

FACTIONALISM AND THE FORMATION OF ELEVENTH-CENTURY MILITARY POLICY

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In the autumn of 1082, Sima Guang lay on his deathbed. He had suffered an apoplexy and feared an imminent deterioration in his condition. In anticipation, he composed his last testament. In the event of his death, he entrusted two of his protégés, Fan Chunren 范純仁 and Fan Zuyu 范祖禹, to deliver it to the emperor. The document is a powerful attack on his contemporary, Wang Anshi 王安石. There is a sense of urgency and venom – these are the words of a dying man – as Sima Guang systematically censures the major policies that Wang Anshi had implemented during his periods as chief minister of state. One of these was the establishment of security groups and tithings (*bao jia* 保甲):

Ever since the Tang, we have raised troops for distant military campaigns and have taxed rural communities in grain and cloth to supply the troops' clothing and food stores. Farmers have faced hardships as a result. We are now taxing grain and cloth as before but, on top of that, [Wang Anshi] has also taken the farmers away from their ploughing and silk production by having them serve on the frontline. Every individual now has a dual responsibility. How are people supposed to cope with it? ... Is there ultimately any benefit for the state in developing strategies such as this?

And later in the same document he claims that 'the use of troops is a serious matter for the state. Its rise or fall, survival or destruction therefore lies in this matter.' None of this ever reached the emperor. Sima Guang of course survived his health scare but the document's intended recipient, Emperor Shenzong, died on 1 April 1085. For Sima Guang, it now had no immediate use. But he decided to preserve it anyway as an appeal to posterity and, in doing so, suggested the importance that he attached to his work: 'I am leaving it,' he claimed, 'to show my children and grandchildren in the hope of letting them know that all I did was serve my ruler with a heart filled with adoration.'¹

Two concerns ring out. First, and most broadly, Sima Guang claims opposition to Wang Anshi's policies. Not only does he criticise Wang Anshi as 'deluded and wilful' and warn the emperor against further heeding his advice; he also represents his own ideology as a preferable alternative that might ensure political stability and longevity. And it is not only himself that he sets against Wang Anshi. Reference to Fan Chunren and Fan Zuyu in the document's preface, and their charge of presenting the document to the throne on his behalf, implicates those two individuals in the political dispute. This is no longer only a personal opposition, although there are two dominant personalities at its centre; political and social allegiances come into play.

¹ *Wen guo Wenzheng Sima gong wen ji* 溫國文正司馬公文集, *Si bu cong kan* ed. (hereafter *SMWJ*), 57.15a-19a. Sima Guang's criticism of the Security Group and Tithing policy appears on 57.16b. Criticisms of this policy recur throughout Sima Guang's political statements of the 1060s and 1070s. His statement on the importance of troops to state survival is on 57.17a. This was also a recurring theme in Sima Guang's political ideology: see, for example, similar statements on the importance of circumspection in the use of military force on *SMWJ* 18.5b, 18.6b, 20.9a, 31.11b, 33.11b, 46.6b. Sima Guang's comments on his aims for the document are contained in its preface, 57.15a.

Second, Sima Guang gives sharp focus to the terms of that opposition. He places military policy among its fundamental issues. He represents a contrast between Wang Anshi's militarism and his own military restraint. The one brings suffering to the populace without any greater benefits for the state. The other urges a reduction in the scale of military activity in order to concentrate on domestic welfare over belligerence abroad. By the 1082, statements of this contrast had already become a familiar feature of Sima Guang's political rhetoric.

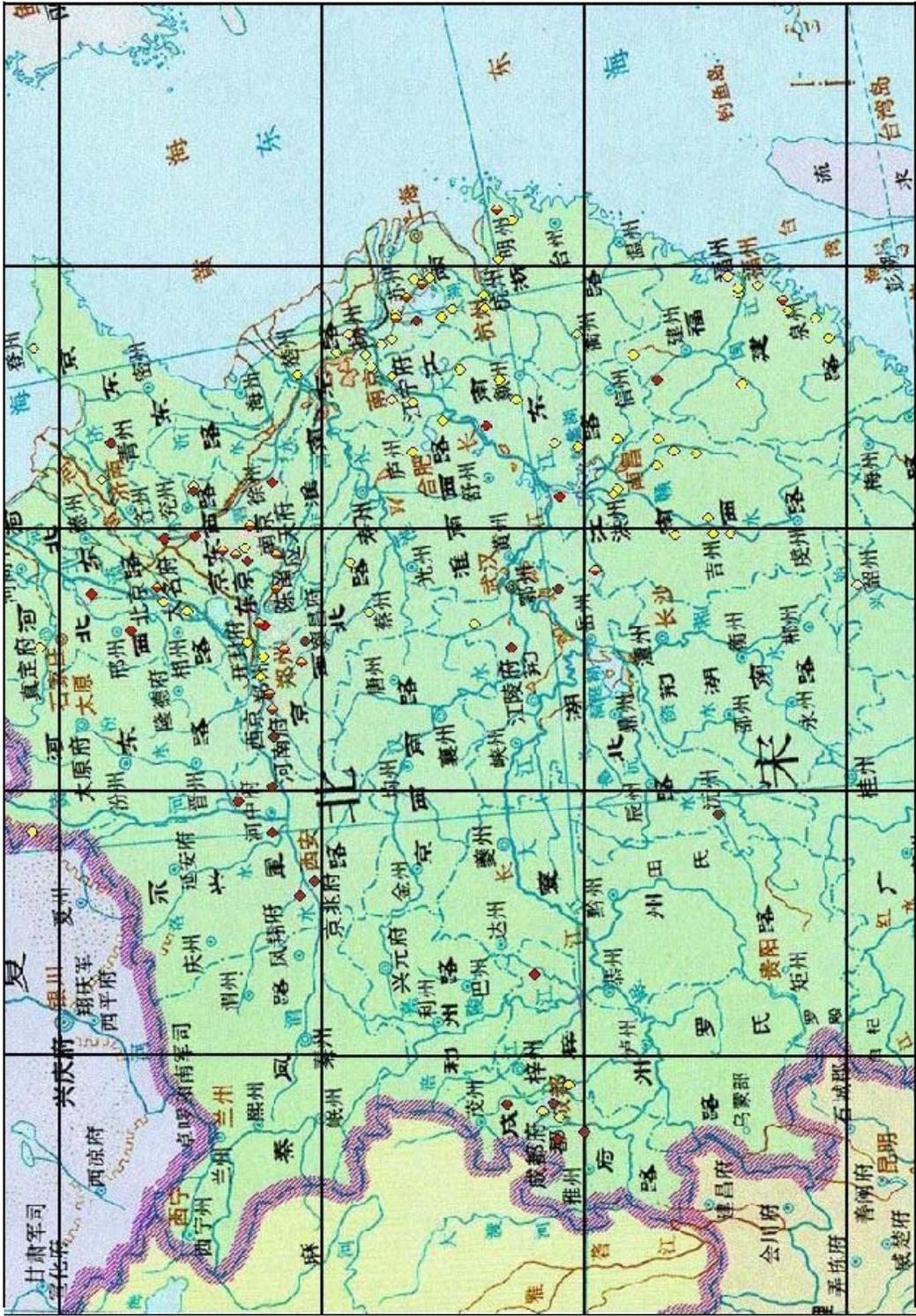
In drawing together these two concerns, this paper will not probe further the political rhetoric of opposition that has suggested itself so far. That is the subject of research elsewhere and goes beyond our present focus. Instead, it will examine the biographical data of Sima Guang and Wang Anshi, and the group identity of their associates. It will undertake three tasks: to identify points of divergence in the military experiences of these two individuals and their associates that might account for conflicts in policy; to examine the value of characterising Sima Guang and Wang Anshi as the driving forces of two, opposing political factions; to propose ways in which prosopographical research might be used as a foundation on which to construct further study of factional divides in military policy.

Geographical origins

At first sight differences in the geographical origins of Sima Guang and Wang Anshi offer promise of a schematic north/south divide between the two men. Sima Guang came from Xia county 夏縣, Shanzhou 陝州. It lay on the southern border of what is now Shaanxi province, between the metropolitan centres of Luoyang and Chang'an. Wang Anshi came from Linchuan county 臨川, Fuzhou 撫州, the site of the modern city of Fuzhou in Jiangxi province.² It stood on the banks of the Ru River 汝水, a south-flowing tributary of Lake Li (modern Lake Poyang) and the Yangzi. The geographical origins of the two men's network clusters tended towards a similar regional divide. The majority of Sima Guang's associates came from regions along the Yellow River and around Kaifeng; a significant proportion also grouped around Chengdu. Despite a presence around Kaifeng, most of the members of Wang Anshi's network cluster came from the mid-Yangzi valley and its southern tributaries, as well as the Yangzi delta [see map overleaf].

But the north/south divide bears little fruit as an organising principle for study of the two networks' military ideologies. Other geographical categories suggest themselves in its place: areas under military administration and non-militarised regions; frontier and non-frontier regions. These have the further benefit of moving away from the binary oppositions that implicitly support notions of factional conflict between the two men: they are based on presence and absence of a single feature rather than sharp contrast (X/not X, rather than X/Y).

² Higashi Ichio notes these geographical differences in the context of a general divide between Sima Guang and Wang Anshi: Higashi Ichio 東一夫, *Ō Anseki jiten* 王安石事典, Tokyo: Kokusho kankokai, 1980, p.236. Peter Bol follows Higashi's observations in his 'Government, Society, and State: On the Political Visions of Ssu-ma Kuang and Wang An-shih' in *Ordering the World: Approaches to State and Society in Sung Dynasty China*, Robert Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer, eds., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, pp.129-30.



The administrative status of the geographical origins of members of the two networks affords useful insights:

	Association with Sima Guang ³	No association with Sima Guang	Total
Military administrative region	20	3359	3379
Non-militarised region	69	5914	5983
Total	89	9273	9362

22.47% of participants in Sima Guang’s network cluster came from regions under military administration.⁴ This falls below the general mean for between 1038 and 1086 of 36.22%. Tests for correlation between an individual’s association with Sima Guang and their origins in a region under military administration suggest a negative statistical link between the two. Correlation cannot suggest causation – these data do not indicate that Sima Guang’s associates entered his network cluster *because of* their geographical origins – but the results beg the question: did an individual’s geographical origins correspond to later developments in their thinking on the use of military force? Did *that* affect their affiliation with one network cluster over another? And, finally, did a low proportion of individuals from non-militarised regions exert a cumulative influence on the formation of military policy among the network cluster as a whole?

These statistical conclusions come with a caveat that will also apply to what follows. The binary nature of the table produces a simplified sense of order and distorts complex social and political realities. It reflects current organising principles, and even the structure of the table itself, as much as any contrasts inherent in eleventh-century society.⁵ In the present paper, it implicitly perpetuates rather than questions assumptions of a factional opposition between participants of Sima Guang’s network cluster and non-participants (including Wang Anshi’s associates). This paper will therefore use tables solely for the purposes of formal statistical analysis and not as a comment on points of opposition between Sima Guang and Wang Anshi, as their graphic form might suggest.

It happens that when Sima Guang’s network cluster is set against Wang Anshi’s, though, it shows a lower proportion of individuals from regions under military administration:

	Association with WAS	No association with WAS	Total
Militarised region	62	3317	3379
No militarised region	111	5872	5983

³ The native place of one member of Sima Guang’s network cluster, Han Du 韓瀆, is unknown.

⁴ I have used the following sources in determining which regions fell under military jurisdiction between 1038 and 1086: Yuanfeng jiu yu zhi 元豐九域志, Wang Cun 王存, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1984; Song shi 宋史, Tuotuo 脫脫, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1977.

⁵ Jack Goody, among others, has argued for this reason against the use of tables to represent complex oral cultures: *The Domestication of the Savage Mind*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977, pp.52-73.

Total	173	9189	9362
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Among Wang Anshi's associates, 36% came from militarised regions. Although this remains a minority among participants of the network cluster, it assumes significance in comparison with Sima Guang's associates. Significantly, too, Wang Anshi's network cluster was representative of eleventh-century society at large. It contained exactly the same proportion of individuals from regions under military administration as the mean of those without association with Wang.

Military administration alone reveals little about the experience of military tensions in a region. For that, frontier regions offer a sharper focus.⁶ And here it is convergence rather than divergence between the two network clusters that stands out.

	Association with Sima Guang	No association with Sima Guang	Total
Border region	1	202	203
No border region	88	9071	9159
Total	89	9273	9362

	Association with Wang Anshi	No association with Wang Anshi	Total
Border region	1	202	203
No border region	172	8987	9159
Total	173	9189	9362

In real terms, the two network clusters are identical: only one individual from each comes from a frontier region. The relative percentages for the clusters as a whole are affected by differences in their sizes – 1.1% of Sima Guang's associates came from a frontier region, compared with 0.6% of Wang Anshi's – but both are lower than the mean for the period (2.2%). A note of caution is necessary here, though. No strong evidence exists for correlation between participation in either network and geographical origins away from the frontier. Deviation away from the mean for this period is too small to allow for such claims. But it is possible to say, at least, that these were individuals who, whatever the administrative status of the areas from which they came, had generally encountered no military action and had experienced little sense of military urgency in their native regions.

Education

The educational backgrounds of Sima Guang and Wang Anshi have offered historians a point of comparison between the two men.⁷ Basic similarities have presented themselves. Both came from families with two generations of successful *jin shi* candidates. Both passed the *jin shi* degree themselves: Sima Guang in 1038, Wang Anshi at the next examination in 1042. But differences have been noted, too. There

⁶ 'Frontier regions' here refers to those regions that abutted the state's borderline. The data in this paper account for shifting borders between 1038 and 1086 as the Northern Song engaged in territorial negotiations with neighbouring states, in particular with the Xia.

⁷ This paragraph follows in outline the observations of Bol, 'Government, Society, and State', pp.129-30.

were stark contrasts between the educational environments of their native regions. Extant records identify only two *jin shi* recipients during Northern Song from Sima Guang's native Shanzhou 陝州; Wang Anshi's native Fuzhou 撫州 produced 179 during the same period.⁸ There were also contrasts between the official achievements of the families of each man, which affected their own entries into officialdom. By the time Sima Guang was fifteen *sui*, his father, Sima Chi 司馬池, had been granted the *yin* privilege. Through this, Sima Guang received the unranked position of ritual assistant in the Office of the State Altars 郊社齋郎 five years before he obtained his *jin shi* degree.⁹ Wang Anshi, by contrast, came from a family of low-ranking local officials and was not eligible for the hereditary benefits of the *yin* privilege system.

It happens that similarities between the two men as individuals carry over into the educational profiles of their associates. Their differences do not. Sima Guang's network cluster contained a proportion of *jin shi* recipients that was significantly above the eleventh-century mean:

	Connection to Sima Guang	No connection to Sima Guang	Total
<i>Jin shi</i> ¹⁰	43 (all general <i>jin shi</i> 進士, 籠統: §37)	2688	2731 ¹¹
No <i>jin shi</i>	46	6585	6631
Total	89	9273	9362

48.31% of Sima Guang's associates received *jin shi* degrees. This compares with a mean between 1038 and 1086 of 28.99%. Tests for correlation between participation in Sima Guang's network cluster and the receipt of a *jin shi* degree present overwhelming statistical evidence for such a link: there is only a minute probability (3.5465E-05) that 43 or more individuals out of Sima Guang's total network cluster of 89 could have obtained a *jin shi* degree had they followed the true rate of probability for all *jin shi* recipients over this period. As this paper has already noted, correlation does not suggest causation – Sima Guang's associates neither entered his network cluster because of their academic qualifications nor did their association with Sima Guang ensure receipt of a degree – but it is clear that Sima Guang's network comprised large numbers of individuals who had achieved the highest level of academic success.

Wang Anshi's network cluster shows a similarly high proportion of *jin shi* recipients:

⁸ These figures follow John Chaffee's *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China: A Social History of Examinations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp.197, 202. As Bol notes (*op. cit.*), the figures for Shanzhou may have been affected by the loss of examination records. Statistical error in Chaffee's figures suggests itself from the *CBDB*, for example, which records five *jin shi* recipients from Shanzhou (two have firm dates of *jin shi* receipt; the rest were all active during the Northern Song).

⁹ Soon after his affiliation with the Office of the State Altars, and before he received his *jin shi* degree, he was promoted to the post of recorder in Directorate for Palace Buildings 將作監主簿, *Su Shi wen ji*, Su Shi, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1986, 16.475.

¹⁰ *CBDB* entry codes §29, 36, 37, 124, 165. This figure excludes military *jin shi* (§44), which are dealt with separately below.

¹¹ The figure in the *CBDB* for the total number of *jin shi* recipients between 1038 and 1086 is problematic. John Chaffee, who bases himself principally upon the figures of the *Wen xian tong kao* 文獻通考 for the number of *jin shi* degrees conferred annually, records a total of 7055 departmental *jin shi* graduates and 6075 palace examination graduates between 1038 and 1086, *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China*, p.193. The conclusions that I draw from this data are therefore necessarily tentative.

	Connection to Wang Anshi	No connection to Wang Anshi	Total
<i>Jin shi</i>	100 (97 general <i>jin shi</i> : §36; 1 facilitated <i>jin shi</i> 特奏名進士: §29; 3 regular <i>jin shi</i> 正奏名進士: §165)	2631	2731
No <i>jin shi</i>	73	6558	6631
Total	173	9189	9362

There is a range in the types of *jin shi* degree that Wang Anshi's received. But the overall success rate in this examination, 57.80%, is double the mean for the period. And, once again, further examination reveals a close correlation between association with Wang Anshi and the receipt of a *jin shi* degree.

A point of difference does make itself felt among these broad parallels. The proportion of *jin shi* recipients in Wang Anshi's network cluster was higher than among Sima Guang's associates. It corresponded to a picture of regional variations in educational environment and *jin shi* examination success, which this paper has already examined in the context of an individual comparison between Sima Guang and Wang Anshi. The Yellow River valley region produced few *jin shi* graduates during Northern Song; Sichuan, from where a large proportion of Sima Guang's associates also came, produced higher numbers. But neither could match the academically successful regions of the mid- and lower Yangzi valley, from which most of Wang Anshi's associates came.

The easy characterisation of a regional-based divide between an educationally ascendant network and an academically stagnant or declining one is too simple. It implicitly supports the stereotype of a reform/conservative factional divide between Wang Anshi and Sima Guang, and their associates.¹² As this paper has shown, such oppositions between the two network clusters tend to blur. They are undermined here by closer examination of the family backgrounds of each network's participants. The numbers who qualified for the *yin* privilege offer an indicator of hereditary official success: it was conferred upon mid- and high-grade officials and allowed their relatives to receive official rank before taking the official examinations.¹³ This was a point of contrast between Sima Guang and Wang Anshi's individual profiles. But the contrast, as usual, breaks down when it appears in the larger context of the two men's network clusters:

	Connection to Sima Guang	No connection to Sima Guang	Total
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¹² For claims of a schematic divide along regional and class lines, see James T.C. Liu's claim that the eleventh century was marked by the 'rise of new bureaucrats from the south, who were replacing bureaucrats of large-size landowning background in the north', *Reform in Song China: Wang An-shi and His New Policies*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959, p.19. Robert M. Hartwell also noted that, by Emperor Zhezong's reign (1086-1100), southerners in the official bureaucracy equalled northerners in number. Unlike Liu, though, Hartwell separated ideological conflicts from regional differences, 'Demographic, Political, and Social Transformations of China, 750-1550', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42.2, 1982: 414-25.

¹³ Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China*, p.23; Bossler, Beverly J., *Powerful Relations: Kinship, Status, and the State in China*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Council on East Asian Studies, 1998, pp.53-5.

<i>Yin</i> privilege ¹⁴	13 (all general <i>yin</i> privilege 恩蔭, 籠統: §118)	539	552
No <i>yin</i> privilege	76	8734	8810
Total	89	9273	9362

	Connection to Wang Anshi	No connection to Wang Anshi	Total
<i>Yin</i> privilege	29 (all general <i>yin</i> privilege 恩蔭, 籠統: §118)	523	552
No <i>yin</i> privilege	144	8666	8810
Total	173	9189	9362

Both contained above-average proportions of individuals who qualified for the *yin* privilege, and in both there was also close correlation between participation in the network and entitlement to the *yin* privilege. Between 1038 and 1086, 5.96% of men were eligible for the *yin* privilege. Of those in Sima Guang's network, 14.61% took this entitlement; in Wang Anshi's network cluster, the proportion was even higher – 16.76%. The statistical difference is not great enough to draw strong conclusions of divergence between the two. Quite the opposite: it suggests that a similar proportion of each network cluster came from academically and officially successful families. Far from a contrast between an upwardly mobile social group and a long-established ruling elite, therefore, both men operated in networks that were characterised by similar educational traditions.

One omission stands out from all of this in the context of the present paper. Between 1038 and 1086, 43 individuals entered the official bureaucracy on military merit: five with military *jin shi* degrees (§44) and 38 through distinguished military service (§77). This represented only a small proportion – 0.92% – of the means of entry into officialdom for this period. That in itself offers an insight into the structure of the eleventh-century official bureaucracy. It means that these statistics have to be handled with care: fractional differences are in operation here and urge against definitive conclusions. Yet it is notable that not a single member of either Sima Guang's or Wang Anshi's network entered the official bureaucracy through a military route. They both attracted individuals who started their official careers with the concerns of civilian governance uppermost in their minds.

Regional postings

In 1055, Sima Guang's political patron, Pang Ji 龐籍, was appointed Military Commissioner and Inspector-general of the Hedong circuit and administrator of Bingzhou 并州.¹⁵ Sima Guang followed him to take up a post as vice-administrator of the region. Under Pang Ji's jurisdiction as Military Commissioner was an area of Linzhou 麟州 that was the focus of a dispute with the Xi Xia. In 1057, he sent Sima

¹⁴ Entry codes §8, 59, 60, 62, 118, 138, 163.

¹⁵ *Xu Zi zhi tong jian chang bian* 180.4354; *SMWJ* 17.5a-b; 歐陽文忠公集, *Si bu cong kan chu bian* ed., 85.7b-8a; *Wen gong ji* 文恭集, Hu Su 胡宿, *Cong shu ji cheng* ed., 25.309.

Guang to discuss a resolution to the dispute with Wu Kan 武堪, the region's inspector. On his return, Sima Guang advanced Wu Kan's plan to take advantage of perceived Xi Xia military weakness to construct two fortresses on the disputed land, drive out Xi Xia farmers from the area, and destroy their crops. Pang Ji adopted these proposals and ignored reports of a large Xi Xia military presence. Northern Song armies were ambushed as they moved into the disputed area and over a quarter of their troops perished. After an official investigation, Pang Ji was demoted. Despite producing successive documents in which he clarified his role in the defeat, Sima Guang went unpunished.¹⁶ After this episode Sima Guang's policy towards the use of military force showed a marked change. Already in a letter of the following year to the former Controller-general of Linzhou, Xia Yi 夏倚, he indicated a policy reversal: he favoured a tolerant approach to dealing with Northern Song's foreign neighbours, which he had previously considered unfavourable; by implication, he rejected the belligerent stance that he had proposed to Pang Ji the previous year.¹⁷ By the early 1060s, this view had crystallised, and he represented Northern Song officials' use of military force as a direct stimulus for foreign retaliation and a threat to the stability of the Northern Song state. Personal experience, it seems, affected political ideology.¹⁸

Wang Anshi, by contrast, had no such close encounter with military conflict. Despite his often-acknowledged preference for local postings (as opposed to Sima Guang's tendency to favour capital over local government), he tended to take civil posts in the circuits of the mid- and lower-Yangzi valley. He served as Military Commissioner and Inspector-general of the East Jiangnan circuit in 1067, but this was in a prosperous area and well away from the fraught tension of the frontier.¹⁹ Here, then, is promise of a point of difference between the two men and their network clusters: military experience in a frontier region.

As usual, though, close analysis of the two men's network clusters breaks down such oppositions.²⁰ The proportion of participants in both network clusters who held military posts in all areas is significantly lower than percentage of those who did not hold military posts: 22.47% of Sima Guang's network cluster served before 1086 as circuit-level military administrators during their careers; in Wang Anshi's network 23.12% took these posts. The participants of the two network clusters also had relatively little experience of any kind in frontier regions. Sima Guang appears to have been in a minority among his associates: only 21.35% of his network assumed a circuit-level post before 1086 in a frontier circuit, either in civil or military governance. A similar proportion – 23.12% – appears in Wang Anshi's network

¹⁶ *Xu Zi zhi tong jian chang bian* 185.4476-8, 186.4494-5; *Song shi* 336.10758; *Su Shi wen ji* 16.476. Sima Guang's version of these events and admissions of guilt appear in: *SMWJ* 17.3a-5a, 17.5a-b, 24.4b-5b (in which Sima Guang also suggests that he discussed the proposals to built fortifications with Xia Yi), 59.6b-7b, 76.8a.

¹⁷ *SMWJ* 59.6a.

¹⁸ I hope to return to the subject of Sima Guang's criticism of Northern Song militarists during the 1060s and 1070s elsewhere; it lies beyond the scope of the present paper. Despite a clear change in ideological direction, though, the experience of 1057 did not prevent Sima Guang from taking up a post as Military Commissioner and Inspector-general of the Yongxing jun circuit in 1070: *Xu Zi zhi tong jian chang bian* 215.5247-8.

¹⁹ 'Xue shi nian biao' 學士年表, *Han yuan qun shu* 韓苑群書, *Zhibuzu zhai cong shu* ed., B.46b.

²⁰ The section that follows does not base itself of the data of the *CBDB*, which are too slight to enable statistical analysis. This lack also means that I have restricted myself to consideration of circuit-level military appointments only. The results are necessarily tentative. Statements on correlation have also proven impossible and it remains unclear how representative these networks clusters were of their time. A more detailed analysis of postings is necessary than the scope of this paper allows. Useful information on military experience and its possible effects on military policy will be gained once full data on regional postings have been collected and compared against the present figures for militarised and frontier regions.

cluster. The two network clusters were predominantly non-military in their professional make-up. It reinforces present data on the military administrative status of network participants' native places, and on their means of entry into the official bureaucracy. What stands out here is the close statistical convergence between Sima Guang's and Wang Anshi's networks. It is necessary to look elsewhere for an explanation of ideological difference between the two networks over the use of military force – if, indeed, such a difference exists.

Differences between Sima Guang and Wang Anshi as individuals – between Sima Guang's close participation in frontier military affairs and Wang Anshi's lack of personal experience of any form of service along the frontier – are overturned by the most relevant statistic of all: the numbers of those who combined both of the above criteria through frontier military postings. It was these individuals, Sima Guang among them, who would have had the most acute sense of the practical implications of court-directed military policy. Yet, again, it is the remarkable statistical similarity between the two network clusters that makes itself felt most readily: 13.48% of Sima Guang's and 13.29% of Wang Anshi's associates had held frontier military posts before 1086. And, once again, both network clusters contained a low proportion of individuals who had served in senior military capacities in frontier circuits and therefore in situations where their military decisions had immediate and visible effects. Needless to say, there was significant variation between individuals within each network cluster. A random sampling from among Sima Guang's associates of three individuals makes the point. Pang Ji (988-1063), in addition to his short-lived term as Military Commissioner and Inspector-general of the Hedong circuit, served for thirteen years in circuit-level frontier posts; of those, ten were in senior military administrative roles. He served a further five years as Military Commissioner and Military Inspector of Jingdong east and west circuits.²¹ Zhou Hang 周沆 (999-1067) spent eleven years of his official career in circuit-level posts on the frontier; seven of those were in senior positions of military administration (he also spent a further four years, between 1048 and 1051, serving as Military Commissioner and Inspector-general of the Jinghu south circuit).²² Both men participated in diplomatic dealings

²¹ Pang Ji's official appointments that are relevant to the present paper are: Fiscal Commissioner of the East Guangnan circuit in from 1034 to 1035 (*Xu Zi zhi tong jian chang bian* 115.2703; *Song shi* 311.10199); Fiscal Commissioner of the Shaanxi circuit from 1040 to 1041 (*Xu Zi zhi tong jian chang bian* 127.3014, 131.3114; *Song shi* 311.10199); Military Commissioner and Inspector-general of the Fuyan circuit from 1041 (*Xu Zi zhi tong jian chang bian* 134.3191); Military Commissioner and Military Inspector of the West Jingdong circuit between 1053 and 1055 (*Wen gong ji* 23.291, 25.309; *Xu Zi zhi tong jian chang bian* 180.4354); Military Commissioner and Inspector-general of the Hedong circuit from 1055 to 1056 (*Bei Song jing fu nian biao* 3.172); Military Commissioner and Military Inspector of the East Jingdong circuit from 1057 to 1058 (*Bei Song jing fu nian biao* 2.72); Military Commissioner and Inspector-general of the Zhongshan Prefecture circuit between 1058 and 1060 (*Ouyang Wenzhong gong ji* 歐陽文忠公集, Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修, *Si bu cong kan* ed., 88.4a-b, 89.7b-8a).

²² Zhou Hang's relevant posts are: Military Commissioner and Inspector-general of the South Jinghu circuit between 1048 and 1051 (*SMWJ* 78.10a); Vice Fiscal Commissioner of the Hedong circuit from 1051 to 1052 (*Song shi* 331.10643; *SMWJ* 78.10b; *Yunxi ji* 鄮溪集, *Hubei xian zheng yi shu* ed., 20.10b); Fiscal Commissioner-in-chief of the Shaanxi circuit in 1054 (*Song shi* 331.10643-4; *SMWJ* 78.10b-11a; *Gong shi ji* 公是集, Liu Chang 劉敞, *Cong shu ji cheng* ed., 30.358); Fiscal Commissioner-in-chief of Hebei circuit in 1054-5 (*Song shi* 331.10644; *Song hui yao ji gao* 宋會要輯稿, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1957, 'zhi guan' 60.20a; *SMWJ* 78.11a; *Gong shi ji*, 30.358; *Yunxi ji* 鄮溪集 20.11a); Fiscal Commissioner-in-chief of the Hedong circuit in 1058-9 (*Song shi* 331.10644; *SMWJ* 78.11b; *Yunxi ji* 鄮溪集 20.11a); Military Commissioner and Inspector-general of the Huanqing circuit in 1058-61 (*Song shi* 331.10644; *SMWJ* 78.11b; *Yunxi ji* 鄮溪集 20.11a); Military Commissioner and Inspector-general of the Zhending Prefecture circuit between 1064 and 1066 (*SMWJ* 78.12a-b; *Yunxi ji* 鄮溪集 20.11a)

with the Liao.²³ Ouyang Xiu (1007-72), by contrast, served only two years in a non-military capacity in Hebei circuit; his five years in military administrative posts, including one year as Minister of War in 1068, were spent in areas away from the frontier.²⁴ It remains for close study of ideological statements on military and border policy to see whether or not those internal variations made themselves apparent in the practical business of political commitments.

Association types

The formation of the two network clusters comes into focus with an examination of the associations that bound them. The categories of association types in the *CBDB* offer a crude but suggestive framework for analysis.²⁵ Associations within each network cluster do not fall evenly over the types of non-kinship relations that were established in the eleventh century. Most are bunched in certain categories and even in specific sub-categories. Although this distribution reflects both the organising principles of the *CBDB* and the values of the written record on which its data are based as much as the inherent nature of eleventh-century associations, it can shed a hazy light on the structural make-up of these networks.

Between 1038 and 1086, four broad categories of association dominated non-kinship relations: political connections, personal friendships, associations established through scholarship, and professional links outside the reach of the official bureaucracy. These categories did not play equal social roles or, at least, were not represented equally by those who later recorded eleventh-century associations. Political connections, both among equals (as colleagues or coalition members) and in hierarchies (through political patronage) played the most prominent role of the four: they accounted for 24.11% of all recorded non-kinship relations. The next most important category during this period was scholarly associations. These also included associations with horizontal structures, between classmates or like-minded scholars, and vertical bonds, between teachers and students. They represented 12.55% of the total. Relatively few associations were recorded outside the sphere of interaction between scholar-officials. Personal friendships comprised only a small proportion of the recorded total, 4.49%. The intervention of later chroniclers makes itself felt more keenly here than anywhere: it is likely that a larger number of friendship connections would have existed in the eleventh century, but they were simply too commonplace as a form of social interaction to draw individual notice. The final category of non-kinship relations, based on professions outside officialdom, account for a mere 0.24% of the total. But surpassing these categories in statistical weight, and cutting through them all in type, were associations established through literary composition: prefaces, postfaces, and personal inscriptions; authorial collaborations; commemorative and ritual writings; biographical works; notes of departure or congratulation, and other such genres of writing that functioned as forms of social exchange. Between 1038 and

²³ Pang Ji: *Liao shi* 遼史, Tuotuo 脫脫, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1974, 18.222. Zhou Hang: *SMWJ* 78.12a; *Yunxi ji* 鄆溪集 20.11a.

²⁴ Ouyang Xiu served as: Fiscal Commissioner-in-chief of Hebei circuit in 1044-5 (*Song hui yao ji gao*, 'zhi guan' 64.51a-b); Inspector-general of Huainan dong circuit from 1048 to 1049 (*Bei Song jing fu nian biao* 4.312-3); Director of Ministry of War in 1068 (*Rong zhai sui bi* 容齋隨筆, Hong Mai 洪邁, Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1978, 'si bi' 9.716); Military Commissioner and Military Inspector of the East Jingdong circuit between 1068 and 1070 (*Song hui yao ji gao*, 'she huo' 69.41b; *Rong zhai sui bi*, 'si bi' 9.716).

²⁵ The numbers of association types in what follows refer to the association codes in the *CBDB*.

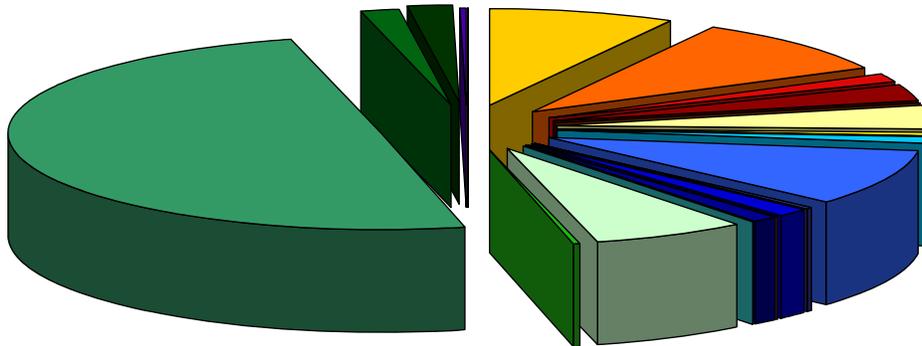
1086, they accounted for 58.61% of all non-kinship associations. They fed into all of the categories above but, since they defy neat categorisation and instead lie at the intersection of the political, the scholarly, and the social, they deserve separate analysis.

Even in their broadest organisational categories, Sima Guang and Wang Anshi's network clusters show remarkable parallels, both with these general trends of the eleventh-century and with each other [see figures overleaf]. The heaviest concentration of their associations lies in those based on literary composition. 58.25% of the associations in Wang Anshi's network cluster were established through written mediums. The percentage for Sima Guang's network cluster is lower, but still comprises a large majority of its total: 53.68%. Commemorative and other ritual writings feature most prominently. For Wang Anshi's network cluster, an above-average 53.77% of its associations depended on this genre, with epitaph writing (§43/44) the most common form. The associations of Sima Guang's network cluster were also dominated by commemorative writings (40.44%), and epitaphs in particular. Other forms of association through writing – prefaces and postfaces, and authorial collaboration – played a larger role than in Wang Anshi's network cluster. But the effect of commemorative writings on network formation needs to be treated with care. Understanding of their socio-political function and significance in the eleventh-century remains vague. And, despite their statistical volume, commemorative writings formed relatively weak binding links: they were ultimately unidirectional since, by their very definition, one of their participants was dead and so could not participate actively (by accepting or rejecting the association) in the network.

At first sight, the significance of writing-based associations in the formation of Wang Anshi's network supports the common characterisation that he surrounded himself with men of rhetorical talent: Sima Guang criticised Wang Anshi for keeping the council of 'men who have the gift of the gab'.²⁶ But two statistics give the lie to such claims. First, for all Sima Guang's professed personal distrust of the literary, the network cluster that surrounded him based its associations on a greater proportion of non-ritual writings (13.24%) than both Wang Anshi's network cluster (4.48%) and the mean for the eleventh century (8.27%). Whole associations were defined by authorial collaborations, for example, a category that did not feature among Wang Anshi's associates. Second, the proportion of associations defined by writing (and even by commemorative writing) in Wang Anshi's network cluster is close to the general trend at the time; any statistical difference is too slight to be meaningful. Wang Anshi's network cluster is therefore representative rather than exceptional in the important role that written mediums played in defining its network associations.

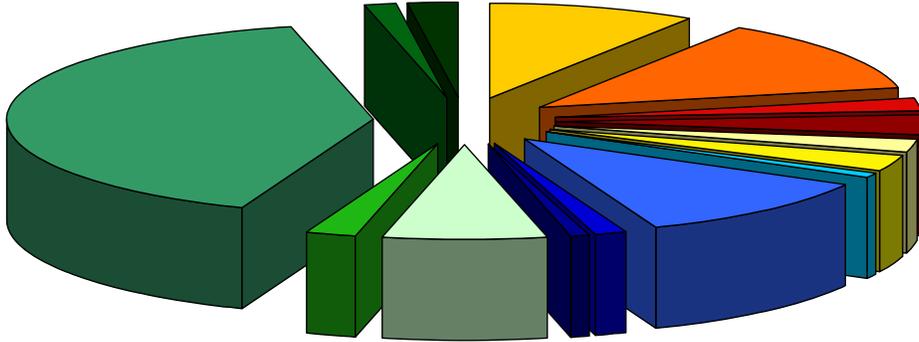
²⁶ See, for example, *SMWJ* 60.10b.

Total association types, 1038-86

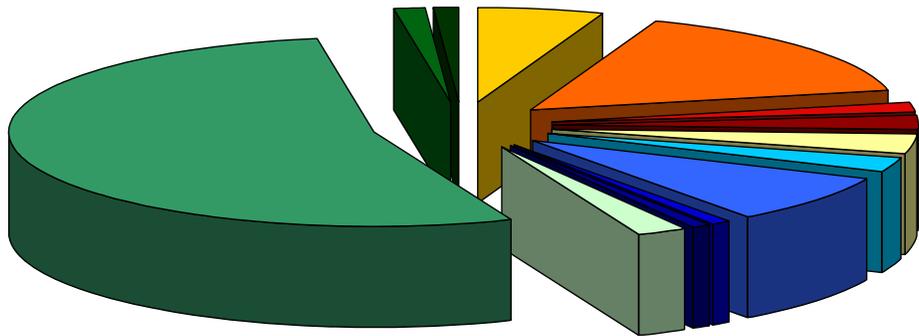


- Undefined Undefined
- Political Coalitions
- Political Patronage
- Political Praise or admiration
- Political Colleague
- Political Decision on jin shi ranking
- Friendship Friendship
- Friendship Club membership
- Friendship Gift-giving
- Friendship Burial
- Scholarship Tong nian you/tong xue / tong dao
- Scholarship Teacher-student
- Scholarship Association through disciples
- Scholarship Scholarly discussion
- Scholarship Appreciation
- Scholarship Criticism
- Scholarship Transmission of scholarship
- Professional (non-official) Professional calling
- Writing Pre/postface, mottos
- Writing Authorial collaboration
- Writing Commemorative
- Writing Biographical
- Writing Social exchange
- Medical Healing
- Religious Commemorative

Association types of Sima Guang's network cluster



Association types of Wang Anshi's network cluster



The role of explicitly political connections offers a further point of convergence between Sima Guang and Wang Anshi's network clusters. Both appear marginally more politicised than the eleventh-century mean, but the percentage differences are too small to be accorded significance: 27.21% of the associations in Sima Guang's network cluster and 25.86% in Wang Anshi's network cluster are explicitly political; this compares with 24.56% of the total recorded associations between 1038 and 1086. Similarity rather than difference makes itself felt most readily.

There is some divergence between the two network clusters in the structure of these political associations, though. Those with links to Sima Guang developed between themselves a high proportion of collaborative, horizontal associations: coalitions (§1, 2, 7/8, 26/27) and associations through common political institutions (§356) comprised 13.22% of their total associations. Those linked by politics in Wang Anshi's network cluster based themselves more heavily on vertical structures of association: political patronage (§4/5, 13/14, 55/56, 130/131, 493/494) and praise (§17/18) comprised 17.92% of total associations, while horizontal associations only accounted for 7.94%.

Equally remarkable was the high degree of political divergence and opposition within Wang Anshi's network cluster. 1.83% of its total associations were formed by membership of the *yuan you* (§1) and *yuan fu* (§2) coalitions – in other words, by membership of groups opposed to Wang Anshi's New Policies. And there were 17 cases, involving 27 individuals, of political in-fighting. This compared with five associations of political opposition, involving six individuals, in Sima Guang's network cluster.²⁷ It suggests weaker political cohesion among those linked to Wang Anshi than between Sima Guang's associates. But such conclusions are only tentative without close examination of the statements of political ideology that members of each network cluster made; the reach of prosopographical analysis finds its limit here.

Statistical differences between the associations of scholarship and personal friendship are generally too slight to be of significance. Here, too, it is convergence between the two network clusters, and the convergence of each with general trends of the eleventh century, that is more notable than divergence. Data on associations through scholarship show that both network clusters conformed closely to a general trend: those with links to Wang Anshi depended in 12.61% of their associations on scholarly ties; the corresponding figure for Sima Guang's network cluster was 13.98%. Within this broad outline, though, there were minor structural variations between the two network clusters. These offer an interesting contrast with political associations. Sima Guang's network cluster was characterised by a higher percentage of vertical associations. The most prominent scholarly association was between teacher and student (§19/20, 22/23, 34/35, 49/50), which comprised 11.03% of its total. This was higher than both Wang Anshi's network cluster (8.55%) and the mean for the period (9.56%). While teacher-student associations remained the primary form of scholarly

²⁷ I have otherwise excluded associations of opposition from all categories, and they do not appear in the statistics given in this section. As a result, these figures appear do not appear as a percentage of the total association types. There are two reasons for this. First, the data in the *CBDB* on such oppositions is inadequate for the purposes of statistical analysis: even the celebrated opposition between Sima Guang and Wang Anshi that is the focus of this paper fails to receive consideration. Second, opposition breaks rather than establishes network bonds and so cannot be considered a factor in network *formation*.

association in Wang Anshi's network cluster, horizontal structures of scholarship associations were more prominent than in Sima Guang's network cluster.

Personal friendships accounted for 5.15% of all the associations of Sima Guang's network cluster, 0.58% above the mean for the period; Wang Anshi's network cluster featured this type of association in 3.26% of its total. As this paper has already noted, though, the value of this data is compromised by the likelihood of omissions from the later record due to the commonplace nature of friendship ties. But there is one statistic that stands out in this category: the role of social clubs as a catalyst for personal association. Eight individuals in Sima Guang's network cluster - 2.94% of the total - were bound by common membership of a social club: the celebrated Venerable Elders' Club 耆英會 that Sima Guang joined in 1082, while still in Luoyang.²⁸ The percentage appears small when taken in isolation but assumes greater import when set in the general context of the eleventh century: it accounts for half of all recorded associations through shared club membership during this period. And, equally notable, the same category fails to feature at all among Wang Anshi's associates.

Also striking are the number and range of associations that existed during the eleventh century but failed to emerge in either of the two network clusters. Professional associations outside the reach of officialdom were identified as one of the broad organisational categories for eleventh-century associations. True, they do not appear frequently among the general data for the period between 1038 and 1086, but it is significant that they are entirely absent from both Sima Guang and Wang Anshi's network clusters. These are networks that function entirely within official, bureaucratic settings: in ministries and bureaus of the court and the provinces; in schools that prepare individuals for official service; in written documents, necessarily the preserve of the literate. Personal friendships might have transcended this official/non-official divide, but close examination of available data suggests that members of these network clusters also restricted this type of association to other officials.

Even that scope is too wide. Not only do Sima Guang and Wang Anshi's network clusters locate themselves in the context of the official bureaucracy, they are exclusively formed on foundations of civil governance. Five types of military association appear in the *CBDB*; not one appears in either of the two network clusters. But analytical circumspection is necessary here. Only three military associations involving six individuals, all of them oppositional associations of military conflict, are recorded for the period between 1038 and 1086. And 71 military associations involving 106 individuals appear for the whole of the Song period - a mere 0.53% of all associations recorded under that state.²⁹ The absence of military associations from Sima Guang nor Wang Anshi's network clusters, while suggestive, is not remarkable. Again, they conform rather than break the general trends of their time.

²⁸ The limits of prosopographical analysis make themselves felt once more here: the bare statistics reveal little of the importance of membership of the Venerable Elders' Club - and the associations that it afforded with retired senior officials of the previous generation - to Sima Guang's political and social standing: see, for example, *SMWJ* 65.9b-11a; Shao Bowen 邵伯溫, *Henan Shao shi wen jian lu* 河南邵氏聞見錄, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1983, 10.104-5.

²⁹ One of the binary military associations (§343/344) records an odd number of participants, something that is clearly impossible. I have assumed the presence of the missing participant.

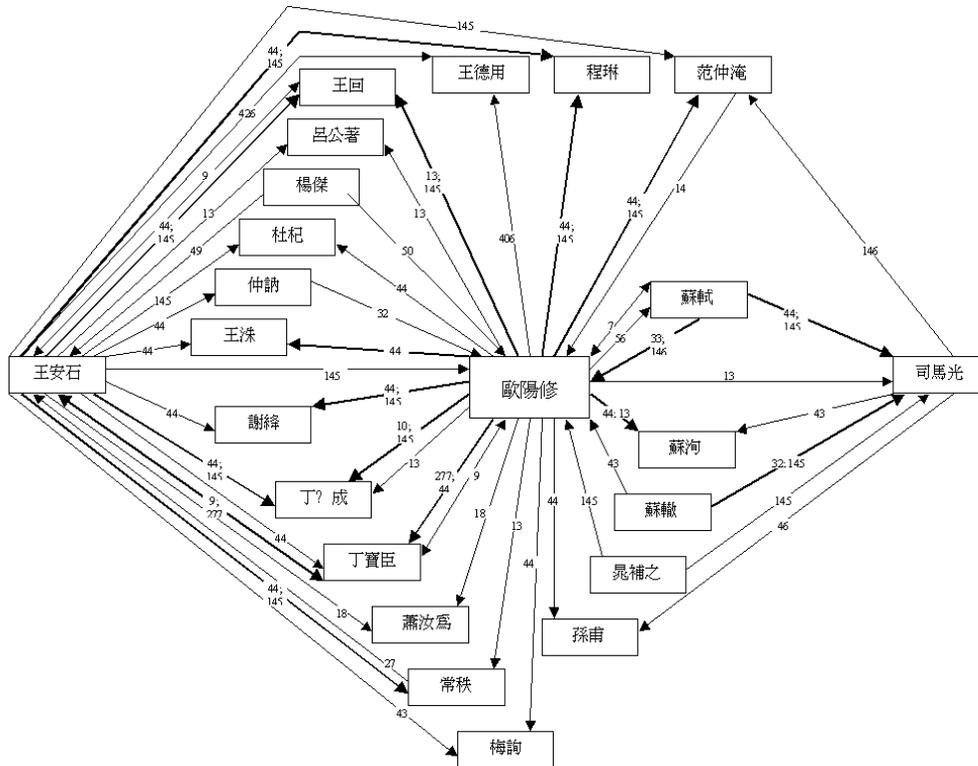
What stands out from all this is the degree of convergence between Sima Guang and Wang Anshi's network clusters, and also the close structural resemblance that they both bear to associations in eleventh-century society at large. Their overarching organisation and the shared preoccupations of their members suggests greater similarity than difference. While each network displays internal cohesion, structural oppositions between them break down.

Blurred factions

To talk in terms of factions is to suggest homogeneity and permanence. Factional oppositions, such as that commonly attributed to Sima Guang and Wang Anshi, assume a schematic simplicity with such rhetoric. Under close scrutiny, though, external political boundaries blur and internal associations appear loose and unstable.

The central positions that both Sima Guang and Wang Anshi appear to occupy in their network clusters are products of present research assumptions. This paper has taken association with the two men as its basic criteria for participation in a network cluster. Needless to say, the results cannot be taken as true reflections of their roles as centrifugal social and political forces of the eleventh century. But even within these methodological constraints, there is evidence that Sima Guang and Wang Anshi did not monopolize influence over their associates. Smaller groupings formed and re-formed with each network cluster and also in eleventh-century society at large.

Sima Guang participated in 44.72% of the total associations of his network cluster; Wang Anshi participated in 71.17%. The impression of a tight structural focus among the participants of Wang Anshi's network is strengthened by the fact that only two other individuals, Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (9.85%) and Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (4.74%), were involved in more than four percent of the network cluster's total associations. There is an interesting tension here with the internal ideological opposition to Wang Anshi that this paper has already identified. By contrast, Sima Guang's personal influence made itself felt less strongly in his network cluster. There were a larger number of individuals who offered alternative centres of influence: Su Shi 蘇軾 (9.32%), Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (8.13%), Fan Zuyu 范祖禹 (6.83%), Fan Chunren 范純仁 (6.21%), and Fan Zhen 范鎮 (4.96%). A random (although particularly suggestive) example from among these makes the point, although almost every association outside those with the two primary figures hints at the complexity of these social and political networks.



Ouyang Xiu featured prominently in both networks. A structural diagram of his associations with members of the two network clusters suggests the variation of type and direction of his associations, and the extent of his influence. And in his relations with some individuals – with Su Shi and Fan Zhongyan, for example – not only does he represent an alternative source of influence; he displaces the dominant figure in the network altogether.

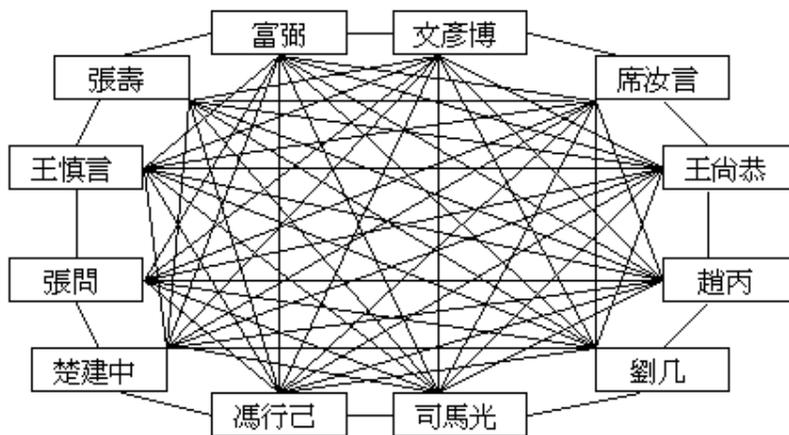
Historians and prosopographers have used astrological metaphors to describe such structures. They appear to describe internal dynamics of power and influence. This paper has referred to ‘network clusters’ to denote the loose social and political groupings that develop around an individual. Within these, there are the ‘primary stars’ around whom other, secondary individuals revolve. Within the main system of networks, localised centres of gravity exert a pull on those closest to them.³⁰ But prosopographical analysis alone reveals little about the significance of these galactic networks and, above all, the role of alternative centres of influence. Did they produce variant, even rival, ideologies to that of the dominant figure in the network? In the context of the present paper, did they produce alternative military policies? And did they weaken the overall coherence of the larger cluster, or hinder its political efficacy at court? These questions can only be answered by close analysis of the political

³⁰ Hirata Shigeki 平田茂樹 suggests a galactic structure for networks during the Northern Song. See, for example, his diagram on, ‘Sōdai no hōtō keisei no keiki ni tsuite’ 宋代の朋党形成の契機について in *Sōdai shikai no nettowaaku* 宋代社会のネットワーク, Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1998, p.40. In another context, Stanley J. Tambiah has employed an astrological metaphor to describe sovereign-subject relations in the early Siamese state: *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: a Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand Against a Historical Background*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976; ‘The Galactic Polity: The Structure of Traditional Kingdoms in Southeast Asia’, *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 293.1, 1977: 69-97.

statements of the networks' participants. But it is important, all the same, to identify deviations from the general organising principles of the network clusters. It points up tensions between the schematic simplicity of a discourse of factionalism and the complexity of actual political experience in the eleventh century. It also focuses future research.

Astrological metaphors only serve a useful analytical purpose up to a point. They are fixed in their basic relations of influence. Even this metaphor is subject to changes of dynamic according to the contexts in which associations develop. The dominance of the central figures (the 'primary stars' of the galactic model) is overturned most obviously in vertical, hierarchical relations. Sima Guang was recommended for office by Ouynag Xiu; he travelled in the company of Shao Yong 邵雍 in a student-teacher relationship. Wang Anshi was a student of Zhang Zhu 張鑄. In these cases, the dominant figures of the two network clusters cede their central position of influence to others within the network. Generational differences, and the implicit social hierarchies that they create, also cut across the basic dynamic that the astronomical metaphor establishes.

The image of a strong centrifugal force attracting weaker satellites, which underpins the astronomical metaphor, fails to stand up when the structures of social or political associations are either horizontal or multi-directional. The Venerable Elders' Club 耆英會 to which Sima Guang belonged nicely illustrates the point.³¹ Shared membership of a social club is determined by both horizontal and multi-directional associations:



Bonds here were denser than in the network cluster as a whole: membership of the Venerable Elder's Club offered a stronger network structure than association with Sima Guang alone. But, turning to contemporary representations of the Venerable Elders' Club, even that is too simple. Generational differences and the nature of entry into the club seem to have created subtle hierarchies even here: Sima Guang was the

³¹ The *CBDB* records some of these associations but not others. Lacunae in the database's entries are evident from the fact that it only records for Sima Guang's network cluster a total of eight associations through membership of a social club when the Venerable Elders' Club comprised twelve individuals after 1082.

youngest of the eleven members, and was invited in 1082 to join what was already an established grouping. Such social interactions therefore carry implicit weighting that is not readily apparent from the prosopographical data.

Network clusters are not self-contained, as a governing galactic metaphor might suggest. They interact with other systems and even merge with groupings that are in direct competition for social influence and political power. Six individuals appear in both Sima Guang and Wang Anshi's network clusters, for example: Qian Gongfu 錢公輔; Li Shoupeng 李壽朋; Ouyang Xiu; Fan Zhongyan; Chen Min 陳敏; Liu Shu 劉恕.³² Their presence should not cause us to reject the idea that there *were* coherent, integral network clusters surrounding Sima Guang and Wang Anshi. Examination of individuals who were politically and socially active between 1038 and 1086 shows that those linked to both Sima Guang and Wang Anshi had an above-average density of associations. The mean in the database for this period was 0.31 bonds per capita; for Sima Guang's network cluster, it was 1.81 bonds; 1.58 bonds was the figure for Wang Anshi's network cluster. But such cohesion does not necessarily indicate the presence of factions, let alone oppositional ones, and that is where the interest of these network-crossing individuals lies.

Ouyang Xiu's bonds of association with the members of both networks, mapped above, create a typical (if exceptionally dense and complex) structure of association for these individuals. Those associations are not uniform in density or quality. Individuals who moved between network clusters tended to display a stronger affinity with one network cluster over the other.³³ Ouyang Xiu had a stronger personal association with Sima Guang than with Wang Anshi: he recommended Sima Guang for office; Wang Anshi and Ouyang Xiu were associated only through the relatively weak, unilateral bond of a sacrificial prayer. Despite these personal associations, though, Ouyang Xiu's associations with the other members of Sima Guang's network cluster were generally weaker than with Wang Anshi's associates. Once again, there was an important distinction between the dominant individual and the network cluster as a whole. But even these broad political preferences were not permanent: Qian Gongfu, for example, had a close relationship with Wang Anshi, who recommended him for the post of Vice Director in the Bureau of Sacrifices. He later opposed Wang's policies, though, and Wang broke their political association.³⁴ Here, if anywhere, is an indication of the fluidity of eleventh-century political relationships, and a warning against the schematic discourse of factional opposition.

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³² The number of shared associates seems remarkably small, given the common social and political environment in which Sima Guang and Wang Anshi operated. But to draw firm conclusions from this, however tempting and dramatic, would be to resort to conjecture. The danger is especially acute here: the *CBDB* data on interpersonal relations, on which this finding is based, remains incomplete; even a brief examination of Sima Guang's and Wang Anshi's associates shows up lacunae. The subject merits further research, though, to supplement these suggestive findings from the database.

³³ Apart from the possession of *jin shi* degrees, I have been unable to identify strong similarities between these six crossover individuals. No compelling reason for their ability to bridge network boundaries suggests itself from the available prosopographical data.

³⁴ The text of Wang Anshi's recommendation of Qian Gongfu appears in *Linchuan xian sheng wen ji* 臨川先生文集, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1959, 50.530. For their friendship and later split, see *Song shi* 321.10422.

With the present focus on military policy formation, convergence between the biographical data of Sima Guang's and Wang Anshi's network clusters has made itself felt more readily than divergence. True, points of difference have emerged: in regional origins; in means of entry into the official bureaucracy; in frontier military experience. But even such promising contrasts have tended to blur when applied to the two men's network clusters as a whole. Further prosopographical research may show parallels in their men's military experiences were exceptions to a general pattern of difference. But they still suggest that long-held factional oppositions between Sima Guang and Wang Anshi, proposed even by the two men themselves, are inadequate as an enduring analytical assumption for the study of complex political relations. Unexpectedly, given the broad sweep of its vision, prosopographical analysis has thrown up exceptions that have destabilised the general image of opposition. Individuals crossed biographical and ideological divides, either through personal choice, kinship, or appropriation by one side or the other. And even within the network clusters themselves, there was often little uniformity. But all this is something to rejoice in: it turns attention from the wide vistas of prosopography to close, individual details; from inanimate statistical analysis to the idiosyncrasies of actual political experience. And that is where prosopography's scope finds its limit. From its suggestive outlines, it is ultimately necessary to move to the textual record for an insight into the inner machinery of eleventh-century political relations rather than just their external forms.