The Reunification of China

The Song dynasty (960–1279) has been characterized by its preeminent civil culture and military weakness. This ground-breaking work demonstrates that the civil dominance of the eleventh century was the product of a half century of continuous warfare and ruthless political infighting. The spectacular culture of the eleventh century, one of the high points in Chinese history, was built on the bloody foundation of the conquests of the tenth century. Peter Lorge examines how, rather than a planned and inevitable reunification of the Chinese empire, the foundation of the Song was an uncertain undertaking, dependent upon highly contingent battles, both military and political, whose outcome was always in doubt. Song civil culture grew out of the successful military campaigns that created the dynasty and, as the need for war and armies diminished, the need for civil officials grew. The Song dynasty’s successful waging of war led ultimately to peace.

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The Reunification of China

Peace through War under the Song Dynasty

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