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*Lucille Chia, "Counting and Recounting Chinese Imprints", The East Asian Library Journal 10, no. 2 (2001): 60-103, accessed January 14, 2017,  
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# 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.<sup>1</sup>

## 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,<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup>

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.<sup>5</sup>

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.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup>

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.<sup>9</sup> 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).<sup>10</sup> 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,<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup> For instance, philological works (*xiaoxue*) in the Classics category (*jingbu*) include five different editions of the rhyming dictionary *Guangyun* (Expanded Rhymes),<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup>

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,<sup>16</sup> and my work on Jianyang during the Song and Yuan (1279–1368)

and on Nanjing during the Ming,<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup>

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.<sup>22</sup> 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.<sup>23</sup>

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.<sup>24</sup>

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).<sup>25</sup>

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,<sup>26</sup> 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-

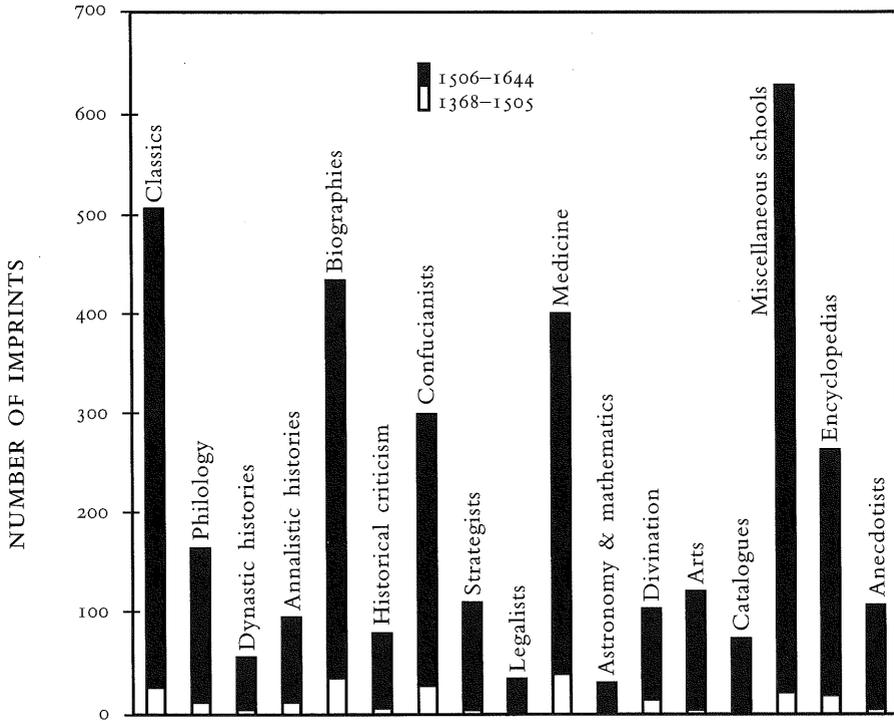


Chart 1A. Increase in number of commercial Jiangnan imprints

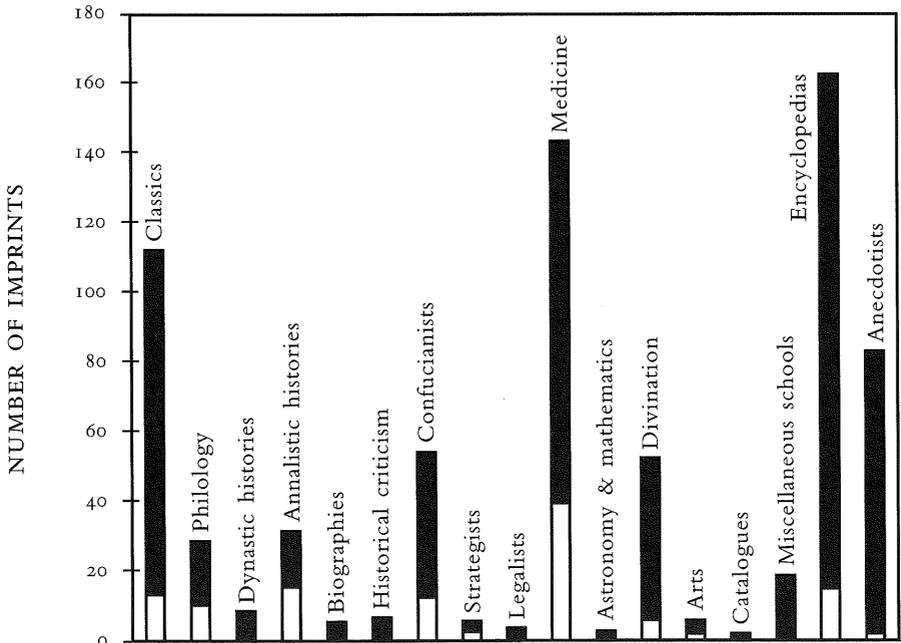


Chart 1B. Increase in number of commercial Jianyang imprints

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”),<sup>27</sup> 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.<sup>28</sup> 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.<sup>29</sup> 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.<sup>30</sup> 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.”<sup>31</sup> 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.<sup>32</sup> 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

星所主土

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

五

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

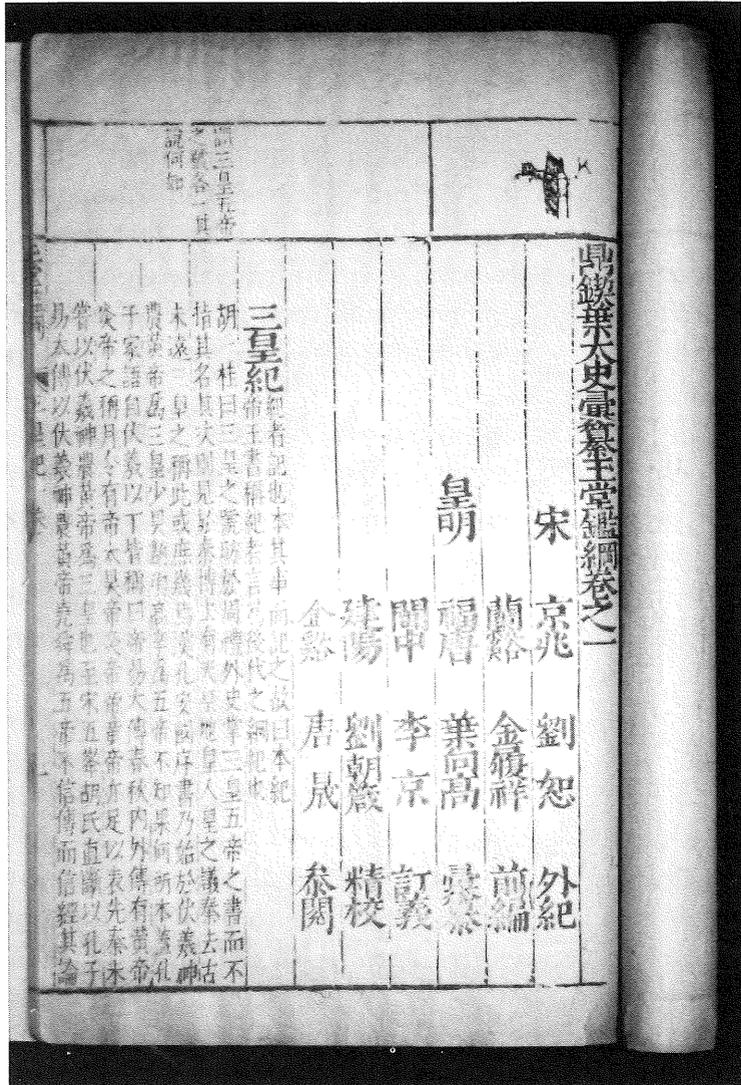
事首命之以朝夕納誨以輔已德可謂知所本  
矣置之於左右是欲說無處而不在也誨之於  
朝夕是欲說無時而不言也望之切至喻之以  
金之礪川之舟楫大旱之霖雨以見已之必資  
於相臣之訥誨其切有如此者然猶以物爲比

- 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.<sup>33</sup>

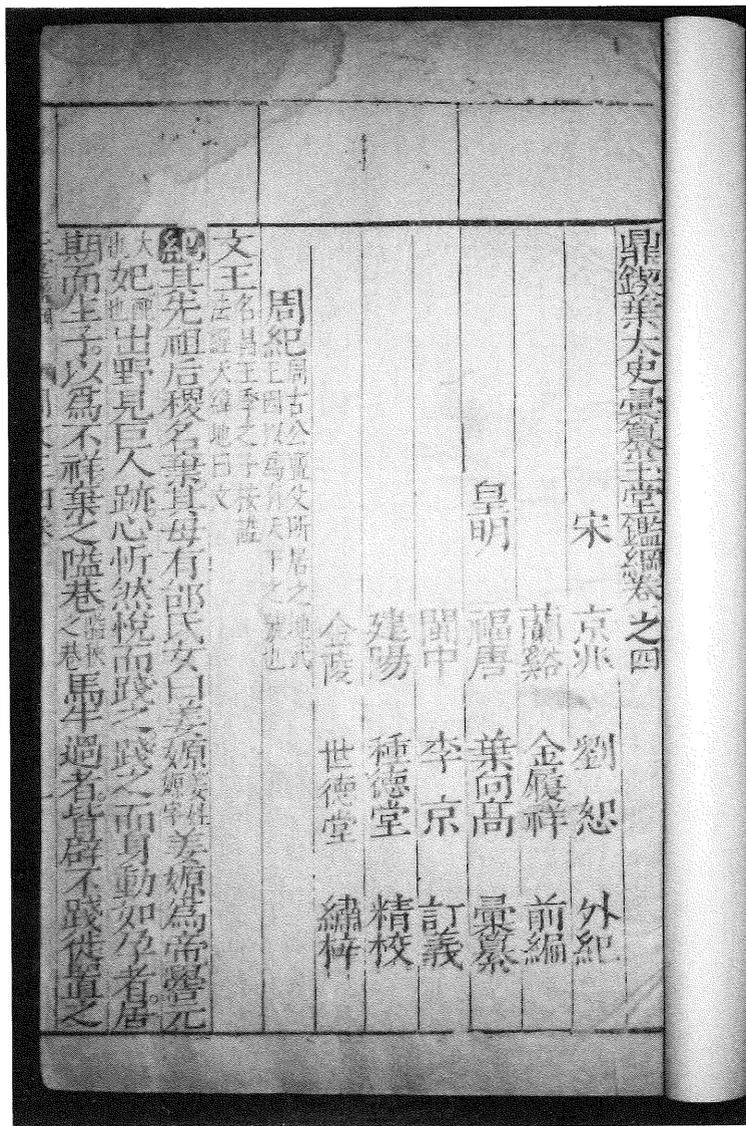
A printer's colophon, often set inside a distinctively decorative colophon block (*cartouche*), provides essential information, including the names of the printer and his establishment and the date the blocks were carved. In particular, the *cartouche* with the lotus-leaf design, such as the one shown 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.<sup>34</sup> 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).<sup>35</sup> 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.<sup>36</sup>

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.<sup>37</sup> 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.



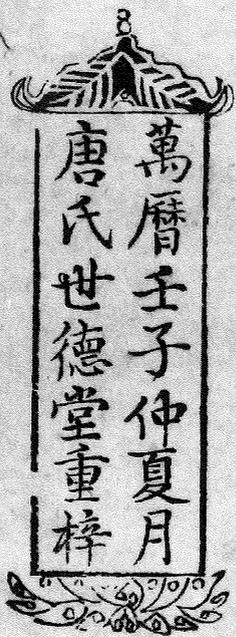
2B. In the sixth column from the right, the name of the collator has been replaced with Zhongdetang, the name of the publishing house of the Xiong family of Jianyang. *Juan 4*, p. 1a.



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

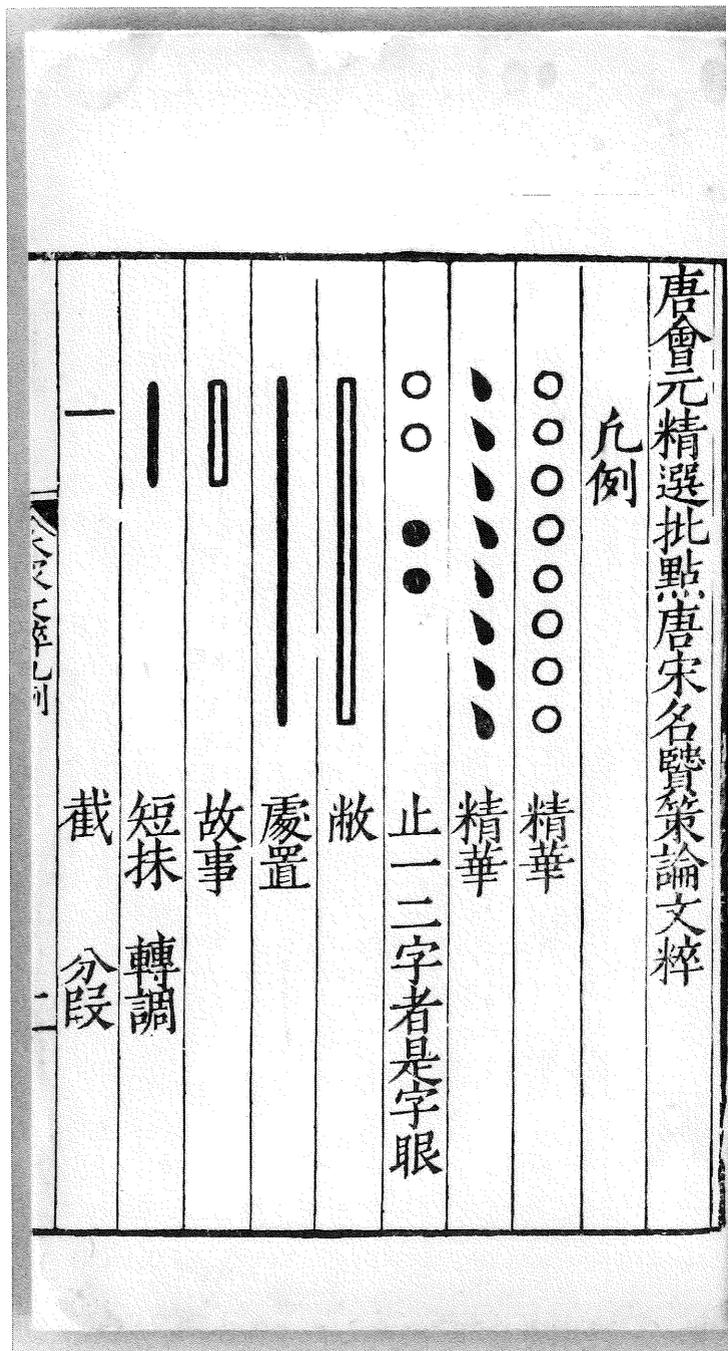
3A. Li Tingji (*jinshi* 1583), et al., comps., *Xinke Li Jiuwo xiansheng bianzuan dafang wan wen yitong* (New Edition of the Connoisseur Collection of Myriad Essays compiled by Li [Tingji] Jiuwo), 22 *juan* (Jianyang: Yu Xiangdou, Wanli period), *juan* 22, last page. Gest Collection, Princeton University, TD73/2484.

進德之聲  
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德文章卓然名  
作非非國  
左陶右御  
 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  
一代文章  
巨璧  
 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  
 俱為一代文章之巨璧云


 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.<sup>38</sup> 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),<sup>39</sup> 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).

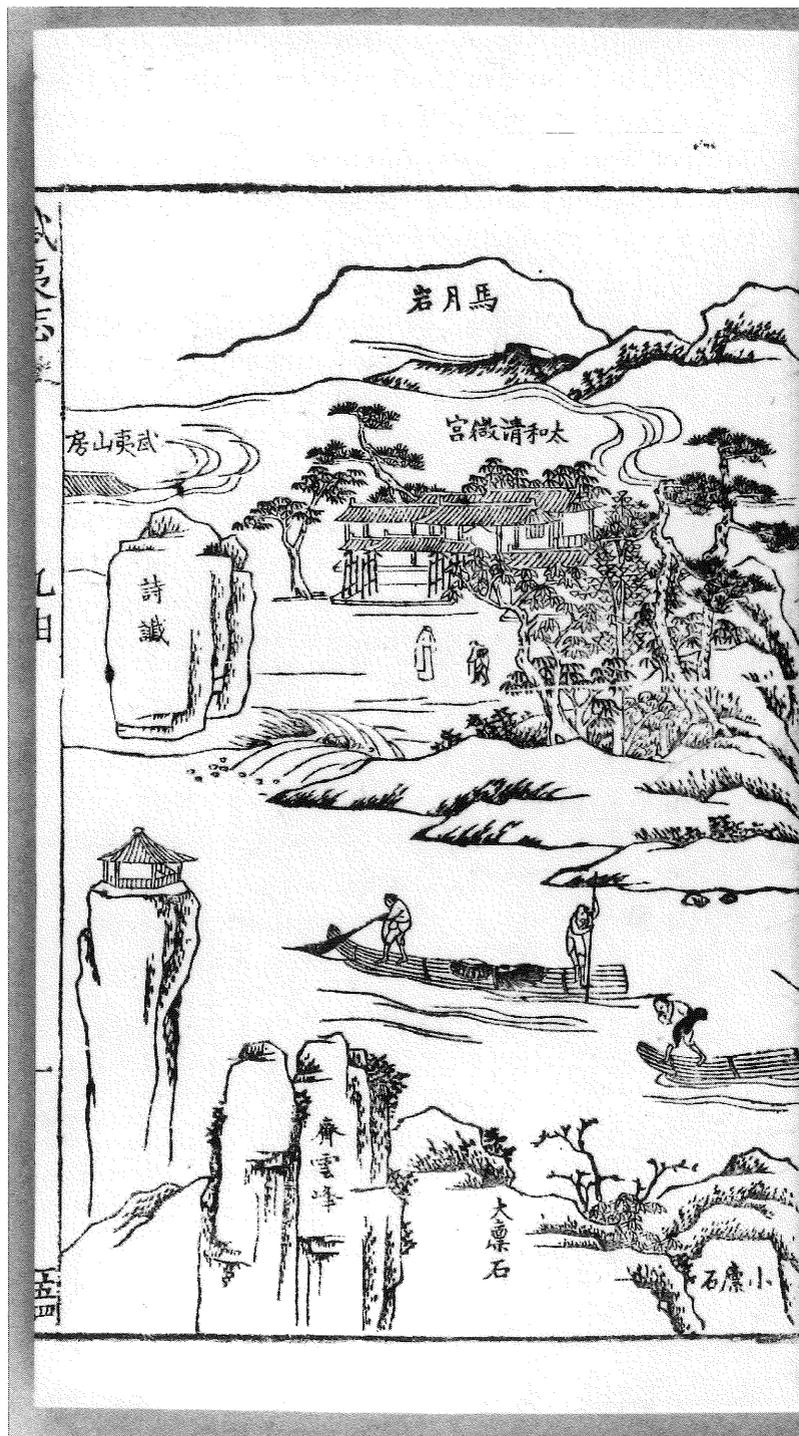
I end with a discussion of divination texts published in Jianyang during the Ming. First, let us do some counting. We have ninety-two extant works from Jianyang (see table 1), of which only eight were printed prior to 1506, and most were published from the late-sixteenth century on. Even if we accept 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).

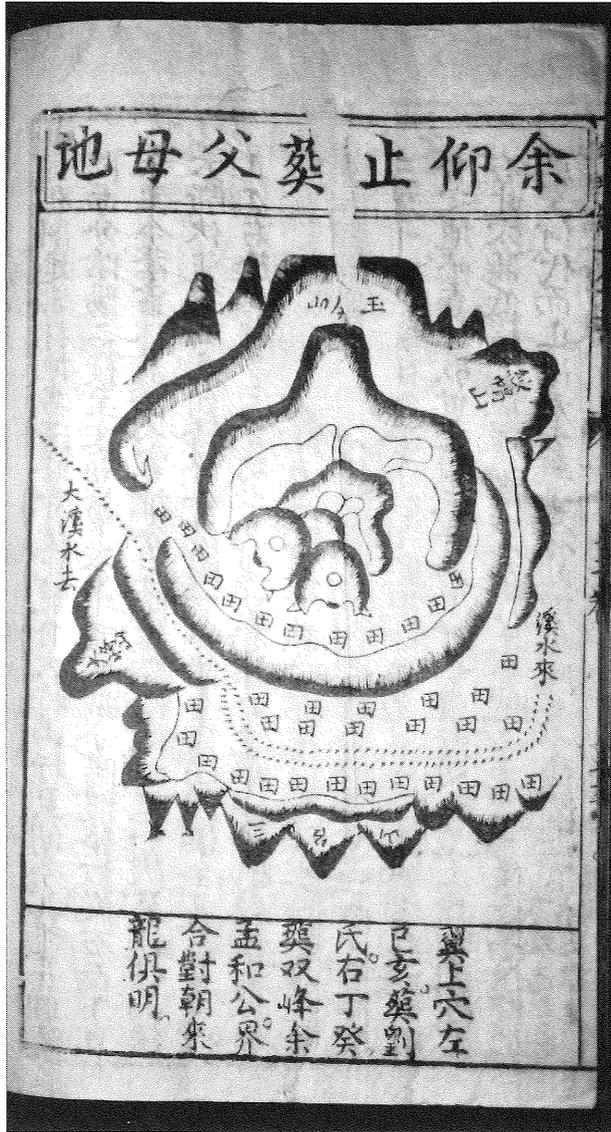


5B. Detail of 5A.

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.<sup>40</sup> 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.<sup>41</sup>

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.<sup>42</sup> 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 *Wa kokuhon 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