The Collecting, Writing, and Utilization of Local Histories During the Late Ming
The Unique Case of Xu Bo (1570–1642)

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The traditional Chinese bibliophile par excellence was probably Huang Pilie (1763–1825), best known for his collection of rare Song (960–1279) editions. However, Ming (1368–1644) book collectors seem to have been more practical in building their collections. Many recognized the importance of collecting ordinary contemporary publications. For example, the Tianyige Library of the Fan family in Ningbo in Zhejiang province actively collected local histories and lists of successful candidates of civil service examinations.

The poet Xu Bo (zi Xinggong, Weiqi, 1570–1642) did not have the resources of the Fan family whose patriarch Fan Qin (1506–1580) retired as a vice minister of the Ministry of War. Nevertheless the Hongyulou Library of the Xu family owned a large number of local histories, and Xu Bo and his younger son Xu Yanshou (1614–1662) often used local histories in their scholarly research. Xu Bo was also involved in the compilation of local histories, and Xu Yanshou carried on this
family tradition and was the chief editor of a history of a county in Henan.

Xu Bo of Minxian (present day Fuzhou in Fujian province) was a man of many talents but was best known as the leader of the Fujian school of poetry in the late Ming. Unlike most famous book collectors, Xu Bo was not a wealthy person nor did he ever enter government service. His father Xu Ang (1513–1591) was a lowly tribute student (gongsheng) whose highest position was that of county magistrate. Xu Tong (1561–1599), Xu Bo’s elder brother, was a poet who received his juren degree in 1588 and died rather young without taking any government post. They also had a younger brother who did not accomplish much. Xu Bo’s most important relative was Xie Zhaozhe (1567–1624), the famous bibliophile and scholar. Xu’s half-sister was Xie’s stepmother. Xu Bo and Xie Zhaozhe were very close, and because Xu was actually three years younger than Xie, their relationship was more like that of cousins than that of uncle and nephew. Although Xu and Xie are mentioned often in tandem in studies on the literary scene in Fujian or book-collecting, their family connection is usually overlooked. When it is mentioned, Xie Zhaozhe is sometimes described simply as the son of Xu Bo’s sister.

Xu Bo was mentioned very briefly but succinctly in the collective biography of literary figures in the Mingshi (Official History of the Ming).

The literary scene in Fujian: . . . During the mid-Wanli period (1573–1620), Cao Xuequan (1573–1646), and Xu Bo came to prominence, and Xie Zhaozhe and Deng Yuanyue (1555–1604) joined them. As a result, literature was revived. . . . [Xu] Bo, zi Xinggong, was a native of Minxian. His elder brother [Xu] Tong became a juren during the Wanli period. [Xu] Bo died a commoner. He was erudite and a master of clerical-style calligraphy. He accumulated books in the tens of thousands in (his library) the Aofeng Academy (Aofeng shushe).

Because of his longevity, Xu Bo was well respected in literary circles and exerted considerable influence, especially among poets from Fujian. However, while the imperially sponsored collectanea Siku quanshu includes the poetry collection of Xu Tong Manting ji (The Curtain
Pavilion Collection), it does not include Aofeng ji (The Turtle Peak Collection), the poetry collection of Xu Bo. As a result the Aofeng ji became so rare that even the famous bibliophile Zheng Zhenduo (1898–1958) mistook it as a banned book.⁹

Xu Bo’s life was rather uneventful. He devoted his life to learning and traveled extensively. Although in general Xu Bo was not regarded by modern scholars as an itinerant scholar (shauren, literary “recluse scholar”) who constantly sought patronage from high officials and rich people, the difference between Xu Bo and the more famous Chen Jiru (1558–1639) or Wang Zhideng (1535–1612) was one in degree only.¹⁰ Much of Xu Bo’s livelihood depended on the kindness of his friends in high places.

In the long history of book collectors in China, Xu Bo left the most written records about his collections. There are two versions of his library catalogue and three published compilations of his colophons.¹¹ There is a printed edition of his poems, selected by himself and published with funds from Nan Juyi (1565–1643), when Nan was the grand coordinator of Fujian province.¹² His collected essays were never published but the original manuscript in Xu Bo’s own handwriting survives at the Shanghai Library.¹³ Many books from his library have survived wars and other natural and human disasters and can be found in libraries in China, Taiwan, and Japan. About thirty of these books have colophons written by Xu Bo, Xu Tong, and Xu Yanshou and only a few of these colophons are included in the previous compilations.¹⁴ In addition, the collected works of Xu Bo’s elder brother Xu Tong, of his son Xu Yanshou, and of his grandson Xu Zhongzhen (b. 1611) all are extant, although for the works of Xu Yanshou and Xu Zhongzhen only unique copies exist.¹⁵ No other Chinese book collector has been as “fortunate” as Xu Bo with respect to the amount of surviving documentation.

Of the two different versions of the Hongyulou shumu (Catalogue of the Hongyulou Library), the recently published photo-reprint of a manuscript in the National Library of China is more authentic than the typeset edition of 1957.¹⁶ (See figure 1.) The manuscript lists 5,335 titles of which 338 are local histories in the broad sense, including special treatises on mountains, rivers, academies, and monasteries. The authors are not always mentioned in the catalogue, so it is impossible to ascertain
the dates of compilation for all the local histories. It is obvious, however, that most of them were compiled in the Ming dynasty. Of these 338 titles, 88 titles (or more than one-fourth) are on Fujian province. These titles are further grouped by prefecture, whereas there is no such subdivision for the other provinces. Obviously Xu Bo was very interested in the history of Fujian, his home province.

If we do not include the special treatises, only five local histories from Xu Bo’s library can now be located, and all but one of these are in Japan. All these books bear Xu Bo’s collector seals, and they are also recorded in the Hongyulou shumu. Among those in Japan, the most valuable is undoubtedly a unique copy of Shouning daizhi (Draft History of Shouning [County]) in the Diet Library (Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan). It was written by Feng Menglong (1574–1646) when he was magistrate of Shouning county in Fujian.\textsuperscript{17} (See figure 2.) In recent years two photo-reprint editions and two typeset editions of the Shouning daizhi have been published, yet Xu Bo is not mentioned in any of the prefaces composed for these new editions.\textsuperscript{18} It is almost certain that Xu Bo received this book from Feng Menglong himself, because the two men were acquainted. The manuscript of Xu Bo’s prose works now in the Shanghai Library contains two letters to Magistrate Feng of Shouning.\textsuperscript{19} Xu Bo also wrote a preface to Feng Menglong’s collection of poems, which apparently was never published.\textsuperscript{20} The other three local histories now in Japan are a 1542 edition of the Shanyin xianzhi (History of Shanyin County), a 1574 edition of the Xuzhou zhi (History of Xuzhou), and a 1578 edition of the Tongzhou zhi (History of Tongzhou). These local histories are in Kunaishô Shoryôbu.\textsuperscript{21}

The survival of the 1520 edition of the Fuzhou fuzhi (History of Fuzhou Prefecture) in 40 juan is particularly interesting. According to the Zhongguo guji shanben shumu (Union Catalogue of Chinese Rare Books), only two copies of this book exist, one at the National Library of China and the other at the Fujian Normal University Library.\textsuperscript{22} The latter library’s mimeographed catalogue for in-house use only indicates that its copy originally lacked chapters (juan) 1 to 15. These missing chapters were later copied from the copy in the National Library of China.
2. Feng Menglong, *Shouning daizhi* (Draft History of Shouning County) (1637). Image from Ma Youyuan, “Feng Menglong yu Shouning daizhi” (Feng Menglong and the Draft History of Shouning [County]), *Xiaoshuo xiqu yanjiu* 3 (1990), p. 178. Two of Xu Bo’s seals are stamped at the bottom of the first column on the right: “Xu Bo zhi yin” (Seal of Xu Bo) and “Xinggong fu” (Master Xinggong). Original in the Diet Library, Tokyo.
In the compilation of Xu Bo’s colophons, there is a piece written in 1612 about the 1520 edition of the *History of Fuzhou Prefecture*:

These twelve volumes (ce) of the old prefectural history were collected by my late father. In 1597 Magistrate Liu of Gutian wanted to study the history of the county and borrowed two volumes from my late brother. Three years later my brother passed away, and Magistrate Liu has not returned the books. I sought help many times from Vice Magistrate Li Yuanruo and got one volume back. But volume ten was lost. Ten years passed and I did not have the time to copy the missing parts. This year, during the compilation [of a new prefectural history], I have been able to copy the missing volume and complete the work. This history was published in 1520, less than a hundred years ago, yet few established families now own it. In the future, it will be even more difficult to acquire. My descendants should value this book. Written by Xu [Bo] Xinggong in midsummer of 1612.²³ (See figure 3; and for this text, see Appendix, text 1.)

Indeed, when a new edition of the *Fuzhou fuzhi* was compiled in 1754, the editors mentioned that they had consulted three earlier editions and that the 1520 edition they used was from Xu Bo’s family. They did not mention the sources or locations of the other two editions. It is apparent that the other two editions were commonplace, whereas the 1520 edition had become extremely rare by 1754. A catalogue of Fujian local histories published in 1935 stated that Xu’s copy was in a private library in Lianjiang in Fujian province.²⁴ This copy has not been mentioned in any of the catalogues published since then.

*Zhongguo guji shanben shumu* (Union Catalogue of Chinese Rare Books) shows that the Fujian Provincial Library owns a few books that include Xu Bo’s colophons, but there is no indication that the Fujian Normal University Library owns any. When I visited Fuzhou in November 2004, I discovered that the incomplete exemplar of the *Fuzhou fuzhi* in Fujian Normal University Library is actually the Xu Bo copy. Because the first fifteen chapters were lost, the colophon was also missing. Incredibly the librarians had not noticed that chapters 31 to 34 also were copied (as described by Xu Bo in his colophon written in 1612). Throughout
3. Text of the colophon that Xu Bo’s wrote in 1612 in his copy of the 1520 *Fuzhou fuzhi* (History of Fuzhou Prefecture). Miao Quansun, ed., *Chongbian Hongyulou tiba* (Revised Compilation of Colophons from Hongyulou) (Qiaofanlou, 1910; Qiaofanlou, 1925; Taipei: Guangwen shuju, 1969), juan 1, p. 10b (p. 20). Xu Bo’s original manuscript colophon was lost from his copy of this prefectural history, which is now held in the Fujian Normal University Library.
the book, Xu Bo had written many comments, often in red ink, correcting factual errors or simply voicing his opinions. (See figure 4.) Various seals of Xu Bo and his father were stamped in each volume, usually on the first page. (See figure 5.) Later owners, including Lin Zexu (1785–1850) of Opium War fame, have also stamped their seals in this copy.

Most of the books from the Hongyulou Library only have seals to indicate their previous ownership. A small portion contains colophons by Xu Bo or his family members. The rarest are books with extensive comments by Xu Bo. So far I have located only two books that bear extensive comments: the 1520 edition of the Fuzhou fuzhi in Fujian Normal University Library and a 1540 edition of the Wenxin diaolong (Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons) in Peking University Library. It is important to note that all five of the local histories described above—Feng Menglong’s Shouning daizhi (Draft History of Shouning [County]), the 1542 edition of the Shanyin xianzhi (History of Shanyin County), the 1574 edition of the Xuzhou zhi (History of Xuzhou), the 1578 edition of the Tongzhou zhi (History of Tongzhou), and the 1520 edition of the Fuzhou fuzhi (History of Fuzhou Prefecture)—are mentioned in the Hongyulou Library Catalogue. It is likely that more local histories from the Hongyulou Library are still extant, however, most library catalogues, including those of rare books, do not mention collector seals. Thus, except by chance, it is nearly impossible to locate books once owned by Xu Bo.

Xu Bo stated in his 1612 colophon to the 1520 edition of the Fuzhou fuzhi (History of Fuzhou Prefecture) that he was involved in the compilation of a new edition of this history. No modern library catalogue or catalogue of local histories mentions Xu Bo as a contributor to this 1612 local history. The 1612 edition is very rare and only the Kokuritsu Kōbunshokan (formerly Naikaku Bunko) has a copy. Fortunately, in the East Asian Library of the University of Chicago I was able to consult a photocopy of this Kokuritsu Kōbunshokan copy. More recently a typeset edition of the 1612 edition was published in Fuzhou (without any indication that it was based on the copy in Japan). This work lists the prefect Yu Zheng (1562 jinshi) as the main sponsor (zhuxiu) and two high officials as chief editors (zongcai). In addition, there were two editors (zuanshui) and eight assistant editors (fenzuan). Xie Zhaozhe
was one of the editors, and Xu Bo was the last of the eight assistant editors. It is difficult to know exactly how much Xu Bo contributed to the 1612 edition. If one were to compare Xu Bo’s hand-written comments in the 1520 edition in the Fujian Normal University Library collection with the text and comments in the 1612 edition, one might be able to see the extent of Xu Bo’s influence on the later edition. Publication of a facsimile edition of the 1520 edition with Xu Bo’s comments should facilitate such a study.

Xu Bo was involved in the compilation of a history of Jianyang county twelve years prior to his work on the 1612 *History of Fuzhou*
In a colophon to *You Dingfu ji* (Collected Works of You [Zuo] Dingfu [1053–1123]), Xu Bo said,

In 1600 Magistrate Wei of Jianyang asked me to compile the county history and to include the families of You, Liu, Zhu, Cai, and Xiong as the “five prominent families.” Members of the You clan copied down facts related to their ancestors and sent them to me for inclusion. . . . Recorded by Xu [Bo] Weiqi in early summer of 1605.28 (For this text, see Appendix, text 2.)

In the preface to this history of Jianyang county, Magistrate Wei
Shiying (1595 jinshi) stated that nine people were involved in the writings. Xu Bo was listed as the fourth person. Jianyang was (and is) quite far away from the provincial capital of Minxian (present day Fuzhou), six hundred li according to the 1600 county history. Xu Bo must have had sufficient reputation to have been invited to travel that distance for such a task.

Xu Bo’s son Xu Yanshou was on the staff of his fellow townsman Wu Yanfang in 1659 when the latter was appointed magistrate of Zhongmou in Henan province. One of the first enterprises Wu Yanfang undertook was to compile the county history. In the preface of this county history, Wu stated that he edited what Xu Yanshou wrote and that he improved on the wording after discussion with Xu. He ended the preface with an acknowledgement of Xu Yanshou’s contribution to this county history, which was completed in six months. Xu Bo participated in the compilation of two local histories, one for his home prefecture Fuzhou and the other for a county within Fujian province. On the other hand, while Xu Yanshou would have had no knowledge of Zhongmu prior to his going there, as an aide assigned to such a task he was obligated to do this work regardless of knowledge or preparation.

Nowadays people often rely on local histories to obtain biographical information of minor historical figures. The pioneering scholars in the Republican period (1911–1949) were often praised highly for utilizing these resources. Yet Xu Bo was doing precisely that late in the sixteenth century. In his colophon to the Guangyue yinghua (An Anthology of Outstanding Poems) compiled by Xu Zhongli (early-Ming era), Xu Bo explained that he noticed a collector’s seal in this book and then used the prefectural history to identify that obscure person.

This [book] belonged to a family in my town, that of Mr. Gao Nanhuo (Xiaozhong). In the spring of 1597, I acquired it by chance in a bookstore. I repaired it and kept it safely in a box. The blocks from which this book was printed were already very worn, but I have not seen a recarved edition. I hope to have it block-printed and circulated. At the beginning there is a seal [that reads] “Gaoshi Weiyi” (Gao Weiyi). According to the “Filial Acts” section of the prefectural history, [Gao] Weiyi’s
personal name was Jun, and he lived at the beginning of this dynasty. [Gao] Nanhuo was a descendent of his. Written by [Xu Bo] Xinggong on the fifth day of the fifth month, 1598.\textsuperscript{31} (For this text, see Appendix, text 3.)

Xu Bo also taught this research technique to his son Xu Yanshou. In 1638 father and son went to Suzhou where the son acquired a copy of the book \textit{Shulin waigao} (Additional Writings from Shulin), which had some pages missing. Later Xu Yanshou was able to identify the author. This is no small feat, especially for a youngster of twenty-four.

In the winter of 1638 I accompanied my father to Suzhou. By chance I obtained the book \textit{Shulin waigao} during a trip with my friend Lin Ruofu to a rundown store. There is no authorship statement, and the book lacks the preface and some pages at the end. I read the poems carefully and learned that the author was from Ningbo in the Yuan dynasty. After I came home, I checked the \textit{Ningbo fuzhi} (History of Ningbo Prefecture). [Yuan] Shiyuan [the author, fl. 1341] was mentioned in the literary biographies section. So I copied [his biography] here at the beginning of the text. Recorded by Xu Yanshou.\textsuperscript{12} (See figure 6; and for this text, see Appendix, text 4.)

While Xu Bo often consulted local histories for information, he also realized their shortcomings. He pointed out that many people were not mentioned in local histories and that some biographies failed to notice genuine accomplishments. In his colophon to Chen Shan’s \textit{Menshi xinhua} (New Notes Taken While Killing Lice), Xu Bo lamented that many people were not recognized in local histories.

Chen Shan of Luoyuan [in Fujian province] became a \textit{jinshi} in 1160 when Liang Kejia (1128–1187) was the top candidate. He ended his government career as an instructor in the Imperial Academy. None of the county or prefectural histories has ever included his biography nor do they mention his \textit{Menshi xinhua}. So we know that many people from the past have been buried in oblivion. . . . Recorded by Xu [Bo] Weiqi, the twelfth day of the second month of 1619.\textsuperscript{33} (For this text, see Appendix, text 5.)
6. Yuan Shiyuan, *Shulin waigao* (Additional Writings from Shulin) (Zhengtong [1436–1449] era) with colophon by Xu Yanshou. A brief biography of Yuan Shiyuan is in the first two columns on the right; Xu Yanshou's colophon is in columns three through seven. Photograph of the original in Fujian Provincial Library, no. J2.5/10.
In another colophon, Xu Bo criticized the category to which the author of the book *Jujing mantan* (Random Chats from the Chrysanthemum Path) was assigned in a prefectural history:

The recently compiled prefectural history places [Shi Pan] in the section “Xunliang zhuan” (Biographies of Good Officials) but does not mention his erudition. It seems not to have given a full picture of his career. . . . Recorded by junior scholar Xu Bo in the summer of 1636.34 (For this text, see Appendix, text 6.)

Shi Pan, who was from Changle county in Fuzhou prefecture, received his *juren* degree in 1546. His biography was included in the “Good Officials” section in the 1612 edition of the *Fuzhou fuzhi* (History of Fuzhou Prefecture), so it is almost certain that Xu Bo was referring to this particular edition.35 It is significant to note that while Xu Bo was one of the assistant editors of the 1612 edition (see above), his opinion was not followed in this case perhaps because of his low ranking.

In his colophons Xu Bo often mentioned how he obtained a particular book. He bought some, received some as gifts from friends, and sometimes made acquisitions through exchanges. There is one particularly illuminating letter in his unpublished collected works. It was written to his very close friend Cao Xuequan when Cao was a high-ranking official in Sichuan province from 1609 to 1613.

I have been looking for the *Sichuan tongzhi* (Provincial History of Sichuan) for a long time but still cannot locate one. It will be regrettable if I cannot get a copy while you are serving in Sichuan. Please have an especially high-quality copy printed and sent to me. It will be a great gift.36 (For this text, see Appendix, text 7.)

Most local histories were published by local governments and had a very small circulation. In general they were not available at bookstores elsewhere because the general public outside of the locality would not have been interested in them. The best way to get them was on site or through friends. The *Xushi jiacang shumu* (Catalogue of the Xu Family Library) lists two different editions of the *Jianyang xianzhi* (History of Jianyang County).37 We may safely assume that Xu Bo got them while he
was in Jianyang in 1600. But most of the local histories in his collection probably were obtained by pleading with his friends, as his letter to Cao Xuequan so succinctly described. Some might have come from the authors or compilers themselves as it was likely the case of Feng Menglong’s *Shouning daizhi*.

Xu Bo was not a passive book-collector. In spite of his limited resources, he was able to amass a large number of books including many local histories. He recognized the unique information provided by local histories and made full use of it in his own scholarly research. But he also understood that local histories might not be the perfect source or the only source. He used other sources to supplement or correct the information in local histories. No doubt there were collectors who owned more local histories than Xu Bo, but he was probably the only book collector who actively used local histories for research and who actually participated in the compilation of local histories. His son Xu Yanshou carried on this family tradition, mining information from local histories and compiling one local history. Xu Bo was involved in so many aspects of local histories and his activities were so well documented that we should recognize his unique role as a key figure in the preservation and utilization of Chinese local histories long before modern scholars realized their unique importance.

**Addendum**

As mentioned in the text above, it is difficult to identify books previously belonging to Xu Bo because most modern library catalogues do not mention collector seals. Recently I located two additional local histories in Japan that previously belonged to Xu Bo.

Wu Zhongli, in his article “Riben cang guben Ming *Ningxia zhi* kaoping” (On a Unique Copy of a Ming Edition of the *History of Ningxia* Extant in Japan), states that this copy of the *Ningxia zhi* previously belonged to one Xu Weiqi of Fujian. Presumably Wu’s assertion is based on some seals of Xu Bo. There is a photographic reprint of this edition in a collection of local histories of Ningxia compiled by Wu Zhongli. Unfortunately, this publication is of such poor quality that it is impossible to detect any collector’s seal. It is interesting to note that
Wu cannot identify Xu Weiqi as Xu Bo but is able to say that Xu was from Fujian. It is quite likely that the seal in question reads, “Minzhong Xu Weiqi cangshu yin” (Collector’s seal of Xu Weiqi of Minzhong). Xu Bo used this seal to stamp at least three local histories in his library: *Shanyin xianzhi* (History of Shanyin County), *Xuzhou zhi* (History of Xuzhou) [both of the above works are mentioned in the text above], and *Zhuozhou zhi* (History of Zhuozhou).

In 2004 Ren Peilin did a study on the various editions of the local history of Zhuozhou held in the National Library of China. One item he examined was a microfilm copy of a 1609 edition found in Japan. The earliest collector stamp on it reads, “Minzhong Xu Weiqi cangshu yin” (Collector’s seal of Xu Weiqi of Minzhong). As was the case with Wu Zhongli, Ren Peilin could not identify Xu Weiqi as being Xu Bo. This local history is also in the Diet Library.

It is remarkable that these two local histories, as well as the five mentioned in the main text, all are recorded in Xu Bo’s library catalogue. It is very likely that the catalogue was compiled intermittently until a very late state of Xu Bo’s collecting career even though the catalogue has a preface dated 1602 when Xu Bo was in his early thirties.

**APPENDIX: CHINESE TEXTS**

**TEXT 1**

舊府志十二冊，先君向所儲也。萬曆丁酉，古田令劉君欲考本邑事，向先兄借二冊去，越三載，先兄殁，劉令亦不以見還。余屢托古田丞李君元若轉索，僅得其一，而第十冊竟無有也。蹉跎十載，未遑鈔補，今歲因纂修之便，乃補一帙，復成完書。此志刻在正德庚辰，未及百年，故家鮮有藏者。自今以往，愈不可得矣。子孫其慎重之哉！王子仲夏，徐興公書。 [Xu Bo in *Chongbian Hongyulou tiba* (Revised Compilation of Colophons from Hongyulou), comp. Miao Quansun (1925; Taipei: Guangwen shuju, 1969), juan 1, p. 10b.]

**TEXT 2**

庚子歲，建陽令魏公命修縣志，將以游，劉，朱，蔡，熊作五世家，游氏子孫抄錄祖先事實，送餘采擇。····乙巳孟夏，徐惟起記。 (Xu Bo in *Chongbian Hongyulou tiba*, comp. Miao Quansun, juan 1, p. 39a.)
TEXT 3
此吾鄉高南霍孝忠先生家藏者。岸暦丁酉春，偶從肆中得之，重加裱飾，秘之箧中。板已模糊，題未見翻刻，粹而傳之，尚猶有志。卷首“高氏唯一”印章。唯一名均，見《府志．孝行傳》，國初人。南霍其裔孫也。戊戌端午，興公題。 (Xu Bo in Chongbian Hongyulou tiba, comp. Miao Quansun, juan 1, p. 65b.)

TEXT 4
崇禎戊寅冬，予侍家大人客姑蘇，偶同友人林若撫子閱門敗肆中得《書林外稿》一冊，不署姓名，前缺序文而卷末復脫數版。細閱其詩，知為元人鄧產也。及攜歸，考《寧波府志》，士元載於文學傳，因錄于簡端。徐延壽譔。[Xu Yanshou in Shulin waigao (Additional Writings from Shulin), by Yuan Shiyuan, 7 juan (Ming edition).]

TEXT 5
羅源陳善，登紹興庚辰梁克家榜進士，官終太學錄，郡縣志自古未有為之立傳，亦不談及《楹詩新話》，可知古人湮沒者多矣。…已未花朝，徐惟起識。 (Xu Bo in Chongbian Hongyulou tiba, comp. Miao Quansun, juan 1, p. 27b.)

TEXT 6
近修郡志，列公於《循良傳》，不談及公淹博，似未盡公之生平。…崇禎丙子夏，後學徐燮識。 [Xu Bo colophon in Jujing mantan (Random Chats from the Chrysanthemum Path), by Shi Pan, 14 juan (1591).]

TEXT 7
《四川通志》弟久覓而不可得，有兄宦蜀而不得一部，殊為闕典，當為我刷一倫精絕者見寄，不啻十朋之錫。 [Xu Bo, “Ji Cao Nengshi dacan” (Letter to Administration Vice Commissioner Cao [Xuequan] Nengshi), Hongyulou ji (Collected Works of Hongyulou), author manuscript, Shanghai Library, ce 6.]

NOTES
2. Luo Zhaoping, Tianyige cang Mingdai difangzhi kaolu (Bibliography of Ming Local Histories from the Tianyige) (Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1982), p. i.


5. Xu Tong, “Xiankao Yongning fujun xingzhuang” (Biography of My Late Father the Magistrate of Yongning), *Manting ji* (1601), photographic rpt. of the original in the Naikaku Bunko (Tokyo: Takeo Hiraoka, 1976), juan 18, pp. 31b–40a.

6. Chen Qingyuan, “Xu Tong nianpu jianbian” (Brief Chronological Biography of Xu Tong), in *Xu Tong ji* (Collected Works of Xu Tong) (Yangzhou: Guangling shushe, 2005), vol. 2.

7. For example, in Xu Bo’s (Hsü Po) biography in the *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, 1368–1644, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), vol. 1, p. 597, Lienche Tu Fang describes Xie Zhaozheng as “son of an elder sister of the [Xu] brothers,” and not “stepson of the half-sister of the Xu brothers.”


10. Two recent studies on *shanren* are Zhang Dejian, *Mingdai shanren wenxue yanjiu* (Study of the Literature of the Shanren of the Ming Dynasty) (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 2005), and Feng Baoshan, “Shanren xiaoshi” (A Short History of “Shanren”), *Xungen* (Root Exploration) 4 (2005), pp. 84–94.

11. Until recently most people have relied on a typeset four-chapter version of Xu Bo’s library catalogue published by Shanghai’s Gudian wenxue chubanshe in 1957. See Xu Bo, *Xushi Hongyulou shumu* (Catalogue of Xu [Bo]’s Hongyulou) (Shanghai: Gudian wenxue chubanshe, 1957). The typeset version differs in major ways from the facsimile of a seven-chapter manuscript in the National Library of China. Since 1994, three facsimile editions have been published. See the following: Xu Bo, *Xushi jiacang shumu* (Catalogue of the Xu Family Library), photographic copy of an 1827 manuscript copy held in the National Library of China in Mingdai shumu tiba congkan, ed. Feng Huimin et al., vol. 2 (Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1994); in Xuxiu siku quanshu, vol. 919 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995–1999), pp. 105–327; and in Zhongguo zhuming cangshujia shumu huikan Ming Qing juan, ed. Lin Xi et al., vols. 10–11 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2005).


14. There are three published compilations of Xu Bo’s colophons. Zheng Jie’s


18. Photo-reprint editions of the *Shouning daizhi* were published by Shanghai guji chubanshe in 1993 and Beijing tushuguan chubanshe in 2003. Typeset editions were published by Fujian renmin chubanshe in 1983 and Jiangsu renmin chubanshe in 1993.


20. There is no record that any collection of Feng Menglong’s poems was published during his lifetime. Some modern scholars have compiled collections of Feng Menglong’s essays and poems with various degrees of success. See Ma Tai-lai, “Ping Jiejun jizhu Feng Menglong shiwen chubian” (Review of Jiejun’s


29. Wei Shiyiing, preface to *Jianyang xianzhi* (History of Jianyang County) (1600; Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1991), pp. 4a–b. For the distance between Jianyang and Minxian, see ibid., juan 1, p. 2b.

30. The 1659 edition of the *Zhongmou xianzhi* (History of Zhongmou County) is extremely rare and has not been reprinted. I consulted the copy in the National Library of China. Fortunately, Wu Yanfang’s preface was included in a number of later editions of the county history, for example the 1936 edition. See Wu Yanfang, *Zhongmou xianzhi* (History of Zhongmou County) (1936; Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1968), preface, p. 5b.


32. This copy of Yuan Shiyuan, *Shulin waigao*, 7 juan (Ming edition) is in the Fujian Provincial Library. This colophon, not included in any of the previous compilations, is transcribed in Ma Tailai, ed., “Hongyulou tiba shize” (Ten Colophons from Hongyulou), *Wenxian*, 3 (2005), p. 35.

33. Xu Bo in *Chongbian Hongyulou tiba*, comp. Miao Quansun, juan 1, p. 27b.

34. This colophon is included in a copy of Shi Pan, *Jujing mantan*, 14 juan (1591) in the Henan Provincial Library. The colophon is not included in any of the previous compilations of Xu Bo’s colophons.


36. Xu Bo, “Ji Cao Nengshi dacan” (Letter to Administration Vice Commissioner Cao [Xuequan] Nengshi), *Hongyulou ji* (Collected Works of Hongyulou), author manuscript, Shanghai Library, ce 6.


**Glossary**

*Aofeng ji* 鰲峰集
*Aofeng qingxiao* 鰲峰清啸
*Aofeng shushe* 鰲峰書舍
*Cai* 蔡
*Cao Xuequan* 曹學佺
*ce* 册
*Changle* 長樂
*Chen Jiru* 陳繼儒
*Chen Shan* 陳善
*Chimutang ji* 尺木堂集
*Chongbian Hongyulou tiba* 重編紅雨樓題跋
*Deng Yuanyue* 鄧原岳
*Fan* 范
*Fan Qin* 范欽
*Feng Menglong* 馮夢龍
*fenzuan* 分纂
*Fuzhou* 福州
*Fuzhou fuzhi* 福州府志
*Gao Nanhuo* 高南霍
*Gaoshi Weiyi* 高氏唯一
*Gao Weiyi* 高唯一
*gongsheng* 貢生
*Guangyue yinghua* 光岳英華
*Gutian* 古田
*Hongyulou* 紅雨樓
*Hongyulou ji* 紅雨樓集
*Hongyulou shumu* 紅雨樓書目
*Hongyulou tiba* 紅雨樓題跋
*Huang Pilie* 黃丕烈
*Jianyang* 建陽
*Jianyang xianzhi* 建陽縣志
*Ji Cao Nengshi dacan* 寄曹能始大參
*Ji Feng Shouning* 寄馮壽寧
*jinshi* 進士
*juan* 卷
*Jujing mantan* 菊經漫談
*Jun* 均
*juren* 舉人
*Kokuritsu Kōbunshokan* 国立公文書館
*Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan* 国立国会図書館
*Kunaichō Shoryōbu* 宮内廳書陵部
*li* 里
*Liang Kejia* 梁克家
*Lianjiang* 連江
*Lin Ruofu* 林若撫
*Lin Zexu* 林則徐
Liu 劉
Liu Xie 劉勰
Li Yuanruo 李元若
Luoyuan 羅源
Manting ji 帘亭集
Menshi xinhua 拊風新聞
Miao Quansun 繆荃孫
Mingshi 明史
Minxian 閩縣
Minzhong Xu Weiqi cangshu yin 闗中徐惟起藏書印
Naikaku Bunko 内閣文庫
Nan Juyi 南居益
Ningbo 寧波
Ningbo fuzhi 寧波府志
Ningxia zhi 寧夏志
Qiaofanlou 峙帆樓
Shanren 山人
Shanyin xianzhi 山陰縣志
Shi Pan 石磐
Shouning 寧
Shouning daizhi 廣寧待志
Shudin waigao 書林外稿
Sichuan tongzhi 四川通志
Siku quanshu 四庫全書
Suzhou 蘇州
Tianyige 天一閣
Tongzhou zhi 通州志
Wang Yiyuan Sishuxuan 汪一元私淑軒
Wang Zhideng 王稚登
Wei 魏
Weiqi 惟起
Wei Shiyi 魏時應
Wenxin diaolong 文心雕龍

Wu Yanfang 吳彥芳
Xiankao Yongning fujun xingzhuang 先考永寧府君行狀
Xidi shuba 西諦書跋
Xiaozhong 孝忠
Xie Zhaozhe 謝肇淛
Xinggong 興公
Xinggong fu 興公父
Xiong 熊
Xu 徐
Xu Ang 徐桸
Xu Ang zhi yin 徐桸之印
Xu Bo 徐勃
Xu Bo zhi yin 徐桸之印
Xueqiao weni 雪樵文集
Xunliang zhuan 循良傳
Xu Qizhi ji 徐器之集
Xushi jiacang shumu 徐氏家藏書目
Xushi Xinggong 徐氏興公
Xu Tong 徐煇
Xu Weiqi 徐惟起
Xu Yanshou 徐延壽
Xu Zhongli 許中麗
Xu Zhongzhen 徐鍾震
Xuzhou zhi 徐州志
Ye Changchi 葉昌熾
Ye Pu 葉溥
You 游
You Dingfu ji 游定夫集
You Zuo 游酢
Yuan Shiyuan 袁士元
Yu Zheng 喻政
Zhang Mengjing 張孟敬
Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉
Zheng Jie 鄭杰
Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸
Zhongmou 中牟
Zhongmou xianzhi 中牟縣志
Zhu 朱
Zhuozhou zhi 涿州志
zhuxiu 主修
Zhu Zhan 朱旃
zi 字
zongcai 總裁
zuanxiu 纂修