

An Exploration into the Rilisuo in the Northern Song Dynasty

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How to cite this paper: Zhao, Q. H. (2024). An Exploration into the Rilisuo in the Northern Song Dynasty. *Advances in Historical Studies*, 13, 218-225.
<https://doi.org/10.4236/ahs.2024.133011>

Received: May 16, 2024

Accepted: September 15, 2024

Published: September 18, 2024

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Abstract

At the beginning of the Northern Song Dynasty, the historical system basically followed the Tang Dynasty. The History Bureau was responsible for all the official revision of the history. The Rilisuo, which is affiliated with the History Bureau, is responsible for writing the RILI. Due to the increasing demand for historical books, the functions of the historical book of the History Bureau have been weakened. Rilisuo was changed to the Bianxiuyuan, and later, it belonged to the History Bureau due to the abolition of the Bianxiuyuan. After the Reform of Yuanfeng, the Institute for the Veneration of Literature was changed to the Mishusheng. The Mishusheng, which was originally an idle institution, revisited his duties, and the Rilisuo also was re-entered into the Mishusheng. The several adjustments set by the Rilisuo are directly linked to the changes in the political fluctuations of Chaotang and the needs of the historical books.

Keywords

Northern Song Dynasty, Mishusheng, The History Bureau, RILI, Rilisuo

1. Introduction

RILI is a type of data compilation of official historical matter in ancient China, which originated from the first year of Yongzhen of the Tang Dynasty (Wang, 2006a). Prior to this, the materials used by historians when writing historical books were all personal records. Therefore, in the historical book written, it is likely to mix personal opinions, and it is inevitable that it is unreasonable. Therefore, the minister Wei Zhiyi asked the historian to write the RILI. He hopes to eliminate the subjectivity of historical books written personally and ensure the authenticity of official historical materials. After the Reform of Yuanfeng, the Institute for the Veneration of Literature was changed to the Mishusheng. The Rilisuo under the History Bureau, which was originally under the Institute for the

Veneration of Literature was also incorporated into the Mishusheng, and the function of writing RILI was also undertaken by the Mishusheng. There are currently many studies related to the Northern Song's RILI. Cai Chongbang's "The Compilation of RILI in the Song Dynasty" (Cai, 1991) used the compilation of the RILI as a clue to compile the revolution and official setting of the Song Dynasty's compilation of the RILI. Wang Shengen's "The Compilation of RILI in the Song Dynasty" (Wang, 2006b) examined the origin of the RILI compilation, summarized the historical sources of the Song Dynasty RILI and analyzed the characteristics of the Northern and Southern Song RILI writing. Yan Yongcheng's "The Change of Historiographers' Offices in the Song Dynasty and Its Achievement of Compiling Historical Records" (Yan, 2017) inspected the entire evolution process of the historical officers in the Song Dynasty, and explored the changes of the historical officers and the results it brought about by the historical officers.

2. Rilisuo is Affiliated with the History Bureau in the Beginning of the Northern Song Dynasty

At the beginning of the Northern Song Dynasty, the History Bureau was responsible for writing the RILI. The History Bureau of the Song Dynasty was an institution established along the old system of the Tang Dynasty. History Bureau's compilation of the RILI, veritable records, and national history editing work, and the Rilisuo under its jurisdiction is responsible for writing RILI. However, with the increase in the workload of historical books, other institutions have begun to share the work of the History Bureau.

In the fourth year of Yongxi, under the suggestion of Hu Dan, Song Taizong set up "Xiushiuyan" and allocated funds to support the compilation of the Xiushiuyan, "In September of the fourth year of Yongxi, Hu Dan said: 'The veritable records and RILI of the period from the first year of Jianlong to the third year of Yongxi have not been written well...The emperor ordered that the Xiushiuyan should be set up in the room to the west of the Museum of Bureau, with a fee of 500 thousand for public use and seven officials for service.'" (Wang, 2003). Xiushiuyan completed the compilation of the national history of Taizu and Taizong dynasties, and in the ninth year of Tiansheng, it was moved to the east of the North Courtyard of Xuanhui and renamed as Bianxiuyuan, "In September of the fourth year of Jingde, Wang Dan and other officials attended the national history banquet of Taizu and Taizong in Xiushiuyan...In May of the ninth year of Tiansheng, Xiushiuyan moved to the east of Xuanhui North Courtyard. At the beginning of the compilation of the national history of the Zhenzong Dynasty, the workplace was in the first half of Zhongshu, and when the national history was written, it continued to compile the Huiyao, therefore, Xiushiuyan moved and was renamed the Bianxiuyuan." (Wang, 2003). Bianxiuyuan took over the duties of compiling the RILI, which originally belonged to the History Bureau, "History Bureau, leading the Rilisuo, set up two editing officers, the prime minister as a supervisor. Since the establishment of the Bianxiuyuan, the compilation has been completed by one editing officer, and the RILI and other historical books have been compiled

by Bianxiuyuan.” (Song, 1980). Rilisuo also became a subordinate organization of the Bianxiuyuan, “The Emperor has decreed that the recorded documents of the Xuanhuiyuan and other organizations will no longer be sent to the Qijuyuan at the end of the month, but will be provided directly to the Rilisuo of Bianxiuyuan from this day onwards.” (Li, 1986). In the fourth year of Yuanfeng, Rilisuo was merged into the History Bureau due to the abolition of Bianxiuyuan, “In November of the fourth year, Bianxiuyuan was abolished and returned to the History Bureau.” (Tuo, 1989).

3. Rilisuo was Reorganized in the Fifth Year of Yuanfeng under the Mishusheng

The official system was reformed in the fifth year of Yuanfeng, with the Institute for the Veneration of Literature as Mishusheng, “At the beginning of the fifth year of Yuanfeng, the Institute for the Veneration of Literature was changed into Mishusheng.” (Xu, 2014). The functions of Mishusheng were restored, and Rilisuo, which was originally under the History Bureau, was also transferred to Mishusheng at this time. Thus, Rilisuo officially became an organization under the authority of Mishusheng.

The leadership of the Department of Mishusheng over Rilisuo is manifested in three main areas. First, the officials responsible for revising RILI in the Rilisuo are officials “Zhuzuolang” and “Zhuzuo zuolang” of Mishusheng, “Zhuzuolang and Zhuzuo zuolang are responsible for it. The contents recorded by the Prime minister’s <SHIZHENGJI> and Zuoyoushi’s <QIJUZHU> are compiled into the Canon of a generation.” (Tuo, 1989). In the event of a vacancy, other officials of the Mishusheng may act as such, “On May 17, the seventh year of Yuan Feng, the emperor issued an edict: If no Zhuzuolang, Zhuzuo zuolang, Jiaoshulang or Zhengzi concurrently hold their posts.” (Xu, 2014). Second, RILI and the materials needed for revision, such as QIJUZHU and SHIZHENGJI, are stored in Mishusheng and are strictly prohibited from being taken out, and those who need to borrow them can only work in Mishusheng, “The official of Mishusheng said that the Zongzheng Temple borrowed the QIJUZHU, SHIZHENGJI and RILI from the reign of the emperor of this dynasty to the ten years of Xining for writing Yudie. Officials won’t let them. The emperor issued an edict to the officials of the Zongzheng Temple to write in the Mishusheng.” (Xu, 2014). Third, the prefect of Mishusheng had the power to intervene in the revision of RILI and related materials, but the scope of the authority was gradually limited, and eventually, the prefect of Mishusheng only retained the right to review the documents. Although Mishujian, as the chief of Mishusheng, should have the responsibility of supervising the process of writing RILI, as an important part of writing history books in the Northern Song Dynasty, its special need for confidentiality determines that its compilation process should be more strictly controlled. Therefore, Emperor Shenzong issued an imperial decree in the sixth year of Yuanfeng, so that Mishujian and Mishushaojian should not interfere in the writing of RILI, “It was decreed that the prefect of Mishusheng should not participate in the writing of RILI. If

there is a leak of text, it will be dealt with in accordance with the regulations of the former Bianxiuyuan.” (Li, 1990).

Only one year later, in the seventh year of Yuanfeng, at Xing Shu’s suggestion, Emperor Shenzong issued an edit further restricting Mishujian, Mishushaojian, and Mishucheng’s right to manage the data needed to write RILI, “Xing Shu, as the Zhuzuo zuolang, said: ...It is hoped that the monthly record documents of each institution will still be handed over to Mishusheng for review, but Mishujian and Mishushaojian are not allowed to participate in the writing of RILI, and the SHIZHENGJI and QIJUZHU can be opened and locked in the library. The Emperor decreed that from now on, the monthly records of each agency would still be submitted to Mishusheng for examination and verification, and that no one, except the officials who compiled SHIZHENGJI and RILI, would be allowed to participate.” (Li, 1990). QIJUZHU, SHIZHENGJI and records of various institutions are the three primary sources for writing RILI, “In the past, the History Bureau collected SHIZHENGJI, QIJUZHU and records of various institutions and wrote RILI.” (Xu, 2014). After the Rilisuo was attached to Mishusheng, these materials used in the preparation of RILI naturally became part of the affairs of Mishusheng, and were kept and controlled by the governor of the Mishusheng. However, under Xing Shu’s suggestion, the SHIZHENGJI and QIJUZHU were no longer handled by the chief of the Mishusheng, and the chief of the Mishusheng only retained the right to review the records of each institution. The confidentiality and particularity of writing RILI give the Rilisuo a relatively independent position in Mishusheng.

In addition, Emperor Shenzong stipulated that when it was necessary to write the national history and veritable records, a special writing agency would be set up, “During the Yuanfeng years, the official system was reformed, and the affairs of writing RILI were assigned to the Mishusheng. Whenever there was a need to write the national history and veritable records of the previous dynasty, we established a separate national history and Records Institute.” (Ma, 2011). The National history and veritable records do not need to be written every day; institutions are built by events. As the basic information needed for writing national history, the RILI needs to be recorded in detail, so the Rilisuo has been established for a long time. From this point of view, after the reform of Yuanfeng, the RILI, The national history and veritable records were written by different departments, which completely changed the form of writing all history books by the same institution in the early Northern Song Dynasty.

4. The Adjustment of Rilisuo after Zhe Zong Dynasty

In the fifth year of Yuanyou, the attribution of the function of writing RILI changed. It was the first year of Yuan You at that time that the SHENZONGSHILU was about to be compiled. This “historiography group controlled by the anti-reform faction” (Kong, 2002) tried to take the function of writing RILI into their own hands, using their position to write their own personal intentions in the SHENZONGSHILU, and achieve their political goals by controlling the revision of the national history

base. Therefore, in the fifth year of Yuanyou, the matter of editing history books was the most secret, and in order to prevent the loss of documents, the National History Academy was established, which was responsible for writing national history, The veritable records, and RILI referring to the Bianxiuyuan before Yuanfeng. The functions of the Institute of National History overlapped with those of the Rilisuo of the Mishusheng, in fact usurping the function of the Rilisuo to write the RILI, “On November 13, the fifth year of Yuanyou, an official of the Shangshu Province said: ‘The Bianxiuyuan previously set up was specifically responsible for the compilation of national history and The veritable records. Now the SHENZONGSHILU is about to be completed and should be strictly stored and controlled. If sent to the province, I’m afraid it will be leaked and lost.’ Zhe Zong issued an edit, the responsibility of writing national history was transferred, and the office place set up today, in the name of the National History Institute, was specifically responsible for writing the national history, veritable records, and RILI, which were subordinate to Menxia Province and no longer subordinate to the Mishusheng. The Academy of National History does not yet have a chief, so the former chief will be appointed as his supervisor and will be dismissed when a new chief is appointed. All officers, with the exception of some unclassified business, waiting for buses and on duty as usual, work only in the Academy of National History...All leaks are handled in accordance with the regulations of the former Bianxiuyuan.” (Xu, 2014). The officials responsible for writing RILI in the Mishusheng are only allowed to serve in the National History Academy, except for some unclassified chores in the Mishusheng. At this point, the brief separation period of the functions of compiling national history, The veritable records and RILI ended, and the unified office was handed over to the National History Institute of Menxia Province, and the system of compiling historical books returned to before the reform of Yuanfeng.

In the first year of Shaosheng, after Zhe Zong came to power, the political direction changed and the Reform Party gained power. CAI Bian requested a revision of the SHENZONGSHILU. The group of anti-reform law revisionists responsible for writing Yuanyou’s SHENZONGSHILU was demoted. After that, the Reform Party made an important decision to revise the Xining Calendar again in order to ensure the legitimacy of the new revision of the SHENZONGSHILU. In September of the first year of Shaosheng, they put forward that members of the anti-reform Law revision team also participated in the revision of the RILI, so the RILI “has many false parts”, and now that it has decided to revise the SHENZONGSHILU, Fan Zuyu’s Xining RILI should also be corrected by them. “On September 14, the first year of Shaosheng, CAI Bian and Lin Xi said: ‘The RILI of Emperor Shenzong, from the first month of the second year of Xining to the end of the third year, was written by Kong Wuzhong, Huang Tingjian and Sima Kang, officials of the Yuanyou Mishusheng; From the fourth year of Xining to the end of the seventh year, Fan Zuyu wrote it, and Huang Tingjian, Sima Kang and Fan Zuyu were all officials who wrote the SHENZONGSHILU. During this period, the

contents they wrote were in accordance with the SHENZONGSHILU, and there were many parts that were inconsistent with the facts. Now the National History Academy has been ordered to revise the SHENZONGSHILU, all the previous RILI written by Fan Zuyu and others. We request to see and correct and be sure to make the content consistent with the facts. The emperor agreed.” (Xu, 2014). The so-called “let the content be consistent with the facts”, in essence, the Reform Party took advantage of their position to make their revised Xining RILI and SHENZONGSHILU complement each other, making it a tool to realize their own political intentions.

In the second year of Shaosheng, Zhe Zong ordered that the function of writing RILI be returned to the Mishusheng again, “CAI Bian and Lin Xi, officials of the National History Academy, were ordered to revise the RILI of the former Emperor, and a review officer should be installed in the National History Academy. The emperor ordered the work of revising the RILI to be returned to the Mishusheng, where Wang Zuo, as the official in charge of revising the RILI, wrote it.” (Xu, 2014). The Rilisuo of the Mishusheng was responsible for writing the RILI again, and the system returned to the period of the Yuan-feng reform.

In the second year of Xuanhe, Emperor Huizong of Song ordered the removal of all the officials who had written books in the capital, including the Rilisuo. Later, at the suggestion of the officials of Zhongshu Province, only the Rilisuo of the Mishusheng was not deposed, “On August 22, the second year of Xuanhe, an official of the Zhongshu Province said: ‘The Emperor issued a decree that all the existing officials of the agency that compiled books in the capital and the Rilisuo should be dismissed. After investigation, the official system implemented by the Rilisuo of the Mishusheng is the official system of Yuanfeng, and the ZHUZUO-LANG and the ZHUZUOZUOLANG are in charge of writing the RILI, and there is no fixed number of officials. There is only one officer who compiled the calendar book library, two SHOUFEN, and seven people who copied regular script.’ The emperor issued an edict, and everything still followed the system of the Yuanfeng period.” (Xu, 2014). The Rilisuo of the Mishusheng still maintained the system of the Yuanfeng period until the end of the Northern Song Dynasty, and did not change again.

5. Conclusion

The Rilisuo belongs to the History Bureau, to the Bianxiuyuan, and then changed to the History Bureau, and then changed to the Mishusheng. However, in the five years of Yuanyou, the Rilisuo did not hold the actual function, and became an idle organization, and the function of writing the RILI was invaded by the National History Institute. In the second year of Shaosheng, the Rilisuo once again mastered the function of writing the RILI. Looking at the overall changes of the calendar in the Northern Song Dynasty, its characteristics are as follows: in the early Northern Song Dynasty, the History Bureau, Bianxiuyuan, Mishusheng and other institutions were constantly improved, and the subordinate relationship of the

Rilisuo changed according to the reform of the institutions. In the later period of the Northern Song Dynasty, the functions of the Rilisuo changed according to the changes of the situation of the court after it was steadily subordinated to the Mishusheng. In general, the adjustment of the Rilisuo in the Northern Song Dynasty is to better assume the function of writing the RILI.

In the fifth year of Yuanfeng, the Mishusheng inherited the function of the History Bureau and took over the Rilisuo, and the ZHUZUOLANG and ZHUZUOLANG were specially responsible for writing RILI. The revision of RILI in charge of the Mishusheng lasted for 40 years, from the fifth year of Yuanfeng, to the fifth year of Yuanyou, and then from the second year of Shaosheng until the demise of the Northern Song Dynasty. During this period, Rilisuo completed the compilation of SHENZONGRILI, ZHEZONGRILI and CHONGNINGRILI. From the point of view of the system, after weakening the authority of the Mishusheng to intervene in the revision of the RILI several times, the Rilisuo has become a relatively independent institution in the establishment of the Mishusheng, and also foreshadowed the future of the RILI as a tool of contention between the new and old parties. In the fifth year of Yuan You, the function of writing RILI was vested in the National History Academy. The reason for the investigation is that the old Party in power intended to change the history revision system, which separated the functions of writing history books and brought the RILI into the control of its own forces. In the second year of Shaosheng, after the New Party came to power, the function of writing RILI was returned to the Mishusheng, and the system was again in accordance with the system of the Yuanfeng period, until the various institutions that wrote books were dismissed in the second year of Xuanhe, and the Rilisuo of the Mishusheng was retained and the system of the Yuanfeng period was maintained. As the basis of the veritable records and National History, the RILI played a great role in the writing of history books in the later period of the Northern Song Dynasty, but it also became a political tool for bureaucratic party disputes, especially about who was in charge of writing, basically representing the political wind direction of a period.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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