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The Fall of the Ming in the First Person: Jiangnan 1640-1650

Sympoism: End of Transition? Emperor Kangxi's First Trips to Jiangnan (1684-1699)

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[**Note**: The text below is a work in progress, started in 2015 and continued (with interruptions) over the years. It still contains many problems to solve, possible errors, and uncertainties, which I would be happy to discuss with colleagues on the occasion of this Symposium. There are also sources that remain to be examined.

I suggest to open this session with general remarks on the circumstances that led me to research the Kangxi emperor's Southern tours, or at least certain aspects of them. Then I will enumerate the topics that seem to me to deserve further research and debate, such as: fiction and reality in the so-called "popular" literature; the balance between the military and civilian dimensions of the first Southern tours; Kangxi's personality and intentions; and more.]

Official Propaganda and Popular Representation during the Kangxi Emperor's Southern Tours

As is well known, the second and the fourth emperors of the Qing dynasty, Kangxi and Qianlong, travelled to South China—more precisely, to the Jiangnan region, that is, the Lower Yangzi—for tours of inspection (Southern Tours, *nanxun* 南巡) that in many ways were unprecedented in the history of imperial China. Unprecedented, first of all, in their numbers: each emperor went six times during his sixty-year reign; but also in their form and content. Contrary to the few precedents that could be cited of emperors leaving their capital and its immediate surroundings, these were not ritual trips, except, at least in part, for the first one; and they were not military expeditions, or retreats. To a various extent they were a combination of field inspection, of tourism, and of political propaganda.

It is in fact this last aspect—political PR, one might say—that first spurred my interest in the subject. Sometime around 1990, I came across a very striking description of the Kangxi emperor's two-day visit to Suzhou in the course of his first Southern Tour, in 1684, found in the little-known autobiography of an obscure commoner from Shanghai named Yao Tinglin 姚

廷遴 (1628-?).[1] I will come back in some detail to this text and to its author. Let me just say for the moment that the description in question provides a popular and extremely colorful narrative of the Suzhou visit, and that it demonstrates in striking fashion the Kangxi emperor's remarkable talent for advertising his own person as well as the regime over which he was presiding.

Later on, my interest in Kangxi's Southern Tours was renewed by my first encounter with the famous painted scrolls depicting Kangxi's second Tour, which took place in 1689. This was in 2009 on the occasion of an exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, devoted to Wang Hui 王翬 (1632-1717), the court painter who was put in charge of producing this enormous set with a team of assistants. It took more than six years to complete the twelve scrolls, each between 15 and more than 20 meters long, collectively known as the *Kangxi nanxun tu* 康熙南巡圖. (There is a similar set depicting the first Qianlong tour in 1751.) Today the Kangxi scrolls, which until the end of the nineteenth century were stored in the Qing archives, have been dispersed between several private and public collections in Europe, North America, and China. The New York exhibit displayed a section (perhaps three meters long) of two of them, no. 3 and no. 7 in the series, belonging respectively to the Met and to the Mactaggart collection of Chinese art donated to the University of Alberta Museums. About five years later I was invited to give a lecture at the University of Alberta as part of a symposium on the topic "Making China's Imperial Order", inspired by the Mactaggart collection.[2] This gave me the possibility to carefully examine scroll no. 7 in its entirety. Besides, before going to Edmonton I went to the Musée Guimet in Paris and was able to do the same with the two scrolls in its possession (nos. 2 and 4 in the series). Above all, the Mactaggart lecture was the occasion to resume serious research on the textual sources of the Kangxi Southern Tours.

Can the Kangxi and Qianlong painted scrolls on the Southern Tours be described as imperial propaganda? Only in a very limited sense, I think, because, even though they describe in striking fashion the highlights of the tours and celebrate the pomp and splendor of the imperial cortège, as well as the variety of landscapes it travelled through amidst admiring crowds, they were in no way intended to be seen by the public; and even at court I doubt that after their first presentation to the throne they were very often unrolled and enjoyed. They were, rather, an *archive*—and it may be noted that they were not part of the imperial painting collection and are not mentioned in its catalogue.[3] Still, some details I will mention later do say something about the imperial representation of the tours; and in any event, the sheer quality of the masterpiece

[1] Yao Tinglin, *Linian ji* 歷年記, in *Qingdai riji huichao* 清代日記彙鈔 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1982), p. 39-168.

[2] The symposium took place in October 2015. The two other speakers were Timothy Brook and R. Kent Guy.

[3] See Maxwell K. Hearn, "The 'Kangxi Southern Inspection Tour': A narrative program by Wang Hui", Ph.D. Diss. (Princeton University, 1990), p. 3.

produced by Wang Hui and his colleagues makes it difficult not to use it as visual counterpoint to the historical narrative, as I will do in what follows.

Speaking of representation, I just alluded to the description found in Yao Tinglin's autobiography as a "popular" narrative. To put it another way, I see it as a narrative allowing us to catch a glimpse of the event's representation that the citizens of Suzhou were able to form for themselves, and this representation is quite different from the one conveyed in official sources. Indeed, this is what led me to explore more systematically the written record on the Kangxi Southern Tours, which turns out to be even more diverse than I would have thought and raises a lot of interesting historiographical problems.

The first section of this essay will therefore propose a quick inventory of the different categories (or statuses) of texts I have been able so far to consult on the subject, and try to ascertain what kind of information they deliver, what the sources of this information may have been, and also, what their *intention* was. This is directly relevant to the question of propaganda and representation. Then, keeping all of this in mind, I will discuss some relevant episodes of the first three Kangxi Southern Tours.

Sources

Roughly speaking, we have, on the one hand, several official chronicles and semi-official accounts; and on the other hand, a range of private accounts, and especially of *testimonies*. Some of these non-official writings remain faithfully within the limits of the imperial discourse: they do not do much more than add a personal touch and some picturesque details, not necessarily uninteresting, to the official narrative—that is, to the propaganda. Others, in contrast, display a variable degree of freedom—indeed, a remarkably high degree in some instances—from the constraints of imperial writing. For this reason, and because they reveal something of popular representations, they are not the least interesting to the historian. So, let me try to give an idea of this variety.

The Official Record

The basic official source, in many ways, and certainly the most contemporaneous, is the so-called *Diaries of Activity and Repose* (*Qijuzhu* 起居注). As is well known, these *Diaries*, which are an old institution in imperial history, were supposed to provide a day-by-day, at times hour-by-hour, account of every move, action, and utterance of the emperor in his official capacity, and of the statements of the officials addressing or answering him, all of this noted down by two imperial diarists in constant attendance. (In the sections of the Kangxi *Qijuzhu* I have used their names are usually provided at the end of each day.) The diarists' daily notes went through a process of editing before being bound into monthly fascicles; at the end of the year these

fascicles were further polished before being presented to the emperor for inspection, after which one copy was stored in the archives of the Grand Secretariat and another at the Hanlin Academy.[4] In other words, this is an official source that was not made public, and of course it was not printed.[5]

So, even though the *Diaries* were assumed to be a neutral and factual report of the emperor's daily activities, there *was* a degree of editing, and this was not just for style: for example, when compared with other sources, it becomes obvious that choices were made on what to include and not to include. Besides, an interesting feature of the Kangxi *Qijuzhu* that has almost never been noticed is that the factual record of actions and speech is interspersed with what we might call "editor's comments".[6] These comments, some of them quite lengthy, and frequently introduced by the words "prostrated, we remark…" (伏惟), may have been written by the diarists themselves, or by anybody else; and we cannot know at which stage they were added to the record—possibly only during the final round of editing, so, not in real time. Such comments occur here and there in the sections of the Kangxi *Diaries* I have consulted; but during the first two Southern Tours they are everywhere to be seen, and I will come back to what this may possibly mean. In contrast, they are completely absent during the 1699 third Southern Tour, and I should note in general that, for no reason I can figure out, the *Diaries* during this third tour are much less detailed than those during the first two tours.

One important peculiarity of the *Qijuzhu* of the Kangxi emperor is that they are incomparably more detailed, and especially, more lively than those of his successors. Even though there obviously is a lot of summarizing, during government audiences we can in many cases hear the emperor and his advisors *speaking* to each other—hence the constant use of the word *yue* 曰 in its concrete meaning of "say"—instead of exchanging abstract, written-out "edicts" (諭) and "memorials" (*zou* 奏) as in the *Diaries* of Qianlong or Jiaqing. Disagreements are at times expressed, for example when discussing new appointments, which always takes much place in the accounts of the daily meetings. There is also the occasional expression of impatience or hesitation on the part of the emperor—he may "lay buried in his thoughts for a long while" (沉思良久); and we can see him specifically addressing this or that individual or group of officials, then turning to someone else, and so on. This is not systematically the case, however, and in this respect also the *Qijuzhu* during the third Southern Tour are very different from those

[4] On the Qing *Diaries*, see Feng Erkang 馮爾康, *Qingshi shiliao xue* 清史史料學 (Shenyang: Shenyang chubanshe, 2004), p. 29-37.

[5] The publication of the copies of the *Diaries* preserved in Beijing and Taipei began in the 1980s.

[6] The only author (to my knowledge) to have looked at these comments is Michael Chang, "Civil-Military Tensions During the Kangxi Emperor's First Southern Tour", *Frontiers of History in China*, 6, 1 (2011), p. 26-52. Chang's thesis, which one may or may not agree with, is that the diarists' comments during the first Southern Tour express a "negotiation" between the emperor's military propensities and the diarists' insistence on civilian and literary virtues.

covering the first two: not only are they much less detailed—some entries (i.e., days) are in fact empty—but the text is mostly devoid of the liveliness just mentioned.

The same sort of (occasional) liveliness is found—though to a lesser extent—in the other official chronicle that is a basic source on the Southern Tours, namely, the Kangxi *Veritable Records* (*Shilu* 實錄). Like the *Qijuzhu* (which were one of their main sources), but with significantly less detail, the *Veritable Records* are a day-by-day chronicle of the emperor's activities and utterances, with further indications on government business dealt with at court. One basic difference, however, is that, contrary to the *Diaries*, the *Veritable Records* were not compiled in real time (more or less), but only after the death of an emperor; and this could have significant political implications regarding what would be enhanced and what would be understated, or even distorted—if we remember that in not a few cases the first concern of a newly-enthroned emperor was to undo what his father had done. In other words, the *Veritable Records* do not have the same immediacy as the *Diaries*. On the other hand, they not infrequently quote from edicts and memorials that do not feature in the *Diaries*. If only for this reason, the two sources are complementary and need to be read in tandem.

Of course the *Diaries* and *Veritable Records* have been widely used by the scholars who have written on the Southern Tours. To be sure, Jonathan Spence, the first historian to offer a comprehensive and still classic account of the Kangxi Southern Tours in English (and as far as I know, in any language), did not have access to the *Diaries*, which had not yet been published at the time.[7] But the *Diaries* are abundantly and consistently used by other important authors on the subject: one example is Maxwell Hearn, whose 1990 Princeton dissertation is devoted to Wang Hui's set of painted scrolls celebrating the 1689 tour; another, more recently, is Michael Chang, whose 2007 book, *A Court on Horseback*, is a detailed study of the policies and circumstances of the Kangxi and Qianlong imperial trips, to the South and elsewhere.[8] Yet I am convinced that there remains much to learn on the Southern Tours from both chronicles, especially when they are read in continuity, rather than being used as a repository of bits of information to pick up from and integrate into one's own narrative: continuous reading allows us to get a better sense of the unfolding and, so to speak, of the *texture* of the voyages. I should add that I find them good reads, especially the *Diaries* during the first two Southern Tours. But of course they need to be confronted with, and complemented by, other sources.

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[7] See Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi Emperor: Bondservant and Master* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), chap. 4.

[8] Hearn, "The 'Kangxi Southern Inspection Tour'". Michael G. Chang, *A court on Horseback: Imperial Touring and the Construction of Qing Rule, 1680-1785* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007); the book has more on Qianlong than on Kangxi, however. Also see Chang's essays, "Civil-Military Tensions", already mentioned, and "Historical Narratives of the Kangxi Emperor's Inaugural Visit to Suzhou, 1684", in *The Dynastic Centre and the Provinces: Agents and Interactions*, ed. Jeroen Duindam and Sabine Dabringhaus (Leiden: Brill, 2014), p. 203-224.

Semi-Official and Private Records

What are these other sources? I mentioned semi-official accounts, and a variety of private accounts and testimonies. What I call "semi-official accounts" here are celebratory narratives found in several local gazetteers of places visited by the emperors during the tours. Their authors may be local officials, or native scholars and retired officials, and in most cases the material is placed in a special *juan shou* 卷首 at the head of the work to enhance the material's special status. The texts that turn out to be the most interesting are those emanating from Suzhou, a city that was visited by Kangxi and Qianlong on each of their trips. I will come back to the successive editions of the county and especially prefectural Suzhou gazetteers, which offer a general account of the Southern Tours (up to the date of publication of the edition considered), though with a special emphasis on Suzhou as can be expected, and occasionally combined with testimonies; as we shall see, they critically complement the official chronicles.[9]

Apart from the additional details that they provide, what distinguishes the gazetteer accounts from the official chronicles is the *viewpoint*: the event is seen and described not from the position of the visitor (the emperor, with his diarists and courtiers in tow), but from that of the visited party (the local officials and gentry). And this is even truer with the individual testimonies left by ordinary people who happened to be there, which again confront us with the question of representation—of the political and psychological relation to the event. I will shortly come back to these local testimonies, which are few in numbers, but some of them of great importance to the historian.

But first, let me say a brief word of the few available testimonies (all of them in the form of diaries) by officials or courtiers who were part of the imperial retinue—so, who we would expect adopted the same viewpoint as the emperor himself and faithfully conveyed the imperial discourse. Only one of these testimonies, to my knowledge, deals with a Kangxi Southern Tour, and this one turns out to be very special. It is due to a high official and close literary advisor of the Kangxi emperor named Zhang Ying 張英 (1638-1708), who was part of the group of what he calls the "attending close ministers" (*shicong jinchen* 侍從近臣) that accompanied Kangxi during the 1689 tour. The text is entitled *Nanxun hucong jilüe* 南巡扈從紀略, and it is in fact a rather unexpected account given the rank and position of its author.[10] Mostly, it shows—

[9] Like those of Suzhou, the Hangzhou prefectural gazetteer (*Hangzhou fuzhi* 杭州府志, revised 1784) has an opening section devoted to the imperial tours. However, it is entirely composed of Kangxi's and Qianlong's poetry, essays, and edicts related to their visits to Hangzhou. Likewise, the 1718 Qiantang gazetteer 錢塘縣志 only contains Kangxi's poems and calligraphies. As for Nanjing, the third major city on the tours, while the 1811 *Jiangning fuzhi* 江寧府志 has nothing of the sort, the 1721 *Shangyuan xianzhi* 上元縣志 (*juan* 2) has a short list of Kangxi's visits, and the 1751 edition (*juan shou*) does contain a rather detailed celebratory account of them (and of the first Qianlong tour), with lengthy quotations of imperial edicts and other writings, part of them also found in the 1824 edition of the same gazetteer.

[10] It is found, among other places, in the *Zhaodai congshu* 昭代叢書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1990), *wuji xubian* 戊集續編, j. 43. I have used the text in *Shiliao congbian* (Taibei: Guangwen shuju, 1968), vol. 17.

candidly, and occasionally in a very funny way—that the progress of Kangxi's retinue may not always have been the orderly pageantry suggested by Wang Hui's images devoted to the same tour and by the stately accounts of the *Diaries* and *Veritable Records*. Zhang's text is quite fascinating because it describes the tour as seen not from the viewpoint of the emperor and his diarists, but from that of the unfortunate courtiers (however "close" they might be) who struggled not to be distanced, who might have to walk miles in the mud and under the rain and suffer from cold and hunger, who were constantly at risk of losing contact with the servants in charge of their luggage, horses, and tents, and who had not much time to sleep and could be summoned at any hour. We hardly find any trace of the debates on rituals, and of the audiences, banquets, and military reviews that are the staple of the *Qijuzhu*. The general impression is that of a big mess, at least when the cortège is on the road, and this, even if Zhang describes the trip as a military operation submitted to military regulations (he speaks of the "imperial camp", *yuying* 御營). The emperor, his close guards, and his baggage are constantly running in the vanguard, and more often than not the rest is hard put to keep up the pace, be it on land or on water. There also are wonderful moments of indiscipline, like when one day in Suzhou the Manchu members of the retinue decide to have some good time and go to the suburbs to watch opera on river boats, until the furious emperor sends guards to summon everybody, creating a general panic. It can also be seen in Zhang Ying's diary that, despite Kangxi's constant protestations that this was a serious tour to inspect the condition of the people, and so on, not a pleasure trip (非為遊觀也), the emperor did a lot of tourism during the 1689 tour, and knew how to enjoy himself. It is also important to note that the journal was not included in Zhang's *Wenji* published during in his lifetime, or later in the *Siku quanshu*: it appeared in print for the first time in the Daoguang era in a *Zhaodai congshu* series.[11]

As a contrast, I might cite three chronicles—these ones not dealing with the Southern Tours—by a close colleague of Zhang's, Gao Shiqi 高士奇 (1645-1703), also a ranking member of Kangxi's literary brain-trust (the Nanshufang 南書房), perhaps the most intimate with the emperor at the time, and a participant in a number of imperial tours. One, entitled *Songting xingji* 松亭行紀, deals with a 1681 trip on which Kangxi took his grandmother to the hot springs and eastern imperial tombs at Zunhua 遵化, then went beyond the Xifeng Pass 喜峯口 to inner Mongolia to do some hunting and to meet Mongol princes.[12] Another one, entitled *Hucong dongxun rilu* 扈從東巡日錄, is an extended and at places rather lively account of a

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On Zhang Ying's career, see A.W. Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1943), p. 64-65. Zhang Ying's colorful account is cited by both Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi Emperor*, and Hearn, "The 'Kangxi Southern Inspection Tour"; according to Hearn, certain details reported in Zhang Ying's account may have inspired Wang Hui pictorial rendering of the 1689 tour (see p. 112, 116-117, 141-145).

[11] Pierre-Henri Durand, personal communication.

[12] In *Zhaodai congshu*, *bingji* 丙集, j. 10.

1682 trip to Mukden, and beyond to the Changbai Mountains and the Sungari River.[13] Gao's third diary, entitled *Hucong xixun rilu* 扈從西巡日錄 and found in the *Siku quanshu*, is about a 1683 trip to Shanxi and the Wutaishan. There may be other such diaries by people who were part of the tours, but so far these are the only ones that I know of. In any case, these day-by-day testimonies may add some pleasant or edifying anecdotes to the official record, not to speak of a quantity of scholarly asides on the historical geography of the places gone through and of literary and historical references, but they remain close to the discourse of imperial propaganda.

Speaking of imperial discourse, it is necessary here to mention yet another testimony, this one on the first trip (1684), and by someone who was very much part of it—the Kangxi emperor himself. Kangxi's *Nanxun biji* 南巡筆記, found in his prose writings[14] and reproduced in several local gazetteers, apparently had a rather wide circulation. According to some scholars, this rather substantial text was edited, if not ghost-written, by Gao Shiqi. It may be the case that Gao had a hand in it, especially for all the literary flourishes in the descriptions, and it is a fact that according to the text itself, during navigation on the Jiangnan watercourses Kangxi and Gao Shiqi would spend their nights on board discussing the classics and history and writing poems, so Gao must have been privy to much of what Kangxi experienced, thought, and felt. Whatever the case may have been, Kangxi's distinctive *voice*, which can be heard in so many sources, is there, as well as his peculiar mindset, combining healthy self-confidence, a deep curiosity for things and people, and a certain impatience in the face of pomposity.

Now to come back to testimonies by local residents, a basic distinction must be made between texts by scholar-officials native to the regions traversed, and texts reflecting the perception of ordinary people. The first category includes, for example, short testimonies due to the retired officials who had been mobilized to welcome the emperor on his arrival at Suzhou; they can be found, together with a variety of celebratory pieces in prose and verse, in the opening chapter of a sort of private Suzhou cultural gazetteer entitled *San Wu caifeng leiji* 三吳采風類記 (1701 author's preface, printed 1710), compiled by one of these scholars, a certain Zhang Dachun 張大純 (1637-1702). Though they do not deviate an inch from the discourse of imperial propaganda, one does find in these testimonies a few telling details. Another such example, of a somewhat different nature to be sure, is the lengthy narrative of Kangxi's visit to

[13] In *Changbai congshu* 長白叢書, *chuji* 初集, éd. Li Shutian 李澍田 (Changchun, Jilin wenshi chubanshe, 1986). It is interesting to read Gao's diary in parallel with the account of the same tour by the Jesuit Ferdinand Verbiest (1623-1688), published in French in *Voyages de l'empereur de la Chine dans la Tartarie, ausquels on a joint une nouvelle découverte au Mexique* (Paris, Estienne Michallet, 1685); the *Changbai congshu* edition includes a translation of Verbiest's testimony in modern Chinese. The motive for Kangxi's visits to the Eastern Tombs and to Mukden was to announce to his ancestors the victory over the Three Feudatories rebellion.

[14] See *Shengzu Ren huangdi yuzhi wenji* 聖祖仁皇帝御製文集 (*Siku quanshu* ed.), j. 20.

Qufu in 1684 by Kong Shangren 孔尚任, the Confucius descendant and future *Peach Blossom Fan* author, who on this occasion acted both as a junior lecturer and a knowledgeable guide.[15]

And finally, a word must be said of missionary testimonies, part of them in Western languages and part in Chinese.[16] Kangxi apparently had intercourse with missionaries on each of his six Southern Tours—quite friendly on the first five, according to the Jesuits at least, but defiant on the last (in 1707), due to the crisis sparked off by the visit to China of Cardinal Maillard de Tournon, Pope Clement XI's special envoy sent to impose the papacy's views in the rites controversy.[17] Despite their heavily apologetic tone—they are another sort of propaganda, after all—and their insistence on their supposed proximity to the emperor, the missionaries do not in fact add much to what can be gleaned from Chinese sources regarding the imperial cortège's progress and how it was perceived by the crowds of onlookers eager to catch a glimpse.

Popular Views

And indeed, how can we know about the views of ordinary citizens? The notion of a "popular narrative" that would run parallel but independent of the official narrative is in fact very elusive. Regarding the Kangxi Southern Tours, I know of only two texts that can be said to reflect popular representations to a greater or lesser extent. Both are highly interesting, and both are at the same time highly problematic.

The first is the autobiography of Yao Tinglin, already mentioned—more precisely, it is a sizable fragment of text *within* that autobiography that describes the two days Kangxi spent in Suzhou in 1684. Yao was born in 1628. He was the scion of a wealthy but somewhat dysfunctional "big family" of Shanghai that was ruined during the Manchu conquest of Jiangnan in 1645 and more or less fell apart during the ensuing decades. As a result, Tinglin, still a teenager at the time, had to fend for himself to make a living and provide for his mother, and later for his own growing family. Now a commoner, he went through all sorts of occupations, such as engaging in petty commerce, farming for the market, being a *yamen* clerk, and working as a village school-teacher and occasional legal consultant. All of this features in

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[15] For a full translation of that narrative, see Richard E. Strassberg, *The World of K'ung Shang-jen: A Man of Letters in Early Ch'ing China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 74-116. My thanks to Susan Naquin for calling my attention to this piece.

[16] For texts in Chinese, see in particular the Jesuit apologetic compilations collected in *Xichao chongzheng ji, Xichao ding'an (wai sanzhong)* 熙朝崇正集、熙朝定案 5外三種), ed. Han Qi 韓琦 and Wu Min 吳旻 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006).

[17] See Han Qi 韓琦, "Nanxun, chuanjiaoshi he waijiao: jianlun Kangxi dui liyi zhi zheng he jiaoting teshi Duoluo lai Hua de fanying" 南巡、傳教士和外交——兼論康熙對禮儀之爭和教廷特使多羅來華的反應, in *Shiqi, shiba shiji (1662-1722) Zhongxi wenhua jiaoliu* 十七、十八世紀 (1662-1722) 中西文化交流 (proceedings of the Third Academic Symposium organized by the Palace Museums across the Strait, Taipei, Old Palace Museum, 2011), p. 301-309. My thanks to the author for giving me a copy of this piece.

great detail in his autobiography (or self-*nianpu*), which bears the somewhat generic title "Chronicle of the successive years" (*Linian ji* 歷年記), and which he started writing at age 41 and continued through age 70 (in 1697). The text, of which at least two different manuscripts have survived, was published for the first time in 1982. Yao's autobiography is of a purely private nature, and this obviously explains its author's candor, his complete absence of posturing, his extreme curiosity and precision, and his sense of amazement at all the extraordinary events he witnessed during his long life. It is in fact a uniquely rich and colorful tapestry of social life and drama in Jiangnan during the Ming-Qing transition.[18]

The Kangxi emperor's visit to Suzhou in 1684 is one of the important, even spectacular, historical events recorded in the *Linian ji*. But when we compare this particular narrative with other events about which Yao Tinglin explicitly says that *he was there*, it is clear that in the present case he was not there;[19] and the narrative is also quite different from the many instances in which Yao recounts things seen by acquaintances and directly reported to him, and makes clear how he was informed: in the present instance there is nothing of the sort, and in fact I strongly suspect that his source was a *text* that he inserted wholesale in his memoir. But then, what kind of text?

Here we touch on the delicate question of the informal media through which information was circulated among the population in late-imperial China. The question is delicate because we have virtually no physical trace of these media—even of the semi-official *Peking Gazette*, at least before the mid-nineteenth century—and can only guess about their form and contents, based on allusions here and there. But it is clear from a text like the *Lininan ji*, whose author was an ordinary citizen, with some education but without bureaucratic connections, that a lot of information about everything of importance in the empire circulated among the population, and circulated fast. The story of Kangxi's visit to Suzhou in the *Linian ji* might well come from one of those anonymous pamphlets for popular consumption that in some ways played the role of a popular press. Yao Tinglin occasionally mentions such pamphlets; and he also mentions the so-called *xiaobao* 小報 (small gazettes), which claimed to complement the semi-official gazettes produced in the provincial capitals and were in fact purely private operations[20]. It is equally possible that Yao extracted his description of Kangxi's 1684 Suzhou visit from one on

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[18] On the Yao Tinglin and the *Linian ji*, see Kishimoto Mio 岸本美緒, "Rekinenki ni miru Shinsho chihô shakai no seikatsu" 歷年記に見る清初地方社會の生活, *Shigaku zasshi*, 16, 6 (1986), p. 53-77; and Pierre-Étienne Will, "Coming of age in Shanghai during the Ming-Qing transition: Yao Tinglin's (1628-after 1697) *Record of the Successive Years*", *Disquisitions on the Past and Present* / *Jingu lunheng*, 4 (2000), p. 15-39.

[19] Chang, "Historical Narratives of the Kangxi Emperor's Inaugural Visit to Suzhou, 1684", p. 118, says that "Yao claims to have been 'an eye-witness to the auspicious presence of the phoenix-emperor' when the imperial procession arrived in Suzhou on 2 December 1684", but this is based on a mistranslation.

[20] See Mokros dissertation, p. 106ff, giving examples that fit rather well the *Hui'ai lu*.

the "novels on current events" popular in the late Ming and early Qing periods, which informed the public of historical events in quasi real time.[21]

Whatever the case, this leads me to say a word of another, very intriguing text that definitely conveys something of the popular representation of the Southern Tours. It is an extended account of the 1699 Tour—the third one—due to a certain Shen Hanzong 沈漢宗, a native of Huzhou in Zhejiang, but apparently a resident of Suzhou, who describes himself as a "subject from the wilderness" (*caomang chen* 草莽臣)—whatever that means exactly;[22] but clearly Shen was an unranked local citizen. As he explains in a short preface, he compiled the book in such a way that, for his fellow citizens, reading his account of Kangxi's benevolence would be tantamount to gazing at the emperor's celestial face at close range; and for this to do, he says, he assembled data from the Peking Gazette (the *Jingbao* 京報), from "small gazetteers" (*xiaochao* 小抄, equivalent to *xiaobao*), and from things "seen and heard" (*jianwen* 見聞)—that is, from testimonies, not necessarily first-hand, though he does not specify their origin. And finally, he had his text printed by a local bookseller in the hope that it would be as widely distributed as possible (see **Fig. 1** for a reproduction of the cover-leaf). (The somewhat untidy printing, with a haphazardly punctuated text not devoid of errors, is typical of cheap publications aimed at the market.) The book's full title is *Shengjia nanxun hui'ai lu* 聖駕南巡惠愛錄 (A Record of Generosity and Love during the Imperial Progress to the South).[23] Shen says on several occasions that he had already published a similar account of the 1689 trip—indeed, the cover-leaf has the mention "printed as a second instalment of things seen and heard" (即二刻見聞錄梓行); unfortunately, this one has not survived.[24]

In any event, the *Hui'ai lu* is an extraordinarily detailed day-by-day chronicle of the 1699 Southern Tour, starting with a lengthy account of the preparations at the capital before

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[21] See Han Li, "News, History, and 'Fiction on Current Events': Novels on Suppressing the Chuang Rebellion", *Ming Studies*, 66 (2012), p. 56-75. My thanks to Paize Keulemans for drawing my attention to this study.

[22] Based on some other occurrences of the term, Pierre-Henri Durand (personal communication) suggests that it might mean a government student (*shengyuan*) who has failed at the higher examinations, or renounced to take them.

[23] The coverleaf has the longer title *Shengjia yueli hegong jian xun Nanzhe hui'ai lu* 聖駕閱歷河工兼巡南浙惠愛錄.

[24] Apparently only one copy of the *Shengjia nanxun hui'ai lu* has been preserved, held by the Taiwan National Library. Very few authors have used it. One is Harry Miller in *State versus Gentry in Early Qing Dynasty China, 1644-1699* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 129-132, who for mysterious reasons calls the author Shen Zongjing, says he was a Hanlin bachelor and even gives his dates as 1658-1725; he also claims that the text is a manuscript, when it is very much a printed book. Another author is Huang Yinong 黃一農, *Erchong zou: Hongxue yu Qingshi de duihua* 二重奏——紅學與清史的對話 (Xinzhu: Guoli Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 2014), table 4.5, where all the mentions of the Cao 曹 family in Shen Hanzong's text are listed. The only study (to my knowledge) looking carefully at the *Hui'ai lu* is Yang Yongjun 楊勇軍, "Lun ji Kangxi disanci nanxun shiji de *Hui'ai lu* jianji *Honglou meng*" 論記康熙第三次南巡事迹的《惠愛錄》兼及《紅樓夢》, *Nanjing shifan daxue wenxueyuan xuebao*, 3 (Sep. 2025), p. 85-94.

departure, and featuring a mix of factual information and formal documents such as could be found in the *Peking Gazette*, and anecdotes, conversations between the emperor and his retinue recorded in *baihua*, and other such things the origin of which is more problematic. All of this is combined into a continuous day-by-day narrative that looks like a sort of private and freewheeling *Qijuzhu*—except that there is virtually no overlap with the "real" *Qijuzhu,* to which the author could not have access, of course. This is clearly a unique account, but it also raises some serious problems, beginning with the fact that certain episodes can be proved to be pure invention. For example, the text speaks of a sort of improvised escapade to the top of the Taishan, with the empress dowager and palace ladies in tow, of which we know, thanks to the official chronicles, that it never occurred. What is more, day-by-day comparison with the *Qijuzhu* reveals that the author of the *Hui'ai lu* subtly warped the chronology prior to this imaginary visit to the Taishan so as to reserve the necessary amount of days to accommodate it; after which he gradually returns to what we assume to be the "real" chronology, since it is the one in the official *Diaries*.

In short, the *Hui'ai lu* raises, more than any other source that I know, the general problem of fact, fiction, and embellishment regarding such highly publicized events as the Southern Tours. Again, and even though the text claims to be a factual chronicle, we are reminded of the "novels on current events", where the frontier between fictionalized history and historical romance remains exasperatingly blurred. One writer of such novels declared that "his work should be able to contribute substantially to the histories that will be written about this period".[25] This is exactly what the author of one of the two postfaces to the *Hui'ai lu* says: "Later, when the imperial family will compile a veritable record and when historians will look for the surviving anecdotes from hermits hiding in the mountains and forests and comb for the forgotten facts recorded in private histories, [the present work] will be able to contribute some help" (他日皇家纂修實錄，史官搆求山林隱逸遺言、蒐羅稗官野史遺事，亦可少補其一助云).

Whatever the level of historical reliability we can ascribe to Shen Hanzong's *Hui'ai lu*, or to this or that aspect of the text—and a lot more research will be needed to ascertain that—it remains that it urgently raises the question, once more, of the various representations of such events that the locals could conjure up, of what were their sources of information or misinformation, how they reacted to them, and how they interpreted them.

Historical Background

Keeping all these problems in mind, let me now turn to some of the problems I believe are worth discussing after a new reading of the sources related to the first Kangxi Southern Tours. In this essay I will concentrate on certain issues and episodes, and also on certain places: as we

[25] Han Li, "News, History, and 'Fiction on Current Events'", p. 59.

shall see, this is enough to raise several interesting questions. Before broaching these, however, a brief reminder of the historical background of the first Southern Tour is in order.

The first Southern Tour took place in 1684—in the late fall of that year, to be precise. (In contrast, the other Kangxi tours took place in the early spring.) The Qing regime had formally assumed power in China exactly forty years before. Yet it could not regard itself as finally and securely established. These four decades had in fact been rather chaotic. Whereas in the year or so after their capture of Beijing on June 2nd, 1644, the Manchus had been able to more or less impose their control on North China, the conquest of the South, which they undertook in the spring of 1645, was quite another challenge.[26] In May 1644, shortly after the news of the fall of Beijing at the hands of a Chinese rebel and of the suicide of the last Ming emperor had been confirmed in Nanjing, the southern capital of the Ming, the high officials and the generals based there put a Ming prince on the throne in an attempt to ensure the continuity of the Ming dynasty, to combat the rebels and resist Manchu invasion, and ultimately to reconquer the North. They succeeded at none of these. The Qing army, which in addition to the Manchu core—the so-called banner forces—included a large number of Chinese contingents that had gone over to the new regime, crossed the Yangzi about a year later, captured Nanjing on June 8, 1645, and conquered Jiangnan and most of the regions further south in a matter of months, replacing the former Ming authorities with their own government.

But the control of the new regime over South China remained shaky for quite a while. For one thing, the harshness of Qing occupation created much resentment in Jiangnan and elsewhere and was an encouragement to rebellion and lawlessness. Most famously, while at first the new regime had been more or less accepted because it seemed able to restore order after a period of near anarchy, shortly thereafter the brutal imposition of the Manchu hairdo (that is, shaving one's head and wearing the queue) on all Chinese males under penalty of death sparked off uprisings that in several instances ended up in the massacre of entire cities. Then, even if the new Ming emperor and government established in Nanjing in 1644 had been crushed after barely a year, other Ming princes claimed legitimacy and continued resistance in the South and Southwest for a decade and a half, with many highs and lows, until the last of them was captured and executed in the far Southwest in January 1662. While this seemed to put an end to loyalist resistance, a powerful ally of the now defunct Southern Ming named Zheng Chenggong 鄭成功 (or Koxinga in Western sources) remained active along the southeast coast, and his descendants continued to defy the Qing for many years from their offshore base on Taiwan, where they were able to hold out until 1683.

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[26] This is not to say that resistance, and more generally, social turmoil ceased altogether in North China after 1645, far from it. The best account in this respect remains Frederic Wakeman, Jr, *The Great Enterprise: the Manchu Reconstruction of Imperial Order in Seventeenth-Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), chap. 9 and 11.

Meanwhile, the Qing regime had been confronted with a new and even more deadly threat, the so-called Rebellion of the Three Feudatories, which started in 1673 and affected large swaths of South China. The "three feudatories" (*sanfan* 三藩) were former Ming generals who had joined the Manchus in the early stages of the conquest and had combatted and eventually destroyed the Southern Ming resistance for their sake. The Qing had then established them as overlords in the territories they had conquered, with resounding titles, wide powers and considerable funds to maintain their armies. When in 1673 the Feudatories had reasons to believe they were about to be deprived of all of this—they had become too independent and too costly—they rebelled and started a war with the explicit aim of expelling the Manchus from China.[27] Without entering into the details of an extremely complicated story, it took the government of the young Kangxi emperor eight years of a ruinous and destructive war until it was able to crush the rebellion's last remnants in Yunnan, where Wu Sangui 吳三桂 (1612-78), the most powerful of the Three Feudatories and the initiator of the rebellion—and, as it happens, the very same general who had helped the Manchus to enter China and capture Beijing more than thirty-five years before—had founded his own dynasty and vowed to displace the Qing.

This was in 1681. The two other rebel leaders had already surrendered. As we have seen, Taiwan, the last stronghold of anti-Qing resistance, was retaken in 1683. So, when Kangxi left for his first Southern Tour in 1684 his regime was at long last free of any internal military threat. Yet, despite these victories, and despite much political propaganda, the legitimacy of the Qing was far from being universally acknowledged. In Jiangnan, in particular, memories of the conquest and its attending brutalities were still vivid and the loyalty of either the elite or the populace was by no means assured. To be sure, local resistance, which had been the source of much violence and lawlessness through the late 1640s, had long been subdued, and the region had by and large escaped the combats of the Three Feudatories rebellion. Still, as the dynasty was in a state of near-constant military emergency, Jiangnan had been subjected to a de facto military regime for nearly four decades. There was in principle a civilian bureaucratic hierarchy; but for many years this hierarchy had mostly been manned by Manchu and Chinese bannermen whose loyalties lay entirely with the new Manchu overlords and whose main assignments were the maintenance of security and fiscal extraction. And in any case, the military had pride of place, there were garrisons everywhere, relations with the civilian population were tense, and there was no question on the part of local officials of resisting any of the military's constant

[27] To be more precise, one of the three rebels, Shang Zhixin 尚之信, who joined the two others in 1676, was the son of the general the Qing had left in full control of Guangdong. His father, Shang Kexi 尚可喜, had retired in 1671 on account of illness and remained loyal to the Qing.

and always very urgent requisitions—in funds, in supplies, in labor, in lodgings, in boats, or whatever, all in the name of national defense.[28]

In short, it seems clear that despite a veneer of submission there still was much resentment; and this was especially the case with the literati elite. Through the end of the Ming, Jiangnan had been not only the wealthiest area of the empire, but also its cultural heart, the region where intellectual and artistic fashions were set, and the one that produced the largest numbers of degree holders, therefore the one with the greatest influence in national politics. The literati class—including its lower stratum, composed of tens of thousands of government students (*shengyuan*) who were not entitled to enter public service—dominated Jiangnan society economically, politically and culturally: its members enjoyed many sumptuary and fiscal privileges, they were in a better position than anybody else to accumulate landed and other wealth, they maintained cozy relations with the local authorities, and in a general way they regarded themselves as incommensurably superior to the common folks (and were regarded as such by them). Yet after the Manchu conquest it looked very much like a good deal of this was about to be lost; and it is easy to imagine that such a situation could only nourish nostalgia for the pre-conquest good old times. Politics in the capital was now dominated by Manchus and by northern Chinese, the provincial chiefs sent down by Beijing were all Manchus or their Chinese retainers, the old networks of political influence based on the examination system had been, so to speak, de-activated, and the all-powerful military had only scorn for the literati class. Worst of all, in 1661 the Manchu aristocrats who ran the government in the name of the seven-year old Kangxi decided that from now on the Jiangnan gentry would have to pay their taxes, including arrears, instead of enjoying the maze of fiscal privileges they had more or less legally accumulated under the Ming. This led to the ruin and loss of status of a lot of distinguished gentlemen. It was—from the point of view of the local gentry—an episode both humiliating and traumatic.

To be sure, Jiangnan's gloomy condition seems to have started to improve shortly before Kangxi's first Southern Tour. By 1680 the Three Feudatories threat could be considered as over; and in early 1682 the administration of Jiangnan was for the first time entrusted to a Chinese governor general who was neither a bannerman nor a military commander. His name was Yu Chenglong 于成龍 (1617-84), and his task was among other things to impose strict control on local officials, inspire them with a sense of mission, and bring the military back to their proper place. In all of this he appears to have been rather successful, and we do have

[28] See my essay, "Shinsho no Kōnan ni okeru bumbu no kenryoku kankei" 清初の江南における文武の權力關係, in Yamamoto Eishi 山本英史 (ed.), *Kinsei no kai.iki sekai to chihō tōchi* 近世の海域世界と地方統治 (Tokyo, Kyūko shoin, 2010), p. 127-151. For a good analysis of the demands on Jiangnan during the Three Feudatories rebellion and Jiangnan elites' difficult relations with the central government during the same period, see Harold Lyman Miller, "Factional Conflict and the Integration of Ch'ing Politics, 1661-1690" (PhD. Diss,, George Washington University, 1974), p. 63ff.

evidence that as a result he earned a lot of popularity with the locals.[29] Yu Chenglong died in office a few months before Kangxi's first visit to Jiangnan, but shortly thereafter Tang Bin 湯斌 (1627-87), another model of Confucian virtues and austerity, and he too a great administrator, was appointed governor of Jiangsu. Still, this was all very recent, and when Kangxi decided to visit Jiangnan in 1684—seemingly at very short notice, as we shall see—the acceptance of Manchu rule was still precarious; so that, politically speaking, this first of the six Southern Tours that Kangxi made during his long reign could be regarded as somewhat adventurous.[30]

The 1684 Southern Tour

Most historians have remarked that the first Southern Tour started not as a "Southern Tour", but as an "Eastern Tour". As is well known, it was part of a tentative program of inspection tours that emerged in the aftermath of the victory over the Three Feudatories and was to bring the emperor to the four orients to proclaim the military successes of the dynasty over the forces that contested its legitimacy. The 1684 Eastern Tour in particular was strongly pushed by the ritualists at court, who wanted to take advantage not only of the victories just won, but also of the fact that 1684, a *jiazi* 甲子 year, marked the beginning of the first full sixty-year cycle of the dynasty, to make the emperor visit certain places with high symbolic value and perform important sacrifices that would confirm the dynasty's legitimate dominion over the empire.[31] There were of course venerable precedents to such touring, going back to the remotest Antiquity and recorded in the Classics, and duly cited by the ritual specialists. Discussions about performing rituals on the Taishan and at Confucius's native place took place as early as the spring of 1684. Some even proposed that the emperor perform the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices at the top of the Taishan, arguing that Kangxi surpassed Yao and Shun in virtue and that his accomplishments were superior to those of the Han and Tang; but this was eventually deemed

[29] In his *Linian ji*, p. 117ff, Yao Tinglin speaks in glowing terms of the stern and upright Yu Chenglong, of whom he was able to catch a glimpse in 1684 once he passed through Shanghai together with other dignitaries. Yao also reports that after Yu's untimely death Buddhist services were set up in many places, that in Nanjing the markets closed several days, and that everywhere the populace expressed its sorrow.

[30] In *The Fall of Imperial China* (New York: The Free Press, 1975), p. 93, Frederic Wakeman implies—with obvious exaggeration—that by then Kangxi was not even sure of his personal safety: "On his early tours south after the three feudatories were crushed, K'ang-hsi preferred to stay within the Manchu banner garrisons for his own safety. But during his four trips to the Yangtze region after 1699, he felt certain enough of his popularity to attend public banquets and lodge in the residences of Chinese officials." Kangxi did not wait until 1699 to stay in the residences of Chinese officials, and to my knowledge he never resided in Manchu garrisons (where they existed).

[31] As a precedent, Emperor Wu of the Han had performed the *feng* and *shan* rituals on the Taishan on a *jiazi* year.

inappropriate on several grounds,[32] and in the end it was decided that the emperor would perform regular sacrifices on the Taishan and at Qufu "taking advantage" of his Eastern Tour (乘便致祭).[33]

Still, in the case of the Qing emperors, perhaps more important was a preexisting "ethnic" pattern of peripatetic rule typical of the Manchus, or at least highly favored by them—a pattern that has been analyzed in detail in Michael Chang's *A Court on Horseback* (indeed, Chang speaks, perhaps a little too insistently, of the Qing as an "ethno-dynasty", not a dynasty *tout court*); and this ethnic pattern was, so to speak, rationalized in a Confucian way by the Chinese classicists at the Qing court. Yet when they went on tour the Qing emperors had many other things on their agenda besides sacrificing to the sacred peaks, announcing their victories to their ancestors, or doing other ritually correct things: they attended hunting parties, they reviewed troops, they presided over central government business from "under the tent", as it were,[34] as government was in no way interrupted by the trips, they checked on local government and inspected public works, they visited scenic spots, and, more than the standard sources would acknowledge, they had fun.

Another motive for imperial travelling sanctioned by Antiquity was to get direct information on the condition of the local populace—or as the phrase goes, to "inquire about the people's sufferings" (問民疾苦). In the months leading to the 1684 tour, the standard chronicles record discussions regarding the proper sacrifices the emperor should perform, as I mentioned; but obviously this question was not high priority for Kangxi. In an edict to the Ministry of Revenue dated October 28, 1684, he insisted that, giving in to the court's insistence—that is to say, for ritual reasons—he was about to depart for an Eastern Tour (今俯允廷議、諏吉東巡), but that he did it principally because he wanted to inquire about the people's circumstances, help the

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[32] See for example the discussions reported in *Kangxi Qijuzhu*, ed. Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'an guan (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), KX 23/2/29 (2:1144) and KX 23/3/14 (2:1152). For a detailed analysis of the controversy, see Chang Jianhua 常建華, "Xin jiyuan: Kangxi di shouci nanxun qiyin Taishan xunshou shuo" 新紀元——康熙帝首次南巡起因泰山巡狩說 », *Wen shi zhe* 2010, 2, p. 147-156; Michael Chang, "Civil-Military Tensions", p. 28-34. Kangxi himself claims at the beginning of his *Nanxun biji* that in the years since his assumption of power the population has suffered from disasters and wars, and that even though peace and contentment are now reigning, his accomplishments are not such that he would dare to imitate rulers of the past by engraving his successes and recording his virtues (實未有豐功偉烈，足以昭示來茲。何敢效法前人銘功紀德 ?).

[33] See the deliberation cited by Chang Jianhua, "Xin jiyuan", p. 151. On the Taishan Kangxi would sacrifice following the rituals for the five sacred peaks (泰山照祀五嶽禮致祭), and at Qufu he would follow the local rituals (孔廟照本處祀典致祭). At one point it had also been contemplated to perform a sacrifice to Heaven on the Taishan, bringing all the paraphernalia from the Temple of Heaven in Beijing to the top of the mountain.

[34] Rather than "on horseback". The sources frequently refer to the "tent palace" (*zhangdian* 帳殿) where the emperor held court when on tour. During the trip to Jehol in early 1684 the *Qijuzhu* often use the phrase "the emperor went to the travel tent" (上御行幄) to describe Kangxi attending government at the end of the day.

victims of disasters, be completely informed about bureaucratic discipline, study local customs, and so forth.[35] This is typical Kangxi: he was concerned first of all with *real issues*; and the rest of the edict is all about the funding of the trip—which should by no means be extracted from the local citizenry—and insists that the people in the prefectures the imperial retinue will walk through be left undisturbed in their daily occupations. In contrast, the formal imperial proclamation (頒詔天下) announcing the trip four days later (on November 1st), which is clearly from the pen of the emperor's literati advisers, is full of flowery language and of references to ancient precedents—but still insisting on taking care of the sufferings of the people, and without any mention of the rituals that have been planned.[36]

The Turn to the South

So, the 1684 tour started as an "Eastern Tour". Kangxi ascended the Taishan (on foot, and in his own *biji* he insists that these forty *li* of steep paths are really hard);[37] he offered sacrifices in the shrines located at the top; but after that, instead of going south in the direction of Qufu—the ancestral home of Confucius, which was supposed to be the second assignment on the trip—he went southeast (**see map in Fig. 2**);[38] and eight days later, on November 24, while the imperial retinue was camping at Honghua pu 紅花鋪, a town in Tancheng 郯城 county in southwest Shandong located on the frontier with Jiangsu, he suddenly announced that he wanted to inspect the condition of the hydraulic works on the Yellow River, where dike breaks year after year had made many victims, and that from now on it would be a "Southern Tour" (*nanxun*)—and the imperial retinue departed for Suqian 宿遷 in Jiangsu, on the Grand Canal near its confluence with the Yellow River, on that very day.[39]

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[35] See *Shengzu shilu*, KX 23/9/20 癸未 (116/27a-b) (not in *Qijuzhu*). For Chang Jianhua, "Xin jiyuan", p. 152, all of this is what the ancient sovereigns attempted to do in their inspection tours (*xunshou* 巡狩), and Kangxi situated his "Eastern tour" in that very perspective. Still, the edict does not mention the Ancients. Elsewhere, before and after the trip, Kangxi said he was interested in getting acquainted with the Southeast: thus, in the *Nanxun biji* (following the passage quoted above, n. 29), he recalls that the Zhou precedent for the sovereign's inspection tours (that is, checking on the feudatories' government) does not apply any more since the empire has been unified, and explains that he was just curious to have a first-hand experience of the Southeast, and for that reason yielded to his ritualists' demand for a tour to the Taishan and to Qufu. (The *Nanxun biji*'s account completely ignores ritual matters.)

[36] *Shengzu shilu*, KX 23/9/24 丁亥 (116/28a-b) (not in *Qijuzhu*).

[37] According to Paul Demiéville, who did the ascent (and was a seasoned mountaineer), it takes six to seven hours. See Demiéville, "Le T'ai-chan ou Montagne du suicide" (1921), in his *Choix d'études sinologiques* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), p. 1-7.

[38] According to Édouard Chavannes, *Le T'ai chan: essai de monographie d'un culte chinois* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1910), p. 48, Qufu "n'est distante que d'une forte journée de marche du *T'ai chan*". (Chavannes himself made the trip, of course.)

[39] *Kangxi Qijuzhu*, KX 23/10/18 (2:1241): 上以黃河屢歲衝決，久為民害，欲親至其地，相度形勢，察視河工，命駕南巡。於是日啟行，駐蹕宿遷縣城內.

At least the decision is sudden *in the sources*; but I have difficulty to believe, as apparently all historians do, that Kangxi was acting on impulse. For one thing, moving along the imperial retinue was not an easy matter, either in terms of logistics or of ritual constraints, and local authorities needed to be warned well in advance. Then—and I think this is the decisive argument—as we just saw it was right after his ascent of the Taishan that Kangxi departed in a direction that took him *away* from Qufu, and I assume that he knew where he wanted to go. After all, in his *biji* Kangxi plainly says that if he accepted to do the tour, it was because he wanted to get acquainted with the Southeast. I am therefore convinced that it was all planned, at whatever level, and from whatever time, even if the available sources do not mention it.[40]

Now, when Kangxi announced that the procession would become a "Southern Tour", he had a serious justification: the Yellow River and Grand Canal waterworks were an important and very immediate problem, and maintaining their condition related to some of the most crucial tasks of the Son of Heaven. But after the emperor had visited the waterworks (I will come back to this episode later), the procession kept on due south and crossed the Yangzi into "real" Jiangnan—and this time there were no official justifications whatsoever, even though several politically momentous moves did actually take place.

The Visit to Suzhou

As I see it, five main events can be highlighted in the 1684 Southern Tour: they are (1) the visit to Mount Tai and the attending rituals, (2) the inspection of the Yellow River dyke-works, which in fact occurred twice, on the way to the south and again on the way back home, (3) the visit to Suzhou, (4) the visit to Nanjing, (5) and finally, on the way back, the visit to Confucius's birthplace. All these episodes are discussed at some length, sometimes at great length, in the official chronicles I mentioned—except one: the two-day stay in Suzhou (on December 2 and 3). In both the *Qijuzhu* and *Shilu* this highly symbolic visit to the economic and cultural center of Jiangnan is disposed of in a few lines—and with only two exceptions known to me, modern historians have done the same.[41] In particular, the trip to this must of Suzhou tourism and one-

[40] Chang Jianhua, "Xin jiyuan", p. 153, notes that the *Shilu* entry for November 24 (117/6a) cites the same words as the *Qijuzhu*, less the phrase 命駕南巡, but specifying that they are addressed to Jin Fu 靳輔, the director general of the Grand Canal (河道總督), and concluding with "let's proceed today" (即於今日前往). Contrary to Chang I do not think such formulation implies that Kangxi changed his itinerary *on that very day*, after he had heard Jin Fu report on the Grand Canal/Yellow River situation. As we saw he had decided to go south at least eight days before. Likewise, it is not likely that the visit to the water works specifically was decided after the interview with Jin Fu, who had come for an audience in Tancheng: after all, the problems of Yellow River and Grand Canal conservancy and related disasters had been high on the court's agenda for years.

[41] Besides my own essay, "Vu de Shanghai", in *Kangxi, empereur de Chine 1662-1722. La Cité Interdite à Versailles*, catalogue de l'exposition au Musée national du château de Versailles (27 janvier-9 mai 2004), p.

time meeting place for Confucian activists that was Tiger Hill (Huqiu 虎丘) yields nothing in these sources but an edifying speech by the emperor to the effect that Jiangnan people are too prone to squander their resources and live in luxury, and that they should therefore revert to austerity and subsistence agriculture.[42]

Did Kangxi actually utter these platitudes during his visit to Tiger Hill? It is a fact that the motif of Jiangnan extravagance, as opposed to the simplicity and authenticity of the North, comes up regularly in his utterances during the Southern Tours. For example, when about to leave Nanjing during the same 1684 tour, Kangxi makes a similar pronouncement, ordering the local officials to combat popular laxness.[43] Likewise, during the 1689 tour Kangxi has only critical comments on southern customs as he has been able to observe them in Jiangsu and Zhejiang, such as improvidence, litigiousness, and a penchant for luxury.[44]

The problem, in the present instance, is that other accounts of the 1684 visit to Tiger Hill deliver a completely different image. First are the reports found in the Suzhou gazetteers. Of the four Qing editions of *Suzhou fuzhi*, the one published in 1748 contains nothing on the event, but the 1692 edition has an opening chapter recounting the first two visits of Kangxi to the city with a certain amount of detail, and in the 1824 and 1883 editions this opening chapter is devoted to the totality of both Kangxi's and Qianlong's visits, enriched with various texts and testimonies by local literati and members of the imperial retinue; it also includes large extracts from Kangxi's own *Nanxun biji*.[45] None of these accounts says a word of the speech on Tiger Hill I just mentioned: Kangxi's considerations on Jiangnan extravagance are only alluded to in the form of an edict addressed to the Jiangnan governor general and governors, and this is not in connection with the visit to Tiger Hill.[46] On the other hand, they provide a very precise list

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29-41, the other exceptions are Yü Ying-shih in a preface mentioned below, and Chang, "Historical Narratives of the Kangxi Emperor's Inaugural Visit to Suzhou".

[42] *Shengzu shilu*, 117/11a. Harry Miller, *State versus Gentry*, p. 132, recalls that at the end of the Ming Huqiu had been the site of demonstrations by members of the Fushe and affiliated societies. In other words, for Kangxi taking symbolically possession of the place was not indifferent politically.

[43] *Kangxi Qijuzhou*, p. 1149. Even before departing for what was still an Eastern Tour, during an audience with Tang Bin before the latter left to assume his post of Jiangsu governor Kangxi broached the problem of Jiangnan extravagance, and because of it refused to lower Jiangsu's tax quota as Tang suggested (ibid., p. 1224).

[44] See, e.g., ibid., p. 1837. In an edict following his visit to Hangzhou in 1689, Kangxi claimed he had observed that the majority of merchants operating on the markets in Jiangsu and Zhejiang were Shanxi people, and that the reason was their austere way of life, as opposed to the improvidence and extravagance of Jiangnan people. See *Shengzu shilu*, 139/24a.

[45] The basic text in the 1824 and 1883 editions is essentially the same, with the latter adding a few more sources as appendixes. For the first tours it draws substantially from Zhang Dachun's *San Wu caifeng leiji*, already mentioned, which opens with a chapter devoted to accounts of the first three imperial visits, enriched with testimonies, poems, and so on, which were in turn used by the gazetteer compilers.

[46] The same sources also say that the emperor's edict was subsequently engraved on three stelae erected on conspicuous spots in Nanjing, Suzhou, and Anqing. Kangxi's own *biji* does make the remark that despite the

of the places the emperor visited during the two days he spent in Suzhou, including all the famous spots on Tiger Hill; and not only this, but some of them also give us a sense of the crowd of onlookers, so dense at times that the imperial retinue could hardly proceed, of the noise, of the music, the lanterns, and so forth.

A few views of Tiger Hill are shown in **Fig. 3-4b**. **Fig. 3**, taken from the 1824 Suzhou prefectural gazetteer, provides a convenient overview of the site. **Fig. 4a-b** is the representation of Tiger Hill found in Wang Hui's scroll no. 7, corresponding to the 1689 tour. We note that the emperor is *not* present here: the rule was that he should be seen only once on each scroll. On scroll no. 7 he will be seen later, when he enters the city of Suzhou through Chang gate 閶門 (**Fig. 5a-b**). As we can see, Kangxi is getting into Suzhou by boat, whereas in 1684 we are said that he crossed the famous bridge leading to Chang gate (**Fig. 6**) riding his horse. As a result, the crowd on the picture of Tiger Hill looks as if it were hovering around *after* the emperor's visit, while he is on his way to the city, when in reality, in 1689 as in 1684, Kangxi entered Suzhou through Chang gate first, and visited Tiger Hill later: this is an example among others where Wang Hui and his associates tinkered with chronology in order to produce a more shapely narrative.

The Suzhou Visit in the Linianji

To come back to it, the chronology and topography of the two days spent by Kangxi in Suzhou in 1684, as they are recorded in the Suzhou prefectural gazetteer, are confirmed in almost every detail in the autobiography of Yao Tinglin. This little-known and totally different sort of source deserves consideration because the image of the Kangxi emperor it conveys is quite surprising when we compare it not only with official sources, but also with most private accounts. The young sovereign as he is shown there (he was thirty at the time) displays none of the earnestness and sternness attributed to him in the official record: he can't stay still, he talks informally to his entourage, he doesn't care about convention, and he is eager to have fun; and in addition, he displays what I do not hesitate to call a truly populist talent for political public relations. I should also add that there are some striking similarities between this image of Kangxi and the one given in Shen Hanzong's account of the 1699 Southern Trip, even though by then the emperor was fifteen years older and many things had changed. Indeed—and that is the point—both may have drawn from the same kind of popular sources of which the originals have long since disappeared.[47]

In any event, according to the account in the *Linian ji*, as soon as his boat has reached Chang gate, to the northwest of the city, Kangxi jumps on a horse and, together with a party of about

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image of peace and prosperity that struck him at Tiger Hill, the locals are mainly interested in the superficialities of luxury and their habits lack the simplicity and authenticity of the Northeast (然徒事紛奢，罔知務本，未若東北風俗之樸實耳).

[47] For a near-complete translation of the *Linian ji* text, see Will, "Vu de Shanghai".

seventy horsemen (including the local high officials), he first rides south to visit a famous temple in Suzhou, the Ruiguangsi 瑞光寺, in the southwest corner of the city (see **Fig. 7-8** for localization of the places mentioned). Then, still on horseback, they all climb to the top of the massive city wall at the nearby Pan gate 盤門, from which they follow the wall clockwise from gate to gate, a cavalcade over more than eight kilometers by my calculation that brings them to the Lou gate 婁門; and only then do they ride down back to ground level. Then the emperor and his retinue are taken to a grandiose mansion and park that had been the property of Wu Sangui's son-in-law before being confiscated as "rebel property" (*nichan* 逆產) and has been fitted out as a temporary palace for the emperor;[48] but after refreshments have been brought, Kangxi declares that he does not like it here, and tells the superintendent of the Suzhou imperial silk factories: let's go eat at your place! (As is well known, under the Qing, the superintendents of the silk factories in Nanjing, Suzhou and Hangzhou were Chinese bondservants of the imperial household, and it remained the custom that they would host the imperial retinue during the Southern Tours.) Thereupon, everybody rides south again. Once they are in the superintendent's *yamen* (the *zhizao fu* 織造府) (see **Fig. 9a-b** for an idealized representation in the Wang Hui scroll), the emperor tells his entourage to relax, absolutely refuses to take the seat of honor—i.e., facing south—and after a while asks to be treated with a theatrical show, which the superintendent has no difficulty to provide—and so, the whole party spends a good part of the night watching opera.

The next day, early in the morning, the emperor asks: where is Tiger Hill? Let's go there! Which they do, but only after they have spent the entire morning watching more opera under the pretext of having breakfast. Riding the streets of Suzhou, Kangxi forbids his guards to keep the populace away and to force the locals to shut their shops and close their windows. Everybody, men and women, is allowed to watch, and as he proceeds the emperor exchanges cheers with the crowd: "Long live the emperor!" (願我皇萬歲), they shout, and he responds, "long live to my subjects!" (你們百姓多有壽).[49] On the road to Tiger Hill amidst a dense throng of people, Kangxi, still riding, orders that the people must not be forced to kneel.[50] Once

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[48] This was the Zhuozheng yuan 拙政園, famously painted by Wen Zhengming in the sixteenth century, which had been acquired and restored to palatial grandeur by Wang Yongning 王永寧, Wu Sangui's son-in-law. After Wang's death (reportedly due to his fright when he heard that his father had rebelled), the garden became the residence of a variety of Suzhou high officials.

[49] According to Yao Tinglin, the emperor and the crowd exchanged the same greetings when Kangxi visited Suzhou again in 1689. As one will have noted, wishing "long live" is not done with the same words in the case of the emperor and in that of his subjects.

[50] Apparently Kangxi and his retinue followed Shantang Street 山塘街, parallel to Shantang Canal, which is seven *li* long and runs directly from Chang Gate to Tiger Hill. His boats, mentioned later in the text, must have been waiting for him on Shantang Canal, which connects with the Grand Canal. See Ōki Yasushi 大木康, *Soshū Kagai sampo: Santōgai no monogatari* 蘇州花街散歩——山塘街の物話 (Tokyo: Kyūko shoten, 2017), in particular maps on p. vii and 66, as well as the plates from *Huqiu shanzhi* 虎丘山志 on p. 105-108.

on Tiger Hill, which he ascends on foot, and after he has visited some of the highlights, Kangxi sits down with all his dignitaries attending, and he orders that music be played for him. However, after a suite in ten movements has been played by the local musicians, he proclaims that this is all very well, but wait until you hear our Northern music! And he sends for his own musicians, who were waiting in the barges down on the Grand Canal, and they in turn play two hours of a music that definitely sounds like new music to the ears of the southerners. After this has been done, the emperor, watching the crowd of onlookers wandering under the lanterns lower on the hill, decides that since they have not been able to enjoy the music, let's play some more for them—and on it goes, till 11pm, Kangxi himself beating a drum! When it's over, he leaves the site with his escort, walking through the front gate of Tiger Hill amidst the throng, and the imperial flotilla departs for Nanking in the middle of the night.

What is the credibility of this account? As I said, most of the details on Kangxi's moves within the city of Suzhou and on Tiger Hill are confirmed by other records;[51] and after all, much of what is described here was *public* behavior, in other words, for everyone to see. Riding a horse on the top of the city wall is not mentioned in any official or semi-official account of the 1684 Southern Tour (not even in Kangxi's own account), but that it is not altogether an impossibility is in a way confirmed by Wang Hui's scroll no. 3 (at the Metropolitan Museum), where we find a representation of the emperor seated on a horse and looking around from the top of the city wall not of Suzhou, but of Jinan in Shandong (**Fig. 10**). To be sure, it is a very formal representation, with the emperor standing still and an attendant holding a parasol above his head—so, a far cry from the wild cavalcade (at least the text suggests it was kind of wild) on top of the Suzhou wall described in the *Linian ji*; and in any event, it is difficult to imagine Kangxi and his suite plodding along on the top of the wall all the way from Pan gate to Qi gate 齊門 (rather than Lou gate, if we are to believe the other sources) *on foot*. As for the descriptions of packed streets and enthusiastic crowds, they are only a notch above what we find in more conventional texts.

Indeed, the various modes of popular attendance as the imperial caravan passes by during the Southern (and other) Tours, as they are recorded in the sources, would deserve more systematic study. There are contrasting descriptions, depending on the source and on the place, of the crowd lining the road followed by the emperor. Sometimes—for instance, during the 1684 Suzhou visit, and this is not found just in the *Linian ji*—it is a cheering populace standing level with the imperial cortège, as it were. When Kangxi enters Jinan in 1689, just after having announced a generous tax exemption for Shandong, the crowds that thank him for his generosity "make a thunderous noise" (叩謝皇恩。懽聲雷動).[52] In contrast, when describing the inhabitants of Nanjing welcoming Kangxi in 1689 the Jesuit missionary Jean de Fontaney

[51] However, even though they all mention the visit to the Zhuozheng yuan, none says that it had been fitted to accommodate the emperor as a temporary palace.

[52] *Shengzu shilu*, 139/5b.

speaks of respectful silence: “Il y avait dans les ruës un peuple infini; mais dans un si grand respect, & dans un silence si profond, qu’on n’entendoit pas le moindre bruit.”[53] Again in contrast, when passing through Yangzhou on the same tour, Kangxi ordered that the costly installations set up by the locals to welcome him in cities be dispensed with, and expressed his fear of accidents caused by the unruly crowds—old and young, men and women—scrambling to get a glimpse and taking advantage of the fact that “there is no strict advance security since this is all for the sake of the people” (念此行原以為民、不嚴警蹕) : from then on, “only kneeling along the road will be authorized—no running in disorder after the cortège and risking unfortunate outcomes!” (此後止於夾道跪迎、勿得紊亂追趨、致有諸患).[54] We are frequently told of the populace kowtowing as the emperor goes past; but this was not necessarily passive submission. In Suqian on November 25, 1684, the emperor found that the many people kowtowing on both sides of the road were here to lodge complaints (*kouhun* 叩閽), spurring him to deliver a speech where he criticized the officials’ propensity to encourage litigation.[55] Indeed, the motif of direct appeal to the sovereign on the occasion of his fleeting apparitions resurfaces constantly. Shen Hanzong’s *Hui’ai lu* even mentions cases of people who jump in the water trying to take a complaint to the imperial boat, and he claims that the emperor systematically ordered the supplicants’ cases to be forwarded to the Ministry of Justice for consideration. This is doubtful, however, and obviously part of Shen’s efforts to embellish things and make the emperor more compassionate than he actually was: in his official pronouncements Kangxi systematically denounces this sort of practice and makes it clear that the supplicants’ requests won’t be examined.[56]

Whatever the case may have been, and to come back to Yao Tinglin’s description of the 1684 Suzhou visit, what is especially striking there and is not found in any formal account of the event is Kangxi’s fondness for musical performance (though there are mentions of operatic shows offered by his hosts during other Southern Tours), his unpredictable behavior, his spontaneity in his exchanges (in *baihua*) with his entourage, and his way of connecting directly with the public.[57] The only other source where we find the same sort of things here and there

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[53] *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, écrites des missions étrangères par quelques missionnaires de la Compagnie de Jésus*, 7 (1707), p. 170. My thanks to Wu Min for mentioning this passage to me.

[54] *Shengzu shilu*, 139/14b-15a.

[55] *Kangxi Qijuzhu*, 2:1241; *Shengzu shilu*, 117/6a-b.

[56] In the edict announcing his departure for the second Southern Tour, for example, he warns that he won’t tolerate such behavior. See *Shengzu shilu*, 139/3a.

[57] The direct contacts between the emperor and the local population that Kangxi, and to a lesser extent Qianlong, allowed during the Southern Tours ran counter to all the regulations related to imperial cortèges. On these, see Luca Gabbiani, “Les déplacements impériaux dans la Chine du XVIIIe siècle: dimensions rituelles et politiques”, in *Les entrées royales et impériales : histoire, représentation et diffusion d’une cérémonie publique, de l’Orient ancien à Byzance*, ed. Agnès Bérenger et Eric Perrin-Saminadayar (Paris: De Boccard, 2009), p. 255-282.

is, again, Shen Hanzong's account of the 1699 tour. One might say that the *Linian ji*'s testimony delivers the exact opposite of the image of the towering Sage insistently propagated by the official sources at the time of the first two Southern Tours, especially the second one. To be sure, Kangxi was very good at cultivating his popularity, and right from the beginning the Southern Tours were the occasion of a variety of tax exemptions and amnesties, not to mention the help to flood victims or grants in food and money to the onlookers who had come from afar to watch the imperial retinue or to the beggars and orphans of the place, as in Hangzhou in 1689.[58] All of this was by all accounts enthusiastically received in a region whose denizens had gone through a punishing regime of fiscal extraction during the previous decades. To give just one example, when he reports that on his arrival in Suqian in 1689 Kangxi decreed an exemption of all tax arrears in the region for a total of 2.2 million taels, to be posted in every town and village, Yao Tinglin celebrates the emperor's "truly shining words" (真天語煌煌).[59]

Yet—contrary to the behavior described in the *Linian ji*'s description of the Suzhou visit—none of this was "populist" in any particular way. It was part and parcel of the image of the perfect Son of Heaven that Kangxi's courtiers and historiographers were working hard at conveying in the sources that would be used for writing History. A typical example of such efforts is the editors' sometimes quite lengthy comments in the *Diaries of Activity and Repose*, in which they insist that each action and pronouncement they record (including the demonstrations of physical prowess and martial competence) is just one more proof that our beloved emperor is equal, if not superior, to the model kings of Antiquity and that he is the first historical ruler ever to have accomplished such deeds and demonstrated such closeness to Heaven's will. Such enthusiasm is particularly heavy-going during the 1689 tour, where the *Diaries* also feature numerous and interminable declarations to the same effect by local notables. As we shall see later, the second Southern Tour corresponded to a particularly important juncture in Kangxi's process of power-building. What is sure is that the sycophantic tone, at places bordering on personality cult, of all of this, in the *Diaries* and elsewhere, is almost embarrassing when we remember how spontaneous, even fun, the Kangxi emperor could be.

The Quest for Legitimacy

[58] *Linian ji*, p.134.

[59] Ibid., year 1689. Note that Yao's account of the 1689 Southern Tour does not constitute a narrative "of a piece" like the 1684 account of Kangxi's visit to Suzhou: it is, rather, a succession of short indications concerning the emperor's travel to Suzhou and Hangzhou, such as could be found in the gazettes to which everybody had access, with a few (possibly spurious) anecdotes inserted. The overall emphasis is on Kangxi's generosity in grants and in tax exemptions.

What is important with texts like the *Linian ji* or the *Hui'ai lu* is that they convey an image that *stayed in popular memory* and that apparently Kangxi was able to build largely by himself, without the help of his ritualists and propagandists: the image of an emperor who is young, athletic, hyper-active, non-conformist, and above all, *really* close to the people. Achieving this was certainly one of the reasons for Kangxi's success at establishing himself as a perfect Sage, not only in dynastic writings, but also in the popular record. At one point—on the occasion of the 1689 Southern Tour—Yao Tinglin exclaims in the *Linian ji* that "No one has ever seen an emperor that more resembles Yao and Shun!" (堯舜之君，亦不過如是).[60] This is remarkable, because Yao Tinglin, without being uncultured, was a commoner and was not involved in politics; yet what he says in his autobiography—a text of a strictly private nature—is exactly what the court diarists kept saying in their comments in the *Diaries of Activity and Repose*: namely, that our present emperor *is* a Yao and a Shun.

Professor Yü Ying-shih, who as far as I know was the first to cite Yao Tinglin's account of the 1684 Suzhou visit, not only does not seem to question its authenticity, but interprets Kangxi's spectacular and certainly very unusual public behavior as a clever manipulation of Confucian symbols: by mingling with the ordinary folk, Yü suggests, Kangxi emulated the mythical sovereigns of high Antiquity who "shared the joys and sorrows of the people" (as the phrase goes); and he parallels this move with two highly symbolic acts that were part of the same 1684 tour. One was making offerings and kowtowing at the Confucius shrine at Qufu, a move that helped in his effort to join the lineage of the sages founded by Confucius (*daotong* 道統), something that no Chinese emperor had ever attempted to do—indeed, Yü Ying-shih's remarks are found in his preface to a book where his disciple Huang Chin-shing analyzes, among other things, what he calls "Kangxi's appropriation of the tradition of the way".[61]

The other symbolic act was sacrificing in person on the tomb of the founder of the Ming in Nanjing—a ritual whereby Kangxi confirmed that the Qing were part of the legitimate succession of dynasties (*zhitong* 治統). It would be too long here to develop on the Nanjing episode, which Kangxi repeated on other trips.[62] Both the *Qijuzhu* and his own writings show that Kangxi could be very emotional about the Hongwu emperor and the fate of the Ming. Clearly he saw Hongwu as a sort of role model. For example, while he prepared once again to sacrifice on his tomb during the third Southern Tour, in 1699, he told his entourage: "Hongwu was a heroic and formidable ruler, not to be compared with ordinary sovereigns" (洪武乃英武偉烈之主，非尋常帝王可比), and therefore insisted on going in person offer libations and

[60] *Linian ji*, p. 134.

[61] See Chin-shing Huang, *Philosophy, Philology, and Politics in Eighteenth-Century China: Li Fu and the Lu-Wang school under the Ch'ing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. xiv.

[62] For an in-depth analysis of the 1684 visit to Nanjing, see Jonathan Hay, "Ming Palace and Tomb in Early Qing Jiangning", *Late Imperial China* 20, 1 (1999), p. 1-48.

prostrate himself in front of the tomb as he had done before—a rather striking scene indeed.[63] A few days later, he again celebrated Hongwu as "a sovereign who established his enterprise and laid down foundations, who had a grand plan and who took action" (創業開基有猷有為之君).[64] Fifteen years before, on his first visit in 1684, Kangxi had composed an essay entitled "On passing through Nanking" (過金陵論), in which he recalled walking through the ruined old palaces and gardens, remarked on the defective *fengshui* of a city that Zhu Yuanzhang's successors had been quick to leave as a capital, and sighed about the rise and fall of the Ming.[65]

If Kangxi was able to take the initiative of symbolically reclaiming the inheritance of Confucius and Ming Taizu in such a way during his first Southern Tour, it was in large part because by 1684 the very peculiar, and very unstable, combination of Chinese tradition and Manchu nativism that was the Qing monarchy was still largely in the making, and that there was much room for creativity, especially for a strong-willed, talented, and shrewd individual like Kangxi. Contrary to his successors Yongzheng and Qianlong, who ascended the throne as mature and well-trained adults, who could rely on relatively stable institutions, and who presided over the most prosperous decades of the so-called High Qing, Kangxi can well be described as a *self-made emperor*. Put on the throne as a child amidst a politically volatile environment, confronted with a deadly rebellion as a teenager, and having to fight his way amid competing factions to make his position secure and impose his own vision of imperial power, he did not have a role model to emulate—or to free himself from—and he was able largely to invent himself.

This vision of imperial power, pursued with variations by all his successors, rested on the combination of Chinese Confucian culture and Manchu martial values just alluded to. But the combination, as I also said, was highly unstable, and the Qing emperors always wavered between Manchu nativism and the celebration of the high Confucian tradition. In the case of Kangxi, such wavering may have been a result of his beliefs and preferences; but the main factor definitely was the necessity to play one faction against the other in order to secure his hold on power—a game that in fact he did not always completely master.[66] In any event, one

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[63] See *Qingdai qijuzhu ce: Kangxi chao*, 13:7077-81 (KX 38/4/11); also *Shengzu shilu*, 193/4b (same date). The actual visit to the tomb took place two days later, on the 13th day. On this occasion Kangxi deplored the derelict condition of Taizu's tomb and announced measures to ensure its maintenance. Similar contents are found under that date in Shen Hanzong's *Hui'ai lu*, 2/23a-b, enriched with a physical description of the site— grandiose but overrun by wild grass, and left to the care of useless "eunuchs from old times" (昔時內監), which sounds unlikely fifty-five years after the fall of the Ming. This passage in the *Hui'ai lu* is a good example of the mix of historical facts and literary embellishment typical of the work.

[64] *Qingdai qijuzhu ce: Kangxi chao*, 13:7095.

[65] Quoted in *Shangyuan xianzhi* (1851), 首/1b-3a. Also in *Shengzu shilu*, 117/14a-15b.

[66] Kangxi factionalism (on which more below) has been well studied by scholars. For the earlier period, see especially Harold Lyman Miller, "Factional Conflict and the Integration of Ch'ing Politics"; for the last two decades of the reign, Pierre-Henri Durand, *Lettrés et pouvoirs. Un procès littéraire dans la Chine impériale*

of the things that strike me in the accounts of the first Southern Tours is the apparent contradiction between, on the one hand, the celebration of the emperor's scholarly and literary abilities and of his profound grasp of the classical tradition, and on the other hand, his rather cavalier attitude towards the intellectual elite of Jiangnan, reputedly the first in the empire.

The Gentry, the Military, and the People

It is conventionally said that one of Kangxi's major reasons for making his first tour was to reconcile the scholar-gentry of the Jiangnan region with the Qing regime.[67] This does not sound very convincing to me, even if some years before his first trip Kangxi had indeed made moves to seduce southern literati of renown but of uncertain loyalty into working for the dynasty: this is of course the 1679 *Boxue hongci* special examination, which was not explicitly aimed at southern literati but in which 40 out of the 50 laureates turned out to be from Jiangnan and Zhejiang. In fact, the scholar-gentry are singularly absent from the sources on the first Southern Tours, and we hardly find any examples of the kind of cozy philosophical or literary small-talk between touring emperor and local scholar that is much more in evidence in the accounts of Qianlong's Southern Tours.[68] And when the local scholars are there—preferably retired old people—Kangxi tends to be patronizing, or even frankly offhanded. Typically, he limits most of these encounters to pleasant exchanges on poetry or calligraphy (which are as many occasions to demonstrate his own mastery of both), and never broaches serious philosophical, let alone political, subjects. Sometimes he just asks his interlocutors about their age and how they enjoy their retirement.

An interesting example of Kangxi's patronizing attitude towards Chinese scholars, verging on the impolite, is offered by the visit the emperor paid to the Nanjing observatory during the 1689 tour, recorded in the *Qijuzhu*, in the private notes of Li Guangdi 李光地 (1642-1718)—one of the main protagonists of the event—and in Jesuit writings. There the topic was very serious: it was astronomical phenomena and their possible political implications; and Li Guangdi, who hailed from Fujian, was not just a local scholar but the chancellor of the Hanlin Academy, so, an eminent representative of Chinese scholarship and a guardian of the orthodoxy. During the visit to the Nanjing observatory, on the evening of March 18, 1689, Kangxi showed himself intent on humiliating Li Guangdi and his Chinese colleagues by asking

(Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1992), chap. 10 ("Chinois et Mandchous"), remains the best synthesis.

[67] See for example Hearn, "The 'Kangxi Southern Inspection Tour'", p. 60-61.

[68] The encounter with Kong Shangren at Qufu, certainly the most extended contact Kangxi had with a local scholar during his first tour, is an exception, explainable by the nature of the place and by Kong's special pedigree.

them questions they were hard put to answer, by showing that *he* had a perfect grasp of the issues, and by stressing the superiority of Western calculations.[69]

In general, Kangxi's attitude and declarations during the Southern Tours are best understood in the light of the strategy he had been consistently and successfully pursuing since the early 1670s, namely, to deprive the literati elite not only of their economic privileges, but also (and more importantly) of their monopoly of the Way—of their philosophical domination, as it were. This motif has been discussed by several scholars.[70] As I mentioned, one of the obsessions of the compilers of the *Diaries of Activity and Repose* (and, we assume, of Kangxi himself) was to represent the emperor as a formidable intellectual—in a way, the best scholar in the empire—and as a ruler who, contrary to all his historical predecessors, had been able to grasp the meaning of the Way, and govern accordingly; which is to say, as a Sage. According to Harry Miller, this exaltation of Kangxi's scholarly capacities and sagely attainments went hand in hand with a systematic downgrading of the position of the Chinese gentry, most especially the Neo-Confucian scholars of the Jiangnan region, who were accustomed to be regarded as the salt of the earth; and in Miller's interpretation, Kangxi's third Southern Tour, in 1699, was also the one on the occasion of which the emperor's intellectual dominance over the literati class was definitively established.[71] In Miller's words—and this view is shared by other scholars as well—by the end of the seventeenth century most Chinese literati were tacitly regarding Kangxi as part of the lineage of towering Sages that had been founded by Confucius; in other words, they had willingly relinquished the intellectual magisterium that in the past had been the source of their own dominance.

That Kangxi did not like the southern gentry seems rather clear. His critical stance is reflected, to give but one example, in his recurring criticism of the luxurious habits of the inhabitants of Jiangnan, already mentioned, which evidently concerned the gentry in the first place. Kangxi's wariness of the south, which even extended to its climate,[72] was not, let us note, in contradiction with employing more and more representatives of its scholarly elite in government, as he did consistently from the late 1670s onward to counteract the Manchu and

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[69] See Han Qi, "Patronage scientifique et politique. Li Guangdi entre Kangxi et Mei Wending", *Études chinoises*, 16, 2 (1997), p. 7-37, and for more details the same author's "Junzhu he buyi zhi jian: Li Guangdi zai Kangxi shidai de huodong ji qi dui kexue de yingxiang" 君主和布衣之間——李光地在康熙時代的活動及其對科學的影響, *Qinghua xuebao* (Xinzhu), 26, 4 (1996), p. 421-445. The episode is elegantly retold by Catherine Jami in *The Emperor's New Mathematics: Western Learning and Imperial Authority During the Kangxi Reign (1662-1722)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), chap. 6.

[70] Most recently (and most systematically) by Harry Miller, *State versus Gentry in Early Qing Dynasty China, 1644-1699*. See also Huang Chin-shing, *Philosophy, Philology, and Politics in Eighteenth-Century China*.

[71] Miller, *State versus Gentry*, p. 129-132.

[72] According to the *Qijizhu* account, during his visits to Suzhou and Hangzhou in 1686 Kangxi complained more than once that he did not feel comfortable with the environment, with such statements as "The south is humid, the climate does not suit me" (南方地濕, 水土不宜)—and yet, this was not in the heat of summer!

northern Chinese cliques. But what I find most remarkable in the accounts of the first two Southern Tours is, again, the quasi *absence* of the gentry—that is, of the holders of academic degrees and retired officials living at home, normally regarded as the natural leaders of their communities—as serious interlocutors of the emperor. With few exceptions, they are mainly seen as a disciplined group assembled at the gate of the cities to welcome the imperial retinue; in other words, not much more than props in the elaborate show. A good example is the group of eight retired or resident Suzhou Hanlin scholars, plus two other retired officials, who welcomed the imperial retinue at the Hushu 滸墅 customs station on the Grand Canal on its way to Suzhou in 1684.[73] The exchange between Kangxi (sitting on his boat) and the scholars (kneeling on the bank) is recounted in some detail in the testimony of one of them, the famous writer Wang Wan 汪琬 (1624-90), entitled "A complete account of respectfully welcoming the august cortege" (恭迎大駕始末).[74] Interestingly, Wang claims that he noted down the exchange because he was afraid that the imperial diarists might not be on board to record it. He also says that after the imperial boat had departed he reported the sovereign's "celestial words" to the crowd of "rural elders" (田間父老) in the company of whom he had come to "bask in the beneficence of the Sage" (沐浴乎聖人之澤). The emperor asked the Hanlin scholars detailed questions, but with few exceptions they did not concern the local situation, and certainly not local politics, they were only about their life in retirement (家居近狀).[75] For his part, Zhang Dachun (the compiler of the *San Wu caifeng leiji*), a retired secretary of the Grand Secretariat who was part of the well-ordered welcoming parties on each of the first three tours, neatly summarizes the pattern in his 1699 account: "In a general way, the officials present in their native Suzhou form the first rank, then come the National University students and local students, then again the local elders, and finally the commoners" (凡在籍諸臣為前一行，監生生員次之， 耆老又次之， 編戶之民又次之).[76]

And in any event, the literati were not expected to involve themselves in politics. It is significant in this respect that the one Suzhou retired Hanlin scholar singled out for praise by Kangxi in 1684 is commended for "staying at home and not meddling with public affairs" (居鄉不與外事). This was Wang Wan, already mentioned for his account of the welcoming party at the Hushu customs station, and Kangxi made the remark to Governor Tang Bin the day after his departure from Suzhou.[77] In contrast with Kangxi's offhand, not to say wary, treatment of

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[73] Zhang Dachun, the author of the *San Wu caifeng leiji*, was part of them.

[74] Quoted in Zhang Dachun, *San Wu caifeng leiji*, 1/3b-4a; also in *Suzhou fuzhi* (1883), 首1/3b-4a, with a few variants. Wang Wan had become a Hanlin compiler after passing the *boxue hongci* special examination in 1679.

[75] See *Suzhou fuzhi* (1692), 首/2a. Still, Wang Wan claims that Kangxi asked him about crops and weather conditions in the region (they were not very good, he answered).

[76] *Suzhou fuzhi* (1883), 首1/15a. Wang Hui's representation of Kangxi's entrance in Suzhou in 1689 (**Fig. 5a-b**) illustrates this rather well.

[77] *Suzhou fuzhi* (1692), 首/2b.

the Jiangnan scholarly elite, the ones who are over and again honored with gifts, banquets and parades are the military, whose presence in the emperor's environment is constantly to be seen, in 1684 and 1689 in particular: despite his scholarly aspirations, Kangxi consistently insisted on the martial values of the Manchu; and after all, at that time Jiangnan was still a place where it was advisable to show off one's military superiority.

But as I see it, the real interlocutors of Kangxi, if only symbolically (though in some occasions directly), are *the people*, including onlookers along the cortège, townspeople, disaster victims, elderly people, monks, and many more. They are very present in the accounts—and also on the Wang Hui scrolls—and they are obviously and insistently cared for by the emperor. As we have seen, when he proclaimed his intentions before starting the 1684 and subsequent tours, Kangxi clearly explained that what interested him in the first place was, first, the condition of the people, then, administrative discipline (*lizhi* 吏治, meaning, to make sure that the officials were not harming the people), and then again, the condition at the strategic spots on the Grand Canal and Yellow River, which were of paramount importance for the well-being of the inhabitants of vast areas.[78]

Inspecting Waterworks

Inspecting waterworks—in particular, the crucial confluence of the Grand Canal, Huai, and Yellow River at Qingkou 清口 (upstream from Huai'an) and the nearby Gaojia dam 高家堰 on the eastern shore of Hongze Lake, designed to force the flow of the Huai north into the Yellow River and protect from flooding the lower prefectures and the Grand Canal further east in northern Jiangsu (see **Fig. 11-12**)—was of especial importance during the first Southern Tours, as hydraulic policies inextricably intertwined with the struggle between two factions at court, each defending a different strategy to control water and attacking the promoters of the opposite strategy. This is not the place to enter into the details, either of the technical debate or of the factional rivalry, as these have already been well studied.[79] Regarding political alignments, it should be enough to recall that one faction, the so-called "Northern Faction" (*Beidang* 北黨)—still in ascendancy in 1684—was dominated by Mingju 明珠 (1635-1708), the Manchu strongman of the moment, who could avail himself of his alliance with Kangxi against the "old

[78] In 1684 this third topic came up only in the course of the trip, as we have seen. But it was part of the preliminary announcements on all the other tours, and indeed the main motive put forward in the edicts announcing those of 1689 and 1699.

[79] See Harold Miller, "Factional Conflict", chap. 5, in particular p. 140ff for the relationship between the water control issues and factional alignments. Also see the good (anonymous) account found on the Baidu Baike 百度百科 website under "靳輔" (https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E9%9D%B3%E8%BE%85, seen Jan. 1st, 2018). The biographies of the main protagonists, notably Jin Fu and Yu Chenglong (see below) in *Qingshi gao* 清史稿, j. 279, likewise provide a clear account of the controversies regarding river control.

Manchu" clique during and after the Three Feudatories rebellion, whereas the "Southern Faction" (*Nandang* 南黨)—which seemed to get the upper hand between the first two Southern Tours—was headed by officials from South China whose political weight initially derived from their association with the Nanshufang and from their proximity to the emperor.[80]

As far as hydraulic policies are concerned, Jin Fu 靳輔 (1633-92), the Grand Canal director turned hydraulic engineer, successfully returned the Yellow River to its main bed and to its outlet to the sea the year before Kangxi's first visit, after much effort and despite much controversy. (Jin Fu had been appointed to the post in 1677.) But when in 1684 Kangxi, with Jin Fu as his guide, inspected the strategic spots on the north bank of the Yellow River at Taoyuan 桃源, visited the Tianfei lock 天妃閘 at the entrance of the Grand Canal at Qinghe 清河, and sailed the canal south through Huai'an 淮安 and Gaoyou 高郵 before crossing the Yangzi near Yangzhou; and again, on his way back, when he inspected the strategic Gaojia dam as well as the southern embankment of the Yellow River, he could see with his own eyes that much work remained to be done.[81] Technically, Jin Fu followed in the steps of the famous hydraulician Pan Jixun 潘季馴 (1521-1595) in the early Wanli years. He advocated a global approach to the complex system formed by the Yellow and Huai Rivers and the Grand Canal, and was a partisan of maintaining strong dikes to contain the river and accelerate its flow so as to prevent siltation and facilitate scouring (*shushui gongsha* 束水攻沙).[82] He also built a number of overflow sluice gates (*jianshui ba* 減水壩) into the dikes, which could be opened to lessen pressure upon the dike system downstream in the event of exceptionally strong high waters. But these overflows were also a problem, as Kangxi could see south of Huai'an, where the inhabitants around Gaoyou and other places were in a very difficult situation. Much of their land was still under water and they were still living in shacks built on higher ground: the overflow water from the Hongze and other lakes that kept flooding the lowlands beyond in Huai'an and Yangzhou prefectures (the so-called Xiahe 下河 region) could not be properly drained to the sea.[83] Jin Fu assured the emperor that the overflow gates were a temporary device that would be abandoned once the entire dike system was completed and secure.

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[80] Contrasting with the first three decades of the Qing, when there were only northern Chinese in the higher rungs of government, recruitment into the Nanshufang (created in 1677) gradually allowed southerners to be appointed to executive positions at ministerial level. See Miller, "Factional Conflict", p. 117, 121. We saw that both Zhang Ying (from Tongcheng, Anhui) and Gao Shiqi (from Yuyao, Zhejiang) were attached to the Nanshufang—they were in fact its first two appointees.

[81] Kangxi inspected the waterworks from Nov. 25 to Nov. 28, and again from Dec. 11 to Dec. 16. See *Shengzu shilu,* 117/7a-9b, 20a-22a. On the very first day he told Jin Fu that seeing with his own eyes the roiling waters, the shape of the terrain, and the layout of the dikes made a big difference with sitting in the palace reading books on river control and examining the maps sent by Jin (117/7a-b).

[82] Siltation in the Yellow River and at the Qingkou junction prevented the Huai clear waters from flowing into the silt-laden Yellow River and accelerating its course, and made the Hongze and other lakes overflow.

[83] See Kangxi's edicts in *Shengzu shilu*, 117/9a-b, 20a-b.

Yet as soon as 1685 the emperor, who obviously had taken the Xiahe people's plight at heart, entrusted the Anhui surveillance commissioner, Yu Chenglong,[84] with the task of setting up a plan for draining the Jiangbei lowlands; but the plan Yu submitted to the court, which entailed a thorough dredging of the rivers draining the region to the sea, met with the opposition of his superior, Jin Fu, who predicted that it would cause tidal flooding inland, as part of the terrain was below sea level. The protracted and tortuous debates that took place during the ensuing years—with the main contestants being summoned to court to present their arguments, investigation commissions being dispatched to the field, and much behind-the-door maneuvering—need not be detailed here. The point, rather, is that in a general way the drainage program advocated by Yu Chenglong for the Xiahe region had the support of the southern faction, whereas the option defended by Jin Fu, which involved more diking up and only a limited amount of dredging, had the preference of the northern faction adherents headed by Mingju. (Though himself a Liaodong native and a Chinese bannerman, Jin Fu does not seem to have been personally involved in factional maneuvers, though at one point he did attack his opponents.) Beginning in February 1688, Mingju, Jin Fu, and others were attacked—with Kangxi's tacit encouragement—by a censor belonging to the southern faction. Mingju and several of his partisans were dismissed from most of their positions in government. But, as emphasized by Harold Miller, the repression was in fact limited: instead of destroying one faction and leaving the ground to the other, Kangxi very cleverly managed to put down both and not allow anybody to exert undue influence at court, thus further enhancing his own power and inaugurating a period of relative stability in the court's political life.

This was in March of 1688. Jin Fu, with whose achievements Kangxi was familiar, was able to an extent to reestablish his position amidst the quite often absurd accusations of incompetence and corruption that were hurled at him by announcing the successful completion of the "Middle Canal" (Zhonghe 中河). Started in 1686, the Zhonghe ran parallel to the Yellow River between Suqian and the Qingkou confluence; it helped stabilize the overall hydraulic situation around Qinghe and Huai'an, and, importantly, allowed the tribute fleets to avoid sailing a ca. 100-kilometer perilous section of the Yellow River above Qingkou and transfer smoothly from the southern to the northern section of the Grand Canal (see **Fig. 11**). But this was not enough, and following a two-day conference at court in April 1688 where Kangxi tried to resolve the Xiahe controversy once and for all, several parties to the dispute were dismissed from their positions for overindulging in attacking each other. Jin Fu, to whom the emperor also

[84] This Yu Chenglong (1638-1700) should not be confused with his namesake already mentioned, who died as Jiangxi-Jiangnan governor general in 1684; he was popularly known as "the junior Yu Chenglong" (小于成龍). A Chinese bannerman, he had been prefect of Jiangning (Nanjing) for two years at the time of the first Southern Tour and was extolled by the emperor for his integrity, which earned him an immediate promotion to Anhui surveillance commissioner. He seems to have made himself quite popular with the local gentry while in post in Jiangnan.

reproached certain of his proposals regarding the Xiahe drainage, was among them, and he lost both his position as Grand Canal director and his ranks.

He regained his professional standing rather quickly, however, as a new commission sent in the field reported that the construction and dredging he had accomplished was highly successful and urged that the new Grand Canal director abstain from making any changes. And when at the beginning of 1689 Kangxi embarked on his second Southern Tour, with inspecting the waterworks number one on his agenda, Jin Fu was invited to join the trip.[85] Once again he accompanied the emperor—who had been joined by the Jiangnan-Jiangxi governor general, the new director of the Grand Canal, and the director general of grain transport (漕運總督)—to visit and discuss first the Middle Canal, then the Qingkou confluence, and, on his way back from Nanjing, the Gaojia dam, all the overflow gates in the area, and again the Zhonghe, concluding in Suqian on March 28 with a general debate attended by all the officials involved.[86]

As far as Jin Fu was concerned, and to borrow Harold Miller's words, the emperor "was sufficiently impressed with the success of Chin Fu's work there and with his enormous fame as a river official among the people of Kiangnan that he restored Chin to his former position and ranks after returning to the capital"—though in actual fact Jin Fu only recovered his ranks (復其原品), not his position.[87] Only three years later, in 1692, would the ailing Jin Fu be called once again to serve as Grand Canal director and replace the man who had succeeded him after his disgrace; he died in the post a few months later.

In any event, if the river-works issue was so much in evidence during the first Southern Tours, the reason was not simply its importance in terms of factional politics in the 1680s, or indeed its importance *tout court*, as it concerned an infrastructure crucial to the prosperity of the regime and the well-being of millions of its subjects. The highly publicized personal riverine inspections of Kangxi, both in 1684 and in 1689, also contributed substantially to the image-building already alluded to: besides being a Sage on the throne and the best scholar in the empire, Kangxi was also its best engineer. At several points in the official chronicles we see him lecturing the officials in charge of the dikes and canals and *telling them what to do*—at

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[85] The very first imperial edict of the year KX 28 in *Shengzu shilu* is devoted to the past discussions regarding the Xiahe drainage and to the emperor's decision to go there, see things with his own eyes, and make a final decision, as recommended insistently by the court. See *Shengzu shilu*, 139/1b-3a (Jan. 22, 1689). Yu Chenglong, then the Zhili governor general, was also ordered to join (ibid., 139/4a).

[86] In 1689 the emperor inspected waterworks in person from Feb. 12 to Feb. 16, and again from March 26 to March 28. See *Shengzu shilu*, 139/10a-14a, 140/5a-8a. He also tasked groups of officials with investigating certain spots and reporting to him. Kangxi also wanted to visit the Xiahe region in person, and sent Yu Chenglong and other people in advance to survey the area and report. While he was visiting Zhejiang he received their report, to the effect that it would be too inconvenient for him to go due to the lack of proper transportation routes, and renounced (*Shengzu shilu*, 139/20b-21a). (Spence, p. 129, followed by Hearn, p. 42, has misunderstood this passage.)

[87] Miller, "Factional Conflict", p. 170; compare *Shengzu shilu*, 140/12a.

best, ordering them to present him with options between which he will then choose. Besides, the on-site inspections were for Kangxi an occasion not just to demonstrate his technical competence, but also to illustrate his hands-on attitude and readiness to go to the field—not hesitating to disembark, climb atop the dikes and walk kilometers—and to cultivate his popularity with the locals by showing his concern for them, asking them questions, distributing relief and granting tax exemptions, and so forth.

Kangxi's 1689 inspection is also the subject of Wang Hui's scroll no. 4 (at Musée Guimet). As Maxwell Hearn's analysis of this scroll shows,[88] two of the three sections that can be distinguished in it deal with water-control matters: one is devoted to relief to flood victims at Pizhou 邳州 (a place on the Grand Canal northeast of Suqian and of the Luoma lake 騾馬湖), marked by the words "The emperor inspects the famine caused by floods in Pizhou" (駕看邳州水荒) (**Fig. 14a-b)**; the other describes construction work on the Yellow River dike near Suqian (**Fig. 15-17**), and the emperor's inspection of the Gaojia dam ("The emperor inspects Gaojia dam" 駕看高家堰) (**Fig. 19**).

Interestingly, for the sake of his overall narrative Wang Hui has conflated events that occurred at different moments of the tour into one single sequence taking place right after the imperial retinue crosses the frontier between Shandong and Jiangsu on its way south. In actual fact, the striking encounter between the emperor and the famine victims at Pizhou is not even mentioned in the chronicles, official or otherwise, related to the 1689 tour, which all assert that the imperial party proceeded due south from Tancheng to Suqian *via* Honghua pu: to my knowledge, the colophon introducing scroll no. 4 is the only place where it is said that, having entered Jiangsu through Honghua pu, the emperor "made a detour to reach Pizhou" (迂道至邳州) and met the famine victims.

In fact the meeting did not occur, at least not at this moment. The Pizhou local gazetteer, published only four years later, which discusses at length the problem of flooded land in its section on taxation (*tianfu* 田賦), allows us to reconstruct what apparently happened. In 1685 the Pizhou lowlands, which were especially difficult to drain, were subject to catastrophic flooding that engulfed a large amount of fields and houses, made a number of victims, and forced people to flee the area. The situation did not improve in the following years, with large amounts of land remaining submerged and uncultivated, thousands of refugees reluctant to come back, and the resulting accumulation of tax arrears. At the beginning of 1689, when it was known that Kangxi was about to visit the region to "enquire about the people's sufferings", Pizhou's gentry and people demonstrated and blocked the roads, while a group of notables submitted a memorial expounding their problems and begging the emperor to come survey the situation in person. Kangxi did get the memorial, but he did not come at once. In an address to three high officials (including Yu Chenglong) on February 11, the day before he crossed into Jiangsu, he declared that he had seen vagrants on the roads leading there, and on questioning

[88] Hearn, "The 'Kangxi Southern Inspection Tour'", p. 100-108.

them had learned they were refugees from flooded Pizhou; he also said that he had read the memorial sent by the Pizhou notables. He therefore ordered an investigation, which confirmed the memorial's contents. One of the demands in the memorial was the definitive exemption of a certain amount of flooded land that had been deserted by its owners. The Ministry of Revenue requested a further investigation by the Jiangsu governor in person to exactly ascertain the amount of land to be exempted; and after this had been done, the exemption was granted by a special edict dated September 5, 1689.

Now, what was obviously crucial in this affair was that Kangxi did visit Pizhou on his way back home, personally surveyed the flooding conditions, and became even more alarmed by the circumstances of Pizhou's inhabitants (聖駕回鑾道過邳境，御覽兩岸水沉情形，如傷益切).[89] This field inspection, which is mentioned by the Pizhou gazetteer, must have taken place on March 28 or 29; it is not recorded in the *Shilu* or *Qijuzhu*, but is confirmed by Kangxi himself in the tax exemption edict he promulgated a little more than five months later.[90] So, the imperial visit to Pizhou depicted on the Wang Hui scroll did occur, as quite probably did his encounter with famine victims; but they took place at the end of the tour, while the imperial party was exiting Jiangsu *via* the Grand Canal (see **Fig. 13** for the itinerary of the 1689 tour), not at the beginning; and the tax exemptions and measures of rehabilitation for which the people represented on the scroll are supposed to thank the emperor were decided several months later.[91] As for the other river control-related representations on scroll no. 4, the inspection of the work sites on the dikes along the Yellow River is confirmed by the chronicles, as is the inspection of the Gaojia dam, even though, as noted by Hearn, here again it did not take place at the beginning of the trip in Jiangnan, but about six weeks later, on the way back, when the imperial retinue returned from Nanjing.

This said, the representation of Kangxi dealing with water control issues in Wang Hui's picture of the 1689 Southern Trip is interesting by itself. Wang Hui seems to have been intent on representing an unmediated contact between the emperor, the disaster victims to whom he provides relief, and the waterworks themselves (see **Fig. 14-19**). Whereas the chronicles always depict Kangxi accompanied by an entourage of high officials and river specialists, on the pictures he is alone, except for his military guard. The encounter with the famine victims—with his "children"—is all the more striking, and it is in line with the theme of the people as direct interlocutors of the sovereign that I stressed earlier. In the same way, when Kangxi is shown inspecting the Gaojia dam, we see only the emperor (more exactly, we guess his presence by

[89] See *Pizhou zhi* 邳州志 (1693), 3/8a-13a. The amount of flooded land eventually exempted was about a third of the original quota of taxable land, namely, 4,682 *qing* out of 13,428.

[90] *Shenzong shilu*, 141/19a (KX 28/7/22). We find the same contents in the *Qijuzhu*, but dated one day before, and without the allusion to the emperor's passing in person through Pizhou.

[91] The colophon at the head of the scroll says: [皇上]蠲租賜復，兆姓莫不稽顙感悅，仰戴聖慈.

glimpsing a piece of his umbrella),[92] his military escort, and, again, an audience of ordinary people. As for the dike workers busying themselves with binding gabions, driving poles in the soil, and so forth—a somewhat idealized representation of the realities of river-work sites, to be sure—although they are not placed directly under the emperor's gaze, his virtual presence, as it were, is suggested by the pavilion being prepared for him as an observation post in front of the river ("Waiting for the emperor to inspect the dikes" 候駕看堤) (**Fig. 17**).

As a Conclusion

Personal inspection of the Grand Canal and Yellow River dike-works by the emperor remained a must during the entire history of the Kangxi and Qianlong Southern Tours. But in other respects the tours appear to have significantly changed from the original model set in 1684 and 1689, which I would perhaps describe as lean and hyper-active.[93] From the third Kangxi tour onward, there definitely was a trend toward a more leisurely and more luxurious style of touring. As is well known, this trend was spectacularly pursued under the Qianlong emperor, and there are reasons to think that it did not contribute to his popularity. The 1699 Southern Tour took more than a hundred days, as opposed to about sixty days for the previous ones. Kangxi took the dowager empress along, together with a host of consorts, palace ladies, and accompanying eunuchs, and this changed many things in the way the expedition progressed—the trip was entirely by boat—and the populace related to it. To go back to Tiger Hill one last time, Shen Hanzong's *Hui'ai lu* has a description of a visit there, which he dates April 16, 1699, that is in striking contrast with the boisterous event related by Yao Tinglin in 1684. The site is full of lanterns, as before, but near empty and eerily silent, as the crowd has been sent away because of the presence of the empress and her attendant ladies. There are only a few local women, who seem somewhat frightened despite the empress's entreaties. The emperor visits the usual spots, he writes a few calligraphies; and suddenly it is dusk and the imperial family returns to its barges on the Grand Canal.[94]

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[92] As remarked by Hearn, by resorting to this trick Wang Hui managed to represent Kangxi twice on the same scroll.

[93] Kangxi's protestations that his journey to the south is for serious business and not at all a pleasure trip, and his obsession with not costing a cent to the visited populations and refusing all the gifts, decorated archs, pleasure boats, etc., are especially in evidence during the 1689 tour. When he arrived to Yangzhou that year, Kangxi decided that from that point on he would do with a reduced military escort, no formal cortège, and a retinue reduced to about 300 people (簡約儀衛、鹵簿不設。扈從者僅三百餘人). See *Shengzu shilu*, 139/14b.

[94] For a translation (not free of errors) of this episode, see Miller, *State versus Gentry*, p. 132. Miller correctly gives the page numbers of the passage he translates (1/51b-54a), but fails to note that in the middle of it p. 52b-53a are missing from the photo-reproduction Taiwan National Library readers are authorized to use: the

This is a nice evocation, but as we have already seen the source where we find it needs to be used with the utmost caution. It does seem that Kangxi took his mother and the other women on Tiger Hill,[95] but for the details we are left to believe Shen Hanzong, which is always a risk as his account is a romanticized narrative and in no way an official record or a factual testimony. As a matter of fact, a careful analysis of the 1699 tour (and of the three ones that followed within a relatively short period), systematically confronting the available sources, whether official or private, remains to be done and is a topic for future research.

To conclude nevertheless, I should probably insist on the fact that by about 1700 the process of imperial construction was still an ongoing process. To return to Yao Tinglin's autobiography, his evocation of the 1684 and 1689 imperial tours may seem to describe a sort of *état de grâce*, of quasi-advent of the Great Peace, and in the same way, in his concluding reflections in 1697 he may speak of the Qing regime as a vast improvement over the Ming; but seen from the ground, the situation is far from being always easy, not to say happy, in his account of the last years of the seventeenth century. And indeed, the Kangxi emperor was to encounter serious political problems during the final decades of his long reign: much unrest at court, the development of vicious factionalism caused by the competition between his sons to replace the heir apparent (who had been a problem since the 1690s—including on some of the Southern Tours—and was eventually deposed for debauchery and mental instability), and finally, a general degradation in the bureaucracy's morale, morality, and efficiency.

Kangxi obviously was an extraordinarily brilliant ruler, and his contribution to the splendor and power of the Qing dynasty was crucial. His political achievements during the first Southern Tours can be hailed as a kind of *tour de force*, and I hope to have shown that in order to get their full measure, and also to grasp the complexity of the situation the young emperor was confronting, it is necessary to confront a plurality of sources and perspectives and scrutinize texts with the utmost care—and in this respect there is still much to do. In any event, despite Kangxi's accomplishments, it would be the task of his successors to take over an inheritance that was not without its problems and finalize the transformation of the Qing polity into the efficient and well-run system and the powerful state that were the glory of eighteenth-century China.

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account of this visit to Tiger Hill must in fact be substantially longer. I still have to retrieve the two missing half-folios.

[95] This 1699 visit to Tiger Hill with Kangxi's mother is left unmentioned in the *Qijuzhu* and *Shilu* as well as in Zhang Dachun's remembrances in his *Caifeng leiji*. The only (very brief) mention I have found so far is in a "Journal of welcoming the emperor" (迎鑾日紀) by then Jiangsu Governor Song Luo 宋犖, quoted in *Suzhou fuzhi* (1883), 首1/18a.

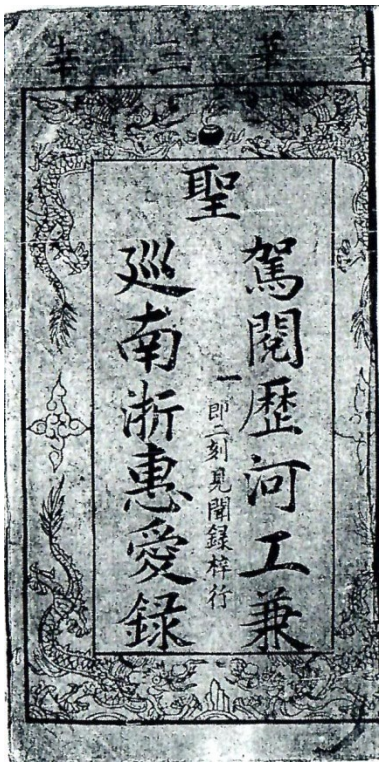

Fig. 1: Cover-leaf of Shen Hanzong's *Hui'ai lu*.

Fig. 2: Map of central Shandong. Qufu is due south from Tai'an (at the foot of the Mount Tai); instead of going there in 1684, Kangxi took the road southeast to Mengyin, Yizhou, and Tancheng.

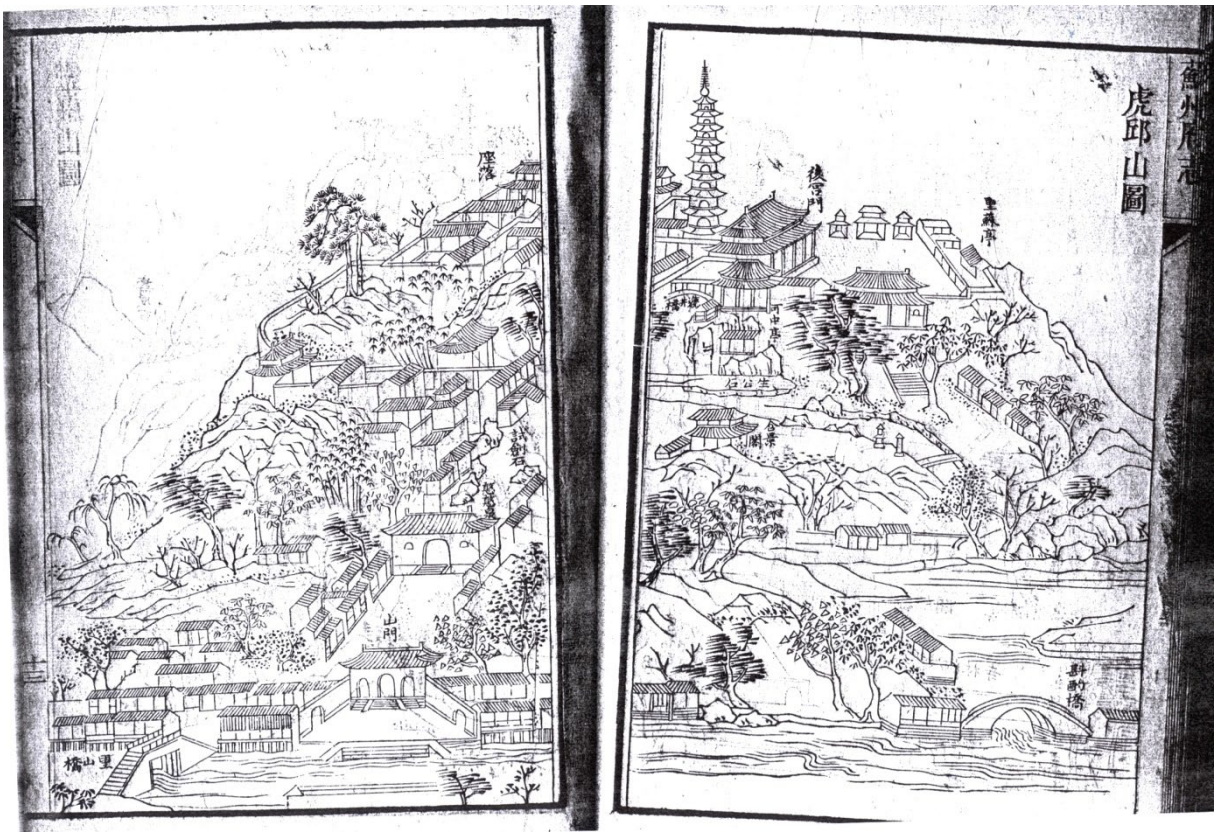

Fig. 3: A general view of Tiger Hill (Huqiu 虎丘), from *Suzhou fuzhi* (1824)

Fig. 4a: Tiger Hill (*Kangxi nanxun tu*, Scroll no. 7)

Fig. 4b: Tiger Hill (continued)

Fig. 5a: Kangxi entering Suzhou through the Changmen gate (*Kangxi nanxun tu*, Scroll no. 7)

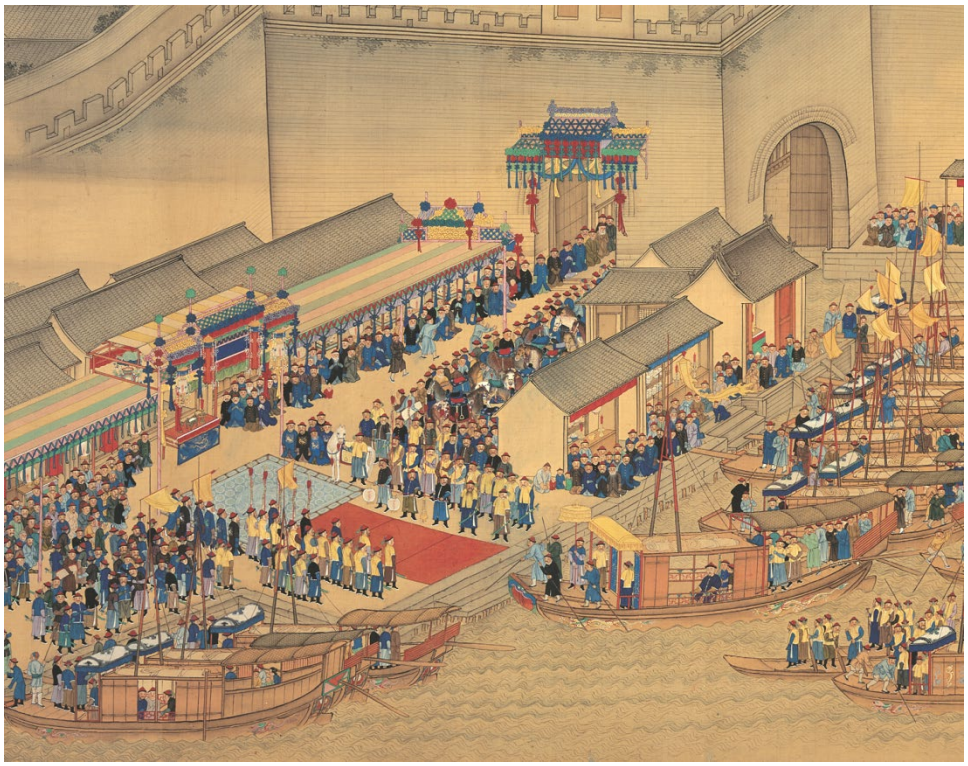

Fig. 5b: Kangxi entering Suzhou (detail)

Fig. 6: The Chang Gate bridge

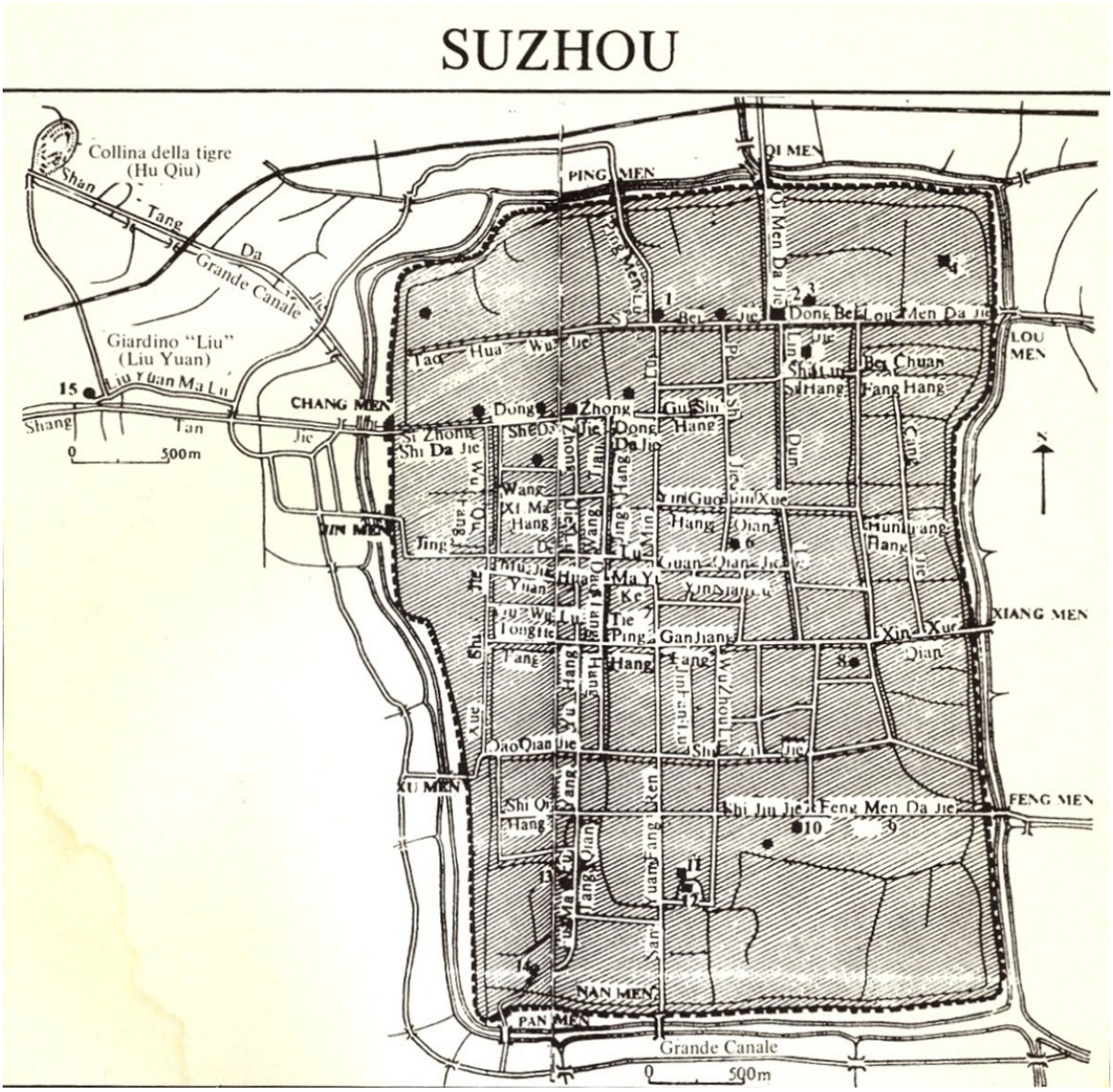

Fig. 7: Map of Suzhou (from *Catai*, vol. I, no. 1, Venice, 1981)

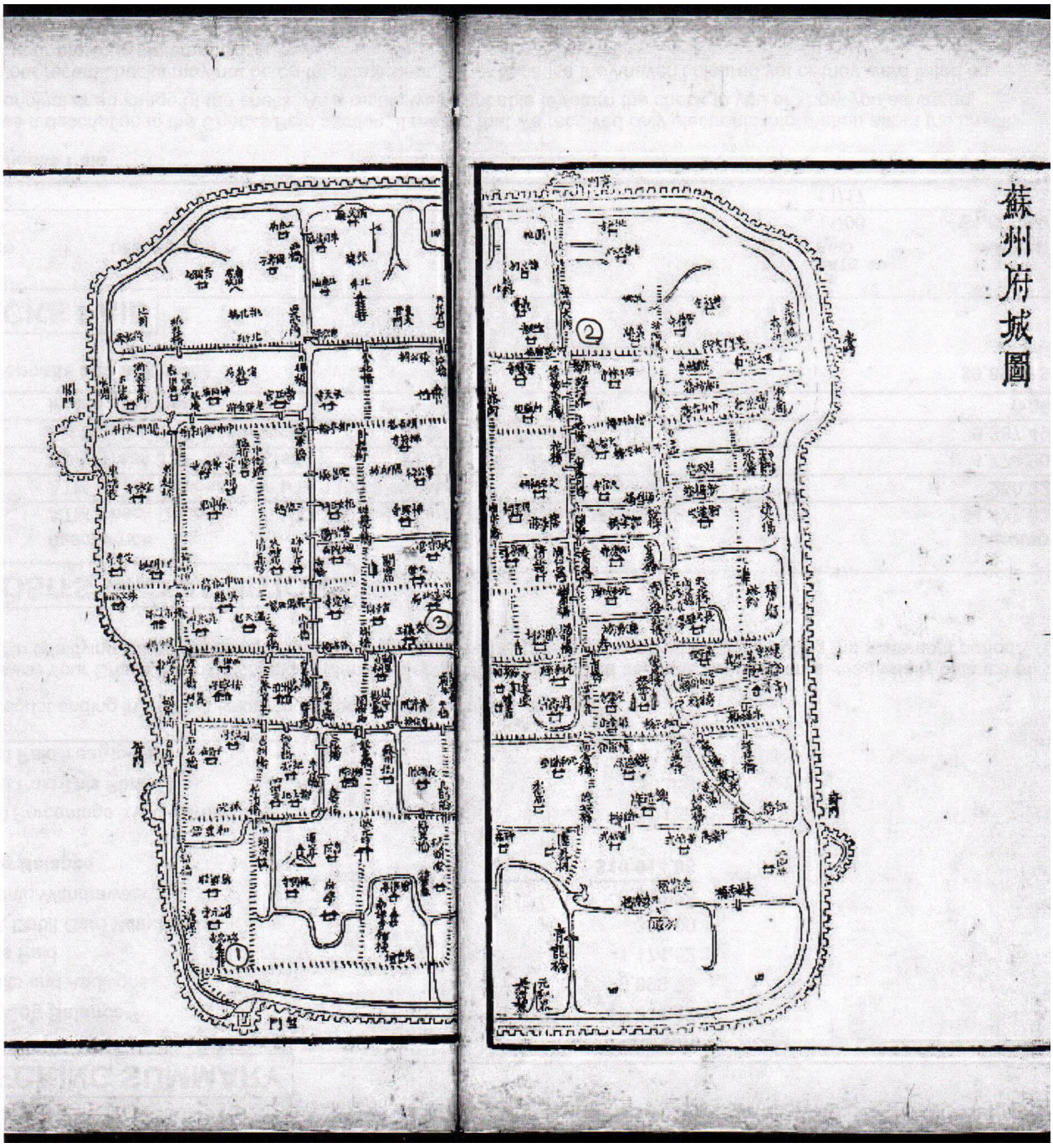

Fig. 8: Map of Suzhou (from *Suzhou fuzhi*, 1748)

1. Ruiguang si 瑞光寺
2.Zhuozheng yuan 拙政園
3. Zhizao ju 織造局

Fig. 9a: Palace of the Suzhou Imperial Silk Factory Superintendent (*Kangxi nanxun tu*, Scroll no. 7)

Fig. 9b: Palace of the Suzhou Imperial Silk Factory Superintendent (continued)

Fig. 10: Kangxi on horse on the top of the Jinan city wall (*Kangxi nanxun tu*, Scroll no. 3)

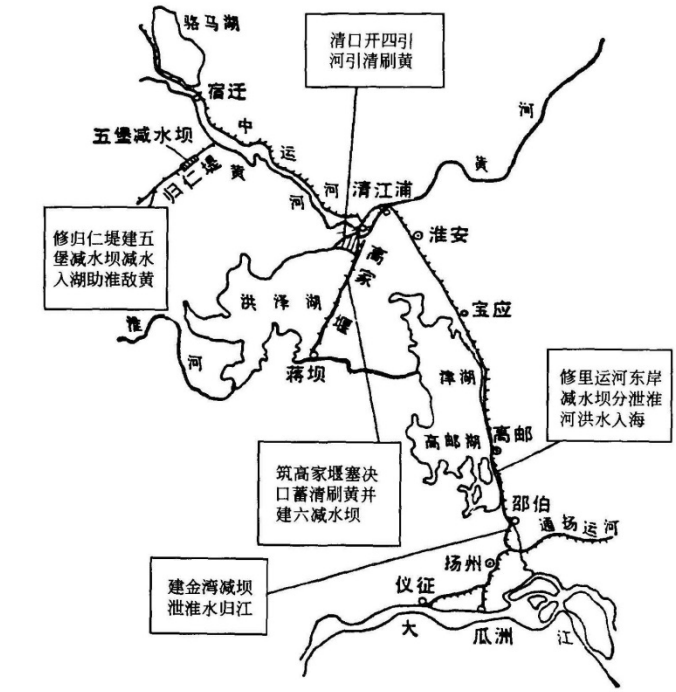

图 3-17　靳辅治河规划示意图

（选自《中国水利史稿》下册，图 10-15）

Fig. 11: The confluence of the Yellow River, Grand Canal, and Huai River after Jin Fu's works in the 1680s. From Zhou Kuiyi 周魁一, *Zhongguo kexue jishu shi: shuili juan* 中國科學技術史——水利卷 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2002), p. 178.

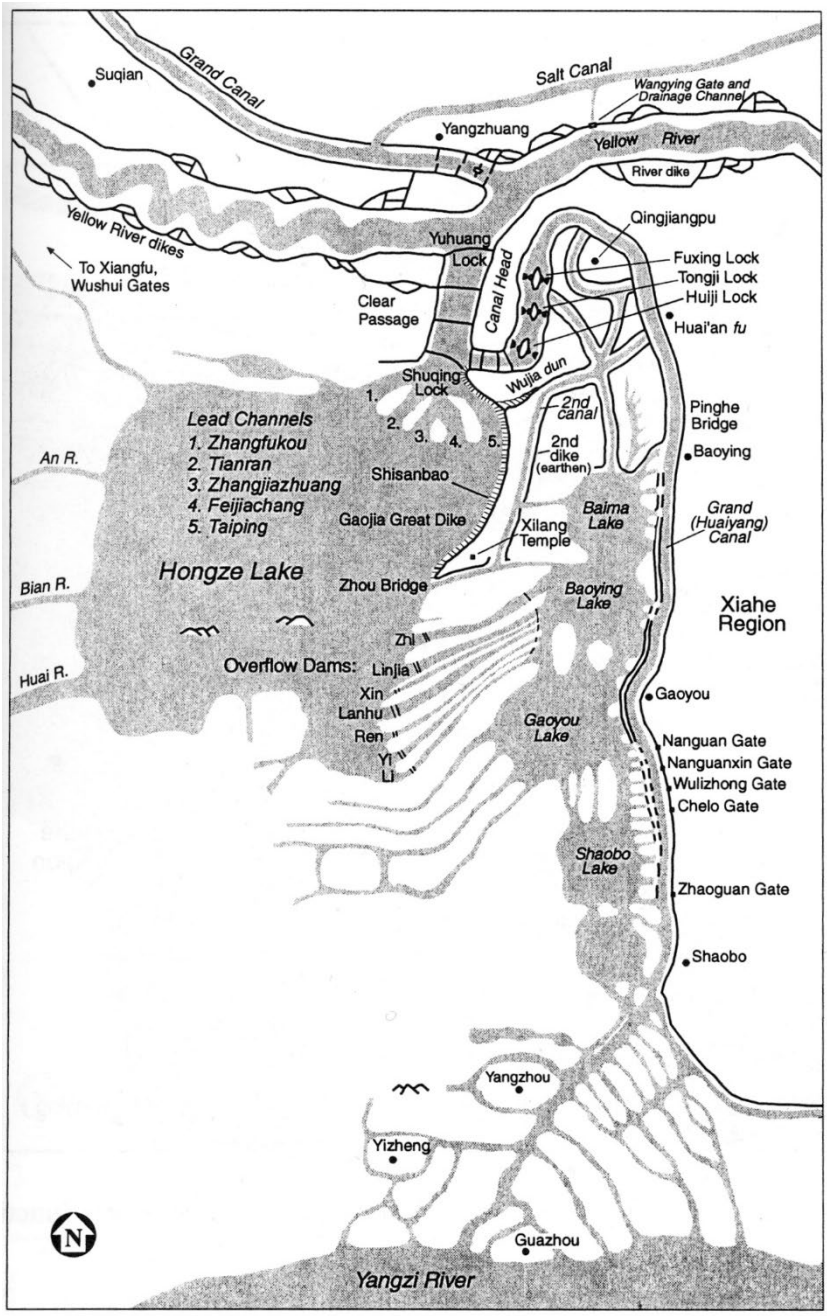

Fig. 12: The confluence of the Yellow River, Grand Canal, and Huai River, ca. 1820. From Jane Kate Leonard, *Controlling from Afar: The Daoguang Emperor's Management of the Grand Canal Crisis, 1824-1826* (Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 1996)

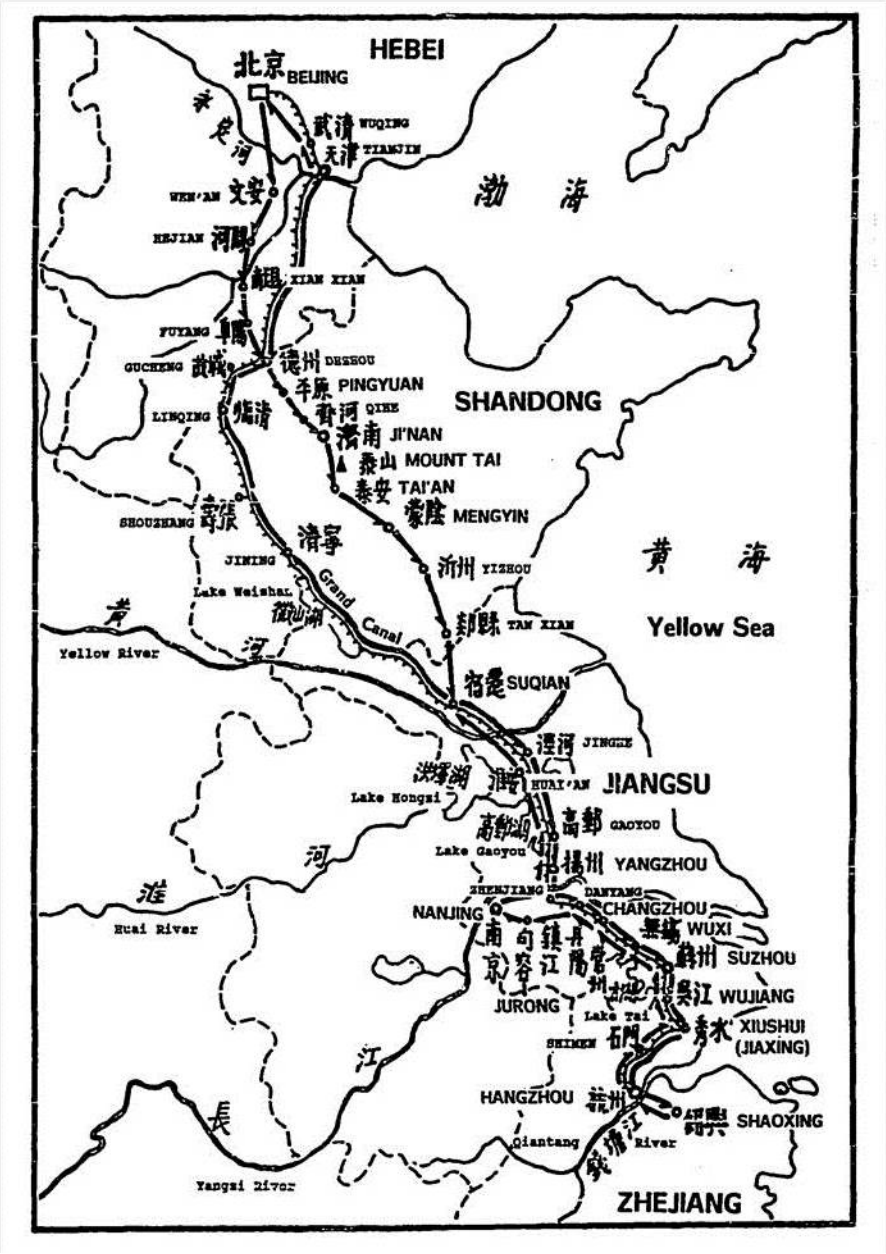

Fig. 13: Route of the 1689 Southern Tour. From Maxwell K. Hearn, "The 'Kangxi Southern Inspection Tour': A narrative program by Wang Hui"

Fig. 14a: The emperor inspects the famine caused by floods in Pizhou (*Kangxi nanxun tu*, Scroll no. 4)

Fig. 14b: The emperor inspects the famine caused by floods in Pizhou (continued)

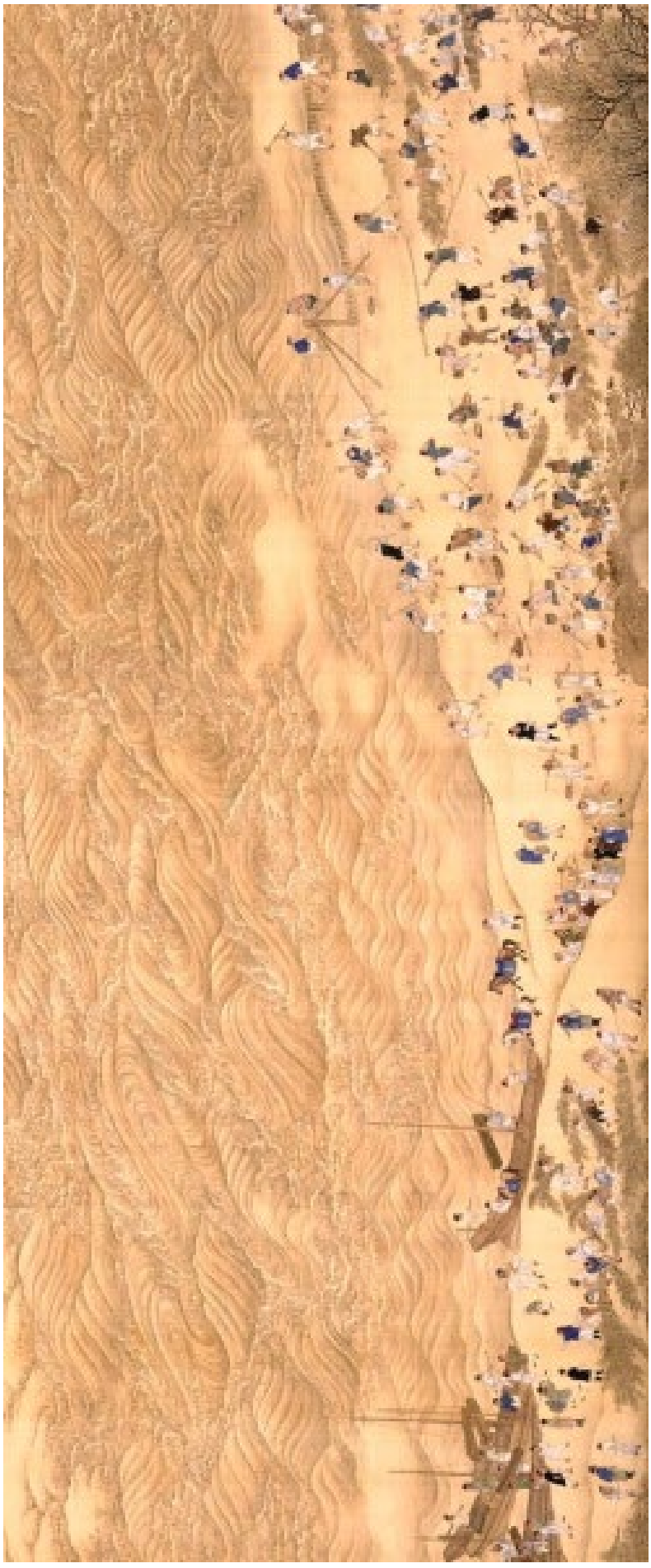

Fig. 15: Construction work on the Yellow River near Suqian (*Kangxi nanxun tu*, Scroll no. 4)

Fig. 16: Construction work on the Yellow River near Suqian (detail)

Fig. 17: Construction work on the Yellow River near Suqian Construction work on the Yellow River near Suqian (detail)

Fig. 18: Waiting for the emperor to inspect the dikes (*Kangxi nanxun tu*, Scroll no. 4)

Fig. 19: The emperor inspects Gaojia dam (*Kangxi nanxun tu*, Scroll no. 4)