

## **“Court Gazettes” and “Short Reports”: Official Views and Unofficial Readings of Court News\*\***

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### Abstract

The growing interest in current affairs among the twelfth- and thirteenth-century Chinese elite, in and outside officialdom, was evident in the circulation of a wide variety of news genres ranging from court gazettes, collections of memorials, anthologies of examination essays, miscellanies, Song history textbooks, and encyclopedias. The gazette was a court publication listing new appointments, dismissals, foreign missions, excerpts of edicts and memorials, as well as a schedule of audiences. In principle its circulation was restricted to court officials and regional and local administrators. Commercial printers routinely defied publishing laws, bribed clerks and officials working in the drafting and transmission offices, hunted down copies as soon as they appeared, and printed pirated copies. These were printed in the capital and

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from there made their way to the provinces. Such unofficial editions were officially labeled “short reports” and were associated in official discourse with unfounded rumor and factionalism. This article investigates the readership of and reader responses to “court gazettes” and “short reports.” It argues that the distinction between “short report” and “gazette” was drawn very differently in the official bureaucratic communication network and derivative semi-official networks.

**Keywords:** Song dynasty, newspaper, gazette, printing, publishing law

## 1. Introduction: Beyond the Quest for Origins

Recent research on late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Chinese newspapers has underscored the mediating role of the imperial court gazette in the development of the modern Chinese newspaper.<sup>1</sup> The rich analysis of the negotiated modernity of late imperial and republican Chinese media stands in sharp contrast to the relative poverty of scholarship on the early history of the court gazette. This essay is a preliminary investigation into the early cultural history of the court gazette and associated news sources.

Chinese historians disagree on the question of the origins of the court gazette. Ge Gongzhen 戈公振 (1890-1935), who is frequently seen as the first historian of the Chinese newspaper, started his historical narrative with the Capital Liaison Offices which Han dynasty nobility established in Chang’an 長安 in the first two centuries BCE.<sup>2</sup> The presence of these offices in the capital and the availability of convenient technologies of written communication (bamboo slips and silk) suggests the likelihood of regular communication

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1 Barbara Mittler, *A Newspaper for China? Power, Identity, and Change in Shanghai's News Media, 1872-1912* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004).

2 Ge Gongzhen 戈公振, *Chatu zhengli ben Zhongguo baoxue shi* 插圖整理本中國報學史 (1927; rpt., Shanghai: Shanghai gujichubanshe, 2002).

between local representatives in the capital and their masters in the kingdoms the founder of the Han dynasty had granted to relatives and associates. During the last three decades historians of news media have dismissed Ge's conclusions, but several have found evidence of the "world's first newspaper" and the origins of the court gazette in reports exchanged between the Capital Liaison Offices and the regional commanders who had autonomous control over sizable parts of the Tang Empire between the mid-eighth and early tenth centuries.<sup>3</sup> A third view, which has a genealogy that stretches back to Qing times, holds that the origins of the centralized compilation and regular distribution of the court gazette go back to the Song dynasty.<sup>4</sup>

The debate on the origins of the court gazette is currently conducted within the paradigm of a teleological history, focused on the gradual emergence of the daily national newspaper. I am opting for a different kind of approach that seeks to understand the relationships among the various source types circulating political news, changing elite identities, and the imperial order. Within this context, the standardization, centralization, and regularization of the gazette in the tenth and eleventh centuries mark a major transition in imperial political culture.

## 2. Authenticity: The Court Gazette in Official Discourse

The standard definition of the layout of the court gazette is based on Song dynasty models. According to a memorial submitted in 1173, the court gazette covered court political affairs, excerpts from edicts and memorials,

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3 Fang Hanqi 方漢奇, *Zhongguo xinwen shiye tongshi* 中國新聞事業通史 (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 1992). For a description of conflicting views on this question, see Li Bin 李彬, *Tangdai wenming yu xinwen chuanbo* 唐代文明與新聞傳播 (Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe, 1999).

4 Zhu Chuanyu 朱傳譽, *Songdai xinwen shi* 宋代新聞史 (Taipei: Zhongguo xueshu zhuzuo jiangzhuweiyuanhui, 1967), and, *Xian Qin Tang Song Ming Qing chuanbo shiye lun ji* 先秦唐宋明清傳播事業論集 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1988).

appointments and dismissals in the bureaucracy, court audiences and departures from the court, and punishments and rewards.<sup>5</sup> This representation of the court gazette as a court publication excerpting major policy decisions, listing personnel decisions, and publishing the schedule of imperial activities, corresponds to later characterizations of the genre.<sup>6</sup>

The centralization of the compilation and distribution process originated in Song regulations. Under Emperor Taizong 太宗 (r. 976-997) the Capital Liaison Offices (*jinzouyuan* 進奏院), which regional commanders set up in the Tang capital in the eighth and ninth centuries, were brought under the control of the central bureaucracy. They were incorporated into one central Memorials Office (also called *jinzouyuan*), staffed by court officials, and housed under the Chancellery (*menxiasheng* 門下省). The Memorials Office became a central node in the transmission of documents between the court and local governments. It oversaw the transmission of memorials and reports from the local level to the various ministries and offices at the capital and was also responsible for the dissemination of court documents (including the court gazette) to the lower levels of the bureaucracy. Taizong's institutional reorganization of the exchange of information between the court and local administrations reflected the center's reassertion of control over information. Whereas Tang Capital Liaison Offices had served as intelligence offices for regional commanders, the Song Memorials Office's mission was to service the court's interest in the gathering, sorting, and selective dissemination of information.<sup>7</sup>

5 Zhu Chuanyu, *Songdai xinwen shi*, p.24; Xu Song 徐松, *Song huiyao jigao* 宋會要輯稿 (ca. 1809; rpt., electronic edition, Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jisuan zhongxin, 2003) [hereafter *SHY*], *Zhiguan* 職官, 2.51.

6 Barbara Mittler, *A Newspaper for China?* pp. 187-207.

7 For the history of the Capital Liaison Offices during the late Tang and Five Dynasties, see Fukui Nobuaki 福井信昭, "Godai shikkokuki no shinsōin 五代十国期の進奏院," *Ōsaka shiritsu daigaku tōyōshi ronsō* 大阪市立大学東洋史論叢 14 (2005): 63-76; id., "Tōdai no shinsōin — Tō kōhanki 'hanchin teisei' no ichi sokumen 唐代の進奏院——唐後半期「藩鎮体制」の一

The reports which the personnel of the Memorials Office sent down to regional and local government offices were typically subject to prepublication review. In 999, Emperor Zhenzong 眞宗 (r. 997-1022) had already set a precedent for the review of the gazettes by the Bureau of Military Affairs, the paramount central government agency in Song times.<sup>8</sup> During times of relaxation, the editorial process still required that the supervising secretaries (jishizhong 給事中) attach to the Chancellery review the gazettes prior to their transmission.

The standardization of content and the centralization of the editorial process went hand in hand with the regularization of the gazettes' dissemination. Memorials Office personnel were assigned to all prefectures, ensuring the transmission of court gazettes to all parts of the empire.<sup>9</sup> The circulation of the gazette was legally limited to officials serving at court and at all levels of the local government. The Memorials Office published gazettes regularly, with the interval changing over time from every five days to every day. The distribution may have taken longer. According to one report (1048), the Ministry of Military Affairs, which was in charge of transportation and

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側面,” *Tōhōgaku* 東方学 105 (2003): 47-62. He argues that Capital Liaison Offices continued throughout the tenth century. Their functionality was less pronounced during the Later Liang dynasty but they went through a revival and restructuring during the Latter Tang. He further shows that in the last part of the Five Dynasties period branch offices were especially important as bases for the three dynasties in the capitals of the southern kingdoms. See also Wang Jing 王靜, “Chaoting he fangzhen de lianluo shuniu: Shitan zhongwan Tang de jinzouyuan 朝廷和方鎮的聯絡樞紐: 試談中晚唐的進奏院,” in Deng Xiaonan 鄧小南, ed., *Zhengji kaocha yu xinxi qudao: Yi Songdai wei zhongxin* 政績考察與信息渠道: 以宋代為重心 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2008), pp. 235-273.

8 Zhu Chuanyu, *Songdai xinwen shi*, pp. 18-24; Umehara Kaoru 梅原郁, “Shinsōin o megutte—Sōdai no bunsho dentatsu seido 進奏院をめぐって——宋代の文書伝達制度,” *Shūjitsu joshi daigaku shigaku ronshō* 就実女子大学史学論集 15 (2000.12): 80-81.

9 The circulation of the court gazettes in border prefectures received higher scrutiny than in other prefectures. In 1167 Emperor Xiaozong issued an edict prohibiting the circulation of the court gazettes in Xuyi 盱眙 Prefecture and other border prefectures. *SHY*, Zhiguan, 2.51.

postal services, distributed the final copies once every ten days. According to another report (1098), Memorials Office personnel sent out the court gazettes every three days.<sup>10</sup>

Whether or not the court gazettes were printed during the Song dynasty cannot be conclusively demonstrated. Historians focusing on the history of the court gazettes during the Ming and Qing dynasties generally hold that Song gazettes circulated in manuscript only and were not distributed in print until late imperial times. Historians touching specifically on the history of Song gazettes have mustered several pieces of evidence suggesting that gazettes may have appeared in print as early as the eleventh century. A decree of 1071 stipulated that the budget of the Memorials Office, whence the gazettes were dispatched, should include annually 1,000 strings of cash for “the carving of woodblocks, paper and ink.”<sup>11</sup> Even though these moneys were not specifically earmarked for the printing of the gazettes, it is likely that the gazettes would have been included in the communications to be printed and sent down to the routes and lower administrative levels. The printing of the gazettes may have started earlier in the eleventh century. A later opinion, submitted in 1176, charged that the printing of communications had fallen under the Board of Punishments (Xingbu 刑部) before 1071 and asked that the printing operations in the Memorials Office be stopped and returned to the relevant office under the Board.<sup>12</sup> Despite this effort, printing operations and subsidies for printing activities in the Memorials Office continued in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.<sup>13</sup>

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10 Zhu Chuanyu, *Songdai xinwen shi*, pp. 19, 42-45; Umehara Kaoru, “shinsōin o megutte,” p. 98.

11 SHY, Zhiguan, 2.46.

12 SHY, Xingfa 刑法, 1.10. The Board was put in charge of the printing of decrees in 1024. Li Tao 李燾, *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian 續資治通鑑長編* (Academia Sinica electronic ed. (1183)), 102.2368; see also Zhu Chuanyu, *Songdai xinwen shi*, p. 39.

13 For further discussion of the records cited above and for additional evidence, see Umehara Kaoru, “shinsōin o megutte,” p. 83; Zhu Chuanyu, *Songdai xinwen shi*, pp. 38-42. Kubota writes emphatically that Song gazettes must have been circulating in print—a view that is in part

The processes of standardization, centralization, and regularization describe the official network and the official view of communication. The official network was based on a set of regulations structuring the flow of information. Official regulations defined the institutions and procedures for the gathering, compilation, review, and dissemination of court news. Such regulations were part of an official discourse of communication which prescribed a direct and transparent flow of information from the center to the public. This public was imagined as an “audience,” literally “the listening of the masses” (*minting* 民聽、*zhongting* 眾聽、*qunting* 群聽). In official discourse, the court gazette was seen as a channel for the transmission of news first to officialdom, and then through it to the population at large. The news covered in the gazette was distributed for political guidance; it was to be “listened to” (*ting* 聽) and accepted as it represented a digest of decisions and events authorized by the central government for the instruction of officials, and through their administration, the population. The orders excerpted in the gazette kept local administrators informed about new measures and demanded their collaboration; they also stipulated which ones were to be posted for broader dissemination.

The thirty prohibitions on the distribution of the court gazette and the separate circulation of news items included in the gazette (such as individual decrees and memorials) listed in table 1 suggests that Song emperors and

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based on the circulation of other official communications in print but that also reflects the intent to regard them as a structural equivalent to the modern printed newspaper in the construction of national identities. Kubota Kazuo 久保田和男, “Sōdai no chūō jōhō no chihō dentatsu ni tsuite—Teihō o chūshin to shite 宋代の中央情報の地方伝達について——邸報を中心として,” paper presented at “Tang Song shiqi de wenshu chuandi yu xinxi goutong guoji xueshu gongzuofang 唐宋時期的文書傳遞與信息溝通國際學術工作坊,” workshop held at Beijing University, Beijing, Sept. 28, 2007. I thank Deng Xiaonan for sharing the papers presented at the workshop with me. Also, Kubota Kazuo, “Sōdai ni okeru seichoku no dentatsu ni tsuite—Genpō kaisei izen o chūshin to shite 宋代における制勅の伝達について——元豊改制以前を中心として,” in Sōdaishi Kenkyūkai 宋代史研究会, ed., *Sōdai shakai no nettowāku* 宋代社会のネットワーク (Tōkyō: Kyūko Shoin, 1998), pp. 197-232.

central government officials from the reign of Renzong 仁宗 (r. 1022-1063) onwards were aware that existing procedures and codes regulating the flow of information were continuously violated. In official discourse such violations were interpreted through the application of an analytic device, the binary opposition between authenticity and falsehood (*zhen/wei* 真偽). This polarity not only distinguished between proper and improper action, it also framed the discussion of proper and improper conduct.<sup>14</sup> The news included in the authorized versions of the gazette was by definition authentic; reports on court events, personnel decisions, memorials, and decrees circulated in advance or not included in the gazette were associated with forgery and falsehood (*wei*). The authenticity-falsehood opposition was applied to a variety of political conflicts in official discourse. Apart from its application to unauthorized reports on court affairs, it also figured significantly in factional disputes such as the twelfth-century rift between defenders and opponents of “true” / “false” learning (*weixue* 偽學). The authenticity-falsehood opposition was not only an analytic device, but also an evaluative tool with moral as well as political connotations. Practices deemed “inauthentic” were automatically associated with moral corruption and political disorder (*luan* 亂).

### 3. Inauthenticity: Short Reports in Official Discourse

The association between unauthorized court news and political subversion gained urgency in the second half of the twelfth century. In the 1150s “short reports” (*xiaobao* 小報) became commonplace, first in the capital and from there in the provinces. Short reports were unauthorized newsheets carrying the same kinds of information as the court gazette. They sold well in the capital, because they reported court news faster than the court gazettes, and

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14 Cf. Robert Wuthnow, *Communities of Discourse: Ideology and Social Structure in the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and European Socialism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 143.



also included news items that had not yet been subjected to the editorial review of the secretaries in the Chancellery or the Bureau of Military Affairs. We have little information about those who were involved in the business of short reports and their operations. According to official reports, Memorials Office personnel leaked news items. Private spies operated in the central government offices, gathering and copying information from various offices in the capital. According to one official investigation, one servant made a living by regularly infiltrating the inner grounds of the palace, gathering leaked reports from government offices, picking up hearsay, and supplementing all this evidence with his "personal opinion."<sup>15</sup> The resulting gazettes were sold in the capital. They were also sent to the provinces; enterprising officials used the official postal network for their distribution.

The term "short reports" is first documented in an official document dating back to 1156. The official report, as well as contemporary literati testimony, described their appearance as a recent phenomenon. The chronology of prohibitions in table 1 suggests that even though there had been similar publications before (prohibitions against the circulation of separate newsheets and the forging and unauthorized printing of orders go back to 1031 and 1070 respectively), the sale of newsheets did not become an established business until the second half of the twelfth century.

The exchange between Emperor Gaozong 高宗 (r. 1131-1162) and Zhou Linzhi 周麟之 (1118-1164) in 1156 illustrates both the novelty of the short report business and the association between short reports and inauthenticity and political subversion in official discourse. On April 16, 1156, Gaozong issued an edict in which he aimed to silence the rumor that the policy of appeasement with the Jin Empire was about to be revised. This rumor spread after the death, about five months earlier, of Qin Gui 秦檜 (1090-1155), whom the scholar-officials saw as the architect of the policy of appeasement. Emperor Gaozong

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15 SHY, Xingfa, 2.125-126.

declared:

I believe that putting the army at rest and the people at peace expresses the great virtue of a sovereign. Being true to one's words and maintaining close relationships has proven to result in great benefits in the past and the present. Therefore, I, based on my own convictions, decided on a policy of appeasement [with Jin]. The former councilor Qin Gui, with his many great talents, merely approved. How could it be that the debate will depend on his life or death! Recently, ignorant folks, because they think that everything came from Qin Gui and do not know that it all came from me, have been spreading superficial stories, confusing the public (*zhongting*). They even go so far as to fabricate imperial decrees calling for the return of former officials and for memorials to be sent to the throne. They randomly discuss border affairs. I am really shocked by this.<sup>16</sup>

朕惟偃兵息民，帝王之盛德；講信修睦，古今之大利；是以斷自朕志，決講和之策。故相秦檜，但能贊朕而已，豈以其存亡而有渝定議耶！近者無知之輩，遂以為盡出於檜，不知悉由朕衷，乃鼓唱浮言以惑眾聽。至有偽造詔命，召用舊臣，獻章公車，妄議邊事，朕實駭之。

The accusation of the falsification of decrees was in this case, as in previous and later prohibitions, related to factionalism. News about the death of Qin Gui opened up prospects for those opposed to his policies who had been sent away from court and kept in the provinces during his two-decade long regime. The opposition used newssheets to overhaul the upper echelons of the bureaucracy and to mobilize their members in the provinces, asking them to send in appeals for a revision of court policy on border affairs.

Emperor Gaozong's speech elicited further investigation into the channels through which political rumor was transmitted. One of the court diarist and editorial directors, Zhou Linzhi, reported:

Now when the emperor issues decrees and promulgates orders, the thunder

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16 Bi Yuan 畢沅, *Xu zizhi tongjian* 續資治通鑑 (1801; rpt., Hanquan electronic edition), 131.3470.

is loud and the winds fly, there are some crooked individuals who make up deceitful stories to mislead the public (*qunting*). Like what was mentioned the other day about "employing former officials,"<sup>17</sup> these superficial words caused a stir, but no one knows whence they came. I have investigated the cause for this. These are all based on privately obtained short reports. These so-called short reports originate in the Memorials Office. Its personnel composes them. In recent years whenever doubtful events come up which people at court or in the provinces do not know about, Memorials Office personnel always vie to write them up on small sheets. They immediately report them nearby and faraway. These things are called short reports. For example, they cover things like today someone was called in for an audience, someone was dismissed, or someone was moved into a new position. They oftentimes make something out of nothing.<sup>18</sup>

方陛下頒詔旨布命令，雷厲風飛之時，不無小人譸張之說，眩惑羣聽。如前日所謂召用舊臣者，浮言胥動，莫知從來。臣嘗究其然矣。此皆私得之小報。小報者出于進奏院。蓋邸吏輩爲之也。比年事有疑似，中外未知，邸吏必競以小紙書之，飛報遠近，謂之小報。如曰今日某人被召，某人被召罷去，某人遷除，往往以虛爲實，以無爲有。

Zhou Linzhi saw the emergence of the regular involvement of Memorials Office personnel in the leaking and writing of court news as a recent phenomenon and added that the reports were an immediate success. He noted that at the time of writing it was commonplace for court officials as well as county magistrates reading official reports to comment, "Oh! The short report on this has already arrived!"

In Zhou Linzhi's report the producers and consumers of the short reports are located within officialdom. Even though commercial publishers and examination candidates were targeted in official reports on the spread of other news genres such as recent histories, archival compilations, and administrative

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17 This is a direct reference to Emperor Gaozong's proclamation translated above.

18 Zhou Linzhi, *Hailing ji* (Siku quanshu edition [hereafter SKQS]), 3.2b-3b.

encyclopedias,<sup>19</sup> they are remarkably absent in official reports and regulations on the production and distribution of court gazettes. This absence does not correspond to a lack of interest on the part of booksellers in the gazettes; there were booksellers and peddlers in the capital who sold gazettes.<sup>20</sup> Rather, it reflects the dominance of office-holders in the gazette business. Apart from the factionalist inclinations of the short reports, official memoranda emphasized the commercial interests of officials involved in their compilation and distribution. The 1175 prohibition, for example, exposed the profit motives of ministers and Memorials Office personnel involved in the smuggling of court news and its distribution through the official postal network.<sup>21</sup>

The very existence of the official postal network spanning the empire

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19 Hilde De Weerd, "What Did Su Che See in the North? Publishing Laws, State Security, and Political Culture in Song China," *T'oung Pao* 92.4-5 (2006): 466-494; "Byways in the Imperial Chinese Information Order: The Dissemination and Commercial Publication of State Documents," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 66.1 (2006): 145-188. On examination essays and manuals, see Lucille Chia, *Printing for Profit: The Commercial Publishers of Jianyang, Fujian* (11th-17th Centuries) (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), pp. 121-123; Liu Hsiang-kwang 劉祥光, "Yinshua yu kaoshi: Songdai kaoshi shiyong cankaoshu chutan" 印刷與考試：宋代考試用參考書初探, *Song shi yanjiu ji* 宋史研究集, vol. 31 (Taipei: Lantai chubanshe, 2002), pp.151-200; also his "Printing and Examinations: The Circulation of Study Aids in Song China," paper presented at the workshop "The Early Development of Chinese Print Culture," the Fairbank Center for East Asian Studies, Harvard University, April 29, 2005. For a discussion of twelfth- and thirteenth-century regulations in the context of the competition over the definition of examination standards, see Hilde De Weerd, *Competition over Content: Negotiating Standards for the Civil Service Examinations in Imperial China* (1127-1279) (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007), esp. Chapter 5.

20 Extant records suggest that court gazettes were on sale at the capital in 1127. Huang Zhuoming 黃卓明, *Zhongguo gudai baozhi tanyuan* 中國古代報紙探源 ([Beijing]: Renmin ribao chubanshe, 1983), pp. 63-65. Zhou Mi noted that papers were also on sale in the southern capital of Hangzhou 杭州. Zhu Chuanyu, *Songdai xinwen shi*, p. 83. Zhou Mi 周密, *Wulin jiushi* 武林舊事 (ca. 1280; SKQS), 6.15a.

21 Umehara discusses another report that provides estimates of the amounts of money Memorials Office personnel made by leaking information or speeding up the delivery of local reports to central government agencies. Umehara Kaoru, "Shinsōin o megutte," p. 77.

helps explain the apparent absence of commercial publishers in the distribution of short reports outside the capital. The details of the distribution process and payment methods cannot be verified in the existing sources; however, the centrality of Memorials Office personnel in official accusations suggests that they played a key role in the business. Memorials Office personnel had a final hand in packaging the materials to be sent from the court to government offices in the provinces, such as the official court gazettes and imperial orders. Likewise, they opened the materials sent back from the provinces. While personnel of the Military Board and soldiers managed the actual transportation of the mail, Memorials Office personnel were most likely to include non-official papers in the mail and would also have had the opportunity to manage payment for the short reports through the postal network. The operation of the postal network, and the fact that it linked the producers of the short reports to an existing readership (local administrators who were already readers of the official papers), thus obviated the development of a parallel commercial distribution network.

The centrality attributed to Memorials Office personnel in the production of short reports and the concern over local officials as their readership in official discourse expresses the central government's anxiety over the spread of factionalism beyond the court and the capital. The anxiety arose both because of the content of short reports and because of their distribution channels. As far as their content was concerned, unauthorized news about personnel changes and policies challenged the official view of direct and unilateral communication between the center and the provinces. In Zhou Linzhi's view, only if the court set up a system of punishments and rewards to eradicate the publication of short reports, would the official order of communication prevail. In this order "when the commands issued by the court are broadcast to the empire, the empire will be able to learn about them, but will not be able to spy them, the empire will be able to trust them and not to fake them. Then the state

will be respected and the public (*minting*) will be unified.”<sup>22</sup>

As seen in Emperor Gaozong’s edict and Zhou Linzhi’s response, the two most sensitive issues were personnel changes and the question of war and peace between the Song and Jin Empires. The former expressed the prevalence of factionalist politics, and the latter question became critical in the formation of factional alliances from the 1120s onwards. Table 2 demonstrates a strong correspondence between the chronological distribution of prohibitions on the one hand, and the urgency of the question of war and peace (1120s and 1130s, esp. Qinzong’s 欽宗 reign), or peaks in factionalist politics (1170s-1190s, esp. Xiaozong’s 孝宗 reign) on the other hand.<sup>23</sup>

The anxiety over the spread of factionalism beyond the confines of the court and capital offices was also informed by the distribution channels for short reports. The fact that short reports circulated across the empire through the official postal network solidified the distinction between “authentic” court gazettes and “inauthentic” short reports in official discourse. In descriptions of communications between the court and the local administrations, the offices and official procedures are typically reviewed first. Normative operations are then contrasted with the reality of pseudo-official uses of the official channels of communication, which continue despite the history of prohibitions.<sup>24</sup> In official reports, such pseudo-official uses of bureaucratic institutions and networks necessitate the distinction between the authentic and the inauthentic; the unified court line and factionalist opinion; the public and the private/commercial. Such distinctions were considered all the more important, because they were deemed to be disappearing or even absent from the minds of the

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22 Zhou Linzhi, *Hailing ji*, 3.3b.

23 For recent research on Southern Song factionalism, see Yu Yingshi 余英時, *Zhu Xi de lishi shijie: Songdai shidafu zhengzhi wenhua de yanjiu* 朱熹的歷史世界：宋代士大夫政治文化的研究, 2 vols. (Taipei: Yun chen, 2003); Shen Songqin 沈松勤, *Nan Song wenren yu dangzheng* 南宋文人與黨爭 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2005).

24 SHY, Xingfa, 2.125-126; Zhao Sheng 趙升, *Chaoye lei yao* 朝野類要 (1236; SKQS), 4.7b-8a.

readers. According to the official report of 1193, "People take pleasure in new things and love the extraordinary. They all put the short reports first and consider the court gazette pedestrian. They no longer make the distinction between authentic and inauthentic."<sup>25</sup>

#### 4. "On Reading the Gazette": Gazettes in Literati Discourse

To a certain degree the official evaluation of literati reading practices applied. Literati bought, read, and shared court gazettes as well as short reports. Both were part of a variety of materials on current affairs for which there was a growing demand in the course of the Song period. Literati distinguished between "court gazettes" and "short reports," but the distinction was not premised on the authenticity/inauthenticity opposition. This section is a preliminary investigation of the literati reception of gazettes (both court gazettes and short reports) and the uses of the gazettes in the creation of literati networks and identities.<sup>26</sup>

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25 *SHY*, Xingfa, 2.125-126.

26 Since this article was first conceived and written, I have come across some scholarship that similarly inquires into the reception history of gazettes. Among the several dozen articles on Tang and Song court gazettes that have recently appeared in academic journals in the People's Republic of China, the work of You Biao in particular usefully revises some received truths and charts new territory in the cultural history of the gazettes. See, esp., You Biao 游彪, "Songdai liuzhuan wanglai de guanfang wenzi 宋代流轉往來的官方文字," in Deng Xiaonan, ed., *Zhengji kaocha yu xinxi qudao*, pp. 379-410; "Songchao de dibao yu shizheng 宋朝的邸報與時政," *Zhongzhou xuekan* 中州學刊 144.6 (2004.11): 108-111; "Songdai dibao de 'jinqū' jì qì guanyuan yu dibao zhi guanxi 宋代邸報的'禁區'及其官員與邸報之關係," *Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan yanjiushengyuan xuebao* 中國社會科學院研究生院學報 2005.4: 97-103. In the latter article, You discusses the uses of the gazettes in communication amongst bureaucrats. He concludes that the gazettes were more a means for networking and managing one's own career than a means to keep track of court events. Similarly Kubota ("Sōdai no chūō jōhō no chihō dentatsu") discusses the "short reports" as a means of creating community amongst both

I distinguish between official discourse and literati discourse, because these broad terms allow us to interpret the varied responses of the same group of people, and even the same individual, to the dissemination and discussion of court news in a systematic way. Officials serving at court, or provincial officials responding to central directives, resort to a different set of concepts and evaluative tools (official discourse) than officials serving locally and corresponding with peers, officials sent away from court, or local scholars with ties to officialdom and an interest in court affairs (literati discourse). The same individual articulated different perspectives on the circulation of court news depending on his current position, targeted audience, and the speech or written genre in which he expressed his view. As Chancellor, Zhou Bida 周必大 (1126-1204) authored a prohibition on short reports in 1188, but when governing in the provinces in 1174, he read a decree included in a short report and contributed to its further dissemination by quoting it in a letter to a friend.<sup>27</sup> Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) criticized the reports on personnel decisions in short reports,<sup>28</sup> even though he read them regularly to keep track of personnel shifts.<sup>29</sup>

The main sources for the reconstruction of literati readings of the court gazette and short reports are poems and letters. A subgenre of poetry devoted to

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bureaucrats and the literati at large. Below I similarly discuss examples of the sharing of gazettes beyond the bureaucracy, but argue that unofficial appropriations of gazettes characterized the circulation of both court gazettes and short reports. For another, complementary, reading of the gazettes as sources intended not to enforce court decisions but to shape its readers as imperial subjects, see Xu Feng 徐楓 and Yuan Yachun 袁亞春, “Lun Songdai dibao de xingzhi ji bianji neirong de shanbian 論宋代邸報的性質及編輯內容的嬗變,” *Xibei shida xuebao (Shehui kexue ban)* 西北師大學報(社會科學版) 39.2 (2002): 92-96.

27 Zhou Lun 周綸, *Zhou Yiguo Wenzhong gong nianpu* 周益國文忠公年譜 (13th c.; Song ren nianpu congkan), vol. 9, p. 5879; Zhou Bida, *Wenzhong ji* (1206 print; SKQS), 192.14b; 151.1b; *SHY*, Xingfa, 2.123.

28 Zhu Xi 朱熹, *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類 (1270; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 128.3071.

29 For example, Zhu Xi, *Zhu Xi ji* 朱熹集 (Chengdu: Sichuan jiaoyu chubanshe, 1996), *xuji* 續集, vol. 9, 2.5177.



the expression of impressions upon "reading the gazette" developed during the Song dynasty. Such "gazette poems" and private letters are not only the main sources for the reconstruction of the contents of the gazettes and their reception among literati, they also formed secondary news genres in which literati exchanged feelings and opinions on the news reported in the gazettes.

In their reflections on the court gazette, literati readers focused on personnel changes, the question of war and peace, and the issuance of particular decrees. These themes overlapped with those outlined in official descriptions of the genre, but the readings captured in poems and letters diverge from the normative reception envisioned as consensus in official discourse. News about personnel changes did not merely serve as direct orders to individual officials to move in the desired direction, or as a notification to officialdom about changes at the top, in literati discourse it became a valuable source of information on the current whereabouts of family members, friends, and colleagues, and the celebration or expression of dismay over their bureaucratic fortunes. In literati readings the listings of personnel changes in the gazettes lost their original shape as a bureaucratic register; individual news items were transposed into the contexts of personal and political networks. Within the contexts of personal and political relationships, literati assigned meaning to individual news items, and expressed a variety of emotions and opinions in response.

In "gazette" poems literati expressed sympathy for and worry about family members who were directly or indirectly impacted by personnel changes. Cheng Gongxu 程公許 (j. 1211), for example, was prompted to write a long poem when he read in the court gazette that a new general had been sent to Sichuan 四川.<sup>30</sup> Two of Cheng's nephews had been serving in Sichuan for several years. A recent letter from them described their hardships as well as those of the local population who suffered from military attacks and the levying

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30 Cheng Gongxu, *Cangzhou chen fou bian* 滄洲塵缶編 (13th c.; SKQS), 5.6b-8a.

of surtaxes. News of the appointment of a new general brought a glimpse of hope, but also reminded Cheng of his nephews' prolonged difficulties and uncertain future.

Literati also read the gazette as a reminder of past friendships and a source for the maintenance of friendship ties. While living in retirement, Gao Zhu 高翥 (fl. mid-12th c.) wrote, "I read the court gazette frequently to remember my old friends."<sup>31</sup> While attending a lantern festival party in 1111, Chao Yuezhi 晁說之 (1059-1129) read in the gazette about a friend's tenure in Jiazhou 嘉州 (Chengdu 成都).<sup>32</sup> It had been almost two decades since Chao and his friend passed the civil service examinations in 1082. Chao sent him a poem remembering the joys they shared in the past, and, jokingly urged him not to let the lanterns shine on his grey hair.

Unlike the more formal congratulatory notes, poems were not only sent to celebrate the bureaucratic achievements of friends and acquaintances, and thus renew connections with men on the rise. "Gazette" poems also expressed sympathy and solidarity with friends who were ousted, demoted, or simply passed by. Dai Fugu 戴復古 (1167-?) opened a poem he sent to Gong Feng 鞏豐 (1148-1217) with the lines, "I have been reading the court gazette frequently; no assignments have come to you."<sup>33</sup> Dai proceeded to console his friend that his literary work would preserve his name for posterity. He compared him with the famous authors Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53 BCE-18 CE) and Meng Jiao 孟郊 (751-814) who established a lasting reputation for themselves despite checkered bureaucratic careers. Dai also extended his sympathy to Zhao Fan 趙蕃 (1143-1229): "In the court gazettes during this time, I frequently noticed that you were given temple guardianships. Temple guardians don't earn a lot, and, once you're poor, what can you do about it! Pick some touchwood (fomes

31 Gao Zhu, *Jujian ji* 菊圃集 (13th c.; SKQS), 24b-25a.

32 Chao Yuezhi, *Jingyu sheng ji* 景迂生集 (12th c.; SKQS), 6.7a-b.

33 Dai Fugu, *Shiping shiji* 石屏詩集 (13th c.; SKQS), 2.5a; (Sibu congkan edition [hereafter SBCK]) 2.5b.

fomentarius; longevity fungus), you can eat it too; you should write a song on picking touchwood.”<sup>34</sup> Dai's recommendation of the retired life (that is what picking touchwood and writing a song about it stand for) was in this case based on the knowledge that Zhao Fan had written a poem of support for Li Zhi 李植 (1161-1238), Vice-Minister of Ritual, who had recently been ousted from court. Dai's poem was then not only an expression of sympathy for his friend's low bureaucratic rank, but also a warning for him to lie low while the campaign against Li Zhi was underway.

Dai's message is a clear indicator of the factionalist politics that shaped both the production and the reception of the court gazettes. With regard to the reception of the gazettes, factionalist politics produced and reproduced the language within which literati interpreted and commented on court news. Recently, a new body of scholarship has appeared on the politics of factionalism during the Song period. Ari Levine's dissertation analyzes the language of factional politics in the latter decades of the Northern Song period.<sup>35</sup> The work of Yu Yingshi 余英時 and Shen Songqin 沈松勤 extends the analysis of factional politics into the Southern Song period. Their work lends support to the observation of the seventeenth-century historian and philosopher Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619-1692) who wrote that factionalism became the literati mode of being in the early Southern Song period.<sup>36</sup> Even though factionalism was a characteristic of court politics under previous dynasties, and was perceived as such by Song literati and later historians, based on mostly a few notorious instances of factional struggle involving bureaucrats and court attendants,<sup>37</sup> Wang Fuzhi's observation captures the transition to

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34 Dai Fugu, *Shiping shiji*, (SKQS) 1.22a; (SBCK) 1.21a.

35 Ari Daniel Levine, "A House in Darkness: The Politics of History and the Language of Politics in the Late Northern Song, 1068-1104" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2002).

36 Wang Fuzhi, *Song lun* 宋論 (late 17th c.; Taipei: Liren shuju, 1985; rpt., Academia Sinica electronic edition), 10.201; Shen Songqin, *Nan Song wenren yu dangzheng*, p. 7.

37 Ari Daniel Levine, "A House in Darkness," pp. 12-13.

an imperial politics in which factionalist struggle became a regular feature of the bureaucracy and structured the political lives of literati across the empire. “Gazette” poems and private letters further suggest that the circulation of the court gazettes played an important role in the expansion and consolidation of factionalist politics in imperial China.

Reading the court gazettes and sharing them in full or in excerpts in poems and letters were ways of keeping up with court politics, expressing opposition to political enemies, and seeking political allies, especially for those who were marginalized in the provinces. In “Remembering My Past” Fang Hui 方回 (1227-1307) captures the thinking of poor scholars who look up to the powerful, “Together they read the court gazettes, frustration and anger overtakes them.”<sup>38</sup> According to Fang Hui, their anger was targeted at those who were in positions to formulate and review state policy: “Sometimes the censors find wrong what is right, and discussions about state affairs are flawed.” Liu Kezhuang 劉克莊 (1187-1269) expressed his views of court policy in more confrontational language. In one of several “gazette” poems, he wrote:

欲取漢清議，	I wish we would opt for the pure criticism of Han times,
盡投唐濁流。	And fully get rid of the corrupt tendencies of Tang times.
鬼車鳴甚惡，	The ghost bird produces terrible and evil sounds,
猛虎死方羞。	Wild tigers will only be ashamed at death.
芳臭須臾判，	Fragrance and foul smell have to be clearly distinguished,
哀哉不善謀。	How I dread the impact of bad policy planning! <sup>39</sup>

The use of wild birds and beasts as metaphors for political enemies was a feature of the factionalist discourse of Song times, as was the use of historical analogy to identify the inheritors of political virtue and the heirs of vice. The division of the scholar-official class into those who exude good smell and those who stink underscores the parallels he drew between internal and external

38 Fang Hui, *Tongjiang xu ji* 桐江續集 (14th c.; SKQS), 5.26b.

39 Liu Kezhuang, *Houcun ji* 後村集 (ca. 1270; SKQS), 11.15a; id., *Houcun xiansheng da quanji* 後村先生大全集 (SBCK), 11.8b.

enemies. Non-Chinese political elites ruling northern Chinese territories had traditionally been portrayed in similar ways, but in his series of poems on the court gazette, Liu Kezhuang directs attention to the enemy within, and the connection between the rule of the enemy within and the power of the Mongols to the north. Liu Kezhuang wrote this poem in 1238, when the Mongols had begun to successfully occupy Song territory and court officials were caught in debates on whether to pursue a policy of war or appeasement. Along with Wang Mai 王邁 (1185-1248), to whom this poem was addressed, Liu Kezhuang was sent away from court in 1237 for his posthumous criticism of Councilor Shi Miyuan 史彌遠 (1164-1233). He was assigned to a temple guardianship, which he still occupied in 1238.<sup>40</sup> In his view, those who had been affiliated with Shi Miyuan were behind the demotions.

Liu Kezhuang shared his readings of the court gazette with Wang Mai. Wang Mai, in turn, shared his readings with Liu Kezhuang:

〈和劉編修潛夫讀 “On Reading the Recent Report on Jiang Xian’s (j. 1196)  
近報蔣峴被逐〉 Ousting with Liu Qianfu [Kezhuang]”  
讀報欣然共賦詩， Reading the report we are delighted and compose poems  
together.  
古來忠佞各殊歧… Since Antiquity the paths of loyalty and treachery have  
run different courses…  
惡草剪除雖一快， Even though one piece of weed has been cut out,  
芳蘭銷歇已多時。 It has been a while since the fragrant orchids have withered  
away.  
懷哉康節先生語， I am reminded of Master Kangjie’s [Shao Yong 邵雍  
1011-1077] words:  
作事莫教人綳眉。 If you want to accomplish things, don’t let people knit  
their brows.”<sup>41</sup>

Wang Mai read the news about the ousting of Jiang Xian 蔣峴, who wrote the censorial report that led to Wang’s and Liu’s dismissals from court, as a sign of

40 Cheng Zhangcan 程章燦, *Liu Kezhuang nianpu* 劉克莊年譜 (Guiyang: Guizhou renmin chubanshe, 1993), pp. 156-169.

41 Wang Mai, *Quxuan ji* 隴軒集 (13th c.; SKQS), 16.8b.

hope. Despite the fact that Wang's allies were still on the periphery of political power, the court gazette proved Shao Yong's 邵雍 dictum to be true and was itself the medium that continuously kept the hopes of scholar-officials in the provinces alive.

These examples of the shared reading and commenting on the gazette indicate that factionalist politics built and maintained channels of communication through which the news and the secondary news genres circulated. Literati in the provinces relied on allies serving at court or in local government offices for the gazettes, and spread the news contained in them further in conversations and through correspondence with friends. Hu Anguo 胡安國 (1074-1138), for example, thanked "Minister Lü" for sending him the gazettes of the last five months and asked him to keep sending them.<sup>42</sup> Fang Yue 方岳 (1199-1262) wrote a poem titled "The County sends the Court Gazette," suggesting that local magistrates shared the gazettes with prominent retired officials.<sup>43</sup> "Zheng Ning 鄭寧 Shows a Border Report, My Quickly Written and Playfully Submitted Response," Liu Kezhuang's satirical response to Zheng Ning's showing him a border report, bears direct evidence of the ways in which the sharing of court news and factional politics reinforced each other.<sup>44</sup> In 1234, the last Jin emperor abdicated. Song forces moved north, but withdrew to the south upon the arrival of Mongol contingents. Around this time Zheng Ning, who did not hold an official title, shared a report with Liu Kezhuang which stated that Mongol armies were mobilizing troops and descending towards the Huai River, the border with Song. In his response to Zheng Ning, Liu Kezhuang exposed the ruling faction's aversion to read

42 Zhu Xi, *Zhu Xi ji*, vol. 7, 81.4165. Hans van Ess, *Von Ch'eng I Zu Chu Hsi: Die Lehre Vom Rechten Weg in Der Überlieferung Der Familie Hu* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003), pp. 139-140. As Van Ess points out, "Minister Lü" probably refers here to Lü Haowen 呂好問 (ca. 1064-1131).

43 Fang Yue, *Qiuya ji* 秋崖集 (mid-13th c.; SKQS), 11.8b.

44 Liu Kezhuang, *Houcun ji* (SKQS) 10.3a-b; Cheng Zhangcan, *Liu Kezhuang nianpu*, pp. 129-136.

the signs and engage the Mongol forces. Liu Kezhuang had established a reputation as a hawk. Zheng Ning's sharing a border report about Mongol activity with him can only be read as an attempt to add grist to the pro-war mill.

Judging by reader responses in poems and letters, literati interests in decisions on war and peace were second only to personnel changes. News about war and peace became the basis for celebration, for the mustering of past memories depicting an alternative to the current political situation, or even for the outright mobilization of opposition. Unsurprisingly, given the dominance of pro-peace policies and the lack of significant victories during the Southern Song period, "gazette" poems tend to be critical of court policy and advocate a more aggressive stance towards the Song's neighbors:

〈二月閱邸報〉 "Reading the Court Gazette in the Second Month"  
 聞道邊頭數萬兵， I have heard of the tens of thousands of soldiers on the  
 frontier,  
 倒戈歸我我遺民。 Surrendering and turning their weapons on the immigrants  
 from the north who are returning to us.  
 處降失策國非國， Surrender is the wrong policy; the state is no longer the  
 state;  
 清野無糧人食人... Burning our own fields leaves no grain; people eat people  
 ...  
 書生憂憤空頭白， Bookish students express their frustration and their vain  
 incorruptibility;  
 自有經綸社稷臣。 Of course there must be officials planning in the interest  
 of the dynasty.<sup>45</sup>

The last sentence in Wang Mai's poem suggests that there were men who opposed the pro-peace policy and who could be counted on to reverse current trends.

While poems capture frustration, anger, and criticism, letters show how literati translated their reactions to the news in court gazettes and short reports into political action. They sent letters to sympathetic politicians in the

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45 Wang Mai, *Quxuan ji*, 14.22a-b.

capital or submitted memorials to the throne. Wang Zhiwang 王之望 (1103-1170), for example, responded to a memorial reporting a flood and famine in Zhedong 浙東 Route excerpted in the court gazette. The proposal he submitted to the throne included a summary of the investigative procedures and support measures that were required by law and that should be followed in this case.<sup>46</sup> Peng Guinian 彭龜年 (1142-1206) sent a letter to Councilor Liu Zheng 留正 (1129-1206) after he read a short report announcing the return of Jiang Teli 姜特立 (1125-?) to the court of Emperor Guangzong 光宗 (r. 1190-1194) around 1193.<sup>47</sup> Councilor Liu had engineered Jiang Teli's dismissal from the post of Administrator of the Palace Postern in 1189. Jiang Teli was a trusted advisor to the emperor; their relationship was based on Jiang's service during the years the emperor had spent in the palace of the crown prince. In his letter Peng wrote that the announcement had been proven false the day after he read it, but he argued that its appearance was a sure sign that Jiang's supporters were preparing the way for his return at court. He added that he had surveyed reactions to the announcement: few expressed concern and many appeared excited when it came out. He proposed that the councilor open an investigation into the matter, persecute those responsible for the circulation of the short report, and use the opportunity to bring in like-minded men and oust Jiang's supporters. He concluded that if such actions were not taken, the short report's announcement was bound to materialize in the near future.

Peng's letter demonstrates how the circulation of court news in the court gazette and short reports enabled scholar-officials to reshape their roles in communications with the center, and thus in the body politic. In contrast to the roles of receivers of central directives and transmitters of local information

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46 Wang Zhiwang, *Hanbin ji* 漢濱集 (late 12th c.; SKQS), 7.25a-26b. Cited in You Biao 游彪, "Songchao de dibao yu shizheng," p. 109.

47 Peng Guinian, *Zhitang ji* 止堂集 (early 13th c.; SKQS), 12.5a-8a. Cf. Yu Yingshi, *Zhu Xi de lishi shijie*, vol. 2, pp. 518-519; Conrad Schirokauer, "Liu Cheng," in Herbert Franke, ed., *Sung Biographies* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1976), p. 626.



requested by the center as assigned to them in official discourse, lower-ranking officials submitted their reflections on a variety of policies announced in the gazettes in practice. The proliferation of argumentative writing, especially concerning administrative questions, has long been considered a characteristic of Song intellectual life.<sup>48</sup> Song scholars and officials noted and debated the trend. Even though the participation of lower-ranking officials and scholars was typically condemned in official discourse, literati capitalized on the opportunities provided by the circulation of court news. Accordingly, some, such as the Yongjia 永嘉 scholars, proceeded to articulate a new interpretation of Confucian political theory. Consultation at the top of the body politic (that is between emperor and court officials) had become standard political creed by the early eleventh century.<sup>49</sup> The idea of an expanded body of participants in administrative deliberation and policy review that included local officials, retirees, exiles, and scholars represented a new vision of the imperial body politic.<sup>50</sup>

To what extent can this vision of the expanded body politic be substantiated in literati discourse on news transmitted in the gazettes? The actual readership of the court gazettes and short reports extended beyond the readership legitimated in official discourse. First, even though the vast majority of surviving Song texts on the court gazette were authored by men who held office (often high office) at some point in their careers, poems and letters by non-office holding scholars suggest that they also read and commented on court gazettes. Chen Chun 陳淳 (1159-1223),<sup>51</sup> for example, who was nominated for a post late in life but died

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48 Peter K. Bol, "Reading Su Shi in Southern Song Wuzhou," *The East Asian Library Journal* 8.2 (1998): 69-102.

49 The Tang dynasty classic on government, *Essentials on Government from the Zhenguan Era* (*Zhenguan zhengyao* 貞觀政要, ca. 730), embodied this creed.

50 Hilde De Weerd, *Competition over Content*.

51 I am adopting the dates given by Satō Takanori, 佐藤隆則, "Shin Jon no gakumon to shisō—Shu Ki jūgaku izen 陳淳の學問と思想—朱熹從學以前," *Daitō Bunka Daigaku Kangakkai shi* 大東文化大學漢學會誌 28 (1989.3): 44-64. For a discussion of the controversies surrounding

before he arrived on the job, intimated in a letter to a friend that he kept up on personnel changes through the court gazette.<sup>52</sup>

Second, non-office holding scholars and students read the court gazette second-hand through excerpts and commentary sent to them by office-holders and retired officials. Cai Yuanding 蔡元定 (1135-1198), a student of Zhu Xi's who never passed the civil service examinations and never held office, learnt about personnel changes and court policy through his correspondence with Zhu Xi.<sup>53</sup>

## 5. Conclusions

The court gazette and the office most closely associated with its compilation and distribution, the Memorials Office, resemble other Northern Song institutions such as the civil service examinations and the government archives. These institutions were reengineered as part of the centralization campaign launched by the first Song emperors. They were imagined as key institutions in the reassertion of imperial control over the bureaucracy and local elites. Gradually these institutions took on a second role in communications between the court and the provinces. They developed into sites through which low-level officials and local elites gathered information about the court, discussed it, and fed it back to the center.

Official regulations prescribed the compilation, review, and distribution processes of the court gazettes. According to the official view of communication with the provinces, the dissemination of the gazettes should be strictly controlled and limited to a small and qualified primary readership of incumbent court officials and local magistrates. Its purpose

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Chen Chun's dates, see p. 49 n.1.

52 Chen Chun, *Beixi daquan ji* 北溪大全集 (around 1220s; SKQS), 24.5b.

53 Zhu Xi, *Zhu Xi ji*, xuji, vol. 9, 2.5177. Chen Lai 陳來 dates this letter to 1192. *Zhuzi shuxin biannian kaozheng* 朱子書信編年考證 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1989), p. 357.

was to give instructions to this readership to have them implement central directives. Violations of the procedures and the compilation and dissemination of alternative gazettes interfered with the official view of communications within the bureaucracy and between the center and the provinces, and were accordingly interpreted through the bureaucratic concept of authenticity. Officially authorized gazettes were authentic, all other gazettes ("private" in official discourse, more appropriately semi-official given the bureaucratic affiliations of their compilers and distributors) were labeled inauthentic.

My brief exploration of reader responses to the gazette demonstrates that the audience for gazettes as well as their reception diverged from official expectations. Lower-ranking officials, retirees, and local scholars read court gazettes and short reports. Some expressed agreement with official estimates that the short reports were distributed faster than the court gazettes,<sup>54</sup> but, in contrast to the official view of them, in literati discourse short reports were not automatically associated with inauthenticity. Literati interest in gazettes of all kinds expressed a more general interest in current affairs among the twelfth- and thirteenth-century elite. They read them for personal reasons and to network with colleagues and friends across the vertical hierarchies of the official communication network.

The literati interest in gazettes also coincided with the expansion of government printing in the eleventh century and commercial printing in the twelfth century. The earmarking of moneys for printing activities at the Memorials Office suggests that the gazettes it disseminated appeared in print no later than the 1070s. Contemporary references to both print and manuscript copying, however, imply that in the distribution of the gazettes as well as other genres of political information, print did not displace manuscript; rather, print and manuscript played complementary roles.

The content and the patterns of dissemination of the gazettes demonstrate

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54 Huang Gan 黃幹, for example, noted that a short report about his demotion arrived one day before the official announcement. *Mianzhai ji* 勉齋集 (13th c. print; SKQS), 15.10b.

that scholar-official networks and communication patterns sustained and expanded the factionalist structure of imperial politics. Court officials, local magistrates, and scholars communicated through bureaucratic networks, and semi-official uses of bureaucratic networks (such as the postal system). The quick dissemination of court news through these networks spread factionalism across the empire. Factional structures were in place by the eleventh century, but the transformation of communication patterns between the capital and the provinces consolidated factional politics outside the court. Once the semi-official uses of bureaucratic networks and the sharing of gazettes became widespread, their role in factional politics ensured their continuity.

Lastly, there are good reasons why the reading of and commenting on court gazettes became a common literati activity in the eleventh century and why short reports became a business in the mid-twelfth century. Both of these trends emerged during the same time period which has been defined by the “localist turn” or the reorientation of elite strategies from the capital to their local communities. This may suggest that the availability of news about court events and decisions in the localities facilitated the localist turn. Elites maintained an interest in court policy, especially in personnel decisions and the question of war and peace as demonstrated in scholar-official readings of the gazettes. The dissemination of gazettes and other news sources about current affairs among local scholar-officials obviated the need for maintaining a presence or personal networks (such as marriage ties with high officialdom) in the capital and facilitated the literati’s double pursuit of imperial politics and local management in their hometowns. The goal of this article is limited to a general overview of the potential and implications of the reception history of court gazettes. I hope it will result in further research on the ways in which communication has constituted politics in Chinese history and in the kind of in-depth inquiry into the places and networks of political communication beyond social boundaries (the relevance of which has been powerfully demonstrated in Filippo de Vivo’s work on communication and politics in

fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Venice).<sup>55</sup>

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Table 1 Chronology of regulations on the dissemination of the court gazette and the circulation of individual news items

Date	Content
1029 Renzong	Prohibition on showing sensitive information in reports to local officials (SHY, XF 2.17).
1031 Renzong	Decree stating that it was learned that Transmission Office personnel circulate news on separate sheets apart from the court gazette and that spies who have infiltrated the court offices and the prefectural office of Kaifeng spread false news and so confuse those in the provinces and at court. Others are encouraged to tell on them and will be rewarded for their efforts (SHY, XF 2.17).
1039 Renzong	Borders affairs can be thoroughly discussed, but they cannot be broadcast ( <i>Song ji sanchao zhengyao</i> 2.27b).
1048 Renzong	Prohibition on the circulation of news about disasters in single sheets (單狀) (SHY, XF 2.29).
1052 Renzong	Order that only reports approved by the Bureau of Military Affairs should be sent out to avoid reports being sent out by Transmission Office personnel that would stir up popular sentiment (SHY, XF 2.30-31).
1070 Shenzong	Prohibition on the forgery, printing, and selling of orders (SHY, XF 2.34).

1071 Shenzong	Prohibition on the reporting of news on border affairs and officials' memorials in Memorials Office reports and request to have it forwarded to the Department of Military Affairs (SHY, ZG 2.46).
1071 Shenzong	Prohibition on the leaking and the forging of orders in gazettes (SHY, ZG 2.47).
1094 Zhezong	Resumption of the rule that the court gazette should be forwarded to the Department of Military Affairs for approval. This rule had been cancelled during the Yuanyou period (1086-1094). Note that this was targeted at personnel decisions only (SHY, ZG 2.47).
1098 Zhezong	Order that only regular memorials and documents already approved by the Department of State Affairs could be passed on; sealed ones or those on state secrets should not be passed on. Rewards for reports on those who fabricate news or pass it on prematurely set at 300 strings of cash (SHY, XF 2.41).
1110 Huizong	Decree against inauthentic court gazettes, demands for definite rewards and punishments on the basis that there have been orders in the past (SHY, ZG 2.54).
1121 Huizong	Edict prohibiting the unauthorized circulation of memorials of officials at court and in the provinces (SHY, XF 2.80).
1122 Huizong	Edict demanding that the Department of State Affairs intervene in all cases of the publication of unedited material in court gazettes (SHY, XF 2.85).
1122 Huizong	Writing on border affairs in private correspondence forbidden for border officials (SHY: XF 2.86).
1126 Qinzong	Memorial asking that official communications dealing with border affairs not be made public to prevent information from being leaked to the enemy (BMHB 52: 394).
1126 Qinzong	Memorial asking that a letter submitted by Imperial College Instructor Wu Ruo impeaching Cai Jing and widely printed and sold be investigated. If the letter was falsely attributed, the printers should be punished ( <i>Jingkang yaolu</i> 7.27b).

1133 Gaozong	Approval of a memorial asking for a prohibition on the excerpting of memorials discussing border affairs in court gazettes (cf. 1071). Reports on the punishment of notable cases will be printed by the Transmission Office and distributed to all offices from the prefectures to the court (SHY, ZG 2.48).
1134 Gaozong	Decree stipulating that leaking information on border affairs will be treated according to martial law (SHY, XF 2:148).
1135 Gaozong	Edict specifying rewards for the reporting of the unauthorized publication and leaking to outside agents of news handled by the Transmission Office (SHY, ZG 2.49).
1156 Gaozong	Imperial edict lashing out against false rumors about personnel issues and fake decrees, and the discussion of border affairs. In response Zhou Linzhi memorialized for a prohibition on "short reports" ( <i>Xu Zizhi tongjian</i> 131.3470; <i>Hailing ji</i> 3.2b-3b).
1163 Xiaozong	Edict prohibiting the unauthorized disclosure of court policy decisions by participating officials and Transmission Office personnel. This decree was to be publicly displayed at court (SHY, XF 2:158).
1167 Xiaozong	Decree stating that court gazette information should not go to Xuyi Prefecture. All border regions should go by that example (SHY, ZG 2.51).
1170 Xiaozong	Case in which unapproved information was reported; heads of Memorials Office personnel were punished (SHY, ZG 2.51).
1170 Xiaozong	Accusation of false reports by Memorials Office personnel; resumption of the rule that the court gazette should be forwarded to the Department of Military Affairs for approval (cancelled in 1173). Stipulates that those who illegally transmit news will be persecuted in accordance with the law on spying and leaking information (SHY, ZG 4.25, ZG 2.51).
1170 Xiaozong	Report that personnel issues and important state affairs are copied and passed on publicly as soon as court audiences are suspended. The prohibition was advertised publicly and the departments were asked to investigate (SHY, XF 2.158).

1175 Xiaozong	Prohibition on the smuggling of information by functionaries in the six boards, the sharing of it with Memorials Office personnel <i>for profit</i> and the distribution of this information <i>through the postal network</i> (SHY, XF 2.118).
1188 Xiaozong	Decree against “short reports” issued at court and in the provinces. Both publishers and officials reading it were to be punished (SHY, XF2.123).
1189 Xiaozong	Decree allowing rewards for those who turn in producers of “short reports” (SHY, XF2.124).
1193 Guangzong	Decree against the circulation of “short reports.” When they touch on state affairs and border affairs, they would cause great damage if circulated (SHY, XF2.125-26).
1194-1204 (1203) Ningzong	Prohibition on spying and the spreading of court news (including military news, important documents and the sharing of information on border defense with foreigners) (QYTFSL 8: 146).

BMHB Xu Mengxin 徐夢莘, *Sanchao beimeng huibian* 三朝北盟會編. SKQS (1196).

QYTFSL Anon., *Qingyuan tiaofa shilei* 慶元條法事類. In *Zhongguo zhenxi falü dianji xubian* 中國珍稀法律典籍續編, ed. Yang Yifan 楊一凡 and Tian Tao 田濤. Haerbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 2002 (ca. 1202).

SHY Xu Song 徐松, *Song huiyao jigao* 宋會要輯稿. Academia Sinica ed. (ca. 1809).  
XF: xingfa 刑法; ZG: zhiguan 職官

Anon., *Songji sanchao zhengyao* 宋季三朝政要. SKQS (after 1280, late 13th C).

Wang Zao 汪藻. *Jingkang yaolu* 靖康要錄. SKQS (ca. 1165).

Table 2 Distribution of regulations on the dissemination of the court gazette and the circulation of individual news items by reign

Reign	Duration (years)	Number of Regulations	Interval between regulations
Renzong	42	5	8.4
Shenzong	19	3	6.3
Zhezong	16	2	8
Huizong	26	4	6.5
<b>Qinzong</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Gaozong	36	4	9
<b>Xiaozong</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>
Guangzong	6	1	6
Ningzong	31	1	31

# 朝報與小報

## ——宋代對於官報的官方觀點與非官方讀法

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### 摘 要

從朝報、奏議集、科舉程文集、筆記、宋代史書與類書等信息度較高的多種文體的廣泛流傳中，可以看出十二、十三世紀宋朝有官位及無官位之精英士人對當時時事的濃厚興趣。朝報是發表新任官職、免職除名與外使到來、詔書奏表引文、召見日程等內容的朝廷出版物。原則上僅限於朝廷大官與路州縣官閱讀。出版商常違反宋朝出版法，賄賂進奏院等中央政府官司的官吏，買到未發行的底稿，私自盜印販賣。此類非正式出版物於臨安刻印，然後從京師寄往他處。官方則稱此類版本為「小報」，並在官方話語中將之與謠言及朋黨聯繫在一起。本文研究朝報與小報的讀者群與讀者之反應，強調官方訊息網絡及隨之衍生的半官方訊息網絡，就上述兩種刊物的異同存在明顯分歧。

**關鍵詞：**宋代、新聞、朝報、印刷史、出版法

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