WEAKENING LOCAL POWER AND STRENGTHENING THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT: WANG MANG'S SPATIAL ORGANIZATION REFORM IN THE XIN DYNASTY

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The Xin dynasty (AD 9–AD 23) is an ephemeral dynasty between the Western Han dynasty (202 BC–AD 8) and the Eastern Han dynasty (AD 25–AD 220), and its founder, Wang Mang, was notorious in official historiography. But within the fifteen years that it lasted, a great number of reforms were launched by Wang Mang. Among these reforms, economic ones have always been a focus of the study of the Xin dynasty. However, reforms of spatial organization in the Xin have been overlooked and criticized. This study attempts to restore these neglected reforms through place name changes in the Xin dynasty, suggesting that these reforms were introduced to strengthen the power of the central government in response to rebellions and invasions, and contrary to the traditional interpretation on these reforms as symbolic and unnecessary, they were well-designed to address contemporary political and military crises.

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Preface

I would like to thank all those who directly or indirectly supported me to finish this paper. I am extremely grateful to my thesis advisor, Professor Ruth Mostern. Without her encouragement, I will never think about the possibility of sending an undergraduate paper to a famed journal of Sinology for publication. Moreover, I am also grateful that while doing research on this project, Professor Mostern gave me enough freedom to do whatever I want to do, which enabled me to practice all kinds of research methods. Then, I would like to thank the other members in my defense committee: Professor Robert Drennan, Professor Francis Allard and Professor Elizabeth Arkush. Their comments on my paper are very helpful for the further improvement of the paper, and the two hours defense is really an enjoyable experience within my life. I thank Professor Bryan Hanks, Professor James Pickett, Dr. Camilla Sturm, and all of the other professors at Pitt who taught me how to think and write like a scholar. Then, I am grateful to my parents and other family members who firmly support my decision to pursue an academic career. I thank Mr. Cai Yueming for kindling my curiosity when I was a little boy and giving me insightful advice when I am facing life choices. Finally, I thank Kong Lingduan for her love and support.

1.0 Introduction

Wang Mang 王莽 (45 BC–AD 23), who usurped the throne of the Western Han dynasty 西漢 (202 BC–AD 8) and established the Xin dynasty 新朝 (AD 8–AD 23), has long been a notorious figure in official historiography. Wang Mang came from the powerful consort clan and gradually rose to power at the court. In AD 6, the infant emperor, Liu Ying, was crowned, and Wang Mang became the regent and appointed himself as the Acting Emperor (*jiahuangdi* 假皇帝). Three years later, in AD 9, Wang Mang usurped the throne and established his own regime.[1] At the end of the "Biography of Wang Mang" 王莽傳 of *Hanshu* 漢書, which is the most comprehensive source about the Xin dynasty, historian Ban Gu 班固 (AD 32–AD 92) criticizes Wang Mang and his reforms that though Wang Mang's deeds were even more disastrous than those of ancient tyrants, he confidently believed that he was the reincarnation of ancient sages.[2] Ban Gu's negative evaluation was inevitably influenced by his standpoint as a loyalist of the Eastern Han dynasty, the successor of the Xin dynasty, that is naturally antagonistic to the Xin dynasty. Moreover, Ban Gu's grandfather, once a respected statesman at the court, was

1 Because there is a continuity of governing between Wang Mang's regency (AD 6—AD 9) and the Xin dynasty, this study also includes spatial organization reforms launched during his regency.

2 Ban Gu, *Hanshu* (Beijing: Chung Hwa Book Company, 1962), 4194.

marginalized by Wang Mang's followers when Wang Mang became powerful in the court.[3] Family history and personal opinion can lead to Ban Gu's prejudice against Wang Mang. Unfortunately, his view influenced generations of official historiographers who generally described Wang Mang as an evil traitor and a failed revivalist dreaming of restoring ancient institutions recorded in Confucian Classics.

Though Xin literally means "new" in Chinese, its foundation was built on the previous Han dynasty, which means that the Xin dynasty initially inherited the whole institution of Han. Except some regional insurgences, the switch of power from Han to Xin was generally peaceful. Almost all government officials on different levels accepted the authority of Wang Mang, and many influential intellectuals, even including members from the imperial family, believed that the Mandate of Heaven has transferred from Han to Xin.[4] As soon as Wang Mang took the throne, he initiated a set of economic reforms, whic make him famous in history, including the redistribution of land, the abolition of slavery and tenantry and the introduction of a new currency system.[5] There are debates on the rationality of Wang Mang's economic reforms. Some scholars contended that his economic policies were just a way that enabled him to get popular approval, especially from

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3 Homer Dubs, "Wang Mang and His Economic Reforms," *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, 35, no. 4 (1940): 220; Denis Twitchett and Michael Loewe, eds., *The Cambridge History of China, vol.1, The Ch'in and Han Empires, 221 BC-AD 220* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1986), 224.

4 Twitchett, *The Cambridge History of China*, 2:230.

5 Mark Lewis, *The Early Chinese Empires: Qin and Han* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 23; Qian Mu 錢穆, *Guoshi dagang* 國史大綱 (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1991), 153; Lin Jianming 林劍鳴, *Qinhan shi* 秦漢史 (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Press, 2003), 623.

statesmen hoping to restore ancient institutions.[6] However, some scholars pointed out that all of these reforms should be considered as pilot policies that aim to address land annexation and slavery, but because of the short life of the regime, they never had the chance to fully unfold or to evolve over time.[7]

Wang Mang's economic reforms have always been the focus of the study of the Xin dynasty. However, his reforms of spatial organization have been overlooked. Unlike modern scholars' positive view of Wang Mang's economic reforms, the evaluation of Wang Mang's spatial organization reforms, to the extent that it has received scholarly attention, is typically negative. Their main argument is that these spatial organization reforms were usually symbolic and unnecessary.[8] However, this study reveals that these spatial organization reforms were neither unnecessary nor symbolic as previous scholars argued, and these reforms were designed to consolidate power to the central government by weakening local power.

Methodologically, this study is based on a database of counties and commanderies in the Han dynasty that was developed from the "Treatise on Geography" 地理志 of *Hanshu*, which is a

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6 Homer Dubs, "Wang Mang and His Economic Reforms," 264.

7 Lin Jianming, *Qinhan shi*, 626; Qian Mu, *Guoshi dagang*, 153.

8 In *Hanshu*, Ban Gu pointed out that Wang Mang changed place names so frequently that officials and people could not even remember them. See Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 4137. Qian Mu argued that the reform on place names did not benefit the life of people and it even disturbed people's lives. See Qian Mu, *Qinhan shi* 秦漢史 (Beijing: Joint Publishing Co., 2005), 325–6. Lin Jianming argued that changing names was symbolic, announcing the beginning of a prosperous new era, and that it also deceived people that the crisis in the Han dynasty has been resolved by the Xin dynasty. See Lin Jianming, *Qinhan shi*, 645.

chapter that records geographical information about each commandery-level entity, including commandery (*jun* 郡) and kingdom (*guo* 國), and its subordinate county-level entity, including county (*xian* 縣), marquisate (*houguo* 侯國), marches (*dao* 道), and estates (*yi* 邑). The spatial location of the commanderies and counties mostly comes from the China Historical GIS (CHGIS), developed by Harvard University and Fudan University 復旦大學. For places that are not included in CHGIS, other scholarly studies were referenced.[9]

9 *Hanshu dilizhi huishi* 漢書地理志匯釋, edited by Zhou Zhenhe 周振鶴, is a great help for determining the rough location of administrative units not included in CHGIS. For each place mentioned in the "Treatise of Geography," this book adds notes about its estimated location. Though the estimated location is usually expressed through its approximate distance from modern places, it is still useful for this kind of empire-wide study. See Zhou Zhenhe, ed., *Hanshu dilizhi huishi* (Hefei: Anhui Jiaoyu chubanshe, 2006).

2.0 The Context of Wang Mang's Spatial Organization Reforms

The first challenge that Wang Mang faced, both before and after his usurpation, was the complexity of the Han administrative system. The Xin dynasty was built on the foundation of the Han dynasty, which was an empire with an immense territory. Up to the reign of Emperor Cheng 成帝 (51 BC–7 BC), the territory of Han was divided into 103 commandery-level entities, including eighty-four commanderies and nineteen kingdoms. Under these commanderies and kingdoms were more than one thousand county-level entities including counties, marquisates, marches, and estates.

In order to manage its large territory, the Han empire established a huge bureaucratic system. Among local officials, the most prominent one was the commandery administrator (*junshou* 郡守) who was the leading official of the commandery and was appointed directly by the emperor.[10] Within their own commandery, commandery administrators had great power for being responsible for both civilian and military affairs.[11] The leading official at the county level was the county magistrate (*ling*/*zhang* 令/長) who was also appointed by the central government. Because

10 In 148 BC, the title of commandery administrator was changed to grand administrator (taishou 太守). To keep consistency and avoid confusion, in the following paragraphs, the term commandery administrator is kept throughout this paper.

11 Hans Bielenstein, *The Bureaucracy of Han Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 93; Qian Mu argued that commandery administrators in the Han enjoyed a significant degree of autonomy, having similarities with feudal lords (zhuhou 諸侯) in the Zhou dynasty. See Qian Mu, *Qinhan shi*, 291.

the county is the lowest level in the administrative hierarchy of Han, the county magistrate had immense power within his territory for enforcing laws and policies ordered by the central government.[12]

Because of the immense power of local power holders either on commandery-level or on county-level, it became imperative for Wang Mang to investigate their credibility, especially when some of them began to challenge his authority. In the second year of Wang Mang's regency (AD 7), Zhai Yi 翟義, the administrator of Dong commandery 東郡, initiated a rebellion. Zhai collaborated with Liu Xin 劉信, the Marquis of Yanxiang 嚴鄉侯, and proclaimed that Liu Xin should be the emperor. They sent edicts around commanderies and kingdoms, informing people that it was time for all local power to collaboratively execute Wang Mang on behalf of the heaven.[13] The rebellion of Zhai Yi expanded across more than ten commanderies and kingdoms, assembling more than one hundred thousand rebels, but it was suppressed within a year. In response to Zhai Yi, two civilians, Zhao Peng 趙朋 and Huo Hong 霍鴻, led a revolt in Huaili county 槐里縣, a county close to the capital at Chang'an 長安. It too was suppressed in the following year (AD 8). However, to suppress these rebellions, Wang Mang ceded military power to other commandery administrators who led local armies to protect their territory.[14]

The second challenge that Wang Mang had to address was the rebellions of once subordinate neighboring polities (see Figure 1). In AD 6, the first year of Wang Mang's regency,

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12 Hans Bielenstein, *The Bureaucracy of Han Times*, 100.

13 Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 4087.

14 Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 4107.

the Qiang 羌, a group of nomadic people on the northwestern frontier, invaded Xihai commandery 西海郡.[15] Qiang chiefs took advantage of the political instability after Wang Mang's becoming regent and reclaimed the land they had previously ceded to Han. Wang Mang dispatched troops to repel the invasion. The conflict did not last long, and in the next year, AD 7, the army successfully defeated the Qiang tribes. After the Xin dynasty was established, military affairs on the frontier became increasingly frequent (see Figure 1). The army of Xin had to fight in different regions from the north to the southwest. On the northern boundary, Xiongnu frequently crossed the Great Wall and invaded border towns of Xin. In the northeast, the army of Xin invaded Goguryeo in retaliation for its assassination of the commandery administrator of Liaoxi commandery 遼西郡. In the northwest, Qiang tribe kept assaulting border counties of Han. In the southwest, the Kingdom of Gouding 句町 revolted, and the army of Xin spent years fighting there until the downfall of Xin. In the Western Region (*xiyu* 西域), the state of Yanqi 焉耆 assassinated the Protectorate General (*duhu* 都護), which led to the military revenge of Xin. Wang Mang had to fully control the previous army of Han and transform it into a force faithful to him in order to fight on multiple-fronts from the north to the southwest.

15 Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 4087.

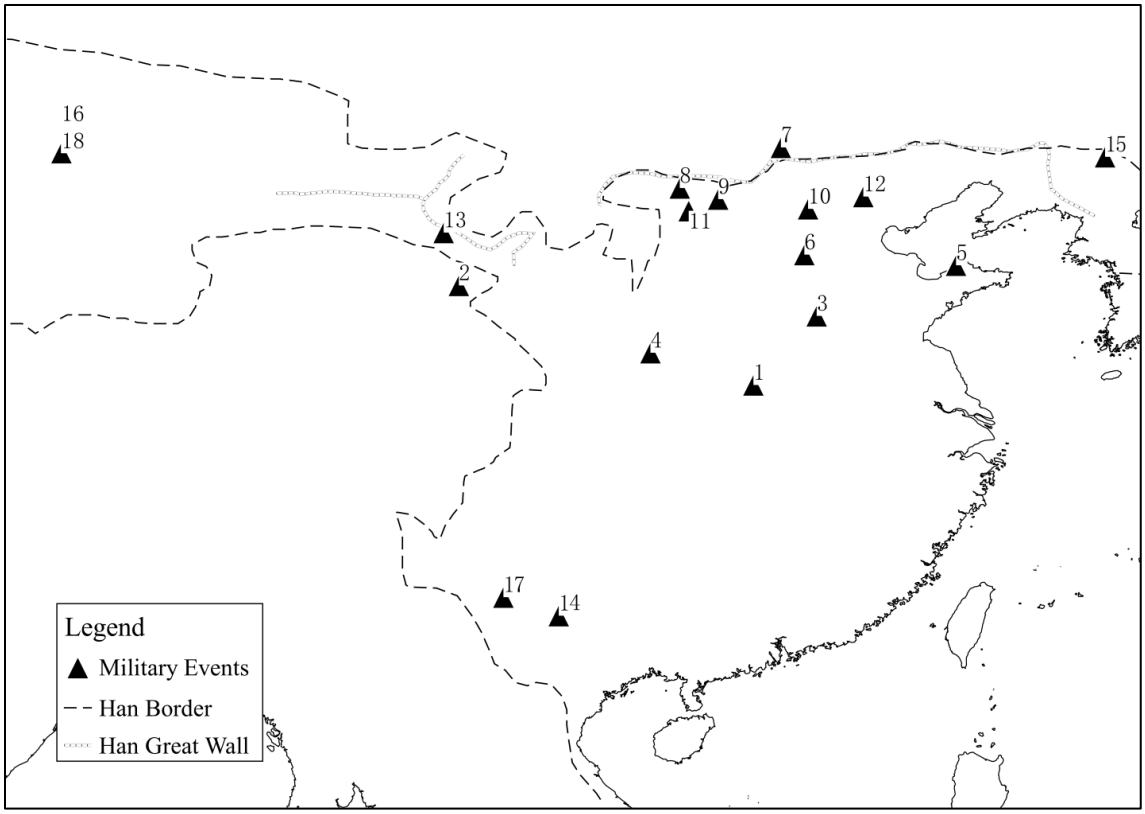

Figure 1 The Map of Military Events of the Xin Dynasty Before 16 AD [16]

[16] 1: the revolt of the Marquis of Anzhong 安眾侯 in Wan 宛 (AD 6); 2: the revolt of Qiang in Xihai commandery (AD 6); 3: the revolt of Zhai Yi (AD 7); 4: the revolt in Huaili County (AD 7); 5: the revolt of the Marquis of Xuxiang 徐鄉侯 in Xuxiang Marquisate (AD 9); 6: the revolt in the Kingdom of Zhending 真定國 (AD 9); 7: the invasion of Xiongnu (AD 10); 8~13: the army of the Xin dynasty fought against Xiongnu from six directions (AD 10); 14: the revolt of Gouding (AD 9—AD 21); 15: the revolt of Goguryeo (AD 12); 16: the revolt of Yanqi (AD 13); 17: the revolt of natives in Yizhou 益州 (AD 14); 18: the army of Xin fought against Yanqi (AD 9).

3.0 Reforming the System of Ranks

The system of ranks in the Han dynasty, with twenty grades, was generally inherited from the previous Qin 秦 dynasty. This kind of ranking system was firstly established by the reformer, Shang Yang 商鞅, to reward meritorious military officers who contributed to the expansion of the state of Qin. When the Han dynasty was founded after the downfall of Qin, this institution was inherited and a group of meritorious followers of Liu Bang 劉邦 became the first beneficiaries of this system.[17] Generally, the system of ranks can be divided into higher ranks and lower ranks. Higher ranks are *guannei hou* 關內侯 and marquis (*liehou* 列侯). The two ranks are hereditary and are actually aristocrats who were able to keep their fiefdoms and collect revenues.[18] The lower ranks are conferred to common people, so it is also called *minjue* 民爵. Each lower rank provides different kinds of prestige, like the exemption from taxation and corvee and the reduce of penalty after breaking the law.[19]

However, the prestige of the system of ranks depreciated once the system no longer rewarded military accomplishments. Instead, after the middle of the Western Han, titles could be

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17 Michael Loewe, "The Orders of Aristocratic Rank of Han China," *T'oung Pao*, Second Series 48, 124.

18 The difference between *guannei hou* and marquis is that *guannei hou* had no real fiefdom but allocated households but marquis had fiefdom.

19 Zhu Shaohou 朱紹侯, *Jungong juezhi yanjiu* 军功爵制研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Press, 1990), 68.

purchased from the government, which provided merchants and landlords a channel to enhance their social status. With the exception of higher ranks, the system of ranks became a collection of vacant titles without any special prestige.[20] But even the highest grade marquis was detached from its original principle when the candidacy of marquis was mainly determined by their relationship with the imperial family. Except meritorious officers or officials (*gongchen hou* 功臣侯), its other candidates were sons of kings (*wangzi hou* 王子侯) and family members of the imperial consorts (*waiqienze hou* 外戚恩澤侯).[21]

An enfeoffment system is a way to organize a group of political followers who can participate in local affairs and connect their profits to their lands. The three military campaigns that transpired during Wang Mang's regency became an opportunity to establish the system of ranks for the Xin dynasty. When the series of wars ended in AD 8, Wang Mang began to reward hundreds of exceptional officers with titles and fiefdoms according to their military accomplishments. He reinstituted the five-grade nobility system 五等爵制 of the Zhou dynasty: duke (*gong* 公), marquis (*hou* 侯), earl (*bo* 伯), viscount (*zi* 子), and baron (*nan* 男). Out of the five grades recorded in the classics, one additional less privileged grade, called subordinate (*fucheng* 附城), was designed. The biggest difference between the five-grade system of ranks and the twenty-grade system of ranks is that the latter one is a system of ranks for every free people within the empire but the former one is a nobility system that distinguished a group of high status

20 Zhu Shaohou, *Jungong juezhi kaolun* 軍功爵制考論 (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2008), 75; Michael Loewe, "The Orders of Aristocratic Rank of Han China," *T'oung Pao*, Second Series 48, 126.

21 Michael Loewe, "The Orders of Aristocratic Rank of Han China," 125.

people from common people. The privileges of noblemen under the new system were identical to those of the aristocratic higher ranks in the Han system: all of them were given a fiefdom to rule like marquis in Han. The rank of subordinate is similar with *guannei hou* for having households to collect revenue but having no real fiefdoms.[22]

Another system was designed to distinguish noblemen through the suffix of their titles: those who defended against the invasion of Qiang were given titles containing *qiang* 羌, those who suppressed the rebellion of Zhai Yi were given titles containing *lu* 虜, and those who engaged in the campaign against rebellions in Huaili were given titles containing *wu* 武. The suffix system provides important hints to restore the reform of the nobility system through place names.[23] Some scholars have already noticed that in *Hanshu*, there were a lot of counties whose new names in the Xin dynasty contain characters like *wu* and *lu*, but they failed to connect that phenomenon with the rewarding of military officers. These scholars generally viewed that phenomenon from a rhetoric perspective. *Wu* in Chinese is related to war or a warrior and *lu* in Chinese means barbarians. Therefore, a kind of explanation is that the motivation of these name change is due to Wang Mang's hostility to non-Han peoples, since these new place names usually transmit strong contempt for them, like yalu 厭虜, which literally means "to suppress barbarians."[24] That traditional perspective argues that because most of these counties were located on the frontier

22 Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 4128–9.

23 Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 4089.

24 Cao Jinhua, "Wang Mang gaiyi diming zhi jiben guilu yu zhengzhi qingxiang 王莽改易地名之基本規律與政治傾向," *Yangzhou shiyuan xuebao* 揚州師院學報, no. 2 (1991): 120.

between Xiongnu and the Xin, these place names functioned to curse nomadic people in order to keep the boundary peaceful.

However, these traditional interpretations neglected Wang Mang's reform of the system of ranks and his design of the suffix system. These county-level entities were actually fiefdoms offered to meritorious military officers. Government seals confirm that speculation. *Jigu guanyin kao* 集古官印考 is a collection of existing government seals from the Han dynasty to the Yuan dynasty. For example, the imprint text of a seal, following the style of government seals in the Xin dynasty, is "The Household Minister of the Baron of Yongwu" (*yongwu nan jiacheng* 永武男家丞).[25] According to the "Treatise of Geography," in Dingxiang commandery 定襄郡, a county that had been called Wugao 武皋 changed its name into Yongwu 永武. Combining the information from the seal and from the text, we can infer that in some conditions, when counties changed names, the nature of these places was also changed. These counties whose new names had *wu* as their suffix seem to have been transformed into fiefdoms and offered to meritorious officers (see Table 1). Since *Hanshu* only includes new place names without their suffix, previous scholars failed to connect the reforms on the system of ranks with name changes in the Xin dynasty.

Another case confirms this speculation from another perspective. There are sixteen Han counties that contained the character *wu*, but in the Xin dynasty, the character *wu* in these counties' names was transformed into *huan* 桓. For example, Yangwu county 陽武 got its new name,

25 Qu Zhongrong 瞿中溶, *Jigu guanyin kao* 集古官印考, vol. 2, 2 juan 8. For more seals from the Xin dynasty recorded in *Jigu guanyin kao*, see Appendix A.

Yanghuan 陽桓, in Xin. One of the meanings of *huan* is "to be mighty," which is a synonym of *wu*. In this way, counties whose names include *wu* in Han but were not fiefdoms in Xin, changed their name to avoid conflicts with the suffix system.

Table 1 The Table of Seals Whose Imprint Text in Accordance with New County Names

Imprint Text	Name Change
The Seal of the Household Minister of the Marquis of Mingyi 明义侯家丞	Liyang 历阳 to Mingyi 明义
The Seal of the Household Minister of the Baron of Yongwu 永武男家丞	Wugao 武皋 to Yongwu 永武
The Seal of the Heir of Zhanwu 展武世子印	Haiyan 海盐 to Zhanwu 展武

There are many examples of Xin government seals, but not all of the place names on them can be found in *Hanshu*. This is explained by what we know of the compilation of the "Treatise of Geography." Based on administrative documents compiled up to the third year of Yuanyan 元延三年 (10 BC), the "Treatise of Geography" does not include entities which were created after that date.[26] Ban Gu only comments on places whose predecessors existed earlier than the third year of Yuanyan. For example, the name change of Wugao county was recorded because it was established before the third year of Yuanyan. However, fiefdoms that were founded by separating some land

26 Zhou Zhenhe, *Xihan zhengqu dili* 西漢政區地理 (Beijing: Renmin Press, 1987), 22.

from existing counties were not included in *Hanshu* for having no predecessors before 10 BC.[27] This explains why some Xin place names on government seals were not recorded in *Hanshu*.

Wang Mang's reform of the system of ranks began with military officers. When the dynasty was formally established, the range of beneficiaries expanded. In AD 9, Wang Mang offered titles and fiefs to his family members according to their closeness to his branch because relatives were his natural allies. Similarly, Wang Mang also designed a rule to distinguish the titles of his relatives. Titles, which contained *mu* 睦, were given to paternal family members, and titles, which contained *long* 隆, were given to maternal family members. In the "Treatise of Geography", there were sixteen counties (though only eleven of them can be located) whose new names in the Xin dynasty incorporated *mu*. These can be linked to noble investiture by seals found in *Jigu guanyin kao*.

27 Hou Xiangrong 后曉榮, "Xinmang zhijun kao 新莽置郡考," *Journal of Chinese Historical Studies* 中國史研究, no.2 (2013): 64.

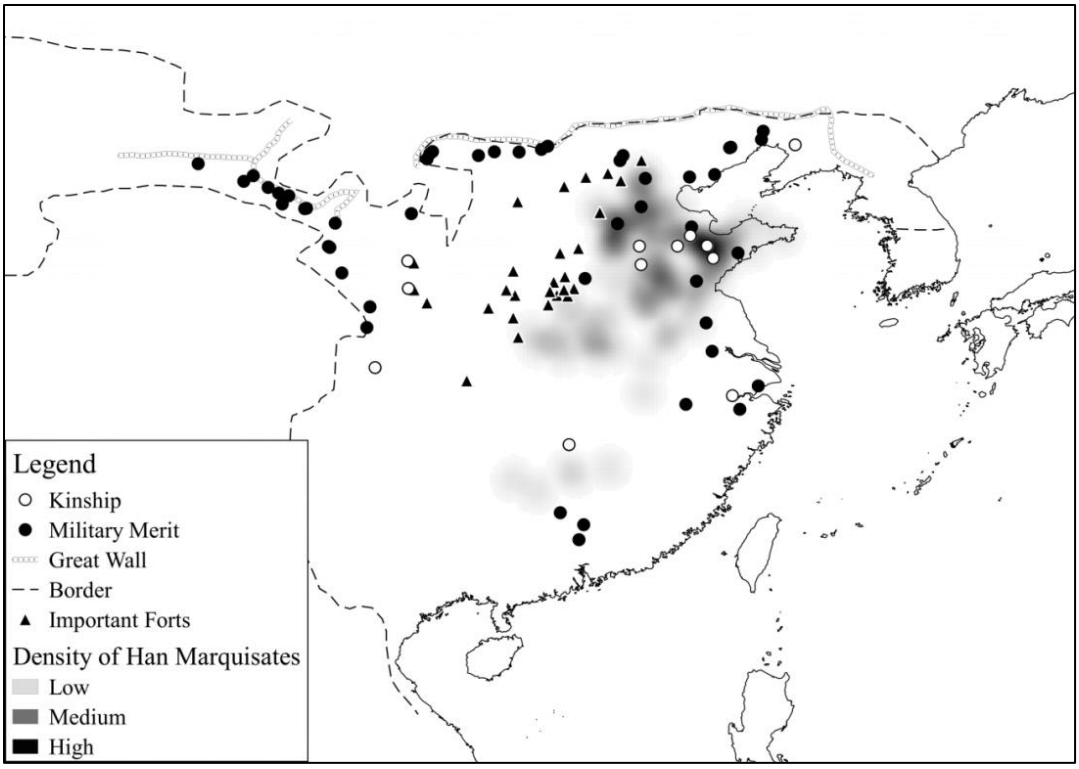

Figure 2 The Map of Potential Fiefdoms in the Xin Dynasty[28]

The record of name changes in the Xin dynasty from *Hanshu* reflects that Wang Mang strategically used enfeoffment to control peripheral territory of the empire. Comparing the distribution pattern of fiefdoms containing *wu* and *lu* with those conferred on Wang Mang's kin, it is evident that fiefdoms containing *wu* and *lu* were usually placed on the geographical periphery of the empire (see Figure 2).[29] The majority of them (69%) were located in border commanderies,

[28] The border and great wall in the Han dynasty referenced *The Historical Atlas of China* 中國歷史地圖集 edited by Tan Qixiang 譚其驤. See Tan Qixiang, ed., *The Historical Atlas of China*, vol.2 (Beijing: Ditu Chubanshe, 1982).

[29] Though there were seals of noblemen with titles containing *qiang* collected in *Jigu guanyin kao*, there was not any new names containing *qiang* in Hanshu. It is possible these fiefdoms were established by separating a portion of land from an existing county.

and some of them were close to important forts.[30] But the spatial distribution pattern of fiefdoms of Wang Mang's relatives was a bit different from that of military officers (see Figure 2). Some of these fiefdoms were located in Guandong 關東, the "ideal" area for marquisates in the Han dynasty. Guandong, which was one of the most prosperous areas with the highest population density and fertile lands in the empire, was also the most potentially rebellious region. Guandong refers to the area east of Hangu Pass 函谷關 and it used to be the territory of the six states during the Warring States 戰國 (475 BC–221 BC). There was a dense network of relationships among multiple traditional powers like former aristocrats of the six states, commandery administrators, county magistrates, Han marquises, landlords, and powerful clans. Because of the intertwine of traditional powers there, in the beginning of the Han dynasty, the central government gave up seeking direct control over Guandong and established kingdoms to rule commanderies in Guandong. In early Western Han dynasty, the central government were anxious to protect the safety of Guanzhong 關中, the basin west of Hangu Pass that the central government located in, from potential insurrections from the east. A series of fords along the Yellow River and passes at strategic locations were built up. The government even issued the "Ordinances on Fords and Passes" (*jin'guan ling* 津關令) to strictly control the circulation of goods between Guanzhong and

[30] In the Han dynasty, commanderies were categorized into two types: border commanderies (*bianjun* 邊郡) and inner commanderies (*neijun* 內郡). Border commanderies differed from inner commanderies for their closeness to the border. Except administrative duties, administrators of border commanderies undertook more military duties in order to protect the border. See Du Xiaoyu 杜晓宇, "Shilun qinhan bianjun de gainian fanwei yu tezheng 試論秦漢"邊郡"的概念、範圍與特征," *China's Borderland History and Geography Studies* 中國邊疆史地研究, no. 4 (2012): 1–12.

Guandong. For instance, the transportation of horses, which can be used to equip cavalries, was prohibited exporting from Guanzhong to Guandong.[31] Though the central government gradually reinforced its control over Guandong by dismembering kingdoms up to the end of Western Han, the central government was still wary of Guandong. For example, when an army comprised of soldiers from Guandong was dispatched to suppress the rebellion of Zhai Yi, officers from Guandong were replaced by those from Guanzhong.[32] Therefore, the offering of lands to Wang Mang's relatives in Guandong can be seen as an action to counterbalance local power there.

However, some relatives of Wang Mang were given fiefdoms in the far south, the northeastern boundary, and the northwestern boundary. Those investitures may reflect similar motive with the investitures of military officers but the difference is that Wang Mang's relatives were obviously more trustworthy than officers having no kinship relation with him. As the Grand Commandant of the Han, Wang Mang appointed many relatives to be military generals, and through a memorial in the end of AD 8, Wang Mang reflected his intention of dispatching his relatives to strategic locations to protect the safety of the capital. General Wang Ji 王級, the Marquis of Mingwei 明威侯[33], was sent to the Pass of Raoliu 繞溜關 which was located in Qinling mountain 秦嶺 and controlled the road to the Basin of Nanyang 南陽盆地; General Wang Jia 王嘉, the Marquis of Weimu 尉睦侯, was sent to the Pass of Yangtou 羊頭關 to defend potential

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[31] Anthony Barbieri-Low and Robin Yates, *Law, State, and Society in Early Imperial China* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 1137; Liang Wanbin 梁萬斌, "*Jin'guan ling yu hanchu zhi zhengzhi dili jiangou* 《津關令》與漢初之政治地理建構," *Fudan Journal (Social Sciences Edition)*, no. 2 (2016): 46–53.

[32] Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 3427.

[33] The title of Wang Ji does not contain *mu*, possibly because he had owned the title through other merits earlier than being conferred as Wang Mang's relative.

attacks from Xiongnu; General Wang Qi 王奇, the Marquis of Zhangwei 掌威侯, was sent to the Pass of Hangu to protect the capital from potential attack of the Guandong region; General Wang Fu 王福, the Baron of Huaiqiang 懷羌子, was sent to the region of Qianlong 汧隴 which shielded the capital from the invasion of Qiang.[34]

In the Xin dynasty, lands for fiefdoms were selected after thorough consideration. *Hanshu* mentions that a group of specialists in geography and maps were enlisted to work collaboratively to select lands for fiefdoms. At the same time, Wang Mang also examined the group of specialists' work with other high-ranking officials.[35] This distribution pattern reveals Wang Mang's multiple intentions. First, though these noblemen may not actually live in their fiefdoms–many of them stayed in the armies or at the court–the offering of peripheral land bound their profits with the prosperity of the periphery because they received revenue from their fiefdom.[36] Allocating aristocrats to the border encouraged them to play more active roles in frontier affairs.

Second, including more military officers into the system of ranks helped Wang Mang to take control over the army. As mentioned before, in the Han dynasty, candidates for marquis were usually from three categories of people including meritorious officers. However, according to the "Table of Meritorious Officers" 功臣表 in *Hanshu*, there were only 205 officers rewarded within

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[34] Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 4116–7.

[35] Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 4129.

[36] According to *Hanshu*, in the Xin dynasty, though each noblemen was nominally given a fiefdom, they did not get their land at once. Wang Mang claimed that because documents relating to households and land had not been officially confirmed, noblemen were suggested staying in the capital and they received money every month. See Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 4129.

the more than one hundred years from the reign of Emperor Jing 景帝 (157 BC–141 BC) to that of Emperor Cheng (51 BC–7 BC), and only 118 of them had no titles before their investiture.[37] During the reign of Emperor Cheng, which immediately preceded Wang Mang's regency, there were thirty people eligible to be included. Ten of them were from consort clans, and fifteen of them inherited their title from their fathers.[38] Therefore, among the thirty meritorious officers in the reign of Emperor Cheng, only five of them had no titles before (see Table 2). By contrast, Wang Mang's generous conferral of thousands of titles gave officers without a Han noble background a channel to enter the system of ranks and enjoy privileges identical to that of previous higher ranks.

Table 2 The Table of the Social Background of Han Marquises Who Were Conferred According to Their Merit[39]

Background / Reign	Ordinary People	Prince	Consort Clan	Inheritance	Proportion of Ordinary People
Jingdi 景帝	18	8	2	29	62.1%
Wudi 武帝	75	/	9	89	84.3%
Zhaodi 昭帝	8	/	6	15	53.3%
Xuandi 宣帝	11	/	21	36	30.6%
Yuandi 元帝	1	/	2	6	16.7%
Cheng 成帝	5	/	10	30	16.7%

[37] Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 636–75.

[38] Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 675.

[39] The table was drawn according to the "Table of Meritorious Officers" in Hanshu. See Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 635–75.

Third, the spatial distribution pattern, which was totally counter to the tradition of Han, was probably due to economic considerations. In the Xin dynasty, only seven of the forty-eight fiefdoms were within these traditionally "ideal" regions for fiefdoms. The rest of them were in border commanderies or in the far south which had never been considered for the allocation of Han fiefs because of hard natural conditions. Since thousands of people were rewarded in the Xin reforms, it would have been impossible to give each one a county-sized territory or a divided portion of a county in a fertile region. By removing that territory from the tax rolls, that would have had an excessive negative effect on the revenue of the empire.

Overall, the introduction of the Xin five-grade system of ranks destroyed the Han nominal twenty-grade system of ranks. The advantage of the new system was that it enabled more people without titles to acquire privileges identical to that of higher ranks in the previous system. The new system played an important role for Wang Mang to control the army not only by offering privileges to his relatives in the army but also by drawing officers with no aristocratic backgrounds to his side. Moreover, the distribution of fiefdoms was strategically designed to counterbalance local power in Guandong and to place noblemen in border commanderies and strategic locations in preparation for potential revolts and invasions.

4.0 Division of Administrative Units

According to *Hanshu*, there were 103 commandery-level entities and 1578 county-level entities around the empire (10 BC).[40] However, a memorial in AD 14 attested 125 commandery-level entities and 2203 county-level entities. Their number grew rapidly in the Xin dynasty, which is the evidence that the division of administrative units was changed. However, the ratio of county-level entities to commandery-level entities remained relatively consistent (from 15.4 to 17.6), it shows that the new division is not a structural change on the administrative system inherited from Han because in order to keep administrative efficiency, there should be an ideal ratio between a unit and its subordinate units, and the ratio will change greatly only when the system encounters a structural change that modifies the function of each level. Thus, the new division was more like an adjustment to the previous one.

4.1 Counties

County was the most basic unit of the Han administrative system. The division of a county-level entity[41] was usually determined by local population. Therefore, a county was a relatively

[40] County-level entities refers to all kinds of county-level administrative units (*xian*, *houguo*, *dao*, and *yi*) in the Han dynasty and the Xin dynasty. According to "Table of Nobility Ranks and Government Office 百官公卿表" from Hanshu, there were 1587 counties, which is nine more than the record of the "Treatise of Geography."

[41] County-level entities refers to county-level administrative units (*xian*, *houguo*, *dao*, and *yi*) in the Han dynasty and the Xin dynasty.

stable unit based on regional economy.[42] Wang Mang established around five hundred new county-level entities around the empire.[43] Such a dramatic increase reveals that the new division was probably not based on population and economy because there was no evidence that population increased rapidly in the end of the Han dynasty. According to the "Treatise of Geography," eleven counties had new names which contained the characters *ju* 聚 and *xiang* 鄉 (see Table 3).

Table 3 The Table of Counties Whose New Names Contained *xiang* or *ju* in the Xin Dynasty

Previous Name	New Name	Previous Name of Superordinate Commandery (New Name)
Li 枎	Zhangxiang 張鄉	Pingyuan 平原 (Heping 河平)
Gaowan 高宛	Changxiang 常鄉	Qiansheng 千乘 (Jianxin 建信)
Ping'an 平安	Duxiang 杜鄉	Guangling Kingdom 廣陵國 (Jiangping 江平)
Shu 舒	Kunxiang 昆鄉	Lujiang 廬江 (Lujiang 廬江)
Tuling 荼陵	Shengxiang 聲鄉	Changsha Kingdom 長沙國 (Tianman 填蠻)
Gaole 高樂	Weixiang 為鄉	Bohai 勃海 (Yinhe 迎河)
Qiao 鄡	Qinju 秦聚	Julu 巨鹿 (Herong 和戎)
Zhongqiu 中丘	Zhiju 直聚	Changshan 常山 (Jingguan 井關)
Hexiang 合鄉	Heju 合聚	Donghai 東海 (Yiping 沂平)
Jiancheng 建成	Duoju 多聚	Yuzhang 豫章 (Jiujiang 九江)
Quanjing 犬氏	Quanju 犬聚	Dai 代 (Yadi 厭狄)

During the Han, *ju* and *xiang* were non-administrative settlements under counties. County-level entities, whose names contained *ju* and *xiang*, were not only seen in the Xin dynasty.

[42] Zhou Zhenhe, *Xihan zhengqu dili*, 231.

[43] According to the preceding section of this paper, newly established fiefdoms also contributed to the increase in the number of county-level entities in the Xin dynasty.

However, this naming pattern was popular among marquisates in the Han dynasty, and it was resulted from the upgrading of settlements to form marquisates. In order to restrict the power of kings, Emperor Wu 武帝 (156 BC–87 BC) issued the "Order to Expand Favors" (*tuien ling* 推恩令) that allowed kings to give part of their territories to their princes, and as when these princely fiefdoms were established, their lands ceased to be subordinate to kingdoms, and were moved instead to the supervision of neighboring commanderies. Initially, princes were usually given full-size counties to build their fiefdoms, but after practicing the policy for several generations, kingdoms no longer had enough lands to offer. As a compromise, princely fiefdoms were created by separating single settlements from full-size counties. Nevertheless, though these princely fiefdoms were not established on the foundation of full-size counties, they were counted as county-level entities.[44] Sometimes, these princely fiefdoms inherited names of single settlements that they built upon and they can be identified according to characters, like *ju* and *xiang*, that their names contained. For example, there was a marquisate called Qixiang 祁鄉. Its predecessor was probably a settlement, called Qi 祁, that was affiliated to a county. In 15 BC, when the King of Liang 梁王 decided to allocate a fiefdom for his prince, the settlement Qi was chosen.[45] As the result, the settlement became a marquisate that was counted as a county-level entity.

The similar pattern of name change suggests that separating some settlements from full-size counties to form new and smaller counties may happen in the Xin dynasty, and the previous names of these settlements were kept. For example, according to the "Treatise of Geography," Li

[44] Ma Menglong 馬孟龍, "Xihan houguo dili 西漢侯國地理" (PhD diss., Fudan University, 2011), 39.

[45] Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 515.

county 枌縣 got its new name Zhangxiang 張鄉 in the Xin dynasty (see Figure 3). It is possible that Li was comprised of several settlements, including a settlement called Zhangxiang. In the Xin dynasty, these settlements were separated from Li and formed new counties. If Zhangxiang was not the only settlement that received independence from Li, why does Ban Gu note that Li was named after Zhangxiang rather than other subordinate settlements? There must be a kind of continuity between Li county and Zhangxiang: the new Zhangxiang county probably received the previous county seat, which makes it the successor of Li county.

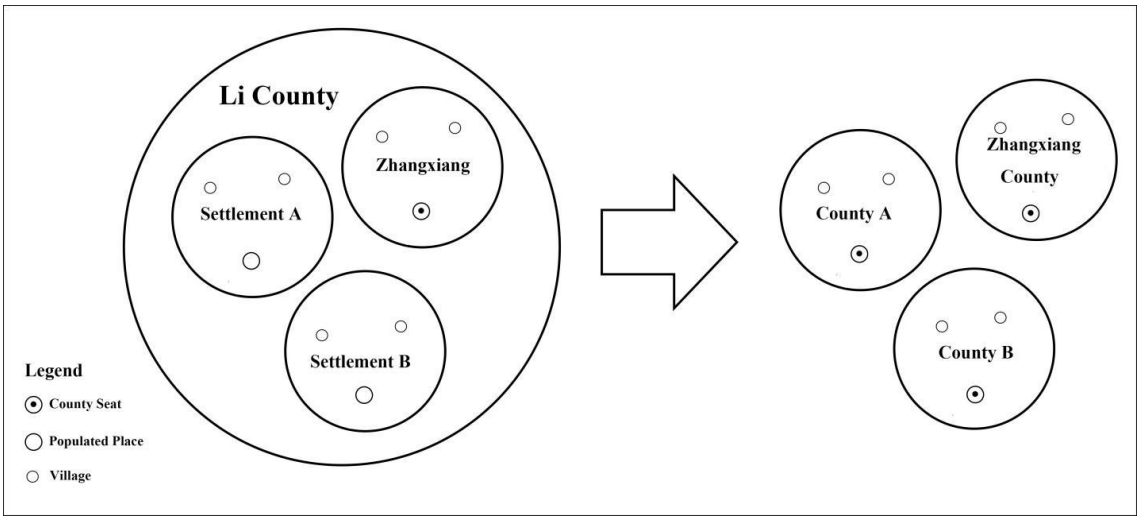

Figure 3 A Graphic Demonstration of the Possible Formation Process of Zhangxiang County

A Xin seal entitled "the Seal of the Minister of Changju County 長聚則丞印," offers an archaeological perspective that reinforces this speculation.[46] The name Changju literally means "the settlement of Chang." Among counties in the "Treatise of Geography," there is no county called Changju, which means that it was newly established in the Xin dynasty, and it was not

[46] Qu Zhongrong, *Jigu guanyin kao*, vol. 2, 2 *juan*, 9.

considered as the successor of its previous superordinate county. Therefore, it had been a Han settlement under a county but was upgraded in the Xin dynasty.

Xin county magistrates were mainly inherited from the Han dynasty. There was no evidence in *Hanshu* that Wang Mang massively replaced county magistrates who had served the Han dynasty with his followers. Though the central government had the power to appoint county magistrates, because of the large number of county magistrates around the empire and their immense power within their territory, it was difficult to investigate the faithfulness of each of them or to remove all of them from office, and any kind of such policy can shake the base of the empire. The expedient way was to restrict them. Separating counties reduced their territory and enabled the central government to appoint trusted officials who could supervise the behavior of their colleagues without taking the current county magistrates' place.

4.2 Commanderies

4.2.1 Name Change Pattern that Reflects Seat Migration

In the Xin dynasty, commandery seats usually have similar names with their superordinate commanderies. For example, the new name of Pei commandery 沛郡 was Wufu 吾符, and the name of its seat was changed from Xiang 相 to Wufuting 吾符亭 (for five examples, see Table 4; for all cases, see Appendix B).

Table 4 The Table of Five Examples of Han Commandery Seats That Shared Similar New Names with Their Superordinate Commanderies[47]

Previous Name and New Name of Commandery Seat	Previous Name and New Name of Commandery
宜禄县 Yilu (赏都亭县 Shangduting)	汝南郡 Runan (赏都郡 Shangdu)
相县 Xiang (吾符亭县 Wufuting)	沛郡 Pei (吾符郡 Wufu)
谯县 Qiao (延成亭县 Yanchengting)	沛郡 Pei (延城郡 Yancheng)
临邑县 Linyi (穀城亭县 Guchengting)	东郡 Dong (穀城郡 Gucheng)
寿良县 Shouliang (寿良县 Shouliang)	东郡 Dong (寿良郡 Shouliang)

Except Han commandery seats that shared similar new names with their superordinate commanderies, there were also some counties that were not commandery seats before but also had similar new names with their superordinate commandery or neighboring commandery. For example, Wei commandery 魏郡 got a new name Weicheng 魏城 in Xin, but its previous seat, Ye county 鄴縣, kept its name. However, another subordinate county, Yu coutny 虞縣, received a new name, Weichengting 魏城亭. This similarity in names might be the evidence of the migration of commandery seats. In this case, it is possible that the seat of Wei commandery migrated from Ye to Yu. However, it is unfortunate that *Hanshu* does not have any discussion about the migration of commandery seats in the Xin dynasty. There are forty-five such cases found (for five examples, see Table 5; for all forty-five cases, see Appendix C).

[47] Pay attention to the consistency between new name for the seat and new name for the commandery.

Table 5 The Table of Five Examples of Counties That Were Not Commandery Seats in Han but Shared Similar New Names with Their Superordinate or Neighboring Commanderies in Xin[48]

Commandery's Name in Han	Commandery's Name in Xin	Previous Seat	New Name of the Previous Seat	New Seat	New Name of the New Seat
河間國 Hejian	朔定郡 Shuoding	樂成縣 Lecheng	陸信縣 Luxin	觀津縣 Guanjin	朔定亭縣 Shuoding
淮陽國 Huaiyang	新平郡 Xinping	陳縣 Chen	陳陵縣 Chenling	新平縣 Xinping	新平縣 Xinping
千乘郡 Qiansheng	建信郡 Jianxin	千乘縣 Qiansheng	千乘縣 Qiansheng	建信縣 Jianxin	建信縣 Jianxin
東萊郡 Donglai	東萊郡 Donglai	掖縣 Ye	掖通縣 Yetong	當利縣 Dangli	東萊亭縣 Donglaiting
勃海郡 Bohai	迎河郡 Yinghe	浮陽縣 Fuyang	浮城縣 Fucheng	南皮縣 Nanpi	迎河亭縣 Yingheting

4.2.2 New Division of Border Commanderies

By comparing Figure 1 and Figure 4, it is evident that on the border, commandery seat migration was mainly determined by military affairs. On the northern border, many commandery seats retreated from the front, which might be the result of military conflicts with Xiongnu. In the northwest, the seat of Jiuquan commandery 酒泉郡 moved westwards. Located in the Hexi Corridor 河西走廊, Jiuquan was a key place that connected the major part of the empire to the Western Region. The Xin dynasty had conflicts with states in the Western Region beginning in

[48] Pay attention to commandery's name in the Xin and new name of the new seat.

AD 13, when the state of Yanqi 焉耆 revolted and assassinated the Protectorate General of the Western Region. In AD 16, the army of Xin marched west, and though the main force was defeated by Yanqi, the rest of the army retreated and stayed in the state of Qiuci 龜茲 until the downfall of Xin, maintaining a military presence in the Western Region.[49] Moving the seat of Jiuquan commandery westwards can help to coordinate military operations and mobilize resources.

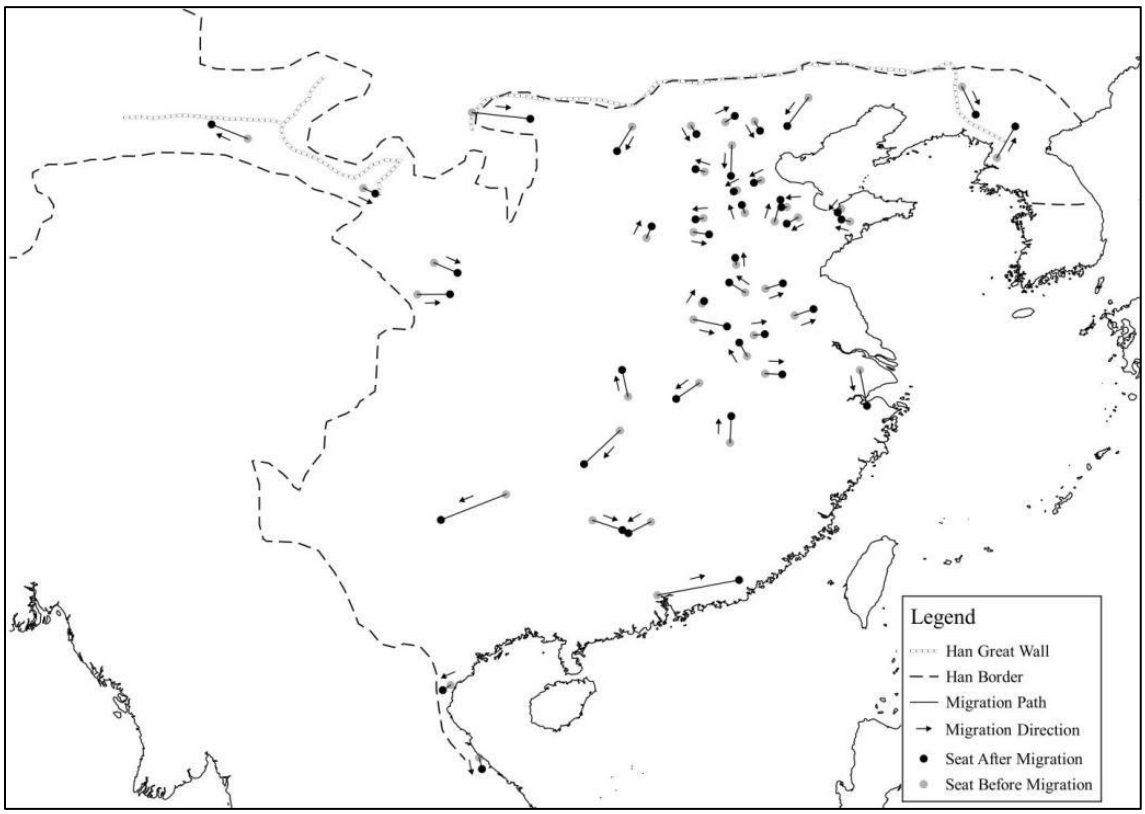

Figure 4 The Map of Commandery Seat Migration in the Xin Dynasty

In the northeast, Xin was seemingly more advantageous to Goguryeo for killing its chief Zou 騶 in AD 12. However, the migration pattern for seats of two northeastern commanderies reflects that the Xin dynasty adopted a more conservative strategy in this region: the seat of Xuantu

[49] Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 3927.

commandery 玄菟郡 migrated southward, but the seat of Lelang commandery 樂浪郡 moved northward. Lelang commandery was located further south than Xuantu commandery and was in charge of governing population in the northern part of the Korean peninsula. However, after this migration, its seat was moved to the frontier between Goguryeo and Xin, parallel with the new seat of Xuantu commandery. It seems that the migration aimed to block the southward expansion of Goguryeo (see Figure 5). The new strategy sought to maintain the existing frontier between Goguryeo and the Xin rather than to effectively place all local population under the household registration system (*bianhu* 編戶) as what the Han dynasty did.[50] This speculation can be proved through *Hanshu*. After the death of the chief of Goguryeo, the conflicts between Xin and Goguryeo did not come to an end. However, Goguryeo initiated more raids on border commanderies of Xin.[51] Facing this situation, the empire had to reorganize its northeastern commanderies to defend its border towns.

[50] Li Dalong 李大龍, "Cong Goguryeo xian dao andong duhufu: Goguryeo he lidai zhognyang wangchao guanxi 從高句驪縣到安東都護府: 高句驪和歷代中央王朝關係," *Etho-National Studies* 民族研究, no.4 (1998): 75.

[51] Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 4130.

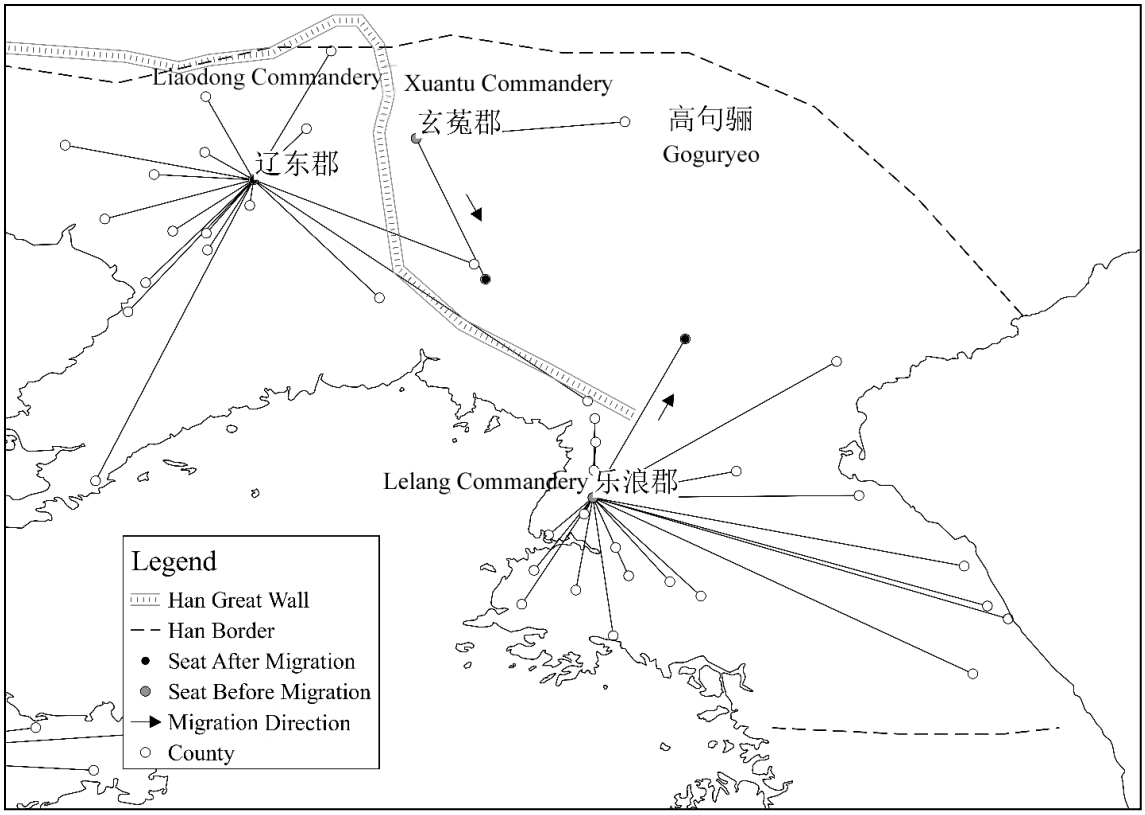

Figure 5 The Map of the Migration of Seats of Northeastern Commanderies

In the southwest, near the Kingdom of Gouding, the seat of Zangke commandery 牂柯郡 migrated forward to the frontier in order to coordinate the warfare against Gouding. Gouding was a kingdom among the southwestern barbarians (*xinan yi* 西南夷). The founder of Gouding, Wubo 亡波, was conferred the title of king in 86 BC for helping the Han empire to suppress a rebellion in Yizhou Commandery 益州郡 whose territory was newly acquired in 109 BC, after conquering the Kingdom of Dian 滇国.[52] Before the conquering of southwestern barbarians, Dian and Yelang 夜郎 were the most important kingdoms in this region. Spatially, Gouding is between the two

[52] Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 3843.

kingdoms and after the downfall of Dian, it began to challenge the power of Yelang.[53] In 27 BC, the rebellion initiated by Yelang was suppressed and the Kingdom of Yelang was conquered.[54] The expansion of Han empire cleared two traditionally powerful kingdoms in the southwest, which gave Gouding the chance to rise. In AD 9, when the Xin dynasty was formally established, Wang Mang demoted the title of the king of Gouding to marquis, which led to his revolt. The war against Gouding became endless that continued until the downfall of the Xin dynasty.[55]

According to the name change pattern, the seat of Zangke commandery was moved from Guqielan 故且蘭 county to Yelang 夜郎 county which used to be the capital of the conquered Yelang. The travel cost map suggests that the cost to move from Gouding to Guqielan was extremely high but the cost to move from Gouding to Yelang was far lower (see Figure 6) . The least-cost path between Guqielan and Gouding was also generated, and it shows that Yelang was midway between the two places. As the previous commandery seat, Guqielan has been under the control of Han empire since 111 BC but the cost of dispatching troops and sending goods from there to the front became extremely high. The midway position of Yelang provided better communication with the frontier and lower logistics cost to send supplies.

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[53] Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 3843-3845.

[54] Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 3845, 1310.

[55] The war had many stages. The first stage started from AD 9 to AD 16. After seven years of failures, previous general was demoted and new generals were promoted. The second stage is from AD 16 to AD 21. The second stage had some victories but none of them are decisive. In AD 21, reinforcements were dispatched but it did not change the situation there. There were no records in *Hanshu* after this reinforcement, which shows that the long-term war probably began to come to an end when empire-wide rebellions drained the military power of the Xin dynasty.

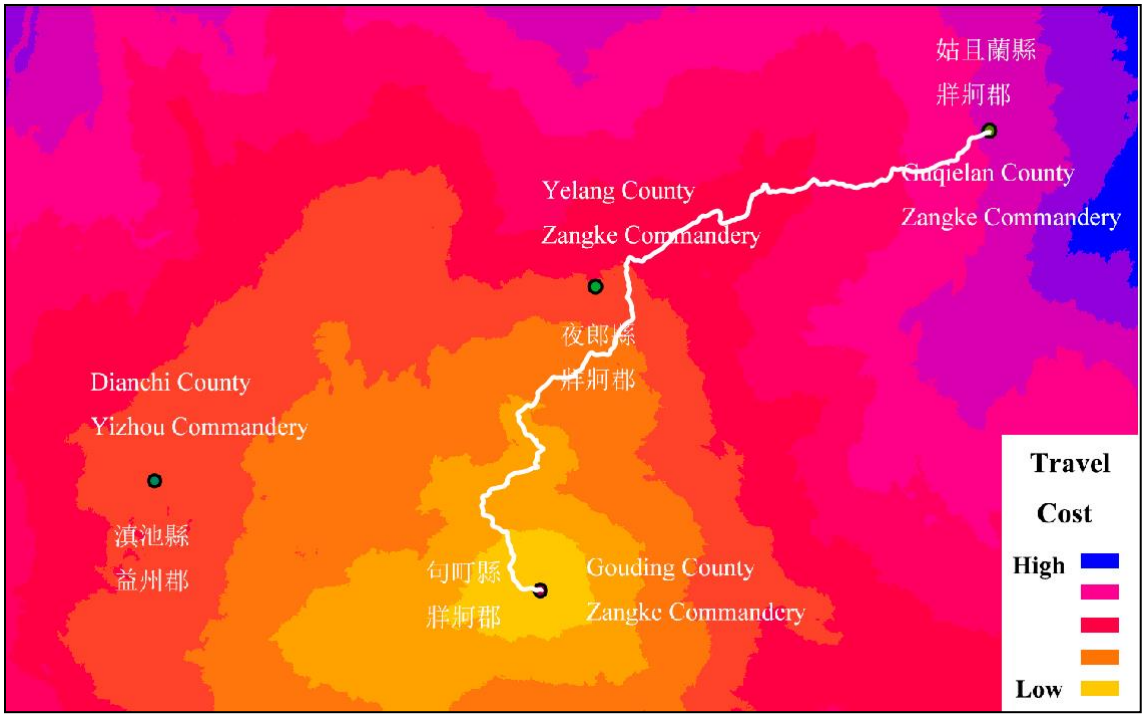

Figure 6 The Cost-Distance Map (Gouding as the Source Point) and a Least Cost Path Between Gouding and Guqielan

4.2.3 New Division of Inner Commanderies

The division of inner commanderies is completely different from that of border commanderies. For inner commanderies, except migrating commandery seats, establishing new commanderies is another strategy that was commonly used. In the Xin dynasty, the number of commanderies increased from 103 to 125 according to *Hanshu*. Though these newly established commanderies were not recorded in the "Treatise of Geography," twenty-five new commanderies

can be restored through existing government seals and other paragraphs of *Hanshu*.[56] Among these commanderies, only five of them were in the territory of border commanderies, which suggests that establishing new commanderies was mainly practiced in inner commanderies.

Guandong is highly representative of the purpose of the division of inner commanderies in the Xin dynasty. Heatmaps generated from the location of commanderies in both regimes suggest that Guandong was always the region with the highest density of commanderies (see Figure 7 and Figure 8). Moreover, there were always two core regions in Guandong with the highest density of commanderies. The western core was located in the area north of the Yellow River 黃河 and east of the Taihang Mountain Range 太行山脈, and the eastern core was located north of the Taiyi Mountain Range 泰沂山脈. However, contour lines generated by heatmaps show that though the dual-core structure remained in the Xin dynasty, the essence of the structure changed greatly. First, the density of commanderies in Guandong in the Xin was actually twice more than that in the Han dynasty. Contour lines for both maps had the same interval, and therefore, the area with more contour lines is quantitatively higher in density. Second, contour lines in the Xin is much more compact than that in the Han, which suggests that the two core regions became much more prominent than the periphery, in terms of the density of commanderies.

[56] Hou Xiangrong, "Xinmang zhijun kao," 64–73. Hou Xiaorong found 25 new commanderies, but according to Hanshu, up to AD 14, there were 125 commanderies around the empire, which means that from the end of the Han dynasty to AD 14, there were 22 new commanderies. Hou Xiaorong claimed that if the three capital commanderies (*sanfu* 三輔) were not counted, the number fits the record of Hanshu.

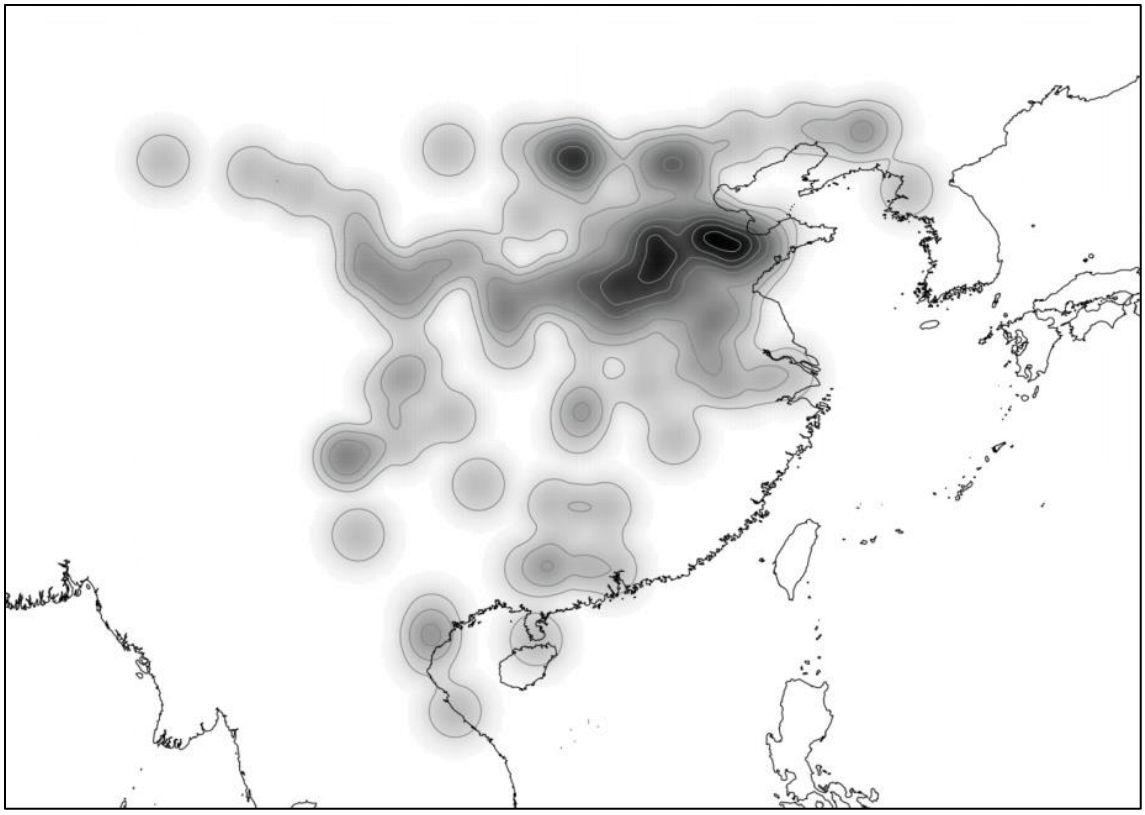

Figure 7 The Heatmap Generated from the Location of Commanderies in the Han Dynasty

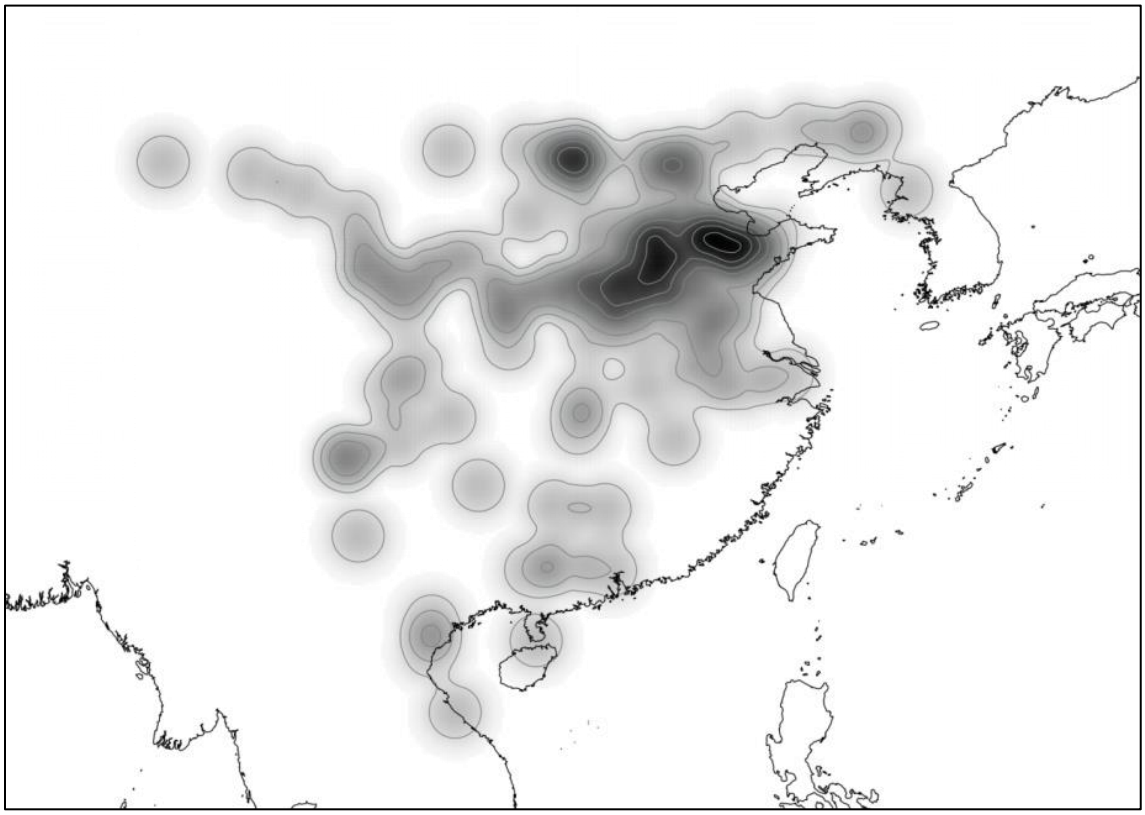

Figure 8 The Heatmap Generated from the Location of Commanderies in the Xin Dynasty

Multiple factors led to increase in the density of commanderies in Guandong. The establishment of new commanderies is the primary reason: five new commanderies were established in the western core region, and two new ones were in the eastern core region.[57] There were totally eleven new commanderies established in Guandong. Second, many commandery seats in Guandong migrated close to each other and formed many clusters (see Figure 9). As the result, the average of distance between the seat of each commandery and that of its nearest neighbor

[57] The five commanderies in the western core are: Gucheng 穀城, Shouliang 壽良, Wenyang 汶陽, Wuyan 無鹽, and Hecheng 和成. The two commanderies in the eastern core are: Yanting 延亭 and Jiping 冀平.

reduced from 99.6 km to 57.8 km. Third, many kingdoms used to be in Guandong, and in AD 9, kings of Han were required to hand over their land and seals to the central government.[58] Though *Hanshu* does not mention the treatment of previous kingdoms, because most kingdoms had new names in the Xin dynasty, they were certainly transformed into commanderies.

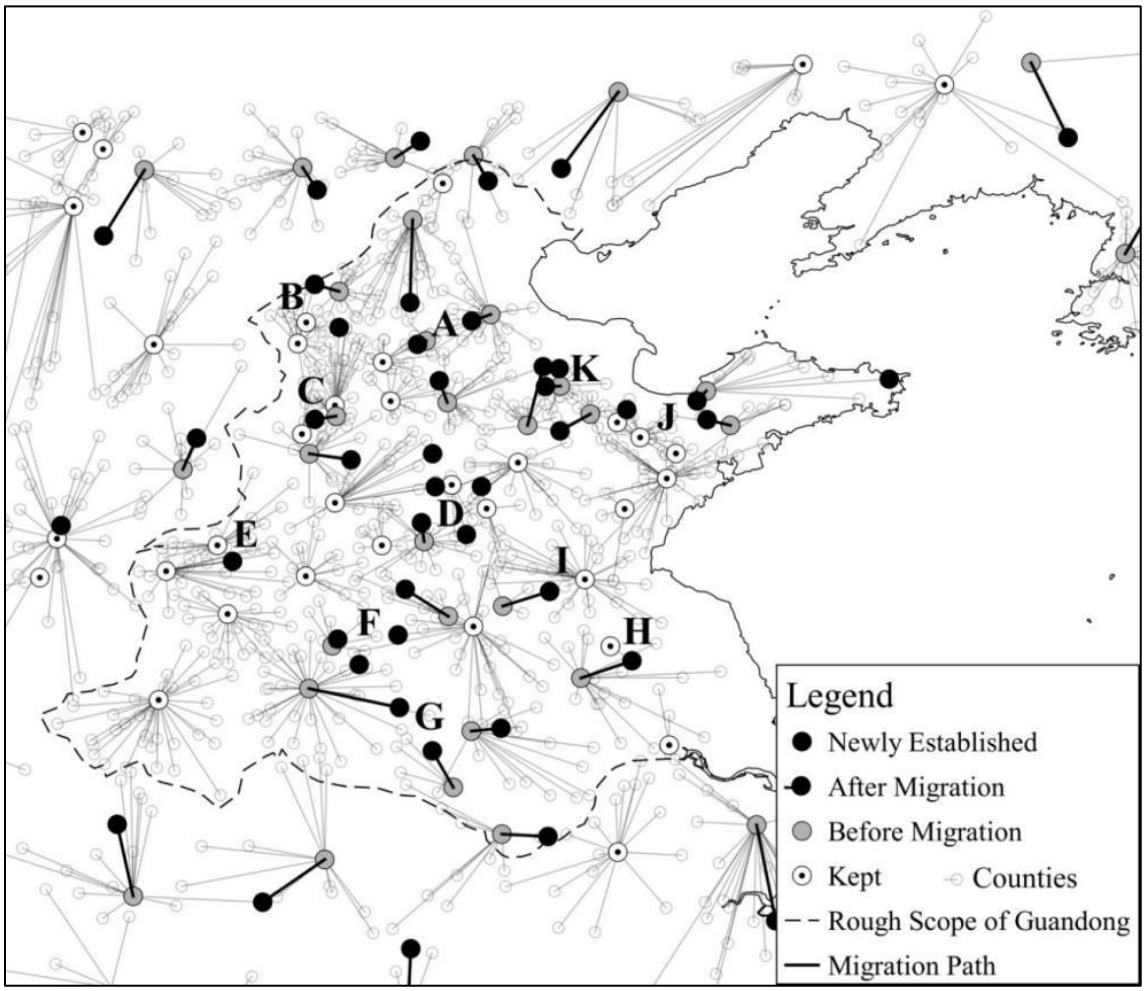

Figure 9 The Map of Clusters of Commanderies

The new division aimed to weaken local power by breaking local power holder's sphere of influence formed in the Han dynasty. Different from the migration of border commandery seats,

[58] Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 4118.

which was mainly determined by the fluctuating frontier, the migration of inner commandery seats was connected with territorial changes. Among the forty-five migrated commandery seats, five of them were in the territory of their previous neighboring commanderies, which shows that territorial changes also happened while the migration of seats.[59] Combined with the establishment of new commanderies, commandery boundary was reset, and the territory of each commandery was reduced, which prevented former Han commandery administrators bringing their power and personal social networks developed in the Han dynasty to the Xin dynasty. Moreover, the seats were placed close to each other to encourage mutual supervision between commandery administrators.

The reason why Guandong endured some many changes in the division of commanderies is due to its potential of revolt. Many rebellions during the Xin dynasty happened there. Cluster D was the center of the western core region (see Figure 9). The extremely high density was due to the four new commanderies established there. The area that Cluster D located used to be the territory of the kingdom of Dongping 東平國, Shanyang commandery 山陽郡, Dong commandery, the kingdom of Lu 魯國, and Taishan commandery 泰山郡. This is the region that entangled deeply in the revolt of Zhai Yi, and many local people and aristocrats participated in the revolt. For example, Liu Xin and Liu Huang 劉璜, the two marquises that revolted together with Zhai Yi, were sons of the king of Dongping.[60] Climate factors also promoted Guandong's potential of revolt.

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[59] Though the proportion of such case (11%) is not prominent, it is still representative. They were extreme cases. Counties in the periphery were usually traded off, but the establishment of seats on newly acquired land shows that the previous boundary was completely destroyed.

[60] Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 3426–7.

In AD 11, a dike breach happened in Wei commandery and influenced commanderies in the lower reach of Yellow River. In the same year, commanderies by the Yellow River also suffered from a plague of locusts.[61] Another major flood in the Xin dynasty happened in AD 14–17. This flood nearly destroyed the lower reaches of Yellow River, and worse than that, archaeological evidence suggests that the flood happened at the end of the growing season of crops, leading to massive starvation.[62] Traditional political instability and devastating natural disasters collaboratively led to the extensive new division of commanderies in this area.

[61] Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 4127.

[62] Tristram Kidder, " New Perspectives on the Collapse and Regeneration of the Han Dynasty," in *Beyond Collapse: Archaeological Perspectives on Resilience, Revitalization, and Transformation in Complex Societies*, Vol. no. 42, ed. Ronald K. Faulseit (Carbonade: Southern Illinois University Press, 2016), 83-84..

5.0 Conclusion

The reexamination of "The Treatise of Geography" of *Hanshu* has shown that the spatial organization reform in the Xin dynasty were neither symbolic nor unnecessary as previous scholars argued. However, it is Wang Mang's reaction to challenges that he faced before and after his usurpation. The twenty-grade system of ranks of Han was replaced by a much attractive five-grade nobility system, and the conferring of land and title to meritorious officers transformed the army of Han into the army of Xin. Moreover, placing relatives to strategic locations to build their fiefdoms ensured the safety of the empire. After grouping followers through the system of ranks, Wang Mang ordered the new division of commanderies and counties, aiming to restrict local administrators' power in inner commanderies and to better coordinate military operations in border commanderies.

In *Crisis and Conflict in Han China, 104 BC to AD 9,* Michael Loewe suggested that during the Western Han, there were two conflicting streams of political attitude. One is the Modernist idea that formed during the reign of Emperor Wu. The other one is the Reformist idea that began in the reign of Emperor Zhao and further developed in the reign of Emperor Xuan. The influence of Modernists was gradually replaced by Reformists, and up to the end of Western Han, Reformists became dominant at the court. According to Loewe, Modernists were more concerned with addressing problems of the contemporary world but the Reformists wished to return to conditions

which they believed to have existed in the remote past.[63] As the result, the modernists supported unrestricted ownership of land, the government monopolies of salt and iron and an expansionist foreign policy. However, the reformists supported political thoughts of Confucius and Mencius, treated omens as the sign of supernatural force and wished to revive institution of the Zhou dynasty. Obviously, on the surface, Wang Mang was a Reformist who ardently used omens to demonstrate the switch of Mandate of Heaven from Han to Xin and reinstituted the Nine Squares Landownership System (*jingtianzhi* 井田製) and the five-grade system of ranks from the Zhou dynasty. Based on this, Loewe argued that by introducing his Reformist plan, Wang Mang wanted to attract all sections of the community, especially Reformist statesmen.[64] Nevertheless, Loewe also noticed that some of Wang Mang's actions did not follow the pattern of Reformists like his extremely aggressive foreign policy that perfectly resembles that in the reign of Emperor Wu, which makes his real political attitude difficult to comprehend.[65]

This study on Wang Mang's spatial organization reforms has shown that Wang Mang was never a true Reformist but a Modernist. He skillfully strengthened his governing through reforms, and actually, similar policies repetitively appeared in history. Throughout Chinese history, Wang Mang not the only usurper, and some other famous usurpers are Cao Pi 曹丕 who established the regime of Wei (AD 213–AD 265) 魏 and Sima Yan 司馬炎 who founded the Western Jin dynasty (AD 265–AD 316) 西晉. Surprisingly, all of them launched reforms on the system of nobility. By

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[63] Michael Loewe, *Crisis and Conflict in Han China, 104 B. C. to A. D. 9* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1974), 11.

[64] Michael Loewe, *Crisis and Conflict in Han China, 104 B. C. to A. D. 9*, 295.

[65] Michael Loewe, *Crisis and Conflict in Han China, 104 B. C. to A. D. 9*, 298.

the end of Eastern Han, The father of Cao Pi, Cao Cao 曹操, introduced the four-grade-system of nobility to replace that of Eastern Han, and many beneficiaries were meritorious officers. By the end of Wei, the father of Sima Yan, Sima Zhao 司馬昭, developed a five-grade-system of nobility replacing that of Wei.[66] Moreover, separating land from a unit to weaken it is also not new in history. The "Order to Expand Favors" that separated kingdoms into marquisates was designed by Zhufu Yan 主父偃 in the reign of Emperor Wu. Reflected from the migration of commandery seats and the establishment of new commanderies was the massive redivision of commandery borders, and the idea behind it was always one of the leading considerations for an ancient Chinese regime while setting up administrative divisions, which is to use arbitrarily divided border rather than natural border to restrict the growth of regional power.

The motive of Wang Mang's spatial organization reform was practical and his seemingly unique polices were actually not new in history. However, it does not save his regime that fell within only fifteen years. Therefore, the downfall of the Xin dynasty is probably not due to the failure of politics but the misfortune of Wang Mang who had to face the devastating effects of the huge flooding of Yellow River in his reign.

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[66] Lu Li 魯力, "*Caowei jueji ji shouyu qingkuang tantao* 曹魏爵級及授予情況探討," *Wuhan University Journal* (Humanity Science), no.4 (2012): 68.

Appendix A

Appendix Table 1The Table of Xin Seals *in Jiguguanyinkao*

Imprint Text	**Location Traceable**	**Note**
The Household Minister of the Marquis of Mingyi 明义侯家丞	√	Liyang county was called Mingyi county in Xin
The Household Minister of the Viscount of Duomu 多睦子家丞		Relative
The Household Minister of the Viscount of Tiaomu 条睦子家丞		Relative
The Household Minister of the Viscount of Shangfu 上符子家丞	√	Reporting Omens
The Household Minister of the Viscount of Jinfu 进符子家丞	√	Reporting Omens
The Household Minister of the Viscount of Juwu 举武子家丞		Meritorious officer participated in the campaign in Huaili county.
The Household Minister of the Baron of Yongmu 雝睦男家丞		Relative
The Household Minister of the Baron of Jiuwu 就武男家丞		Meritorious officer participated in the campaign in Huaili county.
The Household Minister of the Baron of Xiweimu 喜威睦男家丞		Relative
The Household Minister of the Baron of Yongwu 永武男家丞	√	Wugao county was called Yongwu in Xin
The Seal of the Heir of Zhanwu 展武世子印		Haiyan county was called Zhanwu in Xin.
The Seal of the Minister of Changju 长聚则丞印		Probably an upgraded settlement.
The Seal of the Minister of Cavalry Wang Shen of Huaizhi County 槐治县骑司马丞王审之印信	√	Huaili county was called Huaizhi in Xin.
The Seal of the Yutan King of Yue in Xin 新越余坛君		
The Seal of the Sanyang King of Yue in Xin		

新越三阳君印		
The Grand Administrator of Shouxiang Commandery 受降大尉丞	√	
The Foremost Commandant of Lelang Commandery 乐浪前尉丞	√	
The Commandant Over Agriculture of Huoxiang Commandery 获降农中候	√	
The Minister of Jiuduting County 就都亭宰印	√	

Appendix B

Appendix Table 2 The Table of Kept Commandery Seats in the Xin Dynasty

Previous Name and New Name of Commandery Seat	Previous Name and New Name of Commandery
宜禄县 Yilu (赏都亭县 Shangduting)	汝南郡 Runan (赏都郡 Shangdu)
相县 Xiang (吾符亭县 Wufuting)	沛郡 Pei (吾符郡 Wufu)
谯县 Qiao (延成亭县 Yanchengting)	沛郡 Pei (延城郡 Yancheng)
临邑县 Linyi (穀城亭县 Guchengting)	东郡 Dong (穀城郡 Gucheng)
寿良县 Shouliang (寿良县 Shouliang)	东郡 Dong (寿良郡 Shouliang)
寿光县 Shouguang (翼平亭县 Yipingting)	北海郡 Beihai (翼平郡 Yiping)
不夜县 Buye (夙夜县 Suye)	东莱郡 Donglai (夙夜郡 Suye)
莒县 Ju (莒陵县 Juling)	城阳国 Chengyang (莒陵郡 Juling)
梓潼县 Zitong (子同县 Zitong)	广汉郡 Guanghan (子同郡 Zitong)
成都县 Chengdu (成都县 Chengdu)	蜀郡 Shu (成都郡 Chengdu)
无盐县 Wuyan (有盐亭县 Youyanting)	东平国 Dongping (有盐郡 Youyan)
湿沃县 Shiwo (延亭县 Yanting)	千乘郡 Qiansheng (延亭郡 Yanting)
增山县 Zengshan (增山县 Zengshan)	西河郡 Xihe (增山郡 Zhengshan)
广都县 Guangdu (就都亭县 Jiuduting)	广汉郡 Guanghan (就都郡 Jiudu)
敦煌县 Dunhuang (敦德县 Dunde)	敦煌郡 Dunhuang (敦德郡 Dunde)
灵武县 Lingwu (威成亭县 Wuchengting)	北地郡 Beidi (威成郡 Weicheng)

Appendix C

Appendix Table 3 The Table of Migrated Commandery Seats in the Xin Dynasty

Han County Name	Xin County Name	Han Commandery	Xin Commandery
女阴县	汝坟县	汝南郡	汝坟郡
虞县	陈定亭县	梁国	陈定郡
魏县	魏城亭县	魏郡	魏城郡
广年县	富昌县	广平国	富昌郡
上曲阳县	常山亭县	常山郡	井关郡
观津县	朔定亭县	信都国	新博郡
巨野县	巨野县	山阳郡	巨野郡
新平县	新平县	淮阳国	新平郡
鬲县	河平亭县	平原郡	河平郡
建信县	建信县	千乘郡	建信郡
富平侯国	乐安亭县	平原郡	河平郡
般阳县	济南亭县	济南郡	乐安郡
当利县	东莱亭县	东莱郡	东莱郡
郁秩县	郁秩县	胶东国	郁秩郡
襄垣县	上党亭县	上党郡	上党郡
武垣县	垣翰亭县	涿郡	垣翰郡
泗阳县	淮平亭县	泗水国	水顺郡
襄安县	庐江亭县	庐江郡	庐江郡
曲阳侯国	延平亭县	九江郡	延平郡
上虞县	会稽县	会稽郡	会稽郡
柴桑县	九江亭县	豫章郡	九江郡

安风县	安风亭县	六安国	安风郡
武原县	和乐亭县	楚国	和乐郡
编县	南顺县	南郡	南顺郡
州陵县	江夏县	南郡	南顺郡
南平县	南平县	桂阳郡	南平郡
义陵县	建平县	武陵郡	建平郡
营道县	九疑亭县	零陵郡	九疑郡
夜郎县	同亭县	牂柯郡	同亭郡
河池县	乐平亭县	武都郡	乐平郡
戎邑道	填戎亭县	天水郡	填戎郡
张掖县	张掖县	武威郡	张掖郡
玉门县	辅平亭县	酒泉郡	辅平郡
埒县	填狄亭县	雁门郡	填狄郡
代县	厌狄亭县	代郡	厌狄郡
渠搜县	沟搜县	朔方郡	沟搜郡
南皮县	迎河亭县	勃海郡	迎河郡
夷舆县	朔调亭县	上谷郡	朔调郡
路县	通路亭县	渔阳郡	通路郡
徐无县	北顺亭县	右北平郡	北顺郡
西盖马县	玄菟亭县	玄菟郡	玄菟郡
浿水县	乐鲜亭县	乐浪郡	乐鲜郡
揭阳县	南海亭县	南海郡	南海郡
无编县	九真亭县	九真郡	九真郡
西捲县	日南亭县	日南郡	日南郡

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