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EMOLUMENTS, INSTITUTIONS, AND THE FAILURE OF BUREAUCRATIC REFORM IN THE YUAN DYNASTY

Yiming Ha

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
E-mail yha@connect.ust.hk

Beginning in 1260, the Mongol ruler Khubilai Khan embarked on the creation of a Chinese-style bureaucracy to govern his realm more effectively. At the same time, the court began to promulgate a salary code for its officials. Though both processes were led in large part by Chinese scholar-officials, this group continually complained about the shortcomings of the salary code and its negative effects on the bureaucracy. By studying their writings on salaries and official government records, this article will demonstrate that the Chinese literati used their complaints about the salary code to level criticisms against flaws in the administration and to push for bureaucratic reform, and that the Yuan court was genuinely concerned about the salary problem and took measures to alleviate it. Yet the court never actually reformed, and this article will ultimately aim to show how the response to the issue of salaries reflected the Mongols' desires to cling to the power and privilege that was afforded to them by a bureaucratic structure which preserved much of their traditional steppe institutions and values.

Keywords: Emoluments; corruption; bureaucratic reform; Yuan dynasty; political institutions; tribal values; sinicization; Chinese literati

In his "Taiping ce" 太平策 (Policies for Grand Peace), a memorial highly lauded by later generations, the Yuan (1261–1378) scholar Zheng Jiefu 鄭介夫 (dates unknown) wrote that: "An official does not till but needs to eat, so salaries are instituted to take the place [of tilling]. If the salary is not enough, how will he maintain his honesty?"[1] Zheng's quote highlighted an important attitude of the Confucian literati toward emoluments – they were not issued merely for an official to sustain a living; a far more important reason was that officials who served the ruler and the state needed to cultivate honesty (*yanglian* 養廉) to prevent them from growing corrupt. In imperial China, the emoluments of officials had been increasing continuously since the Han dynasty (206 BCE to 220 CE), peaking

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1 Zheng Jiefu 鄭介夫, "Taiping ce" 太平策, in *QYW*, 39.49–50.

during the Northern Song (960–1127), before beginning to decline during the Southern Song (1127–1279).[2] Even the non-Han conquest dynasties such as the Khitan Liao (907–1125) and the Jurchen Jin (1115–1234) began issuing salaries to officials as they adopted Chinese-style bureaucracies. The arrival of the Mongols in the early thirteenth century, however, dramatically altered the landscape. As a nomadic people, the Mongols had no need for salaries – their equivalent was loot taken from subjugated enemies and handed out as rewards. Thus, when the Mongols first entered China, their government also reflected this practice. There was no unified rank system, and no official salaries. Civil officials frequently accepted bribes while military officers plundered cities and towns.[3] Although the Mongols had slowly begun to develop a bureaucratic administration under Ögedei (r. 1229–1241) and Möngke (r. 1251–1259), it was really during the reign of Khubilai (r. 1260–1294) and under Khubilai's patronage that a Chinese-style bureaucracy was formed. With this bureaucracy naturally came emoluments for the numerous officials who were to staff it.

The creation of this bureaucracy and the accompanying salary structure was led by an enthusiastic group of Chinese scholar-officials who aimed to shape the salaries, and by extension the entire bureaucracy, according their vision. However, they were never truly satisfied with the result. Much of their discontent lay in the fact that they considered the salaries to be too low (*feng bo* 俸薄) and unequal (*bu jun* 不均), a complaint that would be repeated up until the fall of the Yuan. Current Chinese and Japanese scholarship has usually taken these complaints at face value, writing at length about the low salaries of Yuan officials, why that came to be, and its negative consequences, while eschewing deeper analysis on the mind-set of the Chinese officials clamoring for change and why the Mongol rulers refused to do so.[4] Western scholarship on the Yuan bureaucracy, meanwhile, typically centers its discussion on whether the Yuan state should be characterized as centralized or decentralized, but does not touch on the issue of salaries.[5] Others have studied the fiscal administration of the Yuan, but salaries are again ignored – Herbert Franz Schurmann's translation of the "Treatise on Food and Money" (*shihuo zhi* 食貨志) chapters in the *Yuanshi*, for example, deliberately left out the chapter containing salaries.[6] Some scholars, such as Thomas Allsen and Elizabeth Endicott-West, have advanced the view that the Mongols were pragmatic rulers and that ultimately the Mongols' preservation of their own customs and values led to the failure of their government.[7] A similar argument was

2 Peng 1994, p. 516.

3 Chen and Shi 1996, p. 371.

4 E.g. Guan 1948; Niwa 1967; Shen 1989; Oshima 1994; Pan 2003; Li 2004, p. 38.

5 Proponents of the centralized view include Dardess 1973 and Ch'en 1979. Those who support the decentralized view include Farquhar 1981, pp. 52–53, 1990; Franke and Twitchett 1994, p. 26; Hsiao 1994, pp. 558–59; Mote 2000, pp. 485–87.

6 Schurmann 1967.

7 Allsen 1987, pp. 220–25 believes that Möngke displayed a huge degree of pragmatism in building a Mongol state that, although far from perfect, was still effective in meeting his military needs. Endicott-West 1989, pp. 125–28 argues against Farquhar's proposition that the Yuan followed a radically decentralized model, pointing out that local governments did in fact answer to central authorities. She states that the Mongols had successfully maintained many features of their way of life and thus rejected Chinese political and administrative ideals.

advanced by Nicola Di Cosmo – in his article on state formation and periodization of Inner Asian nomads, he posited the idea that when nomadic polities borrowed and adopted institutions from their sedentary neighbors, it always resulted in institutions that were mixed with already established tribal structures.[8] But so far, these studies, like previous ones, have all glossed over official emoluments, the discussions surrounding them, and the importance of salaries for studying the formation of Yuan bureaucracy as a whole.

In taking on the issue of official emoluments, this study aims to explore salaries as seen through the eyes of the Chinese scholar-officials during the early and mid-Yuan and how it reflected their idea of what constituted an ideal government. Their memorials and writings on various issues are well documented in their collected works (*wenji* 文集), and many extended their discussions to low salaries and how this bred corruption. Had this been any other dynasty, perhaps the issue would have been just left at that, but the unique characteristics of the Yuan force us to reassess the nature of these complaints. This article will first re-examine these writings and place them in the greater political context of the Song–Yuan transition. Second, it will compare the salary issues these writings highlighted to records concerning the same issues within official legal codes such as the *Yuan dian zhang* 元典章 (*The Statutes of the Yuan Dynasty*) and the *Tongzhi tiaoge* 通制條格 (*Legislative Articles from the Comprehensive Regulations*). And finally, it will examine the Yuan government's mind-set and how it responded to these issues. With the complex nature of official salaries in the Yuan in mind, this article will demonstrate that the complaints of Chinese scholar-officials, far from being a simple call to raise salaries, were a push for political reforms and greater centralization. The Yuan court's response, meanwhile, was one of selectivity – it heeded their Chinese advisers' calls to raise salaries, only to ignore their clamor for reform.

In this context, it is not difficult to discern the Chinese scholar-officials' lingering dissatisfaction. The Mongols, in adopting a Chinese bureaucracy, had reached a high level of bureaucratization, but not to the level that the Chinese literati deemed satisfactory. Their complaints of low and unequal salaries were grounded in the belief that unlike the Song, the Yuan had not centralized enough and that the salary structure had failed to incentivize all the officials. Yuan rulers on several occasions attempted salary reforms, but to go after the root of the problem, to implement the reforms wanted by the Chinese, would have meant an overhaul of the entire bureaucracy. Doing so would no doubt have hurt the privileges of the Mongol elites, and the Mongols refused to take that action. Hampered by their unwillingness to give up power and privilege, the Mongols rejected reform in favor of only adjustment. And, by studying the salaries, I hope to show that despite all the Mongols' pragmatism in constructing a Chinese bureaucracy, the Yuan institutions were ultimately unsustainable.

THE ISSUE OF HONESTY: RECONSTRUCTION OF THE SALARY CODE AND THE PUSH FOR REFORM

Khubilai and the Yuan Salary Code

In 1260, Khubilai emerged triumphant from a civil war against his younger brother and was duly proclaimed khaghan of the Mongol Empire. Since his youth, Khubilai had

8 Di Cosmo 1999, pp. 6–7.

been exposed to Chinese culture, and he later gathered around him a group of talented Chinese scholars who educated the Mongol prince in Confucianism and governance.[9] Thus, Khubilai's ascension in 1260 was markedly different from that of his predecessors. His ascension edict, drafted by one of his Confucian advisers, plainly laid out his desire to build a Chinese-style state, and he soon adopted a Chinese era name – Zhongtong 中統 ("moderate rule" or "pivotal succession").[10] Almost immediately, the court began to oversee the implementation of a salary code as part of the creation of a centralized bureaucracy. The *Yuanshi* records the following:

> The system of salaries for the officials of the court was established in the first year of Zhongtong [1260]; for officials of the Six Ministries, it was established in the second year [of Zhongtong]; [those] for officials of the circuits, prefectures, and counties were established in the tenth month. In the sixth year of Zhiyuan [1270], the counties were divided into the three classes of first class, second class, and third class. [Salaries] for officials and clerks of the Regional Surveillance Bureau were established in the sixth year [of Zhiyuan]. From the Registrar on down, [salaries were] increased in the seventh year. [Salaries] for officials of the Salt Distribution Commission and the various artisan agencies were established in the seventh year. [The officials] of the Salt Distribution Commission would follow the example for civilian officials, and would be paid from the taxes [collected]. In the seventeenth year [1280], the salary [system] was redetermined, and salaries for all inner and outer officials were stopped.[11]

Records regarding salaries in the early Khubilai years are sparse, as no comprehensive records of the salary amount before the 1285 adjustment survive, but they must have been very low, for even Khubilai himself at one point expressed his dissatisfaction. The biography of Jia Juzhen 賈居貞 (1218–1280) records a curious exchange between emperor and subject regarding the salaries during the Zhongtong period. When Khubilai asked Jia about his salary and Jia responded accordingly, Khubilai deemed it too low and ordered it raised, but Jia declined, stating that the pay he received corresponded to his rank and that the emperor should not make an exception for him.[12] It was only in 1285 that Khubilai attempted a major reform to raise salaries. In an edict promulgated in the 2nd month of that year, he stated that due to mounting inflation, current salary levels would not be enough to maintain officials' honesty and thus decreed that all officials would have their salaries increased by 50 percent. Furthermore, each of the nine ranks was subdivided

9 Rossabi 1994, p. 415.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 423.

11 *Yuanshi*, 96.2449. Inner officials referred to the officials who served in the court at Dadu (modern day Beijing). Outer officials referred to regional officials. The Regional Surveillance Bureau (*ti xing an cha si* 提刑按察司) was renamed "Regional Investigation Offices" (*su zheng lian fang si* 肅政廉訪司) in 1291 but its basic functions remained the same. See Farquhar 1990, p. 242.

12 *Yuanshi*, 153.3623.

into three different classes, based on their office and workload.[13] The result of this adjustment, shown in Table 1.1 for officials of the court and in Table 2 for provincial officials (see Appendix), became the foundation for the Yuan salary code.

The salary code under Khubilai initially comprised only two components. The first was paper money, which was called "salary notes" (*feng chao* 俸鈔), paid with Zhongtong notes, and this became the main element of the salaries. The amount of the salary notes was determined by the official's rank and class, though the Yuan differentiated between inner (court) and outer (regional) officials. Aside from the major officials of the regional Branch Secretariats (*xing zhongshu sheng* 行中書省), all other outer officials received fewer salary notes than their counterparts at court, even if they held the same rank.[14] For certain outer officials, the Yuan also granted them office lands (*zhi tian* 職田) to compensate for the fact that they received fewer salary notes. These were lands held by officials while they were in office and from which they collected a certain amount of rent to supplement their income. Regarding office land regulations established under Khubilai, the *Yuanshi* states that:

> The regulations of office lands for officials of the circuits, prefectures, subprefectures, and counties were established in the third year of Zhiyuan [1266]; those for the Regional Surveillance Bureau were established in the fourteenth year [of Zhiyuan]; those for the Branch Secretariats of Jiangnan and the various bureaus were established in the twenty-first year [of Zhiyuan], the amount would be half of those in Fuli.[15]

In addition to the offices listed above, office lands were also granted to the Salt Distribution Commissions, the Salt Offices, the Salt Works, the local Police Offices and the local Prison Offices, as shown in the Appendix below. Later, as inflation rose and the value of paper money declined, the Yuan court instituted salary rice (*lu mi* 祿米) as the third component of salaries.

The Han Vision of Salaries and Bureaucracy

Although the construction of a Chinese-style bureaucracy and salary code under Khubilai was led by Han Chinese scholar-officials, this large group continued to be vocal about the shortcomings of Yuan governance. Of course, no bureaucracy is truly perfect, but the Yuan seemed to be a special case, for although it had built up the façade of a Chinese bureaucracy and accepted a large degree of Chinese influence, the monarchy and the upper

13 *YDZ* 2011, 2.545.

14 Branch Secretariats were extensions of the Central Secretariat (the central administrative organ) that was established as the highest regional administrative organ. Within their jurisdictions, they had complete control over taxes, soldiers, land, waterways and transportation, and other important military and state matters. See *Yuanshi*, 91.2305.

15 *Yuanshi*, 96.2450–51. Jiangnan 江南 referred to the areas south of the Yangtze River formerly controlled by the Southern Song. Fuli 腹裏 was the area under the direct control of the Central Secretariat (*zhongshu sheng* 中書省), encompassing modern day Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei, Shanxi, Shandong, and parts of Henan and Inner Mongolia.

echelons of government remained distinctly Mongolian.[16] In this regard, the discontent of their Chinese advisers was understandable – they had succeeded, to an extent, in impressing on their Mongol rulers their vision of a centralized government, but the Mongols had not gone far enough in that direction. As such, it was only natural that they continued to push, attempting to resurrect the administrative structures of the Song and even the sinicized Jin. One of the individuals who led this push was Hu Qiyu 胡祇遹 (1227–1293). Born in northern China during the final years of the Jin, Hu rose to prominence during Khubilai's reign and served in a number of central and regional posts. Although lesser known than some of Khubilai's other Chinese advisers, Hu was nonetheless a prolific writer who leveled lengthy criticisms against the unorganized nature of the administration, the negative consequences that resulted from poor government policies, and the abuses officials and clerks inflicted on the common people. In a letter to a colleague, Hu wrote that: "The major policies and the legal codes have been abandoned and [the rulers] refuse to implement them, [their] most pressing concern is merely military prestige and financial aggrandizement."[17] In an effort to correct these flaws, Hu devoted enormous energy to drawing up lengthy tracts of advice and solutions that covered everything from regulating the paper currency, to the taming of unruly and corrupt clerks, to improving the efficiency of the military administration.

Of particular concern to Hu was the issue of clerical corruption and abuse. Though clerks had been a vital component of the bureaucracy in previous dynasties, their status in the Yuan rose even higher, the result of the bureaucracy's peculiarities. In the absence of the civil service examination system, becoming a clerk was one of the major routes to office.[18] But while the number and types of clerks increased, their salaries were still many times lower than that of ranked officials, and this led to their negligence and bribe-taking habits. Hu Qiyu complained that:

> In recent years, the wicked and greedy officials and clerks, fearing punishment for wrongdoings, do not conclude any business. Even in legal cases where the truth and falsehoods are clear, they will still delay. A slight delay will last several months, but a more serious delay will be one or two years. No decision will be made even when the incumbent official has completed his term and numerous clerks have transferred in and out. The plaintiffs and defendants will openly pay bribes, but [the officials and clerks] will still not decide. As time goes on, the plaintiffs' and defendants' hardships increase, they will destroy their families and properties, abandon their duty to farm their land, and they will have no choice but to settle [their dispute]. Their desire to settle does not stem from their hearts, but rather from the wicked clerks' extortions and procrastinations.[19]

16 Langlois 1981, p. 139–40; Endicott-West 1989, p. 113.

17 Hu Qiyu 胡祇遹, "Shang Zhang zuo cheng shu" 上張左丞書, in *QYW*, 5.218.

18 Xu 1987, p. 17; Chen and Shi 1996, p. 368.

19 Hu Qiyu, "Guanli ji chi qing bi" 官吏稽遲情弊, in *QYW*, 5.544.

In another essay about clerical malfeasance, Hu pointed out that the clerks were taking advantage of the Yuan practice of transferring them to a new jurisdiction every two years to delay processing litigations and other official paperwork, shifting the burden to their successors. Meanwhile, the new transferees would say that the responsibility for those duties and the blame for the delay lay not with them but with their predecessors, and so nothing would be accomplished. Hu lambasted the Mongols' inability to see this as a problem: "The harm caused by transfers has already reached such an extent, but the rulers still think this is a good method, why do they not contemplate its seriousness?"[20]

Hu attributed these abuses to a host of factors, including oversights in personnel selection and lax discipline, but he saw the main issue as lying in the failure of the Yuan government to incentivize the clerks to fulfill their duties. Regarding their low salaries, Hu wrote:

> Calculating salary, the monthly salary of a clerk in a prefecture amounts to six *guan* 貫. Recently the price of rice and barley has reached no less than eleven *guan* a *dan* 石. [With a] daily earning of 200 *wen* 文, [he] can buy two *sheng* 升 [of grains]; it is only enough for one man's daily needs. The fees for clothes, horse and saddle, and servants are all necessary, but where do they come from? How will [he] be able to support his parents, wife, and children?[21]

Hu also lamented the inability of many clerks to enter officialdom. Already having to endure low salaries and the high costs associated with transfers, the clerks could work for years without gaining office:

> What man desires is fame and fortune. The salaries for clerks of the prefectures, sub-prefectures, and counties are too low to benefit their families. They work hard for years but cannot become officials. They have no fame and no fortune, what do they have to lose? If they are not corrupt, if they do not bend the law, how will they eke out an existence?[22]

In order to properly incentivize these clerks, Hu believed that their salaries must be generous. The problem he saw was that the government was wasting enormous sums of money on supernumeraries, which he bluntly termed the "three redundancies" (*san rong* 三冗) – redundant paperwork, which led to redundant clerks and redundant clerks, which led to redundant affairs.[23] He also suggested amalgamating several sub-prefectures with counties, arguing that the populations of those regions were too low to qualify them as sub-prefectures. He pointed out that one of the immediate benefits was that the government

20 Hu Qiyu, "You si li qian zhuan zhi bi" 又司吏遷轉之弊, in *QYW*, 5.546. For Yuan policies on the transfer of clerks, see Chen and Shi 1996, pp. 394–95.

21 Hu Qiyu, "Jizi Fang langzhong shu" 寄子方郎中書, in *QYW*, 5.226. One *sheng* during the Yuan was equivalent to approximately 1,003 milliliters. Ten *sheng* was equal to one *dou* 斗 and ten *dou* was equal to one *dan*. See Qiu 2005, p. 146.

22 Hu Qiyu, "Minjian jiku zhuang" 民間疾苦狀, in *QYW*, 5.598–99.

23 Hu Qiyu, "Lun chu san rong" 論除三冗, in *QYW*, 5.534.

could spare the salaries paid out to those sub-prefectural officials.[24] To increase salaries, to incentivize, meant that the government must rid itself of these supernumeraries to achieve savings: "redundant personnel lead to chaos in [official] discussions and produce no results; low salaries cannot provide a livelihood and thus breeds corruption. Looking at it today, every single department should reduce its personnel by half and double the salaries."[25]

Hu's counterpart Cheng Jufu 程鉅夫 (1249–1318), a southerner who also rose to high office under Khubilai, similarly related generous salaries to preventing officials from growing corrupt. Unlike Hu Qiyu, however, Cheng Jufu concerned himself primarily with the distribution of office lands, which the Yuan government implemented in the south in 1284. But, because southern lands were considered more fertile, the court decided that the amount of office lands in the south would only be half of those in the north.[26] In addition, office lands were distributed in an uneven manner – not all regional officials were given office lands, and even those who were entitled to them sometimes did not receive them due to the scarcity of available land.[27] To Cheng, this presented two problems. The first was that he considered office lands to be an indispensable part of the regional officials' salaries. In a memorial to Khubilai, Cheng argued that it was not practical to raise salaries by increasing the amount of salary notes, as it would lead to the printing of more paper money. Thus, office lands became the best solution and Cheng proposed that: "every regional official should be allocated state land (*guantian* 官田) as their office lands. It should follow the example of Fuli, and should not be reduced."[28]

Second and more importantly, Cheng used the issue of office lands to level charges against the Branch Secretariats, an administrative organ he had opposed since its inception. Indeed, Cheng had once memorialized the throne calling for their abolition, claiming that their title (*mingcheng* 名稱) was too excessive and that their power (*wei quan* 威權) was too great. Not only were the various Branch Secretariats not cooperating with each other, but Cheng also feared that their broad authority over military affairs within their territories would be a threat to central authority. He proposed that the court should replace them instead with Pacification Commissions, which would wield less power than the Branch Secretariats.[29] In his memorial on office lands, Cheng was careful to point out how the Branch Secretariats were not properly implementing government policies:

> The central government had previously decided to follow the examples of the prefectures and counties in Fuli and distribute office lands to all [regional] officials, but when it was implemented by the Branch Secretariats, it was ordered that [office lands] could only be distributed from uncultivated and unused lands. How can everywhere in Jiangnan have uncultivated and unused lands?

24 Hu Qiyu, "Lun bin zhou xian" 論併州縣, in *QYW*, 5.587.

25 Hu Qiyu, "Minjian jiku zhuang," in *QYW*, 5.598.

26 *TZTG*, p. 372.

27 Shen 1989, p. 62. Chen Gaohua and Shi Weimin believe that most Yuan officials did have office lands, though the amount might have differed from official regulations. See Chen and Shi 2000, p. 264.

28 Cheng Jufu 程鉅夫, "Minjian li bing" 民間利病, in *QYW*, 16.93.

29 Cheng Jufu, "Lun xingsheng" 論行省, in *QYW*, 16.98–99.

> It is because of these senseless and inaccurate words that those who obtain office lands are few.[30]

In all likelihood, Cheng was truly concerned with low salaries, but it is clear from his writings that his ultimate purpose was the abolition of the various Branch Secretariats and the concentration of more power into the hands of the central government.

A generation later, the civilian scholar Zheng Jiefu raised once more the issues that had been advanced by Hu and Cheng. In the "Taiping ce" that he submitted to the throne in 1303, Zheng provided the most detailed and comprehensive analysis on the problems facing the Yuan salary code. He focused heavily on the inequality caused by the office lands, arguing that the lands were not distributed evenly and that those with office lands earned significantly more than those without.[31] Zheng also criticized the government for supernumeraries:

> The redundant positions of the government are indeed difficult to enumerate. For example, the annual salary rice for [the officials of the] various Police Offices and for the Recorders and Dispatch Forwarders of the various circuits are especially wasted. The counties have Sheriffs who command the constables and are in charge of patrols, and the local garrison commander is also ordered to assist. Why should the redundant post of Police Office be installed? In serious cases there are three or four instances of such appointments in a single county, it only harms the people and does not benefit the government. The circuits already have a Registrar and Chief Clerk, and they are enough to take on the task of handling documents, yet the Branch Secretariats are also ordered to dispatch someone [to assist], this harms the government and does not benefit the people. There have been many such cases recently; [these redundant positions] can all be discarded, and in this way the salary money can be saved and the selection of officials will be efficient.[32]

The discrepancy in salaries was so vast and the number of supernumeraries so detrimental that Zheng stated: "The current problem is not that salaries are low, but that salaries are uneven; we should not worry that the salary is not enough, but worry about the excessive appointment of officials."[33] Similar to Hu Qiyu, Zheng proposed cashiering supernumeraries and using the savings to increase salaries. As for equality, Zheng believed that the only way to achieve it was by abolishing office lands, replacing it with salary rice instead:

> Even though the salaries of the court officials are high, [compared to] the price of rice they are poor, for every five *liang* of salary notes, they should also receive one *dan* of rice per month. The salary of officials outside the central

30 Cheng Jufu, "Minjian li bing," in *QYW*, 16.93.

31 Zheng Jiefu, "Taiping ce," in *QYW*, 39.49–51.

32 *Ibid.*, 39.51.

33 *Ibid.*

> government is already low, [and] rice is of little value, for every five *liang*, they should receive two *dan* of rice per month. Above five *liang*, [rice] will be added according to their salary. Those who are unwilling to receive rice can receive [paper] notes based on current prices. The workload of inner and outer [officials of] the Censorate and the Regional Inspection Offices is heavy and exhausting. If the official is honest and pure then the relationship can be absolute; for the relevant departments, if [their salary] is generously increased, then [they will] value more the laws and regulations. The various prefectures and cities of Shanlin [Karakorum], Shangdu [Inner Mongolia], Shanhou [Hebei], Hexi [Shaanxi] are not places that produce rice, so [rice] should be converted to paper money based on each area's current prices. If conversion is not suitable [in an area] then it should be fixed at twenty-five *liang*. This will show [that the court] values the border regions. Civil and military officials and clerks should not be differentiated, those who should be paid should all be distributed rice based on their salaries. Those who originally did not receive any salary notes should receive them based on their rank. Rent from office lands should first be allocated to outer officials so that their salaries are enough, the remaining amount should be sent to the capital and distributed to officials and clerks of the court.[34]

Certain aspects of Zheng's radical solution of centralizing salary distribution were followed by Emperor Wuzong (Khaisan, r. 1307–1311), who in 1310 confiscated all office lands and replaced them with centrally distributed rice (discussed in the following section). However, this reform was short-lived, for it was cancelled the following year upon his death by his younger brother Emperor Renzong (Ayurbarwada, r. 1311–1320), who promptly restored the office lands.

Zheng Jiefu was not the last person to write about the salary code and its shortcomings, as inflation and the failure by the government to reform office lands led to continued complaints. These writers highlighted the government's inability to incentivize its officials as a major flaw and called for action. The mid-Yuan scholar and official Wu Cheng 吳澄 (1249–1333), writing about the importance of county sheriffs and the need to keep their salaries generous, decried the unequal distributions of office lands: "There are those today who even with office lands cannot maintain their honesty, let alone those without any office lands."[35] Wu's protégé Su Tianjue 蘇天爵 (1294–1352) similarly called for more office lands to be distributed to regional officials.[36] Su also stressed the need to incentivize the clerks, writing that: "Alas, if the clerks are not honest and upright, then the way of governance will decay. It is because of this that the Han [dynasty] instituted salaries for clerks, so how can the [present] rulers not think about correcting this flaw?"[37] Such complaints and calls for more generous salaries would persist up until the fall of the Yuan.

34 *Ibid.*, 39.52. *Liang* 兩 was used interchangeably with *guan* 貫 when referring to amounts of paper money in the Yuan.

35 Wu Cheng 吳澄, "Linchuan xian wei si zhi tian ji" 臨川縣尉司職田記, in *QYW*, 15.118.

36 Su Tianjue 蘇天爵, "Zai yi jianbai shi shi" 災異建白十事, in *QYW*, 40.21.

37 Su Tianjue, "Ti qian xian Zhang Hou yi zheng ji" 題僉憲張侯異政記, in *QYW*, 40.95.

SALARIES, READJUSTMENTS, AND THE LIMIT TO MONGOL PRAGMATISM

The Mongol rulers of course were not disconnected from the discussions about low salaries and the abuses that came with it. Nor were they blind to the calls for bureaucratic reform. Even before 1285, Khubilai had resolved to readjust salaries, though each of these cases either failed or did not come to fruition. The court also actively investigated charges of abuse, particularly with office lands, and issued stern injunctions in an attempt to rein them in. Salaries occupied an important place in the minds of Yuan policymakers, as between 1299 and 1351 there were several attempts, both major and minor, to raise the salaries. Yet, these readjustments only scratched the surface of the problem, a temporary remedy for what required much more. The resulting dissatisfaction on the part of the Chinese was because the Mongol rulers refused to implement the more comprehensive bureaucratic reforms that they believed would address the root of the problem.

Government Readjustment of Salaries

With paper money being the primary component of salaries, the real income of officials was naturally tied to inflation. When the Zhongtong notes were first introduced, Khubilai's Chinese advisers were eager to avoid the ruinous inflation that had befallen the Jin paper currency and took necessary precautions, thus creating a stable paper currency regime.[38] Beginning in 1276, due to Khubilai's invasion of southern China and Japan, the court was forced to print additional Zhongtong notes in order to meet expenditure. By 1284, inflation had begun to seriously affect the people's standard of living.[39] According to Hu Qiyu, at the start of the Zhongtong period, one *dan* of rice was only priced at around 600–700 *wen*, but by the mid-1280s, prices had increased as much as ten times.[40] Long periods of inflation plagued much of the mid-Yuan, becoming especially serious during the period between 1299 and 1310,[41] as increased personal spending by the emperors as well as huge military expenditure made it necessary to print more paper money. Writing about inflation in the Chengzong (Temür, r. 1294–1307) period, Zheng Jiefu pointed out that "goods worth one *qian* 錢 of Zhongtong notes in the past now cost one *guan*. Taking the Zhiyuan notes as an example, five *li* 釐 and one *fen* cannot buy a single

38 First, the government closely regulated the amount of paper notes that went into circulation. Second, the notes circulated empire-wide with no expiration dates. Third, the state ordered that all taxes be paid in paper currency, which boosted confidence in it. Fourth, and most importantly, the Zhongtong notes were backed by silver and in theory were redeemable for silver at government exchange bureaus. See Chen and Shi 2000, pp. 407–8.

39 Rossabi 1994, p. 449; Peng 1994, p. 504.

40 Hu Qiyu, "Baochao fa" 寶鈔法, in *QYW*, 5.555.

41 The government issued 1.45 million *ding* 錠 (1 *ding* equals 50 *guan*) of the new Zhida silver notes (*Zhida yin chao* 至大銀鈔), which had a one to twenty-five exchange rate to the Zhongtong notes, in 1310. This was equivalent to around 36.3 million *ding* of Zhongtong notes. It was the single largest issue of paper currency in the entire Yuan period. See Peng 1994, p. 510.

thing and [the Zhiyuan notes] are not used in the markets."[42] It was not until the 1330s that inflation finally stabilized, before serious inflation struck once again in the 1350s.[43]

For a family of five, Hu Qiyu had estimated that every person needed at least one *sheng* of grains, a total of thirty *dan* per annum for the entire family, and two bolts of cloth and two *jin* of cotton annually. The amount spent on salt, condiments, oil and other "miscellaneous items" was equivalent to that spent on grains.[44] Therefore, a sixth-rank capital official during Khubilai's reign needed to spend at least half his salary just for the sustenance of his family.[45] As inflation decreased the purchasing power of the paper notes, an increasing amount of the official's income became devoted simply to buying grains. The Mongols' refusal to use copper coins, a currency that the Chinese literati believed to be stable, and their continued insistence on relying on volatile paper money instead, was a major motivating factor behind the literati's calls for increased salaries.

The court listened to their complaints. Khubilai's salary reform in 1285, which increased all salaries by 50 percent, was an attempt to alleviate salary problems caused by inflation. Not considering this to be enough, Khubilai ordered the Central Secretariat to discuss increasing salaries further for inner and outer officials and clerks in the 11th month of 1291. A month later, the Central Secretariat recommended that the seventy types of corvée taxes of the Southern Song should be collected again in the south and used to increase salaries of officials.[46] However, this policy was never put into practice. In 1299, the Central Secretariat decreed that clerks would receive, in addition to an increased amount of salary notes, anywhere between six *dou* to one *dan* of rice a month depending on their office.[47] Four years later, officials too began receiving salary rice. In his 1303 decree, Emperor Chengzong stated that: "The salaries for officials and clerks are low and cannot cultivate honesty. Salary rice [should] be added." Subsequently, the Central Secretariat decided to follow the 1299 practice of increasing salaries for clerks and recommended that one *sheng* of rice be given for every *liang* of salary notes. An official receiving between ten and twenty-five *liang* would be given one *dan* of rice, and one *sheng* would be issued for every ten *liang* above that amount. In the non-rice producing regions of the north and northwest, officials were given an additional twenty-five *liang* of Zhongtong notes for every *dan* of rice that they would otherwise receive.[48] This was, in fact, the same

42 Zheng Jiefu, "Taiping ce," in *QYW*, 39.31.

43 Hsiao 1994, pp. 552–53; Miyazawa 2012. Throughout most of the Chengzong reign, ten *liang* of Zhongtong notes for one *dan* of rice seemed to be the norm for much of southern China. In times of famine, the price would increase to thirty *liang* or more. By 1346, the price for one *dan* of rice had increased to forty *liang*, a forty-fold increase since the beginning of the Khubilai reign. See Liu Xun 劉壎, "Chengzhou zhuan shen lian fang fen si jiu huang zhuang" 呈州轉申廉訪分司救荒狀, in *QYW*, 10.214; Peng 1958, p. 410.

44 Hu Qiyu, "Pifu sui fei" 匹夫歲費, in *QYW* 5.609. Hu Qiyu's estimates were for an average peasant family. It is very likely that the expenses for officials would be even higher, since they tended to have more dependants.

45 For salaries of capital officials, see Table 1.1 in the Appendix. A first-class official ranked 6a earned seventy *liang* monthly. If the price of rice was seven *liang* as Hu Qiyu described, and combined with expenses for miscellaneous items, then that would amount to thirty-five *liang* per month.

46 *Yuanshi*, 16.352–53.

47 *YDZ* 2011, 2.545–46.

48 *Ibid.*, 2.546–47. Under this policy, an official with 150 *liang* of salary notes would first receive 1 *dan* of rice for

as what Zheng Jiefu wanted, although he proposed double the amount given by the Yuan government.[49]

The most serious readjustment of this period came in 1309, during the reign of Khaisan. A year prior, the court had ordered that all official salaries would be changed to Zhiyuan notes (*Zhiyuan chao* 至元鈔), prorated in terms of Zhongtong notes, and the abolition of salary rice. As Zhiyuan notes, which were first issued in 1287 in tandem with Zhongtong notes, had a one to five exchange rate with their predecessor, this would have represented a fivefold increase in official salaries.[50] In 1309, official salaries were stopped for a second time, and the new salary code was promulgated in the following year. For court officials, the 50 percent increase from 1285 was removed and the remaining amount was converted to Zhiyuan notes. The amount of salary notes for regional officials was reduced by 30 percent and the remaining amount was also converted to Zhiyuan notes. All salary rice for officials was cancelled, though officials who received less than ten *liang* per month were entitled to five *dou* of rice, and salary rice for clerks remained the same.[51] Although many of Khaisan's policies were abolished by his brother Ayurbarwada, the decision to convert salaries for central officials to Zhiyuan notes was kept. Salary rice was initially not included, and it was not until 1320 that the Yuan court restored salary rice by decreeing that 30 percent of all court officials' salaries would be paid in rice, converted at a rate of twenty *liang* of Zhongtong notes (or four *liang* of Zhiyuan notes) per *dan*.[52]

The seventeen years from 1320 to 1337 saw no further adjustments to salaries, as inflation overall remained relatively stable. Yet even with the restoration of salary rice, virtually no literatus considered the salaries to be enough. The main problem was that after the 1320 restoration of salary rice, the rice was deducted directly from the cash portion of the salaries (see Table 1.3 in the Appendix), rather than given separately, as was the case before the 1309 adjustment.[53] Not only was the amount of rice given not enough for most officials, especially those with large families, it also decreased the cash portion of their salaries. Lu Wengui 陸文圭 (1253–1336) was able to sum up the situation succinctly, stating

25 *liang* of notes. The remaining 125 *liang* would follow the 1 *sheng* for every 10 *liang* rule, for 1.25 *dan* of rice. Thus, he would receive in total 2.25 *dan* of salary rice.

49 In his memorial, Zheng Jiefu had lamented the fact that officials who earned three *ding* (150 *liang*) or more were not given salary rice. While Temür's 1303 decree did indeed state this, the *Mishu jian zhi* 秘書監志 recorded a so-called converted payment (*kousuan jifu* 扣算給付) system that Zheng Jiefu did not take into account. By using the salaries listed in the *Mishu jian zhi*, Shen Renguo has demonstrated that officials with salaries over three *ding* (rank 3a and above) circumnavigated this restriction by having the rice converted into a cash price and deducted directly from the notes used to pay their salaries. Officials received rice for the deducted portion. See Shen 1989, pp. 45–46.

50 *Yuanshi*, 22.504. I believe this entry in the *Yuanshi* is erroneous, as it is not corroborated by any of the Yuan codes and institutes. Furthermore, the court's intention behind the 1309 salary reforms was clearly to raise official salaries. If salaries had been switched in 1308 to Zhiyuan notes, prorated in terms of Zhongtong notes, then the results of the 1309 adjustment would have led to a lower amount than the 1308 salaries. Therefore, it is likely that the 1308 adjustment never happened.

51 *YDZ* 2011, 2.547–49.

52 *MSJZ*, p. 43. The *Mishu jian zhi* stated that the Central Secretariat recommended setting the conversion rate at thirty *liang* of Zhongtong notes per *dan*, but a calculation of the subsequent salary composition reveals that the conversion rate was set at twenty *liang* of Zhongtong notes instead.

53 The reason for this change was most likely due to the fact that the salary notes had been changed to Zhiyuan notes, which in theory were worth more than Zhongtong notes.

that, "The monthly salary rice [of officials] in the capital is not enough for their daily needs. Thus, people dream of being dispatched to regional offices and detest being transferred to the capital."[54]

The final readjustments came during the reign of Emperor Shun (Toghon Temür, r. 1333–1370). Bowing to pressure from officials, in 1337 the amount of salary rice was increased for court officials by reducing the conversion of salary notes to salary rice from twenty *liang* Zhongtong notes per *dan* to fifteen *liang*. Then, in 1341, officials without office lands in the Branch Secretariats, Branch Censorates, and Pacification Commissions were given salary rice – ten *dan* for rank one officials, eight *dan* for rank two officials, six *dan* for rank three officials, four *dan* for rank four and five officials, and two *dan* for officials rank six and below. Regions that did not produce any rice would see the rice converted into Zhongtong notes at a rate of twenty-five *liang* per *dan*. Finally, salaries for the Regional Investigation Commissions and officials in the border regions were increased in 1351.[55]

On the bureaucratic front, the Yuan court also took measures to reduce government supernumeraries. Supernumeraries had been plaguing the Yuan since Khubilai's time, as seen from Hu Qiyu's writings, but the issue became increasingly serious during the reigns of Temür and Khaisan when so many new officials were being added that it was causing a serious drain on government revenue. In 1311, immediately upon taking the throne after Khaisan's death, Ayurbarwada ordered a reduction of government officials to 1293 levels.[56] Emperor Yingzong (Shidebala, r. 1320–1323), perhaps the most "Chinese" of any Yuan emperor, continued his father's policies of retrenchment, ordering the abolition of all offices created after Khubilai's reign and imposing stricter discipline over the bureaucracy.[57] In 1330, a general retrenchment of imperial guards and palace service personnel took place under Emperor Wenzong (Tugh Temür, r. 1328–1332) and saw the dismissal of as many as 10,000 people.[58] Though retrenchment and salary raises did not reach the level envisioned by the Chinese literati, it nonetheless showed that the Mongol rulers were concerned about the negative impacts of these issues.

The Problem of Office Lands

No aspect of Yuan salaries was more scrutinized than office lands. Although the concept of office lands was not new, it was the Yuan that first implemented them throughout China on a large scale.[59] Concerning office lands, the Chinese literati were generally divided into two main camps. The first called for the complete abolition of office lands while the second

54 Lu Wengui 陸文圭, "Liumin tan li yan chao fa sibi" 流民貪吏鹽鈔法四弊, in *QYW*, 17.466.

55 *MSJZ*, p. 45; *NTBY*, pp. 221–23; Shen 1989, pp. 50–51; Pan 2003, p. 60.

56 *Yuanshi*, 24.546.

57 *Ibid.*, 27.625.

58 *Ibid.*, 34.765.

59 Office lands had been part of the Chinese salary code since the Jin dynasty (265–420) and were given out to regional officials during both the Sui (581–618) and the Tang (618–907) dynasties. In 999, the Northern Song also instituted office lands for regional officials. The Jurchen Jin dynasty had office lands as well. See Huang and Chen 2005, pp. 265–67.

believed that more office lands were necessary. But regardless of their beliefs, they were all quick to point out the inequality and abuse that stemmed out of the current system. Zheng Jiefu, for example, wrote that a third-rank regional official could claim as much as 800 *dan* of rice annually from his office lands.[60] Su Tianjue wrote that in Fujian, officials were taking three *dan* of rice per *mu* from their office lands, impoverishing the common people.[61] The average yield per *mu* in southern China during the Yuan was between one and one and a half *dan*, so for an official to claim that much rice meant he would have taken the entire harvest without leaving any for his tenants.[62]

The Yuan court was well aware of these abuses. In 1284, the Censorate reported that officials were over-collecting rent from their office lands, often by force and with complete disregard for harvest conditions. In 1302, the Henan Branch Secretariat reported that officials were collecting from their office lands even during times of natural disasters and famine, and the Central Secretariat decreed that all rent should be cancelled in such cases.[63] The amount of rent collected from office lands also drastically increased over time. In the 1270s, a rank 3a official of the Regional Investigation Office in Huguang (modern day Hunan and Hubei provinces) collected three *dou* of rice per *mu* from his office lands. In the 1290s, he collected six *dou* of rice per *mu*. By 1315, an official in the same office was collecting double that amount. The court thus circulated another decree prohibiting the over-collection of land rent from office lands.[64]

But aside from issuing stern injunctions to curtail abuses, the Yuan made only one effort to reform office lands. In 1310, as part of his reforms to ameliorate the dire financial situation facing the government, Khaisan abolished the office land system and replaced it with salary rice instead – "to collect rice from the fields [office lands] in order to supplement the needs of the capital."[65] However, this reform did not balance the salaries in the same way that Zheng Jiefu had envisioned in his memorial. Not only were local officials who previously did not hold office lands not given any salary rice, even salary rice for court officials was cancelled. Furthermore, the amount of rice given to the regional officials was far below what their lands produced, leading to widespread discontent.[66] So disastrous was this reform that the censor Zhang Yanghao 張養浩 (1270–1329), in a carefully worded memorial, placed the confiscation of office lands first in a long list of grievances against Khaisan's rule. Zhang did not mention the discontent harbored by regional

60 Zheng Jiefu, "Taiping ce," in *QYW*, 39.50.

61 Su Tianjue, "Yuan gu Taishi yuan shi zeng Hanlin xueshi Qiwenyigong shendaobei ming" 元故太史院使贈翰林學士齊文懿公神道碑銘, in *QYW*, 40.283.

62 Chen and Shi 2000, pp. 170–73.

63 *TZTG*, pp. 379–80.

64 *Ibid.*, p. 381.

65 *YDZ* 2011, 2.548–49; Yao 2011, p. 368. Rank three officials were given one hundred *dan* of rice, rank four officials were given sixty *dan*, rank five officials were given fifty *dan*, rank six officials were given forty-five *dan*, and those under rank six were given forty *dan*.

66 Shen 1989, p. 60. According to Shen, a third-rank official could receive, based on a rent of 0.22 *dan* per *mu* which he took as an average, between 144 to 176 *dan* of rice from his office lands annually. Khaisan's reform saw the amount of rice received reduced by 30–43 percent. This only benefited lower-ranking officials, who saw a minor increase in the amount of rice they received.

officials, but rather articulated the measure as a neglect of the legacy of Khubilai, an accusation that carried serious consequences:

> In recent years, examining the policies and regulations, there is not one that does not differ from Emperor Shizu's [Khubilai's] time. Does Your Majesty wish to create [your own] institutions by disregarding the laws of [your] ancestors? During the time of Emperor Shizu, outer officials had office lands, today the office lands have been replaced by valueless salary rice.[67]

After Khaisan's death in 1311, this unpopular policy was immediately reversed and office lands were restored to the local officials who originally had them. This was confirmed in a 1313 edict, which stated that "office lands and salary notes for outer officials would follow the old regulations."[68] The term "old regulations" (*jiuli* 舊例) indicated that not only were the office lands restored to those officials, but their salary notes were also paid with Zhongtong notes and according to the 1285 standards. Only officials without lands followed the 1310 adjustments and had their salary notes replaced with Zhiyuan notes.[69] From 1313 until the end of the Yuan in 1368, no further changes were made to the office land system.

Why Did the Yuan Not Embrace Reform?

Hu Qiyu once complained that whenever envoys from the Central or Branch Secretariats came to the localities, in order to satisfy them, the local clerks would requisition from the people everything from food, to cooking utensils, to bedding.[70] In 1295, the Censorate reported that local officials were unlawfully deducting money from the salaries of their subordinates in order to pay for feasts and bribes to entertain officials from the Branch Secretariats and the Pacification Commissions.[71] This created a pattern in which the higher officials took from the lower officials, lower officials took from the clerks, and clerks took from the people. To the Chinese literati, perhaps an obvious solution would have been to restore the operating funds (*gongshi qian* 公使錢) of the Song, which were funds kept by local officials for the purpose of entertaining imperial envoys and other high-ranking officials.[72] But the Yuan court never did so, and like the abuses that were reported with the office lands, only an injunction was issued banning the practice. What we are left with then is an interesting paradox – on one hand, the Mongols attached a degree of importance to the issue of salaries and its effects on the bureaucracy, but on the other hand, they seemed uninterested in really trying to solve the problem.

67 Zhang Yanghao 張養浩, "Shizheng shu" 時政書, in *QYW*, 24.564.

68 *TZTG*, p. 370.

69 See also Pan 2003, p. 54.

70 Hu Qiyu, "Minjian jiku zhuang," in *QYW*, 5.591.

71 *TZTG*, p. 392.

72 For in-depth analysis on operating funds, see Saeki 1964a and 1964b.

The key to understanding this paradox lay in understanding what mattered to the Mongols. Nomadic patrimonial notions of society and government meant that holding onto power demanded the redistribution of wealth and possessions by the leader to his family, retainers, and followers.[73] The Mongols were no exception – this principle was enshrined by Chinggis Khan when he first established the Mongol Empire and was continued by his successors.[74] Khubilai's foundation of a Chinese-style bureaucracy did not change that fact, and he supported this creation because he realized that only with such a bureaucracy and with the help of the Chinese could he perpetuate Mongol rule and extract greater wealth for redistribution.[75] To the extent that adjustment would help them maintain their rule, the Mongols were not unwilling to follow their Chinese advisers' counsel – salary increases were given to officials and clerks, the court sought to mitigate the abuse of office lands, and there were serious attempts to reduce the number of government supernumeraries. But, these measures by themselves were not enough to solve the Yuan's inability to incentivize the bureaucracy, and implementing the policies and reforms that the Chinese believed would address the root of the issue was simply beyond the expertise of the Mongols. To do so would have required the services of the Chinese, many of whom were "Southerners" (*nanren* 南人), a group that the Mongols did not fully trust.[76] Thus, the Mongols' unwillingness to embrace reforms partly stemmed from a deep distrust of their conquered subjects.

As a result of this distrust, the Mongols staffed the high offices of the central government exclusively with other Mongols and Central Asians.[77] More than half of the regional Branch Secretariats' Prime Ministers were Mongols, and together, Mongols and Central Asians made up over 64 percent of the Branch Secretariats' ranked personnel.[78] The *darughachi* (regional overseers), the highest-ranking official in the local administrations, were again mostly Mongol or Central Asian.[79] Clerks were favored not only because their utility was easily recognizable to the Mongols, but also because clerks, unlike the scholar-officials,

73 Allsen 2001, p. 183.

74 Han 1986, 1.188.

75 Dardess 2003, pp. 119, 129.

76 The Mongols' division of China into four social classes is well known. On the top were the Mongols, followed by the Central Asians (*semu ren* 色目人), the Northern Chinese (*Hanren* 漢人) and finally the Southerners (*nanren* 南人). Northern Chinese referred to the Khitans, Jurchens, Han Chinese, and other groups who had served the Jin dynasty. It also included people from Yunnan, Sichuan, and Koryŏ. Southerners were Han Chinese who lived in the territories of the Southern Song. See Han 1986, 2.53–56. The lowered status of the Southerners should not come as a surprise – the Southern Song was the last state in China to succumb to Mongol rule, having successfully resisted for almost half a century.

77 Han 1986, 1.338. Wang Mingsun estimated that Mongols and Central Asians made up 48 percent of all officials above rank three despite their small populations. See Wang 1992, p. 108.

78 Li 2000, p. 145. The author noted that due to the lack of historical sources, his estimates of Mongols and Central Asians in the Branch Secretariats were probably too low.

79 The scholar Hong Lizhu surveyed 108 individuals who served as *darughachi* for a total of 110 terms in the north and 169 individuals who served as *darughachi* for a total of 183 terms in the south. She found that in the north, Mongols and Central Asians accounted for 42 percent of the *darughachi*, with 48 percent having unknown ethnicities. In the south, Mongols and Central Asians accounted for 69 percent of the *darughachi*, with 27 percent having unknown ethnicities. All other county positions were filled mostly by Northern Chinese, followed by Southern Chinese, and clerical positions were dominated by Southern Chinese. See Hong 2014, pp. 67–81.

presented no ideological challenge to their rule.[80] Even when civil service examinations were instituted in 1315 and again in 1342, it worked heavily in favor of the Mongols – the Mongols were given easier questions and the quotas for the Mongols and the Chinese were the same, despite the fact that the Mongol population was significantly smaller.[81] These practices show that the Mongols simply had no intention of sharing power with the Chinese.

An even more important reason for the Mongols' resistance to reform lay in the features of steppe political institutions, much of it influenced by tribal cultures and customs, which were preserved in the Yuan bureaucracy. As Endicott-West pointed out, the Mongols had no tradition of concentrating power in one person, and so instituted a conciliar style of decision-making that was embodied in daily councils, which itself grew out of the traditional *khurlitai*, in which all officials from the Branch Secretariats down to the counties were required to attend in order to deliberate on government matters.[82] In addition, the Mongols feared that one agency might grow too powerful, and thus often delegated the same authority to different offices so that they would act as a check against one another. This, however, led to the creation of offices with overlapping authorities. The mid-Yuan official Wang Jie 王結 (1274–1336) succinctly described this problem in a memorial:

> We have a Ministry of Revenue [for finance], but we also have the Grand Agricultural Administration; we have a Ministry of Rites [for ritual], but we also have the Court of Imperial Sacrifices, the Court of Imperial Entertainments, the Office of State Ceremonies, and the Interpreters Institute; we have a Ministry of War [for postal service, military farms, and horse pastures], but we also have the Office of Transmission, the Court of the Imperial Stud, and the Court of the Imperial Saddlery; [we have a Ministry of Punishments] [for legal matters],[83] but we also have the *yi ke zha er gu qi* 伊克扎爾固齊 (M. *yeke jarghuchi*); we have a Ministry of Works [for construction and manufacturing], but we also have the Imperial Manufactories Commission, the Court of Imperial Armaments, the Directorate of Imperial Manufactories, the Directorate for Felt Manufactures, and the Directorate for Leather and Fur Manufactures. . . . This way, [the agencies] cannot be controlled, government affairs will be in disorder, and salaries will be wasted. . . . In the regional circuits, there are the Branch Secretariats, but we also have the Pacification Commissions and the Director-Generals.[84]

This, of course, was not a problem unique to the Yuan – the Song also had a precedent of establishing offices with overlapping authorities.[85] But while the Song bureaucracy, despite

80 Endicott-West 1989, p. 113.

81 Chen and Shi 1996, p. 359.

82 Endicott-West 1989, p. 126; Li 2000, p. 49; Hong 2014, pp. 100–03.

83 The words "we have the Ministry of Punishments" were left out of the memorial.

84 Wang Jie 王結, "Shang Zhongshu zaixiang ba shi" 上中書宰相八事, in *QYW*, 31.332. All English translations of government agencies and offices follow Hucker 1985.

85 The most glaring example of supernumeraries in the Song was in the realm of finance. Prior to the administrative reforms of the 1080s, most fiscal matters were handled by the State Finance Commission (*sansi* 三司),

its problems, has generally received high marks from historians, the same cannot be said for the Yuan.[86] In addition, the Yuan's use of several different scripts on official documents[87] and its polyethnic nature meant that all branches and levels of government needed to employ a number of translation and interpreter clerks, thus making the reduction of clerks difficult. These factors not only caused the Yuan bureaucracy to grow inefficient, but also greatly increased the number of people paid by the government. If taking into account Hu Qiyu, Zheng Jiefu, and Wang Jie's descriptions of government supernumeraries, then the court's efforts to reduce them would have been considered ineffective.

The Yuan's financial difficulties were further exacerbated by the emperors' free-spending habits. Drawing from their custom of distributing conquered peoples and wealth to members of the ruling family, the Yuan emperors paid out enormous sums in the form of gold, silver, silk, and paper currency as annual grants (*suici* 歲賜) to members of the imperial family and the nobility. In 1294, for example, Emperor Chengzong had some 744,500 *liang* of silver that had been kept in reserve for the paper currency in the various circuits transported to the capital so that it could be given out as grants to relatives and nobles.[88] Military spending naturally accounted for a huge portion of the expenditures as well, but the peculiar nature of the Yuan bureaucracy also played an important role. As the civil service examination was not made available to most of the Yuan, the path to officialdom was limited to other routes. One of the easiest ways to become an official was through joining the imperial guard (*keshig*), whose members were not only well rewarded by the emperor but also given preference in official appointments. This naturally led to the ballooning of the guard force, and there were repeated attempts by Yuan emperors to reduce its numbers.[89] The practice of granting appanages (*touxia* 投下) to imperial princes not only deprived the court of revenue from those lands but also contributed to the Yuan's political instability.[90] Of course, there were other expenditures, such as the imperial family's annual trips to the summer capital of Shangdu and the patronization of Buddhist ceremonies, all of which further added to the expense of the Yuan court. Consequently, continuously increasing salaries would have been very difficult for the

which included the Salt and Iron Monopoly Bureau (*yantie si* 鹽鐵司), the Tax Bureau (*duzhi si* 度支司), and the Census Bureau (*hubu si* 戶部司). This was in addition to the Ministry of Revenue (*hubu* 戶部), which existed but had no real power. Furthermore, there existed other agencies, such as the Court of the Imperial Treasury (*taifu si* 太府寺) and the Court of the National Granaries (*sinong si* 司農寺), which had some authority over fiscal matters as well. Even after the abolition of the State Finance Commission in the 1080s, these agencies continued to compete with the Ministry of Revenue. See Golas 2015, pp. 145–46.

86 Winston Lo argues that despite the overlapping structures and duplicated functions of the Song civil service, it was able to "develop operational norms and procedures which amounted to a fairly sophisticated and, within limits, effective system of personnel administration." See Lo 1987, p. 217. Scholars also point to the increasingly professional financial administration which developed during the Northern Song. See Hartwell 1971 and Liu 2015.

87 In addition to Chinese, the Mongols used the 'Phags-pa script, the Uighur script, and the Persian script. See Yao 2011, p. 147.

88 *Yuanshi*, 18.387; Endicott-West 1994, p. 608. Only the dynastic history of the Yuan (*Yuanshi*) devoted an entire chapter to covering annual grants.

89 Chen and Shi 1996, p. 366; 2000, p. 769.

90 Endicott-West 1994, pp. 607–8.

Yuan court to achieve, as the government's large expenditures dwarfed its annual revenue.[91]

Most of these practices, the staffing of the bureaucracy with Mongols and Central Asians, the conciliar style of decision-making, the distribution of grants and appanages, and the importance of the *keshig*, could be traced to the political apparatus of the steppes. In writing about nomadic state formation, Di Cosmo has pointed out that new khans consolidated their power by staffing high positions with a tribal aristocracy composed of imperial family members, consort clan members, and loyal military commanders, as well as by monopolizing revenue, which was then redistributed to the aristocracy.[92] Khubilai could ill afford to rid himself of these tribal institutions and values, upon which part of his legitimacy hinged, and he preserved these practices during his state-building process in China. Khubilai envisioned that the mixture of Chinese bureaucratic and Mongol steppe institutions would not only satisfy both the Chinese literati and the Mongol nobles but also serve as a check upon one another. Yet the balance between these two opposing institutions was kept in large part through the personal power and prestige Khubilai wielded, and which his successors lacked. This forced them to rely increasingly on steppe institutions – the paying of annual grants, the granting of appanages, and the appointing of loyal allies to positions of powers – to maintain their rule.[93] Later Yuan emperors attempted to reduce excesses by "returning" the government back to Khubilai's time, yet it was precisely Khubilai's political apparatus that was the source of their problems in the first place, saddling the administration with a tremendous financial burden, as it needed to support a host of court apparatuses, the privileges of the elites, and the military.[94]

These flaws were of course recognized by the Chinese literati, but reforming the government along the lines they wanted would have meant the Mongols needed to jettison these tribal institutions. Furthering the Chinese system at the expense of Mongol values would have meant employing more Chinese to staff higher government positions. This, the Mongols were unwilling to do, for it would have infringed directly on the privilege of their elites. The Mongol rulers valued the advice of the Chinese, but that value did not translate into trust. In this regard, Zheng Jiefu's plan to reform office lands was destined to fail. The act of confiscating office lands would have drastically lowered the income of high- and mid-rank officials, a significant proportion of whom were Mongols and Central Asians, and this would have constituted an attack on their interests. The state could also not replace the office lands with sufficient amounts of rice, as this would have further strained the already troubled budget. For this reform to succeed, the Mongols needed to adapt themselves more, if not completely, to Chinese and Confucian values, something the Mongols showed no interest in doing. As long as the bureaucracy was still functioning and wealth continued to be transported to the capital, the Mongols were content with simple remedial measures.

91 Chen and Shi 2000, p. 780.

92 Di Cosmo 1999, p. 14.

93 Yao 2011, p. 367; Rossabi 1988, pp. 115, 172–76.

94 Di Cosmo 1999, p. 18.

CONCLUSION

Scholars writing on Mongol rule in China have revealed a curious ambivalence concerning the Mongol rulers. One the one hand, the Mongols were praised for their pragmatism, utilizing the expertise of others to achieve goals that would have been otherwise impossible.[95] Yet on the other hand, they were criticized for the apathetic attitude they displayed toward governance, leading to a corrupt, incompetent, and ultimately inefficient bureaucracy.[96] The arguments put forth in this article offer a new perspective from which to study this ambivalence by focusing on the salary code. The court's response to the issue of salaries, far from showing that the Mongol rulers were uninterested in governing, instead demonstrated a surprising amount of concern for the bureaucracy and the officials. It was the Mongol emperors who ordered the salary increases and it was the Mongol-led court that received and responded to charges of abuse. To say that the Mongols were apathetic to governance, then, seems a bit exaggerated.

Yet if the salaries showed that the Mongols were not completely apathetic, it also demonstrated the limitations to their pragmatism. Their inability to motivate the bureaucracy revealed a fundamental flaw in the Mongol regime; they valued steppe institutions and traditional customs over the need to reform. The emperors paid out lavish grants and rewards and took annual trips to the summer capital. They filled the major government posts with other Mongols and Central Asians, while relegating the Han Chinese to lower positions. Yet what the state drew in as revenue could not support the huge expenditures of the court, and the Mongol rulers shut out the very people who had the political knowledge and the desire to help them strengthen their administration. The failure to incentivize led to widespread abuses and bribery, particularly among clerks, and caused the local administration to grow increasingly incompetent and difficult to manage. Their unwillingness to share power and embrace reform meant that any solution would have only been a temporary measure – the state could only raise salaries to the extent that their revenue would allow them to. In 1341, when the emperor wished to increase the salaries of officials in Yunnan, his ministers responded that salaries for officials there had already been raised several times, and that "increasing them further would be difficult."[97]

The failures of the Yuan government and the reasons for them have naturally attracted the attention of previous historians. Drawing evidence mainly from the reign histories of the emperors in the *Yuanshi*, Hsiao Ch'i-Ch'ing wrote that curtailing of government spending was difficult to implement because "it would have affected the very basis of the Mongolian

95 Allsen noted the pragmatism of Möngke, who satisfied those pushing for political centralization by pursuing internal reforms and those advocating external expansion with wars of conquest. Consequently, he was able to concentrate a large amount of power into his own hands. See Allsen 1987, pp. 220–21. Dardess noted that Khubilai "was willing to meet the Chinese part way and 'sinify' himself and his regime to whatever extent appeared advantageous." See Dardess 2003, p. 119.

96 The Chinese historian Meng Siming wrote in his study on Yuan society that "the Mongols did not understand government affairs, were not literate in Chinese writing, could not comprehend the laws, and could not understand government documents." See Meng 2006, p. 77. A similar point was raised by Li Zhi'an, who, argued that the Mongols could not comprehend the importance of salaries, as they originally did not possess such a concept. He further noted that the Mongol emperors were uninterested in the quality of their officials and frequently bent the law to lessen the punishment for corrupt offenders. See Li 2004, pp. 37–39.

97 *NTBY*, p. 220.

state in China" and that Yuan emperors feared government reform would insult the legacy of their ancestors.[98] Di Cosmo advanced the notion that the nomadic empires all displayed a high degree of political centralization that allowed them to mobilize human and material resources and that they were very selective in what institutions to borrow from sedentary empires, resulting in the formation of "mixed" institutions.[99] Similarly, Endicott-West pointed to the features of Mongolian tradition embedded into the Chinese-style bureaucracy, arguing that the Mongols' notions of government service came from tribal and military values and that it was these values that caused the Yuan state, especially the local government, to become highly inefficient and ungovernable.[100] Finally, Morris Rossabi wrote in his biography of Khubilai that the Yuan founder had attempted to strike a balance between Chinese civilization and Mongol tradition.[101] By taking as a focus the way in which the Chinese literati pushed the Yuan court to reform through their criticisms of the salary code and the court's response to their complaints, this article has affirmed the points raised by these scholars. The Mongols' distrust of the Chinese and their desire to cling to their traditional institutions and culture clashed with the demands needed for sinicization, and Khubilai ultimately chose a middle path, creating a Chinese bureaucracy imbued with values and practices of the steppes. His heirs refused reform because they did not want to disregard his legacy and curtail the privileges that Khubilai had established for the Mongol elites, people that they had come to depend upon for political support. This led to the court's inability to pay salaries that the Chinese literati considered generous.

There is little doubt that the Mongols were an extremely pragmatic people, but their pragmatism alone was not sufficient to solve the problems inherent in the bureaucracy. Khubilai's overtures to the Chinese literati and his subsequent reforms afforded them the opportunity to influence their Mongol overlords and to rebuild a bureaucracy that had been shattered with the fall of the Jin in the north and the Song in the south. Many literati advocated strongly for a return to Chinese dynastic institutions. Wang Jie, for example, specifically recommended following the Tang and Song models of government in his memorial on supernumeraries.[102] But in their zeal for bureaucratization, these officials either failed to realize or ignored the fact that the Yuan was not like any other Chinese dynasty. It was at its core a Mongol state, with an aim of maintaining the privilege of the Mongol elites, and any serious attempt at reforming the government along the lines that the Chinese literati wanted would have gravely undermined the interests of those elites. The Mongol rulers were concerned with the bureaucracy, but only to the extent that it would preserve their rule. In dealing with the issue of salaries, the Mongols did not do more than what was minimally required – the court indulged the literati's requests to raise salaries and made efforts to reduce supernumeraries, but ignored the calls for further reform that would have addressed the causes. In the face of preserving their power and privilege, it would seem that Mongol pragmatism finally found its limit.

98 Hsiao 1994, pp. 492, 560.

99 Di Cosmo 1999, pp. 6–7.

100 Endicott-West 1989, pp. 113, 127.

101 Rossabi 1988, pp. 115–16, 172.

102 Wang, "Shang Zhongshu zaixiang ba shi," in *QYW*, 31.332–33.

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APPENDIX

Table 1.1. Monthly salaries of central government officials (1285)

Rank	First Class	Second Class	Third Class
1b	300	250	
2a	225	215	
2b	200	185	175
3a	175	165	150
3b	150	135	125
4a	125	115	100
4b	100	95	90
5a	90	80	
5b	80	70	
6a	70	65	
6b	65	60	
7a	60	55	
7b	55	50	
8a	50	45	
8b	45	40	
9a	40	35	
9b	35		

Source: Yuanshi, 96.2451–52.
Note: Salaries were paid in Zhongtong notes (Zhongtong chao 中統鈔) and measured in *liang* 兩.

Table 1.2. Monthly salaries of central government officials (1310)[103]

Rank	First Class	Second Class	Third Class
1b	200	166.666	
2a	150	143.333	
2b	133.333	123.333	116.666
3a	116.666	110	100
3b	100	90	83.333
4a	83.333	76.666	66.666
4b	66.666	63.333	60
5a	60	53.333	
5b	53.333	46.666	
6a	46.666	43.333	
6b	43.333	40	
7a	40	36.666	
7b	36.666	33.333	
8a	33.333	30	
8b	30	23.666	
9a	26.666	23.333	
9b	23.333		

Note: Salaries were paid in Zhiyuan notes (Zhiyuan chao 至元鈔) and measured in *liang* 兩.

103 These figures are the results of applying the 1310 readjustments (the removal of the 50 percent increase from 1285 and the conversion of the remaining amount to Zhiyuan notes) to the 1285 salaries. Thus, 300 *liang* of Zhongtong notes for rank 1b officials in 1285 would now be equal to 200 *liang* of Zhiyuan notes. See *YDZ* 2011, 2.548–49; Chen et al. 2004, pp. 347–49.

Table 1.3. Monthly salaries of central government officials (1320–1337)

Rank	First Class	Second Class	Third Class
1b	200 (140 *liang*/15 *dan*)	181.333 (129.333 *liang*/13.5 *dan*)	176.777 (128.666 *liang*/12 *dan*)
2a	166.666 (118.666 *liang*/12 *dan*) 150 (106 *liang*/11 *dan*)	147 (103 *liang*/11 *dan*)	143.333 (101.333 *liang*/10.5 *dan*)
2b	134.35 (96.35 *liang*/9.5 *dan*)	133.333 (95.333 *liang*/9.5 *dan*)	116.666 (82.666 *liang*/8.5 *dan*)
3a	128.18 (90.18 *liang*/9.5 *dan*) 116.666 (82.666 *liang*/8.5 *dan*)	110 (78 *liang*/8 *dan*)	100 (70 *liang*/7.5 *dan*)
3b	128.18 (90.18 *liang*/9.5 *dan*) 102 (72 *liang*/7.5 *dan*)	100 (70 *liang*/7.5 *dan*) 83.333 (59.333 *liang*/6 *dan*)	77 (53 *liang*/6 *dan* 70 (50 *liang*/5 *dan*)
4a	83.333 (59.333 *liang*/6 *dan*) 83 (59 *liang*/6 *dan*)	73.333 (53.333 *liang*/5 *dan*)	66.666 (48.666 *liang*/4.5 *dan*)
4b	83.333 (59.333 *liang*/6 *dan*)	62 (44 *liang*/4.5 *dan*)	60 (42 *liang*/4.5 *dan*)
5a	61 (43 *liang*/4.5 *dan*) 60 (42 *liang*/4.5 *dan*)	53.333 (39.333 *liang*/3.5 *dan*)	
5b	53.333 (39.333 *liang*/3.5 *dan*)	46.666 (34.666 *liang*/3 *dan*)	43.333 (31.333 *liang*/3 *dan*)
6a	46.666 (34.666 *liang*/3 *dan*)	43.333 (31.333 *liang*/3 *dan*) 42.333 (30.333 *liang*/3 *dan*) 42 (30 *liang*/3 *dan*)	40 (28 *liang*/3 *dan*)
6b	40 (28 *liang*/3 *dan*)		30 (22 *liang*/2 *dan*)
7a	42 (28 *liang*/3.5 *dan*)	40 (28 *liang*/3 *dan*)	28 (18 *liang*/2.5 *dan*)*
7b	40 (28 *liang*/3 *dan*)	36.666 (26.666 *liang*/2.5 *dan*)	33.666 (23.666 *liang*/2.5 *dan*) 33.333 (25.333 *liang*/2 *dan*)
8a	33.333 (25.333 *liang*/2 *dan*)	30 (22 *liang*/2 *dan*)	26.666 (20.666 *liang*/1.5 *dan*)
8b	30 (22 *liang*/2 *dan*)	26.666 (20.666 *liang*/1.5 *dan*)	24.666 (18.666 *liang*/1.5 *dan*)
9a	15 (11 *liang*/1 *dan*)	14.666 (10.666 *liang*/1 *dan*)	
9b	14.666 (10.666 *liang*/1 *dan*)		

Source: Yuanshi, 96.2453–63.

Note: Salaries were paid in Zhiyuan notes (Zhiyuan chao 至元鈔) and measured in *liang* 兩. Salary rice was measured in *dan*.

* It is possible that the *Yuanshi*'s record of this is erroneous and that it should be a total of 38 *liang*, composed of 28 *liang* of salary notes and 2 *dan* of salary rice. This would bring the amount closer to the first and second class salaries.

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Table 2. Monthly salaries of regional officials (1303)

Rank/ Office	Monthly Salary Notes												
	Branch Secretariat	Pacification Commission	Regional Investigation Commission	Judicial Proceeding Office	Circuit		Prefecture	Sub-prefecture			County		
Class					1st	2nd		1st	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	3rd
1b	250												
2a	250												
2b	200	125											
3a	125		80	80	80								
3b		80				70							
4a		60	45	50	40		60						
4b								50					
5a			30	40	30	35			40				
5b	70						30			30			
6a				30	20	20		25			20		
6b	45	42			19	19	18		20			18	
7a										18			17
7b	40	35	20	25	17	17	18	18	15				
8a	35		15							13	15		
8b				17	12	12	12	12			13	13	12
9a		25	13										
9b				15	10	10	10	10	10		12	12	12

Source: YDZ 2011, 2.535–37.

Note: Salaries were paid in Zhongtong notes (Zhongtong chao 中統鈔) and measured in *liang* 兩. The 1303 figures are most likely those after the adjustment of 1285, as there are no records of any salary adjustments for regional officials between 1285 and 1303.

Table A1. Monthly salaries of the Branch Secretariats

Title	Rank	Salary (Zhongtong notes)	Salary (Zhiyuan notes)	Notes and Remarks
Prime Minister (丞相)	1b	N/A	200 *liang*	Salary not stated in *YDZ*.
Grand Councilor (平章政事)	1b	250 *liang*	166.666 *liang*	
Vice Councilors (左右丞)	2a	250 *liang*	166.666 *liang*	
Assistant Grand Councilor (參政)	2b	200 *liang*	133.333 *liang*	
Inspector (僉省)	3a	125 *liang*	N/A	Position abolished in later periods.
Senior Supervisors (左右司郎中)	5b	70 *liang*	46.666 *liang*	
Junior Supervisors (員外郎)	6b	45 *liang*	30 *liang*	
General Secretaries (都事)	7b	40 *liang*	26.666 *liang*	
Controller (檢校)	7b	40 *liang*	26.666 *liang*	Rank from *Yuanshi*.
Recorder (照磨)	8a	35 *liang*	N/A	Not recorded in *Yuanshi*. Rank from *Yuanshi*.
Archives Administrator (管勾)	8a	35 *liang*	23.333 *liang*	
General Clerk (令史)		35 *liang*; 1.8 *dan* rice	N/A	Not recorded in *Yuanshi*.
Translation Clerk (譯史)		35 *liang*; 1.8 *dan* rice	N/A	Not recorded in *Yuanshi*.
Interpreter Clerk (通事)		35 *liang*; 1.8 *dan* rice	N/A	Not recorded in *Yuanshi*. 25 *liang* in *SLGJ*.
Courier (宣使)		15 *liang*; 1 *dan* rice	N/A	Not recorded in *Yuanshi*.
Right and Left Bureau Clerk (左右司典使)		12 *liang*; 1 *dan* rice	N/A	Not recorded in *Yuanshi*.
Proofreading Clerk (檢校所書吏)		12 *liang*; 1 *dan* rice	N/A	Not recorded in *Yuanshi*.
Judicial Proceeding Officers (理問所正官 (理問))	4a	110 *liang*	46.666 *liang*	Possible error in *Yuanshi*, rank 4a salary should be 66.666 *liang*.
Assistant Officers (理問所相副官 (副理問))	5b	35 *liang*	30 *liang*	
Chief Clerk (理問所知事)	8b	25 *liang*	16.666 *liang*	
Files Supervisor (理問所提控案牘)		23 *liang*	16.666 *liang*	
General Clerk (理問所令吏)		20 *liang*; 1 dan rice	N/A	Not recorded in *Yuanshi*. 2 *dan* rice in *SLGJ*.
Interpreter Clerk (理問所通事)		20 *liang*; 1 dan rice	N/A	Not recorded in *Yuanshi*.
Translation Clerk (理問所譯史)		20 *liang*; 1 dan rice	N/A	Not recorded in *Yuanshi*.

Source(s): *YDZ* 2011, 2.535; *YDZ* 2016, 2.590; *Yuanshi*, 96.2463.

Table A2. Monthly salaries of the Pacification and Regional Investigation Commissions

Pacification Commissions

Title	Rank	Salary (Zhongtong notes)	Notes and Remarks
Pacification Commissioner (宣慰使)	2b	125 *liang*	
Associate Commissioner (同知)	3b	80 *liang*	
Assistant Commissioner (副使)	4a	60 *liang*	
Registrar (經歷)	6b	42 *liang*	40 *liang* in *SLGJ*.
General Secretary (都事)	7b	35 *liang*	30 *liang* in *SLGJ*.
Recorder/Administrator of Archives (照磨兼管勾)	9a	25 *liang*	
General Clerk (令史)		25 *liang*; 1 *dan* rice	
Translation Clerk (譯史)		25 *liang*; 1 dan rice	
Seal-Keeper (知印)		25 *liang*; 1 *dan* rice	
Interpreter Clerk (通事)		25 *liang*; 1 *dan* rice	
Agent-Courier (奏差)		15 *liang*; 1 *dan* rice	
Clerk (典吏)		8 *liang*; 8 *dou* rice	

Source: YDZ 2011, 2.535.

Regional Investigation Commissions

Title	Rank	Salary (Zhongtong notes)	Notes and Remarks
Investigation Commissioners (廉訪使)	3a	80 *liang*; 16 *qing* land	85 *liang* in *SLGJ*. Land from *TZTG*.
Assistant Commissioners (副使)	4a	45 *liang*; 8 *qing* land	Land from *TZTG*.
Junior Assistant Commissioners (簽事)	5a	30 *liang*; 6 *qing* land	Land from *TZTG*.
Registrar (經歷)	7b	20 *liang*; 2 *qing* land	Land from *TZTG*.
Chief Clerk (知事)	8a	15 *liang*; 1 *qing* land	Land from *TZTG*.
Recorder (照磨)	9a	13 *liang*	12 *liang* in *Yuanshi*.
Proofreading Clerk (書吏)		10 *liang*; 1 *dan* rice	
Translation Clerk (譯史)		10 *liang*; 1 *dan* rice	
Interpreter Clerk (通事)		10 *liang*; 1 *dan* rice	
Agent-Courier (奏差)		8 *liang*; 8 *dou*	
Clerk (典吏)		5 *liang*; 5 *dou*	
Envoy (公使)		5 *liang*	

Source(s): YDZ 2011, 2.535; *TZTG*, p. 375.

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Table A3. Monthly salaries of regional officials

Circuits					
Title	Rank	Salary (Zhongtong notes)	Office Lands	Office Lands (South)	Notes and Remarks
Darughachi First Class Circuit (上路達魯花赤)	3a	80 *liang*	16 *qing*	8 *qing*	
Darughachi Second Class Circuit (下路達魯花赤)	3b	70 *liang*	14 *qing*	7 *qing*	
Director-General First Class Circuit (上路總管)	3a	80 *liang*	16 *qing*	8 *qing*	
Director-General Second Class Circuit (下路總管)	3b	70 *liang*	14 *qing*	7 *qing*	
Associate Director-General First Class Circuit (上路同知)	4b	40 *liang*	8 *qing*	4 *qing*	Originally 80 *liang*, fixed from *SLGJ* and *Yuanshi*.
Associate Director-General Second Class Circuit (下路同知)	5a	35 *liang*	7 *qing*	3.5 *qing*	
Assistant Director-General First Class Circuit (上路治中)	5a	30 *liang*	6 *qing*	3 *qing*	40 *liang* in *SLGJ*.
Supervisor First Class Circuit (上路判官)	6a	20 *liang*	5 *qing*	2.5 *qing*	
Supervisor Second Class Circuit (下路判官)	6a	20 *liang*	4 *qing*	2.5 *qing*	
Legal Officer First Class Circuit (上路推官)	6b	19 *liang*	4 *qing*	Unknown	Office lands for the south not recorded in *Yuanshi*.
Legal Officer Second Class Circuit (下路推官)	6b	19 *liang*	4 *qing*	Unknown	Office lands for the south not recorded in *Yuanshi*.
Registrar First Class Circuit (上路經歷)	7b	17 *liang*	4 *qing*	2 *qing*	
Registrar Second Class Circuit (下路經歷)	7b	17 *liang*	4 *qing*	2 *qing*	
Chief Clerk First Class Circuit (上路知事)		12 *liang*	1 *qing*	1 *qing*	Office land amount was 1.7 *qing* in original, possible erroneous entry.*
Chief Clerk Second Class Circuit (下路知事)		12 *liang*	1 *qing*	1 *qing*	
Recorder/Dispatch Forwarder First Class Circuit (上路提控案牘)		10 *liang*	1 *qing*	1 *qing*	
Recorder/Dispatch Forwarder Second Class Circuit (下路提控案牘)		10 *liang*	1 *qing*	1 *qing*	
Translation Clerk First Class Circuit (上路譯史)		8 *liang*; 8 *dou* rice	None	None	
Translation Clerk Second Class Circuit (下路譯史)		8 *liang*; 8 *dou* rice	None	None	
Interpreter Clerk First Class Circuit (上路通事)		8 *liang*; 8 *dou* rice	None	None	
Interpreter Clerk Second Class Circuit (下路通事)		8 *liang*; 8 *dou* rice	None	None	
Staff Foreman First Class Circuit (上路司吏)		8 *liang*; 8 *dou* rice	None	None	
Staff Foreman Second Class Circuit (下路司吏)		8 *liang*; 8 *dou* rice	None	None	

Source: YDZ 2011, 2.536; *YDZ* 2016, 2.592–93.

* This mistake was noted by Hong Jinfu in his 2016 annotated edition of the *YDZ*. First, he noted that the *YDZ* calculated the office land amount exclusively in *qing* 頃 and not *mu* 畝. Second, the salary for the Registrars and the Recorder/Dispatch Forwarders were the same for First and Second Class circuits. Therefore, he comes to the conclusion that the 70 extra *mu* is most likely erroneous.

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Prefectures and Sub-prefectures

Title	Rank	Salary (Zhongtong notes)	Office Lands	Office Lands (South)	Comments
Darughachi Prefecture (散府達魯花赤)	4a	60 *liang*	12 *qing*	6 *qing*	
Darughachi First Class Sub-prefecture (上州達魯花赤)	4b	50 *liang*	10 *qing*	5 *qing*	
Darughachi Second Class Sub-prefecture (中州達魯花赤)	5a	40 *liang*	8 *qing*	4 *qing*	
Darughachi Third Class Sub-prefecture (下州達魯花赤)	5b	30 *liang*	6 *qing*	3 *qing*	
Prefect Prefecture (散府知府)	4a	60 *liang*	12 *qing*	6 *qing*	
Prefect First Class Sub-prefecture (上州州尹)	4b	50 *liang*	10 *qing*	5 *qing*	
Prefect First Class Sub-prefecture (上州知州)	4b	50 *liang*	10 *qing*	5 *qing*	Possible error in *YDZ*, position not appointed in First Class Sub-prefectures.
Prefect Second Class Sub-prefecture (中州知州)	5a	40 *liang*	8 *qing*	4 *qing*	
Prefect Third Class Sub-prefecture (下州知州)	5b	30 *liang*	6 *qing*	3 *qing*	
Associate Prefect Prefecture (散府同知)	5b	30 *liang*	6 *qing*	3 *qing*	
Associate Prefect First Class Sub-prefecture (上州同知)	6a	25 *liang*	5 *qing*	2.5 *qing*	
Associate Prefect Second Class Sub-prefecture (中州同知)	6b	20 *liang*	4 *qing*	2 *qing*	
Associate Prefect Third Class Sub-prefecture (下州同知)	7b	18 *liang*	4 *qing*	2 *qing*	
Supervisor Prefecture (散府判官)	6b	18 *liang*	4 *qing*	2 *qing*	
Supervisor First Class Sub-prefecture (上州判官)	7a	18 *liang*	4 *qing*	2 *qing*	
Supervisor Second Class Sub-prefecture (中州判官)	7b	15 *liang*	3 *qing*	1.5 *qing*	
Supervisor Third Class Sub-prefecture (下州判官)	8a	13 *liang*	3 *qing*	1.5 *qing*	
Legal Officer Prefecture (散府推官)	6b	18 *liang*	Unknown	Unknown	Missing from *YDZ* and fixed from *Yuanshi*. Office land amount unknown.
Chief Clerk Prefecture (散府知事)		12 *liang*	1 *qing*	Unknown	Missing from *YDZ* and fixed from *SLGJ* and *Yuanshi*. Office land amount was 4 *qing* in *SLGJ*, possible mistake for 1 *qing*.
Chief Clerk First Class Sub-prefecture (上州知事)		12 *liang*	Unknown	Unknown	Missing from *YDZ* and fixed from *Yuanshi*. Office land amount unknown.
Recorder/Dispatch Forwarder Prefecture (散府提控案牘)		10 *liang*	Unknown	1 *qing*	Office land for the south from *TZTG*.

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Recorder/Dispatch Forwarder First Class Sub-prefecture (上州提控案牘)	10 *liang*	Unknown	1 *qing*	Office land for the south from *TZTG*.
Recorder/Dispatch Forwarder Second Class Sub-prefecture (中州提控案牘)	10 *liang*	Unknown	1 *qing*	Office land for the south from *TZTG*.
Files Supervisor Second Class Sub-prefecture (中州都目)	8 *liang*	Unknown	0.5 *qing*	*SLGJ* also records 8 *dou* of rice. Office lands for the south from *TZTG*.
Clerk Third Class Sub-prefecture (下州吏目)	8 *liang*; 8 *dou* rice	None	None	
Staff Foreman Prefecture (散府司吏)	7 *liang*; 7 *dou* rice	None	None	
Staff Foreman First Class Sub-prefecture (上州司吏)	7 *liang*; 7 *dou* rice	None	None	
Staff Foreman Second Class Sub-prefecture (中州司吏)	7 *liang*; 7 *dou* rice	None	None	
Staff Foreman Third Class Sub-prefecture (下州司吏)	7 *liang*; 7 *dou* rice	None	None	

Source(s): *YDZ* 2011, 2.536; *TZTG*, pp. 373–74.

Counties

Title	Rank	Salary (Zhongtong notes)	Office Lands	Office Lands (South)	Comments
Darughachi First Class County (上縣達魯花赤)	6b	20 *liang*	4 *qing*	2 *qing*	
Darughachi Second Class County (中縣達魯花赤)	7a	18 *liang*	4 *qing*	2 *qing*	
Darughachi Third Class County (下縣達魯花赤)	7b	17 *liang*	4 *qing*	1.5 *qing*	
Magistrate First Class County (上縣縣尹)	6b	20 *liang*	4 *qing*	2 *qing*	
Magistrate Second Class County (中縣縣尹)	7a	18 *liang*	4 *qing*	2 *qing*	
Magistrate Third Class County (下縣縣尹)	7b	17 *liang*	4 *qing*	1.5 *qing*	
Assistant Magistrate First Class County (上縣縣丞)	8a	15 *liang*	3 *qing*	1.5 *qing*	Office land amount was 2 *qing* in original, fixed from *Yuanshi*.
Assistant Magistrate Second Class County (中縣縣丞)	Unknown	13 *liang*	2 *qing*	Unknown	Possible error, Second Class Counties do not have this position.
Records Keeper First Class County (上縣主簿)	8b	13 *liang*	2 *qing*	1 *qing*	
Records Keeper Second Class County (中縣主簿)	8b	13 *liang*	2 *qing*	1 *qing*	
Sheriff First Class County (上縣縣尉)	9b	12 *liang*	2 *qing*	1 *qing*	
Sheriff Second Class County (中縣縣尉)	9b	12 *liang*	2 *qing*	1 *qing*	

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Records Keeper and Sheriff Third Class County (下縣簿尉)	Unknown	12 *liang*	2 *qing*	Unknown	Rank unknown
Clerk First Class County (上縣典史)		7 *liang*; 7 *dou* rice	None	None	
Clerk Second Class County (中縣典史)		7 *liang*; 7 *dou* rice	None	None	
Clerk Third Class County (下縣典史)		7 *liang*; 7 *dou* rice	None	None	
Staff Foreman First Class County (上縣司吏)		6 *liang*; 6 *dou* rice	None	None	
Staff Foreman Second Class County (中縣司吏)		6 *liang*; 6 *dou* rice	None	None	
Staff Foreman Third Class County (下縣司吏)		6 *liang*; 6 *dou* rice	None	None	

Source(s): *YDZ* 2011, 2:536-37; *YDZ* 2016, 2.593; *TZTG*, pp. 374–75.

Administration Offices

Title	Rank	Salary (Zhongtong notes)	Office Lands	Office Lands (South)	Comments
Darughachi Administration Office (録事司達魯花赤)	8a	15 *liang*	3 *qing*	1.5 *qing*	Office lands for south fixed from *TZTG*.
Manager Administration Office (録事司録事)	8a	15 *liang*	3 *qingi*	1.5 *qing*	
Supervisor Administration Office (録事司録判)	9a	12 *liang*	2 *qing*	1 *qing*	Rank from *SLGJ*.
Clerk Administration Office (録事司典史)		7 *liang*; 7 *dou* rice	None	None	
Staff Foreman Administration Office (録事司司吏)		6 *liang*; 6 *dou* rice	None	None	

Source(s): *YDZ* 2011, 2.537; *TZTG*, p. 375; *SLGJ*, 6.33.
Note: 1 *qing* 頃 is equivalent to 100 *mu* 畝, or roughly 6.66 hectares.

Table A4. Monthly salaries of Control Offices and Aboriginal Control Offices

Control Offices

Title	Rank	Salary (Zhongtong notes)	Comments and Remarks
Darughachi (達魯花赤)	3a	100 *liang*	
Control Officer (宣撫使)	3a	100 *liang*	Rank from *SLGJ*.
Associate Control Officer (同知)	4b	60 *liang*	
Registrar (經歷)	7b	30 *liang*	Rank from *SLGJ*. 20 *liang* in *SLGJ* and the 2016 edition of *YDZ*.

Source(s): *YDZ* 2011, 2.538; *YDZ* 2016, 2.596; *SLGJ*, 6.21.

Aboriginal Control Offices

Title	Rank	Salary (Zhongtong notes)	Comments and Remarks
Darughachi (達魯花赤)	3a	100 *liang*	
Aboriginal Control Officer (安撫使)	3a	100 *liang*	Rank from *SLGJ*.
Junior Assistant Officer (簽事)	5b	50 *liang*	
Registrar (經歷)	7b	20 *liang*	

Source(s): *YDZ* 2011, 2.539; *SLGJ*, 6.21.

Table A5. Monthly salaries of the various Tax Offices, Salt Commissions, and Salt Works

Salt Distribution Commissions

Title	Rank	Salary (Zhongtong Notes)	Notes and Remarks
Commissioner (運使)	3a	60 *liang*; 8 *qing* land	Office lands from *TZTG*.
Associate Commissioner (同知)	4a	50 *liang*; 4 *qing* land	Office lands from *TZTG*.
Assistant Commissioner (運副)	5a	35 *liang*; 3 *qing* land	Office lands from *TZTG*.
Distribution Supervisor (運判)	6a	25 *liang*; 2.5 *qing* land	Office lands from *TZTG*.
Registrar (經歷)	7b	20 *liang*; 2 *qing* land	Office lands from *TZTG*.
Chief Clerk (知事)	8b	17 *liang*; 1 *qing* land	Office lands from *TZTG*.
Recorder (提控兼照磨)	9b	13 *liang*; 1 *qing* land	Salary fixed from *Yuanshi*. Office lands from *TZTG*.
Translator and Interpreter (通譯)		10 *liang*; 1 *dan* rice	
Proofreading Clerk (書吏)		10 *liang*; 1 *dan* rice	
Agent-Courier (奉差)		8 *liang*; 8 *dou* rice	
Clerk (典吏)		5 *liang*; 5 *dou* rice	

Source(s): *YDZ* 2011, 2.538, *TZTG*, p. 376.

Guangnan Salt Tax Superintendency

Title	Rank	Salary (Zhongtong Notes)	Notes and Remarks
Superintendent (正提舉)	5b	60 *liang*	
Associate Superintendent (同提舉)	6b	30 l*iang*	
Assistant Superintendent (副提舉)	7b	18 *liang*	
Chief Clerk (知事)		20 *liang*	Most likely an error, as this amount would be higher than the Assistant Superintendent. Possible mistake for 12 *liang*.

Source: YDZ 2011, 2.538.

Note: Possible erroneous entry in the *YDZ*. The Yuan records only a Guangdong Salt Tax Superintendency (Guangdong yanke tijusi 廣東鹽課提舉司).

Stabilization Exchange Banks

Title	Rank	Salary (Zhongtong Notes)	Notes and Remarks
Director (提領)	7b	35 *liang*	
Commissioner (大使)	8b	25 *liang*	
Assistant Commissioner (副使)	9b	15 *liang*	
Overseer (把壇)		15 *liang*	
Agent (攢典)		5 *liang*	
Storehouseman (庫子)		5 *liang*	
Worker (合干人)		4 *liang*	

Source: YDZ 2011, 2.538.

Circuit Tax Offices

Title/Tax Quota	2000 *ding* to 501 *ding*	500 *ding* to 70 *ding*	69 *ding* and lower
Superintendent (提領)	18 *liang*	15 *liang* (fixed from the *SLGJ*)	
General Foreman (都監)			10 *liang*
Commissioner (大使)	15 *liang*	13 *liang*	
Assistant Commissioner (副使)	12 *liang*	10 *liang*	10 *liang*

Source: YDZ 2011, 2.538.

Salt Commissions

Title	Rank	Salary (Zhongtong Notes)	Notes and Remarks
Commissioner (鹽使)	Unknown	20 *liang*; 2 *qing* land	*SLGJ* records salary of 30 *liang*. Rank not stated. Office land from *TZTG*.
Assistant Commissioner (鹽副)	7b	20 *liang*; 2 *qing* land	Office land from *TZTG*.
Administrator (鹽判)	8b	12 *liang*; 1 *qing* land	Office land from *TZTG*.
Clerk (吏目)		7 *liang*	
Staff Foreman (司吏)		4 *liang*	

Source(s): *YZD* 2011, 2.538; *TZTG*, p. 376.

Salt Works

Title	Rank	Salary (Zhongtong Notes)	Notes and Remarks
Office Manager (正)	7b	12 *liang*; 1 *qing* land	Office land from *TZTG*.
Associate Manager (同)	8b	10 liang; 1 qing land	Office land from *TZTG*.
Assistant Manager (副)	9b	8 *liang*	
Foreman (場司)		4 *liang*	司 is probably a mistake for 使.

Source(s): *YZD* 2011, 2.538; *YDZ* 2016, 2.595; *TZTG*, p. 376.

Table A6. Monthly salaries of the Police Bureaus, Police Offices, and Prison Offices

The Police Bureaus

Title	Rank	Salary (Zhongtong Notes)	Notes and Remarks
Darughachi (達魯花赤)	6a	20 *liang*	
Commissioner (大使)	6a	20 *liang*	
Assistant Commissioner (院副)	7b	17 *liang*	
Supervisor (警判)	8b	13 *liang*	
Staff Foreman (司吏)		4 *liang*	

Source: YZD 2011, 2.538.

The Police Offices

Title	Rank	Salary (Zhongtong Notes)	Notes and Remarks
Police Officer (官)	7a	10 *liang*; 2 *qing* land	Office land 1 *qing* in the south.
Staff Foreman (司吏)		6 *liang*; 6 *dou*	

Source: YZD 2011, 2.538.

The Prison Offices

Title	Rank	Salary (Zhongtong Notes)	Notes and Remarks
Warden First and Second Class Circuits (上下路司獄)	8b	12 *liang*; 1 *qing* land	Office land from *TZTG*.
Assistant Warden First and Second Class Circuits (上下路獄典)		6 *liang*; 6 *dou* rice	
Warden Prefectures (散府司獄)	9b	10 *liang*	
Assistant Warden Prefectures (散府獄典)		4 *liang*; 4 *dou* rice	

Source(s): YZD 2011, 2.538; *TZTG*, p. 374.

Table A7. Monthly salaries for Schools and Teachers

Mongolian Superintendent of Schools

Title	Rank	Salary (Zhongtong Notes)	Notes and Remarks
Superintendent (提舉)	5b	50 *liang*	
Associate Superintendent (同提舉)	7b	35 *liang*	

Source: *YDZ* 2011, 2.538–39.

The Mongolian Teacher

Administrative Division	Position	Rank	Salary (Zhongtong Notes)	Notes and Remarks
Circuit (路)	Teacher	8b	12 *liang*	Rank 9a in *Yuanshi.*
Prefecture (府)	Teacher	9a	11 *liang*	
Sub-prefectures (上中下州)	Teacher	9a	10 *liang*	

Source(s): *YDZ* 2011, 2.538–39; *Yuanshi*, 91.2316.

The Confucian Teacher

Administrative Division	Position	Rank	Salary (Zhongtong Notes)	Notes and Remarks
Circuit (路)	Teacher	8b	12 *liang*	11 *liang* in *SLGJ.*
Prefecture (府)	Teacher	9a	11 *liang*	
First Class Sub-prefecture (上州)	Teacher	9a	11 *liang*	
Second and Third Class Sub-prefecture (中下州)	Teacher	9a	10 *liang*	

Source: *YDZ* 2011, 2.538-39; *YDZ* 2016, 2.596.

The Medical Teacher

Administrative Division	Position	Rank	Salary (Zhongtong Notes)	Notes and Remarks
Circuit (路)	Teacher	8b	12 *liang*	
Prefecture (府)	Teacher	9a	10 *liang*	11 *liang* in *SLGJ.*
First Class Sub-prefecture (上州)	Teacher	9a	10 *liang*	
Second and Third Class Sub-prefecture (中下州)	Teacher	9a	10 *liang*	
Salary notes not distributed in southern (Jiangnan) areas with salary grains (學糧).*				

Source: *YDZ* 2011, 2.538–39.
**Note:* fixed from SLGJ.

Table A8. Monthly salaries for miscellaneous agencies

The Superintendency of the Management of Various Artisans

Title	Rank	Salary (Zhongtong Notes)	Notes and Remarks
Superintendent (提舉)	5b	20 *liang*	30 *liang* in *SLGJ*.
Associate Superintendent (同提舉)	7b	18 *liang*	
Assistant Superintendent (副提舉)	8a	18 *liang*	15 *liang* in *SLGJ*.
Files Supervisor (都目)		8 *liang*	

Source: YZD 2011, 2.539.

The Inspector of Stages

Title	Rank	Salary (Zhongtong Notes)	Notes and Remarks
Inspector (正)	5b	50 *liang*	
Assistant Inspector (副)	7a	40 *liang*	

Source: YZD 2011, 2.539.

The Military Storehouse

Title	Rank	Salary (Zhongtong Notes)	Notes and Remarks
Agent (提領)	7b	20 *liang*	
Commissioner (大使)	8a	12 *liang*	
Assistant Commissioner (副使)	9a	19 *liang*	7 *liang* in original, fixed from *SLGJ*.
Overseer (攢典)		7 *liang*	
Storehouseman (庫子)		7 *liang*	
Worker (合干人)		4 *liang*	7 *liang* in original, fixed from *SLGJ*.

Source: *YZD* 2011, 2.539; *YDZ* 2016, 2.596.

The Weapons Storehouse

Title	Rank	Salary (Zhongtong Notes)	Notes and Remarks
Agent (提領)	5b	20 *liang*	
Commissioner (大使)	6a	12 *liang*	
Assistant Commissioner (副使)	7b	10 *liang*	
Overseer (攢典)		6 *liang*	7 *liang* in *SLGJ*.
Storehouseman (庫子)		6 *liang*	

Source: YZD 2011, 2.539.
Note: This was later renamed the Arms Storehouse.

Table A9. Changes in salary of the Imperial Library Directorate, 1273–1283

Title and Rank	Monthly Salary					
	1273	1277	1278	1279	1280	1283
Chief Minister, 3a 秘書監卿	100					
Junior Director, 4b 少卿	75					
Staff Author, 6b 著作郎			45 (later 40)*			
Collator, 8a 校書郎			35			
Imperial Librarian, 7a 秘書郎		35				
Director (clerk) 令史	17	20				30
Library clerk 典書	10					15
Agent-Courier (clerk) 奏差	10					15
Archives Administrator (clerk) 管勾				10	15	
Envoy (clerk) 公使人	3					7.5**

Source: MSJZ, pp. 35–36.
Note: Salaries were paid in Zhongtong notes (Zhongtong chao 中統鈔) and measured in *liang* 兩.
* The salary of the Staff Author was set in the 5th month to be 45 *liang* but changed in the 9th month to 40 *liang*.
** The salary of the Envoy (clerk) was raised from 5 *liang* to 7.5 *liang* in 1283. It is not known when it was raised from 3 *liang* to 5 *liang*.

Table A10. Salary of the Southern Branch Censorate, 1277

Title	Rank	Salary (Zhongtong Notes)
Censors-in-Chief (御史大夫)	2b	208.33
Vice Censors-in-Chief (御史中丞)	3b	166.03
Associate Censors (待御史)	5a	77.63
Secretarial Censors (治書御史)	6b	55
Investigating Censors (察院監察御史)	7a	50
General Secretaries (都事)	7b	40
Archivist (架閣庫管勾)		25
Dispatch Forwarder (承發司管勾)		25
Clerk (令史)		30
Translator Clerk (譯史)		25
Interpreter Clerk (通事)		30
Seal Keeper (知印)		30
Courier (宣使)		20
Clerk (典吏)		12
Storehouseman (庫子)		8
Office of Surveillance Proofreading Clerk (察院書吏)		12

Source: NTBY, pp. 158–59.
Note: Salaries were paid in Zhongtong notes (Zhongtong chao 中統鈔) and measured in *liang* 兩.