

THE TRANSFORMATION OF MEDIEVAL CHINESE ELITES
(850-1000 C.E.)

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ABSTRACT

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Scholars of medieval China agree that between the late Tang (618-907) and the early Song (960-1279), Chinese society underwent a remarkable cultural, social, political, and economic transformation. One of the most dramatic aspects of this “Tang-Song transition” was the upheaval in the composition of Chinese elites, marked by the complete disappearance of the great aristocratic clans that had once surpassed even the emperors in prestige. This dissertation examines the evolution of Chinese elites during the multi-decade political interregnum between Tang and Song—a period that is a virtual black hole in Chinese studies yet holds the key to understanding the changes that revolutionized Chinese society. One thousand tomb epitaphs and a similar number of dynastic history biographies form the basis of a biregional (Hebei vs. Huainan/Jiangnan) prosopographic study that explores the disappearance of the medieval aristocracy; the social and cultural impact of the endemic migration that accompanied the circulation of roving armies; and the relationships between different elite types (civil bureaucrats, military officers, merchants, non-officeholding landowners).

The data reveals that successful elite families turned to survival strategies that might involve professional diversification, expansion of social networks, and

long-distance migration. The collapse of Tang authority brought about the immediate decline of the political oligarchy that had dominated metropolitan society until the end of the ninth century, and the Turkish-led invasion of north China in 923 led to the mass relocation to the northern capital cities of provincial elites (and, I propose, the concomitant spread of new ideologies). Nevertheless, the prestige of the state survived almost intact: non-officeholding elites were generally restricted to regions away from political power centers; the capital cities of the multiple empires and kingdoms during the period of division continued to attract elites, who often travelled between regimes in search of office; and enduring and widespread claims of great clan descent represented, I hypothesize, a "trickle-down" model of elite circulation whereby descendants of capital officials used their ties to the state to reestablish themselves at the sites of provincial appointments, thereby displacing "native" elites.

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Abbreviations and Conventions

To minimize the number of footnotes, references to biographies and epitaphs of individuals are not included in the main text. Instead, a “Person Name Index” (see page 238) includes proper citations for all relevant biographies and epitaphs.

All figures appear at the end of each respective chapter.

The following abbreviations have been used when citing sources:

JGZ	Lu Zhen 路振. <i>Jiuguo zhi</i> 九國志. <i>Wudai shishu huibian</i> ed. Hangzhou: Hangzhou chubanshe, 2004.
JNYS	Zheng Wenbao 鄭文寶. <i>Jiangnan yu zai</i> 江南餘載. <i>Wudai shishu huibian</i> ed. Hangzhou: Hangzhou chubanshe, 2004.
JTS	Liu Xu 劉昫 et al. <i>Jiu Tang shu</i> 舊唐書. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995.
JWDS	Xue Juzheng 薛居正. <i>Jiu Wudai shi</i> 舊五代史. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976.
LS	Toghtō 脫脫 et al. <i>Liao shi</i> 遼史. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995.
NTS	Ma Ling 馬令. <i>Nan Tang shu</i> 南唐書. <i>Wudai shishu huibian</i> ed. Hangzhou: Hangzhou chubanshe, 2004.
QSW	Zeng Zaozhuang 曾棗莊 and Liu Lin 劉琳. <i>Quan Song wen</i> 全宋文. Chengdu: Ba Shu shushe, 1988-1994.
QTW	Dong Gao 董誥 et al., eds. <i>Quan Tang wen</i> 全唐文. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983.
QTWBY	Wu Gang 吳鋼, ed. <i>Quan Tang wen buyi</i> 全唐文補遺. Xi'an: San Qin chubanshe, 1994-2000.
QTWXB	Zhou Shaoliang 周紹良, ed. <i>Quan Tang wen xinbian</i> 全唐文新編. Changchun: Jilin wenshi chubanshe, 2000.
SGCQ	Wu Renchen 吳任臣. <i>Shiguo chunqiu</i> 十國春秋. <i>Wudai shishu huibian</i> ed. Hangzhou: Hangzhou chubanshe, 2004.
SS	Toghtō 脫脫 et al. <i>Song shi</i> 宋史. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995.
TMH	Zhou Shaoliang 周紹良 and Zhao Chao 趙超, eds. <i>Tangdai muzhi huibian</i> 唐代墓誌彙編. Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1991.
TMHX	Zhou Shaoliang 周紹良 and Zhao Chao 趙超, eds. <i>Tangdai muzhi huibian xuji</i> 唐代墓誌彙編續集. Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2001.
XCB	Li Tao 李燾. <i>Xu zizhi tongjian changbian</i> 續資治通鑑長編. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004.
<i>Xin Hebei (1)</i>	Meng Fanfeng 孟繁峰 and Liu Chaoying 劉超英, eds. <i>Xin Zhongguo chutu muzhi: Hebei (1)</i> 新中國出土墓誌: 河北(一). Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2004.
<i>Xin Jiangsu (1)</i>	<i>Xin Zhongguo chutu muzhi: Jiangsu (1)</i> 新中國出土墓誌: 江蘇(一). Forthcoming.
XTS	Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 and Song Qi 宋祁. <i>Xin Tang shu</i> 新唐書.

- Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995.
- XWDS Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修. *Xin Wudai shi* 新五代史. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974.
- ZZTJ Sima Guang 司馬光. *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1956.

Introduction

Nobody could doubt the eminence of Ms. Lu's pedigree. A scion of the "northern" branch of the Lu family of Fanyang, she could trace her ancestry back to the Han dynasty, several hundred years earlier. Her great grandfather, grandfather, and father had all served as civil bureaucrats, the most honorable of all professions. And when she was thirteen, her family married her to a man with a no less prominent heritage. Although her husband died when she was still quite young, she maintained her stature in society by arranging good marriages for her children. She must have felt extraordinary pride when, in the year 878, her son-in-law Cui Hang attained the rank of chief minister, becoming overnight one of the most powerful men in China. Three years later, Ms. Lu's life and her world came to an end.¹

There had been stories of an uprising causing havoc in the south, but this threat must have seemed still quite far-removed to the residents of the Western Capital of Chang'an and the Eastern Capital of Luoyang. But when the rebel Huang Chao turned his attention northward and crossed the Yangzi River in the seventh month of the year 880, it took him only four months to capture Luoyang and, before the end of the year, his army marched into Chang'an.² Then began one of the most infamous massacres in the

¹ For transcriptions and additional information regarding the three epitaphs discovered in Ms. Lu's tomb, see *Yanshi Xingyuan Tang mu* 偃師杏園唐墓, (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2001), 361-369.

² Robert M. Somers, "The End of the T'ang," *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 3, ed. Denis Twitchett, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 736-745.

annals of Chinese history. According to one contemporary account, “Every home ran with bubbling fountains of blood, every place rang with a victim's shrieks—shrieks that caused the very earth to quake.” Before long, the great city of Chang’an was reduced to ruin and “all along the Street of Heaven one tread on the bones of State officials.”³

There is no way to know how long it took Ms. Lu to hear the news that her daughter and son-in-law had been butchered along with the families of several other high officials who had tried to flee the capital in the first days after Huang Chao’s arrival.

Ms. Lu was luckier. She and her two sons were able to escape to a family villa in the countryside a good hundred kilometers east of Luoyang. But her good fortune did not last. Perhaps because of an epidemic that accompanied the warfare and chaos, both Ms. Lu and one of her sons died of illness less than a month apart in late spring of 881. It was not until a year and a half later that it was safe for her youngest son to return her body to Luoyang for burial alongside her husband. Even then, the mood among surviving family members was still grim. Carved onto the side of one of the epitaph stones buried in her tomb was a note written by her nephew in an unsteady hand:

“Another year has passed since the Son of Heaven went to Sichuan. The great bandit Huang Chao has not yet been captured and killed. With the ravages of war overtaking Luoyang and Gong County, the people have no means to survive. 天子幸蜀，歲再周矣，巨寇黃巢，尙稽誅擒。鞏、洛兵荒，人無生理。”

Although the emperor did recapture the throne, the once great Tang dynasty (618-907) lived on in name alone. Imperial legitimacy collapsed as warlords seized control of the provinces, ushering in three decades of upheaval, during which dozens of

³ Translation adapted from Lionel Giles, “The Lament of the Lady of Ch’in,” *T’oung Pao* 24 (1926): 339, 344.

independent regimes all across the country battled for preeminence.⁴ By the end of the first decade of the tenth century, most of the smaller regimes had been subsumed into larger states. North China was controlled by a succession of “Five Dynasties,” while the so-called “Ten Kingdoms” fought for control in the south.

The present study will examine a large number of men and women who lived during this tumultuous period, from the fall of the Tang to the eventual reunification of China in the 960s and 970s under the Song dynasty (960-1279). On the basis of a collective biography of some 2000 individuals, I will look at survival strategies and the social and cultural impact of endemic migration. I will also delve into a fundamental transformation of Chinese society that revolutionized the composition of the upper classes and produced a new elite self-identity that discarded many of the ideals and values held by Ms. Lu and the old aristocracy to which she belonged.

0.1. The transformation of medieval elites

Scholars of medieval China have come universally to accept that between the late Tang and the early Song dynasties, Chinese society underwent a dramatic cultural, social, political, and economic transformation.⁵ One of the most fundamental changes

⁴ For a description of the warlords who battled each other for preeminence in the north after Huang Chao's rebellion, see Wang Gungwu, *The Structure of Power in North China during the Five Dynasties*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), 6-84. For an account of the warlords in Jiangxi in the south, see Itō Hiroaki 伊藤弘明, “Tōmatsu Godai ki ni okeru Kōsei chiiki no zaichi seiryoku ni tsuite 唐末五代期における江西地域の在地勢力について,” in *Chūgoku kizokusei shakai no kenkyū* 中国貴族制社会の研究, eds. Kawakatsu Yoshio 川勝義雄 and Tonami Mamoru 礪波護, (Tokyo: Todōsha, 1987), 275-318.

⁵ The literature on the Tang-Song transition is enormous and I will not attempt a comprehensive survey. Two of the seminal articles by the early twentieth-century Japanese journalist and historian Naitō Torajirō have been translated into English: Naitō Torajirō, “A Comprehensive Look at the T'ang-Sung Period,” translated by Joshua A. Fogel, *Chinese Studies in History* 17.1 (1983): 88-99; Naitō Torajirō, “Cultural Life in Modern China,” translated by Joshua A. Fogel, *Chinese Studies in History* 17.1 (1983): 100-119. For an account of economic developments, see Shiba Yoshinobu, “Urbanization and the Development of Markets in the Lower Yangtze Valley,” *Crisis and Prosperity in Sung China*, ed. John Winthrop Haeger, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1975), 13-48; and

occurring during this “Tang-Song Transition” was the revolution in the composition of the Chinese elites. In particular, as has been described in considerable detail by David Johnson and Patricia Ebrey, the great aristocratic clans that had once surpassed even the Chinese emperors in prestige are thought to have disappeared suddenly and completely with the demise of the Tang dynasty.⁶ Robert Hartwell, Robert Hymes, and Peter Bol, and later Hugh Clark and Beverly Bossler, have described the new group of civil-bureaucratic families who emerged in the early Song and who would come to hold sway in China for a millennium, an elite whose status depended primarily on cultural achievement rather than on blood.⁷

The present study proposes to build on and in some cases critique the work of these scholars in three major ways. First, I have set out to develop a more inclusive

Shiba Yoshinobu, *Commerce and Society in Sung China*, translated by Mark Elvin, (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, 1992). For a description of technological innovations during this period, see Mark Elvin, *The Pattern of the Chinese Past*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973) and for the impact of the emergence of a print culture, see Susan Cherniack, “Book Culture and Textual Transmission in Sung China,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 54.1 (1994): 5-125. For developments in intellectual thought, see Peter Bol, “*This Culture of Ours*”: *Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992). For a description of the demographic revolution occurring at this time, see Robert M. Hartwell, “Demographic, Political, and Social Transformations of China, 750-1550,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42.2 (1982): 365-394; and for more on developments in urbanization, see G. William Skinner, “Introduction: Urban Development in Imperial China,” *The City in Late Imperial China*, ed. G. William Skinner, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977). Finally, for an interesting comparison between Japanese and Chinese scholarship on the Tang-Song transition, see Li Huarui 李華瑞, “20 Shiji zhong ri ‘Tang Song biange’ guan yanjiu shuping 20 世紀中日‘唐宋變革’觀研究述評,” *Shixue lilun yanjiu 史學理論研究* 2003.4: 88-95.

⁶ Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *The Aristocratic Families of Early Imperial China: A Case Study of the Po-ling Ts'ui Family*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978); David G. Johnson, *The Medieval Chinese Oligarchy*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1977); David Johnson, “The Last Years of a Great Clan: The Li Family of Chao chun in Late T'ang and Early Sung,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 37.1 (1977): 5-102.

⁷ Robert M. Hartwell, “Demographic, Political, and Social Transformations of China, 750-1550,” 405-425; Robert P. Hymes, *Statesmen and Gentlemen: The Elite of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi, in Northern and Southern Sung*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Peter Bol, “*This Culture of Ours*”: *Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China*, 32-75; Hugh R. Clark, “The Fu of Minnan: A Local Clan in Late Tang and Song China (9th-13th Centuries),” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 38.1 (1995): 1-74; Beverly J. Bossler, *Powerful Relations: Kinship, Status, and the State in Sung China (960-1279)*, (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, 1998).

vision of the Chinese elite experience. The current model presents a linear sequence of change, from the great clans of the Tang to the civil bureaucrats of the eleventh century. Focus revolves around the highly literate individuals who dominated medieval intellectual life and the civil bureaucracy. But it is also important to consider the role of other elites, including military men, as well as merchant and landowning families who, though wealthy and influential at the local level, did not necessarily hold government titles. Brief studies by scholars such as Kikuchi Hideo and Denis Twitchett have already explored certain elements of these other social groups.⁸ But through the careful analysis of tomb epitaphs, it is possible to explore in substantially greater detail the evolving composition of these multiple elite types in order to achieve a more complete vision of the upper class society of this period.

Second, I have pursued the present study from a multiregional perspective. Although most historians of Tang and Song China have concentrated on developments they believe to have affected China as a whole, it is clear that the transformation of Chinese society did not follow a unified path, especially after the breakdown of central government authority. A focus on regional differences is also necessary for understanding the great geographic mobility of tenth-century elites and for elucidating the impact of provincial autonomy and political fragmentation on social and cultural developments. In order to highlight differences between north and south China and between the capitals and the provinces, the subsequent chapters will combine exemplary cases from all over China with a more in-depth statistically-based analysis of Jiangnan/Huainan in the south and Hebei in the north (for map, see Figure 0.1).

⁸ Kikuchi Hideo 菊池英夫, "Setsudoshi kenryoku to iwayuru dogōsō 節度使權力といわゆる土豪層," *Rekishi kyōiku* 14.5 (1966): 46-58; Denis C. Twitchett, "Merchant, Trade and Government in Late T'ang," *Asia Major*, new series 14.1 (1968): 63-95.

Beginning in the mid Tang period, Jiangnan and Huainan—the area straddling the middle and lower reaches of the Yangzi River—were rapidly changing from backwater regions to the economic and demographic center of China.⁹ During the period of disunity following the fall of the Tang, this was the site of two of the more stable southern regimes, the Wu Kingdom (902-937) and its political successor the Southern Tang (937-975). Hebei—a vast swath of territory in northeastern China—had been the home base of the great mid-eighth century An Lushan Rebellion that had brought the Tang dynasty to its knees. Although the Tang emperors regained control of most of the country, much of Hebei fell under the control of three autonomous military provinces that could support large standing armies by means of a flourishing regional economy.¹⁰ Finally, Hebei rose to political prominence in the tenth century, both as the launching point for the invasion of north China by Shatuo Turks, which led to the founding of the Later Tang dynasty (923-936), and as the place of origin of the Later Zhou (951-960) and Song imperial clans.

⁹ Robert M. Hartwell, “Demographic, Political, and Social Transformations of China, 750-1550,” 383-394; John W. Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China: A Social History of Examinations*, new ed., (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), 119-138.

¹⁰ Although late Tang Hebei has not been the focus of much scholarship, there is quite a bit of evidence of a flourishing economy. Along with northern Henan, Hebei produced most of China’s silk and virtually all of the highest-quality silk, one of the more famous types being the twilled silk (綾) of Fanyang (in northern Hebei). [See Denis Twitchett, “Merchant, Trade, and Government,” 76.] Youzhou (in northern Hebei) seems to have been a particularly important commercial center, though this fact has been neglected in the transmitted sources because it was not under Chinese central government control except during the period 923-936. Inscriptions reveal the existence in Youzhou of over 30 merchant guilds. There was also a special market set up for trade with foreigners (the so-called *hushi* 胡市), where goods from all over China were for sale. [See Lu Xiaofan 魯曉帆, “Tang Youzhou zhufang kao 唐幽州諸坊考,” *Beijing wenbo* 北京文博 2005.2: 79.] One example of the wealth of Youzhou is the impressive list of donors sponsoring the Buddhist stone classics of Fangshan (located west of modern-day Beijing). A large number of the fifteen thousand stones were produced in the late ninth century and on these stones are carved the names of tens of thousands of individuals. [See Fangshan shijing tiji huibian 房山石經題記彙編. Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1987.] The large amount of trade that passed through Hebei, from the Yellow River up to Youzhou in the north, necessitated the construction of an important canal (named *yongji qu* 永濟渠), with major storage and transit depots at Weizhou 魏州 and Beizhou 貝州. [See Denis C. Twitchett, *Financial Administration under the T'ang Dynasty*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 188-189.]

A comparison between the Hebei and the Jiangnan/Huainan regions provides a way not only to contrast the experiences of elites in north and south China, but also to evaluate the effects of northeastern provincial autonomy and of the Turkish invasion on upper class composition and culture.

Third, I seek to develop an alternate periodization of the medieval age in China. The bulk of research into the “Tang-Song Transition” has thus far focused on comparing social conditions under the Tang with those under the Song, with very little consideration of the intervening period. It has been argued, for example, that a study of the “unsettled and evidently transitional” tenth century would shed little light on the nature of the changes affecting the Chinese elite.¹¹ But it is clear that the fall of the Tang had a direct and immediate impact on elite culture. One way to assess the shattering effects on elites of the violent and traumatic final years of the Tang is to examine the rate of production of tomb epitaphs, an essential component of Tang elite burials. Figure 0.2 depicts all known excavated funerary epitaphs (total of 1175) by region and decade for the period 850-1000. Production of these inscriptions declined precipitously beginning in the 880s, the decade following the Huang Chao Rebellion, reaching a nadir in the first decade of the 10th century. Even after the complete reunification of China in the 970s, there was no significant resurgence in epitaph production. The lack of a revival after the founding of the Song is confirmed in Figure 0.3, which shows epitaphs from Henan by 40-year periods, as represented by the collection of rubbings held by the National Library in Beijing (total of 2467 inscriptions).¹² The fact that one of the core manifestations of

¹¹ David G. Johnson, *The Medieval Chinese Oligarchy*, 141.

¹² In order to offset the impact of the emergence of printing on the survival of transmitted texts, the results in Figures 0.2 and 0.3 are based on excavated inscriptions and do not take into account epitaphs preserved in collected works and literary collections. In my opinion, the fact that as many as 10,000

elite culture had suffered an immediate and lasting blow with the decline and fall of the Tang demonstrates the importance of elucidating the mechanisms of elite transformation by concentrating our attentions on the “long” transitional period—that is, on the political interregnum, itself, as well as the last years before the fall of the Tang and the first decades after the founding of the Song. The period I have chosen for the present study is 850 (three decades before the rebellion of Huang Chao) through 1000 (two decades after the complete reunification of China by the Song).

Unfortunately, surprisingly little scholarship presently exists on this Tang-Song interregnum. Compared to the hundreds of monographs and thousands of articles examining either the Tang or the Song, the period of the “Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms” between the late Tang and the early Song is a virtual black hole in Chinese studies. Existing research into the history of this interregnum has been limited almost exclusively to political, administrative, and military history.¹³ Although the pioneering

epitaphs survive in the collected works of Song authors [see Beverly Bossler, *Powerful Relations*, 10] reflects the development of a print culture over the course of the first century of Song rule that greatly improved the survival of all literary works. It has also been argued that one reason for the decline in number of excavated epitaphs under the Song has to do with the fact that few tombs have been excavated around Kaifeng, the seat of the Northern Song capital. Repeated flooding of the Yellow River has left Song relics in the vicinity of Kaifeng under several meters of loess soil; consequently, Song tombs have rarely been uncovered in recent times, whereas abundant Tang tombs have been discovered in the region surrounding the eastern Tang capital of Luoyang. [Dieter Kuhn, "Decoding Tombs of the Song Elite," in *Burial in Song China*, ed. Dieter Kuhn, (Heidelberg: Edition forum, 1994), 87.] However, as indicated in Figure 0.2, the decline in epitaphs affected not just the region surrounding the northern capital cities. The black bars representing “other regions” also declined after the 870s. Furthermore, an examination of epitaphs preserved in the collected works of Xu Xuan 徐鉉 (917-992) and of biographies in *Song shi* of men who served the first Song emperor indicates that as many people were buried in the vicinity of Luoyang as in the vicinity of Kaifeng. Finally, it is possible that the post-Tang decline in epitaphs is due to a historiographical bias. Since the Qing period, published collections of epitaphs have demonstrated a particular interest in inscriptions from the Tang period. See for example Huang Benji (fl.1820s), *Guzhi shihua*, Shike shiliao xinbian 2nd ed., vol. 2 (in which 208 of 282 total epitaphs date to the Tang period) and the numerous region-based catalogs of tomb epitaphs published by Luo Zhenyu (1866-1940) listed in the bibliography. However, I do not believe that historiographical bias alone can explain such a significant drop in uncovered epitaphs.

¹³ For two select political histories of North China during the tenth century, with an emphasis on

work of preexisting scholarship has been of considerable value in establishing the political context of the present study, this is the first monograph-length work examining the social and cultural history of this period of transition. A direct focus on this transitional period is conceived not only to elucidate when and how elite society evolved between the Tang and the Song, but also to understand how individual elite families were able to survive an era of great turmoil and upheaval.

0.2. Tomb epitaphs as a historical source

In order to explore this heterogeneous Chinese upper class, I have posited an inclusive definition of “elite,” generally classifying as such any individual for whom biographical material can be obtained in historical or archaeological sources. Over a thousand contemporary or near-contemporary biographies of individuals from the transitional period are preserved in the standard histories, especially *Jiu Tang shu* (Old

developments in the structures of political power, see Wang Gungwu, *The Structure of Power in North China during the Five Dynasties*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967) and Edmund Worthy, “The Founding of Sung China, 950-1000: Integrative Changes in Military and Political Institutions,” Ph.D. Thesis, Princeton University, 1976. Political and military histories of the southern kingdoms include: Edouard Chavannes, “Le Royaume de Wou et de Yue,” *T'oung Pao* 17 (1916): 129-264; Edward H. Schafer, *The Empire of Min*, (Rutland, VT: C. E. Tuttle, 1954); Ken Gardiner, “Vietnam and Southern Han,” *Papers on Far Eastern History* 23 (1981): 64-110; 28 (1983): 23-48; Hugh R. Clark, “Quanzhou (Fujian) during the Tang-Song Interregnum, 879-978,” *T'oung Pao* 68.1-3 (1982): 132-149; Johannes L. Kurz, “The Yangzi in the negotiations between the Southern Tang and its northern neighbors (mid-tenth century),” *China and her Neighbours: Borders, Visions of the Other, Foreign Policy 10th to 19th century*, eds. Sabine Dabringhaus, Roderich Ptak and Richard Teschke, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1997). For important works of administrative history of the late Tang and tenth century, see Hino Kenzaburō 日野開三郎, “Wudai zhenjiang kao 五代鎮將考,” *Riben xuezheng yanjiu Zhongguo shi lunzhu xuanze* 日本學者研究中國史論著選譯, Vol. 5, ed. Liu Junwen 劉俊文, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1993), 72-104 [originally published *Tōyō gakuhō* 25.2 (1938)]; Zhang Guogang 張國剛, “Tangdai fanzhen junjiang zhiji kaolüe 唐代藩鎮軍將職級考略,” *Tangdai zhengzhi zhidu yanjiu lunji* 唐代政治制度研究論集 (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 1994), 157-174; Yan Gengwang 嚴耕望, “Tangdai fangzhen shifu liaozuo kao 唐代方鎮使府僚佐考,” *Tangshi yanjiu congkao* 唐史研究叢稿, (Hong Kong: Xin Ya yanjiusuo 新亞研究所, 1969), 177-236; Ren Shuang 任爽, *Shiguo dianzhi kao* 十國典制考, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004); Sudō Yoshiyuki 周藤吉之, “Godai setsudoshi no yagun ni kansuru ichi kōsatsu: bukyoku to no kanren ni oite 五代節度使の牙軍に関する一考察--部曲との關聯において,” *Tōyō bunka kenkyūjo kiyō* 東洋文化研究所紀要 2 (1951): 3-72; Kiyokoba Azuma 清木場東, “Go-Nan Tō no chihō gyōsei no hensen to tokuchō 吳-南唐の地方行政の変遷と特徴,” *Tōyō gakuhō* 56 (1975): 176-210.

History of the Tang), *Xin Tang shu* (New History of the Tang), *Jiu Wudai shi* (Old History of the Five Dynasties), *Xin Wu dai shi* (New History of the Five Dynasties), *Shiguo chunqiu* (Spring and Autumn Annals of the Ten Kingdoms), and *Song shi* (History of the Song). Equally important are the over 1200 funerary epitaphs dating to this period that I have recently cataloged.¹⁴ These biographies and epitaphs generally contain information on place of origin, claims to aristocratic descent, recent family migrations, bureaucratic career, genealogy, and marriage ties. All this data can be quantified and analyzed to identify elite types and to evaluate regional and temporal variations in elite composition; to assess the extent of social networks, as defined primarily by marriage ties; and to investigate the scope of elite geographic mobility and the effects of migration on career and social ties. In addition, the genealogical information can shed light on the long-term survival of families over multiple generations; and accounts of the bureaucratic careers of individuals, especially military and civil officials who served under several successive ruling houses, can help identify patterns of survival across the frequent regime changes marking this period of political upheaval. The epitaphs also contain lengthy eulogistic passages that express the ideals and values of the different elite types, sometimes praising the deceased for military exploits, elsewhere celebrating literary accomplishments or even material and monetary success. Excavated inscriptions are especially valuable in that they reach deeper into elite society, revealing the lives of many people deemed insufficiently important to be identified in dynastic histories, but whose families nevertheless commanded the wealth and prestige to pay for elaborate burials. Because of the importance of epitaphs to this study, a more detailed description of this

¹⁴ Nicolas Tackett, *Tomb Epitaphs of the Tang-Song Transition*, (Shanghai: by author, 2005).

source is warranted.¹⁵

Tomb epitaphs (*muzhiming* 墓誌銘) typically consisted of two square and flat slabs of limestone. A biographical inscription usually several hundred or even several thousand characters in length was carved onto one stone. The second stone served as a cover to protect the inscription from damage (Figure 0.4). The two stones were placed flat within the tomb, with the cover on top (Figure 0.6).¹⁶ Variations in form did exist. Some epitaphs were in the shape of an upright stele, embedded within a side wall of the tomb.¹⁷ Others were made of brick, with the inscription either carved into the clay or brushed on with ink.¹⁸ Finally, epitaph texts were sometimes inscribed or painted onto the sides of ceramic or porcelain urns or vessels (Figure 0.5).¹⁹ Note that in all cases, the *muzhiming* was buried within the tomb and should be distinguished from spirit path inscriptions (*shendaobei* 神道碑) and other stelae placed in front of the tomb.

As is clear by the use of a protective cover stone, an epitaph inscription was

¹⁵ The literature on tomb epitaphs is rich. For one of the most comprehensive descriptions of the genre and its historical development by the foremost authority on tomb epitaphs, see Zhao Chao 趙超, *Gudai muzhi tonglun* 古代墓誌通論, (Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe, 2003). For discussions of the use of tomb epitaphs for social history, see Angela Schottenhammer, "Characteristics of Song Epitaphs," *Burial in Song China*, ed. Dieter Kuhn, (Heidelberg: Edition forum, 1994), 253-306; Beverly J. Bossler, *Powerful Relations: Kinship, Status, and the State in Sung China (960-1279)*, 9-12.

¹⁶ In later times, especially by the Ming dynasty, the two stones were sometimes placed vertically in the tomb, held together by metal braces. Consequently, Ming epitaphs are often eroded near the top, whereas earlier epitaphs were generally protected from water damage except on the sides.

¹⁷ In the tenth century, the stele type of tomb epitaph seems to have been most widespread in Jiangxi and Zhejiang. For examples, see "Zhejiang Lin'an Wudai Wuyue guo Kangling fajue jianbao 浙江臨安五代吳越國康陵發掘簡報," *Wenwu* 文物 2000.2: 27; Liu Xiaoxiang 劉曉祥, "Jiangxi Jiujiang Bei Song mu 江西九江北宋墓," *Wenwu* 文物 1990.9: 19-21; "Jiangxi Jiujiang shi, Le'an xian faxian Song mu 江西九江市、樂安縣發現宋墓," *Kaogu* 考古 1984.8: 733-34.

¹⁸ For an example of an ink-on-brick epitaph, see Li Zhenqi 李振奇, Shi Yunzheng 史雲征, and Li Lanke 李蘭珂, "Hebei Lincheng qi zuo Tang mu 河北臨城七座唐墓," *Wenwu* 文物 1990.5: 21-27, 9.

¹⁹ A large number of such urns/vessels dating to the late Tang and tenth century have been found in the vicinity of Shanglin Lake (上林湖) near Cixi 慈溪, Zhejiang Province. See *Shanglin hu yueyao* 上林湖越窑, (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2002), 217-229.

intended to survive for a very long time. *Muzhiming* often eloquently described the passing eons during which it was hoped they would be preserved: “the hills will shift and the valleys will change, and the oceans will turn to emerald mountains 陵遷谷易, 海變蒼山;” “fields will become jasper seas and the waters will turn to green mountains 田成碧海, 水變青山;” “mulberry fields will turn to vast seas, and the pine and cypress trees will crumble to become broken firewood 桑田變爲漲海, 松柏摧爲拆薪.”²⁰ Indeed, tombs were traditionally constructed on mulberry field land because in the old “equal-fields” system of the early Tang, this land was not redistributed upon the owner’s death. Pine and cypress trees, on the other hand, were generally planted in the vicinity of tombs.

On the one hand, the long-term physical survival of the *muzhiming* was important because of the religious and ritualistic role of the epitaph in transmitting a truthful account of the life of the deceased to the gods, ghosts, and ancestral spirits.²¹ But

²⁰ See the epitaphs of Ms. Hou Luoniang 侯羅娘(王) (778-852), Wei Chao 魏朝 (777-847), and Fu Cun 傅存 (d.860).

²¹ Timothy M. Davis’s forthcoming dissertation will be the first in-depth exploration of the religious role of tomb epitaphs. See Timothy Maxwell Davis, “The Literary Aesthetics of Death and Religious Facets of Commemoration: A Study of the Entombed Epitaph Inscription in Early Medieval China,” (Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, forthcoming), esp. Chapter One. Although Davis deals primarily with the pre-Tang period, archaeological accounts of *muzhiming* iconography and the placement of epitaphs within a tomb confirm their ritualistic function in the ninth and tenth centuries. A tomb epitaph and its cover were generally decorated with both the guardian spirits of the four cardinal directions and the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac (the latter representing both the twelve months of the year and the cycle of twelve-year periods). Within the tomb, the epitaph was frequently placed in the center of the entrance hall directly beneath a map of the stars and constellations painted onto the ceiling of the tomb. In this sense, the epitaph was deliberately and carefully placed within a space-time cosmological framework. See Zhang Yun 張蕙, “Xi’an diqu Sui Tang muzhi wenshi zhong de shi’er shengxiao tu’an 西安地區隋唐墓誌紋飾中的十二生肖圖案,” *Tang yanjiu* 唐研究 8 (2002), esp. pp.405-408. For two (of many) specific examples of star maps painted onto tomb ceilings, see *Wudai Wang Chuzhi mu* 五代王處直墓, (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1998), 18-20 (describing a tomb in Hebei in the north); and “Zhejiang Lin’an wan Tang Qian Kuan mu chutu tianwen tu ji ‘guan’ zi kuanbai ci 浙江臨安晚唐錢寬墓出土天文圖及‘官’字款白瓷,” *Wenwu* 文物 1979.12: 18-23 (describing a tomb in Zhejiang in the south). Finally for claims

epitaphs also served what might be considered a more mundane function, as an identifying marker for distant generations. Many families worried that their ancestors' tombs would one day be discovered, a concern no doubt rooted in experience. Numerous ancient graves had undoubtedly been stumbled upon by accident in the Tang and Song periods, just as many historical tombs excavated today were first uncovered by farmers ploughing their fields or building drainage ditches. In the context of such fear, for those who could afford it, tomb epitaphs were an essential component of a proper burial.

Of course, the cost of a proper funeral could be substantial. First, a diviner had to be hired to select a favorable date for the burial, then a geomancer was consulted to determine an auspicious location for the grave. In many cases, the tomb land would have to be purchased. In addition, a coffin needed to be constructed, a one- or two-chambered brick-walled tomb built, and two slabs of limestone for the epitaph cut, carved, and polished. The value of such large, flat stones is clear from the fact that they were frequently recycled in building projects centuries later. The epitaphs of both Mr. Yao 姚□ (d.859) and Ma Liang 馬良 (810-883) were discovered within the Ming-period city walls of Zhengding (in Hebei). The epitaph of Hou Yuanhong 侯元弘 (807-882) was found in 1969 within the old city walls of Beijing's Xizhimen.²² More recently, old epitaph stones have been used to build staircases in public parks or even as attractive hard surfaces for tabletops (Figures 0.7 and 0.8). Finally, the family needed to

to the truthfulness of tomb epitaphs and, specifically, the fact that the epitaph constituted a “veritable record” (實錄) of the life of the deceased, see the epitaphs of Lu Gongbi 盧公弼 (788-866), Ru Hongqing 茹弘慶 (827-878), Ma Liang 馬良 (810-883), and Ms. Zhou 周氏(徐) (929-976).

²² *Xin Hebei (1)* 上:123 (plate 121), 上:143 (plate 138); Zhao Qichang 趙其昌, “Tang Youzhou cunxiang chutan 唐幽州村鄉初探,” *Zhongguo kaoguxue hui diyici nianhui lunwen ji* 中國考古學會第一次年會論文集, (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1980), 413.

commission an author to write the text of the epitaph and sometimes a separate calligrapher and carver to produce the final inscription.²³ In a few cases, the character count of an epitaph was inscribed onto the stone (see Figure 0.9), implying that the price of the author, calligrapher, and carver were most likely dependent on the total number of characters on the stone.²⁴ Given all of these expenses, it is no surprise that some families complained that they had “exhausted the wealth of the household in order to prepare for the funeral in accordance with ritual 罄家內之資財，備遷葬同礼。”²⁵

Some of these families sought to cut costs in a variety of ways. Older tomb epitaphs could be recycled by polishing away the older text. On the inscription for Zhao Gongliang 趙公亮 (842-884), for example, one can still distinguish the faint traces of the *muzhiming* for another man, named Yang Xishi 楊希適 (Figure 0.10). It was also quite common for the family to save money by not commissioning a new stone for a man’s wife. In the case of Fu Cun’s epitaph 傅存 (d.860), an addendum announcing his wife’s demise was squeezed into the second column, between the title and the first line of text. The later date of this addendum is evident because it curves to the right to avoid overlapping with the original author’s signature (Figure 0.11).

Finally, it is possible that many epitaphs were produced at workshops by

²³ For a summary of some of these requirements of a proper burial, see the tomb epitaph of Wang Yu 王玉 (769-841). Allusions to geomancy and divination are very common. See, for example, the epitaphs of Han Jian 韓堅 (763-851) and Fei Fu 費俯 (856-877). Han Yu 韓愈 (785-824), famous for his inscriptions, could command a sum of 400 strings of cash for a commission, enough to feed 100 people for an entire year. See 黃正建 Huang Zhengjian, “Han Yu richang shenghuo yanjiu—Tang zhenyuan changqing jian wenrenxing guanyuan richang shenghuo yanjiu zhi yi 韓愈日常生活研究—唐貞元長慶間文人型官員日常生活研究之一,” *Tang yanjiu* 4 (1998): 256.

²⁴ A similar phenomenon was observed in woodblock printing. Blockcarvers often carved their name onto the center fold as part of the accounting procedure that would determine how much they would be paid. See Lucille Chia, *Printing for Profit: The Commercial Publishers of Jianyang, Fujian (11th-17th Centuries)*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), 34.

²⁵ See the tomb epitaph of Liu Hui 劉惠 (772-848).

specialists. The epitaphs of Sun Rong 孫榮 (d.985) and Zhang Jingde 張敬德 (d.985)—rubblings of which were preserved in the formidable art collection of the Qing court official Duanfang 端方 (1861-1911)—both refer to a single exchange of burial land between the Sun and Zhang families and both contain very similar language. A character comparison suggests that the two were written by the same hand (Figure 0.12). In the case of the inscriptions for Zheng Shuyi 鄭恕已 (d.851), also included in Duanfang's collection, and Lü Jianchu 呂建初 (826-869), discovered by archaeologists in recent years, significant portions of the texts are verbatim copies of each other. Although the calligrapher may not have been the same, similarities in the forms of some characters imply that the calligraphy as well as the text were duplicated (Figure 0.13, see especially the graphs 乃, 恐, and 爲). Undoubtedly, families could save money by commissioning a workshop to produce the epitaph because an author (and perhaps a calligrapher) would not need to be hired.

However, although the expense of epitaphs could vary considerably given the variety of cost-cutting options available, it is generally understood that they were not included in most graves dating to the Tang period. *Muzhiming* were characteristic of only the more sophisticated tombs, and were limited to families who had the resources to fund a more elaborate burial.²⁶ Thus, it is fair to say that any individual with a tomb inscription was by definition a member of the wealthier strata of society. Compared to

²⁶ A series of regional studies seems to confirm this generalization. To list two examples, in Anhui, vertical shaft tombs (豎穴墓) and pit tombs (土坑墓) of the Tang period had few grave goods at all; by contrast, double-chambered brick tombs always contained epitaphs. In Tang and Song Hubei, there was a direct correlation between tomb size, quality of grave goods, presence of a tomb inscription, and official rank of the tomb occupant. See Fang Chengjun 方成軍, "Anhui Sui Tang zhi Song muzang gaishu 安徽隋唐至宋墓葬概述," *Dongnan wenhua* 東南文化 1998.4: 51; Yang Baocheng 楊寶成, ed., *Hubei kaogu faxian yu yanjiu* 湖北考古發現與研究, (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue chubanshe, 1995), 304-306, 319-325.

the dynastic histories, tomb epitaphs provide data on a much greater range of elites, from the most powerful court bureaucrats to landowners of more modest means. They were, nevertheless, an accurate identifying marker of the upper class.

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter One explores the great breadth of the ninth- and tenth-century upper class. Bureaucrats, military men, large landowners, and merchants coexisted in medieval Chinese society, each group with its own set of values and ideals. The geographic and temporal distributions of these elite types shed light on differences in north-south regional development and on the competing relationships between elites and state power. Chapter Two delves into one particular category of elites, the pre-Tang great clans that still wielded enormous power in the capital and great influence over society everywhere. Whereas these old aristocratic families had expanded enormously in overall numbers and had maintained genealogical traditions into the Song period, their dependence on the Tang regime and their close association with metropolitan culture led to their downfall when the dynasty fell and the capital cities changed hands in successive invasions.

Chapter Three investigates social mobility and marriage ties. Limitations in cross-type intergenerational mobility (e.g., when a son is not classified in the same elite type as his father) and cross-type marriage connections help confirm the analytical value of the elite types proposed in Chapter One. In addition, the chapter documents an increased frequency of marriage ties between civil and military elites after the fall of the Tang, as well as a diversification in the occupations (both civil and military) of sons in individual families, both of which may well be linked to a cultural crisis affecting

Chinese elites in this period of warfare and turmoil. In order to ensure family continuity, elites were apparently forced to redefine themselves and turn to novel survival strategies.

The analysis of survival strategies is pursued in Chapter Four, which focuses on the high geographic mobility of the tenth-century Chinese upper class. In south China, well over a third of officeholding elites were immigrants, most of whom had descended in large armed groups from the north. Elite migration in this period was not only endemic, but multi-directional. In addition to this southward migration, there was also northward migration, most notably into the territory controlled by the Khitans, a non-Chinese regime based in present-day Manchuria. The existence of multiple, competing regimes created an environment in which talent came to supersede political connections in the selection of government officials.

Finally, Chapter Five delves in more detail into the geography of power and the role of capital cities (of empire or kingdom) in defining elite status. The founding by conquest of a new regime led to the disproportionate representation at the capital of limited geographic regions. Nevertheless, the enduring preeminence of the capital as a place where elites congregated slowed down the development of an “elite localism” that would weaken the state's authority over society in later centuries.

Figure 0.1. Map of China



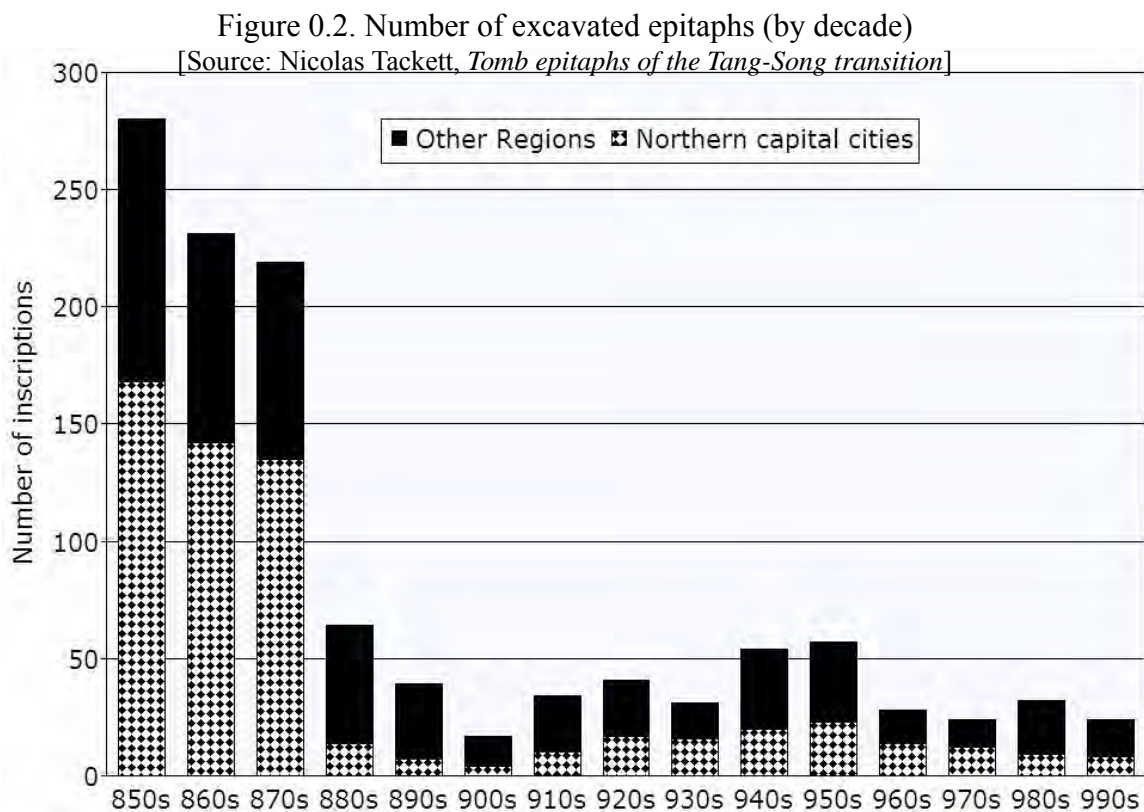


Figure 0.3. Number of excavated epitaphs from Henan (by forty-year period)
 [Source: National Library of China (Beijing) on-line catalog]

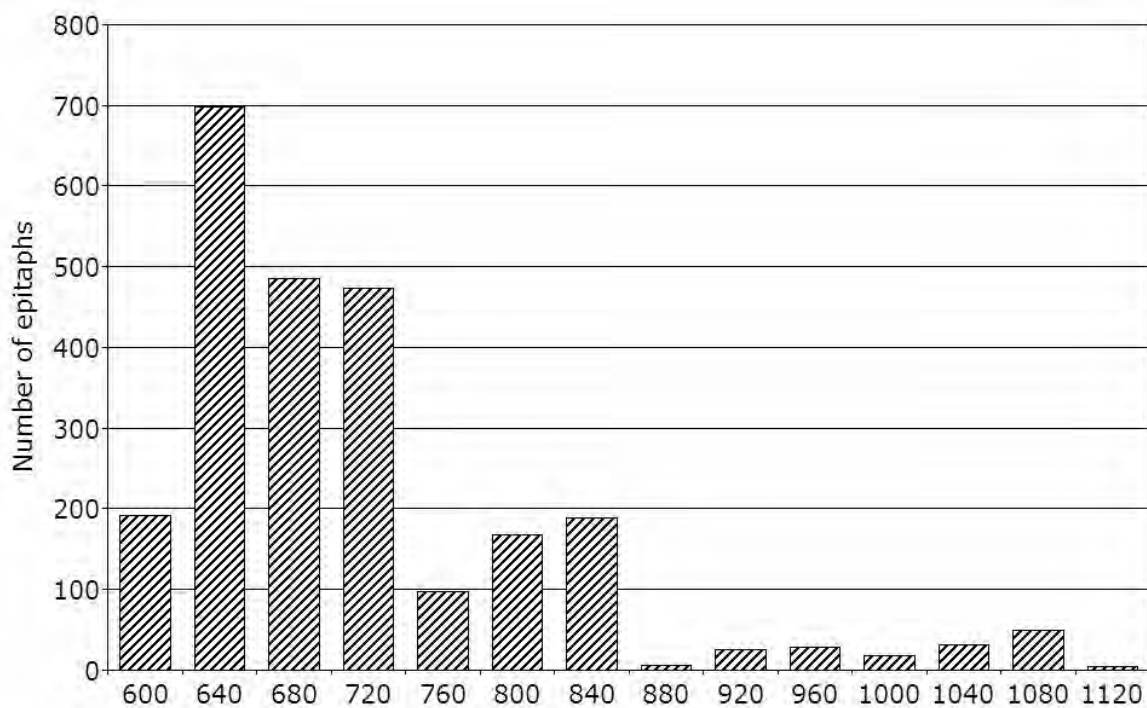


Figure 0.4. Diagram of a tomb epitaph with cover

[Source: Hua Rende 華人德, "Wei Jin Nanbeichao muzhi gailun 魏晉南北朝墓誌概論," *Zhongguo shufa quanji 中國書法全集*, Vol. 13, ed. Liu Zhengcheng 劉正成, (Beijing: Rongbao zhai chubanshe, 1995).]

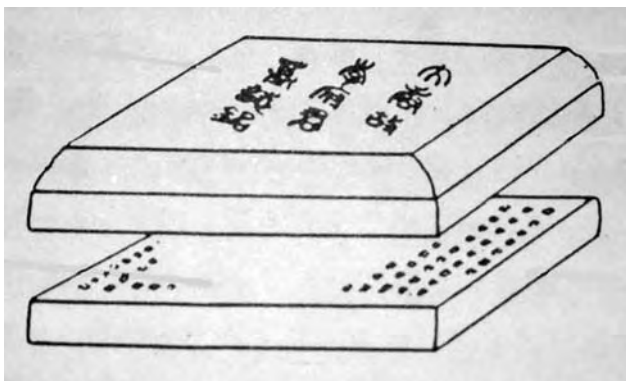


Figure 0.5. Epitaph in the form of a vessel

[Source: Zhenjiang Provincial Museum, author's photograph]



Figure 0.6. Example of a tomb epitaph (cover) as found in a tomb

[Source: *Wudai Wang Chuzhi mu 五代王處直墓*, (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1998), color plate 13.]



Figure 0.7. Staircase with epitaph cover
(City park in Yangshuo, Guilin)
[Source: author's photograph]



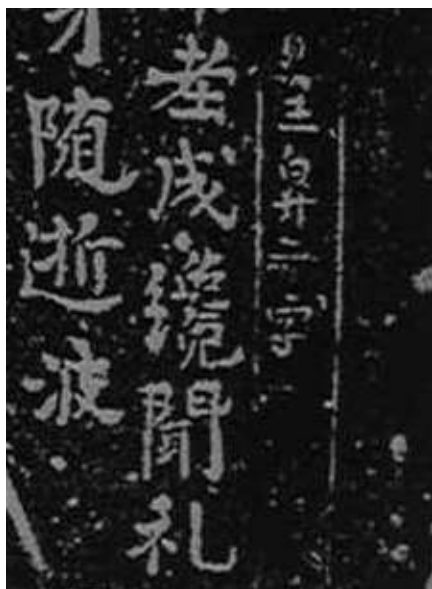
Figure 0.8. Tabletop made with epitaph stone
(Lingering Garden, Suzhou)
[Source: author's photograph]



Figure 0.9. Epitaphs with character count carved onto stone

A. Epitaph of Fei Fu 費俯 (856-877).

Detail of lower right corner, which indicates the stone contains 322 characters. [Source: Yuan Daojun 袁道俊, ed., *Tangdai muzhi* 唐代墓誌, (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 2003), 129.]



B. Epitaph of Yang Jian 楊鈞

(833-879). Detail of title line, which indicates the stone contains 690 characters. [Source: Liu Haiwen 劉海文, ed., *Xuanhua chutu gudai muzhi lu* 宣化出土古代墓誌錄, (Hohhot: Yuanfang chubanshe, 2002), 7.]



C. Epitaph of Ms. Zhang 張氏(李) (795-855)

Detail of left edge, which indicates the stone contains 489 characters. [Source: *Xin Hebei (1)* 上:121 (plate 119).]

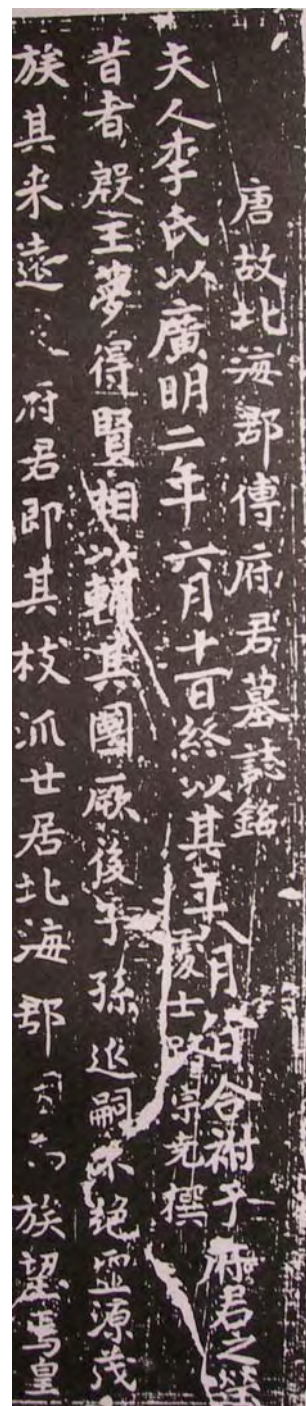


Figure 0.10. Zhao Gongliang's epitaph
(with faint traces of an earlier inscription)



Source: *Xin Hebei* (1) 上:144 (plate 139).

Figure 0.11. Fu Cun's epitaph
(with addendum for his wife)



Source: Wang Sili 王思禮, ed., *Sui Tang Wudai muzhi huibian: Jiangsu Shandong juan* 隋唐五代墓誌匯編: 江蘇山東卷, (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1991), 110.

Figure 0.12. Select calligraphic examples from the epitaphs of Sun Rong 孫榮 (*left*) and Zhang Jingde 張敬德 (*right*).

[Source: Author's photograph (*left*); webpage of the National Library of China in Beijing (*right*).]



Figure 0.13. Select calligraphic examples from the epitaphs of Zheng Shuyi 鄭恕已 (*left*) and Lü Jianchu 呂建初 (*right*).

[Source: Sun Lanfeng 孫蘭風 and Hu Haifan 胡海帆, eds., *Sui Tang Wudai muzhi huibian: Beijing daxue juan* 隋唐五代墓誌匯編:北京大學卷, (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1992), Vol. 2: 135; Hou Lu 侯璐, ed., *Baoding chutu muzhi xuanzhu* 保定出土墓誌選注, (Shijiazhuang: Hebei meishu chubanshe, 2003), 92.



Chapter 1: Structures and Values of the Elites

When Qin Gong 秦恭 passed away in the first month of the nineteenth year of the Tianyou era (922 C.E.), his son Hui buried him in a tomb near a temple, just west of the main highway. Fearing that the tomb would be uncovered one day far in the future, Hui arranged to have a eulogy carved for his father onto a stone he hoped would survive long after Gong's memory had faded into oblivion, long after the Qin family had died off or moved away, perhaps long after the nearby valleys had filled up and the fields had become a vast sea.²⁷ Nearly a millennium later, the heavily eroded epitaph stone was discovered. It probably found its way into the home of a neighboring notable, where it made a short-lived splash among local antiquarians, one of whom recorded the damaged text of the inscription, before the epitaph was misplaced and forgotten. One can still read this transcription, preserved in an early twentieth-century epigraphic collection, and in so doing discover how Qin Gong's son sought to sum up his father's life. Quite typical for the period, the epitaph tells us Gong's place of origin, his date of burial, and the names of his descendants and their spouses. But the inscription goes on to describe, in some detail, Qin Gong's property. Besides the burial land near Dog Mountain, the family owned a house at the Linming county seat, between the residences of Supervisor

²⁷ The "statement of purpose" explaining Qin Hui's motives for commissioning the stone is unfortunately fragmentary in the surviving transcription. It is clear that he was concerned about long-term changes in the terrain adjacent to the tomb, but the details of how the landscape might change have been reconstructed based on a composite of similar inscriptions. See especially the epitaphs of Ms. Zhang 張氏(李) (795-855) and Fu Cun 傅存 (d. 860).

Bian and Granary Official Zhang. In the neighboring county of Wu'an, they also owned a shop next door to Li Nai. Scholars of Tang China might be surprised by this eulogy. In an epitaph for a bureaucrat or a military officer, one would expect to learn about the deceased's ancestors, about his personal qualities, and about his professional career. But the Qin family could apparently claim no such offices and probably earned its living as traders or land-owning farmers. In any case, Qin Hui's memorial to his father focused on what was probably far more prestigious in the rural society of southwestern Hebei: a family's property and assets.

For the most part, the scholarship of pre-Song China has tended to neglect individuals like Qin Gong who, although wealthy and influential in local society, did not define their status primarily in terms of their education or relationship to the state.²⁸ Indeed, because literati and bureaucrats were responsible for virtually all surviving historical sources from the period in question, our understanding of elite society is skewed in favor of the values they held. Using a wealth of data culled from late Tang funerary inscriptions, the present chapter will explore the great breadth of the Chinese upper classes and demonstrate the coexistence of multiple elite types, characterized by a variety of value systems which did not necessarily match the ideals held by intellectuals and bureaucrats.

This study of elites during the Tang-Song transition will begin, therefore, with an investigation into the composition and values of upper-class society. The focus will fall

²⁸ To be sure, there have been fascinating studies of other elite groups, for example, the work on merchants by Denis Twitchett (for the Tang period) and Christian Lamouroux (for the Song period). I hope in this chapter to situate merchants and other elite groups in the broader context of elite society. See Denis C. Twitchett, "Merchant, Trade and Government in Late T'ang," *Asia Major*, new series 14.1 (1968): 63-95; Christian Lamouroux, "Commerce et bureaucratie dans la Chine des Song (Xè-XIIè siècle)," *Etudes rurales* 161-162 (2002): 183-214.

on bureaucrats, military men, merchants, and landowners. The subject of the aristocratic great clans will be deferred to the following chapter. Unfortunately, a study of the ideals and values of eunuchs, imperial clansmen, and Daoist and Buddhist religious professionals is beyond the scope of the present study. The chapter will conclude with a brief assessment of the relative wealth of the different elite groups and an investigation into temporal and regional differences in elite composition.

1.1. Officeholders and their values

One of the great advantages of tomb epitaphs as a historical source is the insight they provide into the variety of upper-class values and ideals in the late Tang and tenth-century. Needless to say, besides the bureaucrats and military commanders whose biographies survive in the dynastic histories, large landowners and merchants held influential positions in Chinese society. How these different types of elites represented themselves in the eulogistic passages scattered throughout their epitaphs—passages extolling not only the deceased, but also ancestors, spouses, and descendants—could vary considerably and implied the existence of multiple value systems.²⁹ Some social and cultural ideals were shared by all elites and even by all of society. Nearly anyone, for example, might be praised for respecting the rituals that underlay the ancestral cult. However, a careful analysis of the language and imagery of praise contained within funerary inscriptions reveals that qualities and actions deemed laudable and justifying the worth of individuals varied considerably from one profession to another.

²⁹ Although one might argue that these representations reflected the cultural values of the literate authors who composed the texts, such an argument neglects the influence the family of the deceased undoubtedly would have had. Given the expense of the funeral and the importance of honoring one's ancestors, it is very unlikely that the deceased's family would not have known and approved of the content of the epitaph. The different representations of elites in tomb inscriptions in fact imply the existence of multiple value systems.

Civil and military officeholding was one of the most widespread sources of prestige. Although many epitaphs composed for officeholders identify only the highest position attained by the deceased, others provide a comprehensive resume of his official career, listing as many as five, ten, or more government appointments. Some of the more lengthy and remarkable *curriculum vitae* appear on late Tang inscriptions written for men who served the autonomous military government in Youzhou (modern-day Beijing). For example, one learns that the career of Zhang Jianzhang 張建章 (806-866) spanned thirty years and included numerous high positions in the Youzhou administration, as well as a diplomatic mission to the Manchurian state of Parhae and the position of Vice Envoy to the Xi and Khitan nations. Similarly, we discover that the military man Geng Zongyi 耿宗倚 (823-881) held no less than nine different appointments in three different prefectures under the command of the Youzhou government.³⁰ Equally extensive careers are described in many epitaphs composed for bureaucrats of the Southern Tang kingdom (937-975).³¹ The fact that half of some inscriptions were dedicated to the deceased's official career underlines the prestige that could be gained from a string of impressive military or bureaucratic positions.

In addition, any officeholder—whether military commander or civil bureaucrat—might be represented as the epitome of the basic tenets of Chinese political

³⁰ For similar examples of epitaphs from late Tang Youzhou containing lengthy resumes of the deceased's official career, see the epitaphs of Wang Gongshu 王公淑 (780-848), Zhou Yu 周瓊 (787-856), Lun Boyan 論博言 (805-865), Yan Haowen 閻好問 (810-873), Wen Lingshou 溫令綬 (806-874), and Yue Bangsui 樂邦穗 (827-877).

³¹ See especially some of the epitaphs by the Southern Tang literatus Xu Xuan 徐鉉 (917-992), such as those composed for Tao Jingxuan 陶敬宣 (899-950), Jiang Wenyu 江文蔚 (901-952), Liu Hao 劉鄩 (908-966), Fang Ne 方訥 (890-966), Zhou Tinggou 周廷構 (901-966), Han Xizai 韓熙載 (902-970), Qiao Kuangshun 喬匡舜 (898-972), Shang Quangong 尚全恭 (905-974), and Yi Wenyun 易文贊 (894-968).

philosophy, with its vision of paternalistic bureaucrats serving the emperor for the good of the people. When the Youzhou administrator Zhou Yu 周瓊 (787-856) arrived as Prefect of Zhuozhou, he is said to have quickly put an end to the ignorant ways of the inhabitants. Later, while serving as Prefect of Pingzhou, the local elders supposedly turned to him to transform their customs as well. Half a century later, Sun Yansi 孫彥思 (865-916), once an important cavalry commander, was dispatched to Huangzhou after its destruction by warfare. Sun was praised for having rebuilt the city from the ground up and for having encouraged the revival of agriculture. Finally, one reads of the military man Ma Liang 馬良 (810-883) who, through his service, became a “pillar of the state” (邦之柱石) and the “limbs of the ruler” (王之股肱).

Among officeholders, additional idealized qualities and traits distinguished civilian bureaucrats from military commanders. Not surprisingly, bureaucrats—including magistrates (縣令), assistant magistrates (主簿), staff supervisors (判官), judges (衙推), and a variety of military administrators (參軍)—were much more likely to receive praise for their education and learning.³² We learn, for example, that Chen

³² I have generally distinguished civil bureaucrats from military officers on the basis of their official titles. Both the Tang and Song bureaucracies clearly and unambiguously categorized most government titles as either belonging to the military or the civil administration. Unfortunately, the autonomous military governments that emerged in the waning years of the Tang developed very different administrative systems which have never been fully elucidated. Nearly all late Tang epitaphs from Hebei, for example, describe men who served in the military government and whose offices are not described in the standard administrative reference works. In these cases, I have generally followed Yan Gengwang, who has analyzed the framework of the late Tang military governments and has distinguished military from civil offices. See Yan Gengwang 嚴耕望, “Tangdai fangzhen shifu liaozuo kao 唐代方鎮使府僚佐考,” *Tangshi yanjiu congkao* 唐史研究叢稿, (Hong Kong: Xin Ya yanjiusuo, 1969), 177-236. However, Yan Gengwang’s list of offices is far from comprehensive and not always correct (for example, although he considers *biezou* 別奏 to be a civil office, this title appears three times in late Tang epitaphs from Hebei and in all cases the individuals in question were almost certainly military men based on the professions of other family members). Thus, identifying the offices of many individuals has required careful empirical analysis.

Lixing 陳立行 (800-857), an administrator in the Youzhou military government, never tired of studying; and that Qiao Kuangshun 喬匡舜 (898-972), a mid-level bureaucrat in the Southern Tang central government, had enjoyed learning and had shown a talent for writing since he was very young. References to Confucian education were typical in the epitaphs of such individuals. That of Xing Tong 邢通 (797-883), for example, announces that his father's training had “followed the teachings of Lu 從魯教 [i.e. Confucianism].” Other personality traits typically associated with civil officials included being “upright” (廉), “faithful” (貞), and “gentle” (溫).³³

Style names—that is, the literary names given to men (or occasionally to women) after they had reached maturity—were also found particularly frequently in inscriptions for bureaucrats. Among late Tang epitaphs from Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan, such style names were mentioned for 68% of males from civil bureaucratic families (36/53), for 45% of males from military families (14/31), but for only 24% of males from non-officeholding families (17/70). Apparently, ninth- and tenth-century non-officeholders were particularly unlikely to adopt what in later times would become an essential marker of all literati.

Finally, participation in civil service examinations was another important source of praise for bureaucrats and their families. We learn from the epitaphs of Daxi Cao 達奚草 (795-866) of Huainan and Feng Ci 封詞 (d.892) of Weibo (in Hebei) that both

³³ In the case of these three character traits, select eulogistic passages in epitaphs for both civil bureaucrats and military officers were examined and the total frequency of these three words were compared. Adjustments were made to take into account differences in overall word count between the two groups (7861 for civil bureaucrats / 6165 for military officers = 1.28). Civil bureaucrats were found to be over twice as likely to be faithful 貞 [15/(5*1.28)=2.3], three times more likely to be upright 廉 [24/(6*1.28)=3.1] and four times as likely to be gentle 溫 [10/(2*1.28)=3.9]

men's grandfathers had earned degrees in the Classics (明經). Although the majority of provincial elites buried in Hebei or Jiangnan/Huainan never met with such examination success, simply having participated in the exams could bring prestige to the family. The title of Prefectural Nominee—indicating an individual appointed by the local prefect to participate in the examinations—was often a source of great pride, as attested by the frequency with which this title was mentioned in epitaphs. Prefectural nominees included Cui Fangjian 崔方揀 (779-861), a native of the independent military province of Chengde (in Hebei); the son-in-law of Hou Yuanhong 侯元弘 (807-882), a military officer in Youzhou; as well as the son of Ms. Liu 劉氏(戎) (796-870), a woman buried in the south, near modern-day Zhenjiang. As shown in Figure 1.1, it was quite common for the authors of epitaphs to identify themselves as Prefectural Nominees when specifying their names, a further indication of the prestige carried by this title. Finally, in the case of sons who had not yet succeeded in being nominated by the prefect, an education in the examination curriculum, regardless of outcome, was in itself deemed praiseworthy. All four sons of Liu Qian 劉鈐 (837-888), a Youzhou native, were “diligent in the *jinshi* [examination] enterprise 肆進士業.” The epitaph of Jing Shi 靖寔 (827-858), a low-level administrator in Hebei, even goes so far as to reveal he *failed* the exams in the capital. Just as in the Song period, either an examination education or a nomination to take part in the exams were, already in the late Tang, markers of status distinguishing civil bureaucratic families from other elite groups.

Military men—including generals (將), commanders of offensive action (討擊使), and military attachés (押衙)—received commendations in epitaphs for very different

qualities. They were heroic (英), brave (勇), or awe-inspiring (威). Their ferocity might be symbolized by the claws and teeth (牙爪) of a beast, often of a tiger. Military commanders were also praised much more frequently than bureaucrats for their loyalty (忠), integrity (節), and meritorious feats (勳). At the same time, they were often honored for displaying a proper balance between civil (文) and martial (武) talent. The epitaph of Liu Yuanzheng 劉元政 (791-867) informs us that his “abilities encompassed the civil and the martial 才包文武.” Similarly, regarding Cao Hongli 曹弘立 (806-864), we learn that “in his youth, he [poured over] the *Songs* and *Documents*; as an adult, he spent his leisure time with the *Scabbards* and *Stratagems*. As for civil [abilities], he could with these manage affairs; as for martial [abilities], he could with these rectify [the evils] of his times. 幼口詩書; 長閑韜略. 文可以經濟; 武可以匡時.” Because military men ideally received literary educations as children, embarking on a military career was sometimes represented by the act of casting away one's writing brush (投筆).³⁴ Of course, although army commanders were often praised for the literary abilities they might have acquired, the converse was not true: civil bureaucrats were rarely expected to have training in the martial arts. But this fact does not imply that martial talent was subordinated to civil or administrative ability. Rather, education and intelligence were understood to be essential qualities of a successful general. In parallel with the bureaucrat's expertise in the Confucian classics, mastery of military classics, such as the *Six Scabbards* and the *Three Stratagems*, was deemed indispensable to the training of any capable tactician.

³⁴ For examples of men who cast away their brushes, see the epitaphs of Mr. Zhang 張□□ (789-859) and Han Zongsui 韓宗穗 (830-879).

But more than anything else, praise for military men centered on warfare and on the battlefield. Lun Boyan's 論博言 (805-865) service to the Youzhou military government was described in terms of his “brandishing a sword” (杖劍) and “wielding a knife” (握刀). Indeed, Lun's epitaph describes in some detail how he had led a contingent of troops from Youzhou in an imperially-sponsored counterattack on the southwestern state of Nanshao. Similarly, we learn that Wen Lingshou 溫令綬 (806-874), while serving as vice commander of offensive action, once “rode alone with a single spear in [his] hand and pursued enemy cavalymen deep into [their own territory] 疋馬隻矛, 追虜騎而深入.” In sum, whereas qualities such as judicious management of government might be associated with all officeholders, there were sets of idealized virtues that set bureaucrats apart from generals and army commanders. The language of praise in tomb epitaphs could justify the worth of both civil bureaucratic and military elites.

1.2. Merchants, landowners, and their ideals

Non-officeholding elites, whose precise occupations are often unclear, held a different set of interests and ideals. To begin with, they tended to exhibit a world view in which ritual played a substantially greater role. The perceived function of the stone epitaph—as explained in a “statement of purpose” that almost always concluded an inscription—reflected this difference in values. In many cases, one encounters an expression of concern that the terrain surrounding the tomb might change in the distant future; the epitaph was to be an eternal marker of the grave. Statements of purpose of this type are highly formulaic, almost always beginning with one of two characters: *kong* 恐 (“fearing that”) or *lü* (慮) (“considering that”). Typical is the concluding line to Ms.

Zhang's 張氏(李) (795-855) epitaph: “Fearing that with changes over the years and generations, the valleys will fill up and the hills will move; so we carve this stone to make this inscription 恐年移代易.谷塞陵遷.迺勒石爲銘.” Similarly, the inscription for Wang Zhi 王晙 (802-882) ends with the statement, “Fearing that in the future, the mulberry fields will become oceans and the mountains and valleys will shift, so we carve this timeless stone, to use as a marker that will not perish 恐後桑田變海.嶠峪有移.刊勒貞石.用章不朽.” Statements of purpose of this kind were so common in ninth- and tenth-century epitaphs and used such similar language that one can only assume that they served a ceremonial purpose. They seem clearly to have functioned as ritualistic invocations necessary for the epitaph to be, in some sense, “correct” and to have the power to protect deceased ancestors from the vagaries of time.

However, not all statements of purpose followed this model. In a second, very common pattern, the author switches quite unexpectedly to the first-person voice in order to explain his motives. Xue Shan 薛瞻 concluded the epitaph he wrote for Luo Qian 駱潛 (848-884) with the explanation:

I, Shan, received favors at the gates of the Prince of Bohai along with the deceased and I know of his outstanding reputation and great virtue. So his elder brother the Prefect of Zhenzhou, bearing his sorrow, asked me to record [this epitaph] and inscribe it in the tomb.

瞻與公同受恩於渤海王門下，熟公之令名懿德。公孟兄溱州良牧，含悲請誌，勒于泉戶。

Similarly, the author of the epitaph for the Youzhou bureaucrat Liu Qian 劉鈐 (837-888) wrote:

Because the deceased and I had served together and were of like mind, because we had been acquainted for thirty years and I know of his magnificence, so his orphaned children came to me crying and asked me to inscribe [this epitaph].

諸孤以愚於公爲同舍同道，且有三十年之舊，熟知厥美，號而請銘。

The difference between these two types of statements of purpose is significant. In the first, the ritualistic invocation highlights the fact that the stone epitaph is a ceremonial inscription placed in the tomb for eternity; in the second, the sudden appearance of the author in the text emphasizes that the epitaph is a personal literary work.³⁵ The former is a representation of a ritualistic world view, the second conveys a more humanistic outlook. As shown in Figure 1.2, epitaphs for non-officeholders were more likely to make use of the formulaic statement. On the other hand, inscriptions for civil bureaucrats were over four times more likely to explain the motives of the author in the first-person voice.

The ritualistic world view is also apparent in the more frequent allusions in the epitaphs of non-officeholders to the divination ceremonies that determined the date of the funeral and the location of the tomb. In the case of Han Jian 韓堅 (763-851), the “good time and auspicious day [of the funeral] were obtained by divination 卜得良晨吉日。” Fei Fu's 費俯 (856-877) place of burial was determined by means of reeds and tortoise shells (蓍龜). Inscriptions for non-officeholders were also more likely to describe the geomantic advantages of the physical position of the grave. In the case of Li Rang 李讓 (793-850) from Bozhou in Hebei, we are told that:

³⁵ Note how the concept of an epitaph as a literary work was a fairly recent development. Timothy Davis shows that the tomb epitaph did not become a respected genre in literary circles until as late as the sixth century. See Timothy Maxwell Davis, “The Literary Aesthetics of Death and Religious Facets of Commemoration: A Study of the Entombed Epitaph Inscription in Early Medieval China,” (Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, forthcoming), esp. Chapter Three.

As for his tomb, to the east it looks upon the edge of the ford; to the west it abuts on the long embankment; in front, it faces the Red Spirit; to the rear, it borders on the mounds and hills. The tomb is peaceful at this location. For ten thousand generations and one thousand years, children and descendants will amass glory and fortune early on.

其塋東臨津界.西輔長堤.前倚朱神.後隈崗阜.塋安此處.萬代千秋.後代子孫.早加榮祿.

Li's tomb was constructed at an auspicious site between a hill and a river. Allusion to the Red Bird, guardian spirit of the south, echoes a desire to tap into the supernatural forces reflected in the topological features of the landscape surrounding the tomb, supernatural forces that had the power to bring glory and fortune to the Li family. Although officeholders' epitaphs sometimes also made reference to divination and sometimes used the formulaic statement of purpose described above, it is clear that the ritualistic world view was more apparent and more frequently alluded to in epitaphs for non-officeholders.

Yet among these non-officeholders, merchants and landowners each had their own somewhat different sets of values. A limited number of epitaphs confirm that, among merchants, the possession and accumulation of money was a praiseworthy activity. To be sure, an apologetic tradition seems to have arisen from the enduring ideal of "disdaining wealth and esteeming righteousness 輕財重義" and the persistent Confucian critique of merchants as unproductive parasites.³⁶ Thus, the epitaph for the merchant Sun Sui 孫綏 (798-878) observes that "although he traveled back and forth to trade, he never cherished objects. 雖貿易往來, 而與物無賚."

³⁶ For a summary of the traditional negative attitudes towards merchants, see Denis Twitchett, "Merchant, Trade and Government in Late T'ang," 63-65. For references to "disdaining wealth and esteeming righteousness," see the epitaphs of Fu Cun 傅存 (d.860), Ru Hongqing 茹弘慶 (827-878), and Tang Yansui 唐彥隨 (846-896).

But trade and profit from trade were sometimes indeed the objects of praise. Ms. Ju 居氏(韋) (791-865), wife of a salt merchant, had a grandson who, upon the demise of his father (Ms. Ju's son-in-law), lost his rights to the *yin* privilege—the privilege that granted an officeholder's descendants an automatic low-level government position. The grandson, however, “became wealthy by his own enterprise 術業自富.” In this case, succeeding financially without taking advantage of a government appointment was considered a source of pride. Likewise, Dong Weijing 董惟靖 (796-852) is said to have “transported currencies to [provide] property for his descendants and revered Buddhism to increase his good fortune 運泉貨以業子孫, 崇釋宗以益景福.” Commerce was as honorable a vocation as worshipping the Buddha; through trade, Dong could fulfill his responsibilities as a father to his descendants. Similarly, the three eldest sons of Xu Yanjia 徐延佳 (894-954) “were not officials and did not receive a [government] salary; they nurtured their spirit on a drifting boat and, in this way, brought profit and wealth to the family 不臣不祿, 泛舟養性, 因利富家.” Earning money through trade could thus be a manifestation of one's filial duty to one's family.

On the other hand, the inscriptions for large landowners might reveal a very different set of ideals. Such is the case with the epitaph of Mr. Xu 許公 (d.867), discovered in Baoding (Southern Hebei) in 1999. As in the case of Qin Gong, described at the beginning of the present chapter, Xu's inscription says very little about his ancestry or his personal qualities. Instead, four-fifths of the text of his lengthy epitaph—nearly 1000 characters long—is a descriptive catalog of Mr. Xu's property, which included about eighty acres of farm land scattered about the countryside, fifty-nine mulberry trees situated on communal or other property, a house in town, and two country villas (Figure

1.3). The extent of each parcel of land is described with some care. Two select entries from the catalog read as follows:

West of the valley, 20 *mu* of mulberry land, extending east to [the property of] Xu Yue, west to the mountains, south to the mountains, and north to the river.

峪西桑子地廿畝，東至許約，西至山，南至山，北至河

In the depression west of the villa, one parcel of land, extending east to his own [property], west to the bog, south to [the property of] Xu Ya, and north to the canal.

莊西坎上地一段，東自至，西至潤，南至許雅，北至河漕。

Clearly, the Xu family was proud of its land holdings and chose to eulogize the deceased with a comprehensive account of his property.

Although similar catalogs of assets are rarely found in late Tang epitaphs, an interest in land and property is clear from the frequent accounts of the purchase of tomb plots or of the extent of the burial ground. Figure 1.4 lists late Tang and tenth-century epitaphs from Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan—all but one of them for non-officeholders—that make explicit reference to the purchase of land for the interment of the deceased.

Typical is the case of Xu Yang 徐陽 (777-865), who was buried “one *li* northwest of the county [seat], west of the highway, on land purchased from the Tang family 縣西北一里官路西買唐氏地.” A more interesting example involves Mr. Zhang 張□□ (789-859).

On the far left of his inscription stone, after the rhymed verse that concludes the main text of the epitaph, appear the terms of the contract for the purchase of the burial land, probably reproduced in verbatim:

One parcel of land purchased, measuring ten double-paces east to west and

fifteen double-paces north to south. The given price is four strings of cash. Landlord: Li Zhiquan; co-seller: Li Zhirou; co-seller: their mother Xu Qiniang. Guarantors: Sun Man, Xia Da.

元買地一段.東西壹拾步.南北壹拾伍步.當價錢肆貫文.地主李知權.同賣人李知柔.同賣人母許七娘.保人孫滿.夏達.

Although Mr. Zhang's epitaph is unusual in including the full text of the contract, several inscriptions provide the precise dimensions of the tomb land (Figure 1.5).³⁷ Whether by alluding directly to the transaction that legally set aside the parcel of land used to bury the deceased, or by demarcating the extent of this burial plot, the kinsmen of the deceased were in essence granting property in perpetuity to their dead relative. As shown in Figures 1.4 and 1.5, officeholding families, by contrast, almost never followed this practice. For the latter families, who almost certainly owned substantial landed property, prestige was derived primarily from an eminent ancestry or an honorable career in the bureaucracy or the military. On the other hand, among large numbers of non-officeholding elites, status at the local level was clearly and strongly affected by the extent of one's land holdings. Setting aside land for burial provided deceased kinsmen with permanent assets, assets that affirmed the prestige of the deceased in lieu of an exalted heritage or officeholding career.

The epitaphs listed in Figures 1.4 and 1.5 reflect a tradition that was particularly prevalent in the Lower Yangzi region of South China. But a similar interest in land and property is evident in Hebei in the north. The epitaphs of Zhang Jingde 張敬德 (d.985) and 孫榮 Sun Rong (d.985) both describe a single land transaction undertaken by the sons of the Zhang and Sun families. Gaps in the texts of the two inscriptions make the

³⁷ For other examples of late Tang tomb epitaphs that in similar ways bear the influence of a tradition of land contracts, see Valerie Hansen, *Negotiating Daily Life in Traditional China: How Ordinary People Used Contracts, 600-1400*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 57-58.

details of the exchange difficult to sort out. Two burial plots were apparently swapped, possibly following the recommendation of a geomancer. In the case of Sun Rong's epitaph, the lengthy discussion of the terms of the contract concludes with a description of the burial plot location:

In front, it looks upon an underground stream; in the rear, is the mound Guishi; to the east is the path leading to the county [seat]; to the west is the north-south mound Long; to the right is [land belonging to] a man from another settlement.

前臨洞水；後口鬼勢之崗；東有口陌而至縣；西有南北之龍崗；右是他村人也。

As shown in Figure 1.6, descriptions of the geographic features adjacent to the tomb are quite frequent in late Tang and tenth-century tomb inscriptions, especially in inscriptions from the southern Hebei prefectures of Weizhou 衛州, Weizhou 魏州, Xiangzhou, Mingzhou, Bozhou, and Cangzhou, which together account for 65% (20/31) of such epitaphs. These descriptions of the surrounding terrain are very reminiscent of the account in Li Rang's epitaph of the geomantic features of the rivers and mounds encircling the tomb. But they are also reminiscent of the entries in the catalog of Mr. Xu's assets. In both cases, property is localized within the adjacent landscape by identifying both natural and man-made features situated in the four cardinal directions. More to the point, in both cases, the value of land is underscored, whether as an economic resource or as a means of channeling the supernatural forces inherent in the earth for the benefit of the family. Not surprisingly, in Hebei, epitaphs for non-officeholders were four times more likely than those for officeholders to describe the

terrain adjacent to the tomb.³⁸

Thus, although a great many values and virtues were undoubtedly subscribed to by all elites—and, indeed, by all of Chinese society—I have argued here that certain sets of ideals were more commonly embraced by specific elite sub-types. Bureaucrats, generals, merchants, and landowners did not share the same value system. Although they undoubtedly owned property, officeholders rarely talked about land as something to treasure and value; and although they are known to have invested in trade, they did not extoll the wealth they had accumulated. Landholding or commercial pursuits were necessary for the economic well-being of even the most powerful generals and bureaucrats, but these were not considered sources of prestige. For these groups of elites, prestige was defined by ancestry, by a career of service to the government, and by other personal qualities such as loyalty and integrity. In contrast, the kinsmen of Mr. Xu clearly believed that the twenty-five parcels of land and three residences itemized in his epitaph were prime determinants of the family's social status. Although this examination of elite types has not been exhaustive—for example, I have made no reference to the values held by religious elites—it is nevertheless evident that a variety of social and cultural ideals coexisted in society and that these different ideals were characteristically celebrated by different elite types.

1.3. Relative economic wealth of elites

A rough assessment of family wealth can be derived from the length and overall size of the inscription buried in the tomb of the deceased kin. As discussed in the

³⁸ An examination of all Hebei epitaphs dating to the period 850-1000 reveals that 18 of 41 inscriptions for non-officeholders describe the landscape surrounding the tomb (44%); this is true of only 9 of 86 inscriptions for officeholders (10%). If one examines only southern Hebei, one obtains the figures 17 of 32 for non-officeholders (53%) and 3 of 24 for officeholders (13%).

Introduction, the production of such an inscription entailed substantial expense. Besides the cost of obtaining, cutting, and polishing two slabs of limestone (one for the epitaph proper and one for the epitaph cover), the family needed to commission an author and, often, a calligrapher and a carver. Larger stones would have been more expensive to acquire. Moreover, as authors and carvers were generally paid by the character, these longer inscriptions filling a larger stone could have added considerably to the cost. Both the physical size of the epitaph and the total number of characters can be approximated by the number of columns of text carved onto the surface of the stone (henceforth referred to as the "size index").³⁹ In cases where the number of columns is unknown—as is usually the case when an epitaph survives only in transcription—the “size index” is equal to the square root of the total number of characters on the stone.

Figure 1.7 compares the size indices of late Tang epitaphs for officeholding and non-officeholding elites. It is immediately clear that in Hebei civil bureaucratic and military families, on average, spent very similar amounts of money on epitaphs for their dead (a similar comparison for Jiangnan/Huainan is impossible because of the scarcity of military men prior to 890). In other words, among officeholding families, professional specialization seems to have had little impact on the family's overall economic situation during this period.

Moreover, bureaucratic and military elites were clearly able to commission substantially larger stones than non-officeholding families. It has been argued that in early Tang times, sumptuary rules governed the allowable size of an epitaph. Officials of higher rank were granted the right to a larger stone. It is possible that in Song times,

³⁹ An examination of a sample of epitaphs from Hebei, Luoyang, and Jiangnan/Huainan has confirmed that *within a given region* the number of columns generally correlates with the physical dimensions of the epitaph stone and the square root of the total number of characters.

laws even prohibited unranked individuals from executing an epitaph. However, empirical evidence provides clear proof that in the late Tang and tenth century any such sumptuary laws were habitually violated.⁴⁰ Indeed, such regulations would have been nearly impossible to enforce given that the inscriptions in question were buried underground within the tomb. It seems far more plausible to conclude that the difference in average inscription size provides a measure of overall wealth and that in both North and South China military and bureaucratic appointments gave families access to substantially greater economic resources than those acquired by most merchants and land-holding elites.

Nevertheless, it is also clear, based on the standard deviation (σ) of the average size indices, that there were substantial variations in wealth among members of the same elite type. A few non-officeholding families were wealthier than many or even most officeholding families. For example, the epitaph for the Hebei landowner Mr. Xu 許公 (d.867) yields a size index of 30, more than one standard deviation larger than the typical epitaph of a government official. Yangzhou merchant families could also become quite wealthy, a fact well-attested in poetry and fiction of the late Tang.⁴¹ Not surprisingly, Figure 1.7 indicates that non-officeholders in the large city of Yangzhou were wealthier

⁴⁰ Although it is known that sumptuary restrictions existed in the Tang period regarding burials and that these restrictions were based on the official rank of the individual in question, it is not clear whether or not these restrictions applied to the size of tomb epitaphs. Zhao Chao argues that although there was a close relationship between epitaph size and rank in the early Tang, the enforcement of any underlying sumptuary regulations was more or less abandoned by the mid to late Tang. See Zhao Chao 趙超, *Gudai muzhi tonglun* 古代墓誌通論, (Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe, 2003), 150-153. For a similar analysis of Tang sumptuary regulations regarding tomb size and how enforcement of these also declined over the course of the Tang, see Qi Dongfang 齊東方, *Sui Tang kaogu* 隋唐考古, (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2002), 78-83. For a discussion of Song sumptuary restrictions regarding epitaphs, see Dieter Kuhn, "Decoding Tombs of the Song Elite," in *Burial in Song China*, ed. Dieter Kuhn, (Heidelberg: Edition forum, 1994), 38-39. Unlike in Song times, there is no evidence that under the Tang there were any rules banning the use of epitaphs by the non-officeholding classes.

⁴¹ Denis C. Twitchett, "Merchant, Trade and Government in Late Tang," 81-87.

than their counterparts elsewhere in the south. The size indices of the epitaphs of known Yangzhou merchants or their spouses confirms the fact that their riches could equal or overshadow the wealth of officeholders.⁴² In sum, government office gave families access to economic resources unavailable to most, but not all, non-officeholding elites. On the other hand, among officeholders, professional specialization did not affect family wealth.

1.4. Regional distribution of elites

Figures 1.8a and 1.8b provide a general idea of the distribution of the different elite types in the regions of north and south China under consideration here. In the late Tang (850-890 C.E.), there was a substantially greater representation of military elites in the north and a near absence of military men among southern elites. This pattern would seem to corroborate the widely-held contention among scholars that North China became highly militarized in the period following the An Lushan Rebellion, when the Tang central government, autonomous provincial regimes, and Turks and Khitans in the far north all engaged in frequent territorial skirmishes. In the south, however, the Tang regime had few reasons to maintain a strong armed presence.

By contrast, southern elite society would seem to have become rapidly militarized after the collapse of the Tang central government. The relatively sparse epitaphs from the tenth century clearly seem to indicate such a trend. The much more abundant data in the standard histories (especially *Jiu Wudai shi* and *Shiguo chunqiu*: see Figure 1.9) largely confirms this assessment, though this data also suggests that military families

⁴² See the epitaphs of the merchants Dong Weijing 董惟靖 (796-852) [size index = 23], Fu Cun 傅存 (d.860) [size index = 21], Lu Gongbi 盧公弼 (788-866) [size index = 27], and Sun Sui 孫綏 (798-878) [size index = 22], as well as the epitaph of Ms. Ju 居氏(韋) (791-865) [size index = 21], whose husband had apparently died while trading overseas.

continued to constitute a dominant segment of elite society in the north.

Striking regional and temporal contrasts are also observed when comparing non-officeholders to officeholders. In the late Tang period, one finds that 72% of epitaphs in the south were for men (or their spouses) who held neither military nor civil bureaucratic offices; in Hebei, by contrast, only 42% of epitaphs were for non-officeholders (Figure 1.8a). In the tenth century, however, the proportions of non-officeholders in southern elite society dropped to levels similar to those in late Tang Hebei.

This latter trend can be explained by a more detailed examination of the distribution of late ninth-century elites. As shown in Figure 1.10, officeholders were the dominant element in Hebei elite society in and near the capital regions of the autonomous provinces—Youdu and Jixian counties in Youzhou, Zhending county in Chengde, and Guixiang and Yuancheng counties in Weibo. By contrast, epitaphs for officeholders have rarely been found elsewhere in the region, with the exception of Yiwu province in the northwest. In the regions of China where the Tang central government was in power, officeholders tended to live in the capital cities of Chang'an or Luoyang, from where they would be rotated to assignments all over the country. Thus, local elites who lived and died in distant regions of China generally had no connections with officialdom. Similarly, the autonomous provinces in Hebei operated like states in miniature. Officeholders resided and were buried in the provincial capital, from where they were rotated to offices in surrounding prefectures. Meanwhile, non-officeholders maintained a preeminent position in local elite society away from the centers of provincial power. Yiwu province was exceptional because it served as a critical bastion of central Tang

authority, sandwiched between the powerful, autonomous entities of Youzhou to the north and Chengde to the south. Although the Yiwu military governor was appointed by the throne, lower-level officeholders were not sent in from Luoyang or Chang'an; they seem to have been largely selected from within the province or even within the prefecture of their appointment.⁴³

In the southern zone of Jiangnan/Huainan, despite its great distance from the Tang capital cities, officeholders were prevalent in the core regions of the Lower Yangzi macroregion—that is, the cities lining the Grand Canal (Figure 1.11). Non-officeholders, who dominated the macroregional periphery (see especially the case of Changshu), also played a prominent role in elite society at the core. A large number of epitaphs for individuals with no ties to officialdom have been found in Yangzi, Jiangyang, and Jiangdu, the three central counties of Yangzhou prefecture. Unlike the case in Yiwu Province in Hebei, southern officials never served in their prefectures or even regions of origin. Instead, politically powerful families, who might otherwise have chosen to live in the Tang capital, were attracted by the booming economy of the south.⁴⁴ These same families would have had no incentive to move to peripheral regions of the Lower Yangzi delta. There, as will be shown in the next chapter, the old pre-Tang southern aristocracy continued to maintain a significant presence.

In summary, in both Hebei and the Jiangnan/Huainan region, one witnesses a

⁴³ The six officeholders buried in Yiwu prefecture were Zhao Jiansui 趙建遂 (d.855), Jing Shi 靖寔 (827-858), Sun Shaoju 孫少矩 (813-864), Duan Chong 段充 (819-881), Cheng Shiyong 程士庸 (804-881), and Zhang Da 張達 (811-883). All served in office within Yiwu province with the exception of Zhang Da, who was the grandson of a previous military governor and had presumably obtained land and other local resources through his grandfather's influence.

⁴⁴ At this point, it is not clear if these southern-based officeholding elites were native elites who had attained office but had chosen not to relocate to Luoyang or Chang'an, or if they were branches of capital-based clans who decided to invest resources in commercial enterprises in the south.

similar phenomenon. Families with no ties to officialdom clustered in regions away from the centers of political power. In the south, such families were able to maintain a position in the elite society of even a great metropolis like Yangzhou. On the other hand, the largest cities in north China—the provincial capitals of Weibo, Chengde, and Youzhou—were the seats of powerful, autonomous regimes. In Youdu and Jixian counties at the political core of Youzhou province, elite society was composed almost exclusively of officeholders. The subsequent diminished number of epitaphs for non-officeholders in the south after the fall of the Tang was the direct result of the establishment of the new independent regimes of Wu (based in Yangzhou) and Wuyue (based in Hangzhou, to the south of Lake Tai).

1.5. Conclusion

This chapter has explored the variety of the late Tang and tenth-century Chinese upper class. Clearly this class was far from homogeneous. Different elite groups coexisted and were characterized by different sets of values and ideals, as represented in the eulogistic passages of tomb epitaphs. An inscription for an officeholder might emphasize the lengthy career of the deceased, his talent for civilizing the uncouth masses in the case of a bureaucrat, or his bravery in battle in the case of a military commander. On the other hand, merchant epitaphs might extoll the virtues of accumulating wealth for the benefit of the family, while those for landowners commonly described the impressive extent of the deceased's landholdings. Not surprisingly—as we shall see in Chapter Three—these cultural differences helped reinforce the social barriers that discouraged exogamous marriages between different elite types.

It is also evident that the regional and temporal variations in elite types were not

uniform. As a general rule, compared to non-officeholding elites, officeholders were more frequently buried and presumably resided near centers of political power (a pattern that I suspect will be confirmed by a more extensive survey of late Tang epitaphs from Luoyang and from other provincial regions such as Hedong and Shandong). Moreover, based on the relative length and size of the epitaphs, it appears that officeholders were generally wealthier than non-officeholders. One possible explanation for this trend is that wealthy individuals who resided near centers of power tended to convert their assets into government appointments. However, based on the bulk of the evidence, I have stressed the opposite explanation: in the principal power centers, regimes of this period were able to monopolize economic resources and effectively distribute them to administrators and military officers in their service. Thus, the independent military governments in late Tang Hebei seem largely to have excluded non-officeholders from access to the assets requisite for elite burial.

But government service was not a goal shared by all elites in all parts of China. In the south the Tang central government was still in control until the very end of the ninth century. Presumably because the Lower Yangzi region was so far removed from the political center of the regime, there were no political structures that could match the power wielded over provincial society by the autonomous governments in Hebei. Thus, non-officeholding elites in this zone were more readily able to accumulate sufficient wealth to finance tombs and tomb inscriptions, an indication of a more prominent position in society. On the basis of surviving epitaphs, it appears that as many as three-quarters of Jiangnan/Huainan elites had no family connections to government. The numerical dominance of non-officeholders was apparent even in core regions, such

as Yangzhou, a city that sustained a large merchant community. It was only with the establishment of local regimes in Yangzhou and Hangzhou, after the fall of the Tang dynasty, that the influence of non-officeholding elites in the south seems to have declined.

The next chapter will turn to the examination of one specific category of ninth and tenth century elites, a category that has been the subject of considerable debate: the aristocratic great clans.

Figure 1.1. Prevalence of Prefectural Nominees among authors of epitaphs from Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan (850-900 C.E.)

(Elite type of deceased's family)	(Epitaph provenance)		Total
	Hebei	Jiangnan/Huainan	
Civil bureaucrats	6/25 (24%)	6/17 (35%)	12/42 (29%)
Military officers	7/25 (28%)	2/4 (50%)	9/29 (31%)
Non-officeholders	4/7 (57%)	2/11 (18%)	6/18 (33%)
TOTAL	17/57 (30%)	10/32 (31%)	27/89 (30%)

Notes: This table notes the prevalence of prefectural nominees among authors of epitaphs from two regions of China (Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan) that date to the period 850 to 900 C.E. All percentages are in terms of the total number of epitaphs for which the author is named. All epitaphs without any information on authorship are ignored. Prefectural nominees are identified as such if the title of Prefectural Nominee (鄉貢) appears where the author signs his name.

Figure 1.2. Frequency of formulaic and first-person statements of purpose in epitaphs from Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan (850-890 C.E.)

	Formulaic	First-person	Total
Civil officeholders	19 (37%)	22 (43%)	51 (100%)
Military officeholders	16 (46%)	9 (26%)	35 (100%)
Non-officeholders	48 (69%)	7 (10%)	70 (100%)

Notes: This table depicts the frequency of formulaic and first-person statements of purpose. The statement of purpose appears at the end of the epitaph, just prior to the final rhymed verse, and explains why the text was composed. "Formulaic" statements begin with the character *kong* (恐) or *lü* (慮), and use very similar language to express concern that the tomb will be unidentifiable in the distant future once the surrounding terrain has changed. In "first-person" statements of purpose, the author appears in the first-person to explain why he decided to write the epitaph.

Figure 1.3. Property owned by Mr. Xu 許公 (d.867)
as described in his epitaph

Description	Size / quantity	Location
1. Primary residence (院子)	51 x 48 meters	曲陽城內 ("in Quyang City")
2. Villa (莊)	2 mulberry trees	去縣冊里 ("40 li from town")
3. Land (地)	80 mu, 12 mulberry trees	莊西南大墓前
4. New burial land (新墓地)	45 mu	
5. Land	35 mu	次口
6. Land		次西
7. Land	6 mu	大峪水西
8. Mulberry land (桑子地)	20 mu	峪西
9. Land	7 mu	次北
10. One portion (一分)		
11. [Land]	21 mu	
12. One portion		次下山
13. Land		破墓西
14. Abandoned mulberry land		莊西北
15. Land		莊西坎上
16. Land in trust (寄地)	18 mulberry trees	莊西南坎上
17. Land in trust (寄地)	18 mulberry trees	石家院東
18. Land		莊前
19. Mountain (?) (山)		莊東南
20. Land		次北
21. Small villa (小莊子)	9 mulberry trees	去莊冊里武棠村 ("40 li from the villa")
22. Abandoned mulberry land		莊西
23. Land	60 mu	次北
24. Land	25 mu	口口北月城坎上
25. Land	50 mu	月城西口
26. Land		林西
27. One portion		大峪西山
28. One portion		橫嶺峪東

Estimate of land acreage: Excluded from the estimate are "portions" (the meaning of which is unclear) and "land in trust" (which appears to indicate land that belonged to somebody else but on which Mr. Xu owned mulberry trees). Of the remaining property (not including primary and secondary residences), Mr. Xu had 18 plots of land, of which 10 plots had a total area of 349 mu (average of 35 mu per plot). By assuming that the remaining 8 plots had the same average acreage, one can estimate that Mr. Xu's property totaled $349 + (35 * 8) = 629$ mu. At 8 mu per acre [see Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual*, revised and enlarged ed., 243], this is equivalent to about 80 acres.

Figure 1.4. Epitaphs that allude to the purchase of burial land
[Hebei (N) and Jiangnan/Huainan (S), 850-1000 C.E.]

Deceased	Dates	Status	Epitaph provenance	Relevant excerpt
Yao Zhen 姚真	801-850	NOH	Changshu (S)	買何彪地
Ms. Liu 劉氏(陸)	809-855	NOH	Shanghai (S)	買宋氏地
Mr. Zhang 張□□	789-859	NOH ⁴⁵	Yangzhou (S)	元買地一段...當價 錢肆貫文, 地主李 知權, 同賣人李知柔, 同賣人母許七娘, 保人孫滿, 夏達
Ms. Zhu 朱氏(邵)	793-861	NOH	Changshu (S)	買□□地
Tang Zhi 湯智	802-865	NOH	Suzhou (S)	買顧涓桑宅地
Xu Yang 徐陽	777-865	NOH	Changshu (S)	買唐氏地
Ms. Xu 徐氏(龔)	839-882	NOH	Changshu (S)	買得何彪地
Sun Yansi 孫彥思	865-916	MIL	Runzhou (S)	用錢貫文, 於處買 得其地之廣也
Ms. Lu 陸氏(蕭)	d.919	NOH	Changshu (S)	買妙清院西地
Li Zhang 李章	864-942	NOH	Changshu (S)	買本鄉季孜地
Ms. Jin 金氏(李)	870-942	NOH	Changshu (S)	買季孜地
Ms. Lu 陸氏(邵)	887-952	NOH	Changshu (S)	買地
Mr. Zhu 朱□	d.963	NOH	Xiangzhou (N)	地於趙祚兄弟三人 叔□買...

Notes: This table lists all epitaphs from Hebei (N) or Jiangnan/Huainan (S) dating to the period 850-1000 that make explicit reference to the purchase of burial land for the tomb of the deceased. “Status” indicates whether the deceased or the deceased’s family was non-officeholding (NOH), military (MIL), or civil bureaucratic (CIV). Under “epitaph provenance,” (S) indicates South China (i.e. Jiangnan/Huainan) and (N) indicates North China (i.e. Hebei).

⁴⁵ It is clear from his epitaph that both Mr. Zhang 張□□ and his father served in the military. However, neither appear to have held ranked offices.

Figure 1.5. Epitaphs that give the dimensions of the burial plot
[Hebei (N) and Jiangnan/Huainan (S), 850-1000 C.E.]

Deceased	Dates	Status	Epitaph provenance	Size of plot (in meters)
Ms. Wan 萬氏(閩)	(814-852)	NOH	Yangzhou (S)	30x45
Mr. Zhang 張□□	(789-859)	NOH ⁴⁶	Yangzhou (S)	24x36
Sun Sui 孫綏	(798-878)	NOH	Yangzhou (S)	19x34
Ms. Xu 徐氏(龔)	(839-882)	NOH	Changshu (S)	17x17
Sun Yansi 孫彥思	(865-916)	MIL	Runzhou (S)	133x109
Li Zhang 李章	(864-942)	NOH	Changshu (S)	48x24
Ms. Jin 金氏(李)	(870-942)	NOH	Changshu (S)	48x24

Notes: This table lists all epitaphs from Hebei (N) or Jiangnan/Huainan (S) dating to the period 850-1000 that describe the dimensions of the burial plot. “Status” indicates whether the deceased or the deceased’s family was non-officeholding (NOH), military (MIL), or civil bureaucratic (CIV). Under “epitaph provenance,” (S) indicates South China (i.e. Jiangnan/Huainan) and (N) indicates North China (i.e. Hebei). The dimensions of the burial plot have been converted into meters using the conversions 1 *chi* = 0.303 meters; 1 *bu* = 8 *chi*; 1 *zhang* = 10 *chi*. See Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual*, revised and enlarged ed., (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000), 236, 238.

⁴⁶ It is clear from his epitaph that both Mr. Zhang 張□□ and his father served in the military. However, neither appear to have held ranked offices.

Figure 1.6. Epitaphs that describe the land/terrain surrounding the tomb
[Hebei (N) and Jiangnan/Huainan (S), 850-1000 C.E.]

Deceased	Dates	Status	Epitaph provenance	Relevant excerpt
Wei Chao 魏朝	777-847	NOH	Weizhou (N)	塋勢也: 東南兩地, 枕淇水而通津, 西有長衝, 應九達之阡陌, 北近鎮關, 距城池之峙堞. 此西勝之殊地, 居一帶之龍腹, 栽松植梓, 永固長秋焉.
Zhang Junping 張君平	799-834	NOH	Shenzhou (N)	南枕漳水, 北望燕幽.
Ms. Zhang 張氏(李)	795-855	NOH	Mingzhou (N)	其地西連古岳, 東接羅城, 前顧趙陵, 後瞻牛水.
Linghu Huaibin 令狐懷斌	834-858	NOH	Bozhou (N)	其墓墳南至金堤北一十里, 北至堯堤三里, 西至堯堤一里, 東至黃河五里.
Wang Yu 王玉	769-841	NOH	Weizhou (N)	於是森聳壠樹, 前望崗阜, 昂據堯堤, 後枕長河, 浪波口而東渚西騁; 疆場彌望, 桑榆晚而煙生. 東即大達, 口聯車馬, 長如電激, 窆於是間, 福增萬代.
Cui Fangjian 崔方揀	779-861	CIV	Zhenzhou (N)	四顧峯岫山巒, 通臨治水之東.
Ms. Zhu 朱氏(邵)	793-861	NOH	Changshu (S)	西戴南自北東自北皆.
Li Rang 李讓	793-850	NOH	Bozhou (N)	其塋東臨津界, 西輔長堤, 前倚朱神, 後隈岡阜, 塋安此處, 萬代千秋, 後代子孫, 早加榮祿.
Sun Shaoju 孫少矩	813-864	CIV	Yizhou (N)	前視萊山, 後眺燕城.
Yang Shaoxuan 楊少愷	794-852	CIV	Guizhou (N)	其宅兆地之四顧, 東臨古埠, 南眺龍門, 西視萬泉, 北帶山谿, 此乃神光淨土. 商角同用, 榮加乙庚, 大墓于葛谷.
Yue Qian 樂倩	789-828	NOH	Weizhou (N)	東至昌樂縣, 西至王莽墳, 南至婁家庄, 北至梁村.

Ms. Cui 崔氏(竇)	d.872	NOH	Xiangzhou(N)	後有道, 下口也.
Ms. Shi 施□□(吳)	796-874	NOH	Suzhou (S)	吳郡東南角, 潼浦西, 呂涇南, 去涇約廿步.
Wen Lingshou 温令綬	806-874	MIL	Youzhou (N)	左枕桑乾, 卻背林麓.
Su Quanshao 蘇全紹	826-877	MIL	Guizhou (N)	崗含龍抱壘, 帶雀前, 前斃洋河, 後臨峰刃.
Zhang Yong 張用	799-865	NOH	Weizhou (N)	其墳勢西俯長途, 接燕魏之廣陌, 東近枯津, 連屯河而遐杳.
Wang Rui 王睿	810-872	NOH	Weizhou (N) (衛州)	即御河之北, 万户山南, 東連衛國, 西接懷潭.
Yang Jian 楊劔	833-879	CIV	Guizhou (N)	其宅兆之地四顧, 隱以左右雙隴俱奔, 南望洋河, 流泉通于千里, 北帶馬鞍山之崗, 此乃神生淨土, 商角同用, 榮加乙庚, 福祚昌口, 子孫興盛, 筆下之輝, 莫不常矣.
Liu Zhong 劉仲	819-881	NOH	Cangzhou (N)	南臨貫水, 北倚長渠, 不高不低, 自然其勢.
Ms. Xu 徐氏(龔)	839-882	NOH	Changshu (S)	東鄭, 西自比, 南顧及自比, 北自比.
Sun Zhongsheng 孫忠晟	828-888	NOH	Cangzhou (N)	墓南十步枕東西之道.
Sun Wencao 孫文操	822-886	MIL	Xiangzhou(N)	其域東接山岫, 西連長口, 前枕口隔, 後隈陵谷.
Zou Ming 鄒明	d.891	NOH	Weizhou (N)	東至韓村, 西至王乾村, 南至堯堤, 北至李河.
Xu He 許和	823-889	NOH	Weizhou (N)	墳勢南臨長道, 北次橫溝, 東瞻馬固之曠, 西鄰潏水.
Han Zhen 韓稹	827-896	NOH	Weizhou (N)	其口東望樂邑, 西瞻莽河, 南眺鬱龍之池, 北望虎牙之塚.
Dou Zhen 竇真	858-921	MIL	Weizhou (N)	其墳菜堤, 東靠引勢而龍踵, 古原曹曠; 西瞻聳樹而雲生; 南望廣陸寬平; 王簞筵階北附.
Qin Gong 秦恭	d.922	NOH	Mingzhou (N)	南至玉口崗, 西至三文口, 北至狗山寺, 西北趙家河及塔院東大官道.
Feng Zhun 封準	856-931	CIV	Weizhou (N)	其墳東有金堤爲青龍, 西枕洛陽道爲白虎, 前臨鄴固爲朱雀, 後靠龍樓爲玄武, 於中土厚水深, 堪充久矣.
Ms. Lu 陸氏(邵)	887-952	NOH	Changshu (S)	其地東小項子, 南溝, 北項及溝諸, 西項.

Mr. Zhu 朱□	d.963	NOH	Xiangzhou(N)	東連□頂, 西接長川, 前□□富, 後□□嵐, □考安正□祖在西□□也。
Sun Rong 孫榮	d.985	NOH	Mingzhou (N)	前臨洞水, 後□鬼勢之崗, 東有□陌而至縣, 西有南北之龍崗, 右是他村人也。

Notes: This table lists all epitaphs from Hebei (N) or Jiangnan/Huainan (S) dating to the period 850-1000 that describe the land or terrain surrounding the tomb, usually with reference to all four cardinal directions. “Status” indicates whether the deceased or the deceased’s family was non-officeholding (NOH), military (MIL), or civil bureaucratic (CIV). In general, if the deceased and the deceased’s spouse and children were all non-officeholding, the epitaph is classified as NOH.

Figure 1.7. Average size index of late Tang epitaphs by elite type [Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan, 850-890 C.E.]

	Jiangnan/ Huainan			Yangzhou			Hebei		
	Size	σ	n	Size	σ	n	Size	σ	n
Officeholders	21.4	4.7	25	21.9	5.2	14	24.7	5.0	57
Civil bureaucratic							24.5	4.3	31
Military							25.1	5.7	26
Non-officeholders	16.3	4.8	43	18.2	4.6	13	18.3	4.5	28

Notes: This table depicts the average size index of late Tang epitaphs by elite type and region. The size index is determined either by the number of columns of text on the epitaph or, if the number of columns is unknown, by the square root of the total number of characters contained on the epitaph. “ σ ” is the standard deviation; “n” refers to the total sample size. Note that Yangzhou is a subregion of Jiangnan/ Huainan and all data in the Yangzhou column is also contained in the Jiangnan/ Huainan column. Similarly, “civil bureaucratic” and “military” are subtypes of the “officeholders” elite type. However, because of insufficient data regarding military elites for the late Tang period, these two categories were not distinguished in the case of Jiangnan/Huainan.

Figure 1.8a. Composition of elites in the late Tang (850-890 C.E.)
[Source: excavated tomb epitaphs]

	Civil bureaucratic	Military	Non-officeholding
Hebei	24 (27%)	27 (31%)	37 (42%)
Jiangnan/Huainan	15 (22%)	4 (6%)	50 (72%)

Figure 1.8b. Composition of elites in the period 890-1000
[Source: excavated tomb epitaphs]

	Civil bureaucratic	Military	Non-officeholding
Hebei	12 (32%)	9 (24%)	17 (45%)
Jiangnan/Huainan	6 (21%)	13 (45%)	10 (34%)

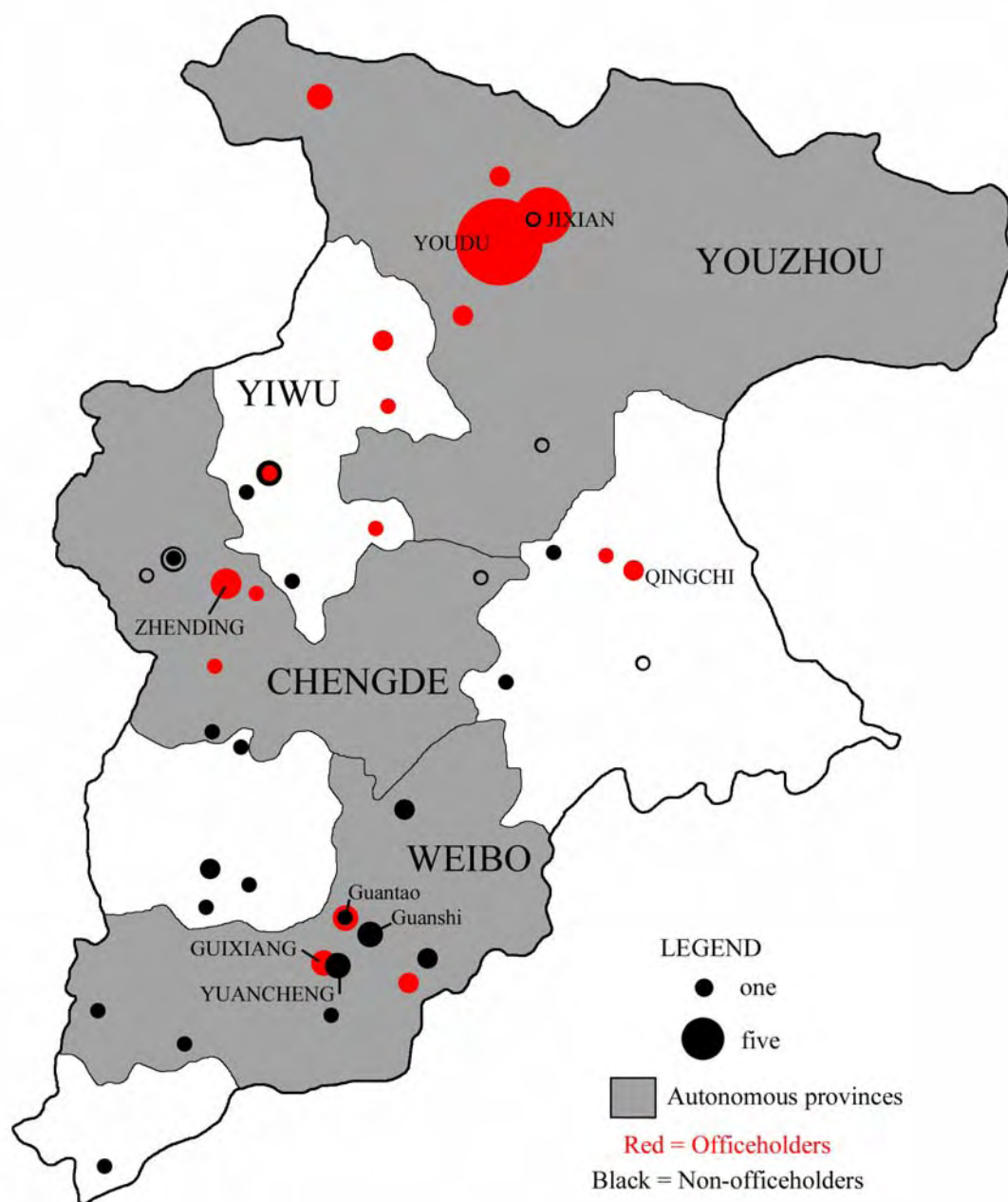
Notes: This table shows the relative proportions of epitaphs composed for civil officeholders, military officeholders, or non-officeholders in two regions of China (Hebei vs. Jiangnan/Huainan) during the late Tang. To avoid biases in favor of officeholders, epitaphs contained in the collected works of authors (*bieji*) are not included in these tables. Officeholding status is based on the status of the deceased or the deceased's spouse.

Figure 1.9. Elite Composition in the Tenth Century
[Source: standard histories]

	Civil bureaucratic	Military
Hebei	77 (32%)	160 (68%)
Jiangnan/Huainan	168 (51%)	163 (49%)

Notes: This table shows the relative proportions of civil and military officeholders in the tenth century in two regions of China (Hebei vs. Jiangnan/Huainan) based on biographies in the standard histories (*Jiu wu dai shi* and *Shiguo chunqiu*)

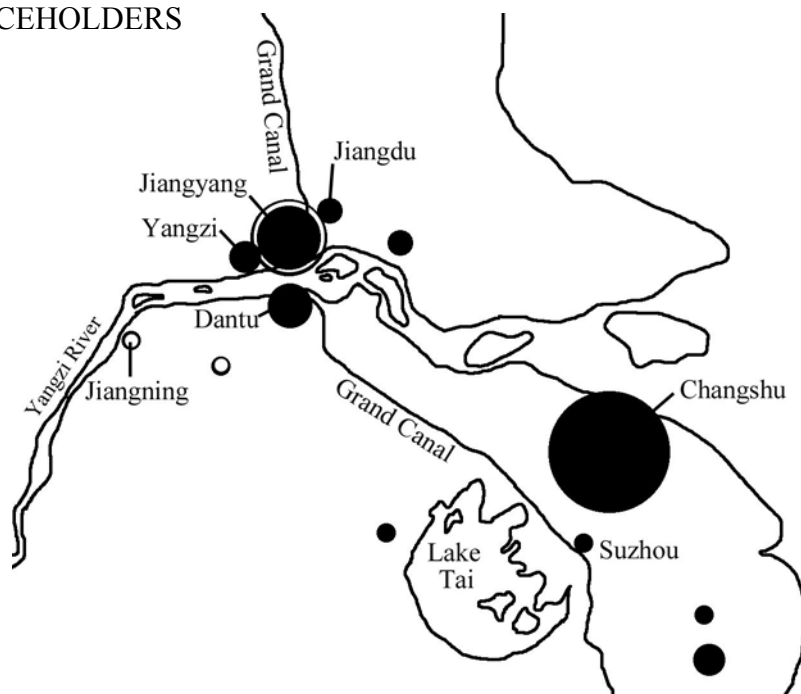
Figure 1.10. Distribution of late Tang epitaphs in Hebei
(850-890 C.E.)



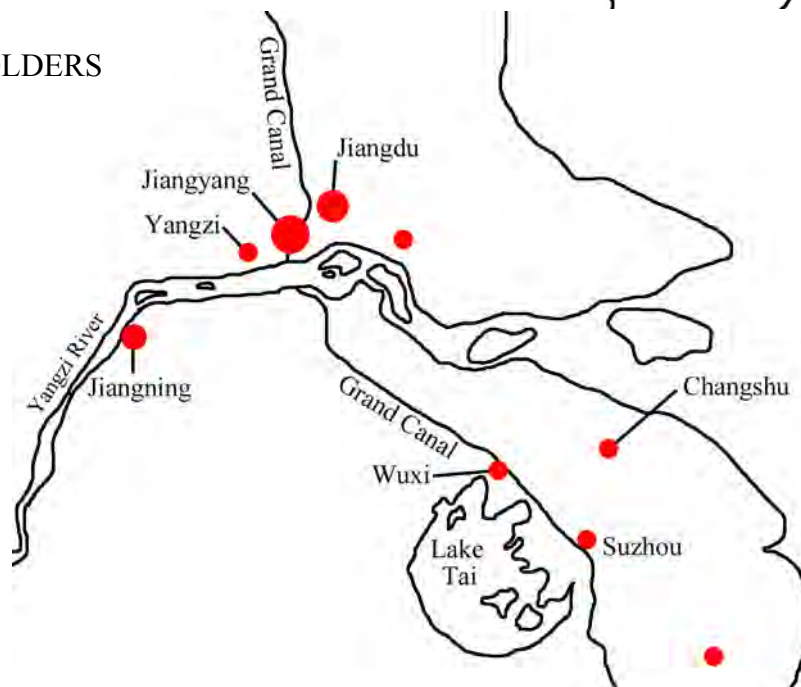
Notes: This map shows the distribution of Hebei tomb epitaphs dating to the late Tang (850-890 C.E.). Red circles refer to epitaphs for officeholders and black circles to epitaphs for non-officeholders. In general, an epitaph was classified as non-officeholding if neither the deceased nor the deceased's father, spouse, or son held office. Open circles include non-officeholders whose father or son (but not spouse) held office. Place names in full caps are counties located at the seat of the provincial capital.

Figure 1.11. Distribution of late Tang epitaphs in the Lower Yangzi macroregion (850-890 C.E.)

NON-OFFICEHOLDERS



OFFICEHOLDERS



Notes: These two maps show the distribution of late Tang epitaphs for non-officeholders and officeholders in the Lower Yangzi macroregion. In general, an epitaph was classified as non-officeholding if neither the deceased nor the deceased's father, spouse, or son held office. Open circles include non-officeholders whose father or son (but not spouse) held office.

Chapter 2: The Medieval Aristocracy

In 1995, a construction crew working in the western suburbs of Beijing discovered an unusual epitaph. Memorializing a military officer named Lun Boyan 論博言 (805-865), the epitaph begins in a fairly characteristic fashion. As with countless similar inscriptions from this period, the title, carved onto the far right of the stone, lists the deceased's functional and honorific titles, as well as his surname. The surname is preceded by a place name which, in this case, identifies him as a member of the Lun clan of Jinchang 晉昌. Next comes the signature of the author, who turns out to be a very high-level civilian bureaucrat in the Youzhou military government. The main text of the epitaph then begins not atypically with an account of the deceased's forebears, including the names and titles of four immediate patrilineal ancestors. But the details of his ancestry are somewhat unexpected.⁴⁷

In Jinfang in the Western Fringes [i.e. Tibet], the terrain is rugged and the mountain regions are vast; the area altogether is 10,000 *li* in size, and here can be found the Man people. Formerly, the *btsan-po* was their chief; next

⁴⁷ A brief account of the discovery of Lun Boyan's tomb can be found in Guan Xuwen 關續聞, "Shijingshan qu chutu Tangdai muzhi zhi wojian 石景山區出土唐代墓誌之我見," *Beijing wenwu bao* 1996.10, reproduced in *Beijing kaogu jicheng* 北京考古集成, (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2000), 4:1479. For an interesting study on this epitaph, see Chen Kang 陳康, "Cong Lun Boyan muzhi tan Tufan mGar shi jiazhu de xingshuai 從論博言墓誌談吐蕃噶爾氏家族的興衰," *Beijing wenbo* 北京文博 1999.4: 62-67. For a better, unobstructed reproduction, see *Beijing shi Shijing shanqu lidai beizhi xuan* 北京市石景山區歷代碑誌選, (Beijing: Tongxin chubanshe, 2003), 36. The transcription mentioned in the appendix is imperfect because it was evidently derived from the obstructed *Beijing wenbo* reproduction.

came the “great *blon*,” equivalent to the “chief minister” of the Chinese. The deceased was the noble descendant of the great *blon* Khri-‘bring, who was that country’s Director of the Department of State Affairs and Grand Marshal of the Eastern Circuit; [the deceased] was the great grandson of Buzhi, the Tang-dynasty Prince of Linzhao, Commander-in-chief of Dangzhou, and Grand General of the Left Guard;

西極金方，地勢峻，山域廣；面統萬里，肘加百蠻。舊惟贊普其雄歟；次有大論者，猶漢之宰相。公即其國尚書令東道大元帥大論欽陵之豪孫；唐左衛大將軍宕州都督臨洮王布支之曾孫；

The genealogy goes on to list Lun’s grandfather and father. What is striking is that, despite the foreign origins of the deceased, his epitaph presents his ancestry in a manner typical of late Tang China. Although the family name, evidently a transliteration of the Tibetan title *blon*, is not a native Chinese surname, a “choronym” in the form of a pre-Tang commandery name appears before the surname, lending his family an aura of nobility. Moreover, the list of his eminent forebears begins with his fifth-generation ancestor, mGar Khri-‘bring, a powerful late seventh-century Tibetan minister. Lun’s epitaph is representative of the medieval Chinese obsession with ancestry—an obsession which, as will be described below, reflected the enduring prestige associated with the eminence of one’s forebears. The incongruity of using a pre-Tang place name to distinguish a clan that did not even inhabit China until the Tang only serves to show more clearly the important role the choronym played in the elite society of medieval China.

The previous chapter explored the different elite types that coexisted in medieval China. Military men, bureaucrats, merchants, and large non-officeholding landowners all held prestige in local society and were distinguishable by the ideals proclaimed in their epitaphs, by their own definitions of the social groups to which they belonged. At the same time, the state apparatus often succeeded in monopolizing local resources near

centers of political power, preventing elites from maintaining their high position in society without close connections to officialdom. This chapter will turn to a status group that pre-dated the Tang, that defined prestige in terms of the social standing of one's ancestors, that spanned all elite types, and that came to dominate the government as well as local society. Ultimately, as I will argue, the members of this status group became both so numerous and so wholly disconnected from their original power base that the rapidly obsolete emphasis on blood over ability did not survive the tenth-century interregnum.

2.1. Past scholarship

An important body of literature has examined the aristocratic “great clans,” the powerful families that feature prominently in Tang and pre-Tang historical texts but that are barely mentioned in Song sources. Unlike the lineage groups of the Late Imperial period, these clans did not share corporate property, engage in communal activities, maintain temples to enshrine common ancestors, or even live together in their native villages. What these clans did do to confirm their status was to prepare genealogies that could be used to enforce the marriage exclusivity characteristic of this social group.⁴⁸ At the same time, an ethos of superior education, manners, and moral standards, all dependent on the notion that culture was indivisible from blood, formed a basis for group solidarity.⁴⁹

To be sure, officeholding ancestry defined elite status in the juridical sense, as

⁴⁸ David G. Johnson, *The Medieval Chinese Oligarchy*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1977), 98-99; David Johnson, “The Last Years of a Great Clan: The Li Family of Chao chun in Late T'ang and Early Sung,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 37.1 (1977): 40-48; Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *The Aristocratic Families of Early Imperial China: A Case Study of the Po-ling Ts'ui Family*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 94-96.

⁴⁹ Patricia Ebrey, *The Aristocratic Families of Early Imperial China*, 96-100.

attested for example by Dunhuang household registers and reflected in the strong tendency in tomb epitaphs to list the offices of patrilineal ancestors.⁵⁰ Thus, there was no legal basis for the enduring belief in Tang society that blood should determine prestige. Nevertheless, by controlling access to the civil service, the Tang aristocracy perpetuated its hold on political power to the very end of the dynasty. David Johnson has shown, for example, that throughout the dynasty most Tang chief ministers had great clan backgrounds.⁵¹ In a broader study of all levels of the Tang bureaucracy, involving nearly eight thousand individual officeholders, Mao Hanguang has shown the enduring influence of a limited number of clans (see Figure 2.1). As shown in the table, thirty-nine families grew in influence over the course of the Tang, gradually coming to represent close to half (43%) of all officeholding families by the final three decades of the dynasty. Although clans of all levels of importance declined in representation, the less influential families came to hold a disproportionately smaller role in government (compare A/B/C to “Others” in the table).

More striking is the sudden demise of these very same families, families that had held sway in China since just after the fall of the Han. By Song times, they had apparently all but vanished.⁵² A number of reasons have been proposed to explain their disappearance. Because the most prominent aristocrats relocated permanently to the

⁵⁰ David G. Johnson, *The Medieval Chinese Oligarchy*, 9-17, 45-58. The prestige attached to officeholding is evident in tomb epitaphs such as the one composed for Chang Kemou 常克謀 (788-864). The genealogical section of this epitaph identifies by name the great grandfather, the grandfather, and the father, and follows each name with a short introduction to the individual in question. The grandfather, who evidently did not serve in office, is briefly eulogized for, among else, his mastery of the Three Teachings. In place of a similar line of eulogy, the offices of the great grandfather and father are listed. In other words, an official title constituted sufficient praise such that an additional bit of eulogizing was considered unnecessary. This pattern was not uncommon among late Tang epitaphs.

⁵¹ David Johnson, *The Medieval Chinese Oligarchy*, 131-141.

⁵² David Johnson, “The Last Years of a Great Clan,” 48-51; David Johnson, *The Medieval Chinese Oligarchy*, 141-148; Patricia Ebrey, *The Aristocratic Families of Early Imperial China*, 112-113.

Tang capital cities of Chang'an or Luoyang, it is often argued that they lost their original local power bases and had nowhere to retreat to when the Tang collapsed. They became completely dependent on the Tang regime for their own survival and accompanied the Tang in its demise.⁵³ In addition, it is assumed that many clansmen were killed during the violent anti-aristocratic persecution that preceded the fall of the Tang. Simultaneously, the physical loss of clan genealogies during the period of turmoil might have inhibited the authentication of great clan claims.⁵⁴ Finally, the expansion of the examination system and a new culture that favored ability as the preeminent determinant of status is said to have led to a decrease in admiration for the very concept of an aristocracy. Thus, it has been argued that the use of great clan choronyms declined at this time.⁵⁵

Yet previous scholarship on the medieval Chinese aristocracy can be developed and revised in a number of ways. To begin with, such studies have been largely limited to an examination of aristocrats living in the capital cities; no attempt has been made to search for the survival of great clans in the provinces. Second, as will be argued below, a number of Tang genealogies *did* survive into the Song, as did the traditional usage of great clan choronyms. By focusing on ninth- and tenth-century tomb epitaphs from two regions of China (Hebei and Huainan/Jiangnan) with a special emphasis on the late ninth and tenth centuries, this chapter will reexamine the causes for the demise of the medieval great clans and the disappearance of the aristocratic mentality that emphasized bloodline over talent.

⁵³ Patricia Ebrey, *The Aristocratic Families of Early Imperial China*, 32-33, 111; David Johnson, *The Medieval Chinese Oligarchy*, 98-100.

⁵⁴ David Johnson, "The Last Years of a Great Clan," 51-59, 66-68, 100.

⁵⁵ David Johnson, *The Medieval Chinese Oligarchy*, 148-151; Patricia Ebrey, *The Aristocratic Families of Early Imperial China*, 113; David Johnson, "The Last Years of a Great Clan," 6, 100-101.

2.2. Choronyms, clan lists, and local prestige

To begin with, it is necessary to explain how a great clan or a claim to great clan status can be distinguished. Aristocratic clans in the medieval period were identified according to surname and “choronym”—that is, their place of family origin.⁵⁶ For example, the Fanyang Lu 范陽盧 family was a clan surnamed Lu that had originally hailed from Fanyang Commandery in Hebei. By Tang times, many of the most influential members of the aristocracy had relocated to Chang’an or Luoyang, inhabiting great mansions near these two capital cities and burying their dead in the vicinity. Thus, the choronym did not necessarily refer to the place where individuals themselves had ever resided. Moreover, because Tang aristocratic families traced their lineages to the Late Han or to the period of division between the Han and the Sui, place names used for great clan choronyms predated the extensive renaming of prefectures undertaken during the reign of the first Tang emperor; they frequently no longer indicated valid place names by the ninth and tenth centuries. Fanyang Commandery, for example, was known as Youzhou Prefecture during most of the Tang dynasty. Because commandery names were no longer used, great clan choronyms are generally easily distinguishable from other place names.⁵⁷

Two nearly complete lists of great clans dating to the tenth century are included among the stash of paper manuscripts found in Dunhuang (these are the so-called lists “A” and “C”). Another list of great clans has been reconstructed based on an early Song geographical text (list “E”). These lists have all been reproduced by David Johnson.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ See David Johnson, *The Medieval Chinese Oligarchy*, 165 (n.46) for an explanation of the coining of the term “choronym.”

⁵⁷ For more, see David Johnson, *The Medieval Chinese Oligarchy*, 63.

⁵⁸ For an introduction to these lists of great clans, see Denis Twitchett, “The Composition of the T'ang

Although such enumerations have been used, by Johnson among others, to distinguish scions of the medieval aristocracy from other elites, it is my contention that by the late Tang any use of a choronym was an aristocratic marker of status. Figure 2.2 depicts all unique clans identified by surname and choronym that appear in Hebei or Jiangnan/Huainan epitaphs of the late ninth century. Over three-quarters of these clans (64/85 for Hebei and 60/77 for Jiangnan/Huainan), representing over 85% of individuals, appear on one or more of Johnson's clan lists.⁵⁹ Upon consulting other listings of prestigious families under the Tang—namely, the reconstruction of *Yuanhe xingzuan* 元和姓纂, the early ninth century manual of surnames, and Mao Hanguang's comprehensive catalog of Tang officeholding families—it turns out that, of the clans in Figure 2.2 that do not appear on Johnson's clan lists (i.e. the names listed in the “NONE” category), nearly half (18/38) are known to have been politically prominent families.⁶⁰ In total, 93% (308/330) of individuals (as opposed to clans) identified by surname and choronym in late ninth century epitaphs from Hebei or Jiangnan/Huainan descended from or claimed to descend from a clan whose prominence is attested by independent documentary evidence. Given the fact that probably over a thousands clans are recorded in Johnson and Mao's lists or in *Yuanhe xingzuan*, it is unlikely that a Tang contemporary would have even recognized the family status of the remaining 7% of individuals. In

Ruling Class: New Evidence from Tunhuang,” in *Perspectives on the T'ang*, eds. Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 47-85; David Johnson, *The Medieval Chinese Oligarchy*, 62-70. A high-resolution digital version of Johnson's list C can be viewed on the International Dunhuang Project webpage (<http://idp.bl.uk>), under the pressmark “S.2052”; although not yet digitized, Johnson's list A should eventually be viewable under the pressmark “BD08418”.

⁵⁹ The number of individuals (as opposed to clans) are not noted in Figure 2. For Hebei, 155/176 of individuals identified by surname and choronym belonged (or claimed to belong) to a clan listed on one of Johnson's lists; the corresponding fraction in Jiangnan/Huainan was 132/154 (see Figure 4).

⁶⁰ Lin Bao 林寶, *Yuanhe xingzuan* 元和姓纂, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1994); Mao Hanguang, “Tangdai tongzhi jiecheng shehui biandong: cong guanli jiating beijing kan shehui liudong,” (Ph.D. Thesis, Guoli zhengzhi daxue zhengzhi yanjiusuo, 1968), 147-199.

the same way that appending a place of origin to one's surname in European tradition (i.e. the use of "von," "de," etc.) conveyed an aura of prestige and of ties to the nobility, the addition of a pre-Tang commandery name to one's surname was a claim to membership in a long-standing aristocratic status group. In all appearance, any use of a choronym implied that the family in question was claiming to belong to what we can term the medieval aristocracy—in other words, they defined their status by a blood relation to a distinguished elite clan.

Figures 2.3 through 2.6 provide further data regarding great clans (or claims to great clan status) that appear in late ninth-century epitaphs from Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan. Figure 2.3 depicts the frequency of attributions of great clan status. No attempt is made to distinguish fictive from accurate claims. It is clear that the majority of Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan elites (as many as 90%) are identified as holding aristocratic status, although choronyms are less consistently used in the case of the spouse and other affines. Figure 2.4 categorizes these attributions by the relative prestige and exclusivity of the great clans in question. The most eminent families were the so-called "marriage-ban" clans that, since the early Tang, were forbidden to intermarry.⁶¹ The next most exclusive category in Figure 2.4 are the top sixteen officeholding clans as identified by Mao Hanguang.⁶² What is remarkable is the disproportionate number of

⁶¹ These seven clans were the Longxi Lis 隴西李, Taiyuan Wangs 太原王, Rongyang Zhengs 滎陽鄭, Fanyang Lus 范陽盧, Qinghe Cuis 清河崔, Boling Cuis 博陵崔, and Zhaojun Lis 趙郡李. The marriage ban was intended to weaken the social prestige of these clans; in fact, the ban served only to make official their preeminence. See David Johnson, *The Medieval Chinese Oligarchy*, 50-51.

⁶² Mao Hanguang, "Tangdai tongzhi jiecheng shehui biandong," 147-150. Besides the seven marriage-ban clans, these included the Langye Wangs 琅琊王, Hongnong Yangs 弘農楊, Jingzhao Weis 京兆韋, Hedong Peis 河東裴, Nanyang Zhangs 南陽張, Qinghe Zhangs 清河張, Pengcheng Lius 彭城劉, Bohai Gaos 渤海高, and Tianshui Zhaos 天水趙. All of these clans produced over one hundred known officeholders based on data Mao collected from 2647 individuals mentioned in

claims to ties to both the seven and the sixteen most prestigious clans. Finally, Figures 2.5 and 2.6 identify the location of the choronyms mentioned in late ninth-century epitaphs. As will be discussed below, the most notable conclusion to be drawn from these two figures concerns the geographic diversity of the places of clan origin (or supposed places of clan origin) of the individuals in question.

At this point it is worth exploring the extent to which the Dunhuang clan lists enumerated families who truly held prestige in the provinces in the late Tang dynasty, as defined by the names of clans mentioned in epitaphs from Hebei or Huainan/Jiangnan. In fact, it seems that Johnson's clan lists did not accurately represent families considered eminent at the provincial level. To begin with, the vast majority of the 791 clans on list C and the 398 clans on lists A and E are never mentioned in Hebei or Jiangnan/Huainan epitaphs.⁶³ More significantly, numerous clans held as eminent at the provincial level did not appear on one or more of these lists. In his inquiry into the family status of Tang chief ministers, Johnson concludes that the A and E lists were very likely derived from an imperially-sponsored catalog of great clans compiled under the direction of Li Linfu 李林甫 in 749 C.E. According to Johnson, these two lists most closely reflected the clans that belonged to what he called the “medieval Chinese oligarchy,” at least as it was defined in the mid-eighth century. The less exclusive C list, which mentions about twice as many choronym-surname combinations, would have included far more clans

Jiu Tang shu and *Xin Tang shu* and 5222 individuals mentioned in Tang-period tomb epitaphs. Mao does not himself create a category for the top sixteen officeholding clans; this is a category I created for the purposes of this analysis. Note also that the majority of the Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan epitaphs used in this study would not have been examined by Mao, who was limited to the collections of rubbings held in Taiwan as of the 1960s. Moreover, the majority of Mao's epitaphs were from Chang'an or Luoyang. Thus, it is in no way redundant to state that Mao's top sixteen officeholding clans appear most frequently in Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan epitaphs.

⁶³ For the number of clans appearing on each list, see David Johnson, *The Medieval Chinese Oligarchy*, 64, 83.

than any government-sponsored compendium.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, based on ninth-century epitaphs, list C comes much closer to reflecting late Tang provincial society. As indicated in Figure 2.2, no less than eighteen clans, representing over ten percent of clans mentioned in late ninth-century epitaphs from both Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan (9/85 and 9/77, respectively) appear only on the C list and not on the other two lists. Thus, although list C was found in Dunhuang, in a far western territory not even under Chinese control in the late ninth century, its validity is corroborated by clan affiliations claimed by elites in the distant regions of Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan.

Who were the clans who appear on list C but not on lists A or E? As attested by the partially reconstructed *Yuanhe xingzuan*, many if not all of these families could claim prestigious officeholding ancestors in both the pre-Tang and the Tang periods.⁶⁵ The officially-sponsored Tang lists were originally conceived to include only those clans with proven records of official service in the Tang dynasty. It is most probable that the families who rose to high status rather late in the Tang period appeared only on the later great clan lists, some of which may have been private compilations. If list C represents such an attempt at a new and revised catalog of eminent clans, what is interesting is that it nevertheless continues to include countless families mentioned on the earlier lists that were not counted among provincial elites by the late ninth century. For the purposes of

⁶⁴ David Johnson, *The Medieval Chinese Oligarchy*, 74, 82-83.

⁶⁵ For confirmation of the pre-Tang prestige of ten of the eighteen clans appearing only on the C list, see Lin Bao, *Yuanhe xingzuan* 1.123 (Nanyang Zong 南陽宗), 1.135 (Bohai Feng 渤海封), 3.8 (Anding Hu 安定胡), 5.356 (Hejian Liu 河間劉), 5.585 (Henan Yan 河南閻), 5.83 (Changsha Luo 長沙羅), 6.3 (Longxi Dong 隴西董), 8.102 (Jiangxia Fei 江夏費), 8.206 (Hedong Wei 河東衛), 10.339 (Kuaiji Luo 會稽駱). [As with the index of this text, all citations are given using chapter and paragraph number.] In the case of the Changsha Luos and Kuaiji Luos, the eminence of these two clans dates to the pre-Han; there is no confirmation that these two clans survived into the Tang. Unfortunately, it is clear that large passages are missing from the reconstructed *Yuanhe xingzuan*, so an absence of corroborating evidence cannot be used to disprove the prestige of any family.

Johnson's study of Tang chief ministers, it is possible that limiting himself to the more exclusive A and E lists—that is, presumably, to a catalog of families who held prestige in the early Tang period—was most appropriate. But what is clear from the snapshot we have of provincial elite society of the late Tang—from the tomb epitaphs described in this study—is that numerous new clans had risen to high status in the provinces, whereas others seem to have disappeared.

More striking is the fact that list C itself was incomplete in terms of choronym-surname combinations found in the provinces. To take one example, the spouse of the Changshu notable Chen Renyun 陳仁允 (812-874) is identified as belonging to the Fuchun Sun 富春孫 clan. Although this family is not cataloged in the Dunhuang clan lists, *Yuanhe xingzuan* confirms its eminence.⁶⁶ Moreover, a number of prominent Suns from Fuchun are mentioned in the dynastic histories of the Tang and earlier periods.⁶⁷ The genealogical tables in *Xin Tang shu* clarify that one branch of the Sun family of Le'an 樂安 fled south from its place of origin and reestablished itself precisely in Fuchun.⁶⁸ Moreover, the same clan is mentioned in a tenth-century epitaph from Yangzhou—in particular, the son-in-law of Wang Renyu 王仁遇 (869-935) is said to be from the Fuchun Sun family. As a second example, consider the Danyang Tao 丹陽陶 family. This clan is not mentioned in any documentary source, neither in the clan lists, nor in Mao Hanguang's catalog of officeholders, nor in *Yuanhe xingzuan*. Yet the

⁶⁶ Lin Bao, *Yuanhe xingzuan*, 4.466.

⁶⁷ See Chen Shou 陳壽 *Sanguo zhi* 三國志, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), 46:1093, 48:1152, 64:1444; Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 et al., *Jin shu* 晉書, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), 54:1481, 88:2284, 96:2513; Shen Yue 沈約, *Song shu* 宋書, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), 27:780; XTS 116:4239.

⁶⁸ XTS 73 下:2945.

Danyang Taos were well-known in the region around Suzhou: no less than three family members are named in late ninth-century epitaphs from Changshu.⁶⁹ Although some clans like the Danyang Taos may only have held such high status at the local level—Danyang was situated very near to Changshu—a quick examination of Figure 2.2 makes clear that most choronyms for clans not appearing on the C list referred to places hundreds of miles away.

To explain the numerous unlisted clans mentioned in late-ninth century epitaphs, one must assume the existence of a more inclusive list (or at least of a broader conception of great clan membership). Like list C, this hypothetical list would have included families who no longer had any influence in the provinces. It is possible that the Dunhuang lists were not up-to-date because Dunhuang was already under Tibetan occupation by the time the lists were copied down. More likely, however, membership in the aristocracy—that is the body of families deemed sufficiently prestigious to be identified by both surname and choronym—was expanding rapidly by the late ninth century; authors of clan lists could not keep up. In any case, what is clear is that the exclusivity of the old aristocracy was being watered down at the provincial level by the absorption of an ever increasing number of new clans.

At the same time, despite the increasing numbers of aristocratic clans, provincial elite society included a plethora of claims to descent from the small number of very prestigious families. Among late ninth-century Hebei epitaphs, nearly half of individuals with choronyms purported descent from one of the top sixteen most politically powerful clans; among Jiangnan/Huainan epitaphs from the same period,

⁶⁹ See the epitaphs for Ms. Yang 羊氏(陶) (802-860), Tao Daiqian 陶待虔 (d.849), and Ms. Yan 嚴氏(吳) (829-861).

about one third claimed such prestigious ancestry (see Figure 2.4). Whether or not these claims were valid, one sees that a large number of provincial elites found it desirable to claim family ties with the most prominent officeholders. Thus, on the one hand, one sees the dilution of the exclusivity of the old aristocracy as the list of member families (presumably including clans that had long since fallen from high status) gradually expanded. On the other hand, claims to descent from the sixteen most influential officeholding families were widespread in the provinces. In both cases, it was ultimately an officeholding heritage that determined status. Yet this fact does not mean that prestige was defined by success in office alone. Rather, typical of a mentality that can be described only as aristocratic, the persistent use of choronyms indicates that individuals in the provinces viewed *descent* from officeholders as critical to the self-identity of their status group. Unlike in Song times, when rags-to-riches stories were heralded, pedigree remained the most significant marker of status throughout the Tang.⁷⁰

2.3. Legitimacy of great clan claims

But how accurate were such claims? If not purely fictive, to what extent were they the result of an optimistic revision of family history?⁷¹ Returning to Figure 2.3, one is struck by the fact that in both Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan, nine out of ten epitaphs claim that the deceased was the scion of a great clan. There are in fact cases of

⁷⁰ For a description of the praise of poverty under the Song, see Beverly J. Bossler, *Powerful Relations: Kinship, Status, and the State in Sung China (960-1279)*, (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, 1998), 17-18.

⁷¹ I suspect that even false claims to great clan status in tomb epitaphs were not purely made up. Instead, members of the upper class probably tended to believe that the success of their family was in itself proof of a prominent ancestry. Note the tomb epitaph for Liu Hui 劉惠 (772-848). Rather than attribute a single choronym to the Liu family, this epitaph lists three choronyms where great clans surnamed Liu are known to have originated. In this case, the Liu family in question is surely not claiming descent from all three families. Rather, the epitaph seeks to demonstrate the multitude of possible heritages that could have produced a man as successful as the deceased.

contradictory attributions of choronyms. According to his own inscription, Dong Tangzhi 董唐之 (804-858) was descended from the Longxi Dong family. But the epitaph of his wife, Ms. Wang 王氏(董) (824-870), asserts he was from a certain Dong family of Jiyin. Similarly, Song Zaichu 宋再初 (777-858) is said to be from the Song family of Guangping, an attribution confirmed in his wife's epitaph. Yet an inscription composed for Song's uncle Song Ti 宋暹 (735-785), discovered some dozen miles away, explains that the Song family hailed from Julu Commandery.⁷² The claims to aristocratic descent made on behalf of Dong Tangzhi and Song Zaichu are, to say the least, highly suspect.

The data presented in Figures 2.5 and 2.6 might also seem to throw into question a large number of great clan attributions. We note in particular that only 26% of choronyms mentioned in Hebei epitaphs are actually situated in Hebei; and that only 15% of those mentioned in Jiangnan/Huainan epitaphs are located in this region. One might argue that the geographic scope of claimed places of clan origin is simply too expansive to be credible. Explanations for why the family is no longer located at the place designated by the choronym tend to state in the vaguest of terms that some past ancestor moved to the present family home base after serving in office there. The frequency with which provincial elites claimed ties to the very most powerful families—to “marriage-ban” clans as well as the top sixteen officeholding clans (see Figure 2.4)—might cast additional doubt on many of these claims to noble status. Why would

⁷² Song Zaichu's wife was Ms. Cai 蔡氏(宋) (d.846). Note also the spurious claim in Song Zaichu's epitaph of descent from Song Jing 宋璟 (662-737), a chief minister under Emperor Xuanzong. Song Jing was indeed of the Guangping Song 廣平宋 family, but if this family tie were true, it is not credible that no mention would be made in the epitaph for Song Ti, who was born two years before Song Jing died.

choronyms demonstrate blood ties to a few particularly famous families more often than to locally-based clans?

Yet these apparent paradoxes may well have explanations. According to Mao Hanguang, over the course of the Tang dynasty, the top sixteen clans produced a total of 1691 officeholders, representing 21% of all officeholders included in his study.⁷³ Using both biographies and epitaphs, he has demonstrated that the top clans succeeded in maintaining a presence in officialdom even as large numbers of other families were disappearing from view. These top families held both central government and provincial appointments. A quick examination of the genealogies of the families of Tang grand councillors shows how many offspring these men could have.⁷⁴ In a society where the sons born to concubines had the same legal privileges as those born to a wife, a powerful minister could have eight to ten sons, many of whom might serve in the bureaucracy. If we then consider the large numbers of aristocratic clans included on the Dunhuang lists—791 appeared on the C list—and consider the fecundity of some of these families, one is left to wonder, where all the descendants had gone by the late ninth century?

More than likely, a plethora of great clan scions had relocated to the provinces. Lesser branches of such families could probably not afford to stay in the capital regions, where real estate was expensive and land and other resources were likely monopolized by agents of the central government. Moreover, it was not difficult for a family to establish

⁷³ The figure 1691 was tabulated based on data contained in Mao Hanguang, “Tangdai tongzhi jieceng shehui biandong,” 147-150. The total number of officeholders examined in Mao’s study is 7869 (see notes to Figure 2.1). Here it is convenient that most of Mao’s epitaphs are from Luoyang or Chang’an. Inscriptions from the two Tang capitals are so frequently corroborated by independent documentary evidence that the validity of great clan claims are unlikely to be questioned.

⁷⁴ See XTS, chapters 71-75.

a new local base after a term of appointment in the provinces. As will be described in Chapter Four, bureaucrats commonly relocated permanently to a place where they had served in office. Presumably, an official's government appointment gave him ample opportunities to accumulate local resources and integrate into local social networks. Even if he himself did return to the capital, one of his sons might establish a new home base there.

In some cases, we have solid evidence of one branch of a great family relocating to the provinces from the capital. As attested by his tomb epitaph, Yan Moudao 顏謀道 (642-721) of the Wangye Yan family was buried in the hills north of Luoyang. However, the tomb of his fourth-generation descendant, Youming 幼明 (785-866), was found several hundred miles to the southeast in Changshu. It is not clear when or for what reasons Youming's branch of the family moved south. Consider also the example of Linghu Huaibin 令狐懷斌 (834-858), scion of the Linghu family from Dunhuang. His fourth-generation ancestor was Linghu Zhang 令狐彰 (d.773), a prominent general who initially rose to power in An Lushan's rebel government. The epitaph of Huaibin's great uncle, Linghu Mei 令狐梅 (793-854), proves that at least one branch of the family sought burial in the capital city of Luoyang. Huaibin, on the other hand, was buried in Bozhou (in southern Hebei), the prefecture where his great grandfather had served as county magistrate in the 770s. No doubt some members of the family reestablished themselves there permanently.

Additional indirect evidence supports the validity of many of the claims to aristocratic descent in the provinces among those for whom tomb inscriptions have been found. Occasionally, in the very same epitaph, one affine (daughter-in-law or

son-in-law) is said to be a member of a great clan (i.e., she or he is identified by surname and choronym), whereas another one is not (i.e., she or he is identified by surname alone).⁷⁵ If great clan attributions were fabricated by the family of the deceased or even by the author of the epitaph, why would choronyms not have been assigned to all affines mentioned in the epitaph? A more careful comparison of the regional distribution of choronyms for Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan epitaphs is also suggestive. Among Hebei epitaphs, 69% of choronyms are situated in the northwest or far north (Guanzhong, Hedong, or Hebei) and 31% in regions further south (Henan, Huaibei, Jiangnan, or Huainan); among Jiangnan/Huainan epitaphs, 41% of choronyms are located in the northwest or far north and 59% in regions further south (see Figure 2.6). Figure 2.5 depicts this same trend graphically: the geographic distribution of choronyms was concentrated more to the north in the case of northern (Hebei) epitaphs and more to the south in the case of southern (Jiangnan/Huainan) epitaphs. If choronyms were fabricated in order to claim blood ties to a prominent clan, one would not expect the trend represented in Figure 2.5—instead, one would expect uniformity of pattern, as all elites needing a pedigree adopted the highest-status choronyms associated with their surnames. A more likely explanation is that many, if not most, claims to choronyms were legitimate and the result of an ancestral migration—in which case, for example, one would expect that most migrants arriving in Jiangnan had come from no further away than Huaibei.

Additionally, if one examines marriage patterns involving the seven most prestigious clans, one finds that marriage-ban lineages were more likely to have affines identified by surname and choronym (see Figure 2.7). Again, it is unlikely that this

⁷⁵ See the epitaphs of Li Rang 李讓 (793-850), He Fu 何俛 (801-866), Huang Gongjun 黃公俊 (803-878), and Ma Liang 馬良 (810-883).

represents an editorial decision by the author of the epitaph: why would the author more likely assign choronyms to the affines of a marriage-ban clan? A more likely explanation is simply that the seven most prestigious clans really did have more status in the provinces and could engage in more advantageous marriage ties—that is, marriage-ban clans were more likely to intermarry with families that could claim great clan descent. If these seven clans could attract more desirable sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, it is unlikely that their claims to a choronym were deemed fictive by their contemporaries.

Finally, the plausibility of a number of claims to choronyms is bolstered by specific references to extant clan genealogies. Consider Ms. Dou 竇氏(王) (d.879), buried in Hebei, but allegedly descended from the Dou family of Fufeng (in Guanzhong). According to her epitaph, her eminent ancestors grace the pages of the historical records (史載) and the family genealogy (家譜).⁷⁶ In other cases, an epitaph reveals in-depth knowledge of distant ancestry that presupposes the survival of a genealogy. We learn, for example, that the 34th-generation ancestor of Yan Haowen 閻好問 (810-873), of the Henan Yan family, was named Zhi 芝 and had served as governor in Sichuan; his 23rd-generation ancestor was named Ding 鼎 and had once been prefect of Jizhou.⁷⁷ If a family is knowledgeable to this degree of its distant ancestry, claims to great clan

⁷⁶ For other similar examples, see the epitaphs of Xu Zhi 許贄 (809-852), Ms. Chen 陳氏(王) (832-856), Yao Jixian 姚季仙 (787-863), Zhao Congyi 趙從一 (792-868), Ren Xuan 任玄 (812-868), Gu Qian 顧謙 (806-872), Yue Bangsui 樂邦穗 (827-877), Luo Qian 駱潛 (848-884), and Ms. Wei 衛氏(吳) (844-886).

⁷⁷ For other examples of inscriptions that reveal knowledge of ancestry beyond the fourth generation, see the epitaphs of Tao Daiqian 陶待虔 (d.849), Ms. Zhang 張氏(李) (795-855), Zhou Yu 周瓊 (787-856), He Hongjing 何弘敬 (806-865), Daxi Cao 達奚草 (795-866), Wen Lingshou 溫令綬 (806-874), and Cui Yisun 崔貽孫 (859-880).

descent would seem more credible. Although not all claims made by provincial elites to great clan descent were true, and in some cases there is particularly strong reason for doubt, not all such assertions should be discounted. In fact, it was probably the very existence in the provinces of so many genuine descendants of great clans that made it plausible for a minority of elites to concoct such prestigious connections.

2.4. The northeastern and southeastern aristocracies

Although it is clear that the majority of choronyms encountered in provincial epitaphs referred to pre-Tang commanderies located far from the site of burial, it is worth investigating to what extent scions of the old northeastern or southeastern aristocracies (based largely in Hebei and the Lower Yangzi, respectively) still resided at their original bases of power. In other words, did any of the provincial power structure from the Period of Disunity survive to the end of the ninth century? As shown in Figure 2.6, only 26% of choronyms mentioned in Hebei epitaphs denote locations situated within this province. But even this figure overestimates the number of individuals with plausible ties to the original clan locale. Since the three dominant military provinces in Hebei (Youzhou, Chengde, and Weibo) were autonomous, it is not likely that a clan could have maintained property in one province and resided in another.⁷⁸ If one further localizes Hebei choronyms, one finds that, of 45 Hebei individuals claiming descent from Hebei great clans in the period 850 to 890, only three were based in their prefectures of origin; only ten were based in their military provinces of origin (Figure 2.8). In other words,

⁷⁸ Abundant scholarship has confirmed that the Tang central government in the ninth century had virtually no influence over the appointment of military governors in Youzhou, Chengde, and Weibo. Even more important, as I will show in a future study, it is clear from late Tang epitaphs that officeholders who lived and were buried in these three provinces were rotated to appointments located strictly within their provinces of residence. In other words, as a general rule, Hebei elites had no political power outside of the military provinces where they were buried.

only 2% (3/174) of great clan claimants mentioned in Hebei epitaphs were buried in the prefectures of clan origin; and only 6% (10/174) of these individuals were in the appropriate military province and could plausibly have still controlled estates at the clan's original home base. Thus, by the late Tang, the Hebei-based northeastern aristocracy had little presence or influence in northeastern elite society.

One example is particularly revealing. Cui Fangjian 崔方揀 (779-861) of the Boling Cui family was buried in Jingjing 井陘 County (in Chengde military province). Although the seat of the defunct Boling Commandery was situated less than one hundred kilometers to the northeast, it was nevertheless in the neighboring prefecture. Another Cui from Jingjing, undoubtedly a relative, was Cui Xinggong 崔行功 (d.674). The ancestry of this branch of the family is clarified in Xinggong's biographies, preserved in the standard histories of the Tang.⁷⁹ His great grandfather Borang 伯讓 moved away from Boling in the late sixth century as a result of a bureaucratic appointment further south. It is particularly telling that moving even such a relatively short distance from the home base of the clan required an explanation. Moreover, this explanation involved officeholding. One can imagine that wherever Borang had been appointed, he would have relocated his family there. Although his descendants lived less than a hundred kilometers from Boling, still within the Hebei region, this family's situation was not directly and continuously linked to a pre-Tang power structure.

What happened to the northeastern aristocracy? David Johnson and Patricia Ebrey have shown that two of the most prestigious Hebei clans, the Zhaojun Lis and the

⁷⁹ For one other example of a clan descendant buried within this prefecture (originally called Hengzhou 恆州, later renamed Zhenzhou 鎮州), see the epitaph of Ms. Zheng 鄭氏(崔), buried in 717, whose husband was a Boling Cui.

Boling Cuis, mentioned above, relocated in large numbers to Luoyang.⁸⁰ But it is not clear why lesser branches of these families could not have preserved their high status at the clan's place of origin. One possibility is that, as Hebei was the home base of An Lushan and his rebel army in the mid-eighth century, An Lushan's followers were able to coopt land from the native Hebei elites, who were at that point largely still descendants of the northeastern great clans. Subsequently, the independent military governments that arose in Hebei actively crushed any remaining independent bases of political power. In fact, it is well-known that the earliest post-An Lushan military governors of Youzhou, Chengde, and Weibo had all been important generals in the rebel regime.⁸¹ Even in the late ninth-century, epitaphs reveal the continuing prominence of some descendants of An Lushan followers. For example, Daxi Cao 達奚草 (795-866) was the grand nephew of Daxi Xun 達奚珣 (d.757), a prominent civilian collaborator who was executed after the rebellion was suppressed.⁸² Linghu Huaibin 令狐懷斌 (834-858) was the fourth-generation descendant of a general who had served under An Lushan's successor, Shi Siming 史思明 (d.761).⁸³ Finally, Zhang Da 張達 (811-883) was the grandson of the tribal chief Zhang Xiaozhong 張孝忠 (730-791), who had fought with An Lushan before submitting to loyalist forces.⁸⁴ But although the impact of the An Lushan

⁸⁰ David Johnson, "The Last Years of a Great Clan," 32-40; Patricia Ebrey, *The Aristocratic Families of Early Imperial China*, 91-93.

⁸¹ C. A. Peterson, "Court and Province in Mid- and Late T'ang," *The Cambridge History of China*, ed. Denis Twitchett, Vol. 3, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 485.

⁸² Daxi Xun was the Tang governor of Henan when he surrendered the city to An Lushan in 755. See XTS 5:151. Under the Yan dynasty (as the rebels would name their regime), Daxi rose to the rank of grand councillor. See XTS 225 上:6418. For his subsequent execution, see XTS 6:160.

⁸³ The ancestor in question was Linghu Zhang 令狐彰 (d.789).

⁸⁴ For one final example, see the epitaph of Cheng Shiyong 程士庸 (804-881), whose ancestors served An Lushan and then became military governors of Henghai (later renamed Yichang) until this province reverted to central government control.

Rebellion and subsequent political autonomy on the Hebei upper class was significant, a more definitive explanation for the disappearance of the northeastern aristocracy from their original base of power would require a broader inquiry into the provincial elite society of the early Tang.

The situation in the south of China was quite similar. Only 15% of choronyms mentioned in Jiangnan/Huainan epitaphs refer to a location in Jiangnan/Huainan. It is well documented that a number of prominent northern families had migrated south as early as the fourth century, and thus could be considered part of the pre-Tang power structure in the south. These so-called "emigré clans" had accompanied the Western Jin regime in its flight south in 317 C.E. and had later taken full advantage of their political clout at the Eastern Jin court to accumulate large tracts of land.⁸⁵ Indeed, several of the top officeholding families of the Eastern Jin, including the Chenjun Xies, the Chenjun Yuans, the Yingchuan Yus, the Runan Zhous, and, the clan that dominated the government at this time beyond all others, the Wangye Wangs, were all originally from Huaibei.⁸⁶ Individuals mentioned in Jiangnan/Huainan tomb epitaphs dating to the late Tang include six Wangye Wangs and four Runan Zhous. In addition, the epitaphs for Ms. Hou Luoniang 侯羅娘(王) (778-852), Ms. Xun 荀氏(陳) (809-854), and Huang Gongjun 黃公俊 (803-878) all claim that the deceased's ancestors took part in the Eastern Jin migration. Finally, the family of Xu Zhi 許贄 (809-852) is said to have

⁸⁵ Patricia Ebrey, *The Aristocratic Families of Early Imperial China*, 20-21; David Johnson, *The Medieval Chinese Oligarchy*, 43.

⁸⁶ For the list of top officeholding families under the Eastern Jin, see Mao Hanguang, "Tangdai tongzhi jieceng shehui biandong," 227. For more on the particular preeminence of the Wangye Wangs, see Zhang Zhaokai 張兆凱, "Dong Jin Nanchao Wang Xie liang da qiaoxing shizu shengshuai tanxi 東晉南朝王、謝兩大橋姓士族盛衰探析," *Xiangtan shifan xueyuan xuebao* 湘潭師範學院學報 1996.1: 1-6.

come south even earlier, at the end of the Han.⁸⁷ Adding these fourteen individuals to the data from Figure 2.6, one finds that, as with Hebei, only about a quarter ($37/154 = 24\%$) of individuals with choronyms mentioned in Jiangnan/Huainan epitaphs made claim to descent from clans already entrenched in this region centuries before the founding of the Tang.

To be sure, unlike in Hebei, the southern great clans still inhabiting southern China appear to have existed in relative continuity with the pre-Tang political and social structure. If one localizes the choronyms attributed to southern elites, one finds that native southern great clans (specifically families claiming the Lower Yangzi choronyms Wujun, Wuxing, and Danyang) are disproportionately ($17/20 = 85\%$) found on epitaphs from Suzhou prefecture, an area which corresponds to the pre-Tang commandery of Wujun. On the other hand, Eastern Jin emigré clan descendants are disproportionately ($11/14 = 79\%$) referred to in epitaphs from metropolitan Jinling 金陵 (modern-day Nanjing), Runzhou (modern-day Zhenjiang), and Yangzhou, all core areas of the Lower Yangzi macroregion. Looking at the overall representation of local and emigré great clans epitaphs from Changshu (in a peripheral area of the Lower Yangzi), one finds that, in the period 850 to 900, 38% ($19/50$) of individuals with choronyms were claiming descent from a local or emigré great clan (see Figure 2.9). Of these, the choronyms most frequently encountered in Changshu were those of Wujun (i.e. Suzhou prefecture where Changshu was situated) or Danyang (which directly neighbored Changshu to the west). Thus, unlike in Hebei, in the south—and especially in the Lower Yangzi

⁸⁷ Although Xu Zhi was said to be of the Gaoyang Xu clan, his family apparently relocated to Runzhou in the late Han. See Lin Bao 林寶, *Yuanhe xingzuan*, which confirms that a branch of the Gaoyang Xu family relocated to Jinling 晉陵 (modern-day Changzhou).

periphery—there was a sizable population of great clan descendants who had apparently never left their original power base. One exemplary scion of this old aristocracy was Gu Qian 顧謙 (806-872), who had once served as a county magistrate in the north, but who would retire and then die at his home in Huating County, Suzhou Prefecture. Himself of the Wujun Gu family, his mother was a Wujun Lu, one son-in-law was a Wujun Zhang, and another son-in-law a Wuxing Yao. Thus, Gu Qian's social network included three of the four Wujun (i.e. Suzhou) great clans appearing on Johnson's A and E lists, as well as one of the two most prominent clans from Wuxing (i.e. Huzhou), which faced Suzhou on the opposite banks of Lake Tai.⁸⁸

How does one explain the enduring presence in the south of families apparently entrenched in the local elite for at least seven hundred years? Unlike Hebei, the Lower Yangzi was not affected by a mid-Tang upheaval of the magnitude of the An Lushan Rebellion. Elite families that did manage to survive into the Tang had fair chances of preserving their high status for several additional generations. Perhaps, more importantly, no local political power structures would develop in the Lower Yangzi that could coopt and monopolize local resources with the efficiency of the Hebei military governments. Southern aristocratic families faced a very different threat: the influx of immigrants arriving with the great north-to-south demographic shift already well under way by the ninth century. More than likely, local great clans were diluted or displaced in the Yangzi River - Grand Canal Corridor, beginning with the appearance of the emigré clans of the Eastern Jin, who probably settled in the vicinity of the new capital city of Jinling. Indeed, descendants of the most powerful of all emigré clans, the Langye

⁸⁸ The other prominent clan from Wuxing that is referred to frequently in documentary sources was surnamed Shen.

Wangs, are believed to have been buried in the northern outskirts of Jinling continuously for a half millennium after their initial arrival in the fourth century.⁸⁹ With the appearance of a new wave of immigrants in the Tang, the old entrenched clans were often able to survive only by relocating to the macroregional periphery, regions such as Changshu County. Indeed, data from epitaphs confirms that they survived here in large numbers to the very end of the Tang and even well into the tenth century (see Figure 2.9).⁹⁰

Nevertheless, even in the south, where as many as a quarter of elites were descendants of the entrenched pre-Tang upper class, the majority of claimants to aristocratic descent—that is, the remaining three-quarters of individuals identified by surname and choronym in Jiangnan/Huainan epitaphs—were from northern clans not known to have participated in the Eastern Jin migration. Whether their claims to great clan choronyms were accurate or fictive, most provincial elites in both Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan were not representatives of the pre-Tang local aristocracy. While still very influential at court and quite possibly well represented in numerous provincial regions all over China, they were no longer dominant political and social forces at their *original* home bases. The old northeastern aristocracy had nearly vanished from provincial northeastern elite society, while the power and influence of the old

⁸⁹ The tomb of Ms. Hou Luoniang 侯羅娘 (778-852), wife of a Langye Wang, was found in a region north of Jinling where numerous Langye Wang tombs of the Six Dynasties Period have been found. See Li Xuelai 李學來, “Jiangsu Nanjing shi chutu de Tangdai Langye Wang shi jiazhu muzhi 江蘇南京市出土的唐代瑯琊王氏家族墓志,” *Kaogu* 2002.5: 479. For a description of the Six Dynasties’ tombs in question, see Wang Qufei 王去非 and Zhao Chao 趙超, “Nanjing chutu Liuchao muzhi zongkao 南京出土六朝墓誌綜考,” *Kaogu* 1990.10: 943-51, 60.

⁹⁰ Robert Hartwell has observed that Lower Yangzi counties situated away from the Grand Canal, with Changshu County as a case in point, did not undergo rapid population growth until the late eighth and even ninth centuries, at a time when population growth in core regions of the Lower Yangzi was already beginning to slow down. See Robert M. Hartwell, “Demographic, Political, and Social Transformations of China, 750-1550,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42.2 (1982): 391.

southeastern clans seem to have persisted only in the macroregional periphery of the Lower Yangzi region.

It is of course possible that those members of the old aristocracy known to have relocated to the Tang capital cities of Luoyang or Chang'an might have maintained estates in their home locales, managed by agents who would forward revenue to the capital.⁹¹ But this would seem unlikely for several reasons. In the case of Hebei, as argued at length in the previous chapter, the independent governments which evolved there were highly successful in monopolizing local resources, all but ruling out the possibility of maintaining provincial estates there while residing in or near the capital. In any case, in China, the most likely agent responsible for managing an estate would have been a family or clan member. Thus, the virtual absence of clansmen in the original home prefectures of the family largely precludes the possibility that capital elites still controlled significant land holdings in the provincial countryside. Finally, in the case of Jiangnan, where we do see surviving clan descendants, transferring rent payments to a far-away capital was probably technically unfeasible. Most capital elites were best represented by the mid-ninth century minister Li Deyu 李德裕 (787-849) and his family. It is known that, despite hailing from a Hebei great clan, neither Li nor his father owned property outside

⁹¹ To illustrate the possible results of relocation to a capital, I will turn to two examples far removed from the topic of this study in both time and space. The Marquis de Lafayette, one of the most powerful men in eighteenth-century France, lived in Paris and very rarely returned to his native Auvergne; yet he did own land there, as well as in several other provinces of France. On the other hand, when the Roncherolles family, originally from Normandy, began to spend more time in Paris over the course of the eighteenth century, they ended up selling most of their provincial estates, investing instead in the resources and social connections available only in the capital. But in any case, the Lafayettes and the Roncherolles lived in a far more stable and centralized state with a substantially more developed system of monetary transfer. See Louis Gottschalk and Margaret Maddox, *Lafayette in the French Revolution: Through the October Days*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 19, 20; Jonathan Dewald, *Pont-St-Pierre 1398-1789: Lordship, Community, and Capitalism in Early Modern France*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 166-167.

of Chang'an and Luoyang.⁹²

In conclusion, what is most striking about provincial elites of the late Tang is that, despite a prevalent interest in proclaiming one's descent from the pre-Tang aristocracy, it was without doubt the state and officialdom that defined high status. Capital elites benefited more directly from the resources of the central government. But to an increasing degree, the old pre-Tang provincial clans were replaced in number by the descendants of more recent government appointees, themselves great clan scions but usually from other parts of China. This process was particularly marked in Hebei, where the locally-based independent military governments were far more successful than the central government in monopolizing local resources.

2.5. Survival of genealogies and genealogical knowledge

David Johnson has described in some detail what he believes to have been a “disruption of the genealogical tradition” between the Tang and the Song dynasties. Based primarily on contemporary Northern Song commentaries, Johnson concludes that a new interest in genealogical research in the eleventh century represented the “resuscitation of a dead tradition,” a tradition already largely defunct by the mid-ninth century, at which time most of the genealogies of the families of chief ministers preserved in *Xin Tang shu* decline significantly in thoroughness.⁹³ One problem with this argument is that, as Johnson himself observes, the *Xin Tang shu* genealogies were largely derived from national histories compiled in Tang times.⁹⁴ The quality of historical material preserved in the national histories deteriorated precipitously after the mid-ninth century, such that both *Jiu Tang shu* and *Xin Tang shu* have very poor coverage

⁹² David Johnson, “The Last Years of a Great Clan,” 60.

⁹³ David Johnson, “The Last Years of a Great Clan,” 55-59.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 58.

of the last fifty years of the Tang on all matters. I have already demonstrated that genealogies were commonly maintained in the late ninth century. Below, I will argue that the survival of a similar genealogical tradition is evident in the tenth century.

To be sure, already in the tenth-century, there are accounts of the physical loss of clan genealogies. According to the epitaph of Ms. Yuan 元氏(石) (895-952) of Luoyang, for example, her ancestry was unknown because her clan genealogy had been lost when most of her family perished in the turmoil of the late Tang. But claims of lost genealogies were not new in the tenth century. A hundred years earlier, the author of Li Rong's 李榮 (792-857) tomb inscription complained that the Li family genealogy had disappeared during the An Lushan Rebellion.⁹⁵ Yet there is no question that genealogical traditions were still maintained in the ninth century.

In fact, allusions to surviving family genealogies are found in numerous tenth-century epitaphs, including the epitaphs of Ms. Li 李氏(韓) (864-913) who was buried in Luoyang, Yao Sipian 姚嗣駢 (893-942) and Liu Chongjun 劉崇俊 (907-946) buried in Huainan, and Zhou Tinggou 周廷構 (901-966) and Yi Wenyun 易文贇 (894-968) buried in Jiangnan.⁹⁶ Similarly, the survival of genealogies is implied in some inscriptions by the in-depth account of the deceased's ancestry. In Jiangnan, the

⁹⁵ The epitaph of Wang Rui 王睿 (810-872) also blames the An Lushan Rebellion for the loss of genealogical knowledge. Similarly, according to the epitaph of Ms. Wang 王氏(董) (824-870), her family had also lost their genealogy, though when this would have happened is not explained.

⁹⁶ For other accounts of surviving Tang genealogies in the Song period, see Robert P. Hymes, *Statesmen and Gentlemen: The Elite of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi, in Northern and Southern Sung*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 289, n.17; David Johnson, "The Last Years of a Great Clan," 58; Zhang Shinan 張世南, *Youhuan jiwèn 游宦紀聞*, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997), 86. Finally, note that the bibliographic chapters of the *Song shi*, which are generally understood to reflect the collections of the Palace Library, list the titles of 110 genealogies, many of which certainly dated to the Tang period. See SS 204:5148-5152. By contrast, the bibliographic chapters of the *Old Tang History* list only 55 genealogies. See JTS 46:2012-2013.

epitaphs of both Sun Yansi 孫彥思 (865-916) and Tao Renzhe 陶仁慙 (941-983) name their 19th-generation ancestor; and the inscriptions for Miao Yanlu 苗延祿 (891-951) and Jia Tan 賈潭 (881-948) both identify their 6th- and 7th-generation ancestors. In the north, the epitaphs of Mao Zhang 毛璋 (882-929) and Liu Cungui 劉存規 (d.955) record the names and titles of their 18th- and 24th-generation ancestors, respectively. Although biographies in the dynastic histories very rarely list distant ancestors, a few exceptions suggest that the compilers of *Song shi* also had access to fairly impressive genealogical records. The biography of Chen Fang 陳昉 (d. c.970), for example, traces his ancestry back eight generations (and also identifies his thirteenth-generation ancestor).⁹⁷

In conclusion, the decline in genealogical traditions described by eleventh-century Chinese observers was, I believe, not as precipitous as one might imagine. The ancestral records of many clans survived the tumult of the tenth century; funerary inscriptions of this period continued to display knowledge, sometimes quite sophisticated, of the deceased's ancestry. Finally, in a certain number of cases, genealogical knowledge was probably preserved as an oral tradition. The Song literatus Han Pu 韓溥 (d. c.991), descendant of an eighth-century chief minister, had an expertise on the old Tang clans that earned him the nickname of “contemporary human genealogical dictionary” (近世肉譜).

Thus, the new lineage genealogies that first began to appear in the eleventh century were not *de novo* creations. Although not all lineages could trace their ancestry

⁹⁷ Not surprisingly, the descendants of Confucius claimed even more impressive knowledge of their ancestry. Kong Yi 孔宜 (941-986), for example, is identified as the Sage's 44th-generation descendant.

back to a Tang great clan—and in fact, the earliest ancestors listed in many Late Imperial lineage genealogies date to the Song period—it is very likely that a number of families could. Some lineages with cloudier pasts undoubtedly spliced their ancestry onto the surviving genealogical records of another clan of the same surname.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, despite generally-held skepticism, it is likely that substantial portions of pre-Song ancestries recorded in Late Imperial genealogies preserve data originally culled from the family records of the old Tang great clans.⁹⁹

2.6. Aristocratic mentality in the tenth century

As David Johnson has pointed out, the large numbers of progeny of the most powerful officeholding clans probably ensured that many biological descendants of the

⁹⁸ For an in-depth account of the splicing of a family's ancestry onto pre-existing genealogies in Ming times, see Michael Szonyi, "Practicing Kinship: Lineage and Descent in Late Imperial China," (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002). A likely Tang-period example of this same phenomenon involves Song Zaichu 宋再初 (777-858), whose claim to great clan descent was called into question earlier in this chapter on the basis of contradictions between his own epitaph and descriptions of the family ancestry included in the epitaph composed for his uncle Song Ti 宋暹 (735-785). Song Ti's epitaph makes no mention of descent from an early eighth-century chief minister, Song Jing 宋璟 (662-737), who is claimed as an ancestor by Zaichu. Moreover, the choronym Zaichu assumes contradicts Ti's epitaph, clearly in order to accord with Song Jing's clan history. What is interesting is that Zaichu's epitaph, besides making the fictive claim to an eminent ancestor, specifically mentions the existence of a clan genealogy. Undoubtedly, this genealogy was reconstructed in the first half of the ninth century, after the death of Zaichu's uncle, presumably on the basis of genealogical information then in circulation.

⁹⁹ I believe it would be possible to reconstruct certain Tang great clan genealogies through a careful collation of a very large number of extant Late Imperial genealogies of a particular surname. Many Late Imperial genealogies trace the lineage's ancestry to a Song forebear, the so-called founding ancestor (先祖). Preceding the lengthy and comprehensive post-Song genealogical tables is usually a generational chart tracing the family backwards from the founding ancestor to the very earliest mythic origins of the clan. The pre-Song portion of the ancestry was credibly derived originally from a Tang great clan genealogy that survived into the Song period. Some promising genealogies on which to base a future study would include Chen Zhaoji 陳肇基, et al., eds., *Chen shi zongpu* 陳氏宗譜, 1907 (Shanghai Library 6255/A); Chen Runzong 陳潤宗, et al., eds., *Piling Chen shi xuxiu zongpu* 毗陵陳氏續修宗譜, 1904 (Shanghai Library JP1079); Cheng Minzheng 程敏政, ed., *Xin'an Cheng shi tongzong shipu* 新安程氏統宗世譜, 1482 (Shanghai Library, 911064-65). The latter is an interesting case because the editor, Cheng Minzheng, was also the editor of *Xin'an wenxian zhi* 新安文獻志 (reproduced in *Ying yin Wenyuange siku quanshu*, Vol. 1375) a corpus of literary works by natives of Xin'an (modern-day Hefei) or, as it turns out, their forebears. The original transcription of the epitaph of the Hebei native Cheng Shiyong 程士庸 (804-881) appears here.

Tang great clans survived the tenth century, maintaining their elite status well into the Song period. Indeed, an inspection of Changshu epitaphs confirms that, while the Wuxing Gu family seems to disappear from view after the 880s, descendants of the Wujun Lus and Runan Zhous are still well-represented.¹⁰⁰ One specific example of family survival involves Li Rang 李讓 (815-886) and Li Zhang 李章 (864-942), both claiming descent from the Longxi Li clan. Although their parentage cannot be confirmed by the genealogical information in their epitaphs, they were buried in the very same village and so were probably agnates.¹⁰¹

Beverly Bossler has observed a number of changes in epitaph rhetoric from the Tang to the Song that she believes reflects the demise of the great clans and the rise of a new class of scholar bureaucrats whose status depended on success in the civil service examinations. According to Bossler, there was a decline in interest in ancestry and great-clan pedigree (the latter ascertained by the frequency of the use of choronyms). Simultaneously, there was an increasing interest in identifying descendants and praising their success. Finally, there was an inversion in the relationship between social prestige and moral virtue. Under the Tang, pedigree implied virtue; under the Song, upright conduct could confer status even on an individual with no eminent heritage.¹⁰²

Perhaps because of the relative brief span of time considered in the present study (850-1000 C.E.), most of the characteristic developments described by Bossler are not

¹⁰⁰ Changshu epitaphs mentioning a Wujun Lu (a clan native to the surrounding Suzhou prefecture) are dated 855, 873, 874, 920, 943, 953, 960, and 988; those mentioning a Runan Zhou (an "emigré" clan) are dated 802, 843, 882, 943, and 988; on the other hand, those mentioning a Wuxing Gu (another native clan) are dated 824, 828, 843, 847, 851, 860, 863, 873, 874, and 882.

¹⁰¹ Li Rang was buried in Jishan Village, Dunxing Township, Changshu County (常熟縣敦行鄉集善里); Li Zhang was buried in Chongshan Village, Dunxing Township, Changshu County (常熟縣敦行鄉崇善里). It is almost certain that Jishan and Chongshan are alternate names for the same village.

¹⁰² Beverly J. Bossler, *Powerful Relations*, 12-24.

strikingly obvious in Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan epitaphs. Figure 2.10 shows the average number of immediate patrilineal ancestors named in the genealogical passages of epitaphs for three regions of China (Hebei, Jiangnan/Huainan, Luoyang) and two time periods (late Tang vs. post-Turkish invasion). In Hebei and Luoyang, there seems to have been a decline in the value of this index; on the other hand, perhaps because of the disproportionate inclusion of inscriptions composed by a single author (Xu Xuan), who may have had his own idiosyncratic attitudes towards ancestry, there was a slight increase in this same index in the Jiangnan/Huainan region. In fact, the sharper distinction revealed in Figure 2.10 was not temporal, but regional. Whereas the typical Hebei inscription tended to name only the deceased's father and grandfather, it was more common in Luoyang to identify the great grandfather as well. The possible influence Hebei cultural attitudes may have had on Luoyang society will be discussed at the end of this chapter. In addition, although there were no obvious changes in the number of offspring mentioned, nor a notable increase in references to training for or success in the examinations, there was a slight increase over time in Hebei in the number of affines (sons-in-law or daughters-in-law) identified by name (Figure 2.11). This trend was not observed in Jiangnan/Huainan.

On the other hand, it is quite clear that there was never a significant decline in the use of great clan choronyms as pertained to the deceased (Figure 2.12), who was identified by choronym 80% to 90% of the time in both Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan in all time periods (except in Jiangnan/Huainan between 890-921, though in this case the sample size is too small to be significant). Attributions of great clan status did decline in the case of affines (sons-in-law and daughters-in-law). Nevertheless, it is clear that

the cachet of the clan choronym remained significant at least as late as the 990s.¹⁰³

In conjunction with the enduring prestige of the choronym, epitaphs attest to the continuing belief in the inheritance of virtue. We are told in the epitaph of Ms. Yin 殷氏(錢) (915-945), said to be of the Runan Yin clan, that “her family transmitted accumulated virtue and passed on from generation to generation its lofty purity 門傳積善, 世襲高貞.” In the case of Ms. Wang 王氏(李) (d. c. 960) of the Taiyuan Wangs, we learn that she “inherited the distinction of noble and officeholding [ancestors], which was made manifest in her beauty and elegance 襲圭組之英, 發爲秀色.” Finally, in the tenth century, dynastic founders sometimes employed descendants of old families when seeking to secure the legitimacy of their rule. In the epitaph for Zhou Tinggou 周廷構 (901-966), we are told that Emperor Liezu of the Southern Tang was already on the lookout for scions of old families (舊族) even before the coup that brought him to power. According to this inscription, as a scion of the Runan Zhou clan and the descendant of three generations of capital officials, Zhou was assumed to possess the circumspection and talent expected of a bureaucrat.

¹⁰³ This contradicts David Johnson, “The Last Years of a Great Clan,” 52-54. The critical weakness in Johnson’s assessment is his dependency on data from *Song shi*. There are a number of examples indicating that the place of origin given in the *Song shi* biography of a tenth-century figure indicates the place of registration or, at the least, the place where the family resided in the recent past. Great clan origins appear not to be given even in cases when great clan descent is virtually certain. For example, see the biographies of Han Pu 韓溥 (d. c.991) of the Changli Han clan (place of origin in *Song shi* said to be Chang’an) and Yang Zhaojian 楊昭儉 (902-977) of the Hongnong Yang clan (place of origin also said to be Chang’an). Presumably Chang’an was the site of burial and residence for these two families at the end of the Tang and possibly well into the tenth century. Choronyms are similarly concealed in *Shiguo chungqiu*, *Jiu Wudai shi*, and *Xin Wudai shi*.

2.7. Conclusion

Although past scholarship has demonstrated conclusively that a limited number of families dominated medieval government and legitimized their preeminence by their illustrious pedigrees, this chapter has expanded our understanding of those elites through an inquiry on two fronts: first, through an examination of the role of these great clans in the provinces; and second, through a careful study of what happened to these clans immediately after the fall of the Tang. On the one hand, I have demonstrated the pervasiveness of claims to great clan descent in local society, both in Hebei in the north and in Jiangnan/Huainan in the south. Some of these claims were probably fabricated, but many others were undoubtedly true. Lesser branches of great clans probably relocated to the provinces after a failure to secure central government employment had limited their access to economic resources at the capital. But regardless of the accuracy of the claims to aristocratic ancestry, the widespread geographic distribution of great clan choronyms among provincial elites indicates that the pre-Tang aristocratic families no longer maintained a dominant and exclusive presence at their original bases of power. Except in certain peripheral regions of the south, where native clans appear to have survived, those descendants of great clans who did survive in the provinces were, by and large, recent immigrants, whose ancestors had probably relocated to the site of a provincial government appointment. On the other hand, I have argued that certain aspects of the Tang aristocratic value system *did* survive the tenth-century interregnum. There is no doubt that large numbers of the biological descendants of these clans were still present after the founding of the Song and that many had succeeded in maintaining their high status. It is also clear that the clan genealogies and the genealogical tradition

survived, as did the cachet of the great clan choronyms, and the belief that eminent ancestry implied virtue and even physical beauty.

And nevertheless, something unquestionably did change between the Tang and the Song. The aristocratic mentality I have described eventually did wane, as Patricia Ebrey, Beverly Bossler, and David Johnson have demonstrated, though many aspects of this cultural change probably did not become widespread in society until the eleventh century. Perhaps more dramatic was the overthrow of the Tang capital elites, solidly entrenched in the metropolitan regions surrounding Chang'an and Luoyang. The full scope of this latter transformation is not yet clear because the present study has focused only on the provinces. But even a cursory overview of late Tang epitaphs from Luoyang makes it clear that the most powerful officeholders at the capital indeed constituted an “oligarchy”—to use Johnson’s terminology—to the very end of the Tang. Yet this oligarchy appears to have been far more circumscribed than Johnson has suggested. In particular, the top officeholders by the late Tang were descendants of a very small subgroup of the several hundred families represented on the Dunhuang clan lists. Moreover, only a limited number of lineage branches of those clans remained in residence and buried their dead in the capital.¹⁰⁴ The most successful great clans were prolific and rapidly used up available employment opportunities at the political center, ultimately forcing the majority of their offspring to relocate to the provinces. Here, they took advantage of bureaucratic appointments or, as I will argue in Chapter Four, they

¹⁰⁴ The small subgroup of great clan lineages represented in the capital-based oligarchy is best revealed by the fact that a large percentage of Luoyang epitaphs were composed for individuals whose ancestry can be traced in the genealogical tables of chief ministers included in *Xin Tang shu*. See, in particular, Zhao Chao 趙超, *Xin Tang shu zaixiang shixi biao jijiao* 新唐書宰相世系表集校, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1998), an edition of the genealogical tables collated by one of the foremost authorities on medieval Chinese epitaphs.

bypassed the central government altogether by turning to the independent regimes in Hebei for employment. Once established as officials in the provinces, they could accumulate local resources and integrate into local social networks. These lesser branches, I believe, continued to maintain genealogies and preserve aspects of their old value system, even after they had lost all hope of returning to high officialdom. As Johnson has shown, between the Tang and the Song, the medieval oligarchy was overthrown; by early Song times, the most powerful Tang families were no longer represented at the highest ranks of the bureaucracy.

The central question, then, is how did the small subgroup of the old pre-Tang great clans lose its hold on power? To begin with, as has been argued above, a very high percentage of provincial elites claimed a pedigree as eminent as any claimed at the capital, claims that were certified, moreover, by extensive genealogies preserved (or fabricated) by those provincial elites. Thus, even the persistence of the aristocratic mentality that pedigree determined status, even the survival of this overarching ideology used by the medieval oligarchy to justify its monopolization of power, could no longer guarantee political dominance for the most powerful officeholding lineages. Although the cachet of the great clan choronym endured, choronyms no longer distinguished entrenched capital bureaucrats from provincial elites.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ To get an idea of the possible overall numbers of descendants of the medieval great clans, consider the result of making the following assumptions: a) each clansman had two male offspring who reached adulthood (the most prominent clansmen would have had many more offspring, though the descendants that fell into poverty may have had fewer); b) there were a total of 791 great clans (the number included on Johnson's list C); c) the average age difference between parent and child was 30 years (a figure estimated on the basis of data culled from tomb epitaphs); d) the exponential expansion of the lineages in question began around the year 250 C.E., by which time many of the entrenched great clans had already gained some prominence according to historical sources. Using these assumptions, one discovers that by the year 850, there would have been nearly a billion great clan descendants. This figure is of course absurd given the population of China at the time. What it does show, however, is that it was only resource limitations that checked the size of the old aristocracy.

Nevertheless, despite the dilution in significance of the choronym, the medieval oligarchy did survive to the end of the Tang. What ultimately catalyzed its fall from power was the fact that the top officeholding lineages were too heavily invested in the capital. As demonstrated in this chapter, the old pre-Tang aristocratic clans had lost their local power base and had neither property nor influential social ties in the provinces. In the turmoil of the transitional period, they had no safe haven to which they could retreat.¹⁰⁶ Their high status ultimately depended heavily on two resources: real estate in the vicinity of the capital and family ties to high officialdom. With the downfall of the Tang regime, the value of metropolitan real estate would have plummeted in both of the dynastic capitals. Chang'an became little more than a provincial backwater for centuries after the fall of the Tang. But even in Luoyang, which retained the status of capital under subsequent dynasties (it would become the Western Capital under the Song), the vast majority of high-valued real estate would have been confiscated by the six successive regimes that seized control of North China between 900 and 960. Indeed, the Turkish invasion of 923, which led to the founding of the Later Tang dynasty, dealt a particularly rude blow to the Tang oligarchy. As will be discussed in Chapter Four, a huge influx of Hebei and Hedong immigrant elites accompanied the new regime leaders to Luoyang. These immigrants rapidly assumed the majority of high offices in the capital, leading to the physical replacement of the remaining fragments of the old

By the late Tang, it is credible that descendants of the great clans not only monopolized elite status at both the capital and in the provinces, but they may even have (assuming non-elites reproduced at a significantly lower rate) replaced much of the population of China, such that nearly every individual—elite or not—could legitimately claim an eminent ancestry.

¹⁰⁶ In some cases, it is possible that metropolitan elites could seek haven at the estates of relatives who had relocated to the provinces. For example, at the time of the Later Liang overthrow of the Tang dynasty, Li Yu 李愚 (d.935) fled the capital, residing with a clansman of unclear relation named Li Yanguang 李延光. In general, however, I suspect that provincial relatives of capital elites quickly lost touch with their more prestigious kin. In some sense, it was their inability to preserve a place in the capital social network that forced these families to relocate to the provinces.

entrenched capital elite. With the removal from office of an entire social network of Tang great clans, the descendants of this super-elite had lost its last hold on political power.

Simultaneously, as I propose in the Appendix to this chapter, the sudden arrival of northeasterners at the capital was accompanied by the reproduction of northeastern provincial culture at the center. To prove that the Hebei upper class was less aristocratic in mentality than the Luoyang-based great clans—and that, thus, Hebei elites would have brought with them to the center of power a less aristocratic world view—will require a broad, systematic analysis of Luoyang tomb epitaphs. Nevertheless, I believe it is no coincidence that one of the first direct attacks I have encountered on the old reverence for pedigree appears in a tomb inscription penned in 996 by Liu Kai 柳開 (947-1000), a Song scholar-bureaucrat whose family hailed from Weizhou in Hebei and had accompanied the founding emperor of the Later Tang to Luoyang.¹⁰⁷ In the epitaph, dedicated to Liu Kai's cousin Liu Min 柳閔 (950-984), the author recounts a dialogue in which his interlocutor asks him why the inscriptions he has written for his family members do not describe his lengthy ancestry. In a fitting contrast to Lun Boyan's epitaph in the introduction to this chapter, Liu Kai replies:

At the end of the Tang, when bandits overturned the two capitals, the genealogies of the officials were burned and destroyed. Using one's surname to masquerade as the descendant of a famous old family, this is to muddy things and fail to make distinctions. How can I imitate this practice? If through ability a peddler or a servant becomes useful to his generation and serves as minister to the prince, is he necessarily the son of a famous old family? As for somebody with no ability, even if he is the son of a famous

¹⁰⁷ Liu Kai at times himself claimed ties to the Hedong Liu great clan. In particular, he saw himself as the intellectual successor (if not the veritable descendant) of the *guwen* prose master Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773-819).

family, what does it matter now?

唐季盜覆兩京，衣冠譜牒燼滅。以姓冒古名家已稱後者，都混無別，吾寧敦乎？苟其材，負販廝役，得時用爲王公卿士，是須古名家子耶？其不材，縱名家子，今何謂？¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ QSW 3:705-706.

Appendix. Preliminary observations on the impact of Hebei provincial culture on Luoyang metropolitan society

A full assessment of the cultural impact of the huge numbers of individuals who relocated to Luoyang from Hebei and Hedong after the Turkish invasion of 923 would require a comprehensive examination of Luoyang tomb epitaphs (both the texts of the inscriptions and the iconography of the images and patterns carved onto the cover and the sides of the stones) and poetry from the period 850-1000 C.E., as well as archaeological reports describing metropolitan tombs from the same period. Here, I will only enumerate a few tentative observations. The ultimate importance of these examples will require more extensive study.

1) Tomb architecture: One of the very few datable tenth-century tombs excavated in the Luoyang region is that of Li Jun 李俊 (c.911-946). According to a brief description of the burial chamber, it is said to resemble in many ways a late Tang tomb excavated at Helinger (Inner Mongolia), with a cross-sectional plan in the shape of a twelve-sided polygon. Indeed, round or near-round burial chambers were typical of the far northeast and were uncommon (possibly even unheard of) in Tang Luoyang.¹⁰⁹

2) Dialect variants: One of the most notable changes in rhyming patterns when comparing the *tongyong* categories of *Guangyun* (representing the late form of Early Middle Chinese) to the *she* rhyme groups of Late Middle Chinese, involves the 元, 魂 and 痕 level-tone rhymes (and the corresponding rhymes in the other tones). In the *tongyong* system, these rhymes were combined; in later times, the first of the three (元) was placed in *she* category XIV and the other two in *she* category XIII. With regard to

¹⁰⁹ *Henan kaogu sishi nian* 河南考古四十年, (Zhengzhou: Henan renmin chubanshe, 1994), 378. For more on techniques for decoding tombs of this period, see Dieter Kuhn, "Decoding Tombs of the Song Elite," in *Burial in Song China*, ed. Dieter Kuhn, (Heidelberg: Edition forum, 1994), 11-159.

these three rhymes, the rhymed verses that conclude all epitaphs observed the *she* categories in 13 of 14 cases from Hebei (93%); on the other hand, late Tang Luoyang epitaphs adhered to the older *tongyong* system in 6 of 9 cases (67%). In the period immediately following the Turkish invasion, three out of four examples from Luoyang of these rhymes made use of the newer *she* system, possibly reflecting the influence of dialectical differences in Hebei.¹¹⁰

3) Identity of women: In a sample of Luoyang inscriptions from the 850s, 16 of 40 epitaphs for women (40%) identify their female subjects' given names (諱), cognomens (字), or nicknames (號). Without exception, Hebei epitaphs identify women only by their surnames. The Luoyang tradition of sometimes providing women with a personal identity appears to have vanished by the tenth century. Again, this may reflect the influence of Hebei culture on elite life in Luoyang.

4) Purchase of burial land: In a mid-tenth century Luoyang epitaph, there is an account of the purchase of four *mu* of land for the purposes of burial.¹¹¹ I have not yet encountered such explicit references to property in Luoyang inscriptions of the ninth century. On the other hand, burial land was commonly discussed and described in epitaphs from the northeast, especially from southern Hebei.

¹¹⁰ For an explanation of *tongyong* rhyme groups and their relationship to *she* rhyme categories, see Edwin G. Pulleyblank, *Middle Chinese: A Study in Historical Phonology*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984), 138-142. See also an attempt to distinguish northern from southern rhymes in tenth-century poetry: Daniel Bryant, "The Rhyming Categories of Tenth Century Chinese Poetry," *Monumenta Serica* 34 (1979-1980): 319-47.

¹¹¹ See the epitaph of Wang Yuanzhi 王元直 (899-951).

Figure 2.1. Representation in government of top officeholding families by time period

Date range	A	B	C	Others	Total
618-649	11	13	15	201 (84%)	240
650-683	11	13	15	181 (82%)	220
684-709	11	13	15	168 (81%)	207
710-732	11	13	15	153 (80%)	192
733-755	11	13	15	128 (77%)	167
756-779	11	13	15	138 (78%)	177
780-805	11	13	14	134 (78%)	172
806-826	11	13	12	115 (76%)	151
827-846	11	13	10	93 (73%)	127
847-873	11	11	9	59 (66%)	90
874-906	11	9	4	32 (57%)	56

Source: Mao Hanguang, “Tangdai tongzhi jieceng shehui biandong: cong guanli jiating beijing kan shehui liudong,” Ph.D. Thesis, Guoli zhengzhi daxue zhengzhi yanjiusuo, 1968, table 31 (pp.232-233).

Notes: The figures in this table represent the number of different officeholding clans represented in government by period and by category based on data collected from 2647 individuals mentioned in *Jiu Tang shu* and *Xin Tang shu* and 5222 individuals mentioned in Tang-period tomb epitaphs. Clans are identified by surname / choronym combination. “A” refers to the top eleven officeholding clans (in terms of number of individuals known to have served; see Mao, pp.149-151 for a list of these); “B” refers to the next thirteen most important officeholding clans (pp.151-154); “C” refers to the next fifteen most important clans (pp.155-158); “Others” refers to all other clans known to have provided officeholders in any given period of time (pp.158-199).

Figure 2.2. Appearance of clans from epitaphs on Dunhuang clan lists (850-890 C.E.)

HEBEI EPITAPHS

A/E only	A/E+C	C only
河內常, 譙郡龐	京兆田, 京兆韋, 武功蘇, 扶風馬, 扶風竇, 安定梁, 武威安, 武威石, 隴西李, 隴西辛, 天水趙, 河東柳, 太原郭, 太原王, 太原閻, 太原溫, 弘農楊, 渤海高, 廣平宋, 廣平焦, 范陽盧, 上谷侯, 博陵崔, 河間邢, 清河張, 鉅鹿時, 鉅鹿魏, 趙郡李, 潁川許, 潁川于, 滎陽鄭, 譙郡曹, 汝南周, 濟陽董, 濟陽丁, 濮陽吳, 魯國齊, 平昌孟, 東平呂, 樂安孫, 樂安門, 彭城劉, 蘭陵蕭, 瑯琊王, 南陽鄧, 南陽張, 南陽樂, 江夏黃, 廬江何, 吳郡陸, 吳興姚, 吳興施, 長沙茹	京兆秦, 安定胡, 隴西董, 廣平程, 河間劉, 鉅鹿耿, 河南閻, 南陽宗, 長沙羅

NONE

安定張, 武威段, 武威韓, 隴西要, 晉昌論, 金城申, 平陽敬, 高都范, 中山靖, 中山劉, 上谷張, 平盧邵, 武邑蘇, 昌黎韓, 北平田, 汝南韓, 陳郡袁, 廬江舒, 長沙蔡, 蒼梧翟, 敦煌令狐

JIANGNAN/HUAINAN EPITAPHS

A/E only	A/E+C	C only
河東薛	京兆韋, 武功蘇, 扶風馬, 隴西李, 隴西董, 隴西辛, 天水趙, 太原郭, 鴈門解, 弘農楊, 渤海吳, 渤海高, 高陽許, 廣平宋, 范陽盧, 上谷侯, 博陵崔, 清河張, 清河傅, 潁川陳, 潁川荀, 滎陽鄭, 譙郡曹, 汝南周, 汝南袁, 濟陽蔡, 濟陽丁, 濟陽江, 東平呂, 北海晏, 樂安孫, 樂安蔣, 樂安任, 彭城劉, 瑯琊王, 瑯琊顏, 瑯琊葛, 東海徐, 東莞臧, 南陽鄧, 南陽韓, 武陵龔, 江夏黃, 吳郡朱, 吳郡顧, 吳郡張, 吳郡陸, 吳興姚, 吳興施, 會稽虞	河東衛, 西河卜, 太原易, 渤海封, 范陽湯, 河間俞, 江夏費, 吳興錢, 會稽駱

NONE

馮翊嚴, 上郡蔡, 河間夏, 長樂馮, 河南榮, 汝南邵, 魯國儲, 魯國戴, 北海傅, 北海儲, 樂安戎, 彭城洪, 南陽樊, 順陽范, 丹陽陶, 吳郡孫, 豫章萬

Notes: These charts list all choronym-surname combinations that appear in epitaphs from Hebei or Jiangnan/Huainan dating to the period 850-890 C.E., including the deceased and any affines. Only surnames associated with choronyms are included. “A/E” refers to clan lists A and E; “C” refers to clan list C; “NONE” indicates that the clan does not appear on any of the three lists (see David Johnson, *Medieval Chinese Oligarchy*, 217-231). Because lists A and E are very similar in content and both lists are incomplete (i.e. missing entire groups of prefectures), they are treated in combination. A few apparent transcription errors in list C have been corrected. Additional corrections made to the lists follow David Johnson, 211-214.

Figure 2.3. Frequency of attributions of great clan status in Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan epitaphs (850-890 C.E.)

	Hebei	Jiangnan/Huainan	Total
Deceased	90% (79/88)	90% (61/68)	90% (140/156)
Spouse	73% (68/93)	62% (44/71)	68% (112/164)
Other affines	33% (27/83)	64% (43/67)	47% (70/150)
Total	66% (174/264)	72% (148/206)	69% (322/470)

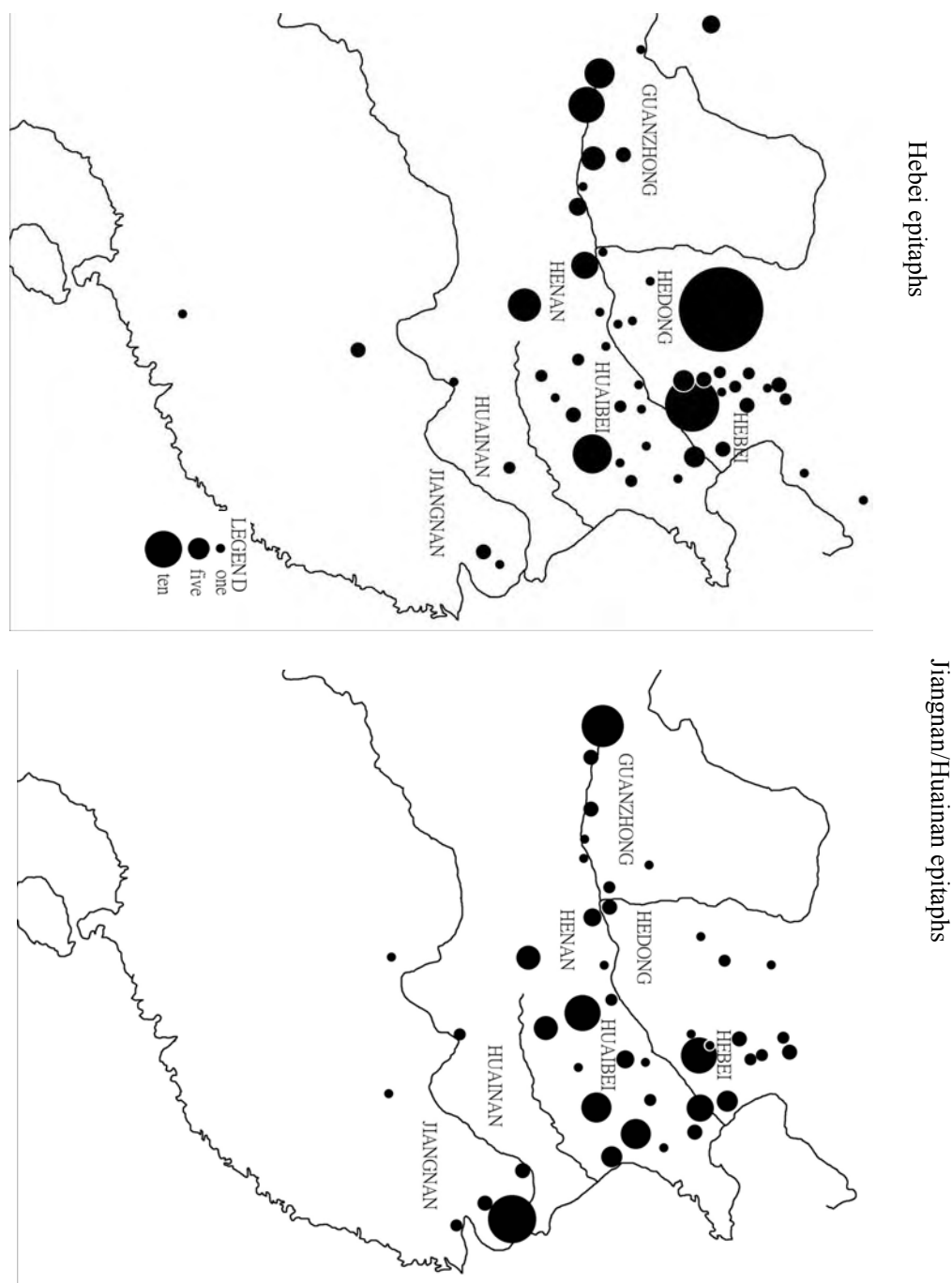
Notes: This table depicts the frequency of attributions of great clan status to individuals mentioned in Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan tomb epitaphs dating to the period 850-890 C.E. Attributions are defined as the use of a choronym. Thus, the fractions represent the ratio of people identified by surname and choronym to people identified only by surname (with no reference to a choronym). “Deceased” refers to the subject of the tomb epitaph; “spouse” refers to the spouse of the deceased; “other affines” refers to sons-in-law and daughters-in-law. Mothers-in-law are not included in this table. In most cases, choronym attributions appear directly before the surname in the text of the epitaph; in some cases, the choronym appears as the ancestral place of origin of the deceased (or, in rare cases, the ancestral place of origin of the spouse of the deceased).

Figure 2.4. Relative prestige of clan attributions in Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan epitaphs (850-890 C.E.)

	Hebei	Jiangnan/Huainan
Seven “marriage-ban” clans	30 (17%)	14 (9%)
Top sixteen officeholding clans	84 (48%)	46 (30%)
Johnson's lists (about 800 clans)	155 (88%)	132 (86%)
Total	176	154

Notes: This figure breaks down by category of clan all individuals with choronyms appearing in Hebei or Jiangnan/Huainan epitaphs dating to the period 850 to 890 C.E. The three categories are the seven “marriage-ban” clans, the top sixteen officeholding clans as identified by Mao Hanguang (which include all of the seven “marriage-ban” clans), and the eight hundred or so clans that appear on one of Johnson’s clan lists (which include all of the top sixteen officeholding clans). Note that somewhere between twelve and fourteen percent of great clans mentioned in epitaphs do not fit into any of the above categories. Finally, note that the total number of attributions in Figure 2.4 does not match the data in Figure 2.3 because mothers-in-law are included in Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.5. Regional distribution of choronyms mentioned in Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan tomb epitaphs (850-890 C.E.)



Notes: These two maps depict the regional distribution of choronyms mentioned in Hebei and in Jiangnan/Huainan epitaphs dating to the period 850-890 C.E. All individual references are included; thus, multiple references to the same clan (same surname / same choronym) would increase the size of the circle set at the respective choronym place.

Figure 2.6. Regional distribution of choronyms according to major geographic region

Choronym place	Epitaph provenance			
	Hebei		Jiangnan/Huainan	
Guanzhong/Hedong	75	(43%)	34	(22%)
Hebei	45	(26%)	29	(19%)
Henan/Huaipei	46	(26%)	68	(44%)
Jiangnan/Huainan	9	(5%)	23	(15%)
Far South	1	(1%)	0	
TOTAL	176		154	

Note: This table summarizes the data presented in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.7. Marriage patterns of marriage-ban clans compared to other great clans (850-890 C.E.)

	affines with choronym	affines without choronym	ratio
marriage-ban clans	26	12	2.2
other great clans	165	119	1.4

Notes: This table compares the marriage patterns of marriage-ban clans to those of other great clans. “Affines” refers to the families of the spouse, sons-in-law, and daughters-in-law. Epitaphs chosen to represent marriage-ban clans include all inscriptions from Hebei or Jiangnan/Huainan dating to the period 850 to 890 C.E. for which the male deceased or the spouse of the female deceased claims ties to one of the seven “marriage-ban” clans. In other words, data under this category represents only the marriage ties involving marriage-ban lineages. “Other great clans” includes data from all epitaphs for which the deceased (whether male or female) is identified by both surname and choronym.

Figure 2.8. Geographic distribution of Hebei choronyms by province of epitaph provenance (Hebei, 850-890 C.E.)

Epitaph provenance	Choronym place					
	Youzhou	Yiwu	Chengde	Yichang	Xingming	Weibo
Youzhou	3	3	1	2	2	8
Yiwu	1	2		1		
Chengde	2	1			1	2
Yichang	1	1				1
Xingming			1		1	1
Weibo	1				4	4
Weizhou (衛州)		1				

Notes: This table includes all individuals with Hebei choronyms mentioned in Hebei epitaphs dating to the period 850 to 890 C.E. Choronyms are divided by military province corresponding to their actual location. The provenance of origin of each epitaph is also distinguished by military province. Of the forty-five individuals included in the above table, only three were buried in the same prefecture as the choronym they claimed: Jing Shi 靖寔 (827-858), Zhang Da 張達 (811-883), and the spouse of Ms. Zhao 趙氏(盧) (831-887).

Figure 2.9. Representation of local and emigré great clans in Changshu (Jiangnan) epitaphs by time period

Period	claims to local/emigré clan descent	total individuals with choronyms
800-850	4 (31%)	13
850-900	19 (38%)	50
900-1000	8 (38%)	21

Notes: This table includes all individuals with choronyms mentioned in Changshu epitaphs. Epitaphs are divided into three periods. “Local” clans refer to clans with the choronyms Wujun (吳郡), Wuxing (吳興), and Danyang(丹陽). Emigré clans refer to clans from the north (generally Huaibei) that migrated south at the time the Jin relocated its capital to Jinling in 317 C.E. Note that although only individuals with choronyms are included, it is clear, among else from the fact that the choronyms of spouses were systematically excluded in the earliest period, that there were additional great clan scions not included in this table and that many of these bore one of the four surnames Zhu (朱), Gu (顧), Zhang (張), and Lu (陸) listed in Johnson’s clan lists under the choronym Wujun.

Figure 2.10. Average number of immediate patrilineal ancestors per epitaph by region and period

REGION	PERIOD			
	850-890 C.E.		920-1000 C.E.	
	avg	n	avg	n
Hebei	2.21	92	2.04	23
Jiangnan/Huainan	2.24	68	2.48	48
Luoyang	2.74	98	2.48	25

Notes: This table shows the average number of immediate patrilineal ancestors mentioned in epitaphs from Hebei, Jiangnan/Huainan, and Luoyang, divided by period (850-890 C.E. vs. 920-1000 C.E.). In the case of Luoyang, only a limited sample of epitaphs were examined. In general, 1 patrilineal ancestor indicates that only the father is identified by name; 2 patrilineal ancestors indicates that the father and grandfather are mentioned by name; etc. “n” indicates the sample size.

Figure 2.11. Average number of affines (sons-in-law or daughters-in-law) per epitaph by region and period

REGION	PERIOD			
	850-890 C.E.		920-1000 C.E.	
	avg	n	avg	n
Hebei	0.92	95	1.38	35
Jiangnan/Huainan	0.99	77	0.96	63

Notes: This table shows the average number of affines identified in epitaphs from Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan over two periods of time. Daughters-in-law and sons-in-law are included in the count of affines. “n” indicates the sample size.

Figure 2.12. Frequency of attributions of great clan status
in Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan epitaphs (late Tang and tenth century)

Period	HEBEI		JIANGNAN/HUAINAN	
	Deceased	Affines	Deceased	Affines
850-890	79/88 (90%)	95/176 (54%)	61/68 (90%)	87/138 (63%)
891-920	17/17 (100%)	22/36 (61%)	3/5 (60%)	8/13 (62%)
921-999	21/24 (88%)	12/62 (20%)	36/45 (80%)	46/98 (47%)

Notes: This table depicts the frequency of attributions of great clan status to individuals mentioned in Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan tomb epitaphs dating to three different time periods. Attributions are defined as the use of a choronym. Thus, the fractions represent the ratio of people identified by surname and choronym to people identified only by surname (with no reference to a choronym). “Deceased” refers to the subject of the tomb epitaph; “affines” refers to the spouse of the deceased, as well as to the deceased’s sons-in-law and daughters-in-law. Mothers-in-law are not included in this table. In most cases, choronym attributions appear directly before the surname in the text of the epitaph; in some cases, the choronym appears as the ancestral place of origin of the deceased (or, in rare cases, the ancestral place of origin of the spouse of the deceased).

Chapter 3: Intergenerational Social Mobility and Marriage Ties

In 883, with the Tang emperor in exile in Sichuan and central China ravaged by rebels and bandits, an as yet unknown military officer named Yang Xingmi (853-906) seized control of the prefecture of Luzhou (modern-day Hefei, Anhui Province). Yang was an imposing man and could awe crowds with his throng of followers, typically all dressed in black. But he also had ambitions to rule and sought to staff his new prefectural government with local talent. He asked a local worthy and the son of a former county magistrate, a man named Wang Xuxian 王勗賢, to recommend members of his family for office. Wang replied, “My son Qian likes to study and is conscientious and meticulous; he can be employed in your service. My younger brother’s son Ren has integrity; he can become a general. 子潛好學慎密; 可任以事。 弟子稔有氣節; 可爲將。”¹¹² Following his advice, Yang did indeed call upon Wang Qian (d. c.915) to serve in his administration and appointed Wang Ren (864-929) as cavalry general. Over the next few years, both Wang Qian and his son Wang Tan 王坦 (896-946) rose to relatively high civil office, Qian attaining the salary title of Director of the Left Office (rank 6a) and Tan directing a bureau in the Ministry of Rites (rank 5b1). Wang Ren, on the other hand, went on to attain a high position in the army, serving as military governor and

¹¹² SGCQ 9:3554 (Wang Ren’s biography).

commander-general.¹¹³ Recommending family members to office was not an unusual practice in late Tang China. When first approached by Yang Xingmi, Wang Xuxian undoubtedly leapt at the opportunity to propose his son and his nephew to serve the new regime. What is more unexpected was the decision by Wang, son of a civil bureaucrat and himself a well-educated civilian, to recommend one of his relatives for a military post.

In Chapter One, we explored the heterogeneity of the medieval Chinese upper class. Between the late Tang and the early Song, neither military men, nor civil bureaucrats, nor highly educated literati succeeded in monopolizing high status. Instead, multiple elites coexisted, each with its own distinguishing values and ideals. To assess the implications on culture and society of this divided upper class, the present chapter will investigate patterns of social mobility and marriage ties. As we will discover, this data largely confirms empirically the distinctiveness of the elite types identified in the first chapter. It was far more common for the sons of generals to seek positions in the army and marry daughters of military men. Civil bureaucratic families followed a similar trend within their own milieu. Nevertheless, counter-examples like that of the Wang family were not unheard of. In both northern and southern China, although most notably in Youzhou Province (modern Beijing) in the far north, career diversification and cross-type marriage alliances could sometimes form part of a deliberate strategy to ensure family survival in this period of political tumult and uncertainty.

¹¹³ For more information on the Wang family, see the biographies of Wang Qian and Wang Ren, as well as the tomb epitaphs of Wang Tan, Tan's daughter Wang Wan 王暉(徐) (919-968), and Wang Ren's daughter-in-law Ms. Liu 劉氏(王) (910-958).

3.1. Social differentiation of elite types

One useful method for confirming the validity of the typology developed in Chapter One is to investigate relations between the principal elite types as reflected in marriage patterns and intergenerational mobility. If families engaged exclusively in endogamous marriages (within the same elite type) and sons always pursued the professions of their fathers, it would be fair to conclude that elite types segregated themselves socially. The following analysis will focus on four categories: civil bureaucratic elites, military elites, ruling elites, and non-officeholders. The last category is vast and includes both non-elites and a range of elite groups that did not hold official titles, such as wealthy merchants, large landowners, and religious professionals. As argued in the Introduction, only when non-officeholders are the subject of a tomb epitaph can we assume with a fair degree of certitude that they were social elites who commanded the resources necessary to finance an expensive burial. Unfortunately, if an individual's father and grandfather did not hold office, we can usually know nothing of their social positions; their profession and social status will remain generally unknown.

Figure 3.1 depicts intergenerational social mobility in Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan in the late Tang and early Song. Included are all officeholding father-son pairs mentioned in the official biographies or in tomb epitaphs of individuals dying between 850 to 1000 C.E.¹¹⁴ In addition to the distinction between north and south China, data derived from biographies is treated separately from that derived from tomb epitaphs, because of the relative biases described in the Introduction. For the sake of simplicity, only civil bureaucrats and military officials have been tabulated here. As

¹¹⁴ Because all ancestors and descendants are taken into account, some of the men counted in the tables died well before 850 C.E. and others after 1000 C.E. In addition, if the father's office is unknown, a grandfather-grandson pair is sometimes used instead.

an example of this analytical approach, consider the southern military man Guo Tingwei 郭廷謂 (919-972). As a youth, he had enjoyed learning and practiced calligraphy. However, his father had been the military inspector of Haozhou and, quite naturally, Guo, his younger brother, and his own son all embarked on careers as army commanders. Guo's older brother Tingyu 廷諭 and Tingyu's son, on the other hand, both served in the civil bureaucracy. Thus, the family of Guo Tingwei exemplifies three instances of intergenerational professional continuity within the military (father to Tingwei, father to Tingwei's younger brother, and Tingwei to son), one instance of professional continuity among bureaucratic elites (Tingyu to Tingyu's son), and one instance of intergenerational elite-type mobility, from the military to the civil bureaucracy (father to Tingyu).

Clearly, intergenerational social mobility from one elite type to another was not the norm. Among cases from Hebei in which biographies record the offices held by both father and son, only about one in eight sons (44 of 357) did not belong to the same elite type as their father. In general, this same trend held in northern as well as in southern China. For the Jiangnan/Huainan regions, both biographies and epitaphs suggest that the vast majority (up to 88%) of sons continued to follow in the footsteps of their fathers throughout this period. The one significant anomaly concerns the intergenerational elite-type mobility recorded in Hebei epitaphs (as opposed to the biographies), where close to 20% of all young men embarked on careers different from those of their fathers. This curious divergence will be broached later in the chapter.

The social differentiation of elite groups is equally evident from the examination of marriage alliances. Figure 3.2 summarizes marriages recorded in biographies and epitaphs from Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan, whether those involving the subjects of the biographies or epitaphs themselves, or related sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, and mothers. Not surprisingly, given what we have previously ascertained, endogamous marriages between the same elite type were four to five times more common than exogamous marriages.

In addition, there was a substantially greater likelihood that members of ruling clans would marry into families of military elites than of civil elites—a trend that Priscilla Ching Chung and John Chaffee have shown to continue into the eleventh century.¹¹⁵ This pattern is not surprising if we consider that all kings, emperors, and independent provincial governors in the ninth and tenth centuries (with the exception of the the last Tang rulers) served as prominent military commanders earlier in their careers. Indeed, because of this close relationship between ruling and military elites, marriage alliances joining members of these two groups can be considered endogamous for the purposes of this study. For similar reasons, intergenerational changes in elite types between the military and the ruling clans (in either direction) will not be treated as examples of mobility between elite type. To be sure, a general who fought his way to the throne would rise substantially in social status. Yet, in this period of endemic warfare, the chances were great that most of his sons would play active roles in the army and marry daughters of important generals.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ For the military backgrounds of Northern Song empresses, see Priscilla Ching Chung, *Palace Women in the Northern Sung, 960-1126*, 25-30. On the military backgrounds of the consorts of imperial clanswomen, see John W. Chaffee, “The Marriage of Sung Imperial Clanswomen,” 148-149.

¹¹⁶ An important distinction should be made between Chinese ruling families in the period 850 to

In summary, patterns of intergenerational mobility and of marriages confirm the relative social segregation of civil bureaucratic from military families. Empirical evidence justifies the treatment of civil elites and military elites as separate analytical categories. Nevertheless, the fact that these two groups did intermarry on occasion implies that the upper echelons of the military and civil bureaucracy could hold similar or equal social status. In other words, as first hypothesized in Chapter Two, military and civil officials of the late Tang and the tenth century interregnum represented distinct but parallel elite groups. The relatively rare cases of generals' sons embarking on careers in the civil bureaucracy are best described as instances of lateral social mobility.

3.2. Upward mobility among civilian bureaucrats

In fact, upward and downward social mobility *within* the civil bureaucracy is difficult to assess in ninth- and tenth-century China because of the difficulty of accurately gauging the relative social status of an individual or a family. One commonly used measure of status is based on the numerical ranks assigned to all offices since the pre-Tang period. However, because of the complex regional variations in administrative practices among the numerous regimes struggling for power during the transitional period, it is nearly impossible to develop a method for accurately and consistently equating office with rank. Nevertheless, it seems safe to posit—based on what we know of both the Tang and the Song—that officeholders generally held higher status than non-officeholders. Thus, the case of a non-officeholder's son rising to a place in the

1000 and the Song imperial clan, as it would develop. John Chaffee, in his important study of the Song ruling family (*Branches of Heaven: A History of the Imperial Clan of Sung China*), has demonstrated the huge size of the imperial clan, its legal and officeholding privileges, the presence of imperial descendants in local communities all over China, and the very substantial resources and institutions dedicated to maintaining clansmen and clanswomen, all of which implies that the Song ruling family can be treated as a well-defined elite group. However, the family dynasties examined in this study were short-lived and would have more resembled the Song imperial clan in its first two decades, before it evolved into its mature form.

official bureaucracy usually represents upward social mobility, while the son of an officeholder who fails to obtain government employment can be said to have experienced downward social mobility.

Of course, the problem of identifying non-officeholders presents its own methodological complications. It is probable that tomb epitaphs and biographies always mentioned the office of the individual in question if he in fact held one. But to study social mobility, one also needs to ascertain the status of the individual's ancestors and descendants, and these are frequently unspecified in the sources. If no mention is made of the father's profession, for example, can we assume that the father did not hold office? In some specific instances, this was indeed the case. Thus Wang Jingren's 王景仁 (d. c.913) biography makes no reference to his father or grandfather; and the epitaph for his daughter Ms. Wang 王氏(趙) (893-933) confirms that neither held office. But the opposite is also sometimes true. The biography of the important Southern Tang official Jia Tan 賈潭 (881-948) is mute on the names and professions of his forebears; his tomb epitaph, however, reveals that his father was Prefect of Changzhou and his grandfather Magistrate of Mi County in Henan.

Tomb epitaphs—as opposed to biographies—are often far more verbose regarding the subject's genealogy. The father and grandfather of the deceased are almost always identified. Moreover, authors of epitaphs did not shy from admitting that a forebear had not held office, even if this fact is couched in a myth of eremitism. Xu Zhi 許贇 (809-852), who hailed from Runzhou on the southern banks of the Lower Yangzi, was the scion of an old aristocratic clan that had once dominated local society. But his own branch of the family had not held office for generations. In the words of his epitaph, his

immediate forebears had “all loftily pursued the traces of the Dao, finding delight when among hills and gardens, thus dying without serving in office 皆高尚道跡，樂於丘園，終而不仕。”

In some ways, the genealogical information contained in tomb epitaphs is reminiscent of the data used by Edward Kracke in an early study of social mobility under the Song. Kracke examined two Song-period lists of civil service examination graduates, both of which noted the offices of each man’s father, grandfather, and great grandfather. Kracke surmised that graduates without officeholding ancestors represented cases of upward social mobility—or, in his words, the recruitment into the bureaucracy of “new blood,” of men with no family tradition of official service.¹¹⁷ Yet Robert Hymes has effectively criticized this argument by noting the possibility that individuals with no direct ancestors holding offices might well have prominent uncles, great uncles, or fathers-in-law.¹¹⁸

Fortunately, tomb epitaphs are generally more inclusive in their genealogical information. Longer inscriptions regularly list the spouse’s ancestors and the offices they held. Although uncles, brothers, and nephews are not normally mentioned, epitaphs do make special reference to particularly prominent collateral relatives. Consider Ms. Wei 衛氏 (844-886) from the southern city of Yangzhou, perhaps the greatest commercial center in late Tang China. Neither her ancestors nor her husband Wu Shou 吳綬 had served in office. Her epitaph makes reference, however, to her brother, a judge in the Huainan military government. Undoubtedly, the author of the

¹¹⁷ E. A. Kracke, Jr., “Family vs. Merit in Chinese Civil Service Examinations Under The Empire,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 10.2 (1947): 114-119.

¹¹⁸ Robert P. Hymes, *Statesmen and Gentlemen: The Elite of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi, in Northern and Southern Sung*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 34-41.

epitaph felt compelled to mention the brother because he was Ms. Wei's most prominent close relative and perhaps the only officeholder from among the Wei and Wu families.

Lu Gongbi 盧公弼 (788-866) was another resident of Yangzhou, who had gotten involved in the lucrative salt trade. His ancestors had been minor provincial officials, as had his mother's father. In addition, Lu's epitaph makes special note of two nephews, both holding offices in the capital. As it happens, the epitaph writer could not possibly have ignored one of the nephews, Lu Kuang 盧匡. The year after Lu Gongbi's death, the latter was chosen by the emperor to supervise the civil service examinations.¹¹⁹

Finally, consider the Jiangxi native Jiang Zhimu 江直木 (917-980). According to his epitaph, neither his father, his grandfather, nor his great grandfather had served in government. His uncle Mengsun 夢孫, on the other hand, is said to have held an unspecified office. The histories of the Southern Tang dynasty preserve Mengsun's biography and confirm that he had once served as a county magistrate. Thus, although the majority of ninth- and tenth-century tomb epitaphs do not list the collateral members of the deceased's family, they do seem regularly to refer to prominent relatives, especially in cases where the family had no other connections to officialdom.

In general, cases of upward social mobility into the civil bureaucracy rarely involved large leaps in status. Kracke envisioned numerous rags-to-riches stories with the sons of non-officeholders rocketing to the highest offices of the Chinese bureaucracy through success in the highly competitive *jinshi* exam. But Robert Hymes has expressed justifiable skepticism. In fact, the following two examples are undoubtedly

¹¹⁹ Lu Guangbi's epitaph, inscribed in 867, asserts that Lu Kuang "presently [serves in the] Ministry of Personnel 今吏部"; according to JTS 19 上:663, there was a certain "minister of personnel Lu Kuang 吏部侍郎盧匡" who was involved in supervising the exams of 867.

much more typical. According to her tomb epitaph, no relative of Ms. Cai 蔡氏 (775-850) nor of her husband Xie Shaoqing 解少卿 (770-835) had held office. Her husband, however, had succeeded in obtaining a minor position in the Jiang-Huai salt administration, receiving one of the lowest-ranked prestige titles, *wenlinlang* 文林郎 (rank 9b1). Similarly, neither Chen Lixing 陳立行 (800-857) nor his wife had family traditions of officeholding. Chen, however, managed to rise to the modest position of military service administrator (兵曹參軍) in the Youzhou military government. Examples abound of similar minor officeholders with no known family connections to officialdom.¹²⁰ What is important to note is that such individuals usually attained only relatively lowly positions in the local or regional bureaucracy.

Furthermore, there is good evidence that the non-officeholding ancestors of minor bureaucrats like Xie Shaoqing and Chen Lixing were members of the local economic elite. Civil—as opposed to military—office required a high degree of administrative and literary skill. The parents of even low-level officials would need to have commanded significant resources in order to educate their sons—especially in the era before mass printing. In other words, the father and grandfather of a new civil officeholder were most likely wealthy merchants or well-to-do landlords. In some cases, there is evidence that, despite not having served in government, the parents and grandparents were well educated. For example, the civil bureaucrats Li Yu 李愚 (d. 935), Cao Guozhen 曹國珍 (d. c.942), and Jiang Mengsun 江夢孫 (c.865-c.950) all hailed from families with no known tradition of government service. Nevertheless, the biographies of all three men

¹²⁰ See, for example, the epitaphs of Zheng Yong 鄭永 (802-850), Yang Shaoxuan 楊少愷 (794-852), Fu Jianwen 傅簡文 (806-878), Ms. Zhao 趙氏(盧) (831-887), and Qiao Kuangshun 喬匡舜 (898-972) (paying particular attention to the latter's father).

reveal strong traditions of learning: Li Yu's "family had been Confucians for generations 家世爲儒," Cao Guozhen's forebears had "propagated Confucian learning for generations 代襲儒素," and Jiang Mengsun's grandfather "elevated himself with the Confucian way 以儒道自高."

In the case of tomb epitaphs, it is more difficult to determine with confidence the degree of education of a non-officeholding father or grandfather, generally eulogized in exaggerated terms that cannot be taken at face value. However, circumstantial evidence is often sufficient to demonstrate the wealth of the deceased ancestors. Consider Zong Xiang 宗庠 (798-852), whose tomb was excavated in southern Hebei Province in 1976. Neither his father nor his grandfather had served in office; yet both he and his younger brother held administrative positions in the Weibo military government. Consider also Ms. Liu 劉氏 (796-870), a native of south China. Neither her ancestors nor her husband, Rong Renxu 戎仁詡, had possessed official titles. Nevertheless, one of her sons was a county sheriff (a civilian position) and at least two of her sons had trained for the civil service exams. The education of a son would have represented a significant financial drain for a family in late Tang China. This was all the more true for families who supported several sons in the skills required for the examinations or to serve in an administrative capacity. Zong Xiang's father and Ms. Liu and her husband were probably well educated and almost certainly relatively wealthy members of their community.

In addition, there are numerous cases of civil officeholding skipping one or more generations. Ouyang Bin 歐陽彬 (c.870-c.964), great grandfather of the eminent

eleventh-century writer and statesman Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072), served in an administrative capacity under the Southern Tang. His father and great grandfather did not hold official titles; his fifth-generation ancestor, however, was a county magistrate under the Tang, and his grandfather was an assistant magistrate. Chang Kemou 常克謀 (788-864) was from Mozhou Prefecture, then under the control of the independent governors of Youzhou. Chang himself did not attain office, nor did his grandfather. On the other hand, his great grandfather, father, and son were all minor provincial officials, serving in Youzhou. Similarly, neither Yi Jie 易節 (798-875), from Jiangxi Province in the south, nor his father and grandfather succeeded in obtaining government employment. However, Yi's great great grandfather, great grandfather, and son did hold such office. In all of these families, a tradition of learning was undoubtedly maintained even when one or more generations did not seek or obtain government employment. In other words, even the non-officeholding individuals of these families would have been members of the local economic and cultural elite, commanding the wealth and learning necessary to educate their own children.

As we can see, there was a relatively porous barrier between the lower echelons of the civil bureaucracy and a class of well-to-do, generally well-educated non-officeholding elites. Successive generations of one family would frequently alternate between these two social groups. The downward mobility of an individual, as measured by a lack of officeholding, did not preclude his descendants from attaining bureaucratic positions. Yi Jie's son attained office after three generations without government service. The family of Yan Youming 顏幼明 (785-866) had suffered several generations of decline. His fourth-generation ancestor, named Moudao 謀道,

had been a prefect in the early eighth century. After three generations of progressively less important offices, Youming could claim no government titles at all. Nevertheless, his sons all trained for the civil service exams.

Not surprisingly, there are numerous examples of intermarriages between non-officeholding families and low-level officials. For example, Ms. Hou Luoniang 侯羅娘 (778-852), whose ancestors did not hold office, was able to marry the son of a county official. Although neither Li Fu 李扶 (795-863) nor his spouse had officeholding ancestors, their son married the daughter of a *jinshi* degree holder. Ms. Yao 姚氏 (860-884) was the great granddaughter of a man who had served as Superior Administrator of Jizhou (薊州). However, neither her grandfather nor her father were officeholders. The family had, nevertheless, not lost all its prestige: Ms. Yao was accepted in marriage by a man named Shu Xingyan 舒行言, who held the fairly important military office of defense commissioner in the Youzhou government. If such marriages were possible, the difference in social status between the non-officeholding and officeholding families in question could not have been prohibitive.

In summary, the upward social mobility involved in a family's rise to civil office represented not the ascent from non-elite to elite status, but rather relatively modest mobility within elite ranks. Non-officeholding elites were a heterogeneous group that included wealthy merchants, landlords, and educated literati. Although a non-officeholder who was the subject of an epitaph or biography was an elite by definition, the social status of a non-officeholding ancestor or descendant of the subject of an epitaph or biography frequently cannot be ascertained. Despite this difficulty, we have seen direct and circumstantial evidence suggesting that the immediate ancestors of

low-ranking civil officeholders were frequently local elites even when they did not themselves hold office. An obvious question remains. What evidence is there of upward social mobility from non-elite to elite status? How did families initially raise their fortunes to be able to afford the relatively expensive burials that included funerary epitaphs (and that would earn them the elite label as it has been defined in this study)? Because of limitations in the sources, there are no comprehensive answers to these questions. Nevertheless, there was clearly one path that could gain an individual rapid access to elite status: military service.

3.3. Upward social mobility in the military

Without doubt, upward social mobility was more readily possible in the army. Rising to the highest ranks of the military did not require the many years of schooling that civil officials needed. Even the most powerful generals were sometimes illiterate, as is frequently observed in their biographies.¹²¹ Assets more valuable to an army leader, including martial skills, charisma, and a good sense of strategy, could be acquired in the course of one's early career. To be sure, as with mobility into the civil bureaucracy, a family's initial rise to military office often involved low-ranking military positions.¹²²

Nevertheless, unlike in the case of mobility into civilian offices, there are frequent examples of military elites with non-elite ancestors. In some instances, rapid mobility was primarily a case of fortuitous circumstances. Yang Tingzhang 楊廷璋 (912-971)

¹²¹ For three of many such examples, see the biographies of Wei Jian 韋建 (c.859-c.938), An Zhong 安忠 (934-997), and Xu Wen 徐溫 (862-927). All three were illiterate. Nevertheless, Wei Jian rose to the rank of military governor; Xu Wen was the single most powerful general under the Wu Kingdom, whose adoptive son would found the Southern Tang empire.

¹²² See, for example, the tomb epitaphs of Yuanzhi (surname unknown) 元芝 (820-853) and Ma Renyu 馬仁裕 (880-942), paying particular attention to their fathers.

came from a poor family. His father was a fisherman. He was able to rise through the military ranks largely because, in the mid 940s, his sister had become the favorite concubine of Guo Wei 郭威 (904-954), who would ascend the imperial throne as the first sovereign of the Later Zhou dynasty a few years later. Sun Fangjian 孫方諫 (d.954) and his two brothers came from a farming family in Qingyuan 清苑 County, Mozhou Prefecture.¹²³ With apparently no prospects at home, they traveled some fifty kilometers to Wolf Mountain (狼山), where a popular nun named Sun Shenyi 孫深意 had attracted followers near and far with her magic. When the nun died, Sun Fangjian claimed to be her nephew and emulated her techniques. As his supporters grew in number, he was proclaimed the head of the garrison stationed at the fortress atop Wolf Mountain. The fort played a critical role during the Khitan invasion of 946, catapulting the Sun family to prominence. All three brothers and two members of the next generation would hold important military titles.

But other examples abound of common soldiers who ascended the military ranks to powerful offices presumably through personal talent and ability. Li Zhou 李周 (871-944) was a petty bandit leader in his youth; his spectacular rise in status culminated with his appointment as Regent of the Eastern Capital. Yi Wenyun 易文贇 (894-968) was initially a soldier in the personal army of the Wu general Liu Xin 劉信 (d.925). After serving under Liu Xin for ten years, he acquired the title of Assistant General, before rising to the position of Provost Marshal. Eventually, he would serve as a prefect under the Southern Tang, the Later Zhou, and then the Song. Wang Jun 王峻 (d.953),

¹²³ For more on the Sun family, besides the biographies of Sun Fangjian and his younger brother Sun Xingyou 孫行友 (902-981), see also ZZTJ 285:9303.

whose father had been in charge of the prefectural harem (樂營), started off as a singing boy for a local strongman. He worked for several warlords before serving in a military capacity under the future founder of the Later Han empire. Rising to the prestigious office of Privy Commissioner under the Later Han, he would then serve as military governor of Qingzhou and hold the rank of grand councillor under the Later Zhou dynasty. Finally, as previously noted, Yang Xingmi began his military career as a common soldier in the Luzhou prefectural army. Years later, he would emerge as the most powerful military governor in South China and founder of the Wu Kingdom.¹²⁴

Because biographies often provide very little information on the family background or early career of military men, it is difficult to assess the frequency of such cases of dramatic upward social mobility. Nevertheless, it is clear that rapid rise to high elite status was very much possible within military circles. Successful individuals not only needed talent, charisma, and a measure of luck, but also had to survive in battle long enough to rise through the ranks. On the other hand, as we saw in the case of Yi Wenyun, it was often the good fortune of serving under a successful general that contributed most to one's career. After serving a successful early Wu general for ten years, not only did Yi rise to high office in the mid tenth century, but his son entered the civil bureaucracy, and in 1008 his grandson succeeded in earning a *jinshi* degree. Nevertheless, in a period of incessant warfare, while victorious military commanders were propelled along with their followers to higher and higher offices, less capable commanders died in combat or suffered defeat, falling from grace along with all their subordinate officers. Investing in a military career was thus a high-risk game. For

¹²⁴ As another example, consider Wei Quanfeng 危全諷 (d.909), the son of farmers who was abandoned by his parents because he was ugly. He eventually joined the army and would rise from the lowest office to independent military governor of Jiangxi.

descendants of non-elites, a military career may have been the only available route to higher social status. However, the element of risk convinced many that they should not base their family's future entirely on success in the military. As shown in the next section, a number of families diversified their survival strategies by training some sons to become civil bureaucrats and others to serve in the army.

3.4. Intergenerational elite-type mobility

As we discovered above, somewhere between 10 and 20 percent of the sons of officeholding families did not belong to the same elite type as their fathers. Figure 3.3 dates each such instance of intergenerational elite-type mobility. Assuming that elites began their literary education or military training at a very young age, parents would have had to decide whether to prepare their offspring for the civil bureaucracy or the military shortly after birth. Thus, the dates given represent the birth dates of the men who switched elite type—in other words, the approximate year when their parents had chosen their future career.

When interpreting Figure 3.3, it should be remembered that tomb epitaphs are concentrated in the ninth century while biographies are overrepresented for the tenth century. Among elite families from the northern province of Hebei, instances of intergenerational elite-type mobility occurred across the entire period 850 to 1000 C.E. Notably, three cases of military to civil mobility occurred after 950. As we shall see below, no less than two early Song grand councillors (both from the north) were involved in family strategies of civil-military diversification. In the south, by contrast, the pattern was rather different. Although the sample size is smaller, it is nevertheless notable that only 1 of 20 (5%) instances of civil to military mobility occurred in the tenth century. In

other words, whereas mobility occurred in both directions in the north through the entire period of study, in the south, civil to military mobility was nearly unheard of after the year 900.

What accounts for such significant regional variation? As described in Chapter One, important differences between northern and southern society were evident as early as the late ninth century. The elite in Hebei included a very sizable military component. On the other hand, in the southern provinces of Jiangnan/Huainan, only 2 of 64 epitaphs datable to the period 850 to 880 were composed for military men. We also observed the survival in the north of an earlier style of elite culture in which civil and military service were equally valued. Although southern society was rapidly militarized in the final two decades of the Tang, after the great Huang Chao rebellion, this process did not apparently lead to a lasting militarization of southern culture.

It is also worth investigating the reasons leading individuals or their families to decide to change their professions. Some biographies imply that the violence of the late Tang played a direct role. Liu Shouguang 劉守光 (d.914), military governor of Youzhou and founder of the short-lived Yan dynasty, has been condemned by historians for his barbarism and cruelty. He overthrew his father and killed his brother in his final rise to power. According to the biography of Zhang Xichong 張希崇 (888-939), Liu was “fierce in character and did not like Confucian scholars 性慘酷，不喜儒士。” Thus Zhang, the son of a Youzhou civil bureaucrat, “discarded his writing brush to present himself [in service] 擲筆以自效,” and soon rose to the rank of assistant general.¹²⁵

¹²⁵ A similar example is Li Qiong 李瓊 (891-963), also from Youzhou. He was well educated, but left home at a young age to join the Taiyuan army. Although it is not explicitly stated, he almost certainly left while Liu Shouguang was in power.

There are similar anecdotes from other parts of Hebei. The Later Tang general Zhang Zunhui 張遵誨 (d. c.929) was the son of a county magistrate. His father was killed when the Weibo military governor Luo Shaowei 羅紹威 (881-914) purged all potential rivals in his province. He fled from home at the time to join the army of Li Keyong 李克用 in Taiyuan. Jing Hanru's 荆罕儒 (d. c.961) father, another magistrate, probably died of natural causes. But in these troubled times, Jing had no way to survive after his father's death and turned to banditry, an activity which eventually led him to a career in the army. Finally, consider the example of Li Tao 李濤 (861-932). Both his father and grandfather were civil officials. He, himself, had a literary education. However, in the final years of the Tang, "bandits rose up in all directions and so he gave up the pen to join the army 四方盜起, 乃投筆從軍." The tomb epitaph of Sun Yansi 孫彥思 (865-916) most effectively summarizes this route from civil to military service: "Between the Four Seas, there is much hardship; in the Central Plains, there is no ruler. Thus, [Sun Yansi] abandoned his civilian [skills] in order to study military [skills]; he offered himself to the state, leaving his family behind. 四海多艱, 中原無主. 是以損文習武, 許國忘家."

Yet in some cases, violence could have the opposite effect: leading the son of a military man into the civil bureaucracy. Zhao Feng 趙逢 (c.908-975) was the son of an army officer in the service of Liu Shouguang. When Liu was defeated by military forces under the command of Zhou Dewei 周德威 (d.918), Zhao's father was executed. In this case, Zhao Feng was adopted by the victorious general and educated alongside Zhou's children, leading him to a career in the civil bureaucracy. A similar example

involves the grandson of the prominent southern general Li Yu 李遇 (d.912). Upon the death of Yang Xingmi, founder of the Wu kingdom, a power struggle between Li Yu and his rival Xu Wen 徐温 (862-927) culminated in the execution of Li and his entire clan. His grandson, an infant at the time, was concealed and saved from death by a close follower. Presumably under the influence of his adoptive father, Li's grandson was given a civilian education and would later serve as county magistrate under the Southern Tang.

All the above examples involve men who were forced by circumstances to change their professions. However, a broader examination of families exhibiting intergenerational mobility suggests that changes in elite type more commonly reflected a deliberate family strategy of career diversification. Due to the variations and complexity of mobility between elite types, this diversification can best be illuminated through a series of case examples culled from biographies and epitaphs.

Zhang Kang 張康 (866-915) was an army commander from Yangzhou (in Huainan). His father had also been a military man by profession. However, one of Zhang's brothers served in the administrative position of military judge and the other was a registrar, a position usually held by civil officials. The Southern Tang military man Liu Chongjun 劉崇俊 (907-946) belonged to the third generation of a family of Wu and Southern Tang army officers. One of his sons pursued a career in the military, whereas his other son held a civil salary rank. His uncle, Liu Renshan 劉仁贍 (900-957) was also an important general and military governor. Two of Renshan's sons served in the military, while another son would serve as a civil bureaucrat under both the Southern

Tang and the Song.¹²⁶ The Wu royal princess Ms. Yang 楊氏 (890-927) was the wife of the Wu general Liu Cun 劉存 (d. c.906).¹²⁷ One of their sons was also a general; the other son held the low-level civil salary rank of Editor of the Palace Library. Finally, consider the Wu military governor Tao Ya 陶雅 (857-913). Although one of his sons served in the military, another son, Tao Jingxuan 陶敬宣 (899-950), was a civil bureaucrat.¹²⁸ In these three examples from south China, the professional diversity detected among the sons of military men was clearly the choice of the family.

A similar phenomenon is observed in the north. He Hongjing 何弘敬 (806-865) and Han Yunzhong 韓允忠 (814-874) were both independent military governors of Weibo (in Hebei), and both were succeeded by their eldest sons. Governor He had four other offspring who held such civil offices as Administrative Aide, Granary Administrator, and Revenue Administrator. Whereas one of General Han's younger sons was a commander in his personal guard, the youngest held the civilian title of Instructor. Similarly, the family of Ms. Wang 王氏 (840-868)—daughter of the Chengde military governor Wang Yuankui 王元逵 (812-854)—and her military officer husband Li Shouhong 李守弘 (816-864) included one son with the title of Instructor and another who was a low-ranking general.¹²⁹ For a later, tenth-century example, consider the

¹²⁶ For information on this family, besides Liu Chongjun's biography and tomb epitaph, see also the biographies of his grandfather Liu Jin 劉金 (d.905) and his uncle Liu Renshan.

¹²⁷ In fact, Ms. Yang's husband is not identified by name. He had been identified by some commentators as the general Liu Xin 劉信 (d.925), although the evidence pointing towards Liu Cun is more convincing. In any case, the epitaph indicates Ms. Yang's husband served as Prefect of Shuzhou (舒州刺史), a position held exclusively by military men in the first half of the tenth century.

¹²⁸ For information on this family, see both Tao Ya's biography and the tomb epitaph of his son Tao Jingxuan.

¹²⁹ For another example regarding the descendants of Hebei military governors, consider the case of the county magistrate Zhang Da 張達 (811-883). His father was a general; both his uncle Zhang

renowned Later Zhou and early Song general Cao Bin 曹彬 (931-999) (from Hebei).

Most of his sons went into the military, but one held the civilian title of Vice Director of the Bureau of Forestry and Crafts.

Professional diversity among offspring was not limited to military families, however. Yan Haowen 閻好問 (810-873) was a civil bureaucrat from Youzhou (in Hebei). His nephew held the modest administrative position of Record Keeper, while two of his own sons were vice commanders of offensive action in the provincial army, and a third became a Buddhist monk. Bian Chengyu 邊承遇 (839-906) was also a civil bureaucrat from Youzhou. One of Bian's sons held the title of Right Superior General of the Awesome Guard; the other son, Bian Min 邊敏 (869-926), whose tomb epitaph also survives, was a county magistrate. Another civil official from Hebei, Liu Cungui 劉存規 (d.955), served as Chief Military Administrator of the Jiqing Ordo. Two of his sons embarked on careers in the army, one as a military attaché, the other as an army commander, while a third and fourth son held the civil office of associate judge.¹³⁰ Finally, consider two of the earliest Song grand councillors, Wei Renpu 魏仁浦 (911-969) and Zhao Pu 趙普 (922-992), both originally from Hebei. Of Wei's sons and grandsons, six held military titles and two held civil titles. Although Zhao's two nephews were civil bureaucrats, his two sons held the military titles of Grand General of

Maozhao 張茂昭 (762-811) and his grandfather Zhang Xiaozhong 張孝忠 (730-791) had been military governors of Yiwu. Although Zhang Da's tomb epitaph does not mention any siblings, it is very unlikely that his father had suddenly determined that, after holding the most eminent of military offices, the family's future now lay in the civil bureaucracy. Undoubtedly, one or more of Zhang Da's brothers or cousins, none of whom would ordinarily be mentioned in his tomb epitaph, had served in the military or had been trained for a military career.

¹³⁰ Although Liu Cungui spent most of his career as an officer of the Liao state, his four sons were probably born no later than the 920s; thus, decisions regarding their career would have been made prior to the Liao takeover of northern Hebei.

the Forest of Plumes Army and of Chengzhou Military Training Commissioner, respectively.

As these examples and others¹³¹ show, intergenerational elite-type mobility typically occurred in the context of family career diversification. One son would serve in the military, another in the civil bureaucracy. Such patterns suggest that the families were making deliberate choices. Endemic warfare and violence may have prompted a bureaucratic family to train one son for the military, but his brothers might still receive a formal, literary education. Intergenerational elite type mobility did not entail a radical, permanent transformation of a family's strategy. Instead, changes in profession were more often than not the manifestation of a conservative approach to preserving a family's status. By steering male offspring in different professional directions, a family could expand the range of its social network, without overturning family traditions and values.¹³²

Thus far, we have only discussed diversification involving military and civil officeholding. Officeholders dominate the standard history biographies, whereas, as we have seen, the professions of non-officeholders are often difficult to determine in epitaphs.

¹³¹ Other civil officials with one son in the military and one son in the civil bureaucracy included Jing Yanzuo 敬延祚 (847-882) and Jia Yan 賈琰. Other military officers with sons in both the military and the civil bureaucracy included Wen Lingshou 温令綬 (806-874), Li Decheng 李德誠 (863-940), Guo Tingwei 郭廷謂 (919-972) (whose father had two sons in the military and one in the civil bureaucracy), Yao Nabin 姚内斌 (911-974), and Tan Yanmei 譚延美 (919-1001). It is also important to remember that siblings and uncles are rarely mentioned in epitaphs and biographies. It is even less common to have information on the military training or literary education of a male relative who failed to attain office. Thus, many epitaphs will not reveal the strategy of professional diversification employed by the family.

¹³² We should also note the large size of some of the families involved. Li Decheng 李德誠 (863-940) provides a good example of family diversification. Himself an important Wu general, one of his sons was also a general, whereas another son was a Southern Tang grand councillor (a civilian post). In fact, according to his biography, Li Decheng had no less than 28 sons from an uncertain number of wives. Having so many children undoubtedly increased the likelihood a father would decide to vary the professions of his children. Other examples of men with many children included Li Jinquan 李金全 (889-950) and Zhong Kuangfan 鍾匡範.

Nevertheless, individual examples reveal that at least some bureaucratic families also branched out into commerce. Liu Chengyuan 柳承遠 (924-968) was the uncle of the early Song literatus Liu Kai 柳開 (948-1001). Most members of the Liu family were civil officials. Ostensibly because he was deaf, Liu Chengyuan embarked on a career in commerce, probably funding the entire clan with his investments.¹³³ Xu Yanjia 徐延佳 (894-954) was the son of a capital official of the Wu kingdom, and along with three of his sons held bureaucratic positions under the Southern Tang. But three other sons ensured the family's fortune through their careers as merchants.¹³⁴

3.5. Exogamous marriages

Figure 3.4 presents the frequency of exogamous and endogamous marriages among officeholding families in Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan before and after 890.¹³⁵ Although the sample size is rather small, it appears that exogamous marriages were particularly frequent (over 20% of all marriages) in pre-890 Hebei and in post-890 Jiangnan/Huainan. The information recorded in standard history biographies, which greatly emphasizes the period after 890, seems to confirm this trend. During the tenth century, ruling families in the north married almost exclusively with military families, marriage ties considered endogamous here, whereas as many as one quarter of marriages

¹³³ Liu Chengyuan's epitaph (written by his nephew Liu Kai) observes: "With a principal of ten million strings of cash, [Liu Chengyuan] used the capital to make a profit. In his lifetime, he never misled anybody; his brothers could rely on him without any suspicions. This fulfilled the aspirations of my uncle [Liu Chengyuan]. How filial! 主緡錢千萬, 用子本爲質, 無欺終身, 諸兄倚之不疑, 克成我王父之志. 孝矣!"

¹³⁴ Xu Yanjia's epitaph says of his three oldest sons that "they did not become officials or receive an official's salary; they travelled by boat to earn their living; by means of profit, they brought fortune to the family. 不臣不祿. 泛舟養性. 因利富家." On the other hand, two younger sons "thoroughly studied civil and military affairs...and served in office in Yongzhen [County] 學通文武....守職永貞."

¹³⁵ Because the vast majority of marriages described in standard history biographies involve the families of emperors, kings, or independent military governors, only marriage ties involving ruling families are listed in the case of biographies.

involving the Wu and Southern Tang ruling clans in the south were exogamous. As previously stated, there were virtually no military elites in Jiangnan/Huainan prior to the Huangchao Rebellion; thus, the absence of marriage ties between civil bureaucratic and military families in the period pre-890 is not surprising. On the other hand, until more data is available, it is difficult to explain why there were so few exogamous marriages in post-890 Hebei.

A more detailed examination of individual instances of exogamous marriages indicates that these intermarriages often fit into a pattern of family diversification. Hou Yuanhong 侯元弘 (807-882) was a military man from Hebei. His first and third daughters married army officers; his second daughter married a prefectural exam nominee and his fourth daughter a civil administrator. The Hou family may have deliberately sought to alternate the professions of sons-in-law. The family of Yue Bangsui 樂邦穗 (827-877) exemplified a strategy of career diversification. His father was a prefect (usually a civilian office at this time), although his grandfather was a general. One of his sons was a civil official; another son held both military and civil positions. Le, who was himself a civil bureaucrat, married the daughter of the Youzhou military governor. Another family epitomizing such a pattern of diversification was that of Yan Haowen 閻好問 (810-873), also from Hebei. He, his father, and his father-in-law were all civil bureaucrats. His great maternal uncle was military governor of Youzhou and one son-in-law was vice commander of offensive action; on the other hand, another son-in-law was an assistant magistrate. The Yan family's multi-generational strategy of cross-type marriages mirrors the career diversity of Yan's sons and nephews (described above). Finally, consider the early Song grand councillor

Zhao Pu 趙普 (922-992). His younger sister married the son of the general Hou Yi 侯益 (886-965).¹³⁶ His son married the daughter of the military affairs commissioner Li Chongju 李崇矩 (924-988), who, in this case, was a military man.¹³⁷ Although Zhao occupied the most prestigious position in the civil bureaucracy, his family intermarried with military families, reflecting the civil-military career diversity of Zhao Pu's own sons and nephews (also described above).

Exogamous marriages involving southern families are also worth considering. The son of the Southern Tang general Diao Yanneng 刁彥能 was a notable early Song civil bureaucrat; Diao Yanneng's daughter, however, married a military man.¹³⁸ In the case of Ms. Yang (890-927), the Wu royal princess also discussed above, her two eldest sons both married daughters of military men, and one of her sons-in-law was an attack commander. However, another son-in-law served as assistant magistrate. Once again, the professions of her sons-in-law reflected the career diversity of Ms. Yang's own sons.

The above examples suggest that exogamous marriages often complemented a family strategy of diversification. Diversification was sometimes exhibited across more than one generation. In general, there are an insufficient number of known marriage ties to determine the extent of this practice, but there is no reason to believe that the above six examples were atypical.

¹³⁶ SS 254:8883. The son, Hou Renbao 侯仁寶 (d.981), was technically in the civil bureaucracy, though, as a prefect, he led troops into battle on at least one occasion.

¹³⁷ As explained in Zhao Pu's biography, Emperor Taizong disapproved of the marriage ties between a grand councillor and a military affairs commissioner and ordered the couple to divorce. Worthy, "The Founding of Sung China," 241-242 addresses this incident.

¹³⁸ For the daughter's marriage, see the epitaph of her husband, Chen Decheng 陳德成 (933-972).

3.6. Youzhou (幽州) civil-military elites

Earlier in this chapter, we observed an unusually high percentage of intergenerational elite-type mobility among tomb epitaphs from Hebei. Figure 3.5 shows a break down of this data by region (Youzhou vs. elsewhere in Hebei) and time period (pre-890 vs. post-890). It is clear that the rate of elite-type mobility in post-890 Hebei is closer to the baseline rate of approximately 11% observed in both Jiangnan/Huainan biographies and epitaphs and in Hebei biographies. If we recall that biographies are overrepresented for the tenth-century, we see that Figures 3A and 3E consistently point towards a higher rate of intergenerational elite-type mobility in pre-890 Hebei.

Figure 3.5 further indicates that the rate of mobility in the prefectures controlled by the Youzhou military governor was as high as 30%. This figure is striking if we consider that a rate of 50% would imply that switching elite type was as common as not switching, in other words, that the profession of the father did not influence the career of the son. Thus, in pre-890 Youzhou, although there was still a tendency for the son of an officeholder to pursue the profession of his father, intergenerational elite-type differentiation was much less marked.

The limited data on marriage types reflects this trend. We saw in Figure 3.4 that 7 of 26 marriages in pre-890 Hebei were exogamous. As it turns out, all 7 of these exogamous marriages occurred in Youzhou, accounting for 41% (7/17) of marriages in pre-890 Youzhou. All this evidence suggests that, in the late Tang period, society in the military province of Youzhou was qualitatively different from other parts of China with regards to the extent of social ties between military men and civil bureaucrats.

Not coincidentally, it was particularly common in Youzhou epitaphs to eulogize the deceased for exhibiting combined civil-military (文武) virtues. Such praise would have been more typical of an earlier age and would have seemed out of place in the south of China at this time. The reasons for the special characteristics of late Tang Youzhou society are beyond the scope of the present study. Suffice to say that Youzhou had a large population of foreigners, widely held responsible for the “barbarization” of Hebei society.¹³⁹ Moreover, Youzhou had been an autonomous border province since the mid-eighth century that, as we shall see in the next two chapters, was largely insulated from inward migrations. Such an environment encouraged the development of social values that diverged from beliefs and attitudes held elsewhere in China. After a lengthy period of isolated development in a militarized environment, there were signs of a fused civil-military elite, which based its prestige on both military and civil bureaucratic officeholding.

3.7. Conclusion

This chapter has extended the analysis in Chapter One of the multiple elites that coexisted in China between the late Tang and early Song dynasties. Because of difficulties identifying the social status of elites who held no offices or titles, focus has been placed on the families of men holding civil bureaucratic or military positions. The fact that nearly 90% of the sons of such officeholders pursued the same professions as

¹³⁹ For a description of the ethnic heterogeneity of Tang-period Youzhou, see Ma Chi 馬馳, "Tang Youzhou jing qiaozhi jimi zhou yu Heshuo fanzhen geju 唐幽州境僑治羈縻州與河朔藩鎮割據," *Tang yanjiu* 4 (1998): 199-204. Besides Ma's list of the ethnic groups found in Hebei, note also the tomb epitaph of Lun Boyan 論博言 (805-865), the proud descendant of a Tibetan high official. Charles A. Peterson, "Court and Province in Mid- and Late T'ang," *The Cambridge History of China*, ed. Denis Twitchett, Vol. 3, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p.471 provides a good summary of Chen Yinke's 陳寅恪 (1890-1969) influential thesis regarding the “barbarization” (胡化) of the Han Chinese populations living in Tang-period Hebei.

their fathers and that the majority of marriage ties did not cross elite type demonstrates the substantial social barriers existing between civil and military elites. Thus, from a methodological perspective, it is correct to treat these two groups as separate analytical categories. Nevertheless, while the two major elite types were largely self-contained, they were not entirely closed and impermeable to one another. Throughout the period in question, a certain number of intermarriages did unite civil and military officeholding families. Although there were undoubtedly different hierarchical levels within the two types, in general they must have been viewed as holding similar social status. Overall, they can be described as “parallel” elites and social movement between the two types can be seen as a form of lateral mobility.

Two qualifications must be made, however. First, I have argued that the close social links between military and ruling elites justifies their treatment as a single elite type. Because all independent military governors, kings, and post-Tang emperors first rose to power in the army, it is not surprising that their sons and sons-in-law would have disproportionately held military titles as well. Second, I have proposed that Youzhou province in the late Tang was an exceptionally good example of the regional diversity of medieval Chinese society. Among officeholding families, as many as 30% of sons did not pursue the professions of their fathers; as many as 40% of marriages united the children of military men to the children of civil bureaucrats. In both cases, a rate of 50% would imply that elite type played no role at all in marriage decisions or in the choice of a son’s career. One can hypothesize that the militarized, multi-ethnic border province of Youzhou was in the midst of a social transformation, involving the formation of an elite type that based its prestige on a tradition of both military and civil

officeholding.

It has sometimes been argued that the intermediary period prior to the founding of the Song dynasty was an era of great social mobility. But the analysis in this chapter has revealed that this generalization is only partly accurate. On the one hand, a dramatic rise in social status was indeed possible in a single generation within the military sphere, where leadership and tactical skills could be learned on the job. Of course, military service was also a game of chance: a military officer's future was dependent both on his survival in the battlefield and on the success of his superior officers.

But on the other hand, the need for an extensive literary education greatly restricted the entry of the sons of non-elite families into the civil bureaucracy. In this chapter, we have examined evidence suggesting that civil office was largely limited to the sons of wealthy local elites, often with a known tradition of scholarship. It is important to note, moreover, that the offices so attained were generally of low-rank. Although downward mobility is more difficult to study because of a lack of source materials on non-elite descendants, limited data does suggest that it was not uncommon for non-officeholding descendants of civil bureaucrats to possess the resources to pay for their children's education and to acquire tomb epitaphs for their own burials. In other words, there was probably extensive upward and downward mobility linking low-level civil bureaucrats to a class of wealthy, well-educated non-officeholding elites.

We have also seen that in all periods there were limited examples of lateral social mobility—that is, of the sons of civil bureaucrats embarking on military careers or vice versa. Such lateral mobility did not necessarily entail a permanent change in family strategy; in general, elite-type mobility occurred in the context of an apparently deliberate

attempt at career diversification, a strategy that might be complemented by cross-type marriage ties. Family diversification implies that neither civil office nor military office was seen as the unique route to securing prestige for the family. Varying marriage ties and the careers of one's sons expanded the survival opportunities of the family and extended the family's social network. Robert Hymes has identified a similar flexibility in the family strategies of Southern Song lineages, which encouraged professions in fields such as medicine, the clergy, agriculture, and commerce for a descendant who was "incapable of being a scholar."¹⁴⁰ But whereas these alternate professions were portrayed by Late Song writers as a less desirable alternative to a life of scholarship, military and civil offices seem to have held equal prestige in the culture of late Tang and tenth-century elites. Indeed, in such a period of turmoil and uncertainty, the diversification of family professions and social ties was particularly important as a rational choice to ensure the survival of a family's high status.

In the following chapter, we will turn to another strategy for family survival and perpetuation: the mass migrations that began in the second half of the eighth century and accelerated in the final years of the Tang dynasty and the early tenth century.

¹⁴⁰ Robert P. Hymes, *Statesmen and Gentlemen*, 119.

Figure 3.1. Intergenerational mobility in Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan (Late Tang to Early Song)

Hebei (Biographies)		Hebei (Tomb epitaphs)	
No change in elite type		No change in elite type	
CIV>CIV	142	CIV>CIV	83
MIL>MIL	215	MIL>MIL	102
Total	357	Total	186
Change in elite type		Change in elite type	
CIV>MIL	21	CIV>MIL	24
MIL>CIV	23	MIL>CIV	25
Total	44	Total	49
Jiangnan/Huainan (Biographies)		Jiangnan/Huainan (Tomb epitaphs)	
No change in elite type		No change in elite type	
CIV>CIV	106	CIV>CIV	113
MIL>MIL	61	MIL>MIL	44
Total	167	Total	157
Change in elite type		Change in elite type	
CIV>MIL	7	CIV>MIL	11
MIL>CIV	17	MIL>CIV	7
Total	24	Total	18

Explanations: This figure depicts all father-son (in some cases grandfather-grandson) pairs for which both individuals can be identified as either a civil bureaucrat or a military official. CIV>CIV indicates that both father and son were civil bureaucrats; CIV>MIL indicates that the father was a civil bureaucrat but the son was a military official; etc. Thus, CIV>MIL and MIL>CIV represent instances of intergenerational elite type mobility, whereas CIV>CIV and MIL>MIL represent instances of no mobility. Data is separated by region (Hebei vs. Jiangnan/Huainan). Because of relative biases in the two types of sources, standard history biographies are treated separately from tomb epitaphs.

Figure 3.2. Endogamous and Exogamous Marriages in Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan (Late Tang to Early Song)

BIOGRAPHIES	Hebei	Jiangnan/Huainan
Endogamous marriages		
CIV-CIV	6	5
MIL-MIL	3	7
MIL-RUL	25	16
Total	34	28
Exogamous marriages		
CIV-MIL	3	1
CIV-RUL	1	6
Total	4	7
TOMB EPITAPHS	Hebei	Jiangnan/Huainan
Endogamous marriages		
CIV-CIV	27	24
MIL-MIL	14	17
MIL-RUL	3	3
RUL-RUL	3	0
Total	47	44
Exogamous marriages		
CIV-MIL	8	8
CIV-RUL	1	1
Total	9	9

Explanations: This figure depicts all marriages involving two officeholding families. CIV-CIV indicates that both families were civil bureaucratic; CIV-MIL indicates that one family was civil bureaucratic and one family belonged to the military elite; etc. In cases when the spouse in question did not hold office, the elite type of the father is used. As explained in the text, MIL-RUL marriages are considered endogamous for the purposes of this table. Data is separated by region (Hebei vs. Jiangnan/Huainan) and source of biographical data (biographies vs. tomb epitaphs).

Figure 3.3. Dates of all instances of intergenerational elite-type mobility in Hebei and Jiangnan/Huainan (Late Tang to Early Song)

HEBEI

TOMB EPITAPHS

MIL>CIV: 747, 757, 776, 789, 797, 802, 804, 804, 811, 818, 829, 831, 836, 836, 836, 836, 837, 837, 844, 845, 853, 860, 864, 864, 939

CIV>MIL: 727, 762, 762, 767, 767, 769, 777, 793, 806, 817, 821, 827, 830, 834, 834, 840, 840, 845, 869, 877, 925, 925, 937

BIOGRAPHIES

MIL>CIV: 840, 881, 883, 902, 905, 908, 911, 915, 920, 941, 942, 942, 944, 949, 954, 955, 957, 960, 961, 971, 974, 997, 998, 998

CIV>MIL: 785, 833, 863, 867, 869, 878, 879, 881, 891, 897, 901, 907, 918, 934, 941, 941, 945, 947, 952, 952, 979

JIANGNAN / HUAINAN

TOMB EPITAPHS

MIL>CIV: 792, 866, 899, 905, 910, 910, 924, 937, 963

CIV>MIL: 806, 830, 833, 836, 847, 852, 852, 861, 865, 869, 870, 875, 880

BIOGRAPHIES

MIL>CIV: 792, 887, 891, 893, 895, 896, 899, 911, 915, 919, 930, 935, 937, 945, 946, 953

CIV>MIL: 845, 850, 852, 861, 861, 865, 946

Explanations: This figure depicts each instance of the officeholding son of an officeholder not belonging to the same elite type as his father. Only military elites (MIL) (a category that includes ruling elites for the purposes of this table) and civil elites (CIV) are considered. “MIL>CIV” indicates that the father was a military officeholder and the son was a civil bureaucrat; “CIV>MIL” indicates that the father was a civil bureaucrat and the son was a military officeholder. Dates indicate the date of birth of the individual who changed elite type, with the exception of three men who changed elite type mid-career: Liu Baoxun 劉保勳 (925-986), Sang Weihān 桑維翰 (899-947), and Lu Jiang 盧絳 (d. c.976). In these three cases, the change in elite type is dated to the actual time at which the switch occurred. Because ancestors and descendants of the subjects of biographies and tomb epitaphs are also considered, some dates do not fall in the period 850 to 1000 C.E. In cases where the birth date of an individual is not known, the date is estimated based on the following: average life span, 60 years; average age of father at time of birth, 30 years; average age of mother at time of birth, 27 years.

Figure 3.4. Frequency of Exogamous Marriages
by Region and Period (pre-890 vs. post-890)

TOMB EPITAPHS

Region/Period	Total marriages	Exogamous marriages
850-890		
Jiangnan/Huainan	11	0
Hebei	26	7 (27%)
890-1000		
Jiangnan/Huainan	42	9 (21%)
Hebei	30	2 (7%)

BIOGRAPHIES

Region	Endogamous marriages (CIV-MIL)	Exogamous marriages (CIV-RUL)
Jiangnan/Huainan	16	6
Hebei	25	1

Explanations: This figure depicts the frequency of cross-type marriages between two officeholding families in two regions of China (Hebei vs. Jiangnan/Huainan) during two periods of time (pre-890 vs. post-890). Cross-type marriages include CIV-MIL and CIV-RUL; same-type marriages include CIV-CIV, MIL-MIL, and MIL-RUL. It can be assumed that most data from the standard history biographies (lower table) can be dated to the post-890 period. See Figure 3B for more information.

Figure 3.5. Frequency of Intergenerational Elite-type
Mobility in Youzhou by Period (pre-890 vs. post-890)

Region/Period	No change in elite type	Change in elite type
850-890		
Youzhou	58 (70%)	25 (30%)
Elsewhere in Hebei	63 (82%)	14 (18%)
890-1000		
Youzhou	33 (85%)	6 (15%)
Elsewhere in Hebei	32 (89%)	4 (11%)

Explanations: This figure depicts the estimated frequency of intergenerational elite-type mobility in two regions of Hebei (Youzhou vs. elsewhere in Hebei) during two periods of time (pre-890 vs. post-890). All father-son (in some cases grandfather-grandson) pairs for which both individuals can be identified as either a civil bureaucrat or a military official have been considered. The data is not based on the time the decision was made (i.e. the date of birth of the son in each father-son pair) but on the date of the tomb epitaph. Youzhou refers to Youzhou Military Province (which included Youzhou prefecture and several neighboring prefectures).

Chapter 4: Elite Migration

In 1994, amid the parched and rocky hills of west-central Hebei, archaeologists made a sensational find. A lavish, two-chambered tomb was uncovered dating to the tenth century: its walls were adorned with mountain landscapes, red-crested birds, portraits of administrators and servants, and several members of a musical ensemble. Under a roof bedecked with stars and constellations lay an unusually massive stone epitaph, over one meter in length on each side, identifying the tomb occupant as Wang Chuzhi 王處直 (863-923), one of the most important governors of tenth-century Hebei. This epitaph and several other epitaphs and biographies present a fascinating story of family survival during the turbulent era of the ninth and tenth centuries.¹⁴¹

For several generations, the Wang family had been military officers in the Shence Army, the powerful, eunuch-dominated military units in charge of defending the imperial palace in Chang'an. Wang's father had taken full advantage of his influential position and of his connections with the palace eunuchs to accumulate a substantial fortune. In 879, Wang's older brother Chucun 處存 (831-895) was dispatched as military governor of Yiwu 義武 Province, one of the few regions of Hebei still under the control of the Tang central government. A loyal agent of the throne, Chucun is said to have wept for days when news reached him the following year that the rebel Huang Chao had captured

¹⁴¹ The subsequent account of the Wang family is based on the biographies of Wang Chuzhi, Wang Chucun, Wang Yu 王郁, and Wang Tingyin and on the tomb epitaphs of Wang Chuzhi, Wang Tingyin, Wang Yu 王裕, Wang Zan 王瓚, and Wang Yue 王悅. For a comprehensive excavation report on Wang Chuzhi's tomb, including more information on the Wang family, see also *Wudai Wang Chuzhi mu* 五代王處直墓, (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1998). Finally, note the discussion of this tomb within a broader study of developments in Chinese landscape painting: see Jessica Rawson, "The Origins of Chinese Mountain Painting: Evidence from Archaeology," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 117 (2002): 4-16.

the capital, forcing Emperor Xizong to retreat south to Sichuan. But with dynastic authority rapidly crumbling, he refused to comply with a central government directive to leave his post when his term of office expired in 885. Ten years later, he was succeeded by his son, and a few years after that by his younger brother Chuzhi. When Chuzhi died in 923, the location of his tomb indicates that this branch of the family had shifted its power base to western Hebei, several hundred kilometers from the ancestral graveyard in the vicinity of Chang'an. Although the fifty-year family dynasty came to an end six years later when Chuzhi's adoptive son was overthrown as governor, the Wang clan itself survived. One branch had relocated to Luoyang, the old Eastern Capital of the Tang dynasty, where the epitaph of Chucun's grandson Tingyin 庭胤 (891-944) was discovered.¹⁴² Another branch of the family sought refuge further north with the Liao, a dynasty founded by the non-Chinese Khitan in present-day Manchuria. Chuzhi's son Yu 郁 (d. c.928), one of the first important Chinese generals to defect to the Khitans, played a critical role in the conquest of the neighboring state of Bohai (Parhae) in eastern Manchuria. The tombs of no less than three of Yu's descendants have been uncovered in Kazuo 喀左 County, Liaoning Province, not far from what was once the Liao's central capital.¹⁴³

During the political turmoil of the Tang-Song interregnum, elites were forced to

¹⁴² The discovery of Wang Tingyin's epitaph (in the epitaph, his name is given in the variant form 廷胤) is not described and cannot be dated. The earliest reference to it that I have found is Huang Liyou 黃立猷, *Shike minghui* 石刻名彙, *Shike shiliao xinbian*, 2nd ed., Vol. 2, 7.116b. Huang's catalog was originally published in 1927.

¹⁴³ The tombs of one of Wang Yu's grandsons [Wang Yu 王裕 (926-980)] and one great grandson [Wang Zan 王瓚 (953-984)] were discovered 500 meters apart in northern Kazuo County, the first before 1949 and the second in 1976. The tomb of another grandson [Wang Yue 王悅 (d.1005)] was discovered in the west of the county in 1958. See "Liaoning Kazuo xian Liao Wang Yue mu 遼寧喀左縣遼王悅墓," *Kaogu* 1962.9:479-83; and Xiang Nan 向南, "Liao Wang shi er fang muzhi kao 遼王氏二方墓誌考," *Kaogu yu wenwu* 1984.3: 93-97, 17.

adopt new family strategies to ensure the perpetuation of their status. As described in the previous chapter, diversification of the careers and marriage ties of offspring played an important role in expanding a family's political network, leading to new social links between the military and the civil bureaucracy. The present chapter will explore another survival strategy by focusing on the high geographic mobility of the ninth- and tenth-century Chinese upper classes. Among elites of this period, migration was not only endemic but, as exemplified by the Wang family, multi-directional. The pillaging of the Tang heartland by Huang Chao and other rebellious armies in the 880s led to an exodus of metropolitan and northern elites; some relocated to Sichuan or Jiangnan in the south; others fled northward to Hebei or into the territory under Khitan control. As I will argue in the course of this chapter, the social implications of such large-scale migrations were considerable.

4.1. Identifying migrants

Migration and geographic mobility could take many forms. Although the present study will broadly consider all cases of individuals who travelled far from their home, including those who did so in the service of the government, attention will be focused on families who relocated permanently. The object is to understand the circumstances in which people made the difficult decision to break away from their home networks of family and social ties, a decision that sometimes entailed abandoning their land and other resources.

Epitaphs and biographies often explicitly mention family migration. The ancestors of Sun Sui 孫綏 (798-878) were based in Huaibei. However, the family “initially followed an ancestor across the Yangzi, stopping in Danyang County in

Runzhou; later, they relocated to Guangling [Yangzhou] to avoid soldiers. 初隨祖過江. 止潤州丹陽縣.後避兵徒居廣陵焉.” However, many cases described in epitaphs occurred in the distant past and will generally not be examined in this chapter. We are told, for example, that the family of Tao Daiqian 陶待虔 (d.849), originally based in Jizhou (Hebei), moved south across the Yangzi at the end of the Han dynasty, “twenty generations” earlier. The accuracy of such allusions to the remote past can be questioned; in any case, the Tao family would have resettled in the south well before the period examined in the present study.

Other examples of migration can be deduced from additional clues. In the case of standard history biographies, it is sometimes possible to compare the place of origin of an individual to the place of origin of his father. For example, according to his *Song shi* biography, Liu Baoxun 劉保勳 (925-986) was from Luoyang; in the *Jiu Wudai shi* biography of his father, Liu Churang 劉處讓 (881-943), the family is said to be from Cangzhou (in Hebei). Presumably, the family relocated at some point from Hebei to Luoyang further south. Sometimes one can also identify cases of migration during the interregnum by comparing a person’s place of origin with the place where he served in office. Administrators and soldiers of the Southern Tang kingdom who are described as northerners would invariably have established new family roots in the south. After the reunification of China under the Song, however, this approach is less reliable. Bureaucrats might temporarily be appointed to posts far from their homes even though their families remained near the sites of their property holdings and ancestral cemeteries.

The places of origin specified in epitaphs are more problematic because of the prevalence of claims to aristocratic ancestry. As we observed in Chapter Two, the

deceased is often said to be a native of the ancestral place of one of the great clans of the same surname, yet the family would have moved away centuries earlier.¹⁴⁴ On the other hand, epitaphs nearly always identify their subjects' places of burial. Because of the importance of the ancestral cult and of the rituals performed at the family graveyard, the location where one chose to bury one's dead was a strong indicator of one's principal place of residence. In rare cases, as with the Wang family mentioned above, multiple epitaphs for members of a single family allow us to trace the migration of more than one branch of the family over time. Beverly Bossler has also demonstrated how place of burial can be used to differentiate capital elites from elites based in the provinces, a distinction we will exploit at length in the following chapter.¹⁴⁵

4.2. Elite migration before Huang Chao's rebellion

It is likely that prior to the Huang Chao Rebellion elites most commonly migrated after taking up office at a new provincial post. Of 85 instances of migration prior to 880, 34 (40%) resulted from a bureaucratic or military appointment; the reasons for migration in the majority of the remaining cases are unknown.¹⁴⁶ Indeed, because of the law of

¹⁴⁴ This problem does not generally affect standard history biographies in the period of focus of this study. The one exception involves capital elites, who were buried at the capital but are, nevertheless, said to be from the place of original family registration. These cases are easily identified by clues in the biographies (especially the official titles that they or their ancestors held).

¹⁴⁵ Beverly J. Bossler, *Powerful Relations: Kinship, Status, and the State in Sung China (960-1279)*, (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, 1998), 41-43. See also John W. Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China: A Social History of Examinations*, new ed, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), 57-58, who shows that in Song times the site of one's ancestral tombs could be used as proof of residency at a particular locale.

¹⁴⁶ Of these 85 cases, 64 were culled from biographies and epitaphs of women and men from Hebei or Huainan / Jiangnan who died between 850 and 879. In some cases, it was an unnamed ancestor many generations before who was responsible for relocating the family. A few examples from both Hebei and Huainan/Jiangnan point to the chaos during the An Lushan Rebellion as the cause for family relocation. In addition, there were 21 cases of migration reported in the biographies and epitaphs of women and men from Hebei or Huainan/Jiangnan (including all men who served the Wu or Southern Tang) who died between 880 and 1000; in all of these cases, the family had migrated many generations before. Although one can question the reliability of a claim to migration many generations before, it is nevertheless noteworthy that migration because of office was deemed

avoidance, individuals under the Tang were almost always assigned to provincial offices away from their places of origin. With ample opportunities for a new appointee to integrate himself into local social networks and to convert political power into land and other local resources, it was not uncommon for him to resettle his family there after his term of office expired. Alternatively, one son might settle at his father's place of office while other sons returned to the family's original home base.¹⁴⁷

In addition, much elite migration in the late Tang (including migration because of office) undoubtedly accompanied the medieval demographic shift that transformed China. Spurred by good land, more reliable rainfall, and an efficient riverine transport system in the south, the Chinese population began to shift southward in the early Tang, a process that accelerated after the mid-eighth century. As demonstrated by Robert Hartwell, between 742 and 1080 (two years with comprehensive surviving census records), the population in the north increased by only 26%, whereas the population in the south increased by 328%.¹⁴⁸ Although regional differences in the rates of reproduction and

sufficiently plausible to be used as a standard explanation.

¹⁴⁷ One example is Linghu Huaibin 令狐懷斌 (834-858). It is clear from the epitaph of his great uncle Linghu Mei 令狐梅 (793-854) that the family originated in Dunhuang, far to the west, although the family would have relocated at some point to Chang'an or Luoyang. However, Huaibin's fourth-generation ancestor served as military governor in Bozhou in the late 750s and in nearby Huazhou from 761 to 773 (offices first acquired under the regime of Shi Siming, successor of An Lushan). See Huaibin's epitaph, as well as Yu Xianhao 郁賢皓, *Tang cishi kao quanbian* 唐刺史考全編, (Hefei: Anhui daxue chubanshe, 2000), 2:791, 1395. His great grandfather was then a county magistrate in Bozhou. Although neither Huaibin nor his father had held office, he was buried in Wushui County, Bozhou.

¹⁴⁸ These figures are derived from Robert M. Hartwell, "Demographic, Political, and Social Transformations of China, 750-1550," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42.2 (1982): 369 (Table 1). By "south," I refer to the macroregions of "Lingnan," "Southeast China," "Middle Yangtze," and "Lower Yangtze;" by "north," I refer to "Northwest China" and "North China." For one of the earliest descriptions of this southward demographic shift, see Aoyama Sadao, "Zui, Tō, Sō sandai ni okeru kosū no chiiki teki kōsatsu," *Rekishigaku kenkyū*, 6.4(1936):441-446. Shiba Yoshinobu, "Urbanization and the Development of Markets in the Lower Yangtze Valley," *Crisis and Prosperity in Sung China*, Ed. John Winthrop Haeger, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1975), 15-19 provides a good summary of Aoyama's data (note the well-known typographical error involving the figures in Shiba's Table 2.1, which have all been multiplied by one thousand).

death also influenced the southern demographic explosion, it is clear that migrants of all social classes, drawn by the agricultural and economic potential of the south, played a significant role.

A variety of evidence suggests that *elite* migrants participated in this southward movement. It is probably no coincidence that there was a surge of epitaph production in the south at this time. For example, of the numerous early tomb inscriptions preserved in the Changshu Museum (Changshu, Jiangsu Province) or recorded in works of Changshu local history, the earliest is dated 795.¹⁴⁹ Subsequently, there were fifteen inscriptions dating to the period 795 to 850. As it turns out, the sudden appearance of epitaphs in the late eighth century closely mirrors demographic data that indicates that Changshu underwent a period of rapid population growth sometime between 726 and 876.¹⁵⁰

Although some of the upper class families represented by tomb epitaphs would have risen to elite status after their arrival in Changshu, northern elites certainly

¹⁴⁹ I am indebted to Shi Liangbao 石良宝 and Yang Jianhua 楊建華 of the Changshu Museum for generously granting me access to their Tang and Song epitaphs, which will be published soon in volume one of *Xin Zhongguo chutu muzhi: Jiangsu* 新中國出土墓誌: 江蘇, (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, forthcoming). Gazetteers and other works of local Changshu history that I have consulted include: Yang Ziqi 楊子器, ed., (*Hongzhi*) *Changshu xian zhi* (弘治)常熟縣志, *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu* ed., Vol. 185; Zheng Zhongxiang 鄭鍾祥 and Zhang Ying 張瀛, eds., (*Guangxu*) *Chang Zhao he zhi gao* (光緒)常昭合志稿, *Zhongguo difangzhi jicheng* ed.; Zhang Jinghuan 張鏡寰 et al., eds., (*Minguo*) *Chongxiu Chang Zhao he zhi*, republished Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 2002; Huang Tingjian 黃廷鑑, *Qinchuan sanzhi buji xu* 琴川三志補記續, (Shuyi zhai, 1835); Chen Kui 陳揆, *Yuyi yiwen lu* 虞邑遺文錄, *Beijing tushuguan guji zhenben congkan* ed., Vol. 118; Chen Kui 陳揆, ed., *Qinchuan zhizhu cao* 琴川志注草 and *Qinchuan xuzhi cao* 琴川續志草, *Hezhong tushuguan* ed., 1941; Luo Zhenyu 羅振玉, *Wuzhong zhongmu yiwen* 吳中冢墓遺文, *Lidai beizhi congshu* ed., Vol. 18.

¹⁵⁰ Robert M. Hartwell, "Demographic, Political, and Social Transformations of China, 750-1550," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42.2 (1982): 391. Hartwell observes that counties situated on the Grand Canal, which was completed in the early seventh century, underwent an earlier period of rapid development. In the case of Changshu, located further from the canal, population growth occurred later. Between 726 and 876, Changshu experienced an average annual growth rate of .41 percent, whereas Wuxian 吳縣 (located on the Grand Canal) had a lower average annual growth rate of .27 percent.

participated in the migration as well. Unfortunately, the Changshu epitaphs themselves do not explicitly indicate if families had recently moved south. Nevertheless, archaeological evidence confirms the northern origins of at least one such family. A small, inscribed brick slab in the collection of the Changshu Museum—measuring about a foot on each side—recounts the genealogy and life of a certain Yan Youming 顏幼明 (785-866). According to this stone, the deceased's fourth-generation ancestor, Yan Moudao 顏謀道 (642-721), had once served as prefect of Fuzhou 涪州 and Hezhou 和州. Neither Moudao nor any other of Youming's other ancestors are mentioned in any transmitted text, neither chronicle nor dynastic history.¹⁵¹ Remarkably, however, an epitaph that surfaced in 1928 confirms that a man named Yan Moudao, whose last substantive offices were indeed those of prefect of Fuzhou and then of Hezhou, was buried on a mountainside in the north, near the Tang Eastern Capital of Luoyang.

Circumstantial evidence is also suggestive of the northern elite origins of a certain number of other Changshu families. Of forty-one epitaphs from Changshu produced in the ninth or tenth century, twelve (29%) state that the deceased was buried next to other family members. On the other hand, sixteen (39%) indicate that the deceased was buried in a new graveyard, either on recently purchased land or in a newly constructed tomb compound.¹⁵² It is plausible to conclude that many of the elites buried in new tombs may also have been emigrés like the Yan family, who had recently resettled in Changshu from the north. Although the Yans had been a prominent officeholding family for generations, other Changshu emigrés may have been descendants of large

¹⁵¹ Besides checking for Yan Youming's ancestors in *Zizhi tongjian* and the two dynastic histories of the Tang, I also performed systematic searches using a full-text searchable version of the *Siku quanshu*.

¹⁵² In the case of the remaining thirteen stones (32%), no information is given.

landowners or merchants from the north, with no family history of government service. Situated very near the mouth of the Yangzi River, Changshu was at the heart of a region that would soon undergo a great commercial revolution. In Song times, this city would even attract numerous Song imperial clansmen.¹⁵³ But already in the late Tang, scions of northern elite families may have resettled there to profit either directly or indirectly from the burgeoning commerce, both domestic and international.¹⁵⁴

The nearby city of Yangzhou was perhaps the most important destination of eighth- and ninth-century migrants. Situated just north of where the Grand Canal crosses the Yangzi River, Yangzhou became the center of the lucrative domestic salt trade and also hosted a significant population of foreign traders.¹⁵⁵ Although the large population of Yangzhou is reflected in the numerous epitaphs excavated here, it is not always possible to establish when or under what circumstances a particular family first arrived. The story of Lu Gongbi 盧公弼 (788-866) and his family is somewhat more transparent. Lu was without doubt a first-generation immigrant, quite possibly from

¹⁵³ For a discussion of the commercial revolution affecting the Lower Yangzi in Song times, see Shiba Yoshinobu, "Urbanization and the Development of Markets in the Lower Yangtze Valley," *Crisis and Prosperity in Sung China*, ed. John Winthrop Haeger, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1975), 13-48. Tomb epitaphs indicate the following Song imperial clansmen were buried in Changshu: Zhao Buli 趙不沴 (1143-1181), Zhao Gongsheng 趙公升 (1143-1216), Zhao Xizi 趙希錡 (1202-1269), and Zhao [...]fu 趙口夫 (13th c.). See Zhou Gongtai 周公太, "Changshu Bowuguan cang Tang Song muzhi yanjiu juyao 常熟博物館藏唐宋墓志研究舉要," *Dongnan wenhua* 2001.7: 50-51; Zhang Jinghuan 張鏡寰 et al., eds., (*Minguo*) *Chongxiu Changzhao he zhi*, (Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 2002), 19:902-903, 905; Yuan Xie 袁燮, *Xiezhai ji* 契齋集, *Congshu jicheng* ed., 17:292-294.

¹⁵⁴ Note that of thirty-four Changshu epitaphs dating to the period 795 to 900, there is no evidence at all of local officeholding. In other words, relocation because of office, one of the driving forces of migration described below, did not influence the ninth-century influx of elites in Changshu.

¹⁵⁵ Hugh R. Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks: Southern Fujian Province from the Third to the Thirteenth Century*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 32. For a summary of archaeological evidence for the existence of a Persian population in Yangzhou (including the use of the word "Persian" to name a district of Yangzhou and to name a child), see Wu Wei 吳煒, "Yangzhou Tang Wudai muzhi gaishu 揚州唐五代墓誌概述," *Dongnan wenhua* 東南文化 1995.4: 114.

Luoyang where his nephew Lu Yan 盧言 is known to have had a mansion in the Gui-de 歸德 Ward of this great city.¹⁵⁶ When Lu Gongbi died, his survivors evoked a common excuse to justify the interment of their kinsman far from his ancestors. According to Lu's epitaph, "the household is poor and the road is long, together impeding the return home for burial. 家貧路遠, 猶阻歸祔." In fact, the Lu family was anything but poor. Lu Gongbi was from an officeholding family, though he "did not care for fame 不好名" himself. Rather than serving in office, he "secured his livelihood by enlisting in the salt business, repeatedly taking charge of money and grain [i.e. financial matters] 籍以鹺務寄食, 亦重縮錢穀." His business was successful, allowing him to purchase a villa in Changzhou, a city about one hundred kilometers south along the Grand Canal. After his death, his descendants paid to return his body from Changzhou to Yangzhou and were able to commission one of the largest ninth-century epitaphs yet discovered in this region.¹⁵⁷

The examples above suggest that, already prior to the great Huang Chao Rebellion, both officeholding and non-officeholding northern elites participated in the great southward migration that began in the seventh century and accelerated in the eighth century. Scions of some upper class and aristocratic families who either failed to gain office or were simply not interested in a bureaucratic career relocated to the south in

¹⁵⁶ Lu Yan identifies the location of his mansion in a collection of anecdotes he compiled, *Lu shi zashuo* 盧氏雜說. See Wang Dang 王讜, *Tang yulin jiaozheng* 唐語林校證, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997), 8: 722. For more on Lu Yan, see the bibliographic notes to *Tang yulin jiaozheng*, pp.782-783, which indicate that he held a variety of capital offices in the mid-ninth century. Lu Gongbi's inscription credits him with holding the office of Chief Minister of the Court of Imperial Entertainments (rank 3b). Note also that the verse *ming* at the end of Lu Gongbi's epitaph implies the Lu family cemetery was in one of the capital cities: "In the old grounds of the Sui capital, the mounds were like dragons 隋都故地, 崗阜如龍."

¹⁵⁷ Lu Gongbi's epitaph has a size index of 27, well above average (cf. Figure 1.7).

search of new economic opportunities. In some cases, these emigrés probably took advantage of a relative's government appointment in the south to integrate into local social networks or acquire land. In other cases, they would have arrived with their own resources, which they then converted into real estate or commercial capital.

4.3. Elite migration after Huang Chao's rebellion

Beginning in the 880s, the effective collapse of Tang imperial power created new reasons to migrate. In a series of regional studies, the historian Aoyama Sadao has demonstrated the importance of migration among elites in the period following the Huang Chao Rebellion. In his examination of the genealogies of early Song bureaucrats, he has identified the two most frequently given reasons for relocation: "avoiding the chaos" (usually 避亂 or 避難 in the sources) in the north and "because of office" (usually 因任).¹⁵⁸ Because Aoyama only examines Song-period data, his portrayal of the pre-Song period is based on a retrospective extrapolation. A broader look at epitaphs and biographies for individuals who died during the period 880 to 1000 provides data on the extent of elite migration in this period and more information on the circumstances surrounding instances of geographic mobility. It is clear that migration played a significant role in elite life: of 679 epitaphs and biographies, first- or second-generation migrants constitute 289 cases (43%).¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ See the following (all by Aoyama Sadao 青山定雄): "Sōdai ni okeru Kahoku kanryō no keifu ni tsuite 宋代における華北官僚の系譜について," *Seishin joshi daigaku ronsō* 21 (1963): 29-30; "Sōdai ni okeru Kanan kanryō no keifu ni tsuite-toku ni Yōsukō karyūiki o chūshin to shite 宋代における華南官僚の系譜について-特に揚子江下流域を中心として," *Uno Tetsuto sensei hakuju shukuga kinen Tōyōgaku ronsō* 宇野哲人先生白寿祝賀記念東洋学論叢, (Tokyo: Uno Tetsuto sensei hakuju shukuga kinenkai, 1974), 22-23; "Godai Sō ni okeru Kōsei no shinkō kanryō 五代宋に於ける江西の新興官僚," *Wada Hakase kanreki kinen Tōyōshi ronsō* 和田博士還暦記念東洋史論叢. (Tokyo: Dai Nippon yūbenkai kōdansha, 1951), 20.

¹⁵⁹ These 678 instances refer to all biographies and epitaphs of women or men who died between 880

As suggested by Figure 4.1, one third of post-Huang Chao migrants were escaping warfare or political instability. Huang Chao laid waste to Chang'an and Luoyang (the Western and Eastern capitals) in 880, prompting an exodus of elite families.¹⁶⁰ Ms. Lu 盧氏(李) (817-881), for example, whose story is recounted in the Introduction, was the descendant of one of the great aristocratic families based in Luoyang. In 880, she fled the Eastern Capital with her two sons, seeking refuge at a family villa in the countryside, where she died a few months later.¹⁶¹ Luo Qian 駱潛 (848-884), from another metropolitan great clan, was one of many elites based in the Western Capital of Chang'an to follow the imperial retinue in its flight to Sichuan; eventually he would travel on to Huainan, where he was buried.

The emperor's return to Chang'an in 885 only introduced another period of intense factionalism at court and warfare in the provinces.¹⁶² Lu Rubi 盧汝弼 (d.923) was one of many civil officials to flee the court purges. He sought refuge with the Turk Li Keyong 李克用 (856-908), who was based in Hedong in the north and whose son would found the Later Tang dynasty twenty years later.¹⁶³ Zhai Qian 翟虔, military man from Xuzhou, fled south with his entire family when his hometown was taken over

and 1000.

¹⁶⁰ For a description of Huang Chao's reign of terror in Chang'an and the famines, looting, and great massacres, especially of wealthy bureaucratic elites, see XTS 225 下:6458-6462. An English translation of this passage exists: see Howard S. Levy, *Biography of Huang Ch'ao*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), 28-40.

¹⁶¹ See the epitaphs of Ms. Lu 盧氏(李) (817-880) and the two epitaphs for her husband Li Shu 李杼 (802-850) (his second epitaph carved at the time of his wife's death). Ms. Lu was eventually reburied in the Li family cemetery. Several members of the Li family died during the rebellion.

¹⁶² Wang Gungwu, *The Structure of Power in North China during the Five Dynasties*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), 35-46, 98; Robert M. Somers, "The End of the T'ang," *The Cambridge History of China*, ed. Denis Twitchett, Volume 3 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 766-789.

¹⁶³ For additional examples of bureaucrats fleeing to Hebei or Hedong, see Wang Gungwu, *The Structure of Power in North China*, 98, note 25 (p.98).

by a local general in the mid 890s. More families relocated when Zhu Wen 朱溫 (852-912) finally overthrew the last Tang emperor in 907, proclaiming the Later Liang dynasty. Zhao Kuangning 趙匡凝, for example, was the son of one of Zhu's most trusted generals. Zhao refused to support the new dynasty and fled to Huainan to join the Wu regime (which still claimed obedience to the defunct Tang throne); simultaneously, his brother sought refuge in Sichuan. At around the same time, under the brutal regime of Liu Shouguang 劉守光 (d.913), governor of Youzhou from 907 until 913, numerous civil bureaucrats fled either southward or to Hedong to the west.

The founding of the Later Tang in 923 introduced a period of relative calm. But some elites still had reason to head south. The famous Southern Tang scholar-official Han Xizai 韓熙載 (902-970) was the son of the Surveillance Commissioner's Secretary in Zizhou and Qingzhou (in Huaibei). After a local revolt was crushed by Later Tang armies and his father was implicated and killed, Han was able to escape to Huainan. The Khitan invasion of North China in 946 produced yet another wave of elite migration. Some fled the invaders and went south; others joined forces with the new regime and ended up relocating to the Liao capital.¹⁶⁴

As shown in Figure 4.1, an additional third of migrants of this period relocated as a result of their careers. In many cases, officials who had been sent out from the capital for a temporary administrative assignment simply decided not to return when their term came to an end. Wang Chucun, described above, established a new family base in Yiwu Province, refusing to accept his new appointment when he recognized the imminent

¹⁶⁴ See the biography of Huangfu Hui 皇甫暉 (d.956) for one example of a military man who fled in the wake of the Khitan invasion; Feng Yu 馮玉 (d.953) is one example of a bureaucrat who went north to serve the Khitans.

demise of the Tang regime.¹⁶⁵ Zhang Bo 張播 (d.918), son of the grand councillor Zhang Jun 張濬 (d.903), was dispatched by the throne to Huainan in late 902 to enfeoff Yang Xingmi as Prince of Wu. When his father was executed the very next year, he did not dare return to the north. Finally, consider the case of Fan Qian 樊潛 (896-952), who served both the Wu and the Southern Tang. The family had originated in Chang'an, but Fan's father had resettled in Chizhou (Jiangnan), where he was serving in office, because of the chaos in the north.¹⁶⁶

Other elites took advantage of the multiple, competing political regimes by crossing borders in search of more desirable government appointments.¹⁶⁷ After failing the civil service exams in the north, He Yanhui's 何延徽 (884-963) grandfather went south to look for employment with the southern warlord Zhong Chuan 鍾傳 (d.906), well-known for actively recruiting talented bureaucrats.¹⁶⁸ Nearly a century later, Fan Qian's son Zhigu 知古 (941-992), who failed the Southern Tang exams in 970, went north to join the new Song regime, undoubtedly in search of better career opportunities. The southern military man Yi Wenyun 易文贊 (894-968) was serving in Huainan at the

¹⁶⁵ For other examples of military governors who were buried where they had served in office, see the epitaphs of Ma Renyu 馬仁裕 (880-942) and Ms. Wang 王氏 (893-933) (whose husband, Zhao Siqian 趙思虔, was prefect of Haizhou, where she was buried).

¹⁶⁶ For comparable examples in Fujian, see Aoyama Sadao 青山定雄, "The Newly-Risen Bureaucrats in Fukien at the Five-Dynasty-Sung Period, with Special Reference to their Genealogies," *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Tōyō Bunko* 21 (1962): 25-27. Paul Smith describes a similar phenomenon involving elites who fled Sichuan after the Mongol invasions. See "Family, Landsmann, and Status-Group Affinity in Refugee Mobility Strategies: The Mongol Invasions and The Diaspora of Sichuanese Elites, 1230-1330," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 52.2 (1992): 678-679. Nine of 29 lineages that escaped at this time had a family member serving in office outside of Sichuan.

¹⁶⁷ For a discussion of tenth-century civil bureaucrats who travelled from one regime to another in search of better treatment, often in an attempt to avoid the requirements of the civil service examinations, see Kim Jong-Seob 金宗燮, "Wudai zhengju bianhua yu wenren chushi guan 五代政局變化與文人出仕觀," *Tang yanjiu* 9 (2003): 497-499.

¹⁶⁸ See Chapter Five for more on Zhong Chuan.

time the Later Zhou armies invaded. Rather than flee south to Jiangnan, he submitted to the northern regime in 958, probably sensing the imminent demise of the Southern Tang. His family reestablished a family graveyard in Xuyi 盱眙 County (on the Huai River), hundreds of kilometers north of his native Hongzhou. Yet another example is Jiang Wenyu 江文蔚 (901-952), originally from Jianzhou in territory controlled by the Min state in the far south. His tomb epitaph observes: “At this time, the world was not united; distant lands were in disorder. But the gentleman [Jiang Wenyu] had contempt for the very existence of the little quail; instead, he followed the flight of the yellow swan. 于時天下未一; 遐方不寧. 公鄙尺鷃之爲; 從黃鵠之舉.”¹⁶⁹ By the 920s, Jiang had gone to the north to serve in office under the Later Tang. Subsequently, he returned south, becoming a high civil bureaucrat of the Southern Tang regime. Like the yellow swan, who was said to miss its home even though it flew away great distances, Jiang crossed political borders twice in his attempt to survive the political turmoil and search for employment.

As suggested by Figure 4.1, two other forms of migration included relocation to the capital and withdrawing to a mountain retreat. The attractive power of the capital will be described in the next chapter. The most popular place of retreat was Lushan 廬山 (in Jiangzhou), which attracted people from all over China and became an important center of learning.¹⁷⁰ Other destinations in Jiangnan included Jiuhuashan 九華山 (in

¹⁶⁹ In the *Zhuangzi*, the little quail (尺鷃 or 斥鴳) laughs at the great Peng bird who could soar ninety thousand *li* above the ground; the quail is content to fly no more than a few yards at a time. See *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋, ed. Guo Qingfan, collated by Wang Xiaoyu 王孝魚, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997), 1 上:14; for translation, see William Theodore De Bary and Irene Bloom, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 97.

¹⁷⁰ Men with biographies (or epitaphs) who travelled to and spent time at Lushan included Xia

Xuanzhou) and Xishan 西山 (in Hongzhou).

The prevalence of geographic mobility among elites is highlighted by numerous cases of multiple migration. According to Figure 4.1, one in five migrants or their families had relocated twice or more. For example, the father of Fan Qian 樊潛 (896-952), discussed above, moved the family from Chang'an in the north to Chizhou in Jiangnan in the late Tang; Fan's son then returned to Kaifeng in the north after the founding of the Song. Shang Quangong's 尚全恭 (905-974) grandfather had migrated to Runzhou (Jiangnan); Shang's son resettled in Jianzhou, once part of the Min kingdom in the far south, where he was serving as military governor. Wang Jingren 王景仁 (d. c.913) was a prominent general under Yang Xingmi, the founder of the Wu kingdom. When he refused to give up his personal army in 906, he was forced to flee first to the Wuyue kingdom to the southeast, then on to the north, where he was involved in several important Later Liang military campaigns. An Chongjin 安重進 (d. c.926) began his career in a military capacity in the north. After being charged with a crime, he escaped south and joined the Wu regime. Later he rejoined his brother in Sichuan before returning to the north to serve the Later Tang dynasty.

What is clear is that geographic mobility was a part of life for the upper classes of this period. In earlier times, because of the law of avoidance, provincial administrators and military men could expect appointments far from their home. It is likely that this longstanding culture of temporary relocations for office permitted elites to conceive of

Baosong 夏竦, Wu Qiao 伍喬, Meng Guan 孟貫, Mao Bing 毛炳, Liu Dong 劉洞, Jiang Wei 江爲, Zheng Yuansu 鄭元素, Jiang Mengsun 江夢孫, Sun Sheng 孫晟 (d.956), Chen Kuang 陳旼, Kuai Ao 蒯鼈, and Chen Fang's 陳昉 great grandfather. Many of these men are said to have gone to Lushan in search of education. Some of their biographies imply that centers of learning like Lushan provided a route to upward social mobility.

permanent relocation elsewhere as a viable survival strategy in a time of political turmoil. The warfare, purges, and breakdown of imperial authority were the primary instigators of migration. Some individuals were forced to flee for their lives; others sought to withdraw to mountain retreats. In addition, many government officials were on assignment away from the capital at the time of the Huang Chao rebellion and the subsequent purges. They were able to resettle their families with relative ease at their place of office even after their term had expired. In these cases, migration was a tool for elite survival, a means by which some upper class families were able to preserve their status across the Tang-Song interregnum.

But the breakdown of central authority and the emergence of independent regimes also offered new opportunities for both bureaucrats and military men. As in the case of the “wandering persuaders” (遊說) of the Warring States Period, disunity provided individuals with multiple competing regimes, none of which had a monopoly on the labor market for administrators and soldiers. Generals with their own personal armies could change allegiances to better their own treatment. So too, trained civilians could circumvent the civil service exams, receiving offices by decree (辟任) from regimes that did not have the resources to maintain an examination system.¹⁷¹ Already in the ninth century, this route was available to educated men who failed to gain office under the Tang but who were willing to serve the independent military governors in Hebei. Gu Qian 顧謙 (806-872), who had earned a *mingjing* degree of the second grade, nevertheless

¹⁷¹ Although implemented under the five northern dynasties, the civil service exams were employed in only five of the nine southern states (Wu, Southern Tang, Southern Han, Former Shu, Later Shu) and were not necessarily offered at regular intervals in the south. Appointments by decree became an important alternate route to office. See Ren Shuang 任爽, *Shiguo dianzhi kao* 十國典制考, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), 177-183.

failed to gain an office that he felt was worthy of his talent—“he walked alone in disaccord with the ranks of his contemporaries 獨行不合時流所排”. Thus, he “went in succession to the various feudal lords to serve as a retainer 歷諸侯上客,” eventually finding employment with the governor of Weibo. In the tenth century, the multitude of empires and kingdoms greatly expanded the number of such opportunities.

4.4. The geography of migration

As suggested above, most elite migration before the year 880 was associated with the great southward demographic shift described by Robert Hartwell and others, although some individuals who failed to gain office under the Tang regime went to serve one of the independent governors in Hebei. After the Huang Chao Rebellion, geographic mobility among the upper class was not only endemic but multi-directional. Figures 4.2 and 4.3 provide one approach to assessing the extent of this migration.

Figure 4.2 is based on an analysis of all officeholders with biographies in the Wu or Southern Tang chapters of the *Shiguo chunqiu* (a comprehensive history of the Ten Kingdoms produced in Qing times) for whom the place of origin is known. The table indicates that over two-fifths of bureaucrats and military men of the Wu Kingdom had come from the north, mostly in fact from Huaibei or from one of the two Tang capitals.¹⁷² Based on this sample, it would seem that only a very slight majority of officeholders came from indigenous families.¹⁷³ Under the Southern Tang, which succeeded the Wu

¹⁷² To be precise, 33 of 58 northerners were from Huaibei; 13 of 58 probably came from one of the two capitals. Individuals from the capitals are sometimes difficult to identify because their place of origin is a great clan choronym, even when it is almost certain that the family had relocated to Chang'an or Luoyang generations before.

¹⁷³ Note that these figures probably tend to underestimate the number of first- and second- generation immigrants, because after families relocated, migrants are sometimes said in their biographies to be natives of their new home base. For example, the biography of Xu Xuan 徐鉉 (917-992) in the *Song shi* (SS 441:13044), states that he was from Yangzhou. However, his tomb epitaph confirms

after a bloodless coup in 937, an important northern contingent maintained its influence in the government. However, by the 940s, the overall proportion of northerners among the new bureaucratic recruits—that is, those officeholders whose families had never served the Wu regime—declined as a result of the many migrants arriving from the far south. This new influx corresponds to the successful Southern Tang expedition against the Min state in 945. Clearly, a substantial number of former Min officials submitted to the Southern Tang, generally relocating to Jiangnan. For example, the tomb of Wang Jixun 王繼勳 (912-956), a descendant of the Min royal house, was discovered in the vicinity of modern-day Nanjing in 1987. One interesting conclusion drawn from Figure 4.2 is that very few officials (less than 5%) joined the Wu or Southern Tang regimes from elsewhere in the south. In other words, there seems to have been little east-west elite migration in this region of tenth-century China.

Figure 4.3 is based on the biographies of officeholders in the *Old History of the Five Dynasties* (originally compiled in the tenth century) categorized by dynasty. As shown in the table, in the initial period during which the Later Liang was in power, some officeholders came from the south (mostly Huainan). But migrants from the south were extremely rare in subsequent periods.¹⁷⁴ In addition, under the Later Liang, there was a contingent of elites from Hedong and Hebei, a vast region north of the Yellow River that was generally not under Liang control. What is most striking is that officeholders born

that his father fled south from the capital after 880. In addition, the brothers Feng Yansi 馮延巳 and Feng Yanlu 馮延魯 are also said in most of their biographies to be from Yangzhou. See NTS 21:5393, TYJZ 9:5692, SGCQ 26:3758. However, Yansi's *Song shi* biography (SS 478:13867) provides more complete information on their father, who it turns out migrated south from Xuzhou (in Huaibei).

¹⁷⁴ Of 13 Later Liang officeholders from the south, 6 came from Huainan, 3 from Jiangnan, and 4 from other, scattered regions; of the 22 officeholders from the entire Five Dynasties period who came from the south, 10 were from Huainan.

in Hebei or Hedong formed the majority in the subsequent four dynasties. Most of these men had already linked themselves to Li Keyong and his son Li Cunxu, then known as the Princes of Jin, before the Li regime crossed the Yellow River and overthrew the Later Liang.¹⁷⁵ Although it is not certain that these individuals all relocated southward at this time—a certain number may have returned home to Hebei or Hedong after retirement or were sent there for burial—most did settle down at the political core of the new dynasty. Tomb epitaphs from Luoyang dating to the Later Tang identify a number of officials who had served the Princes of Jin north of the Yellow River and who chose to be buried at the capital. Thus Mao Zhang 毛璋 (882-929) who originated in Cangzhou (Hebei) and who submitted to Li Cunxu in 916 was later buried in Luoyang.

What is not clear from the table is the fact that numerous Later Tang officials had previously migrated north from Huaibei or Henan during the turmoil of the collapsing Tang. Fu Cunshen 符存審 (861-923), for instance, was originally from Chenzhou (in Huaibei), where his father had been a military officer. During the bandit uprisings of the 870s, he went to serve Li Hanzhi 李罕之, but after the defeat and dispersal of Li's army, he submitted to Li Keyong in Hedong. In fact, many of the 36% of Later Tang officeholders from the “North” (see Figure 4.3) were in fact individuals who had relocated further north to serve Li Keyong or his son in Hedong or Hebei. Some of these individuals resettled permanently and buried their families north of the Yellow River; others returned south of the river after the Later Liang was overthrown.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ For a longer discussion of the “Alliance of Ho-tung and Ho-pei in Wu-tai history,” see Wang Gungwu, *The Structure of Power in North China during the Five Dynasties*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), 208-215.

¹⁷⁶ Fu Cunshen, for example, asked to be returned to Taiyuan in Hedong for burial (see JWDS 56:758). On the other hand, many men who participated in the overthrow of the Later Liang in 923 would have relocated to Luoyang (the Later Tang capital).

There were a number of other important waves of elite migration. As previously discussed, many individual elites fled Youzhou during Liu Shouguang's regime. Some went southward, others westward to Hedong.¹⁷⁷ Like the Wang family mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, numerous officeholding families from Hebei immigrated northward to join the Khitan Liao regime in Manchuria, especially after the Khitans began to expand in the 930s and then invaded North China in 946. It is known that the Liao regime was staffed by a large number of Chinese emigrés.¹⁷⁸ Simultaneously, Khitans and non-Chinese tribesmen in the far north or northwest sometimes went south to enlist in Chinese armies in Hedong or Hebei. Such was the case with the Khitan Liu Chongjin 劉重進 (899-968), the Shatuo Turk Yao Yanchou 藥彥稠 (d.934), the Tuyuhun Li Jinquan 李金全 (889-950), the Uighur Li Cunxin 李存信 (862-902), as well as Mi Xin 米信 (928-994), an ethnic Xi.¹⁷⁹ Already in the ninth century, large numbers of non-Han migrants—including at least one Tibetan—are known to have served the independent governors of Hebei, some of whom were themselves from tribal families.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ See, for example, the biographies of Li Chengyue 李承約 (867-941), Pan You 潘佑 (938-973) (specifically regarding his grandfather), and Feng Dao 馮道 (882-954).

¹⁷⁸ A future study involving a systematic survey of biographies in the histories of the Liao state and of the dozens of Liao-period epitaphs discovered in Manchuria or Inner Mongolia will clarify the extent of northward migration into Khitan territories at this time.

¹⁷⁹ In addition, there were ethnic Chinese in northern Hebei who were absorbed into the expanding Liao empire but later went south to join a Chinese regime. The family of Shang Zaiji 商在吉 (d.935) had held office in Youzhou since at least the time of his grandfather. He served the Liao briefly before submitting to the Later Tang. Eventually, he was buried in Luoyang.

¹⁸⁰ For a summary and critique of Chen Yinke's well-known thesis on the barbarization of Hebei, see C. A. Peterson, "Court and Province in Mid- and Late T'ang," *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 3, ed. Denis Twitchett, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 471. For a more recent discussion of foreigners serving in Youzhou, see Ma Chi 馬馳, "Tang Youzhou jing qiaozhi jimi zhou yu Heshuo fanzhen geju 唐幽州境僑治羈縻州與河朔藩鎮割據," *Tang yanjiu* 4 (1998): 199-213. The tomb of the Tibetan Lun Boyan 論博言 (805-865) was discovered in the hills west of Beijing in 1995. See Chen Kang 陳康, "Cong Lun Boyan muzhi tan Tufan Ga'er shi jiazhu de xingshuai 從論

Another significant movement of elites involved the sizable exodus of metropolitan officeholders at the end of the Tang. Those elites from Chang'an who managed to survive the destruction of their great city fled to Sichuan, either in 880 in the emperor's retinue or in flight from the extensive purges and mass executions during the subsequent two decades.¹⁸¹ Other former Tang capital elites relocated elsewhere in the south, to Jiangnan or Huainan, or north to Hedong.¹⁸² Still other families from Chang'an probably resettled in Luoyang or Huaibei, after it became clear that the center of power had shifted permanently to the east.¹⁸³ Two decades later, a large group of northerners accompanied the Later Tang armies when they invaded Sichuan in 925,¹⁸⁴ while the invasion of Huainan by the Later Zhou, initiated in 956, resulted in the southward evacuation of many Southern Tang elites (though other Southern Tang officials surrendered at this time and relocated to the north).¹⁸⁵

博言墓誌談吐蕃噶爾氏家族的興衰,” *Beijing wenbo* 1999.4: 62-67.

¹⁸¹ For an in-depth discussion of the migrants who accompanied Emperor Xizong to Sichuan and the mythology that developed under the Song regarding this migration, see Aoyama Sadao 青山定雄, “Sōdai ni okeru Shisen kanryō no keifu ni tsuite no ichi kōsatsu 宋代における四川官僚の系譜についての一考察,” *Wada Hakase koki kinen Tōyōshi ronsō* 和田博士古稀記念東洋史論叢, (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1961), 37-48.

¹⁸² Wang Gungwu, *The Structure of Power in North China during the Five Dynasties*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), 98. For a good example of a Luoyang family that went south, see the epitaph of Zhou Tinggou 周廷構 (901-966) and the biography of his father, Zhou Yanxi 周延禧.

¹⁸³ For one example of a family that relocated from Chang'an to Luoyang at this time, see the biography of Kong Chenggong 孔承恭 (929-990). For a description of the obliteration of Chang'an after 880 and how this great capital city became a provincial backwater, see Edward H. Schafer, “The Last Years of Chang'an,” *Oriens extremus* 10 (1963): 133-79. In particular, Schafer, p.168 describes the permanent removal of the court from Chang'an to Luoyang.

¹⁸⁴ Meng Zhixiang 孟知祥 (874-934), descendant of two generations of army officers from Xingzhou 邢州 in Hebei, was appointed governor of Sichuan in 926 after the Later Tang annexation of this region. Meng later seized power, establishing the Later Shu regime. There is no doubt that other northerners followed him south. See, for example, the biography of Wang Huan 王環 (d.957).

¹⁸⁵ For an example of a man who fled south, see the biography of Li Yuanqing 李元清. Li had organized a private militia in Haozhou during the Zhou invasion, but was eventually forced to flee south across the Yangzi. For an example of a southern official who relocated to the north, see the epitaph of Yi Wenyun 易文贇 (894-968), who was from Jiangnan but joined the Later Zhou regime in 958 and was eventually buried near the banks of the Huai river.

Figures 4.4 and 4.5 summarize the major directions of elite migration that have been described above. What is important to note is that although elite mobility did contribute to the major north-south demographic shift of the Tang-Song transition, migration among the upper class of the tenth century was multi-directional, with important numbers of people relocating northward, generally to either Hebei, Hedong, or the Khitan territories.

4.5. The social and human impact of migration

The various examples of migration described above occurred over a period of some 150 years. Invariably, the impact of such mobility on the lives of individuals varied enormously according to the circumstances. Bureaucratic reassignments and other instances of relocation among elites before the Huang Chao Rebellion were probably relatively orderly. There would have been opportunities to sell land and develop strategies for transferring resources. Emigrés such as the merchant Lu Gongbi and the great clan scion Yan Youming, both described above, would have arrived at their new home with substantial assets.

On the other hand, after the Tang regime began to crumble and political authority fell apart, the uprooting of one's life to escape violence or death or to seek new opportunities under a rival regime must have occurred at a tremendous human cost. One is reminded of Paul Smith's description of the elite diaspora that followed the Mongol annihilation of Sichuan in 1236.¹⁸⁶ Many families would have lost their land and most of their resources. After the high civil bureaucrat Li Song 李崧 (d.948) defected to the Khitans following their invasion of North China in 946, for example, his

¹⁸⁶ Paul J. Smith, "Family, *Landsmann*, and Status-Group Affinity in Refugee Mobility Strategies: The Mongol Invasions and The Diaspora of Sichuanese Elites, 1230-1330," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 52.2 (1992): 665-708.

land, various residences, and all of his other possessions in Kaifeng and Luoyang were confiscated and granted to a loyal official of the new Later Han regime.¹⁸⁷ To be sure, the Li family was able to survive. One clansman, Li Fang 李昉 (925-996), even rose to high office in the early Song. But other families may not have come through so well. Ms. Yang 楊氏 (797-881), originally from Youzhou, died in Cangzhou to the south. Her son Zu Tong 祖瞳 could not afford to bury his mother; “in his grief when arranging for the funeral, the funds came from a good friend 情疚送終, 資自良友.” Undoubtedly, countless descendants of the Tang elites lost everything they owned, fell into obscurity, and have entirely disappeared from the sources available to us.¹⁸⁸

Another impact of relocation was the loss of local social networks. In the wake of the emergency migration in many different directions, families were divided by the numerous new political frontiers emerging from the chaos. In the case of the Wang family, described in the introduction of this chapter, some members had relocated to Luoyang and others had settled in Khitan territory. A divergence in clan naming patterns makes it clear that the two branches of the family were no longer in contact as early as the 920s.¹⁸⁹ The epitaph of Ms. Chong 种氏 (884-957) reports a similar

¹⁸⁷ JWDS 108:1421; SS 269:9236; ZZTJ 288:9401.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. Paul J. Smith, “Family, *Landsmann*, and Status-Group Affinity,” 680-681. Sichuanese elites who fled their homeland often fell into destitution and were forced to depend on the charity of others.

¹⁸⁹ The given names of the first generation of the family, Wang Chuzhi and Wang Chucun (the sons of Wang Zong), were based on a pattern using the first character *chu* 處. The given names of the second generation were all a single character containing the radical 阝 in the right position (thus, for example, Wang Chucun’s son 郜 and Wang Chuzhi’s sons 郁, 都, 郇, etc.). The third generation was named using an initial character *ting* 庭 (or 廷). The given names of the fourth generation, which would have been born in the 920s, no longer accord. Thus, Wang Tingyin’s sons in Luoyang were named using a pattern based on the first character *zhao* 昭. Wang Ting’e 王庭鶚 and Wang Tingruan 王庭阮, representing the Liao side of the family, did not follow this pattern when naming their children. For a convenient genealogical table, which unfortunately gives the name of only one of Wang Tingyin’s sons, see Xiang Nan 向南, “Liao Wang shi er fang muzhi kao 遼王氏二方墓誌

situation. Her husband Zhao Dejun 趙德鈞 (d.937) and son Zhao Yanshou 趙延壽 defected to the Khitans in 936 while they were in charge of northern military defenses. Ms. Chong and her grandchildren were permitted to rejoin him and so she was buried in Khitan territory, in the vicinity of modern-day Beijing (where her tomb was discovered in 1959). Her grandson Kuangzan 匡贊 (923-977), however, was involved in the southern Khitan campaign of 946. After surrendering to the Later Han, he quickly fell under suspicion of disloyalty and so fled to Sichuan. Only later was he able to return north to join the Song regime.¹⁹⁰ Similarly, several sets of brothers were separated by political borders. For example, after his father was executed in the final years of the Tang, Zhang Ge 張格 (d.924) escaped to Sichuan, whereas his brother Zhang Bo 張播 sought refuge in Huainan.¹⁹¹ Although there are some instances of separated family members reuniting, such cases were probably rare.¹⁹² In general, communication across the borders was highly restricted. Sikong Ting 司空頌, an official serving in Hedong, sent a servant with a message for his nephew who was then in rival Liang territory.

考,” *Kaogu yu wenwu* 考古與文物 1984.3: 97.

¹⁹⁰ For more on this family, see Ms. Chong’s epitaph, as well as the biographies of Zhao Dejun and Zhao Kuangzan. Similarly, *Zhongguo kaoguxue nianjian* 中國考古學年鑒 1989:114 reports on an excavated epitaph dating to the year 964 that describes a family split across the Liao-Song border. Unfortunately, I have not been able to obtain a rubbing or transcription of this inscription.

¹⁹¹ As another example, after Zhao Kuangning 趙匡凝 turned against the founder of the Later Liang dynasty, he was forced to flee to Huainan; his brother Kuangming 匡明 went to Sichuan. Similarly, the southern military man Wang Fuzheng 王傅拯 (d. c.946) surrendered to the Later Tang while serving in Haizhou; his brother Chongwen 崇文 continued to serve the Wu regime. Finally, after Wu armies conquered Jizhou, Peng Gan 彭玘 and his brother Peng Jian 彭斌 fled west and served the Chu state, whereas his brother Peng Yanzhang 彭彥章 (d.919) surrendered and served the Wu state. For all these examples, see the individuals’ respective biographies; for information on Peng Jian, see SGCQ 2:3481.

¹⁹² Yao Nabin 姚內斌 (911-974), originally a Liao military officer, defected to the Later Zhou in the 950s. His son escaped to the south in 966 and the rest of the family was smuggled across the border the following year. Dong Zunhui 董遵誨 (926-981) had fled his hometown of Youzhou with his father to submit to the Later Han. A decade later, the first Song emperor arranged to have somebody fetch his mother, who was still in Khitan territory.

Unfortunately, the servant was captured and Sikong was executed on suspicion of communicating with the enemy.¹⁹³ The dangers faced by individuals who had to cross borders are also apparent in an account of Sun Sheng's 孫晟 (d.956) flight to Huainan. When he reached the Huai River, which demarcated the frontier with the Wu kingdom, he suddenly encountered a mounted patrol. He was able to escape only by feigning insanity: pretending not to notice the soldiers, he sat on the riverbank and began chewing on lice pulled off his clothing.¹⁹⁴

Separation from one's family was exacerbated by the emotional toll of burying loved ones away from the ancestral cemetery. The strong preference for interring the family dead in a single place is well demonstrated by the regularity with which bodies were returned home for burial. According to the two extant epitaphs for Duan Geng 段庚 (816-871), after dying in northern Hedong, he was initially buried further to the south in Xizhou, where his brother was serving in office. Twenty-three days later, however, he was transferred and reburied in the family cemetery in Chang'an. Cui Yisun 崔貽孫 (859-880) was killed by bandits in the service of Huang Chao. Because his hometown of Hezhou had been burned to the ground by the rebels, he was initially buried in the wilderness (荒野), and only a few months later were his remains returned to the ancestral

¹⁹³ Note that there are some examples of literati exchanging poems across borders. See SGCQ 75:4335, which describes the poems sent by Li Fang 李昉 to Meng Binyu 孟賓于 (893-c.975).

See also the biography of Li Han 李瀚 (d.962), which recounts how even while serving the Liao, he was able to secretly keep the Later Zhou emperor updated on the health of the Liao ruler.

¹⁹⁴ Consider also the example of Zhang Xichong 張希崇 (888-939). After Zhang defected from the Khitans, he sent a servant to fetch his mother while he was serving the Later Tang in a military capacity near the border. After she had crossed the frontier, he carried her sedan chair fifteen kilometers back to the military base where he was stationed. One could imagine that if he needed himself to carry her chair (and had no servants or subordinates to perform the task), he must have greeted his mother at the border without any large armed retinue, presumably to avoid attracting attention. As with the case of Sun Sheng, stealth was required when crossing the frontier.

graveyard. Immediately after her death, Ms. Lu 盧氏(鄭) (786-810) was interred in Xiazhou 峽州 in the south, where her husband was serving in office. Forty years later, her body was recovered by her descendants and she was laid to rest about 500 kilometers to the north in Luoyang, next to her husband's ancestors. Finally, consider the high-ranking minister Xu Xuan 徐鉉 (917-992), who died in the Song capital of Kaifeng nearly 200 years after Ms. Lu. A family friend travelled across the country by boat to bring Xu's body back home to Hongzhou, 800 kilometers to the south.

However, long-distance migration, especially when it entailed crossing political borders, could make burial in the ancestral graveyard extraordinarily difficult or impossible. Even before the collapse of the Tang, it was often dangerous or difficult to transport a body to the ancestral cemetery. The great clansman Luo Qian 駱潛 (848-884), who had fled with Emperor Xizong from Chang'an to Sichuan in 880 before seeking refuge in Huainan, was buried four years later in Yangzhou. His family would explain that "in Hang Commandery in Zhedong [Luo's place of origin], uncouth mutineers were blocking foot traffic 滲東杭郡，無狀起兵，路絕行人。” Perhaps more trying and disconcerting, the dangers of border crossings could inhibit descendants from returning home to their place of origin to perform the requisite, periodic ancestral rites. The son of Mu Junhong 穆君弘 (799-871) felt much anguish at having to bury his father so far from home. Forty years later, he would complain that "because his grave mound is still far away in another county, I fear his soul has not come to rest 墳隴尚遙於他縣，誠恐幽魂不昧。”

Upon arriving in the territory under the control of a rival regime, a destitute but

well educated man might hope to convert his cultural capital into an administrative office. Similarly, as will be discussed in the following chapter, generals hoping to defect to a neighboring state could offer a personal army of loyal soldiers to their proposed new ruler. But emigrés also needed to compete with indigenous elites for both resources and government positions. Thus, factional conflicts among Southern Tang bureaucrats are believed to have pitted natives against immigrants.¹⁹⁵ Emigrant officeholders—who, as we have seen, constituted a third to a half of the Wu and Southern Tang bureaucracies—were initially dependent on the support of their newly adopted regimes until they could convert political status and power into land or other resources.¹⁹⁶

When first settling down in a new place, immigrants would probably have felt a certain feeling of camaraderie with others who had recently arrived. Thus, Xue Shan 薛瞻 was drawn to write Luo Qian's 駱潛 (848-884) epitaph partly because the two had both sought refuge in Yangzhou, where the great general Gao Pian 高駢 (d.887) had successfully held off Huang Chao's rebel army. As Xue explained it, "I, Shan, have received favors at the gates of the Prince of Bohai together with the gentleman [Luo] 瞻與公同受恩於渤海王門下."¹⁹⁷ Nevertheless, most immigrant elites also sought to integrate themselves into local social networks. Sometime in the mid-ninth century, Mr. Xiao relocated to the separatist state of Youzhou, perhaps because he had failed to gain

¹⁹⁵ Ren Shuang 任爽, "Nan Tang dangzheng shitan 南唐黨爭試探," *Qiushi xuekan* 求是學刊 5 (1985): 79-85.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Paul J. Smith, "Family, *Landsmann*, and Status-Group Affinity," 698-703. Sichuanese elites who fled their homeland after the Mongol invasion were very much dependent on office for social mobility. Thus, after the establishment of the Yuan dynasty and the final extermination of the Song, these families continued to hold office; voluntary eremitism out of loyalty to the extinguished dynasty was more realistic in the case of entrenched local elites.

¹⁹⁷ The Prince of Bohai refers to Gao Pian. Because a famous aristocratic family surnamed Gao had originated in Bohai, it was common for an eminent official or general with this surname to receive an honorary enfeoffment there.

office in the Tang bureaucracy. There he soon married the daughter of an entrenched Youzhou elite family.¹⁹⁸ So too the grandson of Li Chengsi 李承嗣 (866-920), a cavalry officer from Hedong who had fled south in 895, married Ms. Wang, a Huainan native, whose fourth-generation ancestor had served as magistrate of Lujiang 廬江 (in Luzhou).¹⁹⁹ Ms. Zhou 周氏(徐) (929-976) and her family were also long-time natives of Huainan; she lived in a single-surname village of one hundred households that continued to perform ancestral rites for a founding ancestor buried there at the time of the Three Kingdoms, six hundred years before. However, she married the son of the Southern Tang grand councillor Xu Jie 徐玠 (868-943), originally from Xuzhou (in Huaibei), who had fled south to join Yang Xingmi's regime in 899.

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter has explored the complexities of upper class migration in the ninth and tenth centuries. Prior to the Huang Chao Rebellion in 880, a certain number of elites probably accompanied the countless numbers of more modest migrants in the great southward demographic shift that accelerated beginning in the mid-eighth century. During this period, wealthy immigrants quite likely converted their families' assets into either land or commercial capital in the south. In many cases, government officials took advantage of provincial bureaucratic appointments to accumulate resources and social ties and then resettle permanently in their new environment after their terms of office had

¹⁹⁸ For information on this case, see the epitaph of Mr. Xiao's wife, Ms. Hou 侯氏 (832-855). We know Mr. Xiao was not a Youzhou native because his father, grandfather, and great grandfather had all served outside of Hebei, unusual for Youzhou officeholders because the independent regime based there was not integrated into the nationwide Tang bureaucracy. On the other hand, Ms. Hou's father and grandfather had both served in prefectures under the control of the Youzhou military governor.

¹⁹⁹ Besides the epitaph of Ms. Wang 王氏(李) (d.960s), see also the epitaph of her uncle Wang Tan 王坦 (896-946) and the biography of Li Chengsi 李承嗣.

expired.

Following the disintegration of Tang political authority, elite migration became both endemic and multi-directional. Often, geographic mobility was an essential component in a family's survival strategy. The sacking of the Tang capitals and the subsequent political purges led to a great exodus of metropolitan bureaucrats and military officers seeking refuge with provincial warlords. But elites elsewhere were also affected by the political turmoil. Some fled in the wake of advancing armies; others withdrew to mountain retreats, weary of the tumult and warfare. Given the large numbers of people involved and the fact that migration affected all regions of China, it is difficult to overemphasize the tremendous social and human impact on society at the time. Emigrés would not only have lost touch with their old social networks at their place of origin, but they would also have frequently been forced to abandon much or even all of their family's assets. Once arrived at their destination, they competed with indigenous elites for government offices and other resources, while attempting to integrate into local social networks.

The massive nature of migration in this period, a migration affecting such a large percentage of the Chinese upper class, would also have led to a cultural crisis. Until immigrants could rebuild roots and accumulate new sources of wealth, they were inevitably dependent on the regimes they served to preserve their status and position in society. The emergence in smaller states throughout China of a bureaucratic elite, based in large measure on talent and reliant on the state itself for its prestige, inevitably dealt a blow to the old Tang aristocratic mentality. Whereas blood had once defined status and permitted some families to claim social superiority even above the Tang emperors,

officeholding and government connections now became the primary markers of prestige.

Moreover, the high geographic mobility of elites at this time arose in part out of the competing needs of the multiple, rival regimes. Bureaucrats and military men who failed to gain office under one regime (or who were unhappy with their low bureaucratic ranks) frequently crossed political frontiers or joined the retinues of rebel generals in search of better treatment. In the 880s and 890s, after the crumbling of Tang authority but before new and more stable kingdoms and empires had been established, a large number of regional warlords battled for preeminence. Each sought to attract successful generals with a good command of military strategy and to staff his administration with talented bureaucrats. In this survival-of-the-fittest environment, there was a far greater interest in genuine ability than in aristocratic pedigree.

Ironically, this search for talent initially involved bypassing the old Tang examination system. Undoubtedly conceived as a tool to weaken the aristocracy, the examination system had, to a considerable extent, been hijacked and manipulated by that very aristocracy by means of the recommendation system and government schools in the capital in order to consolidate and reproduce its status and position.²⁰⁰ Even before the Huang Chao rebellion, the independent military governors of Weibo, Chengde, and Youzhou (all provinces in Hebei) became famous for appointments by decree rather than through examinations or other routinized bureaucratic procedures. Thus, they were able to attract men of talent who might not have succeeded in gaining office under the Tang.

²⁰⁰ John W. Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China: A Social History of Examinations*, new ed., (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), 15-16. By comparison, there was a more widespread ethos of fairness, openness, and impartiality in the Song exams. See Chaffee, 48-53, 60-61. For a more comprehensive discussion on how exams were used to reproduce the social elite in later times, see Benjamin A. Elman, "Political, Social, and Cultural Reproduction via Civil Service Examinations in Late Imperial China," *Journal of Asian Studies* 50.1 (1991): 15-19.

After 880, this more flexible system of appointments was adopted by the warlord regimes that emerged throughout China.

Once the new kingdoms in the south had coalesced and the north had been reunified, a process that was largely complete by the first decade of the tenth century, the political culture that valued talent above all else became more pervasive. As will be discussed in the next chapter, generals who succeeded in seizing control of the empire or in founding a new kingdom tended to reproduce their provincial governments at the new state capitals. In particular, the highest bureaucrats of the new regimes were none other than the top military officers among the warlord troops and the most influential administrators in their retinues. Thus, the provincial mentality and values of these men reemerged at the center. Because larger-scale confrontations erupted as these new states sought to establish their preeminence, talent continued to be essential for the survival of each regime. Even after the resurrection of the old civil service examinations at the regional courts, there is reason to believe that the substantial presence of immigrant elites helped ensure that the new exams genuinely sought to identify talent and did not favor entrenched local elites.

The evidence of the present chapter underlines the role of the endemic migration among elites of the tenth century in initiating the significant changes in cultural views that accompanied the great transformation of medieval elites. The exams may have laid the groundwork for an attempt by the central government to replace blood with talent. However, it was the opportunities to circumvent the exams, first in Hebei and then under the regional warlords all over China, that made a more lasting impact on culture. The new mentality favoring talent above blood would soon be integrated into the civil service

examination system of the Song and become a key component of the ethos of the *shidafu*, the scholar-official class for which the Song would become famous.²⁰¹

²⁰¹ The emerging ethos of the *shidafu* under the Song is probably reflected in the expanding use of the term, itself. A search of the frequency with which “士大夫” (excluding references to “賢士大夫”) appears in the standard *Zhonghua shuju* edition of the dynastic histories produces the following results: *History of the Sui*, 3.7 instances per one thousand pages; the two *Histories of the Tang*, 5.9 instances per one thousand pages; the two *Histories of the Five Dynasties*, 7.6 instances per one thousand pages; the *History of the Song*, 21.2 instances per one thousand pages. It is my impression that the term generally referred to anonymous locally-based gentry in the earlier period, but was adopted in the eleventh century by the national elites as part of the reformulation of their own self-identity.

Figure 4.1. Circumstances surrounding elite migrations post-Huang Chao

Circumstances of migration		Number of migrants	
Fled warfare or turmoil		94	(33%)
<i>Period when fled:</i>			
late Tang (see notes)	56		
Later Tang	8		
Later Jin	3		
Later Han	3		
Khitan expansion	8		
Because of office		80	(28%)
Relocated to capital		59	(20%)
Withdrew to place of retreat		22	(8%)
Other or unknown		83	(29%)
Multiple instances		61	(21%)
Total number of migrants (see notes)		289	(100%)

Notes: This table shows the circumstances surrounding the migrations of individuals or the families of individuals who died between 880 (when Huang Chao took the Tang capitals) and 1000. Migration by recent ancestors are included; migration by unnamed ancestors in the distant past are not included. Of a total of 679 individuals who died between 880 and 1000, 289 (43%) of these individuals (or their families) were involved in migration. Note the following: 1) "Later Tang" refers to the period 880-923; the Later Liang (907-923) period is included because this dynasty was never recognized in Hebei or in Huainan/Jiangnan (and so the sources generally do not allow for a distinction to be made); 2) some individuals/families that migrated more than once could have more than one reason to migrate, so the total percentages do not add up to 100%; 3) the Khitan expansion includes both the Khitan expansion into northern Hebei in 936 and the Khitan invasion of North China ten years later.

Figure 4.2. Geographic origins of officeholders under the Wu and Southern Tang
(Source: *Shiguo chungiu*)

Place of origin	Wu Kingdom (902-937)	Southern Tang (937-975)	Southern Tang (<i>new recruits only</i>)
Indigenous	75 (53%)	91 (54%)	50 (57%)
North	59 (42%)	53 (31%)	15 (17%)
Min	2 (1%)	21 (12%)	20 (23%)
Other	5 (4%)	4 (2%)	3 (3%)
Total	141	169	88

Figure 4.3. Geographic origins of officeholders under the Five Dynasties
(Source: *Jiu Wudai shi*)

Place of origin	Later Liang (907-923)	Later Tang (907-936)	Later Jin (936-946)	Later Han (947-951)	Later Zhou (951-960)	Total
North	57 (70%)	45 (36%)	39 (35%)	8 (25%)	26 (35%)	175 (41%)
Hebei/Hedong	12 (15%)	78 (62%)	67 (60%)	24 (75%)	48 (64%)	229 (54%)
South	13 (16%)	3 (2%)	5 (5%)		1 (1%)	22 (5%)
Total	82 (100%)	126(100%)	111(100%)	32(100%)	75(100%)	426 (100%)

Note: “South” refers to Sichuan and all regions of China south of the Huai River (esp. Huainan and Jiangnan). “North” refers to regions north of the Huai River (esp. Henan and Huaibei); Hebei and Hedong are treated separately to emphasize the influence of men from these regions during most of the Five Dynasties period.

Figure 4.4. Major directions of elite migration (880 – 920 C.E.)

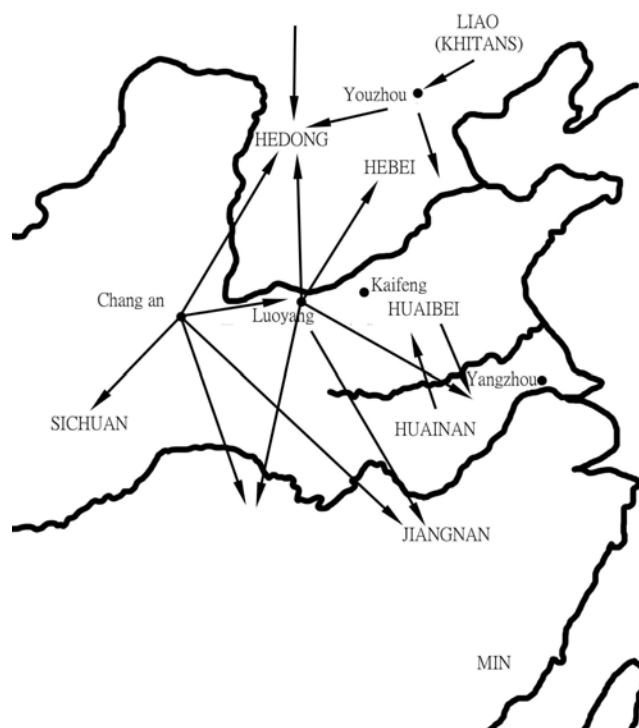
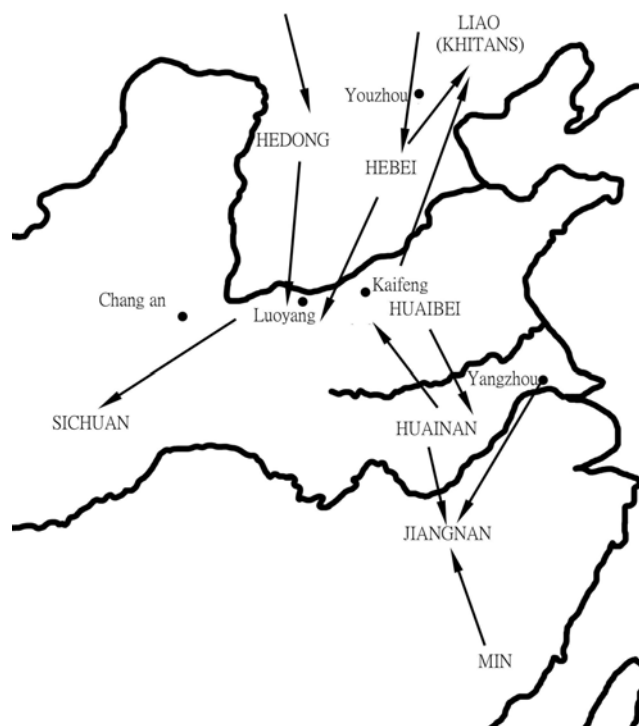


Figure 4.5. Major directions of elite migration (920 - 960 C.E.)



Chapter 5: Geography of Power

In 895, facing an imminent attack by a neighboring warlord, the prefects of Yanzhou and Yunzhou urgently requested assistance from the Prince of Jin in Hedong. He responded by sending several thousand cavalymen across the Yellow River to their aid, commanded by the Shatuo Turk Li Chengsi 李承嗣 (866-920), a man the Prince declared to be as valuable as his own right hand. Li had previously played an important role in the destruction of Huang Chao's army in 883. But this time Li was less successful in his mission. Outmaneuvered by the enemy, he was forced to flee south with his army, accompanied by a sizeable contingent of the populace of Yanzhou. When they crossed the Huai River into the territory then controlled by Yang Xingmi, Yang could not have been more pleased, for he was suddenly in a position to recruit both a large number of cavalymen—still rarely used in south China—as well as a master tactician of mounted warfare. To encourage Li and his family to remain permanently, the general was granted the prefectureship of Chuzhou, a substantial cash payment, and an estate in the newly established capital of the Wu kingdom. Thus when Li died in 920, this northern military commander of Turkish descent was buried near the great southern metropolis of Yangzhou.²⁰² Thereafter, the Li family took root there. The son would continue to live in the Wu capital and the grandson would marry a Ms. Wang, the

²⁰² Besides the biographies of Li Chengsi, see also XTS 188:5455; JWDS 1:16, 13:171-172, 26:354, 134:1781; ZZTJ 260:8469, 260:8482, 261:8500-8501.

daughter of an important family from Luzhou that had served the Wu regime since its inception and was now also based in Yangzhou. Though the Li family was forced to relocate across the Yangzi River after the Later Zhou invasion of Huainan, they continued to bury their dead in the capital city. When Ms. Wang died at the young age of 25, she was buried at the Southern Tang capital of Jinling (modern-day Nanjing).²⁰³

The previous chapter examined the endemic and multidirectional nature of migration during the late ninth and tenth centuries and the role migration played in elite survival. In conclusion, I proposed a link between the geographic mobility of the upper class, the coexistence of multiple competing regimes, and the emergence of a new anti-aristocratic ethos. This chapter will investigate the relationship between geography, power, and the capital cities. After the year 880, armies very much like the cavalymen accompanying Li Chengsi became a basic unit of geographic mobility. In order to patch together viable regimes, the leaders of many newly emerging states depended both on small groups of generals with whom they had long been associated and on the recruitment (or surrender) of outside commanders accompanied by their migrating armies. These limited coalitions of military units led to the overrepresentation of elites from certain regions in the capital cities of the various competing states. Natives from these privileged localities would have brought with them a new provincial culture and mentality to the capital. As states became more established, however, a rather different pattern might be operative. In the mature regimes of the old Tang dynasty, as well as of the Southern Tang and the independent military province of Youzhou, the most talented military men and bureaucrats from all over the state were encouraged to relocate to the

²⁰³ See the epitaph of Ms. Wang 王氏(李). For evidence that the Wang family was also based in Yangzhou, see the epitaph of Ms. Wang's uncle Tan 坦 (896-946), who was buried there.

capital, from where they were rotated to appointments in the provinces. Li Chengsi's family was typical of these capital elites. With a private estate in Yangzhou, they also buried their dead nearby. In these states, two separate processes were at work. On the one hand, prominent families were attracted to the capital and probably defined their own identity and status in terms of access to metropolitan culture. On the other hand, political regimes became all the more dominant once the most important elites had abandoned their local power bases in favor of residence at the capital.

5.1. Migration in groups

To understand how one geographic region could gain disproportionate influence among the corps of officeholders, it is necessary first to examine the role group migrations played in the large-scale relocation of people during the late ninth and tenth centuries. To be sure, there were undoubtedly cases of individuals traveling alone. Sun Sheng's 孫晟 (d.956), whom was encountered in the previous chapter feigning insanity to escape soldiers on patrol before crossing the Huai River into Wu territory, could hardly have been accompanied by many others. Nevertheless, particularly after the dissolution of Tang authority in the 880s, the frequent movements of the imperial entourage, of rebel armies, and of other large armed groups probably accounted for most of the endemic migration described in the previous chapter.

Perhaps the most dramatic example is linked to the two successive flights of Emperor Xizong towards Sichuan. As Huang Chao and his rebel army approached Chang'an in the twelfth month of 880, the emperor escaped in the night out the Gate of Golden Radiance accompanied only by five hundred soldiers of the Shence Army, four princes, and a small number of female and male courtiers. Even before reaching

Xingyuan 250 miles south of Chang'an, however, the entourage had become so large that a local administrator had to organize a train of several hundred mules to bring in temporary provisions.²⁰⁴ Only a few months after the emperor's return to capital in 885, he was forced to flee once again. This time, the imperial retinue must have been equally impressive, as a request was made in Xingyuan for 150,000 catties of grain.²⁰⁵

Although Xizong eventually went back each time to Chang'an, thousands of his followers, both elites and people from more modest classes, did not. In a study of Sichuanese elites of the Song period, Aoyama Sadao has investigated the numerous claims that family ancestors had first arrived in Chengdu in the train of Xizong.²⁰⁶ One example is Wang Jian 王建 (847-918), originally from Huaibei, who followed the imperial retinue to Xingyuan in 885 as an officer in the Shence Army. He stayed behind as prefect of Lizhou (northern Sichuan) when the emperor returned to Chang'an in 888.²⁰⁷ After the last Tang sovereign was overthrown, Wang would found the Former Shu dynasty based in Chengdu. The scattering of Sichuanese epitaphs preserved from this period suggest that men who had accompanied the emperor in his second flight

²⁰⁴ ZZTJ 254:8239-8240, 8243; Robert M. Somers, "The End of the T'ang," *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 3, ed. Denis Twitchett, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 748. Besides bureaucrats and soldiers fleeing Chang'an to join the court at Xingyuan, armies of soldiers were sent by loyal governors, such as Wang Chucun 王處存 (831-895) in Dingzhou (Hebei), who dispatched 2000 of his troops to Xingyuan to protect the emperor. See esp. ZZTJ 254:8243.

²⁰⁵ ZZTJ 256:8333; Somers, "The End of the T'ang," 768-769. Note also that when Emperor Zhaozong (Xizong's successor) was chased out of his capital yet again a decade later, in the seventh month of 895, he was followed in flight by as many as several hundred thousand inhabitants of the city. See ZZTJ 256:8472.

²⁰⁶ Aoyama Sadao 青山定雄, "Sōdai ni okeru Shisen kanryō no keifu ni tsuite no ichi kōsatsu 宋代における四川官僚の系譜についての一考察," *Wada Hakase koki kinen Tōyōshi ronsō* 和田博士古稀記念東洋史論叢, (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1961) 37-48. See also Zou Zhonghua 鄒重華, "Tang Xizong shi qian Shu shizu ji qi ru Song hou de jingkuang kaoxi 唐僖宗時遷蜀土族及其入宋後的境況考析," *Songdai lishi wenhua yanjiu* 宋代歷史文化研究, eds. Zhang Qifan 張其凡 and Lu Yongqiang 陸勇強, (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2000), 58-82.

²⁰⁷ Besides Wang Jian's biographies, see ZZTJ 256:8335.

formed an important contingent of the elites of the new regime. Thus, Jin Hui 晉暉 (845-923), whose tomb was discovered in Chengdu in 1974, is listed with Wang Jian among Shence officers accompanying Xizong to Xingyuan. Similarly, Wang Zongkan 王宗侃 (858-923) followed Wang Jian first to Lizhou and then to Chengdu, where he would be buried.

Epitaphs, dynastic histories, and chronicles provide evidence of many other armies of substantial size permanently relocating during the chaotic period of the late ninth and early tenth centuries. The Boye 博野 Army from Zhenzhou (in Hebei) was stationed temporarily at Fengtian 奉天 in the vicinity of Chang'an in the 870s. During the Huang Chao Rebellion, this unit was resettled in Fengxiang 鳳翔 Province further west, where one of its officers, Li Maozhen 李茂貞 (856-924), would eventually be appointed governor in 887.²⁰⁸ There is also the case of Cui Hong 崔洪, prefect of Caizhou, who was chased out in a coup in 899 and arrived in Yangzhou with two thousand soldiers and other followers to be taken in by the emerging Wu regime.²⁰⁹ Further south, Gao Li 高澧 (d.918), notorious for his spectacular cruelty as prefect of Huzhou (in Wuyue territory), was eventually forced to flee to the Wu kingdom, bringing with him an army of five thousand men.²¹⁰ Even more impressive was the exodus accompanying Wu Guang 吳光, a local magnate in Jianzhou in the far south. When he came to oppose Min rule, he decided to seek refuge in Wu lands with ten thousand followers.²¹¹

²⁰⁸ See Li Maozhen's biographies.

²⁰⁹ ZZTJ 261:8522.

²¹⁰ ZZTJ 267:8720-8721; see also his biographies.

²¹¹ ZZTJ 278:9086.

As with the emperor's flights to Sichuan, the movements of these armies led to the long-term relocation of sizable numbers of people, thus contributing in a substantial way to the endemic migration of this era. The largest components of these armies were conscripts, foot soldiers, servants, and other members of the lower social classes, almost certainly with some women, children, and servants in tow. But these troop movements also played a very important role in the permanent relocation of army officers, military elites, and their families. For example, when Zhu Jin 朱瑾 (867-918), prefect of Yanzhou, was overthrown in 895, he fled across the Huai River with a sizable army. Indeed, the future Wu general Hou Zan 侯瓚 (862-931), originally from Puzhou (in Huaibei), was counted among the ranks of Zhu's troops.²¹² Li Shenfu 李神福 (855-904), who enlisted in the prefectural army of Luzhou 潞州 in southern Hedong at an early age, followed the prefectural soldiers south to Huainan in the mid 870s, eventually joining Yang Xingmi's army. The Later Tang invasion of Sichuan in the 920s also brought in large numbers of northern military officers, including the founder of the Later Shu dynasty Meng Zhixiang 孟知祥 (874-934) from Xingzhou in Hebei, as well as Wang Huan 王環 (d.957) and Xu Duo 徐鐸 (889-951) from Zhenzhou (Hebei), and Gao Hui 高暉 (852-932) from Jinzhou (Hedong). Finally, a large contingent of Caizhou men relocated from Huaibei to Huainan through the complex movement of armies sent to war. In 887, Qin Zongquan 秦宗權, who had proclaimed himself emperor after Huang Chao's death, dispatched ten thousand troops from his base in Caizhou to capture Yangzhou across the Huai River. The second-in-command Sun Ru

²¹² The father of Ms. Wang 王氏 (880-945), who had served as military attaché in Yanzhou, may also have relocated to Huainan at this time.

孫儒 seized control of this army and became one of the dominant generals in Huainan and Jiangnan until his capture and execution five years later, upon which thousands of his troops were absorbed into Yang Xingmi's army.²¹³ In this way, numerous natives of Caizhou left their hometown in Huaibei and became prominent military elites under the Wu, including Li Hou 李厚 (c.857-c.916), Chai Zaiyong 柴再用 (864-935), Zhang Hao 張顥 (d.908), and Zheng Fan 鄭璠 (868-933). Ma Yin 馬殷 (854-931) and Liu Jianfeng 劉建鋒, also officers from Caizhou in Sun Ru's army, would later move with their troops further west and found the Chu kingdom in Hunan.

Like their military counterparts, many civilian elites probably migrated in groups. Thus, the literatus Shi Xubai 史虛白 (c.883-c.950) fled south from Qingzhou to Huainan along with the future Southern Tang minister Han Xizai 韓熙載 (902-970). After the last Tang sovereign was overthrown in 907, Zhu Baoguang 朱葆光, whose family had inhabited Chang'an for generations, went south to Tanzhou in Hunan, accompanied by two former Tang ministers.²¹⁴ Similarly, the noted poet Sun Fang 孫魴 (d. c.937) fled the capital in the north along with a civil bureaucrat named Zheng Gu 鄭谷 sometime in the final decades of the Tang. Another interesting example is the case of Zhu Yuan 朱元 (923-977) and Li Ping 李平, who first met while studying at the sacred mountain or Songshan 嵩山. Together, they joined the retinue of the military leader Li Shouzhen 李守貞. Later, they were sent on a diplomatic mission together to Huainan, where they remained after hearing of their master's demise. Although the

²¹³ ZZTJ 257:8364, 259:8434. Some of Sun's troops also fled to Wuyue (in Zhejiang). See ZZTJ 263:8578.

²¹⁴ See the biography of his son Zhu Ang 朱昂 (925-1007).

number of other individuals traveling in the company of these civil elite migrants is not known, it is likely that they were accompanied by servants, family members (women, men, and children), and bodyguards.²¹⁵

In many cases, it is known that civil elites traveled with generals as scribes and administrative aides, and like the military elites described above, they later resettled in the new geographic bases of the armies they served. During Liu Shouguang's 劉守光 reign of terror in Youzhou, Zhao Feng 趙鳳 (886-935), renowned for his Confucian learning, disguised himself as a monk to avoid military service. Later, he fled with Liu's younger brother Shouqi 守奇 to the Khitans, then to Hedong, and finally to Liang territory.²¹⁶ The military man and Youzhou native Wang Baoyi 王保義 (d.948) was also among Liu Shouqi's followers. In the wake of the Later Tang invasion of the Liang, Wang fled to Jingnan along with the bureaucrat Liu Hao 劉皞 (892-952). The northern general Lu Wenjin 盧文進 (d.944), also from Youzhou, fled south in 936 at the time of the alliance between the Later Jin and the Khitans. He was accompanied by the important Southern Tang bureaucrat and literati Gao Yue 高越 (899-c.960), who would marry Lu's daughter, renowned as a female scholar (女學士). As a final example, there was Xu Jie 徐玠 (868-943), who began his career serving Cui Hong 崔洪, prefect of Caizhou. He fled to Huainan in 899 with Cui and his army of two thousand and would later become an important civilian minister under both the Wu and the Southern Tang.

In summary, a large fraction of the endemic migration typical of the decades after

²¹⁵ ZZTJ 264:8623 discusses the armed escort of thirty soldiers that accompanied Zhang Ge 張格 (d.924), son of former Tang grand councillor Zhang Jun 張濬 (d.903), in his flight from the capital to Hunan. Although the armed guards returned to the capital in this case, other escorts would have presumably remained at the destination.

²¹⁶ See the biographies of Zhao Feng and of Wang Baoyi 王保義 (d.948); see also ZZTJ 266:8672.

the Huang Chao Rebellion consisted of the relocation of armies, either under imperial auspices or acting independently. Amid the ranks of these armies were a certain number of military and administrative elites whose lives may be followed in biographies or epitaphs. Unfortunately, however, we will never know anything of the countless minor bureaucrats, scribes, low-level officers, cavalrymen, and common foot soldiers who accompanied the various armies, sometimes with their families, and resettled at the same time. But undoubtedly the endemic migration that affected elites of the tenth century affected a much broader swathe of society.

The role of armies as large units of battle-hardened soldiers—as well as of scribes, administrators, and tacticians—also underlines the power and significance of the heads of those armies and what one might call their “military capital.” Generals fleeing from battle with their troops were often warmly welcomed by rival regimes, many of which had only recently been created and were struggling to establish sufficient military capacity to preserve their independence. For example, after the annexation of Jizhou by the Wu kingdom in 906, Peng Gan 彭玕 (d. c.919), a southwestern tribal leader and the former prefect there, fled to Hunan with an army of several thousand. The Chu king gave him an appointment as prefect of Chenzhou 郴州 and married his son to Peng’s daughter.²¹⁷ Similarly, when Huangfu Hui 皇甫暉 (d.956), prefect of Mizhou, escaped to the south in advance of the Khitan invasion of 946 accompanied by the prefect of nearby Dizhou and troops numbering as many as 10000, he was granted the rank of grand councillor (同中書門下平章事) by the overjoyed Southern Tang emperor.²¹⁸ Generals were also experts in strategies and techniques. Yang Xingmi’s armies in Huainan were

²¹⁷ See his biographies and ZZTJ 267:8715. Peng Gan is also known under the name Peng Yu 彭玕.

²¹⁸ See Huangfu Hui’s biographies and ZZTJ 286:9338.

formerly known only for their mastery of naval combat, most crucial in the riverine environment of the south. They made great strides in cavalry warfare after the arrival in 897 of two important northern generals from Hedong, Shi Yan 史儼 and Li Chengsi. The grateful Yang Xingmi provided both with choice mansions and concubines.²¹⁹

5.2. Regional overrepresentation at the capital

The above discussion has indicated the importance after 880 of group migration, especially in the context of the relocation of armies. As will be discussed below, this phenomenon often explains the overrepresentation of men from certain localities at the capitals of the multiple empires and kingdoms that coexisted in the tenth century. Figure 5.1 lists the most important prefectures of origin of Wu and Southern Tang officeholders. Because biographies (not epitaphs) have been used to compile the table, the men represented tend to consist of central government officials and the most important provincial bureaucrats and military officers. Noteworthy is the fact that a limited number of geographic regions dominated the highest levels of the bureaucracy. Under the Wu regime, well over one third (37%) of these men came from just four prefectures.

Because many biographies do not describe the ancestors or early career of their subjects, it is frequently difficult to ascertain under what circumstances men left their home prefectures to serve the central government. But in some cases, an educated guess is possible. On the early career of Liu Quan 劉權 (d.920), his biography informs us only that he hailed from Xuzhou 許州 prefecture, that he joined the army in Caizhou at a young age, and that, in 892, he surrendered to Yang Xingmi. That very year, the

²¹⁹ ZZTJ 261:8501, 8511.

Caizhou native Sun Ru was finally defeated by Yang Xingmi's armies, so it is more than likely that Liu Quan followed Sun's army southward into Huainan and then Jiangnan. But in other instances, the early career of an individual cannot be determined. The biography of the Southern Tang official Ouyang Bin 歐陽彬 (c.870-c.964), for example, says nothing at all about his activities prior to holding local administrative positions in the 940s. We can learn more about him from the preface to an eleventh-century family genealogy composed by his great grandson, the Northern Song literatus and statesman Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072).²²⁰ The Ouyang family settled in Jizhou (Jiangnan) no later than the time of Bin's fifth-generation ancestor, who served there as magistrate of Anfu County. Two generations later, Bin's grandfather held an administrative position in Shaozhou in the far south. Family members were involved in local defenses at the time of the Huangchao Rebellion, but nothing is known about how they maintained their status in the subsequent several decades. It is possible that the Ouyang clan cooperated with Zhong Chuan 鍾傳 (d.906), the warlord who controlled Jizhou in the last decades of the Tang.

In order to better understand the disproportionate geographic origins reflected in Figure 5.1, it is useful to explore several representative examples. Undoubtedly, the ten percent of officeholders from Luoyang or Chang'an moved south after the breakdown of Tang political authority. Thus, Jia Tan 賈潭 (881-948), scion of a Luoyang-based aristocratic clan, arrived in the Wu Kingdom from Luoyang during the reign of Emperor Zhaozong (r.888-904). Fan Qian 樊潛 (896-952) belonged to a great clan inhabiting

²²⁰ For two versions of this preface, see Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修, *Ouyang Xiu quanji* 歐陽修全集, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 74:1066-1093.

Chang'an, where a memorial arch had been erected in the 850s praising the family for the seven generations that lived together in the same compound. During the chaos of the last years of the Tang, Fan's father resettled the family in Chizhou south of the Yangzi, where he had previously held office.

Much more striking and more pertinent to the present discussion are the nearly one fifth of Wu officeholders who originated in Luzhou (modern-day Hefei in Anhui Province). This anomaly can be explained by the fact that Luzhou was the home base of Yang Xingmi, the founder of the Wu kingdom. The Wang family of Luzhou, described in the introduction to Chapter Three, is representative. Because of the family's ties to Yang Xingmi, Wang Qian 王潛 (d.c.915) and his son Tan 坦 (896-946) rose to relatively high civil offices; meanwhile, Qian's cousin Ren 稔 (864-929) attained the important positions in the army of military governor and commander-general. This preeminence of Luzhou residents is confirmed by the late tenth century writer Xindu Gao 信都鎔, who asserted that no less than twenty-four of the forty highest officers of state hailed from this city.²²¹

But other prefectures in the Wu government were also overrepresented among officeholders. Nearly one in ten officeholders originated in Caizhou, a prefecture in Huaibei that was never part of Wu territory, largely as a result of the two important group migrations described above: the army sent to Huainan by the prefect of Caizhou, later commanded by Sun Ru; and the troops that accompanied the subsequent prefect Cui Hong after he was overthrown and fled southward. In fact, the Caizhou migrations had an even greater impact on the Wu bureaucracy than suggested in Figure 5.1. As the

²²¹ See the biography of 信都鎔.

home base of Huang Chao's self-appointed successor, this prefecture became an important political and military center in the 880s and 890s, attracting men from elsewhere in Huaibei. Thus, Liu Quan, mentioned above, traveled there from his home in Xuzhou 許州 to join the army. Also among the Caizhou migrants were An Renyi 安仁義 (d.905), a Shatuo Turk from the northern borderlands, and Xu Jie 徐玠 (868-943) from Xuzhou 徐州.

Finally, another ten percent of the high political elites of the Wu state came from either Jizhou or Hongzhou, both in Jiangnan. Most of these men had served the military and political leader Zhong Chuan before his state was absorbed into the Wu bureaucracy. In the 30 years following the coup that brought him to power in Fuzhou 撫州, Zhong Chuan managed to forge an independent regime that controlled the entire Gan River valley from the Yangzi in the north to Jizhou in the south.²²² Known for its sponsorship of scholar-officials, many of whom had escaped the chaos in the north, Zhong's regime, based in Hongzhou (modern-day Nanchang), brought culture and prosperity to this one-time backwater region of the Tang dynasty.²²³ Upon his death, however, a factional

²²² See Zhong Chuan's biographies, as well as ZZTJ 255:8269, 255:8272, 260:8485, 262:8566; XTS 9:267, 9:273, 10:299.

²²³ On Zhong Chuan's particular interest in attracting scholars and men of talent, see Tao Yue 陶岳, *Wudai shi bu* 五代史補, *Wudai shishu huibian* ed., Vol. 5, 1:2480-2481; Wang Dingbao 王定保, *Tang zhi yan jiaozhu* 唐摭言校注, annotated by Jiang Hanchun 姜漢椿, (Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 2003), 35. Important literati who served him included Xu Yanxiu 徐延休 (d.923) and Huang Feigong 黃匪躬, both of whom had earned *jinshi* degrees in the capital before relocating to the south (see their biographies). Other scholars included Huang Tai 黃台 (see XTS 60:1617), as well as Chen Xiang 陳象, Tang Yun 湯筮, and Chen Yue 陳岳 (see Wang Dingbao, *Tang zhi yan jiaozhu*, 213). It is also very possible that Zhong Chuan played a role in establishing Lushan (Jiangzhou) as a major center of learning at this time. See Chen Shunyu 陳舜俞, *Lushan ji* 廬山記, *Yingyin wenyuange siku quanshu* ed., vol. 585, 3.15a. For more on Zhong Chuan in the context of the emerging independent structure of power in Jiangxi, see Itō Hiroaki 伊藤弘明, "Tōmatsu Godai ki ni okeru Kōsei chiiki no zaichi seiryoku ni tsuite 唐末五代期における江西地域の在地勢力について," *Chūgoku kizokusei shakai no kenkyū* 中国貴族制社会の研究, Eds.

struggle among his sons led to the nearly overnight disintegration of the state. After his adoptive son relinquished Jiangzhou to Yang Xingmi, Wu forces gained control of the mouth of the Gan River and access to Lake Poyang. Thus less than six months after Zhong Chuan's death, the five thousand troops defending Hongzhou were forced to surrender, and military officers and bureaucrats alike were absorbed into the Yangzhou-based government.²²⁴ As it turns out, these men included the fathers or grandfathers of three of the most important Wu and Southern Tang statesmen, Song Qiqiu 宋齊丘 (887-959), Xu Xuan 徐鉉 (917-992), and Chen Qiao 陳喬 (d.975), as well as of the Southern Tang naval and army commander Lu Jiang 盧絳 (d.c.976).²²⁵

The preeminence of men from a few prefectures in the Wu bureaucracy is very revealing of the nature of the power structure at that time. In general, military officers and civilian administrators attached to the most successful regional armies were welcomed by the Wu leadership and frequently placed in the highest political and military positions. When Yang Xingmi was enfeoffed as the Prince of Wu in 902, countless of his closest followers were catapulted into high offices. But other successful regional regimes of the 880s and 890s, including those of Sun Ru and Zhong Chuan, had provided other opportunities for advancement, and had ensured the disproportionate representation from the respective prefectures after the regimes in question were defeated. As late as four decades after the founding of the Wu, families who had had the good fortune of serving one of these three regimes retained substantial influence at the center:

Kawakatsu Yoshio 川勝義雄 and Tonami Mamoru 礪波護, (Tokyo: Todōsha, 1987), 284-289.

²²⁴ For more on the fall of Zhong's regime, see ZZTJ 265:8659, 8661, 8665; XWDS 61:752; XTS 10:304.

²²⁵ See the biographies of these three men. For confirmation that Chen Yue 陳岳 had once served Zhong Chuan, see Wang Dingbao, *Tang zhi yan jiaozhu*, 213. For an example of a low-level administrator who had once served the Zhong regime, see the epitaph of He Yanhui 何延徽 (884-963).

the four prefectures of Luzhou, Caizhou, Hongzhou, and Jizhou continued to account for one fourth of the upper echelons of the Southern Tang bureaucracy and army (see Figure 5.1).

Trends in the geography of power were quite similar in the north of China. In a study of the northern dynasties through the Khitan invasion of 946, Wang Gungwu has described in careful detail the reproduction of provincial government personnel and organization at court when a new military governor succeeded in capturing the throne of the empire. Provincial administrators became court bureaucrats; members of the governor's personal staff were elevated to the rank of palace officials (controlling many of the positions once held by eunuchs in the Tang dynasty); and provincial military officers rose to high positions in the emperor's personal army.²²⁶ Because all post-Liang emperors had risen to power during Li Keyong's and Li Cunxu's consolidation of the territories north of the Yellow River, men from Hebei and Hedong came to dominate the bureaucracy. During the period 926 to 960, these two regions of China provided 81% of the most important military and civilian court officials.²²⁷ The importance of these same regions is equally apparent in a broader survey of the bureaucratic and military personnel of the Five Dynasties (see Figure 4.3 in the previous chapter).

Although the scope of Wang's study is limited to the period prior to the founding of the Song, an examination of the standard history biographies of individuals who served in the first fifteen years of the Song (under Taizu, the first emperor), reveals similar trends both in the importance of men who rose to power in the personal retinues of emperors and in the dominance at court of men from Hebei and Hedong. Figure 5.2

²²⁶ Wang Gungwu, *The Structure of Power in North China during the Five Dynasties*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967).

²²⁷ Wang Gungwu, *The Structure of Power in North China*, 208-215.

depicts the backgrounds of military and civil officeholders during the reign of Song Taizu whose families originated in either Hebei/Hedong or Huaibei/Henan. In particular, the table lists the number of men who had once served in the personal entourage of a member of an imperial family or of a prominent general. Over three-quarters of military men from both regions of focus are found to have once served in the military camp of a Later Tang, Later Jin, Later Han, or Later Zhou emperor before the new emperor's accession to the throne. Some of these men had served in multiple retinues of this kind. For example, Wang Zuo 王祚 (d. c.962) was in the ranks of the army that followed Shi Jingtang 石敬瑭 to Luoyang to seize the throne as Emperor Jin Gaozu (r.936-942). Later, he joined Liu Zhiyuan 劉知遠 (future emperor Han Gaozu, r.947-948) in Hedong to help oust the Khitan invaders. Of those military men who had never been attached to the armies of future emperors, some had served other prominent generals. Others were enlisted in the army in the 960s; their biographies are recorded in the *Songshi* only because they rose to prominence under the next emperor.²²⁸ Finally, a few men had surrendered to the Song or a preceding regime with their own substantial followings and were immediately assigned to a prominent office. A Khitan salt commissioner Zhang Cangying 張藏英 (894-962), for example, earned a prefectureship after he surrendered to the Later Zhou. He arrived from Fangzhou in a flotilla of several hundred boats carrying one thousand soldiers and retainers, over seven thousand family members of salt field workers, and ten thousand horses and oxen.

Personal ties to an emperor were less important for civil bureaucrats. Only one quarter are known to have served a future emperor. Nevertheless, service in the military

²²⁸ See, for example, the biography of Zhou Renmei 周仁美 (d.1019).

camp of a preeminent general remained significant for the careers of bureaucrats, especially those from Hebei or Hedong, of whom half are known to have served at some time in a military retinue (whether imperial or non-imperial). The case of Zhao Feng's 趙逢 (d.975) illustrates both the value of military patronage and the importance of a measure of good luck in achieving career mobility. When Zhao's father was killed during the conquest of Youzhou in 914, he was adopted by the invading general Zhou Dewei 周德威. After Zhou died, Zhao went to Fengxiang to become a retainer in the service of Li Congyan 李從暉. On the subsequent death of the latter, Zhao accepted service under Li's successor, Hou Yi 侯益, whose later reassignment to the imperial capital provided Zhao Feng with a crucial boost into the ranks of the high civil bureaucracy. Although over half of the civil officeholders in Figure 5.2 are depicted as having had no known ties to military men, there are reasons to believe that this data is misleading, especially with regard to the early careers of these men's ancestors. Consider, for example, the case of An Deyu 安德裕 (940-1002), who earned a *jinshi* degree in 969. Although his own earlier career is not described, the separate biography of his father An Chongrong 安重榮 indicates that the father once served in the entourage of Shi Jingtang (the future Emperor Jin Gaozu). Unfortunately, however, there is no information on the early careers of the fathers of many other early Song *jinshi* holders.

Based on the data available one can estimate that approximately one third of the civil bureaucrats under Song Taizu had never served (nor had any ancestor ever served)

in the camp of a powerful general.²²⁹ Some of these men are known to have submitted to the Song from Khitan territories or after the Song conquest of Sichuan; they would already have established their reputations when they entered the Song bureaucracy.²³⁰ However, a minority of (mostly civil) officeholders followed a very different career trajectory from that described so far. In particular, it is clear that a certain degree of bureaucratic continuity allowed individuals or families to maintain positions in the central government across several dynastic changes. Normally, the families in question avoided serving on a general's personal staff, and depended exclusively on standard, routinized bureaucratic appointments. Yang Zhaojian 楊昭儉 (902-977), great grandson of an early ninth-century grand councillor, earned his *jinshi* degree in the early 930s and appears to have received appointments exclusively in the central governments of five successive regimes: the Later Tang, Later Jin, Later Han, Later Zhou, and Song dynasties. Previously, his father had served the Later Liang central government. Yang Zhaojian's example was not unique.²³¹ Although most officeholders under Song Taizu had risen to office (or their fathers had risen to office) by the good fortune of having served a successful general sometime within the previous half century, it was apparently possible for a family to preserve a foothold at court over the entire period from the

²²⁹ This estimate presumes that the fathers of a little over one-third of men whose backgrounds are "unknowns" had once been in the retinue of an important general. Note that because of greater social mobility in the military, it is less important to know the ancestry of military men in order to identify ties to an imperial retinue. Because high civil bureaucrats were more dependent on family resources to receive the extensive literary education required, it is important to look at ancestry to determine how the family rose to high status by the early Song.

²³⁰ See, for example, the biographies of Song Qi 宋琪 (917-996), Ju Zhongzheng 句中正 (929-1002), Chen Xinghua 陳省華 (939-1006), and Yuan Kuo 袁廓.

²³¹ See, for example, the biographies of Zhang Zhu 張鑄 (891-963) and Lu Zhihan 盧之翰 (946-1002).

pre-Huang Chao era to the founding of the Song in 960.²³²

An examination of the biographies of officeholders serving Song Taizu also reveals that Hedong and Hebei retained their preeminence at least into the 970s. Figure 5.3 shows the region of origin of three hundred military men and civil administrators who are known to have held office under Taizu. Former officials of the Southern Tang, absorbed into the Song bureaucracy after the fall of their state, are excluded because the Song invasion of Jiangnan was completed less than one year before Taizu's death. As shown, nearly half of civil officeholders and nearly three-quarters of military men under the first Song reign had family roots in Hebei or Hedong. Because dynastic history biographies (as opposed to tomb epitaphs) recount the lives of men who served in the highest offices at least at some point in their careers, Figure 5.3 reveals that the disproportionate influence of Hebei and Hedong at the center of power survived into the 970s.

5.3. Capital elites

The predominance described above of civil and military officeholders from a relatively small number of prefectures or regions was characteristic of the initial stages in the creation of a new government. Such a tendency was commonly countered by the centralizing strategies initiated by political regimes after they became established. Once a ruling family had succeeded in consolidating power over a large domain, the leadership typically attempted to recruit talent from across the entire territory it controlled. In this way, the capital city began to attract people from many different regions.

Figure 5.4 compares the geographic origins of officeholders of the Wu state to the

²³² For a brief discussion of bureaucratic continuity during the Five Dynasties period, see Wang Gungwu, *The Structure of Power in North China*, 171-174.

“new recruits”—men whose families had not held office in the Wu period—of the Southern Tang. Emperor Liezu, the first Southern Tang ruler, was the adopted son of Xu Wen 徐温 (862-927), the power behind the Wu throne as early as the first decade of the tenth century when he arranged the execution of numerous rivals in the military. Liezu was able to seize the throne in 937 in a bloodless coup without having to reconsolidate the territories under his control. For this reason, the Southern Tang bureaucracy could employ the techniques of a stable regime and absorb men more equally from throughout its territory. Whereas 42% of Wu bureaucrats came from the north and 9% came from the single northern prefecture of Caizhou, the Southern Tang recruited much more widely from among the territories under its control: Jiangnan, Huainan (lost to the Later Zhou in the late 950s), and Min (largely under Southern Tang rule after 946). No single prefecture would dominate the pool of new Southern Tang officeholders as Luzhou had done under the Wu.

Closely associated with the development of a truly unified central government drawing on elites from throughout the territories under its control was the attraction of the capital city as a prime destination of elite mobility. Probably no later than the eighth century, the most influential branches of the aristocratic great clans had relocated to the capital cities of Chang’an or Luoyang, where they coalesced into an oligarchy that came to dominate Tang politics.²³³ Traveling to the capitals probably provided ambitious provincial elites with the only avenue for obtaining government employment and joining forces with the oligarchy. Anecdotal literature from the ninth and tenth centuries often

²³³ For a discussion of the relocation of clan burial grounds to Luoyang by one Tang aristocratic clan, see David Johnson, “The Last Years of a Great Clan: The Li Family of Chao chun in Late T'ang and Early Sung,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 37.1 (1977): 33-40. For more on the Tang oligarchy, see Chapter Two.

refer to men journeying from the provinces to take the examinations in Chang'an. Thus, we hear of Wang Zun 汪遵 who made the trek from Xuanzhou (Jiangnan) to the capital in 866 and of Gongsheng Yi 公乘億 (who came down from Weizhou (Hebei) in 872.²³⁴ Among Changshu epitaphs, we learn that both Yan Youming 顏幼明 (785-866) and Li Rang 李讓 (815-886) sent sons north to take the exams, though both families were unsuccessful.

But more than a political center, Chang'an was a cultural center where a unique metropolitan lifestyle was possible. A city of great palaces, gardens, and temples, it was also a place to enjoy celebrations and feasts, to shop for luxury goods, to mingle in night markets and wine houses, and to seek the company of famous courtesans.²³⁵ A systematic survey of late Tang poetry by Bo Juyi, Wei Zhuang, and others and of ninth-century anecdotal literature will be necessary before we can ascertain the role of residence in Chang'an or in the Eastern Capital of Luoyang in the creation of a sense of elite identity. In any case, in accordance with a phenomenon repeated in each successful regime of the ninth and tenth centuries, the highest elites relocated to the capital cities, where they acquired great mansions and established ancestral graveyards.²³⁶ The attractive power of the capital in the late Tang is most evident from an examination of

²³⁴ Li Fang 李昉, et al., eds., *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003), 1363, 1364-1365; Xu Song 徐松, *Dengke jikao buzheng* 登科記考補正, annotated and expanded by Meng Erdong 孟二冬, (Beijing: Beijing Yanshan chubanshe, 2003), 23:952, 962. For a description of examination literature under the Song, see John W. Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China: A Social History of Examinations*, new ed., (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), 169-181.

²³⁵ For a brief description of ninth-century Chang'an, see Edward H. Schafer, "The Last Years of Chang'an," *Oriens extremus* 10 (1963): 143-157.

²³⁶ For a catalog of the mansions in Chang'an and Luoyang of the great nobles, eunuchs, and officers of state, see Xu Song 徐松, *Tang liangjing chengfang kao* 唐兩京城坊考, collated and expanded by Zhang Mu 張穆, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985).

surviving tomb epitaphs. In the period 850 to 879, substantially more inscriptions survive from Luoyang and Chang'an than from all of the rest of China combined.²³⁷

The capital cities of successive northern regimes remained magnets for the upper class in the tenth century. Of twenty-three northern officeholders with biographies in the *Jiu Wudai shi* (*Old History of the Five Dynasties*) for whom the site of burial can be identified, the tombs of eight (over one third) were situated in one of three capital cities (Luoyang, Kaifeng, or Taiyuan).²³⁸ Of twenty-one men who served under Song Taizu and for whom the place of interment is known, thirteen (62%) were buried in the large metropolitan region that included Luoyang, Zhengzhou, and Kaifeng.²³⁹

The concentration of elites in the capital city was, of course, of great benefit to the state as well. Through their relocation to the capital, the highest officers and bureaucrats acquired a greater stake in the regime. They lost their ability to maintain

²³⁷ According to my own data, for these three decades, there are 445 known epitaphs from the capitals (266 from Luoyang and 179 from Chang'an) as opposed to 285 from the rest of China. David Johnson has pointed out that a bias in favor of Luoyang might have arisen from the larger number of amateur archaeological investigations in this region, presumably in the Late Qing and Republican periods. See David Johnson, "The Last Years of a Great Clan: The Li Family of Chao chun in Late T'ang and Early Sung," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 37.1 (1977): 26 (n.52). Note, however, that the predominance of Luoyang epitaphs is also reflected in more recent scientific excavations that are now sponsored all over China primarily at the provincial level.

²³⁸ Of the remaining individuals, ten were buried at home in the provinces, and five were buried elsewhere at their places of office. The twenty-three officeholders in question are Wang Tan 王檀, Li Hanzhi 李罕之, Ge Congzhou 葛從周, Zhai Guangye 翟光鄴, Zhao Ying 趙瑩, Guo Chongtao 郭崇韜, Fang Zhiwen 房知溫, Zhao Chou 趙犖, Zhao Xu 趙珣, Wang Jian 王緘, Fu Cunshen 符存審, Li Yu 李愚, Luo Zhoujing 羅周敬, Shi Gui 史圭, Fan Yanguang 范延光, Lu Siduo 陸思鐸, Li Zhou 李周, Ma Quanjie 馬全節, Wang Qing 王清, Zhang Li 張礪, Liu Shenjiao 劉審交, Feng Hui 馮暉, and Feng Dao 馮道.

²³⁹ The twenty-one officeholders in question were Gao Fang 高防 (905-963), Dou Yi 竇儀 (914-966), Li Chuyun 李處耘 (920-966), Yin Chongke 尹崇珂 (932-973), Yao Nabin 姚內斌 (911-974), Zhang Dan 張澹 (919-974), Gao Huaide 高懷德 (926-982), Chu Zhaofu 楚昭輔 (914-982), Lu Duoxun 盧多遜 (934-985), Cao Guangshi 曹光實 (931-985), Liu Yu 劉遇 (920-985), Gao Di 高頤 (905-986), Guo Shouwen 郭守文 (935-989), Yi Yanqing 易延慶 (d. c.990), Zhao Pu 趙普 (922-992), Xu Xuan 徐鉉 (917-992), Song Dang 宋瑄 (933-993), Zhe Yuqing 折御卿 (958-995), Yin Jilun 尹繼倫 (947-996), Dai Xing 戴興 (d.998), and Cao Bin 曹彬 (931-999).

separate, local power bases which might draw them away from allegiance to the central state. Moreover, once their resources were invested in metropolitan real estate, they became all the more dependent on the survival of the imperial court to preserve the enormously inflated value of their property. One might argue that among the most powerful assets a regime possessed was the widespread belief among elites that residence in the capital played an essential role in strengthening social status. Under both the Five Dynasties and the early Song, the state attempted to lure officeholders into residing at the capital by offering them mansions and estates there.²⁴⁰ In addition, the state might offer elites special burial privileges. Thus, land for a tomb in Luoyang was granted to the military man Li Chuyun 李處耘 (920-966), and the state financed the funeral arrangements for the bureaucrat Zhang Dan 張澹 (919-974). In rare cases, favorites of the emperor could be allowed interment in an imperial tomb complex. The important Later Tang and Later Jin general Li Zhou 李周 (871-944), for example, was granted burial at Huiling, the mausoleum for Emperor Mingzong (r.926-933). In some instances, emperors even forbade officials to leave the capital for interment. When Ma Yu 馬郁 was old and nearing death, he requested permission to return to Hebei to die and be buried among his forebears. But Li Cunxu, then the Prince of Jin, refused to allow this. The provincial official Zhai Guangye 翟光鄴 (907-952) was so loved by those he administered that when he passed away they requested permission to bury him locally and build a shrine in his honor. But consent was not granted and his body was returned to Luoyang. So too surrendering princelings and sovereigns of conquered states were

²⁴⁰ One example of the recipient of a mansion at the capital in the early Song was Guo Tingwei 郭廷謂 (919-972).

often relocated to the capital to prevent them from rallying support at home for their defunct regimes. In 1987, the tomb of Wang Jixun 王繼勛 (d.956), descendant of the Min royal clan, was discovered within the grounds of a brick tile factory in the suburbs of Nanjing (capital of the Southern Tang). Similarly, after the Later Tang conquest of Sichuan, several thousand bureaucrats and imperial clansmen of the Shu state were relocated to Luoyang.²⁴¹ Finally, much of the Later Jin imperial clan was forcibly settled in the vicinity of one of the Liao capital cities after the Khitan invasion of 946.²⁴²

As has been suggested by a few of the examples above, the tendency for elites to aggregate in the capital was in no way limited to Chang'an and Luoyang and did not fade away with the fall of the Tang. Associated with both the centralizing tendencies of the Southern Tang regime and the persistence of an upper class culture that favored residence in the capital was the reemergence of metropolitan elites in three different capital cities: Yangzhou, the center of the Wu state that remained the second most important city after Liezu of the Southern Tang seized the throne; the new capital of Jinling (modern-day Nanjing); and Hongzhou, where the emperor and court relocated after the Later Zhou conquest of Huainan. The preference for burial in one of the capitals is confirmed by the epitaphs for civilian and military officeholders surviving in the collected works of the Southern Tang minister Xu Xuan 徐鉉 (917-992). Of epitaphs composed prior to the Song conquest of Jiangnan in 975 for which the place of burial is known, thirteen (nearly three-quarters) were composed for women or men interred at one of the capital cities.²⁴³

²⁴¹ ZZTJ 274:8954

²⁴² The tomb epitaphs of the last Later Jin emperor and his son have recently surfaced at the Chaoyang City Museum. See Du Xingzhi 都興智 and Tian Likun 田立坤, "Hou Jin Shi Chonggui Shi Yanzhao muzhiming kao 後晉石重貴石延照墓誌銘考," *Wenwu* 2004.11: 87-95.

²⁴³ Unfortunately a number of Southern Tang-period epitaphs preserved in Xu's collected works leave

Three of the remaining five individuals were buried where they had held the important provincial offices of governor or prefect.²⁴⁴

Elite preference for burial in the capital is also reflected in a number of telling examples. Jia Tan 賈潭 (881-948), descendant of a Tang aristocratic clan who fled Luoyang in the late Tang, was serving in office in Taizhou when he fell ill. He rushed back to the capital for burial. Xu Xuan's father-in-law Wang Tan 王坦 (896-946) was the descendant of one of the Luzhou-based clans that had benefited from early ties to Yang Xingmi. Wang was not buried at his family's original home base, but rather at Yangzhou (the capital of Yang Xingmi's regime). Zhao Xuanfu 趙宣輔, a native of Huainan, was serving in Jizhou in southern Jiangnan when he died of a sudden illness sometime in the mid 960s. His body was transported back for burial at the capital city of Jinling several hundred kilometers away.

Even before the fall of the Tang, the tendency for elites to relocate to the capital is already evident among the independent regimes in Hebei. Of thirty-four epitaphs dating to the second half of the ninth century that were composed for inhabitants of the territories under the control of the military governors of Youzhou, twenty-eight (82%) were for individuals buried in the three counties in the immediate vicinity of the capital

the place of burial blank, presumably because it had not yet been determined at the time the epitaph was composed. This is a problem common among epitaphs whose texts are transmitted in literary collections. The eighteen pre-976 epitaphs by Xu Xuan that I am considering are those of Bao Yong 包詠 (899-939), Ma Renyu 馬仁裕 (880-942), Wang Tan 王坦 (896-946), Liu Chongjun 劉崇俊 (907-946), Jia Tan 賈潭 (881-948), Miao Yanlu 苗延祿 (891-951), Tao Jingxuan 陶敬宣 (899-950), Fan Qian 樊潛 (896-952), Ms. Wang 王氏(鍾) (884-958), Bao E 包諤 (880-958), Wu Wuyin 吳無殷 (884-960), Zhao Xuanfu 趙宣輔 (d. 960s), Ms. Wang 王氏(李) (d.960s), Liu Hao 劉鄩 (908-966), Ms. Wang Wan 王畹(徐) (919-968), Han Xizai 韓熙載 (902-970), Qiao Kuangshun 喬匡舜 (898-972), and Shang Quangong 尚全恭 (905-974). The place of burial of Han Xizai is identified in notes to his biography rather than in his epitaph.

²⁴⁴ These three men were Ma Renyu, Shang Quangong, and Liu Chongjun. The remaining two examples of individuals who were not buried at the capital (Fan Qian and Bao Yong) were interred where their fathers had been county magistrates.

(modern-day Beijing).²⁴⁵ To be sure, one might expect that more tomb epitaphs would be discovered in the vicinity of Beijing simply because of the countless construction projects undertaken in the Chinese capital in the past half century. But it is important to note that the officeholding elites buried near the Youzhou capital were typically appointed to offices across a wide swathe of territory. Yan Haowen 閻好問 (810-873) was assigned to posts in Guizhou, Yingzhou, and Mozhou; Song Zaichu 宋再初 (777-858) served in Pingzhou and Jizhou; Yue Bangsui 樂邦穗 (827-877) held office in Jizhou, Tanzhou, Guizhou, Mozhou, and Yingzhou; Zhang Jianzhang 張建章 (806-866) was appointed to positions in Yingzhou and Jizhou, as well as being dispatched on a diplomatic mission to Bohai. In fact, civilian and military officeholders attached to the Youzhou military government were rotated to positions in all of the nine prefectures under the governor's control. Yet the families of these bureaucrats and military men retained a permanent foothold in the capital where they buried their dead.

5.4. Conclusion

It has been argued in this chapter that, to a certain extent, armies served as fundamental units of geographic and social mobility during the period 880 to 960. The relocation of armies largely determined major migration patterns. Moreover, the success of a general in battle affected the future social and political status of his subordinates, including both military officers and the civil administrators on his personal staff. In this respect, the survival of elite lineages in the tenth century was often dependent on chance. An invitation to join the entourage of a warlord could lead to a prestigious career if the warlord in question seized the throne of the empire or became a

²⁴⁵ The three counties in question are Changping 昌平, Ji 薊, and Youdu 幽都.

close follower of a new or established sovereign. Yet there also seems to have been substantial bureaucratic continuity unaffected by changes in dynasty. Once an individual had risen to power under one emperor, he and his family could hope to serve the multiple subsequent regimes that took over the throne in rapid succession in the north of China.

The movement of large groups of elites accompanying these succeeding regimes may have had another impact as well. The sudden arrival in a capital of the countless provincial administrators and military officers who belonged to the entourage of a new emperor had inevitable repercussions on metropolitan culture. Under the Tang, the aristocratic clans based in Chang'an and Luoyang dominated the bureaucracy of the central government, ensuring the reproduction at the political center of their own attitudes regarding the meaning of status and prestige. In this way, the aristocratic assumption that blood was the prime determinant of status would have permeated the mentality of the metropolitan capitals. Although some of these clansmen did survive into the Song period, the great influx and overrepresentation at court of provincial immigrant elites, especially those from Hebei and Hedong, may well have led to a lasting cultural change at the center.

But whereas the preeminence at court of men from a few localities was typical of political regimes in their formative stages, once the regimes were consolidated, close relationships rapidly formed—even in this period of disunity—between elites and the capital cities. Elites were attracted to the regime capitals and tended rapidly to establish roots there both because of greater opportunities for government employment and because access to metropolitan culture was probably important in defining their very

status and prestige. Indeed, governments encouraged elite migration from outlying provinces to the political center of the state to thwart the establishment of destabilizing local power bases.

As described by both Patricia Ebrey and David Johnson, with the decline of Han authority in the second century C.E., local magnates entrenched themselves in the countryside, where they would survive in northern China as a powerful counterbalance to the central government at least until the late fifth century. But by the sixth century, these elite families were absorbed into a nationwide aristocratic system; no later than the eighth century, their most prominent branches began to relocate to Chang'an or Luoyang, where they would acquire estates and establish new family burial grounds.²⁴⁶ Robert Hartwell and Beverly Bossler have argued that even after the complete disappearance of the old Tang aristocracy by the early Song, burial at the capital remained a characteristic feature of the highest political and social elites.²⁴⁷ As Robert Hymes has shown, the importance of the capital did not decline until the twelfth century, with the development of an "elite localism" that combined localist social ideals with the consolidation of a home base in the provinces.²⁴⁸

This chapter has shown that the tendency for elites to relocate to the capital endured throughout the tenth-century political interregnum. This phenomenon is not

²⁴⁶ Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *The Aristocratic Families of Early Imperial China: A Case Study of the Po-ling Ts'ui Family*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978); David G. Johnson, *The Medieval Chinese Oligarchy*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1977); David Johnson, "The Last Years of a Great Clan: The Li Family of Chao chun in Late T'ang and Early Sung," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 37.1 (1977): 5-102

²⁴⁷ Robert M. Hartwell, "Demographic, Political, and Social Transformations of China, 750-1550," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42.2 (1982): 405-416; Beverly J. Bossler, *Powerful Relations: Kinship, Status, and the State in Sung China (960-1279)*, (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, 1998), esp. 41-51.

²⁴⁸ Robert P. Hymes, *Statesmen and Gentlemen: The Elite of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi, in Northern and Southern Sung*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

only apparent in the case of the Five Dynasties in the north but also among officeholding elites of the Wu and Southern Tang in the south and, in a slightly earlier era, among political elites of the independent military provinces of late Tang Hebei. In essence, the attraction of the capital so dominated Chinese upper class culture at this time that the most eminent families—those families represented in surviving biographies and epitaphs—largely chose to relocate to one of the multiple, coexisting centers of administrative power even in this period of political upheaval. With this in mind, the shift to a localist strategy in the twelfth century appears particularly revolutionary in representing a permanent change in the relationship between elites and the state, a relationship that had survived a century of disunity with remarkable tenacity.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁹ Paul Smith has also described in terms of the *longue durée* this critical change in the relationship between the state and local elites. See Paul Jakob Smith, “Introduction: Problematizing the Song-Yuan-Ming Transition,” in *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History*, eds. Paul Jakob Smith and Richard von Glahn, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), 19-30.

Figure 5.1. Prefectures of origin of Wu and Southern Tang officeholders

	Wu (902-937)	S.Tang (937-975)
Luzhou (Huainan)	26 (18%)	15 (9%)
Caizhou (Huaibei)	12 (9%)	6 (4%)
Jizhou (Jiangnan)	8 (6%)	14 (9%)
Hongzhou(Jiangnan)	6 (4%)	7 (4%)
Chang'an/Luoyang	13 (9%)	11 (7%)
Other	76 (54%)	109 (67%)
Total	140	162

Notes: This chart includes Wu and Southern Tang officeholders with biographies in the standard histories that cover this region of China (SGCQ, JGZ, NTS(Ma), NTS(Lu), JWDS, XWDS). Only officeholders with known places of origin are included. Non officeholders are excluded as are a few biographies that appear to be derived entirely from anecdotal sources.

Figure 5.2. Backgrounds of civil and military officeholders who served under Song Taizu (r.960-976)

	Region of origin	Retinues served			Total
		Imperial	Non-imperial	None/Unknown	
Civil	Hebei/Hedong	15 (33%)	10 (22%)	21 (46%)	46 (100%)
	Henan/Huaibei	7 (20%)	5 (14%)	23 (66%)	35 (100%)
	Total	22 (27%)	15 (19%)	44 (54%)	81 (100%)
Military	Hebei/Hedong	113 (78%)	10 (7%)	21 (15%)	144 (100%)
	Henan/Huaibei	33 (70%)	2 (4%)	12 (26%)	47 (100%)
	Total	146 (76%)	12 (6%)	34 (17%)	191 (100%)
Total		168 (62%)	27 (10%)	77 (28%)	272 (100%)

Notes: This chart depicts the early careers of officeholders who served under Song Taizu based on their biographies in *Song shi* (*History of the Song Dynasty*). All individuals are categorized by profession (civil bureaucrat or military officer) and region of origin (Hebei/Hedong or Henan/Huaibei; individuals from other regions of China are excluded). To assess the backgrounds of the individuals, they are divided into three groups according to the military retinues they or an ancestor belonged to at some point early in their careers: “imperial” indicates that they or an ancestor served in the entourage of or (in a few cases only) had family ties with a member of an imperial family prior to his accession to the throne; “non-imperial” indicates that they or an ancestor served on the personal staff of an important military governor or general who was not of an imperial family; “none/unknown” indicates that there is no evidence that a family member ever belonged to a military retinue.

Figure 5.3. Region of origin of civil and military officeholders who served under Song Taizu (r.960-976)

	Civil bureaucrats	Military officers	Total
Hebei	33 (33%)	80 (40%)	113 (38%)
Hedong	13 (13%)	64 (32%)	77 (26%)
HuaiBei/Henan	35 (35%)	47 (23%)	82 (27%)
Other	18 (18%)	11 (5%)	29 (10%)
Total	99 (100%)	202 (100%)	301 (100%)

Notes: This chart includes all officeholders with biographies in *Songshi* (*History of the Song Dynasty*) who are known to have held office under Song Taizu and whose place of origin is known. Excluded are Southern Tang civilian and military officials who were absorbed into the Song bureaucracy after the invasion of Jiangnan less than a year before Taizu's death. In some cases, the place of origin of an individual's father or grandfather is used in cases where the family relocated to Luoyang or Kaifeng (capital cities in the tenth century) after the family had first become influential at court.

Figure 5.4. Region of origin of Wu and Southern Tang officeholders

REGION	Wu Kingdom (902-937)	Southern Tang (937-975) (new recruits only)
North	59 42%	15 17%
Huainan	48 34%	9 10%
Jiangnan	27 19%	41 47%
Min	2 1%	20 23%
Other	5 4%	3 3%
Total	141	88
PREFECTURE		
Luzhou (Huainan)	26 18%	3 3%
Caizhou (Huabei)	12 9%	0 0%

Notes: This chart includes Wu and Southern Tang officeholders with biographies in the standard histories that cover this region of China (SGCQ, JGZ, NTS(Ma), NTS(Lu), JWDS, XWDS). Only officeholders with known places of origin are included. Non officeholders are excluded as are a few biographies that appear to be derived entirely from anecdotal sources. In the case of the Southern Tang, only new recruits are considered (thus these figures do not match the data in Figure 5.1). In other words, individuals or families known to have served the Wu kingdom earlier are excluded.

Conclusion

The present study has examined the evolution of Chinese society in a period of particular turmoil and upheaval: the Tang-Song interregnum of the late ninth and tenth centuries. Inevitably, the vast majority of individuals living during that period—more than a millennium in the past—have left little or no trace of their existence. Nevertheless, through the use of certain unusually rich sources—above all tomb inscriptions and dynastic history biographies—it has been possible to reconstruct the lives of some two thousand elite women and men. Based on this evidence, four major conclusions have emerged.

First, the nature of the dramatic transformation of the Chinese upper class across the Tang-Song transition has been substantially clarified. It is now apparent that this transformation involved two separate and largely independent sociocultural trajectories: 1) the substantial decline in influence of the “medieval oligarchy” that had held sway in China for centuries; and 2) the emergence of a new ideology that assumed that access to the bureaucracy should be determined by talent and not by blood—as presupposed by the older aristocratic mentality. The decline of the pre-Tang aristocratic families, I believe, was ultimately the result of their prolific progeny. Although the cachet of the great clan choronym survived into the Song period, already by the late Tang, an extraordinary number of individuals throughout China could legitimately claim great clan heritage. At some point in the early or mid Tang—the precise timing will be elucidated in a future

study that examines provincial society in the sixth through eighth centuries—claims of pre-Tang aristocratic descent were no longer sufficient for membership in the oligarchy that dominated access to the bureaucracy. Instead, the highest political elites came to consist of a relatively small network of important families deriving their prestige from traditions of service to the Tang regime. In other words, the “medieval oligarchy” described by David Johnson should not be equated with the great clans enumerated on the Dunhuang lists. The oligarchy that held the reigns of power at the capital was actually a small subset of these powerful families.²⁵⁰ The collapse of the Tang state dealt a severe blow to these families not only because their loyalty to the defunct regime scarcely endeared them to the new rulers, but also because their pre-Tang pedigrees did not distinguish them from a plethora of distant kin residing in the provinces. As six short-lived dynasties in succession seized control of the old Tang capitals, the great influx of new men from the provinces—many of whom could themselves claim great clan descent—rapidly supplanted the surviving members of the old capital-based Tang oligarchy.

The second sociocultural trajectory—the emergence of a new emphasis on talent over blood—was probably more dramatic in the capital than in the provinces and probably did not become widespread until the eleventh century. In this sense, it is beyond the scope of the present study. I have nevertheless hypothesized that this phenomenon can be traced to a new political culture developing in the provinces, a culture that contrasted sharply with that of the entrenched capital-based Tang elite. The

²⁵⁰ The distinction between the “great clans” and the “medieval oligarchy” is important for understanding the relationship between elites in the capital and those in the provinces. Although elite families in the provinces made use of their claimed heritage to secure prestige in local society, these same families were quite likely not recognized by the highest elites in the capital and probably not included in the clan genealogies maintained by the most prestigious branches of these families.

independent governments in ninth-century Hebei and the new regimes that sprouted all over China after the Huang Chao Rebellion all developed bureaucratic systems that were not beholden to the Tang oligarchy. In this survival-of-the-fittest environment, resembling conditions in China during the Warring States' Period (481-221 B.C.E.), provincial governors were invariably more interested in a man's talent and ability than in his former political connections and family lineage. When a series of warlords succeeded in capturing the northern capital cities of Luoyang and Kaifeng to found new dynasties, the provincial military and bureaucratic elites that had served those warlords relocated *en masse* to the political center. Most notable was the Turkish-led invasion of 923 that resulted in the domination of the bureaucracy at the capital by new men from Hebei and Hedong. It may well have been during this period that the more talent-based bureaucratic culture of the northeast came to supplant the older aristocratic mentality that suffused upper-class culture in the Tang capitals.

A second major conclusion concerns the relationship between elites and the state. The state's relative success in accumulating surplus wealth during the late Tang and the tenth century was reflected in the relative affluence of its agents, the officeholding families—an affluence indicated by tomb epitaph size. The power of the state to control economic resources as well as the very legitimacy of the successive regimes were bolstered by the high concentration of political and social elites at the centers of power. This trend was apparent not only in the great metropolises of Chang'an, Luoyang, and Kaifeng, but also—perhaps unexpectedly—in the capital cities of the Wu Kingdom, the Southern Tang, and the independent military provinces of late Tang Hebei. It is likely that residence and burial at the capital were critical components of the sense of identity of

the most powerful political elites. During the period under consideration, non-officeholding elites seem to have been largely restricted to regions away from the centers of political power. The importance of this phenomenon will be confirmed, I believe, by a more extensive survey of late Tang epitaphs from Luoyang and from other provincial regions of China (especially Hedong and Shandong).

A third conclusion of this study concerns the strategies employed by elites in their attempts to preserve their prestige and status in a time of turmoil and uncertainty. It is clear that some families consciously turned to elite-type diversification in order to survive. They expanded their social networks by engaging in exogamous marriages and educating their sons to enter a variety of professions. It would have been unusual for a bureaucratic family from Luoyang to form social ties with the military. Yet such links were entirely rational both in the militarized culture of the northeast, and elsewhere in the provinces after the breakdown of Tang central authority, when the needs of survival required elites to redefine their conceptions of self-identity. As suggested in Chapter Four, the tenth century was also a period when elite migration was endemic and multi-directional. Upper-class families fled warfare, but they also circulated among the multiple, competing regimes in an attempt to convert cultural or military capital into employment opportunities.

Finally, this study has revealed the breadth and complexity of elite society in the late Tang and has underscored, in particular, the importance of non-officeholding elites. Scholarship examining the pre-Song period has tended to neglect families with no ties to officialdom because they are rarely described in the sources most commonly privileged by historians. Excavated tomb epitaphs, however, provide a broader view of society,

revealing the sizable influence at the local level of non-officeholding landowners and merchants. These elite types had their own social ideals and conceptions of virtue that did not always accord with the values of the civil bureaucrats and literati—the dominant values reflected in the vast majority of the surviving sources from this period. It is quite possible that this diversity of value systems was a necessary precursor for the development of a new “social contract,” first negotiated under the Southern Song, that would greatly reduce the influence of the state over local communities and diminish the overarching prestige of officeholders.²⁵¹

The relationship between non-officeholding and officeholding elites in the late Tang period is not entirely clear. It is possible that local landowners and merchants were the beneficiaries of a process of upward social mobility—in other words, that these social groups may have risen up from the lower classes. Yet the evidence in this study suggests that during the late Tang period, upward social mobility was exceedingly rare. Downward, or perhaps more properly “outward” mobility was probably far more common. I have proposed that in the provinces many or even most elites were scions of less successful branches of capital elites that took advantage of provincial bureaucratic appointments to obtain local property and other economic resources. In so doing, as I have suggested, they gradually came to replace the indigenous local elites or, as in some regions of the south, they dislodged them, forcing them into the macroregional periphery. In other words, there was a tendency for the most powerful capital-based clans gradually to replace and repopulate the upper classes in the provinces. Such a trickle-down model

²⁵¹ For a description of the development of this new “social contract,” see Conrad Schirokauer and Robert P. Hymes, “Introduction,” in *Ordering the World: Approaches to State and Society in Sung Dynasty China*, eds. Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 1-58.

of elite circulation is particularly plausible in a world where the state controlled a large proportion of economic assets and could redistribute this wealth to officeholding families. In future research, in order to establish the precise chronology of this process of indigenous displacement, it will be necessary to examine epitaphs from the early Tang and even the late Six Dynasties periods.

In the end, the conclusions I have proposed above all point to the existence of one broad phenomenon: by the late Tang the Chinese state had largely succeeded in dominating society everywhere and in supplanting the locally-based magnates who had held sway in the provinces since the fall of the Han. Members of the political oligarchy of the late Tang maintained claims of blood descent from these local magnates and often seemed to base their status on this heritage, yet the ultimate source of their prestige was their close relationship to the state. Nevertheless, the ideology that officeholding superseded all other pursuits, an ideology that was of primary importance in guaranteeing the enduring prestige of the state, had clearly lost ground in the provinces by the end of the ninth century. Away from the principal centers of power, it was not uncommon for provincial elites to define their status in terms of landholding or economic wealth, not service to the state. With the substantial expansion of the Chinese economy under the Song, especially in the south, the state came to control a progressively smaller proportion of the overall economy. Significant new alternatives to officeholding and residency in the capital as markers of prestige contributed to the rise of “elite localism” in the twelfth century, a development representing a fundamental change not only in the nature of the Chinese upper class, but also in the relationship between state and society.

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1. This table lists all individuals mentioned in the present study. “Citation” refers to a published biography or epitaph of the person in question. See page iv for abbreviations. “Page reference” indicates pages where the individual is discussed in the present study. Italics indicate that the reference is in a footnote.
2. In the case of epitaphs, citations are not comprehensive. Please see Nicolas Tackett, *Tomb Epitaphs of the Tang-Song Transition*, (Shanghai: by author, 2005) for complete lists of alternate transcriptions, published rubbings, and excavation reports.

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