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War and the Creation of the Northern Song State

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Abstract
This dissertation explores the way that war formed the Northern Song (960-1127) state. Earlier research on the Northern Song failed to explain how and why the Northern Song empire established a peaceful border with the Liao empire to its north. This dissertation, by means of a detailed military history of the period from 954-1005, concludes that the Liao state did not intend to destroy the Song state. It was the Liao's limited military and political goals rather than the strength or weakness of the Song that created a peaceful border between the two empires.

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WAR AND THE CREATION OF THE NORTHERN SONG STATE

Peter Allan Lorge

A DISSERTATION

in

Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

1996

Supervisor of Dissertation

Graduate Group Chairperson
Dedication and Acknowledgment

Robert Hartwell passed away before this dissertation was completed and it is to his memory that it is respectfully dedicated.

Nathan Sivin took over as my supervisor at a critical time and for that alone I owe him a great debt of gratitude. But my debt goes further. His guidance and comments on my dissertation forced me to clarify an otherwise turgid mass of research into something readable. I learned a lot about writing in the process. Joanna Waley-Cohen was prompt both with her comments on my chapters and her encouragement. Paul Smith added some rather timely comments which have, hopefully, gone a long way to keeping my foot out of my mouth.

David Graff and Ken Chase helped me at several points by providing a friendly forum in which to work out my ideas in their early stages.

My family and friends have been the greatest help and comfort to me. My parents were particularly kind in the face of numerous lectures on Chinese history and particularly generous when my means did not match my enthusiasm to pursue my research. Finally, I must thank my wife, Tracy, for making it all worthwhile.
ABSTRACT
WAR AND THE CREATION OF THE NORTHERN SONG STATE
PETER ALLAN LORGE
NATHAN SIVIN

This dissertation explores the way that war formed the Northern Song (960-1127) state. Earlier research on the Northern Song failed to explain how and why the Northern Song empire established a peaceful border with the Liao empire to its north. This dissertation, by means of a detailed military history of the period from 954-1005, concludes that the Liao state did not intend to destroy the Song state. It was the Liao's limited military and political goals rather than the strength or weakness of the Song that created a peaceful border between the two empires.
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<td>Jiu Wudaishi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LS</td>
<td>Liaoshi</td>
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<tr>
<td>SHY:B</td>
<td>Song Huiyao Bing (Military section)</td>
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<td>SS</td>
<td>Songshi</td>
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CHAPTER ONE

On February 4, 960, Zhao Kuangyin 赵匡胤 overthrew the young emperor of the Latter Zhou 后周 dynasty and established himself as the first emperor of the Song 宋 dynasty (960-1279). His coup d’etat was neither unexpected nor extraordinary. He was an ambitious military man and during the preceding fifty years the ruling house of north China had changed five times. The Song proved more enduring. It lasted in one form or another until 1279.

After consolidating his hold on the country, Zhao, posthumously known as Song Taizu 宋太祖, incorporated all six of the Chinese states to the south and west, but not to the north, under his rule either through force or diplomacy under the threat of force. The extension of Song rule to the south recreated earlier Chinese empires and restored the “proper,” in the Confucian sense, political order of China. By establishing order and control over the territory of previous great dynasties the Song demonstrated that they were the new rightful rulers of the country. Control of that land indicated that they possessed the Mandate of

1 XCB 1/4a. The entire account of the events leading up to the official overthrow is contained in XCB 1/1a-4a. Also see Sima Guang 司马光, Sushui jiwen 湖水记闻, 1.1-3. A report from Zhen 郑 and Ding 定 prefectures arrived on 31 January reporting a Liao and Northern Han invasion. Zhao Kuangyin left Kaifeng two days later leading an army to oppose it. That night, at Chenqiaoyi 陈桥驿, supposedly unbeknownst to Zhao, several officers decided to place him on the throne. On 3 February the army returned. The Song dynasty was founded on the 4th.

2 XCB 4/25b-26a for Zheng Qi’s 郑起 warning concerning Zhao Kuangyin and XCB 1/5a for Han Tong’s 韩通 son’s warning. Also Sima Guang, Sushui jiwen, 1.1-2. There is also an interesting anecdote concerning Cao Bin 曹彬 when he and Zhao Kuangyin were both generals under Zhou Shizong. Zhu Xi 朱熹, Wuchao mingchen yanxing lu 五朝名臣言行録, 1.2/3. John Labadie, “Rulers and Soldiers: Perception and Management of the Military in Northern Sung China”, Ph.d. diss., University of Washington, 1981, 278.
Heaven.³

The Mandate of Heaven was the heaven-bestowed right to rule the country. It was an old concept by the beginning of the Song. The Mandate could be withdrawn from one family and bestowed upon another. A dynasty possessing the Mandate was legitimate. It was part of the proper succession of ruling families. Only one family could hold the Mandate at any time. There was only one legitimate dynasty in a given period with one legitimate emperor.

The Song was not as successful as several earlier dynasties in conquering land. Song Taizu died with the conquest incomplete. His younger brother Zhao Kuangyi, posthumously known as Song Taizong, 宋太宗, conquered one of two remaining territories but twice failed to take the second.

The Sixteen Prefectures Problem

Taizong successfully eliminated the Northern Han 北漢 state, a client of the Qidan Liao 契丹遼 dynasty to the north of China.⁴ Taizong then invaded Liao territory. He wanted to take a small area of land, sixteen prefectures, near modern Beijing. Shi Jingtang 石敬瑭 had ceded those sixteen prefectures to the


⁴The term “Liao” will be used throughout this dissertation to refer to the Qidan state and people. It has been done for simplicity’s sake in order not to confuse the reader with the dual problems of the Qidan people’s own alternation at different times between “Qidan” and “Liao” and Song references to them. The Song often referred to their opponents as the Qidan. It was a not very subtle rejection of the Liao dynastic designation.
Liao in 936 for their aid in establishing his Jin 晋 dynasty. These "sixteen prefectures" were the northernmost tips of Hedong and Hebei provinces during the Tang. Almost all of the strategic north-south mountain passes lay within the Sixteen Prefectures. It was thus the key to controlling the invasion routes between China proper and the steppes. Eventually the military value of the Sixteen Prefectures was matched by their symbolic value. All of the issues of Song legitimacy were rooted in Liao control of the Sixteen Prefectures.

Taizong failed in both his attempts to capture the Sixteen Prefectures. Both campaigns ended in such utter disaster that the Song lost the strategic initiative. Taizong's son, posthumously known as Zhenzong 真宗, didn't even try to conquer the Sixteen Prefectures. He endured systematic Liao raids, culminating in a massive invasion in 1004. As a result, Zhenzong was forced to conclude a treaty in 1005, the Treaty of Shanyuan, that recognized Liao sovereignty over the territory. The recognition that another dynasty controlled a piece of land considered to be Chinese by the Chinese brought Song legitimacy into question. It was not that Song officials doubted their own claims to sovereignty. They simply had no precedents for seeing their country as merely first among equals. The military exigencies of the situation forced them to find ways to deal with it.

Song emperors and officials learned to operate in a less than ideal diplomatic environment, but they never gave up the hope of taking the Sixteen Prefectures from the Liao. This study of Song military history focuses on the creation of the

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5David Wright has argued persuasively that the Song and Liao only treated each other as equals. They treated other states, like the Xixia, as subordinate entities. David Wright, "Sung-Liao Diplomatic Practices", Ph.d. diss., Princeton University, 1993, 17-18.
Northern Song state by war and the reasons that the process reached its limit in 1005. The Treaty of Shanyuan, and the campaign that led up to it, was a defining event in Song history. It was concluded at a moment of apparent Song weakness and its provisions always rankled Song emperors and statesmen. But it was also the basis for the peaceful eleventh century when Chinese culture flourished.

Even after the Treaty of Shanyuan stabilized the border, Song animus continued. The Song ultimately allied themselves with the Jurchen Jin, a proto-Manchurian people to the north of the Liao empire, to achieve their goal. The Jin destroyed the Liao in 1125 and continued on to take the Song capital of Kaifeng in 1127. Their desire to take the Sixteen Prefectures from the Liao caused the Song to follow a course of action that very nearly led to their own destruction.

The Liao, for their part, had good reason to suspect the Song. Song expansion ended any thoughts they had of extending their empire further south. Song Taizu attacked their client state the Northern Han in 976. Song Taizong

It is true that the Song-Xixia wars, which I hope to cover in a subsequent study, impinged upon the peace created by the Treaty of Shanyuan throughout the eleventh century. But the Xixia were never as dire a threat to the Song state as the Liao.

Although they may have begun to think in more defensive terms regarding the territory to their south much earlier. On or about 28 October 908 the Liao emperor ordered the extension of the Great Wall. Karl Wittfogel and Feng Chia-sheng, History of Chinese Society: Liao (Philadelphia:Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, 1949), 364. The Liao actually ruled north China for five months in 946-47. Resistance to their rule quickly made their position untenable.

Despite the failed invasion of the Northern Han, and Song clashes with Liao troops, the Song opened trade offices on the border with the Liao in 977. They had established some diplomatic contacts with the Liao starting in 974. Wright, op cit., 47-48.
destroyed the Northern Han and invaded Liao territory on two occasions. Despite less than friendly relations, however, the border between the Song and the Liao remained fairly stable for more than a century after the treaty. They managed to avoid major military actions. The Song, not the Liao, broke the treaty and allied themselves with the Jin. In the end, it was Liao, not Song, suspicion that was justified.

A third state arose to further complicate the power balance. The Xixia 西夏 or Western Xia played the Liao and Song against each other diplomatically and survived in the middle. It clashed with both larger powers at one time or another and dealt with them diplomatically in between. The Song feared that an attack on the Liao would precipitate a Xixia invasion. It was not clear to them whether the reverse was true. Indeed, the Song were often uncertain of the nature of the Liao-Xixia relationship. The Liao often seemed similarly unclear about it. In any case, the presence of the Xixia did not destabilize the Song-Liao balance. As we will discuss later, it may even have prolonged it.

The preceding discussion of Song history draws a strong connection between war and diplomacy. It highlights the relationship between Song goals and Song policies. But what is war? And how is the process of war best understood?

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9For an example of this see XCB 166/15a when the Liao informed the Song of their plans to attack the Xixia. See also Jing-shen Tao, "Sung Policies Toward Liao and Hsia, 1042-1044," Journal of Asian History, vol. 6, no. 2, 114-122, for a discussion of the three way diplomacy at the end of the Song-Xixia wars that started in 1038. Also Jing-shen Tao, Two Sons of Heaven (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988), 53-67.
What is War?

Clausewitz vs. Keegan

Clausewitz wrote that "war is merely the continuation of policy by other means."\textsuperscript{10} John Keegan in his recent book \textit{A History of Warfare} directly challenged that assertion in the very first line: "War is not the continuation of policy by other means." He goes on to point out that the kind of war that Clausewitz was writing about assumed "the existence of states, of state interests and of rational calculation about how they may be achieved."\textsuperscript{11} Keegan prefers to look to culture and anthropology in order to explain war. Our understanding of war must extend to cover pre-state or non-state war because war existed before states came into being. A true understanding of war would include "primitive" war as well as "civilized" war. Clausewitz, concerned only with Europe, "was struggling to advance a universal theory of what war \textit{ought} to be, rather than what it actually was and had been."\textsuperscript{12}

In overly simple terms we can characterize Clausewitz as seeing war centered around the question of "what do you want?" and Keegan around the question "who are you?" The reason that others wage war in what a modern


\textsuperscript{12}bid., 6.
Westerners would see as an irrational or uncivilized manner, Keegan would argue, is that their reasons for participating in armed conflict and the way they choose to do it are not based on the same assumptions as ours. They are not carrying out state policy by other means. Keegan believes that Clausewitz's description of war only applies to people who understand war as he does. It is accurate only when both sides in a conflict accept his definitions. Other cultures have a different understanding of war and a different way in warfare. The study of Song Chinese military history is a good opportunity to test this thesis.\(^{13}\) The Song Chinese, the Liao, Xixia and Jin, all waged war in a manner easily explained by a Clausewitzian approach.

This may, however, have been rare in the imperial Chinese milieu. The Song, Liao, Xixia and Jin were all operating in a multi-state environment. Each state had its interests and its leaders pursued those interests, presumably, to the best of their abilities. They made choices within the constraints of their culture and the information available to them. The Song were not unique in imperial Chinese history in facing a multi-state environment, but it was not their ideal model for a legitimate dynasty. They preferred the examples provided by the militarily powerful Han and Tang dynasties, who controlled vast empires and dominated their neighbors. Song reality did not fit the imperial ritual framework of the Han and Tang. Allowances and compromises were made to accommodate

\(^{13}\) Alastair Iain Johnston in his excellent study *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), dealt with a similar question regarding Ming history, albeit within the field of international relations. He concluded that Ming policy decisions were not culturally biased. That is, they were best explained by a realpolitik rather than Confucian-Mencian approach.
the facts on the ground but the facts remained. It was supremely important to Song emperors and officials that they fit their dynasty into the proper succession of powerful legitimate dynasties.

It is at this point that the theories of Clausewitz and Keegan can be bridged. Let us first abstract from Clausewitz the thesis that war is a rational activity used as one more means to an end. Let us then establish, based on Keegan, that culture defines and motivates war. If we return to our earlier simplifications we can now combine them by saying that who you are tells you what you want. Culture establishes the values of certain goals and the costs and the risks involved in trying to attain them.

The Song would have liked to take the Sixteen Prefectures from the Liao despite the treaty. They did not make the attempt for over a century for several reasons. The most important reason was that they did not think that their army was capable of beating the Liao. A failed invasion would have left them open to a counter-invasion by the Liao with the possibility of a similar reaction by the Xixia. Even if such a counter-invasion could have been repelled and peace reestablished it would undoubtedly have resulted in an even more unpalatable treaty. Although the objective was of the greatest importance it appeared unattainable.

Peace with the Liao was not cheap. But the annual payments to the Liao court were considerably less costly than the military budget for maintaining a massive standing army.\textsuperscript{14} The Song did not trust that the treaty could guarantee

\textsuperscript{14}Fu Bi estimated that the annual payments were less than one or two percent of what
the security of the empire. They had the worst of both worlds. An offensive military action was the only way to achieve a satisfactory resolution of the situation. But it was unlikely to succeed and risked the possible destruction of the dynasty. The defensive military posture adopted by default was expensive and humiliating. It was safer and less risky than offensive action but constant vigilance was required. The worst aspect of the Song's strategic defensive posture was that it could not obtain the desired result: capturing the Sixteen Prefectures and humbling the Liao.

Even if the Song had been able to work up the political will to risk action against the Liao, they were distracted by the Xixia for much of the 11th century. The Xixia attacked in 1038 and were beaten off only with difficulty. Serious deterioration in the army was exposed and the leadership shaken. In the early 1080's the Song launched a massive assault on the Xixia. Early successes were overtaken by disastrous failures. A near total effort failed spectacularly.

We shall return to this discussion later. The point in introducing these events now is to emphasize that the Song leadership made sensible choices given their priorities and the information at hand. The choices available to them were set by the culture that they lived in. Their belief system limited their responses just as much as their military technology. This raises a very significant question for a study of Chinese military history. What about Sunzi's *Art of War*?
Sunzi

Sunzi is probably one of the most misunderstood military manuals in current discussion.\textsuperscript{15} It has been mischaracterized in western scholarship as the anithesis of Clausewitz, the indirect method versus the direct.\textsuperscript{16} This has led some scholars to believe that there is a "Chinese way in warfare."\textsuperscript{17} The Chinese way in warfare is characterized by: "...its emphasis on avoiding battle except with the assurance of victory, of disfavoring risk, of seeking to overawe an enemy by psychological means, and of using time rather than force to wear an invader down..."\textsuperscript{18} The Western way in warfare by contrast emphasizes moving to a direct, head-on collision of forces in order to reach a decision as swiftly as possible. The roots for the Western approach have been found, as one would expect, in ancient Greece.\textsuperscript{19} In China, Sunzi supplies the textual basis for the

\textsuperscript{15}It is also a far more famous work than Clausewitz. Even if not for its far longer pedigree, more than 2300 years longer than \textit{On War}, it is in much wider common circulation. There are more than half a dozen English translations presently available.

\textsuperscript{16}The origin of this misconception can be traced to Liddell Hart's preface to Samuel Griffith's translation of Sunzi \textit{Bingfa}. Hart saw it as an example of the indirect method that he had been championing in opposition to Clausewitz's direct method. Even though they are inaccurate both characterizations have persisted, John Keegan being only one of the latest to be misled by them. For an interesting discussion of Clausewitz's reception in England and America see Christopher Bassford, \textit{Clausewitz in English} (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), particularly 128-135 for Liddell Hart. Johnston, op. cit., is the best discussion of Sunzi and the Seven Military Classics, but he is not particularly concerned with the direct versus indirect issue. Griffith's translation of Sunzi may still be the best.

\textsuperscript{17}Frank A. Kierman and John K. Fairbank (eds), \textit{Chinese Ways in Warfare} (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974), 1.

\textsuperscript{18}Keegan, op cit., 202.

\textsuperscript{19}Victor Davis Hanson, \textit{The Western Way of War} (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989).
Chinese military method.

There is no reason to believe that Chinese military methods remained the same from around the fifth century BCE, when the general form of Sunzi appears to have taken shape, to the Song. The same can be said for the Western side of the argument. Sunzi was read and cited as an authority on military matters during the Song. There is no evidence, however, to prove that plans based upon Sunzi were ever carried out. Despite this, the primary sources often suggest that this was the case. The most obvious example of this is Wang Pu's long-range plan in 955 for the Latter Zhou conquest of China. His plan, judged to be the best by Zhou Shizong, is replete with phrases from Sunzi. As we will see in the second part of this study, subsequent events demonstrated that Wang's "plan" was either not seriously entertained to begin with or simply ignored afterward. Why then was it included in the historical record?

The civil officials who compiled the historical records expected a properly written memorial filled with extensive textual citations from appropriate sources to precede any major action. The generals themselves did not supply these

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21 Even Keegan, a great proponent of Hanson (he wrote the introduction to The Western Way of War) admits that: "The evidence, however, may not stand such a weight of supposition." op cit., 232.

documents. Field commanders usually stated their advice simply. There are exceptions, noted for their erudition. Civil and military officials often wrote extremely long-winded proposals quoting from Sunzi and other military works. Many of their suggestions were impractical. Their memorials may have been included in the historical record in order to frame policy debates. Sometimes an unpleasant suggestion was made more palatable by a circuitous preamble. Song Taizu's retreat from his unsuccessful siege of Taiyuan was preceded by a well-worded proposal. Whether the proposal caused, confirmed or excused the decision to retreat is unclear. But it should be pointed out that several of the long-range policies contained in that memorial were in fact carried out to good effect.

The compilers of the histories tried to establish cause and effect. They knew what had happened and they looked for documents that provided the cause. The problem with this basic historical desire was that actual military decision making was not always carried out within earshot of a recorder. There are two manifestations of this problem. Zhou Shizong and Song Taizu may have made their policy decisions in private and only held court discussion afterward. Later emperors may have made decisions based on court discussion only to have field commanders pursue their own course. That is not to say that there is no value in reading these discussions. They do present the opinions of

23 John Labadie, op cit., 133.

24 Di Qing is an example of a general who started out as a soldier but was taken under the wing of Fan Zhongyan. Fan gave him the Zuozhuan and the Chunqiu to read. Di is said to have become well read in the military art of Qin, Han and later dynasties. SS 290.9718. Labadie, op cit., 273-277, provides a short biography of Di. Cao Wei is another example of a general noted as being well read in Zuozhuan and Chunqiu. Labadie, op cit. 282-287.
contemporary individuals and their understanding of a particular situation. There
is a great deal of very valuable information in them. But we cannot uncritically
accept them as blueprints. We must look forward from the decision maker's
point of view rather than backward from the historian's. The Song's successful
conquest of the six Chinese states to its south and one to its north was not
inevitable. This last point cannot be stressed enough.

Despite Sunzi's frequent appearance in policy discussions there is no
particular historical approach associated with him. Sunzi's *Art of War* was an
authoritative military text. By the founding of the Song, it was nearly fifteen
hundred years old. It held pride of place as a work on military matters in a
culture that placed great value on texts of ancient origin. If court discussion is
any measure, civil officials considered familiarity with Sunzi to be an adequate
substitute for battlefield experience. The generals may have felt differently, but
after Taizong's reign they were often marginalized in policy discussions.25
Reference to Sunzi or other military works could only be countered by a different
citation or the assertion that a particular citation had been inaccurately applied. It
is almost certain that the compilers of the histories were familiar with Sunzi.

One might be tempted to say that Sunzi's emphasis on strategy over
tactics is responsible for the extreme paucity of battlefield accounts during the
Song. But such a proposal is untenable. First, Sunzi wrote about tactical
matters. Second, the lack of detailed battlefield information may only be true of
Northern Song sources. David Graff found adequate information for his detailed

25 Labadie, op cit., 49.
accounts of several battles in the early Tang. Still, those battles were the exceptions, rather than the rule, and were chosen for that reason. Most Tang warfare was also covered badly. Sima Guang’s battle accounts in the *Zizhi Tongjian*, written during the Northern Song, covering Chinese history up to the founding of the Song, are more detailed than battle accounts written during the Southern Song and Yuan periods covering the Northern Song.

Chinese historians established a link between war and policy or politics early on and never lost that understanding. This connection was not formed from Sunzi in particular, though he explicitly made the point. Chinese officials were steeped in history. They were well aware of the dire consequences that poor policy decisions, external or internal, had caused in the past. They were also aware that their actions would be judged in the future. War and the decisions leading up to it were prominently represented in the past.

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27 Ouyang Xiu’s accounts are not as detailed even though he also wrote in the eleventh century. Compare the accounts of the battle of Gaoping, for example, dealt with in the second part of this work, given in Ouyang’s *Xinwudai shi* with Sima’s account or even the one given in *Jiuwudai shi*.

Definition of Terms

Since the theory of war underlying the present examination of Northern Song military history is that war is the rational pursuit of culturally determined goals, it behooves us to define a few key terms. Much of the argument over Clausewitz and his views stems from a lack of common definitions. "War (whatever that is) is the continuation of politics (whatever that is) or policy (whatever that is) by other means." Keegan bases war in "culture" without explaining what he means by culture.

War, to paraphrase the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is a hostile contention between two or more parties.\(^2\) It does not necessarily involve violence but it often does. We will distinguish it from battle, which is an individual violent encounter. In the present study, the parties involved are usually states. The instruments of violence are armies, which are organized groups of armed men.

Christopher Bassford defines policy as: "...rational action undertaken by a group that already has power, in order to maintain and extend that power. Politics, in contrast, is simply the process (comprising an inchoate mix of rational, irrational, and nonrational elements) by which power is distributed within a given society."\(^3\) It would be useful to expand his definitions slightly in both cases. Policy should not be confined to "a group that already has power" but to any group or individual.


\(^3\)Christopher Bassford, op cit., 22.
Consequently the aim of policy must also be expanded to include achieving power. Policy can also be irrational. The forum for politics should also be expanded beyond a "given society" to include any relationship between two or more parties. Bassford's definitions were designed with Clausewitz in mind.

Culture is a much more difficult term to define. For our purposes we are only concerned with one particular belief related to the Chinese identity. The Chinese believed that China as a whole could and should be ruled by one government headed by a single male with the divine right to rule. Thus, in Keegan's terms, war served culture when it was used to establish or maintain one man ruling all of China, however "China" was defined geographically.

**War in Theory and Practice**

The Treaty of Shanyuan ended the large-scale use of violence in Song-Liao relations for over a century. It did not, however, end their mutual hostility. Both sides still fought over legitimacy. After 1005, they confined themselves to non-violent means. For the Liao, legitimacy meant treatment as an equal by the Song and a stable border. For the Song, legitimacy meant acknowledgment by the Liao of Song superiority despite any territorial or military conditions. Liao military superiority established a baseline of legitimacy that the Song were forced to accept. The cessation of military activities changed the means of contention to demonstrations of prosperity and divine favor. The Song state was far richer than the Liao, allowing it to carry out more extensive imperial sacrifices. While the Song could
act more imperial, and thus more legitimate, because of its wealth, the Liao could always redress the balance by threatening to return to military means or, at least, reminding the Song about the reality of the military situation that underlay their relationship.

We are studying the external policy of the Northern Song government. Our emphasis will be on the military actions resulting from that policy. The clash of armies should not obscure the policy aims. The successes and failures of the military actions were clearly connected to previous and subsequent events. We will touch on those events only to explain the motivations for military plans and decisions. Our aim will be to explain why a particular campaign succeeded or failed.

What is Success?31

The success or failure of a campaign can be judged from several perspectives. A campaign that achieved its stated objectives is usually considered to be a success. With twenty-twenty hindsight, however, a historian may reverse that evaluation and find the origin of a later failure in it. The reverse may also be true. A historian may find the beginning of improved conditions in a failure. The Treaty of Shanyuan was the result of a Song military failure. At first it was

31For a recent discussion of what constitutes victory in war, albeit in Europe from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, see Brian Bond, *The Pursuit of Victory* (Oxford University Press, 1996).
regarded as a successful negotiation, then it was vilified. In retrospect it gave the Song more than thirty years of peace ended not by the Liao but a third party, the Xixia. A Song victory might have sparked continued war. The point here is not to engage in what-if history, but to reassert the importance of looking at historical events from the point of view of the participants. They tried to pursue the best policy they could given the imperfect information they had. When we try to piece together the accounts of a campaign sometimes the only indication of what was intended is what happened. Sometimes we can only guess at events based on the result. In the worst case our conclusions will be based on what did not happen.

The Sources: Campaigns Versus Battles

The sources are strongest about strategic operations. They are weakest at the tactical level. This contrasts dramatically with most western military history. The primary sources for western military history tend to be battle-centered. All of the campaign coverage is simply a preamble to the high drama of the battlefield. It is not by choice that this military history will not follow that pattern. The sources for the Northern Song simply do not allow for a battle-centered history. Indeed, as Ken Chase so pointedly observed, unlike the West, there are

32 The characterization of the Treaty as a failure was connected with political struggles within Zhenzong's court. For a detailed discussion of the political repercussions of the Treaty see Karl F. Olsson, "The Structure of Power Under the Third Emperor of Sung China: The Shifting Balance After the Peace of Shan-Yuan," Ph.d. diss., University of Chicago, 1974.
very few famous battles in Chinese history. Particular battles are not usually presented as historical turning points. This lack in battlefield information is balanced by extensive coverage of the smaller skirmishes, command assignments and march schedules that often elude historians of the west before modern times. This information often seems to take over a campaign account as the list of commanders may exceed the length of the account of their activities.

At first it would seem a good idea to abridge the lists of commanders and their assignments in favor of emphasizing the battles. Battle is the core of military history after all and must remain the focus of any real study of it. We cannot increase the information that we lack by abridging what we have. Nothing beyond the bald statement can be squeezed out of “so-and-so broke the enemy at place x.” It can only be made intelligible in context with other battles. The sources for the Song dynasty are derived from an operational level somewhat distant from the battlefield. This is less true of actions that took place near the emperor. Unfortunately, unlike European monarchs up through the 19th century, Song dynasty emperors usually did not do battle. Our information is better when they did. Detailed information is sometimes available when the emperor was not present. The record is not wholly without drama.

The very first battle of the campaign part of this study, the Battle of

33 Personal conversation, Atlanta, Georgia, January 5, 1996.

34 Alfred H. Burne in his The Crecy War (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1955), went to great lengths to reconstruct the movements of medieval armies in order to understand the strategic thinking of their commanders. His aim, as suggested by the title of his book and a later one, The Agincourt War, was to examine medieval war at the strategic, not tactical, battle, level. He wanted to discuss how medieval commanders, in both books, the kings of England and France, conducted wars, not just battles.
Gaoping, is atypical in the detail of its account. The future Song Taizu took part, but we are still without detailed tactical information. Of course, Peter Paret has argued that battle accounts are by their very nature unreliable and should be set off in such a way as to warn the reader that he is entering uncertain territory.36

Before the advent of modern communications a commander's ability to monitor and control a battle was extremely limited.36 It is only very recently, with the use of satellite positioning, that forces distant from a well known landmark can accurately locate themselves on a map.37 Taken as whole, the lack of detailed battlefield information is not as great a problem as we might think. At least we are clear in knowing what we don't have. We will not be deceived by basing our conclusions on unreliable information.

The lists of commanders and the march routes reveal a level of organization and pattern of operation that is valuable in itself. Northern Song armies developed a fairly regular command structure for expeditionary and peacetime forces. In addition to the assignment of generals to command, officials were appointed to manage supplies.38 Failure to properly manage logistics was punishable under military law. On one occasion Taizu was only persuaded not to punish an incompetent official (a supply officer 轉運使) because doing so would have revealed


37Ibid., 43-45.

38These zhuanyunshi later became fiscal intendants in the regular government structure. The military origins of the fiscal intendants may explain the large number of military men in areas of fiscal responsibility early in the dynasty.

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to the enemy that the supply system of the Song army was in disarray. 39 Many campaign accounts focus on the fighting over vulnerable points in the lines of communication, usually pontoon bridges. Indeed, the decisive battles were often fought by subsidiary forces quite a distance from the campaign objective. While this is not surprising, the emphasis that the sources place on it is. Our picture is much more strategic and logistical than comparable European primary sources. Chinese historians were concerned with the material basis of warfare and its influence on the outcome of campaigns.

Our ability to follow the material basis of Song wars should not obscure the fact that the policy goals were accomplished by resort to battle. The results of battles, however unclear we may be on their details, were of crucial importance in shaping the history of the empire. The empire was created and maintained in the face of external military threat.

The Creation of the Song State by War

How was the empire created? Why was Song Taizu so successful in accomplishing his goals while later emperors fared so poorly? The simplest answer is that Taizu was better and smarter than his successors. This may be true, but it fails to explain the means by which he succeeded. He was not the only man in the middle of the tenth century with the ambition to conquer all of China and establish his own dynasty.

38XCB 10/3a.
Our account of the military history of the Song begins with the reign of the man who preceded Taizu, Zhou Shizong. Shizong began a policy of conquest which Taizu took over when he overthrew the Zhou dynasty. Almost immediately, Taizu had to put down two other men who also aspired to be emperor.

The idea of a Chinese empire was, as we have discussed, a common part of Chinese culture. Previously, we examined how that idea affected the conquerors in their pursuit of a legitimate empire. There was another side to the issue. The smaller countries that surrounded the nascent Song empire were also acquainted with the idea of a Chinese empire uniting north and south. Several of them adopted names that recalled earlier empires, the Han and Tang (the Southern Han, the Northern Han and the Southern Tang). Their rulers sometimes styled themselves emperors. None of them, however, had been able to recreate the empires of the past. Once the Zhou and later Song conquest gained momentum it was clear where it was headed. There was no need to create the concept of an empire by conquest. It was more a matter of convincing the leadership of the smaller countries that the return to empire was at hand.40

One view of the conquest would be that the Song brought superior force to bear on the weaker countries around it. This is substantially correct but it does not account for the speed with which many of those countries capitulated. The conquest was not smooth by any means but it was accomplished with a relatively

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40 ZZTJ 293.9545-46; 293.9548 for Zhou Shizong’s communications with the Southern Tang ruler.
small amount of destruction. Policy is really aimed at the hearts and minds of the opposition. In this respect, strategy is the technique of convincing someone to do what you want them to do.

Taizu's aim was to convince the leadership of a country to capitulate. He did not want to destroy lands that he intended to rule. The most obvious first step was to defeat their armies in the field. But Taizu was more subtle than that. He preceded military action by diplomatic gambit. Zhou Shizong had used the same technique before him. A message from the emperor, Shizong or Taizu, with an offer of advantageous terms of surrender for the ruler of the country about to be invaded was sent along with similar offers for his officials. The ruler of the threatened country would be offered a comfortable retirement under supervision and the officials would be offered positions in the Zhou or Song administration. All offers were made in language appropriate for the emperor and directed downward as a demonstration of his benevolence. The offers were not rescinded if armed hostilities ensued. This was extremely important. As Song forces approached, the wisdom of resistance became increasingly doubtful. Often the most formidable obstacle for officials was their Confucian belief that an honorable man could not serve two emperors. Military commanders often held similar views on loyalty. Fortunately for the Song conquest, many officials and

41The exception to this is the Song campaign to conquer Shu (Sichuan). Except for the troops under Cao Bin, the looting and pillaging was so extreme that the people of Sichuan rebelled after the Shu government had surrendered.

42For an extreme example of loyalty, see Liu Renshan's execution of his son during the Zhou siege of Shouzhou. Liu's action was supported by his wife as a necessary example of Liu family loyalty to the Southern Tang ruler. ZJT 293.9562-63.
commanders were not put off by such high-minded concerns.

There were certain limitations to this approach. The Southern Tang ruler was unaware of the armies outside the gates of his capital for months after they arrived. He had secluded himself from everyday affairs and delegated authority to two officials. They did not inform him of the battlefield losses so he was not in a position to accurately judge the situation. It was only after he made a personal tour of the walls of his capital and surveyed the Song forces surrounding him that he surrendered.

There was also the case of the Northern Han. The Zhou dynasty had been founded by overthrowing the Latter Han dynasty. The Northern Han state was the remnant of the Han ruling house. Wang Pu assumed that the only way to deal with the Northern Han was total annihilation. Song Taizu tried a diplomatic gambit arguing that while the Han and Zhou houses had reason to hate each other, he was not involved in the dispute. His conquest was not, therefore, personal. He was unsuccessful in persuading the Northern Han to surrender. It ultimately fell to Taizong to defeat them and take their capital at Taiyuan. Even so, Taizong was able to persuade the Northern Han ruler to surrender the city and capitulate. We will see several other cases where personalities interfered with "rational" policy. Indeed, war was an extremely personal activity for the leaders and officials of the Song, Liao, Xixia and Jin. Several wars were only settled after the death of one or both rulers.

Taizu was very successful at convincing the governments of the smaller countries to surrender without having to completely destroy either their armies or
the countryside. He was able to create the form of an empire through military means. Actual administrative consolidation took somewhat longer. He died with the issue of the Northern Han and the Sixteen Prefectures unresolved. Taizong destroyed the Northern Han but failed, as all his successors did, to conquer the Sixteen Prefectures. It is here that the belief in a Chinese empire blinded the Song leadership to an obvious point. While they saw the Sixteen Prefectures as a separate piece of territory which they could wage a limited war to obtain, the Liao had no reason to accept that a Song attack would stop at that. The Liao also had no reason to believe that their claim to the territory was less valid than that of the Song. Both sides understood the strategic value of the area. The attitude of the Liao put the Song in the very different circumstance of trying to conquer a part of the territory of a larger country.

The Song did not seriously consider trying to destroy the Liao. Their failure to defeat the Liao army in the field when pursuing limited objectives effectively removed that as a realistic option. Taking the Sixteen Prefectures without destroying the Liao proved impossible. To make matters worse, the failures on the battlefield translated into diplomatic defeats. The Song were forced to accept rough parity in their dealings with the Liao. Frustrated militarily, they could bring little pressure to bear to force the Liao into, to their mind, an acceptable political solution. They could neither separate the Sixteen Prefectures by force nor convince the Liao to give them up.

Military failure and fear of the Liao severely handicapped the Song in dealing with the Xixia. The Xixia rulers were adept at surviving between two
larger powers. They outlasted the Liao and the Jin until Qingsis Khan crushed them in 1226. The Song was always wary of the connection between the Liao and the Xixia. An attack on the Xixia on the northwestern border would leave them open to attack by the Liao in the northeast. The Xixia invasion of the Song in 1038 exposed the weakness of the Song army. A few years later, the Song court thought itself fortunate to be able to buy off the Liao emperor and prevent an invasion. When the Song made their maximum military effort to destroy the Xixia in 1080s they had to buy off the Liao a second time. Fortunately for the Song, relations between the Liao and Xixia were not as cordial as they feared. They fought each other on several occasions with the Xixia usually coming out on top. Even so, the Song were forced to concede far more to the Xixia diplomatically than their size and power would have warranted.

The Weakness Issue

Even before Kaifeng fell in 1127 there was a feeling that the Song was a weak dynasty. It had failed to equal the military exploits of the Han and Tang. It was forced to make real diplomatic concessions and accept the existence of another emperor. If not for the diplomatic concessions, the annual payments of money and silk to the Liao and Xixia would not have been important to the Song administration or later historians. The Han and the Tang had also paid off their

neighbors in various ways. John Labadie suggested that the "weakness issue" is a red herring. The Song was not weaker than earlier dynasties. It was only the Song's misfortune to face more powerful enemies. Some scholars have pointed out the Song's ability to survive in the face of powerful outside threats.

But military strength and weakness is always relative. To say that the Song was only weak because its enemies were strong is simply to state that it was weak. The Song's ability to resist strong enemies is significant. That ability must be considered in light of the actual interest of those enemies in attacking the Song. The Song preserved itself largely intact when invaded by the Liao and the Xixia. On the other hand, it failed in its attempts to establish political dominance over its neighbors. The failure to establish dominance was apparent to the Song emperors and officials. Their military was not succeeding as they felt it should. It was not accomplishing what they wanted it to accomplish.

We cannot reasonably discount the evaluations of Northern Song officials. Strength and weakness is not only relative to one's opponents, it is also relative to one's expectations and effort. Taizong failed to take the Sixteen Prefectures from the Liao. His goal was clear and he devoted considerable resources to achieving it. His officials did not object to the expense and effort required, but to the personal participation of the emperor. The officials did not think the possible benefit was worth risking the ruler's life. Taizong disagreed with his advisors because he thought obtaining the Sixteen Prefectures was worth risking himself.


Wittfogel and Feng, op cit., 19.
The Song military means were inadequate to achieve their policy ends. Their attempts to increase the effectiveness of those means failed. The only thing left to do was to change their ends to fit their means. They persisted, instead, in pursuing unattainable goals. In order to change their ends they would had to change their culture. They would have had to first give up their conception of the imperial system and the superiority of the culture that it rested on before they could have given up the only tangible demonstration of that system's achievement. Reality forced them to live within their means while they continued to dream of their ends. This may have turned out to the benefit of the country due to long periods of peace and prosperity. They lost the war but won the peace.

The Roots of Failure

Up to this point we have discussed the cultural underpinnings of Song policy and the failure of its military to completely carry out that policy. Why did the Song military fail in its assigned mission? Song means were incapable of achieving its ends. We have already established the inflexibility of those ends. It seems odd that the Song government was unable to adequately increase the capability of its means for over a century and a half. If, as we have discussed

46Political infighting may have been responsible for policy indecision and confusion. See Olsson, op cit., for a discussion of the use of the Treaty of Shanyuan as a partisan issue at the court of Zhenzong. There may also be an interesting parallel during the Qing where the issue of opium was possibly used as a partisan issue. See James M. Polachek, The Inner Opium War (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992).
above, the ends were so important then it would be reasonable to expect a
commensurate effort to increase the means to an adequate level. But Song
means were also subject to political, cultural and material constraints.

The Song distinguished itself from the Tang dynasty and the Five dynasties
period by the lack of major internal disturbances and coup d'etats. Generals
were kept subordinate to civil officials in authority and tied to the imperial house
by marriage. Every effort was made to keep commanders from forming close
attachments with their men. Troops and higher officers were regularly rotated.
Commanders of expeditionary forces were sent out to take control of forces
collected from various areas with appointments limited to the tenure of the campaign.
The emperor provided detailed plans and formations. Deviation from those plans
without good cause (victory in battle) was a serious matter.\textsuperscript{47} The positions of
overall command were left unfilled.\textsuperscript{48} Generals were usually prohibited from
holding both provincial and central government appointments. The system
worked well in keeping the military under control but there is probably some truth
in the belief that it also made them less effective. Separating the officers and
men meant that, "the men do not know the officers and the officers do not know
the men," to cite a contemporary criticism.\textsuperscript{49} It is also true that a system which
discourages personal initiative, boldness and charismatic leadership will have a

\textsuperscript{47}XCB 20/17b-18b for an example of a debate between commanders over deviating from
imperial plans.

\textsuperscript{48}Worthy, op cit., 173.

\textsuperscript{49}SS 188.4627. Cited in Labadie, op. cit., 170-171.
deleterious effect on military performance.

Although in earlier dynasties the distinction between civil and military careers for officials was not strict, the Song firmly placed the former over the latter. This was true even though many military officials were not soldiers and had no real military experience. They were bureaucrats like the civil officials. The status of civil officials was, however, higher than the status of military officials. Military officials were often engaged in more worldly tasks like collecting taxes and overseeing the transport of goods. It was assumed by the civil officials that the preferred career was one in the civil bureaucracy. Actual military service as a soldier was considered to be one of the lowest forms of employment.50 Soldiers were often tattooed to prevent desertion. Even worse, they were professional soldiers, not farmers temporarily serving as soldiers. The troops were thus composed of non-productive men who posed a real danger to society, due to their arrogance, but failed in battle. They were also very expensive to maintain. Soldiers were perceived as a necessary evil. There was no great desire to increase their number, but, due to the need to maintain constant vigilance along a long border, their numbers increased dramatically during the Song.

Paying, equipping and feeding the army was no small task. Hon-chiu Wong estimated that the Northern Song spent an average of sixty to seventy percent of the government’s annual budget on soldiers in 1065.51 The cost in

50The extent to which this view was not universal outside the shidafu, or literati, class has not yet been explored.


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salaries was immense but, even so, the soldiers were often ill paid. While the government could manage the logistical support for large armies it was never able to obtain a sufficient number of cavalry mounts. As it expanded the Song army increasingly became an infantry force. The horse breeding areas were in the hands of their enemies.

There is no way to generalize about the quality of the Song army across all of its units and throughout its history. It is usually assumed that its quality was higher at the beginning of the dynasty than at the end. The *prima facie* case for this is made by the military success under Taizu and partly under Taizong compared with subsequent failures. Of course, Taizu never faced the Liao directly, only the smaller states of southern China. Some people thought that if only Taizu had lived, he would have been able to beat the Liao and take the Sixteen Prefectures.52 There is no way to adequately prove such a contention but Taizu was certainly the most successful emperor in carrying out his foreign policy. While the military success of a founding emperor is proverbial, we must not lose sight of the difficulties of the enterprise. Success was never guaranteed.

The troops of the early empire were more experienced than later soldiers. In the southern conquests, Song armies maintained a cavalry advantage over their opponents. On one occasion Song forces captured horses that had earlier been sent south as gifts from the Song court. The Song made great use of a from sixty to seventy percent of state revenues was spent supporting soldiers." That figure only concerns the direct support of the soldiers. It does not include other military expenses.

52Sima Guang slyly makes this point by relating the story of Huangfu Hui's dying words to Zhou Shizong concerning Zhao Kuangyin (recounted in full in part II). Huangfu praises Zhao's troops as superior to the Liao forces he had fought in the past. ZZTJ 292.9539.
riverine navy in the south. Despite the almost unalloyed success of the navy, it clearly functioned as an adjunct to the land forces.\textsuperscript{53} It was later to prove the Southern Song's best defense against the Jin and Mongols. But in the initial conquests its main function was to control the rivers and protect the army's communications by denying the enemy control. Experienced troops with superior cavalry supported by a good navy were commanded by aggressive, veteran commanders. The creation and stabilization of the Song was a process of emerging from a state of continuous war and struggle for power. As the commanders and men raised in that environment passed from the scene, they were replaced by less experienced men. In the north, it was the Liao who had the cavalry advantage and the navy was unimportant. The Liao cavalry was quantitatively and qualitatively better than the Song cavalry by virtue of superior training and access to more horses.

Cavalry is not necessarily superior to infantry. Well trained and appropriately armed infantry can defeat cavalry. At various times and places during its history the Song was able to field competent infantry armies supported by cavalry. The problem was that cavalry was the decisive arm. Cavalry had been the decisive arm in Chinese warfare since the Han and continued to be so until the arrival of the West in the Qing.\textsuperscript{54} It was not the only deciding factor. Individual battles were not decided simply by the presence or absence of cavalry or by which side

\textsuperscript{53}Worthy, op cit., 59.

\textsuperscript{54}For the role of cavalry during the Tang see Li Shutong, "Tangdai zhi junshi yu ma," 唐代之軍史與馬 in Tangshi yanjiu唐史研究 (Taipei: Shangwu, 1979), 231-276. I am indebted to David Graff for this citation.
had the greater number of horsemen. But we can make some generalizations about warfare in China during the Northern Song.

**Warfare During the Northern Song**

In a contest between a Song infantry army and a Liao cavalry army, the Song could win the field but were incapable of inflicting the disproportionate casualties on their opponents that would result in a truly decisive victory. But a Liao victory usually resulted in disproportionate casualties and the destruction of the Song force. This was because an army suffers the most casualties when it breaks and the enemy vigorously pursues it. The casualty rate of contending forces is usually quite close until one side gives way. Pursuit is most effective when fresh troops, preferably cavalry, are available to exploit the opportunity. A mounted man is obviously at a tremendous advantage in running down a man on foot. A defeated infantry army is at the mercy of the enemy’s pursuing infantry and cavalry, particularly the latter. In the opposite circumstance, a defeated cavalry army can only be effectively pursued by cavalry. It would be quite difficult for even a fresh foot soldier in armor to run down a mounted man even if he were riding a tired horse.

An infantry army is at a distinct disadvantage when fighting a cavalry army in open terrain. If conditions are unfavorable for battle, or if the battle turns against them, then a cavalry force can simply ride away. Thus a mounted man is able to ride away to fight another day. If he is part of a unit which accepts that
they may be forced to leave a battlefield and does so in good order, then little
real damage has been done. The Liao were quite willing to retreat. They saw
no particular shame in such an action. The Song, however, could not accept a
tactical withdrawal in the face of the enemy in order to avoid battle under unfavorable
conditions. They did not always stand and fight, but they might be punished for
not doing so. Some Song officers clearly saw fighting to the death as an extremely
noble act demonstrating great loyalty to one’s ruler. But it is impossible to
determine how prevalent those values were.

It was therefore almost impossible to force battle upon a Liao army. Since
they operated without a supply train, they could only be ambushed, trapped
within constricting terrain or forced to fight for a strategic objective, like a city,
which they could not abandon. The first two options were of limited use. The
third might force the Liao to fight. It was the third option that Taizong tried to use
on his second attempt to take the Sixteen Prefectures. The plan called for a
small force to raid the area around Yanjing (modern Beijing) in order to bring the
Liao army to its aid. The main army would wait for the Liao army to commit to
the defense of the city before advancing. In the event, the plan fell apart. While
the plan itself and Taizong came under severe criticism by Zhao Pu afterward,
the underlying concept was not wrong. The Liao army was not invincible when it
did not choose the time and place of battle. The success of Taizong’s Northern

55 Quite strangely, the medieval European knight was prone to riding away from a battle
that turned against him or looked unfavorable. The English innovation of dismounting knights to
fight with the common soldiers during the Hundred Years War was not just to strengthen them by
adding extra well-armed men, but also to reassure those troops that the nobility would remain
with them and share the outcome of the battle.
Han campaign relied on the ability of Song forces to defend strategic mountain passes from Liao relief forces. Liao success depended on superior tactical mobility. They were still tough opponents without it, but at a greatly reduced level.

The tactical reality that Song and Liao forces faced on the battlefield shaped strategic policy. Liao strength lay in mobility and tactical offense. Any condition which decreased that mobility decreased the power of their army. As horse-archers, they had to attack to be effective. Thus, even if they were defending territory, they were better suited to doing so by raiding rather than static defense. The Song army was stronger in static defense. Therefore on the tactical level, Song battlefield victories were usually indecisive while Liao battlefield victories were decisive. The situation was different when it came to defending cities or strategic points. There, simply resisting attack won the day. Superior logistics allowed a besieged city to hold out longer. The Liao fielded armies of cavalrymen without logistic support. They were expected to live off the land. Obviously, a stationary cavalry army would use up all of the available fodder in the surrounding area in short order. It is ill-suited to protracted siege.

The Liao were thus forced to act offensively on the tactical level even if their strategic policy goals were defensive. They could only effectively adopt an offensive-defense or an offensive-offense in carrying out their policies. The Song could only adopt a defensive-defense or a defensive-offense in carrying out their policies. Liao offensive actions in the war leading up to the Treaty of Shanyuan were the expression of a defensive policy. They had to attack the Song in order...
to retain the territory they already had and to reestablish diplomatic relations.

**Conclusion**

Song military history was shaped by a culture that expected a legitimate political unit to meet its military goals. Those military accomplishments were the most concrete expression of possession of the Mandate of Heaven by a dynastic house. The Song dynastic house tried to use military means to attain those goals and, by their own definition, failed. They were conscious of their failure but their attempts to rectify matters were tempered by the fear of an even greater disaster that could come of further military action against the Liao.

It is hard to explain the actions of the Liao in Song terms. The behavior of the Liao is best explained by limited aims with regard to China and the Song. While the Song imagined that their own aims, the addition of the Sixteen Prefectures to their empire and the establishment of diplomatic dominance over their neighbors, were limited, they did not consider that the aims of the Liao could also be limited. Song emperors and statesmen did not doubt that the Liao had designs on the Chinese empire. That bias has continued through historians of China in general and the Song in particular. It is true that the Liao were interested in having influence over their southern neighbors and that they wanted to trade with them. They backed various contenders for the throne in north China during the tenth century. What they did not do was mount a sustained effort to take advantage of the disunity of China following the end of the Tang in order to conquer China.
Liao armies did try to establish more direct control over north China when the Jin, their client state, tried to gain independence in 943. The resistance they encountered convinced them to back another Chinese contender for the throne. It was easier be a kingmaker than to rule directly. They had their own empire to govern and their own concerns outside of China.

As much as the Song realized that they could not seriously undertake the destruction of the Liao, the Liao do not seem to have aimed to destroy the Song. They did not act upon several proposals for joint action by states in south China during the Zhou and Song conquest campaigns. They turned down Xixia proposals for joint action against the Song in the 1040s. It was the Zhou and then the Song who attacked the Liao and then broke off diplomatic relations in the late tenth century. Ultimately it was the Song who abrogated the Treaty of Shanyuan and allied with the Jin to destroy the Liao. Liao actions prior to the Treaty were directed toward recovering territory that had been taken from them, defending territory that had been ceded to them and reestablishing peaceful diplomatic and commercial relations with China. They succeeded in the latter two objectives. It was to their advantage in negotiations that they let the Song imagine that they were actually trying to destroy them. Thus the Liao got most of what they wanted and the Song thought that they had saved themselves from destruction.

Looking back from the perspective of subsequent dynasties of conquest, the Jin, Yuan and Qing, it is natural to assume that the Liao also wanted to conquer China. The fact that they did not conquer China must therefore be attributed to inability, not lack of desire. Under these assumptions, Song military
history is the story of a century-long successful defense which finally collapsed. Historians are then forced to ask why the defense failed when it did. There have already been many studies of why the Song failed. But why should we assume that Liao aims were the same as those of the Jin, Yuan and Qing? Nothing that the Liao actually did supports the view that they wanted to destroy the Song. Even the Jin did not begin their destruction of the Liao with the ultimate aim of also destroying the Song. Quite by accident, the steppe cavalry requirement to act offensively on a tactical level, to attack and raid, in order to pressure a neighbor for concessions, succeeded beyond the Jin's intentions and destroyed the Northern Song. Their initial successes and the pathetic Song response opened up the possibility of a grander vision of conquest beyond their steppe environment.

Ultimately then, this study places the responsibility for the collapse of the Northern Song on a dramatic change in the aims of the steppe peoples. The material conditions of the battlefield forced steppe cavalry armies to fight tactical wars of annihilation. By accident, the Jin armies stumbled upon the broader vision of strategic annihilation. It was the first step in developing an even grander vision that allowed the Mongols to see beyond their own steppe environment and the edges of the sedentary communities to the very centers of the great civilizations. Once they saw that they did not need to limit their aims as the Liao did, the psychological barrier to deeper and more lasting conquest was destroyed. They changed from raiders to true invaders and conquerors. The end of the Northern Song and later the Southern Song was the result of steppe cavalryme learning
that China was theirs if they wanted it.
CHAPTER TWO

Several topics must be discussed before turning to the narrative account of the military campaigns. In order of discussion, they are: Song military organization; the Yuanfeng Reorganization; Weapons, Armor and Tactics; Fortifications; the Liao; and the Sixteen Prefectures.

Song military organization

The basic building block of the Northern Song army was the battalion 指揮. It was also called a ying 營 in garrison. Each battalion had an established strength of five hundred men. They were not always at full strength. It is impossible to determine if any battalion was ever at full strength. Battalions were further divided into five companies 部 of one hundred men each. Every battalion

56 The following discussion of Song military organization is based on Wang Zengyu 王曾瑜, Songchao bingzhichutan 宋朝兵制初探 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中华書局, 1983); Luo Qiuling 羅球慶, "Beisong bingzhi yanjiu (北宋兵制研究)," Xinya Xuabao (新亞學報), 3:1 (August 1957, 169-270; Michael Charles McGrath, "Military and Regional Administration in Northern Sung China (960-1126)", Unpublished Ph.d. diss., Princeton University, 1982; and Edmund Worthy, "The Founding of Sung China, 950-1000", Unpublished Ph.d. diss., Princeton University, 1976, esp. 101-211.

57 Wang Zengyu, op. cit., 29-30. For evidence of battalions that were not up to strength Wang cites a report by Bao Zheng 包拯 in Baozhengji (包拯集) 8: "Qingyi jiboshen sanzhou bingma (請移僞博琛三州兵馬)". Bao was requesting that several battalions be ordered to return to their original posts because it was becoming impossible to supply them where they were. The third Brave and Keen 勇健 battalion had 358 men; the eighth 449; the eleventh 473; the thirteenth 471; the fourteenth 462; and the twenty first 470. The first Upright and Victorious 方捷 battalion had 439 men and the seventh 375. The third Brave and Victorious 勇捷 battalion had 425 men and the fifth 450.

58 WJZY 1/16b. The description goes on to say that five companies made a battalion 營, five battalions made a regiment 軍, and five regiments made a brigade 廠. The organization was
had a complement of attached officers. It was lead by a commander 指揮使 and an assistant commander 副指揮使. The smallest organizational unit was the company. Both cavalry and infantry companies were lead by a captain 軍使／都頭 and a lieutenant 副兵馬使／副都頭, respectively. Below the captain and lieutenant each company had a squad leader 十將, surveillance chief 將虞侯, surveillance officer 承句, and a military police chief 押官.

The Song dynasty maintained a standing army of professional soldiers. In addition to the Imperial Army 禁軍, there were also the Provincial Armies 廬軍, local militia 郷軍, and barbarian auxiliaries 藩兵. The Imperial Army was the only real fighting force. Provincial Army troops were used for labor and as a recruiting and dumping ground for the Imperial Army. Soldiers of the Imperial Army who failed their fitness review were demoted to the Provincial Armies. The local militia helped to maintain local order. Barbarian auxiliaries were first used on the border with the Xixia. They were used as guides and scouts for the Imperial Army. Soldiers of the Imperial Army trained daily to respond to the sound of the drum and received a salary of at least five hundred cash a month. Troops who trained part of the time and acted as laborers part of the time received a salary of less than three hundred cash a month. There were five drills for the cavalry and not as regular as WJZY described. See Worthy, op. cit., 155-158 and 202 n.60.

Sogabe Shizuo 我部靜雄, "Guanyu zhongguo jundui de bianzhi mingcheng, du yu zhihui (關於中國軍隊的編制名稱一都與指揮)," Sungshi yanjiuji 宋史研究集 5, 329-339.

Worthy, op. cit., 155-156 and 159-160. Worthy's description is based on SS 187/20ab and 166/3b-5a for the Imperial Guard and 187/16b and 166/1a-2b for the Palace Corps.

I have eschewed the term "mercenary" because its negative connotations are not always warranted with regard to the paid soldiers of the Song army.
four for the infantry (sitting, rising, advancing and retreating [坐作進退]).

The organization of the Northern Song military above the battalion level was a complex system that balanced the need to concentrate forces for attack and defense with the need to disperse forces for supply and internal stability. Internal stability was the primary concern early in the dynasty. Song Taizu's own coup d'état demonstrated the danger of any individual, apart from the emperor himself, holding a unified or near-unified command over the army. Apart from the bifurcation of civil and military responsibilities in the government, the Imperial Army itself was divided into the Imperial Guard and the Palace Corps. The Imperial Guard was later further divided into cavalry and infantry commands. Neither the civil-military division nor the Imperial Guard-Palace Corps split were Song innovations. Indeed, Song Taizu was the Supreme Commander of Latter Zhou Palace Corps before his coup.

As the inheritors of an existing government and army system Northern Song emperors and their officials stabilized the country through modification of structures rather than radical reorganization. While the administrative and military system was not static over the first century or so of the dynasty, it only underwent dramatic change during the Yuanfeng period (1078-1085). Accordingly, our discussion of the Northern Song will first establish the general shape of the pre-Yuanfeng system and then examine the changes made by the reorganization.

The Song emperor held ultimate authority over all government actions. The government apparatus for informing, advising and carrying out his decisions...
was divided into two parts, the civil and the military. The so-called "two authorities" (兩府) were the Secretariat-Chancellery (中書門下) for civil affairs and the Bureau of Military Affairs (樞密院) for military affairs. Financial affairs were controlled by the Finance Commission (三司). The heads of the Secretariat-Chancellery and the Bureau of Military Affairs were both part of the Council of State. Both administrations reported directly to the emperor.

Splitting the authority of the government into civil and military spheres prevented high officials from gaining too much power. While in 19th century Prussia having the military directly responsible to the Kaiser contributed to growing militarism and lack of control over the military, the same was not true during the Northern Song. The obvious difference was that in Prussia the chief of the General Staff was actually a military officer, a soldier, not a military bureaucrat. During the Northern Song, the Bureau of Military Affairs was staffed by military bureaucrats who were often civil officials. Military affairs were frequently controlled by civilians even though the direction of civil and military matters was divided between different officials.

The civil-military division of administration was further complicated by two ranking systems for government officials. Above the government clerks, all officials held ranks distinct from their actual duties. There was a military and a civil rank system. The military rank system was not reserved for military officers. It also

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encompassed a variety of men whose functions were purely bureaucratic. Thus, many military officials, that is, men holding rank in the military system, were in fact civilians without real military functions.

Officers were under the jurisdiction of either the Sanya (三衙), composed of the Bureaus of the Imperial Guard, Palace Corps Infantry and Palace Corps Cavalry, or the Bureau of Military Affairs. There were two kinds of officers in the army: attached and unattached. Officers involved in commanding the troops of a battalion were "attached" to them. They came under the authority of the Sanya. Officers not connected to a battalion were "unattached." They were directly under the authority of the Bureau of Military Affairs. Once an officer was promoted out of the attached ranks he could be assigned to a variety of jobs from civilian administration to command of expeditionary armies.

The Sanya was directly in charge of Imperial Army personnel. It recruited and trained the professional soldiers of the empire and maintained troop strength. Every three years it reviewed the attached officers in the emperor's presence, at which time it made promotions and demotions. Attached officers had to maintain their combat fitness. If they became physically impaired or reached the age of fifty-four years old (55 sui) they had to retire. Unattached officers were not constrained by these requirements.64

There were several large standing troop administrative units above the battalion level. These administrative units were not combat formations. It was

64Winston Lo, An Introduction to the Sung Civil Service (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), 64.
later recognized that one of the causes of the army's weakness was the failure to train in larger units. The other problem was that severing the connections between officers and troops was politically stabilizing but militarily debilitating. As we have mentioned before, the Song may have traded poor military performance for political stability. Except during war, the most ambitious and competent officers had to find jobs outside of the ranks of the combat formations if they wanted to advance themselves. The best jobs for officers were not in the army. High ranking officers only returned to command larger expeditions of troops drawn from disparate units outside the capital. Even if we assume that the officers of the battalions were competent and the troops well trained, failure to coordinate the battalions in larger formations would be fatal in the face of highly mobile opponents like the Liao. The failure of any individual unit in battle would be enough to break a larger formation. Lack of cohesion between battalions was one of the problems addressed by later reforms (see below).

Expeditionary armies were formed on an ad hoc basis and dissolved at the end of the campaign they had been assembled to prosecute. The highest positions of command were fairly standard. In addition to the Commander in Chief and his second in command, there was a Vanguard Commander in Chief and his second in command as well as an Director in Chief. If the emperor was present the command of the cavalry and infantry was sometimes split. A theatre commander was appointed for large campaigns. Since expeditionary armies were created from units outside the capital the build-up often began before the commander in chief and the
higher rank officers were assigned. Once the officers had been chosen, the emperor held a feast and distributed gifts to them according to their ranks. The emperor also gave final orders to the officers. This was the emperor's final effort to strengthen his generals' loyalty before letting them take control of an army. On at least one occasion Taizu sent a gift to Cao Bin, who was on campaign in Sichuan at the time, to show that he was thinking of him and his troops. A timely distribution of largesse was a good way to improve morale and reinforce loyalty.

The overall deployment of Song troops was designed to insure the security of the emperor. The army also had to defend the borders. A balance was struck, at least theoretically, between the number of Imperial Army troops stationed at the capital and Imperial Army troops stationed on the border. The troops were rotated between the capital and the border. Troops at the capital trained. Troops on the border got field experience. A balance of forces was maintained within the capital to insure the emperor’s safety. That was the primary reason for maintaining the Imperial Guard-Palace Corps division. No general was in a position of overall command, whether inside or outside the capital. Command was further fragmented by leaving the positions at the top of the army hierarchy vacant.

The Song army grew drastically over the course of the dynasty. Some of

65 Wang Zengyu, op. cit., 55-58, for the regulations on troop rotation 更戍法.

66 See McGrath, op. cit., 146, for a diagram with the locations of the various armies in Kaifeng.

67 Worthy, op. cit., 167, provides a chart of the top positions of the military hierarchy from the late Latter Zhou to 961 showing the unfilled posts.
the early increases, particularly during Taizu's reign, were due to the expansion of the empire. When Taizu founded the Song he inherited about 120,000 troops from the Latter Zhou, probably exclusive of provincial troops. By 997 the total had reached 666,000 and by 1022 the figure was 912,000. Troop numbers peaked at 1,259,000 in 1048, decreasing slightly to 1,162,000 in 1067 and 1,063,688 in 1077. Even during Taizu's time the difficulty of supplying a large standing army continually in one location was a cause for concern. It was the main reason that Kaifeng became the Song capital. Kaifeng was at the north end of the Bian canal which allowed it to be readily supplied from the south. Taizu wanted to move the capital to Luoyang, but the logistical problems of maintaining the army there were enough to dissuade him. There were also great difficulties in keeping the troops on the border supplied.

The survival of the Song dynasty was the result of a long process of centralization of military power following the Anlushan Rebellion in 755. Centralized political power was predicated on a militarily strong center around the emperor. The Northern Song military system grew out of the conditions of the late Tang and Five Dynasties period. It was not sufficient for the emperor to be able to withstand an attack on his capital. The emperor had to have enough troops at hand to actively destroy any and all regional warlords. The capital itself was less important than the person of the emperor. This was why Song Taizu could choose Kaifeng as his capital despite the fact that it did not have the imperial

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McGrath, op. cit., 148, provides a chart with all of the troop numbers and their breakdowns by reign period and Imperial Army-Provincial Army. Also Worthy, op. cit., 181-182.

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history of Luoyang or Changan. Military logistics overrode geographic symbolism. But Kaifeng was not in a strong defensive position. There were no geographic impediments to an advancing army from the north once they were past the mountain passes that the Song did not hold.

As war with the Liao and then the Xixia continued, the Song was unable to reduce the number of troops on the northern borders. In fact the number of troops increased. Any increase in troops on the border had to be balanced by a similar increase in troops at the center. Troops stationed in Kaifeng were not there to defend the city from foreign invasion, they were there to prevent rebellion. The increase in troop numbers further exacerbated the logistical problems. The army gradually concentrated its armies where they were most needed, at Kaifeng and on the border. But there were no other defenses between the border and Kaifeng. When the Jin breached the border defenses they reached Kaifeng in a matter of days. Despite its walls and its vast armies, the city could not be effectively defended.

The Yuanfeng Reorganization

One of the primary purposes of the reforms of Wang Anshi and his followers was transforming the economic power of the Song state into military power. With regard to the military, the reformers went to great lengths to increase the supply of horses and to shift the burden of defense from the professional army to the
militia. While the administration of attached officers and troops remained under the Sanya, unattached officers, previously under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Military Affairs, now came under the authority of the Right Personnel Office of the President. Civil officials were under authority of the Left Personnel Office of the President. The effects of the change went beyond simplification of personnel administration.

"The impact of the Yuan-feng reorganization on the status of officials of military rank in the civil service may be briefly summarized as follows. Prior to the reorganization, they were set apart from officials of civil rank by their own rank system with its unique terminology and by the fact that they belonged to a different personnel system. The Yuan-feng reorganization imposed a uniform terminology on the rank systems of both the civil and military officials and brought them under the same personnel agency. The barriers that used to separate them were therefore reduced and the psychological distance between them was shortened. On the other hand the Yuan-feng reorganization also had the effect of weakening the ties between the many military rank officials and the military establishment. (my italics)"

The reorganization thus raised the status of military officials with regard to civil officials, but diluted their martial aspect.

While the higher ranks of the officer corps were being reorganized, the Imperial Army was also being reconfigured. First, the rotation system was abandoned. Su Shi pointed out that the system of rotating the troops between the border and the capital every three years was as expensive as launching a major campaign. Second, in 1074 troops were shifted into commands 向 of

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69 For a detailed study of Wang's efforts to increase the supply of horses see Paul Smith, Taxing Heaven's Storehouse (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991).

70 Lo, op cit.,73.

approximately three thousand men each. A command could be formed from different kinds of troops (Imperial Army, Provincial Army, Barbarian Auxiliary). It trained together as a unit and remained in one location. The changes were supposed to create a better-trained force with strong unit cohesion. But the quality of the troops did not improve.72

The final part of the new military policies was the creation of the Baojia system. This system was designed to organize all of the households in the empire into units which would police themselves and maintain a militia. Ultimately the militia would become a real fighting force and replace the expensive professional army. While the organization of households took place, the military value of the militia produced is unclear.73

The reforms did not demonstrably improve the Song's military situation. On the surface the policies seemed reasonable. They would increase the supply of horses and tremendously increase the number of soldiers while at the same time decrease the economic burden on the state. But as Winston Lo evaluated them: "There is no question that these innovations in the structure and deployment pattern of the army did not work as well as they were expected to. Inadequate provisions for monitoring the performance of the new system, together with the general malaise of the dynasty during the reign of Emperor Hui-tsung, contributed to the military debacle."74 The contribution of the reforms and of a general

72 McGrath, op. cit., 236-238; Wang Zengyu, op. cit., 107-114; Lo, op. cit., 77.
74 Lo, op. cit., 77.
malaise under Huizong to the Northern Song military collapse in 1126-27 is, in fact, not provable.\textsuperscript{75} As I have argued in chapter one, the "decline" of the Northern Song army is really a tautology. It lost to the Jin because it had deteriorated. Its loss to the Jin proved it had deteriorated. What the reforms do show is what some Song officials believed were the army’s problems: insufficient horses, poor training, lack of unit cohesion and great expense. All of these problems were addressed, but to whatever extent they succeeded or failed they did not improve the situation.

**Weapons, Armor and Tactics**

There are three sources that provide information concerning the weapons, armor and tactics of Song armies: the *Songhuiyao* 宋會要, the battle accounts in the histories and the *Wujingzongyao* 武經總要, a military encyclopedia submitted to the throne in 1044. The latter source is the least reliable but the most comprehensive, providing drawings in addition to its explanations. Unfortunately, some of the *Wujingzongyao*’s contents are so fanciful that they damage the credibility of the more reasonable items. For example, the Elephant Cart 象車 or the Tiger Cart 虎車 (see illustration), comprising and elephant or a tiger tied to the bed of their eponymous vehicles respectively, at least in one extant edition.

\textsuperscript{75} For a discussion of the problems of Huizong’s court see John Winthrop Haeger, "1126-27: Political Crisis and the Integrity of Culture," in John Winthrop Haeger (ed.), *Crisis and Prosperity in Sung China* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1975), 143-161. As with most discussions of the "malaise" there is no critical consideration of the actual fighting and the success of the Jin is mostly attributed to the failure of the Song.
are so ludicrous that they must have existed in some form to warrant inclusion in what was supposed to be a sober military manual. While it is easy to dispense with the more outlandish items and to accept the reasonable ones, like the ordinary varieties of swords or bows, there are certain things, particularly regarding tactical formations, that defy clarification. A detailed discussion of weapons, armor and tactics is beyond the scope of this study but some general comments are necessary in order to clarify the nature of warfare during the Northern Song.

The weapons ordinarily used by the Song army can be divided into four general categories: swords, spears, bows and crossbows. Larger and more variegated weapons were available, at least on paper, for siege operations. Some battle accounts make it clear that larger, crew-operated crossbows and trebuchets were sometimes used in the field. Regular army soldiers were all issued body armor and helmets. Horse armor existed in some form, but it is not clear if it was regularly used. Some kinds of standardized formations were used, but their exact forms are unclear. Chentu, or formation plans, were presented to the emperor on several occasions and issued to troops. The extant chentu are concerned with mysticism and five phases theory rather than real military operations. Consequently they will not be considered here.77

The Wujingzongyao contains drawings and explanations of the five cavalry exercises and the four infantry exercises practiced daily by the Imperial Army.

76WJZY 13/27a and 13/28b. The Sikuquanshu 四庫全書 edition of the Wujingzongyao clearly portrays actual animals tied to the beds of carts. Another, probably more likely, version portrays animal shaped carts with spears protruding from the "animal" mouths.

77Ibid., xx
While these exercises may have changed over the course of the dynasty, it is worth examining the ones available in the *Wujingzongyao* to get some idea of what sort of tactics the Song army used (see accompanying illustrations).

**Cavalry Exercises**

In the first cavalry exercise forty six infantry and one hundred and seventy four cavalry soldiers made one section. At the sound of the drum the infantry fired three volleys of arrows and then “opened the gate” for the cavalry to charge out. The cavalry fired three times to the front, turned and fired twice to their rear. The infantry welcomed the cavalry back by firing three volleys, presumably over their heads, before the cavalry reentered the formation. This was repeated three times until the sound of the drums stopped.

In the second cavalry exercise one hundred and seventy four men were divided into three sections. Each section was separated into four lines. When the drum sounded the first section came out, each line firing three volleys of arrows. They stopped and the front two lines fixed their spears. The front two lines uttered a loud cry and made three stabs. The rear two lines also made a loud cry. The entire section turned their horses and fired twice to their rear before returning to their old places. The second and third section then performed the same exercise. However, when the second section charged out, the first two 

_7a_ have interpolated the turn from the text on the assumption that the cavalry would hit their own infantry if they did not turn before firing to their rear.

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lines fixed spears and did not fire to the front. The third section followed the same pattern as the first. When all three sections had gone out again, the drum stopped. The rear lines of the first section who had already fired arrows the first time did not fire arrows the second time. Those who had not fired arrows in the second section changed places with those who had in subsequent exercises.

In the third cavalry exercise one hundred and seventy four soldiers were divided into six platoons. Each platoon was divided into five lines. They advanced and retreated as they did in the second exercise.

In the fourth cavalry exercise one hundred and seventy four soldiers were divided into six platoons. When they heard the drum two men first advanced carrying flags. The front two lines rode out and fired three volleys to the front. They turned, fired two volleys to the rear and stopped. The rear four lines did not move and welcomed back the forward two by each firing three volleys.

In the fifth cavalry exercise one hundred and seventy four men were divided into twelve platoons. At the sound of the drum everyone went out together, fired three volleys of arrows, fixed spears, gave a great cry and made two stabs.

Infantry Exercises

In the first infantry exercise one hundred and eighty eight infantry and twenty seven cavalry soldiers made one formation. At the sound of the first drum the spear and swordsmen 槍刀 stood. At the second drum the spear and
swordsmen and crossbowmen all sat and the bowmen stood and fired volleys of arrows just as in the first cavalry exercise.

In the second infantry exercise one hundred and eighty eight infantry soldiers made one formation. At the sound of the drum those holding flags left the lines and went forward to establish the boundaries. When the first drum sounded the spear and swordsmen stood. At the second drum the spear and swordsmen all sat and the bow and crossbowmen stood and fired three volleys. The drum sounded again and they advanced a little and fired another three volleys. The drum sounded and the front line dragged forward the spearmen and advanced. The bow and crossbowmen followed until they reached the point where the boundary flags had been set up. When they heard a drum the spear and swordsmen stood up. At the next drum the spear and swordsmen sat down and the bow and crossbowmen stood and fired three volleys. At the next drum the spear and swordsmen again stood up and brought their spearheads upright. At the sound of the gong they retreated to their old place and stopped. At one drum the spear and swordsmen stood. At the second they sat and unfurled the flags. At the third they again stood. At the fourth the spears and flags returned to the way they were. Then the drums stopped.

The third exercise was like the second in the number of soldiers and the advancing and retreating. However, the bow and crossbowmen each fired one volley. Apart from that there was no difference.

The fourth infantry exercise was just like the third.

It is readily apparent that the numbers given in other parts of the text
regarding unit size conflict with the numbers of soldiers involved in the daily exercises. This raises the important question of whether the daily exercises were more parade ground performance than battlefield preparation. The number of soldiers required to perform a given exercise can be neither simply multiplied to nor evenly divided from standing troop units. This limits the conclusions we can draw about the tactics of the Song army. Several facts are clear. Song soldiers were trained to respond to the sounds of drums and gongs. They followed flags and their leaders advanced with those flags into battle at the head of their units. Cavalrymen were trained in archery and spear fighting. They could fire both to the front and rear while moving. Infantrymen may have been more specialized in their skills. No provision was made for soldiers to switch positions (from archer to spearmen, etc.), as the cavalry did, in the course of practice. A line of spearmen was required to protect the archers. Provisions were made for different mixes of bow, crossbow and spearmen.

Archery, either with a bow or a crossbow, was the predominant skill practiced by Song soldiers. All cavalrymen and most infantrymen were archers. Infantrymen used crossbows slightly more often than bows. Crossbowmen always stood in front of bowmen. No provision were made for different rates of fire for bows and crossbows. The *Wujingzongyao* lists four kinds of bows and six kinds of crossbows. There were six kinds of arrows, including fire arrows using gunpowder, for the bows and five kinds of bolts for the crossbows. Although new varieties of crossbows, like the Divine Elbow Bow, were invented later in the eleventh century, Song soldiers relied solely on leg, back and arm strength to span the weapons. No
mechanical devices were used to enhance their strength even though winches were used on the larger, siege crossbows.

There were two different groups of spears available, one set of three very long spears and one set of nine shorter ones. The longer spears ranged from 5.544 meters to 5.775 meters in length. Their use appears to have been restricted to siege operations. The shorter set of nine spears are described as "several feet long." The first three were used by cavalrymen. The text notes that the Man tribesmen in the south used spears one-handed and threw them accurately within several tens of paces, one pace being approximately 1.15 meters. Presumably, in contrast, Chinese soldiers expected to wield their spears with both hands. All but one of the spears had some kind of point or knob on its butt. A true double-ended spear is also listed amongst the swords and axes section. It appears to have been particularly short.

In addition to varieties of spears, there were several kinds of halberds. The character for halberd 刀 is more often read "knife", but the weapons represented are clearly long shafts with large blades on top. A "hand knife" 手刀 is represented on the same page with the three halberds. It is clearly a sword. The two swords on the previous page are both referred to as swords 剑. The difference appears to be that swords have straight blades and knives have curved ones.

79 Weapon lengths are calculated based on ten chi 尺 to the zhang 丈. I use the small chi 尺 which is equivalent to 23.1 cm. There were several larger calculations of chi, for example Zhu Xi 朱熹 in his Jiali 家禮 figures a foot of cloth to actually be equivalent to one chi 尺 one cun 寸 three fen 分 or 27.43 cm. See Jin Qixin 金其鑫, Zhongguo gudai jianzhu chicun sheji yanjiu (中國古代建築尺寸設計研究), (Anhui kexue jishu chubanshe 安徽科學技術出版社, 1991), 30-31.

80 One pace is equivalent to five chi.
Turning from hand weapons to poliorcetics, there were two varieties of crew-served weapons: large crossbows and trebuchets. While gunpowder was available during the Northern Song and was used in various incendiary devices, cannon had not been invented yet. There were six kinds of large crossbows. Two of the crossbows had three bows mounted on the stock, two in the usual bow position and one facing the opposite direction. In the “Three Bow Crossbow” 三弓弩, with a crew of seventy men, the three bows worked in concert to cast a “one spear three swords arrow” 一桿三劍 three hundred paces. In the four varieties of double-bowed crossbows the two bows faced in opposite directions. Using crews of from four to seven, these crossbows shot arrows a hundred and forty to a hundred and fifty paces.

The *Wujingzongyao* contains seventeen varieties of trebuchet. The trebuchet as it was usually known in the west was a counter-weighted swape arm balanced on a fulcrum. In China the force was originally supplied by men pulling on ropes. It was only in the very late 12th century that the counterweighted trebuchet came into China. During the Northern Song, only the manned form of the trebuchet was available. Its power and range were dependent on the size of projectile fired and the number of men pulling on the ropes. The longest range for a manned trebuchet was about one hundred and thirty three yards, firing a twenty five pound projectile using one hundred haulers.

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82 ibid., 112-113.
Before concluding our consideration of weapons, armor and tactics, we should mention those available to the Liao, Xixia and Jin. Our information is best for the Liao, but their equipment was similar to the Xixia and Jin. Liao soldiers were almost exclusively horse-archers. Unlike the professional Song soldier, a Liao soldier supplied much of his own equipment. The Liao army was not encumbered with a supply train and its soldiers were expected to live off the land, particularly when campaigning in China. Most significantly, Liao cavalrymen were required to have at least three horses per man. Compare this with the Song’s inability to even supply one mount for each cavalryman on the one hand and the Mongol practice of six horses per man on the other. Liao horses were also qualitatively better because Song access to horses was limited. The Liao army was therefore far more mobile than the Song, able to change horses and unencumbered by a baggage train. Those same characteristics which were so advantageous when the Liao army was moving were equally disadvantageous when the army stopped. The large number of horses quickly ate all of the available grass and the lack of a supply train quickly exhausted human provisions as well.
Fortifications

There were no innovations in fortification during the Song. But there were also no changes in siege equipment either until the 12th century (see above). Thus the balance between attacker and defender was static during the Northern Song. Which was stronger, attacker or defender? The evidence is ambiguous. There were simply too many independent variables affecting the outcome of assaults on fortifications to generalize. Herbert Franke was certainly correct when he said that: "...walled towns were comparatively safe if stubbornly defended," but the evidence does not support his further assertion that: "...in general the odds were certainly against the besieging forces." How can the first statement be correct and the second incorrect? The key word in Professor Franke's first statement is "comparatively." A defender in an established fortification had a comparative advantage over a defender in the open field. Because there was no possibility of the attackers bringing up artillery capable of rapidly destroying a town or fort's walls a defender had a comparative advantage over an attacker. But a besieger usually has the advantage of initiative. He decides when and where to attack. Thus an attacker can defeat individual forts or towns in detail, bringing overwhelming force to bear at a single point. The strength of the attacker in China during the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries compared extremely favorably with that in Europe at the same time. The near impregnability

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of medieval European fortresses was only overturned with the advent of cannon.

There were no private fortifications in Song China. All real military defenses were owned and controlled by the state. These defenses can be divided into three categories: towns/cities, forts and palisades. Virtually all three categories of defense were constructed either of tamped-earth or wood, with the former far more common. Wood was occasionally used in small forts and in a few smaller palisades. It was also used to build towers on top of tamped-earth walls. For the most part all of the significant sieges during the Northern Song involved attacks on towns or cities surrounded by a tamped-earth wall. Taller tamped-earth walls had broader bases than tops, making the walls slightly angled as they rose.

City or town defenses basically consisted of a moat, either dry or wet, and a single tamped-earth wall. Cities were most often square, or at least rectilinear, in shape. Larger cities, for example Northern Han Taiyuan, sometimes had more than one wall in concentric rings. Between the moat and the wall was the "horse and goat wall." This was an area at the foot of the wall where troops could be deployed to fire across the moat at attackers. A low wall on the edge of the moat sometimes protected the deployed troops. The main wall itself might have a number of "horse faces" or projecting square bastions that allowed defenders to fire along the face of the wall and enfilade attackers. Wooden towers were spaced along the wall and on top of the gate to shelter troops from the weather and from missiles. A machiolated battlement, the "woman’s wall," ran along the outside of the wall at the top to provide missile protection for the defenders. The gates were usually thicker than the walls. They were often the focus of attacks.
since the doors could be battered down more easily than the walls. Gates were often reinforced with a “moon wall” in front of them. The “moon wall” was a semi-circular wall placed in front of the gate to add another layer of defense.

Forts and palisades were mostly smaller defensive positions than towns or cities, though their general form as not very different. A fort was usually established for purely military purposes at a strategic point, for defense or observation. Like the town or city, a wall of either tamped-earth or wood was the main defensive work, with one or more gates to provide access, and towers on the walls for observation and as fighting platforms. Sometimes villages were fortified or communities grew up near forts. It is virtually impossible to determine from the records whether a fort was simply a fort, a fort with an adjacent village, or a fortified village. For the purposes of this discussion of Northern Song military history a “fort” refers to a fortified defensive position smaller than a prefectural seat (which were always walled) and often smaller than a county seat. A palisade was simply a wall that did not enclose a space but formed a barrier across a position. The Great Wall of China is really a very large palisade forming a barrier between the northern steppes and China. The defensive value of a palisade is limited by the fact that it can often be outflanked.

64 The following discussion of forts is based on Qiuqing Luo, “Song-Xia zhanzhengzhong de fanbu yu baozhai” (“Song-Xia warfare in the Department and FORTS”), Chongji Xuebao (崇基學報) 6:2 (May 1967), 223-243.
The first emperor of the Qidan (or Khitan) state of Liao was Abaoji, posthumously known as Liao Taizu. He was succeeded by his son Deguang, posthumously known as Taizong. It was under Taizong that the name “Liao” was first proclaimed in 947.

The Qidan were a confederation of nomadic steppe tribes that emerged as a powerful force during the Tang dynasty. In 755, Anlushan routed the Qidan, making up for his serious defeat at their hands in 751. Qidan troops took part in Anlushan’s rebellion later in 755, participating in his invasion of Hebei.

After Anlushan was defeated, many Qidan surrendered to the Tang. They maintained close ties with the military governors of provinces in Hebei, particularly with the governor of Fanyang (later called Lulong) based at Youzhou (modern Beijing). Thus, their attachment to part of the area which became known as the Sixteen Prefectures extended back to the eighth century. Considering the Turkic origin of many of the military governors of Fanyang, it is also not surprising that the Qidan did not regard the area as particularly Chinese.

In 907, the chief of the Ila tribe, Abaoji, was elected leader of the Qidan confederation. Even before his election, Abaoji had proven himself as a military leader.


It is interesting to note that the proclamation of the founding of the Liao dynasty only took place in the brief period during the Qidan occupation of Kaifeng.
leader, successfully attacking neighboring tribes and raiding the Chinese province of Hedong 河东 in 901, 902 and 903. In 905, Abaoji negotiated a treaty with Li Keyong 李克用, the military governor of Hedong, so that he could focus his attention on attacking Lulong (previously called Fanyang). Abaoji raided Lulong every year from 903 to 907.

While Abaoji continued to participate in the struggle for power in China following the collapse of the Tang dynasty, he also had to fight to maintain his own position as supreme ruler of the Qidan. Abaoji established himself as emperor of the Qidan in 916 after suppressing two rebellions and an assassination plot instigated by his younger brothers. As an emperor, he was equal to any Chinese rulers. Abaoji built a Chinese-style capital city and established a dual system of administration, one for the tribal areas in the north and one for the sedentary, mostly Chinese, population in the south.

In 916, Abaoji invaded northern Hedong and Hebei, besieging Youzhou for two hundred days until driven off. In 921, he invaded Hebei again and was driven off. When the strong state of Latter Tang 后唐 was established in north China in 923, Abaoji shifted his efforts to the steppes. He conquered tribes and territory to the north, southwest and east. In the east he conquered the Chinese-style state of Bohai (Parhae) 渤海. In 926, there was a coup d'état at the court of the Later Tang. The new emperor sent an envoy to Abaoji, who had just finished conquering Bohai. Abaoji said that he would make a settlement with the Tang after taking Youzhou and Hebei. When that was refused, he scaled down his demands to Youzhou and Zhenzhou, an enlarged version of Lulong.
negotiations could continue, Abaoji got sick and died.

Abaoji’s son Deguang became the second emperor of the Qidan. In 936, Deguang supported Shi Jingtang with fifty thousand cavalry in his rebellion against the Later Tang. The Qidan emperor appointed Shi emperor of the Jin dynasty. Deguang refused to withdraw from Youzhou and Jizhou which he had occupied when he came south. Shi Jingtang was forced to formally cede sixteen prefectures along the northern border, which included all the strategic passes controlling northern China, to the Qidan. Deguang had thus achieved Abaoji’s goal of holding the dominant territorial position with regard to China. It proved to be a lasting legacy that allowed the Qidan to deal with all of the Chinese dynasties, including the Song, from a position of strength.

Shi Jingtang died in 942 and was succeeded by Shi Chonggui. Chonggui rejected Jingtang’s earlier agreements with Deguang and sent the Qidan representative at court home with an insulting letter for the Qidan emperor. Deguang invaded late in 944. After several years of hard fighting, Chonggui’s uncle, the commander in chief of the Jin army surrendered. Deguang entered Kaifeng, the Jin capital, early in 947. He proclaimed a new name for the Qidan empire, Great Liao. But it proved impossible to rule north China in the face of a hostile population. Only three months after entering Kaifeng, the Qidan, now Liao, emperor withdrew, carting off all the valuables, armor, weapons, books and personnel his forces could carry.

Deguang’s brief stint as “ruler” of China convinced him and his successors that they could not directly rule China. Abaoji’s original territorial objectives
proved more practical. Liao emperors could influence events in China through military intervention or the threat of intervention but they no longer believed that they could rule a large, hostile, sedentary population. Limiting their ambitions in the south freed Liao emperors to concentrate more attention on their other borders. While Liao aims with regard to the Song were limited to establishing and preserving their mutual border, maintaining trade and squeezing as much money and silk out of the Chinese court as possible, their aims in all other directions were much more grand.

The Sixteen Prefectures

In 938 Shi Jingtang 石敬瑭 ceded sixteen prefectures to the Liao to repay their help in establishing his Jin 晉 dynasty. Fifty thousand Liao cavalry led by the Liao emperor Deguang had established Shi. But Deguang demanded real concessions from Shi. The Liao emperor had no intention of fully withdrawing either his troops or the influence that accompanied them from Chinese territory. He chose to take control of the northern sections of Hedong and Hebei, containing all of the strategic north-south passes from the steppes to the central plain of the

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87This discussion of the Sixteen Prefectures is based on the following articles: Tiehan Zhao 鐵寒趙, "Yanyun Shiliuzhoudiliufenxi (燕雲十六州的地理分析)," ; Nap-yin Lau 立言柳, "Song-Liao Shanyuanzhimeng Xintan (宋遼澶淵之盟新探)," Lishi Yuyan Yanjusuo Jikan (歷史語言研究所集刊), vol. 61, part 3 (Sept. 1990), Taibei, 693-747. The first footnote in Nap-yin Lau’s article lists twenty-two articles on the Treaty of Shanyuan.

88It may be unduly sinocentric to call the territory controlled by Shi Jingtang “Chinese.” Shi was Turkish, not Chinese.
China. The area stretched from West Mountain 西山 in the west to Yan Mountain 雅山 in the east. From 938 until the last years of the Liao dynasty in 1118 the Liao controlled those passes. Ultimately they fell to the Jurchen Jin 金, attacking from the north, rather than a Chinese force attacking from the south.

Shi Jingtang’s territorial concession is usually called “The Sixteen Prefectures of Yan and Yun (燕雲十六州).” Strictly speaking this is anachronistic. Yanzhou and Yunzhou only became the capitals of the circuits comprised of the sixteen prefectures during the Jin dynasty. In 1122 Yanzhou became the capital of Yanshanfu circuit and Yunzhou became the capital of Yunzhongfu circuit. During the Liao dynasty’s control of the area Yanzhou became the Liao southern capital and was often referred to as Yanjing. For simplicity’s sake the territory will be referred to as “The Sixteen Prefectures” throughout this discussion of Northern Song history. For the same reason Yanzhou will only be referred to as Yanzhou.

The Sixteen Prefectures consisted of You 幽, Ji 疆, Tan 檐, Shun 順, Zhuo 墟, Ying 瀛, Mo 莫, Wu 武, Ru 儒, Gui 嬪, Xin 新, Yun 雲, Ying 應, Wei 華, Shuo 朔 and Huan 賄 prefectures. The first seven were referred to as those “in front of the mountains (山前)” and the latter nine as those “behind the mountains (山後).” Youzhou’s name was changed to Yanzhou by the Liao (see footnote). The prefectures “in front of the mountains” were those in the east and those “behind the mountains” in the west.

69 It was Liao Taizong (Deguang) who made Yanshan (Yanzhou) into Yanjing, the capital of Yanjing circuit with six commanderies.
Two of the Sixteen Prefectures, Yingzhou and Mozhou, were south of the mountain passes. This area was therefore called Guannan, "south of the passes." In 959 Zhou Shizong launched a campaign to capture the Sixteen Prefectures (see chapter four). He died soon after the campaign began, having captured only Yingzhou and Mozhou. The Guannan region later became the gravamen of Liao border disputes with the Song. It became a convenient *casus belli* for Liao raids.\(^90\)

The significance of the Sixteen Prefectures to Northern Song history cannot be overstated. The territory, and the Treaty of Shanyuan in 1005 that put an end to the military phase of Song-Liao relations for more than a century, was the pivot of Northern Song history. The long Song-Liao peace of the 11th century was predicated on the Treaty of Shanyuan.\(^91\) And the Treaty of Shanyuan was based on Liao control of the Sixteen Prefectures.

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\(^{90}\)Nap-yin Lau, op. cit., asserts that Liao attacks were actually directed at recovering the Guannan region. But their actions do not support this view. The Guannan region was far more valuable to the Liao as a claim upon Song territory. See chapter nine for a more detailed discussion of this issue.

\(^{91}\)Although the eleventh century was not wholly peaceful, it was relatively peaceful compared to the tenth and twelfth centuries when the Song fought for its existence.
An Introduction to the Five Dynasties

Since this discussion of Northern Song military history begins slightly before the founding of the Northern Song state, during the Latter Zhou, it is appropriate to first introduce the Five Dynasties period which the Song ended. The political and military events of the Five Dynasties, however, can only be understood as they developed out of the middle and later parts of the Tang Dynasty (618-907). The founding of the Song state was the end of a long process of recentralizing military, and therefore political, power around the person of the emperor. Imperial control of the military had been broken during the Anlushan Rebellion in 755. Whatever power the Tang court recovered after the Anlushan Rebellion was utterly destroyed during the Huang Chao Rebellion (875-884). Even the Song state did not fully recover control of the Chinese empire until 979. It is therefore clear that the Song state was not founded by a sudden irruption of military force, but by a slow, uncertain accretion of power around the ruler of northern China. The particular importance of the five dynasties that ruled north China after the official end of the Tang was that the state that those dynasties ruled eventually formed the basis of the Song state. It is only in retrospect that a direct line leading up to the Song can be drawn.

92 This discussion of the Five Dynasties, including the history of the Anlushan Rebellion and Huangchao Rebellion during the Tang dynasty is based on Gungwu Wang, The Structure of Power in North China During the Five Dynasties (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1963).
From Anlushan to the End of the Tang

By 755 the Tang court had established ten regional commands along its northern and western borders to provide for the defense of the frontier. *Jiedushi* (節度使), or military governors, were appointed to command these regions. In order to facilitate defense, the military governors were given both military and civil authority over more than one prefecture. The autonomy and concentration of military force on the border proved destabilizing. In 755 Anlushan, the Shatuo Turk military governor of Lulong (around modern Beijing), invaded Hebei after putting down a Liao revolt. Other military governors supported the court, but only at the cost of recognizing their local authority. Thus, while the Tang escaped destruction, real military power had been dispersed to regional warlords. After Anlushan’s rebellion, in an attempt to reduce the power of individual military governors, the central government divided up the empire into smaller regional commands. This created more warlords, but each one was weaker, allowing the court to play them off against each other.

By the time Huang Chao rebelled in 875, the imperial court had managed to regain some control of the empire. His rebellion destroyed the power that the central government had built up so painstakingly. Huang Chao left the governors who submitted to him in power where they were. He reached the height of his power in 880, when he captured Changan and the Tang court fled to Sichuan. But many of the governors who had submitted to him changed their allegiance back to the Tang house. Huang Chao was cut off in Changan. In 883 the Tang
court recaptured Changan with the help of Li Keyong and his Shatuo Turk cavalrymen. The Tang emperor was now officially back in control of the empire. In reality his power was more attenuated than it had ever been.

Control of the area immediately around the capital Changan was divided between Li Keyong and Zhu Wen, a former general of Huang Chao who had switched to the Tang during the rebellion. Their rivalry formed the basis for the power struggle in north China for the next two generations. As Li and Zhu struggled for power, and various other governors tried to establish themselves, the Tang emperor increasingly became a political pawn. The emperor had no power, but he was still the only legitimate ruler of the empire. It was not a situation which could last very long.

Zhu Wen got control of the Tang emperor and moved him to Luoyang in 904. Zhu was not in control of north China when, in 907, he deposed the emperor and ascended the imperial throne in Bianzhou (Kaifeng). Indeed, as he was establishing his Liang dynasty, his forces were being beaten by Li Keyong’s army.

From the Liang to the Latter Zhou

Zhu Wen and his successor managed to hold onto power in their capital at Kaifeng for sixteen years. Li Keyong, Zhu’s longtime rival, died in 908 and Li’s son Cunxu became the leader of the Shatuo Turk forces. Li Cunxu eventually overthrew the Liang dynasty, “re-establishing” the Tang dynasty with himself as

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emperor in 923. This Latter Tang dynasty was, in turn, overthrown by Shi Jingtang, then Commander in Chief of the Emperor's Personal Army and son-in-law of the fourth Later Tang emperor, in 936. Shi's coup succeeded because of Liao military assistance. The Liao demanded, and received, the area which later became known as the Sixteen Prefectures (see chapter two). Shi's son, Chonggui, succeeded him. Chonggui tried to throw off Liao control, prompting the Liao emperor to invade and destroy the Jin dynasty in 946.

The Liao emperor tried to keep Kaifeng and control of north China, but there was too much resistance to his rule. The overextended Liao army was most threatened by Liu Zhiyuan, the governor of Taiyuan. Once the Liao army retreated north, it was Liu who took Kaifeng and established the Latter Han dynasty. The Han lasted only until 950, when Guo Wei established the Latter Zhou. When Guo displaced the Han, the Liu family fell back on their power-base at Taiyuan, establishing the Northern Han state.
When Guo Wei 郭威, the first emperor of the Latter Zhou, posthumously known as Zhou Taizu, died on 22 February 954, he was succeeded by his adopted son, Chai Rong 柴荣, posthumously known as Zhou Shizong. Zhou Taizu took extraordinary steps to secure Shizong’s position. He commanded several powerful generals to swear allegiance to Shizong by his deathbed.

Taizu’s efforts to secure Shizong from internal threats were never tested. Immediately after Shizong became emperor Liu Chong 刘崇, ruler of the Northern Han 北汉, invaded. The Northern Han ruler was aided by a large force of Liao cavalry. Shizong rushed to meet the invasion as quickly, and as far from the capital, as he could. He needed to defeat the Northern Han invasion quickly and decisively. Anything less than a decisive victory would probably have ended his reign.

The opposing armies met at Gaoping. Shizong won, but only by throwing himself into the battle at a crucial moment. The Battle of Gaoping secured Shizong’s position. It also was also notable for the participation of Zhao Kuangyin, the future Song Taizu, who would overthrow Shizong’s son and establish his own dynasty in 960. Indeed, it was at Gaoping that Zhao became Shizong’s preeminent general.

Shizong followed his success at Gaoping with an invasion of the Northern Han.
Han. He failed to destroy the Northern Han, but his campaign marked the beginning of Zhou, and later, Song, expansion. Shizong directed his officials to plan the conquest of China. Shortly afterward, Latter Zhou forces conquered four provinces from the kingdom of Shu. This victory set the stage for a much larger campaign against the Southern Tang.

The Northern Han Invasion (12 March-24 April 954)

The death of Zhou Taizu 周太祖 in 954 presented Liu Chong with what he thought was a good opportunity to take control of northern China. The Northern Han ruler requested aid from the Liao emperor, and prepared to personally lead thirty thousand of his own troops south from Taiyuan 太原, his capital.

The Liao emperor sent a force of more than ten thousand cavalry under the command of Yang Gun 陽謀 to Taiyuan. Liu Chong appointed Bai Conghui 白從暉 Chief Administrator of the Expeditionary Army and Zhang Yuanhui 張元徽

The Northern Han invasion is chronicled in ZZTJ 291.9500-9504, JWDS 114/2a-3a and XWDS 20.118.

Liu Chong heard about Zhou Taizu's death several days later. He applied directly to the Liao for troops.

JWDS reports Liu Chong having 30,000 cavalry. ZZTJ only says 30,000 troops. I accept ZZTJ because no evidence from subsequent events proved that the force was entirely cavalry. It is possible that JWDS connected the all-cavalry Liao force with Liu Chong's and assumed that his troops were also all cavalry.

Sima Guang 司馬光 discards the less reasonable figure of 50-70,000 contained in the Jinyang Jianwenlu 晋陽見聞錄. ZZTJ Kaoyi 考異 291.9501.

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Vanguard Commander in Chief. Zhang led a force of three thousand cavalry.\textsuperscript{97}

The Liao advanced south to Luzhou 臥州 from Tuanbogu 團柏谷.

Luzhou reported on 12 March that Liu Chong and Yang Gun were leading a large army south. The Northern Han army reached Liangsiyi 梁侯驿, located south of Tuanbogu and northwest of Taipingyi 太平驿, by 19 March. Taipingyi was 27 miles northwest of Luzhou. Li Yun 李筠 sent Mu Lingjun 穆令均 with a mixed force of two thousand infantry and cavalry across the border to oppose them. Li himself led a large force to screen Taipingyi.

Zhang Yuanhui and Mu Lingjun's forces clashed. Zhang feigned defeat and fell back to the north, leading Mu into an ambush. Mu was killed and more than a thousand of his soldiers killed or captured. Li Yun fell back to Shangdang 上黨.

There are two possible explanations for Li Yun's initial actions. The first is that he had a reasonably clear idea of the size of force he was facing and intended, by a preemptive strike, to buy time for Zhou Shizong to send help. The second is that he vastly underestimated the size of the invading army and told the court it was large in order to increase any glory he might receive for defeating it.\textsuperscript{98}

\textsuperscript{97} JWDS gives Zhang's name as Zhang Hui 張暉. The variant of Zhang Yuanhui's name and the figure for the size of his vanguard force are from the Shizong Shilu 世宗實錄 cited in ZZTJ Kaoyi 291.9501.

\textsuperscript{98} Xu Wudang 徐無黨 in his commentary on XWDS 20.118 states that Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 used the character 攻 (gong) rather than 伐 (fa) in relating the notice of the Han invasion from Luzhou because, at the time, they couldn't say if the force was large or small. Neither ZZTJ nor JWDS use either term. Both use 入寇 (rükou) to enter and plunder.
The first possibility seems highly unlikely. There would have been little point in sending a force of two thousand to oppose one of forty thousand in the open field. Mu Lingjun could hardly have been expected to seriously delay an opponent that so badly outnumbered him in terrain that would not have given him any particular advantage. His willingness to pursue Zhang Yuanhui north indicates that he did not believe that Zhang's force was only a vanguard. It would have been worse than folly to have chased Zhang for any distance if he knew that a greater Northern Han force was nearby. For Mu Lingjun to pursue Zhang back to the larger force in order to slow the general advance would have required greater loyalty than we might expect of someone not personally connected to Zhou Shizong or Li Yun. As the many coups during the period suggest, personal loyalty was not in great supply.

The second possibility is more likely. Li Yun's rapid retreat after Mu's defeat supports it. Of course Mu's defeat left Li vulnerable. But if he thought that he had only Zhang's three thousand men to contend with he could have rallied Mu's remaining men, added them to his own force and moved back to a blocking position on the route to Luzhou. At the very least, he could have fallen back to Luzhou and firmly held the city while waiting for help. The position of Li's force to the east, as a screen, shows that both he and Mu Lingjun thought that Mu's force was sufficient to deal with the Northern Han army. Li and Mu mistook the vanguard under Zhang Yuanhui for the entire army. Mu was then ambushed by

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99 That would be without considering the false report of 100,000 Liao cavalry mentioned by Sima Guang, ZZTJ Kaoyi291.9501. There is no indication that Mu Lingjun's force was heading toward any sort of strategic pass.
some part of the main Northern Han army. Li Yun fled when he realized how large the Northern Han army was. Still, Mu's unintentional reconnaissance in force alerted the Zhou court to the seriousness of the threat.\(^{100}\)

Zhang Yuanhui invaded Zhou territory from Tuanbogu on 29 March. He was still in command of his three thousand cavalry, less whatever losses he had sustained in his fight with Mu Lingjun.\(^ {101}\) It was at this point that Zhou Shizong heard about the true extent of the invasion force. Over the protests of his officials, he decided to lead the Zhou army personally. They argued that Liu Chong would soon retreat on his own and, since Shizong was newly enthroned, he should not be so unconcerned about moving from the capital.\(^ {102}\) Shizong responded with three reasons that Liu Chong would follow through with his attack: Liu Chong was taking advantage of his being in mourning for Zhou Taizu; the Northern Han ruler thought little of him because he was young and newly enthroned; and Liu's mind was set on taking the empire. Based on these arguments it was certain that he would personally come. Shizong therefore had to personally go to meet him. He correctly saw the fight for the throne as a personal duel, with north China going to the victor.

Feng Dao 馮道, one of Shizong's high officials, still strongly opposed Shizong's personally going. Shizong said: "Formerly, when Tang Taizong 唐太宗

\(^{100}\) JWDS records Mu Lingjun's raid in much less detail but places it after Luzhou reported Liu Chong's invasion. It also places Mu's raid after Shizong resolved to personally meet the threat. ZZTJ's order makes more sense.

\(^{101}\) There are no casualty figures for Zhang's force.

\(^{102}\) Their argument was reasonable. In 951 Liu Chong retreated after surrounding, but failing to take, Jinzhou 晉州. See Hu Sanxing's 胡三省 note in ZZTJ 291.9502.
was pacifying the empire, he did not stop personally campaigning. How can I
dare be negligent?” Feng replied: “I cannot judge if your Majesty’s ability is like
Tang Taizong’s or not.” Shizong said: “My military strength is so strong that
breaking Liu Chong will be like a mountain crushing an egg.” Feng replied: “I
cannot judge whether your Majesty’s capability is like a mountain or not.” Shizong
was not pleased by Feng’s pointed refutation of his arguments. When Wang Pu
王溥, another high official, then recommended that he go, he followed his advice.103
In the Jiu Wudaishi version of the debate, Feng Dao questioned Shizong’s ability
to obtain a large number of troops. His second response was: “I don’t know if
your Majesty can raise (作得) a mountain or not.” This problem was addressed
to some degree by drafting bandits from the various circuits into the army. At
best then, Shizong led an army inferior in number to Liu Chong’s commanded by
men with only nominal loyalty.

On 8 April Luzhou reported that Liu Chong had invaded. Shizong set his
defense plan in motion. The same day, he ordered Fu Yanqing 符彦卿 to march
northwest from Guzhen 固鎮, Cizhou 磁州 and attack the Han army in the rear.
Next, he ordered Wang Yanchao 王彥超 to march northeast from Jinzhou 晉州.
Lastly, he ordered Fan Aineng 樊愛能, He Hui 何徽, Bai Zhongzan 白重贊, Shi
Yanchao 史彥超, and Fu Yanneng 符彥能 to march to Zezhou 澤州 with their
troops where Xiang Xun 向訓 would inspect them.104

103 It is worth noting that Shizong felt his actions had to follow the advice of at least one of
his advisors.

104 The xuanhuishi was the head of the xuanhuiyuan, which supervised the palace
eunuchs. Xiang Xun was probably a eunuch. See Charles O. Hucker, A Dictionary of Official
Shizong left the capital on 16 April and arrived in Huaizhou 饒州 on 21 April. He wanted to unite his forces quickly and advance. He passed through Zezhou on 23 April and camped to the northeast. At the same time, the Han army, not realizing that the Zhou army was nearby, bypassed Luzhou without attacking it and continued south. That night the Han army camped south of Gaoping 高平, 22 miles northeast of Luzhou.

Shizong received a report that troops had been seen 5 miles to the northeast. The next day, the Zhou vanguard happened upon part of the Han army and attacked it. The Han troops pulled back and, when the van of their army came up, arrayed for battle on a high plateau. Shizong was afraid that they would evade him and he ordered his forces to advance quickly. He was hoping that he would have enough time to assemble his entire army. But no matter what, he was going to risk battle. If the Northern Han army got past him, his position would have been extremely tenuous. Shizong's own claim to legitimacy was no better than that of Liu Chong. Unlike Liu, who could rely on his Liao allies, Shizong could not expect the support of anyone if he were outmaneuvered and cut off from his capital.

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The Battle of Gaoping (24 April 954)\textsuperscript{105}

The battle has previously been interpreted as follows: Liu Chong arrayed his troops for battle with Yang Gun on his right. When he saw the Zhou army formed opposite him he realized how small it was and rashly ordered Yang Gun to keep the Liao cavalry out of the fight. Shortly after the battle began, the Zhou right broke and ran. Zhou Shizong personally charged into battle and turned near defeat into victory. Yang Gun was frightened by the power of the Zhou troops and led his troops away without entering the battle. The Zhou rearguard under Liu Ci arrived and clashed a second time with the Northern Han army. The Northern Han was defeated again.\textsuperscript{106}

Let us now try to flesh out this summary and perhaps disagree with some of its interpretations. The first thing to establish is the numbers involved in the battle. Sima Guang 司馬光 in *Zizhi Tongjian* reports that Liu Chong personally led 30,000 troops, and that Yang Gun led more than 10,000 cavalry. The *Jiu Wudaishi* uses the same figure except that Liu Chong's troops are reported to be 30,000 cavalry. The information in this case was reportedly received from a deserter. Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 in *Xin Wudaishi* covers the battle quite summarily and without numbers.

\textsuperscript{105}The Battle of Gaoping is chronicled in ZZTJ 291.9504-9506, JWDS 114/3a and XWDS 12.28.

\textsuperscript{106}For an example of this interpretation see Jiang Weiguo 蒋偉國, series ed., *Zhongguo Lidai Zhanzhengshi* 中國歷代戰爭史 (Taipei: Li Ming Cultural Enterprise Co. 黎明文化事業公司, 1985), vol. 10, 294-296.
The march from Northern Han territory to Gaoping was quite short, less than 60 miles, and it is unlikely that there was much wastage in the army due to illness or casualties. Sima Guang discussed his sources in the *Kaoyi*. His figure of 30,000 troops appears to come from a different source than the *Jiu Wudaishi*’s figure of 30,000 cavalry. The figure of 30,000 Northern Han troops is therefore a fairly reliable estimate. Sima Guang deals with the figure for the Liao cavalry as well in the *Kaoyi*. The figure of 10,000 is certainly reasonable given Liao capabilities. It is also considerably more likely than the figure of 100,000, which Sima rejected.

Were the Northern Han troops all cavalry? The only piece of evidence we have is the report of the deserter discussed above. Several points argue against it. The first is Sima Guang’s assertion that Liu Chong led 30,000 troops, and Yang Gun more than 10,000 cavalry. If Sima believed that Liu Chong’s force was entirely composed of cavalry he would have said so. The second point is the slowness of the Northern Han advance. It was less than 95 miles from Taiyuan to Gaoping, and less than 30 miles from Luzhou to Gaoping. The terrain was not difficult enough to warrant a two week march for a cavalry force. Even if the main body of the army crossed the border a few days after the vanguard officially invaded, it would not have taken a cavalry force that long to reach Gaoping. Liu had every reason to move rapidly. If he reached Kaifeng before

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107 ZKTJ *Kaoyi* 291.9501. The figure of 30,000 troops comes from the *Shizong Shilu* (see note 4). The *shilu* is also Sima Guang’s source for Zhang Yuanhui commanding a vanguard of 3000 cavalry.

108 ZKTJ *Kaoyi* 291.9501.
Shizong mobilized troops, the Zhou government would have been cut off. The third point is that Liu did not know if he would have to conduct a siege in order to eliminate the Zhou dynastic house. The fourth and final point is the evidence in the *Zizhi Tongjian* account that gives us reason to believe, in support of the third point, that the Northern Han army had some poliorcetic resources with them at the battle. When Zhou Shizong personally entered the battle, he faced "arrows and stones." Some of the Northern Han army must have been on foot during the battle to operate the ballistae, even if the weapons themselves had been moved there by animals. But there is no way to estimate the composition of the army more exactly.

The size of the Zhou army is much less clear than that of the Northern Han army. None of the sources give us an overall figure. The Zhou army was apparently substantially smaller than the Northern Han army, but managed to win through the daring of Shizong's personal participation. While Shizong's entry into the battle was probably the key factor in the Zhou victory, the extent to which he was outnumbered is less clear. Liu Chong believed the Zhou army to be so small when he saw it that he revised his orders to Yang Gun. He no longer felt that he needed the Liao troops. When Yang received the order he rode to the front to look at the Zhou army himself. He then rode to Liu Chong and told him that they were facing a powerful enemy.

How do we resolve their different evaluations of the Zhou army? It is possible that Liu was simply incompetent and rash, but all of his generals agreed with his evaluation of the situation. Let us then look at the scene in simple
sequence. Liu gave his orders to array his troops while the Zhou began to do likewise. After doing so, he rode forward and looked at the opposing army. Here it should be remembered that the Zhou vanguard had run into the Northern Han army and attacked them. When Shizong found out, he hurriedly advanced with his armies. Thus, it is entirely possible that when Liu observed the Zhou army they were still coming up to the battlefield. Indeed, the Zhou rearguard did not arrive in time for the first encounter. Liu knew how many troops he had and saw an opportunity to defeat his hated enemy without the help of his patron. He then sent the order to Yang Gun that the Liao troops were not needed. Yang, who was probably in the process of decamping in order to proceed to the battlefield, received what struck him as a very strange change in his orders. When he personally reconnoitered the battlefield, he saw that the Zhou army was quite large. Liu Chong rejected Yang's assessment of the situation, believing that it was not new information, but rather a different evaluation of what he had already seen. Liu then reconfirmed his order that Yang's troops not participate in the battle. Yang watched the battle, but his army did not advance to the battlefield.

This last statement requires some explanation. It has been generally understood until now that the Liao force under Yang Gun was present at the battle but did not take part in it.\(^{109}\) A more careful reading of the *Zizhi Tongjian* account, and a more reasonable examination of the events, clearly demonstrates that this was not the case. As discussed above, the Liao force was originally present.

\(^{109}\) For an example of this interpretation see Jiang Weiguo, ed., *Zhongguo Lidai Zhanzhengshi*, op. cit., vol. 10, 296.
ordered to take up position on the Northern Han right. We are then told that Liu Chong changed the orders. Yang Gun galloped up, but his force is not mentioned. The omission is significant, as the text is fairly consistent in noting when a commander was leading troops. So, reading directly, Yang Gun rode up to the front and then rode to Liu Chong to discuss the situation. He was then told to watch the battle, which he unhappily did. When the battle went badly, he didn't dare go to the rescue. It is stated that he was afraid of the power of the Zhou troops, so he followed Liu Chong's orders and retreated with his entire army. If we understand that it was only Yang Gun with perhaps a small bodyguard present at the battlefield, then it makes sense that he did not personally enter the fray. It also makes sense that he saw that it was time to leave.

This leaves the question of why Yang did not, if we accept that his troops were absent, call his men to the battlefield. They were certainly nearby, otherwise they could not have been given a place in the original order of battle. If he had ten thousand fresh cavalry available why didn't he sweep the now victorious, but certainly disorganized, Zhou army from the field? First, Liu Chong had probably already left the field by this time. It may have even been uncertain where he was or if he was alive. Without Liu, the entire point of the battle was already decided. Second, Yang may have been annoyed enough at having been ordered to sit down and shut up that he decided to leave Liu to the fate of his own making.

We only have a few figures for parts of the Zhou army. Fan Aineng and He Hui led several thousand cavalry when they fled the battlefield. The reserve that followed Shizong in supporting the broken Zhou right wing was four thousand
cavalry. There were also more than a thousand infantrymen who surrendered after the cavalry fled the field. Since the entire right wing did not collapse, the several thousand cavalry and more than one thousand infantry who fled or surrendered did not constitute the entire right army.

Assuming that the reserve of more than four thousand cavalry was smaller than either side or center force, then each side army, assuming they were symmetrical, would have been larger than four thousand and the center probably somewhat larger. If the reserve was twenty percent of the whole than the Zhou army could conservatively be estimated at twenty thousand men. Even though this figure is based on a great deal of supposition, I believe the figure of twenty thousand to be at the low end of the scale. It is entirely possible that the Zhou forces nearly equaled, or even slightly exceeded, those of the Northern Han by the time the battle started.\textsuperscript{110}

Let us now turn to the disposition of troops. Liu Chong arrayed the center of his army at Bagongyuan 過公原. Zhang Yuanhui commanded the troops to the east. Yang Gun and his cavalry were originally intended to take up position to the west. That order was later changed and Yang's cavalry did not take part in the battle. There were some heights on the Northern Han side. The Zhou arranged themselves opposite the Han with heights to their rear. Liu Ci had not yet arrived with the Zhou rearguard, leaving the Zhou army somewhat outnumbered

\textsuperscript{110}It is interesting that the presence of Zhao Kuangyin, the future Song Taizu, is first mentioned only after Shizong personally entered the battle. Considering how much coverage the future founder of the Song received in ZZTJ, it seems odd that his location was not mentioned in the original disposition of the army even though Zhang Yongde, who took part in his attack in support of Shizong, was noted. Perhaps he only arrived after the battle had begun.
on the battlefield. Despite the precarious situation, Shizong was determined to bring on a decision. As discussed above, he had little choice. He placed Bai Zhongzan and Li Zhongjin on his left, to the west. Fan Aineng and He Hui commanded the right, to the east. Xiang Xun and Shi Yanchao commanded picked cavalry in the center. Shizong took up a position close by to observe the battle from horseback. Zhang Yongde guarded him.

Apart from the positions of the generals our tactical information is extremely vague. This may be due to the strong connection between the generals and the soldiers they brought to the battlefield. It might be more correct to say, for example, that the right wing was made up of the forces of Fan Aineng and He Hui, rather than to say that they were in command of the troops of the right wing. Their behavior in the battle seems to support this contention, as will be discussed more fully below. It is also interesting that Xiang Xun was one of the commanders of the picked troops in the center. His earlier function as inspector of the troops at their marshalling point marks him as one of Shizong's most trusted men.

The troops to the left and right were conspicuously not called "wings" 與, although this term came up later, when Zhao Kuangyin specifically used it to set out his strategy to Zhang Yongde. Zhao's plan of attack (below) further reinforces the idea that the line was not continuous. The Zhou left and right are called "brigades" 基 in one account, but this adds little to our understanding. Infantry

111At this point the text calls him Bai Zhongjin. For consistency I have used one name. See Hu Sanxing's note in the inconsistency in ZZTJ 291.9504.

112Zhang Yongde was Zhou Taizu's son-in-law.

113Xiang can have the meaning of "side rooms" and thus wings in the sense of troops on
is mentioned only on the Zhou side during the course of the battle. The battle was decided through cavalry action, so a continuous line would have been neither necessary nor desirable. Cavalry is only useful when moving and needs space to maneuver. If, for example, the Northern Han army had been drawn up five men deep, with a yard of frontage per man or horse without break, it would have made a line nearly three and a half miles long. A formation like that would have been quite unwieldy. It would have to be broken up into manageable units, separated for maneuvering.

Zhang Yuanhui began the Han assault by leading one thousand cavalry against the Zhou right. The battle was joined but Fan Aineng and He Hui soon fled the field with their cavalry. The Zhou right began to collapse. A thousand Zhou infantry took off their armor, yelled "ten thousand years" (萬歲) and surrendered to the Northern Han.

Shizong saw the danger his army was in and led his personal troops forward to battle. Zhao Kuangyin (soon to be Song Taizu) saw the need to support Shizong's action. He said to Zhang Yongde: "The Northern Han troops are [now] overconfident (Presumably because of the collapse of the Zhou right wing.) We can defeat them. You lead your unit to the left and take advantage of the heights. You will be the left wing. I will lead my unit as the right wing and [we] will attack them." Zhang followed Zhao's plan and led two thousand troops into battle. Zhao Kuangyin led his two thousand men from the front. After some the sides. It is more often used militarily to denote simply a formation of troops or an administrative unit of troops.

\textsuperscript{114}Thus affirming Liu Chong's claim to the imperial throne.
desperate fighting, they scattered the Northern Han troops. Ma Renyu 马仁瑀, a Zhou officer, said to those around him: "Let us exploit this containment and take the enemy." He jumped onto his horse, drew his bow and gave a great shout. He killed several dozen men, arousing the spirits of the other officers.

Ma Quanyi 马全乂 said to Shizong: "The bandits' situation has reached its limit. Send me to capture them. I pray Your Highness to rein in your horse, not move, and watch your generals break them." Then he led several hundred cavalry forward to break the Northern Han line.

Liu Chong knew that Shizong was personally supervising the battle, so he praised Zhang Yuanhui and sent him into the fray. Zhang's horse fell down and the Zhou soldiers killed him. The death of such a strong general broke the morale of the Han army and increased that of the Zhou army. Liu fled the field. It was at this point that Yang Gun decided to leave the battlefield without rendering assistance.

Fan Aineng and He Hui led several thousand cavalry south, plundering the Zhou baggage wagons as they fled. Back on the battlefield, Shizong ordered his officers to stop the pursuing the Han army, but they didn't receive the order because the messengers were uncertain which officers had been killed. He was concerned that there was still a large Liao army in the area that could easily change his victory into a defeat. There were also large numbers of surrendered soldiers to secure. The situation was still fluid.

Fan Aineng and He Hui met Liu Ci, the commander of the rearguard, as he was coming up to join the Zhou forces. Fan and He stopped their flight, and
Liu continued on to the north. As it was getting dark, Liu Ci ran into Liu Chong and a force of about ten thousand that he had managed to gather together from the torrent of fleeing men. The armies repeatedly clashed and the Han were defeated again. Wang Yanci died and the Han army fled all the way back to Gaoping, pursued by Liu Ci.

Aftermath and Followup (3 May-30 July 954)\textsuperscript{115}

There were two immediate consequences of the victory at Gaoping: Fan Aineng, He Hui and seventy other top Imperial Guard commanders were executed, and the Zhou army invaded the Northern Han. The executions allowed Shizong to consolidate his position and secure control of the Guard by inserting his own men at the top. They also marked the beginning of the rise and expansion of the Palace Corps (see chapter two "Song Military Organization" for the Imperial Guard-Palace Corps division). Intended to balance the power of the Guard, Corps recruitment was entrusted to Zhao Kuangyin, who used the Palace Corps to overthrow the Zhou six years later. Zhao had been promoted to provost marshal of the Corps for his bravery at Gaoping.\textsuperscript{116}

After his second loss, Liu Chong fled back to Taiyuan. Yang Gun led his army north, camping at Daizhou 代州. Shizong ordered an invasion of the

\textsuperscript{115}Shizong's Northern Han campaign is chronicled in ZJT 291.9513-292.9516.

Northern Han on 3 May. He first sent the troops which had not participated in the battle at Gaoping. Fu Yanqing led a mixed force of twenty thousand infantry and cavalry from Luzhou. Guo Chong was his second in command, and Xiang Xun was his Director in Chief 都監. Li Zhongjin was appointed Chief Inspector of Cavalry and Infantry 馬步都虞侯, and Shi Yanzhao Vanguard Commander in Chief 前鋒都指揮使. At the same time, Wang Yanzhao and Han Tong invaded from Yindiguan 隱地關. The two armies were to link up and advance together. Liu Ci was appointed Administrator of the Emperor’s Entourage 隋駕部署, with Bai Zhongzan as his second in command.

In May the Northern Han territory of Yu county 孟縣 surrendered. Yu county was 67 miles northeast from the Northern Han capital at Taiyuan. Fu Yanqing’s army arrived beneath the walls of Taiyuan, while Wang Yanzhao attacked Fenzhou 汾州. Fenzhou was 150 miles north of Jinzhou 晋州. Shizong ordered Kang Yanzhao 康延沼 to attack Liaozhou 遼州. Liaozhou was 81 miles northeast of Luzhou. Tian Qiong 田瓊 was ordered to attack Qinzhou 沁州. Li Qianpu 李謐薄 rode to Liaozhou alone and convinced Zhang Hanchao 張漢超, the governor of Liaozhou, to surrender.

Shizong’s original intent in invading the Northern Han and sending soldiers to Taiyuan was simply a show of force. He hadn’t considered actually taking it. However, when he was told that the people welcomed the Zhou army and how the counties and prefectures were surrendering, he began to consider a more serious campaign. He summoned his generals to discuss it. They all said that there were insufficient provisions and that he should try again later. Shizong
ignored them and began preparations to intensify the campaign.

First, he combined a variety of forces to create an army of several hundred thousand men. A large part of this army must have been composed of porters and men drafted for digging, not fighting. Next, he ordered supplies and men sent from ten prefectures to supply the army. He also ordered a stop to plundering by the Zhou army.

Fu Yanqing reported on 22 May that Han Guangyuan 漢光愿, the prefect of Xianzhou 憲州, and Guo Yan 郭言, the prefect of Lanzhou 嵩州 had surrendered. Wang Yanzhao and Han Tong subdued Shizhou 石州, capturing its prefect An Yanjin 安彥進 on 23 May. Li Tinghui 李廷誨, the prefect of Qinzhou 沁州 surrenderd on 24 May. Shizong left Luzhou for Taiyuan on 31 May. The Northern Han Army Supervisor 監軍 of Xinzhou 忻州, Li Qing 李𨑨, killed the prefect and the Liao Interpreter-clerk 通事, on 3 June. He was then appointed prefect of Xinzhou for the Zhou. Shizong reached Taiyuan on 6 June. The Zhou army encircled the entire 14 miles of the city’s walls. Meanwhile, Yang Gun was imprisoned by the Liao emperor for his failure to prevent the loss of Daizhou, and a general lack of positive results.

The Liao camped several thousand cavalry between Xinzhou and Daizhou on 7 June to assist the Northern Han. The presence of this force interfered with Zhou efforts to consolidate their territorial gains and was an immediate threat to their operations. The Zhou responded quickly to try and drive out the Liao. Fu Yanqing led a mixed force of ten thousand infantry and cavalry to attack the Liao force on 10 June. He entered Xin prefecture, forcing the Liao to fall back on 93
Xinkou Fort. Fu asked for reinforcements on 17 June. Li Yun and Zhang Yongde were sent out with three thousand troops on 23 June. Meanwhile, a second Liao force arrived beneath the walls of Xinzhou itself.

Fu and several other generals reached Xinzhou on 26 June, and arrayed for battle. Shi Yanzhao commanded the vanguard of two thousand cavalry. Shi saw that he badly outnumbered the Liao, so he advanced casually and was killed. Li Yun followed him. Two thousand Liao died in the battle, but it was a pyrrhic victory for the Zhou army, if not a defeat. Shi substituted bravery and numbers for tactical skill. A large number of Zhou troops were killed or wounded. Li Yun barely escaped with his life. As a result of the battle, Fu Yanqing had to fall back to Xinzhou and subsequently return to Taiyuan. This was the first Zhou military setback.

The siege of Taiyuan also failed to achieve any results. Constant heavy rain, and sickness among the troops, made it clear that it was time to abandon the invasion. They had failed to secure the territory they had taken and failed to drive the Liao from the field. Shizong left Taiyuan on 5 July. Lack of provisions does not appear to have been a factor. The sudden departure forced the Zhou to abandon several hundred thousand units of grain and fodder at Taiyuan. Shizong reached the capital on 30 July 954.

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117 Not twenty as ZZTJ reports. Yuan Shu in *Tongjian Jishibenmo* repeats the figure of twenty. I agree with Hu Sanxing that twenty is too small. A stroke must have been lost from qian 千 making it into a shi 十.

118 The particular units are not mentioned. In this context a unit would have been the grain or fodder for one man or horse for one day.
The Zhou Strategy for Reunification of China

Although Shizong failed in his invasion of the Northern Han, his success at Gaoping opened his mind to the possibility of reunifying all of China. He asked officials to submit plans to accomplish this goal and, in April of 955, decided that Wang Pu's was the best. The strategic debate has been traditionally construed as a choice between a north-first or south-first plan. A north-first plan would place resolving the Northern Han-Liao-Sixteen Prefectures situation ahead of the conquest of the kingdoms south of the Huai river and in Sichuan. A south-first plan would do the opposite. Once the question of south-first or north-first had been decided, a precise plan to carry out the strategy would have to be created.

One of the reasons that the strategic debate has been erroneously represented in this way by historians was the ultimate failure of the Zhou or the Song to "recover" the Sixteen Prefectures. This failure continued to rankle the Song government until the fall of the entire north overshadowed it. Indeed, it may not be too far wrong to say that the all-consuming desire to possess that small area of what was considered "China proper," for want of a better term, and the hatred of the Liao that it engendered, motivated the policies which led to the loss of north China to the Jin. The Song allied themselves with the Jin in order to recover this territory. Due to the subsequent argument over the division of territory, the Jin invaded the Song and captured the capital Kaifeng.

119 ZZTJ 292.9524. Also see Wang Qinruo et al., Cefuyuangui, 104/29ab.
It might seem as if our discussion has gotten far ahead of itself, but subsequent events profoundly affected the portrayal of the Zhou-Song strategy in the sources. The south-first strategy proposed by Wang Pu and later, to Song Taizu, by Zhao Pu 趙普 has been seen as the mistake which prevented the recovery of the Sixteen Prefectures. We have no record of the actual strategy debate or the losing proposals, but they would not be too difficult to guess. The strategy proposals that we do have tell us more about what Chinese historians from the eleventh century on, looking back on the events of the second half of the tenth century, thought than about what the people at the time thought. An examination of Wang Pu’s “accepted” strategy proposal should clarify this discussion and demonstrate the main reason the Sixteen Prefectures became so important to later Song historians.

Edmund Worthy has already translated the entire proposal as it is contained in the Zizhi Tongjian.\textsuperscript{120} Rather than retranslate or reproduce the entire document, I will summarize its contents, illustrating several points with selections from Worthy’s translation. I will also include the slightly different opening of the version of the proposal contained in the Jiu Wudaishi.

The first part of Wang’s proposal is an explanation of how things came to be in their present state. His opening statement is particularly important:

The Middle Kingdom lost Wu 吳, Shu 蜀 (Sichuan), You 幽 (one of the Sixteen Prefectures here used to refer to all of them) and Bing 并 (the Northern Han territory). All this was due to the loss of the Way 道.

\textsuperscript{120}Worthy, op. cit., 15-17. ZZTJ 292.9525-28.
Alternatively, from the *Jiu Wudaishi*:

The Tang 唐 (the Tang dynasty) lost the Way and [thus] lost Wu and Shu. The Jin 晋 (the Jin dynasty) lost the Way and [thus] lost You and Bing.

The loss of territory is thus connected to a loss of legitimacy for a dynasty. Conversely, a legitimate dynasty, one that has the Way, should possess or be able to retake the territory in question. This then is the Zhou *casus belli* and the conception that would haunt the Northern Song in its failure to retake the Sixteen Prefectures.

Wang goes on to discuss how this loss of the Way came about and what should be done to reverse the process. Once the internal problems of the dynasty are resolved, then military operations can be successfully commenced and the Will of Heaven will win out. The south should be conquered first beginning with the largest, strongest opponent, the Southern Tang 南唐. In terms replete with strategies from *Sunzi Bingfa* 孫子兵法, although unattributed, he describes how the Southern Tang should be attacked. The 700-mile border provided the Zhou with the opportunity to make small, harassing attacks to keep the Southern Tang off balance, while building up for a major campaign. After conquering the Tang, the smaller states in the south and Sichuan would submit to the Zhou without a fight. Once that was accomplished, the Sixteen Prefectures would either offer allegiance or be easily conquered. Finally, the Zhou would have to destroy the Northern Han because there was no way to induce it to submit.
Supplies should be stored along the border during the summer and autumn. The campaign against the Tang would begin one year from then.

Underlying Wang's strategy are two significant assumptions. First, he believed, correctly, that neither the Northern Han nor the Southern Tang would launch major attacks against the Zhou during the period of reconquest. Second, he regarded the Sixteen Prefectures as a piece of territory separate from the Liao empire, one that could offer its allegiance to the Zhou or be taken from the Liao as a limited objective. That is to say, the Liao would not regard an attack on the Sixteen Prefectures as a threat to their empire, only as a military venture whose objective was limited to a certain piece of territory. This last assumption was pure folly and vastly underestimated the Liao strength and resolve.

Worthy states that: "In spite of his praise of Wang's strategy, Chou Shih-tsung [Zhou Shizong] did not follow it to the letter." In fact, subsequent Zhou campaigns had very little to do with Wang's plan. The Zhou first took four northern prefectures from the kingdom of Shu (Sichuan), then turned to conquer a large section of Southern Tang territory and, finally, began a campaign for the Sixteen Prefectures. Shizong turned his attention north before conquering the south. Thus, the order of Zhou campaigns defied both Wang's strategy and a north-first or south-first analysis. It seems that Zhou Shizong's decisions had more to do with serendipity than following a theoretically well-constructed blueprint.

12\textsuperscript{1} Worthy, op. cit., 17.
The Campaign against Shu (24 May-30 December 955)\textsuperscript{122}

In March of 955 Shizong decided to capture Shu's four northern prefectures: Qinzhou 秦州, Chengzhou 成州, Jiezhou 隰州, and Fengzhou 秦州. A "request" from the "people of Qinzhou" to become part of the Zhou was duly manufactured and noted in the record. Although the Zhou did not invade until May of 955, the Shu ruler began defensive preparations as soon as he found out about Qinzhou's "request." He replaced Han Jixun 韓繼勳, the military governor of Xiongwu 雄武, and Wang Wandi 王萬迪, the prefect of Fengzhou 秦州, with Zhao Lizha 趙李扎 because, according to Zhao Lizha, Han Jixun and Wang Wandi weren't competent to lead a defense against the Zhou. Slightly later, on 12 May, the Shu ruler sent Wang Zhaoyuan 王昭遠 to prepare the northern fortifications and armor and weapons.

On the same day that Wang Pu delivered his grand strategy for the conquest of China, or shortly thereafter, Shizong ordered Xiang Xun, Wang Jing 王景, and Zan Jurun 孫居潤 to attack northern Shu. Wang Jing invaded from Sanguan 散關 on 24 May, and advanced to Qinzhou. In less than ten days Wang took Huangniu 黃牛 and seven other forts along the Qinzhou border. The Shu ruler appointed Li Tinggui 李廷珪 the Northern Circuit Mobile Brigade Campaign Commander on 3 June. The Northern Circuit was comprised of Qinzhou and Fengzhou. Gao Yanchou 高彥儁 was appointed Bandit Suppression Commissioner, with Lu Yanke 呂彦珂 as his assistant and Zhao Chongtao 趙崇

\textsuperscript{122}The Zhou campaign against Shu is chronicled in ZZTJ 292.9524-9533.
Zhao Lizha was at Deyang, not far from Chengdu, when he heard the Zhou had invaded. He was petrified and requested permission to retreat to the west. Without waiting for orders, Zhao abandoned his troops and rode quickly back to Chengdu, the Shu capital, on 12 June. Everyone in the city was frightened, assuming Zhao Lizha had been routed. The Shu ruler was furious and had Zhao beheaded.

The Zhou army fought inconclusively with Li Tinggui east of Weiwu City on 27 June. Weiwu City was northeast of Fengzhou. Shortly after this encounter the Shu ruler initiated contact with the Northern Han and the Southern Tang to see if they could act together to do something about the Zhou.

Nothing significant seems to have occurred for about a month after the battle at Weiwu City. The prime minister pointed out to Shizong on 22 July that Wang Jing and his fellow generals had not moved for some time. Since logistic support was also proving to be difficult, he asked that the troops be recalled. Shizong ordered Zhao Kuangyin investigate the situation. When Zhao returned, he reported that Qinzhou and Fengzhou could be taken. Shizong followed Zhao’s recommendations and continued the campaign.

Wang Jing defeated a Shu force on 31 August, capturing or killing three hundred men. This minor encounter was the first battle of any significance since Weiwu City. There had been very few battles because the Shu army was unwilling to leave its fortifications to fight, and because supply problems prevented the Zhou army from pressing its attack. The Shu probably felt that they were
more likely to outlast the Zhou than outfight them. Zhao Kuangyin’s inspection tour and subsequent report probably compared the supply situation of both sides. He must have concluded that the Zhou could outlast the Shu. All this is speculation, but the Shu strategy, when the campaign once again became active, concentrated on attacking Zhou supply lines. The Shu army probably risked battle because of dwindling supplies. Its failure to break the Zhou lines of communication effectively doomed the Shu’s effort to defend the four prefectures.

Li Tinggui interdicted the Zhou army’s supply lines on 19 September. First, he sent Li Jin 李進 to capture Maling Fort 馬嶺寨. Next, he positioned irregulars at Yegu 斜谷 and Baijian 白澗. Finally, he sent part of his army to Tangcangzhen 唐倉鎮, north of Fengzhou, and to Huanghuagu 黃花谷. In order to retake the Zhou supply lines, Wang Jing sent a force of two thousand Zhou soldiers under Zhang Jianxiong 張建雄 to Huanghua in October, and a second force of one thousand soldiers to Tangcang. Wang Luan 王巖 led his troops out from Tangcang and fought Zhang Jianxiong at Huanghua. Wang was defeated and fled back to Tangcang. A second Zhou army was waiting for him. Wang fought, and lost, again. He was captured with his three thousand men. The Zhou army also dispersed the Shu forces at Maling and Baijian. Li Tinggui, Gao Yanchou and the other Shu generals fell back to Qingniling 清泥嶺. Han Jixun abandoned Qinzhou and fled back to Chengdu. The Zhou army then dispersed the Shu force at Yegu. Chengzhou 成州 and Jiezhou 際州 also surrendered. The Shu ruler sued for peace on 24 November, but his letter was rejected unanswered because he called himself the "Emperor of Great Shu." He was
afraid and concentrated troops and provisions at Jianmen 剑门 and Baidi 白帝 to prepare a defense against the Zhou. These were the strategic positions that defended the entry to Sichuan itself. Wang Jing surrounded Fengzhou and Han Tong cut off the Shu relief army at Guzhen on 29 December. Fengzhou fell the next day. The Zhou army captured five thousand officers and men.

The sources for this campaign are silent on most of the details of the fighting. Even so, the outlines of what happened are revealing enough for us to draw some conclusions about it. The Shu forces adopted or were forced to adopt a defensive strategy based on walled towns and forts. All they needed to do was not lose in order to win. The Zhou were thus forced to take a series of fortifications. At the same time, they had to keep themselves supplied while denying the Shu the opportunity to do likewise. It was probably the logistics problem that kept the overall numbers and, in particular, the concentrated numbers so small. If we assume that logistic support was quite limited, as it seems to have been, then the manpower pool would have been similarly limited. Any concentration of men for a siege or a general action would be at the expense of some other objective. We must also remember that the Zhou were storing supplies and preparing troops for the major campaign against the Southern Tang at the end of the year. The Shu campaign was not Shizong's major concern at that time.

Once the Shu had more or less ceded the field to the Zhou, their own time became limited by whatever supplies they had already stored up. This is not to say that the Zhou entirely cut off the Shu from resupply, but transport of provisions from Sichuan would have been even more difficult than from the Zhou territory.
The Shu were betting that their stores could outlast the Zhou logistics system. They were not far wrong. Zhao Kuangyin's report must have argued both that the territory could be conquered and that it was worth the effort to do so. The renewed Zhou will and perhaps some additional supplies tilted the balance against the Shu. They realized that unless they did something their provisions would not outlast the Zhou's. Logistics, rather than the strength of a town's walls, was the issue. A besieged town could not expect to hold out against an opponent who controlled the field and had adequate logistic support. In many respects the campaign against Shu would be repeated on a larger scale with the campaign against the Southern Tang that began shortly afterward. The Shu forts closest to Zhou territory fell the fastest because they were at the end of the supply lines. Conversely, the Zhou were most concentrated at the beginning of the campaign and close to their own supplies.

Judged by the size of the forces involved or the territory conquered this was not a major campaign. It was, however, significant in two regards. First, it provided a staging area for the later Song conquest of Shu. Second, Zhao Kuangyin's involvement was pivotal. It was Zhao's inspection and evaluation that persuaded Shizong to continue the campaign. Later, as Song Taizu, Zhao directed the successful campaign against Shu from the capital. In a similar manner, as we shall see shortly, his participation in the Huainan campaign gave him direct, personal knowledge of the importance of riverine naval warfare and the capabilities of the Southern Tang.
CHAPTER FOUR

Zhou Shizong II

With the minor campaign against Shu completed, Zhou Shizong was now ready to attack the Southern Tang. This was the first real step toward conquering the southern states that had formed when the Tang dynasty collapsed. It proved to be the true beginning of the consolidation of a new Chinese empire like that of the Han and Tang. The empire for which Zhou Shizong laid the foundation, however, would not be ruled by his descendants.

The Southern Tang was the largest and most wealthy of the southern states in the tenth century. Shizong's immediate aims were limited. He did not expect to destroy or completely conquer the Southern Tang in a single campaign. It was simply too large and powerful a state to be quickly or easily overcome. As his military fortunes changed, so too did his demands. At the very least, he wanted to take the strategic city of Shouzhou (near present Huainanshi), on the Huai river, in order to provide a launching point for any future campaigns. The campaign was ultimately quite successful, entirely removing the Huai River as a defense line for the Tang. It also gave the Zhou fourteen rich prefectures, containing sixty counties, and an annual indemnity.
The Huainan Campaign (17 December 955-8 April 957) 淮南

Every winter the Huai river dried up and became easily fordable. Until 955 the Southern Tang sent troops to guard the river line during the winter. That year Wu Yanshao 吳延紹, the Army Supervisor of Shouzhou 勝州, said that all the troops were doing was using up supplies and the practice should be discontinued. Liu Renshan 劉仁瞻 unsuccessfully opposed the change. Just as the Zhou were planning to invade, the Southern Tang were neglecting their defenses. Apparently the Southern Tang leadership was not expecting a Zhou attack that year. The state of the Tang defenses was very important to Shizong. He must have been aware of the change in policy. Whether his decision to start the invasion earlier than Wang Pu 王溥 proposed was prompted by this opportunity or whether it was his original intention is unclear.124

Shizong appointed Li Gu 李穀 Chief Administrative Officer of the Huainan Route Forward Expeditionary Army on 17 December. Wang Yanchao 王彥超 was his second in command. Han Lingkun 韓令坤, the Commander in Chief of the Imperial Guard Cavalry, and eleven other generals were under them.125

By 6 January 956, the Southern Tang had heard about the mobilization

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123 The Huainan campaign is chronicled in ZJTJ 292.9532-294.9581, JWDS 115/5b-116/5b and XWDS 12.120.

124 Sima Guang 司馬光 seems to imply the former by the location in the text of the Tang policy change and it seems to be the more likely reason. ZJTJ 292.9532.

125 ZJTJ seems to indicate that Han Lingkun’s rank was a temporary duty assignment. JWDS does not include the prefix du 監 before his title.
and were preparing to resist the Zhou invasion. Liu Renshan started putting his defenses in order. He appointed Liu Yanzhen 劉彥貞 Northern Expeditionary Army Commander in Chief and ordered him to march to Shouzhou with twenty thousand troops. It is clear that the Southern Tang leadership knew that Shouzhou was one of the initial Zhou objectives. Huangfu Hui 皇甫曇 was appointed Officer for Rendering Assistance and Yao Feng 姚鳳 was appointed Director in Chief for Rendering Assistance, under Huangfu Hui. They were ordered to march thirty thousand troops to Dingyuan 定遠. Around that time, Li Gu and his army crossed the Huai river using a pontoon bridge at the ford at Zhengyang 正陽. Zhengyang was west of Shouzhou and above it on the Huai.

Li Gu reported on 25 January that Wang Yanchao had defeated more than two thousand Tang troops beneath the walls of Shouzhou. He reported on 30 January that Bai Yanyu 白延遇, the Vanguard Commander in Chief, defeated more than a thousand Tang troops at Shankouzhen 山口鎮. Shizong took the occasion of an official of the kingdom of Wuyue 吳越 coming to present tribute on 1 February to order its king to invade the Southern Tang from the south. Li Gu reported on 17 February another defeat of more than a thousand Tang troops at Shangyao 上窪.

Shizong decided to take the field himself on 20 February. Xiang Xun 向訓,  

126 Shouzhou 壽州 is sometimes called Shouchun 壽春. For consistency I always use Shouzhou.

127 ZJT 292.9532-33. JWDS 115/5b. XWDS 12.120. JWDS also contains a much more extensive edict by Shizong setting out his reasons for the invasion with reference to Sunzi and Wuqi in 115/5b-6a.
Wang Pu 王溥 and Han Tong 漢通 were left in charge of the capital. Li Zhongjin 李重進 was first ordered to take up a position at Zhengyang. Bai Zhongzan 白重贊 was sent to Yingshang 穎上 with three thousand soldiers of the emperor's bodyguard. Shizong left the capital on 22 February.

The defense of Shouzhou was more determined than expected. Li Gu had only been in the field for, at most, a month and a half, but both subsequent events and the sources make it clear that Shouzhou had not been expected to hold out that long.\footnote{ZZTJ 292.9534 states that: “Li Gu had attacked Shouzhou for a long time without taking it.” Considering that he had been attacking Shouzhou for less than two months we can only conclude that at least Sima Guang thought that a long time for a siege.} The strength of the city's resistance was due to the skill and resolve of Liu Renshan, the military governor of Qinghuai. He would prove to be one of the most formidable of the Southern Tang generals. His heroic defense of Shouzhou reconfigured the Zhou campaign, stopping the invasion and, due to its strategic location, leaving any territorial gains in question. Without a secure foothold in Southern Tang territory the Zhou army was particularly vulnerable to attacks on the pontoon bridge at Zhengyang. Loss of the bridge meant loss of communications with Zhou territory. Thus, what had been intended as a preliminary step in a larger plan became the focus of the campaign. Zhou success hinged on reducing Shouzhou and securing communications across the Huai river. The most important fighting took place around the pontoon bridge and around Shouzhou.

Around the time that Shizong was departing Kaifeng, Liu Yanzhen arrived at Laiyuanzhen 來遠鎭, 67 miles from Shouzhou, leading a Tang force to rescue the city. He also had a naval force of several hundred ships headed for Zhengyang.
to destroy the pontoon bridge. Li Gu knew the emperor was on his way to take
the field. He also knew that he had no navy to counter the Tang’s. He decided
to fall back to Zhengyang where he could defend the bridge and await the
emperor’s arrival. Shizong was at Yuzhen 国镇 when he heard that Li was
planning to withdraw. He promptly sent an order to stop it, but Li had already
abandoned his provisions and retreated to Zhengyang. Shizong arrived in
Chenzhou 陈州 on 27 February and hastily ordered Li Zhongjin to lead a force to
Huaishang 淮上.

Li sent a memorial to Shizong on 2 March reporting his situation: “The
rebel (Southern Tang) warships are advancing in the river. Our crossbow and
ballista fire cannot reach them. If the bridge is not preserved then the troops’
morale will be shaken to the point that we will be forced to retreat. The Tang
ships are advancing daily and the water of the Huai is rising. If Your Majesty
arrives and by chance the supply road is obstructed or cut then the danger would
be immeasurable. I beg Your Highness to halt at Chenzhou or Yingzhou until Li
Zhongjin arrives. He and I can evaluate the situation together and decide if the
rebel’s ships can be repulsed and the bridge preserved. We will then send you a
report. However, if the troops are drilled and the horses fed, after a year, the
rebels will be exhausted and we will take them before long.”129 Shizong was not
pleased with Li’s memorial. He immediately took steps to retake the initiative Li

129 JWDS 116/1ab represents Li Gu as retreating in order to preserve the army in the face
of a direct threat to the pontoon bridge which he had no navy to defend. All of his subordinate
generals concurred with his evaluation of the situation and the army retreated in some disorder.
The memorial to the emperor was a justification after the fact which included concern for
Shizong’s safety, which had not been a consideration in the original decision to retreat.
Fortunately for the Zhou, the Southern Tang general Liu Yanzhen proved to be both overconfident and incompetent. His appointment was due to bribing powerful officials rather than military acumen. Liu told his subordinates to rely upon bravery and not make plans. When he heard that Li Gu had retreated he was pleased and led his soldiers directly to Zhengyang. The units and the baggage wagons were spread out over a hundred miles. Liu Renshan and the prefect of Chizhou 张全约, strongly opposed Liu Yanzhen's pursuit of the Zhou army. Liu Renshan said to Liu Yanzhen: "Your army has not arrived and the enemy is already retreating. This is because they fear your prestige. Why try to bring the fight to such a quick conclusion? If, by chance, we lose, then this important business will fail." Liu Yanzhen didn't follow their advice and marched on. Liu Renshan said to those around him: "When Yanzhen meets the enemy, he will definitely be defeated." Then he increased the number of troops in the cities and prepared his defenses.

While Shizong had been unable to prevent Li Gu from retreating, he realized that he could take advantage of Li's retreat by attacking the pursuing Southern Tang army. Shizong ordered Li Zhongjin to hastily march to Zhengyang and attack the Tang forces. Li Zhongjin crossed the Huai River and fought the Tang army east of Zhengyang, defeating them after only one assault. Liu Yanzhen was beheaded and Xian Shilang and other officers captured alive. Li decapitated more than ten thousand (perhaps even more than twenty thousand) troops, leaving a trail of corpses for 10 miles. He also captured more than 300,000
pieces of armor, weapons and supplies. Zhang Quanyue gathered up the people and fled to Shouzhou. Huangfu Hui and Yao Feng fell back on Qingliuguan. Wang Shaoyan, the prefect of Chuzhou, abandoned his city and fled.130

Shizong reached Yongningzhen on 3 March. He addressed his officers and officials: "I have heard that the siege of Shouzhou has been lifted. Many of the farmers have returned to their villages. Now that they hear a great army has arrived, they will return and enter the city. I have sympathy for their hunger. It is appropriate to first send an announcement to comfort them saying that each person may attend to his occupation." Shizong reached Zhengyang on 5 March and replaced Li Gu with Li Zhongjin as Huainan Route Expeditionary Army Chief Bandit Suppression Commissioner. Li Gu was demoted to Acting Magistrate of Shou Prefecture.

Shizong crossed the Huai river on 6 March and reached Shouzhou itself on 7 March. He camped on the north side of the Fei river, 2/3 of a mile from the city. The various armies were ordered to surround Shouzhou and the pontoon bridge at Zhengyang was ordered moved to Xiacaizhen. Xiacaizhen was in Ying prefecture, 19 miles west and downstream of Zhengyang. The Zhou levied several hundred thousand men from the surrounding prefectures to attack the city on 8 March. They worked ceaselessly, day and night.

130ZZTJ 292.9536. JWDS 116/1b. XWDS 12.120. ZZTJ provides the figure of more than ten thousand beheaded. JWDS provides the higher figure of twenty thousand. There is no way to resolve the discrepancy. Both are possible. The higher figure may derive from the twenty thousand men who were directly under Liu Yanzhen's command.
More than ten thousand Tang troops tied up their ships on the Huai and camped below Tushan 塔山. On 11 March Shizong ordered Zhao Kuangyin to attack them. Zhao sent more than a hundred cavalry to attack their camp and then simulate a withdrawal. He placed troops in ambush and badly beat the Tang at Wokou 瀦口. Zhao beheaded He Yanxi 何延錫, their Military Director in Chief, and several other officers. He also captured more than fifty warships.

In preparation for the arrival of Zhou troops, the Tang ruler ordered He Jingzhu 何敬洙, the military governor of Wuchang 武昌, to move all of the people into the city in order to strongly defend it. He refused and had the land near the city cleared in order to make a battlefield. He said: "When the enemy arrives, the army and the people will all fight together to the last man!" The Tang ruler was pleased by He Jingzhu's plan. There is no confirmation that the plan was, in fact, carried out. But it is indicative of the Southern Tang strategy for dealing with the Zhou invasion. They intended to rely upon the defensive strength of their cities and avoid battle. Some commanders, like He Jingzhu, acted more aggressively.

The pontoon bridge at Xiacaizhen was in place and completed on 17 March. Shizong personally inspected it. He ordered Kang Yan 康嚴 beheaded by the side of the road for failure to properly guard the bridge. Si Chao 司超, the Patrolling Military Inspector of Lu 廬, Shou 壽, Guang 光 and Huang 黃 prefectures, reported on 19 March that he had defeated more than three thousand Tang troops at Shengtang 盛唐, 70 miles south of Shouzhou. He captured Gao Bi 高弼, the Director in Chief, and other officers, as well as more than forty warships.

When the Southern Tang ruler had heard that Shizong reached Huaishang,
he ordered Huangfu Hui and Yao Feng to raise one hundred thousand troops to relieve Shouzhou, using Chuzhou as their base. Shizong heard about Huangfu's and Yao's activities. Sometime between 17 March and 23 March he ordered Zhao Kuangyin to force march to Qingliuguan in response to the mobilization in Chuzhou. Zhao arrived with several thousand troops before the Southern Tang army was ready. Huangfu Hui and his subordinates arrayed themselves at the foot of the mountain in front of the pass with about fifteen thousand troops. Just as the vanguards of both sides opened the battle, Zhao led some troops out from behind the mountain. He had managed to march a force around the Southern Tang army's position and arrived in their rear. The Tang army fled back to Chuzhou closely pursued by the Zhou. They were going destroy the bridge into the city but had no time. Zhao danced his horse through the water, leading his troops in fording the stream and arriving directly beneath the city walls.

The Zhou army saved the bridge into Chuzhou by its rapid pursuit. But the Southern Tang still held the city. Chuzhou was strongly situated across a mountain pass. Zhao Kuangyin held the bottom of the pass in case Huangfu Hui ventured out again. At the same time, Zhao searched for a way to take the city. The local people directed him to a wise scholar named Zhao 趙 who taught in the village.131 The location is given as 滑流山 in JWDS.132 Worthy mistakenly conflated the village scholar Zhao 趙, who showed Zhao Kuangyin the mountain path around Chuzhou, with Zhao Pu 趙普, who became one of Kuangyin's most important advisors. Kuangyin met Zhao Pu shortly after taking the city. Pu had been sent from court as a military judge. His decisions impressed Kuangyin and he later took part in the plot that put Kuangyin on the throne. There is no further mention of the village scholar Zhao, but his convenient appearance and the way he described his plan to get behind the city fits in

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The scholar told Kuangyin that there was a small unused path that went behind the mountain. After fording a stream, one would arrive beneath the city walls, cutting the city off from the pass. Kuangyin was pleased with the plan and sent three regiments of cavalry to carry it out at night. They entered through an undefended gate. The unexpected attack panicked the Southern Tang forces. Huangfu Hui donned armor and led his personal troops into battle. He sought a direct confrontation with Zhao Kuangyin, who was still outside the city.

Huangfu Hui said: "Everyone wishes to fight for his ruler. I want to come out of the city and fight." Zhao laughed and agreed to it. Huangfu ordered his troops and deployed. The troops clashed three times. Zhao Kuangyin suddenly broke through the Tang lines calling out: "I only want to seize Huangfu Hui. No one else is my enemy." He struck Huangfu in the head with his sword and captured him alive. Yao Feng was also captured. The capture of Huangfu Hui and Yao Feng ended Chuzhou's resistance.

As a result of the Zhou victories, the Southern Tang ruler sent a letter to Zhou Shizong asking him to stop his invasion. Shizong did not respond. This was probably due to his confidence in the success of the invasion, and the Tang ruler's addressing the letter from the "Tang Emperor" to the "Emperor of Great Zhou."

Shizong ordered Hou Zhang 侯章 to attack the Shouzhou palisade of boats on 29 March. He broke through the dike at the northwest corner of the moat in order to lead the water into the Fei River. Meanwhile, Huangfu Hui was suspiciously well with literature and military theory. Worthy, op cit., 35.
brought to see Shizong. He was badly wounded from his encounter with Zhao Kuangyin when he spoke to Shizong: "I was not disloyal in what I did, but not all of the troops were brave. Before this, I fought the Liao many times but I have never seen soldiers this well trained." He greatly praised Zhao Kuangyin's bravery. Several days later he died of his wounds.133

Shizong heard from his spies that Yangzhou was not prepared. On 30 March he ordered Han Lingkun to attack it. He cautioned Han not to injure the population or the imperial tombs of the Li family.134 Shizong sent troops to guard the tombs.

The series of recent defeats frightened the Southern Tang ruler. He sent another peace mission to Shizong led by Zhong Mo, a Hanlin Academician, and Li Deming, a Wenliyuan Academician. They brought liquid medicine, one thousand ounces of gold, five thousand ounces of silver and two thousand bolts of silk, as well as five hundred head of cattle and forty thousand gallons of wine to entertain the troops. This very large procession arrived at Shouzhou on 2 April.

Shizong put on a display of his soldiers for the Tang emissaries. He said to them: "Your ruler claims to be a descendant of the Tang royal house. It is appropriate to know the rites and decorum to deal with him. It must be different from other states. His territory and mine are only separated by a river, but he

133 ZZTJ 292.9539. In relating this encounter between Huangfu Hui and Zhou Shizong, Sima Guang is making a subtle reference to the belief that, had Zhao Kuangyin lived long enough, he would have been able to beat the Liao and take the Sixteen Prefectures.

134 The Li family was the imperial house of the Tang dynasty.

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has never sent a single emissary to establish good relations. He only sends missions to the Liao by sea. Abandoning the Chinese and dealing with the barbarians, where are the rites and decorum in this? Moreover, you want to convince me to order my soldiers to stop? I am not a doltish ruler of the Six Kingdoms [period]. How can your entreaties have the power to move me? You can return and tell your ruler that if he comes to see me, and apologizes, this whole business will be over. But, [if he doesn't, then] I will go to Jinling City (the Southern Tang capital) and borrow from its stores to reward my troops. Will your ruler and his officials not regret [if this happens]?" Zhong and Li fought their fear, but didn’t dare to speak. This was Shizong’s first mention of any sort of a casus belli with the Southern Tang.

Meanwhile in the south, the king of Wuyue sent troops to camp along the border of the Southern Tang to wait for orders from Shizong. Chen Man, the Commander of the Suzhou Garrison Fields, pointed out to Wu Cheng, one of the ministers of state, that the Zhou invasion had distracted the Tang. Nearby Changzhou was unprepared and could be easily taken. Changzhou was 60 miles northwest of Suzhou. Wu then spoke to the Wuyue king and asked that they immediately dispatch troops to follow the Zhou policy. One of the other ministers of state, Yuan Dezhao, opposed the action. He pointed out that the Southern Tang was a powerful state which could not be taken lightly. If the Zhou troops failed to arrive then they would be in great danger. Wu countered that if they attacked immediately they couldn't lose. The king agreed with Wu and sent troops to attack Changzhou.
Han Lingkun surreptitiously moved to Yangzhou on 5 April. He arrived at dawn and sent Bai Yanlu 白延鲁 with several hundred cavalry to rush into the city. Everyone in the city was taken by surprise. Bai opened the gates and Han quickly followed him with the main army. Gu Chong 賀崇, the Dongdu Garrison Commander 東都, set fire to the government storehouses and the people's homes. After destroying the city, he fled south. Feng Yanlu 馮延魯, the Assistant Regent Gentleman of the Ministry of Works, shaved his head and took refuge in a Buddhist temple where he was seized by Zhou soldiers. Han then settled the situation and calmed the people.

Wang Kui 王連 reported on 10 April that he had taken Changshan Fort in Ezhou 鄂州 and killed more than three thousand Southern Tang troops. Changshan Fort was in the north of Ezhou. Zhao Kuangyin reported on 11 April that Geng Qian 耿謙, the Military Commissioner of Tianchang 天長, surrendered. Tianchang county was in Yangzhou, 37 miles west from the prefectural capital. Zhao also captured more than two hundred thousand units of grain and fodder. On the same day, Han Lingkun attacked and took Taizhou 泰州. The prefect fled to Jinling 金陵. Taizhou was 39 miles east of Yangzhou. On 12 April the commander of the Jing'an Army 靜安軍, He Jiyun 何繼筠, captured Southern Tang emissaries on their way to the Liao to ask for help against the Zhou.

On 13 April the king of Wuyue commanded Lu Yanzhu 路彦铢, the

\[135\text{ZZTJ} \text{gives his name as Wang Kui. JWDS gives his name as Wang Jinkui 王進遠. I have arbitrarily followed ZZTJ.}\]
Commander in Chief of the Imperial Guard\textsuperscript{136} to attack Xuanzhou 宣州. Shizong went out to inspect the water palisade at Fei Bridge 沁橋 (a bridge over the Fei River) on 14 April. He personally picked up a ballista stone and carried it on horseback to the ballistae at the palisade. All of the officers in his retinue who passed the bridge also carried stones. Zhao Kuangyin went into the Shouzhou moat in a leather boat. Bow and crossbow fire rained down from the city walls. Zhang Qiong 張瓊 was struck in the thigh by an arrow. The barbed head lodged in the bone and could not be pulled out. Zhang drank a large goblet of wine and ordered the bone broken so that the arrow could be extracted. Although he lost several pints of blood the expression on his face was normal.\textsuperscript{137}

The Tang ruler sent another delegation to Shizong, led by Sun Sheng 孫晟, the Minister of Works, and Wang Chongzhi 王崇質, the Minister of Rites. They presented a message to Shizong which said: "Since 907, the empire has been divided and in ruins. Some have been able to hold one part [of the empire] and some have served different dynasties. I have inherited my ancestral holdings and possess the land north of the Yangzi. I am like a crow who doesn't know who to follow or which phoenix is the true one to attach myself to. Now the Mandate of Heaven has returned and your influence is broad. I want to submit as Liangche and Hunan did. I will humbly receive your calendar and cautiously guard your

\textsuperscript{136}The \textit{shangzhiwei} were the Imperial Guard during the Ming dynasty. They were a part of the Capital Guards \textit{jingwei}. My translation of \textit{shangzhi} is anachronistic. See Hucker, \textit{A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China}, (Southern Materials Center: Taipei), 1975, 407.

\textsuperscript{137}Zhang Qiong survived his wound. When Zhao Kuangyin became emperor he put Zhang in charge of the Imperial Bodyguard.
borders. I beg your majesty to recall your forces. Please pardon my crime of submitting late and appoint me leader of this subordinated state so that I can serve as your official. Then who will not say that he submits to your far-reaching virtue?” Then they again presented gifts of one thousand ounces of gold, one hundred thousand ounces of silver and two thousand rolls of gauze silk. Shizong accepted the gifts, but did not alter his campaign plans. Sun Sheng stayed in the Zhou camp, however, keeping the channel for diplomatic communication open.

On 15 April He Chao 何超, the Pacification and Military Inspection Officer of Guang 光, Shu 舒 and Huang 黄 prefectures, gathered several tens of thousands of troops from the prefectures of An 安, Sui 隰, Shen 申 and Cai 蔡 and attacked Guang prefecture. The next day He Chao reported that the Southern Tang prefect of Guangzhou had fled the city. The Director in Chief, Zhang Chenghan 張承翰, surrendered it to He. Guo Lingtu 郭令圖, the Zhou prefect of Shuzhou took Shuzhou on 17 April. Li Fu 李福, the Southern Tang general in charge of Qizhou 藁州, killed his prefect and surrendered the prefecture to the Zhou. Ji Cangzhen 齊藏珍, the Commissioner of the Six Residences, was sent to attack Huangzhou. The people of Shuzhou expelled Guo Lingtu on 23 April. Wang Shenqi 王審琦, the Iron Cavalry Commander in Chief 鐵騎 載 some light cavalry, attacked Shuzhou at night and retook it. Guo then returned to take control. Shu, Qi and Huang prefectures were all located along the Yangzi.

Shizong sent Sun Sheng, the Southern Tang emissary, below the walls of Shouzhou on 30 April to convince Liu Renshan, the defending general, to surrender. Sun told Liu: “You have received the generosity of the country (the Southern
Tang). You cannot open the gates to the bandits (the Zhou)." When he heard what Sun had done, Shizong was very angry. Sun said: "I am a high official. How can I instruct a military governor to rebel?" Shizong then relented.

The Tang ruler sent Li Deming to talk to Shizong and ask him to cancel his (the Southern Tang ruler's) title of emperor. He would cede the six prefectures of Shou, Hao, Si, Chu, Guang, and Hai (all situated along the south side of the Huai River, also known as the Huainan region) to the Zhou and pay an annual indemnity of one million units of gold and silk if Shizong would cease military operations.

At that time, Shizong already held half of the land in the Huainan region. His generals reported more victories every day. Consequently Shizong decided to take the Jiangbei region (those prefectures north of the Yangzi and south of the Huainan region) as well as the Huainan region. The Southern Tang offer was therefore insufficient. Li Deming saw that the Zhou army was advancing daily and said: "The Tang ruler does not know that Your Majesty's military strength is so great. I beg you to give me a grace period of five days to return and report to him that he must also give you the Jiangbei region." Shizong allowed him to go.

Sun Sheng accordingly sent Wang Chongzhi and Li Deming back to Jinling. Shizong sent An Hongdao, a Palace Servitor, to accompany them bearing a letter for the Southern Tang ruler. It said (in part): "If you preserve the title of emperor our relations will be cold. Consolidate your intention to serve my power and then, after all, I will not press others into danger." It further stated that: "I wait for all of the counties to come and surrender. Then I will do away with this
great army. This is my ultimatum. I will say no more." Shizong also sent along letters to the ministers and generals to induce them to personally submit. The Tang ruler sent a reply again apologizing. But he did not immediately agree to Shizong’s terms.

Li Deming described the strength of the Zhou forces. He suggested that the Tang ruler also cede the Jiangbei region to the Zhou. The Tang ruler was not pleased. Song Qiqiu 宋齊丘 thought that they should not cede more territory to the Zhou. Li spoke at length about the military situation, but no one believed him. He was then impeached. The Tang ruler was told that Li had sold out the country for profit. He was furious and had Li beheaded.

In the south, Wu Cheng 吳程, from the kingdom of Wuyue, attacked Changzhou 常州 and broke the Tang forces outside the suburbs, taking captive their Military Training Commissioner, Zhao Renze 趙仁澤. The Tang ruler was concerned about the Wuyue incursion and feared that they would go on to attack Runzhou 鹽州, 64 miles to the northwest. He sent Chai Kehong 柴克宏, the Right Martial Guard General 右武衛, to link up with Lu Mengjun 陸孟俊, the prefect of Yuanzhou 袁州, and relieve Changzhou.

At that time all of the good Tang troops were in Jiangbei, fighting the Zhou, so Chai led several thousand undernourished, exhausted troops. Even so, he defeated Wu Cheng’s army at Changzhou, beheading more than ten thousand soldiers. His victory halted the Wuyue offensive. Chai then requested permission to lead troops to rescue Shouzhou. Unfortunately for the Southern Tang, he died before he arrived.
On 14 May Lu Mengjun led more than ten thousand Southern Tang troops north from Changzhou to Taizhou. The Zhou troops fell back and Lu retook the city. Lu next advanced on Yangzhou. He camped at Shugang to the west of the city. His position on the heights threatened the Zhou force's line of retreat, so Han Lingkun withdrew. Shizong sent a force under Zhang Yongde to reestablish the Zhou position. Han then returned and reentered the city. Shizong then sent a force under Zhao Kuangyin to Liuhe, in Chang prefecture, 44 miles northwest from the city of Yangzhou. Zhao's position allowed him to cut off the Tang lines of communication. Han then resolved to firmly defend Yangzhou.

Shizong had personally directed the siege of Shouzhou. He had ordered his forces to attack day and night. But after nearly three months of constant assault the Zhou army had failed to capture Shouzhou. There were several feet of water in the Zhou camps from heavy rains and they had lost many men during the attacks. Supplies were running low and the late Li Deming (executed by the Tang ruler) had not returned. On 19 May Shizong declared that Shouzhou had all but fallen. He left the siege and went to Haozhou, 127 miles to the east, arriving there on 25 May.

Shortly after 25 May, Han Lingkun defeated a force of Tang troops east of Yangzhou, capturing Lu Mengjun. The Tang Prince of Qi Jing Da 卷三, Jing Da 景達, led twenty thousand soldiers from Guabu forded the Yangzi River and approached to within 7 miles of Liuhe. Jing stopped there and built a stockade. Several

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138 Characterized in ZZTJ as "a long time."

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commanders wanted to attack Jing's force but Zhao Kuangyin refused. He said: "Their building a stockade for defense shows that they fear us. Presently, our force is less than two thousand men. If we go and attack them then they will see how few we are. But if we wait for them to come to us and then attack, defeating them will be a certainty." Several days later, the Tang forces advanced to Liuhe and Zhao strongly attacked them. He crushed the Tang army, killing or capturing nearly five thousand men. The remaining mass of more than ten thousand soldiers fled back to the Yangzi. A great number were killed in the struggle to get on board the boats. The battle at Liuhe destroyed the last of the well-trained Tang soldiers. During the battle, Zhao acted as if he were just directing the fighting, but he surreptitiously used his sword to make a cut on the leather helmets of the soldiers who were not fighting hard. The next day he beheaded the several dozen men with marked helmets. After that none of his soldiers dared not fight to the death.

At that time the Tang ruler heard that Yangzhou had fallen and ordered the neighboring regions to send troops to retake it. Han Lingkun reported on 29 May that he had defeated more than ten thousand Yangzhou troops at Wantouyan 灣頭堰, 3 miles north of Yangzhou. Zhang Yongde reported defeating more than ten thousand Sizhou 泗州 troops at Quqiyan 曲溪堰.

Wokou 濽口 reported on 5 June that the new pontoon bridge (across the Huai River) was finished. Shizong arrived the next day from Haozhou to inspect it. He wanted to go to Yangzhou, but his ministers dissuaded him. Chen Hui 陳諴, the Tang military governor of Yongan 永安, defeated a Zhou force at Nantai. 

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river MIE£H on 15 June, capturing or killing more than a thousand men. Shizong headed back to Kaifeng from Wokou on 17 June. He arrived in Kaifeng on 4 July.

Liu Renshan made a sally from Shouzhou on 21 July and attacked the camp of Li Jixun 李繼勳, the Commander in Chief of the Imperial Guard Infantry. Li was camped south of the city and Liu had found out from his spies that the camp was not prepared. Liu killed several hundred men and burned their weapons. This successful sally helped to convince the Tang ruler that he could resist Zhou incursions in Jiangbei. He ordered troops sent to Jiangbei from several prefectures.

For a short time, the tide of battle began to turn in the Southern Tang's favor. The Tang ruler sent Zhu Yuan 朱元 to retake Shuzhou 舒州 on 29 August. Guo Lingtuan, the Zhou prefect, fled the city. Li Ping 李平 took Qizhou from the Zhou. Zhu also took Hezhou 和州. The local population began to resist the Zhou army. As the campaign dragged on, the presence of the Zhou army made life difficult. People formed "White Armor Armies" (白甲軍) of civilians wearing paper armor. These armies were actually able to defeat Zhou troops on several occasions and were responsible for much of the Tang success in recovering land. No large Zhou units were beaten. But these armies of civilians were able to drive off smaller units and thus impede Zhou efforts to control the territory around major strategic points.

The Southern Tang relief forces camped at Zijin Mountain 紫金山, south of Shouzhou. They communicated with the city by using signal fires. On the Zhou side, Xiang Xun sent a memorial requesting that the troops of Huangling join with
the other troops for a concentrated attack on Shouzhou. He intensified the siege of the city. The troops fighting over Yangzhou and Chuzhou were also brought back to concentrate on Shouzhou. Although many of the Tang commanders wanted to directly attack the Zhou besiegers, Song Qiqiu felt that it was better to adopt a defensive stance. He ordered the generals to defend their positions and not go out to fight.

Jing Da marched to Haozhou in order to provide moral support from a distance for the troops attempting to relieve Shouzhou. All military orders, though signed by Jing Da, came from his advisor, Chen Jue. They had fifty thousand troops but didn't want to fight a decisive battle. The commanders and officials were all afraid of Chen Jue and didn't dare say anything.

Zhang Yongde camped at Xiacaizhen on 15 September. The Tang sent Lin Renzhao with a naval force to rescue Shouzhou. Lin tried to use fire ships to attack the pontoon bridge at Xiacai, but the wind changed direction and he had to retreat. Zhang had also strung an iron cable more than a thousand feet long across the river about fifty feet from the bridge. The cable kept the Tang ships from getting too close to the bridge.

Li Zhongjin reported on 19 November that Wang Yansheng, the Iron Cavalry Commander in Chief, had defeated a Tang force attacking Shengtang. Wang beheaded more than three thousand men. Zhang Yongde reported on 28 November that he had defeated a Tang army at Xiacai. The Tang had returned to attack the bridge. Zhang ordered good swimmers to dive beneath the Tang boats and anchor them to the river bottom with iron chains. Once the
ships could neither advance nor retreat he let his soldiers attack them at will. A
great number of men were killed and their ships sunk.

The Tang tried, and failed, to obtain aid from the Liao. The Liao were
either unwilling or unable to attack the Zhou at that time. While the Zhou
offensive had bogged down, Tang rescue efforts had also failed to produce
decisive results. They had been beaten twice in their attempts to cut the pontoon
bridge at Xiacai. At the same time, Shouzhou had held out far longer than
Shizong had expected. The entire Huainan campaign became focussed on the
siege of Shouzhou. The Zhou army had overextended itself. It had also aroused
popular resistance to its presence. Together, these two factors had accomplished
what the Southern Tang regular military forces had failed to do: force the Zhou to
relinquish widespread territorial gains. Still, a Zhou victory at Shouzhou would
allow it to quickly retake the territory it had conquered, then relinquished, earlier
in the campaign.

By February of 957, the Tang had seen enough defeats to know that it
could not withstand the Zhou army in the field. Instead, the Tang strategy
focussed on gradually breaking the siege of Shouzhou. First, a series of forts
was set up around Zijin mountain, near the city. The positions on Zijin mountain
threatened the Zhou camps around Shouzhou. Next, the Tang army extended a
covered roadway toward the city. If the fortified passage reached the city, the
Tang would be able to resupply Shouzhou, effectively defeating the Zhou siege.
Finally, the Tang continued their efforts to destroy the pontoon bridge at Xiacai.
The bridge was the Zhou army's only solid link to the rest of Zhou territory. If the
bridge were broken the siege of Shouzhou would be seriously weakened, if not ended. If the siege of Shouzhou was broken and the bridge at Xiacai destroyed, then the very existence of the Zhou expeditionary army would be imperiled.

Jing Da sent Xu Wenzhen 許文稹, the military governor of Yong'an, Bian Hao 邊镐, the Chief Military Commissioner, and Zhu Yuan, leading several myriads of soldiers, upstream from Haozhou to relieve Shouzhou on 3 February 957. They built more than ten stockades around Zijin Mountain and made contact with the city by signal fires. When the covered passage had almost reached Shouzhou, Li Zhongjin made a frontal assault on the Tang forces and badly beat them. He killed five thousand men and took two of the stockades. This was reported to Shizong on 21 February.

Liu Renshan requested that Bian Hao be put in charge of the defense of Shouzhou, so that Liu could personally lead his forces in a decisive battle. Jing Da rejected the request. Consequently, Liu became sick with anger and melancholy. His younger son, Chongjian 崇諫 tried to flee to Zhou territory by boat, but was captured. Liu ordered him cut in half at the waist. None of the officials or officers dared to try and save him, except for Zhou Tinggou 周廷構, the Army Supervisor. When his pleas failed to change Liu's mind, Zhou went to the boy's mother to ask her to intercede. She said: "It is not that I do not love him, but military law cannot be adapted to individuals. It is not a lack of sentiment. If he is reprieved then the Liu will not be a loyal family. We will be unable to face the commanders and soldiers." The sentence was carried out. All of the commanders and soldiers were touched.
At about that time, Shizong was having a policy review. Most of his advisors felt that the Tang relief forces were still strong. They advised Shizong to stop the campaign. He was still uncertain so, on 12 March, he sent Fan Zhi and Wang Pu to get Li Gu’s opinion. Li was ill at home. He sent a memorial saying: "Shouzhou is in difficult straits and will soon fall. If Your Majesty personally goes into the field then [our] commanders and men will fight hard and the relieving troops [of the Tang] will be afraid. Those in the city will know that they will be destroyed and must submit." Shizong was pleased with this.

Shizong left the capital to take the field again on 21 March. He brought a new riverine navy of several hundred vessels with him. When the Zhou began their campaign they had no naval forces whatsoever. The course of the campaign had made it clear to Shizong that he would need to remedy this weakness if he wanted to take Shouzhou. Surrendered and captured Tang sailors were forced to teach Zhou troops naval warfare. Meanwhile, ships were built west of the capital on the Bian River. Wang Huan, the Right Brave Guard Great General, was placed in command of the navy and its several thousand sailors. The Tang troops were quite alarmed when they saw the Zhou navy.

Shizong reached Xiacai on 31 March. He crossed the Huai river during the night of 4 April and arrived at Shouzhou. At dawn on 5 April he donned armor and, with the Zhou army south of Zijin Mountain, ordered Zhao Kuangyin to attack the Tang vanguard stockade to the north of the mountain (the one closest to the city). Zhao defeated the Tang and captured or killed more than three thousand men. He also cut the covered passage into the city. Shizong
divided his troops up and had them guard the other stockades. He then returned to Xiacai. Zhu Yuan, the Vanguard Moat and Stockade Commander, surrendered his stockade along with more than ten thousand men the night of 6 April.

Shizong's army was at Zhaobu 趙步 on 7 April, on the north bank of the Huai River. All of the Zhou commanders commenced their attack on the remaining stockades around Zijin Mountain. They broke them all and killed or captured more than ten thousand men. The Tang generals Xu Wenjin, Bian Hao and Yang Shouzhong 楊守忠 were captured. The remains of the Tang forces retreated east along the Huai River. Shizong had anticipated this and earlier positioned several hundred cavalry on the north bank, infantry and cavalry on the south bank and the navy on the Huai river to pursue them. Nearly forty thousand Tang troops were killed, drowned or captured in the 70 mile pursuit. More than a hundred thousand boats and units of grain were also taken. When Liu Renshan heard the next day that the rescue force had been defeated he choked and sighed.

Shizong next shifted his efforts to cutting off Haozhou, reasoning that any further relief forces would have to come through there. Laborers were drafted from the nearby counties to build two forts on either side of the Huai River at Zhenhuaijun 鎮淮軍. The pontoon bridge at Xiacai was then moved between the forts. The Haozhou Director in Chief, Guo Yanwei 郭延韜, planned to sail up the Huai on 9 April, take the Zhou by surprise and burn the pontoon bridge. Zhao Kuangzan 趙匡贇, the Right Dragon Martial Commander-general 右龍武, knew about the attack and ambushed the Tang force when it arrived, defeating it. Jing
Da and Chen Jue fled back to Jinling leaving Chen Decheng 陳德誠 and the rest of the army to retreat without them.

Shizong returned to Xiacai on 14 April and sent an edict to Liu Renshan the following day commanding him to surrender. Shizong assembled his troops to the north of Shouzhou on 19 April. Liu was very ill and couldn't recognize the people around him. His subordinates drafted a letter of surrender for him on 21 April and sent it to the Zhou. The city was formally surrendered over the next two days, although Liu himself was too sick to actively participate. Shizong rewarded Liu for his spirited defense of the city. The siege had lasted fifteen months, from 25 January 956 to 23 April 957.

After the fall of Shouzhou very little occurred until the winter of that year. Shizong returned to the capital on 14 May. Another attack upon the pontoon bridge at Wokou by Guo Yanwei was successful on 11 June. Guo defeated Wu Xingde 武行德, the military governor of Wuning 武寧, at Dingyuan 定遠. Shizong apparently took the time to prepare for another push in the campaign. He may have been resting and refitting his troops or training new ones to replace his losses.

Shizong left the capital to take the field again on 13 November. He crossed the Huai River on 27 November and arrived west of Haozhou the next day. Six miles northwest of the city of Haozhou there was an island on which the Tang had built a palisaded outpost. Since it was surrounded by water they thought they were secure from attack. They believed the Zhou troops would be unable to cross the water. Shizong personally commanded the attack on the
outpost on 29 November. He ordered Kang Baoyi, a Palace Duty Officer, to lead several hundred armored soldiers using camels to attack it, taking advantage of their greater height. Zhao Kuangyin reinforced him with an additional force of cavalry (more camels?) and the outpost was taken. Meanwhile, Li Zhongjin broke the through the south gate of Haozhou.

Shizong turned his attention to Haozhou itself on 4 December. Wang Shenqi was ordered to take the water fort. Several hundred Tang warships were camped west of the city. They built a palisade wall of logs along the river bank to defend themselves. Shizong ordered the navy to attack the position. They pulled up the palisade wall, burned more than seventy ships and beheaded more than two thousand men. The Zhou forces also took Haozhou's goat and horse wall (see chapter two). The Tang commander of Haozhou, Guo Yanwei, sent Shizong a letter on 7 December saying that he would hand over the city if the emperor would send an order to Jinling first. He was afraid for his family in Southern Tang territory. Shizong did so.

Shizong had heard that there was a Tang fleet of several hundred ships on the Huan River planning to relieve Haozhou. He sent troops on the night of 12 December to attack the fleet. Two days later the Zhou force badly beat the Tang fleet at Tongkou, beheading more than five thousand men and taking more than two thousand prisoners.

Shizong advanced to Sizhou, arriving there on 16 December. Sizhou was 60 miles downstream from Haozhou. Zhao Kuangyin first attacked the south of the city, burning the city gate and breaking the moon wall (see chapter two) of
the water fort. Shizong then established himself in the tower of the moon wall so that he could oversee the attack on the city. Ten days later, on 26 December, Fan Zaiyu 范再遇, the defending general of Sizhou, capitulated. Another Tang force of several hundred warships was driven from Tongkou by Zhou cavalry. They retreated to defend Qingkou 清口, the mouth of the Qing River. Shizong had now secured the second of the major anchors of the Huai River defense line. Sizhou was also close to the point where the Bian Canal entered the Huai.

Shizong then gave orders to sweep the Tang from the river. He advanced east on the northern bank with his personal troops. Zhao Kuangyin commanded infantry and cavalry on the south bank. The navy sailed down the middle of the river. The Zhou forces were headed downstream to Chuzhou 楚州, 73 miles northwest of Sizhou. They advanced marching and fighting. The sounds of the signal drums could be heard for miles. Shizong arrived northwest of Chuzhou on 1 January, driving all of the Tang troops before him. There were further Tang forces to the east, below Chuzhou. Shizong personally pursued them. Zhao Kuangyin was in the vanguard and chased them for 20 miles, capturing Chen Chengzhao 陳承昭, the military governor of Baoyi 保義. In addition, they captured, burned or sank more than three hundred warships and killed or drowned more than seven thousand men. The Tang navy was now eliminated from the Huai River.

Shizong crossed the Huai River on 2 January and camped northwest of Chuzhou. He commenced the attack on the city on 8 January, taking their moon wall. On 10 January Guo Yanwei came to see Shizong. The emperor said:
"Since I've come south, the various Southern Tang generals have been continuously defeated and have forgotten to think of cutting [the pontoon bridge across the Huai]. Only you were able to cut the bridge at Wokou and take Dingyuan Fort [see above]. You have sufficiently paid back your country."

Shizong sent Wu Shouqi 武守琦, the Commander in Chief of the Left Brigade of the Iron Cavalry, to Yangzhou with several hundred cavalry. When Wu reached Gaoyou 高郵, 34 miles to the northwest, the Tang evacuated Yangzhou, moving the people south of the Yangzi and burning down the official buildings and the peoples' houses. Yangzhou was only 15 miles north of the Yangzi. When Wu arrived several days later there were only a few sick people left. Shizong had also heard that Taizhou was unprepared and sent a force to attack it. They took it on 17 January.

Wang Hanzhang 王漢璋, the Right Dragon Martial General 右龍武, reported on 27 January that he had taken Haizhou. Shizong wanted to send his warships from the Huai River to the Yangzi. But there was no pre-existing way to crossover. The only waterway that came close to connecting the two rivers was the Guan River 龕水, northwest of Chuzhou. The initial survey of the river was discouraging: the terrain was not favorable for building an extension of the river to connect the Huai and Yangzi. It could be done, but only with a vast expenditure of time and labor. Shizong went to see for himself and then drew up a plan. They drafted labor from the surrounding prefecture and completed the extension in less than ten days. Several hundred Zhou warships then sailed into the Yangzi. The Tang were terribly alarmed at the news. The defensive line of the Yangzi had just
been compromised. Jinling itself was now threatened.

Chuzhou finally fell on 16 February, after more than forty days of siege. The stubborn defenders had fought until their arrows and swords were gone. Then they took poison and committed suicide. Over one thousand men died. When the Zhou took the city not a single person was alive to surrender.

Tian Chang 天長 surrendered on 23 February. Shizong left Chuzhou on 27 February and reached Yangzhou on 8 March. Ci Chao 司超, the prefect of Huangzhou 黃州, reported on 16 March that Wang Shenqi had attacked Shuzhou and captured its prefect Shi Renwang 施仁望. Shizong arrived at Yingluanzhen 迎薰鎭 on 1 April. He heard that several hundred Tang warships were at Dongfuzhou 東布州, preparing to sail to Suzhou 蘇州 and Hangzhou 杭州. He sent Murong Yanzhao 慕容延釗, the Palace Corps Provost Marshal, commanding the army, and Song Yanwo 宋延渥, the Right Divine Martial Commander General 右神武, commanding the navy, to set up an ambush on the Yangzi. Murong reported on 4 April that they had badly beaten the Tang at Dongfuzhou. Shizong sent Li Zhongjin to attack Luzhou 庐州.

The Tang ruler heard that Shizong was on the Yangzi and feared that the Zhou army would cross over and advance south. At that point only four prefectures in the Huainan region, Lu, Shu, Qi and Huang had not fallen. The Tang ruler sent Chen Jue to Shizong, offering him the remaining prefectures in order to make the Yangzi the new border. Shizong agreed and sent back a decree which addressed the Southern Tang ruler as "King of Jiangnan." On 8 April the Tang ruler again sent Liu Chengyu to Shizong, this time with a petition from the "Ruler
of the Country of Tang" asking to present the four prefectures and a yearly tribute of one hundred thousand units. The settlement gave the Zhou fourteen prefectures, containing sixty counties. This was approximately half of the Southern Tang’s territory.

The Sixteen Prefectures Campaign (29 April-27 July 959)\(^{139}\)

Shizong ordered the dredging of various rivers and canals in Hebei and Hedong on 12 March 959. This was done in order to facilitate the movement of supplies and troops north in preparation for a campaign to retake the Sixteen Prefectures. On 29 April Shizong announced that he was going to Cangzhou, on the northern border. He ordered Sun Xingyou, the military governor of Yiwu, to guard Xishan Pass. This was the pass which the Northern Han forces would use to come to the aid of the Liao. Han Tong, the Imperial Guard Bodyguard Provost Marshal, and his subordinates were sent ahead with the navy on 2 May. Shizong left the capital on 9 May.

Han Tong reported on 25 May that he had repaired the waterways and entered Liao territory from Cangzhou. He built a stockade south of Qianningjun. Qianningjun was in Cang prefecture’s Yongan county, 34 miles west of Cangzhou. Repairs were made on the damaged embankments and thirty-six locks were opened, allowing the Ying and Mo rivers to flow. Shizong

\(^{139}\)The Sixteen Prefectures campaign is chronicled in ZTZJ 294.9594-9602, JWDS 120/4b and XWDS 20.124.
reached Cangzhou on 26 May. He immediately led several tens of thousands of infantry and cavalry from Cangzhou to cross the Liao border. The next day he arrived at Qianningjun. The Liao prefect of Ningzhou 窮州, Wang Hong 王洪, surrendered the city to him. Shizong put the navy in order on 30 May, making the command assignments for the various generals. Han Tong was made Chief Administrator of Land Routes 陸路 and Zhao Kuangyin was made Chief Administrator of Water Routes 水路.

Shizong boarded ship on 1 June and sailed north to Chuoliukou 蜀流口 and then west to Yijinguan 益津關, 53 miles northwest from Qianningjun. Zhong Tinghui 終廷輝, the Liao Defending General, surrendered the city to him. From that point west the waterway was un navigable, so Shizong abandoned it.

Zhao Kuangyin went ahead to Waqiaoguan 瓦橋關, 27 miles east of Yijinguan, arriving on 7 June. Yao Neibin 姚內斌, the Liao Defending General, surrendered the city to him. Shizong then arrived and entered the city. The next day, the prefect of Mozhou 莫州, Liu Chuxin 劉楚信, surrendered Mozhou. Li Zhongjin and his subordinates led troops forward and cut off Yingzhou 瀛州 on 9 June. The prefect, Gao Yanhui 高彥暉, then surrendered the city. This completed the conquest of the Guannan 關南 region by the Zhou. It was now time to advance through the passes into the Shanqian region.

Liu Zhongjin took Gu’an 固安 on 10 June, 40 miles southeast from Yanzhou 燕州. Shizong arrived at Anyang River 安陽水 and ordered a bridge built over the river. But he was feeling ill and returned to Waqiao. The Liao had sent a messenger to the Northern Han ordering it to attack the Zhou flank. When they
heard that Shizong had returned south, they ceased military preparations.

Sun Xingyou reported on 12 June that he had taken Yizhou 易州, capturing its prefect Li Zaiqin 李在欽 and beheading its army commander. On 14 June Li Zhongjin was ordered to attack the Northern Han from Tumen 土門. Shizong left Waqiaoguan140 and returned south on 16 June. On 3 July Li Zhongjin reported defeating Northern Han troops at Baijing 白井. Shizong reached the capital on 8 July, after his 400-mile journey from the border. The next day Li Yun reported that he had attacked the Northern Han and taken Liaozhou 遼州. He captured the prefect Zhang Pi 張丕.

Shizong died on 27 July 959, leaving a young son to succeed him. It was not an opportunity that any of his ambitious generals could pass up. The question was not if, but who would seize power and when would they do it. Perhaps an even more important question was whether a single individual would succeed in taking over the Zhou state whole, or whether it would be dismembered by competing factions. Shizong’s legacy was a powerful state which had expanded dramatically, and was poised to expand even more in the future. He had doubled the size of Zhou territory and vastly increased its wealth. Whether his attempt to capture the Sixteen Prefectures would have succeeded had his death not brought all of the generals rushing back to the capital is unclear. Several later attempts started out well, only to fail once the Liao military was mobilized. Regardless, the Guannan region remained in the hands of the Zhou’s successor, the Song, until 1127.

140Waqiaoguan had its name changed to Xiong prefecture 雄州. For consistency I have retained its old designation in the text.
Of all of the contenders for the Zhou throne, it was Zhao Kuangyin who turned out to have been best prepared to seize power. His supporters were well-positioned to control the main military forces of the Zhou. In short order Zhao took control of the capital and most of the army. It was then only a matter of isolating his opponents and then destroying them.
Zhao Kuangyin's most important task in the year following his coup in 960 was to secure his throne against several contenders for power. He only had to use force against two, Li Yun and Li Zhongjin. Apart from the campaigns against the two Lis, Zhao (posthumously known as Song Taizu) did not go to war in the first two years of his reign. He consolidated his political and military power by inducing several powerful generals to retire and by continuing the governmental reforms begun by Zhou Shizong. It was only in 963 that he sent out troops to take Jingnan and to "assist" Zhou Baoquan in Hunan. That same year Song forces raided Northern Han territory in the wake of a revolt by mid-level officials there. Late in 964 he began the conquest of Shu (Sichuan), which was completed early in 965. Another attempt was made on the Northern Han in 968, which failed the following year. The conquest of the Southern Han, begun in 970, was completed in March of 971. Zhou Shizong's partial conquest of the Southern Tang was completed from 974 to 975. Finally, Taizu's campaign against the Northern Han in 976 was recalled because of his death.

The rebellions of the two Lis in the first year of Taizu's reign were resolved fairly quickly. But it was not just luck that they were not simultaneous. Li Zhongjin had intended to coordinate his uprising with that of Li Yun. He was unfortunate in choosing Di Shouxun as his messenger to Yun. Di secretly
went to Taizu and revealed the plan. Taizu had Di convince Zhongjin to delay the beginning of his uprising.\textsuperscript{141} Di was successful in his persuasion, allowing Taizu to deal with Yun in the north before turning to the south to deal with Zhongjin.

\textbf{The Rebellion of Li Yun 李筠 (10 May-15 July 960)\textsuperscript{142}}

Li Yun, the military governor of Zhaoyi 昭義, had defended the border for more than eight years. On 10 May 960 Taizu sent an envoy to Li with Zhou Shizong's son's edict of abdication.\textsuperscript{143} Li didn't want to accept it (and thereby accept Taizu's coup) even though his advisors and his son pleaded with him to do so. When Taizu's envoy arrived, Li had a banquet set out. After a while he ordered a portrait of Zhou Taizu brought in and hung up. Li then began to cry in front of the picture. His officials assured the envoy that this expression of Zhou loyalty was due to drunkenness.

The ruler of the Northern Han knew that Li intended to rebel and sent him a secret letter. Li reported the letter to the court, in order to demonstrate his loyalty, and then accelerated his preparations for rebellion. Taizu personally ordered Li's eldest son, Shoujie 守節, to come to the court. Li sent him with instructions to observe what was happening there. When he arrived for his

\textsuperscript{141}XCB 1/20b.

\textsuperscript{142}The Rebellion of Li Yun is chronicled in XCB 1/12b-15a and SS 1.6.

\textsuperscript{143}Correcting \textit{guisi} 奚已 to \textit{xinsi} 辛巳.
imperial audience Taizu first called him "heir-apparent" in order to make clear his knowledge of Li Yun's imperial ambitions. Shoujie protested and said his father was being slandered. Taizu replied: "I have heard that you have often remonstrated with him. But that old rebel wouldn't listen to you. He won't submit to me but sends you here. This is only because he wants me to kill you, [and thus give him a reason to rebel] that is all. Return and tell your father: ‘When I was not the emperor he was allowed to do what he wanted. [Ask him] why he can't give me a few concessions now that I am the emperor?’" Shoujie returned and told his father. Li Yun then set his rebellion in motion.

On 12 May Li sent emissaries to the Northern Han ruler seeking military assistance. He also sent troops to Zezhou to kill the prefect Zhang Fu, who was loyal to Taizu, and take the city. Lu Qiuzhong advised Li that his plan was risky. If he advanced south, toward the capital, he would directly clash with the superior capital armies. The best plan, Lu felt, was to wait for Taizu to attack in a defensive position west of the Taihang mountains. Lu knew that Taizu would have to respond quickly and actively to Li's rebellion. The empire would fragment if uprisings by military governors weren't rapidly, and decisively, crushed. Li rejected Lu's advice. He felt he could rely on three things to bring him victory in his direct approach, his general Dan Gui, his good horse and the fact that all of the top commanders in Kaifeng were his old comrades and subordinates.

Li's declaration of war arrived at the Song court on 15 May. Wu Yanzuo pointed out that if Li Yun took and strongly defended Luzhou it would...
be extremely difficult to dislodge him. But Li was arrogant and didn't plan. If Taizu quickly met Li's advance, Li would seek battle with the Song army. Taizu would then be able to beat Li Yun in the field, which would be much quicker and easier than besieging him in Luzhou or some other city. Taizu agreed and, on 17 May, sent Shi Shouxin 石守信 and Gao Huaide 高懷德 north with advance units of the army. He ordered them to force march to Xiataihang and take the pass. Once the pass was under Song control Li Yun would be blocked from advancing further south. On 29 May Taizu sent Zan Jurun 蕭居讓 to Shanzhou 潭州 to block Li from crossing the Yellow River there if he turned east. Murong Yanzhao 慕容延釗 and Wang Quanbin 王全斌 led troops from the east to link up with Shi Shouxin and Gao Huaide.

Li Yun exchanged envoys with the Northern Han ruler on 30 May. Li wanted the Han ruler to assist him and send troops south, but asked that no Liao soldiers be involved. Li's stipulation was accepted. The Han ruler immediately prepared to lead his troops south from Tuanbogu 園柏谷. At the farewell banquet before he was going to cross the Fen River, Zhao Hua 趙華 said to him: "Li Yun is taking this business very lightly and cannot succeed. Your Majesty should not leave your territory and go to him. I cannot see that this will work." The Han ruler stared at him and said: "My plan has already been decided. How do you know it will not succeed? Do you have a better plan?" Before Zhao could reply the Han ruler got on his horse and rode to Taipingyi 太平驛.

Li met the Han ruler at Taipingyi. Their meeting did not go well. Li felt that the Han ruler's personal guard were small and weak and not befitting a king. On
the Han side, the problems were more substantive. To begin with, although the Han ruler tried to discuss strategy with Li several times he was unable to do so. Li was then heard to lament that he had been unable to repay the Zhou family's benevolence. Considering the enmity which had existed between the Zhou and Northern Han, it was not surprising that the Han ruler would be displeased to hear Li's comments. The Han ruler appointed Lu Zan 盧賊 to observe Li's army, which annoyed Li.

Lu Zan also tried to discuss campaign strategies with Li. Li refused to discuss plans. He had a special corps of three thousand cavalry that he trained day and night. He planned to head straight for the capital. Li said: "The soldiers of the capital were all my subordinates before. When they see me they will surrender." Lu left in disgust. The Han ruler hurriedly patched things up between Lu and Li, allowing the campaign to go forward. Li left his oldest son behind in Taipingyi and led his army of thirty thousand troops south from Shangdang 上黨. On 1 June Shi Shouxin reported defeating Li's forces at Changping 長平. They beheaded more than three thousand men and attacked and took Dahui Fort 大會寨.

On 15 June Han Lingkun set out for Heyang 河陽 from Kaifeng to prepare the way for Taizu. Taizu left the capital two days later. When he reached Yingyang 永陽 on 20 June he called upon Xiang Gong 向搢 and Zhao Pu 趙普 to discuss the situation. Xiang recommended crossing the Yellow River and

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144 XCB erroneously locates the battle at Changan 長安.
145 Also pronounced Yongyang.
advancing to the Taihang mountains. Li should be attacked while his forces were
dispersed. Zhao added that Li thought that Taizu would be unable to come out to
fight because the Song regime was new. If they force-marched to meet Li they
would catch him unprepared and be able to defeat him in a single battle. Taizu
accepted their advice.

Taizu reached Huaizhou on 24 June. On 25 June Shi Shouxin and Gao
Huaide defeated Li Yun's army of more than thirty thousand south of Zezhou and
captured the Northern Han military governor of Heyang 河陽, Fan Shoutu 范守圖.
Lu Zan and Li Yun retreated into the city of Zezhou and prepared to defend it.
Meanwhile, Li's son Shoujie, retreated into Luzhou 潞州. Taizu arrived at Zezhou
on 27 June to supervise the attack on the city. The Song army erected stockades
around the city to besiege it.

When Zezhou had not fallen after more than ten days, Taizu ordered Ma
Quanyi 馬全乂 to come and discuss plans. Ma asked to concentrate the army
and storm the city. He said: "If we delay the attack I fear the situation will
deteriorate." This was exactly the situation Taizu had been trying to avoid, a
protracted struggle to dislodge Li Yun from strong defensive positions. He ordered
the army to storm the city. Ma lead several dozen "Death-Defying Soldiers" 敢死
士. An arrow lodged in his arm, breaking the bone and causing blood to pour

XCB and SS disagree on the fate of Lu Zan. SS reports that he was killed in the battle
south of Zezhou. XCB reports that he retreated into the city with Li Yun. There is no way to
resolve the issue so I have arbitrarily followed XCB.

XCB and SS disagree on the last character of Ma's name. XCB agrees with ZZTJ. SS
uses 義 instead.
out. Ma pulled out the arrow and advanced fighting. He set fire to the battlements and scaled the wall. Taizu led his own guard in supporting Ma. They took the city on the 9 July. Li threw himself into the fire. The Northern Han prime minister, Wei Rong, was taken captive.

The Northern Han ruler heard that Li had been defeated and returned to Taiyuan. When he arrived he said to Zhao Hua: "Li Yun was not heroic and died just as you said...I regret losing Wei Rong and Lu Zan, that's all." On the 13 July Taizu advanced and attacked Luzhou. Two days later, Li Shoujie surrendered the city. Taizu pardoned him and made him the Military Training Commissioner of Junzhou.

The Rebellion of Li Zhongjin 李重進 (15 October-2 December 960)

When Zhao Kuangyin usurped the Zhou throne, Li Zhongjin was the Military Governor of Huainan, the area Zhou Shizong had captured from the Southern Tang only a few years before. He had been the nephew of Zhou Taizu, and therefore had a personal interest in the success of the Zhou dynasty. During Zhou Shizong's reign military power had been divided between Zhao and Li. Li had always recognized, and feared, Zhao's ambitions. The beginning of the Song Dynasty justified his fears. Zhao, now the Song emperor, tried to conciliate

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148 XCB and SS disagree as to which prefecture Li Shoujie was appointed Military Training Commissioner. SS gives Danzhou 莊州 instead of Junzhou.

149 The Rebellion of Li Zhongjin is chronicled in XCB 1/20a-24a and SS 1.7.

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Li by adding the title Secretariat Director 中書令 to his existing central government position of Commander in Chief of the Cavalry and Infantry. Taizu’s attempt to win-over Li was not a cynical gesture that he knew would fail. He would have preferred Li to accept his overthrow of the Zhou dynasty.

Li’s loyalty to the new dynasty was, at best, uncertain. Taizu took steps to weaken him and cut off his influence at court. First, he replaced Li with Han Lingkun as Commander in Chief of the Cavalry and Infantry. Taizu then ordered Li to move from Yangzhou 揚州 to Qingzhou 青州. When Li requested leave to come to court, Taizu refused. Li was now effectively isolated.

When Li received Taizu’s refusal he began to recruit bandits, heighten the walls of Yangzhou and deepen the moat. Li, intending to coordinate his uprising with Li Yun’s in the north, sent Di Shouxun 翟秀珣, a close aide, to contact Yun. But Di secretly went to Taizu and reported the plot. Taizu sent Di back with instructions to convince Li to delay his uprising. He wanted to avoid having to fight two rebellions at the same time. Di returned and successfully convinced Li to delay his rebellion.

Once Li Yun had been crushed, Taizu turned his attention south and began preparations to move into Huainan. On 4 October he made Li Zhongjin the military governor of Pinglu. This aroused Li’s suspicions. On 6 October Taizu sent Chen Sihui 陳思诲 to Li with a token of imperial favor in order to reassure him. Li wanted to travel to court to thank Taizu, but his advisors dissuaded him. He couldn’t decide what to do. Eventually he locked up Chen and sent a message to the Southern Tang seeking assistance. The Tang ruler
reported the request to the Song court.

An Yougui 安友規, the Director in Chief of Yangzhou 揚州, knew that Li was going to rebel and fled the city. Li became suspicious of the other military commanders and arrested several dozen of them. Although they pleaded that they had also served the Zhou their whole lives and wanted to take part in the uprising, Li was not convinced and had them all killed. On 15 October Li’s declaration of war arrived at court. Taizu appointed Shi Shouxin Chief Administrative Officer of the Yangzhou Expeditionary Army. Wang Shenqi 王審琦 was appointed Assistant Commissioner of the Northern Court of Palace Attendants, Li Chuyun 李處耘 Director in Chief, and Song Yanwo 宋延渥 Chief Formation Monitor. They were ordered to converge on Li Zhongjin from several routes.

On 11 November Taizu called in Zhao Pu to discuss the situation in Yangzhou concerning Li Zhongjin. Zhao said: "Li Zhongjin's defense policy is worse than that of the Duke of Xue 薛公. Its flavor is far from the formations of Zhuge Liang (策畝武候之遠). He relies solely on the Huai and Yangzi rivers, repairing equipment and the ramparts of the city. He does not nourish his troops with benevolence and therefore does not hold their affection. He does not plan. Rescue from outside is cut off. He is low on supplies. If we attack slowly we will take him. If we attack quickly we will also take him. According to military art, faster is better. Taking someone slowly cannot compare to taking them quickly."

150 Xue was a small feudal state in what is now Shandong province.

151 Zhuge Liang (the Marquis of Martiality) was a general of almost supernatural skill during the Three Kingdoms (220-280) particularly known for his army formations.
Zhao further advised Taizu to personally take part in the campaign. Taizu accepted his advice and announced the next day that he would personally take the field.

Taizu left the capital on 15 November. He embarked with the entire army on ships to go east. On 29 November he and the army disembarked at Sizhou. When they arrived at Dayiyi on 2 December, Shi Shouxin sent an urgent memorial to Taizu reporting that Yangzhou was about to fall. He would have to hurry if he wanted to see it. Taizu reached Yangzhou that night. Just as he arrived, Shi attacked and took the city. Li Zhongjin gathered his family together in a house and set fire to it, killing himself and his family.

The defeat of the two Lis was the first step in securing Taizu's position against rival contenders for power. It was still not certain that the Song Dynasty would last longer than the five dynasties that had immediately preceded it. Taizu had to find a way to convince the other generals to accept his rule before he could begin to expand his territory. As part of the same process, he had to reform both civil and military administration and return power to the central government. The solution to the problem had eluded every emperor since the Anlushan Rebellion in 755. The administrative and political changes that Taizu made have already been described by Edmund Worthy. They are not the focus of this study, but some discussion of them is warranted at this point.
Dissolving Military Power with a Cup of Wine

How was Song Taizu able to secure his own position and begin to wean the military governors from their power bases? As Worthy wrote:

"...after the coup, he [Song Taizu] adroitly avoided repaying obligations to cohorts in a manner that might jeopardize his own power. In other words, he was able to control the army and effectively subordinate the generals. This marks the primary reason why the Sung dynasty did not become a "sixth" dynasty in a succession of five earlier military takeovers."^{152}

Immediately after the coup he rewarded his old comrades with positions of supreme military authority. On 18 April 961 however, Murong Yanzhao and Han Lingkun were removed from their commands, Supreme Commander of the Palace Corps and Commander in Chief of the Imperial Guard respectively, and given military governorships.^{153} Shi Shouxin replaced Han, but Murong's position was left vacant. It was never again filled.

The next step was to remove Taizu's remaining old comrades from positions of central authority. Song Taizu was the first emperor in two centuries to have a central government army stronger than any of the military governors' armies. It was vital that the control of that army be firmly in the his hands. This was the clearest sign of how the balance of power had shifted from the provinces to the central government. In order to insure the stability and safety of the new dynasty, Taizu convinced powerful generals to become military governors.

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^{153}XCB 2/5a. Murong became military governor of Shannanxi circuit 山南西道. Han became the military governor of Chengde 成德.

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We now come to the famous drinking party in which Taizu convinced his old comrades Shi Shouxin, Wang Shenqi, Gao Huaide and Zhang Lingduo to relinquish their central government positions.

On 20 August 961 Zhao Pu convinced Taizu of the danger presented by his former comrades. Taizu invited them all to a drinking party and explained that, while he didn't suspect their loyalty, their subordinates might force them to try to become emperor. As a way to remove that danger, he suggested that they become military governors and retire from court life. They could establish mansions with dancing girls and live out the rest of their lives enjoying themselves. Taizu promised to create marriage alliances between his family and theirs. The next day they requested to be relieved of their posts.\textsuperscript{154}

The advantage of Taizu's peaceful method of securing his throne was that he did not need to reward anyone for doing it. Taizu was able to leave the highest positions of the military command structure vacant because he was beholden to no one. He was thus able to internally balance the power of the military by truncating the pinnacle of the command hierarchy. The cavalry and infantry commands were now separated in both the Palace Corps and the Imperial Guard. Only the emperor stood above them all.\textsuperscript{155}

\textsuperscript{154}XCB 2/10b. Also see Sima Guang 司馬光, Sushui Jiwen 漢水記聞, 1.6-7. Worthy translates the entire passage in Worthy, op. cit., 174-5. The fact that Taizu needed to be convinced of the danger his former comrades presented may be a bit of sugar-coating to make him seem less suspicious and scheming.

\textsuperscript{155}The changes were not immediate. It was not until October that Shi Shouxin actually relinquished the title of Commander in Chief of the Imperial Guard, although the title had held little power for some time. In the Palace Corps Han Chongyun held the number three position of Commander in Chief until 967, but he was something of a mediocrity and no danger to the dynasty. For a chart showing the vacancies in the command structure see Worthy, op. cit., 167.
Taizu focussed exclusively on consolidating his rule until 963. He spent three years establishing internal stability before he turned his attention to external conquest, a fact usually overlooked in discussions of his subsequent military success. What truly distinguished Taizu from most of his predecessors in the 10th century was that he knew that external wars did not solve internal problems. Conquest brought territory into the state’s borders, but it took time to integrate new territory into the state’s administration and establish real control over it. Acquiring new territory also distracted the central government from internal reform. Taizu was able to establish firm control over the state by focussing exclusively on internal reform before he launched any campaigns of conquest. His military success was predicated on internal stability. By 963 Taizu felt that he was firmly enough in control of the Song state to consider expanding its territory. The question was, how to go about it?

The Myth of the “South-First” Strategy

In January of 963 Taizu met with his younger brother and Zhao Pu to discuss strategy.\(^{156}\) The meeting is alleged to have established Taizu’s decision to take the south first. The plan Taizu agreed to was a reiteration of Wang Pu’s earlier south-first strategy for Zhou Shizong. As we discussed in chapter three, Zhou Shizong did not follow the plan put forward by Wang Pu. Song Taizu was

\(^{156}\) I agree with Li Tao and Worthy’s dating of the discussion. See Worthy, op. cit., 89-90 n.7 for a discussion of the dating of this policy discussion.
just as much of an opportunist as Zhou Shizong. His order of attack was dictated much more by opportunity than by a pre-established blueprint.

Li Tao also connected an exchange between the Northern Han ruler and Taizu to the strategy session. In the exchange of letters, Taizu pledged not to destroy the Northern Han.\(^ {157}\) Worthy interpreted Li Tao's intentions in connecting the two events as follows:

"In sum then, Li T'ao's purpose in inserting the passage [regarding the Northern Han] under the 7/968 date is to reveal that contrary to the "south first" strategy worked out and agreed upon early in the dynasty, T'ai-tsu launched an attack against the Northern Han before all the south was pacified."\(^ {158}\)

This of course assumes that there really was a south-first strategy. Although Chinese historians since Ouyang Xiu (1007-72) have assumed that there was an explicit south-first strategy to be critical of, and Edmund Worthy has largely accepted this interpretation, I would argue that the actual campaigns of Taizu argue against it. Certainly if there had been such a strategy, he didn't follow it.

Taizu began conquering China in 963. His first efforts were directed against the small countries of Jingnan 荊南 and Chu 楚. A request for aid from Chu to put down a rebellion gave Taizu the opportunity to take both countries. Following that brief campaign, Taizu took advantage of a revolt by some middle-ranked officials later in the same year in the Northern Han to launch an exploratory raid. The opportunity did not turn out to be as advantageous as he had hoped.

\(^{157}\) XCB 9/6ab. Translated in Worthy, op. cit., 18-20.

\(^{158}\) Worthy, op. cit., 90 n.7.
and nothing more developed out of it. Late the following year Taizu began a campaign against Shu. It was quickly concluded early in 965 after the Shu army rapidly, and unexpectedly, disintegrated. The excesses of the Song soldiers started a rebellion in Shu that was finally put down in early 967.

Taizu began preparing for a campaign against the Northern Han on 10 September 968. The newly installed Han ruler had been assassinated little more than sixty days after he had assumed the throne. Once again, internal disorder in the Northern Han seemed to present an opportunity for the Song. Taizu began his campaign against the Northern Han on 5 October. Despite Taizu's presence, the campaign failed the following year and was withdrawn in May of 969. In October 970 Taizu launched a campaign against the Southern Han. It surrendered the following year, in March 971. Taizu spent the next three years consolidating his control over his newly conquered territories. In 974 he attacked the Southern Tang. He finally destroyed it in late 975. The following year Taizu again attacked the Northern Han. His death in November 976 ended the campaign.

The individual campaigns will be examined in detail below, but the pattern of the campaigns shows that the Northern Han were never very far from Taizu's mind. He tried to take advantage of every opportunity to destroy the Northern Han. It simply proved to be much more stable than the southern kingdoms. He didn't conquer the north first because his campaigns failed, not because of a south-first strategy.

Let us turn now to the campaigns themselves.
The Campaign Against Chu and Jingnan

The kingdom of Jingnan lay on the north bank of the Yangzi. It was composed of three prefectures: Jingzhou 荊州, Xiazhou 峡州 and Guizhou 步州. The capital was in Jingzhou, 630 miles from Kaifeng. It was a strategic crossroads for all directions. In 961 it was ruled by the fairly young Gao Jichong 高繼沖. The kingdom of Chu was on the south side of the Yangzi, across from Jingnan. Chu was comprised of ten prefectures covering most of what is modern Hunan. Up until 951, it had been ruled by the Ma 马 family. In that year the Southern Tang had briefly taken control of it. It then fell into the hands of Zhou Xingfeng 周行逢, He died in October 962 leaving it to his eleven year old son Baoquan 保權. One of the generals that Xingfeng had failed to kill earlier, Zhang Wenbiao 張文表, took advantage of the succession to try to seize the throne. An army was sent out to oppose him while a request for aid was sent to Jingnan and the Song.

On 1 February Taizu sent Lu Huaizhong 盧懷忠, Zhang Xun 張勳, and Kang Yanze 康延澤 to Xiangzhou 襄州 (also known as Xiangyang 襄陽) with several thousand infantry and cavalry troops. On 3 February 963 Murong Yanzhao was appointed Chief Administrative Officer of the Hunan Circuit Expeditionary Army 湖南 and Li Chuyun Director in Chief. They gathered an army at Xiangzhou, ostensibly to put down Zhang Wenbiao. Of course, they had to pass through

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159 The campaign against Chu and Jingnan is chronicled in XCB 3/10b-4/6a and SS 1.13.

Jingnan to get to Chu territory. This allowed them to take both kingdoms by "borrowing passage". It was a classic Spring and Autumn period strategy.

Taizu well aware of the political and military situation in Jingnan. He had sent Lu Huaizhong to scout the area in January 963. At that time Lu reported that: "Although Gao Jichong’s army is orderly, it contains no more than 30,000 combat troops. Even though the harvest has just come in, the people's lives are hard because of high taxes. To the south it [Jingnan] connects with Changsha 長沙. To the east it reaches to Jiankang 建康. To the west it borders Shu 蜀. To the north it pays tribute to the court. As I see it, [they pay off all of these countries but] they cannot supply them all. They would be easy to conquer."

Taizu said to his ministers: "Jiangling 江陵 (Jingnan) is a divided country. Now we will 'borrow passage' to send troops there and conquer them, taking everything."

On 5 February Li Chuyun left for Jingnan after receiving final instructions from Taizu.

Gao Jichong relied upon his officials to manage his affairs. On the civil side he was advised by Sun Guangxian 孫光憲 and on the military side by Liang Yansi 梁延嗣. When Li Chuyun arrived at Xiangzhou, Murong Yanzhao was sick. Li sent a request to Gao Jichong for permission for the Song army to pass through Jingnan, and for provisions for the army. Gao and his advisors were wary of the request. They made a counter-offer to provision the Song army 35 miles from their border, but did not give the Song army permission to pass through their country. Li ask again for passage and supplies. Li Jingwei 李景威 tried to persuade Gao to take an aggressive stance: "The imperial army now
asks pass through our country in order to take Chu. As I see it, I fear that, as a consequence (of borrowing passage) they will attack us. I would like to contribute my strength to serve you. Let me borrow three thousand soldiers. I will set up an ambush in the strategic and narrow pass at Jingmen 荊門. When they are marching at night, I will attack the leading general of the imperial army, forcing them to retreat. Then I will use the army to capture Zhang Wenbiao and present him to the Song court. In this way you will gain great merit. Otherwise, you will be just like a kept dog."

Gao was unimpressed by Li's comments. On the one hand he didn't believe that the Song would attack him and on the other, if they did, Li was certainly no match for Murong Yanzhao. Gao's other advisors were all for surrendering early. The size of the Song army made Song intentions clear. It was far larger than necessary to capture Zhang Wenbiao. Liang Yansi and his uncle, Bao Yin 保寅, would be sent to present meat and wine to the Song army. After the decision to surrender had been reached, Li Jingwei left and committed suicide.

Zhang Wenbiao was executed on 24 February, having been defeated and captured the previous day. On 7 March the Song army arrived at Jingmen, 35 miles from Jiangling. Li Chuyun met with Liang Yansi and his entourage, treating

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161 I have attempted to make sense of the order of events by presenting Zhang Wenbiao's capture and execution after Gao's discussion with his advisors. Even though the discussion is listed under March 1, the two references to Zhang indicate that he was still at large when it took place. Therefore it must have occurred before February 23-24 when Zhang's death is recorded. Given the distances involved and the importance of Zhang to the events I think it unlikely that the news of his public execution in the market would have taken more than five days to reach the Jingnan court.
them very well. He asked them to stay the night and return first thing the next day. Liang was so pleased by the treatment that he sent a messenger back to Gao in Jiangling telling him not to worry about the Song intentions. That night Murong Yanzhao invited Liang and the others to dine in his tent. While they were dining, Li Chuyun led several thousand light cavalry on a forced march to Jiangling. When Gao heard that a large army had arrived he could only anxiously go out to welcome them. He met Li 5 miles north of Jiangling. There they awaited the arrival of Murong, who would be the first to enter the city. Jingnan added three prefectures with seventeen counties and a population of 142,300 households to the Song empire.

The bloodless takeover of Jingnan left the Song forces hopeful that Chu would also capitulate without a fight. While the Song army prepared to march on Langzhou 郎州, Zhou Baoquan called in Li Guanxiang 李觀象 to discuss the situation. Li said: "Before, we asked the Song for reinforcements to capture Zhang Wenbiao. Presently, Wenbiao has been captured but the imperial army has not returned [to the Song]. They must intend to conquer us. We used to be allied with Jingnan to the north, and relied on them like lips and teeth. Now the Gao family has submitted. Langzhou is not in a strong position. If you submit you will not lose fortune." Zhou was going to accept this advice when Zhang Congdang 張從當 and others opposed it, presenting a plan to defend the kingdom.

Murong Yanzhao sent Ding Deyu to reassure the Chu government. When Ding arrived at Langzhou, Zhang and the others would not meet him. The bridges were cut and the boats all sunk. Timber had been cut down and used to
make road blocks. Ding couldn't fight, so he withdrew and waited for instructions. On 26 March Taizu sent an ultimatum to Zhou Baoquan and his generals. When they did not capitulate, Murong Yanzhao ordered the Naval Director in Chief, Wu Huaijie, to launch a multi-pronged assault on Yuezhou. Wu badly defeated the Chu navy at Sanjiangkou, capturing over seven hundred ships, executing more than four thousand men and taking Yuezhou.

At the beginning of April Zhang Congdang marched out of Lizhou and fought the Song army south of the city. Before the fighting even began, the Chu army surrendered and scattered. Li Chuyun chased the remaining forces to Aoshan Fort. They quickly abandoned the fort. The Song captured a large number of Chu soldiers. Li then had several dozen fat prisoners divided up and eaten by his troops. A few prisoners were then released and allowed to go to Langzhou. When the people heard that the imperial troops were eating prisoners, they set fire to the city and fled. Zhang Congdang fled to the western mountains. On 6 April the Chu general Wang Duan kidnapped Zhou Baoquan and his family and hid out in a Buddhist temple on the south bank of the Yangzi. Li Chuyun sent Tian Shouqi to recover Zhou. Wang Duan abandoned Zhou and fled. Tian then took Zhou to Li Chuyun. Hunan added fourteen prefectures consisting of one and sixty six counties containing 97,380 families to the Song.

The Song now had a foothold on the south side of the Yangzi river. They also controlled Shu's access to the rest of Chinese territory, had a clear route to the Southern Han kingdom and were another step closer to encircling the Southern...
The entire campaign had been carried out with little bloodshed and at minimal cost to the Song. The navy had once again proven useful, even though the exact details of its activities were seldom mentioned.

**The Raid Against the Northern Han**

Wang Quanbin 王全斌, Guo Jin 郭進, Chen Wantong 陳萬通, Gao Xingben 高行本 and Cao Bin 曹彬 raided Northern Han territory on 30 July, capturing several thousand prisoners. Soon after the Song raid a group of middle-ranked Northern Han officials rebelled against their ruler. The rebellion was put down by 21 August, but it encouraged the Song. The same Song commanders who had launched the 30 July raid attacked the Northern Han again on 29 August. This time their attack was more sustained. The Leping county Commander of the Guard 樂平縣, Wang Chao 王超 surrendered to the Song with eighteen hundred troops. He Guichao 郝貴超 and Wei Jin 蔚進 led a Han army to relieve Leping. They fought and were defeated three times by the Song army, leaving Leping in Song hands. On 7 September the commanders of 18 Northern Han forts surrendered to the Song.

In September the Northern Han ruler induced the Liao to attack Pingjin 平 晉軍. Taizu sent Guo Jin, Zhang Yanjin 張彥進, Cao Bin and Chen Wantong to relieve Pingjin with a mixed force of ten thousand infantry and cavalry. When they were slightly more than a day's march from Pingjin, the Liao army withdrew.

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161 Taizu's raid on the Northern Han is chronicled in XCB 4/14b-5/4b and SS 1.14-17.

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On 15 December Taizu ordered the border generals to raid Northern Han territory. The attacks were not well coordinated and the generals were soon forced to return. On 14 January Cao Bin and Wang Jiyun 王繼均 were ordered to capture Jinzhou 晉州 and Luzhou 滦州, respectively. Zhao Yanhui 趙彥徽 and Li Jixun 李繼勳 were ordered to unite their forces and attack the Northern Han border region from Liaozhou 遼州 to Shizhou 石州.

Given the ongoing campaign it is not surprising that Wang Ming 王明 submitted chentu 陳圖 to the emperor on 24 January, proposing that the Song attack Youzhou 幽州, the key to the Sixteen Prefectures. Taizu rewarded him but took no further action. On 13 February Zhe Deyi 折德扆 reported defeating several thousand Han troops outside Fuzhou 府州.

In the midst of the Song onslaught, the Northern Han ruler received a letter from the Liao emperor on 14 February. The Liao emperor expressed his general displeasure with the Han ruler. The Han ruler’s father had been much more tractable, and consulted with the Liao before acting. The present ruler acted more independently. The Liao emperor was also unhappy with the results of the Northern Han involvement with Li Yun. When he received the letter, the Northern Han ruler was very scared and sent back several envoys to patch up the rift.

His efforts were successful enough that he was able to call on Liao help when the Song attacked Liaozhou in February of the next year. Li Jixun, Kang Yanzhao 康延沼 and Tou Yinxun 頭尹勳 attacked Liaozhou with an army of more than ten thousand infantry and cavalry. The Northern Han relief army under He

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Guichao 郭貴超 was badly beaten in front of the city. After the defeat, the city’s defenders surrendered with three thousand troops. A combined Liao-Northern Han army of sixty thousand infantry and cavalry counter-invaded and Li Jixun was forced to temporarily withdraw. He returned presently with Luo Yanxiang 羅彥環 Guo Jin and Cao Bin, leading an army of sixty thousand troops. They inflicted a severe defeat on the Liao-Northern Han army before Liaozhou.\textsuperscript{163}

The defeat of the Northern Han-Liao army resolved the status of Liaozhou for the next two years. Neither side was interested in making a major effort either to follow up the victory or to avenge it. This incident has been largely ignored or downplayed by historians, but it deserves some attention. Raiding across the border by the Song or the Northern Han was a regular occurrence until the former finally extinguished the latter. In this case, the Song took advantage of the Northern Han revolt and their diplomatic rift with the Liao both to acquire some territory and to put pressure on the Northern Han. Liao aid effectively curtailed the Song effort, despite their battlefield success. They were not ready to face the Liao in a large war. Neither were the Liao ready or willing to begin a large war with the Song, at least over the Northern Han.

\textsuperscript{163}Li Tao points out that SS does not include Northern Han forces in the second army, only Liao.
The Campaign Against Shu (8 December 964 - 11 February 965)\textsuperscript{164}

In December of 964 the ruler of Shu sent a secret message to the ruler of the Northern Han proposing that they attack the Song simultaneously. His couriers carried the message to Song Taizu instead. Taizu was happy to obtain a \textit{casus belli} for Shu. The two Shu couriers also provided intelligence of the terrain and defenses that an invader would have to overcome. Taizu immediately assembled an invasion force of sixty thousand infantry and cavalry. It would attack by two widely separated routes, one from the north and one from the east, up the Yangzi river.

On 8 December Taizu appointed Wang Quanbin 王全斌 Chief Administrative Officer of the Xichuan Expeditionary Army and Fengzhou 西川行營風州, with Cui Yanjin 崔彥進 as his second in command and Wang Renshan 王仁瞻 as Director in Chief. Their army would invade from the north. Liu Guangyi 劉光義 was appointed Assistant Chief Administrative Officer of the Guizhou Circuit 步州 with Cao Bin 曹彬 as his Director in Chief. Their army would invade from the east, up the Yangzi river. Shen Yilun 沈義倫 was the Army Provisioning Commissioner and Cao Han 曹翰 was the Southwest Area Provisioning Commissioner.

\textsuperscript{164}The Campaign against Shu is chronicled in XCB 5/16a-6/2a and SS 1.18-2.21.
Before invading, Taizu made a proclamation offering rewards to Shu officials who switched sides and surrendered cities. He also offered rewards to men who could lead the army through Shu territory. It was further announced that anyone burning houses, bothering the people or digging up graves during the invasion would be subject to military law (which was harsher than civil law). Finally, a mansion with more than five hundred rooms was prepared for the Shu ruler near the Bian River 汴水.

On 9 December Taizu feasted the army and distributed gold and jade belts, clothing, silk, saddles, horses and weapons to the officers according to their rank. Taizu told the officers: "All of the weapons, armor, fodder and provisions that you find in the cities and forts that you defeat must be registered. The money and cloth should be shared among all the troops." Taizu thus made a private contract with his officers which contradicted his public proclamation that the people would not be bothered.

The Shu ruler heard about the impending Song invasion on 5 January. He appointed Wang Zhaoyuan 王昭遠 Campaign Commander of the Northern Area Expeditionary Army, Zhao Chongtao 趙崇韜 Director in Chief, Han Baozheng 韓保正 Bandit-suppression Commissioner and Li Jin 李進 Assistant Bandit-suppression Commissioner. They were sent to oppose the Song. The Shu ruler said to Wang Zhaoyuan: "Today you have summoned the troops. You had better bring me some merit."

Wang had read a lot of books on military strategy and considered himself quite proficient at it. The Shu ruler ordered his prime minister and subordinate
officials to feast the army's officers outside Chengdu, the Shu capital. Wang held
an iron ruyi 如意 like that of Zhuge Liang as his symbol of authority over the
army. 165 After drinking too much wine, Wang rolled up his sleeves and said to
the prime minister Li Wu 李吳: "Why should I stop at defeating the enemy? With
these twenty or thirty thousand hawk-faced troops, taking the central plains would
be as easy as turning over my hand!"

On 24 January Wang Quanbin overran Ganqudu 乾渠渡, Wanren 萬仞, Yanzi 燕子 and several other Shu forts. Wang then captured Xingzhou 興州, defeating seven thousand Shu troops and capturing more than four hundred thousand piculs of military provisions. The prefect Lan Siwan 藍思绾 fell back to defend Xi county 西縣. Wang continued his assault and overran more than twenty forts including Shitu 石圃, Yuguan 魚關 and Zishuige 自水閣.

On 3 February Han Baozheng, hearing that Xingzhou had fallen, abandoned Shannan to defend Xi county. Shi Yande 史延德 marched there with the Song vanguard. Han took up a defensive position, assembling his force of several tens of thousands of men in front of the city wall, with the mountains protecting his flanks. Shi attacked, driving off Han's army and then pursuing it. Han was captured along with his second in command Li Jin. Shi also took more than three million pecks of provisions. Cui Yanjin and Kang Yanze 康延澤 pursued the Shu troops past Sanquan 三泉 to Jiachuan 嘉川, killing and capturing a multitude of

165 The ruyi was a sort of "s" shaped baton. A similar baton was supposed to have been carried by the Three Kingdoms period military strategist Zhuge Liang. "Ruyi" means "as you wish." Its association with Zhuge Liang is particularly significant in this instance because he was the chief advisor to Liu Bei, the ruler of Shu during the Three Kingdoms period.
them. As a result of the defeat, the Shu ruler ordered the rope bridges cut and withdrew his troops to Jiameng.

Meanwhile on the eastern front, Liu Guangyi began his campaign up the Yangzi gorges. He reduced Song Mu, San Hui, Wu Shan, and several other forts, killing the Shu general Nan Guanghai and over five thousand others. The Shu Commander in Chief of the Navy, Yuan Dehong, and more than twelve hundred men were captured alive. Liu also seized more than two hundred war ships and killed or captured more than six thousand naval troops.

Taizu had given Liu Guangyi specific instructions for capturing the Shu pontoon bridge at Lajiang in Kuizhou. There were three towers on the bridge and it was defended by trebuchets and ballistae. Taizu told Liu to first drive off the Shu forces on the banks, thus isolating the bridge, before attacking the bridge towers with his ships. Liu followed Taizu's plan and, when he was slightly more than 10 miles from Lajiang, disembarked from his ships and attacked the bridge by land. Then he attacked the bridge with his navy and captured it intact. The Shu army then reinforced Baidimiao.

When it was reported that the Song army was advancing west, Gao Yanchou said to his second in command Zhao Chongji 趙崇濟 and the Army Supervisor Wu Shouqian 武守謙: "It is dangerous for us to face the Song army. It is to their advantage to fight quickly. Let us dig in and wait them out." Wu replied: "The bandits have advanced to our city [Bai Di Miao] walls and we have not attacked them. How can we wait?"
On 31 January Wu Shouqian independently led more than one thousand Shu troops out to attack the Song army. Liu Guangyi sent a Song force under Zhang Tinghan to meet Wu. They fought at Zhutoupu. Wu lost and fled. Zhang exploited his victory by scaling the city walls. Gao Yanchou put his troops in order and was going to lead them out to fight, but Zhang had already entered the city. Gao fought desperately, but the situation was hopeless. He was wounded more than ten times and all his attendants fled. Gao then returned to the government offices. Luo Ji wanted Gao to flee. Gao refused: "I previously lost Taichuan and now I have been unable to defend this place. If the ruler does not execute me what face will I have to look at people in Shu?" Gao also feared for his family back in Chengdu. If he returned defeated their lives would all be endangered. By choosing to die there he preserved them. He gave the seals of office to Luo Ji to take back. Gao then changed into his formal clothes, prayed to the northwest, ascended the tower of the government offices and killed himself by setting the building on fire. Several days later Liu Guangyi had his bones dug out of the ashes and given a proper burial.

On the northern front, the main Song army was preparing to advance along the Luo River route into Shu. The retreating Shu army had torn up the wooden reinforced roads that ran along the cliff-faces. Wang Quanbin was concerned that the destruction of the wooden roads would prevent the main army from advancing. Kang Yanze said to Cui Yanjin: "The Luo River route is dangerous for a large force. It will be difficult if we cross it together. It would be better to divide army, repair the roads and then arranging a time to meet the main army at
Shendu 深渡.” Cui reported the plan to Wang and he agreed to it. In a couple of days the dispersed forces advanced by separate roads. They attacked Jinshan Fort 金山寨 and broke Xiaomantian Fort 小漫天寨. Wang then marched the main army to Shendu by the repaired Luo River route.

When the Song army reached Shendu the Shu army arrayed for battle near the river bridge. Cui Yanjin sent Zhang Wanyou 張萬友, to attack them. Zhang captured the bridge at sunset, forcing the Shu troops to withdraw to Damantian Fort 大漫天寨. The next day Cui, Kang Yanze and Zhang Wanyou launched a three-pronged assault on the fort. They overran the fort, capturing its commander Wang Shenchao 王審超, Zhao Chongwo 趙崇渥, the Army Supervisor; and Liu Yanzu 劉延祚, the Army Supervisor of Sanquan 三泉. Wang Zhaoyuan retreated with the remnants of the Shu army, pursued by the Song army. Wang was finally able to break away from the Song army north of Lizhou 利州. After surreptitiously breaking camp, the Shu army crossed the river at Jiepaijin 柄拍津 and then burned the pontoon bridge. But Wang continued to fall back until the Shu army reached Jianmen 劍門. On 4 February Wang Quanbin entered Lizhou, taking possession of the eight million pecks of military provisions left behind by the Shu army.

The Shu ruler heard that Wang Zhaoyuan had been defeated on 6 February. He was shaken and desperately tried to increase the number of soldiers defending Jianmen. Then he appointed his heir apparent, Yuanzhe 元哲, Marshal 元帥. The Director of the Chancellery, Li Tinggui 李廷珪 and Manager of Affairs, Zhang Hui’an 張惠安, were assigned to advise him. Yuanzhe brought his entourage of
courtesans and entertainers with him. When he marched out of Chengdu everyone who saw him laughed.

Meanwhile, Wang Quanbin had marched from Lizhou to Jianmen. When the Song army reached Yiguang 美光 Wang called a meeting to plan their strategy. He said: "Jianmen is an extremely dangerous place. In ancient times it was said that one man with a spear could hold off ten thousand there. If anyone in the army has a plan whereby we can capture it, he should present it." Xiang Tao 向韬 said: "Surrendered Shu soldiers said that from Yiguang, on the east side of the river, past several large mountains is a place called Laisu 來蘇. The Shu troops have built a stockade on the west bank of the river, where it can be forded. From this point we can bypass Jianmen 7 miles to the south, at Qingjiangdian 青疆店 and control the road. If the main army marches on this route then Jianmen will be in great danger."

Wang Quanbin and his officers wanted to immediately roll up their armor and go. Kang Yanze said: "The Shu troops have been defeated several times. They are fearful and have low morale. They can be quickly attacked and defeated. But Laisu is a precipitous pass and it is not appropriate for a high ranking officer to personally go. Instead we can send a lower ranking commander. If the force arrives north of Qingjiang and the main army attacks Jianmen, then Wang Zhaoyuan must withdraw completely." Wang Quanbin and everyone else agreed.

Shi Yande was ordered to lead a force of soldiers to Laisu. He crossed the

166 The path was so narrow that they would be unable to wear their armor while traversing it.
river using the pontoon bridge. When the Shu troops saw him they abandoned their fort and retreated. Shi pursued them to Qingjiang. When Wang Zhaoyuan heard that there were Song troops at Qingjiang he fled toward Hanyuanpo, leaving his Deputy General to defend Jianmen. Wang and Zhao Chongtao were overtaken by elite Song troops near Hanyuan. Zhao arrayed his troops for battle and fought. But Wang Zhaoyuan was unable to get up from his camp stool. Zhao himself killed several men, but he was defeated. Wang discarded his armor and fled.

The Song army pursued the Shu army, overrunning Jianzhou and killing over ten thousand Shu soldiers. A patrol of Song cavalymen found Wang Zhaoyuan hiding in a barn. Yuanzhe, the heir apparent, and Li Tingkuei had been enjoying themselves and not paying attention to military affairs. When they reached Mianzhou they heard that Jianmen had already fallen. They decided to fall back to Dongchuan. The next day they left the army and returned west. As they retreated they burned all of the granaries and houses.

When the Shu ruler found out that Jianmen had fallen and that his son had also retreated he was in a desperate panic. He asked his attendants if any of them had a plan. An old general named Shi Fengjun said: "The eastern troops have come from far away. They cannot maintain their attack for long. Please collect the soldiers together in order to firmly defend the country. This is my unworthy plan." The Shu ruler replied: "My family has provided clothing and

167 There is no reason given for Wang being unable to get up. Presumably it was due to fear. Here I translate 胡床 as "camp stool" after Needham, Vol. IV, 136. He notes that the "barbarian bed" can also refer to a folding chair with a cloth seat.
food to the soldiers for forty years. When they finally meet the enemy they are unable to fire even one arrow in defense of my eastern territory. Now who is there that is willing to give their life to defend us?" Li Hao sent the Shu ruler a proposal suggesting that he surrender. He agreed.

After the Shu surrender the Song troops, except for those under the command of Cao Bin, engaged in an orgy of looting and destruction that was to have severe repercussions for the pacification and reintegration effort. The campaign which had so quickly and effectively destroyed the Shu government engendered a rebellion of the populace in its aftermath that took almost two years to subdue. The rebellion was probably responsible for putting a temporary hold on Song expansion efforts.
Song Taizu's Northern Han Campaign (968-9)

1:3,000,000

50 Miles

= M. Pass

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The First Campaign Against the Northern Han (10 September 968-3 July 969)¹⁶⁸

Li Tao had connected a promise by Taizu concerning the Northern Han to a strategy session between Taizu, his younger brother Kuangyi¹⁶⁹ (who would succeed him as Taizong) and Zhao Pu that occurred in 963 or late 962 (see chapter five). The entire entry was inserted under the seventh month of 968, just before the first real invasion of the Northern Han by the Song. Taizu promised to: "Leave Liu Jun (the Northern Han ruler) a way to exist." Accordingly, Taizu didn't invade the North Han "during the Xiaohe reign." Worthy translated this last part as: "Thus throughout his life the emperor did not (raise) a major army to attack the north."¹⁷⁰ Perhaps unintentionally, this translation might imply that Taizu did not attack the Northern Han at all during his lifetime. But "Xiaohe" was Liu Jun's posthumous temple name. The Songshi account reads: "...therefore during Jun's life [Taizu] did not raise troops." Taizu's promise not to attack the Northern Han was confined solely to Liu Jun's lifetime. If he did, in fact, make this promise then he kept it to the letter. Taizu began preparing to invade the Northern Han shortly after Liu Jun died.

¹⁶⁸ Taizu's campaign against the Northern Han is chronicled in XCB 9/6a-10/11b and SS 2.27-29.

¹⁶⁹ I have modified Zhao Kuangyi's 趙匡義 name from the text for consistency. He is referred to as Guangyi 光義. His name was originally Kuangyi 匡義. He changed his name to Guangyi when his older brother became emperor in order to avoid using characters in the emperor's name.

¹⁷⁰ Worthy, op. cit., 20.
Liu Jun had adopted three nephews, Ji’en 靖恩, Jiyuan 靖元 and Jizhong 靖忠 because he hadn’t produced any heirs. Ji’en succeeded to the throne upon Liu Jun’s death in July of 968. Ji’en had been acting as regent since Liu Jun had fallen ill, with Guo Wuwei 郭無為, the prime minister, to advise him. In just over sixty days Ji’en was assassinated, possibly by an assassin sent by Guo. Early in October Jiyuan succeeded to the throne.

When Jiyuan succeeded to the throne, the Song army had already invaded. On 10 September Taizu had ordered troops to concentrate at Luzhou 潞州 in preparation for an invasion of the Northern Han. Two days later he established the top command of the force. Li Jixun 李繼勳 was appointed Chief Administrative Officer of the Hedong Expeditionary Forward Army, Dang Jin 党進 his second in command and Cao Bin 曹彬 his Director in Chief. He Jiyun 何繼筠 was appointed the Administrator of the Vanguard and Kang Yanzhao 康延沼 his Director in Chief. Zhao Zan 趙贊 was appointed Administrator of the Fenzhou Route 汾州, Si Chao 司超 his second in command and Li Qianpu 李謙溥 his Director in Chief.

One of Jiyuan’s first acts as ruler of the Northern Han state was to request aid from the Liao. He then sent an army under Liu Jiye 劉繼業 and Feng Jinke 馮進珂 to hold Tuanbogu 團柏谷. Ma Feng 馬峰 was appointed Commissioner of the Bureau of Military Affairs to supervise their army. When Ma arrived the

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171 There are two versions of the assassination given in XCB. In one, Ba Yong, the assassin, brings Ji’en’s head to Guo after killing him. Ba is then killed in order to silence him. In the other, Ba acted without direction and was killed shortly after killing Ji’en in the same room. SS places the assassination after the Song invasion had already reached Taiyuan.

172 SS says Tuanbeigu 團北谷. XCB is correct.
Dongguo River 洞過河 he met the Song vanguard under He Jiyun. He Jiyun defeated the Northern Han army, beheading more than two thousand men, taking five hundred horses and capturing General Zhang Huan 張環.

Shi Bin 石斌 chased the Han army to the Fen River 汛河 bridge, beneath the walls of Taiyuan, and burned the Yanxia Gate 延夏門. The Northern Han ruler sent the Palace Attendant troops out to fight under the command of Guo Shoubin 郭守斌. They were also defeated. Guo was struck by an arrow and retreated into the city. On 21 October the Assistant Commander of the Victorious Army, Li Qiong 李瓊, surrendered to the Song.

In mid-November Taizu sent a letter to the Northern Han ruler ordering him to surrender. He also sent similar letters to Guo Wuwei, Ma Feng and more than forty other Han officials. Guo turned all of the letters in except one, which he kept secretly for himself. It was at that time that he began to shift his allegiance to the Song. When a Song soldier was captured, Guo knew he was a spy but didn't question him. He even had a Northern Han soldier, who told Ma Feng that the man was a spy, beheaded to silence him.

A Liao relief army approached Taiyuan in mid-December. The Song army raised its siege when the Liao army raided Jinzhou 晉州 and Jiangzhou 綉州 in force. The Song army pulled back to regroup. Although little or nothing happened over the next month, Taizu had not abandoned his plans. With his reconnaissance in force driven off by the Liao demonstration, Taizu moved to a much larger

¹⁷³SS reports thirty which is too small. Clearly the top stroke of the 千 got separated and added to the 二 above it.
invasion.

Taizu ordered troops concentrated to invade the Northern Han on 13 February 969, and again on 17 February. On 26 February Taizu ordered Cao Bin, and Dang Jin to precede him to Taiyuan. Li Jixun was re-appointed Chief Administrative Officer of the Hedong Expeditionary Forward Army on 2 March, with Zhao Zan as Provost Marshal of the Cavalry and Infantry. Li and Zhao were also sent ahead to Taiyuan.

Taizu left the capital for Taiyuan on 7 March. Han Zhongyun had an audience with Taizu on 10 March. Taizu said: "The Liao know that I am invading and must lead a large force to come and reinforce [the Northern Han]. They think Zhending 真定 is unprepared and will enter our territory by that route. You will force march [to Zhen Ding], where they do not expect you, and break them." He then made Han the Chief Administrative Officer of the North Area and Qi Tingyi 祁廷義 his second in command.

Seasonal rains halted Taizu at Luzhou on 18 March. While there, he heard that the military supply system was in chaos, with carts jamming the streets of the city. He was going to punish the Transport Commissioner in charge of the supplies in Luzhou, but Zhao Pu stopped him: "Our armies are all here now. When the enemy hears that you have arrested the Transport Commissioner they will think that our supplies are insufficient. This is not the way to distantly manifest your dignity. Instead, you should select someone who

174 The Transport Commissioners of the early Song, whose function was that of army quartermaster, later became Fiscal Intendants. This may explain the large number of men of military background in the fiscal aspects of the early Song government.
can manage these difficulties and put him in charge." The next day Wang Youquan was put in charge of supplies at Luzhou and the problems were quickly cleared up.

The Northern Han army commanded by Liu Jiye and Feng Jinqi was camped at Tuanbogu. On 19 March Liu and Fen sent several hundred cavalry under Chen Tingshan 陳廷山 to reconnoitre Li Jixun's forward position. Chen promptly surrendered with his command. Liu and Ma saw that they were vastly outnumbered and retreated to Taiyuan. The Northern Han ruler was furious and sacked them. As a consequence of their retreat, Taiyuan was surrounded.

Taizu had been at Luzhou for eighteen days when a Northern Han spy was captured. When questioned about the conditions in Taiyuan he replied: "The people in the city have been suffering for a long time. Day and night they wait for Your Majesty to come and save them." Taizu laughed, gave the man clothing and had him released.

Taizu left Luzhou on 4 April. On 7 April Li Jixun reported defeating a Northern Han force beneath Taiyuan, cutting off more than a thousand heads and capturing six hundred horses. Taizu reached Taiyuan three days later. He inspected the army south of the city on 12 April, and ordered the construction of a long rampart. The following day he went to the Fen River and had a new bridge constructed. Tens of thousands of corvee laborers were drafted from the surrounding counties and brought to Taiyuan on 14 April. The next day, Shi Zhaowen 史昭文, the Administrative Assistant of Xianzhou 憲州, surrendered his prefecture and city. Taizu made him prefect of the surrendered territory and
rewarded him with clothes, a jade belt, caparison and a horse.

Taizu ordered the construction of a long dike connected to the Fen River on 17 April. This followed a suggestion made by Chen Chengzhao. When some of the generals were advocating concentrating the army and making a direct assault on Taiyuan, Chen said: "Your Majesty already has several tens of millions of troops here. Why not use them?" Taizu didn't understand so Chen pointed to the Fen River with his riding whip. Taizu laughed loudly and put Chen in charge of building the dike. The next day Taizu announced that he would drown the city.

Command of the Song army around Taiyuan was divided as follows: Li Jianxun's army was on the south side of the city, Zhao Zan's army on the west, Cao Bin's army on the north and Dang Jin's army on the east. On 19 April Taizu ordered all four commanders to build fortifications in order to tighten the siege. That night a Northern Han force sallied out and attacked the west fortifications. Zhao Zan led the fight to drive them back, getting struck in the foot with a crossbow bolt in the process, but the Han troops did not retreat. Earlier, Dang Jin had sent his Director in Chief, Li Qianpu, from the fortifications east of the city to cut timber for the army in the West Mountains. Li reinforced Zhao Zan and drove back the Northern Han troops. The same day, Liu Jiye led several hundred cavalrymen on a surprise attack on the east Song fortifications. Dang Jin personally pursued Liu. Liu was forced to hide in the trenches until a rescue force from the

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175 It is unclear from the text or subsequent events whether they were ordered to build forts or ramparts. I have therefore opted for the more general term "fortifications."
city came out to save him. He climbed a rope to ascend the walls and avoid
capture.

He Jiyun 何繼筠, the Administrative Officer of Shilingguan 石嶺關, was
camped at Quyang 曲陽. When Taizu heard on 24 April that one of the approaching
Liao relief armies would pass through Shilingguan, he gave He Jiyun several
thousand picked cavalry to stop them. He Jiyun badly defeated the Liao force
north of Yangqu county 陽曲縣, capturing Wang Yanfu 王彥符, the Liao prefect of
Wuzhou 武州, along with more than a hundred other officers. He also beheaded
more than a thousand Liao troops, captured more than seven hundred horses
and took a large quantity of weapons and armor. He Jiyun sent his son to report
the victory to Taizu. Taiyuan had resisted the Song army for a long time, but the
defenders were relying on the Liao to relieve them. Taizu had the captured
equipment and the heads displayed to undermine their morale.

Jie Qiluo 結齊羅, the Northern Han prefect of Linzhou 麟州, surrendered
his city on 18 May. The Liao sent an army to relieve Dingzhou on 20 May. Han
Zhongyun 韓重寳 and Chen Jiashan 陳嘉山 were waiting for it. When the Liao
saw the Song flags and pennons they wanted to retreat. Han quickly attacked
and badly beat them, capturing several hundred horses.

Taizu ordered the water from the Fen River let into the new dike to flood
Taiyuan on 26 May. The Song army then began using small boats with strong
crossbows to attack the inner and outer walls of the city.\textsuperscript{176} Wang Tingyi 王廷乂

\textsuperscript{176}The crossbows were probably large multi-bowed siege weapons served by several
men.
was in the forefront of the attack but was not wearing a helmet. He was struck in the head by an arrow and died the following day. The same day that Wang died, Shi Hanqing 石漢卿 was hit by an arrow. He fell into the water and drowned.

On 14 June Guo Wuwei decided to flee Taiyuan. He asked to personally lead troops in a night attack on the Song army. The Northern Han ruler believed Guo and selected one thousand elite soldiers for him. Liu Jiye and Guo Shoubin were made his subordinates. The Northern Han ruler ascended to the top of the Yanxia gate 延夏門 and personally saw Guo Wuwei off. Earlier that night it had been clear, but then the wind picked up and it began to rain. Guo Wuwei marched out to the North Bridge. But Liu Jiye’s horse injured its hoof, so Liu went back into the city with his men. Guo Shoubin got lost and did not meet up with Wuwei. Since Wuwei could not reasonably attack with only a thousand troops he was also forced to return to Taiyuan.

By 19 June flood waters reached the Yanxia Gate and began to open a gap in the outer wall. When the defenders tried to erect a wall to block the water, the Song army drove them back with missile fire. The Northern Han troops were unable to endure the fire and couldn't approach the gap. Then hay and grass from within the city washed into the gap by itself and plugged the hole. The Song crossbows couldn't penetrate the obstruction, which allowed the Northern Han troops to wall off the gap from the inside.

At about that time, Guo Wuwei was indicted and executed for treason. Guo's execution improved the morale of the people of the city. Even so, the Northern Han army was still unable to drive off the Song army. A large Northern
Han sally on the west side of the city, aimed at burning the Song siege machinery, was counter-attacked and driven off, losing over ten thousand men.

On 20 June Li Huaizhong 李懷忠 led an assault on the city, but was repulsed. He was hit by an arrow and almost died. Taiyuan continued to hold out contrary to all expectations. Zhao Tinghan 趙廷韓 led several companies of guardsmen 衛士 in kou towing to Taizu. They begged to lead an assault on the city, sacrificing themselves for victory. Taizu replied: "You are all soldiers that I personally trained. There is not one of you who is not worth a hundred men. You are the troops I have prepared for a vital crisis, who share hardships and fortune with me. I would rather not take Taiyuan than send you to certain death."
They were all touched and cried out: "Ten thousand years!"

The Song army was camped in marshy ground which, combined with the summer rains, had made most of the troops sick with diarrhea. At the same time, another Liao relief army was marching to Taiyuan. On 23 June Li Guangzan 李光贊 convinced Taizu to raise the siege and retreat. Li pointed out that not only was the Northern Han a small and unimportant state, but if the Song army wore itself out besieging Taiyuan, other states might take advantage of Song weakness. He was also concerned that overflowing rivers might obstruct Taizu from returning to the capital. Li proposed positioning troops at Shangdang 上黨, where they could raid the Northern Han in the summer and fall to steal their harvest. Zhao Pu approved the plan and on 24 June Taizu began planning the Song army's withdrawal.

Jia Huaguang 華化光 further refined Li's proposal: "Generally, in cutting
down trees, one first cuts off the branches and then harvests the trunk. Now, from the outside, Hedong [the Northern Han] is helped by the Liao. From the inside it relies upon its people. With these, I fear we will be unable to conquer it for a long time. It is appropriate to build forts north [of Taiyuan] at Shiling, Hebei, Xijie, Shandong, Jingyangcun, Lepingzhen, Huangzeguan and Baijingshe in order to block the Liao from reinforcing [the Northern Han] with soldiers. We should then take the people within [the Northern Han] to our western capital [Kaifeng] and apportion them land. If we do this, then in a few years it will be easy to conquer [the Northern Han]." Accordingly, on 30 June the Song army began moving the people living near Taiyuan to Song territory. Ultimately they moved over ten thousand families to Shandong and Henan.

Taizu left Taiyuan on 3 July. The Northern Han had been so seriously exhausted by the siege that they had to rely upon the abandoned supplies of the departed Song army. They recovered three hundred thousand units of grain and several tens of thousands of units of silk.

After the water had receded from Taiyuan the city walls crumbled. Han Zhipan, the Liao envoy, commented: "The Song army led the water to inundate the city. They knew the first step but did not know the second. If you know how to do it correctly, first you inundate, then you drain and the walls fall." Liu Jiye urged the Northern Han ruler to let him attack the Liao relief army presently camped at Taiyuan and then to submit to the Song. He figured that they could capture several tens of thousands of horses and use the attack as a basis for submission on good terms. The Northern Han ruler rejected his plan. After a few
days the Liao army returned north.

The Campaign Against the Southern Han (3 October 970-22 March 971)\textsuperscript{177}

In September of 970 Taizu decided to conquer the Southern Han. The Southern Han ruler had refused repeated diplomatic requests to surrender to the Song. Taizu did not mention a \textit{casus belli} in any discussion of the campaign. He proceeded directly to confrontation without the slightest fig-leaf of justification. On 3 October Taizu appointed Pan Mei 潘美 Chief Administrative Officer of the Hezhou Route Expeditionary Army 賀州, Yin Chongke 尹崇珂 his second in command and Wang Jixun 王繼勳 Director in Chief of the Expeditionary Cavalry. Taizu then ordered army units from several prefectures to converge on Hezhou.

The Southern Han was poorly prepared for war. Due to a great deal of infighting in the royal family, most of their generals had been impeached and executed, leaving the military in the hands of a few eunuchs. The walls and fortifications were in disrepair across the state, the warships were unprepared and the weapons and armor were decrepit.

On 21 October Pan Mei reported that he had defeated a Southern Han force, killing more than ten thousand soldiers and taking Fuzhou 富州.\textsuperscript{178} The Song invasion shocked the Southern Han court. The Southern Han ruler quickly

\textsuperscript{177}The campaign against the Southern Han is chronicled in XCB 11/8a-XCB/Yongle Dadian 12306/1b and SS 2.32.

\textsuperscript{178}Correcting 丁卯 to 丁巳.
despatched Gong Chengshu 龔澄禧 to Hezhou, to reassure the troops there. But the Southern Han soldiers in Hezhou hadn't been paid for a long time. They expected Gong not only to pay them what they were owed, but to give them a bonus as well. When they discovered that all he had was a decree, their morale collapsed. Shortly after Gong arrived in Hezhou, the Song army captured Macheng 马乘 and its vanguard reached Fanglin 芳林. Gong fled back to the Southern Han court just before the Song army surrounded Hezhou.

The Southern Han ruler called all his officials in to discuss the situation. They all recommended putting Pan Chongche 潘崇徹 in charge of defending the state. Pan had previously been sacked. He was still discontent because of that, and refused the appointment, claiming to have an eye ailment. The Southern Han ruler was furious: "Why must we use Pan Chongche? Is Wu Yanrou 伍彦柔 without strategies?" Consequently, he sent a force under Wu Yanrou to relieve Hezhou.

As Wu approached the Song army on 22 October, the Song army withdrew about 7 miles, leaving behind soldiers hidden on the south bank of the river. That night, when Wu's force disembarked on the south bank, the Song soldiers ambushed Wu. The Southern Han army was thrown into chaos. The Song troops beheaded Wu and killed seventeen other soldiers. They showed Wu's head to the defenders of Hezhou, seriously demoralizing the besieged troops.

Wang Ming 王明 said to Pan Mei: "We should attack immediately, otherwise

179 Seventeen people seems to be a rather small number, but I see no textual way to resolve this doubt. Perhaps the small number was due to the attack being directed against Wu personally.

186
I fear [the Southern Han] will try to relieve [Hezhou] again." Most of the other generals disagreed with him. Wang donned his armor, prepared his own unit of more than a hundred men and recruited several thousand transport and work troops to assault the city. They quickly filled in the moat in front of the city gate. The people in the city were terribly frightened by this and opened the gate, surrendering the city to the Song army.

The Song army at Hezhou was upstream of Guangzhou 廣州, the capital of the Southern Han. Since the He River 賀江 was navigable, the Song army could now advance very quickly on the Southern Han capital. This danger overcame the Southern Han ruler’s dislike of Pan Chongche, and Pan was put in charge of thirty thousand troops. Pan took a defensive position at the mouth of the He River, but didn’t advance toward the Song army. Meanwhile, the Song army had divided in two, one part heading west and one part heading east. The western force had already reached Zhaozhou 昭州, and the West River 西江, by the time Pan Chongche was at the He River. Pan was only positioned to prevent a Song advance down the He or West Rivers. He could do nothing about the eastern Song force. Once the eastern force reached Shaozhou 韶州 and the North River 北江 it could also quickly strike downstream at the Southern Han capital. But Pan and his army were pinned down as long as the western force stayed upstream of him on either the He or West River. The western force remained a significant threat the entire campaign.

The western Song army broke Kaijian Fort 開建寨 on 24 November, killing several thousand soldiers and capturing its general Jin Hui 靳暉. Tian Xingchou
田行稠，the prefect of Zhaozhou, fled his city and retreated, as did Li Chengjin 李承進，the prefect of Guizhou 桂州. The Song army then captured Zhaozhou and Guizhou.

The eastern Song army overran Lianzhou 連州, forcing Lu Shou 盧收 to fall back to Qingyuan 清遠. The Southern Han had evacuated Guizhou and Lianzhou ahead of the Song army. The Southern Han ruler hoped that Song army would stop at conquering Zhao, Gui, Lian and He prefectures. He was wrong.

On 20 January the eastern Song army had almost reached Shaozhou 韶州. Li Chengwo 李承渥 arrayed a Southern Han army of more than a hundred thousand troops beneath Lianhuafeng Mountain 蓮華峰山, blocking the Song army’s route to the capital. War elephants, each carrying more than ten men, were placed at the front of the Southern Han formations to strengthen them. The Song army concentrated its crossbow fire on the elephants, causing them to flee. All the soldiers riding on the elephants were thrown off and trampled as the elephants stampeded back into the Southern Han formation. The Song army attacked the shattered and disorganized Southern Han army, destroying its remaining cohesion. Li Chengwo barely escaped with his life. Shaozhou was then captured along with its prefect, Xing Yanwo 允延渥.

Xing Yanwo sent a message from captivity to the Southern Han ruler suggesting that he surrender to the Song. Li Tuojian 李託堅 opposed surrendering. He said that the people of the country were just afraid following the recent

180 The Song solution to fighting war elephants was exactly the same as the Romans.

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defeats. The Southern Han ruler wanted to build a palisade east of the capital to
defend it against the Song army. He needed a capable general to take charge of
the operation. Liang Luanzhen 梁鷉真 suggested his adopted son [Liang was a
eunuch], Guo Chongyue 郭崇岳. The Southern Han ruler appointed Guo Bandit-
suppression Commissioner 招討使 with General 大將 Zhi Tingxiao 植延曉 to
assist him. Guo camped his sixty thousand troops at Majing 馬遜 and erected a
rampart facing the approaching Song army.

In February of 971 the eastern Song army took Yingzhou 英州 and Xiongzhou
雄州. Pan Chongche then surrendered. The Song advance down the North
River had made Pan’s position irrelevant. When the Song army reached Longtou
龍頭 the Southern Han ruler sent an envoy to ask for peace. Longtou was a
strategically important area with difficult terrain. Pan Mei was concerned about
being ambushed so he took the envoy hostage in order to quickly pass through
the strategically important points. On 25 February the Song army reached Zhakou
栅口, 3 miles from Majing. The following day Pan Mei marched to Shuangnu
Mountain 雙女山, overlooking Guo Chongyue’s palisade.181 Guo’s army was the
last obstacle between the Song army and the Southern Han capital.

Song cavalry patrols challenged the Southern Han troops to fight but Guo
would not allow it. His army was made up of the defeated and wounded troops
from Shaozhou and Yingzhou, whose moral was completely exhausted. Zhi
Tingxiao wanted to fight but Guo refused. He only intended to defend the
rampart, while praying to the gods day and night.

181 The 庠 should be 遐.
It was at this time that the Southern Han ruler decided to flee his country. He had more than ten ships prepared with gold, treasures and concubines so that he could escape to the sea. But when it came time to leave, he discovered that his eunuchs and soldiers had sailed without him. Now really frightened, he sent a letter of surrender to the Song army. Pan Mei sent the messengers bearing the letter on to Taizu and continued with the campaign.

On 28 February Zhi Tingxiao said to Guo Chongyue: "The northern army has crossed the river and rolled up our position. Their sharpness cannot be withstood. We have many soldiers, but they are all wounded. This strategy of not advancing is just one of waiting for death." On 3 March Zhi arrayed the vanguard of the Southern Han army for battle, with the river across his front. Guo commanded the rearguard. The Song army crossed the river and attacked. Zhi fought vigorously but lost and died. Guo fled back behind the rampart.

Pan Mei said to Wang Ming: "Their rampart is made of wood with interwoven bamboo. If we attack with fire and burn it they will certainly be sent into confusion. Then we can use the confusion to attack them. This is a flawless plan." Five thousand Song troops, each carrying two torches, snuck up to the rampart. At twilight they all lit their torches and threw them in. A great wind also sprang up raising dust and smoke. The Southern Han army was badly defeated and Guo Chongyue was killed in the confusion.

Gong Chengshu, Li Tuo 李托, and Xie Chongyu set fire to all the storehouses and palace buildings in the Southern Han capital. They hoped that the Song army would withdraw once the treasure of the state was gone. Everything was
destroyed in one night.

The next day the Song army reached Baitian 白田. The Southern Han ruler put on ordinary clothing, came out and surrendered. After entering Huangzhou, Pan Mei sent an official report of the triumph to the court. It arrived in the capital on 22 March. The defeat of the Southern Han netted the Song sixty prefectures with two hundred and fourteen counties and a population of 172,263 households.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Song Taizu III

The fall of the Southern Han left Taizu with very few targets for further conquest. He could try to conquer the Northern Han again or attack the Sixteen Prefectures. He could also continue his efforts in the south and attack the Southern Tang. Both northern options would involve fighting the Liao. But it was one thing to fend off Liao border incursions, it was quite another to face their regular army in the field. Liao cavalry was superior to Song cavalry in both numbers and quality. It was also very difficult to supply the army in the north, where there were fewer navigable waterways than in the south. Balanced against the possible value of the territorial gains, which were minimal, the northern option was clearly less attractive than further campaigns in the south. The Southern Tang was still a fairly wealthy country, even after losing the Huainan region (now part of the Song empire) to Zhou Shizong, and the Song could bring their superior naval strength to bear.

Taizu had some compunctions about attacking the Southern Tang without a casus belli. The best he was able to manufacture was that the Southern Tang ruler would not surrender to him peacefully. This rather pathetic excuse was apparently enough to assuage Taizu's conscience, or at least conform to Confucian historiography. Since, in retrospect, Taizu possessed the Mandate of Heaven, it was perfectly reasonable for him to expect the rulers of smaller states to submit
to him. As one of the last holdouts the Southern Tang ruler really had no excuse for not submitting to Taizu.

Cao Bin was put in overall command of the Southern Tang campaign because he was the only general who adequately controlled his troops during the conquest of Shu. Taizu wanted to avoid a repeat of the rebellion that the depredations of the Song army against the residents of Shu had caused. Before sending the generals to conquer the Southern Tang, Taizu admonished them not to bother the common people during the campaign. Cao Bin assured Taizu: "If any of the subordinate generals don't obey this command I will behead them." Pan Mei and the other generals all turned white. Although the Song avoided a costly and prolonged rebellion, it still took more than a year of hard fighting to conquer the Southern Tang.

The Campaign against the Southern Tang 南唐 (6 October 974-5 January 976)182

Taizu began concentrating troops for a Southern Tang campaign on 6 October 974, sending a force under Cao Han 曹翰 to Jingnan 荊南. On 9 October Taizu sent additional forces under Cao Bin 曹彬, Li Hanqiong 李漢瓊, and Tian Qinzuo 田欽祚 to join Cao Han. On 10 October Taizu sent a letter to the Southern Tang ruler asking him to submit to the Song. The Southern Tang ruler

182 The campaign against the Southern Tang is chronicled in XCB/Yongle Dadian 12307/2b-12308/1a and SS 3.42-46.
ruler was initially inclined to submit, but Chen Qiao 陈乔 objected: "Your Majesty and I received the final commands of Yuanzong 元宗 (the previous ruler of the Southern Tang). Now, if you go [to the Song court], we must see the end of it. What about our sovereignty? How will I be able to face Yuanzong in the afterworld?" Zhang Ji 張洎 also opposed submitting. Since Zhang and Chen were Li Huang's closest advisors, he agreed with them. The same day that Taizu received the Southern Tang ruler's refusal, he sent further forces under Pan Mei 潘美, Liu Yu 劉遇 and Liang Jiong 梁迥 to Jingnan.

Taizu inspected the Song navy in the Bian practice basin on 27 October, before sending it southeast to participate in the Southern Tang campaign. Two days later he watched the naval exercises of several more squadrons before sending them to the south. The Southern Tang ruler was still unaware that Taizu had decided to attack him. Although he had refused to go to the Song court and submit to Taizu, he did send his heir apparent to pay his respects. The heir apparent was not allowed to return to the Southern Tang.

The campaign opened on 4 November when the Song army invaded the Southern Tang from Jingnan. On 9 November Taizu appointed the ruler of Wuyue Military Pacification Commissioner in Chief of the Shengzhou Southeast Area Expeditionary Army 昇州東南面  and bestowed two hundred war horses on him. He also sent Ding Deyu 丁德裕 with a thousand Song infantry and cavalry to act as the Wuyue vanguard. Ding was also expected to advise the Wuyue ruler.

Cao Bin crossed the Yangzi from Qiyang 蕭陽 on 11 November and
overran Xiakou Fort 峽口寨. He killed eight hundred of the garrison and captured two hundred and seventy others, including the fort commander. On 16 November Taizu appointed Cao Chief Administrative Officer of the Shengzhou Southwest Area Expeditionary Army and Navy, Pan Mei Director in Chief, and Cao Han Commander in Chief of the Vanguard.\footnote{I have no explanation for the delay in making the command appointments.}

Previously the Song army sent annual patrols down to the Southern Tang border near Chizhou 池州. The Song troops would set up camp along the river, near the city. When the Southern Tang defending general of Chizhou, Ge Yan 戈彥, realized that the Song army was really invading he fled the city. Cao Bin entered Chizhou unopposed on 21 November.

Cao Bin’s first objective was to secure the upper reaches of the Yangzi above Jinling 金陵, the Southern Tang capital. He marched east, downstream, systematically driving the Southern Tang army and navy from the river. But if the Song army was going to besiege Jinling, it would need a reliable transport link across the Yangzi much closer to the city. Taizu ordered Hao Shoujun 郝守濬 to build a pontoon bridge able to span the Yangzi at Caishiji 采石矶. No one had ever built a pontoon bridge at Caishiji before because the river was both broad and deep there. Hao set up the bridge at Shipaikou 石牌口 first, to prove it would work.

Cao Bin defeated the Southern Tang army at Tongling 銅陵 on 29 November. Tongling was 37 miles northwest of Chizhou. The Song captured more than two hundred warships and more than eight hundred men. Cao reached Dangtu 當塗.
on 4 December, having already captured Wuhu 蘇湖. Wei Xi 魏羽 surrendered Dangtu to Cao. The Song army was now at Caishiji, facing a Southern Tang army of more than twenty thousand men. Cao defeated the Southern Tang army defending Caishiji on 9 December, capturing more than a thousand officers and men, and three hundred warhorses.

A Song force attacked Pingxiang 萍鄉 on 17 December, defeating its Supervisor, Liu Mouzhong 劉茂忠. Li Congshan 李從善, the military governor of Jitaining 米泰寧, surrendered to the Song on 25 December, along with more than thirteen hundred Southern Tang sailors. On 26 December the pontoon bridge was moved from Shipaizhen to Caishiji. The work was completed in three days.

When the Southern Tang ruler heard about the bridge he asked Zhang Ji about it. Zhang said: "Since ancient times there has never been this sort of thing. This cannot be." The Southern Tang ruler responded: "I, too, say that this is a child's tale." That day he sent a naval force with ten thousand sailors under Zheng Yanhua 鄭彥華 and an army with ten thousand soldiers under Du Zhen 杜真 to fight the Song army. Upon dispatching them he said: "Two forces, navy and army, supporting each other cannot fail to achieve victory."

Li Nu 李努 defeated a more than three thousand man Southern Tang naval force from Ezhou 鄂州 on 31 December, capturing more than forty warships. On 5 January 975 Cao Bin reported defeating several thousand Tang soldiers at Xinlin Fort 新林寨 and capturing thirty warships. On 13 January Zheng Yanhua and Du Zhen met the Song army. Du fought with the Song forces but Zheng held back his naval force. Du was defeated because Zheng didn't support him.
Ning Guangzuo 邵光祚 defeated more than three thousand Southern Tang troops of the Ezhou navy on the north bank of the Yangzi on 18 January. On 30 January the King of Wuyue surrounded Changzhou 常州. He captured two hundred and fifty Southern Tan soldiers and eighty horses beneath Changzhou's walls. On 3 February the King captured Licheng Fort 利城寨, defeating a Southern Tang army of more than three thousand men, capturing more than six hundred. Cao Bin defeated a Southern Tang army at Xinlingangkou 新林港口 on 6 February, beheading more than two thousand men and burning more than sixty warships. On 11 February the King of Wuyue defeated a Southern Tang force of more than ten thousand troops on the northern border of Chang prefecture. Fan Rushui 樊若水, the acting prefect of Chizhou, defeated four thousand Southern Tang troops on the border of the prefecture on 16 February.

Wu Shouqian 武守谦 defeated more than ten thousand Southern Tang troops at Wuchang 武昌 on 21 February, killing seven hundred and taking Fanshan Fort 樊山寨. The same day, Tian Qinzu defeated more than ten thousand Southern Tang soldiers on the Li River 漂水 beheading their Campaign Commander, Li Xiong 李雄. On 24 February Wang Ming reported defeating more than three hundred troops from Ezhou on the southern bank of the Yangzi. On 26 February, under Fan Ruoshui's orders, Wang Shen 王侁 defeated more than four thousand Southern Tang troops on the border of Xuanzhou.

Cao Bin reached Jinling, the Southern Tang capital, on 2 March. Li Hanqiong led a Song force across the Qinhuai River, south of Jinling. He then attacked Jinling's water fort (a line of ships guarding Jinling's moat), using fire-rafts.
When the wind rose he lit the ships and sent them at the fort. Li followed up the rafts, storming the fort and beheading several thousand men. When Pan Mei reached the Qinhua River, a Southern Tang army of more than a hundred thousand troops was arrayed with its back to the Jinling. Pan Mei had no boats. He said to his officers: "I have tens of thousands of brave and determined troops. When I fight I am always victorious. When I attack, I always take the enemy. How can this narrow belt of water prevent me from advancing?" Pan then led his own bodyguard forward in crossing the water. The rest of the imperial army followed and the Southern Tang forces were badly defeated. The Southern Tang sent a force to cut the pontoon bridge at Caishi. Pan Mei quickly defeated them, capturing their Commander of the Divine Guard 郎官, and six other high officers.

As Pan Mei was establishing himself near Jinling, Cao Bin and the rest of the Song army began to pick off nearby Southern Tang positions. Their goal was to isolate Jinling and destroy any forces that might come to rescue it. Shi Xi 石曦 defeated a Southern Tang force of more than two thousand men in Yuanzhou on 18 March. Cao Bin defeated a Southern Tang force of more than ten thousand men at Bailu Islet 白鹭洲 on 25 March, beheading more than five thousand men, capturing more than a hundred and seizing fifty warships.

A Song force climbed over the walls and snuck into Shengzhou on 27 March. The Song soldiers killed more than a thousand Southern Tang troops, another thousand drowning as they fled. Zhang Jin 張進, the Office Manager and Commander of Tiande 天德, and eight other Tang officers surrendered. Hou 198
Zhi 侯陟 defeated more than one thousand Southern Tang soldiers at Xuanhuazhen 宣化鎮 on 4 April. Xing Qi 邢琪 captured Yian Fort 義安寨 on 28 April, beheading more than a thousand Tang soldiers. Cao Bin defeated a Southern Tang force of more than three thousand men on the Yangzi on 1 May, capturing another five hundred.

On 16 May Wang Ming reported defeating a Southern Tang force on the border of Jiangzhou and beheading over two thousand men. The King of Wuyue surrounded Changzhou on 24 May. The prefect, Yu Wancheng 禹萬誠, surrendered the city. On 2 June Cao Bin reported defeating a force of more than two thousand men at Qinhuaibei 秦淮北. On 24 June the King of Wuyue reported that Jiangyin 江陰, Ningyuan 寧遠 and all of the forts along the Yuan River 緣江 had surrendered. On 7 July Wang Ming reported defeating a Southern Tang force of more than ten thousand men at Wuchang, and capturing more than five hundred ships.

Up until that time, Chen Qiao and Zhang Ji took care of all the affairs of the Southern Tang kingdom. They had ordered all of the cities and forts to defend themselves firmly in order to wear out the Song army. They hadn't even disturbed the Southern Tang ruler when the Song army invaded. Every day he stayed in a back garden with Buddhist monks and Daoist masters reading sutras and discussing *The Book of Changes*. Chen and Zhang decided which military reports to show him. The Southern Tang ruler was unaware that the Song army was besieging Jinling several months after it had surrounded the city.

All of the old Tang generals had died, leaving Huangfu Jixun 皇甫繼勳, the
Commander in Chief of the Divine Guard, in charge of Tang military affairs. Huangfu was both young and arrogant. He had no intention of dying for his country. Although Huangfu wanted his ruler to quickly surrender, he said nothing. But when he spoke to anyone else he said: "The Northern Army is very powerful, who can oppose them?" If he heard of a defeat he got a pleased look on his face. He would say: "I already knew that they could not win."

Huangfu Jixun had an adopted son named Shaojie. Jixun had Shaojie secretly suggest to the Southern Tang ruler that they surrender to the Song, but the Southern Tang ruler did not agree. Huangfu Jixun had the brave troops who wanted to make a sally from the city at night and attack the Song beaten and imprisoned. While Huangfu and his son were arousing popular discontent, Huangfu also often refused to attend court, saying he was too busy with military affairs. When he was ordered to come he arrived late.

On 11 July the Southern Tang ruler personally went out on the city walls and examined the situation. He found the Song army’s stockades outside of the walls and their banners filling the fields. It was then that he realized that he was being deceived by his attendants and began to be concerned about the situation. He had Huangfu Jixun and Shaojie arrested and executed. Their bodies were exposed in the market, where the soldiers barbecued their flesh and ate it. In a short time their bodies were entirely consumed. In reality, military affairs were controlled by Zhang Ji. Huangfu Jixun and his son were made scapegoats for Zhang’s policies.

The Southern Tang ruler ordered Zhu Lingyun to relieve the capital.
Zhu was upstream at Hukou with a force of one hundred thousand troops. His subordinates suggested taking advantage of the high tide to quickly go downstream. Zhu said: "If I advance now, the enemy will certainly attack my rear. If we fight and win that will be alright. But if we are not victorious then our supply lines will probably be cut. Then the damage will be very deep." He then sent an order to Chai Kezhen 柴克貞 to replace him at Hukou. Chai was sick and didn't come. Zhu was also afraid to move. The Southern Tang ruler pressed him several times, but Zhu didn't obey the order.

On 13 July Cao Bin reported defeating a force of more than twenty thousand men beneath the walls of the Southern Tang capital, capturing several thousand ships. On 16 August Du Guangjun 杜光俊 reported defeating more than three hundred Southern Tang soldiers from Xuanzhou on the south bank of the Yangzi.

Taizu again ordered the Southern Tang ruler to surrender on 21 August. He personally wrote the edict demanding that he surrender. In addition, Taizu ordered his generals to slow down their attack while he waited for a reply. On 27 August the King of Wuyue was ordered to return to his country, leaving his troops to follow the Song army. On 23 August the King sent a messenger to the Song court to pay tribute, and give thanks, for Taizu's benevolence.

Hou Zhi was caught taking a bribe on 7 September. He was taken to the capital for trial. Hou was a good friend of Lu Duosun. He asked Lu to help him. At that time, Jinling had not fallen and Taizu was tired of war. The land in the south was low and moist, it was the hottest time of the summer and there were many outbreaks of disease in the army. Taizu was considering ordering Cao Bin
to pull back to Huangling to rest the men and horses. Lu Duosun strongly opposed this, but was unable to prevail in the argument. Hou Zhi had just been brought from Huangling and knew that Jinling was in dire straits. Lu informed Taizu and, when Taizu was discussing the issue, he ordered Hou to come to court. Hou was ill and had to be supported by some palace attendants. In a loud voice he said: "The Southern Tang will be subdued at any moment, how could Your Majesty intend to stop fighting? I promise that you will soon take them. If I am wrong then I request that Your Majesty execute three generations of my family." Taizu sent away his other attendants and had a private conference with Hou to discuss the situation. He changed his earlier idea of withdrawing the troops and pardoned Hou.

On 14 September Hu Gongba 胡公霸, the prefect of Jizhou 吉州, surrendered to the Song. On 1 October Ding Deyu reported defeating more than five thousand Southern Tang soldiers beneath the walls of Runzhou 潞州. At that time Ding and a force of Wuyue soldiers were besieging Runzhou.

When the Song army began its invasion, one of its objectives was to take Jingkou. Liu Cheng 劉澄 was sent to defend Runzhou for the Southern Tang. He had been a companion of the Southern Tang ruler's while growing up. On the point of departure the Southern Tang ruler said to him: "You don't want to leave me. I too find it hard for you to go. Still, in this matter you cannot fail to aid my mind." Liu cried and accepted the orders. He returned home and gathered all of his gold and jade in departing. He told people: "All of this was given to me. Now the country is in trouble. I want to disperse it to promote loyal service."
Southern Tang ruler heard this and was very pleased.

The Wuyue army, under Ding Deyu, was besieging Runzhou. They had not yet completed their circumvallation of the city. Liu Cheng turned down a suggestion that he make a surprise sally from the city: "If we win it will be alright, but if we don't we will be taken captive." He needed assistance if he was to fight while there was still a chance for success. The Southern Tang ruler sent a naval force from Jinling with eight thousand men under Lu Jiang to relieve Jingkou. Lu Jiang disembarked his soldiers at Jingkou and fought with the Wuyue army. The Wuyue soldiers retreated a little and Lu entered the city. Then the besiegers reclosed the encirclement.

Liu and Lu defended the city firmly for several months. But they mutually suspected each other. Liu knew that Lu really wanted to surrender. He was worried about Lu's plans. He said to him: "A scout reported that the siege of the capital is getting worse every day. If the capital isn't defended, then how can this also be defended?" Lu also knew that the capital would fall. He replied: "You are the defending general. You cannot leave the city and go. Given that, it is appropriate for me to go." Liu made a bad face and, after a while, said: "It should be as you say."

Lu prepared to leave. Lu was angry at a subordinate general and intended to kill him. Liu spoke to the general secretly and said: "Lu is angry at you. You're doomed." The subordinate general cried and asked Liu what he should do. Liu replied: "I have one thing to say to you. If you don't leave tonight you will die. Moreover, if you want to get lucky, you must report that we wish to
surrender. You must first leave and contact the besiegers." The subordinate general replied: "My family is in the capital, how can I do this?" Liu responded: "Matters now are very anxious, we must think of ourselves. My family has a hundred people but I don't dare to think of them."

The subordinate general escaped and fled from the city. Lu was unaware of it. The next day, when Lu and Liu were eating together, an officer reported the escape. Liu made a face and said: "I said that you should already have beheaded him. How is this following orders, letting him escape?" After Lu left, Liu gathered all the generals and soldiers together: "I have defended this city several fortnights. I don't want to cheat the country. But we must find a way to survive. What do all of you think?" The generals and soldiers all cried out loudly and wailed greatly. Liu feared that there might be some who loved their country so he also cried: "I have received benevolence and firmly resisted with you. Moreover, my father and mother are in the capital. It would have been better if I didn't know loyalty or filiality, but our strength is unable to resist them. Have all of you not heard the story of Chuzhou? When Zhou Shizong surrounded Chuzhou it didn't fall for a long time. When it did, they killed everyone." In this way Liu convinced his men to surrender. On 16 October Liu opened the gates and asked to surrender. Lu Jiang went to Xuanzhou, where he satisfied himself with drinking and eating. Ding Deyu accepted the surrender of Runzhou on 23 October.

That month Li Congyi went to Jinling to present Taizu's edict, demanding surrender, to the Southern Tang ruler. At first, the Southern Tang ruler intended to surrender. But Chen Qiao, Zhang Xi and Kuang Chenfu thought that Jinling
could hold out. The Song army had attacked day and night but had retreated. They convinced the Southern Tang ruler not to surrender. Once Taizu's edict was rejected the Song army resumed its offensive.

There was a Daoist named Zhou Weijian at the Southern Tang court who often discussed the *Book of Changes*. Zhang Xi brought it to the Southern Tang rulers attention that Zhou had a farsighted plan. He would be able to get an armistice from the Song by talking and joking. The Southern Tang ruler sent Zhou and Xu Xuan to the Song court. At the same time, he ordered Zhu Lingbin to select soldiers from Hukou to relieve Jinling. The Tang ruler then instructed Xu Xuan: "If you can get them to stop I will not order the relief force to come east." Xu replied: "It is not certain that I can settle this. It is hard to resolve these difficulties. The people inside the city are waiting for the relief force. How can you not send it?" The Southern Tang ruler replied: "Seeking peace while sending the soldiers is a contradiction. Under these circumstances, how can you not be in danger?" Xu replied: "You must concern yourself with sovereignty. Do not think of me." The Southern Tang ruler cried and promoted him. Knowing that Zhou Weijian was rather high-minded and not interested in glory, the Southern Tang ruler personally wrote a more than ten-page letter to Taizu asking to stop the war and expressing his desire to retire due to illness.

On 6 November Cao Bin had Xu Xuan and Zhou Weijian escorted to the Song court. Xu considered himself a famous Southern Tang minister. He intended to quickly convince Taizu not to destroy his country. Song officials told Taizu that Xu was a very talented speaker, and that Taizu should prepare for him. Taizu
laughed: "You can all just go, you do not understand my preparations." Then Xu entered the court and respectfully said: "Li Yu (the Southern Tang ruler) is innocent. Your Majesty has sent troops without reason." Taizu ordered Xu to approach him. Xu continued: "Li Yu is a small [ruler] serving a large one. It is like a son serving a father. Li Yu has never committed offence. How is it that he is attacked?" He spoke at some length. Taizu replied: "You speak of a father and son, how can this be when there are two families?" Xu could not reply.

Zhou Weijian then approached with letter from the Southern Tang ruler. Taizu read it and said: "I didn't understand a word of what your master said." Taizu was thus not convinced to slow down the Song offensive, though he continued to treat Xu and Zhou well. On 9 November Xu and Zhou returned to the Southern Tang.

On 24 November the Southern Tang ruler again sent an envoy to seek a delay in the Song advance. But the following day Zhu Lingbin set sail from Hukou to relieve the siege of Jinling. He falsely claimed to have one hundred and fifty thousand men. The Southern Tang soldiers had tied trees together to make giant rafts to transport the soldiers. Their large warships held more than a thousand men each. The first objective was the pontoon bridge at Caishi. Wang Ming camped his troops at Dushukou 獨樹口, in preparation for Zhu's attack. He then sent his son to ride quickly to Taizu and request the building of an additional three hundred warships in order to make a surprise attack on Zhu. Taizu said: "This is not a timely policy. At any moment, Zhu will arrive at Jinling to break the

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184 Quoted from Mencius.
The Yangzi was shallow at that time of the year. Ships could not easily advance. Zhu’s flagship alone was ten stories. When Zhu reached Huankou a Song force under Liu Yu vigorously attacked him. Zhu’s situation was desperate. He tried to use flaming oil on the river to save the situation. A north wind arose and drove the oil back onto the Southern Tang armada. The Tang troops were all dispersed. Zhu Lingbin was captured alive the next day along with his Provost Marshal of the Navy, Wang Hui and other officers. Zhu’s relief force was Jinling’s last hope for outside help.

The Southern Tang ruler again sent Xu Xuan and Zhou Weijian to have an audience with Taizu. On 8 December the pair went to the Bian Hall. Xu Xuan said that Li Yu served the great country of Song with very respectful propriety. It was only illness that prevented him from visiting court. He begged for an armistice for the whole country. His words were very urgent. Taizu repeated his questions several times. Xu’s voice became increasingly harsh. Taizu got angry and, putting his hand on his sword, said to Xu: "You must not say anymore. What crimes have the people of Jiangnan (the Southern Tang) committed? The world is one family. How could I bear someone snoring beside my bed?" Xu was afraid of Taizu and retreated. Taizu then berated Zhou Weijian. Zhou became increasingly afraid: "I originally lived on a mountain. It was not my idea to enter court. It is only that Li Yu sent me. I have heard that Nanshan has a lot of efficacious medicine in the winter. I have always wanted to go there." Taizu pitied him and let him go. He then richly rewarded each of them and gave them an edict to
On 17 December Wang Ming reported defeating more than ten thousand Southern Tang troops at Hukou. He captured five hundred warships and a corresponding amount of weapons. Cao Bin had erected three forts near Jinling as bases of operation for the siege. Pan Mei commanded the north fort. When Taizu saw a plan of the siege he pointed to the north fort: "This must be deeply entrenched for strong defense. The Southern Tang will certainly send troops during the night to attack it." A messenger was quickly dispatched to tell Cao Bin.

Cao Bin heeded Taizu's warning and drafted corvee labor to dig out a moat around the fort. As expected, the Southern Tang sent five thousand troops to attack the north fort one night. Each man carried a torch. They rose in a great clamour and attacked. Cao Bin waited for them to assault the fort and then vigorously attacked them, scattering the Southern Tang troops.

The Song army had besieged Jinling from the spring to the winter. It had defeated the Southern Tang army several times, and the morale of the people in Jinling had been broken. Cao Bin wanted the city to surrender. If he took the city by storm it would be impossible to keep the army from destroying it. He sent a messenger to the Southern Tang ruler: "This month on the twenty-seventh day the city will certainly be broken. You should prepare early for this." The Southern Tang ruler did not believe it. He ordered his son, Zhongyu, to go to the Song court. After a long time, he still hadn't left. After several days, Cao Bin sent a message reproving the Southern Tang ruler. He said: "You needn't go so far [as

return.
to send Zhongyu to the Song court]. If you come to the fort then I will stop the attacks." The Southern Tang ruler finally began suspecting what everyone around him said. He had thought that the city was firmly resisting. Cao Bin's confidence was unnerving him. He sent back a reply: "Zhongyu has not finished packing and we have not finished his departing feast. On the twenty seventh day he will leave. Cao sent another messenger. He said: "If the twenty sixth day passes it will also be too late." The Southern Tang ruler didn't listen.

Cao Bin suddenly feigned illness and didn't attend to affairs. All of the generals asked after his health. Cao said: "My illness cannot be cured by medicine or acupuncture. It is necessary that you all make a pledge that, when the city falls, you do not kill even one person. Then my illness will be cured." The generals all accepted the pledge. They then burned incense together and made their pledge. Cao suddenly became better.

By 2 January Jinling's morale had collapsed. Chen Qiao and Zhang Xi had both originally pledged to die together with their country before surrendering. But Zhang Xi had no intention of dying. Zhang led his wife and children to the palace. He went in at the same time as Chen Qiao to see the Southern Tang ruler. Chen said: "I have failed Your Majesty. You should execute me. If the anyone in the [Song] court asks, please blame me." The Southern Tang ruler replied: "The time has already passed and the country died without profit." Chen said: "You Majesty will not kill me. I also have no face with which to look at the people of the country." He then went and hung himself. Zhang then spoke: "Chen and I controlled things together. Now the country is lost. We are all dead.
Now Your Majesty must attend [the Song] court. Who can explain the situation for Your Majesty? Therefore, I have not killed myself in order to serve you."

Cao Bin arrayed the army in front of the palace wall. The Southern Tang ruler then presented his letter of surrender and, with his officials, bowed in welcome at the gate. Cao selected one thousand elite troops to guard the outside of their gate. The victory over the Southern Tang was reported on 5 January 976. In total the Song took nineteen prefectures, containing three commanderies and one hundred and eight counties. The population was 655,065 households.

Taizu had now completely conquered southern China. Only the Northern Han and the Sixteen Prefectures remained unconquered in north China. The Northern Han was clearly the easier target and Taizu launched his third invasion of it later in 976.

**Taizu’s Third Campaign Against the Northern Han (9 September 976-3 January 977)**

On 9 September 976 Taizu ordered an attack on the Northern Han. He appointed Dang Jin 党進 Chief Administrative Officer of the Hedong Circuit Expeditionary Army 河東道, Pan Mei his Director in Chief and Yang Guangmei 陽光美 his Provost Marshal.

The third campaign against the Northern Han is chronicled in XCB/Yongle Dadian 12308/9a-16a and SS 3.48-51.

Dang Jin reached Taiyuan on 4 October. He defeated a Northern Han force of several thousand men north of Taiyuan, capturing more than a thousand horses and more than six hundred weapons. Dang then established a fort south of the Fen River. On 13 October Guo Jin reported capturing 37,000 people in the Shanhou 山後 prefectures.

On 29 October An Shouzhong reported burning more than forty Northern Han forts and capturing several thousand cattle, sheep and people. The same day, Ji Zhao reported defeating a Northern Han force of five hundred men, capturing thirty. On 1 November Guo Jin reported overrunning Shouyang county 棄陽縣, capturing ninety people. Dang Jin reported defeating a Northern Han force of more than a thousand troops north of Taiyuan.

Song Taizu died in the Wansui Hall 萬歲殿 on 14 November 976. But the Northern Han campaign continued. On 23 November Li Guangrui reported overrunning Wubao Fort 吳保寨. He beheaded more than seven hundred soldiers, and captured the fort commander, along with several thousand cattle, sheep and sets of armor.
Song Taizu was succeeded by his younger brother, posthumously known as Song Taizong. Taizong's most important task immediately after becoming emperor was to secure his own position. In order to do that he had to make sure that he had the military firmly in control. But a large number of troops under the command of generals of uncertain loyalty were on campaign against the Northern Han. Accordingly, Taizong ordered the end to the Northern Han campaign on 30 December. All the generals were ordered to return to the capital and all of the troops to their garrisons. By 3 January Pan Mei and Dang Jin had returned from the field.\(^\text{186}\)

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\(^{186}\)There is an error in the dating of Taizong's order to end the campaign. It reads 兀己, which is chronologically impossible. The closest possibilities are 兀癸 and 兀癸. I have arbitrarily chosen the latter, giving the date 30 December. The alternative date would have been 24 December.
Zhao Kuangyi, posthumously known as Song Taizong, succeeded his elder brother to the Song throne in 976. Taizong inherited the military machine that had conquered all of southern China. The generals' loyalty, however, remained with Taizu. Taizu had earned it by personal valor and military skill. Taizong had no such reputation to support him. In order to prove himself, he personally led the campaign against the Northern Han, as well as the first campaign for the Sixteen Prefectures.

The Northern Han capitulated. Much of the credit for the rapid victory was due to the preparations Taizu made after his last, unsuccessful, campaign. Taizong undertook the Northern Han campaign with the advice and consent of Cao Bin 曹彬. The emperor acted, therefore, in accordance with the wisdom of his military officials. Both Zhou Shizong and Song Taizu had demonstrated their military acumen by going against the advice of their officials and succeeding. Taizong wanted to show that he was his elder brother's equal in military skill. He also wanted to win over the generals. Unfortunately for Taizong, he was neither a skilled strategist nor a particularly good leader. It is clear that he did not take criticism well. When his plans failed, he blamed his subordinates.

Perhaps the most bothersome historiographical problem relating to Taizong's campaigns is that the Song sources were selectively edited by government officials.
during his reign to cover up his failures and, where that was not completely possible, to shift the blame to his generals. While the practice of glorifying an emperor's successes and downplaying his failures was common, the extent to which those officials did it under Taizong was not. The battle at Gaoliang River, in which Taizong was nearly captured and the Song campaign for the Sixteen Prefectures collapsed, is entirely absent from Song sources. When Taizong decided to continue immediately on to the Sixteen Prefectures after Taiyuan capitulated, all of the generals except for Cui Han were afraid to oppose him. Despite that, after the campaign failed, the Xu Zizhi Tongjian Changbian noted that all of the generals had agreed with Taizong's decision.

Taizong's unsuccessful Sixteen Prefectures campaign was a great personal failure. It also began a period of intermittent war with the Liao lasting until the Treaty of Shanyuan in 1005. That quarter century of war was not inevitable. The Song and Liao empires had developed a *modus vivendi* before Taizong's invasion, notwithstanding their clashes over the Northern Han. It was the Song who overturned the existing relationship. The Liao then faced the problem of restoring a stable relationship with the Song in the face of a belligerent Chinese emperor. It is unlikely that Taizong would have accepted the humiliating treaty which ultimately restored diplomatic relations between the Song and Liao empires. In any case, it was a problem he left to his son.
Song Taizong's Northern Han Campaign (979)

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50 Miles
The Northern Han Campaign (6 February-19 June 979)\textsuperscript{187}

From when he first took the throne, Taizong talked about conquering the Northern Han. On 6 February 979 Taizong asked Cao Bin, the Commissioner of the Bureau of Military Affairs, about it: "Zhou Shizong and our Taizu both personally went to Taiyuan. At that time, they were not strong enough to take it. Was the reason they could not get close to it due to the strength and integrity of its walls and ramparts?" Cao replied: "During Shizong's campaign Shichao 史超 was defeated at Shilingguan 石嶺關. People were afraid and therefore they withdrew. Taizu had camped his soldiers within an area of sweet grass [thus moist and swampy] and many soldiers in the army suffered from diarrhea. It was because of this that they stopped, and were unable to get close to the city walls."

Taizong said: "I now intend to attack Taiyuan. What do you think?" Cao replied: "The country's armor and weapons are sharp and the people's hearts are happy and support you. If you attack it will be [as easy as] breaking dried branches or pulling up rotted plants. How could you not succeed?" Grand Councilor Xie Juzheng 薛居正 objected: "Previously when Shizong went to war, Taiyuan relied upon support from the north. They stayed within their walls and did not come out to fight, confident that the imperial army would tire and withdraw. Taizu broke the enemy at Yanmenguan 鷹門關. He moved the people to the area between the Luo 洛 and Yellow Rivers, so that the territory is now empty

\textsuperscript{187}The Northern Han campaign is chronicled in XCB 20/1a-10b, SHY:B 7/5a-7b and SS 4.60-62.
and barren. The difficulties are great and what you would accomplish would be unimportant. There are insufficient food supplies. It will be a disaster. I beg Your Majesty to deeply consider this."

Taizong said: "Now the issue is the same but the situation is different. They are weak and we are strong. Previously, Taizu broke the enemy, removing their people to empty the land just so we could take care of the matter today. I have made my decision. You officials should not speak of it again." He then ordered that preparations be made to send military provisions from the various prefectures to Taiyuan.

On 9 February Pan Mei 潘美 was appointed Northern Route Chief Bandit-suppression and Military Commissioner 北路. Cui Yanjin 崔彦進 was assigned to attack the east side of Taiyuan; Li Hanqiong 李漢瓊 was assigned to attack the south side; Cao Han 曹翰 was assigned to attack the west side; and Liu Yu 劉遇 was assigned to attack the north side. Hao Shoujun 郝守濴 was appointed Director in Chief of the Western Area Ramparts and Forts 西面壕寨. Mi Xin 米信 and Tian Zhongjin 田重進 were respectively appointed the Commanders in Chief of the Expeditionary Cavalry and Infantry.

The following day Taizong appointed Guo Jin 郭進 Chief Administrative Officer of Shilingguan 石嶺關; Tian Renlang 田仁郎 and Liu Xu 劉緒 were given the responsibility of inspecting the trenches and stockades on all four sides of Taiyuan, as well as the ladders, battering rams and siege machinery.

Taizong feasted Pan Mei and the other officers at the Changchun Hall on 14 February, at which time he personally handed them the campaign plans.
Management of the Song army’s supplies was divided between Houzhi 侯陟, the
Transport Commissioner of Hebei 河北, and Lei Dexiang 雷德骧, the Transport
Commissioner of Shaanxi 陕西, on 16 February.

Taizong announced on 2 March that he was going to make a tour of the
border areas. He left the capital on 15 March. On 20 March Xie Hui 解暉, the
prefect of Junzhou 均州, sent Zhe Yanyun 折彥實 to attack Longzhou 隆州.
Taizong reached Zhendingfu 真定府 (Zhenzhou) on 31 March. He paused there
while his armies secured the area around Taiyuan. The same day, he ordered
Yin Xun 尹勤 to attack Longzhou. The Northern Han army had prepared Longzhou’s
defenses by walling up the main passes leading directly to it. Taizong divided
the army into smaller columns and sent them to surround Longzhou by other
routes.

On 1 April Taizong ordered Ji Yanchen 齊延琛 and Hou Mei 侯美 to lead
separate columns to attack Meng county 孟縣. Shilingguan reported on 3 April
that three hundred and thirty people from Yangqu Fort 阳曲寨 had surrendered.
Guo Jin reported on 7 April that he had defeated a Northern Han force at
Xilongmen Fort 西龍門寨 and captured more than one thousand soldiers. He
sent them to Taizong’s temporary palace. On 8 April Hou Jilong 侯繼隆 was
ordered to attack Qinzhou 沁州 and Wang Zhuan 王僑 was ordered to attack
Fenzhou.

On 12 April Wang Gui 王貴 was ordered to attack Qinzhou. On 15 April
Zhe Yuqing 折御卿 and Yin Xian 尹憲 were ordered to attack Lanzhou 嵩州. Guo
Jin badly defeated several myriad of Liao cavalry at Shilingguan. The defeat of
the Liao relief force effectively isolated Taiyuan. Guo also captured a messenger sent by the Northern Han ruler to tell the Liao of his desperate situation. Guo displayed the captured messenger beneath the city walls of Taiyuan. The defeat of the Liao and the failure of their messenger seriously damaged the morale of Taiyuan.

Shi Ye 史业 overran Yingyang 鶯揚 on 16 April, beheading and capturing a great number. On 20 April Wang Shen 王侁 and Liu Wensu 劉文裕 were sent to reinforce Shilingguan. Mi Xin 米信 defeated a Northern Han force beneath the walls of Taiyuan on 26 April. He killed their Commander of the Household Guard, Pei Zheng 裴正, and presented his head to Taizong.

Zhe Yuqing reported on 29 April that he had attacked Lanzhou and defeated a force of more than one thousand Northern Han soldiers. On 30 April Ji Yanchen reported the surrender of Meng county. Zhe Yuqing captured Kelan prefecture 倫嵐 on 5 May, killing a great many and capturing their Military Commander, Zhe Lingtu 折令圖. He presented Zhe Lingtu to the court.

With the area around Taiyuan secured, Taizong continued his march. He left Zhendingfu on 12 May. Xie Hui attacked the main west gate of Longzhou on 14 May. Yuan Jizhong 袁繼忠 and Xu Jun 許均 scaled the wall first. Xu was wounded eight times in the process. They killed more than three hundred soldiers and captured six officers, including Li Xun 李珣, Bandit-suppression Commissioner, who were presented to the court.

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188 No location is provided for this battle so I have followed Li Tao and assumed it was beneath the walls of Taiyuan. See his note in XCB 20/6a.
Taizong composed a poem on 16 May called: "Hearing of Longzhou's Fall." Zhe Yuqing fought successfully outside Lanzhou again on 18 May. He killed Huo Yi 霍翊, the prefect of Xianzhou, and captured seven other officials including Ma Yanzhong 马延忠, Military Governor of Kuizhou 韦州. They were presented to the court.

Taizong reached Taiyuan on 20 May. He established himself at a temporary palace east of the Fen River. He toured all of the encampments and stockades around the city the following day, and inspected the attacking equipment, the ballistae, leather shields, ladders and battering rams. Taizong dismounted and talked with the generals and soldiers operating the siege machinery. When he returned to his temporary palace, he issued an edict to Liu Jiyuan, the Northern Han ruler. In it, Taizong promised to take care of Liu and his descendants if he surrendered.

Taizong went to the west of Taiyuan just before midnight on 22 May and supervised his generals firing stones at the city. Jing Si 菊嗣, Commandant of the Heavenly Martial Army 天武军, led his men in scaling the city wall. He killed several Northern Han soldiers. In the process, both his legs were pierced by arrows and a ballistae stone broke two of his teeth. Taizong saw this and immediately rewarded him with a brocade robe and silver belt.

Taizong inspected the stockades on 24 May and supervised the assault on Taiyuan. On 25 May, before midnight, he returned to the circumvallation wall and ordered Ma Renyu 马仁禹; Bai Zhonggui 白重貴; and Li Jisheng 李继昇 to

186 According to SS, Huo Yi's name was Guo Yi. Cit!
attack the city in several places simultaneously. Taizong observed the attack on the gates of the city. Li Hanqiong lead his men scaling the city wall. Many arrows struck his head and one struck his finger but he continued to fight. Taizong was impressed and had him brought to his tent to have his wounds attended to. He wanted to personally go and reassure the troops fighting beneath the gate. Li Hanqiong cried and said: "Taiyuan's ramparts are precarious, like an egg and a millstone. The generals risk their lives and the soldiers fight bravely. Arrows and stones fall like rain on the gate. How can you risk everything to go there? If you do not listen to me, then I beg to die first." Taizong then relented. Taizong went to the west side of Taiyuan on 27 May and supervised a strong assault on the city from a tower in the circumvallation wall.

On the night of 29 May, Taizong put on armor and supervised a vigorous attack on the southwest corner of the city. They stopped at dawn, having taken the horse and goat wall (see chapter two) and captured Fan Chao, the Northern Han Commissioner of Palace Attendants. Fan Chao was then beheaded beneath his large banner. He had come out to surrender, but they suspected that he was attacking. Guo Wanchao, Commander in Chief of the Northern Han Army, surrendered on 31 May. Taizong went to the south side of Taiyuan on 1 June to supervise a water attack on the city. Previously, he had had dikes constructed to block up the Fen River. That day, he had the dikes opened, causing the waters to break through the outer wall at the southeast corner and enter the space between it and the inner wall. The Northern Han ruler was very concerned and personally supervised the people trying to plug the hole with
Taizong said to his generals: "Tomorrow is the fifth day of the fifth month. We should have our feast in the city." He personally drafted an edict to Liu Jiyuan letting him choose imminent destruction, or a rapid surrender with a comfortable retirement.

Taizong returned to the south of the city the following day to supervise another assault. The soldiers approached the wall with ladders and battering rams, protected by a hail of arrows and stones. The Song army had nearly overwhelmed the wall’s defenders, but the Northern Han soldiers wouldn’t give up. Taizong feared that there would be a slaughter when his men finally broke through, so he signalled the army to pull back a bit. That night, Liu Jiyuan sent Li Xun 李勣 to Taizong with his terms for surrender. Taizong bestowed clothes, a gold belt, silver cup, silk and horse with saddle on Li and ordered Xie Wenbao 薛文寳 to return to Liu Jiyuan with his imperial edict accepting Liu’s surrender.

That night, Taizong went to the north of Taiyuan where a feast was prepared. He received Liu Jiyuan’s surrender at the feast. Taizong then wrote an essay called "Pacifying Jin" and some five and seven-line poems. He ordered his officials to match the poems. The conquest of the Northern Han added ten prefectures and one commandery, containing forty counties. It also added a population of thirty five thousand families and thirty thousand troops.

Taizong went to the Hesha Gate tower on the north side of Taiyuan on 15 June. He sent messengers to move all of the people out of the city to a new city.

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190 The incident involving attacking the city with water is cited by Li Tao in XCB 20/8b.
191 The Dragon Boat festival.
Once the people had all left, he ordered Taiyuan razed. The official buildings and people's dwellings were all quickly destroyed. A great many young and old people rushed to the gates, but didn't make it out in time and were killed in the fire. Taizong made his temporary palace into a Buddhist temple on 19 June, bestowing on it the name "Pacifying Jin Temple" and writing an inscription to be carved in stone.

The Sixteen Prefectures Campaign (26 June-1 August 979)¹⁰²

With Taiyuan destroyed, Taizong withdrew to Zhenzhou, arriving there on 26 June. His first campaign as emperor was a success, which caused him to overestimate his own strategic sense and the strength of the Song army. Unlike his older brother, Taizong's campaign experience was fairly limited. He didn't understand that, after some four to six months in the field, his troops were exhausted. They also expected to be rewarded for their success. Taizong not only failed to reward them, but, by razing Taiyuan, prevented them from looting the city. These errors could have been corrected had Taizong been amenable to criticism or advice. He was not, and his generals knew it. Thus, when he decided to invade Liao territory immediately after the fall of Taiyuan, in order to capture the Sixteen Prefectures, no one opposed him. Cui Han 崔翰 presented a memorial to Taizong saying: "You have an opportunity to resolve this issue

which is not likely recur. It will be very easy to take advantage of this great victory. At this time it cannot fail." Taizong was pleased by the memorial and ordered Cao Bin to discuss marching orders for the soldiers. Taizong marched north from Zhenchuanhu 鎮川扈 on 9 July. He reached Jintaidun 金臺頓 on 15 July, and camped north of it, in Liao territory. Taizong then hired a hundred tribesmen to be guides, paying them two thousand cash each. Kong Shouzheng 孔守正 was sent ahead to Qigouguan 前溝關. That night he reached the fence in front of the drawbridge. He persuaded the Gate Commissioner, Liu Yu 劉宇, that, since a large army would soon arrive, it would be prudent to open the gates and surrender. Kong then returned and reported to Taizong.

Taizong donned armor and led the army to Qigouguan on 16 July. Liu Yu led the officials in opening the gates and welcoming the imperial army. Taizong stationed a garrison of one thousand troops in the city. The same day, Fu Zan 傅赞 and Kong Shouzheng marched to Zhuozhou 營州. They attacked the Liao there and captured more than five hundred men. Taizong reached Zhuozhou on 17 July. Liu Yuande 劉原德 surrendered the city. Taizong stationed Zhang Huaixun 張懷訓 in Zhuozhou with his troops and continued on to Yangoudun 餘溝頓 the following day.

193In a note to this entry, Li Tao includes a discussion of the decision to continue the campaign in which Zhao Chang 趙昌 said that taking Youzhou would be as easy as “Turning over a hot cake in a pan.” Hu Tingzan 呼廷贊 objected to this: “The words of a literary man are not enough. I believe this cake will be hard to turn.” Li Tao doubted that this occurred because Zhao Chang was referred to as a Participant in Determining Governmental Matters 參知政事, a title which did not exist at that time. XCB 20/11a.

194XCB records a variant character for Liu Yu’s name 呂. In the text I have followed SHY.
Taizong arrived south of the city of Youzhou before dawn on 19 July. A Liao force of more than ten thousand men was camped north of the city. Taizong personally led an attack on the Liao troops. The Song army beheaded more than a thousand men and drove off the rest.

With the area around Youzhou secured, Taizong ordered his generals to attack the city from all sides on 21 July. The Song army besieged Youzhou until 1 August. But despite Taizong’s personal supervision of the siege, and eight hundred ballistae, the city did not capitulate.

When Taizong began the siege of Youzhou, he had placed troops under Cao Han and Mi Xin in reserve at the southeast corner of the city. While the troops were digging, they found a crab and presented it to Cao Han. Cao said to the other generals: "The crab is a water animal, but this one was found on land. He has lost his home [he is in the wrong place]. It has many legs, which signifies that the enemy relief force will soon arrive. Also, 'crab' 蟹 (xie) sounds like 'release' 解 (jie). Doesn't this mean that our troops will withdraw?"

The Battle at Gaoliang River (1 August 979)

Cao Han’s prediction was quickly proven correct. A Liao army commanded by Yelü Sha 耶律沙 attacked the Song at Gaoliang River 高梁河 on 1 August. Yelu Sha’s initial attack drove the Song back slightly. Xiu Ge 休哥 and Xie Zhen 斜腤 then attacked from the flanks and routed the Song army. Taizong himself narrowly escaped the Liao army, fleeing to Zhuozhou 涿州 on a donkey. The
Liao killed or captured a large number of troops and took vast booty in weapons, armor, provisions and other equipment.

The battle at Gaoliang River is absent from Song sources, as are all of the subsequent Liao victories. Although it is impossible to determine even the most vague outlines of the battle, its impact on Taizong's campaign makes it clear that it was a rout. The Song expeditionary army collapsed and Taizong fled back to Kaifeng. While the initiative shifted to the Liao, the Song army adopted a defensive posture in preparation for a Liao invasion.

**Taizong on the Defensive**

According to Song sources, the army withdrew from Youzhou on 2 August. Taizong gave the order that night because, due to the extended siege, the soldiers were ill, transport of supplies was difficult and Liao might come to relieve the city. Taizong's order was irrelevant. The main army was already retreating. The order was given after the fact to provide historiographical camouflage for Taizong's failure.

Taizong reached Dingzhou on 6 August. He halted there for a few days and established the command dispositions for defense against the Liao. Cui Han and Meng Yuanji were ordered to defend Dingzhou; Li Hanqiong to defend Zhenzhou; and Cui Yanjin to defend Guannan. Taizong said to them: "The

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195Taizong defensive period is chronicled in XCB 20/14a-21/3b, SHY:B 7/9a-10a and LS 9.102.
Qidan will certainly come and invade our border. If you set up ambushes and attack them when they come, you can achieve a great victory."

Taizong arrived in Kaifeng on 23 August. His defeat at the hands of the Liao was more than just a military failure, it was a personal humiliation. Taizong had set out to prove himself worthy to succeed his older brother by, if not equalling his military exploits, at least demonstrating that he was also a competent general. While it was true that he destroyed the Northern Han, that victory was at least partly due to the measures instituted earlier by Taizu. Li Tao's account directly contradicts the commentary in the *Songhuiyao* to the effect that all of the generals had supported Taizong in his decision to attack Youzhou following the fall of Taiyuan. The generals were afraid to oppose Taizong. Taizong, for his part, began to blame the generals for the failures of his campaigns.

Although Taizong had personally withdrawn from the battlefield, the war with the Liao had just begun. The Liao characterized the attack at Gaoliang River as merely a "stroke with the back of the sword". They may well have been surprised by the magnitude of their victory. It is clear that they were not prepared to take immediate advantage of it. While the Liao mobilized, the Song continued to arrange their defenses, appointing Pan Mei Chief Administrative Officer of Sanjiaokou in Hedong on 10 September. It took until 26 September for the Liao to organize their invasion. Han Kuangsi 韓匡嗣 was appointed Campaign Commander, and Yelü Sha, Army Supervisor. Xiu Ge, Xie Zhen and Mo Zhi 抹只 would each raid the Song at the head of their personal units. Shan Bu 善補

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196 SHY:B 7/9a. XCB 20/10b.

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would invade by several routes with the troops of Shanxi 山西.

Taizong sent an edict to the border forts in Xin, Lan and Xian prefectures on 28 September prohibiting raids on Liao territory. Zhang Shaoqing 張紹勍 and Li Shenyue 李神祐 were sent to reinforce Dingzhou on 2 October. Taizong inspected the army in Jianlong 建隆 on 16 October.

The Liao army invaded Song territory on 23 October. Liu Yanhan 劉延翰 led a blocking force across their invasion route, arraying his troops at the Xu River 徐河. Cui Yanjin led troops north along the Heilu Dike 黑盧埡, to a pass in the Great Wall. He marched to the Liao rear, with his soldiers' mouths gagged. Li Hanqiong and Cui Han also led troops to link up with him there.

Taizong had given the generals chentu 陳圖 (battle formations) which divided their forces into eight formations. When the main army arrived at Mancheng 滿城 the Liao cavalry was already arrayed for battle. Zhao Yanjin ascended to an elevated point and looked over the Liao army. It was both numerous and concentrated. In Taizong's chentu, the Song formations were spaced one hundred paces apart. The soldiers distrusted Taizong's formation and, consequently, their morale was low. Zhao said to Cui Han and the other generals: "The emperor has entrusted border affairs to us. He expects us to destroy the enemy. The enemy cavalry is concentrated, but our army is spread out like stars in the sky. Their formation and ours are so different. If we fight how can we be successful? It is not as good as uniting to attack them. Then we can have a decisive victory. Won't it be better if we disregard the orders, achieve victory and benefit the country?"
Cui Han and the others replied: "In case we are not victorious, then what shall we do?" Zhao said: "If we are defeated then I alone will step forward to take the blame." Cui Han and the others were still reluctant to change Taizong's orders. Li Jilong said: "Adapting to change is very important during war. How could we establish beforehand what we would do? I will bear responsibility for disobeying the emperor's orders alone." Cui Han and the other generals then began to change their minds. They divided the troops into two formations one in front of the other. The soldiers were all relieved.

They clashed with the Liao three times and badly beat them. The Liao army retreated to Xishan 西山. The Song army then pursued the Liao to Suicheng 遂城. They beheaded more than ten thousand men and captured more than a thousand horses. In addition, the Song army captured three tribal leaders, more than thirty thousand civilians and a great many weapons, carts and sheep.

The Liao, under Han Kuangsi, counter-attacked on 11 November and decisively beat the Song at Mancheng. Shen Si 翟思 then beat the Song at Huoshan 火山 on 17 November. The Liao established stockades at Daizhou, Yanmen, Xijing, Huguo and Nanchuan on 26 November. Zhe Yanyun 折彥雲 with Dong Siyuan 董思愿, Liu Xu 劉緒 and Hou Mei, attacked them. They badly beat the Liao, capturing a very great number of saddled horses and weapons.

Taizong announced that he was going on a tour to the Two Rivers area, between the Yellow and Yongding Rivers 永定河, on 2 December, to reassure the troops. He left the capital on 5 December. The following day, Guannan reported defeating a Liao force of more than ten thousand, beheading more than
three thousand men and capturing fifty-three camels. Taizong reached Damingfu on 11 December. That day, a report arrived that the Liao had withdrawn from Xiongzhou. The Song army defeated a Liao force of more than one thousand at Sanjiaokou on 15 December. They defeated another Liao force of several thousand at Xinzhou 忻州 on 17 December, beheading forty-five soldiers and capturing sixty. The prisoners were presented to court, along with captured saddled horses and armor. Taizong reached Daming on 6 January 980.

Pan Mei reported from Sanjiaokou on 29 February, that, when he was in Daizhou on an inspection tour, one hundred thousand Liao troops raided Yanmen 雁門. He ordered Yang Ye 楊業 and his unit of several hundred cavalry from Xixing 西隴 to ride to the north opening of Yanmen by a small pass. Yang’s force was thus behind the Liao raiders. Pan Mei attacked northward and Yang attacked southward. The Liao force was badly defeated. Their military governor, Xiao Duoluo 蕭多羅, was killed and Li Zhonghui 李重誨, the Liao Cavalry Commander in Chief 馬軍都指揮使, was captured. The Song also took a great amount of armor and saddled horses.

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197 There is a large discrepancy between the SHY and XCB numbers. XCB reports that a force of several tens of thousands was broken and more than ten thousand heads taken. I have followed SHY’s more modest figures.
Military operations quieted down after February 980 while both sides prepared for another major effort beginning later in the year. In preparation for operations against the Liao, on 18 November Yang Zhongjin 楊重進 and Mao Jimei 毛繼美 led their troops to Guannan; Cai Yu 蔡玉 and Chen Tingshan 陳廷山 led their troops to Dingzhou; and Lu Hanyun 盧漢筠 led his troops to Zhenzhou. Taizong planned to make a tour of the Northern border. Laborers were sent from the capital to Xiongzhou to open the road and repair the camps on 29 November. Mi Xin 米信, Guo Shouyun 郭守寳, Li Bin 李斌 and Jiang Jun 江鈞 all marched their troops to Dingzhou on 4 December. The generals and subordinate commanders along the Hebei border were all given tea, mutton and wine.

At the same time, the Liao were preparing to invade the Song. The Liao emperor made sacrifices to the gods of war 兵神 on 11 November. He ordered the invasion of the Song on 21 November. Two days later, the Liao emperor arrived in Yanzhou. On 27 November he went through the ritual of firing “ghost arrows” 鬼箭, carried out before major military undertakings. The Liao emperor then went to Gu'an and, on 30 November, carried out sacrifices to heaven and earth. By 9 December the Liao army surrounded Waqiaoguan. The following night, a Song attack was beaten off by Xiao Gan 蕭幹 and Yelü Hende 耶律煥德. Xiou Ge 許葛 defeated a Song force led by Zhang Shi 張師, east of Waqiao on 12 December.

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196 This period is chronicled in XCB 21/9a-13b and LS 9.103-105.
The same day, a Liao army reached Xiongzhou and occupied Longwan Dike. Jing Si led one thousand soldiers in a strong attack on them. At that time an Imperial Commissioner was in Xiongzhou to inspect the walls and ramparts. He was surrounded by the Liao in the suburbs. Song units rushed to rescue him and many were injured. Jing Si and his troops got lost during the night. At three drums (3-5 a.m.) he broke out of the encirclement and went to Mozhou. The Liao constructed a bridge to cross the river. Jing Si attacked them when they were part of the way across, killing and capturing a great many.

The Song army arrayed for battle on the south side of the river near Waqiao on 18 December. Xiu Ge forded the river and defeated them. He pursued the Song troops to Mozhou, killing and wounding a great number. The Song army returned the next day. The Liao attacked and virtually annihilated them.

Taizong announced on 19 December that he would tour the northern border. He left the capital on 22 December. Guannan reported defeating a Liao force of more than ten thousand, beheading more than three thousand men, the following day. Taizong reached Shanzhou on 26 December. The Liao army withdrew the same day. Taizong reached Deqingjun on 27 December. When he stopped at Damingfu the following day, a report arrived from Xiongzhou that the Liao had withdrawn.

The Liao emperor withdrew to Yanzhou on 4 January. Since the Liao had withdrawn, Taizong wanted to advance and attack Youzhou. He established the command of the invasion force on 17 January. Li Fang opposed the
campaign. Taizong relented in the face of Li’s opposition and returned south. Although both the Liao and Song emperors withdrew from the border, sporadic fighting continued.

Taizong returned to the capital on 24 January. On 30 January a Liao force of more than ten thousand was beaten near Jiaozhou, and two thousand three hundred and forty-five men beheaded. When Taizong returned to the capital many officials urged him to capture Youzhou and Jizhou. Zhang Jixian 張齊賢 opposed the campaign. He pointed out that the recently taken territory of the Northern Han was only newly pacified. Transport into Youzhou and Yanzhou was very difficult. Several prefectures were as yet without forts and that even the Liao were not well supplied. He then quoted Sunzi that: “Winning a hundred times in a hundred battles is not as good as winning without fighting.” Zhang advised heightening the walls and deepening the moats. He also said that choosing good soldiers was not as good as choosing good generals. Taizong again backed off in the face of this criticism.

Border raiding by both sides continued, but neither launched any large invasions. The Liao attacked Mancheng in April of 982. They were beaten off and withdrew the following month. The Liao emperor, Jingzong 景宗, died on 13 October of the same year at the age of thirty-four. He was succeeded by his eldest son, posthumously called Shengzong 聖宗. While the Liao dealt with the succession, they were relatively inactive on the Song border. In the absence of a major provocation, the Liao were willing to accept the status quo.

The same was not true of the Song. Neither Taizong nor his officials were
satisfied with the Liao controlling the Sixteen Prefectures. From a purely military perspective, it left the Liao in a strategically advantageous position that was easy to defend and excellent as a jumping-off point for an invasion of Hebei. The open terrain of Hebei meant that any invasion threatened Kaifeng itself. There were also two emotional considerations in addition to the purely military ones. First, there was the desire to control all “Chinese” territory. Second, Taizong had been personally humiliated at Gaoliang River. He wanted to avenge his earlier failure.

From the Song perspective then, the situation as it existed in 982 was unacceptable. Neither the Song nor the Liao had any reason to trust that the other side would remain peaceful. The fact remained, however, that the Liao position was fundamentally strong. It would take a major effort to overcome them. The Song army would have to conduct several major sieges and keep itself supplied in the face of massive cavalry attacks by the Liao. It is not surprising then, that it was only in 986 that Taizong again decided to try to conquer the Sixteen Prefectures.

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Taizong's Second Sixteen Prefectures Campaign (20 February 986-18 June 986) \(^{199}\)

Taizong returned to the problem of the Sixteen Prefectures in 986. After some encouragement, he resolved, once again, to conquer the territory. His plan held back most of the army, while smaller raiding forces secured the route of march to Youzhou. Ideally, the Liao emperor would overreact to the initial incursions and exhaust his army trying to destroy them. Once the Liao army was worn down, the main Song army would advance, crushing any opposition. The plan relied upon the Liao emperor strenuously defending his territory from the earliest stages of the invasion. Unfortunately for the Song, that sort of defense was much more typical of their thinking than the Liao leaders'. Intentionally or otherwise, the Liao emperor kept most of his forces out of the fray until the Song army overextended itself and began to fall back. He then attacked, annihilating a large part of the main Song army.

Several officials continually sent memorials to Taizong urging him to conquer the Sixteen Prefectures. They claimed that the Liao had broken the treaty since the Song took Taiyuan. In addition, the Liao ruler was young and his affairs were being controlled by his mother, with military affairs being run by General Han Derang 韓德讓, who everyone hated. Taizong was inclined to personally lead...
the campaign. On 20 February 986, Li Zhi 李至 sent up a memorial which said:

"Youzhou is the barbarian's right arm. If the imperial army attacks there then they will certainly come and oppose us. Since we will use not less than several tens of thousands of troops to attack the city, our cost will be great. We must prepare for the situation carefully. Whatever day you want to take the city, we must still prepare a hundred days of provisions. I don't know if the border provisions are adequate for this. Furthermore, the barbarian city is situated in a flat area, far from the mountains. Getting stones will be very difficult. Their defenses are like metal walls and boiling moats.\textsuperscript{200} If we cannot obtain stones to shoot, how can we take them?"

Li went on to say that the best plan was for Taizong to remain in the capital. The second best plan would be for him to go to Damingfu to coordinate the campaign and to encourage the soldiers. If Taizong insisted on going to the front then Li would "hold onto the hem of his robe to stop him or presume to cut the strap of his saddle" to prevent him.

Song Qi 宋琪 sent up a memorial giving an extremely long and detailed plan encompassing every aspect of the campaign including the best route to take, the characteristics of the various barbarian tribes in the border areas, how to deploy the army and what provisions were necessary. Song recommended against marching to Yan City by way of Xiongzhou or Bazhou. That route would take the army through flat land and the army would end up surrounded in Yang City. The open terrain would expose the army to enemy attacks. He recommended following the route successfully used by Zhou Dewei 周德威 during the Latter Tang of the Five Dynasties. They would go west along the mountains and gather at Yizhou. Marching along the north of the Hu mountains where there was sufficient water, they would go from the Sangang River to Anzu Fort.

\textsuperscript{200}A standard phrase for invincible defenses.
In February of 986, Taizong announced another campaign to recover the Sixteen Prefectures. In his edict he noted that the territory was originally Chinese but, during the past fifty years of barbarian control, Chinese culture was being replaced by barbarian culture. He appointed Cao Bin Commander in Chief of the Expeditionary Forward Army, with Cui Xiujin as his second in command. Taizong then forbade stealing, felling trees, taking livestock or kidnapping people on pain of death. He also promised to confirm all surrendering Liao officials in their posts and to promote them when Youzhou was captured. Taizong originally intended to take part in the campaign but a Song defeat at Qigouguan, around the time of his edict, dissuaded him.

In April, Pan Mei marched from Yanmen and entered Liao territory from the west. He encountered a Liao force, defeated it and took five hundred heads. Marching north, Pan reached Huanzhou, taking another five hundred heads along the way. The prefect of Huanzhou, Zhao Yanxin, surrendered his city on 23 April. Cao Bin clashed with the Liao east of Zhuozhou. Li Jilong, Fan Tingzhao and others were all struck by arrows but continued to direct the battle. Their resolute courage drove off the Liao. They exploited their victory and successfully stormed the north gate of Zhuozhou. They captured the rest of the city the following day. The same day Zhuozhou fell, Zhao Xizan surrendered Shuzhou city after being surrounded by Pan Mei.

The Liao emperor was informed of the Song invasion on 17 April. Xiu Ge reported that Cao Bin, Cui Yanjin and Mi Xin were advancing via Xiongzhou; Tian Zhongjin was advancing via Feihu; and Pan Mei and Yang Jiye were advancing
via Yanmen. The territory, but not the cities, of Qigou, Zhuozhou, Gu’an and Xincheng were all occupied by the Song at that time. The Liao emperor mobilized his forces, dispatching Xiū Ge to the front and putting Yelü Weizhi in charge of leading the main army south. Yelü Pode defeated a Song force at Gu’an on 19 April. Xiū Ge cut off their supplies and captured the Song commander. He also took a large quantity of horses, sheep and weapons.

Tian Zhongjin reached the north border of Feihu. Da Pengyi 大鹏翼 came to reinforce the Liao forces. Yuan Jizhong said to Tian Zhongjin: "The enemy is numerous. The advantage of cavalry lies in level ground. The best plan is to take advantage of the strategic places and to attack them first." The prefect of Qizhou, Tan Yanmei, said: "The enemy relies on numbers to easily overwhelm us. If we go out and attack them unexpectedly, we can defeat them."

Tian’s troops were deployed along the east slope of a mountain. He clashed with the Liao repeatedly, but inconclusively. At dusk, Tian ordered Jing Si to march around the west slope of the narrow mountain cliffs and attack the Liao from behind. Jing went along the cliffs and then descended, beheading more than a hundred Liao. The Liao retreated to Tuling leaving behind more than a thousand dead.

Huang Ming fought with the Liao inconclusively. Jing Si said to him: "You just prepare your troops. When you hear my call, reinforce me and we will take them." They fought hard and defeated the Liao, pursuing them for more than fifty li. Jing chased them to Cangtou and then returned. He also took Xiaozhi and Zhensu Forts.
Jing Si camped his men at Zhensu for several days. The Liao sent cavalry to challenge him. The forces were uneven, but Jing joined together with Zhang Zhongjin and attacked them. The Liao withdrew but they returned at night surrounding Zhensu and Shimen Forts. Zhang sent a messenger to Jing saying: "Right now I only have five hundred men and the enemy has more than twenty thousand. Our strength cannot oppose them." He then asked Jing what to do. Jing replied: "Tan Yanmei has two thousand troops at Xiaozhi. I will send a messenger to secretly ask him what we should do." Tan replied: "The enemy's disposition is like this. How can we do anything?" Jing said: "Just lead your whole army to Pingzhou and arrange the formations with their banners. Then send another two or three hundred men with white pennons along the road. I will then lead my unit of five hundred men to quickly advance on them. When they see the flags and pennons from afar they will suspect there is a large army there. The masses of the enemy can thus be broken." They agreed to follow his plan.

Jing clashed with the Liao half a dozen times on 26 April, but the results were inconclusive. He was going to withdraw when Zhang Zhongjin took advantage of the situation to attack with his force. The Liao cavalry broke and ran. Da Pengyi was captured along with Awantong, a Cavalry Commander. The Song also captured more than a thousand Liao soldiers from Bohai and beheaded several thousand men. Seven hundred people, young and old, horses, cattle, and more than ten thousand pieces of armor fell into Song hands. Da Pengyi was well known in the border region for his bravery and powerful appearance. His capture was a significant loss for the Liao.
Cao Bin entered Zhuozhou and sent Li Jixuan with a force of light cavalry across the Zhuo River to scout the Liao positions. A Liao army attacked Li on 28 April. Li counter-attacked, defeating them south of the city. He beheaded one thousand men, captured five hundred horses and killed He Si 賀斯, their Grand Councilor 相. Pan Mei attacked Yingzhou on 30 April. The Liao military governor, Ai Zheng 艾正, and Song Xiong 宋雄 surrendered the city.

Tian Zhongjin surrounded Feihu. He ordered Da Pengyi to go before the city wall and talk to the defending general, Lu Xingde. Lu refused to surrender, so Tian vigorously attacked the city. Lu Xingde surrendered on 4 May. Tian Zhongjin then surrounded Lingqiu. Mu Chao, the defending general, surrendered the city on 9 May.

Pan Mei captured Yunzhou on 14 May, beheading one thousand men. Tian Zhongjin broke a Liao relief army north of Feihu, beheading one thousand men and capturing more than four hundred soldiers. Mi Xin defeated a Liao force at Xincheng on 15 May, beheading three hundred men. The Liao regrouped and forced Mi to retreat a short distance. They then cut off and surrounded Mi with his three hundred personal guards, the Dragon Guard Soldiers. The Liao rained arrows down on the Mi and his men, killing most of them. Mi was able to hold them off until dusk, personally shooting down several Liao. As dusk fell, he took up a large sword and broke out with his remaining cavalrymen, now slightly more than a hundred. They killed several dozen Liao troops. Just then, Li Jixuan arrived, sent to rescue Mi by Cao Bin. Li and Mi attacked the Liao and defeated them northeast of Xincheng, beheading a thousand men and capturing a hundred
horses.

Tian Zhongjin attacked the Liao north of Feihu again on 22 May. He killed two leaders, beheaded one thousand men and captured three hundred horses. Tian Zhongjin reached Weizhou on 28 May. Li Cunzhang, Xu Yanqin and others, killed the Liao commander, Xiao Duoluo, and his one thousand defending troops. Geng Shaozhong surrendered the city. Cao Bin and Mi Xin had crossed the Juma River two days earlier and found themselves facing Xiu Ge, dug in behind a long rampart. They challenged Xiu to battle and camped their armies on a north-south line spread over 2 miles. The Liao emperor was 17 miles east of Zhuozhou. On 27 May he ordered Xiu Ge and the other generals to strictly guard the water routes in order to prevent Song soldiers from reaching Zhuozhou. The following day, 28 May, Xiu defeated a Song army. The Liao recaptured Zhuozhou on 29 May.

When Cao Bin and the other generals first had their audience with Taizong to receive his departing words, the emperor had said: "Just send the generals to Yun and Ying prefectures. You, with more than one hundred thousand men, say that you are going to take Youzhou. You should hold back the main advance and march slowly. Do not greedily pursue short-term gains. When the enemy hears your announcement, they must send soldiers to Youzhou. Their soldiers will rush there. Because of that, they will not be relaxed and will be unable to reinforce Shanhou."

Taizong's plan called for a carefully paced advance. The forward Liao positions, either intentionally or unintentionally, fell rapidly to the Song advance.
force. Pan Mei captured Huan, Shu, Yun, and Ying prefectures. Tian Zhongjin captured Feihu, Lingqiu and Weizhou. Cao and the others captured Xincheng, Gu'an and Zhuozhou. It seemed like the Song army was well on its way to an overwhelming victory. Taizong, however, became increasingly worried with each report of a victory that Cao was advancing the army too quickly and that the Liao could cut off his supply lines. Cao retreated from Zhuozhou because, after staying there for more than ten days, he had exhausted his grain supply. He retreated to Xiongzhou in order to resupply himself with provisions from the reserve troops. Taizong was very anxious when he heard about the retreat. He said: "How can he retreat in order to resupply from the reserve troops when the enemy is before him? He is not following the plan." He quickly sent messengers to stop it and ordered them not to advance again. Cao was to lead his troops along the Baigou River and join up with Mi Xin in order to raise morale and strengthen the disposition of forces in the west. Cao and Mi were then to wait for Pan Mei to completely capture the Shanhou area. Finally, they would link up with Tian Zhongjin and march east to Youzhou.

Cao retook Zhuozhou on 28 May. At that time it was very hot and the soldiers were tired. Moreover, they had not been resupplied, so they again returned to the border. At first, Cao wanted to leave Lu Bin to garrison Zhuozhou with ten thousand troops. Lu said to him: "Zhuozhou is deep inside the northern territory. Outside there is no reinforcement and inside there is no food. The census is incomplete. Losing this position is certainly not advantageous. It would be better if these ten thousand men were deployed outside the city."
would be a hundred times better than having them defend the city." Cao followed his suggestion. He ordered Lu Bin to take the residents of the city south. Cao and the main army retreated in some disorder, followed by the Liao.

The main Liao army reached Gu’an on 3 June and surrounded it the following day. Pode was the first to scale the wall and the city was retaken. The Liao army pursued Cao to Qigouguan. They fought a major battle there on 12 June, with the Liao army badly defeating the Song army. Cao gathered his remaining troops and forded the Juma River at night, camping south of the Yi River. Tens of thousands of soldiers were killed or drowned. The Liao pursued the shattered Song army to the Juma River. Li Jixuan counterattacked and drove off the Liao. Li pursued them to Hushanfang. With the Song army defeated, the main Liao army withdrew from the border on 15 June.

Wang Ji’en arrived at court from Yizhou on 18 June and reported the Song defeat. Taizong ordered the generals camp their units along the border. He also ordered Cao Bin, Cui Yanjin, and Mi Xin to attend court. Tian Zhongjin led the entire army to Dingzhou. Pan Mei returned to Daizhou.

Before Cao Bin and the others had returned, Zhao Pu personally wrote a memorial to Taizong. In it he criticized the invasion, describing it as "shooting a pearl at a sparrow" or "setting a trap for a rat." Zhao accepted that he might be severely punished for criticizing the invasion, especially because he was the only official speaking against it. He argued that trying to take territory from nomads was useless. The best policy was wuwei (inaction) and the Liao would have no

\[\text{wuwei (inaction)}\]

201 Metaphors for efforts that pursue worthless ends.

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choice but to come and accept Chinese culture.

Taizong personally wrote a reply to Zhao in which he praised his loyalty in criticizing the invasion but explained that he had not intended to really invade and that his original plan had failed because Cao Bin and his subordinates had not followed his instructions. Cao was supposed to wait with his hundred thousand troops for a month or two at Xiong and Ba prefectures while Pan Mei and Tian Zhongjin pacified the Shanhou region. They were then to advance together on Youzhou. He just wanted to cause the Liao to flee far into the desert. The problem was that Cao Bin's subordinates each pursued their own plans. The troops quickly advanced and then retreated, which wore them out and used up their supplies. Thus it wasn't his fault that the action failed.

The failure of Taizong's second Sixteen Prefectures ended any further ambition to distinguish himself militarily. While he could place the blame for his failures on the generals, he still had to acknowledge that the Liao were far more formidable than he had previously believed. Unfortunately, his belligerence engendered a fair amount of ill feeling on both sides.
Zhenzong ascended the throne in 998 with the issue of the Sixteen Prefectures still unresolved. Taizong's failed efforts to capture the territory from the Liao had inflamed the leaders of both empires. To the Liao, Taizong's invasions had been unwarranted attacks on their territory. They had accepted Taizong's subjugation of their client state, the Northern Han, without using that as a reason to begin a general war with the Song. In spite of Liao forbearance, and the beginnings of more or less cordial diplomatic contacts, Taizong had invaded their territory. To the Song, the only casus belli that Taizong needed was that the Sixteen Prefectures had been part of the Tang dynasty's territory. It was a culturally and historically-based claim that no Song Chinese statesman or emperor questioned. The simple fact that the Liao empire held the territory was sufficient reason to go to war.

There was no peaceful way to resolve the issue of the Sixteen Prefectures. Although Song Taizu had once mentioned the possibility of purchasing the territory from the Liao as an alternative to war, Taizong's failed invasions made clarification of the relative military strengths of the Song and Liao empires a prerequisite for a lasting settlement. Taizong and his advisors had determined that the Song army was incapable of wresting the Sixteen Prefectures from the Liao. After his

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second failure, Taizong was unwilling, or unable, to mount any further campaigns against the Liao. He blamed the army and its generals for his humiliating failures.

By the time Zhenzong became emperor the Song government had already adopted a defensive military posture, ceding the initiative to the Liao. The Liao army, sometimes led by the Liao emperor and the dowager empress, regularly raided Song territory from the Sixteen Prefectures. Their raids served two purposes: maintaining their initiative and probing Song defenses. Song counter-raids were always limited to local actions, so they were not a credible threat to the Liao empire. On the other hand, Liao raids often held the possibility of being the beginning of a major, dynasty-threatening invasion.

But if the Liao were trying to maintain their military initiative and probe Song defenses, what was their ultimate goal? And why did they invade so strongly in 1004? As we discussed in chapter one, the Liao were not trying to conquer Song China. They were trying to stabilize their border with the Song and convince the Chinese empire to accept their control of the Sixteen Prefectures. A secondary objective was to recover the Guannan area, taken from them by Zhou Shizong in 959. Rather than relying on their cities' defenses to blunt Song attacks and then attacking the overextended expeditionary armies, as they had done in 979 and 986, the Liao actively defended their border by regularly attacking

203The dowager empress Chengtian dominated Shengzong's court until her death in 1009. "there was no question who was ultimately in control; ...the new emperor [Shengzong] was thoroughly dominated by his mother, who continued to browbeat and sometimes strike him in public even when he was a grown man." She also had her own ordo of ten thousand cavalry. Denis Twitchett and Klaus-Peter Tietze, "The Liao," in The Cambridge History of China, vol. 6, eds. Herbert Franke and Denis Twitchett, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 90-91.
the Song. Although their strategic aim was defensive, the exigencies of pursuing that goal with a cavalry army forced the Liao to act offensively on the tactical, that is to say battlefield, level.

Of all of the raids mounted by the Liao during Zhenzong's reign, the one in 1004 was the most successful on both the tactical and strategic level. The Liao achieved more than they hoped for: the establishment of a peaceful Liao-Song border, an annual subsidy from the Song court and the opening of border markets for trade.\textsuperscript{204} The Treaty of Shanyuan that ended the 1004 invasion, and stabilized the border for more than a century, was also one of the most important events in Northern Song political history. It secured the Song from the only power that could have threatened the dynasty's existence. The long, stable peace established by the treaty made the great cultural achievements of the 11th century possible. But we would be wrong, or at least excessively sinocentric, to characterize the 1004 campaign as the culmination of a grand Liao plan directed toward the Song. It was one component of a linked Liao plan to secure all of the empire's borders, one of which was with the Song.

\textsuperscript{204}The Treaty of Shanyuan did not provide for the resumption of trade. Shortly after the treaty, however, trade was officially sanctioned. Jing-shen Tao, \textit{Two Sons of Heaven}, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988), 16-17.
The Liao empire secured its western border with the Xixia in 986, when Li Jiqian, the Xixia leader, became a vassal ruler under the Liao. Li had not submitted to the Song with the rest of the Tangut leaders in 982. He, and his successors, disrupted the northwestern border of the Song as long as their territories abutted one another. While the Liao-Xixia relationship was never as friendly as the Song court believed, it nevertheless stabilized the Liao empire's western border.

In 992-3 the Liao temporarily stabilized their eastern border, abutting the Koryo kingdom in Korea. Their methods presaged those used in dealing with the Song. A large Liao army invaded and advanced south, encountering limited resistance along the way. The Koryo king, Songjong, led a large force north to meet the Liao. Confronted by a powerful army, the Liao commander negotiated a settlement. The settlement transferred Koryo’s vassal status from the Song to the Liao, effectively stabilizing the border.

It is unclear why the Liao waited until 999 to begin attacking the Song in earnest. The Liao court may have been occupied with unrest around the empire (there was trouble with the Xixia in 992, and with other Tangut tribes in 997) or the shift may have been due to a change in the military leadership after the death

205 The account of Liao history during this period is based on Denis Twitchett and Klaus-Peter Tietze, “The Liao,” op. cit., 100-110.
of Yelü Xiuge, the Liao commander in chief, in 998. In any case, in 999 the Liao began raids on the Song that might best be described as a series of reconnaissances-in-force. The Liao failed to capture Suicheng in 999, although they defeated a Song force nearby during the winter. A second Liao army defeated a Song army near Yingzhou the same year. The Liao withdrew early the following year as Zhenzong organized a Song counter-attack (but not a counter-invasion).

The Liao emperor personally commanded another invasion in the winter of 1001. Once again the Liao defeated a Song army near Suicheng and withdrew as the Song counter-attacked. There were further clashes in 1002 and 1003. A Song official by the name of Wang Jizhong was captured during the 1003 attack on Dingzhou. Wang had been a personal confidant of Zhenzong, and became a key figure in negotiating the Treaty of Shanyuan in 1004-5.

In the late autumn of 1004 a Liao army commanded by the emperor and the empress dowager invaded Song territory. A second Liao army managed to capture Suicheng, but most of the Song cities were bypassed with little or no effort to take them. Liao forces rode directly south, destroying a Song force near Mingzhou, before reaching Shanyuan. There they faced a massive Song army commanded by Zhenzong himself. After an initial skirmish, both sides negotiated a settlement and the Liao army withdrew.

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206 Yelü Xiezhen, the Northern Commissioner for Military Affairs, died the following year in 999, after the Liao emperor began mobilizing for the campaign against the Song.
Zhenzong's First Campaign (12 October 999-29 February 1000)\textsuperscript{257}

In August of 999 the Liao emperor, Shengzong 聖宗, mobilized his troops for an invasion of the Song. He and his mother, the Dowager Empress Xiao, went to Yanzhou on 12 October. On 31 October he ordered the invasion. Shengzong began his campaign on 4 December when he attacked, but failed to capture, Suicheng in Dingzhou. Xiao Jiyuan 蕭繼遠, captured the stone fort in Langshanzhen 狼山鎮. Shengzong then marched to Yingzhou 瀛州, where he fought and defeated a Song force. After capturing Leshou county 樂壽縣, Shengzong made another attempt to take Suicheng. The Song army took up a defensive position near the city with a river to its front. A force of Liao light cavalry crossed the river and made a surprise attack on the Song force. The Song army was almost completely annihilated. Despite his victory, Shengzong was still unable to capture Suicheng. His cavalry army was unable to take a fortified city.

Although Shengzong and the Liao army had, as yet, failed to capture any strategic cities, their presence in northern Hebei worried the Song court enough for Zhenzong to personally take the field. Zhenzong was not a great general, but his presence would bolster the morale of the Song army and demonstrate his determination to defend the country. Rather than portray his actions in defensive terms, Zhenzong's expedition was presented as a campaign to capture the Sixteen

\textsuperscript{257}Zhenzong's first campaign is chronicled in SHY:B 7/10b-7/11b, XCB 45/13a-15b, SS 6.110 and LS 14.154-55.

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Prefectures. The campaign was announced on 1 January 1000. Zhenzong left the capital on 14 January. On 19 January Zhang Min reported that he had defeated a Liao force south of Jizhou. He killed more than one thousand Liao and captured one hundred horses. Wei Zhaomin reported attacking a second Liao force of five thousand cavalry south of Jizhou, capturing armor and equipment. He chased the Liao off without losing a single man.

Zhenzong rode into Tianxiongjun on 24 January in the midst of a vast imperial army. That day the officials at Weilujun reported beating off a Liao raid. A report arrived on 27 January that Song Sigong, Zhe Weichang, and Liu Wenzhi, had raided Liao territory in Wuhechuan. They captured Bahantaiwei Fort, slaughtering the Liao garrison and burning more than fifteen hundred tents. They also took more than ten thousand war horses, cattle and sheep, along with one thousand swords, bows and armor.

Outside of the forces accompanying Zhenzong in Tianxiongjun, the largest concentration of Song soldiers in Hebei was under the command of Fu Zan in Dingzhou. Zhenzong’s display of force was both a demonstration of resolve and a forward defense of the capital. Still, the emperor was far from the front and it fell to Fu Zan to actually deal with the Liao raids. Fu commanded a force of more

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208 There is a date discrepancy between SHY and XCB. Li Tao’s note in XCB points out that although the *shilu* dates the announcement of the campaign to the first day of the 12th month, matching the SHY date, he followed the SS date. I have chosen to follow SHY, as the edict it contains is more complete. XCB’s edict is also slightly different. In it, Zhenzong announces that he will go to Hebei in the next month.

209 Wei Zhaomin’s victory is recorded in a note by Li Tao. According to the *shilu*, the battle took place on 19 January. It was only recorded at Zhenzong’s temporary palace eight days later.
than eighty thousand infantry and cavalry but adopted a passive defense in Dingzhou. He was accused of cowardice by most of his subordinates for not opposing the Liao army in the field. Fan Tingzhao, Fu's Director in Chief, even compared Fu unfavorably to an old woman. Whether due to cowardice or clear-sighted analysis, Fu adopted the most reliable strategy for dealing with the Liao army. While worrisome, the Liao invasion had, as yet, failed to capture any important cities. The Liao army had proven its weakness in siege operations time and again. They were unable to exploit their battlefield victories and secure territory or booty. By not taking the field, Fu denied the Liao the opportunity to either win glory, or weaken the cities' defenses, by defeating the Song army.

Fu Zan's strategy frustrated the Liao army by denying it victory. It was a successful defensive strategy. But there were many officials at court and officers in the army who were not convinced that a passive defense was sufficiently effective. It also ran contrary to their idea of sovereignty to allow a foreign army to ride through their country unopposed. The Liao succeeded in overrunning several forts in Henshan at the beginning of February. But they subsequently failed to capture Weilujun despite strongly attacking it for two days and nights. Many Song officials and officers demanded an active defense, fighting the Liao army directly by attacking its raiding forces and invading Liao territory. They knew that the Song army had not won the majority of its encounters with the Liao army in the field. They also knew that the Song army had not always lost when it fought the Liao in the field. Thus, although the chance of defeat was fairly high, there was a significant group of officials and officers who preferred directly opposing
the Liao in the field to a more reliable passive defense relying on city walls.

Liao raiding continued into February. The Liao army freely roamed through and plundered Qi, Zhao, Xing and Ming prefectures. Their depredations drove the rural population into the city and suburbs of Zhending. The roads became impassable with refugees. This was the great weakness of a passive defense. The Liao could be prevented from capturing cities or defeating armies, but they could freely attack the unprotected populace. The Song court appeared to be impotent, unable to protect its people or territory. It was for this reason that a passive defense was unacceptable. Barbarians could not be allowed to invade at will while the Song court and army did nothing. A state which did not defend its territory failed in the most fundamental claim of sovereignty: control of its own land. More practically, if the Liao were allowed to invade unopposed it would encourage further raiding. They had to be driven out.

Fu Zan was indirectly encouraged by the Song court to adopt a more active strategy. The fact that he was not directly ordered to do so by Zhenzong suggests that the court itself had not reached consensus. Fu was neither sacked nor explicitly ordered to conduct an active defense. Still, the court wanted Fu to do something. Accordingly, Fu detached eight thousand cavalry and two thousand infantry and put them under Fan Tingzhao's command. Fan was ordered to march to Gaoyangguan in preparation for an attack on Liao territory. Fu would follow shortly with the rest of the army. Zhenzong sent a vanguard force under Shi Baoji and Shang Guanzheng from Daming to Dingzhou to join with Fu in the attack. But nothing came of the planned attack. Whether through cowardice, or
conflicting orders, Fu stayed in Dingzhou.

Zhenzong ordered a policy review on 5 February. Despite an extensive discussion of the situation and possible plans, no decision was made. Several officials agreed that one of the main problems to be solved was cowardly commanders. They proposed executing Fu Zan just as Zhou Shizong did to Fan Aineng and He Hui after the battle of Gaoping (see chapter three). Despite their indecision, it was clear that the general opinion of the officials was tilting toward taking a more active approach. At the same time, the Liao were beginning to withdraw on their own. They had been campaigning for more than two months, during the winter, with little to show for their efforts. Since they lived off the land, they could not return to areas which they had already exhausted by raiding. Shengzong returned to Yanjing some time after 8 February.

Fu Zan and Fan Tingzhao attacked a Liao force at Peicun in southwest Yingzhou on 13 February. Kang Baoyi marched from Gaoyangguan with a force of elite troops to support their attack. He clashed with the Liao near sunset and fought through the next day until dusk. When Fu and Fan withdrew Kang chose to continue his attack. With Fu and Fan gone, the Liao were able to concentrate their forces against Kang. The next morning the Liao surrounded him. Kang decided to fight to the death rather than surrender. He and his remaining men were killed after a spirited defense. The Liao then plundered Ci and Ji prefectures and withdrew.

Fan Tingzhao reported on 19 February defeating a large Liao force 10 miles east of Mozhou. He beheaded more than ten thousand men and captured

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more weapons than could be successfully counted. As a result, the Liao were
driven back across the border. When the report arrived at court, the officials all
congratulated Zhenzong. Zhenzong personally wrote a "happy to hear of your
victory" edict and also a five and a seven line poem for the wall of his temporary
palace. He ordered the officials to match the poems. Although Fan's success in
driving the Liao back across the border was probably due to the fact that they
were already withdrawing, it allowed Zhenzong to leave the front on a victorious
note. He returned to Kaifeng on 29 February.
From 1000 to 1004

Between 1000 and 1004 both the Song and the Liao launched sporadic raids on the others territory. The border area was highly militarized by this time and neither side could make any appreciable gains. The raids were part of a political and military contest of wills. On the political front they were trying to put pressure on the other side and to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the status quo.

For the Song the issue of the Sixteen Prefectures was still not settled. Although they were unable or unwilling to mount a major campaign to take the territory from the Liao, they could not let the Liao peacefully govern it. That would have been tantamount to letting their claim lapse. There was also internal pressure for military action at Zhenzong's court. Rather than deciding either to negotiate for peace or go to war, Zhenzong once again temporized. Some raids were launched and some of the Liao raids opposed in the field. Militarily it was important for the Song army to maintain a high state of training, provide local defense by seizing the tactical initiative with preemptive strikes, and bolster morale by demonstrating its martial virtues. All of this was accomplished by an active defense in the border areas. It must be stressed that these measures were successful. They proved effective for local defense. What made them even stronger was that the Song could also fall back on their walled cities, cities which the Liao were unable to capture.

Liao raids on the Song were also due to Song dissatisfaction with the
status quo. Raiding put pressure on the Song court to negotiate a settlement. The defense of Hebei was exceedingly costly, in men, material and political will. Every Liao raid was a sign of the inability of the Song to defend its own territory. In simple terms, the raids made Zhenzong look bad. The Liao were trying to force Zhenzong to accept their control of the Sixteen Prefectures by making his situation intolerable. He had to see that his best hope lay in reaching a peace settlement. But if the Liao were relying upon Zhenzong to make a decision, they had seriously misjudged the Song emperor. Zhenzong simply didn't know what to do. The impetus behind the Shanyuan campaign (below) may have been either frustration or the growing realization at the Liao court that they would have to force Zhenzong into a decision by an overwhelming threat. Militarily the raids were necessary, as with the Song, to maintain training, establish tactical initiative and bolster morale. In addition, raiding allowed the Liao to gather intelligence regarding terrain and the state of Song defenses. Liao commanders were quite familiar with Hebei by 1004. But they had never captured a border city in all of their raiding. They did not, as a result, develop a siege train capable of overcoming city defenses. Instead, in 1004 the Liao army first attacked several cities to clear the Song army from the field and put them on the defensive behind their walls, and then simply by-passed the cities, riding directly toward the Song capital.
The Shanyuan Campaign (24 September 1004-21 January 1005)\textsuperscript{210}

On 24 September 1004 Shengzong announced that he would campaign against the Song. His edict came as no surprise to the Song court. Liao light cavalry had been reconnoitering in Song territory from at least 25 August. And Song border officials had reported that the Liao were planning to invade on 9 September. Shengzong arrived in Yanzhou on 11 October to prepare for the invasion. He was once again accompanied by his mother, the Dowager Empress Xiao.

The Song prepared for the Liao invasion by reinforcing their border cities, particularly Dingzhou, and giving additional gifts of money to the soldiers. Since the Liao were planning to invade and the Song had a large number of troops in Hebei, on 2 October Zhenzong asked his officials if he should personally go to the front. It seemed to Zhenzong that he had an opportunity to achieve a decisive victory over the Liao which would settle the border. His officials were not enthusiastic, but they recognized that, at least for the moment, Zhenzong had already decided to go. Instead of fruitlessly opposing the emperor’s expedition, they tried to limit its range and delay its beginning. Bi Shi’an 裴士安 felt that Zhenzong should rely upon the generals that were already in the field to handle the Liao. If the emperor was going to the front, he should not go any farther north than Shanyuan (modern Puyang 濮陽). Even then, particularly with the

\textsuperscript{210}The Shanyuan Campaign is chronicled in SHY:B 7/12a-13b, XCB 57/1b-58/21b, SS 7.124-127 and LS 14.159-160.
approach of winter, Shanyuan was not a suitable place for a large army to remain for a long time. An imperial expedition would require careful planning. Other officials echoed these concerns, proposing that Zhenzong go no farther than Shanyuan. Zhenzong apparently agreed with Bi Shi’an and the other officials. He would go to Shanyuan after careful preparation. The preparations took three months and Zhenzong had second thoughts about going, but he did go.

The Liao invasion followed the same route that almost all previous invasions had, opening with an attack on the approaches to Dingzhou. The Liao army badly beat a Song force at Tangxing, north of Dingzhou, on 31 October. The following day a Liao force under Xiao Talin 蕭捷輪 defeated a Song army at Suicheng, northeast of Dingzhou. With the Song army temporarily driven from the field, the Liao army camped at Wangdu 望都 on 4 November.

In response to the initial Liao advance, on 5 November Wang Chao 王超 led a large army to the Shuying Palisade 樹營栅 on the Tang River 唐河. The Tang river ran east-west in front of Dingzhou. Song troops from Beiping Fort 北平砦 and Weilujun 威勲軍 (Suicheng) badly beat a Liao force on 7 November. While the Song army was contesting the approaches to Dingzhou, Zhenzong was having second thoughts about going to the front. His doubts were being fed by some of his closest advisors. It fell to Kou Zhun 寇準, the Chief Councillor of State, to stiffen the resolve Zhenzong held only a month earlier.

Although Kou Zhun had already convinced Zhenzong to go to the front, the Liao invasion was so threatening that on 7 November Wang Qinruo 王欽若,

21Xiao Talin's name is given as Xiao Talan 慕開 in SS.
Participant in Determining Governmental Matters, secretly proposed that Zhenzong flee to Jinling (Nanjing) and Chen Yaosou 陳堯叟, Notary of the Bureau of Military Affairs, proposed that Zhenzong flee to Chengdu (in Sichuan). This set the stage for a well-known display of patriotism by Kou Zhun. Zhenzong called Kou Zhun in to discuss the idea of fleeing to Jinling or Chengdu. When Kou arrived, Wang Qinruo and Chen Yaosou were already present:

Kou Zhun realized that Wang Qinruo had asked the emperor to visit the South because he was from Jiangnan and that Chen Yaosou had asked the emperor to visit the West because he was from Sichuan. Kou pretended that he didn't know [who had proposed fleeing] and said: ‘Those who devised such plans for Your Majesty should be condemned and beheaded. The reigning Son of Heaven has divine military qualities and the officers and commanders are united and in harmony. If the Imperial Chariot sets out for a campaign under the personal supervision of the emperor they (the Liao) would surely vanish. If not, issue a clever stratagem in order to destroy their schemes, safely guard [our territory] and exhaust their people. If they become tired of their endeavors, we can expect victory. How could we wish to abandon our ancestral temples and our altars to the spirit of the land and go as far away as Chu (the South) or Shu (Sichuan)?’ Thereupon the emperor desisted [from those plans].

The Liao simultaneously attacked Weilujun, Shun’anjun 順安軍, Beiping Fort and Baozhou on 9 November. All four attacks failed, although the Liao defeated Beiping Fort’s troops in battle. Xiao Talin, whose forces had attacked Weilujun and Shun’anjun, then linked up with Shengzong and the Dowager Empress to attack Dingzhou. The Song army took up a defensive position behind the Tang River, limiting their attacks to trying to drive off Liao reconnaissance cavalry.

It was at this time, according to the Song sources, that Wang Jizhong sent a

212 My translation of Kou Zhun’s audience with Zhenzong, and the discussion of the events surrounding it, is closely based on Wolfgang Franke’s in, “Historical Precedent or Accidental Repetition of Events? K’ou Chun in 1004 and Yu Ch’ien in 1449,” in Études Song in Memoriam Étienne Balazs, Françoise Aubin ed., Series 1, Fascicle 3, 199-206.

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letter on behalf of the Liao to Shi Pu 石普 at Mozhou to discuss peace. Several
days later, on 13 November, the Liao launched a diversionary attack on Kelanjun
崑嵐軍, more than 200 kilometers to the west, on the far side of the Taihang
Mountains. The attack was beaten off but it accomplished its purpose. Just like
the other unsuccessful assaults on Song positions, the attack on Kelanjun put the
Song on the defensive. With the Song army maintaining a static defense in the
various cities and forts, the initiative was now firmly in Liao hands.

Having taken the measure of the Song forward defense system around
Dingzhou, the Liao circumvented it. Liao forces crossed the Tang River east of
Dingzhou. Rather than turning back to the west and attacking Dingzhou, a Liao
army marched east and south, attacking Yingzhou 瀛州 at dusk on 20 November.
Shengzong and his mother personally directed at least part of the attack on
Yingzhou. The assault continued for more than ten days. Song casualties were
heavy, 30,000 dead and twice as many wounded, but the city held out. The
attack on Yingzhou destroyed the city’s military strength. Although the Liao lifted
their siege, they continued to occupy the surrounding territory. A second Liao
army subdued Qizhou 祁州, west of Yingzhou on 28 November.

After the fall of Qizhou and end of the assault on Yingzhou, the Liao
paused for several weeks. There are three likely reasons for their pause. First,
Shengzong and his mother were waiting for the Song reaction to their peace
overture in light of their attacks on Yingzhou and Qizhou. Second, while they
were waiting for the Song to make them an offer, they were reorganizing, refitting
and resting their troops. Their forces had been campaigning fairly intensely
throughout November. If they were going to continue into southern Hebei, the troops needed to be put back in order, and probably resupplied with arrows, before they faced the Song army again. Thirdly, they were bringing up fresh units now that they had a foothold in Song territory. All of the attacks on positions in northern Hebei had been carried out by relatively small, dispersed units. It is only in mid-December that we first get any sort of troop numbers for the Liao army in Hebei. The purpose of the early raids was to either draw Song troops out so that they could be destroyed in detail or to scare them into shutting themselves up behind their walls. The attack on Yingzhou and the capture of Qizhou ended the first stage of the Liao campaign. Since their military threat was not sufficiently frightening to convince Zhenzong to come to terms, they went on to the second stage. On 19 December a report reached the Song court that the Liao planned to ride south from Yingzhou with 200,000 troops through the gap between Beizhou 貝州, Jizhou 晉州, and Tianxiongjun 天雄軍.

Zhenzong ordered the commander of Deqingjun 德清軍 on 21 December to lead all of his troops to Shanyuan if the Liao rode south. The Song continued to build up troops and defensive positions in Shanyuan. The Song government also continued to distribute extensive gifts of money, silk and wine to the soldiers and people of Hebei. Zhenzong commented to his officials on 23 December that they had better be prepared because Beizhou and Jizhou had been raided and Shenzhou 深州 reconnoitred by the Liao. The Liao raiders left without accomplishing anything. Yelü Keli 耶律譙里 defeated and pursued a Song force at Mingzhou 滟州 on 27 December.

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Shan Bu 善補 reported to Shengzong on 31 December that the Song sent Wang Jizhong 王繼忠 bows and arrows, secretly asking him to seek peace. Zhenzong left Kaifeng on 3 January, riding toward Shanyuan. The Liao captured Deqingjun 德清軍 the same day. Shengzong reached Shanyuan on 5 January. Zhenzong ordered corvee laborers to go up and down the Yellow River breaking the ice to prevent the Liao from crossing it.

Although he was already on the road to Shanyuan, Zhenzong once again reconsidered personally facing the Liao. He called on Kou Zhun again, just as he had before, to discuss the idea put forward by one of his officials that he go to Jinling in the south. A no doubt exasperated Kou replied:

Your advisors are cowardly and timid. They talk ignorantly, no different than farmers and old women. The invaders are now nearby and danger surrounds us. Your Majesty can advance a foot but cannot retreat an inch. All the armies in Hebei await your arrival day and night. The soldiers are very anxious. If you return a few paces then the multitude’s spirit will collapse. The enemy will take advantage of that and Jinling won’t be safe either.

Zhenzong still couldn’t make up his mind. Kou went out and ran into Gao Qiong 高瓊, the Commander in Chief of the Palace Corps. Kou said to him: “You have been generously rewarded by the country. Will you requite it now?” Gao replied: “I am a military man. I am sincerely willing to die for it.” Kou brought Gao into Zhenzong’s presence, where the general supported Kou’s advice. Gao pointed out that everyone’s families were still in the capital. He also thought that Zhenzong’s presence would increase the soldiers’ spirits and make defeating the Liao easy.²¹³ Wang Yingchang 王應昌 also supported Kou, finally convincing

²¹³For a slightly different translation of Kou Zhun’s discussion with Zhenzong and Gao
Zhenzong to continue forward.

The Liao captured Deqingjun on 7 January. Xiao Talin led an attack on Song positions just north of Shanyuan the same day. Gao Qiong and Li Jilong 李继隆 brought up their forces and surrounded Xiao’s army on three sides. A sudden attack on the Liao by Song light cavalry drove the Liao to attack the arrayed Song army. Unable to make any impression on the Song troops, Xiao decided to withdraw. As Xiao led his vanguard away from the battlefield, concealed Song troops opened fire on him with crossbows and siege crossbows. Xiao was struck in the forehead by a bolt and died that night.214

At the same time that Zhenzong was approaching Shanyuan, Song-Liao negotiations were beginning in earnest. Zhenzong was in favor of peace, but he wasn’t certain that the Liao were trustworthy. They had already deeply invaded Song territory. Of even more immediate concern was the freezing of the Yellow River. The Liao army had already demonstrated that it could not be contained by dispersed static defense positions. Without the barrier of the Yellow River Kaifeng itself was threatened and Zhenzong could be cut off. Zhenzong expressed his resolve to have a single, decisive battle to annihilate the Liao invaders.

The Liao captured Tonglijun 通利軍 on 8 January. Zhenzong arrived in the southern city of Shanyuan on 9 January. He was reluctant to cross the


214There is a date discrepancy between XCB, SHY:B, SS and LS. The three Song sources all date the battle north of Shanyuan and Xiao Talin's death to 7 January. LS dates his death 5 January. I have used 7 January because the accounts given in XCB and SHY:B are more complete both in general and in this particular incident.

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Yellow River to the north city of Shanyuan. Kou Zhun pleaded with Zhenzong to go to the north city. He warned the emperor that morale would be destroyed if he did not cross the river. Gao Qiong again supported Kou. When Feng Zheng, Notary of the Bureau of Military Affairs, snorted in derision after Gao spoke, Gao angrily rebuked him: “You have established yourself through literary achievement. Now, when enemy cavalry is all around us you disparage me without respect. Why don’t you compose a poem and by reading it cause the enemy cavalry to retreat?”

Zhenzong then agreed to continue on to the north city. But when he reached the pontoon bridge to cross the river, he stopped again. Gao Qiong beat on the palanquin bearers and hectored them until Zhenzong agreed to cross the river. When he reached the north city the emperor ascended to the top of the city gate. The imperial yellow dragon banners were unfurled and all of the soldiers cheered.

With the reluctant Zhenzong finally installed in the north city of Shanyuan, Cao Liyong 姜利用 went to the Liao court to discuss peace on 10 January. The Liao court sent Han Qi 韓杞 to the Song court to negotiate the settlement terms on 13 January. The Liao initially offered peace in exchange for the Guannan area. Zhenzong decided to reject a land-for-peace deal. Part of his reasoning, that the Song had controlled the Guannan area for a long time, could have been used equally well by the Liao regarding the Sixteen Prefectures. Instead of land, the Song court offered to make an annual payment of money and silk.

Cao Liyong returned to the Liao court on 16 January. He rejected any

cession of land but offered an annual payment of 100,000 taels of silver and 200,000 bolts of silk instead. Shengzong and his mother accepted the annual payment instead of the territory on 21 January. The Liao campaign was successful. All of the raids and attacks culminated not in a decisive battle, but in a decisive negotiation. Although they could not know it at the time, their efforts resulted in over a century of peace between the Song and Liao.

The Treaty of Shanyuan

Apart from the annual payments mentioned above, there were several other provisions of the treaty:

1. A clearly marked border between the two sides.
2. Enforcement of a peaceful border.
3. Extradition of criminals.
4. A ban on new fortifications or canals along the border. Old fortifications could be repaired.

Both sides solemnly swore to observe the treaty, invoking religious sanctions for failure to do so.¹¹⁶

The Treaty of Shanyuan has been described as "...a great success of political realism over ideological pretensions."¹¹⁷ The annual payments have

²¹⁷Ibid., 110.

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been called "blackmail." Humiliating is one of the most frequent words used in discussing the treaty. From the Song perspective these views are accurate. But what about the Liao perspective? They started the war and they retained the initiative throughout the fighting and the negotiations. Song understanding, or misunderstanding, of Liao intentions certainly shaped the treaty. But the Song were reacting during the negotiations. What did the Liao want? Was the Treaty of Shanyuan a success for the Liao?

As we discussed above, Shengzong and his mother invaded Song territory in 1004 in order to force Zhenzong to accept Liao sovereignty over the Sixteen Prefectures. So, regarding that particular issue, they were successful. All of the Song primary sources documenting the campaign make it clear that the Liao asked for peace-talks before the Song. The Liao Shi only records Song requests for peace-talks. Who asked for peace-talks first tells us nothing when it is taken out of the context of the goal of the military action. The Liao probably tried to open peace negotiations before the Song. Their aim was decisive negotiations, not a decisive battle. It was therefore to their advantage to begin negotiating while their army was in the field winning battles. More than eight centuries later Clausewitz might write that "War was merely the continuation of policies by other means," but he assumed that campaigns led up to decisive battles.219 The

218 Jing-shen Tao, op. cit., 16.

219 Russel Weigley forcefully and elegantly argued that, "War in the age of battles was not an effective extension of policy by other means...but the bankruptcy of policy." The Age of Battles (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 543.

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greatest weakness of that assumption is that battles are rarely decisive.\textsuperscript{220} One of the reasons that even a large battle involving tens of thousands of troops on both sides is not decisive is that the victor usually suffers as much if not more than the loser. Badly injured, the victor is in no condition to exploit his victory. His ability to threaten the loser with further destruction is compromised.

Even if the Liao had fought and won a decisive battle at Shanyuan they would have still been deep in hostile territory, in the middle of winter, without a reliable source of supplies. They would have suffered many casualties in the battle. Thus, they might have had to retreat at the height of their victory. By negotiating when they did, the Liao were able to credibly threaten further destruction or even a decisive battle. Zhenzong and most of his advisors were inclined to imagine that the most dire consequences would result from continued fighting. The theoretical consequences of fighting were balanced by certain concessions that Zhenzong felt he could not make. He could not cede new land to the Liao and he could not accept an inferior position to the Liao emperor. But implicit in these requirements was acceptance of Liao sovereignty over the Sixteen Prefectures. To Zhenzong it was a question of how much more he would have to give up in order to get peace.\textsuperscript{221} The Liao clearly understood this and began negotiations by demanding cession of the Guannan region, something they knew


\textsuperscript{221}Zhenzong had apparently been willing to give up ten times what Cao Liyong agreed to. Jing-shen Tao, op. cit., 15.
would be rejected. Demanding land for peace served two purposes: frightening
the Song by manifesting their worst fears, and giving them something that they
could save face with by rejecting. Cao Liyong was a hero for rejecting the Liao
demand for land and substituting annual payments that would not be called
tribute.\textsuperscript{222}

The Shanyuan campaign and its resolution makes no sense without
understanding why Shengzong and his mother invaded the Song. They were not
trying to destroy the Song. Their aims were very limited. They seized and
maintained a dominant bargaining position by convincing the Song court that
their aims were unlimited, that they were both willing and able to destroy the
Song state. The argument at the Song court was not whether the Liao wanted to
destroy the Song state, but whether they were capable of doing so. The view
that the Liao wanted to destroy the Song state persisted in the Song court until
the Jin destroyed the Liao. When combined with a lack of faith in the effectiveness
of the Song army, an opinion that the events of 1004-5 helped create, this view of
the Liao kept the Song from breaking the treaty until the Jin were already destroying
the Liao. Thus, for the next century, the Song court weighed the desire to
conquer the Sixteen Prefectures, end the annual payments and reject the Liao
ruler as an emperor, against their belief that the Song army was weak, the Liao
army strong and that a failed attack on the Liao could result in the destruction of
the Song state. They were unwilling to risk the destruction of the state. It was

\textsuperscript{222}While the provisions of the Treaty of Shanyuan make it clear that the annual payments
were not to be treated as tribute, the Liao court always described them as tribute to all of the
other states that it had relations with except, of course, the Song.
only the rise of the Jin that made the Liao army seem less strong and removed the possibility of the Liao destroying the Song state. Unfortunately, the Jin proved quite capable of capturing Kaifeng along with emperor Qinzong and the retired emperor Huizong.

The Treaty of Shanyuan proved long-lasting not just because the Song reluctantly accepted it, but also because the Liao accepted it. If the Liao really were far stronger than the Song, genuinely wanted to conquer China and deeply resented the loss of the Guannan area to Zhou Shizong, why did they accept the treaty? The Liao army may have suffered a sharp decline in effectiveness during the eleventh century. Whether the decline was real or only apparent, the Liao army was superior to the Song army only in the open field. And, while the idea of destroying the Song state may have occurred to some members of the Liao court, the Liao army was never capable of the task. Likewise, the Guannan area may have been important to some at the Liao court, but it would have been an exposed salient in Song territory. Unlike the Sixteen Prefectures, which were protected by mountains, the Guannan area was, as its name describes, south of the passes. It was, however, extremely useful in negotiations. Not only could the Guannan area be painlessly given up, as it was in 1005, but it could also be the gravamen of any future complaint. The Liao thus retained a useful claim on Song territory. It was a permanent casus belli. During the Song-Xixia war in the


224 The Liao also fought a large, and indecisive, war with Koryo from 1011-1019.
early 1040s, it was precisely this claim that forced the Song to increase its annual payments to the Liao in order to keep them out of the war. From the Liao point of view their relations with the Song under the treaty were close to ideal.

**War by Other Means**

The Treaty of Shanyuan was initially seen by Zhenzong and his court as a diplomatic victory for the Song. Once the immediate crisis was over, however, it was increasingly regarded as a humiliating failure. By late 1007 Zhenzong was looking for a way to overcome the shame of the treaty. Since military action was out of the question, Zhenzong settled on the idea of performing the Feng 封 and Shan 禪 sacrifices, a massive ritual display of imperial legitimacy. The appropriate auspicious omens were produced and the sacrifices took place in 1008. Zhenzong also sacrificed to the earth at Fenyin 汾陰 in 1011, a sacrifice second in status only to the Feng and Shan sacrifices.

Both Sima Guang 司馬光 and the editors of the *Song Shi* explained the sacrifices as directed at the Liao. The Liao were allegedly a superstitious people who would be impressed by auspicious omens.225 Impressive displays of wealth and culture were not limited to the Song. The Liao erected a variety of dramatic Buddhist monasteries.226 These examples only hint at the ways that both the

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226Nancy Steinhart alludes to this use of architecture in *Liao Architecture*, (forthcoming), 240. Interestingly all of the extant buildings are in, or very close to, the Sixteen Prefectures. Not
Song and Liao fought to assert their legitimacy and cultural superiority through non-military means. After the Treaty of Shanyuan, those were the only means they used for more than a century.

All of them were built after the treaty. All of the extant buildings are in areas that were primarily inhabited by Han Chinese subjects of the Liao.
The Northern Song state was formed by war. Conquest and control of the army preoccupied Song Taizu. Taizong tried to prove himself a worthy successor to his brother by conquest. Zhenzong inherited the issue of the Sixteen Prefectures exacerbated by his father’s failures. The Treaty of Shanyuan in 1005 effectively, though not favorably, from the Song perspective, resolved the final issue in the formation of the Northern Song state. With only minor exceptions, the extent and shape of Song territory did not change again until the fall of Kaifeng in 1127.

The military relationship between the Song and Liao empires defined the Song dynasty as a weak Chinese dynasty. Because the Song emperor had to accept equality or near equality with the Liao emperor, and because the Jin eventually destroyed the Liao and took north China from the Song, the problems of the Song army have usually been seen as the root of Song weakness. The Song military failed to do its job. It failed to capture the Sixteen Prefectures and humble the Liao, and it failed to defend the dynasty from the invading Jin. It also failed to crush the small state of Xixia. All this is true. By the standards of the Song emperors and officials after Taizu, the Song military was weak and unsuccessful. It could not accomplish the mission set for it. It is therefore wrong to dismiss the issue of Song military weakness. It was a very real and significant issue for the Song state. But Song weakness does not explain either the extended
peace after the Treaty of Shanyuan or the events leading up to it.

It was not inevitable that the Song state would very nearly equal the geographical extent of the Tang or Han states before it. The Southern Tang and Northern Han put up strong resistance to Song conquest. If the other, smaller, states put up less resistance, it was due to the overwhelming force that Taizu concentrated on them. No one surrendered because they thought the Zhao family possessed the Mandate of Heaven. They surrendered because the Song army was the strongest army south of the Yellow River.

This was not true of the Liao. The Liao army was superior to the Song army. And, because of that superiority, the Liao emperor could not only claim equality with the Song emperor, he could make the Song emperor accept it. He could also make the Song emperor accept that, notwithstanding Chinese claims, the Sixteen Prefectures would remain part of the Liao empire.

Why was the Song army weak? Several reasons have been given for the weakness of the Song military by commentators from the Song period through the twentieth century. During the Song, many officials thought the problem was a lack of good commanders, lack of sufficient cavalry mounts or lazy, disobedient soldiers. Recent historians have pointed to the bureaucratization of the Song military machine, control of the army by civil officials ignorant of military matters, a failure to follow the wise practices established by Taizu and Taizong and the fact that the Song faced a powerful steppe empire greater than anything the Han or Tang dynasties had faced. Many of these problems, particularly the lack of sufficient cavalry mounts, did significantly weaken the Song army. The effect any
of these factors had individually at any given time, or over the course of the
dynasty, is indeterminable. All these attempts to find a structural or institutional
flaw at the root of Song weakness have produced unprovable conclusions. They
have one other aspect in common: they all focus on the Song state as sole
arbiter of its own fate. That is to say, if the Song was weak, it was due to
something it did or did not do. Even the fact that the Song faced a united steppe
empire on its northern frontier is presented as simply a more difficult problem
than earlier dynasties faced. The Song had a bigger problem to cope with than
the Han or Tang, and that is why it had a harder time solving it.

At no point has any previous consideration of the Song-Liao wars considered
what the goals of the Liao emperors were. Why did they go to war? And, more
significantly, why didn’t they? The sinocentric approach to Song military history
has always assumed that the Liao were a constant threat, held off by continuous
diplomatic and military effort. The violent, avaricious Liao were kept out of north
China until any, or all, of the factors contributing to Song military weakness
cau sed the army to buckle in 1127. But it was not the Liao who attacked the
Song and captured Kaifeng, it was the Jin. If the Liao were so violent and
avaricious, and the Liao army superior to the Song army, why didn’t the Liao
conquer, or at least try to conquer, the Song? The 1004-5 invasion of the Song
certainly seemed like an attempt to conquer the Song. As we discussed in the
analysis of that campaign (chapter nine), the apparent invasion was simply an
escalation of earlier attempts to force the Song to the bargaining table.

The strongest proof that the Liao had no interest in destroying the Song is
the Liao rejection of Xixia suggestions of a joint campaign against the Song in
1042, and the way the Liao negotiated a new demarcation of the Song-Liao border in Hedong between 1074 and 1076. In both cases, and in several other negotiations between 1042 and 1074, the Liao combined increased border patrols with demands for Song concessions. The Liao made effective use of credible threats to get as much as they could from the Song. If they didn’t get all they asked for, they didn’t go to war but waited and tried again, sometimes decades, later. The Liao army always presented a real threat to the existence of the Song state. Song officials had to take Liao threats seriously. They couldn’t risk a Liao invasion. This may well have contributed to the impression that the Song was a weak dynasty. It made concessions to an opponent who, after 1005, never really attacked the empire. Of course Song emperors and officials had no way of knowing the outcomes of their actions. If they had not responded vigorously to Liao diplomatic and military incursions, the Liao might well have been encouraged to try to get even more from them. It was in the Liao interest to always appear to be ready to invade the Song.

Ultimately Song emperors and officials cannot be faulted for suspecting and fearing a state which constantly threatened and made demands of them. Liao emperors and officials were quite effective in convincing the Song that they were always a threat. It is not surprising that, despite over a century of peace, the Song tried to make common cause with the Jin against the Liao. The Song tried to conquer the Sixteen Prefectures while the Jin were destroying the Liao empire from the north. The disaster that befell the Song after violating the Treaty
of Shanyuan makes it clear why the sanction of Heaven was taken seriously during the Song. As the Treaty reads near the end:

> Whosoever repudiates this covenant shall be unable to enjoy the reign over [his] state, [for this covenant is] clearly manifested [to all] and scrutinized by Heaven, which along with [the offended state] shall surely destroy him.\(^{227}\)

\(^{227}\)Translated in David Wright, op. cit., 83.
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