for an audience, then they will inevitably suspect that there is something that we are concealing. It would be more than enough to make them haughty. Moreover, Your Majesty had already gone to the main hall on that day. I believe that we need not begrudge them a place of several paces away in the purple chamber, have them kow-tow and prostrate themselves in respect, and look up at your radiance. They will probably come to recognize Your Highness's spirited and vigorous

[183] *Ibid* 18.6a-b, 23.7b, 24.10b, 33.11a, 38.4a, 40.1b, 50.4b.
[184] *Ibid* 31.3b, 50.8a-b, 50.8b-10a, 53.7a, 63.12b.

> bearing and know that you are certainly able to subdue the area within the four seas. When they get back to their state and give word of it in turn, it will cause the buzzing masses [of their state] to surrender their loyalties and will subdue their spirit, and they will not dare to encroach upon our borders. This is what is meant by 'the superior tactic in using troops is to attack [the enemy's] strategy, causing the enemy to submit without waiting to engage in battle.'[185]

Sima Guang's view of an inherent Han Chinese cultural and moral superiority resurfaces here. The emperor overawes Song's barbarian rivals, the bestial 'buzzing masses,' through his moral and cultural dominance. By contrast, the obstruction of diplomacy – a descent to the base, savage level of the barbarians themselves – arouses suspicion and risks retaliation. Refusal to grant an imperial audience, failure to follow diplomatic protocol (as Gao Yi had done), and the aggression of belligerent ministers such as Zhao Zi and Chong E all cause the barbarians to grow suspicious and resentful of Song and to place their troops in a state of high alert.[186] Sima Guang therefore insists on diplomatic transparency. 'Although the Qiang and Rong barbarians are base,' he declares, 'I fear that they have never been easy to fool with written documents. As a result, since the caitiffs have had their hopes dashed, they have grown angry and resentful.'[187] Again he claims inherent superiority over Song's barbarian rivals: his reference to 'caitiffs' 虜 signals this and the whole statement rings with condescension. Unlike both the Western Jin courtiers of the fourth century and the border officials of his own time, though, Sima Guang qualifies his rhetoric.

[185] *Ibid* 26.6a (for dating, see *XCB* 199.4823). Only the first half of the quotation has an identifiable source: *Shi yi jia zhu Sun zi* 十一家注孫子, Sun Wu 孫武, Cao Cao 曹操 et al., annot., Shanghai: Zhong hua shu ju, 1962, A.35. The second half echoes that text's '不戰而屈人之兵,' A.34.

[186] *SMWJ* 40.1b. The creation of unnecessary suspicion and resentment is also the basis of Sima Guang's criticism, in the same document of 10 August 1063, of the court's decision not to admit a Tangut emissary into the imperial palace for an audience with the emperor, *ibid* 26.6a. Sima Guang earlier used similar arguments to criticise the Song court's delay in informing the Kitans of Emperor Yingzong's accession to the throne in 1063. He claimed that it risked undermining the trust on which treaty relations between the two states were based, and offered the Kitans justification for invading Song, *SMWJ* 25.2b-3b (for dating, see *XCB* 198.4796).

[187] *SMWJ* 50.3b; cf. *ibid* 25.3a Sima Guang's arguments in favour of diplomatic transparency in relations with barbarian states find echoes in the policies of his political associates: *XCB* 262.6390-1 (citing Han Qi, cf. *Shao shi wen jian lu* 4.33-4); *ibid* 4.34 (citing Fu Bi); *Zhongsu ji* 6.16a-b; *Luancheng ji* 16.394 (although on 41.937-8 Su Che seems to qualify his calls for 'absolute sincerity' by expressing alarm at the volume of politically sensitive material that had been smuggled across the border into Liao); *XCB* 262.6387-8 (citing Han Qi), 262.6392-7 (citing Fu Bi), 262.6395 (citing Wen Yanbo).

He urges against arrogance or conflict because he is alert to relative barbarian strength and Han Chinese weakness. The barbarians belie their 'base' appearance and are potentially dangerous if underestimated. Honesty and circumspection therefore offer the foundations of a successful ethnic policy. It is a familiar refrain in Sima Guang's memorials and one that also lies at the heart of *ZZTJ*.

Others echoed these views in the eleventh century: many of Sima Guang's political associates urged cordial relations with barbarians over conflict. In a statement to the throne in the eighth lunar month of 1040, the then-prefect of Yanzhou, Zhang Cun 張存, supported a policy of tolerance in the Song court's treatment of Xia leader Zhao Yuanhao. His advice was ignored at the time but, according to Sima Guang, later proved itself prescient.[188] In an essay on the means of defending against barbarians late eleventh-century scholar-official Hua Zhen 華鎮 argued that 'launching penetrating campaigns and stationing troops in distant prefectures is inferior to a peaceful and close relationship.' Like Sima Guang, he suggested that military engagement should only be used reactively and when there was no alternative but to defend against foreign invasion.[189] And, in a blurring of factional oppositions, Wang Anshi advised Emperor Shenzong on 25 August 1072 that 'the way in which we respond to the Kitan should simply be with gentleness and tranquillity.'[190]

We identified a paradox in Sima Guang's representation of Western Jin: there was a 'tension between internal and external politics: the survival of the dynasty rests as much upon its own integrity and stability as upon the strength of a barbarian

[188] *SMWJ* 77.6a-b.
[189] *Yunxi ju shi ji* 18.13b-14a. Cf. *Su Shunqin ji* 11.156, where Su Shunqin argues, like Sima Guang, that Song military action provokes barbarian retaliation; 'Shang Taizong qing ban shi' 上太宗請班師, Zhao Pu, ap. *Guo chao zhu chen zou yi* 國朝諸臣奏議, Zhao Ruyu 趙汝愚, ed., Taibei: Wen hai chu ban she, 1970, 129.5b-10b; *Zhongsu ji* 6.19a; *Shao shi wen jian lu* 4.34-5 (citing Fu Bi); *Xu Zi zhi tong jian chang bian*, ap. *Yong le da dian* 1239.22a-24a (citing Fan Zhongyan); *XCB* 149.3597-3603 (Han Qi and Fan Zhongyan), 262.6395 (Wen Yanbo).
[190] *XCB* 236.5734.

threat.' That same tension makes itself felt in Sima Guang's ethnic policy for the eleventh century. In proposing a solution to the barbarian threat that faces Song he ultimately looks inwards, not outwards. He argues for strong domestic policies before the court attempts to enforce its superiority over barbarians:

> I humbly believe that barbarian disruption of the borders is an affliction of the extremities, but if the common people were to desert and scatter it would give cause for concern at the heart of things. We should surely not place relative importance on the external and treat the internal as relatively insignificant, or pursue the tips while forgetting the roots, or fail to scrutinize what success or failure in this matter might relate to.[191]

The rhetoric is commonplace: the image of the roots and branches of a tree appears often in eleventh-century political discourse as an analogy for the priorities of state governance.[192] The argument for the relative importance of domestic stability over conflict abroad is also familiar. We have already encountered it in *ZZTJ*. It underlies Sima Guang's many criticisms of Song border officials during the 1060s. It is an enduring theme in discussions of ethnic policy among Sima Guang's contemporaries too.[193] Once again factional oppositions between the policies of Wang Anshi and Sima Guang break down here (as such antithetical schemes tend to do): like Sima Guang, Wang Anshi predicates his ethnic policy on the basis of a strong, well-governed Song state.[194] In short, the political, economic, and military 'roots' of the Song state are too weak to sustain conflict with its strong barbarian rivals and this, in

[191] *SMWJ* 43.9b-10a; cf. *ibid* 16.14b-15a.

[192] See, for example, *Yuan xian yi wen* 元獻遺文, Yan Shu 晏殊, *Si ku quan shu zhen ben qi ji* edn., 1b (citing Wang Huaji, cf. *Song shi* 266.9183-4); *ibid* 265.9151-2 (citing Zhang Qixian). Modern scholar Jiang Fuzong 蔣復璁 discusses the policy of 'strengthening the roots and weakening the branches' under Emperor Taizong in *Song shi xin tan* 宋史新探, Taibei: Zheng zhong shu ju, 1969, pp.1-52.

[193] For a sample of the many statements on this issue, see: *XCB* 32.719 (citing Emperor Taizong); *Lequan ji* 18.32a; *Shao shi wen jian lu* 4.33 (citing Han Qi, cf. *XCB* 262.6389); *Tang jian* 3.13a, 11.5a-b; *Song shi* 265.9147 (citing Lü Mengzheng); *Yichuan ji rang ji* 18.119a.

[194] *XCB* 220.5343, 220.5351-2, 229.5566 (cf. *Song Zhongsu Chen Liaozhai Siming Zun Yao ji* 6.1a-2a), 236.5735-6; *Linchuan xian sheng wen ji* 臨川先生文集, Wang Anshi 王安石, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1959, 39.410. Despite these statements, in a memorial of 14 May 1074 Sima Guang lists six major faults of Wang Anshi's reform policies. His fourth criticism is that 'the central state is not yet under orderly control, yet we are invading and causing turmoil among the barbarians from all four quarters. Our gains are few and our losses many,' *SMWJ* 45.5b (for dating, see *XCB* 252.6164).

any case, is only the 'tip' of its political concerns. In its current frail state it cannot afford to ignore (as Western Jin did; as Zhao Zi and Chong E continue to do) either its own failings or, more important, the dynamic of its relations with its barbarian rivals. The only solution for Sima Guang and for many of his eleventh-century contemporaries is therefore to turn inwards and address those failings in domestic governance – to establish the integrity and stability of the Han Chinese polity – before devoting effort and resources to ethnic policy.[195] Here, then, is further support for this chapter's opening proposal that Sima Guang's discourse of a barbarian 'other' is as much introspective and self-defining as it is outward-looking.

It brings us back finally to Jiang Tong in *ZZTJ*. Writing his 'Essay on Re-locating the Barbarians' at the end of the third century, he suggested that 'rulers with the Way' remained fully and constantly prepared for the threat of barbarian invasion. They did not launch expansionist military campaigns, he maintained, but 'simply waited until the lands within their borders were at peace, and the frontiers were not invaded.'[196] Here is Sima Guang's model for his emperor: this, too, is the ethnic policy that he proposes in the eleventh century. And the warning is also already there in *ZZTJ*'s text, in the Western Jin court's rejection of Jiang Tong's advice and its rapid fall at the hands of barbarian usurpers. Like his late third-century predecessor, Sima Guang is dealing in high stakes: the survival of the Han Chinese polity in the face of a powerful barbarian threat.

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[195] *SMWJ* 38.7a-b, 38.8b, 40.1a, 43.5a.
[196] See above, n.28.

Irony has underpinned our reading of *ZZTJ* in this chapter. Our interpretation of the text's governing ideology is based on the way we read the ironic distance between what we have identified as internal and external voices, between the views expressed by different characters within the text on the one hand, and Sima Guang as *ZZTJ*'s editor and historian on the other. That is how Sima Guang manipulates our understanding of ethnic policy under Western Jin and conditions a certain response to the fourth-century barbarian leaders who were its objects. It finds support from intertextual comparison too: the textual and political spin that shapes *ZZTJ*'s text would have had force in the context of barbarian threats to the Song dynasty during the eleventh century; it resonates strongly with contemporary discussions of ethnic policy. An analysis of *ZZTJ*'s ironies recreates for us some of that original ideological force. The insights that we gain are as much into Sima Guang's own eleventh-century political environment as into the world of the past that he invokes.

There is one final level of irony at work in all this. It is the irony that proceeds from our own historical hindsight as modern readers of *ZZTJ*'s text. Forty years after its submission to the throne, and after his own death, Sima Guang's circumspect view of relations between Han Chinese and barbarians proved prescient. Song, like Western Jin before it, succumbed to the pressure of northern barbarian regimes. As Western Jin's had done, its government was forced to abandon its northern base and flee south, where it would try to establish itself once again in an unsuccessful pursuit of the strong, unified state that it had once been. The collapse of imperial integrity paradoxically strengthened the sense of a Han Chinese self-identity that had developed during the eleventh century: social and political conduct was increasingly circumscribed by the antithetical image of a barbarian 'other.' Yet the main lesson that Sima Guang hoped to show with *ZZTJ* – that there are enduring

patterns to be found in history, that the minatory examples of the past should be brought to bear on the present – had been overlooked.

3

SONG EMPEROR WEN'S NORTHERN INVASIONS

The great political and military drama of the mid-fifth century was the cut-and-thrust attempts to bring under single rule territory that had been divided for over a hundred years. Its main actor was Emperor Wen of the southern state of Song. In the third lunar month of 430 he dispatched a large expeditionary force against Wei in the north. He aimed to extend his territorial control as far as the south bank of the Yellow River. His strategic focus was the pass at Hulao, just east of Luoyang. After slow progress Song armies captured the regions of Sizhou and Yanzhou. Wei troops soon regrouped, though, and forced a Song retreat. The dynamic between the two sides shifted. Wei reclaimed territory newly lost to Song and an uneasy peace settled.

After twenty years of border skirmishes, Emperor Wen mobilised a second invasion force on 5 August 450. The same basic pattern of events played itself out. Song troops secured a series of rapid victories and besieged Huatai, Wei's main strategic outpost south of the Yellow River. During the tenth lunar month the weather turned and Wei retaliated. On 28 November 450 its ruler, Tuoba Dao 拓跋燾, crossed the Yellow River at the head of a force rumoured to number a million men. The Song siege of Huatai collapsed. Wei armies surged deep into Song territory. By 14 January Tuoba Dao had reached the headquarters of the Song invasion force at Pengcheng. The Song capital of Jiankang was placed under martial law six days later and its local inhabitants prepared their defence. Wei troops crossed the Huai River on 21 January. On 1 February 451 they occupied Mount Guabu on the opposite,

northern bank of the Yangzi from Jiankang. Negotiations began and Tuoba Dao led his troops back north on 2 February. Song frailty had made itself felt and the state had faced the real threat of collapse. That was not the end of it, though. The following year, on 11 March 452, Tuoba Dao was murdered. News of the death prompted Emperor Wen to launch a third northern invasion on 21 June 452. The campaign did not fare well. A siege on the castle at Que'ao, on the southern bank of the Yellow River, was unsuccessful and Wei counter-attacks inflicted heavy losses on Song troops. It triggered a retreat and the campaign was soon abandoned.

These fraught attempts at territorial conquest drew Sima Guang's attention in the eleventh century:

> Emperor Wen devoted himself to bringing orderly rule. He cared for the common people as if they were his sons. It would have been enough to make him a good ruler in peaceful times. Yet he did not gauge his own power and he recklessly provoked the powerful barbarians.[1] It caused his troops to be wiped out in vain to the south of the Yellow River and the barbarians' horses to drink at the fording places of the Yangzi. He had unresolved misgivings before he had even set off. It ultimately produced a disaster for his sons. Surely he was abundant in civil virtues but lacking in military ones.[2]

A conscientious and compassionate ruler crippled by military misjudgement – that is how Sima Guang represents Emperor Wen in an authorial comment in his *Li nian tu*. His moral message sounds clearest in the final, sententious statement. It points up a tension between the civil and the military that will shape what follows. It makes explicit what underlies the whole comment. There is a paradox. Emperor Wen's canonization title has a civil focus, and he draws Sima Guang's praise for civil

[1] A phrase from Sima Qian's letter to the Regional Inspector of Yizhou Ren An 任安 to describe Han commander Li Ling's 李陵 unsuccessful invasion attempt against the Xiongnu: *Han shu* 62.2729; cf. 'Bao Ren Shao qing shu' 報任少卿書, ap. *Wen xuan* 41.11a, which offers commentary on the phrase.
[2] *Ji gu lu* 14.17b.

governance, yet it is his military exploits that attract greatest comment.[3] A brief opening description of his civil virtues and a declaration that he might have been a competent ruler (although its conditionality already implies censure) give way to an account of his military failure; the shift hinges on a pointed conjunction of contrast, 'yet' 然. The same tension between the civil and the military, and the connotation of good and bad governance that comes attached to them, makes itself felt elsewhere – in *ZZTJ* and in Sima Guang's memorials on eleventh-century politics. Textual and ideological echoes reverberate between these texts. Emperor Wen's attempts at territorial expansion find parallels in the militarism of eleventh-century emperors. The themes of *ZZTJ*'s account of Emperor Wen's fifth-century rule converge with Sima Guang's court memorials in the eleventh century. Our aim here is to explore how a close reading of one might strengthen our understanding of the other and to assess the contribution that each makes to discovering Sima Guang's military policy.

Personal experience

In the year before he presented *Li nian tu* to the throne, in the eleventh lunar month of 1064-5, Sima Guang recalled the process of military conscription that he had witnessed in the frontier circuit of Shaanxi in 1041:

> In the past, during the *kang ding* [1040-1] and *qing li* [1041-8] periods, because [Zhao] Yuanhao had invaded the borders and the official armies had failed to gain any advantage, the court itself increased the conscription of the people of Shaanxi and used

[3] David McMullen has examined the significance of canonization titles in suggesting attitudes to the military during the Tang, 'The Cult of Ch'i T'ai-kung and T'ang Attitudes to the Military,' *T'ang Studies* 7, 1989: esp.76-85. The sharpness of Sima Guang's focus on military activity suggests itself through contrast with other summaries of Emperor Wen's rule. A single example makes the point: his eleventh-century contemporary, Su Che, was able to analyse Emperor Wen's downfall entirely in terms of civil governance, without any reference to his northern military campaigns, *Luancheng ji* 'hou ji' 10.1257.

> them as village archers. At first, a clear directive went out: "We only intend to have them guard the local villages and neighbourhoods, and we will certainly not conscript them to fill the regular army or station them at posts along the border." Before this directive had even been received, though, the court had conscripted them all to fill the imperial armies and military units, and had ordered them to station the posts along the border. I was attending my parent's funeral in Shan[zhou] at the time and saw the whole thing. The people there had all been born and grown up during peacetime and knew nothing of weapons. Once they had been signed up as soldiers, it was as if every member of the local population of Shan[zhou] and the areas to its west were in mourning or every household had been pillaged. Sounds of wailing filled the air and spread throughout the countryside. Heaven and Earth grieved over it. The sun and the moon appeared wan because of it.[4]

His statement offers a recognisable pattern and rhetoric for what follows: the court engages a foreign opponent in conflict; its forces prove ineffective; court orders are contradictory and misdirected; foreign affairs have a domestic impact, as military action causes widespread suffering in local areas. Shaanxi would provide a local case study for many of Sima Guang's statements on military policy. Familial ties gave him his focus: Shanzhou was his native prefecture; the reason for his return in 1041 was the death of his father, Sima Chi 司馬池. He had a larger agenda, too. The basic themes of his document transcend the local. They affect the whole state and even an entire cosmology. They have a visible effect on a local population facing a particular set of circumstances, but they are also of universal significance.

Sima Guang had a more active role in military affairs than that of mere observer. In 1040 he wrote a memorial on behalf of his father, Sima Chi, opposing an increase in the number of archers – local government security forces that comprised those eligible for corvée labour – in Hangzhou.[5] In 1057 he engaged Xia troops in a disastrous conflict in the northern border prefecture of Linzhou; the details of Sima Guang's role came up already in Chapter 2. After that his approach to the use of

[4] *SMWJ* 31.9a-b (for dating, see *XCB* 203.4916-7).
[5] *SMWJ* 16.1b-3b. The eighteenth-century scholar Gu Donggao 顧棟高 identified in this memorial many of the ideas that informed Sima Guang's later statements on military policy, *Sima Wen gong nian pu* 司馬溫公年譜, Gu Donggao, ap. *Sima Guang nian pu* 司馬光年譜, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, repr.2006, 1.32.

military force crystallised in favour of appeasement over belligerence.[6] During the 1060s, Sima Guang sharpened the focus of his opposition to militarism in a series of memorials to the throne. He still took up a further military post, though. Having repeatedly refused an appointment as vice commissioner of military affairs in the second lunar month of 1070,[7] he was soon made prefect of Yongxing Military Prefecture and Military Commissioner and Inspector-general of the area.[8] He served there until his move to a sinecure in Luoyang in the fourth month of 1071.

Sima Guang's involvement in the practical business of military administration corresponds to periods of increase in his writings on the subject: the late 1050s, after his official employment in Bingzhou; the mid 1060s, after Emperor Yingzong's accession – memorials from this period often allude to the reign of the preceding Emperor Renzong and, in particular, conflict with Xia in the early 1040s; 1070 and 1071, the period of his tenure as prefect of Yongxing Military Prefecture and also of the composition of *ZZTJ*'s account of Emperor Wen's fifth-century military campaigns; 1085 and 1086, following his appointment to positions of legislative power at court after the death of Emperor Shenzong. It is impossible to establish with precision or certainty the motivations that underpinned his ideology in these writings, and such speculation offers no analytical benefit in any case. But correlations between personal experience and policy formation can offer useful

[6] *SMWJ* 59.6a.

[7] *Ibid* 41.5b-8a, 42.1a-3b (for the dating of the first five memorials, see *Chuan jia ji* 43.12b-17b; the sixth memorial is dated on *ibid* 43.17b but appears with a variant in dating – the 29th day of the month, not the 27th day – on *Song hui yao ji gao* 宋會要輯稿, Xu Song 徐松, ed., Beiping: Guo li Beiping tu shu guan, 1936, 'shi huo' 4. 24a. Sima Guang's refusal attracted praise from contemporaries, including Emperor Shenzong: *XCB* 338.8149; *Zi wei shi hua* 紫微詩話, Lü Benzhong 呂本中, *Jin dai bi shu* edn., 19b; *Song chao shi shi lei yuan* 14.167; *Shao shi wen jian hou lu* 24.190. See also *Song shi* 336.10765-6; *Xu Zi zhi tong jian* 67.1670 (Sima Guang's appointment as prefect of Yongxing Military Prefecture appears on 68.1689). There is no evidence that Sima Guang refused the post because of a specific opposition to militarism, though. It seems more likely that it resulted from an unwillingness to serve Emperor Shenzong while he still implemented Wang Anshi's policies.

[8] *XCB* 215.5247-8 (cf. 220.5338, on his move to Xuzhou in the second lunar month of 1071); *SMWJ* 43.3a (1071/2/3: *XCB* 218.5312; *Song shi* 191.4736), 43.10a (1071/2/10: *Chuan jia ji* 45.25a), 44.6b-7a (1071-2: *Chuan jia ji* 45.29a - note his claim of ignorance of military affairs in the same document). On Sima Guang's policies for the Yongxing Military Prefecture, including the abolition of *bao jia* conscription, cf. *SMWJ* 42.3b-4b; *Su Shi wen ji* 16.486.

insights into the environment in which Sima Guang operated as he produced both *ZZTJ* and his other statements on the use of military force.

Territorial expansion

In the second lunar month of 430 of *ZZTJ*'s chronology, its external narrator breaks off from the business of narrating events and takes us into the mind of Emperor Wen: 'Ever since the emperor ascended the throne, he had the purpose of recovering the area to the south of the Yellow River 有恢復河南之志.'[9] This, implicitly, is the impetus for the conflict that follows. It provides an insight into the personal motivations that drive his actions – an explanation for them – not just a description of their external forms. It is the first of several statements of Emperor Wen's aim to expand his territory: others appear in *ZZTJ*'s chronological sequence on the sixth lunar month of 445, the fifth lunar month of 449, the sixth lunar month of 450, and the third lunar month of 452. All are in the voice of the text's external narrator. All are framed in similar language and are bound together by their textual parallels. All alert the reader to the imminent outbreak of military conflict.[10]

The statement of 430 stands out both because it is the first and because its phrasing evokes important resonances for *ZZTJ*'s readers. Territorial expansion appears as a long-term and personal ambition for Emperor Wen. It traces back to the beginning of his reign. Not only does this give an ideological purpose and definition

[9] *ZZTJ* 121.3814.
[10] 445/6: *ibid* 124.3912; this account of Emperor Wen's military ambition does not appear in Sima Guang's extant sources, cf. *Song shu* 5.93 and *Nan shi* 南史, Li Yanshou 李延壽, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1975, 2.49. 449/5: *ZZTJ* 125.3935; does not appear in Sima Guang's extant sources. 450/6: *ibid* 125.3945; cf. *Song shu* 50.1447, 71.1849, 78.2014, 99.2424, *Nan shi* 14.386, 17.489, *Wei shu* 97.2139, *Ce fu yuan gui* 403.17b, 18b. 452/3: *ZZTJ* 126.3974; *Song shu* 59.1608, 74.1924, 77.2000, *Nan shi* 40.1020, *Ce fu yuan gui* 529.1a.

to his time in power; it also hints at an underlying motive of retribution – a desire to right the wrongs visited by the Wei on his state and, in particular, his predecessor and father, Emperor Wu.[11] That is at odds with his duties as ruler. Later in *ZZTJ*'s chronology, in the sixth lunar month of 450, the Wei ruler criticises Emperor Wen's invasion plans because 'there have long been peaceful and amicable relations between you and us, and yet your ambition remains unfulfilled.'[12] Territorial expansion is the product of desire; it appears in tension with Emperor Wen's imperial duty to ensure the welfare of the state. We will hear more on this in Sima Guang's political statements of the eleventh century.

Retribution makes itself felt too in the rhetoric of 'recovery' 恢復. Compare Sima Guang's phrasing with the reference in *Song shu* 宋書 to an 'invasion' 略, a term without the same resonance from the past of territory lost, but which refers only forwards to territory yet to be gained.[13] Recovery and retribution are consistent with the moral rectitude that Emperor Wen elsewhere imputes to his northern campaigns: the implication is that he will restore territory that originally and rightfully belonged to Song. It is cast in the voice of *ZZTJ*'s external narrator here but it echoes Emperor Wen's own words and hopes – that is what was meant by 'taking us into the mind of Emperor Wen.'[14]

Emperor Wen's plans for conquest have a narrow regional objective in *ZZTJ*: the territory along the south bank of the Yellow River. There is no such focus in

[11] Mark Lewis identifies a ritual association between warfare and ancestral duty in an earlier period, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990, p.22. It would also make itself felt in Song Emperor Shenzong's comments in the eleventh century, as this study will show.
[12] *ZZTJ* 125.3946.
[13] *Song shu* 95.2331. Seventeenth-century scholar Li Qing 李清 offers a closer parallel to *ZZTJ* in his quotation from *juan* 95 of *Song shu* on *Nan Bei shi he zhu* 南北史合注, Li Qing, Beijing: Quan guo tu shu guan wen xian suo wei fu zhi zhong xin, 1993, 25.389: '文帝將恢復河南.' But the absence of this phrase from extant versions of *Song shu* as well as later omissions from Li Qing's text – several of which also make themselves felt in *ZZTJ* – suggest that the quotation is corrupt.
[14] The external narrator's rhetoric changes in the later descriptions of the emperor's expansionist intent, though: he 'schemes' 謀 to 'strike at' 伐 Wei.

Song shu, where he had simply 'an ambition to invade the north' 有志北略.[15] The variant is in keeping with repeated references in *ZZTJ* to Song designs on the south bank of the Yellow River. In the eleventh month of 425 Emperor Wen spreads a rumour that he will attack Wei and 'seize the area south of the Yellow River'; it does not appear in either *Song shu* or *Nan shi* 南史.[16] In the fourth month of 429 Cui Hao 崔浩 considers the possibility of Wei's ceding the same area to Song.[17] Soon after in *ZZTJ*'s chronology (but earlier in the real-time sequence of events), Emperor Wen sends an envoy to Wei demanding that the ruler 'speedily return our territory south of the Yellow River' and threatens to deploy military force if he fails to do so.[18] There is further sense of recovery and, by extension, moral righteousness here. The emperor's use of the verb 'to return' 歸 carries the sense of restoring something to its rightful position, much as *ZZTJ*'s external narrator later talks of recovery: motivations claimed by a character in the text find their rhetorical echo in the statement of its narrator. Soon after, the same thing again: Emperor Wen dispatches one of his palace commanders to the Wei ruler with an announcement that 'the area south of the Yellow River was once Song territory but you invaded it. We will now restore 修復 the old borders.'[19] And at the other end of his reign, in the summer of 452, we learn that 'the emperor's purpose lay only with the area south of the Yellow River.'[20] A career-long ambition for military retribution; the desire to reclaim lost territory; a sharp focus on a single, limited geographical area: these will find parallels in Sima Guang's own time, in the figure of Emperor Shenzong. A brief and

[15] *Song shu* 95.2331.
[16] This does not appear in all editions of the text, though. A text critical survey of these differences appears on *ZZTJ* 120.3777, confirmed by the various editions of the text that I have been able to examine. Cf. *Song shu* 44.1349; *Nan shi* 19.523.
[17] *ZZTJ* 121.3808-9. Cf. *Wei shu* 35.817-8; *Bei shi* 北史, Li Yanshou 李延壽, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1974, 21.781.
[18] *ZZTJ* 121.3809.
[19] *Ibid* 121.3815.
[20] *Ibid* 126.3975.

inconspicuous-seeming aside by *ZZTJ*'s external narrator – 'Ever since the emperor had ascended the throne, he had had the ambition of recovering the area to the south of the Yellow River' – brings out a welter of resonances with the eleventh-century and directs our reading of the text as a parallel to contemporary events.

Moral justification for an invasion of Wei suggests itself from the way these descriptions of Emperor Wen's expansionist ambitions are couched in terms of retribution and recovery (although that does not mean Sima Guang acquiesces in such a justification). It also appears in more explicit terms in *ZZTJ*. A statement on the emperor's intention to invade Wei appears in the sixth lunar month of 450 of its chronology, in the voice of the text's external narrator. It is followed by Emperor Wen's dismissal of objections to the campaign with the declaration, made in his own voice, that 'the north is suffering under the caitiffs' tyrannical governance. Followers of righteousness will rise up in unison. ... It is not permissible to disappoint those who have set their minds on righteous action.'[21] The representation of northern tyranny, framed in stereotypes of barbarian cruelty, is not in Sima Guang's sources.[22] In *ZZTJ* it emphasises suffering under Wei and, by implication, tries to justify Song's attempts through military action to relieve that suffering. The same type of rhetoric appears elsewhere in Emperor Wen's speeches in the text.[23] A common pattern emerges from Sima Guang's treatment of these statements, and that suggests a causal sequence: the external narrator reveals Emperor Wen's territorial ambitions; the emperor confirms them; he typecasts the people of Wei as vicious and tyrannical barbarians; he is therefore able to cast a Song invasion as a moral crusade – the only way to relieve popular suffering – and repeatedly appeals to the value of

[21] *Ibid* 125.3945.
[22] *Song shu* 50.1447; *Ce fu yuan gui* 403.18b.
[23] *ZZTJ* 125.3946, 126.3974.

righteousness 義. The same rhetorical strategy was common in eleventh-century justifications for military expansionism.

Emperor Wen's personal ambition is seen to provide motivation for the decision to invade Wei, but others share the weight of responsibility in *ZZTJ*. For Sima Guang, the power of the emperor to act and, as a corollary, his power to influence policy formation is (or should be) subject to the approval of his ministers. That ideal political relationship breaks down in the fifth lunar month of 449:

> The emperor wanted to bring the central plains under his control. The ministers vied to present policies in order to pander to this and receive his favour. The Governor of Pengcheng, Wang Xuanmo 王玄謨, was particularly fond of putting forward statements and the emperor told the ministers in attendance: "Looking at what Xuanmo has presented gives one a sense of [Huo Qubing's] enfeoffment in Langjuxu." The Palace Aide to the Censor-in-chief, Yuan Shu 袁淑, said to the emperor: "Your Highness should now roll up [the former territories of] Zhao and Wei like a mat and offer a jade sacrifice on Mount Tai. I shall seize this chance of a thousand years and wish to present to the throne a document on offering *feng shan* sacrifices." The emperor was pleased.[24]

Wang Xuanmo and Yuan Shu are complicit in Emperor Wen's ambition of territorial expansion. The imagery here resonates with past periods of military and political strength: Qin's conquest of its rival states of Zhao and Wei; Qin Shihuang's promulgation of a programme of imperial sacrifice at Mount Tai; the success of the Han general Huo Qubing 霍去病, a common exemplar in the military discourse of the period. The use of that imagery in *ZZTJ* creates irony, though: it is clear by now that Song's military accomplishments fall far short of the golden age of imperial military power that Emperor Wen and his ministers seek to emulate.

Sycophancy, and its impact on the formation of Song military policy, makes itself felt more readily here than in Sima Guang's sources. He juxtaposes two pro-

[24] *Ibid* 125.3935-6.

expansionist policies, which are separate elsewhere.[25] He also omits opposition to the emperor's desire for conquest. It sets a pattern for descriptions of uncritical support for Emperor Wen's militarist policies, offered by members of the Song court who are eager to please.[26] By contrast, the statements of opposition that Sima Guang does include in his account tend to be smothered by the emperor or his yes-men in court debate: when Shen Qingzhi 沈慶之 criticises the emperor's plans for invasion in the fifth lunar month of 452, for example, we learn that 'since [Shen's] arguments were contrary to his own, the emperor did not give him any undertaking.'[27] When opponents do stand unchallenged in *ZZTJ*'s account they make a greater impact as a result of their scarcity, as this study will show.

The context that Sima Guang supplies for these expressions of ministerial support differs from his main source, *Song shu*. His editorial intervention undermines the value of Wang Xuanmo and Yuan Shu's advice. In *Song shu* Wang Xuanmo's proposal appears as a direct response to Wei belligerence and not an attempt to garner imperial favour. Subsequent omissions from Wang Xuanmo's advice in *ZZTJ* also give less prominence to its rationale. It therefore appears as no more than the self-interested manoeuvring of a sycophant who 'was particularly fond of putting

[25] Wang Xuanmo: *Song shu* 76.1973; *Nan shi* 16.464; *Ce fu yuan gui* 389.16a-b; *Du shi fang yu ji yao gao ben* 讀史方輿紀要稿本, Gu Zuyu 顧祖禹, Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1993, 45.1376-7; *Du Tong jian lun* 15.502; *Lingchuan ji* 陵川集, Hao Jing 郝經, *Si ku quan shu zhen ben si ji* edn., 37.18b; *Chengzhai ji* 誠齋集, Yang Wanli 楊萬里, *Si bu cong kan* edn., 112.11b-12a; *Cixi Huang shi ri chao fen lei Gu jin ji yao* 慈溪黃氏日抄分類古今紀要, Huang Zhen 黃震, Ming edn., 6.2a; *Tong zhi* 131.2075b. Yuan Shu: *Song shu* 70.1835-6; *Nan shi* 26.698; Sun Yan's 孫嚴 *Song shu*, ap. *Chu xue ji* 13.335; *Tai ping yu lan* 216.3a (citing *Song shu*), 536.7b (citing Sun Yan's *Song shu*); *Tong zhi* 166.2682b.

[26] *ZZTJ* 125.3945 (cf. *Song shu* 78.1849, which explicitly states that 'the whole court took it to be impossible,' and 78.2014; *Wei shu* 97.2139; *Nan shi* 18.496); 126.3974 (omitted from *Song shu* 59.1608, 74.1924; *Nan shi* 40.1020). A similar situation makes itself felt in the provinces: on *ZZTJ* 126.3967-8, Song aide Zhang Chang attacks the advisors of imperial prince Liu Yigong for failing to commit themselves to a military policy until they have gained a sense of the prevailing argument: 'How do sycophantic aides serve the ruler?' he asks; the silence that follows implies the weight of his argument.

[27] *ZZTJ* 126.3975.

forward statements' and not as the judicious strategy of a talented official with practical military experience.[28]

Emperor Wen's policies for territorial expansion remain in the shadow of their own failure throughout Sima Guang's account. Irony underlies their representation, as it does often in *ZZTJ*. It proceeds from percipient observations made by characters within the text. Before the external narrator's declaration of Emperor Wen's ambition to recover territory south of the Yellow River, Wei minister Cui Hao – an individual whose advice has already proven itself in *ZZTJ* to be well-judged – offers a long, compelling account of Song military weakness.[29] His assessment is echoed by other characters later in the text: the Wei ruler in a letter to the Song court that underlines the futility of Song's expansionist aims; Wei Imperial Secretary Li Xiaobo 李孝伯, in an assessment of Song commanders' weaknesses; and so on.[30] True, these tend to sound in the mouths of men from Wei, but they also find support in impersonal accounts of Song's military defeats and its utter failure to realise Emperor Wen's dreams of territorial restoration.

Irony proceeds, too, from Emperor Wen's failure to learn from past mistakes. With a close memory of his previous failures, we approach Sima Guang's accounts of his successive conquest attempts mindful that this emperor, obsessed by territorial gains, is committing the same mistakes he has already made. That is his hubris in *ZZTJ* and the same hubristic trait that Sima Guang identifies in *Li nian tu*. In the eleventh lunar month of 450 Emperor Wen acknowledges the failure of his recent campaign into Wei territory and the devastating effects of Wei's subsequent retaliation. He accepts personal responsibility for the suffering of the state and the

[28] Cf. *Song shu* 76.1973. Sima Guang's representation of Wang Xuanmo endured in later accounts of the same episode: twelfth-century scholar and poet Yang Wanli, for example, claimed that Wang acted casually through a desire for achievements and, from personal greed, deluded the emperor, *Chengzhai ji* 112.12a.
[29] *ZZTJ* 121.3808-9.
[30] *Ibid* 125.3939-41, 125.3956.

court.[31] It is melancholic, moving stuff and Sima Guang gives greater prominence than his sources to this admission of guilt.[32] But the tone of compunction soon fades. Within a year and a half, in the third lunar month of 452, *ZZTJ*'s external narrator tells us of the emperor's desire to invade the north yet again – the adverb '*geng*' 更 emphasises the repetition – and the reader anticipates the campaign's imminent, inevitable failure.[33] Needless to say, Song collapse comes within a matter of months. This blindness to the lessons of the past would also attract the notice of Sima Guang's contemporaries: Su Che identified it (though in a non-military context) as the source of Emperor Wen's downfall, for example.[34] It has a larger point to make in *ZZTJ* too, since it lies at the heart of that text's didactic purpose. Sima Guang aims to warn his eleventh-century ruler of minatory examples from the past so that he might avoid their mistakes in the present. That is the lesson Emperor Wen fails to learn.

All of this must have resonated with Sima Guang and his eleventh-century audience. In 936 the founder of the Later Jin state, Shi Jingtang 石敬瑭, ceded the sixteen border prefectures of the north-eastern Yan-Yun area to Liao in exchange for support in establishing his rule.[35] Because of their strategic importance to the defence of the North China Plain – their mountainous terrain provided a natural barrier against Liao cavalry – successive rulers sought to recover them.[36] In 959 Emperor Shizong of Later Zhou seized the southernmost part of the ceded Yan-Yun territory,

[31] *Ibid* 125.3960.
[32] *Wei shu* 97.2140; *Nan shi* 2.52; *Jiankang shi lu* 建康實錄, Xu Song 許嵩, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1986, 12.448; *Ce fu yuan gui* 209.25b-26a. It is omitted altogether from *Song shu* 99.2424.
[33] *ZZTJ* 126.3974.
[34] *Luancheng ji* 'hou ji' 10.1257.
[35] *Jiu Wu dai shi* 舊五代史, Xue Juzheng 薛居正, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1976, 75.984-7, 989; *Liao shi* 遼史, Tuotuo 脫脫, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1974, 3.38-9, 41; *ZZTJ* 280.9146-7.
[36] A study of the geography of this region appears in Zhao Tiehan 趙鐵寒, 'Yan-Yun shi liu zhou de di li fen xi (shang)' 燕雲十六州的地理分析(上), *Da lu za zhi* 大陸雜誌 17.11, 1958: 3-7, and 'Yan-Yun shi liu zhou de di li fen xi (xia)' 燕雲十六州的地理分析(下), *Da lu za zhi* 17.12, 1958: 18-22.

comprising the prefectures of Yingzhou and Mozhou as well as three passes; it ensured some protection against Liao cavalry.[37] In 979, and again in 986, Song Emperor Taizong launched expeditions against Liao to recover the remaining prefectures.[38] In response to court opposition in 986, he echoed Emperor Wen's fifth-century justifications for conquest in *ZZTJ*. With a familiar rhetoric of territorial recovery, he claimed an ambition to restore Song's former borders ('恢復舊疆'). He also represented himself as the saviour of local people subjugated by Liao rule.[39] Both of his campaigns began with military gains. In 979 Song armies occupied Liao's client state of Northern Han and approached its southern capital at Youzhou. In 986 they combined with forces from Koryo in a pincer movement to seize large swathes of territory in western Liao. Both campaigns ultimately failed in their objective, though, and Yan-Yun remained under Liao control.

Another parallel lay even closer to hand. Emperor Shenzong took up this dynastic heritage from the time of his accession to the throne in 1068, during the period that Sima Guang worked on *ZZTJ*'s account of the fifth-century conflict between Song and Wei. At the beginning of his reign, he represented Emperor Taizong's defeat by Liao in 979 as pathetic and expressed a powerful hatred for his predecessor's barbarian enemies. He transferred resentment for past humiliation to present obligations: 'I perversely give them hundreds of thousands in cash and silks to serve [their ruler] as my uncle. Should a descendant act like this?'[40] In 1078, in two poems commemorating the establishment of military storehouses, he evoked the successes of the Emperor Taizu's foreign campaigns and expressed his intention 'to

[37] *Jiu Wu dai shi* 119.1581; *ZZTJ* 294.9596-7.
[38] 979: *Song shi*, 4.60-3; *Liao shi*, 9.101-2; *XCB* 20.442-57; *Mo ji* 默記, Wang Zhi 王銍, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1981, B.20. 986: *Song shi* 5.77-9; *Liao shi* 11.120-6; *XCB* 27.602-17.
[39] *Ibid* 27.617.
[40] *Mo ji* B.20. Wang Zhi prefaces this with the claim that 'On first ascending the throne, Shenzong had fervently held the ambition of seizing Shanhou.' Shanhou denoted the prefectures of Guizhou, Tanzhou, Yuzhou, and Yingzhou, to the north of the mountains in Youzhou – the disputed Yan-Yun area, in other words.

honour the enterprise bequeathed me.'[41] It happens that in his twelfth-century *Xu Zi zhi tong jian chang bian* 續資治通鑑長編, Li Tao 李燾 prefaced these poems with rhetoric that paralleled Sima Guang's representation of Emperor Wen in *ZZTJ*; he declared that Emperor Shenzong 'always resented the northerners' tenacity, and he was passionate in his purpose of recovering You and Yan 慨然有恢復幽燕之志.'[42] And Shenzong's fourteenth-century official biographer suggested an underlying sense of ancestral duty to his territorial ambitions by noting that 'the emperor was vigorous in his attempts to wipe away several generations of shame.'[43]

His means of achieving retribution and territorial recovery were not diplomatic negotiation and passive defence – strategies employed by his imperial predecessors after Taizong – but militarism and conquest: he was open in his desire to 'destroy the Xia state and then lead a campaign in person to subjugate the Great Liao.'[44] He adopted a policy of active militarism early in his reign and revisited the theme in court discussions into the early 1080s.[45] In 1078 it even moved Su Shi to complain in a letter to the throne that Song ministers often talked of war in response to Shenzong's belligerence.[46]

In the ninth month of 1070 Shenzong supported his rhetoric with practical action. He focused on Xia: it afforded a chance to recover the prefecture of Lingzhou, lost in 1002 and another source of Song resentment; it was seen in the Song court as the less formidable of its two main barbarian rivals; its conquest was recognized as a prerequisite to an invasion of Liao. He dispatched the Vice Minister of Works and

[41] *XCB* 295.7192; *Song shi* 165.3908.
[42] *XCB* 295.7192.
[43] *Song shi* 16.314. See also Wang Fuzhi's 王夫之 similar claim that Song's humiliation by barbarians in the eleventh century acted as a stimulus for Emperor Shenzong's political activism, *Song lun* 宋論, Wang Fuzhi, *Si bu bei yao* edn., 6.5a-b.
[44] *Shao shi wen jian lu* 3.26.
[45] Examples of Shenzong's close interest in military affairs and foreign conquest, selected at random from the early 1070s: *XCB* 232.5628, 236.5752, 248.6056-8, 254.6216-7, 255.6239-40, 256.6249, 257.6281, 261.6359-60, 266.6526.
[46] *Ibid* 286.7007. On Su Shi's authorship, see *ibid* 286.7009.

Vice Grand Councillor Han Jiang 韓絳 to prepare for an invasion campaign.[47] Logistical problems and tactical confusion soon arose.[48] When Xia troops retaliated in the second lunar month of 1071 they met little opposition and captured Song-occupied cities. Song commanders panicked and large numbers were killed.[49]

Two years after the defeat, in 1081, Shenzong launched a second campaign against Xia. In the sixth lunar month he ordered all the circuits of Shaanxi to prepare for the arrival of expeditionary forces.[50] The campaign was launched in the eighth lunar month. It enjoyed initial successes: on the second day of the ninth lunar month, 6 October, the Song eunuch commander Li Xian 李憲 took Lanzhou, opening a route north-east up the Yellow River to the Xia capital at Zhongxing; Chong E also moved on Zhongxing but from the east, up the Wuding River, where he captured Mizhi, Shizhou, and Xiazhou in the tenth lunar month; in the eleventh lunar month Song troops reached the disputed prefectural seat of Lingzhou, fifty kilometres to the south of Zhongxing.[51] But the five Song divisions failed to converge as planned because of disputes among their commanders. Supply problems soon befell them. Starvation and illness brought large casualties and prompted mutinies. A powerful Xia counter-attack turned the Song retreat into a rout.[52]

Despite this failure, in the fifth lunar month of 1082 the Supervising Palace Secretary Xu Xi 徐禧 and the Administrative Aide Li Shunju 李舜舉 were sent to take control of the area around Mount Heng, with the aim of gaining access to the Ordos steppe region. Xu Xi reached the area in the eighth lunar month and established a castle at Yongle, south of Mount Heng. Xia armies retaliated the

[47] *Ibid* 215.5236-7.
[48] See, for example, *ibid* 218.5305-6, 220.5337-8.
[49] *Ibid* 220.5361-2; *Song shi* 486.14009.
[50] *XCB* 313.7593.
[51] Lanzhou: *ibid* 316.7638. Mizhi, Shizhou, and Xiazhou: *ibid* 317.7657, 317.7669, 318.7682; *Song shi* 486.14010-1. Lingzhou: *XCB* 319.7699; 486.14011.
[52] *Ibid* 319.7702, 319.7704, 319.7707, 319.7715-6

following month and inflicted heavy losses on the ill-prepared Song troops. Xu Xi was reported as killed in action.[53] The defeat marked an end to Shenzong's expansionist ambitions.[54]

As chief minister of state for much of the first half of the 1070s, Wang Anshi's role in all this emerges as a complex negotiation between basic support for Shenzong's expansionist aims and a restraint that proceeded from recognition of Song's current military weakness. With well-worn rhetoric, he evoked the possibility of 'controlling the state of Xia and restoring 恢復 the former borders of Han and Tang.'[55] In court debate, he opposed the conciliatory approach that had been extended to Song's barbarian rivals.[56] And he pursued territorial expansion along Song's western and southern borders.[57] This policy came with a caveat, though: Song would offer a military match for Xia and Liao only after rigorous governmental and military reform.[58] Wang Anshi therefore urged circumspection, even temporary appeasement, during a period of military tension that developed with Liao between 1072 and 1076.[59] Even when he cast Xia as the weaker of Song's two northern neighbours in a belligerent speech of 1072, elsewhere he advocated diplomatic accommodation until Song's social and military strength had increased. Shenzong ultimately implemented his most aggressive campaigns against Xia after Wang Anshi had stepped down as chief minister of state.[60]

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[53] *Song shi* 486.14011-2.
[54] Li Tao claims that Shenzong subsequently 'became weary of military business and had no intention of attacking the west,' *XCB* 330.7955. Paul C. Forage provides a close examination of Shenzong's campaigns against Xia in 'The Sino-Tangut War of 1081-1085,' *Journal of Asian History* 25, 1991: 1-28.
[55] *XCB* 230.5605.
[56] *Ibid* 220.5350, 237.5762.
[57] Ke Changyi 柯昌頤 reviews Wang Anshi's support for these campaigns in *Wang Anshi ping zhuan* 王安石評傳, Shanghai: Shanghai wu yin shu guan, 1933, pp.182-92.
[58] For example, *XCB* 220.5343, 221.5375, 230.5605, 236.5726.
[59] See his statements to Shenzong on *ibid* 234.5692, 236.5725-6, 236.5733-6.
[60] Xia vulnerability: *ibid* 236.5752. Policy of accommodation: *ibid* 214.5197; *Linchuan xian sheng wen ji* 73.776.

It is too simple to set Sima Guang's views on territorial expansion and the use of military force diametrically against this.[61] True, military policy appears as a target of his criticisms of Wang Anshi's New Policies,[62] but two elements urge against a schematic divide. Sima Guang's opposition to the use of military force to achieve territorial expansion, and to the militarization of society in general, predated both Emperor Shenzong's accession to the imperial throne and Wang Anshi's appointment as chief minister of state. He first voiced it in his memorial of 1040, written in Hangzhou. It gathered strength in a series of memorials of the late 1050s, in response to his experiences in Linzhou. He stated it most powerfully of all in the mid-1060s. Emperor Shenzong and Wang Anshi only started to implement a programme of military reform in 1070. Although Sima Guang's criticisms had in their sights a new, sharply focused target in 1070 and 1071 – the period of *ZZTJ*'s composition – and again in the mid-1080s, their basic content traces back to an earlier period.

There is also convergence in overarching political aims. Like Emperor Shenzong and Wang Anshi, and with identical rhetoric, Sima Guang claimed a political goal of the restoration of Han and Tang dynastic borders.[63] There were, of course, differences between their foreign military policies but they were differences of degree: in the speed at which they proposed to reclaim Han-Tang territory and, as a corollary, in the means by which each proposed to achieve this. Emperor Shenzong and Wang Anshi supported the use of military force but, as we have already seen in this study, even here Wang offered the caveat that domestic stability and prosperity

[61] See, for example, Peter Bol's claim that there were fundamental differences in foreign policy between Sima Guang and Wang Anshi, *"This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992, p.251.
[62] See, for example, *SMWJ* 45.1a-9b, 46.5b-9b, 57.16b-17a.
[63] *Ibid* 33.6b, 33.11b, 49.5b. In using the word 'restoration' here, I follow the rhetoric of Sima Guang: the Song state had never fully possessed the territory that once belonged to the Han and Tang dynasties and so 'restoration' (as opposed to occupation) appears as a product of the discourse of a rightful Han Chinese territory rather than a political reality.

were prerequisite to any attempt at a foreign campaign – another point of fundamental similarity with Sima Guang, despite what each maintained. A close reading of both *ZZTJ* and his eleventh-century memorials shows that Sima Guang believed territorial expansion would be achieved through a long-term display of Song's economic strength and inherent cultural superiority over its neighbours. For him, the use of military force posed insurmountable problems. In 1057, after his experience in Linzhou, he recognized that it would be impossible to seize territory without risking full-scale war.[64] Attempts at military expansion, such as he had advised in Linzhou, were too often undermined by incompetent commanders and a lack of adequate preparation.[65] Even if conquest were possible, the barren land to the north and west of Song borders would drain the state's manpower and economic resources as it had done in the past.[66] With much the same agenda as the one that underpinned his critical representation of Emperor Wen's expansionist policies in *ZZTJ*, Sima Guang based his objections to eleventh-century governance on concerns over the specific methods and consequences of Emperor Shenzong's expansionist ambitions and Wang Anshi's military policies, not on grand ideological differences.

Political losses

Sima Guang's opposition to territorial expansion through military force is starkly practical: such policies fail to bring benefit. He frames his arguments, from a 1040 memorial opposing the conscription of archers in Hangzhou to statements at the end

[64] *Ibid* 17.3b (for dating, see *Chuan jia ji* 18.4b).
[65] *SMWJ* 17.4b. This issue, fundamental to Sima Guang's thinking on military policy, will draw further notice in what follows.
[66] *Ibid* 50.2b-3a.

of his life in 1086, in a discourse of '*wu yi*' 無益 and '*wu yong*' 無用.[67] Benefit is the yardstick against which Sima Guang judges decisions to use military force. On 2 August 1065 he blames local military officials along the northern border for current military troubles and dismisses the significance of their achievements: 'Some considered opening up a dozen *li* of barren land to be meritorious; others thought that killing and pillaging from a couple of old and weak menials was courageous and daring.' Their actions are seen to precipitate widespread depredation and death during barbarian campaigns of retaliation. They bring little gain.[68] In the eleventh lunar month of 1064-5 Sima Guang declares that military conscription should be implemented 'only if it is ultimately of benefit to the state and of no harm to the common people.'[69] In 1069 he criticises Chong E's annexation of the Xia prefecture of Suizhou because it fails to bring lasting benefit to the Song state.[70] And in 1085 he criticises the employment of local military commanders like this: 'This business, which brings no benefits of substance, not only lacks benefit but also does harm.'[71] As these statements suggest, there is another side to his calculations of benefit. The use of military force to achieve territorial expansion can also actively visit harm on the Song state and its people. Here are the same terms that shaped the tension between private ambition and state welfare in Emperor Wen's fifth-century policy of military expansionism.

[67] A sample of uses of '*wu yi*': *ibid* 16.3b (1040, written while Sima Guang served in office in Hangzhou; cf. *Sima Wen gong nian pu* 1.31-2), 31.7b (1064-5/11: *XCB* 203.4916), 31.10a (1064-5/11: *XCB* 203.4917), 32.1b (1064-5/11: *XCB* 203.4918), 32.2b-3a (1064-5/11: *XCB* 203.4918), 36.11a (1067/7/30: *Guo chao zhu chen zou yi* 106.7b); 42.4b (1070/12/7: *Chuan jia ji* 44.11a), 46.6a (1085/4: *XCB* 355.8490), 46.8a (1085/4: *XCB* 355. 8492), 46.11b (1085/4: *XCB* 355.8496; *Song shi* 192.4781), 47.4a (1085/4: *XCB* 355.8500), 48.4b (1085/7: *XCB* 358.8564; *Song hui yao ji gao* 'bing' 2.33a), 54.8a (1086: *Chuan jia ji* 55.5a). '*Wu yong*': *SMWJ* 31.9a (1064-5/11: *XCB* 203.4916), 31.10a (1064-5/11: *XCB* 203.4917), 32.3a (1064-5/11: *XCB* 203.4919), 42.4b (1070-1/11: *Chuan jia ji* 44.12b), 46.10b (1085/4: *XCB* 355.8495; *Song shi* 192.4780), 46.12a (1085/4: *XCB* 355.8496; *Song shi* 192.4781), 48.4b (1085/7: *XCB* 358.8564; *Song hui yao ji gao* 'bing' 2.33a), 53.8a (1086/6: *XCB* 380.9222).
[68] *SMWJ* 33.10b.
[69] *Ibid* 31.11b (for dating, see *XCB* 203.4918, although the text omits this phrase).
[70] *SMWJ* 40.1b.
[71] *Ibid* 47.4a (for dating, see *XCB* 355.8500).

Sima Guang identifies two main areas in which military campaigns abroad damage the interests of the state. First, they cause loss of human life. In the conflict with Xia during the early 1040s he estimates that over ten thousand Song soldiers died in each of its major battles.[72] He also suggests that thousands died in fighting on the northern and western frontiers in the mid-1060s.[73] And, reviewing the effects of successive military campaigns against Song's foreign neighbours, Sima Guang suggests in the autumn of 1082 that 'it has caused the exposed bones of several hundred thousand troops to lie on the open plains, and millions of provisions and weapons to be abandoned in foreign lands.'[74] The same phrase appeared again in a general attack on Wang Anshi's New Policies dated 23 May 1085.[75]

Second, foreign military conflict drains economic resources at home. In a long and detailed analysis of state finances, submitted to the throne in the fifth lunar month of 1062, Sima Guang cast excessive expenditure on the military as the greatest possible failing of economic policy.[76] Elsewhere he identified just such a damaging degree of spending on Song's border defences and campaigns of territorial expansion, running into the millions.[77] By the time of his appointment to Yongxing Military Prefecture his criticism had gained precision. On 3 February 1071 he remonstrated against the court's plans for a military campaign into Xia territory. As well as the common argument of a lack of supplies in the state's storehouses and arsenals, he was able to support his claims with precise statistics for military expenditure in the prefecture.[78] The use of personal experience to illustrate the local

[72] *SMWJ* 31.7a, 32.3a.
[73] *Ibid* 33.11a.
[74] *Ibid* 57.17a.
[75] *Ibid* 46.6b (for dating, see *XCB* 355.8490).
[76] *SMWJ* 23.10b (for dating, see *XCB* 196.4759-60; but note the discrepancies with *Chuan jia ji* 25.2a and *Yu hai* 185.20b).
[77] *SMWJ* 40.1b. Cf. *ibid* 32.3a, 33.2a.
[78] *Ibid* 43.4a. *XCB* 218.5312-5 dates the memorial to the twelfth lunar month of 1070-1, but with a qualification that it cannot be precisely dated. I therefore follow the dating on *Chuan jia ji* 45.1a).

impact of court policy is a familiar tactic for Sima Guang. It brings the practical effects of court directives on remote prefectures to the immediate attention of military legislators in the capital. And it is the economic impact of militarization instead of any moral objection that draws Sima Guang's notice. Here, once again, is a practical, pragmatic discourse of benefit and harm that will appear in different thematic guises in what follows.

The specific rhetoric of '*wu yi*' and '*wu yong*' is scarce in *ZZTJ*'s account of Emperor Wen's militarization. When Shen Qingzhi, a frequent opponent of the campaigns against Wei, urges against an expedition to rescue the defeated Song commander Wang Xuanmo, he echoes Sima Guang's eleventh-century discourse: 'Xuanmo's men are worn-out. The invading caitiffs are already closing in. If I were to get tens of thousands of men then it might be possible to advance, but advancing casually with a small army will bring us no benefit 無益.'[79] It is a rare occurrence of the term, though, and the use of the parallel '*wu yong*' is even less frequent.[80]

Despite its rhetorical divergence, *ZZTJ* shares with Sima Guang's eleventh-century statements a concern with the cost of war to the state. In the second lunar month of 451 of its chronology *ZZTJ*'s external narrator surveys the results of the recent conflict between Song and Wei:

> Altogether the men of Wei had devastated the six regions of Southern Yanzhou, Xuzhou, Yanzhou, Yuzhou, Qingzhou, and Jizhou. They had killed and injured unfathomable numbers. They had summarily executed able-bodied men or amputated their limbs. They had impaled children on spears and had amused themselves by dancing around. There was nothing but bare earth left in the commanderies and counties through which they had passed, and when the swallows returned in spring

[79] *ZZTJ* 125.3950. Opposition to the casual use of troops, such as Shen Qingzhi expresses here, appears in Sima Guang's military policy in the eleventh century. It will receive attention later in this study.
[80] Other uses of '*wu yi*' in this section of *ZZTJ*'s chronology appear on: *ibid* 122.3857, where the Wei ruler uses it of diplomacy; 125.3960, where the Song minister Jiang Zhan also uses it to reject diplomatic relations with Wei; and 126.3962-3, where it appears in a different context. '*Wu yong*' appears only on 121.3808, when Wei courtiers use it to describe the subjugation of the Ruru.

> they had to nest in forest trees. Over half of the Wei soldiers and horses had also died or been wounded and everybody in the state resented it.[81]

It is an account of loss. It points up the vast numbers of casualties that resulted from fighting with Wei. It avoids precise statistics, though. The key phrase here, 'unfathomable numbers' 不可勝計, carries an allusion to a period that appears often in Sima Guang's account of Emperor Wen's militarism: Han's conflict with its Xiongnu rivals. Writing in the first century BC, scholar and bibliographer Liu Xiang 劉向 used the same phrase in a survey of military strategy to describe massacres that rulers of the Three Qin principalities had perpetrated before their conquest by Han in 206 BC.[82] A similar statistical vagueness makes itself felt when Sima Guang describes large-scale casualties elsewhere in his text.[83] These omissions of precise statistics serve to draw attention to and magnify the scale of the loss, not to brush it aside. Hu Sanxing therefore misses the tone of the piece when he tries to limit the scale of the devastation by noting the survival of fortified cities in the six regions under Wei attack. There is no such limitation in the original text, just 'unfathomable' loss.

Precise statistics make way for a series of vivid, horrific images that create a greater narrative impact than any cold calculation of the death toll could have achieved. Images of impaled children and scenes of Wei troops dancing around their corpses draw on the stereotype of the barbarian as barbaric. Human loss is paralleled by destruction in the natural world. Conflict creates an ecological disaster: migratory birds lose their nesting sites. These events would attract opprobrium from later

[81] *Ibid* 126.3966. Cf. *Song shu* 61.1644; *Nan shi* 2.52.
[82] *Xin xu* 新序, Liu Xiang 劉向, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1991, 10.2a.
[83] On *ZZTJ* 121.3819, for example, Sima Guang changes 5,000 deaths (*Wei shu* 4A.76) to 'vast numbers' when a Song commander suffers a heavy defeat on 15 September 430 during an attack on a Wei-held castle. The scale of defeat is omitted altogether from *Bei shi* 2.45 and *Ce fu yuan gui* 423.5b-6a.

commentators as a violation of the 'eternal way' of sovereignty.[84] None of the graphic images of Sima Guang's account appears in his surviving sources, though,[85] and even in many accounts that followed *ZZTJ*'s composition they receive terse mention, much of the gory detail of infanticide and environmental destruction omitted.[86]

Loss is not limited to Song. Sima Guang draws an account of heavy Wei casualties from *Song shu*, the only one of his extant sources that contains it.[87] The inclusion is an important one. Neither side emerges as a clear victor: instead of simple oppositions, Sima Guang offers a powerful, universally relevant representation of the practical human costs that warfare visits upon a state.

Like in Sima Guang's eleventh-century memorials, there are economic as well as human losses in *ZZTJ*. In the twelfth lunar month of 430 of *ZZTJ*'s account Sima Guang manipulates his chronology and selects his source material to juxtapose a description of the abundance of army provisions on the eve of the northern campaign with an account of defeated Song armies jettisoning their equipment as they beat a hurried retreat. It leaves 'the official stores and military arsenals empty as a result.' Contrast with the past intensifies the sense of present loss. And the whole scene achieves even greater impact through what follows. When Emperor Wen asks after the state's arsenals, a minister lies in response that 'there are weapons enough for a hundred thousand men.' We know that this is false: *ZZTJ*'s external narrator, an authoritative voice in the text, has just declared the opposite. The resulting irony highlights both Song ministers' irresponsible duplicity and Emperor Wen's

[84] See, for example, sixteenth-century scholar Xia Liangsheng's 夏良勝 comment, which uses the same phrasing as Sima Guang, on *Zhong yong yan yi* 16.26b.
[85] Cf. *Song shu* 95.2353, *Wei shu* 97.2140, *Nan shi* 2.52.
[86] See, for example, *Cixi Huang shi ri chao fen lei Gu jin ji yao* 7.2b; *Shan tang kao suo* 山堂考索, Zhang Ruyu 章如愚, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1992, 'bie ji' 22.6b. Yuan scholar Yin Shifu 陰時夫 traces the imagery of impaling children only as far back as *ZZTJ*, *Yun fu qun yu* 韻府群玉, Yin Shifu, ed., Beijing: Shu mu wen xian chu ban she, 1998, 17.22a.
[87] *Song shu* 95.2353. Cf. *Wei shu* 97.2140; *Nan shi* 2.52.

willingness to be duped. It offers a sense of the real urgency of Song's military predicament too, that a minister has to lie to his ruler to conceal the devastating scale of military and economic loss.[88] All of this has an impact on civilian life. There is a reduction in civilian officials' salaries to fund military campaigns.[89] Money and supplies for the northern campaigns are raised from the nobility, wealthy commoners, and the clergy.[90] And, of course, the suffering of the common people serves as a constant backdrop to accounts of conflict throughout *ZZTJ*.[91]

Popular conscription

Writing about the eleventh century, Sima Guang identifies the recruitment of popular militia as a major source of popular suffering. The theme is rare in his account of Emperor Wen's fifth-century militarism. There are brief references to popular military service during the northern campaign of 450.[92] They differ from eleventh-century policies of military conscription, though, since they appear as necessary responses to a need to defend the capital region, not as active measures to support expansionist aims. Here is a rare point of divergence between *ZZTJ*'s thematic focus and Sima Guang's contemporary concerns in the eleventh century.

Popular conscription had a deep-rooted tradition by the eleventh century.[93] Extant accounts identify the beginnings of popular conscription in Guan Zhong's 管

[88] *ZZTJ* 121.3826-7. Sima Guang draws his claim of plentiful army provisions from *Nan shi* 25.675; cf. *Song shu* 81.2076. Later in Sima Guang's text, Song armies are forced to retreat because of a lack of supplies – economic loss appears not only as the result of military collapse, but also as its cause: *ZZTJ* 122.3829, 125.3958.
[89] *Ibid* 125.3938.
[90] *Ibid* 125.3947.
[91] For example: *ibid* 121.3824, 124.3924, 125.3957, 125.3959, 126.3966, 126.3968.
[92] *Ibid* 125.3947, 125.3959.
[93] The most detailed examination of this topic is Wen Juntian's 聞鈞天, *Zhongguo bao jia zhi du* 中國保甲制度, Taibei: Taiwan shang wu yin shu guan, 1971.

仲 policy of 'locating the army among the people' 寓兵於民 during the early seventh century BC.[94] During Shang Yang's 商鞅 reforms from 359 BC on, the Qin state implemented a system of social groups that formed the basis for local security and military recruitment.[95] Universal military service continued into the Eastern Han, when it was abolished, although popular conscription continued under successive regimes.[96]

Popular conscription was enforced throughout the eleventh century. In 1001 the Song court organized the local people of the Shaanxi and Hebei circuits into local militia. They received professional military training and were used to supplement the regular armies.[97] In the early 1040s Emperor Renzong responded to a threat from Xia by ordering the conscription of local village archers from among those eligible for corvée labour; Sima Guang's reaction has already drawn notice in this study. In 1070 the Commissioner-general for Kaifeng, Zhao Ziji 趙子幾, reported that local inhabitants blamed recent increases in criminal activity on the collapse of a system of voluntary security groups. He called for their revival.[98] In the twelfth lunar month of 1070-1 the Court of Agriculture issued a statute for the implementation of local security groups in Kaifeng and its neighbouring counties. Participation was compulsory. All group members were to receive military training. They were responsible for areas of social control: night patrols, the arrest of thieves, the pursuit of bandits, and the identification of those who might harbour criminals.[99] In the seventh lunar month of 1072 the policy extended to the prefectures

[94] *Guan zi ji jiao* 管子集校, Guan Zhong 管仲, Guo Moruo 郭漠若 et al., eds., Beijing: Ke xue chu ban she, 1956, 20.329-33; *Guo yu* 國語, Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1978, 6.229-32.
[95] *Shi ji* 68.2230-1.
[96] Mark Lewis examines the process of abolition in 'The Han Abolition of Universal Military Service,' in *Warfare in Chinese History*, Hans van de Ven, ed., Leiden: Brill, 2000, pp.33-76.
[97] *XCB* 47.1036, 52.1131; *Song shi* 190.4705-6.
[98] *XCB* 218.5298-9.
[99] *Ibid* 218.5297-8; *Song shi* 192.4767-8.

surrounding the capital. It became universal in the eighth lunar month of 1073.[100] By that time, Wang Anshi had also begun to militarise the security groups. He did this by placing security group conscripts under the command of prefectural military inspectors – the popular conscripts phased out regular army troops – and by introducing regular military drill and review. This process of militarization increased in 1075 when the supervision of security groups passed from the Court of Agricultural Supervision to the Bureau of Military Affairs.[101] Under the pressure of conflict with Xia during the early 1080s military drill and review became compulsory in practice, if not in law, and its frequency increased to at least one session every five days.[102]

With this contemporary focus, Sima Guang associates foreign conquest with the militarization of society at home, in particular the creation of local militia. On 2 March 1085 he suggests that Wang Anshi's New Policies serve no other purpose than to support campaigns of territorial expansion: without such campaigns, these policies would become no more than 'hollow constructs.'[103] Two months later, in an attack on Wang Anshi's policy of security groups and tithings, he makes an explicit causal connection with the conjunction 'therefore' 故:

> In the past, those people who sought advancement advised the former emperor [Shenzong] with policies to wage campaigns against the four barbarian tribes and to open up the borders and expand territory. They therefore established laws for security groups, the system of household warhorses, and the security group horses.[104]

[100] *XCB* 235.5710-1, 246.5999-6000.
[101] *Song shi* 192.4770.
[102] See comments by Fan Chunren (*ibid* 345.8289-90), Wang Yansou (361.8641-4), and Sima Guang (*SMWJ* 46.10a, 48.3a).
[103] *Ibid* 49.6b-7a (for dating, see *Chuan jia ji* 49.5b; *XCB* 363.8690-1).
[104] *SMWJ* 46.11b (for dating, see *XCB* 355.8496; *Song shi* 192.4781). He repeated these claims with similar phrasing in a second statement of 27 July of the same year, *SMWJ* 48.3a (for dating, see *XCB* 358.8563; *Song hui yao ji gao* 'bing' 2.32b).

And security groups would appear among the three areas that Sima Guang identified in a memorial of 23 May 1085 as damaging to the interests of the common people – note the familiar discourse of benefit and harm – and in urgent need of reform.[105] Here he suggests that the roots of these policies lay not in the mismanagement of domestic social affairs but rather in Emperor Shenzong's desire for territorial expansion and the belligerence that this bred among his ministers: the emperor, once again, is associated with policy failure.

As usual, it is too simple to cast criticisms of security groups solely as opposition to Emperor Shenzong's adoption of Wang Anshi's policies. Sima Guang contested the conscription of civilians for local militia – a practice that underpinned the security group system – long before the implementation of Wang Anshi's military reforms in the early 1070s. In 1040 he opposed an increase of local security forces in the Liang Zhe Circuit.[106] Drawing again on personal experience, in the eleventh lunar month of 1064-5 he presented to the throne a series of six memorials in which he confirmed his opposition to the creation of local militia in Shaanxi to defend against Xia during the early 1040s. In the first of these, he signalled that it should offer a minatory example to Emperor Yingzong: 'the whole population of Shaanxi was ruined by it. Over the twenty-plus years since then they have ultimately failed to return things to how they were before – entirely as a result of this. The failure of these strategies and policies is enough to serve as a warning.'[107] Here, as often, Sima Guang depends on past experience to form present policy. It is ironic,

[105] *SMWJ* 46.8a-b (for dating, see *XCB* 355. 8492). The other two areas were local military command posts and labour exemption payments, through which individuals could buy their way out of corvée labour for the state.
[106] *SMWJ* 16.1b-3b. Sima Chi was employed as prefect of Hangzhou, in the Liang Zhe Circuit, see *Song shi* 298.9904. Sima Guang took up a post in Suzhou at the time in order to assist his father, *Song shi* 336.10757; *Sima Wen gong nian pu* 1.31.
[107] *SMWJ* 31.7a-b (for dating, see *XCB* 203.4916, although without this phrase). See also his claim in the fourth of these memorials that 'It is already possible to know from the case of the common people of these two circuits that the militia are harmful,' *SMWJ* 32.2b.

then, that his warning would have little effect in the future on the formation of domestic military policy under the succeeding Emperor Shenzong.

There are two distinct themes in Sima Guang's opposition to local militia. To supplement or replace professional troops with civilians would precipitate military defeat because Song civilian conscripts were unprepared for conflict. In the fourth lunar month of 1085 Sima Guang set his argument in a historical context: a system of civilian conscription was last employed during Tang's *kai yuan* period; in addition, Song had been at peace 'for a hundred and more years.'[108] Neither of these claims really stands up to close analysis: widespread civilian conscription had been in place for almost fifty years before he presented his 1085 memorial; military tensions between Song and its neighbouring states punctuated much of the first half of the eleventh century.[109] That matters less than their rhetorical effect. They point up the limits of Song's military capacity. They echo Sima Guang's suggestion elsewhere that a strong, complacent state was vulnerable to military weakness.[110] The populations of Song's foreign rivals were brought up shooting from horseback and were battle-hardened, but its own peoples were unfamiliar with even the basic use of weaponry. They were agriculturalists rather than warriors and 'those people engaged in ploughing and sericulture have no knowledge of warfare and conflict.'[111] It is a familiar point of contrast in Sima Guang's memorials and one that has already attracted notice in Chapter 2 as a basis for schematic opposition between powerful barbarians and weak Han Chinese. Current systems of militia conscription fail to address such weakness: the rapid turnover of Wang Anshi's security groups prevents

[108] *Ibid* 46.10a-b (for dating, see *XCB* 355.8494; *Song shi* 192.4779).
[109] Despite this, though, Wang Anshi also used a similar rhetoric of enduring peace between Song and its rival states, *Linchuan xian sheng wen ji* 41.444-6.
[110] For example, *SMWJ* 18.10a: Qin and Sui offer minatory examples from the past.
[111] *Ibid* 31.7a. Cf. *ibid* 31.9a, 38.4a, 46.11a, 74.6a. Sima Guang also draws this contrast into the wider discourse of benefit and harm. In the eleventh lunar month of 1064-5, he noted that civilian conscription 'only produces alarm and disorder but is really of no use,' *ibid* 31.9a (for dating, see *XCB* 203.4916).

conscripts from gaining basic military skills.[112] The result could be disastrous. Sima Guang anticipates a complete collapse of the under-trained Song militia in the face of barbarian invasion.[113] As usual, he bases himself on the authority of evidence from the past: the near-fatal consequences of Tang Emperor Dezong's policy of civilian conscription; the recent collapse of civilian militia in the Huanqing circuit.[114]

A second, fundamental issue is at stake. The formation of local militia subverts the divide between military and civilian life that underpins the machinery of the state. For Sima Guang, that is why they fail to operate with success: they blur the roles ascribed to individuals within a larger social framework, and so hobble the common people from fulfilling their appropriate functions. This has important social as well as military effects because the welfare of the common people depends on the preservation of such divisions. In the abstract discourse of harm and benefit, the formation of militia 'does harm to the common people and brings no benefit to officialdom.'[115] In concrete terms, it creates a crippling economic burden. It distracts farmers from their agricultural and sericultural duties and places a two-fold professional obligation on them. The result, by 1085, was that agricultural work had 'almost completely been abandoned' in the circuits of Hebei, Hedong, and Shaanxi (although we should make allowance for hyperbole in Sima Guang's statement). Additional taxes fell on the common people to pay for training and equipment. These were made worse by the intervention of corrupt officials, who sought personal gain. The common people had to draw on private property to fund shortfalls, causing poverty and privation. At the same time, spending on the militia diverted money

[112] *SMWJ* 57.16b.
[113] *Ibid* 18.6b, 32.4a, 32.4b-5a, 42.4b-5a, 48.4a.
[114] Tang Emperor Dezong: *ibid* 18.6a. Huanqing circuit: *ibid* 42.4b.
[115] *Ibid* 54.8a. Sima Guang's descriptions of the harm that security groups visit upon the common people pre-dates this memorial, presented to the throne in 1086 (for dating, see *Li dai ming chen zou yi* 318.15a). It appears in a series of criticisms against local militia that date to the eleventh lunar month of 1064-5: *SMWJ* 32.2b, 32.4b, 32.6b-7a (for dating, see *XCB* 203.4916-22). Sima Guang makes similar claims on *SMWJ* 42.4b. Sima Guang makes a link between the management of military affairs and the well-being of the common people: *ibid* 53.7a.

away from civilian funds for poverty relief.[116] This state-endorsed drain on the economic welfare of the common people created a loss of popular morale and bred fear. Drawing on personal observations, Sima Guang had earlier declared that 'the sounds of wailing filled the air and spread over the whole countryside' in Shaanxi;[117] the inhabitants of Kaifeng also wept over it.[118] And even as early as the sixth lunar month of 1069 he had anticipated more threatening consequences of economic hardship: the long-term militarization of society would drain public and private coffers; the result would be social disruption and the emergence of thieves and bandits.[119] Sima Guang's primary regional focus here, as often, was Shaanxi. On the local level, militia conscription would drive people facing privation to find other sources of income. Paradoxically, their rudimentary military training would offer them the resources and skills to pursue banditry.[120] As evidence he was able to point to two recent local uprisings. In the summer of 1084 a former solider, Wang Chong 王沖, had used the security group horses of Wang Anshi's military reform programme to pillage the prefectures of Shangzhou and Guozhou, in the north-western Yongxing Military Prefecture. Security group members in Huolu County, little more than a hundred *li* from the border with Liao, had rebelled and injured local magistrates.[121] Two circular social processes are shown in these examples. To protect the state local officials supply the training and supplies for armed defence; individuals impoverished by expenditure on those same military resources use their

[116] Distraction from agriculture: *ibid* 46.10a (1085/4, with particular reference to Hebei, Hedong, and Shaanxi: *XCB* 355.8494; *Song shi* 192.4779); cf. *SMWJ* 31.7a, 48.4a, 54.8a, 57. 16b. Additional taxation: *ibid* 31.7b, 42.3b, 57.16b. Official corruption: *ibid* 46.6b, 46.10a. Recourse to personal property: *ibid* 31.7a, 31.9b. Lack of poverty relief funds: *ibid* 43.9b.
[117] See above, n.4.
[118] *Ibid* 18.6b.
[119] *Ibid* 40.2a (for dating, see *Guo chao zhu chen zou yi* 137.11b); cf. *SMWJ* 50.9b.
[120] *Ibid* 42.5a, 46.11a, 54.8a.
[121] *Ibid* 48.4b. For Wang Chong's uprising, see *Song shi* 343.10921; *XCB* 346.8314, 355.8488. Apart from a passing reference by censor Sun Sheng 孫升 in 1086 (*XCB* 372.9020), I have been unable to trace further references to the Huolu County rebellion.

training and supplies illegally to undermine political order. Put in broad terms, the breakdown of divisions between military and civilian spheres creates economic hardship. That produces social turmoil, which then further undermines those divisions. Neither is just a local problem, particular to current circumstances. They both have distant historical precedents that trace back to antiquity.[122] And they implicate the whole state by destabilising the foundations of social and political harmony.[123]

All this comes with a warning against a simplistic reading of Sima Guang's view of military conscription. He again shows himself to be a pragmatist rather than a rigid idealist. In some of his memorials to the throne, he allowed for troop increases *per se*, and even the conscription of civilians into the military, as long as they did not encroach upon the welfare of the common people and were properly managed and effective. In the first lunar month of 1065 he appeared to be in expansive mood:

> Let us suppose that, if the barbarian invaders were to penetrate deeply and were to retreat in defeat on facing the might of the militia, then once the militiamen had been conscripted, the regular army could henceforth be dissolved and disbanded. That would be the superior strategy for ten thousand generations and I hope that Your Highness would implement it without the slightest doubt.[124]

The hypothesis is set up to be self-evidently impossible. Its irony rings out when set in its immediate context of the six memorials that Sima Guang wrote in the same month, in which he presented close-wrought evidence of the inability of the Song militia to withstand foreign invasion.

[122] *SMWJ* 57.18a.
[123] *Ibid* 31.10a.
[124] *Ibid* 32.5a-b (for dating, see *XCB* 203.4920).

His tone was more direct and practical six years later. With the example of Yongxing Military Prefecture close to hand, his focus had shifted to the tension between militarization and the welfare of the common people. Writing on 10 February 1071 he again allowed for military conscription but under strict economic conditions: the court should first calculate annual expenditure for the regular army. It should set aside twenty or thirty percent of the total amount to provide for the local common people. Only then, if any resources remained, should it increase the number of troops and warhorses in the area.[125] Despite differences in tone, a common argument emerges from both documents, and also revisits the foundation of his opposition to military conscription. Civilians cannot prosper economically and be militarily effective at the same time: they cannot straddle the division between military and civilian roles. Limitations on the state's finances also mean that it cannot support both enterprises. Any attempt to do so is a false economy that brings with it danger, both at home and from abroad. We return to the familiar ground of harm and benefit.

Military personnel

Although the conscription of militia receives scant attention in *ZZTJ*'s account of the fifth century, the recruitment of personnel does draw notice as a source of military failure. Two predominant traits suggest themselves in Sima Guang's characterization of Song commanders: cowardice and belligerence. Du Ji 杜驥, Dao Yanzhi 到彥之, Zhu Lingxiu 竺靈秀, Wang Xuanmo – this is a short sample of men who are seen to

[125] This despite the general opposition that he expresses in his memorial to increases in troop numbers, *SMWJ* 43.10a (for dating, see *Chuan jia ji* 45.25a).

place self-preservation over the defence of their state. All are quick to abandon their posts and flee in the face of Wei armies. Sima Guang's rhetorical tactic here is to point up their cowardice through contrast. On 23 November 430 Song commander Du Ji deceives the man sent to help him, Yao Songfu 姚聳夫, and flees his post. To cover his cowardice, he deflects blame for the retreat onto Yao Songfu, whom the emperor executes. Our reading of the episode is guided by *ZZTJ*'s external narrator, who tells us that Yao 'was courageous and resolute, and none of the assistant generals was equal to him.'[126] His integrity is set against Du Ji's cowardice and duplicity, which are emphasised as a result. The following month Dao Yanzhi plans to lead his troops in retreat as the territory around him falls to the invading Wei army. He attracts in response a remonstration from a palace commander, Yuan Huzhi 垣護之, who presents a roll of past models of bravery. Dao Yanzhi's present conduct suffers from the implicit comparison.[127] On 28 November 450 senior Song commander Wang Xuanmo faces a large Wei invasion force and flees in fear. Yet Sima Guang offers extensive accounts of the bravery of his subordinate commanders – Yuan Huzhi again, Xue Andu 薛安都, and Zeng Fangping 曾方平 – who fend off Wei troops through personal valour. Wang Xuanmo's cowardice is emphasised by the juxtaposition of these accounts in *ZZTJ*.[128]

There is a paradox. Commanders who are cowardly in the heat of battle are often the same individuals who, in the safety of the court, appear as the most ardent advocates of conflict. Wang Xuanmo stands out. *ZZTJ*'s external narrator describes him as 'greedy, wilful, and fond of killing' 貪愎好殺. They are terms that Sima Guang has applied earlier in *ZZTJ* – to belligerent Western Jin officials, for

[126] *ZZTJ* 121.3821-2.
[127] *Ibid* 121.3823.
[128] *Ibid* 125.3949-52.

example – and they serve to identify Wang Xuanmo with a certain textual type. In support of this characterization, Sima Guang recasts Wang Xuanmo's refusal to burn down the castle at Huatai in 450 from a concern with preserving military supplies (as in *Song shu*, *Nan shi*, and *Ce fu yuan gui*) to a desire for personal wealth.[129] It deepens the ignominy of his subsequent defeat and the military collapse that his cowardice causes.

Belligerence is prominent among the traits that Sima Guang identifies in eleventh-century ministers too. They are casual in their use of military force. He founds his objection to them on a well-worn canonical phrase that had earlier appeared with identical wording in Li Bo's 李白 eighth-century poem 'Zhan cheng nan' 戰城南, itself a powerful statement against the expansionist policies of the Tang court: 'Weapons are instruments of famine. The sage will only use them when he has no other option.'[130] A division between agriculture and warfare suggests itself again: weapons are the antithesis of farming tools and bring death instead of life; agriculture emerges favourably from the contrast, and warfare is implicitly condemned.

With such potentially damaging consequences for civil society, conflict should not be entered into lightly, only as a last resort. Yet the actions of belligerent Song officials (Sima Guang casts them as 'treacherous, duplicitous ministers') draw a critical response for just this reason. Sima Guang couches his comments once more in canonical values:

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[129] *Ibid* 125.3948-9. Cf. *Song shu* 76.1974; *Nan shi* 16.465; *Ce fu yuan gui* 437.8b.

[130] Sima Guang uses this quotation in two of his statements on military policy, *SMWJ* 43.4b and 46.10a-b, and echoes it closely in a third, 49.5a. It appears on *Li Taibo quan ji* 李太白全集, Li Bo 李白, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1977, 3.177-8. That work also contains these lines, which resonate with the content and rhetoric of Sima Guang's eleventh-century opposition to military expansionism: 'Campaigning and fighting over ten thousand *li*; / The men of the Three Armies have grown exhausted and old. / The Xiongnu treat killing and massacre like ploughing: / Ever since antiquity, only white bones have appeared in their fields of yellow sand.' The present quotation predates Li Bo, though. Its likely source is *Lao zi Dao de jing* 老子道德經, Li Er 李耳, Wang Bi 王弼, annot., *Zhu zi ji cheng* edn., A.18. It also appears (although with a textual variant) in an explicitly military context in *Liu tao* 六韜, Lu Wang 呂望, ap. *Wo qi jing* 握奇經, *Zhu zi bai jia cong shu* edn., 1.6. In the eleventh century Su Shi echoed the formulation in a powerful attack on those with militarist tendencies, *XCB* 386.7005.

> They continually court danger in search of profit and stumble across good fortune by fluke. They embrace deceit and hoodwink the emperor. They are casual about taking up weapons. They rashly stir up the barbarians. [The use of] troops is a serious matter for the state. Its rise or fall, survival or destruction consequently lies in this.[131]

The allusion here in the final, sententious statements is to Sun zi; the emphasis is on the importance to state survival of circumspection in military affairs.[132] To resort to force without due caution and to engage barbarians in warfare can endanger political stability. Yet ministers like Chong E, discussed already in Chapter 2, continue to treat military conflict 'as if it were all just a child's game.' It is an enduring concern in Sima Guang's memorials: he would use identical rhetoric in an attack on the New Policies that he composed on 23 May 1085.[133] And the analogy that he draws between military action and a 'child's game' predates both of these documents. It appears in a memorial of the eleventh lunar month of 1064-5, in the context of the recurrent discourse of practical benefit to the state, to refer to the attitude of those conscripted for local militia service as well the enterprise of militia conscription itself.[134] It finds echoes too in *ZZTJ*'s account of the fifth century (compiled in the early 1070s): Song diplomat Zhang Chang 張暢 refers to conflict with Wei as a 'game' 戲 of military engagement; Wei troops impale children and dance around their corpses 'as a game' 爲戲.[135]

Belligerence proceeds from the personal greed of military officials who 'concern themselves recklessly with personal titles and rewards.' Sima Guang sets

[131] *SMWJ* 57.17a.
[132] Sun zi's *Bing fa* opens like this: '[The use of] troops is a serious matter for the state. It is the place where life or death lies, the route to survival or destruction. It must be scrutinized,' *Shi yi jia zhu Sun zi*, A.1.
[133] *SMWJ* 46.6b (for dating, see *XCB* 355.8490).
[134] *SMWJ* 32.4a (for dating, see *XCB* 203.4920). Further criticism of local officials' casual use of force in the eleventh century appears on *SMWJ* 43.5a, where Sima Guang again points up the economic frailty of the state. In his *Song lun*, Wang Fuzhi also repeatedly uses the metaphor of a game 戲 to discuss military training and governance during the reign of Song Emperor Taizong, *Song lun* 2.5a-7a.
[135] *ZZTJ* 125.3956, 126.3966.

common social and economic interests against personal gain. Here are echoes of the tension that makes itself felt in the fifth century between Emperor Wen's personal military ambition and the welfare of the state. Here too is a preoccupation with the discourse of benefit and harm, although it now appears as a tension between public and private interests that recurs in Sima Guang's memorials and elsewhere in eleventh-century political debate. In the autumn of 1082, he urges Emperor Shenzong to 'keep in check the commanders on the border and not to allow them to endanger the state through their greed for achievements.'[136] The emperor's failure to do so draws Sima Guang's criticism in memorials of 1085 and 1086, although only after the emperor's death and his own accession to a position of legislative power. Instead of encouraging restraint, Shenzong is seen to have created an ethos of greed through his own desire for territorial expansion:

> [Shenzong] had the keen desire to launch a campaign to expand his territory. The military men from the frontier consequently looked for their chance to make petty gains. They dared to talk in grand terms and without restraint. The only thing on their minds was seeking credit for their achievements, but they did not give thought to the disasters that might befall the state. They vied with one another to show that they had more than enough courage and said of themselves that Wei [Qing] 衛青 and Huo [Qubing] had not died.[137] Pale-faced bookworms depended on documents and charts, and were versed in the written record, yet they did not know unity from rebellion. They vied to present crackpot strategies and said of themselves that [Zhang] Liang 張良 and [Chen] Ping 陳平 were still alive.[138] Ministers gathered taxes, amassed wealth, and only portioned off the smallest fraction to provide for army expenditure. They devoted themselves to currying favour without caring about the harm done to the common people. They each described unmined sources of profit and said of themselves that [Ji] Yan 計研 and Sang [Hongyang] 桑弘羊 had emerged once more.[139] They misled the emperor and sought exalted status for themselves.[140]

[136] *SMWJ* 57.18b.
[137] Han commanders who gained military success for Han Emperor Wu on campaigns against the Xiongnu. Both frequently appear as exemplars in Song discussions of military policy in *ZZTJ*. Wei Qing: *Han shu* 55.2471-7 Huo Qubing: *ibid* 55.2478-90.
[138] Han strategists used by Liu Bang in conflict against Xiang Yu. Zhang Liang: *Han shu* 40.2023-38. Chen Ping: *ibid* 40.2038-46.
[139] Ji Yan served under the Spring and Autumn state of Yue and strengthened its civil and military governance, *Shi ji* 129.3256. Sang Hongyang directed agricultural and economic administration under Han Emperor Wu and succeeded in increasing the state's revenue at a time when Han armies went on annual campaigns, *Shi ji* 30.1432, 30.1441, 103.2767; *Han shu* 24B.1164, 24B.1174-6.
[140] *SMWJ* 49.5b-6a.

That familiar marker of causality, the conjunction 'consequently' 於是, establishes a link between Emperor Shenzong's territorial ambitions and his military commanders' pursuit of personal profit, which comes at the expense of state-wide benefits. Sima Guang shows the emperor, whose political and moral imperative it is to restrain the greed of his commanders for the good of his state, instead allowing himself to be misled by them.[141] Echoes sound through all this of Emperor Wen's vulnerability to the self-interest of members of his court.

The result is the provocation of rival states. In *ZZTJ*, in the spring of 451 of its chronology, the Wei ruler resolves to return north after a year of heavy fighting and concludes a peace agreement with the central Song court. He makes a request for wine from Zang Zhi 臧質, Song's Bulwark-general of the State; he receives a vat of urine instead. In a fit of pique he orders the erection of a siege wall and prepares for renewed fighting. An aggressive, sabre-rattling exchange of letters follows. The terms of this verbal confrontation are ethnic. The Wei ruler distances himself from the various barbarian tribes that he proposes to send from his army against local Song forces. Zang Zhi responds by representing his adversary as treacherous, refers to the men of Wei as 'caitiffs,' and likens the Wei invasion to that of Fu Jian 苻堅 in the fourth century – with all the resonance of Han Chinese superiority over a barbarian leader that the parallel suggests. He also issues a statement to the local people, whom he pointedly identifies as 'people who use the Han Chinese calendrical system' in implied contrast to the barbarian identity of the Wei ruler.[142] The fragile peace crumbles as a result. The Wei army halts its retreat to attack Zang Zhi, causing huge casualties. And *ZZTJ*'s account of the episode is supplemented by

[141] It is not the only memorial in which he makes such a claim: the following year, in the second lunar month of 1086, he associated Shenzong's military campaign against Xia with local commanders' seizure of parcels of border territory for personal gain, *ibid* 50.2b (for dating, see *XCB* 365.8749).
[142] *ZZTJ* 126.3963-5.

a string of statements in the voice of the text's external narrator that emphasise the extent of the devastation that the Wei invasion visits upon Song territory. Belligerence produces retaliation, and that brings loss to the state.

The same dynamic of cause and effect, of belligerence and retaliation, recurs in Sima Guang's statements on the eleventh century. It is a theme already mentioned in Chapter 2 of this study, in the specific context of Song policy towards its barbarian neighbours. He draws on the personal experience of his disastrous campaign against Xia in Linzhou in 1057.[143] He also marshals the weighty authority of the past – specifically the past as a minatory example for the present – and refers to the 'numerous cases since antiquity in which rulers have delighted in the use of troops' and have subsequently laid their states open to foreign invasion.[144] Emperor Wen's fifth-century campaigns against Wei are just one such example and serve his argument well. In particular, though, Sima Guang focuses his criticisms on the immediate imperial predecessors of the present Song emperors – a common rhetorical strategy of his, and one that this study has already analysed. We therefore follow the links between the aggressive actions of border officials in the far north and west during the early 1060s and the ensuing barbarian retaliation that caused the massacre and pillage of Song frontier communities. The seizure of territory from Xia in the early 1080s also comes up for scrutiny: it brought little profit to Song but harmed Xia interests (the discourse of economic benefit and harm resurfaces), unsettled that state, and incited its desire for revenge. Sima Guang offers a general pattern here: military action against barbarians repeatedly upsets the fundamental dynamic of inter-state relations and sets in motion a ruinous chain of cause and effect that threatens the stability of the state. Since policies of territorial expansion

[143] *SMWJ* 17.3b.
[144] *Ibid* 57.18a.

jeopardise political stability, whatever their immediate gains (which in any case were seen to be few and illusory), Sima Guang argues that they should be abandoned in the long-term interests of state survival.

Sima Guang's response to the use of military aggression abroad is more complex than outright rejection, though. His approach is informed by a vision of *realpolitik*. He approves the use of force when it is reactive or punitive, and when it enables the Song state to maintain its control over insubordinate barbarian tribes. Failure to offer a military response in these cases would cause them to grow arrogant and tend to rebellion.[145] Like in many of his memorials, he bases himself on canonical authority in an analysis of border affairs of the ninth lunar month of 1064:

> I have heard that *Zhou shu* praised King Wen's virtue like this: "Great states fear his power. Small states embrace his virtue."[146] It probably means that when feudal lords are arrogant and do not pay court, then one attacks and punishes them; when they are compliant and submit meekly, then one protects and preserves them. The way a sovereign exercises governance over the empire is by not fleeing from the strong and by not intimidating the weak.[147]

This is the model for events from the recent past. Between 1038 and 1048 Xia leader Zhao Yuanhao invaded Song borders and violated the relationship of vassal and ruler that he held with Emperor Renzong.[148] For Sima Guang, the court's failure to take military retribution against his insubordination damaged its reputation. Worse still, between 1042 and 1044 it negotiated a treaty with Xia in which it offered official titles and annual financial reparations – Sima Guang calls them 'hefty bribes.' That response appears as an enduring source of resentment: he makes further reference to

[145] *Ibid* 20.8b-9a, 33.10b.
[146] The original quotation appears on *Shang shu zheng yi* 11.72c.
[147] *SMWJ* 31.3a-b (for dating, see *XCB* 202.4906).
[148] Zhao Yuanhao's nomenclature is complicated. The ruling dynasty of Xia had been granted the dynastic surname Li by the Tang state. In 991, Song had bestowed its dynastic surname, Zhao, upon the current Xia ruler, Li Jiqian. Soon after coming to power in 1038, though, Yuanhao changed the dynastic surname to the Tangut Weiming. Sima Guang refers to the Xia dynastic surname as Zhao; I follow his decision.

the failure to employ appropriate military force in memorials of 1065 and 1086.[149] But Sima Guang also adopts a contemporary focus in his criticisms: later in the memorial of the ninth lunar month of 1064 he identifies a similar inversion of the canonical model of King Wen of Zhou in the treatment that the eleventh-century court affords Zhao Yuanhao's successor, Zhao Liangzuo 趙諒祚. A failure to learn from past mistakes makes itself felt once again; the minatory example of Song Emperor Wen goes unheeded.

Personal shortcomings of commanders in the field – their cowardice and belligerence – are overshadowed by the greater failures of the institutions of military administration. Blame rests with the emperor. In *ZZTJ* Emperor Wen himself recognizes this in a retrospective look at the disastrous campaign of 450 (although, as we have seen, that experience fails to deter him from future invasion attempts).[150] It also receives authoritative, explicit expression from *ZZTJ*'s external narrator:

> Whenever the emperor ordered the generals to take out the armies, he gave them fully formed directives. Even when they were engaged in battle, they would have to wait for an edict from the palace. As a result, the commanders and generals hung back and none of them ventured to make their own decisions. Further to this, the common conscripts from south of the Yangzi were casual about advancing and retreated easily. This was the reason why they were defeated. From then on, the towns and neighbourhoods deteriorated and the governance of the *yuan jia* period declined.[151]

This is the clearest statement of aetiology that we have in *ZZTJ*'s account of this period. In his comment on the text Hu Sanxing suggests that its focus is the excessive use of troops. That is true for Sima Guang's account of Song militarism as a whole but it misses the point of this statement. What it offers instead is a close focus on institutional inefficiency: that is the main cause – the only cause suggested here – of

[149] *SMWJ* 32.3a-b (1064-5/11: *XCB* 203.4919), 50.6a (1086/2/3: *XCB* 365.8752-3).
[150] *ZZTJ* 125.3960.
[151] *Ibid* 126.3966.

Song's defeat. It slows Song's military response to crisis and it hobbles the efficacy of those in the field. It causes losses in the present. Echoing Sima Guang's conclusions in *Li nian tu*, it is also seen to lie at the heart of a long-term period of decline that encompasses the remainder of Emperor Wen's reign.

Most important, though, is the chain of cause and effect that traces back to the emperor's attempt to maintain autocratic control over the military. The significance of this statement suggests itself from comparison with Sima Guang's sources. It does not appear with its present wording in any of the extant texts that preceded *ZZTJ*'s composition. In content it is closest to the most anti-Song of all of Sima Guang's sources, *Wei shu*'s 魏書 biography of Emperor Wen, which attributes the decline of *yuan jia* governance to iron-fisted imperial regulations (although not specifically military ones, as Sima Guang suggests).[152] Compare this with rival explanations for Emperor Wen's downfall: consultation with bookish scholars on military matters;[153] institutional changes to terms of official duty;[154] expansionist plans proposed by courtiers Jiang Zhan 江湛 and Xu Zhanzhi 徐湛之, and subsequent Wei retaliation.[155] None of these implicates Emperor Wen himself. By contrast, Sima Guang attributes ultimate responsibility for Song's decline to the emperor and his failed military policies. It sounds a warning for his eleventh-century contemporaries.

[152] *Wei shu* 97.2140.
[153] *Ye Babai yi zhuan* 葉八白易傳, Ye Shan 葉山, *Si ku quan shu zhen ben san ji* edn., 7.29b-30a (Ye Shan's reference to Liu Yu (Emperor Wu), not Liu Yigong (Emperor Wen), seems to be an error: his phrasing echoes that applied to Emperor Wen elsewhere; he later refers to the decline of 'the *yuan jia* governance'). Sima Guang also acknowledges this shortcoming of Song military policy but does not attach to it responsibility for Emperor Wen's long-term downfall, *ZZTJ* 125.3935-6.
[154] *Xiezhai jia shu shu chao* 絜齋家塾書鈔, Yuan Xie 袁燮, *Si ming cong shu* edn., 1.49b.
[155] *Shi xian sheng ao lun zhu* 十先生奧論註, *Si ku quan shu zhen ben chu ji* edn., 'qian ji' 14.7b (based on *ZZTJ*'s account of the conflict between Song and Wei).

Solutions

On the *yi chou* day [27 January 451], Wei's Prince of Yan, Tan 譚, attacked [Song general Hu] Chongzhi 胡崇之 and others. All three camps were defeated. [Zang] Zhi kept his troops where they were and did not venture to rescue them. … That evening Zhi's army also collapsed. Zhi abandoned his baggage supplies and weapons, and made for the castle by himself at the head of seven hundred men.

Before all of this, when the Governor of Xuyi, Shen Pu 沈璞, took up office, Wang Xuanmo was still at Huatai and [the areas around] the Yangzi and Huai rivers were not in a state of alarm. Since the commandery occupied a site of strategic importance, Pu repaired its fortifications and deepened its defensive ditches, amassed funds and grain, and stockpiled arrows and rocks in preparation for a defence of the castle. His staff all thought that this was wrong. The court also considered it a mistake. When Wei troops headed south many local administrators abandoned their castles in flight. Someone urged Pu that he should return to Jiankang. He replied: "If the caitiffs disregard the castle on account of its smallness, then what will we have to fear any more? If they come and attack in hand-to-hand combat, then that will be the moment when we shall requite our state and the day when you shall earn your fiefdoms. Why should we leave it? Have you ever seen hundreds of thousands of men massed beneath the ramparts of a small castle avoid defeat? Kunyang and Hefei offer clear proofs of this from the past." His forces' minds eased somewhat. Having managed to assemble two thousand crack troops, Pu said: "That will do."

Now that Zang Zhi was heading for the castle, Pu's forces told him: "If the caitiffs do not attack the castle, then there will be no job for our forces to do. If they do attack the castle, though, then there is only enough space inside to accommodate our current force's strength and no more. When you have a lot of people within a confined space, it is nearly always a recipe for disaster. What's more, there are masses of the enemy but we are few in number. That's common knowledge. If Zhi's force is able to drive the enemy back and preserve the castle, then we will not take full credit for the achievement. If we avoid disgrace by returning to the capital, and jointly use our ships, then we will inevitably trample one another underfoot instead. It certainly has all the makings of a disaster. It would be better to shut the gates and not receive him." Pu exclaimed: "No way will the caitiffs be able to scale the castle walls – I'd venture to offer you my assurance on that. In fact, the plan of using ships was set aside a long time ago. Neither in the past nor the present have caitiffs inflicted such destruction and harm. The depredation that their massacres have caused is there for all to see. The more fortunate among the people have managed to get away only with being forced back to the northern state as slaves. Though they have formed a rabble like this, they will surely be intimidated by us. That is what is meant by 'when they are all in the same boat, the Hu and the Yue barbarians are of one mind.'[156] If we now have large numbers of troops, then the caitiffs will retreat in haste. If we only have a few, then they will retreat slowly. Surely we should not leave the caitiffs hanging around simply because we want to take sole credit for the achievement." He thereupon opened the gates and took in Zhi. When Zhi saw that there was ample provision of assets within the castle walls, he was delighted. His forces all cheered and then joined Pu in mounting a defence.[157]

[156] Hu Sanxing's commentary attributes the quotation to the third-century exegetical scholar, Wang Bi 王弼. The original phrase – although textually variant from the phrasing that Shen Pu uses in *ZZTJ* – appears in his *Zhou yi lüe li* 周易略例, *Han Wei cong shu* edn., 5a. A variant of this formulation also appears on *Shi yi jia zhu Sun zi* C.197.

[157] *ZZTJ* 125.3958-9.

Sima Guang's main source here is *Song shu*. These events appear in Shen Yue's 沈約 autobiographical section of that text: Shen Pu was his father.[158] Shen Yue was orphaned at thirteen *sui*,[159] but it is tempting to attribute authority for the *Song shu* account to a family anecdote that originates with Shen Pu himself – that would account for the close detail of the deliberations that take place in the castle. This in turn has implications for our interpretation of *ZZTJ*'s text. Sima Guang has chosen a source informed by greater, more obvious personal interest than any other available to him. Before we approach the substance of his account there are warning signs of the ideological slant that underlies its construction.

It is therefore unsurprising when Shen Pu appears in both *Song shu* and *ZZTJ* as a figure of moral integrity in the midst of military collapse. In both texts he resists calls to abandon his post at Xuyi. For him there is an opportunity 'for requiting our state,' a phrase rich with the language of loyalism.[160] His actions stand in juxtaposition with the cowardice of the local officials who flee the powerful Wei invasion force and his characterization in both texts is shaped by the contrast. Later in *ZZTJ* Shen Pu confirms his integrity by attributing to Zang Zhi the military successes that have resulted from his foresight, although the text suggests that his own defensive preparations are their true cause. His modesty receives approval from Emperor Wen; Sima Guang follows his source by framing it in a positive light; it would also draw notice from later commentators.[161] As elsewhere in *ZZTJ*,

[158] *Song shu* 100.2462-3. For Shen Yue's relationship to Shen Pu, see *Liang shu* 梁書, Yao Silian 姚思廉, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1973, 13.232-3.
[159] *Song shu* 100.2466.
[160] See, for example, Ouyang Xiu's use of the phrase on *Guo chao zhu chen zou yi* 76.6b. And this, by Sima Guang's near-contemporary Zong Ze 宗澤: 'The northern cavalry gallops onwards over long distances; grave danger befalls the capital. Pained in heart and mind, this is the time for loyal ministers and righteous men to devote themselves to their sovereign and to requite their state,' *Zong Zhongjian gong ji* 宗忠簡公集, Zong Ze, Taibei: Han Hua wen hua shi ye gu xi you xian gong si, 1970, 6.5a-b.
[161] *ZZTJ* 126.3965; *Song shu* 100.2463-4. Cf. *Feng shi wen jian ji* 封氏聞見記, Feng Yan 封演, *Ji fu cong shu* edn., 4.4a (cf. *Shuo fu san zhong* 說郛三種, Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀 et al., eds., Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1988, 46.2a); *Ce fu yuan gui* 431.11a-b; *Tang yu lin* 唐語林, Wang Dang 王讜, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1958,

demonstrations of moral integrity affect how we are meant to interpret the reliability of Shen Pu's advice: this is a character of proven moral worth and his words are likely to reflect that.

Sima Guang puts his own spin on his source, though. His manipulation of chronology in *ZZTJ*'s text lends this passage significance. An opening time word, 'before all this,' *chu* 初, allows Sima Guang to insert his account of Shen Pu's advance preparations *after* a detailed description of a devastating Song defeat at the hands of Wei forces.[162] By contrast, it appears much earlier in *Song shu*'s version of events where Shen Yue, unlike Sima Guang, describes events in their real-time sequence. Sima Guang's editorial intervention leaves images of destruction and defeat uppermost in our mind before we jump back to events that precede the military disaster. Dramatic irony runs through what follows and affirms Shen Pu's decision to make military preparations at a time when no immediate danger threatens. We know in advance that he is prescient and that his caution will prove well founded. His staff and the members of the court who criticise his actions are wrong.[163]

These military preparations are Sima Guang's main concern. The list of the practical measures that Shen Pu takes to strengthen Xuyi's defences is followed by the declaration that they were 'in preparation for a defence of the castle' 爲城守之備. In Sima Guang's sources they appear only 'as an unbeatable strategy' 爲不可勝之算; although implied, the word 'preparation' 備 is not used.[164] There is a sharp focus on the practical response to enemy invasion, and Sima Guang omits sententious

8.268-9; *Song ben Fang yu sheng lan* 宋本方輿勝覽, Zhu Mu 祝穆, ed., Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1986, 47.11a.

[162] Drawn from *Song shu* 74.1911-2, which offers greater detail than *ibid* 100.2462.

[163] Sima Guang draws his account of opposition to Shen Pu's preparations from his main source text, *Song shu* 100.2462, but it has been omitted from another account that bases itself on *Song shu*, *Ce fu yuan gui* 399.13a. The difference points up the textual choices that faced Sima Guang at every turn of his account.

[164] *Song shu* 100.2462; *Ce fu yuan gui* 399.13a. Sima Guang seems to draw his phrase (with some variation) from *Song shu* 74.1912: '爲守戰之備.'

statements of military theory. 'Although it is said that attack and defence are not the same and so one should estimate relative strengths and weaknesses,' Shen Pu's subordinates proclaim in *Song shu*, 'it is also critical when using troops to retreat when one knows of any difficulties.'[165] The advice resonates with Sima Guang's own statements on military policy in the eleventh century, but it is not his business in *ZZTJ*. He deals only with the practical aspects of military and civil governance.

Ends justify their means. On his entrance into Xuyi, Zang Zhi expresses 'great delight' on seeing the town's plentiful provisions and his forces salute Shen Pu. Because of this – the causal link is explicit in the conjunction '*yin*' 因, absent from *Song shu* – Zang Zhi and his troops assist in the defence of the town. They succeed in repelling Wei's attack. Here lies the difference with inadequate preparation: already by this stage of *ZZTJ*'s chronological sequence, Song commander Tan Daoji 檀道濟 has been forced to retreat because of a shortage of supplies;[166] the successful army of another commander, Liu Taizhi 劉泰之, has to turn back later in the text because of a lack of logistical support.[167] Even in the elation of victory, though, Shen Pu proves himself circumspect. He recognizes that strength in defence does not amount to offensive power and he restrains his subordinates from pursuing the retreating Wei force.[168] It is a demonstration in practical terms of the earlier, omitted *sententia* of his subordinates: 'it is said that attack and defence are not the same and so one should estimate relative strengths and weaknesses.' It also echoes Sima Guang's eleventh-century statements on the need for restraint and caution in military

[165] *Ibid* 100.2463.
[166] *ZZTJ* 122.3829. Sima Guang draws a causal link that does not appear in his main source, *Song shu* 43.1343. Instead he follows accounts in *Nan shi* 15.446, *Wei shu* 29.705, *Bei shi* 20.749, *Yuan jing Xue shi zhuan* 元經薛氏傳, Wang Tong 王通, Xue Shou 薛收, annot., *Han Wei cong shu* edn., 8.12b, *Jiankang shi lu* 12.424 (with textual variation), and *Ce fu yuan gui* 352.29b. Other accounts attribute Tan Daoji's failure to advance to a lack of bravery: *Wei shu* 4A.78, 25.646, 37.856, 97.2136, *Bei shi* 2.46, 22.812.
[167] *ZZTJ* 125.3939.
[168] *Ibid* 126.3965; *Song shu* 100.2463.

policy. The use of force is well founded if it is a necessary response to invasion. It is unjustified, even harmful, if used in needless and disadvantageous conflict.

Shen Pu's military preparations would draw the attention of later commentators. In the twelfth century Hong Mai 洪邁 followed Sima Guang's account and added his own praise for Shen Pu's actions. He included it in a section on military preparations in his *Rong zhai sui bi* 容齋隨筆, a crude but useful insight into his thematic focus.[169] Reference to Shen Pu's preparations also appears with textual echoes from *ZZTJ* in thirteenth-century scholar-official Huang Yingde's 黃應德 'Yizhou Tiecheng ji' 宜州鐵城記 of December 1255. There Hu Ying 胡穎, a contemporary academician from the Hall for Treasuring Culture and Grand Marshal, uses the episode to illustrate his argument that 'put simply, there are no disasters whenever preparations are made' and to urge the Southern Song court to take similar precautions against the threat of invasion. Past and present are juxtaposed to make the point. Shen Pu strengthens Xuyi's castle walls and deepens its moats; the court believes him wrong; Shen Pu and Zang Zhi's success results from his defensive foresight: that is how Hu Ying represents the episode. All other details are omitted.[170]

ZZTJ's account of Shen Pu's military preparations finds parallels in Sima Guang's own military policy in the eleventh century. He identifies a contemporary lack of prescience that echoes fifth-century opposition to Shen Pu's military preparations in *ZZTJ*. In both foreign and domestic military affairs the eleventh-century court's calm in the face of a potential crisis is inappropriate:

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[169] *Rong zhai sui bi* 容齋隨筆, Hong Mai 洪邁, Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1978, 'si bi' 16.799.

[170] 'Yizhou Tiecheng ji' 宜州鐵城記, Huang Yingde 黃應德, ap. *Baqiong shi jin shi bu zheng* 八瓊室金石補正, Lu Zengxiang 陸增祥, ed., *Shi ke shi liao xin bian* edn., 120.5b. Huang Yingde came from Linchuan 臨川 and received his *jin shi* degree in 1241 (*Linchuan xian zhi* 臨川縣志, Tong Fanyan 童範儼 et al., 1870 edn., 36A.7b). He served as magistrate of Guangchang County during the *chun you* period (1241-52), *Guangchang xian zhi* 廣昌縣志, Wang Jingsheng 王景升 et al., 1683 edn., 4.1b. Little else is known about him. Hu Ying's biographical information appears on *Song shu* 416.12478-9.

> Barbarians encroach on our borders while both public and private spheres are in dire straits, the troops are arrogant and indolent, and the army commanders are short of men. What matter could give greater cause for concern than this? Yet those both above and below at court remain at ease, as if nothing were going on. … Rescuing the borders should be as pressing at present as the need to pour water from a leaking earthenware jar into a kiln-fired pot.[171] Even then, I still fear that it would all be too late. Surely we should not appear outwardly to be at leisure as we beget a major disaster.[172]

A casual response to crisis – the predicate 'at ease' 晏然 recurs in Sima Guang's descriptions of the eleventh-century court's responses to military danger – echoes traits of arrogance and complacency discussed in Chapter 2 and that emerge too from his statements on military policy.[173] It leads the court to neglect preparations for a possible invasion by Xia under Zhao Liangzuo.[174] Because of it, the government also fails to accord due attention to the development of military governance and the selection of commanders.[175] There is disparity in this between the central court and the urgent response of local people, who react 'as if they were in the middle of boiling water or a raging inferno.'[176] These are rhetorical fireworks, spectacular and hyperbolic, but the contrast that they create points up the court's failure to fulfil its fundamental duty in rescuing the people from hardship. Here, though, that failure results from a lack of military preparation instead of excessive militarization – another indication that Sima Guang concerns himself above all with militarism's effects on the common people. And it comes attached with an ultimatum: 'By remaining calm and at ease, without any sense of urgency, and subsequently increasing the numbers of those without any real function, we will extend the never-

[171] A phrase from *Shi ji* 46.1902, to describe the need for the states of Qi and Chu to rescue Zhao from Qin attack in 259 BC; failure to do so with due urgency is portrayed as an error of statecraft. Qi's sovereign ignores the advice and Qin routs Zhao.
[172] *SMWJ* 31.3b-4a.
[173] For examples of his use of 'at ease' 晏然 to describe the court's inadequate response to crisis, see: *ibid* 17.4b, 18.5b, 19.2a, 31.11a, 32.4b, 47.5a, 57.17b.
[174] *Ibid* 33.5b.
[175] *Ibid* 31.9a.
[176] *Ibid* 32.4b.

ending calamity.'[177] With an echo of his belief in the central importance of a judicious military policy to state survival, the political strength of the court appears to lie in the effective and timely management of its military resources.

At the heart of the court's failure is a lack of preparation. Sima Guang can draw on his personal experiences in Linzhou in 1057. There, local commanders failed to carry out reconnaissance or produce a coherent strategy before launching an offensive to capture Xia territory. They also lacked sufficient army divisions. 'Coming across the enemy in such a state, how could they possibly not be defeated?' asks Sima Guang. '… I know clearly that today's defeat lay in a lack of preparation and did not lie in constructing forts or crossing the river.'[178] Elsewhere he singles out essential areas of military preparation which, by inference, signal particular Song shortcomings: the selection of commanders; the development of military governance; the correction of an attitude of arrogance and indolence among troops; the erection of suitable defensive structures; the preparation of army divisions for rapid mobilization; above all, the creation of small, elite forces instead of large numbers of ill-trained troops.[179] The focus of his comments is not restricted to the frontier. He also identifies a lack of adequate military defences at Luoyang, which he represents as vulnerable to attack from both internal rebels and foreign invaders despite its political and symbolic importance; he finds a target close to home for the court's legislators.[180]

On 3 February 1071 Sima Guang praised Emperor Shenzong in these terms:

[177] *Ibid* 18.5b.
[178] *Ibid* 17.4a-b.
[179] Selection of commanders: *ibid* 30.6b-7a, 31.3b-4a. Military governance: *ibid* 31.3b-4a. Arrogance and indolence: *ibid* 32.8b. Defensive structures: *ibid* 47.4b. Rapid mobilization: *ibid* 32.4b. Elite training: *ibid* 18.5b, 32.4b-5a, 33.1b, 36.4a.
[180] *Ibid* 47.4b.

> Yesterday I personally received your virtuous statement in which you declared that, as a current border strategy, we should remain cautious and rigorous in our defensive preparations and wait for [foreign armies] to come and invade, and then strengthen our defensive walls and clear the countryside, preventing them from making any gains when they come. With their troops weary and their food exhausted, it would be possible to pick up the pieces of their collapse. I retired and gave thought to this. Your strategy is lofty and far-reaching, and profoundly attains to the sovereign way of defending against barbarians. The empire is truly fortunate.[181]

Sima Guang adopts a familiar tactic. The emperor appears 'virtuous,' 'lofty,' 'far-reaching,' and in tune with an unspecified but canonically-tinged sovereign way because he adopts a policy that resonates with Sima Guang's own – he is cautious in border affairs and devotes attention to internal defensive preparations rather than offensive strategy. Sima Guang would specify elsewhere what he meant by his loose reference to 'preparations.' On 3 November 1067 he presented to the throne for the first time a formal list of eight areas that he insisted were essential prerequisites for military action: completion of appointments to the official bureaucracy; development of popular governance; assuagement of the common people; replenishment of the granaries and arsenals; selection of commanders; implementation of military laws; training of troops; provision of sophisticated weaponry.[182] In addition to this list, he also identified the importance of erecting defensive structures and identifying enemy spies and scouts.[183] In a convergence between past and present, they are practical demands that echo the practical actions of Shen Pu in the fifth century.

The past plays a central role in all this, of course. In his eleventh-century memorials Sima Guang draws on two minatory examples: Qin Shihuang's reduction of troop numbers prevented an adequate response to the rebellions of Chen Sheng 陳

[181] *Ibid* 43.4b (for dating, see *Chuan jia ji* 45.1a; cf. *XCB* 218.5313; *Song shi* 191.4737).
[182] *SMWJ* 38.7a-b (for dating, see *Chuan jia ji* 41.4a). This list was important to Sima Guang: he returned to it in memorials of the late 1060s and early 1070s, *SMWJ* 38.8b (1067/11/6: *Chuan jia ji* 41.11a), 40.1a (1069/6: *Guo chao zhu chen zou yi* 137. 11b), 43.5a (1071/2/3: *Chuan jia ji* 45.1a; cf. *XCB* 218.5314, but the list was omitted from *Song shi* 191.4736-7). It would seem to be more than hollow rhetoric: Sima Guang addressed several of these eight areas on a local scale through his ratification in early 1071 of a request to develop local military management and increase the scale of preparations in Yongxing Military Prefecture, *SMWJ* 43.8a (for dating, see *Chuan jia ji* 45.25a), 44.6b (for dating, see *Chuan jia ji* 45.29a).
[183] *SMWJ* 20.10b-11a.

勝 and Wu Guang 吳廣; Emperor Wu of Jin's decision to disband imperial armies has already appeared in this study as a reason for the devastation of the uprisings at the turn of the fourth century.[184] The court's response to a Xia threat in the early 1040s as usual offers an immediate warning. Lack of military preparation appears the result of a deliberate strategy by its barbarian rivals. Zhao Liangzuo lulls the Song court into a false sense of security by dispatching diplomatic envoys, declaring himself its vassal, and presenting it with tribute. As a result, no substantial preparations are taken against him. At the same time, he provokes minor border skirmishes to exhaust Song troops and deplete their supplies. It creates a vacuum into which he can later launch an invasion without resistance.[185] This is provocative stuff: Sima Guang represents his own state as subject to the whims of its barbarian rivals, quite the opposite of the superior position that it believes itself to hold. He therefore demands foresight and circumspection and, above all, preparation for future troubles.[186] These are just the qualities that Shen Pu displays in *ZZTJ* to such positive effect. But Sima Guang's criticism of a *lack of* appropriate military preparation during the eleventh century further urges against a view of his policy as purely pacifist. Instead he argues in support of taking proper military precautions, though there is the same careful distinction between the proactive and reactive uses of force that Shen Pu identifies in the fifth century. Despite this distinction, though, the account of Shen Pu's military preparations is still, in essence, about the use of force. For an alternative to conflict we have to look elsewhere in *ZZTJ*.

> At the defeat of Ma Wengong 馬文恭, his company captain Kuai Ying 蒯應 was captured by Wei. The ruler of Wei dispatched Ying to the gate of the small market in

[184] *Ibid* 47.3a-b. Sima Guang also uses Emperor Wu of Jin as a minatory example on 23.2b.
[185] *Ibid* 33.5a-b.
[186] *Ibid* 30.6b.

quest of alcohol and sugar cane. The Prince of Wuling, Jun 駿, gave them to him and thereupon demanded camels.

The following day the ruler of Wei sent Imperial Secretary Li Xiaobo to the south gate to bestow upon [the Prince of Jiangxia] Yigong 義恭 a sable robe and to bestow upon Jun camels and mules. In addition, he said: "The ruler of Wei conveys his regards to [the Commander Who] Pacifies the North. Come out and meet us for a while. We will still not attack this castle. Why cause your commanders and soldiers to toil away at defensive preparations like this?" Jun ordered Zhang Chang to open the gate and go out to meet him. He said: "[The Commander Who] Pacifies the North conveys his regards to the ruler of Wei. He has always hoped to express them in person. It is only that, as a minister, he has no contact with people from outside our borders and so he regrets that he cannot fully express his sentiments for the time being. Preparing defences is a constant role of border garrisons. If one pursues it with pleasure, then one will toil without resentment. It's that simple."

The ruler of Wei requested tangerines and gaming equipment. Both were given. A sable robe was again bestowed [in return] together with nine types of salt and a foreign-made soya paste. Further to this, [the ruler of Wei] asked to borrow musical instruments. Yigong responded: "I have been entrusted with military business and won't supply you with musical instruments."

Xiaobo asked Chang: "Why did you hurriedly shut the gates and cut off the bridges?' Chang said: "The only reason the two princes had the gates shut was because, while the ruler of Wei had not yet erected his camp and ramparts, and the commanders and troops were exhausted, the hundred thousand elite troops that we have here would probably have thought nothing of trampling all over them. They are waiting until you have rested your troops and horses. Only then shall we both take the field of battle and set a date for our games of engagement." Xiaobo said: "'There are rules of etiquette for guests, but it is the host who chooses between them.'"[187] Chang said: "Yesterday, I saw a crowd of guests come to our gates but *they* lacked due etiquette."

The ruler of Wei ordered someone to come with a statement: "I convey my regards to the Defender-in-chief and [the Commander Who] Pacifies the North. Why don't they send someone to come to me here? Although all the details on either side cannot be fully known, you really should look at my stature, know my age, and observe how I behave. If your aides cannot be sent, then surely you could order a servant to come." Chang responded under orders from the two princes: "We have long known all about the ruler of Wei's appearance, talent, and power from our comings and goings. Imperial Secretary Li has personally undertaken your orders and there is no worry about not fully understanding one another. As a result, we have not dispatched any more emissaries." Further to this, Xiaobo said: "Wang Xuanmo was only a man of common talent and no more. What did the southern state mean by employing him in such a way with the result that he fled and was defeated? Ever since we penetrated over seven hundred *li* into your territory, you have actually been unable to mount a single counter-offensive to fend us off. You based yourself at the pass at Mount Zou, yet when our vanguard had only just made contact Cui Xieli 崔雅利 quickly went into hiding in a cave and the commanders had to drag him out backwards. The ruler of Wei allowed him to live out his days. He has come with us here today." Chang said: "Wang Xuanmo was a peripheral commander of the southlands; we are not suggesting that he was a man of talent. We only used him as an advance guard. The main army had yet to arrive and the Yellow River had frozen over. It was only after Xuanmo's decision to turn his army back by cover of night that the warhorses were thrown into a slight panic. When Cui Xieli was defeated, what harm did it do our state? The ruler of Wei himself needed a force of hundreds of thousands to control the lone Cui Xieli. Is it even worth mentioning? That we have offered no resistance,

[187] A phrase from *Chun qiu Zuo zhuan zheng yi* 4.33c.

> though fully aware that you have penetrated over seven hundred *li* into our territory, is owing to the inspired design of the Defender-in-chief and the sagacious scheme of [the Commander of] the Garrison Army. The deployment of troops is a matter of finely-balanced strategy and we don't need to speak about it." Xiaobo said: "The ruler of Wei will not besiege this castle but will lead his force in person and make directly for Guabu. If the business in the south is seen through, then we will not need to besiege Pengcheng. If it is not successfully realised, then Pengcheng will still not be necessary to us. All we shall do now is turn south and slake our thirst by drinking from the Yangzi and the lakes around there." Chang said: "You'll make up your own minds whether to leave or stay. If caitiffs' horses manage to drink from the Yangzi in due course, then the Way of Heaven will no longer exist." Before this, a child's ditty had gone: "If caitiffs' horses drink from the waters of the Yangzi, Bili will die in the *mao* year." That is why Chang said what he did. Chang's tone and demeanour were noble and fine, and Xiaobo and his attendants all exclaimed over it. Xiaobo was also eloquent. As he was about to leave, he told Chang: "Take good care of yourself. We're only a few paces apart and I regret not being able to shake hands." Chang said: "You take great care of yourself too. I hope that the turmoil will be settled in due course. If you manage to make it to the Song court, then today will have been the start of our acquaintance."[188]

In a text that paints the past in broad brushstrokes, this offers a rare sense of personal intimacy. True, Sima Guang follows individuals through his account elsewhere but it is often without the sharp detail of interpersonal relationships that he supplies here. Because it is rare, it is moving. How human and recognisable for the reader the pull between official duty and personal emotion that underpins the parting words between Zhang Chang and Li Xiaobo! Mutual affection makes itself felt in a time of uncertainty. It rings through Zhang Chang's speculative closing statement: 'If you manage to make it to the Song court, then today will have been the start of our acquaintance.' We are alert to what is left unsaid but implied by the conditional particle '*ruo*' 若 – that the present meeting between the two men will probably be both their first and last; the implied probability increases the emotion of the scene. The two men check their affection for one another out of a sense of duty to their

[188] *ZZTJ* 125.3955-7.

states but their encounter suggests possibilities for transcending larger political and military conflicts.[189]

Sima Guang's focus is diplomatic exchange. By bringing individual personalities to the foreground of his account, he places diplomacy in contrast to, and as respite from inter-state conflict.[190] The pace of *ZZTJ*'s text slows and speech dominates action. Diplomacy is seen to work on a human scale instead of a dynastic one and its effects are immediate and tangible as a result. It casts Zhang Chang and Li Xiaobo's dialogue in a positive light. Hu Sanxing is right when he suggests in his commentary that Sima Guang's purpose is to show scope for increasing a state's authority through skill in conversation. He supports diplomacy over military action, in other words.

Sima Guang offers a sympathetic characterization of the two actors in this exchange. They dominate the episode and Sima Guang either reduces or omits altogether the appearances of other characters from his sources.[191] He also ends his account with explicit praise for both diplomats. He casts it in the voice of *ZZTJ*'s external narrator instead of a character in the text and that lends it the objectivity and authority identified in Chapter 1. There is unevenness in the treatment of the two men, though. Praise for Zhang Chang is weightier and also finds support from characters within the text (Li Xiaobo and his attendants 'exclaimed over' his refinement). Sima Guang omits the eulogistic description of Li Xiaobo that the external narrator gives in *Song shu* – in one of Zhang Chang's two biographies in that text, no less – but retains the substance of that text's praise for Zhang. He also

[189] Sima Guang follows *Song shu* 59.1604 rather than the confrontational tone of Li Xiaobo's parting response on *Wei shu* 53.1172.
[190] Although Mark Lewis suggests that a number of pre-Qin and early imperial texts, notably the *Zhan guo ce* and the *Gui gu zi*, drew parallels between the skills deployed by rhetoricians and military commanders, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China*, p.101.
[191] Compare, for example, the reduction of Kuai Ying's role through the omission of his conversation with Song commanders (cf. *Song shu* 59.1600; *Wei shu* 53.1168; *Bei shi* 33.1120-1; *Ce fu yuan gui* 660.3b) and the absence of Ju Si 具思 from Sima Guang's account (cf. *Song shu* 46.1398, 59.1601; *Wei shu* 53.1169; *Nan shi* 32.830).

rejects *Wei shu*'s version of the episode, where an identical rhetoric of praise is applied to Li Xiaobo but not to Zhang Chang. And he omits Li Xiaobo's criticism of Zhang Chang that appears in *Wei shu*. It reflects larger biases in Sima Guang's account: the nomenclature that he uses – 'the Wei ruler' instead of 'the Wei emperor' of *Wei shu*, for example – lodges our perspective with Song rather than Wei.

Sima Guang changes his sources' structuring of the episode. He moves away from a meandering narrative to one with three crisp movements. The first defines the roles that each side must take in this diplomatic dance and establishes the divisions between them. Exchanges of gifts play a part in defining these relationships but they are less important than in his sources, where they punctuate the dialogue and create circularity in the narrative through repetition. In contrast, Sima Guang groups the gift exchanges into two clusters. Both appear early in his account. Both are more concise than his sources. Emphasis falls elsewhere: on what the two diplomats say, on their personalities, and on their interpersonal relationship. And in this, three main divisions suggest themselves: between Han Chinese and barbarian; between host and guest; between civil and military interests.

The contrast between Han Chinese and barbarian involves much textual give-and-take. It appears early in *ZZTJ*'s account of the diplomatic exchange, in Zhang Chang's response to the Wei ruler's request for a personal meeting with the two Song commanders, Liu Jun and Liu Yigong. As elsewhere, state duty overrides personal inclination. The request is refused because of established ritual divisions between Song (and, by implication, Han Chinese) imperial princes and 'people from outside our borders' – barbarians. It is the sort of division that has already made itself felt in *ZZTJ* and in this study too: in Jiang Tong's advice to the Western Jin court, for example. As we have seen in Chapter 2, though, Sima Guang's omissions of ethnic

divisions outweigh his commissions. Gone are his sources' derogatory ethnic references, Li Xiaobo's lack of a surname and familiar official title owing to his Xianbei identity (in *Song shu* he often lacks any name at all, taking instead the label 'caitiff envoy'), allusions to the Xianbei as 'white rebels,' detailed descriptions of exotic foreign gifts, references to the preferences of 'the southern territories' as well as Han Chinese political and social customs, and detailed discussions of the sphere of political influence that a foreign state holds over its neighbour. The result is to mute the representation of a division between Han Chinese and barbarian, though its ritual importance to diplomatic form is acknowledged. It is a familiar pattern in *ZZTJ*.

The corollary is a division between host and guest. Successive ritual codes for guests (*bin li* 賓禮) laid down the prescribed etiquette for the treatment of barbarian envoys. Zhang Chang and Li Xiaobo's discussion of the duties of hosts and guests resonates with the same sense of insider and outsider, Han Chinese and barbarian. Like much in this diplomatic exchange and in *ZZTJ*'s text more generally, it carries a canonical allusion to *Zuo zhuan*: 'There are rules of etiquette for guests,' says Li Xiaobo, quoting that text, 'but it is the host who chooses between them' (賓有禮主則擇之).[192] The original phrase is spoken in debate at the Zhou court over ritual precedence between marquises. There are echoes of those restrained manoeuvres for political superiority in *ZZTJ*. The quotation's immediate effect is ironic, though. It serves as a yardstick against which to measure Song and Wei's diplomatic exchange. Li Xiaobo quotes *Zuo zhuan* to lend his argument authority, but it is undermined because Wei fails to live up to those same standards of etiquette as Song's 'guest': the invading barbarian state falls short in observing the local, Han Chinese ritual that

[192] Sima Guang draws Li Xiaobo's use of the phrase from *Song shu* 59.1602 (cf. *Ce fu yuan gui* 834.10a-b). It is omitted from the account on *Song shu* 46.1398. It appears in recast form in *Wei shu* 53.1170 and *Ce fu yuan gui* 660.4b: 'if the guest has the utmost etiquette, then the host should treat him with due etiquette.'

is expected of it. The accusation remains in Sima Guang's text but Li Xiaobo's defence of Wei's actions, which appears in *Wei shu*, does not. Criticism of Wei is allowed to stand unchallenged, a further indication of a textual bias in favour of Zhang Chang and the Song state that he represents.[193] On the issue of social ritual, Sima Guang also omits from *Wei shu* Li Xiaobo's reference to a captured Song commander who, he declares, has violated fraternal obligations by failing to meet his brother on returning to Song and so has sunk to a bestial level: 'How have the customs of a noble land come to this?'[194] The absence from *ZZTJ* of this damning indictment of Song's moral decline again flatters Song.

The first movement of the exchange develops a well-worn opposition between civil (and, by extension, diplomatic) and military concerns. Sima Guang draws attention to it at the start of his account. There is a chronological shift that, as elsewhere, has a significant bearing on our reading of the text. We are made to look back in time to an episode still fresh in the memory: Song commander Ma Wengong's rout by Wei at Xiaocheng in the eleventh lunar month of 450. This is the event against which we compare what follows. Liu Jun and Liu Yigong have tried and failed in military engagement with Wei; they now resort to diplomatic dialogue. In the course of that dialogue, much light is shed on the earlier episode that fails to emerge in Sima Guang's original account of the conflict. Song military defeats stand out and heighten the contrast with present diplomacy.

The contrast develops from more than just Sima Guang's manipulation of chronology as *ZZTJ*'s historian and editor. It finds internal support too: within the action of the text, Zhang Chang and Li Xiaobo themselves set diplomacy in explicit opposition to conflict. The Wei ruler agrees to spare the besieged castle on condition

[193] *Wei shu* 53.1170; *Ce fu yuan gui* 660.4b.
[194] *Wei shu* 53.1170; *Ce fu yuan gui* 660.5a.

that its two princely commanders meet with him in person, a request that he repeats later in the exchange. Diplomacy here appears as a means to reduce the unnecessary expenditure of effort that conflict entails, although the Song response rebuffs that suggestion with a positive representation of its defensive efforts – much in the same vein as Shen Pu does soon after in *ZZTJ*'s chronology.[195] There is a sharp division between military and civil spheres, too, in Yigong's later response to a request for musical instruments: 'I have been entrusted with military business and will not supply you with musical instruments,' he declares, drawing a sharp line between the two.

Military failure comes into sharp focus in the second movement of Zhang Chang and Li Xiaobo's exchange. Li Xiaobo points up the personal shortcomings of two Song generals, Wang Xuanmo and Cui Xieli, who have suffered recent defeats through incompetence and cowardice.[196] Zhang Chang attempts to cast their employment as part of a long-term strategy, not an error of judgement. He attributes to the same strategy (known only to senior Song commanders) a lack of response to the Wei invasion; it is not the result of weakness, as Li Xiaobo suggests. These attempts to explain away Song military failure go against the grain of *ZZTJ*'s text. Sima Guang reduces the length of Zhang Chang's justifications and so accords them less textual weight. And he has already shown that defeat is the inevitable product of the territorial ambition of the Song emperor and the incompetence of his commanders: Li Xiaobo's criticisms find support elsewhere in *ZZTJ*.

Wei armies also suffer military failure. Despite the apparent momentum of their invasion, Sima Guang undermines it by including in his text Zhang Chang's

[195] Sima Guang changes the wording of his sources to make direct reference to Song's defensive preparations ('備守'). *Wei shu* 53.1168 also refers to 'preparations' 備, but the phrase does not appear in either *Song shu* 59.1600 or *Ce fu yuan gui* 660.3a.
[196] Sima Guang conversely omits references in his sources to one of the few successful Song generals in the recent conflict, cf. *Song shu* 53.1171, 59.1604.

warning against an easy victory. He casts things in the morally loaded rhetoric of 'the Way of Heaven' to suggest that Wei military success, specifically an invasion as far as the Yangzi, would represent a fundamental violation of cosmological and moral order. He produces as evidence a child's ditty. It is a rhetorical device that often serves in *ZZTJ* as an accurate prognosticator of future events – much as the remonstrations of percipient ministers, in fact – and which Sima Guang here imports from a different context in his sources. That ditty ironically undermines Wei's campaign: the certainty of its prophecy indicates to those sensitive to its textual function inevitable military failure. The effect is compounded by the historical irony that proceeds from the reader's retrospective knowledge that Wei did not conquer Song and that Song survived. With this failure in mind, Li Xiaobo's arrogant conviction of Wei's future military success counts against him. More than that, it contributes to an unspoken but powerful case against militarism in general: by indicating the failures of both sides, Sima Guang offers a universal, non-partisan condemnation of military conflict.

The third and final movement of the exchange moves from representations of military engagement to the explicitly positive representation of diplomacy with which Sima Guang ends his account of Zhang Chang and Li Xiaobo's dialogue: the encomium accorded both men (although in favour of Zhang Chang); the moving sense of their mutual affection on a personal level after the formal manoeuvring of their political diplomacy. To heighten this positive image of diplomatic exchange, Sima Guang alerts his reader earlier in *ZZTJ*'s chronological sequence to the damage that results from the failure to pursue diplomacy. Emperor Wen has let slip

opportunities for a marriage alliance with Wei that might have averted conflict. Subsequent territorial negotiations between the two states have broken down.[197]

A positive representation of diplomacy in contrast to a negative account of military conflict – this finds resonance in Sima Guang's response to the circumstances of the eleventh century. In the fourth lunar month of 1085 he welcomed an imperial ordinance that called for an end to militarization along the frontier:

> It no doubt results from your sagely intention to appease different customs and to bring respite to the central state. Who among Han Chinese and barbarian peoples would not turn to honour you? Given this, what further use is there for the Security Groups, the system of household horses, and the Security Group horses?[198]

The rhetorical tactic of influencing the emperor through approbation, even flattery, has already appeared in this study: Sima Guang also used it in a memorial of 3 February 1071.[199] Here, on one hand, Wang Anshi's policy of security groups and tithings is implicitly associated with conflict, and becomes redundant once a military threat has been dispelled. On the other, the emperor receives praise for his 'sagely intention' – with hints of canonical conduct – to adopt a policy of appeasement and tolerance towards his state's rivals. Such diplomacy defuses tensions before they develop into conflict, which profits the state. Sima Guang again shows his pragmatism, with recourse to the familiar discourse of benefit and harm. He presents compliance and negotiation as the lesser of two evils rather than an ideal political solution to inter-state tension, and he advocates its use 'for the sake of the common

[197] Marriage alliance: *ZZTJ* 122.3832, 122.3847, 123.3865. Note, too, a repetition of this failure on *ibid* 125.3960-1, even as Emperor Wen acknowledges the failure of his policy of military conquest. There is an echo here of the children's ditty that draws notice in Zhang Chang and Li Xiaobo's exchange. Territorial negotiations: *ibid* 125.3939-41, 125.3946.
[198] *SMWJ* 46.12a (for dating, see *XCB* 355.8496; *Song shi* 192.4781).
[199] See above, n.181.

people.'[200] Emperor Zhenzong is the exemplar here and the Treaty of Shanyuan appears in Sima Guang's memorials as a model for the pragmatic, diplomatic resolution to a barbarian threat, made with the interests of the common people at heart despite its imperfections.[201] He therefore urges his present emperor to re-establish tribute relations with Song's barbarian neighbours.[202] He proposes economic sanctions instead of military force to draw compliance from foreign states, since they rely on Song as a market for their trade in sheep, horses, and felt carpets.[203] And, in direct tension with Emperor Shenzong's express desire for territorial expansion, he repeatedly advocates the return of territory that Song commanders had seized from Xia in the early 1080s.[204] As we have already heard in Chapter 2, Sima Guang's was not a lone voice on this issue. He received broad support from his contemporaries, despite their emperor's tendency to belligerence.

Despite Sima Guang's sympathetic representation of Zhang Chang and Li Xiaobo's hard-fought diplomacy in the fifth century, it ultimately proves unsuccessful in his text. Later in the same month of *ZZTJ*'s chronology its external narrator offers a terse statement that the Wei ruler had attacked Pengcheng, though without success. Military ambition here appears to override earlier diplomatic promises to leave the castle alone. It casts implicit doubts in the text over the Wei ruler's trustworthiness. It rings with the stereotype of the cunning and duplicitous barbarian that Sima Guang limits in *ZZTJ* but which infuses eleventh-century ethnic discourse. Even in this breakdown of diplomacy there are clear parallels with the eleventh century. Minor military skirmishes continued with Liao after the Treaty of Shanyuan in 1005. The negotiation of peace between the Song and Xia in 1045 failed

[200] *SMWJ* 53.7b.
[201] *Ibid* 24.10b-11a, 33.11a.
[202] *Ibid* 31.3b, 50.8a-b, 50.8b-10a, 53.7a, 63.12b.
[203] *Ibid* 50.6a.
[204] *Ibid* 50.5a, 50.8a, 50.9a-b.

to prevent a major escalation of armed hostilities between the two states during the 1060s and again in the early 1080s. Diplomacy offered short-term relief but was not a long-term policy. For that Sima Guang looks to a paradoxical-seeming but well-established solution to military conflict abroad in civil governance at home.

> Wei's invasion gave the emperor cause for anxiety and he consulted with his ministers. The Palace Aide to the Censor-in-chief, He Chengtian 何承天, sent up a petition to the throne: "There have only ever been two types of policy for taking precautions against the Xiongnu: military men have offered all the possible plans for a campaign of attack; scholars have discussed treaties for peace and marriage alliance. If you now intend to follow in the footsteps of Wei [Qing] and Huo [Qubing], it wouldn't be worth the effort unless, of course, you were to bring under cultivation a large area around the Huai and Si Rivers, internally consolidate Qingzhou and Xuzhou, cause the people to have plentiful stores and the countryside to have stockpiles of grain, and only then mobilise a hundred thousand crack troops to wipe out and suppress them in one go. If you only intend to dispatch an army to pursue and attack [the barbarians], and to retaliate against their invasion and aggression, then their light cavalry would inevitably gallop off, reluctant to engage in battle. It would generate a huge outlay, but all in vain – it would cause them no harm. Battles of retaliation would follow without cease. This is the worst policy of all. Calming the borders and consolidating defences is the strongest among the plans.
>
> I believe that Cao [Cao] and Sun [Quan] 孫權 were equals in talent and rivals in intelligence as hegemons. Each had several hundred *li* of uninhabited land between the Yangzi and the Huai Rivers. Why? Because it was an area for sentries and patrols, not farming or herding land. They therefore strengthened their walls and cleared the countryside to wait for the other's arrival. They put their suits of armour in order and repaired their weapons to take advantage of the other's weaknesses. They protected their people and secured their borders without venturing from this path. In essence, they had four policies. First, moving those far away to areas close by. Of the former inhabitants of present-day Qingzhou and Yanzhou, as well as the people who have newly attached themselves to Jizhou, over thirty thousand households are along the borderline. We should move them all and locate them to the south of Daxian in order to consolidate the inner territories. Second, constructing numerous castles and towns to accommodate newly relocated households, and providing for their day-to-day expenditure. In spring and summer they worked the fields and herded animals. In autumn and winter they moved inside for defence. When invaders came, in a castle of a thousand households, there were no fewer than two thousand fighting men. The others, who were sick or feeble, were still able to mount the parapets and create a commotion. It was enough to fend off thirty thousand caitiffs. Third, they assembled and teamed up carts and oxen in order to transport grain and weapons. In reckoning the provisions for a thousand households, there were at least five hundred pairs of oxen for five hundred carts. They stood them together and hooked them up in order to shield their people. If the castle walls could not stand firm, then they would make their way unimpeded to narrow passes through which the rebels could not encroach. If, on occasion, an emergency flared up, they could assemble everyone in two nights. Fourth, calculating the number of able bodied men and inspecting weapons. In all cases, each of the two thousand fighting men [in the castles] had his own weapon, allocated according to what suited him and where his abilities lay. Ordinarily, during training, they engraved [their weapons] as their own and returned them to the arsenals for

> safekeeping. When they went out on campaign, they requested them in order that each man might sharpen his own weapon. Bows, arrows, and steel weapons that could not be had among the common people were gradually supplemented by the officials. Within several years the armies' resources were more or less fully stocked. When units from commanderies close to the capital were stationed far off in Qingzhou and Jizhou, their achievements came at a heavy price and their exasperation and resentment ran deep. As I see it, it would have been easier to use forces from those [regions]. If we now guide and lead the common people according to what benefits them, then the troops will be strong and the enemy will not be militant; the state will be prosperous and the people not overworked. You can't even talk about it in the same breath as the preferential tax exemptions for the military, who just sit around eating up grain and fodder."[205]

During the spring of 446, in expectation of making territorial gains that had been falsely promised by a captured Song official, the Wei ruler had ordered an attack on the regions of Yanzhou, Qingzhou, and Jizhou. Wei armies had advanced to the eastern side of the Qing River and, according to Sima Guang, had killed and captured large numbers of the local population, wreaking havoc along the whole of Song's northern border. That is the context for He Chengtian's petition in *ZZTJ*.[206]

Here, as elsewhere, Sima Guang gives textual space to a percipient minister's advice and, in doing so, lends it ideological weight. He Chengtian's petition is not the only one of its kind to appear in Sima Guang's account of the fifth-century conflicts between Song and Wei. The importance of heeding wise advice makes itself felt often and on both sides. For Song, Wang Zhongde 王仲德, Liu Kangzu 劉康祖, Shen Qingzhi, and Liu Xingzu 劉興祖 all prove themselves prescient.[207] On the Wei side, Cui Hao appears particularly astute in his assessments of the capabilities of Song and Wei armies and acts as a reliable textual guide for the reader, often with an ironic impact on the way we read Sima Guang's account.[208] These men share common characteristics. All urge circumspection in resorting to military action and

[205] *ZZTJ* 124.3924-5.
[206] On *Song shu* 64.1706, by contrast, we hear simply that 'at that time, the pig-tailed caitiffs had invaded the borders,' with little of *ZZTJ*'s detail and none of its description of the destruction that the Wei invaders visited upon the local area.
[207] Wang Zhongde: *ZZTJ* 121.3819. Liu Kangzu: *ibid* 125.3945. Shen Qingzhi: *ibid* 125.3945-6, 125.3950, 126.3975. Liu Xingzu: *ibid* 126.3975.
[208] See, for example, *ibid* 121.3808-9 and 121.3815-7. The Wei ruler links his success to Cui Hao's advice on 122.3831.

warn against unnecessary belligerence. Subsequent success or failure corresponds to their superiors' ability to heed their advice. He Chengtian's petition provides a particularly strong example of two of the central analytical points of this study: Sima Guang's manipulation of his source text, and the echoes of his eleventh-century political commitments in his representation of the past.

He offers a direct response to his emperor's concerns over the Wei invasion. His memorial appears in the context of a larger court discussion, but it is the only contribution to that discussion that Sima Guang selects. That in itself hints at ideological slanting: He Chengtian is freed from counter-argument and his words carry authority as a result.[209]

This version of the petition is shaped by a number of rhetorical and ideological tensions. First, there is the familiar interplay between values with a universal relevance and specific historical circumstances. It makes itself felt in the opening phrases. Sima Guang omits specific historical references that appear in his source, *Song shu*. There, He Chengtian identifies two anti-Xiongnu policies 'that people talked about in Han times.'[210] In *ZZTJ* he suggests simply 'there have only ever been two types of policy for taking precautions against the Xiongnu' and opens his discourse with the generalising particle '*fan*' 凡. The move away from historical particulars towards a broader scope of reference is a common strategy in Sima Guang's manipulation of his sources. It contributes to the general didactic design that he had in mind for *ZZTJ*, explored already in Chapter 1. Sima Guang's editorial selections are nuanced, though. Despite a tendency to generalization in *ZZTJ*'s version of He Chengtian's petition, Sima Guang still preserves in his text allusions

[209] As a corollary, Sima Guang does not offer any explicit imperial response to the memorial (although the text that follows implicitly shows Emperor Wen's failure to adopt many of He Chengtian's proposals). This is in contrast to many of the long ministerial memorials that appear in *ZZTJ*, which carry brief notice of their reception at court and, sometimes, the motivations that underlie a particular response.
[210] *Song shu* 64.1706.

that direct our attention to (though less clearly than *Song shu*) the conflict between the state of Han and its northern barbarian rivals: the evocative term 'Xiongnu'; the allusive phrase 'treaties for peace and marriage alliance' 和親之約, which echoes an identical formulation in the biography of the Xiongnu in the *Shi ji* to describe their alliance with Han after an aborted invasion;[211] Wei Qing and Huo Qubing, both famed for their campaigns under Han Emperor Wu against the Xiongnu, appear again here with a synecdochic function as representatives of Han's general dominance over its northern barbarian enemies.[212] The implicit historical focus of these early sections of the petition is Han, though Sima Guang leaves open the possibility of a broader range of application. In the action of *ZZTJ*'s plot He Chengtian is seen to identify Wei with the barbarian Xiongnu; by implication, Song inherits Han's mantle. For the readers of *ZZTJ*, though, the opening '*fan*' also allows He Chengtian's advice to ring true for their own times.

There is a second tension. A binary opposition emerges between the military and the civil. He Chengtian first applies it in a review of possible policies for dealing with Wei's invasion. 'There have only ever been two sorts,' he suggests: belligerence and conquest, or pacifism and diplomacy. He equates these with two types of individual: military men and scholars. These are the familiar terms of an antithetical opposition between martial virtue, *wu* 武, and what elsewhere has been called a 'civilian ethic,' *wen* 文.[213] It is a dichotomy that plays itself out later in the petition too, where He Chengtian observes of the area between the Huai and Yangzi Rivers that 'it was an area for sentries and patrols, not territory for farming or herding.'

[211] *Shi ji* 100.2894.
[212] See above, n.137.
[213] Pulleyblank, Edwin G., 'The An Lu-shan Rebellion and the Origins of Chronic Militarism in Late T'ang China,' in *Essays on T'ang Society*, John Curtis Perry and Bardwell L. Smith, eds., Leiden: Brill, 1976, p.60.

Agriculture takes the place of scholarship as the representative of the civil sphere, at odds with and in opposition to militarism.[214]

A third tension – the defining one of Sima Guang's version of the petition – makes itself felt between domestic development and foreign expansionism. It is a corollary to the military/civil opposition. True, He Chengtian offers advice on military strategy that echoes themes already examined in this study. He criticises the use of troops from the capital region to deal with distant military matters, maintaining that they waste economic resources and create local resentments. He urges the use of locally stationed troops instead. More powerful than all of this, though, is his insistence that sound civil governance at home is prerequisite for military success abroad. That is the central focus of his advice to Emperor Wen in *ZZTJ*.

This tension, in fact more a sequence of political priorities than a tension, is inherent in the phrasing of the memorial. Military action against Wei 'wouldn't be worth the effort unless, of course, you were to bring under cultivation a large area around the Huai and Si Rivers, internally consolidate Qingzhou and Xuzhou, cause the people to have plentiful stores and the countryside to have stockpiles of grain, *and only then* 然後 mobilise a hundred thousand crack troops to wipe out and suppress them in one fell swoop.' The use of the temporal clause 'and only then' indicates sequence: before it is an appeal to revive agriculture and replenish grain supplies, which supplies the sentence's semantic focus; military action is relegated to second place, grammatically and ideologically dependent on strong civil governance. He Chengtian sets in opposition to this a short-term military offensive against Wei. Its strategic inferiority is marked early on by the adverbial 'only' 但 ('if you only

[214] But Sima Guang omits from *Song shu* 64.1708 a further reference to the conflict of interests between military action and agricultural efficiency.

intend to dispatch an army to pursue and attack them …'), emphasised by the negative terms in which he casts this alternative (its 'outlay' 費 would be 'huge' 巨 but 'in vain' 徒), and made strong and explicit by the conclusion that 'this is the worst policy of all.' Again, Sima Guang gives the statement a universal application. By contrast, Shen Yue limits the scope of He Chengtian's opprobrium in *Song shu* to 'the worst of Qin and Han's policies' alone, not the worst of all policies.[215]

As an alternative, He Chengtian advocates domestic (especially border) preparations. His arguments prefigure Shen Pu's actions later in the text. In direct contrast to the 'worst policy of all' – the two appear juxtaposed in the petition's structure – a programme of defence is 'the strongest among the plans' 於計爲長. There are textual echoes here from another prescient minister in *ZZTJ*'s text, Jiang Tong, who in 299 advocated circumspection in dealing with barbarians (by evicting them from Han Chinese territory and keeping them at a safe distance) and also declared in identical phrasing that this would be 'the strongest among the plans.' His advice would turn out to be well founded, as we have seen in Chapter 2, and the textual echo here directs our reading of He Chengtian's petition.

Specific historical references have a role to play in *ZZTJ* when He Chengtian moves forward in time from glancing allusions to Han to the more recent and politically similar period of conflict between the hegemonies of Cao Cao and Sun Quan. It supplies evidence for much of what follows. Both leaders offer exemplars of civil and military administration. They lend proof to a series of general statements on the need for preparation: the clearing of the countryside and the creation of buffer zones; the strengthening of defensive structures; repairs to weapons and armour; the protection of the common people; the preservation of borders. Generalization gives

[215] *Ibid* 64.1706.

way to specificity in a four-point list that groups Cao Cao and Sun Quan's major military strategies and holds them up as models for Song's response to the Wei invasion. The structure of a list gives focus and practical precision to He's advice. It resonates with Sima Guang's rhetorical strategy in his own memorials: we have already heard about his eight-part list of defensive preparations against rival states to the north, which carries strong echoes of He Chengtian's fifth-century petition. There are thematic parallels too. Instead of describing the programmes of militarization of his two historical exemplars, which occupy only the final one of his four points, He Chengtian points up their successes in domestic governance and civil administration. His agenda prefigures Sima Guang's eleventh-century political commitments.

The conclusion to this version of He Chengtian's petition is significant for the present analysis. It is an appeal for Emperor Wen to 'guide and lead the common people according to what benefits them 因民所利.' The phrase is drawn from a canonical setting: Confucius proposes it as the means to exercise beneficent civil governance without wasteful expenditure.[216] It also resonates with the discourse of benefit and harm that Sima Guang developed in his memorials of the eleventh century. That is why civil administration wins out in his version of He Chengtian's petition: by benefiting the common people, domestic prosperity engenders dynastic success, civil and military, both at home and abroad.

That is what appears in *ZZTJ*. This version is notable as much for what is left out from it sources as for what is included, though. Sima Guang's omissions make themselves felt even on the crudest level: *ZZTJ*'s version of the petition is under a fifth of the length of *Song shu*'s. Just as important are the textual and ideological consequences of those omissions. His thematic agenda comes into sharp focus when

[216] *Lun yu zhu shu* 20.79c.

the two texts are set side by side. This is where what we have called an external, intertextual reading of *ZZTJ* yields rich results.

Before we even approach He Chengtian's petition it is clear that, as usual, Sima Guang has removed much of its ethnic discourse. He mutes the prejudice of ethnic nomenclature: a scene-setting reference by *Song shu*'s external narrator to an assault by 'pig-tailed caitiffs' 索虜 is neutralised to become simply an invasion by Wei.[217] This carries through the text of the petition itself. In *Song shu* He Chengtian draws on well-worn stereotypes to offer a long and prejudiced account of barbarian dispositions and habits: their irascibility and craftiness, their customs of eating meat and wearing skins, their predilection for horse-riding and hunting (in which barbarians are seen to confuse military and agricultural spheres, in contrast to the sharp dichotomy that He Chengtian himself establishes), their immorality in military exploits and rapacity in conquest.[218] Not a word of this appears in *ZZTJ*. The result is a narrow concern with the relationship between military and civil administration.

The first omission from the text of the petition itself is of its substantial opening section, which serves as a preface to the discourse that follows. Gone are the encomia on the political virtues of Song Emperor Wen, the historical examples and canonical echoes that direct the reader to troubles caused by northern barbarians in the past, and He Chengtian's admission of his own ignorance in military matters (which he repeats – and which Sima Guang again omits – later in the memorial). True, textual economy and differences in genre between He Chengtian's petition and Sima Guang's chronicle account for them just as well as ideological spin, but each

[217] *Song shu* 64.1705.
[218] *Ibid* 64.1707-8. Sima Guang does not go as far as *Ce fu yuan gui*, produced in the thick of diplomatic negotiations between Song and Liao. That text omits all derogatory ethnic references in favour of state names; Sima Guang omits derogatory references from the impersonal narrative of *ZZTJ* but retains them in direct speech.

omission does contribute to a cumulative textual effect and each finds parallels in Sima Guang's editorial interventions later in the text.

By opening *ZZTJ*'s version with a universalising particle, '*fan*,' Sima Guang accords general relevance to He Chengtian's advice. The same effect makes itself felt in his editorial interventions throughout the petition. He omits much of the close-wrought historical and geographical evidence that He Chengtian adduces in *Song shu* in support of his arguments. By leaving out the petition's opening section Sima Guang also removes references to Nanzhong's conflict with the Xianyun, a detailed account of Wei Qing and Huo Qubing's campaigns against the Xiongnu, an account of rebellion under Emperor Xuan of Han, and Western Jin's decline as a result of the insurrections of its barbarian clients. Similar omissions continue later in the petition: of the details of Cao Cao and Sun Quan's strategic military manoeuvres; of the many of the geographical particulars of He Chengtian's proposals for relocation of the common people; of canonical examples of military administration; of references to discourses produced on military affairs by Li Mu 李牧 and Yan You 嚴尤.[219] It frees He Chengtian's discourse from its ties to particular historical circumstances and moves it towards universally applicable advice, an effect that has already suggested itself from an internal analysis of *ZZTJ*'s text. It also sharpens its focus on the practical over the theoretical.[220] It therefore serves Sima Guang's purpose as a practical how-to handbook for later states.

[219] In the third century BC, Li Mu took charge of the Warring State of Zhao's military preparations against the Xiongnu, whom he defeated. He later routed Qin armies in 235 and 232 B.C, *Shi ji* 81.2449-51. Yan You served as commander and military adviser under Wang Mang in conflicts with both Koguryo and the Xiongnu, *Han shu* 94B.3824-5, 99B.4130, 99C.4156 (and as a result attracts praise in Ban Gu's statement as historian on 94B.3833); *Hou Han shu* 後漢書, Fan Ye 范曄, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1965, 85.2814. The two men appear together in Fan Ye's discussion as historian on *ibid* 90.2993, Li Mu as skilled in the art of defending the border, Yan You as able to point up the essentials in discussions on how to secure border passes.

[220] The corollary to this pattern of omissions is the uneven inclusion of material from *Song shu*'s version of the petition, which clusters around the four-point list of practical measures taken by Cao Cao and Sun Quan to deal with border troubles.

The main thematic omission is of He Chengtian's proposals for militarization. In *Song shu* He Chengtian offers two alternatives for Song's response to Wei:

> If we now dispatch an army to pursue and attack them, to retaliate against their invasion and aggression, to wipe out large sections of Youzhou and Jizhou, and to sack castles and destroy towns, then our sagely court will love and care for the common people and will rescue them by means of the way. If we only intend to console those who turn to ally themselves with us and to attack wrongdoers while showing care for the people, though, then their swift horses will inevitably flee and will be unwilling to come and engage in battle. It would create huge expenditure in vain and would cause them no harm.[221]

A decisive military campaign appears here in the positive terms of the salvation of local border populations – the same terms in which Emperor Wu is seen to justify his invasion, in fact. By contrast a reactive policy of appeasement of one's allies and small-scale attack on one's enemies achieves little and risks much. The devastation of Song's enemies will have to be swift and total. He Chengtian revisits his criticism of a small-scale military response to Wei that appears early in the *Song shu* version of his petition. In *ZZTJ*, by contrast, Sima Guang omits the second conditional phrase ('If we only intend …') and elides the condition of the first phrase with the result of the second: 'If you only intend to dispatch an army to pursue and attack [the barbarians], and to retaliate against their invasion and aggression, then their light cavalry would inevitably gallop off, reluctant to engage in battle. It would generate a huge outlay, but all in vain – it would cause them no harm.' Military action of any sort now appears pernicious; there are no qualifications to this view.

The same anti-militarist tone makes itself felt elsewhere. In *ZZTJ*'s version of He Chengtian's four-part analysis of Cao Cao and Sun Quan, Sima Guang shifts emphasis from the preparation of military defences to civil governance. In *Song shu* He Chengtian advocates with his second point a programme of deepening of

[221] *Song shu* 64.1706.

defensive moats and erecting castle walls 'in order to increase defences.'[222] In *ZZTJ* the same point focuses on the construction of civilian dwellings for displaced commoners, not on military defence.

Sima Guang also omits much of the lengthy conclusion to He Chengtian's petition that appears in *Song shu*. In that text, it calls for attention to military training. A decline in state security and military strength since Han times has resulted from 'a neglect of warfare and the errors caused by a lack of instruction.'[223] The solution, He Chengtian proposes in *Song shu*, is military training for commoners, as well as a sharpening of military administration and an increase in military strength. *ZZTJ* remains silent on all of this. Sima Guang prevents the character to whom he implicitly lends support in his text from voicing policies that echo those that he himself opposed in the eleventh century – popular military training stands out here. And he ends He Chengtian's petition not with a series of proposals for military development but an explicit criticism of the economic drain of maintaining a military force and an appeal to act in the interests of the common people.

The ideological agenda behind these editorial decisions comes into sharp focus when He Chengtian's petition is set against Sima Guang's political statements of the eleventh century. There is a paradox that recalls one identified already in this study. In formulating his ethnic policy Sima Guang looked first inwards, to establish the integrity of the Han Chinese state, before turning outwards to address foreign relations. Here the terms of the paradox are different, but the lines along which it is drawn are similar: for Sima Guang, strong civil governance is prerequisite for a successful military policy and territorial expansion.

[222] *Ibid* 64.1708.
[223] *Ibid* 64.1709.

This idea forms the basis of Sima Guang's many criticisms of Song military officials during the 1060s. In Chapter 2, we saw Zhao Zi draw notice for diverting resources from local civil administration to border skirmishes that should be of slight consequence.[224] The aggressive expansionism of Chong E drains the state's economic and military resources and causes a huge loss of human life.[225] Their belligerence, which brings little long-term practical gain to the state but only short-term personal profit, is seen to jeopardise popular welfare and dynastic longevity. The common people are exhausted. Granaries and armouries are understocked. The army grows short of men. The state's existing troops are untrained.[226] Put simply, the attempts at territorial expansion by Zhao Zi, Chong E, and their like are impossible – counter-productive, even – as long as the Song state is too weak to sustain them. And to strengthen the state, it is necessary to strengthen the policies of civil, not military, governance.

Sima Guang's response was to warn border officials against the use of force and instead to have them develop strong administration in their prefectures. He offered this incentive to Emperor Yingzong on 2 August 1065:

> When both public and private spheres have plentiful wealth, and the troops and horses are vigorous and powerful, only then should you issue word to attack [the barbarians] and only then will it be permissible to drive the yurts north of the desert. With the territory of Han and Tang restored, would victory in disputes over fishing and tree planting not be a remote thing?[227]

Here is some brightness in the bleak picture of the frailty of eleventh-century civil governance. Song can attain the territorial and political heights of the imperial golden ages of Han and Tang, Sima Guang suggests. In proposing a means to this end, he

[224] *SMWJ* 24.11a. Senior Song minister Hu Su 胡宿 expresses a similar view on *Song shi* 318.10368; cf. *Wengong ji* 8.6b-7b.
[225] *SMWJ* 57.17a.
[226] *Ibid* 33.11b.
[227] *Ibid* (for dating, see *XCB* 205.4970).

echoes in both his argument and his rhetoric He Chengtian's fifth-century petition in *ZZTJ*: here, in the eleventh century is another minister appealing to his ruler to increase popular wealth 'and only then' 然後 mobilise troops for a military campaign outside the state's borders.[228] And although Sima Guang allows for the possibility of territorial expansion in the future, as He Chengtian does in *ZZTJ*, he is as firm as his fifth-century predecessor on the fundamental importance of strong civil governance before the emperor engages his enemies in military conflict.[229] Here, if anywhere, representation and ideology converge for didactic effect. The voices that sound in *ZZTJ*'s account of the past confirm its author's eleventh-century commitments. As usual, a close, critical reading of the text is rewarded with a fuller understanding of Sima Guang's military policy.

[228] See also Sima Guang's declaration to Emperor Shenzong in the sixth lunar month of 1069 that 'the empire really will be extremely fortunate if you were first to build up domestic governance without allowing casual deliberations on the use of troops,' *SMWJ* 40.2a (for dating, see *Guo chao zhu chen zou yi* 137.11b). It is an appeal that Sima Guang repeats often: *SMWJ* 24.1b, 20.10b-11a, 31.3b-4a, 31.9a (note the repetition of the definition of military preparations from 31.3b-4a), 50.9a.

[229] See, for example, his comments on *ibid* 33.11b. The idea that wars were decided by the administration of the state, and that martial skill was of secondary importance in determining the outcome of conflict, has deep roots in Legalist philosophy: *Shang Jun shu jiao shi* 商君書校釋, Shang Yang 商鞅, Chen Qitian 陳啓天, annot., Shanghai: Shang wu yin shu guan, 1935, 10.74; *Han Fei zi ji shi* 韓非子集釋, Han Fei 韓非, Chen Qiyou 陳奇猷, annot., Shanghai: Ren min chu ban she, 1974, 19.1066-7.

4

LIANG EMPEROR WU'S BUDDHISM

On 7 May 504 a crowd of 20,000 religious and lay people thronged into the main chamber of the Zhongyun Hall in the Liang imperial palace at Jiankang. The founder of their state and ruler of two years, Emperor Wu, had summoned them. When they had assembled, he personally composed a declaration in which he renounced his family's affiliation to Daoism and declared his belief in Buddhism.[1] Three days after this act of political theatre he restated the terms of his conversion in a second edict.[2] Reactions were mixed. Many members of the court were quick to express support for the emperor and his new belief. They urged others to follow his example and convert to Buddhism. During the course of his reign dissenting voices also sounded. They warned against the effects that Buddhism might have on the state and the imperial institution – it would undermine Liang dynastic integrity, they suggested.

Emperor Wu ruled for 47 years over what later accounts represent as one of the most stable and long-lived regimes of the Southern and Northern Dynasties. Violence marked the end of his reign, though. In 547 a refugee military commander from Eastern Wei, Hou Jing 侯景, launched a rebellion and marched on the Liang

[1] *Guang hong ming ji* 廣弘明集, Daoxuan 道宣, *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō* edn., Tokyo: Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō kankōkai, repr. 1962 (hereafter *T*.), vol. 52, 2103: 4.112a. On doubts over the authenticity of this document and the suppression of Daoism, see Ōta Teizō 太田悌藏, 'Ryō Butei no shadō hōbutsu ni tsuite utagau' 梁武帝の捨道奉佛について疑う, in *Yūki kyōju shōju kinen: Bukkyō shisōshi ronshū* 結城教授頌壽記念: 佛教思想史論集, Tokyo: Daizō shuppan, 1964, pp.417-32; Naitō Tatsuo 內藤龍雄, 'Ryō no Butei no shadō no hishijitsusei' 梁の武帝の捨道の非史實性, *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 5.2, 1957: 162-3; Xiong Qingyuan 熊清元, 'Liang Wu di tian jian san nian 'she shi Li Lao dao fa' shi zheng wei' 梁武帝天監三年'捨事李老道法'事證僞, *Huanggang shi zhuan xue bao* 黃岡師專學報 18.2, 1998: 67-70, 74. Michel Strickmann offers evidence for the suppression of Daoism in 'A Taoist Confirmation of Liang Wu Ti's Suppression of Taoism,' *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 98.4, 1978: 467-75.

[2] *Guang hong ming ji* 4.112a. cf. *Bian zheng lun* 辯正論, Falin 法林, *T*. vol. 52, 2110: 8.549c; *Fa yuan zhu lin* 法苑珠林, Daoshi 道世, *T*. vol. 53, 2122: 55.707a.

capital at Jiankang. He captured it on 24 April 549 and, two months later, Emperor Wu died in captivity under doubtful circumstances. Even after the restoration of Liang imperial control, the state did not outlive its founder by long. On 16 November 557 a former Liang general, Chen Baxian 陳霸先, seized formal power and established his own regime.

Emperor Wu's downfall and the subsequent destruction of his state drew close attention. Later rulers needed to understand the lessons that their imperial predecessor afforded them if they were to avoid his fate. Studies of Emperor Wu's reign acquired their greatest sense of urgency when personal ideologies were under threat and when the state was vulnerable: during periods of political division, at the beginning of new regimes, while under threat of foreign invasion, in the aftermath of rebellions. Emperor Wu's Buddhist activities were prominent in this discourse. Should an emperor experiment with Buddhism? Would it disrupt the foundations of the state? Would it undermine the Han Chinese cultural traditions that provided those foundations? Or could the Buddhist concept of a universal monarch, a *cakravartin*, bring greater political power? And would its claims to transcendent truth complement native cultural values to produce stability and longevity in governance? The responses that these questions elicited over the following five centuries give a close sense of what was at stake for successive rulers and their ministers. As usual in this study, then, what follows will be less a reflection of Emperor Wu's actual Buddhist policies and practices than an index of the shifting religious and political commitments of those that followed him.

There is also a more basic historiographical point to make. It happens that representations of Emperor Wu offer a clear example of the ways different, often competing ideological traditions form around an individual and then accrete new

characteristics in response to current exigencies. In this process the relation of a work to its ideological and textual ancestry affects the development of its arguments and how we read them. Individual representations offer up a fuller richness and significance when considered in a longer perspective. That idea informs our business here: an attempt at contextualization within broader textual, ideological, and historical settings lies at the heart of this study's analysis of *ZZTJ*.

Pre-Tang and Tang representations

The polarities of the immediate response to Emperor Wu's Buddhist conversion in the early sixth century carried through later discourse. Opponents showed clear continuities in their arguments to produce a line of ideological descent, though one that often remained unacknowledged. Xun Ji 荀濟, Fu Yi, Tang Emperor Taizong, Wei Zheng, Li Yanshou 李延壽, Xu Song 許嵩, Qiu Yue 丘悅, Yao Chong 姚崇, Han Yu 韓愈, Du Mu 杜牧 – between the sixth and late eighth centuries, these men produced the main critiques of Emperor Wu's Buddhism and, in doing so, revisited the discourses of those before them. True, there were variations in the emphasis and slanting that each gave his account. Subtle shifts in representation were contingent upon the contexts from which they emerged; they reflected individual political and religious agendas.[3] Despite these localised variations, eddies in a larger ideological current, a relatively narrow set of themes endured in these anti-Buddhist characterizations of Emperor Wu. It found itself recycled and re-formed in different textual guises.

[3] They have received a detailed study elsewhere: Strange, Mark, 'Emperor Wu of Liang's Buddhism in pre-Tang and Tang texts,' forthcoming. The present section summarises the findings of that paper.

The most powerful argument against Emperor Wu's Buddhism identified its effect on social order. A fundamental tension suggested itself between Emperor Wu's social duties as ruler and his personal inclination towards the Buddhist ideal of liberation from those same social bonds.[4] His anti-Buddhist critics expressed alarm that he had endorsed Buddhist practices out of personal choice: the choice in favour of Buddhism implied a rejection of Confucianism and the doctrinal foundations of the Han Chinese state. Because he was supposed to be the moral exemplar of canonical Confucian values, that in turn undermined all social hierarchies. Writing in the first half of the sixth century, the Attendant-in-ordinary and Imperial Classical Expositor of Eastern Wei, Xun Ji, declared that Buddhism "has caused relations between fathers and sons to grow distant, proper conduct between rulers and subjects to deviate, rifts to develop in the harmony between husbands and wives, and trust between friends to be broken."[5] That had profound political implications: for Xun Ji, the disintegration of these cardinal Confucian social relationships offered a causal explanation for the fragmented political environment in which Liang had emerged.[6]

Tensions between Buddhist and Confucian canonical values, and the same link between social and political disorder, underpinned later arguments too. Tang Grand Astrologer Fu Yi, who in the early seventh century included Xun Ji's critique in his anthology of anti-Buddhist writings, *Gao shi zhuan* 高識傳, elsewhere identified Buddhism's role in Liang's social collapse and political downfall.[7] Nearly a century after him one of Tang Emperor Xuanzong's chief ministers, Yao Chong,

[4] This was underpinned by a basic tension in Buddhist doctrine between the worlds of bondage and liberation – *samsāra* and *nirvāna* – that found practical expression in the dualistic division between monastic and lay adherents.
[5] *Guang hong ming ji* 7.128c. cf. *Li wei* 禮緯, ap. *Li ji zheng yi* 禮記正義, *Shi san jing zhu shu* edn., 39.312c: 'The six subsidiary social relationships mean that fathers practise good conduct, uncles conduct themselves righteously, family members observe hierarchies, elder and younger brothers have close relations, teachers and elders receive respect, and friends maintain old acquaintances.'
[6] *Guang hong ming ji* 7.131b.
[7] *Jiu Tang shu* 79.2715-6. Cf. *Xin Tang shu* 107.4060-1; *ZZTJ* 191.6001-2; *Ce fu yuan gui* 916.6a.

linked political and social disorder by suggesting that Buddhism had caused both the loss of Emperor Wu's state and the destruction of his family.[8] And in 819 Vice Minister of Justice Han Yu rehearsed a familiar set of arguments in his 'Memorial On the Buddha's Bone' 論佛骨表 with a venom sharpened by Emperor Xuanzong's recent downfall and the devastation of An Lushan's 安祿山 rebellion in the previous century. Buddhism disrupted social order, he maintained, and imperial support for Buddhism shortened dynastic rule. He created an implicit link between Emperor Wu's religious devotion and his political downfall, and pointed up his usurpation and death during Hou Jing's rebellion.[9]

Xun Ji identified four cardinal relationships that suffered Buddhism's pernicious influence during Liang: between fathers and sons, rulers and subjects, husbands and wives, and friends. The second of those – the bonds between a ruler and his subjects – drew particular notice from Emperor Wu's critics. Buddhism, they argued, undermined imperial authority. It distracted from the fundamental business of court governance.[10] As a foreign doctrine it challenged the moral and political foundations of the imperial institution, which were bound up with a Han Chinese identity.[11] Emperor Wu's reforms to state sacrifices in 517, in which he undertook to replace live victims with vegetarian substitutes, violated prescribed imperial ritual.[12] Buddhism overlooked the canonical values of filial piety and loyalty on which

[8] *Jiu Tang shu* 96.3023, 96.3027-8.
[9] *Han Changli wen ji jiao zhu* 韓昌黎文集校注, Han Yu 韓愈, Ma Qichang 馬其昶, ed., Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1986, 8.612-7.
[10] Tang Emperor Taizong: *Zhen guan zheng yao* 貞觀政要, Wu Jing 吳兢, Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1978, 6.195. Wei Zheng: *Liang shu* 6.150. Li Yanshou: *Nan shi* 7.226.
[11] Xun Ji: *Guang hong ming ji* 7.129a-b. Fu Yi made similar xenophobic arguments against Buddhism in two memorials of 621 and 624. 621 memorial: *ibid* 7.134a-135a. Arthur Wright examines the arguments of this text in 'Fu I and the Rejection of Buddhism,' *Journal of the History of Ideas* 12.1, 1951: 40-5. 624 memorial: *Jiu Tang shu* 79.2715-6; *Xin Tang shu* 107.4060-1; *Ce fu yuan gui* 916.6a; *ZZTJ* 191.6001-2 (recorded under the fourth lunar month of 626). But Han Yu, who also pointed up Buddhism's barbarian origins, focused on broad cultural rather than narrowly ethnic differences with native Han Chinese traditions, *Han Changli wen ji jiao zhu* 1.12-9 (where Daoism receives more sustained criticism than Buddhism) and 8.615-6.
[12] Xun Ji: *Guang hong ming ji* 7.129a. Li Yanshou: *Nan shi* 6.196. Xu Song: *Jiankang shi lu* 17.678. Han Yu: *Han Changli wen ji jiao zhu* 8.613-4. Du Mu 杜牧: *Fanchuan wen ji* 樊川文集, Du Mu, Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1978, 6.105.

imperial authority rested. Large doctrinal lectures and assemblies provided a forum for recruitment to the Buddhist cause and also offered an outlet for anti-imperial sentiment. Tang scholars varied in the number of Buddhist assemblies and other ritual practices that they ascribed to Emperor Wu. There was broad correlation between the numbers of assemblies recorded and the relative strength of the criticism levelled at the emperor's Buddhism: the greater the number of assemblies, the harsher the terms of the opposition (Han Yu was the only exception).[13] Throughout their criticisms, Emperor Wu's participation in religious assemblies and his repeated ritual renunciation of worldly ties appeared as constituents of a broader set of means by which he subjugated himself to the Buddhist clergy. Assemblies were expressly universal in their conception and their physical and ritual forms abandoned conventional social hierarchies. The emperor's divestment of imperial regalia and temporary donning of *dharma* robes, as well as his self-styling as 'emperor-*bodhisattva*,' blurred his secular and religious duties.[14]

The initiative behind these fundamental changes to the structure of the relationship between ruler and subject was attributed mainly, but not solely to the emperor. The Liang clergy was also to blame. It sought to undermine Emperor Wu's authority by imitating – and even surpassing – the physical and symbolic trappings of imperial power. It usurped the channels through which the emperor made his

[13] Xun Ji identifies Buddhist assemblies as a seedbed for political dissent on *Guang hong ming ji* 7.130c. He does not refer to the emperor's several renunciations of worldly ties at Jiankang's Tongtai Monastery. That, I suggest, is a result of the dating of his criticisms, which may have predated the first of Emperor Wu's worldly renunciations on 24 April 527. In *Liang shu* Yao Silian records three renunciations: *Liang shu* 3.71, 3.73, 3.92. Harsher critics of Emperor Wu note four: *Nan shi* 7.205, 7.206-7, 7.218, 7.218-9; *Jiankang shi lu* 17.681, 17.682, 17.689; *Han Changli wen ji jiao zhu* 8.613-4. The extra, fourth renunciation appears on 23 April 546, where *Liang shu* 3.90 records only a grand Buddhist assembly and an imperial lecture, but no renunciation ritual.

[14] Xun Ji: *Guang hong ming ji* 7.129a–130c. Yao Chong: *Jiu Tang shu* 96.3027-8. Han Yu: *Han Changli wen ji jiao zhu* 8.613-4. Du Mu: *Fanchuan wen ji* 10.153-4. Compare also variations in accounts of the emperor's worldly renunciations in *Liang shu* (3.73, 3.92), which mutes the symbols of the emperor's subjugation to clergy, and the more critical *Nan shi* (7.206-7, 7.218-9) and *Jiankang shi lu* (17.682, 17.689). Andreas Janousch examines the ritual detail of Emperor Wu's worldly renunciations and Buddhist assemblies in 'The Reform of Imperial Ritual During the Reign of Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty (502-549),' PhD. dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1998.

authority felt.[15] Running through these arguments was the same basic concern: imperial patronage of Buddhism caused a shift in the political dynamic that accorded religious concerns ascendancy over secular governance. The state found itself in danger because the official bureaucracy lacked the means to exercise power. Those now lay in the hands of a new dominant political force, the clergy, which overstepped the bounds of its religious authority to assume jurisdiction over secular affairs.

A decline in economic wealth accompanied the secular state's loss of political power. There was a double blow here. Emperor Wu's financial patronage of the clergy, in particular his donations to an extensive programme of temple construction, drained the state's material resources and diverted attention away from popular welfare. Liang military administrator Guo Zushen 郭祖深 sounded an early warning with this contemporary description of Jiankang: 'there are over a hundred thousand monks and nuns whose wealth is abundant. Those in the provinces, meanwhile, are too numerous to mention. Further to this, these men of the Way have lay adherents, and the nuns all raise foster daughters. None of them are registered inhabitants and so the empire has lost almost half of its registered, taxable population.'[16] In the seventh century, the monk Falin provided a more detailed picture of this programme of patronage, less dramatic than Guo Zushen's and with a pro-Buddhist agenda, but still impressive in its scale. He calculated a total of 2,846 monasteries and 82,700 monks and nuns in Liang territory – a large increase on the southern states that had preceded it.[17] It alarmed later rulers: in 646 Tang Emperor Taizong noted with an undertone of

[15] *Guang hong ming ji* 7.130c.
[16] *Nan shi* 70.1721-2.
[17] *Bian zheng lun* 3.503b. In *Jiankang shi lu* Xu Song also supplies 43 references to temple construction during Emperor Wu's reign. Modern scholar Jacques Gernet comments on this growth in the Buddhist church: 'Assuming that the figures in fact correspond to the numbers of religious and of monasteries under each period, the explanation for the considerable fluctuation in the size of the monastic community and the construction of religious houses must be political: the favors granted Buddhism by certain emperors are the only cause for the

censure that his imperial predecessor had 'turned out the state's coffers to supply the *sānghika* and exhausted manpower in providing for *stūpas* and temples.'[18] To exacerbate the problem, the Buddhist clergy had also failed to contribute economically to society: Guo Zushen mourned the exemption from taxation of large sections of the population. For Xun Ji, also writing in the sixth century, this had sinister implications: "How can this not be rebellion on a vast scale?" he asked rhetorically of the Liang Buddhist clergy's failure to contribute to the economy of the state. The association between a loss of political power and the depletion of economic resources made itself felt more readily here than elsewhere.[19]

Economic wealth produced moral corruption and hypocrisy among the Buddhist clergy. This theme occupied authors in the sixth and early seventh centuries in particular, a period of intensive development in church-state relations. It attracted less notice from scholars writing in post-rebellion Tang. For Xun Ji the Liang Buddhist clergy erred from its own moral teachings. The doctrine it now espoused was 'miserly and avaricious' and it sought only to accrue material wealth.[20] In the seventh century Wei Zheng focused this accusation of moral corruption on Emperor Wu himself, whose professed renunciation of possessions and desires masked a material greed.[21] For both of these critics, the Liang Buddhist church's concern with material manifestations of its power distracted from its moral precepts.

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increase in monasteries and monks …,' *Buddhism in Chinese Society: An Economic History from the fifth to the tenth centuries*, Franciscus Verellen, tr., New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, p.7.

[18] *Jiu Tang shu* 63.2403; *ZZTJ* 198.6240-1.

[19] Xun Ji: *Guang hong ming ji* 7.129c-130a, esp. 7.129c; cf. *Bei shi* 83.2786. See also Tang Emperor Taizong's comments on *Jiu Tang shu* 63.2403 and *ZZTJ* 198.6240-1, and Zhu Jingze's 'Liang Wu di lun' 梁武帝論, ap. *Wen yuan ying hua* 753.1a-3a.

[20] *Guang hong ming ji* 7.129c. The displacement of moral virtue by material concerns was central to Xun Ji's assault on Buddhism's authority: the same theme reappears in four of the five 'points of irregularity' (*bu jing* 不經) that he identified in Liang Buddhist practice. In the context of the opposition that Xun Ji established between the principles of Confucian ritual and Buddhist doctrine, the expression that he chose, '*bu jing*,' could also carry the sense of 'not canonical.'

[21] *Liang shu* 6.150.

What concerned scholars in the insecure political environment of the ninth century was something of greater practical concern than Buddhism's moral corruption. Patronage of Buddhism was useless because it had failed to ensure dynastic survival in the past. Han Yu's was the main voice here. In response to Emperor Xianzong's order on 6 February 819 for the public veneration of a relic, reputed to be the finger bone of the Buddha,[22] he drew an implicit comparison with Emperor Wu's patronage of Buddhism. The Liang ruler had embraced Buddhism in the hope of attracting divine blessings and prosperity, Han Yu declared; instead, he had incurred disaster.[23] It was a discourse of practical gain and loss, of *realpolitik*. Han Yu's characterization of Emperor Wu gave focus to the rest of his argument and also lent the historical reference a contemporary relevance to Emperor Xianzong's veneration of a Buddhist relic. Buddhism could not profit state governance. Instead, as the fall of the Liang state had shown, it brought social disorder and political instability – reason enough to reject it as an imperial ideology.[24]

When Emperor Wu announced his conversion to Buddhism in 504 the Liang court was vociferous in its support, but the case in favour of Buddhism was given its most powerful expression in a later, more hostile ideological environment. Confronted with an anti-Buddhist onslaught in the early seventh century, the abbot of the Ximing Monastery in Chang'an, Daoxuan 道宣, responded with two apologias for Emperor Wu's religious patronage.[25] He attempted to absolve Buddhism of blame for the collapse of Liang political stability and integrity. He recycled earlier

[22] *Jiu Tang shu* 15.466, 160.4198.
[23] *Han Changli wen ji jiao zhu* 8.614.
[24] Du Mu made a similar argument, following Han Yu, in his 'Hangzhou xin zao Nantingzi ji' 杭州新造南亭子記, *Fanchuan wen ji* 10.153-4.
[25] The first was the commentary appended to Xun Ji's letter on *Guang hong ming ji* 7.128c-131b; the second was included in his biography in *Xu Gao seng zhuan* 續高僧傳 of the Liang monk Baochang 寶唱, which also functioned as a textual vehicle for an assessment of Emperor Wu's patronage of Buddhism, *Xu Gao seng zhuan*, Daoxuan, *T*. vol. 50, 2060: 1.426b-427b. A brief survey of Daoxuan's general defence of Buddhism appears in Weinstein, Stanley, *Buddhism under the T'ang*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, pp.32-4.

arguments: he based sections of one of his apologias on *Li dai san bao ji* 歷代三寶紀, a work written by a Scholar of Canonical Translation of the Sui dynasty, Fei Changfang 費長房, and dated to 597.[26] A continuous thread of ideological inheritance is not as clear here as in anti-Buddhist critiques, though. The main stimulus for Daoxuan, as for those Buddhists that came after him, was a reactive one: to defend the integrity of their church against contemporary attack by turning Emperor Wu into an exemplar of a ruler who had achieved success through both patronage of Buddhism and secular governance.

Two themes stood out. Both made themselves felt in later Buddhist representations too. The first responded to the charge that Buddhism had distracted Emperor Wu from his political and social duties as ruler. Daoxuan suggested the opposite. He gave imperial patronage of Buddhism a rationale: it was a positive social and political force that benefited the state and its people by harnessing the power of the spirit world to assist in matters of practical governance. Far from its image elsewhere as a catalyst for political decline, Buddhism here appeared as the reason for Liang's relative longevity in a period of political insecurity and fragmentation.[27]

Daoxuan's second response to Emperor Wu's critics set Liang Buddhist policies in a broad ideological context. Support for the study of Buddhist doctrine formed only part of a general patronage of scholarship. It reached beyond a narrow focus on Buddhist texts to include works from Confucian and Daoist traditions as

[26] *Li dai san bao ji* 歷代三寶紀, Fei Changfang 費長房, *T.* vol. 49, 2034: 11.99b-c.

[27] *Xu Gao seng zhuan* 1.426b-c; cf. *Li dai san bao ji* 11.99b. Daoxuan makes a similar claim on *Guang hong ming ji* 7.130a. Japanese scholar Ōchō Enichi 横超慧日 suggests that the institutional development of the Buddhist *sangha* proceeded from emperors' concerns with the practical benefits that Buddhist divinities might bring their states. Buddhist ritual practices therefore received close attention from imperial patrons during the Southern and Northern Dynasties, and also later during Sui and Tang, 'Chūgoku bukkyō ni okeru kokka gishiki,' 中國佛教に於ける國家意識 in Ōchō Enichi, *Chūgoku bukkyō no kenkyū* 中國佛教の研究, Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1958, pp.326-81, esp. pp.347-56 on Emperor Wu's use of Buddhist ritual.

well.[28] It even informed his personal moral conduct. He appeared as an exemplary Confucian, as well as a Buddhist, ruler. He epitomised qualities of frugality and filial piety and, in doing so, elevated himself to the highest echelons of the Confucian pantheon: 'no doubt the only four men in myriad ages who discoursed on filial piety were Shun of Yu, Yu of Xia, Wen of Zhou, and Emperor [Wu] of Liang.'[29] It is a representation that seeks to refute one of the main criticisms that appeared in Liang and early Tang accounts: that imperial patronage of Buddhism undermined canonical Confucian duties. Far from violating the moral and ritual foundations of his imperial authority, Daoxuan suggested that Emperor Wu had consolidated them through his syncretic beliefs.

Hyperbolic references to Emperor Wu's filial piety answered another criticism too: that Buddhist construction drained Liang state finances. Emperor Wu's use of state funds for temple construction appeared as a recurrent target for pre-Tang and Tang anti-Buddhist polemics. It received a different textual and ideological slant from the emperor's Buddhist apologists. It formed part of a ritual programme of filial piety. Daoxuan detailed Emperor Wu's construction of temples to commemorate his parents.[30] State funds now appeared to have been marshalled in support of the moral

[28] *Xu Gao seng zhuan* 1.427b; *Li dai san bao ji* 11.99c. The fullest account of Emperor Wu's scholarly activity, which follows Daoxuan in casting the emperor as a patron of all ideological strands of scholarship, appears on *Bian zheng lun* 3.504a, citing the now-lost *Liang ji* 梁記. See also: *Jin gu fo dao lun heng* 今古佛道論衡, Daoxuan 道宣, *T.* vol. 52, 2104: 1.370a; *Guang hong ming ji* 14.111c; *Fa yuan zhu lin* 55.706c. These are Buddhist sources. There is other, non-Buddhist evidence that Emperor Wu was respected during the Sui and early Tang for his scholarship outside a narrowly Buddhist sphere. This also supports Daoxuan's characterization. A similar representation to *Xu Gao seng zhuan* appears in *Liang shu* 3.96. The appearance in the first *juan* of the eighth-century *Kai yuan zhan jing* 開元占經 of a technical treatise by Emperor Wu on astronomical features of the sun and the moon also provides circumstantial evidence, *Tang Kai yuan zhan jing*, Qutan Xida 瞿曇悉達, *Ying yin Wen yuan ge Si ku quan shu* edn., 1.22b-23a. Twentieth-century scholar Chen Yinque 陳寅恪 examines this treatise in *Chen Yinque Wei Jin Nan bei chao shi jiang yan lu* 陳寅恪魏晉南北朝史講演錄, Wan Shengnan 萬繩楠, ed., Hefei: Huangshan shu she, repr.2000, pp.353-5.

[29] *Jin lou zi* 金樓子, Xiao Yi 蕭繹 (Liang Emperor Yuan 梁元帝), *Zi shu bai jia* edn., 1.6b. See similar representations on: *Li dai san bao ji* 11.99c; *Guang hong ming ji* 7.129a; *.Xu Gao seng zhuan* 1.427a-b; *Liang shu* 3.95-8; 'Liang dian' 梁典, He Zhiyuan 何之元, ap. *Wen yuan ying hua* 754.8a-11b; *Bian zheng lun* 3.504a.

[30] *Guang hong ming ji* 7.129a.

and ritual foundations of imperial authority – this was no longer economic waste.[31] Such a representation further removed Emperor Wu's programme of temple construction from a specifically Buddhist context. It again attempted to reconcile fundamental tensions between Buddhism and Confucianism that existed in the seventh century.[32] It also negated much of the criticism levelled against Emperor Wu as a *Buddhist* ruler and the deleterious effects of his *Buddhist* policies. The tone of ideological reconciliation produced a paradigm for an imperially-led syncretism of the two doctrines in the interests of the state.

Emperor Wu's Buddhist apologists struggled against the current of historical irony. His humiliating downfall cast a shadow over their accounts. It was hard to refute the argument that Buddhism lacked efficacy in matters of secular governance since it had clearly failed to prevent imperial decline. The response was to summon a host of alternative reasons for Emperor Wu's personal usurpation and the rapid destruction of his state. In his old age, he failed to maintain a close grip on court governance. The Liang court undermined its own power through a degree of corruption and negligence that was beyond the emperor's power of control. There was an economic imbalance in which consumption outweighed production. Internecine conflict among the Liang elite undermined social order. Political structures stagnated and failed to adapt to a changing political and social climate. The legal system disintegrated, exacerbating problems of social disorder and political corruption. And so on.[33] Many of these themes appeared in anti-Buddhist works too, where they were slanted to draw out their causal relationship with Buddhism. No

[31] In *Liang shu* Yao Silian adopts a different tactic: to mute the economic impact on the state of Emperor Wu's programme of Buddhist construction. This is not driven by pro-Buddhist interests, but by personal and political ones: Yao Silian, a southerner with family connections to the Liang court, had the ideological motivation to cast Emperor Wu in a favourable light.
[32] See, for example, Arthur Wright's comments on 'Fu I and the Rejection of Buddhism': 37.
[33] Old age: *Liang shu* 3.97. Corruption: *Liang shu* 3.97; *Wen yuan ying hua* 753.1a-3a, 754.8a-11b. Economic imbalance: *ibid* 754.8a-11b. Internecine conflict: *ibid* 753.1a-3a, 754.8a-11b. Political structures: *ibid* 754.8a-11b. Legal system: *ibid* 753.1a-3a.

such connections emerged here. These failings in themselves offered an explanation for Liang political and social decline, which occurred despite, not because of Emperor Wu's patronage of Buddhism. And in the face of a larger dynamic of decline, Emperor Wu stood powerless against (and was therefore absolved of some of the responsibility for) the downfall of his state.

Between the polarities of anti-Buddhist critiques and pro-Buddhist apologias for Emperor Wu, a more nuanced representation emerged. It diverted criticism away from Buddhist doctrine in its broad outline and focused its attack instead on Emperor Wu's idiosyncratic interpretation of it. His religious practices did not signify true devotion but instead contributed to a delusion that he perpetuated for his own ends: they were political, not religious gestures, in other words. He was mistaken in his belief that the physical, symbolic trappings of belief constituted Buddhist merit. Buddhism identified self-sacrifice and renunciation as one of the six *pāramitās*, the *pāramitā* of liberality, but Emperor Wu's patronage of Buddhism came at no cost to himself. It depended instead on the sacrifices that he demanded of others: he abused the state's financial resources and oppressed his subjects to fulfil his personal aims. Buddhism was therefore not the direct cause of Liang's collapse. That occurred because of its pre-existing political weaknesses and because of its inability to sustain the damage done to its material and ritual resources by an imperial obsession. The distinction between Buddhist doctrine *per se* and Emperor Wu's religious extremist and erroneous interpretation of it was made to serve in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist discourse. It first emerged in outline during the early seventh century.[34] It would assume its most powerful form in a Buddhist sectarian setting, in the extant

[34] *Wen Zhong zi Zhong shuo* 文中子中說, Wang Tong 王通, repr. Shide tang 世德堂 1533 edn., repr. Shanghai: You wen she, 1914, 4.7b. This text was likely to have been compiled by Wang Tong's followers in the mid-seventh century: see Wang Yinlong 汪吟龍, *Wen Zhongzi kao xin lu* 文中子考信錄, Shanghai: Shang wu yin shu guan, 1934, p.110-1; and Yu Jiaxi's 余嘉錫 analysis in *Si ku ti yao bian zheng* 四庫提要辨證, Beijing: Ke xue chu ban she, 1958, 10.558-68, esp.562-6.

anecdotes of the early eighth century that depicted a meeting between Bodhidharma and Emperor Wu.[35] It also appeared in other Buddhist contexts through to the fall of Tang in the early tenth century.[36] It is tempting to attribute the increase in expressions of this view to developments within Buddhist discourse: the emerging rhetorical style of the Chan school showed a sensitivity to the dangers of dualistic formulations, like those that shaped early Tang representations of Emperor Wu. But the same argument also made itself felt in the discourse of Li Deyu 李德裕, who elsewhere attacked Buddhism's influence on the imperial institution.[37] Here, if anywhere, was evidence of the malleability of Emperor Wu's characterization and the subtle use of textual and ideological spin.

[35] The Bodhidharma anecdotes that fall within the chronological scope of the present study are: *Puti Damo nan zong ding shi fei lun* 菩提達摩南宗定是非論, Dugu Pei 獨孤沛, Dunhuang MS edn., Pelliot 3047, folio 15, cols. 278-9 (a critical edition appears in Hu Shi 胡適, *Shen hui he shang yi ji* 神會和尚遺集, Shanghai: Ya dong tu shu guan, 1930, esp. p.160) [dated 733]; *Li dai fa bao ji* 歷代法寶記, *T*. vol. 51, 2075: 180c [dated 774]; *Nan zong dun jiao zui shang da sheng mo he bo ruo bo luo mi jing liu zu Huineng da shi yu Shaozhou Dafan si she fa tan jing* 南宗頓教最上大乘摩訶般若波羅蜜經六祖惠能大師於韶州大梵寺施法壇經, *T*. vol. 48, 2007: 341a, which attributes the anecdote to Huineng 惠能 (638-713) [date of composition c.780; earliest extant edition c.830]; *Shuangfeng shan Caohou xi Bao lin zhuan* 雙峰山曹侯溪寶林傳, Zhiju 智炬, *Song zang yi zhen* 宋藏遺珍 edn., Shanghai: Song ban cang jing hui, 1935, 8.2b [dated 801]; *Nei zheng fo fa xue mai pu* 內證佛法血脈譜, Zuicheng 最澄, ap. *Dengyō daishi zenshū* 傳教大師全集, Tokyo: Tendaishū shūten kankōkai, 1912, p.6 [dated 819]; *Zu tang ji* 祖堂集, Jing 靜 and Yun 筠, 1245 edn., repr. Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1994, 2.11a-b [dated 952]; *Jing de chuan deng lu* 景德傳燈錄, Daoyuan 道原, *T*. vol. 51, 2076: 3.219a [dated 1004]; *Tian sheng guang deng lu* 天聖廣燈錄, Li Zunxu 李遵勗, *Zoku* 續 *T*. vol. 78, 1553: 6.442b-c [dated 1036]; *Chuan fa zheng zong ji* 傳法正宗記, Qisong 契嵩, *T*. vol. 51, 2078: 5.742b-c [dated 1061]. The various sources have been collated and compared by Sekiguchi Shindai 關口真大 in his *Daruma no kenkyū* 達摩の研究, Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1967, pp.117-23. The meeting between Bodhidharma and Emperor Wu receives detailed treatment in Zhang Huoqing's 張火慶, *Damo yu Liang Wu di: xiang guan xiao shuo yan jiu* 達摩與梁武帝: 相關小說研究, Taibei: Xiu wei zi xun ke ji, 2006.

[36] In 907 Huang Tao 黃滔 dissociated Buddhist doctrine from Emperor Wu's interpretation of it in a context that had a close Buddhist focus – an inscription for a metal statue of the Buddha that was cast on 6 August 906 and eventually transported to the Kaiyuan Monastery, north of the modern city of Fuzhou, 'Kaiyuan si zhang liu jin shen bei' 開元寺丈六金身碑, ap. *Min zhong jin shi zhi* 閩中金石志, Feng Dengfu 馮登府, ed., *Shi ke shi liao xin bian* edn., 4.5a.

[37] *Li Deyu wen ji jiao jian* 李德裕文集校箋, Li Deyu 李德裕, Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiao yu chu ban she, 2000, *wai ji* 外集 4.708-9. A nuanced analysis of Li Deyu's views on Buddhism appears in Muir, Jovana C., *Li Deyu (787-850): His life, writing and place in intellectual history*, PhD. dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1997, esp. pp.146-65. His reported role in the '*hui chang* persecution' of Buddhism in the early 840s, during the reign of Emperor Wuzong, also receives notice in Dalby, Michael T., 'Court Politics in late T'ang Times,' in *The Cambridge History of China, vol. 3: Sui and T'ang China 589-906, Part 1*, Twitchett, D.C., ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, pp.666-9.

Eleventh-century discourse

There was a renewal of scholarly interest in Emperor Wu during the tenth and eleventh centuries. With the fall of Tang in 907, parallels with Emperor Wu's Liang grew more acute: both dynasties were renowned for their cultural patronage, especially of religion (Tang Emperor Xuanzong offered the closest individual comparison with Emperor Wu); both had their power usurped by military leaders of barbarian descent who plunged their states into periods of internecine warfare from which they never recovered.[38] It stimulated a search for patterns of political decline.

Song Emperor Taizong was one of the earliest and most prominent voices. In early November 983 he drew the now-familiar distinction between Emperor Wu's religious practice and orthodox Buddhist doctrine. He maintained that Buddhism could play a useful role in secular governance. He even declared that he himself observed Buddhist practices for the sake of his subjects. He qualified this, though, with the assurance that he 'would categorically not undertake any business that did not accord with principle.'[39] Emperor Wu stood in sharp contrast to this measured approach to Buddhism: here were the limits of imperial patronage of religion. The

[38] Glen Dudbridge proposes the parallel in *Lost Books of Medieval China*, London: The British Library, 2000, p.65.

[39] *XCB* 24.555. Song Emperor Taizong's pragmatic, cautious approach to Buddhism found expression elsewhere. On one hand, the historians of the *Taizong huang di shi lu* declared that he gave Buddhism and Daoism priority in worship, *Taizong huang di shi lu* 太宗皇帝實錄, Qian Ruoshui 錢若水 et al., *Si bu cong kan san bian* edn., 80.10b. He was open in his admiration for Buddhist doctrine in poetic compositions: see, for example, his two rhapsodies on the Buddha, 'Fo fu' 佛賦, *Yu zhi Mi zang quan* 御製秘藏詮, ap. *Ying yin Gaoli da zang jing* [*Koryŏ Taejanggyŏng*] 影印高麗大藏經, Taiwan, Xin wen feng chu ban gong si, 1982, vol. 35, 21.917-24. He relaxed regulations governing temple construction, leading to an increase in the number of Buddhist monasteries. In Kaifeng, for example, he initiated or supported the construction of a large number of temples during the first decade of his reign, *Bianjing yi ji zhi* 汴京遺蹟志, Li Lian 李濂, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1999, 10.151-63. He encouraged foreign monks to bring new *sūtras* and in 980 ordered the establishment of an Institute for *Sūtra* Translation, which was completed in the sixth lunar month of 982, *Song hui yao ji gao* 'fan yi' 4.5a-6a; *Fo zu tong ji* 佛祖統紀, Zhipan 志磐, *T*. vol. 49, 2035: 43.398a-b; *XCB* 23.523; *Song shi* 4.68. In 988 he composed a preface for a newly translated canon produced by the Institute, which included the breathless (and strikingly unmeasured) exclamation 'Great indeed is our Buddha's teaching!' *Jin shi cui bian* 金石萃編, Wang Chang 王昶, ed., *Shi ke shi liao xin bian* edn., 125.43b (the text seems to have followed a parallel line of transmission in Buddhist works, almost identical in phrasing to this epigraphic item: see, for example, *Longxing bian nian tong lun* 隆興編年通論, Zuxiu 祖琇, *Zoku T*. vol. 75, 1512: 29.252a). At the same time, though, he enforced a restriction of the casting of Buddhist images, which he only allowed for state projects.

difference between past and present enhanced the Song emperor's self-commendation. True, the two rulers converged in intent. Both aimed to use Buddhism to serve their greater political ends. But Emperor Wu was deluded and held an obsessive and misguided religious belief: he renounced worldly ties; he became a monastic slave; he had his officials collect money to buy his release from servitude; he spread his hair on the ground and ordered monks to trample on it. Emperor Taizong attributed this extremism to Emperor Wu's 'partial view' 偏見 of Buddhist doctrine, a phrase that looked back to earlier representations.[40] The result was that Emperor Wu had become the laughing-stock of those who came after him.[41] Not so Emperor Taizong, who maintained a rational approach to religious practice – that, at least, was the unspoken suggestion.[42] The way to achieve this delicate negotiation between secular and religious demands, the Song emperor urged his ministers, was to observe Buddhist doctrine but to take Emperor Wu as a minatory example and avoid becoming 'mired in' 泥 their beliefs. This was allusive rhetoric once again. It recalled the criticism of religious delusion and a phrase that Li Yanshou first used in his seventh-century *Nan shi*,[43] although Song Emperor Taizong had it serve a more complex function of disentangling Emperor Wu's religious extremism from Buddhism as a whole.

Others took a similar middle ground. The deluded actions of a few devotees in the past, of which Emperor Wu was a prominent example, did not debase Buddhist doctrine as a whole. Far from it: their dramatic demise if anything proved the transcendental power of Buddhist retribution. In the middle of the eleventh century Qisong 契嵩, a member of the Chan Yunmen lineage who was based in

[40] See, for example, Xun Ji's claims on *Guang hong ming ji* 7.128c.
[41] *XCB* 24.554-5.
[42] Ironically, though, Emperor Taizong also attracted censure for his patronage of Buddhism and search for blessings. See, for example, *Ru lin gong yi* 儒林公議, Tian Kuang 田況, *Bai hai* edn., A.11b.
[43] *Nan shi* 7.223.

Hangzhou until his summons to court, produced an essay entitled 'Yuan jiao' 原教. It sought to establish Buddhism's role in enforcing and maintaining orderly imperial rule – much as Emperor Taizong had attempted before him. He faced the same problem as earlier Buddhist apologists for Emperor Wu. Liang fell despite fervent imperial support for Buddhism; it provided concrete historical proof of Buddhism's inefficacy in secular governance. Qisong's solution, like Song Emperor Taizong's before him, was to restrict himself to arguments on Emperor Wu's application of Buddhist doctrine to state governance without criticising Buddhism *per se*. Emperor Wu 'mired' himself in Buddhist doctrine, Qisong declared, echoing Emperor Taizong's statement of 983 in rhetoric as well as analytical focus. His religious excess, the failure to stick to what was appropriate in both matters of principle and practical government, was ultimately responsible for Liang's social turmoil and political collapse. The distinction between ideal doctrine and actual practice received strong expression in Qisong's essay:

> Buddhist scriptures indeed employ numerous techniques, but adherents of later generations are unable to communicate them to people as appropriate. It causes those who believe in them to grow excessive in their belief. It makes the ruler, deceived by talk of good deeds, immediately want to renounce his state and drop to the depths of slaves and menials; and lay people, superficial in their understanding, rashly want to abandon their enterprises and focus on scaling the heights of becoming a monk. This is not what we mean by 'practising the Way with a Buddha-mind.' Doesn't the *sūtra* say, "the Buddhas expound the *dharma* as appropriate. Their meaning is hard to understand"?[44] Simply donning black robes and cutting one's hair is therefore not all there is to Buddhist practice.[45]

There was no mention of Emperor Wu by name, but the phrasing and content of Qisong's criticisms called him to mind. He was a ruler – *the* ruler – who was 'excessive' in his beliefs. Qisong already reminded us of that. The recurrent tension

[44] *Miao fa lian hua jing* 妙法蓮華經 [*Saddharmapundarika sūtra*], *T*. vol. 9, 262: 1.7a.
[45] *Xinjin wen ji* 镡津文集, Qisong 契嵩, *T*. vol. 52, 2115: 1.650c.

between political and religious obligations made itself felt. The abstract ruler (Emperor Wu by implication, if not by name) wants to renounce his social and political obligations, the bonds of *samsāra*, to fulfil his personal desires of worldly liberation, *nirvāna*. He attempts that through assuming the physical, symbolic trappings of Buddhist belief and adopting, as Emperor Wu adopted, low social status – he 'drops to the depths of slaves and menials.' It is a social and religious divide that he cannot cross. Qisong insisted on the division between the monastic and the secular. Those who wanted to commit themselves to Buddhism could do so only through a monastic lifestyle. Those who undertook the Confucian duties of an emperor had to engage in them fully and not deceive the world (or themselves) with false piety. Any attempt to blur this divide was evidence of a superficial understanding of Buddhist doctrine. Here, then, was a generalised reformulation of the criticisms of the eighth-century Bodhidharma anecdotes.

Later in the eleventh century Su Shi, who styled himself as a 'lay Buddhist' 居士, argued in powerful terms for the dissociation of Emperor Wu's religious practice from orthodox Buddhist doctrine.[46] He put it like this:

> When referring to rulers who knew about Buddhism, I respectfully follow antiquity in the belief that it is essential to speak of [Emperors] Ming of Han and Wu of Liang. … [Emperor] Ming of Han believed that a pedantic focus on trifling details constituted clarity; [Emperor] Wu of Liang mistook weakness for humanity. They both followed the name while erring from the reality and were at a far remove from the Buddha.[47]

[46] The influence of Buddhist doctrine and rhetoric on Su Shi's ideology and writing has provided the focus of several studies: Chikusa Masaaki 竺沙雅章, 'So Shoku to bukkyō' 蘇軾と佛教, *Tōhō gakuhō* 東方學報 36, 1964: 457-80; Cao Shuming 曹樹名, 'Su Dongpo yu Dao Fo zhi guan xi' 蘇東坡與道佛之關係, *Guo li zhong yang tu shu guan guan kan* 國立中央圖書館館刊 3.2, 1970: 7-21 and 3.3-4, 1970: 34-55; Egan, Ronald C., *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994, pp.134-68; Grant, Beata, *Mount Lu Revisited: Buddhism in the Life and Writings of Su Shih*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994.

[47] *Su Shi wen ji* 17.501-2.

Su Shi's argument lay in the distinction between 'name' and 'reality.' The terms of this dichotomy reverberated throughout his political ideology: in his 'Three Essays on True Rule' 正統論三首 of 1056, for example, he declared that 'the name is relatively insignificant and the reality relatively significant. … If the name is considered insignificant and the reality significant, then the empire will tend towards that which is real.'[48] The use of a common terminology for both political and religious themes was telling. Emperor Wu's failure to discern 'name' from 'reality' undermined his Buddhist belief. It also had practical political implications: it could be taken as a cause of a more general loss of legitimacy, the reason for his violent and dramatic fall from power. The emperor's delusion, applied to both the religious and the secular realms, provided the focus of Su Shi's attack. Buddhist doctrine *per se* remained unscathed.

Su Shi supported his arguments with a practical example. Between 514 and 515 Emperor Wu ordered the construction of a dam across the Huai River to flood the strategic stronghold of Shouchun.[49] His aim was to capture the central plains and regain unified control of the north. The strategy failed and in the deluge that resulted 'several tens of thousands of people' drowned in a single night. The whole of Su Shi's account found support from the official account in *Liang shu* 梁書,[50] but it is his use of the episode and not any factual discrepancy that interests us here. He juxtaposed the massacre with Emperor Wu's vegetarian reforms of imperial sacrifice. A close concern with preserving the lives of a limited number of sacrificial victims on the one hand, a casual disregard for large-scale slaughter on the other – the two

[48] *Ibid* 4.120.
[49] Located in modern Shou County, Anhui Province, Shouchun lay on the banks of the Huai river, approximately 190 kilometres northwest of the Liang capital at Jiankang. Its strategic importance at the time made itself felt in 547: this was the castle that Hou Jing would occupy as he fled his native Eastern Wei, and was the base from which he launched his rebellion against Emperor Wu's regime the following year.
[50] *Liang shu* 18.291-2.

sat uneasily together in the contrast that Su Shi constructed. And that caused Su Shi to question the foundations of Emperor Wu's belief: 'Does he really qualify as one who knows the Buddha?' he asked at the end of the anecdote.[51] For Su Shi the virtue of humanity, together with an understanding of what that meant in practice – in 'reality' – constituted Buddhist conduct.[52] Emperor Wu lacked clarity in his practice of humanity. He insisted on the trappings of Buddhist practice – the mere 'name' – in his vegetarian sacrifices at the imperial ancestral temple, but violated Buddhist doctrine – the 'reality' – by killing innocent people for the sake of territorial expansion. This was religious hypocrisy and disqualified Emperor Wu from a characterization as a true Buddhist. In this context, Buddhism was not responsible for Liang downfall. Culpability for that lay instead with the moral and political failings of Emperor Wu himself.

On either side of the nuances of these middle-ground arguments a polarised opposition endured from Tang and earlier. The familiar presence of Han Yu loomed large. The broad themes of his 'Memorial On the Buddha's Bone' ran through anti-Buddhist representations of Emperor Wu in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Vegetarian reforms of Liang ancestral sacrifice violated the imperial sacrificial rituals of the Confucian canon and were 'impermissible.'[53] Buddhism not only failed

[51] *Su Shi wen ji* 66.2071. Su Shi was not unsympathetic to vegetarian reforms of sacrificial ritual: he himself claims to have opposed the performance of sacrifices using live oxen that he witnessed during his exile in Hainan, *ibid* 66.2058. His target here is rather the contradictions in Emperor Wu's Buddhist practice.

[52] In the context of what follows, it is interesting that in his 'Ba Liu Xianlin mu zhi' 跋劉咸臨墓誌 Su Shi contrasts Emperor Wu's conduct with the wisdom, perspicacity, and humanity of Sima Guang (along with Ouyang Xiu and Fan Zhen). These qualities, Su Shi suggests, qualified Sima Guang as an exemplary Buddhist (Emperor Wu's lack of them is what disqualified him), although he notes that all three of his contemporaries to whom he refers abhorred Buddhism, *ibid* 66.2071.

[53] From a memorial of 955 by the Minister of War under Later Tang, Zhang Zhao 張昭, *Wu dai hui yao* 五代會要, Wang Pu 王溥, Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1978, 3.52. In the mid-twelfth century, Kong Zhuan 孔傳 also noted Emperor Wu's vegetarian reforms with reference to Han Yu's memorial. There was no explicit slant to his account but his allusion to Han Yu in itself carries ideological weight: *Bo Kong liu tie* 百孔六帖, Bo Juyi 白居易 and Kong Zhuan 孔傳, Taibei: Xin xing shu ju, 1971, 68.9b. Han Yu's original comments on Emperor Wu's personal vegetarianism and reforms to imperial sacrifice appear on *Han Changli wen ji jiao zhu* 8.613. There are also earlier echoes, unacknowledged during this period, of Xun Ji's claim that '[replicas of] dried meat offerings made from bamboo and of live sacrificial victims made from dough deceive the imperial ancestral temple,' *Guang hong ming ji* 7.129a.

to protect Emperor Wu from political downfall,[54] but also blinded him to Hou Jing's threat to dynastic stability.[55]

Such arguments folded into broader cultural developments of the time. Driven by imperial concerns with developing civil governance, debates raged over how to define the appropriate limits of official culture, *wen* 文. Court discussions of policies towards Buddhism appeared in this context. Advocates of a culture based on the model of antiquity, of which Han Yu was taken as an exemplary practitioner, sought to establish canonical Confucian moral values that excluded Buddhism. A host of scholars therefore called for measures to reduce, even eliminate, the Buddhist clergy's presence in Song territory.[56] Others meanwhile argued for a more catholic definition of *wen*, which could accommodate ideological development and change since antiquity. That included the influence of Buddhism. The implications of this debate lie outside the scope of the present study,[57] but two of its points are worth noting here. First, those arguing in favour of the model of antiquity gained the ascendance during the second half of the eleventh century. Second, anti-Buddhist representations of Emperor Wu during this period shared the ideological concerns of the increasingly dominant conception of a culture based on antiquity. That explains the power of Han Yu's arguments in eleventh-century accounts of Liang.

Han Yu's influence was not limited to anti-Buddhist accounts of Emperor Wu's Buddhism. It also made itself felt in contemporary pro-Buddhist discourse, and in the arguments of those who favoured a syncretic vision of *wen*. We hear from

[54] See, for example, eleventh-century scholar Kong Pingzhong's 孔平仲 comment on the failure of Emperor Wu's worldly renunciations and servitude to Buddhism to avert disaster, *Heng Huang xin lun* 珩璜新論, Kong Pingzhong, *Xue hai lei bian* edn., 2.27b.

[55] For example, eleventh-century scholar-minister Li Qingchen's 李清臣 'Liang lun' 梁論, ap. *Song wen xuan* 宋文選, *Ying yin Wen yuan ge Si ku quan shu* edn., 19.17b.

[56] Ouyang Xiu was particularly vocal in his arguments for the elimination of Buddhism from imperial ritual and governance by increasing the social prominence of Confucian doctrine: *Ouyang Xiu quan ji* 17.288-93.

[57] They have received attention elsewhere: for example, Peter Bol's overview of the intellectual environment of the late-tenth and early-eleventh century in *"This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China*, pp.148-211.

Qisong again. He wrote a series of thirty criticisms of Han Yu entitled 'Fei Han' 非韓, 'In Opposition to Han Yu.'[58] He made three references to Han Yu's characterization of Emperor Wu in 'Memorial On the Buddha's Bone.'[59] His arguments presented close methodological and thematic parallels with Daoxuan's seventh-century responses to Xun Ji's memorial in *Guang hong ming ji* 廣弘明集. More immediately, Qisong inherited the ideological mantle of the late tenth-century scholar-monk, Zanning 贊寧, who argued that Buddhism was integral to Song's cultural heritage. Zanning made infrequent reference to Emperor Wu, though, even when surveying the tradition of imperial support for Buddhism.[60]

Like both Daoxuan and Zanning, Qisong attacked his opponents' failure to understand Buddhist doctrine in general, and their misrepresentations of Emperor Wu in particular.[61] Like Daoxuan and Zanning too, Qisong argued against his Confucian opponents – not just Han Yu but also, by implication, all those who associated themselves with his ideology – from within the framework of Confucian discourse. He developed his arguments in close relation to, and often cited, his opponents' writings. Armed with a broad and recondite knowledge of the Confucian scholarly tradition, his aim was to counter anti-Buddhist criticisms by developing a

[58] Qisong's 'Fei Han' essays appear on *Xinjin wen ji* 14.722a-16.738a. His biographical details appear in Chen Shunyu's 陳舜俞 'Xinjin ming jiao da shi xing ye ji' 鐔津名教大師行業記 of 13 January 1076, an inscription of which was originally on Lingyin Mountain in Hangzhou. According to Chen, it was here that Qisong 'attained enlightenment' on 22 June 1072, aged sixty-six *sui*. A version of the text has been transmitted with *Xinjin wen ji* on 648a-c. Chen claims that the intellectual environment in which Qisong operated during the *qing li* period (1041-8) was characterised by 'an admiration for Han [Yu]'s rejection of the Buddha and veneration of Confucius.' He also offers an account of Qisong's strategy to oppose this intellectual trend by familiarising himself with the anti-Buddhist discourse of the time, *ibid* 648b.

[59] *Ibid* 14.724a-b, 16.736a, 16.736c.

[60] For a powerful statement of Buddhism's potential role in Song culture, see Zanning's 'General Discourse' 總論 to his *Da Song seng shi lüe* 大宋僧史略, Zanning, *T*. vol. 54, 2126: 3.254c-255b. He traces imperial patronage of Buddhism throughout the same work. Albert Welter examines Zanning's intellectual legacy in 'A Buddhist Response to the Confucian Revival: Tsan-ning and the Debate over *Wen* in the Early Sung,' in *Buddhism in the Sung*, Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, eds., Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999, pp.21-61.

[61] Qisong has attracted much scholarly attention. The most extensive studies of his ideology are Huang, Chi-chiang, 'Experiment in Syncretism: Ch'i-sung (1007-1072) and Eleventh-Century Chinese Buddhism,' Ph.D. dissertation, University of Arizona, 1986; Zhang Qingquan 張清泉, *Bei Song Qisong de ru shi rong hui si xiang* 北宋契嵩的儒釋融會思想, Taibei: Wen jin chu ban she, 1998. I am also grateful to Douglas Skonicki for sharing with me the fruits of unpublished research on Qisong.

synthesis between Buddhist and Confucian teachings. Here lay Emperor Wu's appeal: as a model of a proponent of Buddhism who also patronized Confucian and Daoist scholarship – a precedent for the syncretic cultural vision that Qisong proposed.

For Qisong, Han Yu was selective in his representation of Emperor Wu. That was a result in part of a personal grudge towards Buddhism: he had witnessed his daughter's death and, as a grieving father, had sought an explanation for his loss; he 'violently abused the Buddha' in the inscription that he wrote for her tomb and restated the arguments of his 'Memorial On the Buddha's Bone' there.[62] There was another personal edge to Han Yu's anti-Buddhist sentiments too, this time a political one:

> To rouse his own ruler, he pointed to the business of [Emperor] Wu of Liang and Hou Jing. He declared that [Emperor Wu] 'devoted himself to Buddhism and sought blessings, but instead received disaster.' In the period of the Southern and Northern dynasties, though, only Liang occupied the Jiangbiao region for almost fifty years during a time of relative peace. The Son of Heaven lived to eighty-six *sui*. His blessings *were* extremely great. There are thought to have been thirty-six regicides during the Spring and Autumn period. Surely these rulers' calamities could not have proceeded from service of the Buddha. Master Han does not examine [Emperor Wu's] blessings but focuses on his calamity in order to censure the Buddha. How partial his words are![63]

Here is the same charge of 'partial factionalism' that Daoxuan attributed to Xun Ji in the early seventh century.[64] It also echoes the ideological bias that Song Emperor Taizong identified in 983, though that was directed at Emperor Wu and not his detractors: this was a term that could be made to serve both sides of the argument. It also appeared elsewhere in representations of Emperor Wu during the eleventh

[62] *Xinjin wen ji* 16.736c.
[63] *Ibid* 16.736a.
[64] *Guang hong ming ji* 7.128c.

century, even in those with a less explicit pro-Buddhist slant than Qisong's.[65] Like Daoxuan's defence of Emperor Wu against Xun Ji, Qisong used it to suggest that Han Yu's memorial expressed dissatisfaction not just with Buddhism but also with the current emperor: he developed his arguments 'to rouse his own ruler.'[66]

As a foil Qisong offered his own characterization of Emperor Wu. Against Han Yu's suggestion that Emperor Wu 'sought blessings, but instead received disaster,' he argued that Liang's relative longevity and political stability were in themselves evidence of Emperor Wu's 'blessings.' Han Yu failed to recognize this, though, because he was ignorant of Buddhist doctrine and its effects; elsewhere we are told in explicit terms that he 'did not understand the nature of blessings.'[67] The accusation of ignorance was common in Qisong's discourse. In several letters that he sent to high-ranking court officials in the late 1050s he argued in similar terms that criticisms of Buddhism's negative effects on society resulted from a failure to acknowledge its crucial contributions to social and political order.[68]

Han Yu's failure to interpret the evidence of spiritual support for Emperor Wu's rule was reprehensible for its partiality, but it did not surprise Qisong. 'It is not something that human emotions will come to know quickly,' he declared. 'Only the

[65] See, for example, Su Che's 'Liang Wu di' 梁武帝 on *Luan cheng ji* 'hou ji' 10.1257-9, in which he identified Emperor Wu's partiality and extreme adoption of Buddhist practices as catalysts for his downfall, a pattern of cause and effect common to all those rulers who had neglected canonical Confucian social values. Like Qisong, Su Che advocated a synthetic approach to a Way that transcends sectarian religious divides.

[66] Charles Hartman suggests that in writing 'Memorial On the Buddha's Bone' Han Yu sought to target Tang Emperor Xianzong's fear of death and his concern with obtaining immortality, *Han Yü and the T'ang Search for Unity*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986, p.85. He also points up the memorial's possible function as an expression of opposition to eunuchs' control of the Buddhist establishment, *ibid* pp.86, 139.

[67] *Xinjin wen ji* 16.736a. Qisong launches an extended attack on Han Yu's understanding of Buddhist doctrine by taking issue with his characterization of the Buddha as a 'barbarian deity' in his tomb inscription for his daughter: '[Since] the existence of Buddhism in China, both in ancient times and in the present, among the worthy and the ignorant, although they might be common men and women, everyone knew that the Buddha was not a deity and knew that his *dharma* did not instruct people to practise cruelty or evil for the sake of disrupting governance and order. Yet Master Han alone believes him to have been a deity and to have disrupted order,' *ibid* 16.736c.

[68] See, for example, his four letters to Han Qi on *ibid* 9.691c-693c, and the series of letters on *ibid* 10.697b-702c. Also, his general claim that the subtlety and complexity of Buddhism's influence on secular governance meant that 'the world will never manage to believe in it fully,' *ibid* 1.650a.

spirits and enlightened ones of Heaven and Earth will know it.'[69] The unspoken implication was that Han Yu had not been one of those 'enlightened ones' able to understand the divine mechanisms of Buddhist belief. Qisong, by contrast, implied his own insight and thereby increased his authority over his ideological rivals. In support, he supplied evidence of a divine response to Emperor Wu's worldly renunciations: 'on the occasion that [Emperor] Wu of Liang renounced the physical world, the ground shook in response. This was an exceptionally unusual occurrence, yet the ministers responsible for the compilation of history did not record it, and later generations were increasingly unaware of it.'[70] Here, in concrete terms, was an echo of Daoxuan's argument in the early seventh century that Emperor Wu had based his rule on divine assistance and had 'mostly evoked a response from authoritative spirits.'[71] It was a deft argument since it demanded a privileged understanding of Buddhism's cosmic workings, something that critics of the doctrine could never hope to gain. The interpretation of the past was no longer contested on level terms.

Far from detracting from his imperial duties, Emperor Wu's worldly renunciations now appeared integral to his successful observance of higher moral and political values. With identical rhetoric to his 'Fei Han' essays, Qisong made the point in a letter to Song Emperor Renzong: Emperor Wu had enjoyed 'almost fifty years' of peaceful rule over the Jiangbiao region; he had lived to an old age; this was proof of Buddhism's efficacy in upholding orderly rule.[72] Here, as often, echoes of Daoxuan sounded. He had also attributed the relative peace and stability of the lower Yangzi region during the 'fifty odd years' of Emperor Wu's rule to his success in

[69] *Ibid* 14.724a-b.
[70] *Ibid* 14.724a-b. Qisong appears to overlook the account of this event in *Nan shi* 7.225.
[71] *Xu Gao seng zhuan* 1.426b-c; *Li dai san bao ji* 11.99b.
[72] *Xinjin wen ji* 8.688a.

attracting divine assistance from Buddhist deities.[73] Familiar arguments found themselves recycled to respond to present demands.

Like his intellectual predecessors, though, Qisong faced the allegation of a causal association between Buddhism and Hou Jing's rebellion. It was a problem that he had already addressed in abstract terms in his 'Yuan jiao' essay. He had to confront the issue in a more direct and practical manner here: Han Yu had pointed it up in his 'Memorial On the Buddha's Bone.' Qisong's response was to offer examples of regicide and usurpation that predated the arrival of Buddhism in Han Chinese territory.[74] True, the argument was commonplace and lacked analytical rigour – it was based on indirect and circumstantial logic – but it was enough to serve his purpose here, when he had in his sights the larger aim of repudiating Han Yu. For an alternative explanation of Emperor Wu's downfall, he drew instead on a well-worn discourse, a canonical Confucian one, no less: the natural cycle of political rise and fall absolved both Emperor Wu and Buddhism of responsibility for Liang decline.

There was a second difficulty for Qisong, this time of his own making. His representation of Emperor Wu in his 'Fei Han' essays – of a ruler whose patronage of Buddhism brought blessings to his state, but also of a ruler whose religious activities had been misunderstood by posterity – was at odds with his earlier 'Yuan jiao.' If Qisong's rejection of Han Yu's arguments were to have force, it had to be absolute and unqualified. To achieve that, he therefore had to recant the radically different and far more critical view of Emperor Wu in 'Yuan jiao.' He addressed the

[73] *Xu Gao seng zhuan* 1.426b-c; *Li dai san bao ji* 11.99b.

[74] This use of a longer historical perspective to argue against the negative effects of Buddhism on state welfare revisits Daoxuan's response to Xun Ji: 'With [events] such as Zhou's 周 decapitation of [Shang sovereign] Zhou 紂, surely one does not look in the Buddhist *sūtras*. And Qin's massacre of scholars is not related to the influence of Buddhism. When ritual collapsed and music disintegrated, the Buddha had not yet appeared. How could the fact that the Warring States had no [supreme] ruler be connected to the falsehood of the Buddhist clergy?' *Guang hong ming ji* 7.128c-129a.

issue in delicate and understated terms in his opening statement on Emperor Wu in his 'Fei Han' essays:

> With the business of Emperor Wu of Liang, although I followed common practice and slightly criticised him in my 'Yuan jiao,' yet I never got into an extensive discourse. If we consider his worldly renunciation in the context of common customs, he was at fault. If we consider it in relation to the Way, though, then he was virtuous.[75]

And from there he began his defence of Emperor Wu. The fulcrum for a shift from an earlier negative representation to a later positive one was the crucial distinction of perspective. Should we judge Emperor Wu according to universal moral principles? Or should we use as the criteria for our judgement the exigencies of a particular time and place? 'Yuan jiao' was an argument in favour of Buddhism's place in the imperial state and an affirmation of its contribution to the business of governance: its concern was a practical one and Emperor Wu undoubtedly failed in his practical duty to ensure dynastic survival. In his later 'Fei Han' essays, though, Qisong argued for a grand syncretic moral vision. He also targeted an audience sympathetic to Confucian values. The Confucian discourse of the 'Way,' framed in transcendental moral terms, suited his purpose better and in this context, he declared, Emperor Wu was exemplary – Buddhism and Confucianism could combine to positive effect. Both essays drew on well-established arguments for their characterizations of Emperor Wu, but the seams of discourse that Qisong mined for each varied, and the way in which he marshalled them achieved opposite results. The malleability of Emperor Wu's image was confirmed once more.

[75] *Xinjin wen ji* 14.724a.

Zi zhi tong jian

In 1064 Sima Guang offered this analysis in *Li nian tu* of Emperor Wu's reign:

> He delighted in and elevated culture and refinement, and looked after scholars and senior ministers. He could even have been called a respectful, frugal, generous, and wise ruler. Yet when he took up the conduct of *śramana* as emperor, he debased his person and frittered away his state's wealth in veneration of the Buddha. His grace surpassed his authority. His laws and orders did not stand. He placed trust in the schemes of sycophantic ministers and coveted the territory to the south of the Yellow River. He abandoned his allies and doted on rebels, and subsequently caused the overthrow and destruction of the imperial city. He died of starvation as an old man. The area to the south of the Yangzi and Huai rivers sank into utter chaos. It is not even worth acclaiming what he knew.[76]

For Sima Guang, the root cause of Emperor Wu's violent downfall was his Buddhist beliefs. A familiar rhetorical technique shapes his account. First, a brief opening description of Emperor Wu's admirable qualities and a suggestion that he *could* have been an exemplary ruler. These are the same qualities that Emperor Wu's apologists pointed up, Daoxuan above all: a patronage of scholarship; an embodiment of cardinal virtues of the Confucian canon. At the same time as Sima Guang offers this praise, though, he undermines it by pointing up its conditionality. An auxiliary '*ke*' 可 does the job here: 'he *could* even have been called a respectful, frugal, generous, and wise ruler.' It forewarns us of the criticism that he is about to unleash, as it often does in his historical commentaries. Then, the expected change of tone from potential praise to sharp censure. That ominous conjunction of contrast, 'yet' 然, marks the abrupt shift. We learn about the emperor's patronage of Buddhism. Other shortcomings, without any explicit ideological tint, follow but are already coloured by the reference to Buddhism. The rest of the account is framed in the bleak, negative discourse of political failure and decline. Through this linguistic and

[76] *Ji gu lu* 14.27b-28a.

thematic about-turn, Sima Guang implies that Buddhism was the cause for a reversal in Liang imperial fortunes.

As usual, *Li nian tu* paves the way for *ZZTJ*. Little surprise, then, that Sima Guang aligns himself with anti-Buddhist representations of Emperor Wu in the later text. His choice of sources offers the most immediate indicator of his position in the broader discourse. He cites seven texts in the *kao yi* commentary to his account of Emperor Wu's reign: *Liang shu*, *Nan shi*, *Sui shu* 隋書, the now-lost *San guo dian lüe* 三國典略,[77] two other works no longer extant, *Tai qing ji* 太清紀 and *Liang di ji* 梁帝紀,[78] and Han Yu's 'Memorial On the Buddha's Bone.'[79] All are critical of Emperor Wu's Buddhism; their variations result from differences in political agendas rather than doctrinal beliefs. The corollary is that Sima Guang does not use Buddhist sources to construct his account.[80] Before we even approach the text itself the broad outlines of *ZZTJ*'s ideological orientation already begin to take shape.

There is another early clue to the likely slant of *ZZTJ*'s account in the way that Sima Guang represents his own ideological position in the eleventh century. It fits well with his selection of sources for *ZZTJ*. 'I am a Confucian scholar. I have never been familiar with the writings of Śākyamuni' – that is how he described himself to Ruone 若訥, a monk from the eastern prefecture of Quzhou who visited

[77] *San guo dian lüe* was a chronological history written by Qiu Yue. There is no precise date for its composition and even the dates of Qiu Yue's birth and death are uncertain, although epigraphic evidence suggests that he died after 715. *San guo dian lüe* comprised thirty *juan* (*Chong wen zong mu* 崇文總目, Beijing: Xian dai chu ban she, 1987, 2.8a). It no longer survives in its original form; fragments of the work have been transmitted in *Zi zhi tong jian* and *Tai ping yu lan*. Glen Dudbridge and Zhao Chao have collected these in a modern critical edition, *San guo dian lüe ji jiao*, where Qiu Yue's life and the composition of *San guo dian lüe* also receive full examination (see esp. pp. 1-18).

[78] *Tai qing ji* was an annals history of ten *juan*, written during the Liang dynasty by Wang Shao 王韶, *Chong wen zong mu*, 2.7a-b. *Sui shu* lists *Liang di ji* as a work of 'miscellaneous history' 雜史 in seven *juan* but does not supply an author for the work, *Sui shu* 隋書, Wei Zheng 魏徵 et al., Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1973, 33.960. Neither work appears in connection with Emperor Wu's Buddhist activities, though, and so neither will come under analysis in this study.

[79] We shall also draw on Xu Song's 許嵩 eighth-century *Jiankang shi lu* here. Sima Guang does not cite it explicitly in his *kao yi* commentary but it was available to him as a source for *ZZTJ*'s composition and is extant for our present analysis too.

[80] See the lists of Sima Guang's sources that appear in Zhang Xuhou, *Tong jian xue*, pp.38-71, and its supplement in Chen Guangchong, 'Zhang shi *Tong jian xue* suo lie *Tong jian* yin yong shu mu bu zheng,' pp.173-82.

him in the winter of 1073 with a request for calligraphy.[81] He sets up an ideological contrast. Affiliation with Confucianism precludes knowledge of other doctrines. His identity as a Confucian scholar offers an implicit explanation for his ignorance of Buddhism.[82] It is familiar ground. His characterization of Emperor Wu in *Li nian tu* hints at something similar: the emperor's admirable, Confucian traits – what could make him a good ruler – appear in tension with his decision to adhere to Buddhist doctrine; the two are mutually exclusive for Sima Guang.

Elsewhere, the same contrast presents itself in more dramatic terms. Sima Guang is not just a Confucian scholar; he belongs to a dwindling minority of men in the eleventh century still unfamiliar with Buddhist doctrine. He sets himself apart from current fashions of Chan sectarian discourse that pervade both the court and the provinces and, in a poem to his contemporary Shao Yong, declares that 'recently retainers from the court and countryside alike, / Have all sat and talked of Chan. / … In meeting people, I alone am ignorant.'[83] Confucian scholar, anti-Buddhist, and ideological stalwart – those are the images that he constructs for himself.

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[81] *SMWJ* 69.3a. The same self-representation suggests itself too in phrases such as 'I once heard that those who study Buddhism say …,' which claim second-hand rather than primary knowledge and implicitly establish a distance from 'those who study Buddhism,' *ibid* 69.1b.

[82] See also his comments on *ibid* 66.1b-2a.

[83] *Ibid* 15.6a. See also *Shu yi* 書儀, Sima Guang 司馬光, *Ying yin Wen yuan ge Si ku quan shu* edn., 5. 9b. These claims of Buddhism's popularity in the eleventh century find ready support from Sima Guang's contemporaries. The senior official Sun Fu 孫甫, for example, claimed that followers of Buddhism and Daoism had permeated the empire since Han, throwing native doctrines into chaos (the xenophobic argument resurfaces here) and causing the humiliation of Confucian scholars, *Ru ru* 儒辱, Sun Fu, ap. *Song Yuan xue an* 宋元學案, Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 et al., Shanghai: Shang wu yin shu guan, 1928, 1.92-3. Chen Xiang 陳襄 noted in a powerful attack on contemporary Buddhist influence that 'everyone, from princes down to the common people, honours and believes in the artifice of [Buddhist and Daoist] doctrines,' *Guling xian sheng wen ji* 古靈先生文集, Chen Xiang, *Beijing tu shu guan gu ji zhen ben cong kan* edn., 15.18b. The late eleventh/early twelfth-century scholar-official Yang Shi 楊時, a student of Cheng Yi and Cheng Hao, was moved to suggest that the weight of Buddhism's popularity rendered the anti-Buddhist criticisms of even prominent individuals like Han Yu in Tang, and Sun Fu, Shi Jie, and Ouyang Xiu in Song little more than 'an attempt to put out a cartload of burning firewood with a cup of water,' *Guishan ji* 龜山集, Yang Shi, *Ying yin Wen yuan ge Si ku quan shu* edn., 18.1b. The other side of Sima Guang's claim – that he was a lone figure of opposition to contemporary intellectual fashions – was, paradoxically, far from unique at the time. In a highly critical discussion of the social and political dangers of Buddhism, for example, in 1079 Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi offered a similar representation of their ignorance of Buddhism and powerlessness against growing support for its doctrines, *Er Cheng ji* 2A.23. There is an irony to all this: the late twelfth/early thirteenth-century scholar-official Ye Shi 葉適 noted that the Chengs had drawn heavily from Buddhist learning in formulating their anti-Buddhist attacks, *Ye Shuixin xi xue ji yan* 葉水心習學記言, Ye Shi, ap. *Song Yuan xue an*, 5.39. Modern scholars have devoted close attention to Buddhism's popularity

This self-representation took root: anecdotes of Sima Guang's dislike of Buddhism dominate later characterizations of him. A note of caution should sound here, though. Things are, of course, more complex than the binary opposition that he and those after him propose. Buddhist rhetoric and imagery scatter through Sima Guang's writings, especially his poetry.[84] Even as he claims ignorance of Buddhism, he demonstrates familiarity with its basic tenets (he even praises its concept of emptiness) and several of its fundamental texts.[85] He engages in social and intellectual exchanges with Buddhist clergy and lay adherents,[86] and he is ready to profess respect for Buddhist followers who show moral propriety in their conduct.[87] Much of his poetry is located in, and sometimes inspired by, Buddhist monasteries and temples.[88] True, the activities in which he participated in those locations did not

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at this time, and especially to government policies that favoured the Chan school: see, in particular, the essays in *Buddhism in the Sung*, Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, eds., and Morten Schlütter's 'Vinaya Monasteries, Public Abbacies, and State Control of Buddhism under the Sung Dynasty,' in *Going Forth: Visions of Buddhist Vinaya*, William Bodiford, ed., Honolulu: Hawai'i University Press, 2005, pp.136-60.

[84] The dense allusion of Sima Guang's 'On *A Record of Transmitting the Lamp*' 題傳燈録 is a good example, *SMWJ* 14.11a. See also the reference to 'a mad elephant 狂象,' a Chan metaphor for the mind and used here with that sense, on *ibid* 11.3a.

[85] *Ibid* 14.11a, 69.1b, 74.15a. The idea of emptiness is a complex one for Sima Guang. It does not appear in his discussions of Emperor Wu in *ZZTJ*, a text that rarely deals with the philosophical aspects of Buddhism (although there is also a doctrinal explanation for this omission: it was not until the eleventh century, during the reign of Emperor Zhenzong and after the scope of *ZZTJ*'s chronology, that Chan-based teachings of emptiness, *śūnyatā* or *kong zong* 空宗, began to replace Vinaya teachings, *lü zong* 律宗, as mainstream Buddhist faith in the capital, see Huang, Chi-chiang, 'Imperial Rulership and Buddhism in the Early Northern Sung,' in *Imperial Rulership and Cultural Change in Traditional China*, Frederick P. Brandauer and Chun-chieh Huang, eds., Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994, p.166). It is at the core of his understanding of Buddhist doctrine, though, defined as 'a mind that gives no thought to profit and desire' (*SMWJ* 74.15a). There is promise, then, that Sima Guang does not completely reject the morality of Buddhist doctrine, but close examination throws up complications. In other statements on Buddhist doctrine, Sima Guang forces us to view his interpretation of 'emptiness' in qualified terms when he suggests that the Buddhist concept of emptiness falls short of its formulations in non-Buddhist texts, specifically *Da xue* (*ibid* 63.5b), *Xun zi* (*ibid*), and Yang Xiong's writings (*ibid* 69.1b). Freed of its ideological ties to Buddhism, the concept assumes a universal application and sits just as easily in other doctrinal settings. And in that context, it is tempting to see Sima Guang's use of it as part of a general opposition to the profit-seeking and political activism that characterised the reform policies of Wang Anshi – a term that he has co-opted and reshaped to fit current political exigencies, as he does so often and with such skill.

[86] *Ibid* 6.18a, 11.3a, 66.1b-2b, 69.2b-3b. Peter Gregory notes that even officials who opposed Buddhism maintained relations with Buddhist leaders, since their support often proved important in undertaking local official business, *Buddhism in the Sung*, Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, eds., p.12. This emerges from a detailed study of local officials' patronage of Buddhism in Hangzhou, Huang, Chi-chiang, 'Elite and Clergy in Northern Sung Hang-chou: A Convergence of Interest,' in *ibid* pp.295-339.

[87] For example, the lay devotee Spinster Zhang 張行婆 (*ibid* 67.9a) and the monk Shaojian 紹鑒 (*ibid* 69.2a). We must be careful here, though. Sima Guang invariably detaches their positive traits from a Buddhist context and uses them instead to affirm fundamental moral values that transcend doctrinal belief. He makes the point in extreme terms in the biography of his house cat, Shu 貙 – even an animal can be seen to display recognisable moral goodness, *ibid* 67.9a-10a.

[88] For example, *ibid* 4.11a-b, 13.10a.

have a specifically Buddhist slant. Buddhist buildings often hosted activities in the eleventh century that were distinct from their religious functions – even scholars preparing for the Confucian civil service examinations studied in them. Sima Guang's use of Buddhist spaces therefore offers no evidence of his support for, or even acquiescence in, Buddhist doctrine. He does take the trouble to point out that these locations *are* Buddhist in their original function, though. His clear acquaintance with such Buddhist settings and even basic Buddhist ideology is at odds with his attempts elsewhere to distance himself from the religion. We will find no such ambiguity in *ZZTJ*. It is his opposition to Buddhism – and his self-image as a staunch Confucian scholar – that will inform that work.

Close analysis of *ZZTJ*'s text sustains these early interpretations. Its structure shapes the ideological tone of its representation of Emperor Wu's Buddhism, as well as the way we interpret that ideology. The year 545 is pivotal in its chronology. In the twelfth lunar month Liang Cavalier Attendant-in-ordinary He Chen 賀琛 submits a memorial to the throne. He criticises four aspects of Emperor Wu's rule. He receives a furious rebuke and is treated to an indignant defence of imperial authority. Neither memorial nor response contains any direct reference to Buddhism, but the dispute prompts Sima Guang to insert a retrospective analysis of Emperor Wu, in which Buddhism is central. It takes the structure of similar assessments in *Liang shu* and *Nan shi*. First, a descriptive account of the emperor's personality and qualities as ruler phrased in the voice of the text's external narrator. Then, an analysis of the emperor's rule in which Sima Guang accords himself an explicit voice as narrator-historian with the formulaic 'Your subject Guang states 臣光曰 ….' Finally, unlike the two seventh-century accounts, the text's external narrator offers a second

summary description of Emperor Wu's reign.[89] This is powerful stuff for us as *ZZTJ*'s readers: the two voices that speak have already been identified as holding a particular authority in the text. Here is our guide to interpreting both He Chen's memorial and *ZZTJ*'s account of Liang more generally.

The three parts of the analysis each draw a causal connection between Emperor Wu's Buddhism and the erosion of his political authority. It is the first time that such a connection is made explicit in *ZZTJ*. Before this point, what appear in other works as the emperor's Buddhist activities are either represented in ideologically ambiguous terms – they sit just as well in a Confucian ideological framework as a Buddhist one – or criticism of them is left implicit rather than clearly stated. In the light of Sima Guang's analysis, though, we retrospectively assign them an anti-Buddhist reading. And in the events that are described after 545, Emperor Wu's Buddhism starts to draw explicit critical notice from the actors within *ZZTJ*'s text, which we now approach with a sharp ideological focus. It is that shift in our interpretation that makes 545 a 'pivotal' year in Sima Guang's account of Liang.

The location of the analysis affects our reading of it. In *Liang shu*, *Nan shi*, and *Jiankang shi lu* 建康實錄 – the extant sources for its descriptive sections – similar assessments appear at the end of Emperor Wu's biographies, after his death at the hands of Hou Jing. In *ZZTJ*'s chronological sequence, it prefaces Hou Jing's rebellion. Hou Jing declares his intention to rebel against Liang the following year and two years later, in 547, he defects from his native Eastern Wei to set off a chain of events that ends with his usurpation of Liang imperial power. Situational irony underlies *ZZTJ*'s account of the rebellion as a result. Sima Guang's analysis forewarns us of the decline in Emperor Wu's control over his state and the spread of

[89] *ZZTJ* 159.4933-6.

corruption through the court. The apparent ease with which Hou Jing usurps Liang imperial power later seems inevitable as a result. The analysis of 545 therefore marks a change in Emperor Wu's political fortunes. With it, Sima Guang moulds his chronicle to the model of dynastic rise and fall that dominated historiographical convention. That structure in itself locates *ZZTJ* within a Confucian ideological tradition, but his point has a sharper focus. For Emperor Wu, Buddhism is made to function as the specific catalyst for the decline in his personal authority and the downfall of his state. It is the same pattern of rise and fall, and with the same fulcrum, that Sima Guang first introduced in *Li nian tu*. It fits well with the concept of a tragic flaw, or *hamartia*, in the Western tradition. With Sima Guang's eleventh-century hindsight it also echoes Xun Ji's premonitory criticisms in the sixth century and the anti-Buddhist discourse of those that followed him.

This is the analysis of Emperor Wu that *ZZTJ*'s external narrator offers in 545 of its chronology:

> He liked to employ petty people and keep them close at hand. They did substantial harm by insisting on trivial details. He had constructed numerous *stūpas* and temples, depleting both public and private resources. As the area to the south of the Yangzi River had been at peace for a long time, popular customs had grown extravagant and wasteful, and so [He] Chen wrote a petition on it. The emperor despised the fact that he had hit upon the reality of the situation, and so grew angry.[90]

Deception, principally self-deception, is at the core of the account.[91] Emperor Wu dismisses the perceptive criticisms from He Chen because he believes in his own infallibility as ruler. The suggestion is lent further authority by Sima Guang's personal comment as historian: Emperor Wu 'shielded his shortcomings and boasted

[90] *Ibid* 159.4935.
[91] Sima Guang's only other explicit comment as narrator-historian during his account of the Liang also concerns itself with Emperor Wu's self-deception in a religious context, *ibid* 155.4809. There are echoes of Su Shi's claims of the emperor's dual moral standards – a result of his failure to distinguish between 'name' and 'reality.'

about his strengths,' he tells us there.[92] It traces back to his Buddhist beliefs. The textual sequence of Sima Guang's personal comment suggests the causal connection: Emperor Wu believed that his ascetic, vegetarian lifestyle – now with Buddhist connotations – and his long working hours constituted personal virtue and a model of sovereignty, the canonically resonant 'way of the ruler.' Only after that do we hear about his rejection of He Chen's advice (and the advice of all ministers) on the grounds that he had already fulfilled his imperial duties through minor observances of Buddhist practice. The same connection is made explicit shortly after: the external narrator attributes Emperor Wu's self-deception to age and the 'dedication of his energies to Buddhist precepts.'[93]

Also in support of this anti-Buddhist tone is the reference by the external narrator to Emperor Wu's Buddhist construction programme, which brings more harm than good to his state. Different textual voices reinforce the same point. They echo the criticisms of Xun Ji, Tang Emperor Taizong, and Han Yu. They resonate even more closely with the charge levelled in the Bodhidharma anecdotes of the mid-eighth century and again by Li Deyu soon after: that the emperor mistook the trappings of Buddhist belief for genuine religious merit. As we have seen, this survived into the eleventh century both in Buddhist clerical literature and in the arguments of lay believers such as Su Shi.[94] True, it is a Buddhist seam of discourse (although Sima Guang does not acknowledge it as such), but it is one that identifies the negative elements of Emperor Wu's religious practice and so it fits Sima Guang's purpose well.

[92] Su Che also attributed Emperor Wu's downfall in part to inflated ideas of himself: the belief that he was a sage and his subsequent belittlement of and contempt for his ministers and subordinates, *Luan cheng ji* 'hou ji' 7.1214.
[93] *ZZTJ* 159.4935.
[94] See, for example, *Jing de chuan deng lu* (1004), 3.219a, a work that Sima Guang claims to have read (*SMWJ* 14.11a); *Tian sheng guang deng lu* (1036), 6.442b-c; and *Chuan fa zheng zong ji* (1061), 5.742b-c.

It is an enduring theme of Sima Guang's response to Buddhism. He revisits the tension in the eleventh century between Buddhist rhetoric and ideals on the one hand, and contemporary practice on the other. Like Emperor Wu, the Song Buddhist clergy blurs the distinction between the material and the spiritual promotion of Buddhist doctrine. In the fourth lunar month of 1052, for example, Sima Guang admonishes a monk from Xiuzhou, Qingbian 清辨, for believing that the construction of monastic buildings was in itself sufficient to propagate Buddhist doctrine. He concedes that new temple buildings would help to attract new followers to the religion but urges that emphasis lie on personal conduct and not displays of material wealth. Using temple construction to increase the church's own material gains – note the familiar discourse of practical benefit and harm, although it appears here with a negative connotation – diverges from the Buddha's intention.[95] As so often, Sima Guang's eleventh-century memorials complement *ZZTJ*'s representation of Emperor Wu to offer a richer sense of his response to Buddhist practices and their place in the secular state.

His eleventh-century criticisms also have a broader, more damaging reach. The misdirection of effort into creating physical symbols of Buddhist faith is one symptom of a general disparity between the claims and actual practices of the Buddhist clergy. Even a lay believer such as Su Shi had acknowledged spiritual corruption within the Buddhist church. He folded it into a general criticism of social and cultural decline in the eleventh century.[96] This is how Sima Guang dealt with the same theme:

[95] *SMWJ* 66.2b. See also his exhortation in the winter of 1073/4 that the monk Ruone repay kindnesses received from Emperor Renzong by putting into practice the moral standard that the now-deceased emperor had set; Sima Guang questions the value of dedicating a *sūtra* collection to Renzong's memory, *ibid* 69.3b.
[96] *Su Shi wen ji* 2.386-8. There is a political point to Su Shi's comments: the focus of his criticism was the 'new learning' advocated by Wang Anshi and his supporters.

> Shaolin was once inhabited by Bodhidharma;
> The heroic spirit of Bodhidharma is now no more.
> Riddles have spread throughout the empire
> And people vie to grasp the emptiness.[97]

Bodhidharma's appearance here recalls for us his ridicule of Emperor Wu's misunderstanding of Buddhist merit. The anecdote is pertinent to this poem as a parallel example of delusion and the failure to adhere to true Buddhist doctrine. Bodhidharma's first function, though, is to remind us of a golden age of Buddhist practice, a role taken elsewhere by the Buddha himself.[98] Bodhidharma once, '*xi*' 昔, inhabited Shaolin at a time when Buddhism flourished. That illustrious past appears in counterpoint to its loss in the present, '*jin*' 今, a loss that makes itself felt keenly as a result of the contrast. As so often Sima Guang makes his point through juxtaposition. Rhetoric – what Sima Guang calls 'riddles' 廋辞 here, and 'obscure talk' 隱語 elsewhere[99] – overtakes doctrine. Through their verbal trickery Buddhist adherents mislead both lay people and even other members of the clergy.[100] They compete with one another over empty understandings of true doctrine, an emptiness that jars with the 'heroic spirit' of Bodhidharma.

Self-deception is seen to underlie much of Emperor Wu's Buddhism in *ZZTJ*, confirming Sima Guang's explicit analysis as historian. It drives the Liang emperor's belief that an ascetic, vegetarian lifestyle serves as an index of his political competence and moral virtue.[101] The function of the year 545 as a pivot in *ZZTJ*'s

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[97] *Chuan jia ji* 4.22b (the poem appears in the contents list of *SMWJ*, but not in its main text).
[98] Cf. *SMWJ* 13.9b, 66.2a-b, 69.1b-2a.
[99] *Shengshui yan tan lu* 澠水燕談錄, Wang Bizhi 王闢之, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1981, p.31.
[100] *SMWJ* 13.9b, 26.9b, 66.2a-b; *Shengshui yan tan lu* p.31. It is tempting to see these claims as part of a larger antipathy towards individuals who promoted literary talent above political action – see, for example, *SMWJ* 21.9b-10a, 56.5a-6a, 74.12b – a foundation for several of Sima Guang's criticisms of Wang Anshi's government.
[101] Suwa Gijun 諏訪義純 examines Emperor Wu's vegetarianism in his *Chūgoku chūsei Bukkyō shi kenkyū* 中国中世仏教史研究, Kyoto: Daitō shuppansha, 1988, pp.79-90, esp. pp.81-4. See also John Kieschnick's examination of Emperor Wu's attempts to enforce vegetarianism on Liang monastic communities, 'Buddhist Vegetarianism in China,' in *Of Tripod and Palate: Food, Politics, and Religion in Traditional China*, Roel Sterckx, ed., New York: Palgrave-Macmillan Press, 2005, pp.198-201.

ideological construction is particularly important here: Sima Guang's representation of Emperor Wu's self-deception rests on this structure. Buddhism is revealed as the Liang emperor's tragic flaw to us, *ZZTJ*'s readers, at the same time as its pernicious effects also become clear to actors within the text. Before 545, we are misdirected – as those within the text, including Emperor Wu himself, are misdirected – in our interpretation of his asceticism. Not so after 545: asceticism and self-deception, both products of Emperor Wu's Buddhist belief, emerge as indicators of his downfall. By that time, though, it is already too late and Liang's decline appears imminent and unavoidable.

Early in *ZZTJ*'s account of Liang, Emperor Wu's asceticism is not explicitly linked to his Buddhist belief. It first comes up in 502 of *ZZTJ*'s chronology, soon after his succession to the imperial throne: the external narrator tells us that 'the emperor wore on his person faded, threadbare clothes and always ate only a vegetarian diet.'[102] We hear this in the context of an account of Emperor Wu's good governance. It follows an imperial edict that aims to improve local conditions for the common people. It precedes an account of his success in employing ministers of proven moral propriety. There are also echoes from the canonical values of the *Book of Odes*, in which poverty of clothing indicates frugality and filial piety.[103] Our only clue that there may be an underlying agenda to all of this emerges from intertextual comparison. Sima Guang draws the description of Emperor Wu's asceticism from *Liang shu* and *Nan shi*, but neither of these two works includes explicit mention of Emperor Wu's asceticism at such an early date in their Basic Annals accounts of him. The reference appears instead in the preface to biographies of competent

[102] *ZZTJ* 145.4520.
[103] *Mao shi zheng yi* 1/2.8b-9c. *Shi jing* has a further role to play when, from within the text, Emperor Wu himself makes an allusion to that text to argue that his vegetarian reforms of state ritual conform to canonical ritual. He contrasts himself with Duke Xi of Jin, whose extreme austerity overstep the bounds of moral propriety in the '*Xi shuai*' ode of *Shi jing*, *ZZTJ* 159.4932. The original ode appears on *Mao shi zheng yi* 6/1.93a-c.

government functionaries, at a textual distance from characterizations of the emperor.[104] We will do well to remain alert to this textual manipulation, but it is still too early to assign to it a firm interpretation.

The next we hear on the theme is in 517 of *ZZTJ*'s chronology, when Emperor Wu's vegetarian reforms to imperial ancestral ritual draw the external narrator's notice. There is still no explicit mention of Buddhism. The official historical accounts from the seventh century form the basis of Sima Guang's representation, but again there is textual selection and manipulation at work. He accords the reforms particular textual and historical prominence in *ZZTJ*'s account. He draws on *Nan shi* and *Jiankang shi lu* for the contents of an imperial edict that prohibits the use of animal, divine, or human forms in embroidery. The text that he rejects, *Liang shu*, remains silent on this.[105] Later in his account of the same year he sharpens the details of the reforms. In the fourth month dough replicas replace livestock as sacrificial offerings. In the tenth month cakes replace dried meat, and vegetables and fruit substitute for everything else. 'Consequently those both inside and outside the court created an uproar,' *ZZTJ*'s external narrator tells us. 'They believed that if the use of livestock [for sacrifice] in the imperial ancestral temple were abandoned, bloody food would not be used any more.'[106] Sima Guang claims to follow *Sui shu* here. He supplies a technical reason: *Liang shu* attributes the date of the first edict to the *jia zi* day of the fourth month, a day that Sima Guang correctly suggests did not exist; *Nan shi* maintains that the vegetarian reforms included

[104] *Liang shu* 47.765; *Nan shi* 70.1697. Vegetarianism appears in the official historical record of this period as a defining characteristic of exemplars of filial piety: for example, *Nan Qi shu* 南齊書, Xiao Zixian 蕭子顯, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1972, 55.958 (Xue Tiansheng 薛天生), 55.962 (He Boyu 何伯璵; Wang Wenshu 王文殊), 55.965 (Jiang Mi 江泌); *Liang shu* 47.648 (Teng Tangong 滕曇恭), 47.655 (Yu Shami 庾沙彌); *Chen shu* 陳書, Yao Silian 姚思廉, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1972, 32.430 (Zhang Zhao 張昭).
[105] *ZZTJ* 148.4632. Cf. *Nan shi*, 6.196; *Jiankang shi lu* 17.678; *Liang shu* 2.57. Sima Guang omits reference to the prohibition of the Palace Physician's use of living things to make medicine that appears in *Nan shi*, though. There is no obvious reason for this omission other than a desire for textual concision.
[106] *ZZTJ* 148.4632.

suburban sacrifices, which Sima Guang also rejects.[107] That may be a fair reflection of the actual process of composition that shaped *ZZTJ*'s account, but the result accords greater narrative space to the vegetarian reforms than in either *Liang shu* or *Nan shi*.

Despite his claim to have used *Sui shu*, Sima Guang does not follow that text verbatim. He remains silent on much of its detail of the ministerial discussions on the taxonomy of vegetarian sacrificial offerings. Most notable are his omissions of those reforms proposed by Liang ministers that receive imperial approval. He follows *Nan shi* and *Jiankang shi lu* instead to suggest widespread opposition to the reforms, which Emperor Wu ignores. The decision runs counter to his main sources: *Liang shu* and *Sui shu* both suggest a consensus among senior courtiers to introduce the reforms.[108] In rejecting the advice of his ministers, Emperor Wu resorts to a type of behaviour that Sima Guang criticises in many of the rulers in *ZZTJ*'s text (and that draws censure in explicit terms later on when Emperor Wu ignores He Chen's memorial in 545). His vegetarian reforms appear in *ZZTJ* as the product of a flawed political process. And to substantiate this argument, Sima Guang draws on the most critical of all the historical accounts of Emperor Wu's reign that survive from the seventh and eighth centuries.

We finally come to the pivotal year of 545. Here is the first explicit link in *ZZTJ* between Emperor Wu's asceticism, his self-deception, and his Buddhist belief. Sima Guang draws on this summary account of Emperor Wu's asceticism from *Liang shu*:

[107] The *kao yi* commentary is incorrect in its reference to *Nan shi*'s dating of these events: it claims that Li Yanshou records them in his account under the sixteenth year of the *tian jian* period, during the second lunar month; *Nan shi* 6.196 actually dates the reforms to the third lunar month of that year. This could be the product of scribal error.

[108] *Liang shu* 2.57; *Sui shu* 7.134. *Tong dian* 49.1370 and *Ce fu yuan gui* 194.12b-13a, 563.20a also follow *Sui shu*'s account, although they are not explicitly acknowledged as sources by Sima Guang in the *kao yi* commentary to his account of Liang.

> In his dedication to the tasks of government, [Emperor Wu] was assiduous and tireless.[109] Each time the winter months came around, after the fourth watch had been completed, he would order a candle to be held and would review his affairs. Since he held his writing brush exposed to the cold, his hands would chap. …
>
> He only ate once a day. There was no fish or meat in his diet, but only broths made from pulses and coarse grains. As his business piled up, when the sun had moved to noontime, he would rinse out his mouth to make it through the day.
>
> He wore clothes made of plain cloth and had coarse black bed netting made of kapok. He wore a single hat for three years, and used a single bed cover for two years. The frugal measures that he constantly imposed upon himself were all of this sort. He gave up sex after the age of fifty. Neither the dresses of official members of the rear palaces, from the Honoured Consort down, nor the ritual garments of the Empress [were long enough to] trail along the ground or had embroidery around the hems. [The emperor] neither drank alcohol nor listened to music. Except for sacrificial ceremonies at the imperial ancestral temple, large assemblies and banquets, and matters of *dharma*, he did not have ritual music made.[110]

Emperor Wu's asceticism, even his vegetarianism, has no particular association with Buddhism here. The reference to 'matters of *dharma*' serves as an example – one of several – of an occasion when he sees it fit to break his strict ascetic habits for a higher ritual purpose. Instead, *Liang shu*'s summary is part of a eulogistic account of Emperor Wu's dedication to governance, which ends with the statement that 'looking in turn at rulers of former times, it is rare to find one of such a respectful, frugal, and stern temperament, and of such artistic ability and erudite learning.'[111] These are values of leadership that appear in the Confucian canon, as those of an ideal ruler.

Sima Guang offers a different slant on this characterization and, in doing so, forces upon Emperor Wu's asceticism an explicitly Buddhist interpretation.[112] He follows the same textual sequence as *Liang shu*: a claim for Emperor Wu's dedication to government; a description of the emperor's vegetarian diet; a description of other aspects of his ascetic lifestyle. But he prefaces his account with the statement that 'ever since the middle of the *tian jian* period [502-19], he had

[109] The phrase '*zi zi wu dai*' (孜孜無怠) appears in a canonical setting in Kong Yingda's sub-commentary to *Shi jing* on *Mao shi zheng yi* 16/2.240c.
[110] *Liang shu* 3.97.
[111] *Ibid*.
[112] *ZZTJ* 159.4933-4.

adopted the *dharma* of the Buddha.' His language is more neutral than *Nan shi*'s parallel summary that 'in his later years, he became mired in his faith in the Buddhist Way,' but the effect is similar.[113] In contrast to *Liang shu*, Sima Guang's representation of Emperor Wu's vegetarianism and asceticism now, finally, assumes a sharp Buddhist focus.[114]

With the connection established, Sima Guang's criticism of Emperor Wu's asceticism in the personal analysis that follows amounts to a criticism of Buddhism. Speaking in his own voice as historian, and assuming the full authority that that textual voice implies, he declares that Emperor Wu 'personally believed that the asceticism of [his] vegetarian diet was a great virtue.'[115] Delusions of moral propriety reveal themselves as the motivation behind the emperor's vegetarianism and, by extension, behind his Buddhist belief as a whole, since that is its driving ideology.

From this point on, as we have seen, the criticisms of the emperor's Buddhist activities are explicit in *ZZTJ*. A final reference to his (Buddhist-guided) vegetarianism appears at the end of his life and reign. In 549 of *ZZTJ*'s chronology its external narrator tells us that 'the emperor always ate vegetables.'[116] There is nothing particularly remarkable about this when taken in isolation. Internally, though, its immediate textual setting lends it force. We are in the thick of Hou Jing's siege of the imperial city here: the external narrator has just supplied gruesome descriptions of Liang defenders eating rats, sparrows, horsemeat, and even human flesh to avoid starvation.[117] Intertextual comparison brings out evidence of textual

[113] *Nan shi* 7.223.
[114] This reading finds support elsewhere. Sima Guang was unequivocal in his rejection of Sui scholar Wang Tong's 王通 attempt to dissociate Emperor Wu's vegetarian reforms from Buddhist orthodoxy, for example. Blame for Emperor Wu's observation of vegetarian precepts (and the laxity in government that it produced) lay firmly with Buddhist doctrine which, for Sima Guang, 'did not accord with the sages,' 'Wen Zhongzi bu zhuan' 文中子補傳, Sima Guang, ap. *Shao shi wen jian hou lu* 4.31-2.
[115] *ZZTJ* 159.4935.
[116] *Ibid* 162.5005.
[117] *Ibid* 162.5003.

manipulation too: there are no antecedents for this description in Sima Guang's extant sources. He has inserted it into his account for ideological effect.

The establishment of Emperor Wu's asceticism and vegetarianism in a Buddhist setting in 545 makes us reassess all references in *ZZTJ*. We have a sharp ideological focus on accounts that appeared earlier in its chronology, as early as 'the middle of the *tian jian* period,' but which did not originally cast the emperor's asceticism as an act of Buddhist devotion, simply as an example of moral governance. They are now made to contribute retrospectively to a growing body of evidence of Emperor Wu's Buddhism that, in the light of Sima Guang's analysis, suggests a long-term and cumulative erosion of imperial authority. There is a rare divergence here from earlier anti-Buddhist discourse, especially the criticisms of Xun Ji and Han Yu, which is clear and consistent in attributing Emperor Wu's vegetarianism to his veneration of Buddhism. The pivotal structure better serves Sima Guang's purpose in imposing on his account a pattern of dynastic rise and fall, for which 545 is the year when Buddhism finally emerges as Emperor Wu's tragic flaw.

Accounts of vegetarianism, in particular of vegetarian ritual reforms, would have held a strong resonance with the present for Sima Guang and his readers. In the early eleventh century, Ciyun Zunshi 慈雲尊式, a monk associated with the Tiantai school, argued for reforms to lay Buddhist practice and also called for an end to bloody food offerings in ancestral sacrifices. He even invoked the precedent of Emperor Wu to support his case.[118] During the 1050s and 1060s a broader debate developed at the Song court over Buddhism's role in state rituals. Sima Guang was among those who voiced his opposition. He conceded that some Buddhist adherents

[118] *Xinjin wen ji* 12.714a, 12.714b; *Jin yuan ji* 金園集, Fabao 法寶 (Ciyun Zunshi), *Zoku T.* vol. 57, 950: C.13a-15a, C16a-19a.

managed to transcend sectarian divides and displayed a universal moral and ritual propriety,[119] but they were few in number and on the whole Buddhism emerges in his memorials as a hindrance, not a means, to fulfilling basic (Confucian canonical) ritual demands.[120] For Sima Guang, the tension plays itself out clearly in the sphere of imperial ritual.

The main issue at stake here is filial piety, an issue that also formed one of the main ideological battlegrounds in the earlier discourse on Emperor Wu's programme of ritual reform and patronage of the Buddhist clergy. In a memorial to the throne of 3 September 1061 Sima Guang launched an attack on Buddhist institutions' creation of imperial images – a practice 'far-removed from filial piety.'[121] It appeared often in discussions of ritual that appeared at the time: Fan Zhen 范鎮, Ouyang Xiu, Liu Chang 劉敞, Liu Shu 劉敞, Chen Zhaosu 陳昭素, Sun Bian 孫抃, and Su Song 蘇頌 – all critics of Buddhism – chorused their opposition.[122] On 16 April 1064 Sima Guang also opposed further construction of Buddhist temples at the imperial tombs of Emperors Zhenzong and Renzong because, he argued, they would violate principles of filial piety by surpassing the honour accorded to the dynasty's founders. Buddhism itself does not come under attack here – the excessive number of temples established at each emperor's tomb is his point – but Sima Guang does implicate Buddhist institutions in the failure to offer due ritual respect to imperial ancestors. Later in the memorial, Buddhism also draws

[119] See above, n.87.
[120] *SMWJ* 67.9a.
[121] *Ibid* 19.5a (for dating, see 18.9a).
[122] An account of these images is given on *Song shi* 109.2624-8. For a sample of individual arguments, which also extended beyond the creation of imperial images in just Buddhist institutions, see Fan Zhen (*XCB* 180.4365; *Song shi* 109.2625-6), Ouyang Xiu (*XCB* 180.4361, 187.4506, 188.4532-3), Liu Chang (*Gongshi ji* 32.389), Liu Shu (*Guo chao zhu chen zou yi* 8.5b-8b), Chen Zhaosu (*Sima Guang ri ji*, ap. *XCB* 188.4533), Sun Bian (*Su Wei gong wen ji* 蘇魏公文集, Su Song 蘇頌, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1988, 63.967), Su Song (*Song shi* 340.10860). In favour of building images was Yang Anguo 楊安國: *XCB* 190.4581-3. The debate had a political as well as a religious focus: several of Buddhism's opponents claimed that the construction of imperial shrines in Buddhist institutions simply served the self-interests of eunuchs who were eager to win favour at court.

specific notice with a declaration that it 'violates ritual propriety and damages filial piety.'[123]

Sima Guang voices a second concern about the construction of imperial images in Buddhist temples.[124] It recalls Xun Ji's sixth-century criticisms of Emperor Wu, which thundered against the contemporary practice of Buddhist adherents who 'erect huge buildings and decorate them with barbarian images that are illicitly comparable to the Hall of Enlightened Rule and the [temples] for imperial ancestral sacrifice.'[125] We hear something similar from Sima Guang in the eleventh century:

> There are images of the emperor drawn in Daoist and Buddhist temples and further homage is paid to Canopus, the longevity star. The corruption of all this is extreme. … If we did not have [such images], then would it mean that we were failing to honour honourable men?[126]

His point lies in that final, confrontational question. Not only do such images corrupt prescribed ritual, they also challenge the established functions of the imperial ancestral temple. Sima Guang's question forces us to acknowledge the efficacy of existing, non-Buddhist ritual practice. He does not phrase it rhetorically but he achieves that effect: he implies that the removal of imperial images from Buddhist and Daoist temples would have little effect on the honour accorded to imperial ancestors through Confucian ritual channels. Buddhism therefore infringes on and undermines practices that lie at the heart of Confucian imperial authority.[127] We are on well-trodden ground.

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[123] *SMWJ* 28.4b-5b, esp. 28.5b (for dating, see *Chuan jia ji* 30.12b).
[124] Sima Guang addresses this practice in several memorials: see, for example, *SMWJ* 24.9a-10a, 78.8a.
[125] *Ibid*.
[126] *Ibid* 24.9b-10a.
[127] Sima Guang also entered into a contemporary debate on Buddhism's role in funerary practices. He criticised the damage that its 'misleading trickery' 誑誘 did to ritual. At the centre of his arguments were obviously issues of filial piety: *ibid* 26.10a-b; *Shu yi* 5.9a-10a, esp. 9b. Patricia Buckley Ebrey examines the contours of this debate in 'The Response of the Sung State to Popular Funeral Practices,' in *Religion and Society in T'ang and Sung China*, Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Peter N. Gregory, eds., Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993, pp.209-39.

If Emperor Wu's asceticism and vegetarian ritual reforms do not appear as the specific product of his Buddhist belief until Sima Guang's retrospective analysis in 545 of *ZZTJ*'s chronology, then his first explicit association with Buddhism in the text's chronology comes in 520. 'At that time,' we are told by the text's external narrator, 'Emperor [Wu] revered the Buddha and all the officials and people followed suite. Only [Wei] Rui 韋叡, considering his position as a senior minister, was unwilling to go along with the popular trend, and his conduct remained largely as normal.'[128] The statement indicates something of the prevailing contemporary support for Emperor Wu's religious conversion, but at the same time it directs implicit criticism at the Liang court's reverence of Buddhism. Wei Rui's behaviour is characterised as 'normal' 常. Buddhism, by implicit contrast, must therefore be abnormal. Wei Rui's decision not to follow Buddhism is also taken in consideration of his responsibilities as a senior Liang minister. The unspoken corollary must be that the rest of the court act irresponsibly by embracing the abnormal doctrines of Buddhism. Buddhism undermines official duties and the welfare of government, a familiar theme of *ZZTJ*'s characterization of Emperor Wu and one that links it with earlier anti-Buddhist characterizations. And Wei Rui's position recalls too Sima Guang's self-representation as a lone figure resistant to the ideological mainstream of the eleventh-century court, where Chan Buddhism had acquired a fervent following.[129]

Emperor Wu's Buddhist activities draw further notice in *ZZTJ* (though still no explicit criticism) when he performs the first of his ritual renunciations of worldly ties at Jiankang's Tongtai Monastery on 24 April 527. He performs a total of three

[128] *ZZTJ* 149.4659. Cf. *Liang shu* 12.225; *Nan shi* 58.1430. Earlier in his account, though, Sima Guang omits a reference to Emperor Wu's bodhisattva ordination that *Nan shi* records in its account of 22 May 519: compare *ZZTJ* 149.4645 and *Nan shi* 6.197.
[129] *SMWJ* 15.6a.

worldly renunciations in the text: the others appear in accounts of 1 November 529 and 8 April 547.[130] The source for the first two is *Nan shi*.[131] One variation stands out. When, in 529, Liang ministers have to make redemption offerings to coax the emperor out the monastery and back to the imperial city, Sima Guang identifies the *triratna* as the specific beneficiary. Elsewhere the profit of the Buddhist church is not stated so clearly but left implicit. The variation prefigures Sima Guang's representations later in his text of the financial impact that Emperor Wu's Buddhist activities had upon his state.

There is greater difference between *ZZTJ* and *Nan shi* in their accounts of the worldly renunciation of 547. This is Sima Guang's version of events:

> Emperor [Wu] paid an official visit to the Tongtai Monastery and performed a worldly sacrifice as he had done during the *da tong* reign period [527-9].[132] … On the *bing zi* day, the [Liang] ministers raised ransom money.[133] On the *ding hai* day, the emperor returned to the palace. A general amnesty was proclaimed and the year title was changed, as had happened before during *da tong*.[134]

[130] *ZZTJ* 151.4723, 153.4768-9, 160.4951.
[131] 24 April 527: *Nan shi* 7.205; cf. *Jiankang shi lu* 17.681; *Ce fu yuan gui* 194.13a. Compare *Liang shu* 3.71, which provides an account of Emperor Wu's renunciation that is textually closer to *ZZTJ* but omits the details of the construction of Tongtai Monastery. Note variations in dating. *ZZTJ* puts Emperor Wu's lecture on a *jia zi* day. *Nan shi* correctly ascribes it to a *jia wu* day; there is no *jia zi* day in this month, although the discrepancy seems most likely to be the product of scribal error rather than historiographical difference. *ZZTJ* follows *Nan shi* in dating the submission of petitions to an *yi si* day; *Jiankang shi lu* suggests that it occurred on an *yi you* day, but is likely to be incorrect, again the probable result of scribal error. 1 November 529: *Nan shi* 7.206; cf. *Jiankang shi lu* 17.682. Compare *Liang shu* 3.73 and *Sui shu* 21.594.
[132] This refers to the worldly renunciation that Emperor Wu performed on 1 November 529, since Emperor Wu only changed the title of the reign period from *da tong* to *zhong da tong* in the tenth month of the year, a month after his worldly renunciation. *Nan shi* 7.219 cites the renunciation of *zhong da tong* as a model for the 547 renunciation. It is likely that both texts refer to the same event, since Emperor Wu did not perform a worldly renunciation in *zhong da tong*. The difference therefore hinges simply on the date on which Emperor Wu proclaimed a change in the title of the reign period. In this matter, Sima Guang seems to have shown greater precision than Li Yanshou.
[133] There is variation in dating: *Nan shi* 7.219 suggests a *geng wu* day; *ZZTJ* proposes a *bing zi* day. Both are possible and, since no other account supplies a date for the offering, it is impossible to verify which is correct. The effect of the difference in *ZZTJ* is that Emperor Wu spends six extra days in Tongtai Monastery, and therefore remains out of contact with his ministers and the duties of state for longer than Sima Guang's sources allow. Hu Sanxing remarks on this in his commentary on this passage. He calculates a total of 37 days between the time that Emperor Wu entered the monastery and the day of the redemption offering. He suggests that such a long absence from imperial governance produced Emperor Wu's downfall: 'the myriad affairs of governance cannot be neglected for even a single day. Yet to give oneself over to the Buddha in such a deluded manner [suggests that] the emperor had forgotten about the empire. Over a period of 37 days, if the empire does not know that it is without a ruler, then the empire will forget its ruler.' Hu does not acknowledge the discrepancy in dates between *ZZTJ* and *Nan shi*, though, and therefore overlooks the possibility that Sima Guang has manipulated his account to produce just such a reaction in his readers.
[134] *ZZTJ* 160.4951-2.

Only the outlines of Emperor Wu's renunciation appear here: his visit to the Tongtai Monastery; the need to raise a ransom for his release; his return to the palace several days after the initial ritual of renunciation. Many of the details from *Nan shi*'s account are omitted. Instead, Sima Guang uses historiographical shorthand for his account of this event by drawing a parallel with Emperor Wu's worldly renunciation of 529, a parallel that does not receive explicit notice in his source. No need to describe the event again because it has already appeared in *ZZTJ* with an identical ritual form. This lessens its textual prominence in *ZZTJ* but it has a striking historiographical effect. It points up in clear and insistent terms (the phrase appears twice in *ZZTJ*'s text) parallels between Emperor Wu's worldly renunciations, one before and one after the pivotal year of 545. Emperor Wu's Buddhism again appears to have a cumulative effect on state welfare that traces back to early in his reign and increases during the final years of his life. It is hardly surprising that Hu Sanxing chooses the later date, after the text's ideological position has been made clear, to draw attention in his commentary to the recurrence of long periods of absence from governance because of Emperor Wu's infatuation with Buddhism.

We become aware of the familiar presence of Han Yu at this point. Sima Guang describes three worldly renunciations in the main body of his account but acknowledges the possibility of a fourth. This editorial decision, which he outlines in his *kao yi* commentary, throws light on his use of sources. It offers a close indication of *ZZTJ*'s position in the existing discourse on Emperor Wu's Buddhism. Here is his account of 23 April 546:

> On the *geng xu* day, Emperor [Wu] paid a visit to the Tongtai Monastery. He subsequently stayed at the monastery's residences, where he lectured on *Sanhui jing* 三

> 慧經. In summer, on the *bing xu* day of the fourth month, he gave an exegetical lecture. He proclaimed a general amnesty and changed the year title.[135]

It is closest to *Liang shu*: that is the source that Sima Guang acknowledges. He includes details of Emperor Wu's stay at the monastery that appear there but not elsewhere. He omits references to a worldly renunciation that Emperor Wu performs on this date, which appear in *Nan shi*, *Jiankang shi lu* and *San guo dian lüe*. *Liang shu* omits the reference too, but the authority of that text alone does not seem robust enough for Sima Guang's purposes. He also calls for support upon Han Yu who in his 'Memorial On the Buddha's Bone' only acknowledged three of Emperor Wu's worldly renunciations.[136] With that as his clinching evidence, Sima Guang accepts *Liang shu*'s account against the combined testimony of at least three other accounts that were available to him during *ZZTJ*'s compilation. The implication is that he follows *Liang shu* because to admit the possibility of a fourth worldly renunciation (as the majority of his sources do) would be to contradict Han Yu.[137]

There is an internal textual tension in all this. When the submission of Han Yu's 'Memorial On the Buddha's Bone' appears later in *ZZTJ*'s account, under 819 of its chronology, the text's external narrator criticises many of Han Yu's anti-Buddhist writings as 'inflamed and excessive.'[138] Elsewhere, too, Sima Guang appears less extreme than Han Yu in his response to Buddhism. To effect a reconciliation he therefore has to re-interpret Han Yu's anti-Buddhist stance and cast

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[135] *Ibid* 159.4937.

[136] *Han Changli wen ji jiao zhu* 8.613. There is also an echo from Han Yu's 'Memorial On the Buddha's Bone' in the comment as narrator-historian that Sima Guang appends to *ZZTJ*'s account of 531: 'Because of Crown Prince Zhaoming's humanity and filial piety, and Emperor Wu's compassion and love, a single trace of suspicion caused them to die from anxiety and the crime extended to their descendants. They sought out the auspicious but obtained the inauspicious 求吉得凶,' *ZZTJ* 155.4809. Compare Han Yu: '[Emperor Wu] devoted himself to Buddhism. He sought blessings but instead received disaster 求福乃更得禍,' *Han Changli wen ji jiao zhu* 8.614.

[137] *ZZTJ* 159.4937.

[138] *Ibid* 240.7759. Sima Guang makes an exception for Han Yu's 'Preface to Seeing Off Master Wenchang,' which he credits with dealing more effectively than his other writings with the essentials of the issue of Buddhist influence in China. In his 'Ben lun' 本論, Ouyang Xiu also dismissed Han Yu's proposal for Buddhism's immediate eradication as impractical and ineffective. He proposed instead the intense propagation of canonical ritual practice to smother Buddhism without directly confronting it, *Ouyang Xiu quan ji* 17.288-93.

him in a different light to received tradition. Far from rejecting Buddhism outright, Han Yu now appears to have had a thorough understanding of its doctrines – the opposite of Qisong's attack on Han Yu in the mid-eleventh century, in fact. For Sima Guang, Han Yu's knowledgeable criticisms were founded on an approach of 'simply selecting the refined sections and rejecting the unsophisticated, crude parts' of Buddhist doctrine, not the blind ignorance that Qisong would have us believe nor the outright repudiation suggested by many of Han Yu's supporters.[139] A vested personal interest underlies the image that he paints of Han Yu here. It is also how he represents himself. True, he is critical of Buddhism and in particular its effects on the practical business of state governance – his enduring concern – but there are elements of Buddhist doctrine that can also produce benefit:

> Someone asked: 'Are there things that you would take from Śākyamuni and Lao zi 老子?' Yu sou 迂叟 [Sima Guang] said: 'There are.' 'What would you take?' 'From Śākyamuni I would take his emptiness. From Lao zi I would take his non-action. Of course, if one did away with these, then there is nothing that I should take.'[140]

Here are strong echoes of the Han Yu that Sima Guang offers us, who chooses at will the beneficial elements of Buddhist doctrine and rejects that which brings no profit to statecraft. The representation of Emperor Wu's worldly renunciations in *ZZTJ* helps to paper over any ideological divergence with Han Yu. Sima Guang's authority as historian hinges on Han Yu's memorial, a source that he acknowledges as polemical in his text and that lies at a greater temporal remove from the events it describes than the historical record of the seventh and eighth centuries – by all measures, and certainly by the *kao yi* commentary's rigorous standards, flimsy

[139] *SMWJ* 69.1b. Sima Guang bases his claim on a reading of Han Yu's 'Letter to Director Meng' 與孟尚書書, *Han Changli wen ji jiao zhu* 3.211-6.
[140] *SMWJ* 74.15a.

evidence. The force of Han Yu's influence on eleventh-century anti-Buddhist discourse is clearer but also more awkward than ever.

There are also useful insights here into the complementary function of the *kao yi* commentary. In the main body of *ZZTJ*'s text, the omission of a worldly renunciation in 546 at first seems to mute Emperor Wu's Buddhist activity. That is its effect in Sima Guang's source, *Liang shu*. Unlike that text, though, Sima Guang does not remain completely silent on the fourth worldly renunciation. He simply moves it to his commentary and, in doing so, remains ideologically consistent in his representation of Emperor Wu's worldly renunciations. We still have a close sense of Emperor Wu's continuing participation in Buddhist worship, and that provides substance for Sima Guang's criticisms in his earlier analysis as historian. This is not a suppression of information, therefore, but a manipulation of his representation to fit with an established interpretation of events. That interpretation is Han Yu's. And the decision to privilege the evidence of Han Yu's memorial colours *ZZTJ*'s account of Emperor Wu's worldly renunciations with the reflected light of his anti-Buddhist discourse. Sima Guang achieves his critical ends by co-opting and combining all of the arguments available to him.

Emperor Wu's worldly renunciations receive the most negative response in *ZZTJ* during Hou Jing's rebellion. In 547 Hou Jing was attacked by troops from his native Eastern Wei after a failed attempt to defect to the rival state in the north, Western Wei.[141] He fled to the castle at Shouchun in Liang territory, just over the border from his former territorial base.[142] From there, on 27 September 548, he led a rebellion and marched on the Liang capital of Jiankang.[143] In the eleventh lunar

[141] *ZZTJ* 160.4948-9
[142] See above, n.49.
[143] *Ibid* 161.4981.

month, having surrounded the imperial compound, he is reported in *ZZTJ* to have sent a message to the Eastern Wei ruler, Gao Cheng:

> When I advanced to take Shouchun, I had intended to stop and rest a while. Xiao Yan 蕭衍 [Emperor Wu] realised that his time had come, though, and resigned the imperial throne of his own accord. Before my army had entered his state, he had already performed a worldly renunciation at Tongtai.[144]

Intertextual comparison shows that the letter has been omitted from Sima Guang's extant sources. Its inclusion in *ZZTJ* assumes therefore ideological weight. Within the text, Hou Jing appears as a traitor and his reliability as a textual informant is open to question, but that is not the point here. The true motives of Hou Jing's invasion of Liang are inaccessible (and relatively unimportant) for Sima Guang and his readers. What matters is the justification that he is seen to offer for invading Jiankang. He maintains that Emperor Wu had relinquished imperial power voluntarily by the time of his arrival in Liang territory: the emperor had 'realised that his time had come' 運終. This is the rhetoric of the cyclical succession of the five phases that underpinned discussions of the transmission of imperial power until the eleventh century.[145] Through it, Emperor Wu's act of Buddhist worldly renunciation is given a political significance. For Hou Jing at least, it is an indication that he had ceded his right to rule. On an external, editorial level Sima Guang's decision to include Hou Jing's letter in *ZZTJ* hints at his own implicit criticism of Emperor Wu's decision to forsake his imperial duties in favour of Buddhist activities. A

[144] *Ibid* 161.4992.

[145] See, for example, the discussions of political legitimacy on *Ce fu yuan gui* 1.1a-4b, 182.1a-2b. Zhang Fangping also based his '*Nan bei zheng run lun*' 南北正閏論 on cosmological arguments, *Lequan ji* 17.13b-15a. In a discussion of dynastic legitimacy from 1040, though, Ouyang Xiu rejected the theory of the five phases in according dynastic legitimacy with the suggestion that 'to claim that the rise of sovereigns necessarily depends on permutations in the five phases is erroneous and absurd talk,' *Ouyang Xiu quan ji* 16.268-9. A focused examination of the relationship between the theory of the five phases and historiography appears in Lee, John, 'From Five Elements to Five Agents: *Wu-hsing* in Chinese History,' in *Sages and Filial Sons: Mythology and Archaeology in Ancient China*, Julia Ching and R.W.L. Guisso, eds., Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1991, pp.163-78.

causal link suggests itself between Emperor Wu's Buddhism and his political downfall here too. We revisit the familiar tension between Confucian political expectations, in which imperial rule was a public duty, and Buddhism's doctrine of withdrawal from political and social commitments.

Hou Jing's reference to the Tongtai Monastery – a monastery that Emperor Wu had had built for his personal use – recalls another aspect of the Liang ruler's Buddhist practice: his financial support for temple construction. This finds more explicit expression in *ZZTJ* than in the official historical accounts of the seventh century and fits better with the polemics of Guo Zushen and Xun Ji in the sixth centuries, and of Tang Emperor Taizong in the mid-seventh. The emphasis on temple construction is consistent with *Li nian tu*, where Sima Guang points up the economic effects of Emperor Wu's patronage of Buddhism: 'when he took up the conduct of *śramana* as emperor, he … frittered away his state's wealth in veneration of the Buddha.'[146] There is already a sense of it from earlier in *ZZTJ*'s text too. We hear it in the summary assessment under 545 of *ZZTJ*'s chronology: the external narrator tells us that Emperor Wu 'constructed numerous *stūpas* and temples, depleting both public and private resources.'[147] And even before that, in the first lunar month of 536 of the text's chronology, its external narrator alerts us to the financial and social effects of imperially-sponsored Buddhist construction:

> Emperor [Wu] had the Huangji Temple constructed on behalf of Emperor Wen, to seek blessings for him [in the afterlife]. He ordered officials to search out the finest materials. Mr. Hong of Qu'a bought a large quantity of materials from Xiangzhou and went east downstream. The Commandant of Nanjin, Vice Minister Meng, tried to ingratiate himself with the emperor by killing Mr. Hong, having slandered him as a pillager. He then expropriated his materials for the construction of the temple.[148]

[146] *Ji gu lu* 14.130.
[147] *ZZTJ* 159.4935.
[148] *Ibid* 157.4870.

The anecdote is incidental to *ZZTJ*'s plot. To tell us that the Huangji Temple *was* constructed, without details of the political intrigue that accompanied its construction, would sustain the development of *ZZTJ*'s action just as well. Its function is not narrative, but ideological.

Another version of the same episode appears in *Tai ping guang ji* 太平廣記, under a section on retribution. It is traced there to a late sixth-century text, *Huan yuan ji* 還冤記.[149] No other extant source contains a comparable reference. Textual variation and the addition of details in *ZZTJ*'s narrative – the name of the temple, the suggestion that the emperor sought posthumous blessings for a dead ancestor – as well as the simple absence of both *Tai ping guang ji* and *Huan yuan ji* from *ZZTJ*'s *kao yi* commentary suggest that neither served as Sima Guang's source. It is still profitable to compare the two versions of this anecdote for an indication of its function in *ZZTJ*. It also offers an acute sense of the silences that enshroud so much of Sima Guang's account. He depends heavily, almost exclusively, on sources written by officials within the Confucian bureaucratic system and intended for a like-minded audience. These are works that deal with major events of state and the top echelons of society. Like *ZZTJ*, they paint their historiographical canvases in broad brushstrokes. This anecdote from *Huan yi ji*, by contrast, offers something familiar – a shared story – yet fundamentally different in its thematic concerns and narrative focus. Here are the disparities between the official and the private record, another and even more extensive gap in *ZZTJ*'s account to set beside Sima Guang's already

[149] *Tai ping guang ji* 太平廣記, Li Fang 李昉 et al., eds., Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1961, 120.845. This story does not appear in the one-*juan* version of *Huan yuan ji* that survives, cf. *Huan yuan ji* 還冤記, Yan Tuizhi 顏推之, *Ying yin Wen yuan ge Si ku quan shu* edn. It would seem, though, that this edition has not been transmitted in its original form. It appears in three *juan* under the title *Huan yuan zhi* 還冤志 on *Chong wen zong mu* 3.34a; *Song shi* 206.5219. The same title is used in *Suichu tang shu mu* 遂初堂書目, You Mao 尤袤, Beijing: Xian dai chu ban she, 1987, 33, but the number of *juan* is not included. In *Zhi zhai shu lu jie ti* there is already evidence of textual loss: the work recorded there as *Bei Qi Huan yuan zhi* 北齊還冤志 comprises only two *juan*, *Zhi zhai shu lu jie ti* 11.317.

selective use of the official histories. Here too is a sense of the rich historiographical heritage that Sima Guang chooses to ignore and a further insight into the effects that his prejudices in source selection have on *ZZTJ*'s ideological construction. And it is an important reminder to the modern historian of the danger of relying too heavily and uncritically on Sima Guang to form judgements of past events.

What draws our notice, as so often, is not what Sima Guang chooses to tell us but what he keeps silent: details of a legal battle between Mr. Hong and Vice Minister Meng; an indictment that the Hong family places in Mr. Hong's coffin; the death soon after of both Vice Minister Meng and almost all those involved with Hong's imprisonment and execution; the destruction of the Huangji Temple by fire. For the author of *Huan yi ji* (and for the late tenth-century compilers of *Tai ping guang ji*) these sustain an account of ghostly retribution that provides the story's thematic focus. Remove them, and the conflict between Mr. Hong and Vice Minister Meng is about the drain on private economic resources and the social divisiveness created in the building of an imperially-sponsored temple. That is the point of its inclusion in *ZZTJ*. Despite its absence from the majority of Sima Guang's extant sources, it serves here as condemnation of Emperor Wu's programme of Buddhist construction.[150] In the broader discourse on Emperor Wu, it also serves as a response to Buddhist apologias, such as Daoxuan's in the early seventh century, which argued that Liang temples were built as acts of filial piety: here is a temple dedicated to a deceased imperial ancestor, but the circumstances of its construction are expressly negative.

This feature of Emperor Wu's Buddhism makes itself felt keenly in *ZZTJ*'s text after 545. Let us revisit *ZZTJ*'s account of 546 and the date of the disputed

[150] The omissions from *ZZTJ*'s account in themselves are not surprising. The supernatural rarely draws notice and when it does, it is usually filtered through the perception of one of the text's actors rather than the external narrator or the voice of the historian. What interests us here, though, is the effect that these omissions create.

fourth worldly renunciation. According to Sima Guang, Emperor Wu completed a second doctrinal lecture on 29 May 546.[151] Then this:

> That night, the Tongtai Monastery's image of the Buddha caught fire. The emperor said: "This is [the work of] evil spirits. We should undertake the business of the *dharma* far and wide." The ministers all proclaimed this an excellent idea. He thereupon sent down a decree: "Our way is lofty but evil spirits prosper, and we are hindered in doing good. We must commit all our resources to make it several times greater than before." He subsequently had a twelve-story statue of the Buddha erected. Hou Jing's rebellion broke out just as it was nearing completion and so work on it stopped.[152]

The fire at Tongtai Monastery is well documented.[153] Emperor Wu's declaration, decree, and erection of a Buddha statue do not appear in *ZZTJ*'s extant sources, though.[154] Sima Guang moves his representation of Emperor Wu beyond the established discourse. The emperor's patronage of Buddhism now finds motivation in a concern with the malicious influence of the supernatural. In the early seventh century Daoxuan offered a positive motivation for the imperial support of temple construction: Emperor Wu sought divine assistance for effective governance and to bring blessings to his people.[155] Here, though, it develops from more negative interests of self-preservation, which drive his desire to 'propagate the *dharma* widely' through material means.

Compare this with the destruction by fire of the Lingbao Stūpa of the Kaibao Monastery in Kaifeng on 14 July 1044. It was one of several Buddhist monasteries damaged by fire at that time. We have a description of it in 989 as a building of 'great beauty and exquisite detail, such as there had never been in recent times,' an

[151] See above, n.136.
[152] *ZZTJ* 159.4937.
[153] *Liang shu* 3.90; *Nan shi* 7.218; *Jiankang shi lu* 17.689, which varies textually from *Liang shu* and *Nan shi* ('Tongtai Monastery went up in flames') in its claim that 'Tongtai Monastery was burnt almost completely by a natural fire.'
[154] An account of Emperor Wu's reaction to the fire appears in the thirteenth-century Buddhist work, *Fo zu tong ji* 38.351b. It seems that *ZZTJ* was its source.
[155] *Xu Gao seng zhuan* 1.426b-c; *Li dai san bao ji* 11.99b.

account that resonates with the descriptions of temples built under Emperor Wu.[156] Remonstrance official Yu Jing 余靖 identified the cause of its destruction in 1044 as a 'natural fire,' but his account was not neutral: there are implications of heaven-sent retribution; Buddhism is seen to violate cosmic, canonical order. What really attracted his notice, though, were plans to rebuild the *stūpa*. He set Buddhism in the context of the Song empire's current military and economic problems. It was a barbarian doctrine that diverted wealth from an impoverished population to a prosperous clergy. He therefore urged the emperor to attend to his subjects' welfare rather than seek blessings through the patronage of Buddhism. And he dismissed in familiar terms the possibility that Buddhist divinities might provide assistance to secular governance: 'If a *śarīra* cannot protect itself and is destroyed by fire,' he asked rhetorically, 'then what blessings can it bring the people?' The resonance with Sima Guang's later account of Emperor Wu's patronage of temple construction already makes itself felt here, and Yu Jing goes on to cite Liang as a minatory example to prove his point: 'Long ago, when Emperor Wu of Liang had the Changgan Stūpa constructed, the *śarīra* also had a permanent glow about it. How did it bring fortune when the imperial city was defeated? Looking at this, one can learn a lesson.'[157] Nothing new here: this is the discourse of Xun Ji in the sixth century, of Tang Emperor Taizong in the seventh, and of the Bodhidharma anecdotes in the eighth century and after. That familiarity and connection to the past lends Yu Jing's

[156] *XCB* 30.686. This opulence led the drafter of imperial statements, Tian Xi 田錫, to remonstrate that Emperor Taizong had squandered public funds on the *stūpa*'s construction and that it was therefore 'smeared with the flesh and blood [of the people],' *ibid*. For a comparable description of the opulence of Liang Buddhist architecture see Liang Emperor Jianwen's 'Puti shu song' 菩提樹頌, which he wrote before his succession to the throne, *Guang hong ming ji* 15.204c.

[157] *XCB* 150.3633-4. This was a common theme: on 18 August 1036, for example, a lecturer from the Hall for the Veneration of Governance and Academician of Scholarly Worthies, Jia Changchao 賈昌朝, responded to the destruction of the Tai ping xing guo Monastery with an argument against the construction of further monasteries after large numbers had burnt down in recent years (incidents that were ordained by Heaven, he suggested), *ibid* 119.2797; and a young Li Qingchen identified fires at monasteries in the capital as a warning from heaven on *Song shi* 328.10561.

comment its interest. Emperor Wu had already become a well-established feature of anti-Buddhist discourse by the eleventh century, a warning to Song emperors against the dangers of expecting political benefits, 'blessings,' from physical manifestations of Buddhist belief.

That is Sima Guang's point too. He identifies Buddhism's pernicious influence on the social order and economic prosperity of the Song state. We hear echoes of Xun Ji's sixth-century criticisms of Emperor Wu, and of their legacy to later anti-Buddhist scholars. That is the ideological tradition with which Sima Guang aligns himself in content, if not always in name. Like his ideological predecessors, Sima Guang's focus in *ZZTJ* and in his eleventh-century memorials is on the social and political implications of Emperor Wu's belief. He does not address doctrinal issues and, through his silence, ignores any potential benefit that Buddhism's claims to transcendental truth may bring to statecraft. His response to Buddhism is shaped by the familiar discourse of material, practical benefit and harm. Terms that have appeared already in Chapter 3 of this study, in a different thematic context – the rhetoric of '*wu yi*' and '*wu yong*' – recur here. Buddhism is ineffective because it fails to bring benefit to the state or its people. Underlying this view is a suspicion of its focus on metaphysical over material concerns. The veracity of Buddhist doctrine is hard to establish for the empirically oriented Sima Guang.[158] And detachment from the physical world, such as Buddhist adherents propose, does not in any case produce moral integrity by itself.[159]

Adherence to Buddhist doctrine creates a lack of efficiency in dealing with matters of immediate urgency in government. The summer of 1064 brought drought

[158] *SMWJ* 28.5a. Anti-Buddhist sentiment would grow more acute from the late-eleventh century on, as Confucian scholars began to develop complex metaphysical doctrines to support their moral teachings – precisely the element of Buddhism that Sima Guang shies away from in his discourse. The blurring between worldly and other-worldly concerns of course challenged Buddhism's authority and lent a new focus to doctrinal hostilities.
[159] *Ibid* 63.5b.

and widespread food shortages. The emperor responded on 22 May 1064 with an ordinance to his ministers to pray for divine assistance.[160] Sima Guang's reaction appeared in a memorial of 2 July 1064. He elevated practical measures above the metaphysical focus of Buddhist belief:

> If the state cannot provide relief while the common people are starving and in hardship and while their situation remains precarious, then the corpses of young and old alike will remain unburied in the ditches while able-bodied men will gather as bandits and rebels. At times such as these, even if there were a thousand *stūpas*, what use 用 would they be?[161]

The term at the centre of this discussion is 'use'; not a word on Buddhism's possible spiritual role in times of crisis. All that concerns Sima Guang is its failure to provide relief to the common people in times of hardship. Similarly, in a memorial of 16 April 1064 opposing the unnecessary construction of Buddhist temples at Song imperial tombs, he declares that he would withdraw his opposition if he believed that they would bring real profit. The discourse again is one of practical benefit, '*yi*,' rather than anything to do with spiritual efficacy, '*ling*' 靈. The use of a double, emphatic conditional ('if, by some remote chance, it were of benefit 若萬一有益 …') suggests that he sees no such practical gain to be had from expanding Buddhist institutions.[162] There are echoes of Yu Jing's arguments two decades earlier in the content of Sima Guang's memorials and in their rhetoric. Both men join an even longer tradition of anti-Buddhist discourse, one that was levelled with particular force at Emperor Wu.

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[160] *XCB* 201.4864-5.
[161] *SMWJ* 29.8b.
[162] *Ibid* 28.5b. The argument appeared frequently in anti-Buddhist discourse of the eleventh century. Cheng Hao, for example, also suggested that Buddhism overlooked worldly concerns by aiming exclusively at the transcendental, and that rendered it incapable of addressing practical affairs, *Er Cheng ji* 13.138.

Liang's programme of temple construction supports Sima Guang's point. He also draws for evidence on the recent past. For Sima Guang, Song Emperor Renzong's widespread bestowal of name placards on Buddhist monasteries during his reign implied imperial sanction for their establishment. Had Buddhism been effective, such a display of virtue should have brought longevity and good fortune, he suggests. Yet Emperor Renzong died soon after issuing his edict on the name placards, conclusive proof that Buddhism failed to yield practical returns on spiritual and financial investment in its doctrines. Physical manifestations of belief are of no spiritual use – or benefit – either personally or to the state.[163] The same argument recurs in Sima Guang's writings on the eleventh century. It is the source, too, of his criticism of Emperor Wu's support for monastic institutions in *ZZTJ*: it fails to profit the Liang state; worse still, it distracts attention from the business of statecraft and undermines his duty as ruler in bringing practical benefit to his people. It was a common argument of the mid-eleventh century, one that others also levelled against Emperor Renzong.[164] And echoing through it all is the voice of Han Yu: 'He devoted himself to Buddhism. He sought blessings but instead received disaster. If one looks at it in this way, one can recognize that it is not worth devoting oneself to Buddhism.'[165] Like Han Yu, Sima Guang's focus is fixed on the business of practical governance.

[163] *SMWJ* 28.5a-b. Emperor Renzong was public in his support for Buddhism. He wrote an encomium for the *triratna* (*Yuan zong wen lei* 圓宗文類, *Zoku T.* vol. 58, 1015: 22.549c). He supported the construction of monasteries, which met with fierce contemporary opposition. And, with echoes of Emperor Wu's Buddhist assemblies, he invited prominent monks to the imperial household and inner palace for instruction in meditation and *sūtra* lectures (*Wuxi ji* 武溪集, Yu Jing 余靖, *Beijing tu shu guan gu ji zhen ben cong kan* edn., 8.10a, 9.2a-b; *Chan lin seng bao zhuan* 禪林僧寶傳, Huihong 惠洪, *Zoku T.* vol. 79, 1560: 18.528b, 20.531c; *Su Shi wen ji* 17.501).

[164] See, for example, Cai Xiang's 蔡襄 criticism of imperial support Buddhism, in which he urged against seeking 'blessings that run counter to principle' and urged the emperor instead to focus his attention on secular affairs, *Song shi* 320.10398-9. And for Han Qi, not only did patronage of Buddhism fail to bring divine assistance, but the imperial adoption of Buddhist ritual even brought cosmic and natural disasters, such as earthquakes and unusual astrological events, *XCB* 120.2841-3; *Han Qi shi wen bu bian* 韓琦詩文補編, ap. *Anyang ji bian nian jian zhu* 安陽集編年箋注, Han Qi 韓琦, Chengdu: Ba Shu shu she, 2000, 1.1598-601.

[165] *Han Changli wen ji jiao zhu* 8.613-4.

More than just failing to bring benefits, Buddhism causes harm. It offers a social and legal shelter for undesirable elements of society. On 7 November 1062 Sima Guang evokes once again the discourse of benefit and harm in a further discussion of the imperial bestowal of temple placards:

> I believe that the teachings of Śākyamuni and Lao zi bring no benefit to an ordered world, but assemble and conceal vagrants and idlers … It is probably because there is a current custom of stubbornly, deludedly venerating Śākyamuni and Lao zi that there has already been profound harm done, which cannot be undone. … I fear that from now on treacherous and crafty people will not heed laws and regulations but will base themselves on the teachings of Śākyamuni and Lao zi to deceive and mislead gullible people and to gather up their wealth for the widespread construction of monasteries and belvederes.[166]

Buddhism fails to benefit 'an ordered world' 治世 – the same ordered world that has already appeared in Chapter 1 at the heart of *ZZTJ*'s political purpose (it 'assists orderly rule' 資治) and that was the overarching goal of Sima Guang's political ideology. This memorial's emphasis on social and political order nudges us in the opposite direction: by implication, Buddhism lends itself to disorder. That is how Sima Guang continues, though he becomes more direct. Buddhism actively fosters lawlessness. It does profound and irreversible harm to the state. The same contrast between an orderly society and a Buddhist-influenced one makes itself felt later in the passage too. 'Laws and regulations' are set against 'the teachings of Śākyamuni and Lao zi' as a binary choice that presents itself to 'treacherous and crafty people.' Of course, they choose Buddhism and Daoism, which enable them to profit from the suffering of the common people. (If there is any sense of benefit here, it is all negative: the public interests of the state are not promoted, but rather the private concerns of a handful of morally dubious individuals.) In a final appeal to the

[166] *SMWJ* 24.6b-7a (dating on *Chuan jia ji* 26.8a; *XCB* 197.4778-9 dates it to the previous lunar month).

emperor, Sima Guang suggests that strict regulation of temple placards might prevent 'vagrants and idlers' from creating social unrest. The interests of the Buddhist church once again appear in direct conflict with those of the state and its people. As elsewhere, Sima Guang shows the two sides of Buddhism's social effects – not just profitless but also harmful – to level a criticism that carries a double force. The balance of benefit and harm, which so often measures out Sima Guang's ideological position, weighs against Buddhism.

Buddhism does not bear the full brunt of Sima Guang's criticism in the eleventh century, though. Its prosperity reflects a general moral laxity in contemporary society. Elsewhere, in a response to the Chan sectarian work *Chuan deng lu* 傳燈録, Sima Guang looks back to a golden age of antiquity. If the present were as orderly as the Three Dynasties, then Buddhist *dharma* would have no place.[167] Once again, there is a sharp contrast between Confucian canonical order and Buddhism; if one flourishes the other cannot exist. It is a familiar opposition. The point here, though, is not to attack Buddhism but to highlight current social failings, the reason for the Buddhist church's success. It is a symptom, not just a cause, of a long-term process of social decline.

Sima Guang's discussion of temple placards on 7 November 1062 links Buddhism's impact on social order to its drain on state finances and damage to the economic prosperity of the common people. As well as protecting 'vagrants and idlers' and 'treacherous and crafty people' from state laws, it also offers them a means of appropriating public wealth and private property. Elsewhere, Buddhism is seen to 'leech wealth' 蠹財 – note the parasitic, destructive connotations of the verb that Sima Guang chooses here – and its adherents dispense with morality to amass

[167] *SMWJ* 14.11a.

their own fortunes.[168] They seek any material profit available to them and 'insatiably accumulate great riches for themselves.'[169] Programmes of Buddhist construction cause great harm to society.[170] These were precisely Xun Ji's criticisms of Liang Buddhism. They also find support in the anti-Buddhist memorials of Sima Guang's contemporaries.[171] There is not a word in any of this on Buddhism's spiritual concerns. Instead, Sima Guang offers the most literal and explicit discourse of benefit and harm.

There is an enduring tension here between popular welfare and the private, material greed of the Buddhist clergy, as in his comments on Buddhism's pernicious social effects.[172] He juxtaposes accounts of Buddhist temple construction with vivid descriptions of privation and suffering among the common people. In a memorial of 3 September 1061 a lack of humanity and the death of large numbers of the populace is set in contrast with (through the conjunction '*er*' 而) the statement that 'Daoist and

[168] *Ibid* 28.5b. Wang Yucheng 王禹偁 made a similar claim in a memorial of 989, claiming that 'we can be clear that monks and Daoist priests leech 蠹 from the people,' *XCB* 30.674. Chen Xiang used the same rhetoric in the eleventh century: 'I think that at present the two doctrines of Buddhism and Daoism leech from and deceive the empire 蠹惑天下,' *Guling xian sheng wen ji* 15.18b.
[169] *SMWJ* 66.2b.
[170] *Ibid* 29.8a.
[171] See, for example, Wang Yucheng's memorial of 989, which he submitted with Han Yu's 'Memorial On the Buddha's Bone' (a further indication of Han Yu's influence on anti-Buddhist discourse during Song). Wang remarked that government administration was costly because of increases in the construction of Buddhist temples and the numbers of ordained monks. It was essential to the preservation of Song sovereignty, he argued, that Buddhist expenditure be curtailed, *XCB* 30.674. In the eleventh century, several officials protested the costly construction of the Baoxiang Chan Monastery, which had been left unfinished by Emperor Zhenzong. Among them, in 1036 Han Qi deplored Emperor Renzong's obsession with Buddhist construction projects and to put an immediate stop to further projects; his advice was ignored, *Guo chao zhu chen zou yi* 128.3b-5a. He Tan 何郯 also objected to the construction of the same monastery, offering similar reasons to Han Qi, *ibid* 128.6a-7b. Fan Zhongyan protested against Emperor Renzong's great expenditure on Buddhist construction projects, this time on the Hongfu Monastery (the Daoist Taiyi Palace also provoked his criticism); his protest was also ignored and building work went ahead, *XCB* 109.2538; *Song shi* 314.10268. Cai Xiang urged Emperor Renzong to focus his attention on affairs of state – border troubles and the hardships of the common people – rather than waste state resources on projects that were of no use (his discourse of practical benefit would also find expression from Sima Guang), *Cai Xiang ji* 蔡襄集, Cai Xiang 蔡襄, Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1996, 16.311-2. Song Qi identified economic waste in the construction of monasteries in the capital and offered a general comment on Buddhism's drain on state finances, which he attributed to the unchecked growth of the *sangha*. If it were not eradicated then, he argued, it would be among the social ills that would threaten the state's survival, *Song shi* 284.9594-5. And Ouyang Xiu sounded an ominous warning with his interpretation of the recent destruction by fire of a number of temples in the capital as a heavenly warning against excessive expenditure on construction (although he did not limit argument to Buddhist buildings), *Guo chao zhu chen zou yi* 128.7b-9a.
[172] The antithetical concepts of 'public' 公 and 'private' 私, so deeply rooted in traditional discourse, were also a perennial theme of anti-Buddhist arguments. Timothy Brook discusses the tension in a later social context in *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China*, Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1993, esp. pp.21-3, 33-4, 320-1.

Buddhist temples build and expand images of the emperor.'[173] Sima Guang titles his memorial 'Wu shi' 務實, 'Focus on Substance.' In the setting of such a discourse, the relief of popular suffering is a matter of 'substance' and the production of Buddhist images implicitly is not. Buddhism diverts attention and resources from the substantial business of state and so precipitates social and economic decline.

He develops the theme on 2 July 1064:

> Because there was little snowfall last winter and this spring there has been low rainfall, the maize fields did not yield anything in the circuits of Kaifeng Prefecture, Jingdong, Jingxi, Hebei, Hedong, Shaanxi, and Xichuan. There was rain on the thirteenth day of the fifth month [31 May 1064] and they finally planted the fields for autumn. A whole month passed after that without rain and when the spouts finally came through they withered again. The farmers made a great clamour, most of them having gone without food. They abandoned their villages and hamlets and streamed into the roads. They rented out their wives to do manual labour and sold off their children for grain. There were no stores in the county officials' grain depots and even what they gave to the armies was probably inadequate. There was certainly nothing left over that could be used for relief. At such a time Your Majesty should bend over backwards and exert yourself wholeheartedly. You should cast off your outer robes and cut back on your consumption in order to rescue this disaster. Yet instead you repair this Buddhist *stūpa* and use up the state's resources. I humbly believe that with this business you have lost sight of what is urgent and what is unimportant, of what comes first and what comes after.[174]

The criticism lies in the familiar conflict between the needs of the common people and the demands of the Buddhist church, which Sima Guang establishes by juxtaposing the two. He is more explicit than in his statement in 'Focus on Substance.' The phrasing of his memorial makes the conflict clear: he gives a harrowing account of popular privation; he provides a model of how the emperor should respond; 'yet instead you repair this Buddhist *stūpa* and use up the state's resources,' he accuses. The force of his argument develops from that double statement of contrast 'yet instead,' '*er geng*' 而更, which points up the gap between

[173] *SMWJ* 19.5a (dating on *ibid* 18.9a).
[174] *Ibid* 29.7b-8a. Sima Guang also opposed the construction of separate Buddhist temples at the burial mounds of Emperors Zhenzong and Renzong in part because they generate labour and material costs that are crippling in times of economic hardship, *ibid* 28.5b.

popular interests – what the emperor should do to assuage popular suffering – and the cost of Buddhist construction, which receives imperial support but diverts money away from relief projects.[175] It recalls *Li nian tu*, where Sima Guang uses the same device of a contrast between the ideal and the actual to censure Emperor Wu's patronage of Buddhism.

A second point reinforces the first. Patronage of Buddhism undermines imperial duties. The Song emperor fails to live up to the model that Sima Guang sets for him because of his concern with financing unnecessary repairs to a Buddhist *stūpa*. The building would survive and the clergy would suffer few ill effects without the repairs. For the common people, though, it is a matter of life and death that their ruler should respond in appropriate fashion. Sima Guang's criticism is particularly sharp, then, when he maintains that the emperor is 'casual' 輕 about using the state's resources to finance Buddhist construction projects. It is a term that appears often in his writings – for a failure to acknowledge barbarian threats to Han Chinese sovereignty; for the belligerent policies of militarists at court – and it is always critical. It has the same negative connotation here to imply a lack of imperial responsibility in the face of crisis.

This appears in explicit, canonical terms elsewhere. Sima Guang excludes Buddhism from the model of a humane ruler, a '*ren jun*' 仁君: 'Were there a humane ruler above, surely he would not repeatedly proclaim the teachings of Śākyamuni and Lao zi and thereby harm [the people's] property and resources. This is what is meant by an affair being small but doing profound harm, or orders being applied nearby but causing far-reaching damage.'[176] The sense of a contemporary political and moral

[175] Later in the same memorial, Sima Guang softens his approach. He does not reject Buddhist construction altogether but urges that it only be considered in times of economic abundance, not during times of shortage, *ibid* 29.8a.
[176] *Ibid* 24.7b.

decline resurfaces: the present has failed to produce a humane ruler and that vacuum has allowed Buddhist doctrine to flourish. And we revisit too the discourse of benefit and harm, in which an emperor misdirects state resources and damages the welfare of his people as a result. Here we return to Emperor Wu, who in *ZZTJ*'s representation falls far short of the political yardstick that Sima Guang establishes for his eleventh-century ruler and for all rulers.

Sima Guang is not always consistent in his argument. The Buddhist clergy attracts no mention in an extensive discussion of state finances that he produced in the seventh lunar month of 1062. No sense here of the economic urgency that drives his criticisms of Buddhism both in his other eleventh-century memorials and in *ZZTJ*.[177] And when Buddhism does receive mention in memorials where Sima Guang sights different targets in his critical crosshairs, his representation of Buddhism as a financial liability changes to suit his immediate polemical needs. In the tenth lunar month of 1071, for example, Wang Anshi introduced a tax that allowed households to pay cash taxes in return for release from local corvée duties.[178] The policy soon drew Sima Guang's notice and he produced a series of memorials in protest. Buddhist and Daoist institutions no longer appear as the causes of the state's economic difficulties, nor even as its symptoms. They are now cast among its victims. Sima Guang includes members of both clergies in a list of individuals who would bear the brunt of Wang Anshi's new policy – the others are single men, members of female households, and members of households of retainers – because they had never been obliged to perform corvée labour in the

[177] *Ibid* 23.1b-12a.
[178] *XCB* 227.5521-4.

past.[179] It would therefore be unfair to make them pay taxes now in place of a service from which they were anyway exempt.[180] He urges instead that Buddhist institutions, along with the other economic victims that he identifies, be taxed on the basis of their production and remain unburdened by corvée labour and its opt-out taxes.[181] It is a long way from his portrayal elsewhere of the Buddhist clergy as economic parasites. Instead, Sima Guang argues for preserving their financial dependence on the state. His anti-Buddhist stance is overridden by other political concerns and makes his response to Buddhism more complex than that of many of his ideological predecessors.

Despite these local variations in Sima Guang's argument, though, its general tenor echoes Xun Ji's criticisms of Liang in the sixth century. The economic and social effects of Buddhism were prominent there. A statement of Xun Ji's opposition to Buddhism appears in *ZZTJ* under the year of his death, 547. It is the result of chronological manipulation: internal textual evidence from Xun Ji's letter suggests that he may have submitted it before the date of Emperor Wu's first worldly renunciation on 24 April 527.[182] Sima Guang achieves his temporal leap through the use of a familiar device in *ZZTJ* (and in imperial Chinese historiography more generally): the adverb 'previously,' *chu* 初, appears at the head of his account and indicates anachronism in the text's sequence. It suspends notice of Xun Ji's

[179] On *SMWJ* 42.3b-4a, though, Sima Guang's tone changes: he initially includes the Buddhist and Daoist clergies among the list of those worst affected by the corvée substitution tax; later in the memorial, they are reduced to an 'etcetera' 等, appended to a list of the other economic casualties of the policy.
[180] *Ibid* 47.1b, 53.9b. These segments of society drew particular mention from Deng Wan 鄧綰 and Zeng Bu 曾布 in a statement that they submitted to the throne during debates over the service exemption tax, *XCB* 227.5522.
[181] *SMWJ* 49.11a.
[182] Xun Ji remains silent on the worldly renunciations that receive close attention in later sources (only Daoxuan makes reference to a worldly renunciation in his commentary, *Guang hong ming ji* 7.129c- 130a). When compared with Xun Ji's other criticisms of Emperor Wu's Buddhism, there is little ideological reason for the omission. It may therefore indicate a limit for the dating of Xun Ji's letter. Buddhist and non-Buddhist accounts agree that Emperor Wu renounced the world at the Tongtai Monastery for the first time on 24 April 527, cf. *Liang shu* 3.71; *Nan shi* 7.205; *Jiankang shi lu* 17.681; *Li dai san bao ji* 11.99c; *Xu Gao seng zhuan* 1.427b. It would suggest that Xun Ji submitted his letter to the Liang throne before this date. The evidence remains circumstantial, though, and it is impossible to date the letter with any certainty. At least we can be sure that Xun Ji had composed and sent it before his death, and therefore that reference to his letter appears out of chronological sequence in *ZZTJ*.

criticisms until after that pivotal year of 545 and, as a result, they have greater ideological impact.

> Previously 初, when [Xun] Ji was young, he had lived in the eastern part of the Yangzi. He was erudite in his learning, and had ability at literary composition. He had had a long acquaintance with the emperor when they had been commoners. He recognized that the emperor had imperial ambitions, yet he defiantly did not submit [to the emperor], once telling someone: "I shall [await] an occasion to grind ink on the boss of a shield and issue a summons to war against him." The emperor was extremely unsettled by him. When the emperor had ascended the throne, someone had recommended [Ji] to the emperor, but the emperor had said: "Although he has talent, he has rebellious tendencies and is fond of disorder. He cannot be employed." Ji had submitted a letter to the throne that had remonstrated against the emperor's veneration of Buddhist law and had taken [the construction] of *stūpas* and monasteries to be luxurious and wasteful. The emperor had flown into a rage and intended to assemble the courtiers to have him executed. Zhu Yi had secretly informed him, and Ji had fled to Eastern Wei.[183]

These events appear in the official record in *Bei shi* but textual variations cast doubt over Sima Guang's use of that work as his source. Instead, much of his phrasing is closer to the preface to the text of Xun Ji's letter that appears in Daoxuan's earlier *Guang hong ming ji*. That is unlikely to be Sima Guang's source either, though. Nothing of the content of Xun Ji's letter of criticism to Emperor Wu, included in *Guang hong ming ji*, appears in *ZZTJ*. It seems, then, that Sima Guang resorted to a source that is no longer extant rather than to either of the two surviving accounts of Xun Ji's letter. In doing so, he failed to profit from the rich support of a text that shows strong ideological parallels with his own account of Emperor Wu's Buddhist activities and their impact on Liang state finances.[184] It is a paradox that the effect of Sima Guang's anti-Buddhist ideology on his selection of sources – not a single

[183] *ZZTJ* 160.4960.

[184] In the same vein, but less easily explained, is Sima Guang's decision to omit Guo Zushen's criticisms of Liang Buddhist construction that appears in *Nan shi* 70.1721-2. As this study has shown, Sima Guang draws on this section of *Nan shi* (entitled '*xun li* 循吏,' see above, n.105) for *ZZTJ*'s account and so would have been familiar with the text of Guo Zushen's memorial that is cited there. Guo's criticisms, like Xun Ji's, fit well into the broadly critical view of Emperor Wu's Buddhist construction programme that Sima Guang seems to develop in his narrative. As a result, its absence from *ZZTJ* raises questions that I have so far been unable to answer.

Buddhist source receives citation in his *kao yi* commentary – weakens *ZZTJ*'s ideological force.

Xun Ji's criticisms are not the only ones to receive mention in *ZZTJ*. As we have seen, Hou Jing also appears as an aggressive critic of Emperor Wu's patronage of Buddhism. Twice he attacks imperial financial support for the construction of Buddhist temples. Both criticisms appear after 545 in *ZZTJ*'s chronology. In 548 he declares to those inside the besieged capital of Jiankang that the Liang government had 'cut down and oppressed the masses to provide for [their] lusts and desires,' and cites, among other evidence, the number and opulence of Buddhist monasteries and pagodas in the city. It is this corruption that is the professed target of his rebellion; he does not seek to topple the dynasty itself.[185] Then, in the following year, he details ten of Emperor Wu's shortcomings and presents him with this petition:

> I shall resort to disobedience in serving you. The way in which I shall present my advice will be direct and to the point. Your Majesty exalts and implements hollow and preposterous talk, but dislikes hearing accounts of how things really are. You take the strange and the anomalous to be auspicious, and consider Heaven's reprimands to be without opprobrium. You discourse on the six arts but reject former scholars; this is the way of Wang Mang 王莽. You take iron as a commodity and cause the system of weights to have no constancy; this is the law of Gongsun [Shu] 公孫述.[186] You have seals carved [in a way that enables] people to obtain office by illicit means, and court regulations have been debased and disrupted; this is the corrupting influence of Geng Shi 更始 and Zhao Lun 趙倫.[187] Yuzhang took the emperor[188] as a blood enemy,[189] and Shaoling wore a hat of cloth despite the fact that his father was still alive;[190] this is the style of Shi Hu 石虎. You have restored and made images of Buddha, and indulged in every degree of extravagance, causing people all around to starve; this is taking over

[185] *ZZTJ* 161.4991.
[186] A reference to Gongsun Shu's seizure of Shu during Han, in which he used iron to mint coins.
[187] '*Hua*' 化, which usually takes the meaning 'transformation,' seems to have negative connotations here. Geng Shi received official status by corrupt means during Han. Sima Lun, a Jin imperial prince and King of Zhao, exerted influence over the Jin court before being deposed.
[188] Lit. 'that which he regarded as Heaven.'
[189] Xiao Dong (d.552), the eldest grandson of Crown Prince Zhaoming, was enfeoffed as Prince of Yuzhang. He was later instated as emperor by Hou Jing, after the death of Emperor Jianwen. Soon after, he abdicated in favour of Hou Jing himself. He was eventually killed on the orders of Xiao Yi (Prince of Xiangdong), by then installed as Emperor Yuan.
[190] A cloth cap was worn as part of funerary clothing, demonstrating that 'a filial son had a loyal and true heart.' For the ritual significance of this phrase, see *Yi li zhu shu* 儀禮注疏, *Shi san jing zhu shu* edn., 28.1096-9, esp. 28.1097. In this canonical context, Hou Jing's criticism seems to refer to Xiao Lun, Prince of Shaoling's failure to display respect for Emperor Wu. An account of Xiao Lun's unfilial behaviour opens this study.

> from Ze Rong 笮融 and Yao Xing 姚興."[191] He added: "The palaces and halls of Jiankang are lofty and luxurious. Your Majesty only consults with the administrators in deciding the routine tasks of government, and governance relies on bribery to succeed.[192] The eunuchs are extremely powerful and the hordes of monks have riches. … There has never been [a dynasty] that has lasted long while in this state. Long ago, Yu Quan 鬻拳 used troops to remonstrate and the sovereign ultimately changed for the better.[193] As for my raising troops today, how could anyone blame me? I would hope that Your Majesty places little emphasis on punishment and much on [this] warning, casting out malicious slander and welcoming in loyalty, enabling me not to have the sorrow of having to raise [troops] a second time. If your Majesty feels no sense of disgrace at closing the city for defence, then everyone will be extremely fortunate." When the emperor read the petition, he was both ashamed and angry.[194]

There is textual selection and manipulation in both of Hou Jing's statements. His declaration of 548 does not appear in any of Sima Guang's extant sources. *Liang shu* supplies a direct quotation of Hou Jing's 549 petition on Emperor Wu's ten shortcomings, which does not appear in Sima Guang's account. Conversely, though, it omits this addition to his petition, with its dense historical reference.[195] *Nan shi* reports only that '[Hou Jing] laid out Emperor Wu's ten shortcomings in a petition' but fails to provide the contents of either the main petition or its addition.[196] Sima Guang's other extant sources remain silent.

The effect of all of this has received treatment elsewhere; we shall revisit the central points here.[197] In both statements, Hou Jing declares that Emperor Wu's preoccupation with esoteric religious beliefs, especially Buddhism, has harmed the Liang state. In 548 he rails against the Liang upper classes, among which he includes the Buddhist clergy, for having 'snatched' their wealth away from the common people. At the same time, they fail to contribute to state finances. In 549 he links

[191] Both of these figures are recorded as having promoted Buddhism. In the Eastern Han, Zhao Rong raised numerous Buddhist temples. Yao Xing was ruler of the Sixteen Kingdoms' state of Later Qin, who initiated the translation of a number of Buddhist canonical texts.
[192] An echo from *Chun qiu Zuo zhuan zheng yi* 31.247a.
[193] Yu Quan (d.675 BC) was a chief minister of Chu, serving under King Wen. When the king failed to listen to his remonstration, he raised troops and pressed his case. The king eventually took his advice.
[194] *ZZTJ* 162.5007-8.
[195] *Liang shu* 56.846-50.
[196] *Nan shi* 80.2006.
[197] Strange, Mark, 'A Reading of Hou Jing's Rebellion in *Zizhi tongjian* (*Comprehensive Mirror to Aid Government*): The Construction of Sima Guang's Imperial Vision,' in *Reading China: Fiction, History and the Dynamics of Discourse*, Daria Berg, ed., Leiden: E.J.Brill, 2006, pp.200-37.

Emperor Wu's patronage of Buddhism to a level of political corruption that threatens to topple the dynasty.[198] There is strong resonance here from Xun Ji's sixth-century criticisms and also the anti-Buddhist discourse that followed; Hou Jing's is not a lone voice and we must take his claims seriously as a result. More important for *ZZTJ*, though, is that Hou Jing finds repeated cause for his invasion of Liang territory in Emperor Wu's patronage of Buddhism and his attendant neglect of imperial duties. Dense ironies present themselves, in which the relationship between the internal and external levels of *ZZTJ*'s text plays a central role. Hou Jing would fulfil his own prophecy in the text. With historical hindsight we, as *ZZTJ*'s readers, are aware that Emperor Wu's support for Buddhism therefore ultimately *did* contribute to the decline of his state, just as the catalyst of that decline, Hou Jing, argues within the text.

Hou Jing's two statements present obvious difficulties for analysis. They are difficulties inherent in identifying *ZZTJ*'s ideological agenda, already familiar to us by this stage. He appears as untrustworthy throughout *ZZTJ*'s account.[199] At this stage in its chronological sequence, his criticisms serve the obvious function of political propaganda in his usurpation attempt, both as a defence against accusations of treachery from members of the Liang court and as an active attempt to undermine Liang imperial authority. His criticism of Emperor Wu's Buddhism finds both internal and external support, though: from elsewhere within *ZZTJ*'s text; from Sima Guang's comments in *Li nian tu* and from other accounts of the period, such as Xun

[198] The content of Hou Jing's criticisms of 549 contrasts with *Liang shu*'s account of the failings that Hou Jing attributes to Emperor Wu. In that text Hou Jing focuses on the emperor's political and military incompetence and fails to mention his religious activities.

[199] For example, the assessment by the Eastern Wei military supervisor Du Bi on *ZZTJ* 160.4963: '"Hou Jing is a base parasite. From birth, he has been two-faced. When he lived far away, in Guan and Long, he depended upon treachery and duplicity, and contravened the established divisions between ruler and subject. …"' Sima Guang's deliberate emphasis on Hou Jing's duplicity in this speech is suggested by its textual variations in *ZZTJ* from the seventh-century *Yi wen lei ju* 藝文類聚 (where the speech is attributed to Wei Shou and not Du Bi), *Yi wen lei ju*, Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 et al., eds., Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1959, 58.7a-b. The assessment of Hou Jing's duplicity is omitted from that text and from Sima Guang's other surviving sources.

Ji's letter. Sima Guang's decision to accord Hou Jing's criticisms textual weight and historical credibility in his account, against the run of his sources, therefore proposes Emperor Wu's support of Buddhism as the cause of a general Liang social and economic decline. Personal religious belief is seen to intrude on official, public duty and leads to the usurpation of imperial authority. That representation places Sima Guang within a well-established tradition of anti-Buddhist discourse. It also chimes with his contemporary concerns, with the memorials to his Song emperors in which he himself rehearses Hou Jing's sixth-century arguments.

These complex textual and ideological connections between *ZZTJ*'s world of the past and the political present of the eleventh century extend beyond the particular issue of Emperor Wu's Buddhism. They go to the heart of the way we read *ZZTJ*. They are often intricate and our interpretation of them is fraught with challenges and analytical pitfalls. As the case studies here have shown, though, they repay our efforts by shedding valuable light on how Sima Guang positioned himself in contemporary debates and on what his ideological commitments were. That, surely, is where this text's richness lies and where it comes alive: not as a simple chronicle of the past, as historians have tended to use it, but as a window onto the political concerns of the eleventh century.

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Abbreviations

SMWJ: *Wen guo Wenzheng gong wen ji* 溫國文正公文集, Sima Guang 司馬光, *Si bu cong kan* 四部叢刊 edn., Shanghai: Shang wu yin shu guan, 1929.

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XCB: *Xu Zi zhi tong jian chang bian* 續資治通鑑長編, Li Tao 李燾, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1979-1995.

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