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**The System of Titled Nobility
of the Western Jin Dynasty (265-316 AD)**

**Systém titulární šlechty
dynastie Západní Jin (265-316)**

Disertační práce

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Introduction

After reading any general outline of Chinese history every student, or indeed anybody just vaguely interested, will inevitably get impression that the whole time span of Imperial China constitutes one long chain of periodical rise and decline, waxing and waning of imperial power and change of dynasties, where periods of the greatest achievements, glory and might are as a rule followed by dark ages of disunity, internal strife and political, moral and cultural decline. These periods are often just glossed over, historians being generally content with dutifully recording the name of the dynasty and years of its reign, limiting themselves to saying a few more words about unsatisfactory state of affairs China had been in during such a period. I still remember quite well the frustration I experienced as a student when I first tried to find some substantial information on the period of disunity and whole early medieval Chinese history. This lack of information, which I still perceive as a challenge of its own kind, aroused my interest in this period for the very first time. After spending almost ten years researching the sources for the medieval Chinese history, I feel even more convinced about the importance of this rather neglected and underestimated epoch for our understanding of Chinese history and culture as a whole.

There is nothing unusual about history being viewed through the glasses of relative political or cultural success, periods of national history being judged according to its achievements, degree of prosperity, might and predominance of all kinds which the state or nation enjoyed. The use of history, stressing the times of glory and power, and denigrating periods of weakness and decline for bolstering nationalist feelings and attaining various political ends is most common indeed. And even more so in China where such a distinctly bipolar, black and white view of history is doubtless influenced by notion of the great unified China promoted relentlessly by all Chinese governments almost since the foundation of the first empire. Unity, or the lack of it, thus becomes sole criterion for measuring the degree of success of a respective imperial dynasty, that is also for considering a dynasty worthy or unworthy of any attention and possible study.

The long period of division after the fall of the Han dynasty, known generally as Wei Jin Nanbeichao 魏晉南北朝 (i.e. the Wei, the Jin and Southern and Northern Dynasties), is one of the most important ages usually overlooked and shunned by scholars of Chinese studies. Xiaofei Tian, in the introduction to her book on the Liang literary culture characterizes this period as: “Wedged between Han and Tang, the two energetic and enduring

empires, this period has traditionally been considered a social and political “dark age”, a stage of preparation for the brilliant accomplishments of the Tang literary masters, and consequently a phase of transition, an almost four-century-long hyphen between great empires.”¹ The Western Jin Dynasty (*Xi Jin* 西晉, 265-316 AD), on which I will focus my research was also a part of this rather troubled period, however, it has fared somewhat better than the Liang 梁, at least the Jin were lucky enough to have their name included in the general period designation, Wei Jin Nanbeichao, whereas the Liang and other short-lived regimes lost their chance to win a place in the memory of the general reader by being collectively referred to as the Southern and Northern Dynasties (Nanbeichao 南北朝). On the other hand, this doesn’t mean much, for one should not expect an ordinary Chinese to know much more about the Jin apart from the fact that there was a dynasty of that name, which temporarily unified whole China. And it is exactly for this unification, albeit short-lived and ephemeral, that the Jin Dynasty is being remembered and known while the rest of the medieval Chinese dynasties appear rather vague to all but few experts in the field.

This traditional view of Chinese history has influenced the Western scholars for quite a long time. More often than not they preferred to devote their time and efforts to dynasties traditionally considered as the apogee of Chinese culture for not only were these more likely to catch the eye of a curious scholar, but they were also better documented as tradition tirelessly praised chronicles of these dynasties as important pieces of historical writing, whereas the historiographical production of the disunion period was believed to lack any value whatsoever. In terms of Ancient and Medieval China, interest of Western scholarship in the Han and Tang periods led to serious neglect and underestimation of the period in between which has been much misunderstood until very recent times. Nevertheless, this might not be the only cause. The quick and chaotic succession of dynasties is quite bewildering in itself and the complexity of political, social and cultural changes confusing enough to deter many a scholar. Although the situation has changed for better during the last few decades and scholars both in China and the West, painfully aware of this lacuna in research of Chinese history, have paid more attention to Medieval China, the Wei Jin Nanbeichao period still remains rather puzzling and at the same time intriguing field of study offering whole range of problems and questions which still await satisfactory answers. By addressing some of these issues the future research may deepen our understanding of not only Early Medieval China,

¹ Tian Xiaofei (2007): pp 2-3.

but also of the Tang and other dynasties, which naturally built their empires on foundations laid during the neglected and denigrated time of disunion.

One may ask: Of all the dynasties why the Jin? After the fall of the Han in 220 AD, China was divided among three smaller states: Wei 魏 in the north, Shu Han 蜀漢 in the present day Sichuan, and Wu 吳 in the south. These three kingdoms vied with each other for supreme imperial authority and each of them struggled hard to prove her legitimacy in continuing attempts to unify again the whole territory formerly ruled by the Han. None of them was destined to win for this goal was achieved only by the Simas 司馬, a family which overthrew the Wei and established the Jin dynasty in 266 AD. It is partially this brief unity of all China brought once again under power of one single ruling house which makes this period interesting because it has been seen as the last legitimate Chinese dynasty before the hordes of steppe nomads invaded Northern China and as such influenced many aspects of subsequent imperial dynasties up to the Tang 唐. Even more important, however, at least for medieval Chinese history, is the fall of the dynasty after years of turbulent civil disorders which inaugurated the whole “infamous” period of disunion and determined, to a great extent, the character of the future southern and northern regimes.

Nevertheless, the Jin’s rise to power began even earlier than 266 AD, when Sima Yi 司馬懿 became one of the most important court ministers of the Cao Wei emperors Wendi 文帝 (220-226 AD) and Mingdi 明帝 (226-239 AD). Since 249 AD, when Sima Yi arranged a coup and got rid of his most dangerous rival, an imperial relative Cao Shuang 曹爽, he wielded all the power quite unopposed, and he and his sons Sima Shi 司馬師 and Sima Zhao 司馬昭 played the role of kingmakers whenever the puppet emperors showed any signs of growing too independent. In 263 AD, Sima Zhao conquered the neighbouring state of Shu in the Southwest and couple of years later, in 266 AD, his son Sima Yan 司馬炎 staged an abdication ceremony for the last Wei emperor and assumed the imperial throne as the first emperor of the Jin dynasty, later known as emperor Wudi 武帝 (266-290 AD). It was under Wudi that the new empire gradually took shape and many new policies, which were to influence the future course of China for next couple of centuries, were introduced. It was Wudi, who in 280 AD sent his armies across the Yangzi River and brought to an end the rule of the Sun lords of Wu, subjugating all the regions south of the river, accomplishing the quest for unification which his family had pursued for three generations.

No sooner was the unity achieved, than Wudi's imbecile son and successor Huidi 惠帝 (290-306 AD) began to lose it again. For many a member of the imperial house a chance to rule this weak and vulnerable ruler proved too tempting to resist. Princes and imperial in-laws cherished wild ambitions which kindled disastrous civil strife, the so called Upheaval of Eight Princes (*ba wang zhi luan* 八王之亂) in which various groups of princes and courtiers fought for the custody of the emperor and the ultimate power this custody could provide, in which Huidi himself became easy prey having been degraded to a mere pawn in the hands of powerful relatives. In their struggle for power the princes looked for all possible allies and eventually did not hesitate to invite northern nomadic tribes of various ethnic origins to come and settle in Northern China. During sixteen years of incessant warfare the once mercenary nomadic forces became independent and their chiefs established regimes of their own. The Jin government, weakened by years of political instability and raging war, was no longer able to defend the state against the attacks of the hostile barbarians, let alone take any decisive action towards expelling this threat out of China proper. In 311 AD and 316 AD barbarian armies seized both capitals of the Jin, bringing about the final collapse of the dynasty which started to crumble soon after the death of Wudi in 290 AD.

The defeated Jin regime found shelter in the South where Sima Rui 司馬睿, one of the princes of the blood, proclaimed himself emperor. Surrounded by the once powerful families of northern refugees, he relied on their support and support of the southern elite houses of Jiangnan 江南 area and managed to accomplish partial restoration of the imperial power. The dynasty continued to rule from Jiankang 建康 (present day Nanjing) the whole of Southern China till 420 AD and became known as the Eastern Jin (*Dong Jin* 東晉). Although nominally remaining the same dynasty, political reality in the south was very different from the situation known in the northern capitals. Character of the imperial rule was not to be the same any more. Ruling with support of mighty families, which claimed for themselves certain share of power, the emperor was no longer able to wield his authority without limit and was compelled to share it with his courtiers. Thus the pattern was set, which survived with some changes until the new unification of China in 589 AD.

Here we get an answer to the second question concerning the topic of the thesis: Why the system of titled nobility? Scholars and students whose research concerns history of Chinese Middle Ages, sooner or later encounter one of the peculiar features of this epoch, the great families, often labelled as noble or aristocratic. Members of these families served in official posts at the imperial court, more or less, continuously for many generations, their

social standing remaining remarkably stable, regardless of all dynastic changes and political upheavals. Men of the same famous surnames filled the foremost court offices and their biographies are to be found in all official Chinese histories from the Eastern Han onwards. When dealing with these families, scholars usually speak about powerful aristocratic clans which dominated contemporary society and monopolized politics of the court. However, Professor Albert E. Dien observed that: "...there is much evidence that a re-examination of precisely these assumptions is in order and that an argument can be made... that during this period the putative "powerful aristocratic clans" were neither powerful, nor aristocratic, nor even clans."² Their social standing was not derived directly from hereditary titles or landowning, as was the case with European aristocracy and as their alleged power was concerned, the fact that none of these families had ever established any imperial dynasty of their own, speaks for itself.³

The group of elite families of the highest social standing and political power was by no means constant, yet the number of families which survived and thrived during the whole medieval period is rather limited. Scholars are usually more interested in following the ups and downs of the more successful families throughout the history or focus on the periods and dynasties when the so called *menfa* 門閥 families⁴ dominated the Chinese political world. As far as I am aware, there has not been a study dedicated exclusively to the Western Jin Dynasty elite families. Such a study might be helpful, not only for better understanding of the political and social history of the Western Jin but also for clarifying the process of establishing the *menfa* government of the later dynasties, for the Western Jin was a crucial period when families active in the court service, as well as locally prominent houses, transformed themselves and gradually became "the aristocratic clans" as we know them from the Southern dynasties.

The present study will focus on ennoblement system and families that held hereditary noble titles created during the Western Jin dynasty (266-316 AD). This titled nobility is not necessarily identical with the great *menfa* houses of the southern courts; nevertheless some of these families survived all the political changes of the disunion and disappeared from the

² Dean, Albert E. (1991): p. 1.

³ For various characteristics of the powerful aristocratic clans and nature of Chinese Medieval elites see Johnson, David G. (1977), Mao Hanguang (1966, 1990), Ebrey, Patricia B. (1978), Grafflin, Dennis (1981, 1990), Fogel, Joshua (1985), Tanigawa Michio (1985), Holcombe, Charles (1989, 1994), Chenault, Cynthia L. (1999), Dien, Albert E. (1990), Mather, Richard B. (1990), Cui Xiangdong (2004), Su Shaoxing (1993 a,b,c), Fang Beichen (1999) and Tian Yuqing (2005).

⁴ *Menfa* is one of the terms used by medieval Chinese for powerful hereditary houses who dominated the court during the Six Dynasties period.

stage only after the fall of the Tang some six hundred years later. The system of ennoblement and especially the new Five Ranks System (*wudeng zhi* 五等制) introduced by the Sima family shortly before they took over the throne and established the Jin Dynasty were of vital importance to all court families in securing high and relatively stable social standing which in due course helped them to evolve into the *menfa* houses and survive all the political ups and downs of the ephemeral dynasties.

Facing the problem of many different definitions and various kinds of elite I have decided to focus my attention on the quite clearly defined group of families holding various noble titles, the titled nobility. According to Yang Guanghui during the Western Jin there was a strong connection between noble titles and sense of nobility, social exclusivity, wealth and political power. Outstanding position of the ennobled ministers and military commanders was also acknowledged by the Jin law. One of its parts, the *Zhuhou li* 諸侯律 (The Code for the Lords), sanctioned all kinds of preferential treatment regarding punishments for various crimes and offences committed by members of titled nobility. The same does apply for ritual behavior guided by special set of rules, the *Zhuhou li* 諸侯禮 (The Rites of the Lords), which stated their precedence over all other social groups with their position being second only to the ruler and his clan.⁵ The prominence of the titled nobility as the main part of the elite is also corroborated by the fact that almost all holders of noble titles we know of so far have their biographies in the *Jinshu* 晉書 (*History of the Jin*) and that almost all the important persons with biographies in the *Jinshu* hailed from one of the families holding a noble title. I am far from suggesting that the elite and titled nobility were in fact identical, but I do believe that the nobility probably formed majority of the highest stratum of the Western Jin society. Therefore, detailed study of the ennoblement system appears crucial for better understanding of elite families of the Western Jin as well as relationship between the state and the elite.

In my research I will rely mainly on primary historiographical sources such as *Jinshu* dynastic history, *Sanguozhi* (*Records of the Three Kingdoms*) and some fragments of older, contemporary or almost contemporary historical works cited by Pei Songzhi 裴松之 in his commentary to *Sanguozhi*. I would like to elucidate the nature of Western Jin ennoblement system by following fortunes and careers of titled nobles and interpreting official documents, imperial edicts or communications submitted to the throne discussing various problems connected with creation of noble dignities. The Western Jin were actually the first dynasty which introduced full-fledged system of ennoblement combining various traditions and

⁵ Yang Guanghui (2004): pp. 172-194.

precedents of all previous dynasties up to the ancient Zhou. In the first part of my thesis I would like to explain how the system of titled nobility came into being and in how it managed to integrate these preceding traditions. I will especially focus on the introduction of the five ranks as a part of gradual usurpation process culminating with establishing of the new dynasty. I will also try to trace later development of the institution during the reign of Emperor Wudi with his ingenious use of ennoblement for asserting legitimacy of the rightful Son of Heaven as well as consolidation of positions of the royal family and loyal followers vis-à-vis former court families of the Wei.

In the second part I would like to examine how the ennoblement system actually worked which might help to explain connection between noble title and privileged social standing which some of the Jin families were able to maintain for generations. Under what circumstances could one hope for a noble title and what did such a title actually mean for the family? What profits and privileges did it bring and on what conditions could a noble dignity be actually inherited? These are some of the important questions I shall try to answer. The regular bestowals of noble titles upon meritorious subjects may have been of great benefit to non-royal court families, however, we shall not forget that the ennoblement system was in the first place a governmental institution. Therefore, it is equally important to pay attention to its role in the politics of the dynasty as well as to different ways in which ennoblement was employed by the government. Careful and detailed examination of the contemporary sources would contribute to better understanding of the process of ennoblement and privileges connected with it. It would also enable us to estimate influence of the titled nobility and the role of this socially dominant group of elite families in the history of the Western Jin and subsequent period of the Southern Dynasties.

Chapter I

Delimiting the Subject – Defining Crucial Terms

Even in the European context the aristocracy or nobility are rather ambiguous terms, multilayered and multifaceted, which comprise many fundamentally different groups. There is no definition of nobility as an elite social group which could be indiscriminately applied to any of the national nobilities Europe wide, for speaking about European nobility, one may have in mind groups as varied and different as the aristocracy of the French *ancienne* regime, various nobilities of the Habsburg Empire, knights or princes of the Holy Roman Empire, aristocrats of the papal court or even boyars of Medieval Russia. There is no need to look for the exact equivalent, a group which would resemble the most realities of the Medieval China, for such effort would be absolutely futile from the very beginning. However, I find it useful to specify the meaning of some terms, point out the differences in concepts of nobility and explain how I understand and use this term in connection with China's medieval elite families.

Comparing terms aristocracy and nobility, David Crouch argues, that: "A nobility is a dominant group whose status is legally defined, while an aristocracy is the same group defined sociologically. So a nobility is a socially privileged group, whose privilege set it apart from others and was evident to contemporaries. An aristocracy, on the other hand, was a dominant group in society which drew its importance from its economic and social weights. As a group it is usually wider than the nobility in any generation, and its nature is more often evident to historians than to contemporaries."⁶ Therefore, we shall first ask how the medieval Chinese themselves envisaged their society and what terms they used to describe the upper layer.

Browsing through the contemporary sources, one does encounter almost confusing abundance of status terms applied more or less subjectively to the elite, however, there is one term used more frequently and perhaps even more generally than the others. *Shi* 士, which could be translated as *gentleman*, denotes a member of the upper stratum of society, often in juxtaposition to *shu* 庶, *a commoner*. While the medieval Chinese were quite aware of the boundaries between the two and were eager to discriminate between them, they were less

⁶ Crouch, David (2005): p. 3. Crouch is here summing up observations of Tim Reuter published in an article The Medieval Nobility in Twentieth-Century Historiography. In: Companion to Historiography, ed. M. Bentley. London 1997.

eager to explicitly state the difference. As David Johnson proved, there were no legal and institutional criteria which would stipulate the conditions of the membership in this group.⁷ While in Europe a gentleman, or gentilhomme, denoted someone whose father and grandfather were noble by birth and not even the ruler could make one out of someone unless the individual possessed the ancestors of noble descent,⁸ the Chinese *shi* was far less well defined term. Position of the *shi* was determined by their high culture standard and access to the offices in the state bureaucracy. Johnson argues that while *shi* was term most often used in referring to the upper class, there was no objective juridical status which would specify the standing of the *shi*. It is a "...conventional term denoting a loose category of people whose status is earned rather than a coherent group with ascribed status: an elite, not an aristocracy. This is not to deny that as time passed people began to think of the group of office and rank holders as a kind of hereditary class."⁹ If we accept the *shi* to be a general term denoting in the broadest possible sense a member of the elite, then we are still looking for terms referring to the uppermost strata of the elite, which would imply some concepts of aristocracy or nobility.

Being almost painfully conscious of all kinds of social distinctions and boundaries, which, nevertheless, may not appear as clear and pronounced to our eyes as to the eyes of contemporaries, authors of medieval sources provide great number of expressions denoting socially and politically preeminent groups of society. Richness of the vocabulary is confusing as the various terms overlap and one family could be described in different contexts with different terms. Some of the most frequently used are: *menfa* 門閥 (great bureaucratic houses), *mendi* 門第 (great houses), *shizu* 士族 (scholar-official families), *shizu* 世族 (hereditary families), *guizu* 貴族 (noble families), *youzu* 右族 (eminent families), *gaomen* 高門 (exalted houses) and *zhuxing* 著姓 (famous names).¹⁰ They all refer to a nobility of some kind, either national, or local, hereditary, official, or cultural. The meaning was by no means specified, connotations of these terms are varying greatly, ranging from denigrating and derogatory when the rising power of these families had been perceived as a threat to the interests of the state and other social groups, to reverential and respectful, revealing esteem and awe in which they were held once they began to be connected with central power.¹¹ All

⁷ Johnson, David G. (1977): pp. 6-17.

⁸ Francois Velde, www.heralica.org. History of the French Nobility.

⁹ Johnson, David G. (1977): p. 16.

¹⁰ The list and the translations of the terms are taken from Ebrey, Patricia B. (1978): p. 3.

¹¹ For explanation of some terms referring to the elite families during the Southern dynasties see Su Shaoxing (1993a): pp. 1-2; for a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the terms denoting locally powerful families *haozu*

these terms were used rather freely and subjectively and while we still find it useful to refer to the Chinese terms, we will be using terms *nobility* and *aristocracy*, when speaking about the group of elite families in general. However, it is necessary to be aware of the fundamental differences in realities of medieval Europe and China, therefore the usage of term nobility demands further clarification

The European concept of nobility as a social group stems from division into three orders of society, a notion prevalent throughout the Middle Ages, according to which priests and monks pray, nobles and rulers defend the society with their military force and peasants till the soil and work for the other two. The whole legal concept of nobility, with privileges attached to it, was based on the service rendered to a sovereign, or any liege lord. A noble was expected to provide kind of help, by fighting for his lord in times of need. In return for this military service the nobles had been rewarded by lands and by certain political and social privileges, their lands being exempted from taxes.¹² “A noble order had come into existence in France by the end of the twelfth century and throughout much of Europe by the end of the fourteenth century. Its origins were primarily, though not exclusively, military... Noble status was acquired primarily by birth. Though this status was essential, however it was not sufficient: it had to be defended and upheld by the maintenance of a lifestyle that was self-evidently noble.”¹³

Apart from the military character of the European nobility, there were other features peculiar to this social group, such as service at the court in honourable positions, living only on honourable occupations which were state-sanctioned as acceptable for someone of the noble blood, and ownership and occupation of landed estates, original fiefs bestowed by the sovereign on members of his entourage in lieu of their future services, their loyalty and fealty. Even though not all members of European nobility owned any landed property, and the maintenance of their noble status was not endangered by the fact, nevertheless, the land and its possession still loomed large in the eyes of European nobility, as Scott and Storrs comment: “The attractions of a landed estate and the social and economic power that this

豪族 during the Han see Cui Xiangdong (2004): pp. 43-79. Xiang mentions altogether as much as 94 expressions used during the both parts of the Han dynasty and later. He argues that the changes in the vocabulary mirror changes in society and in character of the *haozu* families, their gradual merging with central power through serving in the offices and their being accepted by the state as well as society in general.

¹² Interestingly enough, the titles awarded to titled nobility in China also used to have distinctly military character, being bestowed in reward for military merits mostly to successful generals and army commanders. With the Confucian virtues becoming the ideal the elite society tried to live up to, the whole concept changed and the focus shifted to merits and exploits more civil in nature. Nevertheless, as we shall see the military achievement remained the main way for obtaining a noble title even during the Jin dynasty.

¹³ Scott, H. M., Storrs, Christopher (1995): p. 9-10.

conferred were... considerable and their possession everywhere the aim of the nobility as a whole.”¹⁴

While the European nobility could be defined as: “... a distinct group within society distinguished primarily by the social and legal privileges which it enjoyed and by its position as an important and often dominant landowner.”¹⁵ the nobility of medieval China was more or less defined in the same terms, except the fact that landownership was not prerequisite for attaining the high social status and legal privileges pertained only to the part of nobility holding noble titles. The Chinese elite families were no landed nobility. Some of them were great land owners and land might have been important at certain stages in the development of the elite families, nonetheless, it was not crucial in sustaining the position of eminence and social exclusivity which made these families conspicuous throughout the age of disunity.¹⁶ Nor could we imagine the Chinese aristocracy having some distinctly military qualities. Despite the fact that its members occasionally were in command of military forces, either private or state ones, pronounced civil character of the families, necessary in the moment when the process of recruitment for office, the only factor which really mattered in maintaining the social status of a family, was based on civil virtues and Confucian learning, speaks against such an assumption.¹⁷ Whatever the differences, we will use the term nobility in the sense of belonging to a big elite family, or being a member of an elite *per se*.

There is, however, more than one concept of nobility. Besides nobility as a distinct social group we can also think about nobility as “... a *quality*, a legal characteristic of the individual, which was held or acquired in specified ways, and which conferred specified rights and privileges.”¹⁸ And this quality was hereditary. In Europe no one could lose one’s noble status, because one was born with it, had it running through one’s veins as noble blood, inherited from one’s noble ancestors. European aristocrats may have lost their titles, their standing, their privileges and their property, but never could they lose the nobility itself. No one, not even the ruler could deny their noble status. On the other hand, nobility as a hereditary quality did not exist in China. Although Medieval Chinese society did attach great importance to the family background and origin and fussed about pedigree to an extent

¹⁴ Ibid: p. 10.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ For the landed property of the aristocratic families and their regional base see Ebrey, Patricia B. (1978): pp. 15-33; for the formation of the magnate families and gradual shift from a regional-oriented to centre-integrated see Mao Hanguang (1990): pp. 73-89.

¹⁷ For the importance of official service as the main source of social preeminence of the Chinese medieval aristocratic houses see Johnson, David G. (1977): pp. 19-31, 123-126; on development of Nine Ranks system of office recruitment see Grafflin, Dennis (1990): p. 149-155.

¹⁸ Velde, Francois, www.heralica.org. History of the French Nobility.

bordering on obsession, it was not the same thing. Members of the elite families did not inherit the quality of nobility. What they did inherit was a name which commanded respect and certain potential to stand up to the expectations and demands such a name laid on its bearer. They were born into privileged class but if they wanted their family to continue figuring on the list of the most eminent families of the realm, they had to renew the claim to this eminent social position again and again by showing their worth in service to the government and emperor. Birth into an elite family could mean privileged life and privileged access to the office but it could not secure it in every case. A son of a member of elite got into his first office because his father was high official himself, and as such, had a special privilege of naming his son or younger brother as a candidate for minor appointment. It had nothing to do with the fact that both the son and the father belonged to a noble, that is elite family. Theoretically, any incumbent of a high enough office could use the same privilege, whatever his family's status might have been. If someone's father lacked an office of required rank, his son had no chance of entering the bureaucracy in the privileged way, even though he could have hailed from a long established family lineage of a well known name boasting of many illustrious ancestors. Once members of a branch failed to enter bureaucracy, they lost the opportunity to renew their claims to social importance as well as prospect of their respective family or branch surviving in the ranks of elite. In a few generations they disappeared from the scene, while more successful bearers of the same surname may thrive for centuries.

However, there was a legally defined group among the elite of Chinese Middle Ages which resembled certain kind of European nobility as a social group with its juridically based status, and even possessed nobility as a hereditary quality of its own kind. This group is seldom mentioned in the sources under its comprehensive appellation; nevertheless, proofs of its existence are quite abundant and omnipresent. I propose to call this group titled nobility, nobility in a narrower sense of a group possessing quality of nobility brought by a title received from the emperor as a reward for rendered services. Titled nobility is my rendering of the Chinese term *zhuhou* 諸侯. This term will sound familiar to anyone even casually acquainted with the history of ancient China. It was originally used for all the feudal princes, rulers of the feudatories of the Zhou period and kings, dukes and marquises of later independent states during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods. However, the meaning has shifted considerably as the centralized imperial government with strong control over the whole realm set in, and during the Han and Six Dynasties *zhuhou* denotes a group of

holders of noble titles from the imperial princes down to the purely honorary titles of lords of the royal domain (*guanneihou* 關內侯) and lords outside the passes (*guanwaihoughou* 關外侯).

Nobility was a distinct quality of this group, quality conferred by a title. As all the titles of the *zhuhou* were hereditary, once a title was granted, hereditary nobility was bestowed with it. Nobility was connected entirely with the title and conferred only on the title holder; nevertheless, some of the privileges, which came with the title, were enjoyed also by other members of the family. However, all the titles and hence all the privileges they could bring, depended on the goodwill and grace of the emperor. Therefore, titled nobility of the medieval China was no independent hereditary social class. On the contrary, it was totally dependent on the favour of the emperor. The emperor could easily bestow a title and corresponding social privileges, but the title could be forfeited even more easily through committing an offence or failing in a duty to the emperor. The sovereign, or more abstractly, the central authority remained the sole arbiter of which family would enter the ranks of titled nobility, which one would remain there and for how long. Unlike the European titled nobility, whose “noble status and wealth were transmitted across the generations by inheritance and did not depend upon external political and economic circumstances,”¹⁹ every dynastic change in China meant a dire threat to any family of the titled nobility. More often than not this threat proved to be real and great changes occurred in the ranks of titled nobility, with families being stripped off their hereditary dignities and losing the noble titles, being replaced by new bunch of people who had been instrumental in establishing of the new dynasty. Only those, who were quick to realize that the wind of change was blowing, and managed to ingratiate themselves with the future masters, supporting their cause and thereby earning a new right to the position they had already enjoyed under the previous regime, were able to survive in the ranks of titled nobility. Such periodical reshuffling and membership changes were unthinkable in case of European titled nobility, which was generally surviving not only the changes of the ruling houses but even the fall of the monarchies.

Nobility of these titled aristocrats depended on title and their status was hereditary insomuch that the title itself was hereditary. The important privileges, political, juridical, economic and social in nature, were conferred just on the holder of the title and his immediate family members. Once he lost the title, he lost also the status of nobility and the corresponding privileges. However, he may still have been considered a member of the elite and his family may have continued to be regarded as a noble hereditary house, as long as its

¹⁹ Scott, H. M., Storrs, Christopher (1995): p. 10.

members endeavoured to renew the family's claim to social importance by pursuing proper Confucian learning and career in the offices of the state. This rather confusing situation might be more comprehensible when we recall the differences between a nobility and an aristocracy. While all the elite families and hereditary houses may be considered as aristocracy, only a small part of them has ever acquired a noble title and entered the ranks of nobility proper. On the other hand, not all title holders hailed from the distinguished and long-lived families of aristocracy. Many a military man or an upstart favourite of the throne was awarded noble title as reward for services or token of imperial favour. Whereas it is true that majority of the families holding and inheriting noble titles belonged at the same time to the larger group of aristocratic families or elite in general, the two groups, titled nobility and aristocracy, were by no means identical.

It is also possible to draw a parallel to Europe, where the titled nobility formed just the highest echelon of the whole social class. Majority of the European noble families in all countries belonged to untitled nobility or aristocracy. In describing the French nobility, Francois Velde argues that the title used to be attached to certain land or territory and acquired with it in a process of enfeoffment or grant. Nobility as a status and personal quality were therefore separate from noble title, although nobility was a pre-condition for bearing a title of nobility.²⁰ That means that there were much more noble families than titles available and majority of all noble families thus were untitled, forming nobility in a broader sense of aristocracy, same as elite families of Chinese Middle ages.

The *zhuhou* or the titled nobility of the Jin dynasty comprises three kinds of noble titles *fengjue* 封爵, all bestowed in the same procedure of ennoblement, that is conferred by an imperial edict *zhao* 詔, carefully ranked and differentiated in terms of various privileges, degree of power they could bring to their holder as well as dignity and respect which they commanded. Foremost place was occupied by the imperial princes, holders of title *wang* 王,²¹

²⁰ Velde, Francois, www.heralica.org. History of the French Nobility.

²¹ Although *wang* 王 is more often translated as a *king*, I prefer to use *prince* instead, as status of a *wang* has changed considerably with the unification and centralization of the empire. Once the title of the supreme ruler of the Shang and Zhou and later used as a title of an independent sovereign of the feudatory states during the Warring States period, it was used again under the new Han regime, endowed though with a brand new meaning. The Han Empire was divided into commanderies and princely fiefs or territories. These apanages carved out from the empire were given to younger sons of Emperor Gaozu to rule. Initially the princes enjoyed quite extensive independence, but with gradual centralization of the empire, their privileges were curtailed, their territories decreased and their standing was reduced to formal rulers, mere figures with almost no authority over consigned territory living of an allowance from the revenue of their so called princely fief *wangguo* 王國. A *prince* thus neatly combines two meanings which are both apt in describing position of Chinese medieval *wangs*: First, a son of the monarch, or more generally any member of the royal family or ruling dynasty in a sense of the French *prince du sang*, prince of the blood, and secondly, a ruler of a certain territory, sometimes independent,

a dignity which was during the Jin dynasty reserved almost exclusively for the prince of the blood.²² Second group are the so called Five Ranks Titles *wudeng* 五等爵, for which I propose to use term *peerage*. It is the peerage which will concern us most as the best documented and most often mentioned group of titled nobility in all surviving sources. Below the peerage stand lesser noble titles known collectively as the *liehou* 列侯 (lordships) which were also hereditary but the privileges and benefices in terms of land revenue which came with a *liehou* title were less distinguished and some of the titles were purely honorific, lacking any grant of land revenue, which was bestowed with princely as well as peerage dignities.

Formally, no wide distinction existed between the titles of princes and the peerage in terms of rules of their creation and character of these dignities, process of ennoblement being the same, some provisions of the imperial edicts even applied to a certain degree to both categories, but both concepts stemmed from different traditions and their reinstitution served different ends. Besides, strict exclusivity of a princely title and its practical unattainability for anyone who was not of the blood royal, made this title a dignity which may have been coveted by, yet was definitely not related to any of the noble families whatsoever. It is interesting, though, that while the ranks of imperial princes remained exclusive preserve of the imperial kin, they were neither the only option opened for a kinsmen in his search for a title, nor even the most common option indeed, as many titles of dukes and marquises were created for members of the cadet branches of the imperial house of Sima and its many princely lines, who thus formed part of the peerage. I have already dealt with this imperial peerage of the blood elsewhere, together with the princes, therefore the present study is focused only on the non-royal title holders of the peerage ranks and holders of the *liehou* lordships.²³

who is nevertheless in the title hierarchy at least theoretically subordinated to a higher authority of either king (Prince of Wales in the United Kingdom, Prince of Asturias in Spain or princes in the Italian kingdoms of Naples and Two Sicilies) or emperor (princes of the Holy Roman Empire).

²² Exception from the rule that only a cognate relative of the imperial house, bearing the same surname of Sima, and later only son of an emperor could be created a prince, was the last emperor of the Cao Wei dynasty. After he had abdicated in favour of Sima Yan, Emperor Wudi of Jin, he was created Prince of Chenliu commandery 陳留郡王, with the title being hereditary in this line of the Cao dynastic house. The lineage of the princes of Chenliu eventually survived the upheavals at the beginning of the 4th century and disappeared only with the fall of the Eastern Jin in 420 AD. They enjoyed privileged position in the court hierarchy and in the order of precedence came even before the most senior of all Sima princes. Hrubý, Jakub (2007): p. 48, note 105.

²³ I attempted to analyze the imperial house of Sima and especially the position of the princes, structure of the dynastic house, and bestowing of the titles and offices upon members of the imperial kin in a study *Sima, vládnoucí rod dynastie Jin. Mocenské postavení knížat z císařského rodu a role, kterou sehrála v dějinách dynastie* [Sima, the Ruling House of the Jin Dynasty. Status of the Princes of the Blood and the Role They Have Played in the History of the Dynasty]. Praha: Orientální ústav AV ČR 2007.

Why to use the term *peerage* in connection with medieval Chinese titled nobility? The titled nobility of Europe was by no means uniform group, for the rules of ennoblement and traditional usage of noble titles differed from country to country, being determined by diverse origins of national aristocracies and dependent on different systems of government as well as social conditions prevailing in the respective region. In France a title was attached to specific piece of land, a fief, and titles were thus borne just by one person at a time, because only one person could own the property to which such a title was attached.²⁴ On the other hand, nobility in Northern Europe and Germany as well as in Bohemia received titles in a different way and under different conditions. The titles were unattached to a land and usually the same title of the same rank was borne by all members of the noble family.²⁵ Chinese system resembles more that of France or England where peerage as concept originated in the first place, because the title was always held by one individual at one time, being hereditary in the direct line of his descendents, usually for the eldest son born of the main wife. Other offspring, brothers and cousins of the title holder were not considered noble in a sense of being entitled to any juridical or other privileges unless they had a title of their own. In France one family might also have more than one title and the head of the family might distribute them among his heirs. However, in China one person could bear just one title and one only. Accumulation of impressive titles which is by no means rare in Europe where a person could boast three ducal titles, a marquisate and two comital titles at the same time was quite inconceivable in medieval China.²⁶ One might have got promoted to a better sounding title, or one's apanage might have been increased, but if that was a case, than the recipient of such favour ceased to use the old title and was known under a new one. Depending on the imperial favour, the old title was either abolished altogether or could have been bestowed, as a mark of exceptional favour or distinction for the services rendered to the dynasty, on a younger son or brother who

²⁴ Velde, Francois, www.heralica.org. History of the French Nobility.

²⁵ For example, when the Kinský family was raised to the rank of counts (Reichsgraf) in 1628, the title of Count Kinský was not connected with any particular land and all members of the family were entitled to use this title. On the other hand, according to the French model, a member of the noble family was known just by his family name, as simple *seigneur* and only in case that he bore a title, was he known as count or duke of XY. Lets take famous French family de Rohan as an example. In sixteenth century three brothers were all known as de Rohan, but they bore different noble titles: Louis VII. de Rohan was Duke of Montbazon, Pierre de Rohan Prince of Guémené, and Alexandre de Rohan was Marquis of Marigny. Other members of the family were left with no titles and were using just their family name de Rohan.

²⁶ For example the head of the Gordon-Lennox family bears titles and dignities of Duke of Richmond, Earl of March, and Baron of Settrington in the Peerage of England and Duke of Lennox, Earl of Darnley and Baron Methuen of Torbolton in the Peerage of Scotland. But the real record holders among European nobility were Spanish grandees, each of them equipped with plethora of noble titles referring to dignities acquired under several crowns which were in possession of Spanish kings. For example certain Don Rodrigo de Silva y Mendoza (1614-1675) held titles of Duke of Pastrana, Duke of Francavila and Duke of Extremera, Prince of Melito and Prince of Eboli, Marquess of Algecilla and Marquess of Almenara, Count of la Chamusca, Count of Ulma and Lord of Mandayuna, Miedes and Balciense.

was not in the direct line of succession to the new title and who would otherwise remain a commoner.²⁷

The concept of *peerage*, or *pairie*, emerged in France in the Middle Ages as a special distinction within the system of the French nobility. The title of *pair de France* was held by and reserved for the highest-ranking and greatest members of the nobility. The vast majority of titled nobility in France were no *pairs*, because it was an extraordinary honour granted only to very few.²⁸ In England the peerage gradually evolved into the whole system of titled nobility and the word is used either generally and collectively for the entire body of titles, or individually referring to a specific title. As in China, all honours and peerage dignities springs from the sovereign who stands high above the peerage. The peer is someone holding a peerage, that is a title, and it is this peerage dignity which is raising him above commoners, other people, even members of his own family, who don't have any title of their own.²⁹

Peers in the *wudeng* system 五等制 were of five ranks, derived from the titles used already under the Zhou dynasty for rulers of dependent feudatory states, corresponding neatly with European or British nomenclature: *gong* 公 (duke), *hou* 侯 (marquis), *bo* 伯 (count), *zi* 子 (viscount) and *nan* 男 (baron).³⁰ As in the case of the British peerage system, these peers were hereditary and the dignity of a peerage continued as long as the line of direct male descendants of the first holder existed.³¹ Once the heirs died out and there was not even a

²⁷ In the British peerage some of the titles of the father could be bestowed on his eldest son and heir as a courtesy title. It is usually the second highest title and being used as a courtesy title means that it does not bring right to sit in the Parliament, only certain privileges in terms of order of precedence. Thus, the eldest son and heir to the Duke of Beaufort bears a courtesy title of Marquis of Worcester, the heir of Duke of Bedford is Marquis of Tavistock and the heir of Duke of Richmond uses the title of Earl of March while his son, grandson to a duke, is entitled to a courtesy title of Baron of Settrington. Even though Chinese peers could not hold more than one title, and their sons and heirs had to wait for their fathers to die before they could succeed to any title, emperor Wudi in order to establish proper distinction between first-borns and sons born to concubines, proclaimed a special edict by which he created a sort of uniform courtesy title for all heirs of peerage dignity. This title was *shizi* 世子, literally *a son which would inherit*. So, a son and heir to the duke of Julu 鉅鹿公 was known as *shizi* of Julu 鉅鹿世子. This title was very similar to German *Erbprinz* used for heirs of ducal or princely dignities within the Holy Roman Empire.

²⁸ Velde, Francois, www.heralica.org. History of the French Nobility.

²⁹ In the case of British peerage even a member of the royal family is considered to be a commoner unless he has been awarded a peerage dignity. Important aspect of the British peerage was their direct connection with the Parliament. Their title entitled them to sit in the House of Lords, a fact which is of course entirely lacking in case of medieval Chinese titled nobility, therefore any discussion of this aspect at this place would be to my opinion utterly pointless.

³⁰ As we are dealing here with a system which, after all, resembles the British peerage only superficially, I prefer to use *count* as rendering of *bo* instead of British *earl* which is too indigenously connected with the United Kingdom, and more international spelling of *marquis* for Chinese term *hou*, instead of medieval form *marquess* still used with the titles of British peerage.

³¹ Whereas in Europe some peerage dignities were hereditary even in the female line of descent, in China peerage was reserved for heirs male only. There was a special noble title of *jun* 君, a *lady* of XY, used for high born women, usually with connection to the throne, mothers of empresses and thus grandmothers to the emperors. This title was not hereditary, though.

chance of having some distant bearer of the same family name adopted, the peerage became extinct. There were also cases of forfeiture of a peerage, meted out as a punishment for taking part in conspiracies, committing offenses against the throne, taking part in an armed uprising against central authority, or trespassing against moral code of behavior dictated by Confucian teaching, the *li* 禮.

At the time of establishing the *pairie* system, the peerage was attached to specific territorial jurisdiction, a fief, and henceforth was transmittable or inheritable only with the fief. The peer originally administered the place associated with his title and collected the revenue, but later on title and land became separated and titles were created in the ranks of British peerage with no corresponding territories having been given to their incumbents.³² Chinese model is somewhere in between. The most important thing is creation of a title. But there is also an allowance which is given to the title holder to be collected as a part of revenue of certain plot of land, usually administrative unit on a prefecture (*xian* 縣) or commandery (*jun* 郡) level, which corresponds with the title, as title uses the name of this very place. The title holder did not exercise any direct authority over this piece of land and his rights in connection with this “fief” *guo* 國 were restricted to a claim to a portion of the land revenue. We can argue that if in France “the titles of nobility were a rank attached to a certain pieces of land,”³³ then in medieval China the rank itself was more important and land was just attached to it as a place name forming a part of the title. We shall use the words fief or domain for this piece of land, even though the peers did not exercise any authority over their fief and majority of them have never as much as set foot in their allotted territory, let alone resided there. These domains – duchies *gongguo* 公國, marquises *houguo* 侯國, counties *boguo* 伯國, viscountcies *ziguo* 子國 and baronies *nanguo* 男國 were just certain pieces of land attached to a respective noble dignity, administered on principally the same basis as normal prefecture *xian* and commanderies *jun* by officials named from the center. Peers had no rights over the population in their domain, but they were entitled to a special household formed by several kinds of domain officials who oversaw everything from the right education and cultivation of a peer, running the household, and maintaining proper ritual conduct to matters of the revenue received from the central government. The peerage domains resemble appanages of Medieval

³² With no land attached to a title, there was, of course, no jurisdiction and no right to any revenue. There are even titles the appellation of which was created not from a toponym but from a surname of a family. Thus we can see a Russell as Duke of Bedford, or a Manners as Duke of Rutland, a Fermor being Earl of Pomfret, but a Gage being created Viscount Gage, a Ruthven Baron Ruthven and a Gray being created Earl Grey.

³³ Velde, Francois, www.heralica.org. History of the French Nobility.

France, where sovereign granted a territory from the Crown lands to maintain a dependent member of a ruling family, except the fact, that French appanages entailed direct and rather independent control over the whole appanage, which might have become a threat to the central royal power.³⁴ While in medieval China the princes of the blood did enjoy quite considerable control over their princely domains, this was certainly not the case with the peers. Therefore, I prefer not to use the term appanage as denoting the territory allotted to a peer of either rank. Instead, I will use the word apanage for the allowance granted to a peer, based on revenue from the allotted land. A peer was not a lord in sense of a master over the land and population of his domain, he was a mere apanagist living on an allowance, apanage, bestowed on him by the state, in the form of precisely defined portion of revenue, which was not even kept directly by apanagist, whose officials collected it, but redistributed in form of salary from the state granaries and warehouses.

The size of domain was determined by the rank of the title, duchies being the largest and baronies the smallest of the fiefs. Each grade corresponding to one of the five titles had fixed number of miles (*li* 里), which the domain should encompass. At the same time, the domain was also defined by number of families or households *hu* 戶 allotted to a title and its domain with number decreasing from a duchy to a barony.³⁵ The allowance bestowed on an appanagist came from revenue produced by these households. Usually, not all the population of a certain territory connected with a title was given under the nominal supervision of the household of a peer, as commanderies and prefectures were not unified in terms of population and area, therefore the domain of prescribed size corresponding to a ranked title was only rarely matching any existing area in the given system of local government. When a local government unit was larger or more populous than required quotas for the peerage dignities, only a portion of it was allotted to a newly created title. In case of a county or a commandery being too small and underpopulated, households and territory of the surrounding areas were added to the newly created peerage dignity. This fact, however, was not reflected in bestowed

³⁴ About French appanages and origin of this word see: Velde, Francois: www.heralica.org. Appanages in the French Monarchy.

³⁵ Many titles of European nobility were more or less traditional, not ranked in respect of the wealth or amount of land owned by a title holder's family. Thus, there might have been counties as big as duchies and barons who were more powerful and wealthier than many a duke or marquis. However, it is interesting to note that even in Europe there appeared efforts to connect title of a certain rank with certain amount of land or income. A royal edict issued by the French king Henri III. in 1575 AD stipulated minimal land revenue attached to a title, which should form a basis for bestowing one of the five peerage titles. Velde, Francois, www.heralica.org. History of the French Nobility.

title, which always derived from the name of the original territory, however small it might have originally been.³⁶

The fief and revenue were aspects in which the peerage differed from the lowest ranking group of noble titles, the *liehou* lordships. These were well established noble titles, inherited from the system of the Qin; they were originally used during the Han and later Cao Wei as the only titles available for non-royals, because higher titles of princes and peers were exclusively reserved for the members of the ruling house. Therefore, members of the hereditary families could have claimed only titles bellow the peerage. This situation has changed with the accession of the new dynasty. The ranks of the peerage were reinvented as a useful tool for maintaining loyalties and winning over powerful supporters for the Sima enterprise, as the Simas instigated the opening of the peerage ranks for any member of the court circles worthy of such distinction, the sole qualification being the adherence to the right cause. With the appearance of the new social dignities the prestige and the social standing of the *liehou* titles sank considerably.

All *liehou* titles fell into two categories, from *xianhou* down to *tinghou* were titles which still provided not only social distinction but also an income for their bearer, while *guanneihou* and *guanzhonghou* were rather honorary distinctions (so called *cijue* 賜爵) awarded only for the life time with no hereditary privileges attached to it and usually no income in form of revenue from a particular piece of land.³⁷ Ban Gu 班固 in his *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (*History of the Later Han*) clearly tried to differentiate between the *liehou* titles with and without revenue by using different verbs referring to the act of ennoblement. With titles of *xianhou*, *xianghou* and *tinghou* Ban Gu used the verb *feng* 封 – traditional expression for enfeoffment, meaning of which has, however, by the time of the Han dynasty slightly shifted from *to enfeoff* to that of *to create* (a dignity) or *to ennoble*, while with honorary titles of *guanneihou* and *guanzhonghou* the verb *ci* 賜 is used, which means *to grant*, *to bestow* (an honour or a title). Even though this verbal distinction is not used in later sources, including

³⁶ Yang Guanghui (2004): pp. 29-36, 67-78; Zhang Xuefeng (2001): pp. 29-42.

³⁷ I rather use usually, as Zhang Xuefeng explains that there is still some disagreement among scholars regarding the question of *guanneihou* receiving apanages. He argues that according to the system, *guanneihou* were purely honorific titles with no income attached, however, in reality, occasionally even the *guanneihou* could receive an apanage as an extraordinary privilege and mark of honour in form of grant of revenue from the so called *fief-town* (*revenue town*) *shiyi* 食邑. Nevertheless, if that was the case, such grant could not have been inherited and the title lapsed with the death of its holder with revenue reverting back to the Crown possessions. See Zhang Xuefeng (2001): p. 30, 32.

Jinshu, the reality which the distinct usage of the verbs *feng* and *ci* had once mirrored, remained the same.³⁸

Unlike the peerage holders who had their domains precisely defined in terms of expanse of land and number of households working for them, the grants of revenue for three *liehou* ranks entitled to some income and heredity were bestowed under slightly different conditions. Their “domains” were even more illusory than that of the peerages, there was no new administration set up with creation of a *liehou* title and no officials of the *liehou* household were actually named. There were no stipulations regarding the extent of land corresponding to different ranks, nor any regulation concerning number of households *hu* attached to the title. Prefecture lord (*xianhou* 縣侯) thus used name of a prefecture in his title without exercising any rights over the prefecture administration, which was run by the centrally appointed officials as any other prefecture. Domains of these lords were sometimes seemingly larger than fiefs of the peerage; in the Western Jin system quotas for a peerage marquisate ranged from 1600 to 1400 households, however, the sources mention creation of *liehou* titles awarded with some 6000 or even 10 000 households. The difference was in portion of the revenue allotted to the respective kinds of titles. Noble title holders never collected whole revenue; they received only a certain portion of it and while the peers enjoyed one third of the revenue produced by the number of households granted to their use when their title was created, the *liehou* title holders were entitled only to one tenth of the total revenue, which makes up for the seemingly huge gap in income going against the title hierarchy.³⁹

Unfortunate use of the same title, *hou* 侯 – usually translated as marquis - in both the *wudeng* peerage and the *liehou* ranks makes it sometimes difficult to distinguish a peer from a mere *liehou*, especially in case of peerage marquises and “marquises of prefecture” (*xianhou* 縣侯), as the important word *xian* 縣 – prefecture was often omitted when referring to a title holder. For example He Pan 何攀 was created Marquis of Xicheng prefecture 西城縣侯, but he also appears as Marquis of Xicheng 西城侯, a designation referring to a dignity of marquis in the ranks of peerage. The situation is even more confusing for us, as the same title of *marquis*, albeit with a specific modifier, is used for titles standing in the hierarchy much below of the lesser peerage titles of counts, viscounts, and barons. Thus a village marquis (*tinghou* 亭侯) could have been promoted to a viscount, which was considered a remarkable

³⁸ Yang Guanghui (2004): pp. 40-45.

³⁹ Zhang Xuefeng (2001): pp. 31-33; Yang Guanghui (2004): pp. 92-93.

promotion jumping over four ranks from *liehou* to peerage. As the *liehou* marquises stand way below the peerage, I would rather translate the word *hou* as a simple *lord* in a sense of the French *seigneur*, which was not used as a specific title in the peerage hierarchy, but rather as an honorary appellation for anyone possessing some landed estate. Therefore I will translate *xianhou* 縣侯 as a Prefecture Lord, *xianghou* 鄉侯 as a Township Lord, *tinghou* 亭侯 as a Village Lord, *guanneihou* 關內侯 as a Lord of the Royal Domain, and *guanzhonghou* 關中侯 as a Lord Inside the Passes.

The present study focuses on families of titled nobility; therefore we shall also explain how we perceive these families from the sociological point of view as kinship units. Chinese sources use many different terms such as *zong* 宗, *zu* 祖, *xing* 姓, *shi* 氏 and others when referring to the noble families throughout the whole period of middle ages. Like other terms used in the medieval sources, these are very loose and used rather randomly. Patricia Ebrey concludes her research on the Boling Cui 博陵崔氏 family with suggestion, that simple reading of “*kin*” would be more apt than *clan* or *lineage* as the reality behind these terms varied greatly and changed constantly from dynasty to dynasty: “...in the Han the Ts’uis were a loose grouping of local kin, in the late Northern Wei a closely defined aristocratic lineage, in the T’ang a scattered group of high status families of common patrilineal descent.”⁴⁰

As we will be dealing only with the Western Jin Dynasty, we may presume that character of these families has not changed much over such a short time span, and we still need some workable description of a family under focus, more precise than *kin*. So clan or lineage? Although Ebrey is right that we cannot refer to the families as clans or lineages in the strict sense of an organized kinship groups with common activities, we still can use more general definitions of both terms. In the scope of the present study, we understand a *clan* to be an unilineal kinship group, which is socially defined in terms of actual or purported descent from a common ancestors.⁴¹ A clan may be further segmented into subclans and lineages. On the other hand, *lineage* is also a unilineal descent group, either paternal (patrilineage) or maternal (matrilineage). “All members of such a group trace common ancestry to a single person... A lineage is exclusive in its membership and is normally corporate, its members exercising rights in common and being collectively subject to obligations. A lineage may comprise any number of generations but commonly is traced through five to ten.”⁴² The

⁴⁰ Ebrey, Patricia B. (1978): p. 116.

⁴¹ Encyclopaedia Britannica (1991), vol. 3: p. 43.

⁴² Encyclopaedia Britannica (1991), vol. 7: p. 375.

question is, how do the Chinese medieval families fit into these definitions and to what exactly we can apply both terms?

Apart of other things, all the families were defined by their surnames. Families bearing the same surname were considered to be descended from the common ancestor and members of the two families were seen as related to each other, no matter how distant the ancestors may have been in terms of time and blood connection. As number of Chinese surnames is rather limited, families used to add a place name, usually name of the commandery or prefecture in which their ancestors had settled or where the family burial ground with ancestral graves was located, as a kind of marker of their respective descent groups. This so called *choronym* (*benwang* 本望 or *junwang* 郡望) later became an indicator of an aristocratic family, a special *preomen* derived from the ancestral home, through which individual members of larger kinship group identified themselves. It was not necessarily referring to actual place of residence of the family and its members - indeed more often than not the families later ceased to have any connection with the place in *choronym* - but by using the *choronym* one was laying one's claim to membership in a certain well established descent group.⁴³ *Choronyms* were noble styles of medieval China, appendages of the family names distinguishing a commoner named Li from a Li of Zhaojun 趙郡李氏 or a Li of Longxi 隴西李氏, members of hereditary aristocratic houses.

In course of history, members of these families identified by the same surname and *choronym* may have dispersed due to the warfare and unfavourable political situation and settle in different regions of the empire. The knowledge of exact family connections and relations may have been forgotten, but awareness of the same origin of different lines was fostered by using the old *choronym* as kind of marker of common descent. When browsing through the sources, we can from time to time come across cases of two people using the same surname and *choronym* and still not being able to ascertain their exact family ties and lines of descent. Therefore, I think it appropriate to label these large descent groups identified by the same surname and *choronym* as clans.⁴⁴ These clans were formed by several lineages

⁴³ Johnson, David G. (1977): pp. 92-93.

⁴⁴ An analogy could be drawn to European medieval descent groups, whether we call them clans or lineages, which used heraldry as a marker of their common descent. In case of Bohemian medieval aristocracy, we can use word *rozrod* which is very akin in sense to a clan as I use it here. Several noble families were aware of their common descent, even though they might not have been certain about exact kinship ties. These families were grouped together in what we call *rozrod* named after first known common ancestor. Thus we speak about the *rozrod* of Vitek (Vítkovci), who was the ancestor of noble families of lords of Rožmberk, of Hradec, of Landštejn, of Ústí and of Stráž; or *rozrod* of Buzici comprising the noble families of lords of Šelmberk, lords of Hazmburk, lords of Rožmitál and lords of Valdek. All the families used the same figure in their coats of arms (the Vítkovci used a rose and the Buzici a head of a wild boar), differing only in colour or additional figures. For

bound together by awareness of common ancestry and bounds of clanship, but they were not forming one single enduring group with common interest.

The lineages apparently were more likely to share interests and work together in effort to attain their goals, however, they often lacked the degree of cohesion required by some precise definitions of the term *lineage*.⁴⁵ Even though these definitions may not apply to the specific case of Chinese medieval families, we will use this term in more general sense as a descent group that can demonstrate their common descent from a known apical ancestor, but members of which do not necessarily participate in the same ritual activities. In focusing on titled nobility, we will be more often dealing with individual lineages than clans, because we know much more about members of the main lines of descent within one family (or clan) who form one single lineage, or, as lineage structure is a branching process in which younger brothers find their own lesser lineages, several leading lineages. However, collateral cadet branches of the same family are less well documented, unless they later established lineage of their own by attaining high offices and ranks or receiving another noble title. Younger members or more distant relatives are often just mentioned by name and sometimes by their title and no particular details are known about their lives or careers; sometimes even their proper place in the genealogy of the lineage is not clear.

I find it appropriate to speak about the lineage while dealing with families of titled nobility, as the concept of lineage stresses the ties of consanguinity in historical perspective. The sense of continuity of blood line and inheritance of noble title in a vertical line connecting generation to generation of the bearers of noble titles and holders of high offices of state fostered an awareness of belonging to a privileged group of exclusive social standing. It was this line, which brought their claims to social preeminence and privileges, through connecting them to the past generations of illustrious ancestors. While lineage is basically another word for family, I may use both terms interchangeably. However, I will also use the word family in more particular sense of a unit of the lineage. Such concept of family stresses horizontal kinship ties in one single generation as opposed to vertical dimension of a lineage,

the use of heraldry as a marker of noble lineage in Medieval France and England see Crouch, David (2005): pp. 135-148.

⁴⁵ For example, according to Maurice Freedman a lineage “is a corporate group of agnates (minus their married sisters and plus their wives) who have a common ancestral hall or estate.... The lineage may be very large, or it may be quite small; its members may live in one community or live quite widely dispersed; but the lineage is by definition the only corporate descent group which acts together on a more than temporary basis, the only one which worships together, the only one to have common property.” Quoted from Johnson’s summary of Freedman’s thoughts. Johnson, David G. (1977): pp. 90-91. As Johnson proved in his study, medieval Chinese families were no lineages in the strict sense of Freedman’s definition, as they were not organised around common ritual activities as ancestral worship or maintaining the graves of the ancestors, and they had no common property. See chapter The Medieval Chinese Clan in Johnson, David G. (1977): pp. 89-119.

comprising relatives not only consanguineous, but also affinal, offering a glimpse into wide kinship connections and working of the marriage alliances network of endogamous social group of aristocratic hereditary houses.⁴⁶

Titled nobility is thus group of families and lineages defined by their surnames and *choronyms*, whose members were ennobled by the imperial court, that is the emperor issued an edict by which a title was created, either in the ranks of peerage or the *liehou* lordships, and conferred on an individual together with appropriate appanage corresponding to the rank of the bestowed title.

Before we start tracing gradual emergence and development of the ennoblement system it would be appropriate to introduce relevant primary sources available which were used in the process of writing this thesis and point to certain peculiar features of the medieval Chinese historiography and limits which its character imposes on our knowledge of the period. The main sources for the Western Jin period are two of the standard dynastic histories (*zhengshi* 正史), the *History of the Jin* (*Jinshu* 晉書) covering periods of both the Western and the Eastern Jin and also the Records of the Three Kingdoms (*Sanguozhi* 三國志) dealing with states of Wei, Shu and Wu which divided the empire after the fall of the Han in 220 AD. As many a lineage of the Jin titled nobility descended from generations of Han and Wei officials and some of the noble dignities were in fact bestowed already during the preceding dynasty of Wei by the Simas in their capacity as regents to the emperor *Sanguozhi* provides useful additional information about progenitors of the Jin title holders and their careers prior to the establishment of the dynasty.

Historiographical tradition of ancient China is proverbial for its richness and diversity of written sources available to historians. However, for the period of Chinese Middle Ages we are more or less dependent on official court or governmental compilations known as dynastic or standard histories. Great distance in time separating us from the period in question, together with certain peculiarities of the compilation process of a standard history are responsible for relative scarcity of contemporary historiographical works. Even though surviving catalogues of the imperial libraries which found their way into later compiled standard histories attest to rich historiographical output, both private and official, subsequent state-sponsored and state-controlled compilations overshadowed older works both in size and importance and indirectly caused their disappearance. The officially appointed team of officials-historians working under the aegis of the emperor often ransacked the imperial

⁴⁶ For interesting exposition of the concept of noble lineage and different meanings of this word in Medieval Europe see chapter The Power of Lineage in Crouch, David (2005): pp. 124-155.

archives rummaging through piles of official memoranda and government communication as well as private and official histories written so far and utilized all available sources from governmental and private libraries. Thus the official standard histories were often viewed as the cream of historiographical production and the original chronicles and histories gradually began to be considered redundant and obsolete, despite their obvious value as more or less contemporary testimony of the given period. They ceased to be copied and gradually disappeared as time and fires consumed imperial libraries one after another. The voluminous compilations of standard histories therefore became the most comprehensive source of information about early medieval Chinese history even though they were created even hundreds of years after the fall of the dynasties the history of which they were recording.

It is exactly this feature which makes them so valuable, as Endymion Wilkinson puts it: “The value of the earlier Standard Histories is greatly enhanced by the fact that many of the sources upon which they were based have since been lost and alternative sources are lacking. For these reasons the scissors-and-paste methods of some of their editors should be regarded as an asset.”⁴⁷ Thanks to the cumulative process of compilation the standard histories preserved many of the written sources which would otherwise have had no chance to survive in their physical form. The chronicle records are interspersed with many official documents quoted verbatim, presumably taken straight from the imperial archives and palace library, holdings of which were at disposal of the compilers. Governmental documents, memoranda to the throne, imperial edicts as well as analyses of current political situation and proposals of governmental policies were utilized side by side with private correspondence, poetry and treatises on various philosophical or ritual issues in order to underscore or explain certain events or certain deeds of historical personalities adding depth to often dry records of their lives and careers portrayed in individual biographies (*zhuan* 傳) which comprised majority of each standard history. The compilation practice may have undoubtedly preserved many an original document word for word, yet the very nature of the compilation process imposed certain limits on knowledge we can acquire through reading of the standard histories. We can never be sure what was omitted or discarded during the compilation process, deemed unnecessary or even unworthy of attention of future generations. The questions of what or who was or wasn’t included and why should always loom large in our minds when dealing with standard histories.

⁴⁷ Wilkinson, Endymion (1998): p. 497; for standard histories in general see the whole chapter – Ibid: pp. 491-507.

Even though there were many chronicles written before the beginning of the 7th century which were retrospectively labeled as standard histories it was in fact the *Jinshu* compiled in 644 AD⁴⁸ which stood right at the beginning of the tradition of state-sponsored compilations as joint undertaking of officially appointed team of historians working in the History Bureau (*shiguan* 史官). At the beginning of the Tang 唐 Dynasty (618-907 AD) writing or compiling of a history of the preceding dynasty became one of ritual steps establishing authority of the new dynasty as a successor of the legitimate imperial rule (*zhengtong* 正統). Being an heir to the tumultuous period of disunion the Tang tried to reinforce in a symbolic way actual unification of the realm through compilation of official histories for those of the preceding dynasties which still lacked *zhengshi* of their own which would at the same time provide historical explanation for the rise of the Tang as the legitimate imperial power. No less than eight standard histories were produced during the first century of the Tang rule but the importance of the Jin as the last dynasty to rule the whole of China was in fact preeminent for the legitimacy issue. The *Jinshu*, which was compiled under the aegis of Tang Emperor Taizong 唐太宗 (626-649 AD) by a team of court dignitaries and official historians headed by prominent meritorious minister Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 (578-648 AD), was perceived as an exemplar standard history mirroring accurately the past and illuminating various patterns and correlations of historical events. Understanding of these correlations should have served as a source of inspiration and guidance for future generations and as such was presented to Taizong's crown prince in earnest hope that the sovereign to be would pay attention to lessons of rise and fall of the dynasties and emulate models of proper conduct provided by the history.⁴⁹ As the function of the histories as mirrors of the past offering guidance for the future was dependant on the right understanding of the principles behind historical events, "the idea that history told the truth was keenly appreciated by rulers and historians ... [and] belief in the factual veracity continued to loom large in both official and private history and historiography in the Tang period."⁵⁰

While *Jinshu* represents a state-sponsored compilation created almost three hundred years after the fall of the Western Jin, *Sanguozhi* occupies the opposite end of an imaginary scale as a private work, only additionally labeled as standard history, which is nevertheless

⁴⁸ According to Wilkinson the compilation of the *Jinshu* was finished in 644 AD and the history was presented to Emperor Taizong in 646 AD. Wilkinson, Endymion (1998): p. 493; according to Ng and Wang it was only in 648 AD. Ng On-cho, Wang, Edward Q. (2005): p. 120.

⁴⁹ For Tang historiography see Ng, On-cho and Wang, Edward Q. (2005): pp. 108-128; for *Jinshu* see Ibid: p. 120.

⁵⁰ Ibid: p. 107

nearly contemporary to the recorded period being compiled shortly after the fall of Wu.⁵¹ Its author Chen Shou 陳壽 (233-297 AD) began writing his work as a private enterprise with no official support and the *Records* gained status of an official history only after Chen Shou's death. Due to the lack of available sources and highly charged political situation at the time of writing the author was compelled to omit certain important particulars and exercise remarkable degree of circumspection and discretion in referring to certain events as their protagonists were still living and wielding considerable power at court.⁵² Therefore, later generations deemed it necessary to fill in some of these omissions and gaps in Chen Shou's history and Liu Song 劉宋 Emperor Wendi 文帝 (424-453 AD) ordered Pei Songzhi 裴松之 (372-451 AD) to write a commentary to *Sanguozhi*. The work was finished in 429 AD and together with the *Records of the Three Kingdoms* represent truly remarkable and accomplished historiographical work unique in its temporal proximity to the recorded events for in the course of compilation Pei Songzhi consulted many contemporary sources unknown or inaccessible to Chen Shou, which he often quoted verbatim in order to elucidate difficult passages of the original text or offer a different view or perspective.⁵³ In this way Pei Songzhi utilized more than one hundred and fifty sources which are now irretrievably lost. The surviving passages of these sources provide wide range of invaluable additional information which is unfortunately lacking in case of later Tang compilations.

Even though the time gap between actual events and compilation of the Jin standard history minimized the danger of manipulation and tampering with the facts, which *Sanguozhi* was accused of, selective compilation process must be blamed for the loss of considerable amount of information. Most probably we will never know what was deliberately omitted and lost for the surviving fragments of the original contemporary works which the compilers presumably had at their disposal do not permit us to reconstruct their original form in its entirety, but it is sure that only those people and events considered important enough by the Tang to figure in the imperial compilation made it to the pages of *Jinshu* as we know it. It seems that majority of the Jin titled nobility passed into oblivion completely unnoticed. We know that there were allegedly some six hundred titles created in 264 AD when the peerages were first introduced. Two years later, when the Jin Dynasty was founded, there were some five hundred noble dignities, either surviving from the Wei or created anew, yet I was able to ascertain only less than two hundred noble dignities recorded in all biographies and basic

⁵¹ For the detailed introduction to *Sanguozhi* and its author Chen Shou see Cutter, Robert Joe and Crowell, William Gordon (1999): pp. 61-81; see also Ng, On-cho and Wang, Edward Q. (2005): pp. 84-87.

⁵² For examples see Cutter, Robert Joe and Crowell, William Gordon (1999): pp. 69-79.

⁵³ *Ibid*: p. 68; for Pei Songzhi see also Ng, On-cho and Wang, Edward Q. (2005): pp. 106-107.

annals (*benji* 本紀) of *Jinshu* and selected parts of *Sanguozhi* for the whole period of the Western Jin. Moreover, majority of these titles were actually created only after 266 AD.⁵⁴

The same selective scarcity of information pertains also to fortunes of various noble lineages which were lucky enough to have their name recorded in the standard history. The sources sometimes offer surprising details, yet these are often matter of chance. Being fairly focused on official careers of the Jin ministers, they offer only occasional glimpses of private or family life of these men. While we may know fairly well details of life and career of the founder of a noble lineage the information about his progeny and further succession of the noble dignity is often limited to a record of accession to the title, highest office attained and record of subsequent demise and eventual successor. The details of genealogy, number of descendants, degree of relationship between various members of a noble lineage, all this is often lacking and our knowledge about family situation of a given noble lord often depends on occasional mentions scattered in various biographies as well as few circumstantial facts which could be gleaned from basic annals of *Jinshu*. Inevitably, there are lacunae and confusions which cannot be presently filled or settled as we lack corroboration in other contemporary sources.

In my work I have focused mainly on selected official documents, edicts and memoranda submitted to the throne as well as records of official careers and official posts of titled nobles which they held during their life for this kind of information is less likely to be tampered with, especially after couple of centuries which lay between the fall of the Jin Dynasty and compilation of *Jinshu*. Still, the limits imposed by the scissors-and-paste method used in compilation should always be born in mind as we can never be sure who was included and who was not. Therefore, my thesis does not aspire to be an exhaustive study of all noble dignities conferred under the Western Jin. It merely tries to disclose some regular patterns in bestowal of peerages and lordships and trace certain tendencies in use of the ennoblement system in the politics of the dynasty. The existence of more noble dignities could be later proved by epigraphic evidence, either existing or discovered in the future. The tomb inscriptions (*muzhiming* 墓誌銘) unearthed from medieval graves may shed additional light on dignities, titles and family ties of known individuals or even uncover existence of unknown family members or title holders. But as *Jinshu* and *Sanguozhi* represent the main sources of information for the given period I thought it prudent to concentrate my attention on them first.

⁵⁴ For details of these see the Appendix.

Chapter II

Development and Structure of the Ennoblement System

Titled Nobility of the Han (221 BC-220 AD)

The origins of the ennoblement system (*fengjue zhi* 封爵制), as we know it from later history of Medieval and even Late Imperial China, are linked to the founding of the unified empire at the end of the 3rd century BC. Widespread rebellion which had toppled the short-lived Qin dynasty saw resurrection of some of the old regional states as well as birth of the new political entities founded by ambitious military leaders of highly various origins. Shortly after the fall of Xianyang 咸陽 the unity achieved by the Qin disappeared and the centralized empire disintegrated once again in the ensuing power struggles. Heirs of the ancient royal houses assumed their hereditary rights, powerful local generals and rebel leaders proclaimed their independence trying to use the opportunity to create a state of their own, and yet others were created by Xiang Yu 項羽, the all-powerful victor over the Qin, who strived to rule over these new “feudal” states in a pre-Qin fashion as a high king or hegemon (*bawang* 霸王).⁵⁵ The unity was as short-lived as the Qin dynasty itself. Indeed, the very concept of a unified realm with one supreme ruler was still quite new and rather alien to many a subject of the Qin.⁵⁶

The original centralized system of regional and local administration based on commanderies (*jun* 郡) and prefectures (*xian* 縣) was replaced by nineteen kingdoms (*wangguo* 王國) ruled by their respective kings (*wang* 王). Most of these kings were quite happy to acknowledge Xiang Yu as their superior as this situation enabled them to rule independently in their respective territories and wait for opportunity to expand at the expense of their peers. Following the battle of Gaixia 垓下, Liu Bang, King of Han 漢王劉邦, became the sole master of the realm and proclaimed himself emperor of the Han dynasty (later known as Gaozu 高祖). And yet, despite the unequivocal assertion of supreme rule connected with

⁵⁵ For the political development during the Qin-Han transition see Cambridge History of China (1986): pp. 110-119.

⁵⁶ It took many more years before the idea of a unified empire came to represent a kind of natural form of affairs. This idea became the norm only during the reign of the Han emperor Wudi 漢武帝 (141-87 BC). Lewis, Mark Edward (2007): 19-21 and Cambridge History of China (1986): pp. 726-729; for the evolution of sense of unity see Loewe, Michael (1994): pp. 8-26.

the title of emperor (*huangdi* 皇帝), the highly complex political reality compelled the Han founder to retain system of kingdoms and fiefs which Xiang Yu had awarded to his allies and powerful local leaders. Apparent reinstatement of the ancient enfeoffment system of the Zhou might have seemed as a step backwards bringing back potentially chaotic political conditions of the pre-Qin China threatening newly achieved unity. But given the specific circumstances of the newly established empire Gaozu had no other choice. His seeming willingness to recreate the original multi-state China was in fact dictated by pressing political needs.

Apart from necessity to reward his allies among the kings who had helped him to defeat Xiang Yu and urgent need to secure their support and allegiance for the future there were also other important reasons connected with the ideology of the new dynasty. There were only two precedents for the unified empire known to the Han, the glorious Zhou 周 and rather infamous Qin. Therefore, the legitimacy of the new dynasty must have been construed in lines of reflecting these models from the past and either emulating or rejecting them. By sanctioning the existence of the semi-independent kings and seeming recreation of the pre-Qin state of affairs Han Gaozu could at least symbolically reenact the time-venerated practice of awarding fiefs which set him on a par with the Zhou kings of high antiquity. Perhaps even more important under the given circumstances than an effort to emulate the Zhou with its glorious and glorified past was to distance oneself as far as possible from the corrupt and oppressive practices of the Qin misrule. Thus, retaining the petty kingdoms was in line with the overall Han policy of publicly denouncing and denigrating methods of administration used by the First Emperor of the Qin.

Extermination of the old-established lineages of the “feudal” lords (*zhuhou* 諸侯) was one of the grievances against the Qin misrule which had been voiced in the strongest terms. In fact, the very ephemeral nature of the Qin regime had been seen as the direct consequence of depriving the supreme ruler of support of his kith and kin, that is the lords. However, kings and lords Gaozu inherited from Xiang Yu were of course no relatives of his and the bonds of allegiance held true only as far as the kings found them useful and expedient. Gaozu not only had to acknowledge their kingly status and preserve their domains intact but also had to guarantee the hereditary right of succession for their offspring. If Gaozu had ever thought about reinstating the ancient enfeoffment system, he gave up the idea quite soon. He had no illusions and was well aware of all the possible dangers of the new situation which soon appeared to be untenable in the long term and incompatible with the new ideas of unified empire and absolute universal power of the emperor Gaozu wanted to promote. Whereas the

central part of the empire with the imperial domain around the capital city of Chang'an 長安 was administered directly from the centre, the border regions were domain of the kings who ruled their kingdoms as semi-independent lords. It is true that such an arrangement was quite effective in terms of border defense and administration, but the questionable loyalty of the kings made the whole administrative structure rather volatile. By 202 BC the Han Empire was comprised of thirteen commanderies and ten kingdoms which in terms of area and population exceeded by far the imperial domain.⁵⁷

In following years Gaozu used every opportunity and every pretense to undermine the position of the kings and replace them with his own sons and other male relatives. His quest for reasserting imperial authority over the whole empire was successful and by the year 196 BC all but one of the original princely fiefs were either abolished or given to newly appointed princes of the blood,⁵⁸ members of the imperial Liu clan.⁵⁹ This qualitative change in awarding fiefs and princely titles actually introduced the whole new system established on different basis, practically using the old categories and concepts endowed with totally new meanings as was the case with many other imperial institutions which allegedly derived from the institutional practice of the inimitable Zhou. Thus during the first reigns of the Han dynasty the new system of ennoblement (*fengjue zhidu* 封爵制度) was created, based on the model of the ancient enfeoffment system (*fenfeng zhidu* 分封制度), which was nevertheless more compatible with administrative mechanisms of the unified empire and centralized government.

Under the new system the highest title of a prince (*wang* 王) was henceforth reserved for members of the imperial family. All sons of an emperor, except the designated crown prince or heir presumptive, were usually given princely fiefs. The title was hereditary in the direct male line according to rules of Chinese primogeniture (i.e. only the eldest son of a ruling prince born of the lawful main wife may inherit). Younger sons of the princes or sons born of concubines may have been given a lesser fief and title of a marquis (*hou* 侯). The proximity to the main imperial line of descent determined the titles and apanages given to respective cadet branches with distant relatives receiving no titles at all and becoming

⁵⁷ Cambridge History of China, vol. I. (1986): p. 124.

⁵⁸ The princes actually held the same title as the original kings, that is *wang* 王, but as I perceive the Han system of ennoblement as something essentially different from the ancient system of enfeoffment, I prefer to use different translations of the title to accentuate the difference of the two systems. For discussion on the translation of the term *wang* see Hrubý, Jakub (2007): pp. 11-12.

⁵⁹ The Cambridge History of China, Vol. I (1986): p. 142; the last non-royal kingdom was Changsha 長沙 where kings from the Wu 吳 family ruled until 157 BC. After the death of the last king the fief was abolished only to be recreated as a princely fief for one of the Liu princes of the blood.

commoners in the course of few generations. The number of princely lines varied during the dynasty ranging from eight to twenty five, being dependent only on fertility of the imperial line and number of imperial sons eligible for the princely rank.⁶⁰

Unlike the original Zhou enfeoffment system which used five hierarchically distinct noble titles, the new ennoblement system of the Han dynasty recognized only two noble ranks, prince and marquis. As acquiring of the rank of a prince was destined to be exclusive prerogative of the princes of the blood, all other non-royal families could reach only for the lesser title. In fact, by adopting marquisates as the lesser degree of the noble titles the Han were actually utilizing some features of the system of social hierarchy used during the Qin. For the marquis dignities of the Han were not derived from the title of marquis (*hou* 侯) originally awarded by Zhou kings to rulers of the fiefs (*zhuhou* 諸侯), but their origin is to be found in system of twenty honorary and noble ranks (*cijue* 賜爵) given to subjects of the Qin kings according to their military merits. The feats of arms and services rendered to the crown and the king were judged by the number of severed heads of the enemy gained at the battlefield. This system of ranking was institutionalized by famous Qin reformer Shang Yang 商鞅 (390-338 BC) after 356 BC, but some features of the new system had been apparently used even earlier.⁶¹

The highest of the twenty ranks was called *chehou* 徹侯 and was awarded only to the most important military commanders and court ministers as a mark of the highest favor or reward for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the overall war effort aimed at unification of all under heaven. The *chehou* were given a part of the kingdom as their apanage, usually a prefecture, couple of walled towns or certain number of tax-paying households. As the *chehou* rank was the highest possible distinction, the Qin kings were rather frugal in its use. The last known *chehou* was Ying Zheng's 嬴政 regent Lü Buwei 呂不韋. After his death in 235 BC the young Qin king took the reins of power into his own hands and was careful not to lose them again. Powerful nobles with certain rights over part of the state territory were perceived as a potential threat to central authority of the king and later the emperor and the *chehou* rank therefore practically ceased to be used.⁶²

It was only with the establishment of the Han dynasty and gradual emergence of the new ennoblement system when the *chehou* and later even other *jue* ranks (especially the

⁶⁰ Bielenstein, Hans (1980): p. 105; For more detailed information on the Han imperial princes, the system of princely fiefs and its later development see Hrubý, Jakub (2007): pp. 33-35.

⁶¹ For discussion of the exact dating see Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 47.

⁶² Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 38.

guanneihou 關內侯) were reintroduced as the lesser grades of the titled nobility of the unified empire. Therefore, the Han marquises were at least institutionally direct descendants of the Qin highest titled nobility. The designation, however, was changed from *chehou* to *tonghou* 通侯 and later *liehou* 列侯, which became the term generally used for lower titled nobility during the whole medieval period.⁶³

Important feature of the *fengjue* system, presumably inherited, from its Qin antecedents, was that the *liehou* neither exercised any direct control over the territory which had been nominally given to them as their “fief” or apanage, nor administered directly state tax-paying households (*hu* 戶) who were assigned to a respective title holder and who handed in certain portion of their taxes as his annual income. The system thus was no alternative to the centralized state administration (*junxian zhidu* 郡縣制度) and worked within the system of local and regional government. The so called fiefs were just another form of commanderies or prefectures temporarily assigned to certain individuals but administered centrally as any other comparable unit of local administration. I am saying temporarily because any of the noble lines might have died out at any moment or the title could have been attainted for crime or misbehavior of its holder and the territory turned once again into a proper commandery or prefecture. The *liehou* were given apanages but no rights to actually rule the place and its people.⁶⁴

The size of a marquisate was determined by relative merits of a marquis to be and his services rendered to the crown. The greater the services, the bigger the apanage assigned, one prefecture being the norm for larger fiefs. The smaller fiefs usually consisted of only one township (*xiang* 鄉) or a mere village (*ting* 亭, also translated as neighborhood), however technically speaking these titles were not differentiated and all title holders were known as *liehou*, regardless of the actual size of their respective fiefs.⁶⁵ The size of an administrative territory is after all rather misleading as the actual size of the apanage is expressed in number of households whose taxes are assigned as an income of the title holder. By the time of Emperor Wudi the government gave up on measuring the fiefs in terms of land and territory. Fluctuation of the population upset the state-ordained hierarchy of the marquisates and affected the fiefs in positive or negative way to such an extent that nominal holder of a small

⁶³ The change of the title was caused by the tabooization of the personal name of Emperor Wudi which was Liu Che 劉徹.

⁶⁴ Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 54.

⁶⁵ The actual appellation of a title holder was marquis of XY (XY 侯) irrespective of the fact whether the territory used in the appellation denotes a prefecture, a township or a village. Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 7-8, 39.

yet populous township could have consequently enjoyed greater income than someone with a large but depopulated prefecture. Relative hierarchy of merit was thereby seriously jeopardized. As the clearly defined proportionality between service (merit) and reward (apanage) which should have stimulated loyalty and diligence of government officials was one of the *raisons d'être* of the whole system, the territory-based grants were gradually abandoned for precise and rigid household allotment quotas which became the norm of all future systems of ennoblement. This change allowed government to use whole system more flexibly. Even though the *fengjue* system knew no formal distinction between the various *liehou* title holders, the subtle distinctions still could be maintained in terms of income. Number of tax-paying households became an indicator of relative standing within the *liehou* group. The household grants attached to a title could be further modified, either increased or decreased depending on official or military service of the respective *liehou*. On the one hand, loyal service and unyielding support of the dynasty could be fostered and rewarded by increasing household allotment, on the other hand trespassing the law or being negligent in one's official duties brought reduction of the apanage and decrease in number of allotted households.⁶⁶

As in the case of the original Qin *cijue* ranks the merit (*gong* 功) remained the crucial condition *sine qua non* for ennoblement and acquiring a marquisate. The most important group among the *liehou* title holders thus were the meritorious ministers (*gongchen* 功臣). As there was no greater merit than assisting with the founding of the new dynasty, these men acquired position of great social preeminence and quite often also considerable political power. The *liehou* title was kind of mark of favor, indicator of their social status and at the same time tangible reward for rather symbolic debt the dynasty and its rulers owed to the meritorious ministers. The *gongchen* were sort of founding members of the dynasty, close colleagues, loyal advisors and valiant commanders of the dynastic founder without whose help the great enterprise of establishing new dynasty could have never been achieved. Their valuable contribution to the enterprise merited reward and gratitude of not only the dynastic founder himself, but also of all the emperors to come, as they remained constantly obliged to them for the very throne they sat upon. This bond of obligation was symbolically expressed in granting the *liehou* marquisate, high distinction in itself, given in appreciation of the services rendered, but also highly valuable means how to maintain stable social position of the *gongchen* family as it secured privileged social and economical position for *gongchen*'s

⁶⁶ Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 43.

descendants, for all the *liehou* titles were hereditary. Ideally the noble lineages established through creating a *liehou* dignity were meant to last indefinitely, practically speaking, the title was to be inherited from generation to generation as long as the dynasty lasts, thereby reminding the reigning emperors of the meritorious deeds of their ancestors.⁶⁷

Awarding of noble titles did not stop with the founding of the dynasty. Later emperors of course used the same system to reward their own efficient and loyal servants, however, the merits of ministers and generals ennobled later during the dynasty generally tended to be considered less important than those of *gongchen*. At the same time the category of merit was somewhat abstract and consequentially highly ascriptive in nature. Services rendered to the emperor himself or those who ruled in his name were various indeed, ranging from leading military campaigns to offering advice in crucial problem of the state ritual to serving the emperor in the private quarters of the imperial palace. No wonder that especially towards the end of the Eastern Han (*Dong Han* 東漢, 23-220 AD) creating and undoing of the *liehou* marquises tend to reflect the political infighting of the court factions. Prevailing practice of awarding marquises to imperial favorites (*enzehou* 恩澤侯) and members of consort families (*waiqihou* 外戚侯) closely mirrors the political ascendance of the inner court.⁶⁸ This trend is especially obvious in highly unorthodox bestowal of the *liehou* titles on the palace eunuchs and creation of eunuch marquises (*huanzhehou* 宦者侯) practiced during the reigns of the last Han emperors. As the grant of a *liehou* title presumed the continuation of the title in an unbroken line of hereditary succession, this late Han practice virtually encouraged the emergence of powerful mock or adoptive eunuch families which dominated the court politics at the end of the Han.⁶⁹

The last group within the Han *liehou* were the royal marquises (*wangzihou* 王子侯) which started to appear during the reigns of Emperors Jingdi 景帝 (156-141 BC) and Wudi. The process of transformation of the princely fiefs from semi-independent border principalities to more or less centrally-administered apanages was only gradual. It is true that

⁶⁷ For information on actual *gongchen* marquises and their lineages during the Han dynasty see Wang Hui (1984) and also Tang Zangong (1995).

⁶⁸ For the formation of the inner court and influence of the consort families see Lewis, Mark Edward (2007): pp. 63-65 and Cambridge History of China (1986): pp. 279-287.

⁶⁹ For all different kinds of marquises see Yang Guanghui (2004): pp. 127-131; for the rise of the eunuchs see Cambridge History of China (1986): pp. 287-290; for the influence the eunuch rise to power had on shaping of the aristocratic elites of medieval China see Holcombe, Charles (1994): pp. 77-78. Cao Cao 曹操 hailed from one of these eunuch families. His adopted grandfather Cao Teng 曹騰 received title of village marquis of Fei 費亭侯 at the beginning of the reign of Emperor Huandi 桓帝 (147-168 AD). For details see *Sanguozhi*, juan 1, p. 1 and Pei Songzhi's commentary to it.

the non-royal kings were replaced by princes of the blood soon after the founding of the dynasty, but the problems of control remained and the situation progressively worsened with every new generation as the main imperial line of succession and old established princely houses grew more and more distant. The power struggle between the main imperial line and collateral branches of the Liu house resulted in series of insurrections which culminated in the Rebellion of the Seven Princes (*qi wang zhi luan* 七王之亂) in 154 BC during the reign of Emperor Jingdi. The imperial line prevailed and ambitious princes were quickly defeated and summarily dealt with. But their defeat had some recuperation for the whole system. Surviving princely fiefs were drastically reduced and all the rights over the land and people withdrawn.

Jingdi's successor Wudi continued the policy of weakening the collateral branches of the imperial house. In 127 BC⁷⁰ the emperor ordered that all sons of princes were to become marquises in their own right. In doing so Wudi just enlarged the scope of well established "special grace" (*tui'en* 推恩) policy which combined the rules of inheritance of the princely fiefs with the bestowal of the *liehou* titles. Previously the central government tried to curb power of the princely fiefs by introducing special grace policy. Whenever a prince died his eldest son was allowed to inherit the title and the apanage, but one of the prefectures of the original fief was to be actually singled out and given to a younger son of the deceased prince who had been, by a special grace, ennobled as a marquis of said prefecture. Wudi's seemingly generous gesture aimed at serious disruption of family ties within princely lines. Once the younger sons were given opportunity to establish their own hereditary lines, they were no longer willing to act in the best interests of the princely line as a whole. Even though the prefectures given by the crown as new marquises were actually to be found mostly outside the original fief and therefore brothers did not necessarily become rivals for their father's heritage, the family ties and loyalties loosened because the interests of the new marquises laid elsewhere. As the marquises were under direct control of the central government and the special grace policy periodically reduced size of the princely domains with every single father-to-son transmission, diminishing their ability to rebel against the court, the collateral branches of the imperial house ceased to be a threat to the central government.⁷¹

There were some one hundred seventy eight marquises bestowed on sons of the princes during Wudi's reign alone⁷² and this number must have increased even more during

⁷⁰ Bielenstein, Hans (1980): p. 105.

⁷¹ The Cambridge History of China, Vol. I (1986): pp. 157-158.

⁷² Ibid: p. 158.

the reigns of Wudi's successors. The royal marquises undoubtedly represent the majority of all the *liehou* titles awarded during the whole dynasty with meritorious ministers, victorious commanders, imperial in-laws and members of the consort clans, various favorites and palace eunuchs lagging far behind in numbers.

The *liehou* was not the only rank of the Qin *cijue* which was adopted by the Han. The second highest rank of *guanneihou* 關內侯 (i.e. the 19th rank of the original twenty) was used side by side with *liehou* titles as kind of honorary distinction. The literary meaning of this Qin title is “marquis within the passes” where *guannei* 關內 (within the passes) stands for the royal domain of Guanzhong 關中, roughly corresponding to the present day province of Shaanxi. The Wei River valley and adjacent regions formed the central core of the Qin realm and were known as the royal domain (*wangji* 王畿). No fiefs were ever established in this area which was constantly under the direct rule of the royal court in Xianyang. The *guanneihou* were no exception to this rule. The very designation of *guannei* differentiated their holders from the group of *chehou*, the highest social rank of the Qin empire, who were given certain territories as their fiefs and apanages. Whereas the *chehou* could be considered as marquis proper, the *guanneihou* were only titular marquises, the mere nominal lords with no right over land and people living on a stipend paid by the central government from the taxes collected from the tax-paying households of the royal domain.⁷³

The same held true for the *guanneihou* during the Han. Unlike the *liehou* titles, the *guanneihou* went without any noble style, reference to a territory or administrative unit within the empire, as their apanages were connected with no particular place and gradually turned into a stable income paid on a monthly basis resembling wages paid to regular government officials and court dignitaries. As they were qualitatively different from the *liehou* I prefer to avoid the misleading term “marquis” used in their title and shall translate the *guanneihou* as the “lord of the royal domain.” It seems that the lords of the royal domain were created only for life and their titles were not hereditary, at least not during the Han dynasty.⁷⁴

⁷³ Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 40.

⁷⁴ Ibid. Yang Guanghui claims that the *guanneihou* remained to be a non-hereditary title even later during the Cao Wei and the Jin dynasties. But there is some evidence in *Jinshu* that the *guanneihou* dignity could be inherited as well.

The Cao Wei Dynasty (220-265 AD)

With the fall of the Han in 220 AD a short period of disunion commenced known as Three Kingdoms (*Sanguo* 三國). The unified empire split into three independent states: Wei 魏, occupying the Central plain in the north, Shu 蜀 in the present day Sichuan and Wu 吳 lying in relatively peripheral region south of the Yangzi River. All three kingdoms sooner or later claimed the supreme authority of the son of heaven for themselves and therefore tried to recreate the administration and institutions of the Han court including their systems of ennoblement. The commitment with which they undertook this task was of utmost importance in the strife-ridden world of three rival regimes fighting for supremacy, because in doing so they were assuming the position of the rightful heirs of the Han imperial legacy which gave them much needed political legitimacy.

All three regimes adopted the original Han system of two noble ranks, princes and *liehou*, however they did not use it in the same way. Moreover, the Han system itself underwent some changes during the Eastern Han, developing more diverse hierarchy within the established ranks. The highest rank of the princes remained more or less the same and the Eastern Han emperors usually applied time-proven policies which had been devised by Emperor Wudi in the 2nd century BC. But the lower rank of the *liehou* was gradually divided into hierarchically distinct grades which corresponded to the size of an apanage bestowed on title holders. The differences between the *liehou* title holders apparently became too great and called for better-expressed distinctions than the rather shadowy inner hierarchy of precedence based solely on number of allotted households. The *liehou* rank was officially divided into three separate ranks of “prefecture marquis” (*xianhou* 縣侯), “township marquis” (*xianghou* 鄉侯) and “village marquis” (*tinghou* 亭侯). Even though these ranks corresponded roughly to the actual size of the apanage, the apanage itself was by no means determined by the rank, as we know of some *gongchen* prefecture marquisates having been created after the restoration of the Han dynasty by Emperor Guangwudi 光武帝 (25-57 AD) holders of which enjoyed income from two, four or six prefectures at the same time.⁷⁵ The absence of prescribed household quotas still provided enough maneuvering space within limits of each new rank as to allow rather nuanced appraisal of individual merit of respective meritorious ministers.

⁷⁵ Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 43.

It seems that in case of Wu and Shu the system was adopted with no substantial change. However, we are lacking comprehensive account of many of their institutions and the evidence in surviving historical sources is rather scant and circumstantial.⁷⁶ We can surmise that both regimes enfeoffed their royal offspring as princes and used three ranks of the *liehou* as a means how to reward loyalty of their non-royal subjects. Apparently, both regimes were somewhat constrained in terms of their resources. Both of them were situated in the regions considered under the Han to be on the periphery of the empire. The area under the state control was therefore limited and both courts could not afford to lose too much territory and prospective tax income even if it were in barter for loyal support of its military commanders and local leaders. Thus the prefecture marquises were bestowed only rarely as a mark of the highest favor and the township and village marquises remained the most usual form of noble title used until the end of the Shu and Wu in 264 AD and 280 AD respectively.⁷⁷

In case of the third regime, the Wei, we are somewhat better informed due to the fact that the dynasty was seen as a link in the chain of legitimate succession going from the Han to the Tang and therefore received much more attention than her less fortunate rivals. Nevertheless even in the case of Wei we have to rely on circumstantial evidence and infer the form of the whole system from more or less unrelated mentions. It seems clear that Cao Cao, founder of the Wei imperial house, pondered great institutional reform of restoring the original noble titles used during the Zhou, the so called “five ranks” (*wudeng* 五等), as new peerage strata of nobility. However, for the reasons as yet unclear the whole project eventually did not materialize and five ranks had to wait another five decades before the Simas brought them again back to life. Despite the abandoning the recreation of the peerage scheme Cao Cao did at least partially revive some of its features. Before long, he adopted the ducal title (highest of the five ranks) for himself and established dukedom of Wei in 213 AD which became the political and institutional base of the prepared dynastic transition.⁷⁸ His successors used various varieties of the ducal title such as “domain duke” (*guogong* 國公), “commandery duke” (*jungong* 郡公), “prefecture duke” (*xiangong* 縣公) and “township duke” (*xiangong* 鄉公), but these were reserved for the princes of the blood and members of

⁷⁶ For the practice of bestowing the marquises in Wu see Gao Min (1992): pp. 6-11 and Li Wencai (2005): pp. 131-164; for the ennoblement system of the state of Shu see Zong Liang, Zhang Min (2008): pp. 5-10 and Zong Liang, Zhang Min (2009): pp. 48-52.

⁷⁷ Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 9, 44.

⁷⁸ For the career of Cao Cao and his gradual usurpation see Wang Zhongluo (1998): pp. 30-71.

the imperial house. Other five ranks titles were used sporadically and apparently simply on an *ad hoc* basis.⁷⁹

Apart from appropriating for himself the highest possible distinction opened to non-royal commoners Cao Cao also expanded the lower end of the noble hierarchy in 215 AD by introducing four new ranks which stood just below the *guannei*侯. These were the “lord of renown” (*minghaohou* 名號侯), the “lord inside the passes” (*guanzhonghou* 關中侯), the “lord outside the passes” (*guanwaihou* 關外侯) and the “noble lord” (*wudafu* 五大夫). As in the case of *guannei*侯, they all derived from the original Qin system of personal ranks (*cijue*) in which they denoted the 18th, the 17th, the 16th and the 15th grade respectively. These titles were meant to be personal distinctions, honorary ennoblement with no claim to territory or apanage and as such they were not heritable and did not provide title holder with any stable income. Therefore they were known as honorary or empty ennoblement (*xufeng* 虛封).⁸⁰ Nevertheless even the empty ennoblement could bring assets, which might have been less material and tangible, yet essential for entering the elite circles and surviving in them. Social prestige, higher official rank and formal precedence were of utmost importance at every royal and imperial court and made the empty ennoblements valuable prizes to be sought after. Expanding the noble hierarchy and especially creating new noble distinctions at the bottom end of the hierarchy on the one hand enabled Cao Cao to meet the expectations of the loyal followers and satisfy their hunger for rewards, promotions and distinctions. On the other hand, it greatly reduced the risks of another court family becoming unduly powerful through its service to the dynasty. Cao Cao in the name of the puppet emperor successfully performed “constitutional” duty of the sovereign who should evaluate individual merits of his subjects and bestow generous rewards accordingly, without actually jeopardizing his regent position at the imperial court by creating future possible rivals which would inadvertently happen if Cao Cao would have stuck to the unaltered system.

Cao Cao’s innovations were readily used by his successors, especially his son Cao Pi 曹丕 who shortly after his father’s death ascended the imperial throne as Emperor Wendi 文帝 (reigned 220-226 AD) of the newly established Wei dynasty. Cao Pi’s path to the throne wasn’t as straightforward as he would have wished for. Cao Cao could not make up his mind as to which of his sons should succeed to the royal throne of Wei and thereby get the chance

⁷⁹ Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 9.

⁸⁰ Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 44.

to become the founding emperor of the new dynasty.⁸¹ Cao Cao's vacillation in naming his heir and successor had negative impact on the whole family and its cohesiveness. His sons vied with each other for father's favor and viewed each other as rivals and potential threat to the future well-being of themselves and their families. The result of this unfortunate development was deep mistrust which the new emperor Wendi felt towards his closest relatives. This mistrust later on bordering on paranoia created an atmosphere of universal and constant fear which expressed itself also in strict policy of deliberate reduction of the cadet branches to impoverished state pensioners in virtual house arrest living far from the court under the vigilant surveillance of the court authorities with all their crimes and misdeeds, no matter whether imagined or real, being swiftly dealt with in the sternest possible way.⁸²

The Records of the Three Kingdoms (Sanguozhi 三國志) chronicle summarizes the plight of the imperial kin under the Wei as follows:

“The princes and dukes of the Wei possessed their fiefs in name only. There were no real altars of grain and soil. Moreover, they were closely watched and separated [from the world/from one another] as if they were in prison. Their standing and titles were not firmly defined, once high, once low, changing [as the occasion arose] during the years. [The emperors of the Wei] turned their back on the kin [of their own] flesh and blood and discarded the message of the *Changdi Ode*.”⁸³

Pei Songzhi's 裴松之 commentary to the *Sanguozhi* paints even more vivid picture of the Cao Wei system:

“When the Wei dynasty arose, it succeeded the [period] of great disorder. The population decreased so it was not possible to begin [to rule in the manner of] the old. Hence, when the marquises and princes were enfeoffed, they were given their territories in name only, not in reality. The princely domain was to have [mere] one hundred odd old soldiers for its defense. Despite their titles of princes and marquises, [the imperial kin] were basically the same

⁸¹ Cao Cao never attempted the last step of the usurpation process and he remained a subject of the Han up to the very end. At the time of his death he was Prince of Wei 魏王 and therefore it was left to Cao Pi who eventually inherited the princely dignity to make the last bid for the imperial throne.

⁸² On the Wei policy of suppressing the imperial kin and its political power see Wang Yongping (2001): pp. 44-51.

⁸³ *Sanguozhi* juan 20, *Wu Wen shi wang gong zhuan*, p. 441; The *Changdi* 常棣 is one of the *Minor Odes (Xiaoya 小雅)* of the *Book of Songs (Shijing 詩經)*. According to the traditional exegesis this ode should have been sung by Ji Dan, Duke of Zhou 周公姬旦 during the banquet which he enjoyed together with his brothers. Therefore, it stands for the feeling of proper brotherly affection; all translations from the chronicles are my own.

as ordinary people. The prefectures [where the fiefs were situated] were thousands of *li* away [from the capital] and no annual audiences were organized. It was even not possible to visit or to communicate with one another in neighboring fiefs. When the lords (*zhuhou* 諸侯) hunted they were not allowed to distance themselves more than thirty *li* [from their fief]. Moreover, there were special offices of Guardians (*fangfu* 防輔) and Keepers of the Fief (*jianguo* 監國) established to spy on them. The princes and the marquises remembered [with nostalgia the times when they were mere] commoners but they could not achieve it. Thus [the Wei] defied the principle of the kin fiefs shielding and protecting [the throne] and harmed the favor of close relatives of [the same] flesh and blood.⁸⁴

Wendi was afraid of the influence of his brothers and other male relatives which they might have exercised at court. Immediately after the accession ceremony the new princes of the blood were sent to their nominal marquises they had held already since the end of the Han and it was only two years after the establishing of the dynasty that Wendi brought himself to promote his brothers as befitted their new standing of imperial kin. In 222 AD Wendi enfeoffed all his brothers and sons as princes and introduced new code according to which the princely dignity was heritable only in the main primogenitural line of descent:

“In the third year of the Huangchu Era (222 AD) during the reign of the Wei Emperor Wendi it was first decreed that younger sons and sons of concubines of the enfeoffed princes should become township dukes (*xiangong* 鄉公) and younger sons and sons of concubines of the princes-inheritors shall be named village marquises (*tinghou* 亭侯). Younger sons and sons of concubines of the dukes and marquises shall be named village counts (*tingbo* 亭伯).”⁸⁵

Younger sons of the founding prince (i.e. the prince who was first enfeoffed) were to become prefecture dukes (*xiangong*) whereas the younger sons of the princes in second, third and any other generations were given only considerably less glamorous title of a village marquis (*tinghou*). Younger sons of the prefecture dukes were only entitled to even lesser title of a village count (*tingbo* 亭伯).⁸⁶

The weakening of cadet branches policy had a direct impact on the practice of bestowing lesser noble titles of *liehou* marquises and lords. The governmental effort to

⁸⁴ *Sanguozhi* juan 20, *Wu Wen shi wang gong zhuan*, pp. 441-442; majority of the official titles are translated according to Hucker, Charles O. (1985), only those which were not quoted by Hucker were coined by myself.

⁸⁵ *Jinshu* juan 14, *Dilizhi shang*, p. 414.

⁸⁶ Wang Yongping (2001): p. 45; for more details about the princes of the blood and bestowal of the princely dignities under the Wei see Hrubý, Jakub (2007): pp. 37-40.

deprive the princes of any means of support and independent power tended to relegate them to the lower rungs of noble hierarchy. There were even general demotions from princes to marquises and then back again. Yet the formal insurmountable distinction of the imperial house and members of other, non-royal families had to be maintained. The same considerations of national security and safety of the throne and the main line of imperial succession which prompted the harsh measures taken against emperor's relatives also dictated caution in dealing with non-royal members of the elite. The meritorious ministers and efficient servants of the dynasty had to be suitably rewarded for their efforts but by no means could the imperial court allow them to grow more powerful than the imperial clan itself. Logical consequence of the downgrading trend practiced in case of princes was the corresponding downward shift of the lesser ranks of nobility.

As the ranks of princes and still not fully developed peerage were practically reserved for the offspring of the imperial clan, courtiers and ministers could only hope for the *liehou* marquises. However, in reality only the township and village marquises were regularly bestowed on the Wei subjects, the highest rank of prefecture marquis was singled out as a mark of special prestige and conferred rather infrequently. Instead, Wendi could use whole new range of honorary empty ennoblement titles resurrected by his father in 215 AD. These lordships (*guanneihou*, *minghaohou*, *guanzhonghou*, *guanwaihohou* or *wudafu*) were probably the more common noble titles used during the Wei. It was only with gradual rise to power of the regent house of Sima 司馬氏 during the later reigns of the Wei that the court families asserted themselves and started to hope for greater distinctions as they sensed the impending dynastical change. The whole process is inextricably intertwined with the gradual usurpation of the Simas and shall be dealt with shortly. But before we actually broach on the topic of recreating peerage system in 264 AD let me summarize the Wei ennoblement system in a short table:

Tab. 1: Noble titles used under the Wei Dynasty⁸⁷

grades of nobility	ranks within grades
princes	commandery prince (<i>junwang</i> 郡王)
	prefecture prince (<i>xianwang</i> 縣王)
peerage ⁸⁸	domain duke (<i>guogong</i> 國公)
	commandery duke (<i>jungong</i> 郡公)
	prefecture duke (<i>xiangong</i> 縣公)
	township duke (<i>xianggong</i> 鄉公)
	village count (<i>tingbo</i> 亭伯) ⁸⁹
lords (<i>liehou</i> 列侯) ⁹⁰	prefecture marquis (<i>xianhou</i> 縣侯)
	township marquis (<i>xianghou</i> 鄉侯)
	village marquis (<i>tinghou</i> 亭侯)
honorary lordships (<i>xufeng</i> 虛封)	lord of the royal domain (<i>guanneihou</i> 關內侯)
	lord of renown (<i>minghaohou</i> 名號侯)
	lord inside the passes (<i>guanzhonghou</i> 關中侯)
	lord outside the passes (<i>guanwaihoughou</i> 關外侯)
	noble lord (<i>wudafu</i> 五大夫)

⁸⁷ The table is based on Yang Guanghui (2004): pp. 4, 45.

⁸⁸ As we have seen, neither Cao Cao nor his successors established the full-fledged peerage system of five ranks (*wudengzhi* 五等制). The table includes only the ranks known from the sources but we cannot rule out that some other ranks might have actually been in use as well. All of them were reserved for the younger sons of the princes of the blood and imperial kinsmen.

⁸⁹ The title of a village count is very exceptional and I am not aware of its having been used under any other dynasty. It is hard to ascertain which rung of the hierarchy the *tingbo* did actually occupy. Counts were usually considered to be part of peerage, but later peerage was never used with such insignificant territory units as villages. However, as the title was primarily meant for cadet branches of the imperial family, it probably stood over the *liehou* marquises.

⁹⁰ As there was under the Wei still no distinction of a full marquis (member of peerage) and a *liehou* marquis, I prefer to translate these terms as prefecture marquis, township marquis and village marquis. However, when dealing with period after the establishment of the five ranks peerage system I will use term “marquis” only for peerage rank, and the *liehou* will be translated as lords.

The Rise of the Sima Regency and Establishment of the Peerage in 264 AD

Wei Wendi's harsh policy of demeaning the closest imperial relatives did succeed in securing the throne against possible threats from unduly ambitious princes of the blood. Isolated in their distant fiefs, barred from entering the presence without official summon and thwarted in any attempt to communicate with each other, brothers and sons of the Wei emperors lived in constant fear of punishment, degradation, and often even physical elimination under the watchful eye of the imperial representatives who virtually ruled their fiefs and the princes themselves. As their survival was totally dependent on mercy of the emperor and his representatives, they had no means to organize a coup or conspire against the throne. By depriving the imperial kin of its traditionally sanctioned and defined role the imperial line had to fight for itself in constant political struggle at court. Wendi and his successors had to rely on distaff relatives and loyal retainers as a replacement of the lacking support with dire consequences which proved to be fatal for the survival of the dynasty. Once these retainers decided to follow their own interests, the dynasty was left defenseless and it became just the matter of time before the new imperial house came to the throne.

The foundations of the new dynasty were laid soon after the demise of Emperor Wendi by Sima Yi 司馬懿, influential courtier and trusted servant of the Wei emperors. Sima Yi started his official career by entering the private administration of the then counselor-in-chief (*chengxiang* 丞相) Cao Cao. Later he was assigned to the Eastern Palace of the Wei where he was to wait on Cao Cao's heir apparent Cao Pi 曹丕. Befriending the prince, Sima Yi's star consequently began to rise once Cao Pi ascended the imperial throne in 220 AD. In couple of years Sima Yi had risen to the position of one of the highest ministers of the court and when Wendi was dying he was one of four relatives and loyal retainers entrusted with care of young Emperor Mingdi 明帝 (227-240 AD).⁹¹

Sima Yi's influence at court steadily increased due to the military victories he had achieved during the campaigns against the state of Shu and the independent enclave of the Gongsun 公孫氏 family in Liaodong 遼東. The prestige of the victorious military commander helped the ambitious minister to consolidate his position in the politics of the court and his actual presence in the field enabled Sima Yi to forge quite strong bonds of loyalty with various officers and generals under his command. Yet his personal influence still did not challenge directly the power of the throne as there were other great ministers and military

⁹¹ Wang Zhongluo (1998): p. 135; fro the rise of the Simas see also Chen Yinke (2000): pp. 13-22.

leaders around the throne and Emperor Mingdi himself was quite capable ruler. Everything changed in 240 AD when Mingdi named in his testament edict Sima Yi to be one of the two regents for his young adoptive successor Cao Fang, Prince of Qi 齊王曹芳. Mingdi was following the time-proven policy of circumventing the imperial kin as the safest way how to secure the line of primogenitural succession as neither Sima Yi, nor his co-regent Cao Shuang 曹爽 were related by blood to the imperial house. Strictly speaking, Cao Shuang was considered to be a member of the imperial house but in fact he had been adopted into the Cao family long before the appointment to the regency. All his possible claims to the throne would be therefore necessarily considered null and void and this fact naturally made him suitable and harmless choice in the eyes of the dying emperor. But Mingdi made serious miscalculation. The circumstances of the regencies were quite different and what had worked at the time of his own accession was not going to work now, because unlike himself, his successor was a minor of mere eight years unable to challenge the powerful regents.⁹²

It seemed that Cao Shuang gained the upper hand. Sima Yi had withdrawn from the court politics and did not pay attention to the state affairs. Claiming to be gravely ill he was carefully bidding his time. The opportune moment came in 229 AD when the young emperor left the imperial capital of Luoyang to visit the Gaoping Tumulus (*Gaopingling* 高平陵), tomb of his predecessor Mingdi outside the city walls. While Cao Shuang and his supporters accompanied the emperor, Sima Yi was free to secure control over the troops of the capital garrison and guards of the imperial palace. As the imperial entourage performed the rituals at Mingdi's tomb, the empress dowager was forced to issue an edict depriving Cao Shuang and his brothers of all their offices and military command over the municipal garrison. Cao Shuang was unable to react and use the august person of the emperor as a weapon against Sima Yi. He was arrested as soon as he returned to the capital and later charged with treason and conspiracy against the sovereign majesty. Hapless regent was executed, his whole family annihilated and all his supporters dismissed from their official posts.⁹³

The so called Gaoping Tumulus coup was one of the first actual steps of the Sima family towards the throne but their position vis-à-vis other court families and forces loyal the Wei dynasty was by no means secure. It took another seventeen years of careful political maneuvering to accomplish the great enterprise of replacing the imperial house of Cao. Sima Yi himself died in 251 AD to be succeeded by his equally capable sons Sima Shi 司馬師 and

⁹² Wang Zhongluo (1998): p. 135; For the steady rise of the Sima regents and the process of gradual usurpation see Leban, Carl (2010): pp. 1-50, for the Prince of Qi regency see especially pp. 5-6.

⁹³ Wang Zhongluo (1998): p. 136; Leban, Carl (2010): p. 8-9.

Sima Zhao 司馬昭 who in turn acted as regents to the Wei emperors and heads of the Sima house and faction at court. Both brothers did not hesitate to play the role of a kingmaker whenever the imperial puppet showed the slightest signs of acting independently or being under influence of a rival court faction. Thus Sima Shi deposed Prince of Qi in 254 AD following the revealing of a conspiracy of distaff imperial relatives against the regent and put on the throne young Cao Mao 曹髦, township duke of Gaogui 高貴鄉公. Six years later Cao Mao again tried to rid himself of the domineering regent only to be killed during the fight in the precincts of the imperial palace. The unfortunate death of the sovereign was a severe blow for the Sima cause as the heinous crime of regicide seriously jeopardized legitimate claims to the throne which the Simas had earned so far. But quick and clever manipulation of the facts saved the day. The dead emperor was officially declared corrupt and vicious, allegedly trying to kill his adoptive mother, the empress dowager, and committing other offences of gross misdemeanor threatening the well being of the state. Regicide was thus presented as a necessary preventive measure sanctioned by an edict of empress dowager, forged without doubt, which ordered Cao Mao's deposition. Following in the footsteps of his brother, Sima Zhao simply installed another puppet, Cao Huan 曹奂, duke of Changdao 常道公 to be the last Wei emperor.⁹⁴

Even though the above described political crisis showed the growing strength of the Sima faction it would be mistaken to view them simply as victories pushing the Sima cause nearer its ultimate goal of establishing new dynasty. In fact each deposition was potentially harmful to the Sima cause as it showed the inability of the regents to manipulate sufficiently the puppet emperor and instigate the abdication. Instead, their effort to raise an obedient puppet who would eventually hand over the mandate of heaven was time and again frustrated by unwillingness of the young sovereigns to become reconciled to the fate of the dynasty as conceived by the Simas. However, the firmer the position of the Simas, the less support the ruler could hope for. As the political and military influence of the Sima steadily grew the Wei emperors lost all support and their resistance became pointless. The Sima usurpation was long and gradual process in which the violent clashes and actual fighting were rather rare.

By the second half of the 3rd century the usurpation was already more or less well established process with a set of certain fixed rules dictated by tradition and precedence. Wang Mang 王莽 (9-23 AD) and Cao Cao set an example for peaceful dynastic transition

⁹⁴ For deposition of Cao Fang, prince of Qi see Leban, Carl (2010): pp. 15-20; for murder of Cao Mao and reinterpretation of the regicide see Leban, Carl (2010): pp. 30-34.

which became a viable alternative to usual bloody and violent overthrowing of a dynasty by sheer military force accomplished in the manner of Zhou and Han dynastic founders.⁹⁵ Actual abdication of the dynasty and transmission of authority and legitimacy to the new imperial house was the climax of a long process of usurpation during which the new masters were gradually building their supremacy trying to convince the court and provinces that the tide had changed and the mandate of heaven was going to be given to a new ruling house. As we have seen in the case of the Simas, it was rather delicate process during which the contender for the throne had to carefully orchestrate and manipulate the portents and auguries of heaven and emulate the ritual practices set by the precedents of the past, building a sequence of evidence which should attest to gradual shift of heaven's favor and impending change of the heaven's mandate. Manipulating, interpreting and fabricating portents as well as repeating certain rituals connected with founding of the dynasties allowed for legitimacy to be gradually transferred from one ruling house to another. By going through the whole process of this ritual and political game, the usurpation became a legitimate succession of its own kind with both parties voluntarily acknowledging the will of heaven. By actual performance of the abdication ceremony both parties were accepting the change of heaven's mandate; one by willingly resigning the throne, the other by ascending it and founding new imperial dynasty.

Establishment of the five ranks peerages (*wudengzhi* 五等制) must be viewed as an integral part of the whole usurpation process, one of several ritual steps taken on the path to the throne. Its timing was not accidental and coincided with crucial stage in the usurpation following the subjugation of the rival state of Shu in 263 AD:

“In the fourth year of the Jingyuan Era (263/264 AD) ... the eleventh month: Since Deng Ai and Zhong Hui led their armies to attack the state of Shu, wherever they went, they were victorious. In the same month Liu Shan, Lord of Shu, went to Deng Ai and surrendered. [The lands of] Ba and Shu were [thus] pacified.”⁹⁶

“In the fourth year of the Jingyuan Era (263/264 AD) ... in the eleventh month Deng Ai led more than ten thousand men from Yinping through forbidding and inaccessible [terrain until they] arrived at Jiangyou. [Later he] crushed the Shu general Zhuge Zhan at Mianzhu, cut his head off and had it sent to the imperial capital. [Then] he advanced with the army to Luoxian

⁹⁵ For the excellent analysis of the principles behind peaceful and violent dynastic change see Leban, Carl (2010): pp. 1-4. The whole article is basically illustration of these principles on example of the Wei-Jin dynastic transition; for Cao Cao, Cao Pi and Han-Wei transition and its models see Goodman, Howard L. (1998), especially its first part, pp 15-55; for the Wei-Jin transition see also Wei Guanglai (2002): pp. 366-370.

⁹⁶ *Sanguozhi* juan 4, *San shaodi ji*, *Cao Huan ji*, p. 112.

and Liu Shan (the emperor of Shu) surrendered [to him]. The son of heaven ordered the duke of Jin (Sima Zhao) to supervise all the affairs of state as councilor-in-chief (*xiangguo* 相國)...”⁹⁷

The conquest of Shu was beyond doubt crucial moment for the future of the Sima cause. Sima Zhao had carefully planned the whole campaign as a way how to bolster his position vis-à-vis the ruling house of Cao, because the eventual victory would provide necessary drive for overcoming last obstacles on his quest for throne. While two loyal Sima partisans Zhong Hui 鍾會 and Deng Ai 鄧艾 were fighting their way through the Shu defenses in direction of Chengdu 成都, Sima Zhao took the emperor and settled temporarily in Chang’an 長安 from where he supervised the military operations in Sichuan as the supreme commander-in-chief. When Shu finally surrendered at the beginning of 264 AD Sima Zhao could deservedly claim a lion’s share of credit for the victory achieved as he had masterminded the whole project from the very beginning.⁹⁸ The fall of Shu carried deep symbolic meaning, for it was no conquest of a mere rival state, but technically speaking subjugation of a rebellious part of the unified empire of the Han which had for decades challenged the legitimate authority of the Wei son of heaven. The victory over Shu thus crowned ceaseless endeavors of generations of Wei sovereigns and their Sima regents to eliminate the rebels and bring the territory of the present day Sichuan under their control. It attested to supreme military strength of the northern state but also, and more importantly, affirmed in the symbolic way the legitimate claim to the mandate of heaven as the only true heir of the Han predestined to rule all under heaven. Yet, because the present Wei emperor Cao Huan was still only an underage boy, all merit must therefore go to his regent and custodian Sima Zhao whose prospects of becoming the founder of a new dynasty were thereby greatly enhanced. For what else could better demonstrate whom the will of heaven favors as the next sovereign than a decisive military victory over Shu which had eluded even the founding emperors of the Wei, the victory which was in fact perceived as the beginning of the unification of the old empire.

The court and emperor duly acknowledged the implicit meaning of the conquest of Shu and Sima Zhao’s status was raised to unprecedented height:

“In the first year of the Xianxi era (264 AD) ... in the third month ... on the *yimao* day the Duke of Jin was promoted in rank to prince and enfeoffed with [territory of additional] ten

⁹⁷ *Jinshu* juan 2, *Wendi benji*, p. 43.

⁹⁸ For the importance of this conquest and aims pursued by Sima Zhao see Leban, Carl (2010): p. 38-39.

commanderies [to the ten which he had received previously as his ducal fief], twenty altogether ... In summer, fifth month, on the day *gengshen* Councilor-in-chief, Prince of Jin, petitioned [the throne] to reinstate the five ranks peerages.”⁹⁹

As we can see from the chronicle, the establishment of the five ranks peerages was directly connected with the important change of status of Sima Zhao. Indeed, the connection was not only temporal but causal as well. By accepting the princely enfeoffment Sima Zhao made another direct step towards usurpation, but this time he reached the point of no return. The sheer size of the princely fief was simply overwhelming. No other prince could command so large a territory with so many households, not even father of the ruling emperor, Prince of Yan.¹⁰⁰ Yet the change in regent’s standing was even more conspicuous. By becoming Prince of Jin Sima Zhao obviously challenged the unwritten law that only princes of the blood are entitled to the princely dignity. Powerful minister was now stepping over the theoretically insurmountable boundary line, symbolically moving from the level of subjects to that of the royalty. Moreover, as the territory assigned to the newly created non-royal prince was enormous, the imperial edict practically sanctioned formation of a semi-independent political entity, a state within the state. Sima Zhao was promoted beyond established political order and social hierarchy and with emperor’s willing consent used some of the prerogatives normally reserved for the imperial majesty. Originally Sima Zhao had long declined even the lesser dignity of a duke which the court repeatedly conferred on him. Being aware of the gravity of such an appointment and all its connotations he was always at pains to profess his modesty and humility in rejecting the honors. Yet, the successful campaign in Shu changed everything. Sure of himself and confident of his position at court Sima Zhao accepted first ducal and later princely title and embarked on the last stage of the usurpation process.

One of the most important features of the gradual usurpation, beside portents, military victories, and empowerment rituals (accepting the higher noble titles of a duke or prince as well as the so called Nine Distinctions),¹⁰¹ was the need for institutional reform, often rather formal attempt to recreate a well known institution or institutions of old which would add legitimacy to a usurper by putting him on par with the glorious kings of the Zhou dynasty. Creation of the princely fief for the usurper called for building of new administration which

⁹⁹ *Sanguozhi* juan 4, *San shaodi ji*, *Cao Huan ji*, p. 112-113.

¹⁰⁰ *Jinshu* juan 2, *Wendi benji*, p. 44.

¹⁰¹ For the Nine Distinctions (*jiuxi* 九錫) see Dubs, Homer H. (1955): pp. 202-203, 208 (Dubs translates as “nine conferments”); for the idea of gradual and ritually sanctioned usurpation becoming a lawful succession see Leban, Carl (2010): p. 2.

would in turn become the basis for future government structure of the new dynasty which was to be established shortly. Creating brand new administrative structure independent of the current state bureaucracy offered the right opportunity to introduce certain administrative and institutional changes. The most important aspect of the whole process was that the usurper was not simply a reformer. Reform of certain shortcomings in the administrative practice of the ruling dynasty might have been commendable and even highly useful for the future, but such an act was not charged with badly needed legitimacy. As Carl Leban observed, “While there may be simpler political motives for restoring archaic institutions, it seems plausible that such acts are also frequent ritual ornaments of usurpation. Their psychological function is to make the usurper to appear a restorationist rather than an innovator.”¹⁰² By formally recreating an institution of glorious and morally impeccable past the usurper implied moral deficiency and institutional or administrative inadequacy of their predecessors on the throne. At the same time the institutional reform or institutional restoration so to speak could be viewed as a pledge for the future, hinting at the possible revival of the golden era of the ancient sages. Both aspects naturally strengthened usurper’s position and provided certain kind of legitimacy for his new regime. Even though there were probably diverse reasons why Sima Zhao at the given moment thought it prudent to restore the five ranks peerages, however, a symbolic effort of ritually required institutional change was definitely an important one.¹⁰³

“In the first year of the Xianxi era (264/265 AD) ... in autumn, the seventh month Sima Zhao petitioned [the throne and suggested that] the Minister of Works (*sikong* 司空) Xun Yi [should] decide on the rites and ceremonies, the Capital Protector (*zhonghujun* 中護軍) Jia Chong [should] rectify the laws and regulations, the Vice Director of the Department of State Affairs (*shangshu puye* 尚書僕射) Pei Xiu [should] deliberate on the official system and the Grand Guardian (*taibao* 太保) Zheng Chong [should] supervise their work and decide [the final form]. The five ranks peerages were established for the first time.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Leban, Carl (2010): p. 38.

¹⁰³ Restoration of the peerage system was not the only institutional reform attempted by Sima Zhao. For example, there were also some changes of the provincial administration done as the territory of the recently conquered Shu was officially divided into two provinces of Yizhou 益州 and Liangzhou 梁州 corresponding of course to two of the traditional nine provinces (*jiuzhou* 九州) under the rule of Yu the Great 大禹, mythical founder of the first Chinese dynasty of Xia 夏. See Leban, Carl (2010): p. 38.

¹⁰⁴ *Jinshu* juan 2, *Jingdi benji*, p. 44. Note that the Tang compilers were well aware of the fact that introduction of the Fiver Ranks System was no simple revival of an ancient practice. Eager to trace origins of certain institutions, they clearly pointed to the event as the actual beginning of the peerage system.

It appears that the restoration of the five grades peerages was the result of joint effort of the highest officials of the Wei court.¹⁰⁵ However, not only were they working on instigation of Sima Zhao, but all of them belonged to the staunch supporters of the Sima cause. Their taking part in devising the new peerage system is therefore no coincidence and must be seen as part of the usurpation process. The verbs used in this chronicle entry for activities of the ministers are *ding* 定 (to settle or to decide), *zheng* 正 (to rectify) and *yi* 議 (to deliberate on, to discuss). These verbs by necessity imply some preexistent forms which could be decided on, rectified or deliberated upon, thereby strongly suggesting that the whole process was perceived more as a deliberation on and rectification of already existing rites, laws and administration rules than creating something new. Sima Zhao appeared to be simply restoring an ancient institution, closely following the examples set by Wang Mang and Cao Cao, the “model” usurpers of the past, albeit this very institution proved to be useful for more than one reason.

As a matter of fact it was Wang Mang who first considered reviving the full-fledged five ranks peerage system.¹⁰⁶ Unfortunately, we know next to nothing about this early attempt to explore potential of this ancient practice of the Zhou and we are unable to compare it to the system brought to life by Sima Zhao and his ambitions. Nevertheless it seems that in one respect both peerage systems had something in common and that is that they probably bore just very superficial resemblance to the original Zhou enfeoffment system, if indeed such has ever existed in the form described by surviving sources.¹⁰⁷ Because despite the fact that both appeared to be restorations of an ancient practice, they were in fact brand new institutions garbed in obligatory rhetoric of institutional restoration but devised with current needs of the regime in mind.

¹⁰⁵ Not all scholars would actually agree that the five ranks peerage system was a joint work of above mentioned ministers. Based on the information in his biography in the *Jinshu* Pei Xiu 裴秀 is usually introduced as the sole author of the system. Indeed, we may interpret the quotation as being about three separate tasks assigned by Sima Zhao to the ministers with Xun Yi 荀顛 devising the ceremonies, Jia Chong 賈充 the laws and regulations and Pei Xiu the official system of the newly created princely fief. Nevertheless I am rather inclined to follow Carl Leban here who understood the record as speaking about different aspects of the peerage restoration. Pei Xiu might well have been the mastermind behind the whole concept, but other ministers might have collaborated as well, with Xun Yi taking care of ritual and ceremonial aspects of the peerage ennoblement, process of inheritance etc., Jia Chong revising the legal practices and introducing special set of laws and regulations for the peerage (*zhuhoulü* 諸侯律) and Pei Xiu himself devising system of peerage fief administration and officials who would administer the apanage and households of the peers. See Leban, Carl (2010): note 177 on p. 40.

¹⁰⁶ Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 29; for Wang Mang and his usurpation see Cambridge History of China (1986): pp 223-251 and also Loewe, Michael (1994b).

¹⁰⁷ For history of the peerage system and uncertainty of the original form of the Zhou peerage see Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 28-30.

The actual correspondence of the new system with original institution of the Zhou was irrelevant. It has been ages since the Zhou enfeoffment system was abolished by the First Emperor. It has become just a distant memory of more glorious past kept via Confucian orthodoxy and contemporary understanding of the system must have been rather vague at best. But the logic of the whole legitimating process was not in the reinstated system and its relative correspondence to the original but in the restoration act itself by which the restorer was dubbed righteous Confucian sovereign and defender of Confucian orthodoxy. For acquiring necessary legitimacy it was essential to perform the act of restoration but the final form of the “restored” institution might have and often did differ from the original practice. Its actual usage was dictated by and at the same time catering to the current needs of the usurper’s administration. Sima Zhao’s five ranks peerage system was no different in this respect and many features of the new system emerged from the specific political situation at the court after the fall of Shu. Practical considerations of rewarding the victorious commanders and gathering tangible political and military support before the actual abdication took place were by no means less urgent than vindication of the intended change on the throne through symbolic restoration of the archaic institution.

After the quick and almost unexpected success of the Shu campaign the Wei government and Sima administration in particular faced utterly practical problem how to reward victorious commanders and army officers who had taken part in the campaign. The conquest of Shu was epochal indeed in the context of the Three Kingdoms history and as this victory was achieved only thanks to valor and strong resolve of the army leaders, their merits were unprecedented as well and called for corresponding reward. But the current ennoblement system practiced under the Wei did not offer much space for adequate reward as the highest ranks were reserved for members of the imperial house and only non-royals who had ever reached for the highest *liehou* marquises were only a handful of *gongchen*, meritorious ministers, who had helped to establish the dynasty at the beginning of the 3rd century.

Practically speaking, there were not many noble ranks opened to the non-royal courtiers and military commanders, certainly not enough to allow a fair appraisal of an individual merit of respective generals and officers. The ranks were too low for merits of such importance in the first place, and the absence of clearly defined inner hierarchy in terms of apauage territory and households made any effort to establish well balanced hierarchy of merit virtually impossible.¹⁰⁸ Establishment of the five ranks peerages enabled Sima Zhao to

¹⁰⁸ For inherent flaws of the Wei system and corresponding problems in its implementation see Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 31.

implement elaborate system of noble hierarchy which permitted better evaluation of the rendered services and detailed grading of rewards. The old *liehou* marquises were not abolished but their relative standing sank as the five peerages were placed above them in the new order. Inner diversification of the ennoblement system and introduction of the new ranks facilitated a clearly defined hierarchy of ennoblement embodying clear equation between merit and corresponding reward. Such defining of the new scale of rewards of course must have had direct impact on the willingness of both civil and military staff of the Wei to serve and in fact should have influenced their performance in their respective offices and military posts. Whole system should have encouraged loyal service. Every single official of state knew what the reward of such a service was and could act accordingly. But it went without saying that as it were the Simas who ruled the court and decided about the rewards and ennoblement, it was also them and not the Wei emperor, who commanded the loyalties of those desiring promotion and nobility. The signal sent to the Wei administrative circles was clear. The Simas were the future and career success was possible only through loyal service to them. Whole system introduced in 264 AD was therefore highly useful to the Simas and proved to be of considerable importance during the following dynastic transition as many a Wei official reconsidered his options and joined the Sima cause.

Winning support and allegiance through offering reward was just one aspect of the peerage reinstatement. No less important was strengthening the positions of the Sima partisans and the Sima cause itself. Reinstatement of the peerage permitted Sima Zhao and other leaders of the faction to promote the long time supporters to the ranks of peerage without causing too much alarm and undue disquiet at court. The wholesale creation of the new peers would under normal circumstances without doubt cause considerable outcry from the Wei loyalists. As the ennoblement was always inextricably connected to merit and service to the dynasty, promotion of the Sima partisans without proper cause would be questioned by many at court as unlawful and in doing so the regent would have trespassed on the authority of the sovereign and definitely overstepped his authority as subject of the dynasty. Premature renouncing of the role of dutiful and obedient subject to the emperor could endanger the delicate process of the gradual usurpation. After all, ennoblement of the Sima partisans by the Wei throne was hardly justifiable as it was a public knowledge to whom these men had so loyally served.

The fall of Shu was an expedient excuse for conveniently circumventing these formal obstacles. By the 3rd century the ennoblement still retained a strong innate connection to military exploits and feats of arms. This was especially the case of the *liehou* marquises and lordship titles derived from ranks which the Qin originally awarded according to the number

of severed heads of the enemy. The merit necessary for obtaining such a title was understood to be primarily military in nature, gained at the battlefields in the skirmishes at the border, raids into the enemy territory or during punitive expeditions against the rebels. Given these well-known precedents the campaign against Shu therefore presented Sima Zhao with a great opportunity for strengthening the Sima cause through elevating official and social standing of his staunch supporters. Majority of the army leaders taking part in the expedition were loyal partisans of the Simas anyhow. And those who had remained at court and had not taken part in the actual fighting could always claim their share of credit for making advanced plans and organizing the logistic support from the rear.

Up to the creation of peerages in 264 AD the majority of the Sima supporters held only minor lordships or lower *liehou* marquisates, if any at all.¹⁰⁹ With new five ranks peerages at his disposal, Sima Zhao could at last promote all his supporters and consolidate position of his faction vis-à-vis the Wei *gongchen* and distaff relatives of the imperial house. At the same time the regent acquired the means with which he was finally able to fulfill the expectations of his supporters. For their loyal support was by no means unselfish. Fulfilling one's ambitions and gain a generous reward might have actually been one of the main objectives which made them support a rival claimant to the throne. As they were not counted among the meritorious ministers of the Wei, their social standing was somewhat lacking and their chance of successful career in a high court office was rather limited. Therefore they had staked everything on the Simas and hoped for better once their patrons get to the throne. A peerage or any other noble rank was obviously seen as a fitting reward for their effort bordering on treason. High risk should bring high profit and nobility was without doubt exactly the kind of reward these men longed for. Noble title secured both economic advantages in form of stable income provided by the assigned apanage, as well as social prestige and prominence in the court administration circles brought by the high official rank enjoyed by the title holders. The certain convergence of ennoblement system with bureaucratic systems of the government offices and official recruitment (the so called "Nine Ranks System" *jiupinzhi* 九品制) provided also hereditary privileged access to the court offices which greatly enhanced chances for long term survival of the family as a member of

¹⁰⁹ Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 31.

social and political elite.¹¹⁰ The ennoblement became highly desirable and establishment of the five ranks peerages was intended, among other things, to meet this pressing demand.

The Sima partisans were not alone in benefitting from the innovation of the ennoblement system. The introduction of the peerages did not limit itself to creating new titles for military leaders of the Shu campaign. It brought about systematic revision of all current noble titles and their potential adjustment in order to correspond to the new creations made after the fall of Shu, which often meant promotion of an original Wei *liehou* marquissate to one of the peerage grades. The Simas were well aware of prevailing mood among the court families, political elite of the empire, dissatisfied in the long term with the Wei policy of bestowing only meager dignities on the non-royals. There was a wide gap between the royal title holders and members of other court families in terms of rank and wealth. Whereas the royal princes and dukes were given the first court rank (*yipin* 一品) the highest *liehou* grade of a prefecture marquis was entitled only to the third rank (*sanpin* 三品) with the official rank descending with relative standing of the titles in the noble hierarchy. The holders of the lordships (*guannei* and bellow) enjoyed only the sixth rank (*liupin* 六品) which meant that these titled nobles actually stood fairly low in the official hierarchy and could not reach for the hereditary privileges bestowed with the rank five and higher.¹¹¹

With the steady decline of the royal authority overshadowed by ever powerful regents the elite families of the court officials also strengthened their position. The once universal power of the sovereign emperor gradually crumbled with every successful assertion of power by the Sima regents, ever more determined and unyielding, only to become a mere illusion kept for the sake of propriety and political expediency. The court families grew in importance and their influence of the decisive factor on the scale of power made itself felt, pressing for the revision of the current ennoblement system. For the usurpation to be successful Sima Zhao needed support or acknowledgment of these families. There were scions of ancient official lineages of the Han as well as meritorious ministers of the Wei to be won over. Bestowing a noble title seemed to be a useful way how to court their favor and achieve this goal. But it also bore a symbolic message meant for the courtiers of the Wei who had still remained undecided as to where their future allegiance lay, that the impending dynastic

¹¹⁰ For the functioning of the Nine Ranks system and the privileges of the noble title holders see Grafflin, Dennis (1991): pp. 145-154; and Yang Guanghui (2004): pp. 159-171; for the period of Western Jin see Chen Linguo (1987): pp. 105-115 and for subsequent development under the Eastern Jin see Zhang Xuhua (1998): pp. 49-60.

¹¹¹ Zhang Xuefeng (2001): pp. 29-30; for the details of the ranking see Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 161-163 and Grafflin, Dennis (1990): p. 145-154; for the fifth rank (*wupin* 五品) as a divide in the official hierarchy see Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 206.

transition would not bring any social change. The social hierarchy of the court would not be disrupted as the Simas were willing to guarantee the court families the same social standing under the new regime in exchange for mere tacit support or condoning their usurpation activities.

Majority of the peerage titles created in 264 AD survived the actual abdication of the Wei and became the titled nobility of the Jin. New peerage title for established court family therefore symbolized readiness of the prospective winner of the power struggle to ensure the same social standing and preeminence of the family even under the new dynasty. This was rather unusual. The social standing of the court families derived from the service rendered to the dynasty and could not be taken for granted once the dynasty had changed. Even though the noble titles were hereditary, their survival and even the right to pass them on to one's children were totally dependent on the will of the emperor. Privileges could be withdrawn at any moment and noble title could be abolished once its holder was attainted. Trespassing the law, being disloyal to the dynasty or simply being slack and negligent in service meant risking the loss of a noble title and jeopardizing the future of the family as a member of the elite. Without the title and corresponding privileges family's position at court became insecure, more dependent on official career of its members, and could quite easily decline rapidly and merge with the common folk in just a couple of generations. Every dynastic change thus presented a great threat to the well-being of the court families. When the old dynasty was going to be replaced by a new ruling house, all the merit which had earned the families their privileged standing ceased to be of any consequence. From now on, it was only the services for the new dynasty which mattered. The ability to choose the right moment for the change of allegiance thus became the vital precondition for the survival of the family. No wonder that every dynastic change opened place for limited social mobility which brought about certain reshuffling and readjustment within the highest strata of the elite. The gradual usurpation process of the Simas and establishment of the five ranks peerages in 264 AD offered the established court families unique opportunity to transfer their allegiance and secure a place among the elite of the new dynasty.

We have seen that the restoration of the five ranks peerages was expedient on several levels. Besides providing much needed legitimacy for the usurper by symbolically stressing Sima Zhao's role as a restorationist of an ancient institution, it also helped to consolidate authority of the Simas and strengthen the bond between the usurper and his followers. Timely reward secured indispensable loyalty which might have otherwise wavered. Last but not least,

the reform of the ennoblement system met the demands of the influential court families whose tacit agreement was after all vital for successful accomplishing of the usurpation process.

Let's turn our attention to the new peerage system itself. The *Treatise on Geography and Administrative Division* (*Dilizhi* 地理志) of the Jin empire describes the five ranks system of peerage in following terms:

“When Sima Zhao (Wendi) was the Prince of Jin, he ordered Pei Xiu and others to establish the system of five ranks of ennoblement. Only Sima Fu, commandery duke of Anping had an apanage of ten thousand households which was the same as the system prescribed for all Wei princes [of the blood]. The apanages of all other prefecture dukes were one thousand eight hundred households with territory of seventy five miles. The apanages of the first grade marquises (*daguohou* 大國侯) were one thousand six hundred households with territory of seventy miles. The apanages of the second grade marquises (*ciguohou* 次國侯) were one thousand four hundred households with territory of sixty five miles. The apanages of the first grade counts (*daguobo* 大國伯) were one thousand two hundred households with territory of sixty miles. The apanages of the second grade counts (*ciguobo* 次國伯) were one thousand households with territory of fifty five miles. The apanages of the first grade viscounts (*daguozhi* 大國子) were eight hundred households with territory of fifty miles. The apanages of the second grade viscounts (*ciguozhi* 次國子) were six hundred households with territory of forty five miles. The apanages of the barons (*nan* 男) were four hundred households with territory of forty miles.”¹¹²

First of all, even though the new peerage system aspired to establish well defined hierarchy of noble titles with clearly defined differences in apanage, precedence at court and corresponding social standing applicable to all non-royal court families including the Simas, the actual arrangements and titles bestowed did not leave anyone in doubt as to who the next ruler should be. As we have seen the gradual usurpation was rather delicate process of political machinations and psychological manipulation of the opinions of the state elites. Sudden promotion in rank, restricted to the Simas and their supporters was therefore unadvisable if not inconceivable. Sima Zhao had to maintain an image of more or less humble and selfless servant of the throne pressed by the circumstances and will of heaven to assume wider responsibility for the affairs of state. The image of loyal and unpretentious regent had to be maintained almost to the very last moment. To limit the privileges of the peerages only to

¹¹² *Jinshu* juan 14, *Dilizhi* shang, p. 414.

the Sima partisans was under the given circumstances simply impossible. The establishment of the peerage system was therefore meant to benefit not only Simas and their followers but also other influential families at court whose support, no matter how tacit, was essential for bringing about the final abdication of the Wei dynasty.

However, the seeming parity of the court families was rather illusory. While the majority of the court families of some consequence indeed secured a peerage dignity and with it also the membership in the future elite circles of the Jin dynasty, the preeminent position of the Simas was further enhanced as well. Not only did Sima Zhao's relatives secured highest possible titles within the frame of the new peerage system, but the exceptional standing of the dynasty was stated quite unequivocally by the sheer size of the apanage bestowed on Sima Zhao's uncle Sima Fu 司馬孚. Whereas all other new peers were presumably given apanages according to prescribed quotas of the new system, Sima Fu was the only person created commandery duke (*jungong* 郡公) with apanage of the size which was usually reserved for the members of the imperial house of Cao. Despite being only a duke his position in fact equaled that of the princes of the blood. The nominal difference between the royalty and non-royals was retained, yet the resources given at his disposal were roughly the same.

There was nothing coincidental about creation of the commandery dukedom of Anping 安平. Even though it is not certain if there was any prescribed quota for the apanage of a commandery duke, by comparison of the apanages connected with the respective peerage ranks it becomes clear that a huge gap existed between a commandery duke and a prefecture duke (*xiangong* 縣公) who was entitled to one thousand eight hundred households only. Sima Fu's appointment was therefore highly symbolic and should be seen as a statement. Whereas the majority of the five peerages were opened, at least theoretically, to members of other court families, the Simas claimed the premier position among them closing on the imperial house itself. Sima Fu was never one of the key leaders of the Sima faction. Indeed, it seems that he might have not agreed with the pretensions of his nephews and he professed his unrelenting loyalty to the Wei dynasty even after the actual abdication in 266 AD:

“When Emperor Wudi accepted the abdication of the Wei, the [deposed sovereign] Prince of Chenliu (Cao Huan) departed to the Jinyongcheng fortress [in Luoyang]. [Sima] Fu bidding him farewell, took his hand and cried and sighed being unable to compose himself professing: “Until my last day I will always remain a true subject of the Great Wei!”¹¹³

¹¹³ *Jinshu* juan 37, *Anping wang Fu zhuan*, p. 1084.

Sima Fu's elevation to the position of the premier peer of the realm was no reward of any meritorious deed, but a symbolic gesture laying claim to the semi-royal position of the whole family as a future ruling house of the empire. Sima Fu was younger brother of Sima Yi, the great architect of the Sima's rise to power, and in 264 AD he was the most senior member of the family living. As a patriarch of the clan he commanded respect of ritual if not actual head of the family and symbolically speaking he stood for the Sima family as a whole. Conferring of a commandery dukedom on Sima Fu, comparable to the princely fiefs of the Cao clansmen, symbolically elevated the ambitious family and paved the way for the future promotion of its members by creating useful precedent. The peerage system in a certain way prefigured the future social hierarchy of the new imperial regime which was to appear in a due course. High rank equaling the princely dignities conferred on the most senior of the Simas heralded eligibility of all Sima clansmen to attain such a high position. And indeed immediately after the abdication all male adults within the Sima family were promoted to the rank of princes of the blood with Sima Fu retaining his foremost position with apanage of forty thousand households.¹¹⁴

Even though the Simas played the vital role in establishing the peerage system and secured the highest ranks among the peerage dignities, the majority of the new peers hailed from other court families. Zhang Xuefeng estimates that there were some six hundred new peerages created in 264.¹¹⁵ The exact number of the peerages is, however, unknown, as the contemporary historical sources and later dynastic histories did not preserve anything which would resemble a list of conferred titles. The majority of the peerages known to us are mentioned in the biographical entries of the respective title holders in the standard dynastic history *Jinshu*. As their membership of the titled nobility was generally not the reason for having their biography included in the historiographical compilation, it is highly probable that we know of only rather limited number of peerages conferred shortly before the establishment of the Jin dynasty. Only the most important servants of the new dynasty and supporters of the Sima cause had the privilege of being mentioned in the later dynastic histories used for the compilation of the *Jinshu*. Thus many peers created in 264 AD may have been too inconsequential or not important enough for the new dynasty to have their names and titles recorded for posterity even though their noble line might have actually survived the dynastic

¹¹⁴ For more details on Sima Fu and his role as the premier prince of the realm after 266 AD see Hrubý, Jakub (2007): pp. 46-48.

¹¹⁵ Zhang Xuefeng (2001): p. 32.

transition and continued under the Jin for couple of generations. We simply can't tell for the lack of relevant information, yet it seems rather probable as we can occasionally find solitary mentions suggesting that the peerage or titled nobility was quite numerous.¹¹⁶

[Pei] Xiu devised the five ranks peerages and more than six hundred persons were enfeoffed starting with [the offices of] Cavalry Commanders (*jidu* 騎督) and higher. [Pei] Xiu himself was enfeoffed as a Marquis of Jichuan with territory of sixty miles and an apanage of one thousand four hundred households. The prefecture of Gaoyuan and the wilderness of Jichuan became [his] marquisate.”¹¹⁷

As it is impossible to determine the exact number of the new peers created in 264 AD, it is equally impossible to get more precise idea of the actual distribution of the peerage ranks. Apart from the fact that ducal titles were more or less reserved for members of the Sima family we know next to nothing about usage of other peerage ranks opened to members of court families. It seems that the most loyal and trustworthy servants of the Sima were given rather high title of marquis whereas majority of the newly created peers, that is members of the original Wei court, had to be content with lesser titles of viscount and baron. However, the better understanding of the whole situation would need much more detailed research which is out of the time scope of this study.

Suffice it to say that new peerage system introduced five noble ranks in ten grades.¹¹⁸ Apparently all the five dignities allowed further nuanced differentiation of merit and honor being generally divided into two distinct grades. Even though the above quoted excerpt from the *Dilizhi* chapter of *Jinshu* does not mention such division in case of baronies, it seems that this omission was probably caused only in the process of compilation of *Jinshu* at the beginning of the Tang. The similar passage in the *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 encyclopedia mentions the division of the baronial rank in the same manner as the preceding peerage ranks. According to this mention the first grade barons (*daguonan* 大國男) were entitled to an apanage of four hundred households and territory of forty miles, while the second grade

¹¹⁶ For example Duan Zhuo 段灼 in one of his memorials to the throne is lamenting the fact that after 264 AD more than five hundred peerages were created which represent potential threat to the central authority of the imperial court. See *Jinshu* juan 48, *Duan Zhuo zhuan*, p. 1349.

¹¹⁷ *Jinshu* juan 35, *Pei Xiu zhuan*, p. 1038.

¹¹⁸ The authors of secondary literature might actually differ in number or ranks or grades. For example Zhang Xuefeng speaks about six ranks and ten grades as he considers commandery duke and prefecture duke to be essentially two different ranks. I prefer to see them as two grades of the same rank. See Zhang Xuefeng (2001): p. 31.

barons (*ciguonan* 次國男) received an apanage of two hundred households and territory of thirty five miles.¹¹⁹

Apart from the ducal dignity which was differentiated by the duchy being either commanderial or prefectural, the rest of the peerages were well defined in terms of both territory (i.e. nominal area of conferred fief in miles *li*) and income (i.e. number of tax-paying households *hu* allotted to be the apanage of a new peerage holder).¹²⁰ The difference between the two grades of ducal dignities was not so much difference in actual size of the fief as difference in category. As a commandery was higher administration unit one level above the prefectures, the title of a commandery duke necessarily implied wider authority and position qualitatively different from the prefecture dukes. The fact that the only commandery dukedom ever conferred before the founding of the Jin dynasty in 266 AD was given to the Sima patriarch also bears testimony to the special position of the commandery duke in the whole system and to the wide gap separating it from the remaining peerages. The main features of the new peerage system introduced in 264 AD are summarized in the following table:

Tab. 2: Five Ranks Peerages (*Wudengzhi* 五等制) introduced in 264 AD¹²¹

title (<i>jue</i> 爵)	grade	apanage (<i>yi</i> 邑)	territory
duke (<i>gong</i> 公)	commandery duke (<i>jungong</i> 郡公)	unspecified	
	prefecture duke (<i>xiangong</i> 縣公)	1800 <i>hu</i>	75 <i>li</i>
marquis (<i>hou</i> 侯)	first grade marquis (<i>daguohou</i> 大國侯)	1600 <i>hu</i>	70 <i>li</i>
	second grade marquis (<i>ciguohou</i> 次國侯)	1400 <i>hu</i>	65 <i>li</i>
count (<i>bo</i> 伯)	first grade count (<i>daguobo</i> 大國伯)	1200 <i>hu</i>	60 <i>li</i>
	second grade count (<i>ciguobo</i> 次國伯)	1000 <i>hu</i>	55 <i>li</i>
viscount (<i>zi</i> 子)	first grade viscount (<i>daguozi</i> 大國子)	800 <i>hu</i>	50 <i>li</i>
	second grade viscount (<i>ciguozi</i> 次國子)	600 <i>hu</i>	45 <i>li</i>
baron (<i>nan</i> 男)	first grade baron (<i>daguonan</i> 大國男)	400 <i>hu</i>	40 <i>li</i>
	second grade baron (<i>ciguonan</i> 次國男)	200 <i>hu</i>	35 <i>li</i>

¹¹⁹ For discussion of the *Taiping yulan* excerpt and division of the baronial rank see: Zhang Xuefeng (2001): p. 31; and Yang Guanghui (2004): pp. 29-30.

¹²⁰ We shall deal with implications of this dual way of defining peers' apanage in a due course in a special section of this thesis.

¹²¹ This table is based on *Jinshu* juan 4, *Dilizhi* shang, p. 414 and tables in Zhang Xuefeng (2001): p. 31; and Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 4.

The Accession of the Jin Dynasty (266 AD)

Despite all the effort and careful arrangements Sima Zhao was not predestined to be the founder of the new dynasty. It was to be his son Sima Yan 司馬炎 who accomplished the gradual usurpation process which took almost three decades and finally received the abdication of the last Wei sovereign early in 266 AD. It appears that by the time the new ennoblement system was brought to life Sima Zhao had been fatally ill.¹²² Knowing that he was going to die he tried to secure the position of the family and proclaimed his eldest son Heir Apparent of the Jin principality and had him appointed the Great General of the Pacification Army (*fujun da jiangjun* 撫軍大將軍) assisting the Counselor-in-chief (*fuer xiangguo* 副貳相國), thereby making him his indisputable heir in both familial and political sense.

As the heir apparent of the Jin principality he was to inherit not only the greatest domain in the realm but also symbolic claims to the rulership and supreme authority which the extraordinary fief represented at the first place. Sima Yan became the future head of the Sima family and leader of the most influential court faction commanding loyalty of all supporters of the Sima cause. His position of the political heir to Sima Zhao was further enhanced by the official appointment which made him virtual vice Counselor-in-chief and designated successor to the highest of the court offices. Carl Leban stresses further symbolic implication of these appointments arguing that Sima Zhao was deliberately strengthening the legitimacy of his family's claim to the throne by imitating Cao Cao who in turn had followed the precedent of the Zhou comparing himself to king Wen of Zhou. As it was only Wen's son King Wu of Zhou who had actually established the new dynasty, Cao Cao was insinuating that the dynastic transition would take place after his death and succession of his son Cao Pi. Sima Zhao was going in his steps declaring himself to be "...“Cultured” King of Zhou for his own time, a powerful ruler who left the dynastic founding to his heir.”¹²³

Sima Zhao died on 6 September 265 AD and the next day Sima Yan assumed his position as the new Prince of Jin and Counselor-in-chief. The scene was set for the last ritual act of gradual usurpation process, but the decent period of mourning had to be observed which delayed the final procedure. It was almost four months after Sima Zhao had been buried when the ritual of abdication was staged. On 4 February 266 AD after announcing to

¹²² Carl Leban suggests that Sima Zhao might have suffered of cancer and was already beyond recovery in the autumn of 264 AD. See Leban, Carl (2010): 41-42.

¹²³ See discussion on Sima Yan's new appointments in Leban, Carl (2010): p. 42-44; quotation from p. 44.

Heaven and ancestors the emperor's resolve to resign his august position, the court dignitaries came to Sima Yan inviting him to accept the throne. Two days later, after three ritual refusals, Sima Yan did accept the imperial seal and ascended the throne as the first emperor of the Jin dynasty.¹²⁴ One of the first acts of the new ruler was to address his relatives and loyal followers:

“In the first year of the Taishi Era (265/266 AD) in the winter, the 12th month on the day *bingyin* ... [the emperor Wudi] graced [by his presence] the front [chamber] of the Taiji Hall in the Luoyang palace and issued the following edict: “In the past our august grandfather King Xuan (Sima Yi), being wise and sagacious, respectful and discerning, complied with the [right] moment (i.e. did what was needed at the time) and gave rise to the beginning of imperial [majesty] and established the mighty foundations [of the imperial enterprise. Our] late deceased uncle King Jing (Sima Shi), perceiving and sensible, personally trod the right path and brought glory to the noble lords [being one of them]. When it came to our august father King Wen, his wisdom was sage-like, bright and vast. In harmony with [the wish of] the deities of Heaven and Earth he obeyed Heaven and acted according to the current needs and received this bright mandate. The humanness [spread] all over the world and the merit became the norm of those above as well as below. Therefore the Wei took the inspiration from the ancient lessons [of the past], followed [the examples of Tang [Yao] and Yu [Shun] and [after] discussing [the whole thing] with lords and ministers entrusted the great mandate to us. I myself was in awe of the mandate of heaven and did not dare to oppose [Heaven's will]. We have taken upon ourselves this great enterprise, yet our virtue is limited. Therefore we entrust the princes and dukes to rule as lords over [all between the] four seas. We are greatly anxious and fearful, not knowing what to do [in order to] help [the empire]. But you [my lords] were [our] most trustworthy supporters, loyal civil and military ministers. [Some of you have served our] grandfather, [others have served our] father. [All of you] were truly the closest servants of our kingly predecessors [and together you have made] our cause glorious and grand. I wish to give you one thousand fiefs so that you too would be able to share this great blessing [of securing] the imperial throne.” After that an amnesty was proclaimed and a new imperial era commenced.”¹²⁵

This imperial proclamation of the new Emperor Wudi was kind of customary opening of the reign of the new dynasty which was more or less expected. In professing being unworthy of such an exalted dignity and admitting personal shortcomings and awe in front of such a great task as ruling the empire undoubtedly was, the emperor was validating the

¹²⁴ For more details on abdication and direct quotations from the sources see Leban, Carl (2010): pp. 47-48.

¹²⁵ *Jinshu* juan 3, *Wudi benji*, p. 51.

expectations of those who begged him to accept the throne. By appearing humble and unassuming his virtue was confirmed as well as his right to the supreme position and legitimacy of the new dynasty. The declared willingness to share power with worthy councilors and advisers of his forefathers was kind of encouragement of loyalty to the new dynasty expressed in ceremonial way. By symbolically offering his subjects a share in ruling the state, the emperor was simply asking for their loyal support as administrators of the new Jin government, hoping that once they got involved in the Sima cause, their interests became one with that of the state and dynasty and concern for their own wellbeing would strengthen their resolve to support the dynasty against any attempt to overthrow it and replace it with a new one.¹²⁶

This rather general statement of appreciation of the past services of the loyal servants and assurance of unfading gratitude of the dynasty was followed by more tangible token of the emperor's grace in form of new peerage titles for those whose unwavering support was vital in accomplishing the dynastic transition. These men became the so called meritorious ministers (*gongchen* 功臣) of the Jin, founding members of the new regime:

“In the first year of the Taishi Era (265/266 AD) in the winter, the 12th month on the day *dingmao* ... the Cavalry General (*piaoji jiangjun* 驃騎將軍) Shi Bao became Commander-in-chief (*dasima* 大司馬) and was enfeoffed as Duke of Leling. Chariot and Horse General (*cheji jiangjun* 車騎將軍) Chen Qian became Duke of Gaoping, General of the Guards (*weijiangjun* 衛將軍) Jia Chong became Chariot and Horse General and Duke of Lu. Director of Department of the State Affairs (*shangshuling* 尚書令) Pei Xiu became Duke of Julu. Palace Attendant (*shizhong* 侍中) Xun Xu became Duke of Jibei. Grand Guardian (*taibao* 太保) Zheng Chong became Grand Mentor (*taifu* 太傅) and Duke of Shouguang. Defender-in-chief (*taiwei* 太尉) Wang Xiang became Grand Guardian and Duke of Suiling. Councilor-in-chief (*chengxiang* 丞相) He Ceng became Defender-in-chief and Duke of Langling. Censor-in-chief (*yushi dafu* 御史大夫) Wang Shen became Cavalry General and Duke of Boling. Minister of Works Xun Yi became Duke of Linhuai. Great General Defender of the North (*zhenbei da jiangjun* 鎮北大將軍) Wei Guan became Duke of Ziyang. All the rest had their enfeoffment [apanages] increased

¹²⁶ The same kind of willingness to share authority with those who used to be one's peers, however pretended, is stated already in some of the acts and edicts of Emperor Gaozu, founder of the Han Dynasty. For example see Homer H Dubs' translation of the second chapter of Gaozu's Basic Annals in *Hanshu*. Dubs, Homer H. (1938): pp. 95-150.

and [noble] ranks promoted according to their individual merit. The standing of the civil and military officials was universally raised by two grades.”¹²⁷

This collective promotion of the highest ranking ministers and officials of the state within couple of days of founding the Jin dynasty again reflected the older tradition of the previous dynasties and by the 3rd century became one of the customary procedures connected with a dynastic transition. The meritorious ministers were all given ducal titles which were at the apex of the noble hierarchy instituted in 264 AD, no doubt as a token of appreciation of their extraordinary services. But it seems that although they have been all raised to unprecedented ducal dignity which under the previous dynasties used to be reserved for royalty, their services did not all carry the same weight for the emperor as their new titles were not of the same grade. Whereas Leling 樂陵, Gaoping 高平, Lu 魯, Julu 鉅鹿 and Jibei 濟北 were commandery dukedoms the remaining titles appear to be only prefecture dukedoms standing within noble hierarchy one grade below *jungong*.¹²⁸ Prestigious ducal titles were bestowed also on some members of the old ruling house of Cao as well as on former Han and Shu princes in whose veins circulated the royal blood of the imperial Liu.¹²⁹

Even though we don't know any details, it is obvious that the promotion was not limited to a dozen or so of the founding members of the Jin regime and scions of the past dynasties. The *gongchen* were in fact just the most visible part of the title holders because the unprecedented prestige of their new ducal titles singled them out for the special mention. The majority of the titled nobles are summed up under the “all the rest” whose enfeoffment and apanages were increased and noble ranks promoted. In fact, this rather brief statement describes the symbolic birth of the new titled nobility of the Jin dynasty. Even though we cannot be hundred percent sure (due to the lack of information), it seems that no revolutionary changes were introduced into the current noble hierarchy and that the composition of the titled nobility remained remarkably stable as there was no need for radical readjustment of the elite

¹²⁷ *Jinshu* juan 3, *Wudi benji*, p. 52.

¹²⁸ Leling 樂陵, Gaoping 高平, Lu 魯, Julu 鉅鹿 and Jibei 濟北 are explicitly mentioned as commandery dukedoms in the biographies of the respective title holders. All the mentions of Shouguang 壽光 and Suiling 睢陵 fail to distinguish them as either commandery or prefecture dukedoms. I am inclined to follow traditional view represented by Wan Sitong who did not consider them to belong to the highest grade either. The fiefs of Boling 博陵 and Ziyang 蓄陽 are mentioned as prefecture dukedoms and in case of Langling 朗陵 and Linhuai 臨淮 we may conclude that they were prefecture dukedoms as well from the size of the apanage. The dukes of Linhuai and Langling were allotted one thousand eight hundred households each, which corresponds neatly with the quota prescribed for prefecture dukes in five peerages system.

¹²⁹ More details on the members of former ruling families and their enfeoffment will be given in a special chapter of the thesis.

membership which otherwise happened to be the norm during every dynastic succession. As the membership of the new elite was more or less decided already two years ago Wudi simply followed the precedents set by his father and generally restricted the changes only to relative standing of a family within the noble hierarchy. From the biographies of the individual title holders included in the *Jinshu* we may infer that the majority of the titled nobles and peers created during the introduction of the five grades peerages retained their noble status even after the change of the dynasty. The particular noble title or peerage dignity may have actually differed from the one bestowed in 264 AD, nevertheless their noble status was assured. As they were supposed to be the new titled nobility of the Jin Empire, the merit and loyal service to the new dynasty again became the main criteria deciding the relative standing of the individual nobles and peers.

General impression which we get from the sources is that of almost universal promotion. Not only does the above cited passage mention increase in apanage and promotion of rank of all other court dignitaries but also individual biographies offer the same picture. The problem is that the people mentioned in the dynastic histories were by definition connected with the rise and fall of the dynasty. Thus in the case of the Jin, the court dignitaries living during the Wei-Jin transition mentioned by the *Jinshu* were naturally proponents of the new regime and as such they could claim their share of credit on creating the new order and were duly rewarded by promotion of their titles and increase in their income. The emperor seemed to be quite generous. As the most meritorious servants were given ducal ranks, which were hitherto unattainable for non-royals, corresponding shift in the upward direction appears in all noble ranks. Even considerably less important supporters could have hoped for a high dignity within the peerage and Wei viscounts and barons were becoming marquises and counts of the Jin. This general impression, however, might be misleading. If we are to believe the occasional mentions of the sources suggesting existence of hundreds of noble dignities, it is highly probable that the majority of the noble titles created in 264 AD, which we unfortunately don't know by name for the simple reason because their holders were not instrumental in politics of the Simas and the Jin dynasty, continued under the new regime unchanged.¹³⁰

The formal creation of the titled nobility of the Jin Empire again worked on both symbolic and practical level. The symbolic importance was connected with the legitimacy of

¹³⁰ We cannot exclude that some of the titles were actually discontinued after 266 AD but it seems more plausible to me that possible changes in the membership of the elite and titled nobility were made already in 264 AD through awarding or denying the new peerages.

the new dynasty. As the gradual usurpation process became more and more institutionalized, performance of certain acts became obligatory. The validity of the transfer of mandate was conditioned by close following of the precedents set by successful usurpers of the past and emulating their deeds. Each of these acts claimed to be sanctioned by Heaven, being performed according to its will. Only repeating or replicating the whole process could ensure that the semblance of legitimacy would be maintained and the seizure of the throne would succeed. The majority of these symbolical steps took place before the actual abdication, but some of them were performed only after the establishment of the new dynasty as ritual confirmation of the legitimacy of the whole process and its irreversibility. Omitting one of these ritual acts might have seriously jeopardized the legitimacy of the new regime. Professions of humility and unworthiness of the new sovereign had the same objective as an amnesty or proclamation of the new government era. They were all ritual expressions of establishing new legitimate imperial regime, formal indicators that the transfer of mandate was legal and conforming to the will of Heaven.

Establishment of the new titled nobility was also one of the acts of ritual legitimization. Even though in reality the whole process entailed only minor changes in peerage ranks and relative social standing of former Wei nobility, creating new peers and nobles in the symbolic way ushered in the beginning of the new age and introduced new social order based on merit and service rendered to the Jin dynasty and its founders. Promotions in rank and apanage as well as creation of the new titles were seen as just and well deserved rewards for the steadfast loyalty and unstinting support of the Sima followers. By bestowing generous rewards with ennoblement being the most prominent of them, the Jin court met the expectations of its supporters and demonstrated in quite tangible way that the trust of the supporters in the Sima leaders was well justified. The trustworthiness of the new dynasty was of course one of its cardinal virtues establishing the Jin as legitimate receiver of the mandate of Heaven as was their ability to institute and maintain new social order integrating the vestiges of the preceding regimes. Princely and ducal titles for the Wei ex-emperor and other members of the ancient and not so ancient ruling houses were to be proof of this ability. On the one hand, enfeoffment of the scions of the Zhou and the Han gave the newly established dynasty rightful place in the chain of legitimate dynastic succession making the Jin the heirs of the ancient traditions of the empires of old. On the other hand, creating the deposed Wei emperor a prince and his relatives dukes and marquises integrated the formal royalty into the new social order in a way which was both prudent by being acceptable for both parties, and appropriate by stressing the legitimacy of the dynastic transition. By accepting the Jin noble title the Wei emperor was

actually accepting his new position as a subject to the new dynasty demonstrating that he had resigned his power voluntarily. This attitude of Cao Huan and his relatives and their willingness to serve the new sovereign sanctioned the whole process of dynastic transition and provided necessary legitimacy for the authority of the Jin rule.

There were also more practical factors at play in creating the new Jin titled nobility. The ritual reordering of the society was at the same time used as practical tool for strengthening the position of the new rulers. Political partners and allies were elevated to the highest ranks of the peerage becoming the elite of the new empire. As there was direct connection between noble ranks, office recruitment and all kinds of social and economical advantages, the families of the meritorious ministers should have become influential power behind the throne. The common interest should have ensured future loyalty of these families and reinforce the political position of the Simas and the dynasty as a whole.

We have seen that in accomplishing the dynastic transfer the Simas relied on the active support of their followers as well as on tacit consent of the established court families. After 266 AD these families naturally expected some kind of reward for their effort and at least some of the promotions might be attributed to the need of the government to reward their timely change of allegiance. Majority of the noble titles was probably only confirmed, but even the mere confirmation of the current noble title acquired during creation of the peerages was enough to establish the family of its holder as a member of the elite circles. Each noble title conferred certain official rank (*guanpin* 官品) depending on its position within noble hierarchy. The grander the title, the higher the official rank which went with it. The official ranks were instrumental in ordering the hierarchy of the court society in many ways. The official rank determined not only precedence during the audiences and ritual performances within the palace, but also laid claim to all kinds of social and economical privileges. Only holders of certain ranks were endowed with hereditary rights (*yin* 蔭) including the right of privileged entry into the state bureaucracy. This right enabled their sons and younger brothers to acquire the official position at remarkably early age giving them advantage of uninterrupted official career long enough to reach the offices with the highest court ranks which would again give them the same kind of privilege for their own offspring. As all the noble titles provided their holders with the higher official ranks, creation of a noble title ensured certain

perpetuation of the social standing of the family thus honored and considerably raised the chances of the survival of this family as a member of the elite.¹³¹

Beside the hereditary privileges the official rank also determined the size of the property of its holders. The early medieval Chinese state repeatedly tried to introduce fixed quotas on land and dependent households which would prevent locally powerful families from seizing the land formerly tilled by free peasants and sheltering families of the state tax-payers who tried to avoid their tax duties by entering their service. Despite this continuous effort the results of this policy were only meager and temporary at best and urgent political needs often compelled the government to close its eyes over these nefarious practices. However, the influential families always tried to legalize their land holding and noble title with corresponding high official rank entitled them to more land and depending tenants. Mere confirmation of the Wei noble title thus simply legalized land holdings of many a court family as well as numbers of tenants working on their estates in the country. Wudi tried to meet the expectations of the established court families and ensure that they would not be disappointed and disillusioned with the new regime. Due to the nature of the long and gradual usurpation process by which the dynasty got to the throne, the creation of the new social order was more about replicating and restructuring the original society of the Wei court than about dismantling the whole structure and replacing it with something completely new.

The same motives probably lead Wudi to another mass creation of the noble dignities only a year later. But this time the titles awarded were only lesser ranks of lordships and not the peerage dignities:

“In the second year of the Taishi Era (266/267 AD) in the second month the emperor issued the following edict: “The enfeoffments of the five grades (peerages) all record the old merits (i.e. merits before the establishing of the Jin dynasty). Let the enfeoffment of those who were originally prefecture marquises be handed down to their second-born sons who should become village lords (*tinghou*). [In case of] township marquises, [let their second-born sons become] lords of the royal domain (*guanneihou*). [In case of] village marquises, [let their second-born sons become] lords inside the passes (*guanzhonghou*). All these should enjoy one tenth of [revenue produced] by households allotted [as their apanage].”¹³²

¹³¹ For the connection between office holding and privileged social position see Johnson, David G. (1977): pp. 19-32; and Dien, Albert E. (1990b): pp. 12, 21-24; and Yang Guanghui (2004): pp. 161-165; for the hereditary privileged access to the office see Grafflin, Dennis (1990): pp. 145-155; for hereditary privileges *yin* in general see Zhang Zhaokai (1989): pp. 110-117.

¹³² *Jinshu* juan 3, *Wudi benji*, p. 53.

The new noble dignities were in fact expression of the well established policy of the special grace (*tui'en* 推恩) by which second-born sons or younger brothers of a title holder were getting noble dignity of their own, considerably lower in terms of rank and income, as a kind of courtesy and special favor expressing the gratitude of the court for the meritorious services of appointee's father or elder brother. This kind of ennoblement was usually practiced within the peerages, and its use in this context is rather exceptional. Wudi applied the *tui'en* principle to the original Wei noble titles of lords (*liehou*). Those who had before the introduction of the five peerages held one of the lordship titles (that is prefecture marquis, township marquis or village marquis) were now entitled to pass this original dignity to their younger sons as a new lordship two ranks lower than the original dignity. Second-born son of the prefecture marquis would continue the original Wei enfeoffment as village lord, younger son of a township marquis would become lord of the royal domain and second-born son of a village marquis would be granted the title of a lord inside the passes.

Even though the new noble titles were relatively inconsequential in comparison to the peerages bestowed in 264 AD and 266 AD, and definitely lower in social standing and privileges than the original Wei dignities, Wudi's decision was of great benefit to all court families and went along with the policy of preferential treatment of the original Wei elite. Apparent degradation in rank was in fact an additional honor for the family. Every individual could at one time hold only one noble dignity and this dignity was transmitted in single line of succession from father to the eldest son born of the legal wife. Therefore, every promotion in rank or creation of a new dignity meant that the original title was discontinued, either being abolished altogether or remaining in abeyance for generations to be resurrected only by an act of a special imperial favor conferred on a younger member of the family. Wudi's act of special grace was in line with this practice. Because the families in the meantime got new peerage and noble titles they had no right to claim the original ones. Wudi's willingness to resurrect the Wei dignities in at least some form expressed great magnanimity of the new rulers which was supposed to be binding for the old elite committing them to support the Jin. Creating an extra noble dignity and new line of hereditary succession for each of the established noble families practically doubled the scope of family members who could use the hereditary privileges, which not only greatly enhanced the stability of their current social position as members of the elite but also much improved their future chances to expand their influence and become even more successful in official career. For even the lowest of the lordship ranks conferred high enough official rank for the family to enjoy all the above mentioned privileges.

The process of creation of the new Jin nobility reflects peculiar nature of the prolonged power struggle between the Simas and the Wei imperial house. Yet, the picture which we get by looking at promotions in titles and reshuffling of the noble ranks at the beginning of the Jin is but one side of the proverbial coin. Parallel to this adjustment of the social hierarchy of the new empire the continuous rise of the imperial clan of Sima was taking place as well. The question of securing the position of the ruling house in general and the main imperial line of succession in particular became the major issue of the court politics throughout the reign of Emperor Wudi. If the founders of the Wei before them were haunted by prospect of an emperor's brother or other collateral relative replacing the main imperial line on the throne through conspiracy and military coup, then the Jin suffered from different, yet not unrelated fear. Wei Wendi's fear might have been paranoid but vacillation of Cao Cao in naming him his successor and the insecurity caused by the opened question of succession were definitely important factors determining the harsh policy of the Wei towards the imperial relatives. The specific circumstances under which the dynasty had been established influenced directly its policies. The same holds true for the court of Wudi, except the fact that the imagined threats to the survival of the royal dynasty were seen elsewhere.

Whereas the Wei emperors were afraid of their own kin, Jin Wudi could not forget the manner in which his family gained the throne. The Wei policy of circumscribing political independence of the royal princes deprived the throne of its natural protection and facilitated the usurpation of the supreme authority by a court family which became too powerful for the lonely throne to be effectively dealt with. Thanks to the Wei anti-clansmen policy the Wei court was full of influential families. The Simas were originally but one of them. Other families may have been initially as powerful and ambitious as the Simas; the only difference was the skill with which Wudi's ancestors manipulated politics of the court and final success which catapulted the Simas high above all other possible claimants for the throne. And still, in minds of many a courtier the Simas remained only *primus inter pares* and Wudi was painfully aware of the fact. As the hostile policy towards imperial kinsmen was universally blamed for the fall of the Wei, Wudi naturally decided to avoid the grave mistakes of his predecessors and stake the future of his family on completely opposite policy of strengthening the royal house by large scale enfeoffment of the princes of the blood. Members of the imperial clan were to be endowed with large political and military power as pillars of the dynastic authority shielding it from any attempt of another court family to replace the Simas at the helm:

“At the beginning of the Taishi era, when the [situation of] all under heaven quieted down [the emperor] reformed the lingering flaws of the Wei. Abiding by the ancient practices of the Zhou [he] established the imperial kin (*zongshi* 宗室) [in their fiefs] to be the bulwark and support [of the dynasty]. All those [from the generation of emperor’s] father were honored in the same manner as [the lords] of Yu and Guo and his brothers [and cousins] received the blessing of Lu and Wei. Thus [the dynasty could enjoy] the eternal time span and the root and the branches [would support one another] for hundreds of generations.”¹³³

The collective promotion of the imperial relatives, mostly uncles and cousins to the emperor, mentioned by the chronicle took place immediately after establishing the new dynasty, within a day after Wudi’s accession. In fact, creation of the new princes of the blood occurred on the same day as the promotion of the meritorious ministers to the ducal dignities and both appointments are clearly related. In both cases Wudi was only following well established practice and policies set by his predecessors. Building on the foundation laid by his father Sima Zhao in 264 AD when the future eminence of the Sima clansmen was clearly stated by enfeoffment of the clan patriarch Sima Fu, Wudi now enfeoffed twenty seven of his close male relatives as new princes of the blood. It seems beyond doubt that this unprecedented promotion of the wider imperial kin was dictated by the fear that without adequate backing some other court family might replace the Simas as easily as they had replaced the Caos.

The scale of the Jin creation was unprecedented indeed. None of the preceding dynasties had ever conferred princely ranks on so many male relatives. Even the Han were careful not to establish independent regional sources of power and tried to keep the princely rank out of reach of the more distant male members of the imperial clan. As Wudi’s sons were at this time still only minors, he had to rely on support of his brothers, uncles and cousins. His willingness to risk possible internal family disputes as well as danger of the main imperial line being replaced by one of the cadet branches attests to the urgent need of the imperial family to assert itself against all possible rivals.¹³⁴ The main aim of this collective creation of the princes was to consolidate the standing of the new imperial house vis-à-vis the original Wei elite. The Simas may have been the most powerful force at the Wei court but the actual accomplishing of the usurpation process changed the scene and moved the new imperial house on less stable ground. They still had to find their roles as the new ruling house and

¹³³ *Jinshu* juan 37, *Zongshi zhuan*, p. 1114.

¹³⁴ For more detailed discussion of this problem see Hrubý, Jakub (2007): pp. 46-49.

defend their position. Wudi's decision to enfeoff his relatives was not only ritual gesture, mere concession to the Confucian tradition but efficient means how to secure power for his own family and elevate the status of its members high above their former peers, thereby ensuring stability of the new regime. Rationale behind Wudi's policy was nicely summed up in the preface to biographies of the imperial princes:

“Since the ancient times all the emperors and kings who ruled all under heaven wanted to establish widely the defenses and bulwarks [and therefore] they respected the imperial kinsmen and made them stable... Since [the rule] of the Zhou royal house how clearly it can be seen! They have enfeoffed their close relatives and the wise and thus various states [came into being]... the Wei Emperor Wudi (Cao Cao) forgot paramount rules of governing a state and practiced only low crafts of being jealous and mean. Meritorious ministers did not have land enough for a single awl to be placed on and the lord did not allow [his] sons and younger brothers to rule over the people. Even though the reed-wrapped soil [from the altars of state] was divided, they were in fact passing on only the empty fiefs. The roots had nothing to be sheltered and covered with and therefore [their empire] ended in just three generations. The Jin thought about how to alter the overturned carriage and how to heap up again [foundations of the dynasty as firm and eternal as] a boulder. Some of [the princes] were sent to the provinces where, wielding the yak tail [standard] and imperial commission, they enjoyed the glory of being shepherds of military regions. Others were summoned [to the court] where, ascending the steps [of the throne hall] they enjoyed the respect and dignity due to the ministers of the state.”¹³⁵

The superiority of the imperial clan was demonstrated not only by higher noble titles of princes which remained unattainable for anyone who wasn't of royal blood but also by the sheer size of the princely fiefs bestowed on Sima clansmen as well as administrative and military power vested in the princes and their civil and military staff:

“In the first year of the Taishi Era (265/266 AD) of the Jin Emperor Wudi all the princes created [at that time] were given a commandery as their fief. Those with apanage of twenty thousand households were first grade fiefs and established the upper, middle and lower army, three of them altogether with five thousand soldiers. Those with apanage of ten thousand households were second grade fiefs which established the upper and lower army with three thousand soldiers. [Those with apanage of] five thousand households were small [third grade]

¹³⁵ *Jinshu* juan 59, *Ba wang zhuan*, p. 1589-1590.

fiefs which maintained [only] one army of one thousand and five hundred soldiers. The princes did not depart to their respective fiefs and they served in the state offices in the imperial capital. System of the five ranks was abolished. Those dukes and marquises who [enjoyed] apanage of ten thousand households and above were [considered to be holders of the] first grade fiefs. Those who [enjoyed] apanage of five thousand households and more were [considered to be holders of the] second grade fiefs, [whereas] those whose apanage did not reach five thousand households were [considered to be the holders of the] small [third grade] fiefs.”¹³⁶

Before we discuss any details of the system of the princely fiefs, we should comment on the baffling statement which poses a problem for our understanding of the evolution of the titled nobility. This statement insinuates that the five grades peerage was abolished following the creation of the princes of the blood. I agree with Yang Guanghui who argues that this statement must be an error.¹³⁷ I suppose that it might be some kind of misconception or misunderstanding of the situation on the part of later compilers as there is plenty of evidence attesting to continuous usage of the five peerage system of ennoblement throughout the whole period of the Jin rule both before and after the restoration of the dynasty in 316 AD up to the very end in 420 AD. The above quotation is from the *Treatise on Geography* of the Jin dynastic history. As the treatises of the *Jinshu* were written only at the beginning of the Tang Dynasty during the compilation process it is possible that the author did not fully understand the sources at his disposal and has somehow distorted their testimony.

First of all, it is not clear whether the passage speaks about dukes and marquises within the frame of the five peerages. As we have seen earlier, the government implemented system of the fixed quotas which determined the size of the apanage of the five peerages. With the exception of the commandery dukes in which case we lack relevant information, all other peerage ranks were allotted precise number of households. In comparison to the apanages of the imperial princes this number was not staggering with one thousand eight hundred households granted to a prefecture duke being the highest. The first grade marquis enjoyed only one thousand four hundred households. Neither the above mentioned division into the first, the second and the third grade fiefs nor the indicated size of the apanage oscillating between under five thousand and above ten thousand households does fit into the frame of the peerage system as it has been recorded elsewhere in the dynastic histories. As the beginning of the passage deals with princes of the blood it seems plausible to me that the

¹³⁶ *Jinshu* juan 14, *Dilizhi shang*, str. 414-415.

¹³⁷ Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 35-36.

whole passage does not deal with the ordinary peerage of the realm, but mainly with the royal peerage, royal dukes and marquises. These royal peers formally belonged to the peerage of the realm, however due to the emperor's policy of raising the position of the imperial clan high above all the non-royal families their fiefs tended to be much larger than prescribed size of apanages of the ordinary peerage dignities. Therefore I would suggest that what the compilers meant by the alleged abolition of the peerages was not the abolition of the system *per se*, but comment on obvious disregard of the fixed quotas prescribed for the five peerages in case of the royal dukes and marquises. In creating royal peers the usual rules of the peerage system were not applied and their fiefs abided by different set of regulations resembling those normally used for creating princely dignities.¹³⁸

Unlike the Cao Wei, Emperor Wudi from the very beginning bestowed on his relatives large commandery fiefs corresponding to their standing within the new social order of the realm. However, this distinction reflecting the change of attitude to the imperial clansmen remained for some time rather formal and the princely dignities were mostly empty fiefs (*xufeng* 虛封) with their authority over certain territory being only nominal. The princes of the blood received regular stipend derived from their apanage, but as they resided in the capital where they served in the offices of state they could not attend to administration of their fiefs. Wudi employed the ancient rule of the Han, that “the [princes] are lords in their fiefs, yet they do not rule the people” (*jun guo er bu lin min* 君國而不臨民).¹³⁹ In other words, the princes of the blood were supposed to reign and not to rule their respective fiefs. In fact, the fully operating administration of the princely fief was established only in case that a prince had left the capital and departed to his domain to attend to its affairs. As there were only six princes of the smaller fiefs who really assumed their position as domain holders,¹⁴⁰ the provisions of Wudi's edict were in reality never fully realized. Even establishing of the armed forces of the princely fiefs which is mentioned in the quotation above was dependent on physical presence of the prince in his fief.

During the first ten years of the Wudi's reign the majority of the princes did not repair to their domains. Some of them remained in the imperial capital where they served in the official positions at the court and participated in the court deliberations, formulating the state policies and often sharing executive powers with other court ministers from non-royal families. Others were commissioned to depart to the provinces where they assumed command

¹³⁸ Yang Guanghui suggests other plausible explanations for this confusion. See Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 36.

¹³⁹ Yang Guanghui (1989): p. 142.

¹⁴⁰ Zhang Xingcheng (2001): p. 63.

of the military regions as Regional Inspectors (*cishi* 刺史 or *mu* 牧) and Commanders-in-chief (*dudu* 都督).¹⁴¹ Thus the stability of the imperial house was achieved not so much through the creation of the princes as through the appointment of the imperial relatives to the highest civil and military posts in both central and provincial administration. Whatever the actual means, Wudi's policy did succeed in securing preeminence of the ruling family creating an insurmountable gap between imperial clansmen and other non-royal subjects. In fact, it was so effective that even though the threat which the non-royal peers allegedly posed to the supreme authority of the throne was not forgotten, it was the princes of the blood themselves who later became cause of considerable concern for the emperor.

Even though the current political and power situation effectively precluded any attempt of another usurpation, the fear of influential court families encroaching on the sovereign authority of the emperor still lingered on, being perhaps even more acute after the change of the dynasty because now the potential rivals were wielding new kind of authority conferred by the noble titles and peerage dignities. This fear was keenly felt by many Jin officials who repeatedly voiced their concern for the future well-being of the empire and security of the imperial line. The question of curtailing power of the titled nobility is repeatedly mentioned amidst the usual and rather formal exhortations encouraging high moral integrity and impeccable conduct of the government officials, side by side with need of support of the agricultural production and recruitment of worthy and talented men into state bureaucracy as the way how to ensure peaceful and successful reign of the dynasty. The memorials of Duan Zhuo 段灼 may serve as a good example of the reservations some Jin officials felt towards the current system of ennoblement, being quite unequivocal in stating his concern in strongest possible terms:

“Your subject has heard that the opportune moment is not as good as the topographical advantage. And the topographical advantage is not as good as the support of the people [acting in unison]. In the case of a walled city [surrounded] by wall three miles long and an outer wall of some five miles, if we besiege it and attack it [from all around], we may still not be able to subdue it. That is [what is meant by] the opportune moment being not as good as the topographical advantage. And when the [defenders] give up and abandon the city even though the walls are high, the moat is deep, the grain supplies are abundant and the weapons are sharp, [that is the moment when] the topographical advantage is not as good as the support of the

¹⁴¹ For detailed discussion of this topic see Hrubý, Jakub (2007): pp. 103-117 and secondary literature mentioned there; for princes of the blood as regional governors see Tang Changru (1983): pp. 123-139; Ai Chong (2002): pp. 32-36; and Zhang Hequan (2002): pp. 15-20.

people [acting in unison]. Because this is so, those who ruled as kings of old have all as the first [and foremost] thing bestowed the special grace binding people's hearts with tight [bonds of loyalty]. Once the hearts of the people are in harmony, [ready to act in unison], even the walled city of a mere three miles and outer wall no longer than five miles cannot be attacked. [But] once the hearts of the people are not in harmony then even the metal walls and moats filled with boiling water cannot be defended ... Shun played the five-stringed zither *qin* and sang a song of the Southern Airs, yet all under heaven was ordered by itself. [It was possible only] because Yao's men were enfeoffed one after another [and therefore were able to be of assistance to Shun]. There were many troubles and upheavals in the past. Unscrupulous schemers have risen time and again confusing and disturbing the hearts of the multitude. The swords and saws (i.e. the instruments of punishment) vied with each other and the sound of wailing of orphans of those who had died in banishment does not cease. Therefore your subject thinks it prudent that Your Majesty should deeply ponder this [problem] and consider the distant [past]. [Your Majesty] should prevent corrupting [influences] and be on guard against the sprouts [of wickedness]. [And then You should] play the zither and sing the song and do nothing else. There is nothing more important in this respect than bestowing special grace in order to bring harmony to the common people. For when one bestows the grace, one is able to secure all between the four seas. But when one does not bestow the grace one is not able to secure even his own wife and children. That is the reason why Tang Yao attached such an importance to his family and clan being loving and harmonious and why King Wen of Zhou was so concerned about treating his own wife according to the rites and law. Among all the bright kings and sagely rulers there was none who would not approach those close to him first and only later deal with those who were distant moving from near to far. Your subject believes that it would be fitting to leave the three princes [who are] the Great Steward (*taizai* 太宰), Minister of Education (*situ* 司徒) and General of the Guards (*weijiangjun* 衛將軍) in Luo[yang] to defend and guard it [against intrusions]. Regarding the rest of the princes, those capable of serving in [an official position should be] recalled from the provinces, those over fifteen years of age should be all sent to their respective fiefs. Princely Attendants (*zhonglang* 中郎), Mentors (*fu* 傅) and Princely Administrators (*xiang* 相) should be selected for them whose talents would combine [abilities both] civil and military in order to assist and guide [the princes]. They should be allowed to train soldiers and horses in their fiefs which would declare the benevolence [of the emperor] and [establish] good faith far and wide. Then surely [they] would look after those below them as their own children and would love the state as their family. [The position of] the ruler and the subject will be settled and won't change in hundred generations. The neighboring cities and divided territories [of the fiefs] would become Jin, Lu and Wei [the strongest buttresses of the Zhou]. The whole under heaven yields to the strength of the so called clan as

[eternal and firm as a boulder]. Even though we are talking about dividing the territory, it is more like a pierced sack [leaking] inside the storeroom [with none of the grain getting lost]. They are after all also a possession of one single family. If you are worried that they would grow stronger and bigger in later generations, it is possible to [take precautions], introducing system [of control] in advance and make them receive the special grace and thus divide [the territory of their fiefs among their] sons and younger brothers. In this way the branches would ramify and leaves would spread and [the fiefs] would little by little become smaller on their own accord gradually being turned into ten thousand states. Thus the interest of the future generations is again nothing to be worried about.

In the past during the reign of the Han Dynasty when the Lüs made themselves suspected [of disloyalty], there were the close relatives like Zhuxu and Dongmou at court and the lords with the strength of nine princely fiefs outside in the provinces. The Lüs therefore did not dare to move and shake [the world]. Today, it would be expedient if the princes would become stronger and greater in order to be as firm and steady as the Mount Tai. If someone is not of our clan and house, his heart would necessarily differ [from ours]. And yet, the Wei law forbade all the princes to serve in the offices and the close relatives were isolated from each other. There is nothing more unfortunate than this. In the meantime all under heaven was carved up without a cause [when] the five ranks lords were created. Thus the upper [rank] does not reflect the ability, the lower [rank] does not discuss the merit, the right and the wrong intermingle [and are confused] when [all] regularly receive reed-wrapped soil [without proper discrimination]. This resembles [merely] an expedient measure serving present needs but not the constant and everlasting order. If this is going to be unchanged in the future then these men will again [cause] disturbances and [the five ranks peerage system] becomes the first step [leading to] the gradual onset of chaos. For the prosperity of the state [is achieved] through family and clan being loving and harmonious and common folk being supportive and acting in unison. Decline of the state lies in flesh and blood being estranged and alienated and hearts of the common people losing faith [in government]. Therefore when the state of Xia became unstable, Yi Yin transferred his allegiance to the [Shang] Yin. When the state of Yin became disordered, Lü entered [the service] of the Zhou. The [Shang] Yin learned their lesson from the Xia. The warning of the things past is truly the lesson for things to come.”¹⁴²

For Duan Zhuo the establishment of the five grades peerages paved the way for chaos and disintegration of the state. With the benefit of hindsight he considers Wudi’s generous ennoblement policy to be highly unwise and potentially harmful to the state and calls for preventive measures to be taken which would counterbalance the dangerous centrifugal

¹⁴² *Jinshu* juan 48, *Duan Zhuo zhuan*, pp. 1338-1339.

tendencies caused by supposed alienation of the supreme authority of the throne. The Jin emperor should learn a lesson from the past and rely on his kin in order to forestall the disintegration of the empire caused by the rise of rival loci of power. The imperial clansmen should be enfeoffed not only in theory but they should really be sent to their respective fiefs to administer the region and thereby share the authority of the throne as well as the responsibility for the defense of the realm against every intrusion be it a raid of the nomads into the border regions or conspiracy of a court faction attempting to overthrow the legitimate imperial line. According to Duan Zhuo the empire and responsibility for it should be shared by all members of the imperial house, for even though this entails certain diminution of the supreme authority of the emperor and his central administration the division of power makes the regime outwardly stronger without jeopardizing the foundations of the dynasty. After all, the control over the empire remains in the family.

On the other hand, Duan Zhuo is well aware that the policy of strengthening imperial house through wide creation of the imperial princes might have dire consequences of its own kind. Powerful cadet branches of the imperial house could pose a threat to the main imperial line of succession. While mentioning the attempted coup of the Lü family following the death of Empress Lü in 180 BC as an example of efficiency of imperial clansmen in safeguarding the throne against any potential threats, he at the same clearly remembers the deterring example of the Upheaval of the Seven Princes. In 154 BC the collateral branches of the imperial house rose against the main line which had employed resolute and unscrupulously harsh policy of asserting supreme authority of the centre over the regions ruled by the princes of the blood. This ill-fated attempt to preserve the independence of the princely domains was short-lived and initiated the process of transformation of the fiefs into harmless units of provincial administration totally dependent on the central government. Duan Zhuo suggests that in order to prevent possible discord within the imperial family, the government should follow the example of the Han emperors and use the policy of special grace which had been first implemented precisely after the victory over the seven princes. Continual division of the fiefs occurring time and again in every generation would render the princes of the blood too powerless for any coup on their part to succeed, yet their function as a bulwark and shield against the ambitions of the non-royal elite families would remain unaffected.

The same arguments are presented in another of Duan Zhuo's memorial submitted couple of years later. The clear indication that these thoughts were heavy on his mind:

“In the past when the Zhou and the Han flourished they had installed their close relatives [in position of influence] and established virtue. The Zhou [achieved it] through the five ranks peerages and the Han used the pledge of rivers and mountains. But when decline set in, the imperial regalia were snatched by powerful subjects and the throne of the realm was transferred to an outsider [from a different family]. Thus those who had annihilated the Zhou were the Qin and not a member of the [Zhou imperial] house of Ji. And those who had replaced the Han were the Wei and not scion of the Liu family [of the Han emperors]. Today, the great strategy of the state should be to deprive the non-royal families of the territory which had been divided among them and the cities which they claim unlawfully. [On the other hand, members] of the imperial clan should take hold of the territory of neighbouring walled cities. If we order the future sons and grandsons of the princes to return [the territory] back, then it would be like the men of Chu who had lost the good bow Fanruo in Yunmeng, and yet the bow itself was not [irretrievably] lost! And if the imperial regalia would not be transferred to some other family than the founding ancestors would not be moved from their temple and in ten thousand years the common people would not change their name (i.e. the dynasty would not change)!

The princes of the blood of the Great Jin [number only slightly] more than twenty persons, yet there are more than five hundred duchies, marquises, counties, viscounties and baronies. If you want to [object] that their fiefs are all small [and insignificant, remember, that] the Emperor [Gao]zu of the Han rose [to the imperial throne] even though he did not possess a single foot of land, let alone those in possession [of the whole] fief! If you intend to say that whereas the [rulers] of the Great Jin are wise and sage-like in every generation, the offspring of the noble lords are generally unworthy [of their ancestors], foolish and unwise, [then remember] that even though Fang Xun (Emperor Yao) himself was solemn and perceiving [his son] was Dan Zhu and even though Gusou (the Blind man) himself was conceited and stubborn [he was father to] Yu Shun. Whenever there are disturbances in all under heaven it is always by means of weapons [and military activity]. And yet, for no reason, we are establishing many bases of military [power] and opening wide the source of chaos. That is why your subject says that the five ranks [of peerage] are not appropriate [at this stage]! Your servant deems it advisable [to act] according to [what has been proposed in the] previous memorandum. The fiefs of the respective princes should be enlarged, [strength of] their military forces augmented and [princes themselves] should all be sent to assume control over their domains. Only if we arrange things in such a way that they would be able to join [and support] one another, would Your Majesty be able to lie down and sleep peacefully. Your servant thinks it prudent to change titles of all the marquises, counts, viscounts and barons and adjust the system of ennoblement, salaries and emoluments and ceremonial precedence and ranks to correspond with the precedent of the lords (lordships – *liehou*) of all under heaven.

Your subject has heard that those who follow the track of an overturned cart won't ever be safe, those who suffer from a dead man's disease won't ever survive and those [states] which observe the rules of a perished state won't ever endure. Let alone this mighty and majestic Great Jin whose [emperor] is just about to climb the Mount Tai and sacrifice at Liangfu, engraving a stele with record of the meritorious achievements for all posterity forever to see. It would be advisable to take lesson from distant [past] of rise and fall of dynasties [long] gone and [ponder] deeply [the causes thereof and] take strict precautions, for if all the affairs are written down truthfully and straightforwardly there is surely some moral [and guidance to be found] in them. Long ago Yi Yin felt ashamed that his ruler was no Yao or Yu. And that is the reason why your subject, feeling fervent [urge] of his own, forgot his mean and humble [status and dares to speak up].”¹⁴³

Duan Zhuo's analysis of the situation points out obvious discrepancy of the ennoblement system as it was practiced during the first decade of the Wudi's reign. Whereas the meritorious ministers and other members of the former Wei elites were given prestigious titles and privileges of the peerage, the princes of the blood who were supposed to counterbalance the influence of the titled nobility were only nominal lords of their domains. Because they were kept in the capital the planned semi-independent administration of their fiefs was never fully brought into life and the whole policy of princely enfeoffment did not serve its purpose. Without full control over their domains and command of its military forces the princes would not be able to protect the main imperial line and check the ambitions of would be usurpers. In order to secure the dynasty the court on the one hand should send the princes of the blood to their domains and let them fulfill their role of support behind the throne, on the other hand the excessive and highly dangerous practice of creating peerages should be abolished. Duan Zhuo is not questioning the need to award meritorious services of loyal Jin subjects otherwise he would not suggest degrading all the peers to the status of noble lords (*liehou*). He is merely pointing out that a peerage is too high and dangerous an honor to be given lightheartedly. Creation of the peerage is politically inappropriate. There may have been a good reason to bestow such high honors on followers before the founding of the dynasty in order to secure their support and allegiance, but after the establishment of the dynasty the situation changed and one of the prime concerns of the new imperial regime should be curtailing the power of titled nobility through keeping their privileges and their very number within well defined limits.

¹⁴³ *Jinshu* juan 48, *Duan Zhuo zhuan*, pp. 1348-1349.

The main reason why the system of princely fiefs was still not fully operational was that the emperor relied on his male relatives not as on some abstract source of support which would lie dormant in the provinces rushing in to rescue the throne only in times of need, but he was still dependent on them in very practical terms. With their help Wudi was able to control the state administration quite effectively as the princes of the blood practically monopolized crucial official position at court as well as in the provinces. If the princes were to be sent to their fiefs Wudi's control over bureaucracy might be shaken as he would have to take the risk and appoint members of non-royal families whose loyalty was by definition more questionable as heads of executive offices and commanders of crucial military regions. The security of the state was at stake.

Emperor's attitude changed in the second half of the 270s. As his own sons were growing up, the group of the princes of the blood wielding considerable power both at court and in the provinces who up to this moment served their purpose so well started to threaten the main line of succession and members of Wudi's immediate family. The latent contradiction in interests of the both parts of the imperial house was growing more prominent with time. Whereas Wudi naturally tended to prefer his own flesh and blood over distant relatives and tried to secure smooth succession for the main imperial line, the princes of the blood (*zongshiwang* 宗室王) were of course eager to retain as much authority as possible and resented emperor's plans to replace them in the due course with his sons. The princes of the blood constituted a very powerful political group as it did not comprise only the princes themselves but also their sons and younger brothers who could often boast their own peerage titles of dukes and marquises and therefore Wudi had to act very carefully. The first step was taken in the third year of the Xianning 咸寧 Era (277/278 AD) when four sons of the emperor, who had just approached adulthood, were created princes. Many current holders of princely dignity were transferred to different domains and the system of the princely fiefs and their administration was thoroughly modified in order to strengthen the position of the central government and main imperial line vis-à-vis possible rival claimants for the throne from among the princes of the blood.¹⁴⁴

The *Jinshu* asserts that the Xianning Era reshuffling of the princely dignities were direct consequence of misgivings of certain court ministers close to the emperor about rising power of the princes of the blood and especially Sima You, Prince of Qi 齊王司馬攸:

¹⁴⁴ For details of this transfer see *Jinshu* juan 3, *Wudi benji*, p. 68; for detailed discussion of the reform see Hrubý, Jakub (2007): pp. 50-57.

“In the third year of the Xianning Era (277/278 AD) the General of the Guards (*weijiangjun* 衛將軍) Yang Yao and Secretariat Supervisor (*zhongshujian* 中書監) Xun Xu were afraid that because Sima You, Prince of Qi, enjoyed respect and prestige of the time, some difficulties might arise in the future for Emperor Huidi (that is the then designated heir and emperor to be). Therefore, they pursued the [original] intent of the late Minister of Works Pei Xiu to establish the five ranks peerage enfeoffments and together calmly explained to Emperor Wudi what the current time demanded: “[The men of] old enfeoffed marquises in order to shelter and protect the royal house. Nowadays the bandits of Wu still remain unsubdued and the responsibility of those entrusted with the regional military command is great. The princes of the blood are commanders supervising and exercising control over their fiefs and yet, none of them actually governs the subjects within the territory [under their rule]. Their importance is not appropriate. Moreover the generals from non-royal families are stationed at the borders. It would be fitting if the [imperial] relatives would be involved as well, yet the [royal] princes and dukes are all in the capital. That does not [conform] to principles of strengthening the border garrisons and [securing] the stability of ten thousand generations.” At first the emperor did not give thought to the matter but then proclaimed an edict requesting [court] deliberation on the [ennoblement] system.”¹⁴⁵

Both Yang Yao 楊珧 and Xun Xu 荀勗 belonged to the inner circle of Emperor Wudi their families being tied by bonds of past loyal service strengthened by number of marriage alliances. Therefore they may have been privy to many private thoughts and fears of the emperor. Even though the *Jinshu* wants us to believe that they were acting on their own, being worried about the heir apparent having an unwelcome rival which threatened the smooth succession of the throne, it is quite plausible that they were just voicing general concern of the court or even perhaps personal fears of the emperor himself. Whatever the truth, it is more interesting to look at the subtle way in which they deal with the problem of excessive power of the princes of the blood which in many respects prefigures the solution chosen by Wudi. First of all, the problem itself is not mentioned at all. Both ministers argue for full implementation of the enfeoffment system which is here somewhat misleadingly labeled as five ranks peerages system. Such confusion is, however, not uncommon and it is quite understandable if we take into consideration that the princely dignities were considered to be equivalent of the Zhou feudal lords, which were in turn direct models for the peerages of the Jin. Indistinct boundary line between the princes and the royal peers on the one side and other

¹⁴⁵ *Jinshu* juan 24, *Zhiguanzhi*, p. 744.

non-royal peers on the other further enhanced chances of confusion as many rules and provisions of the enfeoffment system applied to both groups without difference.

Under the rhetoric of implementing the enfeoffment of the princes which is almost universally considered to be one of the main pillars of the imperial authority and stable dynastic rule lies the ingenious strategy how to eliminate the threat and divest the princes of their power without their being able to raise any rightful objection. Only by departing the capital and assuming one's responsibility in one's domain could the princes fulfill the roles of guardians of the throne which were traditionally expected from them. There was no fighting back without losing the moral high ground and therefore once the emperor had decided to send them to their fiefs, they had no choice but to obey the imperial command. It is true that to send the princes to their fiefs on the one hand meant realization of the division of the empire among members of the imperial house which had been so far only nominal, accompanied by establishment of the full-fledged fief administration including the armed forces. However, on the other hand, the princes of the blood were gracefully sent packing, having to leave the imperial capital with just a faint hope of return. They were deprived of the chance to participate in court deliberations and influence directly the policy of the state. Even though their departure may have been extolled and celebrated as noble accomplishment of their prescribed role, in reality they were exiles banished from the centre of power sentenced to precarious existence in the provinces, practically deprived of any means how to communicate with one another being constantly under the watchful surveillance of centrally appointed administrators. It is kind of paradox that the fear, however groundless, of too much power being vested in the non-royal peerage which was still prevalent in the court circles was so ingeniously used as an excuse for smooth elimination of a danger much more real threatening the future stability of the dynasty.

The position of Sima You, Prince of Qi, whose popularity among the Jin courtiers caused such alarm of the meritorious ministers, was exceptional indeed. He was a younger brother of Emperor Wudi but as he had been adopted as an heir of his sonless uncle Sima Shi he got ritually separated from the main imperial line represented by the emperor and his immediate family and became premier prince of the blood, standing for the cadet branches of the imperial house and their ambitions in claiming the succession for themselves. Unlike the majority of the princes of the blood who were only distant cousins of the emperor, You's claim to the throne was legitimate and therefore very dangerous for Wudi's line:

“Sima Shi was the first born son of Sima Yi but he died prematurely without leaving a son of his own. And therefore Sima Zhao made Wudi’s younger brother Sima You Sima Shi’s heir and successor and favored him greatly. He used to say that he acted as the regent only as a proxy [of his older brother] and that after his death the great enterprise should return to You. He always said: “This is Sima Shi’s all under heaven. What have I to do with it?” When he wanted to name his hereditary prince [and successor] his heart favored [his younger son] You.”¹⁴⁶

By the act of adoption, Sima You became the heir to the older line of the Sima house which at least theoretically had better claim to the throne. However, Sima Zhao may have professed his readiness to return the empire to his brother’s heir, yet in the end he followed the advice of his counselors and named his eldest son Sima Yan his heir and successor. The tricky question of precedence in succession was not solved by the establishment of the dynasty either. Even as the emperor of the new dynasty Wudi was still considering naming his younger brother the heir to the throne and thereby fulfilling his duty to the ancestors in which their father had failed. Later on the interests of his own children prevailed and Wudi appointed his oldest son Sima Zhong 司馬衷 crown prince. The position of Sima You changed immediately. As the new crown prince was not very bright and even his father was not sure whether he would ever be able to take up the responsibility of the supreme ruler of the empire, his uncle Sima You was all of a sudden too much of a competition for the young prince. Sima You was an experienced administrator and military commander who had achieved great merit in services of the dynasty which did not endear him to his brother’s heart. And the emperor’s distrust of Sima You was not lost on the more perceptive of his courtiers who might have their own reason for wishing the unfortunate prince ill:

“As Emperor Wudi was getting old, his sons were [still quite] young and the crown prince was not fit to rule. All the ministers and officials at the court and in the provinces set their mind on You [and thought about him as their future sovereign]. Secretariat Supervisor Xun Xu and Palace Attendant Feng Dan promoted themselves through fawning and flattery. You loathed their behavior. As You was the hope of the whole court, [Xun] Xu and others were afraid that once he succeeded the disaster would inevitably have befallen them. Therefore they have said to the emperor [with seeming] disinterest: “When the ten thousand years of Your Majesty’s [life] are up, the crown prince will not be able to ascend [the throne].” “For what reason?” asked the emperor. [Xun] Xu answered: “All the officials both at court and in the provinces in their hearts pay allegiance to Prince of Qi. How could the crown prince ever be

¹⁴⁶ *Jinshu* juan 3, *Wudi benji*, p. 49.

able to ascend [the throne]?! Your Majesty should try to order the Prince of Qi to depart to his fief. This would without doubt stir the whole court and [everyone would say] it is not possible. Then the words of your humble servant will be vindicated.” [Feng] Dan added: “Your Majesty should send all noble lords to their respective fiefs. In implementing the five ranks peerage system [it would be highly] suitable to begin with one’s own close relatives. And there is no one closer to you than the Prince of Qi.”¹⁴⁷

Even though both ministers were probably pursuing their own interests, having been motivated by the urge to get rid of their political opponent as well as the chance to win the good will of the future emperor, they were at least outwardly acting in perfect correspondence to their position of meritorious ministers. One of the duties of these founding members of the dynasty was to defend the interests of the main imperial line of descent and safeguard the stability of the imperial regime which manifested itself in direct primogenitural succession from father to son. Of course it is a question whether we can believe the *Jinshu* at all, yet it seems obvious that the attitude attributed by the chronicle to both ministers represents kind of general view held by those being close to the emperor and very probably by the emperor himself. Mounting tension between the main imperial line and princes of the blood may have urged the emperor to ponder pros and cons of the current system of princely enfeoffment. The need for reform which would reflect the changed political situation at court compelled the emperor to initiate open discussion on working of the ennoblement system and possible sending of the princes to their fiefs in which all the relevant state agencies should participate.

“At that time the [question] of sending princes and dukes to their fiefs was discussed [at the court]. The emperor asked [Xun] Xu what was his opinion [in this matter] and Xu answered: “All the princes and dukes already act as Commanders-in-chief [supervising military areas and provincial commands] (*dudu* 都督). To send them to their respective fiefs means to discard the provincial administration. Moreover carving and partitioning the commanderies and prefectures would without doubt cause an outcry [and discontent] because people love [their] roots (i.e. where they come from). All the fiefs are to establish [at least one] army [which means] that officials and soldiers [would have to be] recalled in order to be assigned to the respective fiefs and would be [sorely] missed in the border defenses.” When the emperor had [Xun] Xu to think it over again, he expounded [his thoughts] further: “If the imperial edict [took] the ancient [practices of] selecting the talented ones to be regional governors as the norm and would arrange things in such way that regional commands would be assigned according the territory of

¹⁴⁷ *Jinshu* juan 38, *Qi wang You zhuan*, pp. 1133-1134.

the fief and location of the army on a Commander-in-chief to be, then it would be indeed the brightest of intentions. As the carving out the territory and correcting the borders of the fiefs is concerned, if we differentiate between close and distant [relatives], it would be fine indeed! But I am afraid that dividing the old territories (administrative units) would shake the [established situation] and certainly make the people's hearts restless and agitated. When I think about [this matter] I would dare to say that it is fitting to [leave it] as it used to be before. (i.e. no change of the fief, no redistribution of the domain territory) If [in the future] the current situation and the politics of the state necessitate a change of the enfeoffment [and the fief itself] which would not go as far as dividing the territory then if there is something gained or lost it could be dealt with [ad hoc] as deemed suitable [for the occasion]. After all, the fiefs of the five grades [peerages] were created long time ago, yet in fact there is no system established as yet. They possess just an empty name but the actual administration [of the fiefs] is roughly the same as in the case of old commanderies, prefectures, townships and villages. I am afraid that if we are rash and imprudent in changing [the system] we will regret it! ...”¹⁴⁸

Obviously, even though the previous *Jinshu* quote wants us to believe that Xun Xu was one of the main advocates of the sending of the princes to their fiefs, this passage from his own biography in *Jinshu* suggests that he warned against any rash and unwarranted changes which would destabilize the system which was after all one of the main pillars of the supreme authority of the throne. Again he discharges his obligations as a meritorious minister and advises for prudent and circumspect action which would not jeopardize the power base of the imperial family. It seems that his concern for well-being of the dynasty was caused mainly by the influence of the Prince of Qi whom he wanted to see banished from the court as the latent danger of future succession struggles loomed large in his mind. However, universal revision of the princely enfeoffment system was not advisable either. Xun Xu points out a couple of technical difficulties connected with some of the suggested changes in the system. As some of the princes were appointed commanders-in-chief of the crucial military region, to recall them back and replace them by non-royals would definitely weaken the position of the Simas and risk the security of the state and its borders. With sending of the princes to their fiefs the proper fief administration would have to be established including rather large contingents of military forces which were to become a garrison of the fief. As these troops had to be set aside from the state armies, the fighting efficiency of the Jin military forces would be seriously impaired as well as the ability of the state to withstand an attack from the still unsubdued southern state of Wu.

¹⁴⁸ *Jinshu* juan 39, *Xun Xu zhuan*, p. 1154.

Xun Xu's convincing arguments were duly taken into consideration and some of them were reflected in the final reform of the princely enfeoffment system which was introduced in 277 AD. Despite dealing mostly with regulations of princely fiefs, their administration, armed forces and their inheritance, some of the provisions applied to the highest ranks of the non-royal peers as well, given certain overlapping of the princely enfeoffment and peerage system:

“The officials concerned petitioned the throne that the system of apanages of the princes and dukes should be changed and that the forces of the fief should be given under the command of a Commandant-in-ordinary (*zhongwei* 中尉) in every [fief]. Pingyuan, Runan, Langye, Fufeng and Qi were to be considered as the large fiefs (first grade fiefs), Liang, Zhao, Le'an, Yan, Anping, Yiyang as the second grade fiefs. All other were to be considered as small fiefs (third grade fiefs). All of them were to be enlarged [by including the territory of] neighboring prefectures in order to fulfill the [prescribed quota of] ten thousand households each. Moreover, the system used for the commandery dukes should be the same as that of the princes of the small fiefs. Their forces should also be given to Commandant-in-ordinary to command. The commandery marquises established one army of one thousand and one hundred men, also under the command of a Commandant-in-ordinary as was the case of princes with apanage of less than five thousand households.

At that time the apanage of the ducal fief of Lu was increased by special [grace] and the title of the late Minister of Works, Wang Shen, Duke of Boling, was posthumously promoted to that of a commandery duke, and title of Yang Hu, Marquis of Juping to that of a commandery marquis of Nancheng. Moreover Sima Cheng, Prince of Nangong, and Sima Wan, Prince of Sui¹⁴⁹ were at the beginning of the Taishi Era both enfeoffed as prefecture princes with apanage of one thousand households. Now their [status] was corrected to proper prefecture princes and their apanages increased [accordingly] to three thousand households. The rules for them were the same as those of a commandery marquis and they were also to establish one army.

Hence, only the sons of emperors were [entitled to be created] princes. The younger sons and sons of concubines of the princes of the blood were all the closest relatives of the imperial family and as such they should again by special grace receive enfeoffment of some territory. In case of princes-founders (*shifengwang* 始封王, i.e. princes enfeoffed as the first in line, progenitors of respective princely lineages) of the first and second grade fiefs, their younger sons were to become dukes. Younger sons of the princes-inheritors (*chengfengwang* 承封王, i.e. those who inherited the fief from the princes-founders) were to become marquises. Younger sons of the princes-successors (*jichengfengwang* 繼承封王, i.e. all princes who stood

¹⁴⁹ According to the commentary his name was Sima Mai 司馬邁, not Wan 萬.

in line in the third place or later) were to become counts. In case of small fiefs with more than five thousand households the younger sons of the princes-founders were to become viscounts. Younger sons of the princes-founders whose apanage is less than five thousand households together with younger sons of dukes-founders and marquises-founders were all to become barons. No other could ever be enfeoffed. The rules [applicable] to these dukes were the same [as the rules of] five thousand household fiefs. The rules [applicable] to the marquises were the same [as the rules of] fiefs with less than five thousand households. They established one army of one thousand men each too which was under command of a Commandant-in-ordinary. The counts, viscounts and barons were differentiated [from one another] but none of them was to establish a single army.

The grandsons of the first grade fief founders should disband the lower army, great-grandsons should disband the upper army. The offspring (sons and grandsons) of the second grade fief founders should also disband the lower army. All the rest were regularly left with just one army. In case of the first grade fiefs the middle army numbered two thousand men and upper and lower armies one thousand five hundred men each. The upper armies of the second grade fiefs numbered two thousand men and their lower armies numbered one thousand men. Those who had not yet departed to their respective fiefs raised [only certain number of men] for defense of their territory [in their absence.] One hundred men in case of the first grade fiefs, eighty men in case of the second grade fiefs and sixty men in case of the lesser fiefs. Rules for commandery marquises and prefecture dukes were the same as those [applicable to] the lesser fiefs. Once they have gone [to their fiefs, the number of their] retainers would be increased according to the original memorial. [The princes] were sent off to their respective fiefs, but all the dukes (i.e. princes) felt attached to the capital city [and life in it] and therefore they left it shedding [many] tears. When the state of Wu [was finally] vanquished, Sima You, Prince of Qi subsequently repaired to his fief.”¹⁵⁰

The reform of the princely enfeoffment system in 277 AD at last implemented all the provisions envisaged eleven years ago and at least theoretically brought into life the ideal of princely fiefs serving as the support of the dynasty, a kind of regional backup in times of emergency. Yet to say that these provisions were applied indiscriminately would be too farfetched as the various objections, recommendations and reservations of men like Xun Xu were also taken into consideration and many regulations were adjusted and modified accordingly. Many princes did indeed depart to their respective fiefs, but the order to leave the capital did apply only to those who did not perform any government office. The princes in official positions were to remain at court or in their respective provincial posts and discharge

¹⁵⁰ *Jinshu* juan 24, *Zhiguanzhi*, p. 744-745.

their duties as before. Wudi's sons who were newly given the princely dignity were also to remain at court where they assumed command of the palace guards and metropolitan forces in obvious attempt to strengthen the position of the main imperial line. Even Sima You, Prince of Qi was to remain at court and it was not until 282 AD that he was finally sent to his domain, yet not in capacity of a mere fief administrator but provided with wide authority of regional command:

“The emperor believed [Xun] Xu's words and heeded the advice of [Feng] Dan and in the third year of the Taikang Era (282 AD) indeed issued the following edict: “In the ancient times when they had first established nine ranks and created the counts-palatine (*bo* 伯 in sense of regional viceroy), some of them were retained at court where they [attended to] court affairs and assisted the government while others were sent [to the provinces] to administer the regions of the empire. Lü Wang of Zhou, five lords and nine counts-palatine can verily bear testimony to [such a practice]. Palace Attendant (*shizhong* 侍中), Minister of Works (*sikong* 司空) Sima You Prince of Qi possesses bright virtue, pure and untarnished. He is loyal and earnest, faithful and honest. Being our close relative, our own full younger brother, You was entrusted with a position of aiding the government in which he accomplished great achievements in assisting the [establishment of the] imperial mandate, laboring hard for the benefit of the royal house. It would be fitting to raise him to the office of some consequence in which he would be looked up to [with respect and reverence]. Let him be appointed Commander-in-chief (*dasima* 大司馬), [area commander] supervising all the military affairs of the Qingzhou province and Palace Attendant as before. Let him be commissioned with a warrant. Let him command one thousand men of his original garrison and have personal mounted escort, headquarters staff (aides de camp) and majors and [ceremonial] great carriage as he used to have earlier. His [princely] entourage is to be expanded by a troupe of pipers and drummers. The number of the official mounted forerunners should be evened up to twenty and he may establish five cavalry majors. All other important matters not mentioned should be all carried precisely according to the old rules.” Sima You was not happy about it.”¹⁵¹

As we can see from this as well as the previous edict the government tried to sweeten the bitterness of forced political exile by bestowing various additional honors and privileges devoid of any political meaning. The 277 AD reform also generously increased the princely apanages, allegedly in order to reconcile the current holdings of the princes with quotas set earlier for the size of the princely fiefs. However, this reconciliation was applied only in one

¹⁵¹ *Jinshu* juan 38, *Qiwang You zhuan*, p. 1134.

way. Whereas the fiefs found to be too small were augmented by tax-paying households from neighboring prefectures, the apanages at the apex of princely dignities which often exceeded by far the prescribed quotas were left unaltered. Enlargement of the princely fiefs was also in keeping with the declared objective of transforming nominal territorial lords into counterbalance of non-royal court families in order to establish a fully operational system of backing for the throne and its future incumbents. On the other hand, the command of military forces of the fiefs was to be entrusted to centrally appointed Commandant-in-ordinary (*zhongwei* 中尉) and thereby subordinated directly to the central authority of the emperor. Wudi did not want to create possible independent regional forces. After all, curtailment of the power of the princes was one of the main aims of the whole reform.¹⁵²

The most important innovation of the system was resurrection of the old-established Han rule according to which only the sons of an emperor are entitled to the rank of a prince, which was to become the most important rule in judging eligibility of an imperial clansmen for princely dignity. The criterion of imperial parentage should have effectively prevented the more distant branches of the imperial clan from getting more and more powerful. The younger sons of the current princes could no more be created princes in their own right. While in 266 AD almost every adult male member of the Sima family received princely title, henceforth this dignity should be reserved for sons of the reigning monarch. The new rule was not enforced retroactively, though, so the cadet branches of the imperial family retained their position, however their future prospects as the further enfeoffment was concerned, were rather bleak. The princely title was hereditary in the main line from father to eldest son but younger members of the princely families could claim only considerably less prestigious titles and their position sank even further with every new generation up to the point when they effectively ceased to be considered members of the imperial family and became commoners.

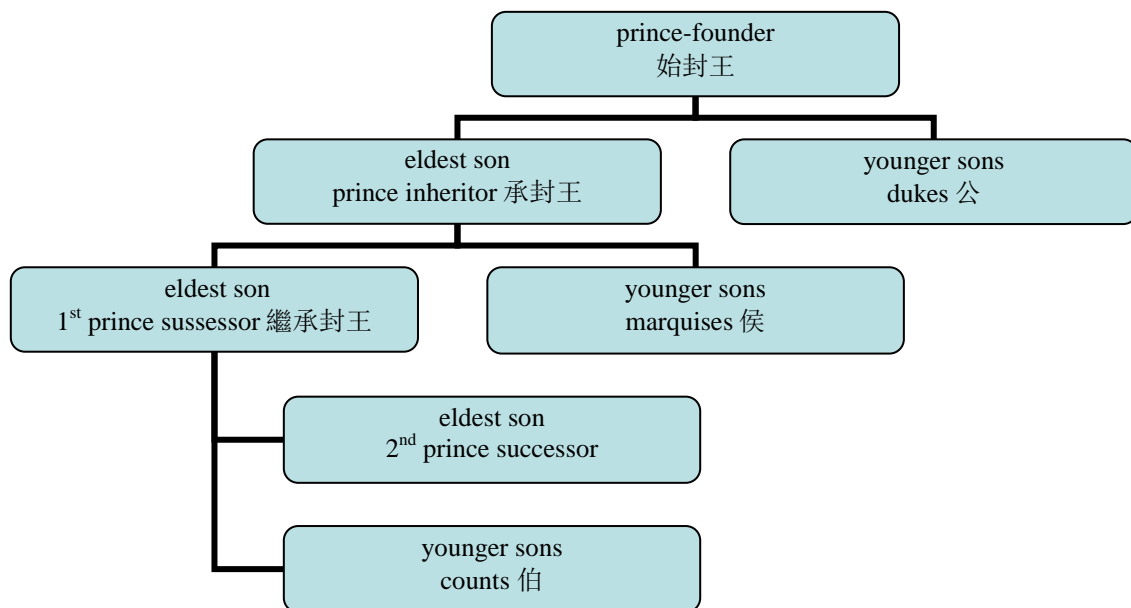
The reform of the third year of the Xianning era also introduced elaborate mechanism of devolution of privileges of the princes. As their line grew in time and generation more and more apart from the main imperial line of succession, the power of the princes was gradually curtailed. One of the examples is disbanding of the armies mentioned in the above passage. The mutual distrust and consequential fear of disloyalty was believed to grow in direct proportion to the genealogical distance from the main line and therefore each new inheritor of the princely rank should disband one of his armies so even the biggest first grade fiefs were left with but one single army after just two generations, being no different from much smaller

¹⁵² Hrubý, Jakub (2007): pp. 53-54.

fiefs of third grade princes, dukes or marquises. The same kind of devolution principle applied to the official staff of the fief administration and princely household. The fief itself should have been divided with every transfer of princely title as the younger brothers of the new title holder were supposed to get part of family inheritance and by the special grace (*tui'en*) be created noble lords in their own right. Even though this last regulation was never thoroughly implemented and the original fief was usually reduced by only one prefecture,¹⁵³ it did succeed in weakening the position of the princes in their own domains.

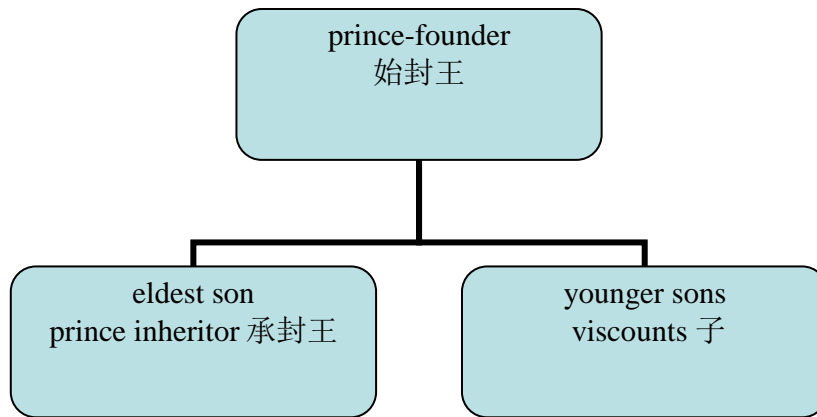
Practice of continuous partitioning of the princely fiefs was accompanied by elaborate system of royal peerages regularized for the first time precisely during the 277 AD reform of the princely enfeoffment. The younger sons of the princes were to be given peerage dignity, but the exact title and its grade was to be determined by the size of the ancestral fief, one's position in the imperial clan and one's relative distance from both the imperial line and the founder of the respective princely line, with the rank and title decreasing as the distance grows.

Tab. 3: Schema of *Tui'en* Peerages Practiced in 1st and 2nd Grade Princely Fiefs

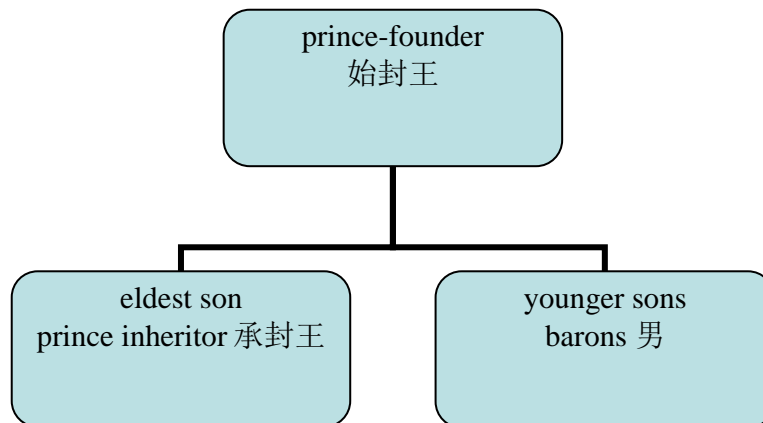


¹⁵³ Yang Guanghui (1989): p. 143.

Tab. 4: Schema of *Tui'en* Peerages Practiced in the 3rd Grade Princely Fiefs with Apanage of More than Five Thousand Households



Tab. 5: Schema of *Tui'en* Peerages Practiced in the 3rd Grade Princely Fiefs with Apanage of Less than Five Thousand Households



It is obvious from the above schemes that the same hierarchical principle based on genealogical proximity to the main imperial line was at work in creating royal peerages. Whereas the great fiefs of the first (*daguo* 大國) and the second grade (*ciguo* 次國) were usually given to the most prominent of the princes, that is the sons of a reigning emperor, the smaller fiefs of the third grade (*xiaoguo* 小國) were conferred on more distant imperial kin. In other words, the smaller the fief, the greater the distance between its incumbent and the reigning emperor. Concern of the main imperial line not to bestow too much power on distant relatives is clearly expressed in decreasing rank of peerage titles available for different offspring of different princes. While the younger sons of a prince founder of the 1st grade fief were entitled to become dukes, the sons of a prince founder of the 3rd grade could hope for a

viscounty or even only a barony, depending on the actual size of the fief. Thus the system ensured that the grandsons and great-grandsons of the emperor would be dukes and marquises whereas their peers from more distant lines were entitled to ranks of viscounts and barons at the best. In this way the everlasting supremacy of the main imperial line was ensured, with close relatives of the reigning emperor ideally holding at every given moment the highest dignities of premier princes of the realm.

The system of the special grace creations did help in the long run to strengthen position of the main imperial line, yet the future would show that the power of the princes of the blood was not sufficiently curbed. Nevertheless it would be a mistake to blame the failure of the special grace system as there were much more serious reasons for the final disintegration of the empire in internecine bloodbath known as the Upheaval of the Eight Princes.¹⁵⁴ Indeed I don't think that the system ever failed in the first place. It seems quite intriguing to me to see the whole system as useful tool serving more than one purpose. If the creation of the new dignities out of the original princely fief aimed at the power of the princes, the pruning of their privileges was never as drastic and absolute as to render the princes completely powerless. Wudi deliberately employed the principle mentioned already by Duan Zhuo in one of his memorials. While the perpetual partitioning may have diminished political consequence of the individual fiefs, shrinking of the domains and multiplying of the dignities did not affect the power base of the imperial family as a whole. On the contrary, the *tui'en* policy gave birth to numerous and practically ever-growing group of royal peerage which effectively counterbalanced the influence of the non-royal peerage families and if not outright precluded any possibility of recurring of usurpation than at least greatly minimized the danger of it.

The assumption that the *tui'en* creations of peerage dignities served double purpose may be supported by indirect mentions of the changes being made in the non-royal peerages as well. During the reform of the enfeoffment system in 277 AD three non-royal peerages are explicitly mentioned as being promoted either in rank or apanage:

At that time the apanage of the ducal fief of Lu was increased by special [grace] and the title of the late Minister of Works (*sikong* 司空) Wang Shen, Duke of Boling, was

¹⁵⁴ For detailed analysis of these reasons see my study of the role of the imperial princes during the Western Jin Dynasty: Hrubý, Jakub (2007), especially chapters "Princely Fief" (pp. 72-97) and "Members of the Imperial Family as Officials" (pp. 100-117).

posthumously promoted to that of a commandery duke, and title of Yang Hu, Marquis of Juping to that of a commandery marquis of Nancheng.¹⁵⁵

The fact that the promotions are mentioned in connection with far-reaching changes of the system of the princely enfeoffment suggests that both systems were intertwined and probably even partially overlapping.¹⁵⁶ It is highly significant that all three belonged to meritorious ministers enjoying imperial favor. It seems that Wudi tried to adjust their relative standing within the ranks of non-royal peerage and raise them closer to the ranks of the princes. Whereas Wang Shen 王沈 was originally created prefecture duke of Boling, Yang Hu 羊祜 refused the ducal dignity and accepted only title of marquis.¹⁵⁷ Now both of them were promoted to commandery peers and attained the highest possible grade within the non-royal peerage. The third beneficiary, Jia Chong 賈充, was already commandery duke of Lu, but his apanage was now considerably enlarged. His position at court was exceptional. Not only was he one of the staunchest supporters of the Jin regime, but he was also related to both candidates to the throne as he had married two of his daughters to the heir apparent and Prince of Qi respectively. As an imperial in-law he may have been seen as a part of the wider imperial family and this generous promotion in apanage may in fact reflect general effort of strengthening the position of the main imperial line.

Be it as it may, the promotion of Wang Shen and Yang Hu at this particular moment and other circumstantial evidence suggests that Wudi was closing the ranks of the non-royal peerage in the same way as he had closed the ranks of the princes. Parallel to the new development in conferring the princely dignities which restricted the eligible candidates to the sons of an emperor, similar restrictions were introduced into the process of ennoblement as well. The bestowment of the peerages was always guided by ancient Han principle according to which “none was to become lord unless through merit” (*fei gong bu hou* 非功不侯).¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ *Jinshu* juan 24, *Zhiguanzhi*, p. 744.

¹⁵⁶ It seems that the regulations pertaining to the armies and administrative staff at least theoretically applied even to the highest strata of the non-royal peerages, that is commandery dukes and marquises, but it is rather dubious whether the rules set for the inheritance of royal peerage titles were ever used in connection with non royal peerage. I have been unable to find a single example of a younger son of a duke founder or a marquis founder having been named baron in his own right that would clearly indicate that such a creation was consequence of the *tui'en* principle.

¹⁵⁷ It is clear that Juping was not a commandery marquisate, however it wasn't prefecture lordship either as it is rather unlikely that a meritorious minister would be given title of prefecture lord which stood bellow peerage ranks as the highest of the lordship dignities. He had been originally singled out for ducal dignity but when he had refused it as too great an honor, he was named simply Marquis of Juping without any indication of his fief being a commandery marquisate or a prefecture lordship.

¹⁵⁸ About this principle and its application in the history of ennoblement system from the Han to the Tang see Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 125-141.

Nevertheless the merit (*gong* 功) was rather a general concept which could under different circumstance mean all kinds of different services to the dynasty and one's sovereign. Obviously the various services might be of varying importance and therefore qualified those who had rendered them for reward of varying degree. As the peerage dignities were universally seen as the highest possible reward they were naturally set aside to be awarded only for the most loyal service. For Wudi such loyal service was tantamount to helping the Sima family in accomplishing the usurpation process and establishing the dynasty of their own. In this context the merit referred to the greatest merit of all that is the assistance in founding the dynasty (*zuoming zhi gong* 佐命之功). Wudi considered peerage to be too high an honor to be given lightheartedly and therefore only meritorious ministers who were instrumental in bringing about the abdication of the Wei were entitled to such high dignity. Even though the available sources do not state this explicitly it is clear from the fact that the 266 AD creation and confirmation of the peerages connected with the proclamation of the new dynasty was to remain the only creation of the peers in the long reign of more than thirty years. Never again did Wudi bestow any of the peerage ranks on a deserving minister or military commander. Even the leaders of the victorious campaign against the southern state of Wu who had vanquished the long time rival of the Wei and Jin regimes and achieved the longed-for unity of the empire were not given more than prefecture lordships, the highest of the lordship dignities standing just below the peerage ranks.

As the foundation of the dynasty could not be repeated it was impossible to gain the kind of merit necessary for bestowment of a peerage. In consequence the peerage ranks became unattainable for all non-royal court families as no other achievement, however spectacular it may have been, could match the merit of the *gongchen*. Meritorious service for the dynasty was to be rewarded only by bestowal of the lesser titles and fiefs of lordship ranks (*liehou*). The position of the existing peerage was apparently enhanced (at least in some cases) by promotion in rank and apanage to equal the position of the royal peers and princes which further widened the gap between the peerage holders, the one-time founders of the dynasty, and other titled or untitled non-royal elite families in the service of the Jin. Wudi's decision effectively precluded further rise of the peerage as independent power challenging the royal authority. It did not only prevent the actual growth in number of the peerage as a whole but at the same time greatly minimized the influence of single peers as they were in the long run bound to be eclipsed by the royal peerage. For it is true that the ranks of the peerage were closed to members of non-royal families, but the newly introduced system of privilege

devolution connected with the enfeoffment of the imperial princes and inheritance of the princely dignities ensured that the royal peers were to be created regularly with every change of incumbent in any of the princely lines.

While the number of the royal peerage continuously increased, the number of the non-royal peerage dignities should remain the same or actually even decrease due to the various natural or legal causes as the lack of an heir or negligence in one's duties, treason or gross misconduct, all of which warranted abolition or attainder of the peerage. Wudi practically turned the peerage ranks into monopoly of the imperial family. In a way he was heeding the advice of men like Duan Zhuo who called for the strengthening of the position of the imperial family vis-à-vis the non-royal peerage by creating multitude of politically inconsequential royal fiefs which were nevertheless firmly under control of the imperial clansmen and centrally appointed officials. Under these circumstances the peerages of the meritorious ministers were too small to serve as the territorial base of possible regional resistance defying the authority of the centre. Even Duan Zhuo himself was to find out that once the ranks of the peerage were closed, Wudi would not consent to any revision of the meritorious achievements which would include further ennoblement. When Duan Zhuo petitioned the throne for reconsideration of the adequacy of the rewards bestowed upon the victorious commanders of the Shu campaign, the emperor did not deign to answer:

“In the past when [we] fought Shu, [in order to] enlist and recruit men and horses from Liangzhou and brave lads of Qiang and Hu [descent], [the court] had promised them rich reward and more than five thousand men followed [Deng] Ai in chastising the rebels and the merit these men achieved was tremendous [indeed]. Yet the imperial edict from the *yihai* (day or year) [stated] that [the merits and rewards] of the generals and army leaders of the provincial [militia] forces would be [estimated] differently from those of standing imperial armies and even though their merits were high, they were not enfeoffed accordingly. Only some thirty men from those lead by the Governor (*taishou* 太守) of Jincheng, Yang Xin were enfeoffed for the [military] pressure they had exerted on Jiangyou. But there was not a single commander west of Jincheng enfeoffed who would not be from Yang Xin's unit. However, those who served in the central army, despite their merits having been rather meagre were all enfeoffed as marquises [and lords]. Not to enfeoff those who are from the provincial [militia] forces even though their merit is high is not what is meant by not awarding munificent grants on those who are near and not omitting to bestow grace and favour on those who are far.

Your servant has heard that fish [tend to] hang [from the angling hook] due to the sweet bait and brave men [are eager to] die for generous reward. That is why Jing Ke admired the

righteousness of the Yan crown prince Dan and [why] Zhuan Zhu was moved by Helü's love. And the dagger was raised in the halls of Qin and the blade of Wu glistened in the fish belly. To view death as a mere return, is there not a reason to it after all?! For merits and honour and [corresponding] generous reward, that is something the noble men vie for. Being unfair [in bestowing rewards] leads to resentment. It has always been so. The *Book of Songs* says: "Turtledove sits on a mulberry tree, it has got seven children! A good and noble man has but one way of acting!" Your subject [dares] to suggest that [the men] like those [mentioned above] should also receive the noble titles and fiefs."¹⁵⁹

Motivated by his concern for what he considered to be a dangerous stain on the imagined moral profile of the dynasty, Duan Zhuo called for impartial bestowment of rewards to all those who had helped to establish the Jin imperial regime, yet his appeal went unheeded. It is rather difficult to date this memorial and therefore unclear whether Duan Zhuo's initiative preceded or followed the changes of the enfeoffment system introduced in 277 AD, however, whichever the case, it is still obvious that Wudi was disinclined to reopen the discussion on merit connected with the establishment of the dynasty and create any new noble dignity be it a peerage or a lordship. By the enfeoffment of the meritorious ministers in 266 AD Wudi had fulfilled his moral obligations as the founder of the new regime to his supporters. Any further sharing of the supreme authority of the emperor was deemed unnecessary and should have been avoided as such. Of course, the loyalty of the subjects should be encouraged as before but not in a way which would be detrimental to the power of the imperial family. Therefore the government should be rather circumspect in bestowing the noble titles limiting the future use of the peerages to members of the imperial clan. Even the lesser titles of lordships were to be granted rather reluctantly during the whole period of Wudi's reign. It was only during the second half of the dynasty when decline of the central authority of the throne compelled Wudi's successors to rescind many of these restrictions and resort to creation of the new peerages which would satisfy the ambitions of powerful men at court and in the provinces whose support was crucial for survival of the dynasty.

Due to the highly complex and intertwined policies of princely enfeoffment and ennoblement of the non-royal families the period of Western Jin saw birth of an elaborate system of noble dignities comprising whole range of noble titles from imperial princes and royal and non-royal peerages to all kinds of lordships differing in rank, income and right to inherit. In fact the government had at its disposal more than twenty different noble titles of

¹⁵⁹ *Jinshu* juan 48, *Duan Zhuo zhuan*, p. 1340.

three to four categories which differed widely in their usages and origin. The following table provides an overview of the noble titles used during the Western Jin and corresponding official ranks:

Tab. 6: Noble Titles Used during the Western Jin Dynasty (266-316 AD)¹⁶⁰

category	title (<i>jue</i> 爵)	grade	apanage (<i>yi</i> 邑)	rank (<i>pin</i> 品)
princes	prince (<i>wang</i> 王)	domain prince (<i>guowang</i> 國王) ¹⁶¹	unspecified	1 st rank
		commandery prince (<i>junwang</i> 郡王) ¹⁶²	from 5000 to 20 000 <i>hu</i>	1 st rank
		prefecture prince (<i>xianwang</i> 縣王)	unspecified	1 st rank
peerages	duke (<i>gong</i> 公)	commandery duke (<i>jungong</i> 郡公)	unspecified ¹⁶³	1 st rank
		prefecture duke (<i>xiangong</i> 縣公)	1800 <i>hu</i>	1 st rank
	marquis (<i>hou</i> 侯)	commandery marquis (<i>junhou</i> 郡侯)	unspecified	2 nd rank
		first grade marquis (<i>daguohou</i> 大國侯)	1600 <i>hu</i>	2 nd rank
		second grade marquis (<i>ciguohou</i> 次國侯)	1400 <i>hu</i>	2 nd rank
	count (<i>bo</i> 伯)	first grade count (<i>daguobo</i> 大國伯)	1200 <i>hu</i>	2 nd rank
		second grade count (<i>ciguobo</i> 次國伯)	1000 <i>hu</i>	2 nd rank
	viscount (<i>zi</i> 子)	first grade viscount (<i>daguozi</i> 大國子)	800 <i>hu</i>	2 nd rank
		second grade viscount (<i>ciguozi</i> 次國子)	600 <i>hu</i>	2 nd rank
	baron (<i>nan</i> 男)	first grade baron (<i>daguonan</i> 大國男)	400 <i>hu</i>	2 nd rank
		second grade baron (<i>ciguonan</i> 次國男)	200 <i>hu</i>	2 nd rank

¹⁶⁰ This table is based on *Jinshu* juan 14, *Dilizhi shang*, str. 414-415, separate mentions in the biographies of respective title holders in the *Jinshu* and tables in Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 5.

¹⁶¹ These were the princely dignities bestowed on his sons not long before his death in Taikang 10 (289 AD). See Hrubý, Jakub (2007): pp. 57-61.

¹⁶² Yang Guanghui comments that this princely rank was further divided in dependence on the size of the fief to three grades of 1st grade prince (*daguowang* 大國王), 2nd grade prince (*ciguowang* 次國王) and 3rd grade prince (*xiaoguowang* 小國王). According to the *Diguanzhi* treatise the 1st grade prince had commandery fief with apanage of twenty thousand households, the 2nd grade prince enjoyed the commandery fief with apanage of ten thousand households and the 3rd grade prince was given the commandery fief with apanage of five thousand households only.

¹⁶³ It seems that both commandery dukes and commandery marquises were at least after 277 AD considered to equal in some respects the princely ranks. Average apanage of these noble ranks may have been around five thousand households.

lords (<i>liehou</i> 列侯)	prefecture lord (<i>xianhou</i> 縣侯)	unspecified ¹⁶⁴	3 rd rank
	township lord (<i>xianghou</i> 鄉侯)		4 th rank
	village lord (<i>tinghou</i> 亭侯)		5 th rank
honorary lordships (<i>xufeng</i> 虛封)	lord of the royal domain (<i>guanneihou</i> 關內侯)	unknown ¹⁶⁵	6 th rank ¹⁶⁶
	lord inside the passes (<i>guanzhonghou</i> 關中侯)		unknown

¹⁶⁴ The apanages of the lords (*liehou*) were not liable to any limits or quotas as was the case with the peerages. In fact, their apanages often seemingly exceeded those of the peerage. However, whereas the peers were entitled to one third of taxes collected from the allotted households plus some more levies collected from all households living within the conferred territory, the lordships enjoyed only one tenth of the taxes produced by households conferred as their apanage. Therefore their net income was generally lower than in case of peerage holders. See Yang Guanghui (2007): p. 88.

¹⁶⁵ It is still not known whether the honorary lords were given any apanage at all, let alone the quotas for its size.

¹⁶⁶ It is not clear which court rank belonged to the lords of the royal domain during the Western Jin. It used to be the 6th rank under the Wei so it seems rather probable to me that the Jin retained it. See Yang Guanghui (2007): p. 45.

Chapter III

The Fief – the Apanage and Bestowal of Noble Dignities

The Fief Administration

We have seen that the much discussed recreation of the old institution of enfeoffment did not in fact mean restoring the state of affairs which had existed prior to the establishment of the unified empire. Even though there were voices among the court ministers who called for resurrection of the ancient practices of the Zhou, yet this concept inevitably collided with the political needs of a unified empire and central government and therefore could have never been fully implemented. The imperial kin and trusted supporters were created princes, peers and lords in order to become kind of power backing for the throne and the main imperial line, but the central government was reluctant to surrender part of its authority over territory and people and share it with these prospective protectors of the realm. Thus, reflecting the experience of its predecessors the Han and the Wei, the Jin Dynasty did not so much recreate the ancient pre-imperial order as rather established original and new system of ennoblement. The period of Western Jin did not see emergence of the semi-independent landed aristocracy, but mere titled nobility fully subordinated to the central government. Despite persisting practice of differentiating between two kinds of administrative units, commanderies and fiefs (*guo* 國), the mere existence of the fiefs did not mean the existence of two separate systems of local administration.

The fiefs, regardless of their being princely domains or territories assigned to peerage dignities,¹⁶⁷ were integral parts of the Jin realm functioning as administrative units of provincial administration side by side with commanderies and prefectures. Yet the specific position of the fiefs vis-à-vis more standard units of provincial administration was reflected in the administration of the fiefs which combined two separate official structures with different agenda and distinct fields of activity. Whereas the actual administration of the fief was not dissimilar to the official structure of any commandery or prefecture of the realm, the fiefs gradually established the institutions of princely and noble households run by separate official

¹⁶⁷ It is not clear from the sources whether the lordship titles (*liehou*) holders actually got any territory as a fief. It seems that unlike the peers who were given nominal control over an official fief with special fief administration and corresponding staff, the *liehou* titles were connected only with apanages drawn from precisely defined number of households in certain area which may have corresponded somehow to the territory used as a title appellation. Even if they had indeed been given fiefs of their own, we do not know any details regarding the structure of such a fief and rules governing its administration.

staff which were of course lacking in standard administrative units. The household administration in the fiefs imitated similar agencies within the imperial palace and in case of advisors and mentors also the administration of the palace of the crown prince.¹⁶⁸ The officials of the administration proper handled the everyday agenda of the fief, supervising the populace, collecting the taxes and administering justice. The officials of the noble household, on the other hand, presided over the administration of the private sphere of the fief, the family of the domain lord, his residence and household maintaining the comfort and security of the lord and his family, overseeing his education and also monitoring his conduct. Members of the household staff, especially those who were part of the closer retinue of the princes and royal peers, often played the roles of trusted advisors and intimate confidants. With the rising influence of the imperial princes towards the end of the dynasty these men often stood good chance of becoming politically influential and some of them even managed to secure a noble title of their own.

We may be quite well informed regarding the official structure of the princely fiefs,¹⁶⁹ but our knowledge of the administration of the peerage fiefs or offices connected with lordships (*liehou*) is rather sketchy and prevents any attempt of reconstruction of the official system as a whole.¹⁷⁰ Given the previously mentioned overlapping of the system of princely enfeoffment with the rules governing the creation and inheritance of the peerage dignities we may presume that the main features of the fief administration might have been the same as well. We may surmise that at least in case of ducal and marquis fiefs which in certain respects obviously equaled the third grade princely domains¹⁷¹ the official structure of their administration may have actually matched or at least approached the apparatus of the princely fiefs. It appears that the composition of the official staff of the peerage fiefs mirrored the hierarchical distinctions between the peerage ranks with only the main fief officials being

¹⁶⁸ As in the case of the heir apparent the central government stressed the importance of education of the princes and royal peers. The men of great talent and moral integrity were to be appointed as tutors and advisers of the princes and peers in order to instruct them in philosophy and sharpen their literary skills as well as to provide a model for the proper behavior which would instill in the nobles the moral virtues and qualities required of their high social standing.

¹⁶⁹ The *Jinshu* treatise on offices lists dozens of official posts responsible for the administration of the princely fief, smooth running of the princely household and well-being of a prince and his ancestors. See *Jinshu* juan 24, *Zhiguanzhi*, p. 742; for discussion of these official posts and their agenda see Zhang Xingcheng (2001): p. 53-65.

¹⁷⁰ For some of the offices for which we have evidence from the sources see Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 15, note number 7; and p. 65, note number 16.

¹⁷¹ In view of this connection to the princely fiefs Yang Guanghui argues that the ranks of duke and marquis actually formed distinct group within the peerage, the high peerage so to speak, with remaining ranks of count, viscount and baron lagging far behind in rights, offices and precedence. See Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 15, note number 7.

common to all five peerage ranks. Number of other official posts allotted to a peerage fief decreased with the rank of the peerage in question.¹⁷²

Judging from the names of offices which have been preserved in the contemporary sources the official structure of the peerage fiefs probably retained the division into two separate agencies, noble household and domain administration proper, which was typical for the fiefs of the princes and royal peers. The most senior official of the fief administrative hierarchy was an Administrator (*xiang* 相, later *neishi* 内史) who resided in the fief and exercised authority over the territory and its inhabitants. Even though the Administrator was the head of fief administration, he was actually appointed by the central government and was no different in this respect from a Governor of a commandery (*taishou* 太守). Theoretically the Administrator was a subordinate of the fief holder but in practice he was acting independently of the lord and was accountable to the central authority only. Once appointed, the fief holder could not dismiss the Administrator. On the contrary, he had to beware his watchful eye for the Administrator was authorized not only to administer the fief but also to monitor the activities of the domain lord and report any irregularities, acts of misconduct or treachery to the central government.¹⁷³

The Jin court made sure that the noble title holders would not become potential threat endangering the position of the central government in the provinces through establishing independent regional centers of power. The authority of the fief holder over the territory and its inhabitants was only nominal and even though the officials of the fief administration were considered to be the subjects of a prince or peer, this subordination was limited to symbolic and ceremonial level as a more or less ritual vestige of the ancient practice of the Zhou. The fief was controlled by the throne through centrally appointed officials who took part in both the administration of the fief and running of the noble household. Rights of the fief holders were curtailed to such an extent that the very word “fief” came to denote simply centrally administered territory from where an apanage was drawn for a prince or peer which was otherwise no different from any other commandery. The fief holders neither owned land of their fiefs, nor commanded loyalty of the people living within their boundaries. They could not implement their own laws and regulations and had no jurisdiction over their own “subjects”.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 65, note number 16.

¹⁷³ For the discussion of the responsibilities of the administrator of the princely fief see Hrubý, Jakub (2007): pp. 72-74.

¹⁷⁴ For detailed discussion of the rights of the fief holders and development of the system from the Han to the Western Jin see Yang Guanghui (2004): pp. 59-62.

The same holds true for the military forces which Wudi ordered to be recruited and stationed in all princely and some of the peerage fiefs at the beginning of his reign, probably right in the year 266 AD (see the edict quoted above in the previous chapter). This imperial edict without doubt aimed at strengthening of the position of the imperial family and its most loyal supporters during the critical period of dynastic transition. The number and strength of these military forces differed according to various grades of the princes and peers, ranging from three armies of five thousand men to one army one thousand and five hundred men strong. As we have already seen, these new provisions, however, lay dormant for years till 277 AD when change of the power balance between the princes of the blood and the main imperial line forced the emperor to revise the whole system of enfeoffment including their military forces. The command of these fief forces was again given to a centrally appointed officer, Commandant-in-ordinary (*zhongwei* 中尉) who was subordinated directly to the central government. Thereby the imperial court retained its control over the military forces of the princes without jeopardizing their important role of prospective defenders of the throne. This time the dukes and marquises within the peerage ranks were also included and their fiefs should have abided by the same general rules as the fiefs of the princes. According to the edict issued in 277 AD a duke had at his disposal one army of one thousand five hundred men, whereas a marquis should have commanded a force of one thousand and one hundred soldiers.¹⁷⁵ It is possible that these new provisions related to the royal peerage, sons and grandsons of the princes of the blood who were at this time newly equipped with the peerage dignities, but as there was no formal institutional distinction between royal and non-royal peerage they applied to previously existing peerage fiefs of the meritorious ministers as well.

Even though this formal sanction of possible emergence of military forces connected to non-royal peerage fiefs may seem as going against the overall policy of strengthening the imperial house vis-à-vis the elite families at the court, the setting of the system in fact prevented any undue rise of power of these families. Despite the imperial edicts the recruitment of the fief armies was actually in abeyance as was the establishment of the fief official structure itself. Not only that the non-royal peerage holders could not administer their respective fiefs but even their ability to establish household offices corresponding to their dignity was in reality rather limited as the establishment of the full-fledged civil and military administration of a fief was conditioned by the actual departure of the title holder to the allotted territory. Unless the fief holder decided to reside permanently in his fief the

¹⁷⁵ The first edict is mentioned in *Jinshu* juan 14, *Dilizhi* shang, pp. 414-415; the second edict is quoted in *Jinshu* juan 24, *Zhiguanzhi*, pp. 744-745; for the discussion of the fief armies see Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 57.

household administration staff could not be appointed and the title holder's right to establish an official retinue which would differentiate him from his fellow courtiers remained more or less just an empty privilege.

Unlike the princes, many of whom were indeed forced to leave the imperial capital and exchange its sumptuous life style for politically uneventful existence of a local fief holder, the non-royal peers and title holders remained at court. Overwhelming majority of these men served in some official position in the central government or in the imperial palace administration. Bound by their official duties they could not simply take up residence in their fiefs even if they wanted to and the administration of their fiefs was therefore never fully established and remained incomplete.¹⁷⁶ Despite the proclaimed resurrection of the enfeoffment system the non-royal peerages remained for all practical purposes just empty titles with peers simply drawing stable income from certain territories assigned to them as their "fiefs" which nevertheless continued to be administered by centrally appointed officials.

It seems possible that these arrangements were actually part of conscious effort of the emperor to curb down power of the potentially rival court families without unduly alienating them and losing their support. One of the main objectives of the changes in the system of ennoblement introduced in 277 AD was consolidation of the position of the imperial house in general and the main imperial line in particular. However, in order to alleviate the sting aimed at non-royal court families the new system did not distinguish between royal and non-royal peers and the new rules naturally applied to non-royal peers as well. Therefore, at least theoretically, the non-royal peerage holders should have benefitted by the new system in the same way as the princes of the blood. On the other hand this concession to the influential court families was nothing but an illusion for the emperor would never risk the future of the dynasty by giving too much power to possible rivals. The non-royal peers simply could have never been in position to become a threat to the imperial family. The official posts they held in the central government and palace administration effectively prevented them from leaving the capital and resettling in their domain. Without this final step they were not able to take up their position as fief lords and substantial privileges connected with the establishment of the full-fledged fief administration remained dormant. Thus, the non-royal peers could never fully

¹⁷⁶ As the matter of fact there is only one mention of a peer departing to his fief in all contemporary sources. At the beginning of the Taikang Era (280 AD) Wang Jun 王浚, second duke of Boling 博陵郡公, inherited the title and later together with other princes and lords departed for the fief (*yu zhu wang hou ju jiu guo* 與諸王侯俱就國). Only two years later, however, he was recalled back to court and appointed Supernumerary Gentleman Cavalier Attendant (*yuanwai sanji shilang* 員外散騎侍郎). Unfortunately the *Jinshu* does not provide any information regarding possible establishment of the fief and household administration. See *Jinshu* juan 39, *Wang Jun zhuan*, p. 1146.

use the potential of their fief. Emperor Wudi managed to achieve his goal by granting the court families much desired privileges without giving them opportunity to acquire real power which could have been turned against authority of the throne.

The Apanage

Even though bestowal of the noble title did not bring any real political or military power which could have been used to one's advantage the peerage dignities as well as lordship titles retained their appeal to members of court circles and state bureaucracy. The noble titles remained highly coveted social distinction which improved the standing of one's family in the ranks of elite. Some of the reasons for continuous attraction were such practical aspects of ennoblement as hereditary privileges, precedence and stable income drawn from the apanage. For every title holder, no matter whether he had actually taken up his position in the allotted fief or not, was entitled to annual stipend paid from the taxes. A noble title provided its holder with economic advantages which were by no means negligible as the revenue gained from the fief exceeded by far the state-provided income of the state officials of comparable court rank who were not members of the titled nobility.¹⁷⁷ This economic advantage could of course be employed in gaining social and political preeminence at court as was indeed often the case. Thus, beside hereditary privileges which considerably improved the prospect of survival of an aristocratic family, the ennoblement brought also some tangible assets which favored any title holder over untitled members of the bureaucracy, no matter how high their position may have actually been.

The amount of income connected with a noble dignity was dependent on the rank and grade of the particular title and was drawn from certain number of tax-paying households (*hu* 戶) living within the boundaries of the fief, which constituted the so called apanage (*shiyi* 食邑). In case of the peerage the number of households corresponding to each rank and grade was prescribed by the imperial edicts issued at the beginning of Wudi's reign. The lower ranks of lordship titles (*liehou*), however, were subject to no such regulation. Number of households allotted to the lords was therefore not restricted and depended solely on the largess of the emperor and the relative importance of the meritorious deed which was to be rewarded by bestowal of the lordship in case.

¹⁷⁷ Yang Guanghui shows that whereas the government officials were paid only in grain, the nobles were getting certain amount of both grain and silk produced by the households allotted as their apanage, which exceeded income of the officials. For example a court minister of the highest court rank (*yipin* 一品) received only just about half of an income of the first grade marquis (*daguohou* 大國侯), who, with the second court rank, stood below him in the court hierarchy. See Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 92.

The noble titles themselves do not tell us much about the actual size of their apanage or territory conferred as their fief. Despite the seeming connection of a noble dignity with particular territorial or administrative unit which appears in the very title the size of the fief hardly ever corresponded to the actual size of the territory in question. Titles as commandery duke, prefecture duke, commandery marquis, prefecture lord, township lord or village lord did not refer to the actual size of their respective apanages. These were mere ranks with the usage of administrative unit nomenclature simply denoting their relative standing within the hierarchy of noble dignities. Thus a marquis within the peerage was entitled to one thousand six hundred households only despite the fact that the title was formally considered to be connected with commandery, an administrative unit which under the Jin tends to have thousands, even tens of thousands tax-paying households. On the other hand, some prefecture lords were officially given apanages of twenty thousand households even though the average population of a Jin prefecture could have been just between one and two thousand tax-paying households.

In comparison to the princes who were indeed often given whole existing commanderies and prefectures as their fiefs,¹⁷⁸ the peerage fiefs appear to be less well defined domains only vaguely related to any particular territory or administrative unit which figured in the title. We may suppose that in many cases there actually was a direct connection with territory in question with majority of the apanage households living within its boundaries, but the real fief or rather the apanage related to it and administrative unit itself were by no means identical. The same territory might have appeared in turn as designation of a peerage dignity, prefecture lordship and even village lordship without actually changing its own administrative status.¹⁷⁹ Thus the names of particular territorial units were used as mere appellations which might have or might have not born any resemblance to the reality. The size of the apanage was not related to the actual administrative unit used in the designation of the noble dignity and was determined by either the prescribed quotas applied in creating peerages, or by the grant itself in case of the lordships.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ For the details regarding the princely fiefs, their size and location see Hrubý, Jakub (2007): pp. 82-83, 141-143.

¹⁷⁹ For example Anchang 安昌 was bestowed as dukedom and township lordship, Anle 安樂 as dukedom, township lordship and village lordship, Chengyang 成陽 as dukedom and barony, Lanling 蘭陵 as marquisate and dukedom, Liangzou 梁鄒 as marquisate and township lordship, Pingyang 平陽 as prefecture lordship and township lordship, Wuchang 武昌 as commandery dukedom, marquisate and village lordship, Wuling 武陵 as marquisate and prefecture lordship and Pingle 平樂 as county and township lordship.

¹⁸⁰ Yang Guanghui claims that in contrast to the peers the lordships' apanages corresponded to the real territorial units used in the appellation. Even though he might be right in case of smaller apanages allotted to the village

The peerages and lordships further differed in one more respect. Whereas the apanages of the lesser lordship dignities were defined only in terms of number of apanage households (the principle known as allocation of people, *fenmin* 分民), the fiefs of the peers were in addition defined also in terms of territory (the principle known as allocation of territory, *fentu* 分土). The rules set by Emperor Wudi prescribed not only quotas of households but also the expanse of territory, acreage measured in miles (*li* 里), conferred on the recipient of the peerage title.¹⁸¹ Yet again, despite referring explicitly to a well defined territory, the practice of *fentu* did not imply any territorial rights or jurisdiction over certain area and was considered only as an additional means for assessing the annual income drawn from an apanage.

The revenue of every single peer was in fact comprised of two distinct parts reflecting parallel use of principles for allocation of people and territory. The bulk of the revenue was drawn from the taxes paid by the apanage households (*shiyi hu* 食邑戶) conferred under the *fenmin* principle. The term “apanage households” denotes ordinary state tax-paying households (*bianhu* 編戶) the taxes of which were assigned for the use of the peerage holder. This assignment was, at least in theory, only temporary as it depended on viability of the hereditary peerage line and its loyal service to the dynasty. Once the peerage line became extinct or the dignity happened to be abolished as a consequence of some offense committed by its current holder, the fief ceased to exist and the revenue from the households which were once allotted as its apanage once again found its way to the government coffers.

The status of the apanage households did not differ from that of the ordinary tax-paying households and the fact that they were assigned as apanage to a peer did not imply any form of dependence on or subservience to the lord of the fief. For all practical purposes these people remained free state tax-payers whose taxes were for the time being redirected to the private treasuries of the peerage holders.¹⁸² This rather loose and indirect connection between peers and their apanage households becomes even more apparent when we realize that the peers were entitled to just a portion of the revenue collected from these households. According to the *Jinshu* and other sources the peers were granted only one third of the taxes

lords I would disagree with his assumption that the same holds true for all the prefecture and township lords as well. See Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 70.

¹⁸¹ Yang Guanghui (2004): pp. 67, 70; For the number of households and miles conferred with respective peerage ranks see Table 2 in the previous chapter of this thesis, page 65.

¹⁸² For the detailed discussion of the apanage households' status see Yang Guanghui (2004): pp. 78-80.

paid by the households allotted as their apanage.¹⁸³ The rest of the revenue belonged to the state which actually never relinquished its authority over the land and people. The total amount of tax-paying households allotted as apanages to various princes and peers was staggering and if it were not for the provision limiting the fief holders' income to one third of total revenue, the vital human and fiscal resources would slip out of the state's control.¹⁸⁴

Nevertheless the total income of the peerage holders was slightly higher than one third of revenue produced by the apanage households. We have seen that even though there was certain connection between the administrative unit used as the dignity appellation and the population of certain area bestowed as its apanage, only rarely did the apanage comprise the whole administrative unit in question. The first grade marquis may have been entitled to some one thousand six hundred households only, but the appellation used for his title connected him with a commandery the population of which must have been considerably higher than the marquisate apanage. Regardless of actual institutional inability of the peers to be involved in the administration of their fief, the peerage title at least on the symbolic level gave its holder potential right to exercise some kind of nominal authority over the whole administrative unit for after all the status of the commanderies and prefectures was officially changed to that of the fiefs (*guo* 國) once they were granted as peerage dignities. Yet the actual size of the fief did never exceed the prescribed quotas. In order to somewhat alleviate the obvious discrepancy between nominal claims to authority derived from the peerage title and reality dictated by state-ordered regulations the government tried to take into consideration these claims and deal with them in a way which would not jeopardize the state control over the fiscal resources but which would symbolically do justice to the peers in their capacity of lords over their domains. And that is when the *fentu* principle of land allotment comes into play.

The term "allotment of land" is rather misleading as it did not refer so much to the land itself as to the population living within certain area defined by the prescribed acreage. Even though this area did not correspond to the territory of the whole commandery (such a

¹⁸³ Zhang Xuefeng (2001): p. 39; and Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 88; for the detailed discussion of the state revenue and peerage income ratio during the Western and Eastern Jin see p. 98, note number 2.

¹⁸⁴ Despite drawing only one third of revenue from the allotted households, the fiefs inevitably must have been great burden on the state finances. When assessing impact of the princely enfeoffment on the economy of the dynasty Wang Zhongluo argues that the total number of households given to the Western Jin imperial princes might have been around 570 000. Taking into account other peerage and lordship fiefs Wang estimates that one sixth of all the tax-paying households were actually allotted as apanages to the various princes, peers and lords. Wang Zhongluo (1998): p. 221; Yang Guanghui takes Wang Zhongluo's estimations one step further. He argues that peerage apanages conferred at the beginning of the Western Jin may have amounted to some 500 000 households. Yang Guanghui estimates that with households of the princely fiefs and apanages given to the *liehou* lords added to the total number, the apanage households may actually account for one third of the population of the realm during the Taikang Era (280-289 AD). Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 79.

concession to a mere symbolic claim would be too dangerous a risk for the state to take), the total number of households living within its boundaries was as a rule higher than number of apanage households which formed but a part of the population. Thus, from the fiscal point of view, there were two different types of households living side by side in every domain, probably intermingled and dispersed over the whole territory of the fief. Whereas the apanage households, number of which corresponded to the quota of particular peerage dignity, were obligated to contribute one third of their taxes in grain and silk to the lord of the domain, the rest of the families living within the allotted territory were not considered to be apanage households and retained their status of state tax-payers. Yet their nominal obedience to the domain lord was symbolically expressed by their duty to pay annually one *sheng* 升 of grain from every *mu* 畝 of the tilled land in addition to the state-imposed taxes. Even though the quotas for households and acreage applied universally to all peerages, the total income of two peers of the same rank and grade may have actually varied as it depended on the density of population in the areas conferred as fiefs. The apanage households granted under the *fenmin* principle were the same, while the revenue collected from the remaining households in allotted area (*fentu*) differed from fief to fief.¹⁸⁵

Our ability to understand properly all the details of the apanage and land allotment process is seriously impaired by paucity of the relevant sources. As we have to rely on mere accidental evidence and later summarizing comments of the *Jinshu* treatises which were compiled only at the beginning of the 7th century, we may never be sure if the system described by these sources actually ever worked. The traditional sources may have recorded the imperial decrees and edicts in their original wording but it is hard to tell whether the provisions stipulated in these edicts were really implemented or not. It is possible that in describing the working of the system the ideal directive proclaimed by the edicts may have to a certain extent taken place of the everyday routine practice already adapted to working conditions of the imperial administration as was the case of some other imperial institutions described in the dynastic histories.

The rules of this elaborate and highly sophisticated system of dual apanage allotment must have been extremely hard to abide by. The faithful observance of the ideal provisions of the imperial edict was in practice hindered by technical problems and difficulties in regard to actual location and delineation of the fief and its apanage. The provisions could probably be

¹⁸⁵ Yang Guanghui (2004): pp. 70, 88-89; for a detailed table enumerating income and official emoluments of various princely and peerage dignities in comparison with the highest bureaucratic positions in the central government and imperial palace administration see p. 91.

hardly ever implemented in its entirety as it must have been extremely hard to take account of every relevant factor. The awarded fief had to correspond to the importance of the merit, the status of the administrative unit ideally ought to match the rank and grade of the conferred title, the area and the population should have been large enough to provide the required number of apanage households and so forth. It is obvious that reality must have lagged far behind the ideal set by the edicts. The demands which the system made upon the process of selection of the suitable territory were high from the very beginning. With the creation of new fiefs (mainly princedoms, royal-peerages and lordships) later during the reign of Emperor Wudi and his successors it was increasingly difficult to meet all criteria. Moreover, even if the office of Chamberlain of Dependencies (*dahonglu* 大鴻臚) responsible for creation of the noble dignities managed to find the right territory fulfilling the necessary requirements any subsequent change of the noble dignity, be it promotion, demotion or transfer of the fief, would upset the effort as the territory in question would need to be adjusted to new standing of the title holder in question. Such a highly impractical system was untenable in the long run and it is no wonder that it did not survive the fall of the Western Jin. Restored regime in the South was even more circumscribed in its options. Pressed by various urgent political needs and constrained geographically to the region south of the Yangzi River the Eastern Jin government reduced number of peerage ranks and simplified the rules governing the selection and delimiting of the fief. The territory allotment principle was abolished altogether and the household allotment became the sole means of determining the size of the noble apanage.¹⁸⁶

The rules governing bestowal of the *liehou* lordships and allocation of their apanages were less elaborate. The dual concept of *fenmin* and *fentu* allotment was not used and the apanages were defined only in terms of number of apanage households. No precise quotas were imposed with number of households often only roughly following the hierarchy of the lordship titles, the size of the apanage being dependent solely on largess of the emperor and the importance of particular meritorious deed which had been the incentive for the bestowal. Despite the fact that the size of their apanages was not limited by any quotas, the actual income gained from the apanage was always lower than revenue of the peerages. Of course, that without the territory allotment the *liehou* lords could not draw any additional income from families living within their fiefs other than the apanage households. But much more

¹⁸⁶ Beside abolition of the practice of *fentu* the southern court also abolished the grades within the peerage ranks. For details see Yang Guanghui (2004): pp. 33, 36; the strained economic conditions of the Eastern Jin regime also prompted the government to reduce the income ratio of the princes and peers from one third to universally applied one ninth of the revenue collected from the apanage households. Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 93; For discussion of the differing Western and Eastern Jin apanage income ratios see also Zhang Xuefeng (2001): pp. 34-37.

important factor was that the relative hierarchy of both groups of titled nobility tended to be reflected in different income ratio of the peerage and lordship apanages. Whereas peers were entitled to one third of the revenue, the lords had to content themselves with only one tenth of the revenue produced by their apanage households.¹⁸⁷

The system of lordship ennoblement may have been simple in itself, yet it presents problem of its own. Even though there obviously existed institutionally defined distinction between peerage ranks and lordship titles, in case of marquises this clear difference tends to be obscured by confusing use of the same word *hou* 侯, “marquis” or more generally “lord” for both the peerage dignity and all the lordship titles. The situation is especially confusing in case of prefecture lords (*xianhou* 縣侯) who could be easily mistaken for peerage marquises as the contemporary sources often drop the word *xian* 縣, “prefecture” from their title. The difference made by the absence of the full title is not merely a difference in degree, but one of quality. While the peerage marquis was one of the highest noble ranks opened to non-royals, occupying third to fourth position of the noble hierarchy (first grade marquis and second grade marquis), prefecture lord was standing just below the rank of the baron, the lowest of the peerages, and belonged actually to a different category of noble dignities.

While the peerage marquises were usually referred to simply as XY *hou* (marquis of XY) the full title of a prefecture lord would be XY *xianhou* (prefecture lord of XY). Yet these titles were often abbreviated and the word *xian* was omitted. And once we omit the word “prefecture”, there is no way how to tell both ranks apart. To complicate matter even further many of the peerage marquises used in their appellation name of a certain prefecture as was also the case with the prefecture lordships. Undoubtedly, the contemporaries would know the difference for they knew their peers and nobles, but we have to rely on other indicators of their standing such as official career, patterns of promotion in title or rank and above all the size of their apanage expressed in number of allotted households. When we happen to know the exact number of household which constituted the apanage in question we are moving on safer ground. As the apanages of the peerage marquises were strictly defined we may assume that all mentions about *hou* having apanages higher or lower than the quotas prescribed for peerage marquises (ranging from one thousand four hundred to one thousand six hundred

¹⁸⁷ Yang Guanghui (2004): pp. 92-93; for discussion of the usage of the lordship titles under the Western Jin and their gradual decline in importance see Yang Guanghui (2004) pp. 44-45; and Zhang Xuefeng (2001): pp 32-33.

households) actually refer to mere prefecture lords.¹⁸⁸ Yet there still remain instances in which we cannot determine for sure the rank of particular noble dignity for we lack the relevant data concerning the number of apanage households.

Location of the Fief

The elaborate system of rules prescribing allotment of apanage and fief may have been important in itself, yet it was but one of the factors taken into account during the process of selection of suitable territory. The final decision was apparently also influenced by equally important considerations of geographical and geopolitical nature. Some of these factors may become clear when we look at location of the fiefs and their distribution throughout the empire. However, one should not forget that while comparing title designations with existing administrative units can provide some idea of where the fiefs may have been situated this idea must be necessarily only general. We cannot be hundred percent sure where the fief actually lay, because the contemporary sources mention exact location of the fief in only few rather exceptional cases. Therefore, the following tables of noble titles listing the supposed location of the fiefs are based on assumption that there existed some kind of connection between the territory figuring in the appellation of the noble title and the allotted fief. As we know that this was not always the case I am aware that the conclusions resulting from the comparison of the data summarized in tables are rather tentative. Yet my objective is not to come up with an exhaustive overview of all awarded fiefs and titles. The dearth of the relevant data does not permit doing so. I merely try to present a survey of certain tendencies and developments which might have influenced the practice of bestowing noble titles and determined the choice of territory suitable to become a noble fief.

The following tables (Tab. 7, 8, 9 and 10) list all known peerage and lordship dignities created during the Western Jin, presumed location of the fief and also choronym of the family of the title holders and its location within the provincial structure of the empire. As we shall discuss the relationship between the fief and the place of origin of the family of title holders later, we should first focus on the location of the fief itself. As we have generally more information about the peerage dignities than the lordships, and as the selection of the lordship fiefs obviously tend to show similar tendencies, we shall pay attention mainly to the peerage fiefs with only occasional mentions of the lordships. By looking at the information in the “fief

¹⁸⁸ For discussion of the *hou* and *xianhou* confusion see Yang Guanghui (2004): pp. 45-46; Beside discussing the same problem Zhang Xuefeng also provides table of prefecture lords whose title is confirmed by the size of their apanage and circumstances under which their dignity was bestowed. See Zhang Xuefeng (2001): pp. 33-34.

location” column one may get the impression that the peerage were dispersed, albeit unevenly, over the whole territory of the empire. The peerage domains were to be found in sixteen out of nineteen provinces of the Jin realm with only three provinces in the far south and southwest conspicuously lacking fief of any of the peerage ranks. Obviously there was no special part of the empire for the fiefs to be ideally located in with number of fiefs per province usually ranging from one to ten. Only the economically better developed provinces of the Central Plain sported almost twice as many fiefs as other areas. The preeminence of Henan and Huainan regions, however, is not so striking when we take into consideration only the peerages created during the reign of Emperor Wudi (266-289 AD) when the whole enfeoffment system was first institutionalized. Even though both regions retain the highest number of awarded fiefs, the contrast between the Central Plain and the rest of the empire is not so high and the pattern of balanced fief dispersal becomes even more apparent.

The heart of the empire was the province of Sizhou 司州 comprising the area around the capital city of Luoyang which was basically conceived as the imperial domain (*huangji* 皇畿), a sovereign territory of the crown parallel to the royal domain (*wangji* 王畿) of the ancient Zhou. Yang Guanghui argues that the Western Jin followed the practice of the Zhou and more recently the Han who were not used to conferring as fiefs the territory within the imperial domain. According to him the peerage fiefs were evenly distributed among the centrally administered commanderies and prefectures outside the imperial domain and also outside the border regions where the presence of the fief might have been undesirable from the security point of view.¹⁸⁹ This assumption is in all probability correct, yet as we can see in the table, it holds true only for some periods of the Western Jin and even then just to a certain extent, for Wudi himself had bestowed three peerage dignities within the imperial domain right at the beginning of the dynasty in 266 AD.

Nevertheless all Sizhou dignities were kind of exceptional. First of all, dukedoms of Wei 衛 and Shanyang 山陽 were created for scions of the imperial houses of the Zhou and the Han respectively to ensure continuous offering of sacrifices to the deified ancestors of both dynasties. Whereas the parentage of the alleged Zhou descendant Ji Shu 姬署 may have been dubious, Liu Kang 劉康, the duke of Shanyang, was indeed a grandson of the last Eastern Han Emperor Xiandi 漢獻帝 (189-220 AD) and therefore the undisputed heir to the main imperial line of descent entitled to look after the altars of his illustrious ancestors. Promotion of both men to the ranks of peerage was a symbolic act confirming the legitimacy of the new

¹⁸⁹ Yang Guanghui (2004): pp. 68-69.

dynasty as the rightful heir to the imperial past. I think that the locating of the new fiefs within the imperial domain was therefore not coincidental. Luoyang was after all associated with both Eastern Zhou and Eastern Han regimes and gradually became the domicile of both ruling houses even though their ancestral homes may have lain elsewhere. Through creation of these peerages and location of their fiefs within the wider Luoyang area, the Jin symbolically acknowledged the eminence of deposed ruling families and at the same time presented themselves as their legitimate successors by strengthening the spatio-temporal connection to their locus of power.

The connection of the third peerage dignity, marquissate of Miling 密陵, to Sizhou is only tentative as I was unfortunately not able to determine the exact location of Miling. But because this peerage was created for one of the better known families of the disunion period, the Xinyang Zhengs 滎陽鄭氏, it is possible that Miling might have been actually located in or near Mixian 密縣 prefecture which happens to be within the borders of Xinyang, the home commandery of the Zheng family. If this identification happens to be mistaken, it would confirm the unique position of Sizhou within the realm as an area under the exclusive authority of the throne. But even if Wudi had decided to acknowledge the positions of the locally important Zheng family by awarding them a marquissate fief not far from their ancestral home, we may still conclude that for all practical reasons no large fief was ever awarded within the province of Sizhou during the reign of Wudi except for symbolic and ritual reasons.

The worsening political situation of the empire during the second half of the Western Jin led to inevitable decline of central authority and subsequent deterioration of many imperial institutions including the ennoblement system with rules and provisions of the system envisaged and observed by Wudi being generally disregarded or circumvented. However, it seems that the exclusivity of the imperial domain was more or less respected with only minor lordship fiefs being formally allotted within Sizhou territory. The remaining two peerage fiefs in Sizhou were created only during the reign of Emperor Mindi 愍帝 between 313 and 316 AD, when Sizhou ceased to be the imperial domain. In fact, it is hard to tell whether the territory in question was under the sway of the Jin anyway, as the capital city of Luoyang had been captured by the Xiongnu 匈奴 forces after prolonged siege and large tracts of Sizhou became a part of territory of the Former Zhao Kingdom (*Qian Zhao* 前趙, 304-329 AD). The emperor was dragged into captivity while remnants of the Jin court managed to flee to Chang'an in the west, where they proclaimed Mindi the new emperor. With the shift of the

capital the area of Guanzhong 關中 became at least theoretically the new imperial domain and the territory of Sizhou, or whatever remained of it, was again available to be given to new peerage holders as was the case of any other ordinary province of the realm.¹⁹⁰

The majority of the peerage fiefs bestowed during the Western Jin were located in the populous and economically well developed regions with thriving agricultural production and presumably also operational road or waterway network providing decent transport facilities enabling smooth collection of the tax levies. The leading place among these provinces was occupied by Jingzhou 荊州 and Yuzhou 豫州 with nineteen and fourteen fiefs respectively. Jingzhou comprised the southern part of the present day Henan, the valley of the Han 漢水 River and important grain-producing regions in the middle reaches of the Yangzi. Part of this region extended into neighboring Yuzhou, a province which stretched on both banks of the upper Huai 淮水 River forming part of the agriculturally important regions of Huaibei 淮北 and Huainan 淮南. The river Huai was an axis of this strategically very important border region the economic potential of which started to be fully realized only after subjugation of Wu in 280 AD. The province of Xuzhou 徐州 which lay on the lower reaches of the Huai River and more or less coastal Qingzhou 青州 occupying Shandong 山東 Peninsula north of Xuzhou could claim nine peerage fiefs each attesting to the relative prosperity of the region. The Yellow River basin in the northeast of the Central Plain represents another affluent region traditionally rich in people, grain and silk, the province of Yanzhou 兗州 on the southern bank of the Yellow River being home to at least ten peerage fiefs with Jizhou 冀州 in southern Hebei 河北 lagging not far behind with eight peerage fiefs, some of them being large fiefs of the premier non-royal dukes of the realm.

Encircling this prosperous core territory of the Jin Empire there was a belt of less populous border provinces stretching from the north-eastern Pingzhou 平州 (North of Korean Peninsula and southern Liaoning 遼寧) to Liangzhou 涼州 in the far west, which, bestriding the vital Gansu Corridor, connected the empire with markets of Central Asia via the various branches of the Silk Route. It seems that for some reason it was not so desirable to confer a fief in one of these provinces, at least the number of peerage fiefs we know of is strikingly smaller than in case of the core region and the gap between the core and the border regions was gradually widening, growing even more prominent in the latter part of the dynasty. Three

¹⁹⁰ Due to the various geopolitical reasons the Eastern Jin could not any longer afford to allot the fiefs only outside the imperial domain of Yangzhou 揚州 as there was not enough suitable territory at their disposal. For detailed discussion of the Eastern Jin practice see Yang Guanghui (2004): pp. 75-76.

of these provinces appear to be used somewhat more often. Bingzhou 並州 in Shanxi immediately north of the imperial domain takes the pride of place with five fiefs being followed by Yongzhou 雍州 and Qinzhou 秦州 which bordered the imperial domain on the west and occupied the original Han core region of Guanzhong.

While Bingzhou despite its peripheral position retained some strategic importance as the northern bulwark of the imperial capital, the glory of the Guanzhong was long past. The relative decline in importance which set in after the restoration of the Han when Emperor Guangwudi 光武帝 (25-57 AD) had moved the capital to Luoyang culminated during the series of devastating uprisings and border raids of the Qiang 羌 at the end of the Han. The central government, unable to deal effectively with such menace, decided to move the inhabitants to the east and abandon the region to its fate.¹⁹¹ Guanzhong was partly depopulated and its economy brought virtually to its knees. Especially its western part, Qinzhou, suffered heavily and the situation did not become much better even during subsequent Wei period as the continuous warfare raging between Wei and Shu Han affected the Sichuan-Shaanxi border with Zhuge Liang's 諸葛亮 invasions repeatedly ravaging territory south of the Wei 渭水 River. Yongzhou and Qinzhou were less populous in comparison to the core provinces and therefore probably also less eligible as territory suitable for peerage apanage with four fiefs in Yongzhou and only three in Qinzhou.

Liangzhou 涼州 in the far west was in peripheral position and its importance started to grow only with decline of the central authority of the court and disintegration of the realm which set in after the fall of Luoyang. Therefore it is not surprising that just two fiefs were ever bestowed in this province. While it is not even clear whether the marquissate of Yongping 永平 which Wudi bestowed on a relative of one of his meritorious ministers was a peerage dignity or a mere lordship, the second fief, dukedom of Jiuquan 酒泉, was a peerage created for an uncle of Emperor Mindi and therefore reflects the changed political situation within the empire with the centre of power shifting at least temporarily to the west. As the court settled in Chang'an Liangzhou naturally ceased to be that distant frontier of old and became suitable source of revenue and appealing alternative base which could, if the need be, provide shelter for the court on the run.

¹⁹¹ For the Qiang uprisings, politics of the late Han court and economic decline of Guanzhong see Lewis, Mark Edward (2007): pp. 254-260; Cambridge History of China Vol. 1 (1986): pp. 335-336; and de Crespigny (1977): pp. 1-25 and (1978): pp. 193-245.

Tab. 7 Location of the Peerage Fiefs under the Western Jin (266-317)¹⁹²

fief	rank	creation	fief location	family choronym	choronym location	notes
Qi 祁	marquis	266	Bingzhou Taiyuan	Shangdang Tongdi	Bingzhou	neighboring commanderies of the same province
Juyang 劇陽	viscount	266	Bingzhou Yanmen	Rencheng Fan	Yanzhou	
Jingling 京陵	duke	280 (266)	Bingzhou Taiyuan	Taiyuan Jinyang	Bingzhou	prefectures in the same commandery
Daling 大陵	duke	306	Bingzhou Taiyuan	Taiyuan Qi	Bingzhou	prefectures in the same commandery
Dingxiang 定襄	marquis	< 311	Bingzhou Xinxing	Zhongshan Weichang	Jizhou	
Shaoling 邵陵	duke	266	Jingzhou	unknown		ruling line of Cao Wei
Guanyang 觀陽	count	266	Jingzhou Lingling	Pingyuan Gaotang	Jizhou	
Xi'e 西鄂	marquis	270	Jingzhou Nanyang	Xiangyang	Jingzhou	commanderies of the same province
Yidu 宜都	duke	272	Jingzhou	unknown		
Pingchun 平春	marquis	< 280	Jingzhou Yiyang	Huainan Shouchun	Yangzhou	
Guangxing 廣興	marquis	< 289	Jingzhou Ancheng	unknown		
Guanyang 觀陽	duke	290 (266)	Jingzhou Lingling	Pingyuan Gaotang	Jizhou	
Shandu 山都	duke	291	Jingzhou Xiangyang	Donghai Tan	Xuzhou	
Anzhong 安眾	baron	300	Jingzhou Nanyang	Nanyang	Jingzhou	prefectures in the same commandery
Xingjin 興晉	marquis	300 >	Jingzhou Weixing	Taishan Nancheng	Yanzhou	
Anchang 安昌	duke	301	Jingzhou Yiyang	Xingyang Zhongmou	Sizhou	
Xingjin 興晉	duke	< 304	Jingzhou Weixing	Taishan Nancheng	Yanzhou	
Nanxiang 南鄉	marquis	306	Jingzhou	Langye Linyi	Xuzhou	
Jiangxia 江夏	duke	306	Jingzhou	Hedong Anyi	Sizhou	

¹⁹² All the tables are based on data in biographies of individual title holders in Jinshu and Sanguozhi.

Linxiang 臨湘	duke	306	Jingzhou Changsha	Wujun Wu		ruling line of Wu
Wuling 武陵	marquis	306-311	Jingzhou	Langye Linyi	Xuzhou	created but never accepted
Xincheng 新城	duke	306-311	Jingzhou	Peiguo Xiang	Yuzhou	
Quling 曲陵	duke	313-316	Jingzhou Jiangxia	Yingchuan Linying	Yuzhou	
Wugang 武岡	marquis	< 317	Jingzhou Shaoling	Langye Linyi	Xuzhou	
Boling 博陵	duke	266	Jizhou	Taiyuan Jinyang	Bingzhou	
Leling 樂陵	duke	266	Jizhou	Bohai Nanpi	Jizhou	neighbouring commanderies of the same province
Julu 鉅鹿	duke	266	Jizhou	Hedong Wenxi	Sizhou	
Tangyang 堂陽	viscount	266	Jizhou Anping	Leling Yanci	Jizhou	commanderies of the same province
Gaoyi 高邑	duke	266	Jizhou Zhaoguo	unknown		ruling line of Cao Wei
Anxiang 安鄉	duke	301	Jizhou Julu	unknown		
Wuqiang 武強	marquis	301 >	Jizhou Anping	Fanyang Fangcheng	Youzhou	
Bohai 渤海	duke	< 317	Jizhou	unknown		probably outside realm
Yongping 永平	marquis	280 >	Liangzhou Zhangye	Pingyang Xiangling	Sizhou	
Jiuquan 酒泉	duke	307-313	Liangzhou 涼	Wuwei Guzang	Liangzhou 涼	commanderies of the same province
Yongning 永寧	count	< 317	Ningzhou Yunnan	Runan Ancheng	Yuzhou	
Changcen 長岑	baron	< 316	Pingzhou Daifang	Yingchuan Yanling	Yuzhou	
Liangzou 梁鄒	marquis	266	Qingzhou Le'an	Jinan Zhuo	Qingzhou	neighboring commanderies of the same province
Shouguang 壽光	duke	266	Qingzhou Le'an	Xingyang Kaifeng	Sizhou	
Xinta 新沓	count	266	Qingzhou Qi	Henei Huai	Sizhou	
Ziyang 菑陽	duke	266	Qingzhou?	Hedong Anyi	Sizhou	

Chang'an 昌安	marquis	290	Qingzhou Chengyang	Leling Yanci	Jizhou	
Zhuangwu 壯武	duke	291-300	Qingzhou Chengyang	Fanyang Fangcheng	Youzhou	
Mouping 牟平	duke	301	Qingzhou Donglai	unknown		
Pingshou 平壽	duke	301	Qingzhou Peihai	Xinyang Kaifeng	Sizhou	
Zhu'a 祝阿	viscount	< 317	Qingzhou Jinan	unknown		
Yinping 陰平	marquis	266	Qinzhou	Fufeng Mei	Yongzhou	
Linwei 臨渭	duke	266	Qinzhou Lüeyang	unknown		
Yinping 陰平	baron	302	Qinzhou Yinping	Taishan Fenggao	Yanzhou	
Wei 衛	duke	266	Sizhou Dunqiu	unknown		ruling line of Zhou
Shanyang 山陽	duke	266	Sizhou Henei	unknown		ruling line of Shu Han
Miling 密陵	marquis	266	Sizhou Xinyang	Xinyang Kaifeng	Sizhou	if Mixian is Miling, prefectures of the same commandery
Yuanling 苑陵	duke	313	Sizhou Xinyang	Pingyuan Gaotang	Sizhou	commanderies of the same province
Shangluo 上洛	duke	313-316	Sizhou	Dunhuang	Liangzhou 涼	
Linhuai 臨淮	duke	266	Xuzhou	Yingchuan Linying	Yuzhou	
Jiqiu 即丘	viscount	266	Xuzhou Langye	Langye Linyi	Xuzhou	prefectures in the same commandery
Suiling 睢陵	duke	266	Xuzhou Xiapi	Langye Linyi	Xuzhou	commanderies of the same province
Lanling 蘭陵	marquis	266?	Xuzhou Donghai	Langye Linyi	Xuzhou	neighboring commanderies of the same province, if ever existed
Zheng 丞	viscount	266?	Xuzhou Donghai	Donghai Tan	Xuzhou	prefectures in the same commandery
Guangling 廣陵	duke	300	Xuzhou	Yingchuan Xuchang	Yuzhou	
Lanling 蘭陵	duke	300?	Xuzhou Donghai	Hedong Anyi	Sizhou	
Zhuxu 朱虛	duke	303	Xuzhou Dongguan	Donglai Ye	Qingzhou	commanderies of neighbouring provinces, not far distant
Sheyang 射陽	duke	316 >	Xuzhou Guangling	Yingchuan Linying	Yuzhou	

Linhai 臨海	marquis	266	Yangzhou	Donglai Ye	Qingzhou	
Kuaiji 會稽	duke	270	Yangzhou	unknown		ruling line of Wu, at that time under control of Wu
Danyang 丹楊	marquis	276	Yangzhou	Wujun Wu	Yangzhou	neighboring but at that time under control of Wu
Yongshi 永世	marquis	280 >	Yangzhou Danyang	Langye Linyi	Xuzhou	
Jiaxing 嘉興	count	302	Yangzhou Wujun	Wuguo Wu	Yangzhou	neighboring prefectures within one commandery
Xuancheng 宣城	duke	< 305	Yangzhou	Peiguo Xiang	Yuzhou	
Yanling 延陵	duke	< 306	Yangzhou Piling	Chenliu Yucheng	Yanzhou	
Moling 秣陵	marquis	306	Yangzhou Danyang	Guangling	Xuzhou	
Wucheng 烏程	duke	313-316	Yangzhou Wuxing	Yixing Yangxian	Yangzhou	neighboring prefectures within the same commandery
Jiaxing 嘉興	duke	316 (302)	Yangzhou Wujun	Wuguo Wu	Yangzhou	neighboring prefectures within the same province
Lu 魯	duke	266	Yanzhou	Pingyang Xiangling	Sizhou	
Gaoping 高平	duke	266	Yanzhou	Linhuai Dongyang	Xuzhou	
Juancheng 鄆城	duke	266	Yanzhou Puyang	unknown		ruling line of Cao Wei
Linqiu 廩丘	duke	266	Yanzhou Puyang	unknown		ruling line of Cao Wei
Kangfu 亢父	baron	266	Yanzhou Rencheng	Chenliu Yu	Yanzhou	prefectures in the same commandery
Chengyang 成陽	viscount	291	Yanzhou Jiyin	Jiyin Yuanju	Yanzhou	neighboring prefectures within the same commandery
Fengqiu 封丘	duke	301	Yanzhou Chenliu	unknown		
Pingyin 平陰	duke	301	Yanzhou Jibei	unknown		
Chengyang 成陽	duke	301 (291)	Yanzhou Jiyin	Jiyin Yuanju	Yanzhou	neighboring prefectures within the same commandery
Chengyang 成陽	baron	300-306	Yanzhou Jiyin	Yingchuan Linying	Yuzhou	
Han'an 漢安	marquis	316	Yizhou Jiangyang	Langye Linyi	Xuzhou	
Chungu 鶉觚	viscount	266	Yongzhou Anding	Beidi Niyang	Yongzhou	commanderies of the same province
Xiayang 夏陽	marquis	266	Yongzhou Fengyi	Anding Linjing	Yongzhou	commanderies of the same province

Linjin 臨晉	marquis	276	Yongzhou Fengyi	Hongnong Huayin	Sizhou	commanderies of the same province
Bacheng 霸城	marquis	310-312	Yongzhou Jingzhao	Anding Wushi	Yongzhou	commanderies of the same province
Anle 安樂	duke	266	Youzhou Yanguo	unknown		ruling line of Shu Han
Rongcheng 容城	marquis	266?	Youzhou Fanyang	Fanyang Fangcheng	Youzhou	neighboring prefectures within the same commandery
Shanggu 上谷	duke	291	Youzhou	Bohai Dongguang	Jizhou	
Liaoxi 遼西	duke	302	Youzhou	unknown		probably outside realm
Guangning 廣甯	duke	< 317	Youzhou	unknown		probably outside realm
Jibei 濟北	marquis	266	Yuzhou	Yingchuan Linying	Yuzhou	commanderies of the same province
Langling 朗陵	duke	266	Yuzhou Runan	Chenguo Yangxia	Yuzhou	prefectures in two neighboring commanderies
Shangcai 上蔡	count	266	Yuzhou Runan	Runan Xiping	Yuzhou	neighboring prefectures within the same commandery
Juping 鉅平	marquis	266	Yuzhou Taishan	Taishan Nancheng	Yuzhou	prefectures in the same commandery
Shen 慎縣	viscount	266?	Yuzhou Ruyin	Yingchuan Xuchang	Yuzhou	commanderies of the same province
Nancheng 南城	marquis	277	Yuzhou Taishan	Taishan Nancheng	Yuzhou	prefectures in the same commandery including the home prefecture
Yiyang 弋陽	viscount	300	Yuzhou	Qiaoguo Zhi	Yuzhou	commanderies of the same province
Xiaohuang 小黃	duke	301	Yuzhou Chenliu	unknown		
Xihua 西華	duke	302	Yuzhou Yingchuan	Yingchuan Linying	Yuzhou	neighboring prefectures within the same commandery
Yiyang 弋陽	marquis	306	Yuzhou	Qiaoguo Zhi	Yuzhou	prefectures in the same commandery
Dongping 東平	marquis/duke	311 (306)	Yuzhou	Henei Shanyang	Sizhou	
Wuyang 舞陽	duke	312 >	Yuzhou Xiangcheng	Yingchuan Linying	Yuzhou	neighboring commanderies of the same province
Linying 臨潁	duke	313	Yuzhou Yingchuan	Yingchuan Linying	Yuzhou	the same prefecture and commandery
Xiping 西平	duke	314	Yuzhou Runan	Anding Wushi	Yongzhou	
Pingling 平陵	baron	266	unknown	Taiyuan	Bingzhou	

Xunyang 循陽	count	266	unknown	Pingyuan Gaotang	Jizhou	
Guanglu 廣陸	marquis	266	unknown	Liaodong Xiangping	Pingzhou	
Daliang 大梁	marquis	266	unknown	Fanyang Fangcheng	Youzhou	
Guang'an 廣安	duke	266	unknown	unknown		
Changlu 昌陸	viscount	266?	unknown	Chenliu Yucheng	Yanzhou	
Jingyuan 涇原	viscount	266?	unknown	Beidi Niyang	Yongzhou	
Qingquan 清泉	marquis	269	unknown	Beidi Niyang	Yongzhou	
Guiming 歸命	marquis	280	unknown	Wujun Wu	Yangzhou	ruling line of Wu
Guiyi 歸義	marquis	283	unknown	unknown		probably outside realm
Xunyang 循陽	marquis	290	unknown	Pingyuan Gaotang	Jizhou	
Lingchuan/Lingzhou 靈川/ 靈州	duke	291	unknown	Beidi Niyang	Sizhou	Lingchuan was native place of one of Fu Zhi's ancestors
Yiju 弋居	count	313	unknown	Dunhuang	Liangzhou 涼	
Guangrao 廣饒	marquis	< 317	unknown	Qi	Qingzhou	

Tab. 8 Prefecture Lordships (*Xianhou* 縣侯) Awarded during the Western Jin and Location of their Fiefs (266-317)

fief	first Jin fief holder	year of creation	fief location	family choronym	choronym location	notes ¹⁹³
Jingling 京陵	Wang Hun 王渾	266	Bingzhou Tiayuan	Taiyuan Jinyang	Bingzhou	neighboring prefectures in one commandery, apanage of 6500 households ¹⁹⁴
Guangwu 廣武	Zhang Hua 張華	280	Bingzhou Yanmen	Fanyang Fancheng	Youzhou	

¹⁹³ Not all of the dignities listed here as prefecture lordships are mentioned as such in the contemporary sources. The distinction between the peerage marquises and prefecture lordship is often obscured with the sources referring to both simply as *XY hou*. In these cases I tried to determine the status of the dignity in question by taking into account other known facts and these are indicated in separate notes. The rest of the dignities are explicitly mentioned as lordship titles, however, I do not claim that the list of the prefecture lords is complete. I may have either missed some of the titles, or misidentified lordship dignity for a peerage or peerage for a lordship title. Nevertheless, I believe that the list, however big its shortcomings, still can provide some clues concerning general trends in choosing location of the fief.

¹⁹⁴ As the quotas set the apanage of a peerage marquis to 1400-1600 households, anything above this number indicates that the particular dignity belongs to lordships.

Guangwu 廣武	Liu Kun 劉琨	306	Bingzhou Yanmen	Zhongshan Weichang	Jizhou	apanage of 2000 households
Shangyong 上庸	Tang Bin 唐彬	280	Jingzhou	Luguo Zou	Yanzhou	apanage of 6000 households
Xiangyang 襄陽	Wang Jun 王濬	280	Jingzhou	Hongnong Hu	Sizhou	
Dangyang 當陽	Du Yu 杜預	280	Jingzhou Nanjun	Jingzhao Duling	Yongzhou	apanage of 9600 households
Jiangling 江陵	Wang XY 王氏	280	Jingzhou Nanjun	Taiyuan Jinyang	Bingzhou	
Wudang 武當	Teng Xiu/You 滕脩	280	Jingzhou Nanxiang	Nanyang Xi'e	Jingzhou	neighbouring commanderies in one province, created after the fall of Wu ¹⁹⁵
Wuchang 武昌	Pei Gai 裴該	291	Jingzhou	Hedong Wenxi	Sizhou	conferred by special grace ¹⁹⁶
Xicheng 西城	He Pan 何攀	291	Jingzhou Weixing	Shujun Pi	Yizhou	apanage of 10 000 households
Guanjun 冠軍	Guo Zhang 郭彰	291-299	Jingzhou Nanyang	Taiyuan Yangqu	Bingzhou	
Wuling 武陵	Wang Yi 王廙	306	Jingzhou	Langye Linyi	Xuzhou	
Chaisang 柴桑	Tao Kan 陶侃	316>	Jingzhou Wuchang	Lujiang Xunyang	Yangzhou	neighboring commanderies of two provinces, apanage of 4000 households
Fulu 福祿	Zhang Shi 張寔	312-316	Liangzhou Jiuquan	Anding Wushi	Yongzhou	neighboring provinces, Fulu was under control of the Zhangs
Changuo 昌國	Ren Kai 任愷	266	Qingzhou Qi	Le'an Bochang	Qingzhou	nighboring commanderies in one province
Chang'an 昌安	Shi Jian 石鑿	290	Qingzhou Chengyang	Leling Yanci	Jizhou	
Anyang 安陽	Shi Chong 石崇	280	Sizhou Weijun	Bohai Nanpi	Jizhou	
Xiu/Youwu 脩武	Li Ju 李矩	312-316	Sizhou Jijun	Pingyang	Sizhou	neighboring commanderies in one province
Yangwu 陽武	Li Ju 李矩	312-316	Sizhou Xingyang	Pingyang	Sizhou	neighboring commanderies in one province

¹⁹⁵ All titles given in reward for the merit on the successful conquest of Wu in 280 AD were *liehou* lordships. Therefore we may assume that Wudang was very probably prefecture lordship too.

¹⁹⁶ The Wuchang dignity was conferred in 291 AD to a son of the duke of Julu as a special grace (*tui'en* 推恩). The titles bestowed by special grace to younger sons of the peerage were generally lower titles within the *liehou* ranks. Therefore it is highly probable that Wuchang was only prefecture lordship.

Pingyang 平陽	Li Ju 李矩	317	Sizhou Pingyang	Pingyang	Sizhou	same prefecture of the same commandery
Wanling 宛陵	Tao Huang 陶璜	280	Yangzhou Xuancheng	Danyang Moling	Yangzhou	neighboring commanderies in one province, created after the fall of Wu
Linhai 臨海	Pei Kai 裴楷	291-299	Yangzhou	Hedong Wenxi	Sizhou	apanage of 2000 households
Wucheng 烏程	Zhou Qi 周玘	<313	Yangzhou Wuxing	Yixing Yangxian	Yangzhou	prefectures of the same commandery
Ping'a 平阿	Zhao You 趙誘	<317	Yangzhou Huainan	Huainan	Yangzhou	prefectures of the same commandery
Xunyang 尋陽	Zhou Fang 周訪	<317	Yangzhou Lujiang	Runan Ancheng	Yuzhou	
Xue 薛縣	Wu Gai 武陔	266	Yanzhou Lugu	Peiguo Zhuyi	Yuzhou	neighboring commanderies in two provinces
Fenggao 奉高	Ma Long 馬隆	290	Yanzhou Taishan	Dongping Pinglu	Yanzhou	commanderies of the same province
Liangzou 梁鄒	Liu Song 劉頌	301	Yongzhou Jingzhao	Guangling	Xuzhou	
Lantian 藍田	Wang Cheng 王承	306	Yongzhou Jingzhao	Taiyuan Jinyang	Bingzhou	
Anfeng 安豐	Wang Rong 王戎	280	Yuzhou	Langye Linyi	Xuzhou	
Chengwu 成武	Zhou Jun 周浚	280	Yuzhou Jiyin	Runan Ancheng	Yuzhou	commanderies of the same province, yet quite far apart, apanage of 6000 households
Minyang 敏陽	Wang Yu 王聿	297>	unknown	Taiyuan Jinyang	Bingzhou	conferred by speacial grace
Jinxing 晉興	Sun Hui 孫惠	301	unknown	Wujun Wu	Yangzhou	

Tab. 9 Township Lordships (*Xianghou* 鄉侯) Awarded during the Western Jin (266-317)

fief	first Jin holder	year of creation	fief location	family choronym	choronym location
Anling 安陵	Xun Yun 荀顗	266	unknown	Yingchuan Linying	Yuzhou
Gao'an 高安	Xiahou Shao 夏侯劭	266	Jiaozhou Jiuzhen	Peiguo Qiao	Yuzhou
Lexiang 樂鄉	Hua Jiao 華嶠	291	Jingzhou Yiyang	Pingyuan Gaotang	Sizhou
Pingxiang 平鄉	He Feng 何逢	291	Jizhou Julu	Shujun Pi	Yizhou
Pingyang 平陽	Jia Mo 賈模	291	Sizhou Pingyang	Pingyang Xiangling	Sizhou
Pingle 平樂	Yan Zuan 閻纘	<300	Guangzhou Shi'an	Baxi Anhan	Liangzhou
Anle 安樂	Zhang Gui 張軌	305	Youzhou Yanguo	Anding Wushi	Yongzhou
Anyang 安陽	Xue Jian 薛兼	306>	Sizhou Weijun	Danyang	Yangzhou
Dongxiang 東鄉	Gu Zhong 顧眾	<317	unknown	Wujun Wu	Yangzhou
Dongxiang 東鄉	Tao Kan 陶侃	300-316	unknown	Peiguo Xiang	Yuzhou
Anchang 安昌	Suo Yu 索聿	unknown	Jingzhou Yiyang	Dunhuang	Liangzhou

Tab. 10 Village Lordships (*Tinghou* 亭侯) Awarded during the Western Jin (266-317 AD)

fief	first Jin fief holder	year of creation	notes
Fengle 豐樂	Du Yu 杜預	266	
Fengsheng 奉聖	Kong Zhen 孔震	266	
Wuting 務亭	Yang Wenzong 楊文宗	266	
Ganlu 甘露	Yang Xiu 羊琇	266	
Wuchang 武昌	Ji Han 嵇含	266?	
Gaoyang 高陽	Pei Jing 裴憬	271	
Anyang 安陽	Han Gai 韓蓋	280	
Runan 汝南	He Yu 和郁	280	fief in their home commandery
Xincheng 新城	Han Chang 韓暢	280	
Yangli 陽里	Jia Hun 賈混	280	
Yangxiang 楊鄉	Wang Yi 王彝	280	
Dongming 東明	Fu Jun 傅雱	291	
Wuxiang 武鄉	Fu Chang 傅暢	291	
Xuanchang 宣昌	Hua Jiao 華嶠	291	
Anle 安樂	Suo Jing 索靖	306?	
Anyang 安陽	Xue Jian 薛兼	306?	
Jianwu 建武	Zhang Shi 張寔	<313?	
Dongming 東明	Li Ju 李矩	313-316	
Xianting 咸亭	Xie Kun 謝鯤	313-316	
Yuanxiang 原鄉	Liu Chao 劉超	313-316	
Jiyang 吉陽	Guo Song 郭誦	317	
Anling 安陵	Bian Dun 卞敦	<317	
Yichang 宜昌	Zhang Fu 張輔	<317	
Zhangpu 漳浦	Zhou Zha 周札	<317	
Anshou 安壽	Wang Qian 王虔	unknown	
Qingliu 清流	Zhou Mao 周懋	unknown	
Qingming 清明	Xiahou Zhuang 夏侯莊	unknown	
Yingyang 潁陽	Xun Xian 荀顯	unknown	fief in their home commandery?

Remaining border provinces of Pingzhou 平州 and Youzhou 幽州 occupied similar peripheral position in the east. The actual extent of the Jin control over the Liao River 遼河 basin and North of the Korean Peninsula is actually questionable. The Jin interests in the region must have inevitably collided with the interests of Kogurjŏ and the Xianbei 鮮卑 tribes which despite their occasional alliances with the Jin remained potential threat to the Jin authority in the region. With all three powers vying with each other the control of the Far East must have been an elusive mirage, being subjected to the ever changing balance of power. During his long reign Wudi never bestowed a fief within Pingzhou province and this decision was probably deliberate. It was only after his death when the system of ennoblement was adjusted to become a useful tool for strengthening one's political position through bestowing unprecedented honors on one's followers, that a barony was created in the Pingzhou Commandery of Daifang 帶方. Daifang, lying south of present day P'yŏngyang, was one of the four commanderies which were established in the North of the Korean Peninsula following the victorious campaigns of Han Emperor Wudi 漢武帝 (141-87 BC). In view of the peripheral position of Daifang and its considerable distance from the imperial capital it seems to me rather unlikely that there was more than just a formal connection of the barony of Changcen 長岑 with prefecture of that name which was shortly to be annexed by Koguryŏ King Mich'ŏn 美川王 (300-331 AD) together with the rest of the Jin possessions on the Korean Peninsula in 313 AD.

Youzhou, the other of the far-eastern provinces, may have been much closer to the capital than Pingzhou but certain features of insecure and potentially volatile border zone applied to it as well and peerage fiefs located within its borders were rather exceptional. The dukedom of Anle 安樂 which Wudi bestowed on Liu Shan 劉禪, the ex-emperor of Shu Han, actually corresponded with the ancestral home of this branch of the Liu imperial clan which was Zhuo commandery 涿郡 of Youzhou. As in case of other peerages created for the ex-rulers and members of dethroned or abdicated imperial lines, the revenue flowing from dukedom of Anle should have ensured the continuation of regular sacrifices to the imperial predecessors of the Jin and is to be seen as a ritual step taken on the way to establishing one's legitimacy. The second of Wudi's creations, the marquisate of Rongcheng 容城, is only hinted at by the sources. It was in fact a continuation of the original Wei title bestowed on the Fanyang Lu 范陽盧氏 family which belonged to the staunchest supporters of the Simas before the establishment of the dynasty. As Fanyang was new Jin designation for Zhuo

commandery it is obvious that the main reason for bestowing fief exactly in Youzhou was again the proximity to the ancestral home of the family.

The second half of the dynasty saw creation of three new peerage fiefs within Youzhou. While dukedom of Shanggu 上谷 was an irregular peerage creation typical of period of political infighting during the reign of Emperor Huidi, the remaining dukedoms, Liaoxi 遼西 and Guangning 廣寧 represent altogether different kind of noble title. They were granted to members of Duan 段 family, the ruling clan of the Eastern Xianbei who wielded considerable influence along the border. These men may have acknowledged the suzerainty of the Jin, yet they were often living outside the empire being virtually independent of the central authority and its local representatives. Bestowal of these titles was very likely a gesture of political expediency acknowledging the position of Xianbei leaders as semi-independent lords of the border which nevertheless formally integrated this unpredictable power within the framework of the empire hierarchy. By formally becoming members of the titled nobility of the realm they became subjects to the Jin emperor at the same time. Through conferring the highest noble title available for non-royals the Jin court hoped to win allegiance of the Duans and instill in them sense of loyalty to the throne which would bind them in useful alliance protecting the frontier of the empire against the raids of more hostile steppe tribes.¹⁹⁷ Yet as these titles were conferred on tribal leaders who were not subjected to direct control of the centre it is arguable whether the titles actually entitled their holders to any of the rights enjoyed by the peers. As long as these dukes remained outside of the realm, the creations must have remained purely nominal and commanderies of Youzhou were chosen only for their proximity to the border and sphere of activity of the Xianbei Duan clan.

While in the central core region the fiefs were more or less evenly distributed over the whole area, with even the provinces of northern border zone used regularly, albeit less often, for creating new peerages, the provinces in the far south and southwest of the empire evince conspicuous absence of any peerage fiefs and initially were not used at all. During Wudi's reign the territory of Guangzhou 廣州 and Jiaozhou 交州 in the far south stretching from the basin of the Pearl River (Zhujiang 珠江) to the delta of the Red River (Honghe 紅河 or Sông Hồng) in northern Vietnam was apparently used only for granting low township lordships while Ningzhou 寧州 in present day Yunnan and both Sichuan provinces of Yizhou 益州 and Liangzhou 梁州 were left with no fief at all. The situation changed shortly before the collapse

¹⁹⁷ For the complicated relations between the Xianbei and other steppe ethnic groups and Chinese empires since the collapse of the Xiongnu authority over the steppe see Barfield, Thomas (1992): pp. 85-97.

of the dynasty and transfer of its capital to Jiankang 建康 when there were two peerages newly created in Ningzhou and Yizhou, but as they were in all probability bestowed by regime of the future emperor Yuandi, they reflect the Eastern Jin practices which differed in many respects from the system instituted by Wudi.

The southwestern and southern provinces represented in a certain sense continuation of the northern border zone, yet the reasons which rendered them hardly admissible as proper areas for a fief to be located in were quite different and were related to specific political conditions of the region and peculiar nature of the state control over it. Despite the on-going territorial expansion of the Chinese empire southwards large areas of the Lingnan 嶺南 region were actually still ruled by native chieftains and hereditary tribal rulers who often remained the real masters of the region. The control of the state over these political entities was frail and depended on the ability of the government to integrate at least partially the local rulers into power structure of the dynasty represented by the local administration and also on the good will of the native chieftains and their willingness to cooperate with the Jin court and its local representatives.

Contemporary sources offer us a notion of full-fledged administrative structure with network of provinces, commanderies and prefectures which seemingly existed in the south, yet it would be mistaken to take the information gleaned from the sources at its face value. The state may have officially established provinces and prefectures and even appointed their administrative staff, but such creation often remained only on paper, so to speak, and did not necessarily imply smooth running of the office or even the existence of a centrally governed administrative unit *per se* as the reality was often conditioned by the balance of power and attitude of the local native rules. Not much could have been expected from governors and prefects who if not living in overtly hostile surroundings were at best tolerated but ignored.¹⁹⁸ The regions where even the overall control of the government was subject to current mood of the native elites were hardly suitable for establishing noble fiefs and apanages which should have become sources of stable annual income enabling perpetual remembrance of meritorious deeds through regular offering of sacrifices.

Even though the above description of the conditions in the far south may to some degree apply also to certain parts of Sichuan, especially the south-west frontier of Liangzhou bordering on tribal region traditionally known as Nanzhong 南中, the reasons for absence of

¹⁹⁸ For excellent discussion of the situation in the southwest regions of China, especially present day Yunnan, Guizhou and part of Sichuan during Early Middle Ages see Herman, John (2009): pp. 241-286, especially 260-281.

noble fiefs in Sichuan are probably different. The vast and fertile Chengdu basin has been known for its wealth and prosperity since time immemorial and therefore its economy, even though temporarily impaired by the mismanagement under the last Shu Han emperor could have not been the issue. Therefore, it seems plausible that military and security concerns mentioned by Yang Guanghui in connection with all border regions may have actually played crucial role here. Beside its proverbial wealth Sichuan was also known as region of utmost strategic importance with unique geophysical conditions making it a well defensible place of last resort, either safe haven for political refugees fleeing the turmoil of the Central Plain or convenient self-sufficient local base for any malcontent trying to set up independent regime of his own. The territory of Sichuan was annexed to the Wei-Jin Empire only after the conquest of Shu Han in 263 AD. The fall of the independent kingdom was shortly followed by rebellion of Zhong Hui 鍾會 one of the victorious commanders who tried to take advantage of unstable political situation at court which occupied itself with impending dynastic transition and establish a separate regime. Even though the rebellion had been swiftly suppressed this abortive attempt convinced the emperor that Sichuan remained potentially unstable and insecure and therefore possible bestowal of fiefs within this region might have presented security risks which the emperor was not ready to run. Practical concerns may have influenced the final decision as well. The relative remoteness of Sichuan provinces and overall inaccessibility of the region, connected with the capital, where majority of the prospective peers were supposed to reside, though only handful of perilous mountain roads may have contributed to undesirability of Sichuan, disqualifying it in the process of selection of the fief territory.

The last remaining province of the empire was Yangzhou 揚州 stretching south of the Yangzi River and comprising economically expanding regions of Jiangnan 江南 and Jiangdong 江東. Having been originally the core region of the independent kingdom of Wu Yangzhou was incorporated into the territory of the Jin realm only in 280 AD. Yet even before the final subjugation of the rival regime did Wudi confer peerages which used in their appellation names of existing administrative units of southern kingdom. Because these places were nevertheless out of reach being controlled by the Wu government the connection between the peerage and the territory in question must have been only nominal with actual apanage being situated elsewhere. Unfortunately we don't know any details about the dignity of Linhai 臨海 but at least in case of dukedom of Kuaiji 會稽 and marquissate of Danyang 丹陽 Wudi was intentionally playing game of symbolics claiming the supreme authority as the

sole legitimate Son of Heaven. His claim was even more poignant as the recipients of both dignities were members of the Wu ruling family who had previously defected to the Jin camp. By creating fiefs within the enemy territory Wudi challenged the authority of the Wu emperor and unscrupulously threatened his position as this deliberate act was to be seen as gesture of support of refugee princes and their claims to the southern throne. At the same time, situating the fief within their home territory of Wu must have felt as a mighty incentive prompting the defectors to strive hard and serve the Jin well so as to turn the symbolic claims over the territory into its permanent hold.

Due to its economic potential Yangzhou had joined other populous and developed core provinces with seven more fiefs having been allotted within its borders during the later period of the dynasty. As the political situation in the Central Plain worsened with the capital city being repeatedly threatened by incursions of rebellious Xiongnu and their allies, part of the court elite began to contemplate a move of the imperial seat to the safety of the southern bank of the Yangzi. The southern families which had retained their local influence even after the fall of Wu now helped to maintain the stability of the region suppressing several rebellious attempts aiming at recreating an independent southern kingdom. In view of these developments it is no wonder that later fiefs located within Yangzhou tended to reflect the rising importance of local prominent families which were to play crucial role in transferring the centre of power to Jiankang, making the restoration of the Jin regime south of the Yangzi possible.¹⁹⁹

Apart from general economic and geopolitical considerations there were also other factors at play determining the exact location of the fief with a place of family origin being actually often decisive for the final choice of the territory. Time and again we encounter examples of fiefs being somewhat related to the ancestral home of the family honored by its bestowal, as it appears in the family choronym. At the beginning of the Jin Dynasty the choronym still often corresponded if not to the actual place of residence of the noble family, then at least to its provincial base where the family held some landed property and might have exercised considerable influence over the affairs of the local community. When we compare the family choronyms with exact locations of the bestowed fiefs it becomes clear that at least during the reign of Emperor Wudi it was usual to select suitable territory as close to the

¹⁹⁹ For the conditions in Jiangnan after the fall of Wu and the role of the local prominent families of Wu origin in establishing of the Eastern Jin see Fang Beichen (1991): pp. 61-81 and Wang Xiaorong (2002): pp. 89-92; for Jin policy of appeasing the former Wu elites see Chen Jinfeng (2001): pp. 78-82.

ancestral home of the family as possible, provided by the fact that the selected territory would meet all necessary requirements concerning available land and number of apanage households.

The following tables (Tab. 11-16) provide the list of all peerage dignities and prefecture lordships awarded during the Western Jin arranged chronologically by the date of creation with special regard to comparison of the exact location of the fief and location of the ancestral home of the particular family. For better understanding of the wider changes in the selection process affecting the relationship between the fief and ancestral home I have divided the reign of the Western Jin into three distinct periods. The first pair of tables shows situation during the reign of Wudi (266-289 AD) when the system was first institutionalized and was presumably still working flawlessly with all the regulations governing the bestowal of the fief being generally observed. Tables 13 and 14 cover the reign of hapless Emperor Huidi 惠帝 (290-306 AD) with a period of political infighting of the *waiqi*-dominated court factions giving way to subsequent internecine warfare brought about by rivalry within the imperial house. Powerful men of the time, regents and princes used the enfeoffment system as a means how to achieve their political ends without bothering too much about the rules and provisions set by Wudi. The last period (Tables 15 and 16) comprises the reigns of emperors Huaidi 懷帝 (307-313 AD) and Mindi (313-316 AD) and brief regency of Sima Rui 司馬睿 (316-317 AD) before he ascended the throne as the first emperor of the Eastern Jin. In the aftermath of the Upheaval of the Eight Princes the war-torn country found itself at the mercy of rebellious nomadic mercenaries who were constantly chipping away at the Jin territory gradually building state of their own. The practice of ennoblement must have deteriorated even further as the insecurity of the time called more for the emergency measures than for strict observance of the prescribed norm. The refugee court in Chang'an did not have enough time and power to enforce its authority over the rest of the empire with Sima Rui establishing a rival centre of power and later on even conferring his own noble titles in the capacity of the protector of the realm and emperor's surrogate in the South.

Out of fifty peerage fiefs with known locations conferred by Emperor Wudi twenty six other fiefs were actually situated either very near of the place of origin of the particular family or at least within the same administrative unit. The exact proximity to the ancestral seats may have differed ranging from neighboring prefectures of one commandery to commanderies within the same province. Even the home prefecture itself could have become the territory of the newly created fief, even though this appears to be rather an exceptional case. Sometimes the fief was not situated in the same province where the ancestral family home was to be

found, nevertheless both territories bordered on one another. Six other fiefs were granted to families which hailed from the imperial home province of Sizhou. As the imperial domain was very likely to remain fief-free it is only natural that these families must have been given their fiefs somewhere else and ancestral home proximity factor gave way to more urgent concerns of geopolitical nature. The same holds true for ten peerages which were created for members of ex-ruling families, yet in some cases their fief did also correspond to ancestral homes of the families in question as we have already seen in the discussion above. Spatial proximity between fief and family home appears to be for some reason very important and there were only eight fiefs where we can find no connection to the ancestral home of the family of their holders. It seems that the same applied in principle to the prefecture lordships as well even though the ratio is more balanced with six fiefs having no connection to the place of origin against six fiefs corresponding to it and one more being granted to a Sizhou family, presumably in an alternative location.

With no ready explanation being offered by the contemporary sources it is difficult to decide, what was the reason for this widespread and obviously favored practice of locating fiefs close to the ancestral homes of the noble families. We know that the families still maintained some kind of connection to the locality identified as their ancestral home through the use of the respective choronym. If that was the case then the spatial proximity could have been desirable for purely practical reasons as it solved many a logistic problem connected with collection of taxes and generally made the management of the apanage households easier. But since we do not know enough details about economic background of the titled nobility, working of their family bases and process of levying taxes from the apanage households it is rather hard to say whether the distance between the fief and family base really played such an important role. It is by no means sure that the apanage stipend was collected directly from the apanage households with the collected grain and silk being afterwards transported to the native place of the fief holder. As the peers and lords usually resided in the capital with only occasionally taking official position in the provincial administration they may have simply received certain amount of silk and grain corresponding to their annual stipend from the state depots either in the capital city or in the provincial administrative seat.

Tab. 11 Peerages Created during Reign of Emperor Wudi (266-289)

fief	rank	creation	fief Location	family choronym	choronym location	relationship between fief and family place of origin
Boling 博陵	duke	266	Jizhou	Taiyuan Jinyang	Bingzhou	None
Qi 祁	marquis	266	Bingzhou Taiyuan	Shangdang Tongdi	Bingzhou	neighboring commanderies of the same province
Pingling 平陵	baron	266	unknown	Taiyuan	Bingzhou	unknown
Leling 樂陵	duke	266	Jizhou	Bohai Nanpi	Jizhou	neighboring commanderies in one province
Guanyang 觀陽	count	266	Jingzhou Lingling	Pingyuan Gaotang	Jizhou	none
Xunyang 循陽	count	266	unknown	Pingyuan Gaotang	Jizhou	unknown
Tangyang 堂陽	viscount	266	Jizhou Anping	Leling Yanci	Jizhou	two commanderies of the same province, not neighboring
Guanglu 廣陸	marquis	266	unknown	Liaodong Xiangping	Pingzhou	unknown
Liangzou 梁鄒	marquis	266	Qingzhou Le'an	Jinan Zhuo	Qingzhou	neighboring commanderies in one province
Linhai 臨海	marquis	266	Yangzhou	Donglai Ye	Qingzhou	none
Julu 鉅鹿	duke	266	Jizhou	Hedong Wenxi	Sizhou	outside Sizhou
Lu 魯	duke	266	Yanzhou	Pingyang Xiangling	Sizhou	outside Sizhou
Shouguang 壽光	duke	266	Qingzhou Le'an	Xingyang Kaifeng	Sizhou	outside Sizhou
Ziyang 菑陽	duke	266	Qingzhou?	Hedong Anyi	Sizhou	outside Sizhou
Miling 密陵	marquis	266	Sizhou Xiangyang	Xingyang Kaifeng	Sizhou	if Mixian is Miling, two commanderies of the same province
Xinta 新沓	count	266	Qingzhou Qi	Henei Huai	Sizhou	outside Sizhou
Gaoping 高平	duke	266	Yanzhou	Linhuai Dongyang	Xuzhou	none
Suiling 睢陵	duke	266	Xuzhou Xiapi	Langye Linyi	Xuzhou	two commanderies of the same province, not neighboring
Jiqu 即丘	viscount	266	Xuzhou Langye	Langye Linyi	Xuzhou	two prefectures in the same commandery
Juyang 劇陽	viscount	266	Bingzhou	Rencheng Fan	Yanzhou	none

			Yanmen			
Kangfu 亢父	baron	266	Yanzhou Rencheng	Chenliu Yu	Yanzhou	two prefectures in the same commandery
Xiayang 夏陽	marquis	266	Yongzhou Fengyi	Anding Linjing	Yongzhou	two commanderies of the same province, not neighboring
Yinping 陰平	marquis	266	Qinzhou	Fufeng Mei	Yongzhou	neighboring provinces
Chungu 鶉觚	viscount	266	Yongzhou Anding	Beidi Niyang	Yongzhou	two commanderies of the same province, not neighboring
Xiayang 夏陽	viscount	266	Yongzhou Fengyi	Anding Linjing	Yongzhou	two commanderies of the same province, not neighboring
Daliang 大梁	marquis	266	unknown	Fanyang Fangcheng	Youzhou	River Daliang was in Pingzhou in Manchuria-Korea border region
Langling 朗陵	duke	266	Yuzhou Runan	Chenguo Yangxia	Yuzhou	prefectures in two neighbouring commanderies in one province
Linhuai 臨淮	duke	266	Xuzhou	Yingchuan Linying	Yuzhou	none
Jibei 濟北	marquis	266	Yuzhou	Yingchuan Linying	Yuzhou	two commanderies of the same province, not neighboring
Juping 鉅平	marquis	266	Yuzhou Taishan	Taishan Nancheng	Yuzhou	two prefectures in the same commandery
Shangcai 上蔡	count	266	Yuzhou Runan	Runan Xiping	Yuzhou	neighboring prefectures within one commandery
Anle 安樂	duke	266	Youzhou Yanguo	Zhuojun Zhuo	Youzhou	ruling line of Shu Han, neighboring prefectures within one commandery
Gaoyi 高邑	duke	266	Jizhou Zhaoguo	Peiguo Qiao		ruling line of Cao Wei
Guang'an 廣安	duke	266	unknown	unknown		unknown
Juancheng 鄆城	duke	266	Yanzhou Puyang	Peiguo Qiao	Yuzhou	ruling line of Cao Wei
Linqiu 廩丘	duke	266	Yanzhou Puyang	Peiguo Qiao	Yuzhou	ruling line of Cao Wei
Linwei 臨渭	duke	266	Qinzhou Lüeyang	unknown		unknown
Shanyang 山陽	duke	266	Sizhou Henei	unknown		ruling line of Han
Shaoling 邵陵	duke	266	Jingzhou	Peiguo Qiao	Yuzhou	ruling line of Cao Wei
Wei 衛	duke	266	Sizhou Dunqiu	unknown		ruling line of Zhou

Lanling 蘭陵	marquis	266?	Xuzhou Donghai	Langye Linyi	Xuzhou	neighboring commanderies in one province, not sure if ever existed
Zheng 丞	viscount	266?	Xuzhou Donghai	Donghai Tan	Xuzhou	two prefectures in the same commandery
Changlu 昌陸	viscount	266?	unknown	Chenliu Yucheng	Yanzhou	unknown
Jingyuan 涇原	viscount	266?	unknown	Beidi Niyang	Yongzhou	unknown, not sure if the Wei title was confirmed by the Jin
Rongcheng 容城	marquis	266?	Youzhou Fanyang	Fanyang Fangcheng	Youzhou	neighboring prefectures in one commandery
Shen 慎縣	viscount	266?	Yuzhou Ruyin	Yingchuan Xuchang	Yuzhou	two commanderies of the same province, not neighboring
Qingquan 清泉	marquis	269	unknown	Beidi Niyang	Yongzhou	unknown
Xi'e 西鄂	marquis	270	Jingzhou Nanyang	Xiangyang	Jingzhou	two commanderies of the same province, not neighboring
Kuaiji 會稽	duke	270	Yangzhou	Wujun Wu	Yangzhou	ruling line of Wu
Yidu 宜都	duke	272	Jingzhou	unknown		unknown
Danyang 丹楊	marquis	276	Yangzhou	Wujun Wu	Yangzhou	ruling line of Wu, neighboring but at that time under control of Wu
Linjin 臨晉	marquis	276	Yongzhou Fengyi	Hongnong Huayin	Yongzhou	prefectures in the same commandery
Nancheng 南城	marquis	277	Yuzhou Taishan	Taishan Nancheng	Yuzhou	prefectures in the same commandery including home prefecture
Pingchun 平春侯	marquis	< 280	Jingzhou Yiyang	Huainan Shouchun	Yangzhou	none
Jingling 京陵	duke	280(266)	Bingzhou Taiyuan	Taiyuan Jinyang	Bingzhou	prefectures in the same commandery
Guiming 歸命	marquis	280	unknown	Wujun Wu	Yangzhou	ruling line of Wu
Yongping 永平	marquis	280 >	Liangzhou Zhangya	Pingyang Xiangling	Sizhou	outside Sizhou
Yongshi 永世	marquis	280 >	Yangzhou Danyang	Langye Linyi	Xuzhou	none
Guiyi 歸義	marquis	283	unknown	unknown		probably outside realm
Guangxing 廣興	marquis	< 289	Jingzhou Ancheng	unknown		unknown

Tab. 12 Prefecture Lordships Created during Reign of Emperor Wudi (266-289)

fief	first Jin fief holder	year of creation	fief location	family choronym	choronym location	relationship between fief and family place of origin
Jingling 京陵	Wang Hun 王渾	266	Bingzhou Tiayuan	Taiyuan Jinyang	Bingzhou	neighboring prefectures in one commandery
Changguo 昌國	Ren Kai 任愷	266	Qingzhou Qi	Le'an Bochang	Qingzhou	nighboring commanderies in one province
Xue 薛縣	Wu Gai 武陔	266	Yanzhou Luguo	Peiguo Zhuyi	Yuzhou	neighboring commanderies in two provinces
Guangwu 廣武	Zhang Hua 張華	280	Bingzhou Yanmen	Fanyang Fancheng	Youzhou	none
Shangyong 上庸	Tang Bin 唐彬	280	Jingzhou	Luguo Zou	Yanzhou	none
Xiangyang 襄陽	Wang Jun 王濬	280	Jingzhou	Hongnong Hu	Sizhou	outside Sizhou
Dangyang 當陽	Du Yu 杜預	280	Jingzhou Nanjun	Jingzhao Duling	Yongzhou	none
Jiangling 江陵	Wang XY 王氏	280	Jingzhou Nanjun	Taiyuan Jinyang	Bingzhou	none
Wudang 武當	Teng Xiu/You 滕脩	280	Jingzhou Nanxiang	Nanyang Xi'e	Jingzhou	neighboring commanderies in one province
Anyang 安陽	Shi Chong 石崇	280	Sizhou Weijun	Bohai Nanpi	Jizhou	none
Wanling 宛陵	Tao Huang 陶璜	280	Yangzhou Xuancheng	Danyang Moling	Yangzhou	neighboring commanderies in one province
Anfeng 安豐	Wang Rong 王戎	280	Yuzhou	Langye Linyi	Xuzhou	none
Chengwu 成武	Zhou Jun 周浚	280	Yuzhou Jiyin	Runan Ancheng	Yuzhou	commanderies of the same province, yet quite far apart

Tab. 13 Peerages Created during Reign of Emperor Huidi (290-306)

fief	rank	year of creation	fief location	family choronym	choronym location	realtionship between fief and place of family origin
Guanyang 觀陽	duke	290 (266)	Jingzhou Lingling	Pingyuan Gaotang	Jizhou	none
Chang'an 昌安	maquis	290	Qingzhou Chengyang	Leling Yanci	Jizhou	none

Xunyang 循陽	maquis	290	unknown	Pingyuan Gaotang	Jizhou	unknown
Shanggu 上谷	duke	291	Youzhou	Bohai Dongguang	Jizhou	none
Lingchuan/Lingzhou 靈川/靈州	duke	291	unknown	Beidi Niyang	Sizhou	Lingchuan was native place of one of Fu Zhi's ancestors
Shandu 山都	duke	291	Jingzhou Xiangyang	Donghai Tan	Xuzhou	none
Chengyang 成陽	viscount	291	Yanzhou Jiyin	Jiyin Yuanju	Yanzhou	neighboring prefectures within one commandery
Zhuangwu 壯武	duke	291-300	Qingzhou Chengyang	Fanyang Fangcheng	Youzhou	none
Anzhong 安眾	baron	300	Jingzhou Nanyang	Nanyang	Jingzhou	two prefectures in the same commandery
Guangling 廣陵	duke	300	Xuzhou	Yingchuan Xuchang	Yuzhou	none
Yiyang 弋陽	viscount	300	Yuzhou	Qiaoguo Zhi	Yuzhou	two commanderies of the same province, not neighboring
Lanling 蘭陵	duke	300?	Xuzhou Donghai	Hedong Anyi	Sizhou	outside Sizhou
Xingjin 興晉	maquis	300 >	Jingzhou Weixing	Taishan Nancheng	Yanzhou	none
Chengyang 成陽	duke	301 (291)	Yanzhou Jiyin	Jiyin Yuanju	Yanzhou	neighboring prefectures within one commandery
Anchang 安昌	duke	301	Jingzhou Yiyang	Xingyang Zhongmou	Sizhou	outside Sizhou
Pingshou 平壽	duke	301	Qingzhou Peihai	Xingyang Kaifeng	Sizhou	outside Sizhou
Anxiang 安鄉	duke	301	Jizhou Julu	unknown		unknown
Fengqiu 封丘	duke	301	Yanzhou Chenliu	unknown		unknown
Mouping 牟平	duke	301	Qingzhou Donglai	unknown		unknown
Pingyin 平陰	duke	301	Yanzhou Jibei	unknown		unknown
Xiaohuang 小黃	duke	301	Yuzhou Chenliu	unknown		unknown
Wuqiang 武強	maquis	301 >	Jizhou Anping	Fanyang Fangcheng	Youzhou	none
Jiaxing 嘉興	count	302	Yangzhou Wujun	Wuguo Wu	Yangzhou	neighboring prefectures within one commandery
Yinping 陰平	baron	302	Qinzhou Yinping	Taishan Fenggao	Yanzhou	none
Xihua 西華	duke	302	Yuzhou Yingchuan	Yingchuan Linying	Yuzhou	neighboring prefectures within one commandery

Liaoxi 遼西	duke	302	Youzhou	unknown		probably outside realm
Zhuxu 朱虛	duke	303	Xuzhou Dongguan	Donglai Ye	Qingzhou	commanderies of neighboring provinces, not far distant
Xingjin 興晉	duke	< 304	Jingzhou Weixing	Taishan Nancheng	Yanzhou	none
Xuancheng 宣城	duke	< 305	Yangzhou	Peiguo Xiang	Yuzhou	none
Yanling 延陵	duke	< 306	Yangzhou Piling	Chenliu Yucheng	Yanzhou	none
Chengyang 成陽	baron	300-306	Yanzhou Jiyin	Yingchuan Linying	Yuzhou	none
Daling 大陵	duke	306	Bingzhou Taiyuan	Taiyuan Qi	Bingzhou	in the same commandery
Jiangxia 江夏	duke	306	Jingzhou	Hedong Anyi	Sizhou	outside Sizhou
Moling 秣陵	maquis	306	Yangzhou Danyang	Guangling	Xuzhou	none
Nanxiang 南鄉	maquis	306	Jingzhou	Langye Linyi	Xuzhou	none
Yiyang 弋陽	maquis	306	Yuzhou	Qiaoguo Zhi	Yuzhou	two prefectures in the same commandery
Linxiang 臨湘	duke	306	Jingzhou Changsha	Wujun Wu	Yangzhou	ruling line of Wu

Tab. 14 Prefecture Lordships Created during Reign of Emperor Huidi (289-306)

fief	first Jin fief holder	year of creation	fief location	family choronym	choronym location	relationship between fief and family place of origin
Chang'an 昌安	Shi Jian 石鑿	290	Qingzhou Chengyang	Leling Yanci	Jizhou	none
Fenggao 奉高	Ma Long 馬隆	290	Yanzhou Taishan	Dongping Pinglu	Yanzhou	commanderies of the same province
Wuchang 武昌	Pei Gai 裴該	291	Jingzhou	Hedong Wenxi	Sizhou	outside Sizhou
Xicheng 西城	He Pan 何攀	291	Jingzhou Weixing	Shujun Pi	Yizhou	none
Guanjun 冠軍	Guo Zhang 郭彰	291-299	Jingzhou Nanyang	Taiyuan Yangqu	Bingzhou	none
Linhai 臨海	Pei Kai 裴楷	291-299	Yangzhou	Hedong Wenxi	Sizhou	outside Sizhou
Minyang 敏陽	Wang Yu 王聿	297>	unknown	Taiyuan Jinyang	Bingzhou	unknown
Liangzou 梁鄒	Liu Song 劉頌	301	Yongzhou Jingzhao	Guangling	Xuzhou	none

Jinxing 晉興	Sun Hui 孫惠	301	unknown	Wujun Wu	Yangzhou	unknown
Guangwu 廣武	Liu Kun 劉琨	306	Bingzhou Yanmen	Zhongshan Weichang	Jizhou	none
Wuling 武陵	Wang Yi 王廙	306	Jingzhou	Langye Linyi	Xuzhou	none
Lantian 藍田	Wang Cheng 王承	306	Yongzhou Jingzhao	Taiyuan Jinyang	Bingzhou	none

Tab. 15 Peerages Created during Reigns of Emperors Huaidi and Mindi and regency of Sima Rui (307-317)

fief	rank	year of creation	fief location	family choronym	choronym location	relationship between fief and place of family origin
Wuling 武陵	marquis	306-311	Jingzhou	Langye Linyi	Xuzhou	none, created but never accepted
Xincheng 新城	duke	306-311	Jingzhou	Peiguo Xiang	Yuzhou	none
Jiuquan 酒泉	duke	307-313	Liangzhou 涼	Wuwei Guzang	Liangzhou 涼	commanderies in the same province
Bacheng 霸城	marquis	310-312	Yongzhou Jingzhao	Anding Wushi	Yongzhou	commanderies in one province
Dongping 東平	duke	311 (306)	Yuzhou	Henei Shanyang	Sizhou	outside Sizhou
Dingxiang 定襄	marquis	< 311	Bingzhou Xinxing	Zhongshan Weichang	Jizhou	none
Wuyang 舞陽	duke	312 >	Yuzhou Xiangcheng	Yingchuan Linying	Yuzhou	neighboring commanderies in one province
Yiju 弋居	count	313	unknown	Dunhuang	Liangzhou 涼	unknown
Yuanling 苑陵	duke	313	Sizhou Xingyang	Pingyuan Gaotang	Sizhou	outside Sizhou
Linying 臨潁	duke	313	Yuzhou Yingchuan	Yingchuan Linying	Yuzhou	the same prefecture and commandery
Shangluo 上洛	duke	313-316	Sizhou	Dunhuang	Liangzhou 涼	none
Wucheng 烏程	duke	313-316	Yangzhou Wuxing	Yixing Yangxian	Yangzhou	neighboring prefectures within one commandery
Quling 曲陵	duke	313-316	Jingzhou Jiangxia	Yingchuan Linying	Yuzhou	none
Xiping 西平	duke	314	Yuzhou Runan	Anding Wushi	Yongzhou	none
Changcen 長岑	baron	< 316	Pingzhou Daifang	Yingchuan Yanling	Yuzhou	none

Jiaxing 嘉興	duke	316 (302)	Yangzhou Wujun	Wuguo Wu	Yangzhou	neighboring prefectures in one province
Han'an 漢安	marquis	316	Yizhou Jiangyang	Langye Linyi	Xuzhou	none
Sheyang 射陽	duke	316 >	Xuzhou Guangling	Yingchuan Linying	Yuzhou	none
Guangrao 廣饒	marquis	< 317	unknown	Qi	Qingzhou	unknown
Wugang 武岡	marquis	< 317	Jingzhou Shaoling	Langye Linyi	Xuzhou	none
Yongning 永寧	count	< 317	Ningzhou Yunnan	Runan Ancheng	Yuzhou	none
Bohai 渤海	duke	< 317	Jizhou	unknown		probably outside realm
Guangning 廣甯	duke	< 317	Youzhou	unknown		probably outside realm
Zhu'a 祝阿	viscount	< 317	Qingzhou Jinan	unknown		unknown

Tab. 16 Prefecture Lordships Created during Reigns of Emperor Huaidi and Mindi and regency of Sima Rui (307-317)

fief	first Jin fief holder	year of creation	fief location	family choronym	choronym location	relationship between fief and family place of origin
Wucheng 烏程	Zhou Qi 周玘	<313	Yangzhou Wuxing	Yixing Yangxian	Yangzhou	prefectures of the same commandery
Fulu 福祿	Zhang Shi 張寔	312-316	Liangzhou Jiuquan	Anding Wushi	Yongzhou	neighboring provinces, Fulu was under control of the Zhangs
Xiu/Youwu 脩武	Li Ju 李矩	312-316	Sizhou Jijun	Pingyang	Sizhou	neighboring commanderies in one province
Yangwu 陽武	Li Ju 李矩	312-316	Sizhou Xingyang	Pingyang	Sizhou	neighboring commanderies in one province
Chaisang 柴桑	Tao Kan 陶侃	316 >	Jingzhou Wuchang	Lujiang Xunyang	Yangzhou	neighboring commanderies of two provinces
Ping'a 平阿	Zhao You 趙誘	<317	Yangzhou Huainan	Huainan	Yangzhou	prefectures of the same commandery
Xunyang 尋陽	Zhou Fang 周訪	<317	Yangzhou Lujiang	Runan Ancheng	Yuzhou	none
Pingyang 平陽	Li Ju 李矩	317	Sizhou Pingyang	Pingyang	Sizhou	same prefecture of the same commandery

Even though the ancestral family home ceased to be the actual place of residence of the main branch of the family, the officials at court still maintained close contact with their home localities and relatives who may have continued to live there. The mutual ties remained strong with the local family base supposedly supplying economically the family members living in the capital. The families often managed to retain traditional influence as the main pivot of the local social network and the family ties and patron-client relationship with the members of local community constituted a vital link between the central administration and lowest level of the local society already since the end of the Han.²⁰⁰ The authority of the central government on the local level often depended on the influence of the local prominent families and could be implemented only through their mediation. Therefore, awarding fief in or near one's home territory could have reflected the position of the family within the local society acknowledging on symbolical level its preeminent influence over the locality and its population and probably also conferring additional symbolic power. Even though the bestowal of the fief did not entail any jurisdictional rights, there was at least formal connection between the title, the territory used in the appellation and people living within its boundaries. Bestowal of the noble title thus perhaps confirmed the standing of the family within its ancestral home territory and confirmation by the highest authority without doubt strengthened their position vis-à-vis all possible rivals. Such an arrangement allowed the central government to integrate these families into wider hierarchy of the empire making them partly responsible for its well-being and survival. At the same time it also enabled the court to maintain the vital link between the centre and the local community which secured its control over the locality.

It is not entirely clear when the practice of awarding fief in correspondence to the ancestral home of the family emerged or what the origins were. It might have been a distant echo of the Zhou enfeoffment system even though the Zhou princes were actually first enfeoffed and then sent to their fiefs which subsequently became their place of residence and home of their offspring and not the other way round as was the case of later noble families. Unfortunately the contemporary sources are not of much help as the explicit mentions of the fief – ancestral home connection are extremely rare. Even circumstantial mentions are fairly vague, not going into any particular details:

²⁰⁰ For the emergence of the local prominent families during the Eastern Han see Cui Xiangdong (2004): pp. 227-254; for their further development see Mao Hanguang (1990): pp. 73-80 and also (1966): pp. 48-66; for the case study of the Boling Cui 博陵崔氏 family and their connection to local community see Ebrey, Patricia B. (1978): pp. 35-49.

“For the merit [achieved during] chastisement of Yang Jun [Fu Zhi] should have been enfeoffed as a commandery duke with [apanage] of eight thousand households, but he firmly declined [to accept it. Then, the apanage] was reduced by half and he was enfeoffed [with a title one grade] lower as prefecture duke of Lingchuan with [apanage] of one thousand eight hundred households. The remaining two thousand two hundred households [became the apanage] of his younger son [Fu] Chang who was enfeoffed as village lord of Wuxiang. Moreover, Fu Zhi’s original title of [the lord of the royal domain] was bestowed upon [Fu] Jun, son of [Fu Zhi’s] elder brother, who became village lord of Dongming.”²⁰¹

Fu Zhi 傅祗 was member of an ancient lineage of Han and Wei court officials. His relatives supported the ambitions of the Simas and were duly rewarded with titles and honors once the dynasty was established. Fu Zhi belonged to a collateral branch the merit of which was apparently not so high as he had been given just *guanneihou* lordship. Only after the palace coup of 291 AD when the Empress Jia 賈皇后 got rid of self-appointed regent Yang Jun 楊駿, was Fu Zhi awarded a ducal dignity. The appellation of Lingchuan 靈川 is, however, scribal error for Lingzhou 靈州 which, according to the *History of the Later Han (Hou Han shu 後漢書)* corresponds to the ancestral home of Fu Zhi’s family.²⁰² Therefore, the appellation of the newly created peerage dignity was clearly chosen according to the place of origin of the Fu family.²⁰³ Moreover, the village lordship of Wuxiang 武鄉亭侯 bestowed by the act of special grace on Fu Zhi’s younger son was in fact kind of recreation of older title used by the family during the Wei, as it was first created after the accession of Duke of Gaogui in 254 AD for Fu Zhi’s father Fu Jia 傅嘏. Practice of recreation of older titles used during previous dynasties was not uncommon and probably stems from the same concern for symbolic continuity of family traditions and local influence which was also at play in selecting fiefs within or near the ancestral home area of the family. Indeed, both practices were sometimes interconnected as is the case of the Jin barony of Anzhong created at the beginning of the 4th century:

²⁰¹ *Jinshu* juan 47, *Fu Zhi zhuan*, p. 1331.

²⁰² *Jinshu* juan 47, note 7, p. 1334.

²⁰³ Unfortunately I was not able to locate Lingzhou and compare its location with the family choronym (Beidi Niyang 北地泥陽). But whatever the connection between the fief and the choronym, Lingzhou was clearly a place where Fu Zhi’s ancestors resided at some point.

“Liu Qiao, whose honorary style was Zhongyan, hailed from Nanyang. His ancestors were members of the Han imperial family and were enfeoffed as marquises of Anzhong. This title was inherited for three generations. [Liu Qiao’s] grandfather Liu Yi served as Palace Attendant (*shizhong* 侍中) under the Wei. His father Liu Fu was Administrator (*xiang* 相) of the Chenliu [princely fief]. As a young man Liu Qiao was appointed Assistant in the Palace Library (*bishulang* 祕書郎) and General Establishing Authority (*jianwei jiangjun* 建威將軍) Wang Rong drafted him as his Adjutant (*canjun* 參軍). During the campaign against Wu Wang Rong had sent Liu Qiao together with Adjutant Luo Shang across the Jiang River, where they captured Wuchang. When he returned, he was given the post of the Magistrate (*ling* 令) of Xingyang. [Later on] he was promoted to Frontrider of the Crown Prince (*taizi xima* 太子洗馬). For merit of [assisting] the execution of Yang Jun, the title of lord within the passes (*guanzhonghou* 關中侯) was bestowed on him and Liu Qiao was appointed Right Aide to the Imperial Secretary (*shangshu youcheng* 尚書右丞). After participating in the execution of Jia Mi he was enfeoffed as Baron of Anzhong and later on promoted to the position of Cavalier Attendant-in-ordinary (*sanji changshi* 散騎常侍).”²⁰⁴

It is clear that the fief selected for this new baronial peerage was no random choice. One of Liu Qiao’s 劉喬 ancestors was enfeoffed, most likely as a younger son of a Han prince, as Marquis of Anzhong 安眾侯. Having been created a royal marquis, he had to depart the capital or paternal fief and settle down in his own domain accompanied by his immediate family. Generations of his descendants continued to reside in the locality which was part of Nanyang 南陽 commandery, so that Nanyang gradually became their choronym. The creation of barony of Anzhong on the one hand referred to unquestionably noble descent of the family through resurrection of an ancient Han title which the family used to hold. At the same time, the government clearly fulfilled the ideal of selecting fief close to ancestral home of a family by choosing Anzhong of all possible locations, a prefecture within the home commandery of the Lius where the family had lived for couple of centuries. Thus both factors contributed to the final decision and it is rather hard to determine which one was more prominent.

Nevertheless, it seems that the Jin did not invent this practice and as in case of other imperial institutions they were only following more or less established procedures known and

²⁰⁴ *Jinshu* juan 61, *Liu Qiao zhuan*, p. 1672-1673.

practiced under their predecessors.²⁰⁵ There is plenty of evidence that similar practice guided the process of fief selection at least under the Cao Wei if not already during the Han. The good example may be the Yingchuan Chen 潁川陳氏 family whose ancestral home lay in Xuchang 許昌 prefecture of Yingchuan commandery in Yuzhou. During the reigns of Wei emperors Wendi 魏文帝 (220-227AD) and Mingdi 魏明帝 (227-240 AD) a member of the family acquired first title of the township lord of Yingxiang 潁鄉侯 and later the marquise of Yingyin 潁陰侯. Both appellations referred to localities within Yingchuan commandery close to the home territory of the Chen family.²⁰⁶

Whatever the origins of this practice, it is obvious from tables above that the ideal of conferring fief near the ancestral home of the noble family played an important role in the process of selection of suitable locality alongside wider economical and geopolitical concerns. I would argue that at least during the reign of Emperor Wudi the place of family origin was the most important consideration in determining the location of the new fief with other concerns playing secondary role, coming into play only if the ancestral home territory was for some reason unable to meet all the requirements regarding number of households and size of the territory or happened to be within the imperial domain.

Following the death of emperor Wudi, more and more fiefs were created in open disregard of the rules set at the beginning of the dynasty. New peerages were created for members of non-royal families with the whole process being accelerated by rivalry of hostile court factions which uniformly used noble dignities as means how to strengthen their positions and widen the ranks of their followers. Owing to rising number of existing peerage and lordship dignities it was increasingly difficult to meet all requirements and the fiefs were increasingly chosen irrespective of the ancestral home of the particular family. The reasons for this change are self-evident. The number of households in a given locality which might have been turned into apanage households was not infinite and there were simply not enough households to satisfy the quotas of ever rising number of fiefs. As the population of home area and neighboring administrative units was already divided between existing fiefs the court had to locate the territories allotted to the new dignities elsewhere. The government might have also tried to prevent unwanted concentration of the fiefs in particular province or area and maintain certain balance between the fiefs and other regular administrative units.

²⁰⁵ As any detailed research of all known fiefs granted under the Wei and the Han would be out of scope of this thesis, we cannot be sure when exactly the practice of locating fief near the ancestral home of the family emerged.

²⁰⁶ For the Yingchuan Chen family see *Sanguozhi* juan 22, pp. 472-478; for bestowal of both dignities see *Chen Qun zhuan*, p. 473.

During the reign of Emperor Huidi the number of fiefs conferred near the family's ancestor home sharply decreased. The four fiefs of Sizhou families and six fiefs of unknown location taken aside, only ten fiefs were situated in close proximity to the family place of origin while fifteen peerages, almost half of the total number, were situated elsewhere. And the same trend continues during the last phase of the dynasty with only six fiefs out of twenty two having been conferred close to the ancestral home and eleven which were demonstrably located somewhere else. If Huidi may have actually tried to keep to well-established practice the economic and maybe even political concerns compelled the later rulers to revise the process of fief allocation with the result that the fiefs located near the ancestral home of a family became rather exceptional. This assumption holds true especially for the peerage dignities as the rules governing their bestowal were more demanding in respect of suitable territory with enough tax-paying households. Results of comparison of prefecture lordships created during the reign of Huidi and his successors are not so conclusive. While only one prefecture lordship conferred by Huidi was somehow connected to the ancestral home of the family against seven which were clearly situated elsewhere, the ratio is quite reversed during the last phase of the Jin with six lordship fiefs corresponding to the choronyms of the title holders and only one having been located somewhere else.

It seems that the tradition of fief – ancestral home correspondence was to a certain degree maintained even under the Eastern Jin, even though its implementation must have been even harder, as the constrained geographical situation of the southern regime did not provide enough place for maneuvering. The main reason preventing the resurrection of this ideal, however, was the fact that the majority of influential court families whose members stood good chance of entering ranks of the titled nobility were émigré families which had fled their ancestral homes in the north seeking new life in Jiangnan. As the Central Plain came under the sway of various non-Han regimes and the original family bases were lost, the southern court was obliged to provide its titled nobility with alternative sources of income drawn from new fiefs located within the territory south of the Yangzi.

After discussing the connection between the fief territory and the ancestral home area we should once again reconsider the overall distribution of the fiefs within the empire. Low number of fiefs situated in border provinces is explicable by more than just one reason. The military and security concerns might have played some role as it was in ruler's interest to maintain control over these strategic regions. Creating potentially unstable fief which might have collaborated with the enemy across the border would endanger the security of the border zone. Yet, in view of the fact that the fiefs were in most cases only nominal with their holders

residing permanently in the capital, they didn't have an opportunity to evolve into semi-independent entity threatening the centre. Therefore I would argue that the overall distribution of the fiefs reflects economic possibilities of the provinces and above all the distribution of the influential court families and their places of origin as the practice of bestowing fiefs close to their ancestral home was clearly the main factor determining the location of the allotted fief, at least during Wudi's reign. Low number of fiefs in peripheral regions thus simply attests to relative unimportance of the local families which could not rival the court families of some consequence, the majority of which hailed from economically well developed core region of Central Plain and the imperial domain around the traditional seat of power.

The same considerations of economic prosperity and practicability of fief allocation with regard to the place of origin of the recipient family were behind unusual and rather confusing practice of conferring noble dignities with the same appellation simultaneously to two or even more different families. The contemporary sources attest that there were sometimes two or perhaps even more noble lineages existing side by side using the same appellation, albeit usually with different noble rank, and yet, they were neither challenging position of one another, nor vying for the claims over the particular territory. This situation was possible only due to the peculiar nature of the ennoblement system. Bestowal of a noble dignity did not entail any territorial rights, as there was no direct connection between the appellation and jurisdiction over the territory in question. The grant of noble title simply entitled its recipient to receive annually portion of a tax-levies collected from certain number of households presumably residing within the area used in the title appellation. We have already seen that these apanages tended to be smaller than the total number of households living within the boundaries of the administrative units and prosperous and populous areas were therefore able to provide sufficient number of households to fill the apanage quotas of more than just one noble dignity. The ability of a given administrative unit to accommodate apanages allotted to noble dignities depended, at least theoretically, solely on its area and size of its population.

We cannot rule out that some of the cases of parallel use of the same noble appellation were actually second creations of the title, that is titles newly conferred on a different family after the lineage of previous title holders had died out. Nevertheless it is hard to determine whether the title in question was actually used simultaneously by two different families or simply reappeared again, utilized in an act of new creation after the family of the original holders had become extinct. First of all, it is not always clear when the respective dignities were actually created. Precise dating is often lacking, being narrowed down only to imperial

eras or the reigns of respective emperors. The exact year of creation is therefore to be estimated from sequence of events described by the *Jinshu* and other sources. And even in the cases when we are lucky enough to know the exact year of creation, it is almost impossible to determine the time of the final demise of a noble line. We may know some details from life and career of a founder of family's fortune, but our knowledge of the generations of his successors who inherited the noble dignity is limited, to put it mildly, as the sources did not record much more apart from their existence.

Out of ten cases when the same appellation was used in titles of more than one noble family,²⁰⁷ the circumstances of only two, Liangzou 梁鄒 and Yinping 陰平, seem to suggest that these may have been used for second creations after the original title had become extinct. Liangzou was first used as an appellation of a peerage marquissate bestowed on Xie Xiu 解脩 following the establishment of the Jin Dynasty. This dignity was later inherited by his son Xie Xi 解系 who unfortunately got into conflict with Sima Lun, Prince of Zhao 趙王司馬倫, was slandered and subsequently deprived of his offices and apparently even his peerage dignity. In 300 AD, when Prince of Zhao staged a palace coup which ended the political hegemony of Empress Jia and her family, he did not forget his old adversary and had Xie Xi executed together with his whole family. Even though Xie Xi was posthumously rehabilitated two years later as a hapless victim of the vengeful usurper, his family had been exterminated and there was no one who could continue the family line and revive the noble title.²⁰⁸ However, during his short tenure as regent and hegemon the Prince of Zhao managed to use the appellation of Liangzou in conferring new noble dignity of his own. In 301 AD Liu Song 劉頌 was posthumously ennobled as prefecture lord of Liangzou in lieu of merit he had achieved in bringing down the Jia family. The new title was immediately inherited by Liu Song's heir who became second Lord of Liangzou.²⁰⁹ Thus, we are justified to assume that the first creation, marquissate of Liangzou, ceased to exist before 300 AD and its later reappearance as a prefecture lordship is to be viewed as the second creation of the title.

The case of Yinping is similar. It was first created as a peerage marquissate following the Wudi's ascending the imperial throne in 266 AD for Lu Zhi 魯芝, a trusted and loyal

²⁰⁷ These were: Anle 安樂, Anling 安陵, Anyang 安陽, Dongming 東明, Chengyang 成陽, Liangzou 梁鄒, Linhai 臨海, Wuling 武陵, Xincheng 新城 and Yinping 陰平. For details of creations and noble lines see corresponding entries in the Appendix.

²⁰⁸ For marquissate of Liangzou and its holders see biography of the Xies: *Jinshu* juan 60, *Xie Xi zhuan*, pp. 1631-1633.

²⁰⁹ For prefecture lordship of Liangzou and its holders see biography of Liu Song: *Jinshu* juan 46, *Liu Song zhuan*, pp. 1293-1309, especially 1308-1309.

follower of the Sima cause. The Marquis of Yinping, however, died already in 273 AD and contemporary sources do not record continuation of his family line.²¹⁰ Even though we can never be sure we may presume that the original peerage dignity became extinct and was later revived in 302 AD when it was conferred on Huwu Fuzhi 胡毋輔之, this time as a peerage barony.²¹¹

On the other hand, the parallel usage of the same appellation for two unrelated noble lines is also confirmed by the sources. In case of Chengyang 成陽 the first noble title using it as its appellation was created as a viscountcy for Bian Cui 卞粹 shortly after the death of Wudi. In 301 AD Bian Cui was promoted to the ducal dignity only to end his life on the scaffold two years later during the Upheaval of the Eight Princes. His son Bian Hu 卞壺 subsequently inherited his father's title and became the second Duke of Chengyang. He used this title until the beginning of the Eastern Jin, when Emperor Yuandi bestowed on him new peerage dignity of prefecture duke of Jianxing 建興縣公.²¹² While the ducal title was used continuously from 301 until at least 317 AD, a new barony of Chengyang was created approximately in 304 AD for Xun Zu 荀組 who was promoted at the beginning of the Jianxing era (313-316 AD) as imperial *waiqi* and enfeoffed as prefecture duke of Linying 臨潁縣公.²¹³ Thus there were two peerage lines, one ducal and one baronial, with their apanage located in Chengyang verifiably existing side by side for some ten years.

Another example is Linhai 臨海 which was first conferred as a peerage marquissate on Houshi Guang 侯史光 probably in 266 AD. The title was later inherited by Guang's son and grandson and even though we do not know any exact dates regarding their life, we may reasonably presume that the noble lineage survived at least till the beginning of the 4th century. The second noble dignity with appellation of Linhai emerged shortly before 291 AD, when a prefecture lordship of Linhai was conferred on Pei Kai 裴楷 together with an apanage of two thousand households to be later passed on his son and possibly other descendants.²¹⁴ Sometimes, the noble dignities using the same appellation might have even been created at the same time as was the case of Anyang 安陽. In 280 AD, after the accomplishment of the unification process the emperor rewarded his officers and commanders who had been

²¹⁰ For Lu Zhi and marquissate of Yinping see his biography: *Jinshu* juan 90, *Liangli zhuan*, *Lu Zhi zhuan*, pp. 2328-2329.

²¹¹ For Huwu Fuzhi and barony of Yinping see his biography: *Jinshu* juan 49, *Huwu Fuzhi zhuan*, pp. 1379-1280.

²¹² For Bian family and their titles see biography of Bian Hu: *Jinshu* juan 70, *Bian Hu zhuan*, pp. 1866-1873.

²¹³ For Xun Zu and barony of Chengyang see his biography: *Jinshu* juan 39, *Xun Zu zhuan*, pp. 1159-1160.

²¹⁴ For prefecture lordship of Linhai see biography of Pei Kai: *Jinshu* juan 35, *Pei Kai zhuan*, pp. 1047-1050.

instrumental in bringing about the final victory over the southern state of Wu by mass creation of lordship dignities. Anyang tax-paying households were allocated to two separate lordship dignities. The prefecture lordship of Anyang was conferred on Shi Chong 石崇 and became extinct after his execution in 301 AD.²¹⁵ The village lordship of Anyang was bestowed on Han Gai 韓蓋, a grandson of the great minister Jia Chong. As the Jia family and their relatives did not survive coup of the Prince of Zhao, this lordship dignity probably became extinct in 301 AD as well.²¹⁶ The practice of creating different noble dignities with the same appellation is well attested even for the subsequent period of the Eastern Jin. For example in 329 AD Emperor Chengdi 成帝 (326-343 AD) created viscountcy of Fengcheng 豐城 as well as prefecture lordship of Fengcheng for two of his commanders who had helped to put down rebellion of Su Jun 蘇峻.²¹⁷

The possibility of two distinct noble dignities sharing the same territorial appellation demonstrates yet again peculiar nature of relationship between the noble title and its fief. Despite their appellations the titles were not so much connected with the territory mentioned in the appellation as with precisely defined apanages reflecting the rank of the noble dignity as well as family origin and larger factors of economy and demography. As we have already seen in some cases the title appellation and the location of the actual apanage did not correspond to each other at all. The high peerage dignities created for members of the Wu ruling family who had defected to the Jin cause referred in their appellations to territories out of control of the Jin court. Such a bestowal was tantamount to laying symbolic claim over territories of the enemy and these political ends were clearly more important than usual need for following the tradition in choosing appellation which would have corresponded with the allotted apanage. Yet these noble dignities were probably an exception as majority of the conferred titles corresponded somehow to the fief locations. The exact nature of this correspondence is, however, hard to determine, for the available sources hardly ever provide direct and unequivocal links between the titles and particular territories, inhabitants of which were allotted as their apanage. Presumably, the exact location of the apanage was specified in the imperial edict by which the noble dignity in question was created, not unlike the number of allotted households, as is indicated by the following passage from the *Jinshu*:

²¹⁵ For prefecture lordship of Anyang see biography of Shi Chong: *Jinshu* juan 33, *Shi Chong zhuan*, pp1004-1008.

²¹⁶ For Han Gai see biography of Jia Chong: *Jinshu* juan 40, *Jia Chong zhuan*, p. 1170.

²¹⁷ The viscountcy of Fengcheng was created for Liu Yin 劉胤, see *Jinshu* juan 81, *Liu Yin zhuan*, pp. 2113-2114; the prefecture lordship of Fengcheng was granted to an imperial relative Yang Jian 羊鑿, see his biography: *Jinshu* juan 81, *Yang Jian zhuan*, pp. 2112-2113.

“[Pei] Xiu devised the five ranks peerages and more than six hundred persons were enfeoffed starting with [the offices of] the Cavalry Commanders (*jidu* 騎督) and higher. [Pei] Xiu himself was enfeoffed as a Marquis of Jichuan with territory of sixty miles and an apanage of one thousand four hundred households. The prefecture of Gaoyuan and the wilderness of Jichuan became [his] marquisate.”²¹⁸

Even though the actual ennoblement occurred in 264 AD, i.e. technically speaking before the founding of the dynasty, the creation of the Jichuan marquisate was a part of establishment of the five ranks peerages which in many respects prefigured the form and usage of the Jin ennoblement system. It is obvious that the fief corresponded to the appellation used in the title, yet the correspondence was only partial as there was additional territory of or within Gaoyuan prefecture assigned to form the apanage of the new peerage dignity beside the eponymous locale of Jichuan. This is also the case of the only explicit mention of a peerage fief location dating back to the Western Jin period:

“When the five [peerage] ranks were [first] established [Yang Hu] was enfeoffed as Viscount of Juping with apanage of six hundred households ... When Emperor [Wudi] accepted the [Wei] abdication, [Yang Hu] was promoted due to the merit of assisting [in establishing] the mandate to the position of General of the Capital Army (*zhongjun jiangjun* 中軍將軍) and Additional Cavalier Attendant-in-ordinary (*jia sanji changshi* 加散騎常侍). His enfeoffment was changed to that of a commandery duke with apanage of three thousand households, but [Yang Hu] firmly declined the enfeoffment and did not accept it. Then his current noble dignity was raised to that of a marquis, the office of Marquisate Chamberlain (*langzhongling* 郎中令) established together with position of nine offices [which formed the marquisate staff]. Yang Hu’s wife was given seal and ribbon of a [marquial] Spouse (*furen* 夫人) ... Later, the imperial edict ordered that five prefectures of Taishan [commandery], Nan Wuyang, Mou, Nancheng, Liangfu and Pingyang, were to become a new commandery of Nancheng. [Yang] Hu was then enfeoffed as Marquis of Nancheng. The post of Administrator (*xiang* 相) was established [to lead the fief administration] as was the case with commandery duke. Yang Hu declined [to accept the enfeoffment]: “In the past Zhang Liang asked for permission to accept ten thousand households of Liu and the Han Founder did not force him to change his decision. Your subject accepted Juping from the previous emperor, how could I ever dare to disgrace [myself by accepting] high noble title and invite slander for being incompetent and undeserving [of such

²¹⁸ *Jinshu* juan 35, *Pei Xiu zhuan*, p. 1038.

honor].” He stood firmly his ground and did not accept. The emperor [at last] gave his consent.”²¹⁹

Apart from interesting details concerning the administrative structure of the peerage fief the above quotation offers unique example of exact delineation of the prospective fief. The fact that the fief was not accepted and therefore never actually existed in this form is immaterial to the questions concerning practice of fief demarcation and fief – appellation correspondence. In this case the new administrative unit, Nancheng commandery 南城郡 was to be created especially out of five neighboring prefectures of an already existing commandery to become territory of the new fief and its name was used as the appellation of the marquisate. Yet again, the original Nancheng prefecture was but one of five prefectures forming larger administrative unit. Sometimes the apanage could have been distributed over much larger area comprising even two commanderies as was the case of dukedom of Boling 博陵 bestowed on the Wangs of Taiyuan 太原王氏. Nevertheless, such an expansion of apanage was rather exceptional and was achieved through further loyal service with the apanage having been gradually increased in course of couple of generations:

“When Emperor [Wudi] accepted the [Wei] abdication, [Wang Shen] was promoted for his merit of assisting [in establishing] the mandate to Cavalry General (*piaoji jiangjun* 驃騎將軍), Overseer of the Department of State Affairs (*lu shangshu shi* 錄尚書事) and Additional Cavalier Attendant-in-ordianry (*jia sanji changshi* 加散騎常侍) supervising all military affairs outside the capital. He was enfeoffed as commandery duke of Boling, but he firmly declined [the enfeoffment] and did not accept it. Then his noble dignity was [at least] promoted to that of prefecture duke with apanage of one thousand eight hundred households ... [after Wang Shen’s death] his son Wang Jun inherited [the peerage] ... In the Xianning era (275-279 AD) [Wang] Shen was again posthumously promoted to commandery duke ... When Emperor Huidi returned back to Luoyang, [Wang] Jun was appointed Great Cavalry General (*da piaoji jiangjun* 大驃騎將軍), Commander-in-chief supervising all military affairs concerning Eastern barbarians north of the Yellow River, Concurrent Regional Inspector of Youzhou (*ling cishi* 領刺史) and territory of his fief was enlarged by adding Yanguo to that of Boling ... [Wang Jun was beheaded and died] without siring a son. In the second year of the Taiyuan era (377 AD) the imperial edict ordered to pick up the threads of the severed succession and revive the line which became extinct. Wang Shen’s step-grandson Wang Daosu was enfeoffed as Duke of Boling.

²¹⁹ *Jinshu* juan 34, *Yang Hu zhuan*, pp. 1014, 1019.

When he died his son Wang Chongzhi succeeded [to the title]. In the eleventh year of the Yixi era (415 AD) the enfeoffment was changed to that of commandery duke of Dongguan. When the Song Dynasty received [the Jin] abdication, the fief was abolished.²²⁰

In addition to the eponymous Boling, commandery in Jizhou, where the majority of one thousand eight hundred households representing the apanage of the ducal fief were presumable to be found, the inheritor of the dukedom was later given another commandery, Yanguo 燕國 in Youzhou. Unfortunately, as we do not know exact number of households by which the ducal apanage was increased, we are unable to determine how much of Yanguo territory, or its population to be precise, was added to the original fief. The interesting thing is that Boling and Yanguo were not neighboring commanderies which means that the apanage did not have to be concentrated in one locality and could have been dispersed over wide area, interspersed with territorial units under full control of central administration.

The Taiyuan Wang family history and fate of the dukedom of Boling raise another interesting point which should be of particular interest to us as they attest to the practice of enfeoffment change (*gaifeng* 改封) which might elucidate the complexity of the appellation-territory correspondence. In 415 AD Wang Chongzhi 王崇之, the fourth Duke of Boling, was proclaimed first Duke of Dongguan 東莞. It was not a promotion as both ducal dignities were of the same rank and presumably entitled their holder to an apanage of the same size. Nor was it mere change of the fief territory or the households which constituted its apanage. The original title was abolished and replaced by a new peerage dignity created in an act of enfeoffment change. It would appear that because commanderies of Boling and Yanguo, the original apanage territories belonging to the dukedom of Boling, were long lost to the rival northern regimes the court now tried to change the enfeoffment so that the new fief would be situated within the territory under its control. But that was not the case. As the dukedom of Boling had been revived already in 377 AD, its apanage must have been allotted in some alternative location already for almost four decades. The reasons behind this particular enfeoffment change are rather complex and are related to the power struggle which kept the Jiankang court occupied towards the end of the Eastern Jin Dynasty.

Liu Yu 劉裕, future founder of the Liu Song Dynasty 劉宋 (420-479 AD), was carefully orchestrating the usurpation process, gradually strengthening his power through series of military exploits and administrative changes and biding his time, waiting for the

²²⁰ *Jinshu* juan 39, *Wang Shen zhuan*, *Wang Jun zhuan*, pp. 1145, 1147, 1150.

right moment to stage an abdication ceremony which would raise him to the throne. The military campaigns against the enemy in the North led with the aim of recovering the original core territory of the Jin state in the Central Plain were to play crucial role in legitimization of Liu Yu's claim to the throne. In 410 AD Liu Yu destroyed the Xianbei state of Southern Yan 南燕 (*Nan Yan*, 398-410) and seized territory of present day northern Jiangsu and Shandong up to the Yellow River. Even though serious internal troubles in the south prevented him from immediately pursuing his victory, Liu Yu was determined to prove his worth by retaking the Central Plain and it was only matter of time before he would proceed against Luoyang.²²¹ The Taiyuan Wang's enfeoffment change was a symbolic expression of this determination. While Boling and Yanguo remained out of reach, territory of the newly created peerage of Dongguan was situated in Xuzhou, which had been reclaimed after the fall of Southern Yan. By situating apanage in fairly recently conquered Shandong Liu Yu was laying claim to this territory as an integral part of the Jin realm (and its successor regimes) and at the same time expressed strong resolve to maintain full control over the conquered areas against all odds. No apanage would have ever been situated in the territory in potential danger of being retaken by the enemy any time soon. Thus, on the symbolic level, the enfeoffment change was tantamount to public statement declaring the hold of the conquered Shandong to be permanent. At the same time it became a memento of the great achievements of Liu Yu and his success in recovering ancestral lands, tangible proof of the will of Heaven heralding to the court society the impending change of the mandate.

The practice of enfeoffment change is attested for the period of the Western Jin as well, even though the reasons for its use were motivated by practical concerns of administration rather than abstract political ends of self-promotion:

“At that time the imperial mounds were opened [and ransacked]. [Xun] Song sent his Recorder (*zhubu* 主簿) Shi Lan with an armed force to enter Luoyang and repair the imperial mounds. For this merit [Xun Song] was elevated to [the peerage dignity of] prefecture duke of Wuyang. He was promoted to Commander-in-chief (*dudu* 都督) supervising all military affairs of Jingzhou region north of the Yangzi River and he was to defend [the garrison city of] Wan as General Pacifying the South (*pingnan jiangjun* 平南將軍). His enfeoffment was changed to that of duke of Quling.”²²²

²²¹ For Liu Yu's campaign against Southern Yan see Wang Zhongluo (1998): p. 368; for his political ascendancy in general see Ibid: pp. 366-373, 378-384 and Chen Qun (2002): pp. 23-33.

²²² *Jinshu* juan 75, *Xun Song zhuan*, p. 1976.

Xun Song 荀崧 hailed from a collateral branch of the powerful Xun family of Yingchuan 潁川荀氏 and originally held minor title of township lord of Anling 安陵鄉侯 which he had inherited from his father. His promotion to the ducal dignity occurred after the fall of Luoyang in 313 AD when his distant relatives wielded authority at the court of Emperor Mindi who happened to be their nephew. It is interesting that despite the prevailing practice towards the end of the dynasty the territory of the new peerage still corresponded to the ancestral home of the family as Wuyang 舞陽 was a prefecture of Xiancheng 襄城 commandery which was neighboring on Yingchuan. However, it did not take long before Xun Song's enfeoffment was suddenly changed to that of duke of Quling 曲陵. It is possible that the enemy forces started to penetrate the area south and southeast of the fallen capital and Shi Le 石勒 and his commanders were slowly encroaching upon the home of the Xun family making their position there untenable which led to the change of enfeoffment from purely practical reasons of safety and defensibility of the fief. Yet I would argue that the key to understanding of this particular change is to be found in official promotion of Xun Song's. It is no coincidence that the enfeoffment change is mentioned right after the appointment to a regional command of Jingzhou.

It has been a long established practice of the Jin to somewhat coordinate the appointment of the imperial princes to position of regional commanders over the strategically most important regions with their enfeoffment and location of their respective fiefs. From the very beginning of the dynasty Wudi relied heavily on his close relatives and entrusted them with command of the key military regions control of which was vital to the survival of the recently established regime. In 277 AD the system of princely enfeoffment became officially interconnected with the system of regional command. The location of the princely fief was to correspond to a regional command the particular prince was entrusted with and should be situated within the territory under its jurisdiction. Such an arrangement made the position of the princely Commanders-in-chief stronger and their control over the entrusted territory more effective. It should have ensured better mobilization of all resources of the area commands which would enable the Jin to mount the war effort necessary to subdue the recalcitrant state of Wu, the mere existence of which remained a stain on legitimacy of the Luoyang court.²²³

²²³ For 277 AD creation of princely dignities and related changes of the system of area commands see Hrubý, Jakub (2007): pp. 54-57; for system of regional command under the Jin in general see Zhang Hequan (2002): pp. 15-20; for impracticality of the fief – command correspondance see Tang Changru (1983): p. 137.

Even though this practice was apparently never used for the non-royal peerages and was later even abolished as impractical following the death of Emperor Wudi, it is not implausible that it was revived in times of imminent danger when the very existence of the dynasty was threatened by mounting pressure of the Xianbei and other non-Han ethnic groups. Xun Song's enfeoffment was changed at the same time when he was appointed Commander-in-chief of Jingzhou. Whereas Wuyang was situated near his ancestral home in Yuzhou, Quling was a prefecture of Jiangxia 江夏 commandery in Jingzhou. Thus the new fief was part of the military command under his jurisdiction and moreover, it was located further south of the garrison seat in Wan 宛 in the middle reaches of the Yangzi River, far away from the battlefield and therefore safe from plundering of the raiding hordes.

Such an interpretation of this particular enfeoffment change might be corroborated by similar case of Wang Shen 王沈, Duke of Boling mentioned above.²²⁴ In or shortly after 306 AD Wang Shen was appointed Concurrent Regional Inspector of Youzhou and Commander-in-chief of important regional command with a task of defending territory north of the Yellow River against the attacks of the barbarians, i.e. the Xianbei and other non-Han ethnic groups. At that time part of the area officially under his jurisdiction was in open rebellion against the authority of the court and the rest was constantly threatened by the devastating raids of the insurgents.²²⁵ In Wang Shen's case the original enfeoffment was not changed, perhaps because Boling, being part of Jizhou, might have actually been within the area under the duke's command. But in addition to the current fief, Yanguo, the largest commandery of Youzhou was bestowed on Wang Shen in obvious effort to enhance his position as the new provincial commander. It is possible that bestowal of an additional commandery served the same purpose as the enfeoffment change in case of Quling. Both can be perceived as emergency measures giving additional authority and resources at disposal of important area commanders at the time of dire crisis. The imperial court and central government were in no position to help the governors who remained loyal to the dynasty and despite bearing the brunt of the enemy offensive maintained vigorous resistance fighting for the survival of the dynasty.

Not all the enfeoffment changes recorded by the *Jinshu* were envisaged either as special emergency means in time of need or public statements serving higher political ends. Sometimes they may have reflected purely practical concerns:

²²⁴ See quotation on page 152.

²²⁵ For Wang Jun and his position in the region see Dreyer, Edward L. (2009): p. 134 and Li Chunhao (2002): pp. 132-136.

“[Mao Muzhi] inherited the noble dignity of Marquis of Zhouling ... Because Huan Wen was enfeoffed as [Duke of] Nanjun, [Mao] Muzhi’s [fief] was transferred [and he became] Marquis of Jian’an.”²²⁶

In 356 AD Huan Wen 桓温, powerful Eastern Jin general, launched northern campaign against Yao Xiang 姚襄 during which he managed to once again secure hold over symbolically important Luoyang region with its imperial mausolea and other vestiges of the Jin imperial past. Following his victories in the field the court was compelled to take into account such an outstanding achievement and reward him accordingly.²²⁷ Therefore, in late 350s Huan Wen was enfeoffed as commandery duke of Nanjun 南郡, rich and populous commandery in Jingzhou. Unfortunately we do not know how large the awarded apanage actually was, nevertheless with regard to the import of the accomplished deed we may safely presume that the apanage grant probably encompassed the majority of tax-paying households living within commandery limits. Zhouling 州陵, the original fief of the Mao 毛 family, was apparently situated within the Nanjun commandery. However, with creation of a new ducal fief Mao Muzhi’s 毛穆之 apanage had to be moved elsewhere as there were not enough households in the area to form adequate apanages for both the dukedom and the marquissate.

Yet, the marquissate of Zhouling was not simply transferred. Clearly, such situation called for change of the whole peerage dignity, not only location of its apanage. The dignity of Zhouling was abolished and Mao Muzhi was newly enfeoffed as Marquis of Jian’an 建安 with apanage of the new dignity having been situated in Yangzhou where the demographic situation was more congenial to fulfilling the prescribed apanage quotas. This again attests to two important features of the enfeoffment system. First, the fief was not so much defined by the territory as by the households allotted as its apanage. Had there been enough state tax-paying households in Nanjun, there would have been no need to change Mao Muzhi’s enfeoffment. The parallel existence of several fiefs within the limits of the same territorial unit was quite common and their jurisdictions overlapped only seemingly. In fact, as there was no territorial jurisdiction *per se* entailed in the enfeoffment grants there was also no possibility of a conflict over territory between the fiefs sharing the same area for these were defined strictly in number of apanage households. Several prefecture fiefs could have existed

²²⁶ *Jinshu* juan 81, *Mao Muzhi zhuan*, p. 2125.

²²⁷ For Huan Wen, his career and noble titles see his biography: *Jinshu* juan 98, *Huan Wen zhuan*, pp. 2569-2580; for his northern campaigns see Wang Zhongluo (1998): pp. 333-339.

within a commandery which was itself given as a fief to a commandery duke or a prince. The dukedoms of Suiling 睢陵 and Shouguang 壽光 may provide good example of this practice. Both were created in 266 AD for meritorious ministers who had supported the Jin cause and had helped to establish the dynasty. Both were inherited for three generations and existed almost till the demise of the Western Jin being regarded as premier nobles of the realm. And yet, both apanages were in fact situated within commanderies which were given as princely fiefs to Wudi's relatives already in 266 AD. Suiling was a prefecture of Xiapi 下邳 principality, whereas Shouguang was part of domain of Le'an 樂安. Both princely lines thrived till the first half of the 4th century side by side with the ducal lineages.²²⁸ However, the dukedoms were never considered to be a part of either of the principalities and existed as separate entities dependent on the central government in the same way as the princely domains themselves. After all, all the noble fiefs, regardless of their rank and grade, were administered along the same lines with majority of the officials being appointed by the centre. Subordination implied by the commandery – prefecture hierarchy of administrative units did not apply to noble fiefs simply because these were not defined in terms of territory but only by number of the tax-paying households.

Secondly, the practice of enfeoffment change shows the complexity of appellation and apanage location correspondence. It seems clear that it was considered more appropriate when the appellation corresponded with the apanage territory. Therefore when the apanage was for some reason changed the appellation tended to change accordingly in order to retain certain required degree of connection between the title and apanage territory, between the name and reality. The peerages created for Wu commanders who had defected to the Jin were the only exception. But as these creations pursued rather specific objectives being used as a weapon in the inter-state propaganda warfare for supremacy they should not be considered as a standard feature of the system. Indeed, all these dignities were abolished in 280 AD once the state of Wu surrendered for their *raison d'être* disappeared with the independence of the southern regime. The situation changed after the fall of the Western Jin. Majority of the titled nobles who managed to flee to safety of the southern bank of the Yangzi River retained their original noble dignities and used them throughout the whole period despite the fact that the territories

²²⁸ Dukedom of Suiling was created for Wang Xiang 王祥 of the Langye Wangs 琅耶王氏, see *Jinshu* juan 33, *Wang Xiang zhuan*, pp. 987-990; Dukedom of Shouguang was conferred on Zheng Chong 鄭冲, see *Jinshu* juan 33, *Zheng Chong zhuan*, pp. 991-993; For the overview of the Le'an and Xiapi princely lineages see Hrubý, Jakub (2007): pp. 174, 183-184; for details of their lives see *Jinshu* juan 38, *Le'an Pingwang Jian zhuan*, pp. 1137-1138 for princes of Le'an and *Jinshu* juan 37, *Xiapi Xianwang Huang zhuan*, pp. 1090-1091 for princes of Xiapi.

which their titles referred to were overrun by the enemy and therefore out of reach of the southern regime. The old titles became important symbols of status at the slowly emerging imperial court in exile. They became hallmark of noble descent, the last surviving link to the more glorious past. On the one hand, the ancient name supported the claim to social preeminence of its bearers and ensured the membership of the elite circles. On the other hand, retaining the original noble dignities reflected prevalent belief of the exiles that the stay in the unfamiliar and inhospitable South was to be only temporary expressing their ardent hope that they all would return home soon.

Noble Dignities with Symbolic Meaning

As we have already seen the selection of suitable noble fief and corresponding appellation was rather complex process during which the final location of the noble fief was determined by various economic, strategic, demographic, ritual and political factors with the relative importance of the factors being different from case to case. However, apart from these factors, more or less practical in nature, there were also other considerations at play which may be described as symbolic. Sometimes a fief was bestowed in open disregard of the usual practice only for the sake of its name as some of the existing administrative territorial units bore names with auspicious connotations. Once bestowed as noble dignities, these appellations either commemorated certain deed which merited the bestowal of the particular noble dignity or were considered capable of inviting the future peace and prosperity of the realm in general and the imperial house in particular. Examples of such practice are to be found not only during the Jin period but already long before the establishing of the dynasty and probably originated in the reign of the Han:

“When Duke of Gaogui ascended the throne, [Lu Zhi] was granted title of a lord of the royal domain with apanage of two hundred households. After Guanqiu Jian was suppressed his apanage was increased by two hundred households as was the usual practice [for those who had helped to suppress a rebellion]. He was appointed General Raising Authority (*yangwu jiangjun* 揚武將軍) and Regional Inspector (*cishi* 刺史) of Jingzhou. When Zhuge Dan rose up in Shouchun [against the Simas], Emperor Wendi (Sima Zhao) took the Wei emperor and launched the punitive expedition [against Zhuge Dan]. He summoned armed forces from all around the empire and [Lu] Zhi, leading both civil and military officials of Jingzhou, rushed ahead [of others to respond to the summons]. After Zhuge Dan was suppressed, Lu Zhi was

elevated in rank to village marquis of Wujin and his apanage was again increased by nine hundred households.”²²⁹

Lu Zhi’s active support of the Sima cause is well attested by sequence of military appointments as well as repeated involvement in suppressing of armed uprisings challenging the power of the regent family. However, the most important achievement of his career was his engagement with Zhuge Dan 諸葛誕 who had risen in Shouchun 壽春 and hoped to reverse the tide with the help of Wu reinforcements. Lu Zhi’s contribution to the victory over the rebel forces during this symbolic last stand of the political opponents of the Sima house was duly commemorated by bestowal of village lordship of Wujin 無進亭侯.²³⁰ As we cannot ascertain the exact location of Wujin village (the historical maps of China seldom show lower administrative units below prefecture level) we cannot rule out that the territory of the new lordship dignity was situated in or near the ancestral home of Lu Zhi (Fufeng 扶風 in Yongzhou), yet it seems to me that Wujin was selected simply for its name, the meaning of which: “no advance” or less literally “You shall not pass!” was an apt commemoration of Lu Zhi’s valor and importance of the victory achieved. The next example from the very beginning of the Cao Wei Dynasty is even more telling:

“When [the Wei] Emperor Wendi ascended the throne, [Jia] Xu was appointed Defender-in-chief (*taiwei* 太尉) and he was promoted to township marquis of Weishou and his apanage was increased by three hundred households, [enjoying some] eight hundred households in total. Additional two hundred households were singled out as an apanage for [Jia Xu’s] younger son [Jia] Fang who was ennobled as a lord (*liehou* 列侯). His eldest son [Jia] Mu was appointed Commandant-escort (*fuma duwei* 駙馬都尉)”²³¹

Jia Xu 賈詡 was a trusted advisor of Cao Cao. When the powerful regent was vacillating unable to decide which of his sons should be officially named his heir the timely intervention of Jia Xu secured the succession for the eldest Cao Pi who later became the first emperor of the Cao Wei Dynasty. Grateful ruler later rewarded Jia Xu for his advice by bestowing on him township marquisate of Weishou 魏壽. Again, the choice of the appellation is hardly coincidental and “Long live the Wei!” must have indeed be an apt appellation for

²²⁹ *Jinshu* juan 90, *Liangli*, *Lu Zhi zhuan*, p. 2329.

²³⁰ For the uprising of Zhuge Dan and its importance for the dynastic change see Leban, Carl (2010): pp. 25-28.

²³¹ *Sanguozhi* juan 10, *Jia Xu zhuan*, p. 248.

someone who had made the existence of the dynasty possible. If it were not for Jia Xu, Cao Pei would not be appointed heir and the Wei might have never been actually established. The noble title commemorated his merit and at the same time should have symbolically ensured that the dynasty would indeed be a long-lived one.

The same concerns probably determined the choice of appellation of two noble dignities created during tumultuous period of internecine warfare at the beginning of the 4th century for local military commanders who worked their way up in the service of the imperial princes who struggled for political domination over the court:

“At the beginning of the Yongning Era (301 AD) [Sun Hui] joined the righteous forces of [Sima] Jiong, Prince of Qi, and chastised [Sima] Lun, Prince of Zhao [who had usurped the imperial authority]. For his merit he was enfeoffed as prefecture lord of Jinxing and was entrusted with the office of Revenue Section Clerk (*hucao yuan* 戶曹掾) [in the administration of] Commander-in-chief (*dasima* 大司馬) [only to be later] transferred to a position of Subsidiary Clerk in Eastern Section (*dongcao shu* 東曹屬).”²³²

Sun Hui's 孫惠 participation in a punitive campaign against Prince of Zhao earned him a prefecture lordship the appellation of which clearly hinted at the circumstances of Zhao's fall. The meaning of Jinxing 晉興 was not only “prosperous Jin” or “May the Jin flourish!” which in itself would suffice to explain the reasons behind choosing such an appellation but it also implied the fight with a usurper and symbolic rebirth of the legitimate Jin regime. As the expression *zhongxing* 中興 was often used for the Han restoration after the fall of Wang Mang in 23 AD, appellation of Sun Hui's fief can be read also as “restoration of the Jin.” Like Wang Mang before him, Prince of Zhao overstepped his authority and usurped the imperial throne which prompted Prince of Qi to play the role of second Guangwudi, raising the righteous army, bringing down the usurper and restoring the main imperial line to its proper place. Despite the ardent desire expressed by the government the future prosperity of the Jin appeared to be an impossible dream. The political situation at court remained highly volatile and before long it was Prince of Qi who was declared a usurper by his cousins and swiftly dealt with:

²³² *Jinshu* juan 71, *Sun Hui zhuan*, p. 1881.

“After [Sima] Jiong, [Prince of Qi] was executed, [Gu] Rong was enfeoffed for merit of chastising [prince’s henchman] Ge Yu as count of Jiaying and was transferred to position of Palace Cadet to the Crown Prince (*taizi zhongshuzi* 太子中庶子).”²³³

The situation repeated itself. Gu Rong 顧榮, member of locally powerful southern family, helped to eliminate Prince of Qi who had become too powerful and overbearing for his cousins’ taste. As the timely involvement of the princes allegedly saved the incumbent of the imperial throne from peril of being deposed once again the notion of revival or restoration was not totally out of place. Thus, the barony of Jiaying 嘉興 (“fine restoration”) could have been bestowed with such a notion in mind even though the evidence is not as conclusive as in the previous case, for Jiaying happened to be the ancestral home of the Gu family since the founding of Wu. Even though the choice of the fief might have been determined by the place of family origin, the auspicious connotations of the name would not be lost on Gu Rong and his contemporaries.

The commemorative aspect of the appellations mentioned above accounted for only one side of the practice with soliciting of future blessing being at least equally important. Within the framework of correlative thinking the bestowal of an appropriate title with apt appellation could either reaffirm already existing reality or induce certain ideal state of affairs to become reality in the future. The affairs of men reflected the will of heaven but at the same time the right actions of the emperor and his government could ensure positive reaction of heaven which might be induced to give its blessing to the dynasty. Given the importance of correlative thinking it is no wonder that every early medieval imperial regime tried to secure the goodwill of heaven and nothing was ever left to chance especially where the well-being of the imperial line and emperor’s immediate family was concerned. The Jin were no exception as we can see from noble dignities bestowed on the imperial in-laws:

“Yang Jun ... hailed from Huayin in Hongnong commandery. When he was young, he became an official of the [Jin] royal [administration] and served [successively] as Prefecture Magistrate (*ling* 令) of Gaolu, Commander (*sima* 司馬) in the Office of the Imperial Guards (*xiaoji fu* 驍騎府) and Defending General (*zhenjun fu* 鎮軍府). Later, as the father of the empress he was elevated [surpassing other deserving ministers] and attained important position [at the court]. He was promoted from General of the Defending Army (*zhenjun jiangjun* 鎮軍將

²³³ *Jinshu* juan 68, *Gu Rong zhuan*, p. 1812.

軍) to Chariot and Horse General (*cheji jiangjun* 車騎將軍) and was enfeoffed as Marquis of Linjin.”²³⁴

As an uncle to Yang Yan 楊艷, the first empress of Wudi, Yang Jun 楊駿 was head of the most important *waiqi* family in the realm from the very beginning of the dynasty. But he became a prominent political figure at Wudi’s court only later, when his own daughter Yang Zhi 楊芷, assumed the place of her recently deceased cousin and was installed as the new empress.²³⁵ Wudi relied on him during last years of his reign eventually naming Yang Jun regent for his incompetent successor. The emperor hoped that he would be able to act as a faithful guardian of the young prince who, after all, was his grand-nephew and administer the realm in his best interest. The unique position of Yang Jun and the house of Yang as a future support of Wudi’s descendants may have been reflected by the choice of fief and appellation of the peerage dignity bestowed on him shortly after his daughter entered the rear palace.

The Yangs hailed from Hongnong 弘農 commandery in Sizhou. As their ancestral home lied within the imperial domain the noble fief had to be located elsewhere. Linjin 臨晉 was a prefecture in Fengyi 馮翊 commandery in Yongzhou near the Yang ancestral home, bordering Hongnong on the east. The close proximity to the family place of origin thus undeniably contributed to the final choice. Yet, the choice of Linjin as an appellation for a *waiqi* family peerage is too conspicuous to be coincidental and symbolic meaning probably played some role as well, as Linjin was not the only prefecture bordering on Hongnong. The name itself means “close to Jin” or “facing Jin” and probably reflects geography of the particular territory as was the case of many other toponyms using the same syntactic structure (for example Linying 臨潁, Linhuai 臨淮 or Linwei 臨渭). On the other hand “close to Jin” could be understood not only in terms of geographic proximity to the region of the ancient Jin state (that is modern Shanxi), but also in terms of kinship proximity suggesting close cooperation and mutual support, an apt appellation for father of the empress and grand-uncle of the future emperor.

If the bestowal of the marquisate of Linjin may have been determined by various factors, in case of the following *waiqi* peerage the symbolic meaning of the appellation was probably the main reason behind its bestowal:

²³⁴ *Jinshu* juan 40, *Yang Jun zhuan*, p. 1177.

²³⁵ For details about Empress Yang Yan and her family see *Jinshu* juan 31, *Wu Yuan Yang huanghou zhuan* and *Wu Dao Yang huanghou zhuan*, pp. 952-957; see also Hrubý, Jakub (2011): pp. 47-72.

“Yang Xuanzhi was father of the Empress Hui (second wife of Emperor Huidi). He was a son of the Right Vice Director of the Department of State Affairs (*shangshu youpuye* 尚書右僕射) [Yang] Jin. At first, [Yang] Xuanzhi served as Secretarial Court Gentleman (*shangshulang* 尚書郎) [but later on], as the father of the empress, he was appointed Grand Master for Splendid Happiness (*guanglu dafu* 光祿大夫), Lord Specially Advanced (*tejin* 特進) and Cavalier Attendant-in-ordinary (*sanji changshi* 散騎常侍). His enfeoffment was enlarged to that of Marquis of Xingjin. He was promoted to Right Vice Director of the Department of State Affairs (*shangshu youpuye* 尚書右僕射), Additional Palace Attendant (*shizhong* 侍中) and he was elevated in rank becoming duke [of Xingjin].”²³⁶

Yang Xuanzhi 羊玄之 was enfeoffed after 299 AD as marquis of Xingjin 興晉侯 shortly after his daughter Yang Xianrong 羊獻容 became the second empress of Huidi.²³⁷ Because Xingjin prefecture lay in Jingzhou, far from the ancestral home of the Yangs (Taishan 泰山 in Yanzhou), the symbolic meaning of the appellation, “Make the Jin prosper”, was apparently the main reason behind the choice. The auspicious connotations of the name were of utmost importance especially at the time when the court had just recovered from a serious crisis caused by the preceding empress and her family. The only son and heir of Emperor Huidi perished, murdered on trumped up charges due to the intrigue of Empress Jia whose family monopolized political power for almost a decade, bringing the realm on the brink of devastating military conflict. The choice of the appellation for the new imperial in-laws expressed an ardent hope that the family of the new empress would assume the proper place of the *waiqi* and would duly give its wholehearted support to the imperial line. Unfortunately the exact time of creation is unknown to us as the sources only indicate that it followed the official installation of the empress in 300 AD. Under the given circumstances the phrase “Make the Jin prosper!” could also refer to a wish that the empress would eventually give birth to a son and heir to the imperial throne, for the continuation of the imperial line of succession was seriously endangered when all three surviving sons of the assassinated crown prince died within three years in 300-302 AD.²³⁸ If the peerage had been created before the sad demise of the infant princes the wish behind the appellation is probably to be understood

²³⁶ *Jinshu* juan 93, *Waiqi zhuan*, *Yang Xuanzhi zhuan*, p. 2413.

²³⁷ For Empress Yang and her interesting life see *Jinshu* juan 31, *Hui Yang huanghou*, pp. 966-968; she did not get the usual posthumous temple names for after the fall of Luoyang she entered harem of Former Zhao Emperor Liu Yao 劉曜 eventually becoming empress of the rival regime.

²³⁸ Hrubý, Jakub (2007): p. 145; for the detail about the succession issue and political infighting following the fall of Empress Jia see Dreyer, Edward L. (2009): pp. 112-135, for Huidi’s grandsons especially page 122.

in more general terms. It was hoped that Empress Yang's entrance into the palace could bring peace and prosperity to the imperial family and as the emperor and empress were perceived as the father and the mother of all subjects also peace and prosperity to the whole empire.

The similar concerns of universal prosperity and well-being of the common people led to the posthumous enfeoffment of He Zhun 何準, father-in-law of the Eastern Jin Emperor Mudi 晉穆帝 (344-361 AD).²³⁹ Even though He Zhun's son refused to accept the honor as going against the dying wish of his father, the effort of the court to bestow noble dignity bearing auspicious appellation upon an important *waiqi* family is self-evident:

“He Zhun was father of Empress Mu Zhang. He was of noble mind and modest in his desires. [Despite his youth] he gained [quite a] reputation [for it]. Both provincial administration and ministerial offices of the central government summoned him, yet he did not take up the [offered] positions. His elder brother [He] Chong, who was Cavalry General (*piaoji jiangjun* 驃騎將軍), [tried to] persuade him to accept the office, but He Zhun answered: “Why should the appellation of ‘the fifth one’ be any worse than ‘cavalry general’?” Zhun was the fifth [born] among his brothers, that is why he talked like that. [He] Chong held the influential position of a premier minister of the realm and at that time became all-powerful, yet [He] Zhun [preferred] to live in seclusion and did not pay attention to the mundane affairs. He only used to chant the sutras and erect or repair pagodas (stupas) and temples, nothing else. When he was summoned to court as Gentleman Cavalier Attendant (*sanjilang* 散騎郎) he did not take up the position. He died when he was forty-seven. In the first year of the Shengping Era (357 AD) he was posthumously granted the title of Grand Master of the Palace with Golden Seal and Purple Ribbon (*jinzi guanglu dafu* 金紫光祿大夫) and he was also enfeoffed as prefecture lord of Jinxing. But his son [He Tan] petitioned the throne that his father was always noble and unsullied [living life of austerity and reclusion] and therefore declined the honor and did not accept the enfeoffment.”²⁴⁰

The practice of selecting peerage and lordship appellations according to the symbolic meaning of the existing toponyms seems to be quite widespread, being used not only by the Eastern Jin but also by other successor regimes which emerged in northern China after the fall of the Western Jin. One of these was the semi-independent kingdom of Former Liang (*Qian Liang* 前涼, 320-376 AD) in Liangzhou 涼州 ruled by the Zhang 張氏 family which

²³⁹ For details of He Fani 何法倪 who was to become Empress Mu Zhang 穆章皇后 see *Jinshu* juan 32, *Mu Zhang He huanghou zhuan*, pp. 977-978.

²⁴⁰ *Jinshu* juan 93, *Waiqi zhuan He Zhun zhuan*, p. 2417.

flourished in Gansu Corridor for almost six decades till it was conquered by Fu Jian 苻堅 of Former Qin 前秦 (*Qian Qin*, 351-394 AD) in 376 AD. The Zhang princes maintained semblance of subordination to the Jin emperors, sending regular embassies to Jiankang and professing to be loyal and obedient subjects of the southern court. However, within their own domain they behaved like independent and sovereign rulers using all kinds of royal prerogatives including bestowal of noble dignities which was normally an inalienable right of the emperor:

“Zhang Yaoling ... was only ten when he succeeded [his father in] administering the affairs [of Liangzhou]. He proclaimed himself Commander-in-chief (*dasima* 大司馬), Commandant Guarding the Qiang (*hu Qiang xiaowei* 護羌校尉), Regional Inspector (*cishi* 刺史) [of Liangzhou] and Duke of Xiping. His uncle Zhang Zuo, Marquis of Changning, was by nature crafty and deceitful and was good at ingratiating himself with those within and without [the palace]. First he had become sworn brothers with Zhao Chang and Wei Qi, favorite ministers of [Yaoling’s late father Zhang] Chonghua. Zhao Chang and his colleague pretended to be acting upon bequest of the testamentary edict of [Zhang] Chonghua and appointed [Zhang] Zuo area commander with special powers supervising all the military affairs of the state. As General of Pacification Army (*fujun jiangjun* 撫軍將軍) he should have assisted the government [and became a regent to the young lord]. Zhao Chang and his colleagues were of opinion that [Zhang] Yaoling was too young and weak [to rule] and as the times were difficult and [the realm still] not at peace it would be [more] suitable to enthrone a grown man as the new lord. As Zhang Zuo had earlier an affair with Zhang Chonghua’s mother (and his step-mother), Lady Ma, [the dowager now] followed Wei Qi’s advice and ordered Yaoling to be dethroned and demoted to Marquis of Liangning. Zhang Zuo was enthroned in his stead. Soon after that Zhang Zuo sent Yang Qiuhu to murder Yaoling in Eastern Orchard and had him buried in a sand pit conferring on him posthumous name Sorrowful Duke.”²⁴¹

Following the successful palace coup the hapless Zhang Yaoling 張曜靈, the fifth prince of Liang, was dethroned by his uncle in 353 AD after only three months rule and confined to life in seclusion of his residence. The usurper Zhang Zuo 張祚 (353-355 AD) and Lady Ma 馬氏, matriarch of the ruling clan, bestowed on the ex-ruler title of Marquis of Liangning 涼寧侯. The choice of the appellation, “Liang[zhou] at peace”, expressed their hope that the boy prince would accept his deposition as a *fait accompli* abandoning all wild

²⁴¹ *Jinshu* juan 86, *Zhang Yaoling zhuan*, pp. 2245-2246.

hopes of being reinstated. At the same time, the use of Liangning also expressed belief that this act of violent deposition would bring peace and prosperity to Liangzhou. Yet, it is hard to say how earnest this belief actually was for Zhang Zuo decided not to leave anything to chance. Obviously, despite the hopefully sounding title the unfortunate boy remained too much of a threat to be left alive.

All the noble appellations discussed above referred to existing administrative or territorial units which we can find on the map of the Jin Empire, using the symbolic meaning of the place names to commemorate certain achievement or ensure some future blessing. But there were also noble dignities appellation of which did not refer to any real locality and were made up *ad hoc*, chosen simply for the conveyed symbolic meaning of the particular collocation. Such peerages and lordships were nevertheless regular noble dignities within the noble hierarchy presumably entitling their holders to the same kind of rights and privileges as well as apanage as were enjoyed by other titled nobles whose appellations referred to existing administrative units. The example at hand could be Sun Hao 孫皓 the defeated ruler of Wu who had surrendered to the victorious Jin generals in 280 AD and was later taken to the imperial capital where he became living reminder of the successful accomplishment of the unification process:

“In the first year of the Taikang Era (280 AD) during the fifth month on day *xinhai* Sun Hao was enfeoffed as Guiming Marquis (Marquis Returning to Allegiance). His heir apparent was appointed Palace Attendant (*zhonglang* 中郎) and all other sons became Gentlemen of the Interior (*langzhong* 郎中). The [members of the] ancient houses of Wu were elevated [to suitable positions] according to their talent. The families of the high commanders of the house of Sun who were killed during the fights were moved to Shouyang. The commanders and officers who had crossed the River were to be exempt from paying taxes for ten years. Common folk and craftsmen were to be exempt for twenty years.”²⁴²

“[Sun] Hao together with his family was taken west and [they all] gathered together in the capital city on the *dinghai* day, fifth month, in the first year of the Taikang Era. [Before that,] in the fourth month, on the *jiashen* day [the emperor issued an imperial] edict: “Hard pressed and having no way out Sun Hao was forced to surrender. The previous edict ordered to treat him [with leniency] and spare his life. Now [Sun] Hao is just about to come and it is still [our] intention to have mercy on him. Let the title of Guiming Marquis be bestowed upon him. Let

²⁴² *Jinshu* juan 3, *Wudi benji*, p. 72.

him be given [official] clothes and carriage, thirty *qing* of fields and annually provisions of five thousand *hu* of grain with [additional] five hundred thousand coins, five hundred bolts of silk and five hundred *jin* of silk floss.” [Sun] Hao’s heir apparent [Sun] Jin was appointed Palace Attendant (*zhonglang* 中郎) and other sons who [used to] be princes [of the blood] were appointed Gentlemen of the Interior (*langzhong* 郎中). In the fifth year [of the Taikang Era (284 AD) Sun] Hao died in Luoyang.”²⁴³

The legitimizing nature of the ex-ruler’s presence at Wudi’s court is confirmed by the choice of appellation which was to go with his new marquis title. Guiming 歸命 was no place name. The meaning of this collocation can be roughly translated as “return to allegiance” or “return to give one’s allegiance to the right master” and its use for Sun Hao’s marquisate implied unconditional acknowledgement of the Jin authority. Despite the reality of a military campaign which was instrumental in subjugation of Wu, the appellation formally stressed the commanding authority and virtue of Wudi as supreme sovereign suggesting that Sun Hao had recognized his previous mistakes and submitted to the Jin emperor, renouncing his dignity as independent ruler and accepting subordinate position at his court for he had realized who the true son of heaven was. Sun Hao’s title thus symbolically confirmed the change of mandate of heaven and legitimacy of the Jin Dynasty.

The *Jinshu* records one more unusual noble appellation used exclusively for its symbolic meaning:

“In the fourth year of the Taikang Era (283 AD) in the eighth month country of Shanshan sent a son [of the king] to wait upon [the emperor] in the palace. [The Shanshan prince] was given title of Guiyi Marquis (Marquis Returning to Righteousness).”²⁴⁴

Shanshan 鄯善 (Kroraina) was one of ancient oasis kingdoms in Eastern Turkestan which used to acknowledge suzerainty of the Han dynasty. After the fall of the Han the mutual contacts were interrupted due to the division of the empire and coming of the embassy or tributary mission to the Jin court soon after the conquest of Wu was therefore of great symbolic importance. The title chosen for the young Krorainian prince, Guiyi 歸義 means “return to righteousness” and again expresses the notion of the Jin emperor being the chosen

²⁴³ *Sanguozhi* juan 48, *San sizhu zhuan*, p. 870; according to Pei Songzhi’s commentary Sun Hao died in the twelfth month of Taikang 4 when he was 42 years old and he was buried within the borders of Henan 河南 prefecture.

²⁴⁴ *Jinshu* juan 3, *Wudi benji*, p. 75.

one, legitimate prince who rules with the blessing of Heaven. In light of this unexpected visit Wudi indeed seemed to be the universal sovereign whose virtue (*de* 德) reached far and wide, making the barbarians realize the superiority of China, coming of their own will to the court of the Jin Son of Heaven to bask in his favor and be gradually transformed and civilized by his noble influence. Since the times of the Han the tributary missions from far-off lands became important forms of legitimization attesting to superior moral qualities of the ruling emperors and Wudi readily used the opportunity to herald this moral superiority of his dynasty to the world through creation of peerage dignity commemorating this legitimizing event.

The appellation of Guiyi was later used practically in the same sense as Sun Hao's title of Guiming Marquis:

“In the first year of the Taiyuan Era (376 AD) Fu Jian [the Emperor of Qin] sent his commanders Gou Chang, Mao Dang, Liang Xi and Yao Chang to raid [the territory of Liangzhou] ... [Zhang] Tianxi (prince of Liang) led ten thousand men and they stopped in Jinchang fortress. Ma Da led ten thousand men to confront Yao Chang and others. But because he asked for surrender his army dissolved and soldiers scattered. Chang Ju and Xi Li both died in battle. Military Administrator (*sibing* 司兵) Zhao Chongzhe engaged Yao Chang in tough fighting but he also died ... Zhang Tianxi got scared and came out of the fortress to fight himself. [Immediately] the garrison in the fortress mutinied. Being in dire straits Zhang Tianxi surrendered to Yao Chang and others. Before that, the Anchang Gate and Pingzhang Hall of Tianxi's residence had suddenly collapsed without a cause. Ten days later the state perished ... Fu Jian had already a residence built in advance for Zhang Tianxi [to live in once he is captured and comes to Chang'an]. When he arrived [to the Qin capital] he was appointed imperial secretary (*shangshu* 尚書) and enfeoffed as Guiyi Marquis (Marquis Returning to Righteousness).”²⁴⁵

King Fu Jian of Former Qin was apparently the first to follow the Jin precedent. After his commanders marched west and conquered Liangzhou, Zhang Tianxi 張天錫 (364-376 AD), the last of the independent Liang princes, was captured and brought to Chang'an where he became a symbol of Qin legitimacy in the same way in which Sun Hao confirmed the superiority of the Jin court almost one hundred years earlier. Guiming and Guiyi later became popular titles for all defeated rulers of rival regimes and were bestowed time and again

²⁴⁵ *Jinshu* juan 86, *Zhang Tianxi zhuan*, pp. 2251-2252.

throughout the history of China by victorious conquerors seeking additional legitimization of their claims to the imperial throne.

No Dignity without Merit – Reasons for Ennoblement

One of the principle notions of the Jin (or more generally medieval Chinese) ennoblement system was that noble dignity of any rank and grade has to be merited by loyal service to the sovereign and the dynasty. Bestowal of a noble title was dependent neither on family origin nor on high official post in the government. It could not have been bought either by wealth of the family, or by its social preeminence derived from the possible affiliation to a “noble” line of descent. It could be obtained only as a special mark of distinction and imperial favor for those worthy and deserving servitors of the ruling house who had proved their ability and discharged their duties with aplomb contributing significantly to the great cause of the dynasty. The meritorious deed of any kind was absolutely prerequisite if one hoped to be enfeoffed. The traditional maxim *Fei gong bu hou* 非功不侯 sums up the situation nicely: There was no noble dignity without merit. Yet, what exactly was considered to be meritorious differed quite widely from case to case for the concept of merit was rather abstract and wide comprising all kinds of meritorious service, both military and civil in character, and could have been employed flexibly according to the current needs of the ruler and regime.

The following tables (No. 17 and 18) list all the peerage and lordship dignities respectively bestowed during the Western Jin Dynasty which I managed to come upon while browsing through the contemporary sources together with reasons for their creation.

Tab. 17 Reasons for Ennoblement of the Western Jin Peerage

noble title	first holder under the Jin	year of creation	reason for ennoblement
Daliang 大梁侯	Lu Qin 盧欽	266	continuation of Wei title
Miling 密陵侯	Zheng Mao 鄭袤	266	continuation of Wei title
Rongcheng 容城侯	Lu Fan 盧藩	266	continuation of Wei title, not confirmed
Yinping 陰平侯	Lu Zhi 魯芝	266	continuation of Wei title
Shangcai 上蔡伯	He Jiao 和嶠	266	continuation of Wei title
Xinta 新沓伯	Shan Tao 山濤	266	continuation of Wei title
Xunyang 循陽伯	Liu Shi 劉寔	266	continuation of Wei title
Jiqiu 即丘子	Wang Lan 王覽	266	continuation of Wei title
Kangfu 亢父男	Jiang Tong 江統	266	continuation of Wei title
Xiayang 夏陽侯	Hu Fen 胡奮	266	continuation of Wei title, waiqi

Guanyang 觀陽伯	Hua Biao 華表	266	contunuation of Wei title
Guanglu 廣陸侯	Li Yin 李胤	266	founding of the dynasty
Liangzou 梁鄒侯	Xie Xiu 解脩	266	founding of the dynasty
Linhai 臨海侯	Houshi Guang 侯史光	266	founding of the dynasty
Chungu 鶉觚子	Fu Xuan 傅玄	266	founding of the dynasty
Juyang 劇陽子	Wei Shu 魏舒	266	founding of the dynasty
Tangyang 堂陽子	Shi Jian 石鑿	266	founding of the dynasty
Xiayang 夏陽子	Hu Fen 胡奮	266	founding of the dynasty
Pingling 平陵男	Guo Yi 郭奕	266	founding of the dynasty
Gaoping 高平郡公	Chen Qian 陳騫	266	gongchen
Julu 鉅鹿郡公	Pei Xiu 裴秀	266	gongchen
Juping 鉅平郡公	Yang Hu 羊祜	266	gongchen
Langling 朗陵公	He Ceng 何曾	266	gongchen
Leling 樂陵郡公	Shi Bao 石苞	266	gongchen
Linhuai 臨淮公	Xun Yi 荀顗	266	gongchen
Lu 魯郡公	Jia Chong 賈充	266	gongchen
Shouguang 壽光公	Zheng Chong 鄭沖	266	gongchen
Suiling 睢陵公	Wang Xiang 王祥	266	gongchen
Ziyang 菑陽公	Wei Guan 衛瓘	266	gongchen
Jibei 濟北侯	Xun Xu 荀勗	266	gongchen
Qi 祁侯	Li Xi 李憙	266	gongchen
Boling 博陵縣公	Wang Shen 王沈	266	gongchen
Juping 鉅平侯	Yang Hu 羊祜	266	gongchen
Anle 安樂公	Liu Shan 劉禪	266	ritual
Gaoyi 高邑公	Cao Jia 曹嘉	266	ritual
Juancheng 鄆城縣公	Cao Zhi 曹志	266	ritual
Linqiu 廩丘公	Cao Xi 曹翕	266	ritual
Shanyang 山陽公	Liu Kang 劉康	266	ritual
Shaoling 邵陵公	Cao Fang 曹芳	266	ritual
Wei 衛公	Ji Shu 姬署	266	ritual
Linwei 臨渭公	Guo Jian 郭建	266	supporters of Sima cause
Guang'an 廣安公	Zhen De 甄惠	266	waiqi and partisan of Simas
Lanling 蘭陵侯	Wang Xun 王恂	266	waiqi, Wei title, not sure if it was revived after 266
Changlu 昌陸子	Gao Hun 高渾	266?	continuation of Wei title
Zheng 承子	Wang Xun 王恂	266?	continuation of Wei title
Jingyuan 涇原子	Fu Zhi 傅祗	266?	continuation of Wei title, not confirmed
Shen 慎縣子	Chen Wen 陳溫	266?	continuation of Wei title, not confirmed
Qingquan 清泉侯	Fu Xuan 傅玄	269	posthumously promoted for past service
Xi'e 西鄂侯	Luo Xian 羅憲	270	posthumously promoted for administrative service
Kuaiji 會稽公	Sun Xiu 孫秀	270	surrendered enemy commander
Yidu 宜都公	Bu Chan 步闡	272	surrendered enemy commander

Danyang 丹楊侯	Sun Kai 孫楷	276	surrendered enemy commander
Linjin 臨晉侯	Yang Jun 楊駿	276	waiqi
Nancheng 南城侯	Yang Hu 羊祜	277	promotion by Wudi
Pingchun 平春侯	Hu Wei 胡威	<280	unknown
Guiming 歸命侯	Sun Hao 孫皓	280	ritual
Jingling 京陵公	Wang Hun 王渾	280(266)	subjugation of Wu
Yongping 永平侯	Jia Hun 賈混	280>	unknown
Yongshi 永世侯	Wang Jun 王俊	280>	unknown
Guiyi 歸義侯	prince of Shanshan	283	outside realm?
Guangxing 廣興侯	Zhu Zheng 朱整	<289	unknown
Guanyang 觀陽公	Hua Yi 華廡	290	Yang Jun after the death of Wudi
Xunyang 循陽侯	Liu Shi 劉寔	290	Yang Jun after the death of Wudi
Chang'an 昌安公	Shi Jian 石鑿	290	Yang Jun for supervising the erection of burial mound
Chengyang 成陽子	Bian Cui 卞粹	291	after the death of Yang Jun
Lingchuan/Lingzhou 靈川縣公/靈州縣公	Fu Zhi 傅祗	291	after the death of Yang Jun
Shandu 山都縣公	Wang Kai 王愷	291	after the death of Yang Jun
Shanggu 上谷郡公	Meng Guan 孟觀	291	after the death of Yang Jun
Zhuangwu 壯武郡公	Zhang Hua 張華	291-300	service to Empress Jia
Yiyang 弋陽子	Ji Shao 嵇紹	300	after the fall of the Jia faction
Anzhong 安眾男	Liu Qiao 劉喬	300	after the fall of the Jia faction
Guangling 廣陵郡公	Chen Zhun 陳準	300	partisan of Lun of Zhao
Lanling 蘭陵郡公	Wei Guan 衛瓘	300?	posthumously, rehabilitation presumably after the fall of the Jias
Xingjin 興晉侯	Yang Xuanzhi 羊玄之	300>	waiqi, father of the empress
Chengyang 成陽縣男	Xun Zu 荀組	300-306	unknown
Chengyang 成陽公	Bian Cui 卞粹	301(291)	partisan of prince of Qi, chastisement of Lun of Zhao
Anchang 安昌公	Pan Ni 潘尼	301	partisan of prince of Qi, chastisement of Lun of Zhao
Anxiang 安鄉公	Liu Zhen 劉真	301	partisan of prince of Qi, chastisement of Lun of Zhao
Fengqiu 封丘公	Han Tai 韓泰	301	partisan of prince of Qi, chastisement of Lun of Zhao
Mouping 牟平公	Ge Yu 葛旗	301	partisan of prince of Qi, chastisement of Lun of Zhao
Pingyin 平陰公	Wei Yi 衛毅	301	partisan of prince of Qi, chastisement of Lun of Zhao
Xiaohuang 小黃公	Lu Ji 路季	301	partisan of prince of Qi, chastisement of Lun of Zhao
Pingshou 平壽公	Zheng Qiu 鄭球	301	when Ying of Chengdu rebelled against Lun of Zhao
Wuqiang 武強侯	Lu Zhi 盧志	301>	advisor of Ying of Chengdu
Jiaying 嘉興伯	Gu Rong 顧榮	302	chastisement of Jiong of Qi and his advisor Ge Yu
Xihua 西華縣公	Xun Fan 荀藩	302	chastisement of Jiong of Qi

Yinping 陰平男	Huwu Fuzhi 胡毋輔之	302	chastisement of Jiong of Qi
Liaoxi 遼西公	Duan Wuwuchen 段務勿塵	302	outside realm?
Zhuxu 朱虛縣公	Liu Tun 劉噉	303	chastisement of Jiong of Qi
Xuancheng 宣城公	Liu Hong 劉弘	<304	for merit and virtue, enfeoffed by Huidi
Xingjin 興晉公	Yang Xuanzhi 羊玄之	<304	waiqi
Yanling 延陵縣公	Gao Guang 高光	<306	for campaigning against Ying of Chengdu
Moling 秣陵侯	Dai Yuan 戴淵	306	chastisement of the rebels
Daling 大陵縣公	Wen Xian 溫羨	306	chastisement of Ying of Chengdu, return of Huidi
Yiyang 弋陽侯	Xi Shao 嵇紹	306	posthumous rehabilitation by Yue of Donghai
Jiangxia 江夏郡公	Wei Zao 衛璪	306	promotion by Yue of Donghai, rehabilitation of Wei Guan
Linxiang 臨湘縣公	Sun Hui 孫惠	306	return of Huidi to Luoyang
Nanxiang 南鄉侯	Wang Cheng 王澄	306	return of Huidi to Luoyang
Xincheng 新城郡公	Liu Hong 劉弘	306-311	posthumously by Yue of Donghai for help against Ying of Chengdu
Wuling 武陵侯	Wang Yan 王衍	306-311	unknown, created but never accepted
Dongping 東平郡侯	Gou Xi 苟晞	306-311	created by Yue of Donghai
Jiuquan 酒泉公	Jia Shu 賈疋	307-313	under Huaidi, for chastisement of the rebels
Bacheng 霸城侯	Zhang Gui 張軌	310-312	defense of Luoyang against Qian Zhao
Dingxiang 定襄侯	Liu Yu 劉輿	<311	posthumously by Yue of Donghai for past services
Wuyang 舞陽縣公	Xun Song 荀崧	312>	restoration of the imperial burial mound
Dongping 東平郡公	Gou Xi 苟晞	311(306)	after the death of Yue of Donghai
Yuanling 苑陵縣公	Hua Heng 華恒	313	accession of Mindi
Yiju 弋居伯	Suo Chen 索綝	313	accession of Mindi
Linying 臨潁縣公	Xun Zu 荀組	313	accession of Mindi, waiqi
Shangluo 上洛郡公	Suo Chen 索綝	313-316	chastisement of Liu Yao, defense of Mindi
Quling 曲陵公	Xun Song 荀崧	313-316	transfer from Wuyang
Wucheng 烏程公	Zhou Qi 周玘	313-316	conferred by Yuandi as King of Jin
Xiping 西平郡公	Zhang Gui 張軌	314	help during the siege of Chang'an
Changcen 長岑男	Yu Min 庾珉	<316	unknown
Han'an 漢安侯	Wang Dun 王敦	316	chastisement of Du Tao
Jiaying 嘉興開國公	Gu Rong 顧榮	316(302)	posthumously by Yuandi as King of Jin
Linxiang 臨湘侯	Ji Zhan 紀瞻	316>	unknown
Sheyang 射陽公	Xun Kai 荀闓	316>	Yuandi as King of Jin
Wugang 武岡侯	Wang Dao 王導	<317	chastisement of Hua Yi
Yongning 永寧伯	Zhou Fu 周馥	<317	chastisement of Chen Min
Guangrao 廣饒侯	Cao Yi 曹嶷	<317	unknown
Zhu'a 祝阿子	Shao Xu 邵續	<317	unknown
Bohai 渤海公	Duan Pidi 段匹磾	<317	outside realm?
Guangning 廣甯公	Duan Chen 段辰	<317	outside realm?

Tab. 18 Reasons for Ennoblement of the Western Jin Liehou Lordships

noble title	rank	first Jin holder	year of creation	reason for ennoblement
Fengle 豐樂亭侯	tinghou	Du Yu 杜預	266	continuation of Wei title
Wuting 莠亭侯	tinghou	Yang Wenzong 楊文宗	266	continuation of Wei title
Ganlu 甘露亭侯	tinghou	Yang Xiu 羊琇	266	Sima partisan
Anling 安陵鄉侯	xianghou	Xun Yun 荀勗	266	continuation of Wei title
Gao'an 高安鄉侯	xianghou	Xiahou Shao 夏侯劭	266	continuation of Wei title
Changguo 昌國縣侯	xianhou	Ren Kai 任愷	266	continuation of Wei title
Jingling 京陵侯	xianhou	Wang Hun 王渾	266	continuation of Wei title
Xue 薛縣侯	xianhou	Wu Gai 武陔	266	continuation of Wei title
Wuchang 武昌鄉侯	tinghou	Ji Han 嵇含	266?	may have been continuation of Wei title
Fengsheng 奉聖亭侯	tinghou	Kong Zhen 孔震	266?	new title for descendant of Confucius
Gaoyang 高陽亭侯	tinghou	Pei Jing 裴憬	271	tui'en
Anyang 安陽亭侯	tinghou	Han Gai 韓蓋	280	subjugation of Wu
Runan 汝南亭侯	tinghou	He Yu 和郁	280	tui'en for brothers merit on defeat of Shu
Yangxiang 楊鄉亭侯	tinghou	Wang Yi 王彝	280	tui'en for father's merit on subduing of Wu
Xincheng 新城亭侯	tinghou	Han Chang 韓暢	280	tui'en for Jia Chong's merit on subduing Wu
Yangli 陽里亭侯	tinghou	Jia Hun 賈混	280	tui'en for Jia Chong's merit on subduing Wu
Wanling 宛陵侯	xianhou	Tao Huang 陶璜	280	original Wu governor acknowledged by Wudi
Wudang 武當侯	xianhou	Teng Xiu/You 滕脩	280	original Wu governor acknowledged by Wudi
Anfeng 安豐縣侯	xianhou	Wang Rong 王戎	280	subjugation of Wu
Anyang 安陽縣侯	xianhou	Shi Chong 石崇	280	subjugation of Wu
Chengwu 成武侯	xianhou	Zhou Jun 周浚	280	subjugation of Wu
Dangyang 當陽縣侯	xianhou	Du Yu 杜預	280	subjugation of Wu
Guangwu 廣武縣侯	xianhou	Zhang Hua 張華	280	subjugation of Wu
Shangyong 上庸縣侯	xianhou	Tang Bin 唐彬	280	subjugation of Wu
Xiangyang 襄陽縣侯	xianhou	Wang Jun 王濬	280	subjugation of Wu
Jiangling 江陵侯	xianhou	Wang XY 王氏	280	tui'en for father's merit in subjugation of Wu
Fenggao 奉高縣侯	xianhou	Ma Long 馬隆	290	bestowed by Yang Jun
Chang'an 昌安縣侯	xianhou	Shi Jian 石鑿	290	bestowed by Yang Jun for supervising the erection of burial mound
Wuxiang 武鄉亭侯	tinghou	Fu Chang 傅暢	291	tui'en for brothers merit on death of Yang Jun
Dongming 東明亭侯	tinghou	Fu Jun 傅雱	291	tui'en for brothers merit on death of Yang Jun

Xuanchang 宣昌亭侯	tinghou	Hua Jiao 華嶠	291	unknown
Lexiang 樂鄉侯	xianghou	Hua Jiao 華嶠	291	after the death of Yang Jun
Pingyang 平陽鄉侯	xianghou	Jia Mo 賈模	291	after the death of Yang Jun
Pingxiang 平鄉侯	xianghou	He Feng 何逢	291	tui'en for brothers merit on death of Yang Jun
Xicheng 西城侯	xianhou	He Pan 何攀	291	after the death of Yang Jun
Wuchang 武昌侯	xianhou	Pei Gai 裴該	291	tui'en for father's merit on death of Yang Jun
Linhai 臨海侯	xianhou	Pei Kai 裴楷	291-299	during supremacy of Empress Jia
Guanjun 冠軍縣侯	xianhou	Guo Zhang 郭彰	291-299	relative of Empress Jia
Minyang 敏陽侯	xianhou	Wang Yu 王聿	297>	tui'en as inheritance of a princess dignity
Pingle 平樂鄉侯	xianghou	Yan Pu 閻璞	<300	recreation of Wei title for unknown reasons
Dongxiang 東鄉侯	xianghou	Tao Kan 陶侃	300-316	chastisement of the rebels
Liangzou 梁鄒縣侯	xianhou	Liu Song 劉頌	301	chastisement of Ji Mi, awarded by Lun of Zhao
Jinxing 晉興縣侯	xianhou	Sun Hui 孫惠	301	partisan of prince of Qi, chastisement of Lun of Zhao
Anle 安樂鄉侯	xianghou	Zhang Gui 張軌	305	defense against Xianbei raid
Guangwu 廣武侯	xianhou	Liu Kun 劉琨	306	return of Huidi to Luoyang
Lantian 藍田縣侯	xianhou	Wang Cheng 王承	306	return of Huidi to Luoyang
Wuling 武陵縣侯	xianhou	Wang Yi 王廙	306	return of Huidi to Luoyang
Anyang 安陽亭侯	tinghou	Xue Jian 薛兼	306?	partisan of Yue of Donghai
Anle 安樂亭侯	tinghou	Suo Jing 索靖	306?	posthumously during the upheaval of eight princes
Anyang 安陽鄉侯	xianghou	Xue Jian 薛兼	306>	partisan of Yue of Donghai
Xiu/Youwu 脩武縣侯	xianhou	Li Ju 李矩	312-316	defense of Luoyang against Qian Zhao
Yangwu 陽武縣侯	xianhou	Li Ju 李矩	312-316	defense of Luoyang against Qian Zhao
Fulu 福祿縣侯	xianhou	Zhang Shi 張寔	312-316	chastisement of rebels in Liangzhou
Xian 咸亭侯	tinghou	Xie Kun 謝鯤	313-316	chastisement of Du Tao
Dongming 東明亭侯	tinghou	Li Ju 李矩	313-316	chastisement of Qi Wannian
Yuanxiang 原鄉亭侯	tinghou	Liu Chao 劉超	313-316	partisan of Yuandi
Chaisang 柴桑侯	xianhou	Tao Kan 陶侃	316>	pacification of Guangzhou rebels
Wucheng 烏程縣侯	xianhou	Zhou Qi 周玘	<313	chastisement of rebels
Jianwu 建武亭侯	tinghou	Zhang Shi 張寔	<313?	chastisement of rebels
Anling 安陵亭侯	tinghou	Bian Dun 卞敦	<317	chastisement of Du Tao
Zhangpu 漳浦亭侯	tinghou	Zhou Zha 周札	<317	chastisement of rebels
Yichang 宜昌亭侯	tinghou	Zhang Fu 張輔	<317	unknown
Dongxiang 東鄉侯	xianghou	Gu Zhong 顧眾	<317	chastisement of Hua Yi
Ping'a 平阿縣侯	xianhou	Zhao You 趙誘	<317	chastisement of Du Tao
Xunyang 尋陽縣侯	xianhou	Zhou Fang 周訪	<317	chastisement of rebels Hua Yi and Du Tao

Jiyang 吉陽亭侯	tinghou	Guo Song 郭誦	317	restoration of the dynasty
Pingyang 平陽縣侯	xianhou	Li Ju 李矩	317	restoration of the dynasty
Qingming 清明亭侯	tinghou	Xiahou Zhuang 夏侯莊	unknown	may be a Wei title
Yingyang 潁陽亭侯	tinghou	Xun Xian 荀顯	unknown	tui'en for grandfather's merit
Anshou 安壽亭侯	tinghou	Wang Qian 王虔	unknown	unknown
Qingliu 清流亭侯	tinghou	Zhou Mao 周懋	unknown	unknown
Anchang 安昌鄉侯	xianghou	Suo Yu 索聿	unknown	unknown

As we have already seen the highest rungs of imaginary ladder of merit were occupied by those who had helped to establish the dynasty, long time followers of the Sima family whose unwavering support made the dynastic change possible. In fact, during the reign of Wudi the merit of assisting with founding of the dynasty (*zuoming zhi gong* 佐命之功) was the only qualification for peerage enfeoffment. None of the future meritorious deeds was considered to be as important as the loyal support prior to 266 AD. According to Wudi the peerage titles were to be reserved for the meritorious ministers who were to form kind of exclusive and closed group of high nobility of the empire the membership of which remained out of reach for everyone else as the act of dynasty founding was naturally not repeatable. All future service to the dynasty, whatever its import, was to be deemed only secondary in comparison to the great merit of the dynastic founders and should be rewarded only by bestowal of less prestigious lordship dignities.

Like the concept of merit itself, merit of assisting with founding of the dynasty is by no means well defined and in case of the Western Jin it can range from active support bordering on committing treason against the Wei Dynasty, as was for example Jia Chong's role in regicide of Duke of Gaogui, to biding one's time and tacitly consenting to the dynastic change at the last possible moment. In compiling the tables I tried to take into consideration these differences and even though all dignities created at the beginning of the dynasty in 266 AD were, theoretically speaking, conferred as a reward for the support of the Simas, I tried to differentiate between them as the degree of willing cooperation of the particular title holders may have differed considerably.

Therefore, only those of the new Jin peers who are explicitly mentioned by the sources as meritorious ministers or as acquiring the merit of helping in establishing of the dynasty are listed as *gongchen* together with holders of the ducal dignities, the rank of their title being sufficient proof of momentousness of their service. Few other titles were granted for unspecified past service to the dynasty or for support of the Sima house. The same reason for enfeoffment is to be expected in case of all other peerage titles which were newly created

immediately after the establishment of the dynasty. But there were also many titles which were originally bestowed already during the preceding Wei Dynasty and were simply adopted by the Jin to continue unaltered as their own peerages and lordships.

It is hard to determine the exact reason behind survival of any of these particular dignities. Some of them were of course created only in 264 AD during the establishment of the five ranks peerages. They were indeed theoretically bestowed under the aegis of the last Wei monarch, yet as the whole system of the enfeoffment change was orchestrated by the Simas, these peerages undoubtedly reflected the importance of their holders for the regent family and its plans for usurping the throne. Despite being members of the Wei titled nobility, their allegiance in fact belonged to the Simas. Therefore, once the dynasty changed their titles were confirmed and they became part of the Jin titled nobility. On the other hand, there were also established Wei families which tried to stand aloof from the power struggle waiting for an opportune moment to change their allegiance. The Simas tried hard to win their support and later rewarded their goodwill by allowing them to retain their original noble dignities which may have been conferred long before the ascent of the Simas began. Thus the “continuation of the Wei title” may actually refer to both the peerages awarded in 264 AD to the loyal supporters of the Simas as well as the old Wei dignities bestowed in the first half of the 3rd century on meritorious ministers and commanders of the Wei.

While the majority of the peers and lords created in 266 AD acquired their noble dignities in virtue of their more or less tangible service to the Simas, there were also some dignities created for specific reasons of ritual legitimacy in case of which the crucial notion of merit becomes rather abstract. Following the established precedents Wudi enfeoffed princes of the deposed ruling family as dukes, thereby ritually accomplishing the act of usurpation sanctioned by Heaven. But at the same time Wudi went one step further when he enfeoffed in the same way not only descendants of the former imperial house of Han but even a scion of the great Zhou whose origin, half a millennium since the last Zhou king ceased to reign, must have been obscure at best. These were ritual enfeoffments partially dictated by tradition, partially necessitated by an urgent need for legitimacy of the Jin regime which was an heir to the time of disunion when the line of rightful imperial succession (*zhengtong* 正統) was by no means clear. The symbolic value of these noble dignities was of utmost importance for the new regime aspiring to unification of all under heaven. Through the ritual enfeoffment of the members of the preceding dynastic houses the Jin symbolically espoused their governmental traditions and at the same time were integrated into the chain of legitimate succession of imperial regimes.

As we can see from the tables, the founding of the dynasty was not the only moment when one could achieve promotion into the ranks of titled nobility. New noble dignities were created during the whole period of the Western Jin even though the prospects of ennoblement were less bright and as a rule limited to noble dignities of considerably lower rank, at least during Wudi's reign. When we look at the tables, we can see that majority of noble dignities created after the founding of the dynasty from 267 AD onwards were bestowed in virtue of meritorious service which was more or less military in nature. It is not surprising as the Han enfeoffment system derived substantially from the system of the Qin noble ranks (*cijue* 賜爵) which were awarded according to bravery on the battlefield and number of severed enemy heads. It seems that the merit on which the bestowal of noble dignities depended was always connected more with military exploits than efficiency in civil office and noble dignities in general retained strong military nature. Circumstantial evidence is provided by discussion of a ritual issue of conferring posthumous names which occurred at the beginning of the Eastern Jin. It clearly attests to the prevalent understanding that the noble titles were rewards reserved exclusively for military achievements:

“Since the Han and the Wei [dynasties] bestowal of posthumous names was mostly [done in consequence] of noble rank. Even though one may have achieved position of authority and great virtue, one was not [entitled] to receive posthumous name unless one had been given a noble title first. [Wang] Dao therefore petitioned the throne arguing that: “The military officials get the noble rank and [therefore] necessarily even the posthumous name. But [the civil] ministers and advisors won't get the posthumous name unless they hold a noble rank. The original meaning of the system is lost indeed!” [The emperor] followed his advice. Later on the posthumous names were conferred on the great officials of state even though they did not hold any noble titles, [exactly] as [Wang] Dao had argued.”²⁴⁶

The military merit required for bestowal of a noble dignity might have been gained in many different ways. At the time when China was divided into three and later two independent regimes the easiest way would be to take part in a military campaign against the rival state or defending the border against the raids of the enemy forces:

“[Jia] Kui was appointed Regional Inspector (*cishi* 刺史) of Yuzhou ... As the southern part of the region [under his jurisdiction] bordered on Wu, [Jia] Kui understood [the importance

²⁴⁶ *Jinshu* juan 65, *Wang Dao zhuan*, p. 1750.

of] gathering information [about the enemy], he had the armor and weaponry repaired and got ready, making [all kinds of] preparation for [both] defense and attack so that the enemy did not dare to encroach on [the territory of the realm]. He was building an army [to be used] outside [the region and at the same time he was also taking care of] internal affairs of governing the people. He dammed the Yan and the Ru rivers building new dykes. He was also cutting through mountains regulating the flow of the streams and rivers building the Small Yiyang Barrage. He also constructed a shipping canal more than two hundred miles long, which is the so called Canal of Lord Jia. During the Huangchu Era (220-226 AD) he followed all the [Wei] military commanders in campaigning against Wu and defeated Lü Fan at Dongpu, being afterwards promoted in rank to village marquis of Yangli with additional title of General Establishing Authority (*jianwei jiangjun* 建威將軍). After Mingdi's accession to the throne his apanage was increased by two hundred households so that [he enjoyed] four hundred households altogether.²⁴⁷

The enfeoffment of Jia Kui 賈逵 actually took place at the beginning of the Wei Dynasty and strictly speaking does not illustrate the practice of the Jin. However, the Jin in many ways followed the precedents set by the Han and the Wei and once Sima Yi and his sons usurped the authority of the Emperor it was the Simas who actually decided about all promotions and ennoblements. Therefore, some of the Wei practices clearly prefigured later official system of the Jin. This and following examples from the Wei Dynasty are used deliberately in order to show continuity in both the practice and the “noble” lineage as I have selected only members of the families which were to figure prominently at the Jin court. For example, Jia Kui was father of Jia Chong, the most influential *gongchen* of Wudi's reign and father to Empress Jia.

While Jia Kui without doubt still owed allegiance to the Wei, Wang Chang 王昶 who fought the Wu forces in neighboring Jingzhou some three decades later was already acting on command of the Sima regent:

“In the second year of the Jiaping Era (250 AD) ... [Wang] Chang had all the repeating crossbows shoot simultaneously [at the Wu forces], the great commander of the enemy, Shi Ji, fled during the night and withdrew behind the walls of Jiangling. [Chang's men] pursued [the fleeing enemy] and cut off hundreds of heads. [Wang] Chang wanted to lure them out [of the city] to engage them in a battle on the open plain. Therefore, he first [feigned retreat by] sending five army units back using [all the] main access routes to the city so that the enemy would be

²⁴⁷ *Sanguozhi* juan 15, *Jia Kui zhuan*, p. 363.

able to observe [the retreat] and rejoice at it. [Then] he rode quickly round the city [parading] captured armored battle horses and severed heads [of their fallen comrades] in order to enrage them, leaving some men lying in ambush waiting for the [Wu soldiers coming in pursuit]. Shi Ji indeed pursued [the Wei forces] and a battle was fought in which [Wang Chang] vanquished him. Shi Ji [himself] fled and escaped [with his life], but his officers Zhongli Mao and Xu Min lost their heads. [When the victors] gathered [severed] heads, banners, drums, valuables and weapons [of the enemy], the army regrouped and returned [north] ... Then Wang Chang was promoted to Great General Conquering the South (*zhengnan dajiangjun* 征南大將軍), Unequaled in Honor (*yitong sansi* 儀同三司) and enfeoffed as Marquis of Jingling. When Guanqiu Jian and Wen Qin rose up in rebellion, he gained [further] merit by leading his forces against Jian and Qin. [For these achievements] two [of his younger sons] were enfeoffed as a village marquis and a lord of the royal domain respectively with Wang Chang himself being promoted to position of Cavalry General (*piaoji jiangjun* 驃騎將軍).”²⁴⁸

Wang Chang not only became Marquis of Jingling 京陵侯 following his victory over Wu forces, establishing a noble lineage of Taiyuan Wangs 太原王氏 which was to thrive during the Western Jin, but he also proved his loyalty to the Simas even further when he helped to suppress the rebellion of Guanqiu Jian 毌丘儉 and Wen Qin 文欽.²⁴⁹ Feats of arms meriting the ennoblement were obviously not limited to fighting the external foe behind the border. Bringing down a rebellion or annihilating the internal enemy was also a reason for enfeoffment and if he had not been enfeoffed before Wang Chang would have undoubtedly earned a noble rank for this timely intervention of his. However, as he was already a prefecture marquis, he could not have been promoted in rank for under the Wei the higher noble dignities were reserved for the princes of the blood. Nevertheless, his achievement was too great to be overlooked and the court at least granted lower noble titles to his younger sons to compensate him for his effort. Such an arrangement might have actually been even more advantageous to the family because together with the eldest son, who was to inherit his father’s marquisate there were now no less than three family lines enjoying hereditary noble status. The chances of the Jingling family to survive as a member of the elite were thereby greatly enhanced.

Military achievements meriting enfeoffment were not limited to actual fighting. Offering sound advice, devising useful strategy or simply supervising the preparations for the

²⁴⁸ *Sanguozhi* juan 27, *Wang Chang zhuan*, p. 556.

²⁴⁹ For this rebellion see Leban, Carl (2010): p. 22.

military campaign or overseeing the logistics and coordination of supplies were also seen as important contributions to overall war effort as was the case of Zheng Mo 鄭默 during the final conquest of Shu in 263 AD:

“[Zheng] Mo started his official career as Assistant in the Palace Library (*bishulang* 祕書郎) carefully studying and examining the old documents ... [later] he was transferred to position of Gentleman of Bureau of Evaluation within the Department of State Affairs (*shangshu kaogonglang* 尚書考功郎) and [in this capacity] he supervised conquest of Shu for which he was enfeoffed as lord of the royal domain and promoted to Left Aide to Minister of Education (*situ zuo zhangshi* 司徒左長史).”²⁵⁰

In case of commanders and officers who had already been enfeoffed or who had inherited a noble dignity from their fathers or other close relatives their new achievements called for promotion either in rank or in size of the apanage. Career of Du Yu 杜預 offers more than one example of such promotion:

“When Wendi (Sima Zhao) succeeded to the position of [the regent], [Du] Yu married his younger sister, Princess of Gaolu (daughter of Sima Yi), and [later] started his official career as Secretarial Court Gentleman (*shangshulang* 尚書郎) and inherited his grandfather’s noble title of village marquis of Fenge. He had served in this office for four years before he was transferred to Adjutant in the Grand Councilor’s office (*can xiangfu junshi* 參相府軍事). When Zhong Hui campaigned against [the state of] Shu, [Du] Yu was named Aide to the [General] Defending West (*zhenxi zhangshi* 鎮西長史). When [Zhong] Hui rose in rebellion, all officials and adjutants [under his command] met their doom and perished, only [Du] Yu managed to avoid [this disaster and escaped with his life] thanks to his wisdom and his apanage was increased by one thousand one hundred and fifty households.”²⁵¹

“At that time the emperor harbored a secret plan [aiming at] annihilation of [the southern state of] Wu, but the deliberations of the court [ministers] were mostly against [the campaign]. Only [Du] Yu, Yang Hu and Zhang Hua were of the same opinion as the emperor. [Yang] Hu fell ill and had raised Du Yu to take up his position as [a coordinator of planned campaign]. [Du Yu] was therefore in addition to his current official post commissioned with a

²⁵⁰ *Jinshu* juan 44, *Zheng Mo zhuan*, p. 1251; For Zhong Hui’s attempt to carve out his own independent domain in Sichuan see Leban, Carl (2010): pp. 39-40.

²⁵¹ *Jinshu* juan 34, *Du Yu zhuan*, p. 1025.

warrant to be Acting General Pacifying East (*xing pingdong jiangjun* 行平東將軍) and Concurrent Chastising South Army Supervisor (*ling zhengnan junsì* 領征南將軍). When [Yang] Hu died, [Du Yu] was appointed Great General Defending South (*zhennan dajiangjun* 鎮南大將軍), Commander-in-chief supervising all the military affairs of Jingzhou. Moreover, he was given a fast *zhui Feng* carriage and two [additional] side horses [as a mark of honor]. When [Du] Yu arrived to his garrison post he had the armour and weaponry [of his troops] mended and made the military might resplendent. Then he selected crack troops and made a surprise attack on Zhang Zheng, Wu Supervisor (*du* 督) of Xiling, and routed him. For this merit [the apanage of] his fief (village lord of Fengle) was increased by three hundred sixty five households.”²⁵²

Du Yu gradually became one of the main advocates of aggressive advance against the state of Wu, masterminding necessary preparations in border military commands along the course of the Yangzi River as well as strategic plans for the final campaign. Even though the overall command of the operations was in the end entrusted to someone else and Du Yu was to be just one of the commanders contributing to the final victory, his long-standing commitment to the task of subduing the rival regime in the South earned him new enfeoffment as a prefecture lord of Dangyang 當陽縣侯 with generous apanage of almost ten thousand households and an additional village lordship for one of his sons.²⁵³

The conquest of Wu in 280 AD was the main military enterprise of Wudi's reign and the event of great consequence, second only to the establishment of the dynasty itself. The importance of this victory is reflected by the exceptional rewards for the victorious commanders. The tables above attest to Wudi's reluctance to create new noble dignities after 266 AD. Apart from occasional enfeoffments of surrendered enemy commanders, imperial distaff relatives and descendants of loyal servants of the dynasty the emperor appears to be rather stingy with granting the ultimate honor of ennoblement. But the symbolic importance of the fall of the independent South called for extraordinary reward. After all, the military victory not only brought peace to the realm ending decades of armed struggles for supremacy after the disintegration of the Han Empire, but in the first place achieved the unity of the empire proving the Jin to be the rightful possessor of the heavenly mandate and legitimate successor to the Han. Therefore, the conquest of Wu was followed by collective enfeoffment of the commanders responsible for this outstanding success of the Jin arms. Thirteen new noble dignities were created which represents the largest number since the establishment of

²⁵² *Jinshu* juan 34, *Du Yu zhuan*, p. 1028.

²⁵³ *Jinshu* juan 34, *Du Yu zhuan*, p. 1030.

the Jin. Yet the imaginary hierarchy of merit was maintained as the victorious commanders were granted only lordship dignities which stood far below the peerages bestowed on meritorious ministers who had contributed to the founding of the dynasty. The only exception was Wang Hun 王渾, son of Wang Chang mentioned above, who was adjudged the main credit for the fall of Wu and duly given the ducal rank within the peerage with standing and apanage comparable to the old *gongchen*:

“Sun Hao’s Minister of Education (*situ* 司徒) He Zhi and General Establishing Authority (*jianwei jiangjun* 建威將軍) Sun Yan sent their official seals and credentials and surrendered to [Wang] Hun. At the same time Wang Jun had already seized the [fortress of] Shitou and received the submission of Sun Hao and his military reputation was greatly enhanced by it. It was only next day that Wang Hun crossed the Yangzi River and ascended the [terraces of] the palace in Jianye where he held sumptuous feast and served fine wine. Because he had first occupied the upper reaches of the Yangzi River and defeated Sun Hao’s main army, he halted his troops and did not proceed [any further]. That is why he reached [Jianye only] after Wang Jun. He felt ashamed and resentful, repeatedly submitting memoranda accusing and incriminating Wang Jun, [gradually] becoming laughing-stock of his contemporaries. The emperor issued the following edict: “Commander-in-chief Commissioned with Special Powers (*shichijie* 使持節) supervising military affairs of Yangzhou, General Appeasing the East (*andong jiangjun* 安東將軍) Wang Hun, Marquis of Jingling, led troops under his command and [duly] invested Moling and thereby compelled that miscreant Sun Hao to save what could be saved and guard his [position in Jianye], preventing him from dividing his army and sending [reinforcements] upstream. Thus he made possible the great achievement of the western contingent [led by Wang Jun]. Moreover, he had destroyed the great enemy host capturing Zhang Ti, leaving Sun Hao with no other option but to beg to surrender with his hands tied behind his back. Eventually, he pacified Moling [as well] and his merit is outstanding indeed! Let the [apanage of] his fief be increased by eight thousand households, let him be promoted in rank to duke [of Jingling], His son [Wang] Cheng is to be enfeoffed as a village lord and younger brother [Wang] Zhan as a lord of the royal domain. [The family] shall be granted eight thousand bolts of silk.”²⁵⁴

²⁵⁴ *Jinshu* juan 42, *Wang Hun zhuan*, p. 1202; According to Pei Songzhi’s commentary to *Sanguozhi* a son of Wang Hun was enfeoffed as a lord of Jiangling 江陵侯 thanks to his father’s merit gained during the conquest of Wu. Most likely it was Wang Cheng 王澄 mentioned by *Jinshu* and Jiangling thus appears to be a village lordship bestowed by act of special grace. See *Sanguozhi* juan 27, *Wang Chang zhuan*, p. 556, note number 1.

The rewards were bestowed not only upon commanders who distinguished themselves on the battlefields, but strangely enough even on court ministers who were only formally charged with supervising the campaign. The men like Jia Chong or Xun Xu gained additional noble titles for their younger relatives despite the fact that they did not actively take part in the fighting and actually even vehemently opposed the campaign as such demanding the heads of Du Yu and other advisors responsible for the attack on the very day when Sun Hao capitulated.²⁵⁵

“When Wang Jun submitted memorial to the throne requesting permission to launch an attack against Wu, [Xun] Xu and Jia Chong vigorously remonstrated [with the emperor claiming that the attack] was impossible. The emperor did not lend an ear to their [objections] and yet, eventually, Wu was vanquished. When the merits [of the officials taking part in conquest of Wu] were assessed, a son [of Xun Xu] was enfeoffed as a village lord with apanage of one thousand households [despite Xun Xu’s original protests] for his father’s [merit of] transmitting imperial orders and supervising [that they were carried out]. He had been granted one thousand bolts of silk. Moreover, [Xun Xu’s] grandson Xun Xian was enfeoffed as village lord of Yingyang.”²⁵⁶

The same kind of reward was bestowed on Jia Chong whose rather formal and unwilling engagement in the enterprise secured village lordships for two of his grandsons and a younger brother.²⁵⁷ To understand Jia Chong’s and Xun Xu’s disapproval of the southern campaign as well as reasons for the special grace enfeoffment of their junior relatives it is crucial to realize that both Jia Chong and Xun Xu were meritorious ministers whose political preeminence was based on their past service to the Simas. Naturally they were painfully aware of the consequences of the eventual fall of Wu. The final unification of the empire would call for wholesale promotion of the new men who would become new titled nobility challenging their authority and prominent standing of the founding members of the regime. Their vociferous remonstrations and unscrupulous diatribes against the “warmongers” bordering on sabotaging the war effort in fact mirrored their fear that they might lose their power and influence at court. Wudi seemed to have understood the reasons behind their opposition and tried to mollify their fears by first entrusting them with command along with the new military men, thereby making them eligible for possible rewards and later by bestowing special grace

²⁵⁵ *Jinshu* juan 40, *Jia Chong zhuan*, pp. 1169-1170.

²⁵⁶ *Jinshu* juan 39, *Xun Xu zhuan*, p. 1154.

²⁵⁷ *Jinshu* juan 40, *Jia Chong zhuan*, p. 1170.

on their brothers, sons and grandsons strengthening the position of their families by further enfeoffments which helped them to retain their pride of place among the elite.²⁵⁸

With the fall of Wu the prospects of further military engagements diminished for the empire for the time being did not face any serious military threat. The possibility of enfeoffment consequently became rather limited as the military merit prerequisite for bestowal of a noble dignity was not to be had so easily with the occasional minor rebellions remaining the only option opened for those who hoped for ennoblement to prove their worth in a battle. We have already seen that taking part in a punitive campaign launched against internal enemies and political opponents of the Simas was an important way how to secure promotion and coveted noble dignity even before the founding of the dynasty. Career of Wang Xiang 王祥, founder of the Western Jin ducal branch of the famous Langye Wang 琅邪王氏 family may offer another example:

“Wang Xiang was nominated for Cultivated Talent (*xiucai* 秀才) and appointed Prefecture Magistrate (*ling* 令) of Wen Prefecture. Eventually he was promoted to Chamberlain for the National Treasury (*dasinong* 大司農). When Duke of Gaogui ascended the throne he bestowed on Wang Xiang a noble title of lord of the royal domain for his merit of establishing the governmental policies. He was named Chamberlain for Attendants (*guangluxun* 光祿勳) [only to be] transferred to Metropolitan Commandant (*sili xiaowei* 司隸校尉) [soon afterwards]. For taking part in punitive campaign against Guanqiu Jian his apanage was increased by four hundred households, he was promoted to Chamberlain for Ceremonials (*taichang* 太常) and enfeoffed as village marquis of Wansui.”²⁵⁹

It is obvious, however, that the merit of suppressing a rebellion was considered inferior to other military exploits achieved during the campaigns against the rival regimes and was rewarded only with dignities on the lower end of the noble hierarchy:

“[Li Ju] won outstanding merit in fighting Di [leader] Qi Wannian and [as a reward he] was enfeoffed as village lord of Dongming.”²⁶⁰

²⁵⁸ For the power struggle behind the Wu campaign see Yu Zhaowei (2002): pp. 37-40.

²⁵⁹ *Jinshu* juan 33, *Wang Xiang zhuan*, p. 988.

²⁶⁰ *Jinshu* juan 63, *Li Ji zhuan*, p. 1706.

Even though Li Ju 李矩 in 299 AD managed to quell large and dangerous uprising of several ethnic groups lead by a Di 氏 leader Qi Wannian 齊萬年 which ravaged the region of present day Shaanxi and northern Sichuan for more than three years, he was enfeoffed as a mere village lord.²⁶¹ As this happened ten years after Wudi's death when strict rules for enfeoffment gave way to more flexible use of the system with the court bestowing noble dignities rather freely, not shunning even occasional creation of a new peerage, village lordship awarded to Li Ju clearly shows low regard for his accomplishment. Guanlong 關隴 was far away from the capital and the court society preoccupied with power struggle between the princes and Empress Jia could not be bothered to fully appreciate the value of this military achievement.

The same holds true for a minor Jingzhou uprising at the beginning of the 4th century in which Tao Kan 陶侃, future Commander-in-chief of the Eastern Jin forces, first distinguished himself. Fairly low lordship dignity reflects the view of the court that these local disturbances were just nuisances of no importance, unworthy of too much attention and therefore left to local civil or military personnel to be dealt with:

“It happened that Liu Hong was appointed Regional Inspector (*cishi* 刺史) of Jingzhou. When he was just about to depart [for the provinces and] assume the office, he summoned [Tao] Kan and made him Aide of Southern Aborigines (*nan Man zhangshi* 南蠻長史), dispatching him ahead [of the travelling party] to Xiangyang where he was to chastise the rebel [leader] Zhang Chang. [Tao Kan] duly defeated him. When [Liu] Hong [finally] arrived [to his garrison], he said to [Tao] Kan: “When I was Adjutant (*canjun* 參軍) to His Lordship Yang [Hu], he told me once that I would later take up his place. Now when I look at you, I am sure [that one day] you will become successor of this old fellow (i.e. myself)!” Then he was enfeoffed for his military achievements as lord of Dongxiang with apanage of one thousand households.”²⁶²

This attitude changed dramatically during the second half of the Western Jin Dynasty. The authority of the central government deteriorated following the disastrous Upheaval of the Eight Princes and local rebellions and uprisings of the non-Han ethnic groups became more frequent. Progressively worsening situation compelled the court to reassess its attitude to regional commanders who succeeded in suppressing a rebellion. With the central forces depleted by internal strife the central government was increasingly dependent on these men

²⁶¹ For Qi Wannian's uprising see Yang Ming (1991): pp. 59-62.

²⁶² *Jinshu* juan 66, *Tao Kan zhuan*, p. 1769.

whose armies still managed to maintain some semblance of control over the territory under their jurisdiction. Therefore, the court spared no expense and bestowed generous rewards for quelling uprisings in order to encourage the faltering loyalty of the army leaders:

“After Ji Sang destroyed Ye, [Sima] Yue, Prince of Donghai, led [the army into the field] in order to chastise Ji Sang and encamped at Guandu, ordering [Gou] Xi to command the vanguard. Ji Sang had been always afraid of him and now had a stockade built outside the city walls to defend his position. When Gou Xi arrived to [vicinity of Ye] he halted his march and let the soldiers rest. He sent a single rider ahead to reconnoiter the situation. Ji Sang’s hordes were so frightened that they abandoned the stockade and fled under cover of night, fortifying themselves in the city and defending it tenaciously. [Gou] Xi seized nine fortified encampments [of the enemy one by one] and when the situation in Ye became stabilized he returned back [to the capital]. He marched to the West, [leading] punitive campaign against Lü Lang and [duly] vanquished the enemy. Later on, [Gou Xi] participated in punitive campaign against a Qingzhou rebel Liu Gen, routed Ji Sang and Gongshi Fan, former general under command of [Sima] Ying, Prince of Chengdu and he also defeated Shi Le north of the Yellow River. His reputation for military prowess quickly spread far and wide and his contemporaries compared him to Han [Xin] and Bai [Qi]. He was promoted in rank to General of the Pacification Army (*fujun jiangjun* 撫軍將軍), Commissioned with a Warrant (*jiajie* 假節), Commander-in-chief supervising all military matters in Qingzhou and Yanzhou and was enfeoffed as commandery marquis of Dongping with apanage of ten thousand households.”²⁶³

As the court of Emperor Huaidi grew more desperate, hard pressed by the attacking forces of the emerging regime of Former Zhao, no noble dignity was high enough to reward sufficiently the loyal services of the regional commanders. While Gou Xi 苟晞 was granted high peerage title of a commandery marquis, Zhang Gui 張軌, whose timely reinforcements helped to repel the attack of insurgents and saved the capital from capture, was rewarded with a ducal title, the highest dignity attainable for non-royals:

“Suddenly Wang Mi raided [the capital region around] Luoyang. Zhang Gui sent Beigong Chun, Zhang Zuan, Ma Fang and Yin Jun leading regional forces [of Liangzhou] to attack and destroy him. Moreover, he also defeated Liu Cong (King of Zhao) in Hedong. Following song circulated in the metropolis [after these victories]: “The great horse from

²⁶³ *Jinshu* juan 61, *Gou Xi zhuan*, p. 1666, translation follows amended and slightly altered text suggested by note number 7, p. 1678.

Liangzhou galloped quickly and freely across all under heaven, the sparrow hawk of Liangzhou dispersed the vile bandits. When sparrow hawk stirs but a little, men are dying of fear.” The emperor commended his loyalty and promoted him in rank to commandery duke of Xiping but [Zhang Gui] did not accept it.”²⁶⁴

Zhang Gui’s intervention carried the day and the imperial government tried hard to court his favor as it was in constant need of his protection. Even though Zhang Gui refused to accept such a high honor, probably in a gesture of commendable modesty which should have attested to his professed loyalty, the emperor did not press him to accept the ducal dignity but at least conferred additional village lordship on one of Zhang Gui’s sons with reference to his merit of crushing yet another local rebellion:

“[Zhang Gui’s son] Zhang Shi ... was well-learned and perceptive. He revered the wise and loved the scholars. As a Cultivated Talent (*xiucai* 秀才) he was appointed Gentleman of the Interior (*langzhong* 郎中). At the beginning of the Yongjia Era (307-312 AD) he firmly refused [to accept] appointment to Cavalry General (*piaoji jiangjun* 驃騎將軍) and asked for permission to return to Liangzhou. [The Emperor Huaidi] granted his request and he was newly entrusted with a different post of Court Gentleman for Consultation (*yilang* 議郎). When he reached Guzang (capital of Liangzhou) he was enfeoffed as village lord of Jianwu for the merit gained when he had chastised Cao Qu.”²⁶⁵

Unfortunately, Zhang Gui’s Gansu domain was too distant from Luoyang to provide an efficient succor to the court in need. In the end the capital fell and remnants of the ruling circles tried to sustain some control over peripheral regions of the empire where they planned to regain their strength in order to strike back later. While Mindi maintained precarious hold over Guanzhong region, constantly threatened by inroads of the Zhao forces, Sima Rui, future founding emperor of the Eastern Jin, found refuge in Jiangnan where he strove to establish administration of his own, a viable alternative to the doomed regime of his distant cousin in Chang’an. Officially acting as a Counselor-in-chief (*chengxiang* 丞相) and surrogate to the emperor (*chengzhi* 承制) he created noble dignities of his own, rewarding members of locally prominent southern families as well as regional commanders who efficiently asserted authority of the Jiankang court over Lingnan, the far South of the empire where indigenous

²⁶⁴ *Jinshu* juan 86, *Zhang Gui zhuan*, p. 2223.

²⁶⁵ *Jinshu* juan 86, *Zhang Shi zhuan*, p. 2226.

rulers and governors tried to take advantage of the collapse of central government and establish independent regimes of their own:

“... the people of Guangzhou turned their back on the Regional Inspector (*cishi* 刺史) Guo Ne and invited [certain] Wang Ji, native of Changsha, to be their Regional Inspector. Wang Ji sent a messenger to Wang Dun imploring him to be appointed [the Regional Inspector of] Jiaozhou [instead]. Wang Dun granted [his request], yet Wang Ji in the end did not set out [for Jiaozhou and stayed in Guangzhou]. It happened that Du Hong seized Linhe. As Wang Ji begged for surrender he was instigating Du Hong to capture Jiaozhou. Subsequently, Du Hong together with Wen Shao and Jiaozhou Cultivated Talent (*xiucai* 秀才) Liu Shen conspired to raise a revolt against the state. Someone tried to persuade Tao Kan to settle temporarily in Shixing, observe the situation and bid his time. But Tao Kan would not listen to him and marched straight to Guangzhou. Du Hong sent a messenger [to him] offering submission, but as Tao Kan knew this submission being only pretended, he had some catapults constructed at Fengkou [getting ready for the attack]. It was not long before Du Hong arrived with his light infantry force. But when he found out that Tao Kan had taken precautions [against his attack], he withdrew [immediately]. Tao Kan pursued him and utterly routed his force with Liu Shen having been taken captive at Xiaogui. [Tao Kan] also dispatched his commander Xu Gao to deal with Wang Ji and [Xu Gao had him duly] beheaded and sent his head to the capital. All the commanders and officers begged for permission to pursue the victory and attack Wen Shao, but Tao Kan laughed at them: “With my outstanding renown for military prowess it won’t be necessary to send any troops. Sending single letter should be enough!” and then he send a letter of admonition to [Wen Shao]. Wen Shao was seized with fear and fled. But he was chased and caught in Shixing. For these achievements [the court] enfeoffed [Tao Kan] as marquis of Chaisang with apanage of four thousand households.”²⁶⁶

The urgency of the situation sometimes called for emergency measures and the court was compelled to offer a bounty on a head of an insurgent leader and actually promise a noble dignity as a reward for the quelling of the rebellion:

“And then it happened that [Sima] Yong, Prince of Hejian summoned Liu Qiao to arms [and ordered him to] take punitive measures against [Sima] Xiao, [Prince of Fanyang] in Xuchang. He fabricated the following edict: “Governor (*taishou* 太守) of Yingchuan Liu Yu coerced Xiao, Prince of Fanyang [to take up arms]. He defied the imperial decree appointing

²⁶⁶ *Jinshu* juan 66, *Tao Kan zhuan*, p. 1773.

great number of his own followers [to official positions], plundering commandery and prefectures on his own authority and gathering a great military force. [Liu] Yu and his brothers used to wield great power as in-laws of the Prince of Zhao, being vicious and deceitful. They should have been exterminated long ago! But [due to their good fortune] an amnesty edict applied to them and he was able to keep his head and neck intact. However, the small men do not dread [the consequences of their deeds] and acts of his wickedness multiply day by day. And now he used Gou Xi and made him [regional inspector of] Yanzhou, thereby ignoring totally the royal/princely edict. Let the Great General Defending South (*zhennan dajiangjun* 鎮南大將軍) Hong, General Pacifying South (*pingnan jiangjun* 平南將軍), [Sima] Shi Prince of Pengcheng and the Great General Chastising East (*zhengdong dajiangjun* 征東大將軍) Zhun lead forces under their command and meet at Xuchang where they are to join their forces with Liu Qiao ... in order to get rid of Liu Yu and his brothers. Whoever dares to raise arms in order to oppose [this] royal order [of ours] shall be executed with all his relatives up to the fifth degree. Whoever manages to kill Liu Yu and his brothers and delivers their heads shall be enfeoffed as a prefecture lord with apanage of three thousand households and rewarded with five thousand bolts of silk.²⁶⁷

It is rather symptomatic that the phenomenon of an enfeoffment offered as a bounty on a head of an alleged rebel appears at the time of culminating political crisis during the Upheaval of Eight Princes. With the world torn by universal warfare and alliances and pacts practically ever changing the princes were forced to employ highly unorthodox measures in order to enhance one's power base and attract followers who might support one's cause and decide the struggle in one's favor. Offering of a noble dignity for getting rid of an uncomfortable political opponent might have attracted just the right kind of would-be supporters who might have come handy sometimes in the future. Whatever the exact reason, using enfeoffment as a bounty was obviously an extreme measure employed at the time of crisis and as such reflects worsening situation of the empire with the court gradually losing control to successive princely dictators and later on to independent regional commanders.

After the restoration of the dynasty south of the Yangzi River the mounting tension between the central government and Wang Dun 王敦, highly ambitious regional commander of Jingzhou, compelled the southern court to resort to the same emergency measures. Eclipsed by an all-powerful subject the court was struggling for its survival and the young Emperor

²⁶⁷ *Jinshu* juan 62, *Liu Yu zhuan*, pp. 1691-1692.

Mingdi announced punitive campaign against the offender and his cronies offering rich rewards for their heads including enfeoffment as a prefecture lord:

“After [Wang] Dun reached Wuhu he again submitted memorial impeaching Diao Xie. The Emperor [Mingdi] was greatly enraged and issued the following imperial edict: “Wang Dun, taking advantage of the [emperor’s] kindness and grace [bestowed upon him] dares to indulge [his wild ambitions] and willfully defies [our authority]. He compares us to [hapless] Taijia (incompetent young ruler of Shang who was deprived of his power by minister Yi Yin who later ruled in his name as a regent), and wants us to be imprisoned. If this could be tolerated, then what [other outrage] couldn’t?! Now we will personally lead the six [imperial] armies to punish this [act] of high treason. Whoever kills Dun, let him be enfeoffed as a lord/marquis with apanage of five thousand households.”²⁶⁸

“... [the generals] shall have command over all the armies to chastise [Qian] Feng’s crime. Yet, the blame lies with this one man only and we shall not employ excessive punishments [of other people involved]. Whoever is able to kill [Qian] Feng and deliver his head, let him be enfeoffed as [prefecture] lord with apanage of five thousand households and rewarded with five thousand bolts of cloth.”²⁶⁹

Even though Mingdi’s punitive campaign ended in failure the government forces prevailed after Wang Dun had unexpectedly died and all commanders responsible for the final victory were duly enfeoffed. The same appeal was repeated later in time of another dire crisis of the Eastern Jin when the rebel hordes of Su Jun 蘇峻 captured Jiankang and took Emperor Chengdi prisoner. At that time, desperate regents even offered a peerage marquisate for the heads of the main culprits.²⁷⁰

Besides taking part in military offensive against external threats or fighting the insurgents in punitive campaigns it was also possible to gain the merit necessary for enfeoffment by defending the realm against the incursions of hostile nomadic groups living along the border:

“During the Yongxing Era (304-305 AD) Xianbei [leader] Ruoluo Baneng repeatedly raided [the territory of the empire]. [Zhang] Gui sent [his] Commander (*sima* 司馬) Song Pei to

²⁶⁸ *Jinshu* juan 98, *Wang Dun zhuan*, p. 2559.

²⁶⁹ *Jinshu* juan 98, *Wang Dun zhuan*, p. 2562.

²⁷⁰ “Whoever will be able to cut off the heads of Zu Yue and Su Jun, let him be enfeoffed as a marquis within the peerage and let him be rewarded with ten thousand bolts of cloth.” *Jinshu* juan 67, *Wen Jiao zhuan*, p. 1792.

attack [the intruder] and [Song] had Ruoluo Baneng beheaded and he also took more than ten thousand [tribal] people prisoner and the military might of [Zhang Gui] became awe-inspiring. The Emperor Huidi sent [messengers to award Zhang Gui] an additional title of General Appeasing the West (*anxi jiangjun* 安西將軍) and enfeoff him as township lord of Anle with apanage of one thousand households.²⁷¹

While during the Western Jin the ready defense of the frontier regions remained only a marginal factor in awarding noble dignities, it gained in importance during the Eastern Jin when the southern court repeatedly faced the imminent danger of invasion by an aggressive northern neighbor. The southern campaign of Fu Jian, king of the Former Qin would be the best known example. The forces of the northern court invaded the Huai River basin in 383 AD. The southern court dispatched an army commanded by members of the Chenjun Xie 陳郡謝氏 family which encountered the enemy on the Fei River 淝水 in a series of skirmishes and battles. Eventually, the Jin commanders emerged victorious and the Battle of the Fei River became celebrated by surviving sources as the greatest victory crowning the unequal struggle in which the very existence of the dynasty was at stake. The importance of this military engagement for the southern court is attested by momentous rise in number of peerage enfeoffments bestowed collectively upon the victorious commanders, not unlike the collective enfeoffment of conquerors of Wu some one hundred years before them.²⁷² The example of Xie Shi 謝石 who was charged with overall command of the military operations will suffice to illustrate the point:

“[Xie] Shi ... was initially appointed Assistant in the Palace Library (*bishulang* 祕書郎) and eventually promoted to Vice Director of the Department of State Affairs (*shangshu puye* 尚書僕射). He campaigned against Gou Nan and for his merit was [later] enfeoffed as prefecture count of Xingping. During the campaign on the Fei and the Huai Rivers imperial edict relieved him of his office of Vice Director and as a general commissioned with a warrant, the Great Commander-in-chief supervising the punitive campaign he was sent together with his nephews [Xie] Xuan and [Xie] Yan to defeat Fu Jian (King of Qin) ... despite the fact that the defeat of Fu Jian was actually initiated first by Liu Laozhi and then accomplished by [Xie] Xuan and [Xie] Yan, they were [formally] acting under [Xie] Shi's command. [Xie Shi] was therefore promoted to General of the Capital Army (*zhongjun jiangjun* 中軍將軍), Director of the Department of

²⁷¹ *Jinshu* juan 86, *Zhang Gui zhuan*, p. 2222.

²⁷² For detail of Fu Jian's southern campaign and also different assessment of the battle of the Fei River see Roger, Michael C. (1968), especially pp. 64-69.

State Affairs (*shangshuling* 尚書令) and his enfeoffment was changed to that of commandery duke of Nankang.”²⁷³

Apart from the enfeoffments based on the military achievements gained either during offensive campaigns or punitive expeditions against the rebels, there was a parallel tradition of bestowing noble dignities as a reward for outstanding civil merit which again can be traced back to the Han Dynasty. At the end of the Han Cao Cao had one of his trusted advisors enfeoffed as a village marquis:

“In the eighth year of the Jian’an Era (203 AD) Taizu (Cao Cao) petitioned the throne and had [Xun] Yu enfeoffed as village marquis of Wansui, taking into consideration [Xun] Yu’s previous and current meritorious services.”²⁷⁴

Pei Songzhi’s commentary provides valuable additional information regarding the nature of these services by quoting Cao Cao’s memorandum suggesting Xun Yu’s 荀彧 enfeoffment and subsequent deliberations:

“Your subject has heard that to ponder on [the affairs of state] is the heart of a meritorious service and to offer [good] advice is the root of a reward. Accomplishments of the battlefield do not surpass [service for the] ancestral temple [and imperial court] and feats of arms cannot outdo the achievements for the state. That is the reason why the bestowal of Qufu did not come after Yingqiu and the land of Xiao He had precedence over [the fief of] Pingyang. Rare stratagems and far-reaching plans, that is something which has been esteemed in the ancient times as well as nowadays. Palace Attendant (*shizhong* 侍中), Probationary Director of the Imperial Secretariat (*shou shangshuling* 守尚書令) [Xun] Yu accumulated virtue and repeatedly acted according to it having nothing to regret during his entire life. Even though he was unfortunate to encounter world in turmoil and confusion he cherished [the feelings of] loyalty and longed for the [orderly] rule. Since your subject has raised the righteous army I was fighting and campaigning all around [the empire], I and Xun Yu were united in our effort and worked as one. He served the royal enterprise and in making statements or devising tactics, there was nothing which was not carried out successfully. It was only thanks to Xun Yu’s achievements that your subject was relieved. He pushed aside the floating clouds and made sun and moon shine. When your majesty graced Xu [by Your august presence], Xun Yu enjoyed

²⁷³ *Jinshu* juan 79, *Xie Shi zhuan*, p. 2088.

²⁷⁴ *Sanguozhi* juan 10, *Xun Yu zhuan*, p. 236.

influential position of confidence as a member of [the imperial] entourage, being faithful and devoted, respectful and obedient. He handled all the affairs very carefully, [always] concentrating all his attention [to the task] and sharpening his senses as if he were treading on thin ice. Indeed, it is Xun Yu's achievement that all under heaven is [once more] stable and calm. It would be fitting if he could enjoy [benefits of] a high noble rank. Then we would extol this outstanding merit [of his]." Xun Yu firmly refused [to accept the honor saying that] he had won no distinction on the battlefields and therefore [the reality] does not correspond to what Taizu had claimed in his memorandum. Taizu sent Xun Yu a letter saying "Since we [have started to] work together, we have established an imperial court. You have rectified [the shortcomings of administration] and remedied [the flaws in government] for me, you have elevated men [worthy to be appointed to the offices] for me, you have laid the [great] plan for me and you have devised secret schemes for me. Truly, haven't you done an awful lot? And where the merit is concerned, it is not necessarily achieved [only] on the battlefields. I wish your honor would not decline [the enfeoffment]." Xun Yu then accepted it.²⁷⁵

Xun Yu's refusal to accept the enfeoffment as a village marquis does not only attest to his modesty which was to be expected in case of virtuous and moral courtier but also to prevalence of a general notion that noble dignity should be bestowed as a consequence of outstanding feats of arms and valorous conduct on the battlefield risking one's life for sovereign and dynasty. On the other hand, Cao Cao's memorandum voices unequivocal denial of the fact that gaining military achievement was the sole criterion for bestowing noble dignities and asserts that the merit required for the ennoblement is not necessarily achieved on the battlefield. Moreover, Cao Cao's argument directly questions the superiority of the military merit as it assigns far greater importance to civil achievements referring to Zhou and Han precedents. The great merit of Duke of Zhou 周公 whose son Boqin 伯禽 was enfeoffed as Duke of Lu 魯 naturally took precedence before Jiang Ziya 姜子牙 (Lü Wang 呂望), who had helped King Wuwang of Zhou 周武王 in fighting the Shang and was later given the fief of Qi 齊 (capital Linzi 臨淄 a.k.a. Yingqiu 營丘). Guiding of the young and inexperienced ruler and administering affairs of state was obviously far more important for the survival of the dynasty than a military assistance. In the same way, among the advisors of the Han founder Gaozu 漢高祖 Cao Shen 曹參 (died 190 BC) Marquis of Pingyang 平陽侯 may have achieved important military victories, but when he had succeeded to the office of Han

²⁷⁵ Pei Songzhi's commentary to *Sanguozhi* quoting the *Alternative biography of Xun Yu* (*Xun Yu biezhuàn* 荀彧別傳), *Sanguozhi* juan 10, *Xun Yu zhuan*, p. 237.

chancellor, he was considered inferior to his predecessor Xiao He 蕭何 (died 193 BC) becoming epitome for someone merely following in somebody's footsteps not being able to contribute anything of one's own.

Thus, under certain circumstances, the Wei and later the Jin rulers were wont to bestow noble dignity as a reward for purely civil exploits in open disregard of the originally exclusive connection with military merit. Shortly before the establishment of the Wei dynasty Xiahou Shang 夏侯尚 performed important ritual assignment which earned him a village marquisate:

“When the royal fief of Wei was first established, [Xiahou] Shang was promoted to Gentleman Attendant at the Palace Gate (*huangmen shilang* 黃門侍郎). The Hu [barbarians] from Dai commandery rose up [against the authority of the throne] and [Cao] Zhang, Marquis of Yanling launched punitive campaign [against them. Xiahou] Shang became Zhang's Adjutant (*can junshi* 參軍事). After [control over] the territory of Dai had been reasserted, he returned. When Taizu (Cao Cao) had died in Luoyang [Xiahou] Shang was commissioned with special powers to fetch the royal coffin made of catalpa wood and escort [the body of Cao Cao] back to Ye (capital city of the Wei Principality) [to be buried there]. For this and [all] previous meritorious services he was enfeoffed as village marquis of Pingling and was appointed Cavalier Attendant-in-ordinary (*sanji changshi* 散騎常侍) and later promoted to the position of Capital Commandant (*zhonglingjun* 中領軍).”²⁷⁶

Apparently attending to the deceased regent who was soon to be proclaimed founding emperor of the Wei on his last journey was a great achievement as Xiahou Shang was further promoted in rank to township marquis immediately after Cao Cao's son Wendi ascended the throne. The same symbolic value of the ceremonial functions connected with the person of living or dead ruler was in all probability behind the enfeoffment of Zheng Mao 鄭袤, even though his promotion was undoubtedly initiated by Sima Shi and not the Wei ruling family:

“When Duke of Gaogui ascended the throne [Zheng] Mao and Governor of Henan Metropolitan Area (*Henan yin* 河南尹) Wang Su took the imperial equipage (*fajia* 法駕) and came to Yuancheng to fetch [the young emperor to be and accompanied him to the capital. Later on] Zheng Mao was enfeoffed as village marquis of Guangchang. He was transferred to position

²⁷⁶ *Sanguozhi* juan 9, *Xiahou Shang zhuan*, p. 220.

of Chamberlain for Attendants (*guangluxun* 光祿勳) and Concurrent Chamberlain for the Imperial Clan (*ling zongzheng* 領宗正)²⁷⁷

After the deposition of Cao Fang 曹芳 in 255 AD Zheng Mao, a trusted advisor of Sima Shi, was sent by him to meet an imperial prince who was to replace Cao Fang on the throne. It is possible that Sima Shi wanted to keep an eye on the future sovereign from the very beginning and Zheng Mao should have seen to it that no one would have had the opportunity to get hold of either emperor's person or his ear and set him against the regent. Zheng Mao's enfeoffment thus may have been reward for faithful service to the Simas as well as appreciation of his ceremonial role in the enthronement of the new emperor.

Emperor Wudi of the Western Jin invoked the same Han precedent of enfeoffment for civil achievements as Cao Cao in case of Xun Yu when he bestowed additional honors on some of the most influential of his meritorious ministers who were responsible for promulgation of the new Jin Code (*Jinlü* 晉律):

“The new law code established by [Jia] Chong was already promulgated in all under heaven and common folk benefited by it. [Emperor Wudi issued the imperial] edict: “Since the [time] of the Han [dynastic] house the laws and ordinances were strict and severe. From the reigns of [Emperors] Yuan[di] and [Cheng]di until the Jian'an and Jiaping eras, all [rulers] wanted to clarify the old regulations and revise the penal code. Despite great amount of legal works [written since that time] the [effort] brought no results. The previous emperor was moved by the fact that the common people fall into a dense net of oppressive and harsh laws and personally uttered gracious words (i.e. issued the imperial edict) ordering [his ministers] to rectify the name and reality [behind the law code]. Chariot and Horse General (*cheji jiangjun* 車騎將軍) Jia Chong encourages and clarifies the intension of the sages and seeks advice from the righteous path. Grand Mentor (*taifu* 太傅) Zheng Chong together with Minister of Works (*sikong* 司空) Xun Yi, Secretariat Supervisor (*zhongshujian* 中書監) Xun Xu, General of the Capital Army (*zhongjun jiangjun* 中軍將軍) Yang Hu, Capital Protector (*zhonghujun* 中護軍) Wang Ye, and Chamberlain for Law Enforcement (*tingwei* 廷尉) Du You, Governor of Henan Metropolitan Area (*Henan yin* 河南尹) Du Yu, Gentleman Cavalier Attendant (*sanji shilang* 散騎侍郎) Pei Kai, Governor of Yingchuan (*taishou* 太守) Zhou Xiong, Princely Administrator (*xiang* 相) Guo Qi, Commandants of Cavalry (*jiduwei* 騎都尉) Chenggong Sui and Xun Hui

²⁷⁷ *Jinshu* juan 44, *Zheng Mao zhuan*, p. 1250.

and Secretarial Court Gentleman (*shangshulang* 尚書郎) Liu Gui all refined and corrected the [final] thing. Whenever we observed their commitment [to this task], we always felt deeply [moved] and praised their [effort]. Now, the laws and regulations are already done and they have been just promulgated for the first time in all under heaven. The punishments are lenient and bans easy [to comprehend], [the result] being true to the original intent. In the past Xiao He received enfeoffment for establishing the laws and Shusun Tong became chamberlain for ceremonials [as a reward] for ordering the ceremonies, [having been] given five hundred *jin* of gold. His younger brothers and sons were all appointed [court] gentlemen (*lang* 郎). After all, gaining merit and establishing [one's reputation through meritorious] deeds was something the people of old had held in great esteem. Let all [those ministers] from Grand Mentor and Chariot and Horse General down be rewarded by raising their official emoluments. All the details should be done according to the ancient precedents.” Whereupon a title of the lord of the royal domain was bestowed on a son or younger brother of Jia Chong together with [grant of] five hundred bolts of silk. [Jia Chong] firmly declined [this honor, but the emperor] would not permit it.”²⁷⁸

As the Wei before them, the Western Jin Dynasty attached great importance to services rendered in connection with the state ritual and worshipping of the imperial ancestors:

“After the demise of Emperor Wudi [Shi] Jian and Capital Protector (*zhonghujun* 中護軍) Zhang Shao supervised the construction of his imperial mound. At that time the Grand Mentor (*taifu* 太傅) Yang Jun did not trust the Commander-in-Chief (*dasima* 大司馬) [Sima] Liang, Prince of Runan, and [prince therefore] did not dare to attend the emperor's funeral. He left the capital and encamped outside the city walls. Current rumors had it that Sima Liang wanted to rise in arms against Yang Jun. Yang Jun was scared and wanted the empress dowager to order the emperor to write an edict in his own hand which would command Shi Jian and Zhang Shao to lead the troops [guarding] the mausoleum to chastise Sima Liang. Zhang Shao was Yang Jun's nephew and therefore summoned [troops] under his command and urged Shi Jian to launch [the attack] speedily but Shi Jian did not believe the rumors, he remained inactive and sent someone to spy in secret on [Prince of Runan] and watch Sima Liang's moves. But [the prince] had already returned to Xuchang by a different rout. Therefore, Yang Zhi desisted and

²⁷⁸ *Jinshu* juan 40, *Jia Chong zhuan*, p. 1167.

people praised [Shi Jian's prudence]. Once the [construction of the] imperial mausoleum was completed [Shi Jian] was enfeoffed as prefecture duke of Chang'an.²⁷⁹

Construction of the imperial burial mound with accompanying ceremonial places where the offerings prescribed by the cult of imperial ancestors could be performed was naturally assignment of utmost importance for successful accomplishment of such a task was thought to influence directly the well-being of the imperial family and resilience of the dynasty. Even though Shi Jian's 石鑿 enfeoffment partially falls under the ennoblement inflation triggered by Yang Jun after the death of Emperor Wudi the rank of the created peerage is surprisingly high in comparison to other noble dignities conferred at the same time and presumably reflects the importance of his assignment. The same holds true for the reconstruction of the imperial tumuli after they had been looted during the fighting towards the end of the dynasty:

“At that time the imperial mounds were opened [and ransacked]. [Xun] Song sent his Recorder (*zhubu* 主簿) Shi Lan with an armed force to enter Luoyang and repair the imperial mounds. For this merit [Xun Song] was elevated to [the peerage dignity of] prefecture duke of Wuyang. He was promoted to Commander-in-chief (*dudu* 都督) supervising all military affairs of Jingzhou region north of the Yangzi River and he was to defend [the garrison city of] Wan as General Pacifying the South (*pingnan jiangjun* 平南將軍). His enfeoffment was changed to that of duke of Quling.”²⁸⁰

The symbolic value of Xun Song's 荀崧 deed was perhaps even more important than the original construction of the mausolea. Reparation of the desecrated tombs of the first rulers could have been perceived as a promise of future recuperation of governmental forces and return of the righteous rule of their legitimate successors. Hence the staggeringly high title of a prefecture duke bestowed on the man, title which would be normally reserved for royal peers or meritorious ministers who had contributed to the founding of the dynasty. And in a way it was in place. If the restoration of the imperial burial ground in a symbolic way founded the hope of overall resurgence of the regime, then Xun Song's achievement was

²⁷⁹ *Jinshu* juan 44, *Shi Jian zhuan*, p. 1266; The original text has prefecture lord instead of prefecture duke. I have amended the text according to the note 6 on page 1269 which refers to excavated tomb tablets (*mujie* 墓碣) of certain members of the Leling Shi 樂陵石氏 family.

²⁸⁰ *Jinshu* juan 75, *Xun Song zhuan*, p. 1976.

nothing short of the merits attributed to the dynastic founders and he indeed deserved the highest of the peerages.

Another building of highly symbolic importance the maintenance of which might have secured promotion was the ancestral temple in the capital city:

“[Zhou] Jun was transferred to position of Chamberlain for the Palace Revenues (*shaofu* 少府) and with this office he was concurrently charged [to perform the duties of] Chamberlain for the Palace Buildings (*jiangzuo dajiang* 將作大匠) [and supervise the reconstruction of the ancestral temple]. When the rebuilding of the temple of imperial ancestors was completed, the apanage [pertaining to his title of prefecture lord of Chengwu] was increased by five hundred households.”²⁸¹

However, unlike Shi Jian or Xun Song, supervising the reconstruction of the ancestral temple did not earn Zhou Jun 周浚 high peerage rank. It is possible that either his achievement was not deemed to be high enough for such a promotion or the ennoblement was seen as unnecessary for Zhou Jun was one of the victorious commanders conquering Wu and as such he had been enfeoffed as prefecture lord of Chengwu 成武侯 already in 280 AD. Whichever the reason, increase of the apanage by five hundred households was nevertheless certainly not negligible and accounted for a fair reward.

The last example of a noble dignity awarded for more or less civil achievements is marquisate of Bacheng 霸城 created for Zhang Gui, lord of Liangzhou, who had been mentioned couple of times before:

“Chamberlain for Attendants (*guanglu* 光祿) Fu Zhi and Chamberlain for Ceremonials (*taichang* 太常) Zhi Yu sent [Zhang] Gui a letter in which they informed him that the capital region suffers from famine and shortage [of supplies. Zhang] immediately dispatched his Adjutant (*canjun* 參軍) offering five hundred horses and five hundred bolts of fine woolen cloth. Emperor [Mindì] sent his messenger to promote [Zhang Gui] in title to General Defending West (*zhenxi jiangjun* 鎮西將軍), Commander-in-chief supervising all military affairs in Longyou (West of the Long Ridge), enfeoff him as Marquis of Bacheng and elevate him further to Chariot and Cavalry General (*cheji jiangjun* 車騎將軍), Unequaled in Honor (*yitong sansi* 儀同

²⁸¹ *Jinshu* juan 61, *Zhou Jun zhuan*, p. 1659.

三司) with right of employing his own staff and right of direct appointment of officials under one's command (*kaifu bizhao* 開府辟召).”²⁸²

Zhang Gui's peerage is in a way exceptional. Whereas other enfeoffments based on civil achievements were connected in one way or another to the state rituals and ceremonial activities of the court and imperial family, the marquisate of Bacheng was granted for a timely succor sent to the court in need from Zhang's Liangzhou domain. It should be seen in connection with other activities of this loyal regional commander as a part of his long-term military support of the western capital and protection of the exiled court of Emperor Mindi. On the other hand, in a situation when dearth of food directly threatened the existence of the imperial court and its survival was totally dependent on supplies sent from Liangzhou, Zhang Gui's merit may not have been dissimilar in substance to the previously mentioned civil achievements of repairing the imperial mausolea or the ancestral temple. Indeed, in this case the rescue of the court and dynastic institution was much more tangible because without supplies the court would have not only famished but its very existence would have been jeopardized as well. Saving the court was tantamount to resurrecting the dynasty and again somewhat equaled the deeds of dynastic founders with peerage marquisate being an appropriate recognition of Zhang Gui's credit.

As we have seen the term “civil achievements” might be slightly misleading as it does not denote just any merit achieved in civil pursuits but rather specific kind of meritorious service to the state and the imperial house. Discharging duties of one's office was simply not enough, no matter how high the office was, unless the task transcended the usual administrative routine and was charged with special symbolic impact pertaining to the existence of the dynasty. Welcoming of a new emperor, escorting funeral cortege of a deceased ruler, repairing of the ancestral temple of the imperial clan or renovation of the imperial burial grounds were all ceremonial and ritual acts of great symbolic importance for the legitimacy and survival of the imperial regime. The continuous sacrifices to the imperial ancestors were hardly less important than safeguarding of the altars of soil and grain. In this respect, these civil achievements were in a way emulating the matchless merit of the dynastic founders and were second only to them.

Even compiling and promulgating of the new Jin Code should not be seen as part of day-to-day administrative routine. Promulgation of the law code was a part of gradual process

²⁸² *Jinshu* juan 86, *Zhang Gui zhuan*, p. 2225.

of founding of the dynasty. The new code was being created as a revision of the current code used during the previous dynasty expressing the eagerness of the new regime to prove one's worth through rectifying shortcomings and failings of their predecessors. Besides imparting additional legitimacy for promising redress of the most oppressive laws of the past the new code in symbolic way ordered society and established the authority of the dynasty, thus completing the process of dynastic foundation. The merit of Jia Chong and his colleagues was in fact mere continuation of their achievements connected with the establishment of the Jin. The case Xun Yu with whom we have started our discussion of civil achievements was rather similar. According to Cao Cao's memorandum Xun Yu was instrumental in installing the last Han Emperor Xiandi in Xuchang 許昌 assisting with the resurgence of the regular imperial court following the unfortunate captivity of the emperor in Chang'an. He was truly a meritorious minister in the last of the Han restorations.

Yang Guanghui argues that the evolution of the enfeoffment system evinces gradual shift from noble dignities having been bestowed on commanders and army officers for purely military exploits to increasing enfeoffment of civil officials and court dignitaries (Yang calls them *shiren* 士人).²⁸³ Whereas he might be quite right in asserting that the recipients of the noble titles were increasingly often court ministers, advisors and civil officials of the central government the achievements which had merited creation of noble titles remained, with some exceptions, military in nature. Leaving the achievements of founding the dynasty aside (and some of it was clearly of military nature as well) tendency of military exploits securing enfeoffment remained prominent throughout the period of the Western Jin. As we cannot be certain how big a portion of all the fiefs and titles we know of (indeed, we know that there must have been quite a few other creations which were not recorded by our sources), we cannot speak about percents and exact numbers. The facts in the tables of peerage and lordship creations simply indicate possible trend. The enfeoffments may have been given mostly to civil officials, yet the honor was bestowed in virtue of exploits which were more often than not military. The tendency towards civil achievements connected with regular administrative routine getting more prominent is not discernible from the data collected from the *Jinshu*. The ennoblement seems to have retained quite strong character of a reward for achievements which were primarily of military nature, be it feats of arms performed on the battlefield during conquest of rival regimes, defense of the border against intrusion of the warlike neighbors or quelling of internal rebellions.

²⁸³ Yang Guanghui (2004): pp. 125-131.

Bestowal of Noble Dignities during the Civil Strife

There is one further aspect of bestowal of noble dignities which merits our attention and that is its usage as a ready tool for strengthening one's position through securing support of political allies, cementing loyalty of one's partisans and legitimizing one's claim to authority over the affairs of state. This aspect of the enfeoffment system becomes more prominent only during the second half of the Western Jin and is connected to marked proliferation (one could even say inflation) of noble dignities following the death of Emperor Wudi. When we look at the tables of peerage and lordship creations above there is a clear pattern in frequency of ennoblement. Mass creation of peerage dignities immediately after the establishment of the dynasty is followed by striking decrease in number of creation during the rest of Wudi's reign with only occasional promotions in peerage and one further collective enfeoffment raising victorious commanders who had helped to conquer Wu to prefecture lords in 280 AD. Whereas in 266 AD almost fifty peerage titles were created either for the meritorious ministers of the Jin or members of the ancient Wei court families, there were only thirteen peerages created in remaining twenty-odd years of Wudi's reign. The pattern evinced by lordship bestowals is similar with ten lordship dignities having been granted right at the beginning of the dynasty's rule and another fifteen having been created after the conquest of Wu in 280 AD. There was only one lordship awarded in between as an act of special grace for a younger offspring of a meritorious minister. Obviously, for Wudi enfeoffment was the highest possible reward reserved for only the most loyal and trusted servants of the dynasty and as such it should have not been bestowed recklessly. Throughout his reign ennoblement remained exclusive honor, without doubt highly coveted by everyone yet attainable only to those lucky few who had happened to devote their life to the Sima cause long before there was any chance of a Jin Dynasty ever being founded.

The frequency of peerage and lordship creation conspicuously rises again after the death of the Jin founder. More than sixty peerages and forty lordships were created in the last two decades of the existence of the Western Jin, which is slightly more than during Wudi's reign which was, however, somewhat longer. The titles were granted more or less regularly, their creation closely following the political development and shifts in balance of power between various princes of the blood and quarrelling court factions as the ennoblement system became a useful tool for strengthening positions of successive would-be regents and princely dictators during the Upheaval of the Eight Princes. Yet the ennoblement inflation had started before the internecine conflict of the Sima princes even erupted for the first one to

break Wudi's strict rules regulating enfeoffment eligibility was regent to Wudi's successor, Yang Jun 楊駿. He did so immediately after Wudi's demise, even though promotion in ranks and bestowal of new noble titles after the death of a sovereign were totally unprecedented and apparently considered highly inappropriate by some of the courtiers:

“Emperor [Wudi] died and his body was placed into a coffin [made of] catalpa wood and taken to the place of burial when Grand Mentor (*taifu* 太傅) Yang Jun assumed the government as a regent [for Emperor Huidi]. He wanted to please hearts of the multitude and therefore entertained thoughts of general promotion in noble ranks. [Fu] Zhi wrote Yang Jun a letter [in which he] said: “There has never been [a precedent] for evaluation of merit of the subjects following the demise of a sovereign!” Yang Jun did not follow [his advice].”²⁸⁴

Yang Jun's reasons for breaking the rules set by Wudi are explained in his biography in the *Jinshu*:

“Yang Jun knew that he lacked [necessary] renown and was afraid that he would not be able to rally [support] of those far and near. Therefore he resorted to [the same policy as was used by] Wei Emperor Mingdi when he ascended the throne and he began to bestow awards and noble dignities extensively. He wanted to please the multitude. In governing he was severe yet garrulous, often stubborn and unyielding, unable to listen to an advice and he did not win the esteem and hearts of the multitude. Governor (*taishou* 太守) of Fengyi, Sun Chu, used to be a close friend of Yang Jun's. He [tried to] persuade him: “As an imperial relative Your Grace holds position of consequence [same as] Yi Yin and Huo Guang [used to have had]. You wield great authority providing assistance to a feeble ruler. You should recall the way of utmost fairness, complete sincerity and modest humility [practiced by] the ancient ones. There was never a case of a minister of non-royal blood arrogating control over the court, either during the Zhou when Dukes of Zhou and Shao acted as stewards [of the realm] or under the Han when Marquises of Zhuxu and Dongmou [helped to annihilate the Lü clan] who would be lucky enough to die a natural death. Now [the members of the] imperial clan are both close [to the throne and held in] high esteem and the princes in their fiefs [wield] great power and yet, Your Grace does not share [the responsibility of the government and does not let them] participate in the affairs of state, thus suspicion and jealousy are harbored within and favorites and confidants

²⁸⁴ *Jinshu* juan 47, *Fu Zhi zhuan*, p. 1331.

are planted outside [forming factions]. The disaster will come soon enough!” But Yang Jun could not follow his advice.”²⁸⁵

Even though confirmed by the testamental edict of the dying emperor, the regency arrangements at the beginning of Huidi’s reign were apparently result of some scheming on part of Yang Jun and his daughter, Wudi’s widow, for the emperor originally intended to entrust his heir to a regency council headed by the premier princes of the blood. Yang Jun’s position was in consequence anything but stable. He had to face hostility of Huidi’s wife, Empress Jia, backed by prominent families of meritorious ministers who did not take kindly that a mere *waiqi*, imperial relative by marriage, is arrogating the right to act as a regent. As the founding ministers of the state they felt entitled to guiding young sovereign and administering the realm in his best interest. The resentment felt by the princes, brothers, cousins and uncles of Emperor Huidi, was even stronger. After all Wudi made always clear that the Jin dynasty was above all enterprise of the Simas, a family business depending on loyalty and support of the imperial kin who were intended to play an active role in the politics. Yang Jun in a way dangerously overstepped his position of an imperial in-law challenging the rights of the imperial kin to act as rightful guardians of the emperor and protectors of the throne (in both senses of the word). No wonder that he tried to strengthen his position by all possible means, the well nigh unattainable and therefore coveted enfeoffment having been the most powerful inducement at hand. General promotion of noble ranks and bestowal of completely new or additional noble dignities should have bought loyalty and support of the established court families and mollified their misgivings regarding future intents of the regent.

Sun Chu’s 孫楚 admonition represents sober analysis of current balance of power and precarious position of Yang Jun which Sun Chu perceives as untenable. Pointing to the fact that unlike celebrated regents and guardians of the throne of the ancient and not so ancient past Yang Jun was not a member of the imperial clan but a mere imperial in-law he warned Yang Jun against overstepping his place by indirectly hinting at the unenviable fate of the Lüs, a *waiqi* clan of notorious would-be usurpers of the Han times. In this respect Sun Chu’s mention of marquises of Zhuxu 朱虛 and Dongmou 東牟 sounds especially ominous. Besides being members of the imperial clan and guardians of the throne they were also instrumental in orchestrating a coup which led to the downfall and extermination of the Lüs in 180 BC.²⁸⁶ Thus Yang Jun is indirectly compared to infamous ministers of non-royal blood who had

²⁸⁵ *Jinshu* juan 40, *Yang Jun zhuan*, p. 1178.

²⁸⁶ For the Lü 呂氏 clan and its rise and fall see Cambridge History of China (1986): pp. 135-137.

unlawfully arrogated control over the throne. Undoubtedly he had been seen as such by imperial princes and members of founding elite of the dynasty including Empress Jia.

Yang Jun's unorthodox use of the enfeoffment system did not go unopposed. A vision of new noble titles might have been effective in securing loyalties of those who had yearned for it and otherwise would have no chance of getting it. However, the established titled nobility of Wudi's reign was naturally less enthusiastic as the new peers and lords were challenging their pre-eminent social and political standing laying claim to the same kind of privileges and benefits. Following memorandum of Shi Chong 石崇, a younger son of Duke of Leling 樂陵 and erstwhile protégé of Emperor Wudi, voices their concern quite unequivocally pointing to the fact that the inflation of enfeoffment would inevitably lead to devaluation of the prestige brought by noble dignities:

“At the beginning of the Yuankang Era (290-299 AD) Yang Jun held the reins of government in his hands and he was forming faction of his partisans and supporters extensively granting rewards and noble titles. [Shi] Chong and Gentleman Cavalier Attendant (*sanjilang* 散騎郎) He Pan of Shujun had jointly expressed reservations petitioning Emperor Huidi in following words: “The sagely virtue of You Majesty extends everywhere. Since Your august imperial father established the imperial rule [of your dynasty] You have held your proper place in the Eastern Palace [as the rightful heir to the throne] for more than twenty years and the [Confucian] ethic and right morals spread far and wide and ten thousand states came to pay allegiance [to the Jin]. Now you have inherited the great enterprise [of imperial rule] and that is Heaven's doing. But when it comes to ordering rewards and practicing ennoblement you are exceeding even the dynastic change at the beginning of the Taishi Era. That is the first thing we are uneasy about. The impostors from Wu and Kuai[ji] defied [the rightful authority] for almost one hundred years. The border regions were afflicted by their raids and the court [was so preoccupied with this problem that the ministers found no time to] eat [before] the nightfall. The late emperor with determined resolution and astuteness strove to fulfill the great scheme of divine warrior and [in the end] annihilated roving bandits easier than if he had broken a withered [branch]. Focusing their mind and sparing no effort, the wise advisors and valiant generals acquired great achievements as well. And yet, the noble dignities bestowed [now] out of favor exceed those [granted in reward of] merit of extinguishing Wu. That is the second thing we are uneasy about. The Great Jin indeed enjoys affectionate protection of Supreme Heaven and divining the number of generations it is impossible to know the years [allotted to it]. The system which we introduce today should be handed down to posterity. If we are to honor the mean without any discrimination and promote whoever happens to have got a noble title then in

couple of generations there won't be anyone who would not be either a duke or a marquis. That is the third thing we are uneasy about. Your subjects have ventured to expound [our thoughts] for [Your Majesty's] consideration. With regard to [the events of] the beginning of the Taishi Era (266 AD) and the evaluation of merit once Wu had been pacified we dare say that the system is still extant as are the rolls/letters patent. Even though we cannot honor the ancient institutions we should at least act according to the old precedent." The memorandum was sent but it went unheeded."²⁸⁷

At the end Yang Jun was discouraged neither by admonitions of his friends nor by petitions of the meritorious officials. Again, as we don't know details about all Jin noble dignities it is hard to determine how many promotion and new creations actually took place during the short spell of Yang Jun's regency. For possible creations connected with regent's policy of self-strengthening see the tables above. As an example of the policy may serve promotion of Hua Yi 華廙 from Count of Guanyang 觀陽 to a duke:²⁸⁸

"When Huidi ascended the throne [Hua Yi] was appointed Concurrent Palace Attendant (*jiashizhong* 加侍中), Grand Master for Splendid Happiness (*guanglu dafu* 光祿大夫) and Director of the Department of State Affairs (*shangshuling* 尚書令) and was promoted in rank to duke [of Guanyang]."²⁸⁹

Political friction came to a head in April 291 AD when Empress Jia staged a coup and had Yang Jun executed and his daughter, unwanted Empress Dowager deposed and interned in a secluded palace where she died not long afterwards. However, if Yang Jun had been blamed for bestowing excessive rewards violating the rules of enfeoffment system introduced by the dynastic founder, his political rivals forgot their objection at the very moment when they replaced him as the main force behind the throne. They quickly draw on the precedent set by unfortunate regent and set about strengthening their own position by the same means:

²⁸⁷ *Jinshu* juan 33, *Shi Chong zhuan*, p. 1006.

²⁸⁸ The additional motivation of this promotion might have been the fact that Hua Yi was originally deprived of the inherited title by machinations of Xun Xu, one of the meritorious ministers of Wudi, who bore a grudge against him. Hua Yi was rehabilitated after more than ten years and allowed to succeed to the comital dignity shortly before Wudi's death. See *Jinshu* juan 44, *Hua Yi zhuan*, p. 1260-1262; Another case of Yang Jun's promotion was Liu Shi 劉寔 who was promoted from Count of Xunyang 循陽 to marquis. See *Jinshu* juan 41, *Liu Shi zhuan*, p. 1196.

²⁸⁹ *Jinshu* juan 44, *Hua Yi zhuan*, p. 1261.

“At that time Great Steward (*taizai* 太宰) [Sima] Liang Prince of Runan acted as regent. [Fu Xian] sent him a letter: “I always thought that both Taijia [of Xia] and Chengwang [of Zhou] were still ignorant minors and therefore [there was regency] of Yi [Yin and Duke of] Zhou. Even the sages [like them] were not able to avoid suspicion, let alone a subject who is not a sage [acting as a regent for] a king who is no infant. Is it even possible to re-enact the regency of Yi Yin and Duke of Zhou if this is the case?! His majesty was in mourning and yielded to [suggestions of] the steward. Yang Jun was unworthy and yet he played Yi Yin and Duke of Zhou claiming that he was bringing peace to all under heaven. That is what led to his death. His guilt could have not been greater than this as Your Highness has seen for yourself. The impulse for chastisement of Yang Jun came from the Emperor and Meng Guan and Li Zhao were acting only on secret imperial instructions. Thus when it came to assessing the merit the greatest praise should have gone to His Imperial Majesty. [Besides,] Meng Guan and others were already prefecture lords with [apanages of] couple of thousand households each. And yet, the Sagely Majesty was very generous in evaluating merit in order to show his favor as there was no one who would not rejoice in death of Yang Jun. In this way [the principle that] the subjects [and their merits] should be judged according to their actual deeds was shattered. [The Duke of Dong’an] was enfeoffed as a prince, Meng [Guan] and Li [Zhao] became commandery dukes. The remaining marquises, counts, viscounts and barons were also promoted in disregard of their real achievements. Moreover, there was also special universal promotion in three grades [for everyone]. The momentum of such an action shook both Heaven and Earth for since the ancient times there was never bestowing of honors and rewards on such a large scale. If those without merit are generously rewarded than there will be no one who would not rejoice in the country facing disaster because once a disaster strikes the great achievements would inevitably follow! People rejoicing in disaster, is it not extreme?! This all happened because of Duke of Dong’an. I dare say Your Highness should scotch [this abuse] and rectify it according to the [proper] Way. If you rectify it with the [proper] Way, what could the multitude be angry about? For what makes the multitude angry is the unfairness [in dealing], nothing else. Now the evaluation [of merit] was confused and wrong and there is no one who would not be disappointed. Myself being ignorant and unable, I am not only disappointed, I am sadly grieved by it! Moreover, Your Highness even was not at court when it came to chastising Yang Jun, this was truly nothing you were in charge of. Now they want to entrust you with an important position and that is why you have been ordered to evaluate the merits. But evaluation of merit is indeed never easy to accomplish. [In this respect] there is nothing better than sit and observe successes and failures. It is fitting that one should be impartial and follow the correct path.”²⁹⁰

²⁹⁰ *Jinshu* juan 47, *Fu Xian zhuan*, pp. 1326-1327.

The rewards in question were naturally mainly enfeoffments and promotions in noble or official rank for the instigators of Yang Jun's downfall whose effort made successful coup possible. In comparison to Yang Jun's enfeoffments widely perceived as excessive and inappropriate in both ritual and moral way the creation of new noble dignities following his violent death retained at least some semblance of ritual propriety. Once Yang Jun had been proclaimed traitor and official enemy of the dynasty, participation in a punitive or in this case rather preventive action became a righteous deed of utmost importance meriting appropriate reward. When altars of soil and grain were at stake, the situation called for intervention of the loyal subjects mindful of the future well-being of the dynasty. It could have been argued that as it was only timely action of these people which saved the dynasty their claim to enfeoffment became legitimate for in a way they re-enacted the great achievement of the meritorious ministers who had originally established the Jin regime. Besides Sima Yao 司馬繇 Duke of Dong'an 東安公,²⁹¹ whose participation in the coup earned him a princely dignity, the above cited Fu Xian's 傅咸 letter also mentions Meng Guan as one of the leaders of the coup:

“Soon after Huidi had ascended the throne [Meng Guan] was promoted to Palace Attendant within Palace Directorate (*dianzhong zhonglang* 殿中中郎). Empress Jia acted against the norms of propriety between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law and secretly wanted to execute Yang Jun and depose Empress Dowager. Because Yang Jun usurped the authority she repeatedly talked about this to the emperor and also sent someone to set Meng Guan against him. When it happened that Sima Wei, Prince of Chu, wanted to chastise Yang Jun, Meng Guan received an order from Empress Jia to promulgate the edict and he fabricated many false charges against him. After Yang Jun had been executed Meng Guan was named Gentleman Attendant at the Palace Gate (*huangmen shilang* 黃門侍郎) and forty of his relatives and followers were presented [with] special [rewards]. [Meng Guan] was promoted to General of Crossbowmen (*jiniu jaingjun* 積弩將軍) and enfeoffed as commandery duke of Shanggu.”²⁹²

Unlike the reign of Wudi when suppressing a rebellion or successful leading of a punitive campaign would have been rewarded with a lordship title far below the peerage ranks of the founding titled nobility, the highly volatile political situation together with need of securing wider support for one's regency rule called for more generous rewards which would

²⁹¹ For details of Sima Yao's involvement see his biography in the *Jinshu*: *Jinshu* juan 38, *Dong'an wang Yao zhuan*, pp. 1123-1124; see also Hrubý, Jakub (2007): p. 166.

²⁹² *Jinshu* juan 60, *Meng Guan zhuan*, p. 1634.

disregard the original strict rules of Wudi. Thus Meng Guan was enfeoffed as commandery duke, the highest title attainable for a non-royal and was actually placed on par with the most important and the most meritorious of the *gongchen*. And he was not to be alone as shows example of Wang Kai 王愷:

“[Wang] Kai ... for the achievement of chastising Yang Jun was enfeoffed as prefecture duke of Shandu with apanage of one thousand eight hundred households.”²⁹³

Unfortunately, we don't know what role did Wang Kai play in the 291 AD coup, yet we can surmise that he might have not been one of the main initiators. Ducal rank, which is actually one grade lower than Meng Guan's dukedom, could be explained not only by his direct involvement in Yang Jun's death but also by his overall standing at the Jin court. Wang Kai was not only one of the wealthy and influential favorites of the late emperor but he was also Wudi's uncle, his sister having been emperor's mother. Thus Wang Kai was also a *waiqi*, close relative of Emperor Huidi as Yang Jun himself used to be. His enfeoffment may have symbolically stressed his authority as senior imperial in-law and at the same time provided additional legitimacy to Empress Jia and her faction who constituted the real power behind the throne. Whatever his actual part in the coup, by being granted high peerage title Wang Kai appears to be involved in it, acting hand in hand with Empress Jia in a rightful attempt to purge the court of baleful influence of unworthy *waiqi* family threatening the throne. Thus the coup does not look like private bit for power on part of the Jia faction but rather as an action of conscious imperial relatives worried of one of their midst getting too powerful.

Apparently, not all the achievements rewarded after the execution of Yang Jun by bestowal of noble dignities were as tangible as those of Meng Guan. In some cases the participation may have been rather symbolic and timely change of allegiance or even quiet acquiescence of the *fait accompli* were considered to be as important as taking part in actual fighting:

“[Fu Zhi] was summoned to the palace as Palace Attendant (*shizhong* 侍中). At that time [there was a conspiracy aiming at] executing Yang Jun, but Yang Jun himself did not know about it. Fu Zhi was waiting upon Yang Jun. The Cloud Dragon Gate was closed and the inner and outer palaces were cut off from one another. Fu Zhi begged for permission to go with Imperial Secretary (*shangshu* 尚書) Wu Mao to [find out] whereabouts of Lord of the Realm.

²⁹³ *Jinshu* juan 93, *Waiqi zhuan*, *Wang Kai zhuan*, p. 2412.

He made bow [to Yang Jun] and descended the flight of steps [in front of the hall], yet Wu Mao was still sitting. Fu Zhi looked back and called: “Isn’t Your Honor a subject to the Son of Heaven?! Now how can you sit there calm [and unmoved] when the inner palace is isolated from the outside world and we don’t know where the Lord of the Realm is!” Thereupon Wu Mao got up, startled [and perturbed]. [In the end] Yang Jun was executed ... For his achievement on chastising of Yang Jun [Fu Zhi] should have been enfeoffed as commandery duke with apanage of eight thousand households, but when he firmly refused the honor was decreased by half and he was enfeoffed as prefecture duke of Lingchuan (should be Lingzhou) with apanage of one thousand eight hundred households. The remaining two thousand two hundred households were granted to his younger son [Fu] Chang who was created village lord of Wuxiang. His original noble dignity [of lord of the royal domain with apanage of three hundred households] was bestowed upon Fu Jun, his elder brother’s son, who became village lord of Dongming.”²⁹⁴

Again, Fu Zhi 傅祗 was to be rewarded with the highest peerage dignity and even though he declined such an honor, part of the apanage which would have come with commandery dukedom was granted to Zhi’s younger son and nephew in order to make up for the declined dignity. His actual involvement may have not gone beyond deserting Yang Jun shortly before the arrival of the armed men dispatched to apprehend the regent, yet Fu Zhi was apparently considered important enough for his allegiance to be actively sought after. Generosity of the reward may reflect his importance as veteran courtier staunchly loyal to the dynastic house whose support was sought as source of both actual power and political legitimacy for he was known to have opposed Yang Jun’s unorthodox policies and reprimanded him for his misdemeanors (see the petition mentioned above penned by Fu Zhi). In this respect he was certainly not alone, as family of He Pan 何攀, another critic of Yang Jun’s excessive use of enfeoffment system, also benefitted greatly from his fall:

“When Yang Jun held the reins of government in his hands, he often appointed his own relatives and confidants [to official positions] and extensively granted rewards and ennoblements. In that way he wanted to protect his position through bestowing favors. [He] Pan considered it wrong and together with Shi Chong petitioned the throne stating their opinion ... but the emperor did not accept [their objections]. For his part in execution of Yang Jun he was enfeoffed as Marquis of Xicheng with apanage of ten thousand households and granted ten

²⁹⁴ *Jinshu* juan 47, *Fu Zhi zhuan*, p. 1331.

thousand bolts of silk. His younger brother He Feng became Marquis of Pingxiang and an elder brother's son, He Kui became lord of the royal domain.”²⁹⁵

Presenting killing of Yang Jun as righteous act of punishment executed on a traitor and enemy of the state became a useful excuse for strengthening one's position and influence over the government through bestowing noble dignities on close relatives and political allies at court. The degree of their actual role in either planning or executing the coup was probably irrelevant with securing of the possible future support of the new peers and lords being more important than the wish to reward particular deeds. The example of Pei Wei 裴頌 who became one of the main ministers for a short period of time immediately after Yang Jun's death may attest to it:

“As Jia Chong was husband of [Pei] Wei's aunt, he petitioned the throne: “[Pei] Xiu had earned the great achievement of assisting the founding of the dynasty but he was unfortunate in that his eldest son born of the main wife died young and the orphan he had left behind was still immature and weak. Wei's talents and moral integrity are outstanding, [which is in itself] sufficient [guarantee] of [future] prosperity and thriving of the line of noble descent.” The imperial edict ordered Wei to succeed to his father's peerage [dignity of Duke of Julu instead of Xiu's underage grandson]. Pei Wei firmly declined but [the emperor] would not permit it. In the second year of the Taikang Era (281 AD) he was summoned as Palace Cadet of the Heir Apparent (*taizi zhongshuzi* 太子中庶子) and promoted to Cavalier Attendant-in-ordinary (*sanji changshi* 散騎常侍). When Huidi ascended the throne he was transferred to position of Chancellor of the National University (*guozhi jijiu* 國子祭酒) and Concurrent General of the Right Army (*jian youjun jiangjun* 兼右軍將軍). At first, Wei's nephew [Pei] Jing was a commoner [but] Wei expounded the achievements of the [previous] generation and afterwards [Jing] was granted noble title of village lord of Gaoyang. At the time when Yang Jun was just about to be executed, Jun's partisan, General of the Left Army (*zuojun jiangjun* 左軍將軍) Liu Yu deployed his soldier at the gate(s) where he encountered Pei Wei. He asked Wei where Grand Mentor (*taifu* 太傅) [Yang Jun] was. Wei deceived him: “I have just met his lordship at Xiye Gate. He rode out in a common carriage heading west, accompanied by two retainers.” Liu Yu asked him: “Where should I go?” Wei answered: “You should go to Chamberlain for Law Enforcement (*tingwei* 廷尉) [and await punishment].” Yu followed Wei's advice, handed [the command of his forces] to Wei and left. Soon, the imperial edict ordered

²⁹⁵ *Jinshu* juan 45, *Ha Pan zhuan*, p. 1291.

Wei to take up Liu Yu's command as General of the Left Army and occupy the Wanchun Gate. After Yang Jun's execution he should have been [further] enfeoffed as Marquis of Wuchang. Wei asked for this dignity to be bestowed upon [his nephew] Pei Jing. [But] the emperor in the end enfeoffed Wei's second son [Pei] Gai. Pei Wei vehemently argued that Jing should have succeeded to [the ducal dignity of] Julu for he was originally an heir of the main line. ["Due to the favor of the late emperor my renunciation [of the title] did not meet with his approval. The dignity of Wuchang was graciously bestowed upon myself. Therefore I am asking for permission to have it granted to Jing."] Because Pei Gai was at that time married to an imperial princess the emperor did not listen to [his plea]."²⁹⁶

In case of Pei Wei's cousin Pei Kai 裴楷 the reasons for enfeoffment are even more complex. Pei Kai was a loyal and honest official who started his career in service of the Simas even before the establishment of the dynasty. Unlike Pei Wei he cannot be considered a friend of Jia Chong as he was quite outspoken in his criticism of the mighty minister. Yet his reputation of a righteous minister who is not to be intimidated by power and wealth was apparently an important factor in the quest for legitimacy because it may have served as a symbolic guarantee of the high moral profile of the ascending faction behind the throne. On the other hand, the marquisate may have been kind of compensation for Pei Kai's son Pei Zan 裴瓚 lost his life during the coup, executed for being Yang's son-in-law, and Pei Kai himself may have died as well if it were not for timely intervention of Fu Zhi:²⁹⁷

"Grand Guardian (*taibao* 太保) Wei Guan and Great Steward (*taizai* 太宰) [Sima] Liang commended [Pei] Kai as upright and unyielding, not fawning [over Yang Jun] and [argued] that it would be fitting if [Pei Kai] received peerage and fief as well. Hence [Pei Kai] was enfeoffed as Marquis of Linhai with apanage of two thousand households."²⁹⁸

The intercession of Wei Guan and Sima Liang Prince of Runan was no coincidence. Pei Kai's older son Pei Yu 裴輿 was married to Liang's daughter and a girl born out of this union became in turn wife of Wei Guan's son. Thus the enfeoffment undoubtedly helped to cement the bonds of kinship between the leading politicians of the time and considering Pei Kai's reputation it could have also strengthened their political position and legitimacy.

²⁹⁶ *Jinshu* juan 35, *Pei Wei zhuan*, pp. 1041-1042.

²⁹⁷ For details see *Jinshu* juan 35, *Pei Kai zhuan*, p. 1049; and *Jinshu* juan 47, *Fu Zhi zhuan*, p. 1331.

²⁹⁸ *Jinshu* juan 35, *Pei Kai zhuan*, p. 1049.

Another member of the Empress Jia's faction who was newly enfeoffed was her distant cousin Jia Mo 賈模, albeit his enfeoffment was in comparison rather meager and probably reflected his so far inconsequential political position at court, which, however, was to change soon with Jia Mo becoming a leading politician of the last decade of the 3rd century:

“For his part in executing Yang Jun [Jia Mo] was enfeoffed as township lord of Pingyang with apanage of one thousand households. When [Sima] Wei Prince of Chu on the pretext of imperial edict killed [Sima] Liang Prince of Runan and Grand Guardian (*taibao* 太保) Wei Guan the imperial edict instructed Jia Mo to lead two hundred men of palace cavalry to their rescue. At that time Empress Jia took part in government and she wanted to entrust [important matters of state to] her trusted partisans and close relatives. Therefore Jia Mo was appointed Cavalier Attendant-in-ordinary (*sanji changshi* 散騎常侍) and in just two days elevated to position of Palace Attendant (*shizhong* 侍中). He [immediately] tried wholeheartedly to rectify the flaws of government and be of assistance [to his sovereign]. He promoted Zhang Hua and Pei Wei and being of the same mind, they ruled [together] as regents. In a few years both court and country were calm and peaceful. That was due to Jia Mo's [dedicated] effort.”²⁹⁹

The high peerages were bestowed even later during the reign of Empress Jia even though there was no ready excuse available with the altars of soil and grain being perfectly safe, free of any threat except perhaps the ambitions of Empress Jia herself. Once the precedent was set which enabled non-royals to secure a peerage dignity it was readily used by all subsequent regents and dictators as a means of strengthening the bonds of loyalty within the ruling faction as well as its overall standing or, if the need be, for winning allegiance of influential men both at court and in the provinces who might otherwise remain hesitant in their endorsing of the political takeover or even potentially hostile. Thus a commandery dukedom laid in store for Zhang Hua 張華, principal advisor to Emperor Huidi and Empress Jia, even though it was connected with no particular deed and appears to be bestowed only in virtue of various unspecified loyal services the relative importance of which remains rather unclear:

“Even though Empress Jia was vicious and jealous she held Zhang Hua in high esteem. After a long time she assessed his loyal achievements and faithful service past and present and

²⁹⁹ *Jinshu* juan 40, *Jia Mo zhuan*, p. 1176.

promoted him in rank to commandery duke of Zhuangwu. [Zhang] Hua declined more than ten times but the edicts from the palace admonished him and pressed further so in the end [Zhang Hua] accepted [the honor.]”³⁰⁰

Let us now return once again to the events immediately after the execution of the regent in April 291 AD. From the point of view of Empress Jia the coup was only partially successful. She may have got rid of one unwanted regent but now there were two new ones taking up his place; the fact which must have been highly frustrating for the ambitious woman. Especially when the validity of the regency government was rather questionable as Emperor Huidi was no minor. His impaired mental capacity was certainly an issue but as there was no precedent for either setting emperor aside for being mentally imbalanced or for his having a regent during the whole reign, all possible settling of this problem might have been perceived as arbitrary by one of the parties. Nevertheless the interim arrangement with patriarch of the imperial clan Sima Liang, Prince of Runan, and Wei Guan, senior official of Wudi’s government acting as regents was certainly not to Empress Jia’s liking. Therefore, just a month later she had orchestrated another coup in which both regents lost their lives:

“When Yang Jun was executed Wei Guan became Overseer of Department of State Affairs (*lu shangshu shi* 錄尚書事) ... and together with [Sima] Liang, Prince of Runan, acted as regent to [Emperor Huidi]. Sima Liang proposed to send all princes of the blood to their fiefs and when he deliberated upon this matter with other ministers in court conference there was no one who would dare to agree [with his suggestion], only Wei Guan praised it. That is how [Sima] Wei, Prince of Chu, came to bear a grudge against him. Empress Jia herself felt resentment against Wei Guan, moreover she was displeased with his honesty and uprightness as she was not able to give free play to her excesses. Now that she heard about the enmity between Wei Guan and Prince Wei of Chu, she slandered both Wei Guan and Prince Liang of Runan insinuating that they want to [re-enact the coup of] Yi [Yin] and Huo [Guang] (two ministers who had eclipsed their masters and ruled in their stead). She made the emperor write an edict in his own hand whereby he commissioned prince Wei of Chu to deprive Wei Guan and others of their offices. Palace gatemens transmitted the imperial edict to Sima Wei. Because he was by nature both reckless and malicious he wanted to give free vent to his personal hatred and during the night sent [his brother Sima] Xia, Prince of Qinghe, to detain Wei Guan. As Wei Guan’s retinue suspected that Xia was acting on a false edict they remonstrated with [Wei Guan]: “Among the penalties for offences against both the ritual and the law there has never been a

³⁰⁰ *Jinshu* juan 36, *Zhang Hua zhuan*, p. 1072.

single one like this, applied to the highest minister of state. Thus we beg you to resist for the time being, submit your own petition to the throne and wait for the reply. [Then if the intent of the edict is confirmed,] it won't be late to suffer the punishment." Wei Guan did not follow their [advice] and was subsequently killed together with his sons Heng, Yue and Yi and grandsons, nine persons altogether. He was seventy two years old. Two of Heng's sons, Zao and Jie were at that time in a house of a physician and therefore escaped [the fate of their family] ... Because Wei Guan perished with his whole family despite being innocent the court traced back his meritorious achievements during the conquest of Shu and enfeoffed him as commandery duke of Lanling with the apanage [of the original enfeoffment] increased by three thousand households. He was granted posthumous name [Duke] Cheng [of Lanling] and [honor of] yellow axe was conferred upon him."³⁰¹

Empress Jia made Prince of Chu believe that he was to act under the imperial fiat and execute both Prince of Runan and Wei Guan. She was careful to strike a right chord insinuating that they wanted to follow in Yang Jun's footsteps and usurp the supreme authority of a lawful sovereign. Thus the responsibility of a protector to the throne paired with feeling of personal insecurity prompted Sima Wei to act practically on behalf of the empress and do all the dirty work for her. However, once the deed was done Sima Wei was charged with willfully forging an imperial edict and murdering innocent ministers loyal to the state. He was found guilty and summarily executed, with Empress Jia emerging as the sole victor of the violent power struggle. Leaving aside the political acumen of the empress the fate of unfortunate Wei Guan and his peerage dignity offers an interesting glimpse at another important aspect of the use of enfeoffment system during the second half of the Western Jin. Besides its usefulness in cementing the alliances and strengthening one's political standing posthumous bestowal of noble rank on a victim a political persecution or restoring of the original dignities and honors which had been taken away unlawfully brought considerable political capital.

Wei Guan may have been heartily hated by Empress Jia and yet, his political rehabilitation followed immediately after the execution of his murderer. Not only were the original honors posthumously restored to him but his peerage was even raised from prefecture dukedom of Ziyang 菑陽公 to commandery dukedom of Lanling 蘭陵郡公 accompanied with substantial increase of the number of apanage households. This posthumous promotion redeemed by violent death of the main protagonist served at least two purposes. On the one

³⁰¹ *Jinshu* juan 36, *Wei Guan zhuan*, pp. 1059-1061.

hand, by rehabilitating a victim of Sima Wei's she was publicly distancing herself from foul murder of the innocent servant of the state, formally denying prior knowledge of his plans preventing possible accusations of her complicity. At the same time she also asserted high moral ground as the righteous authority restoring order. Whereas both the imperial princes of the blood and senior officials of the dynasty failed in stabilizing the situation, with one of the princes even being perpetrator of such an outrageous crime against the throne, Empress Jia and her government appear as restorers of the order bringing peace and justice to the realm writhing in uncertainty. While other political entities has discredited themselves Empress Jia, acting in the name of her husband, emerges as the moral victor redressing wrongs and restoring balanced imperial rule. Wei Guan's posthumous promotion is to be seen as symbolic confirmation of legitimacy of this new power behind the throne.

The same strategies connected with the enfeoffment system were later adopted and further elaborated by princes vying for power during the Upheaval of the Eight Princes. The first to use the same strategy to his own advantage was Sima Lun, Prince of Zhao. In 300 AD the prince staged a successful coup, deposed Empress Jia and compelled her to commit suicide comparing her and her family to the notorious Han Dynasty *waiqi* menace of the Lü clan. Members of her family and political supporters were executed including Zhang Hua and Pei Wei mentioned above.³⁰² On the other hand, close advisors of Prince of Zhao were immediately promoted to the rank of peerage:

“Sun Qi's son Bi and three sons of his younger brother Mao, Fu and Yan, four of them altogether, were all praised for their administrative talent by their contemporaries. Afterwards they joined their family to that of (Prince of Zhao's henchman) Sun Xiu. When [Sima] Lun Prince of Zhao staged military coup they followed Sun Xiu during the night, opened the Shenwu Gate of the palace, where they reviewed the weapons. Within weeks and months the brothers (sic! cousins) all became in turn Administrators (*yuan* 掾) of the ministerial office and Secretarial Court Gentlemen (*shangshulang* 尚書郎). [Sun] Bi became Elite Troops General (*zhongjian jiangjun* 中堅將軍) and Concurrent Assistant Director of the Left in Department of State Affairs (*ling shangshu zuocheng* 領尚書左丞) [only] to be transferred to Generalissimo (*shangjiangjun* 上將軍) and Concurrent Commandant of Bowmen Shooter by Sound (*ling shesheng xiaowei* 領射聲校尉). [Sun] Mao became Militant General (*wuwei jiangjun* 武衛將軍) and Concurrent Supervisor of the Household of the Heir Apparent (*ling taizi zhanshi* 領太子詹

³⁰² For details on Sima Lun's career see his biography in *Jinshu* juan 59, *Zhao wang Lun zhuan*, pp. 1597-1605; For his coup and events leading to it see Dryer, Edward L. (2009): pp. 116-117.

事). [Sun] Yan became Militant and Awesome General (*wuwei jiangjun* 武威將軍) and Concurrent Left Commandant of the Heir Apparent (*ling taizi zuoshuai* 領太子左率). They have all been granted the dignities of commandery marquis with right of inheritance ... When [Sima] Jiong Prince of Qi rose in arms all four cousins suffered execution. Governor (*taishou* 太守) of Xiangyang Zong Dai obeyed Jiong's decree and had Sun Qi beheaded. His whole clan was exterminated.”³⁰³

“[Liu] Qiao in his youth became Assistant in the Palace Library (*bishulang* 祕書郎). General Establishing Authority (*jianwei jiangjun* 建威將軍) Wang Rong drafted him as his Aide (*canjun* 參軍). During the campaign against Wu [Wang] Rong sent [Liu] Qiao together with Aide Luo Xiang to cross the Jiang River where they captured Wuchang. When he returned he was given position of Prefecture Magistrate (*ling* 令) in Xingyang. [Later] he was promoted to Frontrider of the Heir Apparent (*taizi xima* 太子洗馬). For the merit of executing Yang Jun he was granted title of lord inside the passes and was appointed Assistant Director of the Right in Department of State Affairs (*shangshu youcheng* 尚書右丞). For his part in executing Jia Mi he was enfeoffed as Baron of Anzhong and later eventually promoted to Cavalier Attendant-in-ordinary (*sanji changshi* 散騎常侍).”³⁰⁴

Given the alleged seriousness of the threat which Empress Jia and her faction had posed to the altars of soil and grain the Prince of Zhao could afford to be generous to his followers. Creation of new noble dignities was perceived as apt and legitimate form of reward for the rendered loyal services to the throne. Sima Lun was able to consolidate his position quite conveniently through promotion of his partisans without causing too much alarm. Suggested rhetoric of a *waiqi* maladministration enabled the prince to present the whole coup as a timely act of loyal commitment to the Sima cause rescuing the dynasty from the brink of total destruction for comparison with the Han precedent of Empress Lü and her family was close at hand.

In order to add more legitimacy to his purely military act Sima Lun, who himself used to support the regime of Empress Jia, now tried to present his coup as the culmination of long-term opposition of certain court circles which deeply resented the empress meddling in the affairs of state. Therefore, besides bestowing noble titles for real military achievements Sima Lun was careful to reward those who for the past nine years remained aloof from the ruling

³⁰³ *Jinshu* juan 60, *Sun Qi zhuan*, pp. 1633-1634.

³⁰⁴ *Jinshu* juan 61, *Liu Qiao zhuan*, p. 1673.

party. By formal endorsing the unyielding defiance of the corrupt and unlawful regime Sima Lun appeared as the legitimate restorer of the order meting out just punishment for the selfish officials as well as recognizing selfless subjects true to the dynasty:

“At the beginning of the Yuankang Era (291-299 AD) [Ji Shao] became Palace Attendant (*jishi huangmen shilang* 給事黃門侍郎). At that time Palace Attendant (*shizhong* 侍中) Jia Mi, enjoying [emperor’s] grace as imperial relative assumed influential position despite being young and [men like] Pan Yue and Du Bin [were eager to] oblige and relied on him. [But when] Jia Mi sought to make his acquaintance Ji Shao distanced himself from him and refused [his overture]. When Jia Mi was executed Shao was in the office and he was enfeoffed as Viscount of Yiyang for not toadying to the evil house [of Jia] and promoted to Cavalier Attendant-in-ordinary (*sanji changshi* 散騎常侍), Concurrent Erudite of the National University (*ling guozi boshi* 領國子博士).”³⁰⁵

Curious case of an enfeoffment used for its symbolic value which nevertheless attests to its mounting importance in the process of legitimizing one’s actions and subsequent rule presents the posthumous bestowal of a prefecture lordship upon Liu Song 劉頌:

“When [Sima] Lun, Prince of Zhao, murdered Zhang Hua, [Liu] Song cried bitterly for him. When he heard that [Zhang] Hua’s son managed to escape, he remarked joyfully: “Maoxian (i.e. Zhang Hua), you still have got an offspring!” Zhang Lin, one of [Sima] Lun’s partisans, overheard this [remark] and got enraged, but fearing his moral uprightness he was not able to kill him. Sun Xiu and others praised highly merits of Prince of Zhao urging for Nine Bestowals (*jiuxi* 九錫) to be conferred upon him as an appropriate [reward and honor] and there was no one among all the court official who would dare to oppose it. Only [Liu] Song said: “In the past the Han bestowed [these] upon the Wei and the Wei bestowed them upon the Jin. In both cases it was just one-off measure and [as such] it cannot be practiced universally. Indeed, today the temple of imperial ancestors is safe and stable [again], but even though an evil empress was demoted and power-abusing ministers were executed, neither Zhou Bo nor Huo Guang were granted Nine Bestowals despite the fact that [Zhou Bo] exterminated all the Lü and revered Emperor Wendi and [Huo Guang] deposed [Marquis of] Changyi and enthroned Emperor Xuandi. To defy the ancient statutes and practice only what is suitable for one’s time is not the order of the preceding kings [of old]. Thus I beg that the suggestion of Nine Bestowals is

³⁰⁵ *Jinshu* juan 89, *Zhongyi zhuan*, *Xi Shao zhuan*, pp. 2298-2299.

not heeded.” Zhang Lin’s rage mounted and he was about to kill [Liu] Song as a partisan of Zhang Hua but Sun Xiu told him: “We have already lost some prestige for executing Zhang [Hua] and Pei [Wei]. It is not possible to execute Liu Song as well.” Lin desisted ... Soon [Liu] Song became ill and died. The [imperial] messenger was sent to offer condolences and sacrifices [to the dead] and he was granted two hundred thousand coins, one set of ceremonial court garment [to be buried in] and posthumous name of Zhen ... Liu Song had no son of his own so he had adopted his nephew, Liu Yong, son of his younger brother Liu He, but he died prematurely. Thus Liu Yan, a son of Yong’s younger brother Liu Xu became his adopted grandson and [later] inherited the noble title. In the first year of the Yongkang Era (300 AD) the imperial edict decreed that Liu Song should be posthumously enfeoffed as prefecture lord of Liangzou with the apauage of one thousand five hundred households for his merit on execution of Jia Mi and also because he supervised various affairs of the government.”³⁰⁶

Unfortunately, the exact timing of Liu Song’s posthumous enfeoffment poses some problems which make any interpretation rather tentative. The dynastic history indicates that it took place during the first year of the Yongkang Era (300/301 AD) but the commentary of the editors amends the date to the first year of the Yongning Era (301/302 AD) arguing that Liu Song’s eventual promotion was possible only after Sima Lun’s final defeat and execution in early summer of 301 AD.³⁰⁷ However, it is not necessarily impossible for the Prince of Zhao himself to bestow posthumous enfeoffment upon dead Liu Song for it was undeniably during the period of Sima Lun’s political dominance that Liu Song’s family was granted substantial honors following the demise of the man. Moreover, Liu Song was no victim of prince’s revenge and had died the natural death. Even though there was certainly no love lost between them Liu Song was not considered an enemy of the new regent and it is therefore not impossible that it was Sima Lun himself who sanctioned the lordship grant. I would argue that even the formal reasons for enfeoffment indicate that the dignity might have been bestowed during Sima Lun’s regency as they are referring to the rightful execution of Jia Mi rather than defying the usurper Prince of Zhao, which was generally the case with the enfeoffments accompanying Sima Lun’s fall.

If my assumption is correct then the bestowal of a lordship dignity upon Liu Song could be interpreted as a conscious effort on part of Prince of Zhao to use Liu Song’s reputation and moral credit for legitimization of his own regency rule. Liu Song may have been political opponent of the prince, disagreeing with the murder of Zhang Hua and other

³⁰⁶ *Jinshu* juan 46, *Liu Song zhuan*, p. 1308.

³⁰⁷ *Jinshu* juan 46, *Liu Song zhuan*, p. 1314, note number 9.

high officials associated with the regime of Empress Jia, yet his loyalty to the dynasty and high moral standards were exemplary. As the posthumous enfeoffment symbolically extolled these qualities the bestowal might have actually presented the regent as a righteous ruler appreciating men of worth, himself worthy of the great task of steering the realm. Sima Lun's effort to promote an opponent in order to consolidate his own political position was made easier by the fact that the death had meanwhile rendered Liu Song inconsequential and the prince did not have to worry about eventual rise of his power.

The enfeoffment of Liu Song might appear purely ceremonial to us but keeping appearances was crucial for maintaining balance of power and legitimacy of one's authority. Sima Lun overstepped the line when he deposed Emperor Huidi and proclaimed himself ruler in his stead. At that moment he turned from more or less respected protector of the realm to a detested usurper. Emperor's brothers immediately rose in arms acting as loyal guardians of the throne protecting the hereditary right to succession of the primogenitural imperial line. At the end of May 301 AD the forces of the princes entered the imperial palace, apprehended the usurper and re-installed the deposed Emperor Huidi.³⁰⁸ One of the allies Sima Jiong 司馬冏, Prince of Qi 齊王, soon became the new power behind the throne and a new wave of enfeoffment duly followed rewarding fresh achievements of the victorious commanders of the princely forces:

“When [Sima] Lun Prince of Zhao usurped the throne Sun Xiu monopolized all authority and all loyal and honest gentlemen met with disaster. [Pan] Ni subsequently became gravely ill and took leave [from his office] in order to sweep the ancestral graves. When he heard that Jiong prince of Qi rose in righteous uprising he rushed to Xuchang [to join him]. Jiong drafted him as his Aide (*canjun* 參軍) and he discussed the matters of policy [and strategy] with him and at the same time put him in charge of writing his documents. When the thing (execution of Prince of Zhao) was over he was enfeoffed as Duke of Anchang.”³⁰⁹

Not all of the newly created peers and lords were former court official. Like Sun Xiu 孫秀, henchman of Prince of Zhao, who had attained high rank and office during his master's reign despite his rather obscure origin, the righteous uprising and subsequent execution of the

³⁰⁸ For details about Sima Lun's usurpation and uprising of the three princes led by Prince of Qi see Dreyer, Edward L. (2009): pp. 116-121; for period of Prince of Qis's hegemony see Dreyer, Edward L. (2009): pp. 118-124.

³⁰⁹ *Jinshu* juan 55, *Pan Ni zhuan*, p. 1515; Another of Sima Jiong's commanders, Sun Hui 孫惠, was enfeoffed as prefecture lord of Jinxing 晉興侯. See *Jinshu* juan 71, *Sun Hui zhuan*, p. 1881, the relevant passage is translated on page 161 above.

usurper opened the ranks of titled nobility to newcomers hailing from considerably less illustrious families often of only local importance connected with princely fief who rose in service to a prince without ever holding an office in the central government. Even though these men were given the highest peerages we don't know any details except the fact that their career was brief and did not survive the eclipse of political dominance of prince of Qi:

“In the first year of the Yongning Era (301 AD) ... in the sixth month ... on the *yimao* day ... the meritorious ministers of [Sima] Jiong Prince of Qi were enfeoffed as follows: Ge Yu as Duke of Mouping, Lu Ji as Duke of Xiaohuang, Wei Yi as Duke of Pingyin, Liu Zhen as Duke of Anxiang and Han Tai as Duke of Fengqiu.”³¹⁰

Sima Jiong of Qi was not the only one whose commanders were newly promoted. We may expect that also men serving under other imperial princes who allied themselves with Sima Jiong were duly rewarded as is attested by the cases of Shi Chao 石超 and Zheng Qiu 鄭球, officers of Jiong's cousin Sima Ying Prince of Chengdu 成都王司馬穎:³¹¹

“When [Sima Ying] raised arms in righteous uprising he made [Shi] Chao Dashing General (*zhechong jiangjun* 折衝將軍) and [had him] chastise Sun Xiu. For his achievement he was enfeoffed as a marquis/lord.”³¹²

“When [Sima] Ying Prince of Chengdu became General-in-chief (*dajiangjun* 大將軍) and raised righteous uprising against [Sima] Lun Prince of Zhao. [Zheng] Qiu was promoted from Governor (*taishou* 太守) of Dunqiu to Right Administrator (*you zhangshi* 右長史). For his merit he was enfeoffed as Duke of Pingshou.”³¹³

While Sima Lun of Zhao did not ever question the validity of Yang Jun's execution even though it had been orchestrated by Empress Jia and her faction, Sima Jiong Prince of Qi was in a different position. Prince of Zhao was not a mere “unworthy” minister exercising potentially harmful influence over the emperor but a usurper who had dethroned his rightful sovereign and tried to alter the legitimate succession. Therefore, the fact that Sima Lun had

³¹⁰ *Jinshu* juan 4, *Huidi benji*, p. 98.

³¹¹ Another of Sima Ying's men was Lu Zhi 盧志 who was created Marquis of Wuqiang 武強侯. See *Jinshu* juan 44, *Lu Zhi zhuan*, p. 1257.

³¹² *Jinshu* juan 33, *Shi Qiao zhuan*, p. 1004.

³¹³ *Jinshu* juan 44, *Zheng Qiu zhuan*, p. 1252.

turned usurper set his previous deeds into a different perspective, no matter how noble his original intentions may have been. Even if the deposition of Empress Jia had been originally motivated by loyalty to the crown, in light of subsequent usurpation the prince's motives must have inevitably appeared less selfless. As it was impossible to perceive Sima Lun's coup as beneficial to the dynasty without giving him the due credit for it, the downfall of the Jia faction had to be reassessed and in the process lost its momentousness of a timely rescue of the dynasty on the brink of a disaster. The need to discredit Sima Lun's rule as corrupt and unlawful led to posthumous rehabilitation of members of the Jia family and Empress Jia's faction. The political rehabilitation of the victims of prince of Zhao was necessary in order to justify the physical elimination of the prince and his faction.

Empress Jia herself was still held responsible for the death of the crown prince Minhuai but some officials associated with her reign who had died during the coup were posthumously rehabilitated and the hereditary noble lineage of the Jia family was also formally resurrected:

“After [Sima] Lun Prince of Zhao was defeated the court assessed the past achievements of Jia Chong and deliberated about [official] appointing his inheritor. They wanted to name Jia Chong's clan grandson Gentleman Cavalier Attendant (*sanji shilang* 散騎侍郎) Jia Zhong his heir, but Jia Zhong pretended to be mad and thereby avoided [the inheritance]. His son Jia Tu was declared Chong's heir and enfeoffed as Duke of Lu. But he succumbed to an illness. During the Yongxing Era (304-305 AD) Chong's great-grandson Jia Zhan was installed as Duke of Lu in order to offer sacrifices to Chong. He perished during the upheavals [at the end of the dynasty] and the fief was abolished.”³¹⁴

Formal restoring of dukedom of Lu 魯 to the Jia family was of high symbolic importance in several respects. First of all, the last duke of Lu was Jia Mi 賈謐 (also Han Mi 韓謐), grandson and adopted heir of Jia Chong, who had been presented as the main culprit blamed for the greatest excesses of Empress Jia's reign including the assassination of the heir apparent. Even though this view did not change, the restoring of the peerage for a collateral branch of the family signaled that the original punishment inflicted on the family might have been too severe and that an injustice had been done to the memory of Jia Chong, the leading meritorious minister of the Jin. By restoring the noble dignity Sima Jiong of Qi

³¹⁴ *Jinshu* juan 40, *Jia Chong zhuan*, p. 1175.

redressed the wrong without actually revising the role of Jia Mi. Thus he managed to discredit at least partially the merit of his predecessor Sima Lun and at the same time strengthened legitimacy of his own rule even further by symbolically restoring the proper order of things. For Jia Chong should have not been denied an offspring who would continue offering sacrifices in memory of his great achievement during the founding of the dynasty. In this way Prince of Qi claimed to be the true heir to the more glorious reign of Wudi and as the restorer of the order he was able to vindicate his violent action and became the legitimate power behind the throne.

Apparently, the posthumous rehabilitation of the Jia family was no isolated gesture and there were also other officials associated with the Jia faction whose honors and titles were posthumously restored either to them or to their relatives immediately after the fall of Prince of Zhao. One of them was Shi Chong 石崇, younger son of Duke of Leling and erstwhile favorite of Emperor Wudi:

“After Jia Mi was executed [Shi] Chong was deprived of his office as member of his faction. At that time [Sima] Lun Prince of Zhao usurped the authority. There were feelings of enmity between Shi Chong’s nephew Ouyang Jian and Prince of Zhao. Chong had a musician and dancer called Lüzhu who was graceful and beautiful, skilled in playing the flute. Sun Xiu (henchman of Prince of Zhao) sent someone to claim her. [Shi] Chong dwelled in his Jingu Villa and had just ascended a terrace for catching breeze and was admiring clear stream from above surrounded by his women waiting upon him. When the messenger conveyed [the request] Shi Chong ordered all his servants and concubines, couple of dozens, to come out and showed them to the messenger. They were all clad in thin gauze perfumed with rare scents of orchids and musk. Shi Chong challenged the messenger: “Choose right here!” The messenger demurred: “These trinkets and trappings of Your Honor are smart indeed but I have been ordered to demand only Lüzhu. I don’t know which one is her, though!” Agitated, [Shi] Chong said: “Lüzhu is the one I love. You cannot have her!” The messenger reasoned with him: “Your honor is well versed in ancient learning as well as practices of our times, I wish you would ponder the distant as well as recent past and think it over!” But Shi Chong was adamant: “It is not going to happen!” The messenger left and then came again but in the end Shi Chong would not consent. [Sun] Xiu was enraged and prevailed on Prince of Zhao to execute both Shi Chong and [his nephew] Ouyang Jian. Both men knew about their plan and therefore in secret tried together with Gentleman of the Palace Gate (*huangmenlang* 黃門郎) Pan Yue to persuade [Sima] Yun Prince of Huainan and [Sima] Jiong Prince of Qi to conspire against [Sima] Lun and [Sun] Xiu. [Sun] Xiu got wind of [the hatching coup] and had [Shi] Chong, Pan Yue and

Ouyang Jian detained, pretending that he was acting on [the authority of] an imperial edict. [Shi] Chong just held a banquet on the top of a multi-storied pavilion when the armed men arrived at his gate. Chong said to Lüzhū: “Now I have committed offence for your sake.” Crying, Lüzhū answered: “Then I have to prove [my faithfulness] by dying in front of them.” Thence she threw herself down the pavilion and died. Chong said: “I will be merely banished to either Jiaozhou or Guangzhou, nothing more!” But then he was taken in a carriage to the Eastern Market [to be executed]. There [Shi] Chong sighed: “Slaves will profit from the wealth of my family.” The man who had arrested him answered: “If you knew that wealth may lead to doom, why did you not get rid of it earlier?” Chong was unable to answer. Chong’s mother, elder brother, wife and children were all slain regardless of their age. There were more than fifteen victims. Shi Chong was fifty two years old ... When Emperor Huidi returned to the throne [following the execution of Prince of Zhao] he decreed to re-bury [Shi Chong] with honors belonging to a court minister. His clan grandson [Shi] Yan was enfeoffed as Duke of Leling.”³¹⁵

The rehabilitation of Shi Chong was easily justified by his leading role in a frustrated attempt to remove ambitious regent and replace him with Sima Yun Prince of Huainan 淮南王司馬允 who, being a brother to the emperor, was considered to be more fitting as a champion of the imperial house.³¹⁶ This conspiracy, albeit unsuccessful, redeemed the political blunder of Shi Chong’s inopportune connection with Jia Mi and qualified him for posthumous rewards as a righteous minister who was not hesitant to defy the usurper and sacrifice his life for the well-being of the dynasty. However, such was not the case of Zhang Hua, the leading member of the Jia faction and yet, Sima Jiong did attempt to rehabilitate him as well:

“Later when [Sima] Lun and [Sun] Xiu suffered execution, [Sima] Jiong, Prince of Qi, assumed power as regent [to the emperor]. Yu Zhi sent Jiong a following communication: “After Zhang Hua was killed I entered the Secretariat (*zhongshusheng* 中書省) and found the original draft of Hua’s answer to a decree of the late emperor. The late emperor was asking Hua who could be entrusted with regency and assigned the great responsibility of managing the affairs [of the state] after [emperor’s death]. Hua’s answer was: “In both bright virtue and closeness of blood nobody can surpass the late prince (he is referring to the then still living Sima You prince of Qi, younger brother of Wudi and father to the Prince of Qi who is the addressee of Yu Zhi’s letter). It would be fitting to detain him [in the capital] as guardian of the

³¹⁵ *Jinshu* juan 33, *Shi Chong zhuan*, p. 1008.

³¹⁶ For Sima Yun and conspiracy against Prince of Zhao see Dreyer, Edward L (2009): p. 117.

altars of soil and grain.” Indeed, he may be in nether world, yet his honest and loyal advice, his sincere and earnest words are outstanding even after his death. He cannot be mentioned in the same breath with those moving with the times, seeking temporary ease [and accommodating to current conditions]. Those discussing [his deeds tend to] blame [Zhang] Hua that in the matter of [deposing and assassination] of the Crown Prince Minhuai he did not stand fast to the moral principle and did not fight for him in the court [conference]. At that time all the remonstrants ought to have merited death for disobeying orders. [However according to] the teaching of the sages of yore [someone’s] death is not held against people unless they profit by it. Thus, Yan Ying was a righteous dignitary in Qi and yet, he did not die during the disaster of Cui Zhu. Ji Zha was a venerated minister of Wu and yet, he did not criticize [anything] for going [either] against the principles or being in harmony with them. To exhaust one’s reason and still achieve nothing, that is something that the teaching of the sages would originally not blame on anyone.” Thereupon [Sima] Jiong petitioned the throne: “Your subject has heard that to make flourish what has once declined and to pick up the threads of something that has been severed was the noble policy of the sagely kings and that to censure the evil and praise the good was the beautiful intent of the Springs and Autumns. That is why King Wuwang had a mound raised over the grave of Bi Gan and had Shang Rong praised in the neighborhood. Thus the causes of evil and good are truly intertwined. Sun Xiu rose in rebellion, annihilated the domain [lords] who had assisted with the establishing of the mandate and executed principled and honest ministers of the state in order to cut down the imperial house and indulge his viciousness and cruelty. Many an offspring of a meritorious minister was exterminated. Zhang Hua and Pei Wei were both executed because they were feared [as righteous ministers], Xie Xi and Xie Jie were both slaughtered as lambs. Ouyang Jian and others died innocent and all the people felt pity for them. Now Your Majesty’s [aura] shines more than Sun and Moon as you have ushered in the new reign of reform, yet these noble lords still haven’t been favored by your grace. In the past [the great aristocratic houses of] Luan and Xi sank in standing to become mere slaves and the Spring and Autumn Annals pass it down as erroneous. King Youwang cut off the lines of descent of the meritorious ministers and discarded the offspring of the wise ones and the poet(s) criticized him for it. Your subject may be unworthy of a high office he holds, yet his thoughts are those of utmost sincerity. If it meets wish of [Your Majesty’s] sagely [mind], let the officials be ordered to thoroughly deliberate [upon this matter].” Each of the discussants had a view of his own but majority of them claimed that an injustice had been done to [Zhang Hua and others].³¹⁷

³¹⁷ *Jinshu* juan 36, *Zhang Hua zhuan*, pp. 1076-1077.

Sima Jiong's initiative to rehabilitate Zhang Hua and to restore to him his peerage dignity was obviously motivated not only by the need to discredit the perpetrator of his death but also by feelings of personal gratitude to the man who had supported Sima Jiong's late father, Sima You, recommending him to Wudi as a possible regent for his successor and executor of his last will.³¹⁸ These are distant echos of the succession struggle which had occurred before Wudi decided to settle the succession upon future Huidi. Sima You was for some time considered to be prospective heir and if Wudi had not changed his mind it would have been Sima You and in turn his son Sima Jiong who would have sit upon the Jin throne. Clearly, Prince of Qi was well aware of it and his ambition in this respect was soon to cause alarm among his princely cousins.

In case of Zhang Hua, Jiong's rehabilitation effort ended in failure. Unlike Shi Chong, Zhang Hua was the main minister of Empress Jia's government and therefore he was universally held morally responsible for the actions of the meddlesome empress and her haughty family. He was especially blamed for his failing in preventing the murder of the crown prince Minhuai in 300 AD. Apart from the fact that Minhuai's death meant direct threat to primogenitorial succession it also jeopardized the legitimacy of the imperial rule as it opened the door to ambitious Prince of Zhao and following usurpation:

“Minister of Works (*sikong* 司空) Zhang Hua was executed by Lun, [Prince of Zhao] and [after the prince's fall] the advisers reassessed his case and wanted to restore him to his original peerage dignity], but Ji Shao protested: “When a subject serves his lord he is bound to remove the obstacles and dispel confusion. When [Zhang] Hua served in official positions of both central and provincial government, even though there were some things which were good, his blame [meriting] death is apparent far and wide. For the one who had ushered in the disaster and started the chaos was [no other than] Zhang Hua. In the past when Zheng suppressed the upheaval of Yougong, the coffin of Zijia was hacked [to pieces] and when Lu punished Yin's crime, the chapters [of the Annals] in the end censured Hui. Even not being able to bear [Zhang Hua's] heavy punishment is serious enough! [Let alone the effort to restore his dignity.] Therefore I say that it is not fitting to restore his peerage dignity as if he were without blame.”³¹⁹

³¹⁸ The original text of the petition Yu Zhi was hinting at says: “In both bright virtue and closeness of blood nobody can surpass prince You of Qi!” See *Jinshu* juan 36, *Zhang Hua zhuan*, p. 1070.

³¹⁹ *Jinshu* juan 89, *Zhongyi zhuan*, *Ji Shao zhuan*, p. 2299.

Sima Jiong did not live to see Zhang Hua restored to his dignities, yet the worsening political situation with various princes vying for power and legitimacy called for pragmatic reassessment of previous decisions. No opportunity was to be lost which would enable the princes to appear as a restorer of the order and therefore eventually even Zhang Hua was posthumously fully rehabilitated and officially proclaimed innocent victim of a rebellious traitor:

[Certain] Zhu Dao, a subject of Zhuangwu Dukedom, also approached Prince of Changsha and beseeched him to restore Zhang Hua's noble dignity but he [remained] hesitant for a long time. In the second year of the Tai'an Era (302 AD) the following imperial edict was issued: "Love and hate are combating one another and treason and evil abhor uprightness. It has been always so since the ancient times. Late Minister of Works (*sikong* 司空) Duke of Zhuangwu [Zhang] Hua exhausted his loyalty and honesty, pondering the affairs of state and assisting the government. His achievements of devising [the strategies] and planning [the policies were great] and [We] have relied on him in every single matter. Previously, because of his merit of aiding [the government] it was suitable [for him] to be enfeoffed [as others], yet [Zhang] Hua had firmly refused up to eight or nine times widely explaining the great system [of state?] but he was unable to achieve anything. In the end he expressed his worries of [lurking] peril and [possible] humiliation and his protestations refusing [the honor] were so earnest that they sufficed to persuade everyone both far and near. Hua's sincerity [must have been] received from the gods. For his achievement on conquering Wu [Zhang] Hua received noble dignity from the late emperor. Later [he argued] that since the enfeoffment is not one of the main institutions of the state, it is inappropriate to increase the previous great reward for [any subsequent] small achievement. As for Hua's murder, he was wantonly assassinated, [becoming] innocent [victim of the] treacherous rebels who were plotting mischief. [The original] offices of Palace Attendant (*shizhong* 侍中), Secretariat Supervisor (*zhongshujian* 中書監), Minister of Works, duke and Marquis of Guangwu shall be restored to [Zhang] Hua together with the confiscated property as well as official seals, ribbons, tallies and other insignias. An imperial messenger shall be sent to condole and offer sacrifices to him."³²⁰

The alliance of the imperial princes did not survive long the accomplishment of its purpose. Whereas Jiong of Qi seized the reins of government other princes withdrew to their regional commands where they waited gathering forces and watching the actions of Prince of Qi with mounting concern. Mutual distrust grew into poorly concealed enmity as the old

³²⁰ *Jinshu* juan 36, *Zhang Hua zhuan*, pp. 1077.

rivalries between the different branches of the imperial family gradually resurfaced. The unfortunate question of seniority of the main imperial lineage contested by the Qi princely line in the end cost Sima Jiong his life. Brothers of the emperor felt more entitled to regency for the inept ruler and one of them, Sima Yi, Prince of Changsha 長沙王司馬乂, staged a coup early in 303 AD and had Jiong of Qi killed.³²¹ Successful military action was again followed by promotion of meritorious commanders and advisors as well as executions and demotions of the members of the losing party whose noble dignities were forfeited:³²²

“For the achievement of following His Imperial Majesty in chastising [Sima] Jiong Prince of Qi [Xun Fan] was enfeoffed as prefecture duke of Xihua.”³²³

“After [Sima] Jiong, [Prince of Qi] was executed, [Gu] Rong was enfeoffed for merit of chastising [prince’s henchman] Ge Yu as Count of Jiaying and was transferred to position of palace cadet to the crown prince (*taizi zhongshuzi* 太子中庶子).”³²⁴

Due to the rising political instability it was increasingly hard for succeeding regents and princely protectors of the realm to retain not only their position but also their moral credit and legitimacy of their authority. With one regent being replaced by another in ever faster succession of military coups and uprisings the validity of the claims to power of any new regent was seriously impaired. A political rival had to be declared a rebel in order to justify the violent action taken against him as a necessary punitive measure sanctioned by the throne. The question of high moral ground became highly important as the inflated frequency of the supposed usurpation attempts discredited all future attempts to “save the throne.” The strategic use of the enfeoffment and posthumous restoring of the honors for both their practical and symbolic value which was developed gradually since the death of Emperor Wudi was now employed on a regular basis. As every new would-be regent was eager to appear as a restorer of the order the restoring of noble dignities, titles and honors previously abolished by their political opponents became the norm during every subsequent power struggle. It goes without saying that political rehabilitation of the “victims” was accompanied

³²¹ For Sima Yi and period of his administration see Dreyer, Edward L. (2009): pp. 124-128; *Jinshu* juan 59, *Changsha Liwang Yi zhuan*, pp. 1612-1615.

³²² One of newly created peers was also Huwu Fuzhi 胡毋輔之, Baron of Yinping 陰平男. See *Jinshu* juan 49, *Huwu Fuzhi zhuan*, p. 1380.

³²³ *Jinshu* juan 39, *Xun Fan zhuan*, p. 1158.

³²⁴ *Jinshu* juan 68, *Gu Rong zhuan*, p. 1812.

by elimination of the partisans of one's predecessor and forfeiture of the dignities bestowed upon them during his rule.³²⁵

“Liu Tun was promoted to Princely Administrator (*neishi* 内史) of Taiyuan. When [Sima] Lun Prince of Zhao usurped the throne he bestowed on him title of General Fighting the Caitiffs (*zhenglu jiangjun* 征虜將軍) but he did not accept this [appointment] and instead joined the righteous uprising of the three princes. When Emperor Huidi returned to the throne [Liu] Tun was made Assistant Director of the Left in the Department of State Affairs (*zuocheng* 左丞) and as he was strict and unyielding in [discharging the duties of his office] the three agencies became earnest and impartial ... When [Sima] Yi Prince of Changsha chastised [Sima] Jiong Prince of Qi, [Liu] Tun participated in planning the whole action and was [duly] enfeoffed as prefecture duke of Zhuxu with apanage of one thousand eight hundred households. But after Yi's death he was sentenced [as his partisan] to the loss of office ... When Emperor Huidi graced Chang'an with his presence he left Liu Tun behind to defend Luoyang. [Sima] Yong Prince of Hejian sent a messenger to poison Empress Yang, but Tun together with Vice Director of the Department of State Affairs of the temporary government (*liutai puye* 留臺僕射) Xun Fan and Governor of Metropolitan Area (*Henan yin* 河南尹) Zhou Fu petitioned him arguing that the empress was innocent [of all charges] ... When Yong saw the memorandum, he seethed with rage and sent Chen Yan and Lü Lang leading five thousand riders to detain [Liu] Tun. Tun fled eastwards to [Sima] Lüe Prince of Gaomi ... when Huidi came back to Luoyang Empress Yang returned to the palace. She sent a messenger to Liu Tun expressing her thanks: “All what is happening now is possible only because of loyal and sincere intents of Metropolitan Commandant (*sili* 司隸) Liu (i.e. you)!” For the old achievements the peerage dignity was restored to him and he became Additional Grand Master of Splendid Happiness (*jia guanglu dafu* 加光祿大夫).”³²⁶

The achievements leading to the enfeoffment of Suo Jing 索靖 are also connected to the campaign against Jiong of Qi launched in 303 AD, nevertheless Suo Jing did not act in service to prince of Changsha in Luoyang but as a commander of Sima Yong Prince of Hejian 河間王司馬顥, regional commander of Guanzhong and another important player in power struggle of the imperial princes:³²⁷

³²⁵ The same strategies were naturally used also in connection with royal peerages and princely enfeoffments. For detail see Hrubý, Jakub (2007): pp. 120-128.

³²⁶ *Jinshu* juan 45, *Liu Tun zhuan*, pp. 1280-1281.

³²⁷ For Sima Yong and his actions see Dreyer, Edward L. (2009): pp. 123-134; and *Jinshu* juan 59, *Hejian wang Yong zhuan*, pp. 1619-1622.

“During the Yuankang Era (291-299 AD) the Western Rongs rebelled and [Suo] Jing was appointed Left Commander (*zuo sima* 左司馬) to General-in-chief (*dajiangjun* 大將軍) Sima Rong, Prince of Liang. With honorific title of General Sweeping off the Bandits (*dangkou jiangjun* 蕩寇將軍) he stationed his troops in Suyi from where he assaulted the bandits and defeated them. Then he was promoted to Princely Administrator (*neishi* 內史) of Shiping. When Lun, Prince of Zhao, usurped the throne Suo Jing joined the righteous uprising of the three princes and as Left General of the Guard (*zuo weijiangjun* 左衛將軍) he achieved some merit on chastising Sun Xiu. Therefore, he was made Concurrent Cavalier Attendant-in-ordinary (*sanji changshi* 散騎常侍) and promoted to General of the Rear (*houjiangjun* 后將軍). At the end of the Tai'an Era (302-303 AD) [Sima] Yong, Prince of Hejian, raised an army and [marched] on Luoyang. Suo Jing was Commissioned with Extraordinary Powers (*shichijie* 使持節) to direct all the military affairs of the City of Luo and appointed General Striking Unexpectedly (*youji jiangjun* 遊擊將軍) commanding the righteous forces of Yongzhou, Qinzhou and Liangzhou. They engaged the insurgents and routed them but Suo Jing was wounded and died. Posthumously he was given title of Chamberlain for Ceremonials (*taichang* 太常). He was sixty five years old. Later he was posthumously granted title of Minister of Works (*sikong* 司空) and promoted in noble rank to village lord of Anle with posthumous name Zhuang.”³²⁸

As the power struggle between the princes of the blood and descendants of Emperor Wudi continued unabated, other noble dignities were later awarded to courtiers and commanders, who had somehow contributed to the downfall of another of Huidi's brothers, Sima Ying, Prince of Chengdu, self-proclaimed heir apparent who tried to monopolize the power following the death of prince of Changsha.³²⁹

“When [Sima] Lun Prince of Zhao was allowed to commit suicide [Sima] Jiong Prince of Qi became regent and again made [Gao] Guang Chamberlain for Law Enforcement (*tingwei* 廷尉) and promoted him to the post of Imperial Secretary (*shangshu* 尚書) and Concurrent Commandant-in-chief of Chariots (*fengche duwei* 奉車都尉). Later he followed his Imperial

³²⁸ *Jinshu* juan 60, *Suo Jing zhuan*, pp. 1648-1649.

³²⁹ For Sima Ying and his fate see Dreyer, Edward, L. (2009): pp. 118, 122-131; *Jinshu* juan 59, *Chengdu wang Ying zhuan*, pp. 1615-1619.

Majesty in chastising [Sima] Ying Prince of Chengdu and for his achievements was enfeoffed as prefecture duke of Yanling with apanage of one thousand eight hundred households.”³³⁰

“Later [Wen Xian] followed his Imperial Majesty in chastising [Sima] Ying Prince of Chengdu and for his achievements was enfeoffed as prefecture duke of Daling with apanage of one thousand eight hundred households.”³³¹

In summer of 306 AD Emperor Huidi who had been previously forced to resettle in Chang’an under control of Prince of Hejian returned triumphantly back to Luoyang. He was welcomed by Sima Yue Prince of Donghai who placed himself in charge of the government. The war of the Eight Princes was almost over. The remnants of the independent forces of princes of Hejian and Chengdu were defeated and dispersed and both rivals eventually met their death. Yue of Donghai emerged as a sole victor of the internecine struggle with no other imperial prince being strong enough to challenge the authority he exercised over the court and the emperor.³³² Emperor’s return was accompanied by the last large-scale enfeoffment of the Western Jin when the newly restored imperial court under Prince of Donghai’s supervision granted generous rewards to all those who had somehow contributed to the war effort aimed against princes of Chengdu and Hejian and made return to Luoyang possible. The new peerages and lordships were officially bestowed in acknowledgement of the ultimate achievement “of welcoming His Imperial Majesty” (*ying jia zhi gong* 迎駕之功) back from humiliating captivity of Chang’an.³³³

Not much has changed for the emperor, though. As so many times in his life he remained just a puppet in hands of a powerful clansman who was to reign in his name. Nevertheless, the appearances of legitimate authority seriously damaged by disastrous military defeat at Dangyin 蕩陰 and subsequent abduction of the sovereign were successfully restored. This “return to normal state of affairs” was symbolically confirmed by assessing past merits and revising judgments passed by various warring princes. By this time it was already

³³⁰ *Jinshu* juan 41, *Gao Guang zhuan*, p. 1198.

³³¹ *Jinshu* juan 44, *Wen Xian zhuan*, p. 1267.

³³² For rise of Sima Yue Prince of Donghai see Dreyer, Edward L. (2009): 131-135; for details about political development under his rule see *Ibid*: 135-136; and also *Jinshu* juan 59 *Donghai Xiaoxianwang Yue zhuan*, pp. 1622-1626.

³³³ For example Sima Yue’s advisor Sun Hui 孫惠 was created prefecture duke of Linxiang 臨湘縣公 (*Jinshu* juan 71, *Sun Hui zhuan*, p. 1884); Wang Yi 王廙 became prefecture lord of Wuling 武陵縣侯 (*Jinshu* juan 76, *Wang Yi zhuan*, p. 2003); Wang Cheng 王承 was awarded prefecture lordship of Lantian 藍田縣侯 (*Jinshu* juan 75, *Wang Cheng zhuan*, p. 1960); Liu Qiao 劉喬 was enfeoffed for his merit of fetching the emperor from Chang’an as Marquis of Guangwu 廣武侯 with apanage of two thousand households (*Jinshu* juan 62, *Liu Kun zhuan*, p. 1680).

an established tradition for a victorious prince to reward one's followers with noble dignities, yet the situation of Prince of Donghai was slightly different. The victory might have left him with no serious political opponents but the empire now faced much greater danger of rival imperial regimes founded by various non-Han insurgents during the years of the civil disorder challenging the supreme authority of the Jin Son of Heaven and raiding the area under his control. Wrecked country ravaged by incessant warfare and court suffering from years of political infighting were in great need of consolidation in order to be able to maintain its existence vis-à-vis aggressive rival regimes. Yue of Donghai had to rally all possible support for the dynasty and strengthen the bonds of loyalty which might have got weekend as the years of suicidal faction struggle without doubt seriously discredited the dynastic cause. Therefore, apart from customary rewards to his own followers he was careful to bestow noble dignities also on men of local influence who might prove to be valuable allies of the court in its quest for re-establishing the order:

“When [Sima] Yue, Prince of Donghai, welcomed the imperial equipage (i.e. the emperor) [back to Luoyang, Liu] Hong sent his Adjutant (*canjun* 參軍) Liu Pan to be Protector-general (*duhu* 督護) and led all his forces to join Prince of Donghai. When Liu Pan returned he planned to resign from his office of Regional Inspector and Commandant (*xiaowei* 校尉) and was just about to distribute units under his command [to his generals and officers] for he felt old and infirm. Before he could have petitioned the court [and ask for permission] he had died in Xiangyang. Men and women mourned and lamented [his death] as if they had lost their own kin! Initially, when [Sima] Ying, Prince of Chengdu, fled to the South he wanted to go to his fief but [Liu] Hong cut him off [preventing his reaching the fief]. And when Liu Hong died, his Commander (*sima* 司馬) Guo Mai wanted to raise Sima Ying as a [new] master, but Liu Hong's son Liu Fan respected his father's intent even after his death and in black hempen mourning clothes led the soldiers of the office to deal with Guo Mai. The battle was fought on the Zhuo River where [Liu Fan] cut off [Guo Mai's] head and peace and tranquility was restored in [the regions] of Xiang[yang] and Mian. Initially [Sima] Yue, Prince of Donghai distrusted [Liu] Hong and Liu Qiao suspecting them of disloyalty to himself and even though [Liu Hong] resigned from his office the prince was still worried. [But] when Hong cut off [Sima] Ying [from his fief] and now Fan again beheaded Guo Mai, the court rejoiced and Yue [of Donghai] wrote a letter to Liu Fan in his own hand praising him highly. [At the same time] he also

petitioned the throne having Liu Hong posthumously promoted to commandery duke of Xincheng granting him posthumous name Yuan.”³³⁴

Obviously, even though Sima Yue initially did not trust the Lius who remained more or less independent of the central government in Luoyang, he appreciated their loyalty when they denied support to defeated Prince of Chengdu and had Liu Hong 劉弘 posthumously enfeoffed as commandery duke of Xincheng 新城郡公. Despite its having been conferred posthumously it was no empty ceremonial gesture for this highest peerage dignity was of course heritable and Liu Hong’s son Liu Fan 劉璠 would duly succeed to the title. As he had inherited the command of his father’s troops and presumably remained in control of the large territory in today’s Hubei the question of Liu Fan’s allegiance was very important and the enfeoffment should have secured his loyalty for the future.

The enfeoffment apparently may have served as a means how to win over potentially disloyal regional commanders as well as a kind of compensation for military authority which Sima Yue was forced to take from them in the process of consolidation of the dynastic power:

“At the beginning [Sima] Yue Prince of Donghai was very grateful to [Gou] Xi (regional military commander of Yanzhou) for avenging his shame and took him in [as member of his entourage] handling official business and they became sworn brothers. Yue’s Commander (*sima* 司馬) Pan Tao admonished him: “Yanzhou is [a region] of utmost strategic importance with which Wei Wu[di] (Cao Cao) assisted the House of Han as its prime minister. Gou Xi is a man of great ambition, not a loyal minister. If you let him occupy that position for [too] long, a peril shall arise from among your trusted retainers. If you transfer him to Qingzhou and promote him in rank and title Gou Xi is bound to be pleased. Your lordship should shepherd Yanzhou yourself and thence administer the realm and protect the court. That is what is meant by planning before the emergency arises and acting before the trouble starts.” Yue thought it prudent and therefore promoted [Gou] Xi to the Great General Campaigning in the East (*zhengdong dajiangjun* 征東大將軍), Commander Unequaled in Honor (*kaifu yitong sansi* 開府儀同三司), Concurrent Palace Attendant (*shizhong* 侍中) Commissioned with Warrant (*jiajie* 假節), Commander-in-chief (*dudu* 都督) [supervising] all military affairs of Qingzhou, Concurrent Regional Inspector of Qingzhou (*ling cishi* 領刺史) and he was promoted to commandery duke [of Dongping].”³³⁵

³³⁴ *Jinshu* juan 66, *Liu Hong zhuan*, p. 1767.

³³⁵ *Jinshu* juan 61, *Gou Xi zhuan*, p. 1667.

Sima Yue's effort to restore working imperial court and revive the feelings of affiliation with the dynasty manifests itself also by his willingness to take into his service advisors and officials who had previously served his rivals. At the same time his willingness was probably motivated by other reasons of rather practical nature. Despite the overall violence of the civil war the individual coups of the contending princes were generally not accompanied by extensive purges in the official ranks. Apart from a few closest followers of a defeated claimant who had been singled out to be made an example of and publicly executed the court officials generally tended to be absolved. After so many military coups and power takeovers there was hardly any official left who would have not served under at least one of the warring princes. If Sima Yue wanted to unite the court he had to transcend not only the faction bickering and old jealousies but also the past differences in allegiance of the respective courtiers:

“[Wang Cheng] was eventually promoted to position of Gentleman Retainer (*congshi zhonglang* 從事中郎) to [Sima] Ying Prince of Chengdu. Ying's favorite Meng Jiu had secretly killed Lu Ji and his brother [Lu Yun] and [Everyone] in all under heaven gnashed his teeth [in resentment]. [Wang] Cheng revealed that Meng Jiu has wrought his private vengeance upon [the Lu brothers] and persuades Ying to kill Meng Jiu and indeed, Ying had him duly executed. There was none among both gentlemen and commoners who would have not praised him. After [Sima] Ying's defeat [Sima] Yue Prince of Donghai invited him to be his Administrator to Minister of Works (*sikong zhangshi* 司空長史). For his merit on receiving His Imperial Majesty [back in Luoyang] he was enfeoffed as Marquis of Nanxiang.”³³⁶

Despite their involvement in Sima Ying's military actions against the court Lu Ji 陸機 and his brother Lu Yun 陸雲 were respected members of the officialdom venerated for their literary talents and their wrongful death caused by scheming of a detestable eunuch caused considerable outcry. The fact that Wang Cheng 王澄 won high esteem of the court for his redressing of what was generally considered to be a great injustice, was without doubt important factor influencing prince's decision. The political legitimacy which could be derived from the symbolic role of restorer of the order was as important for Sima Yue as for any of his predecessors. Thus we come back to the fate of Wei Guan and his family who fell victim of a ruthless prince right at the beginning of the disorder:

³³⁶ *Jinshu* juan 43, *Wang Cheng zhuan*, p. 1239.

“When [Sima] Wei Prince of Chu set a trap for [Wei] Guan, [his son Wei] Heng had heard about the coup. He crept through a hole in the wall [and went to] call upon He Shao, father of his sister-in-law, to ask him what was going on. [Even though] He Shao knew he did not tell him. [And so it happened, that when Wei] Heng returned home, he passed the kitchen where the people sent to detain them were just eating [their supper]. Thus [Heng] met his death. Later he was posthumously named Commandant of Changshui (*changshui xiaowei* 長水校尉), and he had been granted posthumous name of Lanling Heir Zhen (*Lanling Zhen shizi* 蘭陵貞世子). He had two sons, [Wei] Zao and [Wei] Jie. Zao ... succeeded to [Wei] Guan’s peerage. Later [Sima] Yue Prince of Donghai enlarged his fief by adding [the territory of] Lanling and changed his enfeoffment to commandery duke of Jiangxia with apanage of eight thousand five hundred households. When Emperor Huaidi ascended the throne he was named Gentleman Cavalier Attendant (*sanji shilang* 散騎侍郎). In the fifth year of the Yongjia Era (311 AD) he died at the hands of Liu Cong (lord of Zhao). Emperor Yuandi made [Wei] Guan’s great-great-grandson [Wei] Chong the heir [to the peerage].”³³⁷

Even though Wei Guan had been posthumously rehabilitated shortly after his death he remained sort of paradigmatic innocent victim of an unacceptable act of arbitrary violence associated with the power struggle of the princes and various court sections. Sima Yue decided to use it yet again in order to add much needed legitimacy to his own authority through formally redressing iniquities both imagined and real. Being a meritorious minister of Emperor Wudi Wei Guan was apparently considered important enough for his lineage to be preserved and peerage restored even under the Eastern Jin. Formal re-enfeoffment of Wei Guan’s descendant which was by no means usual practice of Yuandi’s court attests to Wei Guan’s importance as a symbol of legitimacy connecting the émigré regime in the South with the dynastic founders.

The last two passages also record cases of posthumous political rehabilitation initiated by Prince of Donghai, but at the same time they enable us to follow the turns of family fortune closely mirroring various political changes and show the mechanism of usage of the enfeoffment system for its symbolic legitimizing value in a nutshell. The first excerpt details the career of Bian Cui 卞粹, Viscount and later Duke of Chengyang 成陽 who had acquired his peerage dignity already in 291 AD for staying aloof of Yang Jun:

³³⁷ *Jinshu* juan 36, *Wei Heng zhuan*, *Wei Zao zhuan*, p. 1066.

“At the beginning of Huidi’s reign [Bian Cui] became Secretarial Court Gentleman (*shangshulang* 尚書郎). [At that time] Yang Jun held reins of government in his hands and many people attached themselves to him but [Bian] Cui remained upright and honest and did not [try to] ingratiate himself [with Yang Jun]. After Jun’s execution [Bian Cui] was preferentially promoted to Assistant Director of the Right in the Department of State Affairs (*youcheng* 右丞) and enfeoffed as Viscount of Chengyang. Soon he was further promoted attaining the rank of General of the Right Army (*youjun jiangjun* 右軍將軍). When Zhang Hua was executed, Bian Cui as his son-in-law was deprived of his office. When [Sima] Jiong, Prince of Qi acted as a regent, [Bian Cui] became Palace Attendant (*shizhong* 侍中), Secretariat Director (*zhongshuling* 中書令) and was promoted in rank to ducal dignity. But when [Sima] Yi Prince of Changsha monopolized power at court, Bian Cui maintained stern expression during the audiences and Yi was afraid of him and had him killed ... when this disaster struck the family, [Bian Cui’s eldest son Bian Hu] returned to his ancestral home. [Only] during the Yongjia Era (307-312 AD) he was appointed Editorial Director (*zhuzuolang* 著作郎) and succeeded to his father’s title.”³³⁸

Bian Cui’s career suffered a setback when Prince of Zhao assumed power in 301 AD due to his unfortunate family connection with Zhang Hua who had been singled out as a principle accomplice of the crimes perpetrated by Empress Jia. However, as a victim of a treacherous usurper Sima Lun of Zhao he was rehabilitated and promoted to the rank of a duke soon after Jiong of Qi took over the power. Even though he had retained his title even after the fall of Prince of Qi, his badly concealed disapproval of Jiong’s murderer made Prince of Changsha uneasy and cost Bian Cui his life. We don’t know whether he was publicly executed as a supporter of Jiong of Qi or secretly murdered, nevertheless unlike other Jiong’s partisans his family was certainly not wiped out for his son Bian Hu 卞壺 was allowed to retreat to family ancestral home. The ducal title, however, went into abeyance and it was only during the reign of Huaidi when Sima Yue of Donghai was in charge of state affairs that Bian Hu was recalled and officially succeeded to his father’s ducal peerage.

Besides recording vicissitude of a peerage dignity during Upheaval of the Eight Princes the passage also points to yet another factor influencing the demotion-rehabilitation dynamics. We have seen that the closest supporters of a defeated princely claimant usually did not survive his fall and at least some of the noble dignities bestowed by his order were forfeited as soon as a different court faction assumed power. Yet, there were also titles which

³³⁸ *Jinshu* juan 70, *Bian Hu zhuan*, p. 1867.

survived and were accepted by the victorious faction. Even though Bian Cui suffered demotion for being son-in-law to Zhang Hua he was not deprived of his viscounty. Apparently Lun of Zhao was satisfied with having Bian Cui removed from office for the dynastic history does not mention any subsequent restitution of a noble dignity. Jiong of Qi had him simply promoted in rank and summoned to serve as a Palace Attendant.

It appears that officials associated with a losing claimant may have suffered demotion but they usually retained their noble dignities unless they had directly participated in various offences a prince was blamed of or they actively defied the authority of a righteous restorer of the order. In that case the peerages and lordships were abolished. It seems possible that in politically volatile environment it was not prudent to deter possible supporters by stripping them off their noble titles, even though these may have been granted under the aegis of their rivals. The erstwhile opponents should have been won over and not turned into bitter enemies. The authority of the princes was lacking any institutional foundation and therefore was largely dependent on their current military might as well as on willingness of the court to support them. Their being members of the imperial clan did not entitle them to rule either the court or the empire. The princes needed obedient cooperation of the court dignitaries in order to establish semblance of normalcy which provided desired legitimacy of their rule. Thus they might have summarily dealt with the closest partisans of their rival but were careful not to set the court against themselves by any unwarranted reassessment of the past dignity grants.

Unlike Bian Cui, Ji Shao 嵇紹 was actually deprived of his peerage dignity and demoted to the status of a commoner because he had actively opposed Ying of Chengdu personally leading the imperial guards in an attempt to defend Luoyang against prince's attack. Nevertheless Ji Shao's career and fate of his noble dignity confirm the importance of the court opinion for the legitimacy of the princely dictators who made quite an effort to appear as righteous rulers appreciating straightforward honesty and moral integrity of fearless courtiers, steadfastly loyal to their dynasty and ready to risk their lives for it. We have met Ji Shao as principled official who had shunned the overbearing Jia Mi and his associates which earned him viscounty of Yiyang 弋陽 in 301 AD. Later he fearlessly criticized Jiong of Qi and his style of government and opposed his plan to have Zhang Hua rehabilitated. His unyielding moral stance won him reputation of a selfless and true subject of the dynasty which was fully justified by his sacrificing one's life for the emperor during the battle of Dangyin:

“When [Sima] Yong Prince of Hejian and [Sima] Ying Prince of Chengdu raised an army and marched upon the capital city in order to get [the court] rid of [Sima] Yi Prince of Changsha, His Imperial Majesty dwelled [with the army] east of the city. Yi of Changsha made public proclamation addressing the [royal] host: “Today we shall fight in the west. Whom would you like to have as your commander?” The officers of the six royal armies replied: “If only Palace Attendant Ji [Shao] would join hands [with us] and lead the van then the death would be no different from life.” Hence Ji Shao was appointed General Pacifying the West Commissioned with Extraordinary Powers (*shichijie pingxi jiangjun* 使持節平西將軍). When Yi of Changsha was apprehended, Shao reverted to his original position of Palace Attendant. Everyone from great ministers and princes of the realm down repaired to Ye to beg Sima Ying for mercy. Ji Shao and others were all deprived of their offices and demoted to commoners. Soon, the court launched its northern campaign and Shao was summoned [to the presence] and his peerage was restored to him. Aware of [gravity of the situation when the emperor was practically forced] to exile, he obeyed the edict and rushed to the presence [of the emperor]. Exactly at that moment the imperial force was routed at Dangyin and there was none of the attending officials or imperial guardsmen who would not [forsake the emperor] and scatter in all directions. Only Ji Shao, majestic and solemn in his black court robe and high ceremonial cap defended the emperor with his own body. As the forces clashed around the imperial equipage, flying arrows were thick as rain. Thus, Ji Shao was slain by emperor’s side and his blood stained the imperial garment. The Son of Heaven sighed and mourned for him very deeply. When everything calmed down, the emperor’s retinue wanted to wash the clothes but the emperor would not let them: “That’s Palace Attendant Shao’s blood. Don’t remove it!” ... When Zhang Fang forced the emperor to move [the court] to Chang’an [Sima] Yong, Prince of Hejian, petitioned the throne to award Ji Shao posthumously with the title Minister of Works (*sikong* 司空) and to promote him in rank to ducal dignity. But then it happened that the emperor returned to Luoyang and this business came to naught. When [Sima] Yue, Prince of Donghai stationed his troops in Xu[chang], he was once travelling through Xinyang where he passed Ji Shao’s grave. He bemoaned [his death] expressing profound grief. He had a stone stele carved and erected [by the grave] and again petitioned [the throne] to bestow [upon him] posthumous office and noble rank. Then the emperor sent an imperial messenger with a letter patent posthumously appointing [Ji Shao] Palace Attendant (*shizhong* 侍中), Grand Master for Splendid Happiness (*guanglu dafu* 光祿大夫) with golden seal and purple ribbon and creating him Marquis [of Yiyang]. He was further granted one *qing* of fields [for the upkeep of the] grave with ten tenant households [to till it]. [It was decreed] that the lesser sacrifice should be offered to him.”³³⁹

³³⁹ *Jinshu* juan 89, *Zhongyi zhuan*, *Ji Shao zhuan*, pp. 2300-2301.

Through his death at the side of Emperor Huidi Ji Shao became a potent symbol of staunch loyalty. Unlike the princes whose professions of loyalty were only a pretension for manipulating the emperor and acting in his name Ji Shao actually died in defense of the emperor, protecting him by his own body while assaulted by one of the “loyal” princely guardians of the throne. As so many of his colleagues he was caught in between various princes vying for power being forced to watch how the imperial kin usurps the authority which otherwise would have been theirs because only they were legitimate executors of the emperor’s will as members of the state bureaucracy. Ji Shao died a martyr to the righteous cause of the Jin, true subject to his sovereign and moral hero respected by the court society. It was already Yong of Hejian who had tried to use this aspect of Ji Shao’s death for legitimizing his own authority. He hoped to secure sympathy of the court officialdom through suggesting rehabilitation of Ji Shao and bestowal of the highest possible peerage. Yet the victorious campaign of Yue of Donghai compelled Yong to release the emperor from his custody before the promotion had taken place. It was to be Yue of Donghai who in the end took advantage of still unresolved case of Ji Shao’s evaluation and validated his standing of the ultimate winner and restorer of the order by initiating a grant of a marquisate in due appreciation of his dauntless deed.

Ritual Ennoblement of the Scions of the Former Ruling Houses

Another interesting aspect of the symbolic use of the system of titled nobility was ritual enfeoffment of members of the former ruling families. Shortly after the establishment of the Jin Dynasty former rulers and some imperial princes of the blood were granted high peerage titles in order to become successors of the ruling lineages and continue the sacrifices offered to the emperors and kings of old. The pride of place naturally belonged to the abdicated last emperor of the Wei Dynasty, Cao Huan 曹奂 who was created Prince of Chenliu 陳留王 and became the premier prince of the realm enjoying precedence over even the most senior of the Jin princes of the blood:

“In the first year of the Taishi Era (265/266 AD) in the winter, in the twelfth month on the day *dingmao* the Chamberlain for the Imperial Stud (*taipu* 太僕) Liu Yuan was sent to the ancestral temple to announce [the founding of the dynasty to the ancestors]. The Wei emperor [Cao Huan] was enfeoffed as Prince of Chenliu with apanage of ten thousand households. He

was to reside in the Palace of Ye. The princes of the Wei [imperial house] were all [demoted] to prefecture lords.³⁴⁰

“In the first year of the Taishi era (265/266 AD) in the winter, in the twelfth month ... on the day *yisi* an imperial edict [allowed] Prince of Chenliu to hoist the imperial standard of the Son of Heaven. He was equipped with attendant carriages of the five seasons. He was to use the calendar and the imperial era of the Wei and he should offer sacrifices to heaven and earth at the suburban altar. The rites and ritual music were all to follow the old customs of the Wei. When petitioning the throne [the prince] was not to refer to himself as subject (*chen* 臣).³⁴¹

Privileges conferred upon the deposed emperor were clearly exceptional. From the ritual point of view he was to enjoy a semi-independent status symbolized by his right to maintain original calendar of the Wei. As the acceptance or rejection of the dynastic calendar was generally considered to be a sign of either submission to or rebellion against the sovereign authority of the emperor permission of maintaining calendar of a deposed dynasty must be viewed as an important concession. Cao Huan was to reside in Yecheng 鄴城 traditional seat of the Cao family ever since the end of the Han when it became center of the newly formed fief of Wei, private domain of Cao Cao. Residing in the original detached imperial palace, Cao Huan retained even some ritual prerogatives of the emperor as he was permitted to perform annual sacrifices at the suburban altar (*jiao* 郊), presumably also located in Yecheng. Because this important sacrificial rite propitiating heavenly deities was under normal circumstances reserved for the sovereign emperor, by performing it the Prince of Chenliu was in a way acting as an emperor in his own domain of Ye. As the enfeoffment system itself, granting of high noble titles to ex-rulers was also inspired by notions of the ancient and glorious Zhou. By giving Cao Huan highly privileged position as a vassal lord of the original ancestral home area of the Wei Wudi was re-enacting the enfeoffment of the Shang princes by King Wuwang of Zhou 周武王 following the battle of Muye 牧野 when a son of deposed tyrant Di Xin 帝辛 was created lord of the original Shang 商 core region.

Creation of the Chenliu principedom should have ensured ritual continuation of the Wei imperial line and worship of dynastic ancestors who after all used to be legitimate sovereigns and as such were important sources of legitimacy for all Jin emperors who presented themselves as their rightful successors. Unfortunately, as the titled members of the ex-ruling

³⁴⁰ *Jinshu* juan 3, *Wudi benji*, pp. 51-52.

³⁴¹ *Jinshu* juan 3, *Wudi benji*, p. 52.

families generally did not figure prominently in the politics of the dynasty they did not merit personal biographies in the dynastic history (with the only exception of Cao Zhi 曹志) and therefore we are left with not much more than dates of accession and death of respective princes and peers mentioned in the basic annals:

“In the first year of the Xianhe Era (326 AD) during the winter in the tenth month a great-great-grandson of Emperor Wudi of Wei (Cao Cao) Cao Mai was enfeoffed as prince of Chenliu to continue the lineage of the Wei [rulers].”³⁴²

“In the second year of the Shengping Era (358 AD) ... during the winter in the tenth month on the day *yichou* Cao Mai Prince of Chenliu passed away.”³⁴³

“In the first year of the Xingning Era (363 AD) ... during the winter in the tenth month on the day *shenjia* [Cao] Hui Heir Apparent to the Prince of Chenliu was installed as [the next] prince.”³⁴⁴

“In the third year of the Taiyuan Era (378 AD) during the summer in the fifth month on the day *gengwu* Cao Hui Prince of Chenliu passed away.”³⁴⁵

“In the eighth year of the Taiyuan Era (383 AD) ... in the eleventh month ... on the day *renzi* [Cao] Lingdan Heir Apparent to the Prince of Chenliu was installed as Prince of Chenliu.”³⁴⁶

“In the fourth year of the Yixi Era (408 AD) in the twelfth month Cao Lingdan Prince of Chenliu passed away.”³⁴⁷

Apparently the Jin emperors took great pains to ensure the continuation of the Wei imperial lineage and even though the founders of the Eastern Jin had to find an alternative successor (*shaofeng*), presumably when the original line died out at the beginning of the 4th century, the princely lineage of Chenliu did eventually survive almost to the very end of the Eastern Jin. The amount of effort reflects the symbolic importance of the princely line

³⁴² *Jinshu* juan 7, *Chengdi benji*, p. 170.

³⁴³ *Jinshu* juan 8, *Mudi benji*, p. 203.

³⁴⁴ *Jinshu* juan 8, *Aidi benji*, p. 208.

³⁴⁵ *Jinshu* juan 9, *Xiaowudi benji*, p. 229.

³⁴⁶ *Jinshu* juan 9, *Xiaowudi benji*, p. 232.

³⁴⁷ *Jinshu* juan 10, *Andi benji*, p. 260.

descended from the Wei emperors for the legitimacy of the Jin dynasty. In the process of gradual usurpation the usurper's claim to the throne was legitimized by the ultimate act of ritually expressed acceptance of the will of heaven on part of the resigning ruler through the uncoerced or at least non-violent abdication. Enfeoffing members of the former ruling house by the new regime and willingness of the deposed royalty to accept their new titles were in fact another formal, yet very tangible expression of acceptance of the dynastic transition. These honors were actually demotions referring to their new subordinate standing and by accepting them the former princes symbolically demonstrated that they were completely reconciled to their new lot, publicly declaring themselves to be subjects of the new sovereign lord. At the same time the new emperor assumed his authority through generous bestowal of peerage dignities, reordering the society according to the heaven's will and assigning the ex-royals new place within the titled nobility of his realm as living reminder of the change of heavenly mandate.

The grace of new masters was not limited only to the former imperial line of the Cao clan, even though the princely lineage of Chenliu remained the most exalted branch of the family throughout the whole period of the Jin Dynasty. As we have seen former princes of the blood were collectively demoted to prefecture lords, yet there were at least four branches of the family which were singled out for special treatment and were granted ducal dignity, the highest possible peerage opened to non-royals. Foremost among them was another Wei emperor, Cao Fang 曹芳 who had ruled from 240 to 254 AD when he was deposed by the all-powerful regent Sima Shi and created Prince of Qi 齊王. After the abdication of the Wei Emperor Wudi created him Duke of Shaoling 邵陵公 clearly respecting his unique standing among the Wei princes of the blood:

“After the Jin received abdication of [the Wei Dynasty], Prince of Qi (Cao Fang) was enfeoffed as prefecture duke of Shaoling. When he was forty-three years old, he passed away in the tenth year of the Taishi Era (274 AD). He was granted posthumous name Duke Li.”³⁴⁸

Remaining three ducal lineages were all descended from younger sons of Cao Cao. Cao Jia 曹嘉 Duke of Gaoyi 高邑公 was son of the Wei Prince of Chu Cao Biao 楚王曹彪 who had died in 249 AD as an innocent victim of unsuccessful attempt to overthrow the

³⁴⁸ Pei Songzhi's commentary quoting *Wei shipu* 魏氏譜, *Sanguozhi* juan 4, *San shao di ji*, p. 99.

powerful ministerial house of Sima staged by two provincial governors loyal to the Wei Dynasty:

“In the first year of the Jiaping Era (249 AD) Regional Inspector (*cishi* 刺史) of Yanzhou Linghu Yu and Defender-in-chief (*taiwei* 太尉) Wang Ling conspired to install [Cao] Biao [Prince of Chu as a new ruler] with Xuchang as his capital ... [Cao] Biao thereupon committed suicide. Princess and his sons were all demoted to commoners and were exiled to Pingyuan ... In the first year of the Zhengyuan Era (254 AD) an edict was issued: “Late [Cao] Biao Prince of Chu turned his back on the state and resorted to treachery. He suffered death and his noble lineage ceased to exist. Even though he had himself chosen his course We still feel great pity for him. To swallow a disgrace and conceal a weakness that is indeed the way of loving one’s relatives. Let Biao’s son and heir [Cao] Jia be enfeoffed as Prince Zhending of Changshan.” In the first year of the Jingyuan Era (260 AD) his apanage was increased to the final two thousand five hundred households.”³⁴⁹

“During the Jin [Cao] Jia was enfeoffed as Duke of Gaoyi. During the Yuankang Era (291-299 AD) he served together with Shi Chong as Erudite of the National University (*guozhi boshi* 國子博士) and later became Governor (*taishou* 太守) of Dongguan.”³⁵⁰

Another ducal dignity was bestowed upon Cao Xi 曹翕, son of Cao Hui, Wei Prince of Dongping 東平王曹徽, who was created Duke of Linqiu 廩丘公:

“[Cao] Hui, Prince Ling of Dongping passed away in the third year of the Zhengshi Era (242 AD). His son [Cao] Xi succeeded to [the dignity as Prince of Dongping]. During the Jingchu (237-239 AD), Zhengyuan (254-255 AD) and Jingyuan (261-263 AD) Eras the apanage of the fief was repeatedly increased to the final three thousand and four hundred households.”³⁵¹

“Under the Jin [Cao] Xi was enfeoffed as Duke of Linqiu. Within the imperial clan of the Wei Dynasty his fame was second only to the Duke of Juancheng (Cao Zhi). In the second year of the Taishi Era (266 AD) [Cao] Xi sent his heir apparent [Cao] Kun to come and seek an audience with the emperor and hand in his father’s petition. Thereupon a following imperial edict was issued: “[Cao] Xi possesses great virtue and treads on the right Path. He is [truly] the [paragon of] honesty of the house of Wei. Now, [his son Cao] Kun came from afar, let him be

³⁴⁹ *Sanguozhi* juan 20, *Wu Wen shi wang gong zhuan*, p. 438.

³⁵⁰ Pei Songzhi’s commentary, *Sanguozhi* juan 20, *Wu Wen shi wang gong zhuan*, p. 439.

³⁵¹ *Sanguozhi* juan 20, *Wu Wen shi wang gong zhuan*, p. 440.

granted seal and ribbon of the [official ducal] Heir Apparent (*shizi* 世子), let him be made Concurrent Commandant of Cavalry (*jiduwei* 騎都尉) and given one set of garment and one hundred thousand coins and let him be employed in an office according to his talent.”³⁵²

Apparently Cao Xi was held in great esteem by Emperor Wudi, yet the highest renown for moral and cultural accomplishment was commanded by the third ducal lineage, Juancheng 鄆城, founded by Cao Zhi 曹志 son and heir of the famous Cao Zhi 曹植, favorite son of Cao Cao and once potential rival to the founder of the Wei Dynasty:

“Cao Zhi ... was a son of [Cao] Zhi Prince Si of Chen born of concubine. Since childhood he took great delight in studying and gained renown for his talent and moral integrity for he was unpretentious and magnanimous and highly skilled in horseback riding and archery. [His father Cao] Zhi once said: “This is a lord who will preserve [our] family!” and had him installed as his heir and successor. Later his fief was changed to that of prince of Jibei. When Emperor Wudi was still only a General of the Pacification Army (*fujun jiangjun* 撫軍將軍) he [went to] meet Prince of Chenliu in Ye (i.e. the last Wei Emperor). [Cao] Zhi called on him during the night and the emperor talked with him from dusk till dawn and greatly marveled at him. Then, when the emperor received the abdication he was demoted [from princely dignity] to Duke of Juancheng. An edict was issued which read: “Even though it was the destiny of all foregone generations of the past to replace one another, as far as the progeny of the ancestors is concerned the imperial throne was passed on without interruption and some of [them were made] regional lords defending the nine districts [of the earth] and according to [their ranks and precedence] acquired official positions in the government. To select the wise and talented and to support only the virtue, that is indeed the path of utmost justice. The princes and dukes of the house of Wei cultivated virtue and possessed hidden abilities and yet they were for a long time debarred from [holding an office]. And even if they were eventually summoned they had to undergo an evaluation [and wait for an assignment]. Because there was lack of [suitable] official posts they were in the end [unable to] obtain [an office] corresponding to their rank. Former Prince of Jibei, Cao Zhi is [always] honest and upright and practices virtue. His talent is outstanding and conduct impeccable. He takes delight in [things] ancient and is knowledgeable about [diverse] matters. He is the noble paragon of the House of Wei and We hold him in great esteem. Therefore let him be appointed Governor (*taishou* 太守) of Leping.”³⁵³

³⁵² Pei Songzhi's commentary to *Sanguozhi* juan 20, *Wu Wen shi wang gong zhuan*, p. 440.

³⁵³ *Jinshu* juan 50, *Cao Zhi zhuan*, p. 1389.

It seems that high peerage titles - much higher in fact than prefecture lordships which were universally bestowed on the former Wei princes of the blood – awarded to Cao Jia, Cao Xi and Cao Zhi reflected esteem in which the emperor held their abilities, for all three are coincidentally praised by the sources for their moral integrity and promising talent and referred to as the cream of the house of Wei (*Wei zong zhi ying* 魏宗之英). Nevertheless, there was yet another dimension of the preferential treatment these three lineages were singled for.

In case of Cao Jia, Duke of Gaoyi, the miserable fate of his father might have influenced emperor's decision. Cao Biao Prince of Chu was forced to commit suicide after two Wei loyalists rose in arms and declared for him as the rightful emperor. It seems that Cao Biao was not privy to the coup and was innocent of any treacherous intent. Unfortunately for him the conspiracy was too dangerous for the rising might of the Simas to let it go unpunished and the culprits had to be made an example of whether they were initiators or mere figureheads. Cao Biao's family initially suffered demotion and banishment but five years later the lineage was rehabilitated and Cao Jia created a prince in his own right. As this happened in 254 AD when the court was definitely under control of the Simas the formal rehabilitation must have taken place with their knowledge and consent. Even though Cao Biao's name was never fully cleared, rehabilitation of his heir as well as bestowal of a Jin ducal title might suggest that the Simas were aware of Cao Biao's innocence and tried to make amends for his forced death. At the same time Wudi had an opportunity to appear as a righteous ruler appreciating talent, magnanimously overlooking transgressions of his subjects and judging their past offences with utmost leniency. The symbolic value of this lenient stance was extremely important especially in comparison with the treatment accorded to the imperial kinsmen under the previous regime.

Despite being universally respected men of talent Cao Jia, Cao Xi and Cao Zhi would have had no chance of ever holding an office under the Wei Dynasty. The Wei were notorious for their harsh and uncompromising policy of curbing power of the imperial kin (*zongshi* 宗室). And there was no clan member who would better epitomize reprehensible oppression of one's own family than Cao Zhi's own father, Cao Zhi 曹植, highly talented yet victimized brother of Emperor Wendi. His chequered career with frequent transfers from fief to fief, demotions and reductions of apanage in consequence of transgressions of strict rules

controlling lives of the Wei princes gives evidence of harsh oppression of the Wei *zongshi*.³⁵⁴ His case was well known through his writing - widely read at the time – which attests to his depression for being denied an opportunity to prove his worth in a consequential government post he thought he was born for. Given the fate of his father and other princes of the House of Cao the enfeoffment of Cao Zhi and his cousins had great symbolic meaning. When they were finally appreciated and given offices to prove their abilities in the service of the state, the new regime symbolically redressed the injustice once done to Cao Zhi and other worthy members of the dynastic house.

This would not be lost on Wudi's contemporaries sending clear message that the new dynasty was going to employ everyone according to his talent even if he happened to be a member of an overthrown dynastic house who might have been otherwise debarred from holding an office as potentially disloyal. High peerage and public praise for Cao Zhi's son were no coincidence as they enabled Wudi to pass moral judgment on the previous dynasty and thereby strengthen the legitimacy of his rule. Support of the branch which had suffered most from unjust mistrust and incessant suspicion of the imperial court was clearly tantamount to public denunciation of the Wei policy as wrong and ill-advised. By creating Cao Zhi a duke and extolling his qualities Wudi was dissociating himself from the Wei, indirectly criticizing the maladministration of his predecessors. The new regime of the Jin appeared in comparison as a restorer of the order correcting the malpractices of the Wei for it was fully appreciating the men of talent as was expected from proper Confucian government.

The Wei, however, were not the only deposed dynasty whose members were honored by bestowal of peerage dignities. A certain Ji Shu 姬署, alleged scion of the Zhou royal house, was created Duke of Wei 衛公 at roughly the same time as the abdicated last emperor of the Wei. But again the evidence is rather circumstantial due to the lack of sources:

“In the seventh year of the Taishi Era (271 AD) ... in the eleventh month on the *dingsi* day Ji Shu Duke of Wei passed away.”³⁵⁵

If the formal revival of the Zhou royal line remained purely symbolic with Ji Shu's ancestry being necessarily obscured by centuries of undocumented succession the noble lineage of Dukes of Shanyang 山陽 which was to look after the proper sacrifices to the

³⁵⁴ For details of Cao Zhi's enfeoffment changes and transfers (*xifeng* 徙封) see Hrubý, Jakub (2007): p. 39; For the position of Cao Zhi as a possible heir to Cao Cao see Cutter, Robert J. (1985): pp. 228-262; for general Wei policy towards imperial kin see Wang Yongping (2001): pp. 44-51.

³⁵⁵ *Jinshu* juan 3, *Wudi benji*, p. 56.

illustrious ancestors of the Han could boast direct descent from the imperial line of the Eastern Han through Liu Kang 劉康, grandson of the last Han Emperor Xiandi 獻帝 (189-220 AD):

“In the third year of the Taishi Era (267 AD) ... in the twelfth month ... Liu Kang Duke of Shanyang came to an audience with the emperor.”³⁵⁶

“In the sixth year of the Taikang Era (285 AD) ... in the ninth month on the day *bingzi* Liu Kang Duke of Shanyang passed away.”³⁵⁷

“In the tenth year of the Taikang Era (289 AD) ... in the sixth month on the day *gengzi* Liu Jin Duke of Shanyang passed away.”³⁵⁸

“In the first year of the Yongjia Era (307 AD) during the summer in the fifth month Commissioner for Horse Pasturages (*mamushuai* 馬牧帥) Ji Sang gathered a multitude and rose in arms. He defeated Feng Song, Governor (*taishou* 太守) of Weijun, and subsequently captured the walled city of Ye where he killed [Sima] Teng Prince of Xincai. When he set fire to the palaces of Ye the conflagration did not cease for ten days. He also killed former Regional Inspector (*cishi* 刺史) of Youzhou Shi Xian in Leling. Then he raided Pingyuan where Liu Qiu Duke of Shanyang was thereupon slain.”³⁵⁹

By bestowing noble dignities upon descendants of the royal houses of Zhou, Han and Wei Wudi symbolically placed the Jin within the chain of legitimate imperial succession (*zhengtong* 正統) which was extremely important especially at the time when the supremacy of the new regime was still challenged by existence of a rival claiming the same kind of universal authority. As the decisive military victory over the southern state of Wu had to wait for another fifteen years Wudi sought different means how to assert legitimacy of the new dynasty. The emperor showed great concern for well-being of the former emperors whose place in the state cult was now taken by the ancestors of the Jin Dynasty. Therefore, one of the main reasons for enfeoffment was to ensure the continuity of line of descent and unflinching offering of the sacrifices to the ancestors of the respective lineage. By providing for the

³⁵⁶ *Jinshu* juan 3, *Wudi benji*, p. 56.

³⁵⁷ *Jinshu* juan 3, *Wudi benji*, p. 76.

³⁵⁸ *Jinshu* juan 3, *Wudi benji*, p. 79.

³⁵⁹ *Jinshu* juan 5, *Xiaohuaidi benji*, p. 117.

ancestral cults of the previous dynasties the Jin declared themselves to be rightful successors of the long line of sovereign kings and emperors and legitimate heirs to their traditions.

Question of legitimacy of the new dynasty was extremely important, especially given the circumstances of the gradual usurpation and unusual geopolitical situation of the realm divided into three independent polities vying for supreme authority. Because the Jin usurped the power from the Wei they could not question the legitimacy of their predecessors without jeopardizing their own claim as rightful heirs of the Han. Their legitimacy was therefore derived through the succession of the Cao emperors, the fact which was reflected by bestowal of princely dignity upon the Wei ex-emperor. Yet the Wei had not been alone in claiming political heritage of the Han. The rulers of Shu Han vigorously contested the authority of the Wei and, being direct descendants of the Han imperial family, were seen by many as the sole legitimate successors to the Han.³⁶⁰ Even though the conquest of Shu Han in 263 AD proved that Sichuan regime was not to possess mandate of heaven, the final victory was attained by forces and acumen of the Simas and therefore could neither validate nor disprove the alleged legitimacy of either Wei or Shu. Wudi did not leave anything to chance and while he chose to bestow highest honors on ex-emperor Cao Fang he also confirmed Wei ducal title of the last emperor of Shu, Liu Shan 劉禪, who had been created Duke of Anle 安樂公 shortly after the fall of Shu in 263/264 AD.³⁶¹ At least we can infer so much from the following mention in Wudi's basic annals:

“In the first year of the Taishi Era (265/266 AD) in the winter, the 12th month ... on the day *yisi* a son and a younger brother of Liu Kang Duke of Shanyang, and Liu Shan, Duke of Anle, were made Commandant-escorts (*fuma duwei* 駙馬督尉).”³⁶²

The situation repeated itself after the fall of Wu in 280 AD when Sun Hao, the last sovereign ruler of the South, was taken to the capital and created Marquis Returning to Allegiance (*Guiming hou* 歸命侯) in order to mark the great military victory and become living symbol of the unification confirming legitimacy of the Jin:

³⁶⁰ For the complex political situation of the Three Kingdoms Period and corresponding diplomatic activities of the three rival regimes see Xie Weijie (2004): pp. 21-45.

³⁶¹ “In the first year of the Xianxi Era (263/264 AD) in the third month on the day *dinghai* Liu Shan was enfeoffed as Duke of Anle.” *Sanguozhi* juan 4, *Cao Huan benji*, p. 113.

³⁶² *Jinshu* juan 3, *Wudi benji*, p. 52.

“In the first year of the Taikang Era (280 AD) during the fifth month on day *xinhai* Sun Hao was enfeoffed as Guiming Marquis (Marquis Returning to Allegiance). His heir apparent was appointed Palace Attendant (*zhonglang* 中郎) and all other sons became Gentlemen of the Interior (*langzhong* 郎中). The [members of the] ancient houses of Wu were elevated [to suitable positions] according to their talent. The families of the high commanders of the house of Sun who were killed during the fights were moved to Shouyang. The commanders and officers who had crossed the River were to be exempt from paying taxes for ten years. Common folk and craftsmen were to be exempt for twenty years.”³⁶³

As with other former royal houses enfeoffed by the Western Jin the information we may glean from the pages of the contemporary sources is extremely limited and we are left in almost complete ignorance regarding further fate of the noble lineage of Wu lords. We don't even know if the Guiming Marquisate was hereditary or not but Sun Hao's family must have retained some influence as one of his sons, Sun Fan 孫藩, later tried to make use of the political upheavals after the fall of the northern court to instigate a rebellion in a vain attempt to resurrect an independent dominion in the South:

“In the first year of the Taixing Era (318 AD) ... in the tenth month ... [Sun] Fan, a son of the late Guiming Marquis Sun Hao conspired against the throne and [duly] suffered execution.”³⁶⁴

As we have seen the last rulers of the dethroned dynastic houses were not given equal noble titles. The descending grades of peerages within the hierarchy of the titled nobility mirrored complex political reality of the Three Kingdoms period and the gradual process of establishing the new dynasty. The hierarchy of the noble dignities in fact reflected the degree of legitimacy the Jin were willing to adjudge to the respective rival contenders. Whereas the Wei, considered as the legitimate predecessors and source of sovereign authority, were given the highest noble title of a prince and Cao Fang's line retained its position as the premier prince of the realm throughout the whole period of the Jin rule, the ex-emperor of the Shu Han had to be content with a ducal title. Even though in order of precedence he stood far below the princes of Chenliu his ducal title put him on an equal footing with the descendants of the Zhou and the Han. As the state of Shu had been vanquished already before the

³⁶³ *Jinshu* juan 3, *Wudi benji*, p. 72.

³⁶⁴ *Jinshu* juan 6, *Yuandi benji*, p. 151.

establishment of the dynasty, Liu Shan was technically speaking never defying the authority of the Jin and as a legitimate blood descendant of the glorious Han was entitled to certain indulgence. On the other hand Sun Hao, deposed sovereign of Wu, was considered to be recalcitrant rebel constantly defying imperial authority who had to be brought to his senses by use of force. Therefore he eventually fared the worst having been given title of a mere marquis with a telling appellation which was, however, not entirely flattering.

Regardless of the actual noble ranks the ritual enfeoffment of Cao Fang, Liu Shan and Sun Hao served the same purpose. By creating royals of the three kingdoms princes and peers Wudi exercised prerogatives of the Son of Heaven and asserted his indisputable authority as sole sovereign lord. At the same time the scions of the former ruling houses assumed their proper place within the social structure of the realm as subjects of the Jin emperor, thereby confirming the process of dynastic transition and unification of the empire as well as legitimacy of the new dynasty.

Concern for indisputable legitimacy of the Jin was also behind another ritual enfeoffment made shortly after the beginning of Wudi's rule, when Kong Zhen 孔震, a descendant of Confucius was granted new noble dignity of Fengsheng village lord 奉聖亭侯 within the new titled nobility of the Jin Empire:

“In the third year of the Taishi Era (267 AD) ... in the twelfth month Zongsheng Marquis (Revering the Sage) Kong Zhen was transferred and became Fengsheng village lord (Offering the Sacrifices to the Sage).”³⁶⁵

The line of Confucius' descendants was apparently honored already during the previous dynasties and Kong Zhen himself used to be Zongsheng Marquis 宗聖侯 during the Wei, but bestowal of a new title symbolized renewal of the Confucian orthodoxy under the new dynasty and its commitment to the Confucian cause. Wudi was publicly announcing his resolve to honor the legacy of the great sage and meet the obligations of a Confucian ruler.

Ennoblement of the Tribal Leaders outside the Realm

Another example of special and highly symbolic use of the ennoblement system would be bestowal of noble dignities upon tribal leaders and indigenous rulers of the semi-

³⁶⁵ *Jinshu* juan 3, *Wudi benji*, p. 56.

independent nomadic ethnic groups which were settled in a broad band of territory along the border of the empire stretching from northern Hebei and southern Manchuria in the Northeast across northern Shanxi to the Gansu-Shaanxi border in the Northwest. Rulers of various Xianbei 鮮卑 groups (Duan 段, Murong 慕容 and Tuoba 拓跋) as well as tribal kings of the Di 氐 and the Qiang 羌 were granted ducal peerages and integrated into the titled nobility of the empire. These titles may have been formally part of the established system, yet the circumstances of their bestowal differed somewhat from peerages conferred upon meritorious subjects and the grant of such a title was often prompted by serious considerations of state security or political expediency dictated by ever changing geopolitical reality of Northern China at the beginning of the 4th century.

It seems that one of the first peerage dukedoms ever created for a tribal ruler was Liaoxi 遼西 bestowed upon Duan Wuchen 段勿塵 (or Wuwuchen 務勿塵), leader of the powerful tribal formation of the Eastern Xianbei, in 303 AD:³⁶⁶

“When [Sima] Yue Duke of Donghai was just about to welcome His Imperial Majesty [back in his capital], [Wang] Jun sent Qi Hong leading Wuwan crack cavalry as an advanced guard. When Emperor Huidi returned to Luoyang [Wang] Jun was transferred to position of Cavalry General-in-chief (*piaoji da jiangjun* 驃騎大將軍), Commander-in-chief supervising all military affairs of the Eastern barbarians north of the Yellow River, Concurrent Regional Inspector (*ling cishi* 領刺史) of Youzhou. His [ducal] fief of Boling was increased by adding the [territory] of Yanguo to it. When Emperor Huaidi ascended the throne, [Wang] Jun was appointed Minister of Works (*sikong* 司空) and Concurrent Commandant of the Wuwei tribes. Wuwuchen was appointed Great Shanyu (*dashanyu* 大單于). [Wang] Jun again petitioned the throne to enfeoff Wuwuchen as commandery duke of Liaoxi and his auxiliary commander Dapiaohua and an auxiliary commander of his younger brother Kemo by name of Datuweng were both made Kings Closely Related to the Jin (*qin Jin wang* 親晉王).”³⁶⁷

As the tension among various branches of the imperial family vying for power and influence over the person of hapless emperor increased the nomadic groups rose in importance as potential allies. The rival princes were using tribal armies as a source of mercenary cavalry forces which often proved invaluable, beating the peasant armies made up of infantry recruited in the regions under the princes’ command. With the escalation of

³⁶⁶ *Jinshu* juan 4, *Huidi benji*, p. 102.

³⁶⁷ *Jinshu* juan 39, *Wang Jun zhuan*, p. 1147.

hostilities at the turn of the 3rd and 4th centuries their military might gradually became indispensable with their allegiance being a valuable asset to be actively sought after.³⁶⁸

The noble dignities of tribal rulers were generally not bestowed as a reward for certain merit but as a pledge of good will obliging the recipient to maintain allegiance towards the throne. The “fiefs” of these dukes were often peripheral regions on the border where the tribes began to settle during the centuries prior to the establishment of the Jin and which in turn became home territories of the nomads. The degree of state control over these territories is hard to determine but it seems quite plausible that the control was rather nominal with the obedience of the people being dependant on the overall balance of power in the region.³⁶⁹ Bestowal of a ducal peerage sealed an alliance between the dynasty and a nomadic ruler who was in a symbolic way integrated into the administrative and social structure of the realm. By accepting noble title he got a place within the official hierarchy of the court acknowledging the supreme authority of the emperor and committing himself to be obedient subject of the dynasty.

The practice of peerage bestowals upon tribal leaders seems to be mutually beneficial. On the one hand, the court was able to exercise at least some influence over the border regions and their inhabitants through the authority of these semi-independent rulers who became nominal vassals of the emperor and the symbolic value of such relationship for legitimacy of imperial authority was equally important. On the other hand, for tribal leaders a ducal dignity represented additional confirmation of their claims to rulership. Through peerage creation the court acknowledged and confirmed their leading position within the tribal society. Unlike the imperial succession determined by primogeniture the tribal leadership was hereditary within the ruling family with every able-bodied adult male member having at least theoretical right to succeed. Abilities and experience remained decisive factors determining the final choice, often more important than the proximity to the ruling lineage.³⁷⁰ Official recognition on the part of the imperial court enabled the recipient of the peerage title to command additional respect among his own people. Rather unstable position of a tribal ruler was considerably strengthened by having been elevated far above all other possible

³⁶⁸ For rising might of the northern nomads and their role in the fall of the Western Jin see Lewis, Mark E. (2009): pp. 58-62, 73-80; Barfield, Thomas J. (1992): pp. 97-101; and Graff, David A. (2002): pp. 39-51; for the rise of the Xianbei see Gardiner, K. H. J. and de Crespigny, Rafe (1977): pp. 1-44.

³⁶⁹ The similar situation along the southwest border in present day Yunnan and Guizhou is described in Heraman, John (2009): pp. 241-286.

³⁷⁰ For the explanation of specific succession system prevalent among the nomadic societies see Barfield's discussion of the Xiongnu 匈奴 empire: Barfield, Thomas J. (1992): pp. 41-42.

claimants for leadership who could have not boasted the same kind of acknowledgment by higher authority.

Duan Wuchen, ruler of the Duan branch of the Xianbei (*Jinshu* calls them Wuwan 烏丸 or Wuhuan 烏桓), was one of these tribal allies whose support became important towards the end of the Western Jin. He married a daughter of Wang Jun 王浚 Duke of Boling and regional governor of the Northeast and was named great *shanyu* (i.e. the ruler) of the Wuwan/Xianbei by Emperor Huaidi. He and his family remained staunchly loyal to the Jin cause, repeatedly offering assistance to the Luoyang court and fighting its arch-enemy Shi Le.³⁷¹ His son Duan Juan 段眷 (also known as Jilujuan 疾陸眷) inherited the ducal dignity of his father and later was one of the Jin loyalist commanders of the Northeast who entreated Sima Rui Prince of Langye to ascend the throne and restore the dynasty in the South:

“In the first year of the Jianwu Era (317 AD) ... in the sixth month on the day *bingyin* Minister of Works (*sikong* 司空) and Regional Inspector (*cishi* 刺史) of Bingzhou Liu Kun Marquis of Guangwu, Regional Inspector of Youzhou, Left Wise King (*zuoxianwang* 左賢王) Duan Pidi Duke of Bohai, Vice Commandant Guarding the Wuwan (i.e. the Wuhuan tribes) (*ling hu Wuwan xiaowei* 領護烏丸校尉), General Defending the North (*zhenbei jiangjun* 鎮北將軍) Liu Han, *shanyu* Duan Chen Duke of Guangning, Duan Juan Duke of Liaoxi, Regional Inspector of Jizhou Shao Xu Viscount of Zhu’a, Regional Inspector of Qingzhou Cao Ni Marquis of Guangrao, Regional Inspector of Yanzhou Liu Yan Marquis of Dingxiang, Commandant of the Eastern Barbarians (*dongyi xiaowei* 東夷校尉) Cui Bi, Xianbei Area Commander-in-chief (*dadudu* 大都督) Murong Hui and others, altogether one hundred eighty persons sent [Sima Rui] a letter persuading him to mount the imperial throne...”³⁷²

Besides Duan Juan there are two other members of the Duan family among the co-signers of the letter, both mentioned with ducal title. While Duan Pidi 段匹磾 Duke of Bohai 勃海公 and Left Wise King of the Wuwan/Xianbei (i.e. something as viceroy) was another son of Duan Wuchen, the *shanyu* Duan Chen 段辰 Duke of Guangning 廣寧公 is probably identical with Duan Wuchen’s younger brother Shefuchen 涉復辰.³⁷³ Thus there were at least three ducal titles bestowed upon the Duan ruling family which together with the association

³⁷¹ For the Eastern Xianbei 東部鮮卑 and the Duans see Ma Changshou (2006a): pp. 187-189, 194-197.

³⁷² *Jinshu* juan 6, *Yuandi benji*, p. 145.

³⁷³ For detail of the Duan ruling family see biography of Duan Pidi: *Jinshu* juan 63, *Duan Pidi zhuan*, pp. 1710-1712.

with Wang Jun and other Jin loyalist commanders attest to the importance of the family and its Xianbei tribal army as an important ally in the desperate struggle to preserve the remnants of the dynastic power in the North against insurgents and self-declared usurpers. The Duans were apparently fighting long after the fall of the western court in Chang'an:

“In the third year of the Taixing Era (320 AD) ... during the summer in the fourth month ... Shi Le attacked Yanci and seized it. General of the Pacification Army (*fujun jiangjun* 撫軍將軍), Regional Inspector of Youzhou Duan Pidi fell victim to Shi Le.”³⁷⁴

The Liaoning-based Duans were not the only Xianbei group whose leaders maintained contact with the Jin court receiving titles in acknowledgement of their loyalty to the dynasty. The Tuoba Xianbei whose grazing lands stretched in southern Inner Mongolia and northern Shanxi may have not been as powerful and important as their cousins from the Northeast, yet they were able to intervene in the power struggle, assisting the loyalist forces in fighting the Xiongnu state of Former Zhao:

“Because of the achievement of [Xianbei] *shanyu* [Tuoba] Yituo who had rescued [Sima] Teng Duke of Dongying, [Liu] Kun petitioned the court to enfeoff Yituo's younger brother Yilu as commandery duke of Dai.”³⁷⁵

The bestowal of the commandery dukedom of Dai 代郡公 upon Yilu 猗廬, younger brother of the Tuoba *shanyu* Yituo 猗兜, laid foundation for the first independent state of the Tuoba Xianbei. The Principality of Dai flourished from 310 to 376 AD when it was overrun by forces of the Former Qin only to be revived a decade later as the Northern Wei 北魏 Dynasty which eventually reunited the whole of northern China.³⁷⁶

With the fall of the Western Jin and commencement of the period of disunion the symbolic meaning of the peerage bestowals upon semi-independent tribal rulers became even more important. Apart from the practical concerns of securing alliances for possible coordinated attack against the northern rivals the peerage bestowals and their acceptance on the part of tribal leaders constituted formal declaration of allegiance to the dynasty. At the

³⁷⁴ *Jinshu* juan 6, *Yuandi benji*, p. 154.

³⁷⁵ *Jinshu* juan 62, *Liu Kun zhuan*, p. 1681.

³⁷⁶ For the early history of the Tuoba and the Principality of Dai see Ma Changshou (2006a): pp. 241-243 and He Dezhang (2001): pp. 51-61; for the unification of the Xianbei and transition from the Dai to the Northern Wei see Li Ping (2010): pp. 28-36 and Du Shiduo (1992): pp. 62-82.

time when there were two or even more Sons of Heaven vying for supreme authority the question of allegiance of the tribal ethnic groups became an important indicator of the legitimacy of rival imperial courts. We have seen that even Wudi, being at the height of his power, did not hesitate to use the diplomatic mission sent from the oasis kingdom of Kroraina (Shanshan) for proclaiming his supreme authority of the Confucian universal ruler whose virtue attracts voluntary submission of the various barbarian entities.³⁷⁷ The same strategy was used by his descendants in time of crisis when the exiled court in Jiankang was desperately trying to strengthen its faltering legitimacy contested by the emperors of Former Zhao whose claim to the emperorship was validated by right of conquest. Bestowal or confirmation of a ducal peerage enabled the court to formally integrate the nomadic entities within the realm even though the territories of the tribal rulers were often out of control of the southern regime, separated by vast dominions of its northern rivals. Accepting a peerage title within the hierarchy of titled nobility of the realm was tantamount to acknowledging allegiance to the dynasty and was viewed as a token of submission to the rightful sovereign chosen by the will of Heaven. In this way the southern court reinforced its position vis-à-vis northern usurpers with the legitimacy of the restored regime confirmed and moral claims to supreme authority vindicated by uncoerced submission of the barbarians drawn by virtue and moral superiority of the true Sons of Heaven in Jiankang.

The Eastern Jin court apparently maintained contacts with the Duan Xianbei even after their influence in the region ebbed, eclipsed by rising power of the Murongs, another branch of the Eastern Xianbei group, who were soon to establish independent state of Former Yan 前燕 (*Qian Yan*, 337-370 AD). When certain Duan Kan 段龕 proclaimed allegiance to the southern regime, bringing over the whole province of Qingzhou 青州, the court awarded him with newly created dukedom of Qi 齊 (the appellation clearly referred to Qingzhou province which was under Duan Kan's sway) in appreciation of his gesture:

“In the seventh year of the Yonghe Era (351 AD) during the spring in the first month ... on the day *xinchou* Xianbei [leader] Duan Kan surrendered with whole of Qingzhou ... in the second month on the day *wuyin* Duan Kan was appointed General Defending the North (*zhenbei jiangjun* 鎮北將軍) and enfeoffed as Duke of Qi.”³⁷⁸

³⁷⁷ “In the fourth year of the Taikang Era (283 AD) in the eighth month country of Shanshan sent a son [of the king] to wait upon [the emperor] in the palace. [The Shanshan prince] was given title of Guiyi Marquis (Marquis Returning to Righteousness).” *Jinshu* juan 3, *Wudi benji*, p. 75; for discussion of this enfeoffment and its symbolic meaning see p. 173 of this thesis.

³⁷⁸ *Jinshu* juan 8, *Mudi zhuan*, p. 197.

Roughly at the same time the Jiankang court bestowed official ducal title on Yang Chu 楊初, king of the Di, whose strategically placed dominion stretching over the territory of northern Sichuan, southwest Shaanxi and Southeast Gansu constituted an important communication channel with Liangzhou-based regime of the Zhang family in the Far West. Yang Chu was enfeoffed as Duke of Chouchi 仇池公 and again his title referred to a territory under his direct authority, Chouchi being the seat of his court located on the eponymous mountain in Longnan 隴南, Gansu Province:

“In the third year of the Yonghe Era (347 AD) ... during the winter in the tenth month on the day *yichou* ... Di King in Wudu Yang Chu was named General Conquering the South (*zhengnan jiangjun* 征南將軍), Regional Inspector (*cishi* 刺史) of Yongzhou, Commandant Pacifying the Qiang (*ping Qiang xiaowei* 平羌校尉) and Duke of Chouchi and together with [Zhang Chonghua Regional Inspector of Liangzhou] was Commissioned with a Warrant (*jiajie* 假節).”³⁷⁹

The ducal dignity of Chouchi became hereditary in the house of Yang and was confirmed on regular basis following accession of every new king of the Di:

“In the eleventh year of the Yonghe Era (355 AD) Commandant Pacifying the Qiang (*ping Qiang xiaowei* 平羌校尉) Yang Chu Duke of Chouchi was murdered by his commander Liang Shi. Yang Chu’s son [Yang] Guo succeeded to the ducal dignity and was subsequently appointed General Defending the North (*zhenbei jiangjun* 鎮北將軍) and Regional Inspector (*cishi* 刺史) of Qinzhou.”³⁸⁰

Frequent contacts between the southern court and Di kings of Chouchi were maintained not only throughout the whole period of the Eastern Jin but also by all successor regimes residing in Jiankang up to the mid 6th century. The status of the Di rulers was later even raised as they were promoted in rank to Princes/Kings of Chouchi.³⁸¹

Another powerful ethnic group whose allegiance the southern court tried to secure were the Qiang. After the collapse of the Later Zhao Dynasty (*Hou Zhao* 後趙, 319-351 AD)

³⁷⁹ *Jinshu* juan 8, *Mudi zhuan*, p. 194.

³⁸⁰ *Jinshu* juan 8, *Mudi zhuan*, p. 200.

³⁸¹ For the history of the Di kingdom of Chouchi see Ma Changshou (2006b): pp. 54-59; and Yang Ming (1991): pp. 105-130; for Yang Chu see especially p. 111.

Qiang tribal rulers Yao Yizhong 姚弋仲 and his son Yao Xiang 姚襄 controlled the region south of Luoyang and the Eastern Jin without doubt planned to use their influence to bring the heart of the Central Plain with the ancient capital once again under their sway. High military titles and ducal dignities of Gaoling 高陵 and Pingxiang 平鄉 (or Jiqu 即丘) bestowed upon the erstwhile enemy commanders reflect the desperate effort of the court to win them over as potential allies in the planned northern campaign:

“In the seventh year of the Yonghe Era (351 AD) ... in the eleventh month Shi Zhi’s commander Yao Yizhong and Ran Min’s commander Wei Tuo (or Wei Tong) each sent a messenger asking to surrender [to the Jin]. [Yao] Yizhong was made Chariot and Cavalry General (*cheji jiangjun* 車騎將軍), the great *shanyu* and was created commandery duke of Gaoling. His son [Yao] Xiang became General Pacifying the North (*pingbei jiangjun* 平北將軍), Commander-in-chief supervising all military affairs of Bingzhou, Regional Inspector (*cishi* 刺史) of Bingzhou and was enfeoffed as prefecture duke of Pingxiang (according to different sources Duke of Jiqu)...³⁸²

The Jin hopes of recovering the Central Plain with help of the Qiang were dashed though when Yao Xiang led his tribesman westward planning to establish an independent state of his own in Guanzhong. His advance, however, was checked by the forces of Di kingdom of Former Qin. The Qiang were defeated and Yao Xiang himself perished on the battlefield. The tribal elites were incorporated into the government structure of the Former Qin and it was only after its disintegration that Xiang’s younger brother Yao Chang 姚萇 managed to found a state of his own, the Later Qin (*Hou Qin* 后秦, 384-417 AD).³⁸³

The last influential ethnic group, which was significantly involved in the history of northern China during the 4th and 5th centuries, were the Murong Xianbei who had gradually replaced the Duans as the strongest power of the Northeast. We have already met their ruler Murong Hui 慕容廆 as one of the co-signers of the petition of Jin loyalist commanders urging future Yuandi to announce restoration of the dynasty and mount the imperial throne in Jiankang. Few years later Murong Hui’s importance was further affirmed by bestowal of

³⁸² *Jinshu* juan 8, *Mudi zhuan*, p. 197.

³⁸³ For the early career of the Qiang ruler as well as later development of the Later Qin see Wang Zhongluo (1998): pp. 252-253, 300-302.

ducal dignity of Liaodong 遼東, appellation of the fief again referring to the home territory of the Murong in southern Manchuria:³⁸⁴

“In the fourth year of the Taixing Era (321 AD) ... in the twelfth month Murong Hui was Commissioned with Special Powers (*chijie* 持節), appointed Commander-in-chief of the two regions of Youzhou and Pingzhou supervising all military affairs of the eastern barbarians, Shepherd (*mu* 牧) of Pingzhou and he created commandery duke of Liaodong.”³⁸⁵

“In the eighth year of the Xianhe Era (333 AD) ... in the fifth month ... Chariot and Horse General (*cheji jiangjun* 車騎將軍) Murong Hui Duke of Liaodong died. His son [Murong] Huang succeeded to the title.”³⁸⁶

Facing worsening military situation in the North the court withdrew behind the seemingly insurmountable barrier of the Yangzi River virtually abandoning remnants of the Jin loyalist forces in the Central Plain. Former regional governors and local rulers as Murong Huang 慕容皝 in Youzhou and Zhang Chonghua 張重華 in Liangzhou were forced to fight for themselves. Some of them gradually aspired to higher dignities which would be more fitting to their standing of virtually independent warlords. In order to retain their allegiance the court was eventually forced to grant concessions far greater than ducal peerages and confirm princely or kingly ranks and titles (we are speaking about the same rank of *wang* 王 here) which the local rulers had the audacity to adopt despite their professed loyalty to the dynasty:

“In the third year of the Xiankang Era (337 AD) ... during the winter in the tenth month on the day *dingmao* Murong Huang proclaimed himself King of Yan.”³⁸⁷

“In the sixth year of the Xiankang Era (340 AD) during the spring in the second month ... on the day *yimao* Murong Huang sent a messenger and begged for a seal and credentials of King of Yan to be bestowed upon him. His [plea] was granted.”³⁸⁸

³⁸⁴ For the history of the Murong and their state of Yan see Barfield, Thomas (1992): pp. 105-114.

³⁸⁵ *Jinshu* juan 6, *Yuandi benji*, p. 155.

³⁸⁶ *Jinshu* juan 7, *Chengdi benji*, p. 177.

³⁸⁷ *Jinshu* juan 7, *Chengdi benji*, p. 181.

³⁸⁸ *Jinshu* juan 7, *Chengdi benji*, p. 183.

The formal submission and allegiance of the Murong ruler was so important for the southern regime that the court was willing to surrender part of the imperial prerogatives and bestow a princely dignity on Murong Huang even though he was not a member of the imperial clan. Both parties maximally exploited the hidden potential of the *wang* title and its dual nature. While Murong Huang undoubtedly viewed the confirmation of the *wang* title as an official acknowledgment of his sovereign authority as a king ruling an independent domain, the imperial court considered Murong ruler to be a non-royal prince of the realm (*yixingwang* 異姓王) being on par with royal kinsmen. And like the princes of the blood he was still officially only a subject of the emperor formally dependent on his will and obedient to his authority.

Interesting reflection of the Murong adoption of the royal title of *wang* as well as delicate diplomatic effort of the Eastern Jin to maintain allegiance of the independent northern warlords is provided by case of diplomatic mission sent in 347 AD to Liangzhou governor Zhang Chonghua who intended to proclaim himself King of Liang 涼王:

“The imperial edict ordered Imperial Censor-in-attendance (*shiyushi* 侍御史) Yu Gui to be sent to appoint [Zhang] Chonghua Commandant Guarding the Qiang (*hu Qiang xiaowei* 護羌校尉), Regional Inspector (*cishi* 刺史) of Liangzhou, Commissioned with a Warrant (*jiatie* 假節) ... At the time when Censor Yu Gui arrived in Liangzhou [Zhang] Chonghua was just considering proclaiming himself King of Liang and [therefore] he would not accept the imperial edict. He sent his trusted follower Shen Meng to address [Yu] Gui: “Lords of our family were for generations loyal to the House of Jin and yet, they cannot compare to a Xianbei! The court has given Murong Huang a title of King of Yan and now grants lord of our province title of [mere] Commander-in-chief (*dajiangjun* 大將軍). Is this the way how to encourage a loyal and righteous subject with great achievements?! The illustrious court should now move to the other bank of the Yellow River (Heyou 河右, i.e. Liangzhou) and together urge the province lord to become King of Liang. When Your Honor was sent on this mission [it was in order to] benefit the altars of soil and grain. [I am sure] it would be possible to act without authorization [and confirm Zhang Chonghua as the King of Liang].” [Yu] Gui replied: “The system of princes prevents anybody who is not from the royal family from declaring oneself a prince. Within the nine districts [of all under heaven] there is no higher noble dignity than that of a duke. Indeed, there were once non-royals made princes during the reign of Han Gao[zu] but all of them were executed and [their families] exterminated soon enough. It was just a matter of temporary expediency and not an established institution of old. Therefore Wang Ling said: “If there is

someone reigning as a prince who is not of the Liu House, all under heaven would launch an attack against him.” As far as the Barbarians are concerned this is not applied to them. During the Springs and Autumns Period [rulers of] Wu and Chu declared themselves kings and yet the noble lords did not consider it wrong, for they considered them to be mere barbarians. But if it had been [rulers of] Qi or Lu who had declared themselves kings, would the noble lords have not launched an attack against them?! Therefore his Sagely Majesty has enfeoffed His Noble Grace as supreme duke (i.e. commandery duke) for his loyalty and wisdom and has him appointed regional governor. How could a barbarian Xianpei ever compare to him! Therefore, you erred by asking me. Even if I would answer [your request], whenever there is someone whose achievements are unique and outstanding his reward ought to be outstanding as well. Suppose His Noble Grace is made a king today and later His Noble Grace with all the might of Heyou (i.e. Liangzhou) would pacify Ba and Shu in the south, wipe out Zhao and Wei in the east, build the old capital anew and invite Son of Heaven [to assume his rightful place upon the throne]. What noble title, what official position would Son of Heaven be able to reward him with? I hope you would think it over once again.” [Shen] Meng conveyed everything what [Yu] Gui had said [to the governor] and [Zhang] Chonghua desisted.”³⁸⁹

It is clear that in view of the court there was a great difference between a tribal ruler, a barbarian, who cannot be expected to abide by ancient rules guiding Chinese society, and loyal official of the dynasty, scion of a Han family of provincial dignitaries, whose authority was derived from the fact that he was acting as a representative of the legitimate imperial court. Yu Gui 俞歸 is rather articulate on this point. Unlike Murong Huang who is as ignorant as he is arrogant, Zhang Chonghua should know better where his proper place is and should not ask for impossible for the imperial court would not be blackmailed. The imperial envoy promptly and vigorously defended prerogatives of the dynasty as he was not ready to grant any concession which would compromise the supreme authority of the Jin emperor unless absolutely necessary. Obviously, the dynasty developed double standards for “barbarian” tribal rulers on the one hand and centrally appointed Han officials on the other. Through their ducal peerages the semi-independent nomadic leaders may have been, at least formally, a part of the titled nobility of the realm, nevertheless they never ceased to be perceived as barbarians defying the common rules and their fiefs were in fact existing outside the established hierarchy being dependent on different factors than noble dignities of ordinary meritorious subjects of the dynasty.

³⁸⁹ *Jinshu* juan 86, *Zhang Chonghua zhuan*, pp. 2244-2245.

Chapter IV

Inheriting Noble Dignity and Bestowal of Special Grace

Succession and Inheritance

As the Jin system of titled nobility was derived partially from the ancient Zhou practice of enfeoffment it took over also one of the most distinguished features of its model, the principle of heredity of noble dignities. Like the princely titles awarded to the members of the imperial clan and indeed, like the imperial throne itself, noble dignities bestowed on non-royal meritorious ministers and commanders were hereditary and ideally meant to be held in perpetuity in the family of the first recipient as an eternal memento of meritorious services rendered to the state or ruling house by the family ancestors as well as reminder of ensuing mutual bond of loyalty between their descendants and the dynasty. The succession within the noble lineage was basically primogenitural in nature with the eldest son born of the main wife succeeding to his father's title and all the privileges and duties connected with it.³⁹⁰ Due to the various factors it was not always possible to follow the ideal pattern of succession and the noble lineages in which the primogenitural succession would last for more than two or three generations in a row were rather exceptional.³⁹¹ One of them was the ducal lineage of Gaoping 高平 founded by Chen Qian 陳騫, a loyal supporter of the Simas whose assistance was essential for accomplishing the great enterprise of founding the new dynasty:

“When Emperor Wudi received the abdication of the Wei Dynasty [Chen Qian] was promoted for his achievement of assisting in founding of the dynasty to Chariot and Horse General (*cheji jiangjun* 車騎將軍) and created commandery duke of Gaoping ... In the second year of the Yuankang Era (292 AD) [Chen Qian] passed away in the age of eighty-one. He was granted privilege of being encoffined in full ceremonial garment and the office of Grand Mentor (*taifu* 太傅) was posthumously bestowed upon him together with posthumous name Wu. At the time of the burial the emperor (i.e. Huidi) [himself] took part in the funerary obsequies, watched the bier [pass by] from atop of the Dasima Gate and shed tears. The rites were conducted according to the precedent set by [funeral of] Commander-in-chief (*dasima* 大司馬) Shi Bao. [Chen Qian's] son [Chen] Yu succeeded to the peerage ... When he died his son [Chen] Zhi ...

³⁹⁰ For general discussion of the principle of heredity in Early Medieval system of titled nobility see Yang Guanghui (2004): pp. 142-146.

³⁹¹ For details see the lists of peerage and lordship holders in the Appendix.

succeeded [to the title] and he eventually attained the office of Cavalier Attendant-in-ordinary (*sanji changshi* 散騎常侍). When he died his son [Chen] Cui succeeded [as the third Duke of Gaoping]. He was killed during the Yongjia Era (307-312 AD). [Later, the Eastern Jin Emperor] Xiaowudi had a great-great-grandson of [Chen] Qian's inherit the dukedom. When he died a son of his younger brother, [Chen] Haozhi succeeded [to the title]. The fief was abolished [in 420 AD] after the Liu Song Dynasty received the abdication [of the Jin].³⁹²

During the Western Jin the title was inherited in unbroken line from father to son for three generations and despite the hiatus caused by the overall political disorder of 310s the ducal lineage of Gaoping managed to survive the fall of the northern court being resurrected during the reign of Xiaowudi 孝武帝 (373-396 AD) of the Eastern Jin, becoming one of only a few noble lineages lasting from the very beginning of the Western Jin in 266 AD up to the dynastic transition of 420 AD which brought the Liu Song 劉宋 Dynasty to the throne.³⁹³

Even though the succession of all peerage and lordship titles was primogenitural in nature there were certain limitations imposed by the existence of concubinage which ran parallel to primogeniture. The eligibility of a son to inherit and succeed to a noble dignity was determined not only by the order of birth but also by the status of his mother. No son of a title holder, regardless of his possible seniority, was entitled to succeed to the title unless he was born in the official wedlock. Only sons of the main wives (*dizi* 嫡子) were considered to be true heirs to their fathers and they held precedence over their brothers born of concubines (*shuzi* 庶子) even though these might have been actually older. It seems that Emperor Wudi tried to impose strict distinction in status between the main wives and concubines and their respective offspring and even proclaimed special edict regarding this issue:

“In the tenth year of the Taishi Era (274 AD) ... in the intercalary first month on the day *dinghai* [Emperor Wudi] issued the following edict: “The distinction between the main wife [and her children] and secondary wives (i.e. concubines) [and their children] are the means how to differentiate between the high and the low and make clear [the difference between] the distinguished and the mean. But nowadays many a favorite attained position of the main consort and thus violated precedence order of the honored and the lowly. From now on it shall not be

³⁹² *Jinshu* juan 35, *Chen Qian zhuan*, pp. 1136-1137.

³⁹³ Other noble lineages which maintained more or less unbroken line of succession for quite a long time were the Lords of Chengwu 成武縣侯 (the Zhous of Runan 汝南周氏) and the Lords of Lantian 藍田縣侯 (the Wangs of Taiyuan 太原王氏). See *Jinshu* juan 61, *Zhou Jun zhuan*, pp. 1658-1665; and juan 75, *Wang Cheng zhuan*, pp. 1964-1970 respectively.

possible to raise one's secondary wife or concubine to become lawfully [wedded] first wife!''''³⁹⁴

Wudi's effort may have been practical reaction to a prevalent (mal)practice of the preceding dynasties or simply an act of the dynastic founder reinstating the proper norms of ritual behavior. Maintaining clear distinction between the *di* 嫡 and the *shu* 庶 was considered extremely important for the lack of it was traditionally seen as a cause of untoward and potentially disastrous events threatening the social and political order of the realm.³⁹⁵

The example of practical application of the distinction between sons of the main wife and sons born of concubines is provided by inheritance of the ducal dignity of Suiling 睢陵 in the family of Wang Xiang 王祥:

“[Wang] Xiang [Duke of Suiling] had five sons: Zhao, Xia, Fu, Lie and Fen. [Wang] Zhao was son of a concubine. [Wang] Xia died young [and therefore Wang] Fu succeeded [to the ducal dignity]. At the beginning of the Xianning Era (275-279 AD) as [Wang] Xiang's family was very frugal and poor it has been granted three hundred bolts of silk and [Wang] Fu was appointed Governor (*taishou* 太守) of Shangluo. When he died, he was granted posthumous name Xiao and his son [Wang] Gen succeeded [to the peerage. Later] he became Gentleman Cavalier Attendant (*sanjilang* 散騎郎). [The eldest, Wang] Zhao attained the post of Governor of Shiping. His son [Wang] Jun held an office of Secretary of the crown prince (*taizi sheren* 太子舍人) and was created Marquis of Yongshi.”³⁹⁶

As the *Jinshu* usually lists all sons according to their birth order we may presume that Wang Zhao 王肇 was actually the eldest. However, because he was born of a concubine he was naturally excluded from the inheritance and the heir presumptive must have been the second son Wang Xia 王夏 as the eldest born of the main wife. Unfortunately, he had died young (that is before his father) and very probably did not manage to sire a son of his own. Therefore it was only Wang Xiang's third son Wang Fu 王馥 who eventually succeeded to the peerage and became second Duke of Suiling. The succession then continued through his line of the family. It is interesting to note the fate of Wang Zhao and his line. The fact that he

³⁹⁴ *Jinshu* juan 3, *Wudi benji*, p. 63.

³⁹⁵ We should recall the text of the oaths sworn by the rulers of the Zhou tributaries during the *meng* 盟 called by Duke Huan of Qi 齊桓公.

³⁹⁶ *Jinshu* juan 33, *Wang Xiang zhuan*, p. 990.

was born of a mere concubine may have prevented him from claiming the ducal peerage for himself but was apparently no hindrance to his official career. His origin may have been less glamorous in comparison with his brothers yet he was a Wang of Langye and son of a duke and as such he was entitled to same kind of material and social privileges as his brothers, including the privileged access to the state service. Being a concubine's son obviously was not detrimental to having distinguished career in the state bureaucracy. Wang Zhao himself served as commandery governor and his son Wang Jun 王俊 was later even created Marquis of Yongshi 永世侯 in his own right, thereby establishing another noble lineage within the well ramified clan of Langye Wangs.

The earnest endeavor on the part of the Jin to protect the rights of the offspring born of the main wife found an appropriate expression also on the institutional level. Whereas in the past the primogenitural succession was more or less matter of tradition with the standing of the heir much dependent on the decision of a title holder under the Jin the standing of the official heirs became institutionally protected. A brand new title of Heir Apparent (*shizi* 世子 for sons and *shisun* 世孫 for grandsons) was introduced to be bestowed already during the lifetime of a title holder upon the designated heirs, eldest sons born of the main wife or in case of their premature death their eldest sons:

“[Liu] Qun ... in his youth was appointed the Heir Apparent (*shizi* 世子) of Marquis of Guangwu.”³⁹⁷

“When Liu Yao came to raid and harass the royal capital [of Chang’an Suo] Chen was appointed Commander-in-chief and Great General Conquering the East (*dudu zhengdong da jiangjun* 都督征東大將軍), Commissioned with Special Powers (*chijie* 持節) to chastise the rebels. He crushed [Liu] Yao’s [commander] Hurizhu King Huyanmo and for his achievement was enfeoffed as prefecture duke of Shangluo with apanage of ten thousand households. His spouse, lady Xun was created Lady of Xinfeng and his son [Suo] Shiyuan was named the [ducal] Heir Apparent (*shizi* 世子). His second son and a younger brother were granted titles of village and township lords.”³⁹⁸

It seems that the official heirs apparent had even their own official staff looking after their household which might have been much simpler then but still not unlike the

³⁹⁷ *Jinshu* juan 62, *Liu Qun zhuan*, p. 1691.

³⁹⁸ *Jinshu* juan 60, *Suo Chen zhuan*, p. 1651.

establishment of the Eastern Palace of the crown prince. As the title of Heir Apparent was considered to be an official post with an official rank attached to it, a complex hierarchy emerged copying the hierarchy of the “parent” noble dignities with heirs of different peerage ranks having different court ranks. Heirs Apparent of the imperial princes³⁹⁹ naturally took precedence over all non-royal Heirs Apparent whose official and social standing was descending with descending ranks of their fathers’ peerages.⁴⁰⁰ It is not clear whether the holders of the lordship dignities were also entitled to appoint official Heir Apparent but it seems that all mentions of the title in the sources refer to the heirs of a peerage dignity, especially the higher peerage ranks of duke, marquis and count:

“When Emperor Mindi proclaimed himself crown prince [Xun] Zu was as a maternal uncle of the crown prince charged with administering the office of Metropolitan Commandant (*sili xiaowei* 司隸校尉) and was acting regional commander of Yuzhou. With [his brother Xun] Fan they guarded Kaifeng in Xingyang [Commandery]. At the beginning of the Jianxing Era (313-316 AD) the imperial edict entrusted charge of the government in exile to [Xun] Fan. Suddenly, Xun Fan passed away and the emperor made [Xun] Zu Minister of Works (*sikong* 司空) and Concurrent Left Vice Director of the Department of State Affairs (*ling shangshu zuopuye* 尚書左僕射) and at the same time had him take charge of the affairs of both Metropolitan Commandant and government in exile ... He was promoted in rank to prefecture duke of Linying and the seals and ribbons for the Dowager Duchess (*taifuren* 太夫人) and [ducal] Heir Apparent (*shizi* 世子) were bestowed as well.”⁴⁰¹

The case of Xun Zu 荀組 and dukedom of Linying 臨潁 poses another interesting question, the answer to which nevertheless remains elusive. One might be born an heir to a peerage title, yet obviously one has to be officially appointed the Heir Apparent and granted the official seal and other credentials of the office. But was this appointment automatic, following every creation of a new peerage as a formal confirmation of the heredity of the noble title as is suggested by the case of Linying or was it a special gesture, either an act of grace or granting the plea of a title holder himself as was evidently the case with Zhang Gui, semi-independent lord of Liangzhou at the beginning of the 4th century:

³⁹⁹ The title of heir apparent of the princely fief could be well translated as *Erbprinz*, a title used for the heirs of the principedoms within the Holy Roman Empire.

⁴⁰⁰ Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 144.

⁴⁰¹ *Jinshu* juan 39, *Xun Zu zhuan*, p. 1160.

“At that time Liu Yao again raided [commandery of] Beidi. [Zhang] Gui sent his Aide (*canjun* 參軍) Qu Tao in command of three thousand men to guard Chang’an. The emperor sent Chief Minister for Dependencies (*dahonglu* 大鴻臚) Xin Pan to appoint [Zhang] Gui Palace Attendant (*shizhong* 侍中), Defender-in-chief (*taiwei* 太尉), Shepherd (*mu* 牧) of Liangzhou and Duke of Xiping. [Zhang] Gui again firmly declined [the honor]. After administering the province for thirteen years, he fell gravely ill ... he petitioned the throne to have his son [Zhang] Shi named the Heir Apparent (*shizi* 世子). Then he died in the age of sixty years and was granted posthumous name of Duke Wu.”⁴⁰²

It is not entirely clear to what title should have Zhang Shi 張寔 actually succeeded. After Zhang Gui’s death Zhang Shi became Duke of Xiping 西平公 but this was in all probability a new creation. The imperial court in Chang’an repeatedly tried to bestow this ducal dignity already upon his father but Zhang Gui refused to accept such an honor as undeserved. He was willing to accept only peerage of a lower rank and in the end was created Marquis of Bacheng 霸城侯. It is highly probable that it was this marquissate that Zhang Shi was supposed to inherit. If that is the case then the official appointment of the Heir Apparent did not follow automatically the creation of a peerage as Zhang Gui had become a marquis couple of years before his death. It was only a dying wish of the loyal commander which prompted the court of Mindi to approve of his choice of a successor and appoint Zhang Shi the official Heir Apparent. Such an act was without doubt highly important as a symbolic confirmation of the hereditary leadership of the Zhang family over the Liangzhou region and its military forces which the court was dependent on.

Unfortunately, the sources do not provide enough relevant information to solve this problem. With majority of peerage dignities we simply don’t know anything about official appointment of the Heir Apparent and even though this might be just an omission we do know about the cases of heirs succeeding to the peerage dignities without ever having been appointed Heir Apparent (see Wang Jun becoming second Duke of Boling below). The question would merit further research and it would be useful to compare the situation under the Western Jin with its successor regimes in the South.

Being the officially appointed Heir Apparent or not, the inheritor of a noble dignity apparently did not succeed immediately after the death of his predecessor:

⁴⁰² *Jinshu* juan 86, *Zhang Gui zhuan*, p. 2226.

“When Luoyang has still not fallen, [Liu Yu] was taken ill, having a deep-rooted ulcer on his finger, and succumbed to it. He was forty-seven years old at the time. He was posthumously promoted to Cavalry General (*piaoji jiangjun* 驃騎將軍). For his previous achievements he was enfeoffed as Marquis of Dingxiang and granted posthumous name Zhen. His son [Liu] Yan inherited [the title] ... Liu Yan ... was first drafted as Clerk to Defender-in-chief (*taiwei yuan* 太尉掾) and then appointed Secretarial Court Gentleman (*shangshulang* 尚書郎). He left the office when he went into mourning for his father. After he had completed [the prescribed period of] mourning he succeeded to the noble dignity [of his father] and Grand Mentor (*taifu* 太傅) [Sima] Yue Prince of Donghai had him summoned as his Recorder (*zhubu* 主簿).”⁴⁰³

Certain prescribed period of mourning was to be observed before the heir could succeed to a peerage or a lordship.⁴⁰⁴ The heir had to leave all the official posts he was holding at the moment of his predecessor’s demise and fulfill the ritual requirements of the funeral obsequies and subsequent mourning. For the time being he remained a mere commoner with the noble dignity left temporarily vacant and the final settlement of the succession pending. Even though leaving one’s office during the period of mourning was required of all officials regardless of their being a member of a noble lineage, the succession practice of the titled nobility was probably not so much a consequence of observing the norms of Confucian ritual behavior as a trace of much older tradition hearkening back to the feudatories of the Zhou. The *zhuhou* 諸侯 of the Zhou realm apparently were wont to observe the ritual period of mourning before they ascended the throne. The peerages and lordships thus retained something of the original quality of these titles which after all originally used to denote sovereign rulers of the Zhou state and its feudatories. This ancient practice of succession after completion of the official mourning period was partially applied even to the imperial succession. Unlike the titled nobility, an emperor succeeded to the throne immediately after the demise of his predecessor, however, even he had to observe period of ritual mourning (*liang’an* 諒闇) taking personal charge of the state affairs only after its completion.

⁴⁰³ *Jinshu* juan 62, *Liu Yu zhuan*, *Liu Yan zhuan*, pp. 1692-1693.

⁴⁰⁴ For other examples of succeeding to a noble dignity only after a period of mourning see Xun Sui 荀邃, Duke of Xihua 西華公 during the Western Jin, *Jinshu* juan 39, *Xun Sui zhuan*, p. 1158; and Zhou Fu 周撫, prefecture lord of Xunyang 尋陽縣侯 and Wang Tanzhi 王坦之, prefecture lord of Lantian 藍田縣侯 during the Eastern Jin. See *Jinshu* juan 58, *Zhou Fu zhuan*, p. 1582 and juan 75, *Wang Tanzhi zhuan*, p. 1965 respectively.

Circumstantial evidence attesting to the practice of succession to the noble dignity after period of mourning together with formal confirmation of its connection with the ancient Zhou tradition is to be found in record of a curious judicial case involving an heir of a comital dignity being charged of corruption:

“At the beginning of the Taishi Era [Hua Yi] was promoted to Supervisor of the Entourage (*rongcong puye* 冗從僕射). When he was young Emperor Wudi respected him [and therefore he was now in turn] appointed Gentleman Attendant at the Palace Gate (*huangmen shilang* 黃門侍郎), Cavalier Attendant-in-ordinary (*sanji changshi* 散騎常侍), General of the Front Army (*qianjun jiangjun* 前軍將軍), Palace Attendant (*shizhong* 侍中), Southern Leader of the Court Gentlemen (*nanzhonglangjiang* 南中郎將) and Commander-in-chief supervising military affairs north of the Yellow River. When his father fell gravely ill he returned [back to the capital]. According to the old rules for suffering a loss [in the family] he should have resumed his position once the interment was done but he firmly refused defying the imperial decree. Previously, [Hua Yi’s father Hua] Biao [Count of Guanyang] had been granted some tenants (dependent people, *ke* 客) in Bi. He sent Hua Yi to go to prefecture magistrate Yuan Yi and had them registered in the tax rolls. All three tenants were exchanged for slaves (*nu* 奴). Later when Yuan Yi was brought to trial for bribery his confession was confused and imperfect and it was no longer evident that the slaves were given in exchange for tenants. It just said that he had given three slaves to [Hua] Yi. And after all, Yi was son-in-law of Lu [Yu] (a fact that somehow incriminated him even further). Secretariat Supervisor (*zhongshujian* 中書監) Xun Xu had once before asked the hand of Hua Yi’s daughter for his middle son but Yi did not give his consent and incurred [Xun’s] wrath. Therefore, he had now secretly reported to the emperor that there are so many who had been bribed by Yuan Yi that it is not possible to bring them all to justice. Therefore it would be fitting to put the blame on someone who stands closest to [him/the throne?] and he pointed out that it should be [Hua] Yi. As he was already guilty of offence of defying the imperial order he was stripped of his office even though he was currently in mourning and the apanage [of his peerage] was reduced. Chief Minister for Dependencies (*dahonglu* 大鴻臚) He Zun petitioned the throne that Hua Yi should be demoted to commoner and should not be allowed to succeed to the peerage. He begged for permission to install Hua Biao’s primogenitural grandson (*shisun* 世孫) [Hua] Hun as Biao’s heir. But the officials responsible submitted following memorandum: “[Hua] Yi suffered removal of his name from the list of eligible candidates for office and reduction of the fief for what he had committed. It may have been [only] a preliminary measure, [but] the fact that Hua Yi is [himself] the Heir Apparent (*shizi* 世子) is clearly written in the records. If we don’t let him succeed to the

peerage it would amount to applying another punishment. As far as the noble lords breaking the law are concerned when persons enjoying any of the eight kinds of immunity are judged then the merit should be extolled and noble dignity honored. It is too harsh a punishment for a son born of the main wife [of a peer], who had not committed any capital offence, to be disinherited. According to the law he ought to be allowed to succeed to the noble dignity.” The imperial decree stated: “When a lord passes away after a year (*yunian* 踰年) his son mounts the throne. Indeed, that is the ancient order. When we disinherit someone who ought to succeed than [his chances of ever] receiving the noble dignity [albeit reduced in apanage] are gone. So what another punishment [are you talking about?]. Moreover, I blame Hua Yi because [I want to] eradicate corruption. Therefore [the case] should not be judged by standard law. The wise [counselors] were not able to follow my intention and had therefore distorted and contradicted the rites and the laws. Not understanding the law, the subjects would have reinstated someone who had been disinherited by the order of [their] sovereign lord. Thus the position of those above and those below were completely reversed!” Then the responsible officials called for all those discussing the matter to be stripped of their offices but the edict ordered that they could redeem their offence by paying a fine. As a grandson heir [Hua] Hun should have received the peerage but he ran away and had his hair cut off pretending to be mad. He became mute and was unable to speak. That is how he managed to remain unenfeoffed and the world praised him for it ... at the beginning of the Taikang (280-289 AD) [after almost ten years] the great amnesty was proclaimed and [Hua] Yi was at last able to succeed to [his father’s peerage as second Count of Guanyang] ... after Huidi’s accession he became Palace Attendant (*shizhong* 侍中), Grand Master for Splendid Happiness (*guanglu dafu* 光祿大夫) and Director of the Department of State Affairs (*shangshuling* 尚書令) and he was promoted in noble rank to duke [of Guanyang].⁴⁰⁵

It seems that Hua Yi 華廙 was an official Heir Apparent to his father Hua Biao 華表, Count of Guanyang 觀陽伯. Unfortunately for him he was incriminated in a corruption case not long after his father had died. Even though he was probably innocent he was to be punished by reduction of the fief (*xiao juetu* 削爵土). Yet because the investigation of the case coincided with the period of mourning for deceased Count of Guanyang and Hua Yi still did not succeed to the peerage himself, it was apparently just a preliminary decision which would take effect only after Hua Yi eventually succeed to the title. Another proof that the peerage was left vacant for the time being is the ensuing dispute between some officials and Emperor Wudi discussing adequacy of the punishment meted out so far. It is significant that

⁴⁰⁵ *Jinshu* juan 44, *Hua Yi zhuan*, pp. 1260-1261.

the emperor did not wish to deprive him of his peerage which would have been the case if he had any but denied him the right to succeed at all. Wudi explicitly stated that the tradition of succession to a title after a period of mourning went back to the feudatories of the Zhou times claiming that the heir usually succeeded after roughly a year's time (*yunian jiwei* 踰年即位). We may presume that the Western Jin practice was similar.

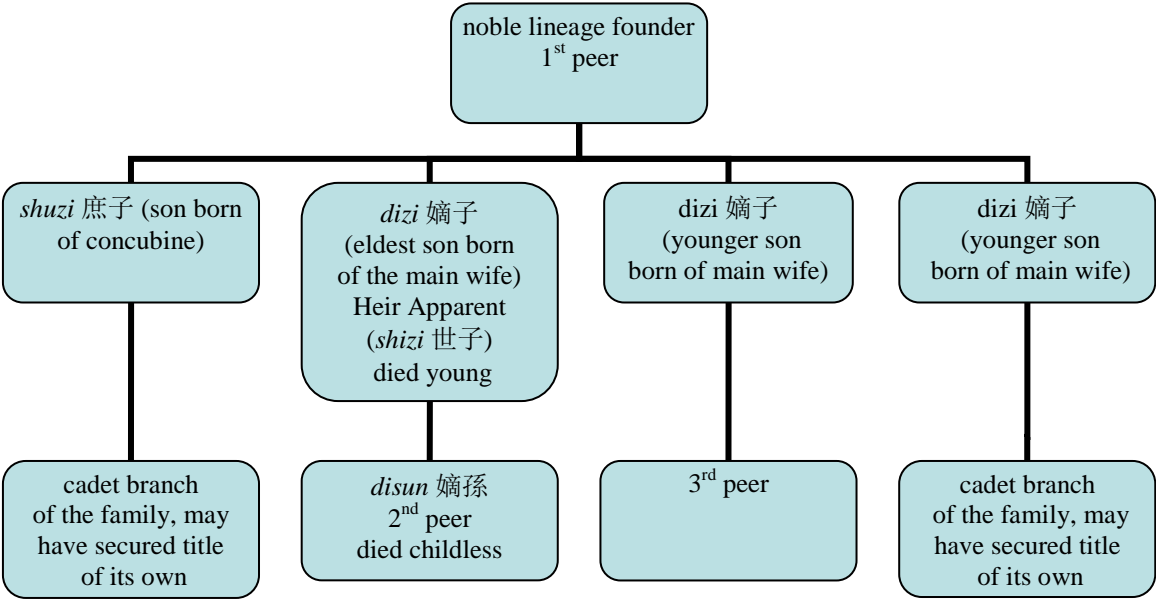
Wudi decided to make an example of Hua Yi and his alleged crime and decreed that he was not to inherit arguing that the objections of double punishment are not valid for if Hua Yi had not inherited anything as yet the reduction of the fief's apanage could hardly be considered a punishment. However, it was to be a personal punishment for Hua Yi with the rest of the family standing free from any charges. It was clearly important for the emperor that the noble lineage should be preserved and ritual sacrifices continued by a grandson of the founding peer.⁴⁰⁶ Hua Yi's son Hua Hun 華混 was called upon to succeed in his father's stead but he displayed commendable loyalty to his father and rather than act against the ideal of filial piety he had defied the imperial order and fled pretending to be mad. Feigned madness as well as dumbness naturally disqualified him as an eligible heir because physical health and mental sanity were important criteria determining succession of noble dignities. The emperor did not pursue the matter and the peerage laid in abeyance for nearly a decade, yet it was never abolished. That is why Hua Yi was not only able to finally succeed with emperor's permission to the title once the great amnesty cleared him of his past offence but even secure a promotion to a ducal dignity during Huidi's reign.

We have seen that the right to succeed to a noble dignity was limited only to the heirs male born of the main wife, that is primogenitural sons and grandsons (*dizi* 嫡子, *disun* 嫡孫) of a title holder with the order of birth determining the precedence of eligible heirs. The eldest son of the main wife was naturally seen as an heir presumptive and his exclusive position was in fact often recognized officially by appointing him Heir Apparent of the given noble dignity. Nevertheless, the choice of successor was often influenced by biological factors as a lack of an heir or his premature death which necessitated change of the ideal succession pattern. In case of premature demise of the eldest son born of the main wife, his own eldest son, i.e. the primogenitural grandson of a title holder stood next in line to succession. If the heir died without siring any male offspring of his own, the right to succeed was transferred to the eldest of his younger full brothers or his heirs male in case he was not alive either (see Table 19).

⁴⁰⁶ Note that *shisun* 世孫 here denotes simply a grandson in the direct primogenitural line and not the official Heir Apparent. We may presume that even the term *shizi* 世子 was not always used in the sense of officially designated heir but as an equivalent to *dizi* 嫡子, a son born of the main wife.

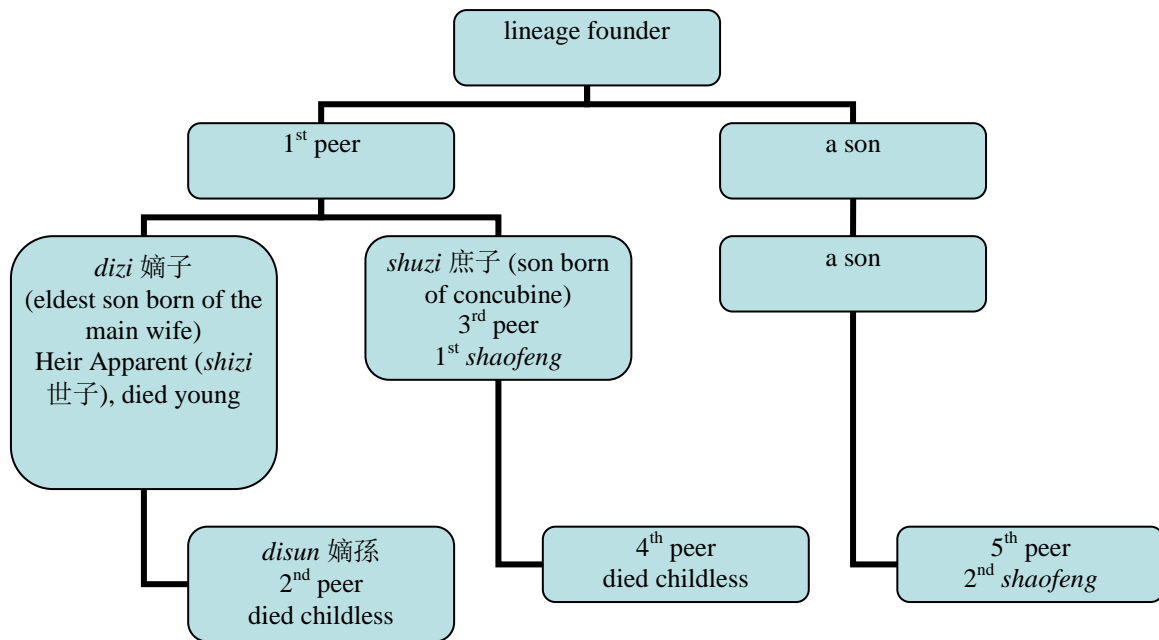
When none of the brothers or nephews was living then the the main primogenitural line became extinct and the noble lineage was discontinued (*guojue* 國絕). Strictly speaking, such a fief should be abolished (*guochu* 國除) for it should have been descendants in unbroken primogenitural line who should have offered sacrifices to their ancestors who had won the noble dignity in the first place. But unlike some of the preceding dynasties (especially Eastern Han)⁴⁰⁷ the Western Jin again resorted to an ancient system of the Zhou feudatories and introduced a practice of providing an alternative heir who would continue the broken line and succeed to the extinct dignity.

Tab. 19: Primogenitural Succession



⁴⁰⁷ For the succession of the noble lineages of the Eastern Han see Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 143.

Tab. 20: Alternative Succession (*shaofeng* 紹封)



The alternative succession (*shaofeng* 紹封 or *shaofeng jijue* 紹封繼絕) was kind of intra-family adoption which transcended the distinction between offspring born of the main wife and a concubine as well as seniority of the different branches of the family. Should the main primogenitural line fail to prove viable the noble dignity could be inherited by the eldest surviving son born of concubine (*shuzi* 庶子) or his eldest son (*shusun* 庶孫) in case he was no longer alive. If the title holder is left with no progeny at all a younger member of the clan could be selected, a son or grandson of his brother or even more distant descendant of the previous title holders, and adopted as an heir of a given peer or lord (see Table 20). This formal adoption could have taken place even years after the death of the last title holder and given the sheer size of the medieval aristocratic families the alternative heirs were almost always available. Thus the extinction of a noble lineage was rather temporary and as long as the dynasty lasted emperor could choose to revive it whenever he liked appointing alternative heir even decades after the lineage became officially extinct.

The example of change of the ideal pattern of primogenitural succession would be the Marquisate of Liling 醴陵 in case of which early death of the heir necessitated succession from brother to brother. Even though it is a noble dignity bestowed by the southern state of

Wu, the family of Gu Yong 顧雍 belonged to the locally powerful families entrenched south of the Yangzi and was to play an important role in the politics of the Western and Eastern Jin with his grandson Gu Rong 顧榮 even attaining the rank of a duke:

“[Gu Yong’s] eldest son [Gu] Shao died young. And as his second son [Gu] Yu was gravely ill [Yong’s] youngest son [Gu] Ji succeeded [to the dignity of Marquis of Liling]. He died without progeny and the [noble lineage] got interrupted. In the first year of the Yong’an Era (258 AD) [Sun Xiu] issued the following edict: “The late Counselor-in-chief (*chengxiang* 丞相) [Gu] Yong was highly virtuous and principled, loyal and wise. He did serve the state with all propriety and yet, the lordly lineage of his had declined and died out and We are extremely sorry for it. Let Gu Yong’s younger son [Gu] Yu succeed the noble dignity and become Marquis of Liling in order to extol the old achievements [of his father’s].”⁴⁰⁸

It seems that all three brothers were sons of the main wife. The eldest Gu Shao 顧邵 died young without siring a son. Next in line would be the second born Gu Yu 顧裕 but because he was dangerously ill there were serious doubts as to whether he would be able to continue the family line and ensure future existence of the noble dignity. Therefore his claim to the title was disregarded to the benefit of the youngest brother Gu Ji 顧濟 who succeeded their father as the second Marquis of Liling. Survival of the noble dignity was obviously of utmost importance as it was connected with regular offering of sacrifices to the lineage founder which at the same time served as a ritual reminder of obligations to the dynasty. The eternal perpetuation of the bond of loyalty which had merited the original enfeoffment was from the ritual point of view the *raison d’être* of the hereditary noble dignities. Therefore the heirs mentally or physically impaired were generally disqualified from the succession as they were conceived of as weak links in the chain of succession and threats to the survival of the noble lineage. Sometimes these disinherited heirs were granted alternative enfeoffments (*biefeng* 別封) so as to make up for their loss, but these were generally much lower than the original dignity (see Pei Wei’s succession to the dukedom of Julu below). That is why the elder Gu Yu was skipped over. He was simply not expected to live long enough to establish family of his own. It is rather nice irony that it was his younger brother Gu Ji who in the end died childless with title reverting back to Gu Yu and his descendants who were to thrive during the Jin.

⁴⁰⁸ *Sanguozhi* juan 52, *Gu Yong zhuan*, p. 907.

The similar reasons probably lead to change of the usual succession pattern in case of fairly low lordship of Anling 安陵, originally a Wei dignity which was retained even after the dynastic change and was inherited within the illustrious Yingchuan Xun family:

“At the beginning of the Taishi Era (266-274 AD) the imperial edict ordered [Xun] Song to succeed to his father’s title [of township lord of Anling] instead of his elder brother and he was assigned the position of Instructor (*wenxue* 文學) to [Sima] Yun Prince of Puyang, [a son of Wudi’s].”⁴⁰⁹

It seems that the most usual deviation of the established pattern of the father-to-son succession still within the primogenitural line of descent was a nephew succeeding his uncle who either did not have any sons of his own or his male offspring was born of a concubine. As the nephew was himself a son of younger primogenitural son his claim to succession was stronger having precedence even over sons of the title holder born out of the wedlock. The fact that these were his own flesh and blood and therefore much closer to the title holder than his nephew was from the ritual point of view irrelevant. If we are to stay with the Yingchuan Xun family, the inheritance of the ducal dignity of Jibei 濟北 offers a nice example of a marquis being succeeded by his nephew because his own son(s) were presumably born of concubine:

“When the emperor (Wudi) ascended the royal throne of the Jin Kingdom he made [Xun] Xu his Palace Attendant (*shizhong* 侍中) and had him enfeoffed as Viscount of Anyang with apanage of one thousand households. After Wudi received the abdication [of the Wei Xun Xu’s enfeoffment] was changed [and he became] commandery duke of Jibei. However, because Yang Hu had declined [the similar honor], he firmly refused [the dukedom] and became a marquis instead ... He died in the tenth year of the Taikang Era (289 AD) ... leaving behind ten sons ... [One of them, Xun] Ji succeeded [to the peerage] and he attained position of Defender-in-chief (*taiwei* 太尉). When he died, he was granted posthumous name of Jian and his son [Xun] Jun succeeded. When Jun died, he was granted posthumous name of Lie. As he did not have any sons born of his main wife the [peerage] was inherited by a son of his younger brother, [Xun] Zhi.”⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁹ *Jinshu* juan 75, *Xun Song zhuan*, p. 1976.

⁴¹⁰ *Jinshu* juan 39, *Xun Xu zhuan*, pp. 1153, 1157.

The dukedom of Jibei might have been rather a special case. Usually, the uncle-to-nephew succession was mainly adopted either when the current title holder died sonless or during his lifetime when there was no hope of siring a son of his own:⁴¹¹

“[Zheng] Chong [Duke of Shouguang] did not have son [of his own]. Therefore, his nephew [Zheng] Hui became his heir [and succeeded to the ducal title]. He eventually attained the office of Princely Administrator (*neishi* 内史) of Pingyuan. When he died his son [Zheng] Jian succeeded [to the title].”⁴¹²

“[Liu] Song had no son of his own so he had adopted his nephew, Liu Yong, son of his younger brother Liu He, but he died prematurely. Thus Liu Yan, a son of Yong’s younger brother Liu Xu became his adopted grandson and [later] inherited the noble title. In the first year of the Yongkang Era (300 AD) the imperial edict decreed that Liu Song should be posthumously enfeoffed as prefecture lord of Liangzou with the apanage of one thousand five hundred households for his merit of execution of Jia Mi and also because he supervised various affairs of the government.”⁴¹³

None of the cases mentioned above would be considered an alternative succession (*shaofeng*). The changes of the heir were made within the limits of primogenitural succession with all brothers presumably being sons of the main wife (*dizi*). But the sources also offer quite a few instances of various types of alternative succession to noble dignities of both peerage and lordship ranks. Interesting example would be Wang Jun’s 王浚 succession to the peerage dignity of Duke of Boling 博陵公:

“[Wang Jun’s] mother was a woman of the Zhao clan. She was daughter of a good family but she was poor and of low standing. She entered [Wang] Shen’s house and there she gave birth to [Wang] Jun. Shen used to hold them in contempt. [But] when Jun was fifteen years old [Wang] Shen passed away. As he did not have any son [born of his main wife] the relatives

⁴¹¹ Other examples of uncle-to-nephew succession would be Li Yin 李胤 Marquis of Guanglu 廣陸侯 and Fu Xuan 傅宣 Duke of Lingzhou 靈州公. See *Jinshu* juan 44, *Li Yin zhuan*, p. 1254 and juan 47, *Fu Xuan zhuan*, p. 1333 respectively.

⁴¹² *Jinshu* juan 33, *Zheng Chong zhuan*, p. 993; Zheng Hui is named as the Heir Apparent (*shizi* 世子) of Shouguang by an imperial edict issued during Zheng Chong’s life. See *Ibid*.

⁴¹³ *Jinshu* juan 46, *Liu Song zhuan*, p. 1308.

together raised Jun to be the heir and he was appointed Commandant-escort (*fuma duwei* 駙馬都尉).”⁴¹⁴

Wang Shen 王沈, the founder of the ducal lineage was officially married to a lady of the Xun 荀氏 family and Wang Jun’s mother was clearly just a concubine. Wang Shen therefore never considered him as his heir and held him in contempt. His standing changed dramatically after Wang Shen’s death. For an unknown reason Wang Jun was chosen by his relatives to succeed to the peerage and with the approval of the court was duly installed as the second Duke of Boling. Wang Jun might have impressed his relatives by his abilities which promised to be sufficient guarantee of the safe future of the noble lineage or there simply might have been no better candidate closer in blood to Wang Shen for we know that Wang Shen was orphaned quite early and was brought up in the family of his uncle. Whatever the reason the rules of primogenitural succession were circumvented and Wang Jun was established as an alternative heir. But the interesting thing is that it was clearly the family who decided the case and nominated an heir with the court subsequently confirming their choice.⁴¹⁵ That was not always the case and the emperor often personally intervened in settling succession of the peerage dignities in danger of extinction:

“[Because Yang Hu died without siring a son] Emperor [Wudi] made [Yang] Ji, a son of Hu’s elder brother an heir. But Yang Ji [argued] that as his [own] father had already died, he cannot become an heir of someone else. Then the emperor ordered Ji’s younger brother [Yang] Yi to become the heir of Yang Hu but he did not heed the imperial edict either. The emperor was enraged and had them both detained and stripped of their offices. In the second year of the Taikang Era (281 AD) Yang Pian, younger brother of Yi, became Marquis of Juping to provide for [the offerings] as Yang Hu’s heir. He behaved honestly and with utmost circumspection in all his offices. Once, his own cow calved in the official quarters. When he was promoted [to different office] he left [the calf there as a property of the state]. He eventually attained position of Cavalier Attendant-in-ordinary (*sanji changshi* 散騎常侍) and died young. In the Taiyuan Era (376-396 AD) of Emperor Xiaowudi [certain] Yang Faxing, a son of a great-great-grandson of Hu’s elder brother was enfeoffed as Marquis of Juping with apanage of five thousand

⁴¹⁴ *Jinshu* juan 39, *Wang Jun zhuan*, p. 1146.

⁴¹⁵ Yang Guanghui shows that during the southern regimes the alternative succession ceased to be automatic and required special permission of the court. See Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 146.

households. [Later] he was executed as a partisan of [the usurper] Huan Xuan and the fief was forfeited.”⁴¹⁶

Yang Hu 羊祜 was one of the most trusted ministers of Emperor Wudi who provided invaluable advice during the preparation of the 280 AD campaign which eventually brought the rival state of Wu to submission. Wudi evidently felt great concern for his deceased servant and made it his personal quest to secure proper heir and successor to his dignity who would continue in offering the sacrifices to Yang Hu. It is hard to understand what made Yang Hu's nephews defy the imperial order but I would venture to say that the main problem of the suggested adoption was that their father, brother to Yang Hu, had died before these events. That means that the eldest nephew had already become his heir and his shifting to Yang Hu's line would leave his father bereft of the proper sacrifices by his lineal descendants, a thought of which must have been horrifying for a filial son. His younger brother perhaps tried to avoid the appointment out of fear that by accepting the noble dignity he would have deprived his elder brother of something which was rightfully his by birth. It is quite interesting to note that the fear of being unfilial was stronger than the allure of a marquisate with all its benefits and privileges.

Later succession of the marquisate of Juping 鉅平 offers an interesting glimpse at another usage of the alternative succession (*shaofeng*) which enabled the court to revive a noble lineage which became extinct in its direct line of descent by appointing an alternative heir from among the members of wider family to continue the sacrifices offered to the lineage founder. This was called “picking up the threads of a broken lineage” (*jijue* 繼絕) and could have taken place decades after the main line had died out for unless the dignity had been officially abolished sometime in the past it could have been revived at any given time. This became important especially after the fall of the Western Jin. Many a noble lord lost his life in the incessant fighting of the first decades of the 4th century and just a few noble lineages managed to survive and made it to the safety of the Jiangnan Region. The southern court soon established its own titled nobility reflecting the current services rendered to the Eastern Jin claimant of the throne but some of the ancient Western Jin lineages were eventually revived later during the dynasty.

Juping happens to be one of the peerages revived around year 376 AD by the order of Emperor Xiaowudi. It seems that the collective resurrection of ancient lineages was instigated

⁴¹⁶ *Jinshu* juan 34, *Yang Hu zhuan*, p. 1024.

by Xie An 謝安 following a series of natural calamities which struck the core area of Jiangnan. Thus this endeavor should probably be seen as a ritual measure restoring the order of the imperial rule. As the Eastern Jin derived their legitimacy from their northern predecessor, they could not afford to be indifferent to the fate of the founding meritorious ministers of the Western Jin. To maintain uninterrupted sacrifices to the *gongchen* became an important duty of the rightful sovereign and current absence of the official heirs to the original *gongchen* dignities naturally undermined the legitimacy of the imperial authority. By reviving several *gongchen* noble lineages through usage of alternative succession Xie An and Emperor Wudi tried to rectify the omission for which the southern court had incurred displeasure of Heaven and at the same time strengthened the legitimacy of the Eastern Jin by claiming direct connection with the last rightful imperial regime ruling the whole of China.

The dukedom of Linhuai 臨淮 awarded first to Xun Yi 荀顗 was another of the peerages resurrected by Xiaowudi in 376 AD but this case the alternative succession was practiced more than once as the first attempt to revive the lineage immediately after the restoration ended in failure:

“At the beginning of the Xianxi Era (264-265 AD) [Xun Yi] was enfeoffed as Marquis of Linhuai. When Wudi ascended the throne he was promoted in rank to a duke with apanage of one thousand eight hundred households ... [Xun] Yi did not have son of his own and therefore a grandson of one of his brothers [Xun] Hui succeeded [to the peerage]. At the beginning of the restoration great-great-grandson of Yi’s elder brother [Xun] Xu was [officially] made Yi’s heir and was enfeoffed as Duke of Linhuai. But when Xu died, the lineage was again discontinued. The Emperor Xiaowudi enfeoffed Xu’s son [Xun] Heng as an adoptive heir to Yi. When [Xun] Heng died, his son [Xun] Longfu succeeded to the title. The fief was abolished when the Liu Song Dynasty received the abdication of the Jin.”⁴¹⁷

Interesting details about the first attempt to revive the Dukedom of Linhuai are given in the biography of Xun Yi’s great-nephew once removed, Xun Song 荀崧, who was himself progenitor of a noble lineage of the dukes of Quling 曲陵:

“When Yuandi ascended the throne [Xun Song Duke of Quling] was summoned and appointed Vice Director of the Department of State Affairs (*shangshu puye* 尚書僕射). Then together with Diao Xie they were to fix the rites and ceremonies of the dynastic restoration. His

⁴¹⁷ *Jinshu* juan 39, *Xun Yi zhuan*, pp. 1151-1152.

cousin [Xu] Kui had died young [leaving behind] two sons, [Xun] Xu and [Xun] Xin both only few years old. [Xun] Song had taken them into his house and made them dwell with his family, being as kind to them as if they were his own sons. The noble line of Defender-in-chief (*taiwei* 太尉) Duke of Linhuai Xun Yi died out and the court considered [Xun] Song to be close [in blood to him] and wanted one of Song's sons to succeed the peerage. [Xun] Song was grieved to see [his nephew Xun] Xu orphaned and destitute and therefore declined the enfeoffment and had it bestowed upon Xu. The opinion of the time commended him for that."⁴¹⁸

It is clear that in case of alternative succession, especially when the main line of descent became extinct and the dignity was long left vacant, the final choice of a successor was influenced by many factors with proximity of the line of descent being just one of them. Despite being the closest surviving relative of the last Duke of Linhuai Xun Song renounced his right to the title in order to provide for orphaned sons of his cousin. His own family line was secure with the eldest son having prospect of succeeding to the dignity of Quling and other sons enjoying the highest possible privileges as sons of a duke. Accepting another ducal title for a younger son would not change the standing of the lineage as a whole. On the other hand, by refusing the honor and redirecting it to orphaned nephew whose social standing and chance of future official career was seriously impaired by early demise of his father Xun Song lived up to the Confucian ideal and gained moral credit through fulfilling his duty to protect the family and share the benefits with the orphaned and the poor relatives. At the same time he strengthened the position of the family as a whole for the chances of the Yingchuan Xuns to survive as members of the elite suddenly multiplied. Yet another branch of the family which could boast a ducal title meant that more members of the clan became eligible for privileged treatment and especially for privileged entry into bureaucracy.

As we have seen, the alternative succession was kind of adoption which provided a noble lineage on the brink of extinction with an alternative heir, yet it was not possible to adopt just anybody. The adopted successor should have been of the same kin as the title holder, bearer of the same family name. Members of different families, even though closely related through marriage to the noble lineage were generally excluded as the noble dignities could traditionally be inherited only by heirs male. Daughters of the family and their offspring had no right to succeed even if death of their father eventually meant extinction of the noble lineage due to the lack of suitable heir. Yet there is a unique case of alternative succession in the lineage of dukes of Lu when Emperor Wudi sanctioned highly unorthodox and

⁴¹⁸ *Jinshu* juan 75, *Xun Song zhuan*, p. 1976.

controversial succession of a *waisun* 外孫, grandson of the title holder born to his daughter married into a different family:

“[Jia] Chong’s wife Lady of Guangcheng Guo Huai was of a very jealous nature. First, when their son Limin was three years old his wet nurse was once holding him in her arms, leaning against the door when Limin saw his father enter and laughed with joy. Jia Chong approached [them] and fondled him. Guo Huai saw it from a distance and thought that Ji Chong was actually having an affair with the wet nurse and had her whipped to death at once. Limin longed and yearned for her [so much] that he fell ill and died. Later she gave birth to another boy but after some time it happened that Chong stroke his head while he was in his wet nurse’s arms and Lady Guo again started to suspect the wet nurse and had her killed. The son again died of longing after her. Thus Jia Chong was left without an heir [of his flesh and blood]. When he died [Lady Guo] Huai made their grandson Han Mi [an adoptive] son of Limin to provide for [the sacrifices] as Jia Chong’s heir. Chamberlain for Attendants (*langzhongling* 郎中令) Han Xian and Commandant-in-ordinary (*zhongwei* 中尉) Cao Zhen remonstrated with Lady Guo Huai: “According to the Rites, when there is no progeny in the main line than younger sons of the cadet branches [of the family are adopted as] heirs. There is no mention of a member of a different family ever becoming an heir. Don’t let the late duke be ashamed and embarrassed in the netherworld and dutiful and honest historians record [such a] transgression [against the rites]. Wouldn’t it be distressing?!” Lady Guo Huai did not follow their advice. [Han] Xian and other petitioned the throne asking for a change of successor but the whole matter was laid aside. Lady Guo Huai petitioned the emperor explaining that this was [Jia] Chong’s dying wish. The emperor thereupon issued the following edict: “The Great Steward (*taizai* 太宰) Duke of Lu Jia Chong honored virtue and gained great merit, having unceasingly toiled to make the establishing of the mandate [possible]. He turned his back to this world and died. I do grieve whenever [I think about it]. Moreover, his offspring died [and his line] ended [with him] with no heir having been appointed as yet. In the ancient times when there was no heir in one of the states they took a younger member of a cadet branch descended from the founder of the fief to continue the family line. Yet nowadays, such a fief is abolished. [When we think] about Duke of Zhou under the Zhou or Xiao He under the Han, one has appointed his heir in advance, the other had his main wife enfeoffed. Thus honoring the outstanding achievements of illustrious men transcends the prevalent rules. The Great Steward had earlier chosen his daughter’s son Han Mi to become the successor to his heir Limin. When I think over [this affair and] consider [all the facts] then I come to a decision that one’s grandson, albeit born of a daughter, is the closest in flesh and blood and to bestow one’s kindness and tender feelings on him [is only natural], conforming to people’s hearts. Let [Han] Mi be appointed the Heir to Duke of Lu (*shisun* 世孫)

in order to succeed to the dukedom. As there is no achievement like the Grand Steward's neither [such a misfortune] of a founding peer being left with no heir like the Grand Steward's. There is also no better [candidate] like the one the Grand Steward had himself already chosen. No other can measure up to [Han Mi in this respect.]”⁴¹⁹

While she may have been personally responsible for the unfortunate death of her sons and lack of an heir to her husband's peerage Lady Guo Huai 郭槐 tried hard to secure the title for direct descendants of Jia Chong. Despite the opposition of the ducal administration of Lu she had installed Han Mi 韓謚, a son of her younger daughter, as an heir of her dead son. She appealed to the emperor and secured his approval. It is clear that Wudi's decision was unprecedented and the inter-family succession remained exceptional even in context of subsequent development of the enfeoffment system. Even though the emperor in his edict points to the ancient tradition of alternative succession and argues that it should be revived his argumentation for a *waisun* inheriting from his grandfather totally lacks support in tradition. In fact, his approval of the suggested succession went against the basic principles of the patrilineal clan structure of the Chinese families and as such must have caused quite an outcry. Nevertheless, Wudi's decision prevailed and Han Mi was adopted into the family becoming Jia Mi 賈謚 and eventually succeeding to the peerage as second Duke of Lu. (He was the infamous cousin of Empress Jia whose extermination later became cause for creation of couple of new noble lineages following the coup of 300 AD)

Wudi must have been aware of the unorthodox nature of this succession, yet there were compelling reasons for permitting it. First of all, Jia Chong was the most prominent of his meritorious ministers and the Simas literally owed him their throne. By obliging his widow and granting his alleged dying wish Wudi was proving his gratitude for his past services fulfilling his moral obligations to a meritorious minister. Meaning of this concession could have not been lost on other *gongchen* families either. His obliging attitude must have assured them of emperor's good will and strengthened the bonds of loyalty of these influential families to the dynasty. On the other hand Jia Chong was closely related to the imperial family as his elder daughter was married to the crown prince and future Emperor Huidi. Jia Mi was in fact Huidi's nephew, his mother and Empress Jia being full sisters. Thus the Jias were without doubt seen as future support of the throne and Wudi would not permit their

⁴¹⁹ *Jinshu* juan 40, *Jia Chong zhuan*, pp. 1170-1171.

position to be weakened by transfer of the peerage dignity to some other branch of the family which would have happened if the rules of the *shaofeng* had been observed.

Preferential treatment of the *gongchen* noble lineages and the effort to ensure their survival through alternative succession, however unorthodox, was not limited only to the Western Jin period. We have seen that even the Eastern Jin emperors, especially Yuandi and Xiaowudi showed great concern for the well-being of the descendants of the founding ministers of the dynasty and repeatedly tried to revive those which became extinct or temporarily vacant through appointing distant clansmen as alternative heirs (*jijue*). Continuation of these lineages was apparently of great symbolic importance as it touched upon the question of legitimacy of the restored court as the successor to the northern regime and the legitimacy of the southern emperors themselves as rightful and righteous sovereigns carefully judging the merits and faults of their subjects. Even as late as the beginning of the 5th century, only couple of years before the end of the Jin Dynasty, an official petitioned the court asking to revive lineage of Yang Hu Marquis of Juping:

“In the first year of the Taiyuan Era (376 AD) of Emperor Xiaowudi [Yang] Faxing, son of great-great-grandson of [Yang] Hu’s elder brother was enfeoffed as marquis of Juping with an apnage of five thousand households. [Later] he was executed as one of the members of Huan Xuan’s faction and the fief was abolished. Director of section for sacrifices under the department of state affairs (*shangshu cibulang* 尚書祠部郎) Xun Bozi petitioned the throne in which he contested [this decision]: “Your subject has heard that when Jiu Yao lost an heir (line of his descendant came to an end), Zang Wen deeply sighed [feeling regret] and when Boshi’s apnage city was taken from him, Guan Zhong was praised for his humanity. When the merit is high, then indeed it may not perish for one hundred generations, [but] excessive reward cannot [secure] respect for the court [and dynasty]. The late Grand Mentor (*taifu* 太傅) Marquis of Juping Yang Hu possessed bright virtue and was worthy and wise. He was truly one of the paragons of state. He rendered meritorious service [to the dynasty] in assisting [the transfer of the] heavenly mandate and completed his achievements with subjugation of Wu. And yet, later line of his descendants was discontinued and there was no one who would follow up with offering sacrifices [to him]. Due to the great achievement of establishing the dynasty the Han always immediately restored Xiao He’s line once it got interrupted. In my ignorance I would say that we should deal with the fief of Juping on the same terms as [the Han dealt with] the fief of Zan [awarded to Xiao He]. The late Defender-in-chief (*taiwei* 太尉) [Chen] Zhun, Duke of Guangling, supported the cabal of the arch-villain [Sima] Lun [prince of Zhao]. When disaster struck [the family of Sima Yun, prince of] Huainan, he profited from this act of rebellion and

unlawfully [got the chance] to offer sacrifices to ancestors [as a lord] of large domain. It happened that the western court lost discernment and its decrees and punishments [were lacking good sense]. Thus the [possession of the fief] was not revoked even after the restoration. But now that the kingly way was reformed, is it permissible not to judge between good and bad? Therefore I say that the fief of Guangling should be abolished. The original noble title of the late Grand Guardian (*taibao* 太保) Wei Guan was prefecture duke of Ziyang. Then he had been atrociously slain and [his] reed-wrapped soil (the fief) was posthumously promoted, first to that of Lanling only to be changed later to Jiangxia. But there were many celebrated ministers at the imperial court who suffered premature death. Wei Guan's achievements and virtue were not exceptional, yet he was singled out for exceptional reward. I say that his commandery fief ought to be abolished and [his descendants] should revert to the apanage of Ziyang. [Only] then shall we maintain the order of giving and taking away and differentiate between good and bad." In the end the memorandum was put aside and went without any response."⁴²⁰

Yang Faxing 羊法興, the last holder of the marquisate of Juping, imprudently joined the ranks of ambitious usurper Huan Xuan 桓玄 who had deposed the emperor and in years 403-404 AD ruled as an independent sovereign of Chu 楚. For this treason Yang Faxing suffered death and his marquisate was abolished. It was a harsh punishment as it involved not only the culprit but also other members of the family including deceased ancestors who were thus forever deprived of their sacrificial offerings. Whereas the individual title holders may have personally forfeited their noble dignity, the dignity *per se* usually did not cease to exist and only went into abeyance to be resurrected in the future. Therefore, the extinction of a dignity (*guojue* 國絕) was theoretically speaking only temporary for the dignity could have been revived through continuation of an interrupted noble lineage (*jijue* 繼絕) whenever there was an opportune time. However, this did not apply in case the dignity was outright abolished (*guochu* 國除) which is what happened to the marquisate of Juping. Once the peerage was abolished the potential right to succeed ceased to exist and the dignity could not be revived unless it was created anew. But that would naturally require new meritorious achievement in the service of the state justifying creation of a new dignity.

Xun Bozi 荀伯子 did not try to exonerate Yang Faxing for his guilt was plain enough and punishment well deserved. The source for Xun's concern was finality and irreversibility of the abolition of the fief which would affect even the illustrious ancestors of the lineage for it would make future revival through an alternative heir impossible. He argues that the Han

⁴²⁰ *Jinshu* juan 34, *Yang Hu zhuan*, p. 1024.

precedent should be followed and the noble lineage of Yang Hu preserved. Apparently the original achievement of the lineage founder was far more important than possible crimes of his descendants and officially appointed successors. Because the noble dignity was seen as the means how to ensure continuous sacrifices to the progenitor of the lineage, the successive holders were in fact mere stewards temporarily charged with administering the noble dignity and catering to the ritual needs of the deceased founder. The importance of this task transcended the deeds of individual title holders, either good or bad, which were inconsequential in comparison to the great achievement of the meritorious minister.

It is interesting that Xun Bozi's effort to revive the lineage of Juping is paired with suggestion of revision of other Western Jin *gongchen* dignities which survived the restoration. Xun considers the political rehabilitation of Chen Zhun 陳准 and Wei Guan as undeserved, being a product of period of heightened political struggle during which the court "lost discernment." Xun Bozi appeals to the emperor as the highest authority judging the merits and demerits of each subject and asks for revision of the incorrect decisions of the past which would restore the justice and proper order of things.

The symbolic and ritual importance of the noble dignities was undeniable and explains the unceasing effort on the part of the government to preserve the continuous line of succession through appointment of alternative heirs (*shaofeng jijue*). But we should not forget other, perhaps more practical factors which influenced rather liberal policy of the state towards titled nobility. Granting the privilege of *shaofeng* which considerably prolonged the life of noble lineages and ensured privileged social standing for families of their holders should be seen as a part of preferential treatment of the influential court families whose loyalty was crucial for establishing the dynasty. Without their support the Simas would not have been able to accomplish the dynastic transition and survival of the new dynasty was to certain degree dependent on them. Trying to secure their allegiance and further support Wudi had them generously rewarded for their pains. Rejection of the purely primogenitural succession and its replacement with possibility of unlimited alternative succession was clearly a concession which was in the best interest of the court families. Whereas originally the fief would be abolished once the direct line of descent becomes extinct the right to adopt a successor from a cadet branch gave the family unique opportunity to retain noble dignity and

corresponding privileges which were crucial for maintaining their social preeminence, legalizing the land holding of the family and opening way to official career.⁴²¹

Special Grace Policy

The practice of special grace (*tui'en* 推恩) was another policy highly favorable to the families of titled nobility. It was originally connected with the process of inheritance of princely dignities and high peerages. The *tui'en* practice originated during the reign of Emperor Wudi of the Han Dynasty as one of the measures taken by the central government in order to curb independence and excessive power of the princes of the blood and minimize the danger of regional uprising led by a member of the imperial clan. Whenever a prince died his fief was to be divided between all his sons with the eldest inheriting the princely rank and title and the rest being created marquises in their own right by the act of special grace. Thus while the independent power of the princes diminished as their economic base shrank with every new incumbent change, their social preeminence remained untouched. An elaborate system of devolving privileges for the heirs of deceased title holder emerged which was later applied to non-royal peerages as well.

Certain shift in nature of the *tui'en* practice occurred after the fall of the Han Dynasty. While the inheritance of princely dignities was still generally guided by the same principle with the princely fief being divided among sons of the dead prince, the rising importance of influential court families resulted in introduction of radical changes to the system of non-royal titled nobility. First of all, the special grace bestowals ceased to be limited to settling of inheritance after the death of title holders. Younger members of the families, either sons or younger brothers of the title holder, received the special grace and were granted their own titles already during the lifetime of their father or elder brother. As a noble title became a highly coveted guarantee of privileged social standing important court families tried to secure as many noble dignities as possible in order to strengthen their position in society and increase their chances of survival as a member of the elite.⁴²²

The Jin Dynasty more or less adopted the Wei practice but introduced some important changes. The imperial princes continued to share the inherited fief with their younger brothers

⁴²¹ For the preferential treatment of the *gongchen* families and remarkable stability of the Jin noble lineages see Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 144-145.

⁴²² For the development of the special grace see Yang Guanghui (2004): pp. 148-154; for the situation under the Cao Wei see especially pages 148-149.

with one of them usually being granted a peerage of his own by the act of special grace.⁴²³ In case of non-royal peerages the tradition of dividing the fief following the death of its holder was abolished altogether. The court might have decided to bestow additional titles on peer's younger sons or brothers during his lifetime. Whereas during the Wei Dynasty the dignities bestowed as a special grace were still derived from the original dignity with their apanage having been deducted from it, under the Western Jin the special grace dignities were true additional creations totally independent of the parent peerage either in terms of territory or apanage.⁴²⁴ Unlike the previous use of special grace privilege there were probably no regular bestowals under the Western Jin which would be connected to any special occasion, with the exception of an edict issued shortly after the establishment of the dynasty in 266/267 AD:

“In the second year of the Taishi Era (266/267 AD) in the second month the emperor issued the following edict: “The enfeoffments of the five grades (peerages) originally recorded the old merits (i.e. merits before the establishing of the Jin dynasty). Let the enfeoffment of those who were originally prefecture marquises be handed down to their second-born sons who should become village lords (*tinghou*). [In case of] township marquises, [let their second-born sons become] lords of the royal domain (*guanneihou*). [In case of] village marquises, [let their second-born sons become] lords inside the passes (*guanzhonghou*). All these should enjoy one tenth of [revenue produced] by households allotted to the original apanage.”⁴²⁵

The old merits Wudi is referring to were of course the achievements of the new Jin titled nobility which they gained by loyal service and unswerving support of the Simas before the establishment of the dynasty. Many of them were originally rewarded with Wei noble titles but these were later abolished and supplanted by new peerages introduced in 264 AD which were granted in reward for the help with bringing about the dynastic transition. The old achievements, however, should not be forgotten for the new ones. Even though the original titles were part of the Wei system they were nevertheless bestowed by the Sima regents and therefore should be respected and revived. Wudi thus symbolically restored original Wei dignities of the current Jin peers and had them granted by the act of special grace to their younger sons or brothers as an eternal reminder of their invaluable services. However, Wudi's edict did not exactly recreate the original Wei dignities. He merely granted brand new Jin

⁴²³ For special grace creations of younger members of princely lineages see Hrubý, Jakub (2007): pp. 85-89; and Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 151; for an edict establishing the elaborate rules for bestowal of peerage dignities on younger sons of imperial princes see Chapter II of this thesis.

⁴²⁴ Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 149.

⁴²⁵ *Jinshu* juan 3, *Wudi benji*, p. 53.

titles which were nevertheless lower both in rank and apanage than their Wei counterparts. After all, granting a title which was lower in rank than the original dignity was a characteristic feature of the special grace since the very beginning.

Transformation of a dignity which the family used to hold in the past into a new dignity of considerably lower rank bestowed upon one of its junior members was only one of the possible ways in which the special grace bestowals could be realized. Sometimes the noble title holders were not granted new dignities but were merely promoted in rank. Unlike new enfeoffment, promotion did not leave the family with a vacant dignity which could have been bestowed on its younger member. However, under certain circumstances promotion could secure conferment of an additional title provided for from the difference of the apanage quotas of the original dignity and the new dignity after promotion. If an individual was raised from a lordship to a peerage, the number of households forming his apanage had to be adjusted as well. In other words, his original apanage had to be reduced in number of households as the quotas prescribed for the peerages were much lower than the allowances for the lordship dignities. The remaining apanage households which accounted for the difference between peerage quotas and the apanage of the original lordship could have been bestowed by special grace on a junior member of the family as a new lordship so as to assure that the resources once given to the family would remain under its control:

“[Wei Guan] succeeded to his father’s title of township marquis of Wen ... [When the Zhong Hui’s uprising in Shu] was quelled the court wanted to enfeoff [Wei] Guan. But Wei Guan considered the conquest of Shu to be achieved by efforts of all the commanders and [argued that] both domineering generals [Deng Ai and Zhong Hui] invited their end and perished [without his endeavor]. Even though he might have had contributed by his wisdom and intelligence he did not gain merit by capturing enemy standard (i.e. vanquish the enemies) and therefore he firmly declined and did not accept the honor. [Despite his protests he] was appointed Commander-in-chief supervising all military affairs of Guanzhong, Commissioned with Extraordinary Powers (*shichijie* 使持節) and General Defending the West (*zhenxi jiangjun* 鎮西將軍). Soon he was promoted to Commander-in-chief supervising all military affairs of Xuzhou and General Defending the East (*zhendong jiangjun* 鎮東將軍). His enfeoffment was enlarged to that of a Marquis of Ziyang. The remaining fief (i.e. apanage) was bestowed on his younger brother [Wei] Shi [who became] village marquis of Kaiyang.”⁴²⁶

⁴²⁶ *Jinshu* juan 36, *Wei Guan zhuan*, p. 1057.

It is not clear whether Wei Guan's new title was a prefecture lordship or a peerage. Nevertheless, his younger brother was granted a part of the apanage (here referred to as "remaining fief" *yujue* 餘爵) bestowed at some point upon his brother together with a *liehou* dignity.⁴²⁷

The transformation of the special grace from dignities bestowed from the original fief in a process of property division following the demise of a title holder into creation of new titles with additional apanages must have suited the material interests of the noble families as it certainly enabled them to retain or even extend their economic base. Yang Guanghui maintains that the Jin regime was catering to demands of the influential families and being partially dependent on their support and acknowledgment tried to oblige the titled nobility by granting additional titles and apanages to junior family members.⁴²⁸ However, it is also possible that such a policy was in a long run much more expedient than the traditional dividing of the parental apanage between heirs. The number of noble dignities would otherwise increase at much quicker pace, theoretically doubling in every new generation. It is true that number of apanage households would remain the same, yet the growth of number of noble dignities would mean that an ever increasing number of lineages would have valid claims to hereditary privileges. The factual resources at the disposal of the individual noble lineages would decrease but their influence would be undiminished or even rising. The more of noble dignities were held in the family, the better her position and prospects of its future survival. With every new title a family got more secure and more entrenched within the ranks of elite. What might have been no problem in case of imperial princes, whose social preeminence and influential position were after all considered to be a guarantee of stability of the imperial rule, was totally undesirable in case of non-royal aristocratic houses which could have easily become rivals of the imperial house and challenge its authority. Despite partially obliging the aristocratic houses the Jin managed to safely avert such danger by making "special" grace really special. Occasional act of special grace may have given the families additional source of income as it meant increase in apanage but the number of persons eligible for special hereditary privileges derived from the noble dignities remained more or less under control. The government used special grace as high honor and its willingness to grant such a concession naturally depended on potential merit achieved in the loyal service to the dynasty.

⁴²⁷ For discussion of *yujue* and slightly different interpretation of this special grace bestowal see Yang Guanghui (2004): p 149 and note 29 on page 155.

⁴²⁸ Yang Guanghui (2004): p. 149.

During Wudi's reign the special grace was therefore often bestowed in reward for remarkable service and military achievements mainly in the prolonged struggle with the southern state of Wu as is attested by the case of Chen Qian:

“When Emperor Wudi received the abdication of the Wei Dynasty [Chen Qian] was promoted for his achievement of assisting in founding the dynasty to Chariot and Horse General (*cheji jiangjun* 車騎將軍) and created commandery duke of Gaoping. [Then] he was promoted to Palace Attendant (*shizhong* 侍中), the Great General (*dajiangjun* 大將軍) and [later] was sent as Commander-in-chief to supervise all military affairs of Yangzhou with the rest of the offices remaining the same. He was given the yellow axe. He invested and seized the Wu walled city of Zhili and routed the garrison(s) in Tuzhong. [Chen] Kui, a son of Qian's elder brother was granted the noble dignity of lord inside the passes.”⁴²⁹

The final defeat of the inveterate foe in 280 AD called for rewards which would be adequate to the importance of the moment for the Jin Empire which had just validated its claim to rule all under heaven. The imperial advisors who had devised the strategy of the Jin attack as well as generals responsible for command of the invasion forces during the campaign were generously rewarded by being created prefecture lords. As an additional honor their junior relatives were granted lower lordship dignities bestowed by an act of special grace:

“At the beginning the emperor made secret plans with Yang Hu for attacking the state of Wu, but many of the ministers opined that it is not possible [to fight Wu]. Only [Zhang] Hua approved of this plan. Then Yang Hu fell gravely ill and the emperor sent [Zhang] Hua to visit [Yang] Hu and ask him about the plans of attacking the state of Wu. This is told in the biography of Yang Hu. When the great enterprise was just about to be launched [Zhang] Hua was made Minister of Revenue (*duzhi shangshu* 度支尚書) and was charged to assess possibilities of supply transportation via both the water and land routes and decide the general strategy [of the offensive]. The armies had already moved [into the field] and still have not achieved anything when Jia Chong and others [impeached] Zhang Hua calling for his execution so as to beg forgiveness of all under heaven [for this pointless campaign]. The emperor told them: “This is my own intention. [Zhang] Hua simply shares it, nothing else!” At that time the great ministers all thought that it is not possible to advance rashly but Hua alone persisted arguing that [Wu] would surely be conquered. And when the state of Wu was exterminated the following edict was issued: “Minister and lord of the royal domain Zhang Hua had in the past

⁴²⁹ *Jinshu* juan 35, *Chen Qian zhuan*, p. 1036.

devised the great strategy together with late Grand Mentor (*taifu* 太傅) Yang Hu and now he supervised the military affairs deploying the armies in various quarters, determining the tactics and planning the ultimate victory. Thus he has got [a great] achievement as the mastermind [of the whole campaign]. Let him be promoted in rank to prefecture lord of Guangwu and his apanage should be increased by ten thousand households. Let one of his sons be enfeoffed as a village lord with apanage of one thousand five hundred households. Let him be granted ten thousand bolts of silk.”⁴³⁰

Zhang Hua followed in footsteps of Yang Hu who used to be the main advocate of the aggressive course urging Emperor Wudi to attempt an invasion of Wu. He appears to be one of the masterminds behind the campaign devising plans and being in charge of the logistics. But the same reward was given to other participants of the conquest who had actually taken part in the fighting.⁴³¹

“[Wang Jun] was enfeoffed as prefecture lord of Xiangyang with apanage of ten thousand households. His son [Wang] Yi was enfeoffed as village lord of Yangxiang with apanage of one thousand five hundred households. He was also granted ten thousand bolts of silk, one set of ceremonial garment and three hundred thousand coins together with some food.”⁴³²

“After Sun Hao finally surrendered [Du Yu] regrouped his troops and returned victoriously back [to the capital]. For his merit he was promoted in noble rank to prefecture lord of Dangyang and his apanage was increased to final nine thousand and six hundred households. His son [Du] Dan was enfeoffed as a village lord with apanage of one thousand households. They were granted eight thousand bolts of silk.”⁴³³

Although the bestowals of special grace after the conquest of Wu may resemble previous examples of this practice they are in fact different and constitute a part of a wider policy how to reward the meritorious commanders and strategists without antagonizing the *gongchen*, the highest standing peers of the realm who had helped to establish the dynasty. We have seen that lordship dignity bestowed as special grace upon a junior member of the

⁴³⁰ *Jinshu* juan 36, *Zhang Hua zhuan*, p. 1070.

⁴³¹ Another example of special grace bestowal following the fall of Wu is a village lordship for younger brother of He Jiao 和嶠. See *Jinshu* juan 45, *He Jiao zhuan*, p. 1283.

⁴³² *Jinshu* juan 42, *Wang Jun zhuan*, p. 1215.

⁴³³ *Jinshu* juan 34, *Du Yu zhuan*, p. 1030.

family tended to be of lower rank than the original peerage. Yet, both Zhang Hua and Wang Jun were merely lords of the royal domain before they were created prefecture lords and Du Yu was only slightly better off with a village lordship of Fengle 豐樂亭侯, originally a Wei title which he had inherited from his father. Thus the new noble dignities bestowed upon their sons and brothers by act of special grace were actually either of the same rank as the original dignity (Du Yu) or even higher (Zhang Hua and Wang Jun). I would argue that this rather unorthodox use of *tui'en* attests to a deliberate effort on the part of the emperor to console his commanders and compensate them for the fact that despite their glorious victory they were denied higher peerage dignities for these, according to the rules of the enfeoffment system, remained reserved solely for the great achievements of the *gongchen*. Besides granting victorious commanders large apanages considerably exceeding fiefs of the peers the *tui'en* bestowal of additional lordships upon their junior relatives higher in rank or larger in apanage than the original dignity remained the only way how the emperor could compensate them for the unattainability of peerages.

The meritorious ministers viewed the invasion plans with utmost concern perceiving the attack on Wu as a direct threat to their preeminent position. Their aversion to the planned campaign and their reluctance to participate in it is rather evident in following passage as is the emperor's effort to overcome their objections and mollify their fears, coaxing them into taking part in this "ill-advised and irresponsible adventure":

"When Wang Jun conquered Wuchang, [Jia] Chong sent a messenger with a petition: "It is still not possible to subjugate all of Wu. As it is summer now the [ground around] the Huai and the Jiang Rivers will be damp and sodden and [various] diseases are bound to arise [and spread within the army ranks]. It would be fitting to recall the army and then plan what to do next. Even if Zhang Hua [is executed by] cutting his waist, it won't be enough to beg for forgiveness of all under heaven." Hua devised the strategy how to conquer Wu that is why Jia Chong said these words. Secretariat Supervisor (*zhongshujian* 中書監) Xun Xu submitted a memorandum in the same vein as Jia Chong's but the emperor did not heed them. When Du Yu had heard about Jia Chong's petition he rushed to submit [one of his own] protesting vehemently that the victory is a matter of days. His messenger [had managed to] reach [only] Huanyuan when Sun Hao surrendered. After the conquest of Wu the army was disbanded. The emperor sent Palace Attendant (*shizhong* 侍中) Cheng Xian to reward the army in the field with food and drink. [Jia] Chong was granted eight thousand bolts of silken fabric and his apanage was increased by eight thousand households. Grandsons of his brother, Jia Chang and Jia Gai were enfeoffed as village lord of Xincheng and village lord of Anyang respectively. The

apanages of his younger brother [Jia] Hun, village lord of Yangli, as well as lord of the royal domain Jia Zhong, grandson of another of his brothers, were increased.”⁴³⁴

In order to mollify the *gongchen* and reassure them of their unique standing within the social hierarchy of the empire both Jia Chong and Xun Xu were richly rewarded for the alleged achievements on the fall of Wu. Even though both men vehemently opposed the campaign repeatedly calling for the execution of the “warmongers” they were eventually rewarded in the same way as the generals and officers who had taken part in the actual fighting.⁴³⁵ Thus the special grace was used to maintain balance of power between the founding *gongchen* and new meritorious commanders. However, the *gongchen* retained their predominance as the special grace bestowed upon their families was obviously more generous entailing creation of at least two additional lordships in each case.

Sometimes, special grace could have been bestowed on request of a meritorious minister or commander who himself refused to accept additional honors and enfeoffments and asked for them to be bestowed instead on his younger relatives. An interesting example would be Yang Hu who declined further promotion in rank and apanage and had it bestowed as a special grace on his cousin Cai Xi 蔡襲, grandson of famous Han courtier Cai Yong 蔡邕. Apparently under certain circumstances it was possible to ask for a special grace to be applied to one’s maternal relatives as well, yet such a bestowal remained an exception:

“[Yang] Hu (Marquis of Juping) should have been promoted both in noble rank and territory of his fief for his achievements in chastising the bandits of Wu, but he begged [for this additional enfeoffment] to be bestowed upon [his cousin,] Cai Xi, son of his maternal uncle. The imperial edict granted [Cai] Xi a title of lord of the royal domain with apanage of three hundred households.”⁴³⁶

Curious case of special grace inheritance occurred in the family of Wang Ji 王濟, son and probably an heir presumptive to the Duke of Jingling 京陵公:

“[Wang] Ji was married to an imperial princess [of Changshan]. The princess lost eyesight in both her eyes and she became extremely jealous. In the end she did not bear him a

⁴³⁴ *Jinshu* juan 40, *Jia Chong zhuan*, pp. 1169-1170.

⁴³⁵ Xun Xu’s son and grandson became village lords in their own right. See *Jinshu* juan 39, *Xun Xu zhuan*, p. 1154.

⁴³⁶ *Jinshu* juan 34, *Yang Hu zhuan*, p. 1020.

son and [Wang Ji] had only two sons born of concubines. [Wang] Zhuo ... succeeded to [his grandfather's] Wang Hun's noble dignity [as Duke of Jingling] and he was named Palace Steward (*jishizhong* 給事中). Younger [son Wang] Yu ... succeeded to the dignity of the princess and was enfeoffed as Marquis of Minyang.⁴³⁷

Wang Ji was married to the imperial princess of Changshan 常山公主. As an emperor's daughter she was naturally his main wife but unfortunately she remained childless and Wang Ji's only sons were born by concubines. Wang Ji himself did not live long enough to succeed to his father's ducal peerage, but his eldest son Wang Zhuo 王卓 became an alternative heir (*shaofeng*) of the dukedom and in 297/298 AD became the second Duke of Jingling. The younger son Wang Yu 王聿 became an heir to the princess by an act of special grace and the apanage of Changshan was transformed into a new marquissate of Minyang 敏陽 which was bestowed upon him. As the princess was only a step-mother of newly created marquis such an arrangement of inheritance of her property must have been exceptional mark of favor.

After the death of Emperor Wudi gradual deterioration of the rigid enfeoffment system accompanied by overall inflation of bestowals of the noble dignities led also to further development of the special grace. With various political opponents desperately trying to secure their standing and political legitimacy through generous grants of highest possible peerages the traditional *tui'en* practice offering only lower *liehou* lordships lost its appeal. It was simply not enough to encourage loyalty and entice political support of the leading court families. Therefore it was at least partially replaced by unprecedented bestowal of additional noble dignities (*gengfeng* 更封) by which a title holder was granted another noble title which was subsequently transferred on one of his younger sons. Even though the contemporary sources do not refer to this additional creation as an act of special grace, the two were in fact closely related, with *gengfeng* being under the given circumstances just a logical development of the special grace:

“At that time the imperial mounds were opened [and ransacked]. [Xun] Song sent his Recorder (*zhubu* 主簿) Shi Lan with an armed force to enter Luoyang and repair the imperial mounds. For this merit [Xun Song] was elevated to [the peerage dignity of] prefecture Duke of Wuyang. He was promoted to Commander-in-chief (*dudu* 都督) supervising all military affairs

⁴³⁷ *Jinshu* juan 42, *Wang Ji zhuan*, p. 1207.

of Jingzhou region north of the Yangzi River and he was to defend [the garrison city of] Wan as General Pacifying the South (*pingnan jiangjun* 平南將軍). His enfeoffment was changed to that of Duke of Quling ... At the beginning of the Taining Era (323-325 AD) he was named Concurrent Cavalier Attendant-in-ordinary (*sanji changshi* 散騎常侍) and later he was made Acting Grand Mentor to the Crown Prince (*ling taizi taifu* 領太子太傅). For his achievement in quelling Wang Dun's [rebellion] he was additionally enfeoffed (*gengfeng* 更封) as Count of Pingle.⁴³⁸

Xun Song belonged to one of the leading families of the Western Jin court. He managed to survive the fall of Luoyang and found shelter in the south where he continued to serve Sima Rui (Emperor Yuandi) and his descendants. As he had been created duke already at the end of the Western Jin, comital dignity of Pingle 平樂 must have been kind of additional honor granted in appreciation of his loyal stance during the rebellion of Wang Dun 王敦. Being the highest of the peers, dukes could not be further promoted in rank (*jinjue* 進爵) and the government therefore tried to find other means how to reward them. Bestowal of special grace in form of additional enfeoffment (*gengfeng*) appears to be one of possible ways. Even though formally it was Xun Song himself who had been enfeoffed as Count of Pingle, the title must in fact have been received by one of his younger sons, because it was not possible to hold more than one noble title at the same time. Unfortunately, the sources do not provide enough detail to follow the line of succession of this particular comital dignity. We know that Xun Song's eldest son Xun Rui 荀蕤 inherited his ducal title and this lineage later continued through his own son. Only younger son known to us, Xun Xian 荀羨, married an imperial princess but we have no proof that it was him who had been created Count of Pingle. On the other hand, when he earned merit by defending Qingzhou 青州 against attacks of the Former Yan 前燕 ruler Murong Jun 慕容儁 around 355 AD, he refused to accept suggested enfeoffment. It is possible that he was refusing honor because he had already been a peer in his own right, inheriting the comital dignity formally bestowed upon his father.

While the conclusions regarding the inheritance of additional enfeoffment by younger sons of a title holder may be rather tentative in case of Xun Song, the interpretation of *gengfeng* as kind of special grace is corroborated by the inheritance of titles heaped upon Wang Dao 王導, the founding minister of the Eastern Jin, whose abilities and political acumen were instrumental in restoration of the dynastic power in Jiankang:

⁴³⁸ *Jinshu* juan 75, *Xun Song zhuan*, p. 1976.

“Wang Dao ... was a grandson of Grand Master for Splendid Happiness (*guanglu dafu* 光祿大夫) [Wang] Lan ... At first he had succeeded to his grandfather’s peerage as Viscount of Jiqiu ... for his achievement in chastising Hua Yi he was enfeoffed as Marquis of Wugang ... After [the rebellion of his cousin] Wang Dun was quelled he was promoted in rank to prefecture duke of Shixing with apanage of three thousand households... [Wang] Dao had six sons: Yue, Tian, Qia, Xie, Shao and Hui. [Wang] Yue ... died before his father and was granted posthumous name and title Heir Zhen [of Shixing] ... as he himself had no sons Wang Kun, son of his younger brother [Wang] Tian became his heir and succeeded to [Wang] Dao’s peerage becoming Governor of the Metropolitan Area (*Danyang yin* 丹陽尹). When he died, he was posthumously promoted to Chamberlain for Ceremonials (*taichang* 太常) and his son [Wang] Gu succeeded to the title. He married imperial princess of Poyang and served as Capital Commandant (*zhonglingjun* 中領軍) and Imperial Secretary (*shangshu* 尚書). When he died his son [Wang] Hui succeeded to the title and at the end of the Yixi Era (405-418 AD) he was appointed Roaming and Attacking General (*youji jiangjun* 游擊將軍) ... [Dao’s younger son Tian] succeeded to the noble dignity of Viscount of Jiqiu ... [Wang] Xie ... succeeded to the noble dignity of Marquis of Wugang. He died young without leaving a son [of his own]. Therefore [Wang] Mi, a son of his younger brother [Wang] Shao became his heir [and succeeded to the marquise].”⁴³⁹

Wang Dao had first inherited peerage dignity of his grandfather and in 278/279 AD became Viscount of Jiqiu 即丘子. Later he served princes of Donghai and Langye (i.e. future Yuandi) and sometimes after the fall of Luoyang was promoted to Marquis of Wugang 武岡侯. The final promotion to Duke of Shixing 始興郡公 came after the end of Wang Dun’s rebellion in 324 AD and was tantamount to formal acknowledgment of his exceptional standing as the most important founding minister of the restoration. The preeminent position of Wang Dao and his family in the court society of the Eastern Jin was further emphasized by the fact that his original noble dignities did not cease to exist with the promotion in rank but were allowed to be given to Wang Dao’s younger sons by highly generous act of special grace. As Wang Dao’s eldest son and ducal Heir Apparent Wang Yue 王悅 predeceased his father without leaving a legitimate heir, the dukedom of Shixing was inherited by a son of his younger brother Wang Tian 王恬 and his descendants in direct line till the end of the dynasty.

⁴³⁹ *Jinshu* juan 65, *Wang Dao zhuan*, *Wang Yue zhuan*, *Wang Tian zhuan* and *Wang Xie zhuan*, pp. 1745, 1749-1750, 1754-1755, 1758.

Wang Tian himself inherited his father's viscounty, the original peerage which was in the family since 264 AD, and Wang Xie 王協 was awarded marquisate of Wugang which was later inherited by descendants of yet another brother, Wang Shao 王劭. Thus all three peerage dignities acquired by Wang Dao remained in the family. Whereas the special grace originally allowed the dignities gained earlier in one's career to be handed over to younger members of the family only in form of lower *liehou* lordships, Wang Dao's and presumably also Xun Song's peerages were inherited unaltered with the original rank and privileges. It must have been rather exceptional concession on part of the government reflecting the importance of both Xun Song and Wang Dao for newly emerging refugee court in Jiankang as a symbol of continuity of legitimate power and a founding minister of the restored regime respectively.

To sum up various forms of inheritance of noble dignities as well as practice of special grace we may cite an example of ducal peerage of Julu 鉅鹿 originally bestowed on Pei Xiu, a man responsible for the introduction of five peerages and new ennoblement system, immediately after the founding of the Western Jin:

“[Pei Xiu] had two sons, Jun and Wei. Jun inherited [father's] title and achieved the post of Cavalier Attendant-in-ordinary (*sanji changshi* 散騎常侍). He died young and as his son born of concubine, Pei Jing was an impaired imbecile and was given an alternative enfeoffment as village lord of Gaoyang. Jun's younger brother Pei Wei was to inherit [the title].”⁴⁴⁰

“As Jia Chong was husband of [Pei] Wei's aunt, he petitioned the throne: “[Pei] Xiu had earned the great achievement of assisting the founding of the dynasty but he was unfortunate in that his eldest son born of the main wife died young and the orphan he had left behind was still immature and weak. Wei's talents and moral integrity are outstanding, [which is in itself] sufficient [guarantee] of [future] prosperity and thriving of the line of noble descent.” The imperial edict ordered Wei to succeed to his father's peerage [instead of Xiu's underage grandson]. Pei Wei firmly declined but [the emperor] would not permit it. In the second year of the Taikang Era (281 AD) he was summoned as Palace Cadet of the Heir Apparent (*taizi zhongshuzi* 太子中庶子) and promoted to Cavalier Attendant-in-ordinary (*sanji changshi* 散騎常侍). When Huidi ascended the throne he was transferred to position of Chancellor of the National University (*guozi jijiu* 國子祭酒) and Concurrent General of the Right Army (*jian youjun jiangjun* 兼右軍將軍). At first, Wei's nephew [Pei] Jing was a commoner [but] Wei expounded the achievements of the [previous] generation and afterwards

⁴⁴⁰ *Jinshu* juan 35, *Pei Xiu zhuan*, p. 1041.

[Jing] was granted noble title of village lord of Gaoyang ... After Yang Jun's execution he should have been [further] enfeoffed as Marquis of Wuchang. Wei asked for this dignity to be bestowed upon [his nephew] Pei Jing. [But] the emperor in the end enfeoffed Wei's second son [Pei] Gai. Pei Wei vehemently argued that Jing should have succeeded to [the ducal dignity of] Julu for he was originally an heir of the main line. [“]Due to the favor of the late emperor my renunciation [of the title] did not meet with his approval. The dignity of Wuchang was graciously bestowed upon myself. Therefore I am asking for permission to have it granted to Jing.[”] Because Pei Gai was at that time married to an imperial princess the emperor did not listen to [his plea].”⁴⁴¹

Pei Xiu left his title to his eldest son Pei Jun 裴濬 who apparently succeeded as the second Duke of Julu. However, he died young and his only son Pei Jing 裴憬 was somehow unfit to succeed. His being a son of concubine was not the main problem of inheritance as the alternative succession (*shaofeng*) could have been employed. Much greater obstacle was the fact that the prospective heir was probably mentally impaired (Chronicle says *buhui* 不惠) and therefore further continuation of the noble lineage was endangered. This fear is clearly voiced in Jia Chong's argument calling for disinheriting Pei Jing and replacing him with his uncle Pei Wei whose virtue and moral integrity provides sufficient guarantee of future glory of the Pei Xiu's dignity. Apparently, Pei Wei's appointment was no longer regarded as regular primogenitural succession otherwise Jia Chong would have not deemed it necessary to petition the throne for approval of the change of succession. Either Pei Wei was also son of a concubine or, more probably, succession from brother to brother was considered irregular. Had the elder brother died prematurely before he had actually a chance to succeed to the title, Pei Wei would have succeeded as rightful primogenitural heir of Pei Xiu. But because Pei Jun had already succeeded to the dignity the change of succession lineage would leave him excluded from sacrificial offerings which could be provided only by one's descendants. Pei Wei could not become an adoptive heir to Pei Jun as it was impossible from the ritual point of view for a brother to become a son of a title holder. Once the succession was changed and settled upon Pei Wei, his elder brother and his descendants were circumvented and forever left out of the ancestral worship of the Julu Dukedom.

Pei Wei was very reluctant to replace the primogenitural line and when he finally accepted the succession he tried hard to secure Pei Jing a title of his own for he had always considered him to be the rightful heir of his father. Shortly after he had become third Duke of

⁴⁴¹ *Jinshu* juan 35, *Pei Wei zhuan*, pp. 1041-1042.

Julu he petitioned the throne and asked for an alternative enfeoffment (*biefeng*) for Pei Jing who was duly created village lord of Gaoyang 高陽亭侯. Later when Pei Wei was to receive an additional enfeoffment (*gengfeng*) as Marquis of Wuchang 武昌侯 he again tried to prevail upon the throne to bestow this dignity on disinherited Pei Jing so as to make up for the lost dukedom. This time, however, his wish was not granted as the emperor chose to confer the title upon Pei Wei's younger son who happened to be married to an imperial princess. As the bestowals and inheritance of noble dignities always remained prerogatives of the sovereign the enfeoffment rules were subject to potential modifications and adjustments. The emperor or those acting in his name had the final word in the matter of succession and the decisions were often made according to the current needs of the politics.

Conclusion

As was often the case with imperial institutions the ennoblement system of the Western Jin was based on much older traditions originating in the ancient past. All preceding imperial dynasties in some way practiced bestowal of noble dignities upon royal kinsmen and meritorious subjects, yet the Western Jin system remains unique for the Simas managed to combine various traditions of the previous regimes and transform them into a full-fledged system of titled nobility which was to be used by all subsequent dynasties of Mediaeval China. The princely dignities which began to be conferred on princes of the blood during the Han were thus combined with the peerage hierarchy of the ancient Zhou feudatories as well as noble distinctions which the Qin used to grant in reward for military achievements and intrepid conduct on the battlefield. Therefore the Western Jin system should be seen as an outcome of a long development process which did not end with the foundation of the dynasty. Due to the various reasons it underwent many changes even during the reign of the Jin having been constantly improved or modified according to current political needs.

The first step towards establishing of the new system of titled nobility was actually made even before the founding of the Jin dynasty in 264 AD when regents of the Sima house introduced five ranks peerages following successful conquest of Shu Han. During prolonged process of gradual usurpation the Simas had carefully orchestrated portents and auguries of heaven and performed certain ritual acts emulating precedents of the past, yet the successful accomplishment of the dynastic transition required also an administrative reform or rather resurrection of a venerable institution of glorious past. By formally recreating such an institution the usurper implied moral as well as administrative deficiency of the dynasty he was going to replace and at the same time symbolically pledged redress of all governmental failings. In this context the revival of ancient enfeoffment system connected with reign of the Zhou kings of old was an important step in a sequence of ritual acts symbolically attesting to gradual transfer of the Mandate of Heaven which provided the house of Sima with semblance of legitimacy as rightful successors to the Wei.

Leaving the symbolic importance of newly established peerage aside, practical considerations of rewarding loyal partisans and securing further political and military support before the actual abdication were by no means negligible either. Timely reward of the Sima followers strengthened their loyalty which might have otherwise wavered and revision of the current ennoblement system was a gesture of goodwill towards influential court families. While the rulers of the Wei Dynasty, jealously guarding privileged position of their family,

reserved higher noble titles for exclusive use of the imperial kinsmen, establishment of the peerage system in 264 AD satisfied the demand for more generous bestowal of the coveted dignities. The active support or at least tacit acknowledgment of the established court families was absolutely necessary for successful accomplishment of the usurpation process. By bestowing new noble titles the Simas were courting their favor and at the same time symbolically expressed their willingness to guarantee the established court families the same social standing and preeminence even under the new dynasty provided by the fact that they decide to support the right claimant.

The actual founding of the Western Jin Dynasty brought no remarkable change in composition of the elite. As the membership of the new titled nobility was more or less decided already two years ago when Simas initiated establishment of the peerage ranks, the actual changes were now restricted to readjustment of relative standing of particular court families within noble hierarchy in regard to their commitment to the Jin cause. The most important meritorious ministers whose assistance was essential to founding of the new regime were granted ducal ranks, the highest peerage titles previously unattainable for non-royals, and many others were rewarded for their loyalty or readiness to accept the dynastic transition by promotion in rank, yet it seems probable that majority of hundreds of noble dignities created in 264 AD continued under the new regime unchanged.

Creating new peers and nobles in the symbolic way ushered in the beginning of the new age and introduced new social order based on merit and service rendered to the Jin dynasty and its founders. At the same time it enabled Jin Emperor Wudi to enhance stability of his new regime. Loyal supporters and political allies were elevated to the highest ranks of the peerage becoming the elite of the new empire. As there was direct connection between noble ranks, office recruitment and all kinds of social and economical advantages, the families of the meritorious ministers should have become influential power behind the throne. The common interest should have ensured future loyalty of these families and reinforce the political position of the Simas and the dynasty as a whole.

On the other hand, Wudi was well aware of the way how his family came to the throne and he was not willing to take the risk that one of the court families, erstwhile peers of the Simas, would aspire to the throne and try to reenact the gradual usurpation. Titled nobility should by no means endanger position of the ruling family. Therefore, Wudi was careful to impose certain restrictions on future ennoblement which should have prevented uncontrollable growth of titled nobility and its power. Theoretically speaking all noble titles were granted on basis of some achievement or loyal service rendered to one's sovereign or

dynasty and relative importance of this merit determined the reward, i.e. the rank and grade of a noble dignity bestowed upon meritorious subject. The hierarchy of noble titles should have corresponded to relative hierarchy of merit with the peerage dignities being the highest possible reward intended for the most loyal service. As there was no greater merit than assisting in the founding of the dynasty the peerages were henceforth reserved only for the meritorious ministers (*gongchen*) of the Jin who had actively helped to overthrow the Wei. Because the foundation of the dynasty could not be repeated it was well nigh impossible to gain the kind of merit necessary for bestowal of peerage. In consequence during the reign of Wudi peerage ranks became virtually unattainable for all non-royal court families and all future achievements and services for the dynasty, no matter how great or important they may have been, were to be rewarded only by grants of lesser lordship dignities. Not even the leaders of victorious campaign against the southern state of Wu in 280 AD were exempted from this rule. Even though their victory accomplished the long process of reunification and greatly enhanced legitimacy of the Jin they were not given more than prefecture lordships, the highest of the *liehou* dignities standing just below the peerage ranks.

While restricting further bestowal of peerage dignities Wudi also made sure that the current peerage holders would not become threat to the ruling family. Imperial kinsmen were elevated high above members of other court families and created princes of the blood. As the princely dignities were reserved for sons and brothers of the reigning emperor the close relatives of the ruling line always held the highest noble dignities of the realm and the everlasting supremacy of the imperial house was ensured. Moreover, later reform of princely enfeoffment introduced in 277 AD created an elaborate system of royal peerage. After a death of a prince his younger sons were to be given part of the ancestral princely fief and created peers in their own right as a share of their inheritance. As the peerages became virtually unattainable once the dynasty was established, Wudi's decision practically turned the highest noble dignities into monopoly of the imperial family. The enfeoffment reform of 277 AD gave birth to numerous and practically ever-growing group of royal peerage which effectively counterbalanced the influence of the non-royal titled nobility and precluded its further rise as independent power challenging the royal authority. The danger of recurring usurpation was effectively averted for it did not only prevent the actual growth in numbers of the peerage as a whole but at the same time greatly minimized the influence of the peers created so far as they were in the long run bound to be eclipsed by royal peerage.

Due to the highly complex and intertwined policies guiding princely enfeoffment and ennoblement of meritorious subjects the period of Western Jin saw birth of an elaborate

system of noble dignities comprising whole range of noble titles from imperial princes and royal and non-royal peerage to all kinds of lordships differing in rank, fief apanage and right to inherit. In fact the government had at its disposal more than twenty different noble titles of three or four categories. However, regardless of the noble rank the setting of the system ensured that the title holders would not become potential threat endangering the position of the central government in the provinces through establishing regional centers of power. The actual administration of the fief was not dissimilar to the official structure of any commandery or prefecture of the realm and was controlled by the government through centrally appointed officials. The peers may have been entitled to special household offices corresponding to their noble dignity but their establishment was in reality rather limited as it was conditioned by the actual departure of a title holder to the allotted territory. As majority of titled nobility served in government offices either at court or in the provinces they could not afford to reside permanently in their fief and the right to establish official retinue therefore remained just an empty privilege.

The authority of the nobles over the territory granted as their “fief” and its inhabitants was only nominal. The fief holders neither owned land of their fiefs, nor commanded loyalty of the people living within their boundaries. They could not implement their own laws and regulations and had no jurisdiction over their own “subjects” whatsoever. The period of Western Jin thus did not see emergence of a semi-independent landed aristocracy, but mere titled nobility fully subordinated to the central government and entitled to annual stipend drawn from precisely defined number of state tax-paying households which were temporarily assigned to form an apanage of the fief. Whereas the apanages of the lesser lordship dignities were defined only in terms of number of apanage households, the fiefs of the peers were in addition defined also in terms of territory. The rules set by Emperor Wudi prescribed not only quotas of households but also the expanse of territory, acreage measured in miles, conferred on the recipient of the peerage title in correspondence to the rank of bestowed peerage. Yet again, despite referring explicitly to a well defined territory, the practice of territory allocation did not imply any territorial rights or jurisdiction over certain area and was considered only as an additional means for assessing the annual income drawn from the apanage.

The process of selection of suitable fief territory primarily followed the elaborate system of rules prescribing apanage allotment, yet it was also influenced by important considerations of geographical and geopolitical nature. It seems that noble fiefs were dispersed unevenly over the whole territory of the empire with the exception of the imperial domain around the capital city of Luoyang. However, the majority of the large peerage fiefs

bestowed during the Western Jin were located in the populous and economically well developed regions in the basins of the Yellow and Huai Rivers with thriving agricultural production and presumably also operational road or waterway network providing decent transport facilities enabling smooth collection of taxes. It seems that at least during the reign of Emperor Wudi it was usual to select suitable territory as close to the ancestral home of the family as possible, provided by the fact that the chosen fief would meet all necessary requirements concerning available land and number of apanage households. The spatial proximity of the allocated fief and ancestral home of the family could have been desirable for purely practical reasons as it solved many a logistic problem connected with collection of taxes and generally made the management of the apanage households easier. On the other hand, at the beginning of the Jin Dynasty the court families often still maintained some kind of provincial base where the family held landed property and exercised considerable influence over the affairs of local community. The authority of central government on the local level often depended on the influence of these families and could be implemented only through their mediation. Therefore, awarding fief in or near one's home territory could have reflected the position of the family within the local society acknowledging on symbolical level its preeminent influence over the locality and its population and probably also conferring additional symbolic authority.

Even though bestowal of a noble title did not bring any real political or military power the peerage dignities as well as lordship titles retained their appeal to members of court circles for every noble title provided its holder with economic advantages which were by no means negligible as the revenue gained from the fief exceeded by far the state-provided income of untitled officials of comparable court rank. Noble titles remained highly coveted social distinction which improved standing of one's family within the ranks of elite. Even the lowest of the lordship titles brought to its holder rather high court rank which entitled him not only to precedence over many untitled court officials but also to various hereditary privileges. The most important of them was right of priority entry into the higher ranks of bureaucracy for sons and grandsons of title holders. At the time when high social standing of a family depended on official ranks attained by its members such a privilege greatly improved chances of retaining their distinguished position among the elite. Thanks to the right of priority entry members of noble families were able to secure consequential court offices at fairly young age which gave them considerable advantage over members of untitled families whose official career was hardly as straightforward. Due to the better starting position it must have been

easier for every new generation of a noble family to reach the top echelon of the state bureaucracy and renew its claim to social preeminence.

Being partially dependent on support and acknowledgment of the court families the Western Jin tried to oblige the titled nobility by ensuring almost unlimited heredity of the noble dignities. The succession within the noble lineage was basically primogenitural in nature with the eldest son born of the main wife succeeding to his father's title and all the privileges and duties connected with it. Sons of the main wives held precedence over their brothers born of concubines as well as other members of the family. While the policy of the previous dynasties was rather strict, with noble dignities being regularly abolished once their main primogenitural line became extinct, the Western Jin revived old Han practice of alternative succession (*shaofeng*) which enabled the families to retain the noble dignity and transfer it to a collateral branch. *Shaofeng* was kind of intra-family adoption which transcended the distinction between offspring born of the main wife and a concubine as well as seniority of the different branches of the family. Should the main primogenitural line fail to prove viable the noble dignity could be inherited by the eldest surviving son born of concubine and his heirs male or by a younger member of wider family who was duly adopted as an heir to given peerage or lordship dignity.

Another apparent concession to families of titled nobility was revival of practice of special grace (*tui'en*) under which additional titles and apanages were granted to junior relatives of the title holders. The more of noble dignities were held in the family, the better its position and prospects of its future survival. With every new title a family got more secure and more entrenched within the ranks of elite. However, unlike the old practice of special grace which meant regular dividing of original fief or apanage among all sons of a deceased title holder the Jin turned special grace into a distinction bestowed only occasionally as a mark of highest favor. While the original practice would have led to uncontrollable increase of number of noble dignities as well as persons claiming preferential treatment, the Western Jin innovation managed to safely avert such danger. Occasional act of special grace may have given the families additional source of income but the number of persons eligible for special hereditary privileges derived from the noble dignities remained more or less under control for any act of special grace depended solely on the will of the sovereign and its bestowal was conditioned by performance of remarkable meritorious service.

Bestowal of a noble title was always dependent on merit and could be obtained only as mark of distinction and imperial favor for various meritorious deeds and remarkable achievements in service of the sovereign and dynasty. It seems that apart from the most

valued merit of assisting in founding the dynasty the majority of meritorious achievements which led to ennoblement during the Western Jin Dynasty tended to be military in nature. Fighting the forces of rival state of Wu, defending the border against the raids of nomadic tribes and bringing down rebellions or annihilating internal enemies were the most frequent reasons for bestowal of a noble dignity. Yet the military achievements meriting ennoblement were not limited to actual fighting. Offering sound advice, devising useful strategy or simply supervising the preparations for the military campaign were also seen as important contributions to overall war effort and tended to be rewarded as such. On the other hand performance in a civil office usually could not secure ennoblement unless it went beyond the administrative routine and was charged with special symbolic impact. Great importance was attached to services rendered in connection with the state ritual and worshipping of the imperial ancestors. Welcoming of a new emperor, escorting funeral cortege of a deceased ruler, repairing of the dynastic ancestral temple or renovation of the imperial burial ground were all ceremonial and ritual acts of great symbolic importance for the legitimacy and survival of the imperial regime which in a way emulated the merit of the dynastic founders and called for corresponding reward.

Symbolic value of title bestowal was important feature of the ennoblement system and the Western Jin rulers often used it as useful and effective tool for asserting their supreme authority and securing additional legitimacy of their rule. Wudi symbolically placed the Jin within the chain of legitimate imperial succession by bestowing noble dignities upon descendants of the royal houses of Zhou, Han and Wei as well as rival regimes of the Three Kingdoms. By creating deposed royals princes and peers Wudi exercised prerogatives of the Son of Heaven and asserted his indisputable authority as sole sovereign lord. At the same time the scions of the former ruling houses assumed their proper place within the social structure of the realm as subjects of the Jin emperor, thereby confirming the process of dynastic transition and unification of the empire as well as legitimacy of the new dynasty.

The worsening political situation of the empire during the second half of the Western Jin led to inevitable decline of central authority and subsequent deterioration of many imperial institutions including the ennoblement system. The original restrictions imposed by Emperor Wudi were rescinded and the court resorted to regular creations of new peerages which would satisfy the ambitions of powerful men at court. Creation of new dignities closely followed the political development and shifts in balance of power between various princes of the blood and quarrelling court factions. Generous bestowal of noble titles could secure wider support for the rule of successive would-be regents and princely dictators during the upheaval

of the Eight Princes and strengthen the bonds of loyalty within the ruling faction as well as its overall standing. Besides conferring titles upon one's supporters considerable political capital was to be gained also through posthumous rehabilitation and ennoblement of victims of persecution by one's political opponent. Recurrent restoring of noble dignities, titles and honors previously abolished became the norm during every subsequent power struggle as every new would-be regent was eager to appear as the legitimate surrogate of the sovereign authority restoring the order and bringing redress of injustice done by self-appointed usurpers.

As the tension among various branches of the imperial family increased the rival princes were hiring tribal armies as mercenaries and the military might of nomadic groups gradually became indispensable. The court tried to secure their allegiance through bestowal of ducal peerages upon their rulers who were in a symbolic way integrated into the administrative and social structure of the realm. By accepting noble title they acknowledged the supreme authority of the emperor and became formal subjects of the dynasty. Such arrangement enabled the court to establish certain degree of control over border regions and their inhabitants as nominal overlords of these semi-independent tribal rulers. At the same time the dynasty secured additional legitimacy as the peaceful submission of the barbarians attested to superiority of the Jin Son of Heaven. With the fall of the Western Jin this symbolic meaning of the peerage bestowals upon tribal rulers became even more important. Through their ducal peerages the semi-independent nomadic leaders may have been, at least formally, a part of the titled nobility of the realm, nevertheless their actual position within Jin titled nobility was rather specific and their fiefs were in fact existing outside the established hierarchy of ordinary dignities bestowed on meritorious subjects of the dynasty.

As we have seen, the ennoblement system of the Western Jin was quite flexible being used in order to achieve highly diverse aims from rewarding loyal service to asserting legitimacy as the sole inheritor of the imperial tradition or strengthening diplomatic alliance with semi-independent tribal rulers. Thus, the Western Jin titled nobility was a group of families of fairly varied origins. The pride of place belonged to meritorious ministers, staunch supporters of the Sima cause, but there were also imperial in-laws, former Wei courtiers as well as descendents of illustrious Han families, scions of deposed royal houses and royal pretenders of rival regime who had defected to the Jin. With loosening of the original restrictions on further ennoblement during the second half of the dynasty the titled nobility expanded considerably comprising also military commanders and men of local influence who had risen in service of various princes of the blood together with rulers of nomadic tribes inhabiting the border regions of the empire.

All members of titled nobility, regardless of their origin, to a various degree shared considerable social and economic privileges which under certain circumstances could have been turned into kind of political influence or power over the affairs of state. However, the Jin state managed to retain full control over its titled nobility with bestowals and inheritance of noble dignities always remaining exclusive prerogatives of the sovereign authority. The preeminent social standing of the members of titled nobility derived from their loyal service and allegiance to the dynasty and was always dependent on the will of the emperor. Even though the noble dignities were hereditary, their survival and even the right to pass them on to one's children could have never been taken for granted for the emperor or those acting in his name had the final word in the matter of succession. Privileges could be withdrawn at any moment and noble title could be abolished once its holder was attainted. Trespassing the law, being disloyal to the dynasty or simply being negligent in performing one's official duty meant risking the loss of noble title and jeopardizing the future of the family as a member of the elite. Even the most illustrious lineages could quite easily decline rapidly in just a couple of generations because without a title and corresponding hereditary privileges family's position at court became less secure, being more dependent on official career of its members. Thus the titled nobility of the Western Jin never became independent power group which would have challenged the authority of the throne and central government.

Noble Dignities Bestowed During the Western Jin Dynasty and their Holders

I. Peerage:

Dukedoms

Anchang 安昌公 – Pan of Xingyang 滎陽潘氏

1. **Pan Ni** 潘尼 – Jin courtier; after usurpation of Prince of Zhao he had left the court and later joined the righteous army of Sima Jiong, Prince of Qi, becoming his Adjutant (*canjun* 參軍). After the defeat of Prince of Zhao Pan Ni was enfeoffed as Duke of Anchang 安昌公 (probably early summer of 301 AD). He died shortly before or immediately after the fall of Luoyang in 311.

Anle 安樂公 – Liu of Zhuojun 涿郡劉氏

1. **Liu Shan** 劉禪 – son of Liu Bei 劉備, the last ruler of the Shu Han 蜀漢. He was enfeoffed as Duke of Anle right at the beginning of the Jin Dynasty.

2. **Liu Xun** 劉恂 – son of Liu Shan, it is not clear whether he had ever succeeded to his father's peerage.

Anxiang 安鄉公 –family of unknown origin

1. **Liu Zhen** 劉真 – commander and partisan of Sima Jiong Prince of Qi. After Jiong seized power he had Liu Zhen created Duke of Anxiang as his meritorious minister (301 AD).

Bohai 渤海公 – family of Xianbei origin

1. **Duan Pidi** 段匹磾 – In 317 AD the regional commander of Youzhou and the Left Wise King (*zuoxianwang* 左賢王) of the Xianbei is mentioned as Duke of Bohai. The peerage was most likely only nominal title bestowed on local tribal leader in the border area. He was killed in 321 AD during the fights with Shi Le 石勒.

Boling 博陵縣公 – Wang of Taiyuan 太原王氏, prefecture dukedom was later changed to commandery dukedom

1. **Wang Shen** 王沈 – originally a Wei official. When Duke of Gaogui was conspiring against the Simas Wang Shen informed Sima Zhao who rewarded his loyalty by granting him marquisate of Anping 安平侯 with apanage of 2000 households. After establishment of the five ranks peerages in 264 AD he was created Marquis of Boling 博陵侯 (it was a second grade marquisate *ciguo* 次國). After the founding of the Jin Dynasty he was enfeoffed for his achievement of assisting in establishing the mandate as commandery duke of Boling. However, as he declined the honor he was at least promoted to Prefecture Duke of Boling 博陵縣公 with apanage of 1800 households. He died in the same year. His posthumous name was Yuan 元公. One year later the emperor recalled his achievements and had him

posthumously promoted and buried with honors due to a commandery duke. He was succeeded by his son Wang Jun. During the Xianning Era (275-279 AD) he was posthumously promoted to the rank of commandery duke.

2. **Wang Jun** 王浚 – son of Wang Shen, his mother Lady Zhao 趙氏 hailed from a poor family and Wang Shen therefore considered her and her son below himself. However because Wang Shen did not have another son, fifteen-year old Wang Jun was proclaimed his heir by his relatives. At the beginning of the Taikang Era (circa 280 AD) he left the capital and repaired to his fief. After turbulent military career he became regional commander in Youzhou. His fief was enlarged by grant of another commandery, Yanguo 燕國. He died in 314 AD defending his territory against Shi Le. As he did not have any son, the fief went into abeyance.

3. **Wang Daosu** 王道素 – In Taiyuan 2 (377 AD) Emperor Xiaowudi 孝武帝 decreed that the broken lineage should be resurrected and an official heir adopted. Wang Shen's clan grandson (*congson* 從孫) Wang Daosu became the 3rd Duke of Boling.

4. **Wang Chongzhi** 王崇之 – son and heir to Wang Daosu, the 4th Duke of Boling. In Yixi 11 (415 AD) he was transferred to become commandery duke of Dongguan 東莞郡公. The fief was abolished following the establishment of the Liu Song Dynasty in 420 AD.

Chang'an 昌安公 – Shi of Leling 樂陵石氏

1. **Shi Jian** 石鑿 – after the accession of Emperor Wudi Shi Jian was enfeoffed as Viscount of Tangyang 堂陽子. After Wudi's death Shi Jian supervised construction of the imperial mound and when he had accomplished his task he was created Duke of Chang'an 昌安縣公 (probably at the instigation of Yang Jun). He died in Yuankang 4 (294 AD) and he was granted posthumous name of Yuan 元公.

2. **Shi Lou** 石陋 – son and heir to Shi Jian, 2nd Duke of Chang'an.

Chengyang 成陽 - Bian of Jiyin 濟陰卞氏

1. **Bian Cui** 卞粹 – originally Viscount of Chengyang 成陽子, as a son-in-law of Zhang Hua he suffered demotion after Zhang's death but after execution of Lun of Zhao he was promoted to the ducal rank by victorious Jiong of Qi. Jiong's murderer Sima Yi Prince of Changsha did not trust Bian Cui and had him killed in 303 AD. His son could not immediately succeed to the title

2. **Bian Hu** 卞壺 – son and heir to Bian Cui. He was rehabilitated only in the Yongjia Era (307-312 AD) when he succeeded to his father's peerage as 2nd duke of Chengyang. However, this peerage apparently did not survive the fall of the Western Jin as Bian Hu was newly enfeoffed as Duke of Jianxing 建興公 by Emperor Yuandi 元帝 for quelling the rebellion of Wang Han.

Daling 大陵縣公 - Wen of Taiyuan 太原溫氏

1. **Wen Xian** 溫羨 – When Jiong of Qi acted as regent he held Wen Xian in high esteem as a former official of his late father. Later he gained merit by participating in a punitive campaign against Ying of Chengdu and was subsequently enfeoffed as prefecture duke of Daling 大陵縣公 with apanage of 1800 households. He died shortly after the accession of Emperor Huaidi and was given posthumous name Yuan 元公.

Dongping 東平郡公 – Gou of Henei 河內苟氏

1. **Gou Xi** 苟晞 – during the regency of Yue of Donghai he was for some military achievements created commandery marquis of Dongping with apanage of 10 000 households. Later he fell out with Yue of Donghai but retained his position and after prince's death secured control of the court and was promoted to the rank of a duke. The apanage was increased to 20 000 households. The fief probably ceased to exist with the fall of the northern regime.

Dongpingling 東平陵 – family of unknown origin

1. **Zhao Feng** 趙豐 – duke of Dongpingling, details unknown.

Fengqiu 封丘公 – family of unknown origin

1. **Han Tai** 韓泰 – follower of Sima Jiong Prince of Qi. When Jiong took over the reins of power he had Han Tai enfeoffed as Duke of Fengqiu as his meritorious minister. After Jiong's fall he was executed and his fief was abolished (301 AD).

Gaoping 高平郡公 – Chen of Linhuai 臨淮陳氏

1. **Chen Qian** 陳騫 – descendant of an ancient family, started his career as a Wei official and was granted Wei noble title of village marquis of Anguo 安國亭侯. Soon he started to serve the Simas and for his part in quelling rebellion of Zhuge Dan was promoted to Marquis of Guangling 廣陵侯. After introduction of five ranks peerages in 264 AD he was created Marquis of Shan 郟侯. Being a main *gongchen* he became Duke of Gaoping immediately after establishing the Jin Dynasty. He died in Taikang 2 (292 AD) and was granted posthumous name Wu 武公.

2. **Chen Yu** 陳輿 – son and heir to Chen Qian, 2nd Duke of Gaoping.

3. **Chen Zhi** 陳植 – son and heir to Chen Yu, 3rd Duke of Gaoping.

4. **Chen Cui** 陳粹 – son and heir to Chen Zhi, 4th Duke of Gaoping. He died during the Yongjia Era and the noble line was broken.

5. **Chen Haozhi** 陳浩之 – son of a great-grandson of Chen Qian. Emperor Xiaowudi named him an heir to the noble title and had him succeed as the 5th and last Duke of Gaoping. The fief was abolished after the founding of the Liu Song Dynasty in 420 AD.

Gaoyi 高邑公 – Cao of Pei 沛國曹氏

1. **Cao Jia** 曹嘉 – son of Cao Biao, Wei prince of Chu 楚王曹彪, originally succeeded to the princely title but after the establishment of the Jin Dynasty he was created Duke of Anyi.

Guang'an 廣安公 – family of unknown origin

1. **Zhen De** 甄惠 – younger brother of Guo Jian Duke of Linwei 臨渭公郭建 (by a different father?), he married daughters of both Sima Shi and Sima Zhao. Thus he belonged to important *waiqi* families of the Simas.

2. **Zhen Xi** 甄喜 – son and heir to Zhen De, 2nd Duke of Guang'an.

Guangling 廣陵郡公 – Chen of Yingchuan 穎川陳氏

1. **Chen Zhun** 陳準 – friend and supporter of Sima Lun Prince of Zhao who had him created Duke of Guangling.

Guangning 廣甯公 – family of Xianbei origin

1. **Duan Chen** 段辰 – In 317 AD is mentioned as Duke of Guangning. The peerage was most likely only nominal title bestowed on local tribal leader in the border area.

Guanyang 觀陽公 – Hua of Pingyang 平原華氏

1. **Hua Yi** 華虞 – originally succeeded to the title of count of Guanyang. After the accession of Huidi he was promoted to the ducal rank, probably at the instigation of Yang Jun. His posthumous name was Yuan 元公.

2. **Hua Hun** 華混 – son and heir to Hua Yi, 2nd Duke of Guanyang.

3. **Hua Tao** 華陶 – son and heir to Hua Hun, 3rd Duke of Guanyang. He died during the upheaval caused by Shi Le and the fief ceased to exist.

Jiangxia 江夏郡公 – Wei of Hedong 河東衛氏

1. **Wei Zao** 衛瓘 – grandson of Wei Guan 衛瓘, he succeeded to his ducal peerage of Lanling 蘭陵. Later Yue of Donghai increased his apauage by adding some territory in Lanling and he changed the enfeoffment to that of Duke of Jiangxia 江夏郡公 with apauage of 8500 households. He died in Yongjia 5 (311 AD), killed by soldiers of Liu Cong 劉聰.

2. **Wei Chong** 衛崇 – great-grandson of Wei Guan, perhaps descended through Guan's grandson Wei Jie 衛玠. Yuandi proclaimed him to be Wei Guan's heir and he may have succeeded to the peerage as 2nd Duke of Jiangxia.

Jiaying 嘉興開國公 – Gu of Wujun 吳郡顧氏

1. **Gu Rong** 顧榮 – After the fall of Jiong of Qi he was enfeoffed as Count of Jiaying 嘉興伯 for his achievement of chastising Jiong's henchman Ge Yu 葛旃. He died in 312 AD and

Yuandi who had just assumed title of King of Jin had him posthumously created Duke of Jiaxing. He was granted posthumous name of Yuan 元公.

2. **Gu Pi** 顧毘 – son and heir to Gu Rong, 2nd Duke of Jiaxing.

Jingling 京陵公 – Wang of Taiyuan 太原王氏

1. **Wang Hun** 王渾 – son and heir to Wang Chang 王昶. He succeeded to his father's peerage and became 2nd Marquis of Jingling 京陵侯. At the beginning of the Taishi Era the apanage was increased by 1800 households. He acquired great achievements during the campaign against Wu. For his contribution to the final victory he was promoted to the ducal rank and his apanage was increased by 8000 households. At the same time his younger son Wang Cheng 王澄 was granted title of a village lord (*tinghou*) and younger brother Wang Zhen 王湛 title of a lord of the royal domain (*guanneihou*). According to Pei Songzhi's commentary to *Sanguozhi* one of his sons was enfeoffed as Marquis of Jiangling 江陵侯. He died in Yuankang 7 (297 AD) and was granted posthumous name of Yuan 元公. The text of the Jinshu is confused. It states that Wang Hun's eldest son Wang Shang 王尚 died prematurely and therefore his second son Wang Ji inherited the title, yet the biography of Wang Ji claims that he died before his father and one of his sons succeeded to the dukedom.

2. **Wang Ji** 王濟 – son and heir presumptive to Wang Hun, married Princess of Changshan 常山公主, daughter of Emperor Wudi. He died before his father and never held the ducal dignity.

3. **Wang Zhuo** 王卓 – son of Wang Ji born of a concubine. As the princess of Changshan did not bear any children Zhuo became heir to his grandfather's peerage and succeeded as 2nd Duke of Jingling.

Jiuquan 酒泉公 - Jia of Wuwei 武威賈氏

1. **Jia Shu** 賈疋 – During the reign of Emperor Huaidi he was enfeoffed as Duke of Jiuquan. He assisted in proclaiming future Emperor Mindi crown prince and later died during the turmoil in the North.

Juancheng 鄆城縣公 – Cao of Pei 沛國曹氏

1. **Cao Zhi** 曹志 – son of Cao Zhi, Wei Prince of Chen 陳王曹植. Originally he was enfeoffed as Prince of Jibei 濟北王. Wudi held in a great esteem his father and Cao Zhi himself and had him created Duke of Juancheng. Later, however, he merited emperor's displeasure by supporting Sima You Prince of Qi. He was granted posthumous name of Ding 定公.

Julu 鉅鹿郡公 – Pei of Hedong 河東裴氏

1. **Pei Xiu** 裴秀 – staunch supporter of the Sima cause and main architect of the peerage system introduced in 264 AD. First he had inherited his father's Wei title of village marquis of Qingyang 清陽亭侯. After the defeat of Zhuge Dan he was promoted to township marquis

of Luyang 魯陽鄉侯 with the apanage increase of 1000 households. After the accession of Duke of Changdao he was promoted to prefecture marquis and apanage was increased by 700 households. After introduction of the five peerages he was created Marquis of Jichuanu 濟川侯, with territory of 60 li and 1400 households. The marquissate comprised prefecture of Gaoyuan 高苑 and wasteland of Jichuanxu 濟川墟. After the establishment of the Jin Dynasty he was enfeoffed as commandery duke of Julu 鉅鹿郡公 with apanage of 3000 households. He died in Taishi 7 (271 AD) and was granted posthumous name of Yuan 元公.

2. **Pei Jun** 裴濬 – elder son of Pei Xiu, presumably his her presumptive, but he died prematurely. Probably never succeeded to the title.

3. **Pei Jing** 裴憬 – son of Pei Jun born of concubine, should have succeeded to the peerage dignity, however his health was poor and the peerage was therefore given to Pei Wei, younger brother of Pei Jun. Pei Wei had Pei Jing enfeoffed as village lord of Gaoyang 高陽亭侯 (it was na alternative enfeoffment *biefeng* 別封).

4. **Pei Wei** 裴頌 – son of Pei Xiu born of concubine, Jia Chong, husband of his aunt, had him succeeded to the dukedom instead of infirm Pei Jing. Pei Wei took an active part in the downfall of Yang Jun and for this merit he was additionally enfeoffed as Marquis of Wuchang 武昌侯. Wei wanted to transfer this second peerage on his nephew Pei Jing but the emperor bestowed this honour on his younger son Pei Gai 裴該 who had just married one of his daughters. Pei Wei was killed by Prince of Zhao in 301 AD. Later he was rehabilitated and granted posthumou name Cheng 成公.

5. **Pei Song** 裴嵩 – son and heir to Pei Wei, 3rd Duke of Julu. He died during the upheavals of the Yongjia Era and the ducal line ceased to exist.

Juping 鉅平郡公 – Yang of Taishan 泰山羊氏

1. **Yang Hu** 羊祜 – brother-in-law of Sima Shi and one of the leading meritorious ministers of the dynasty. After introduction of five ranks peerage was created Viscount of Juping 鉅平子 with apanage of 600 households. Following the founding of the dynasty he was enfeoffed as commandery duke of Juping 鉅平郡公 with apanage of 3000 households. He refused to accept such a high honor and was consequently created Marquis of Juping 鉅平侯.

Kuaiji 會稽公 – Sun of Wujun 吳郡孫氏

1. **Sun Xiu** 孫秀 – descendent of a younger brother of Sun Quan 孫權, ruler of Wu. During the reign of Sun Hao 孫皓 (probably in Taishi 6 that is 270 AD) he defected to the Jin and was immediately created Duke of Kuaiji 會稽公. After the fall of Wu in 280 AD he was demoted in rank and died during the Yongning Era (301 AD). There is no indication of his son Sun Jian 孫儉 succeeding to the title. Probably the peerage was abolished after 280 AD.

Lanling 蘭陵郡公 – Wei of Hedong 河東衛氏

1. **Wei Guan** 衛瓘 – first he had inherited Wei title of township maquis of Wen 閔鄉侯. When the last of the Wei emperors ascended the throne his apanage was increased. Later he

was to be enfeoffed again for quelling the rebellion in freshly conquered Shu but he declined the honor. Soon he was created Marquis of Ziyang 菑陽侯. The original fief was granted to his younger brother Wei Shi 衛實 who became village marquis of Kaiyang 開陽亭侯. At the beginning of the Taishi Era (265-274 AD) he was promoted as a *gongchen* of the Jin to Duke of Ziyang 菑陽公. He was murdered by Prince Wei of Chu in 291 AD but the whole coup was orchestrated by Empress Jia. After the execution of prince of Chu he was rehabilitated as an innocent victim of an unruly prince and he was posthumously enfeoffed for his merit gained during the conquest of Shu as commandery duke of Lanling 蘭陵郡公 and his apanage was increased by 3000 households. He was granted posthumous name Cheng 成公.

2. **Wei Heng** 衛恒 – son and presumptive heir to Wei Guan. He died together with his father in 291 AD and was only posthumously proclaimed Zhen, the Heir of Lanling 蘭陵貞世子.

3. **Wei Zao** 衛瓘 – son of Wei Heng, survived the massacre of his family in 291 AD and after his rehabilitation succeeded to the new ducal dignity as 2nd Duke of Lanling. Later Yue of Donghai enlarged the territory of the fief and changed the enfeoffment to commandery duke of Jiangxia 江夏郡公 with apanage of 8500 households. He was killed in Yongjia 5 (311 AD) during the fights with Liu Cong.

4. **Wei Chong** 衛崇 – great-grandson of Wei Guan (probably through his grandson Wei Jie 衛玠). Yuandi had him proclaimed the heir of Wei Guan. He duly succeeded to the peerage as 2nd Duke of Jiangxia.

Langling 朗陵公 – He of Chenguo 陳國何氏

1. **He Ceng** 何曾 – He inherited Wei dignity of village marquis of Yangwu 陽武亭侯 (according to the Sanguozhi village marquis of Chengyang 成陽亭侯). Later he was promoted to township marquis of Yingchang 潁昌鄉侯. In 264 AD he was created peerage Marquis of Langling 朗陵侯. After the establishment of the Jin Dynasty he was raised to Duke of Langling with apanage of 1800 households. He died in Xianning 4 (278 AD) in the age of eighty years and was granted posthumous name Xiao 孝公. At the end of the Taikang Era (280-289 AD) his son He Shao petitioned the throne asking for the name to be changed to Yuan 元公 and his request was granted.

2. **He Shao** 何劭 – son and heir to He Ceng, 2nd Duke of Langling. He died in 301 AD and was granted posthumous name Kang 康公.

3. **He Qi** 何岐 – son and heir to He Shao, 3rd Duke of Langling.

4.? **He Rui** 何夔 – according to different sources he was the heir to He Shao and the 3rd Duke of Langling.

Leling 樂陵郡公 – Shi of Bohai 勃海石氏

1. **Shi Bao** 石苞 – one of the main supporters of the Simas. He helped to quell the rebellion of Zhuge Dan and was enfeoffed as Marquis of Dongguang 東光侯. After the accession of Jin

Wudi he was created Commandery Duke of Leling 樂陵郡公. He died in Taishi 9 (272 AD) and was granted posthumous name Wu 武公.

2. **Shi Tong** 石統 – son and heir to Shi Bao, 2nd Duke of Leling. He was murdered by Prince Sima Lun of Zhao.

3. **Shi Shun** 石順 – son and heir presumptive to Shi Tong.

4. **Shi Yan** 石演 – clan grandson of Shi Tong. When Huidi resumed his imperial authority whole clan was rehabilitated and Shi Yan was made 3rd Duke of Leling.

Liaoxi 遼西公 – Duan 段氏, family of Xianbei origin

1. **Wuwuchen** 務勿塵 – Xianbei ruler of the Duan group of Eastern Xianbei. He married daughter of Wang Jun Duke of Boling. At Wang Jun's instigation Wuwuchen was created Duke of Liaoxi (302 AD). Duan rulers used it thereafter as one of their regnal titles even after the fall of the Western Jin. Only after the fall of Later Zhao one of Wuwuchen's descendants claimed royal authority as a King of Zhao.

2. **Jilujuan** 疾陸眷 – son and heir to Wuwuchen, 2nd Duke of Liaoxi.

3. **Mobo** 末波 – probably next Duke of Liaoxi

4. **Duan Ya** 段牙 – Duke of Liaoxi?

5. **Duan Liao** 段遼 – Duke of Liaoxi?

6. **Duan Lan** 段蘭 – Duke of Liaoxi?

7. **Duan Qin** 段勤 – proclaimed himself King of Zhao 趙王 following the fall of Later Zhao in 351 AD. later he submitted himself to Murong Jun of Yan.

Linhuai 臨淮公 – Xun of Yingchuan 潁川荀氏

1. **Xun Yi** 荀顗 – During the reign of Wei Shaodi he acquired dignity of lord of the royal domain. For his achievement in quelling Guanqiu Jian's rebellion he was created village marquis of Wansui 萬歲亭侯 with apanage of 400 households. During the Xianxi Era (264-265 AD) was promoted to township marquis of Wansui. After the establishment of the peerages he was created Marquis of Linhuai 臨淮侯. Following the founding of the Jin he was promoted to Duke of Linhuai 臨淮公 with apanage of 1800 households. He died in Taishi 10 (274 AD) and he was granted posthumous name Kang 康公. He died sonless.

2. **Xun Hui** 荀徽 – clan grandson of Xun Yi, 2nd Duke of Linhuai.

3. **Xun Xu** 荀序 – great-great-grandson of Xun Yi's elder brother, after the restoration he was made successor to the Linhuai Dukedom, 3rd Duke of Linhuai. After his death the lineage got interrupted again.

4. **Xun Heng** 荀恒 – younger son of Xun Xu. Created 4th Duke of Linhuai later during the reign of Xiaowudi (375-396 AD).

5. **Xun Longfu** 荀龍符 – son and heir to Xun Heng, 5th Duke of Linhuai. The fief was abolished after the establishment of the Liu Song Dynasty in 420 AD.

Lingchuan/Lingzhou 靈川縣公/靈州縣公 – Fu of Beidi 北地傅氏

1. **Fu Zhi** 傅祗 – for his achievement in execution of Yang Jun he should have been enfeoffed as a commandery duke with apanage of 8000 households but he refused to accept it. He did accept only a lesser dignity of prefecture duke of Lingchuan / Lingzhou with apanage of 1800 households. Remaining 2200 households were given to his son who was created village lord of Wuxiang 武鄉亭侯.

2. **Fu Xuan** 傅宣 – son and heir to Fu Zhi, 2nd Duke of Lingchuan.

3. **Fu Chong** 傅沖 – nephew and heir to Fu Xuan, probably 3rd Duke of Lingchuan.

Linqiu 廩丘公 – Cao of Peiguo 沛國曹氏

1. **Cao Xi** 曹翕 – son of Cao Hui, Wei Prince of Dongping 東平王曹徽. He inherited princely dignity and became 2nd Prince of Dongping but following the accession of the Jin he was created Duke of Linqiu.

Linwei 臨渭公 – Guo of Anping 安平郭氏

1. **Guo Jian** 郭建 – cousin of Empress Guo, consort of Wei Emperor Mingdi, during the Jin he was created Duke of Linwei.

2. **Guo Jia** 郭嘏 – son and heir to Guo Jian, 2nd Duke of Linwei.

Linxiang 臨湘縣公 – Sun of Wujun 吳郡孫氏

1. **Sun Hui** 孫惠 – scion of the ruling house of Wu. He followed Sima Jiong Prince of Qi in chastising Sima Lun of Zhao and was enfeoffed as prefecture lord of Jinxing 晉興侯. Later he entered service of Sima Yue of Donghai and for his achievement in welcoming Huidi back into his capital was created prefecture duke of Linxiang 臨湘縣公.

Linying 臨潁縣公 – Xun of Yingchuan 潁川荀氏

1. **Xun Zu** 荀組 – During the Upheaval of the Eight Princes he was created Baron of Chengyang 成陽縣男. At the beginning of the Jianxing Era (313-316 AD) he was raised to the dignity of prefecture Duke of z Linying 臨潁縣公 as an uncle of Emperor Mindi. After the fall of Chang'an he fled to the South where he died in Yongchang Era (322 AD) in the age of sixty-five and was granted posthumous name 元公.

2. **Xun Yi** 荀奕 – son and heir to Xun Zu, 2nd Duke of Linying. He died in Xianhe 7 (332 AD) and was granted posthumous name Ding 定公.

Lu 魯郡公 – Jia of Pingyang 平陽賈氏

1. **Jia Chong** 賈充 – He inherited Wei title of village marquis of Yangli 陽里亭侯 with apanage of 750 households. Later he was promoted to township marquis of Xuanyang 宣陽鄉侯 with apanage of 1000 households and later to township marquis of Anyang 安陽鄉侯 with apanage increased by 1200 households. After the introduction of the peerages Jia Chong was first created Marquis of Linyi 臨沂侯 and then, when Wudi succeeded to the royal throne of Jin domain Marquis of Linying 臨潁侯. After the establishment of the dynasty he was promoted to commandery Duke of Lu. In Xianning 3 (277 AD) his fief was enlarged to encompass the territory of Gongqiu 公丘 in Peiguo. He died in 282 AD and was given posthumous name Wu 武公.

2. **Jia Limin** 賈黎民 – son and heir presumptive to Jia Chong. He died in infancy and posthumously was created Duke Shang of Lu 魯殤公.

3. **Han Mi** 韓謐 – grandson of Jia Chong, son of his youngest daughter. Jia Chong's widow proclaimed him adoptive son and heir to Jia Limin. Wudi confirmed his succession and Jia Mi became 3rd Duke of Lu. He was executed together with Empress Jia during Sima Lu's coup in 301 AD.

4. **Jia Tu** 賈禿 – After the fall of Sima Lun of Zhao Jia Chong's lineage was rehabilitated. His clan grandson Jia Zhong 賈眾 should have succeeded to the dignity but he refused and Jia Tu, Chong's clan great-grandson was installed as 4th Duke of Lu. He may have been son of Jia Zhong.

5. **Jia Zhan** 賈湛 – great-grandson of Jia Chong. During the Yongxing Era (304-305 AD) he was installed as the 5th Duke of Lu. However, he fell victim to the warfare and the fief got extinct.

Mouping 牟平公 – family of unknown origin

1. **Ge Yu** 葛旃 – follower of Prince Jiong of Qi. After Jiong's successful coup he was created Duke of Mouping (301 AD). He did not survive his master's fall.

Pingshou 平壽公 – Zheng of Xingyang 滎陽鄭氏

1. **Zheng Qiu** 鄭球 – son of Zheng Mo, Marquis of Miling 密陵侯. He joined Prince Sima Ying of Chengdu in his fight against Lun of Zhao and was rewarded by being created Duke of Pingshou 平壽公. He died in Yongjia 2 (308 AD) and was granted posthumous name Yuan 元公.

Pingyin 平陰公 – family of unknown origin

1. **Wei Yi** 衛毅 – follower of Prince Jiong of Qi. After Jiong’s successful coup he was created Duke of Pingyin (301 AD). He did not survive his master’s fall.

Qi 齊公 – Duan 段氏, family of Xianbei origin

1. **Duan Kan** 段龕 – Xianbei leader who submitted to the authority of the Eastern Jin. In 351 AD Mudi created him Duke of Qi. He died 357 AD during the fighting with Murong Ke of Yan.

Quling 曲陵公 – Xun of Yingchuan 潁川荀氏

1. **Xun Song** 荀崧 – son and heir to Xun Yun, 2nd Marquis of Anling 安陵侯 and eldest daughter of Cao Cao. At the beginning of the Taishi Era (266-274 AD) he was made to succeed to his father’s title. After the fall of Luoyang he had the imperial mounds repaired and for this achievement was created prefecture Duke of Wuyang 舞陽縣公. Later his fief was changed to that of Quling 曲陵公. He served at the court of Emperor Yuandi in Jiankang and after quelling of Wang Dun’s rebellion he was rewarded by an additional title of Count of Pingle. He died in Xianhe 3 (328 AD) in the age of sixty-seven. He was granted posthumous name Jing 敬公.

2. **Xun Rui** 荀爽 – son and heir to Xun Song, 2nd Duke of Quling.

3. **Xun Ji** 荀籍 – son and heir to Xun Rui, 3rd Duke of Quling.

Shandu 山都縣公 – Wang of Donghai 東海王氏

1. **Wang Kai** 王愷 – imperial *waiqi*, relative of Wudi’s mother. For his achievement in execution of Yang Jun he was created prefecture Duke of Shandu 山都縣公 with apanage of 1800 households. After his death he was granted posthumous name Chou 醜公.

Shangluo 上洛郡公 – Suo of Dunhuang 敦煌索氏

1. **Suo Chen** 索綝 – originally enfeoffed as Count of Yiju 弋居伯 for his achievement of helping to install Emperor Mindi. For military achievement in fighting Zhao forces created commandery Duke of Shangluo 上洛郡公 with apanage of 10 000 households. He later defected to Zhao.

Shanggu 上谷郡公 – Meng of Bohai 勃海孟氏

1 **Meng Guan** 孟觀 – For his achievement in chastising Yang Jun he was created commandery Duke of Shanggu 上谷郡公. His son died prematurely and Meng Guan himself was executed after the fall of Lun of Zhao. The fief was abolished.

Shanyang 山陽公 – Liu of Zhuojun 涿郡劉氏

1. **Liu Kang** 劉康 – grandson of the last Han Emperor Xiandi 漢獻帝 (189-220 AD), during the Jin he was created Duke of Shanyang to continue the offerings to the Han ancestors. He died in 270 AD.

2. **Liu Jin** 劉瑾 – son and heir to Liu Kang, 2nd Duke of Shanyang. He died in 274 AD.

3. **Liu Qiu** 劉秋 – probably son of Liu Jin, 3rd Duke of Shanyang. He was killed in 307 AD when the rebels plundered Pingyuan.

Shaoling 邵陵公 – Cao of Peiguo 沛國曹氏

1. **Cao Fang** 曹芳 – an ex-emperor of the Wei Dynasty. He was deposed in 254 AD and created Prince of Qi 齊王. After the abdication of the Wei he was demoted to Duke of Shaoling. He died in 274 AD.

Shouguang 壽光公 – Zheng of Xingyang 滎陽鄭氏

1. **Zheng Chong** 鄭沖 – important Wei minister, after 260 AD he was created Marquis of Shouguang 壽光侯. After the founding of the dynasty he was promoted to Duke of Shouguang 壽光公. He died in Taishi 10 (274 AD) and was granted posthumous name Cheng 成公. He died sonless.

2. **Zheng Hui** 鄭徽 – nephew of Zheng Chong, 2nd Duke of Shouguang.

3. **Zheng Jian** 鄭簡 – son and heir to Zheng Hui, 3rd Duke of Shouguang.

Suiling 睢陵公 – Wang of Langye 琅邪王氏

1. **Wang Xiang** 王祥 – important courtier of the Wei. In 254 AD he was enfeoffed as lord of the royal domain. For his part in quelling Guanqiu Jian's rebellion he was created village Marquis of Wansui 萬歲亭侯 and his apanage was increased by 400 households. After the establishment of the peerages he was created Marquis of Suiling 睢陵侯 with apanage of 1600 households. After 266 AD promoted to Duke of Suiling. He died in Taishi 4 (268 AD) and was granted posthumous name Yuan 元公.

2. **Wang Fu** 王馥 – third son of Wang Xiang, 2nd Duke of Suiling. He was granted posthumous name Xiao 孝公.

3. **Wang Gen** 王根 – son and heir to Wang Fu, 3rd Duke of Suiling.

Wei 衛公 – allegedly scion of the ruling house of Zhou

1. **Ji Shu** 姬畧 – created Duke of Wei, he died in Taishi 7 (271 AD).

Wucheng 烏程公 – Zhou of Yixing 義興周氏

1. **Zhou Qi** 周玘 – member of ancient Wu family of local influence in Wujun. At the beginning of the 4th century he had repeatedly quelled rebellions in the south maintaining authority of the Jin ruling house. For his achievements he was enfeoffed as prefecture lord of Wucheng 烏程縣侯. During the Jianxing Era (313-316 AD) Sima Rui created him Duke of Wucheng 烏程公. He was granted posthumous name Zhonglie 忠烈公.

2. **Zhou Xie** 周勰 – son and heir to Zhou Qi, 2nd Duke of Wucheng.

Wuyang 舞陽縣公 – Xun of Yingchuan 潁川荀氏

1. **Xun Song** 荀崧 – son and heir to Xun Yun, 2nd Marquis of Anling 安陵侯 and eldest daughter of Cao Cao. At the beginning of the Taishi Era (266-274 AD) he was made to succeed to his father's title. After the fall of Luoyang he had the imperial mounds repaired and for this achievement was created prefecture Duke of Wuyang 舞陽縣公. Later his fief was changed to that of Quling 曲陵公. He served at the court of Emperor Yuandi in Jiankang and after quelling of Wang Dun's rebellion he was rewarded by an additional title of Count of Pingle. He died in Xianhe 3 (328 AD) in the age of sixty-seven. He was granted posthumous name Jing 敬公.

Xiaohuang 小黃公 – family of unknown origin

1. **Lu Ji** 路季 – follower of Prince Jiong of Qi. After Jiong's successful coup he was created Duke of Xiaohuang (301 AD). He did not survive his master's fall.

Xihua 西華縣公 – Xun of Yingchuan 潁川荀氏

1. **Xun Fan** 荀藩 – For his achievements in emperor's punitive action against Prince Jiong of Qi he was created prefecture Duke of Xihua 西華縣公. He died in Jianxing 1 (313 AD) in the age of sixty-nine and was granted posthumous name Cheng 成公.

2. **Xun Sui** 荀邃 – elder son of Xun Fan, 2nd Duke of Xihua He fled to Jiankang and served Emperor Yuandi. After he died he was granted posthumous name Jing 靖公.

3. **Xun Wang** 荀汪 – son and heir to Xun Sui, 3rd Duke of Xihua.

Xincheng 新城郡公 – Liu of Peiguo 沛國劉氏

1. **Liu Hong** 劉弘 – for his achievements he was created Duke of Xuancheng 宣城公. Prince Yue of Donghai had him posthumously enfeoffed as commandery Duke of Xincheng 新城郡公 with ceremonial name Yuan 元公.

2. **Liu Fan** 劉璠 – son and heir to Liu Hong, 2nd Duke of Xincheng.

Xingjin 興晉公 – Yang of Taishan 太山羊氏

1. **Yang Xuanzhi** 羊玄之 – father to Empress Hui 惠皇后, second consort of Emperor Huidi. As the father of the empress he was created Marquis of Xingjin 興晉侯. Later he was promoted to the rank of duke. He died in 303 AD.

Xiping 西平郡公 – Zhang of Anding 安定張氏

1. **Zhang Gui** 張軌 – Regional Inspector of Liangzhou in Gansu. For successful defense of his regional command against incursions of the warlike Xianbei he was initially enfeoffed as township lord of Anle 安樂鄉侯 with apanage of 1000 households. At the beginning of the Yongjia Era (307-312 AD) Zhang Gui defeated Liu Cong of Zhao in Hedong and relieved besieged Luoyang. Emperor Huaidi promoted him to commandery Duke of Xiping 西平郡公. Zhang Gui refused to accept. Later he sent supplies to the capital suffering from famine and for this merit was created Marquis of Bacheng 霸城侯. He continued to send reinforcements to Chang'an and was to be enfeoffed as Duke of Xiping again, but he refused to accept the honor. The court promoted him only posthumously in 314 AD when he was also granted ritual name Wu 武公.

2. **Zhang Shi** 張寔- son and heir to Zhang Gui. Initially he was enfeoffed as village lord of Jianwu 建武亭侯 for quelling local uprising of Cao Qu in Liangzhou. Later he was promoted to prefecture lord of Fulu 福祿縣侯. After the death of his father he was raised to the position of lord of Liangzhou. Emperor Mindi confirmed him in this position and conferred upon him title of 2nd Duke of Xiping. He was murdered in 320 AD. His family conferred upon him ritual name Zhao 昭公, but Emperor Yuandi granted him instead the name Yuan 元. As his son Zhang Jun 張駿 was still a minor, Shi's younger brother Zhang Mao became semi-independent ruler of Liangzhou.

3. **Zhang Jun** 張駿 – son and heir to Zhang Shi. Initially he had inherited dignity of Marquis of Bacheng (in 316 AD) and later his uncle Zhang Mao installed him as the 3rd Duke of Xiping. Jin court subsequently confirmed this title. He succeeded his uncle and ruled for twenty-two years as lord of Liangzhou and died when he was forty years of age. Liang posthumous name was Wen 文公 but Emperor Mudi conferred on him official name Zhongcheng 忠成公.

4. **Zhang Chonghua** 張重華 – son and heir to Zhang Jun, 4th Duke of Xiping. He died in the age of twenty-seven after reign of eleven years. First, he was worshipped as Zhao 昭公 then Huan 桓公, and Emperor Mudi conferred on him official posthumous name Jinglie 敬烈公.

5. **Zhang Yaoling** 張耀靈 – son and heir to Zhang Chonghua, 5th Duke of Xiping. His uncle Zhang Zuo Marquis of Changning 長寧侯張祚 conspired against him and had him deposed. Yaoling was degraded to Marquis of Liangning 涼寧侯 and murdered soon afterwards. He was granted posthumous name Ai 哀公.

6. **Zhang Xuanjing** 張玄靚 – younger brother of Zhang Yaoling. After three years' rule of Zhang Zuo who proclaimed himself Duke of Liang and later an emperor there was a rebellion which brought Zhang Xuanjing to the throne. He accepted traditional ducal title becoming the 6th Duke of Xiping. In 361 AD Emperor Xiaowudi confirmed his titles and position. In 363 AD Xuanjing was murdered by his uncle Zhang Tianxi. He was fourteen years old and ruled

for nine years. He was given posthumous name Chong 沖公, but Emperor Xiaowudi granted him another name, Jingdao 敬悼公.

7. **Zhang Tianxi** 張天錫 – younger son of Zhang Jun. He proclaimed himself Regional Inspector of Liangzhou and 7th Duke of Xiping. The southern court confirmed his titles in the Taihe Era (366-371 AD). In Taiyuan 1 (376 AD) he was forced to submit to Fu Jian King of Former Qin and the independent dominion of the Zhangs known as Former Liang came to an end. Zhang Tianxi was taken to Chang'an where he was created Guiyi Marquis 歸義侯. After the collapse of the Former Qin in 384 AD he returned to the South where he was enfeoffed as commandery Duke of Xiping 西平郡公.

Xuancheng 宣城 – Liu of Peiguo 沛國劉氏

1. **Liu Hong** 劉弘 – for his achievements he was created Duke of Xuancheng 宣城公. Prince Yue of Donghai had him posthumously enfeoffed as commandery Duke of Xincheng 新城郡公 with ceremonial name Yuan 元公.

Yanling 延陵縣公 – Gao of Chenliu 陳留高氏

1. **Gao Guang** 高光 – during the Upheaval of the Eight Princes he was created Duke of Yanling for his achievement in campaigning against Prince Sima Ying of Chengdu (probably in 307 AD). He died one year later.

2. **Gao Tao** 高韜 – son and heir presumptive to Gao Guang. For misconduct during the mourning period and intriguing against the throne he was executed before he actually succeeded to his father's dukedom.

Yidu 宜都公 – family of unknown, probably southern origin

1. **Bu Chan** 步闡 – Wu military commander who had defected to the Jin in 272 AD. He was created Duke of Yidu.

Yuanling 苑陵縣公 – Hua of Pingyuan 平原華氏

1. **Hua Heng** 華恆 – husband of a daughter of Wudi. Originally he was lord of the royal domain but following the accession of Emperor Mindi he was created prefecture Duke of Yuanling. After the fall of the Jin he fled to the South. His enfeoffment was not respected by Emperor Yuandi and it was only after the rebellion of Wang Dun that Hua Heng was enfeoffed anew, this time as prefecture lord of Yuanling.

Zhuangwu 壯武郡公 – Zhang of Fanyang 范陽張氏

1. **Zhang Hua** 張華 – after the establishment of the dynasty he became lord of the royal domain. He was one of the advocates of the Wu campaign in 280 AD and after the conquest was rewarded by being created prefecture lord of Guangwu. His fief was increased by 10 000 households. He became leading minister of the government of the Jia faction, was enfeoffed as commandery Duke of Zhuangwu 壯武郡公 and subsequently murdered by Sima Lun of

Zhao in 300 AD in the age of sixty-one. Both his sons were executed alongside their father. In 303 AD Zhang Hua was posthumously rehabilitated and his ducal dignity was restored.

2. **Zhang Yu** 張輿 – son of Zhang Wei 張韙, younger son of Zhang Hua. He succeeded to the ducal peerage as the 2nd Duke of Zhuangwu. (in other sources he is named as the 2nd prefecture lord of Guangwu)

Zhuxu 朱虛縣公 – Liu of Donglai 東萊劉氏

1. **Liu Tun** 劉暉 – he assisted Prince Sima Yi of Changsha in conspiracy against Jiong of Qi. As a reward he was created prefecture Duke of Zhuxu 朱虛縣公 with apanage of 1800 households. After the death of his benefactor he lost his peerage. His dukedom was restored following the return of Huidi back to Luoyang. He died as a prisoner of Shi Le.

Ziyang 蓄陽公 – Wei of Hedong 河東衛氏

1. **Wei Guan** 衛瓘 – initially he inherited his father's Wei title of township Marquis of Wen 閩鄉侯. Following the conquest of Shu he should have been enfeoffed but he refused further honors. Nevertheless he was created Marquis of Ziyang 蓄陽侯. At the beginning of the Taishi Era (265-274 AD) he was promoted to Duke of Ziyang 蓄陽公 as one of the meritorious ministers. He was murdered in 291 AD by Prince Wei of Chu at behest of Empress Jia. Soon he was rehabilitated and posthumously enfeoffed as Commandery Duke of Lanling 蘭陵郡公 and the fief was increased by 3000 households. He was granted posthumous name 成公.

Marquises

Bacheng 霸城侯 – Zhang of Anding 安定張氏

1. **Zhang Gui** 張軌 – Regional Inspector of Liangzhou in Gansu. For successful defense of his regional command against incursions of the warlike Xianbei he was initially enfeoffed as township lord of Anle 安樂鄉侯 with apanage of 1000 households. At the beginning of the Yongjia Era (307-312 AD) Zhang Gui defeated Liu Cong of Zhao in Hedong and relieved besieged Luoyang. Emperor Huaidi promoted him to commandery Duke of Xiping 西平郡公. Zhang Gui refused to accept. Later he sent supplies to the capital suffering from famine and for this merit was created Marquis of Bacheng 霸城侯. He continued to send reinforcements to Chang'an and was to be enfeoffed as Duke of Xiping again, but he refused to accept the honor. The court promoted him only posthumously in 314 AD when he was also granted ritual name Wu 武公.

Daliang 大梁侯 – Lu of Fanyang 范陽盧氏

1. **Lu Qin** 盧欽 – originally inherited Wei title of village marquis of Dali 大利亭侯. Later he was promoted to Marquis of Daliang 大梁侯. He died Xianning 4 (278 AD) and was granted posthumous name 元侯.

2. **Lu Fu** 盧浮 – son and heir to Lu Qin, 2nd Marquis of Daliang.

Danyang 丹楊侯 – Sun of Wujun 吳郡孫氏

1. **Sun Kai** 孫楷 – scion of ruling house of Wu. He used to be Marquis of Lincheng 臨成侯 in his own right. In Xianning 2 (276 AD) he defected to the Jin being afraid of Sun Hao. Wudi had him created Marquis of Danyang 丹楊侯.

Dingxiang 定襄侯 – Liu of Zhongshan 中山劉氏

1. **Liu Yu** 劉輿 – loyal follower of Prince Yue of Donghai. He was enfeoffed posthumously for his “past merit” shortly before the fall of Luoyang in 312 AD. He was created Marquis of Dingxiang 定襄侯 and granted ritual name Zhen 貞.

2. **Liu Yan** 劉演 – son and heir to Liu Yu, 2nd Marquis of Dingxiang. He died fighting Shi Le after 317 AD.

Dongping 東平郡侯 – Gou of Henei 河內苟氏

1. **Gou Xi** 苟晞 – during the regency of Prince Yue of Donghai he was created commandery Marquis of Dongping for his military merit. The apanage of his fief was 10 000 households. After the death of Prince of Donghai he took charge of government affairs and was promoted to a duke.

Guanglu 廣陸侯 – Li of Liaodong 遼東李氏

1. **Li Yin** 李胤 – loyal supporter of the Sima cause, initially lord of the royal domain and after establishment of the peerages he was created Count of Guanglu. After Wudi’s accession he was promoted to Marquis of Guanglu. He died in 282 AD and was granted posthumous name Cheng 成侯.

2. **Li Zhi** 李志 – grandson and heir to Yin. Yin’s first-born Li Gu died young and his son inherited the fief and became 2nd Marquis of Guanglu.

Guangrao 廣饒侯 – family of unknown origin

1. **Cao Yi** 曹嶷 – in 317 AD he is mentioned as one of the co-signers of a petition urging Sima Rui to ascend the throne. Apparently, he was Marquis of Guangrao. He died after 321 AD.

Guangwu 廣武侯 – Liu of Zhongshan 中山劉氏

1. **Liu Kun** 劉琨 – scion of Han royal house, relative of Sima Lun Prince of Zhao. For his merit in assisting the emperor in his return to Luoyang he was created Marquis of Guangwu 廣武侯 with apanage of 2000 households. He was murdered in 318 AD by Xianbei ruler Duan Pidi. Yuandi granted him posthumous name Min 愍侯.

2. **Liu Qun** 劉群 – son and heir to Liu Kun, Heir Apparent of Guangwu 廣武世子. He was taken captive by Shi Jilong and served in official position at the court of Later Zhao. He died after the fall of Ran Wei.

Guangxing 廣興侯 – family of unknown origin

1. **Zhu Zheng** 朱整 – Marquis of Guangxing. He died in 289 AD.

Guiming 歸命侯 – Sun of Wujun 吳郡孫氏

1. **Sun Hao** 孫皓 – the last ruler of Wu. In 280 AD he was created Guiming Marquis (Return to Allegiance). He died in 284 AD.

Guiyi 歸義侯 – family of non-Han origin

1. **XY** – a son of King of Shanshan 鄯善 (Kroraina) in Eastern Turkestan. When he came to the Jin court in 283 AD with a tributary mission he was created Guiyi Marquis (Return to Righteousness).

Jibei 濟北侯 – Xun of Yingchuan 潁川荀氏

1. **Xun Xu** 荀勗 – meritorious minister of the Jin, initially created Viscount of Anyang 安陽子 with apanage of 1000 households. After the establishment of the dynasty he should have been promoted to commandery Duke of Jibei 濟北郡公 but Xun Xu refused to accept and followed the example of Yang Hu who was willing to accept only a lesser title of marquis. He died in 289 AD and was granted posthumous name Cheng 成侯.

2. **Xun Ji** 荀輯 – son and heir to Xun Xu, 2nd Marquis of Jibei. He was granted posthumous name Jian 簡侯.

3. **Xun Jun** 荀峻 – son and heir to Xun Ji, 3rd Marquis of Jibei. He was granted posthumous name Lie 烈侯.

4. **Xun Shi** 荀識 – son of Xun Jun's younger brother, inherited the title and became the 4th Marquis of Jibei.

Jingling 京陵侯 (also **Jiangling** 江陵侯) – Wang of Taiyuan 太原王氏

1. **Wang Chang** 王昶 – Wei minister, during the Zhengshi Era (240-248 AD) he was enfeoffed as Village Marquis of Wuguan 武觀亭侯. In 250 AD he attacked Wu and Shu positions on the northern bank of the Yangzi and for his achievements was raised to the dignity of Marquis of Jingling 京陵侯. He became staunch supporter of the Simas. He died in Ganlu 4 (259 AD) and was granted posthumous name Mu 穆侯.

1. **Wang Hun** 王渾 – son and heir to Wang Chang 王昶. He succeeded to his father's peerage and became 2nd Marquis of Jingling 京陵侯. At the beginning of the Taishi Era the apanage was increased by 1800 households. He acquired great achievements during the campaign

against Wu. For his contribution to the final victory he was promoted to the ducal rank and his apanage was increased by 8000 households. At the same time his younger son Wang Cheng 王澄 was granted title of a village lord (*tinghou*) and younger brother Wang Zhen 王湛 title of a lord of the royal domain (*guanneihou*). According to Pei Songzhi's commentary to *Sanguozhi* one of his sons was enfeoffed as Marquis of Jiangling 江陵侯. He died in Yuankang 7 (297 AD) and was granted posthumous name of Yuan 元公. The text of the Jinshu is confused. It states that Wang Hun's eldest son Wang Shang 王尚 died prematurely and therefore his second son Wang Ji inherited the title, yet the biography of Wang Ji claims that he died before his father and one of his sons succeeded to the dukedom.

Juping 鉅平侯 – Yang of Taishan 太山羊氏

1. **Yang Hu** 羊祜 – brother-in-law of Sima Shi and important meritorious minister of the Jin. In 264 AD he was created Viscount of Juping 鉅平子 with apanage of 600 households. After the abdication of the Wei he should have been promoted to the rank of commandery duke with apanage of 3000 households but he refused the honor and accepted only a lesser dignity of Marquis of Juping 鉅平侯. Later, in 277 AD during the preparations of the Wu campaign Wudi established new commandery of Nancheng 南城郡 and bestowed it upon Yang Hu as commandery marquisate. He became Marquis of Nancheng 南城侯. He died in 278 AD and wanted to revert to the original dignity of Juping. Wudi granted his dying wish. He died without a son of his own.
2. **Yang Ji** 羊暨 – son of Yang Hu's elder brother. He was nominated as successor but refused to accept as the lineage of his own father would have died out with him.
3. **Yang Yi** 羊伊 – younger brother of Yang Ji. When Yang Ji refused to accept the dignity of Juping Wudi chose Yang Yi as a new heir presumptive. However, Yang Yi refused as well.
4. **Yang Pian** 羊篇 – younger brother of both Yang Ji and Yang Yi. In 281AD he became 2nd Marquis of Juping. He died young and the dignity became temporarily extinct.
5. **Yang Faxing** 羊法興 – son of great-great-grandson of Yang Hu's elder brother. In the Taiyuan Era (376-396 AD) he was chosen as alternative successor and inherited vacant dignity of Marquis of Juping with apanage of 5000 households. Later he was executed as accomplice of Huan Xuan and the fief was abolished.

Lanling 蘭陵侯 –Wang of Donghai 東海王氏

1. **Wang Lang** 王朗 – Wei official, initially village marquis of Anling 安陵亭侯 (Han title). After establishment of the Wei Dynasty he was promoted to township marquis of Leping 樂平鄉侯. Later created Marquis of Lanling 蘭陵侯 with apanage of 1200 households. He died in Taihe 2 (228 AD) and was granted posthumous name Cheng 成侯.
2. **Wang Su** 王肅 – son and heir to Wang Lang, 2nd Marquis of Lanling. His daughter was married to Sima Zhao and became mother of Emperor Wudi. For his meritorious service to the Sima regents his apanage was increased to 2200 households. He died in 256 AD and was granted posthumous name Jing 景侯.

3. **Wang Yun** 王惲 – son and heir to Wang Su, 3rd Marquis of Lanling. He died childless and the dignity became temporarily extinct.

4. **Wang Xun** 王恂 – younger son of Wang Su, in 263 AD he was created Marquis of Lanling. In 264 AD he was created Viscount of Zheng 丞子. He died in 278 AD. He might have been given the original marquisate of Lanling after the establishment of the dynasty.

Liangzou 梁鄒侯 – Xie of Jinan 濟南解氏

1. **Xie Xiu** 解脩 – he was created Marquis of Liangzou 梁鄒侯 following Wudi's accession as Emperor of the Jin.

2. **Xie Xi** 解系 – son and heir to Xie Xiu, 2nd Marquis of Liangzou. He was murdered by Sima Lun Prince of Zhao and posthumously rehabilitated only in Yongning 2 (302 AD).

Linhai 臨海侯 – Houshi of Donglai 東萊侯史氏

1. **Houshi Guang** 侯史光 – During the Xianxi Era (264-265 AD) he was appointed lord within the passes. Later he was created Marquis of Linhai.

2. **Houshi Xuan** 侯史玄 – son and heir to Houshi Guang, 2nd Marquis of Linhai.

3. **Houshi Shi** 侯史施 – son and heir to Houshi Xuan, 3rd Marquis of Linhai.

Linhai 臨海侯 – Pei of Hedong 河東裴氏

1. **Pei Kai** 裴楷 – After Wudi's death he was created Marquis of Linhai 臨海侯 with anapanage of 2000 households. He was granted posthumous name Yuan 元侯.

2. **Pei Yu** 裴輿 – son and heir to Pei Kai, 2nd Marquis of Linhai. He was granted posthumous name Jian 簡侯.

Linjin 臨晉侯 – Yang of Hongnong 弘農楊氏

1. **Yang Jun** 楊駿 – father of the second empress of Emperor Wudi and as such he was created Marquis of Linjin 臨晉侯 in 276 AD. He died during a coup orchestrated by Empress Jia in 291 AD. The fief was abolished.

2. **Yang Chao** 楊超 – distant relative of Yang Jun. During the Yongning Era (301 AD) he was formally installed as Yang Jun's heir but he was created only village lord of Wuting (also pronounced as Maoting or Muting) 務亭侯. It was originally Wei noble dignity inherited in the family for couple of generations (father of Wudi's first empress was also village marquis of Wuting).

Miling 密陵侯 – Zheng of Xingyang 滎陽鄭氏

1. **Zheng Mao** 鄭袤 – during the Wei he was enfeoffed as village marquis of Guangchang 廣昌亭侯. After 260 AD he was promoted to township marquis of Ancheng 安城鄉侯 with apanage of 1000 households. With the introduction of the peerages in 264 AD created Count of Miling 密陵伯. Following the founding of the dynasty he was promoted to Marquis of Miling 密陵侯. He died in Taishi 9 (273 AD) at the age of eighty-five. He was granted posthumous name Yuan 元侯.

2. **Zheng Mo** 鄭默 – son and heir to Zheng Mao, 2nd Marquis of Miling. He died in Taikang 1 (280 AD) at the age of sixty-eight years and was granted posthumous name Cheng 成侯.

3. **Zheng Qiu** 鄭球 – son and heir to Zheng Mo, 3rd Marquis of Miling. For his achievement in chastising Lun of Zhao he was created prefecture Duke of Pingshou 平壽縣公.

Minyang 敏陽侯 – Wang of Taiyuan 太原王氏

1. **Wang Yu** 王聿 – younger son of Wang Ji of the dukes of Jingling, born of concubine. While his elder brother succeeded to the ducal peerage of their grandfather Wang Hun, Wang Yu was given inheritance of his step-mother, Imperial Princess of Changshan 常山公主 (a daughter of Wudi) and created Marquis of Minyang 敏陽侯.

Moling 秣陵侯 – Dai of Guangling 廣陵戴氏

1. **Dai Yuan** 戴淵 – for his merit gained in quelling various rebellions he was created Marquis of Moling 秣陵侯. He served Yue of Donghai and later fled to Jiankang. He was murdered at the instigation of Wang Dun in 322 AD and given posthumous name Jian 簡侯.

2. **Dai Miao** 戴邈 - younger brother of Dai Yuan. He had survived Wang Dun's rebellion but it is not clear if he had his own title or succeeded to the dignity of his brother.

3. **Dai Mi** 戴謐 – son and heir to Dai Miao. He had succeeded to his father's dignity, but we don't know what dignity it was. It may have been marquissate of Moling but it is nowhere confirmed.

Nancheng 南城侯 – Yang of Taishan 太山羊氏

1. **Yang Hu** 羊祜 – brother-in-law of Sima Shi and important meritorious minister of the Jin. In 264 AD he was created Viscount of Juping 鉅平子 with apanage of 600 households. After the abdication of the Wei he should have been promoted to the rank of commandery duke with apanage of 3000 households but he refused the honor and accepted only a lesser dignity of Marquis of Juping 鉅平侯. Later, in 277 AD during the preparations of the Wu campaign Wudi established new commandery of Nancheng 南城郡 and bestowed it upon Yang Hu as commandery marquissate. He became Marquis of Nancheng 南城侯. He died in 278 AD and wanted to revert to the original dignity of Juping. Wudi granted his dying wish and gave him posthumous name Cheng 成侯. He died without a son of his own.

Nanxiang 南鄉侯 – Wang of Langye 琅邪王氏

1. **Wang Cheng** 王澄 – he served Prince Ying of Chengdu and later Yue of Donghai. For his achievement in assisting the emperor in his return to Luoyang he was created Marquis of Nanxiang 南鄉侯. He was murdered by Wang Dun when he tried to reach the southern court in Jiankang. Later he was given posthumous name Xian 憲侯. It seems that his peerage was not revived in the South and his son is not mentioned as 2nd Marquis of Nanxiang.

Ping'a 平阿縣侯 – Zhao of Huainan 淮南趙氏

1. **Zhao You** 趙誘 – he served Wang Dun in the south and for his achievements in quelling couple of rebellions he was created prefecture lord of Ping'a 平阿縣侯. He died in a battle and was granted posthumous name Jing 敬侯. His elder son died alongside his father and younger Zhao Yin 趙胤 served the Eastern Jin. It is unsure if he had ever succeeded to the lordship though.

Pingchun 平春侯 – Hu of Huainan 淮南胡氏

1. **Hu Wei** 胡威 – During Wudi's reign he was created Marquis of Pingchun. He died in 280 AD and was granted posthumous name Lie 烈侯.

2. **Hu Yi** 胡奕 – son and heir to Hu Wei, 2nd Marquis of Pingchun.

Qi 祁侯 – Li of Shangdang 上黨李氏

1. **Li Xi** 李憇 – supporter of the Simas. After establishment of the dynasty he was created Marquis of Qi 祁侯. He was granted posthumous name Cheng 成侯.

2. **Li Zan** 李贊 – son and heir to Li Xi, 2nd Marquis of Qi.

Qingquan 清泉侯 – Fu of Beidi 北地傅氏

1. **Fu Xuan** 傅玄 – initially Viscount of Chungu 鶉觚子, posthumously created Marquis of Qingquan and granted ritual name Gang 剛侯.

2. **Fu Xian** 傅咸 – son and heir to Fu Xuan. 2nd Marquis of Qingquan. He died in 294 AD and was granted posthumous name Zhen 貞侯.

3. **Fu Fu** 傅敷 – son and heir to Fu Xian, 3rd Marquis of Qingquan.

Rongcheng 容城侯 – Lu of Fanyang 范陽盧氏

1. Lu Yu 盧毓 – during the Wei initially enfeoffed as village marquis of Gaole 高樂亭侯. Later he was promoted to township marquis of Daliang 大梁鄉侯. He died in 257 AD. Shortly before his death he was created Marquis of Rongcheng 容城侯 with apanage of 2300 households and was later granted posthumous name Cheng 成侯.

2. Lu Fan 盧藩 – grandson and heir to Lu Yu. He might have been 2nd Marquis of Rongcheng but it is not sure if the dignity survived the dynastic transition in 266 AD.

Wanling 宛陵侯 – Tao of Danyang 丹陽陶氏

1 **Tao Huang** 陶璜 – Wu Regional Inspector of Jiaozhou. After 280 AD he was confirmed in his office by Emperor Wudi and he was also created Marquis of Wanling 宛陵侯. Tao Huang's descendants remained prominent local power in the south till the end of the Eastern Jin but inheritance of the marquissate is not confirmed by the sources.

Wuchang 武昌侯 – Pei of Hedong 河東裴氏

1. **Pei Gai** 裴該- younger son of Pei Wei 2nd Duke of Julu. For his father's merit in execution of Zang Jun he was created Marquis of Wuchang 武昌侯. He was married to an imperial princess.

Wudang 武當侯 – Teng of Nanyang 南陽滕氏

1. **Teng Xiu/You** 滕脩 – Wu general and Marquis of Xi'e 西鄂侯, Regional Inspector in Guangzhou. He submitted to the authority of the Jin in 280 AD and was subsequently created Marquis of Wudang 武當侯. He died in Taikang 9 (288 AD) and was granted posthumous name Sheng 聲侯. His son and heir did not like it and in the end secured different ritual name, Zhong 忠侯.

2 **Teng Bing** 滕並 – son and heir to Teng Xiu, 2nd Marquis of Wudang.

Wuling 武陵侯 – Wang of Langye 琅邪王氏

1. **Wang Yan** 王衍 – one of the leading ministers of Huaidi's court. He defended Luoyang against attacks of Shi Le and Wang Mi and was duly enfeoffed as Marquis of Wuling 武陵侯. But he refused to accept this honor. Later he was captured by Shi Le and executed.

Wuqiang 武強侯 – Lu of Fanyang 范陽盧氏

1. **Lu Zhi** 盧志 – supporter of Prince Ying of Chengdu. He was created Marquis of Wuqiang 武強侯. He died during the upheavals in the Yongjia Era. His son Lu Chan later served Shi Le as an official of the Later Zhao.

Xiayang 夏陽侯 (also **Yangxia** 陽夏侯) – Hu of Anding 安定胡氏

1. **Hu Fen** 胡奮 – initially created Viscount of Xiayang (or Yangxia) in 264 AD. Later he was promoted to Marquis of Xiayang (or Yangxia). He died in 288 AD and did not leave any sons. His daughter was a concubine of Wudi.

Xicheng 西城侯 – He of Shujun 蜀郡何氏

1. **He Pan** 何攀 – military commander hailing from Shu. For his achievement in bringing down Yang Jun and his faction he was created Marquis of Xicheng with apauage of 10 000 households.

2. **He Zhang** 何璋 – son and heir to He Pan, 2nd Marquis of Xicheng.

Xi'e 西鄂侯 – Luo of Xiangyang 襄陽羅氏

1. **Luo Xian** 羅憲 – hailed from a Shu official family and served Shu and later the Jin. He died in 270 AD and Wudi had him posthumously created Marquis of Xi'e and granted him ritual name Lie 烈侯.

2. **Luo Xi** 羅襲 – son and heir to Luo Xian. 2nd Marquis of Xi'e.

Xingjin 興晉侯 – Yang of Taishan 太山羊氏

1. **Yang Xuanzhi** 羊玄之 – father to Empress Hui 惠皇后, second consort of Emperor Huidi. As the father of the empress he was created Marquis of Xingjin 興晉侯. Later he was promoted to the rank of duke. He died in 303 AD.

Xunyang 循陽侯 – Liu of Pingyuan 平原劉氏

1. **Liu Shi** 劉寔 – descendant of the Eastern Han princely lineage of Jibei 濟北. In 264 AD created Viscount of Xunyang and following the founding of the dynasty he was promoted to Count of Xunyang. After Wudi's death he was promoted yet again, to Marquis of Xunyang 循陽侯. He died soon after the accession of Emperor Huaidi in 307 AD and was granted posthumous name Yuan 元侯.

Yangxia 陽夏侯 – see **Xiayang**

Yinping 陰平侯 – Lu of Fufeng 扶風魯氏

1. **Lu Zhi** 魯芝 – loyal follower of the Simas, initially lord of the royal domain with apanage of 200 households. He took part in quelling Zhuge Dan's rebellion and was subsequently enfeoffed as village Marquis of Wujin 無進亭侯. In 260 AD he was promoted to township Marquis of Li/Lai/Taicheng 藜城鄉侯. With the introduction of the peerages he was created Count of Yinping 陰平伯 and two years later, in 266 AD he was promoted to Marquis of Yinping 陰平侯. He died in 273 AD and was granted posthumous name Zhen 貞侯.

Yiyang 弋陽侯 – Ji of Qiaoguo 譙國嵇氏

1. **Ji Shao** 嵇紹 – son of Ji Kang 嵇康. After the execution of Jia Mi he was promoted for not currying his favor and created Viscount of Yiyang 弋陽子. He served prince Yi of Changsha and after his death he was demoted and his peerage forfeited. Later he was rehabilitated and took part in Huidi's northern campaign and died during the battle of Dangyin. Prince Yue of Donghai had him posthumously promoted to Marquis of Yiyang 弋陽侯. Yuandi later granted him posthumous name Zhongmu 忠穆侯.

2. **Ji Han** 嵇翰 – grandson of Ji Shao’s brother. Shao’s own son Ji Zhen 嵇珍 died prematurely and the dignity was inherited by Ji Han who became 2nd Marquis of Yiyang. But later he returned to the lineage of his own father and Ji Shao was again left without posterity.

3. **Ji Kuang** 嵇曠 – grandson of Ji Han. Emperor Xiaowudi had him installed as Ji Shao’s heir and newly created Marquis of Yiyang.

Yongping 永平侯 – Jia of Pingyang 平陽賈氏

1. **Jia Hun** 賈混 – younger brother of Jia Chong Duke of Lu. Initially he was created village lord of Yangli 陽里亭侯 for his brother’s achievement during the conquest of Wu. Later he secured higher peerage and became Marquis of Yongping.

Yongshi 永世侯 – Wang of Langye 琅邪王氏

1. **Wang Jun** 王俊 – son of Wang Zhao of the Dukes of Suiling. Wang Jun was created Marquis of Yongshi 永世侯 in his own right.

2. **Wang Xia** 王遐 – son and heir to Wang Jun, probably 2nd Marquis of Yongshi.

Countships

Guanyang 觀陽伯 – Hua of Pingyuan 平原華氏

1. **Hua Biao** 華表 – after establishment of the peerages he was created Count of Guanyang. His dignity survived dynastic transition and Hua Biao died in 275 AD and was given posthumous name Kang 康伯.

2. **Hua Yi** 華廙 – son and heir to Hua Biao, 2nd Count of Guanyang. After the accession of Huidi he was promoted to Duke of Guanyang.

Jiaying 嘉興伯 – Gu of Wuguo 吳國顧氏

1. **Gu Rong** 顧榮 – After the fall of Jiong Prince of Qi he was created Count of Jiaying 嘉興伯 for his achievement in dealing with Jiong’s henchman Ge Yu 葛旃. When Sima Rui assumed authority as King of Jin he had him posthumously promoted to Duke of Jiaying.

Shangcai 上蔡伯 – He of Xiping 西平和氏

1. **He You** 和逌 – during the establishment of the peerages he was created Count of Shangcai.

2. **He Jiao** 和嶠 – son and heir to He You, 2nd Count of Shangcai. He died in 292 AD and was granted posthumous name Jian 簡伯.

3. **He Ji** 和濟 – nephew of He Jiao, 3rd Count of Shangcai. His father He Yu 和郁 was village lord of Runan 汝南亭侯 in his own right.

Xinta 新沓伯 – Shan of Henei 河内山氏

1. **Shan Tao** 山濤 – trusted supporter of the Simas, charged to look after all the Wei princes of the blood summoned to Ye while Sima Zhao was campaigning in Shu. In 264 AD created Viscount of Xinta 新沓子 and following the accession of Emperor Wudi he was promoted to Count of Xinta. He died in 283 AD and was given posthumous name Kang 康伯.

2. **Shan Gai** 山該 – son and heir to Shan Tao, 2nd Count of Xinta.

Xunyang 循陽伯 – Liu of Pingyuan 平原劉氏

1. **Liu Shi** 劉寔 – descendant of the Eastern Han princely lineage of Jibei 濟北. In 264 AD created Viscount of Xunyang and following the founding of the dynasty he was promoted to Count of Xunyang. After Wudi's death he was promoted yet again, to Marquis of Xunyang 循陽侯. He died soon after the accession of Emperor Huaidi in 307 AD and was granted posthumous name Yuan 元侯.

Yiju 弋居伯 – Suo of Dunhuang 敦煌索氏

1. **Suo Chen** 索綝 – originally enfeoffed as Count of Yiju 弋居伯 for his achievement of helping to install Emperor Mindi. For military achievement in fighting Zhao forces created commandery Duke of Shangluo 上洛郡公 with apanage of 10 000 households. He later defected to Zhao.

Yongning 永寧伯 – Zhou of Runan 汝南周氏

1. **Zhou Fu** 周馥 – together with Zhou Qi 周玘 he crushed insurgents in the South and was duly created Count of Yongning 永寧伯. Later he died a rebel fighting the forces of the southern court.

Viscountcies

Changlu 昌陸子 – Gao of Chenliu 陳留高氏

1. **Gao Hun** 高渾 – grandson and heir to Gao Rou 高柔, Wei Marquis of Anguo 安國侯. In 264 AD he was created Viscount of Changlu but it is not clear whether his dignity survived dynastic transition and became a Jin title.

Chengyang 成陽 – Bian of Jiyin 濟陰卞氏

1. **Bian Cui** 卞粹 – son-in-law of Zhang Hua, he was created Viscount of Chengyang for his achievement in the execution of Yang Jun in 291 AD. After the victory of uprising led by Prince Jiong of Qi he was promoted to Duke of Chengyang.

Chungu 鶡觚子 – Fu of Beidi 北地傅氏

1. **Fu Xuan** 傅玄 – initially he got Wei baronial dignity of Chungu, after the establishment of the dynasty he was promoted to Viscount of Chungu 鶡觚子, posthumously created Marquis of Qingquan and granted ritual name Gang 剛侯.

Jiqiu 即丘子 – Wang of Langye 琅邪王氏

1. **Wang Lan** 王覽 – brother of Wang Xiang Duke of Suiling. In 264 AD he was created Viscount of Jiqiu and it seems that the title survived the dynastic change. He died in Xianning 4 (278 AD) at the age of seventy-three years and was granted posthumous name Zhen 貞子.

2. **Wang Cai** 王裁 – son and heir presumptive of Wang Lan, he died young before he could have succeeded to the viscountcy.

3. **Wang Dao** 王導 – son of Wang Cai and heir to Wang Lan, 2nd Viscount of Jiqiu. After he followed Sima Rui to the South he was created Marquis of Wugang 武岡侯 for his merit in quelling several uprisings. Later he was created Duke of Shixing 始興郡公 but the court allowed for the original family dignity to be inherited by a younger son of Wang Dao.

4. **Wang Tian** 王恬 – younger son of Wang Dao, 3rd Viscount of Jiqiu. He was granted posthumous name Xian 憲子. His own son later succeeded to Wang Dao's ducal dignity and Viscountcy of Jiqiu might have fallen into abeyance.

Juyang 劇陽子 – Wei of Rencheng 任城魏氏

1. **Wei Shu** 魏舒 – loyal supporter of the Simas, created Viscount of Juyang 劇陽子. He died in 290 AD at the age of eighty-two and was granted posthumous name Kang 康子.

2. **Wei Hun** 魏混 – son and heir to Wei Shu, he died young before his father.

3. **Wei Rong** 魏融 – grandson of Wei Shu born of concubine, 2nd Viscount of Juyang. He died young as well.

4. **Wei Huang** 魏晃 – grandson of Wei Shu's brother. He succeeded as the 3rd Viscount of Juyang.

Shen 慎縣子 – Chen of Ruyin 汝陰陳氏

1. **Chen Wen** 陳溫 – younger son of Chen Tai 陳泰. Initially he held Han dignity of village Marquis of Changwu 昌武亭侯 and Wei titles of township Marquis of Yingxiang 潁鄉侯 with apanage of 800 households and Marquis of Yingyin 潁陰侯 with apanage of 2600

households. In 264 AD he was created Viscount of Shen. However, it is not confirmed that the dignity survived the fall of Wei.

Tangyang 堂陽子 – Shi of Leling 樂陵石氏

1. **Shi Jian** 石鑿 – After Wudi's accession to the imperial throne he was created Viscount of Tangyang 堂陽子. Later he was promoted by Yang Jun to prefecture lord of Chang'an 昌安縣侯 for supervising the construction of the imperial mausoleum of Wudi.

Xiayang 夏陽子 (also **Yangxia**) – Hu of Anding 安定胡氏

1. **Hu Fen** 胡奮 – initially created Viscount of Xiayang (or Yangxia) in 264 AD. Later he was promoted to Marquis of Xiayang (or Yangxia). He died in 288 AD and did not leave any sons. His daughter was a concubine of Wudi.

Yiyang 弋陽子 – Ji of Qiaoguo 譙國嵇氏

1. **Ji Shao** 嵇紹 – son of Ji Kang 嵇康. After the execution of Jia Mi he was promoted for not currying his favor and created Viscount of Yiyang 弋陽子. He served prince Yi of Changsha and after his death he was demoted and his peerage forfeited. Later he was rehabilitated and took part in Huidi's northern campaign and died during the battle of Dangyin. Prince Yue of Donghai had him posthumously promoted to Marquis of Yiyang 弋陽侯. Yuandi later granted him posthumous name Zhongmu 忠穆侯.

Zheng 承子 – Wang of Donghai 東海王氏

1. **Wang Xun** 王恂 – younger son of Wang Su 王肅, in 263 AD he was created Marquis of Lanling 蘭陵侯. In 264 AD he was created Viscount of Zheng 承子. He died in 278 AD. He might have been given the original marquisate of Lanling after the establishment of the dynasty.

Zhu'a 祝阿子 – family of unknown origin

1. **Shao Xu** 邵續 – in a petition from 317 AD he is mentioned as Viscount of Zhu'a. He died fighting Shi Le in the North and his son and heir was slain alongside his father.

Baronies

Anzhong 安眾男 – Liu of Nanyang 南陽劉氏

1. **Liu Qiao** 劉喬 – for his achievement in execution of Yang Jun he was enfeoffed as lord within the passes. For his part in execution of Jia Mi he was created Baron of Anzhong 安眾男.

Changcen 長岑男 – Yu of Yingchuan 潁川庾氏

1. **Yu Min** 庾珉 – during the reign of the Western Jin he was created Baron of Changcen. He was captured with Emperor Huaidi and dragged to Pingyang where he was executed by Former Zhao ruler for conspiring against him. At the end of the Taiyuan Era (376-396 AD) he was given posthumous name Zhen 貞男.

Chengyang 成陽縣男 – Xun of Yingchuan 潁川荀氏

1. **Xun Zu** 荀組 – During the Upheaval of the Eight Princes he was created Baron of Chengyang 成陽縣男. At the beginning of the Jianxing Era (313-316 AD) he was raised to the dignity of prefecture Duke of z Linying 臨潁縣公 as an uncle of Emperor Mindi. After the fall of Chang'an he fled to the South where he died in Yongchang Era (322 AD) in the age of sixty-five and was granted posthumous name Yuan 元公.

Kangfu 亢父男- Jiang of Chenliu 陳留江氏

1. **Jiang Rui** 江蕤 – created Baron of Kangfu.
2. **Jiang Zuo** 江祚 – son and heir to Jiang Rui, 2nd Baron of Kangfu.
3. **Jiang Tong** 江統 – son and heir to Jiang Zuo, 3rd Baron of Kangfu. He died in 310 AD.

Pingling 平陵男 – Guo of Taiyuan 太原郭氏

1. **Guo Yi** 郭奕 – At the beginning of the Western Jin he was created Baron of Pingling. He was granted posthumous name Jian 簡男.

Yinping 陰平男 – Huwu of Taishan 泰山胡毋

1. **Huwu Fuzhi** 胡毋輔之 – for his achievement in chastising Prince Jiong of Qi he was created Baron of Yinping.

II. Lordships:

Prefecture Lordships

Anfeng 安豐縣侯 – Wang of Langye 琅邪王氏

1. **Wang Hun** 王渾 – son of Wang Xiong, Wei village Marquis of Zhenling 貞陵亭侯.
2. **Wang Rong** 王戎 – son of Wang Hun whom he succeeded as the 2nd Marquis of Zhenling. After the conquest of Wu he was created prefecture lord of Anfeng 安豐縣侯 and his fief was increased by 6000 households. He died in Yongxing 2 (305 AD) in the age of seventy-two years and was granted posthumous name Yuan 元侯.

Anyang 安陽縣侯 – Shi of Bohai 勃海石氏

1. **Shi Chong** 石崇 – younger son of Shi Bao Duke of Leling. For his achievement in conquering Wu he was created prefecture lord of Anyang. He was executed by Sima Lun Prince of Zhao.

Changguo 昌國縣侯 – Ren of Le'an 樂安任氏

1. **Ren Kai** 任愷- After the establishment of the Jin domain he was enfeoffed as prefecture lord of Changguo 昌國縣侯. He was granted posthumous name Yuan 元侯.

2. **Ren Han** 任罕 – son and heir to Ren Kai, 2nd lord of Changguo.

Chengwu 成武侯 (sometimes also **Wucheng** 武城侯) – Zhou of Runan 汝南周氏

1. **Zhou Jun** 周浚 – initially enfeoffed as Marquis of Sheyang 射陽侯 (probably just Wei title). For his achievement in conquering Wu he was created prefecture lord of Chengwu 成武侯 with apanage of 6000 households. When he supervised reconstruction of the temple of imperial ancestors his apanage was increased by 500 households.

2. **Zhou Yi** 周顛 – son and heir to Zhou Jun, 2nd lord of Chengwu/Wucheng. He was killed in the South during Wang Dun's rebellion (322 AD). After Wang Dun's death he was rehabilitated and granted posthumous name Kang 康侯.

3. **Zhou Min** 周閔 – eldest son of Zhou Yi. He succeeded as the 3rd lord of Chengwu/Wucheng. He was granted posthumous name Lie 烈侯. He died without a son.

4. **Zhou Lin** 周琳 – nephew and heir to Zhou Min, son of his brother Zhou Yi, 4th lord of Chengwu/Wucheng.

Dangyang 當陽縣侯 – Du of Jingzhao 京兆杜氏

1. **Du Yu** 杜預 – initially Du Yu became 3rd Village Marquis of Fengle 豐樂亭侯 (Wei dignity). Following the fall of Wu he was created prefecture lord of Dangyang with apanage of 9600 (*Jinshu*) or 8000 (*Sanguozhi*) households. His younger son Du Dan was in addition enfeoffed as village lord with apanage of 1000 households. He died in 284 AD and was granted posthumous name Cheng 成侯.

2. **Du Xi** 杜錫 – son and heir to Du Yu, 2nd lord of Dangyang.

3. **Du Yi** 杜乂 – son and heir to Du Xi, 3rd lord of Dangyang. He was father of Empress Cheng Gong, but died while she was still a child.

Dongqian 東遷縣侯 – Zhou of Yixing 義興周氏

1. **Zhou Zha** 周札 – younger brother of Zhou Qi Duke of Wucheng. For his achievement in chastising Qian Hui he was enfeoffed as village lord of Zhangpu 漳浦亭侯. Later he was

promoted to prefecture lord of Dongqian 東遷縣侯. The whole clan was exterminated by Wang Dun during his rebellion.

Fenggao 奉高縣侯 – Ma of Dongping 東平馬氏

1. **Ma Long** 馬隆 – one of leading military offices in Longyou. At the beginning of the Taixi Era (probably in 290 AD) he was created prefecture lord of Fenggao 奉高縣侯.

2. **Ma Xian** 馬咸 – son and heir to Ma Long, 2nd lord of Fenggao.

Fulu 福祿縣侯 – Zhang of Anding 安定張氏

1. **Zhang Shi** 張寔- son and heir to Zhang Gui. Initially he was enfeoffed as village lord of Jianwu 建武亭侯 for quelling local uprising of Cao Qu in Liangzhou. Later he was promoted to prefecture lord of Fulu 福祿縣侯. After the death of his father he was raised to the position of lord of Liangzhou. Emperor Mindi confirmed him in this position and conferred upon him title of 2nd Duke of Xiping. He was murdered in 320 AD. His family conferred upon him ritual name Zhao 昭公, but Emperor Yuandi granted him instead the name Yuan 元. As his son Zhang Jun 張駿 was still a minor, Shi's younger brother Zhang Mao became semi-independent ruler of Liangzhou.

Guangwu 廣武縣侯 – Zhang of Fanyang 范陽張氏

1. **Zhang Hua** 張華 – after the establishment of the dynasty he became lord of the royal domain. He was one of the advocates of the Wu campaign in 280 AD and after the conquest was rewarded by being created prefecture lord of Guangwu. His fief was increased by 10 000 households. He became leading minister of the government of the Jia faction, was enfeoffed as commandery Duke of Zhuangwu 壯武郡公 and subsequently murdered by Sima Lun of Zhao in 300 AD in the age of sixty-one. Both his sons were executed alongside their father. In 303 AD Zhang Hua was posthumously rehabilitated and his ducal dignity was restored. It seems that even this prefecture lordship was revived but it is not clear if anybody succeeded to it.

Guanjun 冠軍縣侯 – Guo of Taiyuan 太原郭氏

1. **Guo Zhang** 郭彰 – cousin of Lady Guo Huai, mother of Empress Jia. As close relative of the Jia family he was created prefecture lord of Guanjun. He died before the fall of the Jia faction and was granted posthumous name Lie 烈侯.

Jiangling 江陵侯 – Wang of Taiyuan 太原王氏

1. **XY** – a younger son of Wang Hun 王渾 Duke of Jingling. According to Pei Songzhi's commentary to *Sanguozhi* one of Wang Hun's sons was enfeoffed for Wang Hun's merit as lord of Jiangling 江陵侯 following the conquest of Wu in 280 AD.

Jinxing 晉興縣侯 – Sun of Wujun 吳郡孫氏

1. **Sun Hui** 孫惠 – scion of the ruling house of Wu. He followed Sima Jiong Prince of Qi in chastising Sima Lun of Zhao and was enfeoffed as prefecture lord of Jinxing 晉興侯. Later he entered service of Sima Yue of Donghai and for his achievement in welcoming Huidi back into his capital was created prefecture duke of Linxiang 臨湘縣公.

Lantian 藍田縣侯 – Wang of Taiyuan 太原王氏

1. **Wang Cheng** 王承 – for his part in assisting Huidi in his return to Luoyang he was created prefecture lord of Lantian 藍田縣侯.

2. **Wang Shu** 王述 – son and heir to Wang Cheng, 2nd lord of Lantian. He died in 368 AD and was granted posthumous name Mu 穆侯. Later his name was changed to Jian 簡侯.

3. **Wang Tanzhi** 王坦之 – son and heir to Wang Shu, 3rd lord of Lantian. He died in 375 AD and was granted posthumous name Xian 獻侯.

4. **Wang Kai** 王愷 – son and heir to Wang Tanzhi, 4th lord of Lantian.

Liangzou 梁鄒縣侯 – Liu of Guangling 廣陵劉氏

1. **Liu Song** 劉頌 – In 300 AD he was posthumously created prefecture lord of Liangzou 梁鄒縣侯 for his achievement in execution of Jia Mi and he was given apanage of 1500 households and posthumous name Zhen 貞侯.

2. **Liu Yong** 劉雍 – son of Liu He 劉和, elder brother of Liu Song. He was adopted as his uncle's heir but died prematurely.

2. **Liu Yan** 劉鄢 – son of Liu Xun 劉翽, younger brother of Liu Yong. He was adopted as Liu Song's heir and became 2nd lord of Liangzou.

Pingyang 平陽縣侯 – Li of Pingyang 平陽李氏

1. **Li Ju** 李矩 – originally village lord of Dongming 東明亭侯. After the fall of Luoyang he entered service of future Yuandi and was promoted to prefecture lord of Yangwu 陽武縣侯. The dignity was later changed to prefecture lord of Xiuwu/Youwu 脩武縣侯 and after the restoration he was created prefecture lord of Pingyang 平陽縣侯.

Shangyong 上庸縣侯 – Tang of Luguó 魯國唐氏

1. **Tang Bin** 唐彬 – one of the commanders during the campaign against Wu in 280 AD. Initially he was lord of the royal domain. For his achievement during the conquest he was created prefecture lord of Shangyong 上庸縣侯 with apanage of 6000 households. He died in 294 AD and was granted posthumous name Xiang 襄侯.

2. **XY** – son and heir to Tang Bin, 2nd lord of Shangyong.

Wucheng 武城侯 – see **Chengwu**

Wucheng 烏程縣侯 – Zhou of Yixing 義興周氏

1. **Zhou Qi** 周玘 – member of ancient Wu family of local influence in Wujun. At the beginning of the 4th century he had repeatedly quelled rebellions in the south maintaining authority of the Jin ruling house. For his achievements he was enfeoffed as prefecture lord of Wucheng 烏程縣侯. During the Jianxing Era (313-316 AD) Sima Rui created him Duke of Wucheng 烏程公. He was granted posthumous name Zhonglie 忠烈公.

Wuling 武陵縣侯 – Wang of Langye 琅邪王氏

1. **Wang Yi** 王廙 – son of Wang Zheng and a sister of Emperor Yuandi. For his achievement in welcoming Huidi back in Luoyang he was created prefecture lord of Wuling 武陵縣侯. He died in 322 AD and was granted posthumous name Kang 康侯.

2. **Wang Yizhi** 王頤之 – son and heir to Wang Yi, 2nd lord of Wuling.

Xiangyang 襄陽縣侯 – Wang of Hongnong 弘農王氏

1. **Wang Jun** 王濬 – victorious military commander who had brought to submission the last ruler of Wu, Sun Hao in 280 AD. For this achievement he was created prefecture lord of Xiangyang 襄陽縣侯 with apanage of 10 000 households. His younger son Wang Yi 王彝 was appointed village lord of Yangxiang 楊鄉亭侯 with apanage of 1500 households. He died in 285 AD at the age of eighty years and was granted posthumous name Wu 武侯.

2. **Wang Ju** 王矩 – son and heir to Wang Jun. 2nd lord of Xiangyang. The fief did not survive the fall of the Western Jin even though direct descendants of Wang Jun lived at the southern court.

Xiu/Youwu 脩武縣侯 – Li of Pingyang 平陽李氏

1. **Li Ju** 李矩 – originally village lord of Dongming 東明亭侯. After the fall of Luoyang he entered service of future Yuandi and was promoted to prefecture lord of Yangwu 陽武縣侯. The dignity was later changed to prefecture lord of Xiuwu/Youwu 脩武縣侯 and after the restoration he was created prefecture lord of Pingyang 平陽縣侯.

Xue 薛縣侯 – Wu of Peiguo 沛國武氏

1. **Wu Gai** 武陔 – initially he had Wei title of a village marquis. In 264 AD he was created prefecture lord of Xue 薛縣侯. He was granted posthumous name Ding 定侯.

2. **Wu Fu** 武輔 – son and heir to Wu Gai, 2nd lord of Xue.

Xunyang 尋陽縣侯 – Zhou of Runan 汝南周氏

1. **Zhou Fang** 周訪 – he served Sima Rui and helped him to establish his position in Jiankang. For his military achievements in quelling several insurrections he was created

prefecture lord of Xunyang 尋陽縣侯. He died in Taixing 3 (320 AD) at the age of sixty-one years. He was granted posthumous name Zhuang 壯侯.

2. **Zhou Fu** 周撫 – son and heir to Zhou Fang, 2nd lord of Xunyang. He took part in Huan Wen's conquest of Sichuan and for this achievement was created prefecture Duke of Jiancheng 建城縣公. He died in 365 AD and was granted posthumous name Xiang 襄公.

Yangwu 陽武縣侯 – Li of Pingyang 平陽李氏

1. **Li Ju** 李矩 – originally village lord of Dongming 東明亭侯. After the fall of Luoyang he entered service of future Yuandi and was promoted to prefecture lord of Yangwu 陽武縣侯. The dignity was later changed to prefecture lord of Xiuwu/Youwu 脩武縣侯 and after the restoration he was created prefecture lord of Pingyang 平陽縣侯.

Township Lordships

Anchang 安昌鄉侯 – Suo of Dunhuang 敦煌索氏

1. **Suo Yu** 索聿 – younger son of Suo Jiang, village lord of Anle. Later he was created township lord of Anchang in his own right.

Anle 安樂鄉侯 – Zhang of Anding 安定張氏

1. **Zhang Gui** 張軌 – Regional Inspector of Liangzhou in Gansu. For successful defense of his regional command against incursions of the warlike Xianbei he was initially enfeoffed as township lord of Anle 安樂鄉侯 with apanage of 1000 households. At the beginning of the Yongjia Era (307-312 AD) Zhang Gui defeated Liu Cong of Zhao in Hedong and relieved besieged Luoyang. Emperor Huaidi promoted him to commandery Duke of Xiping 西平郡公. Zhang Gui refused to accept. Later he sent supplies to the capital suffering from famine and for this merit was created Marquis of Bacheng 霸城侯. He continued to send reinforcements to Chang'an and was to be enfeoffed as Duke of Xiping again, but he refused to accept the honor. The court promoted him only posthumously in 314 AD when he was also granted ritual name Wu 武公.

Anling 安陵鄉侯 – Xun of Yingchuan 潁川荀氏

1. **Xun Yun** 荀顗 – initially he held Wei dignity of township marquis of Anling.

2. **Xun Song** 荀崧 – son and heir to Xun Yun, 2nd Marquis of Anling 安陵侯 and eldest daughter of Cao Cao. At the beginning of the Taishi Era (266-274 AD) he was made to succeed to his father's title. After the fall of Luoyang he had the imperial mounds repaired and for this achievement was created prefecture Duke of Wuyang 舞陽縣公. Later his fief was changed to that of Quling 曲陵公. He served at the court of Emperor Yuandi in Jiankang and after quelling of Wang Dun's rebellion he was rewarded by an additional title of Count of

Pingle. He died in Xianhe 3 (328 AD) in the age of sixty-seven. He was granted posthumous name Jing 敬公.

Anyang 安陽鄉侯 – Xue of Danyang 丹陽薛氏

1. **Xue Jian** 薛兼 – follower of Prince Yue of Donghai who had him enfeoffed as village lord of Anyang 安陽亭侯. For his further merit he was promoted to township lord of Anyang 安陽鄉侯. It appears that his son Xue Yong 薛顛 predeceased his father and the dignity became extinct.

Dongxiang 東鄉侯 – Tao of Lujiang 廬江陶氏

1. **Tao Kan** 陶侃 – military commander of the Eastern Jin. During the transition period before restoration of the dynasty he gained merit in quelling a local rebellion and was created township lord of Dongxiang 東鄉侯 with apanage of 1000 households. Later he was Regional Inspector of Guangzhou and for his achievements there was created Marquis of Chaisang 柴桑侯 with apanage of 4000 households (Eastern Jin title).

Gao'an 高安鄉侯 – Xiahou of Peiguo 沛國夏侯氏

1. **Xiahou Dun** 夏侯惇 – at the end of the Han he was enfeoffed as township marquis of Gao'an 高安鄉侯. In Jian'an 12 (207 AD) his apanage was increased to 2500 households. He died shortly after the establishment of the Wei Dynasty and was granted posthumous name Zhong 忠侯.

2. **Xiahou Chong** 夏侯充 – son and heir to Xiahou Dun, 2nd Marquis of Gao'an. Wei Wendi wanted to give ennoblement to other sons of Xiahou Dun. Therefore he took 1000 households of the original apanage and divided it among seven sons and two grandsons of Dun who all became lords of the royal domain.

3. **Xiahou Yi** 夏侯廙 – son and heir to Xiahou Chong, 3rd Marquis of Gao'an.

4. **Xiahou Zuo** 夏侯佐 – grandson of Xiahou Dun, Marquis of Gao'an. He died in 266 AD and the lineage was interrupted.

5. **Xiahou Shao** 夏侯劭 – relative Xiahou Zuo (according to *Sanguozhi* he was son of Xiahou Yi). Jin Wudi wanted to revive hereditary lineage of Xiahou Dun as one of the founding ministers of the Wei and had Xiahou Shao created township lord of Gao'an.

Lexiang 樂鄉侯 – Hua of Pingyuan 平原華氏

1. **Hua Jiao** 華嶠 – initially lord of the royal domain. At the beginning of the Yuankang Era (291 AD) he was enfeoffed as village lord of Xuanchang 宣昌亭侯. For achievement in executing Yang Jun he was promoted to township lord of Lexiang.

2. **Hua Yi** 華頤 – son and heir to Hua Jiao, 2nd lord of Lexiang.

Pingle 平樂鄉侯 – Yan of Baxi 巴西閻氏

1. **Yan Pu** 閻圃 – originally served Zhang Lu 張魯, master of Hanzhong and made him submit to the Wei. As a reward he was enfeoffed as township marquis of Pingle 平樂鄉侯.
2. **Yan Pu** 閻璞 – son and heir to Yan Pu, 2nd marquis of Pingle. The title was abolished after the establishment of the Jin Dynasty.
3. **Yan Zuan** 閻纘 (also written as 纂) – son of Yan Pu. For his merit he was enfeoffed as township lord of Pingle 平樂鄉侯 (before 300 AD).
4. **Yan Heng** 閻亨 – son and heir to Yan Zuan, probably 2nd lord of Pingle.

Pingxiang 平鄉侯 – He of Shujun 蜀郡何氏

1. He Feng 何逢 – younger brother of He Pan Marquis of Xicheng. For his brother's merit in execution of Yang Jun he was enfeoffed as township lord of Pingxiang.

Pingyang 平陽鄉侯 – Jia of Pingyang 平陽賈氏

1. **Jia Mo** 賈模 – nephew of Jia Chong. For his achievement in executing Yang Jun he was created township lord of Pingyang with apanage of 1000 households.
2. **Jia You** 賈遊 – son and heir to Jia Mo, 2nd lord of Pingyang.

Wansui 萬歲鄉侯 – Xun of Yingchuan 潁川荀氏

1. **Xun Yi** 荀顗 – During the reign of Wei Shaodi he acquired dignity of lord of the royal domain. For his achievement in quelling Guanqiu Jian's rebellion he was created village marquis of Wansui 萬歲亭侯 with apanage of 400 households. During the Xianxi Era (264-265 AD) was promoted to township marquis of Wansui. After the establishment of the peerages he was created Marquis of Linhuai 臨淮侯. Following the founding of the Jin he was promoted to Duke of Linhuai 臨淮公 with apanage of 1800 households. He died in Taishi 10 (274 AD) and he was granted posthumous name Kang 康公. He died sonless.

Wuchang 武昌鄉侯 – Ji of Qiaoguo 譙國嵇氏

1. **Ji Han** 嵇含 – he served Prince Jiong of Qi and inherited noble dignity of township lord of Wuchang 武昌鄉侯. After 307 AD he was given posthumous name Xian 憲侯.

Village Lordships

Anle 安樂亭侯 – Suo of Dunhuang 敦煌索氏

1. **Suo Jing** 索靖 – commander the royal forces, died in action. Posthumously created village lord of Anle 安樂亭侯 and granted posthumous name Zhuang 莊.

Anling 安陵亭侯 – Bian of Jiyin 濟陰卞氏

1. **Bian Dun** 卞敦 – for his part in quelling a local rebellion in the South he was created by future Yuandi village lord of Anling. Later for achievement in destroying Wang Dun he was created Marquis of Yiyang 益陽侯 (323 AD) with apanage of 1600 households. He was granted posthumous name Jing 敬侯.

Anshou 安壽亭侯 – Wang of Donghai 東海王氏

1. **Wang Qian** 王虔 – created village lord of Anshou 安壽亭侯.

2. **Wang Shiwen** 王士文 – son and heir to Wang Qian, 2nd lord of Anshou.

Anyang 安陽亭侯 – Han of Gaoyang 高陽韓氏

1. **Han Gai** 韓蓋 - grandson of Jia Chong Duke of Lu. For Jia Chong's achievement in conquest of Wu he was created village lord of Anyang.

Anyang 安陽亭侯 – Xue of Danyang 丹陽薛氏

1. **Xue Jian** 薛兼 – follower of Prince Yue of Donghai who had him enfeoffed as village lord of Anyang 安陽亭侯. For his further merit he was promoted to township lord of Anyang 安陽鄉侯.

Dongming 東明亭侯 – Fu of Beidi 北地傅氏

1. **Fu Jun** 傅雱 – son of an elder brother of Fu Zhi. After the fall of Yang Jun Fu Zhi was created a duke and his original dignity was given to Fu Jun with apanage of 300 households.

Dongming 東明亭侯 – Li of Pingyang 平陽李氏

1. **Li Ju** 李矩 – for his achievement in fighting Di insurgent leader Qi Wannian he was created village lord of Dongming 東明亭侯.

Fengle 豐樂亭侯 – Du of Jingzhao 京兆杜氏

1. **Du Ji** 杜畿 – Wei minister and lord of the royal domain. After the establishment of the Wei Dynasty he was enfeoffed as village marquis of Fengle with apanage of 100 households. He was granted posthumous name Dai 戴侯.

2. **Du Shu** 杜恕 – son and heir to Du Ji, 2nd Marquis of Fengle. He got into the conflict with the Simas and in 249 AD was demoted and his noble dignity was forfeited. He died in 253 AD as a commoner.

3. **Du Yu** 杜預 – initially the forfeited dignity was restored and Du Yu became 3rd Village Marquis of Fengle 豐樂亭侯 (Wei dignity). Following the fall of Wu he was created prefecture lord of Dangyang with apanage of 9600 (*Jinshu*) or 8000 (*Sanguozhi*) households. His younger son Du Dan was in addition enfeoffed as village lord with apanage of 1000 households. He died in 284 AD and was granted posthumous name Cheng 成侯.

Fengsheng 奉聖亭侯 – descendants of Confucius

1. **Kong Zhen** 孔震 – descendant of Confucius, Wei Marquis of Zongsheng 宗聖侯. At the beginning of the Jin he was transferred to dignity of village lord of Fengsheng.

2. **Kong Jingzhi** 孔靖之 – relative of Kong Zhen. Emperor Xiaowudi had him created village lord of Fengsheng in Taiyuan 11 (386 AD).

Ganlu 甘露亭侯 – Yang of Taishan 太山羊氏

1. **Yang Xiu** 羊琇 – cousin of Sima Shi's wife. He contributed to the conquest of Shu and was enfeoffed as lord of the royal domain. When Wudi became King of Jin he had him created village lord of Ganlu 甘露亭侯. He was granted posthumous name Wei 威侯.

Gaoyang 高陽亭侯 – Pei of Hedong 河東裴氏

1. **Pei Jing** 裴憬 – son of Pei Jun and grandson of Pei Xiu Duke of Julu. He should have succeeded to the ducal dignity but because he was mentally impaired he was given an alternative enfeoffment as village lord of Gaoyang 高陽亭侯 .

Jianwu 建武亭侯 – Zhang of Anding 安定張氏

1. **Zhang Shi** 張寔- son and heir to Zhang Gui. Initially he was enfeoffed as village lord of Jianwu 建武亭侯 for quelling local uprising of Cao Qu in Liangzhou. Later he was promoted to prefecture lord of Fulu 福祿縣侯. After the death of his father he was raised to the position of lord of Liangzhou. Emperor Mindi confirmed him in this position and conferred upon him title of 2nd Duke of Xiping. He was murdered in 320 AD. His family conferred upon him ritual name Zhao 昭公, but Emperor Yuandi granted him instead the name Yuan 元. As his son Zhang Jun 張駿 was still a minor, Shi's younger brother Zhang Mao became semi-independent ruler of Liangzhou.

Qingming 清明亭侯 – Xiahou of Peiguo 沛國夏侯氏

1. **Xiahou Zhuang** 夏侯莊 – father of the Princess Dowager of Langye, mother to Yuandi. He is mentioned as village lord of Qingming.

Runan 汝南亭侯 – He of Runan 汝南和氏

1. **He Yu** 和郁 – younger brother of He Jiao Count of Shangcai. For his brother's merit in conquest of Wu he was enfeoffed as village lord of Runan in 280 AD. His son He Ji later inherited comital peerage of Shangcai.

Wansui 萬歲亭侯 – Xun of Yingchuan 穎川荀氏

1. **Xun Yi** 荀顗 – During the reign of Wei Shaodi he acquired dignity of lord of the royal domain. For his achievement in quelling Guanqiu Jian's rebellion he was created village marquis of Wansui 萬歲亭侯 with apanage of 400 households. During the Xianxi Era (264-265 AD) was promoted to township marquis of Wansui. After the establishment of the peerages he was created Marquis of Linhuai 臨淮侯. Following the founding of the Jin he was promoted to Duke of Linhuai 臨淮公 with apanage of 1800 households. He died in Taishi 10 (274 AD) and he was granted posthumous name Kang 康公. He died sonless.

Wu 務亭侯 (somewhere also Fengwu 封務亭侯) – Yang of Hongnong 弘農楊氏

1. **Yang Wenzong** 楊文宗 – he inherited a Wei title of village Marquis of Wu 務亭侯. His daughter became first consort of Emperor Wudi. But he died before the marriage and it is not clear whether this dignity actually survived the dynastic change. He was granted posthumous name Mu 穆侯.

2. **Yang Chao** 楊超- distant relative of Yang Jun Marquis of Linjin. During the Yongning Era (301 AD) he was officially appointed Yang Jun's successor as village lord of Wu (also pronounced as Mao or Mu) 務亭侯.

Wuxiang 武鄉亭侯 – Fu of Beidi 北地傅氏

1. **Fu Chang** 傅暢 – younger son of Fu Zhi Duke of Lingchuan/Lingzhou. For achievement of his father in execution of Yang Jun he was created village lord of Wuxiang.

2. **Fu Yong** 傅詠 – son of Fu Chang and probably his heir. He fled South but it is not sure if he had ever succeeded to the title.

Xian 咸亭侯 – Xie of Chenjun 陳郡謝氏

1. **Xie Kun** 謝鯤 – during the transitional period before the restoration of the Jin he helped to put down a local rebellion and for this achievement was created village lord of Xian. He was granted posthumous name Kang 康侯.

2. **Xie Shang** 謝尚 – son and heir to Xie Kun, 2nd lord of Xian. He was granted posthumous name Jian 簡侯. He did not sire a son of his own. Son of his cousin Xie Yi succeeded to the title.

3. **Xie Kang** 謝康 – adoptive heir to Xie Shang, 3rd lord of Xian. He died prematurely as well.

4. **Xie Su** 謝肅 – son of Kang's younger brother Xie Jing 謝靜, 4th lord of Xian. He died childless.

5. **Xie Lingyou** 謝靈祐 – son of Xie Qian 謝虔, grandson of Xie Jing. he became the 5th lord of Xian.

Xincheng 新城亭侯 – Han of Gaoyang 羔羊韓氏

1. **Han Chang** 韓暢 - grandson of Jia Chong Duke of Lu. For his grandfather's merit in conquest of Wu he was created in 280 AD village lord of Xincheng.

Xuanchang 宣昌亭侯 – Hua of Pingyuan 平原華氏

1. **Hua Jiao** 華嶠 – initially lord of the royal domain. At the beginning of the Yuankang Era (291 AD) he was enfeoffed as village lord of Xuanchang 宣昌亭侯. For achievement in executing Yang Jun he was promoted to township lord of Lexiang.

Yangli 陽里亭侯 – Jia of Pingyang 平陽賈氏

1. **Jia Hun** 賈混 – younger brother of Jia Chong Duke of Lu. Initially he was created village lord of Yangli 陽里亭侯 for his brother's achievement during the conquest of Wu. Later he secured higher peerage and became Marquis of Yongping.

Yangxiang 楊鄉亭侯 – Wang of Hongnong 弘農王氏

1. **Wang Yi** 王彝 – for achievement of his father Wang Jun in conquest of Wu he was created village lord of Yangxiang 楊鄉亭侯 with apanage of 1500 households.

Yichang 宜昌亭侯 – Zhang of Nanyang 南陽張氏

1. **Zhang Fu** 張輔 – during the Western Jin he was created village lord of Yichang 宜昌亭侯.

Yingyang 潁陽亭侯 – Xun of Yingchuan 潁川荀氏

1. **Xun Xian** 荀顯 – grandson of Xun Xu Marquis of Jibei. For his grandfather's achievement in conquest of Wu he was created village lord of Yingyang.

Yuanxiang 原鄉亭侯 – Liu of Langye 琅邪劉氏

1. **Liu Chao** 劉超 – scion of the Han royal family. His ancestors lived in Langye and were close to princely lineage of Langye and future Emperor Yuandi. Shortly before the restoration he was created village lord of Yuanxiang with apanage of 700 households. During Mingdi's reign he quelled a rebellion and was created Count of Lingling 零陵伯 (Eastern Jin dignity).

Zhangpu 漳浦亭侯 – Zhou of Yixing 義興周氏

1. **Zhou Zha** 周札 – younger brother of Zhou Qi Duke of Wucheng. For his achievement in chastising Qian Hui he was enfeoffed as village lord of Zhangpu 漳浦亭侯. Later he was promoted to prefecture lord of Dongqian 東遷縣侯. The whole clan was exterminated by Wang Dun during his rebellion.

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Abstract

The practice of ennoblement became an important institution of the imperial government quite early, yet it were only the Western Jin who managed to combine various traditions of the previous regimes and transform them into a full-fledged system of titled nobility which was to be used by all subsequent dynasties of Mediaeval China. The development process did not end with the foundation of the dynasty and underwent many changes even during the reign of the Jin having been constantly improved or modified according to current political needs. The present study, based on close reading of the *Jinshu* standard history and selected chapters of *Sanguozhi*, focuses on the nature of the Jin ennoblement system and its changing use in the politics of the dynasty. The ennoblement system of the Western Jin was quite flexible being used in order to achieve highly diverse aims from rewarding loyal service to asserting legitimacy as the sole inheritor of the imperial tradition or strengthening diplomatic alliance with semi-independent tribal rulers. Thus, the Western Jin titled nobility was a group of families of fairly varied origins. The pride of place belonged to meritorious ministers, but there were also imperial in-laws, former Wei courtiers as well as descendents of illustrious Han families, scions of deposed royal houses and royal pretenders of rival regime who had defected to the Jin. With loosening of the original restrictions on further ennoblement during the second half of the dynasty the titled nobility expanded considerably comprising also military commanders and men of local influence who had risen in service of various princes of the blood together with rulers of nomadic tribes inhabiting the border regions of the empire. As the authority of the nobles over the territory granted as their "fief" and its inhabitants was only nominal, the introduction of the ennoblement system did not create a semi-independent landed aristocracy, but mere titled nobility fully subordinated to the central government and entitled to annual stipend drawn from precisely defined number of state tax-paying households. All noble title holders shared considerable social and economic privileges, yet the Jin state managed to retain full control over its titled nobility with bestowals and inheritance of noble dignities always remaining exclusive prerogatives of the sovereign authority. The preeminent social standing of the members of titled nobility derived from their loyal service and allegiance to the dynasty and was always dependent on the will of the emperor. Never did the titled nobility of the Western Jin become an independent power group which would have challenged the authority of the throne and central government.

Abstrakt

Udělování šlechtických titulů se již velmi záhy stalo důležitou institucí císařské vlády, ale byla to až dynastie Západní Jin (266-316), komu se podařilo skloubit různé tradice předcházejících dynastií a vytvořit plně hierarchizovaný systém titulární šlechty, který byl později převzat i všemi následujícími režimy čínského středověku. Vývoj však neskončil založením dynastie a titulární šlechta procházela proměnami i v průběhu vlády Západních Jin tak, jak to vyžadovala aktuální politická situace a zájmy trůnu. Tato studie vychází z pečlivé analýzy biografí, análů a pojednání obsažených ve standardní dynastické kronice *Dějiny Jinů* (*Jinshu*) a vybraných kapitol *Záznamů Tří království* (*Sanguozhi*) a soustřeďuje se na povahu systému udílení šlechtických hodností a jeho proměny v průběhu vlády dynastie. Jednalo se o velmi pružný systém, který jinská vláda využívala k dosažení velmi různorodých cílů, od odměňování věrných služeb přes ostentativní vyhlášení nároků na legitimitu z pozice nesporného dědice císařské tradice předcházejících vládců po upevnění diplomatických vztahů s polonezávislými kmenovými vládci. Titulární šlechta Západních Jin byla různorodou skupinou rodin často velmi odlišného původu. Přední místo mezi jinskou šlechtou zaujímali zasloužilí ministři (*gongchen*), ale také císařští příbuzní z rodin císařoven, bývalí hodnostáři weiského dvora či dokonce potomci význačných a starobylých rodů dynastie Han včetně příslušníků sesazených vládnoucích domů či претенdentů trůnu sousedních nepřátelských států, kteří přeběhli na stranu Jinů. S uvolněním omezení dalšího udělování titulů v druhé polovině vlády Západních Jin se řady titulární šlechty nebývale rozrostly a nově zahrnuly i vojenské velitele a členy lokálních prominentních rodin, kteří vystoupali vzhůru ve službách císařských knížat, i vládce nomádských kmenů usídlených v pohraničních oblastech říše. Jelikož autorita titulární šlechty nad jejich „lény“ a poddanými byla pouze nominální, zavedení udělování šlechtických hodností nestálo u zrodu polonezávislé dědičné pozemkové aristokracie, ale pouze titulární šlechty plně podřízené centrální vládě a oprávněné pobírat pravidelnou apanáž z přesně stanoveného počtu rodin státních daňových poplatníků. Všichni držitelé šlechtických titulů požívali významných společenských a ekonomických výhod, avšak stát si uchoval naprostou kontrolu nad titulární šlechtou a udílení titulů a jejich dědičné předávání navždy zůstalo nezadatelným a nezcizitelným právem panovníka. Přednostní společenské postavení členů titulární šlechty pramenilo z jejich loajální služby dynastii a vždy záviselo na vůli císaře. Titulární šlechta dynastie Jin se tak nikdy nestala nezávislou mocí, která by ohrožovala autoritu trůnu a centrální vlády.