

The Grand Scribe's Records: The Memoirs of Han China, Part II (Volume IX)

Ssu-ma Ch'ien



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This volume of The Grand Scribe's Records includes the second segment of Han-dynasty memoirs and deals primarily with men who lived and served under Emperor Wu (r. 141–87 B.C.). The lead chapter presents a parallel biography of two ancient physicians, Pien Ch'üeh and Ts'ang Kung, providing a transition between the founding of the Han dynasty and its heyday under Wu. The account of Liu P'i is framed by the great rebellion he led in 154 B.C. and the remaining chapters trace the careers of court favorites, depict the tribulations of an ill-fated general, discuss the Han's greatest enemy, the Hsiung-nu, and provide accounts of two great generals who fought them. The final memoir is structured around memorials by two strategists who attempted to lead Emperor Wu into negotiations with the Hsiung-nu, a policy that Ssu-ma Ch'ien himself supported.

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