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CHINA'S GATE TO THE SOUTH:

Iranian and Arab Merchant Networks in Guangzhou during the Tang-Song Transition (c.750–1050), Part II: 900–c.1050*

ANGELA SCHOTTENHAMMER

In a world of tumult many courtiers [sic] of the Middle Kingdom journeyed to the far reaches of Lingnan in search of sanctuary. There were famous courtiers banished for life in the far south during Tang times who often left behind survivors; or officials on recent assignment who encountered tumult that impeded their safe passage back north – these are the sorts of persons to become itinerants beyond the Lingnan Mountains¹

1. Introduction

“In late Tang times, Nanhai was the last region to succumb to chaos, so senior courtiers after Xizong’s reign [僖宗, r. 873–888] serving locally as governors could find no place untouched by turmoil, safe for Nanhai. Yet it also turned independent beginning with Yin’s [that is, Liu Yin 劉隱, A.S.] rule” (Davis 2004: 537).

During much of the tenth century the Guangdong region was ruled independently from the rest of China by the Liu 劉 family who established the Kingdom of Nan Han 南漢 (917–971) or Southern Han. Liu Yin 劉隱 (873–911; posthumous Nan Han Liezong 南漢烈宗) is recorded as its founder. Already in 905, the weak Tang 唐 court (618–906) appointed Liu Yin as military commissioner (*jiedushi* 節度使) of Qinghai 清海 in 905 and enfeoffed him as king of Pengjun 彭郡 in 907, thus making him de facto ruler of the Lingnan 嶺南 region (lit. “south of the mountain ranges”, i.e. modern Guangxi and Guangdong) with its capital Guangzhou. After the fall of the Tang in 907, Liu Yin started to pay tribute to the new succeeding Liang 梁 court in Luoyang (Later Liang 後梁, 907–923) and obviously maintained close relations with them. In 907, he accepted the title of prince of Nanping (Nanping wang 南平王) that the Later Liang offered him. As military governor of Jinghai 靜海, he also became responsible for the Chinese protectorate in Annam (modern Vietnam, Hanoi) and was enfeoffed as King of Nanhai 南海 (lit. Southern Seas) in 909. Together with his younger brother, Liu Zhi 劉陟 or better known as Liu Yan 劉巖 (889–942), they eventually managed to conquer the whole region of Lingnan and they tried to create a southern version of the Tang capital, Chang’an (Miles 2002: 46).

After Liu Yin’s death in 911, his younger brother Liu Yan (r. 917–941) took over rulership of Lingnan and inherited the official titles of his brother. In the first years, following the narrative in *Jiu Wudai shi* 舊五代史, he was still busy with pacifying the region. When he heard that Qian Liu 錢鏐 (852–932) received investiture as King of Wuyue he is quoted with the words: “The Central Plains (i.e. Chinese main territory) are full of false pretensions; who actually is the real ruler? How

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¹ Quoted from *Xin Wudai shi* 新五代史 (*New History of the Five Dynasties*), cf. “Hereditary House of Southern Han”, in Ouyang Xiu; translation in Davis 2004: 536.

can it be that one [is able to] cross ten thousands of miles through mountains and water [i.e. has far-reaching relations with other countries and peoples] and still [at home] serves a puppet court?” According to *Zizhi tongjian* and *Jiu Wudaishi*, Liu Yan, in the 8th month of 917, usurped the imperial order in Guangzhou, named his country Da Yue 大越 and adopted the title of Qianheng 乾亨 (917–925) as reign period.² Following the recently discovered tomb inscription of Wu Cun’e 吳存鏐 Liu Yan carried the title of King of Nan Yue 南越 already in 915 (乾化 5)³ and he changed the kingdom’s name to Han in the 11th month of the following year, that is 918⁴ – considering himself a descendent and successor of the glorious Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 AD), whose founder’s surname was also Liu 劉.

The following year, according to *Jiu Wudaishi*, he unlawfully conducted the state sacrifices and imperial rites, pardoned everybody within the country’s boundaries and changed his personal name from Zhi to Yan 巖. From this time onwards, the wealth (lit. pearls) from the Southern Seas accumulated and gathered in Guangzhou. But his country also communicated with Guizhou and Sichuan in the West and received their costly presents. He annually exchanged presents and betrothals with all the rulers and countries north of the mountain passes (Lingbei 嶺北).⁵ *Jiu Wudai shi* explicitly mentions Nan Han’s ties with the northern countries, emphasizing that Liu Yan eagerly showed his wealth to itinerant merchants from north of the mountains (*Lingbei xingshang* 嶺北行商).⁶ As for the situation within the borders of his kingdom, he possessed enough wealth to sustain his rule, and as far as his foreign policy is concerned, he opposed the rest of China (內足自富，外足抗中國).⁷ This shows that, on the one hand, the Nan Han maintained a policy of distance towards the central Chinese dynasties and sought to consolidate his kingdom economically speaking independently from the rest of China, being extremely proud of having succeeded to do so. On the other hand, however, it shows that the kingdom was imbedded in a wider diplomatic and commercial network, in which Liu Yan sought to position himself and his kingdom as wealthy, independent country that the others should respect and pay some form of “tribute” to. Definitely, he intended to assert himself, forming political alliances or declaring war, if he considered it necessary, to reach this goal.

The Nan Han certainly obtained commodities sold overseas also from beyond their borders and possibly sold part of their goods to “northern” merchants. We do unfortunately not know much about Nan Han merchants, but judging from archaeological evidence, as we will see below, it is clear that the Nan Han court was actively involved in maritime trade.

The Nan Han regime was consequently relatively strong and prosperous, deriving much of its wealth from maritime trade. But its rule was characterized as illegitimate in official historiography, the region as peripheral and remote, and its rulers as cruel, immoral, extravagant and arrogant, partly influenced by sorcery and superstition (Miles 2002: 51). To get a better idea of why the official picture drawn of this kingdom is so relatively negative and who the rulers of this inde-

² *Zizhi tongjian* 1956: 270.1876.

³ Cheng Cunji 1994: Originally, a certain Zhao Tuo 趙佗 (c. 230–137 BC), a former Commander, who had been sent together with Tu Ju 屠睢 to subjugate the local Yue people by Qin Shihuang 秦始皇 (r. 221–210 BC), had controlled the region during early Han times. After the collapse of the Qin dynasty in 206 BC, Zhao Tuo allied with local chieftains and founded his own kingdom. In 203 BC, he proclaimed himself King of Nan Yue. His rule was later officially acknowledged by the Han court, which did not yet possess the political and military strength to subjugate the region. That Liu Yan used “Da Yue” instead of “Nan Yue” for his kingdom may be traced back to his ambition, trying to represent officially not only a small southern part of China.

⁴ *Zizhi tongjian* 1956: 270.1880.

⁵ *Jiu Wudai shi* 1976: 135.1807-08.

⁶ *Jiu Wudai shi*, op. cit., ibid.

⁷ *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian* 1983: 5.23b (2190).

pendent kingdom in reality were, I will below first discuss the origins of their family – after all even the hypothesis that they were descendants of Iranian or Arab merchants has been raised – comparing their “official history” with the presentation in recently discovered inscriptions, before I focus on Nan Han’s maritime relations.

Problematic is not only the scarcity of sources but also the negative picture later Chinese historiographers have drawn of this period that was never recognized as a legitimate dynasty. Only gradually are we able to reassess the role of this kingdom and its local rulers by analyzing new archaeological evidence, such as tomb inscriptions. We will definitely have to revise our picture of an ignorant, uneducated ruling élite with partly barbaric characteristics. Interesting to note is also the fact that obviously women played a much more important and active role also in politics than Song sources make us believe.

2. Origins of the Southern Han (Nan Han 南漢)

The name of the ruling family was Liu. Both *Jiu Wudai shi* and *Xin Wudai shi* state that a certain Liu Ren’an 劉仁安 (*Jiu Wudai shi*) respectively Liu Anren 劉安仁 (*Xin Wudai shi*), his grandfather, was a man from the north, hailed from Shangcai 上蔡, Henan, and later relocated himself in Fujian. Then, after having conducted trade at the Nanhai Commandery (Guangdong) he is said to have settled in Guangdong.⁸ Liu Qian 劉謙 or Liu Zhiqian 劉知謙 (d. 894), his son and the father of Liu Yin, had been a military attaché in Guangdong of non-local origin before he was assigned as Tang regional inspector (*cishi* 刺史) of Fengzhou 封州. He is said to have been engaged in restoring law and order in Guangzhou after the Huang Chao 黃巢 (?–884) Rebellion in 878/879.⁹

Liu Yin, according to *Jiu Wudai shi*, was the eldest son of Liu Qian and the niece of the military-governor of Liangnan, Wei Zhou 韋宙. Following this biography, he was still very much engaged in consolidating the region, in which robberies were frequent. Once the region as “pacified” and stable, he and especially his son, Liu Yan, greatly sponsored and involved in maritime commerce.

Given the increasing role of Arab and Persian merchants in south Chinese port cities since early Tang times,¹⁰ it has even been argued that members of the ruling house of the Nan Han were descendants of migrants of Arab or Persian origin, who had earlier migrated to China, an argument first raised by Fujita Toyohachi 藤田豐八 (1869–1929) in the early twentieth century. The surname “Liu”, so Fujita, actually was a transcription of “Ali” (Toyohachi 1916: 247–257). This argument seemed to be plausible especially against the background that a Chinese source that provides insight into maritime trade at Guangzhou during the late eleventh century, *Pingzhou ketan* 萍洲可談 (preface by the author dated 1119) by Zhu Yu 朱彧 (fl. 1110), states that during the Yuanyou 元祐 period (1086–1093) someone from the foreign quarter named “Liu” married a woman from the

⁸ *Jiu Wudai shi* 1976: 135.1807; *Xin Wudai shi* 1974: 65.809.

⁹ Huang Chao sacked the city of Guangzhou and wreaked a massacre among its foreign residents. The Arab geographer and writer Abū Zaid of Sīraf (writing in 916) speaks of 120,000 Muslims, Jews, Christians, and Magians being killed by Huang Chao, apart from Chinese. See Levy 1961: 113–4.

¹⁰ See my first part of this study “China’s Gate to the South: Iranian and Arab Merchant Networks in Guangzhou during the Tang-Song Transition (c. 750–1050), Part I: 750 – c. 900” (forthcoming). Generally speaking, historians of maritime Asia all agree on the importance of Iranians and Arabs in and for China’s long-distance trade, although it is of course impossible to assess the concrete quantity of this trade. Stephen G. Haw is, however, extremely sceptical of the significance of merchants from the Persian Gulf for China’s trade during the Tang-Song transition and the Song period. He rather suggests that “Southeast Asians played a more important role in maritime trade with China than has generally been recognised, and that, conversely, Persians played a lesser role.”

Cf. http://www.academia.edu/11459020/The_Chinese_Term_Bosi_%E6%B3%A2%E6%96%AF.

In addition, he is convinced that the Chinese expression 波斯 actually refers to Malay Bosi.

imperial line.¹¹ Liu, similar like Li 李, were obviously preferred Chinese surnames to adopt by foreigners (Chen Yinke 2001: 365–366).

Recent archaeological discoveries can now bring more light into this question. In this context, especially the tombs and tomb inscriptions of Liu Hua 劉華 (896–930) in Fuzhou, Fujian province (dated 930) and that of Liu Yan 劉夔 have to be mentioned. Liu Hua's tomb inscription in detail discusses the ancestry of the Liu family and records relations between the Southern Han and the Min kingdoms, both of which were actively engaged in maritime trade (Chen Hongjun 2010: 86–91). Evidence from Liu Yan's recently discovered mausoleum interestingly also suggests that his ancestors originated from north China (Liu Wensuo 2008: 285–316).

Liu Hua was the daughter of Liu Yin and, in 917, married the son of the Min King Wang Shenzhi 王審知 (862–925), Wang Yanjun 王延鈞 (d. 935), also known as Wang Lin 王璘 or 王璘 or Emperor Huizong of Min 閩惠宗 (r. 933–935). The tomb is not only of major importance due to various grave objects found therein: Three turquoise-blue glazed vases have been found. On the basis of the close affinity between the Islamic wares with floral designs and turquoise-blue glaze from Sīrāf, comparable wares from Banbhore and Mantai, and wares from the tomb of Liu Hua, the Japanese Islam historian Yajima Hikoichi 家島彦一 pointed out that blue-glazed wares of this type were probably produced in Sīrāf and distributed across Asia by local traders.¹²

Accordingly to her tomb inscription, Liu Hua came from Heshui 賀水, Fengzhou 封州 in Guangdong, but her ancestors originally stemmed from Pengcheng 彭城 (modern Xuzhou) in Jiangsu. According to *Xin Wudaishi* and *Songshi*, however, the family originally migrated from Shangcai in the course of the political turmoil during the Jin 晉 period (265–420). As they were engaged in trade, they eventually moved to Fujian before they settled in Guangdong.¹³

It is, consequently, probably true what is claimed in the standard historical sources, namely that the Liu ancestors emigrated from the north in the eighth century, probably from Shangcai in Henan to Pengcheng in Jiangsu, as stated in Liu Hua's tomb inscription, and then to Fujian from where they finally moved to Guangdong. Nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence to maintain the suspicion uttered by Clark who argues, on the basis of evidence in the *Wuguo gushi* 五國故, that the Liu genealogy is at least spurious, intending “to mask their ancestry and enhance their credibility in the Chinese world of the tenth century”, as they “were chieftains of one of the many non-Chinese tribes that lived in the far south, the people whom the Chinese lumped together as Man”.¹⁴ Interestingly, namely, the Liu from Pengcheng belonged to the top sixteen office-holder families as identified by Mao Hanguang 毛漢光 (Mao Hanguang 1986: 147–150). At the same time, “(w)hat is remarkable is the disproportionate number of claims to both the seven and the sixteen most prestigious clans”, as Tackett observed (Tackett 2006: 67–68). Was the descent from the Pengcheng Liu family consequently a means to legitimise their position? Liu Hua's great-grandfather's name, we learn, apparently was not Anren or Ren'an, as stated in most other sources, but simply An 安. He was a common person, wearing “cotton garments” all his life. This clearly indicates that her great-grandfather did not hold an official title during his lifetime – possibly a plausible explanation

¹¹ *Pingzhou ketan* 1975: 2.22: 元佑間廣州蕃坊劉姓人娶宗女。官至左班殿直。劉死，宗女無子，其家爭分財產，遣人搗登聞鼓。朝廷方悟宗女嫁夷部。因禁止。

¹² Cf. Hsieh Ming-liang 2010: 137–143, 139, with reference to a respective book chapter in Japanese by Yajima Hikoichi on the networks of Sīrāf merchants.

¹³ *Xin Wudaishi* 1974: 65.809; *Songshi* 1985: 481.13919; cf. also http://www.zhslw.com/new_page_39.htm; <http://www.zwbk.org/MyLemmaShow.aspx?zh=zh-tw&lid=135987>; http://yiming323_2002.mysinablog.com/index.php?op=ViewArticle&articleId=1791606; <http://www.baike.com/wiki/%E5%88%98%E9%BE%91> (accessed October 4, 2015).

¹⁴ Clark 2009: 133–205, 153, following the argumentation by Masahiro 1984: 229–253.

why they claimed descent from the Liu family of Pengcheng? Consequently, even if the Liu ruling house may not have intended to conceal local Man-origins of the family, there is still sufficient evidence to support the hypothesis that they intended to conceal details of their ancestry who definitely did not hold office – and most probably were of foreign descent.¹⁵

Liu Wensuo 劉文鎖 recently discussed the newly discovered tomb inscription from Liu Yan's 劉龔 mausoleum in Kangling 康陵, entitled "Gaozu tianhuang dadi aicewen" 高祖天皇大帝哀冊文¹⁶ and resumed the question of the ethnic origin of the Liu family. In his eyes, the fact, first, that the Liu originally came from the north – the inscription claims it was from Pengcheng – second, that their ancestry can only be traced back to Liu An(ren) and that "An" was one of the nine foreign surnames under the Tang of Tujue 突厥 origin, strongly suggests that the ancestors of the Liu family were originally foreigners, but not Persians or Arabs who had reached China on the sea route but rather foreigners from the north, possibly of an ethnic group related to the Turks, perhaps Sogdians (?) or Western Asians (Hu 胡), who settled in China in the early Tang dynasty, and who later migrated first to the Huai River area, and then, in the ninth century, to Fujian and Guangzhou. To further support his argument, Liu Wensuo quotes a passage from the *Dongdu shilue* 東都事略 stating that Liu Yan "observed that the people from the north with necessity speak of themselves as residing for generations in (the region of) Xian[yang], [the former] Qin [territory] and feeling ashamed of the ruler of the Southern barbarians (Nan Man)."¹⁷ Many people around that time tried to conceal their foreign origins and spoke of themselves in a similar manner, so that it is very much possible that Liu Yan, too, originally stemmed from the region around Chang'an, having foreign roots.

At any rate, that the ancestors of the Liu were Muslims is very improbable, also against the background that neither the so far discovered tombs nor the tomb inscriptions provide us with any hints that the deceased may have believed in Islam. Liu Yan, for example, rather believed in both Daoism and Buddhism and possessed a broad range of interest also in Confucian scholarship.

3. Varying Narratives: Tomb inscriptions versus official accounts

Considering Liu Yan's and Nan Han's representation and portrayal in official accounts, the characterising of Liu Yan provided in his "lament inscription" is particularly striking. The different narratives provided in both types of sources may clearly show that we should be very cautious when reading official biographies and descriptions of personalities who were either critical of official rule,

¹⁵ To support his hypothesis Clark (op. cit., ibid.) also mentions the marriage of Liu Qian with the niece of Wei Zhou between 860 and 873. Wei Zhou had earned a reputation of cultivating cordial relationships with minority peoples.

¹⁶ Liu Wensuo 2008. In the English abstract, Liu Wensuo explains: "Comparing the original Kangling epitaph with postscripts in works on bronze-stone inscriptions of the Qing dynasty and with history books, raises several important questions concerning the Southern Han dynasty and its founder Liu Yan. This paper discusses the following issues: the system of conferring posthumous titles in Southern Han and the temple titles of dead emperors during this period, the author of the epitaph, the administrative achievements during Liu Yan's reign, his religious orientation, and also his abilities and interests in magical calculation or fortune-telling, and in healing and medical arts, etc. In this epitaph, the parts that laud Liu Yan's cultural achievements and promotion of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism are especially worth noting. They stand in stark contrast to historical records that exaggerate the atrocities by this so-called 'despot'. The second part of this article re-examines the question about the royal Liu family's ancestry by analysing newly discovered evidence. Based on the analysis, it is clear that Liu Yan's ancestors originated from the Hu 胡, who settled in China during the Tang dynasty, and who later moved first to the Huai River area, and then to Fujian and Guangzhou (Panyu) at the end of the Tang dynasty. Through struggle and personal ability, along with the opportunity and chance afforded them at this time in history, they were able to found an independent dynasty in the Lingnan region. They were not of Arabian or Persian descent."

¹⁷ Liu Wensuo 2008: 307, with reference to *Dongdu shilue*, 23.162.

stemmed from non-Han Chinese origins, or were otherwise suspect in government eyes. Not infrequently they were portrayed as uncivilised or simply bad and cruel persons, or their biography was completely erased from official accounts.

But how do we know that the inscription tells us the truth? As I have argued elsewhere, tomb inscriptions should select the supposedly most important events and special features from the life of the deceased, in order to portray him/her in a positive way but without distorting or embellishing the truth, according to accepted moral standards in this life that were transferred to the afterlife. Lies and falsehoods would definitely have evoked the “powers of the departed” (Schottenhammer 2003: 80). While parts of Tang epitaphs contain of course ornamental styles and literary embellishments, it was, however, completely contrary to the objectives of tomb inscriptions to consciously include false information or pervert the facts.¹⁸ Certainly, this possibility cannot be entirely excluded. Ancestry, at least until Tang times, was frequently “embellished”, for example also by reconstructing a very long genealogy that can be traced back until Zhou times (1045–221 BC) or even earlier. But concerning other information it is, I would argue, at least improbable that tomb inscriptions lie or distort important information.

Liu Yan, according to his inscription, was interested in fortune-telling and magical arts as well as in medicine and pharmacy. His cultural achievements, the interest in Confucian scholarship, Daoism and Buddhism, in medicinal and pharmaceutical knowledge, which are all recorded in his epitaph, clearly contradict the picture that is drawn of him in official historiography.

Also Liu Hua is portrayed in her tomb inscription as an engaged and knowledgeable woman who highly valued the ancient Confucian classics of the state of Lu 魯 (i.e. the home of Kongzi 孔子, Latinized as “Confucius”). After the general introductory information on who composed and who wrote and encarved the inscription the text begins with the following words: “In the past, when Jianghou 姜后 (Queen Jiang; 9th c. BC) [the wife of King Xuan 宣 of Zhou, r. 827–781 BC] took of her hair-pins as admonition, many records and documents praised this. A text that a woman from the state of Lu has in her hands, this is the book “Chunqiu 春秋” (*Spring and Autumn Annals*), a prestigious work that is traditionally ascribed to Kongzi.”¹⁹ The inscription, thus, definitely intends to stress the Confucian erudition of Liu Hua – an assessment that runs counter to the general rather negative image drawn by Neo-Confucian Song historians on the role of women in politics and society. Evidence rather suggests that women had a strong influence on the political culture during the southern Han. They were able and erudite, even filled high positions as officials and exerted great influence on the government (Qiao Yuhong 2014: 80–83).

The purportedly negative influence of women is particularly stressed in the biography of the last Nan Han ruler, Liu Chang 劉鋹 (r. 959–971). Chang is described as “stupendously stupid... considering officialdom incapable of complete loyalty because of family duties and concern for progeny, leaving only eunuchs as intimates capable of deployment.”²⁰ Inside the palace, he played his debauched games with female attendants and – even worse – including a Persian foreign woman (Bosifu 波斯婦 in Chinese), who had such a negative influence on him and whom he doted upon so much that he never again inquired about state affairs.²¹ Furthermore, he had a female shaman called

¹⁸ See also Twitchett 1992: 71f.

¹⁹ Text according to the transcription in Chen Hongjun 2010: 86.

²⁰ *Xin Wudai shi* 1974: 65.817; Davis 2004: 544.

²¹ “Liu Chang, originally named Jixing, had been invested Prince of Wei. ... Because court affairs were monopolised by Gong Chengshu and cohort, Liu Chang in the inner palace could play his debauched games with female attendants, including a Persian. He never again emerged to inquire of state affairs.” Davis 2004: 544. See also Kuwabara Jitsuzō 1928: 1–79; and 1935: 1–104.

Fan Huzi 樊胡子 at his court, thus seeming to have been almost completely dominated by women as a consequence of what it should not surprise the reader that he engulfed his kingdom into abyss. Fan Huzi – perhaps meaning Fan, the foreigner, as Faure correctly suggests – acted on behalf of the Jade Emperor deity (Faure 2007: 24).

We see here a clearly intended image of the last Nan Han ruler as a morally spoilt one, having himself distracted even by a *foreign woman* as well as a female shaman – very obviously something very condemnable as seen through the eyes of a conservative Neo-Confucian moralist, such as Ouyang Xiu.²²

Nan Han rulers were probably polytheist, both Daoists and Buddhists as well as sponsors of local deities and shamanism and greatly sponsored these religions. Liu Chang, for example, had twenty-eight Buddhist monasteries built on the four sides of the city, each corresponding to one of the lunar constellations. As Faure (op. cit. *ibid.*) has shown, Buddhist knowledge was spreading, but their rites and teachings were just another force to draw upon, similar to that of indigenous deities.

A family with foreign origins that successfully made its way up to rulership and established a wealthy local kingdom, a kingdom where practices unfamiliar or even morally condemnable to the Neo-Confucian scholars who composed the official narrative of the Wudai Period prevailed, such as an influential role of women in politics, the promotion of magical arts and Buddhism, or a hedonistic way of living, probably was reason enough to portray them in a negative way. We should consequently critically reassess and start to revise the traditional picture of the rulers of the Nan Han that official historiography has so far comported.

4. Nan Han after Liu Yan's death

Liu Yan's son and successor, Liu Hongdu 劉宏度 or Liu Bin 劉玠 (920–943, r. 941–943), died young and is described as a morally degenerated, inept governor who “summoned actor-musicians to make music, drinking wine in the palace and amusing himself with naked boys and girls. Occasionally donning a black hemp shirt, he consorted by night with prostitutes and casually roamed from one commoner's home to the next. In consequence, bandits from the mountains to the seas vied to rise up”, one of them, Zhang Yuxian 張遇賢, even declaring himself “King of the Middle Heavens and the Eight Kingdoms [that means, he started a rebellion that lasted from 942 to 943]...Bin failed to reflect sufficiently on such events, causing the eastern Ling region to slip into chaos” (Davis 2004: 541). Zhang Yuxian's rebel forces successfully captured a number of prefectures especially in the eastern part of the kingdom.²³ His rule obviously led to an almost complete loss of government control over the region. As Kurz has shown, the rebel groups that joined Zhang Yuxian were looking for a “multilaterally recognised leader presiding over a hierarchical system with a bureaucracy, a royal title and a reign title” (Kurz 2014: 22). Eventually, Bin was assassinated through a plot of his younger brother, Liu Hongxi 劉宏熙 (920–958) after only two years of rule.

Liu Hongxi thereupon changed his name and ascended the Nan Han throne as Liu Cheng 劉晟 (920–958; r. 943–958). During his reign, Nan Han is said to have continued to prosper and eventually

²² It is generally accepted that not few Persian women were to be found in Canton. In the Tang period, for example, they would be found among the inmates of the harem of Liu Chang, and in the Song they were described as typically wearing great numbers of earrings and cursed with quarrelsome dispositions. Wearing earrings was a very common tradition in the Sassanid Empire (224–651) and also became popular among Islamic women of later periods. Kuwabara Jitsuzō 1928: 91.

²³ For this rebellion, cf. Kurz 2014: 1–23. The rebels, after all, are said to have numbered more than 100,000 men (p. 17).

expanded to incorporate all of former Nan Yue.²⁴ Liu Cheng is said to have “deployed to the high seas a force led by Ji Yanyun [暨彦贇], director of ‘sea-hulk’ warships (*jujian zhihui shi* 巨艦指揮使), and they commandeered the gold and silk of merchants to erect palace retreats for Cheng” (see below).²⁵

Liu Cheng’s biography in *Xin Wudai shi* also mentions a eunuch named Lin Yanyu 林延遇 and a palace women (*gongren* 宮人) named Lu Qiongxian 盧瓊仙. They are said to arbitrarily have killed enemies in and away from the palace, frequently drinking wine during the nights to sever intoxication, while Cheng raised no questions. Again, we meet here the picture of moral decadence, especially in relation with wine, women and eunuchs. A woman like Lu Qiongxian is described as having exerted simply bad influence on the ruler, and being interested only in wine, sex and strange religious shamanistic practices.

Private historiography can here help us to at least adjust this picture. Qu Dajun 屈大均 (1630–1696), a late Ming, early Qing literati and poet from Guangzhou, for example, tells us that Lu Qiongxian was very skilled in poetry; she was one of the more than ten female scholars at the court. He also mentions a certain Su Cairen 蘇才人, who, like Lu Qiongxian, was very skilled in poetry; both were apparently women from the Southern Seas (Nanhai ren 南海人), possibly women of the Man ethnicity? (Ou Chu and Wang Guizhen 1996: 678). Another “Nanhai” women employed at the court of Liu Cheng was the palace women Huang Qiongzhi 黃瓊芝. According to *Zizhi tongjian* both Lu Qiongxian and Huang Qiongzhi were employed as female palace attendants (*nü shizhong* 女侍中) wearing court dress with cap and sash (i.e. they were literati). They actively took part and intervened in political decisions (*canjue zhengshi* 參決政事).²⁶ This very active role of women in court politics was assessed quite negatively by the conservative Neo-Confucian literati who later composed the official narrative of this period.

Interestingly, the tendency that women took a more active role in politics and society, for example assisting their husbands with advice and recommendations in matters concerning their official career, as erudite mothers and wives paying great attention to the education of their children, continued in the Song dynasty (Schottenhammer 1994, 1995: 56–60). Again, we know this from non-official historiography, such as for example tomb inscriptions. In contrast to the picture that is portrayed in official historiography, namely that women have been less active in politics in comparison to Tang times and simply took care of household matters (also the wide-spread use of foot binding started in the Song), they were not inactive but rather “leading from behind”, as I stated elsewhere (Schottenhammer 2016). Hymes recently even spoke of “women’s autonomy” in this context (Hymes 2014: 582).

Above we have already highlighted the extremely negative picture that is drawn about the last Nan Han ruler: Cruel and incompetent, morally spoilt, and seduced by women.

5. Nan Han’s relations with other Chinese polities and maritime trade

Seeking to establish and maintain their country as a strong and independent kingdom, their ruler, especially Liu Yan, pursued a policy of strategic alliances and diplomatic and military confrontations where considered necessary. At the beginning of the Wudai period, Nan Han allied with the kingdom of Nan Wu 南吳 (904–937) in order to counterbalance Nan Chu 南楚 (907–951) and Min 閩 (909–951) (Li Qingxin 2006: 300–315). In 913, however, Liu Yan accepted the recommendation of an advisor to establish friendly relations with his neighbours and, subsequently, he

²⁴ *Jiu Wudai shi* 1976: 135.1809.

²⁵ *Xin Wudai shi* 1974: 65.816; Davis 2004: 543.

²⁶ *Zizhi tongjian* 1956: 289.2012; Qiao Yuhong 1993: 619–620.

married his daughter, the Princess of Yueguo 越國, to the ruler of Chu, Ma Yin 馬殷 (852–930). Later, however, bilateral relations again deteriorated.

After the late 930s, Nan Han also maintained friendly relations with the kingdom of Nan Tang 南唐 (937–975) founded by Li Sheng 李昇 (889–943). Most important in our context is probably the fact that around 950 (Qianhe 9) both Nan Han and Nan Tang sent troops to attack Chu. The Nan Han army won the battle and subsequently, in 951, obtained the region of Guiguan 桂管 in Guizhou 桂州 from Chu as well as the district of Chenzhou 郴州 and the Supervisorate Guiyang jian 桂陽監 in southern Hunan.²⁷ Chenzhou was a major mining centre, producing both copper, silver, and lead, but the most important source of silver and copper at that time was Pingyang 平陽 district, which produced silver of exceptional purity. The discovery of these silver deposits are said to have led to the wide use of silver bullion after the early ninth century.²⁸ In 939, Pingyang was separated from Chenzhou and, together with Linwu 臨武 district, placed under the jurisdiction of Guiyang jian. Interestingly, now, the silver ingots retrieved from the tenth-century Intan wreck (see below) carried marks identifying the mint from which they originated, namely Guiyang jian. It is unclear whether Guiyang jian under the Chu still referred to a mint, as during Tang times, or, as under the Song, to a special industrial prefecture, as Twitchett (op. cit., *ibid.*) explains. Most ingots, in addition, were of extraordinary purity (between 93 and 98.1 per cent silver) and enclosed in a folded wrapping of thin silver that bore inscriptions stating that the silver was of superior quality and had been used as revenue from the government's salt tax monopoly (Twitchett and Stargardt 2004: 35, 39f., 46). Somehow, it must have been paid into the Nan Han treasury and probably used “to purchase from merchants (or possibly foreign envoys) some extremely valuable Southeast Asian commodities it required, such as incense” (op. cit., p. 41).

Against this background, Twitchett suggests that, if the Intan wreck dates from before 939, that is, when Guiyang jian was still part of the Chu kingdom, that the Chu government collected these taxes from its population or from merchants, consolidated them into silver ingots produced at Guiyang jian and then used this to purchase salt from the Nan Han; and the Nan Han in turn used the silver to exchange it for aromatics or spices to pay merchants or envoys who brought the commodities to Guangzhou. If the Intan wreck, however, dates from after the Nan Han conquest of Chu, when Nan Han itself occupied the Guiyang mint or industrial prefecture, the ingots probably constituted a collection of taxes levied otherwise and then consolidated in silver at Guiyang jian (Twitchett and Stargardt 2004: 48–49). The large quantity of silver stemming from Guiyang jian that was found on the wreck at least suggests if not attests to the Nan Han court's disposal over great quantities of silver (see discussion below).

In 1069, the Song emperor Shenzong 神宗 (r. 1068–1085) is quoted with the words:

“The Southeast [of China] is very profitable for the greatness of the country, also overseas merchants settle there. In the past, when Qian and Liu had seized Zhejiang and Guangdong, as far as internal affairs are concerned, they had sufficient wealth for themselves, as far as external affairs are concerned, they had sufficient means to resist the rest of China. Also from embracing overseas merchants they acquired this proficiency. High ranking officials properly established laws for investigation, so that they not only annually obtained high profits, but

²⁷ During Tang times, Guiyang jian was the name of a mint that had a significant output and produced for example fifty million copper cash annually in 812. Twitchett and Stargardt 2004: 46.

²⁸ Twitchett and Stargardt 2004: 46, with reference to the early ninth-century *Yuanhe junxian tuzhi* 元和郡縣圖誌, 29.708.

also caused that China became the hub where all the foreigners converge. This was really a spectacular business.”²⁹

東南利國之大，舶商亦居其一焉。昔錢、劉竊據浙、廣，內足自富，外足抗中國者，亦由籠海商得術也。卿宜創法講求，不惟歲獲厚利，兼使外藩輻輳中國，亦壯觀一事也。

This clearly expresses a high estimation of a politics that was able to raise enormous profits via maritime trade.

In 977, the Song government, which had in 971 officially incorporated Nan Han territory into its rule, even attempted to prohibit private trade in “spices, medicinal ingredients, perfumes, rhinoceros horn and ivory” – the major profitable commodities of the Nanhai trade, in order to undermine the role that had been played in overseas trade by the Southern Han, Min and Wuyue kingdoms and attempt to monopolise the profits in its own hands.³⁰ This decision also clearly attests to the fact that private commerce obviously continued after the Song had sacked the Nan Han and that it was the goal of the Song government to re-monopolise this profitable trade. The same year, 977, a certain Zhang Sun 張遜, the Director of the Warehouse for Aromatics (*xiangyao ku* 香藥庫), proposed the establishment of a Monopoly Exchange Bureau (*juèyì shù* 權易署) in the capital Kaifeng, in order to resell foreign imports through a government monopoly system.³¹

One would assume that Liu Yan continued or re-established a customs office as it had existed under the Tang, in order to monopolise maritime trade; we do, however, not possess direct references to such an office;³² it was definitely opened in 971 when Song rule was established in Guangzhou. To oversee maritime trade, Emperor Taizu 太祖 in 971 (*kaibao* 4) appointed the Canton officials Pan Mei 潘美 (921–987) and Yin Chongke 尹崇珂 as Maritime Trade Commissioners (*shibo shih* 市舶使). This date is generally regarded as the date of the Song re-establishment of the Maritime Trade Office (*shibo si* 市舶司) in Canton.³³ Subsequently, the early Song rulers gradually began to reorganise its administrative structure. As early as the late tenth century (Zhidaoyuan 1, i.e. 995) the Song government began to permit ships to sail abroad to trade; at the same time, however, it becomes clear that the government sought to strictly control and survey these maritime commercial activities.³⁴ Early sources do, however, not specify if taxes were levied in kind or in cash. A valuation of the maritime trade balance in copper cash was for example at the latest implemented during the Huangyou 皇祐 reign (1049–1054) of Emperor Renzong; for following reign periods we possess a series of entries specifying the tax income of the Maritime Trade Office at least also in cash form (for example specified as *qian* 錢, *min* 緡, sometimes even specified in silver, *yin* 銀, or simply as a figure).³⁵ On the other hand, taxation was basically a taxation in the form of commodities, barter in other words, called *choufen* 抽分. Sources suggest that most of the early Song government’s income from maritime trade derived from its re-sale of the foreign commodities “taxed” and from the so-called monopoly purchases. This would imply that the government’s income in the form of cash or silver came almost exclusively from its own domestic merchants, who

²⁹ *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian* 1983: 5.23b (2190).

³⁰ *Song huiyao jigao* 1964: *Shihuo* 36/1b-2b, cited by Hartwell 1983: 34.

³¹ *Wenxian tongkao* 1964: 60.549.

³² Clark 2009: 185. For the Kingdom of WuYue, *Xin Wudai shi* states that “(p)refectural authorities along the coast all established trade offices for commerce with the people. Yet when people failed to trade as scheduled, administrators exceeding their own authority opted to organise trade and impose legal penalties, rather than report to the prefectures and counties”; cf. Davis 2004: 254.

³³ *Song huiyao jigao* 1964: Zhiguan 44.1b.

³⁴ *Song huiyao jigao* 1964: Zhiguan 44.3a-b.

³⁵ *Wenxian tongkao* 1964: 20.201; *Songshi* 1985:186.4559. The pages prior to these entries in the *Songshi* describe the monetarisation of the inner markets.

first had to pay the government authorities for these goods in order to further distribute them in China. This would also mean that the cash and silver to fill the state coffers gained from maritime trade was if not mainly, at least largely withdrawn from its own society, that is the social élites who could pay for these foreign commodities. In addition to the official commodity tax, foreign merchants were normally obliged to sell between 40 and 60% of their commodities to the government authorities at officially set prices. This system of monopoly purchases was called “harmonious purchase” (*hemai* 和買 or *choumai* 抽買). The goods purchased through this system were, as a rule, paid either in cash, silver, gold or ceramics and silks.³⁶ As I have argued elsewhere, the idea that maritime trade should serve as a financial source to be tapped emerged only gradually in the course of the tenth century, and it only became the main impetus for the promotion of seaborne trade with the introduction of Emperor Shenzong’s (r. 1068–1085) New Policies (Schottenhammer 2014: 470). So, during the period under consideration here, maritime trade mainly remained a kind of barter or commodity exchange. Unfortunately do we not have further indications on how active Chinese merchants were in this trade or if it basically relied on foreign traders coming to Guangzhou.

According to *Cefu yuangui* large profits could be made with pearls and shells.³⁷ Pearl fishing was again developed, apparently as a royal monopoly. The Nan Han created their own officialdom and established a strong military system, including an elephant cavalry. Their immense wealth can also be depicted from the number of buildings constructed during their reign. Liu Yan had palaces built ornamented with pearls, gold and silver. And he frequently asked merchants from other regions “to ascend to his palaces and basilicas, where he showed his wealth of pearls and jade.”³⁸ His son, Liu Cheng, is said to have built over a thousand villas to enjoy life outside Guangzhou city during his hunting trips (Faure 2007: 23). And he “deployed to the high seas a force ...[of] ‘sea-hulk’ warships. They commandeered the gold and the silk of merchants to erect palace retreats for Cheng. The royal house of Liu, thus, came to own hundreds of palaces too numerous to record...” (Davis 2004: 543). Maritime trade was so profitable for the Nan Han rulers that, in 925, the profits derived from it even prompted Liu Yan to change the regime’s reign title to “Bailong” 白龍 (white dragon, symbolizing flourishing splendour and favour) after having received a report of a white dragon in the Nanhai.³⁹ According to *Xin Wudai shi*, “Guangzhou amassed the precious goods of the South Seas” in order to construct lavish residences for the Liu family (Clark 2009: 184). This is substantiated by Buzurg Ibn Shahriyar, captain of a merchant ship the Iranian province of Khuzistan, who wrote about 950 and observed that in “Canton, the capital of Great China”, the “Baghbur, the ruler of China” prided himself with elaborate parades and a garden of “flowers and leaves made of silk, [...] so well done that anyone would have no doubt that they were real trees and flowers” (Freeman-Grenville 1981: 84). In 971, when Liu Chang, the last Nan Han ruler, handed over the kingdom to the Song troops, he presented emperor Taizu 太祖 (r. 960–976) with a saddle studded with pearls (Faure 2007: 23) and his wealth was so immense that he could fill “more than

³⁶ Fang Hao 1983: vol. 1, 251. Generally speaking, commodities were divided into coarse (*cuse* 粗色) and fine (*xise* 細色) goods. Textiles, for example, belonged to the coarse, precious commodities to the fine quality goods. The *xiangyao* were partly of fine and partly of coarse quality. Sometimes the categorisation of one specific item was also changed from coarse to fine and vice versa.

³⁷ *Cefu yuangui* 1989: 25.248.

³⁸ *Xin Wudai shi*, according to Schafer 1954: 339–369, 354.

³⁹ *Jiu Wudai shi* 1976:135.1808. At this occasion Liu Yan again changed his name, namely to 龔, so that it would fit to the dragon. On recommendation of a Shaman priest who argued that this was not an advantageous name, he changed it again to 龔.

ten sea-going junks with his valuables” (銀以海舶十余，悉載珍寶、嬪樂，將入海，宦官樂範竊其舟以逃歸).⁴⁰

In 923, the chieftain of Nanzhao (in present Yunnan), a certain Zheng Min 鄭旻, sent an envoy to the Nan Han court, presenting a white horse with a red mane and requesting a marriage accommodation. Liu Yan later sanctioned his marriage with the princess of Zengcheng 增城, that is Liu Yin’s daughter.⁴¹ The Nan Han, thus, had also entered into marriage relations with the Nanzhao Kingdom during Liu Yan’s rule.

5.1 The archaeological evidence – shipwrecks

The extent of Nan Han’s involvement into maritime trade can also be derived from recent wreck discoveries. One intriguing example is the Intan wreck, found in South Sumatra in 1997. It carried a mixed cargo of Chinese ceramics and other artifacts, many of them made from metals and some of West Asian origin, suggesting that the ship might have come from Śrīvijaya (Chin. Sanfoqi 三佛齊) or perhaps even was a Śrīvijayan ship (Twitchett and Stargardt 2004: 60, 67). The ship was about thirty meters long, with a displacement of approximately 300 tons.⁴² Flecker identified ceramics, silver ingots, coins, mirrors and iron as possibly Chinese cargo and reconstructed a possible route from Guangzhou southwards, calling most probably at Palembang and with possibly a port on Java as the next destination when it sank near Belitung Island (Flecker 2002: 122). The route most probably followed closely that described by Jia Dan 賈耽 (729–805) in the Tang dynasty (see map).

Silver ingots, coins, and ceramics found on the Intan wreck strongly suggest that it was a ship returning from a trading voyage to Guangzhou, the capital of the Southern Han. Some 5,000 *liang* (roughly 185 kg) of the silver ingots were recovered, approximately 1.15 per cent of the Song government’s total silver income in 996 (Twitchett and Stargardt 2004: 25, 60, 62; Heng 2009: 14–16, 29). The silver ingots, as discussed above, were of extremely pure quality.

The Guangdong region was rich in gold and silver. According to *Xin Tangshu*, thirty-nine local districts sent gold and forty-seven silver as local tribute to the Tang court, constituting 61.9 and 69.12 per cent of the total production of gold and silver respectively.⁴³ Precious metals have also been used as local currencies since the Southern Dynasties period (Huang Qichen 2003: 198). Also *Song huiyao* explicitly states that Arab merchants exchanged their goods for gold and silver. Much of the gold circulating in the late Tang Empire, however, seems to have come from deposits in Annam, and also large part of the silver circulating in China in the second half of the tenth century was produced from mines in Lingnan and Annam (Schafer 1967: 162f., 255). Gold, at any rate, was a regular tribute item paid by many countries of the Southern Seas. Interestingly, gold dinars from the Islamic world seem to have been used in trade in Guangzhou at least during Tang times (Schafer 1963: 257). The gold coins found on the Intan wreck were known as “sandalwood flower coins” due to the pattern stamped into the reverse side. The obverse side carries the character “*ma*” in North Indian *nagari* script, probably personal belonging of a crewmember on board (Flecker 2002: 65), which might suggest an involvement of Indian merchants in this trip.

⁴⁰ Wang Gungwu 1958: 88, with reference to *Xin Wudai shi*, 65.819. Shortly before Guangzhou’s fall to the Song troops in March 971, the Nanhan court destroyed by fire all government treasuries, palaces and halls in an attempt to divert the invaders by a tactic of scorched earth. Cf. Davis 2004: 547.

⁴¹ *Zizhi tongjian* 1956: 274.1905: “長和驃信鄭旻遣其布變鄭昭淳求婚於漢，漢主以女增城公主妻之。長和即唐之南詔也。”; *Xin Wudai shi* 1974: 65.812.

⁴² Flecker 2002. See also <http://www.maritime-explorations.com/intan.htm> (accessed September 29, 2015).

⁴³ *Xin Tangshu* 1997: 43shang.1095f. (*tugong* 土貢 of several districts listed on pages 1095 to 1115; Huang Qichen 2003: 198).

Furthermore, 45 copper-lead alloy coins were discovered, 136 of which stemmed from the reign period Qianheng zhongbao 乾亨重寶, reign period adopted by Liu Yan in 917.⁴⁴ In the first year of this reign period only bronze coins were produced but starting from the second year a lead alloy was used. The coins on the Intan wreck thus stem from between 918 and 942, when Liu Yan died (Flecker 2002: 62). Similar coins have also been found on a tenth-century wreck that was lost in the Java Sea and probably also had taken on board its cargo at Guangzhou, the Cirebon wreck: Eight were identified as Zhouyuan tongbao 周元通寶 (955/6) issued by the Later Zhou ruler Shizong 世宗 (r. 954–959); others belonged to the Qianheng zhong-bao coins, only some of which were, however, made of copper, the majority being made by a lead-tin amalgam (Liebner 2014: 197, 299). These latter were valued only one-tenth of the copper coins and, after the Qianhe reign (943–958) only circulated inside the city of Guangzhou, while outside copper cash was used (op. cit., p. 197). Legal statutes prohibited the use of copper cash within the city, making base metals, in our case lead coins, the means of circulation in areas that were frequently visited by foreign traders, an attempt to prevent the outflow of copper coinage through trade transactions (Elvin 1973: 152). This is why Flecker (op. cit., p. 80) believes it unlikely that the copper ingots found on board the Intan wreck actually stemmed from China but were probably cast in Sumatra, “produced from melted down bronze objects, probably old and broken implements and decorations” (Flecker 2002: 80).

But most intriguing are certainly the already mentioned ninety-seven silver ingots recovered from the wreck and in detail investigated by Flecker, Stargardt and Twitchett. These ingots, used to pay for the original cargo, interestingly all originated from a single source, Guiyang jian (see above; Twitchett and Stargardt 2004: 42f.). This fact has led to speculations if the ship was not perhaps even carrying official envoys to the Nan Han court, who were then paid with silver, probably for a cargo of incense and other valuable aromatics and/or spices – products highly demanded by local élites and used not only for consumption, for example, for religious and ritual purposes but also as rare and valuable gifts (Twitchett and Stargardt 2004: 65, 57). As it would have been unlikely that all the silver stemmed from one and the same source, if the cargo was sold freely on the open market, it seems at least very likely that the silver stemmed from the Han court (Twitchett and Stargardt 2004: 65). Part of the incense may have been purchased by Nan Han authorities and then used as gifts, perhaps to the Nanzhao 南詔 Kingdom or other states that had diplomatic relations with the Southern Han (op. cit., p. 65). This would attest to the courts direct involvement into maritime commerce.

Fourteen silver ingots have also been salvaged from the Cirebon wreck, totally weighing slightly more than 19 kilograms. The similarity of their shapes and the proximity of time and place, according to Liebner, indicate a similar lane of distribution. The high percentage of gold in the metal also corresponds the composition of the ingots from the Intan wreck (Liebner 2014: 198–200). The Cirebon wreck carried at least 40 tons of ingots, bars and readily fashioned implements of various metals (Liebner 2014: 201), including iron. Iron was locally also produced in Guangdong, although the major source were the Wuyi 武夷 Mountains in Fujian. A number of iron pagodas and pillars have been constructed under the Nan Han regime and all attest to the city’s role as a centre of metalwork (ibid., p. 206; Faure 2007: 25).

Ceramics definitely constituted the bulk of trade objects in Tang-Song maritime trade, although we have of course to take into account that other commodities that do not survive in the salt water, such as silks and fabrics in general, will have constituted part of the cargo. The increasing importance of ceramics in maritime trade since the second half of the Tang dynasty is attested to by recent wreck discoveries.

⁴⁴ In addition, hundreds of standard-sized ingots of copper and tin were part of the cargo, up to two tons of each metal, probably stemming from sources in Southeast Asia; op. cit., pp. 28–29.

The ninth-century Belitung wreck had, according to estimates, approximately 100,000 ceramics pieces on board, the Cirebon wreck even around 150,000, and the Intan wreck probably between 30,000 and 70,000 (Liebner 2014: 75, 304). The ceramics on board the Intan wreck included both Chinese and Southeast Asian wares (Twitchett and Stargardt 2004: 35–36), those retrieved from the Cirebon cargo consisted of unglazed earthenware, highly fired white stoneware and greenish-glazed Yue wares. Yue ware originated from the Yue kilns in Eastern Zhejiang and under WuYue 吴越 rulership (907–978) during the time of investigation here. Various types of green-glazed Yue bowls and dishes constituted nearly 90% of the total ceramics cargo of the Cirebon wreck (Liebner 2014: 75, 302); other items were, for example, jars, kendis (from Malay; a pouring vessel with a globular body, very popular in Southeast Asia, especially among Muslim communities) and ewers. Yueyao products have been characterised as the “world’s oldest ceramics that are hard, dense and durable – the ultimate predecessors of porcelain” (Krahl 2010: 185–199), also described as “porcellaneous stoneware”. The items discovered on the Cirebon wreck were extremely conform, a fact that lead Liebner to suggest they were the product of probably one single kiln complex. Another kind of green-glazed stoneware, stemming from a Xu 徐 kiln suggests that this part of the cargo could be related to a Wuyue “tribute kiln” of that name, “indicating the possibility that such a monopoly system was also operated during the Wudai” period.⁴⁵ This also implies a relatively close relation between contemporary coastal states, such as it existed, for example, between the Nan Han and Min kingdom.

The Intan wreck, too, carried Yue wares on board, along with mainly white paste and translucent or bluish-tinged white glazed ceramics from the Fanchang 繁昌 kilns in Southern Anhui, simple earthenware with rudimentary brown glazes probably from local production in Guangdong and Southeast Asian ceramics (Twitchett and Stargardt 2004: 30f.).

A small quantity of ceramics shards with turquoise-green glaze on a thick yellow-sandy body, as they are typical for early Islamic pottery, has been found on the Cirebon wreck (Liebner 2014: 215). The relatively large quantity of green-glazed Yue wares in archaeological sites and the known appreciation of the Iranian and Arab worlds for turquoise glazed wares could suggest that Iranian and Arab customers also favoured Yue wares.

Also glass is a case in point. Fragments of glass were found on both the Cirebon and the Intan wreck (Liebner 2014: 171). Flecker describes the colour variety of the glass shards found on the Intan wreck as impressive, with variations of purple, blue, green, brown and clear. Most fragments were transparent or at least translucent (Flecker 2002: 88). Two finds in China strongly resemble the glass pieces found on the wreck, both of them carafes imported from the Middle East, which would suggest that they are definitely of Middle Eastern origin, a conclusion that is supported by chemical analysis. Middle Eastern glassware has been found in various places across Sumatra (Palembang, Barūs, Jambi, and Cota Cina) (Flecker 2002: 88–89). This again strongly suggests that they were taken there by either Islamic merchants or traders involved in trade with the Arab world. Also the glass beads found seem to have been manufactured from glass imported from either the Middle East or India. Similar beads have been found in Kedah (Malaysia) (Flecker 2002: 79).

Glass bottles or flasks were, for example, used to carry fragrances. Fifteen bottles of Persian rosewater, for example, along with “eighty-four glass bottles of liquid Greek fire” have been sent as a gift to the court of the Later Zhou through an Arab trader, Abū Hasan, who claimed to represent Champa (Schafer 1967: 75; Schafer 1963: 173). Rosewater was also among the tribute brought by Vietnamese and Chōla envoys in the early eleventh century (Bielenstein 2005: 43, 51, 370–371). The ninth century Belitung wreck carried at least one flask commonly used for attars (Liebner 2014:

⁴⁵ Liebner 2014: 75, 303. See also his discussion of the “Xu” trade mark from possibly 968, 戊辰/徐記燒 (燒), 120f.

171). According to Zhou Qufei, the “holy water that can calm agitated waves” when sprinkled over the seas, “filled into bottles of opaque glass” in twelfth century Bagdād (Netolitzki 1977: 44). Glass bottles and flasks in contemporary maritime trade were definitely used to transport liquid items and fragrances. Also Jasmine oil, a famous Persian product produced at Shīrāz, Dārābejird, and Sābūr was shipped into Canton during Song times.⁴⁶ Persia, like Byzantium, was also famous for its white alum, which was very much desired by Chinese alchemists and favoured by druggists (Schafer 1963: 2017).

The Cirebon wreck furthermore held several hundreds of kilograms of crude lapis lazuli. Crushed and pulverised, the stone was also used as a pigment for the finest of the blue Islamic glasses (Liebner 2014: 178–179). Beads, gems, pearls, jewels, and items like bronze mirrors and other ritual objects were also retrieved from the wreck (Liebner 2014: 185f., 194f.). Mirrors were not only used in China but also constituted an item of Hindu-Buddhist piety. The Chinese mirrors salvaged from the Intan wreck, according to Flecker, clearly show that many designs originate from as early as Han times, while others were typical of the Tang period and the tenth century (Flecker 2002: 60). The decorations and symbolisms were typical Chinese and were obviously highly valued also by foreign élites in Southeast Asia and beyond.

Maritime trade in the tenth century was basically carried out on Southeast Asian ships, “commanded by Southeast Asian, Indian, or Muslim-Arab navigators” and much of this trade probably took place under the protection of one of the economically speaking most influential and powerful polity of Southeast Asia at that time, Śrīvijaya (Twitchett and Stargardt 2004: 66). The frequent citation of “ships of the southern barbarians” (*Manbo* 蠻船), as John Chaffee has argued, strongly suggests Southeast Asian traders. Consequently, we can at this point only speculate about the concrete involvement of Arabs and other West Asians,⁴⁷ although both textual and archaeological evidence attest to their importance. Many had moved to ports in Southeast Asia, such as Jiaozhou 交州 (Hanoi) in Vietnam, or to ports on the Malay Peninsula, such as Kalāh, Phang Nga in northern Phuket (present-day Thailand) or Laem Po (Suratthani) located on the eastern coast of Thailand since the late eighth century. Kalāh and Śrīvijaya developed as the new stopover points between the Western and the Eastern Indian Ocean in the late ninth century, and by the tenth century, Kalāh had become a prosperous town “inhabited by Muslims, Hindus and Persians”.⁴⁸ Definitely some Iranian and Arab merchants stayed in Guangzhou or came back, when the situation gradually recovered after the Huang Chao Rebellion in the course of the tenth century; and they maintained networks with their countrymen and partners who had emigrated to Southeast Asia. But their influence within Nan Han society and its maritime trade is difficult to assess and still requires further investigation. A more thorough analysis of these networks of Iranians and Arabs as customers, producers, and traders, and of the concrete influence of foreigners and maritime commerce on local society and local merchants still remains a major task for the future. Hopefully, further tombs and epitaphs will provide us with more information on these aspects.

As I have shown in the first part of this study (Schottenhammer, forthcoming), especially after the rise of the Abbasids (750–1258) who controlled the trade routes in lower Iraq and Sīrāf on the Iranian

⁴⁶ “It was known in China in the middle of the eighth century that Islam pressed a smooth and fragrant oil from Jasmine flowers.” Cf. Schafer 1963: 173, with reference to Laufer 1919: 332–333.

⁴⁷ Chaffee (unpublished manuscript), Chapter 2: 17.

⁴⁸ Cf. Wink 1990: 83–84. See also Wade 2014: 25–31, 274–276 Wade notes that another name, Geluo 哥羅, “that seems to represent Kedah appeared by about 800. ... This major polity, recorded as having twenty-four provinces, would appear to have been the Kalāh of Arabic texts, where it is noted as a major trading centre and focus of shipping routes from the ninth century or earlier” (p. 30).

coast of the Gulf, merchants from these regions were very active in the China trade. But the politico-economic situation of the caliphate drastically declined in the late ninth century, while at the same time another powerful dynasty, the Fatimid Dynasty (909–1171), rose in the Red Sea area and greater portions of the Indian Ocean trade, consequently, shifted away from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea. Cairo was founded as its capital in 969, and the former trading hub in the Gulf, Sīrāf, was destroyed by an earthquake in 977. Later, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries the ports of Qais and Hormuz, emerged as new trading centres, but between the late ninth and the early tenth century long-distance maritime trade at Guangzhou really seems to have experienced a significant setback with many Iranian and Arab merchants migrating to places in Southeast Asia. A closer and thorough investigation of their diasporas and networks across Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean world – the presence of Iranian and Arab merchants is, for example, also attested to in coastal cities of India and Sri Lanka long before the rise of Islam (Wink 1990: 67–86) – will definitely remain a major task for the future.

On the other hand, due to increasing problems across land routes, such as the Tibetan expansion between 760 and the 840s, trading routes in general shifted more and more to the sea. Consequently, also merchants who traditionally took the land routes increasingly shifted to the seas. Abū 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī bin al-Ḥusain al-Mas'ūdī (al-Mas'ūdi; 895–956), for example, describes in his *Murūj al-dhahab wa-mā'ādin al-jawāhir* (“Gold Pastures and Gem Mines”) a merchant from Samarkand who was travelling to Kalāh by sea. According to al-Mas'ūdī, Kalāh was the place where ships from the Islamic world “nowadays” (that is, mid-tenth century) met the Chinese.⁴⁹ The tenth century was definitely “a key period of change in long-distance trade through Southeast Asia”, as also Wade stresses, a period when Chinese shipping and Chinese commercial networks slowly started to become more active in the eastern part of Southeast Asia, while Arab ships ended their voyages on the western side, at ports such as Kalāh (Wade 2013: 83–104). This development would also indicate that Iranian and Arab merchants were less active from within China but rather carried out their business from other locations in Southeast Asia.

For the early Song period at least several “ship owners” (*bozhu* 船主) from the “Arab lands” are said to have called at Chinese ports, mostly Guangzhou.⁵⁰ On the other hand, we have to take into consideration that the whole volume of trade was definitely larger in the tenth than in eighth or ninth century. Although Iranian and Arab merchants, thus, increasingly settled in parts of Southeast Asia, this does not necessarily mean that the total number of traders active in China or of members of their community in Guangzhou decreased in comparison to Tang times, once the trade had recovered. As Derek Heng has, for example, already stressed in this context, the representation of foreigners from Śrīvijaya at Guangzhou was obviously so significant that in one particular case the court of the Min Kingdom was warranted “to appoint, in 905, the envoy from Śrīvijaya (Sumatra) who had arrived at Guangzhou on a diplomatic mission the year before as the foreign official of the port city.”⁵¹

Simultaneously, archaeological evidence in the form of foreign, Muslim, tombstones dating to the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries indicates that the Arab community step by step must have migrated and shifted their focus from Guangzhou to Quanzhou in the course of the later Northern Song period. The foreign key groups in Guangzhou in the late eleventh and early twelfth century, as Heng has shown, definitely came from Southeast Asia (Heng 2008: 30), what does of course not really say much about their ethnic origin. Consequently, this does not rule out the possibility that many of them were descendants of merchants and families who had earlier migrated from the Arab world to China and Southeast Asia.

⁴⁹ Meynard and de Courteille 1861, tome I: 303.

⁵⁰ *Songshi* 1985: 490.14118f.

⁵¹ See Heng 2008: 1–38, 3, with reference to the *Wenxian tongkao*.

Definitely, the sea routes became increasingly interesting to a larger group of merchants, a development that definitely contributed greatly to a relative fast recovery of maritime trade in south China. Long-distance maritime trade, as far as we know, was still basically in foreign hands, with products and merchants of Iranian and Arab origin figuring prominently, although their networks were much more complex at this time and probably included also merchants from other countries who cooperated with them over geographical space. The period of direct voyages between the Persian Gulf and China was definitely over. The fines and penalties that the early Song government (edict of 976, renewed 994) imposed on profits from private trade with foreigners clearly suggest that, very much to the dislike of the government, great portions of maritime commerce lay in the hands of private traders, who bought their products directly from foreign merchants.⁵²

5.2 Annam, Champa and the Gulf of Tonkin

When Liu Yin established the Southern Han, he also claimed control of Annam. Depending to a great extent on prosperous maritime trade relations, the Nan Han also sought to defend their supremacy in the region militarily.

Annam and the Tonkin Gulf region had been under Chinese administrative control of varying degrees since Han times, and local élites were quite sinicised. But already through much of the ninth century Chinese control of the area around the Red River valley was continuously afflicted by unrest and rebellion against Chinese rule. This control was seriously threatened by attacks from the Nanzhao 南詔 Kingdom (649–902)⁵³ in the mid-ninth century. That Wei Zhou (cf. above) was dispatched as the military-governor of Lingnan at that time certainly has to be traced back to the fact that he cherished very friendly relations with local minority people (Clark 2009: 153–154). In 930, Liu Yan sent his fleet to the south to raid Champa 占城. His soldiers returned with a rich booty of gold and other treasures.⁵⁴

Only a couple of years later, in 938, Liu Yan sent his navy again to the south in an attempt to reinforce Chinese supremacy over the whole Annam region. But his troops were heavily defeated by the Vietnamese forces, led by Ngô Quyền 吳權 (897–944), in the Battle at Bạch Đằng 白藤 River. Liu Yan had sent his son, Liu Hongcao 劉弘操 (Vietnamese *Lưu Hồng Thao*) in command of this expedition and conferred upon him the title of “Pacifying-the-seas-military governor” (*jinghai jiedushi* 靜海節度使) and “King of Jiao[zhou]”. The fleet left the port of Guangzhou, sailed through the Hainan Straits and across the Gulf of Tonkin into the entrance of the Red River estuary. Ngô Quyền immediately sent his ships down the river, waited until high tide and then sent light ships to meet the Nan Han navy. They were defeated and turned around to flee back the river upstream, being pursued by the Nan Han warships. But when the tide ebbed down, the Chinese ships got stuck in between iron-tipped wooden stakes made of tree trunks that had been put into the riverbed, so that they were unable to retreat. Ngô Quyền thereupon with his light and easily manoeuvred ships surrounded the heavy Chinese crafts and eventually destroyed the Nan Han navy. Liu Hongcao and most of his men were killed in this battle,⁵⁵ which factually ended the over thousand years lasting Chinese domination of the Jiaozhou region until the early fifteenth century.

⁵² *Song huiyao jigao* 1964: Zhiguan 44.2a, b. For a German translation of this part, see Schottenhammer 2002: 382, 387.

⁵³ Succeeded by the Dali 大理 Kingdom (937–1253).

⁵⁴ *Guangdong tongzhi* 1934: 184.3364.

⁵⁵ We possess a written description by Sima Guang in his *Zizhi tongjian* 1956: 281.9193; an international archaeological team is currently excavating the site, see Kimura Jun. For this battle, see also *Xin Wudai shi* 1974: 65.813: “Quan’s troops advanced by riding a rising tide, Hongcao in Pursuit. Yet the boats recoiled once tide receded, the iron rods [planted into the water] now sticking into the wheel-ruts and overturning all

The lower Red River delta and the coastal zone were then controlled by a Chinese of Cantonese descent named Trần Lâm 陳覽 (?–967). He was based at a seaport called Bộ Hải 渤海 (Whitmore 2006: 103–122, 105). At the southern edge of Jiaozhou lay Trương, home of Đinh Bộ Lĩnh 丁部領 (924–979; r. 968–979), who unified the country in 968. He was originally named Đinh Hoàn 丁桓 and later stilicised as the first Vietnamese emperor after the liberation from Nan Han supremacy. In 972, the Chinese recognised Vietnamese independence but soon reattempted to invade the country.

Still under Đinh Bộ Lĩnh's reign, Lê Hoàn 黎桓 (941–1005; r. 980–1005), a commander-in-chief in Bộ Lĩnh's army, became regent of his successor and, in 980, proclaimed himself emperor, posthumous name Lê Đại Hành 黎大行 (r. 980–1005), thus initiating the era of the Earlier Lê dynasty (980–1009). In 981, the Song again invaded Vietnam, but the invasion was repulsed by Lê Đại Hành, who subsequently established tribute relations with China, as he realised that he could hardly oppose this great neighbour in the long perspective. Just one year later, in 982, he carried out a successful military expedition against his southern neighbour, Champa.

Both the Đinh and Lê families had originally established their base at Hoa Lu in the southern hills of Trường. But with Lý Công Uẩn 李公蘊 (974–1028), the later emperor Lý Thái Tổ 李太祖 of the Lý dynasty (1009–1025), the centre and base shifted to the old Tang period capital, which was renamed Thăng Long (Whitmore 2006: 105). After the fall of the Tang at any rate, Vietnamese kings had constantly to fight against local centrifugal forces and it was not until the mid-eleventh century, approximately one hundred years after the reunification, that the Lý rulers really managed to stabilise this situation (Lê Thành Khôi 1981: 126).

South of this region lays the country of Champa that was also part of Arab and Islamic networks. It is well possible that the king of Champa was aware of the influential position of “Muslim” colonies and merchants in South China, as a consequence of which he may have engaged Arab merchants residing in Champa at his court, in order to cherish contacts and intercourse with China, as Pierre-Yves Manguin suggests.⁵⁶

When the Champa king intended to resume relations with China, he dispatched a first embassy in 951 with a certain Pu Hesan 蒲可散 (Abū l’Hassan) as ambassador, who brought twenty Arabian bottles and rose water, that is products from the Persian Gulf region, in addition to four bottles of “Greek Fire”, as we have already noted above.⁵⁷ Manguin further emphasises that the famous Muslim Pu family who moved to Guangzhou (as to Quanzhou) during the Song period had previously lived in Champa (Manguin 1979: 259). An emigration from Champa to China occurred after 986 as a result of the local usurpation of the crown by an official of probably Vietnamese origin, Lưu Kỳ Tông 劉繼宗 (Chin. Liu Jizong). Lưu Kỳ Tông had taken advantage of the period of war and chaos in Champa caused by Vietnamese campaigns and eventually seized the throne there (op. cit., *ibid.*).

As far as the migration is concerned, some hundred foreigners from Champa (*Zhancheng yiren* 占城夷人) “arrived in that year in Hainan, led by a certain” Pu Luo’e 蒲羅遏. “Nearly five hundred others at Canton demanded the protection of China”. Leading personalities among this community were a certain Sidang Liniang 斯當李娘 (?) in 987 and a Hu Xuan 忽宣 (probably Hussain) in 988 (Manguin 1979: 259). Manguin also quotes the genealogy of the Pu family in the *Local Gazetteer of Sanya* (*Sanya shi* 三亞史), which records that the foreigners of South Hainan originally came from

of the affected ships. Hongcao died in battle and Yan regrouped his remaining men to return.” Lo Jung-pang 2011: 56.

⁵⁶ Manguin 1979: 255–287, 260. He quotes the example of the tenth-century Persian explorer and geographer from Isfahan, Ahmad ibn Rosteh [Rusta], who was writing around 903 and recorded that an Arab merchant was staying at the court of the Khmer king for two years.

⁵⁷ Schafer 1967: 75; Schafer 1963: 173; see also *Songshi* 1985: 489.14079.

Champa (op. cit., *ibid.*). *Songshi* states that customs and dress of people in Champa resemble those of the Arabs.⁵⁸ It should be mentioned in this context that control over Hainan was claimed by the Nan Han rulers. Edward Schafer notes that there is in fact little that might show the real extent of Nan Han's holdings on the island; however, some evidence suggests that Chinese control deteriorated after the 950s, when they gave up their garrisons in Dan 儋 and Wan'an 萬安.⁵⁹

We can, thus, definitely observe a bidirectional migration. While Arabs and Iranians who had resided in Guangzhou since early Tang times migrated to Southeast Asia after the Huang Chao rebellion, there was also a migration wave from at least Champa (Southern Vietnam) and probably some other places in Southeast Asia back to China, when the political and commercial situation had become stabilised under the Song dynasty.

The Red River Delta has been described as an important market for foreign trade. In 976, for example, reportedly merchant vessels from various nations overseas arrived there and presented products of their countries (Hall 2011: 97). Up to the fifteenth century, the Jiaozhou region was "frequented by Muslim traders from South, West and Southeast Asia. This trading zone included the Guangxi coast facing the Tonkin Gulf, coastal Đại Việt, northern Champa and Hainan Island" (Tana Li 2006: 83). For example, local ceramics production that mostly existed for exportation overseas was "driven and mediated by the Muslim merchants" (op. cit., p. 84). Jiaozhou was also a known market for slaves. At any rate, this Arab description definitely confirms the importance of Jiaozhou or the region of what is now southern Guangxi Province and northern Vietnam.

Towards the end of the Five Dynasties period we can also observe knowledge transfer and co-operation among some of the coastal independent states, as Lo Jung-pang notes. The emperor of the Later Zhou Dynasty 後周 (951–960), Shizong 世宗 (r. 954–959), for example, hired naval experts from South China to help him to construct efficient warships, which he later used in a two-year campaign against his neighbour, the Nan Tang 南唐 (937–975).⁶⁰ The founding emperor of the Song dynasty, who reunited China in the late tenth century after decades of disunion, it should be mentioned, had been a Later Zhou official and also employed naval forces in his campaigns. His navy eventually subjugated Nan Han in 974 (after the Song troops had defeated the war elephants of Nan Han already in 971), and the kingdom of WuYue subsequently submitted voluntarily (Lo Jung-pang 2011: 57). An interesting WuYue account, by the way, speaks of beans being thrown on enemy's ships and the shooting of "burning oil" (*menghuo you* 猛火油)⁶¹ to set fire to the ships. Then, the liquid was shot from a metal tube. The oil, it is recorded, was obtained from Arab merchants from Hainan (or simply from "south of the seas").⁶²

It is therefore certainly not surprising that in the eleventh century, the Song again attempted to impose their supremacy over the Annam and Champa regions: In 1052, a Song naval commander, Di Qing 狄青 (1008–1057), defeated Champa in a sea battle near Qinhon 歸仁, and in 1076 another Song fleet sailed southwards in order to seize Quảng Nam, until Annam and Champa officially acknowledge Song Chinese superiority in the macro region (Lo Jung-pang 2011: 57).

⁵⁸ *Songshi* 1985: 489.14078.

⁵⁹ Schafer 1969: 21. He also mentions an inscribed bell, dated 951, at a Buddhist temple in Qiongzhou, a hall of a monastery and a set of iron pillars as archaeological relics from the Nan Han, which would "suggest a reasonably effective occupation of the old Tang strongholds." (*Ibid.*).

⁶⁰ Lo Jung-pang 2011: 57, with reference to *Jiu Wudaishi*, 117.

⁶¹ Wild-fire oil, which burned even more fiercely when water was added.

⁶² *WuYue beishi* 2000: 3.4b-5a, in *Siku quanshu*, fasc. 464: 五年春三月命王率水師大小戰艦五百餘艘皆刻龍形...夏四月乙巳大戰淮人於狼山江將戰之夕王召指揮使張從寶計之曰...每舟必載石灰黑豆江沙以隨焉...乃撒豆於賊舟我舟則沙焉戰血既漬踐豆者靡不顛踣命進火油焚之火油得之海南大食國以鐵筒發之。

6. Further developments

With the gradual expansion of Islam we also encounter increasing evidence of Islamic (Muslim) merchants in China. By early Song times, the Arab community had partly recovered. References to Iranians are gradually disappearing and sources only speak of “Dashi” 大食, i.e. Tājik. *Yudi jisheng* 輿地紀勝 states that “outside the borders of the [city] towers foreign merchants live together” (越臺之境胡賈雜居).⁶³ *Song huiyao* speaks of a community of (rich) foreign merchants who came to Canton, either alone or with their families, with their wives from abroad or locally married (每年多有蕃客帶妻兒過廣州居住, 今後禁止廣州不得賣與物業).⁶⁴ And from the description of the land of the Arabs in the *Songshi* it is clear that Arab merchants frequently called at Guangzhou in the early Song dynasty.⁶⁵

There is much evidence of Islamic connections between China and Southeast Asia in the later tenth century. During this period, Chinese texts record the arrival at the Northern Song court (at Kaifeng) of envoys from Dashi 大食 (the Arab lands), the Chōla empire, Zābaj/Zābag (likely Śrīvijaya) and Champa, all of whom bore names which can be reconstructed as being Muslim. These arrivals reflect the great maritime trade route which connected the Arab lands with China, passing through Southern India, Zābaj/Śrīvijaya in Sumatra, and Champa in what is today Central Vietnam. It thus appears that during this century, the more prominent Muslim communities in Southeast Asia were likely resident in and traded out of the capital of Zābaj (either Palembang or Jambi) and the capital of Champa. One of the key characteristics of these Muslim envoys to China during the tenth century is that almost all were “surnamed” Li 李 (*ali*) or Pu 蒲 (*abū*).⁶⁶ The majority of the Li-“surnamed” envoys came from Sanfoqi/Zābaj and Champa, with some from the Arab lands and one from Butuan in the southern Philippines. Ferrand has early suggested that the Chinese transcription of 蒲 actually refers to an Indonesian noble title, “Pu” or “Mpu” (that is, čam Pō), and not to the general Arab patronym of “Abu” (Ferrand 1922: 9, fn. 2). But, as Salmon emphasised, this does not necessarily exclude the possibility that these emissaries were in fact Muslims, perhaps Muslim merchants (Salmon 2002: 65, fn. 32); and Wade more recently identified some of these envoys clearly as coming from the “Arab lands”.⁶⁷ Most of them arrived in Guangzhou. Champa as one of the most active tribute bringer definitely also had one of the most active Muslim communities around that time.⁶⁸

There definitely existed quite an active diplomatic exchange between “Arabs” (or “Muslims”) from various countries and China during the early years of the Song dynasty. In 968, the Arabs probably sent their first official envoy to China with tribute goods. From that time onwards,

⁶³ *Yudi jisheng* 1971: 89.516 (6b).

⁶⁴ *Song huiyao jigao*, 1964: Xingfa 165/2.21.

⁶⁵ *Songshi*, 1985: 490.14118-14121.

⁶⁶ In the first year of the Tang reign period Tianyou (904), China received tribute from the Śrīvijayan leader Pu-he-li-li 蒲訶栗立. In 1017 (Tianxi 3), the “king of Sumatra”, Aji Sumatrabhūmi 霞遲蘇勿吒蒲迷, sent the envoy Pu-mo-xi 蒲謀西. *Songshi* 1985: 490.14089.

⁶⁷ Wade 2010: 181–193, see especially his table on 191–192. Wade identified envoys carrying the surname Li in four (or five) missions from Śrīvijaya until 1003, fourteen missions from Champa until 1105, two from Butuan (1003 and 1011) and one (or two) from the Arab lands (971 and 993); fifteen missions from the Arab lands carrying the surname Pu, nine from Śrīvijaya, nine from Champa, two from Brunei and two from the Chōla Kingdom as well as one from Java, eighteen of them in the late tenth and the rest in the eleventh century.

⁶⁸ Chaffee has recently pointed to an observation made first during the Five Dynasties but repeated in Song sources, that “its customs and clothing are similar to those of the country of Dashi”, Chapter 2, 9 (with reference to *Wudai huiyao* 1978: 30.479; *Song huiyao jigao* 1964: Fanyi 4.61a; *Songshi* 1985: 489.14078).

merchant ships have come and gone incessantly.⁶⁹ Already in 976 a certain Pu Ximi 蒲希密 (Abu Hamid) was sent by the Arab caliph (珂黎拂).⁷⁰ This Pu Ximi was sent again in 993; an entry in *Songshi* explicitly mentions that Pu Ximi had received a letter from the foreign headman in Guangzhou urging him to go to the capital and offer tribute.⁷¹ The entry also refers to the care of the Song government about a correct treatment of foreign envoys. Important for us in this context is the fact of the mentioning of a foreign headman in Guangzhou, because this attests to the presence of Arabs in Guangzhou and also highlights his role in fostering communication with the Abbasid Caliphate and promoting diplomatic and commercial relations between China and the Arabs.

Chaffee also introduces Pu Tuopoli 蒲陀婆離 (Abū Mahmud Dawal) who represented the Arab lands in 995, 1011, 1019 or Pu Hesun 蒲訶散 (Abū-I-Hassan) who represented Champa in 961, 972 and 990. “Especially intriguing were Pu Yatuoli 蒲押陀黎 (Abu Adil), who led a mission from Śrīvijaya in 988, and then from Arabia in 995 and 998, and Pu Jiaxin 蒲加心 (Abu Kasim), who represented Arabia as a “foreign guest” in 1004, served as envoy for Muscat (Wuxun 勿巡) in 1011, and then as vice-envoy, first for the south Indian state of Chola (Zhunianguo 注輦國) in 1015, and then again for Arabia in 1019.”⁷²

During the reign of the first three Song emperors (960–1022) alone fifty-six missions came from the kingdoms in the Southern Seas, almost half of them (twenty-three) were from the Middle East. And actually during this period, maritime trade was concentrated in Guangzhou (Chaffee 2006: 397). Many of the envoys from the Arab lands were simultaneously identified as “ship owners” (*bozhu*) (Chaffee 2006: 401).

Zhu Yu, in 1171, in his *Pingzhou ketan* mentions that the foreign residential quarter (*fanfang* 蕃坊) in the densely populated area of Guangzhou is frequented by foreign merchants.⁷³ Some had been living there for generations and were consequently called “locally born foreigners” (*tusheng fanke* 土生蕃客); they possessed local property and houses. Claudine Salmon refers to the interesting fact that in the eleventh century even a special school was established by a Chinese scholar-official in order to educate foreign children.⁷⁴ Not long afterwards, however, Song authorities seem to have become concerned about the many foreigners: In 1035, an edict was issued that interdicted them to possess property in China and another one followed that forbade intermarriages between foreigners and Chinese.⁷⁵ Muslim merchants in any case remained active in both Guangzhou and Quanzhou throughout the Song dynasty.

After a last attempt by Emperor Zhenzong 真宗 (r. 997–1022) to reinstall the former Tang period tributary order in China’s relations with maritime Asia, the Song rulers eventually adopted a relatively free handling and management of maritime trade, concentrating themselves basically on the collection of tax revenues. This eventually brought along a new prosperous era of maritime

⁶⁹ *Song huiyao jigao* 1964: Fanyi 7.3a.

⁷⁰ *Songshi* 1985: 3.47.

⁷¹ See Chaffee 2006: 395–420, 401, with reference to *Songshi* 1985: 490.14119: “Formerly, when I was in my home country, I received a letter from the foreign headman (*fanzhang* 蕃長) of Guangzhou reporting that [the Arabs] have been ordered to [send a mission] to go to the capital and offer tribute. He praised the sagely virtue of the emperor, who has announced [a policy of] magnanimous favour [towards the foreigners], commanding [the officials] in Guangan to honour and comfort the foreign merchants [so as to] make abundant the goods from distant countries. I then engaged passage on a sea-going ship and collected agricultural products.”

⁷² Chaffee (unpublished manuscript), Chapter 2: 22. He also discusses the question of whether these envoys were all ethnically Arab.

⁷³ *Pingzhou ketan* 1975: 2.19.

⁷⁴ Salmon 2004: 42, with reference to Gong Mingzhi 1986: 3.55.

⁷⁵ Salmon 2004: 42, with reference to the *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian* 1083: 118.2782.

commercial relations of Arab merchants in China, the centre of which was, however, no longer Guangzhou but the Fujian city of Quanzhou. Elsewhere I have shown, how the Song central government sought to find a middle way between strict central control (to increase her income and curb corruption) and relative local autonomy in order not to alienate foreign merchants but secure that they could make enough profits to continue to trade with China (Schottenhammer 2014: 437–525, 471f.). Although the early Song government already permitted Chinese ships to sail abroad, as we have seen above, trade probably continued to rely heavily on foreigners coming to China. Until the end of the eleventh century, long-distance maritime trade was obviously still basically carried out by foreigners who brought their goods to China on foreign ships that arrived at Guangzhou, Quanzhou and other ports on an annual basis. The period of active Chinese shipping began only in the late eleventh century.⁷⁶

7. Conclusion

Although many of the products exported through the port of Guangzhou originated from other parts of China, the Nan Han kingdom with its territory disposed of metals and Kaolin resources for the production of ingots, metal objects, coins, ceramics. The local ceramics industry definitely received a great upswing in the Tang, Wudai and early Song period. It started to develop as an export industry during the eighth to tenth centuries, especially in and around Guangzhou (Nanhai 南海, Qingyuan 清遠, and Huizhou 惠州 districts, or the Guanchong 官冲 kiln in Xinhui 新会) and in Chaozhou 潮州.⁷⁷ The kilns were basically located in the vicinity of tributaries of the Pearl River Delta or next to the Hanjiang 韓江 River. Local Guangdong kilns produced, for example, Yue-type ceramics (copies of Yue wares from the kilns in Zhejiang) that were especially common throughout Southeast Asia (Liebner 2014: 123). The Xicun 西村, Foshan 佛山, and Qishi 奇石 kilns near Guangzhou were the main sources of celadon wares and coarse stoneware for utilitarian use (Heng 2009: 186). Interestingly, for example, recent finds in the Xicun kilns show striking similarities to Cambodian Khmer wares, a fact that suggests a closer relation between both production centres (Wade 2009: 221–265, 245). Tons of Chinese ceramics dating from the second half of the tenth century have been excavated in and around Angkor. Chinese ceramics design and production technology clearly influenced local ceramic production in many Southeast Asian societies (Wade, *ibid.*). Ceramics from other parts of China, such as Fujian, Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Anhui etc. probably mainly reached Guangzhou via river and sea transportation. Ceramics definitely constituted a major export commodity of Nan Han merchants. Nan Han ceramics have been found in various places in Indonesia, including Java (Zhou Jiasheng 2008: 221–223, 223). The importance of metals, silver in this case, for maritime trade can be assumed from the discovery of the Intan shipwreck.

That merchant ships sailed from Nan Han following the East coast of Sumatra as far as Java is also supported by the Intan and Cirebon wrecks. But how active Chinese Nan Han merchants were in this maritime trade, how their domestic and overseas networks looked like, and to what extent they relied on foreign merchants – Southeast Asians, Indians and definitely Arabs and some Iranians – is almost impossible to answer at this stage. The Nan Han court, this is suggested by both textual and archaeological evidence, was certainly actively involved in maritime trade in the sense

⁷⁶ In 1090, the Song government permitted Chinese prefectural authorities to allow Chinese ships to depart overseas, as long as the voyage had officially been registered – an administrative reform that Heng has called “1090 liberalization”; Heng 2009: 48, with reference to the *Song huiyao jigao* 1976: Zhiguan 44.8a-b.

⁷⁷ Cf. Huang Qichen 2003: 203–206; So Kee Long 2000: 197–199; for Chaozhou especially Ho Chuimei 1992. Chaozhou ceramics have been found in abundance overseas and are considered a major export item in the tenth and eleventh centuries, until the trade declined towards the end of the eleventh century. See So Kee Long 2000: 198.

that it purchased and sold goods and received envoys. But we have no records that members of the Nan Han court sent embassies abroad. Nor do we have evidence of Nan Han merchants privately sailing abroad with own ships. The evidence we have at least strongly suggests that both the contemporary court and local social élites as well as private merchants were basically still depended on foreign traders and ships to provide them with commodities from overseas. Hopefully, future archaeological evidence will bring more light into these aspects.

The Nan Han rulers definitely also profited from the already established role of Canton as *the* major Chinese entrepôt for foreign trade. Silver in particular was obviously used by the ruling élite as an equivalent of value and means of payment and exchange to obtain acquire valuable goods from overseas. Their active promotion of maritime trade during this period certainly again attracted more foreigners including Arabs and Iranians to South China. Various Chinese, also from aristocratic circles, maintained relations with or even intermarried with foreigners of Iranian and Arab descent since Tang times.⁷⁸ One of the wealthy Muslim merchant families that lived in Guangzhou around that time was the family of Pu Shougeng 蒲寿庚 (d. 1296), who later even became Superintendent of Maritime Trade in Quanzhou (after 1266–1274) (Schottenhammer 2002: 143, 148). Pu Shougeng's family was most probably of either Arab or Iranian origin. They had first traded in the South Seas and settled in Southeast Asia, probably Śrīvijaya or Champa – perhaps even Hainan, before they moved to Guangzhou and constituted one of the rich foreign households there; subsequently they relocated in Quanzhou during the generation of Pu Shougeng's father (So Kee Long 2000: 108). The family members were very active in the trade between South China and Southeast Asian countries, such as Champa and Brunei (Boni 淳泥).

As shown above, we have evidence that the centre of the Arab and Iranian merchants network gradually shifted to Southeast Asia after the Huang Chao Rebellion in late ninth century, especially to the Vietnam and the contemporary thalassography Śrīvijaya. The whole situation, however, remains complicated, also because many of these foreign merchants who had migrated to Champa or Śrīvijaya may well have generally been considered Champs or Śrīvijayan by the Chinese⁷⁹ – and records consequently did not list them as Arab or Iranian any more. It is clear that many goods, especially since the late tenth century, were traded to China by so-called Śrīvijayan or Champa merchants, many of them probably had Arab or Iranian origins. Some of the merchant families with Arab or Iranian backgrounds, however, as we have seen, also (re-)migrated to China in the early Song period, probably because they expected better business opportunities in the Song.

With the consolidation of the Song dynasty in the course of the eleventh century we enter a new phase of Sino-Arab relations. The relatively liberal and open maritime commerce policy of the Song (after the initial phase that lasted until the 1020s) provided foreign merchants with new, unprecedented possibilities to maintain their communities in China, built-up unforeseen domestic commercial networks and extend these networks throughout maritime Asia. In the second half of the eleventh century, the Tang-Song transition had, thus, definitely come to an end, at least as far as the activities of these foreign merchants are concerned. The central Arab – Chinese sources then no longer speak of Iranians but of “Dashi” (i.e. Tajik or Arabs) – maritime activities gradually shifted to Quanzhou and most of them probably traded between China and Southeast Asia, while other merchants of Iranian and Arab origin operated in the Western Indian Ocean. Future archaeological evidence will hopefully provide us with more information to better understand the details of their maritime commercial networks.

⁷⁸ Cf. Schottenhammer, forthcoming.

⁷⁹ Cf. also the argumentation in So Kee Long 2000: 57.



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