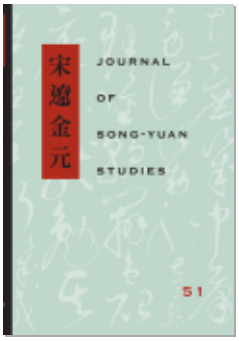
Land and People: The Sixteen Prefectures of Yan and Yun during the Liao-Song-Jin Transition



Jinping Wang

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Land and People:

The Sixteen Prefectures of Yan and Yun during the Liao-Song-Jin Transition

Jinping Wang NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

In 1120, decision makers of the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127) made a bold political gamble. They decided to ally with the Jurchen—who had established the Jin dynasty (1115–1234) under their leader Aguda (r.1115–1123)—to launch a joint assault on their common enemy: the Khitan Liao dynasty (907–1125). Through this alliance, the Northern Song hoped to reconquer a large swathe of territory known as "the Sixteen Prefectures of Yan and Yun" 燕雲十六州, which included today's Beijing and the northern parts of Hebei and Shanxi provinces. This territory had been ceded to the Liao in 938 by the Later Jin 後晉 (936–947) founder Shi Jingtang 石敬瑭 (r. 936–942).[1] What the Song decision makers did not anticipate was that the Jurchens turned out to be a more dangerous enemy than the Khitans. After finishing with the Khitans, the Jurchens continued southward and captured the Northern Song capital of Kaifeng within only two years. The Northern Song's gamble resulted in the rapid fall of the dynasty itself.

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1. Subsequently, the Later Zhou 後周 (951–960), the last of the Five Dynasties regimes, managed to reconquer two of the "Sixteen Prefectures" (Mozhou 莫州 and Yingzhou 瀛州), which remained in the territory of the Later Zhou, and its successor the Northern Song, until the Jurchen invasion. Yet as Yuan Chen has pointed out, "historians still refer to the Yan and Yun area in Khitan occupation as the 'Sixteen Prefectures,' 'sixteen' here being a nominal, not exact number." See Chen, "Legitimation Discourse and the Theory of the Five Elements in Imperial China," *JSYS* 44 (2014): 432–33.

The failure of the Northern Song court's political gamble was caused in part by its judgement of, and policies toward, the Sixteen Prefectures, particularly regarding the local Han populations, who were commonly referred to as Yan-Yun "Han'er" 漢兒 or "Hanren" 漢人 in historical sources from the Liao-Song-Jin periods.[2] For the sake of convenience, I follow the Liao-Song-Jin practices of using both "Hanren" and "Han'er" to refer to the Han populations of the Sixteen Prefectures.[3] The court anticipated that the local Han'er would remain politically loyal to the Northern Song because of their shared Han identity. This judgement also accounted for a series of rancorous disputes between the Song and the Jin over how to divide the land and people of the Sixteen Prefectures between the two states. In this article, I interrogate the Song elite's rhetoric concerning the Sixteen Prefectures and their resident Han populations while also engaging with recent scholarship on the Han'er.

The Song court's rhetoric regarding the Han'er has driven historians to write about the Han'er from a perspective that focuses on ethnic identity. Liu Pujiang pioneered the study of "Han'er" or "Hanren," addressing the use of these terms in historical sources as well as the Han'er's ethnic consciousness and political attitudes in the Liao-Song-Jin dynasties. He views the Han'er's ethnic identity as a historical fact and discusses it within the distinctive historiographical discourse of "Sinicization" (*hanhua* 漢化) and "Barbarianization" (*huhua* 胡化) that emphasized acculturation among different peoples.[4] In

2. Scholars have long believed that the term "Hanren" or "Han'er" became an ethnic category in the Northern Dynasties (420–589), especially after the sixth century. A recent insightful study by Su Hang, however, shows that while "Han'er" appeared as an ethnic category in historical sources from the Northern Dynasties, it meant neither an ethnic group in the modern sense nor a culturally defined social group. Instead, it was used to refer to the native inhabitants of the Central Plains (*zhongyuan* 中原), of agrarian north China, or those who were identified with Han culture during the Northern Dynasties. See Su Hang 蘇航, "'Han'er' qishi yu 'Huxing' ciyu: lun Beichao de quanli bianjie yu zulei bianjie" 「漢兒」歧視與「胡姓」賜與: 論北朝的權利邊界與族類邊界, *Minzu yanjiu* 民族研究 1 (2018): 92–109.

3. The two terms were used almost interchangeably in Song-Liao-Jin writings. Despite the fact that modern historians often fail to differentiate between "Hanren" and "Han'er," it is worth drawing a distinction between them. As Liu Pujiang has pointed out, "Han'er" was most often used by both the Northern Song and Liao people to refer to Han people living in Liao territory. After conquering both the Liao and the Northern Song, the Jin used "Hanren" and the term "Nanren" 南人 (meaning "southerners") to address the Han populations in the Jin empire. The two terms referred to those who had formerly lived in the Liao and Northern Song territories, respectively. See Liu Pujiang 劉浦江, "Shuo Hanren" 說漢人, in Liu Pujiang, *Liao Jin shilun* 遼金史論 (Shenyang: Liaoning daxue chubanshe, 1999), 109–27.

4. See Liu Pujiang, "Shuo Hanren." Iiyama Tomoyasu has also discussed the continuity of

contrast, recent scholarship in English has emphasized ethnic categories and identities—both Han and non-Han—as something constructed and fluid. Scholars employing this line of thought often treat the Han'er as objects of perception by others and focus their analysis on the conceptualization of ethnicity.[5]

In spite of their differences, both approaches heavily rely on transmitted historical records, including court documents and private writings by the Song elite. These records reveal much about the intellectual world of Han and non-Han elites—particularly that of the Song elite—but offer little information on the experiences of the Han'er as historical actors living through the Liao-Song-Jin transition.

Diverging from existing scholarship, I approach the issue of the Yan-Yun Han'er and the Song elite's rhetoric concerning them in two ways. First, while recognizing that the Yan-Yun Han'er appeared as objects of perception in writings of the Northern Song elite, I problematize their rhetoric by analyzing conflicting views among the Song elite themselves. Their conflicting views on the Han'er were deeply entangled with the Song court's often contradictory long-term agenda toward the Sixteen Prefectures as well as its short-term policy of defending the reconquered lands during the three-state wars in the 1120s. My approach thus departs from the existing scholarship by contextualizing the Song elite's rhetoric on the Han'er within their broader discourse on land-people relations. I emphasize that this discourse itself was modified in accordance with changing geopolitical conditions in the Sixteen Prefectures during the three-state wars.

Second, and more importantly, I assess the Song elite's rhetoric on the Yan-Yun Han'er against evidence from stele and tomb inscriptions from the

official "Hanren" families from the Liao during the Jin and Yuan dynasties. See Iiyama Tomoyasu 飯山知保, "*Ryō* no kanjin imin no sono go" 遼の "漢人" 遺民のその後, *Ajia yūgaku* 160 (2013): 240–52. For a recent discussion of three historiographical discourses of "Sinicization" in Chinese and western scholarship, see Fangyi Cheng, "The Evolution of 'Sinicisation'," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Series 3, 31.2 (2021): 321–42.

5. See Naomi Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty: Frontier Crossings in Liao China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007); Mark Elliott, "Hushuo: The Northern Other and the Naming of the Han Chinese," in *Critical Han Studies: The History, Representation, and Identity of China's Majority*, ed. Thomas Mullaney et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 173–90; Nicolas Tackett, *The Origins of the Chinese Nation: Song China and the Forging of an East Asian World Order* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017); and Shao-yun Yang, *The Way of Barbarians: Redrawing Ethnic Boundaries in Tang and Song China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019).

borderland region. In such local sources, the Yan-Yun people appear as individuals, family members, and members of specific social groups who experienced the Liao-Song-Jin transition. Their identity had both political and social dimensions. They had agency in shaping historical narratives about themselves, as most local sources were written by local people for local consumption. They described some local leaders' decisions to submit to the Northern Song or the Jurchen Jin. They praised individuals' efforts to ensure the survival of their families or the rebuilding of local communities during warfare.

The Song elite's views and local evidence about the Han'er are worth investigating together because the sharp contrast between them reveals both a historical and methodological lesson. Historically, for most Han'er, as borderland residents in the Yan-Yun region, ethnicity did not determine their loyalty, or more precisely, their political choices in the three-state wars of the 1120s. Their survival instincts and strategies were far more important. Methodologically, when discussing the borderland in Middle Period China, we need to put sources produced in different contexts into conversation. Doing so allows us to recognize the multitude of agents from all sides with plural identities, of which ethnic identity was one, but not necessarily the most important one.

In addition to engaging with the scholarly debate over Han'er, this article also addresses two major lacunas in the existing scholarship on the Sixteen Prefectures and the Liao-Song-Jin transition. First, there has remained an imbalance in scholarly works on the Sixteen Prefectures, socially and geographically. The Sixteen Prefectures consisted of two parts categorized as Shanqian 山前 and Shanhou 山後 in historical records from the tenth to the twelfth centuries. The Shanqian region centered around Yanjing 燕京 (today's Beijing) and the Shanhou around Yunzhou 雲州 (today's Datong 大同 in Shanxi province).[6] In the Liao dynasty, Yanjing enjoyed greater political and economic prominence.[7] Conventional understanding of the

6. The Shanqian region included seven prefectures (You 幽, Ji 薊,Ying 瀛, Mo 莫, Zhu 涿, Tan 檀, and Shun 順) located to the southeast of the Taihang Mountains 太行山. The Shanhou region included the other nine prefectures (Yun 雲, Ru 儒, Gui 嬀, Wu 武, Xin 新, Yu 蔚, Ying 應, Huan 寰, and Shuo 朔) situated to the northwest of the Taihang Mountains. For the changing meaning of the term "Shanhou" in historical records from the Five Dynasties to the Ming period, see Li Mingfei 李鳴飛, "'Shanhou' zai lishi shang de bianhua"「山後」在歷史上的變化, *Shaanxi ligong xueyuan xuebao* 陝西理工學院學報 1 (2007): 35–39.

7. Yanjing was made the Southern Capital (Nanjing 南京) in 938 and Datong the Western Capital (Xijing 西京) in 1044.

Sixteen Prefectures under Khitan rule has mainly relied on sources about upper-class elites from Shanqian.[8] More recent scholarly studies have enriched our understandings of both Shanqian and Shanhou from the late Tang to the Liao periods.[9] Yet, in general we still know very little about the experiences of broader populations in the Sixteen Prefectures, particularly in the later periods of Liao-Song history. Although the questions raised in this study pertain to Yan-Yun as a whole, this article pays special attention to extant sources about and from Shanhou to address the scholarly oversight of this important region of the Sixteen Prefectures.

Second, scholarly studies on the immediate Liao-Song-Jin transition have thus far been incomplete. The dynastic approach to Chinese history as well as imbalanced source materials have resulted in a lack of collaboration between Song and Liao-Jin historians as they often ask different questions.[10] As is often the case, transitional periods and zones remain understudied. Most importantly, the majority of historical sources documenting the history of Liao-Song-Jin relations were composed or compiled by Song literati, and the biases of these sources have not been adequately interrogated. For instance, the *Sanchao beimeng huibian* 三朝北盟會編, compiled by the Southern Song

8. For representative scholarship, see Xiao Qiqing 蕭啓慶, "Hanren shijia yu bianzu zhengquan—yi Liaochao Yanjing wuda jiazu wei zhongxin" 漢人世家與邊族政權—以遼朝燕京五大家族爲中心, in Xiao Qiqing, *Yuandai de zuqun wenhua yu keju* 元代的族群文化與科舉 (Taipei: Lianjing chuban, 2008), 339–77; and Wang Shanjun 王善軍, *Shijia dazu yu Liaodai shehui* 世家大族與遼代社會 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2008).

9. For instance, studies on excavated tombs and tomb murals have provided insights into local elites and their culture in the Sixteen Prefectures. And scholarly interest in the history of the late Tang and the Five Dynasties has yielded new assessments of Shanhou, particularly the importance of the cavalry forces of Shanhou's nomadic peoples in the Liao's struggles with Central Plains regimes, including the early Northern Song, for control over the Sixteen Prefectures. For studies on excavated tombs, see Liu Wei 劉未, "Liaodai hanren muzang yanjiu" 遼代漢人墓葬研究, *Hanxue yanjiu* 漢學研究 24.1 (2006): 443–82; and Li Qingquan 李清泉, *Xuanhua Liao mu: muzang yishu yu Liaodai shehui* 宣化遼墓: 墓葬藝術與遼代社會 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2008). For recent scholarship on Shanhou under early Khitan rule, see Kudō Toshiharu 工藤寿晴, "Ryō Kyojū'in boshimei kōshaku: En'un chi'iki kakutoku chokugo ni okeru unshū no yōsō o kōsatsusuru tegakari toshite" 遼許従贇墓誌銘考釋: 燕雲地域獲得直後における雲州の様相を考察する手掛かりとして, *Hakusan Shigaku* 45 (2009): 107–41; and Watanabe Miki 渡邊美樹, "Kittan no en'un jūrokushū ryōyū to sango yūbokumin" 契丹の燕雲十六州領有と山後遊牧民, *Shisō* 58 (2017): 75–102.

10. For this issue and how the availability of source materials has affected the output of scholarship on the Liao, see Naomi Standen, "Integration and Separation: The Framing of the Liao Dynasty (907–1125) in Chinese Sources," *Asia Major* 24.2 (2011): 152–59.

scholar Xu Mengshen 徐夢莘 (1126–1207), is the most important transmitted source for the history of the Liao-Song-Jin wars and diplomatic negotiations in the early twelfth century.[11] Writings about the Sixteen Prefectures in this book were, however, heavily shadowed by Song political discourse, as their authors were almost all Song elites. This bias obscures the fuller picture of the Sixteen Prefectures in the immediate Liao-Song-Jin transition as seen from local perspectives. This article examines the contentious history of the Sixteen Prefectures in the early twelfth century by outlining some of the major differences between the perspectives of Song officials and those of local populations, especially the Han'er.

The article consists of two sections. The first section relies on government documents and writings by Song political elites to explore how Northern Song rulers and officials conceptualized the land and people of Yan-Yun during the three-state wars, both ideologically and in practice. The second section examines local materials from Yan-Yun, especially epitaphs and stele inscriptions, to discuss how its residents described their experiences of living through the Liao-Song-Jin transition. Such descriptions reveal conceptual frameworks within which Yan-Yun Han'er understood their relationship to imperial powers and dynastic changes. Analyzing how local people differed from court officials in what they saw as important offers new ways of understanding identity, ethnicity, and the borderland in Middle Period China.

Perspectives and Policies of the Northern Song Elites

The Sixteen Prefectures lay at the center of the complex three-state wars of the 1120s. When the Liao dynasty's control of this crucial border area crumbled in the first two decades of the twelfth century, debates about ownership of the Yan-Yun region resurfaced among dynastic states. The Song-Jin disputes over the Sixteen Prefectures were settled first at the negotiating table, but eventually their disagreements led to armed conflict on the battlefield. During these disputes, Northern Song elites deployed an array of rhetorical strategies to justify their political decision to claim ownership of Yan-Yun. "Retrieving"

11. Xu Mengshen 徐夢莘, *Sanchao beimeng huibian* 三朝北盟會編, henceforth *HB* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987). For Xu Mengshen and his composition of the *Sanchao beimeng huibian*, see Deng Guangming 鄧廣銘 and Liu Pujiang 劉浦江, "*Sanchao beimeng huibian* yanjiu" 《三朝北盟會編》研究, *Wenxian* 文獻 1 (1998): 93–117.

the lands of the Sixteen Prefectures was, in reality, a political act of imperial expansion. The reconquest rhetoric nonetheless identified the territory and its people in specific ways in which two entangled issues were underscored: land-people relations and the Han'er's ethnic solidarity and political loyalty.

The discourse on land-people relations among Northern Song elites both shaped and was shaped by the Northern Song's general policies toward the Sixteen Prefectures as well as its specific military strategies for "retrieving" and defending the territory during the three-state wars in the 1120s. Reclaiming the Sixteen Prefectures was a longstanding ambition of Song rulers and political elites. During the three-state wars, Song court officials were split on how to define the lands and people of the Sixteen Prefectures, as well as their relations to the Song dynasty. Those with idealistic views saw the lands and the people who inhabited them as inseparable; they also expected the Yan-Yun Han'er's allegiance to the Song because of what they perceived as a shared "Chinese" identity in both ethnic and cultural terms. In contrast, those with a more pragmatic view often separated the people from the lands. While concurring that the Yan-Yun lands were the lost territory of former Chinese empires, they questioned the Yan-Yun Han'er's "Chinese" identity and, therefore, their political commitment to the Song. These conflicting perceptions of land and people had important policy implications. Swaying between the idealistic and pragmatic positions during the three-state wars, Song polices toward the Sixteen Prefectures remained inconsistent, if not contradictory. The Song-Jin disputes over the lands and people of the Sixteen Prefectures caused diplomatic tensions and eventually escalated into a full-scale war between the two dynasties.

Laying claim to the Shanhou region was a major source of tension in the Song-Jin negotiations, even before the Jurchens invaded the Northern Song. As the Northern Song and Jin formalized the primary terms of their 1120 alliance—known in historical sources as the Alliance Made by Crossing the Sea (*Haishang zhi meng* 海上之盟)—the Jurchen agreed that, after defeating the Liao together, the Song would receive "the Yan lands and the Han subjects in this jurisdiction."[12] In return, the Song would divert annual tribute payments of silver and silk from the Liao to the Jin to compensate the Jurchen, who bore the brunt of the military burden in fighting against the Liao. In the Jurchen statement, "the Yan lands" referred to the Shanqian region alone and did not

12. 燕地並所管漢民. *HB*, 4.8a.

include Shanhou. Yet the Song expected to reclaim all former Chinese lands that had been ceded to the Liao during the Five Dynasties.

The territorial definition of "the Yan lands" (*Yandi* 燕地) thus became the focus of disputes between the Northern Song and the Jin. These disputes started with a poor choice of words in the first official document the Song sent to the Jin when negotiating the alliance. The official document, in the form of Emperor Huizong's (r. 1100–1126) imperial brush edict (*yubi* 御筆), described the territory the Song claimed as "the former Han lands and Han prefectures of the Yanjing region."[13] In the Liao administrative system, the former Han lands the Song hoped to reconquer were divided into three administrative units—the Xijin Prefecture of the Southern Capital (Nanjing Xijin fu 南京析津府) that governed the Shanqian region, the Datong Prefecture of the Western Capital (Xijing Datong fu 西京大同府) that governed Shanhou, and the Prefecture of Pingzhou 平州 which governed three coastal prefectures east of Yanjing—Pingzhou, Luanzhou 灤州, and Yingzhou 營州. The Jurchen took advantage of the problematic word choice of "the Yanjing region" in Emperor Huizong's edict. By deliberately identifying the term with the jurisdiction of the Southern Capital, the Jin refused to include in the agreement the Shanhou region and the three coastal prefectures as they did not fall in the category of "the Yan lands."[14]

The Song-Jin disputes over the territory taken over by the Northern Song escalated as the Jin found success on the battlefield. After forming the alliance in 1120, the Jurchen achieved more military success against the Liao without assistance from the Song. The Jin emperor Aguda began to change the terms of their alliance to suit the Jurchen's new territorial ambitions. In addition to firmly reserving the three eastern coastal prefectures for the Jin, Aguda refused to allow the Song to take over the Western Capital of Datong unless the Song committed its forces to a joint attack on the city.[15]

Meanwhile, the Song court sought to reaffirm at the negotiating table all of the targeted lands they aimed to reconquer. In early 1122, the Song sent

13. 燕京一帶舊漢地漢州. *HB*, 4.5a.

14. *HB*, 4.5a.

15. For the territorial disputes in the original negotiation between the Northern Song and the Jin, see Zhao Yongchun 趙永春 and Li Yongping 厲永平, "Song Jin 'haishang lianmeng' qijian de lingtu jiaoshe—yi Zhao Liangsi *Yanyun fengshi lu* de jizai wei zhongxin" 宋金「海上聯盟」期間的領土交涉—以趙良嗣《燕雲奉使錄》的記載爲中心, *Beihua daxue xuebao (shehui kexueban)* 北華大學學報 (社會科學版) 6.6 (2005): 62–66.

three envoys carrying a credential to the Jin, demanding the Shanhou region and renewed deliberation about the joint assault on Datong. The credential advanced several arguments in support of the Song's demands. Above all, the credential emphasized that Shanqian and Shanhou, as well as the three coastal prefectures, were all "former Han lands" (*jiuhandi* 舊漢地) and that the people in these prefectures were "Han subjects" (*hanmin* 漢民). The annual tribute of silver and silk that the Song would now divert from the Liao to the Jin was the payment for recovering all these former Han lands and Han subjects. Thus, Datong would need to be included.[16] In contrast to the first edict, the credential dropped the problematic reference to "the Yan lands."

The rhetoric used in the credential represented the mainstream narrative about the Sixteen Prefectures which many Song rulers and officials held dear. As we have seen, this narrative highlighted the Sixteen Prefectures as "former Han lands" and the majority of their inhabitants as "Han subjects." As historians have noted, the key issue to understanding what these terms signified to the Song elite is the meaning of the word "Han" 漢 here. Did it refer to an ethnic identity, to the historical dynasty, or both? After the Han dynasty (202 BCE–220 CE), the word "Han" was used in various contexts to indicate geographical, linguistic, cultural, ethnic, and even gendered meanings.[17] In Song political texts, the term "former Han lands" was often used interchangeably with "former territories of the Han and the Tang" (Han Tang *jiujiang* 漢唐舊疆). In the Song political discourse of frontier expansion (*kaibian* 開邊), the "former territories of the Han and the Tang," as Huang Chunyan has pointed out, referred to specific frontier regions including the Sixteen Prefectures that were once governed by the Han and Tang dynasties (618–907) and which the Northern Song desired to reconquer.[18]

Thus, the word "Han" in the term "former Han lands" that appeared in the Song credentials to the Jin referenced the historical dynasty of Han. Two issues, however, remain unresolved. First, how did the Northern Song justify its claim to the "former Han lands" in the context of its historical relationships

16. *HB*, 4.11a–b.

17. Chen Shu 陳述, "Han'er hanzi shuo" 漢兒漢子說, *Shehui kexue zhanxian* 社會科學戰線 1(1986): 290–97.

18. The other frontier regions highlighted in the Song political discourse on "former territories of the Han and the Tang" include Hehuang 河湟 and Xi Xia 西夏 in the northwest and Jiaozhi 交趾 in the south. See Huang Chunyan 黃純艷, "Hantang jiujiang huayu xia de Song Shenzong kaibian" 漢唐舊疆話語下的宋神宗開邊, *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究 1 (2016): 24–39.

with the Han and the Tang dynasties? Second, did the term "Han subjects"—describing those who inhabited the "former Han lands"—possess an ethnic connotation? In other words, did the Northern Song elite see the Song people and the Han'er as sharing an ethnically defined identity? Intellectual historians have tried to answer such questions, debating whether ethnicity is a proper analytical category for the history of premodern China. While engaging with this type of scholarship, I will ground my discussion in the analysis of specific texts that used such terms during the Liao-Song-Jin transition.

From the very beginning of the Northern Song, "retrieving" the Sixteen Prefectures had been the dynasty's goal. This goal served the imperial project of establishing the Song as another Chinese empire that ruled "All-under-Heaven" (*tianxia* 天下) like the Han and the Tang. An influential civilizational discourse on *Hua-Yi* 華夷 underpinned the conceptualization of the Chinese empire ideologically, while the institution of the tributary system sustained it in practice. In *Hua-Yi* discourse, *hua* (and equivalent terms such as *huaxia* 華夏 and *zhonghua* 中華), originally a culturally defined category, became equivalent to the political category of *Zhongguo* 中國 (the Middle Kingdom or China), which occupied the dominant center of the "All-under-Heaven" world order. *Yi* (and its equivalent term *yidi* 夷狄) referred to all kinds of barbarian peoples and entities, which occupied the periphery regions of "All-under-Heaven" and were thus both politically and culturally inferior to China.[19] "Retrieving" the "former territories of the Han and Tang" would lend the Northern Song tremendous political legitimacy in claiming to be a successor to the Han and Tang. Reconquering the Sixteen Prefectures was germane to this imperial project, as the region was located within the Central Plains (*zhongyuan* 中原) or Central Lands (*zhongtu* 中土), which had always been seen as the geographical and political core of the Middle Kingdom.[20]

In addition to the above-mentioned ideological rationale, Song elites held the strategic goal of reconquering the Sixteen Prefectures for geopolitical reasons too. The loss of the Sixteen Prefectures to the Liao posed a serious threat to the security of the northern borders of the Northern Song, particularly

19. For a detailed discussion of this Chinese civilizational worldview, see Tackett's article in this special issue.

20. On the Northern Song's failure to create an "All-under-Heaven" empire and the dynasty's strategies for achieving national security, see Huang Chunyan 黃純艷, "Chaogong tixi yu songchao guojia anquan" 朝貢體系與宋朝國家安全, *Jinan xuebao (zhexue shehui kexueban)* 暨南學報 (哲學社會科學版) 2 (2018): 120–22.

given the geographical vulnerability of its capital Kaifeng.[21] Despite several failed military attempts in the early Song, ambitious Northern Song rulers never gave up their dynastic dream of recovering the Sixteen Prefectures.[22] This dream was shared by the Song literati, who imagined an ideal Song territory that included the Sixteen Prefectures. They saw the Sixteen Prefectures as the "lost territory" (*shidi* 失地) of the Song that ought to be "recovered" (*huifu* 恢復), even though the Song never directly controlled the region.[23]

The optimistic notion of "retrieving" the Sixteen Prefectures put forth by early Song rulers and literati changed after the signing of the peace treaty of Chanyuan with the Liao in 1005. At that point, Northern Song policymakers began to adopt pragmatic approaches for dealing with the affairs of the Sixteen Prefectures by shifting their focus from territorial recovery to border security.[24] In the century of post-Chanyuan peace, most Northern Song policymakers generally kept their idealistic vision of the Song as a Chinese empire separate from their pragmatic policies in border defense and interstate relations. They discouraged hawkish irredentism and some even regarded peace with the Liao as one of the most impressive triumphs of the dynasty.[25] The eleventh-century Song elites were, nonetheless, sensitive to the issue of "lost territory," and they did not completely give up on the dream of "recovering" the Sixteen Prefectures after the treaty of Chanyuan.[26]

21. For the geographical vulnerability of the Northern Song and the frontier strategies used to solve the problem, see Yuan Julian Chen, "Frontier, Fortification, and Forestation: Defensive Woodland on the Song-Liao Border in the Long Eleventh Century," *Journal of Chinese History* (2018): 1–22.

22. For the Northern Song's military campaigns against the Liao in the early dynastic period, see Zeng Ruilong 曾瑞龍, *Jinglüe Youyan: Song Liao zhanzheng junshi zainan de zhanlüe fenxi* 經略幽燕: 宋遼戰爭軍事災難的戰略分析 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2013).

23. For instance, in their imagined map of the ideal territory, the "Great Wall" existed as the "natural" border between *hua* (the Northern Song) and *yi* (the Liao). As a result of this conception, Song cartographers were willing to twist reality to suit the ideal. They marked Datong, Shuozhou, Yingzhou, and Yuzhou—the four prefectures in the Shanhou region that lay beyond the Song northern border—inside the "Great Wall" they drew on maps. See Nicolas Tackett, "The Great Wall and Conceptualizations of the Border under the Northern Song," *JSYS* 38 (2008): 99–138; and Qian Yun 錢雲, "Songdai yuditu zhong dui bianjie de biaoshi jiqi hanyi" 宋代輿地圖中對邊界的表示及其含義, *Lishi dili* 歷史地理 32 (2015): 143.

24. For the management of borderlines and borderland people under the Chanyuan Treaty system, see Furumatsu Takashi 古松崇志, "Kittan Sōkan no sen'en taisei ni okeru kokkyō" 契丹·宋間の澶淵体制における国境, *Shirin* 90.1 (2007): 28–61.

25. Tackett, *The Origins of the Chinese Nation*, 49–58.

26. In the special border area that was governed by both the Song and the Liao, for instance,

Notably, the 1005 Treaty of Chanyuan marked a watershed event in reshaping Chinese conceptualizations of identity and political loyalty in the eleventh century. The Song court and literati elite continued to hold the expectation of capitalizing on the potential support of Hanren across the border when it became possible to reconquer the Sixteen Prefectures.[27] This expectation of the Yan-Yun Hanren's loyalty raises two important questions for historians. What was the nature of the "Hanren" identity in Middle Period China: ethnicity or culture? And, what was the relationship between identity and loyalty for the eleventh-century Song elite?

Scholars have different answers to these questions, centering around their understandings of ethnicity, and specifically whether the word "Han" could be understood as an ethnonym in Middle Period China. Some, like Naomi Standen, problematize the ethnic understandings of identity in premodern eras and propose to understand the term "Hanren" in the historical records of Middle Period China as a cultural identity. Standen argues that the Treaty of Chanyuan demarcated the Liao and the Song with a sharply defined border, which subsequently resulted in a more rigid standard of loyalty asserting itself among Song elites from the eleventh century onward.[28]

Other scholars like Shao-yun Yang and Nicolas Tackett, however, argue that it is still appropriate to deploy ethnicity as a category of analysis for the premodern period. Yang examines the term "Han" together with the term "Fan" 藩, arguing that they became a conceptual dichotomy, first in a geopolitical orientation in the Tang and then in an ethnic sense in the Liao, Xi Xia, and Jin. The Khitans' use of Han as an ethnonym for the Han people of the Sixteen Prefectures influenced Song political elites.[29] Defining ethnicity as categories of cultural difference that are believed to be tied to biological

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the Song's governance of the borderland people hinged on the symbolic meaning of not losing any more territory. See Hong Sungmin 洪性珉, "Zei'eki kara mita Sō Ryō ryōzokumin" 税役から見た宋遼両属民, *Nairiku ajiashi kenkyū* 28 (2013): 1–26.

27. For instance, the Song court paid close attention to collecting information about the Sixteen Prefectures, hoping to assess whether any circumstances in the Liao were favorable to the Song by using the feelings of local Han people as an indicator. See Huang Chunyan 黃純艷, "Songchao souji jingwai xinxi de tujing" 宋朝搜集境外信息的途徑, *Beijing daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexueban)* 北京大學學報 (哲學社會科學版) 48.2 (2011): 141–49.

28. Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty*.

29. Shao-yun Yang, "Fan and Han: The Origins and Uses of a Conceptual Dichotomy in Mid-Imperial China, ca.500–1200," in *Political Strategies of Identity Building in Non-Han Empires in China*, ed. Francesca Fiaschetti and Julia Schneider (Harrasowitz Verlag: Wiesbaden, 2014), 9–35.

descent, Tackett sees such categories as being socially constructed on the basis of plausible ethnic markers. Agreeing with Yang's argument about the origin of the use of Han as an ethnonym in Khitan usage, he argues that the eleventh-century Song political elite, through frequent interactions with Liao officials during diplomatic activities, shared the Khitans' ethnic categories and increasingly used "Han" and "Fan" as ethnic markers.[30]

In my view, the studies by Standen, Yang, and Tackett together illustrate the conceptual development of the Hanren identity from the tenth to the eleventh centuries, which significantly shaped the Northern Song elite's mainstream conceptualization of the Sixteen Prefectures. In short, tenth-century political elites understood "Hanren" more as a cultural identity, and they commonly separated historical figures' Hanren identity from their political loyalties. In contrast, eleventh-century Song elites conflated the cultural and ethnic dimensions in their understanding of "Hanren," and they tended to link an individual's Hanren identity to that person's political loyalty to the transdynastic Chinese empire. In this context, the word "Han" in the Hanren identity connoted an equivalence to "Hua" as China or Chinese in the *Hua-Yi* discourse. This line of thought explains why there existed among the Northern Song elite a strong expectation of Han-identity-based loyalty among residents of the Sixteen Prefectures under Liao rule.[31]

In addition, the eleventh-century Song elite's identification with the ethnonym "Han" occurred in a political and cultural environment in which the Song still aspired to emulate the Han and the Tang. Yang's recent study, however, reminds us that this environment changed in the twelfth century. Twelfth-century Song elite were, as Yang observes, increasingly influenced by the new intellectual movement of Daoxue Neo-Confucianism, which ceased to view the Han and Tang empires as worthy political models. As a result, they were ambivalent about, or even straightforwardly resisted, the use of "Han" as an ethnonym or a name for the Song state.[32] The significant political and intellectual shifts in the late Northern Song demand that we examine the

30. See Tackett, *The Origins of the Chinese Nation*, especially chap. 4 and 6. Also see Tackett's article in this special issue.

31. The scholarly debate on the nature of Hanren identity in Middle Period China is still ongoing. For a recent review of this debate, see Yang, *The Way of Barbarians*, 16–20.

32. Yang further developed this line of argument in his recent research notes on Emperor Huizong's ban on using the word "Han" to refer to the Song dynasty. See https://www.academia.edu/45612656/New_Evidence_for_Song_Huizongs_Ban_on_the_Word_Han.

twelfth-century Song elite's writings about the Sixteen Prefectures and the Yan-Yun Han'er in their immediate context.

The early twelfth century ushered in an intensified revival of the Northern Song court's irredentist ambition, especially with the ascension of Emperor Huizong to the throne. The imperial aspiration of "recovering" the lost territories at the Song's northern and northwestern borders had already begun to resurface after the outbreak of the first Song-Xi Xia war in 1040.[33] In the following decades, the irredentist dream, as Paul Smith has argued, served as strong political capital for ambitious Song rulers and officials.[34] The reign of Emperor Huizong was marked by imperial enthusiasm for extending the Song borders on both the southern and the northern frontiers. In 1108, the court adopted a policy known as "Opening the Frontiers and Acquiring Land" (*kaibian natu* 開邊納土), under which Huizong's final attempt to expand the empire involved the "recovery" of the Sixteen Prefectures.[35] As early as the 1110s, after winning western campaigns against the Tangut Xi Xia, Huizong and two of his most trusted advisers, Cai Jing 蔡京 (1047–1126) and Tong Guan 童貫 (1054–1126), began to reactivate the dream of retrieving the Sixteen Prefectures by initiating a northern expedition against the Liao. In the twelfth century, the Song elite's conceptualization of Hanren's identity was thus deeply entangled with the Song court's political-military plans to reconquer the Sixteen Prefectures.

The late Northern Song court's imperial ambition of "recovering" the Sixteen Prefectures was strongly encouraged by the defection of Ma Zhi 馬植 (?–1126), a Yanjing Han'er and a former Liao official. Ma's statement on his defection lent support to the idealistic narrative that people of the Sixteen Prefectures identified themselves as former Han subjects and desired to return to the Middle Kingdom, now the Song dynasty. In a letter he secretly sent to a Song border official under the alias of Li Liangsi 李良嗣, Ma claimed that:

33. Fang Zhenhua 方震華, *Hezhan zhijian de liangnan: Bei Song zhonghouqi de junzheng yu dui Liao Xia guanxi* 和戰之間的兩難: 北宋中後期的軍政與對遼夏關係 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2020), 4–34.

34. Paul Jakov Smith, "Irredentism as Political Capital: The New Policies and the Annexation of Tibetan Domains in Hehuang (the Qinghai-Gansu Highlands) Under Shenzong and His Sons, 1068–1126," in *Emperor Huizong and Late Northern Song China: The Politics of Culture and the Culture of Politics*, ed. Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Maggie Bickford (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006): 78–130.

35. For the Northern Song's frontier footprints in the Huizong reign, see Ruth Mostern, *Dividing the Realm in Order to Govern: The Spatial Organization of the Song State* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011), 210–21.

> The people of my kinship group were originally Han people living in Huoyin of Yanjing. Ever since the time of my remote ancestors, men of my kinship group have all had official careers. Although we have put on fur coats to serve [the Liao] as officials for generations, we have never forgotten the customs of Yao [a legendary Chinese sage-king of antiquity] and we wanted to get rid of the coats that are folded to the left. Unfortunately, we have not yet been able to realize our goal.[36]
>
> 良嗣族本漢人，素居燕京霍陰。自遠祖以來，悉登仕路。雖披裘食祿不絕如線，然未嘗少忘堯風，欲投褫左衽而莫遂其志。

In other words, it was not just Ma's individual aspiration, but also his family's dream, to defect to the Song because of their "Hanren" identity. Referencing "the customs of Yao," Ma's use of "Hanren" suggests a strong connotation of "Chineseness" in cultural and political terms.

Ma Zhi's defection to the Northern Song in 1115 played an important part in advancing the Song court's plan to reconquer the Sixteen Prefectures by allying with the Jin. In 1115, through Tong Guan's introduction, Ma Zhi presented the court with his "Strategy of Pacifying Yan" (*Ping Yan ce* 平燕策), which proposed a strategic alliance with the Jurchen against the Liao.[37] Favoring the proposal, Emperor Huizong granted Ma the imperial surname Zhao 趙 and gave him the new name Zhao Liangsi 趙良嗣. When he was received for an audience by Emperor Huizong in 1117, Zhao Liangsi described how the Han people in the Liao territory suffered because of the tyranny of the Liao emperor Tianzuo 天祚 (r.1101–1125) as well as the ongoing Liao-Jin war. He painted a picture of the Liao empire on the cusp of falling and again urged the emperor to launch a northern expedition. He claimed:

> I sincerely hope that Your Majesty, out of concern for the former subjects [of the Middle Kingdom] who are experiencing utter misery, will recover the former territory of the Middle Kingdom, condemn [the Liao emperor] on behalf of Heaven, and send a punitive expedition against the rebellious [Liao]. Once Your Majesty's army sets off, [the people of the Sixteen Prefectures] will surely welcome the army with pots of wine.[38]
>
> 願陛下念舊民遭塗炭之苦，復中國往昔之疆。代天譴責，以順伐逆。王師一出，必壺漿來迎。

36. *HB*, 1.3b.

37. For Tong Guan's dominant role in the Northern Song's planning for the northern expedition, see Fang Chengfeng 方誠峰, *Bei Song wanqi de zhengzhi tizhi yu zhengzhi wenhua* 北宋晚期的政治體制與政治文化 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2015), 154–58.

38. *HB*, 1.4b.

Here, Zhao underscores three elements legitimizing a Northern Song expedition against the Liao: rescuing the suffering Hanren—as former subjects of Chinese empires—living in Liao territory; regaining the former territory of past Chinese empires; and acting on Heaven's behalf by punishing those who had rebelled against the legitimate dynasty. Using the exact same rhetoric of the Sixteen Prefectures as the "former territory" of China, Zhao Liangsi's statement corresponded to the Song ideology that the dynasty, as the reigning Chinese empire, held responsibility for, and held a legitimate claim to, both the lands and the people of the Sixteen Prefectures.

In suggesting that the Yan-Yun Hanren were committed to the Song – that is, to the contemporary "Middle Kingdom" – Zhao's statement was completely in line with the Song court's idealistic narrative about the lands and people of the Sixteen Prefectures. It presupposed a positive correlation between identity and political allegiance. Of course, one cannot know for sure what Zhao Liangsi really thought. Given that his arrival at court was orchestrated by Tong Guan, Zhao was presumably coached on what he should say. His statement thus more than likely reflected the particular rhetorical position held by a group of Song court officials represented by Tong Guan. They believed that the Song could count on the solidarity of the Yan-Yun Hanren when the right time arrived to recover the "lost territory."

While Northern Song elites had imagined ethnic solidarity in many of their writings, nothing served as better evidence for their claim than the testimonies of Hanren from the Liao such as the statement by Zhao Liangsi. Not surprisingly, Zhao Liangsi's statement drew favor from Emperor Huizong and hawkish court officials, who were eager to push forward the strategy of allying with the Jurchen against the Liao to ultimately reconquer the Sixteen Prefectures.[39] The revival of the irredentist dream supported by Huizong, Cai Jing, and Tong Guan was also enabled by a political environment that suppressed policy debates at the Song court. Many court and border officials, seeing how the political wind was blowing toward the irredentist position, also began to affiliate themselves with the northern-expedition policy.

Only a few officials opposed the northern expedition; their arguments reveal the opposite conceptualization of the Sixteen Prefectures which questioned the Yan-Yun Hanren's ethnic solidarity. Those who opposed the northern

39. For Emperor Huizong's early plans to reconquer the Sixteen Prefectures and Ma Zhi's defection, see Huang Xiaowei 黃曉巍, "Song Huizong zhenghe nianjian mou Liao fu Yan shishi kaolun" 宋徽宗政和年間謀遼復燕史事考論, *Shixue yuekan* 史學月刊 5 (2017): 42–51.

advance often based their recommendations on firsthand knowledge of the complexity of the Hanren's situation in the Liao state. For instance, an experienced border official named Hong Zhongfu 洪中孚 (1049–1131) presented a memorial in 1116 criticizing the idealistic expectation that the Hanren of the Sixteen Prefectures held political allegiance to the Northern Song. He wrote:

> Commanders and officials of various circuits do not understand the military circumstances yet adhere to the absurd words of some Yan-Yun people. These people say, "We are Hanren who have fallen into utter misery. If the court [of the Northern Song] does not rescue us, we have no way to return [to the Song] on our own. It is not different from people suffering from a great drought longing for clouds and a rainbow [signs of rain]. If the court dispatches troops to conciliate the people, we will not just receive soldiers with baskets of food and pots of wine but also welcome them with a decorated archway at the border made of fragrant flowers." *I have served at the border for a long time and know a little about the situation on the enemy's side*. The quoted words above come from ne'er-do-wells of limited means who covet receiving noble ranks and salaries after defecting to the south. These are not the words of men from elite families. I have investigated the matter and concluded that, from councilors and academy scholars at the court to prefects and magistrates, those who support and sustain the Khitan [Liao] are all, without exception, Han'er. Those who study reading and writing surely aspire to wealth and status. How can they not know that since our country has an abundance of talented men, there is no way we can give important official positions to all the learned men of the Yan-Yun prefectures who defect to the south? This is why [literati of the Sixteen Prefectures] have no intention to defect.[40]
>
> 諸路帥臣皆不知兵情而執燕雲不根之語，云:「我本漢人，陷於塗炭，朝廷不加拯救，無路自歸，何啻大旱之望雲霓。若興弔民偏師，不獨簞食壺漿，當以香花樓子界首迎接也。」臣久歷邊鄙，粗知虜情。此乃遊手之人不能自存者，覬覦南歸以竊爵祿，實非大姓之言。臣契勘維持契丹者，自公卿翰苑州縣等官，無非漢兒。學誦書識字者，必取富貴。豈不知國家英俊如林，若南歸，其權貴要途，燕雲數州學究，安能一一遽用，此士人無歸意也。

Hong Zhongfu's memorial was directed against Zhao Liangsi's ethnocentric assumptions. While Zhao grouped all people of the Sixteen Prefectures under the ethnic category of Hanren, Hong differentiated them by social status and

40. *HB*, 19.8b–9a. The italics are added by the author.

emphasized the importance of individual and family interests in making political choices.

Hong Zhongfu pointed out an important reality: the majority of Han'er literati in the Sixteen Prefectures had no intention to join the Song, as they were concerned more with their political careers than ethnic allegiance. In the memorial, Hong further explained how the Liao policies of lightening taxation and labor services had effectively reduced the desire of the general Han population of the Sixteen Prefectures to defect.[41] As the italicized line indicates, Hong stressed that his argument was based on his firsthand knowledge of Yan-Yun society during his long tenure as a border official. Hong's memorial warned of the danger of the ungrounded expectation of ethnic solidarity across borders. But he was soon dismissed from his post because of the anti-expedition memorial. The idealistic narrative of the Sixteen Prefectures by then had come to dominate the strategic thinking of Song policymakers.

Hong Zhongfu's argument sheds light on the rhetoric regarding the questionable allegiance of Han'er, which appeared frequently in writings by Song elites during and after the 1120s. It was often in this rhetoric, which concerned the relationship between identity and loyalty, that "Han'er" appeared as a derogatory term. In the early twelfth century, the articulations of Han'er identity were importantly occurring alongside discussions of geopolitical strategy. While those arguing for the Han'er's Chinese identity and ethnic solidarity aimed to justify the court's northern-expedition policy, those arguing against the Han'er's ethnic solidarity tended to disagree with the idea of allying with the Jurchen. Hong Zhongfu questioned the Han'er's allegiance to the Northern Song, but he still recognized them as Chinese.

Some Song officials, in contrast, completely denied the Han'er's Chinese identity as part of their effort to invalidate the ethnocentric assumption of the northern-expedition policy. For example, in 1122, a lower-ranking official

41. This socioeconomic point had already been raised by Yu Jing 余靖 (1000–1064), who traveled to the Liao three times as an envoy. Yu lamented that people of the Sixteen Prefectures had no emotional attachment to the south as they were subject to lighter taxation than their Northern Song counterparts. See Ma Duanlin 馬端臨, *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011), 453. The Liao emperors Xingzong 興宗 (r. 1031–1055) and Daozong 道宗 (r. 1055–1101) took the advice of the Han official Liu Liufu 劉六符 to reduce the taxation of Hanren in the Sixteen Prefectures and compensate for the lost revenue by extorting extra annual tribute payments from the Northern Song. See Fu Haichao 符海潮, *Liao Jin Yuan shangceng beifang hanren minzu xinli yanjiu* 遼金元上層北方漢人民族心理研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2016), 113–14.

named Song Zhao 宋昭 (1078–1162) presented a memorial to the court, arguing fiercely against the Song-Jin alliance. While not denying that the Sixteen Prefectures were territory of former Chinese empires, Song Zhao underscored the price of "retrieving" the lands, such as the considerable material and human costs needed for defense. Moreover, Song Zhao ridiculed the naïve expectation of Han ethnic solidarity across political borders. He did not just question the Han'er's political commitment to the Song but rejected the interpretation of the Han'er as former subjects of Chinese empires altogether, arguing:

> Some claim that people of the Shanhou region all have feelings of longing for the Han and want to pay allegiance [to the Song]. This is a particularly absurd view. Not only have the northern barbarians [the Khitans] long made preventive arrangements by resettling many Shanhou people to the north of the [Gobi] desert; but also, several hundred years have passed since the end of the Tang, and after several generations, their descendants are *today all foreign descendants. How can they still be former subjects of the Nine Provinces of the Middle Kingdom*?[42]
>
> 或者又謂山後之民皆有思漢之心，或欲歸順，此尤妄誕之易見者。不惟北虜爲備日久，山後之民往往徙居漠北。又自唐末至於今數百年間，子孫無慮已易數世，今則盡爲蕃種。豈復九州中國舊民哉？

Song Zhao's Han'er-rejection narrative identified Han'er with "northern barbarians" (*beilu* 北虜), politically and culturally. This narrative held currency among many twelfth-century Song people and has been seen by some modern historians as evidence for acculturation between the Hanren and the Khitans. As Liu Pujiang has argued, many Hanren of the Sixteen Prefectures had experienced "Barbarianization" (*huhua* 胡化) since the late Tang. Living under Khitan rule for two hundred years, they formed distinctive cultural norms, particularly the valorization of martiality (*shangwu* 尚武) and the adoption of the Khitans' hairstyle, clothing, and social customs.[43] Some upper-class Hanren even joined the Khitan aristocracy and identified themselves,

42. *HB*, 8.3b. The italics are added by the author.

43. Liu Pujiang, "Shuo Hanren." According to Mori Eisuke's study on Hanren who became conversant in the use of the Khitan language during the Liao dynasty, most such Hanren seemed to live in the Khitan's interior territory instead of the Sixteen Prefectures. In other words, the closer Hanren lived to the Khitan populations, the deeper the degree of their adoption of the Khitan culture and language. See Mōri Eisuke 毛利英介, "Kittan reishi saishijun" 契丹令史蔡志順, *Kansaidaigaku tōzai gakujutsu kenkyūjo kiyō* 47 (2014): 293–317.

politically and culturally, with the Khitans instead of the Chinese.[44] While we should not take Song Zhao's words as direct evidence of the Yan-Yun Han'er's changing cultural identity, they do attest to the late Northern Song elite's diverse perceptions of the Han'er.

Such diverse perceptions were inseparable from the broader intellectual context in which "Han," "Zhongguo," and the Song were conceptualized. Language in the memorial demonstrates how some late Northern Song elites still understood the terms "Han" and "Zhongguo" as interchangeable. When Song Zhao ridiculed the claim that "people of the Shanhou region all have feelings of longing for the Han and want to pay allegiance [to the Song]," the word "Han" clearly does not reference the historical Han dynasty but rather the reigning Song dynasty of the time. When he argued that descendants of Shanhou people were no longer "*former subjects of the Nine Provinces of the Middle Kingdom*," he juxtaposed the cultural-geographical term "Jiuzhou" 九州 and the cultural-political term "Zhongguo" 中國 to refer to the Chinese empire, or the civilized world of Chinese people. His interchangeable use of "Han" and "Zhongguo" meant that the two terms were conflated in late Northern Song political texts.

In his narrative, Song Zhao used another term, *fanzhong* 蕃種, which literarily means "foreign descendants," to highlight Shanhou people's non-Chinese identity. Song Zhao underscored their integration with nomadic peoples through migration—or more precisely, forced resettlement to the areas north of Shanhou—as an important reason for why their identity shifted from descendants of Han to descendants of Fan.[45] With the word *zhong* 種, Song Zhao seemed to insinuate that intermarriage with the Khitans and other

44. The best example was the well-known lineage of Han Derang 韓德讓. While Liu Pujiang interprets the Han lineage as a typical example of elite Hanren being culturally Khitanized, Pamela Crossley contends that the Hans who became aristocrats in the Liao empire were not seen as Hanren but as Khitan by the Liao state and society. See Liu Pujiang 劉浦江, "Qidan ming zi yanjiu: wenhua renleixue shiye xia de fuzi lianming zhi" 契丹名、字研究: 文化人類學視野下的父子連名制, in Liu Pujiang, *Songmo zhijian: Liao Jin Qidan Nüzhen shi yanjiu* 松漠之間: 遼金契丹女眞史研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008), 173–74; Pamela Crossley, "Outside In: Power, Identity, and the Han Lineage of Jizhou," *JSYS* 43 (2013): 51–89.

45. When the Liao founder Abaoji established his dynasty in the early tenth century, he indeed relocated many Hanren to the northern desert to populate his new capital. See Xue Juzheng 薛居正, *Jiu Wudai shi* 舊五代史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976), 137.1827. For the state-forced relocations of Chinese in North China to the Liao heartland in Mongolia, see Patricia Buckley Ebrey, "State-Forced Relocations in China, 900–1300," in *State Power in China, 900–1325*, ed.

non-Han peoples had erased any Chinese identity the Shanhou people once had, even if they had avoided being resettled to the steppe. However, without knowing more about Song Zhao's personal intellectual background, we cannot conclude with any certainty that he used "Han" and "Fan" as ethnic markers.

But Song Zhao's rejection of the Han'er's Chinese identity was clearly based more on a position of geopolitical realism. In spite of his bias, his identification of the Shanhou people as "Fan" pointed to the dynamics of multiethnic integration among populations in the Shanhou region, which had been largely neglected in the idealistic view of the Yan-Yun people's ethnic solidarity. Like Hong Zhongfu, Song Zhao was quickly dismissed from his position and even sent into exile, as his memorial outraged the court's policymakers. Although Song Zhao's view was not taken into consideration by the Song court, it showed that there was no consensus among the political elites of the Northern Song on the question of the Yan-Yun Hanren's identity.

Irrespective of Song officials' debates at court, the expectation of the Yan-Yun Hanren's identification with the Song deeply affected the rhetoric Song envoys used in their diplomatic negotiations with both the Liao and the Jin in the 1120s. Ma Kuo 馬擴 (?–1152), a veteran Song diplomat, recorded an interesting conversation he had in 1122 with Wang Jieru 王介儒 (?-?), a Hanren official and Liao envoy.[46] In this conversation, Ma Kuo invoked a kinship analogy to impose the Song elite's rhetoric of political loyalty when Wang highlighted the Yan-Yun Hanren's identification with the Liao. According to Ma Kuo's record, when talking about the Northern Song's threat to attack Yanjing, Wang asked:

> The Southern Court often claims that the people of Yan long for the Han. Yet haven't you ever considered that it has been almost two hundred years since Yan was ceded to the Khitans? How could the people of Yan have developed no ruler-subject and father-son bonds [with the Khitan emperor/state]?
>
> 南朝每謂燕人思漢，殊不思自割屬契丹，已近二百年，豈無君臣父子之情？

Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Paul Jakov Smith (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2016): 309–18.

46. For Ma Kuo's role in the Song-Jin negotiations and wars as well as Southern Song politics, see Huang Kuanchong 黃寬重, "Ma Kuo yu liang Song zhiji de zhengju biandong" 馬擴與兩宋之際的政局變動, in Huang Kuanchong, *Songshi conglun* 宋史叢論 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 1993), 1–40.

Ma Kuo responded:

> Talking about the father-son bond, who is the natural father then? If [the people of Yan] know that they have an adoptive father but don't know that they have a natural father, that would be unfilial.[47]
>
> 若論父子之情，誰本謂的父耶？知有養父，而不知有的父，是亦不孝也。

Here, Ma Kuo uses the kinship analogy of biological and adoptive fathers to refer to the Northern Song and the Khitan-Liao emperors/states, respectively. In Ma Kuo's argument, both Song and Liao emperors are legitimate fatherly rulers of the Yan-Yun Hanren, but the Yan-Yun Hanren should prioritize the Song like a filial son should always put his biological father first. In highlighting the biological bonds between the Yan-Yun Hanren and Song China, this argument illustrates the profound ethnic dimension of loyalty that was ingrained in the Song elite's political discourse. But the Yan-Yun Hanren did not necessarily subscribe to this discourse. Wang Jieru's reaction to Ma Kuo's statement said it all; he "smiled but did not respond."[48]

In reality, pragmatic Song officials did not expect the Yan-Yun Hanren to feel ethnic allegiance to the Song. Even Ma Kuo, when talking to his Northern Song colleagues, was always suspicious of the Shanhou Hanren during the Song-Jin negotiations over the region. In the midst of increasingly complicated geopolitical conflicts in the 1120s, the Khitans, the Jurchen, the Song Chinese, and even the Tangut Xi Xia all sought to control Shanhou, a strategically important borderland for all these states. Having traveled to various prefectures and counties of the Sixteen Prefectures many times during his diplomatic missions, Ma Kuo gained valuable firsthand knowledge of the region. In 1123, before embarking on another diplomatic trip to the Jin to discuss the handover of Shanhou, Ma exchanged opinions with a court councilor on the future plans for the region. After hearing that the court had decided to let local strongmen assume the task of defense, Ma voiced his disagreement, claiming:

> Ever since the Han dynasty established Yunzhong, Shuo, and Wu Prefectures, the prefectures in Shanhou were set up to weaken the Xiongnu. Emperor Wen

47. Zhao Yongchun 趙永春, comp. *Fengshi Liao Jin xingcheng lu* 奉使遼金行程錄, henceforth *XCL* (Beijing: shangwu yinshuguan, 2017), 181.

48. 介儒笑而不答. *XCL*, 181.

> of the Han appointed Wei Shang to defend the region; the Xiongnu thus did not dare to invade the border. Today the Shanqian and Shanhou regions form an integral whole. They are strategically important places in border defense. Even if the indigenous people are strong, they are not the right men to defend the region. Besides, in the wake of Jurchen raids, the local towns have all been burned and looted. The wealthy men of influence have dispersed and run away, and the remaining residents are struggling to survive. They submitted to the Khitans when the Khitans arrived, to the Jin when the Jin people arrived, to the Xia when the Xia people arrived, and to us when our imperial troops arrived. All they want is not to be killed. How could they defend the region?[49]
>
> 山後自漢築雲中、朔、武、等郡以弱匈奴，孝文時任魏尙守之，匈奴不敢犯邊。今與山前山後爲表裏，乃邊防要害之地，儻土民有力，猶不可使之守。況自金人蹂籍之後，燒掠殆盡，富豪散亡，苟延殘喘。契丹至則順契丹，金人至則順金人，夏國至則順夏國，王師至則順王師。但營免殺戮而已，豈能守耶？

Ma Kuo invoked earlier historical examples of guarding the Shanhou region against northern nomads to highlight the importance of not entrusting the border defense to the forces of local strongmen. His conclusion about the Shanhou Han'er's doubtful loyalty did not hinge on their ethnic identity but on their practical choice of survival over political allegiance in troubled times.

Importantly, pragmatic Song elites like Ma Kuo separated the people from the land as they evaluated the Sixteen Prefectures. Ma Kuo's distrust of the Shanhou Han'er did not mean that he opposed the "recovery" of the Shanhou lands like Song Zhao did. On the contrary, Ma Kuo firmly believed in the importance of retrieving these lands for the sake of strengthening the Song's border defense. He argued that if the Song acquiesced to receiving Shanqian alone and did not insist on gaining Shanhou as well, "the Yan people will have different inclinations, leading to conflicts and calamities beyond measure."[50] In the context of Ma Kuo's argument, the term "Yan people" could refer to the Han'er in both Shanqian and Shanhou.[51] The implication of Ma Kuo's was that if the Song did not reconquer the entire Sixteen Prefectures, but instead

49. *XCL*, 194.

50. 則燕人志向不一，爭端在即，禍釁叵量. *XCL*, 192.

51. Fu Haichao, *Liao Jin Yuan shangceng beifang hanren minzu xinli yanjiu*, 126–65. As Fu has argued, in the Liao-Song-Jin periods, the term "Yan people" in different contexts could refer to the Han population of Yanjing, the Shanqian region, the entire Sixteen Prefectures, and even all Han populations under Liao rule.

left Shanhou to the Jurchen, the Song would soon be engulfed in disastrous conflicts resulting from shifting loyalties among the Shanqian and Shanhou Han'er between the Song and the Jin. For that reason, Ma Kuo suggested the use of official Song troops to defend Shanhou territory once it was recovered, but his suggestion was ignored by Song decision makers.

At the time, Song policymakers still adopted an idealistic view about the political allegiance of the Han'er. This view justified their strategy to utilize new military forces formed by the Yan-Yun Han'er to advance the dynastic agenda of territorial control. As a result, the Song court entrusted defected Han'er officers and their military forces to guard newly gained territories. After "annexing" part of the Sixteen Prefectures in 1123, the Song set up two new administrative units – Yanshan Prefecture 燕山府 and Yunzhong Prefecture 雲中府 – to govern, respectively, the Shanqian and Shanhou regions. The Song entrusted the defense of Yanshan Prefecture to the Changsheng Army 常勝軍, an originally Liao loyalist army led by Guo Yaoshi 郭藥師 (?-?), who submitted to the Northern Song in 1123. Guo was a former Liao general from Liaodong and believed to be of Bohai 渤海 ancestry, the people of which were recognized in Liao and Jin texts as a distinctive ethnic category. His troops were composed of Bohai and Han'er men from Liaodong, and the Bohai troops maintained personal loyalty to Guo.[52]

Due to the difficulty of reining in Guo Yaoshi's troops and possibly also the suspicion of their ethnicity-based loyalty, the Song set up a separate Han'er army that drew military forces from Shanhou. In 1123, Emperor Huizong sent a eunuch named Tan Zhen 譚稹 (?–?) to supervise the governance of Yanshan Prefecture. After hearing that Guo and his troops had become uncontrollable, Tan requested that the court establish a separate Yisheng Army 義勝軍 in Hedong (Shanxi) to counterbalance Guo's power. Led by two Han'er generals named Li Siben 李嗣本 (?–?) and Geng Shouzhong 耿守忠 (?–?), this new army consisted of 100,000 Han'er soldiers, most of whom came from Shanhou.[53] Tan likely assumed that a complete Han'er army would be more reliable or loyal than one mainly made up of Bohai people.

The Jurchen's changing stance on the Shanhou issue, however, brought a series of strategic and conceptual challenges to the Northern Song's operations

52. For a recent study on the Bohai people in the Liao-Jin-Yuan periods and Guo Yaoshi's Bohai identity, see Jesse Sloane, "Mapping a Stateless Nation: 'Bohai' Identity in the Twelfth to Fourteenth Centuries," *JSYS* 44 (2014): 365–403, especially 375.

53. *HB*, 18.7b, 19.4a.

in the Sixteen Prefectures. In the early phase of their imperial expansion, the Jurchen elites prioritized economic gain by controlling the conquered people and their wealth as movable property. They regarded the Shanhou region as an area of conquered lands from which they could gain wealth and human resources, either through direct looting or through transactions with other powers that wanted the lands. Thus, after capturing Datong in early 1122, the Jurchen began to move local residents—both Han and non-Han populations—to the Jin's interior territory in Manchuria.[54] According to Ma Kuo's records, in early 1123 Ma and Zhao Liangsi were sent to negotiate the handover of the Shanhou region with Wanyan Zonghan 完顏宗翰 (1080–1137), the Commander-in-Chief of Jurchen forces in Datong. The Jurchen proposed dividing up the Shanhou lands and people, with the Song gaining the lands and the Jin gaining the people. When the Song diplomats refused, the Jurchen threatened to give the Shanhou lands to the Xi Xia. In the end, Aguda agreed to hand over all lands and people of the Shanhou region to the Song on the condition of receiving extra gifts to compensate the Jurchen troops who had fought to seize Datong.[55]

Yet as the Jin became the strongest force in the heated geopolitical competition in Shanhou among the four states (the other three were the Liao, the Northern Song, and the Xi Xia), the Jurchen began to change their policy toward Shanhou from plundering to occupation. The Jurchen's military successes against the Liao and diplomatic gains from the Song encouraged their political elites to take an increasingly hard line in their territorial claims regarding the Shanhou region. After occupying Datong, Zonghan and his associates intended to make it their own power base. In 1123, Zonghan persuaded the new Jurchen emperor, Taizong, not to hand over Shanhou to the Song, arguing:

> Earlier, when the former emperor [Aguda] started the expedition against the Liao, he aimed to gain Song assistance in attacks and thus promised the Yan lands to the Song. After forming the alliance, the Song people then asked for prefectures west of the [Taihang] Mountains [i.e., the Shanhou region] by offering additional payments. The former emperor originally did not accept the additional payments. The covenant of the alliance dictates that both sides cannot accept or hide cross-border fugitives, nor can they entice or harass border residents. Now

54. Tuotuo 脫脫 (1313–1355), *Jin shi* 金史, henthforth *JS* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 46.1032–33. In 1123 when the Jin took Yanjing, they implemented the forced relocation of wealthy households and craftsmen from Yanjing and six Shanqian prefectures to the Jin heartland.

55. *HB*, 14.9a–b.

> the Song has enticed and accepted cross-border fugitives with generous rewards in several circuits. We have repeatedly sent the names of defectors to Tong Guan and asked the Song to return them. We set specific deadlines and asked them to obey the covenant's terms. Yet we have gotten nothing. Things have come to this within just a year of [forming the] alliance. How can we expect them to abide by the terms of the covenant forever? In addition, the western frontier has not yet been pacified. If we handed over the prefectures west of the [Tanhang] Mountains, our troops would no longer have a place to establish garrisons. Our plans for territorial gains in the future, might then become unsustainable. I humbly request that Your Majesty leave the issue in abeyance and not hand over [Shanhou] to the Song.[56]
>
> 先皇帝征遼之初，圖宋協力夾攻，故許以燕地。宋人既盟之後，請加幣以求山西諸鎮，先皇帝辭其加幣，盟書曰：「無容匿逋逃，誘擾邊民。」今宋數路招納叛亡，厚以恩賞。累疏叛人姓名，索之童貫，嘗期以月日，約以誓書，一無所致。盟未朞年，今已如此，萬世守約，其可望乎。且西鄙未寧，割付山西諸郡，則諸軍失屯守據之所，將有經略，或難持久，請姑置勿割。

Zonghan's statement illustrates the significance of both borderlands and borderland people in the Song-Jin disputes that led to the war. First, Zonghan used the Song violation of the Song-Jin agreement on dealing with borderland people and defectors as an excuse for the Jurchen not to fulfill Aguda's promise of ceding Shanhou to the Song. Second, Zonghan was explicit about the Jurchen plan to conquer new territories through military campaigns, asserting that Shanhou was just their first target. From the winter of 1123 to early 1124, Zonghan took strategic actions to reconquer the Shanhou prefectures—Yingzhou, Shuozhou, and Yuzhou—that had submitted to the Northern Song.[57]

56. *JS*, 74.1696.

57. Capitalizing on the weakened Jurchen control of the Shanhou region around the time of Aguda's death, the Northern Song commissioner Tan Zhen actively enticed governors of the Shanhou prefectures to defect to the Northern Song. As a result, two military leaders of Shuozhou and Yingzhou and a local strongman of Yuzhou rebelled and submitted to the Northern Song. The Northern Song then sent Li Siben's Han'er troops to defend the three prefectures. In his campaign, Zonghan successfully drove out or killed pro-Song local leaders and welcomed former Liao generals to submit to the Jin. Zonghan also skillfully manipulated Song-Xi Xia relations for the benefit of the Jurchen's southward invasion of the Song. In early 1124, the Jurchen gave the Tangut Xi Xia several prefectures, including Shuozhou, in exchange for the latter's cooperation during the upcoming war with the Northern Song. The Jurchen also supported the Xi Xia in their competition with the Song over Shuozhou. See *HB*, 19.6b–8a; *JS*, 3.50; and Wang Yanqian 王彥潛, "Da Jin gu zuochengxiang jinyuan jun Zhenxianwang Wanyan gong shendao bei" 大

Meanwhile, the Jurchen's cunning diplomatic maneuvering hindered the Northern Song's capacity to perceive and prepare for the upcoming crisis. As the Song court continued to prioritize territorial gain to fulfill its dream of recovering the Sixteen Prefectures, it failed to recognize that the Jin had not only changed its position on Shanhou, but further aimed to conquer the entire region of Shanxi to pave the way for a southward invasion. To buy time to prepare for this southern assault, Zonghan exploited the Northern Song's desire to reconquer at least part of Shanhou. In early 1124, Zonghan sent envoys to Taiyuan to pretend to discuss the details of handing over the two border prefectures of Yingzhou and Yuzhou. Even though multiple border intelligence reports alerted the Northern Song court about the Jurchen plan to invade, the Song decision makers foolishly ignored the warnings, clinging to the glorious vision of territorial recovery and placing faith in the Jurchen's good will.[58] To appease Zonghan's anger toward Tan Zhen's provocative operations in Shanhou, the Song removed Tan from the office in Hedong and reappointed Tong Guan to take charge of the negotiations with the Jurchen.[59]

As the Jin's imperial ambition extended from Shanhou to Shanqian as well, the Jurchen elites raised a direct challenge to the Northern Song by claiming legitimate ownership over the entire Sixteen Prefectures. When Ma Kuo met Zonghan at the end of 1124 to convey the Song request for the handover of Yingzhou and Yuzhou, Zonghan responded with a statement that was unprecedented from the Jurchen side, claiming: "Both Shanqian and Shanhou are the former lands of our dynasty."[60] This remark referred to the fact that it was the Jin forces that had defeated the Liao on the battlefield in both Shanqian and Shanhou. From Zonghan's point of view, this justified the Jurchen's claim, as the successful conqueror, to being the new overlord of the Sixteen Prefectures. In this regard, the Jin differed from the Liao in its conception of borderlands. While the Liao prioritized relative power over territory in its military and diplomatic strategies toward North China regimes, the Jin, just like the Northern Song, "fought long and hard for territory and administrative control."[61]

金故左丞相金源郡貞憲王完顏公神道碑, in *Jinbei huishi* 金碑匯釋, ed. Li Shutian 李澍田 (Changchun: Jilin wenshi chubanshe, 1989), 80.

58. *HB*, 23.9a–b.
59. *XCL*, 199.
60. 山前山後乃是我家舊地. *XCL*, 201.
61. Naomi Standen, "What Nomads Want: Raids, Invasions and the Liao Conquest of 947,"

The Jin's territorial ambition in the Sixteen Prefectures put more strain on the Northern Song's operations in the reconquered borderlands, which were already deeply troubled. The heated geopolitical contests between the Song and the Jin were accompanied by the deterioration of the relationship between the Song people and the Han'er in both Shanqian and Shanhou. But the tensions between the local Han'er and Song people focused on different issues due to different degrees of Song control in the two regions.

In Shanqian, where the Northern Song governed directly from 1123 to 1125, the tensions between the local Han'er and the Song people worsened as the Song and Jin negotiated to divide up its lands and people. The original Song-Jin alliance partitioned local populations along ethnic lines, stipulating that after taking Yanjing and its subordinate prefectures, the lands and the Han'er would belong to the Song, while other ethnic peoples including Khitans, Xi, and Bohai would belong to the Jin. In addition, the populations of other parts of the Liao dynasty would all belong to the Jin regardless of ethnicity, and those who came to Yanjing during the war would also need to be returned to the Jin. In accordance with these rules, the Jurchen also demanded the handover of Guo Yaoshi's Changsheng Army, as the majority of its soldiers came from Liaodong, which did not belong to the Sixteen Prefectures.

As the Song armies' battlefield performance repeatedly failed to live up to their ultimatums at the negotiating table, the Song accommodated the Jurchen demands by making a counteroffer at the cost of local interests. To retain Guo's troops to guard the newly received Song territory, Tong Guan proposed giving wealthy Yanjing residents to the Jurchen instead, which would have allowed the Song to bestow Guo's troops with the estates and land they left behind.[62] Resenting this Song policy, many men from the great Hanren families of Yanjing submitted to the Jurchen and tried to convince them to keep the Yan land for themselves. Meanwhile, both literati and commoners who had remained under Song rule also hated the Song for its exploitative socioeconomic policies sacrificing local interests.[63] In short, the Northern Song's governance of Shanqian prioritized the court's political goals while completely ignoring the concerns and feelings of local Han'er. The ideological

in *Mongols, Turks, and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World*, ed. Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 164.

62. *HB*, 16.7a–b.

63. Xu Mengshen summarized three Song policies in the Shanqian region that led to the loss of support by Yan literati and commoners. See *HB*, 24.2b–5a.

legitimacy of the Song's northern expedition—recovering the lost territory of Yan-Yun and rescuing fellow Chinese under foreign rule—thus suffered a severe moral setback.

In Shanhou, where the Northern Song only partially recovered, the major tension between the Song and Han'er focused on military matters, particularly on the Han'er officers who first submitted to the Northern Song but later defected to the Jin. These defections were largely triggered by the Zhang Jue 張覺 (?–1123) incident of 1123, a watershed moment in Song-Jin relations.[64] This event irritated other defected Han'er officials; many feared that the Song might betray them as well and many of them eventually chose to defect to the Jin.[65] In Shanhou, the Han'er defections posed a serious threat to the Song defensive line against the Jin. As Datong was under Zonghan's control, the Northern Song operations in the Shanhou region were mostly confined to the three borderland prefectures of Shuozhou, Yingzhou, and Yuzhou. When Zonghan's troops attacked Shuozhou and neighboring Song prefectures in 1125, many Han'er officers chose to be informants for the Jurchen and some even murdered Song officers. With the help of defected Han'er, Zonghan's troops subdued four border cities without any difficulties.[66]

Shanhou Han'er's defections to the Jin were also thought to have played an important part in the disastrous fall of Taiyuan, the most critical city for the entire defense system of Hedong.[67] When Zonghan's troops reached Taiyuan, Sun Yi 孫翊 (?-1125), the Song general serving as the governor of the three borderland prefectures, led his troops to reinforce Taiyuan. Many of Sun's soldiers were Shuozhou natives, indicating that Sun had recruited a

64. Zhang Jue was a Han'er and a former Liao governor of Pingzhou (modern-day Lulong County 盧龍縣 of Hebei province), who first submitted to the Jurchen in the first month of 1123 and then defected to the Northern Song in the fifth month. The Jin blamed the Northern Song for appropriating Jin territory (as mentioned earlier, Pingzhou was not part of the Sixteen Prefectures but was one of the three northeastern prefectures that the Jin had firmly claimed) and for violating the Song-Jin agreement to not accept defectors from each other. Under Jin pressure for Zhang Jue's repatriation, the Song murdered Zhang Jue and sent his head to the Jurchen in an effort to ease Song-Jin tensions. *HB*, 17.2b–5a, 18.1a–3a.

65. Du Xingzhi 都興智, "Lüelun Zhang Jue shijian yu Song Jin hanmeng" 略論張覺事件與宋金寒盟, *Langfang shifan xueyuan xuebao (shehui kexueban)* 廊坊師範學院學報 (社會科學版) 25.2 (2009): 55–58.

66. *HB*, 23.11a.

67. For the battle of Taiyuan and how it led to the fall of the Northern Song, see Zou Di 鄒笛, "HokuSōmatsu no taigen sen'eki no saikō: HokuSō metsubō no gunji katei ni tsuite" 北宋末の太原戰役の再考——北宋滅亡の軍事過程について," *Tōyō gakuhō* 101.2 (2019): 136–62.

large number of Shanhou Han'er into his army. When Zonghan forced the ordinary people of Shuozhou to act as human shields in front of the Jin troops to deter Sun's soldiers from attacking, many soldiers surrendered to him. Sun was then killed by the Jurchen on the battlefield.[68]

The widespread Han'er defections to the Jin inevitably affected how the Song understood the bigger issues of loyalty and identity. As both Song-Jin and Song-Han'er relations deteriorated, the Han'er-rejection narrative began to dominate Song perceptions of Yan-Yun people, particularly the submitted Shanhou Han'er, many of whom had served in the Song military with their homeland still under Jurchen control. A popular narrative of disloyal Shanhou Han'er began to appear in many Song elites' writings at the time, which claimed that the mutual distrust and resentment between the Song people and the Shanhou Han'er led to a series of incidents that caused the collapse of the entire Song defense system in Hedong.

According to this narrative, the tension first arose between Song imperial soldiers and Han'er soldiers of the Yisheng Army. These soldiers received provisions and stipends from the Song. After a while, when the provisions became insufficient, the hungry and angry Han'er soldiers made impertinent remarks. At the time, the Song officers and soldiers were not happy either, as the provisions they received were stale and moldy. They took their resentment out on the Han'er soldiers, saying that, "You are foreigners (*fanren* 番人), yet you get to eat fresh food. We are imperial soldiers, yet we have to eat stale food. Are we inferior even to foreigners? We will kill you!" These threatening words frightened the Han'er soldiers, who then began planning to rebel when the opportunity arose.[69] Noticeably, the dichotomous ethnic categories of Han and Fan were invoked to distinguish between "Chinese" and Han'er "foreigners," implying that the loyalty the Han'er held towards the Song was quite fragile.

The increasing number of defections of Shanhou Han'er to the Jin added fuel to the narrative of Han'er disloyalty, which had gained momentum among the Song Chinese since the start of the Jurchen invasion. Many Song Chinese records, official and private, are replete with stories of perfidious Shanhou

68. *HB*, 25.5b–6a.

69. 汝番人也，而食新，我官軍也，而食陳．吾不如番人乎？吾誅汝矣！Yuwen Maozhao 宇文懋昭, *Dajin guozhi* 大金國志, ed. Cui Wenyin 崔文印 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 3·37·

Han'er, who betrayed the Northern Song and defected to the Jin. In this narrative, the term "Han'er" commonly had a derogatory connotation. For instance, in another story, Li Yi 李翼 (?–1125), the Song general stationed in Guo County 崞縣 when Zonghan started his invasion in the winter of 1125, openly expressed his distrust of the Han'er. At the time, Cui Zhong 崔忠 (?–?), an officer of the Yisheng Army, was also in charge of defending Guo County. Li Yi told the county officials,

> *Cui Zhong is a Han'er and is greedy and afraid of risking his neck*. How is it possible that he possesses loyalty and integrity and will defend the county with us? If by any chance an upheaval arises from within, not only would it do harm to the state, our own lives would also be jeopardized. It would be better to kill him first.[70]
>
> 崔忠，一漢兒，貪利苟生。豈有忠節可與共守？萬一內變，豈惟上誤國家，吾屬亦受禍矣。不若先事誅之。

In this context, the italicized sentence seems to imply a causal relationship between Cui Zhong's Han'er identity and his lack of morality. Thus, it might be better understood as "Cui Zhong is a Han'er, *and so* he is greedy and afraid of risking his neck."[71] Li Yi's words typified the Han'er-rejection narrative, which denied that the Han'er could possess moral integrity and ethnic allegiance simply because of their Han'er identity. In the end, Cui Zhong did rebel; he led Jurchen troops into the county seat capturing and killing Li Yi as well as other Song officials and officers who refused to surrender.

The spread of news and rumors about defections of Han'er at the northern border caused a domino effect within the interior prefectures of Hedong. Many prefectures fell into violence sparked by mutual suspicion between Song Chinese and Han'er. These defections, and the ensuing violence, in effect invalidated the Han'er-identification narrative and reinforced the opposing Han'er-rejection narrative. The retrospective records of such events by Song literati were thus often framed from the beginning using the Han'er-rejection perspective.

A typical example is Xu Mengshen's description in the *Sanchao beimeng huibian* of the most consequential Han'er rebellion led by a general named Liu Sichu 劉嗣初 (?–?), who commanded four thousand Han'er soldiers stationed outside the city of Pingyang. According to Xu's account, when Zonghan's troops

70. *HB*, 25.3b. The italics are added by the author.

71. I would like to thank Nicolas Tackett for pointing out the nuanced meaning of this passage.

besieged Taiyuan, an assistant general managed to break through the siege and reached Pingyang to call for reinforcements. He revealed his intention to kill all men of the Yisheng Army, whom the local people of Hedong called the Submitted Men (*toufuren* 投附人). The news soon sparked anxiety among the Han'er soldiers. Liu Sichu, who had already siphoned away much of Pingyang's wealth, plotted to rebel once he heard about the siege of Taiyuan. He first tested the intentions of the Pingyang Prefect by making the following statement:

> I am a Shanhou man; many generations of my family unfortunately fell under Khitan rule for almost two hundred years. Now we once again have suffered the misfortune of being conquered by the Jin, who caused the Khitans, our former lords, to lose their state. I spent all my family's wealth, and thus was able to submit to the [Song] dynasty. My men and I see the Jurchen as our enemies. Now the Jurchen have seized a pretext and started a war. Our state has also responded to the invasion with an army. It was our Submitted Men's utmost hope that the court would allow us to serve in the army with all our strength to exact vengeance on the Jin people. I heard that someone intends to kill all Submitted Men. I don't know why that is.[72]
>
> 嗣初乃山後人，累世不幸陷於契丹者幾二百年。今重不幸，又爲金人吞滅。使我前主契丹，喪其社稷，而嗣初亦傾覆其家，遂得歸朝。今一行部曲與嗣初見視金人爲仇讐也。金人方造釁用兵，國家以兵應之。使投附人效死於陣前，以報金人之讐，深所望也。竊聞欲盡殺投附人，不知何故。

Liu's alleged statement was clearly framed from the Song perspective in that it expected the Han'er to identify themselves within an ethnic framework and to resent foreign conquerors. Yet, Xu Mengshen described Liu's intention to rebel in vivid detail right before recording his statement. This arrangement not only alerted readers to Liu's questionable sincerity, but also revealed Xu's skepticism toward the idealistic view of ethnicity-based loyalty.

As a Southern Song scholar who tried to reflect on the reasons for the catastrophic fall of the Northern Song in 1127, Xu Mengshen described the Liu Sichu event with a retrospective critique of the Northern Song's Han'er-identification narrative and polices. Like many other similar stories, the end of Liu Sichu's story was presented as catastrophic to the Song dynasty and Song people. The Prefect of Pingyang tried to appease Liu and his men by

72. *HB*, 30.10a–b.

making an announcement that whoever made up rumors about Han'er's disloyalty would be arrested. But Liu and his followers had made up their minds and prepared secretly for an uprising. In the first month of 1126, a local soldier named Wang Cun discovered Liu's intentions and reported them to the Vice Prefect. But the Vice Prefect punished the soldier and informed Liu Sichu. Realizing that his plot had been exposed, Liu led his followers to seize the city on the spot, setting it on fire and killing every man they caught. They plundered property and seized women and animals for more than ten days before at last surrendering to the Jurchen. Xu Mengshen also expressed his criticism of Northern Song elites who had shown flawed judgement on the Han'er's loyalty by placing the Vice Prefect's death within a supernatural framework. According to Xu's report, when the spirit of the soldier Wang Cun met the Vice Prefect in the afterworld, he blamed the latter for not believing his words and thus causing the deaths of many residents of Pingyang city. As a sort of divine justice, the spirit of Wang Cun had mobilized others to kill the Vice Prefect and all his family members.[73]

The animosity and killings between Han'er and Song Chinese attested to the complete bankruptcy of the idealistic view of ethnic solidarity. The Liu Sichu event prompted massive massacres of submitted Han'er in Hedong. When the news of Liu's uprising reached neighboring Jiangzhou the next day, local Song officials launched a sudden attack on the four thousand Yisheng troops stationed there under the leadership of another Shanhou-Han'er general. As news about what had happened in Pingyang and Jiangzhou spread to other prefectures of Hedong, Submitted Men and their family members were slaughtered indiscriminately. Even civilian Han'er who had been relocated to Song interior areas were not spared.[74]

Before the Song-Jin war, many Song political elites imagined ethnic solidarity between the Song Chinese and the Han'er of the Sixteen Prefectures. This idealistic view laid the ideological foundation for the Song strategy of depending on submitted Han'er forces to defend its new northern borders in the Shanqian and Shanhou regions. After the Song-Jin war broke out, the Han'er-identification narrative was no longer tenable. The wide-scale defections of Han'er forces to the Jin not only reinforced the Han'er-rejection sentiment among Song Chinese, but also caused the breakdown of the Song

73. *HB*, 30.10a–11b.
74. *HB*, 30.18a–b.

defense system in both Shanqian and Shanhou, contributing to the disastrous fall of the Northern Song dynasty itself.[75]

In summary, the Northern Song conceptions of the Sixteen Prefectures hinged upon one critical issue: the nature of the lands and people of the Sixteen Prefectures. The Song elite commonly used terms like "former Han lands" and "former Han subjects" to refer, respectively, to the lands and people of the Sixteen Prefectures. Yet how they understood these terms was crucial in shaping their understanding of the relationship between the Song and the Sixteen Prefectures. And the key issue in their understanding rested on the word "Han" and its relations with other terms indicating "China" and "Chinese" in the *Hua-Yi* discourse. While Song elites in general agreed that the Yan-Yun lands were essential territory for the holistic Chinese empire, they held differing, and even clashing, views about whether the Yan-Yun Han'er could be identified as Chinese subjects loyal to the Northern Song. Their divergence on this issue was deeply rooted in major intellectual movements that impacted people's stances toward the former Han and Tang dynasties as model Chinese empires for the Song to emulate.

The Song elites' contradictory conceptions of ethnicity, loyalty, land-people relations, and ideal Chinese empires had significant implications for Song policies toward Yan-Yun Han'er during the three-state wars in the 1120s. On the basis of the Han'er-identification narrative, the Song court presumed the ethnicity-based loyalty of submitted Han'er forces and thus they entrusted them to take charge of defending the newly reconquered Yan-Yun lands. Yet to achieve this land-oriented goal, the Song ruler and his court officials were willing to sacrifice local Han'er families' socioeconomic interests, undermining the same Han'er-identification narrative they claimed to uphold. When the Song-Jin war started and some Han'er forces defected to the Jin, many Song officials and officers on the ground quickly embraced the opposite Han'er-rejection narrative and intensified their conflicts with submitted Han'er. Even though some level-headed Song officials were able to understand that the Han'er's flexibility in political allegiance was a survival strategy, they still politicized the issue of Han'er identity and loyalty, albeit from the perspective of military strategy. The epic strategic and diplomatic failures in the 1120s together with the fall of the Northern Song consolidated the Song elite's

75. For Song operations in the Shanqian region, see Zeng Qian 曾謙, "Youzhou de qude yu Bei Song de miewang" 幽州的取得與北宋的滅亡, *Jianghan luntan* 江漢論壇 1 (2013): 129–33.

ethnopolitical perspective, leading to a Han'er-rejection consensus in their writings about the Sixteen Prefectures and the Yan-Yun Han'er.

Experiences and Perspectives of Yan-Yun Residents

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the court-oriented rhetoric did not always reflect local concerns, understandings, and choices. For the Yan-Yun Han'er on the frontlines of the three-state wars in the 1120s, dynastic changes brought about a quandary of side picking and choice making as they faced existential crises of violence and suffering. Within this tumultuous context, how did the local people of Yan-Yun identify themselves and represent their experiences in the three-state wars? How do such representations compare with the Song elites' ethnopolitical perspectives on the Han'er? To answer these questions, this section examines locally produced sources, namely tomb epitaphs and commemorative stele inscriptions from the Yan-Yun region.

The epigraphic and inscriptional sources show that local narratives rarely addressed the issues of ethnic identity and solidarity that dominated the Song elite's writings. Instead, Yan-Yun residents often contextualized their political choices during the Liao-Song-Jin transition through the lens of social categories such as families, village communities, and religious institutions. The absence of ethnically-charged language in local sources does not necessarily mean that Yan-Yun Hanren had no awareness of the ethnic and political boundaries between them and others, including the Khitan and Jurchen peoples to the north and the Song Chinese to the south. Rather, the absence of such language suggests that local populations saw other issues as more important, particularly their survival and opportunities for individuals, families, and communities.

Among extant twelfth-century epitaphs and inscriptions for Liao-Jin officials, I have come across only one—an 1123 inscription—that documented the experiences of Shanhou people who shifted their political allegiance from the Liao to the Northern Song between 1123 and 1125, when the Song temporarily reconquered three border prefectures (Shuozhou 朔州, Yingzhou 應州, and Yuzhou 蔚州). This inscription from Shuozhou commemorates Master Chizheng 持正 (?–1125), a local monk who served as a Buddhist official and a military leader for the Liao, but died as a Buddhist official under the Northern Song. The inscription was written by Gao Xiying 高息盈 (?–?), the monk's longtime friend and a former Liao official himself. Because Gao

composed the inscription when Shuozhou was still under Northern Song rule, his choice of words reveals a great deal about how contemporary Shanhou elite represented their submission to the Northern Song.

In addition to describing the monk's Buddhist learning and practices, the majority of the 1123 inscription focuses on the monks' religious and military careers in the Liao and Northern Song bureaucracies. It reports:

> From the fourth month of the first year of the Baoda reign (1121) to the third month of the third year (1123), the master was appointed under an imperial edict as a commander and was promoted to Sangha Chancellor of Shuozhou with the religious title of Senior Monk Chizheng, the Recipient of the Imperial Bestowed Purple Cassock, and Auxiliary Official at the Express Courier Office. Earlier, because of his contributions in defending the [prefectural] city, he had been specially promoted to Acting Minister of Education to replace the previous [one word missing] official. In the fourth month of that year [1123], the emperor of the Great Liao ordered that Shuozhou be promoted to a superior prefecture called Zhongqing. The master was again appointed as a commander and Sangha Registrar of the prefecture. *Due to the armed rebellion by [words missing], the master submitted himself to the Great [one word missing, probably Song].* The prefectural government included the master in the list [of names being reported to the court]. The master's practice of the precepts [one word missing] throughout his jurisdiction, and [three words missing] able-bodied men in the [prefectural] army were well organized. He capably strengthened the defense in peaceful times and prudently assessed the enemy's situation in times of war. [One word missing] his petitions and memorials arrived, in the seventh month of the fifth year (1123), the emperor [Emperor Huizong of the Northern Song] issued an edict to grant the four-word title "Miaozhan huikong" to the master.[76]
>
> 自保大元年 (1123) 四月至三年三月內，前次奉宣敕并使衙指揮，授朔州管內僧正、持正大德、賜紫、東頭供奉官。昔有防城功最，以前□官倒換，超授檢校司徒。當年四月，奉大遼皇帝宣，改州爲府，以「中慶」爲名，再授指揮，充管內僧錄。爲□□作亂，歸順大□。蒙府衙開坐，師之戒行□及管轄□□□丁壯咸使齊整。靜足以固防，動足以料敵。申奏□到宣和五年七月，敕命補「妙湛慧空」四字大師。

76. Gao Xiying 高息盈, "Dasong Shuozhou guannei sengzheng jianjiao situ Miaozhan Huikong Chizheng dashi cizi shamen bei" 大宋朔州管內僧正檢校司徒妙湛慧空持正大師賜紫沙門碑, in *Sanjin shike daquan: Shuozhoushi shuochengqu juanshang* 三晉石刻大全: 朔州市朔城區卷上, ed. Du Qigui 杜啓貴 (Taiyuan: Sanjin chubanshe, 2017), 51–52. The italics are added by the author.

The inscription unravels the important role of Buddhist personnel and institutions in the Liao-Song-Jin transition, an aspect hardly seen in narratives from the court-oriented perspective. Master Chizheng's role in the late Liao military corresponded to a Song official's observation that when engaging in wars with both the Jurchen and the Northern Song in the 1120s, the Liao recruited many Buddhist monks to form Buddhist armies (*sengbing* 僧兵) as one of its four sources of military manpower.[77] The lack of sources makes it difficult to explore this issue, but Master Chizheng's experience reminds us of the complex makeup of Han'er troops, who were conflated under the single category of Han'er in Song elites' writings.

More importantly, when writing about why the monk Chizheng submitted to the Northern Song, Gao Xiying notably did not adopt the common rhetoric of Han'er-identification found in Song elites' writings. That rhetoric emphasized the Han'er's longing for allegiance to the Chinese empire or their suffering under the tyrannical rule of the last Liao emperor Tianzuo. Instead, Gao seems to have highlighted the Jurchen rebellion as the primary reason behind Chizheng's decision to submit. As the italicized line in the above translation shows, Master Chizheng surrendered to the Northern Song after an armed rebellion between the third and seventh months of 1123; although a lacuna prevents us from identifying the "rebels," the line likely referred to the Jurchen conquest. This event happened when the eunuch Tan Zhen was operating in Hedong to actively induce Han'er officials' defection to the Song. We know that the Liao governor of Shuozhou, a Han'er official, indeed submitted to the Song in 1123.[78] It is possible that Master Chizheng followed the governor's lead. In other words, Master Chizheng did not truly betray the Liao but was forced by circumstances, and this also applied to other Shuozhou officials who submitted to the Song in 1123, including Gao Xiying himself.

Master Chizheng's loyalty was indeed highlighted in the inscription's concluding comments on the monk's achievements. In the comments he appended to the inscription, Gao Xiying remarked, "He commanded men at arms while upholding the sense of loyalty and integrity."[79] Gao did not specify

77. Zhao Yongchun, *Fengshi Liao Jin xingcheng lu*, 289. The other three military forces included professional armies (*shiliang jun* 食糧軍), militia (*minbing* 民兵), and mercenaries (*shibing* 市兵).

78. *HB*, 19.7a.

79. 爰轄壯夫, □懷忠節. Gao Xiying, "Dasong Shuozhou guannei sengzheng jianjiao situ Miaozhan Huikong Chizheng dashi cizi shamen bei," 52.

to whom or to what Master Chizheng upheld his loyalty and integrity. But a close reading of the inscription indicates that the phrase here does not hold a particular ethnic implication. Rather, throughout the inscription Gao framed the monk's loyalty to the Song as an official's personal political duty to the imperial state he served. In this context, the monk's former loyalty to the Liao was not contradictory but rather equivalent to his new loyalty to the Northern Song.[80] Compared to the rigid standard of loyalty upheld by Northern Song elites, the perception of political loyalty among many Yan-Yun Hanren, as we will see again below, had much less of an ethnic connotation.

Some epigraphic sources are more explicit about how elite Yan-Yun Hanren's submission to the Northern Song or the Jin resulted mainly from their assessment of the geopolitical situation and individual career opportunities. The epitaph of Shi Liai 時立愛 (1058–1143), one of the most famous Yan-Yun Hanren serving at the early Jin court, provides a good example. The epitaph, which was produced in 1143 soon after Shi's death, framed his political choices during the Liao-Song-Jin transition in three ways. They were 1) calculated decisions based on his understanding of the situation at the time, 2) appropriate decisions that glorified the entire lineage, and 3) moral decisions based on his astute recognition of the true monarch in his time.

The epitaph highlighted Shi Liai's three decisions as evidence for his strategic maneuvering and political wisdom. First, although he had the reputation of being loyal to the last Liao emperor, Tianzuo, Shi volunteered to surrender to the Jurchen. According to his epitaph, when Aguda's Jurchen forces occupied Yanjing in 1123, Shi, as a high-ranking Liao official, was commanding an army of 100,000 soldiers to safeguard the strategic town of Pingshan in Pingzhou. In spite of his subordinates' recommendation that they hold fast to the three coastal prefectures and wait for reinforcements, Shi allegedly decided to surrender with a firm belief that the Jurchen conquest was inevitable. After traveling to Yanjing to submit to Aguda in person, Shi won Aguda's favor and received an appointment as Vice Prefect of Pingzhou.

Second, Shi Liai refused to serve the Northern Song after the Jin handed over Yanjing and its subordinate counties to the Song later in 1123. At the time,

80. Another inscription from Shuozhou demonstrates that local people's short-lived careers of serving the Northern Song in 1123–1125 were recognized in their biographical records. "Dajin Shuozhou Guangfusi xinying qianzang ji" 大金朔州廣福寺新塋遷葬記, in *Sanjin shike daquan: Shuozhoushi shuochengqu juan shang*, 88.

Zhang Jue, the Prefect of Pingzhou, had defected to the Northern Song and killed many of his colleagues who refused to surrender. Shi, after escaping from Zhang's massacre, chose to live in retirement at his hometown in Julu 鉅鹿 County, Hebei, which was now under Northern Song rule. Yet he not only refused to join Song officialdom but also instructed his lineage members to do the same. The epitaph reported:

> The Song court had known of Mr. Shi's fame for a long time and repeatedly summoned him, but he again and again rejected the offer. The court then ordered the Pacification Commissioner to urge him, but he still did not respond. Outraged, a chief general issued a call to arms, ordering the local government to draft him under the "ordinary household" register. In doing so, the commander-in-chief expected to pressure him to comply. Yet Mr. Shi only grew more determined. He continued to admonish dozens of his lineage members not to join the [Song] bureaucracy. Such a situation continued for several years. It appeared that Mr. Shi was waiting for something.[81]
>
> 宋朝知公名甚久，屢召不起，復命宣撫司敦遣，亦不應命。主將怒，檄州縣，以編戶役之，冀其可屈。而公志益堅，仍誡宗族，數十人皆無得干祿，如是者累歲，若有所待。

In praising Shi's political wisdom in "waiting for the right time to act,"[82] the epigraph suggests that Shi truly saw through the situation at the time: the Song and Jin would go to war soon and the Jin would win the war and regain control over Yan-Yun.

Third, Shi Liai resubmitted to the Jin immediately after the Jin invaded the Northern Song and reoccupied Yanjing in 1125. He enthusiastically took his sons, nephews, and grandsons to visit the Jurchen commander, bearing his former appointment document granted by Aguda. The document, as the epitaph describes, moved the Jurchen commander to tears. Shi soon received a high-ranking position from the Jurchen, and he continued to show his commitment to Jurchen rule by sending his son and two nephews to join the Jin army's southward campaign against the Song.

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81. For the archeological report on Shi Liai's tomb and textual analysis of his epitaph, see Hebeisheng wenhuaju wenwu gongzuodui 河北省文化局文物工作隊, "Hebei Xincheng xian Beichang cun Jin Shi Liai he Shi Feng mu fajue ji" 河北新城縣北場村金時立愛和時豐墓發掘記, *Kaogu* 12 (1962): 647; and Miao Linlin 苗霖霖, "Shi Liai beizhi kaoshi" 時立愛碑志考釋, *Bowuguan yanjiu* 博物館研究 3 (2012): 68–75.

82. 待時而動. Miao Linlin, "Shi Liai beizhi kaoshi," 75.

In the epitaph's narrative, Shi Liai's political wisdom and actions brought status and honor not just to himself but to the entire Shi lineage. The epitaph reports in detail how Shi and his lineage reaped immense rewards from Shi's strategic maneuvering. Shi himself was promoted to high-ranking positions up to the top rank of prime minister in 1131 and conferred with the prestigious title of "Prince of Julu Commandery" (*Julu junwang* 鉅鹿郡王) in 1140. In addition, "dozens of men from his lineage became [Jin] officials."[83] The epitaph attributed the Shi clan's glorious achievements as a leading Hanren family in the early Jin to Liai's prescient assessment of the situation and subsequent decisions during the uncertain years of the 1120s.

When explaining Shi Liai's determined service to the Jin and resistance to the Song, the epitaph invoked the rhetoric of a good official's (*liangchen* 良臣) loyalty to his ruler. It emphasized Shi's recognition of the Jin emperor Aguda as the true legitimate monarch. The epitaph recounts that while Shi "served the Liao ruler with loyalty and filial piety until the state fell and his strength was exhausted . . . once meeting the true monarch (i.e., Aguda), he gladly submitted with the entire city." Even though he later had to live under Northern Song rule, "neither bribes nor coercion could change his resolve not to serve."[84] Like the inscription for Master Chizheng of Shuozhou, the epitaph of Shi also reveals that local accounts did not shun the rhetoric of loyalty in justifying Yan-Yun Hanren's political choices among the Liao, Song, and Jin. However, whether from a position under Song rule or Jin rule, both Chizheng's inscription and Shi Liai's epitaph highlighted political allegiance based on the universalistic Confucian moral ethic of ruler-minister relations rather than ethnic solidarity. In doing so, they tacitly avoided entangling Yan-Yun Hanren's ethnic identity with their political identity.

Some Yan-Yun Hanren did flexibly change sides among the Liao, Song, and Jin out of concerns for familial survival and career opportunity. The epitaph of

83. 宗族之中聯仕版者數十人. For more studies of Shi Liai and his lineage, see Miao Linlin 苗霖霖, "Jinchao Zhuozhou Shishi jiazu hunyin yu zhengzhi" 金朝涿州時氏家族婚姻與政治, *Beifang wenwu*, 北方文物 3 (2012): 73–86; Wang Xinying 王新英, "Zailun Jindai Zhuozhou Shishi jiazu" 再論金代涿州時氏家族, *Beifang wenwu* 北方文物 2 (2013): 75–77; "Jindai Shi Liai jiazu chengyuan 'Shi Changguo muzhi ming' kaoshi" 金代時立愛家族成員《時昌國墓志銘》考釋, *Beifang wenwu* 北方文物 1 (2016): 94–98; and "Jindai Shi Liai jiazu chengyuan Shi Feng qi Zhangshi muzhi ming kaoshi" 金代時立愛家族成員時豐妻張氏墓誌銘考釋, *Beifang wenwu* 北方文物 4 (2017): 70–73.

84. 惟公奉侍遼主, 周旋忠孝, 國止力竭 . . . 一見眞主, 傾城悅附 . . . 其所不欲往, 雖利誘威脅, 終不能奪. Miao Linlin, "Shi Liai beizhi kaoshi," 75.

Zhao Li 趙勵 (?-1122) from Yanjing offers a rare glimpse into a lower-ranking official family's dramatic experience in shifting their dynastic identity from the Liao to the Northern Song and then to the Jin within the decade of the 1120s.[85] The Zhaos were a typical elite Han'er family in Yanjing; for several generations, they had produced men who served as Liao officials. In 1122, when Zhao Li had just entered Liao officialdom, the collapsing Liao state was divided. The court in Yanjing was under the authority of the Imperial Consort Xiao 蕭德妃 (?-1122), the wife of the recently deceased Yelü Chun 耶律淳 (1063–1122) who had founded the "Northern Liao" (*beiliao* 北遼) rump regime after the flight of Emperor Tianzuo. At the time, the Northern Song had begun to attack Yanjing. The epitaph vividly describes the rapid ups and downs Zhao Li and his family went through during this dynastic transition in the 1120s. It reads:

> In the first year of the Dexing era [1122, under the regency of Imperial Consort of Xiao], Mr. Zhao Li gained the *jinshi* degree and was granted the official rank of Court Gentleman for Ceremonial Service and the position of Editor at the Department of the Palace Library. Due to the flames of warfare, Zhao left the land [of Yanjing] and took his entire lineage to submit to the Song. In the twelfth month of the fourth year of the Xuanhe era [1122, the reign of the Northern Song emperor Huizong], they reached the Song-Liao border. There, Zhao Li substituted his official rank with the Song counterpart and received the rank of Court Gentleman for Ceremonial Service in exchange for his previous position [in the Liao]. On the sixteenth day of the fifth month of the next year, Zhao Li finally reached the [Northern Song] court. Yet before receiving a formal appointment, he died of illness at the Tongwen Lodge at the age of fifty-four *sui*.[86] He was then temporarily buried in the Changqing Chan Monastery west of Bian [the Northern Song capital of Kaifeng]. The court sympathized with Zhao Li's death and specially granted his eldest son Haoxiu the rank of Court Gentleman for Ceremonial Service.

85. Zhao Li's tomb was discovered in Beijing on March 9, 2002. The intact epitaph "Tianshui Zhaogong muzhiming" 天水趙公墓誌銘 was first transcribed in the archeological report published in the same year. See Wang Qinglin 王清林 and Zhou Yu 周宇, "Shijingshan Bajiao cun Jin Zhao Li mu muzhi yu bihua" 石景山八角村金趙勵墓墓志與壁畫, *Beijing wenwu yu kaogu* 北京文物與考古 (2002), 179–98. The epitaph was also published in Mei Ninghua 梅寧華, ed. *Beijing Liao Jin shiji tuzhi (xia)* 北京遼金史跡圖志 (下) (Beijing: Beijing yanshan chubanshe, 2004), 183–84.

86. The Tongwen Lodge was normally used to house visiting envoys from Koryo.

> In the fourth year of the Tianhui era of our [Jin] dynasty [1126, the reign of the Jin emperor of Taizong], hearing that the great [Jin] army was approaching Bian, Haoxiu took his entire family to return to Yan. In haste and under pressure, Haoxiu was unable to take his father's remains north with him. In the next year, the imperial [Jin] army captured Bian and made it the capital of the Chu State and later of the Qi State.[87] This only increased the distance [between the tomb of the deceased Zhao Li and his family]. In the same year [1126], Haoxiu completed the exchange of his official rank [for its equivalent in the Jin bureaucracy], but only in the twelfth year [of the Tianhui reign, 1134] did he receive the official position of Vice Magistrate of Neiqiu County in Xingzhou Prefecture.[88]
>
> 至德興元年及進士第，授將仕郎、秘書省校書郎。緣兵火迺避地，挈族歸宋。宣和四年十二月即境上換授將仕郎。粵明年五月十六日至闕下，未及授命，六月十四日以疾終于同文館。享年五十有四。權葬於汴西長慶禪院。朝廷憫恤，特授長男毫秀將仕郎。
>
> 本朝天會四年正月聞大兵至汴，遷公全家歸燕。蒼卒迫逐，而公之喪遂不得俱北。次年王師下汴，以立爲楚國，後立爲齊都，益致懸絕。毫秀當年換官訖，至十二年方授邢州內丘縣主簿。

We can take away three important points from the contents of this epigraphic narrative. First, many Yan-Yun Han'er like Zhao Li submitted to the Northern Song not just to survive the war but also to take advantage of career opportunities the Song court was offering to surrendering Hanren officials. At the time, the Song expedition army that was attacking Yanjing posted placards calling on the people of Yan to surrender. The placards promised that those who submitted could keep their positions and land.[89] This promise was carried out through a specific policy known as *huanshou* 換授, which allowed a submitted Liao official to exchange his current official rank for its equivalent in the Song bureaucracy. Thus, after his submission at the border, Zhao Li received the same rank of Court Gentleman for Ceremonial Service, the lowest rank in both the Liao and Song bureaucracies. But to be a Song official who held a real government post, Zhao Li needed to receive an imperial appointment from the court. Thus Zhao Li and his family continued their journey to Kaifeng, the capital of the Northern Song.

87. The identities of these two states are explained below.

88. Mei, *Beijing Liao Jin shiji tuzhi (xia)*, 184.

89. Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Emperor Huizong* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2014), 401.

Second, the *huanshou* policy implemented by both the Northern Song and the Jin must have been appealing to many Han'er elites, as they could pass on their official ranks to their descendants even after defecting. As Zhao Li's example shows, although he died in Kaifeng before receiving a government appointment, by grant of the court his son Zhao Haoxiu inherited his official rank. In other words, even though the Northern Song applied the idealistic narrative about the solidarity of ethnic Chinese to persuade elite Yan-Yun Han'er to submit, for many, what really convinced them was the opportunity to sustain their families' official status and privilege. The same concerns for survival and opportunity accounted for Haoxiu's choice after the all-out Song-Jin war started in 1125. To flee the warfare now embroiling Kaifeng, in 1126 Haoxiu took the family back to their hometown of Yanjing, which was now controlled by the Jurchen. As in his father's case, it was not political loyalty but political opportunity that affected Haoxiu's change of identity from a Song official to a Jin official. This choice was encouraged by the Jin court's implementing a similar *huanshou* policy; Haoxiu exchanged his official rank in the Northern Song for the equivalent in the Jin bureaucracy soon after he reached Yanjing.[90]

Third, the epitaph's author Zhao Bing 趙賓 (?-?), who was Zhao Haoxiu's friend and also a Yan-Yun Hanren, used reign titles of the Liao, Northern Song, and Jin to mark the times when Zhao Li and Zhao Haoxiu served each respective dynasty. Thus, even for the same year of 1122, the epitaph used "Dexing" of the Northern Liao and "Xuanhe" of the Northern Song to narrate Zhao Li's experiences before and after his submission to the Song, respectively. For the year of 1126, when the Zhaos returned to Yanjing and became Jin subjects, the epitaph stopped using reign titles of the Northern Song and started to use those of the Jin instead. This chronological strategy represented the Zhao men's experiences of joining Northern Song or Jin officialdom as simple career moves that did not connote any type of ethnicity-based preference.

In addition to family survival and career opportunity, the relocation of ancestral tombs was also a significant issue that deeply concerned many families from the Sixteen Prefectures living through the Liao-Song-Jin transition. How could they relocate their ancestral tombs from their original sites to the new

90. For examples of other Yan-Yun Han'er who had the similar experiences exchanging official ranks in both the Northern Song and the Jin, see "Lü Gong muzhi (1161)" 呂恭墓志 (1161), in *Beijing Liao Jin shiji tuzhi (xia)*, 188.

place where the surviving family members had settled? In addition to wartime disorder, relocating ancestral tombs along with the migration of living family members became particularly hard when the original designated tomb sites were located within the territories of different states. The rest of Zhao Li's epitaph reports in detail Zhao Haoxiu's effort to bring his father's remains from Kaifeng back to Yanjing:

> In the first year of the Tianjuan reign [1138], our dynasty abolished the Qi State and established unified rule. In the spring of the next year, Haoxiu asked for leave to visit Bian to search for his father's tomb at the original burial site. However, [the city was devastated] after the great [Jin] army's military campaigns. Haoxiu looked everywhere outside the city of Bian but had no idea where he could find the tomb. As he wept in a state of uncertainty over what to do, suddenly one of the farmers guided him to the site of the former Changqing Chan Cloister, but only ruins remained. Then Haoxiu happened to run into the man who had managed the burial [of Zhao Li]. With the man's help, Haoxiu found the former abbot of the monastery, who was familiar with the tomb's exact location. Amazing! When one has perfect filial piety, he is able to move the gods and spirits! What Haoxiu encountered was a divine gift! On the next day, Haoxiu and the same man, traveling across wasteland and muddy water, eventually reached the place. There, within the short period of [one having] a few thoughts [in mind], they suddenly found the old epitaph stele that Haoxiu had written for his father. It was indeed a miraculous thing! Haoxiu then took [his father's remains] and returned to his post. Sometime later, when Haoxiu was appointed as Judge of the Military Prefecture of Shenzhou, he took [his father's remains] along with him to his new post.[91]
>
> 至天眷元年本朝廢齊一統，二年春毫秀給假詣汴，欲即其元葬故地而求之。奈大軍之後，汴城之外四顧茫然，將何地而可得焉。方踟躕灑涕之際，忽于衆農夫中有一人，指引到長慶禪院，但舊址瓦礫而已。又逢元營葬之人，詢得故院主僧髣髴端的。嗚呼！孝悌之至通神明耶！毫秀之所遇，迨神明所賜也。翌日迺與前人披荒榛、涉水潦，到一地，恍然神悟不數緘，而獲毫秀之舊誌仍存，誠異事也。遂奉之還任。未幾毫秀授深州軍事判官，又奉迎至任所。

Zhao Haoxiu's extraordinary story sheds light on the incredible lengths that people went to in order to relocate the burial sites of deceased family members during this time of tumultuous dynastic change. It took Haoxiu thirteen years to return to Kaifeng to retrieve his deceased father's remains because of the complicated political situations in north China. Even though the Jurchen

91. Mei Ninghua, *Beijing Liao Jin shiji tuzhi (xia)*, 184.

conquered Kaifeng in 1127, they did not rule north China immediately. Instead, they first set up the Chu—which existed for only a few months in 1127—and then the Qi (1130–1137) states governed by Song officials who had surrendered. Both were puppet states that administered parts of north China south of the Yellow River. During this transition period, Haoxiu, now a Yanjing resident and a Jin official, was unable to travel to Kaifeng, which was now within the territory of the puppet state of Qi. He could do so only after 1138, when the Jin abolished the Qi and began to directly rule all of north China. Zhao Bing, the author of the epitaph, elaborated in vivid detail Haoxiu's seemingly miraculous experience of relocating his father's remains. This was likely also a theme that Haoxiu wanted to highlight in the epitaph for his father; it was not their political loyalty but their efforts toward familial survival and solidarity that they saw as most important.

The funeral arrangement for Zhao Li's new tomb in Yanjing fortified the impression that the Zhao family's sociocultural practices cut across the boundaries between imperial dynasties. Twenty years after his death in Kaifeng, Zhao Li was in the end reburied with his deceased wife in Yanjing in 1143. Haoxiu built his parents a decent brick-chamber tomb adorned with colorful murals. According to the archeological report on the excavated tomb, the tomb's structure and murals exhibit strong consistency with typical Liao-dynasty tombs that have been discovered in the neighboring Beijing and Hebei areas. Specifically, the hexagonal tomb was adorned with murals and wood-imitation architectural components. And the murals portray iconic astronomical and cosmological images found in many Liao tombs, such as the twelve earthly branches represented by twelve animals.[92] Politically, the Zhaos changed their identity twice in the 1120s. Yet socially and culturally, they continued to express many of the ideas and practices of the Yan-Yun Hanren of the Liao dynasty. This feature was also manifested in other early Jin tombs in the Yan-Yun region.[93]

The epitaph and tomb of Zhao Li thus serve as a powerful testimony of

92. Wang Qinglin and Zhou Yu, "Shijingshan Bajiao cun Jin Zhao Li mu muzhi yu bihua," 190. For a discussion of Liao tomb murals depicting astronomical and cosmological images in the context of Chinese funeral art, see Wu Hung, *The Art of the Yellow Springs: Understanding Chinese Tombs* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2010), 160–63.

93. For similar detailed examples, also see the case of Lü Siyan 呂嗣延 and his family, whose tombs spanned the Liao and Jin dynasties and were excavated in Beijing around 2007. See Beijing shi wenwu yanjiusuo bian 北京市文物研究所編, *Lugu Jindai Lüshi jiazu muzang fajue baogao* 魯谷金代呂氏家族墓葬發掘報告 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2009). For a discussion

many Yan-Yun Hanren's experiences of living through the tumultuous decades of the Liao-Song-Jin transition. Ordinary people, including those who gained lower-ranking government positions, were primarily concerned about family survival, individual career opportunities, and responsibilities to parents and ancestors.[94] Their political choice to submit to the Northern Song or the Jurchen Jin was primarily dictated by these individual and familial concerns. Such narratives dominated not just the representations of Yan-Yun Han'er who served in the Song-Jin civilian bureaucracies but also epitaphs for military men who participated in the Liao-Song-Jin wars.

While Han'er military men were often portrayed in the Song elites' writings as greedy, violent, and faithless, their images in epigraphic sources were very different. For instance, an 1159 epitaph of Chen Qing 陳慶 (1096–1157), a Datong native and a lower-ranking officer of the Liao and Jin, prioritizes social issues like upward mobility rather than political morality. According to the epitaph written by Chen's fellow townsman Zhang Daheng 張大亨 (?–?), Chen was recruited into the Liao army before the fall of the Liao dynasty. After the Jin conquered Datong, Chen then served in the local government of the Jin dynasty as a security officer and later received a military position. Summarizing Chen's life, Zhang wrote, "Mr. Chen experienced both difficult and prosperous situations. In troubled times he stiffened his resolve and committed himself to the state by joining the military. In our [Jin] dynasty, he achieved great accomplishments. Rising from humble beginnings, he glorified his ancestors."[95] In the narrative of the epitaph, it did not matter that Chen shifted his military service from the Liao to the Jin. What mattered was that Chen's official position in the Jin military system elevated his humble family and brought honor to his ancestors, a perennial concern for Chinese families.

Religious rhetoric also provided local epitaphs with meaningful frameworks to account for Yan-Yun military men's choices in life when they were

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of features of early Jin tombs in the Yan-Yun region, see Lu Qingfeng 盧青峰, "Shilun Yan Yun diqu Jindai muzang" 試論燕雲地區金代墓葬, *Wenwu shijie* 文物世界 6 (2008): 29–31.

94. For a similar example, see "Zhang Xiaozhi muzhi" 張蕭之墓志, in *Beijing Liao Jin shiji tuzhi (xia)*, 186.

95. 陳公歷涉窮通, 遭時發憤, 許身投戎. 迨及本朝, 克成厥功, 始自微賤, 榮光祖宗. Zhang Daheng 張大亨, "Jinyi xiaowei qian Xijing Datongfu Dingbajun zuoyi fu bingmashi Chengong muzhiming" 進義校尉前西京大同府定霸軍左一副兵馬使陳公墓誌銘, cited from Datongshi bowuguan 大同市博物館, "Datongshi nanjiao Jindai bihua mu" 大同市南郊金代壁畫墓, *Kaogu xuebao* 考古學報 4 (1992): 520–22.

embroiled in ethnic and political tensions. An 1186 epitaph interprets Han'er soldier Zhang Wen's 張溫 (1113–1186) distinctive experience of returning to his homeland from the Southern Song, crediting it to divine intervention. According to the epitaph, written by a lower-ranking local official of Shuozhou, Zhang Wen served in the Jin army in 1133 and was captured by the Southern Song in 1135. He then lived as a prisoner of war in several southern places for eleven years, until a Song-Jin negotiation to repatriate prisoners made it possible for him to return to his native country (*benguo* 本國) in 1146. The epitaph reports that when Zhang lived in the south and longed to return to the north, he made a vow that he would build a Daoist abbey and invite Daoist monks to pray for the state if he ever returned home alive. One day, Zhang Wen encountered a strange man who told him that he, Zhang, would return home soon. The man also taught Zhang secret skills (*mishu* 秘術) and instructed him to wait for a divine response quietly and patiently. Soon after, Zhang was repatriated back to the north and eventually settled down in his native village in Shuozhou. In addition to getting married and raising children, Zhang Wen spent his daily life chanting Daoist texts and practicing Daoist rituals. He also donated a piece of ancestral land to build a Daoist cloister and used his own wealth to support ten Daoist monks living there.[96] In other words, in the epitaph's narrative, Zhang Wen's religious identity—as a devoted follower of Daoism—shaped his fate more significantly than his ethnic identity as a Hanren or political identity as a Jin subject.

So far, we have analyzed locally produced materials about Yan-Yun Hanren who had direct involvement in the bureaucracy or military of the Liao, Song, and Jin dynasties in the 1120s. Such materials, including both stele inscriptions and epitaphs, portrayed those men's identities and experiences mostly from a sociocultural perspective instead of an ethnopolitical one. This sociocultural perspective was even more obvious in writings about nonofficial local elites. For instance, in the 1185 epitaph for Zhang Gongyi 張公義 (1105–1182), a Shuozhou merchant, the chaotic dynastic changes of the 1120s served only as a remote context for Zhang's extraordinary commercial success, which benefited not just his own family but also his countrymen through his Buddhist-inspired charity. The epitaph described Zhang as destitute and homeless during the Liao-Song-Jin wars. After becoming a merchant, he accumulated considerable

96. Qin Bayuan 秦八元, "Dajin gu Qinghe Zhang xiansheng muzhiming" 大金故清河張先生墓志銘, in *Sanjin shike daquan: Shuozhoushi shuochengqu juan shang*, 100.

wealth from selling commodities among the prefectures in north China. In addition to forming a marriage alliance with a family associated with the Jin imperial clan, Zhang rose as a local elite in his hometown of Shuozhou by sponsoring local Buddhist activities. He supported Buddhist monks in building cloisters and organizing a "great dharma assembly without discrimination" (*wuzhe dahui* 無遮大會), which provided Buddhist lectures and food to ten thousand poor people for months. He also mobilized hundreds of Buddhist followers to form a Huayan Society (*Huayan yi* 華嚴邑). Through this Buddhist institution, Zhang collected enough money to buy and renovate a Buddhist cloister, to purchase Buddhist sutras and commentaries, and invite eminent monks to lecture at sutra gatherings.[97] In the epitaph, Zhang's local-elite identity was defined by his contributions to social institutions he belonged to or sponsored, including his family, village community, and Buddhist associations and monasteries.

Given the wide popularity of Buddhism in the Yan-Yun region under Khitan rule, the representations of Buddhist monastic communities' experiences during the Liao-Song-Jin transition also shed light on local perspectives oriented around survival and social advancement. Local inscriptions reveal that many Buddhist communities—whether Han or non-Han—adopted universalistic Buddhist rhetoric on religion-state relations to accommodate changing political rule. Many inscriptions of local Buddhist monasteries downplayed the wartime destruction and extreme violence caused by the Jurchen conquest, emphasizing instead the Jurchen patronage of their monastic institutions.[98] For instance, an 1147 inscription about the rebuilding of the Great Grotto Monastery (*Da shiku si* 大石窟寺) at the famous Yungang Caves (Yungang shiku 雲岡石窟) spoke highly of Zonghan's contributions to protecting the monastery and the monks living there. According to the inscription, when the Jurchen troops took Datong in 1122, Zonghan not only forbade his soldiers from harassing the monastic community, but he also memorialized the Jin court

97. Zhao Zihua 趙子華, "Da Jinguo Shuozhou Shunyijun lushisi xibeixiang houshujie Qinghejun Zhanggong muzhi" 大金國朔州順義軍錄事司西北廂侯殊街清河郡張公墓誌, in *Sanjin shike daquan: Shuozhoushi shuochengqu juan shang*, 97.

98. From other historical records, we know that the Jin forces exercised extreme violence when conquering the Shanhou region, particularly Datong. In addition to the hard-fought battles between the Jurchen and Liao troops, when the Jurchen troops recaptured Datong city after a local rebellion, Zonghan ordered a vengeful massacre of Datong residents. See Yuan Haowen, "Bian Yuanshu suoji ershi" 邊元恕所紀二事, *Yuan Haowen quanji* 元好問全集, ed. Yao Dianzhong 姚奠中 and Li Zhengmin 李正民 (Taiyuan: Shanxi guji chubanshe, 2004), 51.1225–26.

to grant a purple robe and a religious title to the abbot of the monastery. In addition, to protect the monastery from being flooded by a nearby river, in 1131 Zonghan's Office of the Commander-in-Chief (*Yuanshuai fu* 元帥府) even ordered a subordinate agency to mobilize three thousand laborers to redirect the river's course.[99] The inscription uses the phrase *huangchao waihu* 皇朝外護 (outside protection by our august dynasty) to describe Zonghan's support for the monastic community. Such a narrative favorable to the Jurchen conquerors attested to a common monastic strategy for self-protection during dynastic changes. This strategy underscored the popular Buddhist rhetoric that the state—regardless of its nature as a Chinese or non-Chinese dynasty—gained political legitimacy by patronizing the universal religion of Buddhism. In this context, the dominant identity of local Buddhist communities was religious instead of ethnic or political.

In summary, local sources of epitaphs and stele inscriptions tell a range of stories about the Yan-Yun Hanren living through the turmoil of the 1120s. These were stories of local people who were not Han'er officials and officers shifting their political allegiance among the Liao, Song, and Jin states. They were monks, officials, merchants, and soldiers who rarely identified themselves with an ethnic group or a state but instead with family, locality, and religion. During the three-state wars and dynastic transitions, local people and communities were predominantly concerned about their survival, career opportunities, upward social mobility, community rebuilding, and religious practices. The strong familial, social, and religious dimensions in these local narratives results partly, of course, from the nature of epigraphic and inscriptional sources. But the complexity of the borderland society exhibited in local sources forces us to reconsider the grand narratives about the same land and people articulated by outsiders, especially Song literati elites.

Conclusion

As this paper has shown, compared to writings by Song political elites, local inscriptional and epigraphic sources paint a dramatically different image of Han'er families and communities of the Sixteen Prefectures during the turbulent Liao-Song-Jin wars and dynastic transitions. While Song elite writings

99. Cao Yan 曹衍, "Da Jin Xijing Wuzhoushan chongxiu Da shiku si" 大金西京武州山重修大石窟寺, in *Quan Liao Jin wen* 全遼金文, ed. Yan Fengwu 閻鳳梧 (Taiyuan: Shanxi guji chubanshe, 2002), 1384–85.

understand the Yan-Yun Hanren overwhelmingly in ethnopolitical terms, locally produced sources stress the political and sociocultural conditions of this period. We might wonder why the tension between these two kinds of accounts matters at all. I argue that this distinction is important because it carries great significance for reshaping our understanding of identity, ethnicity, and borderlands in Middle Period China. It does so in four main ways.

First of all, the controversial issue of borderland people's identity and loyalty is often a result of a specific historiographical bias rather than a general historical reality. Diverse aspects of identity—ethnic, political, socioeconomic, and cultural—were all embedded in the Yan-Yun Hanren's involvement in the dynastic transition in the early twelfth century. Due to the limitations of transmitted sources, historians have commonly turned to texts written and compiled by Song elites when discussing the Yan-Yun region and the Liao-Song-Jin transition. Such sources looked at the borderland society from the top down and the outside in, thus projecting images of Yan-Yun Hanren through the ethnopolitics-oriented gazes of Song elites. This perspective reveals the tendency to view identity and loyalty in terms of abstract universals.

While local sources may be few and far between, their introduction into the conversation provides an important counterweight to Song elites' pronounced assumptions about the Yan-Yun Hanren's political loyalty. After the eleventh century, the Song elites developed a powerful political discourse in which Hanren's ethnic identity and political loyalty were interlinked. While this discourse encouraged some Song political elites to expect ethnicity-based solidarity across borders, it did not gain much currency among borderland populations. Locally produced epitaphs of Yan-Yun Hanren reveal a different conception of loyalty, commonly tied to an imperial ruler and state in general instead of the Chinese ruler and state in particular. This tendency among Yan-Yun Hanren to identify with an imperial ruler in general was not surprising due to their having been governed by the Liao dynasty. As a recent study shows, the Liao played a crucial role in shaping a new form of rulership after the tenth century, in which there could be more than one legitimate emperor in the world.[100] To some extent, the Yan-Yun Hanren's political choices in the twelfth century exhibited a feature similar to what Naomi Standen calls "unbounded loyalty." The tensions between submitted Yan-Yun Han'er and

100. For how the Liao shaped this concept of rulership and subsequently the new form of interstate interaction, see Xue Chen, "Age of Emperors: Divisible Imperial Authority and the Formation of a 'Liao World Order' in Continental East Asia, 900–1250," *JSYS* 49 (2020): 45–83.

Song Chinese in the 1120s exposed the collision between different concepts of "loyalty" upheld by Yan-Yun Hanren and Song elites, respectively.

In short, the ethnic understanding of identity and loyalty in Middle Period China reflected a top-down and idealized vision of society imagined by only a small group of political and cultural elites. In reality, political choices by an individual, a family, and a community often had less to do with people's ethnic identity and more to do with their assessment of the situation and their desire for survival and opportunity. As local epitaphs and inscriptions show, Yan-Yun Hanren changed their political identities flexibly and frequently. Such actions were fully recognized and justified in texts written from the perspective of families and local institutions. Thus, we should not take elite imaginings of Yan-Yun Han'er, advanced mostly by Song literati, as representative of the social consensus among either the Song people or the Yan-Yun people.

Second, this article's methodology insists that we recognize the multitude of agents and voices that populated the borderlands and that lived through alternating Chinese and foreign rule. The diversity of these people was concealed under the collective identity of Han'er as labelled by outside observers, including the Song Chinese, the Khitans, the Jurchen, and later the Mongols. Locally produced epitaphs and inscriptions display a general absence of ethnic markers like Han or Fan. Instead, Yan-Yun Hanren appeared as civil officials, military officers, soldiers, wealthy merchants, religious clergy, or just ordinary villagers. Their experiences were mainly structured by social identities configured by wealth, status, locality, and religious belief. The local sources demonstrate that for many Yan-Yun Hanren, dynastic changes meant both chaos and opportunity, including the chance to reposition themselves vis-à-vis external powers and within their local communities. Thus, we should pay more attention to how the Yan-Yun region's long-term "betwixt and between" status conditioned the interactions between imperial centers and local agents, a process that shaped the history and culture of this important borderland.

Third, juxtaposing central and local perspectives allows us to reexamine the Song elites' conceptualizations of people-land relations, which dominated their political discourse on the Sixteen Prefectures. As I have shown, the Song elites' conceptualizations conflated three distinctive objectives: an agenda of unification, territorial and administrative control, and military arrangements for border defense. When separating these issues, we see clearly that during the Liao-Song-Jin negotiations and wars, the Northern Song court prioritized the political gains of imperial expansion and dynastic legitimacy through

"recovering" the "lost lands" of the Sixteen Prefectures. But their policies were inconsistent and morally bankrupt toward civilian Han'er and opportunistic toward military Han'er. In the short period when the Song controlled the reconquered prefectures and counties of Yan-Yun, the Song court not only mismanaged relations with both civilian and military Han'er, but also destabilized its defense system at the northern borders.

What lay at the core of this terrible outcome was the discrepancy between the people-land unity in rhetoric, based in the assumption of an inherent, essentialized Chinese identity, and the people-land separation in practice. This separation in practice had two major forms: 1) the Song gaining the land and the Jin gaining the people of a specific region; and 2) the Song and the Jin dividing certain categories of people between themselves along lines of ethnicity and wealth. Both forms were contingent on the competing states' military strength and the geopolitical situations in the borderlands. While court officials did recognize gaps between their ideals and reality, they commonly did not take local populations' concerns into consideration when they opted to separate the people from the land. The backfiring of such court-centric policies was an important historical lesson derived from the Northern Song's political gamble to reconquer the Sixteen Prefectures in the 1120s.

Finally, rather than taking the term "Yan-Yun" as a homogeneous category of land and people, as the Song elites often did (with many modern scholars following suit), we should also look at diversity within regional subgroups. In particular, we should recognize the differences between Shanqian and Shanhou amidst changing historical contexts. The relative scarcity of materials about people from Shanhou is not just a historiographical issue but also a historical product. The political importance of Shanhou men and their families in the Liao-Jin empires was much lower than their counterparts in Shanqian, especially compared to those residing in Yanjing. As we have seen, the majority of epitaphs of civil officials came from Shanqian, while those from Shanhou were more likely involved in the military. The Shanhou region's strategic importance in frontier defense and its martial culture continued to shape its history in the following Mongol era. Local strongmen in Shanhou emerged as an important force in the Jin-Mongol wars and they achieved prominence in the Mongols' military system as well as in the administration of the Mongol empire. In this regard, this article also reveals the need to increase scholarly attention on subregional diversity in the Sixteen Prefectures in the context of frontier management by different dynasties.