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Local Politico-Economic Particulars of the Quanzhou Region During the Tenth Century*

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The Problem

A significant impulse behind the economic transformation that took place in the Indian Ocean and eastern waters¹ in general in the tenth, and still later in the eleventh, century was the increased commercial activity of Song China. Already prior to the founding of the Song—during the era officially designated the Five Dynasties or Wudai period (906-960) in Chinese historical writing, also known as the Tang-Song transition or interregnum (879-978)—major commercial and cultural changes occurred in the Indian Ocean, in Southeast Asia, and in China. The eighth to eleventh centuries was a period of expansion of Muslim commerce on all the main routes of the Indian Ocean, and trading posts and colonies emerged along the coasts and river estuaries to sustain newly established networks. In the eighth and ninth centuries, the Indian Ocean had become an “Arab Mediterranea.” Arab maritime accounts, especially the Akhbâr as-Stîn wa-l-Hind of 851, give detailed descriptions of Arab establishments in China.² Conversely, apparently only one source of 1000 notes Jewish traders on their way to China, in Sribuza, Indonesia.³

Buddhism was also a significant motor behind the cultural and commercial exchange between China and the Indian Ocean. The cultural prestige that India gained in Southeast Asia and China was

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1. “Eastern waters” refers broadly to the South China Sea and the waters in Southeast Asia.

certainly enhanced by the spread of Buddhism. In McNeill's words "a new and powerful wind of change began to blow across the southern seas that connected the Far East with India and the Middle East."4

The Chinese city of Quanzhou, located on the South China coast in Fujian, is an example of a city that was integrated into this wide net of maritime trade relations. Written sources and archaeological evidence reveal the significance of Quanzhou as a maritime trading center during the Song and Yuan dynasties. This is indisputable. The situation is more complex, however, for the Tang (618-907) and Wudai periods. Not only are Tang and Five Dynasties written records and data rarer; later, post-Wudai descriptions in Chinese sources are often more prejudiced than is normally the case. This is because the events of the Five Dynasties period were not regarded as the history of a legitimate dynasty.

As Quanzhou gradually developed into one of the most famous ports within this "international" trade and culture network—a process that lasted until the end of the eleventh century, it is essential to elaborate on how it achieved the status of a flourishing port and trading center, which linked the East to more Western regions. It is likewise fascinating to analyze the political and economic particulars that characterized the region during this era because general scholarly opinion says it was a period of great significance. As a result, numerous articles and books have been written about the history of the maritime trade in Quanzhou during the Five Dynasties.6 Despite this wealth of material, in some respects

5. In this article the term "West" includes what we know today as the Middle East, which was, of course, the "West" to China.
there is no agreement in scholarly research. Some scholars, such as Kuwabara Jitsuō 桑原騭藏 and Fu Zongwen 傅宗文, argue that Quanzhou was already a flourishing entrepôt by Tang times. Hugh R. Clark has pointed to the importance of the "periods of independence, and hence self-reliance" of the Quanzhou region; that is, the "Tang-Song interregnum" (879-978). He fixed the initial stage of a remarkable economic development of Quanzhou in the early period of this "interregnum." So Kee Long (Su Jilang 蘇基朗), on the other hand, has argued that Hugh Clark's idea that maritime trade had prospered under Wang Yanbin 王延彬 and the Wang family already in the early tenth century is not very conclusive because it is based solely on a passage in the latter's biography in the Wuguo gushi 五國故史. So argues that during the period from 898 to 930, when the Min regime in Fujian was still under the control of the Wang family, the leading city and seaport in Fujian, in both political and economic terms, was still Fuzhou: "Taking into account that Fuzhou had long been the center of growth in Fukien, developed much earlier than any part of southern Fukien," he continues, "this should not be a surprising answer." So Kee Long has also challenged and thoroughly disproved Kuwabara's arguments for such an early boom own research. I should note, however, that this is by no means a complete list of all the publications, but only a selection of some of the most important.


11. Wang Chao 王潮 (7-898) and his successors Wang Shengui 王審邽 and Wang Yanbin. So Kee Long writes: "By the end of the ninth century, an important change occurred in the power structure in Fukien. Wang Ch'ao, who came from Honan with a bandit army, took control of Ch'üan-chou prefecture, and was officially appointed prefect of Ch'üan-chou in 886 by the T'ang court. His power expanded quickly, so that, by 893 he became the actual ruler of Fukien after capturing the city of Fu-chou. This was the beginning of an independent regime in Fukien, ruled by Wang and his successors until 946." So Kee Long, "Developments in Southern Fukien," 450.

in Quanzhou's overseas trade. So believes that the initial stage of Quanzhou’s remarkable economic development probably did not take place before the time of the local rulers Liu Congxiao 留從效 (905?-961?) and Chen Hongjin 陳洪進 (914-985), who succeeded each other in ruling the region for thirty years, relatively independently of Fuzhou after the fall of the Min Kingdom (910-946) in 946. Conversely, Zhu Weigan 朱維幹, for example, has claimed that evidence from a family register of a Zhang 張 clan from Yongtai 永泰 and from the Shiguo chunqiu 十國春秋 could prove that Quanzhou had already become the major of the two ports (that is, Quanzhou and Fuzhou) during the time of the Wang family.

Owing to the poor state of source materials, we will probably never get an exact picture of Quanzhou’s development. In this respect, the quest to pinpoint its initial stage of “remarkable development” will remain difficult. So Kee Long is certainly correct when he concludes that the years of Liu Congxiao and Chen Hongjin’s quasi-independent rule marked a period of decisive change. While this is true, the independent rulers of Quanzhou no doubt built upon a rudimentary overseas trade that had been burgeoning for some time. There is indisputable evidence that it was already functioning in Tang times. Therefore, while examining the history of the economic development and maritime trade in the Quanzhou region of the Wudai period we should not fix our concentration too much on the question of whether this economic
upswing was already in place during the times of the Wang family or only appeared after the end of the Min kingdom in 946. Searching for an explanation for the economic rise of Quanzhou in the tenth century should certainly be seen in the broader context of changes in the Muslim trade system; that is, changes in the Indian Ocean and eastern waters. Political, economic, and cultural developments in the newly established “Arab Mediterranean” cannot be neglected when discussing this problem. In contrast to Fuzhou, developments in the eastern waters certainly contributed to the rise of Quanzhou with its stronger orientation towards Southeast Asia. In this respect, Li Donghua is certainly right in not restricting his analysis to the changes that occurred in the Quanzhou region, but draws attention also to the developments that took place in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian waters.16

Nevertheless, we can and should try to answer the question of whether or not during the tenth century it is valid to speak of a general economic upswing in the Quanzhou region, (1) based not solely on various, more or less occasional, successful economic activities of some independent rich merchants, and (2) which already integrated sections of the local commercial (manufacture) and agricultural sectors into a production orientated towards maritime trade. Against the background of a flourishing overseas trade scenario in the Song period, it may be tempting to detect a flourishing trade into scattered general statements on the picture of Quanzhou during the Tang or Wu-dai period. One example would be the Tang poet Bao He's 包何 (fl. late eighth cent.) remark that “people of many climes mingle in the city's markets.”17 And, after all, the economic success of Quanzhou during the Song dynasty could not have come overnight.

Similar questions have entered scholarly discourse in the past few decades concerning the level or state of commercialization, even though not maritime but inter-regional trade, achieved under the Song, is debated. A well-known article by William T. Rowe appropriately summarized the problem as follows:

“The initial impression held by many observers was that Sung inter-regional trade, while of some volume, was

16. Li Donghua, Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong, 100-06.
17. Li Fang 李昉 (925-996), Wenyuan yinghua 文苑英華 (Shangwu yinshuguan ed.), 271.5a-6b. Clark, “Tang-Song Interregnum,” 143. See the excellent discussion of this poem by So Kee Long, Tang-Song shidai Min’nan Quanzhou shidi lungao, 48-49.
essentially still limited to luxury items ... entirely consumed and largely manufactured in the large regional metropoles. Thus the cities remained effectively islands in a non-commercialized agrarian hinterland. Since urban food supplies were acquired primarily via fiscal extraction in kind there was no need for rural markets and small intermediate cities to develop until the later transformation of the Ming and Ch'ing. More recent research, however, suggests that a graduated marketing hierarchy did exist in the Sung, at least in the most commercially developed portions of the lower Yangtze ... Moreover, as Mark Elvin points out, inter-regional trade even in staples had existed in the Sung, if only on an ad hoc basis, to make up temporary and accidental shortfalls. What the subsequent revolution introduced, then, was not bulk inter-regional trade itself but rather its routinization." 

In this context, no uniform or definite explanation has been found so far concerning the politico-economic characteristics of the development of Quanzhou during this time period; that is to say, when maritime trade relations in Quanzhou entered a stage of development in which they were no longer more or less occasional, but instead were carried out on a routine basis. I should emphasize that it is not my intention to enter into the discussion on economic model types that may or may not be applicable to the Song and pre-Song economy. A priori consideration of a specific economic development under the surface of a given economic model, or trying to put it into defined patterns or general models and trends, in my opinion, disturbs the view of what had really happened.

The poor state of source materials forms the major problem in the investigation of the Quanzhou region during the Wudai period. In this context, it is certainly correct to be cautious with definite conclusions or explanations, the way Hugh R. Clark proceeded in his monograph on the Quanzhou trade. Nonetheless, in my opinion we can seek more definite conclusions, or at least can reject some

19. In modern economics, for example, the way of investigating economy by defining micro- and macro-regions and their interconnections has produced a great number of theories, but at the same time failed to reach any definitive conclusion.
previous explanations as invalid. Thus, attempting to provide a more satisfying explanation of the politico-economic development of the Quanzhou region during its period of independence, this article intends to reinvestigate and analyze the following questions:

The fact that the independent rulers of Quanzhou built upon a rudimentary maritime trade must not be treated as equivalent to a general economic upswing in the region. However, it leads us to a number of questions. First, how did this trade develop in the first place? What gave it an initial impetus and what were its particular characteristics? How did the merchants or the rulers make their profit?

Second, how did the upswing in maritime trade affect the agricultural sector? As the general economic development of a city does not necessarily include an increase in the field of agriculture, but can, for example, be restricted to the development of urban handicrafts, or, as the city could have functioned as a purely trading and transshipment center for merchants, the specific relationship between a general economic upsurge and a transformation of the agrarian sector requires some further elucidation. Was Quanzhou's hinterland already undergoing a process of transformation triggered by the requirements of overseas trade during the Wudai period?

Third, what role did local rulers, who are said to have generously sponsored overseas trade, play within this development, and what was the economic content behind their often praised “sponsoring” of maritime trade? How could they produce profit and attract more wealth by means of maritime trade? In this respect, I will investigate especially their promotion of local “industries” and the manufacture of commodities that were demanded by foreign merchants. Special emphasis will also be given to the role of metals in the supra-regional trade.

Although some questions will probably forever remain unsolved, just as Hugh R. Clark has noted, this investigation may be regarded as an attempt to seek for and arrive at a more standardized understanding of the political and economic development of a region, which was gradually integrated into overseas trade.

21. Clark, Community, Trade, and Networks, 68: “It is impossible to be certain whether such patterns had already arisen during the interregnum.”
1. Genesis of the Ancient Local Overseas Trade

We know that some of the first foreign traders who came to Quanzhou were Persian and Arab merchants, who shipped their surplus wealth in the form of luxury commodities, local specialties, and the like to China where they could exchange them.\(^\text{22}\) It can be assumed that the first Persian and Arab maritime traders came to Quanzhou around the mid- or late seventh century. Naturally, it would be intriguing to be able to pinpoint when exactly the first Muslim traders appeared in Quanzhou, but this is not really necessary or decisive for an explanation of the general character of its early overseas trade.\(^\text{23}\) One may also speculate whether later, at the end of the Tang dynasty after the Canton massacre of 878, when foreign colonies including Arab and Muslim ones were uprooted, trade not only “in Indonesia surged and an exodus of Arab settlers occurred towards Indonesia,”\(^\text{24}\) but more Arabs settled down in Fujian as well.

Speaking in terms of trade and exchange, in China (Quanzhou) these Persian and Arab traders met Chinese merchants who operated primarily only as middlemen between the foreign traders and their Chinese customers. As a rule, the latter were members of the royal family and of the aristocratic and social elite, who did not normally live on the coast. In Tang China many of them lived in the capital Chang'an and therefore did not purchase commodities directly from foreign traders. Successful barter within China required Chinese traders who knew where and to whom to sell the commodities, as well as being familiar with the ways of transportation. In exchange for what they wanted “to buy,” the Chinese could

\(^{22}\) The port of Quanzhou was known to these merchants as Zaiton, Zaitún, or Zitún, a name which is thought to be the Arab transcription of the Chinese term citong 刺桐, the name of a thorny tree. In 944 Liu Congxiao, the ruler of Quanzhou, planted a large number of these trees when he extended the city walls of Quanzhou. While this was commonly regarded as the reason Quanzhou was later called “Citong City” (citong cheng 刺桐城), the Chinese historian Li Donghua has proven that this name was already in use in Tang times. Li Donghua, Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu haihang jiaotong, 47-48. It is true that Wang Shenzhi 王審知 (862-925) and later Liu Congxiao extended the city walls, but these had already been constructed in 793 under Emperor Dezong (r. 780-804).

\(^{23}\) According to Tibbetts, the Arabs reached Southeast Asia before China; that is, between the sixth and seventh centuries. G. R. Tibbetts, “Pre-Islamic Arabia and South-East Asia,” Journal of the Middle Branch of the British Royal Asiatic Society 25.3 (1956): 182, 207.

\(^{24}\) André Wink, Al-Hind, 84.
offer the foreign traders their own surplus commodities. To some extent, precious metals, mostly silver, but also gold or copper, were used as a general equivalent of value at this supra-regional level. This kind of trade in luxury articles could indubitably be carried out without any integration or specific organization of the hinterland and its indigenous local production. Considering that in Tang China most potential customers and consumers of foreign commodities lived in inner China and not on the littoral, it is not surprising that the port of Quanzhou served primarily as a transshipment center. The situation did not diverge radically from the picture in many of the ancient, flourishing non-Chinese trading cities. The trade did not affect local production, which was principally orientated towards satisfying local subsistence needs, and consumption, and could function completely without any integration of the hinterland. Within this trade the first overseas traders acted as pioneers. But before they could undertake such a long and costly journey they needed to have considerable financial means at their disposal. They normally obtained this starting capital stock through domestic and overland trade. As Hugh Clark has already noted, using Quanzhou as a trade center to exchange their luxury commodities, some Chinese and foreign traders probably had accumulated large amounts of merchant’s capital already in the ninth century. Given this situation, where did the profits of the traders come from? How did they know what amount of another commodity or of a precious metal they should give in exchange?

The traders generally made their profits by taking advantage of regional and supra-regional price differences between various localities and conditions of production. In early modes of production, such as that in China, a merchant’s capital appropriated an overwhelming portion of the surplus-product. Part of their profit was made by acting as middlemen or mediators, especially between communities where local production was still substantially oriented towards self-sufficiency—production for use-value and not for exchange—and for whose economic organization the sale of the portion of their product entering circulation, or for the matter any sale of products at their value, was of secondary importance.

25. Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, esp. 64-70.
26. This situation was, of course, quite similar with Chinese merchants.
28. Of course, in Tang and pre-Tang China a number of goods was already being produced for exchange on the market, but this mode of production did not assume
came from the fact that given such a mode of production, the principal owners of the surplus-product with whom the merchants dealt, such as the aristocratic and ruling elite, represent the consuming wealth and luxury that the merchants sought to trap. In other words, the ruling class—those who principally owned or gathered the social wealth into their hands to build themselves enormous wealth and fortune—were able and willing to pay almost any demanded price for a desired commodity.

A glance at the circulation process of this kind of trade reveals that the ruling classes and the aristocratic elite formed the starting point and the end of the circulation. Foreign traders came to China in order to make profits. They demanded a "price" as exchange for their products, be this jewels or frankincense, either in the form of another commodity or in the form of an equivalent weight in preferably precious metals. The Chinese traders, now, were at

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important dimensions and was not the purpose of the contemporary local economic system.

29. This is an expression used by Adam Smith when describing the states of trade in medieval Europe. "The inhabitants of trading cities, by importing the improved manufactures and expensive luxuries of richer countries afforded some food to the vanity of the great proprietors, who eagerly purchased them with great quantities of the rude produce of their own lands. The commerce of a great part of Europe in those times, accordingly consisted chiefly, in the exchange of their own rude produce for the manufactured produce of more civilized nations ... When this taste became so general as to occasion a considerable demand, the merchants, in order to save the expense of carriage, naturally endeavored to establish some manufactures of the same kind in their own country." Adam Smith, An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations (London: Wakefield, 1889), 3: 489-90. Smith is talking about early Venetian and also later Dutch merchants. The situation in the early Quanzhou overseas trade was somewhat different, as it was the Chinese who exported the "improved manufactures." Consequently, domestic merchants were eager to exchange their sophisticated manufactured goods either with "improved manufactures" or with "rude produce" of foreign countries. They mediated between the manufactured produce of the Chinese aristocracy and social elites and those of the foreign traders. Of course, Chinese merchants were also interested in saving costs of transportation and therefore tendentiously "endeavored to establish" manufactures and industries in the vicinity of the port of Quanzhou. In this respect the encouragement of rich landlords and of local rulers during the Wudai Period complied with the interests of the merchants, both Chinese and foreign.

30. In contrast to the working of a modern market economy, the reduction in the value of the produce to the abstract quantity of the human labor embodied in the manufacture of the commodities, a certain quantity of a commodity (such as silk or a specific metal), which stands as an equivalent to an abstract quantity of human labor, was not yet generally valid.
liberty to accept or reject the “price” demanded. After a successful business transaction—for example the purchase of silk in exchange for jewels—the Chinese traders transported the commodities to the consumers—members of the imperial Court and the wealthy elite. Their goal in this transaction was to acquire a larger quantity of Chinese “improved manufactures” in exchange for their goods, worth more than the “price” they had paid for them. The “price” that they received depended on how much the purchaser was willing to pay. Probably, he normally accepted and paid the merchant a certain quantity of silk in exchange, or, if dissatisfied, he had to haggle over the “price.” The imperial Court as consumer did, as a rule, not profit from such a transaction, its sole objective being the possession of certain luxury articles or foreign specialties, which it was unable to obtain in its own country. The financial beneficiary was the middleman. He had increased his wealth by juggling the difference in the “price” he had paid the foreign trader and the “price” he had obtained from the consumer. He now offered the purchased silk again to a foreign trader in exchange for jewels or frankincense. After several such transactions, the “prices” of the exchanges were probably adjusted to a certain level or rate. Both sorts of traders, the foreign overseas trader and the Chinese middleman, extracted their profits from the difference between what they had to pay when purchasing their commodities and what they could command when selling them again. This means that the decisive component of this luxury trade, which decided the level of the traders’ profits, was the willingness of the consumer (the aristocracy or the social elite of the society) to pay this “price.” Given the immense power of such consumers to pay the “prices” demanded, either in the form of precious metals or in the form of other desired commodities like silk, it seems obvious that this kind of luxury (maritime) trade was never restricted by the height of the “prices.” Such prices, demanded by the traders, were dependent solely on what the consumer was willing to pay; in this respect they were truly subjective prices.31

31. I would like to emphasize that this explanation of exchange prices refers only to a trade in luxury articles in economic relations which coincidentally brought commodities into a relationship with one another. Modern economics wants to claim this same price mechanism for the regnant market economy of today, in which the customer is confronted with fixed prices only. Modern economists argue that the realized price proves its subjective character, because the customer, by paying = accepting the price, expresses his high regard for the product he wants to purchase,
Regardless of whether the Chinese traders garnered their commercial capital only in domestic markets or as middlemen between foreign traders and the domestic elite, or eventually perhaps from some other Chinese traders and middlemen, the very presence and the success of the traders already engaged in overseas trade no doubt stimulated those Chinese traders who were wealthy enough to do so, to become overseas traders themselves. As a consequence, more merchants would meet at Quanzhou, but still the trade would function without integration of a local economy. The structure of local agriculture and commerce gradually could be subjected to decisive changes only from a time onwards, when wealthy local people, such as the rulers of Quanzhou and other rich households, more or less in alliance with merchants who were interested in saving costs of transportation, began to independently organize parts of the local production for the making of goods for exchange overseas. Only then could the organization of the local production undergo a process of transformation, during which the trade eventually affected no longer only merchants and members of the ruling and social elites and the consumers of the commodities that were traded, but the economy of a complete region. But was the agricultural and commercial structure of mid-tenth century Quanzhou region already subjected to such decisive changes? In my opinion, although the basis for a future transformation of the local agricultural and commercial structures had definitely been laid during the Wudai period, we should be very careful with conclusions that are too rash.

2. Local Politico-Economic Conditions and Developments

One argument that often served as proof for the growing popula-
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just as if the modern customer was a Chinese feudal lord armed with the same authority and living in a world of an exchange of commodities in the form of occasional transactions. For a comparable argumentation cf. Stanley W. Jevons, *The Theory of Political Economy* (London, 1987). German ed. (Jena, 1924), 134 and 137. A few centuries after the first business transactions between foreign and Chinese merchants in Quanzhou, conditions fixed by the state pertaining to a “minimum capital” a merchant had to prove if he wanted to engage in overseas trade provide some knowledge about the amount of the requisite financial means. In the Song dynasty traders who wanted to sail to and trade in Korea had to prove that they possessed at least 30 million strings of cash consisting of 1,000 coins. Xu Song (1781-1848) et al., eds., *Song huiyao jigao* (hereafter SHY), “Shihuo,” 38.33-34. But these stipulations emerged when Chinese merchants no longer simply acted as intermediaries between the foreign traders and the domestic Chinese consumers.
tion, and thus, to some extent also for the growing wealth and economic progress in contemporary Quanzhou, is the extension of the city walls initiated by Liu Congxiao. During the Tang-Song transition part of this rise in population can be attributed to immigration from other parts of China. If we take the figures given by Robert Hartwell as an approximation, households increased from 24,000 in 742 to 76,000 in 980, and reached as high as 201,400 in 1080. This means that the population had more than tripled by the reign period of the independent warlords Liu Congxiao and Chen Hongjin. People immigrate to places where they expect to be able to earn enough to live on or even a little bit more. What possibilities could the Quanzhou of that time offer such people?

2.1. The Field of Agriculture

The relationship between commercial expansion and agricultural development has been the repeated object of scholarly research. Most of these studies claim that an expanding agricultural sector is an essential prerequisite for the development of local and maritime trade and commerce. Although growth in the agricultural sector is no doubt essential for the development of local domestic trade—particularly in a society whose economy relied basically on agriculture just as it had in tenth century China—I want to argue that the state of the agrarian sector was not significant for the development of the early maritime trade. In this respect, we should first

33. See also Zhuang Weiji 莊爲機 et al., Haishang sichou zhi lu de zhuming gangkou Quanzhous海上絲綢之路的著名港口泉州 (Beijing: Haiyang chubanshe, 1988), 6-8.
34. A more or less exact number of households is irrelevant to our purpose.
35. Robert Hartwell, "Demographic, Political and Social Transformation of China, 750-1250," Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 42 (1982): 365-442, 428. But I want to sound a cautionary note about laying too much emphasis on statistical population figures, plagued by all their well-known inaccuracies. Besides the principal inaccuracies and generalizations, which can be ascribed to their statistical nature, they give rise to other questions; for example, whether the authors made a distinction between zhuhu 主戶 (established households with own land) and kehu 客戶 (alien households) households or how many persons they counted per household.
36. For one of the most recent studies see So Kee Long, "Agricultural Breakthrough in Southern Fujian During the Northern Song," ed. Department of History of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Historia, Vol. II (Hong Kong, 1996), 101-19.
bear in mind that in the early maritime trade potential consumers of the commodities exchanged were basically the aristocratic and ruling elites. Ordinary families could hardly profit from an overseas trade mainly consisting of the exchange of luxury articles and commodities imported to or transshipped at Quanzhou. It was the higher echelons of society who were determined to promote maritime trade, and thereby also the respective commercial activities of the merchants. Second, when seeking to “profit” from overseas trade for the satisfaction of their needs and desires, the aristocratic and ruling elites were not confronted with the “problem” of an expanded agriculture and a large agricultural surplus produce, as long as the more or less standard of living of the population under their patronage was secure and could be taxed. Third, the decision of contemporary rulers to promote maritime trade, conversely, in the long term had effects on the local structure of agriculture and commerce.

Since the Tang dynasty irrigation projects had opened new possibilities to bring larger areas of land under cultivation, which probably provided a substantial agricultural output. But, simultaneously, it seems unlikely that this would have been able to provide the people with much more than their own subsistence needs. This does not rule out the fact that there were some wealthy local households that produced a considerable surplus. As So Kee Long has already pointed out, the various “luxurious mortuary objects unearthed from local Tang tombs attest to their existence." But a few wealthy households do not prove the existence of a flourishing local agriculture. Likewise an increasing population, which is reflected in the sources, does not automatically imply rising productivity and the creation of a significant agricultural surplus, which may have been sold at local markets.

The assumption that agricultural progress must have preceded the upswing in maritime trade stems from a problematic idea. Problematic, because it regards the entire Quanzhou region as one large independent economic unit or subject without any distinction of the specific groups of people who were involved and who conducted the overseas trade. A complete Quanzhou or Quannan region as an independent “trading subject” never existed in this form, and therefore such assumptions are misleading. The aristocratic and ruling elites and the merchants as well were not confronted with the “problem” of an agricultural basis that had to

37. The Xin Tangshu, for example, mentions several irrigation projects in this region. Ouyang Xiu (1007-1072). Xin Tangshu 新唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju ed.), 41.1064-65.
be expanded before the sphere of maritime trade could be entered, even though the "fruits" or results of an expanded agrarian sector did, of course, later find their way into the commercial sector. The idea of a significant agricultural surplus that would be necessary to develop overseas trade implies, furthermore, that the agricultural sector, land ownership, and the property situation in contemporary China possessed a dimension they did not have; namely, allowing ordinary households to produce widely for exchange in markets where the agricultural produce was eventually converted into money. Great quantities of agricultural surplus produce, which hypothetically could be sold abroad and used to help promote an overseas trade, were non-existent in China at that time. More cogently, it is clearly evident that the early maritime traders did not make their profits from agricultural products. It would be ridiculous to assume that an ordinary peasant or merchant would be able to make his fortune by selling lychees overseas and that it would be profitable for him simply to set out on a journey overseas. On this same theme, it is undeniable that the early maritime trade between China and Persian and Arab merchants was an exchange of luxury articles consisting of sophisticated manufactured items and local specialties that appealed greatly to the taste of the ruling and social elites in various countries, as they could not (yet) procure or produce those commodities in their own country. Sophisticated manufactured items produced in China were primarily silks and ceramics. Local agricultural products like lychees would certainly have accompanied this trade, but they did not form its essence.

Several Song and later sources, on the other hand, indicate that Quanzhou had been a region that was not very rich and could barely satisfy its own needs. Some explanations even offer agricultural deficiency as the spur for the development of overseas trade and concomitantly the stimulus for the growth of the local commercial sector. The famous Song official Cai Xiang 蔡襄 (1012-1067) provides an example for such a scenario. The hypothesis

39. In reality, Chinese agriculture consisted of a manorial system with feudal tenants and peasants as the tilling households, which were obliged to give away the greatest part of their agricultural produce to the official authorities in the form of taxation or to the lords of the manor. This left them with just enough to survive, or perhaps not even this. Even supposing that an individual might become rich by selling lychees or rice, this would only have been possible if the agricultural sector was already established as a vehicle for private enterprise.

40. Cai Xiang, Cai Zhonghuigong ji 蔡忠惠公集 (Siku quanshu zhenben ed.), 36.14b-
that traces the causes for the development of the overseas trade back to an agricultural deficit and poverty, circumstances which drove the people to initiate and develop maritime trade, cannot be valid either.

First, from a logical point of view, it is absurd to derive a flourishing trade from pure deficiency. If there is a flourishing trade, all partners involved need a significant surplus, over and above their own requirements, which can therefore be exchanged. The fact that they are poor, thwarted by a lack of land compounded by bad local agricultural conditions, can never provide the stimulus for developing a flourishing overseas trade. This explanation has a miraculous simplicity: driven by economic distress the people sail abroad (where did they get their ships from?) and trade (with which commodities?) so successfully that they initiate a flourishing trade. Or, to put it in another way, disadvantaged by a host of negative conditions, the people initiate positive trade. Persons who were so impoverished could have become fishermen, but certainly not wealthy merchants.

Such an argument neglects the fact that in order to promote trade one has to dispose of the respective material and financial means. Yet, it frequently appears in Song, Yuan, Ming, or Qing sources, and occasionally in modern Chinese historical writing as well. Studying Li Donghua's excellent monograph on the Quanzhou trade, one is confronted with a noticeable, and in some respects similar, explanation of the reasons for the development of maritime trade during the period of the Five Dynasties. Discussing the reasons for the upswing of Quanzhou during that time, Li Donghua makes a distinction between changes in Fujian (Min) and in the development of maritime trade routes and adduces the poor quality of the land, agricultural deficiency, and high population figures as causes for the increasing trade and economic "activism" of Fujian merchants, whom he sees as major contributors to the boom of maritime trade during the Five Dynasties.41 This leaves the reader at least with the impression that Li is perhaps not fully aware that agricultural deficiency and poor quality of the land cannot have constituted a positive condition for the development of maritime trade.

Second, complaints concerning saline soils and uncultivable land, which were quite common at the beginning of the Southern Song dynasty, were normally not raised in this earlier period. This is readily explainable as large parts of the land were neither uncultivable nor infertile per se; the major task was to make them accessible. The bulk of the land about which the complaints were

(continued)

15a.
41. Li Donghua, Quanzhou yu wuguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong, 91-100.
leveled had in fact suffered primarily from the way the economic activities of the local people were treated politically, not only by Tang and Wudai regimes, but later also by the Song government. Numerous households, driven into poverty by high taxation, officially donated their land to monasteries, sometimes even pro forma becoming monks, in order to exempt themselves from the payment of heavy taxes. The natural outcome of this process was that the extreme density of land concentration became even more pronounced. Nor did the high taxation situation change much during the Northern Song. This particular land concentration was therefore the inevitable result of political, social, and economic circumstances. The landless, impoverished population subsequently offered a potential work force for the kilns and the mines.

Hugh Clark has already discussed in detail the problem of landholding during this time. He also addressed another aspect that characterizes the debate on the economic development of Quanzhou and its hinterland at that time; namely, the growing concentration of land in the hands of religious communities, especially Buddhist monasteries. He argues that, because Buddhism was already an established religion in Fujian when the family of Wang Shenzhi came to rule there, the Wangs initially donated lands for political reasons “in order to demonstrate their faith to the local population for whom Buddhism was so important; other landowners, compelled by the political example that the Wangs established, followed suit. But a more important part of the answer is that these land transfers provided relief from the heavy taxes of the interregnum.”

Concerning the question of why so many people of different social standing donated their lands to monastic communities, Clark assumes that “perhaps many of the so-called monks in fact retained the right to work their land and enjoy most of its benefits,” as donating one’s land would be of benefit to a donor only if he retained some interest or responsibility for the land. And he offers a conclusion: “Many of the newly ordained monks were in fact not practicing adepts in cloistered temple communities, but lay people who were enrolled on the temple rosters in order to benefit from the protection such enrollment offered from taxes while they continued to work their land as much as before.” Referring to a study by

42. I will deal in detail with this problem in my forthcoming monograph (in German) on Quanzhou in the Song.
43. Clark, Community, Trade, and Networks, 62.
44. Clark, Community, Trade, and Networks, 63.
Chikusa Masa’aki, who claimed that while taxes on monastic properties in Fujian during Northern Song times were lighter than those on private lands, they were at least taxed, Clark also addresses the question of the tax burden on monastic communities. We do not know the fiscal relationship between the Min state and later the independent rulers, but very probably monastic lands were taxed also at that time.

It is almost certain that many people of various echelons of society officially donated their lands to monasteries primarily because of economic reasons; that is, to pay less taxes or enjoy even other advantages. Only wealthier households could afford to donate lands for purely religious reasons, and some probably did so. At the same time, it is completely plausible that lay people who donated land to monastic communities retained rights to their lands, although it is unclear under what conditions.

About two centuries later, Cai Xiang complained that the “illegal autocratic kings [of the Min regime] took the land of the people and gave it to the Buddhists.” Another source says: “Since the time of the Five Dynasties (906-960) most of the fertile land has belonged to Buddhist and Daoist monasteries. The people possess only land which is of poorer quality.” The concentration of land in the hands of religious institutions is indisputable, but that rulers just gave all the fertile lands away to the monasteries purely for religious reasons is extremely unlikely, even in the context of an “intensely religious atmosphere.”

Aside from the purely political calculations suggested by Chikusa and taken up by Clark, there might have been economic motivations for local rulers to donate large quantities of fertile land to monastic communities as well. After all, it is no mystery that, as in medieval Europe, monasteries had been some of the wealthiest business

45. Evidence comes from Liang Kejia 梁克家 (1127-1187), Chunxi Sanshan zhi 淳熙三山志 (Siku quanshu ed.), 10.4a; and He Qiaoyuan 何乔遠 (1558-1632), Minshu 閩書 (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1994), 39.4a.
46. Cai Zhonghuigong ji, 27.2b.
47. Chen Maoren 陳懋仁 (Ming), Quannan zazhi 泉南雜志 (Congshu jicheng ed., fasc.3161), xia.20. According to the local gazetteer of Quanzhou, during the Wudai period land there was divided into three categories: the finest quality land was given to Buddhist and Daoist monasteries and the land of medium or poor quality was given to the people. Huang Ren 黃仁 and Guo Qingsu 郭慶武 (Qing), eds., Quanzhou fuzhi 泉州府志 (1984 ed. of the Research Group for the Compilation of Quanzhou Records), 21.76a.
48. This is an expression used by Hugh Clark, although in a different context. Clark, Community, Trade, and Networks, 41.
agents throughout early history.\textsuperscript{49} The strategy adopted by the rulers would have meant that they gave greater proportions of the most productive land to people who were best able to use it to increase material wealth within their country. Against the political and economic background of their time it is plausible that they wanted to ensure that the most productive land was in the hands of persons who already had the means to instigate and promote the production of material wealth and, by so doing, also boost the economy of the state. This was certainly beyond the capabilities of the normal peasant. Consequently, it was not their intention deliberately to deprive the ordinary people of their basic source of livelihood, as Cai Xiang puts it,\textsuperscript{50} but this was a by-product of their policy.\textsuperscript{51} Local rulers were by no means so far-sighted that they would have avoided undertaking political and economic measures that would turn out to be harmful for the state a few centuries after their own time. They sought to establish a solid agricultural production, the basis of an economy, within their country. In their eyes this was logically quite consistent with the provisioning of those households or institutions with the material conditions that


\textsuperscript{50} When a high Song official like Cai Xiang, who was confronted with the negative results of this land concentration two centuries later, ascribed this situation to lawless people who gave away the land illegally, he is merely expressing his own negative attitude towards results that he deemed as unsuitable and quite inappropriate for his own political purposes, and towards a regime independent of greater China, which he automatically equated with an “illegal regime.” This is by no stretch of the imagination a reasonable explication of the facts, but a very unfair way of drawing a conclusion, by no means uncommon in our society. History and specific developments are \textit{a posteriori} measured by the standards of one’s own ideas and purposes centuries later, and combed for guilty persons in the past who did not fulfill the criteria one would have wanted them to have fulfilled. In Cai Xiang’s complaint the question of why the independent rulers took actions other than those he would have wished, is not even touched upon.

\textsuperscript{51} It was a by-product of their policy—both concerning the donation of fertile land to monastic communities and levying heavy taxes—which bore its most negative consequences in conjunction with the results of respective politico-economic measures of the Song many decades after their rule.
would assist in their aim of building a national economy. But the roots of a further development of the maritime trade in Quanzhou are not to be found in the field of agriculture, either in a positive or in a negative sense. The reason must be sought from the economic subjects involved in maritime trade and their economic means: foreign traders, in the beginning primarily Muslims, domestic merchants, and the local social and ruling elite; that is, persons who could afford to earmark parts of the local production towards exchange overseas.

2.2. The Promotion of Local Handicrafts and Their Relation to Maritime Trade

We know that local Fujian rulers, even before the rule of Liu Congxiao, instigated various measures to promote the overseas trade, albeit perhaps mainly through the port of Fuzhou. Hugh Clark noted that as early as the reign of Wang Shenzhi an office was established to oversee the government's monopoly on the purchasing of foreign commodities. The main purpose of this office was not to tax foreign merchants highly—a measure that would have immediately counteracted the purpose of attracting foreign merchants who would, then, have switched to other ports, but rather to monopolize the redistribution of foreign commodities among domestic merchants, reselling them for higher prices than those for which they had purchased them.

Apparently, local rulers had permanent access to foreign commodities. Some of the tribute the Min kingdom, and later the tribute the independent Quanzhou rulers paid to the Song court, consisted of foreign commodities, like rhinoceros horn, glassware, and jewels. According to the Wuguo gushi, Muslim traders were, for example, said to have traded primarily with glass vases. But we can probably assume that besides luxury goods the Muslim traders also brought spices, medicines, and possibly even some quantities of

52. That is, an enormous local agricultural surplus that could be sold overseas did not trigger off this trade.
53. This refers to the argument that the overseas trade evolved because of local agricultural deficiencies.
55. See Clark, Community, Trade, and Networks, 48-51.
56. Li Donghua, Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong, 57.
57. The large quantities of tribute to the Song court in the form of various foreign spices, perfumes, and medical plants would suggest this. See, for example, SHY,
gold to China for exchange, perhaps first using the area of Srivijaya as a kind of transshipment center.\textsuperscript{58}

The commercial intercourse of Java with China—even though there is no particular reference to Quanzhou—is, for example, testified to by some quantities of Chinese stoneware present at most of the temple sites in Central Java.\textsuperscript{59} Large-scale merchants connected with overseas trade, even foreigners, are also mentioned in local Sanskrit inscriptions. Especially after the early tenth century, Jan Wisseman Christie explains, the Javanese rulers took a more active and direct interest in maritime trade.\textsuperscript{60} Referring to trade goods, a Manānjung inscription of the late tenth or eleventh century mentions, for example, commodities used for external trade, though it lists only local produce sold in standard weights or volumes, the majority of which was not used in direct trade with China. Rice, the most important commodity, is followed by pepper, salt, beans, dyes and medicines. The hostilities between Java and Srivijaya in the late tenth century, Christie assumes, probably arose from a competition for the position as “a chief emporium for goods from other islands”,\textsuperscript{61} that is, as a kind of transshipment area for non-domestic commodities.

We also know that the Min kingdom already had trade contacts with Zhancheng 占城 (Annam),\textsuperscript{62} Sanfoqi 三佛齊 (Srivijaya)\textsuperscript{63} in the

\textit{(..continued)}

\textit{Fanyi, 7.78.}

\textsuperscript{58} For the history and economic development of Srivijaya see, for example, Jan Wisseman Christie, \textit{Patterns of Trade in Western Indonesia: Ninth through Thirteenth Centuries A.D.} 2 Vols. (Ph.D. diss., London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1982), especially 2: 440-43.


\textsuperscript{60} Wisseman Christie, “Markets and Trade,” 205-07.

\textsuperscript{61} Wisseman Christie, “Markets and Trade,” 207.

\textsuperscript{62} See Li Donghua, \textit{Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong}, 58-59.

\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Wang Shenzhi dezheng beiwen} 王審知德政碑文, established in 906 (tianyou 3). The \textit{Tang huiyao} 唐會要 by Wang Pu 王溥 (922-982), \textit{juan} 100, says that traders from Sanfoqi settled down in Fuzhou. Quoted according to Li Donghua, \textit{Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong}, 58-59, 61.
south, and Korea\textsuperscript{64} and probably also Japan\textsuperscript{65} in the north. While we should not lose sight of the fact that at the time of Wang Shenzhi's reign it was still Fuzhou, which was the political and economic center in that region, and therefore a greater number of both Chinese and foreign traders and ships converged perhaps on this port, it is unlikely that the foreign traders “mingling” at Quanzhou suddenly came from completely different regions. When, be it after or already before the disintegration of the Min kingdom, the role of Fuzhou was gradually overtaken and surpassed by Quanzhou,\textsuperscript{66} it must have been more attractive for foreign merchants to exchange their commodities at the Quanzhou port—it would seem perhaps primarily but not solely for geographical reasons. However, it is probably safe to assume that whereas Fuzhou was basically more orientated towards Northeast Asia, Quanzhou was more orientated towards countries and localities in Southeast Asia after 946. As mentioned in the introduction, this has certainly to be seen in relation with commercial and political changes in the Indian Ocean and the eastern waters in general. The rise to commercial power of Srívijaya and the domination of Persian and Arab Muslim merchants and sailors in the Far-Eastern trade were of major importance in this respect.\textsuperscript{67}

Which commodities, now, could the local rulers offer in exchange? The family register of the Liu clan explicitly cites that “ceramics, copper, and silver were sold to countries far away.”\textsuperscript{68} Zhuang Weiji has noted, that the main export commodities were ceramics, copper, and iron.\textsuperscript{69} In their efforts local rulers apparently managed to stimulate not only a “rudimentary” already existing trade, but simultaneously laid heavy emphasis on the development of the manufacture of local Chinese specialties, and on the

\textsuperscript{64} Xin Wudai shi, 68.852.
\textsuperscript{65} Li Donghua, Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong, 42. See also Kinomiya Yasuiko 木宮泰彥, translated from the Japanese by Chen Jie 陳捷, Zhong-Ri jiaotong shi 中日交通史 (Wanyou wenku huìyào 萬有文庫薈要 ed.) (Taiwan: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1980), 1:255-69. He gives, however, a principal account of the contacts between Japan and the state Wu-Yue.
\textsuperscript{67} André Wink, Al-Hind, 330.
\textsuperscript{68} Liushi zupu 留氏族譜. I want to express my thanks to Wang Lianmao 王連茂, the director of the Quanzhou haijiaoshi bowuguan, who allowed me to study all the relevant family registers during my last research trip to China in October and November 1996. Unfortunately, most of the family registers did not have a folio pagination. For this quotation see also Zhuang Weiji, Gu Citong gang, 72.
\textsuperscript{69} Zhuang Weiji, Zhuang Jinghui, Haishang sichou zhi lu de zhuming gangkou Quanzhou, 17.
production of sophisticated manufactured goods that were in demand with the foreign traders. As Hugh Clark and Li Donghua have already noted, local rulers had to maintain, consolidate, and protect their relatively small regimes, keeping it independent of neighboring states, and were, therefore, compelled to rely heavily on their own financial and material resources, a fact that is even more applicable to Quanzhou and its hinterland at a time when the region was relatively independent of the court in Fuzhou. Thus, with the help of overseas trade, local rulers sought to satisfy not solely their own luxury needs and desires, but to serve their political, economic, and military purposes. In this context, the accelerated promotion of the rudimentary overseas trade, in conjunction with the promotion of the local production of Chinese commodities so desirable to foreign traders, appears as a very apposite way to attract more wealth and desired consumer articles. How was this possible in practice?

Taking a look at the items that had been imported, it becomes evident that the greatest proportion consisted of luxury articles, spices, perfumes, and medicinal plants. Luxury articles were a commodity with which the early maritime traders, as described in section one, made their profits. At the same time only a small percentage of imported luxury goods could have been consumed in the Quanzhou region. In this context, the merchants profited from the role of Quanzhou as a transshipment port, the significance of which has been described by Hugh Clark. But the fact that merchants accumulated great wealth is not automatically identical with advantages to the local rulers, and even less to the Quanzhou region. Conversely, the rulers themselves, through overseas trade, could obtain certain foreign commodities they desired as consumers. But the consumption of imported goods is not identical with attracting more wealth either. Taking into consideration the “unprecedented fiscal demands” they were confronted with, it is unlikely that the consumption of luxury articles constituted the essential economic factor behind the rulers' promotion of overseas trade but rather the resale of commodities “imported.”

When the local rulers tried to attract foreign merchants, they at least to some extent had to facilitate the merchants’ chances to

70. Clark, Community, Trade, and Networks, 64-70.
71. Clark, Community, Trade, and Networks, 46, especially his argument on pp. 46-51.
conduct trade. This suggests that they in fact intended to build up and develop trade activities within their own country. They sought to use foreign demand for Chinese sophisticated goods and specialties to enrich themselves by selling their own surplus commodities, either directly or via mediators to foreign traders and consumers. The commodities they received in exchange could either have been resold to domestic merchants for other commodities required, or for money in the form of coins. That local rulers were already aware of the problem of an outflow of cash may be suggested by a quotation from the Fujian tongzhi cited by Zhu Weigan: "Through it (maritime trade) the profit prospers, but damage also arises." The situation described is also quite consistent with the idea of a monopoly office. The rulers sought to monopolize the redistribution of foreign commodities in order to resell them to domestic merchants for a higher "price" than that paid. Being local rulers, they had in fact enough political power to regulate the local redistribution of foreign goods. And despite their needs for money and commodities to serve political and military purposes, they had sufficient financial means to provide the conditions conducive to local export production. By contrast, an ordinary household could have the option of participating in this economic development, which was not a direct product of its economic activity.

In this context it seems plausible that the rulers did not content themselves with providing other social strata, namely merchants and wealthier households such as the monasteries, with positive conditions for conducting trade and commerce, both domestic and maritime. Determined to expand overseas trade, local rulers probably did their utmost to promote the manufacture of everything that could be produced within their own territory and that satisfied the demand of foreign traders, from ceramics to average or lower quality silks up to metals. They did so not only under their patronage, but also under their own "personal" supervision.

1. The family of Liu Congxiao is said to have given generous sponsorship to the construction of kilns for ceramic production, as well as to the mining of metals. But already the Wang family is supposed to have possessed numerous kilns, located especially close

72. In this context, the Min rulers did, for example, not levy taxes on trade at the national borders. See Wang Shenzhi desheng beiwen. Li Donghua, Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong, 58-59.
73. Zhu Weigan, Fujian shigao, 164.
to the Min capital, Fuzhou. Various ceramics have been unearthed from local tombs, for example from the tomb of Wang Senzhi’s wife. The hinterland of Fujian was rich in natural resources for the production of one kind of commodity that foreign traders principally sought, that is, kaolin-earth and clays for the production of ceramics. It is thus understandable that their main endeavors were directed towards sponsoring this sector of local handicraft. It lies beyond the scope of this article to give detailed documentation on this sector of local industry, which is already well documented. Compared to some other commercial sectors, the archaeological evidence is relatively clear and the relationship between the ceramics industry and overseas trade is unequivocal. Equipped with the necessary local resources and the requisite technical skill, local rulers and probably other wealthy families as well were able to satisfy this foreign demand to some extent, although the dimension of production was certainly still relatively small and the complete output was probably not exported abroad. As of 1995, nineteen kilns of the Wudai period had been discovered in the vicinity of Quanzhou. According to the Quanzhou haijiaoshi bowuguan (Museum for the History of Overseas Trade of Quanzhou), the main product of these kilns was jugs of the guan 罐 type. Archeologists of Jinjiang recently excavated some well-preserved ceramics of the Wudai period fired in the Cizao-kiln in Jinjiang. Some pieces are now on exhibition in the Jinjiang Museum.

2. Although there are no specific references to the role of export silk during time period under discussion, Quanzhou is generally called the “starting port of the maritime silk route.” Silk was another

76. In this respect I would like to refer to the various studies on Wudai and Song ceramics both by Chinese and Western scholars, although the Song period is undoubtedly the better documented. For a short selection see, for example, Ye Wencheng and Lin Zhonggan, Fujian taoci; So Kee Long, “The Trade Ceramics Industry in Southern Fukien during the Sung,” Journal of Sung-Yuan Studies 24 (1994): 1-19; John Guy, Oriental Trade Ceramics in Southeast Asia: Ninth to Sixteenth Centuries (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1986).
77. Huang Yuede, Quanzhou keji shihua (Xiamen: Xiamen daxue chubanshe, 1995), 93. Quanzhou lishi wenhua congshu. For a more detailed description of some ceramics see also Ye Wencheng and Lin Zhonggan, Fujian taoci, 166-174.
“improved manufacture”\footnote{38} for which foreigners looked. Alongside ceramics, it was the most important commodity in this early trade with China, a commodity that served simultaneously as a general equivalent in the local and the “international” trade.\footnote{39} Silk represented not only a measure of value, but was likewise a valuable and useful consumer article, which could furthermore be divided into quantitative proportions, making it suitable to function as a general equivalent, as real money, a role it also played in foreign trade.\footnote{80}

Some scholars like Fu Zongwen are of the opinion that a local silk trade had already flourished since the times of the Tang dynasty, but I cannot substantiate this.\footnote{81} The beginning of the local silk industry in Quanzhou is commonly traced back to Huang Shougong 黃守恭, a rich landlord who established large gardens for the cultivation of mulberry trees. Due caution is advisable about generalizing this statement and jumping to conclusions. Foremost, a distinction should be made between fine, top quality, and lower

\footnote{78. This is an expression used by Adam Smith. See Adam Smith, An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, 3:488-491.}

\footnote{79. Pertinently, silk—being a product of work expended and thus representing value—also served as a measure and general equivalent of value, in distinction to iron (and copper), it occupied a major position both in China’s inner and in the outer circulation (overseas trade). Especially since the period of Qin Shihuang (221 BC), silk fulfilled not only the function as a general equivalent in the international trade, but served also as a measure of value for the calculation of taxes and the national budget within China. In comparison to silk, other Chinese commodities represented only more simplified expressions of value which, tied to their specific use value (for example ceramic bowls, jars, cups), could not as easily be divided into quantitative proportions as silk, rolled in bolts. The decisive disadvantage with silk as a general equivalent of value, on the other hand, was its lack of material durability. Despite this “disadvantage” and the presence of an established coin currency system, silk was still widely used as a general equivalent in Tang China.}

\footnote{80. Robert S. Wicks has already pointed to the use of materials other than metals as measures of value: “Metals were not always preferred as measures of value. We have already noted the use of cloth as a subsidiary measure of value in eighth-century Cambodia. In ninth-century Nanzhao lengths of silk were used as a valuation standard for precious objects ... It is significant that silver and gold were valued in terms of cloth, demonstrating that, even though these metals were valuable commodities on the mainland, they did not always serve as measures of value.” Robert S. Wicks, Money, Markets, and Trade in Early Southeast Asia: The Development of Indigenous Monetary Systems to AD 1400 (New York: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 1992), 303.}

\footnote{81. The legend that Huang Shougong laid out large gardens with mulberry trees in the Tang dynasty is far from proving the presence of a flourishing local silk industry.}
quality silks or mixed textiles. The former were, as a rule, not produced in Quanzhou, as the soil was not very suitable for the cultivation of mulberry trees, and thus silkworms fed on their leaves produced only coarse, lower quality silk threads. This meant that top quality silks or silk yarn still had to be “imported” from other districts of China, one of the main centers being Zhejiang and the lower Yangtze, a region famous for its sericulture. The material efforts made to produce higher quality silks under such unfavorable local conditions were even more painstaking than normal. Richer households or institutions such as monasteries were the most advantageously placed to cultivate mulberry trees, to spin large quantities of silk yarn, and to weave silk cloth; or, they could at least afford to “import” high quality silk thread or silk yarn and have it woven into cloth. The Kaiyuan temple apparently provides an example of a landowner who cultivated mulberry trees locally and produced local silks. But it is still very much debatable if larger quantities were exported.

Cloth was furthermore made from bast fibers like ramie, hemp, bean-creeper, and banana fibers (jiaoge 焦葛), and lower quality tabby silks (juan 糸昌) were also produced. Juan is a textile for which both Quanzhou and Fujian in general were famous. An examination of the local tributes paid by Minnan during the period of the Five Dynasties reveals that tribute in the form of textiles did not increase before the late Jin Dynasty (936-944). Hino Kaizaburō has cogently argued that prior to the Song dynasty, Fujian, like Guangdong, did not belong to the important regions that provided the court with great quantities of tabby silk. Yet we know that in 977, shortly before his surrender to the Song Court, Chen Hongjin delivered 30,000 bolts of bean-creeper, 2,000 bolts of thin satin cloth (ling 綾), and 20,000 bolts of juan to the Song Court.

It is not difficult to pinpoint where the local rulers’ problem of providing foreign merchants with this highly appreciated commodity lay. As the local conditions were not very propitious for the provisioning of higher quality silks, they had to rely on supplies from other regions in China that did not fall under their authority.

82. (Chunxi) Sanshan zhi, 41.4a.
83. See Zhuang Weiji, Gu Citong gang, 131-32.
84. Hugh R. Clark is probably correct in translating these two characters as a compound meaning “banana fibers” and not “banana” and “kudzu.” Clark, Community, Trade, and Networks, 31.
Their supply of high and exquisite quality silks was therefore fraught with political uncertainty. Worsening relations with neighboring countries could mean their silk supplies were cut off. It is therefore possible that this situation provided a stimulus to those households who could afford it to engage (as far as local conditions permitted) in larger scale silk manufacture. The typical local silk they produced seems to have been exported as far away as Mediterranean markets, at the latest in the eleventh century, probably even earlier. But with the exception of monasteries and one or the other rich landlord family, local people did not, as a rule, produce export silk at that time. In general, the production of local silk does not seem to have gone far beyond a local self-sufficiency, including that required as tribute to the Song court.

3. Turning to the mining of metals, base and precious, principally iron, copper, and silver, and to some extent also gold, we have few references at our disposal. As early as the Tang dynasty iron was extracted from mines in Nan'an, Jian'an, Youxi, or Jiangle. Jian'an, Youxi, and Jiangle also produced silver and copper, and Shaowu iron and copper. According to Huang Yuede these products were sold through the port of Quanzhou. This may be true, but the Xin Tangshu does not provide any reference to such activity. The notion in the Wanli edition of the Quanzhou fuzhi that during the reign period Kaibao (968-975) 201 tax stations and offices for the smelting of metals, primarily iron, were established, may also indicate that the mining and smelting of metals had been developed to a certain extent especially during the period of independence (946-978).

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86. We have indications that the plain silk textiles of Quanzhou were exported as far away as Mediterranean markets in the mid-11th century, but we unfortunately do not know exactly when “Quanzhou silk” made its entry into those markets. Liu Xinru, *Silk and Religion: An Exploration of Material Life and the Thought of People, AD 600-1200* (Delhi: Oxford University Press 1996), 185. S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza. Vol. I. Economic Foundations* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), 455 (n. 53). On page 81 he also notes that the manufacture of paper and sugar had no local Persian tradition, but were industries that had migrated from China and India to Persia.
87. Xin Tangshu, 41.1064-1065.
88. Xin Tangshu, 41.1064-1065.
89. See Huang Yuede, *Quanzhou keji shihua*, 100.
90. Wanli Quanzhou fuzhi, 7.3a-b. In order to examine the role the metals played in the overseas trade at that time, where exactly they were extracted is not a decisive factor. It is enough to know that they were mined under the supervision of a
The Qing period Jinjiang xianzhi says that Liu Congxiao also had iron cast (tiele 鐵治) at a place later designated as “iron furnace temple” (tielu miao 鐵爐廟).\textsuperscript{91} Hugh Clark translated the passage as follows: “The Iron Furnace Hall (Tielu miao) was on the west side of Quanzhou City in the Iron furnace quarter (Tielu bu 鐵爐部)....This is where Liu Congxiao cast his coinage ...”\textsuperscript{92} In my opinion, it is not absolutely evident from the text whether this should be translated as “to cast iron coinage,” or simply as “to cast iron.” We do unfortunately not (yet ?) have archaeological evidence that Liu Congxiao or Chen Hongjin issued their own coins. After having minted some of his own copper coins, Wang Shenzhi is said to have concentrated mainly on minting lead and, above all, iron coins.\textsuperscript{93} In 1974 archaeologists at the Chengtian Temple excavated an iron coin engraved with the four characters Yonglong tongbao 永隆通寶, referring to the Yonglong reign (939-944) of Wang Yanxi 王延曦 of the state Min.\textsuperscript{94} According to Huang Yuede, the technique of minting was relatively precise and accurate.\textsuperscript{95} The Songshi notes: “Since the time of the Five Dynasties, the old money of the Tang dynasty has been used; it was very rare that other coins were casted.”\textsuperscript{96} But this should, of course, not be regarded as proof that Liu or Chen did not issue own coins. It is certain that they were aware of the economic importance of metals, base and precious, both for their domestic economic and military projects and for maritime trade. Liu Congxiao is, for example, said to have built an ordnance depot within the city walls close to the south-west gate and to have iron weapons produced for his army.\textsuperscript{97}

Concerning gold and silver, a Songshi reference dated to 963 (Jianlong 4) mentions 10,000 ounces (liang) of baijin 白金 (white gold or silver) as tribute of Chen Hongjin to the Song Court.\textsuperscript{98}
According to the Song huiyao, Chen Hongjin delivered 5,000 ounces of silver and 2,000 ounces of gold and silver utensils, being a local product (tuchan 土產), on the sixth day of the ninth month of 977,99 and again 10,000 ounces of silver on the thirteenth day of the ninth month of 977.100 Unfortunately, there are no figures for the mining of silver101 and gold in Wudai Quanzhou. A record of the local District Magistrate, Zhan Dunren 詹敦仁, of the Later Zhou Period (951-960) explicitly mentions the mining of iron and silver in Anxi district.102 The note just quoted in the family register of the Liu clan, on the other hand, refers to an exportation of silver.103 A few scattered references to the use of gold, silver, and bronze may at least suggest their religious significance. In 907 (Tianyou 3) big golden and bronze Buddha images were casted.104 Gold coins have been excavated in the foundation of one of the twin pagodas of the Kaiyuan temple.105 Moreover, during the time of the Min ruler Wang Shenzhi more than 10,000 ounces of gold and silver were used to plate religious scripts.106

The considerable quantities of precious metals mentioned sug-

99. SHY, Fanyi, 7.8a.
100. SHY, Fanyi, 7.8a.
101. Hino Kaizaburô, “Godai Binkoku no taichōgen chōchô to bōeki.” 36. The situation is similar to that of the local mining of copper. Although Wang Cun 王存 (1023-1101) et.al., Yuanfeng jiuyu zhi 元豐九域志 (Congshi jicheng ed., fasc.3099-3103), 9.411, mentions only one tax station (chang 場) for copper still extant in the Northern Song dynasty (Longxu 龍须 in Shaowujun 邵武軍), a significant amount of copper money was minted in Northern Song Fujian. See Hino Kaizaburô, “Hoku Sō jidai ni okeru dō tessen no chūzōgaku ni tsuite” 北宋時代における銅鐵錢の鑄造額に就いて, Shigaku zasshi 史學雜誌 1 (1935): 46-105. Table, see 46-49.
102. The record says that the people minted silver and iron. Zhuang Cheng 莊成, ed., Anxi xianzhi 安溪縣志 (Banshu xianku 板簿縣志 ed. of 1757), 11.269. This may be regarded as insubstantial proof, as this edition dates from 1757, but viewed against the political and economic background of the region at that time, and in combination with other references in the sources, there is no doubt that silver and copper were already being extracted in Quanzhou during the Wudai period.
103. The SHY, too, indicates that many foreign traders purchased metals like silver, gold, lead or tin as well as silks and ceramics in exchange for other commodities like xiangyao, rhinoceros horn, pearls etc., although it does not explicitly refer to Quanzhou. SHY, Zhiguan 44.1.
104. Minzhong jinshi zhi 閩中金石志 (Shike shiliao xubian 石刻史料續編 ed. [Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 1977; hereafter SKSLXB]), Series 1, 4.1a-b, 14a-b., SKSLXB17:12552, 12558.
105. Minzhong jinshi zhi, 4.5b-6a; SKSLXB, 12554. For another reference concerning gold coins see, for example, 3.8b (12544).
106. Minzhong jinshi zhi, 3.21b; SKSLXB, 12551.
gest two things: (1) Conscious of the importance of precious metals not only for religious purposes, but also in inter-regional and "international" contacts and trade relations, the rulers did their utmost to mine as much silver and gold as possible, in spite of the fact that the techniques at that time were probably not yet greatly advanced. For later time periods one gets the impression that at least the gold ores were apparently not easily tapped and consequently not very productive. But it is difficult to assess whether tenth-century Fujian still had gold ores that were easily accessible. Silver mines seem to have been more productive. (2) Rulers also had access to foreign gold and silver As we shall see below, in the case of silver, mining seems to have been at least the decisive factor. I propose to treat in more detail the role that metals played in the maritime trade of Quanzhou during the Five Dynasties. I do so because little research has been published on this significant topic, whereas other industries such as ceramics are better documented.

2.3. The Significance of Metals in Domestic and Maritime Trade and Society

Viewed against the specific economic situation and the fiscal demands of the rulers, especially during the time of independence of the Quanzhou region, it seems reasonable that the independent rulers sought to "produce" and had to exchange commodities that represented a general equivalent of stable value. These were accepted not only by domestic merchants, but also in supra-regional and "international" (trade) relations, especially by the Muslims who still dominated trade at the time. Ceramics, silk, and metals all fulfilled this function in the early maritime trade. One has to be careful not to overestimate the role of "money" and to identify fiscal demands automatically with a demand for coins and bullion. The local economy during the reign period of Liu Congxiao and Chen

107. According to the Minshu, for example, only one gold mine (Tingzhou 汀州) existed in Song dynasty Fujian. At the latest, gold and silver mining were abandoned in Fujian at the beginning of the Ming. Minshu. 39:971. Local monographs such as the Quanzhou fuzhi do not mention gold or silver as local products. After collecting all available data on local mining during the Song dynasty, it becomes evident that by then the dimension of the quantities mined was not very large. See also Chen Yande 陳衍德, "Songdai Fujian kuangyeye" 宋代福建礦冶業, Fujian luntan 2 (1983): 67-74, 80.
Hongjin was certainly not a highly monetized one. Supplying the troops or a ruling family with food and other vital requirements and desires could also be understood as a demand for grain, cloth, fruits and the like. In this context, the taxation policy, as it is described by Hugh R. Clark, also reflects the interest in levying high taxes on the produce of land. Although cash certainly did not play an important role in the prevailing agricultural sector, which was still very much orientated towards subsistence needs, money in the form of coin was circulating in the local economy and was probably primarily used in regional and interregional trade. Other countries in Southeast Asia such as Java, for example, also did not have a completely monetized economy, but used gold and silver in supra-regional trade relations. And we should take into consideration that regular trade relations, already routinized (that is, not purely occasional) between Quanzhou and other countries in Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean, and even further West, promoted the demand for a general equivalent and measure of value, which was independent of regional differences. Within this Muslim dominated trade, India and the Indian Ocean were also integrated in the domain of the dinār and dirham, the universal gold and silver coinage of the early medieval world. Because of their specific physical characteristics, metals are particularly suitable to function as a general equivalent and measure of value. Therefore, it seems

108. Clark, Community, Trade, and Networks, 48-51.
109. “The ninth century Javanese economy was marketized, though probably not fully monetized.” “Although a number of silver pieces stamped 'ma' have been recovered in Central Java, the Javanese economy does not appear to have been generally monetized until after the twelfth century.” Wiseman Christie, “Markets and Trade,” 200, 10.
110. The necessary precondition for this (that is, serving as a measure and equivalent of value) is that the measure of value itself represents value in being a product of work expended. As the comparability in value between commodities of different qualities is reduced to the pure quantity of working time, which is required to produce them, a commodity which serves as a measure of value must fulfill two essential conditions: it must be able to express pure quantitative relations and differences, and it must be divisible into larger or smaller proportions, in order to represent itself practically as a means of calculation (money). Because of their high specific gravity, gold and silver possess these qualities to an ideal degree. As instruments of production, metals were of great importance for the ordinary production process. Apart from their scarcity, the relative softness of gold and silver, compared to iron and even hardened copper, made them unusable for such a purpose; furthermore they appear to be dispensable as an everyday consumer article.
111. André Wink, Al-Hind, 309.
completely plausible to assume that in contact with foreign traders and countries, besides silk, the importance of metals, especially the precious metals as the general equivalent of value and abstract expression of wealth, grew. In this context, under the rule of the local governors metals fulfilled specific different economic functions.

1. Within the local economy, base metals, especially iron and copper, were important because of their utility for military, agricultural or religious purposes.

2. For the maintenance of local trade and the internal circulation of commodities, iron, lead, or copper coins served as a measure and equivalent of value within the local economy of Quanzhou, as the “national tender.” In domestic trade, the demand for such a measure of value and quantitative proportion crystallizes in relation to other commodities (price), subject to local and national particularities, and it is sufficient to have an equivalent of value that could meet the principal requirement of serving as a measure of value, and, one that is divisible into quantitative proportions, as a measure of prices, mediating the circulation of commodities. Only after such a measure of value has crystallized itself through the requirements of trade can it consequently be substituted in its function as a means of circulation by pure tokens of value by the central state authority. In this respect, being less valuable, iron or lead coins were circulating in the Quanzhou region, but they were, as a rule, not important for

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113. Only a commodity that represents value itself (that is, a product of work expended) can function as an equivalent and expression of values. Gold as a pure chemical substance in itself does not incorporate or represent value, due to its relative scarcity, but only when and in so far as it constitutes as a product of work. Relative scarcity is not a characteristic or a quality of an item in itself, but it is only relevant for the value of something in as far as more (or less) time is required to produce and obtain it. In this context the original value of silver was, for example, in spite of its lower scarcity, higher than that of gold, as quantitatively more intensive work had to be expended to produce the silver (whereas gold also occurred naturally in a “virgin” condition). For the origins of money and, in particular, the use of metals as money cf., for example, Adam Smith, An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag 1963), 1:31-39. See also 1:232-74 for a change of the silver value in fourteenth to eighteenth century Europe.
the role as general equivalent in supra-regional trade, in an "international" comparison of values. Generally speaking, in the "international" trade in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean, gold and silver had already gained the acceptance as a general equivalent, and the use of iron had been "reduced" to its much more important function as a use value in the production process. In this context the use of iron coins in the Chinese monetary system did actually conflict with its importance in everyday life.

3. Locally mined base metals, in particular iron, were, as a rule, not used as a means of payment in the form of currency, but were, with the exception of some quantities of bronze coins of the previous Tang dynasty, either exported as raw material (raw iron), improved into tools and every-day articles, or at least traded unminted. The fact that larger parts of the Islamic world were short of iron may suggest that Muslim traders also exported iron through the port of Quanzhou. Already in the tenth century copper was exported in the form of bronze coins, dating mostly of the previous Tang dynasty, but additional details on these exports do not seem to be available. The fact that Wang Shenzhi, after having minted some quantity of bronze coins, is said to have concentrated mainly on the minting of lead and iron coins may be interpreted as another indication that he was aware of the problem of the drainage of bronze cash and tried to take some measures against this. Nevertheless, I suspect that the role of unminted copper was probably of greater significance in the tenth century maritime trade of Quanzhou. According to Karl Hutterer, Southeast Asia did have a well-developed indigenous metal technology at least since the early third millennium B.C. Still, for example in Philippine sites of the

114. The refusal of foreign traders to accept payment in iron-lead coins is readily explicable in the light of the minor value these coins possessed elsewhere, accompanied by technical problems to "resell" them in foreign markets.
115. For a modern economy in which not only trade but the complete social production process is subsumed into a production of (exchange) values, the simultaneous existence of various equivalents of value is indeed a contradiction (examples are gold and silver in Europe up to the eighteenth century), as the purpose of fixing the value, which then becomes the sole purpose in the production of social wealth, is not complete before it is expressed in one general equivalent, which consequently subsumes the others (in Europe gold). For problems concerning the simultaneous existence of gold and silver as general equivalents of value in late medieval Europe cf., for example, David Ricardo, On the Principles of Political Economy (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1959), 1:360-67.
116. The idea to introduce a lower value coinage corresponded to the theory that those coins were not considered worthy to be taken across the borders by the foreign merchants.
first millennium A.D., bronze and iron were probably of foreign origin.\textsuperscript{117} Bronze coins were, as a rule, not used in the Indian Ocean region and in Southeast Asia. Copper was used as a general equivalent in some places in Southeast Asia, but by no means welcomed everywhere or accepted by all foreign traders. Copper cash was, for example, used in Vietnam. Base metals were seldom made into coinage in early Southeast Asia, the use of copper cash in Vietnam and Majapahit Java being notable exceptions to the emphasis on precious metal coinage.\textsuperscript{118}

Against the prevailing background of an intensely religious, especially Buddhist, atmosphere in contemporary East and Southeast Asia, it is plausible that copper especially, which was this kind of "precious material," worthy of being used for higher religious purposes, was exported in the form of ritual vessels or other sophisticated manufactured goods. Chinese bronzes, mostly imitations of Tang and earlier bronze figures, were, for example, highly valued among the Muslim elite and were exported to places as far away as Fustat (Old Cairo).\textsuperscript{119} Large quantities of copper were also consumed in the Cola Kingdom (South India) during the tenth century for the production of copper plates (mostly inscriptions and deeds of land donations). It is absolutely possible that some quantities of copper were also being imported from Quanzhou. The Muslims exchanged their own commodities for copper as well.

4. Besides copper, precious metals, especially gold, were for religious purposes of major importance to the rulers. But in spite of the intensely religious atmosphere at that time, we should certainly not underestimate their economic importance, particularly the fact that it was Muslim merchants who dominated the trade at that time and in this Muslim trade India and the Indian Ocean were also integrated into the domain of the \textit{dinar} and \textit{dirham}.

5. Precious metals as commodities that also represented a \textit{stable}


\textsuperscript{118} See, Robert S. Wicks, \textit{Money, Markets, and Trade}, 310, 302, and 55-61. He further notes on p. 16 that Chinese copper cash in Java, for example, was at first treated by the Javanese as a commodity, to be traded like any other good.

value in foreign markets, because they stood for a general average expenditure of time and energy, functioned first as a treasure in the form of tribute and, second, as a means of payment in supra-regional, "international" trade. From an economic point of view, tribute did incorporate a value, but not the kind of value that purchased or mediated for other commodities, but very uneconomically was paid as a political price to ensure the good treatment of their regime by a more powerful nation. In this sense, it was in fact equivalent to a withdrawal of wealth, but especially after the official establishment of the Song dynasty in 960 of great political importance for Liu Congxiao and Chen Hongjin.120

Conversely, the mining of precious metals for the purpose of transregional exchange considers a commercial interest in a general equivalent of value, which is stable in value. The precious metals were widely used as a general equivalent of value, but at the same time served religious purposes in other regions of the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia in the tenth century. To give an example: a prosperous commercial region like Gujarat in northwest India did not have an indigenous coinage tradition from the seventh to the eleventh century. But, as André Wink has pointed out, this does not mean that it was “demonetized.” In fact, evidence shows that there was in Gujarat a stupendous amount of unminted gold and silver. As everywhere in India, considerable amounts of these precious metals were manufactured in the form of idols or temple decoration.121 India's propensity to attract precious metals has been notorious ever since, but apparently it drew vast quantities of gold and silver during the seventh to eleventh centuries, exceeding all previous periods.122 Besides having been imported from Western regions of Islam, mines of gold and silver were, for example, also found in the environments of Palembang and Kedah and were exported by the Srivijayan “state.” Early Java had even been known as an island rich in grain and gold.123 Is it possible that Fujian gold and silver constituted a part of this metals trade?

The role of gold is difficult to assess. Can the few references we have in fact suggest that some places in tenth-century Fujian possessed gold deposits that were easily tapped, but—similar to the case of Java—were no longer of great importance by the eleventh century? Despite the possibility that some quantities of unminted Fujian gold may have been exported through the tenth-century

120. This situation is also reflected by the biography of Liu Congxiao in the Songshi, 483:13960-13962.
121. André Wink, Al-Hind, 309.
122. André Wink, Al-Hind, 63.
123. André Wink, Al-Hind, 355.
Quanzhou port, the evidence we do have does not suggest that gold was an important export commodity. The largest proportion of the amount locally mined entered local consumption, especially in the spheres of religion, or was paid as tribute. This brings us to silver, which still played an important role in the Fujian economy in Song times.\textsuperscript{124} Whereas Liu Congxiao at home used considerable quantities of silver for paying tribute, the exportation of silver, as mentioned in the family register of the Liu clan, may suggest the following: (1) The ruling Liu family intended and indeed had to serve a foreign demand for commodities that represented a stable value on foreign markets if it wanted to purchase certain foreign commodities and at the same time wanted to render itself independent of upsets that might occur as the result of the seller's wishes and specific demands within trade. Determined to promote maritime trade, the rulers of Quanzhou tried to serve foreign demand for a "saving" of values in a general form, if the trade was not to be of a purely occasional and incidental nature.\textsuperscript{125} (2) Against the background of an omnipresent shortage of silver in a majority of Islamic states shortly before the year 1000, it seems plausible that the price of silver was higher in countries abroad. Without being too speculative this may well have been the case in many areas in Southeast\textsuperscript{126} and East Asia, and also in countries of the Muslim

\textsuperscript{124} Cf. Liao Gang 廖剛 (1070-1143), \textit{Gaofeng wenji} 高峰文集 (Siku quanshu ed., fasc.1438-1444), 1.21a-23a.

\textsuperscript{125} In their interest to enrich themselves and their local economy with the help of maritime trade, local rulers complied with the demands of foreign traders to the best of their ability, in as far as the resources of their territory could provide. It is difficult to say in which concrete "shape" the silver was sold. We may assume that a great bulk of the silver exported was sold unminted in the form of weights or bullion; but at the same time silver was possibly also exported as refined manufactured goods like cups, bowls, and similar utensils, or silver-plated articles. Gold and silver utensils had for example been paid as tribute to the Song court.

\textsuperscript{126} Bennett Bronson notes that "(a)gentiferous lead-zinc ores seem to have produced the great bulk of the silver made in Southeast Asia during the preindustrial period." Bennett Bronson, "Patterns in the Early Southeast Asian Metals Trade," in \textit{Early Metallurgy, Trade and Urban Centers in Thailand and Southeast Asia}, eds. Ian Glover, Pornchai Suchitta et. al. (Bangkok: White Lotos, 1992), 63-114. (For this quotation see p. 82). Bronson estimates that "even with a modest silver content in the 300-600 gram per ton range" "the profitability of a lead-zinc mine" would have been great (p. 81). Bronson also notes that the value of silver must have been high in pre-European times. Since Fujian possessed apparently silver ores with a higher
world at least during the late tenth century. And higher silver prices in countries abroad certainly constituted a positive condition for the exportation of Fujian silver.

To summarize, for domestic utility purposes, military or agricultural, for exportation overseas, and, to a less extent, for internal circulation, large quantities of base metals were required. To serve as a profitable export commodity mainly for religious purposes, as tribute, and to a less extent, as a supra-regionally accepted means of payment, silver, and perhaps on a small scale also gold, were of not negligible significance.

4. Conclusion

The maritime trade during the time period investigated was certainly no longer an accidental, *ad hoc* trade. Whereas the local domestic trade was still no doubt in its infancy, the politico-economic particulars unequivocally suggest that not only merchants, but also the local ruling and probably also parts of the local social elites intentionally and routinely used the transshipment port for their purposes. In contrast to the local, purely domestic trade, maritime trade through the Quanzhou port—and consequently also the resale of foreign commodities to Chinese merchants who further distributed them in China and vice versa—had already experienced a certain routinization in the later tenth century.

The promotion of local crafts took place fundamentally under the supervision of the local social and ruling elite. A consequent expansion of possibilities of reproduction for ordinary people—from the entertainment of merchants to the work in kilns—appeared only

(...continued)

agentiferous content, silver could be produced with comparatively less labor because it occurred in a more "virgin" condition. This meant with less intensive work its value was lower. Thus, it could be sold for cheaper prices, and over and above the costs of mining and smelting a considerable profit could probably be yielded.

127. "Shortly before the year 1000 A.D. a remarkable, omnipresent shortage of silver affected the Mahometan world. Within a brief space of time it practically ceased to be coined at all in the majority Islamic states and fractional currency in base metals took its place alongside of the gold dinars, which continued to circulate." Robert P. Blake, "The Circulation of Silver in the Moslem East Down to the Mongol Epoch," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 2 (1937): 291-328, 291. Due to a series of political changes in Central Asia during the ninth and tenth centuries, Arab silver, for example, ceased to be exported to the north and northwest; the Arabs, for example, lost control over the argentiferous section of Armenia during the latter half of the ninth century.
as the result of an expanded maritime trade and local commerce, and was at the same time certainly very underdeveloped in the contemporary Quanzhou region. Superficially, the active role of local rulers makes them appear to be the *initiators* of the overseas trade; however, their support cannot be construed as the reason for the local maritime trade, which rudimentarily had already been in existence before their reign. The specific (but not necessary) cause of the overseas trade in Quanzhou must be seen in the interest of foreign (primarily Muslim) traders to accumulate wealth by exchanging commodities in China and the reciprocally positive enthusiasm shown by Chinese merchants and, later, by the local rulers, in such an exchange. Undeniably the latter's support and stimulation did lead to some specific local characteristics that may be summarized as follows:

1. Directed at the consolidation of their autonomous regime and the increase of their financial resources, to a greater extent than predecessors including the Wang family had ever done, the independent rulers had to rely on their own material and financial resources. They stimulated the maritime trade in order to profit from it as an active "trading regime." In this respect, for the first time in its local history, in the tenth century the regime in Quanzhou—and not solely merchants—was officially integrated into the overseas trade.

2. In order to be able to offer foreign traders surplus commodities they did not need for their own consumption, the rulers of Quanzhou and other wealthy households of the local social and ruling elites—building on elementary trade relations that had been in existence for some time before—at least partly directed the manufacture of local products for exchange in maritime trade. They had kilns built for the firing of ceramics and mines opened for the extraction of metals, and a part of the output was exported. The manufacturing of local silks was probably also encouraged within the bounds of the natural conditions prevailing in their territory.

   Under the rule of Liu Congxiao and Chen Hongjin, a proportion of the local production was explicitly orientated towards production for exchange, for sale overseas; in other words, they partly transformed privately owned sections of their local economy, above all ceramics and metals, to production for exchange abroad; local impoverished peasants subsequently represented the potential work force for the kilns and mines.

3. The greatest proportion of the merchandise exported through
the port of Quanzhou, of necessity, consisted of commodities from other regions of China; this was probably especially the case with silks. As Hugh Clark has put it, Quanzhou was mainly a transshipment port at that time. History reveals that political relations with its neighbor, the state Wu-Yue, were not very good, but still it seems that traders could cross the borders without encountering insuperable problems. Yet this situation implied a certain dependency on political relations with neighboring countries and consequently an uncertainty about the supply of some commodities, a situation that may have provided the stimulus for an even more intensive sponsoring of local industries also on the part of the merchants. At the same time the rulers tried to profit from a monopolization and a consequent resale of imported goods.

4. Despite the widening of the economic horizon, it is evident that we cannot speak of an extensive integration of the local economy into the overseas trade, especially not in the field of agriculture. The basic structure of the agrarian sector was the least touched by the development. With the exception of some surplus products like lychees, processed sugar, sugar cane, and perhaps some salt, the agricultural sector in general still seems to have been unable to produce much in excess of local subsistence needs, even though some rich landlords may have gradually reoriented their land use respectively towards the cultivation of products demanded abroad.

5. Concentration of land in the hands of religious, especially Buddhist monastic communities was enforced by donations of the rulers and by high tax burden for the peasantry that forced not a few rural households into accepting forms of tenant relations or perhaps even abandoning their land. On the other side, this situation led to fundamental changes in the structure of the local property situation, which eventually also had its effects on the agrarian sector. The monasteries owned ever-increasing amounts of land and wealth and were in this way also provided with constantly better conditions to actively engage in maritime trade themselves.

6. With their politics, the independent local rulers of the Liu and Chen families certainly laid the basis for a further transformation of the local economy. At the same time it seems unlikely that fundamental changes in the local economic sector occurred already during the thirty years of their reign.

The sponsorship and support of the government combined with the success of the Muslims, as well as some pioneering Chinese overseas traders, certainly stimulated many Chinese traders to

128. See also So Kee Long, "Developments in Southern Fukien," 446.
engage in maritime trade, both on the eve of the Wudai period and at the beginning of the Song dynasty. Running parallel to their active engagement in the following two dynasties, which was not without its fluctuations, the development of maritime trade at Quanzhou reached its peak. Similar to the period of the Five Dynasties, during the Song and Yuan dynasties the engagement and specific reference of the government to the local overseas trade was again far from being negligible.