
Note

The History of a Loyal Heart (Xin shi):

a late-Ming forgery.

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Abstract

The History of a Loyal Heart (Xin shi) is allegedly a work by the Song loyalist, Zheng Sixiao, written to bemoan the fate of the Song empire after its conquest by the Mongols. There have always been doubts about its authenticity, however, and many scholars have believed it to be a forgery. The arguments for and against this have remained inconclusive, and the work has been commonly used as a source for the history of the Song–Yuan transition period. This article adduces compelling evidence to show that there can be very little doubt that it is a late-Ming forgery. Some of the implications of this conclusion are briefly addressed.

The History of a Loyal Heart (Xin shi): a late-Ming forgery.

The forging of books has a long history in China. Several allegedly pre-Qin works have, at one time or another, been suspected of being forgeries. Some undoubtedly are. Probably the best known example is the so-called ‘ancient text’¹ *Book of Documents* (*Shu jing* or *Shang shu*). This was allegedly found hidden in a wall of Confucius’ house by one of his descendants, and was accepted as genuine for many centuries.² More recently, there is the infamous case of the “Diary of His Excellency Ching-Shan”, which eventually proved to have been forged by a British resident of Beijing.³ Forged documents supposedly from Dunhuang still pose problems of authentication.⁴ There are numerous other examples, from all periods of Chinese history. Indeed, substantial monographs have been written about the various forged books of China.⁵

¹*guwen* 古文.

²For a recent discussion of the history of the *Book of Documents*, see E. L. Shaughnessy, “*Shang Shu* 尚書 (*Shu Jing* 書經)”, in M. Loewe (ed.), *Early Chinese Texts: a Bibliographical Guide* (Berkeley, Society for the Study of Early China and Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1993), pp. 376–389, especially pp. 380–385.

³Ching-Shan [Jing Shan景善], *The Diary of His Excellency Ching-Shan: being a Chinese Account of the Boxer Troubles*, trans. J. J. L. Duyvendak (Leiden, 1924); for a brief account of the circumstances of the diary’s forgery, see O. Schell, “Reflections on Authentication”, in Zhang Liang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, (ed.) A. J. Nathan and P. Link (New York, 2001), pp. 461–462.

⁴S. Whitfield, “Dunhuang Manuscript Forgeries”, *IDP News* 20 (2002), pp. 2–4.

⁵See, for example, Zhang Xinwei 張心澂, *Weishu tongkao* 偽書通考 [A Comprehensive Examination of Forged Books], 2 Vols. (Shanghai, Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1939); and Deng Ruiquan 鄧瑞全 and Wang Guanying 王冠英, *Zhongguo weishu zongkao* 中國偽書總考 [A General Study of Forged Books in China] (Hefei 合肥, Huangshan shushe 黃山書社, 1998).

From the time of its first “discovery”, the *History of a Loyal Heart*,⁶ a collection of writings supposedly by the Song loyalist, Zheng Sixiao,⁷ aroused considerable suspicion.⁸ In fact, the story of its alleged concealment and discovery is so bizarre as to stretch credulity to the limit. According to the various prefaces and postfaces in the first printed edition of the work, a manuscript copy of the *History of a Loyal Heart* was prepared by being sealed inside a tin container, waterproofed with raw lacquer or wax, further placed inside an iron casket containing lime (presumably quicklime), and then hidden in a well at a Buddhist monastery at Suzhou.⁹ This was allegedly done in 1283, on Buddha’s birthday (the eighth day of the fourth month [10 March 1283]), by the author, Zheng Sixiao. The iron casket, with the book inside, remained in the well until there was a prolonged and severe drought in Suzhou in 1638. The well dried up, and when monks began digging at its bottom, to try to obtain water, they uncovered the iron casket.¹⁰

This story immediately arouses suspicion (or, at least, should arouse suspicion) for its timing. The *History of a Loyal Heart* bewails the overthrow of the Song dynasty and the conquest of China by the “barbarian” Mongols. It was therefore extremely providential for it to appear, in almost miraculous circumstances, at just the moment when the Ming dynasty, racked by internal rebellion, and by factionalism at court, was facing a serious threat from the Manchus, who had already founded a rival dynasty on the Ming empire’s north-eastern borders.¹¹ Perhaps this was simply a fortuitous coincidence, but it seems implausibly serendipitous.

Further cause for suspicion is that, for a forger (or forgers), Zheng Sixiao was a perfect choice. He certainly existed, and was known to have been a Song loyalist. A small collection of his writings was extant prior to the “discovery” of the *History of a Loyal Heart*. He was a painter, principally of orchids. Otherwise, very little was known about him. Neither his date of birth nor date of death, nor even his original name, had been recorded.¹² Most of the information about him that appears in recent biographies derives from the *History of a Loyal Heart*. Thus, information relating to him could be fabricated more or less at will, with little fear of contradicting known facts.

The story of the “book in the well” is dubious for other reasons, too. It was reported that, when the iron casket and the inner container were opened, the book appeared “as if new”.¹³ It is surely highly unlikely that, after more than three hundred and fifty years in

⁶ *Xin shi* 心史. For this translation of the title of the work, see A. Mittag, “Scribe in the Wilderness: The Manchu Conquest and the Loyal-Hearted Historiographer’s (*Xinshi* 心史) Mission”, *Oriens Extremus* 44 (2003), pp. 30–31.

⁷ 鄭思肖.

⁸ A. Mittag, “Scribe in the Wilderness”, pp. 27–30; Chen Fukang 陳福康, *Jingzhong qishu kao* 井中奇書考 [A Study of the Amazing Book in the Well] (Shanghai, Wenyi chubanshe 文藝出版社, 2001), pp. 267–268.

⁹ 蘇州.

¹⁰ Chen, *Jingzhong qishu kao*, pp. 134–138; Zheng Sixiao 鄭思肖, *Zheng Sixiao ji* 鄭思肖集 [Collected Works of Zheng Sixiao], (ed.) Chen Fukang 陳福康 (Shanghai, Guji chubanshe 古籍出版社, 1991), pp. 297–320.

¹¹ F. W. Mote and D. Twitchett (eds.), *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. vii, *The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644*, Pt. I (Cambridge, University Press, 1988), pp. 627–630.

¹² A more or less complete collection of all biographical information about Zheng Sixiao, which existed prior to the “discovery” of the *History of a Loyal Heart*, can be found in Wan Sitong 萬斯同, *Songji zhongyong lu* 宋季忠義錄, *juan* 11, in *Congshu jicheng xubian* 叢書集成續編 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian 上海書店, 1994), pp. xxviii, pp. 465–467.

¹³ Zheng Sixiao, *Zheng Sixiao ji*, pp. 301, 302.

the well, this could have been the case. The lime allegedly placed inside the iron casket was no doubt supposed to keep the inner container dry, as quicklime would absorb moisture. However, it is improbable that the lime could have absorbed all the water that entered the casket during a period of more than three and a half centuries. Moreover, after reacting with water, quicklime (calcium oxide) becomes slaked lime (calcium hydroxide). This is a highly caustic alkaline substance, which would almost certainly have damaged both the iron casket and the inner container (to say nothing of polluting the water of the well). The possibility that the book could have survived for so long in the well, without water penetrating the containers, is very remote.

Nevertheless, it remains a possibility, even if slight. Although the timing and circumstances of the alleged discovery of the book must arouse suspicion, they are not conclusive proof that it is a forgery. There is, however, one overwhelming difficulty for those who claim the *History of a Loyal Heart* to be genuinely from the hand of Zheng Sixiao, dating from the 1270s and early 1280s. This is that there is absolutely no solid evidence that the work existed prior to its first printing and circulation in 1640. Various defences of the work have been made, often by those who would very much like it to be genuine (usually for nationalistic, patriotic reasons), but this difficulty remains. Perhaps the best attempt made so far to show that the *History of a Loyal Heart* must date from the thirteenth century, an article by Zhong Han,¹⁴ fails to achieve its object.

This article by Zhong needs to be examined seriously. Its basic argument is that the *Da yi lue xu* section of the *History of a Loyal Heart* contains information that specifically relates it to the Yuan period. Some of this information, according to Zhong, does not appear in other Chinese sources, but is confirmed by non-Chinese sources, which a Ming writer could not have seen, and by traditions current among the Mongols, which it is also assumed a Chinese writing during the late Ming period could not have known.¹⁵ This latter point is questionable. There can be no certainty that traditions which circulated among the Mongols were completely unknown to Chinese. This is not an essential point however, as there is other evidence which contradicts the arguments put forward by Zhong Han.

Almost half of the paper is devoted to an analysis of a passage in the *History of a Loyal Heart* which states that the Jin empire controlled the rising power of the Mongols by regularly attacking them and cutting off one of their thumbs.¹⁶ This, of course, would have prevented them drawing a bow, and would undoubtedly have greatly reduced their military potential. The discussion which follows makes reference to a variety of sources, including Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, to show the importance of thumbs to the Mongols, but none of it actually confirms the statement in the *History of a Loyal Heart*. No evidence is adduced to support the claim that the Jin empire systematically cut off the thumbs of Mongols. In the final analysis, then, this discussion is of little value.

The second piece of evidence put forward in the article at first sight seems more substantial. The *History of a Loyal Heart* says that, when Chinggis Qan first attacked the Jin empire, he

¹⁴Zhong Han 鐘焯, "«Xin shi·Da yi lue xu» cheng shu shidai xin kao" «心史·大義略叙» 成書時代新考 [A New Study of the Date of Completion of the *Da yi lue xu* in the *History of a Loyal Heart*], *Zhongguo Shi Yanjiu* 中國史研究 2007.1, pp. 133–149.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 136.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 136–141; Zheng Sixiao, *Zheng Sixiao ji*, p. 157.

suffered a great defeat.¹⁷ This is not recorded in Chinese sources, but there is a passage in John of Plano Carpini's *History of the Mongols* that also records a defeat of the Mongols by Jin.¹⁸ John is clearly unreliable, however. His mention of a severe defeat of the Mongols under Chinggis Qan by the "Emperor of the Kitayans" is immediately preceded by an account of "a vast desert . . . inhabited by wild men, who do not speak at all and have no joints in their legs". Immediately following it, John claims that Chinggis Qan made war against the Uighurs and defeated them in battle.¹⁹ There was no such war, of course, for the Uighurs submitted voluntarily to the Mongols in 1209.²⁰ John also apparently places the final defeat of the Jin empire in the time of Chinggis Qan.²¹ Moreover, he then continues by describing things that are very clearly mythical, such as "monsters who had the likeness of women", whose husbands were dogs.²² To adduce his account to support that of the *History of a Loyal Heart* is therefore very unsafe. Perhaps there was a tradition of a defeat of the Mongols under Chinggis Qan by the armies of the Jin empire, which both these works record. On the other hand, the apparent agreement may be no more than coincidental. It is certainly impossible to place much confidence in John's account.

The main point of John's story of the defeat of the Mongols by Jin is one which is not mentioned in the *History of a Loyal Heart*. John states that, during the battle:

all the Mongol nobles in that army were killed with the exception of seven. This gives rise to the fact that, when anyone threatens them saying "If you invade that country you will be killed, for a vast number of people live there and they are men skilled in the art of fighting", they still give answer, "Once upon a time indeed we were killed and but seven of us were left, and now we have increased to a great multitude, so we are not afraid of such men".²³

This brings to mind the episode of the Baljuna Covenant, when Chinggis Qan, after being defeated by the Ong Qan, fled to Baljuna with only nineteen followers.²⁴ The Ong Qan was a vassal of Jin, whose title (Mongolian *Ong*, Chinese *Wang*, prince) had been conferred on him by the Jin emperor,²⁵ so John of Plano Carpini (or his informant) might well have confused the two. His story of the reduction of numbers because of defeat, followed by a resurgence of power, mirrors exactly the events surrounding the Baljuna episode. It seems very likely that it derives from it. The brief mention of a defeat in the *History of a Loyal Heart* might have a similar derivation, or might simply have been an invention. It may be noted that the story of the Baljuna covenant is recorded in the *History of the Yuan Dynasty*, so it would have been available to a late-Ming writer.²⁶

¹⁷Zhong, "Cheng shu shidai xin kao", p. 142; Zheng Sixiao, *Zheng Sixiao ji*, p. 157.

¹⁸John of Plano Carpini, "History of the Mongols", in C. Dawson (ed.), *The Mongol Mission* (London, 1955), p. 20.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 20–21.

²⁰T. T. Allsen, "The Yüan Dynasty and the Uighurs of Turfan in the 13th Century", in M. Rossabi (ed.), *China Among Equals: the Middle Kingdom and its Neighbors, 10th – 14th centuries* (Berkeley, 1983), p. 246.

²¹John of Plano Carpini, "History of the Mongols", p. 21.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 23.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 21.

²⁴F. W. Cleaves, "The Historicity of the Baljuna Covenant", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 18 (1955), p. 382.

²⁵I. de Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols: a Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century* (Leiden, 2006), i, pp. 57, 493–494.

²⁶Cleaves, "Baljuna Covenant", p. 397; Song Lian 宋濂, et al. (eds.), *Yuan shi* 元史 (Beijing, Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1976), x, juan 120, p. 2960.

The remainder of Zhong's article produces nothing that is any better. Overall, it entirely fails to be convincing in its argument that the *History of a Loyal Heart* must have been written during the Yuan dynasty. Far more convincing is the article by Professor Dr. A. Mittag, which argues that the *History of a Loyal Heart* shows clear signs of being a product of the Ming dynasty.²⁷ Mittag's analysis of the style and content of the *History of a Loyal Heart* appears to place it quite firmly in a late Ming context. Nevertheless, as Mittag acknowledges, his arguments are unlikely to settle the dispute.

Here the question will be approached in a different way, arguing not from intangible attributes such as the ideas expressed in the *History of a Loyal Heart*, which could no doubt be interpreted and reinterpreted indefinitely, but seeking more concrete evidence. I have already suggested above that the account of the discovery of the book in the well is dubious, but there are too many uncertainties, regarding such things as the size of the iron casket and how much lime it contained, and how well sealed the inner container was, for these arguments to be definitive. There is, however, one aspect of the story of the book's discovery that can be tested more fully. It is claimed that it was found when the well in which it had been concealed dried up, during a severe and prolonged drought in Suzhou in 1638. One of the documents included in the first edition of the *History of a Loyal Heart* gives a graphic account of the drought that afflicted Suzhou at this time: "[In 1638], in Wuzhong²⁸ [Suzhou], there was a long drought. The residents of the city bought water to drink. Those fighting for a mouthful grappled in the street".²⁹ There are good records of droughts in China. A drought as severe as this should have been noted somewhere.

The *History of the Ming Dynasty* does indeed include records of droughts. For the year in question, 1638 (the eleventh year of the Chongzhen³⁰ reign-period), the *History of the Ming Dynasty* includes the following notice: "There was drought³¹ in the two capitals, Shandong, Shanxi and Shaanxi".³² Suzhou was in the Southern Metropolitan Province,³³ so it is possible that it might have been affected by this drought. It must be noted, however, that the drought is not recorded as having been severe: the text says only "drought", and not "great drought".³⁴ Another historical work, completed during the late 1640s by a Ming loyalist, gives a little more detail: "This month [the sixth month of 1638], in the Northern and Southern Metropolitan Provinces, Shandong and Henan, there were severe drought and locusts".³⁵ This makes clear that the drought did not last very long, only during the sixth month. The discovery of the *History of a Loyal Heart* is supposed to have occurred in the eleventh month.³⁶ There was no recorded drought in the eleventh month of 1638, and there was no prolonged drought in Suzhou in that year.

²⁷ Mittag, "Scribe in the Wilderness", pp. 30–41.

²⁸ 吳中.

²⁹ Zheng Sixiao, *Zheng Sixiao ji*, p. 336.

³⁰ 崇禎.

³¹ 旱.

³² Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉, et al. (eds.), *Ming shi* 明史 (Beijing, Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1974), ii, *juan* 30, p. 486.

³³ Nan Zhili 南直隸.

³⁴ 大旱.

³⁵ Tan Qian 談遷, *Guo que* 國權 (Beijing, Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1958), vi, *juan* 96, p. 5813.

³⁶ Chen Fukang, *Jingzhong qishu kao*, pp. 134–135; Zheng Sixiao, *Zheng Sixiao ji*, p. 302.

There was severe and prolonged drought in Suzhou at another time, however. The *History of the Ming Dynasty* records that, in the seventeenth year of the Wanli³⁷ reign-period [1589], there was prolonged severe drought in Suzhou.³⁸ This drought was so bad that the great Tai Hu³⁹ lake dried up.⁴⁰ Surely, then, if a well ran dry in Suzhou, it would have been at this time, not in 1638. It must be asked why the *History of a Loyal Heart* was not discovered in 1589. As the alleged drought in Suzhou in the eleventh month of 1638 did not occur, then the whole story of the discovery of the book, which in any case is dubious, must surely be a fabrication. Very probably, the forger(s) of the *History of a Loyal Heart* based the story of the great drought of 1638 on the actual events of 50 years previously.

This fact alone is enough to make it highly probable that the *History of a Loyal Heart* is a late-Ming forgery. There is further evidence of this, however. As already seen above, according to the various records of how the book was concealed and then discovered in the well, it was placed in the well on 10 March 1283. Yet it contains mention of events that happened only very shortly before this date, and even after it.⁴¹ For example, it not only records the assassination of Ahmad, which took place early in 1282,⁴² but also the execution of his sons, which did not occur until November.⁴³ Again, it clearly shows knowledge of the death of Wen Tianxiang,⁴⁴ formerly a Chief Councillor⁴⁵ of Song, who was executed in Dadu⁴⁶ (modern Beijing) in January 1283.⁴⁷ The news of his execution must have travelled fast, if Zheng Sixiao could have known of it in time to write a lament over his death and include it in the *History of a Loyal Heart*, before hiding it in the well in early March of the same year.

This might nevertheless have been possible. What is obviously impossible is that the *History of a Loyal Heart* records an event which did not occur until just over a year *after* it was supposedly hidden in the well. It clearly mentions the return of Andong⁴⁸ from captivity with Qaidu.⁴⁹ This did not take place until late March of 1284.⁵⁰ It is perhaps possible that the work was altered after its discovery, and that this record was added then. If so, however, it would still invalidate the *History of a Loyal Heart* as a source for the Song–Yuan transition period, as it would be impossible to know which parts of the work were original, and which had been added or altered after 1638.

³⁷ 萬曆.

³⁸ Zhang Tingyu, *et al.* (eds.), *Ming shi*, ii, *juan* 30, p. 485.

³⁹ 太湖.

⁴⁰ Zhang Tingyu, *et al.* (eds.), *Ming shi*, ii, *juan* 20, p. 273.

⁴¹ Yang Lian 楊鐮, “Zhen yu weide shiji—wenzue shiliao bianwei dubai” 真與偽的世紀—文學史料辨偽獨白 [A Century of Truth and Falsehood—A Soliloquy on Authentication of Sources of Literary History] <<http://www.literature.org.cn/article.aspx?id=14605>> viewed 12 August 2013; also published in Dong Naibin 董乃斌, *et al.* (eds.), *Zhongguo gudian wenzue xueshushi yanjiu* 中國古典文學學術史研究 [Studies on the Historiography of Traditional Chinese Literature] (Urumqi 烏魯木齊: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe 新疆人民出版社, 1997) [not seen].

⁴² Song Lian, *et al.* (eds.), *Yuan shi*, xv, *juan* 205, p. 4563.

⁴³ Song Lian, *et al.* (eds.), *Yuan shi*, i, *juan* 12, pp. 247–248; Zheng Sixiao, *Zheng Sixiao ji*, pp. 178–179.

⁴⁴ 文天祥.

⁴⁵ Chengxiang 丞相.

⁴⁶ 大都.

⁴⁷ Song Lian, *et al.* (eds.), *Yuan shi*, i, *juan* 12, p. 249; Zheng Sixiao, *Zheng Sixiao ji*, p. 156.

⁴⁸ 安東 (usually transcribed Antong 安童 in the *History of the Yuan Dynasty*).

⁴⁹ Zheng Sixiao, *Zheng Sixiao ji*, p. 179.

⁵⁰ Song Lian, *et al.* (eds.), *Yuan shi*, ii, *juan* 13, p. 265.

All in all, however, it seems most likely that the story of the hiding and discovery of the *History of a Loyal Heart* is a fabrication. There was no prolonged, severe drought in Suzhou in 1638, as is alleged. Nor could Zheng Sixiao have hidden the book, as it now exists, in March 1283, because it contains a record of an event which did not occur until March 1284. With the additional evidence of Professor Mittag's analysis of the work, which concludes that it most likely was written during the latter part of the Ming dynasty, it seems evident that, beyond reasonable doubt, the *History of a Loyal Heart* was not written by Zheng Sixiao, during the 1270s and early 1280s, but rather by a forger, or forgers, during the 1630s or 1640s. It is not a work by a Song loyalist, but rather by a Ming loyalist, or loyalists, who fabricated it to help inspire resistance to the Manchus.

This conclusion has serious implications, for the *History of a Loyal Heart* has been accepted as genuine, and used as a thirteenth-century source, by quite a number of scholars. It was, for example, one of the main sources used by Kuwabara Jitsuzō in his work on Pu Shougeng. Indeed, it was the only 'contemporary' source that he cited as support for the claim that Pu Shougeng was of foreign ancestry.⁵¹ When it is also realised that his assertion that the family name "Pu" was a transcription of Arabic "Abu"⁵² is not necessarily the case, his arguments are significantly weakened. The name "Pu" was (and still is) a Chinese family name that by no means always transcribes a foreign word. A general of the state of Wei,⁵³ called Pu Zhong,⁵⁴ is mentioned in the *History of the Three Kingdoms*, with reference to the year 242.⁵⁵ At that date, it is highly unlikely that Pu Zhong was of Arab descent, and he certainly could not have been a Muslim. Similarly, there is really no proof at all that Pu Shougeng was a Muslim of non-Chinese descent. Almost all the evidence for these suggestions is late, dating from no earlier than about 1600, more or less three centuries after the time of Pu Shougeng. It is by no means inconceivable that Chinese chauvinists of the Ming period fabricated Pu's foreign origin. He was a turncoat, who betrayed the Song dynasty and defected to the Mongols, and who massacred members of the Song imperial family.⁵⁶ It is at least a possibility that there were those who wanted to deny that he was Chinese. Indeed, the fact that the very probably forged *History of a Loyal Heart* includes a claim that Pu was of foreign descent strengthens this supposition. This is clearly a question that needs further research, but for now it should be noted that, although it is possible that Pu Shougeng was of foreign descent, and perhaps also a Muslim, there is absolutely no certainty of either of these things.

It may be relevant here to note that Kuwabara's methodology has been seriously questioned in relation to another issue. He persistently asserted that the Chinese family name An was commonly used during the early medieval period by people who originated from Bukhara. Despite considerable evidence that, in fact, it very often referred not to Bukhara, but rather

⁵¹ Kuwabara Jitsuzō 桑原鷺藏, *Pu Shougeng kao* 蒲壽庚考, trans. Chen Yujing 陳裕菁, (Shanghai, Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1929), pp. 111–112.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 112–113.

⁵³ 魏.

⁵⁴ 蒲忠.

⁵⁵ Chen Shou 陳壽, *San guo zhi* 三國志, (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1971), v, *juan* 56, p. 1307.

⁵⁶ Tuotuo 脫脫, et al. (eds.), *Song shi* 宋史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1977), iii, *juan* 47, p. 942.

to Parthia,⁵⁷ he stuck to his position, apparently ignoring all evidence to the contrary.⁵⁸ His thesis that Pu Shougeng was a Muslim of Arab origin is, I would suggest, a not dissimilar case.

Several works on Song loyalism have also used the *History of a Loyal Heart* as a source. Sometimes the controversy about its authenticity has been noted, but quite often it has not. F. W. Mote went so far as to suggest that it “may have circulated in manuscript during the Yüan period”,⁵⁹ although there is not so much as a scrap of evidence for such a speculation. Jennifer Jay claimed that “neither its authenticity nor its spuriousness can be proved beyond doubt”. Yet she went on to say that it “should therefore be included as a source on Song loyalism, but used with caution”.⁶⁰ Now, if it were spurious (as it almost certainly is), then no amount of caution could make it authentic, while, if it were genuinely a work by Zheng Sixiao, then caution would scarcely be necessary. Such an approach is certainly no longer tenable. Another work on Song loyalism which used the *History of a Loyal Heart* as a source is R. L. Davis’ *Wind Against the Mountain*.⁶¹ All works which have relied on the *History of a Loyal Heart* as a source for Song loyalism are partially invalidated by the fact that it is more or less unquestionably a late-Ming forgery.

Although it deals with an entirely different period (pre-Han), an article by Noel Barnard, published two decades ago now,⁶² still makes thought-provoking reading today, and seems relevant to the issues discussed above. Barnard notes the tendency of some scholars working in the field of Chinese studies “to bypass the requirements of historical research methodology as it has developed in the West over the last century or so”. He criticises the “failure to divide the documentation into areas of reliability”.⁶³ It is well known that, during the long course of Chinese history, numerous attempts have been made to alter, delete, or falsify historical records. The re-editing of the *Veritable Records*⁶⁴ of the Ming dynasty, which resulted in, among other things, the complete erasure of the reign-period of the second emperor, is a case in point.⁶⁵ All too often, these attempts have been at least partly successful, and have left a legacy of historical obscurities.⁶⁶ It is the responsibility of modern historians to look critically at their sources. The *History of a Loyal Heart* is a salutary example. It was always controversial, and commonly condemned as a forgery. Those who supported it as a genuine

⁵⁷ Called Anxi 安息 in Chinese.

⁵⁸ A. Forte, “Kuwabara’s Misleading Thesis on Bukhara and the Family Name An 安”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116.4 (1996), pp. 645–652.

⁵⁹ F. W. Mote, “Confucian Eremism in the Yüan Period”, in A. F. Wright (ed.), *The Confucian Persuasion* (Stanford: University Press, 1960), p. 234.

⁶⁰ J. W. Jay, “Memoirs and Official Accounts: the Historiography of the Song Loyalists”, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 50 (1990), p. 602.

⁶¹ R. L. Davis, *Wind Against the Mountain: the Crisis of Politics and Culture in Thirteenth-century China* (Cambridge, Mass., 1996), pp. 127–131.

⁶² N. Barnard, “Astronomical Data from Ancient Chinese Records: the Requirements of Historical Research Methodology”, *East Asian History* 6 (1993), pp. 47–74.

⁶³ Barnard, “Astronomical Data”, p. 47.

⁶⁴ *Shi lu* 實錄.

⁶⁵ For this and other problems with official Ming historical sources, see the discussion in the introduction to the *Guo que* by Wu Han 吳晗: “Tan Qian he *Guo que*” 談遷和國權, in Tan Qian, *Guo que*, i, pp. 5–6.

⁶⁶ Such as the doubts surrounding the accession of the Yongzheng 雍正 Emperor of the Qing 清 dynasty; see A. Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch’ing Period*, (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1943), ii, pp. 916–917; and also the Preface to the same work, by Hu Shih: Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, i, p. iii.

work by Zheng Sixiao were clearly often motivated by considerations other than historical accuracy. That it ever gained as much acceptance as it did, throughout much of the twentieth and into the twenty-first century, reflects badly on scholarship in the field of Chinese studies. s.g.haw@wadh.oxon.org

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