

Genealogy and Status: Hereditary Office Holding and Kinship in North China under Mongol Rule

By Tomoyasu Iiyama 飯山知保. Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2023. 388 pp. \$60.00 (cloth)

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The Mongol empire is a perennial challenge to historians. How are we to balance the disruptive destruction of the empire's birth with the generative opportunities that it created? How do we capture the nearly indescribable dynamism and drama of the empire's early decades without slighting the far-reaching, Eurasia-wide social, political, cultural, economic, and technological changes ushered in by the mature empire? Finally, how do we do justice to the diversity and complexity of regional, even local, developments in places like Iran, Rus, or China without losing sight of the empire's continental span? In *Genealogy and Status: Hereditary Office Holding and Kinship in North China under Mongol Rule*, Tomoyasu Iiyama tackles all of these issues, providing a wealth of new factual information and introducing new lines of potential new research.

A senior scholar with a deep knowledge of northern China during the middle period, Iiyama is interested in broad issues like the nature and impact of Mongol governance throughout Eurasia and centuries-long patterns of cultural interaction along the “marginal zone” between the steppe and the Chinese sown, but his point of departure and principal lens of analysis is the evolution of a particular epigraphic genre, genealogical steles, erected in much of northern China from the early thirteenth century to the mid-fourteenth century. As Iiyama explains, both steles—texts inscribed onto stone slabs of various sizes—and a deep concern with lineage genealogy long predated the arrival of Mongols. Why then did so many in northern China under Mongol rule decide to use steles, rather than, say, paper, to document genealogies? What does this development tell us about the interaction of Mongolian and Chinese political culture and lineage practice? What does it reveal about how lineages in north China responded to the trauma and opportunities of Mongol rule? What can genealogical steles tell us about change over time? These are the central issues that Iiyama explores in five chapters that examine in granular detail the experiences of dozens of Chinese (and a few non-Chinese) lineages.

Perhaps the most striking feature of *Genealogy and Status* is its extraordinary command of epigraphic materials. Through years of on-site surveys and exhaustive culling of textual sources like epigraphic collections, literary collections, and local gazetteers, Iiyama amassed 298 genealogical steles, which are catalogued in a 70-page appendix that includes, for each stele, the author and title of inscription, date, location, source of compilation, size of stele, and more. Other lengthy appendixes include genealogical steles from the Jin period, topological analysis of Jin-Yuan genealogical steles, marriage cases from Mengzhou during the Jin period, marriage cases from Yuan genealogical

steles, and genealogical steles from the Ming. The appendices, which total 220 pages, represent a wealth of information in themselves and will no doubt become an indispensable epigraphic reference for anyone interested in north China during the Jin and Yuan periods.

Of course, *Genealogy and Status* is not just an epigraphic compendium, but also a fine-grained consideration of elite formation, office-holding, and kinship in northern China. Chapter 1 traces the fortunes of the Sun lineage of Hunyuan County, Shanxi Province during the tumultuous early decades of the thirteenth century, when Mongols needed local allies as they toppled Jin rule and attempted to establish their own control. At one level, Iiyama tells a familiar tale. The Suns were arrivistes nouveaux, seizing opportunities in a time of crisis, joining first the Jin army and then the triumphant Mongol forces. A key to the lineage's success was cultivating ties with individual members of the new Chinggisid elite. Those ties allowed them to establish hereditary master-servant bonds, which in Chinese-language sources of the Yuan period were called *genjiao* 根脚 (literally "root and foot"). Iiyama argues that the Sun lineage, which would come to supervise armorer households in north China on behalf of the Mongols, commissioned genealogical steles "to prove immediate connection and persistent loyalty to the imperial household" (p. 22). Under Chinggisid rule, ties to the ruling elite were the ultimate form of political capital, an asset that needed constant tending and had to be renewed each generation. Genealogical steles not only served as a source of lineage cohesion; they were an immediately visible way to advertise the lineage's power.

Using the Duan lineage of Jishan County, southern Shanxi, as its core case study, Chapter 2 shifts perspective, giving greater attention to the evolution of genealogical steles from the Jin to Yuan periods. It shows that, whereas in the Jin period most who commissioned genealogical steles did not hold office, under Mongol rule 244 of 298 lineages who erected genealogical steles were officeholders, albeit often holding modest posts. They worked assiduously to form relations with higher-ranking officials in the hope of moving up the ladder, and inviting officials to write epitaphs and soliciting their calligraphy were two common strategies. Centered on the Liu lineage of Beihai County, northeastern Shandong, Chapter 3 returns to the importance of cultivating political patrons through soliciting stele inscriptions and highlights the significance of erecting genealogical steles and establishing new graveyards as a way to bolster a lineage's legitimacy and status at home among their kinsmen and neighbors. Chapter 3 also outlines the spread of the genealogical stele in north China through what the author calls new networks of nascent local elites.

Chapters 4 and 5, which draw on the Song lineage of Huazhou County, northern Henan, and the Yang lineage of Daizhou, northern Shanxi, after fall of Mongol rule, respectively, offer the book's most substantial consideration of the interplay of genealogical stele and kinship organization/practices. Chapter 4 argues three basic points. First, group burial was the "only core principle that kept a centrifugal lineage from breaking apart"; second, "the inheritance of official status legitimated the exclusion of non-office-holding collateral kin from genealogical charts on steles," a development the author attributes to the singular dynamics of Mongol rule; and third, commoner and low-ranking military households tended to include all kinfolk (mentioning individual women and children by name) as a way to document which members of the lineage owed what military or corvée service to the state. Chapter 5 suggests that lineages in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries re-interpreted and repurposed Yuan period genealogical steles. Here Iiyama offers a particularly striking example of historical sleuthing, suggesting—if I read him correctly—that a stele

purportedly compiled in 1329 was actually produced in the mid-sixteenth century by the Yang lineage as a way to avoid tax and service obligations to the state. The 1329 inscription “proved” that the lineages’ extensive lands were actually ancestral graveyards established during the Yuan period, which according to Ming dynastic law, were tax-free.

In the conclusion, the author pulls back to briefly consider broader issues such as a) the interplay of Mongolian political culture and indigenous office-holding families elsewhere in the Mongolian empire such as Iran and Anatolia and b) the place of north China in Eurasian history.

Although the sheer volume of detail that Iiyama includes in *Genealogy and Status* threatens at times to overwhelm clear lines of analysis and argumentation, his book is a most welcomed addition to the study of north China under Mongol rule. It may be read profitably in conjunction with Wang Jinping’s *In the Wake of the Mongols: The Making of A New Social Order in North China, 1200–1600* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2018), another important work that offers a fresh and nuanced examination of a region less well explored than many other parts of China. Finally, *Genealogy and Status* makes excellent use of a large body of past scholarship on the Mongol empire, on the Liao, Jin, Yuan, and Ming periods, and on north China, but it owes most to the outstanding work produced by generations of Japanese historians, a salutary reminder of their admirable commitment to unearthing new sources and pursuing clearly focused topics in great depth.

Transmedial Landscapes and Modern Chinese Painting

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It is probably an apocryphal tale that the nineteenth-century French painter Paul Delaroche (1797–1856), on seeing the first photographs, gestured towards his own work and (quoting Victor Hugo) remarked, “This, will kill off that.” But certainly some cartoons produced in the very first years of mechanical reproduction imagined droves of engravers and other craftsmen of the multiple image hanging themselves in despair at their redundancy. In fact, as research in the history of photography has shown, the new technology initially massively *increased* the need for engravers, whose craft flourished in a world saturated more and more and more with pictures. And painting did not perish, as it and photography worked out a complicated mutual dependency throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. But how did that dependency operate specifically in East Asia, where the most prestigious forms of painting all claimed to eschew mimetic realism, the transcription of the look of the world, at which photography supposedly excelled? This important new volume makes a major contribution to advancing our understanding of this question. By