

 PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

東亞圖書館
East Asian Library
and the *Gest Collection*

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33 Frist Campus Center, Room 317
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From the Editor

This issue of the *East Asian Library Journal* is comprised of what I feel certain will be recognized as ground-breaking research in the study of the book and printing in East Asia. The issue opens with Sören Edgren's update on the Research Library Group's Chinese rare-book cataloguing project. Following that are three papers that were first presented in March 2001 at the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies as a panel entitled "How to Study the History of the Chinese Book: Practical Tips and Wishful Thinking." In some ways these three main presentations are deceptively simple—a fieldwork report, some counting of numbers of books, and speculation about reading habits. Yet each of the three articles demonstrates the application of methods new to the study of the book in China. The results are exciting and, I hope, will stimulate discussion.

Cynthia Brokaw, professor of Chinese history at Ohio State University, writes about her fieldwork, which took place in centers of printing and book production, primarily in western Fujian province, that were important in late-imperial China. She hints at what an expansion of this kind of research might reveal about patterns of publishing and distribution of books throughout China. Lucille Chia, professor of Chinese history at the University of California, Riverside, lists a variety of methods for extracting information from imprints in order to count and estimate the number of books published in Ming-dynasty China. Anne McLaren, professor of Chinese literature at the University of Melbourne, drawing on well-established studies of the history of the book and reading in European traditions, presents a provocative look at what questions can and should be asked about reading practices in traditional Chinese society. The implications for and the potential to influence

future studies of this aspect of scholarly inquiry are already evident in other scholars' interest in these approaches to research.

It is never pleasant for an editor to have to call attention to a mistake, but this one at least gives me an opening to talk about Princeton's East Asian collection and to pay tribute to two recently deceased scholars who played such a large role in establishing it. The official name of the East Asian collection at Princeton University is East Asian Library and Gest Collection. The title page of volume ten, number one (Spring 2001) of the *East Asian Library Journal* bore a slightly different name.

In fact, the name of this great collection of books about or published in East Asia has gone through several transformations over the more than seventy years of its existence. Most simply, and perhaps fondly, many still refer to it as "Gest." Guion M. Gest was an engineer and businessman with a passion for collecting and the financial resources to indulge that passion. Gest's collaboration in the 1920s, thirties, and forties with Irvin V. Gillis, a consultant and long-time resident in Peking (Beijing), resulted in the remarkable treasure that forms the core of the East Asian Library and Gest Collection.

Not many articles have been published about Gest, Gillis, or the "Gest Collection." I can point to Hu Shih's article in volume fifteen (Spring 1954) of the *Princeton University Library Chronicle*, Diane Perushek's article in volume forty-eight (Spring 1987) of that same journal, and Sören Edgren's article in volume six, number two (Winter 1993) of this journal, known then as the *Gest Library Journal*. In the summer of 2002, Su Chen, director of the University of Minnesota's East Asian collection, came to Princeton to read through archival materials in search of information to amplify what she had already gathered on the history of Mr. Gest's collection when it was held at McGill University in Montreal prior to its purchase in 1937 by the Rockefeller Foundation for the Institute for Advanced Studies and its subsequent placement in the permanent care of Princeton University. We eagerly await this scholar's revision of her manuscript for a further unfolding of the history of the East Asian Library and Gest Collection.

Any history of the Gest Collection since it came to Princeton and of the growth of the East Asian Library around that collection would of course acknowledge the significance of the roles that Marius B. Jansen

and Marion J. Levy Jr. played in convincing the university to retain the Gest Collection and in expanding that collection beyond the Chinese materials that made up the original Gest acquisition. Professor Jansen, who taught Japanese history at Princeton beginning in 1959, died on December 10, 2000, at the age of seventy-eight. Professor Levy, who taught sociology and international affairs at Princeton beginning in 1947, died on May 26, 2002, at the age of eighty-three. Obituaries of these two scholars and teachers, who were such an important part of the experience of those of us who came to Princeton as graduate students in East Asian Studies, appeared on the Princeton University website and in various print media. I would like to add to these tributes some indication of the fundamental and profound influence these two professors had on the preservation and development of the East Asian library at Princeton.

For the facts, I am drawing on two informal histories of the East Asian Studies Program, both written in 1993, one an untitled account of East Asian Studies at Princeton by Professor Jansen, the other entitled "East Asian Studies at Princeton—A View from the Beginnings" by Frederick W. Mote, now Princeton Emeritus Professor of Chinese History. Both are on file for general reference in the East Asian Studies Department office. The accounts make clear that the establishment and growth of the academic department known today as the East Asian Studies Department and Program were possible because of the existence at Princeton of the Gest Collection, a significant core of Chinese-language rare books.

And further, Professor Mote's account gives unambiguous and heart-felt credit to Professors Levy and Jansen, both colleagues and dear friends, for their work over the years on behalf of the East Asian library. He wrote this of Marion Levy's passionate commitment to retaining the Gest Collection at Princeton:

Recognizing (as most then at Princeton did not) the great value of the collection, the young Professor Levy was invited to explain to the senior faculty why Princeton, if it intended ever to develop East Asian Studies, must retain the collection and give it space when the new Firestone Library became ready for occupancy in 1950. Subsequently, he connived with the then

University Librarian, Dr. Julian Boyd, to convince the President and the Trustees that rival Yale was eager to acquire the collection and would thereby be enabled to make an important advance in developing the field. The Trustees promptly voted to keep the Gest Collection at Princeton Whether the story about Julian Boyd's and Marion Levy's stratagem to induce the Trustees to retain the Gest collection reflects all of the dimensions of that crucial decision . . . , it is clear that the further decision to commence the study of East Asia at Princeton followed directly from the existence here of the Gest Collection. (Fritz Mote, "East Asian Studies at Princeton—A View from the Beginnings," informal history dated September 1993, pp. 5–6.)

And Professor Mote wrote of Marius Jansen's refined acumen in building a balanced East Asian library here:

During 1958–59 the University came to the decision that my position in Chinese studies must be matched by one in Japanese studies. Here a proper search was conducted, although those of us most deeply involved . . . knew all along that we wanted Marius Jansen for this position. . . . [B]ecause I had long known him his arrival added to the warm spirit of friends engaged in a common effort. . . . During Marius' first year a decision was reached to create an undergraduate "Program in East Asian Studies," at that time conceived of as a proto-department as well as the instrument for coordinating East Asian Studies across the campus. . . . Marius headed the Program from its inception. His other major task was to oversee the creation of a Japanese research library. The Gest Collection held virtually nothing in Japanese. The University was generous in providing special start-up funds and Marius made buying trips to the Kanda district in Tokyo. Mrs. Soowon Kim was hired to become the acquisitions librarian for Japanese. The Jansen-Kim team's feat in creating so important and well-balanced a collection in a matter of about two decades may be unmatched in the annals of East Asian Studies in this country. (Ibid., pp. 8–9.)

A well-researched history of the Gest Collection, when eventually written, will surely yield further evidence of the inextricable intertwining of East Asian Studies at Princeton and the East Asian Library and Gest Collection. One part of the conclusion to Professor Mote's article on East Asian Studies quoted above contains precisely this point:

References to the East Asian Library appear throughout the foregoing, and it is clear that the existence of the library has been the major impulse toward the creation and maintenance of EAS at Princeton. Libraries tend to be as strong as related faculty members demand that they be,—and no stronger. (*Ibid.*, p. 16.)

Ten years later, it remains true that the continued existence and growth of the East Asian Library and Gest Collection depend on innovative use and expansion of the existing resources by the undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty of the East Asian Studies Department and Program at Princeton, and also by students and scholars of East Asian studies from around the world. Further, as Professors Levy and Jansen's involvement in the academic life at Princeton demonstrates conclusively and as the conviction of Professor Mote's words states uncompromisingly, "The most important matter now facing the future of East Asian Studies at Princeton" has to do with convincing the university to "assign to our library the priorities necessary to accomplish even the minimal enhancement of support now urgently needed" (*ibid.*, p. 16).

The *East Asian Library Journal* was founded in 1986 to draw attention to the East Asian Library and Gest Collection at Princeton and to publish articles on the history of the book and printing that would have wide appeal and relevance to the field of East Asian Studies. It is the only journal that specifically seeks to publish in a Western language articles on the varied topics associated with the history of the book and printing in East Asia, a region of diverse cultural identities that incontrovertibly have been and continue to be mutually influencing.

I trust you will enjoy this issue and take the time to write to me with your responses and comments. If it is time for you to renew your subscription, you will find a renewal form enclosed with this mailing. I

have also enclosed a form should any of you want to make a special tax-deductible contribution, separate from your regular subscription payment, to support the continued publication of the *East Asian Library Journal*.

Chinese Rare Books Project Report

SÖREN EDGREN

The Chinese Rare Books Project (CRBP) is an international cooperative project to create a unique electronic catalogue of Chinese rare-book holdings. The work was initiated in 1991 by the Research Libraries Group (RLG), and since then the Central Editorial Office of the project has been located in the East Asian (formerly Gest) Library of Princeton University. The chief aim of the project is to catalogue and enter all available Chinese rare-book holdings in North American libraries on the RLG Union Catalog, a major international bibliographic database maintained in Mountain View, California. Although participation is voluntary, the project expects to eventually include all significant holdings in the United States and Canada. Concurrently, the project encourages participation by Asian and European libraries in order to achieve the ultimate goal of an international union catalogue of Chinese rare books. In fact, over 50 percent of current on-line records represent the holdings of libraries outside North America.

The project was announced in 1992 by John Haeger in the *Gest Library Journal*.¹ I had the pleasure of making two brief reports on the project in 1993,² but since then many changes have taken place, and much progress has been made. It is fitting, therefore, to take this opportunity to offer an up-to-date report, one that describes the state of the

project as of July 2002, to the readers of the *East Asian Library Journal*.

In my first report in the *Gest Library Journal* I noted that, as of September 1992, on-line records for the holdings of nine North American libraries had been created. I pointed out that work on the holdings of two libraries in Beijing, the Peking University Library and the Library of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, would soon begin. At that time the total number of records was a mere 734. Progress was slow at first because each of the titles had to be catalogued anew, and at the same time we had to compile the cataloguing rules by which the work was to be done. Whenever a rule was changed, we felt obliged to revise earlier records before creating new ones according to the new rule. Nevertheless, we made steady progress, and three years later, in September 1995, we could boast of having 5,836 full bibliographic records on-line for fourteen libraries, including five in China. As of July 2002, statistics show that a total of 18,841 records have been produced for Chinese books and manuscripts published before 1796, including the full collections of the East Asian libraries of Columbia University, Princeton University, and the University of British Columbia. Because of the way that bibliographic records for identical editions automatically “cluster” on the RLG Union Catalog, as many as 10 percent of the records are duplicated. To date thirty major libraries in China, Europe, and North America are associated with the project. Sixteen of the libraries are inactive, having contributed all the available data, and cataloguing for them is currently suspended; fourteen libraries are actively contributing data, and cataloguing for them is ongoing. (See the appended list of libraries.)

The latest additions to the project are the Indianapolis Museum of Art, whose small collection of unique fifteenth-century illustrated Buddhist sutras has been completely catalogued; the American Museum of Natural History (New York), whose Berthold Laufer Collection was acquired in China exactly one century ago; and the Richard Rudolph East Asian Library of the University of California at Los Angeles. The year 2002 will also see CRBP participation by medium-sized collections such as the East Asian Collection at Indiana University and the East Asian Library of Brown University. In the fall of 2002 we expect to welcome the Wason Collection of Cornell University as an active CRBP member. The project’s major accomplishment in the second half of 2001 was the

completion of on-line cataloguing of all 1,430 Ming and earlier printed editions in the Harvard-Yenching Library. Later in 2002 planning will begin for cataloguing of Harvard's Ming and Qing manuscripts and all early-Qing printed editions. In the meantime, efforts are being made to increase the total of on-line records for the collection of the Library of Congress.

As indicated above, one of the project's greatest challenges was to create guidelines for on-line cataloguing that fully recognized the special characteristics of Chinese traditional books and the value of Chinese bibliographic tradition. Through an extensive compilation and review process, which involved a twenty-two-member committee, a bilingual edition of guidelines was compiled. *Cataloguing Guidelines for Creating Chinese Rare Book Records in Machine-Readable Form* was published by RLG at the end of 2000, and the long-awaited volume has been enthusiastically received. A recent unsolicited comment from a professional Chinese cataloguer reads in part, "Your book can serve as the Bible, not only for cataloguing Chinese rare books, but also for the standardization of cataloguing terminology related to MARC tags, AACR2, etc. [even in the] Chinese version."

In 1996, administration of the Chinese Rare Books Project was transferred from Stanford University, which was affiliated with the Research Libraries Group in California, to Princeton University. Since September 1996, the Chinese Rare Books Project has been administratively organized within the Department of East Asian Studies of Princeton University, and Professor Susan Naquin, Department of History, serves as project director. The Central Editorial Office currently has three staff members: Sören Edgren, editorial director; Chi-wah Chan, cataloguer; and Guangmei Li, data-entry clerk. In addition to performing their normal duties, members of the CRBP staff continue to answer librarians' queries related to Chinese rare-book cataloguing as well to assist scholars searching for CRBP data in the RLG Union Catalog.

To date, several foundations have helped to underwrite the Chinese Rare Books Project. The project has received major economic support from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the Henry Luce Foundation, the Starr Foundation, the Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation, and a significant anonymous donor. The Research Libraries

Group has made valuable cost-sharing contributions, and Princeton University has hosted the project since 1991 and solely administered the project since 1996, thereby providing for all overhead needs.

At the beginning, RLG rightly saw the project as an opportunity to help its member libraries in North America address a growing international demand for access to these unique resources. It was equally clear that participation by major libraries in China would increase the value of the contents of the database, as well as provide a vehicle for unprecedented scholarly cooperation.

In all ways, the Chinese Rare Books Project greatly expands access to the rich trove of Chinese books and manuscripts not only in the West but in China itself. To be able to state that the project now enables scholars to work as effectively in traditional Chinese sources as they can in most contemporary sources in major research collections represents no small accomplishment.

CHINESE RARE-BOOK-PROJECT RECORDS ON THE RLG UNION CATALOG

Records for sixteen inactive libraries

New York Public Library (NYPO, NYPG), University of Alberta (ABUO), University of Hawaii (HAUO), University of Southern California (CSCO), University of Pennsylvania (PAUO), University of Minnesota (MNUG), Freer-Sackler Gallery (DCFO), Stanford University (CSUO), University of Pittsburgh (PAPO), Indianapolis Museum of Art (INMA), Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (GYMO), Oxford University (UKOR), combined total:	426
University of Toronto (ONTG)	536
University of British Columbia (BCUO)	1,064
Columbia University (NYCP, NYCG)	1,120
Princeton University (NJPX)	<u>2,149</u>
	5,295

Records for fourteen active libraries

Harvard-Yenching Library (MHVO)	1,703
Library of Congress (DCLP)	305

University of Chicago (ILCO)	379
University of California at Berkeley (CUBO)	219
American Museum of Natural History (NYMN)	13
University of California at Los Angeles (CULX)	246
London University (UKSO)	<u>342</u>
	3,207
Tianjin Library (CHTR)	1,120
Renmin University (CHRR)	1,828
Chinese Academy of Sciences (CHAO)	1,856
Liaoning Provincial Library (CHLR)	1,707
Hubei Provincial Library (CHHR)	1,488
Peking University (CPUO)	1,271
Fudan University (CHFR)	<u>1,069</u>
	10,339
Chinese rare-book records on the RLG Union Catalog as of July 31, 2002	18,841

N.B. The National Central Library (Taipei), Oxford University/Bodleian Library, and Bayerische Staatsbibliothek have either only participated in the pilot project or contributed a small number of trial records.

NOTES

1. *Gest Library Journal* 5.1 (Spring 1992), pp. 90-92.
2. *Ibid.* 6.1 (Spring 1993), pp. 101-103; *ibid.* 6.2 (Winter 1993), pp. 103-105.

Fieldwork on the Social and Economic History of Chinese Print Culture

A Survey of Sources

CYNTHIA J. BROKAW

Lucille Chia's essay in this issue, "Counting and Recounting Chinese Imprints," outlines many ways in which thorough analysis of texts can tell us a great deal about the history of the book and even about the output of a specific publishing site. Her fuller study of Jianyang publishing from the Song (960–1279) through the Ming (1368–1644), together with briefer works like Ellen Widmer's study of the seventeenth-century Huanduzhai publishing house, demonstrates in greater detail this same point: intensive and extensive library searches, combined with careful and informed interpretation of imprints, can provide much of the basic information we need to understand the history of publishing and book culture in China.¹

It is often the case that historians of the book have to rely solely on this approach, for it is difficult to find much in the way of on-site sources or local physical evidence of commercial woodblock publishing. Certainly the great urban publishing centers of the late-imperial period—Nanjing, Suzhou, Hangzhou, and Beijing—yield today only scraps of information about the organization or even the location of late-Ming and Qing (1644–1911) print shops and book-selling neighborhoods, while the imprints they produced fill libraries. It is likely, then, that publishing operations in these cities and other major urban centers are best studied through the techniques of imprint analysis and biographical reconstruction employed by Widmer and Chia in the works mentioned above.

Here, however, I want to describe—and argue for the value of—another approach to the study of publishing and book culture: fieldwork at historical publishing sites and the collection of on-site data. Fieldwork allows the researcher the opportunity to study commercial woodblock publishing *in situ*; it involves recording oral histories, the collection of local artifacts of publishing (imprints, woodblocks, tools, and so forth), and consultation of a range of local documents—largely genealogies, property-division documents, and land and labor contracts.² Where available in sufficient numbers, these materials may provide information not always accessible through the study of imprints alone: the local socio-economic conditions that shape the development of publishing businesses, the structure of book production and the organization of publishing businesses, the pattern of book distribution and marketing, and so forth. Information collected from fieldwork, then, does not simply supplement the library and archival study of texts; it can supply new and otherwise inaccessible insights into the social and economic relationships of Chinese woodblock publishing in the late-imperial period.

The purpose of this essay is to present a survey of the types of materials potentially accessible through fieldwork at publishing sites. The focus here is on the collection and use of sources. I do not attempt to describe any of the publishing operations referred to here in full, though I do indicate, sketchily, what kinds of information such sources can yield about Chinese publishing and print culture.³ The examples presented in this essay are drawn largely from intensive field research done between 1993 and 1997 in a range of block-carving, publishing, or book-selling sites. These sites vary widely in significance and size. Sibao township, an isolated cluster of Hakka peasant villages in the mountains of western Fujian, was the center of a thriving regional publishing concern serving villages, market towns, and county seats in eastern Jiangxi, southern Zhejiang, northern Guangdong, and Guangxi from the late-seventeenth through the early-twentieth century; Sibao even established a branch bookshop in a provincial capital, Nanning, Guangxi, in the late-nineteenth century. Xuwan,⁴ a market town in Jinxi county, northeastern Jiangxi, was, in contrast to Sibao, an economic center of some importance before it became a publishing center in the late-eighteenth century; its strategic location on the Fu river facilitated shipment of its texts



Places related to fieldwork on Chinese printing and publishing. Map based on *Biao Zhun*



Zhongguo quantu (Map of China) (Hong Kong: Yanyuan chubanshe, [after 1999]).

northward to Anhui and Hubei and eastward to Zhejiang. Mianzhu, north of Chengdu in Sichuan province, is a somewhat different site: noted for its production of *nianhua* (usually translated as New Year's prints), Mianzhu provides an opportunity to compare different types of print, as well as book, cultures. And not all of the sites here were necessarily important publishing centers: Yuechi, in eastern Sichuan province, though it did develop a local publishing industry of its own, played its most significant role in Qing publishing as a source of skilled block carvers, most of whom worked for distant publishing concerns. Yuechi peasants originally took up block carving as a subsidiary handicraft in the late-eighteenth century; many, finding it more lucrative than agriculture, specialized in the craft, providing the publishers of Chengdu and Chongqing with a steady supply of carvers. So too, Magang, a peasant village in Shunde, Guangdong, developed block carving as a sideline; here, however, the carvers were all women—cheap female labor made these blocks attractive to publishers as far away as Suzhou and Sibao.⁵ Selection of such a range of different sites—including block carving as well as book- and print-publishing centers, and peasant villages as well as market towns and provincial capitals—provides an opportunity to consider a wide variety of different sources, yielding insights into a range of differences in local business conditions, organization of publishing operations, market structures, and local book cultures.

IDENTIFYING FIELD SITES

First, however, before surveying these sources, it is necessary to address one basic question: how does one identify a field site in the first place? The great commercial publishing centers of the late-Ming, Qing, and early-Republican (1911–1949) eras—the cities of Jiangnan (Nanjing, Suzhou, Hangzhou, Yangzhou, and Huzhou, to name the major centers), Jianyang in northern Fujian, Beijing, Shanghai, and so forth—are widely known. And it is easy enough to identify important provincial capitals outside the Jiangnan area, cities like Guangzhou and Chengdu, as likely sites of commercial publishing in the Qing and early Republic. But such large urban sites are usually least susceptible to productive fieldwork; the rapid physical changes of the past century have swept away the material

remains of the industry, and high rates of social mobility have made it difficult to locate knowledgeable informants.⁶

How, then, do we discover the more obscure, and especially rural, publishers operating at the lower end of the book market? Gazetteers from the late-imperial and Republican periods are usually not very helpful; indeed, gazetteers for even some of the largest publishing sites often do not refer in any detail to their publishing activities. The large-scale publishing industry of Xuwan, for example, identified by a nineteenth-century literatus, Jin Wuxiang (dates unknown), as one of the most productive in the empire,⁷ is not mentioned in contemporary gazetteers of Jinxi county. Imprints themselves, of course, if they list on their cover pages (*fengmian*) or title pages the site of publication and name of the publishing house (*tangming*), will reveal names of sites, but this is certainly a somewhat laborious procedure for finding heretofore little-known sites. Catalogues of private collections and libraries are frequently of only limited aid in this large task, as they do not necessarily give full or precise publication information for each title. This is a particular problem for texts published during the Qing, and certainly for those published after the end of the Qianlong era (1736–1796), the official date that now separates rare books from regular string-bound texts.⁸ As “non-rare” books, these imprints are often rather carelessly and inadequately catalogued.

And there are times when even examination of the imprints themselves will not help; many texts, particularly cheap and poorly produced ones, do not list complete publication information—date of publication, *tangming*, and site of publication—thus limiting the number of commercial concerns we can identify with any assurance. (Listing of a *tangming* alone is often not conclusive, for many print-shop names—Wanjuanlou, for example—are used by different publishers.) The major secondary works in Chinese on Chinese publishing are also not particularly helpful, as they tend to revisit the same major sites over and over: even the magisterial *Zhongguo yinshuashi* (History of Printing in China, 1989) by the leading scholar of printing Zhang Xiumin, for example, focuses almost exclusively on the largest centers, sparing only a few pages for glancing references to smaller rural sites.⁹

Until quite recently, the best way of identifying potential field

sites was through discussion with scholars of the study of editions (*banbenxue*) and, most important, wide reading in journals and local serial productions like the county and provincial *Wenshi ziliao* (Source Materials for Cultural History), which sometimes include articles on local publishing concerns, bookstores, and paper industries in the pre-1949 period.¹⁰ Over the past few years, however, it has become easier to identify possible field sites as a consequence of efforts by the provincial Office of Media and Publishing (Xinwen chubanju), under the direction of the central office in Beijing, to compile provincial publishing histories. These histories appear in a variety of forms: in Sichuan, as a serial, *Sichuan xinwen chuban shiliao* (Historical Sources on the Media and Publishing in Sichuan, 1992–), which publishes articles on the history of book and newspaper publishing in that province; in Nanchang, Jiangxi, as a multivolume set of books, including a bibliography of Jiangxi imprints and a dictionary of Jiangxi authors and editors;¹¹ in Jiangsu, as a narrative history of publishing, *Jiangsu keshu* (Publishing in Jiangsu) edited by Jiang Chengbo, Du Xinfu, and Du Yongkang and an extensive bibliography of Jiangsu publications;¹² and in Guangdong, as a volume of the new provincial gazetteer, *Guangdong shengzhi*, that is devoted entirely to the Guangdong publishing industry,¹³ to give just a few examples. There is a considerable range in the quality and usefulness of these works, but, by listing fuller references to publishing sites within each province, they provide researchers with a starting point, places to visit and begin inquiries. Helpful, too, is what seems to be a general nationwide trend toward the compilation of fuller library catalogues, electronic and print, that more regularly provide, where possible, precise publication information not only about rare books, but about nineteenth- and twentieth-century texts as well.¹⁴

PRIMARY SOURCES AND ARTIFACTS

Once potential sites for field study have been identified, what primary materials, what range of sources, can a researcher reasonably hope to find? Before describing the sources I have found, let me emphasize that the availability and usefulness of these vary widely from place to place. First, the format and value of certain genres of sources may differ.

Genealogies, for example, might consist of quite detailed accounts of lineage history, including biographies of prominent lineage members and precise information about landholdings and migration—or they might simply be rather short and sketchy outlines of generational charts, not very helpful to any effort to trace the histories of publishing households. Second, as suggested above, most of my successful field experiences have been in the countryside, in relatively poor rural areas (such as western Fujian and Yuechi county in eastern Sichuan), where, because of low mobility rates and a slower pace of development, local sources are more likely to have been preserved. In these areas, a researcher is more likely to find genealogies, residents who had participated in the print or book-selling business or who were descendants of publishers and booksellers, and some documentary evidence of publishing. Generally speaking, the closer one gets to a city, the harder it is to find physical remains of publishing businesses or people with some first-hand knowledge to interview. Xuwan in Jiangxi, for example, though only a moderately important market town in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was not a particularly fertile site for fieldwork; the more mobile society of the town and its location on a major waterway offered economic opportunities that lured the families of prosperous publishers away. Now it is very difficult to find genealogical records for the important publishers, or, for that matter, anyone who had been actively involved in the publishing trade to interview. In a major metropolitan center like Chengdu, it is even more difficult to find traces of local publishing concerns (other, of course, than the imprints themselves).

Finally—and rather obviously—it seems unlikely that fieldwork will yield much useful information on publishing before the nineteenth century. While it is possible to get rather rich materials on nineteenth- (and particularly late-nineteenth) and early-twentieth-century publishing, it seems that information for earlier periods must come largely from published sources—genealogies, references in *biji* (collections of notes) and writings by local literati, and locally produced imprints. Contemporary informants can also provide some local color in the form of oral traditions and legends, but these, unless verified in the written sources, are of only limited usefulness.

With these qualifications in mind, I list below the range of

different source materials that can be gathered through fieldwork at commercial publishing sites, suggesting briefly in each case at least something of what we can learn from them about the social and economic organization of commercial publishing—specifically, about the structure of publishing concerns, competition between them, the process of book production, and decisions about marketing.

Genealogies of Publishing Households

At their fullest and most useful, genealogies of publishing households can supply important information about the history of a local publishing industry and the social relations that shaped the industry. For example, in Sibao township, the genealogies of the Zou lineage of Wuge village and the Ma lineage of Mawu village (Wuge and Mawu were the primary publishing sites within Sibao township) include biographies of the leading lineage figures from the Kangxi era (1661–1722) through the Republican era.¹⁵ Since many of these men were publishers, their biographies often provide useful information about the development of individual household print shops.

So, for example, from the biographies of the father and son Ma Quanheng (1651–1710) and Ma Dingbang (1672–1743), we learn about the evolution of one of the more important of the Ma print shops. Orphaned in his teens and responsible for the care of his younger brothers, Ma Quanheng invested capital borrowed from his well-to-do uncle in the carving of woodblocks of popular texts for examination study, Zhu Xi's (1130–1200) *Sishu jizhu* (Collected Annotations on the Four Books), *Sishu jicheng* (Complete Collection of the Four Books),¹⁶ and the *Sishu beizhi* (Preparation Guide to the Four Books). These texts, all explications of the Four Books, were very popular; they sold so well that within four years the brothers were able to divide the family profits between them and establish their own households. Ma Quanheng then generously handed all the blocks over to his youngest brother, thirteen years his junior, who presumably would otherwise have had a hard time starting a business on his own. Ma Quanheng took for himself a little land and twenty *liang* of silver. With the silver he once again invested in woodblocks for educational texts, hiring carvers to cut the *Sishu* (The Four Books), *Shijing zhu* (Book of Odes, Annotated), and a popular

elementary primer, *Youxue zengguang* (Enlarged and Expanded Children's Primer). When these texts were printed, he took them out on the road to sell in Guangdong, entrusting the management of the household to his fifteen-year-old son, Ma Dingbang, who, as the genealogy explains, "though young, was rich in talent." The father left behind two reels or hoops (*gu*) of paper to supply the daily needs of the household:

This paper was worth three *qian* [one *qian* equals one-tenth of a *tael*, a Chinese ounce of silver]. [Ma Dingbang] used it to print texts. When these were all sold, he went into the mountains to buy more paper, which he carried back himself and again used to print up texts. He continued this cycle, and the family never suffered hunger or cold, all on the strength of those two reels of paper. . . . Thus those two reels of paper were made into ten million [*qian*].¹⁷

A few years later, Ma cut the blocks for the *Sishu zhu daquan* (Great Compendium of Annotations on the Four Books)—yet another examination study aid—a text apparently so popular that, the genealogy notes, "family circumstances were made more comfortable, and providing daily necessities ceased to be a difficulty."¹⁸

These biographies, however exaggerated their claims for the generosity of Ma Quanheng and the genius of Ma Dingbang may be, reveal a great deal about the organization of print shops in Sibao: that the print shops were household operations, run by fathers and sons or brothers until property was divided; that woodblocks were partible property, divided among heirs, who might use them to establish their own publishing shops; that Sibao book sellers were sojourning merchants (and that Guangdong was one of their markets); that Sibao printers had direct access to paper factories (in the mountains of Changting county); and, perhaps most strikingly, that the great demand for examination texts made them the staples of the Sibao publishing business.

This particular set of genealogies is also extremely useful for information on the book-selling routes and the sites of branch bookstores established by the Sibao publishers. In the generational tables, the editors have indicated which lineage members traveled to other parts of south China to sell books or migrated out to Jiangxi, Guangdong, or Guangxi

to establish branch bookstores. See, for example, the text reproduced in figure 1: it is recorded here that Zou Xidao (1815–1884) moved from Wuge, one of the major publishing villages of Sibao township, to Wenzhou in Zhejiang during the Daoguang era (1821–1851) to establish a bookstore.¹⁹ This kind of information allows us to reconstruct the distribution routes for Sibao imprints and, of course, to pinpoint the location of branch bookshops.

Unfortunately, most genealogies are not as forthcoming or as detailed as this particular set about the business activities of publishing families. The Zou and Ma texts are, in fact, rather unusual in the information they provide. Much more typical are the genealogies of many of the Jianyang publishing families (the Liu, Yu, or Xiong, for example); these texts do not refer to the publishing activities of the lineage members, focusing rather on the examination honors that the more prominent men of the lineage attained. Clearly business practices and relationships, even within a relatively respectable business like the production of books, were not considered worthy of mention.²⁰ We might attribute the willingness of the editors of the Zou and Ma genealogies to discuss their business concerns quite openly to their lineages' failure to achieve any higher or more glorious distinction, for neither the Zou nor the Ma ever enjoyed consistent examination success. It was perhaps natural, then, for them to fall back on their one reasonably respectable claim to fame, "assisting the empire's literati to become generals and ministers of state" (that is, to pass the civil-service examinations) by disseminating texts that "are of great benefit to culture and education, which, as a result, are permeated with the spirit of the Classics."²¹

But even those genealogies that do not provide information about the publishing business are still invaluable sources for understanding the kin relations within lineages and thus, relationships between publishing families and other families within a lineage. The generational charts clarify kin ties and relationships—they may reveal that publisher Y, now known only as a name in a printer's colophon in a text, is in fact the son of publisher X, and so on.²² Moreover, genealogies, at least the fuller and richer ones, also provide information about lineage traditions—the worship of founding ancestors, the disposition of land among lineage mem-

bers, the family instructions designed to guide behavior and career choice—that help scholars analyze the place of households within each lineage and the role of the lineage at large in local society, both important factors in assessing the significance of publishing firms to local economies and local and regional book markets. Finally, prefaces by local officials or local scholars—and other writings within genealogies by men outside the lineage—often provide useful information about the social and intellectual connections between lineage members and local and regional officials and elites.²³

Property-Division Documents (fenguan or fenjia)

Property-division documents were drawn up to distribute property when an extended family decided to divide, either on the death of the patriarch or after his sons and heirs had reached adulthood. As David Wakefield explains in his study of the traditions of family division, usually each heir would receive an equal portion of the total value of the property, though each type of property might not be equally divided.²⁴ In the case of publishing families, since the woodblocks used to print books and the print shops where they were printed were both important parts of a household's property, these would be divided among the heirs along with houses, furniture, and land. Figure 2 provides an example of a page from a Sibao property-division document, dated 1839, listing the print shop and the sets of blocks, by title, that were to go to one of the sons of Ma Cuizhong (1770–1848), the manager of the Zaizitang.

Since the woodblocks are identified by title, these documents provide some evidence of what titles were still considered valuable—and possibly what texts were being produced—at certain times in a household print shop's history. If the principle of equal distribution among heirs was followed, it might also be possible to calculate, in very crude terms, the value of certain titles, by comparing the portions given to each heir. And a reading of the whole document, and all the property listings, can help us put printing into the context of the entire household economy for each print shop, suggesting what portion of that economy—in an area where most households enjoyed mixed incomes, earning support from agriculture as well as a range of handicraft industries and trades—was devoted to and dependent on book production.

希驥

女一

貴姬適長

校李榮昌

光年間往浙

卒光緒十一

江温州府開

年乙酉十一

書店卒光緒

月初二享年

十年甲申十

五十一終于

月初六日辰

浙江金華府

時享壽六十

蘭溪縣葬蘭

九葬温州上

溪縣東門外

河鄉箭下老

配温州府金

翁山坐甲向

氏生未詳卒

庚兼卯酉分

同治甲戌十

金與蕭氏夫

月十六日

婦合葬壽文

繼配嚴氏生

附後

未詳卒光緒

原配羅岳秀

乙酉年七月

生嘉慶廿一

十八日戌時

鄒氏

三

1. Genealogy entry indicating the migration of a Zou family member to Wenzhou to establish a bookstore; see the second section from the top (beginning on page 19) for the entry for Zou Xidao. That entry reads: "During the Daoguang era [1821-1851], he went to Wenzhou prefecture in Zhejiang to open a bookstore."

乾隆四十六年辛丑六月
 初十日戌時
 卒未詳葬清
 流四堡里竹
 青裡水口大
 溪邊壽文附
 後
 配李月鳳生
 乾隆四十八
 年癸卯十月
 初十日酉時
 卒未詳葬下
 馬鞍山
 生子三

滿文適黃
 視坑馬姓

希道 字 克任
 號毅夫

際唐公沈子
 希道光廿八
 年戊申由俊
 秀授京
 剛授國學生
 生嘉慶廿年

庚寅八月十

九日子時

光緒年間卒

於浙江温州

葬上河鄉與

希道公相近

宜 字 為韶
 號來儀

希道公長子
 生光緒四年
 戊寅由俊秀
 授京
 剛授國學生
 生道光十五年

查克仁公房

廿一世至廿

三世遷往浙

江蘇州是任

不知詳情民

國三十六年

丁亥第五期

譜修在廿四

世下未列

希天

乙亥二月初

年七未五月

譜內

Fanyang Zoushi zupu (Genealogy of the Fanyang Branch of the Zou Lineage)
 (Dunbentang, 1947), juan 22, pp. 50b-51a. Photocopy from a text
 held privately by a member of the Zou lineage in Wuge, Sibao, Fujian.

一南山上印房壹所 廳子下廊並近周通全出入

廳子右畔正棟壹間 書屋半間

一羅川屋內壹間半又餘坪左畔上堂又間幫出錢拿文

書板

老四書合講

四書監本

書經體註

大清新律部全

三十家文

鄉党文集

墨卷標準

古文雅正

新幼學

地理訣要

辨字彙

詩鑑十錦

老酬世錦囊

韻府珠璣

一夕話

一世新屋內左畔橫屋巷路下第叁壹間抽與

務周名下以補先年造屋銀息批照

源慎奉

2. A page from a property-division document, dated 1839, listing the titles of the woodblocks that were to be given to one of Ma Cuizhong's six sons. Note that three of the fifteen titles are identified as either "new" (xin) or "old" (lao) editions of a text, indicating that Ma Cuizhong's print shop, the Zaizitang, might sell different editions of the same title. Note also that this son was to be given a printing shop (yinfang yisuo) as well as blocks (see the first line at the right of the page). Photocopy from the original manuscript, held privately by a member of the Ma lineage in Mawu, Sibao, Fujian.

But these texts are perhaps most useful for the information they yield about inheritance practices, the formation of new print shops, and the size of print-shop stock. The practice of equal division of property had the effect, of course, of encouraging the development of new print shops: the oldest son might continue the shop established by his father, retaining the original name, but his brothers could take their woodblock heritage and use it to establish new shops.²⁵ Thus the 1839 division of 107 titles originally belonging to the Zaizitang resulted in the formation of at least three new print shops: while the eldest son, with 19 titles, continued to manage the Zaizitang, the next three sons, receiving 16, 18, and 22 titles respectively, used their woodblock capital to establish new shops, the Nianzitang, Wenzitang, and Wenlintang. The two youngest sons, Ma Yuming and Ma Yuting, also received some blocks (15 and 17 titles respectively) and became booksellers, but the names of their shops are not known.²⁶ The Zaizitang, with its store of 107 titles, was obviously a major concern. Yet there are documents that define the division of far fewer titles: for example, in the 1897 division of the 14 titles belonging to the Wanjuanlou of Zou Bangyu (1843–1881) among three sons, the largest share is a mere 6 titles. Here apparently even just a few titles might be enough to supply a family with the capital for developing a print shop.

In short, property-division documents, supplemented by information from genealogies, can provide valuable information not only about titles of locally produced imprints, but also about the development of different print shops and the relationships between print shops established by members of the same extended family.

ACCOUNT BOOKS

There is little point in devoting too much space to publishing account books (*zhangben*), for the simple reason that few seem to have survived. In fieldwork in eight sites, I have found only one account book—and it has survived only in part and not in very good shape. This book, dating from the 1880s, records twenty-five different lots of texts printed by the Sibao Wenhailou (in Wuge village) and sold wholesale to different branch shops. Each entry includes an abbreviated title, a note of the number of sets, and a per-title wholesale price. At the end of the

document, there is a brief notation of the different distribution routes for each lot and the total amounts paid for each by the different Sibao branch shops. (See figure 3; note that the numerical notations are made in a “secret” accounting script, presumably to disguise the value of the texts should a non-expert happen to see the account book.)

The value of this source is obvious, though, just as obviously, its value is limited by its rarity. Clearly, as a single example, it cannot be used to reconstruct the financial transactions of the Wenhailou and other Sibao publishing houses in any detail. And the fact that we cannot link specific surviving editions of texts to those listed in the account book by abbreviated title and price alone restricts the conclusions we can draw about book prices, since we do not know anything about the size, length, or other physical qualities of the texts: we don’t know what *kind* of edition of the *Yingxiong pu* (Catalogue of Heroes), a popular combined edition of the *Sanguo tongsu yanyi* (Romance of the Three Kingdoms) and *Shuihu zhuan* (Water Margin), cost 3.2 *qian*. Nonetheless, this source does tell us something about prices—and any source that reveals anything at all about book prices in pre-twentieth-century China is extremely valuable. For it does give wholesale prices for a variety of texts, from 2.5 *fen* (one *fen* is one-tenth of a *qian*) for *Mingshen feng* (this is an abbreviated title of a fortune-telling manual), to 8 *qian* for a multivolume dictionary, the *Xinban Kangxi zidian* (New Edition of the Kangxi Dictionary), suggesting something of the range in value of books printed and sold by Sibao publishers. Supplemented by other local information about prices (taken, for example, from surviving contemporary account books from ancestral halls, which seem to have survived in Sibao in several volumes), it is possible to put these wholesale prices in a local economic context—that is, to develop an understanding not only of the wholesale price of a text, but of its relative value in the local economy.

The listing of numbers of copies of titles per lot provides some evidence about how titles were stocked and possibly about the relative popularity of texts. We learn, for example, that the *Gongxue zhu* (an abbreviated title for what appears to have been an annotated guide to examination study), at three hundred copies, was apparently a text in fairly high demand, as were the almanac *Baizhongjing* (Classic of Miscellaneous Things) and the common children’s primer *Dazi zengguang*



3. A page from the account book of the Wenhailou, Wuge, dating from the 1880s. The record, handwritten on a printed form, includes two rows of entries. At the top is the wholesale price per copy, an abbreviated title of the text, and the number of copies. Numbers are written in a special script. Photocopy of a photograph from the original, held privately by a member of the Zou lineage in Wuge, Sibao, Fujian.

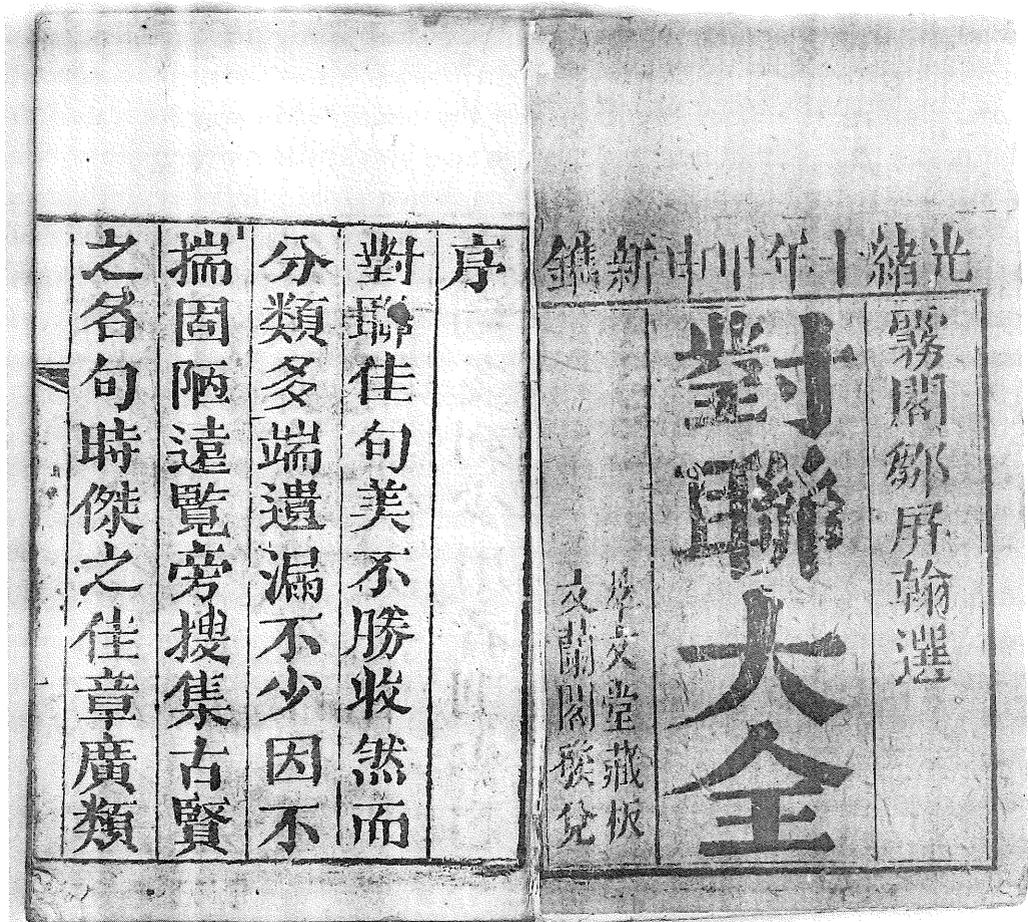
xianwen (Supplemented and Enlarged Essays of the Worthies, Large Character Version), at one hundred copies each;²⁷ whereas *Xinban shixue* (New Edition of Poetics), at two copies, or the eighteenth-century geomancy manual, Zhao Tingdong's *Dili wujue* (Five Secrets of Geomancy), at only one copy, were perhaps less sure sellers. (Without other supporting information, however, it is difficult to be too sure about such conclusions, for the differences in numbers of copies shipped might simply indicate fluctuations in stock, not market demand.)

The organization of the account book—the division of titles into lots and the notations at the end about the different channels of distribution of the texts—gives us information, too, about the business methods of this particular print shop. The existence of this single account of different lots of texts destined for different sale routes and branch shops does suggest that the operation was centralized in Sibao, overseen by a manager who kept fairly close tabs on distribution and, thus, on sales and profits. This supposition is supported by information from both the Zou lineage genealogy and local traditions: Zou Jianchi (1848–1898), the manager of the Wenhailou in the late-nineteenth century (and perhaps the keeper of this account book), was noted for his strict oversight of the Wenhailou branch shops.²⁸ It is said that he regularly left Sibao on much-dreaded visits to these various shops, during which he would insist on a close and suspicious examination of their books, invariably haranguing his branch managers about the necessity of passing a just portion of their profits back to the head shop in Sibao.

IMPRINTS

Of course one of the best sources for the study of publishing is the imprints themselves—in many cases, as I have said, they provide us with the only information we have about a publishing concern. Chia has made the value of imprint analysis clear in her paper, and I do not want to repeat her points here, but I would like to supplement her observations by discussing some other ways in which the study of imprints can provide information about publishing practices—about production processes and production quality, projected markets, and, to some extent, reading. Then I want to point out some of the advantages of studying imprints *in situ*, in the field.

First, we can learn something about business relationships from imprints. The cover page from the Sibao imprint *Duilian daquan* (Great Compendium of Parallel Couplets, 4 *juan*; see figure 4), compiled by a Wuge publisher, Zou Bingham (fl. early-nineteenth century), and cut in 1884, reveals that print shops at times sold their texts through other local print shops. The blocks for the text were owned by the Cuiwentang of Wuge (Cuiwentang *cang ban*), and presumably the text was printed by



4. The cover page (on the right in this figure) states that this text, the *Duilian daquan* (center column; Great Compendium of Parallel Couplets), was compiled by the Wuge publisher Zou Binghan (first column on the right) and published (that is, the blocks for the text were cut) in 1884 (right to left, reading the horizontal text at the top) by the Cuiwentang of Wuge (right side of left column; Cuiwentang *cang ban* or “Cuiwentang holds the blocks”). It was, however, sold by another Wuge publishing house, the Wenlange (left side of left column; Wenlange *fadui* or, literally, “Wenlange sells”). ([Wuge]: Cuiwentang, 1884; block 19 x 12.2 cm.). Photocopy of a text held privately by a member of the Zou lineage in Wuge, Sibao, Fujian; there is also a partial copy of this text in the Fujian Provincial Library, Fuzhou.

this print shop as well. Yet it was distributed—that is, sold—by the Wenlange, also of Wuge (Wenlange *fadui*). This evidence is confirmed by oral histories of Sibao publishing; print shops might make all sorts of arrangements—here to distribute texts for, but also to rent blocks from, other shops—as long as the nature of the relationship was indicated on the cover page. They might also purchase blocks from other shops but, in that case, could replace the name of the original publisher with their own. Some of the more sloppily produced Sibao texts provide evidence for this arrangement as well: the cover page lists one publisher, presumably the new owner of the blocks, but the internal title pages for each *juan* list the original print-shop name, as the new owner neglected to have the old name replaced or obliterated on all the blocks.

Second, the study of imprints reveals a great deal about book-production processes and quality: the kind and quality of paper used; the quality of the carving; the nature and quality of the calligraphy (whether it is the ubiquitous craftsman's style, *jiangti*, or a more artistic or idiosyncratic calligraphic style); the state of the blocks when that particular copy was printed; the size of the text page; the frequency, quality, and placement of illustrations, and so on. The format of the page—the arrangement of the “fishtail” (*yuwei*) folding guides, the presence of either *heikou* (a black fore-edge, literally, “black mouth”) or *baikou* (a white fore-edge, literally “white mouth”),²⁹ the height of the upper margin (*tiantou*), and so forth—sometimes identifies a text with a certain regional or specific print-shop carving or printing style.

By using these techniques, we can investigate also the range in production quality that may exist within a single local industry. Figures 5A–D are pages from four texts, all printed by Sibao publishers, but each representing quite different production qualities. The first is from a rather fine edition of a calligraphy and picture collection by Sibao's most distinguished editor and publisher, Zou Shengmai (1692–1762), *Shuhua tongzhen* (Script and Pictures—Precious Together; see figure 5A), a text that can be dated only very roughly to the late-nineteenth century.³⁰ The second, published in 1884, is from a well-cut annotated collection of essays selected to provide students with models of classical prose, the *Zengding guwen jingyan xiangzhu pangxun hebian* (The Best of Classical Prose, Edited with Both Detailed Annotations and Sideline Instructions,

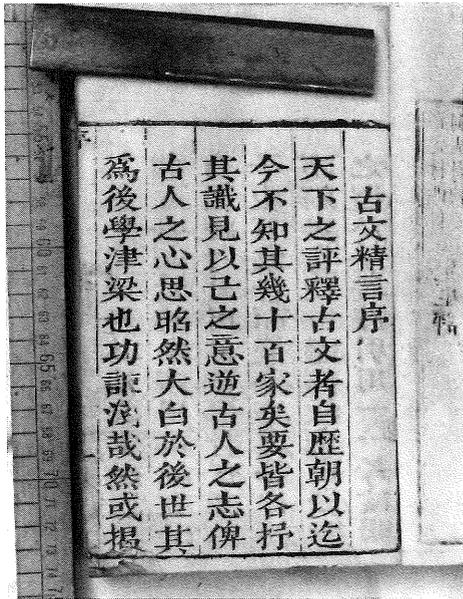
Expanded and Verified; figure 5B) in 16 *juan*.³¹ The third, from a difficult-to-read (and error-ridden) edition of the Four Books designed for examination study, the *Sishu buzhu beizhi tiqiao huican* (Collection of Enhanced Annotations, Preparation Hints, and Key Themes for the Four Books; see figure 5C),³² presents a good example of the flattened-character carving style (*bianti zi*), particularly popular in the late Qing as a means of cramming as many characters as possible on a page. The last is from a crudely illustrated, annotated version of the widely popular children's primer *Sanzijing* (Three-Character Classic; figure 5D). The difference in quality in these texts, produced at roughly the same time, in the late-nineteenth or early-twentieth century, suggests that the Sibao firms were targeting a somewhat varied market, one that might include consumers interested in cheap—and not very well produced—editions, as well as those with the interest and funds to purchase relatively well-cut and produced editions, including even what we might call “art” editions.

Comparisons of quality across publishing businesses—that is, comparison of the production quality of editions of the same title published by different concerns—can provide a good sense of the range in quality published at any one time; and may help us to situate a particular firm within a hierarchy of publishers by production quality. Thus a comparison of pages from Sibao and Xuwan editions of *Yixue sanzijing* (Three-Character Classic of Medicine, 4 *juan*; see figures 6A–B) and *Shennong bencao jingdu* (The Classic Reader of Shennong's Pharmacopoeia; see figures 7A–B),³³ both popular medical works by the physician-official and prolific popularizer of medical knowledge, Chen Nianzu (*zi* Xiuyuan, 1753–1823), makes quite clear the finer quality of the Xuwan texts and allows us, tentatively at least, to guess that Sibao occupied a lower place on the publishing hierarchy than did Xuwan—and perhaps that Sibao was targeting a lower end of the market than was the Jiangxi market town.

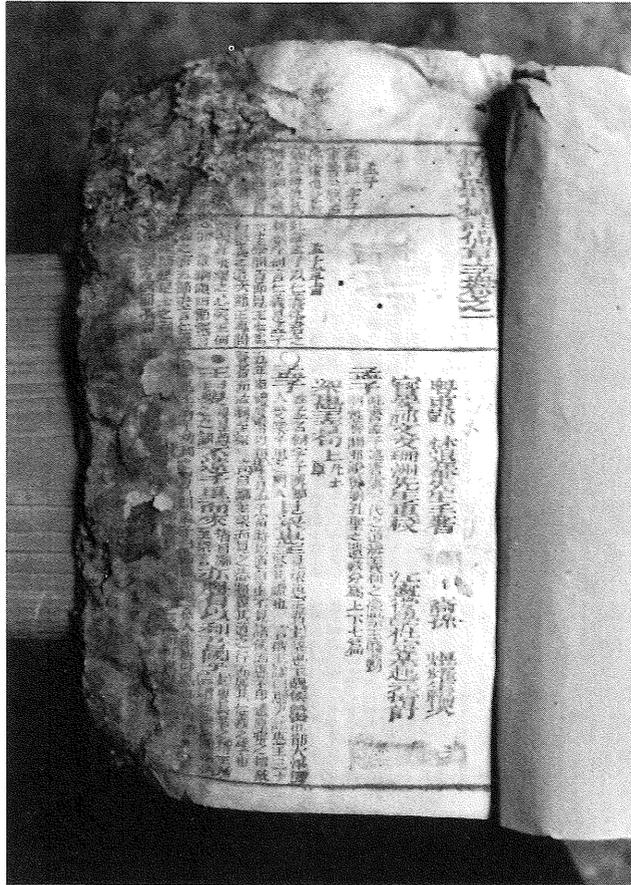
Reading the prefaces of imprints, particularly if these are prefaces added by the publisher, also often helps us define, if not the real market for a text, at least the author's and publisher's assumptions about the nature of its appeal and its intended market. Prefaces, particularly for practical how-to texts, often functioned as advertisements, either in the



5A. A page from Zou Shengmai's *Shuhua tongzhen* (Script and Pictures—Precious Together; block approx. 38 x 32.4 cm.). This sample, though poorly reproduced from a fragment of the original, demonstrates that the Sibao publishers could produce large and finely cut texts when the occasion demanded. This appears to be a vanity publication, dated tentatively to the late-nineteenth century, of the fine calligraphy of Sibao's leading editor-publisher, Zou Shengmai, manager of the Ji'ao shanfang in Wuge. Photocopy of a text held by a private collector in Longyan, Fujian.



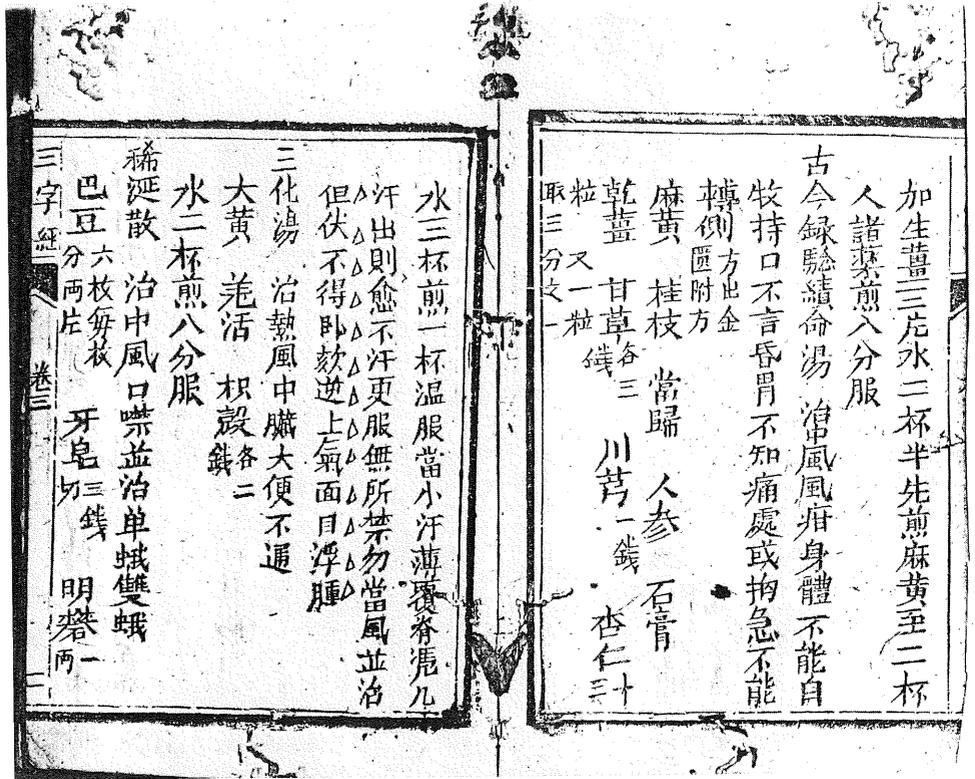
5B. The cover page (right) and first page (left) of the preface from the *Zengding guwen jingyan xiangzhu pangxun hebian* (The Best of Classical Prose, Edited with Both Detailed Annotations and Sideline Instructions, Expanded and Verified, in sixteen *juan*; block approx. 28 x 17.2 cm.), compiled, with annotations by Lin Yunming (*zi* Xizhong), with later comments added by Zhou Dazhang (*zi* Pinhou). This text, edited by the Sibao editor-publisher Ma Kuanyu and published in Mawu at the Zhensongtang in 1884, is an example of a relatively high-quality Sibao production. Photograph of a copy held privately by a member of the Ma lineage in Mawu, Sibao, Fujian.



5c. Opening page of *Meng Zi* (Mencius), from a late-nineteenth-century Mawu edition of *Sishu buzhu beizhi tiqiao huican* (Collection of Enhanced Annotations, Preparation Hints, and Key Themes for the Four Books; *juan* 1, 1a; block 31 x 22.6 cm.). This text, based on an examination-study guide first compiled by Deng Lin in the early Ming and later edited by Zhang Chengyu, is cramped (in the *bianti zi*, or “flattened character,” style) and difficult to read. It includes, in addition to the standard Cheng-Zhu reading of the classic (with the main text, in the lowest register), full explications of the text (in the top two registers). The very poor condition of this text suggests one of the difficulties of studying imprints on site: if not stored properly, they quickly deteriorate.



5D. The first text page of the pamphletlike Sibao edition of the *Zengzhu sanzijing* (Three-Character Classic with Expanded Annotations; block 20.4 x 14.5 cm.). Although the characters here are clearly carved, the illustration is quite crudely cut. Photograph of a copy held privately by a member of the Zou lineage in Wuge, Sibao, Fujian.



加生薑三片水二杯半先煎麻黃至二杯
人諸藥煎入分服

古今錄驗續命湯治風風疔身體不能自

收持口不言昏胃不知痛處或拘急不能

轉側

方世金
匿附方

麻黃 桂枝 當歸 人參 石膏

乾薑 甘草

各三錢

川芎 一錢

杏仁 三十

粒又一粒
取三分支

水三杯煎一杯溫服當小汗薄覆脊憑几

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三化湯 治熱風中臟大便不通

大黃 羌活 枳殼

各二錢

水二杯煎八分服

稀涎散 治中風口噤並治單蛾雙蛾

巴豆 六枚每枚

分兩片

牙皂 三錢

明礬 一兩

三字經

卷三

6A. From a partial Sibao edition of Chen Nianzu (zi Xiuyuan), *Yixue sanzijing* (Three-Character Classic of Medicine; block 18 x 11.6 cm.), *juan* 3, pp. 1b–2a. Compare the crude carving and small characters of this text to the relatively clear carving and larger characters of the Xuwan edition following (figure 6B). Photograph of a copy held privately by a member of the Zou lineage of Wuge, Sibao, Fujian.

閩陳脩園著

醫西學三字經

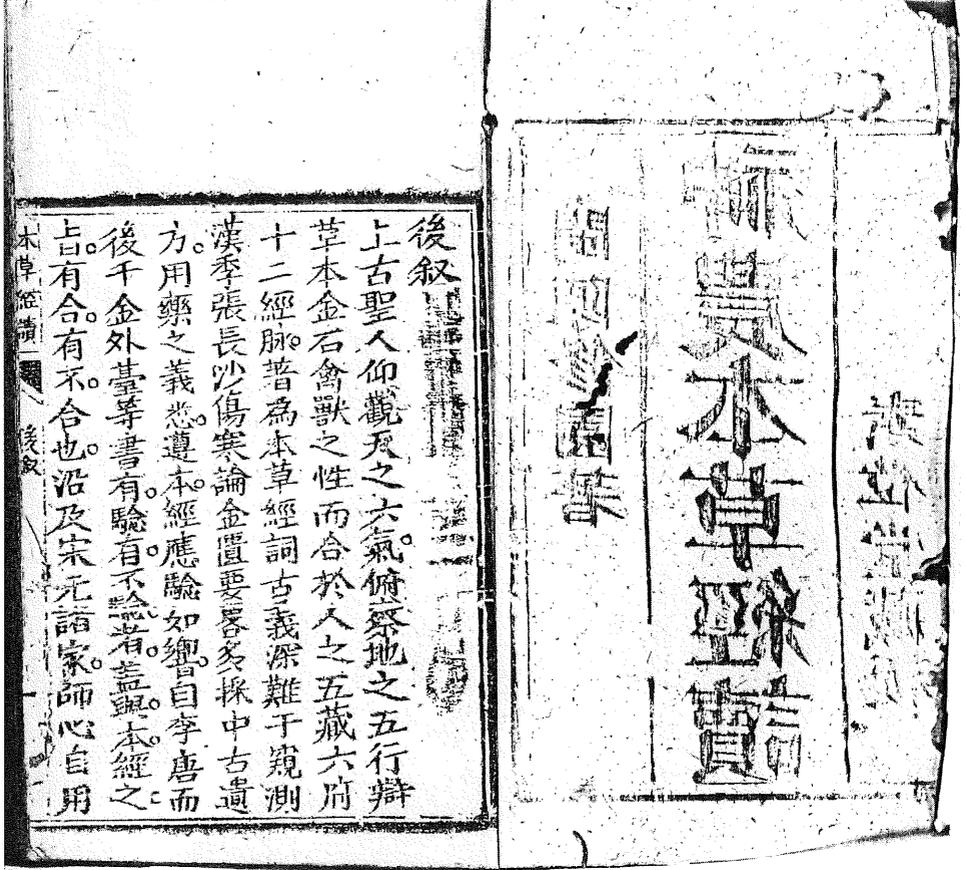
兩儀堂藏板

醫學三字經小引

江西通俗圖書館

童子入學塾師先授以三字經欲其便誦也識途也學醫之始未定先授何書如大海茫茫錯認半字羅經便入牛鬼蛇神之域余所以有三字經之刻也前曾托名葉天士取時俗所推崇者以投時好然書中之奧旨悉本聖經經明而專家之技可廢謝退谷於注疏書室得縉本惠書千餘言屬歸本各幸有同志今付梓而從其說而仍名藥而不以為僻者採集經文還之先聖海內諸君子可因此一字而共知所遵且可因此一字而不病余之作嘉慶九年

6B. Cover page and first page of the "Short Forward" (Xiaoyin) by Chen Nianzu, in his *Yixue sanzijing* (Xuwun: Liangyitang, n.d.; block 20.2 x 16.1 cm). Photocopy from the edition in the Jiangxi Provincial Library.



7A. Obverse of cover page and first page of the “Later Preface” (Houxu), in Chen Nianzu, *Shennong bencao jingdu* (The Classic Reader of Shennong’s Pharmacopoeia; block 17.8 x 11.5 cm.) (Wuge: Suweitang, n.d.). Again, compare the quality of this relatively small text with that of the following example from Xuwan, figure 7B. Photocopy of a partial edition held privately by a member of the Zou lineage in Wuge, Sibao, Fujian.

閩陳脩園著

本草經讀

兩儀堂藏板

神農本草經讀序

江西通俗圖書館

陳修園老友精於岐黃之術自負長沙後身世醫壇而
 笑之及遇危症疆斷梳橫萬手齊束修園往脫冠几上探
 手舉脈目霍霍上聳良爪乾笑曰侯本不奇治之者擾之
 耳主人曰某名醫曰悞矣曰法本朱張王李曰更悞矣天
 下豈有朱張王李而能愈疾者乎口吃吃然罵手吃吃然
 書方其則又自批自贊自解自起調刀圭火齊促服之服
 之如其言嘗以李時珍綱目為謬陋著有神農本草經註
 六卷其言簡其旨該其義奇而不軌於正其鉤深索隱也

本草經讀

7B. Cover page and first page of preface (by Jiang Qingling) in Chen Nianzu, *Shennong bencao jingdu* (Xuwan: Liangyitang, n.d.; block 21 x 16.9 cm.). Photocopy of the edition in the Jiangxi Provincial Library.

form of testimonials (real or imaginary) from satisfied readers or as direct appeals to prospective readers about the usefulness of a text. For example, the *Chuxue zibian* (Distinguishing Characters for the Beginning Learner; preface dated 1876), a two-*juan* text that both aids students to distinguish the meanings and pronunciations of similar characters and provides rules for proper mercantile conduct, has a preface that clearly announces its usefulness to merchants. The preface writer, identified only as Baopu shanren (Mountain man who embraces simplicity), explains that his father ordered him to abandon his studies at the age of eighteen to “travel to distant places as a merchant.” Now he bitterly regrets the resulting deficiencies in his education: “Whenever I have to write anything, I cannot distinguish clearly the forms of the different characters. I scratch my head, bitterly wasting much time and energy trying to think of the right character.” Returning home to visit his family, he is shocked to see that his son, who has been studying for five years, has the same problem; he cannot distinguish between *bu* (record book) and *bo* (thin) or between *wei* (minute, tiny) and *zheng* (proof, to summon). The son, shamed by his father’s anger and disappointment, procures a copy of *Chuxue zibian* and, after a mere month of study, is able to pass an extensive test, involving several tens of similar characters, of his ability to read accurately. “That only one month of hard work would be enough to supplement five years of study—this is indeed extraordinary!” marvels the proud father, and he then goes on to praise the clarity and convenience of the textbook.³⁴

This text has been presented, through this rather pointed preface, as particularly appropriate for the use of merchants (and merchants rather like the Sibao booksellers, sojourners with only limited education). The rhetorical reader, the reader addressed in the preface (and, indeed, throughout that portion of the text that provides rules for mercantile conduct), is a merchant or the son of a merchant who is likely to follow his father’s profession. This does not, I should emphasize, tell us anything about the *real* readers of the text—on that point we have almost no evidence. But it does give us some idea of the market imagined by the Sibao publishers of this text.

I would like to point out, however, that the rhetorical reader identified and addressed in the preface or the body of a text is not

necessarily always the same as the consumer targeted by the publisher—that is, the person who is seen, more narrowly and practically, as the most likely buyer of a text. Here I am thinking of texts that advertise themselves as for “all the four categories of people” (*simin*) or for “both poor and rich families,” like the Sibao prescription manual *Yanfang xinbian* (New Edition of Efficacious Prescriptions in 8 *juan*), which claims in its preface that “every household should have a copy of this text.” Here the rhetorical reader is everyone, “all the four categories of people,”³⁵ but I think it is fairly clear that the targeted buyer, the consumer practically imagined by the publisher, is someone below the status of the gentry, someone who might be attracted to a text that would associate him with the reading habits of the elite. Presumably few members of the elite would find the thought of consulting a text prescribing medicine for “everyone,” “all the four categories of people,” very attractive. Here, then, this text, despite its rhetorical appeal to all people, is designed for marketing to lower-ranking socioeconomic groups.

Certainly the kind of imprint analysis I have described here need not necessarily be done in the field; it can be performed just as easily, perhaps more easily, in libraries. I have discussed this kind of research here because there are times when it is necessary to collect imprints in the field, precisely because they are not easily available anywhere else. This is particularly likely to be a problem when studying rural, lower-end publishers of the post-Qianlong era: their texts are not rare books, usually not beautifully enough produced to merit the attention of collectors, and they often lack publication information. These difficulties impose a painful limitation on this kind of research; a scholar relying simply on texts that have survived at a publishing site may never be able to accumulate the broad range of texts or assemble the large database of titles that would allow for a comprehensive overview of output at that site.

But there are nonetheless some advantages to collecting imprint information in the field. First, there are certain types of texts, particularly very popular works or products of local cultures and linguistic practices, that are not likely to be preserved in great numbers—or even preserved at all—in libraries. Song books (*changben*), for example, very valuable reflectors of local culture, are only sporadically collected in libraries.³⁶

Zhao Yulin, a Sibao song book, exists to my knowledge only in a single, late-nineteenth-century woodblock version in Wuge—and in contemporary mimeographed editions that are passed around the village, still in use. Educational song books published in Shaoyang, Hunan, in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries appear to have survived (with one known exception) largely in private hands or in the stock of street-side book peddlers. Or *Renjia riyong* (Everybody, Everyday), a glossary for beginning readers written in the Sibao subdialect of Hakka and still being published as late as 1910 (by the Linlantang of Mawu), apparently survives today only in private hands.

Second, it is useful to consider *all* texts—whether woodblock, movable type, lithographic (fairly common by the early-twentieth century), or manuscript—that appear at a specific site, regardless of their source in official or institutional, literati, or commercial publishing and regardless of their site of origin, for such a study provides something of an overview of the local book and publishing culture as a whole. It also raises questions about the transmission, use, and significance of print technology and about the availability of books and print culture: What is the significance of the coexistence of different book-producing technologies in early-twentieth-century texts found at a single site? How do we explain the persistence of hand copying as a means of publication when obviously more efficient technologies of reproduction were available? To what extent were different types of texts associated with different technologies? How deeply did new print technologies and “modern” texts penetrate Chinese society in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries?

The local genealogies cited earlier can provide a good example of the value of such a comprehensive survey of all extant texts at a given locality, if we consider them not as sources of information about local lineages, but rather as samples of locally produced imprints. The Ma and Zou genealogies were printed, *not* by Sibao publishers, but by specialists devoted exclusively to the production of genealogies—in the case of the Ma genealogy, a printer the name of whose printing house (*tang*) was, appropriately for a publisher of genealogies, Xiaositang, literally House of Filial Remembrance. Typically using movable wooden type rather than woodblocks (the use of this movable-type technology can often be

deduced from the slight unevenness in the alignment of the characters within a column or in the unevenness of the ink density), these specialists were itinerant printers, men who traveled, within a broad circuit, wherever genealogies needed to be printed, living at their work sites until they had completed their job.³⁷ The availability of this other specialized form of publishing suggests that, even in an isolated rural area like Sibao, access to print technology was relatively easy and that books themselves might have been, at least by the late-nineteenth century, widely available. The presence (or absence) of other local printing operations—and here we might consider those initiated by individual literati, county governments, private academies (*shuyuan*), temples, and monasteries, as well as these specialized genealogy printers—could reveal much more about the depth, range, and richness of local book culture. And finally, research into the interaction between different types of publishing operations and their networks at the local level could also help us to modify or overturn the overly rigid labels—“official” (*guanke*); “private,” or “literati” (*sike* or *jiake*) family; and “commercial” (*fangke*)—that have been used to categorize Chinese publishing.³⁸

There are other benefits to be gained from a comprehensive survey of all extant local books. Although, of course, we cannot develop any comprehensive sense of what was available at any given time from a body of texts whose survival was somewhat arbitrary and fortuitous, such research may provide some limited—and much-needed—information about what texts were in use and in demand. We might also learn about the extent and complexity of distribution networks. Contemporary Sibao book collections of woodblock texts include, for example, works published by print shops in Guangdong and Guangxi, a fact that argues for some degree of textual exchange with publishers in those areas.

To some extent it is possible to get a sense, too, of reading interests and practices from the study of local imprints. Many surviving texts were rather actively read, their readers adding comments along the side of characters deemed of particular interest, marginal annotations, punctuation, marks of emphasis, and other signs of engaged interpretation that can, with careful study, give us hints about how texts were received. These are texts that have survived not simply as artifacts of

Sibao's (or some other site's) publishing past, but as texts that were (and even today still are) read and consulted. Most of these texts are practical works—medical manuals and geomancy handbooks—that can be seen to have some contemporary value, particularly as they aid in the recovery of almost lost but still-honored technologies and rituals.³⁹ Song books, too, remain fairly popular; in Chaozhou, for example, it is apparently still possible to find older women who use old song books as promptbooks in private performances.

Thus examination of all imprints and texts surviving at a site can provide useful information about the general character of the local book culture and, to some extent, local literacy. This information can then be used to make comparisons between different localities—to compare, for example, the titles published and read in Sibao, to those in Xuwan, Yuechi, Shaoyang, Chaozhou, and so on, to develop a larger picture of the book market and reading abilities and preferences in the late-imperial period.

I should add here that though the focus of this essay has been book culture, somewhat the same kind of analysis can be usefully applied to other products of print culture. *Nianhua*, for example, though usually largely textless, are also carriers of cultural images and messages, messages that are shaped by the formal characteristics and production qualities of the prints. Comparison of the different images and stories depicted on New Year's prints from different and geographically distant printing sites—the towns of Mianzhu in Sichuan, Zhangzhou in Fujian, and Weifang in Shandong, and the printing houses Taohuawu in Suzhou and Yangliuqing in Tianjin, to name just a few possibilities—should, as with the comparison of texts, provide us with a clearer sense of how widely certain cultural and religious references were shared and how local markets defined and perhaps restricted the range of images produced.

WOODBLOCKS

The value of woodblocks is quite obvious—they provide more information about production and production quality by making it possible to determine the kinds of wood used to make the blocks and to examine the quality of the carving somewhat more precisely than is possible from



8. A woodblock from Wuge, Sibao, Fujian. One face of a single block has been economically used to carve the cover pages of two different primers: in 1865, *Sìyán zazi* (Four-Character Glossary), and, in 1868, rotating the block 180 degrees, *Zēngzhù sānzìjīng* (Three-Character Classic, Expanded with Annotations). The publisher is the Linwentang. The former text does not survive; though the edition of *Sānzìjīng* does, it is missing the cover page carved here. Photograph by the author of a block in the Sibao Wenhua Zhongxin (Sibao Cultural Center).

examination of a printed page. On occasion, when woodblocks survive without matching imprints, they supply information about titles published and about variation in different versions of the same title (see figure 8).

The storage of woodblocks is also an interesting point to investigate. Of course adequate means of storing blocks, so that they would not mildew, rot, or suffer insect damage, was essential to the survival of a print shop; successful publishing relied to some extent on the ability to print up new “runs” of popular texts over a long period of time, perhaps decades. Two modern showcase woodblock-publishing houses, the Jinling kejingchu in Nanjing and the Guangling guji keyinshe in Yangzhou, still store their blocks in the manner traditionally believed the safest and most efficient: on shelves, vertically in rows, with air between the blocks to prevent the spread of mildew, insects, and moisture. But in sites where

xylographic publishing has died out completely, blocks are no longer stored so carefully. In Sibao, those few blocks that survive are piled randomly in any available storage space, with no effort to protect them from wet or insects (see figure 9). It is still possible, however, to see there the large storehouses (*zangku*) within the old publishing households that, during Sibao's prime as a publishing center, had been used to store a print shop's blocks.



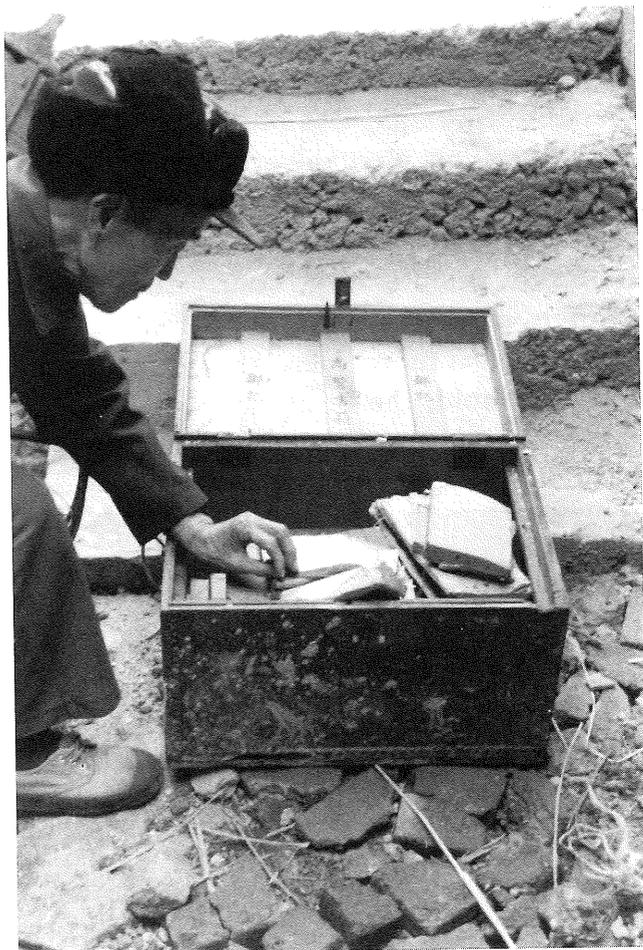
9. Woodblocks piled in a loft in Wuge, Sibao, Fujian. Photograph by the author.

PRINT SHOPS AND PUBLISHING ARTIFACTS

Certain sites might also preserve some of the print shops or print shop-bookstores that were the production centers of old publishing businesses. In Sibao, one can still see the lines of facing stalls, organized around a small courtyard, where the actual printing of texts was done; a large stone tub in the middle of the courtyard was filled with ink, so that when the printers in the various rooms ran out of ink, they could simply step outside to get more. Here printing operations were literally embedded in the household; the printing courtyard, as it were, formed one of many different compartments of an extended family's large multiple-courtyard house.

In contrast, in a site like Xuwan, print shops were establishments separate from the household, and combined with bookstores on two parallel blocks in the heart of the market town: Qian shupu jie (Front Bookstore Street) and Hou shupu jie (Back Bookstore Street). This separation between the home of the extended family and the place of the publishing business in Xuwan reflects the difference in the social organization of publishing there; though print shops were often family concerns, passed from father to son, they were not tied into the extended family structure as tightly as they were in Sibao. Xuwan print shops, for example, relied to a large extent on laborers hired from outside the family;⁴⁰ Wuge and Mawu shops were staffed by members of the extended family. Here the contrast in the physical location and setup of the print shops (and in Xuwan, the bookstores as well) reflects the greater separation between business and family organization in Xuwan.

The arrangements of the publishing and the bookselling operations also indicate different relationships between production and distribution in each site. In the isolated, mountain-bound villages of Wuge and Mawu, books could be produced easily enough, but they could not be effectively and profitably distributed wholesale to book merchants; nor was the local market large enough to support the industry. Sibao booksellers thus carried their products outside the production center, selling books along market routes in the surrounding provinces and establishing bookstores along these routes, well outside of Sibao. Not surprisingly, then, we find in Sibao today traces of print shops only—



10. A book box that was used by Wuge booksellers to carry their merchandise to market. Two such boxes would be carried on a shoulder pole. Photograph by the author.

there are no bookstores.⁴¹ In contrast, Xuwan publishers, benefiting from the more fortunate location of Xuwan on a major provincial transport line, the Fu river, and its status as a market town, could expect some book merchants to come to them to purchase texts wholesale as well as considerable local retail sales. Thus Xuwan operations combined production and sale in the same building, the bookstore at the front, the print shop at the back.⁴²

The arrangement, placement, and functions of the buildings housing publishing and bookselling operations, then, can also tell us something of the organization and division of labor and the relations within publishing businesses. A range of artifacts—book presses (used to compress and cut the pages of a book before it was bound), brushes, ink-and-

water dishes, book boxes used to carry books to market (see figure 10), and so forth—can also often be found on site; these naturally improve our understanding of the technology of printing and the physical conditions of production and sale.

ORAL HISTORIES

Fieldwork provides, in addition to an understanding of the specific physical context for the development of a publishing industry, invaluable opportunities to conduct interviews with local informants and to collect oral histories of publishing and the book trade from direct participants or the recent descendants of direct participants. There are, to be sure, problems with this method of collecting evidence: the vagaries of human memory, the difficulty of finding a sufficient number of informants, the near certainty of disagreement among informants—all make interview material a source that must be used cautiously and critically. But by talking to as many informants as possible, by structuring questions carefully and consistently, and by returning, as often as necessary, for repeat interviews to confirm or correct information—and, of course, by attempting to find primary textual support for oral histories—it is possible to build up a core of reliable material generally not available in written sources.

The first task in interviewing is to find knowledgeable informants. One of the best ways of identifying potential interview subjects is through the county Gazetteer Compilation Office (Fangzhi banshichu) and Cultural Affairs Office (Wenhaju). Here one can consult the local *Wenshi ziliao* and get help identifying local experts, the local scholars who have written on publishing or bookselling (or on the related industries of paper- or ink-making) for the local gazetteer and the *Wenshi ziliao*. These men were usually my first informants, as they were the ones who knew the most about local history and the local economy and sometimes had had some experience in the publishing industry themselves. And they were also useful as sources for other informants—they knew who within the county had had direct experience in publishing or bookselling.

There are, to be sure, certain dangers involved in relying too

heavily on such local scholars, in that they often felt they knew more about the publishing industry than less-well-educated informants with hands-on experience—and would often interrupt and “correct” such informants in interviews. But they nonetheless provided the best introductions to potential informants. With their help, one can usually set up interviews with print-shop owners and booksellers (or, as is the case with all the potential informants listed here, their descendants); craftsmen and women who had been directly involved in book production; managers and workers involved in associated businesses; and other local residents able to supply information about education, reading practices, book culture, and socioeconomic conditions in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

In the first category, older members of families that had once operated print shops often had experience as printers or booksellers and could speak with some authority about the physical process of printing, how labor was organized within the family, and how the actual process was performed. It was from such men that I learned about the customary regulations that developed to manage competition among the different Sibao print shops.⁴³

Those men who had been booksellers were able to outline fairly precisely the routes they had traveled, the means used to carry books, the methods developed to transport funds, relations between the Sibao head print shops and branch shops, and so on. One of my most interesting set of interviews in Sibao was with a man who had, when the Sibao industry was in precipitous decline in the 1930s, worked as a book peddler, traveling to surrounding villages, selling cheap, pamphletlike versions of the ever-popular children’s primers *Sanzijing* and *Baijiaxing* (Myriad Family Names) on market days. Thus former book merchants were sources of useful information about both long-distance bookselling routes and denser local distribution networks.⁴⁴

Such informants were also able to transmit rare information about the economics of the printing business, providing, for example, a rough idea of production costs relative to profits. And these men—and they were all men—were probably the best sources of information about relationships among print shops and between print shops and booksellers.

They knew in great detail about the customary regulations, that is, the unwritten rules that governed the rent and sale of blocks and the exclusive publication “rights” to certain titles that had developed to manage print-shop competition. They also knew, and were often willing to tell, the most about conflicts within the printing industry and bookselling trade. Whereas the genealogies consistently emphasized the harmony of interlineage relations, these men often provided good, vivid anecdotal evidence of tensions both among printing and bookselling families within each lineage and between the Zou and Ma printing and bookselling families.

Even in the absence of these older informants with first-hand experience of the book trade, the descendants of print-shop managers and booksellers usually had some knowledge of the history of their family print shop and some information about the local organization of the industry. They often had imprints and other documents, such as property-division documents, that substantiated their family’s involvement in the trade. And these informants also helped to identify other informants—Zou and Ma lineage members now living in other parts of south China who were descendants of the managers of branch shops—thus providing me with another source of oral histories, from Nanning, Lingyun, and Baise (Guangxi), about the organization of branch shops and about relations between the branches and the center.

Second, it was also possible, at certain sites, to interview men and women who had been block carvers or printers, either serving a local publishing industry—like the men I interviewed in Yuechi—or working within a community of block carvers providing distant publishing centers with a cheap source of carving labor—like the women of Magang, Guandong, who carved blocks for publishers in Guangzhou, Sibao, and even as far away as Suzhou. These informants supplied valuable information about and often demonstrations of the processes of carving and printing. In particular, in areas where *nianhua* prints were produced, it is today often possible to find craftsmen continuing to produce prints; in both the town of Mianzhu (in Sichuan) and the printing house of Yangliuqing (in Shandong), for example, these specialty prints are still produced from woodblocks.

More interesting in terms of the socioeconomic relations of publishing is the information one can get from former carvers about the apprentice system through which most trained to become carvers and about labor conditions—wages, trade associations, relations with publishers, block-carving shops (*kezidian*), and so forth. Here perhaps the most interesting informants were from Magang, the home of a group of professional female block carvers in the nineteenth century. They described a carving industry whose workers were all female, peasant women taught, in their early teens, to carve blocks as a means of supplementing the family income from agriculture. Recruited and taught by older, experienced female carvers, but managed by a man who worked as the liaison with publishers, these women, most of them illiterate, worked for very low wages, supplying publishers in the Guangzhou, Fujian, and even the Jiangnan area with cheap blocks.

Third, informants in industries supportive of publishing are also useful sources of information. The existence of local paper and ink-making industries, for example, was often crucial to the success of rural publishing businesses; certainly in the case of Sibao and probably in Longhui (in Hunan), Yuechi and Mianzhu (in Sichuan), and Xuwan (in Jiangxi), as well, it is difficult to imagine how publishing could have flourished without access to local sources of paper and printing ink. And study of the nature of local paper and ink production, the seasonal rhythms of the industries, the structure of the local market, and the business relationships between local paper and ink factories, brokers, and publishers is necessary for a full understanding of the operation of publishing concerns. What different types and quality levels of paper were available locally? How did the range in availability affect production quality within the local publishing businesses? Did publishers develop exclusive, direct, relationships with individual paper and ink factories, or were all transactions handled by intermediaries or brokers? Did publishers ever own and control paper and ink factories themselves? Interviews with former managers of paper and ink firms and on-site visits to factories still producing paper by the traditional methods can help to answer some of these questions.

Finally, almost any discussion with an older resident of a publish-

ing site (or, indeed, any village) can be of use, even if he or she is ignorant of the details of the publishing industry. Such informants can provide useful information about socioeconomic conditions and local political changes that help to put publishing operations in a larger context. More specifically, discussions about reading practices and educational methods and texts in use in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries can tell us a great deal about the kinds of audiences rural publishers were targeting. Informants in Sibao testified to the widespread use of “traditional” educational texts like *Sanzijing* and *Zengguang xianwen*, mentioned above, well through the Republican era—they report continuing to attend “family schools” (*jiashu*) that taught these texts and the Four Books while, at the same time, they studied from the new textbooks issued by the Republic. In the realm of entertainment literature, they emphasized the impressive, but largely undocumented, popularity of simple song books; some could even recall the lines of several now-lost lyrics. This kind of information adds to our understanding of early-twentieth-century reading habits and practices, and thus helps us to place the output of publishers like the Zou and Ma of Sibao in the context of the local book culture and market.

OTHER SOURCES

A host of other documents and sources can be useful for understanding the publishing trade in late-imperial and Republican-era China: land contracts, for example, often provide a sense of relative wealth, allowing us to assess the economic prominence of publishing families vis-à-vis their neighbors. Ancestral-hall account books, as I have already mentioned, are useful as means of comparing prices, of putting information about book prices in the context of a range of prices for articles of everyday life. Records of a range of social organizations—loan clubs, temple associations, benevolent societies, and so forth—also provide useful information about local social organization and religious practices that, while perhaps not directly relevant to publishing, nonetheless assist by deepening knowledge about the social and economic context within which the publishing industry developed.

CONCLUSION

Fieldwork, though it can yield valuable and unusual information essential to our understanding of commercial publishing in late-imperial and Republican-era China, also presents certain challenges to the researcher, particularly the foreign researcher working in hinterland villages. If he or she is not familiar with the local dialect, then it is necessary either to take the time to learn it or to hire an interpreter (preferably one with some knowledge of or sympathy for the project). Though most younger rural residents speak standard Chinese (*putonghua*), many older villagers, particularly women, do not—and the older residents are usually the most useful informants.

Reliant almost entirely on the grace of local officials and the helpfulness of local experts and residents, fieldworkers have to be prepared for considerable variation in the access they are allowed at different sites. Local leaders, informants, and holders of important local sources are often (and often justly) suspicious of county and provincial officials and outsiders; it takes patient, sustained, and repeated efforts—and often long residence on site—to assure them that one is both serious and harmless. And there are also, of course, tensions among local officials, local leaders, and their constituencies. Thus, although fieldworkers are dependent on the approval and sponsorship of local officials, it is often best not to emphasize this connection when interviewing residents; usually the best go-betweens are local scholars or respected villagers who, for some compensation, are willing to introduce the fieldworker to informants.

Informants of course also have to be compensated for their time, according to the local hourly wage scale; it is important to establish a consistent, rational schedule of payment that is made clear and applied as fairly as possible to all informants. It is important, too, to emphasize that one is not interested in purchasing local materials or taking them permanently out of the site; the danger here is that one may otherwise come to be perceived as a merchant interested in exploiting the local population (though refusal to purchase items may also disappoint informants eager to sell their materials). Photographing, photocopying (if a machine is available), hand-copying, or simply taking notes on local documents are more appropriate means of collecting materials; again, holders of

these materials should be compensated according to some standard scale for the opportunity to copy or make notes on their materials.

There remain all sorts of pitfalls that even the most scrupulous, cautious, and knowledgeable of researchers will find difficult to avoid. Local factions, tensions, and antagonisms—between county and local officials, between local officials and villagers, and among the villagers themselves—often interfere with the research process in unpredictable ways. (Efforts made in Sibao to arrange for the collection and preservation, in Wuge, the administrative center of the township, of imprints, woodblocks, and other artifacts of the site's publishing history foundered on just such antagonisms.) Yet it is virtually impossible for the researcher, as an outsider, to avoid or even fully understand these tensions, and researchers often run the risk of becoming, unwittingly, a pawn in local struggles. Ideally, a fieldworker should live for some time at a site before beginning work (though even then, it is unlikely that one could learn as much as necessary about local society and politics); yet often such extended site visits are difficult to arrange.

Thus fieldwork presents special difficulties and challenges quite different from those confronting the library researcher. The rewards, however—in the form of local sources available only on site; a deeper knowledge of local geography, history, and local socioeconomic conditions; and rich, often anecdotal detail about the organization of publishing businesses—fully justify the effort.

NOTES

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1. Lucille Chia, *Printing for Profit: The Commercial Publishers of Jianyang, 960–1644* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002). Ellen Widmer, “The Huanduzhai of Hangzhou and Suzhou: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Publishing,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 56.1 (June 1996), pp. 77–122.
2. The model for this kind of fieldwork is the pioneering work of Fu Yiling and his students at Xiamen University. See, for just a few examples, Fu Yiling and Yang Guozhen, eds., *Ming Qing Fujian shehui yu xiangcun jingji* (Society and

- Rural Economy in Ming and Qing Fujian) (Xiamen: Xiamen daxue chubanshe, 1987); Yang Guozhen, *Ming Qing tudi qiye wenshu yanjiu* (Research on Land Contract Documents from the Ming and Qing) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1988); Zheng Zhenman, *Ming-Qing Fujian jiazu zuzhi yu shehui bianqian* (Changsha: Hunan jiaoyu chubanshe, 1992), translated by Michael Szonyi as *Family Lineage Organization and Social Change in Ming and Qing Fujian* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001); Chen Zhiping and Zheng Zhenman, "Qingdai Minxi Sibao zushang yanjiu" (The Lineage Merchants of Sibao, Western Fujian, in the Qing), *Zhongguo jingjishi yanjiu* (Research on Chinese Economic History) 2 (1988), pp. 93–109.
3. For a fuller presentation of the conclusions that can be drawn from such materials—and for more background on Sibao, one of the sites treated here—see Brokaw, "Commercial Publishing in Late Imperial China: The Zou and Ma Family Businesses of Sibao, Fujian," in *Late Imperial China* 17.1 (June 1996), pp. 49–92. I am working on a full-length study of this industry in the context of commercial publishing in south China in the Qing, "Commerce in Culture: The Book Trade of Sibao, Fujian, 1663–1947."
 4. The first character in the name of this town is more commonly pronounced "hu"; the local (and official) pronunciation is, however, "Xuwan."
 5. I have also included some information garnered from preliminary field investigations done since 1999 in Shaoyang and Longhui counties in Hunan; Chaozhou and Shantou in Guangdong; and in Huizhou, the once-famous block-carving center in Anhui. This series of field trips was part of a larger collaborative project, directed with Professor Hou Zhenping of Xiamen University, entitled "Mapping the Book Trade: The Expansion of Printing in Late Imperial China." Funded by the Henry Luce Foundation, this project is designed to identify late-imperial and Republican-era publishing sites worthy of future, more intensive study.
 6. There are certain exceptions. Yangliuqing, the great center for production of New Year's prints in Tianjin, has been preserved as a working site, and it is possible to interview craftsmen who are still producing *nianhua* there (see also, under "Woodblocks" below, on the Jinling kejingchu in Nanjing and the Guangling guji keyinshe in Yangzhou). And in some Jiangnan cities it is also possible to find men who were active in the early-twentieth-century book trade; these men are able to provide information about bookselling, if not publishing.
 7. Jin Wuxiang states that Xuwan block carvers are rivaled in productivity only by the carvers of Magang, Guangdong. See Jin Wuxiang, *Suxiang sanbi* (Shanghai: Saoye shanfang, 1894), *juan* 4, p. 10b, cited in Nagasawa Kikuya, *Wa Kan sho no insatsu to sono rekishi*, vol. 2, Nagasawa Kikuya chosakushū (Kyūko shoin, 1982), p. 84. Unlike Magang, however, Xuwan was also a publishing center.
 8. The difficulty here is compounded by the fact that this point of division, the year 1796 (which corresponds roughly to the point, 1800, used to identify western rare books), is not by any means universally accepted. See, for ex-

- ample, Mao Chunxiang's discussion of the meaning of *shanben* in his *Gushu banben changtan* (Talks on Old Books) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), pp. 3–7; here, although he considers the traditional, much earlier, cut-off date of 1567, the end of the Ming Jiaping era (1522–1567), as a means of identifying rare books, he ultimately suggests that criteria of production quality and excellence in editing, rather than date of publication, ought to be the primary measures of *shanben*. Thus a finely produced and carefully edited Qing edition might qualify more for the designation “*shanben*” than a poorly printed and shoddily edited Ming edition.
9. Zhang Xiumin, *Zhongguo yinshuashi* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1989), pp. 558–559.
 10. See, for example, the useful article on Sibao publishing in the Liancheng county series: Zou Risheng, “Zhongguo sida diaoban yinshua jidi zhi yi—Sibao: Qiantan Sibao diaoban yinshuye de shengshuai” (One of the Four Great Chinese Printing Bases—Sibao: Introduction to the Rise and Decline of the Sibao Publishing Industry), *Liancheng wenshi ziliao* 5 (1985), pp. 102–115.
 11. Du Xinfu and Qi Shenqi, *Jiangxi lidai keshu* (A Chronology of Publishing in Jiangxi); Huang Rixing and Zhang Deyi, *Jiangxi qikan zonglu* (A Summary Record of Jiangxi Periodicals); Huang Rixing and Jiang Qinyun, *Jiangxi bianzhu renwu zhuanlue* (Brief Biographies of Editors and Authors in Jiangxi), all published by the Jiangxi renmin chubanshe in 1994.
 12. Jiang Chengbo, Du Xinfu, and Du Yongkang, eds., *Jiangsu keshu* (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1993). This single history is supplemented by several other studies of Jiangsu publishing, including a fifteen-volume bibliography of Jiangsu publications, Qiu Yu, ed., *Jiangsu yiwenzhi* (Jiangsu Bibliography) (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1994–1996).
 13. Guangdongsheng difang shizhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, ed., *Guangdong shengzhi—Chuban zhi* (Guangdong Provincial Gazetteer—Annals of Publishing) (Nanhai: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1997). See the notes to the introduction, “On the History of the Book in China,” in Cynthia Brokaw and Kai-wing Chow, eds., *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, forthcoming) for a fuller list of similar titles.
 14. For example, the provincial libraries in Shenyang and Nanjing and the rare-books collection of the Zhejiang provincial library were all, in 1999, engaged in revising their catalogues.
 15. The three most useful genealogies for the study of Sibao publishing are: Zou Wenjun, ed., *Fanyang Zoushi zupu* (Genealogy of the Fanyang Branch of the Zou Lineage) (Dunbentang, 1947) in 33 *ce*. An alternate title for this text is *Minting Longzuxiang Zoushi zupu* (Genealogy of the Zou Lineage of Longzu Village, Tingzhou, Fujian). Zou Hui, ed., *Sixiu Zoushi zupu* (Fourth Revision of the [Fugong Branch] of the Zou Lineage) (Dunbentang, 1911), in 21 *ce*. Ma Xuanliang, ed., *Mashi dazong zupu* (Genealogy of the Great Ma Lineage) (Xiaositang, 1944), in 44 *ce*. An alternate title of this text is *Changting Sibaoli Mashi zupu* (Genealogy of the Ma Lineage of Sibao, Changting County). Mawu, the village of the Ma lineage, and Wuge, home of the Zou, were

- located in Changting county until 1951, when they were transferred to Liancheng county.
16. It is possible that this text is the *Sishu jicheng* attributed to a Song-dynasty scholar, Wu Zhenzi (dates unknown). See *Zhongguo guji shanben shumu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1985), “Jing” section, vol. 3, p. 54b.
 17. *Changting Sibaoli Mashi zupu*, *ji* 7, *juan* 1, pp. 74a–75b.
 18. *Ibid.*, p. 75b. Since no identifiable copies of these titles survive—and since, in any event, the titles given in the genealogy may well be abbreviated—it is not possible to provide any bibliographical information about these texts, except for the obvious point that they were published in the late-seventeenth century in Mawu. It is possible that this last text, the *Sishu zhu daquan*, is either an edition of or a text closely related to the *Sishu daquan* (Great Collection on the Four Books), the compilation of commentaries on the Four Books that, commissioned by the Yongle emperor in 1415, firmly established Cheng-Zhu readings of the Four Books as the standard for examination study. (See Thomas A. Wilson, *The Genealogy of the Way: The Construction and Uses of the Confucian Tradition in Late Imperial China* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995], p. 54.) Like all the other texts mentioned in this paragraph (with the exception of the reading primer), however, the title of this work indicates that it would have been attractive as a guide to the Classics and thus to examination study.
 19. *Fanyang Zoushi zupu*, *juan* 22, pp. 50b–51a.
 20. Chia, *Printing for Profit*, chap. 1.
 21. *Fanyang Zoushi zupu*, *juanshou*, pp. 4b, 17b.
 22. See, for example, Fan Yanshou, “Jianyang Liushi keshu kao” (Study of Publishing by the Liu of Jianyang), *Wenxian* (Documents), 36 (1988.2), p. 207.
 23. See Robert P. Hymes, “Marriage, Descent Groups, and the Localist Strategy in Sung and Yuan Fu-chou,” in Patricia Buckley Ebrey and James L. Watson, eds., *Kinship Organization in Late Imperial China, 1000–1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 115–128, for a discussion of the significance of genealogy prefaces in the later imperial period.
 24. David Wakefield, *Fenjie: Household Division and Inheritance in Qing and Republican China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1998), pp. 21–25, 57.
 25. This tradition was not always followed, though often it is not clear why not. In many cases, it seems that an eldest son with a reasonable chance of examination success, or one who had earned or purchased some sort of official position, would not take over the management of the father’s shop. According to informants in Sibao, a father might also take into account the various talents of his sons, bypassing an eldest son if he felt he was not competent to manage the family print shop. Or, as in the case of Ma Quanheng cited earlier, the decision to give all of a print shop and its woodblocks to the youngest son may have been a way of ensuring an income to the family member least able to strike out on his own.
 26. It is possible, of course, that they joined one or two of the other brothers, bringing their woodblock inheritance to what would then become a joint venture.

27. *Baizhongjing* seems to have been a generic title for popular “almanacs for future years” (*weilaili*), which included calendars for several decades as well as astrological charts and fortune-telling advice. See, for example, the entries in Andrew C. West, *Catalogue of the Morrison Collection of Chinese Books* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1998), p. 133. The *Dazi zengguang xianwen*, a primer of unknown authorship, consisted of a series of rhymed couplets expressing orthodox moral and social messages. See Mao Shuiqing and Liang Yang, eds., *Zhongguo chuantong mengxue dadian* (Great Compendium of Chinese Traditional Primers for Children) (Nanning: Guangxi remin chubanshe, 1993), p. 155.
28. *Fanyang Zoushi zupu*, *juan* 33, pp. 98b–99b.
29. When a text has *heikou* markings, a portion of the center of the printing block was left uncarved. When pages were printed from this block, the uncarved portion showed as a wide band of black on the “mouth” or fore-edge of each folded page. But when the segment at the center of the printing block was carved out, a wide band of white or “white mouth” (*baikou*) was visible at the fore-edge fold of the page.
30. Indeed, for many of the texts that I refer to in this section, complete bibliographical information cannot be given. Some texts are incomplete, missing the crucial *fengmian* or cover page that often supplies important—though at times misleading—information about authorship, date of publication (that is, the date the blocks for the text were carved), place of publication, and publisher. Others lack whole *juan*—and if the first *juan* is missing it is often difficult to determine the full contents or length of a text. Finally, even when a text survives whole, it does not necessarily include full bibliographical information. This is particularly true for the very lowest-level productions of popular commercial publishers like the Zou and Ma of Sibao; their pamphletlike editions of children’s primers rarely contain information about publication date or publisher. In the following discussion, I supply whatever bibliographical information can be gleaned from the texts in question.
31. *Zengding guwen jingyan xiangzhu pangxun hebian*, edited by the Mawu publisher Ma Kuanyu (1670–1754) and published by the Mawu Zhensongtang, seems to have been based closely on the *Guwen xiayi* (Analysis of the Meaning of Classical Prose) of the Kangxi-era scholar Lin Yunming (*zi* Xizhong, *jinsi* 1658), first published in 1717. To Lin’s text, it adds, as the title implies, another set of comments, by a Zhou Dazhang (*zi* Pinhou) of Tongcheng (fl. Yongzheng era, 1723–1736).
32. *Sishu buzhu beizhi tiqiao huican* is one of at least two titles presenting very similar commentary on the Four Books. This particular version was edited by a Zhang Chengyu (dates unknown), apparently from a text compiled originally by the Hongwu-era (1368–1399) official Deng Lin. This work presents, with the texts of the Four Books, the officially approved commentary by Zhu Xi, as well as lengthy and often laborious explanations by Deng.
33. Since *Yixue sanzijing* appears in a property-division document dated 1839, we know that a version of this text, though not necessarily the one depicted here, which lacks its cover page (*fengmian*), was published by a Mawu publisher no

- later than that date. The Xuwan edition was published by the Liangyitang—but no date of publication is given. The undated Sibao edition of *Shennong bencao jingdu* was published by the Wuge Suweitang; the also undated Xuwan edition by the Liangyitang.
34. Baopu shanren, “Xu” (Preface), pp. 1a–2b, *Chuxue zibian* (preface dated 1876).
 35. “Xu” (Preface), p. 1b, Bao Xiang’ao and Mei Qizhao, *Yanfang xinbian* (1883); the publisher is not given. This work was originally compiled by Bao in 1846, when he was serving as an official in Wuxuan, Guangxi; it was revised and expanded by Mei Qizhao of Nanchang, Jiangxi, in 1878.
 36. The Shoudu tushuguan in Beijing has a collection of song books from a variety of provinces. In Chaozhou, Guangdong, efforts have been made to preserve song books in the local dialect; many such song books have been recently reprinted and collected in the Chao-Shan lishi wenhua yanjiu zhongxin (Center for Research on Chaozhou and Shantou History and Culture) in Shantou. For a sampling of titles, see Guangdongsheng Zhongshan tushuguan and Shantou tushuguan xuehui, eds., *Chao Shan wenxian shumu* (Bibliography of Writings from Chaozhou and Shantou) (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1994), pp. 389–399.
 37. Zhang Xiumin, *Zhongguo yinshuashi*, pp. 710–715. Itinerant genealogy printers in Sibao—now using a small hand-operated press—still print the new editions of the Zou and Ma genealogies, living and setting up their printing operation in the relevant ancestral hall until the job is done.
 38. Many secondary studies of publishing in Chinese rely on these categories without exploring the connections between them, so that “official” publishing, “private,” “family,” or “literati” publishing, and “commercial” publishing are treated in separate sections. These distinctions appear quite early; though he employs somewhat different terminology, Ye Dehui (1864–1927) accepts them in his pioneering study *Shulin qinghua*, first published in 1920 (Beijing: Yanshan chubanshe, 1999). For a more recent example, see Ji Shaofu, *Zhongguo chuban jianshi* (A Brief History of Chinese Publishing) (Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 1991).
 39. Geomancers in Sibao were still, as recently as 1996, consulting local editions of old geomancy (*fengshui*) texts; there is also some evidence that medical manuals published in Sibao in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries were still in use or at least highly prized as sources of medical knowledge.
 40. Xu Zhengfu, “Jinxi shu” (Jinxi Books), *Jiangxi chubanshi zhi* (Annals of Jiangxi Publishing History) 3 (February 1, 1993), pp. 36–37.
 41. An effort was made to establish a book market in Wuge in the eighteenth century, but this failed, presumably as a result of Sibao’s isolation and difficulty of access. See *Fanyang Zoushi zupu*, *juan* 29, pp. 2a–3b.
 42. Xuwan publishers also shipped some of their texts for sale to the port cities of the lower Yangzi. Some Xuwan publishers also established branch shops in Nanchang and Jiujiang in Jiangxi and Wuhu and Anqing in Anhui. See Zhao Shuiquan, “Xuwan yu muke yinshu” (Xuwan and Woodblock Publishing),

- Jiangxi difangzhi tongxun* (Newsletter of the Jiangxi Gazetteer) 9 (February 1986), p. 52.
 43. See Brokaw, "Commercial Publishing in Late Imperial China," pp. 73-75.
 44. *Ibid.*, pp. 76-78.

GLOSSARY

- Anqing 安慶
Baijiaxing 百家姓
 baikou 白口
 Baise 百色
Baizhongjing 百中經
 banbenxue 版本學
 Baopu shanren 抱朴山人
 Bao Xiang'ao 鮑相璈
 bianti zi 扁體字
 bo 薄
 bu 簿
 changben 唱本
 Changting 長汀
Changting Sibaoli Mashi zupu
 長汀四堡里馬氏族譜
 Chaozhou 潮州
 Chengdu 成都
 Cheng-Zhu 程朱
 Chen Nianzu 陳念祖
 Chubanzhi 出版志
Chuxue zibian 初學字辯
 Cuiwentang 翠文堂
Cuiwentang cang ban 翠文堂藏板
Dazi zengguang xianwen 大字增廣賢文
 Deng Lin 鄧林
 Dili wujue 地理五訣
Duilian daquan 對聯大全
 Dunbentang 敦本堂
 fangke 坊刻
 Fangzhi banshichu 方志辦事處
Fanyang Zoushi zupu 範陽鄒氏族譜
 fen 分
 fengmian 封面
 fengshui 風水
 fenguan 分關
 fenjia 分家
 Fu 撫
 Fugong 敷公
Gongxue zhu 貢學注
 gu 箍
 Guangling guji keyinshe
 廣陵古籍刻印社
 guanke 官刻
Guwen xiyi 古文析義
 heikou 黑口
 Hou shupu jie 後書鋪街
 Houxu 後敘
 hu 滸
 Huanduzhai 還讀齋
 Huizhou 徽州
 Huzhou 湖州
 jiake 家刻
 Jiangnan 江南
 Jiang Qingling 蔣慶齡
Jiangsu keshu 江蘇刻書
 jiangti 匠體
 Jianyang 建陽
 Ji'ao shanfang 寄傲山房

- jiashu 家塾
 Jinling kejingchu 金陵刻經處
 Jin Wuxiang 金武祥
 Jinxi 金谿
 Jiujiang 九江
 kezidian 刻字店
 Liancheng 連城
 liang 兩
 Liangyitang 兩儀堂
 Lingyun 凌雲
 Linlantang 林蘭堂
 Linwentang 林文堂
 Lin Yunming 林雲銘
 Liu 劉
 Longhui 隆回
 Longyan 龍巖
 Ma 馬
 Ma Cuizhong 馬萃仲
 Ma Dingbang 馬定邦
 Magang 馬崗
 Ma Kuanyu 馬寬裕
 Ma Quanheng 馬權亨
 Mashi dazong zupu 馬氏大宗族譜
 Mawu 馬屋
 Ma Xuanliang 馬選良
 Ma Yuming 馬玉鳴
 Ma Yuting 馬玉廷
 Mei Qizhao 梅啓照
 Meng Zi 孟子
 Mianzhu 綿竹
 Mingshen feng 命神峰
 Minting Longzuxiang Zoushi zupu
 閩汀龍足鄉鄒氏族譜
 Nanchang 南昌
 Nanning 南寧
 nianhua 年畫
 Nianzitan 念茲堂
 Pinhou 聘侯
 putonghua 普通話
 qian 錢
 Qian shupu jie 前書鋪街
 Renjia riyong 人家日用
 Sanguo tongsu yanyi 三國通俗演義
 Sanzijing 三字經
 shanben 善本
 Shantou 汕頭
 Shaoyang 邵陽
 Shennong bencao jingdu 神農本草經讀
 Shenyang 瀋陽
 Shijing zhu 詩經註
 Shuhua tongzhen 書畫同珍
 Shuihu zhuan 水滸傳
 Shunde 順德
 shuyuan 書院
 Sibao 四堡
 Sichuan xinwen chuban shiliao
 四川新聞出版史料
 sike 私刻
 simin 四民
 Sishu 四書
 Sishu beizhi 四書備旨
 Sishu buzhu beizhi tiqiao huican
 四書補註備旨題竅匯參
 Sishu daquan 四書大全
 Sishu jicheng 四書集成
 Sishu jizhu 四書集注
 Sishu zhu daquan 四書注大全
 Sixiu Zoushi zupu 四修鄒氏族譜

- Siyán zazi* 四言雜字
Suweitang 素位堂
Suxiang sanbi 粟香三筆
 tang 堂
 tangming 堂名
 Taohuawu 桃花塢
 tiantou 天頭
 Tingzhou 汀州
 Tongcheng 桐城
 Wanjuanlou 萬卷樓
 wei 微
 Weifang 濰方
 weilaili 未來曆
 Wenhailou 文海樓
 Wenhuaaju 文化局
 Wenlange 文蘭閣
 Wenlange fadui 文蘭閣發兌
 Wenlintang 文林堂
 Wenshi ziliao 文史資料
 Wenzhou 温州
 Wenzitang 文茲堂
 Wuge 務閣
 Wuxuan 武宣
 Wu Zhenzi 吳眞子
 Xiaositang 孝思堂
 Xiaoyin 小引
Xinban Kangxi zidian 新版康熙字典
Xinban shixue 新版詩學
 Xinwen chubanjū 新聞出版社
 Xiong 熊
 Xiuyuan 修園
 Xizhong 西仲
 Xuwan 潛灣
Yanfang xinbian 驗方新編
 Yangliuqing 楊柳青
 yinfang yisuo 印房壹所
Yingxiong pu 英雄譜
Yixue sanzijing 醫學三字經
Youxue zengguang 幼學增廣
 Yu 余
 Yuechi 岳池
 yuwei 魚尾
 Zaizitang 在茲堂
 zangku 藏庫
Zengding guwen jingyan xiangzhu pangxun he-
bian 增訂古文精言詳註旁訓合編
Zengguang xianwen 增廣賢文
Zengzhu sanzijing 增注三字經
 zhangben 帳本
 Zhang Chengyu 張成遇
 Zhangzhou 漳州
 Zhao Tingdong 趙廷棟
Zhao Yulin 趙玉麟
 zheng 徵
 Zhensongtang 枕松堂
Zhongguo yinshuashi 中國印刷史
 Zhou Dazhang 周大章
 Zhu Xi 朱熹
 Zou 鄒
 Zou Bangyu 鄒邦鈺
 Zou Binghan 鄒屏翰
 Zou Hui 鄒輝
 Zou Jianchi 鄒建池
 Zou Shengmai 鄒聖脉
 Zou Wenjun 鄒文峻
 Zou Xidao 鄒希道

Counting and Recounting Chinese Imprints

LUCILLE CHIA

Certainly books as objects can tell us much about the social history of the book, but just how do we go about extracting such information? In this paper I illustrate several methods, using imprints from the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) as examples. First, a quantitative approach is essential, but what and how do we count? “Macrocounting” the total number of imprints produced in a given historical period or in a particular publishing center has its uses. So, too, do smaller-scale enumerations, as of a specific type of work for different periods. Both help us trace the development of the book trade in China over time. In addition, it may be instructive to estimate the number of similar works that have not survived from a given period—a tricky though by no means impossible task, and one that may lead us to a deeper understanding of both the power of print and its limits in different historical periods. Second, I show how certain features of a printed book, often referred to collectively as the paratext—all the materials other than the main text—can yield valuable information unavailable elsewhere concerning the history of the Chinese book.¹

COUNTING IMPRINTS

Any study of the history of the book necessitates compiling a bibliography of the relevant works, an obvious but not always easily feasible first step. Some of the difficulties result from the inaccessibility not only of the imprints themselves but even of information about them. While the last ten years or so have seen the beginnings of on-line computer catalogues for holdings of individual libraries and collections of Chinese rare books throughout the world,² most of the available information is found only in bibliographies of famous collections of the past (now mostly dispersed) and library catalogues—if we are lucky.³ Other imprints, although included in collections that are theoretically accessible to the public, are either catalogued in ways that are not of much help to a researcher, or not catalogued at all, even by libraries that may now have their collections of modern publications on-line, available on the Internet.⁴

As for works in private hands, they are all too often difficult to locate, and still harder to enumerate. Even relatively sizable collections may sometimes remain unknown to scholars, and families possessing one or a few imprints may not appreciate their worth or have reasons for not revealing their existence. Very occasionally, however, such imprints or their woodblocks may come to light. Quite recently, a serendipitous find occurred when close to six thousand woodblocks for books were donated to the museum in Zhangqiu municipality, about thirty kilometers east of Ji'nan, the capital of Shandong province. These woodblocks, which had been stored inside the walls of a storehouse in the Li-family compound, had originally been engraved by the famous Qing-dynasty (1644–1911) bibliophile Ma Guohan (1794–1857) and inherited by his daughter, who married into the Li family. Since Ma was dedicated to the reprinting of works that were for all practical purposes unavailable in his time, the woodblocks are proving to be valuable not only to the history of publishing, but also to Chinese written culture in general.⁵

Researchers studying publishing in the later Qing and the Republican (1911–1949) periods generally encounter somewhat different problems than those who focus on earlier periods. The books they wish to examine may exist in relatively greater numbers than earlier imprints; at

flea markets in China one can still bargain for cheap, low-quality publications, mostly from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Such works, however, have not received the same care and attention as earlier ones. Although libraries may have other, somewhat better-printed editions of the same works, they have not made the effort to collect such tattered and tatty copies, whose importance to the history of the Chinese book thus remains largely unrecognized. For instance, in her work on the Sibao book trade of southern Fujian, Cynthia Brokaw so far has searched most successfully for imprints or for the original woodblocks among the publishers' descendants.⁶ Although Sibao publications have found their way into library collections, most of them have not been clearly catalogued as such. Only by looking exhaustively through a library's holdings of "ordinary string-bound books" (*putong xianzhuang shu*) can such imprints be identified.

Indeed, an interesting pattern in library holdings emerges when we consider the distinction between what Chinese bibliophiles of the past deemed worthy of collecting and what they disdained. For example, works of fiction, drama miscellanies, household reference manuals, almanacs, and other imprints with illustrations inserted on a page along with the text (*chatu*) began to be produced in great numbers in the late Ming, but they rarely made it into book collectors' libraries, or at least into their annotated catalogues.⁷ Consequently, while such works are found in Chinese libraries, they constitute only a small portion of these collections. In fact, by my count, the Naikaku Bunko in Tokyo alone has more such illustrated works of fiction and story collections than the three largest public libraries in China combined. Even more striking is the number of unique copies of such works in several European libraries, inherited from early Western visitors in East Asia, who had bought them out of curiosity. Thus in order to study the history of "popular" books printed in late-imperial China, it is essential to examine the imprints in a number of Japanese and Western libraries.⁸

Assuming, however, that we overcome all these obstacles, and have obtained enough information on a group of imprints, how do we count them? The discussion below relies largely on the counting done on imprints from Jianyang in north inland Fujian (Minbei). Why Jianyang? For over five hundred years, from the Southern Song (1127–1279)

through the end of the Ming, more books were published in Jianyang than in any other book center in China. Indeed, a conservative estimate is that about one-seventh of all the extant Chinese woodblock imprints before the Qing come from Jianyang.⁹ The Jianyang area, already noted for its flourishing paper industry, rapidly became one of the most important centers of the book trade in the country as printing burgeoned during the Song dynasty (960–1279).¹⁰ From the start, Jianyang publishers had the reputation (not fully deserved) of producing shoddy editions on cheap paper with blurred impressions, which nevertheless sold throughout China, as well as in Japan and Korea. These works included the Confucian classics, dictionaries, histories, geographies, medical texts, encyclopedias, school primers, collections of anecdotes, poetry anthologies, historical novels, and drama—almost any book that would sell. Elsewhere, I have described in detail the history of the Jianyang book trade,¹¹ and in this article I draw on that earlier work to illustrate how counting the imprints from one region of the country can help us understand many different aspects of the history of the Chinese book. I would like to emphasize that unlike the printing centers Cynthia Brokaw discusses, for which fieldwork is a feasible and essential part of the research, Jianyang, where publishing activities died out early in the Qing, and little evidence remains in the area of this five-hundred-year-long industry, does not present such opportunities. My study of the Jianyang book trade, therefore, has been possible only because so many of the imprints and some of the publisher families' genealogies have survived.

Let us begin with the distribution of Jianyang imprints of the Ming, organized according to the *siku* classification system. Table 1 gives the number of different *editions* (that is, engraved from different woodblocks) for each category.¹² For instance, philological works (*xiaoxue*) in the Classics category (*jingbu*) include five different editions of the rhyming dictionary *Guangyun* (Expanded Rhymes),¹³ and geographical works (*dili*) in the History category (*shibu*) include two commercial reprints of the official administrative guide, *Da Ming yitong zhi* (Comprehensive Gazetteer of the Great Ming). One caveat: the table's neat figures do not convey the uncertainty involved in determining whether certain books are Jianyang imprints or the date the woodblocks for some works were

Table 1

DISTRIBUTION OF JIANYANG COMMERCIAL IMPRINTS OF THE MING,
ORDERED BY THE SIKU SYSTEM

	NUMBER OF IMPRINTS	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
Book of Changes (<i>Yi</i>)	24	1.4
Book of Documents (<i>Shu</i>)	22	1.3
Book of Poetry (<i>Shi</i>)	21	1.3
Book of Rites (<i>Li</i>)	28	1.7
Spring and Autumn Annals (<i>Chunqiu</i>)	34	2.0
Book of Filial Piety (<i>Xiao</i>)	0	0.0
Works on the Classics (<i>Wujing zongyi</i>)	8	0.5
Four Books (<i>Sishu</i>)	39	2.3
Music (<i>Yue</i>)	0	0.0
Philology (<i>xiaoxue</i>)	44	2.6
1. CLASSICS (<i>JINGBU</i>) TOTAL	220	13.2
Standard histories (<i>zhengshi</i>)	10	0.6
Annalistic histories (<i>biannian</i>)	87	5.2
Narrative histories (<i>jishi benmo</i>)	0	0.0
Separate histories (<i>bieshi</i>)	0	0.0
Miscellaneous histories (<i>zashi</i>)	12	0.7
Decrees and memorials (<i>zhaoling zouyi</i>)	2	0.1
Biographies (<i>zhuanji</i>)	21	1.3
Historical excerpts (<i>shichao</i>)	35	2.1
Contemporaneous records (<i>zaiji</i>)	0	0.0
Chronography (<i>shiling</i>)	0	0.0
Geography (<i>dili</i>)	14	0.8
Bureaucracy (<i>zhiguan</i>)	4	0.2
Works on government (<i>zhengshu</i>)	14	0.8
Bibliographies (<i>mulu</i>)	1	0.1
Historical criticism (<i>shiping</i>)	23	1.4
2. HISTORY (<i>SHIBU</i>) TOTAL	223	13.4
Confucianists (<i>rujia</i>)	67	4.0
Strategists (<i>bingjia</i>)	15	0.9
Legalists (<i>fajia</i>)	4	0.2
Agronomists (<i>nongjia</i>)	0	0.0
Medicine (<i>yijia</i>)	244	14.7
Astronomy and mathematics (<i>tianwen suanfa</i>)	13	0.8
Divination (<i>shushu</i>)	92	5.5
Fine arts (<i>yishu</i>)	10	0.6
Catalogues (<i>pulu</i>)	2	0.1
Miscellaneous schools (<i>zajia</i>)	35	2.1
Encyclopedias (<i>leishu</i>)	232	13.9
Anecdotists (<i>xiaoshuo</i>)	17	1.0
Buddhists (<i>shijia</i>)	2	0.1
Daoists (<i>daoia</i>)	27	1.6
Collectanea (<i>congshu</i>)	6	0.4
3. PHILOSOPHY (<i>ZIBU</i>) TOTAL	760	45.7

Table 1 continued

	NUMBER OF IMPRINTS	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
Elegies of Chu (<i>Chuci</i>)	1	0.1
Separate collections (<i>bieji</i>)	144	8.7
General collections (<i>zongji</i>)	138	8.3
Literary criticism (<i>shiwen ping</i>)	12	0.7
<i>Ci</i> poetry and dramatic songs (<i>ciqu</i>)	55	3.3
Fiction (<i>xiaoshuo changpian</i>)	110	6.6
Collectanea (<i>congshu</i>)	1	0.1
4. BELLES LETTRES (<i>JIBU</i>) TOTAL	461	27.7
TOTAL	1,664	100.0

engraved. When such information is not explicitly given in the imprint, it is necessary to make an educated guess based on circumstantial evidence and practical knowledge of block-printed books (*banbenxue*).

Obviously, the table includes only imprints that are extant or known from adequate descriptions in annotated bibliographies. For the books that have not survived it is almost impossible to make even educated guesses about numbers. This means that surviving imprints from a given period may not accurately reflect the actual distribution of titles published at that time. For instance, we cannot conclude from the low survival rate of the cheaper printed books (such as leaflets of several pages on how to write letters and official documents, and almanacs and calendars) and the even lower survival rates of printed ephemera like public announcements, of which we have virtually none, that such works were not produced.¹⁴ In fact, that the many surviving topically arranged reference works or “encyclopedias” (*leishu*) offered by the Jianyang publishers all incorporated sections that served as a writing manual or as an almanac suggests how popular the simple booklets probably were. For all these reasons, the table’s distribution patterns, especially for those categories with a sizable number of imprints, are far more meaningful than the absolute number for each kind of imprint, as the discussion below shows.¹⁵

Furthermore, data like those presented in table 1 are difficult to amass for each period, each publishing center, or each kind of publisher. Other than Ming-sun Poon’s data for various kinds of publishers in the Song,¹⁶ and my work on Jianyang during the Song and Yuan (1279–1368)

and on Nanjing during the Ming,¹⁷ there are so far no other tabulations similar to those in table 1 for *any* period of Chinese history. It is therefore difficult at present to make detailed comparisons between books produced in Jianyang and those produced by other kinds of publishers or in most other areas of China. In this article, I focus on Jianyang and the major Jiangnan publishing centers, for which we do have some quantitative data. Because commercial publishers in these locations dominated the book market of central and south China during the Ming, we can make some useful deductions about the book culture in this large region of the country.

For example, is there quantitative evidence for the belief among modern scholars that there was an explosive increase of commercial imprints, particularly in central and south China, starting about the mid-sixteenth century, as compared to the earlier Ming? And if so, how can we characterize this increase? Did it entail mainly production of many more of the same kinds of works published earlier, or was there also a wider variety of works available? Were there changes in the ways commercial publishers operated? Were they based primarily in one location or did they rely on increasingly widespread production and distribution networks that spread across provinces? If the publishing industry was truly interregional, was book culture in central and south China homogeneous?

Even a casual perusal of the catalogues of the major Chinese rare-book collections in Chinese libraries or of the important Qing private collections would confirm the impression that the number of books printed in the latter half of the Ming far exceed those from the earlier part of the dynasty.¹⁸ In addition, a number of scholars have recently presented convincing evidence, largely anecdotal, for countrywide changes in the publishing industry between the earlier and later Ming.¹⁹ But is there a way of measuring, even approximately, the number of commercial printed editions from Jianyang and from Jiangnan in different periods of the Ming?

One way of counting simply tracks the number of Ming printed editions versus the cumulative years since the beginning of the dynasty. The works counted are those produced by commercial publishers throughout the country (excluding Jianyang), but most come from the four major

Jiangnan publishing centers: Nanjing, Suzhou, Wuxi, and Hangzhou. The works are those listed in a modern bibliography based on the catalogues of twenty libraries in China and thirteen other bibliographies.²⁰ Thus although the number of imprints would of course be an undercount of the total number of *known* Ming imprints (those extant and those known only from bibliographical descriptions), the statistics still can tell us the percentage of total commercial editions published as a function of time. In fact, dividing the dynasty exactly in half (conveniently at the end of the Hongzhi period, 1488–1505), we find that only a little under 10 percent (707 editions out of the total of 7,325) were printed in the first 138 years.²¹

A somewhat more certain but very similar figure is derived by examining Ming printed editions from Jianyang alone: out of the total 1,664 imprints, about 170, or slightly over 10 percent of all the works were printed in the first half of the dynasty (see table 1); the rest were printed in the second half.²² Indeed, these various figures may actually be further skewed in favor of the later Ming since a number of imprints that are sometimes dated to the early Ming turn out to be reprints using woodblocks cut sometime in the Yuan. The similar contrast between the earlier and later Ming for the various Jiangnan cities and for Jianyang alone strengthens the argument that the distributions are largely attributable to a lower survival rate of the earlier imprints common throughout central and south China, and are not just particular to a single printing center. That is, it is less likely that all these printing centers show around a 10-percent survival rate through sheer coincidence than through a shared set of historical factors, which in turn suggests an integrated book market in central and south China by the early Ming, if not earlier.

Nevertheless, it may be worth seeing if correcting for the survival rates of imprints would greatly alter this disparity between the earlier and later periods. For Jianyang imprints of the Ming, several bibliographies help us obtain some idea of the survival rate for the first two hundred or so years of the dynasty. Two of these are particularly useful—one consisting of 384 titles in the 1553 edition of the *Jianyang xianzhi* (Jianyang County Gazetteer) and the other of 368 titles in *Gujin shuke* (Blockprinted Books, Old and New), a bibliography organized by geo-

graphic area and compiled around 1570 by a scholar, Zhou Hongzu (*jinsshi* 1559). A comparison of these lists with my own bibliography of known Jianyang imprints for the appropriate dates gives a survival rate of about one-third in both cases.²³

If we correct for the one-third survival rate and assume the actual number of works published in Jianyang up through 1505 to be three times the known figure ($3 \times 179 = 537$), and if we further assume a highly unlikely 100-percent survival rate of post-1505 publications, then the percentage of works published in the first half of the dynasty increases, but only to 36 percent of the total. This would mean that the number of commercial titles published in Jianyang in the second half of the dynasty would still be nearly twice that in the first half. Such quantitative estimates therefore support the argument that there was a significant growth in commercial publishing in Jianyang in the late Ming.²⁴

The changes from early to late Ming in commercial publishing entailed not only a huge growth in the numbers of books produced, but also a far greater variety. The chart (see page 69) shows the increases for Jiangnan and for Jianyang imprints in seventeen categories in the *siku* system. The lower portion of each bar represents the number of imprints for the earlier half of the Ming, through the Hongzhi reign period (1368–1505), and the upper portion the number of imprints for the second half of the dynasty (1506–1644).²⁵

What can we conclude from the graphs in the chart? First, in every category shown, more books were published in the second half of the Ming than in the first, both in the Jiangnan printing centers and in Jianyang. Second, several kinds of works, including the Classics,²⁶ Confucian works, and medical books, retained their relative importance even as their absolute numbers grew in the later Ming. In contrast, however, for the Jiangnan publishers, books in the categories of fine arts, catalogues, miscellaneous schools, anecdotists, and to a smaller extent encyclopedias, grew in relative importance with time. Among the kinds of Jianyang imprints that had been relatively unimportant in the early Ming but later became publishing staples are divination texts, encyclopedias, anecdotes, and to a smaller extent, miscellaneous schools. As with the Jiangnan publishing centers, the Classics, Confucian works, and medical works constituted a substantial portion of Jianyang publications through-

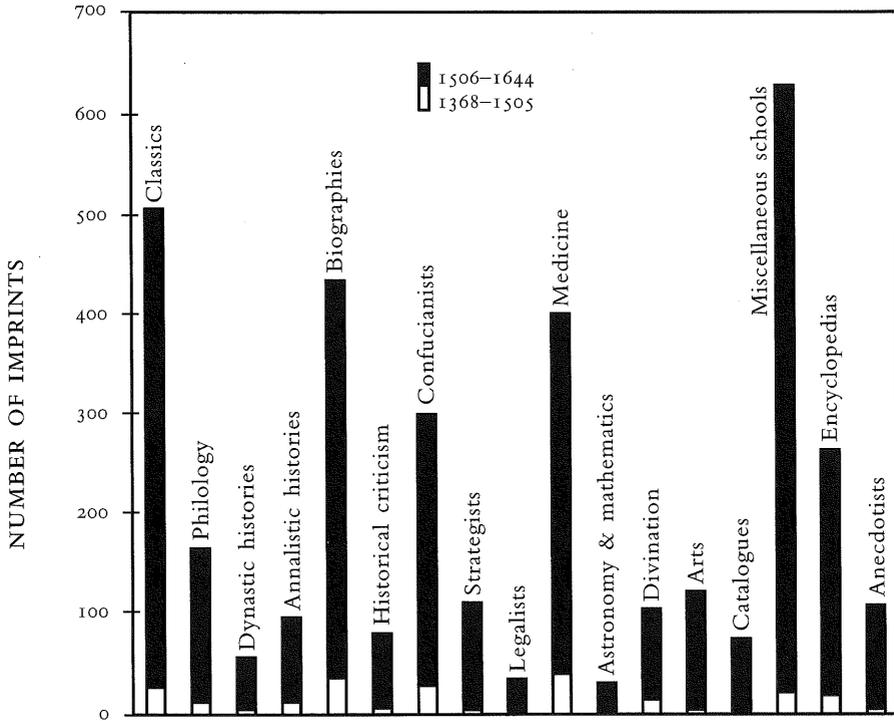


Chart 1A. Increase in number of commercial Jiangnan imprints

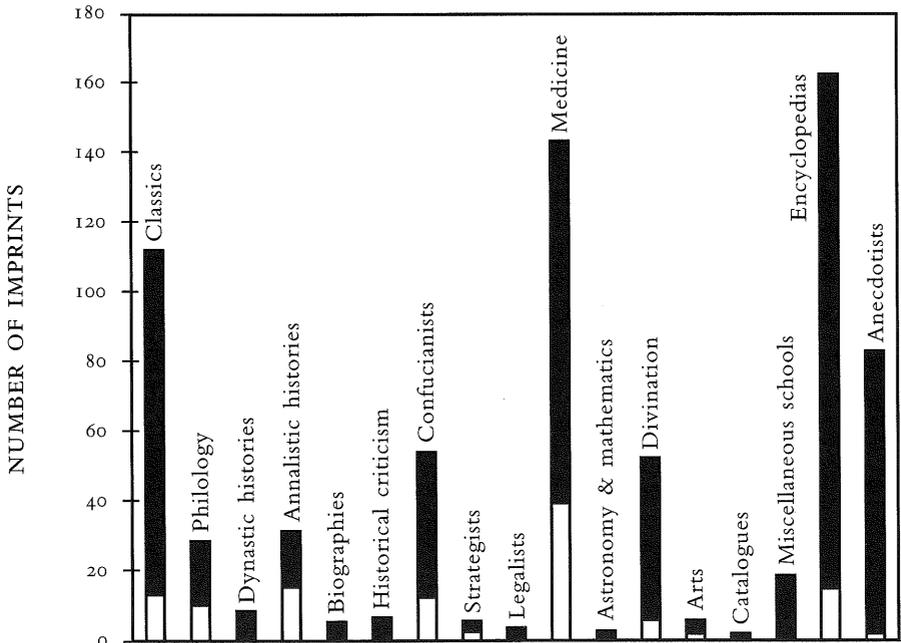


Chart 1B. Increase in number of commercial Jianyang imprints

out the Ming. In short, the kinds of imprints that grew conspicuously in both relative and absolute terms are mainly nonscholarly books, which the more conservative literati like Xie Zhaozhe (1567–1624) disliked and considered frivolous (“nothing but romances and other works to gratify the ear and eye”),²⁷ including art albums, story collections, and historical romances. Xie probably also deplored the low-quality divination texts (on geomancy, physiognomy, astrology, and the like) and household manuals, the text and illustrations in many of which would not have gratified the reader’s eye.

LOOKING INSIDE THE COVERS

So far, we have demonstrated how to derive much information about books and printing in Ming China merely by counting imprints without opening their covers. Now, let us look inside the books. But in doing so, we will pay attention to features located at the beginning and end of the work, in the centerfold of its folios, and at its edges and corners. Bibliophiles and bibliographers of Chinese block-printed books have always been aware of the different kinds of information about each work to be found in its paratext, including prefaces and postfaces, the printer’s colophon (*paiji*), the names of block carvers recorded in the center strip (*banxin*) of each folio in some works, the names of men credited as author, collator, or compiler at the start of a *juan*, and other details often unnoticed by most readers.²⁸ Such features have heretofore served almost exclusively to help rare-book experts deduce bibliographic information, such as the provenance of a work and its publication date. As the examples below show, however, we can also tease out from these features valuable facts about the social history of the Chinese book.

The contents of prefaces and postfaces would seem the parts of a book most likely to tell how it was written, collated, annotated, and published. Examination of these texts in many works, however, yields disappointingly little information about the circumstances of the imprints’ making. Often their writers would wax eloquent about the ancient origin of the work (especially a Classic), its transmission through the ages, its literary merits, and all the scholars, past and contemporary, who had recompiled or emended the work, added commentaries, or

simply discussed the work. Little, however, would be said about how a particular edition came into being, so that the occasional prefaces that do discuss such matters are particularly valuable. For example, in a preface dated 1616, Sun Yunyi (dates unknown), who provided commentaries to *Jianshi Meiting xiansheng siliu biao zhun* (Standard Pieces of “Four-Six Prose” by [Li Liu] Mei-ting, with Commentaries) explained why he and the publisher in Nanjing, Tang Lifei (Jilong) (dates unknown), decided to issue a new edition of the work.²⁹ According to Sun, this well-known collection of “four-six” parallel prose pieces by Li Liu (*jinsshi* 1214, *hao Meiting*) from the Song had been recompiled by the director of the National University in Nanjing, Feng Mengzhen (1546–1605), using a manuscript copy, and published by a student of Feng’s around 1597.³⁰ Sun, however, felt that this earlier edition, although an improvement on an error-ridden version he had bought in a bookstore in Jingkou (possibly meaning Nanjing, or possibly referring to what is today called Zhenjiang), was still far from perfect. Consequently, Sun decided to collate the work again and add his own commentaries, using as his exemplar what he considered to be a good edition that was in a private collection. The result was a text about 20 percent longer than Feng Mengzhen’s version. When Tang Lifei (Jilong) saw Sun’s work, he felt that “other books were not as worthy of publication as this one was.”³¹ An added reason was that Li Liu had come from Chongren, a district close to Tang’s native place of Linchuan in Fuzhou prefecture in Jiangxi.

Despite a self-promoting tone in the preface, Sun’s description provides plausible details about how even a famous work that remained in demand by enough scholars to warrant commercial reprints did not circulate in a well-collated edition early in the seventeenth century. Transmission of works even at a time when official, private, and commercial publishing activities enjoyed an unprecedented boom remained chancy. Moreover, the reliance on manuscript copies to recollate an old text suggests how complex the relationship between print and hand copying remained. Finally, the small bit of information about the publisher is particularly interesting, since we know so little about Tang Lifei (Jilong) and the other members of his family who figured among the most prominent commercial publishers of Nanjing during the late Ming.

Compared with the relative dearth of information in prefaces, the

narrow centerfold strip, which in the string-bound format means the outer edge of the folded leaf, yields a surprising variety of facts about an imprint. In addition to information such as an abbreviated title of the work (or a section) and the foliation, government and private publishers sometimes had the block carvers' names recorded at the bottom of the strip, both to keep track of the number of characters carved by each engraver and a means of quality control (see figure 1). Although commercial publishers rarely followed this practice, they sometimes recorded instead the name of their publishing house. For example, in the first edition of the historical narrative on the Southern Song "restoration," *Xinkan Da Song zhongxing tongsu yanyi* (New Publication of a Popular Elaboration of the History of the Restoration of the Great Song Dynasty), published in 1552 in Nanjing by the Zhou family's Wanjuanlou, a number of leaves have "Wanjuanlou" scratched into the block, that is, sloppily carved at the bottom of the centerfold. On just as many other leaves, the name of another Zhou-family publishing house, the Renshoutang, is recorded. But what is most intriguing is that on still other leaves, "Shuangfengtang" is recorded. Now, the last is one of several publishing-house names (*tangming*) of the best-known late-Ming publisher of Jianyang, Yu Xiangdou (ca. 1555–ca.1635), whose earliest imprints date to the 1580s. One likely explanation is that Yu somehow obtained the blocks and after making his mark on them, so to speak, printed copies, including the one now owned by the Naikaku Bunko in Tokyo.³² This practice of sharing, borrowing, or inheriting sets of printing blocks from another publisher—a most economical and efficient measure given that engraving was the costliest and slowest step in the printing process—was probably quite common among commercial publishers, although it is almost never mentioned in writings before the Qing dynasty.

Because a number of men involved in the Nanjing book trade came from other publishing centers, it is not surprising to see such interregional connections revealed in the imprints. The connection between the Wanjuanlou and the Shuangfengtang is but one of many examples. A similar connection is shown on the first page of the first *juan* of a heavily annotated edition of *Zizhi tongjian gangmu* (Outline of the Comprehensive Mirror for the Aid of Government), the drastic reworking by Zhu Xi (1130–1200) and his students of Sima Guang's (1019–1086)

者

周禮馮相氏

馮乘也相視也言登臺以視天文也

掌十有二歲

歲星所

次十有二月

所謂斗柄所建

十有二辰

所謂日月所會

十日

甲乙丙丁戊己

庚辛

二十有八星之位

星即宿也

辨其敘事以會天位

保章氏

保守也章文也

掌天星以志星辰日月之變動以觀

天下之遷

謂災祥禍福之遷動者

辨其吉凶以星土

星所主辨

九州之地所封

封猶界也

封域皆有分星

如角亢氐兗州之類

以觀妖祥

臣按唐堯之羲和成周之馮相保章即今欽天

衍義補卷第五

二十一

1. Names of block carvers cut into the center of printing blocks, either in the same space as the folio number, or beneath it, in the black strip. Qiu Jun (1421-1495), *Daxue yanyi bu* (Broad Explanation of the Meaning of the Great Learning, Supplemented), 160 *juan*, "Qianshu," 1 *juan* (Jianning fu, 1488), Gest Collection, Princeton University, CI3/391.

1A. Wang Rong, the name of the person who carved the block for this page, appears in a white space along the centerfold just below the folio number. *Juan* 5, p. 20, centerfold.

之行無所見也

王炎曰已之有失非說之苦口不能藥已之不明
非說之開導不能行

臣按高宗爰立傳說作相置諸其左右未遑他

衍義補卷第四

五

賢

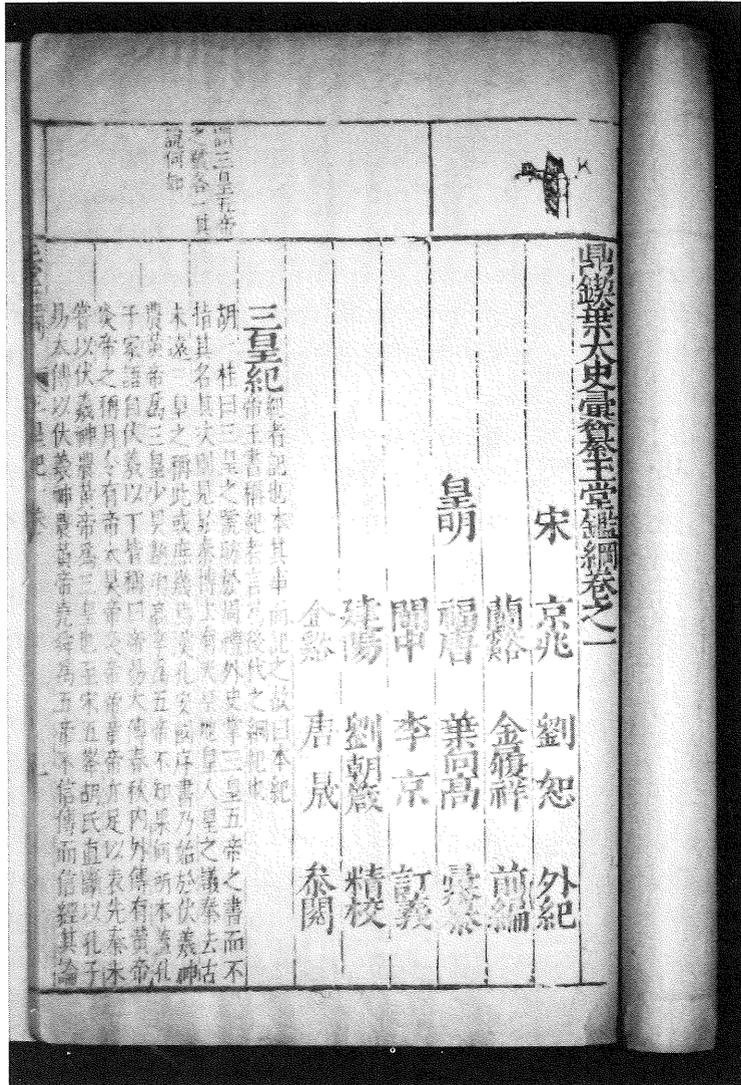
事首命之以朝夕納誨以輔已德可謂知所本
矣置之於左右是欲說無處而不在也誨之於
朝夕是欲說無時而不言也望之切至喻之以
金之礪川之舟楫大旱之霖雨以見已之必資
於相臣之訥誨其切有如此者然猶以物爲比

- 1B. Jian, a character representing the name of the person who carved the block for this page and the character *kan*, meaning to carve, appear in the black strip, *heikou*, at the bottom of the centerfold.
Juan 4, p. 5, centerfold.

work. This edition, published by Tang Sheng (fl. late-sixteenth to early-seventeenth century) of Nanjing, lists as the collator Liu Chaozhen (dates unknown), who was active in the famous Anzhengtang of the Liu family in Jianyang (figure 2A, sixth column from the right). Instead of Liu Chaozhen, another Jianyang printing house, the Zhongdetang of the Xiong family, is given the collating credit on the first page of *juan* four of the same work (figure 2B, sixth column from the right). This is not the end of the story; it turns out that sometime in the Wanli period (1573–1620), the Zhongdetang itself published an edition of this work with the same title and nearly the same format.³³

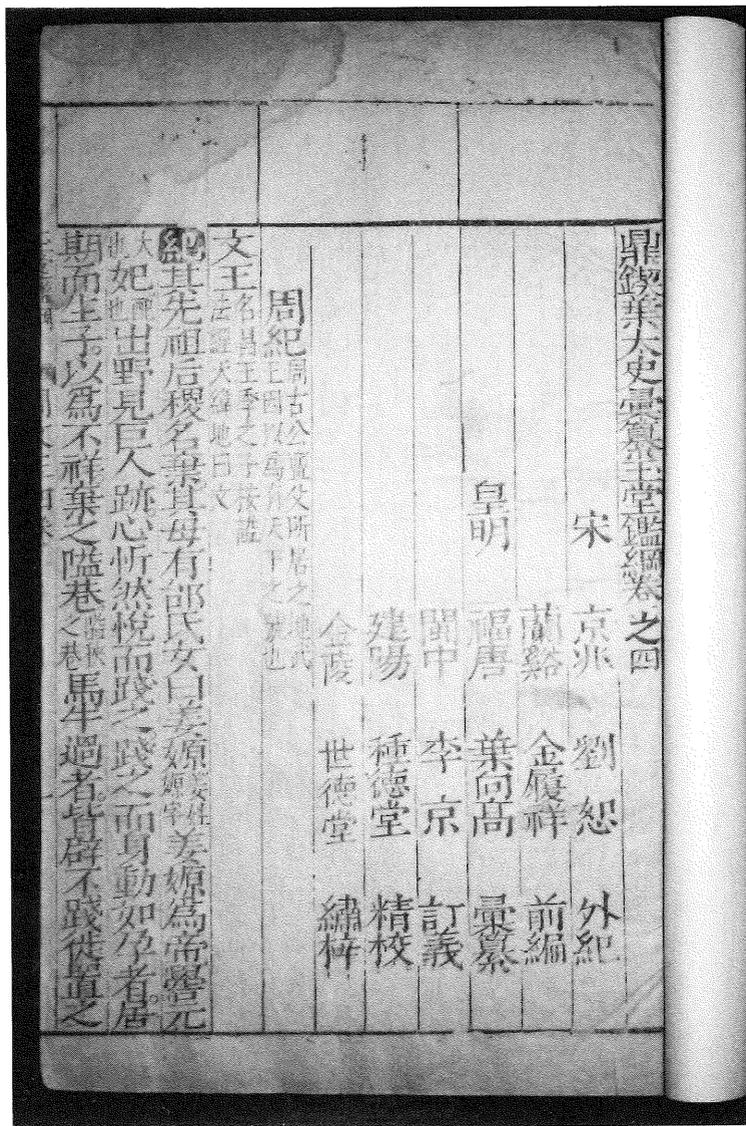
A printer's colophon, often set inside a distinctively decorative colophon block (*cartouche*), provides essential information, including the names of the printer and his establishment and the date the blocks were carved. In particular, the *cartouche* with the lotus-leaf design, such as the one shown in figure 3A, which is located at the end of a literary anthology published by Yu Xiangdou, had become a familiar trademark of Jianyang imprints by the late Yuan or early Ming.³⁴ Indeed, this lotus-leaf design is so closely associated with the Jianyang that it is surprising to see the Tang family's Shidetang, one of the best-known publishers of Nanjing, use it at the end of one of their imprints dated 1612 (figure 3B).³⁵ The format of the work, especially the style of the characters, however, suggests that it may have originally been a Jianyang edition. And indeed, there is an earlier edition printed by Yu Liangmu (fl. late-sixteenth to mid-seventeenth century) of Zixinzhai, another prolific Jianyang publisher.³⁶

In addition to the colophon, a publisher may also include an advertising note (*gaobai*) at the beginning or end of the imprint, identifying himself, extolling the merits of his edition, and noting the defects of other editions (right page in figure 4A). The work that the printer Ye Jinquan (fl. mid- to late-sixteenth century) was touting, *Tang huiyuan jingxuan pidian Tang Song mingxian celun wencui* (Choice Policy Essays by Famous Worthies of the Tang and Song, Specially Selected and Annotated by Top Scholar Tang [Shunzhi]), would have been popular among candidates studying for the government examinations eager to read the comments on examination essays by one of the most popular writers of the day.³⁷ To further attract buyers, the publisher also provided "general



2. Jianyang men involved in a Nanjing publication. Ye Xianggao (1559–1627), comp., *Dingqie Ye taishi huizuan yutang jian'gang* (Finely Carved Edition of Grand Secretary Ye [Xianggao]'s Compiled Annotations on *Comprehensive Mirror*), 72 *juan* (Jinling [Nanjing]: Shidetang, Wanli era). Gest Collection, Princeton University, TB22/2517.

2A. Liu Chaozhen, listed in the sixth column from the right as collator or proofreader, was also active in publishing done by Anzhengtang, a prolific publishing house of the Liu family of Jianyang. *Juan* 1, p. 1a.



2B. In the sixth column from the right, the name of the collator has been replaced with Zhongdetang, the name of the publishing house of the Xiong family of Jianyang. *Juan 4*, p. 1a.



3. Lotus-leaf colophon box in a Jianyang and a Nanjing imprint.

3A. Li Tingji (*jinshi* 1583), et al., comps., *Xinke Li Jiuwo xiansheng bianzuan dafang wan wen yitong* (New Edition of the Connoisseur Collection of Myriad Essays compiled by Li [Tingji] Jiuwo), 22 *juan* (Jianyang: Yu Xiangdou, Wanli period), *juan* 22, last page.

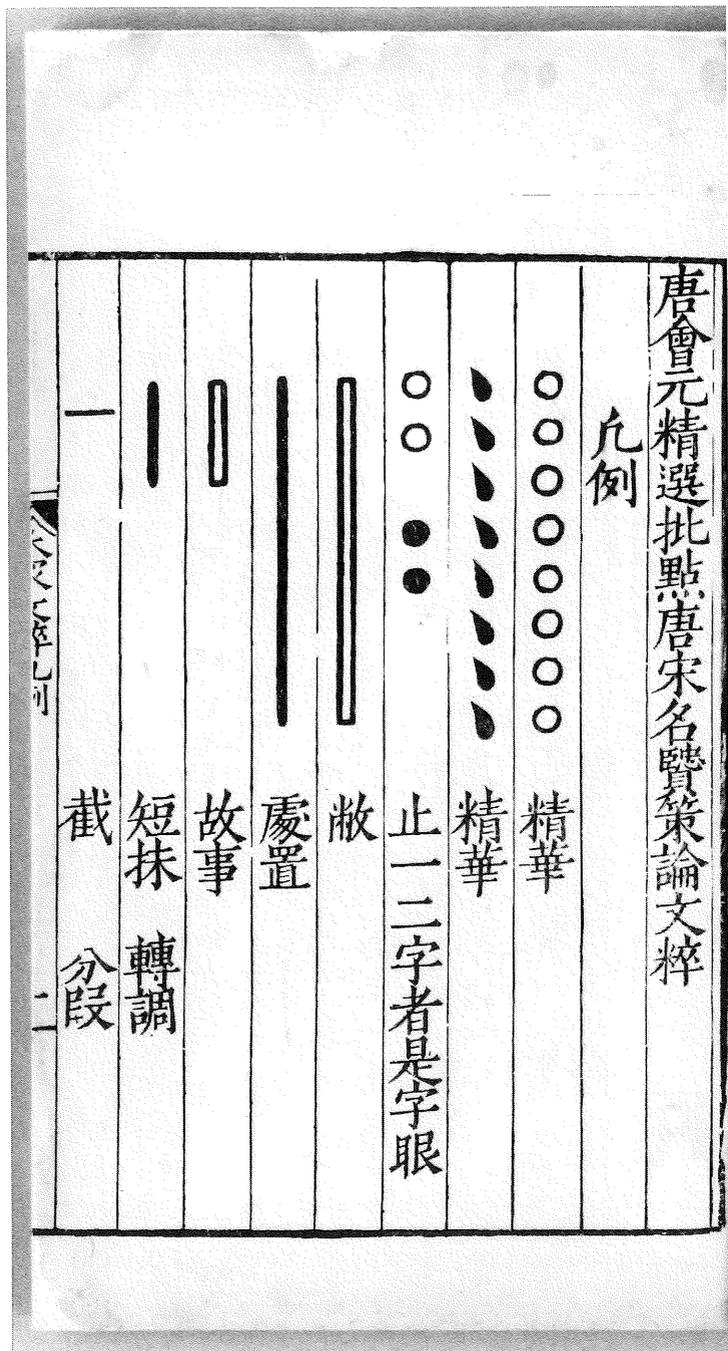
Gest Collection, Princeton University, TD73/2484.

道徳文章卓然名世
 宋公遷以吳準軒得聞蘭馨之學往準軒學焉於是道徳文章卓然名
 世○唐集嘗讀柳子厚非國語曰國語誠非柳子之說亦非也作非
 國語○唐集與弟解構二室左書陶潛詩曰陶庵右書堯夫詩曰邵庵
 故稱集為邵庵先生○楊載文章以氣為主於詩尤有法與范楊盧獨
 俱為一代文章之巨擘云

萬曆壬子仲夏月
 唐氏世德堂重梓

通鑑纂要抄卷之六終

3B. Gu Chong, ed., *Tongjian zuanyao chao hubai* (Best Selections of Essential Passages from the Comprehensive Mirror [for the Aid of Government]), 6 *juan* plus *juanshou* (Jinling [Nanjing]: Tang family Shidetang, 1612), *juan* 6, last page. Gest Collection, Princeton University, TB137/3745.



4. Tang Shunzhi (1507–1560), ed., *Tang huiyuan jingxuan pidian Tang Song mingxian celun wencui* (Choice Policy Essays by Famous Worthies of the Tang and Song, Specially Selected and Annotated by Top Scholar Tang [Shunzhi]), 8 *juan* (Sanqu, Zhejiang: Hu family, 1549; reprint Jianling [Nanjing]: Ye Jinqian, n.d.).

4A1. Left page: First page of the “General Principles” (*fanli*) explaining the notations in the text.

告白士夫君子。此書迺
唐公親自批點校正字樣
無差。今被本行無籍棍徒
省價翻刻批點字畫差錯
甚多。亦無校正。哄騙人財。
况價一般買書君子。恐費
唐公精選批點之功。務要
辯認端的。此牌為記。見住
三山街。浙江葉氏錦泉。印行

principles” (*fanli*), where all the notations in the text were explained (left page in figure 4A).

The publisher of this work and author of the advertising note identified himself as being from Zhejiang but operating on Three Mountains Street (Sanshanjie) in Nanjing, where most of the city’s commercial publishers were located. But two colophons in this same work show that Ye was actually reprinting an edition originally produced in 1549 by a publisher named Hu from Sanqu in Zhejiang (figure 4B). Information from other imprints shows that Hu (or members of his family) also operated in Piling (modern Changzhou, Jiangsu). Furthermore, another work, the prose writings of Tang Shunzhi, *Tang Jingchuan xiansheng wenji* (Collected Prose of Tang Jingchuan [Shunzhi]), was issued in 1553 by both the Ye Baoshantang of Sanqu in Zhejiang and Ye Jinshan in Nanjing’s book district; except for the printers’ colophons, the two editions are identical.³⁸ From Ye Jinshan (also known as Ye Gui), who often identified himself in colophons as Jinling Sanshanjie Jianyang Ye Gui Jinshantang (Jinshantang of Ye Gui from Jianyang on Three Mountains Street in Jinling [Nanjing]), we have about fifteen extant imprints, some looking like Nanjing editions (or what would appeal to Nanjing literati customers) and others like lower-quality Jianyang editions. We can tentatively untangle these relations by suggesting that the Ye family, originally from, and continuing to operate a publishing business in, Jianyang, also established a branch at Sanqu in western Zhejiang (near modern-day Changshan in Quzhou, bordering on northern Fujian) and at Nanjing, while collaborating with the Hu publisher(s) of Sanqu, who also had some business in Piling. Although it is highly plausible that the peripatetic publishers from the smaller printing centers in south and central China established a network of branch shops throughout the region, we have little specific evidence for such practices before the Qing so that these scraps of information for the Ye (and Hu) publishers are worth noting.

Among other Jianyang men who traveled to and worked in different cities in Jiangnan was Liu Suming (fl. late-sixteenth to early-seventeenth century), a master block carver who often designed and drew the illustrations he engraved. Indeed, Liu is far better known for his work in imprints from Nanjing, Hangzhou, and Suzhou than for those from his

嘉靖己酉
年九月初一日

唐會元精選批點唐宋名賢策論文粹

唐會元精選批點唐宋名賢策論文粹目錄

書林桐源胡氏刊

卷之一

易論

豐合冊

4B. Colophons of the Hu family of Sanqu with publishing date of 1549.

4B1. Left page: Colophon found on 1b of "Fanli" reads "Jiajing jiyou mengqiu jidan"
(The first day in the first month of autumn in the year *jiyou* of the Jiajing era [1549]).

Gest Collection, Princeton University, TC318/1152.

法竭天下以養兵守亦使此戰亦使此未戰而士
皆怠者其亦少異矣

三衢山房胡氏梓于易陵

唐會元精選批點唐宋名賢策論文粹卷八終

4B2. Right page: Colophon found on the last page of *juan* 8 reads “Sanqu Qianfang Hu shi zi yu Piling” (Carved in Piling by the Hu family of Qianfang in Sanqu).

native region. It is therefore interesting to find evidence that he also worked in Minbei, as shown in the landscape (figure 5A) from the *Wuyi zhilüe* (Succinct Gazetteer of the Wuyi Mountains),³⁹ published privately in 1619 by one Sun Shichang (dates unknown) in Chongan, which has the phrase “Shulin Liu Suming kexiang” (Drawn and engraved by Liu Suming of Shulin) written on a vertical rock face (right half-leaf of figure 5A; also figure 5B).

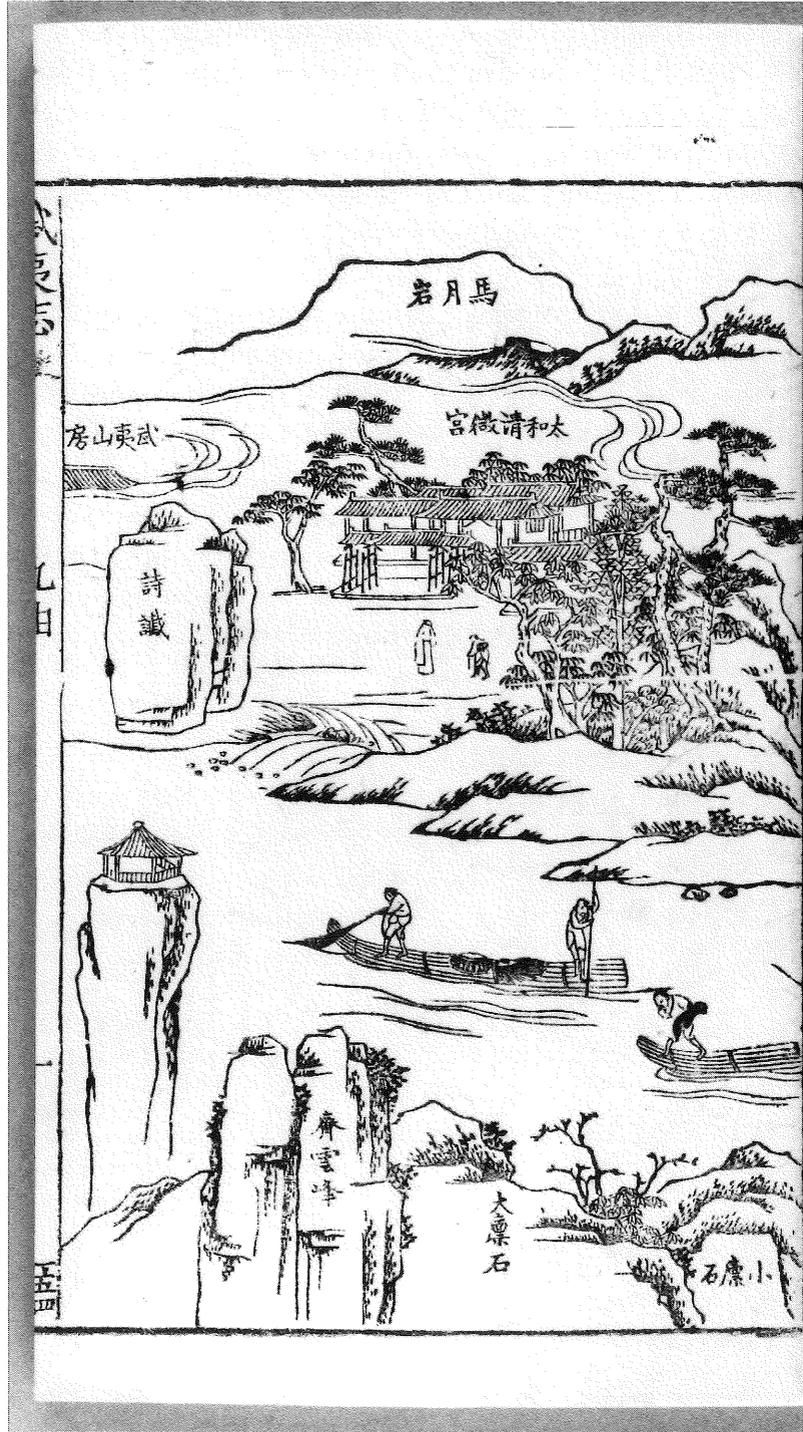
I end with a discussion of divination texts published in Jianyang during the Ming. First, let us do some counting. We have ninety-two extant works from Jianyang (see table 1), of which only eight were printed prior to 1506, and most were published from the late-sixteenth century on. Even if we accept the explanation that there was a greater interest in divination in the late Ming than before, we are left asking why, and by whom. Since neither this one paragraph nor this entire paper will suffice to explain the *mentalité* of late-Ming society, we do something far simpler: we continue our counting. The ninety-two divination works can be subdivided as shown in table 2.

Of the types of divination works listed in table 2, the most popular were books on geomancy (siting), and on fate determination and physiognomy, many of which contained some portions that were more comprehensible and accessible to the lay reader, at least compared to the works on numerology, divination by the *Yijing* (Book of Changes), and other more esoteric methods. A similar distribution is seen in a survey of the divination sections in thirty-one Jianyang imprints of *leishu*, known

Table 2

DIVINATION WORKS PUBLISHED IN JIANYANG DURING THE MING

TYPE OF DIVINATION	NUMBER OF JIANYANG IMPRINTS	SECTIONS IN 31 HOUSEHOLD REFERENCE MANUALS (LEISHU)
Numerology (<i>shuxue</i>)	1	2
Meteorology (<i>zhanhou</i>)	3	4
Geomancy (<i>xiangzhai xiangmu</i>)	36	29
Divination by the <i>Yijing</i> (<i>zhanbu</i>)	8	1
Fate calculation, physiognomy (<i>mingshu xiangshu</i>)	30	27
Yinyang, five agents (<i>yinyang wuxing</i>)	9	3
Miscellaneous (e.g., oneiromancy) (<i>zashu</i>)	5	5
TOTAL	92	



5A. Xu Biaoran, *Wuyi zhilüe* (Succinct Gazetteer of the Wuyi Mountains), 4 *juan* (Chongan, Jianning: Sun Shichang, 1619).



5A. Name of illustrator and engraver Liu Suming on vertical rock face (right half-leaf).

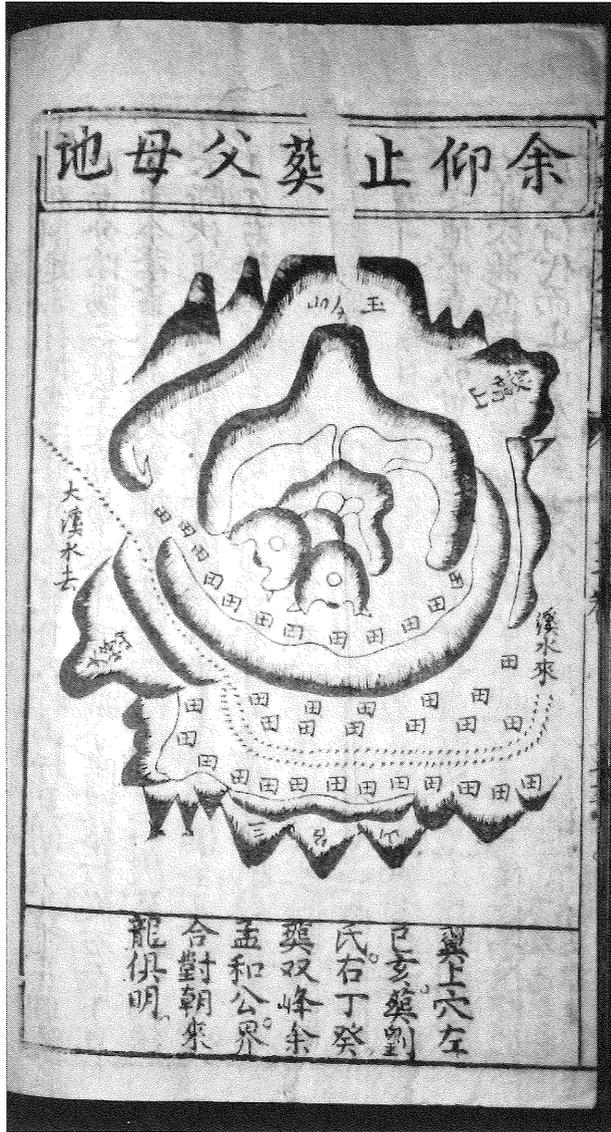


5B. Detail of 5A.

as general household reference manuals. It may be that for the growing number of somewhat literate readers, such as shopkeepers, craftsmen, and middle- and lower-level merchants, their preferred divination methods represented those that were not only most intelligible to them, but ones that most directly addressed their greatest preoccupations—their personal fortunes and destinies and the well-being of their deceased ancestors. Nevertheless, of the divination texts I examined, few of *any* type seem truly aimed at the nonprofessional. Perhaps the mere possession of such texts, unread and unreadable (except by a professional who might be consulted), still provided a certain psychological reassurance and the likelihood of good fortune. It represents a use of print that does not require its being read.

The divination texts also tell us something about their publishers: that a number of Jianyang printers most active in the production of household encyclopedias (and other kinds of *leishu*) also produced the bulk of the divination texts: eighteen from Yu Xiangdou and the Yu family's Cuiqingtang, fourteen from various Xiong publishers, fourteen from various Chen publishers, and ten from the Liu family's Qiaoshantang. Furthermore, both the Xiong and Chen families had long histories of printing medical works, and included men who were known to be skilled in both medicine and divination, apparently two alternative occupations popular among the Jianyang publishers.

Finally, we proceed from counting and correlating the numbers of imprints in different categories of divination techniques to reading the text in one of them—the *Ke Yangzhi Zi canding zhengchuan dili tongyi quanshu* (Unified Compendium of [Works on] Geomancy, Collated, and Correctly Transmitted by Yangzhi Zi [Yu Xiangdou]), a 1628 collection of works on geomancy jointly printed by Yu Yingqiu (fl. late-sixteenth to mid-seventeenth century) and Yu Yingke (fl. late-sixteenth to mid-seventeenth century) and compiled by Yu Xiangdou, who managed to involve both his living and his dead relatives.⁴⁰ Some eight living relatives are listed as collators or editors at the beginning of many of the *juan*, and there are four full-page pictures showing the burial sites of Yu's parents (figure 6) and other ancestors to illustrate various geomantic factors. Yu also provided an account of the arrival of the Yu lineage in the Chonghua district of Jianyang county and of the supposed origins of publishing in Shufang.



6. A burial site for Yu family ancestors, taken from a Ming geomancy text published in Jianyang. Yu Xiangdou, comp., *Ke Yangzhi Zi canding zhengchuan dili tongyi quanshu* (Unified Compendium of [Works on] Geomancy, Collated, and Correctly Transmitted by Yangzhi Zi [Yu Xiangdou]), 12 *juan* plus *shoujuan* (Jianyang: Yu Yingqiu and Yu Yingke, Chongzhen period 1628–1644), *juan* 12, pp. 72b. Harvard-Yenching Library, T1747/8923.

In the west of Jianyang county, about eighty *li* [forty kilometers] from the county seat, is the district called Chonghua, which is today's Shufang [literally, "Book Town"]. . . . Originally, when Shufang was settled, there were only three lineages, the Fu, the Liu, and the Ruan. The Fu lived in what is now the Rear Alley (Houxiang), the Liu in today's Luo Family Alley (Luojiaxiang), and the Ruan in today's Ruan Settlement Alley (Ruandunxiang or Ruantunxiang). . . . All of them tilled the land and wove cloth to make their living. In the Song, after retiring from office, my ancestor Yu Tongzu, who was a native of Xin'an county [Henan] and had been a grand master for consultation and military commissioner of Guangxi [came here and] determined by siting to settle in this place. He was accompanied only by his nephew Zhisun and his brother-in-law, Fan De. . . . At that time, there were only five or six lineages and about eighty to ninety households, though their homes were scattered all over. Zhisun was an expert in siting. When he had time, he traveled around the area and determined it would later become one of culture and learning and exhorted the people to establish a Confucian temple at a site called "The Commanding Dragon Inclining Its Head" (*Long luo tou zongling*) in order to gain the [site's] full benefit. He also encouraged the people to print books for a living, . . . and they all heeded his advice. At that time, printing was not used to disseminate information, and only the people of Shufang perceived the benefits of blockprinting. Families that were well-to-do printed books in order to study; families that were poor engraved blocks in order to print books. The people in the region rejoiced in their craft, and not one out of a thousand wandered away to seek work for his living. All this resulted from the geomantic skill of Zhisun. From then on, the people and homes of Shufang multiplied. During the Song, when Zhu Xi used siting to determine the location for Kaoting [Academy], he came to Shufang. Seeing the beauty of the landscape and the luxuriantly growing forests, he reestablished the Confucian Temple and founded Tongwen Academy. He collated and printed the collected commentaries for the Five Classics and Four Books, all

the histories, and the writings of many philosophers, for dissemination everywhere. These works were reprinted in the capital, in areas west of Zhejiang, and other places.⁴¹

Very shrewdly, Yu summarized in this passage various traditional stories about the publishing industry of Shufang, which must have been in common circulation in the area long before the late Ming. Thus it was the Yu family, and by extension the other well-known publisher families to whom the Yu were related, who, when they came to the sparsely settled Chonghua district, recognized by their skill in geomancy its potential as a place of culture and learning. By heeding Confucian traditions and by showing the inhabitants the benefits of blockprinting, they realized Shufang's promise. Admittedly, Yu Xiangdou was exceptional among commercial publishers in his unabashed self-advertising in his imprints, but in this excerpt, we get a rare glimpse of how Yu and other commercial publishers must have perceived themselves—as scholars worthy of association with Zhu Xi and his disciples and like him, skilled in geomancy and engaged in dissemination of learning through printing. Yu thus endowed the Jianyang publishers with an intellectual respectability that they may not have attained in many of their imprints.

CONCLUSION

Ironically, the great many imprints produced in China for the last twelve centuries are particularly silent on the story of their own making, so that there are large gaps in our knowledge of how books were produced and who produced them in imperial China. Furthermore, many of the details that historians of the book find interesting went unnoticed, or at least were not remarked on by the publishers, authors, editors, and all others whose efforts contributed to the making of these imprints. For the producers of these books, the relatively simple technology of woodblock printing, which had changed very little and been in use for nearly a thousand years by the late Ming, was not a topic worth special notice.⁴² Consequently, modern scholars must find ways of coaxing such information from the books themselves, by counting them and by examining the various paratextual features that have usually been ignored by most readers.

NOTES

1. Some of the material in this article has appeared in print elsewhere (see notes 11 and 17), but I believe the presentation here is justified by its emphasis on practical methods for learning about the history of the Chinese book.
2. In 1989 the Research Libraries Group's Chinese Rare Books Project began to catalogue on-line Chinese imprints published prior to 1796 that are in the collections of various libraries in North America, mainland China, and England. Although this catalogue's usefulness is indisputable, it will be some time before all the holdings of even the currently participating libraries are recorded fully. In China, some libraries (for example, Liaoning Provincial Library, Shandong Provincial Library, and Nanjing Library) have now incorporated their rare-book catalogues into their in-house computers, allowing for on-line searches. There has been no concerted effort, however, to standardize these on-line catalogues in terms of bibliographic classifications (for example, how to subdivide the *siku* [four-divisions] system if used, what search parameters to be made available, or even rules on how to record book titles). Until such absolutely basic bibliographic standards are established, the uses of the on-line catalogues will continue to be limited.
3. Readers who wish to examine works in the rare-book collections of many libraries generally count themselves fortunate if even a traditional card catalogue exists, despite omissions, errors, and wildly inconsistent cataloguing of similar works. Sometimes the card catalogue is considered "internal" and can only be used by the library staff. In certain libraries, including some of the most important collections in Japan (for example, the Sonkeikaku), the printed catalogues have not been updated for decades and in any case contain little information about a work other than title, author, and the dynasty in which it was published. Even a reader-friendly institution, such as the new Shanghai Municipal Library, does not yet have more than a mimeograph copy of its rare-books catalogue for public use, and some unknown number of interesting items remain uncatalogued.
4. The National Library of China (formerly the Beijing Library) has a readily accessible on-line catalogue of its modern book holdings, but the rare books have only a printed catalogue (compiled using the card catalogue), and the "ordinary string-bound books" collection does not even have a complete printed catalogue.
5. In the summer of 2000, I had the opportunity to visit the Li-family storehouse, where the blocks had been walled up for over fifty years, and to examine at the museum some of these woodblocks, which are in good condition. The Zhangqiu Municipal Museum is currently preparing a bibliography of all the works represented by the woodblocks.
6. See Brokaw's article in this issue of the *East Asian Library Journal*.
7. As far as I know, almost none of these kinds of imprints are listed in any of the annotated catalogues of the famous old collections or bibliographies,

- compiled privately or for the official histories. Zheng Zhenduo (1898–1958), the famous bibliophile, who was unusual in his interest in such popular works, recalled his own and friends' experience of rescuing old books from being recycled in paper factories. See "Yu Xiangdou: *Lieguo zhizhuan*," in *Xidi shuhua* (Beijing: Xinhua shuju, 1983), pp. 670–671.
8. Because most of the previous European owners of such books could not read Chinese and bought them as exotica, the works were often split up, so that several *juan* were donated to or bought by different libraries. For example, portions of an edition of the *Sanguo zhizhuan* (Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms) printed in 1592 have apparently been apportioned among four European libraries (Cambridge University Library with *juan* 7–8, the Württemberg State Library in Stuttgart with *juan* 9–10, the Oxford Bodleian with *juan* 11–12, and the British Library with *juan* 19–20), and there may be more elsewhere, lying undiscovered. Since the Bodleian fragment was given to that library in 1635, it seems that the work was indeed acquired by some European in the late Ming. See also Y. W. Ma's "Introduction" in Hartmut Walravens, ed., *Two Recently Discovered Fragments of the Chinese Novels "Sanguo zhi yanyi" and "Shuihu zhuan"* (Hamburg: C. Bell Verlag, 1982). Ma cautions that we cannot be sure that the four fragments came from the same copy.
 9. This is my own estimate, based on a thorough survey of library catalogues and annotated bibliographies. Furthermore, in *Zhongguo yinshua shi* (History of Printing in China) (Shanghai: Renmin chubanshe, 1989), Zhang Xiumin's lists of commercial publishers in the major printing centers of the Song (pp. 70–93), Yuan (pp. 282–293), and Ming (pp. 340–402) show that in each dynasty, there were at least as many commercial publishers in Jianyang as in such cultural centers as Nanjing, Hangzhou, and Suzhou.
 10. The two main printing centers in northern Fujian were Masha and Shufang, both located in Jianyang county in Jianning prefecture. Traditionally, imprints from the Minbei area have been called *Jianyangben*, *Jiankanben*, *Jianben*, or *Mashaben*. The last term more often refers to the low-quality imprints produced by Jianyang publishers.
 11. Lucille Chia, "The Development of the Jianyang Book Trade, Song-Yuan," *Late Imperial China*, 17.1 (June 1996), pp. 10–48; *Printing for Profit: The Commercial Publishers of Jianyang* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002); and "Commercial Publishing in Jianyang from the Late Song to the Late Ming," in *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition*, ed. Paul J. Smith and Richard von Glahn (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), pp. 284–328.
 12. Thus, I would count as two different editions an earlier publication and a later one printed from blocks that were facsimile engraved from the first, even though the main text; the annotations and commentaries; any front and back matter; the punctuation of any of these parts; and any charts, tables, and illustrations may be (nearly) identical.
 13. The rhyming dictionary *Guangyun*, as recompiled by Chen Pengnian (961–1017) et al., is the edition on which subsequent ones are based. Many of the

commercial editions, however, tended to be abridged or to have additions offered by their publishers to entice buyers, or both.

14. This nearly total nonsurvival of certain kinds of printed materials occurs even for countries for which the social history of the book in the early modern period usually benefits from an abundance of imprints and more information about their publishers than China. See, for example, the three pages comprised largely of speculation on the reading materials of “the humblest readers” in his 640-page study on the book trade in seventeenth-century Paris in Henri-Jean Martin, *Print, Power, and People in 17th-Century France*, trans. David Gerard (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1993), pp. 368–370. Rudolf Hirsch, in talking about the first century of European imprints, lists twelve kinds of books “more likely to have disappeared than others” in *Printing, Selling and Reading 1450–1550* (1967; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrossowitz, 1974), p. 11. Many items on his list—cheap books, small books, household books (such as cookbooks), books classified as pseudoscientific (prescriptions, almanacs, prognostications, dream books), school primers, vernacular popular literature, proscribed books, and aids in conducting business (for example, books on commercial arithmetic or samples of letters with proper salutations)—would also be likely to have disappeared in China. Although in China much of this kind of information has survived in the type of encyclopedia (*leishu*) known as a household encyclopedia, it seems quite likely that small works devoted to just one of these topics were printed in abundance, sold very well, and were read to tatters, so that almost none are extant from pre-Qing times.
15. For detailed analysis of the figures in table 1 and of those for Jianyang imprints of the Song and Yuan, see Chia, *Printing for Profit*, chaps. 3–6.
16. Ming-sun Poon, “Books and Printing in Sung China (960–1279)” (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1979), table 8 (p. 123), table 12 (p. 135), table 13 (p. 154), and table 14 (pp. 170–171). Several older works, although not intended as complete surveys of known imprints for any region, kind of publisher, or period, are useful—for example, Wang Guowei, *Liang-Zhe gu kanben kao* (Study on Old Printed Books from the Liang-Zhe Region), in volume 7 of *Wang Guowei yishu* (Posthumously Collected Writings of Wang Guowei) (1939; Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1983); and a number of essays by Ye Dehui in *Shulin qinghua* (Pure Talks on the World of Books) (1920; Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1988).
17. For the Song and Yuan data on Jianyang imprints, see table 2 of Chia, “Commercial Publishing in Jianyang from the Late Song to the Late Ming.” For Nanjing, see Chia, “Of Three Mountains Street: Commercial Publishers in Ming Nanjing,” in Cynthia Brokaw and Kai-wing Chow, eds., *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, forthcoming).
18. I specify *Chinese* libraries (including the National Central Library and the Palace Museum Library in Taipei) because rare-book collections in other countries tend to focus on a particular period because of their acquisition histories and do not therefore give a “representative” sample of Chinese

imprints throughout history. For example, most of the collections in Western libraries are strongest in works from the Ming and later. In Japan, the collections that are strongest in Ming, Qing, and Republican works have far fewer Song and Yuan imprints, whereas Song and Yuan holdings of the Seikadō Bunko and the Sonkeikaku are especially strong. For these reasons, in counting Ming imprints, I have used bibliographies based on holdings in libraries in China.

19. See, for example, Inoue Susumu, "Zōsho to dokusho (Book Collecting and Reading)," *Tōhō gakuho*, 62 (1990), pp. 415-440; and Joseph P. McDermott, "The Ascendance of the Imprint," in Brokaw and Chow, *Printing and Book Culture*.
20. Du Xinfu, ed., *Mingdai banke zongmu* (Comprehensive Catalogue of Ming-Dynasty Printed Books), 8 string-bound vols. (Yangzhou: Jiangsu Guangling guji keyinshe, 1983). I have used Du's bibliography because it conveniently covers the entire Ming period for the major Chinese libraries. These advantages outweigh the occasional misprints and errors in Du's work. I included the commercial publications from Beijing, but they constitute less than 2 percent of the total 7,325 works. Nearly all the rest, as identified by Du or by my own research, come from one of the four major publishing centers in Jiangnan. Because my study is focusing specifically on commercial imprints, I have excluded imprints produced by various central, regional, and local government offices and by Buddhist and Daoist institutions that are also listed in Du. These publications exhibit very different patterns with respect to the historical period than do the commercial ones.
21. Dividing the dynasty in half is admittedly arbitrary, but the second half happens to begin with the Zhengde period (1505-1521), when definite signs indicate the revival of commercial publishing in both Jianyang and the Jiangnan book centers.
22. These figures are more reliable than those for publications from all four major Jiangnan printing centers since I have done an exhaustive search for Jianyang imprints using almost all the available catalogues and bibliographies. I found it much more difficult to determine the number of Ming imprints from each of the other four publishing centers (Nanjing, Suzhou, Wuxi, and Hangzhou) alone and so have been unable to make individual comparisons with Jianyang.
23. Feng Jike et al., comps., *Jianyang xianzhi*, 16 *juan*, 1553; reprinted as vol. 31 of *Tianyige Mingdai fangzhi xuankanben* (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1964), *juan* 5, pp. 20b-30a; Zhou Hongzu, *Gujin shuke* (ca. 1570; Shanghai: Gudian wenxue chubanshe, 1957), pp. 361-369. Comparison with my own bibliography of Jianyang imprints reveals that only 123 of the 384, or 32 percent from the gazetteer list, are known today, essentially the same as the 33 percent for the *Gujin shuke* list. It is unclear whether the 384 titles in the *Jianyang xianzhi* include ones printed in the Song and Yuan, but even if the fourteen from these earlier periods are included, the survival rate only increases to about 36 percent. I did not use the bibliography in the 1601 edition of the *Jianyang xianzhi*, comp. Yang Dezheng et al., 10 *juan*, reprinted in the series Riben

cang Zhongguo hanjian difangzhi congkan (Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1991), *juan* 7, pp. 9b–13b, since it contains only 131 titles and seems like a sloppily compiled list. Not only are most of these works also in the earlier gazetteer, but given the dramatic increase in Jianyang imprints during the late-sixteenth century, the 1601 list should have been far larger.

It is also worth noting that both the 1553 *Jianyang xianzhi* and the Zhou bibliographies are incomplete in two ways. First, both fall short of a complete list of Jianyang imprints up to the date of compilation, even for the categories included. For example, whereas I count about 106 medical works published in Jianyang before the start of the Wanli period in 1573, Zhou lists only 48. Similarly, I count 85 literary works of individuals (*bieji*) published before the Wanli period in 1573, whereas Zhou lists only 35. The tallies in the 1553 *Jianyang xianzhi* similarly fall short. Second, neither works of fiction (novels and many story collections) nor plays (including drama miscellanies) are included in the *Jianyang xianzhi* and Zhou bibliographies, an especially disappointing omission since the information would help test the belief of many modern scholars that the printing of such works grew tremendously in the late Ming.

24. I have not attempted a similar estimate for imprints from Jiangnan because the *Gujin shuke's* lists of imprints from the various publishing centers in this area seem too incomplete, when compared to those known from other bibliographies and catalogues.
25. Obviously there are ways to present such information in a fuller fashion, such as plotting the number of imprints in each category (or subcategory) against the length of time into the dynasty. I have not shown every *siku* category because the number of imprints for several of them was extremely low. Furthermore, a classification scheme other than the *siku* system may be more useful, since the latter's organization groups quite disparate types of works together. I use it here for ease of reference since so many bibliographic sources (traditional annotated catalogues of various collections, card catalogues for the Chinese rare-book collections of many libraries, as well as the on-line RLIN Chinese Rare Books Catalogue) also use it. Various refinements in presentation will be more valuable when we can apply them to more complete data.
26. I have included imprints of and about the Four Books in the Classics since the former increased in the same proportion as the Classics.
27. Xie Zhaozhe, *Wu za zu* (Five-part Miscellany), 1616; reprinted in *Wakuhon kanseki zuihitsu*, no. 1 (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1982), *juan* 13, p. 22b.
28. Although terms such as page layout, typography, *mise en page*, and paratext have long been used by scholars of the Western book, they do not have definitions that are universally agreed on. Page layout refers to the spatial arrangement of the text matter (number of characters per line, number of lines per page, size of the margins, indentations, justification, and the like). Typography in the broader sense refers to such elements of book design as the kinds of letter type, the page layout, the organization of the main text and front and

- back matter, and titling. This is the sense used by D. F. McKenzie in "Typography and Meaning: The Case of William Congreve," in Giles Barber and Bernhard Fabian, eds., *Buch und Buchhandel in Europa im Achtzehnten Jahrhundert* (Hamburg: Hauswedell, 1981), pp. 81–125. *Mise en page*, which refers to much the same features as typography but with perhaps a greater emphasis on the reading practices than on book design, is discussed by Roger Laufer for manuscripts in "L'Espace visuel du livre ancien," and for imprints in "Les Espaces du livre," in Roger Chartier and Henri-Jean Martin, eds., *Histoire de l'édition française* (Paris: Promodis, 1984), vol. 1, pp. 579–601, and vol. 2, pp. 128–139, respectively. Even more comprehensive is "paratext," as used by Gérard Genette in his *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 3, to mean that which links the author's intention, mediated by the book designers and producers, with the reader's response. All these concepts, after necessary modifications, are useful for our discussion of the Chinese imprint.
29. Sun Yunyi, "Siliu biao zhun jian yin" (Preface to *Standard Pieces of "Four-Six Prose" with Commentaries*), pp. 1a–2a in Li Liu, *Jianshi Meiting xiansheng siliu biao zhun*, Sun Yunyi, annot., 40 juan (Jinling [Nanjing]: Tang Lifei (Jilong), 1612). See Qu Wanli, *Pulinsidun daxue Ge Side Dongfang tushuguan Zhongwen shanben shuzhi* (Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiye gongsi, 1984), p. 437.
 30. Feng's preface, entitled "Siliu biao zhun xu" (preface to *Standard Pieces of "Four-Six Prose"*), pp. 1a–3a, included in the Tang Lifei (Jilong) edition, is dated 1597.
 31. The quotation is from page 2a of Sun's preface (see note 29). In any case, Sun's edition won the approbation of the editors of the Siku quanshu, who included it in their collectanea (no. 1177; ji 116).
 32. Naikaku Bunko, *fu han 2, hao 4*.
 33. Copies of the Zhongdetang edition exist in several libraries in China, including the National Library's Rare Book Collection (no. 19208).
 34. The compilation and editing of this literary anthology, *Xinkan Li Jiuwo xiansheng bianzuan dafang wanwen yitong* (New Edition of the Connoisseur Collection of Myriad Essays compiled by Li [Tingji] Jiuwo), 22 juan (Jianyang: Shuangfengtang, Wanli era), are attributed to Li Tingji (1583 *jinshi*) and two other prominent late-Ming officials. Qu Wanli in his catalogue of the rare books in the Gest Collection at Princeton notes that in all likelihood this anthology was compiled by the Yu family's publishing house under the names of borrowed literati luminaries. See Qu Wanli, *Pulinsidun daxue Ge Side Dongfang tushuguan zhongwen shanben shuzhi*, pp. 531–532.
 35. Gu Chong (1567 *juren*), ed., *Tongjian zuanyao chao hubai* (Best Selections of Essential Passages from the Comprehensive Mirror [for the Aid of Government]), 6 juan plus *juanshou* (Jinling: Shidetang, 1612). See Qu Wanli, *Pulinsidun daxue Ge Side Dongfang tushuguan zhongwen shanben shuzhi*, p. 116.
 36. The date for the Zixinzhai edition is 1573, according to entry 1329 in "*shibu*" (History Section) of *Zhongguo guji shanben shumu* (Catalogue of Old and Rare Chinese Books), ed. Zhongguo guji shanben shumu weiyuan hui (Shanghai:

- Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1991). This may be a misprint, however, since most of Yu Liangmu's fifteen or so publications date to the last decade of the sixteenth and first decade of the seventeenth century. I have not seen the Zixinzhai edition (copies are held in the Beijing Normal University and Qinghua University libraries, according to the above catalogue), but on the basis of my examination of other imprints from this printing establishment, I would say the overall look of the 1612 Shidetang work (see figure 3B) greatly resembles a number of Zixinzhai publications. This similarity may again be a case of woodblocks being shared by different publishers.
37. Tang Shunzhi (1507–1560), ed., *Tang huiyuan jinxuan pidian Tang Song mingxian celun wencui*, 8 juan (Sanqu, Zhejiang: Hushi, 1549; Sanshanjie, Jinling: Ye Jinquan, n.d.). See Qu Wanli, *Pulinsidun daxue Ge Side Dongfang tushuguan zhongwen shanben shuzhi*, p. 511. In 1529 Tang Shunzhi, a well-regarded essayist and literary theorist, was “huiyuan”; that is, he placed first in the Metropolitan Examination that year. See Guoli zhongyang tushuguan, ed., *Mingren zhuanji ziliao suoyin* (1965; Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1978), p. 398.
 38. More libraries (including the Harvard-Yenching and the Library of Congress) seem to have the Ye Baoshantang edition of Tang Shunzhi's prose writings; I have seen only one copy with the Ye Jinshan colophon, at the Naikaku Bunko (*han* 316, *hao* 150) in Tokyo. In a colophon at the end of the table of contents (*mulu*) of this copy, the name of the publisher is given as Sanqu Ye Baoshantang, whereas in the colophon at the end of the work, the name Zhejiang Ye Baoshantang is given. The date 1553 is given in yet another colophon, at the end of a preface and before the table of contents, and reads “Jiajing guichou Shulin Ye shi Wujin zixing” (Printed in the year *guichou* of the Jiajing era [1553] by Ye Wujin of Shulin).
 39. Xu Biaoran, *Wuyi zhilüe*, 4 juan (Chongan: Sun Shichang, 1619). See Qu Wanli, *Pulinsidun daxue Ge Side Dongfang tushuguan zhongwen shanben shuzhi*, p. 180.
 40. Yu is listed as the author or editor of every *juan* and seems to have been the moving spirit behind the work. Copies are held in the Naikaku Bunko Chinese Rare Book Collection (291 *han*, 46 *hao*) and the Harvard-Yenching Rare Book Collection (T1747/8923). Yu Yingqiu and Yu Yingke were most likely nephews or younger cousins of Yu Xiangdou.
 41. Yu Xiangdou, comp., *Ke Yangzhi Zi canding zhengchuan dili tongyi quanshu* (Jianyang: Yu Yingqiu and Yu Yingke, 1628), *juan* 1, pp. 65b–66a. The book is actually a compilation of geomancy texts that Yu and a number of other men had either abridged or supplemented with comments.
 42. Perhaps this easy acceptance and the relative simplicity of woodblock printing rendered it a “transparent” technology—closer in these ways to photocopying than to the much-noticed computer revolution of modern times.

GLOSSARY

- Anzhengtang 安正堂
 banbenxue 版本學
 banxin 版心
 Baoshantang 寶山堂
 biannian 編年
 bieji 別集
 bieshi 別史
 bingjia 兵家
 Changshan 常山
 Changzhou 常州
 chatu 插圖
 Chen 陳
 Chen Pengnian 陳彭年
 Chongan 崇安
 Chonghua 崇化
 Chongren 崇仁
Chuci 楚辭
Chunqiu 春秋
 ciqu 詞曲
 congshu 叢書
 Cuiqingtang 翠慶堂
Da Ming yitong zhi 大明一統志
 daojia 道家
Daxue yanyi bu 大學衍義補
 dili 地理
Dingqie Ye taishi huizuan yutang jian'gang
 鼎鍬葉太史彙纂玉堂鑑綱
 fajia 法家
 Fan De 范德
 fanli 凡例
 Feng Jike 馮繼科
 Feng Mengzhen 馮夢禎
 Fu 傅
 fu han 附函
 Fuzhou (Jiangxi) 撫州
 gaobai 告白
Guangyun 廣韻
 Gu Chong 顧充
Gujin shuke 古今書刻
 han 函
 Hangzhou 杭州
 hao 號
 heikou 黑口
 Houxiang 後巷
 Hu 胡
 huiyuan 會元
 Hushi 胡氏
 ji 集
 Jiajing guichou Shulin Ye shi Wujin zixing
 嘉靖癸丑書林葉氏武進梓行
 Jiajing jiyou mengqiu jidan
 嘉靖己酉孟秋吉旦
 Jian 堅
 Jianben 建本
 Jiangnan 江南
 Jiankanben 建刊本
 Jianning 建寧
 Jianning fu 建寧府
Jianshi Meiting xiansheng siliu biao zhun
 箋釋梅亭先生四六標準
 Jianyang 建陽
 Jianyangben 建陽本

- Jiayang xianzhi* 建陽縣志
 jibu 集部
 Ji'nan 濟南
 jingbu 經部
 Jingkou 京口
 Jinling 金陵
 Jinling Sanshanjie Jianyang Ye Gui Jinshantang 金陵三山街建陽葉貴近山堂
 jishi benmo 紀事本末
 juanshou 卷首
 kan 刊
 Kaoting 考亭
Ke Yangzhi Zi canding zhengchuan dili tongyi quanshu 刻仰止子參定正傳地理統
 一全書
 leishu 類書
 Li 禮 (book title)
 li 里 (distance measure)
 Li 李 (family name)
Liang-Zhe gu kanben kao 兩浙古刊本考
Lieguo zhizhuan 列國志傳
 Li Liu 李劉
 Linchuan 臨川
 Li Tingji (Jiuwo) 李廷機 (九我)
 Liu 劉 (Jiayang family)
 Liu 柳 (Shufang family)
 Liu Chaozhen 劉朝箴
 Liu Suming 劉素明
 Long luo tou zongling 龍落頭總領
 Luojiaxiang 羅家巷
 Ma Guohan 馬國翰
 Masha 麻沙
 Mashaben 麻沙本
 Meiting 梅亭
 Minbei 閩北
 mingshu xiangshu 命書相書
 mulu 目錄
 Naikaku Bunko 內閣文庫
 nongjia 農家
 paiji 牌記
 Piling 毘陵
 pulu 譜錄
 putong xianzhuang shu 普通線裝書
 Qianshu 前書
 Qiaoshantang 喬山堂
 Qiu Jun 邱濬
 Quzhou 衢州
 Renshoutang 仁壽堂
 Ruan 阮
 Ruandunxiang 阮墩巷
 rujia 儒家
Sanguo zhi yanyi 三國志演義
Sanguo zhizhuan 三國志傳
 Sanqu 三衢
 Sanqu Qianfang Hu shi zi yu Piling 三衢前坊胡氏梓于毗陵
 Sanqu Ye Baoshantang 三衢葉寶山堂
 Sanshanjie 三山街
 Seikadō Bunko 靜嘉堂文庫
 Shi 詩
 shibu 史部
 shichao 史鈔
 Shidetang 世德堂
 shijia 釋家
 shiling 時令
 shiping 史評
 shiwen ping 詩文評
 shoujuan 首卷

- Shu 書
 Shuangfengtang 雙峰堂
 Shufang 書坊
 Shuihu zhuan 水滸傳
 Shulin 書林
 Shulin Liu Suming kexiang
 書林劉素明刻像
 Shulin qinghua 書林清話
 shushu 術數
 shuxue 數學
 Sibao 四堡
 siku 四庫
 Siku quanshu 四庫全書
 Siliu biao zhun jian yin 四六標準箋引
 Sima Guang 司馬光
 Sishu 四書
 Sonkeikaku 尊經閣文庫
 Sun Shichang 孫世昌
 Sun Yunyi 孫雲翼
 Suzhou 蘇州
 Tang 唐
 Tang huiyuan jingxuan pidian Tang Song ming-
 xian celun wencui 唐會元精選批點唐
 宋名賢策論文粹
 Tang Jingchuan xiansheng wenji
 糖荆川先生文集
 Tang Lifei (Jilong) 唐鯉飛 (季龍)
 tangming 堂名
 Tang Sheng 唐晟
 Tang Shunzhi 唐順之
 tianwen suanfa 天文算法
 Tongjian zuanyao chao hubai
 通鑑纂要抄虎白
 Tongwen 同文
 Wang Guowei 王國維
 Wang Rong 王榮
 Wanjuanlou 萬卷樓
 wujing zongyi 五經綜義
 Wuxi 無錫
 Wuyi zhilüe 武夷志略
 Wu za zu 五雜俎
 xiangzhai xiangmu 相宅相墓
 Xiao 孝
 xiaoshuo 小說
 xiaoshuo changpian 小說長篇
 xiaoxue 小學
 Xie Zhaozhe 謝肇淛
 Xin'an 新安
 Xinkan Da Song zhongxing tongsu yanyi
 新刊大宋中興通俗演義
 Xinke Li Jiuwo xiansheng bianzuan dafang wan-
 wen yitong 新刻李九我先生編纂大
 方萬文一統
 Xiong 熊
 Xu Biaoran 徐表然
 Yang Dezheng 楊德政
 Yangzhi Zi 仰止子
 Yan keshu shi 言刻書事
 Ye 葉
 Ye Baoshantang 葉寶山堂
 Ye Dehui 葉德輝
 Ye Gui 葉貴
 Ye Jinquan 葉錦泉
 Ye Jinshan 葉近山
 Ye Wujin 葉武進
 Ye Xianggao 葉向高
 Yi 易
 yijia 醫家

<i>Yijing</i> 易經	<i>zhaoling zouyi</i> 詔令奏議
<i>yinyang wuxing</i> 陰陽五行	Zhejiang Ye Baoshantang 浙江葉寶山堂
<i>yishu</i> 藝術	<i>zhengshi</i> 正史
Yu 余	<i>zhengshu</i> 政書
<i>yue</i> 樂	Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸
Yu Liangmu 余良木	Zhenjiang 鎮江
Yu Tongzu 余同祖	<i>zhiguan</i> 職官
Yu Xiangdou 余象斗	Zhisun 芝孫
Yu Yingke 余應科	Zhongdetang 種德堂
Yu Yingqiu 余應虬	Zhou 周
<i>zaji</i> 載記	Zhou Hongzu 周弘祖
<i>zajia</i> 雜家	<i>zhuangji</i> 傳記
<i>zashi</i> 雜史	Zhu Xi 朱熹
<i>zashu</i> 雜術	<i>zibu</i> 子部
<i>zhanbu</i> 占卜	Zixinzhai 自新齋
Zhangqiu 章丘	<i>Zizhi tongjian gangmu</i> 資治通鑑綱目
<i>zhanhou</i> 占候	<i>zongji</i> 總集

Investigating Readerships in Late-Imperial China

A Reflection on Methodologies

ANNE E. MCLAREN

This image of two peasants treading on a chain pump (*fanche*) over a channel in a paddy field (see figure 1B) appeared in a giant compendium of agricultural techniques in the first half of the seventeenth century. Texts of this sort, agricultural books (*nongshu*), had appeared for over a millennium in China.¹ By the Ming period, *nongshu* commonly were illustrated.² What is new about this illustration is that the peasant man with the bamboo hat has an open book in his hand, which he studies as he pedals assiduously on the chain-pump irrigation device. Next to him, a second peasant also pedals, wielding a parasol, in place of his companion's broad bamboo hat. It is an incongruous and unexpected image.³

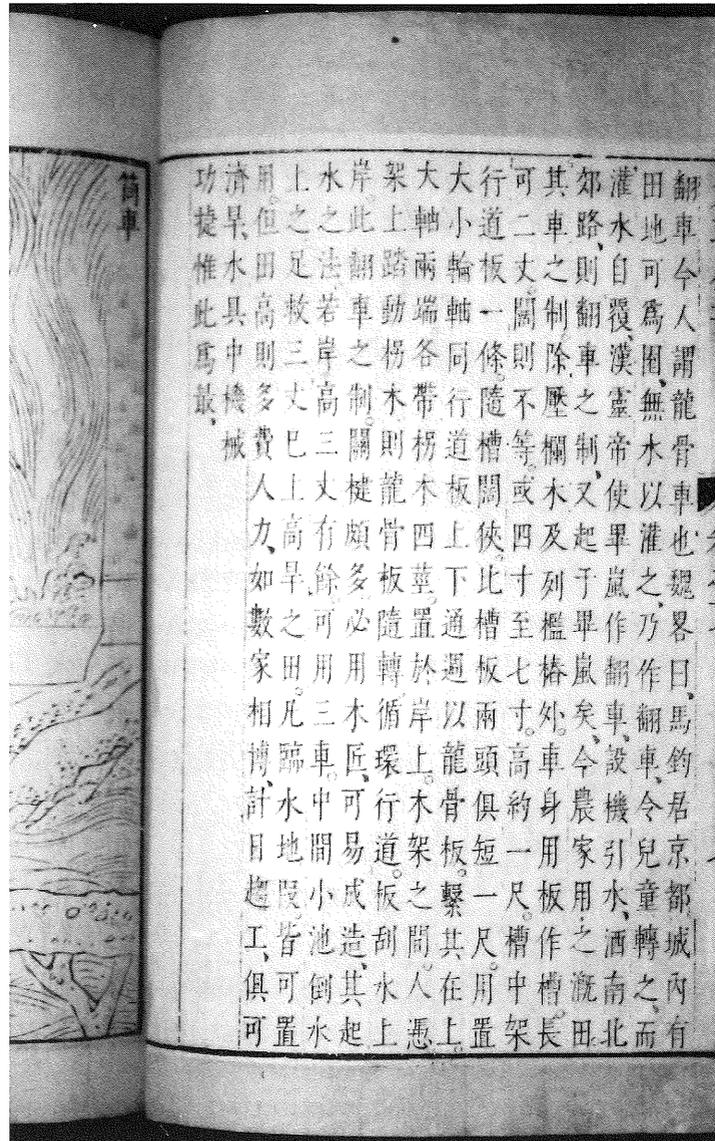
This illustration comes from the *Nongzheng quanshu* (Complete Compendium of Agricultural Practices), sixty *juan*, compiled by Xu Guangqi (1562–1633), the famous Christian convert who became a senior official in the Ministry of Rites.⁴ Xu studied Western science, including hydraulics, with Matteo Ricci and sought to put these ideas into practice, most notably on his private farm in Tianjin and also in his home region of Shanghai county.⁵

The *Nongzheng quanshu*, a huge opus compiled from 1625 to 1628 on the basis of over two hundred sources, was not completed at the time of Xu's death. His friend the writer and poet Chen Zilong (1608–1647) edited it and published the work in his own printing house, the Pinglutang, in 1639.⁶ Official Zhang Guowei (1595–1646), who is listed as scrutineer, is also responsible for another reprinting of this work.⁷ Both, as well as later editions, are extant today and held in libraries across China and overseas.⁸ The *Nongzheng quanshu* was presented to the throne by one of Xu's grandsons in 1643, just before the fall of the Ming dynasty.⁹

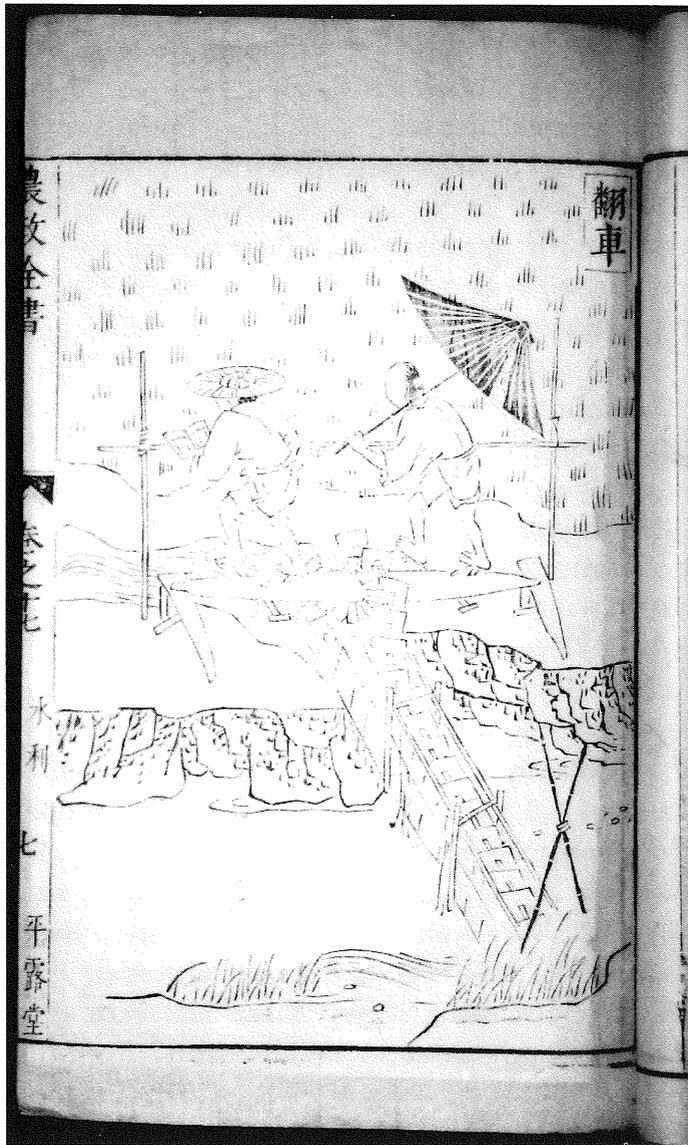
What does this somewhat improbable image say about the history of books and reading in China? How is the peasant actually reading this text? Is he reading it silently, leaving the second man to toil alone with his thoughts, or is he reading it aloud? What is he reading: the *nongshu* in question, or a basic primer? How are we, at this distance, to interpret this puzzling image? Should we see it as a literal depiction of what the forward-looking peasant should be encouraged to do, that is, to read the latest *nongshu* and put the ideas into practice? Is it really likely that Xu believed that peasant laborers were literate enough to read his work? The text accompanying the illustrations provides some clues. The opening goes:

The chain pump (*fanche*) is called “the dragon bone wheel” in the present day.¹⁰ According to the *Weilüe*, Ma Jun (fl. 227–230) resided in the capital [Luoyang]. Within the city, there were fields that could be converted to gardens but there was no water. In order to irrigate the fields he constructed a chain pump and had youths pedal it. [In this way] water for irrigation gushed forth.¹¹

At the simplest level, the text suggests the water wheel is so easy to use it is child's play, a Chinese version of “Look, Ma, no hands.” Perhaps this is the point of the accompanying illustration.¹² However, this does not account for why a man (or youth?) reading was chosen to create this effect. At a deeper level, we could see this image as a symbolic statement of the intense urge of some members of officialdom and the literati to popularize knowledge in the late-Ming period. As Francesca Bray has noted, the major innovation of the *Nongzheng quanshu* lay in its



1A. Agricultural text with illustration of a chain pump (*fanche*) from Xu Guangqi, *Nongzheng quanshu*, 60 *juan* (Pinglutang, 1639), *juan* 17, p. 7b. Original in the Harvard-Yenching Library, T8037/2003.



1B. Illustration of a chain pump.

stress on agricultural administration and the dissemination of information.¹³ Xu was deeply concerned with the deepening political crisis and the rise of the Manchus in the underpopulated north. He advocated irrigation systems be set up to allow for paddy rice cultivation in northern provinces and the movement of people from the overpopulated south.¹⁴ One can assume that for Xu Guangqi, the open book as an aid to learning had an important place. Even the humble bamboo parasol presumably had a place. It was among the sorts of commercial products Xu wished peasants to produce from their crops, together with such things as ink, brushes, and glue.¹⁵

In his apparent intention to popularize knowledge among less-learned groups, Xu Guangqi was hardly alone in the late-Ming period. A significant theme in the history of the Chinese book is the broadening of readerships that apparently occurred at this time. My intention here is to discuss how one can approach the amorphous topic of the popular reader in the late-imperial period and, in particular, what methods might be appropriate to the Chinese experience of the history of reading.

In the West the history of reading, that is, a history of reading practices, the hows, whys, and wheres of reading, or what one could call the social history of reading, has an established place in studies of the history of the book and of social and intellectual history generally. It is now a commonplace to state, in the words of Robert Darnton, that "reading has a history."¹⁶ The history of the Western book has emerged as a significant subdiscipline of social and literary history. Darnton, in his discussion of scholarship on the history of the European book distinguished between macroanalytical, that is, quantitative social history and microanalytical, that is, the history of individual readers.¹⁷ Scholars of the Western book have benefited hugely from the vast array of primary sources that one can draw from, including registers of publishing rights granted to publishers (that is, French *privilèges*), annual bibliographies of publications from government offices (France), the history of book fairs (Frankfurt and Leipzig), the archives of publishing companies (for example, the London Stationers' Company), probate inventories from estates, court cases from the Inquisition such as Carlo Ginzburg's study of the fifteenth-century miller in Italy,¹⁸ preserved annotated copies of

texts, diaries by individuals detailing what they read (for example, Samuel Pepys in London), private library holdings, records of book loans in lending libraries, book subscriptions with publishers, fictional representations and visual images of books and reading, and various social commentaries of the era. The furniture of reading has also been studied, from the pulpits that held massive bibles in medieval churches to the armchairs and footstools in genteel parlors of later ages.¹⁹ As a result of decades of study, a great deal is known about the impact of publishing and growing readerships on significant social developments in the West such as the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and even the movement toward sentimentalism in the Romantic period, and the emergence of the concept of privacy.²⁰

The study of the history of the Chinese book made great strides in the second half of the twentieth century. The publication of Tsien Tsuen-hsuei's *Paper and Printing in China* in 1985 was a landmark that summarized decades of study by Chinese and Western scholars on the history of Chinese book publishing and offered fresh insights into the particular trajectory of print technology in China.²¹ Substantial empirical studies on particular regions of China, such as Sören Edgren's on Hangzhou printing in the Southern Song (1127–1279) period, Cynthia Brokaw's on family publishers in Fujian province in the late-imperial period, Lucille Chia's on the history of printing in Fujian province and Nanjing, and Ellen Widmer's on the Huanduzhai publishing house of Hangzhou and Suzhou, alert us to the wealth of empirical data that can be found in libraries around the world, in archives, gazetteers, and family histories, or even discovered on field trips to former publishing centers in remote village areas.²² Robert E. Hegel's recent *Reading Illustrated Fiction in Late Imperial China* is a landmark study of the material form of the illustrated book and its likely readership.²³ A conference on the history of Chinese print culture held at Mount Hood, Oregon, in 1998 drew together scholars in fields ranging from sociohistory to literature and the fine arts.²⁴ Studies dealing with the reception of literary works have also appeared in recent decades. Isobe Akira and Ōki Yasushi have debated the likely readership of late-Ming novels such as the *Xiyou ji* (Journey to the West).²⁵ The famous play *Mudanting* (The Peony Pavilion) became

the focus of romantic discourse among a circle of women in the Jiangnan area, a phenomenon discussed in the work of Ellen Widmer, Judith Zeitlin, and Dorothy Ko.²⁶

Nonetheless, there is still much truth in the statement of Michela Bussotti (1998) that “in China, studies on the history of books and of publishing have always been important, but in general, the emphasis is concentrated on the history and the techniques of printing, the material characteristics, and the transmission of rare books with little interest for those who conceived and ‘consumed’ the books in question.”²⁷ In other words, we are still grappling with the more intangible aspects of the history of the Chinese book—what does it all signify for Chinese cultural, intellectual, and socioeconomic history? What impact did the growing volume of printed books have on society? Can we assume that just because there were more books (as there certainly were by the late-sixteenth century) there were more readers and that reading spread to increasingly broader social groups? The use of comparative perspectives drawn from Western studies is in itself problematic. While decrying the Eurocentric bias of “studies of the book” (implicitly taken to be the European book), critics caution against a too ready acceptance of Western-based assumptions and hypotheses in the case of Chinese print history.²⁸ These questions bring us directly to the problem of methods. What primary sources and what techniques are available to scholars who wish to investigate the social context of reading in China? What sorts of methodologies can be developed to understand puzzling images such as this one of a peasant reading while treading the chain pump?

My intention here is to discuss methods aimed at investigating what authors, editors, and publishers intended in the way they shaped, formatted, and produced their books. In line with the image of the peasant reader, I focus in particular on attempts made to popularize printed texts in the mid- to late-Ming period (ca. 1490–1644).²⁹ The methods discussed here belong to what has been termed “the sociology of texts,” that is, a study of the text as a material form within changing social contexts.³⁰ Lucille Chia, in her contribution to this issue of the *East Asian Library Journal*, discusses the use of paratextual features in establishing the likely provenance of texts (region, printer, and so on).³¹ Here I discuss the typography, formats, and publishing styles of different edi-

tions (that is, the *mise en texte*),³² likely reading practices for these texts, and what these can tell us about target reading publics. I also look at what prefaces and postscripts can tell us about constructed readerships, targeted by authors and editors and how one can historicize these terms to trace an emerging lexicon involving authors, editors, publishers, and readers. Finally, I draw on normative images of reading from a range of textual and visual sources and show how these can assist us in the study of changing notions of reading and reading practices. My intention is to discuss methodologies for analyzing possible readerships, not to make a particular case about types of readership for this period. However, a broadening of readerships and greater popularization of published material are dominant themes of Chinese print culture in the late-imperial period. Readers interested in this topic are invited to read items listed in endnotes to this section and to my forthcoming publications on the theme of popularization.³³

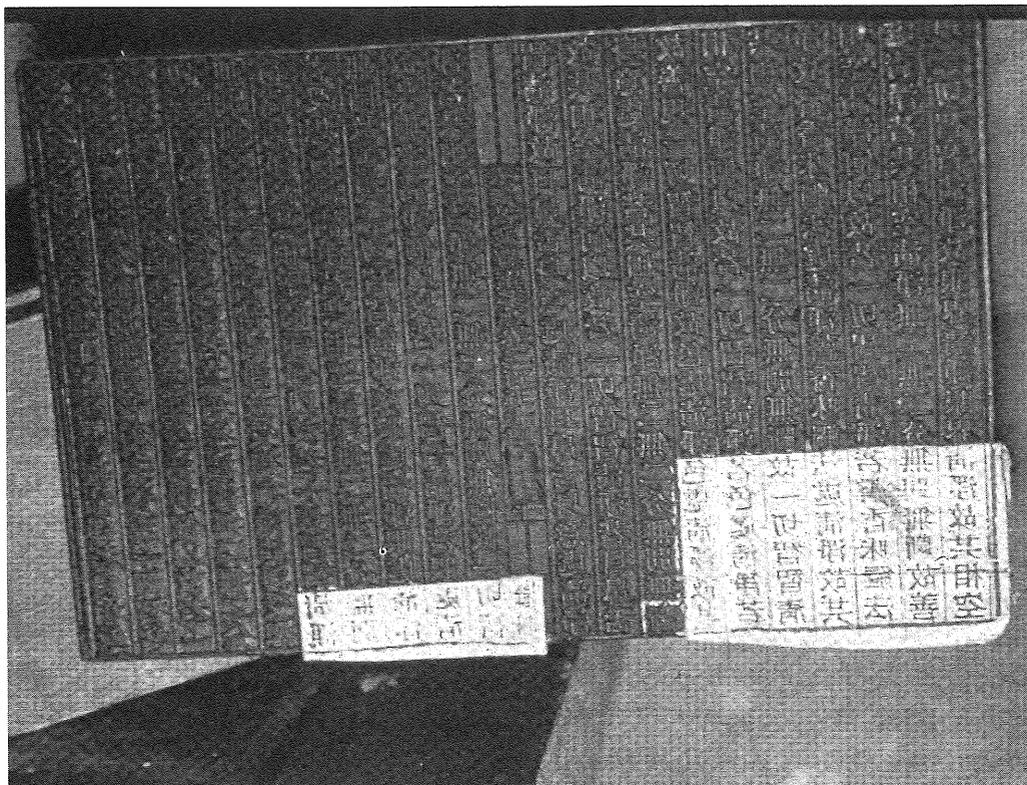
THE MATERIAL FORM OF THE PRINTED TEXT

When discussing readerships, a vital factor is the material form of the book, especially the way the “same” text can be repackaged in different ways to suit different reading publics. As many scholars have discussed in recent decades, the study of the multiple representations of the “same” text belongs not only to bibliographic study but to social and literary history as well. It is also of great significance to the study of changing readerships. Before the advent of printing, each copy of a book was necessarily unique. The social context in which different manuscript copies of the “same” text were produced offers valuable insights into the uses made of these texts and their likely readership.³⁴ With the introduction of print technology, the reader came to expect that, in a single edition, texts would be identical. This aspect of print technology has led some theorists to talk about the “fixity” and “preservative power” of print, of the “standardization” apparently brought about by the exact reproduction of a large number of multiple copies of the same text.³⁵ This “fixity” and “standardization” of print, which allow for the exact duplication of texts, are regarded as attributes of Western “print culture.”

These seminal ideas have come under attack from those aware of

the mutability of the printed text across generations of editions.³⁶ Recently the argument that print technology necessarily brings about “fixity” and “standardization” has been critiqued by Adrian Johns, who argues that these features are not intrinsic to print but emerged as the result of a tortuous historical process, where conventions and legal protocols were developed over time to establish the authority and reliability of texts.³⁷

The notion of the “preservative powers” and “fixity” of print is even harder to establish in the case of woodblock publishing in East Asia. As Peter Kornicki has explained in *The Book in Japan*, woodblock printing was “replete with instability.”³⁸ The complexity of the situation can be judged from the range of terms used by Chinese bibliographers to indicate the printed woodblock text. A *yankeben* (original text) or *zuben* (ancestral text) denoted an original edition of a text. A reprint of the original was called in general a *chongkeben* or *fankeben* (both terms indicate reprinting), but there were different sorts of reprints. The *fangkeben*, *fukeben*, and *yingkeben* were regarded as virtual replicas of the original text.³⁹ However, replica reprints, as Kornicki has pointed out, were never exactly identical to the original text because of the difficulty of emulating precisely the original carving style and differences in the binding, paper, and packaging of subsequent editions of the book.⁴⁰ There were more complex cases in which a mixture of original blocks and freshly cut blocks was used. This could happen when some of the original blocks were damaged, lost, or worn, or when some updating of information was required. There were also cases when a fresh plug of wood was used to alter one of the original woodblocks, because of damage, to emend errors, or to update information (see figure 2).⁴¹ Printing blocks could be repaired in this way for centuries, and the resulting imprints were known in the trade as *xiububen* (restored texts) or *dixiuben* (supplemented texts). In the worst examples the formats were irregular and the print illegible; these were known disparagingly as *lataben* (“sloppy” or carelessly produced texts).⁴² Even greater variations occurred when publishers took a text in circulation and either abridged it (*shanjieben*) or added to it (*zengkeben*).⁴³ Commercial publishers often took advantage of the flexibility inherent in woodblock technology to alter titles, frontispieces, colophons, and other paratextual features to present a “new” text for the market. This was particularly common at the



2. Repair to a damaged Chinese book-printing block. Damaged sections along the lower margin have been cut out and new pieces of wood inserted. A copy of the missing text printed on thin paper has been pasted text side down on the new wood, ready for carving. Photograph taken by Nancy Norton Tomasko at Jinling kejingchu in Nanjing, May 1999.

more popular end of the market.⁴⁴ These practices are well known, but the implications of this lack of standardization and fixity have been little explored in the context of growing readerships in East Asia.⁴⁵

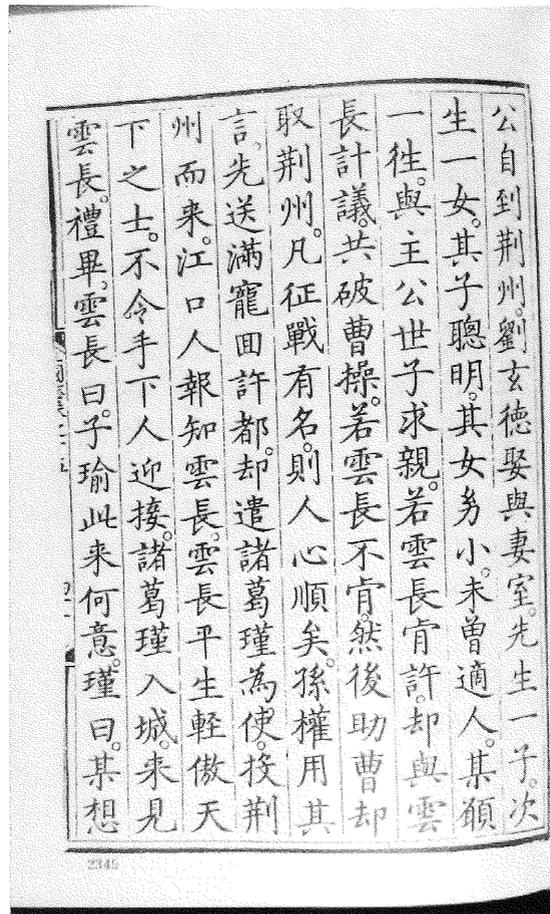
The following case study demonstrates the complexities of the use of woodblock technology in printing texts of a relatively popular nature in sixteenth-century China. Figure 3 depicts four editions of the text known today as the *Sanguo yanyi* (Narrative of the Three Kingdoms), attributed to Luo Guanzhong (fl. 1364) and published between ca. 1522 and ca. 1592. The *Sanguo yanyi* offers a particularly good example of the way in which publishers used the flexibility inherent in woodblock publishing to create different texts for niche markets. All these editions

were perceived by contemporaries to belong to the category of *tongsu xiaoshuo*, which one could translate loosely as “popular fiction.” But they are packaged in diverse ways. Note that the same section of the story has been chosen for figures 3A, 3B, and 3D. (In the case of 3C, this chapter no longer exists.)⁴⁶ Liu Bei, leader of one of the three contending states of the era, has just established himself as king of Hanzhong in the western state of Shu. His rival, Cao Cao, of the state of Wei, vows to exterminate him. It is at this pivotal moment that the camp of Shu considers forming an alliance with the third kingdom of Wu by arranging a betrothal between the daughter of Liu Bei’s sworn brother, Guan Yu, and the heir to the state of Wu. However, it is a proposal that the hot-headed Guan Yu arrogantly refuses.

Three of the texts, with their pictorial format of illustrations above and text below (*shangtu xiawen*), look quite similar, but figure 3A, the earliest text, is strikingly different. Figure 3A is an example of the manuscript-look text (*xiekeben*) favored before the mid-Ming period when it was overtaken by the dominant artisan style (*jiangti*, also known as imitation Song, *fang Song*).⁴⁷ The *xiekeben* style makes the printed text look as much like a manuscript as possible, an effect accentuated by the lack of illustrations. The artisan style found in figures 3B, 3C, and 3D was simpler, more standardized, and cheaper to produce but lacked individuality and the aesthetic appeal of the manuscript-look style.

There are also slight differences in content among the four editions. For example, the text of figure 3A contains a greater number of official documents (letters, petitions, depositions, literary set pieces, and the like), all in classical Chinese (*wenyan*). Examples in figures 3A, 3C, and 3D were printed with punctuation marks (circles at breath pauses or the ends of meaningful units). In prefaces or other paratextual material in the first three of these editions, the publishers have referred to their target readership. For 3A it is *shi* or *shi junzi* (literati or more politely, gentlemen literati). Example 3B is said to be destined for the more inclusive *tianxia zhi ren* (people of the empire). Item 3C (Shuangfengtang edition) is claimed to be directed at *shizi* (literati). We lack a frontispiece and preface for example 3D (*pinglin* or commentarial edition), which comes from the same publishing house as 3C.

Both editions 3A and 3B contain sparse commentary concerning



3A. *Sanguo zhi tongsu yanyi* (Popular Elaboration of the Three Kingdoms Record), 24 *juan*, publishers unknown, preface dated 1494 attributed to Yongyu Zi (the pen name of Jiang Daqi [dates unknown]) and another preface dated 1522 attributed to Xiuran Zi (the pen name of Zhang Shangde [dates unknown]). Photocopy from the facsimile edition in *Guben xiaoshuo jicheng*, ser. 3 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1990), vol. 31, part 4, *juan* 15, p. 41a. This edition is known generally as “the Jiaping-period edition.” Printed Chinese characters are in manuscript style; there are no illustrations and only occasional commentary, and the target readership is aficionados from the literati (*shi junzi zhi haoshizhe*).



土上與國家除克下雪自己之恨清平之後
 自以江南接連西川盡屬於公漢中襄陽孤
 當自取善不相侵求結為好書不盡言專祈
 照察
 徐權觀書畢設宴待消龍送君官舍連夜與謀士議
 論碩雍曰雖是說詞其中有理一邊送消龍回會約
 曹公首尾相擊一境使人過荊州探視關公動靜方
 可行事諸葛瑾曰其聞雲長自到荊州劉玄德與娶
 妻子先生一女次生一子名與其女婚年幼未可適
 人某願一往與主公世子求親若雲長肯許到東吳
 為童養兒婦却與雲長共議破曹若雲長不許此親
 然後助曹取荊州凡征戰有名則人心皆順矣孫權
 用其謀先遣消龍回西都後遣諸葛瑾為使投荊州
 來江口報知雲長雲長平生輕傲士大夫不令人出
 接諸葛瑾至刑衙見雲長禮畢雲長曰子瑜此來何
 意瑾曰想弟孔明久事漢天故有此行求結兩家之

3B. *Xinkan tongsu yanyi Sanguo zhi shi zhuan* (New Edition of the Popularized Elaboration of the Historical Record of the Three Kingdoms), 10 *juan*, preface by Yuan Fengzi dated 1548, published by Ye Fengchun (dates unknown), *juan* 7, p. 6a. Photocopy of facsimile published as *Sanguo zhi tongsu yanyi shi zhuan* by Taizan Inoue (Osaka: Kansai University Publishers, 1998), 2 vols. Original held in the Escorial Library in Madrid. The printed characters are artisan style, there are pictorial illustrations (*shangtu xiawen*) and occasional commentary, and the target readership is “people of the empire.”

伯氏孔明
知亮之難殺
而希之風
嗚矣

孔明已去
前已到而
亮先順流而
夫可見亮之
明度而公理
空有妨礙之
計矣



下船而去

孔明被髮

手邊開棹不到上馬一百子箭各各誇精巧南屏山離愁足
里路兩路來殺孔明於路正迎東南風起有詩為証詩曰
七星壇上正嚴疑 奴擊東南項刺興 萬里雲烟皆動蕩
三江波裡及掀騰 還鄉解使在吳諫 得道須教列子登
當孔明施妙計 致令公瑾顯才能

又詩曰
東風一夜起江干 百萬曹兵喪膽寒
誰易身亡千載後 更無人上七星壇

又詩曰
奸雄曹操起戈矛 志欲平將天下收
一夜東風壇上起 精兵百萬等閑休

當日徐盛奉來奔地壇前奉馬軍先到見壇上執旗將士各口重
却才下壇去了徐盛來尋奉船已到二人來趕孔明忽見江
曰昨晚一隻快船泊在面前江口見披髮先生下船那船便
水去了丁奉徐盛水陸兩路追來徐盛交攔起滿帆搶風而下
前船不遠徐盛立於船頭高聲大叫軍師休去爾將何請

3c. *Yinshi buyi an Jian yanyi quanxiang piping Sanguo zhi* (Commentarial Edition of the Three Kingdoms according to the *Zizhi tongjian* with Complete Illustrations, Pronunciation, and Supplementary Notes), preface by Yu Xiangwu, 20 juan (Shuangfengtang, 1592), juan 9, p. 3a. Photocopy from the facsimile copy reproduced by Harmut Walravens, *Two Recently Discovered Fragments of the Chinese Novels San-Kuo-chih Yen-I and Shui-hu-chuan* (Hamburg: C. Bell, 1982). The printed characters are artisan style, there are pictorial illustrations, commentary is primarily about strategy, and the target readership is the literati (*shizi*).



謀乃東吳之至尊而受制於劉備此可恥一也備少
 燕小童素無行已天下共知一旦以賢妹妻之此可
 二也荆州九郡公父兄皆以此土養身何輕如敵獲
 劉備而不取此可恥三也夫備恃頑賴數有輕侮
 諾寡信素懷不仁先背主而後叛呂布棄袁紹之義
 劉表之恩併吞蜀川卓居漢上負明公與狐之德雖
 牧亦切齒也今遣滿寵前米陌有舊怨一切勿言可
 與仁義之師速取荆襄之土上與國家除克下雪自
 之恨清平之後自以江南接連西川盡屬於公漢中
 陽孤當自取誓不相侵求結為好書不盡言專祈
 孫權觀書畢設宴待滿寵送居官舍連夜與謀士商議
 雍曰雖是說詞其中有理一邊送滿寵回會約曹公首
 相擊一邊使人過荆州探視關公動靜方可行事諸葛
 曰其聞雲長前有一妻生一子名閉索自到荆州喪子
 妻劉玄德與娶一妻先生一女次生一女其子聰明能

3D. Xinkan jingben jiaozheng yanyi quanxiang Sanguo zhizhuan pinglin (New Edition of the Capital Text: Revised Elaboration of the Record of the Three Kingdoms with Complete Illustrations and Commentary), 20 juan (Yu Xiangdou, Shuangfengtang, post-1592), juan 13, p. 5b. This image is reproduced from a microfilm held in the British Library, London, produced from the original, which is held at Waseda University. The printed characters are in artisan style, there are pictorial illustrations, the commentary is on basic cultural knowledge, and the target readership is unknown because the preface is not extant.

place names and the like. Examples 3C and 3D have innovative commentary. That in example 3C contains a large number of references to various strategic plans (*ji*) put forward by characters in the narrative and evaluates their success or failure.⁴⁸ Example 3D, however, has commentary on basic items of cultural knowledge. In the example here we see in the top margin a definition of the word *qi* (wife). Elsewhere one finds a definition of the term *huanguan* (eunuch) and other relatively simple terms.⁴⁹

There is a further point of interest. Example 3A is extant today in incomplete form in various locations in China.⁵⁰ It may have been published by the Censorate (Duchayuan) in the mid-sixteenth century, in which case it would presumably have circulated among the court and officialdom.⁵¹ Examples 3B, 3C, and 3D, in company with most other pictorial texts of this famous narrative dating from the Ming to early-Qing periods, are not to be found in China.⁵² We can view example 3B today only because a Portuguese missionary, who resided in China in the mid-sixteenth century, wished to curry favor with the court of Spain. He made a gift of this book and other “exotic” Chinese texts to Phillip II on the occasion of the Spanish conquest of the Philippines.⁵³ This unique example is held today in the Escorial Library in Madrid. Editions 3C and 3D exist today only because they were taken to Europe and Japan, respectively. Of the thirty-odd Ming- and early-Qing editions of this novel extant, about fourteen pictorial-style editions survive today. Only two are held in China. What was the fate of these pictorial editions, which must have been abundant in the late-Ming period? Were they simply passed around and read to pieces? Did some of them meet the fate of much waste paper in China? Were they used to cover lattice windows or jars of pickles, or even put into service in the privy? These are all relevant factors in our analysis of how valuable and rare or, conversely, how cheap and common a text was perceived to be.

At any rate, if one accepts that these texts are all examples of popular fiction (*tongsu xiaoshuo*), then clearly some are more *tongsu* than others. What one needs here are nuanced gradations of what *tongsu* actually means. We also need to be careful in our use of the English word “popular” to describe these sorts of books. In English “popular” generally means that a work has found favor with a broad audience (or is likely to do so) and, by implication, that it is written in a form designed to attract a broad audience (easy language, simple content, and so on). For

scholars of popular culture, the term “popular” is also used to explicate theories of power and dominance in a particular society (for example, elite attempts to eradicate popular culture or popular resistance to elite culture).⁵⁴

The Chinese word *tongsu* has a different set of connotations. *Tongsu* combines two ideas. *Tong* means “comprehensible,” that is, capable of getting through, and *su* means vulgar or common as opposed to refined and literary. In Ming prefaces to fictional texts, the term is often used to mean “to get through [to communicate] to the vulgar [unlearned].”⁵⁵ In other words, it denotes a work designed in such a way that even unlearned people can understand it. Although it implies that such a work is capable of attracting a broad audience, it does not suggest as strongly as the English word “popular” that it has or even will attract a broad audience, or even that this is necessarily the goal of the publisher.⁵⁶ For many Ming preface writers, the claim that a work is *tong* and *su* (easily comprehensible and using *su* or “vulgar” language) is simply a valorization of the work in question and justifies its existence in print.⁵⁷ In other words, a claim to be *tongsu* does not necessarily mean the work in question actually had a broad readership, at least in that particular textual manifestation. It is entirely possible, for instance, that the *tongsu* edition 3A had a readership confined to court and official circles, but it still remains *tongsu* because of the content, format, and language style per se, not because of the social status or breadth of its readership. As I have argued elsewhere, texts 3B, 3C, and 3D were targeted at broader types of readership than text 3A.⁵⁸ A final point: although the word *tongsu* is always seen in implicit distinction to official, refined, or literary works, and can be used as a term of either praise or disparagement, depending on the speaker, in the Ming period it does not refer to a code of dominance of one culture over another but rather to the attempt to make public knowledge systems that would ordinarily fall within a more restricted domain.⁵⁹

It appears that it was not necessary for a text to be popular with unlearned people to be declared *tongsu*. Further, claims made in paratextual material need to be understood with a degree of skepticism. Even texts that are clearly adapted to a less-learned readership are addressed to the literati. One cannot make judgments about probable readership from

format and presentation alone, although these provide useful clues. Another useful approach is to look at the notion of literary competence,⁶⁰ or at a more basic level, the standard of literacy of the constructed reader of these texts, that is, the prospective readership targeted by the author or editor in prefaces and other paratextual material. Just as readerships changed historically, so did reading practices, or methods of reading. I suggest that in the Ming period the proliferation of relatively new print genres, such as historical fiction and plays, was accompanied by changes in reading practices.

LITERACY OR LITERARY COMPETENCE AND READING PRACTICES

Reading was a relatively arduous activity during much of the imperial period in China, as recognized in the common term for study, *qindu* (diligent reading).⁶¹ Before the advent of print in China, reading a text often involved writing it down, memorizing it, reciting it aloud, or breaking up the text with pause marks for ease of comprehension. Some of the earliest manuscripts extant in China, those found in the caves at Dunhuang, appear to have been the work of students at various stages of acquiring literacy.⁶² In these examples, discussed by Victor Mair, copying was done to transmit a text and to practice writing, and also as an act of devotion to properly master the contents of the text (which was often religious in nature). In imperial and even modern educational systems in China, reading involved, at the minimum, reciting a text, often from memory. In the late-imperial period, for the more literate (those over the age of about fifteen engaged in full-time education), “reading” also meant punctuating a text. At a later stage, “reading” included writing it out, and, for those with advanced literacy, collating, editing, and annotating a text. These stages were all taught sequentially in the curriculum in the late-imperial period.

Cheng Duanli’s (*zi* Jingshu, 1271–1345) *Cheng shi dushu fennian richeng* (Daily Schedule of Study in the Cheng Family School, Graded According to Age), published in 1315, had a wide influence in the late-imperial period.⁶³ The *Schedule of Study* sets out a lengthy process of transition from elementary to advanced literacy. Between the ages of eight and fifteen, the student read, recited, and memorized the classics

taught at elementary level, such as the *Daxue* (The Great Learning), minus their commentary.⁶⁴ He would also practice writing the one thousand characters taught at elementary level. From the ages of fifteen to twenty-two the student read these texts with the annotations of Zhu Xi (1130–1200). At this stage reading now included copying out the relevant classic. The student learned how to correct texts for punctuation and pronunciation and wrote his personal understandings of some sections.⁶⁵ It was only when the student was twenty-two to twenty-five years old that he was encouraged to write for himself such things as model examination essays, documents, and literary pieces. At this stage the student also “marked notable pieces with circles and dots and made deletions and cuts,” that is, learned the art of editing.⁶⁶

At an elementary level, the punctuation, phrasing, and pronunciation of the text were prepared by the teacher for the beginning student. Gradually the student would be taught to take on these tasks himself. For those with more advanced literacy, writing a text out was an important way of “reading” it. The copying of prestigious texts in an appropriate hand remained an important activity even after the burgeoning of the printed text. Publisher and bibliophile Mao Jin (1599–1659) was famous for his careful tracing of Song (960–1270) manuscript books for the admiration of his friends.⁶⁷ When writing out a text, educated readers would often insert their own punctuation, correct mistakes (and probably add errors of their own), and, perhaps, include the odd postscript or annotation.

A revolution in reading practices took place in the late-Ming period when commercial publishers took it on themselves to produce a text that was “readable” without needing strenuous efforts on the part of the less-educated reader. They did this by taking over the tasks of the teacher in the elementary stages of education and of the more advanced student in postelementary stages. One can trace the process of this revolution in textual “packaging” in the texts presented in figure 3.

The first example of the *Sanguo* (figure 3A) was said to have circulated among “literati aficionados” (*shi junzi zhi haoshizhe*) who “strived to copy it” (see the preface of Yongyu Zi, 1494).⁶⁸ Clearly these late-fifteenth-century “readers” of the original or an early *Sanguo yanyi* text (whether this text was in manuscript or printed form) were also copiers of the text. The text of figure 3A was punctuated, a concession

to the reader, but included a lot of documents in relatively difficult language.⁶⁹ Twenty-six years later, a pictorial edition (figure 3B) was designed for the reader who wished to look at the pictures as an aid to reading the contents. There are fewer difficult documents, and one finds simpler verse than in figure 3A. More than forty years later even more assistance was given the readers of figures 3C and 3D, which include not only punctuation but also commentary focused on the application of strategic notions or basic cultural knowledge. The readers of the three pictorial editions would find the story summarized in illustrations with punchy rhyming captions. Memorable jingles, familiar from storytelling and drama, added to the readability of the text and aided vocalization of the text either to oneself or to a circle of family and friends. The readers of examples 3C and 3D were further invited to consider the text as either a manual of strategy or a primer of cultural and historical knowledge. The “same” text was subject to different target readerships and reading practices.

Each of the elements discussed here (punctuation, commentary, pictorial style) had long been features of manuscript and print culture in China.⁷⁰ What is new by the Wanli period (1573–1620) is that commercial publishers began to apply these features comprehensively to material that was easy to understand, fictional, and attractive (that is, *tongsu*). The broadening group of youths acquiring literacy (the aspirant *shi*) would have provided a ready market. We do have a handful of examples to indicate that young aspiring *shi*, including some in relatively straitened circumstances, did read pictorial-type editions of the *Sanguo* and similar texts in the mid-sixteenth century, generally away from the prying eyes of their family. Wu Cheng'en (1506–ca. 1582), the likely author of the full-length fiction *Journey to the West*, whose father worked in a silk shop, confessed to reading “unorthodox histories” in his youth. Official Chen Jitai (1567–1641), who came from a relatively poor family in Fujian, enjoyed a pictorial edition of the *Sanguo* in his youth. This was a gift from his uncle. Editor, author, and social critic Jin Shengtian (1608–1661) also admitted to enjoying a so-called vulgar edition of the novel *Shuihu* (Water Margin) in his youth.⁷¹ Ming prefaces of fiction often mention (disparagingly) the involvement of “village pedants” (*cunxuejiu*) in the editing of the crudest of the *tongsu* editions.⁷² It is tempting to speculate that the production of many of the “vulgar” (*suben*) editions is the result

of the conjunction of commercial publishers with minor literati, such as examination candidates and school teachers, of a given locality.

It seems that bibliographical analysis can take us a certain distance in pursuing the elusive “common reader.” One can use the *mise en texte* to delineate gradations of *tongsu*-type texts and to assess the likely literacy and literary competence of the target readership. Coupled with empirical data (usually sadly limited) one can make informed guesses about likely readerships. However, one suspects that the readership of texts like these would not have been limited to young aspiring literati (*shi*).⁷³ Once in the marketplace, pictorial editions could have appealed to less-learned male readers of the merchant, shop-owner, and minor-gentry classes, as well as to women with a certain level of literacy and affluence, although empirical evidence about both groups is harder to come by.⁷⁴ It is also possible that texts of this sort, marketed in line with a popular formula, did not merely *reflect* the demands of an existing group of readers but helped to *create* a broadening readership and to stimulate an ever increasing demand for *tongsu* books in the late-Ming era. In the next section I discuss the role of commercial publishers in seeking actively to create this new market.

THE EMERGING LEXICON OF AUTHORSHIP, READERSHIP, AND PUBLISHING

Another technique by which to assess changes in the history of reading, especially “popular” reading, is to examine closely paratextual material such as prefaces, postscripts, and advertising announcements. A survey of paratextual material in plays, fiction, and composition manuals from the Yuan and Ming periods provides a wealth of information about developing notions of authorship, reading, and publishing. One can take an item in the lexicon referring to authors, editors, and readers and trace its change in meaning and usage over the centuries. In this way one can note changes to older items in the lexicon, such as *haoshizhe* (aficionado), and the emergence of new categories of readership (unlearned men and women, *yufu yufu*) or “the people of the empire.” The term *haoshizhe* acquired a range of meanings over the centuries. It frequently refers to men who are admirers of a particular text, often one circulating in manuscript. In *xiaoshuo* (fictional texts) of the sixteenth and seventeenth

centuries *haoshizhe* are said to compose, write, and edit texts or reshape transmitted texts. By the mid-seventeenth century *haoshizhe* were also referred to, somewhat disparagingly, as book collectors. They were the type who purchased fine, attractive libraries as a signifier of social status and were to be distinguished from the true bibliophiles, who lived the lives of hermits and actually read their books.⁷⁵

An intriguing constructed readership is “unlearned men and women,” *yufu yufu*. The term itself is of great antiquity,⁷⁶ but in the lexicon of readerships its earliest appearance (at least in texts I have surveyed so far) is in the Yuan period, where it refers to the audience of the storyteller. The *Zuiweng tanlu* (Notes from Conversations of the Old Drunkard) by Luo Ye (dates unknown), an early-Yuan manual for storytellers, refers to “ignorant people and their kind” (*yufu deng bei*) who can be moved to anger by a storyteller’s tale about traitors.⁷⁷ Some of the earliest historical fiction is said be targeted at this group.⁷⁸ Related terms are “the people of the empire” (*tianxia zhi ren*), “people of the four classes” (*simin*), “ordinary people” (*liusu*), and other similar designations. It is often hard to give this term a referential status, given the sheer cost of production of the lengthy *yanyi*-style texts, that is, texts that are elaborations on historical records; the presumably low literacy of “unlearned men and women”; and the relative difficulty of this type of historical narrative, which relied more or less on historical material written in simplified classical Chinese.

However, eventually, editorial packaging and reshaping of *tongsu* texts, together with rising literacy levels, intersected to produce “the common reader.” This is not the place to trace this lengthy historical process; however “the common reader” may have appeared in considerable numbers some time after the emergence of these “popular” genres in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. By the late-Qing period, social reformers noted the prevalence of traditional *tongsu* texts among the less learned. It was observed that shop assistants commonly had historical novels in their hands as they worked,⁷⁹ and that an illiterate man, assisted by his workmates, acquired literacy through constant reading of the *Sanguo yanyi*.⁸⁰ It is ironic that this historical moment, when *tongsu* fiction was read by actual “ordinary folk,” as distinct from rhetorically constructed “ordinary folk,” is exactly the time when reformers like Liang Qichao (1873–1929) bemoaned that this underclass could *only* read

the old-fashioned, stereotypical *xiaoshuo*, so inappropriate in a rapidly modernizing and westernizing society.⁸¹

An examination of prefaces also allows us to trace associations among authors, readers, and publishers; to establish the existence of coterie readerships; and to discover the lucrative conjunction between the literary specialist and the commercial publisher.

Coterie Publication

Here I show some examples to illustrate the richness of the material. The first example deals with what I call “coterie publication.” The *Zhongyuan yinyun* (Sounds and Rhymes of the Central Plains), compiled by Zhou Deqing (1277–1365) and completed in 1324, was a highly influential book used in the composition of dramatic arias in the Yuan and Ming periods.⁸² The work contains four prefaces and a postscript by the author.⁸³ The first preface (undated) is also by the author. He notes that the target readers for his work range from composers of arias to scholar officials (*jinshen*) to “lyricists of the alleyways,” that is, commoners (*lüyan geyong zhe*). In spite of this broad target audience, Zhou is careful to distinguish his work from those composers who seek merely to please the vulgar herd (*shijing zhi tu*). He has written this book at the request of his friend Xiao Cuncun (fl. early 14th century).⁸⁴

Another preface (undated) by Hanlin academician Ouyang Xuan (1238–1357) places the author in a long line of those who have sought to correct the prosody of the empire, beginning with Zhou Gongjin (Zhou Yu, 175–210).⁸⁵ The third preface is by Luo Zongxin (dates unknown), presumably a friend of Zhou Deqing, who provided financial sponsorship for its publication. Luo claims that publication of the work will serve to broaden its circulation (then in manuscript form) to benefit a larger range of readers (called *zhiyin*, admirers or connoisseurs). He notes that Zhou has sought to correct errors in previous works, such as confusion over names and false attributions of authorship.⁸⁶

One additional preface (undated) by Soqui Fuchu (from the Western Regions, dates unknown), who is presumably another friend of the author, expresses admiration for Zhou Deqing. He notes that this work will benefit not just the Central Plain but the whole world. He also expresses appreciation for Luo Zongxin’s efforts in publishing the work and thus benefiting later generations of song composers (*houbei xueci*).

Because of Zhou's modesty, Luo has taken it upon himself to commission printers to make the engraved blocks.⁸⁷

The author, in a postscript (undated), provides a more intimate view of the association among himself, his sponsor Luo, and his admiring reader Soqui. He describes a drinking party held with Luo and Soqui to celebrate the publication of the *Zhongyuan yinyun*. Zhou Deqing reconstructs his elaborate dialogue with Luo Zongxin in which each praises and toasts the other as a true connoisseur of the prosody of the Central Plain. According to Zhou, the toasting continued until all present were thoroughly drunk.⁸⁸

Such delightfully detailed pictures of the process of composition and publication are rare in prefaces to *xiaoshuo* and dramas from the Yuan to the Ming.⁸⁹ But already in the Yuan period one finds notions that appear time and again in prefaces of plays and dramas from the Ming period. A work will first circulate among a coterie circle in manuscript form. The modest but talented author will not suggest publication, but his friends, who know talent when they see it, will devise a way to get it published. In other cases, a farsighted publisher will commission a work. An official with an imposing title will be asked to write a preface for the work. He will mention the high principles of the author, the benefits of the work, and its superiority to its rivals. The work is claimed to be designed for a broad readership, but this should certainly not be construed to mean that it is designed for "the vulgar herd." In the case above, the sponsor and another reader or admirer cannot resist adding contributions of their own. This allows everyone to be thoroughly flattered and congratulated for their perspicacity in facilitating the publication of this wonderful book. The commercial motive of the publisher is implicit in the attempt to draw a wide readership, but it is not signaled in a dramatic way.

Book-Merchant-Directed Publications

In this type of work the focus is on the initiative of the book merchant (usually the book printer as well as its distributor) in searching for or commissioning suitable texts for publication. The commercial motive is uppermost. However, even this type never entirely sheds elements of the "coterie publication" model.

One example is the case of Fujianese publisher Xiong Damu (fl.

mid-sixteenth century). In his 1552 preface to *Da Song yanyi zhongxing yinglie zhuan* (Tales of Valor in the Elaboration of the History of the Restoration of the Great Song Dynasty), Xiong explains how his relative by marriage and fellow publisher, Yang Yongquan, came to see him, bearing a book about the famed Song loyalist general Yue Fei (1103–1142).⁹⁰ Yang declares this book, the *Jingzhong lu* (The Record of Pure Loyalty), is so literary that no one who was not a *shidai fu* (literati) could read it. He asks Xiong to expand this into a *cihua* (verse-prose narrative) so that even “unlearned men and women” could understand it. Xiong says that he agreed to do this, relying on Zhu Xi’s *Zizhi tongjian gangmu* (Outline of the Comprehensive Mirror for Government) as his basis. He also affirms the value of *xiaoshuo* and unorthodox histories, which relate matters left out by the official histories. Now that it is to be made public to all under heaven (*gong zhu tianxia*), he wonders whether those who peruse this text (*lanzhe*) will regard it with disapprobation as an “unorthodox” (*xie*) work?

Xiong’s historical narrative was very popular at that time and was reprinted under three different titles several times over the next fifty years.⁹¹ It is believed that a fine handwritten copy with colored illustrations was sent to the Jiajing-period emperor (1522–1566) and placed in the Palace Treasury (*neifu*) library.⁹² In this case we have a text commissioned by a commercial publisher that is apparently directed toward “unlearned men and women.” Should we take this claim at face value or regard it as a rhetorical construct?⁹³ *The Restoration of the Great Song Dynasty*, in emulation of its famous predecessor the *Three Kingdoms Narrative*, contains many documents and aims at a style of historical verisimilitude. This could be related to the fact that, from the evidence of the Palace Treasury manuscript cited above, its intended readership included court circles. In later manifestations, the text was reproduced in pictorial form and may, at this stage, have enjoyed a broader readership.⁹⁴ However, Xiong’s desire to make a text that could be read by “unlearned men and women” is probably best understood as a description of the genre he was writing, that is, the *yanyi* genre, a “writing down” of official history to make it simple to read (so simple it could even be read by the hypothetical “ordinary folk”).

One could assume a commercial motivation in the publication of both *Sounds and Rhymes of the Central Plains* and *The Restoration of the*

Great Song Dynasty. The commercial intention is implicit in the first case and explicit in the second. Later prefaces draw time and again on notions expressed in both of the above paradigms, that is, a manuscript circulates amongst a coterie readership, a publisher hears of it, the text is said to be *tongsu*, and so on. In the first half of the seventeenth century, the relationship between book merchant and author is particularly striking in short-story publications, such as Ling Mengchu's (1580–1644) *Erke pai'an jingqi* (Second Set of Stories to Amaze You) and others. However, “the coterie model” is rarely entirely absent. Paratextual material continues to indicate that the work in question is the product of a member of the literati who has put his stamp on the material, and that the work has circulated to others of his social circle.

NORMATIVE CONCEPTS OF READING

Another way of understanding the history of reading and readership in China is to trace changes in what one could call normative concepts of reading, that is, how one should read or study. One can draw here on a vast array of materials, including literary representations of reading and visual images of reading. Here I mention a few possibilities.

Books about How to Read and Study

From Zhu Xi's famous *Dushu fa* (Ways to Study Writings), one can turn to the plethora of books comprising anecdotes about how famous people of the past achieved official rank through prolonged study.⁹⁵ Stories of *qindu* (diligent study) had been told from antiquity. Two of the most famous stories tell of Sun Jing of the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), who used string to tie his hair to the rafters to keep himself from nodding off and Su Qin, who jabbed himself with an awl till the blood ran to keep himself awake while studying. These stories are encapsulated in the well-known proverb *xuanliang cigu* (“tying one's hair to a beam and jabbing oneself [with an awl]”).⁹⁶ In spite of the stereotypical nature of these tales, one can learn much about reading practices ascribed to historical personages from instructional books on how to study. A book by Ming official and bibliophile Qi Chenghan (1565–1628) contains a large number of anecdotes representing the desperate strategies of aspirants to the *shi* class.⁹⁷ It is replete with stories of poor young men who overcome

excruciating odds to study, such as rationalist philosopher Wang Chong (27–ca. 97), author of the *Lunheng* (Authoritative Expositions), who could not afford books but would go to booksellers and memorize their books on the spot,⁹⁸ or writer Liu Jun (463–522), who was too poor to buy a lamp and burnt hempen stalks to see at night. Once his hair caught fire, but he kept on reading.⁹⁹ There are stories about those who copied texts extensively or annotated their texts with colored inks, and so on.¹⁰⁰ In the *Dushu zhiguan lu* (A Record of How to Read for Meditation and Enlightenment), five *juan*, by Wu Yingji (1594–1645),¹⁰¹ advice is given on such reading practices as correcting one's pronunciation when reading and pausing at the right place for emphasis,¹⁰² copying a text to understand it better, and avoiding plagiarism in copying the words of someone else.¹⁰³ The instructional texts lay most emphasis on studying to win high office. However, one can also discover those who read books for pleasure, such as leading radical thinker Li Zhi (1527–1602), who rejoiced in his quiet hermitlike existence, immersed in his favorite books.¹⁰⁴ Instructional texts give injunctions concerning what one should not do with books, such as not using pages from books to cover jars or window panes,¹⁰⁵ and also concerning what one should do, such as adjusting one's attire and setting up incense on the table before reading the classics.¹⁰⁶

Books about how to read or study (*dushu*), of course, present norms of reading as a form of study and self-cultivation to which the educated man should aspire. One could interpret some of them as a vulgarization of the Neo-Confucian emphasis on the achievement of self-cultivation (and material reward) through study. To understand more about historical practices one must turn to graphic and material images, which present a significantly broader range of the symbolic attributes of the book and reading than one finds in instructional texts. Some of these images mark a decisive break with the “normative” guides concerning how one should read or study.

Graphic and Material Images of Reading

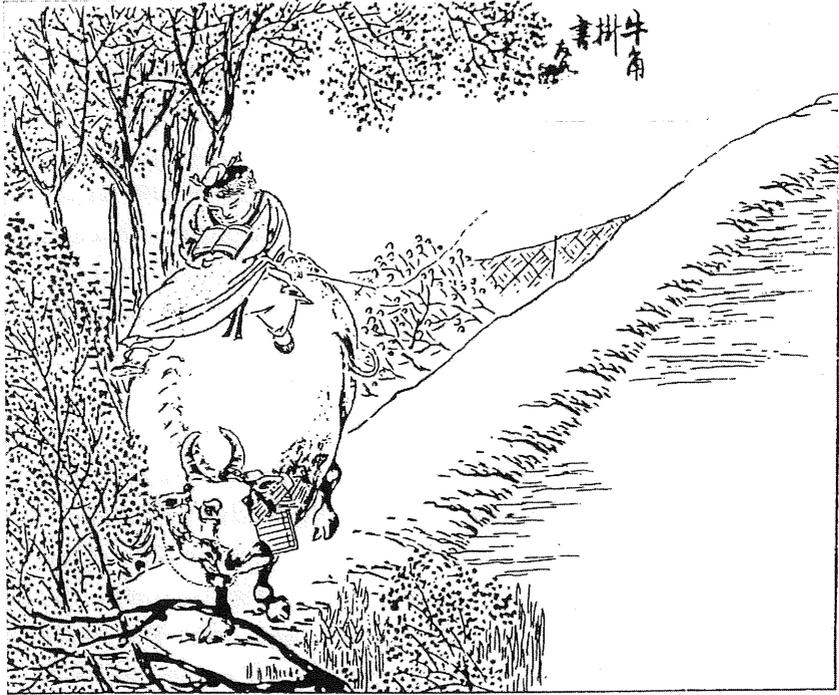
In graphic and material representations, the site in which reading takes place is paramount. The ancients are associated in legend or historical works with particular places where they read, thought, or composed their great works. Many of these sites were reconstructed, or built for the

first time, during the Ming period. The mythical Fu Xi and Cang Jie, together with Confucius, are honored by association with a platform (*tai*).¹⁰⁷ Poet and statesman Qu Yuan (ca. BCE 339–ca. 278) and historian Sima Xiangru (BCE 179–118) are associated with caves.¹⁰⁸ Men of later ages (and lesser fame) were associated with towers (*lou*), reading rooms (*guan*), or more simply, “places” (*chu*).¹⁰⁹ The infamous first emperor of a unified China, Qin Shihuang (r. BCE 221–210), is associated with a pit (the one where he allegedly burnt the books).¹¹⁰ In many cases such records of historical or legendary sites of reading are “confirmed” by an actual site that one can visit.

In book illustrations of the Ming period, one finds a wide range of locations for reading, divided along the lines of class, gender, and function. Male literati are found communing with nature and reading in bamboo huts in a natural setting. A magistrate sits at his desk, with his books and writing tools laid out as symbols of his authority. The scholar is found in his studio. A man ushers a woman into his bedroom. We know he is a member of the literati from his furnishings and from the books placed on his desk.¹¹¹ Books here are a signal of social class and occupation.

Boys from affluent classes read in well-furnished studies, but poor boys, determined to get an education, studied while sitting on an ox in a field (in a topos known as “the ox-horn student” [*niujiao shusheng*]; see figure 4).¹¹² The image of the ox-horn student reminds one of the figure of the peasant reading while pedaling the chain pump from the *Nongzheng quanshu* referred to at the beginning of this paper. Within the context of instructional texts and graphic images that applauded youths who rose above poverty and lifelong manual labor through diligent study, the chain-pump pedaler now appears less anomalous. One can perhaps understand this illustration as the extension of a familiar idea (the poor peasant striving for a better future by studying as he toils) to a new context, namely, a manual on agricultural techniques.

An illustration of the future Judge Bao (the “Chinese Solomon”), born to a farming family, attending his village school, represents another example of someone rising from obscurity through study. This plate (see figure 5) comes from a chantefable (song and prose narrative) of the late-fifteenth century.¹¹³ For a much later example, note the New Year print depicting Su Xun (1009–1066), who ignored learning when he was



4. Young boy reader in the rural countryside. “Ox-horn student” (*niujiao shusheng*). Image from Wang Yuguang and Xu Yan, *Zhongguo dushu da cidian* (1993; Nanjing: Nanjing daxue, 1995), opposite p. 1.

young but later developed a passion for study. He is show teaching his two sons, Su Shi (1037–1101) and Su Zhe (1039–1112), who later became famous writers and officials.¹¹⁴

The most interesting illustrations create a social situation that virtually serves as an instruction on how to read the book. In a mixed compilation of plays and *xiaoshuo*, this frontispiece from a fiction miscellany, *Wanjin qinglin* (Compendium of the Quintessence of Passion), produced by the well-known publisher of popular works Yu Xiangdou (fl. ca. 1550–1637), shows Yu himself reading in his studio with two maids in attendance.¹¹⁵ We understand this is where one should read this work. The commendation to the reader on this frontispiece tells him (but not her) that the book contains so many poems, songs, and stories that they cannot all be enumerated on the front page. The text then continues “Literati (*shizi*) within the four oceans [that is, the known world] who



5. Reader in a school setting. *Sao song sanlang qu dushu* (Mother Takes Her Third Son to School), *Xinkan quanxiang shuochang Bao daizhi chushen zhuan* (New Edition of the Fully Illustrated Chantefable of the Childhood of Judge Bao), [illustrations], p. 5a, reproduced in *Ming Chenghua shuochang congcan* (Shanghai: Shanghai bowuguan, 1979), vol. 4, p. 5a. Original in the collection of the Shanghai Museum.

buy this will realize this in a glance.” Here, reading is for the male connoisseur of arias, fictional romances, and the like, and designed for private enjoyment in one’s home.

The same work contains an image that shows another potential use for this compilation of mainly romantic tales, the art of seduction. In an illustration from *Zhongqing li ji* (Story of Ardent Lovers) young scholar Gu Lu sits with his arm around his lover Li Yuniang, as they read love stories (see figure 6).¹¹⁶ The caption runs “Gu sheng and Yu Sit Shoulder to Shoulder Reading Tales” (Gu sheng gong Yu bingjian guan zhuan). From the narrative preceding the illustration, the reader realizes that what the pair is reading are likely to be the *Xixiang ji* (The Western Chamber) by Wang Shifu (fl. 1295–1307), a play about Yingying who fell in love with a young scholar, and a romance *Jiao Hong ji* (The Story of Wang Jiaoniang and Fei Hong) by Song Yuan (fl. late-thirteenth century).¹¹⁷



6. Readers in the boudoir.
Zhongqing li ji (Story of Ardent
 Lovers) in Yu Xiangdou, comp.,
Wanjin qinglin, reproduced in
 Guben xiaoshuo congkan (Shang-
 hai: Guji chubanshe, 1990), ser. 4,
 vol. 152, *juan* 1, p. 23b (p. 46).
 Facsimile of the original in Tokyo
 University.

Readers of the *Wanjin qinglin* may well have been aware that a whiff of scandal pertained to this particular story. An unfounded, but often repeated, rumor had it that Qiu Jun (1420–1495), Hanlin academician and leading political thinker, was the author of the *Story of Ardent Lovers* and that it was based on a love affair of his youth. This false supposition was apparently based on the fact that Gu Lu, the young scholar of the story, was said to hail from Qiongsan in Guangdong, the hometown of Qiu Jun.¹¹⁸

Another example is from the *Saizheng geji* (Compilation of Songs from Saizheng), a compilation of play arias in a small-sized edition (*jinxiangben*) of the Wanli era. This depicts a man in a pavilion strumming

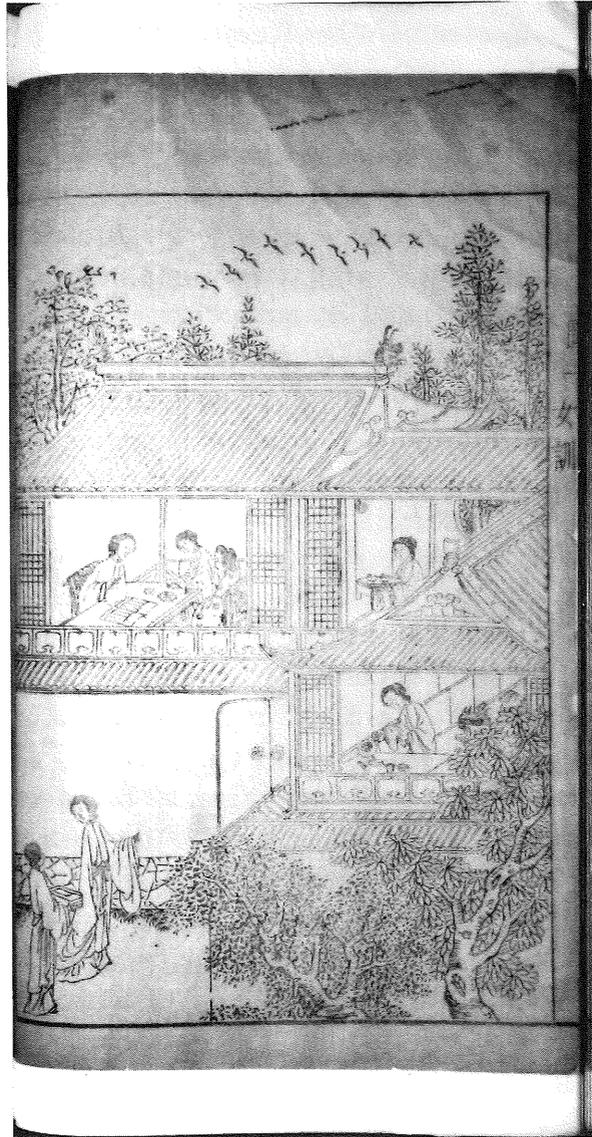
a zither, books strewn over a bench, watched by admiring maids with fans and drinks. His wife lingers, smiling, by the doorway.¹¹⁹ The illustration is captioned “Enjoying summer in the cool pavilion” and depicts the pleasures of summer for a gentleman of leisure (see figure 7).¹²⁰ A further illustration in the same compilation depicts a more intense state of pleasure. A gentleman in a lady’s boudoir seeks to awaken a sleeping beauty. He has a scroll in his hand, perhaps something he has just written. Behind her bed some books rest on a bench.¹²¹ Perhaps writing and reading were part of this courtship?

In these Ming illustrations one commonly finds women reading. One of the most famous examples is that of Cui Yingying, heroine of Wang Shifu’s drama *Xixiang ji*, who is depicted reading a billet-doux from her frustrated lover Zhang.¹²² This image became vulgarized in numerous representations, including some on brush holders and the like.¹²³ In spite of the dangers of allowing women to read, books are an important accessory for the well-bred young lady. One example comes from the *Lüchuang nüshi* (Women Scholars of the Green Windows), a miscellany of texts for women comprising moral texts, biographies, and fictional tales.¹²⁴ The second half-folio illustration, under the heading “Nüxun” (Womanly Department), depicts the ladies of the house engaged in conversation about what is presumably an instructional text. Two other ladies, one bearing books, are about to enter the house (see figure 8).¹²⁵ By the late-Ming period, drama, fiction, and didactic literature typically depicted the virtuous woman as one who read books. Katherine Carlitz draws our attention to the way these highly literate women could be depicted in masculine images, such as the pose of a magistrate.¹²⁶

Visual and fictional representations of reading are important because they offer tantalizing insights into the little-known area of the use of literacy, reading, and writing in private life. The visual images discussed above can be combined with literary representations to open up the emergence of a private domain involving books and a whole new line of questions. For example, why in poetry written during the Ming period, are the women poets depicted reading in sorrowful solitude? Solitary reading is now a trope in the standard theme of sorrow at separation. Shang Jinglan (1604–1680), in a poem entitled “Sitting in the



7. Gentleman reader in his garden. *Saizheng geji* (Compilation of Songs from Saizheng), Wanli era, reprinted in Fu Xihua, *Zhongguo gudian wenxue banhua xuanji* (Shanghai: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1981), vol. 1, p. 73. Image of Cai Yong, his second wife, Niu, and three attendants, to accompany act 21 of the late-Yuan play *Pipa ji* (Song of the Lute), by Gao Ming (ca. 1307–ca. 1371).



8. Women readers in their home. Qinhui yuke [pseud.], "Nüxun" (Womanly Department), *Lüchuang nüshi* (Women Scholars of the Green Windows), late-Ming, "Tu" (picture) 1b. This image is reproduced from a microfilm of the original held in the Harvard-Yenching Library, T4176/2934. It is the second half-folio-size illustration in a series appended to the table of contents placed before the first *juan*.

Book Room at the Garden of What Remains,” says, “Bird songs accompany me as I read alone.”¹²⁷ Xu Can (ca. 1610–1677) writes: “Perhaps in the dying watch I’ll read a book in silence / And drink a sad cup alone.”¹²⁸ Other poems, however, testify that reading and writing can be a shared activity with other women. Wu Qi (mid-seventeenth century) declares: “Paintings and history texts are our friends in the women’s quarters. / Our modest skill at poetry composition takes us beyond worldly affairs.”¹²⁹ Graphic and literary representations can be particularly useful in the case of social groups, such as women, where other evidence is scarce.

CONCLUSION

In this article I have sought to explore methodologies for investigating readerships in late-imperial China, particularly for fictional and dramatic works. Since the type of empirical evidence of literacy and readership obtainable in studies of the European experience is less accessible or simply unavailable in the case of China, I have considered a range of alternative methods. Western studies of the history of the book have provided the stimulus for this research agenda, but strategies adapted to the particularity of the Chinese context shape the research methodology. Direct empirical evidence of readerships may well be hard to find, but imaginative use of China’s sophisticated textual culture can yield some interesting results. For example, the Chinese practice of multiple representations, aided by the inherent flexibility of woodblock publication, offers an obvious site of exploration. The different “packaging” applied to the “same” text, even within the same era, implies different sorts of readerships and reading practices. The intense interest on the part of Chinese males in study techniques, a consequence of the centrality of the imperial examination system, led to the production of numerous guides on study for the aspirant official. *Dushu* texts (that is, books about how to read or study), which are mainly collections of anecdotes about men who succeeded in their study in the face of overwhelming odds, provide a wealth of material concerning normative concepts of how to read. At the same time, the burgeoning of illustrated texts in fiction and drama

from the late-Ming period, offers vivid depictions of the kinds of private, secret, and even subversive types of reading one could find in the domestic quarters. The transposition to popular texts of the kind of textual “packaging” found in primers and examination cribs, such as commentary, punctuation, and easy formatting, when considered together with the standard sequence in literacy training, can give us an indication of the kind of literacy level or literary competence required to read certain types of texts. The rich Chinese tradition of paratextual material allows one to record changes in the lexicon for readership, authorship, and publication over the centuries and to raise questions about possible emerging readerships. Taken singly, each of these items offers us only a limited angle on an amorphous subject. Taken in conjunction, compared and considered historically, these shifting representations have the potential to offer fresh insights into the social impact of print in China’s late-imperial period.

NOTES

This article was first presented as part of a panel entitled “How to Study the History of the Chinese Book: Practical Tips and Wishful Thinking” at the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies in Chicago, April 2001. I wish to thank my fellow panelists, Cynthia Brokaw and Lucille Chia, for organizing this panel and for their encouragement and insights. I have also benefited from helpful comments made by members of the audience. Anonymous readers for the *East Asian Library Journal* challenged me to clarify my ideas and provided useful references. I thank them for their careful reading. I am also indebted to Nancy Tomasko, of the *East Asian Library Journal*, for her diligent editing and thoughtful insights. The research for this paper was funded by the Australian Research Council. Thanks are due Wu Cuncun, for her work as research assistant in compiling and analyzing data from paratextual material. A visit to the University of California-Berkeley and to the Harvard-Yenching Library allowed me to view rare editions and microfilms. Many thanks to James Cheng, Shen Jin, and Hilde de Weerd of the Harvard-Yenching Library for their assistance and advice.

1. The most comprehensive study of Chinese agriculture and *nongshu* is that of Francesca Bray, “Agriculture,” *Biology and Biological Technology*, pt. 2, *Science and Civilisation in China*, ed. Joseph Needham, vol. 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1984. Bray (p. 64) hails the *Nongzheng quanshu* as “the last of the great traditional agricultural treatises.” See also Gang Deng,

- Development versus Stagnation: Technological Continuity and Agricultural Progress in Pre-modern China*, (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1993). Deng describes the *Nongzheng quanshu* as “the most extensive private work on agriculture in pre-modern China,” pp. 43, 85–91.
2. On illustrations in *nongshu* see Deng, *Development*, pp. 84–86. Deng notes that the *Nongzheng quanshu* had an “unprecedented” number of illustrations (717), p. 86.
 3. Compare this illustration with images of figures operating the chain pump in the *Yuan Liaofan quan nongshu* (Yuan Liaofan’s Encouragement to Agriculture), 5 *juan*, comp. Yuan Huang (1533–1606, *zi* Liaofan). This illustration can be conveniently viewed in Zhou Xinhui’s compilation of illustrations, *Zhongguo gu banhua tongshi* (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 2000), Appendix “Tuban,” p. 60; for discussion see p. 134 (text proper). The 1605 edition of this work was published by the Shuangfengtang publishers of Yu Xiangdou, *ibid.* (Yu is discussed below in “The Material Form of the Printed Text” and by Lucille Chia in her article in this issue of the *East Asian Library Journal*). In Yuan’s *Quan nongshu* the chain pump has a thatched awning, and the two men pedal while hanging on to parallel bars for support. There is no sign of book or parasol. For a similar illustration (although this time the same irrigation device is called a *renche* or *tache*), see the *Tiangong kaiwu* (The Exploitation of the Works of Nature, preface 1637) by Song Yingxing (d. ca. 1660) (modern edition annotated by Pan Jixing, *Tiangong kaiwu jiaozhu ji yanjiu* [Ba Shu shushe, 1989]), p. 228. The relevant section is translated in E-Tu Zen Sun and Shiou-Chuan Sun, *T’ien-kung K’ai-wu: Chinese Technology in the Seventeenth Century* (University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1966), pp. 12–14. One could note further that there are no similar images of farmers using their tools elsewhere in the *Nongzheng quanshu*. I thank the *East Asian Library Journal* editor for pointing this out.
 4. The illustration discussed here is reproduced from an original of the 1639 edition held in the Harvard-Yenching Library (T8037/2003). For details on this edition, see Shen Jin (Chun Shum), *Meiguo Hafo daxue Hafo Yanjing tushuguan zhongwen shanben shushi* (Shanghai: Cishu chubanshe, 1999), p. 311. My thanks to Antonia Finnane, of the University of Melbourne, who first pointed out this illustration to me in Monique Cohen and Nathalie Monnet, *Impressions de Chine* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1992), p. 85.
 5. For details on Xu Guangqi, see the biography by J. C. Yang in Arthur W. Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Qing Period (1644–1911)* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1943–1944), pp. 316–319; see also Bray, *Agriculture*, pp. 64–70 and Deng, *Development*, pp. 42–43, 85–91. For Xu Guangqi’s experiments with Western irrigation technology in Shanghai county and his pioneering of wet-rice cultivation in Tianjin, see Bray, *Agriculture*, pp. 65–67 and Deng, *Development*, p. 43.
 6. Shen, *Meiguo Hafo daxue*, p. 311.
 7. *Ibid.*
 8. For details of the holdings of the Chongzhen-era edition (1628–1644), ed.

- Chen Zilong, see Du Xinfu, *Mingdai banke zonglu* (Yangzhou: Jiangsu Guangling guji keyinshe, 1983), vol. 1, p. 66a. The edition produced by Zhang Guowei is listed in *ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 63b.
9. See the biography of Xu Guangqi, in Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, p. 318.
 10. Joseph Needham translates *fanche* as “square-pallet chain-pump”; *Mechanical Engineering, Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 4, pt. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965); see p. 339, and figs. 577 and 578. It is also known as the “water machine” (*shuiche*) and the “dragon-bone machine” (*longguche*), *ibid.* As mentioned in note 3, the same irrigation device is termed a “human-operated machine” (*renche*) or a “treadle machine” (*tache*) in the *Tiangong kaiwu*.
 11. *Nongzheng quanshu*, *juan* 17, p. 7b. This translation is adapted from the translation by Needham of the relevant section in the *Sanguo zhi*; *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 4, pt. 2, p. 346. He dates this event to between 227 and 239 CE. The section from the *Nongzheng quanshu* above is an abbreviated version of that in the *Weilüe* and the *Sanguo zhi*. The original *Weilüe*, by Yu Huan (fl. 3d century CE), is listed with a variable number of *juan* in Tang (618–907) sources; see the preface to the *Weilüe jiben* in 25 *juan* by Zhang Pengyi, in the modern compilation of Yang Jialuo, *Zhongguo xueshu leibian: Sanguo zhi fubian* (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1979), “Fanli,” p. 1a. For this passage about Ma Jun, see the *Weilüe jiben*, *juan* 8, p. 8b (p. 37). For the same passage in the *Sanguo zhi* by Chen Shou (233–297), see the modern edition of the *Sanguo zhi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1971), vol. 4, p. 807.
 12. I am suggesting here that the illustration is making a rhetorical point about the relative ease of use of this irrigation device. This was not necessarily the case in practice, especially when the gap between the water channel and the irrigated field was large. Needham cites one fourteenth-century source describing girls working chain pumps (*Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 4, pt. 2, p. 347). On the other hand, the illustration of this device in the *Tiangong kaiwu* depicts two men operating the machine. However, in that text it is noted that one man could operate it. In the latter case one man could irrigate five *mu* of land a day; see modern edition of Pan, *Tiangong kaiwu jiaozhu ji yanjiu*, p. 226. For a translation of this passage see Sun and Sun, *T'ien-kung K'ai-wu*, p. 12. Rudolf P. Hommel in his study of early-twentieth-century agricultural practices in China describes a case in which three men use their combined strength to operate a chain pump draining water from a deep clay pit; see *China at Work; An Illustrated Record of the Primitive Industries of China's Masses, Whose Life Is Toil, and Thus an Account of Chinese Civilization* (New York: John Day Company for the Bucks County Historical Society, Doylestown, Pa., [ca. 1937]), pp. 54, 56 and fig. 81. Mark Elvin, in his discussion of agriculture in the Song and Yuan periods, notes that in the Yangtze River delta region “the treadle pallet pump predominated—mobile, adaptable, but requiring a prolonged input of hard labor.” See his *The Pattern of the Chinese Past* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973), p. 126.
 13. Bray, *Agriculture*, p. 66.

14. Xu advocated setting up military and civilian agricultural colonies in these underpopulated northern provinces. To sustain these populations he argued for the use of innovative techniques to cultivate rice in traditional dry-land farming areas. See the lengthy discussion by Bray, *Agriculture*, p. 67. Zhang Guowei, who is mentioned in the preface to the first edition of the *Nongzheng quanshu* and who later reprinted this work (see note 8 above), was also active in the encouragement of agriculture, particularly cotton growing in the Wu area; see Chen Fukang, "Zhang Guowei yu Mingmo de jibu qishu," *Chubanshi yanjiu*, no. 3, 1995, p. 208.
15. Xu advocated the production of economic crops including bamboo and timber products; see Bray, *Agriculture*, p. 70. Cohen and Monnet, in their discussion of this illustration, point out that among the commercial crops advocated by Xu for small farm holdings were glue, ink, brushes, and parasols; *Impressions de Chine*, p. 84.
16. Robert Darnton, "History of Reading," in Peter Burke, ed., *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), p. 141.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 142-143.
18. Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, trans. Anne and John Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).
19. Darnton, "History of Reading," gives a good survey of the type of primary sources available in the West. For a comprehensive recent study see Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier, *A History of Reading in the West*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995). The bibliography provides a useful guide to the vast number of works on this topic.
20. Key studies on the impact of print include the seminal study of Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). For a critical assessment of Eisenstein's leading hypotheses, see Harvey J. Graff, *The Legacies of Literacy: Continuities and Contradictions in Western Culture and Society* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987). On issues of readership, see particularly the work of Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), and also his *Forms and Meanings: Texts, Performances, and Audiences from Codex to Computer* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995). Chartier discusses the impact of reading on private life in "The Practical Impact of Writing," *A History of Private Life*, ed. Roger Chartier, in *Passions of the Renaissance*, vol. 3, ed. Philippe Ariès and George Duby (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 111-160.
21. Tsien Tsuen-hsuen, *Paper and Printing*, in Joseph Needham, ed., *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 5, pt. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

22. Sören Edgren, "Southern Song Printing at Hangzhou," *Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, Bulletin No. 61, 1989. Cynthia Brokaw, "Commercial Publishing in Late Imperial China: The Zou and Ma Family Businesses," *Late Imperial China* 17.1 (June 1996), pp. 49–92; also her "On the History of the Book in China" and "Reading the Bestsellers of the Nineteenth Century: Commercial Publishing in Sibao" in Cynthia Brokaw and Kai-wing Chow, eds., *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003). Lucille Chia, "The Development of the Jianyang Book Trade, Song–Yuan," *Late Imperial China* 17.1 (June 1996), pp. 10–48; "Printing for Profit" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1996); "Commercial Publishing in Jianyang from the Late Song to the Late Ming" in Richard von Glahn and Paul Smith, eds., *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition: Theoretical and Historical Perspectives* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, in press); and "Of Three Mountains Street: Commercial Publishers in Ming Nanjing," in Brokaw and Chow, *Printing and Book Culture*. Ellen Widmer, "The Huanduzhai of Hangzhou and Suzhou: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Publishing," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 56.1 (June 1996), pp. 77–122.
23. Robert E. Hegel, *Reading Illustrated Fiction in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).
24. The conference volume is to appear as Brokaw and Chow, *Printing and Book Culture*.
25. Isobe Akira, "Minmatsu ni okeru 'Saiyūki' no shūtaiteki jūyōsō ni kansuru kenkyū-Mindai 'koten teki hakuwa shōsetsu' no kokusha sō o meguru mondai ni tsuite," *Shūkan Tōyōgaku* 44 (1980), pp. 50–63; Ōki Yasushi, "Minmatsu ni okeru hakuwa shōsetsu no sakusha to dokusha ni tsuite-Isobe Akira shi no shōsetsu ni yosete," *Mindai shi kenkyū* 12 (1984), pp. 1–16.
26. Ellen Widmer, "Xiaoqing's Literary Legacy and the Place of the Woman Writer in Late Imperial China," *Late Imperial China* 13.1 (1989), pp. 1–43. Judith Zeitlin, "Shared Dreams: The Story of Three Wives' Commentary on the Peony Pavilion," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 54 (June 1994), pp. 127–179. Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 68–112.
27. Michela Bussoti, "General Survey of the Latest Studies in Western Languages on the History of Publishing in China," *Revue bibliographique de sinologie*, n.s., vol. 16 (1998), pp. 53–68.
28. Concerning Eurocentric theories of the history of the book, Roger Chartier has written, "For too long, Western historians have judged this manner of reproduction of texts and book publication against the standard of Gutenberg's invention." See his "Gutenberg Revisited from the East," *Late Imperial China* 17.1 (June 1996), p. 2. Craig Clunas critiques Eurocentric theories concerning the impact of print technology on Europe that do not take into account the fact that printing was actually invented in China, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 29–32. Concerning East-West differences in the trajectory of print, Jean-Pierre Drège notes that the much greater use of xylography in China meant there was less

- rupture with manuscript forms than in the West; see his “Des effets de l'imprimerie in Chine sous la dynastie des Song,” *Journal Asiatique* 282.2 (1994), pp. 391–408. Chartier states many parallels between East and West in his article “Gutenberg Revisited.” Cynthia Brokaw stresses “the very real differences that inform the history of the book in the West and the history of the book in China” in her “On the History of the Book in China,” in Brokaw and Chow, *Printing and Book Culture*, chap. 3. She goes on to discuss differences in technology, particularly the dominance of woodblock printing, which involved a different “set of economic considerations” than those applicable to movable-type technology in the West.
29. I also include some discussion of Yuan-period texts to provide a comparative context within which developments in the Ming period can be better understood.
 30. The term is that of D. F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts: The Panizzi Lectures* (London: British Library, 1985). McKenzie notes (p. 19) that “bibliography as a sociology of texts has an unrivalled power to resurrect authors in their own time, and their readers at any time.”
 31. Paratextual features refer to textual devices that frame the text proper, such as prefaces, postfaces, commentaries, running titles, and format. For a study of paratextual features see Gerard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
 32. For examples of parallel studies in the West, see D. F. McKenzie’s analysis of how the dramatist Congreve restyled texts of his plays along neoclassical lines to meet the perceived needs of readers of theatrical texts as distinct from professional actors, in his article “Typography and Meaning: The Case of William Congreve,” in G. Barber and B. Fabian, eds., *Buch und Buchhandel in Europa in Achtzehnten Jahrhundert* (1981), pp. 81–125. See also his *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*. For an introduction to these issues see Darnton’s “History of Reading,” pp. 159–161. In the past decade many studies have appeared dealing with the materiality of the book and its social context and interpretation. See particularly Jerome J. McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991) and Roger Chartier, *Forms and Meanings*.
 33. See my “Constructing New Reading Publics in Late-Ming China” in Brokaw and Chow, *Printing and Book Culture*, and “Print Culture in China and the Emergence of the Common Reader,” in *Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference on Publishing Culture in East Asia December 2001* (Tokyo), 2003.
 34. For an authoritative study of manuscripts and handwriting styles as a tool for studying the sociology of manuscript texts, see Armando Petrucci, *Writers and Readers in Medieval Italy: Studies in the History of Written Culture*, ed. and trans. Charles M. Radding (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995).
 35. For the leading study on printing and standardization, see Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). See particularly “Some Features of Print Culture,” pp. 42–91.
 36. See, for example, McKenzie, “Typography and Meaning.”

37. Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 6.
38. Peter Kornicki, *The Book in Japan: A Cultural History from the Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), p. 49.
39. For a survey of terms, see Cheng Qianfan and Xu Youfu, *Jiaochou guangyi: banben pian*, Nanjing daxue gudian wenxian yanjiusuo zhuankan (1991; Jinan: Qi Lu shushe, 1998), pp. 260 ff.; and Huang Yansheng and Lin Yan, *Banben guji jianshang yu shoucang* (Jilin: Kexue jishu chubanshe, 1996), pp. 33–57.
40. Kornicki, *The Book in Japan*, pp. 49–51.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 51–52.
42. Cheng and Xu, *Jiaochou guangyi*, pp. 263–264; Huang and Lin, *Banben guji*, p. 42.
43. For discussion of revisions, abridgments, expanded texts, and rewritten ones, see Zhang Wenzhi, *Gushu xiuci li* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1996).
44. For a discussion of these unscrupulous practices as they applied to Ming and Qing fiction, see Liu Ts'un-yan, *Chinese Popular Fiction in Two London Libraries* (Hong Kong: Lungmen Booksellers, 1967), pp. 29–35.
45. An exception is Stephen H. West's fine study of the editing of Yuan dramas with particular attention to "the inscription of ideology"; see his "Text and Ideology: Ming Editors and Northern Drama," in Hua Wei and Wang Ailing, *Ming Qing xiqu guoji yantaohui lunwenji* (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo choubeichu, 1998), pp. 237–249, esp. p. 237. Robert Hegel has demonstrated how a standard typeface and format came to dominate publishing in the late-Ming period; see his *Reading Illustrated Fiction*, pp. 112–113. He also notes that this standardization led to a fall in the price of books and a probable rise in the speed of reading, now that type was more uniform; see p. 123. However, the trend toward standardization of typeface and format in general does not detract from the fact that different editions of the "same" text were often published in quite distinct formats.
46. The editions and relevant page numbers are as follows. The story is narrated in chapter 73 of the standard edition of *Sanguo yanyi*, with commentary by Mao Zonggang (ca. 1632–1709):
 - a. *Sanguo zhi tongsu yanyi* (Popular Elaboration of the Three Kingdoms Record), 24 *juan*, publishers unknown, prefaces attributed to Yongyu Zi (the pen name of Jiang Daqi [dates unknown], dated 1494) and Xiuran Zi (the pen name of Zhang Shangde [dates unknown], dated 1522). This edition is known generally as the Jiajing-period edition; facs. edn. in the Guben xiaoshuo jicheng, ser. 3 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1990), vol. 31, pt. 4, *juan* 15, p. 41a.
 - b. *Xinkan tongsu yanyi Sanguo zhi shi zhuan* (New Edition of the Popularized Elaboration of the Historical Record of the Three Kingdoms), 10 *juan*, preface by Yuan Fengzi dated 1548, published by Ye Fengchun (dates unknown). See *juan* 7, p. 6a. Published in facsimile as *Sanguo zhi tongsu yanyi shi zhuan* by Taizan Inoue (Osaka: Kansai University Publishers, 1998), 2 vols. Original held in the Escorial Library in Madrid.
 - c. *Yinshi buyi an Jian yanyi quanxiang piping Sanguo zhi* (Commentarial

Edition of the Three Kingdoms According to the *Zizhi tongjian* with Complete Illustrations, Pronunciation, and Supplementary Notes), preface by Yu Xiangwu (Shuangfengtang, 1592), 20 *juan*. See *juan* 9, p. 3a. From the facsimile copy reproduced by Harmut Walravens, *Two Recently Discovered Fragments of the Chinese Novels San-Kuo-chih Yen-I and Shui-hu-chuan* (Hamburg: C. Bell, 1982).

d. *Xinkan jingben jiaozheng yanyi quanxiang Sanguo zhizhuan pinglin* (New Edition of the Capital Text: Revised Elaboration of the Record of the Three Kingdoms with Complete Illustrations and Commentary), (Yu Xiangdou, Shuangfengtang, post-1592), 20 *juan*. This image is reproduced from a microfilm held in the British Library, London, produced from the original, which is held at Waseda University. See *juan* 13, p. 5b.

47. See Hegel's discussion in *Reading Illustrated Fiction*, pp. 110-113. Samples of the *jiangti* style are given on page 111.
48. For more detailed discussion on these texts, see Anne McLaren, "Ming Audiences and Vernacular Hermeneutics: The Uses of *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*," *T'oung Pao* 81 (1995), pp. 51-80.
49. This is not the only case in which simple terms are elucidated in fictional and dramatic texts. The well-known writer Ling Mengchu (1580-1644), for example, scoffed at editions of Wang Shifu's (fl. 1295-1307) famous play *Xixiang ji* (Western Chamber Romance), which glossed even simple words like *gushuang* (orphans and widows). See Ling's preface to his edition of the *Xixiang ji* in the compilation by Cai Yi, in the series *Zhongguo gudian xiqu xuba huibian* (Jinan: Qi Lu chubanshe, 1989), vol. 2, p. 677.
50. Such as Shanghai, Lanzhou, Beijing, and Tianjin. For further details see Wei An (Andrew West), *Sanguo yanyi banben kao* (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1996), p. 16.
51. The main evidence for this attribution with respect to the publisher is an item in a catalogue with mention of an edition in twenty-four *juan* published by the Duchayuan. See Zhou Hongzu (jinshi of 1559), *Gujin shuke* in the modern edition *Baichuan shuzhi Gujin shuke* (Shanghai: Gudian wenxue, 1957), p. 325. Of extant texts, the above edition is the only one to be arranged in twenty-four *juan*. An edition of the *Sanguo yanyi* was held in the Silijian (Directorate of Ceremonial). See Liu Ruoyu (1548-ca. 1642), *Zhuo zhong zhi* (Taipei: Weiwen tushu chubanshe, 1976), *juan* 18, p. 4b. For further details see my discussion of editions 3A and 3B in "Popularizing *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*: A Study of Two Early Editions," *Journal of Oriental Studies* 33.2 (1995), pp. 165-185.
52. By "pictorial" editions I mean those with comic-strip-like layout of illustrations at the top of each page. Only two of the pictorial editions of *Narrative of the Three Kingdoms* dating from the Ming to early-Qing period are extant in China today (the edition bearing commentary by Tang Binyin [ca. 1595] and the edition bearing commentary by Huang Zhengfu [dates unknown], and both have been discovered in China in recent times; another copy of the Huang Zhengfu edition is found in the Harvard-Yenching Library). For a list

of the pictorial editions and their locations see West (Wei An), *Sanguo yanyi banben kao*, pp. 36–54. The majority of Ming and early-Qing editions had illustrations, often half-folio size, scattered throughout the text. Sometimes illustrations were inserted into the text of occasional folios. The ca. 1522 edition, the earliest one extant (in figure 3A), is unusual in having no illustrations. The relative dearth of pictorial editions in China could indicate that the *shangtu xiawen* type of *Narrative of the Three Kingdoms* was more “popular” than the other varieties and less likely to be passed down or kept in imperial libraries. Foreigners in China during this period, on the other hand, purchased these texts and gave them as gifts to patrons, and because of this they are now held in libraries outside China.

53. The Portuguese Jesuit missionary Gregorio González was sent to China in 1553. He was held in captivity by the Ming government but later freed and moved to Macau where he lived for twelve years. In 1572 González presented several Chinese books to the Spanish ambassador based in Lisbon, Juan de Borja. In the following year Borja presented the books to Felipe II. The texts were bound in solid Western binding and placed in the Escorial Library. González was subsequently given a missionary post representing Spain in Macau. For these details see Sun Chongtao, *Fengyue jinnang kaoshi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000), p. 253; Inoue Taizan, “Xibanya Aisigaoliya jingyuan suo cang ‘Sanguo zhi tongsu yanyi shi zhuan’ chu kao,” *Zhonghua wenshi luncong* 60 (1999), pp. 153–169.
54. For a stimulating discussion of these issues, see Chartier, *Forms and Meanings*, pp. 83–97.
55. See, for example, the preface by Yongyu Zi to the *Sanguo zhi tongsu yanyi*. He complains that official history (*shi*) does not get through (communicate) to the multitudes (*bu tong hu zhong ren*). The preface to the same edition by Xiuran Zi refers to enthusiasts who use vulgar language to write a work that people of the empire will understand by ear and thus comprehend (*tong*) the content (*yu tianxia zhi ren ru er er tong qi shi*). One hundred years later it was commonplace to describe the *yanyi* (historical fiction) as a genre designed to instruct people by using easily comprehensible material (*yi tongsu yu ren*). For this example see the preface by Yang Erzeng (fl. 1612) to the *Dong Xi Jin yanyi* (Elaboration of the Eastern and Western Jin), which can be conveniently consulted in Zhu Yixuan, ed., *Ming Qing xiaoshuo ziliao xuanbian* (Jinan: Qi Lu shushe, 1989), vol. 1, p. 146.
56. Concerning the use of the term “popular” with regard to Chinese fiction, Wilt L. Idema’s discussion many years ago in *Chinese Vernacular Fiction: The Formative Period* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974) is still relevant. Note in particular his avoidance of the term “popular fiction,” p. xlvi, and his comments on the variable language registers of “colloquial fiction,” pp. liii–liv.
57. Many *yanyi*-type texts were written in a simplified form of classical Chinese. The term *su* did not necessarily refer to vernacular language. The term *tongsu* is also discussed in this author’s “Constructing New Reading Publics.”
58. McLaren, “Ming Audiences and Vernacular Hermeneutics.” Andrew West (as

- Wei An), in his comprehensive study of extant Ming and early-Qing editions of this narrative, concludes that texts in this category were read by a less-educated audience; see *Sanguo yanyi banben kao*, p. 131.
59. For the cases discussed by Chartier that illustrate this point in the European experience, see his *Forms and Meanings*, pp. 83–97.
 60. The notion of “literary competence” refers to the background knowledge of conventions required by readers if they are to make sense of a particular work. See Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 113–130.
 61. I say more about *qindu* in the section “Books about How to Read and Study” below. The tools for reading and writing in China (brush, ink, and paper) would have been easier to use than the clay tablets, papyrus, and animal skins associated with Western “scribal culture” before the thirteenth century. On the latter, see Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London and New York: Methuen, 1982), pp. 94–96, 115–116. For a survey of writing methods in the West, see Henri-Jean Martin, *The History and Power of Writing*, trans. Lydia Cochrane (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988). The technology of writing and reading in the West has influenced reading practices, literacy levels, and the social impact of writing; see M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307* (1972; Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1993), especially chap. 4, pp. 114–144 and pt. 2, “What Reading Meant,” pp. 185–334; and Paul Saenger, *Space between Words: The Origins of Silent Reading* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).
 62. For examples from Dunhuang manuscripts, see Victor H. Mair, “Lay Students in the Making of Written Vernacular Narratives: An Inventory of the Tunhuang Manuscripts,” *Chinoperl Papers* 10 (1981), pp. 5–96.
 63. Cheng Duanli, of Yinxian in Zhejiang, was a Confucian School instructor at Quzhou lu and follower of the educational philosophy of Zhu Xi. Cheng’s *Dushu fennian richeng* comprised three *juan* and a separate “Gangling” (Outline), 1 *juan*. Cheng’s curriculum schedule was circulated throughout schools in the Yuan period by the Directorate of Education; see Cheng Duanli’s short biography in Song Lian (1310–1381), *Yuan shi* (Yuan History) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976), *juan* 190, p. 4343. Cheng’s *Schedule of Study* remained influential in academies of the Ming and Qing period. See John Meskill, *Academies in Ming China* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1982), p. 61, p. 177, n. 55. In the *Zhongguo dushu da cidian*, comp. Wang Yuguang and Xu Yan, it is noted that this guide to curriculum was widely applied in the early Ming among the literati classes (1993; Nanjing: Nanjing Daxue chubanshe, 1995), p. 272. For details on the content, see pp. 797–798. William de Bary and Irene Bloom in *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 2d. ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), vol. 1, p. 816, note that the *Cheng Family School Schedule* “became the model for many family schools and academies in late-imperial China and was widely quoted in educational manuals.” I consulted

- the edition of Cheng's *Schedule* in the Siku quanshu (Taiwan: Shangwu yinshuguan), vol. 709, *Dushu fennian richeng*, *juan* 1 and 2, pp. 471-497.
64. See Meskill's translation of sections of the *Schedule* in *Academies*, pp. 160-161.
65. *Ibid.*, pp. 162-163.
66. *Ibid.*, pp. 160-166.
67. Discussed in Zhu Hengfu, "Mao Jin he tade chuban shiye," *Zhongguo dianji yu wenhua* (Chinese Classics and Culture) 3 (2000), pp. 50-56; Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, pp. 565-566.
68. For details on each text see note 46.
69. I have surmised that this could have been done to add an air of historical verisimilitude to what was essentially a work of fiction. See Anne E. McLaren, "Chantefables and the Textual Evolution of the *San-kuo-chih yen-i*," *T'oung Pao* 71 (1985), pp. 159-227. This feature was imitated by later admirers of the *Sanguo*, notably Xiong Damu; see Chen Dakang, *Mingdai xiaoshuo shi* (Shanghai: Wenyi chubanshe, 2000), pp. 262-263.
70. In the Song period the notation of "biaodian" (punctuation) was used to indicate pauses. Colored ink was used to mark a passage or word, and other symbols were used to signal tonal punctuation. However, *biaodian* was the formulation of similar practices that had been in use for centuries; see Ren Yuan, *Judou xue lun gao* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Guji chubanshe, 1998), pp. 4-6. One of the goals of this sort of punctuation was to make a text easier to recite; see *ibid.*, pp. 154-157. On the role of learning how to punctuate in learning literacy, see Lai Xinxia, "Lun judou," in *Guji zhengli lunwen ji*, comp. Zhongguo lishi wenxian yanjiu hui (Lanzhou: Ganzhou renmin chubanshe, 1984), pp. 38-52. For an excellent survey of commentary and punctuation as it applies to Chinese fiction, see David L. Rolston, ed., *How to Read the Chinese Novel* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 42-49. The pictorial style can be traced back to Buddhist votive prints of the Tang and Song periods. For discussion see my *Chinese Popular Culture and Ming Chantefables* (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill Academic Publishers, 1998), pp. 53-67.
71. The *Shuihu zhuan* is variously attributed to Luo Guanzhong and Shi Nai'an (ca. 1290-1365). The earliest recorded editions date from the mid-sixteenth century. For further details, see Andrew H. Plaks, *The Four Masterworks of the Ming Novel: Ssu ta ch'i-shu* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 281; on the authorship of this novel, see p. 293. These examples are also discussed in McLaren, "Constructing New Reading Publics."
72. See, for example, Hu Yinglin's (1551-1602) scathing comments in the *Shaoshi shanfang bicong* about *cunxuejiu* who included fictional tales in *Narrative of the Three Kingdoms*. This can be conveniently consulted in the compilation of Huang Lin and Han Tongwen, *Zhongguo lidai xiaoshuo lunzhu xuan* (Jiangxi: Renmin chubanshe, 1982) p. 151. For this and other examples of *cunxuejiu* see my discussion in "Constructing New Reading Publics."
73. In the case of the *Sanguo yanyi*, military personnel were among the readership;

- see my discussion in "Ming Audiences and Vernacular Hermeneutics," pp. 77–78.
74. Empirical evidence for illustrated vernacular texts such as chantefables (*shuochang cihua*) suggests an emerging female readership, at least in the Qing period (1644–1911); see my *Chinese Popular Culture*, pp. 67–76. The word "affluence" is used advisedly here. The chantefables of Jiading county, for example, were discovered in the tomb of an affluent family with official connections; *ibid.*, pp. 15–31. See also the extensive discussion on readerships in Hegel, *Reading Illustrated Fiction*, pp. 294–303.
 75. See the comments of Shen Chunze (fl. 1573–1620) discussed in Wai-ye Li, "The Collector, the Connoisseur, and Late-Ming Sensibility," *T'oung Pao* 81 (1995, 4–5), pp. 279–280, and McLaren, "Constructing New Reading Publics."
 76. Discussed in more detail in McLaren, "Constructing New Reading Publics."
 77. Prefaces to Chinese novels can be conveniently consulted in Ding Xigen, comp., *Zhongguo lidai xiaoshuo xuba ji* (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1996), 3 vols. For this reference, see vol. 2, p. 588.
 78. For example, see Xiong Damu's preface of 1522 to the *Da Song zhongxing tongsu yanyi* (Popular Elaboration of the History of the Restoration of the Great Song Dynasty) in Ding, *Zhongguo lidai xiaoshuo xuba ji*, vol. 2, p. 980.
 79. See a report written by Xu Nianci that originally appeared in the journal *Xiaoshuo lin*, no. 9–10 (1908) and is reprinted in Zhu Yixuan, *Ming Qing xiaoshuo ziliao xuanbian* (Jinan: Qilu chubanshe, 1989), vol. 1, p. 121.
 80. See a report that originally appeared in Zhang Mingfei, *Gujin xiaoshuo pinglin* (1919) and is reprinted in Zhu Yixuan, *Ming Qing xiaoshuo ziliao xuanbian*, vol. 1, p. 140.
 81. This report originally appeared in the periodical *Zhonghua xiaoshuo jie* 2.1 (1915) and is reprinted in Zhu Yixuan, *Ming Qing xiaoshuo ziliao xuanbian*, vol. 1, p. 122.
 82. The translation of the title comes from J. I. Crump who discusses this work in *Chinese Theater in the Days of Kublai Khan* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1980), pp. 28–29.
 83. See the compilation of paratextual material to drama in Cai Yi, ed., *Zhongguo gudian xiqu xuba huibian* (Jinan: Qi Lu shushe, 1989), vol. 1, pp. 8–15.
 84. *Ibid.*, pp. 8–10.
 85. *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13.
 86. *Ibid.*, pp. 13–14.
 87. *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15. Part of this preface is translated in Ch'ien Hsing-hai and L. Carrington Goodrich, *Western and Central Asians in China under the Mongols* by Chen Yuan, Monumenta Serica Monograph 15 (Los Angeles: Monumenta Serica at the University of California, 1966), pp. 183–184. The transliteration of this name is found in Wang Deyi et al., *Yuanren zhuanji ziliao suoyin* (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, 1979–1982; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), vol. 4, p. 2625.
 88. Cai, *Zhongguo gudian xiqu*, pp. 10–11. An excerpt from this postscript is

- translated by Ch'ien and Goodrich, *Western and Central Asians*, pp. 182–183.
89. I make this observation on the basis of a survey of paratextual material from the Yuan in fiction and *xiaoshuo*. My survey is based on compendiums such as that of Cai Yi, *Zhongguo gudian xiqu xuba huibian* for dramas and Ding Xigen, *Zhongguo lidai xiaoshuo* for fiction; see notes 77 and 83. Some of the results of this survey appear in my “Constructing New Reading Publics” and “Print Culture in China and the Emergence of the Common Reader.”
90. For Xiong’s preface see Ding, *Zhongguo lidai xiaoshuo*, vol. 2, pp. 980–981.
91. Sun Kaidi, *Zhongguo tongshu xiaoshuo shumu* (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1957; rev. ed. 1982), pp. 57–59. Ōtsuka Hideta, *Chūgoku tsūzoku shōmoku kaitei ko* (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 1984), pp. 172–173.
92. This is according to Sun Kaidi who viewed a manuscript copy of this narrative in the possession of a French man (?), that is, Faren) called Duo-er-meng; see Sun Kaidi, *Riben Dongjing suo jian xiaoshuo shumu* (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1981), p. 30. Sun notes this manuscript is of fine quality but with an “artisanal air.” In his *Zhongguo tongshu xiaoshuo shumu* (Beijing: Renmin wenzue, 1982), p. 58, Sun expresses regret that this edition is fragmentary. Only three *juan* survive. It is not known where this manuscript copy is located today.
93. Chen Dakang, taking into account the intermarginal commentary, believes that this text was indeed directed to the “ordinary folk.” See his “Xiong Damu xianxiang: gudai tongshu xiaoshuo chuanbo moshi ji qiyi,” *Wenzue yichan* 2 (2000), p. 102.
94. For these later editions, see the indexes listed in notes 91 and 92.
95. Substantial excerpts from the *Dushu fa* are available in English translation in Daniel K. Gardner, *Learning to Be a Sage: Selections from the Conversations of Master Chu, Arranged Topically* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); see “On Reading,” pp. 128–162. I have also discussed Zhu Xi’s *Dushu fa* in “Constructing New Reading Publics.”
96. For the story of Sun Jing, see the *Taiping yulan* (Imperial Compendium of the Taiping Xingguo Era [976–984]), comp. Li Fang (925–996), 1,000 *juan* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), vol. 2, *juan* 363, p. 1,674. The story of Su Qin is related in the *Zhanguoce* (Intrigues of the Warring States [475–221 BCE]) (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1978), vol. 1, *juan* 3, p. 85. The story of Su Qin has been translated by J. I. Crump, *Chan-kuo Ts’u*, 2d rev. edn. (San Francisco: Chinese Materials Center, 1979), pp. 55–58, esp. p. 57. These two stories circulated widely in late-imperial China. For further details on later circulation, see Wang Yuguang and Xu Yan, *Zhongguo dushu da cidian*, p. 661.
97. Qi Chenghan, *Dushu xun* (Instructions on How to Study), 1 *juan*, included in his *Danshengtang cangshu yue* (Contract for the Danshengtang Library). Qi had a vast library and set up rules for the management of his library for his sons to follow. See L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1976), vol. 1, pp. 216–220, esp. p. 218. For the anecdotes cited here from the *Dushu xun*, see the modern annotated edition included together with three similar

- instructional works in Wang Yuguang, ed., *Dushu siguan* (Hubei: Cishu chubanshe, 1997), pp. 1–12.
98. *Dushu xun* in Wang, *Dushu siguan*, p. 6. The text reads “chang you Luoyang shisi jian, yue suo mai shu” ([He] often roamed through the bookshops of Loyang to read the books on sale). The original tale is found in Fan Ye (398–445), *Hou Han shu* (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1971), vol. 3, *juan* 49, p. 1629, which contains the line above. It takes an effort to imagine what types of books and bookshops were available in the first century CE. We do know that paper made of vegetable fiber was known in the second century BCE; see Xiao Dongfa, *Zhongguo tushu chuban yinshua shilun* (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2001), pp. 35ff. Li Ruiliang has traced bookshops (*shusi*) and people employed to copy books as far back as the Eastern Han period (25–220 CE); see *Zhongguo gudai tushu liutong shi* (Shanghai: Renmin chubanshe, 2000), pp. 94–95.
99. Qi Chenghan, *Dushu xun*, pp. 7–8.
100. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
101. The Buddhist connotations of the term *zhiguan* in the title are explained in *Zhongguo lidai xiaoshuo* in Wang, *Dushu siguan*, p. 13. The complete work is given in *ibid.*, pp. 13–104.
102. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
103. For an example of copying, see *ibid.*, p. 103. One is advised to make appropriate attributions in copying a text, p. 97.
104. *Zhongguo lidai xiaoshuo*, p. 81.
105. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
106. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
107. The mythical Fu Xi is credited with devising the Eight Trigrams at the Fu Xi shi huaguatai (Platform Where Fu Xi Drew Trigrams) located in Tianshui county in Gansu. A Ming-period record attests to an actual platform at this spot although it does not remain today. See Wang Yuguang and Xu Yan, *Zhongguo dushu da cidian* (1993; Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 1995), p. 3. The mythical Cang Jie is purported to have devised Chinese characters at the Zaozitai (Character Creation Platform) in Shensi, not far from Xi’an city. A platform of earth is said to be in existence there today. An alternative site is claimed to be in Luonan county, Shensi; *ibid.*, p. 3. The Kongzi xian’getai (Platform Where Confucius Strummed Songs) is located in Huaiyang county, Henan. The name Kongzi xian’getai dates only from the Ming period. As with many of these locations attributed to sites of antiquity, the surviving buildings date from the late-imperial period. In the case of the Confucius platform, the remaining buildings date back to the early-eighteenth century; *ibid.*, p. 5.
108. Qu Yuan’s Reading Cave (Qu Yuan dushudong), located in Zigui county in Hubei, is said to be where he studied in his youth. It is reported to be six meters in height and furnished with stone benches and tables; Wang and Xu, *Zhongguo dushu da cidian*, pp. 5–6. Sima Xiangru’s Reading Cavern (Sima Xiangru dushuku) is located in Zitong county, Sichuan. He is said to have

- paused here to read while en route to Chang'an. The Tang emperor Xuanzong (r. 713–755) is said to have penned an inscription for this cavern while passing through the area. The surrounding buildings were destroyed in 1967; *ibid.*, p. 7.
109. The practice of commemorating particular places where important people studied or worked has been continued in the present day. Many famous writers, among them the philosopher Yan Fu (1853–1921), the reformer Kang Youwei (1858–1927), and authors Lu Xun (1881–1936) and Mao Dun (1896–1981), are associated with significant places where they read and composed their works (*dushuchu*).
110. The place of the alleged desecration of the books is said to be outside Xi'an in Shensi close to the emperor's palace or alternatively, in Weinan county, Shensi; Wang and Xu, *Zhongguo dushu da cidian*, p. 6.
111. From the compilation of short stories, Zhou Ji (Qingyuan, fl. sixteenth to seventeenth century), comp., *Xihu erji* (Second Collection from West Lake), Chongzhen era (1628–1644) in the series Guben xiaoshuo jicheng, ser. 1 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1990–1991), vol. 42; see the opening series of illustrations, p. 53.
112. An example of the image of a young boy reading perched atop an ox is given in Wang and Xu, *Zhongguo dushu da cidian*, facing p. 1. The *Christian Science Monitor* (May 25, 1995, p. 16) features a delightful photograph of a farm boy holding an umbrella as he reads a magazine astride a water buffalo in Wuhan, China. The photograph was taken by Norman Matheny in the early years of the reform period (early 1980s). I thank the editor of the *East Asian Library Journal* for drawing my attention to this photo. The notion of the farmer who studied as he toiled was a familiar one in household texts. Yan Zhitui (531–591) in *Yanshi jiaxun* mentions “carrying classics while hoeing” (*chu ze dai jing*) and “weaving rushes into tablets for writing while tending the flocks” (*mu ze bian jian*); see the modern edition, *Yanshi jiaxun jijie* (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1980), section 8, “Mian xue,” p. 189. For this translation see Teng Ssü-yu, *Family Instructions for the Yen Clan: Yen-shih chia-hsün* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968), p. 72.
113. *Xinkan quanxiang shuochang Bao daizhi chushen zhuan* (New Edition of the Fully Illustrated Chantefable of the Childhood of Judge Bao), late-fifteenth century, in *Ming Chenghua shuochang congkan* (Shanghai: Shanghai bowuguan, 1979), vol. 4, p. 5a.
114. Maria Rudova, comp., *Chinese Popular Prints*, trans. Viacheslav Sobolev (Leningrad: Aurora Art Publishers, 1988), pp. 106–107.
115. *Wanjin qinglin*, comp. Yu Xiangdou (fl. ca. 1550–1637), facs. edn. in the Guben xiaoshuo jicheng, 1990, ser. 4, vol. 152, frontispiece. Richard G. Wang presents this illustration with discussion in “The Publishing of Ming Novellas and the Print Culture,” *Monumenta Serica* 48 (2000), pp. 126–128.
116. *Wanjin qinglin*, *juan* 1, p. 23b (p. 46). The illustration comes from the *Zhongqing li ji*, which runs on the lower half of the first *juan* of the *Wanjin*

- qinglin*. The *Zhongqing li ji* was first published ca. 1487. The author is unknown. The early edition had no illustrations; see Sun Kaidi, *Riben Dongjing*, p. 122.
117. *Wanjin qinglin*, *juan* 1, p. 22b (p. 44).
118. Two commentators who circulated the rumor were Lü Tiancheng (1580–1618) and Shen Defu (1578–1642). See the discussion by Chen Dakang, *Mingdai xiaoshuo shi* (Shanghai: Wenyi chubanshe, 2000), pp. 212–214. See also Chu Hung-lam, “The Authorship of the Story *Chung-ch’ing Li-Chi*,” *Asia Major*, 3d. ser., 1.1 (1988), pp. 71–82.
119. In Chinese book illustrations the figures of higher status are commonly depicted as taller than those of lesser status, such as servants and attendants. The relative height, hair arrangement, and dignified pose of the lady on the right suggest her status as principal wife. Anne S. Farrer notes the larger size of “authority figures” in illustrations to vernacular fiction; see her “The Shui-hu Chuan: A Study in the Development of Late-Ming Woodblock Illustration” (Ph.D. diss., University of London, 1984), p. 105. Examples from chantefable illustrations involving family scenes showing parents larger than their children and servants are discussed in McLaren, *Chinese Popular Culture*, p. 55.
120. Compiler unknown, *Saizheng geji*, thought to be late Ming, reprinted in Fu Xihua, *Zhongguo gudian wenxue banhua xuanji* (Shanghai: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1981), vol. 1, p. 73. Also available in facsimile copy in Shanben xiqu congkan, ed. Wang Qiugui (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1987), 104 vols., vol. 46, p. 41.
121. For this image from the *Saizheng geji*, see the reproduction in Zhou Xin, *Mingdai banke tushi* (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 1998), vol. 4, p. 109.
122. See the exquisite illustration by Chen Hongshou (1599–1652) reproduced in *Zhongguo banhua xuan* (Beijing: Rongbaozhai, 1958), nos. 125–126.
123. Yuan Zhan, *Wenju de gushi* (Taipei: Gugong bowuguan, 1991), p. 67. Ceramics commonly reproduced scenes from fictional tales. For other examples of scenes from *The Western Chamber* on everyday artifacts, see a porcelain wine jar in Craig Clunas, *Art in China* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press), p. 94, and a bottle from the late-Ming period reproduced in his *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 56.
124. The *Lüchuang nüshi* in fourteen *juan* is attributed to an unknown author with the pen name Qinhuai yuke. It was published in the late Ming. For discussion, see Shen Jin, *Meiguo Hafo daxue*, p. 407. On the stories recounted in the *Lüchuang nüshi*, see Katherine Carlitz, “Desire, Danger, and the Body: Stories of Women’s Virtue in Late-Ming China,” in Christina K. Gilmartin, Gail Hershatter, Lisa Rofel, and Tyrene White, eds., *Engendering China: Women, Culture, and the State* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 101–124, esp. pp. 120–122. The translation of the title follows Carlitz.
125. This image is reproduced in my “Constructing New Reading Publics.”
126. Katherine Carlitz, “Desire and Writing in the Late-Ming Play ‘Parrot Island,’”

- in Ellen Widmer and Kang-I Sun Chang, eds., *Writing Women in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 123. Carlitz further discusses how the boundaries between instructional texts for women and romantic texts became blurred by the late Ming; see p. 125.
127. Poem by Shang Jinglan (1604–1680), trans. Ellen Widmer, in Kang-I Sun Chang and Haun Saussy, *Women Writers of Traditional China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 316.
128. Poem by Xu Can, trans. Charles Kwong, in *ibid.*, p. 347.
129. Poem by Wu Qi, trans. Ellen Widmer, in *ibid.*, p. 372.

GLOSSARY

- | | |
|---|--|
| Bao 包 | <i>Da Song yanyi zhongxing yinglie zhuan</i> |
| biaodian 標點 | 大宋演義中興英烈傳 |
| bu tong hu zhong ren 不通乎衆人 | <i>Da Song zhongxing tongsu yanyi</i> |
| Cai Yong 蔡邕 | 大宋中興通俗演義 |
| Cang Jie 蒼頡 | Daxue 大學 |
| Cao Cao 曹操 | dian 點 |
| Chang'an 長安 | dixiuben 遞修本 |
| chang you Luoyang shishi jian yue suo mai | <i>Dong Xi Jin yanyi</i> 東西晉演義 |
| shu 常遊洛陽市肆間閱所賣書 | Duchayuan 都察院 |
| Cheng Duanli 程端禮 | Dunhuang 敦煌 |
| <i>Cheng shi dushu fennian richeng</i> | Duo-er-meng 鐸爾孟 |
| 程氏讀書分年日程 | dushu 讀書 |
| Chen Hongshou 陳洪綬 | dushuchu 讀書處 |
| Chen Jitai 陳際泰 | <i>Dushu fa</i> 讀書法 |
| Chen Shou 陳壽 | Dushu fennian richeng 讀書分年日程 |
| Chen Zilong 陳子龍 | <i>Dushu xun</i> 讀書訓 |
| chongkeben 重刻本 | <i>Dushu zhiguan lu</i> 讀書止觀錄 |
| chu 處 | <i>Erke pai'an jingqi</i> 二刻拍案驚奇 |
| chu ze dai jing 鋤則帶經 | fanche 翻車 |
| cihua 辭話 | fangkeben 仿刻本 |
| Cui Yingying 崔鶯鶯 | fang Song 仿宋 |
| cunxuejiu 村學究 | fankeben 翻刻本 |
| <i>Danshengtang cangshu yue</i> 澹生堂藏書約 | Fanli 凡例 |

- Fan Ye 范曄
 Faren 法人
 Fei Hong 飛紅
 fukeben 覆刻本
 Fu Xi 伏羲
 Fu Xi shi huaguatai 伏羲氏畫卦台
 Gangling 綱領
 Gao Ming 高明
 gongzhu tianxia 公諸天下
 guan 館
 Guan Yu 關羽
Gujin shuke 古今書刻
 Gu Lu 辜輅
 Gu sheng gong Yu bingjian guan zhuan
 辜生共瑜並肩觀傳
 gushuang 孤孀
 Hangzhou 杭州
 Hanzhong 漢中
 haoshizhe 好事者
 houbei xueci 後輩學詞
Hou Han shu 後漢書
 Huaiyang 淮陽
 Huanduzhai 還讀齋
 huanguan 宦官
 Huang Zhengfu 黃正甫
 Hu Yinglin 胡應麟
 ji 計
 Jiading 嘉定
 Jiang Daqi 蔣大器
 Jiangnan 江南
 jiangti 匠體
Jiao Hong ji 嬌紅記
 Jingshu 敬叔
Jingzhong lu 精忠錄
 Jinling kejingchu 金陵刻經處
 jinshen 縉 (搢) 紳
 Jin Shengtan 金聖嘆
 jinxiangben 巾箱本
 Kang Youwei 康有為
 Kongzi xian'ge tai 孔子弦歌台
 lanzhe 覽者
 Lanzhou 蘭州
 lataben 邇邇本
 Liang Qichao 梁啓超
 Liaofan 了凡
 Li Fang 李昉
 Ling Mengchu 凌濛初
 Liu Bei 劉備
 Liu Jun 劉峻
 Liu Ruoyu 劉若愚
 liusu 流俗
 Li Yuniang 黎瑜娘
 Li Zhi 李贄
 longguche 龍骨車
 lou 樓
Lüchuang nüshi 綠窗女史
Lunheng 論衡
 Luo Guanzhong 羅貫中
 Luonan 洛南
 Luoyang 洛陽
 Luo Ye 羅燁
 Luo Zongxin 羅宗信
 Lü Tiancheng 呂天成
 Lu Xun 魯迅
 lüyan geyong zhe 閩閩歌詠者
 Ma Jun 馬鈞
 Mao Dun 茅盾
 Mao Jin 毛晉
 Mao Zonggang 毛宗崗
 Mian xue 勉學

- mu 畝
Mudan ting 牡丹亭
 mu ze bian jian 牧則編箋
 neifu 內府
 Niu 牛
 niujiao shusheng 牛角書生
 nongshu 農書
Nongzheng quanshu 農政全書
 Nüxun 女訓
 Ouyang Xuan 歐陽玄
 pinglin 評林
 Pinglutang 平露堂
Pipa ji 琵琶記
 qi 妻
 Qi Chenghan 祁承燦
 qindu 勤讀
 Qinhuai yuke 秦淮寓客
 Qin Shihuang 秦始皇
 Qiongsan 瓊山
 Qiu Jun 邱濬
Quan nongshu 勸農書
 Qu Yuan 屈原
 Qu Yuan dushudong 屈原讀書洞
 Quzhou lu 衢州路
 renche 人車
Saizheng geji 賽徵歌集
Sanguo yanyi 三國演義
Sanguo zhi 三國志
Sanguo zhi tongsu yanyi 三國志通俗演義
Sanguo zhi tongsu yanyi shi zhuan
 三國志通俗演義史傳
 Sao song sanlang qu dushu
 嫂送三郎去讀書
 Shang Jinglan 商景籛
 shangtu xiawen 上圖下文
 shanjieben 刪節本
Shaoshi shanfang bicon 少室山房筆叢
 Shen Chunze 沈春澤
 Shen Defu 沈德符
 shi 史 (history)
 shi 士 (literati)
 shidaifu 士大夫
 shijing zhi tu 市井之徒
 shi junzi 士君子
 shi junzi zhi haoshizhe 士君子之好事者
 Shi Nai'an 施耐庵
 shizi 士子
 Shu 蜀
Shuangfengtang 雙峰堂
 shuiche 水車
Shuihu 水滸
Shuihu zhuan 水滸傳
 shuochang cihua 說唱詞話
 shusi 書肆
Siku quanshu 四庫全書
 Silijian 司禮監
 Sima Xiangru 司馬相如
 Sima Xiangru dushuku 司馬相如讀書窟
 simin 四民
 Song Lian 宋濂
 Song Yingxing 宋應星
 Song Yuan 宋遠
 Soqui Fuchu 瑣非復初
 su 俗
 suben 俗本
 Sun Jing 孫敬
 Su Qin 蘇秦
 Su Shi 蘇軾
 Su Xun 蘇洵
 Su Zhe 蘇轍

- tache 踏車
 tai 台
 Taiping yulan 太平御覽
 Tang Binyin 湯賓尹
 Tiangong kaiwu 天工開物
 Tianjin 天津
 Tianshui 天水
 tianxia zhi ren 天下之人
 tong 通
 tongsu 通俗
 tongsu xiaoshuo 通俗小說
 tu 圖
 Wang Chong 王充
 Wang Jiaoniang 王嬌娘
 Wang Shifu 王實甫
 Wanjin qinglin 萬錦情林
 Wei 魏
 Weilüe 魏略
 Weilüe jiben 魏略輯本
 Weinan 渭南
 wenyan 文言
 Wu 吳
 Wu Cheng'en 吳承恩
 Wu Qi 吳琪
 Wu Yingji 吳應箕
 Xi'an 西安
 Xiao Cuncun 蕭存存
 xiaoshuo 小說
 xie 邪
 xiekeben 寫刻本
 Xihu erji 西湖二集
 Xinkan jingben jiaoxzheng yanyi quanxiang
 Sanguo zhizhuan pinglin 新刊京本校
 正演義全像三國志傳評林
 Xinkan quanxiang shuochang Bao daizhi chu-
 shen zhuan 新刊全象說唱包待制出
 身傳
 Xinkan tongsu yanyi Sanguo zhi shi zhuan
 新刊通俗演義三國志史傳
 Xiong Damu 熊大木
 xiububen 修補本
 Xiuran Zi 修髯子
 Xixiang ji 西廂記
 Xiyou ji 西遊記
 xuanliang cigu 懸梁刺股
 Xuanzong 玄宗
 Xu Can 徐燦
 Xu Guangqi 徐光啓
 Xu Yan 徐雁
 Yan Fu 嚴復
 Yang Erzeng 楊爾曾
 Yang Yongquan 楊涌泉
 Yanshi jiaxun 顏氏家訓
 yanyi 演義
 Yan Zhitui 顏之推
 Ye Fengchun 葉逢春
 yingkeben 影刻本
 Yingying 鶯鶯
 Yinshi buyi an Jian yanyi quanxiang piping
 Sanguo zhi 音釋補遺按鑑演義全
 像批評三國志
 Yinxian 鄆縣
 yi tongsu yu ren 以通俗諭人
 Yongyu Zi 庸愚子
 Yuan Fengzi 元峰子
 Yuan Huang 袁黃
 yuankeben 原刻本
 Yuan Liaofan quan nongshu 袁了凡勸農書

- Yuan shi* 元史
Yue Fei 岳飛
yufu deng bei 愚夫等輩
yufu yufu 愚夫愚婦
Yu Huan 魚豢
yu tianxia zhi ren ru er er tong qi shi
 欲天下之人入耳而通其事
Yu Xiangdou 余象斗
Yu Xiangwu 余象烏
Zaozitai 造字台
zengkeben 增刻本
Zhang 張
Zhangguoce 戰國策
Zhang Guowei 張國維
Zhang Pengyi 張鵬一
Zhang Shangde 張尙德
zhiguan 止觀
zhiyin 知音
Zhongqing li ji 鍾情麗集
Zhongyuan yinyun 中原音韻
Zhou Deqing 周德清
Zhou Gongjin 周公瑾
Zhou Hongzu 周弘祖
Zhou Ji 周楫
Zhou Qingyuan 周清源
Zhou Yu 周瑜
Zhuo zhong zhi 酌中志
Zhu Xi 朱熹
Zigui 秭歸
Zitong 梓潼
Zizhi tongjian 資治通監
Zizhi tongjian gangmu 資治通監綱目
zuben 祖本
Zuiweng tanlu 醉翁談錄

About Our Contributors

CYNTHIA BROKAW received her doctorate in history and East Asian languages from Harvard University in 1984. She now teaches Chinese history at Ohio State University. Author of *The Ledgers of Merit and Demerit: Social Change and Moral Order in Late Imperial China* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), she is currently focusing her research on the history of the book in late-imperial China. Her major project is a manuscript on the commercial publishers of Sibao, western Fujian, in the Qing—a topic that receives considerable attention in her essay in this volume.

LUCILLE CHIA is currently an associate professor in the Department of History at the University of California at Riverside. She received her Ph.D. in Chinese history from Columbia University in 1996. Her book *Printing for Profit: The Commercial Publishers of Jianyang, Sung-Ming* was published by the Harvard University Asia Center. She has also written several papers on printing and book culture in late-imperial China. Currently, Professor Chia is participating in a project funded by the Henry Luce Foundation's U.S.-China Cooperative Research Program, "Mapping the Book Trade: The Expansion of Print Culture in Late-Imperial China."

J. SÖREN EDGREN received his Ph.D. in sinology from the University of Stockholm. Since 1991, he has served as editorial director of the Chinese Rare Books Project, an online international union catalogue of Chinese rare books, based at Princeton University. In 1984, he published *Chinese Rare Books in American Collections*, based on an exhibition he organized at the China Institute in New York. Dr. Edgren also curated *The Traditional Chinese Book: Form & Function* at Princeton in 1995, and served as the editor of the *East Asian Library Journal*, Princeton University, from 1994 to 2000. He is currently writing a history of the book in China.

ANNE E. McLAREN obtained a Ph.D. in Chinese literature at the Australian National University, Canberra. Currently she teaches Chinese culture and literature at the University of Melbourne, Australia. Dr. McLaren is the author of *Chinese Popular Culture and Ming Chantefables* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 1998); the editor (with Antonia Finnane) of *Dress, Sex and Text in Chinese Culture* (Melbourne: Monash Asia Institute, 1999); the translator and editor of an anthology of stories, *The Chinese Femme Fatale: Stories from the Ming Period* (University of Sydney East Asian Series, 1994); and the author of many studies of Ming fiction, chantefables, and Women's Script literature, including a chapter on Chinese oral formulaic and prosimetric literature in Victor H. Mair, ed., *Columbia History of Chinese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001). Forthcoming is a chapter, "Constructing New Reading Publics in Late Ming China," in Cynthia Brokaw and Kai-wing Chow, eds., *Publishing and Print Culture in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press).

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