

State Power in China, 900–1325. Edited by Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Paul Jakov Smith. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2016. Pp. ix + 363. \$60.00.

For *State Power in China, 900–1325* the two main editors, Patricia Ebrey and Paul Smith, selected nine papers that were presented at the inaugural Middle Period Chinese Humanities (800–1400) conference, held at Harvard University in June 2014. The volume thus brings together outstanding new work in socio-political history; the papers were not intended to respond to a shared set of questions or concerns. This explains how the work should be read: as an anthology or handbook exemplifying promising new work in the field of mainly Song political history, not as a coherent analysis of state power in (Song and Yuan) China.

State Power in China, 900–1325 consists of nine chapters which are presented under four main topics: The Ruling House; The Literati and the Political System; Statecraft Theory; and State Power in Practice. According to the Introduction (that also briefly summarizes each of the contributions), this organization shows the ways in which the common theme, namely the exercise and contestation of state power, is worked out by the different contributors. Different actors, including the ruling house (mainly emperors), the literati (also styled cohabitants of the state), and those at the bottom of the official social hierarchy (soldiers and populations subjected to forced relocation) are examined from this perspective.

The editors justified their choice of title with the argument that focusing on state power would open up the discussion for comparison with all manner of states (polities of different size) whereas the common designation for Chinese polities, “empires,” might limit the comparative potential of Song history given that empires tend to refer to large-scale polities. One could argue whether the latter fear is warranted. For one, the territorial extent of the Song state and its neighbours was still relatively large, and, more importantly, recent theoretical literature (such as the work by Karen Barkey) focuses more on the assumption of inequality and variable core-periphery relationships under a shared administration in the comparative analysis of empires rather than size. The Introduction goes back to standard Weberian definitions of the state as the community that monopolizes sanctioned violence within a given territory and through administrative organization. However, the emphasis on the exercise and contestation of state power is welcome, perhaps less so for a Weberian focus on the state but all the more for the historical analysis of the exercise of power in different domains.

The latter point is especially visible in the fourth and final set of contributions (Elad Alyagon’s chapter on soldier mutinies and resistance, and Patricia Ebrey’s on state-forced relocations). Alyagon discusses the ways in which commoners avoided conscription (especially in border territories where the professional army was supplemented with local militia), and how conscripted soldiers escaped the

harsh conditions of (both military and civil) service and food shortage through self-mutilation, desertion, strike, and mutiny. Alyagon reads these acts of resistance as the weapons of the weak and contrasts them with the Northern Song state's zero-tolerance policy towards the disobedience of soldiers. At the same time, the cases he discusses also show that these acts of resistance required negotiation and concessions on the part of the state.

Coercion on a large scale is also the topic of Ebrey's survey of forced relocations by the Liao, Song, Jin, and Yuan states. Ebrey distinguishes forced relocations from "government-managed migrations, intended for the good of the people moved" (p. 307). On the basis of this somewhat loose definition she concludes from a survey of forced relocations registered in different types of sources for each of the states that Song made relatively little use of this strategy when compared to Liao, Jin, and Yuan, with the Liao and Yuan moving people around in the largest numbers and across great distances. She proposes that this can be explained by both cultural difference and differences in what we may call the political economy of these states. The Khitans, Jurchens, and Mongols were nomadic peoples who were used to moving around and tended to see the labour force as a state asset. By contrast, the greater commercialization of the Song economy implied that the Song state preferred to operate on the basis of market principles. This is an important first step in the direction of a more varied approach to the history of migration in the Chinese territories, especially for its emphasis on comparison across time and on comparison based on different types of migration. Many questions remain, however, for example, the differences in source base for the different states require further explanation; on what criteria are distinctions between forced relocations and "migrations for the good of the people" (which presumably includes the policy to vacate the Huai 淮 border region in the Southern Song) drawn; and, can Alyagon's approach to look for tools of resistance among those forcibly relocated be applied here as well? Overall, these were to my reading the most innovative chapters, and collectively they raise the question how this work on the application of state power at the grassroots level could be further developed in imperial Chinese history.

The other chapters treat more familiar topics but in all cases do so by providing a fresh take on or showing a new direction for research on legitimation, statecraft, the political practices of the scholar-officials, and policy reform. The chapters by Tracy Miller and Charles Hartman detail strategies of legitimation in places where we seldom look in Song political history, namely material culture and historical anecdote. Miller demonstrates how Emperor Taizong's 太宗 better-known policies of patronage were complemented by his support for the construction of the Kaibao 開寶 Monastery Pagoda, especially his selection of a southern architect and southern style, to stake out a claim for his Buddhist rule on a greater geographical scale than his father, Emperor Taizu 太祖, had been able to accomplish in his support for Buddhist

architecture. It remains unclear to what extent this strategy paid off both within the Song and beyond.

Hartman's chapter is a meticulous deconstruction of the myth of the oath presumably sworn by the first emperor of Song, a promise to his officials that no officials would be slain. By tracing the history of the different versions of the story and comparing the language used in the oath as recorded in each version, Hartman shows convincingly that the story emerged and that the language was moulded to create a space for the articulation of political critique among officials and literati more broadly. By the thirteenth century earlier more generic references to an ancestral practice were more specifically attributed to the first emperor as this proved to be a stronger basis for legitimating fundamental principles of court practice and the relationship between the court and literati. Hartman equally shows, however, that the story was not commonly shared among Southern Song literati (and far less probably than in modern Song history surveys) because the source of the story was not a scholar-official but rather a servant of the inner court. Other historical anecdotes involving scholar-officials could be more usefully exploited, as Hartman also richly documents in his other publications on Song historiography.

The two chapters on statecraft deal with well-known figures, Wang Anshi 王安石 and Ma Duanlin 馬端臨, but expose lesser-known aspects of the sources on which they relied and the ways in which they used them to profile both themselves and their work. Li Huarui argues that, in addition to Legalist administrative philosophy and selected classics (namely *The Documents*, *The Odes*, and *The Rites of Zhou*), Wang Anshi heavily drew on *Mencius*, a text traditionally more associated with his neo-Confucian critics than with Wang himself. Li principally relies on the similarity Wang drew between the role of Mencius as he saw it and the historical role he saw for himself and on broad parallels between their views on land distribution and social policy. The former point is well substantiated; for the latter a further analysis of Wang Anshi's use of *Mencius* in his philosophical and political writing (in comparison with other sources) would have strengthened the analysis.

Song Jaeyoon compares the sources Ma Duanlin used in his treatise on taxation in *The Comprehensive Survey of Literary Remains* (*Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考, c. 1307) in order to determine the author's approach to the sources and his position on the matter. Taking the reader through Ma's account of the major turning points in the history of taxation, Song argues that even though Ma brings in different voices, ranging from more fundamentalist approaches to the tax models of antiquity (e.g., Zhu Xi 朱熹) to historicized accounts of the reasons why adaptations to classical models were necessary throughout time. He concludes that Ma favoured less state intervention and the adaptation of tax schemes to the privatization of land and therefore lent greater voice to the Yongjia 永嘉 statecraft thinkers. Song also notes that rather than resolving the tensions between the different authors he quotes, he

highlighted them, and so left an important legacy for the statecraft thinkers of the Ming and Qing period. This allowed for a de-centring of the Zhu Xi line of thinking about taxes and other institutions. One hopes that this excellent work on institutional history and theory might also lead to further work on the impact of the broader range of Song political thoughts on Ming and Qing statecraft and policy making.

Scholarship on the Song bureaucracy and literati circles has a long history but the three chapters on “The Literati and the Political System” gathered here fruitfully apply less common approaches in prosopography, comparative history, and the analysis of the historiographical process to this core group of political actors. Chen Song musters a very impressive dataset and a broad range of quantitative analytical techniques to compare the cohorts and the networks of prefectural magistrates in two distinct decades, the 1040s and the 1210s. The fine-grained analysis results not only in a solid test for existing paradigms but also in new hypotheses. Regarding the regional origins of prefects, for example, Song shows that despite the influx of southerners into the bureaucracy in the early decades of the Song, prefectural positions largely remained in the hands of a capital-oriented elite. This and its corollary, the declining influence of the capital in the 1210s, substantiate the Hartwell paradigm. Chen’s analysis suggests that a southern model came to dominate the Song bureaucracy after the Jin occupation of the north. He shows that no region dominated in the south neither in the 1040s nor in the 1210s and that in the south there was little change over time at the level of the macroregion despite significant changes in success among prefectures within macroregions. The regional focus also lends nuance to other fundamental principles of Chinese administrative rule: the rules of avoidance, requiring officials to serve outside their native places and to rotate in and out of new posts every few years, were mitigated at the regional level, with relatively large percentages of prefects serving in the broader macroregions in which their native counties were located. This trend, already visible in the 1040s when most received half of their appointments in their home macroregions, only became stronger by the 1210s. The changing regional patterns of officeholding were accompanied by changing marriage networks among prefects, with the later cohort being far less likely to marry outside their macroregions than the earlier cohort. The multicentred nature of the origins of prefects in the south in the 1210s was also reflected in sparser marriage ties among prefects there, whereas in the 1040s prefects from North China tended to dominate in the economy of marriage. Chen’s explanation for these trends as the long-term result of the conscious choice of the early Song government to recruit southerners in office and to prioritize schools and examinations in recruitment is also persuasive. The dataset appears not have been made available online.

In his chapter, “Anatomies of Reform,” Paul Smith treats the reader to a comparative analysis of the two major reforms of the eleventh century with the aim to understand why their fates were so different. The systematic comparison of the

reformers' visions, the political environment, the measures taken, and especially the institutional embedding of reform, proves to be a highly rewarding way of explaining why Wang Anshi and the New Policies succeeded whereas Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 and the Qingli 慶曆 reform were quickly turned back. Smith explains the New Policies' success with an assessment of each reform on five points: the capture of key government institutions such as the Council of State, the Censorate, and the Bureau of Policy Criticism; the creation of reform-centred government agencies; the neutralization of political opponents; the mobilization of followers; and imperial support. On each of these points Qingli reformers significantly underperformed whereas Wang Anshi and his successors moved quickly and decisively. Smith's model for assessing the performance of reform may indeed work for other moments when radical political, military, and economic reforms were attempted in Chinese history.

The final contribution by Cong Ellen Zhang discusses the political import of commemorative biography, using the biographies of Fan Zhongyan written by his political allies. Based on a careful analysis of the chronology and the process by which these biographies came into being, Zhang proposes that the authors' different treatments of particular episodes reflected the former allies' diverging attitudes towards their former alliance and its current political implications. The political and social significance of commemorative writing was also evident from the sharing and commenting on drafts and subsequent alterations. Much to the dismay of the Fan family, Ouyang Xiu 歐陽脩, for example, was tardy in responding and, when he finally submitted his piece, it read as a toned-down version of the factional strife in which Fan Zhongyan had played a prominent role. Fan Zhongyan's case may have been the first Song case illustrating the politicization of commemorative writing; during the political struggles that followed, the politics of epitaph writing became a recurring theme in private correspondence, revealing tensions between authors, family members, and other acquaintances of the deceased and between the impetus to provide a historically reliable account of a life and the desire to celebrate the positive. The increasing value attached to the genre and the status of the contributing authors also became evident in the greater length of the texts when compared to examples from earlier times.

As this lengthy review may attest, this volume does not disappoint. It includes a set of highly accomplished contributions on newer topics and new analyses of more familiar episodes in Song political history. It should not be read as a coherent overview of the application and contestation of state power but it may very well lend new impetus to the exploration of state violence, legitimation, resistance, reform, statecraft, and literati politics in imperial Chinese history.

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