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Trade relations between the Song and Jin Empires: smuggling against embargo

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Abstract. The growing socio-political interest to the northeastern territories of China in terms of the historical prerequisites for their economic and political connections with traditional China defines the scientific interest the article. The purpose of the presented study is to identify the main trade features between the Jurchen and the Chinese during the Song (960–1279) and Jin periods, with an emphasis on smuggling trade. The research literature mainly presents the political and military side of the relationship between the Song and Jin, emphasizing that trade between the two states was suppressed. However, trade played a fundamental role in the relations between the two empires. Due to the characteristics of the semi-nomadic economy, trade with neighboring states was one of the main conditions for the existence of the Jin Empire. The Jin Empire traded with its neighbors throughout its existence, but the Song Empire always remained its main trading partner. Based on such sources as Jin-shi, Song-shi and Song Huiyao Jigao, the main features of trade of the two empires, trade items, as well as factors that positively and negatively influenced trade relations between the two countries were identified. The main items of trade were horses, livestock products, tea, grain and salt. After the conquest of northern China by the Jin Empire and the beginning of its political confrontation with the Southern Song, the Southern Song government imposed a ban on trade with the Jurchens. The restrictions introduced stimulated the transition to mechanisms of informal trade exchange, and the role of smuggling transactions increased significantly.

Keywords: Jurchen, medieval China, smuggling trade

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Торговые отношения империй Сун и Цзинь: контрабанда против эмбарго

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Аннотация. Актуальность исследования обусловлена ростом общественно-политического интереса к северо-восточным территориям Китая в части исторических предпосылок их экономической и политической связи с традиционным Китаем. Цель исследования — выявление особенностей торговых взаимодействий чжурчжэней и китайцев в период империй Сун (960–1279 гг.) и Цзинь, в том числе контрабандной торговли. В научной литературе в основном представлена политическая и военная сторона отношений Сун и Цзинь, и говорится, что торговля между двумя государствами пресекалась. Однако на протяжении всего существования империй торговля играла основополагающую роль в их отношениях. В силу особенностей полукочевого хозяйства торговля с соседними государствами была одним из основных условий существования империи Цзинь, но основным торговым партнером всегда оставалась Империя Сун. На основе таких источников, как Цзинь-ши, Сун-ши и Сун Хуэйяо Цзигао, выявлены основные особенности торговли двух империй, предметы торговли, а также факторы, позитивно и негативно влиявшие на торговые отношения. Основными предметами торговли были лошади, продукты животноводства, чай, зерно и соль. После завоевания северного Китая империей Цзинь и начала ее политического противостояния с Южной Сун, правительство Южной Сун ввело запрет на торговлю с чжурчжэнями. Введенные ограничения стимулировали переход к механизмам неформального торгового обмена, значительно возросла роль контрабандных сделок.

Ключевые слова: чжурчжэни, средневековый Китай, контрабандная торговля

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Introduction

The nomadic Jurchen state of Jin was formed in 1115 AD in the territory of modern Northeast China. Due to the limitations of the northern climate and other natural conditions, many goods had to be obtained from abroad. At the same time, some goods produced in Jin could be exported. Thus, to adjust the surplus and deficit, trade between the Jin state and surrounding regimes gradually developed.

The main studies of the Jurchens and the Jin state focus on the formation of the Jin state and its conquest [1–4]. The economic system of the Jin state was also of interest to both Russian and Western researchers. M.V. Vorobyov pays attention to the trade interactions of the Jurchens and their neighbors before the formation of the Jin state [5. P. 94–104] and after 1115 [5. P. 243–257]. Certain results have been achieved in studies of the financial and monetary systems of the Jurchens and the Jin state [6], as well as monetary circulation in Manchuria and Primorye from ancient times to the Mongol invasion [7]. Some papers focus on the cultural and institutional interactions of the Chinese, Khitans, Jurchens and Tanguts [8; 9]. Non-Russian authors mainly study the political and military alliances of that period, revealing the features of political and military interaction within the Liao-Song-Jin triangle [10–12]. Few studies touch upon the issue of interaction between Jin and the Koryo state [8]. Some aspects of trade relations between Song and Jin were also of interest to Western researchers [14].

The purpose of the study is to identify the features of trade interactions between the Jurchens and Chinese during the Song (960–1279) and Jin periods. I focus on smuggling.

The source base of the study is represented by Chinese chronicles and collections of documents of that period. The main ones are *Jin-shi*, *Song-shi*, and a collection of documents of the Song period (*Song huiyao jigao*). However, the information of interest to us is presented in the sources rather fragmentarily, since the authors of these chronicles did not set themselves the task of recording the trade contacts of the countries. We are interested in those fragments that concern the publication of new regulations prohibiting one or another type of trade, as well as in evidence of violations of current trade rules.

The Formation of Trade Relations between the Jin and Song

Trade between the Jin and Song states probably began during the Jianlong Period (960–963) of the Northern Song state. “Since the accession of Emperor Jianlong, the Jurchens traveled across the sea from Suzhou to Dengzhou to sell horses” [15, juan 3]. The horse trade route between the Jurchens and the Northern Song became a channel of communication between the two states. After the

Jurchen leader Aguda (1068–1123) rebelled against the Liao, their controllers, and proclaimed himself emperor in 1115, the Northern Song government attempted to ally with the Jurchens to destroy the Liao state and reclaim the Yanyun territory, which had previously belonged to the Tang Empire. In the spring of the second year of the Xuanhe reign (1120), the Northern Song government sent Zhao Liangxi to Jin to discuss the struggle against the Liao with Aguda, and proposed that "after the matter is settled, a state-owned market should be established east of Yuguan"[1] [15, juan 4]. This was the first formal trade agreement between Jin and Song.

However, the Song were not the only trading partners of the Jin; the Jurchens traded actively with the Liao [16, juan 134] and the state of Goryeo. Goryeo was located "east of the Yalu River, south of the Yilan Road, and as far as the sea in the southeast" [16, juan 135, 17, p. 314].

The state of Jin also had relatively close trade exchanges with some surrounding tribes such as the *huihe* [18, juan 1]. When the Jin people conquered Shaanxi, the *huihe* who lived in Qinchuan during the Northern Song were resettled in Yanshan, which provided favorable conditions for trade between the *huihe* and the Jin [19].

In addition to the Song, Liao, and Song states, the Jurchens traded with neighboring military states, and the main products of trade were fabrics, fruits, medicinal materials, and books. Overall, the Jin's foreign trade areas were relatively extensive.

Main Trade Items

After the formation of Jin State, animal husbandry gradually became the most important industry of Jin State. However, the sources known to us do not mention domestic production. On the contrary, historical materials often mention the purchase of animal husbandry products by the Jin State from neighboring states such as Xixia. For example, in June of the second year of Dading (1162 CE), Shizong "sent (Bai) Yan Jing to the northwest road to recruit horses and received more than 6,000 horses" [5, juan 84]. "In the third year of Dading, Shizong again sent to the horse market of the Xia State" [16, juan 50]. Since horses are an important military commodity, the Jin and Song authorities strictly prohibited the export of horses to each other after the Jurchen attack on China. Jin law stipulated that "anyone who sells horses outside the country or has the intention of selling them will be punished with death" [16, juan 12]. The Southern Song (1129–1276) decrees stated that

[1] State monopoly market *quechang* (榷场) — during the Song, Liao, Jin, and Yuan periods, border markets for trade with neighbors; such markets were under government control, and private traders were charged a tax or commission, or required special permission to trade.

"merchants from Jingxi[2] and Hubei who export tea from the country on oxen and horses will be punished with death" [20, juan 35]. Here we see that even as a means of transport, a horse was not allowed to leave the Song borders. The ban on horse trade between the two sides was very strict. In the confrontation between the Jin and Song, an advantage in the number of war horses meant, to a certain extent, an advantage in military power. The Song rulers used all possible means to take horses from the enemy. Since both states banned the horse trade, it can be concluded that the horse trade between the Jin and Song empires was carried out through smuggling. It is worth mentioning that almost nothing is known about the trade in other types of animals, as well as livestock products. Perhaps this is since we are mainly dealing with prohibitive documents of both states, and not with regulations somehow adjustinf legal trade.

The bulk of tea in Jin came from Song, and tea was therefore one of the main trade items between Jin and Song. Some types of tea were brought to the Jin through market trade, while others were smuggled.

Although the volume of tea trade between the Jin and Song is not clearly recorded, it is assumed that it was large. In November of the sixth year of the Taihe reign (1206), a minister reported that the cost of purchasing tea during the Jin era was "no less than one million *liang* per year," "There are more than 50 counties in today's Henan and Shaanxi provinces, and the daily tea ration in this county is 20 bags" [16, juan 49]. According to this statement, the people of Jin consumed more than a thousand bags of tea every day.

The types of tea traded during the Jin and Song periods are not known in detail, but it is well known that the famous teas from the Southern Song did find their way to the Jin. In July of the second year of the Shaoxi reign (1191 AD), Ni Xi, an envoy of the Southern Song state, brought *Jiancha, Longtuan, Fengtuan* and other high-quality teas to Jin [26. P. 321–322]. It is known that not only high-ranking officials drank famous teas, but tea also reached ordinary people, but most likely it was smuggled [22].

Even though the Jin government allowed the open sale of Southern Song salt, salt was smuggled into Song in large quantities.

At the same time, Song had its own salt reserves, so to protect them, the Southern Song government repeatedly issued orders to prohibit the export of salt. On August 7, the ninth year of the Chunxi reign (1182), the official Huang Qiayang issued a warning: "Circumventing the ban on the sale of salt will be severely punished; from now on, anyone who dares to sell salt himself or give it to others

[2] Jingxi Province — the territory of present-day Henan Province, west of Luoyang and south of the Yellow River.

as a gift, no matter how much it costs, will be punished according to the law and will not be pardoned" [23, book 135]. The Southern Song government repeatedly emphasized that salt smuggling was not allowed, which indicates that salt smuggling was unstoppable at that time.

As for the grain trade, since the Tang and Northern Song dynasties, the general trend was mainly to ship large quantities of grain from the south, especially from the Yangtze River Delta to the north. The Southern Song and Jin dynasties continued this tradition. Of course, due to the political rivalry between Jin and Song, the Southern Song government could not allow grain to be transported to the Jin state through legal channels. Thus, grain trade between the two states was impossible. During this period, smuggling was mainly carried out, and the volume of transactions was very large. In July of the fourth year of Jianyang (1130 AD), Lin Bingde, the jinshi[3] of Mingzhou, noted that since rice and wheat were very expensive in the Jin state, selling grain was profitable [24, juan 35]. From this the scale of production was very high. Grain smuggling from the Southern Song to Jin was large-scale and brought in large profits.

There were cases where grain from the Jin state also entered the Southern Song. The History of the Song Dynasty records that in the autumn of the seventh year of Qiandao's reign (1171 AD, one (11th year of the Dading reign of the Jin Dynasty) the Jin Empire also transported grain for sale to the Southern Song. There was a severe famine in Hunan Province and other places: "The Jin people transported wheat to the north bank of the Huaihe River and exchanged it for copper coins" [20, juan 67]. This was a way to obtain copper coins, which were in great shortage during this period of the Jin, and this objectively could not help but play a positive role in the development of grain trade during this period.

Smuggling Trade

As noted above, smuggling trade was an important part of the trade between Jin and Song. The study of this phenomenon was partially reflected in the studies of Chinese researchers [17; 25].

Various restrictions on market trade during the Jin and Southern Song periods hindered the exchange of goods between the north and south, which provoked and intensified smuggling activities. Jin and Song Empires imposed strict limitations on market trade. For example, the laws of the Southern Song stipulated that merchants from the north and south could not meet directly to make deals, and

[3] The highest educational degree of an official in traditional China.

transactions could only be conducted by *yaren*[4], who acted as an intermediary, which significantly reduced the efficiency of commodity transportation. In addition, the Southern Song authorities also strictly limited the number of merchants who could cross the Huaihe River, stipulated the procedure for crossing the Huaihe River, the number and type of goods sold, and even the time of merchants' stay at the market. Obviously, this did not contribute to the development of market trade. Naturally, smuggling became an important means of evading official supervision, simplifying transaction procedures, and increasing the efficiency of trade.

High taxes levied on merchants forced merchants to engage in smuggling. The Jin government attached great importance to tax management of market trade and levied a constant entrance tax and a tax on transportation and transactions on merchants.

The Southern Song took the taxation of merchants more seriously than Jin. The Song government imposed a high tax duty, starting from 11 % of profits [23, book 136]. In reality, of course, the taxes were much higher. Faced with such high taxes, merchants naturally resorted to smuggling to escape.

The long land border between the Jin and Song territories facilitated smuggling activities. In the second year of Emperor Xizong (Jin)'s reign (1142), Jin and Song made peace, and the line from the middle of the Huai River to Dashanguan became the dividing line between the territories of Jin and Song. Given the actual situation at that time, it was obvious that neither Jin nor Song could guard the entire border. On February 12, the fifth year of the Chunxi reign (1178), an official from Jingxi named Zhang Tingzhao explained the reason for the smuggling of salt on the border between Jin and Song by the fact that there were many uncontrolled roads on the border [23, book 135]. In addition, the Huai River itself is not large and can be easily crossed by small private vehicles. May 17, 12th year of Shaoxing (1142): "Along the Huai River, the settlements of Ziyang and Chu are in the east, and Guan and Shu are on the border, and in the west the territory is uncontrolled. And on the remaining sections of the border, no one controls it, and when the water level drops and stones appear, it becomes shallow and it is enough to cross the river on foot" [23, book 140]. Obviously, favorable geographical conditions provide more opportunities for smuggling. Small roads on the border between the Jin and Song territories and shallow sections of the Huai River became important routes for smugglers.

The Jin established a system of exchanging ambassadors with neighboring states. They sent ambassadors to each other to communicate on state affairs. The envoys had a special status and could smuggle almost uncontrollably. Due to geopolitical problems, wars and other factors, the exchange of envoys

[4] 牙人 — commission agent, trade intermediary.

between the Jin and Song was quite frequent. It was precisely during this period, after the peace treaty of 1141, that the problem of smuggling by envoys became most noticeable. The Southern Song government repeatedly specified the topics on which envoys could negotiate and conclude treaties. Smuggling, of course, was suppressed in every possible way, but its incredible profitability outweighed all prohibitions, and envoys often became smugglers. This is evident from the comments of some Southern Song officials. In the 32nd year of the reign of Shaoxing, Wu Dai, the imperial censor, reported that some envoys of the Southern Song "were the first to bribe northern envoys and enter into a strong alliance with northern envoys in order to establish business relations with northern merchants", "… bought off restrictions with bribes" and "… I have been doing this for many years and have become accustomed to it" [24, juan 199]. After the Jiading period (1208–1224), the problem of smuggling carried by envoys became more serious and caused more trouble. Attacks on smuggling caravans for the purpose of robbery increased [23, book 79]. And this in turn interfered with the fulfillment of direct ambassadorial duties.

There is not much documentary evidence about the involvement of envoys from Jin in smuggling, but we can still find clues in some sources. In the 14th year of the reign of Shaoxing, the Southern Song government issued a regulation to the border troops: "You must follow the instructions for receiving and escorting merchants and envoys, that is, you must not allow people to trade during the "in a formal manner with the envoys of the North" [23, book 80]. This situation shows that some of the Jin envoys conducted private transactions with ordinary people, so the Southern Song government had to impose restrictions.

Officials serving on the border also engaged in smuggling. Officials and soldiers in the border areas of Jin and Song took advantage of their geographical location, and they had a better chance of succeeding in smuggling. In the first year of the reign of Qiandao (1615), one of the ministers wrote: "In the counties along the Huai River, it was always a common occurrence for officials to send people to the Huai River to sell goods from the South for their own purposes. They often brought copper coins and prohibited items with them and traded them openly" [23, book 186]. Soldiers also took advantage of the favorable opportunity to travel across the border and smuggle. They relied on their privileges, formed cliques with each other, and used force to lobby and protect their private interests. Every year during the Jin and Song periods, coins were brought to the border, and soldiers often accompanied them. These people "often follow the old practice of secretly taking money and treasures abroad, and also bringing private merchants with them, and not allowing them to be inspected" [23, book 166]. Such smuggling activities were more difficult to detect and stop.

Ordinary people and merchants often carried out illegal trade along the border. Although they had no administrative resources to hide the illegal trade, for the sake of huge profits, many civilians and merchants risked their lives bringing in and taking out contraband. On August 9, the eighth year of the Chunxi reign (1181), officials of the Southern Song wrote: "The border has not been strictly guarded recently, and many people along the border steal salt and infiltrate its production sites" [23, book 134]. As for the Jin Empire, in March of the second year of the Yuanguang reign (1223), the provincial minister demanded a ban on the tea and salt trade because the country's wealth had been depleted and mentioned that "the border residents were seeking profit and making private cross-border transactions" [16, juan 49]. Those smuggling activities by border residents and merchants were widespread during the period I studied.

Conclusion

The trade of the Jin Empire with its neighbors, especially with the Song Empire, had some distinctive features. In the early stages of the Jin Empire, the Song government actively traded with the Jurchens legally. The main trade goods were horses, livestock products, tea, grain, and salt.

Then, due to the political confrontation between the Jin and Song, the Southern Song government prohibited trade with the Jurchens. During this period, smuggling was mainly carried out, and the volume of smuggling transactions was large. For example, the rulers and ministers of the Southern Song repeatedly emphasized that salt smuggling was not allowed, which proves that salt smuggling was active at that time and was difficult to stop.

Trade with surrounding regimes was an important part of the Jin economic system. Trade between the Jin and Southern Song, Xixia, and Goryeo states not only facilitated economic and cultural exchanges between the Jin and these states, but also helped to maintain, to a certain extent, the political ties of the Jin with its neighbors.

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