



BRILL



brill.com/mqyj

Aliens and Emperors: Faithful Mongolian Officials in the *Ming History*

Donatella Guida

University of Naples “L’Orientale”

dguida@unior.it

Abstract

The biographies of nine Mongol officials recorded in the *Ming History* are not only useful in tracing the enduring Mongol presence at the highest levels of the Ming court; they are also a political demonstration of the close and continuous relationship with this ethnic group until the very end of the dynasty. Besides, since the *History* was compiled under the auspices of the Qing dynasty, it may give some hints about its own relations with the Mongol allies.

Keywords

Mongols – Ming dynasty – biographies – Tatar

•••

吾聞用夏變夷者，未聞變於夷者也。

I have heard of men using the doctrines of our great land to change foreigners, but I have never yet heard of any being changed by foreigners.¹

Mengzi, IIIA, 4,12

••

¹ Translation by Legge vol. 2 1861: 253, modified.

Although the Yuan dynasty was officially recognized as the rightful heir to the heavenly mandate, Chinese traditional historiography has always taken care to present the founding of the Ming dynasty as the affirmation of Han culture on the barbarian invaders.² Undoubtedly, after the fall of the Yuan, a significant number of Mongols remained in China. This paper examines the great officials of Mongolian origin who remained in China after the fall of the Yuan in 1368 and who held positions of such importance in the Ming court as to deserve the privilege to be counted among those who constituted the *exempla* in the so-called biographical section of the dynastic history.

Through an analysis of these characters, I intend to shed some light on the complex Sino-Mongol relations in the Ming dynasty and possibly draw some conclusions about the position of Mongol allies on the Qing political agenda. We must bear in mind that the *Ming History* was written during the Qing period but drew on the *Veritable Records* compiled in Ming times.³ It is thus a unique document in which both Ming and Qing political views are conveyed. It is no coincidence that it is the dynastic history that required the longest time to complete and be approved, which it was by the Qianlong emperor in 1739, some ninety-four years after the Shunzhi emperor's decree for its compilation.⁴ This is even more remarkable if compared to the barely eighteen months devoted to the writing of the *Yuan Shi*,⁵ whose biographies I shall deal with in a forthcoming publication.⁶

The *liezhuan* or Biographies section of any dynastic history usually contains several thousands of exemplary lives, being in fact the larger section of these monumental works.⁷ In the *Ming History* only a dozen⁸ of these great men are said to be of Mongolian origin—that is, a dozen over a span of 300 years and among the thousands of officers and generals selected in this gallery of

2 See, for instance, Chan Hok-lam 1968, 1975; Dardess 1970; Dreyer 1982: 1–156; Mote 1988; Jiang Yonglin 2011. Jiang Yonglin 2018 discusses the concept of Ming China as a multicultural body as opposed to the traditional monolithic image of the empire; Zhu Hong 2001 summarizes the recent findings of Chinese scholarship; Guida 2018 retraces in the *Veritable Records* and other contemporary sources the development of this ethnic bias.

3 For a discussion about the composition and manipulation of the *Veritable Records of the Ming Dynasty*, see Franke 1961, esp. 67, and 73–76 for its transmission and copies. See also Xie Gui'an 2003: 122–31; Chan Hok-lam 2007, 2008: 105–10.

4 See, for instance, Ng and Wang 2005: 239.

5 Cleaves 1988.

6 Cleaves 1956 examines the biography of Bayan of the Barin.

7 See Wilkinson 2012: 626. On the structure and significance of biographies, see Twitchett 1961 and Wright 1962.

8 There are nine entries but in Wu Yuncheng's biography (*Ming Shi* 1974 156: 4269–70) his three sons and grandsons are also mentioned as loyal and virtuous officials.

positive models. This limited number may indicate that many of them were not properly registered as Mongols, or else—given the general political lines of Ming legitimacy based on ethnicity⁹—that the Chinese officials intended to reduce their role in the dynasty construction.

During the Ming era, the Mongols represented the largest group among the non-Chinese peoples settled in China; as Henry Serruys' research amply demonstrated,¹⁰ from 1368 to 1449 tens of thousands of Mongols joined the fledgling Ming dynasty. The sinicization process of the Mongols, which some believe had already successfully started during the Yuan, was actually more an achievement of the Ming period than of the previous dynasty. In their biographies, this element is strongly highlighted: the Mongols chosen here as models were—above all—transformed, civilized, and their origin strengthened the glory of Chinese civilization, which they had recognized and to which they were loyal. Discussing prominent Mongols of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries who joined the Ming, Serruys observed, "it is very questionable whether their descendants can still be called Mongols."¹¹ In fact, as underlined by Di Cosmo,¹² Chinese states were already integrating foreign peoples in Han times. Why insist on their foreign origin, then, more than a century after the collapse of the Ming?

David Robinson argues that the Ming dynasty continued to distinguish very carefully Mongols from other groups until the end of the dynasty mainly for administrative reasons, as they were classified among the hereditary military households.¹³ It must be noted, however, that the biographies also include some civilian officials, equally labelled with the term Menggu 蒙古 or, as in the case of Li Xian, Dada 鞑靼 (Tatar); this interpretation is therefore not fully convincing. But we shall return on this point.

1 Competing Views

With the end of the Yuan, while some Chinese officials proved to be loyal to the foreign dynasty and followed its last emperor in Mongolia after his defeat and escape, many Mongolian soldiers also returned to their land of origin; actually, a century after the foundation of the Yuan dynasty by Qubilai they had

9 For a general definition of ethnicity in late imperial China, see Elliott 2001: 16–20.

10 Serruys 1959, 1966, 1967, 1975.

11 Serruys 1959a: 210.

12 Di Cosmo 2002. See also Liu Xiangxue 2006 and Zhang Feixiang 2016 for the specific situation in Ming times.

13 Robinson 2004.

nothing in common with the troops of Chinggis Qan.¹⁴ On the contrary, considering the tragic Mongolian economic and political situation at that time, the Ming empire became the target of many Mongols who, voluntarily submitting, gained the privilege of trespassing the Great Wall and added to the great number of Mongols already living there from the previous dynasty. In fact, it must be considered that most Mongols were born in China and had lived all their lives there, having never travelled outside its borders. In particular, given the climatic differences and lifestyles between China (to which they were accustomed) and Mongolia, that part of the population who did not engage in military activities—administrators, officials, merchants, and so forth—and lived not only in northern regions but also in central and southern China, were highly unlikely to choose to ‘return’ to a country they had never been to. The ethnic identity was merely a label; what sense could it have in their eyes?¹⁵ Confucian officials, on the other hand, did not fail to underline ethnic and cultural differences, highlighting the problems that were connected to their presence in Chinese society, as in the following memorial of Zeng Bingzheng, presented to the Hongwu emperor in 1376:

臣聞易之為書也，貴陽賤陰，春秋之法，內中國而外夷狄，蓋中國者，陽也，夷狄者，陰也。臣竊觀近來蒙古、色目之人多改為漢姓，與華人無異，有求仕入官者，有登顯要者，有為富商大賈者。古人曰“非我族類，其心必異。”安得無隱伏之邪心，懷腹誹之怨咨？咨宜令復姓，絕其番語，庶得辨認，可以斟量處置其典兵，及居近列之人許其避退。

I know that in the *Book of Changes* the *yang* is considered precious and the *yin* of little value; the law [expressed] in the Spring and Autumn Annals is to call the inside territory the Middle Kingdom and the outside that of the foreigners, for the Middle Kingdom is the Yang element and the foreigners are the Yin element. I have heard that many of the newly arrived Mongols and *Semuren*¹⁶ have changed their names to be equal to the Chinese. Some want to get an official assignment, others have become very powerful people, others are wealthy merchants. “Who does not belong to our people, necessarily has a different mind”, the ancients said. They can surely hide evil hearts, smouldering occult resentment. We should order them to resume their original names, stop using their

14 See, for instance, Barkmann 1999, esp. 276–78.

15 An interesting discussion on ethnicity and the loyalty to the Ming dynasty can be found in Swope 2003.

16 For a discussion on this term, see Haw 2013–14.

foreign tongues, so that we would be able to recognize them, and devise ways of dealing with them. Those who command troops or held offices near the capital should be allowed to retire.¹⁷

Zeng seemed to be afraid of the Mongols and other foreigners—disguised as Chinese—who could easily plot against the government just because of their ethnic origin. Letting them keep their names and tongue would make their identification clear; on the other hand, this label might come in handy in case of the need to single out a scapegoat, as Kenneth Swope has shown for Pubei.¹⁸

Hongwu did not listen to Zeng's admonitions. On the contrary, many of the Yuan troops who had remained in the Ming territory were included in the Ming army rightly after he came to power, as well as civil officials who submitted. Even the emperor's guard, the infamous body of the Brocade Guards (*Jinyiwei* 錦衣衛), which represented one of the most obvious legacies of the previous dynasty, included Mongols. Remarkably, the Ming readily adopted the Mongol system of hereditary military households. In fact, in some imperial decrees, Emperor Hongwu said he wanted to treat Mongols and all other foreigners like the Chinese, provided they recognized his sovereignty. This was his strategy to ensure the strongest support from all the population of the Mongol empire, and therefore by any means he would comply with the Chinese officials' desire for a kind of revenge towards the race which had been responsible for their marginalization during the Yuan domination. Already before the official proclamation of the dynasty, Hongwu affirmed this principle several times. For example, on 19 January 1367, the future emperor stated:

如蒙古、色目,虽非华夏族类,然同生天地之间,有能知礼义愿为臣民者, 与中夏之人抚养无法。

As for Mongols and different categories (*semu*), though they do not have Chinese origins, they are still born between Heaven and Earth. Those

17 *Ming Taizu Shilu* 109.4ab (ed. Taipei 1962–68 pp. 1815–16. 7.11.1376. All the translations are mine, unless specifically stated otherwise.

18 Swope 2003. Pubei (1526–1592) was a Chahar Mongol who, after the killing of his father by a neighbour, defected to the Ming in order to save his life, becoming an extremely useful warrior on the border region of Qinghai. After many years of rewards from the Ming court, both in cash and in official ranks, he got involved into a rebellion led by a Chinese officer named Liu Dongyang who meant to protest against the Grand Coordinator (i.e. provincial governor) for his denial to provide food and pay for the troops. In the end, Pubei was accused of being the leader only because of his origin.

who observe correct behaviour and want to become our subjects will be treated in the same way as the Chinese.¹⁹

Beyond the official propaganda of the “Son of Heaven” who must look at everyone with the same benevolence (*yishi tong ren* 一視同仁), it was undoubtedly the case that the Mongols were the best warriors to oppose to their kin who continued to rally the northern borders. On 23 September 1368, a few days after the conquest of the Mongolian capital Daidu and the proclamation of the two capitals Yingtian (present-day Nanjing) and Kaifeng (with the name of the northern capital, Beijing), the new emperor declared:

蒙古、色目人既居我土即吾赤子，有才能者一体擢用。

Since the Mongols and *Semuren* live on our soil, they are our subjects, an official assignment will be granted to all who have adequate capacities.²⁰

Foreign presence was to be welcomed not only in military ranks but also in the bureaucratic carrier, giving credit to those who had worked for the previous dynasty. In the following years, as the new government consolidated, Hongwu’s programmatic statements intensified:

上曰：人性皆可與為善，用夏變夷古之道也。今所獲故元官並降人宜內徙，使之服我中國聖人之教，漸摩禮義，以革其故俗。

Human nature can always exercise good, and correcting foreigners through the costumes of China is our duty according to the teachings of the Ancient masters. Now, the Yuan officials who have been caught and those who surrendered will be taken inside the Empire so that they can submit to the teachings of our Masters, gradually learn our rituals, and change their old customs.²¹

The Mongols would be good subjects for the Ming only if they adopted and followed the tenets of Chinese civilization. On the contrary, in the Yuan era, being Chinese was not an advantage. Indeed, there was even the tendency of some Chinese to “become Mongols”, to pretend to be Mongols to get privileged

19 *Ming Taizu Shilu* 26: 11b (ed. Taipei 1962–68 p. 404).

20 *Ming Taizu Shilu* 34: 9b (ed. Taipei 1962–68 p. 616). See also *Ming Shi* 1974 2: 21.

21 *Ming Taizu Shilu* 117: 3b–4a (ed. Taipei 1962–68 pp. 1912–13).

positions, while sometimes it was the sovereign to confer Mongolian surnames as honorary titles.²²

The question of names was of great importance during the Hongwu period (1368–1398). Many Mongols adopted both Chinese names and surnames, others preferred a combination of Chinese surnames and their own Mongolian names, so that on 15 May 1370, the emperor felt it necessary to forbid this with a specific imperial edict, a sign that this practice must have been widespread:

禁蒙古、色目人更易姓氏诏曰：天生斯民族属姓氏，各有本源，古之圣王尤重之。

It is forbidden for Mongolians and Classified people to change their names. Every person in our people belongs to a lineage [or a surname] that has its origin, that is why the sovereign sages of antiquity gave a great importance to this.²³

At the same time, Hongwu often gave Han honorary names and nobility ranks to foreign officials, in appreciation for their services and to announce their transformation into loyal subjects, as we will see when we study the biographies.

It is not surprising that most of the Mongolian individuals mentioned in the *Ming History* and in the *Veritable Records* were military officers: recent scholarship has amply demonstrated how Ming emperors as late as Jiajing (1521–1567) continued to consider Mongols as models to emulate in terms of martial ability.²⁴ Among those mentioned as separate entries in the *liezhuan* section, only three Mongols were bestowed civil ranks, all of them during the reign of the first emperor. The reason for this might be that once the dynasty was successfully established and consolidated there was no need to emphasize the foreigners' role in its government, or else that, since Ming military power began to decline after Yongle, the Mongol contribution to the dynasty's well-being was to be highlighted only in relation to border policy and defence.²⁵

22 Serruys 1959: 162–63.

23 *Ming Taizu Shilu* 51: 5a (ed. Taipei 1962–68 p. 999).

24 Robinson 2013. Eirkson 2017 discusses the idea of a much larger empire, inherited from the Mongols.

25 Swope warns against the idea of a 'general' Ming policy towards the Mongols, stressing the differences between the attitudes of individual emperors (2003: 81). See also Waldron 1992: 72–140.

2 The Biographies

2.1 *Dalu Yuquan*

Although he was born in China and mastered perfectly the Chinese language and culture, Dalu Yuquan 荅祿與權, a Naiman prince, never changed his name. Nor did Hongwu ever confer him a Chinese one.²⁶ Surprisingly, in his old age Dalu chose a literary name that led to a strong rebuke from the emperor precisely because it was deemed too Chinese, meaning “the old man from the Luo river”. Thus Dalu Yuquan was not entitled to use it.²⁷ Being a minor civil official during the Yuan dynasty it was quite remarkable he was summoned to assume the assignment of teacher of the emperor’s second son (*jishan* 紀善). Why should the founder of a dynasty, who would later on build his legitimacy on the alleged restoration of Han Chinese, employ a Mongolian teacher for his son? We can imagine that either Dalu Yuquan was considered, so to speak, to be more Chinese than Chinese nationals, or else that ethnicity at this earlier stage of the Ming construction was not so important, something I have demonstrated elsewhere.²⁸ After only ten days, he was promoted to the rank of provincial inspector-censor: it might have been an honorary title to be added to his actual job. Later he was given the rank of compiler in the Academy of Literature (*Hanlin xiuzhuan* 翰林修撰) and allowed to retire in 1378 due to old age.²⁹

2.2 *Dao Tong*

It is worthwhile noting that even the term usually translated as ‘Mongol’ swiftly changes, from Yuan to Ming and again from Ming to Qing: while during the Mongol domination the term was transcribed according to his original sound Menggu 蒙古, later it was changed to Dada 鞑靼, ‘Tatar’, mainly to distinguish the actual Mongol people from the previously successful foreign tribe, in order to stress the end of the Yuan dynasty in 1368 and prevent its comeback. As demonstrated by Okada in 1994, there were at least five more khans who continued to associate themselves with the name of the Yuan dynasty until the end of the fourteenth century, but this was unacceptable to Chinese ideology. Esen declared himself to be the “Grand khan, Heavenly holiness of the Great

26 For a discussion about Dalu Yuquan’s name and Hongwu’s assessment of him, see Guida 2018: 155–56.

27 *Ming Taizu ji* repr. 2014 16: 347.

28 See Guida 2018.

29 *Ming Shi* 1974 136: 3932.

Yuan” (大元田盛大可汗) in a letter sent to the Ming court in 1453.³⁰ Despite this self-assigned title, the *Ming History* duly registers tribute missions, consisting mainly in horses, regularly received from them and ignores his claim.³¹

The term Dada, used as early as the Song era to refer to various northern populations, is seen as derogatory by some scholars.³² This may explain why the second civil official whose biography is recorded in the *Ming History*, Dao Tong 道同, is defined as Dada in the *Veritable Records*,³³ while later he is registered as Menggu in the *Ming Shi*³⁴ since the Manchu Qing probably recovered the original term.

The story of this official, “educated to filial piety by his mother”, is an exemplary case of honesty against corruption. Recommended for a minor position in 1370, he later became magistrate at Panyu in Guangdong. Having clashed several times with local lords who bullied and abused the population, he always maintained a firm position in the name of the law and public welfare, refusing bribes and ignoring threats right to the day when he was accused by the lords of actions unworthy of his role and was condemned to death by the emperor. The most powerful of these local lords was in fact a certain Marquis of Yongjia, whose surname was Zhu and was probably a distant relative of the emperor himself. Soon afterwards, Hongwu realized that Dao Tong was only trying to prevent the lords from extorting money from farmers and artisans; however, his intervention came too late—Dao had already been assassinated.³⁵ However, the Marquis was later executed and Dao’s memory still survives in the region today as a protecting divinity.

2.3 *Li Xian*

The former Yuan minister of works, whose original name in Mongolian is transcribed or translated as Chou lü 丑驢, i.e. “ugly donkey”,³⁶ came back to China in 1388 and for this was bestowed with a true Chinese name, Li Xian 李賢, meaning ‘wise’. Significantly, he was conferred several posts after the civil war (1399–1402) that led to the victory of Emperor Yongle, and he also trans-

30 Okada 1985: 52, quoting *Ming Shilu*, Jingtai the fourth year. The term 田盛 stands for 天聖. It has been transcribed in a different way probably in order to avoid any reference to the heavenly mandate.

31 In 1969 Louis Hambis translated into French the full chapter (*juan* 327) of the *Ming History* devoted to Dada. See Hambis 1969: 24, 30, 32.

32 Nashun Wuliji 2008.

33 *Ming Taizu Shilu* 133.3a (ed. Taipei 1962–68 p. 2111).

34 *Ming Shi* 1974 140: 4008.

35 Cf. *Ming Shi* 1974 140: 4008. *Ming Taizu Shilu* 133.3b (ed. Taipei 1962–68 p. 2112).

36 The habit of giving derogatory names to children was due to the traditional fear of the evil influence of spirits that might affect them. See Zhaqi Siqin 1981: 77.

lated official acts concerning border issues. The next sovereign, Renzong, in 1425 employed him and honoured him repeatedly, giving him the title of count of Zhongjin.³⁷

2.4 *Qoryočin*

The life of Qoryočin was similar. Transcribed as Huoli Huozhen 火裡火真 in Chinese, Qoryočin was instead a general in the Yuan army. Returning to China in 1381 with 171 other families (according to the Veritable Records³⁸), he was enrolled in the regular army and assigned to the Beiping garrison at the northern border. He fought alongside the prince of Yan during the civil war, and the texts relate his courage as commander of a Mongolian cavalry squadron. With the rank of general and the title of Marquis of Tong'an, he died in combat on the border in 1409 at the age of sixty-one; one of his descendants honoured the family about a century later by killing Japanese pirates in the name of the Ming.³⁹

2.5 *Wu Yuncheng and Xue Bin*

The next great officials of Mongolian origin worth remembering are Wu Yuncheng 吳允誠 and Xue Bin 薛斌, both holding a regular Han name for imperial grace. The first, originally from Gansu, returned to the southern side of the Great Wall in 1405; he received this Chinese name from Emperor Yongle in place of his Batu Temür “because many Mongols have the same name”, and was assigned the post of assistant to the Commissioner-in-chief of the Right. For many years he fought heroically in the ranks of the Ming army, as his three sons and grandchildren had done. The second, Xue Bin, the son of a Mongolian officer who returned to China during Hongwu’s reign, distinguished himself for his military qualities and was thus awarded the title of Marquis of Yongshun in 1419. His son Shoutong 壽童 fought valiantly in numerous battles before being killed in the tragic attack on the Tumu fort in 1449. In this regard, the dynastic history reports of his extreme courage “even when the strings were broken and the arrows exhausted, he continued to hit the enemies with the empty bow”. Even his own enemies the Mongols Oirat recognized him as one of their own kind and publicly praised his heroism while shedding tears.⁴⁰

37 Cf. *Ming Shi* 1974 156: 4272.

38 *Ming Taizu Shilu* 138: 4b (ed. Taipei 1962–68 p. 2178).

39 Cf. *Ming Shi* 1974 145: 4091. See also Serruys 1959: 247–62.

40 *Ming Shi* 1974 156: 4272. Wu Yuncheng’s descendants also took part in this unlucky and desperate battle.

2.6 *Ha Ming*

Other Mongolian officials are mentioned in different roles during this dramatic episode. While the eunuch Xi Ning 喜宁 is depicted as a slimy traitor who readily changed sides and became Esen's advisor on China,⁴¹ Ha Ming 哈銘,⁴² who joined the expedition as an interpreter, is said to have served the emperor well, both during the capture and throughout the year of imprisonment they spent in a felt tent. Together with Yuan Bing, who belonged to the emperor's personal guard and was the only one left to assist him, Ha Ming comforted and supported His Majesty in any way he could, risking his life in the process. Upon returning to Beijing, Yuan was made head of the Imperial Guard, while the surname Yang 杨 and an official rank were conferred to Ha Ming. In subsequent years, he was sent to foreign countries on diplomatic mission several times and held official positions until his late age.

2.7 *Jiao Li*

Jiao Li 焦禮 (1382–1463) belonged to a family of soldiers who had received hereditary ranks in the Ming army in the Hongwu era. His father, Ba-si-tai, was conferred the post of assistant commander of Tongzhou, near Beijing. He worked at the court of Xuande (1426–1435) and was appointed by the Zhengtong emperor (1436–1449) as Commissioner-in-chief of the Right.⁴³

While the emperor was imprisoned in Esen's camp, Jiao Li, commissioned by the new ruler Jingtai (1449–1457), managed a few times to repel Esen's attacks on the capital (at that time, very close to the Great Wall) and on Xingshui fort. When Zhengtong returned to the throne in 1457 with the name of Tianshun, he awarded Jiao the hereditary title of count of Dongning. Jiao fought all his long life against Uriangyad attacks and had to be joined by a junior aide—Deng Duo 鄧鐸—only on account of his age (he was eighty). He is described as exceptionally brave and as gifted as any other in chivalry and archery.⁴⁴

2.8 *Man Gui*

Finally, one last character deserves mention: significantly, he lived during the reign of the unfortunate Emperor Chongzhen (1627–1644), with whom the Ming dynasty ended. Again, in very troubled times, Man Gui 滿桂 (1594–1630), who had entered China as a young boy, repeatedly faced attacks by the troops

41 *Ming Shi* 1974 167: 4509. See also De Heer 1986: 18. Xi Ning obviously did not deserve to have his biography included in the *Ming History*.

42 *Ming Shi* 1974 167: 4509–11.

43 *You dudu* 右都督 was the highest rank of military administration in Ming times. There were five military commissioners in the central government. See Hucker 1985: 544.

44 *Ming Shi* 1974 156: 4278–79.

of the new Jin (later to be called the Manchus) of Hong Taiji, always victorious until the final clash of 1634 in which he was killed while defending the border. His archery skills were extraordinary, and he was rewarded with cash prizes many a time for his brave actions when still very young; later on, he climbed the ladder of military ranks. In 1621 the academician Sun Zhengzong went to his garrison on an official visit and was greatly impressed by both Man Gui's imposing appearance and martial capability. He thus recommended Man Gui for a post at Shanhai guan. Man Gui is described in the *Ming History* as not very intelligent but exceptionally brave; not prone to distractions and pleasures and always ready to share both his suffering and joy with his soldiers. His fame grew in the following years and he was given more responsibilities and was always able to fulfil his tasks. When the Chongzhen emperor heard of his last, desperate, and unlucky enterprise, he was shocked and sufficiently grief-stricken as to order the Minister of Rites, Xu Guangqi, to offer sacrifices for him. Man Gui was conferred great posthumous honours.⁴⁵

3 Conclusion

While the official *Ming History*, written by officials for officials, reproduces the usual stereotypes of this kind of text emphasizing the moral values of Chinese tradition, it is quite revealing that at least some Mongol personalities are left among those considered to be the most important people of the whole period. Although in possession of scarce elements, the compilers of the *Ming History*, according to the politics of the Qing dynasty in the eighteenth century, have highlighted the uninterrupted contribution throughout the Ming period of the Mongol allies,⁴⁶ defining a precise line of continuity between the three dynasties (Yuan, Ming, Qing).

Even though these remarkable Mongol characters are said to conform totally to the Chinese way of living, some keep their original names and are given command of their troops as before in appreciation of their military qualities. During the reigns of Emperors Hongwu and Yongle, both inclined to join the battlefield, the Mongol presence seems more remarkable, as the difference between the Mongols who have submitted and those who did not like the Oirats and the Uriangyad slowly emerges. This feature is echoed in Qing times, when the western Mongols were called Dzungars as opposed to the eastern Mongols

45 *Ming Shi* 1974 271: 6957–60.

46 For the close relationship between the Mongols and Manchus, see Crossley 1997: 95–101; Rawski 1998: 131, 295; Elverskog 2006; Wulan 2011.

who were, on the contrary, faithful allies. The variety of names for different tribes seems to illustrate that the great Mongol empire had long gone, and no one else deserved to keep this name anymore. Going back to the selected biographies, if the hereditary category military officers belonged to seems to be a reasonable explanation for these officers' 'ethnic' identification, it is much more difficult to understand why it should be mentioned for civilians. This foreign identification is by no means the only exception in Ming bureaucracy: after all, the Ming dynasty was the successor state to the Mongol empire and thus retained much of the great multiracial character of the Yuan period. There were other foreigners, duly registered as loyal officers in the *Ming History* biography section.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, official sources, far from emphasizing the continuity of the institutions of the two dynasties, frame these presences in the Confucian view of unsurpassed virtue: the fact that they all chose to remain in China signalled the deep Chinese education they received and how much they were thus transformed. Undoubtedly, the military officers were classified in hereditary categories that had to keep a clear label, but the fact that civilian officials are also defined as Mongols must convey a political meaning.

Bibliography

- Barkmann, Udo, "Some Comments on the Consequences of the Decline of the Mongol Empire on the Social Development of the Mongols", in Reuven Amitai-Preiss and David Morgan (eds.), *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, pp. 273–81, Leiden: Brill, 1999.
- Chan Hok-lam, "Liu Chi (1311–75) and his Models: The Image-Building of a Chinese Imperial Adviser", *Oriens Extremus*, 15.1 (1968): 34–55.
- Chan Hok-lam, "The rise of Ming T'ai Tsu (1368–98): Facts and Fictions in Early Ming Official Historiography", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 95.4 (1975): 679–715.
- Chan Hok-lam, "Xie Jin (1369–1415) as Imperial Propagandist: His Role in the Revisions of the 'Ming Taizu Shilu'", *T'oung Pao*, 91.1/3 (2005): 58–124.
- Chan Hok-lam, "Legitimizing Usurpation: Historical Revisions under the Ming Yongle Emperor (r. 1402–1424)", in Philip Yuen-sang Leung (ed.), *The Legitimation of New Orders: Case Studies in World History*, pp. 75–158, Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2007.

47 See, for example, in *Ming Shi* 1974: Hu Dahai, a general of Persian origin who played a key role in the establishment of Ming the dynasty (133:3878–79); Mo Hongyi, a Vietnamese officer (144:4077); Ma Gui 麻貴, a Muslim general (238: 6199).

- Chan Hok-lam, "The 'Song' Dynasty Legacy: Symbolism and Legitimation from Han Lin'er to Zhu Yuanzhang of the Ming Dynasty", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 68.1 (2008): 91–133.
- Chan Hok-lam and Laurie Dennis, "Frenzied Fictions: Popular Beliefs and Political Propaganda in the Written History of Ming Taizu", in Sarah Schneewind (ed.), *Long Live the Emperor! The Uses of the Ming Founder across Six Centuries of East Asian History*, pp. 15–36, Minneapolis, MN: Society for Ming Studies, 2008.
- Chen Gaohua 陈高华, "Lun Zhu Yuanzhang he Yuanchao de guanxi" 论朱元璋和元朝的关系, *Xueshu yuekan* 学术月刊, 5 (1980), repr. in Chen Gaohua, *Yuanshi yanjiu lungao* 元史研究论稿, pp. 316–27, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1991.
- Cleaves, Francis W., "The Biography of Bayan of the Barin in the Yuan shih", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 19 (1956): 185–303.
- Cleaves, Francis W., "The Memorial for Presenting the Yüan shi", *Asia Major*, 3.1 (1988): 59–69.
- Crossley, Pamela Kyle, *The Manchus*, Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1997.
- Dardess, John, "The Transformations of Messianic Revolt and the Founding of the Ming Dynasty", *Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 29.3 (1970): 539–58.
- Dardess, John, "Ming T'ai-tsu on the Yuan: An Autocrat's Assessment of the Mongol Dynasty", *Bulletin of Sung and Yüan Studies*, 14 (1978): 6–11.
- Dardess, John, *Confucianism and Autocracy: Professional Elites in the Founding of the Ming Dynasty*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.
- De Heer, Ph., *The Care-taker Emperor: Aspects of the Imperial Institution in Fifteenth as Reflected in the Political History of the Reign of Chu ch'i-wu*, Leiden: Brill, 1986.
- Di Cosmo, Nicola, *Ancient China and Its Enemies: The Rise of Nomadic Power in East Asian History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Ditmanson, Peter, "The Early Ming National University and Xu Cunen", in Sarah Schneewind (ed.), *Long Live the Emperor! The Uses of the Ming Founder across Six Centuries of East Asian History*, pp. 37–54, Minneapolis, MN: Society for Ming Studies, 2008.
- Dreyer, Edward L., *Early Ming China: A Political History 1355–1435*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1982.
- Eirkson, Christopher, "Early Ming Imperial Ambitions: The Legacy of the Mongol Yuan in Spatial Representations and Historical Judgements", *Frontiers of History in China*, 12.3 (2017): 465–84.
- Elliott, Mark C., *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001.
- Elverskog, Johan, *Our Great Qing: The Mongols, Buddhism and the State in Late Imperial China*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006.
- Farmer, Edward, "Social Regulations of the First Ming Emperor", in Kwang-Ching Liu (ed.), *Orthodoxy in Late Imperial China*, pp. 103–25, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

- Farmer, Edward, *Zhu Yuanzhang and Early Ming Legislation: The Reordering of Chinese Society Following the Era of Mongol Rule*, Leiden: Brill, 1995.
- Franke, Wolfgang, "The Veritable Records of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644)", in W. G. Beasley and E. G. Pulleyblank (eds.), *Historians of China and Japan*, pp. 60–77, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961.
- Guida, Donatella, "Ming Taizu on the Yuan Dynasty: Between Ethnicity and Legitimation", *Archiv Orientalní*, 86 (2018): 137–60.
- Hambis, Louis, *Documents sur l'histoire des Mongols à l'époque des Ming*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969.
- Haw, Stephen G., "The *semu ren* 色目人 in the Yuan Empire", *Ming Qing Yanjiu*, 18 (2013–14): 39–63.
- Hucker, Charles O., *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1985.
- Jiang Yonglin, "In the Name of 'Taizu': The Construction of Zhu Yuanzhang's Legal Philosophy and Chinese Cultural Identity in the Veritable Records of Taizu", *T'oung Pao*, 96.4 (2011): 408–70.
- Jiang Yonglin, "Thinking about 'Ming China' Anew: The Ethnocultural Space in a Diverse Empire—With Special Reference to the 'Miao territory'", *Journal of Chinese History*, 2 (2018): 27–78.
- Kwok Ka Fai 郭嘉輝, "Lüelun 'DaMing Taizu huangdi yuzhi zhi' ji qi shiliao jiazhi" 略論 '大明大明太祖皇帝御製集' 及其史料价值, *Journal of Chinese Studies* 中國文化研究學報, 61 (July 2015): 171–89.
- Langlois, John D. Jr., "Chinese Culturalism and The Yüan Analogy: Seventeenth-Century Perspectives", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 40.2 (December 1980): 355–98.
- Legge, James (tr.), *The Chinese Classics* in five volumes, with a translation, critical and exegetical notes, prolegomena, and copious indexes, v. 2 (1861): The works of Mencius, Hong Kong: At the Author's, 1861–1872.
- Liu Pujiang, "Zai lun Zubu yu Dada" 再论阻卜与鞑鞑, *Lishi Yanjiu* 历史研究, (2005): 28–41.
- Liu Xiangxue 刘祥学, *Mingchao minzu zhengze yanbian shi* 明朝民族政策演变史, Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2006.
- Ming Shi* 明史, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974.
- Ming Taizu ji* 明太祖集, ed. Hu Shie 胡士萼, 1991, repr. Hefei: Anhui guji congshu zubian, Huangshan shushe, 2014.
- Ming Taizu Shilu* 明太祖實錄, ed. Taipei: Institute of History and Philology of the Academia Sinica, 1962–68.
- Mote, Frederick, "The Rise of the Ming Dynasty, 1330–1367", in Frederick Mote and Denis Twitchett (eds.), *The Cambridge History of China Volume 7: The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644, Part 1*, pp. 11–57, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

- Mote, Frederick, *Imperial China, 900–1800*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999.
- Nanshun Wuliji 那顺乌力吉, “Lun ‘Dada’ mingcheng de yanbian” 论“鞑靼”名称的演变, *Nei Menggu minzu daxue xuebao* 内蒙古民族大学学报 (社会科学版), 34.2 (March 2008): 8–12.
- Ng, On-cho and Q. Edward Wang, *Mirroring the Past: The Writing and Use of History in Imperial China*, Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 2005.
- Okada, Hidehiro, “Dayan Khan as a Yuan Emperor: The Political Legitimacy in 15th Century Mongolia”, *Bulletin de l’Ecole française d’Extrême-Orient*, 81 (1994): 51–58.
- Okada, Hidehiro, “China as a Successor State to the Mongol Empire”, in Reuven Amitai-Preiss and David Morgan (eds.), *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, pp. 260–72, Leiden: Brill, 1999.
- Rawski, Evelyn S., *The Last Emperors*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- Robinson, David, “Images of Subject Mongols Under the Ming Dynasty”, *Late Imperial China*, 25.1 (June 2004), 59–123.
- Robinson, David, “The Ming Court and the Legacy of the Yuan Mongols”, in David Robinson (ed.), *Culture, Courtiers, and Competition: The Ming Court (1368–1644)* (Harvard East Asian Monographs 301), pp. 365–422, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008.
- Robinson, David, *Martial Spectacles of the Ming Court* (Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph Series 87), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013.
- Serruys, Henry, *Sino-Mongol Relations During the Ming I: The Mongols in China During the Hung-wu Period (1368–1398)*, volume 11 of *Mélanges Chinois et Boudhiques*, Brussels: Institut belge des hautes études chinoises, 1959.
- Serruys, Henry, “Mongols Ennobled During the Early Ming”, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (December 1959a): 209–60.
- Serruys, Henry, “Land Grants to the Mongols in China: 1400–1460”, *Monumenta Serica*, 25 (1966): 394–405.
- Serruys, Henry, *Sino-Mongol Relations During the Ming II: The Tribute System and Diplomatic Missions (1400–1600)*, volume 14 of *Mélanges Chinois et Boudhiques*, Brussels: Institut belge des hautes études chinoises, 1967.
- Serruys, Henry, *Sino-Mongol Relations during the Ming III: Trade Relations: The Horse Fairs (1400–1600)*, volume 17 of *Mélanges Chinois et Boudhiques*, Brussels: Institut belge des hautes études chinoises, 1975.
- Swope, Kenneth, “All Men are not Brothers: Ethnic Identity and Dynastic Loyalty in the Ningxia Mutiny of 1592”, *Late Imperial China*, 24.1 (June 2003): 79–129.
- Twitchett, Denis C., “Chinese Biographical Writing”, in W. G. Beasley and E. G. Pulleyblank (eds.), *Historians of China and Japan*, pp. 95–114, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961.

- Waldron, Arthur, *The Great Wall of China: From History to Myth*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Wilkinson, Endymion, *Chinese History: A New Manual*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2012.
- Wright, Arthur and Denis Twitchett (eds.), *Confucian Personalities*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1962.
- Wulan 乌兰, "Baqi manzhou shizu tongpu menggu xingshi kao" '八旗满洲氏族通谱' 蒙古姓氏考, *Minzu yanjiu*, 1 (2011): 62–76.
- Xie Gui'an 谢贵安, *Ming shilu yanjiu* 明实录研究, Wuhan: Hubei Renmin chubanshe, 2003.
- Zhang Feixiang 张飞翔, "Jianshu Mingchaode minzu zhengce" 简述明朝的民族政策, *Journal of Kaifeng Institute of Education*, 36.8 (August 2016): 3–4.
- Zhaqi Siqin 札奇斯钦, *Menggu wenhua yu shihui* 蒙古文化與社會, Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshuguan, 1981.
- Zhu Hong 朱鸿, "Youguan Zhu Yuanzhang yanjiu (1989–2000) jieshao" 有关朱元璋研究 (1989–2000) 介绍, *Hanxue yanjiu tongxun* 汉学研究通讯, 20.1 (February 2001): 28–44.