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The Making of Song Dynasty History

Sources and Narratives, 960–1279 CE

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In this ambitious work of political and intellectual history, Charles Hartman surveys the major sources that survive as vestiges of the official dynastic historiography of the Chinese Song dynasty (960–1279). Analyzing the narratives that emerge from these sources as products of Song political discourse, Hartman offers a thorough introduction to the texts and the political circumstances surrounding their compilation. Distilling from these sources a 'grand allegory of Song history', he argues that the narratives embedded within reflect tension between a Confucian model of political institutionalism and the Song court's preference for a non-sectarian, technocratic model. Fundamentally rethinking the corpus of texts that have formed the basis of our understanding of the Song and of imperial China more broadly, this far-reaching account of historiographical process and knowledge production illuminates the relationship between official history writing and political struggle in China.

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'The Making of Song Dynasty History is a masterwork of history and historiography. Meticulously researched, closely argued, and studded with sparkling gems on the workings of Song institutions and the lives of historical figures, Hartman's grand narrative reveals in exquisite detail how contemporaneous historical and political developments shaped the writing of Song history. This is a book that every Song historian will want – and need – to read.'

Beverly Bossler, *University of California, Davis*



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