

The Biography of Sun Jian

from Chapter 46 [Wu section 1] of the *Sanguo zhi* by Chen Shou (233-297)
with commentary [PC] compiled by Pei Songzhi (372-451)
translated by Rafe de Crespigny [with occasional annotations: RdeC]

The original translation was published as *The Biography of Sun Chien: being an annotated translation of pages 1 to 8a of chüan 46 of the San-kuo chih of Ch'en Shou in the Po-na edition*, Occasional Paper No. 5 of the Centre of Oriental Studies, The Australian National University, Canberra 1966.

There is a detailed discussion of the life of Sun Jian in Chapter 2 of Rafe de Crespigny, *Generals of the South: the foundation and early history of the Three Kingdoms state of Wu*, Faculty of Asian Studies Monographs, New Series No. 16, Canberra 1990.

Sun Jian had the style Wentai; he was a man from Fuchun county in Wu commandery and was presumably a descendant of Sun Wu.

PC quotes *Wu shu* [the official "History of Wu" compiled by Wei Zhao and others in the mid-third century]:

Sun Jian came from an old official family of the [pre-Qin state of] Wu, which had a house at Fuchun and a burial ground east of the city. On several occasions a strange light appeared above the tombs, and there was a cloud of five colours which reached to the heavens and spread over several *li*. All the people went to look at it, and the elders said to one another, "This is no common appearance; the Sun clan will rise!"

When his mother was pregnant with Sun Jian, she dreamt her intestines came out of her and wound about the Changmen [gate] of Wu. She woke up and was afraid and she told an older woman of her neighbourhood; the neighbour said, "How do you know that isn't a good sign?" When Sun Jian was born, he was not a boy of ordinary appearance, and he was generous, intelligent and fond of unusual behaviour.'

When Sun Jian was young, he was a civil officer in his county. At the age of seventeen he travelled with his father by boat to Qiantang [present-day Hangzhou]. At this time the pirate Hu Yu and his band were robbing merchants of their goods from a base near Baoli, and just then they were dividing up shares on the bank. All travellers were stopped and no boat dared go forward.

Sun Jian said to his father, "These bandits can be attacked; I beg to destroy them". His father said, "This is nothing to do with you".

Sun Jian went and took his sword and climbed up on the bank. He waved his hands to the east and to the west as if [he was signalling] to detachments of soldiers that were coming to surround the pirates and arrest them. The pirates saw him from the distance and thought the government troops had come. They threw away their treasure, scattered and ran. Sun Jian chased after them, and he cut off one man's head and came back with it. His father was very startled.

From this he became known. The local government office summoned him and appointed him to a temporary military post.

The heretic rebel Xu Chang of Kuaiji rose in rebellion at Chu-chang and named himself Emperor Yangming ["Brightness of Yang"].

PC quotes *Lingdi ji* ["Annals of Emperor Ling" by Liu Ai (*fl.* 200)]:

Xu Chang made his father King of Yue.

With his son Shao he stirred up the people of many of the counties and his followers were numbered by the tens of thousands. As Major of the commandery, Sun Jian

called up the best soldiers and collected more than a thousand men. He joined the provincial and commandery forces to attack the rebels and destroy them. This was the first year of Xiping [172-173].

The Inspector Tsang Min commended Sun Jian's good conduct and an imperial letter appointed him Assistant Prefect of Yandu. Some years later he was transferred to be Assistant Prefect of Xuyi; and he was shifted again to be Assistant in Xiapi.

PC quotes *Jiangbiao zhuan* ["Account of the Lands Beyond the Yangzi" by Yu Pu (fl. 300):

Sun Jian held office as assistant at three counties in succession; and in each he gained a good reputation. The officers and people loved and trusted him, and there were always hundreds of old friends from his home district and young adventurers who came to visit him. Sun Jian looked after them and cared for them like his own family.'

In the first year of Zhongping [184-185] Zhang Jue, the leader of the Yellow Turban rebels, made a rising in Wei commandery. He pretended to have divine powers, he sent out eight messengers to convert the empire, and he kept secretly in close touch with his followers. He styled himself "Great Peace of the Yellow Heaven."

In the third month, on the day *jiazi*, 360,000 men rose together in sudden rebellion. The whole empire responded, commanderies and counties were burnt and destroyed, and magistrates and officials were killed or wounded.

PC quotes *Xiandi chunqiu* ["Chronicle of Emperor Xian" by Yuan Ye (third century):

Zhang Jue was called Lord of Heaven General, his younger brother Bao was called Lord of Earth General, and Bao's younger brother Liang was called Lord of Man General.

The Han sent the General of Chariots and Cavalry Huangfu Song and the General of the Gentlemen of the Household Zhu Jun to lead soldiers to attack the rebels. Zhu Jun sent a recommendation asking that Sun Jian be appointed as his Associate Major. The young people of his own district who had gathered to him at Xiapi were all willing to follow him, and he also called up travelling merchants and trained soldiers from the region of the Huai and Si rivers; and in this way he collected more than a thousand men. He joined Zhu Jun's army for the fighting, and wherever he faced he was always in the lead.

PC quotes *Wu shu*:

In following up a success, Sun Jian had gone a long way in advance when his party had the worst of a skirmish at Xihua. Sun Jian was wounded and fell from his horse and he was lying among some bushes, while the men of his command were divided and scattered and did not know where he was.

The horse Sun Jian rode was a piebald, and it came fast back to the camp and fell on the ground and neighed excitedly. The officers and soldiers followed the horse to the bushes and they found Sun Jian. Sun Jian came back to the camp; and after more than ten days his wound was somewhat healed and only then did he go out to fight.

The rebels of Ru[nan] and Ying[chuan] were hard pressed and in distress and they fled to hold Wan city. Sun Jian was responsible for one side of the siege; he climbed the walls and was first to get in. The soldiers swarmed after him like ants, and as a result they completely defeated the enemy. Zhu Jun wrote a full report for the emperor, and Sun Jian was promoted to be a Senior Major.

PC quotes *Xu Han shu* ["Continued History of Han" by Sima Biao (c. 240-c.306):

Zhu Jun had the style Gongwei, and he came from Kuaiji. When he was young he loved learning, and he became Officer of Merit in his commandery; he was examined as Filial and Incorrupt and recommended as a *Jinshi* [RdeC notes: this last is a false anachronism]. Because of his good work against the Yellow Turbans, the Han court named him General of Chariots and Cavalry and he was later transferred to be Intendant of Henan. Dong Zhuo saw Zhu Jun and pretended great friendship and admiration, but he really disliked him. For his own part Zhu Jun was secretly on his guard against Dong Zhuo.

[After Dong Zhuo seized power at the capital, Luoyang, in 189] the soldiers east of the passes rose in rebellion. Dong Zhuo talked of shifting the capital [to Chang'an] but Zhu Jun always opposed him. Though Dong Zhuo was afraid of Zhu Jun, he was still anxious to have support from a man of his reputation; so he recommended his appointment as Minister Coachman, to act as his assistant.

When Zhu Jun received the imperial order, he was unwilling to accept the appointment; but he went forward and said, "The state should not be shifted; it would certainly disappoint the hopes of the empire, because it would make a reality of the rift with the east of the mountains. I do not know how that could be right".

The senior officials questioned him, "You have been called to receive an appointment and you refuse it; you were not asked about the transfer yet you discuss it. Why is this?"

Zhu Jun replied, "To assist the Chancellor of the State [Dong Zhuo], I am not worthy of that. To shift the capital is a bad plan, and I believe it is dangerous. I excuse myself from what I cannot manage, and I bring forward the matters which I consider to be important. That is the duty of a subject."

The senior officials said, "In the beginning the question of shifting the capital was not discussed and even when the idea was considered it was still not made public. How did you come to hear about it?"

Zhu Jun replied, "The Chancellor of the State Dong Zhuo told me about it, and I heard of it from the Chancellor of the State." The senior officials could have no quarrel with this, and the court praised him and respected him for it.

Zhu Jun later became Grand Commandant. When Li Jue and Guo Si fought each other [in Chang'an in 195] they kidnapped the Son of Heaven and the excellencies and ministers as hostages [against one another]. Zhu Jun was a stubborn man, and he became ill [with anger at the indignity] and so he died.

[In 184] Bian Zhang and Han Sui had rebelled in Liang province. The General of the Gentlemen of the Household Dong Zhuo faced and attacked them but had no success.

In the third year of Zhongping [186/7] the Minister of Works Zhang Wen was appointed acting General of Chariots and Cavalry and sent west to attack Bian Zhang and the others. Zhang Wen sent in a request for Sun Jian as a member of his staff. They camped at Chang'an, and Zhang Wen summoned Dong Zhuo with an imperial command. Dong Zhuo waited a long time before he came, however, and when Zhang Wen reprimanded him he answered back and would not obey.

Sun Jian was in attendance at that time, and he went forward and whispered to Zhang Wen, "Dong Zhuo has no fear that he will be punished, and so he acts proud and talks big. You should execute him by military law for failing to come in time to your summons."

"Dong Zhuo has been respected and famous in all the area between Long and Shu," replied Zhang Wen. "If we kill him now we shall have no support when our army goes to the west."

"Your Excellency is the leader of an imperial army," responded Sun Jian, "and your authority makes the empire tremble. Why must you rely on Dong Zhuo?"

"Consider what he says; he does not even pretend to courtesy towards you. He treats his superiors lightly and is without feelings of respect. This is one crime.

"Bian Zhang and Han Sui have defied the law for over a year, and now is the time we should go forward to punish the rebels. But Dong Zhuo says we must delay: he is holding up the army and is making the people uncertain. This is the second crime.

"Dong Zhuo holds an official position without getting results; he waited a long time before he answered your summons and yet he acts proudly and holds himself high. This is the third crime.

"The famous leaders of the past were given the insignia of an axe to rule their armies; none of them would hesitate to condemn a man and behead him in order to demonstrate their authority. This was the way that Sima Rangju [of the fifth century state of Qi] cut the head off [the royal favourite] Zhuang Jia and Wei Jiang [of the state of Jin in the sixth century] executed [the charioteer of] Yang Gan the brother of the ruling marquis]. Now Your Excellency shows consideration for Dong Zhuo and refrains from punishing him, but in this way you will lose and destroy the authority of the law."

Zhang Wen could not bear to take his advice, and so he said, "You should withdraw. Dong Zhuo may become suspicious." So Sun Jian got up and went out.

When Bian Zhang and Han Sui heard what a great force was coming against them the rebel group separated and scattered and all begged to surrender. The army came home, but the imperial advisers held that since they had not actually fought with the enemy, they should not receive any rewards. On the other hand, it was told how Sun Jian had enumerated Dong Zhuo's three crimes and had urged Zhang Wen to behead him, and everyone sighed with admiration. Sun Jian was appointed to be a Consultant.

RdeC notes:

This story is contradicted on a number of points by other reliable sources:

- Zhang Wen was appointed to the west in 185, not 186.
- Zhang Wen's forces gained a victory at Meiyang in Youfufeng in the winter of 185, and Dong Zhuo played a major role in that success.
- Dong Zhuo and the general Zhou Shen were then sent in pursuit of the rebels, but they were driven back and the enemy retreated west in good order. The rebellion was not put down for more than twenty years.

It seems clear that the story is false, and that the whole incident was invented by an early biographer to show Sun Jian's prescience and courage. For Dong Zhuo's own opinion and a more likely account, see PC quoting *Shanyang gong zaiji* below.

At this time [187], a rebel in Changsha named Ou Xing had styled himself a general, and with a force of over ten thousand men he attacked and laid siege to cities.

Then Sun Jian was made Grand Administrator of Changsha. Arriving at his commandery, he took personal command of his officers and soldiers, worked out a plan of attack, and within a few weeks he had defeated and destroyed Ou Xing and his followers.

PC quotes *Wei shu* [the official "History of Wei" compiled by Wang Shen (d.266)]:

When Sun Jian came to his commandery there was trembling and obedience. He appointed worthy men to office, and instructed them: "Treat good people carefully and mildly, and keep official documents according to regulations. Leave the robbers and killers to me!"

Zhou Chao and Guo Shi also led people to make a revolt in Ling[ling] and Gui[yang] and they had connection with Ou Xing. So Sun Jian left his own territory to seek them out and punish them; the three commanderies acknowledged him.

Taking account of all his good work, the Han court enfeoffed Sun Jian as Marquis of Wucheng [county in Wu commandery, in present-day Zhejiang].

PC quotes *Wu lu* ["Record of Wu" by Zhang Bo (third century)]

At this time the nephew of Lu Kang, Administrator of Lujiang, was acting as Chief of Yichun [in present-day Jiangxi]. He was attacked by bandits and sent a messenger to Sun Jian to ask for help.

As Sun Jian made ready to go to his aid, the Commandery Secretary came forward and protested. Sun Jian replied to him, however, "I have none of the civil graces; warfare is my work. If I cross the boundaries to attack some rebels, that is giving help to a neighbour. Even if I commit a crime by doing this, why should I feel any shame before the world?" So he led his army to go and help, and the bandits heard about it and fled.

RdeC notes:

In normal times, it was firm policy that the head of a commandery should keep within his borders, and was only permitted to leave them when under the command of the provincial Inspector. Sun Jian was thus disobeying standard practice, and the fact that this was condoned and even rewarded is a sign of troubled times.

[In 189] Emperor Ling died. Dong Zhuo took over the government of the court and acted as a tyrant in the capital. [In 190] all the rulers of provinces and commanderies raised loyal troops to punish him.

PC quotes *Jiangbiao zhuan*:

When Sun Jian heard of this, he beat his breast and said with a sigh, "If Lord Zhang had taken my advice earlier, the court would not have this trouble now."

Sun Jian also raised troops. Wang Rui, the Inspector of Jing province, had met Sun Jian before and had treated him without courtesy. Sun Jian passed his way and killed him.

PC notes that *Wangshi pu* ["Register of the Wang Clan"] says Wang Rui had the style Tongyao and that he was the paternal uncle of Wang Xiang, who became Grand Guardian under the Jin dynasty [in the third century].

PC quotes *Wu lu*:

Wang Rui had been with Sun Jian before, at the time of the attack on the rebels in Ling[ling] and Gui[yang]; and because Sun Jian held a military appointment he had spoken somewhat scornfully of him.

Wang Rui had an earlier disagreement with Cao Yin the Administrator of Wuling, and so when he raised troops to attack Dong Zhuo he announced that he would first kill Cao Yin. Cao Yin was frightened, and he forged an order as if from the Household Grandee Wen Yi, acting as an officer of investigation, and he sent it to Sun Jian. The document set out Wang Rui's crimes and wrongdoing, and ordered Sun Jian to arrest and execute him, then submit a

report. As soon as Sun Jian received the order he led his soldiers to attack Wang Rui.

When Wang Rui heard that soldiers had come he climbed a tower to look out and sent to ask what they wanted. Sun Jian's advance party replied, "Our men have been suffering the toil of fighting and labour for a long time and the rewards they have received are not enough to keep them in clothing. They have come to you, sir, just to beg for a grant."

"How could I be mean about this?" replied Wang Rui. He opened up his storehouses, and gave permission for the men to go in and see for themselves that nothing was kept back.

As the soldiers came forward to the foot of the tower, however, Wang Rui saw Sun Jian. He was frightened and said, "The soldiers may want their rewards, but why is Magistrate Sun with them?"

"I have been given an order for your execution," answered Sun Jian.

"What have I done wrong?" asked Wang Rui.

"I do not know [or care]," replied Sun Jian [*or* "You just don't understand things."]

In utmost distress, Wang Rui scraped gold and drank it and died.

RdeC notes: There are a number of accounts in Chinese records of people killing themselves by taking gold, though the metal in fact is not poisonous [*e.g.* gold fillings in teeth]. Either the substance was a false gold, such as Tellurium, or an alloy, or else the taking of gold was a gesture, followed by something more practical, like *hara kiri*.

By the time Sun Jian reached [Wan city, the capital of] Nanyang, his forces numbered several ten thousand men. When the Administrator Zhang Zi heard that the army had come, he appeared to be at ease.

PC quotes [*Hanmo*] *yingxiong ji* ["Records of the Heroes and Champions at the end of Han" by Wang Can (177-217)]:

Zhang Zi had the style Ziyi and came from Yingchuan. He too was a famous man.

PC quotes *Xiandi chunqiu*:

Yuan Shu had recommended Sun Jian as a provisional General of the Household, and when he came to Nanyang he asked the Administrator to provide supplies for his army. Zhang Zi asked his officials, but they said, "Sun Jian is an officer in charge of the neighbouring commandery. You should not give him any provisions." So Zhang Zi did not grant him the supplies.

RdeC notes: A man of old official family, Yuan Shu was one of the leaders of the "loyal rebellion" against Dong Zhuo, holding command on the south-eastern front against Luoyang. As a general officer, Sun Jian was entitled to obtain supplies. By refusing to provide them, Zhang Zi denied Sun Jian's new status and considered him only as a commandery official who was out of his territory. In effect, he was rejecting the legitimacy of Yuan Shu's appointment and thus opposing the rebellion against Dong Zhuo.

Xiandi chunqiu continues:

Sun Jian presented oxen and wine to Zhang Zi and on the following day Zhang Zi returned the visit to Sun Jian. When they had drunk, the Commandery Secretary of Changsha [Sun Jian's subordinate] came in and reported that, "We gave notice to Nanyang, but I find that the roads have not been prepared and there are no supplies forthcoming. I request that the Commandery Secretary [of

Nanyang] be arrested and questioned about the reasons." Zhang Zi was frightened and wanted to escape; but there were soldiers drawn up on all four sides and he could not get away.

After a short time the Commandery Secretary of Changsha came in again and reported that, "The Administrator of Nanyang has delayed and obstructed the loyal troops and has allowed rebels to escape their due punishments. I ask that he be arrested and sent out to be dealt with according to military law." So Zhang Zi was led away to the gates of the camp and his head was cut off.

In the commandery there was fear and trembling, and they were given everything they asked for.

PC quotes *Wu li*:

Before this, when Sun Jian came to Nanyang Zhang Zi would not give supplies for the army and he was not willing even to see Sun Jian.

Sun Jian wanted to take his soldiers forward, but he was afraid [Zhang Zi] might cause trouble behind him. He pretended, therefore, to be extremely sick. All the army was frightened, and they sent out for sorcerers and doctors and prayed to the mountains and the rivers.

Then Sun Jian sent a man he trusted to tell Zhang Zi that he was desperately ill, and wanted to hand over his soldiers. When Zhang Zi heard this he was eager to have the men, and he led five or six hundred horsemen and foot-soldiers to go to the camp to see Sun Jian. Sun Jian met him lying down; but then he suddenly jumped up and grabbed his sword. He swore at Zhang Zi and then cut his head off.'

PC says: This is not the same story as the one in the biography.

Sun Jian then went forward to Luyang [present-day Lushan in Henan] and met with Yuan Shu, and Yuan Shu recommended Sun Jian as acting General Who Routs the Caitiffs and Inspector of Yu province. He set his army headquarters at Luyang city.

RdeC notes: As discussed above, a general's command gave Sun Jian broad military authority, while an Inspector was entitled to raise troops from his province.

As he prepared to take his army forward against Dong Zhuo, Sun Jian named his Chief Clerk Gongchou Cheng as Attendant Official in Command of Troops, and sent him back to the province to attend to supplies.

Sun Jian set tents outside the eastern gate of the city and held sacrifice and feasting to farewell Gongchou Cheng on his journey. All his officers were there.

Dong Zhuo sent tens of thousands of foot-soldiers and horsemen against Sun Jian, and several tens of light-armed horsemen came up first. Just at that time, Sun Jian was passing the wine and talking and laughing, but he gave orders to draw up his divisions and everything was arranged without fuss. Later, as more horsemen began to arrive, he leisurely left his seat to lead his men back into the city. Then he explained to his attendants: "Beforehand, the only reason I didn't get up straight away was that I was afraid the soldiers would rush and trample one another, and you would not have been able to get in." When Dong Zhuo's soldiers saw the discipline of Sun Jian's troops they did not dare attack the city, but drew off and went back.

PC quotes [*Hanmo*] *yingxiong ji*:

When Sun Jian attacked Dong Zhuo, he came to Yangren in Liang county [by present-day Linru in Henan]. Dong Zhuo sent more troops against him, five thousand foot-soldiers and horsemen. Hu Zhen the Administrator of Chen commandery was in over-all command, Lü Bu was in charge of the cavalry, and

there were a great number of generals and colonels and controllers of foot-soldiers and cavalry beside.

Hu Zhen had the style Wencai. An impetuous man, he announced that, "On this campaign the only thing is to take the head of one man with a black ribbon [*i.e.* Sun Jian, whose insignia as a general was a black ribbon for his seal]. Then we shall keep order." His officers heard this and disapproved.

The army came by nightfall to Guangcheng, a few score *li* from Yangren [a Han *li* was about half a kilometre or one third of a mile]. The soldiers and their horses were extremely tired and ready to stop. Dong Zhuo's orders, moreover, had been to stop at Guangcheng to drink and eat and feed the horses, then to take the army forward during the night and attack Yangren at dawn. All the officers, however, disliked and feared Hu Zhen, and they wanted to spoil his plans.

Lü Bu and some others claimed that, "The enemy have already fled from Yangren, and we should go in chase of them. We mustn't miss this chance." Hu Zhen accordingly brought the army forward by night, but the guard at [Yangren] was fully prepared and was not taken by surprise.

By this time, however, [Hu Zhen's] officers and men were hungry and thirsty, while both men and horses were extremely tired. Since they had come during the night there were no walls or palisades, and they put their shields aside and lay down to rest. Then Lü Bu made another announcement, to frighten his own men, saying "The enemy in the city are coming out!" The whole army fell into confusion and fled, leaving their shields and abandoning their saddles and their horses. They ran for more than ten *li*, and then found out that there was no enemy.

When day came they went back and collected their weapons and equipment and they thought again of going to attack the city. The guard on the city, however, was still more secure, and the moat round the city was already dug deep. Hu Zhen and his forces could not attack, and so they withdrew.'

Sun Jian moved his camp to the east of Liang. Dong Zhuo's army made a great attack on him. With a few dozen horsemen, Sun Jian broke through the ring and escaped. He usually wore a red woolen turban; and he took it off and ordered Zu Mao, a leader of his Companions, to wear it. All Dong Zhuo's cavalry chased after Zu Mao and Sun Jian got away by side-roads.

Zu Mao was surrounded and hard pressed, but he got down from his horse and took off the cap and put it on a burnt stick in a grave-mound, and then he hid in some bushes. Dong Zhuo's horsemen saw it from the distance and they surrounded the place in several rings. When they came close they realized that it was a stick, and so they went off.

Sun Jian gathered his men again and he joined battle at Yangren. They completely defeated Dong Zhuo's army, taking the heads of the Chief Controller Hua Xiong and others.

At this time some people who made trouble between Sun Jian and Yuan Shu. Yuan Shu became suspicious and did not send up the supplies for the army.

PC quotes *Jiangbiao zhuan*:

Someone said to Yuan Shu, "If Sun Jian captures Luoyang you will not be able to keep him under control. This is like driving a wolf away and getting a tiger instead." So Yuan Shu became suspicious of Sun Jian.'

Yangren is over a hundred *li* from Luyang, but Sun Jian rode fast by night to see Yuan Shu. He drew on the ground to show his plans and he said, "Above I am attacking a rebel for the Emperor, below I am giving some help in a private revenge of your house. Those are the reasons why I am in this service, without thought for my own safety. Dong Zhuo and I have no family quarrel. But you are listening to the words of liars, and so you have turned around and become suspicious of me."

RdeC notes that when the rebellion against him began Dong Zhuo had killed a large number of people of the Yuan clan who had stayed in Luoyang. This is why the Yuan had a family vendetta against him.

PC quotes *Jiangbiao zhuan*, which records Sun Jian as saying, "A great achievement is hanging in the balance, but the supplies for the army are broken off. This is what caused Wu Qi to sigh and weep in Xihe, and this is why Yue Yi had his regrets for a task that he never quite finished. I wish you would think about it carefully."

RdeC notes that both Wu Qi of Wei in the fourth century BC and Yue Yi of Yan in the third century were successful generals who were forced to take flight and abandon victorious campaigns because their rulers were unjustifiably suspicious of their loyalty.

Yuan Shu was embarrassed. He immediately sent off the supplies for the army, and Sun Jian went back to his camp.

Dong Zhuo was afraid of Sun Jian's strength and courage; so he sent his general Li Jue and some others to try to make peace and arrange a marriage alliance. He told Sun Jian to recommend his relatives for appointment as Inspector or as Grand Administrator and promised to urge that they be given office.

Sun Jian replied, "Dong Zhuo opposes Heaven and acts against the law. He has destroyed and overturned the royal house. Now, unless I kill you and all your families as a sign to all the four seas, I will not be able to die and close my eyes. How can there be peace and marriage with you?" He went forward to the Tagu Pass, ninety *li* [south] from Luoyang.

PC quotes *Shanyang gong zaiji* ["Parallel Annals of the Duke of Shanyang (the title of Emperor Xian of Han after his abdication in favour of Cao Pi, first Emperor of Wei)" by Yue Zi of the third century]:

Dong Zhuo said to his Chief Clerk Liu Ai, "The armies of the east of the passes have often been defeated and they are all afraid of me and there is nothing they can do. Only Sun Jian, the little fool, is quite good at using men. You should tell all the officers and let them know they ought to be careful of him.

"I once went with Zhou Shen on the campaign against the rebels of the west [in 185: see the note above]. When Zhou Shen was besieging Bian Zhang and Han Sui at Jincheng, I asked Zhang Wen for permission to lead my men to serve as a rearguard for Zhou Shen. Zhang Wen would not allow it. At that time I sent up a report of the situation, and I realized Zhou Shen had no chance of success. The whole story is now in the palace records.

"Before any result was known, Wen sent me off to attack the rebel Qiang of Xianlian. He thought that all the west could be settled peacefully at the same time. I knew it would not work out, but I had no choice and so we marched. I left the Senior Major Liu Jing to command four thousand horsemen and foot-soldiers in camp at Anding to give a show of strength. The rebel Qiang withdrew. They attempted to cut my line of retreat, but I was able to open it

each time with a light attack. The reason why [this worked so easily] was that the enemy were afraid of the soldiers at Anding: they thought that Anding must have several ten thousand men, and they didn't realize that only Liu Jing was there. And at this time I sent up another report of the situation.

"Sun Jian was with Zhou Shen. He spoke to Zhou Shen and wanted to lead ten thousand men forward to Jincheng and have Zhou Shen act as an after-guard with twenty thousand men. Bian Zhang and Han Sui had no supplies of grain in the city and they would have to rely on provisions from outside. They would have been afraid of Zhou Shen's great force and would not have dared hurry into a fight with Sun Jian, while Sun Jian's soldiers would have been enough to cut their line of supply.

"If those officers had used [my plan and that of Sun Jian] then the Qiang would certainly have been driven back into their valleys, and perhaps Liang province could have been settled. But just as Zhang Wen could not use me, so Zhou Shen could not use Sun Jian. He attacked Jincheng himself and after he had destroyed their outer defences he sent a messenger post-haste to tell Zhang Wen that he expected to defeat the rebels almost immediately. At that time Zhang Wen also believed that his plans had succeeded.

"As it happened, however, the men of the borders [Bian Zhang and his forces] broke [the lines of supply for Zhou Shen's army at] Caiyuan, and Zhou Shen abandoned his baggage and fled. So everything happened just as I had said it would, and it was on account of this affair that the court enfeoffed me as the marquis of a chief district.

"As an Associate Major, Sun Jian could see as I did, and I admire him for that."

"Though Sun Jian could appreciate the planning at that time," observed Liu Ai, "he is not in fact as good as Li Jue or Guo Si. I have heard that when he was north of Meiyang village he was leading a thousand horsemen and foot-soldiers and came to fight with some rebels. He was almost killed, and he lost his seal and tassel in his flight. This is not impressive."

"On that occasion," replied Dong Zhuo, "Sun Jian had a flock of irregulars, and his soldiers weren't as good as the rebels. In any case, war has its ups and downs. If you consider the general picture east of the mountains, there is really no-one who measures up to him."

"The fellows the east of the mountains are using common people for their rebellion," remarked Liu Ai. "Their spirit is no match for ours, not are they as experienced as our men with armour and weapons and crossbows. How can they last for long?"

"You are right," answered Dong Zhuo. "If only the two Yuan [Yuan Shu and Yuan Shao] and Liu Biao and Sun Jian were killed off, the empire could easily be brought to submit and obey me."

RdeC notes that, unlike other items of direct speech in the histories, this is possibly an authentic account of a conversation. Liu Ai was the author of *Lingdi ji* and other accounts of the time. He may well have made notes, which came later to the hands of Yue Zi.

[In 191] Dong Zhuo shifted the capital and moved west into the passes, and he set Luoyang on fire and destroyed it. So Sun Jian went forward and came to Luoyang. He repaired the imperial tombs, and he levelled out and filled in all the places Dong Zhuo had dug up.

PC quotes *Jiangbiao zhuan*:

The former capital was deserted, and for several hundred *li* there was no smoke or fire [from a house that was lived in]. As Sun Jian came forward into the city, he wept for grief.

PC quotes *Wu shu*:

When Sun Jian came to Luoyang he cleared out the imperial temples of Han and held a great sacrifice.

He camped his army to the south of the city. In the morning there was a light of many colours above the well of the pottery office; all the men were startled and afraid, and not one dared to draw water. Sun Jian ordered a man to go into the well, and he discovered the Great Seal of State of Han. It had an inscription which said: "For the one who receives the mandate from Heaven; may he live long and prosper forever." It was four inches all round; on the top there was a ring of five dragons intertwined. One corner had broken off the top.

Before this, the Attendant at the Yellow Gates Zhang Rang and others had caused trouble, and they kidnapped the Emperor and fled away. [The Emperor's] attendants scattered and the man in charge of the seal dropped it into the well.'

PC quotes *Shanyang gong zaiji*:

Yuan Shu planned to usurp the imperial title. When he heard that Sun Jian had the Great Seal of State he held Sun Jian's wife and took the seal.'

PC quotes *Jiangbiao zhuan*:

The *Han Xiandi qijuzhu* ["Diaries of Activity and Repose of Emperor Xian of Han": the official records of the dynasty, compiled day to day by the court historians] says that "When the Son of Heaven came back from the Yellow River, the six seals were found in the harem apartments."

RdeC notes that this refers to the occasion on 189 when the future Emperor Xian and his short-lived elder brother were kidnapped by the palace eunuchs. They were chased and brought back, and then fell into the hands of Dong Zhuo.

Moreover, at the beginning of the Taikang period Sun Hao [surrendered to the Jin and] handed over six seals of gold; none of them were jade. It is clear that these were false.

RdeC notes that Sun Hao was the last ruler of the state of Wu, founded by Sun Jian's son Sun Quan and defeated by Sima Yan, Emperor of Jin, in 280.

PC quotes *Zhilin* ["The Forest of Records"] by Yu Xi (fourth century):

The six imperial seals had the following inscriptions: "The seal of the Emperor," "The seal of action of the Emperor," "The seal of credence of the Emperor," "The seal of the Son of Heaven," "The seal of action of the Son of Heaven," and "The seal of credence of the Son of Heaven." Each of the six seals was used for a different purpose, so their inscriptions were not the same. When the *Xiandi qijuzhu* says that "The Son of Heaven came back from the Yellow River, and the six seals were found in the harem apartments", these are what he was talking about.

The Great Seal of State, however, is the seal of the Qin emperors that [the founding] Emperor Gao of Han wore at his waist. It was handed down from generation to generation and was known as *Chuanguo Xi* [Seal Which Transmits the State]. Note that the Great Seal of State was not counted among the six seals, so how can we discuss them in the same category?

The *Hanguan* [*yi*: "Ceremonial of Han Offices"] of Ying Shao (d.c.200) and the [*Diwang*] *shiji* ["Annals by Generations of Emperors and Kings"] by Huangfu Mi (215-282) both discuss the six seals and their descriptions agree.

According to *Hanguan* [yi], the Great Seal of State had the inscription "For the one who receives the mandate from Heaven, may he live long and prosper". The two phrases "and prosper [*qiekang*]" and "and prosper forever [*yongchang*]" are confused; we cannot tell which of the two versions is correct.

Gold and jade in their pure state each have a light of their own, and if they are in the form of a sacred object or a mysterious treasure then they would shine still more brightly. This is the remarkable sight of the age and will become a great tale for future times. To call something false just because it cannot be explained, that is surely going too far.

When Chen Shou wrote the *Polu zhuan* [i.e. this biography of Sun Jian, the General who Routs the Caitiffs (*polu*)], he left out this story. He was evidently doubtful of the [account in the *Xiandi*] *qijuzhu*. He did not realize that the six seals were quite different, and that the Great Seal of the State was a seventh seal.

During the time of the Wu [state founded by the Sun family], there was no one who was good at carving jade, and so the emperors used gold for their seals, but though the seals were made of gold there was no difference in the inscriptions. When Wu surrendered and handed over the seals, they handed over the six seals of the emperors. The jade seal which [Sun Jian] had obtained earlier, however, and which had been left by the men of the past, was unfit for use. Anyone who finds it difficult to explain the fact of the missing seal simply does not understand this point.

PC says:

Your servant Pei Songzhi observes that Sun Jian received the highest praise for the strongest loyalty among those who rose up for the right [against Dong Zhuo]. If, however, he came by one of the sacred objects of the Han and hid it away and made no mention of it, then he must have cherished thoughts of rebellion. How could he have been called a loyal subject?

The historians of Wu wanted to keep the seal as the glory of their state, but they did not realize that by doing so they injured Sun Jian's good name. If he really acted like this [and took the seal] and handed it on to his children and descendants then even if it was not one of the six seals it was still something that an ordinary man should not keep. It cannot be that when Sun Hao surrendered he handed over only the six seals and kept back the Great Seal of State. What good would a seal of "Receiving the Mandate of Heaven" do in a house of one who had surrendered?

If what Yu Xi says is true, then this seal would still be with the Sun family. If an ordinary fellow kept a jade *bi*-ring [insignia of rank], that would be called a crime; what could one say about this!

RdeC notes that until his last paragraph Yu Xi's discussion seems straightforward and correct. Then, however, he appears to accept the story that Sun Jian kept the seal and that his descendants did not give it up. There is no good evidence for this, and Pei Songzhi's comments are therefore unnecessary.

According to *Shanyang gong zaiji*, however, Yuan Shu took the seal from Sun Jian soon after it was found, and other texts tell how it was returned to the Han court controlled by Cao Cao after Yuan Shu's death in 199. Thereafter it is said to have been transferred to Cao Pi, first Emperor of Wei, and then to Sima Yan, first Emperor of Jin. It appears to have been finally lost when the city of Luoyang was sacked by the Xiongnu chieftain Liu Cong in 311.

It is possible Sun Jian's discovery was in some way faked, but it is doubtful he had the time to prepare a forgery. The disagreement on the

inscription may be accounted for by the fact that neither Wei Zhao, compiler of *Wu shu*, nor Yi Xi ever saw the Seal: Wei Zhao died as a subject of Wu when the Seal was in the hands of the rival Jin dynasty, and Yu Xi lived after the Seal had been lost at Luoyang.

The complex history of the Seal is discussed in de Crespigny, *Generals of the South*, 138-145.

When this was finished, he drew back his army and stayed at Lu-yang.

PC quotes *Wu lu*:

At this time the rulers of the provinces and commanderies east of the passes were all anxious to take one another over and so make themselves great and powerful. Yuan Shao sent Zhou Yu of Kuaiji as Inspector of Yu province to make a surprise attack and seize the territory [from Sun Jian, who was Inspector of Yu province under Yuan Shao's cousin Yuan Shu].

Sun Jian was sad and he sighed and said, "Together we have raised loyal troops, intending to bring help to the nation. The rebels and bandits are almost destroyed, and yet each can act like this. Whom shall I work with?" As he spoke he wept.

Zhou Yu had the style Renming. He was a younger brother of Chou Xin [who was later killed by Sun Jian's son Sun Ce].

PC quotes *Kuaiji dianlu* "Authoritative Record of Kuaiji" by Yu Yu (fourth century):

Before this, when Lord Cao [Cao] was raising loyal troops [against Dong Zhuo in 190], he sent a man to invite Zhou Yu. So Zhou Yu recruited men, obtained two thousand soldiers, and joined his campaigns. He was made Master of the Army [probably a staff position].

Later he fought Sun Jian for Yu province, but he had the worst of it in several engagements. About this time his brother Zhou Ang [who was younger than Xin but older than Yu], then Administrator of Jiujiang, was attacked by Yuan Shu. Zhou Yu went to help him, but his army was defeated and he returned to his home country. He was killed by Xu Gong.

In the third year of Chuping [192/193: but see RdeC note below] Yuan Shu sent Sun Jian to attack Liu Biao in Jing province. Liu Biao sent Huang Zu to oppose Sun Jian between Fan and Deng [by present-day Xiangfan north of the Han River]. Sun Jian defeated Huang Zu, pursued him across the Han River and then surrounded Xiangyang. He was shot and killed by a soldier of Huang Zu's army as he rode without an escort to Xianshan [a ridge of hills south of Xiangyang].

PC quotes *Dian lue* ["Authoritative Account" by Yu Huan of Wei (third century)]

Sun Jian attacked Liu Biao [inside Xiangyang] with all his army. Liu Biao held the gates and sent his officer Huang Zu to make a surprise sortie during the night. When Huang Zu tried to bring his soldiers back [into the city] Sun Jian fought to keep him out. Huang Zu was defeated and went to hide in Xianshan, and Sun Jian followed up his victory and chased after Zu in the night. A soldier of Huang Zu's command hid in a grove of bamboos and shot Sun Jian and killed him.

PC quotes *Wu lu*:

At this time Sun Jian was thirty-seven.

PC quotes [*Hanmo*] *yingxiong ji*:

Sun Jian died on the seventh day of the first month of the fourth year of Chuping [193].

PC quotes [*Hanmo*] *yingxiong ji*:

Liu Biao's officer Lu Gong led soldiers to climb the hills and fight with Sun Jian. Sun Jian led light-armed horsemen into the hills to find Lu Gong and attack him. Lu Gong's men hurled down rocks and Sun Jian was hit on the head; at once his brains spilt out and he died.

PC observes that "There are obviously two different stories."

RdeC notes that the accounts of how Sun Jian met his death vary, but the general outline of the action is reasonably clear.

There is, on the other hand, considerable disagreement about the date. The balance of evidence and the context of events, however, indicate that the campaign took place and Sun Jian was killed in the winter of Chuping 2, 191/192. He was therefore born in 155.

Sun Ben, son of Sun Jian's elder brother, took command of the army and went [back] to Yuan Shu. Yuan Shu made a new recommendation that Sun Ben become Inspector of Yu province [but without the general's rank which Sun Jian had held].

Sun Jian had four sons: Ce, Quan, Yi and Kuang. When Sun Quan took the imperial title he gave Sun Jian the posthumous appellation of Martial and Brave Emperor [*Wulie huangdi*].

PC quotes *Wu lu*:

Sun Jian was honoured with the temple name of "First Founder" and his burial place was called Gaoling.

RdeC notes that Sun Jian's body had been captured by the enemy, but Liu Biao permitted his client Huan Jie to take it back to his family. The "High Mound" tomb was at Qu'a in Danyang, present-day Danyang in Jiangsu.

PC quotes *Zhi lin*:

Sun Jian had five sons: Ce, Quan, Yi and Kuang were borne by his wife of the Wu clan. His youngest son Lang was borne by a concubine; Sun Lang had the second personal name of Ren.

RdeC notes that Sun Jian also had at least three daughters, one by the Lady Wu and two by different concubines.