RECRUITMENT REVISITED

THE COMMISSIONED CIVIL SERVICE OF LATER HAN*

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Summary

Though the imperial service of Later Han employed some 150,000 men, the majority held only junior rank, in secretarial and technical posts or low-level positions in the police and the military. High office was reserved for those with an imperial commission, on which basis they could rise to power and authority. This paper [2] discusses how such commissions were obtained, and the processes which recruited officials and ensured support for the government among the leading classes of the empire.

Most men who received commissions were recommended by the officials in charge of their local communities, and were subject to a period of probation at the capital before receiving a substantive post. Few reached high position through the Imperial University.

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Common sources and abbreviations:

DHHY: *Dong Han huiyao* 東漢會要 by Xu Tianlin 徐天麟 (Song); Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 1955

HHS: *Hou Han shu* 後漢書; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 1965

Annals 本紀 [10 *juan*] and *liezhuan* 列傳 [80 *juan*] by Fan Ye 范曄 (396-446), with commentary compiled under the auspices of Li Xian 李賢, Heir of Tang 章懷太子 (651-684);

Treatises 志 [30 *juan*] taken from the *Xu Han shu* 續漢書 of Sima Biao 司馬彪 (third century) [see also below], with commentary by Liu Zhao 劉昭 (sixth century)

HHSJJ: *Hou Han shu jijie* 集解 compiled by Wang Xianqian 王先謙 and others, with additional comments *jiaobu* 校補 to each chapter; in the *Wanyou wenku* 萬有文庫 edition of the Commercial Press, Shanghai

HS: *Han shu* 漢書 by Ban Gu 班固 (32-92) and others, with commentary by Yan Shigu 顏師古 (581-645) and others; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 1962

QJHHS: *Qijia Hou Han shu* 七家後漢書 compiled by Wang Wentai 汪文; Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe 1974

SGZ: *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 by Chen Shou 陳壽 (233-297), with official commentary compiled by Pei Songzhi 裴松之 (372-451); Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 1959

XHS: *Xu Han shu* 續漢書 by Sima Biao 司馬彪; in *QJHHS*

1. Introduction

In the 20s and 30s AD Liu Xiu 劉秀, Emperor Guangwu 光武 of Later Han, took control of the empire of his ancestors after the civil war that followed the fall of the usurper Wang Mang 王莽. The new regime relied heavily upon the past: Qin and Former Han had developed effective techniques for ruling the vast state, and by the end of the first century BC, even allowing for vagaries introduced by the idealistic Wang Mang, there was a tested model of imperial government. Guangwu simplified some matters and decentralised part of the administration, but the restored regime followed many traditions of its long-lived predecessor.

In similar fashion and on the basis of experience, Later Han had a well-formed system of recruitment, choosing competent men to serve the state from among groups whose involvement was valuable to the regime.

Forty years ago I offered a preliminary account of the system,¹ but there has since been further debate. In the chapter on "Civil Service Recruitment" in his most valuable study of Han bureaucracy, Hans Bielenstein argued against some points I made,² and his criticisms [3] must be acknowledged. More recently, Michael Loewe has considered

¹ Rafe de Crespigny [abbreviated hereafter as deC], "The Recruitment System of the Imperial Bureaucracy of Later Han," in *The Chung Chi Journal* 6.1 (Hong Kong, November 1966): 67-78; now online at <http://hkjo.lib.hku.hk/archive/files/8d26b82330175566e6cba742d11c3912.pdf> [accessed December 2018]; cited as "Recruitment System."

I must also mention the valuable article by Han Fu-chih 韓復智, "*Dong-Han de xuanju*" 東漢的選舉 [Selection under Later Han], in *Bulletin of the Department of History, National Taiwan University* 國立台灣大學歷史學系學報 4 (1977), 13-34.

² Hans Bielenstein, *The Bureaucracy of Han Times* (Cambridge UP, 1980) [hereafter *Bureaucracy*], 132-42.

In rendering Han official titles, Bielenstein follows the system developed by Homer H Dubs in his *The History of the Former Han Dynasty* by Pan Ku [HFHD] 3 volumes, (Baltimore: Waverly Press, 1938-1955); *Bureaucracy*, 207-240, sets out a full list. I largely follow these principles, but have made some amendments for the sake of brevity: rendering the *taishou* 太守 of a commandery as Administrator rather than Grand Administrator; or clarity: identifying each of the Nine Ministers (九卿 *jiuqing*) with that title as part of the rendering: thus *guanglu xun* 光祿勳 is Minister of the Household rather than Superintendent of the Household. Where the variation is considerable, I also give Bielenstein's version.

"The First Steps to Office," and though he is primarily concerned with Former Han he gives an excellent description of the developing system which its successor would follow.³ It seems appropriate, therefore, to consider once more the means by which the rulers of Later Han obtained men for their service.

Since the active government of the dynasty lasted more than a century and a half, from the time of Emperor Guangwu until the collapse into civil war in 190, it is natural that policies changed over time, and there were debates and experiments. I discuss some details below, but the chief purpose of the present work is to offer a general picture of the procedures for recruitment of senior officials.

2. *Major sources*

The first part of the Table of the Hundred Officials, Excellencies and Ministers (百官公卿表 *boguan gongqing biao*) of *Han shu* [HS 17A] lists the major offices of Former Han, but the Treatise of Officials (百官志 *boguan zhi*) of *Hou Han shu* is far more comprehensive. The treatises were originally compiled by Sima Biao for his *Xu Han shu* in the late third century, but the sixth-century commentator Liu Zhao attached them to the Annals and Biographies of the *Hou Han shu* compiled [4] by Fan Ye in the early fifth century, and the incorporation has been accepted ever since. The Treatise of Officials occupies five chapters of the combined work [HHS 114/24-118/28].⁴

Bielenstein claims that Sima Biao based his Treatise upon material from the mid-second century AD, and describes it as "a contemporary Han document and consequently of the greatest historical value." Following a detailed analysis of the text, however, Mansvelt Beck is less enthusiastic: he identifies it as a later compilation, using some contemporary material such as the Tables of the Hundred Officials (百官表 *boguan biao*) from *Dongguan Hanji* 東觀漢記, an official compilation of the mid-second century; frequently forced, however,

³ Michael Loewe, *The Men Who Governed Han China: companion to A Biographical Dictionary of the Qin, Former Han and Xin Periods* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 109-154.

⁴ On the historiography of the Treatises and their entry into *Hou Han shu*, see Bielenstein, *The Restoration of the Han Dynasty* [RHD] I, in *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* [BMFEA] 26 (Stockholm, 1954), 12-17, also his *Bureaucracy*, 1-2, and B J Mansvelt Beck, *The Treatises of Later Han: their author, sources, contents and place in Chinese historiography* (Leiden: Brill 1990), 5-35.

into an artificial simplification by Sima Biao's own theories and prejudices.⁵

Beside the Treatise, there are fragments of other works from Later Han, notably an anonymous *Hanguan* 漢官 "Han Offices," the *Hanguan jiegou* 漢官解詁 "Explanatory Notes to Han Offices" of Hu Guang 胡廣 (91-172), the *Hanguan dianzhi yishi xuanyong* 漢官典職儀式選用 "Administrative Observances of the Han Official System Selected for Use" by Cai Zhi 蔡質 (fl. 175), and Ying Shao's 應劭 (fl. 200) *Hanguan yi* 漢官儀 "Ceremonial of Han Offices," *Hanguan zhu* 漢官注 "Notes on Han Offices," *Hanguan liyi gushi* 漢官禮儀故事 "Ceremonial Precedents for Han Offices" and *Fengsu tongyi* 風俗通義 "A Compendium of Popular Customs."⁶

Besides these theoretical sources, the Annals and *liezhuan* of *Hou Han shu* and other histories, and some inscriptions from stele, provide incidental information both on official policy and about the routes by which men rose to authority.[5] In particular, the Annals of *HHS* 1-9 provide a complete account of the highest officials of the bureaucracy.⁷

Accounts of regular ministers and those of lesser rank are incomplete and often confused, however, while biographical texts and inscriptions must be treated with caution.⁸ Firstly, a man's career is

⁵ Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 2; Mansvelt Beck, *Treatises*, 196-226.

⁶ *Hanguan*, *Hanguan jiegou* and *Hanguan dianzhi yishi xuanyong*, with *Hanguan yi*, *Hanguan zhu* and *Hanguan liyi gushi*, are collected in *Hanguan liuzhong* 漢官六種, in the *Sibu beiyao* 四部備要 collection. *Fengsu tongyi* is published by the Centre Franco-chinois d'Études sinologiques, Publication 3 (Paris, 1943).

⁷ The Three Excellencies (三公 *sangong*) of Later Han, highest officials of the regular bureaucracy, were the Grand Commandant (太尉 *taiwei*), the Excellency over the Masses (司徒 *situ*: Minister over the Masses), and the Excellency of Works (司空 *sikong*: Minister of Works).

At the beginning of each reign, moreover, a Grand Tutor (太傅 *taifu*) was appointed with position above the Excellencies; the office was not normally renewed after the incumbent's death: *HHS* 114/24:3556; Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 5-7). And at some periods, notably in the second century AD, a senior member of the imperial consort family might be appointed General-in-Chief (大將軍 *da jiangjun*) with rank equal to or above the Excellencies.

HHS 1-9 lists all appointments, dismissals, resignations and deaths of the Three Excellencies, together with those relating to Grand Tutors and Generals-in-Chief holding authority for a regent Dowager (皇太后 *huang taihou*).

⁸ Examples of conflict, confusion and potential error are provided by Bielenstein, "Later Han Inscriptions and Dynastic Biographies: a historiographical compari-

seldom covered in detail, so we cannot assume that if one office is listed after another there were no intervening appointments. Second, it is not always easy to tell whether an item is presented as part of normal procedure, or whether it was considered exceptional and recorded for that reason. Above all, we must recognise that our sources are limited.⁹

3. *Commissioned officials and other ranks*

The *Tongdian* 通典 encyclopaedia compiled by Du You 杜佑 of Tang gives a figure of 152,986 for the total number of men in [6] the imperial bureaucracy of Later Han,¹⁰ divided into the following categories:

Senior civil and military officials (文武官 *wenwu guan*):

at the capital 內	1,055
in the provinces 外	<u>6,512</u>
Subtotal:	7,567

Other civil and military officers (職掌人 *zhichang ren*):

at the capital 內	14,225
in the provinces 外	<u>131,194</u>
Subtotal:	145,419

Though the total is supported by a near-contemporary estimate for the end of Former Han,¹¹ it is difficult to assess such statements, particularly as *Tongdian* is dated seven or eight hundred years after Han

son," in *Proceedings of the International Conference on Sinology, Section on History and Archaeology* (Taipei: Academia Sinica 1981), 571-586.

⁹ We must also be aware that a number of phrases used in the process of recruitment and commissioning appear in other contexts, quite distinct. Important examples are the terms *chaju* 察舉 [see note 21 below], *gaodi* 高第 "First Class" [page 28] and *shouling* 守令 [note 103], and the titles Expectant Appointee [notes 32 and 69] and Member of the Suite of the Heir [page 12].

¹⁰ *Shitong* 十通 edition (Shanghai: Commercial Press 1935), in *Guoxue jiben congshu* 國學基本叢書 (reprinted Taipei 1962), 36:205c. The figures are discussed by Loewe, "The Records from Yinwan and the Administration of Donghai," in *Men Who Governed*, 38-88 at 71.

¹¹ The Table of Officials in *HS* 19A:743 gives the size of the civil bureaucracy of Former Han in 5 AD, from the Imperial Chancellor (丞相 *chengxiang*) to the most junior clerks, as 130,285 men, corrected from 120,285 men: Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 156 and 205 note 1, Loewe, "Records from Yinwan," 70. Though the figure is provided by Ban Gu and/or his colleagues in the first century AD, close to the time, it is suspiciously precise for such a vast category. Bielenstein and Loewe both argue, however, that this is a reasonable number for the basic control of some fifty-seven million people in a largely settled peasant society.

and no intervening documentation survives. Du You's estimates for officials at the capital, moreover, may be too small a proportion of the whole. Bielenstein has suggested that the total number of officials of all ranks at Luoyang was about 30,000,¹² while senior officials in the 105 commandery units and the 1,180 counties which existed about 140 AD,¹³ amount to fewer than [7] 3,750, a low base from which to reach 6,500. Some of the balance could have been made up by military officers stationed on the frontier, but the standing army was not large, perhaps no more than some five or six thousand of all ranks.¹⁴

Though Du You combined civilian and military officials, he counted senior ranks separately from junior. As in a modern bureaucracy, there was distinction between the clerks, troopers and *yamen* runners in the lower ranks of the service, and their superiors with executive authority. In texts of Later Han the generic term *li* 吏 "officers" is used for junior members of the civil service and, less often, *guan* 官 "officials" for their seniors. Junior office did not entail a commission in the bureaucracy, nor any expectation of such attainment by ordinary promotion. To become an imperial official, with potential to rise to the highest ranks, a man had to be recommended to the court and commissioned by the emperor.¹⁵

¹² Bielenstein, *Lo-yang in Later Han Times*, in *BMFEA* 48 (1976): 19-20; Loewe, "Records from Yinwan," 70.

¹³ I use the term commandery units to describe commanderies (郡 *jun*), kingdoms (國 *guo*) and, from the early second century, those Dependent States (屬國 *shuguo*) which were raised to rank with commanderies; all these last are listed in the Treatise of Administrative Geography 郡國志 (*junguo zhi*) at *HHS* 113/23: 3514-15, 3521 and 3530; references to the establishment of dependent states at this level appear in the Annals, *HHS* 5, at 206, 211 and 237.

County units similarly included not only regular *xian* 縣, but also "marches" (道 *dao*) controlling numbers of non-Chinese, and also the county-level fiefs of marquises (侯國 *houguo*) and the estates (邑 *yi*) of imperial princesses: *HHS* 113/23:3533. All were governed in similar fashion by officials appointed from the capital.

¹⁴ See, for example, Loewe, *Records of Han Administration [RHA]* (Cambridge UP 1967) I, 90-91, and deC, *Northern Frontier: the policies and strategy of the Later Han empire* (Australian National University, 1984), 50-52.

¹⁵ Besides the comparison with a modern bureaucracy, as above, there is analogy to the structure of a Western army, with commissioned officers, who are subject to a selection process and receive special training, being distinguished from "other ranks."

Later Han identified eighteen grades in the imperial service, ranked by salary. Highest were the Excellencies at Ten Thousand *shi* (萬石 *wanshi*) and the Nine Ministers 卿 at Fully Two Thousand *shi* (中二千石 *zhong erqian shi*); then followed officials at Two Thousand *shi* and Equivalent to (比 *bi*) Two Thousand *shi*, through One Thousand *shi* and Six Hundred *shi* (六百石 *liubo shi*) to the most junior officers, whose salaries were expressed in terms of *dou* (斗食 *doushi*), and Accessory Clerks (佐史 *zuoshi*). Actual [8] stipends could vary with time, and did not match their nominal values, but they did express a certain hierarchy.¹⁶

If we consider the manner in which men received their nominations and the positions which they occupied subsequently, the salary/rank of Six Hundred *shi* becomes significant as a base grade for commissioned officials. At the capital, officers in charge of bureaus, such as the Court Astronomer (太史令 *taishi ling*: Prefect Grand Astrologer), the Court Physician (太醫令 *taiyi ling*) and the Libationer (祭酒 *jijiu*) head of the Academicians (博士 *boshi*: Erudits) at the Imperial University (太學 *taixue*). held that rank, as did a Master of Writing (尚書 *shangshu*), head of a department of the Imperial Secretariat, and such officers as the Prefect of [the Majors at] the Gates for Official Carriages (公車[司馬]令 *gongju [sima] ling*), the commanders of the guards at the two palaces, and the men in charge of imperial tombs and parks. Among advisers at court, Palace Counsellors (太中大夫 *taizong dafu*: Grand Palace Grandee), Attendant Counsellors (中散大夫 *zhongsan dafu*) and Counsellor Remonstrants (諫議大夫 *qianyi dafu*) all ranked at Six Hundred *shi*, as did Consultants (議郎 *yilang*); this last serving often as a holding position for officials awaiting more active employment.

¹⁶ The *shi* 石 and the *dou* 斗 were measures of capacity: one *shi* was equivalent to a *hu* 斛, just under twenty litres; a *dou* was one-tenth of a *shi*: e.g. Denis Twitchett and Michael Loewe, eds, *The Cambridge History of China, volume I, The Ch'in and Han Empires 221 B.C. – A.D. 220* (Cambridge UP 1986), xxxviii.

Salaries were apparently paid half in grain and half in cash: Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 126. Bielenstein has considered the real values of the payments and, from analysis of an edict of Emperor Guangwu in 50 AD and a list dated 106 AD, he concludes that all but the lowest ranks could live on their stipends. See *Bureaucracy*, 125-131 and 193-199, citing HHS 1B:77, with supplementary text from the *Xu Han shu* of Sima Biao cited in the commentary of Li Xian, and HHS 118/28:3633 commentary of Liu Zhao quoting the *Jin boguan biao zhu* 晉百官表注 "Commentary to the Table of Officials of Jin" by Xun Chuo 荀綽 of the early fourth century.

Outside the capital, the Administrators (太守 *taishou*) of commanderies or Chancellors (相 *xiang*) of kingdoms, with executive authority over their territories, ranked at Two Thousand *shi*, but the Inspectors (刺史 *cishi*) of provinces (州 *zhou*), who could normally do no more than send reports to the throne, were [9] Six Hundred *shi*.¹⁷ The heads of counties varied: magistrates of counties with a population over ten thousand households were given title as Prefect (令 *ling*), and ranked at One Thousand or Six Hundred *shi*,¹⁸ while smaller counties had Chiefs (長 *zhang*), at Four Hundred or Three Hundred *shi*. From the sources, however, it appears that all county magistrates required some form of commission, and given their special responsibilities with defined territories this seems appropriate.

4. *Gentlemen on probation*

There were normally three stages by which a man might be chosen for commissioned office: nomination, probation and assessment. Depending upon circumstances, one or more of these could be bypassed, but the common pattern was the procedure which followed nomination from commanderies and kingdoms throughout the empire.

Each year the heads of commandery units were required to propose men as Filial and Incorrupt (孝廉 *xiaolian*: Filially Pious and Incorrupt). As candidates with this formulaic title came to the capital they were subject to preliminary assessment, then joined a corps of Gentlemen (郎 *lang*). The three civilian corps comprised the Corps for All Purposes (五官 *wuguan*), the Corps of the Left (左 *zuo*) and the Corps of the Right (右 *you*). All-Purpose, senior of the three, was reserved for mature candidates.

Formally speaking, members of these **Three Corps** (三署 *sanshu*) served as bodyguards to the emperor, both in the palace and as escorts on tour, but such duties were largely nominal or ceremonial; Gentlemen were there to be judged on character and capacity. Each Corps was headed by a General of the Household (中郎將 *zhonglang jiang*),

¹⁷ See further, however, at note 23 below.

¹⁸ *HHS* 118/28:3622 mentions only the salary of One Thousand *shi* for a Prefect, but Yen Keng-wang, *Regional and Local Administration* I.1, 217, argues that the text has omitted the lower grade.

The magistrate of a county marquisate held courtesy title as Chancellor (相 *xiang*), but his duties and powers were the same as those of a regular country; a marquis had no authority over his fief.

Equivalent to Two Thousand *shi*, responsible to the Minister of the Household (光祿勳 *guanglu xun*: Superintendent of the Imperial Household), and the Minister controlled the process of probation. [10]

There were three grades of these cadets: Gentleman of the Palace (郎中 *langzhong*), Equivalent to Three Hundred *shi*; Gentleman in Attendance (侍郎 *shilang*), Equivalent to Four Hundred *shi*; and Gentleman of the Household (中郎 *zhonglang*), Equivalent to Six Hundred *shi*. It seems likely that three years was the normal period of probation, with annual promotion by one rank, and that while numbers might change according to intake and passing out the total in the Three Corps was six or seven hundred.¹⁹

We know little about the procedures for probation and supervision, which varied over time. One assessment was based upon the Four Types of Virtuous Conduct (四行 *sixing*) or Four Virtues: Simple and Honest (質樸 *zhipu*), Sincere and Generous (敦厚 *dunhou*), Humble and Yielding (遜讓 *xunrang*) and Good Behaviour (節儉 *jiejian*). Like filial piety and incorruptibility, they represent a notional combination of attributes, but an edict of Former Han had required the Minister of the Household to grade cadets according to these qualities, and Emperor Guangwu confirmed the system. He also ordered that the Minister should nominate one man each year as [11] possessing all Four Virtues; he was immediately eligible for substantive office.²⁰

¹⁹ Some time in the 150s a memorial from the future Excellency Chen Fan 陳蕃 gave the figure as two thousand: *HHS* 66/56:2161. Chen Fan was arguing against a proposal to issue an emergency call for candidates, however, and probably exaggerated to make his point. Though he claimed to refer only to the Three Corps, he may have counted members of the other two corps of guards, the Rapid Tigers and the Feathered Forest, on which see below.

In 163 a memorial from the Excellency Yang Bing 楊秉 urged that the system whereby Reporting Officers from the various commandery units were appointed as Gentlemen [see Section 5 at 17] should be abolished: *HHS* 54/44: 1772. He gave the numbers of the Three Corps as a little over seven hundred.

We shall see in Section 5 at 14 that something under two hundred candidates would have been recommended each year from the commandery units of the empire, and an average of three years' service would have meant the Three Corps contained six hundred men who had entered by this route. Add one hundred Reporting Officers each year, and allow for wastage and early transfer to substantive appointment, and Yang Bing's figure is far more plausible than that of Chen Fan.

²⁰ The Former Han edict was issued in the spring of 43 BC: *HS* 9:287; Dubs,

An edict of Emperor An 安 in 123 ordered that Gentlemen should be examined for their understanding of the Confucian classics and their administrative ability, and could then be given substantive appointment.²¹ This placed emphasis upon [12] skill as opposed to personal qualities, but assessment of the Four Virtues continued, for three men of the second century received this commendation and became county magistrates.²²

HFHD II, 317. Guangwu's edict, dated 12 September 36, was summarised by *Hanguan mulu* 漢官目錄, now quoted in commentary to the Treatise of Officials, *HHS* 114/24:3559. It set broad policy for subsequent reigns.

On the Four Virtues, see also Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 136 and 200-201 note 24, and Dubs, *HFHD* II, 317 note 7.5, quoting *Hanguan yi* as cited in the Tang commentary to *HHS* 67/57:2204. In making his recommendation, the Minister would naturally have been guided by advice from the relevant Generals of the Household in charge of the Three Corps.

Some parts of the Virtues were also used as attributes for recommendation to office: pages 23-24 below.

²¹ *HHS* 5:237 and 79/69A:2547; Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 136. The edict says that the examination was to be given after three years, but I believe that three-year service had long been the norm; the edict was concerned with the content of the examination, and did not seek to change the length of probation.

The expression used in the edict, *chaju* 察舉, is discussed by Loewe, "First Steps," 130-131, under his section on *chalian* 察廉 "assessment of integrity;" a phrase which does not appear in *Hou Han shu*.

In the present context, *chaju* may be understood as "examination and promotion" from the position of Gentleman. The character *cha*, however, could be used separately. When Ban Biao 班彪, for example, was a clerk in the office of an Excellency in the early 50s he was recommended/examined (*cha*) as an Incorrupt Officer and became a county magistrate [see Section 7 at 20] (*HHS* 40/30A: 1329); and in 117 Hu Guang 胡廣 was *cha* by his commandery as Filial and Incorrupt (*HHS* 44/34:150).

In 132, however, when Zuo Xiong 左雄 proposed to check the quality of Filial and Incorrupt nominees before they entered the Three Corps [Section 5 at 16] he used the compound *chaju*, and an edict of 146 ordered that the sons and grandsons of officials convicted of corruption should not be eligible for *chaju*: *HHS* 7:288. In this context, the phrase could evidently be used to describe any process of examination and appointment to office.

Furthermore, the Treatise of Officials at *HHS* 117/27:2613-14 says that the office of the Director of Retainers (司隸校尉 *sili xiaowei*: Colonel Director of the Retainers), head of the capital province, had the right to *chaju* officials and commoners who disobeyed the law. So *chaju* must have been a general term for investigation and subsequent report.

²² They are Wu You 吳祐/佑, probably about 130 (*HHS* 64/54:2101); Liu Chong

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At the conclusion of his probation, a man was eligible for commissioned office. Of some thirty thousand men who must have joined the Three Corps during the course of the dynasty, there are only 170 cases where we are told of this first appointment, and the accounts are not always clear. The majority of those recorded, more than ninety, took office in the provinces, most as county magistrates, some as assistants in commandery units, some as Inspector of a province,²³ and a few went to a royal court or to the county office of Luoyang, the imperial capital. Others, perhaps more fortunate, obtained medium rank position at the capital: twenty joined the Imperial Secretariat (尚書 *shangshu*); a dozen became Imperial Clerks (侍御史 *shi yushi*), officers of the Censorate;²⁴ and the remainder held positions at court, in the University or in the bureaucracy at the capital, as Court Astronomer or in an office of a ministry. Almost all appointments were at rank/salary about Six Hundred *shi*.

Such a limited survey can be no more than indicative, and may be affected by two further factors. Firstly, about a dozen men left the Three Corps to take clerical positions in the offices of the Excellencies, discussed in Section 7 below as an additional route to commissioned rank. Secondly, there may be bias in the [13] sample, for the historians were chiefly concerned with men who had distinctive careers. It is clear, however, that probation in the Three Corps was the normal route to commissioned office.

In Republican and early imperial Rome, contemporary to Han, young men of family were expected to undertake military service before they sought a political career or influence at the capital. In China, however, though they may have worn uniforms and carried weapons, the cadets of the Three Corps were not fighting men, and experience in battle was not a prerequisite for senior office. Heads of commanderies and provinces were responsible for dealing with local bandits and rebels –

劉寵 about 140 (the *Xu Han shu* of Sima Biao 5:9a); and Fan Pang 范滂 about 160 (*HHS* 67/57:2202).

²³ In normal times an Inspector held supervisory authority over the heads of commandery units in his region: he could report wrong-doing to the throne, but could take no action of his own. In time of major rebellion or other trouble, however, since no Administrator was authorised to operate outside his commandery, even to assist a neighbour, the Inspector had the authority to raise and take command of an army from the entire province.

²⁴ On entry to the Censorate, often associated with the grading First Class, see Section 9 at 31.

and a disconcerting number met their death in the field – but they were primarily civilians, and one must assume they benefited from the advice of experienced and professional subordinates.

Unfortunately, the names and the careers of such middle-ranking military men are seldom mentioned.²⁵ In time of emergency in the provinces, men who had shown their ability might be given temporary commissions,²⁶ and soldiers of the imperial army could surely be promoted from the ranks. On the other hand, it is difficult to believe that all military officers were obtained by such haphazard means.

Besides the Three Corps, however, there were two other units under Generals of the Household, the **Feathered Forest** (羽林 *yulin*) and the **Rapid as Tigers** (虎賁 *huben*), whose members came from military background.²⁷ We are told that Gentlemen Rapid as Tigers, some 1500 strong, [14] obtained their positions by hereditary right,²⁸ while the 1700 men of the Feathered Forest were recruited from the sons and grandsons of soldiers who had died in battle and from respectable families of Liang province 涼州 in the northwest.²⁹ The Feathered Forest corps provided guards for the imperial horse-parks of the northwest, and it is possible that some were officer cadets for the army.

²⁵ Traditional records are concerned chiefly with the men in charge of major units or important campaigns, and these were often members of great families who had connection to the throne or had been transferred from civilian office. In contrast archaeological texts, notably the wooden slips from the northwest, deal chiefly with the lowest ranks; as Loewe has shown, these documents demonstrate a high standard of professionalism, both in the design and in the execution of the administration: *RHA* I, 117-126. Neither the histories nor the slips, however, provide any quantity of information about the middle-range commissioned officers equivalent to lieutenants, captains, majors or even colonels.

²⁶ Examples are given in note 105 below.

²⁷ Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 27-29.

²⁸ *HHS* 115/25:2576 note 3 commentary quoting the *Jin boguanbiao zhu* 晉百官表注 by Xun Chuo 荀綽 of the fourth century; cited by Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 28.

²⁹ A "respectable family" (良家 *liang jia* or "blameless family") was defined as one whose members had not been convicted of a crime, and were not involved in medicine 醫, magic 巫, trade 商賈 or any form of handicraft manufacture 百工: *HS* 28B:1644 commentary quoting Ru Shun 如淳 of the third century.

Despite limited evidence, two examples support this suggestion: during Former Han, the future general Zhao Chongguo 趙充國 served what was evidently an apprenticeship as a member of the Feathered Forest; and in Later Han, towards the end of the second century the future usurper Dong Zhuo 董卓 was a Gentleman of the Feathered Forest before he gained commissioned appointment as a Major (司馬 *sima*).³⁰ There appears, moreover, no other means by which men could be trained and assessed for substantial rank in a professional army, and it is difficult to believe that all officers were promoted from the ranks.

There was another, secondary group of civilian officials-in-waiting, the **Members of the Suite of the Heir** (太子舍人 *taizi sheren*). An imperial Heir-Apparent had a large household, but even when no Heir was designated thirteen Members of his nominal Suite were maintained under the authority of the Minister Steward (少府 *shaofu*: Privy Treasurer).³¹ At Two Hundred *shi*, however, they ranked below the Gentleman of the Three Corps, and during all of Later Han no senior official is recorded as having gained his initial commission solely by such an appointment.³² [15]

5. *Approaches to probation: commandery nomination and special access*

The common means of entry to the Three Corps was through nomination as **Filial and Incorrupt** (孝廉 *xiaolian*).

³⁰ HS 69:2971 and HHS 72/62:2319 with SGZ 6:171.

³¹ HHS 117/27:3808-89. *Hanguan* 5a says that Members of the Suite were chosen from young men of respectable family, as in note 29 above.

³² One possible exception is the scholar Liu Yi 劉軼, who was a member of the Suite of the Heir Liu Da 劉烜, future Emperor Zhang 章. When Liu Da came to the throne in 75 he appointed Liu Yi as Minister of the Imperial Clan (宗正 *zongzheng*: Director of the Imperial Clan): HHS 79/69A:2550. This, however, is best regarded as a mark of personal favour, not as normal procedure.

In what appears to have been a separate arrangement, at various times during the dynasty four men with title as Members of the Suite are recorded as being involved in calendrical calculations in the office of the Court Astronomer. They were Xu Zhen 徐震 in 85 (HHS 92/2:3027), Li Hong 李泓 in 123 (HHS 92/2:3034), Feng Xun 馮恂 in 174 (HHS 92/2:3030) and Zhang Guang 張光 in 177 (HHS 91/1:3015). These men evidently held substantive position, albeit at low rank, as experts in that technical office; it does not appear that they were candidates for commissions, and none of them are mentioned further. See also note 70 below, on Expectant Appointees under the Astronomer.

The requirement for Filial and Incorrupt candidates to be presented annually by each commandery or kingdom had been introduced during the reign of Emperor Wu 武 of Former Han in 130 BC: each territory was to nominate two men, for an average of some two hundred a year.³³ The system was continued by Later Han, but in 92 the government of Emperor He 和 noted the imbalance: each commandery unit was sending two candidates a year, regardless whether they were populous and prosperous, or had limited numbers and were on the frontiers of the empire. The Excellencies Ding Hong 丁鴻 and Liu Fang 劉防 proposed that each should be required to recommend one Filial and Incorrupt candidate for every 200,000 inhabitants, and this was approved. Those with less than 200,000 nominated one man every second year, and those with fewer than 100,000 one man every three years.³⁴ [16]

The refined system would still have produced some two hundred candidates each year, though we are told that in 124 it was for the first time approved that heads of commandery units who had served less than one year in their post should be allowed to present nominations.³⁵ Assuming this limitation had applied to all earlier years of the dynasty, it may have reduced the number of nominations by some ten to twenty per cent.

³³ *HHS* 6:160 and 166-67; Dubs, *HFHD* II, 34 and 48-49, Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 134. Initially one candidate was described as Filial and the other as Incorrupt, but the title was soon combined.

³⁴ The biography of Ding Hong at *HHS* 37/27:1268 ascribes all these reforms, including the provision for smaller commanderies, to the advice he gave in 92, but the *Annals* of *HHS* 4:189 date the arrangements for smaller units, notably on the frontier, to 101.

One must in any case doubt whether such territories always matched their full quota, and comparatively few men from the frontier are recorded in high civil office. Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 133, suggests that the situation may have improved through the increase in Chinese colonisation and population in the south during the course of the dynasty, though he notes an edict of Emperor He in 94 which called for a special recruitment restricted to the inner commanderies of the empire: *HHS* 4:178.

See Hsing I-tien 邢義田, "Dong Han xiaolian de shenfen beijing" 東漢孝廉的身分背景 [The Background and Status of Filial and Incorrupt candidates during Later Han], in his *Qin Han shi lungao* 秦漢史論稿 (Taipei: Dongda tushu gongsi 1987), 145-214.

³⁵ *HHS* 6:251; Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 135 and 184 note 45.

There was provision for candidates recommended as Filial and Incorrupt to be tested before they were accepted into the Three Corps. Loewe describes the Former Han system of "responding to a rescript" (射策 *she ce*), that is presenting written or oral answers to questions,³⁶ but although the procedure was maintained,³⁷ the term is rare in Later Han texts, and this initial assessment was frequently perfunctory. Further judgement was presumably left to the relevant General of the Household.

In 132, however, during the reign of Emperor Shun 順 the reformer Zuo Xiong 左雄, Director of the Imperial Secretariat (尚書令 *shangshu ling*: Prefect of the Masters of Writing), argued that Filial and Incorrupt nominees should be qualified Confucian scholars (儒學 *ruxue*) or possess the Literary Ability (文吏 *wenli*) to draft official [17] documents, and they were to be examined in these categories (科 *ke*) by the Excellencies and the Secretariat. Unless they had exceptional talent, moreover, they should be at least forty years old. The new policy was promulgated at the end of the year.³⁸

The age requirement soon proved impracticable. The Corps for All Purposes was traditionally reserved for men over fifty, but forty is an advanced age to begin a career. Many leading officials had held positions of authority well before that age, and among the rulers of Later Han only Guangwu and his son Emperor Ming 明 reached it before their death. Several commanderies, moreover, must have had difficulty filling their annual quota of candidates, and this is surely reflected by another edict issued a few weeks later, calling for candidates who had been approved to present further nominations of their own.³⁹

Two years later the shortage was still noticeable, and when Huang Qiong 黃瓊 succeeded Zuo Xiong as Director of the Secretariat in 134

³⁶ Loewe, "First Steps," 128-130.

³⁷ When Hu Guang was nominated Filial and Incorrupt in 117, candidates had to present a memorial on their arrival at the capital. Hu Guang's was judged the best, and within a few days he was appointed to the Imperial Secretariat, evidently without any period of probation: *HHS* 44/34:1505.

³⁸ *HHS* 6:261 and 61/51:2035. At *HHS* 61/51:2020 we are told how Zuo Xiong succeeded in embarrassing and rejecting the under-age candidate Xu Shu 徐淑. Xu Shu, however, was a talented man who went on to a successful career, and distinguished himself as a general on the frontier: *HHS* 48/38:1620-21.

³⁹ *HHS* 6:261; Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 200 note 19.

he proposed that two further categories be added to the Confucian and literary skills: Filial and Fraternal Affection (孝悌 *xiaoti*) and Able to Deal in Affairs of State (能從政者 *neng congzheng zhe*). This was eventually agreed. The new criteria provided a balance of morality against technical ability, but they were more difficult to assess and thus easier to satisfy.

Zuo Xiong had also arranged for candidates to be examined by the Excellencies and then by the Secretariat. Some suggested that the second test might be abolished, but Huang Qiong argued its value, and the role of the Secretariat developed through the rest of the dynasty.⁴⁰

The regulations imposed by Zuo Xiong and Huang Qiong came at an exceptional time, as energetic Confucianists sought to use their influence in the Secretariat to effect reform. They relied rather [18] upon the acquiescence of their sovereign, Emperor Shun, than his energetic support,⁴¹ and many conservative officials and scholars opposed the changes. It is claimed that the nomination process remained free of corruption until the death of Emperor Shun, but as the power and patronage of the Liang 梁 consort family developed from the second half of the 130s, this is doubtful. Certainly, whether the Excellencies or the Secretariat were formally responsible, there is evidence that the system was vulnerable to pressure from special interests.⁴²

The restrictions on age, moreover, were soon honoured rather in breach than observance. In 146, just fourteen years after Zuo Xiong's reforms, when an edict of the regent Dowager Liang called for an improvement in the quality of nominees, she required that they should be officers at least ten years old. The text may be faulty, but youthful candidates and officials were not uncommon at this time,⁴³ and two

⁴⁰ HHS 65:2035 and 78:2532; Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 137.

⁴¹ On the character and policies of Emperor Shun, see deC, *A Biographical Dictionary of Later Han to the Three Kingdoms (23–220 AD)* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 472–478, and *Fire over Luoyang: a history of the Later Han dynasty 23–220 AD* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 220–268 at 267.

⁴² Even in the early 140s, soon after the period of reform, Tian Xin 田歆, head of the capital commandery Henan, found that five out of six places available for Filial and Incorrupt candidates had been pre-empted by relatives and clients of influential families, and he could make only one nomination on merit alone: HHS 56/46: 1826; Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 135.

⁴³ Martin J Powers, *Art and Political Expression in Early China* (Yale UP 1991), 261, suggests that there may be a mistake in writing, but in her review of his

years later students of the University aged sixteen were allowed to compete for appointment.⁴⁴

Though the texts identify some men of humble background, it is not surprising [19] that the great majority of Filial and Incorrupt candidates came from good families, frequently the sons or grandsons of local officers or commissioned officials. Many had acquired their reputation through scholarship – which requires wealth and leisure – while others made a name by leadership in their community; some were distinguished for the ferocity with which they pursued vendetta. Almost half the 175 candidates whose previous careers are known had served as local officers of their commandery or province; many had held senior and trusted positions such as Registrar (主簿 *zhubu*: Master of Records) and Officer of Merit (功曹 *gongcao*: Officer of the Bureau of Merit),⁴⁵ and several had been Investigators (都郵 *duyu*), supervising subordinate counties. On occasion a commissioned official who had left office for some reason was re-nominated Filial and Incorrupt; he was presumably subject to a shorter period of probation.

In addition, during much of the second century the **Reporting Officer** (上計吏 *shangji li*: Official in Charge of Accounts) of a commandery could be appointed a Gentleman in the Three Corps.

Heads of commandery units and of provinces were required to present accounts to the court each New Year, and the local officer sent to do so was known for that purpose as the Reporting Officer. In 102, following a precedent of Former Han, Emperor He ordered that Reporting Officers should join the Three Corps of cadets in the same fashion as Filial and Incorrupt candidates. The program was halted in 163, when the Excellency Yang Bing claimed the additional recruitment

work in *Archives of Asian Art* XLVI (1993), 93–100 at 94b, Michael Nylan confirms the existing text. A shorter version of Professor Nylan's comments appears in *Early China* 18 (1993), 227–247; see at 234.

Examples of youthful nominees are discussed by Hsing I-tien, "Dong Han chaju xiaolian de nianling xianzhi" 東漢察舉孝廉的年齡限制 [Restrictions on Age at the Selection of Filial and Incorrupt candidates during Later Han], in *Qin Han shi lungao*, 121–143; at 135 he presents a table showing many exceptions to the forty-year requirement.

⁴⁴ See below at 31.

⁴⁵ The Officer of Merit was responsible for all matters of personnel, including the selection of local staff and advising on nominations to the capital. He was frequently the Administrator's closest confidante, and it was natural that such a man would himself be chosen for further promotion.

wasted resources and encouraged false expectations amongst men of limited ability; it was revived, however, about 170.⁴⁶

There were two other ways by which individuals might enter the probationary corps. One was the **Appointment** or *ren privilege* (任): Excellencies and other officials who had held rank at Two Thousand *shi* or higher for three years could nominate [20] a close relative, usually a brother or a son, as a gentleman cadet. The system had been in force during much of Former Han, but was ended on grounds of favouritism. It was nonetheless restored by Emperor Guangwu and was maintained through Later Han.⁴⁷

The second was by **direct grant**: as reward for special service or a sign of imperial favour, a man's sons or other kinsmen were granted entry to the Three Corps. The recipients thereafter followed the same process of probation and assessment as other Gentleman, and several rose to high office. Some grants were made to members of the imperial clan or consort families, others to outstanding officials, and some to the kinfolk of men who had shown exceptional loyalty or had been unjustly treated.⁴⁸

6. *Privileged nomination: Abundant Talent*

As described above, Filial and Incorrupt candidates, *ren* appointees and the recipients of direct grants had to pass probation as gentlemen cadets. In his edict of 36, however, Emperor Guangwu ordered that the Excellencies, the Minister of the Household and the heads of provinces should each year nominate one man of Abundant Talent (茂才 *maocai*), and these were accepted directly into the commissioned civil service. The classification of Flourishing Talent (秀才 *xiuca*) had been used on occasion during Former Han, but the name was now changed to avoid

⁴⁶ HHS 4:190, 54/34:1772, and note 19 above.

⁴⁷ Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 132-133. Loewe, "First Steps," 133-134, discusses this process as "sponsorship."

⁴⁸ A few examples: Ma Shuan 馬鱗 [consort family] (HHS 24/14:860); Yin Xing 陰興 [consort family] (HHS 32/22:1132); Liu Kai 劉愷 [honourable conduct] (HHS 39/29:1306); Teng Fu 滕撫 [successful general] (HHS 38/28:1280); Zhang Gang 張綱 [successful Administrator] (HHS 56/46:1819); Wang Huan 王渙 [fine service] (HHS 76/66:2470); Wen Xu 溫序 [heroic death] (HHS 81/71:2673); Ni Shi 兒式 [heroic death] (HHS 86/76:2839); Feng Huan 馮煥 [recompense for unjust treatment] (HHS 38/28:1280); and Liang Qin 梁懂 [recompense for unjust treatment] (HHS 47/37:1591).

taboo on Guangwu's personal name and the nomination became a regular requirement.⁴⁹ [21]

The initial posting for men of Abundant Talent was at rank about Six Hundred *shi*, the same as those transferred from the Three Corps, but Abundant Talent candidates required no probation. Their numbers were not large: there were three Excellencies, one minister and thirteen provinces, for a total of seventeen possible proposers. We may assume that the Grand Tutor, appointed at the beginning of each reign, could also make nominations, and the same privilege was extended to some Generals-in-Chief.⁵⁰ At one time or another, therefore, there was a maximum of nineteen such candidacies each year.

The Excellencies were the chief officials of the empire and, as discussed in Section 7 below, they could arrange recruitment through their own offices, so it was appropriate they had the right to recommend men for immediate commission. Similarly, though the Minister of the Household had eight colleagues of equal rank, he was responsible for the Three Corps, and the Abundant Talent nomination matched his annual recommendation of a Gentleman with the Four Virtues.

The Director of Retainers, who controlled the capital province, was ranked close to a minister, and although Inspectors of regular provinces were only Six Hundred *shi* and seldom held executive power, they did supervise several commandery units and had a wide group of potential candidates to draw upon. In selecting Abundant Talent candidates they were no doubt guided by their local staff – the Headquarters Officer (治中從事 *zhizhong congshi*: Attendant Clerk in charge of the Bureau of Headquarters) played the same personnel role for a province as the Officer of Merit in a commandery – and there may well have been consultation with the heads of commandery units; it is nonetheless remarkable that authority for direct appointment was granted to such junior and comparatively inexperienced officials.

[22]

⁴⁹ A summary of the provisions of the edict is preserved in the commentary to the Treatise of Officials (*HHS* 114/24:2559), quoting *Hanguan mulu*. It has been mentioned above at note 20, dealing with the Four Virtues, and it will be mentioned again below, in Section 7 at 20, regarding promotion from the offices of the Excellencies and Ministers. On Abundant Talent, see also Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 136-137 and 200 note 23.

⁵⁰ On the Grand Tutor and the General-in-Chief, see note 7 above.

7. *Privileged appointment: the offices of the Excellencies, ministries and the Secretariat*

The Treatise of Officials notes that each of the three Excellencies maintained an office (開府 *kaifu*), with twenty to thirty Senior and Junior Clerks (掾/史 *yuan/yuanshi* and 屬 *shu*: department heads and associates). Aided by some thirty Foreman Clerks (令史 *lingshi*) and others, they had charge of bureaus (曹 *cao*) which oversaw the whole imperial administration.⁵¹ At the same time, besides their supervisory responsibilities the clerks themselves were on track for commissioned appointment. There are many references to men who joined the offices of the Excellencies and then transferred directly to substantive office at the capital or in the provinces, as a county magistrate, Inspector of a province, or even Administrator of a commandery. Appointment or invitation (辟 *pi*) to the staff of an Excellency was thus a route to commissioned rank comparable to nomination and assessment in the Three Corps of Gentlemen.⁵²

In his edict of 36 discussed above,⁵³ Emperor Guangwu required the Excellencies not only to nominate men of Abundant Talent, but also to present two members of staff each year as **Incorrupt Officers** (廉吏 *lianli*). He placed the same obligation upon the Minister of the Household for three nominees, upon the Minister of Justice (廷尉 *tingwei*: Commandant of Justice) and the Minister of Finance (大司農 *da sinong*: Grand Minister of Agriculture) for two men each, and called for one candidate from each of the other ministries and two from generals in command of troops. [23]

Incorrupt Officers are mentioned also in an edict of 146, but there is nothing more in the texts, so we can make no judgment of what effect or benefit the recommendation may have had. One must assume

⁵¹ HHS 114/24:3558-63; Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 12-17.

⁵² Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 138, refers to these appointments to the offices of the Excellencies, but places them in the same category as locally-appointed officers in the provinces or other junior positions in the various ministries and bureaus about the capital. From many citations, however, it appears that clerical positions on the staff of the Excellencies were different and special.

Besides the three Excellencies, the Grand Tutor also maintained an office, as might a General-in-Chief, with equivalent rights of recruitment and transfer to commissioned rank.

⁵³ HHS 114/24:2559 commentary quoting *Hanguan mulu*, and see at 9 above with note 20, and at 18-19 with note 49.

that the men received commissions in the same way as those of Abundant Talent, though it is likely that clerical staff under a Minister gained internal promotion to become the head or chief assistant of a bureau.⁵⁴

In particular, there must have been some two hundred Gentlemen in the Three Corps under the Minister of the Household who completed probation and were commissioned each year. This was certainly far more than the two special nominations allocated to the Minister: one of Abundant Talent and one with the Four Virtues; or even five, if three Incorrupt Officers are counted. The Minister of the Household would most probably have nominated Incorrupt Officers from among members of his clerical staff; gentlemen cadets who came to the end of their probation were transferred to commissioned appointments as a matter of course.

Similarly, though it is possible that Senior and Junior Clerks in the offices of the Excellencies may have required endorsement as Incorrupt Officers, I suspect they could take commissioned office without such specific nomination.⁵⁵ Since the Excellencies had overview of the entire bureaucracy, moreover, while their own offices had lower-level clerks, their quota of Incorrupt Officers could have been usefully used.

One further category, applied to members of the offices of the Excellencies and also to others, was First Class (高第 *gaodi*), which generally brought accelerated promotion or entry to a specialised agency of the government. It is discussed further in Section 9.

The **Imperial Secretariat** (尚書 *shangshu*) provided another route to commissioned rank.⁵⁶ The Masters of Writing, heads of bureaus [24] in the Secretariat, were commissioned officials, and junior posts as Gentlemen (尚書郎 *shangshu lang*) were filled by Filial and Incorrupt

⁵⁴ In *Bureaucracy*, 201 note 26, Bielenstein agrees, as I argue above, that nomination as an Incorrupt Official was a form of internal promotion. He believes, however, that the Minister of the Household used it to transfer gentleman cadets from probation to substantive office; on this we differ.

⁵⁵ To argue *ex silentio*, the several records of transfer in the texts include no reference to nomination as an Incorrupt Official.

⁵⁶ The Secretariat was formally subordinate to the Minister Steward (*HHS* 116/26: 3596-99), but in practice operated as an effectively independent authority. It was headed by a Director (令 *ling*: Prefect of the Masters of Writing) and a Deputy Director (僕射 *puye*: Supervisor); the heads of bureaus had the same title, *shangshu*, as the Secretariat itself.

candidates transferred from the Three Corps. We are told that the Court Astronomer examined potential Masters of Writing on their knowledge of characters, and we may assume their subordinates were also tested.⁵⁷ There is no account however, of how the more lowly Foreman Clerks were actually recruited; they may have come from the University, but there is no reference to it.

In the first years of Later Han, when a Gentleman of the Secretariat, ranking Four Hundred *shi*, came to the end of his appointment, he was normally transferred to be magistrate of a small county, at Three or Four Hundred *shi*; Foreman Clerks, at Two Hundred *shi*, became county assistants or commandants. During the late 70s, however, the Director of the Secretariat Zheng Hong 鄭弘/宏 argued that though ranks and salaries in the Secretariat were low it was an institution of great importance, and the poor prospects for promotion discouraged good men from joining. He persuaded the emperor that departing Gentlemen should be eligible for posts of One Thousand *shi*, while Foreman Clerks could become full county magistrates (*HHS* 33/23:1155). Junior staff of the Secretariat thus gained access to commissioned office; but there is no record that anyone rose to significant position from this route.

8. *Special nominations and imperial invitation*

Beside the regular process of nomination and appointment discussed above, on various occasions the government made a call for recommendations from senior ministers at the capital, from officials in the provinces and sometimes from the holders of fiefs. Each summons was different, both in terminology and the officials [25] involved. The records are not complete in the list of edicts and in their details, but they included the following categories:

- Worthy and Good, Sincere and Upright (賢良方正 *xianliang fangzheng*), generally in combination, though there are references to Worthy and Good and to Sincere and Upright alone, perhaps as abbreviations. This is the combination of qualities that is recorded most frequently, and it was used throughout the dynasty.

⁵⁷ The organization and recruitment of the Secretariat under Later Han is discussed by Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 56-57, with notes at 172-173. At 19, moreover, he describes the examinations administered by the Court Astronomer. Masters of Writing were required to know nine thousand characters and be competent in six different styles of script; qualification for lower positions was presumably less demanding.

- Able to Speak Directly and Admonish Unflinchingly (能直言極諫 *neng zhiyan jixian*) also abbreviated as Direct Speech 直言.
- Knowing the Way (有道 *youdao*), sometimes combined with other categories, such as Worthy and Good or Extremely Filial.
- Extremely Filial (至孝 *zhixiao*), sometimes combined with other categories, including Knowing the Way.⁵⁸

Besides these, the Discussion (論 *lun*) presented by Fan Ye at the end of the chapter containing the biographies of Zuo Xiong and Huang Qiong, chiefs of the Secretariat under Emperor Shun, mentions several additional categories used by Later Han. These include Reliable and Honest (敦朴/撲 *dunpu*), High Standards (高節 *gaojie*), Absolute Purity (清白 *qingbo*), Simple and Straightforward (質直 *zhizhi*), and Reliable and Generous (敦厚 *dunhou*).⁵⁹

As with Filial and Incorrupt, one must suspect that such attributes were used rather as a gesture to Confucian virtue than as a specific requirement for commissioned office. Many appear interchangeable, and distinguishing them in translation requires a thesaurus.

The Dowager Deng Sui 鄧綏, widowed consort of Emperor He who ruled as regent from 106 to 121, was most energetic in such searches. The biography of Fan Zhun 樊準/准 says that he persuaded her to issue a number of calls for nomination as Sincere and Upright, Reliable and Honest, and Kind and Worthy (仁賢 *renxian*). Not all are recorded by the Annals in precisely those [26] terms,⁶⁰ but the period of regency did see an extraordinary number of special summons:

⁵⁸ This category was used by the regent Dowager Deng during the reign of Emperor An in the early second century, as below, and also by the Liang family regency for Emperor Huan about 150. On the latter occasion the call was for men who were Extremely Filial and of Exceptional Conduct (獨/篤行 *duxing*): *HHS* 52/42: 1725.

⁵⁹ *HHS* 61/51:2042. The last two of these are very close to or identical with two pairs of the Four Virtues used to assess Gentlemen in the Three Corps: page 9 above. As below, however, they were used by the regent Dowager Deng in her call for recruitment in 114.

⁶⁰ *HHS* 32/22:1127. The only active reference to the category Reliable and Honest in Later Han is recorded for the mid-180s, when Zhang Jian 張儉, former hero of the Proscribed Party (黨錮 *danggu*) opposed to the palace eunuchs, was nominated by the government of Emperor Ling. He did not accept the invitation: *HHS* 67/57:2211.

RECRUITMENT REVISITED

- In 106, soon after taking power on behalf of the "Young" (殤 Shang) Emperor, the Dowager issued a call for Worthy Confucian Gentlemen Living in Obscurity (隱士大儒 *yinshi daru*): *HHS* 81/71:2685.
- In 107, now regent for Emperor An, she sought candidates who were Worthy and Good, Sincere and Upright, Able to Speak Directly and Admonish Unflinchingly, together with men who were Skilled in the Way (有道術之士 *you daoshu zhi shi*), who Understood the Art of Government (明政術之士 *ming zhengshu zhi shi*), and could Comprehend Matters Ancient and Modern (達古今 *da gujin*). One in each category was to be nominated by the Excellencies and Ministers at the capital and by the heads of commandery units in the provinces: *HHS* 5:206. This indicates a recruitment of more than six hundred men.
- The same call was repeated in the following year, and also a demand for men who could interpret portents, understood the laws of *Yin* and *Yang* and commanded other mysterious arts: *HHS* 5:210.
- Again in 108, there was a call for scholars and other local worthies to be nominated by officers of kingdoms, so they might be assessed for employment at the University or in the provinces: *HHS* 5:211.
- In 111 the Dowager repeated the summons for Worthy and Good, Sincere and Upright candidates, for those who could Speak Directly and Admonish Unflinchingly, were Skilled in the Way, and Understood Politics (達政化 *da zhenghua*). She also made a general call for men who were Extremely Filial or possessed Exceptional Ability (卓異 *zhuoyi*), promising to interview them in person: *HHS* 5:217.
- A few months later, still in 111, senior officials were ordered to nominate sons and grandsons of military officers who were themselves competent in war, for commissions in the army: *HHS* 5:217.
- In 114 the Dowager sought men who were Reliable and Generous or Simple and Straightforward, one in each category, from senior officials at the court [27] and in the provinces, and from the holders of fiefs: *HHS* 5:221. There could have been as many as five hundred nominees.
- In 119 the Excellencies were ordered to select ten men from their offices who were either First Class⁶¹ or were Able to Govern

⁶¹ On First Class nomination, see Section 9 at 31.

Generously and Bring Prosperity (能惠利牧養者 *neng huili muyang zhe*). The Minister of the Household and the Generals of the Household were to recommend a further fifty men, either Filial and Incorrupt candidates or Gentlemen of the Three Corps, who were Able to Make Broad Plans (寬博有謀 *kuanbo youmou*) or held to the Highest Standard of Pure Conduct (清白高節行者 *qingbo gaojiexing zhe*): *HHS* 5:229.⁶²

- In 121, shortly before the Dowager's death, she made a general donation of cash and silk to kings and princesses and to senior officials, while also ordering that Excellencies, Ministers, colonels of the Northern Army at the capital, and officers of the Secretariat should nominate a son or grandson for probationary office in the Three Corps: *HHS* 5:232.

According to these records, the Dowager issued more special calls for candidates than any other ruler of Later Han, and possibly as many as all the others combined. There are two likely reasons: firstly, the government was facing serious financial difficulties, which required substantial economies and even the sale of offices – on which see Section 12 below; while from 107 to 118 it had to deal with the great rebellion of the non-Chinese Qiang 羌 in the northwest.⁶³ In such time of crisis, it was appropriate to seek the best assistance possible, both in civil and in military affairs. One must wonder, however, how many of the hundreds who were nominated had significant careers.⁶⁴ [28]

A second reason, more political, was the need for a woman ruler to keep support and influence in the government of the empire. The Lady Deng's predecessor, the Dowager Dou, who had governed as regent for

⁶² This is presumably the basis for Fan Ye's reference to High Standards 高節 and Absolute Purity 清白 in *HHS* 61/51: page 23 above.

As he began his personal rule in 122, Emperor An sought recommendations of provincial officials who had carried out their duties well. Absolute Purity was one of the criteria, but the category is not recorded as a form of nomination for office. High Standards are not mentioned in any other text.

⁶³ On the Qiang rebellion, see deC, *Northern Frontier*, 90-115. On the government of the Dowager Deng, see deC, *Biographical Dictionary*, xxi-xxii and 126-127, also deC, *Fire over Luoyang*, 170-207.

⁶⁴ Throughout the dynasty, many men recommended in the more usual of these special categories – such as Worthy and Good, Sincere and Upright or Knowing the Way – went on to hold high rank. However I can find no record of any leading official who gained his initial entry to the imperial service through any of the more exotic categories summoned by the Dowager Deng.

the young Emperor He from 88 to the early 90s, was overthrown in a coup in 92, and much of the unpopularity of her regime was due to her arrogance and that of her brothers. The Dowager Deng kept her kinsmen at a distance, but she refused to transfer power to Emperor An even after he formally came of age in 109, and she continued to control the government until her death. In such circumstances, an ostentatious interest in worthy candidates for office, combined with frequent donations and other awards, served to bolster her unorthodox authority.

A few further categories of nomination are recorded, some of which will be discussed in more detail below:

- Men of Honour (義士 *yishi*): Emperor Guangwu made a call for this category in 27, soon after he had taken the imperial throne: *HHS* 81/71:2671. It does not appear again.
- Understanding the Classics (明經 *mingjing*) was used by Former Han, by Emperor Guangwu and occasionally thereafter: see Section 10 on the Imperial University.
- In the late 70s Emperor Zhang sought Literary Scholars (文學 *wenxue*): *HHS* 80/70A:2613. This title, however, was more commonly held by a local officer involved in education, who had reached his position by examination: see Section 10.
- Knowing the Classics (通經 *tongjing*): *SGZ* 13:406, says that in the time of Emperor Ling the scholar Wang Lang 王朗 was recommended in this style, became a gentleman cadet and then a county magistrate. This may have followed a personal recommendation by his patron the Excellency Yang Ci 楊賜, for Wang Lang resigned his post after Yang Ci died in 185.

And as we have seen with the Dowager Deng in 111, in time of emergency there could be a call to recommend men of military ability and prowess: these were issued by Emperor An in 121 (*HHS* 5:233), by Emperor Shun in 138 (*HHS* 6:268) and in 142 (*HHS* 6:272), and by Emperor Ling in 184 (*HHS* 8:348). [29]

Beside the many occasions that noted scholars and local worthies were invited to join the offices of the Excellencies or were nominated after a call for recommendations, the ruler himself could issue an **imperial invitation** to a particular man. This was obviously the most honourable means of entry to the civil service, and naturally the most exceptional. The favoured gentleman was often brought to court in an official

carriage (公車 *gongche*); sometimes, as mark of even greater respect, a "comfortable carriage" (安車 *anche*) was sent.⁶⁵

It is not always possible to judge whether an imperial invitation came after a call for nomination, as discussed above, or whether it was issued directly and personally. Some men were recommended by a senior official,⁶⁶ others appear to have been so well known that they needed no specific introduction. Among the latter were Yang Hou 楊厚/后, Fan Ying 樊英 and He Chun 賀純, celebrated as hermit scholars of divination; all three refused invitations from Emperor He and the government of Emperor An, but were eventually persuaded to attend the court of Emperor Shun.

It was generally agreed that Fan Ying, who was always reluctant and sought every opportunity to retire, showed no great distinction, and some disappointment was expressed at the performance of Yang Hou. He Chun, on the other hand, had a successful career and rose to be an Administrator. Despite this uneven record, the senior official Li Gu 李固 observed that the presence of such men was valuable to the court, for they gave an example of maturity and good conduct. The invitation to Fan Ying, moreover, was good propaganda, for other scholars were now prepared to take office, while Emperor Shun's ostentatious patronage of such distinguished men reflected well upon his government.⁶⁷

[30]

There was a delicate dance of negotiation between the emperor and his invitee, each adding to his prestige in the process. The subject, frequently known as a recluse, could play hard-to-get, demonstrating his purity and disdain for power. The ruler, for his part, gained repute when the reluctant candidate finally acceded to his request. In reality, the invitations were designed not so much to acquire officials who might give practical service but rather to display the quality and ambitions of the emperor.

⁶⁵ The still more distinguished "comfortable carriage with wheels wrapped in rushes" (安車輶輪 *anche ruanlun*) is mentioned in an edict of Emperor Ming as a mark of honour for elders of the state, but it does not appear as a summons to office during Later Han. Cf. Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 132.

⁶⁶ Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 137 and 201 note 25, presents some examples.

⁶⁷ On Fan Ying, Yang Hou and He Chun, see *HHS* 82/72A:2721-24, 30/20A:1048-50, and 63/53:2081-82. Li Gu's comments are discussed by Aat Vervoor, *Men of the Cliffs and Caves: the development of the Chinese eremitic tradition to the end of the Han dynasty* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press 1990), 161-164.

From the time of Emperor Guangwu, all rulers of Later Han used the technique of invitation, and the policy was well expressed in an edict of the youthful Emperor He in 94, as he called for men who were Worthy and Good, Sincere and Upright, and Able to Speak Directly and Admonish Unflinchingly:

Bring out to the light the men of the cliffs and caves, bring into the open those who live in obscurity and seclusion. Let them come to the Office of Official Carriages, and We shall listen to them attentively.⁶⁸

We are told that Emperor He indeed interviewed the candidates in person, and they were then appointed to clerical offices or to probationary posts as Gentlemen. This was the usual pattern for men brought forward by a general summons: the nominee came to the capital, was received in audience or presented a memorial, and was assessed for employment. Some were appointed directly to office, including posts as Academicians at the Imperial University; others, as above, became clerks to the Excellencies or Gentlemen under probation. [31]

Some men who had been thus approved, but for whom no immediate position could be found, were named **Expectant Appointees** (待詔 *daizhao*), receiving a stipend until an appointment was made.⁶⁹ The system had been common in Former Han, and early in his reign Emperor Guangwu awarded the title Expectant Appointee to the philosopher Huan Tan 桓譚 (*HHS* 28/18A:956) and the future great general Ma Yuan 馬援 (*HHS* 24/14:830). During all the rest of Later Han, however, the only person recorded with such an appointment is the future Excellency Ding Hong, who was called to the court of Emperor Ming in 67 and impressed the sovereign with his understanding of the *Classic of History*. Granted a ceremonial robe and

⁶⁸ *HHS* 4:178; Vervorn, *Men of the Cliffs and Caves*, 156. Both imperial compounds, the Northern and the Southern Palace, had Gates of Official Carriages (公車門 *gongju men*) behind their major south-facing gates. As the name indicates, carriages were kept there, but the relevant office was also responsible for receiving documents and visitors, and there was a contingent of guards under the overall command of the Prefect of [the Majors at] the Gates for Official Carriages (公車[司馬]令 *gongju [sima] ling*; above at 7). See *HHS* 4:179 with commentary quoting *Hanguan yi*, *HHS* 115/25:3579 and Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 31 and 166; also his *Lo-yang*, 23.

⁶⁹ Commentary to *HHS* 37/27:1264; Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 137.

noble rank, he was given status as an Academician at the University while receiving a stipend from the Office for Official Carriages. He soon afterwards became a Palace Attendant (侍中 *shizhong*), close counsellor to the ruler: *HHS* 37/27:1264.

No other men are recorded as Expectant Appointees, and we cannot judge how many there may have been nor whether the procedure was normal or exceptional. In most cases we are told only that a nominee came to court and received a substantive position; the intermediate post, if used, is not mentioned.⁷⁰ [32]

At a lower end of the scale, some men received their commission simply through an **imperial letter** (詔書 *zhao shu*), which allowed them to take minor posts in the provinces. Sun Jian 孫堅, for example, future general in the civil wars at the end of Han, distinguished himself against rebels in the region of the lower Yangzi during the early 170s; he received an imperial letter, then served as an assistant magistrate in various counties of that region. This was a comparatively informal process, and applied only to such junior ranks; it is exceptional that Sun Jian rose to high position.⁷¹

9. *First Class and other special designations*

Some categories of recommendation could be applied to a junior officer or a member of the staff of an Excellency and led to substantive office. These included Presenting Advantageous Proposals (便宜 *bianyì*) and

⁷⁰ The title Expectant Appointee was also held by a number of junior officers in the bureaus responsible for astronomy. The subordinates of the Court Astronomer included thirty-seven Expectant Appointees, of whom six were involved in calculations of the calendar, as others dealt with various techniques of divination and invocation; and at the Spiritual Terrace (靈臺 *Lingtai*), also under the Astronomer's authority, there were a further forty-two, responsible for observing the movements of the sun, the stars, the wind and the ethers of the season: *HHS* 116/26:3572 commentary quoting *Hanguan*; Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 22-23. Such positions certainly required technical skill, but it is unlikely they were held as preparation for a commission, and there is no record of any such officer rising to high rank. Officers styled as Members of the Suite of the Heir likewise worked for the Court Astronomer: note 32 above.

There are also references to Expectant Appointees, surely eunuchs, in the offices of the imperial harem (*HHS* 116/26:3595 commentary quoting *Hanguan*; Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 64), and men of the same title were associated with a regiment of the Northern Army (*HHS* 117/27:3613 commentary quoting a *Hanyi* 漢儀 ascribed to Cai Zhi; cf. page 4 above).

⁷¹ *SGZ* 46/Wu 1:1093; deC, *Generals of the South*, 83-85.

Qualified to Deal with Complex Affairs (理劇 *liju*). In the time of Emperor An, Ge Gong 葛龔 was nominated Filial and Incorrupt and became Assistant Court Provisioner (太官丞 *taiguan cheng*); he was then commended for Presenting Advantageous Proposals and became a county magistrate: *HHS* 80/70A:2618. In the late 150s, when Zhao Qi 趙岐/歧 was a clerk in the office of the General-in-Chief Liang Ji 梁冀, he was described as Qualified to Deal with Complex Affairs and was transferred to be a magistrate: *HHS* 64/54:2122. When Huang Qiong was Excellency of Works in 161 he nominated the local commandery officer Chen Shi 陳寔 as Qualified to Deal with Complex Affairs; Chen Shi became a magistrate: *HHS* 62/52:2066. More significant, however, and somewhat better attested, is the designation **First Class** (高第 *gaodi*).⁷² [33]

Through all of Later Han, there are some forty references to men named as First Class during the process of their commission, the majority when they held clerical posts in the offices of the Excellencies. Forty, however, can have been only a small proportion of those who received such a grading: an edict of 119 ordered each of the Excellencies to identify five members of their staff as First Class (*HHS* 5:882), and before that we are told that the Excellency over the Masses Lu Gong 魯恭 commended several dozen men who rose later to be ministers or heads of commanderies (*HHS* 25/15:882). Lu Gong held the office twice, in 101-104 and 107-109, for a total of four years, and since we may assume that not all his protégés were so successful, he would appear to have been a most energetic patron. It is possible that commendation as First Class or as an Incorrupt Officer may have been a requirement for transfer from the office of an Excellency to a substantive post in the higher bureaucracy, but there is no good information, and First Class may indeed have been exceptional.⁷³

Of clerical officers known to have been graded First Class, several were transferred to be county magistrates, though at least two, Dong

⁷² The Treatise of Officials has unfortunately no discussion of the term *gaodi*, and Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, does not mention it.

Charles O Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford UP 1985), 277 at entry 3147, explains it as "Customs Collector: common reference to an official assigned to collect fees at a customs barrier or marketplace." This may be correct for later dynasties, but it is neither helpful nor relevant for Han.

⁷³ On Incorrupt Officers, see Section 7 at 20.

Xuan 董宣 about 30 and Yang Qiu 陽球 in the early 170s, were sent as heads of commandery units to deal with local troubles; both became known as stern officials (酷吏 *kuli*): *HHS* 77/67:2489 and 2498. Very often, however, grading as First Class led to appointment as an Imperial Clerk (侍御史 *shiyushi*: Attending Secretary) or as Inspector of a province. Inspectors held supervisory control over their territories, while Imperial Clerks at the capital were responsible for the checking of documents and conduct, and could charge any official with an offence. They were trusted agents of the emperor, and in many respects their office performed the functions of a Censorate.⁷⁴ [34]

In similar fashion, some Filial and Incorrupt candidates were identified as First Class and became Imperial Clerks, others received senior positions at court or in the bureaucracy, and about 150 the Academician Zhu Mu 朱穆 was graded First Class and transferred to the Censorate: *HHS* 43/33:1462-63. Though the process was not fully consistent, there was a tendency for First Class men to be given accelerated promotion or to be appointed to sensitive and influential supervisory office.⁷⁵

10. Education and the Imperial University

While there are many references to government schools in provinces and commanderies, and some private scholars attracted great numbers of students, there is little information on the process by which a young man of family received his education. In prosperous territories in the heart of the empire it is likely that the government schools were adequate, but many of those in more distant regions were set up primarily to indoctrinate and civilise the local people, Chinese and non-Chinese alike, and teachings were very basic. Most gentlemen were probably educated by tutors at home under family or clan auspices,

⁷⁴ See deC, "Inspection and Surveillance Officials under the Two Han Dynasties," in *State and Law in East Asia: Festschrift Karl Bnger*, edited by Dieter Eike-meier and Herbert Franke (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1981), 40-79 and 69-74, and deC, *Biographical Dictionary*, 1227.

⁷⁵ First Class and related terms could be used more loosely, and were not restricted to candidacies for commissioned office. Notably, the Han required annual grading of local government, and First Class, or Number One (第一 *diy*), appears in that context: e.g. *HHS* 20/10:744 and 21/11:756. On the other hand, one gentleman cadet, Yuan Zhu 袁著, is described as being in the first grade (甲科 *jiake*), a classification more commonly used in relation to examinations at the Imperial University: *HHS* 34/24:1184.

then went on to attend a private academy or the Imperial University at Luoyang. On the other hand, though literacy was essential for commissioned appointment, and some offices, notably the Secretariat, required a very high standard, the University itself was not a major gateway to office.

Modern scholars are generally agreed that as the University developed through the Former Han period, an examination process was established which could lead to commissioned office. In the time of Wang Mang at the beginning of the first century, the best forty students [35] each year were granted entry to the Three Corps of Gentlemen, the next twenty became Members of the Suite of the Heir, while a third group of forty were sent out as Literary Scholars (文學 *wenxue*) or Authorities on Ancient Matters (掌古 *zhanggu*) in commanderies and kingdoms. The total entry was a hundred.⁷⁶

As Guangwu revived the University and appointed Academicians to teach the Confucian classics, examinations were reinstated and senior members of government debated their nature and content. Examinations themselves, however, no longer provided entry to the imperial service. A man who attended the University might gain reputation at the capital or in his home country, but in order to obtain commissioned rank he still needed nomination or other special appointment, as described above.

The fortunes of the University varied through the dynasty.⁷⁷ Neglected by the regent Dowager Deng, it was restored under Emperor Shun. In 132, following major work of reconstruction on the campus, the government called for nominations of men Understanding the Classics: candidates were tested, and those successful became Academicians or Disciples (弟子 *dizi*): *HHS* 6:260.⁷⁸ [36] In the following year

⁷⁶ *HS* 88:3596; Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 140. On Members of the Suite of the Heir, a lower grade of probation, see Section 4 above at 13. Little is known of the functions of Literary Scholars or Authorities on Ancient Matters, but they presumably dealt with matters of education.

⁷⁷ On the University during Later Han, see Tjan Tjoe Som, *Po hu t'ong: the Comprehensive Discussions in the White Tiger Hall* (Leiden: Brill 1949 and 1952), I, 146-154, and deC, "Scholars and Rulers: imperial patronage under the Later Han dynasty," in *Han-Zeit: Festschrift für Hans Stumpfeldt aus Anlaß seines 65. Geburtstages*, edited by Michael Friedrich, assisted by Reinhard Emmerich and Hans van Ess (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2006), 57-77.

⁷⁸ A similar call had been made by Emperor Zhang in 85, at the time of a general donation, but we are not told what positions were offered: *HHS* 3:152.

some fifty elderly scholars of the capital district were appointed gentleman cadets: *HHS* 6:262.

It was only in the 140s, however, as the Liang family sought to gain support for its regency by patronage of scholarship, that the Former system was in part restored. In 146 officials ranking at Six Hundred *shi* or above were required to send their sons to study, while five posts in the Three Corps and five Memberships of the Suite of the Heir were allocated for annual competition between those who had attended the University for a year. In 148 provision was made for thirty-one successful examinees aged sixteen or over to be given senior

The term *dizi* is a source of confusion. Dubs, *HFHD* II, 197, describes *dizi* as junior members of staff of the University, but Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 202 note 42, argues that they were students. The students of academies run by private teachers could also be described as *dizi*: e.g. Yang Lun 楊倫 at *HHS* 79/69A: 2564 and Wei Ying 魏應 at *HHS* 79/69B: 2571; and there are two references to the *dizi* of private schools (*sixue* 私學 *dizi*) in the Treatise of Carriages and Robes (*Yufu zhi* 輿服志) at *HHS* 120/30:3666 and 3673: they appear at the bottom of a hierarchy headed by the Academicians of the Imperial University.

The *dizi* of the Imperial University, however, are not numbered in the thousands by the histories of either Former or Later Han, and the generality of students in Later Han are referred to as *sheng* [as in the compound 學生 *xuesheng*]: when *HHS* 79/69A:2547 tells how the numbers at the University rose to thirty thousand in the time of Emperor Huan, it uses the simple *sheng*.

So it appears that *dizi* could have two meanings. The first indicates senior students of the University, below the Academicians, who may have received a stipend and probably had teaching duties; they were subject to selection and formal appointment, and were limited in number. There is analogy with a system of European universities in the past, when a professor was formally responsible for all teaching of his subject and personally hired his staff; while the United States still makes extensive use of teaching assistants.

The second meaning of *dizi* relates to the students at private academies. If we believe some of the claims, they could be numbered by the hundreds or even thousands, but they were not part of the University.

If this analysis is correct, then the variations in apparent numbers of *dizi* from one period of Han to another may be explained by a confusion of the two categories. In any case, under Later Han, it does not appear that *dizi* of the University held any specific rank or received any salary.

We should also note the phrase *mensheng* 門生, well discussed by Patricia Ebrey in "Patron-Client Relations in the Later Han," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 103.3 (1983): 533–42. Though formally described as "students" of leading men, in practical terms *mensheng* were self-proclaimed clients, parallel to *guli* 故吏 "former officers" and they may never in fact have studied under their nominal patron.

rank [37] among the gentleman cadets, the next seventeen became Members of the Suite of the Heir and another seventeen were appointed to the court of a king. In 156 a new system allowed candidates to take examinations in an increasing number of classics over a period of years, and to rise with each success. Though it was possible to obtain a substantive post in the bureaucracy by this route, however, it would have taken as many as eight years of academic success to get so far.⁷⁹

Bielenstein correctly observes that University examinations were maintained throughout Later Han, but he goes on to claim that success brought commissioned rank.⁸⁰ I do not find his argument conclusive. The edicts of the Liang regency, providing for limited entry well below the numbers of Wang Mang, indicate that the previous system had not been in operation until the 140s. There were indeed examinations, but they did not lead to anything more than progress and possible promotion within the University, and some reputation outside it.

It is natural that modern scholars should seek to emphasise the importance of their ancient colleagues, but our biases should not blind us to the fact that the Imperial University of Later Han, even at the best of times, was not a major political institution. Academicians were full members of the civil service, and could be transferred to other offices, but their rank/salary was Equivalent to Six Hundred *shi*, no more than that of a senior Gentleman in the Three Corps, and the chief of them, the Libationer, was Six Hundred *shi*, the same as any other head of a bureau. Under the Minister of Ceremonies, the Libationer ranked with the Court Astronomer, the heads of the offices for music and sacrifices, and officials in charge of the imperial ancestral temples: *HHS* 115/25: 3572.

The policies of the Liang family in the 140s and 150s, moreover, placed great strain upon the University. So successful was their patronage, with opportunity for official appointment and occasional public banquets, that it is claimed the number of students reached thirty thousand. We are also told, however, that the quality of scholarship was unimpressive, for the official New [38] Text was in decline, and such a number was far too many for effective teaching. So a horde of nominal students, uninspired by their teachers and with few opportunities for advancement, turned readily to idealistic criticism of the government. A tradition of Confucianist opposition was maintained for twenty years,

⁷⁹ *HHS* 6:281, *Tongdian* 13:75b; deC, "Recruitment System," 73-74.

⁸⁰ Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 140 and 202-203 note 55.

not only against the Liang hegemony but later against Emperor Huan and his eunuch favourites, who took power in their stead.⁸¹

After this heady period of political activity, however, in the early 170s the University was purged of its activists and fell once more into decline.⁸² Commissions to the civil service may still have been available on the limited scale established by the Liang, but we have no record of any entrants, and the size of the backlog may be judged by an edict of 176, which provided for special examinations of University students aged sixty or more; one hundred were then appointed as Gentlemen of the Three Corps, as Members of the Suite of the Heir, and to junior positions at royal courts or commandery offices.

In 178, moreover, Emperor Ling authorised his **School at the Gate of the Vast Capital** (鴻都門學 *Hongdu men xue*) to provide an alternative entrance to the commissioned service. The emperor was interested in literary composition and calligraphy, and had established the School a few years earlier to encourage such studies, but he now called for senior officials at the capital and in the provinces to [39] nominate potential students, and ordered that graduates could be appointed directly to office. Calligraphers were required to write nine thousand characters in the major scripts, and were then assigned to the Imperial Secretariat, while others obtained positions as Inspectors, Administrators or advisers at court.⁸³

Leaders of opinion objected to such frivolous compositions as rhapsodies (賦 *fu*), but even from their hostile evidence the curriculum

⁸¹ HHS 79/69A:2547. It may be observed that when the students gathered lists of their heroes and chanted their praises in mass demonstrations, no Academician received such popular endorsement.

⁸² The decline of the University during the reign of Emperor Ling is discussed, for example, by HHS 79/69A:2547; Tjan, *White Tiger Discussions* I, 164-165, and deC, "Scholars and Rulers." A low point was reached when orders were given for the carving of the Stone Classics (石經 *Shi jing*) in 175. Completed in the early 180s, the work was a monument of official scholarship; but it was needed because members of the academic community had been altering canonical texts to support their own theories: HHS 78/68:2533 and 79/69A:2547; deC, *Emperor Huan and Emperor Ling: being the chronicle of Later Han for the years 157 to 189 AD as recorded in Chapter 54 to 59 of the Zizhi tongjian of Sima Guang* (Australian National University 1989), 481-483, and *Fire over Luoyang*, 382-384.

⁸³ HHS 8:340-41. On the establishment of the School, see deC, *Huan and Ling*, 137-140 and 146-152, and *Fire over Luoyang*, 385-388.

may be judged to have had merit: it included the style and technique of drawing up official documents, while in more imaginative fashion it added literature and calligraphy. It may fairly be argued that a graduate of the School was at least as well equipped to handle affairs of government as any student of New Text Confucianism at the University – and the calligraphy requirement was comparable to that for entry to the Imperial Secretariat. The emperor's initiative, however, was widely regarded as an attack on traditional scholarship and as creating an illegitimate route to office. There is no record of any graduate of the School reaching substantial rank, and the aberrant experiment ended with the death of its imperial patron ten years later.

11. Responsibility and reluctant officials

In principle, officials were responsible for those whom they nominated, and they could be punished when their protégés behaved badly or failed in their duties. Conversely, when an official suffered disgrace, those whom he had recommended or who had served under him (故吏 *guli*) often shared his punishment. The best-known example is the affair of the Proscribed Party (黨錮 *danggu*), when Confucian reformers were attacked by the eunuchs who dominated the court of Emperor Ling: the leaders were killed and their followers were proscribed from office.⁸⁴ The Great Proscription lasted from 169 to 184, but [40] the same penalty had been applied on many other occasions to associates of a fallen minister or a defeated faction.⁸⁵

In the course of the dynasty this principle of mutual responsibility became rather a matter of personal conscience than of public policy, and by the second century there were many candidates or junior officers who rejected a nomination or resigned their position if they disapproved of the official who sponsored them or under whom they were required to serve. The phrase *fei qiren* 非其人 "not the right man"

⁸⁴ DeC, "'Political Protest in Imperial China: the great proscription of Later Han 167-184," in *Papers on Far Eastern History* 11 (Canberra, March 1975), 1-36, and *Fire over Luoyang*, 352-354 and 375-380.

⁸⁵ To give two notable examples: at the time of the alleged conspiracy by his brother Liu Ying 劉英 the King of Chu 楚 in the early 70s, Emperor Ming had hundreds of officials dismissed and proscribed. They included the Administrator Yin Xing 尹興 and his subordinate Lu Xu 陸續 (*HHS* 81/71:2682-83). And when the Liang clan was overthrown by Emperor Huan in 159, many former officers were dismissed and proscribed. They included the scholar-official Cui Shi 崔寔 (*HHS* 52/42:1730) and the successful general Zhang Huan (*HHS* 65/55:2139).

expressed this disapproval, and the prevalence of the custom meant that an individual's personal sense of morality took precedence over his public duty to the state.⁸⁶

The concept of the righteous man who withdraws from the world had long been honoured in China. We have seen how Emperor Shun gained prestige from his cultivation of such men, and at a lower level there were officials who enhanced their authority by the respect they showed to local worthies and the favourable response they received in return. The wider extension of the principle, however, so that men gained prestige not for holding office but for rejecting it, meant that the government was deprived of the services of many well-qualified men, while the combination of official proscription on the one hand, and refusal to take office on the other, brought a dangerous division between the imperial court and the landed gentry who were its natural allies.⁸⁷ [41]

12. *Sale of offices*

Official ranks and titles had been sold during Former Han, notably by Emperor Wu as a means to finance his great campaigns in the north, but the example was not followed by Later Han until the early second century, when the regent Dowager Deng was faced by the massive rebellion of the Qiang in the northwest and by a serious weakness in government finance. In 109, with the advice of the Excellencies, some positions in the guards, minor posts in the ministries and a number of noble ranks were offered for sale. In 161 Emperor Huan followed the same policy,⁸⁸ but in 178 Emperor Ling went very much further, putting all official positions onto the market, and by the mid-180s every man appointed had to negotiate a payment at the ruler's private treasury in the Western Garden (西園 *Xi yuan*) outside Luoyang.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ DeC, "Politics and Philosophy under the Government of Emperor Huan 159-168 A.D." in *T'oung Pao* 66.1-3 (1980), 41-83 at 52-53.

⁸⁷ In somewhat contradictory fashion, great families such as the Yuan of Runan and the Yang of Hongnong, who produced numbers of Excellencies and other senior officials, and maintained their high position even during the years of eunuch dominance and the Great Proscription under Emperor Ling, were highly respected for their senior service, despite their association with a corrupt regime. In particular, the distinguished ancestry of Yuan Shao and Yuan Shu gained them support as popular leaders of reform in the 180s and later as warlords at the end of Han: *HHS* 74/64A-B and *SGZ* 6.

⁸⁸ *HHS* 5:213 and 7:309; Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 141.

⁸⁹ *HHS* 8:342; deC, *Huan and Ling*, 152-153 and 515-518, also Bielenstein,

Some lower ranks may have been sold directly, but the money paid for senior positions was essentially a fine levied on men who were already eligible. The requirement could be reduced for those of particular quality, and it was possible to pay by instalments at a higher rate, but when the cost was assessed at millions of cash, it is hard to see how such an investment could be recouped.⁹⁰ Though the texts describe the transactions as [42] *mai* 賣 "sales," such poor bargains must have been made under pressure, and "fines" seems more appropriate.⁹¹

Similar systems have been used in the West, notably by eighteenth-century France, where the cost of a venal office could be taken as purchase of an annuity, a down-payment against future salary, while noble rank offered immunity from some taxes. A yet closer parallel may be the forced sales of knighthoods by Charles I of England: during the 1630s his impecunious government compelled landowners of a certain standing to accept the title and then pay a fee for exemption from the military service which it entailed; those who refused the title were still

Bureaucracy, 141-142.

⁹⁰ Two sources, the Annals at *HHS* 8:342, relating the inauguration of the system in 178, and *Shanyang gong zaiji* 山陽公載記, compiled by Yue Zi 樂資 about 300 and quoted in commentary to that passage, describe different prices. The Annals say that an Excellency's position cost ten million cash, and a Minister's five million; *Shanyang gong zaiji* claims that an office of Two Thousand *shi* cost twenty million, while one of Four Hundred *shi* cost four million: Leban, "Sale of Office" at 33 [see note 91 immediately below] observes that the latter scale meant that 10,000 cash were demanded for each *shi* of rank/salary. Despite its placement by the Tang commentary, it is likely that the *Shanyang gong zaiji* text relates to the levies established after 185: see below.

A statement of salaries dating to 106, interpreted by Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 129-131, values the salary of an Excellency at 420,000 cash per annum. At this rate, even if the outlay was "only" ten million cash, and without allowing for interest, it would have taken more than twenty years to recoup the capital; and the tenure of an Excellency at this period was commonly measured in months. Similar figures apply to all other levels of office: even allowing for opportunities of extortion, one cannot regard these "purchases" as worthwhile.

⁹¹ This policy has been discussed in further detail by Carl Leban, "Sale of Office or 'Fines' in the Later Han: a Matter of Interpretation," in Albert E Dien, ed, *State and Society in Early Medieval China* (Stanford UP 1990), 31-48. After canvassing most of the available references to the system under Emperor Ling – though his renderings include some mistranslations and misinterpretations – he concludes that the payments represented sales rather than fines. In light of the calculations in the preceding note, however, the distinction is hardly significant.

obliged to pay the fee.⁹² In defence of the corrupt regime of Later Han, one may observe that the very fact that men could pay such exorbitant prices indicates that there was great private wealth in the empire, and the government had no good method to gain access to it through normal taxation. The central government had been short of funds from at least the beginning of the second century, [43] while great families in the provinces dominated the local economy and society.⁹³

Emperor Ling, however, was primarily inspired by his own greed and extravagance.⁹⁴ In 185, though the country had been devastated by the rebellion of the Yellow Turbans in the previous year, a disastrous fire in the Southern Palace became an excuse to double the rates of contribution from new officials and to require them also from Filial and Incorrupt and other candidates.⁹⁵ Officially the money was for the repair of the palaces and for military expenses, but the private treasury of the Western Garden was still at the centre of the program, and a new Hall of Ten Thousand Gold Pieces (萬金堂 *Wanjin tang*) was built to handle the trade.⁹⁶ Among others, we are told that Cui Lie 崔烈 had been highly respected and received a discount when he became an Excellency, but his reputation suffered because he paid for the promo-

⁹² For example, Simon Schama, *Citizens: a chronicle of the French Revolution* (London: Viking 1989), 68-69, and C V Wedgwood, *The King's Peace 1637-1641*, (Penguin 1983), 156.

⁹³ See, for example, deC, *Biographical Dictionary*, xxi-xxii, and *Fire over Luoyang*, 190-199 and 321-323. In his Introduction to *State and Society in Early Medieval China* at 11, Dien observes that "...as powerful families increasingly came to dominate the local scene, they may have been able to restrict the flow of income to the centre. The court may thus have been forced to resort to extra-legal and even illegal means to supply itself with income, such as the sale of offices." I do not believe his statement requires the caveat.

⁹⁴ Given his access to the resources of the empire, the emperor's conduct seems absurd, but it is said that as a junior marquis, before he came to the throne, he had been poor, and he never recovered from the experience.

⁹⁵ *HHS* 8:339 records that several dozen merchants and other men of poor background had been named Filial Sons at the Mound of Comprehension, the tomb of Emperor Huan (宣陵孝子 *Xuanling xiaozi*), and that in 177 they were allowed to become Members of the Suite of the Heir; deC, *Huan and Ling*, 137-142. As Bielenstein suggests in *Bureaucracy*, 203, this may have been an early means for Emperor Ling to obtain money by selling official positions.

⁹⁶ *HHS* 8:352 and 78/68:2535-36; deC, *Huan and Ling*, 191-192, also Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 142, and Leban, "Sale of Office," 44.

tion.⁹⁷ When the worthy Sima Zhi 司馬直 was named an Administrator, he too received a discount for quality; rather than seeking to recoup the cost by exploiting his future subjects however, he sent in a [44] memorial of protest and then killed himself. Emperor Ling is said to have called a halt to the palace levy, and the empire in any case fell to ruin a few years later.⁹⁸

13. *Temporary commissions*

Given the size of the imperial service, and the flexibility provided by common factors of education and qualifications, any vacancy in an office of the central government could normally be covered by promotion or transfer. In the provinces, however, the situation was different. Because of the distance from the capital, some counties could be without government for a considerable time until a commissioned official could arrive to take up the post.⁹⁹ In such cases, therefore, there was provision for a local man to act as a brevet magistrate.¹⁰⁰

The Han Rule of Avoidance (三互法 *Sanhu fa*) forbade a commissioned official to hold office in his home territory or in that of his wife,¹⁰¹ but brevet magistrates were exempted by the special circumstances which allowed their appointment. In most cases, they had held responsible positions in the offices of the commandery or province. There are few indications how long the term might last, but the [45] appointment was not of itself a means to obtain a commission.

⁹⁷ HHS 52/42:1732; deC, *Huan and Ling*, 193, Leban, "Sale of Office," 36-37.

⁹⁸ HHS 78/68:2535-36; deC, *Huan and Ling*, 192. Leban, "Sale of Office," 44-45, also discusses the case of Sima Zhi. He prefers to consider the money involved as an "*ad hoc* tax" on the territory which the man was to govern, but I suspect that any new appointee was expected to recover his costs through simple corruption. The difference is not one of substance, for in either interpretation the people would suffer a new and extraordinary imposition.

⁹⁹ A county magistrate was certainly a commissioned officer, and in theory county assistants and county commandants were too, though in practice, as we have seen, such lower-ranked officials could gain their places simply through an imperial letter, without the full route of nomination, probation and appointment.

¹⁰⁰ I use the term "brevet" here in the sense of a special authorization for an officer to act temporarily in a higher rank.

¹⁰¹ The *Sanhu* regulations are discussed in HHS 60/50B:1990-91, which records how during the 170s Cai Yong presented a memorial urging their provisions be eased; his argument was not accepted.

It was still necessary for such men to be nominated or receive advancement by other means, and many sought to rise no further.¹⁰²

There were a number of different terms for such exceptional or short-term positions. Brevet magistrates were frequently identified as *shouling* 守令 or *shouzhang* 守長,¹⁰³ while other [46] acting officials are described as *xing* 行...*shi* 事, or *xing*.¹⁰⁴ An expression of slightly

¹⁰² Li Yi 李翊 in the 160s and Du Ji 杜畿 in the 180s were local officers who served as brevet magistrates in their home commanderies and were later recommended Filial and Incorrupt: *SGZ* 16:493 and *Li shi* 隸釋, compiled by Hong Kuo 洪适 of Song (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 1983), 9:7a-8b and 12:16a-17b. Man Chong 滿寵 became a brevet magistrate about 190, then returned home; he later had a further career: *SGZ* 26:721.

Given their low rank but local importance, it is not surprising that references to brevet magistrates are found more often among inscriptions than in formal histories. A notable example is Miao Yu 繆宇, whose tomb, northwest of Pi county in present-day Jiangsu, close to the border with Shandong, was explored in the early 1980s and is discussed in *Wenwu* 文物 "Cultural Relics," Beijing 1984/8. A fragmentary inscription says that he died in 150 and was buried in the following year, and records the offices he held: 故彭城相行長史事呂長. The tomb has thus been identified as that of a Chancellor of Pengcheng 东汉彭城相繆宇墓.

The title, however, is mistaken. A Chief Clerk (長史 *zhangshi*) was normally appointed by the central government, while men were forbidden to hold such a commissioned appointment in their homeland. Since the tomb was in the territory of Pengcheng of Later Han, it is likely that was Miao Yu's native place. In these circumstances the inscription is better understood as indicating that he was a local officer who acted as Chief Clerk under an unnamed Chancellor [on *xing*... *shi* see immediately below at note 104]. Similarly, since Lü 呂 county was in Pengcheng, Miao Yu should not have held substantive office as a magistrate (長 *zhang*) there. In fact, we may assume that Miao Yu was a member of local gentry, who had at various times held brevet appointment as magistrate in a neighbouring county and as chief assistant to the Chancellor of the kingdom.

I am grateful to Professor Miranda Brown of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, for her most helpful discussion on these and other cases.

¹⁰³ It must be noted, however, that the phrase *shouling* 守令 does not always indicate a brevet magistrate: it can refer to commandery administrators (太守 *taishou*) and county magistrates (令長 *lingzhang*), being the generality of commissioned officials in the provinces.

¹⁰⁴ One special use of the term *xing* relates to the General on the Liao (度遼將軍 *du-Liao jiangjun*), an office established in 65 to guard against collusion between the Southern Xiongnu 南匈奴, settled within the empire, and their putative rivals and enemies the Northern Xiongnu on the Mongolian steppe. The incumbent was described initially as *xing* "Acting," and the qualifier was

different significance was *jia* 假 "temporary:" this could be used for civilian offices, but frequently qualifies a military appointment for emergency or special mobilisation; several such men later rose to high rank.¹⁰⁵

14. Conclusion

A system of official recruitment had been developed through Former Han, and Later Han consolidated the earlier experiments into a regular process. The steady entry of some two hundred Filial and Incorrupt candidates each year, supplemented by those of Abundant Talent and other special nominations, together with promotions and transfers from the offices of the Excellencies and ministries, was generally adequate to fill the commissioned places which became vacant each year. There was a degree of wastage, whether by illness and death, resignation or refusal to serve, but except in particular emergency there was small need for widespread additional recruitment.¹⁰⁶

The system was set upon clear principles: worthy and able men should be brought forward from their local community, then assessed by the central government. It was inevitable that powerful families and factions would exercise influence, and Emperors Ming, Zhang and He all issued edicts condemning dishonest [47] recommendations and calling for men of higher quality.¹⁰⁷ The titles of nominations, such as Filial and Incorrupt or Worthy and Good, were largely artificial, but there was a sense of morality behind the rhetoric, and expectation that those who exercised power should be both honourable and competent. In the time of Emperor Shun, the reformers Zuo Xiong and Huang Qiong sought in Confucian style to have the reality match the name, but the needs and practicalities of government were against them.

On the other hand, it was much to the advantage of the emperor that the most powerful men in communities across his realm should seek their fortunes at the capital, rather than in separatist power. The

retained until the early second century: Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 120; deC, *Northern Frontier*, 252, and *Biographical Dictionary*, 1235.

¹⁰⁵ For civilian examples, see Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 56, 86 and 92. For military examples, see *HHS* 19/9:718 [Geng Kui 耿夔 against the Xiongnu in 89], *HHS* 87/77:2890 [against the Qiang in 115], *HHS* 65/55:2150 [Xia Yu 夏育 against the Qiang in 168] and *SGZ* 46/Wu 1:1093 [Sun Jian against rebels in the southeast in 172].

¹⁰⁶ I am grateful to the demographer Professor James Z Lee of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, for his advice on this question.

¹⁰⁷ *HHS* 2:98 (in the years 57/58 AD), *HHS* 3:133 (in 76) and *HHS* 4:176 (in 93).

alliance between the central government and the landed gentry was a cornerstone of the imperial state, and the pattern of local nomination followed by confirmation from the throne was an excellent way to maintain stability. The real danger came when those who were regarded as leaders and exemplars of their local community were either driven from office by proscription or refused to serve on moral grounds. There were many factors which threatened the Han dynasty at the end of the second century, including disease, rebellion and faction-fighting at court, but the failing relationship between the sovereign and his leading subjects contributed greatly to the final collapse.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ On later development of the selection process under Three Kingdoms Wei and its successors, notably through the *jiupin zhongzheng* 九品中正 system established by Cao Cao, see Donald Holzman, "Les débuts du système médiéval de choix et de classement des fonctionnaires: les neuf catégories et l'Impartial et Juste," in *Mélanges publiés par l'Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises* 1 (1957), 387–414; Miyazaki Ichisada 宮崎市定, *Kyūhin kanjin hō no kenkyū: kakyō zenshi* 九品官人法の研究: 科挙前史 [Studies on the Law of the Nine Ranks of Officials: a prehistory of the examination system], Kyoto, 1974; the section on "The Nine Rank Systems" in Dennis Grafflin, "Reinventing China: pseudo-bureaucracy in the early Southern Dynasties," in Dien, ed, *State and Society*, 139-170 and 145-148; and Yan Buke 閻步克, *Pinwei yu zhiwei: Qin-Han Wei-Jin Nanbeichao guanjie zhidu yanjiu* 品位與職位: 秦漢魏晉南北朝官階制度研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 2002); also deC, "Three Kingdoms and Western Jin: a history of China in the third century AD," Part I, in *East Asian History* 1 (Canberra, June 1991), 1-36 at 27-28, and *Imperial Warlord: a biography of Cao Cao* (Leiden: Brill 2010), 247-249.