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The Making of Iconic Disloyalty: The Evolution of Liu Mengyan's (1219—ca. 1295) Image since the Thirteenth Century

Abstract This paper traces the deeds and evolving images of Liu Mengyan (1219—ca.1295), the top candidate in the 1244 civil service examination who was later promoted to Chief Councilor of the Southern Song (1127–1279) in 1275. After the Southern Song collapse, Liu joined the Yuan (1271–1368) government and continued his career as a high official. In contrast to the prominent Song loyalist Wen Tianxiang (1236–83), who enjoyed excellent posthumous fame, Liu Mengyan was repeatedly denounced upon his death and even became an icon of disloyalty. This paper examines how this image of disloyalty was forged from the late-thirteenth century onwards. It suggests that the way Liu's contemporaries and later literati interpreted and portrayed his deeds depended on political and social circumstances, and this in turn related to the ideal loyalist prototype by which they considered Liu, as well as on their interpretation of the concept of loyalty and their attitudes towards non-Han “barbarians.”

Keywords Southern Song, Yuan, Mongols, Liu Mengyan, loyalty, Ming historiography

Introduction

To produce a good reputation was for Chinese in all ages a common concern. In imperial times, achievement in the four subjects 四科 of Confucian learning, namely conduct 德行, communication 言語, politics 政事 and literature 文學, was one among many ways to do it. Depending on the interpretation and judgment of their contemporaries and those later on, their deeds might be recorded in the biographies of martyrs 死節, filially pious and friendly 孝友, loyal and righteous 忠義, virtuous 卓行, or in the garden of literature 文苑, or simply as famous officials 名宦 in official histories and local gazetteers. Being the top candidate of the 1244 civil service examinations and later being promoted

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to Chief Councilor of the Southern Song in 1275, Liu Mengyan 留夢炎 (1219–ca.1295) achieved the highest attainment in politics and literature. His name bore the potential to “spread like a scent for a hundred generations.” Ironically, Liu became infamous for his disloyalty. Subsequent to the Mongol conquest of the Southern Song, he joined the conquerors. Since then, criticisms of his failure to uphold absolute loyalty to the Song began to emerge, evolving to the degree that Liu became an icon of disgrace in Chinese history.

This paper investigates the formation of such a posthumous image through a study of Liu Mengyan, with the aim to shed light on a broader historical question, why did names of certain historical figures “smell bad for ten thousand years”? Who condemned Liu Mengyan? Under what circumstances did they do so? To what degree was Liu’s image affected? With a particular focus on the social networks of Liu Mengyan throughout the Song-Yuan transition, I examine Liu’s contemporaries’ perceptions of him. Later comments on Liu are analyzed, and through them I identify a pattern in the evolution of Liu’s image with reference to the specific time and circumstances that he was portrayed. It seems that Liu’s contemporaries and writers after his death interpreted and portrayed his deeds depending on political and social circumstances, which related to the ideal loyalist prototypes to which they compared Liu. It also depended on their interpretations of the concept of loyalty, as well as their attitudes towards non-Han “barbarians.” The story begins with Liu Mengyan’s shift of allegiance to the Mongols in the 1270s.

The Mongol Invasion and the Surrender of Liu Mengyan

Liu Mengyan’s family claimed origins in Xi’an county of Quzhou, in modern Zhejiang. He received an advanced scholar degree in 1244.¹ Having served in various metropolitan and regional positions for nearly three decades, Liu then was assigned to be Prefect of Tanzhou as well as Military Intendant of Hunan in 1274/1.² Half a year later, Emperor Duzong (1240–74, r.1264–74) died, and his two-year-old son, posthumously known as Emperor Gongdi (1271–1323, r.1274–76), was enthroned, with Empress Dowager Xie (1210–83) as regent.³ A month later in 1274/8, the court invited proposals from a group of veteran ministers, among them Liu Mengyan, Ma Tingluan 馬廷鸞 (1232–98), Jiang

¹ *Song shi*, 34:830; *Song shi quanwen*, 33:2255.

² *Song shi*, 46:917 and 214:5652. Dates in this article correspond to the Chinese lunar calendar. The years of the Song and Yuan court calendar are converted into the corresponding Western year. Thus 1274/1 stands for the first month of the tenth year of the Xianchun reign period of Song Emperor Duzong or the eleventh year of the Zhiyuan reign period of Yuan Emperor Shizu.

³ *Song shi*, 47:921.

Wanli 江萬里 (1198–1274), and Ye Mengding 葉夢鼎 (?–1278),⁴ likely seeking their advice in light of the succession and the increasing threats of the Mongols. Yet they could hardly turn the tide against the overwhelming power of the Mongols when Qubilai (1215–94, r.1260–94) launched a full-scale invasion.⁵ Instead of staunchly defending cities and upholding their responsibilities, many Song officials fled or surrendered, as acknowledged by the Empress Dowager in an edict: “Within [the capital], officials forsake their commissions and vacate posts. Away [from the capital], responsible officers relinquish their seals and abandon cities.”⁶ Considering that a number of high officials had fled the capital, Liu Mengyan was summoned back to the court in 1275/6 and subsequently appointed Chief Councilor of the Right as well as Commissioner of Military Affairs, responsible for commanding and coordinating the Song armies in different Circuits.⁷

In 1275/10, Liu was promoted to Chief Councilor of the Left. Despite reaching the highest position in the civil service, Liu was hardly well-respected among his colleagues. Wang Yinglin 王應麟 (1223–96) and Fang Yingfa 方應發 (1223–89) fiercely criticized Liu, accusing him of cronyism for recommending Xu Nang 徐囊, who came from the same prefecture as Liu, to be a Censor.⁸ Wang, a Reviewing policy adviser, further reiterated the fact that other officials recommended by Liu Mengyan were equally disappointing: Huang Wanshi 黃萬石 was held responsible for the fall of Nanchang, and Wu Jun 吳浚 was seen as frivolous. According to Wang, “Liu disobeyed orders and delayed remonstrance. In turn, officials dared not submit upright proposals. Most of the officials who betrayed [the Song] and surrendered were appointed by Liu Mengyan.”⁹ Even though Wang Yinglin might have exaggerated the flaws of Liu Mengyan, the fact was clear: not every high official in the Song court had a high regard of Liu. Remarks by Gao Side 高斯得 (1201–?), who considered himself unjustly demoted owing to the wickedness of Chief Councilor Liu Mengyan, suggest this sort of negative image of Liu among Song officials.¹⁰ Even more detrimental to Liu’s reputation was his flight to Quzhou, his hometown, when the Mongol armies approached the Song capital Lin’an in 1275/11, refusing repeated orders

⁴ Ibid., 47:922.

⁵ For English-language narratives of Qubilai’s conquest, see Morris Rossabi, “The Reign of Khubilai Khan,” 429–36; idem, *Khubilai Khan: His Life and Times*, 77–95 and Richard L. Davis, “The Reign of Tu-tsung (1264–1274) and His Successors to 1279,” 913–29.

⁶ Richard L. Davis, “The Reign of Tu-tsung (1264–1274) and His Successors to 1279,” 934.

⁷ *Song shi*, 47:931.

⁸ Ibid., 438:12991. See also Zheng Zhen, “Ti Liu Mengyan yu Xie Jingzhai shu qinji,” in Zheng Zhen, *Xingyang waishi ji*, 36:3a–b.

⁹ *Song shi*, 438:12991. The original text reads: 况夢炎舛令慢諫，讜言弗敢告，今之賣降者，多其任用之士。

¹⁰ Gao Side, “Shu Liu Mengyan jian zhu ben mo,” in Zeng Zaozhuang and Liu Lin, eds., *Quan Song wen*, 344:181; *Song shi*, 409:12328.

to return to the capital.¹¹ The court then appointed Liu to be Pacification Commissioner for the Jiangdong, Jiangxi, Hunan and Hubei Circuits in 1276/1.¹² But the Mongol armies soon swept over these regions and surrounded Lin'an. In 1276/2, the Song court declared unconditional surrender, and the Zhao Imperial family was transferred to Dadu, where they met Qubilai in 1276/5.¹³

A group of Song loyalists escorted two young princes to the south, demarcating the continuation of Song reign. Attempting to capture the two princes as well as to take control entirely of South China, the Mongol troops continued their advance. When Yuan general Suodou 唆都 (?–1285) approached Quzhou, the hometown of Liu Mengyan, he found that the city was well defended, which might somehow relate to Liu's efforts to protect his family and neighborhoods. To lift the morale of his armies, Suodou himself headed up the front, leading troops over the city wall. Soon Quzhou was conquered and Liu Mengyan surrendered to the Yuan in 1276/5.¹⁴

The above narrative suggests that Liu Mengyan submitted himself to the Mongols when Quzhou was conquered, and by then the Song court at Lin'an had already surrendered. Liu should have noticed the official surrender of the Song court when the Mongols approached Quzhou, since right after the submission of the Song court in 1276/2, Chief Commander of the Yuan armies Bayan 伯顏 (1236–94) had dispatched generals to spread this news in the Liangzhe area as a means to induce other cities' capitulations.¹⁵ Liu should also have acknowledged the fact that the stronger the resistance that the Mongols encountered, the more brutal toward civilians they became. Considering that the Song government was already defunct, and that his family was then staying in the city, Liu should have withdrawn the city defenses and welcomed the Mongol troops to Quzhou. However, the strong defense at Quzhou that Mongol general Soudou initially encountered suggests that Liu Mengyan did not betray the Song in exchange for

¹¹ Wen Tianxiang, *Wen Tianxiang quanji*, 17:696; Liu Yiqin, ed, *Qiantang yishi*, 8:11a; *Song shi*, 214:5653 and 47:936.

¹² *Song shi*, 47:937; Bi Yuan, *Xu Zizhi tongjian*, 182:4976.

¹³ Bi Yuan, *Xu Zizhi tongjian*, 182:4978; Richard L. Davis, "The Reign of Tu-tsung (1264–1274) and His Successors to 1279," 942–45.

¹⁴ Staunch defense at Quzhou that Soudou encountered during his siege and the surrender of Liu Mengyan after the city was taken over were mentioned in the biography of Soudou in the official history of the Yuan. See *Yuan shi*, 129:3151. Two different chronological histories of the Song and Yuan period compiled by Ming historians basically followed the above account in the official history. See Wang Zongmu, *Song Yuan Zizhi tongjian*, 52:10b and Shang Lu, *Tongjian gangmu xubian*, 22:46a–b. Yet in some other accounts, only the surrender of Liu Mengyan was mentioned while the strong defense that Soudou encountered was omitted. See Xu Ziming, *Song zaifu biannianlu jiaobu* 25:1791; Bi Yuan, *Xu Zizhi tongjian*, 183:4987; and Zeng Lian, *Yuan shu*, 55:8a–9a. For detailed narratives on the Mongols attack of Quzhou, see Li Tianming, *Song Yuan zhanshi*, 1384–1385, and Hu Zhaoxi and Zou Chonghua, *Song Meng (Yuan) guanxi shi*, 437–40.

¹⁵ *Song shi*, 127:3110.

wealth and fortune in the Yuan government. The question is to what extent did the portrayals of a staunch defense at Quzhou reflect historical reality? Are they a hint that Liu Mengyan had exhausted all means for resistance before he surrendered? Answers to the above questions require further textual mining of the sources.

The earliest surviving narrative on the staunch defense at Quzhou is the biography of Soudou in the official *History of the Yuan Dynasty* (or, *Yuan History*),¹⁶ which is somehow at odds with the “official Yuan myth of easy conquest, mild resistance, and bloodless victories.”¹⁷ What deserves our special attention is that the *Yuan History* sometimes distorted historical truths in favor of the officials who surrendered to the Mongols. The most well-known example is how it mythologized Wang Shixian 汪世顯 (1195–1243), a Jurchen general who surrendered to the Mongols in the mid-1230s and later fought valiantly for his new master. The biography of Wang in the *Yuan History* portrayed him as a Jin (1115–1234) loyalist who surrendered to a benevolent Mongol prince after the dynasty’s collapse for the sake of preserving the civilians of the town.¹⁸ Yet the *History of the Jin Dynasty* (or, *Jin History*) showed that Wang was a rebel who subsequently defected to the Mongols. For the sake of pleasing his new masters, Wang even presented a luxurious gift—a city he had just seized from the Jin.¹⁹ After comparing the contrasting records, a later historian, Qian Daxin 錢大昕 (1728–1804), was inclined to believe the latter account and contended that Wang Shixian had collaborated with the Mongols well before the fall of the Jin dynasty. He killed his superior and betrayed the Jurchens in pursuit of benefits, attesting that he was a genuine “petty person” 小人. Qian then attributed the misleading accounts in the *Yuan History* to a mistake of Yuan historian Su Tianjue 蘇天爵 (1294–1352), who unfortunately trusted the family records of Wang Shixian when compiling Wang’s entry in *Brief Records of the Deeds of Prominent Officials* (*Mingchen shilüe* 名臣事略).²⁰ Since historians in the early Ming

¹⁶ *Yuan shi*, 129:3151.

¹⁷ Jennifer W. Jay, “Memoirs and Official Accounts: The Historiography of the Song Loyalists,” 598.

¹⁸ *Yuan shi*, 155:3649.

¹⁹ *Jin shi*, 124:2710.

²⁰ The sources that Su Tianjue referred to are the Stele of the Spiritual path 神道碑 of Wang Shixian written by Yang Huan 楊奐 (1186–1255) and Yu Ji’s 虞集 (1272–1348) preface to the “Record of the glorious past of the Wang family.” Full text of the Stele of the Spiritual path and the preface are incorporated into the *Quan Yuan wen*. See Yang Huan, “Zongshuai Wang yiwu wang Shixian shendaobei,” in Li Xiusheng, ed., *Quan Yuan wen*, 1:155–158 and Yu Ji, “Longyou wang Wang shi shijia xudelu xu,” in Li Xiusheng, ed., *Quan Yuan wen*, 26:68. Similar narratives on Wang Shixian’s loyalty to the Jin dynasty as well as his benevolence in protecting the civilians also appear in the tomb inscription of Wang Weixiao 汪惟孝, a grandson of Wang Shixian. See Wang Fuchang, “Da Yuan longhu wei shangjiangjun zhongshu youcheng Sichuan xingshengshi bianyi duzongshuai Wang gong kuangzhi,” in Zhao Yibing, “Yuandai Gongchang Wang Shixian jiazou muzang chutu muzhi jiaoshi wuze,” 44–45.

(1368–1644) who were responsible for compiling the *Yuan History* had simply followed Su’s work without rectifying the mistake, a distorted picture of Wang Shixian was transmitted to posterity.²¹ Contrasting accounts of Wang Shixian suggest a possibility that the staunch defense at Quzhou depicted in the *Yuan History* was indeed designed to create an image of loyalty for Liu Mengyan. In order to determine whether it is fact or myth, other authentic accounts about the Mongol conquest of Quzhou have to be consulted.

Even though thirteenth- and fourteenth-century sources (other than the official history) which contains a detailed account of the battle of Quzhou are no longer extant, a court compilation of the fifteenth century sheds some light on the matter. Titled *Outline and Details of “Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Governance,” Continued* (*Xu Zizhi tongjian gangmu* 續資治通鑒綱目, hereafter *Outline*) and finished in 1476,²² this work was compiled by the Academicians in the Ming court on Imperial command as a continuation of Zhu Xi’s *Outline and Details of “Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Governance”* (*Zizhi tongjian gangmu* 資治通鑒綱目). Notwithstanding its pedagogical intent to support moral judgment,²³ the *Outline* also emphasized factual accuracy, as stated by its Chief compiler Shang Lu 商輅 (1414–86) in his submission to the emperor: “Sources were gathered and cautiously selected so that not only the truths were preserved, but the doubts were also transmitted.”²⁴ The preface written by the Ming emperor Xianzong (1447–87, r.1464–87) also revealed that extensive works, among which some are no longer extant today, had been consulted: “(the compilation had) drawn upon the collections in the Secret Pavilion and made reference to the original texts of the *National History*.”²⁵ What deserves our attention in this Ming compilation is a detailed account of the Mongol conquest of Quzhou. Under the events in 1276/5, there is an entry in the *Outline* regarding Soudou’s capture of Quzhou and the surrender of Liu Mengyan. The defense of Quzhou that Soudou encountered was then elaborated in the appended *Details* section.²⁶ Contrasting later Ming literati’s interpretations of Liu Mengyan’s surrender, which will be discussed in following sections, the account in the *Outline*, a work laden with

²¹ Qian Daxin, *Nianer shi kaoyi*, 5:1575–76.

²² *Ming Xianzong shilu*, 159:4a. See Wang Deyi, “Shang Lu yu Xu Zizhi tongjian gangmu,” 1–18 and Wu Man, *Ming dai Song shi xue yanjiu*, 48–53 for discussions of the work and its compilers.

²³ See Charles Hartman, “Chen Jun’s Outline and Details: Printing and Politics in Thirteenth-Century Pedagogical Histories,” 273–316 for a discussion of an ensuing trend from “documentary” to “pedagogical” historiographical writings in the late 13th century.

²⁴ Shang Lu, “Jin Xu Song Yuan Zizhi tongjian gangmu biao,” in Shang Lu, *Shang Lu ji*, 11:225. The original texts reads: 搜羅惕別，存其信而傳其疑。

²⁵ *Ming Xianzong shilu*, 159:4b. The original texts reads: 發秘閣之載籍，參國史之本文。

²⁶ Shang Lu, *Tongjian gangmu xubian*, 22:46a–b.

moral judgments and strong sentiments against barbarian rule,²⁷ projected an image that Liu Mengyan had exhausted all means to defend Quzhou before the city fell and he surrendered. It suggested that Liu Mengyan did not sell out Song territories as Wang Shixian did to the Jin—he surrendered to the Yuan only after Quzhou fell. Despite his cowardly flight from the capital, Liu seems far more responsible than other Song officials, who surrendered without a fight. Yet we should not simply attribute the actions to Song loyalty, since Liu did not become a martyr. Neither did he join Song loyalists in resisting the Mongols nor adopt an eremitic lifestyle to avoid joining the Yuan government.

Liu Mengyan as a Yuan Official and His Mission to Recruit Southern Talent

After the Mongols seized Quzhou in 1276/5, they transferred the surrendered Liu Mengyan to their capital Dadu. During his stay in Dadu, Liu Mengyan was idled for nearly a year with no official assignment. Tormented by the feeling of uncertainty about his future prospects, he sought help from the southerner Xie Changyuan 謝昌元, one of Qubilai's favorite officials. Like Liu, Xie was a former Song official. After conquering the Song in 1276, Qubilai summoned Xie to the capital and treated him with great respect. Being honored as the "Southern Confucian" 南儒, Xie served in the Central Secretariat and deliberated on important policy matters.²⁸ This high status likely caught the attention of Liu, who sought help from his former colleague through a letter to Xie, likely written in 1277/6. Liu Mengyan mentioned that he had paid Xie a visit in the fifth month of the year, but Xie was away. He then lamented his poor fortune due to his being a former Song Councillor and stated that he was idled since his arrival at the Yuan capital, yet other former Song officials had already taken up important positions in the government. Lastly he begged Xie to do him a favor by recommending him to the emperor.²⁹ Partly owing to their relationship as ex-colleagues and being in the same examination cohort (同年; both Liu and Xie obtained the Advanced Scholar degree in 1244), Xie Changyuan responded to Liu's request and sponsored him.³⁰ By the end of 1278, Liu had already assumed an official position in the Yuan government as Minister of Personnel.³¹

²⁷ Wang Deyi, "Shang Lu yu Xu Zizhi tongjian gangmu," 8–10.

²⁸ Yuan Jue, *Yanyou Siming zhi*, 5:29a–b.

²⁹ Zheng Zhen, "Ti Liu Mengyan yu Xie Jingzhai shu qin ji," in Zheng Zhen, *Xingyang waishi ji*, 36:3a–b.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Yuan shi*, 173:4038; Zeng Lian, *Yuan shu*, 55:8a–9a.

What deserves our attention is the initial hesitation of the Yuan court in appointing Liu Mengyan, which partly reflects Qubilai's attitude towards Chinese and Confucian scholars as a whole. In fact, after the uprising of Li Tan 李檀 (?–1262) in 1262, Qubilai became skeptical towards the Chinese and relied increasingly on advisers and officials from Central Asia.³² Even though an edict was promulgated in 1276 to recruit former Song officials who surrendered and whose talent and virtues made them employable,³³ we should not simply take it as Qubilai's changing attitude. The fact that none of the Chinese literati from the south assumed councillorships in the Central Secretariat in the late 1270s implies that Qubilai did not involve them in the highest decision-making process in civil administration. Xie Changyuan, Qingyang Mengyan 青陽夢炎, and Wang Huchen 王虎臣, the most prominent southern literati of the day, were appointed as the heads of various ministries at the rank of 3A,³⁴ while in the last two decades of Qubilai's reign, Chief Councillorships at the rank of 1A were dominated by Mongolian or Western and Central Asian financial experts such as Ahmad 阿合馬 (?–1282) and Sangha 桑哥 (?–1291).³⁵ Upon their surrender to the Yuan government, even Fan Wenhui 范文虎 (?–1302) and Lü Wenhuan 呂文煥, former Southern Song military commanders, had been appointed to higher offices and played a more influential role than their non-military counterparts in officialdom.³⁶ Modern scholarship holds that the southern scholar-officials were marginalized and excluded from the top echelon of civil administration, and actually “served mainly for token purposes and were unable to exert any real influence on Qubilai's government.”³⁷ The aforementioned edict of 1276 seems to have been a gesture to pacify the southerners rather than a genuine move to

³² For a brief narrative of Li Tan's uprising, see Morris Rossabi, “The Reign of Khubilai Khan,” 424–26, and idem, *Khubilai Khan: His Life and Times*, 62–67. According to Yao Jing'an 姚景安, there was a shift of Qubilai's attitude towards Confucian scholars and Confucianism. At first he needed the talent of Confucian scholars to consolidate his power and facilitate governance. But once the situation was stabilized, Qubilai felt that the politically conservative Confucian scholars were obstacles to his expansionist policies. Together with his perception that the collapse of the Jin and Song owed much to the Confucian scholars, Qubilai began to turn against and ultimately abandon them. See Yao Jing'an, “Hubilie yu ruchen he ruxue,” 31–39.

³³ This was promulgated in 1276, see *Yuan dianzhang*, 45.

³⁴ Yuan Jue, *Yanyou Siming zhi*, 5:29a–b.

³⁵ *Yuan shi*, 112:2799

³⁶ Sun Kekuan, *Yuandai han wenhua zhi huodong*, 348–49; Xiao Qiqing, *Yuanchao shi xinlun*, 34.

³⁷ Quoted from Igor de Rachewiltz, et al., eds., *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol-Yüan Period (1200–1300)*: xvi. Mainland scholar Liu Xiao also held a similar view, comparing the careers of scholar-officials from the south with those from the north. See Liu Xiao, “Yuan Haowen ji zhongshu Yelü gong shu renwu bushi—Jianlun shidafu jiazu zai Jin Yuan zhengzhi shenghuo zhong di yanxu,” 441–60, in particular 459.

broaden recruitment and improve governance.³⁸ It was a ploy to promote the ruler's image by accommodating southerners while concurrently governing through another set of rules. Hence we should avoid the perception that Qubilai relied heavily on southern literati despite remarks to the contrary, for example:³⁹ "During the early years when Shizu had just conquered Jiangnan, he searched extensively for the Song remnants and employed them, particularly stressing the Advanced Scholar degree holders."⁴⁰ In fact, an edict was promulgated in mid-1278 to lay off redundant officials from the Jiangnan area (i.e., the Southern Song area). Even former Southern Song elites posted in the Hanlin Academy were insecure.⁴¹ What, then, helped Liu Mengyan survive this wave of cutbacks and even receive an appointment as a high official in the Yuan government by the end of 1278?

Liu Mengyan's credentials as the top examination candidate and Chief Councilor likely gave the Mongols the impression that he enjoyed wide acclaim among Southern Song literati in terms of literary talent and that he had played a leading role in the Song bureaucracy. The reasoning was that should Liu agree to join the Yuan, other former Song officials would follow suit. In turn, the power to resist and the morale of Song loyalists would be weakened. Likely because of Liu's strategic importance, Qubilai finally appointed him Minister of Personnel (as already noted), a position equivalent to that of his sponsor Xie Changyuan. After serving for more than a decade, Liu was promoted in the early 1290s as Hanlin Academician Recipient of Edicts. The Hanlin Academy in the Yuan period was responsible for "compiling the National History, supervising edicts and imperial orders, and preparing consultations."⁴² Nevertheless, it was designed more to appease the Chinese literati elites than to bear substantial political functions,⁴³ which may explain why we can hardly identify any major policy proposal made by Liu Mengyan throughout his tenure as a Yuan official until his retirement in

³⁸ "Pacification" 安撫 was the term used by Yao Congwu 姚從吾 to describe the general policy of Qubilai towards south China. According to Yao, Qubilai did not have a proactive plan to develop the south. See Yao Congwu, "Hubilie ping Song yihou de nanren wenti," 49.

³⁹ Lao Yan-shuan, "Southern Chinese Scholars and Educational Institutions in Early Yuan: Some Preliminary Remarks," 107–33, see 112 in particular for a discussion of the poor career prospects of Southern literati.

⁴⁰ *Yuan shi*, 190:4334. The original texts reads: 世祖初得江南，盡求宋之遺士而用之，尤重進士。

⁴¹ *Yuan shi*, 10:202–3.

⁴² *Yuan shi*, 8:165. The original texts reads: 纂修國史、典制誥、備顧問。

⁴³ For detailed discussion of the Hanlin Academy in the Yuan period and its impact on the Chinese Confucian scholars, see Yang Liang, *Song mo Yuan chu Siming wenshi ji qi shiwen yanjiu*, 163–98, and Zhang Fan, "Yuandai hanlin guoshiyuan yu hanzu rushi," 75–83, see particularly 77–78 for a discussion of the actual power of the Academy. For English narrative, see Morris Rossabi, "The Reign of Khubilai Khan," 452.

1295.⁴⁴ If not high-level policy-making and deliberation, what role did Liu Mengyan play in the Yuan government?

Continuous and frequent rebellions in the Jiangnan area throughout Qubilai's reign alerted the emperor to the necessity of improving governance in the south.⁴⁵ In this connection, the Yuan court needed to solicit the support of the local gentry, making use of their stature and familiarity with local affairs, in order to suppress rebellions and facilitate governance.⁴⁶ For local elites, assisting the Yuan government in suppressing rebellions was a way to ensure their own safety and property. Some might even have taken this as an opportunity to enter officialdom.⁴⁷ Coincidentally, Xu Heng 許衡 (1209–81), Yao Shu 姚樞 (1203–80), and Wang E 王鶚 (1190–1273), loyal advisers to Qubilai,⁴⁸ were all dead by the early 1280s, which was one reason Qubilai decided to reach out to southerners. Accordingly, Qubilai sent various missions, usually led by prominent former Song officials, in search of talent. Among them, the one led by Cheng Jufu 程鉅夫 (1249–1318) in 1286 caught quite a lot of attention.⁴⁹ Liu Mengyan's credential as a southern elite seems to have been a valuable asset to Qubilai. For Liu, apart from repaying the Yuan emperor's confidence in him, the mission might have provided Liu with a certain kind of psychological relief, especially if he could successfully lure others to join him. Nevertheless, the situation turned out to be undesirable, as we see from the responses of the

⁴⁴ The most memorable contribution of Liu Mengyan was his remonstrance to Qubilai against taxing the mountainous area in the Jiangnan area. See Zheng Zhen, "Ji suojian," in Zheng Zhen, *Xingyang waishi ji*, 35:12b–13a, which has yet to be mentioned in the *Official History of the Yuan Dynasty*.

⁴⁵ For a detailed discussion of the frequent rebellions in the Jiangnan area, see Huang Qinglian, "Yuanchu Jiangnan de panluan 1276–1294," 37–76. Huang argues that the ethnic boundaries between people in the south and the "barbarians," as well as the political inequality and economic suppression perceived by the Southerners, explains why there were more frequent rebellions in the Jiangnan area in the early Yuan compared with other periods.

⁴⁶ Chen Dezhi, *Meng Yuan shi yanjiu congkao*, 584.

⁴⁷ Su Li, *Yuandai difang jingying yu jiceng shehui : yi Jiangnan diqu wei zhongxin*, 68.

⁴⁸ Yao Shu, Xu Heng and Wang E had followed Qubilai for a long time, even before the latter's enthronement in 1260. For a detailed study of this group, see Xiao Qiqing, *Yuandai shi xintan*, 263–302. According to Xiao, they initiated Qubilai's thought on sinicization.

⁴⁹ For studies regarding Cheng Jufu's mission, see Yao Congwu, "Hubilie ping Song yihou de nanren wenti," 1–86. Yao illustrated the struggle by Cheng Jufu for better treatment of southern literati and how Qubilai appreciated Cheng. Yao also discussed the attitude and policy of Qubilai towards southerners. The main argument in Yao's article is that Qubilai, for the sake of stabilizing Jiangnan, adopted a series of measures to improve governance in the south and win the support of southerners. Recruitment and employment of talented southern literati was one among the many measures. Mainland scholar Chen Dezhi also discussed in detail the background, process, and outcome of Cheng Jufu's mission. He identified 24 people whom Cheng had recommended. Among them, 55% of them accepted the nomination and joined the Yuan government, while the remaining 45% turned down the offer. See Chen Dezhi, *Meng Yuan shi yanjiu congkao*, 540–70.

prominent Song statesmen Ma Tingluan and Wen Tianxiang.

An Advanced Scholar degree holder of 1247, Ma Tingluan was promoted to Chief Councilor of the Right and Commissioner of Military Affairs in 1269. During his tenure, Ma bypassed normal procedures and promoted certain generals at the borders for the sake of lifting their morale to fight against the Mongols. But Ma's practices offended Chief Councilor Jia Sidao 賈似道 (1213–75), who believed that Ma betrayed him. Likely in order to avoid further conflicts with Jia, Ma Tingluan submitted nine memorials in 1272 requesting to resign from the Councillorship, and soon he retired. Even though Emperor Gongdi attempted to summon him upon his accession in 1275, Ma refused.⁵⁰ After the demise of the Song, Ma Tingluan and another former Song Councilor, Zhang Jian 章鑑, were recommended by Liu Mengyan. Yet these two also refused the imperial order of summons.⁵¹ Liu then changed his target to Ma Duanlin 馬端臨 (1254–1323), son of Ma Tingluan, who was at the time renowned for his literary composition and knowledge in Chinese history, his masterpiece was *General Investigation into Written Documents* (*Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考). Again the junior Ma turned down the offer of the Yuan court with the commonly used excuse of the demands of caring for elderly parents.⁵²

If eremites, in the sense of evaders of service, like Ma Tingluan were already hard enough to persuade, Liu Mengyan's plan to recruit extreme loyalists like Wen Tianxiang seems to have been a mission impossible. Liu and Wen shared a similar background, both being top examination candidates and former Southern Song Chief Councilors. After the formal surrender of the Song court in 1275, Wen Tianxiang protected two children who were blood descendants of the Zhao imperial clan and subsequently enthroned them one after the other to demarcate the continuation of Song rule. He escorted the young princes to the south to escape from their Mongol pursuers. Yet after a few years of staunch resistance, the Song remnants ultimately lost. Refusing to join the Yuan government, Wen was captured and transferred to Dadu. Upon his arrival in 1279/10, Wen was treated as an honored guest and was provided with feasts. However he refused to eat and sleep as a sign of protest. Neither did Wen's mind change when the Mongols offered him a high position.⁵³ Liu Mengyan was then sent to persuade

⁵⁰ *Song shi*, 414:12438–39.

⁵¹ Zeng Lian, *Yuan shu*, 55:9a.

⁵² Huang Zongxi, *Song Yuan xuean*, 89:2977; Zeng Lian, *Yuan shu*, 55:9a.

⁵³ Among voluminous Chinese scholarly works on Wen Tianxiang, one might consult Liu Wenyuan, comp., *Wen Tianxiang yanjiu ziliao ji* and two lengthy biographical studies: Yu Zhaopeng and Yu Hui, *Wen Tianxiang yanjiu* and Xiu Xiaobo, *Wen Tianxiang pingzhuan*. For English narratives, see Jennifer W. Jay, *A Change in Dynasties: Loyalty in Thirteenth-century China*, 93–136; Richard L. Davis, *Wind against the Mountain: The Crisis of Politics and Culture in Thirteenth-century China*; William Andreas Brown, *Wen T'ien-hsiang: A Biographical Study of a Sung Patriot*, and Horst Wolfram Huber, "The Hero as the Spiritual Legacy of his Culture: Wen T'ien-hsiang and his Admirers," 309–36.

Wen to surrender, but the latter reprimanded and spat on Liu.⁵⁴ This surely affected poorly their relationship, and may somehow have led to Wen's death. On one occasion when Qubilai expressed a desire to recruit talented people from the south, Wang Jiweng 王積翁 (1229–84), a former Song official, named Wen Tianxiang as the most outstanding. Wang was then sent to persuade Wen, and Wen reiterated his refusal. Having said that, Wen pointed out that if the Yuan government is kind enough to release him, he would return to his hometown and become a Daoist priest, and would consider offering advice to the Yuan emperor when requested. Wang then conferred with Xie Changyuan and ten other former Song officials, deliberating whether to request the release of Wen Tianxiang. It was Liu Mengyan who disagreed with the proposal on the grounds that “Wen Tianxiang's aspiration to summon people to fight, as he did in Ganzhou, and his desperation to escape from captivity as he did in Zhenjiang still solidly remain. If he suddenly has absurd acts, how can all of us escape blame?”⁵⁵ The proposal to release Wen Tianxiang then was put to rest.⁵⁶ In less than a year Wen was executed. Since then, the image of Wen as a Song loyalist who repeatedly refused the Yuan court at the cost of his life began to take root in people's minds. What Liu Mengyan might not have envisioned is that people drew a comparison between Wen and himself, likely because of their similar backgrounds: the more Wen was glorified, the more Liu was condemned for his shifted allegiance.

In contrast to senior statesmen, junior officials of the Song would likely have been more eager to join the Yuan government. Liu Mengyan could not, however, persuade them to shift, as seen in the case of Xie Fangde 謝枋得 (1226–89). After passing the civil service examinations in 1256, Xie took up various local positions. But he was demoted after criticizing Jia Sidao. When the Mongol armies took southeast China, Xie led a staunch resistance at Xinzhou. After the city was conquered, Xie pretended to be mad and escaped. He then moved to Fujian, where he was invited to be a private tutor for local families. Soon his fame began to grow. In 1286, when Cheng Jufu nominated more than twenty former Song officials to Qubilai,⁵⁷ Xie was on the top of the list. But Xie refused the recommendation. A provincial administrator invited Xie to serve the Mongols a year later, and Xie still was not moved. In 1288, another edict was issued by Qubilai that called for southern talents. Again Xie Fangde was the primary target, this time recommended by his mentor Liu.⁵⁸ In his reply to Liu, Xie not only

⁵⁴ Wen Tianxiang, *Wen Tianxiang quanji*, 17:709.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 17:711. The original text reads: 文公贛州移檄之志，鎮江脫身之心，固在也。忽有妄作，我輩何以自解？

⁵⁶ Wen Tianxiang, *Wen Tianxiang quanji*, 17:711; *Song shi*, 418:12539.

⁵⁷ See Chen Dezhi, *Meng Yuan shi yanjiu congkao*, 540–70.

⁵⁸ *Song shi*, 425:12689–90; Huang Zongxi, *Song Yuan xuean*, 84:2845–47.

reaffirmed his stance using three reasons—the need to care for his family, his already having repeatedly refused, and the enormous favors that the late Song Empress Dowager bestowed on him,⁵⁹ but he also tried to persuade his mentor to be loyal to the Song:

Characters down from the Spring and Autumn period are not worth mentioning. And today too, if you want one example like a Xialü Yisheng, Cheng Ying, Gongsun Chujiu or the faithful servant, you cannot find even one. You, sir, are ranked as the top candidate in your early age; in late life you become Chief Councilor. In terms of merits, titles, wealth, and prestige, you have fulfilled your ambitions. When you galloped four thousand *li* to Dadu to pay respects to the Great Yuan—is it because you want to inquire about the [Song] emperor and empress dowagers, and let the world and posterity know that the righteousness between ruler and subject cannot be deserted? I recognize your good will. Heaven, earth, ghosts and deities know it, and the ancestral spirits of the fifteen Song emperors are aware of it. How about majority of the population? Do they fully understand your good will?⁶⁰

Xialü Yisheng, Cheng Ying and Gongsun Chujiu, three prominent loyalists during the Spring and Autumn period (722–481 BCE), as well as the faithful servant in a repeated anecdote who successfully rescued the King of Zhao 趙 in the early third century BCE,⁶¹ were mentioned in this letter. Xialü Yisheng was a loyal subject of the Jin 晉 state. When the leader of the Jin (the Duke of Hui) was captured by the Qin 秦, Xialü led a diplomatic mission to the Qin and successfully persuaded the Qin to release his lord.⁶² The loyalty of Cheng Ying and Gongsun Chujiu to the Zhao family is even more well known, and it became a famous drama titled *The Orphan of the House of Zhao* (*Zhao shi guer* 趙氏孤兒) by the Yuan playwright Ji Junxiang 紀君祥 (ca.1300). Originally a powerful family inside the Jin, the Zhao were almost entirely wiped out by a political

⁵⁹ Xie Fangde, “Shang cheng xiang Liu Zhongzhai shu,” in Xie Fangde, *Xie Dieshan quanji jiaozhu*, 1:3–9. For parts of the translation of this letter, see Jennifer W. Jay, *A Change in Dynasties: Loyalism in Thirteenth-Century China*, 127–28.

⁶⁰ Xie Fangde, “Shang cheng xiang Liu Zhongzhai shu,” in Xie Fangde, *Xie Dieshan quanji jiaozhu*, 1:5–6. Translation is made with reference to Jennifer W. Jay, *A Change in Dynasties*, 127. The original texts reads: 春秋以下之人物，本不足道，今可求一人如瑕呂鉛錡、程嬰、杵臼、廝養卒亦不可得矣。先生少年為掄魁，晚年作宰相，功名富貴，亦可以酬素志矣。奔馳四千里，如大都拜見皇帝，豈為一身計哉！將以問三宮起居，使天下後世知君臣之義，不可廢也。先生此心，某知之，天地鬼神知之，十五廟祖宗之靈亦知之，眾人豈能盡知之乎？

⁶¹ For details on how the faithful servant rescued the King of Zhao, whom was held hostage by the generals of the Yan Kingdom, see Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, 89:2576–77.

⁶² For the story of Xialü Yisheng, see *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 366–67, and Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, 39:1654.

enemy, Tu Angu 屠岸賈 (?–583 BCE). Only the pregnant wife of Zhao Shuo 趙朔, a close relative of the Jin king, escaped bloodshed. This woman later delivered a child, who was the only surviving son of the Zhao family and the primary target of Tu. In order to protect the infant Zhao, Cheng Ying and Gongsun Chujiu found another baby boy to be a stand-in. Cheng then reported to Tu that Gongsun was harboring the Zhao progeny. Thus, both Gongsun and the stand-in baby were killed, while Cheng Ying was generously rewarded. The entire state denounced Cheng in ignorance, and condemned his seeming betrayal of the Zhao family and his friend Gongsun Chujiu in exchange for lucrative rewards. Bearing harsh accusations, Cheng Ying had in fact secretly raised the real Zhao baby. When the boy grew up and successfully avenged the tragedy, Cheng's mission was accomplished. He then committed suicide to accompany his friend Gongsun Chujiu.⁶³ Since then, the fame of Cheng Ying's loyalty to the Zhao family far surpassed Gongsun.

What deserves attention is the underlying message: It is easy to sacrifice oneself for the sake of loyalty and become a martyr, as Gongsun Chujiu did, but it is much more difficult to act like Cheng Ying, who was living disgracefully for decades, bearing the contempt of thousands for his betrayal of friendship, while behind the scenes fulfilling his loyalty to the Zhao family. By quoting the example of Cheng Ying in the letter, it appears that Xie Fangde envisioned his mentor Liu Mengyan to be another Cheng Ying, expecting Liu to hold a hidden loyalty to the Zhao family, even though he was misunderstood by the masses. It is also possible that Xie Fangde wanted to use this story to remind his mentor Liu Mengyan to be loyal to the imperial Zhao family of the Song and offer him suggestions on how to become a loyal Song subject despite serving in the Yuan court.

In fact, serving the Yuan government did not necessarily contradict one's loyalty to the defunct dynasty. Wang E was a Jin dynasty (1115–1234) loyalist who served as Hanlin Academician Recipient of Edicts under Qubilai; he is an example of this sort. As with Liu Mengyan, Wang was a top examination candidate. After obtaining the Advanced Scholar degree in 1224 under the Jin, he served in the Jurchen-Jin government until its demise in 1234. Having withdrawn from public service for a decade, Wang was summoned by Qubilai, who at the time (1244) was still a prince. Even though Wang E agreed to serve as an adviser and later became a high official in the Yuan government, he still continued to profess loyalty to the fallen Jin dynasty. His requests to accord a proper burial to the late Jin emperor Aizong (1198–1234, r.1224–34) as well as his endeavors to revive historical records of the Jin dynasty were proof of his

⁶³ Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, 43:1783–85.

nostalgia for the fallen Jurchen regime.⁶⁴ Wang Yuanliang 汪元量 (1241–ca.1317), a highly educated former Song court musician, was another typical example. Wang accompanied the Song imperial family to the north, and he spent more than a decade in Dadu before returning to the south. Despite his service in the Yuan government, his loyalty to the Song remained unchanged, as reflected in his caring attitude towards the Song imperial family and loyalists in captivity, as well as his literary writings. Wang’s loyalty and nostalgia partly explains why he managed to get along well with the group of Song loyalists residing in the south upon his return in 1288, and why he was generally considered as a Song loyalist in posterity.⁶⁵ Even Wang Guowei 王國維 (1877–1927), a leading early-twentieth-century scholar who considered the veneration of Wang Yuanliang along with Song loyalists Xie Ao 謝翱 (1249–95) and Gong Kai 龔開 (1222–1307) as inappropriate since Wang had served the Yuan government, agreed that Wang, compared with talents like Fang Feng 方鳳 (1240–1321), Xie Ao, and Gong Kai, left “different traces [in history] but had the same (loyal) heart.”⁶⁶ It is likely that Xie Fangde envisioned Liu Mengyan as following the precedents of Wang Yuanliang and Wang E, who upheld loyalty to a defunct dynasty while serving the Yuan government.

Even though moral integrity and career aspiration can be compromised, Xie Fangde did not consider compromise as an option. He did not follow in the footsteps of Liu Mengyan and serve the Yuan court. Nonetheless he was taken involuntarily to the Yuan capital. Upon arriving at Dadu in 1289/4, the first enquiry that Xie made was the location of the Song Empress-Dowager and the dethroned emperor Gongdi. Xie prostrated himself toward the direction in which they were located and cried in grief. He soon became sick and was relocated to a Buddhist monastery. Probably sensing Xie’s determination to die, in view of his refusing medicines, Liu Mengyan asked a doctor to mix herbs into a bowl of congee and he offered this to Xie, but Xie refused and poured it onto the ground.

⁶⁴ For a biography of Wang E in English, see Igor de Rachewiltz, et al., eds., *In the Service of the Khan*, 300–316. His request to accord a proper burial to the late Jin emperor appears on page 304. Regarding the role of Wang E in the preservation of Jin history, see pages 306–9 of the above work as well as Chan Hok-lam, “Wang O’s Contribution to the History of the Chin Dynasty (1115–1234),” 345–75.

⁶⁵ Cheng Minzheng, a Ming historian, considered Wang Yuanliang to be a Song loyalist. See Cheng Minzheng, *Song yimin lu*, vol.11. For recent studies on Wang Yuanliang and his writings, see Kong Fanli, “Wang Yuanliang shiji jinian,” in Wang Yuanliang, *Zengding hushan leigao*, 235–96, and Chen Jianhua, *Wang Yuanliang yu qi shici yanjiu*. For English narratives on Wang Yuanliang, see Jennifer W. Jay, *A Change in Dynasties*, 143–49.

⁶⁶ Wang Guowei, “Hushan leigao Suiyun ji bai,” in Wang Yuanliang, *Zengding hushan leigao*, 196. The original text reads: 與方、謝、龔諸賢，迹異而心則同。

Soon Xie died of starvation.⁶⁷ His brave deeds as well as his righteous words in his letter to Liu eventually turned him into one of many exemplars of Song loyalty. What deserves attention in the letter is the last sentence, which gives hints on how Liu Mengyan was generally perceived among Song loyalists in the late 1280s—namely, his failing to uphold ultimate loyalty to a defunct dynasty and shifting allegiance for the sake of power and wealth. Possible reasons for this will be discussed in the following section.

From the above, we noted that Liu Mengyan failed to persuade prominent figures like Ma Tingluan, Wen Tianxiang and Xie Fangde to join the Yuan government. How successful was Liu in facilitating Qubilai's agenda to recruit southerners? He recommended a total of seven southern Advanced Scholar degree-holders to Qubilai, but it turns out that only Wang Longze 王龍澤, the top candidate of the 1274 palace examination, joined the Yuan government and became a censor, while the others refused to serve. Sun Tongfa 孫潼發 (1244–1310), a degree holder of 1268 whose talent was highly appreciated by Liu Mengyan (who attempted to adopt him as a son-in-law), became an eremite.⁶⁸ Xiong Penglai 熊朋來 (1246–1323), a 1274 Advanced Scholar, preferred staying in his home town to teach.⁶⁹ Another nominee, Mou Yinglong 牟應龍 (1247–1324), a degree-holder of 1271, was once a primary target for recruitment. Liu even wrote a letter to Mou, promising a position in the Hanlin Academy if he agreed to join. But Mou did not reply, which embarrassed Liu.⁷⁰ Moreover, a talented associate of Mou named Yang Zixiang 楊子祥 turned down Liu as well.⁷¹

It appears that the rate at which Liu Mengyan's targeted scholars joined the Yuan was only 15% (1 out of 7). Compared with the famous recruitment mission of Cheng Jufu, where 4 out of 22 (18%) accepted the nominations and joined the Yuan,⁷² Liu's results were not all that bad. Nonetheless, we do get a sense of the failure of the Yuan to gain networks of former Song officials of this type. Hence in considering the early-Yuan's strategy of governance, which focused on Jiangnan, we should not exaggerate the contributions made by the group of former Song officials. Instead, rising stability in the Jiangnan area, as Uematsu

⁶⁷ *Song shi*, 425:12690.

⁶⁸ Huang Jin, "Panfeng xiansheng mubiao," in Li Xiusheng, ed., *Quan Yuan wen*, 30:106.

⁶⁹ Yu Ji, "Xiong Yuke muzhiming," in Li Xiusheng, ed., *Quan Yuan wen*, 593–94; *Yuan shi*, 190:4334–35.

⁷⁰ Yu Ji, "Mou Bocheng mubei," in Li Xiusheng, ed., *Quan Yuan wen*, 27:397.

⁷¹ *Yongzheng Zhejiang tongzhi*, 192:25b.

⁷² Chen Dezhi found that 12 (out of 22 candidates whose attitude in serving the Yuan government can be identified) nominees had accepted Cheng Jufu's recommendation. Among these 12 candidates, 8 of them were already serving in the Yuan government at the time of nomination. See Chen Dezhi, *Meng Yuan shi yanjiu congkao*, 540–70, particularly 569.

Tadashi suggests, owed much to the fall of Chief Councilor Sangha and the promulgation of the state's *New Code of the Zhiyuan Era* (*Zhiyuan xin ge* 至元新格).⁷³

We also should not undervalue Liu Mengyan's influence on the southern elites simply based on the above data. In his study on literati's attitudes in the Jiangnan area, Chen Dezhi has identified 328 people who received the Advanced Scholar degree in the Lizong and Duzong reign-periods. He looked at their actions during the Song-Yuan transition and found that 71 (21.65%) became martyrs, 174 (53.05%) became eremites, and 83 (25.3%) joined the Yuan government. Among a total of 17 examination cohorts from 1226 to 1274, the highest percentage of the degree-holders to join the Yuan government was the cohort of 1244 (45.5%).⁷⁴ This high rate of crossover loyalty likely triggered certain moralistic sentiments among mid-Ming literati, who belittled this group by deliberately omitting their names and submitted essays in the *Outline*.⁷⁵ Although as yet not completely proved, the situation regarding the 1244 cohort might be attributed to the political inclination of the top candidate—Liu Mengyan himself.⁷⁶

The Image of Liu Mengyan among His Contemporaries and Later

Liu Mengyan's inability to gain the southern elites let the Yuan emperor down, as reflected in Qubilai's reservations about Liu's actions. On one occasion, Qubilai asked Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫 (1254–1322), a surrendered clansman of the Zhao imperial family, to comment on the virtues of Liu Mengyan compared to those of Ye Li 葉李 (1242–92), a former student of the Imperial University in the late Southern Song who later surrendered to the Yuan. Zhao gave Liu a very high place, partly because Liu was a friend of his father, but Qubilai disagreed:

Do you think (Liu) Mengyan was more virtuous than (Ye) Li? Mengyan was the top examination candidate in the Song, and was later promoted to Chief Councilor. When Jia Sidao was doing harm to the country and deceiving the emperor, Mengyan fawned on him, while Li, who was still a commoner, knelt before the palace gate and submitted a memorial. Hence Li was more

⁷³ Uematsu Tadashi, "The Control of Chiang-nan in the Early Yüan," 49–68. For a comprehensive study of the *New Code of the Zhiyuan Era*, see Paul Heng-chao Ch'en, *Chinese Legal Tradition under the Mongols: The Code of 1291 as Reconstructed*.

⁷⁴ Chen Dezhi, *Meng Yuan shi yanjiu congkao*, 571–95. See particularly 593–95 for the data collected by Chen.

⁷⁵ Shang Lu, *Tongjian gangmu xubian*, 20:40a.

⁷⁶ He Guanhuang, *Songchu pengdang yu taiping xingguo sannian jinshi* is one of the earliest studies elaborating on the networks among examination cohorts.

virtuous than Mengyan.⁷⁷

Dissatisfied with the flattering Liu Mengyan, Qubilai even ordered Zhao Mengfu to compose a poem to tease Liu:⁷⁸

A top examination candidate had once received Song's grace;
 But he dared not speak against powerful and treacherous ministers.
 Whatever matter was wrong should be forgotten
 So that he can repay loyalty and filial piety to the imperial Yuan.⁷⁹

It is said that Liu Mengyan felt this insult for his entire life. Compared with Zhao Mengfu, Liu's attitude towards Wang Yuanliang was far more lenient. As discussed above, Wang was a Song loyalist despite serving in the Yuan government. He presented a poem to Liu Mengyan in an early court meeting in 1280/1, mocking the latter's blessings and allegiance to Qubilai.⁸⁰ Interestingly, this poem cast little negative impact on the relationship between Wang and Liu, as Liu, among other former Song officials and palace ladies, bade Wang a warm farewell when he returned to the south in 1288.⁸¹ Contrasting Zhao Mengfu and Wang Yuanliang, most of Liu's colleagues in the Yuan government were less sarcastic, as reflected in the poems by Cheng Jufu,⁸² Zhang Zhihan 張之翰 (1243–96),⁸³ Wang Yun 王惲 (1227–1304),⁸⁴ and Chen Fu 陳孚 (1259–1309)⁸⁵ that celebrated Liu's birthday and retirement. Li Qian 李謙 (1233–1311), a colleague of Liu at the Hanlin Academy, even showed his calligraphic collections to Liu.⁸⁶ One anecdote noted that Liu Mengyan had a

⁷⁷ *Yuan shi*, 172:4020–4021. The original text reads: 汝以夢炎賢於李耶? 夢炎在宋為狀元, 位至丞相, 當實似道誤國罔上, 夢炎依阿取容; 李布衣, 乃伏闕上書, 是賢於夢炎也。

⁷⁸ Zhou Mi, *Guixin zazhi*, 153; Yang Zai, “Da Yuan gu hanlin xueshi chengzhi ronglu daifu zhi zhigao jianxiu guoshi Zhao gong xingzhuang,” in Li Xiusheng, ed., *Quan Yuan wen*, 25:582 and *Yuan shi*, 173:4050 and 172:4020–21.

⁷⁹ Zhou Mi, *Guixin zazhi*, 153. The original text reads: 狀元曾受宋朝恩, 目擊權奸不敢言。往事已非那可說, 好將忠孝報皇元。

⁸⁰ Wang Yuanliang, “Gengchen zhengyue dan zaozhao cheng Liu Zhongzhai,” in Wang Yuanliang, *Zengding hushan leigao*, 3:70.

⁸¹ Nasen, “Du Wang Suiyun shiji,” in Nasen, *Jintai ji*, 2:27a–b.

⁸² Cheng Jufu, “Hangong chun” and “Mulan huaman,” in Cheng Jufu, *Xuelou ji*, 30:18b and 19b. Both works celebrated the birthday of Liu Mengyan.

⁸³ Zhang Zhihan, “Ji Liu chengzhi zhongzhai” and “Shou zhongzhai Liu xueshi,” in Zhang Zhihan, *Xiyuan ji*, 6:20a and 8:6a–b.

⁸⁴ Wang Yun, “Song Zhongweng nangui bing xu” and “Zai ji qianyun zeng Zhongzhai chengzhi,” in Wang Yun, *Qiu jian ji*, 12:13b–14b and 22:6a.

⁸⁵ Chen Fu, “Cheng chengzhi Zhongzhai Liu gong yi lezhi junzi xiabu meishou wei yun cheng shi,” in Chen Fu, *Chen Gangzhong shi ji*, 3:9b–10b.

⁸⁶ “Wudai Yang ningshi qiju tie,” in Sun Yueban, *Peiwen zhai shuhua pu*, 75:46a.

wine-drinking gathering with several high officials from the south, among them Ye Li and Jia Yuqing 賈餘慶.⁸⁷ It seems that Liu Mengyan in general had got along well with the Han Chinese as well as with the Southern officials in the Hanlin Academy.

But the group of Song remnant subjects was not as forgiving as Liu's colleagues. Their refusal to serve the Yuan and their criticism of Liu Mengyan owed much to their adherence to absolute loyalty. Such a stringent concept of loyalty started to assume a noticeable place in the thinking of eleventh-century literati, who promoted it through didactic historical writings that condemned disloyal subjects who shifted allegiance. The differences between tenth- and eleventh-century literati's evaluations of Feng Dao 馮道 (882–954), a Five Dynasties (907–59) Chief Councilor who served twelve emperors of four different surnames, help to illustrate the matter. In the *Old History of the Five Dynasties*, a work compiled in the late-tenth century, Feng Dao's change of masters was not criticized, probably because the compilers themselves had similar experiences of changing loyalty. Yet in Ouyang Xiu's 歐陽修 (1007–72) *New History of the Five Dynasties*, dated to the mid-eleventh century, Feng's disloyalty was denounced.⁸⁸ A similar denunciation of Feng followed from Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–86) in his masterpiece *Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government*.⁸⁹ The variation in handling the life of Feng Dao reflects a changing perception of loyalty that Naomi Standen attributes to a moral transformation beginning in the eleventh century, when “morality became ever more important to literati living in a world transformed, some sought to apply their own high standards to predecessors living through the period in which the transformation had taken place.”⁹⁰ Contrary to their predecessors' tolerance of shifting loyalty, the Song literati of the eleventh century held that:

The servitor had the duty of absolute and unswerving loyalty to the ruler and his dynasty, even at the price of death or forced retirement.... Ultimately they [i.e., the Song Neo-Confucianists] demanded absolute loyalty to the ruler and his dynasty, and looked upon one man's successive service to two

⁸⁷ Fu Zhanheng, “Lu Bopi xiaochuan,” in Fu Zhanheng, *Xiangfantang ji*, 6:25b–26a.

⁸⁸ Richard L. Davis, *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*, lxxi–lxxii, which also include the English translation of the biography of Feng Dao (439–43). See also Wang Gungwu, “Feng Dao: An Essay on Confucian Loyalty,” 123–45.

⁸⁹ Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, 291:9512. For a full translation on Sima Guang's commentary in English, see Richard L. Davis, *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*, 611, a passage appended to note 131.

⁹⁰ Quoted from Naomi Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty: Frontier Crossings in Liao China*, 35. Evolution of the concept of loyalty from the first millennium BCE. to the Northern Song has been thoroughly discussed in Chapter 2 of this book.

ruling houses as being incompatible with morality... [They considered] willingness to serve a new dynasty after serving the old implied moral degeneracy.⁹¹

This heightened standard of loyalty explains why certain Song literati in the late-thirteenth century refused to serve the Yuan. Considering the moral duty of all officials of a fallen dynasty, they adhered to what Frederick W. Mote called “compulsory eremitism.”⁹² No longer handling administrative tasks as government officials, they had much leisure to produce literary writings.⁹³ Apart from writings laden with nostalgia for the fallen dynasty, some of the poetry of this period mocked former Song officials who failed to remain loyal to the Song, among them Liu Mengyan. Comparing Wen Tianxiang’s hardship with Liu’s wealth and status, Lo Zhiren 羅志仁 glorified the former’s sacrifice as loyalty to the Song, and denigrated the latter. Lo equated Wen Tianxiang with an exemplary ancient loyalist Su Wu 蘇武 (140–60 BCE), a Han-state diplomat dispatched on a mission to the Huns,⁹⁴ while comparing Liu Mengyan with Yu Xin 庾信 (513–81), a disloyal emissary of the Liang dynasty (502–57) in the south who later surrendered to the Western Wei dynasty (535–57) in the north.⁹⁵ Furious about the poem, Liu Mengyan attempted to cook up charges against Lo, who barely escaped trouble.⁹⁶

Liu’s disloyalty to the Song even embarrassed his student He Menggui 何夢桂 (1228–?). He was ranked as the third candidate in the civil service examinations of 1265 when Liu Mengyan was the Chief Examiner. After the demise of the

⁹¹ Quoted from Frederick W. Mote, “Confucian Eremitism in the Yuan Period,” 208. This was an argument made by Xiao Gongquan.

⁹² Frederick W. Mote, “Confucian Eremitism in the Yuan Period,” 208.

⁹³ For recent monographic studies on the literature of Song remnant subjects, see Fang Yong, *Nan Song yimin shiren qunti yanjiu*; Niu Hairong, *Yuan chu Song Jin yimin ciren yanjiu*; and Yang Liang, *Song mo Yuan chu Siming wenshi ji qi shiwen yanjiu*. For discussion of the meanings behind their literary compositions, see Lao Yan-shuan, “Yuan chu nanfang zhishi fenzi – shi zhong suo fanying chu de pianmian,” 129–58; Chen Dezhi, “Cong yimin shi kan Yuan chu Jiangnan zhishi fenzi de minzu qijie,” 7–18 and Wang Renjie, “Song Yuan zhiji nanfang shiren de zaoyu yu xintai,” 209–23.

⁹⁴ Detained by the Huns for nineteen years during his mission, Su Wu endured various kinds of hardships and remained loyal to the Han. See Ban Gu, *Han shu*, 54:2459–69 for the biography of Su Wu.

⁹⁵ Yu Xin 庾信 (513–81) was an emissary from the Liang dynasty in the South to the Western Wei dynasty in the North in 554. When Wei started to invade the south, Yu defected to the Wei. He continued to stay in the north, serving the Northern Dynasties for nearly three decades, and never returned to the south. See the biography of Yu Xin in Li Yanshou, *Bei shi*, 83:2793 and Linghu Defen, *Zhou shu*, 41:748. For a recent study of the life of Yu Xin, see Ji Ding, *Yu Xin yanjiu*, 1–30.

⁹⁶ Jiang Zhengzi, *Shanfang suibi*, 7b.

Song, He became an eremite, refusing repeated invitations to join the Yuan government.⁹⁷ When He noticed that Liu had become Yuan Minister of Personnel, he sent his mentor a poem, which includes the following phrase: “Mr. Zhong has not yet changed the tone of southern music; Mr. Yu emptily embraced his sorrow in the Northern court.”⁹⁸ The allusions that He Menggui used in his poem were the stories of Zhong Yi 鍾儀 (ca. 584 BCE) and Yu Xin, the latter of which has just been discussed. Zhong Yi was a musician from the Chu 楚 Kingdom in the south in the Spring and Autumn period. He was captured by the Zheng 鄭 Kingdom and later presented to the Jin 晉 Kingdom. When the King of Jin gave Zhong Yi a musical instrument and asked him to make a performance, Zhong played the music of the south, which reflected his nostalgia. Jin officials held Zhong in high esteem, and perceived him as a “true gentleman” because he did not forget his origins and his past.⁹⁹ It is obvious that He Menggui saw Liu Mengyan as having the same nostalgia for the Song as Zhong Yi did for Chu. Even though Liu stayed in the north, as Yu Xin had, he could still lament the demise of the Song. But what Liu did in reality disappointed his student: He Menggui’s poem has the following: “Your apprentice whose hair already turned white is ashamed for being alive.”¹⁰⁰ This owes partly to the failure of He Menggui himself to die as a Song martyr and partly to the flaw in his mentor’s integrity.

Another thing deserving our attention is that most of the writings of the Song loyalists merely condemned Liu Mengyan’s disloyalty without taking up Liu’s specific career in the Yuan government. The extreme loyalist Zheng Sixiao seems to have been an exception. By using the metaphor of a drunken man unaware of the danger of sleeping in a cave with a tiger, Zheng mocked Liu Mengyan’s service to the “barbaric” Mongols as a path to suicide.¹⁰¹ Neither did Liu’s contemporaries condemn him as a traitor who sold out Song territories in exchange for high position in the Yuan court. Yet further charges were imposed on Liu in the hands of mid-Ming literati. Even though the highly moralistic *Outline* of 1476 still held that Liu Mengyan had surrendered to the Yuan after the fall of Quzhou, when all means of resistance were exhausted, subsequent Ming

⁹⁷ He Menggui was recommended by Cheng Jufu to Qubilai, and the emperor also agreed to appoint He to a high position in the government. Yet He still rejected the offer. In three of He’s poems, we can still see how He Menggui teased Cheng Jufu. For details, see Lao Yan-shuan, “Yuan chu nanfang zhishi fenzi—shi zhong suo fanying chu de pianmian,” 148–49.

⁹⁸ He Menggui, “Shang Liu Shangshu,” in He Menggui, *He Menggui ji*, 2:75. The original text reads: 鐘子未將南操變，庾公空抱北朝悲。

⁹⁹ For the story of Zhong Yi, see *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 844–85.

¹⁰⁰ He Menggui, “Shang Liu Shangshu,” in He Menggui, *He Menggui ji*, 2:75. The original text reads: 白髮門生憐未死。

¹⁰¹ Zheng Sixiao, “Da yi lue xu,” in Zheng Sixiao, *Zheng Sixiao ji*, 188.

literati who elaborated on the *Outline* were not as forgiving as Shang Lu. In his *Elaborations on the Outline and Details Continued* (*Xu Zizhi tongjian gangmu faming* 續資治通鑒綱目發明), submitted to the emperor in 1498,¹⁰² Zhou Li, a scholar from Yuhang county, fiercely criticized Liu Mengyan in a comment on the latter's surrender, a passage that deserves to be translated in full:

Mengyan was ranked as the first candidate in the civil service examinations under Lizong's reign and served as Chief Councilor under Gongdi's reign. It's not that his reputation was the wrong sort, or that his honors were trivial. Having experienced and served under the reigns of three emperors, the favors offered were not uncommon. But to sacrifice oneself after the collapse of a dynasty—this is an obligation. Already in Quzhou when the city was under siege, even though he could not take the lead of the soldiers to fight against the enemy, why couldn't he alone give up his life and uphold righteousness to take the lead of a whole people! So thus he disregarded honesty and shame, strived to greet the Yuan armies and surrender. Even ordinary people like hawkers who sold silk fabrics or butchers who slaughtered dogs would not behave in such a way, let alone the first examination candidate and Chief Councilor? Didn't he alone stain the scholar-official class?¹⁰³

Unlike the original *Outline and Details Continued*, Zhou Li's elaboration no longer mentioned the staunch defense at Quzhou. Instead Liu Mengyan was portrayed as an unscrupulous villain who without shame greeted the Yuan armies. This represents a stark contrast to earlier accounts of Liu's surrender. Paralleling Zhou Li's *Elaborations*, Zhang Shitai 張時泰, a student at the Imperial College during the mid-Ming years, also wrote a commentary to the *Outline*. His work, titled *Extended Meaning of the Outline and Details Continued* (*Xu Zizhi tongjian Gangmu Guangyi* 續資治通鑒綱目廣義) in 17 *juan*, was submitted to the Ming court in 1488/8.¹⁰⁴ Similar to Zhou Li, Zhang Shitai was critical of Liu Mengyan. Zhang's comment about the incident when Liu Mengyan persuaded Xie Fangde to surrender said that "Liu Mengyan himself is already shameful for having lost

¹⁰² The preface written by Zhou Li is not preserved in the *Siku Quanshu* and *Siku Huiyao* editions. I have consulted an edition reprinted in 1804 by Gusu juwen tang 姑蘇聚文堂, which has incorporated Zhou Li's preface dated 1498 in the front chapter. See Zhou Li, "Jinshu biaowen," in Shang Lu, *Tongjian gangmu xubian*, 12a–15a (1804 edition).

¹⁰³ Shang Lu, *Tongjian gangmu xubian*, 22:46a–b. The original text reads: 夢炎為理宗朝之狀元，為帝昴朝之宰相，名非不正，爵非不隆，歷仕三朝，恩非不溥，國亡而死，乃其分也。既居衢州，元兵攻陷，縱不能身先士卒以拒敵，獨不能舍生取義以先民？而乃不顧廉恥，相率迎降，雖販糴屠狗之流有所不為，況為狀元宰相？獨不有玷於縉紳乎？

¹⁰⁴ *Ming Xiaozong shilu*, 17:4b.

his moral integrity, let alone teaching others to lose theirs.”¹⁰⁵ Zhang also compared Liu with Xie when he remarked about the latter’s death; there he denounced Liu as “someone who bore the ignominy and lived in a haphazard manner at the moment,” while glorifying the latter as “giving up his life and gaining righteousness for eternity.”¹⁰⁶

Accusations from another Ming literatus, He Qiaoxin 何喬新 (1427–1502), were similar. In two articles praising Li Fu 李芾 (?–1276) and Xu Yingbiao 徐應鑣 (?–1275), both martyrs for the Song, He contrasted their deeds with Liu Mengyan’s perfidy.¹⁰⁷ In another comment honoring Jia Xuanweng 家鉉翁 (1213–ca.1295), a former Song official who preferred living humbly instead of receiving generous offers from the Yuan, He condemned Liu Mengyan as cravenly clinging to his life without any integrity.¹⁰⁸ Echoing Zhang Shitai, He Qiaoxin also held Liu Mengyan’s attempts to recruit Xie Fangde in great contempt. According to He, it is just like tarnished women who seduce chaste women, and thus corrupt loyalties.¹⁰⁹ In general, it was only by the time of the Ming that the notion of Liu’s having seduced others began to cross the line over and above merely shifting allegiance. Liu’s staunch defense at Quzhou was ignored by He Qiaoxin, who described Liu as a traitor who hastily surrendered and who contaminated the statuses of top examination candidates and of Chief Councilors:

When the Yuan troops besieged Quzhou, (Liu Mengyan) could not do his utmost to defend with resolution. Instead he hastily surrendered the city. With the Yuan dynasty established he accepted appointment as a Yuan official and enjoyed honorable titles and ample emoluments for the rest of his life. This is the so-called top examination candidate and Chief Councilor. How could military men and vulgar clerks not be contemptuous of Liu?¹¹⁰

Equally harsh was a mid-Ming poet Jiang Nan 姜南 (sixteenth century) who

¹⁰⁵ Shang Lu, *Tongjian gangmu xubian*, 23:39a. The original text reads: 夢炎自己失節，固為可耻，又教人失節耶？

¹⁰⁶ Shang Lu, *Tongjian gangmu xubian*, 23:44b–45a. The original text reads: 以忍耻偷生於當時，以舍生取義於千古。

¹⁰⁷ He Qiaoxin, “Yuan ke Tanzhou, zhizhou Li Fei sizhi” and “Di ji huangtaihou Quan shi beiqu, taixue sheng Xu Yingbiao sizhi,” in He Qiaoxin, *Jiaoqiu wenji*, 7:24a–25a and 26b–27b.

¹⁰⁸ He Qiaoxin, “Ci Song shizhe Jia Xuanweng hao chushi qian huanxiang,” in He Qiaoxin, *Jiaoqiu wenji*, 8:10b–11a.

¹⁰⁹ He Qiaoxin, “Fujian canzhi zhengshi Wei Tianyou zhi Song Xie Fangde zhi Yan, buqu, sizhi,” in He Qiaoxin, *Jiaoqiu wenji*, 8:7b–8b.

¹¹⁰ He Qiaoxin, “Hanlin xueshi chengzhi Liu Mengyan zhishi,” in He Qiaoxin, *Jiaoqiu wenji*, 8:11b–12a. The original text reads: 及元兵攻衢，又不能竭力固守，遽以城降，至乃立元朝，受元官，以榮名厚祿終其身，所謂狀元宰相者乃如此，豈不為武夫俗吏所嗤哉！

condemned Liu's studio name as deceptive: "Liu was already the utmost of disloyalty. Who was he deceiving [by naming his own studio as loyal]?"¹¹¹ Such denunciation was echoed by a mid-Ming Neo-Confucian scholar, Cai Qing 蔡清 (1453–1508). When descendants of Liu Mengyan requested that Cai to write a preface to a portrait of their famous ancestor, Cai wrote the following:

A top examination candidate and a Chief Councilor;
 He submitted himself to serve the barbarian.
 In the portrayal, his robe is folded to the left.
 The painter here would be [the upright historian] Dong Hu.¹¹²

By drawing an analogy between the actual painter of Liu Mengyan's portrait and Dong Hu, a prominent scholar praised by Confucius as "an upright historian who recorded the truth without camouflage,"¹¹³ Cai Qing was praising the current artist for depicting the truth. This is because robes folded left is a non-Han custom, thus indicating Liu's close association with the "barbaric" Mongols.

The image of Liu Mengyan turned increasingly grimy in the hands of Ming historians like Wang Zhu 王洙 (1521 Jinshi) and Ke Weiqi 柯維騏 (1497–1574), both of whom wrote histories of the Song. From his nationalist feelings against the Mongol threat from the North, Wang Zhu emphasized the historiographical tradition of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, and in his *Essentials of Song Dynastic History* (*Song shi zhi* 宋史質) he stressed so-called "praise and blame" 褒貶 as well as the distinction between the Chinese and barbarians.¹¹⁴ Liu Mengyan is seen as a "surrendered official" 降臣, and Wang contrasted the surrendered Liu to loyalist exemplars Wen Tianxiang and Xie Fangde: "A top examination candidate and Chief Councilor like Liu Mengyan abandoned his own learning. Ultimately he was despised by Qubilai. How could he be comparable with Wen (Tianxiang) and Xie (Fangde)?"¹¹⁵

Criticism was even harsher with another Ming historian, Ke Weiqi. Considering the Song as the only legitimate regime in China from the tenth through the thirteenth centuries, Ke was dissatisfied with the official histories of

¹¹¹ Jiang Nan, *Rongtang shihua*, 17:8b–9b. The original text reads: 其不忠甚矣，尚誰欺乎？

¹¹² This story is recalled by a Qing scholar Li Guangdi. See Li Guangdi, *Rongcun yulu*, 19:345–46. The original text reads: 狀元兼宰相，屈身事蠻胡。遺容猶左衽，畫工是董狐。

¹¹³ *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 663. The original text reads: 古之良史也，書法不隱。

¹¹⁴ Wang Deyi, "You *Song shi zhi* tandao Mingchaoren de Songshiguan," 229. This article provides a brief discussion of the *Song shi zhi* and the perception of the Ming people towards the Song.

¹¹⁵ Wang Zhu, *Song shi zhi*, 84:414. The original text reads: 至若……狀元宰相如留夢炎，而自棄其學，其終也卒為忽必烈所賤，視文謝諸人何如哉？

the Song, Liao (907–1125) and Jin that were compiled under the Yuan government, which saw Song, Liao and Jin all as legitimate. Ke therefore rewrote the *History of the Song Dynasty*, treating Song as orthodox, while Liao and Jin were supplementary. The entire project took nearly twenty years and was finished around 1555, with the title *New Edition of the History of the Song Dynasty* (*Song shi xinbian* 宋史新編). In this work, Ke Weiqi categorized Liu Mengyan as a “traitorous official” 叛臣, alongside prominent Song traitors like Zhang Bangchang 張邦昌 (1081–1127) and Liu Yu 劉豫 (1073–1143), who had usurped the throne and become heads of puppet regimes under the stewardship of the Jin.¹¹⁶ The rationale behind Ke’s categorization is highlighted in the prefatory guide to his work:

A majority of those included in the “Chapters on traitorous officials” of the *Old History* surrendered to the Jurchens. Among them were Li Qiong 鄴瓊 (1104–53) and the others who acted similarly to Liu Yu. For generals and officials in the fall of the Song who surrendered to the Yuan, like Liu Zheng 劉整 (1213–75) and his cohorts, they were even more treacherous than Liu Yu and Li Qiong. Liu Mengyan was a Song Chief Councilor and later served the Yuan. What is the difference between Liu and Du Chong 杜充 (?–1141)? Historians in the Yuan court listed Li Qiong’s group in the *History of the Jin Dynasty*, treating the evil doings of (Liu) Zheng and (Liu) Mengyan as a taboo for the reason that the Yuan owed its debt to them. In turn, the great righteousness of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* was extinguished. Now I compile and record their deeds, setting them out clearly and exposing them so that traitorous officials cannot escape from ill fame in posterity.¹¹⁷

Historians under the Yuan government, as Ke Weiqi argued, avoided referring to Liu Mengyan’s defection in their compilations, since the Yuan benefited from Liu’s support. As a conscientious historian adhering to the principle of praise and blame as set out in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, Ke Weiqi felt obliged to expose the evilness of Liu Mengyan for posterity to judge. But Ke seems to have neglected the staunch defense that Mongol armies encountered during their siege of Quzhou and the unconditional surrender of the Song court well before Liu’s

¹¹⁶ The biographies of “traitorous officials” 叛臣 are set out in *juan* 188 and 189 in the *Song shi xinbian* of Ke Weiqi. See Ke Weiqi, *Song shi xinbian*: 733–40. For a discussion of Ke Weiqi’s work, see Chan Hok-lam, “Ke Weiqi *Song shi xinbian* shuping,” 283–306. See page 298 in particular for a discussion of how Ke Weiqi treated traitorous officials.

¹¹⁷ Ke Weiqi, *Song shi xinbian*, “Fanli”: 1. The original text reads: 舊史〈叛臣傳〉，多降金之臣。按鄴瓊等，事同劉豫，而宋末降元帥臣，如劉整等，視豫、瓊尤甚。留夢炎以宰相仕元，視杜充何殊。乃瓊等只載《金史》，整、夢炎德其助己，皆爲之諱。《春秋》之大義滅矣。今各纂其事，列而暴之，無令亂臣賊子幸免惡名于後世也。

submission, hence exaggerating the misconduct of Liu Mengyan. From the above recounting, we noted that Liu Mengyan in fact exhausted all means to defend Quzhou, and his ultimate surrender owed much to the sheer military might of the Mongol troops. Liu did not sell out Song's territories and interests in exchange for immediate rewards from the Yuan, as seen in the fact of his underemployment that followed. Primarily, accusations by his contemporaries focus on Liu's failure to uphold integrity—absolute loyalty to the Song—and charges of betraying the Song had yet to appear. Ke Weiqi's criticism seems to be out of place. What, then, explains the very harsh critiques of mid-Ming literati?

Rising antagonism towards “barbarians” in the mid-Ming helps explain this phenomenon. The issue of serving a non-Han regime seems not to have been foremost in the minds of the Song loyalists: they stressed absolute loyalty to any defunct dynasty.¹¹⁸ But in mid-Ming times there were a series of threats from militarized non-Chinese groups in the north, particularly after the humiliating Tumu incident when Ming Emperor Yingzong (1427–64, r. 1436–49 and 1457–64) was captured by the Mongols in 1449.¹¹⁹ Ming literati then began to express strong anti-Mongol sentiments in their writings, and the value of “expelling barbarians” 攘夷, as seen in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, was reasserted, along with traditional “praise and blame.” Such circumstances, at least in part, induced the attacks on Liu Mengyan.¹²⁰

The condemnation of Liu Mengyan even demolished his image in his hometown. Back in the mid-1270s, people in Zhejiang were proud of Liu's achievements. It was the opposite case in less than three centuries, as Kong Tianyin 孔天胤 (1505–81), a Ming official who oversaw educational matters in Zhejiang, lamented that Zhejiang was ashamed of having Liu Mengyan.¹²¹ Neither was Liu Mengyan celebrated in his home prefecture Quzhou. In various editions of the gazetteer of Quzhou (1503, 1564, 1622 and 1711),¹²² the name Liu Mengyan only appears on the list of Advanced Scholar degree holders. Considering Liu Mengyan's credentials in the Southern Song, he should have emerged there as one of the most remarkable local personages, and his biography

¹¹⁸ Xiao Qiqing, *Yuanchao shi xinlun*, 4.

¹¹⁹ For a detailed discussion of the crisis of 1449, see Frederick W. Mote, “The T'u-mu Incident of 1449,” 243–72.

¹²⁰ See Wang Deyi, “You *Song shi zhi* tando Mingchaoren de Songshiguan,” 232–33; Chan Hok-lam, “Ke Weiqi *Song shi xinbian* shuping,” 287–88, and “Chinese Official Historiography at the Yuan Court: The Composition of the Liao, Chin, and Sung Histories,” 96–97.

¹²¹ Lai Jizhi, “Liu shi zixing jiezhuang,” in Lai Jizhi, *Tanghu qiaoshu*, 9:11a.

¹²² Three Ming and one Qing edition of the prefectural gazetteer of Quzhou can now be identified: the Ming are dated in the 16th year of Hongzhi (1503), 43rd year of Jiajing (1564) and the 2nd year of Tianqi (1622), while the Qing edition is dated in the 50th year of Kangxi (1711). See *Hongzhi Quzhou fuzhi*, *Jiajing Quzhou fuzhi*, *Tianqi Quzhou fuzhi* and *Kangxi Quzhou fuzhi*.

should have appeared. No biography of Liu Mengyan can be found in the local histories.

Even worse, not only Liu Mengyan did himself become a target of these arrows, but his offspring suffered as well. In a poem to a grandson of Liu Mengyan, Lu Wengui 陸文圭 (1256–1340) reminded the junior Liu of the glorious past of his grandfather and advised him to study hard so that the fame of the Liu family would carry on.¹²³ This suggests that the grandson of Liu Mengyan was probably still attempting to struggle through the examinations. Liu-family hardships also were noted by Zheng Zhen 鄭真 (1372 *juren*), a scholar from Zhejiang in the early Ming period. According to Zheng, Liu Mengyan's offspring wandered through life in poverty less than a hundred years after Liu's death. Some even became beggars.¹²⁴ Decline like this owes partly to the failure of its members to climb the social ladder through the examinations. In the lists of successful examination candidates preserved in local gazetteers, only a few Advanced Scholar degree holders in Yuan and Ming times from Xi'an county had a surname Liu (and they may be unrelated to Liu Mengyan's family). Lack of examination success echoed an anecdotal record that candidates with surname "Liu" had to declare that they were not offspring of Liu Mengyan in order to take the civil service examinations throughout the Ming dynasty.¹²⁵

Liu's hardship went beyond the examination halls. During the Wanli era (1573–1620), descendants of Liu Mengyan were insulted and unjustly treated by a magistrate of Xi'an county named Zhang Yaofeng 張堯封 (ca.1600), who was responsible for resolving the disputes between the Liu family and another regarding graveyards. During Zhang's investigation, he visited the ancestral temple of the Liu family, where he saw a painting of a senior official. After noticing that the portrait was of Liu Mengyan, Zhang became furious and yelled at the painting: "Aren't you the old and wicked Liu Mengyan? You betrayed the Song and intended to kill our Chief Councilor Wen (Tianxiang). I wish I could dig out your grave and burn your bones! How dare you to still be staring at us!"¹²⁶ Zhang then tore down the painting, spread it on the buttocks and lower back of Liu's descendants, and hit them with a cane fifty times, causing serious injury. The infuriated Zhang even made a fire, burnt the portrait and resolved that Liu's ancestral graveyard be allocated to the other family. Probably so as to avoid further trouble, the Liu family changed its surname to another character read "Liu." Feeling unjustly treated, some of Liu's descendants filed a lawsuit against

¹²³ Lu Wengui, "Song Liu Zhongzhai sun gui Sanqu," in Lu Wengui, *Qiangdong leigao*, 18:23a–b.

¹²⁴ Zheng Zhen, "Ji suojian," in Zheng Zhen, *Xingyang waishi ji*, 35:12b–13a.

¹²⁵ Lai Jizhi, "Liu shi zixing jiezhuang," in Lai Jizhi, *Tanghu qiaoshu*, 9:11a.

¹²⁶ He Yisun, "Ji Xi'an Liushi shi," in He Yisun, *Shuitianju wenji*, 5:4a–b. The original text reads: 得非老賊留夢炎乎? 此賊負宋, 欲殺吾文丞相, 吾恨不得掘爾墳, 燔汝骨, 尚敢見吾乎?

their opponents for occupying their ancestral graveyard when a new magistrate assumed duty. During the investigation, the descendants reported how poorly they were treated by ex-magistrate Zhang to the new magistrate, who told the entire story to his son He Yisun 賀貽孫 (1605–88), the one who recorded it.¹²⁷

It is worth noting that the above two stories were recorded by literati of the Ming-Qing transition era: the former by Lai Jizhi 來集之 (1604–83) and the latter by He Yisun. Both considered themselves to be scholar-officials of the Ming dynasty, hence they refused to serve the Qing (1644–1911) government and became eremites after the demise of the Ming. By including anecdotes about Liu Mengyan's descendants, these Ming loyalists' were alerting their ex-colleagues about the negative consequences of shifting allegiance to the Manchus. Xu Shiqi 徐石麒 (1578–1645), a martyr who committed suicide after the Manchu took over Jiaqing, was even more critical towards Liu Mengyan. He condemned Ming officials who surrendered to and glorified the Qing empire as being as unscrupulous as Liu Mengyan and Feng Dao.¹²⁸ This sort of attack in fact was quite typical among Ming loyalists and remnant resisters.¹²⁹

Likely influenced by such writings, unfavorable treatment of the descendants of Liu Mengyan persisted in the Qing. Chen Pengnian 陳鵬年 (1663–1723), a magistrate of Xi'an county in the early Qing, once visited families under his jurisdiction to requisition grain. When Chen saw a portrait of Xu Huiyan 徐徽言 (1090–1128), a Northern Song official from Xi'an who became a martyr after refusing to join the Jurchens,¹³⁰ ensconced in the ancestral temple of the Xu family, Chen paid due respect to and sat some distance from Xu's portrait. Yet when Chen noticed Liu Mengyan's in the Liu's ancestral temple, he put the painting on the floor and flogged it twenty times! According to a mid-Qing

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Xu Shiqi, "Da Wu Shipao," in Xu Shiqi, *Kejingtang ji*, 12:37a–38a.

¹²⁹ For example, a Ming loyalist Du Jun 杜濬 (1611–87) identified Feng Dao and Liu Mengyan as the utmost amid historical and contemporary figures who failed to uphold moral integrity. See Du Jun, "Ba Huang Jiuyan hubu jueming shi," in Du Jun, *Bianyatang yiji*, 3:14a. Li Shixiong 李世熊 (1602–86) and Peng Shiwang 彭士望 (1610–83), both remnant subjects of the Ming, mocked that Liu Mengyan and his descendants should feel ashamed after recognizing the deeds of loyal subjects and chaste women. See Li Shixiong, "Ming xiaolian Yu Yuqing mubiao," in Li Shixiong, *Hanzhi erji*, 6:42b–43a and Peng Shiwang, "Shu Guan Panpan shi hou," in Peng Shiwang, *Chigongtang shiwen chao*, Wenchao 9:1b. In a letter of 1651 from a Ming loyalist Zhang Huangyan 張煌言 (1620–64) to his ex-colleagues who had surrendered to the Manchus, Zhang used an analogy of Wen Tianxiang and Liu Mengyan to demarcate himself and the intended recipients of the letter. See Zhang Huangyan, "Fu weitidu Tian Xiong weizhen Zhang Jie weidao Wang Erlu shu," in Zhang Huangyan, *Zhang Cangshui ji*, 5:3b–4a. All these writings of the Ming loyalists reinforced the disloyal image of Liu Mengyan.

¹³⁰ For the biography of Xu, see *Song shi*, 447:13190–94.

scholar-official Yao Ying 姚瑩 (1785–1853), there were hardly any descendants of Liu Mengyan studying in government schools after this incident, which marked the decline of the Liu family that had once been quite prominent.¹³¹ Even the ending of dynastic rule in China did little to help rescue the reputation of Liu Mengyan. In a postscript to the literary collection of Song loyalist Wang Yuanliang, dated 1918/8, Wang Guowei praised Wang Yuanliang's allegiance to the Song and at the same time denounced Liu Mengyan:

A minor official in the Song court, Wang Suiyun moved northward after the demise of the dynasty, serving the imperial family in captivity in Dadu and following the dethroned young emperor in rural areas. His contemporary officials like Liu Mengyan should feel shame!¹³²

Wang Guowei was a Qing loyalist since he never served in the Republican government after the demise of the Qing in 1911. His strong nostalgia towards the defunct dynasty, attested by his continuous service to the dethroned Emperor Puyi 溥儀 (1906–67, r.1908–11),¹³³ is comparable to what Wang Yuanliang did for the Song imperial family in captivity, which explains why he had a high regard of the Song loyalist. By contrast, Wang Guowei was contemptuous of former Qing officials who failed to uphold their loyalty to the fallen dynasty and served as leaders in the Republican government. Among them, Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 (1859–1916) who betrayed the Qing by forcing Puyi to abdicate, was the worst. Wang Guowei's scorn for Liu Mengyan as shown in the postscript, being an echo of the Ming loyalists three centuries earlier, could therefore be interpreted as his insinuations about the treacherous deeds of the usurper Yuan Shikai. Repeated denunciations of Liu Mengyan in the writings of Ming and Qing loyalists discussed above suggest how an icon of disloyalty was forged in Chinese history.

Conclusion

This paper is a study of the forging of an iconic disloyalty. It does so by analyzing the deeds and evolving images of Liu Mengyan from the thirteenth

¹³¹ Chen Kangqi, "Chen zonghe zhang Liu Mengyan xiang," in Chen Kangqi, *Langqian jiwén*, Er bi 15:602–3.

¹³² Wang Guowei, "Hushan leigao Suiyun ji bai," in Wang Yuanliang, *Zengding hushan leigao*, 195. The original text read: 汪水雲以宋室小臣，國亡北徙，侍三宮於燕邸，從幼主於龍荒，其時大臣如留夢炎輩，當為愧死！

¹³³ For details of the activities of Wang Guowei during 1923–26, see Sun Dunheng, *Wang Guowei nianpu xinbian*, 115–65.

century onwards. Despite the fact that Liu was one of the top scholar-officials of his generation, he never received wide acclaim among Song officials, partly because he promoted cronyism and partly because he fled the capital in the midst of Mongol invasions. Even though Liu tried to rescue his reputation through his defense of Quzhou and not surrendering until the last minute, it did not help as he soon assumed high positions in the Yuan government. This was generally deemed by Liu's contemporaries as a failure to uphold absolute loyalty to one's own dynasty in favor of mere material rewards. But we should not neglect the fact that Liu Mengyan did not surrender without a fight, that the Song court had declared unconditional surrender well before Liu's submission, and that Liu had been underemployed for over a year before he took up official duty in the Yuan court. I would therefore argue that Liu had never intended to sell out Song territories and interests in exchange for immediate rewards from the Yuan. In addition, the initial hardships of Liu Mengyan in Dadu reflect Qubilai's apathy in appointing civilian officials from the south to high offices, in stark contrast to his generous treatment of military commanders who shifted allegiance.

During his tenure as a Yuan official for nearly two decades, it seems there is no trace of major policy deliberations in which Liu participated, which owes partly to Qubilai's skepticism towards Han and Southern Confucian scholars as a whole. Even worse, Liu Mengyan's credentials as a former Song Chief Councilor proved not to be a valuable asset to the Yuan, a fact attested by his failure to recruit former Song officials and talented literati from the South. After taking Liu Mengyan's attempts and Cheng Jufu's mission into account, it appears that the Yuan court's vision to improve governance in the South through the networks of former Song officials there was hard to realize. What Liu might not have expected was that serving as a recruiter for the Yuan government would incur further destruction of his own image in the hands of Ming literati, since encouraging others to serve the conquerors seemed to many to cross the line.

Literary writings by Liu Mengyan's contemporaries unveiled his networks with two groups of people—colleagues at the Hanlin Academy in the Yuan court, and Song loyalists who refused to serve the Mongols and became eremites. A negative image of Liu Mengyan started to emerge in the writings of the latter group due to a heightened moral expectation for Song scholar-officials to maintain absolute loyalty. What was even more detrimental to Liu's reputation was his refusal to release Wen Tianxiang, which ultimately led to the latter's death in 1283. Drawing an analogy between Wen and Liu, people glorified the former as a martyr while at the same time denounced the latter as an official failing to uphold moral integrity—absolute loyalty to the Song. The negative stigma on Liu Mengyan was further exaggerated by mid-Ming literati, who held an increasingly antagonistic attitude towards the Mongols after the Tumu incident in 1449. Apart from condemning Liu's role as a recruiter for the

barbarians, mid-Ming literati unfairly denounced Liu as an unscrupulous traitor in adherence to the praise and blame historiographical tradition rooted in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. Even more fatal to Liu's image was that after later dynastic collapses, the disloyal image of Liu Mengyan was resurrected in the writings of remnant subjects, as happened in the mid-17th and early 20th centuries. Even the descendants of Liu Mengyan could not escape the curse, as they were unjustly punished by local officials for their ancestors' sins. This story of Liu Mengyan not only shows how the power of praise and blame in Chinese historiography affects the glory and fortune of an individual and his offspring, but also reveals how an individual's fame is shaped and transmitted to posterity. Whether one's name "spread like a scent for a hundred generations" or "remains stinky for ten thousand years" depends on how his/her contemporaries and literati in posterity interpreted and portrayed his/her deeds. The political and social circumstances of the interpreters was closely related to how they portrayed the subject to the ideal prototypes while applying their own definitions of cardinal virtues like loyalty, which are essential elements in forging one's image in history.

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