

Ritual, Text and Canon

Without ritual, how can there be a state?

Emperor Gaozong, after the fall of Kaifeng¹

Introduction

In A.D. 1040, Song emperor Renzong, convinced that military men of the day were ignorant of military knowledge ancient and modern, ordered the compilation of China's first court-sponsored comprehensive military manual. Despite the long tradition of the military arts and its textual tradition in China, the *Classic of Comprehensive Military Essentials* (*Wujing zongyao*; hereafter *Comprehensive Essentials*) was the first court-sponsored military manual in China's history. The culmination of a tradition of comprehensive manuals begun in the mid-Tang (618-908), the *Comprehensive Essentials* is distinguished by the breadth and detail of its content. This manual is significant for a number of reasons: it was planned as a standard for military commanders; it was the first imperial manual to incorporate, explicitly and in rich detail, chapters on ritual; and it set the standard for subsequent military manuals of the late imperial era.

The Song creation of this new kind of military treatise was accompanied by other developments: creation of a military canon embodied by the *Seven Treatises of the Military Canon*²; the re-categorization of military rituals at the court level; and the

¹ SS p. 2424.

² *Wujing qishu* compilation: *Taigong liutao* (*Tai Gong's Six Secret Teachings*); *The Methods of Sima Sima fa*; *Sunzi's Art of War/Sunzi bingfa*; *Wuzi*; *Wei Liaozi*; *Huang Shigong's Three Strategies/Huang Shigong sanlue*; *Questions and Replies Between Tang Taizong and Li Weigong/Tang Taizong Li Weigong wendui*

re-categorization of knowledge as reflected in new taxonomies of encyclopedia compilations and the new curricula in the imperial academies. To me, the conjunction of these events indicate more than simply ad hoc, anomalous decisions on the part of the Song court; rather they suggest that ritual was a necessary part of the military tradition.

In this chapter, I discuss the causes that led to the above developments. First, with respect to their attitude toward the military, the Song had competing goals: they needed to strengthen the army because they were surrounded by hostile neighbors on just about all sides. At the same time, they wanted to defuse the potential and actual power of local units or individual generals of the army that they believed threatened the central court. These goals combined with other circumstances of the Song: the continuation of the Tang project of centralizing the power of the court through ritual; the building up of a professional army; and having at their disposal a proven print technology. In short, the Northern Song combination of need and historical circumstance led to the development of comprehensive manuals.

Second, the *Comprehensive Essentials* epitomized the military facet of a trend begun early in the dynasty to collect up lost texts and local knowledge. The ritual sections in the manuals, in particular, resulted from the desire to recover knowledge—especially knowledge of occult rituals associated with the military tradition (see Chapter Six), dispersed or, where they existed in text, destroyed during the Five Dynasties era (908-960). Part of this project was the desire to recover “lost” knowledge; part was the Song effort to re-mold the military system.

Third, the Song manuals incorporate new metaphysical concepts developed especially in the Northern Song that centered on the concept of *xiang* (image, phenomenon, constellations, simulacrum) and its place in a re-worked construction of the universe. *Xiang*, transformed as highly visual and expanded in scope, is key to

many rituals in the manuals, especially newly developed techniques of the battle array schema (Chapter Five) and the cosmography rituals (highly creative rituals that used a compass-like instrument; Chapter Six). Simultaneously, changes in the curriculum in the Imperial Academy point to new paradigms of thought taking place during the Song. For those familiar with the history of the era, this comes as no surprise. Nevertheless, these changes indicate that the military system being created by the Song contributed to this intellectual turning point.

Fourth, rituals included in the manuals are a reflection, if not a source, of what Judith Boltz calls a “new age of ritual creativity”.³ This creativity resulted from the combination of local practices with those of the “Five Rituals”, a traditional corpus of rituals, which is to say canon, practiced at the court. Tracing the history of changes in what these rituals signify illuminates the specific role that the military profession played in changes in systems of beliefs during the Song. How they signify relates to practices of the Song court, especially in relation to the military commander. On a more mundane level, I discuss the contents of the manuals, their provenance and the changes in the rituals they document.

Why did the Song court decide to include ritual in military manuals? As a means to begin to answer this question, I proceed as follows. First, I discuss the nature and characteristics of the manuals that I am using; who wrote them, their circumstances and why the compilers chose the contents that they did. After looking at the military rituals celebrated at both the Tang and the Song courts, I compare those to rituals included in the manuals. I then discuss the Song program of texts and how documented rituals fit in with it.

³ Boltz 1987, 23.

Military Treatises and Song Manuals

The nature of the military treatise shifted during the Song. This shift is reflected in the compilation of the *Comprehensive Essentials* and in the creation of a canon of military texts, the *Seven Treatises of the Military Canon* (*Wujing qishu*; hereafter, *Military Canon*). This set of military books achieved canonical status, a status that it still retains.⁴ These changes signaled a transition not only in the Chinese military program, but also redefined how the military would operate with respect to the court. New blocks for the *Comprehensive Essentials* were re-cut once during the Song and five times during the Ming.⁵ The effects of this text were long lasting. The Ming dynasty collection, the *Treatise on Military Preparedness* (*Wubeizhi*), retains the fundamental structure and organization of the *Comprehensive Essentials*.⁶

The military text had a long tradition in China. One of the earliest and most famous of these is *Sunzi's Art of War* (late 5th c. B.C.). Nevertheless, the manuals of the Tang-Song era were different for a few reasons. First, these texts—the *Venus Classic* of the Tang, and the *Tiger Seal Treatise* and the *Comprehensive Essentials* of the Song—were comprehensive and as such, were a departure from the pithier, primarily strategic and tactical stance of the previous manuals. Second, the *Comprehensive Essentials* was written by group of court-appointed authors, a departure from the tradition of the military book written by individuals. That tradition of individual authorship is reflected in all but one of the *Seven Treatises of the Military Canon*—the exception being *Questions and Replies between Tang Taizong and Li Weigong* (hereafter, *Questions and Replies*), and the *Tiger Seal Treatise* and *Venus Classic*. The *Comprehensive Essentials* was a court-generated, officially

⁴ Xu Baolin, 424ff. See discussion below.

⁵ Xu Baolin, 361.

⁶ Franke 1974, 198, though he speaks more to the Qing dynasty *Wubei jiyao*.

sanctioned text. Third, the *Comprehensive Essentials* was the first court-generated issue of rituals performed outside the direct the purview of the court.

Many scholars consider the Song dynasty one of the most militarily ineffective in China's history, mostly because they kept losing pieces of the empire to their more nomadic neighbors. Few brilliant military thinkers are associated with the Song dynasty.⁷ Yet the Song court held an unprecedented number of military tracts in the imperial libraries. The *Comprehensive Treatise* (*Tongzhi*; submitted in 1161), a Northern Song (960-1125) encyclopedia compiled by Zheng Qiao (1104-1162), lists a total of 245 separate books amounting to 945 *juan* (scrolls; chapters) listed in the "Militarists" (*bingjia*) section through the end of the Tang dynasty.⁸ The "Militarists" section was composed of five types: military treatises (112 vols.), military *yinyang* (99 vols.), camp and battle array schema (20 vols.), military regulations (7 vols.), and border policy (7 vols.).⁹

About 1308, Ma Duanlin (1254-1325) completed his *General Investigations on Important Writings* (*Wenxian tongkao*), which covers through Ningzong's reign (1195-1224). Ma's "Classics" (*jingji*) section notes that the Sui had 133 volumes in 512 *juan*.¹⁰ The Tang had 23 authors of 60 volumes in 319 *juan* (Ma writes that 25 authors and 163 *juan* were not recorded). In the Song, the "three reigns" (Taizu, Taizong and Zhenzong; 960-1022) had 182 volumes totaling 553 *juan*; the "two reigns" (Renzong, Yingzong; 1023-1067) had 32 volumes of 127 *juan*; the "four reigns" (Shenzong, Zhezong, Huizong, Qinzong; 1068-1126) had 97 volumes of 828 *juan*; and the Southern Song *zhongxingzhi* period (中興志) had 92 authors of 107

⁷ But see Li Ling et al, *Zhongguo bingshi mingzhu jinyi: Baijiang tuzhuan* entries for "Di Qing", "Yang Yanzhao", "Zong Ze" (1059-1128: *Sbio*, p. 1073), "Yue Fei", and "Han Shizhong".

⁸ *TZ* 799. On the *TZ*, see Dudbridge 2000, 9-12.

⁹ *TZ* 798-799.

¹⁰ *WXTK* <Jingji kao> 221:1787-96 and *WXTK* <Table of Contents>, 21.

volumes and 1,074 *juan*. Ma treats “*yinyang*” school in another section (*juan* 219), although some of the military books discuss *yinyang* principles.¹¹ The *Official History of the Song* (hereafter *Song History*), written in 1344-45, “Military Treatises” section of Monograph on Bibliography gives 347 volumes of 1,956 *juan*. Xu Baolin gives a total of 559 volumes of 3,865 *juan* for both the Northern and Southern Song periods.¹²

In short, the Song had over twice the number of military treatises in the imperial library than did the Tang. The types of documents the Song wrote differed from those of previous dynasties, too. According to Xu Baolin, the *Comprehensive Essentials* was not the only Song contribution to the historical development of the military book during the Song. Other new genres included commentaries, collections, biographies of famous generals, compilations of the classics, and critique.¹³ Song manuals inspired those of the later imperial dynasties in both structure and content. The Ming dynasty *Wubeizhi*, for instance, expanded upon many of the specifically ritual aspects of the Song manuals.¹⁴

In summary, the tradition of the military text changed during the Song dynasty. By creating the *Military Canon*, they extolled the virtues of a tradition that they simultaneously drastically altered.

¹¹ See, for instance, his 人事軍律221:1791. All but a few of the books discussed in the “Militarists” section of the *WXTK* (p. 1787-1796) were written in the Tang or are commentaries on the classic texts: *Liu Tao*, *Sunzi*, and the like. Of the remainder, most Song texts discussed were imperially ordered works. Some exceptions are the *Sanlue sushu*, *Xining shufu hezhenfa*; *Wujing gaijian*; two texts on Han military organization (*bing* 制) elaborated and supplemented; and a collection of texts *Xiuchengfa wutiaoyue* (修城法武條約) captured by Shen Kuo and Lu Weiqing and submitted in Xining yr. 8 (1075). See *WXTK* 221.

¹² *SS* 207:5277-5288; Xu Baolin 27, 53. I might note here that treatises in the libraries of the following dynasties more than doubled again the Song figures: the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) libraries contained 1023 volumes, reduced to 982 volumes of the Qing (1644-1912). Xu Baolin, 27.

¹³ Xu Baolin, 45.

¹⁴ Franke 1974.

Ritual in Manuals

The most important development for this study, though, was that the *Comprehensive Essentials*, drawing on its precursors, the *Venus Classic* and the *Tiger Seal Treatise*, incorporated—officially—the tradition of ritual and occult magic as an integral part of military procedures and hence, of warfare itself. The idea of compiling a comprehensive manual is instructive in a few ways. Like most encyclopedias, it collects in one place all knowledge on a topic. Nevertheless, as Wolfgang Bauer points out, encyclopedias fix knowledge and, indeed, define what knowledge is considered worthwhile.¹⁵ Encyclopedias categorize knowledge. They are an important indicator of world view, and, combined with ritual practices, define a view of the cosmos. In the case of ritual in military manuals and the creation of a military canon, the encyclopedic tradition of the Song also signified a new tradition of taxonomy, important in defining both knowledge and epistemology. The institution of the imperially-generated military manual was itself a manifestation of Song thinkers' search for the construction of heaven and related taxonomies.

In the taxonomy of bibliographic materials, military texts came under a category that translates as philosophy, a taxonomy established in the Han dynasty.¹⁶ This gives some insight into the place that military texts held in Chinese conceptualization and cognition. In this sense, there is a connection of military texts with the texts of, for instance, Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi, all great philosophers of the “100 Philosophers” era (6th-3rd c. B.C.). Given the place of ritual (*li* 禮) in philosophical texts—and here ritual refers etiquette, comportment, mode of behavior, and performance of ceremonies and rituals—inclusion of ritual and metaphysical ideas

¹⁵ Bauer 1966.

¹⁶ Dudbridge 2000, 4-5.

in military texts may not be especially surprising. Nevertheless, few post-imperial scholars, Chinese or Western, treat in depth this aspect of military thought.

To my mind, taxonomy is one key to understanding changes that occurred in the Song, especially because taxonomy organizes collective thought. Texts speak of and to the general condition of society, and to its own particular collective; i.e., its community of readers. The way that texts are categorized, as in a bibliographic system, and the way that texts categorize other things—in this instance, the thought and practices of the military system—tell something about the society that produces them. More specifically, the role of taxonomy in ritual organizes beliefs about the cosmos, affecting how humans perceive their place in the universe. Finally, taxonomic shifts in ritual affected the cultural construction of knowledge, especially what kind of knowledge was deemed important and legitimate.

Taxonomy and ritual are related. Ritual continually presents and re-presents a set of acts and ideas, which is what makes it key in producing ideologies. When “closed”, these sets of ideas, texts, or objects comprise canon. Though in most major religions, canon usually refers to texts, Jonathan Z. Smith, in *Imagining Religion*, describes canon as a model or “redescription” including but not limited to texts. His argument goes something like this: canon is a subgenre of the list, which is entirely “open-ended and arbitrary” and therefore, random. Catalogue, composed for “information retrieval”, is a list subjected to one or a set of organizing principles (taxonomy, in my parlance). Catalogue describes a “map of cultural selection”, generated by processes that involve objects, thoughts, ideas, occurrences.¹⁷ Canon is distinguished from catalogue by being thought of as complete or “closed” (but still

¹⁷ One sequence of such processes is “empirical collection of data”, “recording occurrences over time”, “discovering a pattern to synchronisms” and “determining common principles that underlies the pattern” (48). I might add that these maps are generated by either individuals, collectives, or as in the case of Chinese official histories, by convention.

subject to taxonomies), achieved by the presence of both tradition and an interpreter. Canon constantly seeks to limit, whereas the “hermeneute continually extends the domain of canon over everything that is known or that exists without altering the canon in the process”.¹⁸

Taxonomy presented by ritual was connected to changes in taxonomy in other arenas during the Song. Here I am concerned with those other fields insofar as they played a role in the coming together of an oral canon with the creation of a new textual canon, which, I believe, is what these manuals represent. In investigating changes in rituals in the manuals, I follow the trajectories of both a textual and oral canon. Therefore, I treat here the occurrence of topics and themes in the manuals, the “Five Rituals”—a court canon of military rituals, and the categories professed by the manuals themselves.

The Military Manuals

The Song included detailed explanations of ritual in the newly defined “tradition” of the military treatise. The court recognized the role of ritual and its associated cosmology both in the military branch of the bureaucracy and in the actual undertaking of military action. In this section, I describe the manuals and their contents, and situate them in the context of the traditional military treatise. I discuss *xiang*, one of the foremost new concepts that the manuals incorporated.

Overview of Manuals and their Authors

A brief discussion of the three comprehensive manuals, their authors and their contents, follows.

¹⁸ Jonathan Z. Smith 1982, 44-48.

1. *Classic of Venus, Planet of War* (*Taibo yinjing*; hereafter *Venus Classic*) was written by Li Quan.¹⁹ Li Quan's dates are unknown, but he flourished in 750's-ca. 770's. He found a copy of the Yellow Emperor's *Yinfujing* "inside a magic mountain" and later, inside a mountain again, he happened upon a Daoist adept who taught him what that ancient and abstruse text meant. He submitted the *Venus Classic* to the court at the emperor's request only reluctantly.²⁰

2. The *Tiger Seal Treatise* was written by Xu Dong (976?-1015?), and submitted to the court in 1005(?). Xu, caught in the midst of factional politics, was accused and found guilty of graft.²¹ He wrote the tract in exchange for promises to drop charges against him. He was pardoned for the crime. Xu acknowledges a debt to both Li Quan and to Sunzi's famous volume, cribbing freely from them both. Xu Dong's text is self-consciously more pragmatic than the *Venus Classic*, an objective he clearly states in his "Preface":

. . . . *Sunzi's Art of War* is abstract and profound, but for those who study it, it is difficult to know how to use it. Some of the methods the various schools are superficial and shallow. . . . It is truly difficult to put these theories into practice in the midst of real circumstances. In speaking of Li Quan's famous *Venus Classic*, the secret methods are abstruse and not explained; he discusses *yinyang* but it is scattered throughout and incomplete. Looked at in this way, Li Quan's text really is not thorough.

Now, in the first half of the [*Tiger Seal Treatise*], I select the important points of Sunzi and Li Quan and clarify their strategies. In the second half, I select auspicious circumstances and the subtleties of human affairs and exhaustively explain them. . . . Even though clever strategies and tricky schemes are not in accordance with the Six Classics, these are things that the militarist must use.²²

True to his word, Xu includes such pragmatic and prosaic activities as wall-building, well-digging, naval warfare, very specific methods for training and

¹⁹ Also called the *Shenji zhidi Taibo yinjing*.

²⁰ *Taibo* <Preface>; *Daocang Yunqi qiqian*, 38 ce, j. 112, no. 5-6.

²¹ *SKQSTY*.

²² *HQJ* <Preface>.

practicing the soldiers, and the like (see Appendix One). Much of this text and Li Quan's were adopted wholesale into the *Comprehensive Essentials*, and the authors of the latter carried this pragmatism even further with catalogue-like descriptions of armor, weapons and so forth.

Xu expresses in the *Tiger Seal Treatise* a type of thought, unsystematic though it may be, later taken up in more detail by his maternal nephew, the famous thinker Shen Kuo (1031-1095). In particular, Xu incorporates a new attitude toward *xiang*, in a way that anticipates its key role in the four orders of reality, an ontological construction that formed the basis for many rituals (discussed below).

3. The *Classic of Comprehensive Military Essentials* former and latter collections (*Wujing zongyao*, qianji-houji) was written by committee headed by Zeng Gongliang (998-1078) and Ding Du (990-1053), the latter collection the responsibility of Zeng. He wrote the first 15 chapters of that collection, which gives accounts and stories selected from Chinese military history. The last five chapters of the latter collection, discussing occult rituals, astrology, prayers and sacrifices, were written by Yang Weide (?-after 1054), a court astrologer.²³

Zeng Gongliang (999-1078) was from what is now Fujian province. He received his entered scholar (*jinshi*) degree during Renzong's *Tiansheng* reign (1023-1031). He was very learned in law. He served as District Magistrate, Prefect, and then Prefect of Kaifeng, before becoming a Chief Councillor of State in 1061. In his later years, he recommended Wang Anshi to Emperor Shenzong. He resigned in 1069, and received the title of Grand Protector.²⁴

Ding Du (990-1053) was in charge of the compilation and writing of the *Comprehensive Essentials* former section. He was appointed to the Bureau of Imperial

²³ Franke "Wu-ching tsung-yao" in *Sbib*, 235-36.

²⁴ Xu Baolin, 356-57; *Sbio* "Tseng Kung-liang".

Sacrificial Ritual. He wanted to recruit more soldiers in Hebei and Hedong. His proposals included not promoting positions based on family lines, and other anti-nepotism proposals.²⁵ In the interests of solving problems of frontier defense and low morale, Ding personally visited many frontier towns and scoped out military installations. Ding wrote a number of tracts on military affairs, including *Essentials of Preparation for Border Defense for the Emperor's Perusal* (*Beibian yaolan* 備邊要覽, before 1041), *Military records of the Qingli reign* (1041-1048) (*Qingli binglu*), and the *Shanbianlu* (贍邊錄) in addition to co-authoring the *Comprehensive Essentials*. He served as the Vice Minister for War in 1045, the year after the *Comprehensive Essentials* was submitted.²⁶

Yang Weide 楊維德 (?-after 1054) completed the latter sections of the *Comprehensive Essentials* while serving in the Directorate of Astronomical Observations (*Sitian jian*). Excepting sections on the cosmograph techniques in the *Venus Classic* and the *Tiger Seal Treatise*, Yang was one of the first writers to develop explicitly the Hidden Period system; first, in his the *Classic of the Talismanic Response of the Hidden Period* (*Dunjia fuying jing* 遁甲符應經), submitted to the court between 1034 and 1037, and then in the cosmograph sections of the *Comprehensive Essentials*.

The Contents of the Manuals

In this section I discuss the similarities of the three manuals and situate them within the tradition of the military treatise. Then I point out new material in them and

²⁵ *Sbio*, 1023. Upon being ordered to investigate a “will-o-the-wisp which had been seen eerily glowing on the funeral mound of Taizu, the founder of the dynasty,” Ding replied: “Spirits like to be left in peace; it would be better not to build anything on them,” upon which the matter was dropped.

²⁶ *Sbio*, 1022-1025.

discuss the significance of those differences. Detailed contents of the manuals are included in Appendix One.

For ease of analysis, the texts discussed above can be broadly organized into four groups: first, the pre-Han and Han texts, including all texts of the *Military Canon* but the *Questions and Replies between Tang Taizong and Li Weigong* (hereafter *Questions and Replies*); second, military treatises left out of the *Military Canon*, for example those written by Zhuge Liang and Cao Cao of the Northern and Southern Dynasties; third, the text *Questions and Replies*, believed to have been written in the late Tang or early Song, and the three Tang-Song manuals—the *Venus Classic*, *Tiger Seal Treatise*, and the *Comprehensive Essentials*. My goal here is argue that the latter stand as a turning point in the nature of the military treatise generally, and discuss specific new additions.

A number of themes run through the Tang-Song manuals that are common to those of the ancient classics of the *Military Canon*. Themes emphasized in the latter include thought, strategy, stratagem and, to some extent, tactics. All presume the role of the commander as supreme, the military equivalent to the emperor. In keeping with this, many topics—even whole texts—are applied to governance as well as to military endeavors. Examples of specific topics that apply to both include strategic configuration (*shi* 勢) and the disposition of authority (*quan* 勸); inspiring troops and the spirit and awesomeness of the commander (*qi* 氣); the moral disposition of the ruler and/or commander including winning the hearts and minds of the people, obtaining their support, and how these all form the basis of the army; terrain; organization of troops; the unification of purpose; and the importance and role of banners, drums and music. The Dao (道 Way, proper path) of warfare, governance and battle—incorporating five phases, *yinyang*, legalist and Laozi's thought—underlie many of these texts. General mention of divination prior to battle and the hunt appear

in several texts.²⁷ More specific topics covered are rewards and punishment, spies, battle formations and incendiary warfare. Most ancient authors discuss the above topics in broad outline, as opposed to specific detail, and most assume a sort of grand intuition or inherent knowledge and will on the part of the commander.

Questions and Replies, written sometime during the latter half of the 10th century, and probably in the early Song, mimics ancient texts in many ways.²⁸ It is set up along the lines of the *Taigong's Six Strategies* and the *Wuzi*, both didactic dialogues between Taigong and King Wen or King Wu of the Zhou dynasty, or *Wuzi's* conversations with the Marquis of Wu. *Questions and Replies* introduces three new topics of import: who should have access to military knowledge; the idea of limiting transmission of texts that deal with that knowledge; and battle array schema as a key to victory. Many argue that the pretense of *Questions and Replies* as an early Tang text (ca. early 600s) was a conscious effort on the part of its authors to add legitimacy and authority to its contents. This is probably so. But it also likely that its authors meant it as an early model describing the shape of military values that the Song would later fix via the *Comprehensive Essentials* and the *Military Classics*.

What was new in the Tang-Song manuals? All, but especially the *Comprehensive Essentials*, show a new emphasis on the importance of organization, the establishment of hierarchy, and rewards and punishments, i.e., military law. Other new or much expanded topics (with reference to specific manuals in parentheses) are shown in Figure 2.1.

²⁷ Most prominently in the *Wei Liaozi* and *Three Strategies of Huang Shigong*.

²⁸ Translated in Sawyer 1993.

Topic	Text ²⁹
Details of communication for apprising the court of progress in the field	<i>Taibo</i> 7; <i>WJZY</i> qj 15
Military geography including the field allocation system (<i>fen ye</i>), a form of geographical astrology	<i>Taibo</i> 3; <i>HQJ</i> 16; <i>WJZY</i> qj 16-20
Siege warfare, with specifics of building and breaching walls	<i>HQJ</i> 6; <i>WJZY</i> qj 10,12
Pallet of weapons and other equipment	<i>Taibo</i> 4; <i>WJZY</i>
Recipes for gunpowder and various types of bombs	<i>WJZY</i>
Care, medicine recipes and treatment of illnesses, wounds and prevention of epidemics for horses, humans, and other livestock (in that order)	<i>Taibo</i> 3, 7; <i>HQJ</i> 8, 10; <i>WJZY</i> qj 6
Choosing horses and soldiers based on physiognomy	<i>Taibo</i> ; <i>HQJ</i>
Specifics of provisioning and supply lines	<i>WJZY</i> qj 6
Timekeeping	<i>Taibo</i> , <i>WJZY</i> qj 6
Naval warfare	<i>Taibo</i> , <i>HQJ</i> 2; <i>WJZY</i> qj 11
War rehearsals and troop training	<i>Taibo</i> ; <i>HQJ</i> 3, 8; <i>WJZY</i> qj 2,4
Countering the ancients	<i>HQJ</i> 5; <i>WJZY</i> 1-15
Losing and finding one's way	<i>Taibo</i> 4; <i>HQJ</i> 6
Signaling	<i>Taibo</i> , <i>HQJ</i> 6; <i>WJZY</i> qj 5
Water sources and hunting for food	<i>HQJ</i> 8; <i>WJZY</i> 6
Night fighting	<i>WJZY</i>
Accounts of former affairs, a military history of China through the Song	<i>WJZY</i> 1-15
Setting up camp and battle array schema	<i>Taibo</i> 6; <i>HQJ</i> ; <i>WJZY</i> qj 2,5,6,7,8
Divination and cosmography rituals	<i>Taibo</i> 8, 9, 10; <i>HQJ</i> 8, 11-19; <i>WJZY</i> 16-20
Prayer and sacrifices to various deities	<i>Taibo</i> 7; <i>HQJ</i> 20; <i>WJZY</i> qj 5
Various rituals and ceremonies	<i>Taibo</i> 3; <i>HQJ</i> 20; <i>WJZY</i> qj 5

Figure 3.1 New or expanded topics included in the *Venus Classic* (*Taibo*), the *Tiger Seal* (*HQJ*), and the *Military Essentials* (*WJZY*).³⁰

²⁹ Includes chapter when known.

³⁰ All references to *WJZY* refer to the latter collection unless noted qj (*qianji*).

A tendency toward pragmatism is evident in the three manuals.³¹ The move toward the bureaucratization of the military is evident in the chronological progression of the manuals. The sections on punishments and rewards, for example, became more detailed and explicit through time. Clearly, infractions of rules were a great problem for the Song, judging from the content of the code laid down. The “Military Treatise” of the *Song History* documents that, in retrospect, officials repeatedly called for harsher codes and punishments.³² The idea of troop discipline is emphasized through specific prescriptions in battle array schema and troop training. Obviously, any military system requires organization, but the manuals lay out very specifically troop organization by units from a basic squad of five up to the division of 12,500. They also clearly define the hierarchy of position, specifying number of officers, duties, and order of command.

In its first two chapters, the *Venus Classic* sings the swan song of the commander as supreme authority and field substitute for the emperor. This authority was invested through the *fu* and *yue* ritual (both a kind of axe). That text also characterizes of the ideal commander along the lines of Daoist divine, so clearly manifest in Li Quan’s biography.³³ The *Tiger Seal Treatise* gives this supreme authority over to Nature in the form of the Three Talents (Heaven, Earth, Human), supernatural forces full of power and which hold the key to employing the army.

As mentioned above, divination and ritual are not entirely new in the tradition of the Chinese military treatise: divination and ritual are both mentioned in a general way in a number of texts in the military canon, and in treatises excluded from the

³¹ See Xu Baolin 1990, 45, for developments in the expansion of topics covered in the Tang-Song manuals vis-à-vis those covered in the Han; planning and the disposition of authority (*quanmo*), form and strategic configuration (*xingshi*), *yinyang*, and arts and techniques (*jiqiao*).

³² *SS* p. 4812-13.

³³ See Appendix Two.

canon, too. The discussion of ritual (*li* 禮) tends to follow the concept as developed in Confucian thought, and, in most texts, follows the same logic. That is to say, proper *li* or ritual must be followed. First, it must be followed in making the decision to undertake battle at all. This means that decisions can stem only from proper moral governance, necessary to secure loyalty, assent of the population and therefore, willing troops. Second, upholding *li* is essential to battle; the commander must maintain a ritual stance—observance of proper conduct, ceremony, and ritual—in following through in his campaigns. All three manuals mention this latter point.

The association of the magical rituals and the military treatise was not new—Huang Shigong, for instance, putatively authored the magical text, the *Classic of the Hidden Talisman* (Yinfujing); the *Weiliaozi* mentions divination. In his *Wujing zhijie* (completed in 1398), Liu Yin notes that *Sunzi's Art of War* incorporates principles from which various occult techniques arise.³⁴ *Qi* divination—reading the “vapors” and clouds—omen sightings and omen interpretation, too, were both well-established ancient forms of military divination that changed little from ancient times through the Song.³⁵

Generally, one can see new cosmological considerations coming into play in both Li Quan's and Xu Dong's texts. Li Quan discusses *xiang* (constellations) in several chapters. These are very much in line with the Tang conception of *xiang* as asterisms. New cosmology can be seen in the inclusion of the “Three Talents” or *sancai* (三才) in the *Tiger Seal*, which Xu relates to the Xunzian scheme of Heaven,

³⁴ *Wujing zhijie*, 113. Specifically, the orphans and the empties; see Chapter Six. Liu is commenting on Sunzi's “Calculations”. Admittedly, Liu's interpretation may be the result of the Song magical infusions into this textual tradition.

³⁵ Yates 1988 documents this for the Warring States; Wallacker 1999 for the Northern and Southern dynasties; Ho and Ho 1986 for late Tang. All show remarkable continuity and consistency in form and text. On *qi* divination, see Reiter 1991; Bodde 1981.

Earth, Human and discusses these in terms of a mutual interconnectedness.³⁶ A shift in cosmology is evident in Xu's section on reading topography, using Sunzi's text on topography combined with geomantic reading.³⁷

Many texts of the *Military Canon* discuss terrain, expressing a Daoist view of landscape and Earth as magical and imbued with power, in addition to the very human tactical considerations of terrain in battle. But, as I read them, the Tang-Song manuals stress a much more powerful geomantic interpretation of the landscape. Geomancy as a specific term and developed art came into its own during the Tang, and the refinement of geomancy beliefs is quite clear in the Tang-Song manuals.³⁸

This is especially salient when considering the addition of the entirely new sections on the astrological-field (*fenye*) system. These stress the relation to both strategic and tactical decisions and the constellations associated with geography. Their appearance in the *Venus Classic* and the *Tiger Seal Treatise* undoubtedly inspired the new, more in-depth military geography sections in the *Comprehensive Essentials*. In the latter appears military-political accounts of each region or province, especially of those not entirely incorporated into the Chinese cultural order. Both geomancy and the *fenye* system are related to the development of the battle array schema. This latter occupies a great deal of space in the Song texts, particularly in the court-generated *Comprehensive Essentials*, and represent the crystallization of all three elements of thought in the Song.³⁹ Much discussed at Shenzong's court, he favored battle array schema and their relationship to the five phases.⁴⁰

³⁶ *HQJ* 1: 1-5

³⁷ *HQJ* 1:1-5 and 5:33-40.

³⁸ Morgan 1990-91; Morgan 1980; Feuchtwang 1974.

³⁹ See Chapter Five.

⁴⁰ *SS* 4863.

Despite this tendency toward pragmatism evident in the three manuals, the manuals include ritual practices based on concepts of natural philosophy. These practices include *qi* divination, cosmographic methods, astrological prognostication, battle array schema, and methods of inferring events from natural forces (*tui*).⁴¹ These rituals were based on the five phases theory (*wuxing*), *qi* (vital essence), *yinyang* (relationship of shadow to light), and *xiang* (symbol, image, simulacrum). These elemental creative forces constitute the conceptual ground for many forms of divination. This is especially true in the case of battle arrays and watching the vital force (*qi*); both are less direct heavenly signs than omen-reading, for instance, but all three forms share a common belief in the mutual reciprocity and mutual response (*ganying*) of heaven, earth and human put into action. Important concepts that formed the basis of many forms of divination, most had their provenance in the *Book of Change*, a divination text in the Confucian canon, and the locus of various philosophical strains in the Northern Song.

***Xiang* and its role in the manuals: ritual and canon**

Xiang, a major conceptual innovation of the Song, constituted the key to most forms of divination and occult techniques. *Xiang* bridged categories of knowledge—especially as conceived of in the four orders of reality, and as presented in Song ritual innovations—and involved canon, both textual and non-literate. *Xiang* was an important bridge between an oral canon and the shaping of that into text. This is true for a number of reasons: 1. Its unique position in the *Book of Change*. 2. The role it played in the development of the “four orders of reality” a cosmological and ontological scheme developed by polymath Shao Yong and other Northern Song thinkers. This was ultimately synthesized in the *Taiji* schemata of Zhu Xi (1130-1200)

⁴¹ See Kim, Yung Sik 2004 on the concept of inferring events (*tui*).

as expressed in his concept of *zhiwu*, “extension of knowledge” and *gewu*, “investigation of things”.⁴² 3. The domain of *xiang* expanded from asterisms, as in the appearances of comets and the regularities of heavenly bodies, to extraordinary but visual phenomena, as in clouds, flocks of cranes and so forth.⁴³ Therefore, the potential interpretive range of non-literate canon also expanded.

Xiang was highly ritualized by virtue of its role in the *Book of Change*, where it held an important place in divination. The locus classicus of *xiang*'s variegated role in human past and future is expressed in the “Appended Words Commentary” (“Xici zhuan”) of the *Book of Change*:

In ancient times, when Fu Xi ruled the world, he looked up and contemplated the images (*xiang*) in Heaven, he looked down and contemplated the patterns (*fa*) on earth. He contemplated the markings (*wen*) of the birds and beasts and their adaptations to the various regions. From near at hand he abstracted [images from] his own body; from afar he abstracted from things.⁴⁴

Xiang is the source of divine inspiration for Fu Xi's ordering of the human and the animal world, investing them with taxonomy and therefore, meaning. *Xiang* provided inspiration for the hexagrams of the *Book of Change*. More important, though, *xiang* is the meaning of the hexagrams. As Deborah Porter points out, “*xiang* is the only word in the ‘Appended Words Commentary’ to refer both to an object with prognosticating capabilities and the means by which these capabilities were made knowable.”⁴⁵ In other words, the four Images of the *Book of Change* (the four possible combinations of 2 lines), which proceed from *yin* and *yang*, generate all sixty-four possible combinations of the hexagrams. But *xiang* also refers to interpretations of the hexagrams: for instance, the Image for hexagram #58 Dui (lake, joyous) says: “Lakes

⁴² Kim, Yung Sik 2004, 41-52.

⁴³ Sturman 1990; Reiter 1991; Powers 1990.

⁴⁴ Adapted from Smith et al., 177 (*Zhouyi benyi*, 152)

⁴⁵ Porter 1996, 71-72.

resting on one another; the Image of the Joyous. Thus the superior person joins with friends for discussion and practice.”⁴⁶ As Porter notes, *xiang* are generated from a “vision of an obstacle to being,” but simultaneously provide the means to transcend that obstacle.⁴⁷ This was even more true in the Song version of *xiang* as visual, when contemplation of visual objects were used for meditation to transcend ordinary knowledge and achieve divine understanding.⁴⁸

The Tang concept of *xiang* as asterisms changed during the Song, when it entailed meaning more profound than coordinating human action with the stars.⁴⁹ For Song thinkers, the concept of *xiang* metamorphosed from the Tang sense of constellations, and branched out in all its senses: as highly visual and schematic Image; as constellations (in all manuals, underlies Three cosmographies techniques); as symbol, model and simulacrum; and finally into its most profound sense, as occult fulcrum that made possible most divination and sorcery techniques (reading the *qi*, pitch pipes, three cosmographies, battle array schema).

Polymath Shao Yong (1011-1077) developed the concept of *xiang* in his scheme of the four orders of reality, a hierarchical moral and universal order that has at its root *xiangshu* or Image-number. This system was an ontological description of reality, a system that figured largely in Chinese ritual and divinatory systems. These orders of reality corresponded with techniques used to know Nature, “arranged in descending order of human perception: *li*, principles or patterns of Nature; *shu*, regularities or numbers that calculate and describe Heavenly patterns of *li*; *xiang*, images that are perceived by humans and manifest nature’s will; and *wu*, things which

⁴⁶ Adapted from Wilhelm 1967, 686.

⁴⁷ Porter 1996, 71.

⁴⁸ Milcinski 1991.

⁴⁹ Schafer 1977.

are concrete. The latter two are readily perceived by humans; the numbers are used to predict images so that the principles and the will of Nature can be known.”⁵⁰

Most relevant to a ritual canon shaped in the manuals is the role of *xiang* in these four orders.⁵¹ First, *xiang* connected the visual and perceptible (*wu*) to *li*, the “grand unifying pattern or principle”.⁵² The scheme of the four orders of reality expanded the domain of interpretation of *xiang*.⁵³ Highly visual, it refers to the “extraordinary-but-still-perceptible”. As Peter Sturman puts it, “*xiang* represents presumed reality; i.e., those higher truths that need not be seen to be understood. Occasionally, however, those truths are made manifest in Images”.⁵⁴ The Song were the first to express concepts and ideas about the divine in pictorial form. The River Chart (*hetu*) and the Luo Writing (*luoshu*), “magic squares” that expressed *yinyang*, the heavens and the Eight Trigrams (*bagua*) of the *Book of Change*, believed to capture the essence of the divine, were first expressed as pictures rather than words during the Song. Similarly, Zhou Dunyi (1017-1073) first expressed the relationship of *yin*⁵⁵ to *yang*⁵⁶ visually. As symbol and icon, *xiang* draws meaning from and between unlike things, distilling a great deal of information into a single image. *Xiang* is highly visual—sometimes only visual—and as such correlates with the icon in its ritual role.⁵⁷ It exists in the absence of language.

⁵⁰Forage 1991a, 166-72; Smith and Wyatt 1990, 105-110 and 255-58.

⁵¹ See K. Smith et al. 1990.

⁵² Kim 2004.

⁵³ A discussion of the term is given in Smith et al. 1990, 255-56. Its meaning varied among the philosophers of the era, but the authors define it as ‘image,’ ‘figure’ or ‘symbolization.’

⁵⁴Sturman, 1990, 44-46.

⁵⁵ Lit., the south bank of the river; shadow, cold, wet, even numbers, female, realm of the dead, ghosts

⁵⁶ Lit., the north side of the riverbank; light, hot, dry, odd number, male, realm of the living, human, etc.

⁵⁷ Rappaport 1979, 180.

Xiang functioned as taxonomy; i.e., as organizing principles of things (*wu*). The most well-known evidence of this is seen in the figure of Shen Kuo (1031-1095), a famous scholar and official who served as a the imperial representative and one of the main strategists in a Northern Song expedition against the Xi Xia.⁵⁸ Much of Shen Kuo's work, *Brush Strokes from Dream Creek*, is devoted to taxonomy of natural phenomenon, and categorizing nature according to the four orders of reality, in which visual similitude played a large role; for example, coral was the *xiang* of water's trees.⁵⁹ Similarly, clouds, understood as visual manifestations of *qi*—normally imperceptible, took on symbolic significance by virtue of their visual resemblance to steam resulting from alchemical distillations.⁶⁰ Through visual resemblance *xiang* takes on iconic characteristics.⁶¹

Song emperor Renzong's "Preface" to the *Comprehensive Essentials* illustrates the extent to which the concept of *xiang* as underlying element of cosmic order permeated Northern Song thought. He used the conception of *xiang* to incorporate the military project into heavenly cosmology, giving it a position in human moral action:

We have heard that the Dao of Heaven considers the martial superior; it signifies its majesty through expressions of thunder and the constellations. The key to court affairs lies in the military; it straightens its troops through establishing camps and guarding the sword; it is assisted by the non-military virtue and signifies [non-martial virtue] through its good will. Since the recording events with the rope and tally, [then] on silk and leather documents, [martial affairs] have been importantly recorded. In ancient times, for the sake of defending the Xian tribes within the Hangu pass, the former and outstanding sage kings established troops to inquire and prohibit, to repel the violent ones, and to punish the idle watching deviants. Fetching the symbolizations (*xiang* 象), they thereby made the bow and arrow sharp.

⁵⁸ Forage 1991a and 1991b; Sivin 1980; *Sbib* 226-228.

⁵⁹ *MXBT*; Forage 1991a.

⁶⁰ Major 1993; Loewe 1979. This may be why, incidentally, Daoist adepts are often depicted riding on clouds. Reiter 1991, 114.

⁶¹ I refer to Charles Peirce's tripartite theory of signs; symbol, icon, and index, in which he is concerned with the role of signs in the production of meaning. See Searle 1994, 560ff; Rappaport 1979, 180.

[If] the troops in the empire were strictly [straightened] by regulations, then nature itself would control the fundamental [moral] firmness [of Heaven and earth]⁶², and the appropriateness [of governance and society]. . . .

Here Renzong combines history, warfare, and symbolizations (*xiang*), revising the classical cosmological construction to exult not the civil (*wen*) as one might expect, but the martial (*wu*) as a fundamental aspect of civilization and society. He gives the martial a position superior to the civil. He also makes clear the relationship of the military, governance and morality; *wu* is prime actor, *wen* assists it. Renzong clarifies the place of *xiang* in warfare.

How was the concept of *xiang* used in the Song manuals? References to Fu Xi's symbolizations and its connections with civilization and knowledge appear in all three manuals.⁶³ Each discuss *xiang* explicitly. The *Tiger Seal* evokes the language of the *Book of Change*: "Heaven and earth are without speech, [so] good and ill-fortune are [expressed] through *xiang*."⁶⁴ Quoted again in the *Comprehensive Essentials*, both texts echo the conceptualization of *xiang* from the *Book of Change*: "Heaven dangles the *xiang*, which perceive good and evil fortune; the sage follows them". The *Comprehensive Essentials* relates this to the "*xiang* of the soldier" (*bingxiang*).⁶⁵ In this sense, *xiang* signified a general description of the entire military enterprise.

The idea of *xiang* runs throughout the texts most markedly in the chapter on battle array schema, setting up camp, heavenly timing, geography (*dili*), fenyé, divining the *qi*, inferring future events from nature (*tui*) techniques, and cosmography. In these chapters, the manuals connect *xiang* with *qi*, *yinyang* and the stars.⁶⁶ In the *Tiger Seal Treatise*, it is manifestation of interaction of the Three Talents. The

⁶² i.e., the natural order.

⁶³ *Taibo* <Preface> and see below.

⁶⁴ *HQJ* 17:167.

⁶⁵ *HQJ* 16:149; *WJZY* 17, 18.

⁶⁶ *WJZY* 21:2192-2193.

“Heavenly Timing” chapter of the *Tiger Seal Treatise* lays out a scheme of *xiang* (the *xiang* of victory and defeat, of stability and change, etc.) that connects it to *yin* and *yang*, empty and substantial (*xushi*), and the upright and deceitful Way (*zhengdao*, *guidao*).⁶⁷ Here, Xu incorporates *xiang* into his scheme of the military system. For Xu, *xiang* makes possible the supernatural abilities of battle array schema. In his description of the “Three Talents,” *xiang* connects the level of the enterprise to the specific situation of the commander and troops. The earth scheme of the Three Talents includes land form (hills, valleys, etc.) and clouds, sighting unusual *qi* and so forth, attributing superhuman—that is to say, natural—capabilities to geography itself. The proper reading of *xiang* makes it possible for the commander to tune planned action, the tactical situation, geography, and natural phenomena as the formula for success.⁶⁸ The discussion of “inferring (*tui*) the numbers (*shu*; emblem, regularities) of Heaven and Earth” to the ultimate goal of “bringing into correspondence the patterns (*li*) of Heaven and Human” in the *Comprehensive Essentials* combines the four orders of reality, implicitly founded on *xiang*, with Xu’s Three Talents.⁶⁹ Both texts expand the interpretive domain of *xiang*, increasing its potential significance to humans, and as we shall see in the next chapters, the ability of humans to control it.

Battle array schema and the cosmography techniques are based on the concept of *xiang*. In the former, Image is a model of empire traced onto contested territory. It enlarges schema intended for alchemical meditation (*neidan*) and similar talismans to the scale of empire, invoking superhuman power by virtue of collective action.⁷⁰ The cosmograph techniques use *xiang* as the awesome power of asterisms and constellations of *xiang*. But, unique to the Song, these became simulacrum,

⁶⁷ *HQJ* 11:105-106.

⁶⁸ *HQJ* <Tianshi.>

⁶⁹ *WJZY* 21:2192-2193

⁷⁰ See Chapter Five.

expanded in potential from mere imitations of the stars to models that humans used to dominate the heavenly bodies, a heady and no doubt compelling new element in the Song repertoire of occult practice.

Xiang was connected to ritual and canon through its provenance in the *Book of Change*. There it acted as object to be interpreted and the interpretation itself. In making a case for non-literate canon, Jonathan Smith notes that “the canonical-interpretive enterprise is most prevalent in five situations: divination, law, legitimation, classification, and speculation.”⁷¹ Divination is at the very center of canon, he says, since it manifests “with particular clarity the relationship between canon and hermeneute.”⁷² He points to the processes of interpretation of the *Book of Change* as one example of a non-literate canon: “it is not so much the text...that constitutes the canon, but rather the mathematically fixed number of possible divination figures.”⁷³ Clearly this is what was at work in Image-number, *xiangshu*, reinvigorated during the Song.

Smith’s assertion may seem somewhat contradictory, however, since the *Book of Change* is obviously a text. What he proposes can only be true as a non-literate canon per se once *xiang* was detached from text. This detachment of *xiang* from text began in the Tang, when new emphasis was placed on *xiang* as asterisms.⁷⁴ With the Song enthusiasm for using the visual as a means of transcending the phenomenal, the potential for creating a non-textual canon increased. In its role as icon in the four orders of reality, *xiang* functioned as taxonomy. As symbol, it bridged ordinary concrete things in everyday life (*wu*) to *li*, a “grand unifying principle”.

⁷¹ Jonathan Smith 1982, 50.

⁷² Jonathan Smith 1982, 50.

⁷³ Jonathan Smith 1982, 52.

⁷⁴ See Edward Schafer 1977 on this point. A renewed emphasis on *xiang* as asterisms and as icons began early in the Tang, when Taizong ordered the compilation of the “Astronomical Chapters” of the *Jinshu*. See Ho Pengyoke 1966.

Xiang is one key to how the Song court shaped a ritual canon of texts and practices. But because of the hermeneutic qualities of canon, its tendency to expand the interpretive domain of canon and thereby continually generate variations of application, and the nature of visual interpretation generally, the Song court had less control over how that canon of rituals would be practiced and interpreted in the field. The evidence for this lies in comparing court practices with practices designated to the military in the field.

Military Ritual at court and in the field: Song re-categorization

The Court: Military Ritual (junli)

This section describes the contents of “Military Rituals” performed at the court. I show how those changed from the Tang to the Song. I compare military ritual performed at the court of the Tang and Song with rituals included in the manuals. How are these similar to or different from those included in the manuals? The fact that rituals in the manuals do not precisely imitate those at court suggests that they were included for reasons more complex than simple boiler plate rituals or ideological indoctrination of the their troops. Some of the rituals in the manuals represent real innovation of Song thinkers and literati, civil and military alike. Yet these innovations were highly contentious, as we shall see below.

The official dynastic histories, whose textual format was fixed early in the imperial era, contained a section specifically devoted to ritual (*li*). The *Monograph on Ritual (Lizhi 禮志)* was divided into five categories of ritual—“Auspicious Ritual” (*jili 吉禮*) “Ritual of Commendation” (*jjiali 嘉禮*), “Ritual for Guests” (*binli 賓禮*), “Military Ritual” (*junli 軍禮*), and “Inauspicious Ritual” (*xiongli 凶禮*). These are the canon of rituals celebrated at court, known collectively as the “Five Rituals” (*wuli 五禮*). The court mandated the performance of some of these rituals—especially

“Auspicious Ritual”—at the provincial and county levels. These rituals mostly consisted of sacrifices that regulated the natural and social order, which is to say they maintained empire.

Official ritual and the ritual code were contentiously debated during the Song. The early Song emperors initially followed the Tang *Kaiyuan Ritual Code*,⁷⁵ except in those instances where the emperors instituted their own, sometimes ad hoc, versions. This was especially so in the reigns of Taizu (r. 960-975) and Taizong (r. 976-997).

From the Zhiping (1064-1067) through the Zhonghe reigns (1111-1117), 300 *juan* (scrolls, chapters) of ritual code were written. In the Yuanfeng (1078-1085) and the Yuanyou (1086-1093) eras, the ritual codes experienced great vicissitudes, especially with respect to deities worshipped. In the Zhaosheng reign (1094-1097) and after, the ritual code was debated in almost excruciating detail, according to the *Song History*. At the beginning of the Dagan reign (1107), the emperor decreed a settlement of debate over ritual specifics, giving the officials in charge three years to produce a complete text. The result was the *Auspicious Rituals* (Ji Li) of 231 *juan* and the *System of Clothing for Officials at Sacrifices* of 16 *juan*.⁷⁶

In the first year of the Zhenghe reign (1111), officials from the Department of Ritual continued to add another 477 *juan* to the ritual code. They were then ordered to annotate it (!) so that the code could be “distributed to all under the realm”. In the third year of the Zhenghe (1113) reign, the *New Ceremonies of the Five Rituals* in 220 chapters was completed.⁷⁷

It is tempting to ascribe some of this debate over ritual to the era of the Wang Anshi’s influence (1068-1076; 1078-1085) and its attendant acrimonious factionalism

⁷⁵ See Wechsler 1985 for a detailed discussion of the Kaiyuan Code.

⁷⁶ SS 98:2423-24

⁷⁷ SS 98: 2423-2424. Only two ritual codes, the *Yuanfeng (1078-1085) Ritual Text for the Suburban Sacrifices* and the *New Ceremonies for the Five Rituals* survived beyond the Song.

at court. But prior to this, the Song court had already generated 14 various ritual codes of at least 526 *juan*.⁷⁸ The fact remains, then, that the Song generated an extraordinary number of writings over ritual concerns, both in texts written and in space these debates take up in the *Song History*.⁷⁹ One can understand these events during the Northern Song as the result of factionalism, “ritual creativity” or both.⁸⁰ Clearly, the debate was both political and ideological. Also clear is that the court and literati were changing their conceptions of ritual.

No wonder that this was so. Song ritual, via *xiang*, re-presented symbols, invoking both text and act. I noted above that canon is more or less fixed, but its domain of application tends to expand. What that expanded domain would look like led to the changes that occurred in ritual practiced at court and in the field during the Northern Song. This involved a struggle over shaping “new” canon. It involved especially invoking new myths (what deities would be instated and worshipped) and how specific symbols were defined and interpreted (specific sacrificial forms and patterns). This necessarily raises the questions of who is doing the presenting, which symbols will be presented, and to whom these symbols are being presented. There are no clear cut answers to these questions, but I suggest below a few reasons why ritual was contentious and how the changes in these texts might be understood. The changes in official ritual practices and those documented in the manuals are one lens through which to view those conceptions. The changes in categorization of specific rituals also suggest that the ritual practices of the court with respect to the military changed.

⁷⁸ SS 2421-2423. Of these texts, the number of chapters in five of the texts are not specified. The number of texts produced during the reign of each emperor is shown in parentheses: Taizu (3); Zhenzong (1); Renzong (4); Shenzong (6).

⁷⁹ See Chapter Five for the debate over pitch pipes, an example of a small part of the Song debates.

⁸⁰ As Judith Boltz (1987) puts it, though she was undoubtedly referring to rather less official quarters.

The “Military Ritual” section of the *Comprehensive Treatise (Tongzhi)*, an encyclopedia written ca. 1130s-1150s, compared with the same section of the *Song History* show that some military rituals during the Song were re-categorized as “Auspicious Ritual” and “Ritual of Commendation”.⁸¹ That is, rituals formerly categorized as specific to the military were rolled into non-military categories of court ritual. In particular, this occurred with deity worship. Some rituals were abolished at the court and moved into rituals practiced in the field. This indicates a taxonomic shift in court and field rituals between the late 10th century and the mid-14th century.⁸² Below, I compare military rituals celebrated at the Song court to those of the Tang, then compare court “Military Ritual” to those rituals prescribed in the manuals.

Tongzhi Rituals

The “Military Ritual” section of the *Comprehensive Treatise*, which covers through the end of the Tang dynasty, follows with a short description. All were written into the Tang *Kaiyuan (713-741) Ritual Code*, the same ritual code that the Song court initially adopted.

1. The Son of Heaven, the Various lords and the Commanders receive their orders by performing the *lei*, *yi*, *zao*, and *ma* sacrifices. These were rituals performed prior to engagement and preparatory measures for sending out the troops. They are not performed in the capital, but after the troops leave the capital and before they engage the enemy. “The *yi* (宜) ritual is to request an appropriate conquest; the *zao* (造) ritual assures good strategic planning by the court; the *lei* (類) ritual respectfully receives heavenly timing for a brilliant conquest or the prudence to wait.”⁸³ See Song section for *ma* ritual.

⁸¹SS <Zongmu> 13.

⁸² On this point, see Yates 2001.

⁸³ TZ 44:592

2. Baji. Sacrifices to deities along the route.⁸⁴ Self-explanatory.
3. Hunting.⁸⁵ Similar to that of the Song below.
4. Instructing and practicing military affairs (*jiang wu*).⁸⁶ Performed every year, this was preceded by sacrifices made at certain parts of the city.⁸⁷
5. Issuing Orders to the General to attack. (i.e., initiating the military expedition). This took place in the temple and involved the bestowing of the *fu* and *yue* (the ceremonial pike and axe).
6. Announcing victory report (*xuan lubu*). This ritual originated in Jin dynasty, and included dancing and music, presumably mimicking battle. It was read in front of gathered officials, civil and military.
7. Archery ritual (*dashe, xiang she*; possibly official positions). The ritual was preceded by offerings of wine and donning ceremonial dress. In the Tang, it was performed on 3rd day of 3rd month and the 9th day of 9th month, accompanied by music, especially drums and trumpets. It probably was a way for the emperor to reward military talent, encourage practice, and an opportunity for advancement.
8. Heshuo fagu (chopping the drum when the sun and the moon come together). Similar to that of the Song below, except it was performed at the eclipse of the moon.
9. Sacrificing to *Mazu* (Horse Progenitor). One of four seasonal sacrifices, performed in the autumn.
10. Seasonal exorcism (*shinuo*). Exorcism ritual performed on the last day of each season.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ TZ 44:592. see ZY 1642.3.

⁸⁵ TZ 44:593 and <lue>: 297-298.

⁸⁶ ZY 1583.2; notice that these definitions include words and acts. McMullen “Qi Taigong” translates this as “rehearsals”.

⁸⁷ See TZ 44:594 and TZ <lue>:298)

⁸⁸ TZ 44:59. Robin Yates, calls this “the Great Exorcism” (*danuo*) in his “Texts and Practice: The Case of Military Ritual” 14-15, citing *Da Tang Kaiyuanli*, j. 90, 2b-4a in *SKQS zhenben* ed.

Songshi

The *Song History* gives the following as “Military Ritual” in the “Treatise on Ritual”:⁸⁹

1. Worship before sending troops out (*maji*): In Song times, this was performed at the capital rather than on the march as it was during the Tang. It centered on the flags (*ya*) that preceded the troops and involved sacrifices at two different suburban altars; animal sacrifice at the first altar, and meatless and bloodless sacrifice at the Altar of Grain. Later the flags were set up permanently in one of the courts inside the Imperial City.

2. Grand Imperial review of troops (*yue wu*). This was a review of troops by the emperor. Taizu and Taizong developed new practice drills. It was an opportunity for the emperor to consult with the head commanders. Opening with a wine-sharing ceremony, participants then progressed from the palace to the practice arena. A tea ceremony, presumably with the emperor and each commander, followed. Depending on the outcome of the rehearsal, gifts and rewards were distributed. When the rehearsal ended, a banquet with music and dancing followed.

3. Receiving surrender/ Offering up the war captives at the Imperial shrine (*shouxiang and xianfu*): The first ritual, “receiving surrender”, was conducted with the surrendering commander and his subordinates present. The participants—of which there were many— progressed from the Mingde Gate to the Shen Long Gate, the terms of surrender announced at each stop. At the first stage, the surrendering commander and his subordinates changed clothes, prostrated themselves and showed support for the emperor by shouting “Long live the Emperor” many times. Once inside

⁸⁹ *SS* <Mulu 目錄>, 19.

the temple, both sides took turns performing dances for each other. A banquet with the enemy commander and the closer officials from both sides followed.

When “Offering captives at the Imperial Temple”, the captives, bound with silk cord, were brought to the Mingde Gate, proceeded to the Imperial Temple, then to the Altar of Grain. The Victory Report was announced at each place. After the emperor was seated within, various officials took turns dancing. All moved back outside, where the head officers and commanders performed dances. The emperor delivered the sentences. Rewards were distributed, and the captives executed.

4. Field hunting (*tian lie*). This ritual “causes the seasons to be in accord and keeps one in good weapons practice”. Sometimes several thousands participated. It started out with the performance of a specific type of music and three rounds of wine at the martial training ground, accompanied by five drums. On the way to the scene of the hunt, the emperor distributed food. Part of the catch was sometimes immediately offered at the ancestral temple. It finished with a banquet, during which the music of each regional command was performed.

5. Playing ball (*da qiu*). This was a military game originally. Played with two teams, a ball and tall goals at either end of the field.

6. Aiding the sun by chopping the drum (*jiuri fagu*). This ritual was performed at a solar eclipse. Drums were set up in the temple at specified doors and directions. After ritual incantations, etc. the drums were chopped. This ritual is somewhat reminiscent of seasonal exorcism rituals, but it was performed in a single location. The site of the ritual changed during the course of the dynasty.

The changes in category between rituals noted in the *Tongzhi* (used as a baseline for military rituals in the Tang, all of which were included in the Tang *Kaiyuan Ritual Code*) and those of the *Song History* fall into two groups: rituals

formerly celebrated as “Military Ritual” moved into non-military categories, most of which fell into “Auspicious Ritual”; and rituals no longer celebrated at the court that re-appear in the military manuals.

As seen above, the Song had six “Military Rituals” to the Tang’s ten. Of these six, the Song court added three; Receiving Surrender, Offering War Captives, and Playing Ball. The Song didn’t practice Sacrifices to Deities along the Route, Issuing Orders, Announcing the Victory Report, Archery, Sacrifice to the Horse Progenitor, or Seasonal Exorcism as “Military Rituals”. Some of these rituals were moved into different categories. The Song court moved many of the deities previously worshipped as “Military Ritual” either into a different category of official ritual or into the manuals.

Sacrifices to the Horse Progenitor (*Mazu*), the Duke of Wind (*Feng Bo*), the Master of Rain (*Yu Shi*) and Archery were moved into a different category of court ritual. Worship of the Horse Progenitor and related rituals—worshipping the Horse Collective (*mashe*) and Horse Stepping (*mabu*)—moved into “Auspicious Ritual”.⁹⁰ The Duke of Wind and the Master of Rain, worshipped as “Auspicious Ritual” at the court, were also included in the manuals.⁹¹ The Archery Ceremony (*Dashe*), re-instated by Taizong, was re-classified as a “Ritual of Commendation” category.⁹² All manuals recommend worship to many and various deities.

To their repertoire of “Auspicious Ritual”, the Song added Sacrifices in the Temple of the King of Military Success (*Wucheng Wang Miao*). It was made an official temple in Taizu’s Jianlong reign (960-962). In 1007, the court established a

⁹⁰ *SS* <Zongmu> 15; *SS* 103:2522-23. *Mazu* is a spring deity; *Mashe* autumn; *Mabu* winter.

⁹¹ *Taibo* 7; *HQJ* 20; *WJZY* 5; *SS* 103:2516-17. They all belong to the *qi* category, and their respective directions, along with that of *Xianmu* (the first shepherd), were brought up in a memorial. Later they added the Duke of Thunder (*lei*) to the group and later still, added music to the ritual. Finally, disciples for the deities were added to the altars.

⁹² *SS* <Zongmu> 17; *SS* 115:2718-2719.

Temple of the King of Military Success in the western capital (Luoyang). In 1123, 72 generals were enfeoffed and added to the temple. In 1137, worship expanded to include a sacrificial animal, in contrast to the previous cloth and wine sacrifices.⁹³ After they were instituted, military examinations were administered here.

Unlike the Tang (618-907) and the Ming (1368-1644), the Song did not practice the ritual handing over of the axes, known as *fu* and *yue*, when the emperor gave command to the general.⁹⁴ Traditionally, the *fu* and *yue* ritual gave the emperor's supreme command over to the field general; the words spoken reinforced the separation of the emperor's power over the commanding general.⁹⁵ The Song exacted no such return-or-die-fighting oaths from the general, nor did the emperor engage in self-castigation (over his diminished virtue and therefore, the need for warfare) or relinquish his supreme power at the Giving Orders and Dispatching the Troops ritual.⁹⁶ Rather, the Song used tablets, tallies and scrolls in their ceremonies. Similarly, while they sacrificed animals, the Song general did not drink blood or smear it on his face, unlike the rituals of the Tang and the Ming.⁹⁷ Rituals that involve smearing blood or dissecting sacrificial animals in particular ways seemed to be restricted to the provinces, or more accurately, moved away from the capital.

Similarly, the sacrifices to mountains, rivers and other geographic deities, part of the Tang and Ming court "Military Ritual", were not celebrated by the Song.⁹⁸

⁹³ *SS* 105:2556-57.

⁹⁴ *Wuli tongkao* 19:14396-14408; *TZ*, 592 "Tianzi..." talks about the commander assuming the position of the emperor, connecting them to five virtues. The values that should be held by commander and troops was also documented in the *Venus Classic*.

⁹⁵ *Taibo* 3:51-51; Liu Xianting 160-162; *HQJ* 2:11.

⁹⁶ *Wuli tongkao* 19:14399-14405 (Song *Zhenghe Wuli Xinyi*) and 14405-14408 (quoting the *WXTK*, Tang *Kaiyuanli* code and the Ming *Jili*).

⁹⁷ *Wuli tongkao* 19:14405-14408 (*WXTK*, Tang *Kaiyuanli* and Ming *Jili* ["Collected Rituals"]).

⁹⁸ *Wuli tongkao* 14412-414.

Detailed sacrifices and prayer texts for these are recorded in the *Venus Classic*, the *Tiger Seal Treatise* and the *Comprehensive Essentials*.⁹⁹

Rituals in the Military Manuals

Some elements of court rituals celebrated by the Tang but rejected by the Song court are disseminated throughout manuals: certain sorts of sacrifice, particular deities and exorcism rituals are found in all three manuals. Sacrifices to Deities on the March is one example. What is the significance of this? In order to answer this question, I explain the differences between rituals found in the manuals and court celebrated “Military Rituals”.

The “Various Ceremonies” chapter of the *Venus Classic* specifies the following rituals: Receiving the Axe, Deploying the Troops, Commanding General, Troop Commander, Battle Array Commander, Horse Commander, Physiognomy of People, Physiognomy of Horses, Swearing in the Troops and Issuing Orders, and Blocking the Passes from the Four Barbarian Tribes.¹⁰⁰ The *Tiger Seal Treatise* and the *Comprehensive Essentials* both contain sections on sacrifice.¹⁰¹ Both *Tiger Seal Treatise* and *The Comprehensive Essentials* specify the same deities with similar prayers as those celebrated by the “Military Ritual” of the Tang court, with some changes.¹⁰² Most of these deities remained more or less the same, and those not celebrated by the Song court appear in the military manuals.

The same is true of exorcism rituals, a seasonal ritual that the Tang court celebrated, but the Song did not. In the field, exorcism protected the camp against numerous undesirables: plagues, ambush, the enemy ruler’s vital essence (*qi*), the

⁹⁹ *Taibo* 7; *HQJ* 20; *WJZY* 5.

¹⁰⁰ *Taibo* 3:51-75; Liu Xianting 160-189.

¹⁰¹ *HQJ* 20; *WJZY* 5:212-215; *WJZY* 6:250.

¹⁰² See Chapter Six for differences.

enemy commander's destiny (*ming*), and so forth. Each effect was enacted by differently specified performances and sacrifices.¹⁰³ In exorcising the enemy ruler's vital essence, for example, an altar surrounded by the eight trigrams, inscribed with the six *jia* cycles of calendar and the twelve constellations was set up. The commander, dressed in undyed cloth, beheaded simultaneously a gray dog and a white bird held in his left hand, then buried them three feet deep at the compass point where the undiminished vital essence of the enemy ruler was observed.¹⁰⁴ In the *yi* ritual of the Tang court, the ear of the sacrificial animal was given to the emperor, who in turn gave it to the head commander. The latter smeared blood on his mouth and then drank the blood. Afterward, the animal was buried in a pit along with the text of the loyalty and performance oath; wine was poured in as the animal was buried. After the burial, a divination was performed to fix the day of battle.¹⁰⁵ The *Comprehensive Essentials* advises performance of this ritual when the troops have not taken oath recently.¹⁰⁶

In contrast to the above, Song court ritual seemed to involve a great deal of pomp, but little symbolic complexity (except in specifying clothing). Re-enactment and mimesis happened there through dance and music. It engaged its participants but did not control natural forces or supernatural beings in the same way that Song military field ritual and the Tang and Ming court ritual did. Maybe this is because, for so much of the Northern Song, court ritual specialists simply could not reach a consensus on anything but the broadest outlines of ritual. More likely, though, the court was redefining the image of the courtier, and with it the military commander.

¹⁰³ *HQJ* 10: 99-100. Rangyan 禳厭 (exorcism rituals) including *yandi fa* 厭敵法, *yanyi fa* [plague], *yanwangqi fa* [*qi* of enemy ruler], *yan dijiang fa* [enemy commander's *ming* according to eight characters], *yan wufubing fa* [soldiers hidden in ambush].

¹⁰⁴ *HQJ* 10:99.

¹⁰⁵ *TZ* <Junli>.

¹⁰⁶ *WJZY* 6 <Setting up Camp>.

The contents of the Tang court's "Military Rituals" not practiced by the Song were shifted into the military manuals. Those rituals shifted from the court to field were those that the Song viewed as disorderly or chaotic; they were messy and bloody, invoked *yin* rather than *yang* power, and therefore, were dangerous. Given the Song attitude toward the army, this seems paradoxical. But one must remember that at court, ritual interests revolved around regularity and maintaining the status quo. Rituals that smacked of *yin* power, as opposed to *yang* power, belonged on the battlefield where they were well out of the way of the court and would do the most good. The issue of keeping commander and troops in line with dynastic rule was dealt with by administrative means, such as increased requirements between the commander and the court, civilian overseers for particular expeditions, etc.¹⁰⁷

From examining rituals in the manuals, it would seem that the court shaped a ritual corpus for performance outside the court. Savvy use of print technology made compiling such a canon possible, since these were the first documentation of many rituals. It is true that putting that corpus into text potentially standardized ritual practice. Consciously or not, this compilation opened the door for creation of a specific ritual canon within the military system, too. One might also see in these developments a disjuncture, or at least a parallel development, of textual and oral canon. With regard to the latter, Jonathan Smith proposes that non-literate canon is derived from a "totalistic and complete system of signs or icons which serve as functional equivalents to a written canon".¹⁰⁸ I have already discussed how *xiang* comprised such a system. In its simplest form, the process of interpretation of a non-literate canon expresses the verbal and the visual simultaneously. Creating a ritual corpus meant the court created an interpreter of such ritual. These "interpreters" came

¹⁰⁷ See Wang Zengyu on this point.

¹⁰⁸ Jonathan Smith 1982, 49.

back to haunt them; instituting the military academy attempted to exorcise those particular ghosts. Below, I explore Smith's proposal and suggest some ways that the Northern Song went about creating canon.

Texts and Canon

In generating these manuals, why do some rituals imitate those at the court while others appear to distinctly diverge? Why abolish rituals at the court only to prescribe their performance elsewhere? The answers to these questions lie in part in the more general issue of the Song court's program for texts. As Glen Dudbridge points out in his *Lost Books of Medieval China*, three simultaneous events occurred during the Song: "the reassembling of an imperial library collection after losses through war; the commissioning of three large encyclopedic compilations based on earlier literature; and China's transition from the manuscript age to the age of print."¹⁰⁹

A prime concern of the early Song emperors, Taizong in particular, was the recovery of texts lost in the chaotic and destructive era that preceded the establishment of the Song. At the establishment of the dynasty in 960, the imperial library contained 12,000 scrolls. By 966, through amassing texts as the spoils of victory, and through Song officials' voluntary donations of scrolls, that figure had increased to about 26,000 scrolls. At the beginning of Taizong's reign in 976, the library boasted 46,000 scrolls, quite respectable by historical standards.¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, in 984, Taizong issued an edict calling for the recovery of missing texts.

There are a number of interpretations of this quest for lost texts. Aside from a personal interest in texts on the part of the emperor,¹¹¹ the possession of texts and their

¹⁰⁹ Dudbridge 2000, 1.

¹¹⁰ Dudbridge 2000, 2-3. In comparison, there were 51,852 scrolls in the Tang catalogue of 721. This figure excludes Buddhist and Daoist texts.

¹¹¹ John Haeger 1968, 405-06 for instance, emphasizes Taizong's "bibliomania", personal interest in texts, reading and libraries.

holdings in imperial libraries asserts the “dynasty’s central control over the whole sphere of written knowledge.”¹¹² In the Chinese tradition, where knowledge was transmitted through and by the classical canon, such collections reinforced the authority and legitimacy of rule. Indeed, Taizu (r. 960-975) ordered the printing blocks made for the Buddhist canon in 971, and the new dynasty built up a collection of standard commentaries to the Confucian classics.¹¹³

Another facet of the text project was writing new texts; in particular, the compilation of encyclopedia. In 977, Taizong ordered the compilation of the *Extensive Records of the Supreme Peace Reign* (Taiping guangji) and the *Imperial Reader of the Supreme Peace Reign* (Taiping Yulan); in 982, the *Finest Blooms in the Garden of Literature* (Wenyuan yinghua). His successor, Zhenzong (r. 998-1022), commanded the compilation of the *Cefu Yuangui*, an encyclopedia on moral governance. In the mid-thirteenth century, Ma Duanlin wrote his *General Investigations on Important Writings* (Wenxian Tongkao), modeled on the Tang dynasty encyclopedia, the *Tongdian*, but adding five new sections, “Bibliography”, “Imperial Genealogies”, “Feudal System”, “Astronomy” and “Unusual Phenomena”.¹¹⁴

Textual collections, then, in the form of both building up the size of collections in the imperial library and in generating encyclopedia, were part of the Song project to unify and centralize power. First of all, encyclopedia gather up all prior knowledge. Such was the case with the *Extensive Records*, the *Imperial Reader*, and the *Finest Blooms*, encyclopedia whose compilations were all ordered, oddly, *prior* to Taizong’s 984 quest for lost texts.¹¹⁵ Second, encyclopedia define the “‘sphere of knowledge’: ...imply[ing] the existence of a generally accepted ‘cosmos’ of

¹¹² Dudbridge 2000, 5.

¹¹³ Dudbridge 2000, 13.

¹¹⁴ Bauer 1966, 681-682.

¹¹⁵ Dudbridge 2000, 14.

knowledge[,] which in the opinion of the cultural leaders of the period has to be transmitted in its entirety and has to serve as a general basis to education.”¹¹⁶

Therefore, encyclopedia not only define knowledge, but standardize it, too: one of the uses of encyclopedia in the century following Taizong’s reign was for preparation for the civil service examinations.¹¹⁷ Encyclopedia, and indeed, written texts generally, attempt to fix knowledge, define the collective “tradition”, and make it static. Such was the case for the Song.

Collecting texts was part of the Song project to centralize power. Cast in slightly different terms, Taizong’s encyclopedia projects would “spread civilization throughout the empire.”¹¹⁸ For Song emperors, this meant eradicating, or at least stabilizing, local tradition. For example, in 977, the same year that he ordered the encyclopedic compilations, Taizong issued a decree to “confiscate texts used by diviners throughout the land”.¹¹⁹ A similar decree prohibiting private ownership of divination texts had already been issued in 972.¹²⁰ The problem of illegal possession of these texts was raised again in 1109, when an official of the Bureau of Military Affairs memorialized the throne about army desertion in large numbers who were banding together. He proposed that commanders-in-chief detain, among others, those subordinates suspected of having divination skills or possessing old writings and texts on divination.¹²¹ Aside from the traditional political hostility that emperors showed toward divination, early Song emperors were trying to collect “lost” and possibly useful skills.¹²²

¹¹⁶ Bauer 1966, 665.

¹¹⁷ Haeger 1968.

¹¹⁸ Haeger 1968, 401; *SHY* <Chongru> 5.1.

¹¹⁹ Dudbridge 2000, 9; *XZZTJ* 18:414.

¹²⁰ *SS* 461:13500.

¹²¹ *SS* 4813.3-8.

¹²² See Chapter Six.

The court also wanted to determine what sorts of rituals and techniques were practiced at the local level. In the mid-twelfth century, Zheng Qiao noted in his *Comprehensive Treatise* that local traditions, and texts concerning them, continue to be transmitted despite government proscription. There, he argues that “survival and loss” of texts is due less to collecting texts than to their transmission. Key to the latter, Zheng asserts, is the presence of specialists who will copy and transmit texts devoted to their own field. Therefore, “traditions of medicine, of Buddhism and of Daoism have survived the turbulence and destruction of history, while the rich Han literature on the *Book of Change* and the Legalist school has largely been lost.”¹²³ Some divination rituals specifically associated with the warfare enterprise—divining the *qi* comes immediately to mind—were transmitted relatively unchanged in texts for centuries. For example, interpretations for divining the *qi* recovered from Warring States era bamboo slips are repeated almost verbatim in tenth century texts from Dunhuang and in the eleventh century *Tiger Seal Treatise*.¹²⁴ Records show that *qi* divination was practiced in the Period of Disunion and during the Song in cities under siege.¹²⁵

This transmission is especially relevant to texts documenting local traditions; these texts are transmitted despite not being listed in catalogues and bibliographies. Dudbridge points out especially Zheng Qiao’s example of a divining technique called “targeting under cover” (*shifu* 射覆), “a ritual game” in which participants used their skills to “discover the identity of objects kept under cover.”¹²⁶ Zheng shows that the

¹²³ Dudbridge 2000, 10.

¹²⁴ Yates 1994; Wallecker 1991; Ho and Ho 1986; *HQJ*.

¹²⁵ Wallecker 1991; *Shoucheng lu*.

¹²⁶ Dudbridge 2000, 11; *TZ* 71.

school was listed in the Han official bibliography, but not in Tang bibliographies, even though “targeting under cover” texts were “still at large in society.”¹²⁷

While Zheng’s point is that texts continued to be transmitted by devoted or active practitioners, one can also infer from this that local techniques were practiced without either court knowledge or, at least, acknowledgement. Judging from legal records, the Song court made an effort to stop these practices. The most obvious example of this was outlawing religious practices that did not come under the rubric of Confucianism, Daoism or Buddhism.¹²⁸ These categories, though, were rather fluid, and may be more an attempt to encourage application to the court for official recognition, thereby making them known, than restricting particular practices. In other words, this was one way for the court to gather information about what was going on in the provinces and counties.¹²⁹

I noted above that in view of the court’s repeated prohibitions, private ritual practices existed both within the military and civilian populations. Consider, too, the following instances:

1. In 1018, the court responded to the report of the Quelling Sword Army (Zhenrong) in Ningzhou (in modern day Shanxi) that the local shrine, Jiu Pool Shrine, was that of the Qin and Han dynasties. It was granted the status of imperial temple (*miao*) and re-named Magical Benevolence Temple (*lingze miao* 靈澤廟).¹³⁰

2. The Duke of Wind and the Master of Rain, worshipped as “Auspicious Rituals” at the court, were originally worshipped in the provinces.¹³¹ At the beginning

¹²⁷ Dudbridge 2000, 11

¹²⁸ Liu and McKnight 1999.

¹²⁹ For accounts of the specific developments around local deities, see Hansen 1990, ter Haar 1999; Hymes 1996; Duara 1988.

¹³⁰ *WXTK* 90:822-823 <*Zaci yinci* 雜祠淫祠> [Miscellaneous and Licentious Cults].

¹³¹ *SS* 103:2516-17.

of the *Dazhong xianfu* reign (1008-1016), the emperor issued an edict permitting their worship only at the border. Not long after, Zezhou requested permission to establish a Duke of Wind and Master of Rain temple; court ritual officials were ordered to look into setting the order of ceremony, and the sacrifices and altars were fixed.¹³² In the Yuanfeng reign period (1078-1085), the Department of Codification argued that the deities had been improperly categorized in the Xining era (1068-1077), and that the placement of altars and sacrifices with were not in correspondence with respect to altars of other deities, the four *qi* categories (*lei*; sun, moon, stars and constellations) and the five directions. Their recommendations were followed, adding to the ritual a course of music and an altar to the Duke of Thunder and other disciples. Sacrifices to these deities were included in all the manuals, indicating that they were traditionally worshipped by armies.¹³³

3. The *Tiger Seal Treatise* includes sacrifices to Chi You, a highly ambivalent figure, who, along with his eighteen siblings, was legendary for his wanton violence.¹³⁴ After seventy-two battles over the Five Directions, he was finally defeated by the Yellow Emperor.¹³⁵ His worship was dropped in the *Comprehensive Essentials*.

4. The *Comprehensive Essentials* includes a section on local traditions (*tusu* 土俗); their character, what kinds of warfare techniques they excel at, and which they do not, etc.¹³⁶

5. In 1095, Zhezong ordered that all the circuits and provinces within the realm document “from beginning to end” an account of all shrines and temples, “in words

¹³² *SS* 103:2516.

¹³³ *SS* 103:2516-18.

¹³⁴ *HQJ* 20.

¹³⁵ *Taibo* 9:243-244.

¹³⁶ *WJZY* 9:399-404.

and charts”. The resulting document was to be called “Such and such Province Rituals and Sacrifices” (*mouzhou sidian*).¹³⁷

With the few examples above, we might note that local communities had a say in what was represented at court. The opposite is true, too, and the instances above give the idea that local practices and those of the court are not mutually exclusive. The dynamic of exchange between the court and the provinces is not one that can be easily sorted out. From the example of the Duke of Wind and the Master of Rain, we see that the court ordered local clerks in the border provinces to personally insure that the sacrifices were carried through. Yet, based on the request of Zezhou, there was clearly a local interest in these deities, as well.

By the same token, the manuals and their culmination in the *Comprehensive Essentials* followed Song textual models. As encyclopedias, they gathered up all knowledge possible, old and new. They are based on a hybrid format whose organization echoes the emerging genre of the encyclopedia during the Northern Song and, to a lesser extent, that of the official histories. Like encyclopedias, they include a taxonomy that defines not only what sorts of knowledge are defined as relevant to warfare, but their own internal organization depends on categories that make up that taxonomy; e.g., the re-categorizing of certain types of sacrifice, the position of personnel, inclusion of ever more detailed laws and regulations, etc.

How does this relate to the creation of military manuals and the rituals documented there? The manuals are some of the first documentation of ritual practices that existed in the military. These signal imperial efforts to control the military and appropriate its tradition of patron-apprentice relations based on praxis and orally transmitted “secrets”. They also represent the collection of practices, oral and textual,

¹³⁷ WXTK 90:824

from around the empire. The court's success at controlling non-textual practices could only be as good as the transmission of favored practices or the non-transmission of those forbidden, "secret" or proscribed.

In the early Song military text, *Questions and Replies*, the famous Tang general, Li Jing, tells of personally teaching his military methods to leaders of allied tribes.¹³⁸ For the author, to transmit something orally is to keep it secret, a theme that runs throughout the text. The importance of writing down Li Jing's methods and their transmission is the tacit motivation for the work. In the last paragraph, Tang emperor Taizong tells Li Weigong:

"Daoists shun three generations [of a family] serving as generals. Military teachings should not be carelessly transmitted yet should also not be not transmitted. Please pay careful attention to this matter." Li Jing bowed twice and went out, and turned all his military books over to Li Ji.¹³⁹

In a similar vein, passing on practices from master to apprentice is a theme that runs throughout the "Fangji" ("Masters of esoteric arts", "Masters of techniques") section of the *Song History* and in Yuan Shushan's *Biographies of Diviners throughout History*.¹⁴⁰ The latter shows that specific techniques were specialized at certain locales. Rituals recorded in the manuals were most likely the product of locally, probably orally, transmitted traditions. Gathering them up into the *Comprehensive Essentials* was an effort to control that tradition, since orally transmitted traditions are more difficult to control than a textual corpus. The latter can be shaped initially, and then later, only under supervision, be revised. And, as Renzong explicitly states in his "Preface", he wanted to set a standard corpus of knowledge for the military commander.

¹³⁸ Sawyer 1993, 335. See Sawyer 488-490n.4 for a discussion of the dating of this text.

¹³⁹ Sawyer 1993, 360. For Li Ji, see *ibid.*, 504n.162.

¹⁴⁰ See *SS* <Fangji>. *LDBRZ* documents local specialties in divination techniques.

Obviously, the success of his last goal depended on distribution of those texts. This is a problematic issue with regard to the military treatise generally. As Xu Baolin points out, the military treatise has historically suffered from transmission because they were often prohibited texts. Such was the case during the Song.¹⁴¹ He notes that there were two periods of collection, collation and generation of military texts during the Song, their contributions voluminous. If Xu Baolin's analysis is accurate, this was all for naught, since no one could actually see them.¹⁴² This very issue, "the appropriateness of knowing military books while they are at the same time prohibited and unable to be obtained for transmission", was posed as a question on the Military Exam.¹⁴³ So far, I have found only one reference to the distribution of the *Comprehensive Essentials*: In 1072, Shenzong, in an effort to enforce a coordinated rehearsal of battle array schema, bestowed imperially bound editions of *Comprehensive Essentials*, along with five other texts, to Wang Shao, Administrator of the Tongyuan Army, and ordered the Military Commissioner of Qinfeng Circuit to make copies of them.¹⁴⁴ Qualifying Xu's ominous conclusion was the repeated printing of the *Comprehensive Essentials*, and Zheng Qiao's contemporary testimony that texts were transmitted outside of official channels. After all, all three manuals are still extant, and according to Zheng Qiao's thesis, that they were transmitted at all infers an interested audience throughout the ages. At this point, one can only speculate on who that audience was during the Song. According to Renzong's "Preface", the

¹⁴¹ Xu Baolin 72-74.

¹⁴² Xu Baolin 73.

¹⁴³ *WXTK* 34:322.

¹⁴⁴ *SS* 195:4863. The other texts, no longer extant to my knowledge, were *Gongshou tu* (*Diagrams for attack and defense*), *Xingjun haunzhu* (*Pearl necklace of engaging battle*), *Shenwu milue* (*Divine secrets of military strategy*), *Fengjiao jizhan* (*Collection of divining wind direction*), and *Silu zhanshou yueshu* (*Fixed bundles of the four roads to warfare and defense*).

texts were intended for (literate) commanders, and, apparently, for court officials in charge of or liaising with the various armies.

In any event, the manuals can be interpreted as a synthesis of oral techniques shaped, in the *Comprehensive Essentials*, into an acceptable textual canon by court compilers. In this fashion, they modified the tradition of military specialists, particularly their knowledge of magic. The next step in shaping a true textual canon was the institution of academies; and after their institution, academies increased their specialization. Both of these indicate more forceful efforts in shaping military talent.

The establishment of the Military Academy was erratic. First established by Renzong in 1043, it closed down after only a few months. Shenzong re-instituted it in 1072. During the Yuanfeng reign (1078-1085), the Academy fell under the jurisdiction of the Director of Education. An official system of teachers was set up; Instructors (*jiaoshou*) in the Academy promoted to Erudite status (*boshi*), and the *Military Canon* was introduced as a required text. During Huizong's Chongning reign (1102-1106), Military Academies were ordered and set up in provinces and counties, though the institutions were spotty and short-lived. Students entered through a recommendation system (*yin* privilege), or selected from the commoner population. In 1146, under Gaozong, six curricula within the Academy were inaugurated. (Inauspicious omens were reported shortly after the local academies were ordered.)¹⁴⁵

Of note here is the adoption of the *Military Canon*, followed by increasing specialization in the curriculum. Given its nature and the rather large range of alternatives, the choice of the *Seven Treatises of the Military Canon* as a textbook in

¹⁴⁵ SS 157.3679-3686. Chen Gaochun 1992, 523-524; Tan Sucheng 1972, chaps. 4, 5 and 6. Cheng-hua Fang's (2003) argument that the lack of a formal military training institutions perpetuated the military clan networks seems to confirm that the establishment of military academies at national and provincial levels was neither a long-lasting nor a successful program. Fang implies that the military exam was solely a written one (50-51); however, students were also tested in archery and horsemanship. See Wang Zengyu, 115.

the military academy is telling. It was not a new compilation at the time the academy was established. In late 10th century, during the *Taiping xingguo* reign period (976-984), a compilation called the *Seven Books on the Art of War* (*Bingfa qishu*) already existed; the specific books included are not clear, but it is likely that these were, if not identical to the *Seven Treatises of the Military Canon*, at least its forerunner. In 1080, Shenzong ordered the canon fixed, and published under the name, the *Seven Books* (*qishu*).¹⁴⁶ With this, Shenzong established this collection of military books as canon for training officials. Like the *Comprehensive Essentials*, this, too, set the standard for developing military talent.¹⁴⁷ Unlike the *Comprehensive Essentials*, it was transmitted and established as part of a deliberate model for churning out military officials. The *Military Canon* stands in sharp contrast to the military manuals. It incorporated almost no new material. Its contents are quite general, almost aphoristic, and geared to overall strategy. Like the Five Classics, another element required in the curriculum, they are lofty and highly quotable, speaking to an ideal rather than to any specific skills.

The trend toward specialization occurred similarly in the civil academy. Ritual specialists, *fangshi* and *fangji* (“masters of esoteric arts”, “masters of techniques”), performed many of the rituals mentioned in above, including various forms of divination and exorcism.¹⁴⁸ In 975,¹⁴⁹ Taizu prohibited them from assignments outside of the capital. In 1017, Zhenzong mandated that, although they served as Metropolitan

¹⁴⁶ Xu Baolin, 425. The order was *Sunzi*, *Wuzi*, *Liutao*, *Sima fa*, *Sanlue*, *Wei Lioazi*, *Li Weigong wendui*.

¹⁴⁷ Xu Baolin, 425. Sawyer says *WJQS* (*Military Classics*) was assembled ca. 1078. Griffith 1963, 18; Shenzong (1068-1085) edict (18). Shenzong also directed “cadets” to pursue studies under the *boshi*, He Qufei. The order of the texts changed throughout history. See Xu Baolin 424-27.

¹⁴⁸ Though the influence of the *fangshi* tradition is widely believed to have waned around the rise of the Sui dynasty, they are mentioned fairly often in Song sources. *SS* 7: 2542-45; *YJZ*, 522; *MQBT* no. 356.

¹⁴⁹ *WXTK* 35:337 gives year 10 of the Kaibo reign, which lasted only 8 years, from 968-975.

Officials, they would no longer be eligible for re-assignment, a procedure usually conducted every three years or at the official's request. These specialists and their position within the bureaucracy were re-categorized in 1110. Huizong split up their disciplines according to the specific "technique," and re-assigned them to various imperial institutions.¹⁵⁰ Simultaneously, creating official positions for sorcerers in the bureaucracy meant further court control over these practices, as in the case of the Three Cosmographies.¹⁵¹

The institution of the Military Academy at the capital and in the provinces, short-lived though it was, meant that the state dictated what military practices were suitable for the curriculum, as well as monitoring the training of future commanders. This latter was meant to be a major shift in military training, previously accomplished by individual masters, outside the court. The development of the academy was a very conscious attempt to break the hold of military training as either family or private tradition. It is true that the students could enter the academy on the *yin* privilege—i.e., easier entrance for those whose relatives had official positions—but the court could shape graduates coming out according to its own curriculum, and students had to graduate to increasingly advanced levels within that curriculum once accepted. Students practiced martial arts—riding, shooting, etc., but the court designed military curriculum envisioned a more refined courtier—literate and trained in the classics. As such, breaking the master-apprentice transmission of military training, and ritual training was part of that, was inherent in the program.¹⁵² Through the military academy, the court attempted to take full control of the tradition of military specialists, including the magical aspects of that tradition. This is not to say that they did not see

¹⁵⁰ *WXTK* 35:337; *SS* 461-462:13495-13534.

¹⁵¹ See Chapter Six.

¹⁵² See note 145 above.

the use of some of these techniques—indeed, they developed some of them, as with the cosmography techniques—but they did recognize that an orally transmitted tradition is more difficult to control than a textual one.

Conclusions

At court, especially after 1080, the court exercised a conscious, concerted effort at establishing a textual canon. The *Comprehensive Essentials* was the last prescriptive record of an orally transmitted military tradition, surpassed only by that of the *Venus Classic* and the *Tiger Seal Treatise*. Despite their prescriptive tone, these reflect military practices collected by their authors prior to court interference. The military canon was devoid of most ritual content. The newly instituted military canon did not incorporate *xiang* and its expanded domain of interpretation that formed the basis of the non-textual canon. The following chapters will bear out this assertion, especially with respect to new innovations of post-rebellion Tang (after 755) and the Northern Song.

The encyclopedic tradition, especially in Northern Song, signified a new tradition of taxonomy—the institution of the imperially-generated military manual was itself a manifestation of an epistemological shift revealed through taxonomies. Yet, as the re-categorization of rituals from court to field suggest, countering lost texts is not the only explanation. In the Song, the establishment of the military academy was a way to counter the loss of texts, insuring the transmission of knowledge under the court's gaze. Simultaneously there was another kind of transmission arranged, and it occurred through the non-literate canon. The comprehensive manuals are the repositories of early court efforts to modify oral and local practices. They record the Song experiments with new warfare techniques and how those combined with philosophical schema. These were expressed in a non-literate canon developed

through *xiang*, which took on a heightened visual character. Precisely how these ideas become manifest in rituals and other sorts of practice are explored in the next chapter.