Book Reviews

Michaela Bussotti and Jean-Pierre Drège, eds.


Imprimer sans profit? is an edited volume in eighteen chapters, ten in English and eight in French, plus an introduction in French. Some chapters were translated from Chinese by Bussotti, Drège, Pierre-Henri Durand, and Jérôme Kerlouegan. Most chapters are revised versions of papers presented at a conference of the same name held at the Institut nationale d’histoire de l’art in Paris in 2009. The chapters are arranged chronologically, covering the period from the eighth to the twentieth centuries. This review, however, will group essays by topic where appropriate.

The introduction situates the volume in the literature on Chinese and European book history. The editors explain that in the last twenty years the history of the Chinese printed book has expanded rapidly. Early studies focused on the history of print technology, bibliography, and collections, while recent studies more often address the social history of the book, especially that related to commercial editions. The focus on commercial editions arose from the desire to engage scholarship on early European printing, which was closely tied to the market. In China, historians influenced by social sciences examined the roles of merchants, markets, and consumption. This volume is needed, the editors correctly argue, because many Chinese books were not produced with a commercial logic. Revisiting the literature on European book history in light of Chinese experience can lead to productive comparisons.

Not-for-profit publishing included a wide range of genres. Buddhist images and texts that were printed to acquire merit played an important role in the early development of printing. Editions of Confucian classics, religious books, dynastic histories, and other genres were printed to demonstrate prestige and power. Some were disseminated to the entire empire, while others circulated in narrow regions. Local families and institutions printed non-commercial books such as genealogies and temple gazetteers.
The line between commercial and non-commercial is often unclear. Scholars who published books may have needed the income from selling their books, and Buddhist texts produced for religious merit were sold. It was not, the editors explain, that earlier research had not addressed various types of non-commercial books, however ‘non-commercial’ had not been recognized from a theoretical and methodological approach. By doing so in this volume, the editors hope to make it possible for us to better appreciate the nuances, changes, and ambiguities in book printing and publishing, including both commercial and non-commercial motivations.

The editors explain that their use of term ‘non-commercial’ is derived from the long-standing Chinese classification of books as ‘imperial’, ‘governmental’, ‘private’, ‘institutional’, or ‘commercial’. The books addressed in this volume are those in all but the last category. Studying them allows the contributors to examine all of the book crafts at all levels: an individual, a family, an academy, a monastery, a prefectural school, a princely or imperial court, etc. This theme also allows the contributors to reflect on the roles that various organizations had in publishing and printing in China, while not precluding the parallel presence of commercial production and a book market.

Chapters by Jean-Pierre Drège, Chen Jie, and Lucille Chia examine religious printing. In ‘Des charmes aux canons (viii–xi siècles)’, Jean-Pierre Drège notes the likely origins of the printed book in eighth-century Buddhist charms and dhāraṇī printed on small paper rolls that were put inside stupas in China, Korea, and Japan. Drège emphasizes that all the early indications of wood-block printing are in a Buddhist context, and we can assume that early wood-block printing was not market oriented. Instead, he argues, it was simply about multiplication of texts and images for religious reasons. Installed in stupas and statues, these texts represented the words of the Buddha and became objects of worship. Early dhāraṇī were dispersed among the faithful, put up on walls, deposited alongside the dead, and worn on the bodies of the living, to protect the person, absolve transgressions, heal the ill, bring about victories, peace, and joy.

Drège argues that even though the value of the charms and sutras was symbolic, their production as printed objects went through a market-like system of exchange. It is likely that the sheet bearing a dhāraṇī, whether printed in a monastery, or made by a professional copyist, monk, or layman, was acquired by a devotee who gave an offering to the Buddhist community. The symbolic value did not exclude the market value, on the contrary it was implied.

Printing did nothing but accelerate the production of these texts. If the cost was too large, the faithful could be grouped together, and each donated to printing one or more leaves. In terms of production, there was no radical dif-
ference between early Buddhist printed *sutras* and the pamphlets sold in markets, lexicons, divination manuals, and calendars. What differentiated them was their use: For the most part, sutras were not read but were instead kept in a treasury or library of a monastery.

Two other chapters, by Chen Jie and Lucille Chia are based on relatively rich publishing details found in Buddhist books of the Song through Ming. Both examine the printing of various editions of the Buddhist canon and other Buddhist texts. Chen Jie’s ‘L'imprimerie et l'activité éditoriale des monastères bouddhiques sous les Song (960–1279)’ addresses the organization and funding of monastic publishing in Song. Chen notes that during the Song the state promoted Buddhism and supported Buddhist publishing by sponsoring specific works, such as the tenth-century Kaibao canon, and opening offices for the translation and publishing of Buddhist works. These offices were closed as part of Wang Anshi’s reforms in the 1070s, but individual monasteries continued to be able to run large publishing enterprises supported by donations. The ability to complete large projects in several regions indicates that the print craft was already developed therein. Such projects would have enhanced stability for print craftsmen and drawn more people into the trade.

Chen then examines the sole surviving Song dynasty imprint (1103 reprint) of the *Shishi liu tie* (the six registers of Buddhism), an encyclopedia of Buddhist quotations compiled in 954 in twelve *juan* and approximately 700,000 characters, and presented in a manuscript version to the emperor. Chen translates the postface and donor list, and uses them along with other paratextual elements to discuss the process by which the compiler, the monk Yichu, obtained donations for publication from nobles, government officials, and Buddhist faithful. Chen shows that, despite support from many prominent donors, it took Yichu until 973 to get his work printed. Chen argues that this shows printing such a work was extremely difficult at that time. Chen also examines donations to the collation and printing of the 1103 edition, translates donor information from two other Song Buddhist texts, and from them argues that high government officials worked with monks and scholars to publish Buddhist texts using donations from both elites and commoners, male and female. Chen concludes with a discussion of the circulation of Buddhist texts and argues that they were primarily religious in nature, not commercial.

Lucille Chia’s ‘Printing for merit: a preliminary study of the role of donors in Buddhist printing, Song to Ming’, also draws on donor and publication information from Buddhist imprints, but covers a longer period of time. She examines various editions of the Buddhist canon and shows that donors contributed for religious merit, while at the same time monasteries and nearby print shops profited from the projects.
Chia uncovers numerous details about Buddhist printing for merit. She shows that donations came from a wide area to support cutting the woodblocks for the Qisha canon in Suzhou in the late 1200s to early 1300s. She found records of donations for original blocks, repaired ones, and facsimile copies, and shows that donors to a reprint edition sometimes cut out names of the original edition's compilers and donors. New donors were also acquiring merit and needed their names recorded. Groups of donors sometimes sponsored a section: For the 1584 Jiaxing canon, Huizhou people, likely merchants sojourning in Jiaxing, donated in groups. Such a large project could involve distant regions: the Jiaxing canon was planned in northern Shanxi, but it was impractical to print there because the woodblocks came from Hebei and the paper from Fujian.

Chia also explores why people supported printing at monasteries. While devotees might have copies of a text printed when they attributed their recovery from illness to a particular religious work, Chia argues that broader intellectual support of Buddhism in the late-Ming led to donations that were less about individual gratitude or merit. By late Ming, donors were listed only by name; there were no longer requests for merit to be transferred to relatives. At that time, literati had an active interest in Buddhism and even secular publishers printed a modest number of Buddhist works. Combined, these suggest that literati viewed Buddhism as part of their intellectual landscape which they were willing to support. Chia concludes by arguing that printing was a Sinification of Buddhism to be part of the text-obsessed Chinese culture.

Religious printing continued to be important in Qing, but the linguistic background changed. Françoise Wang-Toutain and Vladimir Uspensky examine Qing bilingual and multilingual books in a time when Chinese was no longer the national language. In ‘Tibetan-Mongolian bilingual books printed in Beijing under the auspices of Prince Yunli (1697–1738)’, Uspensky argues that Beijing was a major center of publishing Tibetan and Mongolian books, mostly Buddhist works. Tibetan language books were also printed in monasteries in Tibet and Mongolia, but Mongolian-language books were almost all printed in Beijing. Prince Yunli, who died in 1723, was a major sponsor of these editions. He knew multiple languages, did translation, and personally contributed to printing while head of the lifanyuan. Uspensky notes that Prince Yunli’s strong interest in mystical practices of the fifth Dalai Lama led Yunli to sponsor translations of his works. Uspensky’s sources show that Tibetan works were published simultaneously with Mongolian translations in Beijing, usually with the same design and illustrations. Translation projects during Yunli’s lifetime created a pool of talented translators who continued working after Yunli’s death. In ‘Les éditions impériales multilingues: l’exemple du
Recueil de toutes les dhārāṇī du Canon bouddhique, Dazang Quanzhou 大藏全咒, Françoise Wang-Toutain explores Manchu and Mongol translations of Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist texts during the Qing. Wang-Toutain notes the difficulty of phonology in the multilingual environment, especially for dhāraṇī, because their strength comes from sounds linked to a specific deity or activity. The imperfect match between languages made it important to compose and disseminate language manuals, lexicons, and dictionaries. For example, the 1750 treatise on unification of sounds, Tongwen yuntong 同文韻統 played a key role in the development of Manchu writing because it was used in imperial workshops.

Such works made possible the eighty-juan collection of 10,402 dhāraṇī in four languages, which had the Chinese title Yuzhi manhan menggu xifan hebi Dazang quanzhou 諭制滿漢蒙古西番合璧大藏全咒. The compilation began in 1758 and printing in 1773. The text was to be used by monks to improve ritual recitation. Senior monks in Beijing taught the system in the palace, and Cankya Hutuktu monitored and corrected their pronunciation. Forty temples in Beijing were selected to have a palace-trained monk teach other monks and receive two copies of the dhāraṇī collection.

Peter Kornicki, in ‘The role of non-commercial editions in the diffusion of texts in East Asia’, also addresses translations and bilingual editions in his study of the circulation of Chinese books to Japan, Korean, and Vietnam. He uses a catalogue of Chinese texts in Japan compiled by Fujiwara no Sukeyo in or before the year 898 to describe texts that travelled out of China in the early period of East Asian printing. He argues that for centuries transmission was almost entirely in one direction; Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese books rarely ended up in China. The initiative to disseminate Chinese texts came from people overseas, not the desire of the Chinese court. Books left China with diplomatic missions and other travelers returning from China. Chinese merchants did not seek to export Chinese books in bulk to Japan until the 1600s. After texts arrived overseas they were often copied by hand or reprinted. In Japan, this was done commercially, while in Vietnam and Korea it was done by the government. Kornicki notes that all Korean pre-nineteenth century books were non-commercial.

Kornicki examines Korean onhaebon editions, which had Korean pronunciations, grammar, and translations. Early ones were Tang poetry and Buddhist texts. The Four Books and Five Classics came later because they were critical texts in Confucian education and it took a long time to settle on a definitive interpretation. In 1585, the Korean court created an office that finally produced onhaebon editions of the Four Books. There also were onhaebon books for common people on various topics.
In Vietnam, there was a low survival rate for books due to war and climate, and the oldest imprints are from the 1600s, even though we know Vietnam had printing by the 1400s. Like Korea, commercial printing began only in the 1800s. Buddhist texts and private individual collected works were published in Vietnam, and a bilingual Chinese-Vietnamese edition of the Four Books was printed in there in 1792.

Government publication was much more limited in Japan than in China, Korea, and Vietnam. Most Japanese emperors had no interest in printing or publishing, although a few shoguns sponsored a small number of titles. Instead, commercial publishers dominated from the 1600s onward, but they did not publish bilingual texts like those in Korea and Vietnam. Chinese canonical texts published in Edo, Osaka, and Kyoto were mostly commercial editions. In Korea and Vietnam there were national-level civil service exams based on Chinese canonical texts, but in Japan, rank by birth was more important. Korean and Vietnamese officials also saw Chinese texts as key to the moral education of the general population, so accessible bilingual editions were needed. Japan in the Edo period and earlier, Kornicki argues, had no interest in such broad education and did not need mass printing.

Chapters by Timothy Brook, Nathalie Monnet, and Han Qi explore government-produced editions. In ‘A bibliography of books published by the Ming state’, Brook provides a general introduction to Ming state publishing followed by a list of 738 titles published by agencies of the central government in Beijing and Nanjing. Brook omits titles from other state publishers because they are too numerous for a single chapter. His stated purpose is simply to show that the state was a major publisher, not to create a comprehensive list of state-published titles. Brook’s translations for all 738 titles will be much appreciated.

Brook’s list is derived from five Ming book catalogs supplemented with works from the Harvard-Yenching Library and Peking University Library rare books catalogs. He notes that the Nanjing Academy was the publisher of 47% of the 738 titles, and the Imperial Household 32%, but warns that the totals are only as good as the sources from which they are derived. This is important to keep in mind when using Brook’s list. The list omits works published by local government offices, schools, and other state publishers, and is derived from catalogs that have substantial limitations in terms of representativeness and completeness.

Brook argues that the state was the biggest publisher in Ming, especially for its first 200 years. The imperial family, especially the Hongwu, Yongle, and Jiajing emperors were active publishers and used publishing to disseminate their views to realm. In addition to the imperial family, the Censorate, the Southern Academy, and local governments all published books. Brook argues
that it was only in the Wanli period that private publishing overtook state publishing.

These imperial editions were not commercial. Emperors gave them away to favored officials and foreign envoys and distributed some of the books more widely. Imperial editions became the core of local schools' book collections. In the late 1400s, the Classics began to be reprinted outside of the imperial court. For example, the 1415 *Xingli Daquan* 性理大全 imperial edition had more than ten later commercial editions.

Many agencies published books. Chief among them was the National Academy in Nanjing, which may have published more books than all other Ming agencies. Brook cites Scarlett Jang's work on the eunuch Directorate of Ceremonial (*silijian* 司禮監) publications, but disagrees with her argument that they were primarily for the imperial household. Brook's list shows that published titles were not always relevant to an agency's mission.

Nathalie Monnet's 'Le livre impérial de la dynastie des Qing: quelques éléments d'appréciation' is an extensive study (105 pages) on Qing imperial editions; many of which she examined in the Bibliothèque national de France. Imperial editions, she notes, long pre-date printing and do not follow commercial logic or financial practices. Assigning a single term such as 'imperial edition', she notes, can obscure the extensive variation within this category over the three centuries of Qing rule. The Forbidden City was a key book center, with editorial offices, archives, printing workshops, libraries, and storage facilities. Beijing also had more than one hundred private publishers, but the two worlds were largely separate.

People outside the court, Monnet argues, had almost no access to imperially-printed editions. Exceptions to this general rule included imperial imprints provided to provinces to be used as the base texts for re-cutting woodblocks, thereby broadening distribution; and the calendar and other texts intended for mass distribution, some of which had among the widest circulation of any texts. Imperially-printed editions not intended for mass distribution likely accounted for less than one percent of all titles published. Nevertheless, they were culturally significant. The exact number of imperial editions is unknown because the palace does not appear to have kept a register of the books it published.

Previous scholarship has revealed relatively few details about the production and dissemination of imperial editions. Weng Lianxi has recently collected new materials by scouring archives for reports on particular projects, examining edicts, and looking at extant specimens. But analysis has been hindered by difficulties in accessing needed materials, and confusion over where works were published. Many book historians have ignored pre-Kangxi works
and late-Qing reprints produced with Western technology, such as photolithography. Monnet challenges Weng's portrayal of Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong as the main periods for imperial editions. Weng's count stresses the overall number of titles by reign period, but Monnet argues that we need to consider book length too because otherwise a long book counts the same as a short one.

Monnet carefully describes the buildings and workshops in the Forbidden City used for printing imperial editions, and discusses their establishment, use, division of labor and responsibilities. She explains that a large project usually could not be handled by the Wuyingdian or the other permanent publishing institutions, so a special office would be created for the project and dissolved upon completion. There were also offices opened on a recurring basis for projects such as each reign’s veritable records shilu 實錄 and regulations, which were periodically revised. Monnet notes that imperial editions were also published outside of Beijing. In the Kangxi reign, imperial poetry offices in Yangzhou and Suzhou produced imperial editions in collaboration with private publishers.

Monnet discusses the various categories of imperial editions, such as law codes, dynastic histories, the classics, and religious texts, many of which were issued in multiple languages. She addresses imperial calligraphy albums made from stelae rubbings, illustrated editions, and military propaganda. She emphasizes that imperial editions had diverse formats, sizes, and production techniques. She gives thorough descriptions of paper, page layouts, characters, seals, and other visual and paratextual elements found in imperial editions. Monnet’s chapter is an extremely thorough and useful discussion of imperial editions and will be required reading on the topic for decades to come.

Han Qi’s chapter, ‘Les ouvrages compilés et imprimés au Palais sous Kangxi’, uses manuscripts and archival documents from the Vatican and Beijing to analyze palace printing operations and communications between the emperor and officials connected to palace editions of the late 1600s to early 1700s. Han surveys 100 editions produced by the Wuyingdian, then focuses on the compilation and printing of the Zhouyi zhezhong 周易折中. Han uncovers valuable information, on craftsmen salaries, regulations, backgrounds and status, and the Jesuit Joachim Bouvet’s influence on the Kangxi emperor with regard to mathematical principles he saw in the Yijing.

Joseph McDermott, in his ‘Private non-commercial publishing in Ming China and its private uses’, argues that private non-commercial publications are key to understanding Ming society and economy. He stresses the need to look outside of libraries for genealogies and other private works that document how things worked on the local level. As in his previous work, McDermott is
here concerned with the social history of books. He argues that to explain non-commercial book publishing we must look at social structures and values.

McDermott spends much of his piece discussing problems in categorizing and counting books. He focuses on Katsuyama Minoru’s study of 5,200 Ming titles and how they changed over time. Katsuyama argued that in the early Ming, nearly half of all works were government publications, in the mid-Ming family publications were most common, and in the late-Ming commercial publications predominated. McDermott criticizes Katsuyama’s analysis on several counts: he argues that Katsuyama’s source base is too narrow, that his four categories are unclear, that ‘gentleman printing’ was more likely to survive than commercial printing, and that by pigeonholing books into ‘family’ and ‘commercial’ Katsuyama ignores the complexities of publishing.

The remainder of the chapter is a case study of a private publication that was printed and reprinted from the 1500s to 1716 in Huizhou, *Doushangong jiayi* (The family agreements of Lord Doushan). *The Family agreements* was about family trust practices and problems and was reprinted every 10 years. The book played a role in the ritualized transfer of trust management duties: like the seal transferred from the outgoing magistrate to the incoming magistrate, the book represented the legitimate transfer of power over the family trust. The book had printed rules and grave maps plus handwritten records of trust income and expenses. The account books were done in two copies for comparison at the time of transfer. All of the annual account books were to be preserved to track trust issues and resolve property disputes.

Hilde De Weerdt’s chapter, ‘The production and circulation of written notes (*biji*); explores the socio-political dimensions and printing of *biji* 筆記 during the Song dynasty (960–1279). She uses her database of 121 *biji* to analyze their compilation, printing, and temporal and geographical distribution. The genre emerged in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and grew rapidly from 1150–1250. The fifty-seven editions with identifiable production locales were printed in more than twenty prefectures, mostly in the southeast. Of these, only two prefectures had commercial publication of *biji*: Jianning 建寧 and Lin’an 臨安 (Hangzhou). The others were published by local governmental units, especially prefectural and county schools. Commercial publishers only became important suppliers of *biji* in the thirteenth century and marketed them in the capital.

*Biji* covered many topics, and although there was considerable overlap in the subject matter printed by commercial and government publishers, local governments printed more philological and educational titles, while commercial publishers focused more on court politics. They were not for examination preparation, rather De Weerdt argues that *biji* were in some ways like modern
blogs; they interacted with published and new information, corrected comments made by others, and kept readers current without being exhaustive.

De Weerdt reconstructs detailed information on authors’ status and concludes that most were officials, although not necessarily high officials, but those whose works were printed were mostly high officials who had passed the examinations. De Weerdt argues that Zhang Hui’s finding, that from the 1130s on fewer high officials wrote biji, needs revision; in fact, many court officials were still writing biji in the Southern Song. The author should be commended for her rigorous quantification. She provides many useful statistical tables, although because of the volume’s layout, some of the tables’ type size is too small and may be illegible without magnification.

In ‘Zhang Chao ou l’amour bien compris des belles-lettres. Un lettré éditeur de Yangzhou à la fin du xviiie siècle’, Pierre Henri Durand presents a short study of Zhang Chao’s self-published collection of 1500 letters. He begins by discussing Zhang’s other publishing activities and his rejection of the idea of for-profit publishing. Zhang made money in the salt trade and fronted money for other scholars to publish their works. He saw himself as a patron of worthy scholars and lover of belles-lettres, even as he made commercial arrangements for the sale of his sponsored books. Zhang’s letters provide details on publishing costs and book prices and Durand’s work will add to the slowly-expanding body of data on these topics. From Zhao’s letters, Durand argues that finely printed books were very costly to produce.

In ‘Privately published illustrated books on art from the Song dynasty’, Ankeney Weitz argues that illustrated art books are a product of the Song dynasty and developed concurrently with xylographic printing. Early illustrated catalogs were printed by the court and private scholars. These non-commercial publications laid a foundation for later commercial works by creating a visual baseline for scholars, collectors, and forgers.

The Northern Song court sponsorship of projects promoting ancient ritual and decorum led to illustrated works. In 962, Nie Chongyi presented to the court his illustrated study of ritual implements, the Xinding san li tu 新定三禮圖, which was then printed for bureaus, and its illustrations were copied onto walls of the Guozijian. The illustrations were not made from actual objects, rather, Nie drew from descriptions found in ancient texts.

Model calligraphy books also were precursors of later, more elaborated illustrated art books. The Chunhua mige fatie 淳化秘閣法帖 was first issued in 992 as a printed inventory of the best pieces in the imperial collection. It circulated widely both as a printed book and as stone stelae cut according to the book’s pages. In the second half of the eleventh century, imperial interest in publishing on antiquities temporarily waned, but private interest grew. With
urbanization, collecting antiquities became a gentlemanly pursuit and private publications for scholars helped make it acceptable. Court-sponsored projects returned in the early-twelfth century: in 1115 officials proposed removing Nie’s inaccurate drawings from the Guozijian and replacing them with ones based on new research and direct observation of bronzes, and Emperor Huizong published catalogs of the imperial art collection. After the loss of art collections during the fall of the Northern Song, scholars wanted to document lost objects as part of their nostalgia for their lost world. Although many Southern Song illustrated catalogs only copied older ones, some contained original materials from Southern Song finds.

In ‘Imprimer sans profit: quelques observations sur les généalogies de Huizhou’, Michaela Bussotti builds on her earlier work on Huizhou block cutters to present an extensive study of Huizhou genealogies of the Ming, Qing, and Republican period. Huizhou was a relatively important place for Chinese books and there are numerous extant imprints. Bussotti begins with an overview of the numbers and format of Huizhou genealogies. She notes that there are about 1230 Huizhou titles in the Zhongguo jiapu zongmu 中国家譜總目 (general catalog of Chinese genealogies), about one third of which from the Ming, and two thirds from the Qing. Only three predate the Ming. Extant Ming genealogies are mostly woodblock prints due to the high rate of loss of unique manuscripts. For the Qing, the distribution is more balanced between woodblock print, movable type, and manuscript. This pattern persisted in the Republican Period until new Western printing methods began replacing xylography. Bussotti cautions that library collecting practices impact the generalizability of findings. For example, when Bussotti started her research, the National Library of China collected many manuscripts, but the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences Social Sciences collected few.

With regard to format and content, Bussotti notes substantial variation. In the Ming, there were several forms for the layout of tables, the number of generations covered, and how names were internally linked to each other. Bussotti questions Zhao Huafu’s argument that information beyond genealogical charts was rare before late Ming. In the Ming genealogies she studied, many from early to mid Ming, there is content not directly related to lineage structure: two-thirds have a literature section, and many have clan rules.

Bussotti then discusses the ‘Short guide to the genealogy of the Hu family’, a pocket book in five character phrases intended for memorization. It presents essential information from the Hu genealogy printed in 1921, which was distributed to a small number of subscribers. The short guide was a low-cost book that could be distributed to more households than the complete genealogy and was intended for regular use, not conservation in a box.
Bussotti argues that it is important to consider genealogy illustrations in studies of printed portraits and landscape because fifteenth-century genealogy illustrations evoke the prints from late-Ming and early-Qing painting albums that are typically cited on this topic, but predate them by 120 to 180 years. Some illustrations are similar to those found in anthologies of biographies of exemplary people, and images of plays produced a century later in urban Jiangnan. Bussotti’s larger question is about the function and meaning of these images, and she argues that Huizhou genealogies approximate the history of the book more broadly in the prefecture.

Zhai Tunjian’s ‘Étude comparative des monographies de la préfecture de Hui et du district de She’ examines local gazetteers from Huizhou prefecture and its subordinate units from the Song through the Republican period. Zhai describes who worked on gazetteers, where the sources came from, and how they were financed. He creates a multi-page table of Huizhou gazetteers by date, compiler, whether extant or lost, and one place where it is held, usually the Anhui Provincial Library. Zhai notes that the number of people working on a particular gazetteer varied, and the largest number of listed participants was sixty-three, most of whom were officials, local scholars, students, and teachers.

Zhai’s chapter, while useful, could go further in several regards: Zhai does not engage or cite related scholarship, such as Zhang Yingpin’s book on Nanzhili gazetteers. Some interesting items lacked footnotes, making follow-up difficult. For example, Zhai discusses a receipt for payment made to support printing of the 1870 gazetteer of Qimen, notes that the receipt form is printed and stamped, and argues this suggests the form was used widely. Proof of a general tax assessment being leveled on the local population to support printing the gazetteer is a significant find, but he does not record where the receipt can be found.

In ‘Household publications in the society of Ming Hangzhou’, Dai Lianbin presents a statistical analysis of the prevalence of household publications in Ming, creates a fourteen-part typology of relationships between authors and publishers, and discusses the social functions of books published by literati families. Dai’s statistical analysis is based on Du Xinfu’s bibliography of Ming imprints, which is arranged by publisher. Dai first corrected many of Du’s entries, and then used his results to argue that 6,616 out of 9,270 Ming editions listed by Du were household publications. Dai notes that even though Du’s list is not complete, these figures show that household publications were produced in greater numbers than governmental or commercial titles. He stressed that the non-professional nature of a publishing venture is more important than blood relationships in categorizing an imprint as a ‘household publication’. Dai disagrees with Katsuyama’s argument that household
publications peaked in the 1530s-1540s. Dai argues that they flourished from 1488–1637.

Dai's discussion of the social functions of household publications is based on a case study of the Zhang family of Hangzhou, which published many books on a variety of topics. Dai asserts that his investigation shows that, ‘For family members, household editions connected them with the family’s past and the tradition established by their ancestors.’ He notes that Zhang family civil service examination answers listed their ancestors’ publications to show the family’s cultural tradition. Apart from this, Dai presents little evidence of social functions grounded in actual relationships. The pairing of the Zhang case study, which is focused on high Qing, with a statistical analysis limited to Ming, which Dai describes as the peak of household publishing, is confusing.

Cynthia Brokaw’s ‘Regional publishing and late imperial scholarship: Zhang Zhidong and the Zunjing Academy in late Qing Sichuan,’ is part of her larger study of the Academy and its publishing activities. In this chapter, she examines the role of the Zunjing Academy in bringing Sichuan back into the intellectual mainstream in the late 1800s. Much of Sichuan’s intellectual life had been wiped out in the Ming-Qing transition as intellectuals fled or died. After repopulation by migrants in the late 1600s-early 1700s, hundreds of academies were built, but the intellectual level was comparatively low. The Kangxi Emperor’s 1672 edict requiring every locale to publish a gazetteer increased the demand for print craftsmen and helped stimulate a publishing revival. Publishing continued to increase in the 1700s and 1800s as Jiangxi merchants migrated to Sichuan to publish works aimed at examination candidates and licentiates. Officials from elsewhere brought ordinary books, such as children’s books, to reprint in Sichuan.

After Zhang Zhidong became provincial educational commissioner in 1875 and founded the Zunjing Academy, he used book collecting and publishing to promote statecraft and broad learning. Zhang hoped its graduates would spread throughout Sichuan, help start schools, buy books, and spread the Academy’s curriculum. Zhang began with two books on how and what to study. Because the academy library lacked the necessary books, Zhang donated money to buy them, commissioned merchants to buy books in nearby provinces, and encouraged wealthy men to publish rare books in Sichuan. He also solicited book donations and built the collection through various means. Soon after it was founded, the Academy opened a print shop to produce classics, histories, and philological works that were sold throughout Chengdu, but Zhang paid a commercial publisher to print the *Shuowen jiezi*. Zhang left Sichuan in 1877, but his program continued.
After discussing the Academy’s origins, book collecting, and early printing, Brokaw goes through the books it published, the library collection, and management. The books, she notes, were intended to be read, not merely collected. The books reflect an allegiance to an evidential learning approach to classical study with an emphasis on Han learning. There was no printing of geography, astronomy, or math books. When Zhang left in 1877, there were at least 218 titles in the Academy library. Zhang’s activities, Brokaw argues, were transformative of Sichuan’s intellectual life and Sichuan scholars were soon contributing to central debates. Once the Zunjing Academy started publishing, the Jinjiang Academy followed suit. Isolated schools bought the academies’ editions, and the academies provided an audience for commercially published scholarly books.

In ‘Examination culture and the non-commercial book: the case of Liang Zhangju’s (1775–1849) Zhiyi conghua (Collected words on the eight-legged essay)’, Rui Magone examines connections between the civil service examinations and publishing, and non-commercial elements of the for-profit publishing industry. Magone begins by defining non-commercial, examination-related books. He describes the four main types of Qing exam publications: reports, records, anthologies, and guidelines, and argues that there was a continuum of government/private publishing. He argues that state-sponsored examination literature was non-commercial in the sense that it tried to undercut low-quality commercial works, but the government also intentionally circulated official examination materials through private publishers, and private publishers often put official-looking texts in their publications’ paratext.

One of the most insightful and useful parts of this essay is Magone’s argument that publications that were guided by didacticism, visibility, or predictability were maximally commercial. For example, miniature crib books made the exams more visible to candidates, while explanations of potential essay topics and examiners increased predictability. Several types of exam-related publications started out as non-commercial works: vanity publications of one’s own essays increased social capital, but did not make money, and literary compilations of eight-legged essays, compilations of names and statistics on previous exams, and historical scholarly works on the exams were not for profit. Successful essays that first circulated as vanity pieces were repackaged and sold as commercial texts.

The second part of the chapter is a case study of Liang Zhangju’s work on the history and aesthetics of the eight-legged essay, which was first published in 1850. Magone argues it was in part a vanity publication covering his own family, but Liang’s intent was also that the book would help purify the eight-legged genre of what he viewed as commercial excesses. Even though eight-
legged essays had existed for 400 years, there had been no comprehensive treatment of them until Liang. Liang's book is a compendium of sources for eight-legged essays that was designed to circulate in literati networks, making available sources that were otherwise hard to get. It was not a didactic book: one could read the whole thing and still not know how to write an examination essay. It was too large to be a crib book, and its information was too out of date to help predict exam content or examiners. Magone concludes that the eight-legged essay was a more vibrant form than as portrayed by many scholars.

Bussotti and Drège’s volume is a welcome and important addition to the rapidly-growing literature on Chinese print culture. The various authors all contribute to helping us better understand varying motivations for publishing and the continuum between for-profit and non-profit books. It helps expand the field’s purview, raises important questions regarding how we categorize imprints, and contains studies that will be essential reading on many topics.

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