

**LINZHANG COUNTY AND THE CULTURALLY CENTRAL  
PERIPHERY IN MID- MING CHINA**

by

Timothy R. Sedo

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation offers a local history of a small, peripheral county located in the most northern part of Henan Province during the Ming dynasty known as Linzhang County. Henan suffered a great deal from the wars that recurred frequently from the end of the Six Dynasties Period through the late fourteenth century and Linzhang County was among its many places that seemed to “fall behind” as the economic and cultural centres of the empire shifted to the south. Linzhang could however, claim a direct link with some of the empire’s most culturally central heartlands of the past. Given that the foundation of the Ming state followed a period of prolonged alien rule under the Mongol Yuan Dynasty, promotion of such “cultural centrality” was at the discursive core of the Ming state’s restorationist legitimacy. In this context, even a small peripheral county that went largely untouched by the dramatic commercial transformations characterizing southern China throughout the 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries could rightfully claim a degree of “centrality” within the Ming realm.

One particular mid-Ming magistrate named Jing Fang, realized this opportunity and in his tenure actively promoted projects that publicly linked the county to its distant antiquity. In just a few years Jing Fang successfully rectified Linzhang’s historic record; compiled and edited the county’s gazetteer; promoted the cult of the region’s most famous ancient culture hero, Ximen Bao; and renovated the county’s most important historic sites, temples and public buildings. Jing Fang’s dizzying pace of activity reveals the use and power of a stylized antiquity as a vital resource for local governance in north China during the mid-Ming period. While the dominant southern, or *Jiangnan* model of Ming studies emphasizes relatively autonomous commercial development and literati academic achievement as the key to late imperial wealth and culture, this “northern,” or perhaps more precisely “central” study gives more credit to state supervision and popular culture in the sustenance of the Ming. It also offers a new local vantage point to begin to rethink the deeply regional characteristics of the composite Ming realm.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>List of Figures</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>vii</b>
<b>Dedication</b> .....	<b>ix</b>
<b>1 Beyond Jiangnan: Micro-History in the “Culturally Central” Periphery</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Introduction: First Impressions .....	1
1.2 The Jiangnan Model of Ming Studies .....	6
1.3 Beyond the Jiangnan Model.....	14
1.4 A Regional Approach.....	17
1.5 A Mid-Ming A Resource History .....	20
1.6 Gazetteer Sources: From the Macro to the Micro .....	25
1.7 Linzhang Gazetteer Particulars .....	32
1.8 Gazetteer Strategies.....	36
<b>2 Linzhang Orientations: Reading and Seeing the Locality</b> .....	<b>41</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	41
2.2 Reading the Locality: a Marginal Preface.....	46
2.3 Seeing the Locality: the 1506 Gazetteer’s Prefatory Map .....	64
2.3.1 Symbolic Scale, Selection and Sign Language .....	72
2.3.2 <i>Zhong</i> : Power and Authority.....	75
2.3.3 State and Water .....	80
2.4 Conclusion.....	100
<b>3 Creating the Confucian Saint: the Canonization of Ximen Bao</b> .....	<b>102</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	102
3.2 Ximen Bao in the Early Textual Record .....	109
3.2.1 Inept and Disloyal: the <i>Lushi chungiu</i> .....	109
3.2.2 Impatient and Quick Tempered: the <i>Han Feizi</i> .....	112
3.2.3 Local Resistance to Ximen Bao’s Rule: The <i>Huainanzi</i> .....	113
3.3. The Confucian Shift: Ximen Bao in the <i>Zhan guo ce/Shuo yuan</i> and in the <i>Shi ji</i> .....	116
3.3.1 A Confucian Pupil: The <i>Zhan guo ce</i> and the <i>Shuo yuan</i> .....	116
3.3.2 The Canonical Account: the <i>Shi ji</i> .....	118
3.4 Contextualizing Ximen Bao and the <i>Shi ji</i> : Shamans, He Bo and Magical Efficacy .....	122
3.4.1 Female Shamans in the Pre-Han Period.....	123
3.4.2 He Bo and Water Sacrifices .....	126
3.4.3 The Decline in State Shamanism .....	133
3.5 Constructing the Confucian Saint .....	135

3.5.1	Opening the 12 Irrigation ditches: Managerial Efficiency.....	137
3.5.2	What about Shi Qi.....	141
3.6	Conclusion.....	144
<b>4</b>	<b>The Religious Rise, Fall and Rehabilitation of Ximen Bao in Linzhang County: 220 -1644 AD.....</b>	<b>146</b>
4.1	Introduction.....	146
4.2	From the Secular to the Religious: Ximen Bao Worship Following the Han Period.....	149
4.3	Ye and the North China Plain during the Six Dynasties Period.....	153
4.4	The Religious and Social Life of the Ximen Bao Shrine during the Six Dynasties Period.....	156
4.5	The End of the Six Dynasties and the Fall of the Ximen Bao Shrine.....	160
4.6	The Late Imperial Rehabilitation of Ximen Bao in Linzhang County.....	162
4.6.1	Cultural Centrality and the Mid-Ming Textual Revival of Ximen Bao.....	164
4.6.2	Ximen Bao as City God: Building/Renovating Linzhang’s City God Temple.....	169
4.6.3	Public Performance and the Restoration of the City God Temple in Linzhang.....	174
4.6.4	A Mid-Point Renovation?.....	177
4.7	Claiming Ximen Bao.....	179
4.8	Conclusion.....	187
<b>5</b>	<b>“From the Minute that he Stepped out of the Cart:” Jing Fang’s Magistrate Activism in a 1506 Northern Gazetteer.....</b>	<b>190</b>
5.1	Introduction.....	190
5.2	Finding the Banal Magistrate.....	191
5.3	Career Local Administrators: the Rank-and-File Magistrate.....	197
5.4	A Transplanted History: The Jing Family in Shandong’s Dingtao County.....	200
5.5	Waiting for Work.....	209
5.6	“From the Moment that Jing Fang stepped out of the Cart:” An Activist Magistrate’s Successes.....	212
5.7	Local Gazetteer as Personal Biography: Jing Fang’s 1506 Gazetteer.....	220
5.7.1	Jing Fang’s Biography.....	225
5.7.2	The Magistrate’s Private/Public Charity.....	227
5.7.3	The Magistrate’s Moral Sway.....	228
5.7.4	The Magistrate’s Statecraft.....	229
5.7.5	The Magistrate’s Judicial Cunning.....	232
5.8	Losing the Trail: Jing Fang Record in Subsequent Appointments.....	234
5.9	Conclusion: Jing Fang as <i>Mid-Ming</i> Magistrate.....	237
<b>6</b>	<b>Conclusions: Reflections of an Unworthy Magistrate: Linzhang County in the Late Ming.....</b>	<b>241</b>
6.1	Introduction.....	241
6.2	Droughts, Famines, Epidemics and Floods: the late Ming Context in Linzhang County.....	242

6.3 Dislocation and Social Unrest in late Ming Linzhang County .....	246
6.4 Zhang Erzhong in the Late Ming .....	250
6.5 A Brief Record of an Unworthy Magistrate of Linzhang County .....	253
6.6 Conclusions: Reading Back from Zhang Erzhong.....	259
<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>264</b>
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>283</b>
Appendix A: Translation of Ximen Bao Passage from the <i>Lushi Chunqiu</i> .....	283
Appendix B: Translation of Ximen Bao Passage from the <i>Han Feizi</i> .....	285
Appendix C: Translation of Ximen Bao Passage from the <i>Huainanzi</i> .....	286
Appendix D: Translation of the Ximen Bao Passage from the <i>Shuo Yuan</i> .....	288
Appendix E: Translation of Ximen Bao Passage from the <i>Shi ji</i> .....	289
Appendix F: Translation of Yu Xin’s “A Poem for the Ximen Bao Temple” .....	292
Appendix G: Historical Chart of Changing Jurisdictions for Anyang and Linzhang Counties .....	293

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 Historic Monument in Linzhang County.....	2
Figure 1.2 William Skinner’s Physiographic Macroregions.....	18
Figure 2.1 “Map [of the Terrain] within the [County] Borders” (境內之圖).....	70
Figure 2.2 “Map of the County Seat” (縣治之圖).....	71
Figure 2.3 Yao Jianzhi’s Map of the Zhang River During the Shang Period.....	87
Figure 2.4 Yao Jianzhi’s Map of the Zhang River During the Late Zhou Period.....	88
Figure 2.5 Yao Jianzhi’s Map of the Zhang River During the Ming Period.....	90
Figure 3.1 Monument to Ximen Bao in Linzhang County.....	107

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## **DEDICATION**

To my parents

## **Chapter 1: Beyond Jiangnan: Micro-History in the “Culturally Central” Periphery**

### **1.1 Introduction: First Impressions**

When traveling to a new place, first impressions are always important. In 2006, I had the opportunity to travel to my area of study, Linzhang County (臨漳縣), for the first time. Getting there was not particularly easy and required riding a small beat-up “bun-van” from Handan city located in the southernmost tip of Hebei Province for almost two hours before I reached the “county city” (縣城) of Linzhang. Linzhang is somewhat off the beaten path. Few Chinese have ever heard of the place and it is not directly linked to the national highway or railway system. The preferred mode of transportation for many in the area is still two-wheeled carts pulled by donkeys. With no large scale industry to speak of, historic sites that are far too esoteric to be of interest to most people and a predominately agricultural landscape there is little reason for most to visit Linzhang county. Yet after almost two hours of being thrown around inside the suspension-less minivan, which somehow managed to magnify every bump in the potholed road, we emerged onto a pristinely paved circle with a massive spire that soared into the sky. Amused by a foreigner wanting to stop and look at something so routine to the locals, the driver in a barely intelligible local dialect asked if I wanted to stop and have a look. I responded with an enthusiastic “yes” and in seconds I was outside of the cramped van and walking around the monolith that somehow resembled both a dollar sign and the head of a mythical creature all at the same time.

**Figure 1.1 Historic Monument in Linzhang County**



**Source: Photo by author, summer 2006**

I was pleasantly surprised to find that sitting below the imposing spire, typical of monumental architecture found in the central plains region, was an enormous granite-faced cube with four sides depicting reliefs from the annals of the county's past. Because the historic remains of Cao Cao's (曹操, 155-220 CE) Wei (曹魏) capital are preserved within the Linzhang County boundary, one of the four sides was reserved for images of the famous Three Kingdoms ruler and his ministers.<sup>1</sup> The next two sides depicted stories associated with the most famous

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<sup>1</sup>Both reliefs depict Cao Cao (曹操) and his ministers resting below the famous Three Terraces Pavilions (*San tai* 三臺). Following the defeat of his chief rival, Yuan Shao (袁紹), in 200 CE, the famous Three Kingdoms general Cao Cao was able to consolidate control over the North China Plain and establish his capital in Ye (today's Linzhang) in

local official and first hydro-bureaucrat to rule the region, Ximen Bao (西門豹, 5<sup>th</sup> Century BCE).<sup>2</sup> One of these sides illustrated the well-known historical incident when the upright and righteous Ximen Bao supervised the tossing of a group of corrupt local shamanesses (巫) into the billowing waves of the local river;<sup>3</sup> the second portrayed Ximen Bao supervising the construction of twelve irrigation canals used to irrigate the fields of Ye. Nestled between these two sets of reliefs was a lengthy inscription that outlined the administrative history of the county and traced its distinct connection to a glorious and distant past.<sup>4</sup>

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204. To celebrate his achievements Cao Cao ordered the construction of the Copper Sparrow Terrace (*Tong que tai* 銅雀臺) in 210, followed eight years later by construction of the Golden Tiger Terrace (*Jin hu tai* 金虎臺) and the Ice Well Terrace (*Bing jing tai* 冰井臺). According to the *Records of Ye* (*Ye zhong ji* 鄴中記), it was during the reign of Shi Hu (石虎 295-349 CE) that the Golden Tiger Terrace's name was changed to Golden Phoenix Terrace (*Jin feng tai* 金鳳臺) to avoid an imperial naming taboo. Taken together these three structures were commonly referred to throughout the ages as the Three Terraces (*San tai* 三臺).

The *Records of Ye* provides the most complete account of the majesty, size, and use of these terraces and their importance within the Jian'an (建安) culture of the times. While the Ice Well Terrace had 150 foot deep pits to store ice, the two other terraces were primarily ceremonial - perhaps defensive - in design. Cao Cao is said to have led two of his sons to the top of the Copper Sparrow Terrace in 212 to compose rhapsodies on the majesty of the structures and their kingdom. Many subsequent emperors, officials and members of the literati, such as Cao Pi (曹丕, 220-265 CE) and Ouyang Xiu (歐陽修, 1007-1072 CE), would follow suit and compose their own poems odes to the magnificence of the Three Terraces. For a complete translation of the *Records of Ye* see Edward H. Schafer, "Yeh Chung Ji," in *T'oung Pao*, Vol. 76, livr. 4/5 (1990): 147-207, pp. 175-178; Robert Joe Cutter has also analyzed the rhapsody written by Cao Cao's son, Cao Zhi in 212 CE. See Robert Joe Cutter, "Cao Zhi's (192-232) Symposium Poems," in *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles and Reviews*, vol. 6 no. 1/2 (July 1984): 1-32. For local information on the Three Terraces and a collection of related poems and texts see Jing Fang 景芳, ed. *Linzhang xian zhi* 臨漳縣志 [*Gazetteer of Linzhang County*], 1506: juan 1, 1a; juan 6, 2b-3a; juan 9, 13a-21a; and Hao Liangzhen 郝良真, et. al. eds., *Zhao du guan guan guang zhi nan* 趙都觀光指南 [*Handbook for Sightseeing in the Zhao Capital*] (Handan: Handan shi shehui kexue yanjiu suo, 1993), pp. 23-24.

<sup>2</sup> From the surviving historical records it is impossible to know the exact dates for both Ximen Bao's life and his tenure in Ye. We only know that he served in the county sometime during the reign period of the Marquis of Wei (446 – 396 BCE). Ximen Bao's record in Ye will be taken up in much more detail in Chapter Three.

<sup>3</sup> From the historic sources it remains unclear exactly what river these shamanesses were tossed into. Situated in the fertile Central Plains region of China, Linzhang County has witnessed the constant meandering of a wide variety of rivers and tributaries across its territory over the past two thousand years. This situation makes it difficult to gauge exactly which river or river tributaries were in the region at any given historic time.

<sup>4</sup> The inscription is entitled, "Soaring Clouds of the Copper Sparrow Pavilion" and was dedicated by the Linzhang County People's Government in 1998. Linzhang xian renmin zhengfu 臨漳縣人民政府 [Linzhang County's People's Government], *Tong que fei yun ming ji* 銅雀飛雲銘記 [*Soaring Clouds of the Copper Sparrow Pavilion – Monument Inscription*], 1998: n.p.

According to this text, the administrative territory now occupied by Linzhang County was first known as Ye and was initially established by Duke Huan of Qi<sup>5</sup> at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Under orders from the Marquis of Wei (魏文侯, 403-387 BCE), *Ye* became the Wei state's administrative capital in the first years of the 4<sup>th</sup> Century BCE. Over the centuries, *Ye* took on many forms and at times served as the capitals for the Cao Wei (曹魏, 220-265 CE), the Later Zhao<sup>6</sup> (后趙, 319 – 351 CE), and the short lived Northern Qi (北齊, 550 – 577 CE) dynasties. It was not until 314 CE that *Ye* became known as Linzhang, a name reflecting the importance of the Zhang River (漳水) that figured so prominently in the local environment.<sup>7</sup>

Aside from the more generic references to Linzhang's role in the 20<sup>th</sup> century War of Resistance, the inscription had surprisingly very little to say about *Linzhang County* itself before 1949; the majority of its text is devoted to outlining the cultural achievements found in the region's *Ye* antiquity. The text states that it was at this time that the region served as a key political, economic, military and cultural centre for the Yellow River flood plain and that it was the “fertile soil of ancient *Ye* that nurtured the countless examples of benevolent

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<sup>5</sup> Duke Huan of Qi or, Qi Huangong (齊桓公) ruled the Qi state from 685 BCE to 643 BCE. While sovereign Duke Huan of Qi appointed his chief advisor Guan Zhong (管仲) to the post of Prime Minister and initiated a wide range of political and administrative reforms for which he is well known to this day. See Cho-yun Hsu, “The Spring and Autumn Period,” *Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.*, eds. Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 545-586, pp. 553-554.

<sup>6</sup>The later Zhao (後趙, 319-351 CE) was one of the Sixteen Kingdom's established during the Jin Dynasty (265-420 CE) by Shi Le 石勒 of the Jie ethnicity. While the Later Zhao's capital was first established in Xiangguo (襄國) situated in modern Xintai, Hebei), it was moved soon after in 335 CE by Shi Hu (石虎) to the former site of *Ye* (鄴城) - today's Linzhang.

<sup>7</sup> See Hebei sheng Linzhang xian difangzhi bianzuan weiyuan hui, *Linzhang xian zhi* 臨漳縣志, 1999, p. 11; Anon., *Henan sheng qu xian yange jianbiao* 河南省區縣沿革簡表 [*Simplified Chart of County Evolution in Henan Province*] n.d, Republican era (Taibei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1968): p. 13; and Shao Jian 少劍, “Linzhang you he er lai” 臨漳由何而來 [Where did Linzhang Come From?], *Zhao wenhua* 趙文化 [*Zhao Civilization*]. no. 15 (Feb. 2006): 40-41.

government . . . found in the county's brilliant historic record.”<sup>8</sup> According to the inscription, this brilliant record is best reflected in the several anecdotes that were told widely throughout the various realms of empires past that dealt with Ye's most famous local official, Ximen Bao. The historic staying power of these distant anecdotes provides the inscription's conceptual and textual bridge to the present day. If Linzhang is to “build up the structure of the county and city square, to rationalize its thoroughfare, to make the county beautiful and bring back a spirit of culture to the city” locals must first under the leadership of the party study and emulate “the spirit of Wei times and bring back the efflorescence and beauty of Ancient Ye.”<sup>9</sup>

It may seem odd to start a dissertation focusing on a small locality during the mid-Ming period with such a lengthy description of a late twentieth century monument. Yet the significance of this monument and its inscription go far beyond its value as an opening literary hook. Given the current accelerated state and rhetoric of modernization in contemporary China, Linzhang's monument to the past seems completely out of step with the rhythm of the times. At the same time as Shanghai promotes images of lofty skyscrapers as symbols of the city's economic and cultural capital in contemporary China and the world, Linzhang meagerly offers up an obscure and ancient culture hero. In this current era of radical and dramatic transformations, I had to ask, why would Linzhang promote such an ancient and relatively obscure culture hero as a model for the county's modernization?

A cynic's answer might be that Linzhang has simply nothing else going for it - and to a certain extent this may be true. The county is certainly peripheral with no real national reputation to speak of; its residents remain poor and tied to the land; and its economy is weakly integrated into the larger trends of China's current state of rapid economic growth. Maybe this

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<sup>8</sup> Linzhang xian renmin zhengfu 臨漳縣人民政府 [Linzhang County's People's Government], *Tong que fei yun ming ji* 銅雀飛云銘記 [*Soaring Clouds of the Copper Sparrow Pavilion – Monument Inscription*], 1998: n.p.

<sup>9</sup> Linzhang xian renmin zhengfu, *Tong que fei yun ming ji*, 1998, n.p.

monument is a case of the truism illustrated by all the countless attractions erected in highway-side towns located throughout Canada and the United States – the larger and more obscure the structure, the smaller and less significant the town. Linzhang’s monument might simply be explained as such - a small roadside curiosity in a backwater place; a stagnant monument to honour a matter of local pride significant only to those who call this place home.

If I was not familiar with the county’s historic record beforehand, I too may have arrived at this conclusion, got back on the “bun-van” and headed straight to the county archives. However, having the benefit of previously studying the 1506 edition of the county’s local gazetteer, I was struck by the continued symbolic resonance of Ye and this Ximen Bao character in the county’s historical record. Much like the 1998 monument, the 1506 gazetteer similarly emphasized the county’s strong connective links with past and offered little evidence of the dramatic social, cultural and economic shifts more commonly associated with the times. Judged from its public records, Linzhang County was as curiously out of step with the times in 1506 as it was in 1998; when I arrived in 2006, it appeared that not much had changed. Perhaps a local official first arriving in Linzhang County in the middle decades of the Ming period might have also felt the same.

## **1.2 The Jiangnan Model of Ming Studies**

As a discipline, history is often described as the study of change and continuity over time. However, it is my sense that much historical writing tends to privilege *change* as the prime unit of historical analysis and only engages with questions of continuity in so far as they provide a backdrop to better understand more progressivist modes of historical development. From this perspective, there is little reason to study a place like Linzhang. Throughout the course of the Ming period (1368-1644), the local gentry remains small, weak, and unorganized, the county

produces only one figure of any dynastic reputation, and the local economy remains largely the same as it had in previous times (except for the limited introduction of a few New World food stuffs towards the latter half of the Ming). One might simply dismiss Linzhang as the stagnant exception to the better understood rule of Ming social, cultural and economic transformation. You could even ask, “Why historically study a place that does not change?” This dissertation is a deliberate attempt to shift some focus away from “change” as *the* key variable in our historic understanding of the Ming towards the ways in which a type of local “dynamic continuity” was constructed around the creation and use of a canonized antiquity in a small peripheral northern county. In other words, rather than use continuity as a stagnant foil from which to understand the “more important” historical issue of change, I take the construction and sustenance of continuity as a dynamic historical force itself, and one that could be mobilized to important social, political and cultural ends in peripheral places like Linzhang County.

Throughout much of this dissertation I will be working implicitly against the grain of what I label the “Jiangnan model” of Ming scholarship. “Jiangnan” (江南) literally means “South of the River” and refers to the lands located immediately south of the Yangzi River. Geographically the term includes the southern parts of Jiangsu and Anhui Provinces, and the northern parts of Jiangxi and Zhejiang Provinces. More specifically it has come to represent the agriculturally, economically and culturally vibrant region located along the lower reaches of the Yangzi River Delta. Many of China’s historically most important cities, literati centres and commercial hubs such as Shanghai, Hangzhou, Suzhou, Ningbo and Yangzhou<sup>10</sup> are included within the Jiangnan designation.

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<sup>10</sup> In her *Speaking of Yangzhou: a Chinese city, 1550-1850*, Antonia Finnane also includes Yangzhou, a city located north of the Yangzi River, into the Jiangnan designation due to shared cultural and economic similarities. See Antonia Finnane, *Speaking of Yangzhou: a Chinese city, 1550-1850* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004).

By focusing on the dramatic socio-economic changes that occurred in the Jiangnan region during the Ming and Qing periods an entire generation of English language scholars came of age during the 1980s and 1990s and challenged previous notions of “Chinese stagnation” that many scholars held throughout much of the twentieth century.<sup>11</sup> Much of their work owed its conceptual underpinning to previous Japanese Marxist scholarship on the socio-economic history of the Ming and mirrored their long-standing interest in the monetary and commercial history of the Jiangnan region in late imperial China.<sup>12</sup>

No one book better represents this focus than Timothy Brook’s foundational *Confusions of Pleasure*.<sup>13</sup> Rich in historic detail and vivid in style, Brook’s 1998 work outlines the ways in which society emancipated itself from the heavy hand of the early Ming state. Working against many of the assumptions of earlier scholars, who often stressed the inherently autocratic nature of the Ming state and its strangle-hold on society,<sup>14</sup> Brook examines how the Ming era state-society relationship was radically reworked through the rising tide of commerce brought on by both changes in domestic commercial relations and the influx of foreign silver from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Other scholars such as Craig Clunas have also shifted their focus away from issues of Ming autocracy to examinations of how new commercial relations were reflected in the maturation and expansion of the gentry’s aristogenic pursuits,<sup>15</sup> such as Ming garden

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<sup>11</sup> The most noted work associated with the Chinese stagnation model is Karl August Wittfogel’s *Oriental Despotism*. See Karl August Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: a Comparative Study of Total Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957).

<sup>12</sup> Much of this highly influential work was later translated and published in Linda Grove and Christian Daniels Eds, *State and Society in China: Japanese Perspectives on Ming-Qing Social and Economic History* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1984).

<sup>13</sup> Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

<sup>14</sup> For a discussion of this historiographical shift see Peter Perdue, *Exhausting the Earth: State and Peasant in Hunan, 1500-1850* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 2-9.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Hymes first advanced the term aristogenic, which refers to elite status that is not only conferred by birth and land holdings, but also through cultural pursuits. He argues that the composition and focus of the Chinese gentry

construction and elite patterns of art connoisseurship.<sup>16</sup> The overwhelming majority of these works derive their evidence from Jiangnan case studies.

This Jiangnan bias is witnessed even more clearly in the more recent growth fields of world/global history and urban history where the Jiangnan region generally forms the sole geographic backdrop of inquiry. Works such as Kenneth Pomeranz's *The Great Divergence*,<sup>17</sup> William Atwell's contribution to the *Cambridge History of China* entitled "Ming China and the Emerging World Economy, c. 1470–1650,"<sup>18</sup> and Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Giraldez's edited volume *Metals and Monies in an Emerging Global Economy*<sup>19</sup> all focus on the Jiangnan core in their attempts to integrate China into world history. Moreover, recent urban histories, with the notable exception of Susan Naquin's *Peking: Temples and City Life*,<sup>20</sup> have also tended to focus

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changed dramatically in the Southern Song period when local gentry became less tied to national networks. In this new context, the southern gentry elite began to focus more clearly on "local stategeis rather than national ones. Hyme writes that this changed marked a "shift from a national strategy centered on high office to basically a localist one, seeking occasional office as one element of success but not concentrating on bureaucratic position above all else." See Robert Hymes, *Statesmen and Gentlemen: the Elite of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi, in Northern and Southern Sung* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 119.

<sup>16</sup> See Craig Clunas, *Fruitful Sites: Garden Culture in Ming Dynasty China* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996); and Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).

<sup>17</sup> Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

<sup>18</sup> William Atwell, "Ming China and the Emerging World Economy, c 1470-1650," *The Cambridge History of China - The Ming Dynasty, 1398–1644, Part 2*, eds. Denis Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 376 – 416.

<sup>19</sup> Denis O. Flynn and Arturo Giraldez, eds. *Metals and Monies in an Emerging Global Economy* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1997).

<sup>20</sup> Owing to its central capital status and the city's strong ties to realm-wide gentry culture, I would also argue that Beijing is also a somewhat unique place during the Ming period and cannot provide useful generalizations beyond its own immediate capital region. For a recent examination of the impact of Ming court culture on wider Beijing society see David M. Robinson, ed., *Culture, Courtiers, and Competition: The Ming Court (1368-1644)* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008); and Susan Naquin, *Peking: Temples and City Life 1400-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

largely on key urban centres in the Jiangnan region such as Shanghai,<sup>21</sup> Yangzhou<sup>22</sup> and Suzhou.<sup>23</sup>

The reasons for this Jiangnan focus are not arbitrary and are perhaps most eloquently stated in Paul Jakov Smith's introduction to his co-edited volume entitled *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History*.<sup>24</sup> In this introduction, Smith outlines the larger intellectual project of the volume, which is to address the "historiographical black hole" that separates the study of mid-imperial (Tang and Song) and late imperial (Ming and Qing) China.<sup>25</sup> Smith argues that what best unifies the Song-Yuan-Ming transitional period as a coherent whole is the long term "transformation in the scope and nature of economic activity, the emergence of new forms of social organization, and [the] dramatic expansion in the production and consumption of knowledge and culture," that started in the Southern Song period and fully matured in the Ming.<sup>26</sup> Drawing heavily on previous scholarship regarding China's "medieval economic revolution,"<sup>27</sup> Smith also stresses that these transformations were first facilitated by a large scale

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<sup>21</sup> Linda Cooke Johnson, *Shanghai: from Market Town to Treaty Port: 1074-1858* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

<sup>22</sup> Antonia Finnane, *Speaking of Yangzhou: a Chinese City, 1550-1850*.

<sup>23</sup> Michael Marme, *Suzhou: Where the Goods of all the Provinces Converge* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

<sup>24</sup> Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn, eds. *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003).

<sup>25</sup> Paul Jakov Smith, "Introduction: Problematizing the Song-Yuan-Ming Transition," *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History*, eds. Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> Paul Jakov Smith, "Introduction: Problematizing the Song-Yuan-Ming Transition," p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> Such as Mark Elvin, *The Pattern of the Chinese Past* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973); and Robert M. Hartwell, "Demographic, Political and Social Transformations of China, 750-1550," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42:2 (December, 1982): 365-442.

“demographic shift from the dry cereal regions of north China to the rice regions of the south” that occurred from the mid-eighth century onwards.<sup>28</sup>

This shift southwards was facilitated by a variety of factors including: the completion of the Grand Canal system during the Sui Dynasty (581–618 CE) that connected the fertile rice growing regions of the south to the political centre in the Central Plains;<sup>29</sup> the relative isolation of the lower Yangzi River valley from the political disruptions in the north caused by invaders from the steppe lands over the course of the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries; the establishment of the Southern Song’s (1127–1279) capital in Lin’nan (today’s Hangzhou); and a shift in political and cultural power away from the “medieval aristocracy”<sup>30</sup> to the “local gentry” who derived their power through success in the civil service exams as well as a variety of locally orientated strategies.<sup>31</sup> Smith argues that the most salient feature of these general trends over the Song-Yuan-Ming transitional period is the “compression of people and processes into one region of China, the lower Yangzi macroregion and especially its Yangzi Delta core, Jiangnan.”<sup>32</sup> Sheltered from the direct impact of the Mongol conquest of China, the Jiangnan region from the thirteenth century onwards continued to undergo dramatic socio-economic and cultural developments, which cumulated in the region’s undisputed cultural, social, political and economic prominence in the late imperial period.

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<sup>28</sup> Paul Jakov Smith, “Introduction: Problematizing the Song-Yuan-Ming Transition,” p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> For a very brief discussion of the origins and development of the Grand Canal and Grain Tribute systems see the introduction to Hoshi Ayao, *The Ming Tribute Grain System*, trans. Mark Elvin (Ann Arbor: Michigan Abstracts of Chinese and Japanese Works on Chinese History, 1961): pp. 1-20.

<sup>30</sup> Smith defines the ‘medieval aristocracy’ as, “...a small but tightly knit status group that specialized in office holding and maintained real or fictive ties to the great clans of the Tang.” Paul Jakov Smith, “Introduction: Problematizing the Song-Yuan-Ming Transition,” p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> Paul Jakov Smith, “Introduction: Problematizing the Song-Yuan-Ming Transition,” p. 2.

<sup>32</sup> Paul Jakov Smith, “Introduction: Problematizing the Song-Yuan-Ming Transition,” p. 8.

In her article “Economic and Social Foundations of Late Imperial Culture,” Evelyn Rawski also outlines several economic trends that start in the Ming and stretch into the Qing period, which help to characterize the two dynasties as a coherent unit of historic analysis.<sup>33</sup> She discusses: the commercialization of agriculture as facilitated by the influx of foreign silver and the rationalization of the Ming fiscal system; the creation of a hierarchy of inter-connected and regionally integrated rural markets and market towns; the upsurge in rural and urban handicraft production; and changing relations in land tenure patterns. Following these economic transformations came a whole host of equally dramatic social and cultural transformations such as: a rapid growth in population; increasing levels of social stratification; the rise of absentee landlordism; the maturation of village clan organizations; increased urbanization; the expansion of the educational system; and the growth of large-scale printing, the book trade and levels of literacy to name just a few. Yet Rawski is careful not to generalize and states that most of these dramatic shifts were localized in the lower Yangzi Region along with a few other select areas along China’s southeast coast.<sup>34</sup>

Given the weight of historic evidence, one cannot doubt the economic, commercial and cultural dynamism found in the Jiangnan region starting in the 15<sup>th</sup> century; however, without a critical mass of scholarship on the more economically and culturally peripheral areas of Ming China, historians are left with essentially localized generalizations derived from the Jiangnan experience to understand the entire Ming realm- even its economic and cultural periphery. The reasons for this situation are something akin to the inherent Eurocentric bias found in early

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<sup>33</sup> Evelyn S. Rawski, “Economic and Social Foundations of Late Imperial Culture,” *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, eds. David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan, and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985): 3-33.

<sup>34</sup> Rawski does mention however, that some of these transformations can be witnessed in North China in places that adjoined the Grand Canal. For a discussion of how Jiangnan was inflected in northern towns situated along the Grand Canal, see Sun Jinghao “City, State, and the Grand Canal: Jining’s Identity and Transformation, 1289–1937,” PhD Diss, the University of Toronto, 2007.

modern world history as outlined in Andre Gunder Frank's *ReOrient*. In this work, Frank examines the general failure of early modern world historians to include East Asia into their historical narratives.<sup>35</sup> To Frank, this omission is partially driven by deeply seated Eurocentric assumptions about the "nature" of the early modern world, but more importantly by the fact that most models used to conceptualize world historical development are derived from a more limited western historical experience. In Frank's terminology, both the disciplinary and methodological "light posts" that historians draw upon to help conceptualize world history are all firmly rooted in the west and in the western historical experience. As such, they cast little light on areas the further one moves away from the centre.<sup>36</sup> Just as the world history field has tended to generalize from western historical experiences, so too has much of the Ming history field generalized from the Jiangnan experience. This situation is intensified by the fact that a great deal of the surviving textual records from the Ming originate from the Jiangnan region.<sup>37</sup> To use Frank's phraseology, such Jiangnan sources often cast "very dim light" on places like rural Henan. Moreover, even historians who wish to work against this Jiangnan dominance are often

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<sup>35</sup> Andre Gunder Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

<sup>36</sup> Frank writes that even sympathetic scholars are "handicapped by having to place so much reliance on the already existing European and other Western light posts, which cast very dim light if any on the more distant evidence." See Andre Gunder Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 31.

<sup>37</sup> To date, no scholar has created a breakdown of available Ming sources organized by region. Such a monumental task also remains outside the scope of this dissertation. However, owing to its higher rate of gentry domination, we do know that Jiangnan society was far more literate than other regions of the empire. Jiangnan literacy rates were also spurred by the region's active publishing and trade industries. On these issues see: Joseph P. McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book: Books and Literati Culture in Late Imperial China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006); Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 19-23; and Lucille Chia, "Of Three Mountains Street: the Commercial Publishers of Ming Nanjing," *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China*, eds. Cynthia Brokaw and Kai-Wing Chow (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005): 107-151.

reluctant to take on projects in the Ming periphery due to the almost certain possibility of severe source limitations.<sup>38</sup>

### 1.3 Beyond the Jiangnan Model

In recent years however, there have been some attempts by scholars to look beyond the immediate Jiangnan region in their search for a more comprehensive picture of late imperial China.<sup>39</sup> Philip Huang's 1985 *The Peasant Economy and Social Change in North China* was one of the first books to explicitly put the study of north China during the late imperial period on the agenda.<sup>40</sup> Although Huang's work is largely focused on the early Qing through the Republican periods, his focus on Hebei and Shandong provinces and on rural peasants over local gentry was somewhat exceptional for the time. A few years later, Huang's work was followed up by an equally compelling study of peasants in a non-Jiangnan region, Peter Perdue's *Exhausting the Earth*.<sup>41</sup> Finally, Kenneth Pommeranz's 1993 work, *The Making of a Hinterland*,

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<sup>38</sup> This type of sympathy is best displayed in Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn's edited volume, *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition*. In his introductory chapter, Richard von Glahn writes that, "...the hallmark of the Song-Yuan-Ming transition is the emergence of the Jiangnan (江南) region of the lower Yangzi Basin as the economic and cultural centre of the Chinese world, a dominance that would endure until the eighteenth century." However, given this unequal balance in regional scholarship, the need "... to expand the scope of our study beyond Jiangnan and South China, is all the more pressing." Given this consideration, the title for von Glahn's main contribution to the volume is quite telling - "Towns and Temples: Urban Growth and Decline in the Yangzi Delta, 1100-1400. See Richard von Glahn, "Imagining Pre-modern China," *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History*, eds. Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), p. 69; and Richard von Glahn, "Towns and Temples: Urban Growth and Decline in the Yangzi Delta, 1100-1400," *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History*, eds. Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003): 176-211.

<sup>39</sup> Recent years have also seen a growing interest in the Ming's southwestern frontier region, best represented by Leo Shin's recent work *The Making of the Chinese State: Ethnicity and Expansion on the Ming Borderlands*. In this work, Shin looks well beyond the Jiangnan core to explore literary constructions of "Chinese identity" in China's southwestern frontier - namely, Guangxi Province. However, Shin's work is not explicitly concerned with the larger questions of region in Chinese historical analysis but rather more focused on issues of classification, ethnicity and identity as emanated from a Han-core to a non-"Chinese" periphery. Leo Shin, *The Making of the Chinese State: Ethnicity and Expansion on the Ming Borderlands* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

<sup>40</sup> Philip Huang, *The Peasant Economy and Social Change in North China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985).

<sup>41</sup> In this work, Perdue examined the ways that state policies regarding agricultural commercialization differed in Hunan from China's equally larger rice growing region, Jiangnan. Given the massive influx of migrants to the

also took north China as a unit of analysis and examined how, in response to foreign pressures, state policies unwittingly led to the further peripheralization of the “Huang-Yun” region.<sup>42</sup> What one will immediately notice in all three instances however is that the real weight of each of these works lies primarily in the Qing and Republican periods and not in the Ming.<sup>43</sup>

Roger Des Forges’ recent work, *Cultural Centrality and Political Change in Chinese History: Northeastern Henan in the Fall of the Ming*, is undoubtedly the most important exception to this dearth of writing on the Ming Empire’s “other” regions.<sup>44</sup> Des Forges’ focus on the “Central Plains” region in Ming history is innovative unto itself, but what makes this work so foundational is its use of another regional experience to build up an alternative narrative for the Ming period. “Central Plains,” or *Zhongyuan* (中原), is the Chinese term that is commonly given to the region that occupies the lower reaches of the Yellow River and includes parts of today’s Henan, Hebei and Shandong Provinces.<sup>45</sup> Historically it was in this region where China’s first fully historical dynasties emerged and for this, the region is still generally regarded

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region, the commercialization of the agricultural economy and the intensification of land use patterns, Perdue’s work argues several important differences between Hunan and Jiangnan despite their increasing economic integration. Peter Perdue, *Exhausting the Earth: State and Peasant in Hunan, 1500-1850*.

<sup>42</sup> “Huang-Yun” referring to the area where the Yellow River and the Grand Canal intersect including parts of western Shandong, northeastern Henan and (by 1928) southeastern Hebei Provinces. See Kenneth Pommeranz *The Making of a Hinterland: State, Society, and Economy in Inland North China, 1853-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 4-12.

<sup>43</sup> It should be noted here that in recent years there has been a surge of work on the southwestern reaches of the Ming Empire along with the empire’s border regions. For a sampling of this new work see chapters by Timothy Brook, Leo K. Shin, and Benjamin Elman in Diana Lary, ed., *The Chinese State at the Borders* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007); and Leo K. Shin, *The Making of the Chinese State: Ethnicity and Expansion on the Ming Borderlands*. Such work for the Qing period is plentiful and falls outside the scope of this project.

<sup>44</sup> Roger Des Forges, *Cultural Centrality and Political Change in Chinese History: Northeastern Henan in the Fall of the Ming* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

<sup>45</sup> Sometimes parts of southern Shanxi, Shaanxi and northern Anhui and Jiangsu Provinces are also included in the Central Plains designation.

as the cradle of Chinese civilization.<sup>46</sup> Owing to the area's "culturally central" history and the fact that the Ming dynasty was a restorationist dynasty after the period of Mongol alien rule, the entire region became "an important touchstone for Chinese notions of culture and change that lasted through Ming times."<sup>47</sup>

While a great deal of our understanding of the Ming period has been built upon a historical architecture that tends to draw the majority of its sources from the more immediate Jiangnan experience, Des Forges' notion of "cultural centrality" however, is firmly rooted in another regional experience. More conventional historic narratives of the Ming (or what I have labeled the "Jiangnan model") tend to stress the ways in which society emancipated itself from the heavy hand of the early Ming state through the largely autonomous workings of economy, culture and various localist strategies. Des Forges' "cultural centrality" model however, offers a compelling alternative to this narrative and demonstrates the ways in which people in China's Central Plains region drew on such "culturally central" resources such as history, historical memory, and historical allusion to help deal with the present and to shape their future. Owing to the region's culturally central status and location, Des Forges argues that the experiences of these people may have been "more representative of the entire Ming polity" than any other region at this time, especially the more exceptional and commercial rich Jiangnan region.<sup>48</sup> As

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<sup>46</sup> To this day the most common synecdoches for China, such as *Zhongyuan* (中原), *Zhonghua* (中華) and *Zhongzhou* (中州) all have their etymologically origins in this region. Des Forges also points out that the Chinese word for "history" (史) is derivative of the word for "centre" (中), which to Des Forges suggests the intimate relation between these two concepts. Roger Des Forges, *Cultural Centrality and Political Change in Chinese History: Northeast Henan in the Fall of the Ming*, 2003, p. xviii.

<sup>47</sup> Roger Des Forges, *Cultural Centrality and Political Change in Chinese History: Northeast Henan in the Fall of the Ming*, 2003, p. xviii.

<sup>48</sup> Des Forges writes: "During the Ming dynasty, the cultural and political center of China was presumably in the north, in Beijing, while the social and economic center was arguably in the south in Jiangnan. Henan province, however, maintained its claim to centrality in several ways. It remained near the geographical center of the Ming polity, drew its name from several different previous administrative units, and continued to be called the central province. Trends in its population, land, and taxes were quite representative of those of Ming China as a whole." Roger Des Forges, *Cultural Centrality and Political Change in Chinese History: Northeast Henan in the Fall of the Ming*, 2003, p. 314.

such, Des Forges discussion of the more “culturally central” portions of Henan Province exposes the historical importance of this region and is an important first step in moving us beyond Jiangnan and towards a fuller appreciation of the regional character of larger Ming dynamics.

#### **1.4 A Regional Approach**

To better understand the larger regional units of analysis that operate throughout this dissertation, I will first discuss in some detail G. William Skinner’s foundational work on Chinese macroregions. In his *The City in Late Imperial China*, Skinner laid out one of the lasting paradigms for understanding regional dynamics in late imperial China, something he called the “physiographic macroregion”<sup>49</sup> Skinner describes how socioeconomic, human settlement and urbanization patterns historically can be spatially divided into eight key macroregions that generally coincide with key river drainage basin systems in China. These eight macroregions include: north China, northwest China, the upper Yangzi, the middle Yangzi, the lower Yangzi, the southeast coast, Lingnan, and the Yun-Gui region.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> G. William Skinner, “Regional Urbanization in Nineteenth Century China,” *the City in Late Imperial China*, ed. G. William Skinner (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977): 211- 249.

<sup>50</sup> Owing to its somewhat removed position in “Chinese” history, Skinner does not discuss a possible ninth macroregion, Manchuria, in any detail. In Skinner’s analysis, these physiographic macroregions represent a sort of spatial hierarchy whereby each macroregion has its own system of discrete, hierarchically descending relations. Although Skinner was primarily interested in these relations in terms of the creation of urban-rural networks in late imperial China, his work laid out the basic premise that each macroregion was characterized by having both distinct cores and distinct peripheries. Represented by the shaded portions seen in Figure 1, cores tended to be situated in the macroregion’s lowlands where a given system’s secondary rivers and streams converged. Moving away from these low-lying cores was a descending network of lower-level cities, market towns and villages that were located in the higher reaches of the macroregion’s drainage basin system. Although these cores and peripheries were functionally interrelated, the urban centres served as the nodal “command posts” that articulated and integrated the socioeconomic activities of the macroregion’s whole. These activities were defined primarily by the macroregion’s physiographic features such as access to resources, size of arable land and ease of transport but were then articulated in human geographic patterns of population growth, human settlement, market integration/maturation, and urbanization. G. William Skinner, For a further explanation see G. William Skinner, “Regional Urbanization in Nineteenth Century China,” 1977, pp. 213-216.

**Figure 1.2 William Skinner's Physiographic Macroregions**



**Source: G. William Skinner, “Regional Urbanization in Nineteenth Century China”<sup>51</sup>**

Skinner employs this macroregional approach in the interest of discerning historic patterns of regional urban growth in China. He argues that each macroregion displays a “distinctive rhythm” of “economic development, demographic history and sociopolitical dynamics” that tends to cumulate in the emergence of an apex city in a key macroregion followed by its subsequent breakdown.<sup>52</sup> To illustrate his theory, Skinner offers two case studies - one drawn from north China and the other from the lower Yangzi River region. He argues that

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<sup>51</sup> G. William Skinner, “Regional Urbanization in Nineteenth Century China,” 1977, p. 214.

<sup>52</sup> G. William Skinner, “Introduction: Urban Development in Imperial China,” *The City in Late Imperial China*, ed. G. William Skinner (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977), p. 16.

China's medieval period saw the rise of Kaifeng in the north as the region's apex nodal city. However this status was disrupted by Mongol invasions starting in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, which led to the "disruption of trade and transport, the collapse of the Kaifeng market, and the eventual destruction of most of the region's cities..."<sup>53</sup> Kaifeng's preeminence was later replaced by Beijing and the changes in the macroregional socioeconomic structure reflected this shift into the late imperial period. Similarly, the lower Yangzi macroregion also saw the rise of particular nodal cities such as Yangzhou during the Tang (618-907) and the Northern Song (960-1127) periods, Hangzhou during the Southern Song (1127-1279) and Nanjing during the Ming. Skinner argues, however, that unlike in the north, the ascendancy of a new apex city in the lower Yangzi macroregion did not bring about the complete eclipse of the previous regional centre. While he does not entirely spell out the reasons for this difference, Skinner hints that it may have to do with the commercial importance of the region.<sup>54</sup>

Perhaps more compelling than Skinner's regional approach to Chinese history is the somewhat less examined *Key Economic Areas in Chinese History* by Ch'ao-ting Chi, originally published in 1936.<sup>55</sup> Rather than dividing China into eight key physiographic macroregions based on watersheds, Chi examines the historical shifts in what he calls China's "key economic area." Like Skinner, Chi also uses water and hydraulic systems to underscore dynamics of historical change in China; however, unlike Skinner, who divides China into eight key physiographic macroregions based on watersheds, Chi looks at the evolution of three "key economic areas" based on their hydrological projects. Like his mentor, Karl Wittfogel, Chi was most interested in explaining the coercive nature of the Chinese state as it related to water and

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<sup>53</sup> G. William Skinner, "Introduction: Urban Development in Imperial China," 1977, p. 16.

<sup>54</sup> G. William Skinner, "Introduction: Urban Development in Imperial China," 1977, p. 16.

<sup>55</sup> Ch'ao-ting Chi, *Key Economic Areas in Chinese History: As Revealed in the Development of Public Works for Water-Control* (1936; New York: Augustus M. Kelly Publishers, 1970).

water control; however, his analysis differed from Wittfogel's famous formulation of the "Oriental Despot" rooted in the Asiatic "hydraulic society" in that he focused on the state's capacity to extract grain resources from the localities through the exploitation of water resources.<sup>56</sup>

Historically, Chi argues that China's first key economic area was located in the lower reaches of the Yellow River basin and lasted from the Qin (221-206 BCE) to the Han (206 BCE – 220 CE) period. This key economic area was later eclipsed during the Sui and Tang periods, by the rise of the lower Yangzi River region. The third cycle that carries through the Yuan, Ming and Qing period was also in the lower reaches of the Yangzi, but more attention was focused on the Grand Canal region as all the states were worried about the separation of their political centres from the key economic areas in the south. Thus according to Chi's analysis, while at one time China's core economic area was once located in the Yellow River flood plain region and represented by the formerly great political centres of Xi'an, Kaifeng, and Anyang, this centre had moved southwards by the early sixth century and remained there until the end of the dynastic period in 1911. Chi's analyses help to explain why, despite its one time regional preeminence, Linzhang County by the Ming period had become decidedly peripheral.

### **1.5 A Mid-Ming Resource History**

The wide variety of social, political, economic and cultural resources that emerged in tandem with the increasing commercialization and marketization of the Jiangnan landscape has

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<sup>56</sup> While these two men indeed had a working relationship, it remains unclear exactly who influenced whom in their similar ideas about water and the 'nature' of Chinese society. According to William T. Rowe, Ch'ao-ting Chi was a disciple of Wittfogel; however according to Professor Wu Pei-yi who attended Columbia University at the same time as Chi, says that Wittfogel's work was a much less inspired and a far less thoughtful application of Chi's original Chinese language work. In any case, Chi's work did not proclaim ancient China to be an "Oriental Despotism," but rather he settled on the term 'feudal' to describe the more coercive aspects of Late Imperial Chinese state/society relations. See William T. Rowe, "Approaches to Modern Chinese Social History," *Reliving the Past: The Worlds of Social History* eds. Olivier Zunz, David William Cohen (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985): 236 - 285, p. 264. Information from Professor Wu based on private correspondences, summer 2007.

been examined in much detail by scholars of the Ming period. Indeed the emergence of these resources and the ways that they helped to facilitate “society’s” emancipation from the state has undergirded much of the Ming field in recent years. This dissertation is similarly concerned with “resources” broadly defined; however, it tasks itself with examining the ways in which cultural, political, and historical resources could be mobilized in areas more peripheral to the commercial and market developments characterizing the Jiangnan region.

Given the dearth of writing on places outside the Jiangnan core in the Ming period, my dissertation shifts its geographical focus to one such peripheral county located in the North China Plain, named Linzhang County.<sup>57</sup> Linzhang County during the Ming Dynasty was located in the most northern tip of Henan Province and was placed under the jurisdictions of Zhangde Prefecture (彰德府).<sup>58</sup> The county was named for the Zhang River (漳河) which ran prominently through the county and across the fertile farmlands of China’s Central Plains region. As we will see in the next chapter, the challenges posed by this river formed a perennial source of concern for those who lived and governed in Linzhang County. The county was predominantly agricultural and produced crops more commonly found in north China such as: barley, wheat, beans, sesame, nuts, peaches, pears, melons, eggplant, and cabbage along with a variety of other

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<sup>57</sup> Linzhang is located in one of these peripheral areas of the “Huabei Qu” (華北區 North China Region), which Skinner defines as the lower reaches of the Yellow River drainage basin and includes areas of the Huai and Wei River drainage basins. G. William Skinner, “Regional Urbanization in Nineteenth Century China,” p. 213.

<sup>58</sup> Throughout the dissertation I will often refer to Linzhang County as being under the jurisdiction of Henan Province as it was throughout the entire late imperial period. It was only in 1949 that Linzhang County was incorporated into the newly formed Hebei Province. From 1958 to 1961 Linzhang County and Cizhou County were amalgamated as one unit. In 1961 Linzhang was once again split off and made into its own independent entity. Finally, in 1993 with the incorporation of Handan City, Linzhang County was put under Handan City governance where it remains today. Conducting local history in a county with such frequent changing jurisdiction has presented a wide variety of challenges. To this day some of the county’s records are held in the Hebei Provincial Library in Shijiazhuang (despite a Hebei never existing during the Ming period) and others are held in Zhengzhou’s Henan Provincial Library. See Hebei sheng Linzhang xian difangzhi bianzuan weiyuan hui 河北省臨漳縣地方志編纂委員會 [Linzhang County Gazetteer Compilation Committee, Hebei Province], *Linzhang xian zhi* 臨漳縣志 [Gazetteer of Linzhang County] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1999), p. 56; and Zhang Huizhi 张惠芝, et al., ed, *Hebei fengwu zhi* 河北风物志 [Local Records of Hebei Province] (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1985), pp. 31-40.

hearty vegetables.<sup>59</sup> Evidence from the county's local records suggests little evidence of any wide scale commercial cropping or strongly developed local handicraft industries.<sup>60</sup> By all accounts Linzhang County was not considered an important county in the Ming realm, nor was it considered a particularly troublesome one either. Official records describe locals as not particularly active yet neither were they prone to incite rebellion or be recalcitrant to imperial rule either. Owing to its entirely mediocre status, the county, therefore, received very little attention in the official records and was not well represented in the body of late imperial works dealing with local governance or imperial geography. Despite these source limitations, I do believe that there is still enough local information available to construct a reasonable picture of Linzhang County during the Ming period. Chapter 2 is dedicated to this task and seeks to historically situate Linzhang County in the mid-Ming period through a close reading of the prefatory material contained in the county's 1506 gazetteer. I argue that the textual first impressions provided by the gazetteer's preface and prefatory maps offer a great deal of information, which help to orientate readers, both then and now to a variety of important dynamics in Linzhang County and the larger North China Plain region. Personnel, governmental and environmental dynamics are all considered in my discussion.

Although local histories always run the risk of offering nit-picky exceptions to otherwise useful generalizations, my particular micro-history of Linzhang County seeks to accomplish three clear goals. First, I set out to offer a detailed local history of a place that, owing to its

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<sup>59</sup> Jing Fang 景芳, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 臨漳縣志 [*Gazetteer of Linzhang County*], 1506, juan 3, 1a-1b.

<sup>60</sup> A recent sociological study of fertility behavior in north China, which takes its subject area as Linzhang County, offers comparable statistics for the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to 1990 statistics the county's primary local product was wheat, with corn, cotton, beans, and other vegetables following after. The author of this study also writes, "Owing to deficiencies in industrial resources, the industry of the county is weak. According to the county officials, industry contributed only one-fourth of the financial income of the county in early 1990s, and in 9 of the 23 townships there were no township-or village-run industrial enterprises in 1993." See Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 臨漳縣志, 1506, juan 3, 1a-2b; and Zhang Weiguo, *Chinese Economic Reforms and Fertility Behaviour* [sic]: *a Study of a North China Village* (London: China Library, 2002), p. 45.

utterly peripheral status, would be unlikely to ever receive any critical attention by historians of Ming China. As such, my local history of Linzhang County is driven by a strong desire to better understand the nature of peripherality and county status itself during the Ming period.

Second, I aim to explain how some Ming-era Linzhang County magistrates seem to have understood this peripherality and took active measures to renovate and rehabilitate the county by mobilizing the region's "culturally central" past. I argue that although these magistrates were not able to draw upon the same type of economic or cultural resources that their counterparts might have in Ming Jiangnan, they could at least utilize aspects of the region's antiquity to conduct their administrations, and to help craft notions of local governance and aid in the formation of local identity and public morale.

Finally, an implicit thread running throughout this entire dissertation is that much of what is often derived from the Jiangnan experience to explain larger Ming dynamics simply does not apply to places like Linzhang County and by extension much of north China. This argument is not intended to cast doubt on the actual Jiangnan experience itself, but rather to begin to consider some of the larger regional and local dynamics that have often been overlooked in describing the larger makeup of the Ming realm and its polity.

Temporally, I situate much of my discussion in the middle-Ming period, which I date roughly from the beginning of the Hongxi period in 1425 to the death of the Zhengde Emperor in 1521.<sup>61</sup> While all historic periodizations present their own set of unique problems, I agree with Edward Farmer's argument that the mid-Ming period is a unique period of historical

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<sup>61</sup> This 147 year period covers the reign periods of the Hongxi (洪熙 1425), Xuande (宣德 1426-1435), Zhengtong (正統 1436-1449), Jingtai (景泰 1450-1456), Tianshun (天順 1457-1464), Chenghua (成化 1465-1487), Hongzhi (弘治 1488-1505), Zhengde (正德 1506-1521) Emperors. It is also reasonable to begin the "mid-Ming period" with the Tumu Crisis of 1449, which resulted in the capture of the Zhengtong Emperor by Mongol forces and set off a crisis of imperial authority in the capital. I however, follow Edward Farmer's periodization, which stresses the uniqueness of the period following the initial military consolidation of the Ming Empire.

development and also a useful unit of historical analysis.<sup>62</sup> Written in 1988, Farmer's "An Agenda for Ming History: Exploring the Fifteenth Century," argues that Ming scholarship tends to be weighted in either the early or late Ming periods. To Farmer, the early Ming is marked by a dynamic period of imperial consolidation and military expansionism starting with founding of the Ming dynasty in 1368 and ending with the death of the Yongle Emperor in 1424. While the beginning of the late Ming period is more difficult to date, Farmer begins this period with the Great Rites Controversy in the Jiajing reign period (嘉靖 1522-1566), which set the factional tone and vocabulary of the late Ming court.<sup>63</sup> Sitting somewhere in-between these two poles is the mid-Ming period, which according to Farmer, is less distinguished by its own internal historical dynamics and more by the sharp differences of the time periods that came immediately before and after it. This is not to suggest that there is nothing distinctively "mid-Ming" about the mid-Ming period, but rather, that far less is known about this crucial historical period to make any generalizations at this point.

Some recent scholarship has begun to take steps in this direction. In his survey of the changing roles of local officials over the Ming period, Thomas Nimick has demonstrated that many of the most innovative and vibrant "institutional" changes in local administration occurred in the mid-Ming period this time.<sup>64</sup> Official records from the mid 15<sup>th</sup> to the late 16<sup>th</sup> century

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<sup>62</sup> Edward. Farmer, "An Agenda for Ming History: Exploring the Fifteenth Century," *Ming Studies* no. 26 (Fall 1988): 1-17.

<sup>63</sup> Farmer also provides a long list of historical dynamics, which are particular to the Late Ming period and properly set it apart including: the wide range of reforms associated with the Wanli era (萬曆 1573-1620) official, Zhang Juzheng (張居正); the massive demographic, population and commercial shifts that transformed Ming society and economy; the influx of foreign silver and the dawn of the global silver trade; the rise of Wang Yangming's (王陽明 1472-1529) *Xinxue* style (心學) Neo-Confucianism; the arrival of Jesuits on Chinese shores starting in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century; the growth of vernacular literature and popular printing; and finally, the multitude of Late Ming rebellions. Edward. Farmer, "An Agenda for Ming History: Exploring the Fifteenth Century," 1988, pp. 1-4.

<sup>64</sup> I problematize the word "institutional" here because many of the innovations in terms of taxation, jurisdiction, and other forms of local governance were never officially changed in the codes and statutes. Rather we see many of these innovations in practice. See Thomas Nimick, *Local Administration in Ming China: The Changing Roles of Magistrates, Prefects, and Provincial Officials*.

offer many compelling clues to the deep structural changes that were happening at the state, society and whole variety of intervening intermittent levels. While these changes have been examined in detail for the more economically dynamic areas of the Ming, little is known about the same issues outside of the Jiangnan context. One of the key arguments contained in this dissertation is that while the vibrancy of the mid-Ming period for the Jiangnan core was primarily articulated in market, commercial and gentry dynamics, the lack of such comparable forces and agents in the North China Plain region created a vastly different array of possible spaces, resources, and dynamics. However, given that there is very little written on the subject, I too follow Farmer's argument and derive some of my evidence for this study of mid-Ming Linzhang by period by examining what came before and immediately after this time period.

### **1.6 Gazetteer Sources: From the Macro to the Micro**

To write this history of a somewhat peripheral county during the Ming dynasty, I have had to rely heavily on the local records. Such a bottom up approach is not unique in the vast literature on local societies in the late imperial period. Indeed, often the easiest way to “get to know a locality” is to peruse the various editions of the local county gazetteer. While this ease of use can be related to the standardization of the genre's form, content and narrative voice that gradually occurred from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, some gazetteers are decidedly different and offer uniquely particularized windows into local societies of the past.

The 1506 edition of the Linzhang County Gazetteer is one of these unique windows and provides the central starting point for much of this study. On first glance though, this edition is not that unlike other contemporary gazetteers found in the surrounding Central Plains region. All the notable hallmarks of the genre - such as: maps of the county and its administrative seat; an administrative history of the region; prominent topographic features such as mountains and

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ivers; lists of locally produced products; land, population and tax registers; important state and religious structures both past and present; lists and biographies of venerated officials and other local notables; and miscellaneous literary works regarding the locality – are found within the source’s ten fascicles. Yet, while hitting all the required notes within the gazetteer idiom, a closer reading of the source reveals the unique narrative and compilation strategies at play within the text. Employing some of the ‘inter-textual’ reading techniques advanced by Joseph Dennis, this section argues that the 1506 Linzhang County Gazetteer exhibits a distinct strategy in how it presents the County’s history.<sup>65</sup> Through various compilation strategies, historic inclusions and omissions, the gazetteer editor attempts to fix the county’s history into a canonized version of past antiquity.

Before going any further a discussion of both the general development of the gazetteer format in Chinese history and the particular issues surround the production of the 1506 Linzhang County Gazetteer are equally necessary. The English term “gazetteer” is convenient shorthand for the wide genre of Chinese sources referred to as *difang zhi* (地方志), *fang zhi* (方志), or in some cases, simply *zhi* (志). What categorically unites all of these various *zhi* is their focus on a specific spatial and/or administrative unit. Gazetteers were generally produced under the auspices of a governing agency having jurisdiction over a delineated territory. At the highest level was the comprehensive gazetteer of the entire dynastic realm such as *the Unified Gazetteer of the Great Ming* (大明一统志). From here, gazetteer production descended downwards through the empire-wide spatial-administrative hierarchy and saw production at the provincial (省志), prefectural (府志), sub-prefectural (州志), county (縣志) and sometimes canton (鄉志) levels. However, not all gazetteers that were produced were explicitly linked to this

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<sup>65</sup> Here my thinking has been heavily influenced by the inter-textual approach to Ming gazetteers advanced by Joe Dennis in his PhD Dissertation entitled “Writing, Publishing, and Reading Local Histories in Ming China.” Joseph Dennis, “Writing, Publishing, and Reading Local Histories in Ming China,” PhD. Diss. University of Minnesota, 2004.

administrative hierarchy. During the Ming and the Qing dynasties it was not uncommon for Buddhist temples and Daoist monasteries to produce their own gazetteers; moreover, famous mountains, lakes and rivers were sometimes celebrated in their own editions.<sup>66</sup> Given the wide scope of the *zhi* genre, Joseph Dennis has recently suggested that, while possibly more cumbersome, it may be more accurate to translate the Chinese term *zhi* into English as “treatise on a place” rather than “gazetteer.”<sup>67</sup>

Timothy Brook has aptly characterized the gazetteer as a “multi-volume repository of public information about the history, geography, administration, biography and culture of a local area.”<sup>68</sup> Most gazetteers offer an extensive cataloguing of all things local: place names, prominent buildings, local products, and the names of successful local candidates in the imperial exams. They also include lists regarding administrative matters such as tax quotas, corvée labor requirements, local official posts, and tribute requisitions to the imperial household.<sup>69</sup> Over the course of the 15<sup>th</sup> century these categories were slowly regularized through a series of imperial edicts regarding compilation principles (凡例).<sup>70</sup> By the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the gazetteer form was relatively uniform across administrative units. The ideal of gazetteer production was that each administrative unit would produce one roughly every sixty years. In actuality we can see that

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<sup>66</sup> Notable examples include a variety of topographical and institutional gazetteers for prominent landscape features such as mountains (山志), lakes (湖志) and rivers (河志); famous ritual sites such as shrines (祠志), temples (廟志), monasteries (觀志) and tombs (墓志); and a variety devoted to constructed elements such as gardens (園志), pavilions (閣志), dikes (堤志), bridges (橋志) and canals (渠志). Timothy Brook has compiled an extensive list of 860 such non-administrative topographical and institutional gazetteers in his *Geographical Sources of Ming-Qing History*. See Timothy Brook, *Geographical Sources in Ming-Qing History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 2002).

<sup>67</sup> Joseph Dennis, “Writing, Publishing, and Reading Local Histories in Ming China,” pp. v. I agree that *zhi* is more accurately translated as “treaties on place;” however, I retain the word “gazetteer” throughout my discussion because I feel it better translates the common sense of the genre by the Ming period.

<sup>68</sup> Timothy Brook, “Native Identity under Alien Rule: Local Gazetteers of the Yuan Dynasty,” *Pragmatic Literacy East and West, 1200-1330*, ed. Richard Britnell (Suffolk: the Boydell Press, 1997): 235-245, p. 235.

<sup>69</sup> Timothy Brook, “Native Identity under Alien Rule: Local Gazetteers of the Yuan Dynasty,” p. 236.

<sup>70</sup> Ideally, county gazetteers would be recompiled and reedited in 50-70 year cycles. Joseph Dennis, “Writing, Publishing, and Reading Local Histories in Ming China,” p. vi.

this ideal was often never met, but this varied from locality to locality and depended on the vigor of the magistrate and the local gentry in the production process. Joseph Dennis estimates that over 3,000 various gazetteers were produced during the Ming period, with roughly 1,000 surviving to this day. The bulk of these gazetteers were produced at the county and prefectural level.<sup>71</sup>

Gazetteers differ from “histories” (史) in that they are cumulative records that collect information transcending dynastic changes, whereas histories are generally records of single dynasties.<sup>72</sup> This archival quality teamed with the standardization and regularization of the format make gazetteers excellent sources for historians wishing to produce more reliable local histories. Moreover, because of their comparability over time and space, local gazetteers are essential sources to better understand the larger socio-economic, political, cultural and ecological changes in late imperial China.

Yet, despite their almost ubiquitous use by contemporary scholars of late imperial China, very little critical attention has been paid by the English language literature to the historic development and maturation of the gazetteer genre over time. One notable exception is Timothy Brook’s work on the rising popularity of the Gazetteer format during the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368).<sup>73</sup> In his 1997 essay entitled “Native Identity under Alien Rule,” Brook offers an account of the historical dynamics that shaped the less systematized and regularized gazetteers of the Tang and Song dynasties into their more recognizable form found in the Ming and Qing

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<sup>71</sup> Joseph Dennis, “Writing, Publishing, and Reading Local Histories in Ming China,” p. v. This number dramatically increases after the 17<sup>th</sup> Century with approximately 7,000 different surviving Qing and Republican period editions. Timothy Brook calculates that about 800 editions from the Ming and 5,000 from the Qing are from the provincial, prefectural and county level administrative units. Timothy Brook, “Native Identity Under Alien Rule: Local Gazetteers of the Yuan Dynasty,” pp. 235-236.

<sup>72</sup> Joseph Dennis, “Writing, Publishing, and Reading Local Histories in Ming China,” p. v.

<sup>73</sup> Timothy Brook, “Native Identity under Alien Rule: Local Gazetteers of the Yuan Dynasty,” p. 235.

periods. He argues that although China's first gazetteers were produced during the Tang Dynasty and proliferated throughout the Song,<sup>74</sup> that they are best understood as a late imperial genre due to the historical dynamics that saw their popularization. Drawing on Robert Hymes' concept of "localist strategies" in the Southern Song period, Brook describes how gazetteer production during the Yuan can be understood as a product of elite Han alienation by the Mongol ruling elite. Disenfranchised from the national polity, Han scholars often retreated back to their localities and looked to aggrandize their own accomplishments and the beauty of their localities in a public record.<sup>75</sup>

Elite aggrandization of the local area becomes a lasting motif in gazetteer writing and can be seen as part and parcel of the creation and sustenance of the "aristogenic" order characterizing the late imperial period. With the Ming expansion of gentry society, the increasing numbers of official degree holders throughout the realm and a general disillusionment with the perceived cruelty, corruption and indifference of the Ming court, many successful exam candidates actively chose to stay in their hometowns and involve themselves in local affairs and institutions.<sup>76</sup> The

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<sup>74</sup> Estimates about the actual number of gazetteers produced during the Song range from 600 to 1,200. Just over 30 remain extant to this day. Timothy Brook, "Native Identity under Alien Rule: Local Gazetteers of the Yuan Dynasty," pp. 235-236. Peter Bol has also argued that the gazetteer genre developed out of the "map guide" (圖經) model from the Tang and Song periods. Bol's production estimates are more conservative, fixed at around 500, as cited in Joseph Dennis, "Writing, Publishing, and Reading Local Histories in Ming China," p. v.

<sup>75</sup> Timothy Brook, "Native Identity under Alien Rule: Local Gazetteers of the Yuan Dynasty," pp. 237-245.

<sup>76</sup> The literature regarding this retreat to the locality is vast and complex. Regarding the growth of gentry society starting from the Song Dynasty see Robert Hymes' *Statesmen and Gentlemen: The Elite of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi, in Northern and Southern Sung*; and Peter Bol, "The 'Localist Turn' and 'Local Identity' in Later Imperial China" *Late Imperial China* 24.2 (2003): 1-50. Ho Ping-ti's classic, *Ladder of Success in Imperial China: Aspects of Social Mobility, 1368-1911* (New York: Columbia UP, 1968) examines the relationship between population growth during the late imperial period and the resulting bottleneck in upward promotion it created within the Ming and Qing bureaucracies. This work is best expanded on by John R. Watt in his *The District Magistrate in Late Imperial China* (New York: Studies of the East Asian Institute, Columbia University, 1972) where Watt examines in detail the diminishing career prospects of Qing magistrates. In Joanna F. Handlin's, *Action in Late Ming Thought: The Reorientation of Lu K'un and Other Scholar Officials* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983) the author examines the increased emphasis on statecraft thinking, local knowledge and moral action characteristic of late Ming thinkers such as Lu Kun. John Meskill's, *Academies in Ming China: a Historical Essay* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1982), explores how the academic seclusion of Ming thinkers resulted in the growth of local academies and a further localist turn in intellectual orientation.

mid-Ming proliferation of gazetteers can be read in partial relationship to this gentry elites' new concern with elevating the prestige of their home township or county. By the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century if a locality did not have a gazetteer it would be regarded as inconsequential in cultural and political terms.<sup>77</sup> Moreover, the production of a county gazetteer could strengthen the reputation of local sons who participated in the realm-wide bureaucratic and cultural worlds.

As the actual production of gazetteers was expensive and time consuming, the local elite often became involved in funding the compilation and publication process. The magistrate of the locality at the time of gazetteer's compilation was often awarded the title of chief compiler, yet this title was often more of a reflection of his ability to coordinate and raise resources for the gazetteer's production. In the actual research and compilation process, editorial teams were created and were generally composed of members of the local educated elite. Due to their active participation in the compilation process, gentry concerns and their emerging sense of identity form a strong undercurrent in most local gazetteers.<sup>78</sup>

Aside from matters of local pride, the importance and function of gazetteers can also be understood in tandem with the rise of statecraft thinking characteristic of the late imperial period. Focusing on the Ming and Qing periods respectively Joanna Handlin and Benjamin Elman have examined the late imperial literati's explicit shift away from the more philosophical and esoteric concerns expressed by such thinkers as Wang Yangming (王陽明, 1472–1529) towards a more locally orientated and practically minded style of thinking often called 'statecraft' (經世).<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> For a discussion of the development of the gazetteer genre in Song and Yuan times see Fang, Jun, "A Bibliography of Extant Yuan Gazetteers." *Journal of Sung-Yuan Studies*, no. 23 (1993): pp. 123-138.

<sup>78</sup> These themes are further elaborated in Timothy Brook, "Xu Guangqi in His Context: the World of the Shanghai Gentry," *Statecraft and Intellectual Renewal in Late Ming China: the Cross Cultural Synthesis of Xu Guangqi (1562-1633)*, eds. Catherine Jami, Peter Engelfriet, and Gregory Blue (Leiden: Brill, 2001): 72-99.

<sup>79</sup> See Joanna F. Handlin, Joanna, *Action in Late Ming Thought: The Reorientation of Lu K'un and Other Scholar Officials*; and Benjamin Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Los Angeles: University of California Los Angeles, Asia Institute, 2001).

Central to this new intellectual orientation was a renewed focus on local administration and the idea that proper local governance required accurate local information. Yet prior to the 17<sup>th</sup> century crystallization of this new intellectual agenda, district administrators and local gentry were busy collecting such detailed local information for their local gazetteers. Because one of the core aims of any gazetteer project was to collect and edit detailed information about the locality it makes sense to place the proliferation of Ming gazetteer production within the larger trajectory of late imperial statecraft thinking.

The links between local knowledge, local administration and gazetteer production were clearly understood by administrators of the time and perhaps helps to account for the genre's enduring appeal. In his late 17<sup>th</sup> century magistrate handbook entitled *A Complete Book Concerning Happiness and Benevolence*, the then retired county magistrate, Huang Liuhong, wrote:

Mountains, rivers, noted inhabitants, tributes to imperial court, local products, communities, temples, bridges and so on are clearly recorded in the local gazetteer. When the Magistrate makes a thorough study of the local gazetteer he will be able to have a clear picture of its geographical layout, the amounts and rates of taxation, and the vital statistics and degree of prosperity of its population. This information is indispensable in planning his administration.<sup>80</sup>

Even before a magistrate was dispatched to his new locality he was advised to familiarize himself to the post with a thorough and meticulous read-through of the local gazetteer. The convenient fixing of such an abundance of local information to the immediate lines of administrative jurisdiction certainly made gazetteers an invaluable resource in local governance. For magistrates like Huang Liuhong, local gazetteers provided the “clear picture” necessary for able local administration and they also timelessly preserved images of the locality for future

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<sup>80</sup> Huang Liuhong 黃六鴻, *Fu hui quan shu* 福惠全書 [*A Complete Book Concerning Happiness and Benevolence*], translated and edited by Djang Chu as, *A Complete Book Concerning Happiness and Benevolence: A Manual for Local Magistrates in Seventeenth-Century China* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1984), p. 129.

administrators.<sup>81</sup> However there is no real reason to assume that Huang Liuhong necessarily believed this himself. Having once personally edited a county gazetteer he most likely would have been aware of the difficulties of committing an entire county -its history, ecology, social dynamics, economics and politics among other things – to historic record. Yet his silence on the complexities of how the locality was mediated and to a certain degree “fixed” in and by the gazetteer is telling of the constraints in which its production occurred; moreover, it illustrates the peculiar place gazetteers occupied somewhere between state and local interests.

### **1.7 Linzhang Gazetteer Particulars**

If we assume that by the Ming period county gazetteers were essentially “local” products that represented “local” interests, Linzhang County’s 1506 gazetteer is something of an anomaly in the prominent position and level of praise that it offers to the non-local magistrate compiler, Jing Fang. Due to the laws of avoidance Ming magistrates were not allowed to serve in their native province; however they were often placed in positions that were at least regionally familiar to them. For example seven of the eleven recorded magistrates that served in Linzhang before Jing Fang were from the immediate surrounding North China Plain provinces of Shandong, Beizhili and Shanxi.<sup>82</sup> Given this trend, it is not surprising to find that Jing Fang also came from the historic Yellow River flood plain region. Hailing from southwestern Shandong’s Dingtao County, Jing Fang was no exception to larger trends found across appointment of local officials in late imperial China; magistrates could not be from the province in which they were to

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<sup>81</sup> Huang Liuhong, *Fu hui quan shu*, p. 129.

<sup>82</sup> Jing Fang, ed, *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 7, 2b.

serve but every attempt possible was made to match up qualifications and regional familiarity with the particularities of a given post.<sup>83</sup>

Despite this qualification, magistrates were never local and the ability to influence a given magistrate often became a way for local society to exert its own influence and agendas.<sup>84</sup> Despite being the highest level of state power in a given locality, the magistrate's office was also a vector through which a variety of local interests came to contend, compete, and operate. This is evidenced in much Ming dynasty gazetteer production where although the local magistrate is often granted the honorary title of chief compiler, the overall content and narrative trajectory of the gazetteer was largely determined by local interests. Joseph Dennis has gone so far as to suggest that some Ming gazetteers are best understood as reflections of lineage and clan strategies.<sup>85</sup> Using inter-textual reading techniques, Dennis has demonstrated that much of what appears to be discrete information in local gazetteers is in fact quite inter-related. To see these inter-relations, Dennis argues that you not only have to read gazetteers in their entirety, but also read them in tandem with outside genealogical records to understand the various marriage and lineage strategies at play in the locality. While Dennis' inter-textual methodology of reading gazetteers as strategic texts makes major contributions to our understandings of this vital source for writing late imperial Chinese history, his findings may be somewhat limited to gazetteers produced in areas with strong gentry presence. This at least seems to be the case with Linzhang's 1506 Gazetteer, where in the absence of a strong local gentry, Jing Fang is decidedly in control of the production of the gazetteer and its overall textual strategies.

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<sup>83</sup> The most systematic demonstration of this trend is found in John Watt's, *District Magistrate in Late Imperial China*, which focuses more closely on the Qing period and appointment of magistrates. Evidence of this is also found in Pierre-Etienne Will, "The 1744 Annual Audits of Magistrate Activity and their Fate," *Late Imperial China*, 18:2 (Dec. 1998): 1-50.

<sup>84</sup> However, they could be regional, which is an important distinction that I will take up in the biography and career chapter regarding Jing Fang.

<sup>85</sup> See Joseph Dennis, "Writing, Publishing, and Reading Local Histories in Ming China."

Linzhang's 1506 county gazetteer opens with a preface written by neighboring Cizhou Sub-prefecture (磁州) education intendant, Chen Wenhui (陈文淮).<sup>86</sup> While following many of the conventions found in Ming gazetteer prefatory material, Chen's preface sets a somewhat unusual tone that hints at *local failure*, which is less common in the larger body of prefatory material found in Ming gazetteers.<sup>87</sup> Chen's preface opens with standard salutations on the greatness and prosperity that the Ming dynastic founding afforded the realm; it then mentions the "scenic triumph of the local landscape" the "heroism of [the county's] people of talent" and the "achievements of its meritorious officials."<sup>88</sup> However, after these initial celebratory words, the focus of the preface turns to the county's deficiencies found in more recent years. Chen writes how the local historic records before this 1506 gazetteer were "tattered, fragmentary and incomplete."<sup>89</sup> He elaborated that even the county's most precious writings, carvings and rubbings could not be rectified due to their degree of ruin and poor level of education found in the district. It was clear to non-local resident, Chen Wenhui, that Linzhang's historic beauty and record of cultural achievement were not reflected in the state of their local records. Although Linzhang had been a glorious county in the past, Linzhang's locals failed to recognize this fact and had let their county fall into ruin.

Starting at this textual low point allows the gazetteer to tell a new story of renewal, repair and restoration. Most interesting is how this renewal is primarily attributed to the non-local

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<sup>86</sup> Chen Wenhui's preface is dated the first year of the Zhengde Reign period (1506). More discussion of this native of Fujian's Putian (莆田) County will follow in Chapter Two. Chen Wenhui 陳文淮, "Linzhang xian zhi xu" 臨漳縣志序 [Preface to the Linzhang County Gazetteer], *Linzhang xian zhi*, 臨漳縣志 [Gazetteer of Linzhang County], ed. Jing Fang 景芳, 1506, preface, 1a-3b.

<sup>87</sup> Many Ming period gazetteer prefaces spend a great deal of time justifying the reasons for the current volume's production. The reasons offered often cite the need to rectify and standardize confused historic local records. However, it is rare to see a preface that points out these faults in such clear terms as Chen Wenhui's found in Linzhang County's 1506 Gazetteer.

<sup>88</sup> Chen Wenhui, "Linzhang xian zhi xu," 1506, preface, 1a-1b.

<sup>89</sup> Chen Wenhui, "Linzhang xian zhi xu," 1506, preface, 1b-3a.

magistrate and gazetteer compiler, Jing Fang - or Master Jing (景公) as he is often referred to in the text. Chen's preface states that under Jing Fang's careful direction, two local stipend students surnamed Yang (楊) and Niu (牛) were selected.<sup>90</sup> Working days and nights, Jing, Yang and Niu collected materials, corrected mistakes, repaired the local record and through tireless and meticulous work they gradually completed the county's 1506 gazetteer.<sup>91</sup> Chen describes their work as "unrushed, refined and polished"; an excellent example of good governance that will leave a mark as "straight as a carpenter's line" for the influence and benefit of future generations.<sup>92</sup> Chen's preface is so celebratory of Jing Fang's work that by its end one gets the impression that the 1506 gazetteer is not only primarily due to Jing's work alone, but that it is also the county's first gazetteer. In fact as we learn later, the county had produced an earlier edition, but that this edition only existed in a tattered manuscript copy and was full of errors and omissions.

Perhaps even more telling than Chen Wenhui's gazetteer preface is Jing Fang's postface to the same edition. Throughout the text, Jing's tone reveals a certain amount of frustration with the locals and their inability to rectify their own historic record. When he arrives at the post, Jing Fang complains that it was marred by a myriad of problems ("one hundred holes and one thousand scars") and that all of his attempts to investigate and solve these problems failed as the previous local records were unclear and confused.<sup>93</sup> He writes:

When I of little talent took up office [in Linzhang], there were a myriad of problems resulting from accumulated customs found [in the local] administration. All attempts at investigating and planning failed. I asked the village elders for suggestions and consulted the old gazetteer [in an attempt] to bring about some transformation. The former

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<sup>90</sup> Chen Wenhui, "Linzhang xian zhi xu," 1506, preface, 2a-3b.

<sup>91</sup> Chen Wenhui, "Linzhang xian zhi xu," 1506, preface, 2a-2b.

<sup>92</sup> Chen Wenhui, "Linzhang xian zhi xu," 1506, preface, 3b.

<sup>93</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, postface (序), 1a-3a.

gazetteer was [only] in the form of a hand written manuscript.<sup>94</sup> Things that should have been recorded in detail were omitted while things that were simple were made complicated with many miscopied and superfluous characters.<sup>95</sup>

With the help of the local village elders, Jing Fang first attempts to rectify the local record, but had to quickly move to attend to the county's more pressing needs such as repairing dilapidated public structures and rebuilding the county's morale through promoting local education.

Eventually:

the old was removed and replaced with the new and beneficial; the ruined and dilapidated was reconstructed; the collapsed was repaired; the leaky was covered and the faded and dull walls were all repainted. The local people were put at ease and in ritual order talent rose steadily; diligently everyone made ambitious progress through study and cultivation.<sup>96</sup>

After these initial steps were taken, in his “spare time” Jing Fang selected local students<sup>97</sup> from the Confucian school to investigate the available written materials and consult with the local people.<sup>98</sup> Through “making comparisons, drawing out and judging the relevant materials, correcting errors and adding and omitting information” they eventually completed the gazetteer.

## 1.8 Gazetteer Strategies

The preface and the postface to Linzhang County's 1506 gazetteer are useful windows for exploring the overarching themes, editorial choices, and various strategies found throughout the work. If we work with the assumption that contemporaries of the 1506 edition possibly read the gazetteer more thoroughly than modern historians who often only spot-mine local gazetteers for information, then the preface and the postface play the important role of introducing and

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<sup>94</sup> This is the only mention in the entire gazetteer of a previous edition of the Linzhang County gazetteer. No surviving copy exists.

<sup>95</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, postface, 1a-1b.

<sup>96</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, postface, 1b-2a.

<sup>97</sup> Surnamed Gao (高), Zhang (張), and Yuan (袁). See Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, postface, 2a.

<sup>98</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, postface, 2a.

concluding the gazetteer's textual arc. They serve as bookends to the overarching theme/message/strategy that runs throughout the entire gazetteer; namely, that Linzhang County, while heir to a long and fantastic historic and cultural pedigree, had long forgotten its own history due to decades of local neglect. Under the able governance of Jing Fang, order was restored, the county's record was rectified and the former glory of Ye was slowly returning to Linzhang County. The gazetteer is the public record of this historic rescue mission led by the careful and active leadership of Jing Fang.

So what exactly did Jing Fang choose to rescue from Linzhang's distant past? And what do his editorial choices tell us about historic governance in the Linzhang County? To address these questions it is useful to return once again to Jing Fang's 1506 postface. In this postface, Jing Fang offers a fairly candid description of his administrative predecessors stationed in Linzhang County. He states that while some previous magistrates were virtuous and worthy of emulation others were wicked and their records needed to be scrutinized and reevaluated. In doing so, the new gazetteer allowed "the county's aspiring scholars ("Blue-Robed scholars") to rectify their own minds and become familiar with the ancients and to emulate the achievements of the county's historic sages."<sup>99</sup>

Throughout the entire gazetteer one of the county's 'historic sages' is highlighted and celebrated above all the rest, the famous Warring States governor of Ye, Ximen Bao (西門豹). While Ximen Bao's story – of how the upright and virtuous official Ximen Bao eradicated the annual river sacrifices in Ye to the region's local water deity - remains popular in China even to this day, the actual historic records concerning him and his legacy are few and brief. Owing to his profound weight in the construction of Linzhang County's local identity even to this day, I have devoted both Chapters 3 and 4 to explore the origin and development of the body of texts

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<sup>99</sup> It remains unclear if Jing Fang places himself in this pedigree of worthy local sages; however, he does write in final evaluation that his administrative record "is not inferior to his predecessors." Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, postface, 2b-3a.

and meanings associated with Linzhang County's most famous historic official, Ximen Bao. The first of these two chapters starts at the very beginning of the story and explores Ximen Bao's "canonization" into a Confucian "saint." I argue that although the Ximen Bao story has been transferred through the ages as a relatively unproblematic and simplistic tale of upright Confucian governance, the body of early textual evidence surrounding his achievements is by no means as uniform. It was not until Sima Qian's (司馬遷), *Shi ji* (史記), that Ximen Bao was recast as the model of sagely secular governance that we know today. I also contend that important metaphors of water control, upright administration and the maintenance of public order provided by the Ximen Bao tale intimately reflect the larger Han era development of official state Confucianism. I offer this discussion to lay the groundwork for the next chapter, which explores the various social, cultural, and political lives of the Ximen Bao story in Linzhang County through the Ming period.

Chapter 4 then explores the elevation of Ximen Bao into a religious deity during the Six Dynasties period. I argue that the realm-wide prestige that the Ximen Bao Shrine eventually enjoyed reflects the larger status of Ye/Linzhang region following the collapse of the Han Dynasty. I also paint a rough sketch of the types of temple practices associated with his shrine based on the limited historical resources available. Finally I argue that the rise and fall of the Ximen Bao cult over the Six Dynasties period and into the Song era intimately reflects the declining status of Linzhang as the county moved into the late imperial era.

The second half of this chapter moves to examine the local rehabilitation of the Ximen Bao cult in mid-Ming Linzhang. By the end of the Ming period, Linzhang County could boast three distinct ritual structures devoted to Ximen Bao worship. The rehabilitation of Ximen Bao not only allowed Linzhang County to make direct links with the region's past antiquity, but also established a clear and personified model of virtuous local governance, or what I call the "Ximen

Bao example,” that would come to affect generations of subsequent local officials. Central to this rehabilitation was Linzhang’s continued quest for “cultural centrality” in a dramatically changing Ming world.

One of the most active agents in the county’s cultural rehabilitation was the mid-Ming magistrate, Jing Fang. Chapter 5 explores his life biography as revealed primarily through the county’s 1506 gazetteer. I argue that both Jing Fang’s career path and the county gazetteer that he helped to produce sit at the centre of important institutional and administrative changes that took place in the mid-Ming period. By examining Jing Fang’s family history and career trajectory we see a world of new possibilities emerging that was facilitated by an active state intervention to incorporate more northerners into the larger Ming polity. Once in the system, Jing Fang worked in a distant corner of the Ming state, but used whatever resources were available to him to publicize and spread his own reputation. As such, Jing Fang oversaw the production of the 1506 Linzhang county gazetteer and used the public nature of this source to publicize his successes to his administrative superiors. This auto-representation of Jing Fang’s local accomplishments can best be understood as a personal interjection of his own life biography into the quasi-public local gazetteer record; it also displays Jing Fang’s active dialogue with the state that put him into power and functions as his personal biography of achievement.

In sum, I argue that Jing Fang’s life, along with his agenda and target audiences were distinctly different - perhaps even more “northern” - in their statist orientation than what is more commonly explained by southern models of gentry life and gazetteer production. Such a reading of Linzhang County’s 1506 Gazetteer also not only tells us something about the different strategies available to lesser known gazetteer compilers in lesser known counties but also significantly expands our understanding of the different venues in which one could write about himself for posterity in late imperial China.

By way of conclusion, the final chapter discusses the last surviving local record Linzhang County from the Ming period, Zhang Erzhong's *Brief Account of an Unworthy Magistrate of Linzhang*. When examining Zhang's official handbook, one cannot help but to be struck by the sense of impending doom that hovers over his entire text. Unlike Jing Fang who governed Linzhang County in a time of relative stability and peace, Zhang Erzhong entered the county in 1632 and had to deal with the cumulative effects of decades of environmental crisis and the growing threat of local rebellion, Manchu aggression, and dynastic collapse. In this late Ming context, Zhang simply did not have the luxury of promoting the same type of cultural renovation projects that previous mid-Ming magistrates had enjoyed, such as the revitalization the Ximen Bao example in the locality. Starting with this late Ming text, I argue that reading back from Zhang Erzhong's *Brief Account*, allows a better understanding of the uniqueness of the mid-Ming period in Linzhang County itself.

My discussion of Zhang Erzhong is followed by some final thoughts on the importance of examining Ming history from a new regional perspective. Given the county's unique historical experience and its distinct set of local dynamics, I conclude that Linzhang County provides an excellent vantage point from which to rethink the deeply regional character of the larger Ming historical experience and to begin moving historians beyond the "Jiangnan model" of Ming studies.

## Chapter 2: Linzhang Orientations: Reading and Seeing the Locality

### 2.1 Introduction

In his well known guide for local magistrates *A Complete Book Concerning Happiness and Benevolence* (福惠全書), the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century magistrate, Huang Liuhong (黃六鴻), wrote:

When a magistrate is appointed to rule over a department or district, he should acquire some knowledge of its special administrative problems and the social customs of the locality. He should make conscious effort to get such information from those who have served as officials in the department or district and from members of local gentry now living in the capital. Not only will this information help him prepare for his future problems, it will also help him decide what kind of assistants he must recruit.<sup>1</sup>

For Huang, it was the duty of every official to familiarize himself as much as possible with his new position before taking up his post. Huang's concern is understandable given the well-known difficulty of local administration during the late imperial period.<sup>2</sup> Any foreknowledge of a post would certainly help to smooth over an incoming magistrate's transition into a new and often foreign locality.<sup>3</sup> It would also aid the magistrate in identifying important local dynamics, such as "rapacious *yamen* underlings and local bullies" as well as help him to set the administrative tone of his tenure before presenting himself in the locality.<sup>4</sup> Huang's suggestion

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<sup>1</sup> Huang Liuhong 黃六鴻, *Fu hui quan shu* 福惠全書 [*A Complete Book Concerning Happiness and Benevolence*], translated and edited by Djang Chu as, *A Complete Book Concerning Happiness and Benevolence: A Manual for Local Magistrates in Seventeenth-Century China* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1984), p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> For comprehensive discussions of local administration in the late imperial period see Thomas Nimick, *Local Administration in Ming China: The Changing Roles of Magistrates, Prefects, and Provincial Officials* (Minneapolis: Society for Ming Studies, 2008); and John Watt, *The District Magistrate in Late Imperial China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972).

<sup>3</sup> By 1511, a "sort of official guide for magistrates" was issued along with his official seals to every newly appointed magistrate from the Board of Officials. This guide was titled *Shouzhi daoren xuzhi* 授職到任須知 [*What one needs to know when receiving a charge and reaching one's office*] and contained a list of 31 items outlining aspects of local administration. Thomas Nimick estimates that the guide was prepared sometime during the Yongle reign period (1403-1424), and that the 1511 version of the text was first included in the 1587 edition of the *Daming huidian* 大明會典 [*Collected Statutes of the Ming Dynasty*]. See Thomas Nimick's *Shouzhi daoren xuzhi* entry in the Pierre-Etienne Will, *Official Handbooks and Anthologies of Imperial China: A Descriptive and Critical Bibliography*. Work in progress, 2010, entry 144.

<sup>4</sup> Huang Liuhong, *Fu hui quan shu*, p. 77.

rests on the assumption however, that officials who had previously served in the same post or members of the local gentry were resident in the capital. What happened in instances when this was not the case? How was an incoming magistrate to gather information about a locality when the locality that he was travelling to was not fully represented in the capital?

One method of gathering information was to read through a copy of the county's local gazetteer. Indeed, Huang's handbook explains that this essential source of information could help new magistrates familiarize themselves with the locality's "Mountains, rivers, noted inhabitants, tributes to imperial court, local products, communities, temples, bridges" as well as its "geographical layout, the amounts and rates of taxation, and the vital statistic and degree of prosperity of its population."<sup>5</sup> Gazetteers offered a comprehensive, albeit stylized view of the locality and sought to summarize the county's historical, political, cultural, fiscal and environmental dynamics.<sup>6</sup> It was, and still is, the go-to source for anybody looking to find quick and comprehensive information about a given locality in Chinese history.

Gazetteers were generally compiled by the local magistrate and reflected his official duty to collect and collate information about the locality. However, they also reflected the interests of the local gentry who sought to elevate the prestige of their locality through this printed source. The ability to raise the prestige of a given locality was directly related to the two primary ways that gazetteers circulated throughout the empire – through hierarchal compilation practices and through elite literati collections. While the vast majority of Ming and Qing gazetteers were produced at the county level, most sub-prefectural, prefectural, provincial and even dynastic units also produced their own gazetteers from the sixteenth century onwards.<sup>7</sup> Much of the

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<sup>5</sup> Huang Liuhong, *Fu hui quan shu*, p. 129.

<sup>6</sup> Not all gazetteers were as successful in their comprehensive surveys of their respective localities.

<sup>7</sup> Over 8,000 local gazetteers from the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) periods survive to this day. See James M. Hargett, "Song Dynasty Local Gazetteers and Their Place in the History of *Difangzhi* Writing," *Harvard Journal of Asian Studies*, 56.2 (December, 1996): 405-442, p. 405.

information contained in gazetteers produced by more superior administrative units was directly culled from gazetteers created by units under their immediate jurisdiction. This editorial practice facilitated the upward flow of information, with the county gazetteer serving as the basic unit of local knowledge collection; it also meant that all local information could become dynastic knowledge.<sup>8</sup> It was thus in the interests of the local gentry to make sure that their county was adequately represented in all of the various gazetteers produced by their county's upward administrative chain.

The second way that local information circulated throughout the empire by way of gazetteers was through elite collecting practices. While we have no firm statistics regarding exactly how many local gazetteers were circulated throughout the empire at any given time, we do know they were widely traded and collected by elites in both the Ming and Qing periods. Scholars interested in geography, local history, and the increasing trend of what would later become known as “evidential research” (考證) all “considered gazetteers, and not just those of their own locale, worth owning.”<sup>9</sup> Local gazetteers were also collected in elite private libraries. The most famous of these libraries was Ningbo's famous Tianyige Library (天一閣), founded by the Ming Minister of War, Fan Qin (藩欽 - 1506-1585), which at one time is said to have housed over 400 unique Ming period local gazetteers.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Gazetteer information could also move laterally across administrative units and it is not uncommon to find repeated information, especially biographical information, in a variety of gazetteer sources not in the same administrative hierarchy. For example, the biography of one local degree holder named Yang Xin that is contained in his native Gaoyuan County's (Shandong) gazetteer is copied almost verbatim from his biography in the local officials section in the 1506 Linzhang County (Henan) gazetteer. See Song Bi 宋弼, ed., *Gaoyuan xian zhi* 高苑縣志 [*Gazetteer of Gaoyuan County*], 1672, juan 6, 3b; and Jing Fang 景芳, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 臨漳縣志 [*Gazetteer of Linzhang County*], 1506, juan 7, 2b.

<sup>9</sup> Timothy Brook, “The Gazetteer Cartography of Ye Chunji,” *The Chinese State in Ming Society* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), p. 44.

<sup>10</sup> The first Ming gazetteer in the collection is dated, 1395 (*Illustrated Gazetteer of the Capital*, Hongwu Era 洪武京城圖志) and the last, 1642 (*Gazetteer of Wu County* 吳縣志). The Tianyige library at one time held 435 unique gazetteer editions for this 247 year period. Today 270 of these editions are still extant. See Ma Zhaoping 駱兆平,

Given that local gazetteers were often found outside of the localities that produced them (either in their aggregate form or in elite private collections) it is reasonable to assume that many magistrates could have been at least textually familiar with their post before arriving there. Such foreknowledge also helps to explain why some magistrates began their work immediately as though they were already well acquainted with the county and the sum of its local dynamics. The 1506 Linzhang County gazetteer is full of stories of one such magistrate, Jing Fang (景芳), who “from the moment that he stepped out of the cart” (“以下車...”) immediately began his restoration of the decayed county seat to which he was dispatched to.<sup>11</sup>

Jing Fang however, could not have had the benefit of viewing a complete and cohesive local record before arriving in Linzhang County. In his postface (後序) to the county’s 1506 gazetteer, Jing Fang complained that the previous county record was unclear and confused and “all the things that should have been recorded in detail were omitted while simple things were made complicated with many miscopied characters.”<sup>12</sup> To Jing Fang, the shabby state of the

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ed., *Tianyige cang ming dai di fang zhi kao lu* 天一閣藏明代地方志考錄 [*Critical Notes and Record of Ming Dynasty Gazetteers Collected in the Tianyige Library*] (Beijing: Shumu wen xian chubanshe, 1982), p. v. Reprints from the Tianyige Ming Dynasty gazetteer collection can be found in: *Tianyige cang mingdai fan zhi xuan kan* 天一閣藏明代方志選刊 [*Selected Reprints of Ming Dynasty Gazetteers from the Tianyige Collection*] 72 v. (Shanghai: Shanghai shu dian, 1990) and; *Tianyige cang mingdai fangzhi xuan kan xu bian* 天一閣藏明代方志選刊續編 [*Selected Reprints of Ming Dynasty Gazetteers from the Tianyige Collection; Supplementary Selections*] 72 v. (Shanghai: Shanghai shu dian, 1990).

<sup>11</sup> The 1506 Linzhang County Gazetteer uses this phrase, “from the moment that he stepped out of the cart” (以下車) throughout the entire source to describe the speed at which Jing Fang tackled the county’s myriad of problems. It appears that this phrase was in somewhat common usage during the Ming period and was used to describe the speed at which an incoming magistrate sprung into his activity. One late Ming text entitled *Xia che yiji lu* 下車異績錄 [*Extraordinary Accomplishments After Getting out of One’s Cart*] uses this term to describe the swift famine relief efforts of one incoming magistrate named Wang Guocai (王國材) in Zhejiang’s Linhai County (臨海). The literary value and meaning of this phrase is taken up in more analytic detail in Chapter Five. See Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, postface, 1a; and Wang Guocai (王國材), *Xia che yiji lu* 下車異績錄 [*Extraordinary Accomplishments After Getting out of One’s Cart*], 1621. m.s.

<sup>12</sup> There exist no surviving copies of this pre-1506 Linzhang County Gazetteer to help evaluate Jing Fang’s frustrated claims. Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, postface, 1a.

county's record was just another symptom of the “one hundred holes and a thousand scars” (“百孔千瘡”) that plagued Linzhang County.<sup>13</sup>

In this postface, Jing Fang explains that although the county record was a mess, he had to first attend to the more pressing needs of the county – namely, repairing and renovating its dilapidated public structures. Once Linzhang's physical state was restored, Jing Fang then moved to address all the inadequacies in the county's textual record. He enlisted the help of a select group of students registered in the local Confucian school and together they spent countless hours “judging materials, correcting errors, adding information and omitting information.”<sup>14</sup> Through their work the county's 1506 gazetteer was completed. No longer would any incoming magistrate have to rely on a spotty local record to help guide his administration. As such, Jing Fang's gazetteer was crafted to be “helpful and beneficial to all the subsequent gentlemen holding office [in Linzhang].”<sup>15</sup>

Although Jing Fang did not have the benefit of consulting a source as complete as his own 1506 gazetteer before arriving in office, it is safe to assume that Jing Fang's successors did. Much of the 1506 Linzhang gazetteer's information is directly cited in the 1522 Zhangde Prefectural Gazetteer<sup>16</sup> as well as the 1555<sup>17</sup> edition of the Henan Provincial Gazetteer. Moreover, the fact that all three of these gazetteers found their way into the esteemed Tianyige collection offers strong evidence that these sources were traded and collected in elite networks. Through such editorial and collection practices, it is highly possible that by the early 16<sup>th</sup> century

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<sup>13</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, postface, 1a.

<sup>14</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, postface, 1b-2a.

<sup>15</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, postface, 2a.

<sup>16</sup> Cui Xi 崔銑, ed., *Zhangde fu zhi*彰德府志 [*Gazetteer of Zhangde Prefecture*], 1581.

<sup>17</sup> Zou Shouyu 鄒守愚, ed., *Henan tong zhi*河南通志 [*General Gazetteer of Henan Province*], 1555.

any incoming Linzhang County magistrate could have some textual foreknowledge of the locality before arriving in office. We might ask however, what kind of first impressions did the 1506 gazetteer produce for those textually encountering the county for the first time?

Although today's readers tend to spot-mine historical gazetteers for specific information, I follow Joseph Dennis' contention that to best understand these sources we must read them in their entirety and start at their beginnings.<sup>18</sup> This chapter thus offers a close reading of the prefatory material that opens the 1506 Linzhang County gazetteer. The first half of this chapter entitled, "Reading the Locality" explores the single preface that opens the gazetteer. I argue that much of the county and region's personnel dynamics can be sketched through a close reading of the preface and a deeper understanding of its author - an instructor (學政) from the neighbouring Cizhou Sub-prefecture's (磁州) Confucian school named Chen Wenhui (陳文淮). The second half of the chapter, entitled "Seeing the Locality" uses the gazetteer's prefatory map to outline the county's unique historic relationship between its physical environment and its local governance. To explore this relationship, I advance conceptual tools borrowed from the "new cartographic history," which helps to demonstrate exactly how much "mapping" this singular image of the county actually accomplishes.

## 2.2 Reading the Locality: A Marginal Preface

Like most local gazetteers produced during the Ming period, the 1506 Linzhang County gazetteer also starts with a preface (序) written by a man we can assume is of some local, or perhaps even realm-wide reputation.<sup>19</sup> While there exists no full-length study of gazetteer

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<sup>18</sup> Joseph Dennis, "Writing, Publishing, and Reading Local Histories in Ming China," PhD Dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2004.

<sup>19</sup> As with most gazetteer prefaces, the 1506 Linzhang County gazetteer's preface is simply titled, "Preface to the Linzhang County Gazetteer." Chen Wenhui 陳文淮, "Linzhang xian zhi xu" 臨漳縣志序 [Preface to the Linzhang County Gazetteer], *Linzhang xian zhi*, 臨漳縣志 [*Gazetteer of Linzhang County*], ed. Jing Fang 景芳, 1506, preface, 1a.

preface writing in late imperial China, one can make a few generalizations about the genre as it applies to the politics of gazetteer production during the Ming period. Gazetteer prefaces satisfied the dual purposes of orientating the reader to the gazetteer's content while also situating the work within a larger world of literati cultural production.<sup>20</sup> It was in the interests of the gazetteer's chief compiler to secure a man of notable status to pen the preface. If more notables could be included, more prefaces were added, and in some famous literati centres it was not uncommon to have four or even five prefaces.<sup>21</sup> The types of people who were asked to write gazetteer prefaces ranged from local sons who had earned reputations outside of their immediate county to notables within the Ming bureaucracy, such as prefectural, provincial, circuit, or metropolitan officials. Securing preface writers was thus a political act that reflected networks of patronage and place status within the nested geo-political hierarchies of the Ming imperial and literati structure. Although the actual prefatory content could range in historic detail and value, the status of the person who wrote it offers hints to the reputation of a given county outside of its immediate locale. In this regard, the low status of the scholar who wrote the one and only preface to the 1506 Linzhang County gazetteer, a minor official named Chen Wenhui, is quite telling.<sup>22</sup>

Linzhang County Magistrate and chief gazetteer compiler, Jing Fang, is silent on the issue of why Chen Wenhui was chosen to write the introductory preface to the county's 1506

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<sup>20</sup> See Joseph P. McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book: Books and Literati Culture in Late Imperial China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006) especially Chapter 3 "Distribution of Books and Literati Culture," pp. 83-114. Although McDermott does not include the gazetteer genre in his study of late imperial books and book culture, this chapter offers a succinct overview of the social life of books and the social positions of their distributors, readers and collectors; moreover this chapter offers a succinct overview of the textual production, distribution and consumption in the late imperial period.

<sup>21</sup> For example the 1609 gazetteer produced by Zhejiang Province's Qiantang County (today's Hangzhou) included five prefaces. Nie Xintang 聶心湯, ed., *Wanli Qiantang xian zhi* 萬曆錢塘縣志 [*Gazetteer of Qiantang County*], 1609. Thanks to Desmond Cheung for supplying this information.

<sup>22</sup> Chen Wenhui's style name was Chang Bo (常伯). Wang Dajing 汪大經 and Liao Biqi 廖必琦, eds., *Putian xian zhi*, 莆田縣志 [*Gazetteer of Putian County*], 1758, juan 13, 21b.

gazetteer. Perhaps, Jing Fang's choice points to the conclusion that he simply had very few options in selecting a more notable official to provide literary or official credibility to his gazetteer. According to the 1506 source, Chen Wenhui was an Instructor in the Confucian School from the immediately neighbouring Cizhou Sub-prefecture.<sup>23</sup> Chen hailed from Fujian's Putian County (莆田縣) and was recognized as a "Prefectural Nominee *Jinshi*" (鄉貢進士), a somewhat unusual title with important implications that will be taken up shortly. No dates are given for this honour in the source and judging from silences in his native Putian County's gazetteer, Chen Wenhui had much less success in his administrative career than other members of his impressive Chen family lineage.<sup>24</sup>

Other sources also give few clues as to who Chen Wenhui was. The 1522 Zhangde Prefectural Gazetteer offers the most complete information on Chen Wenhui's life, but is still extremely limited. Chen Wenhui is said to have taken up the position of Classics Instructor (書經校教授) in the tenth year of the Hongzhi Reign period (1497). He is listed as holding a *juren* (舉人) provincial graduate degree, but the source does not mention any *jinshi*, or "presented scholar" degree.<sup>25</sup> This omission in the 1522 prefectural source raises some suspicions about Chen Wenhui's "*jinshi*" status.<sup>26</sup> Data taken from Cizhou Sub-prefecture, in which Chen Wenhui served as an instructor in the Confucian school, also raises some suspicions. The 1553

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<sup>23</sup> Jing Fang, ed, *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, preface, 3b. Charles O. Hucker translates *Xue zheng* (學正) as "Instructor in a Confucian School" at the sub-prefectural level. Over the late imperial period this position's official rank rose from 9b in the Yuan, to 9a in the Ming and finally to 8a in the Qing period. Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), p. 252.

<sup>24</sup> Without genealogical records it is impossible to construct the exact patrilineal line that Chen Wenhui descended from; however, a multitude of references to various local and highly accomplished Chen's are found throughout the Putian Gazetteer. It is safe to assume that Chen Wenhui was related to at least a few of these men. Wang Dajing and Liao Biqi, eds., *Putian xian zhi*, 1758.

<sup>25</sup> The "*Jinshi*," or "Presented Scholar" title was given to all those who had successfully passed the highest level examination in the three tiered structure of the late imperial examination system. Over the course of the Ming, the *jinshi* exam was generally held in the imperial capital every three years.

<sup>26</sup> Cui Xi, ed., *Zhangde fu zhi*, 1522, juan 5, 48a.

Cizhou gazetteer not only inserts the wrong character for Chen's surname,<sup>27</sup> which casts some doubt on his real local importance, but also provides no *jinshi* credentials.<sup>28</sup>

Chen Wenhui's home gazetteer from Fujian's Putian County is equally vague on the subject. Putian's 1758 county gazetteer briefly states that along with thirty-six other people, Chen obtained "examination success" in the eighth year of the Hongzhi Reign period (1495) and that he went on to serve as an instructor in Cizhou.<sup>29</sup> There is no explicit record of Chen ever obtaining a *jinshi* degree nor any record of any subsequent positions held after his posting in Cizhou Sub-prefecture. The steles outside of the Imperial Academy in Beijing, which list all Ming and Qing *jinshi* degree holders, also offer no mention of Chen Wenhui.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, any *jinshi* status is immediately put into question by Chen's lowly rank in the Sub-prefecture's Confucian School, which was ranked at 9a, the second to lowest rank in the regularized Ming bureaucracy.<sup>31</sup>

The sum of all these sources supports the conclusion that Chen Wenhui was in fact never a *jinshi* degree holder and that we should resist the temptation to translate 'Prefectural Nominee *Jinshi*' as such. We are thus left with the question: given that the 1506 Linzhang County gazetteer is a mid-Ming source where "*jinshi*" generally means "*jinshi*," how should we understand this curious title? Is it possible that Chen's status is simply a misprint in the source, a case of a careless calligrapher inserting the wrong title? Such banal mistakes can never be

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<sup>27</sup> Chen Wenhui's surname is listed as "Shen" (申) instead of "Chen" (陳). Zhou Wenlong周文龍 and Sun Shao孫紹, eds, *Cizhou zhi* 磁州志 [*Gazetteer of Cizhou Sub-Prefecture*], 1533, juan 2, 9b.

<sup>28</sup> Zhou Wenlong and Sun Shao, eds, *Cizhou zhi*, 1533, juan 2, 9b.

<sup>29</sup> "弘治八年乙卯: 是科中式三十六人," in Wang Dajing and Liao Biqi, eds, *Putian xian zhi*, 1758, juan 13, 21b. In all cases except for when *jinshi* degree status was earned, the source is unclear on exactly what degrees were conferred in all cases except for when *jinshi* degree status was earned.

<sup>30</sup> Zhu Baojiong 朱保炯 and Xie Peilin 谢沛霖, eds, *Ming Qing jinshi timing beilu suoyin* 明清進士題名碑錄索引 [*Index to Ming-Qing stele lists of jinshi degrees*] 3 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980).

<sup>31</sup> For ranking see Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, p. 252.

entirely ruled out when reading Ming sources. Or was there something more deceitful going on? Was Chen Wenhui deliberately lying about his credentials? To answer this question, we need to examine the history of the term “Prefectural Nominee *Jinshi*” itself.

The term “Prefectural Nominee *Jinshi*” can be traced back to its origins in the Tang Dynasty (618-907) when the civil examination system acquired its characteristic multi-tiered structure. To qualify for the highest level metropolitan exam, in the Tang system, the Gaozu (高祖, 618-26) and Taizong (太宗, 627-50) emperors required that one not only had to first pass qualifying exams (*ju* 舉)<sup>32</sup> but also be recommended (*xuan* 選) for the exam. Hence the entire shorthand name for the examination system came to be known thereafter as “*xuanju*” (選舉).<sup>33</sup> During the Tang period there were two examinations at the metropolitan level that served different purposes. The first exam, called the “Clarifying the Classics” or *Mingjing* (明經) examination, tested candidates’ classical learning and their ability to construct policy essays. The second, and more prestigious of the two exams, was the “Presented Scholar” or *jinshi* (進士) exam, which focused more heavily on literary skills and the ability to construct eloquent prose and poetry. In his study of the Tang dynasty literati world, David McMullen argues that although both of these exams were situated at the top metropolitan level and were aimed at testing different aspects of a scholar’s training, due to its low quota of successful candidates, the *jinshi* degree was far more prestigious than the Clarifying the Classics, *mingjing* exam.<sup>34</sup> In this

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<sup>32</sup> This exam was known as the “decree examination” (制科) and in theory was held on an ad hoc basis whenever “the emperor indentified the need for officials in any of a wide range of categories, skills, or moral worth.” David McMullen, *State and Scholars in T’ang China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 25.

<sup>33</sup> Benjamin Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 7-9. For a more detailed discussion of the changes in the examination system as they related to larger intellectual trends and political events in the Tang, see David McMullen, *State and Scholars in T’ang China*, pp. 29-43.

<sup>34</sup> David McMullen estimates that only 2 - 3 percent of the 1000 candidates who sat the *jinshi* exam were successful each year. Thus those who successfully satisfied the exam’s demands were instantly catapulted into the empire’s elite. David McMullen, *State and Scholars in T’ang China*, p. 24.

context, being recommended for the more prestigious *jinshi* degree exam was a sign of status in itself and one's recommendation would often be included in his list of credentials. Thus all of the qualified prefectural candidates (鄉貢) who had been recommended to take the *jinshi* exam were known as "Prefectural Nominee *Jinshi*" (鄉貢進士).<sup>35</sup> If one was successful in the *jinshi* examinations he would thereafter be simply known as a "Presented Scholar" or *jinshi* (進士); however, if he failed the exam he would be still allowed to retain his title "Prefectural Nominee *Jinshi*." The "Prefectural Nominee *Jinshi*" title thus singled out a candidate who had been recommended for the prestigious *jinshi* examination, which was an honour in itself, but who had not been successful in passing it.<sup>36</sup>

From the Song period onwards, the "Prefectural Nominee *Jinshi*" title gradually fell out of use and by the Ming period it is rarely seen in the primary source material. Nominations still played an important role in the examination system, but in order to qualify for the metropolitan exam one first had to pass the fiercely competitive provincial exam. By the Ming period, official records generally state the highest degree level one had obtained, not the exams one sat for but failed. This is not to say that the term had completely fallen out of use by the Ming period. In fact, a stele was erected in the fifth year of the Chenghua reign (1469) period in Jiangsu's Haizhou Prefecture (海州) that explicitly lists all of the prefecture's local *juren* degree

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<sup>35</sup> Charles Hucker offers no definition for "Xianggong *jinshi*." My somewhat cumbersome translation of the terms uses Hucker's translation of 鄉貢 as "Prefectural Nominee." Hucker states that this title was only used in the Tang and was an "unofficial reference to a man nominated by a Prefect...to participate in the regular civil service recruitment examinations." Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, p. 232.

<sup>36</sup> Very little has been written about "prefectural nominee *jinshi*." In fact I have only been able to locate one very brief discussion of the topic in Gao Fushun 高福順, "Liao chao 'Jinshi' chengwei kaobian" 辽朝'进士'称谓考辨 [Analysis of the Title 'Jinshi' During the Liao Dynasty], *Shixue jikan* 史學集刊 [Collected Historiography Papers] no.1 (2009), n.p.

holders as “Prefectural Nominee *Jinshi*.”<sup>37</sup> It does suggest however, that when the term was used in the Ming it was done so with deliberate effect - in the Haizhou stele’s case, most likely to create an air of classical authority.

To return to the original question then, was Chen Wenhui lying about his credentials; the answer is technically, no. Calling himself a “Prefectural Nominee *Jinshi*” was strictly speaking not incorrect. Historic sources clearly state that Chen Wenhui held a *juren* degree and given the fiercely competitive nature of the examination system at the time, he most likely sat the *jinshi* exam and failed it, making him the quintessential “Prefectural nominee *Jinshi*” in the Tang sense of the term.

Chen’s usage of the word still begs the question however, why list a credential that hints at failure; here, I can only speculate. Given the anachronism of the term by the mid-Ming period, I suspect that less educated people in the region might have simply glossed over the title, thought Chen was a *jinshi* degree holder and continued reading. After all, by early 16<sup>th</sup> century most mid-Ming gazetteer prefaces were penned by men with *jinshi* degree credentials as the bare minimum. More educated audiences however, would understand the classical allusion and be invited to delight in Chen’s historical erudition.

We should not be surprised by Chen Wenhui’s lack of *jinshi* status while holding office in this region, however. Judging by the lists of officials stationed in such peripheral counties in Northern Henan, it was actually quite rare to have *jinshi* status officials serving in office. Of the twelve Ming era Linzhang County magistrates listed in the 1506 gazetteer, only two are recorded as *jinshi* degree holders. Of the nine non-*jinshi* degree holding magistrates who held office in this region, seven were *juren* degree holders, two held *jiansheng* (Imperial Academy Students) status, and one, who served in the immediate years following the founding of the Ming dynasty,

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<sup>37</sup>A brief description of this stele can be found can be found at the Lianyungang 連云港 City Government website. Anon., “Haizhou Xianggong *Jinshi* timing pai” 海州鄉貢進士題名碑 [Stele Inscription of Haizhou’s Prefectural Nominee *Jinshi*], 22 July 2007 <http://www.lygwh.gov.cn/show.asp?id=1667> (Accessed 28 August 2009)

has no status listed at all. A similar pattern is repeated throughout many of the other administrative units found throughout Zhangde Prefecture, which Linzhang County was a part of. Of Cizhou's forty-two subprefectural magistrates (知州 - rank 5b) recorded from the founding of the Ming up until 1553, only six held the highest ranking *jinshi* degree while the rest were comprised of twenty-two *juren* degree holders, ten *jiansheng* and four whose statuses are indeterminate.<sup>38</sup> It was only at the prefect level (知府 – rank 4a) in this region, where one begins to see the majority of officials holding office also having *jinshi* degree status.<sup>39</sup>

This pattern suggests a different regional trend than the argument outlined in Benjamin Elman's *Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* regarding the changing relations between degree status and office holding starting in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Drawing on evidence from Shandong province, Elman argues that the number of *juren* degree holders who went on to obtain *jinshi* status steadily increased beginning in the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century. While this percentage was initially high in the early Ming - 27% in 1369 and 36% in 1384 - it dropped to a record low in 1417 (0.5%) and slowly recovered from the mid-Ming period onwards. In 1450, 10% of Shandong's provincial graduates obtained the coveted *jinshi* degree and in the following years we see a steady increase in this percentage: 1474 (20%), 1501 (29%), 1549 (43%), and 1642 (46%).<sup>40</sup> While Elman never explicitly states that he takes these provincial statistics to be representative of the larger realm wide trend, the way that he presents this provincial data seems

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<sup>38</sup> Zhou Wenlong and Sun Shao, eds, *Cizhou zhi*, 1533, juan 2, 3a-5b.

<sup>39</sup> Of the 27 prefects recorded from the start of the Ming until 1522, 15 were *jinshi* degree holders, 2 were *Juren* and the remaining 10 are obscure. These obscure numbers all account for scholars found between the Hongwu (1368-1398) and Hongxi Regin (1425) periods. By the Xuande period (1426-1435) county gazetteer production was increasingly regularized and the tumultuous nature of the early Ming brought to an end. Thus such personnel statistics from the early 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards become more reliable and detailed. Cui Xi, ed., *Zhangde fu zhi*, 1522, juan 5, 13a-19b.

<sup>40</sup> Information drawn from the *Huang ming Shan dong li ke xian shi lu* 皇明山東歷科鄉試錄 [Record of Shandong Provincial Examinations during the Ming Dynasty] (ca. 1642 reprint) in Benjamin Elman, *Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*, p. 666, table 3.7.

to suggest such a conclusion; as the Ming dynasty proceeded, more and more *juren* degree holders were successful in obtaining *jinshi* status.<sup>41</sup>

The reasons for this increase are complex but can be best understood in relation to the changing politics of degree status and office holding during the Ming. One general trend that Elman observes is the increasing domination of *jinshi* degree holders in all metropolitan, provincial, and local offices of significance.<sup>42</sup> While the competition for a *juren* degree was intensely fierce (due to the sheer numbers who qualified for the exam) success in the provincial exam did not guarantee a commensurately high position in official office. As Elman states, "... by the late Ming it became difficult for candidates who only got as far as the provincial chu-jen [*juren*] degree to gain reputable government positions."<sup>43</sup> Thus it was in the interests of successful *juren* candidates to seek accomplishment at the higher *jinshi* degree level. Due to new regulations that accompanied the founding of the Ming, unsuccessful *jinshi* candidates would not lose their *juren* status and could continue to re-take the *jinshi* exam until they were successful.<sup>44</sup> Drawing on an impressive array of statistical data, Elman demonstrates that from the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards, as the rate of *juren* degree holders obtaining *jinshi* status rose, so too

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<sup>41</sup>This increase should not suggest a combined overall growth in the number of successful candidates in all three levels of exams (local, provincial, metropolitan). What it does suggest however is that the most acute level of examination competition was at the provincial, not the metropolitan level. According to one late Ming observer, *Juren* competition had grown so fierce in Nanjing that, "gold went to the chu-jen [*juren*] and [only] silver to the chin-shih [*jinshi*]" (金舉人，銀進士). Gu Gongxie 顧公燮, *Xiao xia xian ji zhai chao* 消夏閑記摘抄 (Selected Notes Jotted in Leisure to Pass the Summer), ca. 1797 edition, in *Yong fen lou mi ji* 涌芬樓秘記 (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1917), er ji, B.2a. As cited in Benjamin Elman, *Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*, p. 143.

<sup>42</sup> Benjamin Elman, *Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*, p.149.

<sup>43</sup> Benjamin Elman, *Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*, p.146.

<sup>44</sup> During the Tang, Song and Yuan dynasties if one failed the *jinshi* exam the unsuccessful candidate would lose all examination status. If he wanted to re-take the *jinshi* exam he would have to start the entire examination process again at the lowest regional level. See John Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 30-34.

did their domination of all levels of offices ranked within the eighteen grade Ming bureaucratic system (ranks 9b to 1a).

Given all of these trends towards *jinshi* domination, the general lack of *jinshi* officials in the highest levels of local office in Linzhang County and Cizhou Sub-Prefecture is an interesting anomaly and is perhaps best understood as a product of the region's peripheral status. While it would be rare to see a *juren* degree holder acting as county magistrate in such important areas of the empire as Hangzhou or Yangzhou, the opposite is true for places like Linzhang and Cizhou where the majority of office holders were ranked at the *juren* level and often even lower. This is not to suggest that Elman's assessment of the general growth trend in *jinshi* office domination is incorrect, but rather, to draw attention to the existence of some compelling exceptions where the very marginality of a place was expressed in local patterns of degree holding and office placement. From an administrative perspective, places like Linzhang County and Cizhou Sub-prefecture were relatively unimportant and did not warrant the placement of high-ranking *jinshi* officials.<sup>45</sup> In fact, the 14<sup>th</sup> century treatise on Ming local administration, the *Daming Guanzhi* (大明官制), which also served as the de facto guide to county rankings during the Ming period, described Linzhang County as isolated from prominent travel routes<sup>46</sup> and inhabited by "simple

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<sup>45</sup>The marginality of these places is further expressed in the little attention that Linzhang and Cizhou received in the more noted geographic works of the time. See Lu Yingyang 陸應陽, ed., *Guangyu ji* 廣輿記 [Record of the Vast Empire], 1600. Modern reprint (Taipei: Xuehai chubanshe, 1969), 485-493; and, Li Xian 李賢, et al. ed., *Da ming yitongzhi* 大明一統志 [Union Gazetteer of the Great Ming], 1461, juan 28.

<sup>46</sup>While the neighbouring Cizhou Subprefecture had its own Postal Relay station (鄴城馬驛), Linzhang County could not boast such a similar distinction. Linzhang's closest postal relay station was located in the neighbouring Anyang County, which further contributed to the county's peripheral status. See Yang Zhengtai 楊正泰, *Mingdai yizhan kao* 明代驛站考 [Study of Postal Relay Stations during the Ming Dynasty] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2006), p. 38.

people” (僻饒民淳).<sup>47</sup> In such a place, lower ranking *juren* or even *jiansheng* officials would suffice as they had for much of the region’s history.

Not only did places like Linzhang and Cizhou have trouble attracting high status officials they also had very little success in producing their own. From the founding of the Ming until 1506 when the county gazetteer was published, Linzhang only produced a total of three *jinshi* scholars. The first of these men, Niu Shun (牛順) received his *jinshi* degree in the fifth year of the Xuande reign period (1430) and went on to hold subsequent posts as a secretary in the Guangdong Province department in the Ministry of Personnel before being promoted to a post in the Ministry of Works.<sup>48</sup> Next in line was Cheng Pu (程普) who earned his degree in the eighth year of the Chenghua reign period (1472), but died of sickness before taking office.<sup>49</sup> The last of these three locals was Zhang Jing (張璟) who earned his *jinshi* degree in the eleventh year of the Chenghua reign period (1475) and went on to serve as magistrate of Lucheng County (潞城) in Jiangsu Province before being promoted to Assistant in the Court of the Imperial Stud (太僕寺寺丞); according to local sources, Zhang died of sickness but was still admired after his death by locals.<sup>50</sup> All in all, none of these men had the type of distinguished careers that characterized the career advancement paths of more prominent *jinshi* degree holders throughout the empire.<sup>51</sup> In

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<sup>47</sup> See, the *Daming guazhi* 大明官制 [*Bureaucratic System of the Great Ming*], juan 2, 65b. in, *Huang-Ming zhishu* 皇明制書 [*Systems of the August Ming*], 1579 edition. Thanks to Professor Thomas Nimick for alerting me to this crucial source.

<sup>48</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 8, 7a. Niu Shun graduated 41st out of 62 candidates in the third class (第三甲); Zhu Baojiong and Xie Peilin, eds., *Ming Qing jinshi timing beilu suoyin*, pp. 2443.

<sup>49</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 8, 7a. Cheng Pu graduated 62<sup>nd</sup> out of 170 in the third class; Zhu Baojiong and Xie Peilin, eds., *Ming Qing jinshi timing beilu suoyin*, p. 2467.

<sup>50</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 8, 7b. Zhang Jing graduated 130<sup>th</sup> out of 202 candidates in the third class; Zhu Baojiong and Xie Peilin, eds., *Ming Qing jinshi timing beilu suoyin*, p. 2470.

<sup>51</sup> One need only look at the countless records of more illustrious officials who served in more vibrant and often more important regions of the empire to prove this point.

fact, the section of the 1506 gazetteer that lists all of Linzhang's local degree holders who went on to have distinguished careers as “meritorious officials” during the Ming (國朝功臣) includes only one person, a local *juren* degree holder by the name of Shi Pu (石璞).<sup>52</sup>

Although Shi Pu only held *juren* degree status, his career was a phenomenal success;<sup>53</sup> a type of success that simply was not possible for subsequent generations of *juren* degree holders starting from the fifteenth century onwards. Shi Pu first earned his *juren* degree in the ninth year of the Yongle reign period (1411) and was posted to the Shaanxi Circuit as an Investigating Censor.<sup>54</sup> Thereafter, Shi Pu received nine official reappointments over the duration of his career and eventually became a Grand Minister in the Ministry of Works (rank 2a), followed by the same position in the Ministry of War (rank 2a), and lastly the Chief Censor on the Left in the Censorate (rank 2a).<sup>55</sup> During his last three postings, Shi Pu also held the concurrent post of Grand Guardian to the Heir Apparent (rank 1a), generally regarded as one of the top three

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<sup>52</sup> Shi Pu's style name was Zhong Yu (仲玉).

<sup>53</sup> Shi Pu is the only Linzhang County native to be honoured with a complete biography in the *Official History of the Ming* (明史). See Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉 et al., eds., *Ming shi* 明史 [*Official History of the Ming*]. 1974 Reprint, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), juan 160, p. 4360.

<sup>54</sup> Shi Pu's official title was as follows: *Shaanxi dao jian cha yu shi* 陝西道監察御史, rank 7a. Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, pp. 145-6.

<sup>55</sup> One can easily get lost in translating Shi Pu's dazzling list of promotions. The official titles are as follows: 1. Investigating Censor in the Shaanxi Circuit (陝西監察御史) – rank 7a; 2. Surveillance Vice Commissioner in the Jiangxi Surveillance Commission (江西按察司副使) – rank 4a; 3. Surveillance Commissioner in the Jiangxi Surveillance Commission (江西按察司按使) – rank 3a; 4. Commissioner on the Right in the Shanxi Provincial Administration Commission (山西布政司右布政) – rank 2b; 5. Commissioner on the Left in the Shanxi Provincial Administration Commission (山西布政司左布政) – rank 2b, with ‘left’ designation taking precedence over ‘right’; 6. Minister of Works (工部尚書) – rank 2a; 7. Minister of Works and Member of the Court of Judicial Review (工部尚書兼大理司郎) – rank 2a; 8. Grand Guardian to the Heir Apparent and Minister of Works (太子太保兼工部尚書) – rank 1a; 9. Grand Guardian to the Heir Apparent and Minister of War (太子太保兼兵部尚書) rank 1a; 10. Grand Guardian to the Heir Apparent and Censor and Chief on the Left in the Censorate (太子太保兼都察院左都御史) – rank 1a. All translations from Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*. See Shi Pu's biography in the Linzhang County gazetteer. Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 8, 6a-7a.

ceremonial positions in the empire.<sup>56</sup> Shi Pu's ability to climb so high up the bureaucratic ladder without a *jinshi* degree is certainly a reflection of the early Ming period when such advancements were still possible. It would be almost unthinkable for a man without a *jinshi* degree to hold such posts by even the late 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Other than this one notable, and indeed exceptional *juren* degree holder, Linzhang County in 1506 possessed no real notable local degree holders, let alone a living one who could pen a gazetteer preface. Similarly, the Cizhou Subprefectural gazetteer only lists a total of two locals who had earned *jinshi* degrees from the time of the founding of the Ming to 1506, when the Linzhang gazetteer was produced.<sup>57</sup> The first of these men, Luo Qi (羅綺), graduated in the fifth year of the Xuande reign period (1430) and had a notable career as a Vice Minister on the Left in the Ministry of Punishment before moving to the Censorate where he served as Censor and Vice Commander in Chief on the Left in Sichuan's Songpan County (松潘).<sup>58</sup> The Second man, Ji Jie (紀傑), earned his *jinshi* degree in Chenghua 11 (1475) and went on to work as a Chief Investigating Censor in the Guangdong Circuit.<sup>59</sup> While it is almost certain that Luo Qi had passed away long before 1506, it is hard to say with any certainty if Ji Jie was still alive when the Linzhang County gazetteer was compiled.

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<sup>56</sup> The other two positions were the Grand Preceptor (太師) and the Grand Mentor (太傅). Together these three officials were unofficially known as the "Three Preceptors" (三師). Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, p. 401.

<sup>57</sup> Five other local *jinshi* degree holders are listed in the 1553 source, but the date when they earned their *jinshi* degrees falls after 1506. The five men are as follows: Jian Qin (蔞覃) who earned his *jinshi* in Zhengde 9 (1514) and worked as a Vice Surveillance Commissioner in the Shaanxi Censorate; Wang Pan (王泮) a *jinshi* of Zhengde 12 (1517) who later worked in the Censorate; Zu Ju (組瑠) graduated in Zhengde 16 (1521) to become a Vice Director in the Ministry of Revenue; Ji Chun (紀純) who graduated in Jiajing 2 (1523) and worked as a Vice Commissioner in the Shaanxi Military Defense Circuit; and lastly, Hu Jing (胡經), a *jinshi* of Jiajing 17 (1538) and eventual Secretary in the Ministry of Revenue. Zhou Wenlong and Sun Shao, eds, *Cizhou zhi*, 1533, juan 2, 20b-21a.

<sup>58</sup> Zhou Wenlong and Sun Shao, eds, *Cizhou zhi*, 1533, juan 2, 19a.

<sup>59</sup> Zhou Wenlong and Sun Shao, eds, *Cizhou zhi*, 1533, juan 2 19b.

It should be clear from the above evidence that when the editorial committee of Linzhang County's 1506 gazetteer sought a person of status to pen their preface they had very few regional options. High-ranking officials were simply not posted to this area even in the context of an empire wide trend that saw more and more *jinshi* degree holders taking up local office. Moreover, Linzhang and its immediate surrounding territory had a dismal record of producing their own *jinshi* degree holders. Of those local scholars who had previously passed the exam, such as Niu Shun, Cheng Pu, Zhang Jing and Ji Jie, and even the somewhat abnormal case of the lower ranked yet more accomplished Shi Pu, it is highly likely, almost certain, that these men had passed away well before the 1506 preface was penned.

This lack of distinguished officials in office and surviving local *jinshi* degree holders must have presented a problem to Jing Fang and his editorial committee. As the gazetteer format grew more standardized over the course of the Ming period, one can assume that readers' expectations also followed suit.<sup>60</sup> Gazetteers should start with the words of accomplished men and their writings were to confer prestige upon the locality. Therefore, both the status of the place producing the gazetteer and the reputation of the work's chief compiler - generally the local magistrate - was directly at stake when selecting preface writers. As the chief compiler of the 1506 Linzhang gazetteer, magistrate Jing Fang, was only a *juren* degree holder himself he was likely somewhat removed from the empire wide network of *jinshi* officials created through a shared experience in the triennial metropolitan exams.<sup>61</sup> The sum of all of these deficiencies - including, the lack of *jinshi* degree holders serving in the area, a noticeable dearth of living local

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<sup>60</sup> Timothy Brook states that the initial gazetteer genre began in the Tang and "gained a measure of standardization" when the Yuan state issued its gazetteer compilation guidelines in 1296. Timothy Brook, "The Gazetteer Cartography of Ye Chunji," p. 43.

<sup>61</sup> Although focusing explicitly on the Qing period, Iona Man-Cheong's study of the 1761 *jinshi* graduation class offers excellent insights into how elite networks were forged through common experience in the triennial examination system. See Iona Man-Cheong, *The Class of 1761: Examinations, State, and Elites in Eighteenth-Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

scholars, and Jing Fang's own lowly position within the bureaucracy – all helps to make sense of why a lowly instructor from the neighbouring sub-prefecture's Confucian school was chosen to write the 1506 preface. Increasing expectations of what a gazetteer preface should look like also helps to make further sense of why Chen Wenhui's "Prefectural Nominee *Jinshi*' status was possibly recorded as such.

Status considerations aside, Chen wrote a fairly apt preface that hit all of the correct notes that one would expect from a Ming gazetteer. The preface opens with the typical nod to the greatness of the dynasty and then explicitly states why this particular edition of the gazetteer was commissioned. As Chen writes, the founding of the Ming brought prosperity and bounty to the realm. Accordingly, a gazetteer record should function as a testament to this new prosperity and "not only pay respect to the flourishing of the age and the grandness of its unity, but also [honour] its cultured men of talent."<sup>62</sup> Chen writes that although Linzhang could claim a long pedigree of talented local officials this legacy had not been preserved in the county's records, which were "substandard, fragmentary and tattered."<sup>63</sup> This situation was only remedied with the arrival of one particularly talented local official, Jing Fang.

When Jing Fang first arrived in the county in 1497, he found it in a state of severe disrepair and neglect and immediately jumped into action to repair its physical presence. Magistrate Jing also found the county's records to be incomplete, fragmentary and flawed, but was worried that he would not have time to attend to this issue.<sup>64</sup> Jing Fang was a particularly active magistrate however, and in his spare time recruited two students from the county school named Yang Jing (楊璟) and Niu Shun (牛舜). Together they worked tirelessly day and night to

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<sup>62</sup>“非惟仰見盛世大一統之隆而文人才士,” in Chen Wenhui, “Linzhang xian zhi xu,” 1506, preface, 1a.

<sup>63</sup>“顧舊誌未能極行且殘缺破碎,” in Chen Wenhui, “Linzhang xian zhi xu,” 1506, preface, 1b-2a.

<sup>64</sup> Jing Fang's overhaul of the county is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

correct the disorderly and chaotic local record. Their initial research found that the county did indeed have a former gazetteer, but that it was physically unfit due to careless carving. Overall, they condemned the work for being “unrefined...and forfeiting all reality in favor of flashy and showy embellishments.”<sup>65</sup> The editorial committee then spent several exhaustive months working on the project and eventually obtained all the necessary documents needed to put the county’s record back into order. When it came to finalizing this record, “for every stroke of the brush and for every cut of the block there was an active discussion to find the correct compromise; all of the gentlemen involved were diligent, attentive and meticulous [in their work].”<sup>66</sup> Finally, when all their hard work was complete, the 1506 Gazetteer was committed to woodblocks. The county’s record was rectified so that future officials would be able to study the examples of previous worthies and benevolently carry out their own administration.<sup>67</sup>

For those familiar with gazetteer prefaces, much of the above will sound quite unexceptional. Indeed, most gazetteers start with a nod to the glory of the dynasty, proceed by describing the hard work of the editorial committee, and conclude with some remarks on the importance of the local gazetteer and the need for future locals to study this record diligently. In this sense, Chen Wenhui wrote a perfectly adequate, perhaps even cliché, preface. Yet just as Chen Wenhui played a subtle trick in (mis) representing his official degree status, I suggest that there is much more than meets the eyes to this seemingly innocuous preface.

We have already learned that during the Ming period, Linzhang did not have an impressive record of producing or even hosting distinguished officials. Moreover, by the time

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<sup>65</sup>“考訂弗精狀物也敘事也或雕鏤篆刻而傷其本或浮華緣飾而喪其真,” in Chen Wenhui, “Linzhang xian zhi xu,” 1506, preface, 2a.

<sup>66</sup>“大抵筆則筆削則削折衷以至當之論皆君用心之密耳,” in Chen Wenhui, “Linzhang xian zhi xu,” 1506, preface, 2b.

<sup>67</sup> These records of former sage officials were said to be like the “words of immortals left for posterity.” Chen Wenhui, “Linzhang xian zhi xu,” 1506, preface, 3b.

the 1506 gazetteer was produced, Linzhang was certainly not considered central to the literati landscape of the times. Yet despite this low literati status, Chen Wenhui consistently refers to the county's sagely pedigree along with its current generation of enlightened leadership. In his preface, Chen effectively reduces the county's personnel history to the accomplished records of two officials, Ximen Bao and Jing Fang. The first of these men was the most noted official to ever serve in Linzhang County, the famous Warring States official Ximen Bao, who ruled the area almost 2,000 years earlier when Linzhang was historically known as Ye.<sup>68</sup> The second man worthy of emulating was in fact Jing Fang, the then county magistrate and chief compiler of the 1506 gazetteer. Here, Chen Wenhui plays a trick with time and establishes much of the narrative arc that forms the gazetteer's narrative backbone. In his preface he writes that "The people of Ye [鄴] today are blessed with benevolent and thoughtful rulers."<sup>69</sup> In this phraseology, the people of Linzhang in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century were still "the people of Ye." Just as the people of Ye enjoyed Ximen Bao's benevolent rule in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, so too did they enjoy Jing Fang's benevolent rule in the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> century.

While most gazetteer readers, local or otherwise, would immediately recognize Ximen Bao and know something of his important historic legacy, it is highly unlikely that many would be familiar with Jing Fang. Jing's native Dingtao County was not considered a prominent literati centre nor did he descend from any noted gentry family to speak of. He never obtained a *jinshi* degree and his first posting to little known Linzhang County must have done little to raise his profile outside of his immediate hometown. Jing Fang was emblematic of the nameless substratum of magistrates that staffed the county offices in the Ming; he had very little chance of significant promotion upwards in the ranks and most of his work would have gone largely

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<sup>68</sup> Ximen Bao and what I label "the Ximen Bao Example" will be taken up in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4.

<sup>69</sup> Chen Wenhui, "Linzhang xian zhi xu," 1506, preface, 1b-3a.

unnoticed by his superiors insofar as he accomplished all the administrative regularities of his job. As both Thomas Nimick and Pierre-Etienne Will have noted, rank and file magistrates like Jing Fang often had very little incentive to go beyond the duties that they was immediately evaluated on – collecting taxes and insuring military security in the county.<sup>70</sup> Jing Fang however, was a particularly active magistrate.<sup>71</sup> So active in fact, that his administration might be favorably compared to Ximen Bao's. This is the theme that Chen effectively establishes in his preface.

When Chen writes that “The people of Ye today are blessed with benevolent and thoughtful rulers,” not only does Chen employ Linzhang's style name “Ye” for literary effect and classical authority he also pulls Jing Fang's lesser known record into a longer historic line with one of the Central Kingdom's most celebrated sage officials, Ximen Bao. While I can only speculate on this point, this historic allusion was not likely lost on his audience both in and outside of Linzhang County. Moreover, Chen's favorable, if not obsequious attitude towards Magistrate Jing may also help to account for why he was chosen in the first place to pen the gazetteer's preface despite his low literati credentials.

The sum of these allusions and strategies speaks to the various strategies that Chen employed to pull the marginal Linzhang County back into the Ming *cultural* mainstream. Chen's agile use of the Tang literary term “Prefectural Nominee *Jinshi*” obscured his inadequate credentials while at the same time providing an air of classical authority to his somewhat average achievements.<sup>72</sup> The fact that Chen's patron, Jing Fang worked in one of the empire's

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<sup>70</sup> On this point see Pierre-Etienne Will, “The 1744 Annual Audits of Magistrate Activity and their Fate,” *Late Imperial China*, 18:2 (Dec. 1998): 1-50; and Thomas Nimick, *Local Administration in Ming China: The Changing Roles of Magistrates, Prefects, and Provincial Officials* (Minneapolis: Society for Ming Studies, 2008).

<sup>71</sup> Jing Fang's activity will be taken up in more detail in Chapter 5.

<sup>72</sup> “Inadequate” and “average” are slight misnomers, as Chen's achievements would have been regarded as quite exceptional by many of the time. I simply use these terms to highlight Chen's mid-level achievements in the overall Ming bureaucratic structure.

administrative blind spots and would likely never receive any recognition for his hard work was also addressed through his favorable allusion to the ancient venerated sage official, Ximen Bao. In both cases, Chen Wenhui's dexterous use of history speaks to the very core of Linzhang's increasing marginality during the Ming period and demonstrates the power of history and culture in the construction of Linzhang's local identity and its realm wide reputation.

### 2.3 Seeing the Locality: The 1506 Gazetteer's Prefatory Map

Although the county gazetteer is principally regarded as a literary medium, most gazetteers by the mid-Ming period followed their prefatory remarks with a few images of the county. Due to wide variances in substance and style seen from gazetteer to gazetteer, it is hard to categorize these images as a distinct and defined genre. For the sake of clarity however, I will label the two images found in the front of 1506 gazetteer as "maps." Here I am not concerned with making fine distinctions between "images" and "maps" and the semiotic work that each of these genres does. I simply use the term "map" to highlight the ways in which these images *spatially* represent relations within the county.

As much of my analysis of these two maps is grounded in the "new cartographic history," I start my discussion with a brief description of this field and its methodological approach. Inspired by the semiotician Alfred Korzybski's famous proclamation that "the map is not the territory,"<sup>73</sup> a whole new generation of historical cartographers led by J.B. Harley, John Pickles, Matthew Edney, and Denis Wood focused their attention on the social, cultural, political and semiotic contexts that framed all maps and map production.<sup>74</sup> Such an approach amounted to an

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<sup>73</sup> Alfred Korzybski, *Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics*. 3rd edn. (Lakeville: The Internal Non-Aristotelian Library, 1948), p. 58.

<sup>74</sup> This new emphasis was most clearly stated on the first page of the first volume to J.B. Harley and David Woodward's edited series, *The History of Cartography*, where the authors state: "any appreciation of the historical importance of maps depends upon a clear conception of their nature, of the factors that have shaped their making

epistemic break that effectively flipped the field of historic cartography on its head. No longer were historical maps evaluated for their truthful depictions of past terrains; rather, they became windows into the cultural systems and power structures that produced them as well as active discursive agents in the construction of the past itself. In just twenty years, these scholars' works have significantly expanded our understanding of what we consider a "map" to include a whole range of images, charts and pictures, which, scientifically accurate or not, all seek to comprehend and represent the world and cosmos around us.<sup>75</sup>

James R. Akerman and Robert W. Karrow Jr's edited volume *Maps: Finding our Place in the World* offers an excellent guide through what might be called the "new cartographic history."<sup>76</sup> To help work through this new cartographic terrain, Karrow offers a six-point checklist of structural features, which characterize *all* maps in general. These features include: scale, selection, generalization, sign language, authority and power. Scale is "the ratio between the size of the map and the size of the piece of environment it is trying to show," and is the most

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and transmission, and of their role within human societies." J.B. Harley and David Woodward, *The History of Cartography*, (1995) vol. 1: 1. See J.B. Harley's collection of seminal essays in J.B. Harley, *The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography*, ed. Paul Laxton, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); and his impressive editorial project *The History of Cartography Series* especially: J.B. Harley and David Woodward, eds. *Cartography in the Traditional Islamic and South Asian Societies* (1992) vol 2, book 1; *Cartography in Traditional East and Southeast Asian Societies* (1994) vol 2, book 2; and *Cartography in the Traditional African, American, Arctic, Australian, and Pacific Societies*, vol. 2 book 3 (1998) of *The History of Cartography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press); John Pickles, *A History of Spaces: Mapping, Cartographic Reason, and the Geo-Coded World* (London: Routledge, 2004); Matthew Edney, "Cartography without 'Progress': Reinterpreting the Nature and Historical Development of Mapmaking." *Cartographica* 30: 2/3 (Summer/Autumn 1993): 54–68; Matthew Edney "Theory and the History of Cartography." *Imago Mundi* 48 (1996): 185–91; Matthew Edney *The Origins and Development of J. B. Harley's Cartographic Theories*. Cartographica Monograph 54. *Cartographica* 40, nos. 1 & 2. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); Denis Wood, *The Power of Maps* (London: The Guilford Press, 1992).

<sup>75</sup> As stated by Matthew H. Edney, "People have used maps for many thousand of years to create spatial conceptions that they can then use to think about, deal with, and relate to the world. Maps permit us not only to conceive of the world, but to *grasp* it as well." Emphasis in the original. Matthew H. Edney, "Mapping Parts of the World," *Maps: Finding our Place in the World*, eds. James R. Akerman and Robert W. Karrow Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 118.

<sup>76</sup> The term "new cartographic history" is first introduced in Robert W. Karrow Jr's, "Introduction" *Maps: Finding our Place in the World*, eds. James R. Akerman and Robert W. Karrow Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 8.

basic feature common to all maps.<sup>77</sup> Typically, in modern western maps, scale is expressed mathematically as either a ‘representative fraction’ (ie. 1:2,000) or as a statement of equivalency (ie. one inch equals ten kilometers).<sup>78</sup> One should not assume however, that to express spatial relations all maps must employ mathematical scale. Some maps offer several different scale expressions within the same work; others are not interested in strict scale calculations at all and work at the more impressionistic or even symbolic level.

Closely related to this notion of scale is the idea of “selection,” that is, the process by which a map’s contents are determined. A map cannot include every detail of the terrain it seeks to represent. Thus mapmakers are forced to make decisions about what to include and what to omit. Both these inclusions and omissions are equally integral to a map’s “selection.”<sup>79</sup> Drawing on J.B. Harley’s notion of cartographic “silences,” Karrow argues that maps offer as much information in what they say as they do in what they do not say; “silence is not accidental – it represents a choice and *means something*.”<sup>80</sup>

The next two structural features outlined by Karrow, “generalization” and “sign language” are essentially semiotic categories. Generalization is the process by which “every map maker must adjust, and fudge, and lie a little here and simplify a little there and put down something

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<sup>77</sup> Robert W. Karrow Jr. “Introduction” in James R. Akerman and Robert W. Karrow Jr. Eds. *Maps: Finding our Place in the World*, 2007, p. 3.

<sup>78</sup> Robert W. Karrow Jr. “Introduction” in James R. Akerman and Robert W. Karrow Jr. Eds. *Maps: Finding our Place in the World*, 2007, p. 3.

<sup>79</sup> J.B. Harley has called these omissions “silences.” J.B. Harley, “Maps, Knowledge and Power,” *The Iconography of Landscape 1: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and use of Past Environments*, eds. Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press): 277-312, p. 290.

<sup>80</sup> Robert W. Karrow Jr. “Introduction,” op. cit. 5. Emphasis in original. Reference drawn from J.B. Harley, “Silences and Secrecy: the Hidden Agenda of Cartography in Early Modern Europe,” *Imago Mundi* 40:57-76. Reprinted as “Silences and Secrets: The Hidden Agenda of Cartography in Early Modern Europe,” *The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography*, ed. J.B. Harley (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002): 83-108.

that isn't literally true in order to make the map work."<sup>81</sup> This category is concerned with how maps make compromises so that their visual and aesthetic language can do the work the map was intended for.<sup>82</sup> Maps are also full of signs. Some are iconic in the case of round mounds used to depict mountains or as seen in the use of the color blue to depict oceans. Some are textual such as listing the names of places or things. Others are completely arbitrary, as often witnessed in the use of colors to code nations in many world maps. In each case however, much of the work that maps do is through their sign language.

The last two categories offered by Karrow are also closely related – “authority” and “power.” Maps not only “stand for” the terrain they seek to represent, they also represent the people, institutions and power structures that make them. “Authority” is the status a map is conferred by virtue of its place and point of origin. For example a government map created by a professional cartographer might be viewed to have more authority than the same map produced by an amateur map-making aficionado. This authority to represent, prioritize, and express knowledge is one potential source of a map's power.<sup>83</sup> As J.B. Harley has argued, maps belong to the social, cultural and political worlds that produced them and as such, are intimate reflections of deeply embedded power structures. Such power is what underscores all map production. Power is also created and witnessed through the “representational hierarchy” of

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<sup>81</sup> Robert W. Karrow Jr., “Introduction,” p. 5.

<sup>82</sup> For example, a highway map will generally depict a road much larger than the tiny fraction of a millimeter that it should be drawn at to satisfy the map's overall mathematical scale. In such cases, roads are represented with visible lines that are much bigger than what scale requirements determined; thus, “generalizations” are made so that these maps can work more effectively. In this sense, the road line is not only a generalization but also a type of “sign language.”

<sup>83</sup> Robert W. Karrow Jr., “Introduction,” p. 7.

places created by a map's symbolic iconography,<sup>84</sup> or the use of an orthographic bird's eye view employed to command visual mastery over the terrain being mapped.<sup>85</sup>

I have described Karrow's six-point breakdown in some detail for two reasons. First, Karrow's approach provides a more effective understanding of the mechanics that allow maps to do their work. Starting with "scale" and "selection" we can first deconstruct and appreciate the choices that the mapmaker had to make in order to cartographically rationalize the terrain that he sought to map. "Generalization" and "sign language" allow us to understand the semiotic structures underscoring a map's communicative ability. Lastly, "authority" and "power" emphasizes the way in which all maps function as socially and culturally embedded texts, or as Harley calls them, "thick texts."<sup>86</sup> Thus, Karrow's approach effectively combines techniques drawn from deconstruction theorists, semioticians, anthropologists, and other theorists interested in the relationships between power, culture and knowledge and provides a very useful methodology for anybody wishing to deconstruct the larger context, language, power and techniques of a map.

Second, I stress the importance of this "new cartographic history" and its methodology in order to apply some of its crucial insights to the study of gazetteer maps from the late imperial period. Although prefatory maps are almost ubiquitous throughout all late imperial local gazetteers, no scholar to date has explored the medium in any comprehensive detail. Aside from

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<sup>84</sup>As Harley writes: "It has long been one of the map-maker's rules that the signs for towns and villages - whether depicted iconically or by abstract devices - are shown proportionally to the rank of the places concerned. Yet the resulting visual hierarchy of signs in early modern maps is often a replica of the legal, feudal, and ecclesiastical stratifications. Indeed, the concept of a tiered territorial society was by no means lost on contemporary map-makers." J.B. Harley, "Maps, Knowledge and Power" *The Iconography of Landscape I: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and use of Past Environments*, eds. Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989): 277-312, p. 292.

<sup>85</sup> Here Karrow offers the example of Jacopo de'Barbari's "huge format and commanding bird's eye viewpoint" of 1500 Venice which seems to say, "We are the greatest city, the greatest nation; nothing like us ever was." Cited in Robert W. Karrow Jr. "Introduction," p. 7.

<sup>86</sup> J. B. Harley, "Maps, Knowledge, and Power," p. 277.

one article written by Timothy Brook entitled “The Gazetteer Cartography of Ye Chunji,” there exists no study in either the English or Chinese language scholarship to my knowledge that focuses on prefatory gazetteer maps as a distinct genre of spatial representation unto itself.<sup>87</sup>

This lack of scholarship on the topic is likely due to the often less than technical nature in which these gazetteer maps were produced; moreover it is even problematic to speak of a gazetteer map genre unto itself given the high degree of variance found from map to map in gazetteer to gazetteer. While some gazetteer maps are highly technical in nature and offer fixed-point perspectives and clear scale expressions, others are often far more impressionistic and even artistic in their approach. The vast majority of Ming era gazetteer maps fall into this latter category, which Brook describes as, “pictorial summaries rather than exact renderings of precise knowledge of spatial dimensions and relationships.”<sup>88</sup> In this sense, many Ming era gazetteer maps seem to function largely as pro forma conventions, cliché to the genre; however, even as clichés many of these “pictorial summaries” still manage to accomplish a great deal of mapping. The following section offers insights from the “new cartographic history” and employs Karrow’s six point approach to better understand the mapping work performed by two such prefatory maps

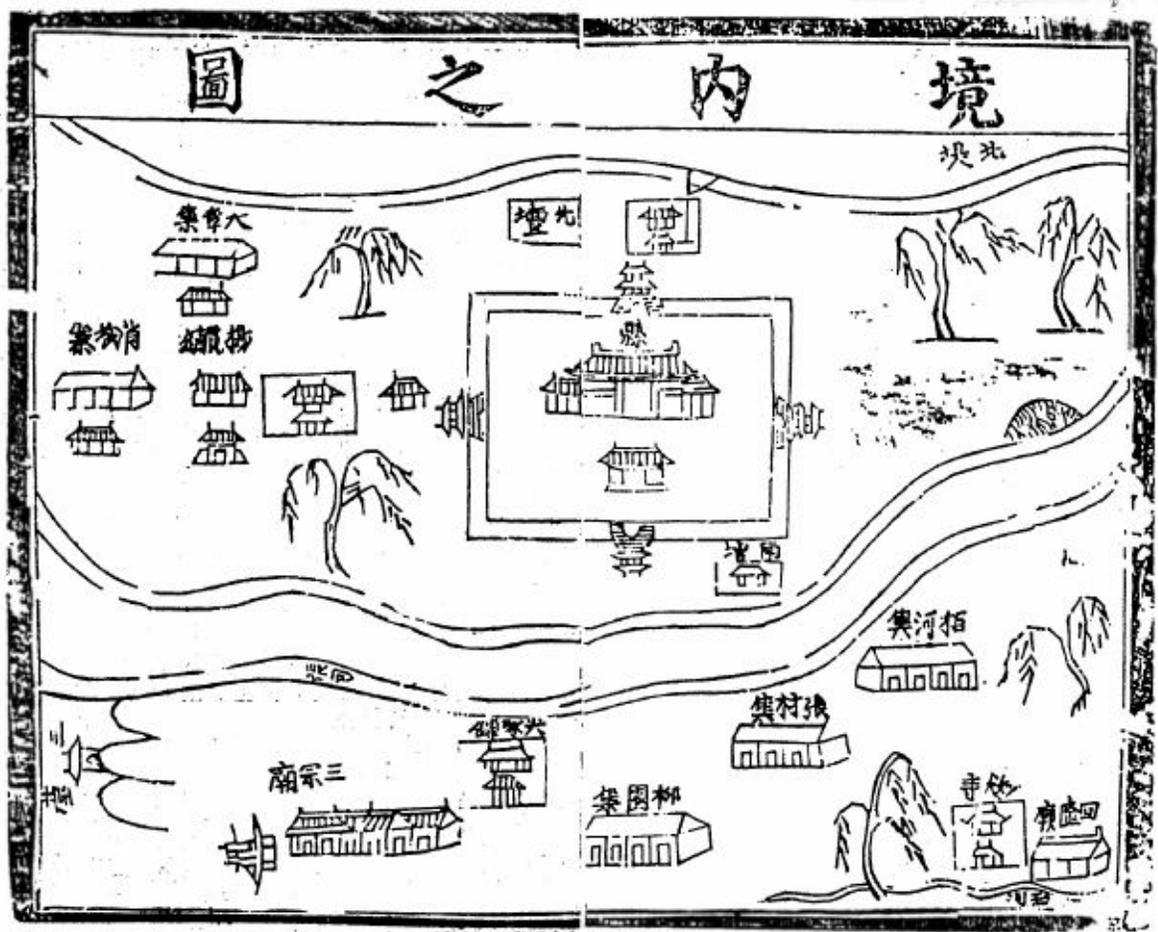
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<sup>87</sup> In this article, Brook examines how Ye Chunji, a late Ming local magistrate, applied a scaled grid system to his local mapping practice. Although seen at earlier times in Chinese history and even during the Ming period at the empire-wide mapping scale, Ye was the first to employ this grid system at the county and sub-county level. Using a scaled grid at this micro level afforded Ye’s maps a level of local detail and accuracy hitherto not seen. Brook’s title is a bit misleading however, as Ye’s local mapping practice was largely formulated in his more “idiosyncratic variation of the gazetteer genre”- an administrative handbook called the *Huian zhengshu* – and not in the more standardized local gazetteer format. Strictly speaking, much of Ye’s cartography did not belong to the world of local gazetteers, but rather to the realm of administrative handbooks; as such, I resist classifying Ye’s mapping practices as “gazetteer cartography” in the strict sense of the term. Brook is quick to acknowledge this fact and offers several reasons why the *Huian zhengshu* resists classification and is “something other than a regular county gazetteer.” These reasons include: 1. Unlike most gazetteers which privilege text, Ye Chunji’s maps account for about two-thirds of the source; 2. Much of the standard gazetteer format (ie “records of former officials, lists of degree-winner, biographies, and local writings”) are left out of Ye’s text; 3. The *Huian zhengshu* primarily concerns itself with the township level and does not aggregate its data up to the county level; and 4. Ye’s own personal voice can be heard throughout the source. Such personalization of the narrative is rarely witnessed in gazetteer sources. Timothy Brook, “The Gazetteer Cartography of Ye Chunji,” pp. 46, 55.

<sup>88</sup> As Brook writes, “The maps inserted in the prefatory material of Ming gazetteers are mostly pictorial summaries rather than exact renderings of precise knowledge of spatial dimensions and relationships. The reader would be hard-pressed to extract from such maps information about where places actually were, or even how one could get from one place to another; but that was not their purpose.” Timothy Brook, “The Gazetteer Cartography of Ye Chunji,” p. 46.

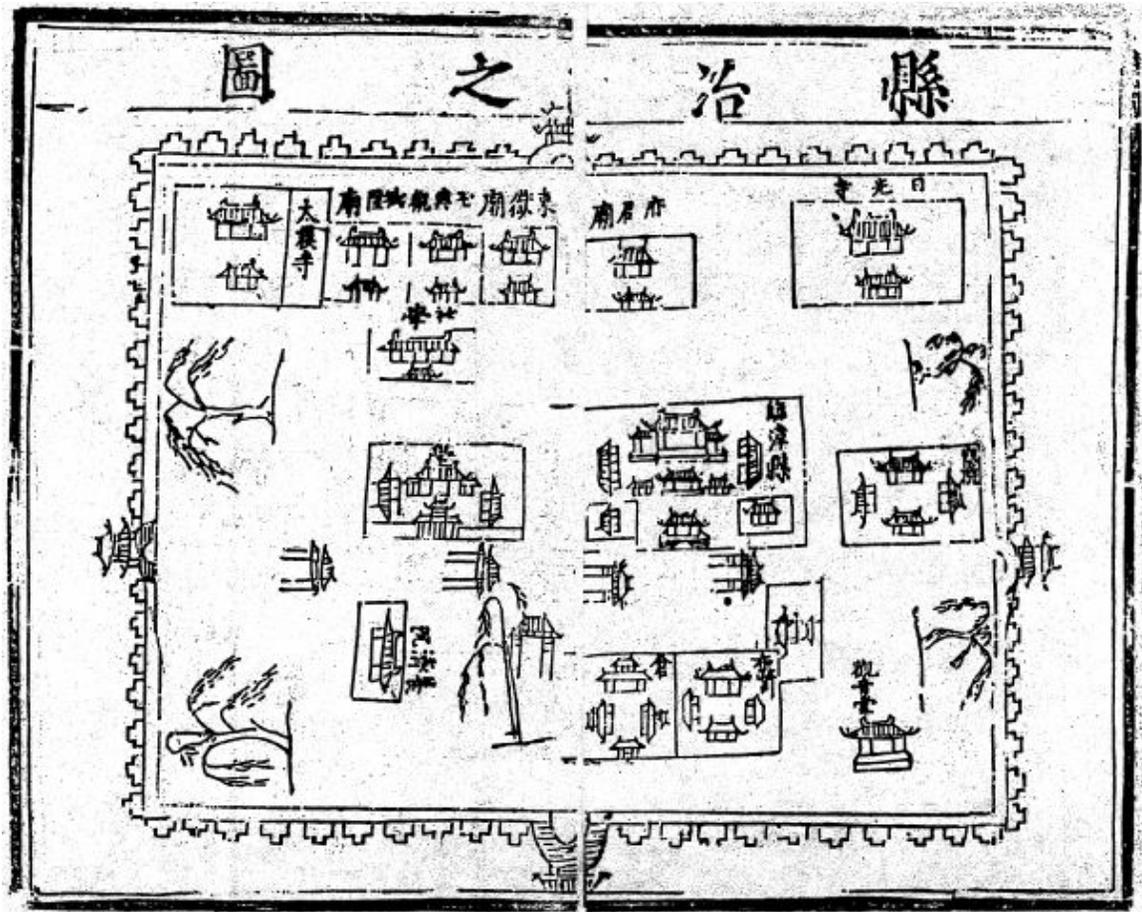
found in the 1506 Linzhang County gazetteer. – the “Map [of the Terrain] within the [County] Borders” (境內之圖, Figure 2.1) and the following, “Map of the County Seat” (縣治之圖, Figure 2.2)

Figure 2.1 “Map [of the Terrain] within the [County] Borders” (境內之圖)



Source: Jing Fang, ed. *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506.

Figure 2.2 “Map of the County Seat” (縣治之圖)



Source: Jing Fang, ed. *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506.

In terms of projection, both of these maps follow conventions found in many other late imperial prefatory gazetteer maps. This convention projects the general expanse of the territory orthographically as a straight down, bird's-eye view and renders the county's three-dimensional space into a two-dimensional plain. Local features such as temples, villages, administrative structures, trees and hills are plotted on this orthographic plain in profile format. In some cases, the map creator employs two-dimensional profiles to represent local landmarks; in other cases he uses oblique drawing technique creating a three-dimensional quality in the depicted structures. Generally, oblique drawing techniques are chosen to represent villages located within the county;

however, the maps do not offer any explicit clues as to why this technique was preferred in this case.

### 2.3.1 Symbolic Scale, Selection and Sign Language

All maps' scales are determined by the terrain that the map seeks to represent; in the first map's case, scale is established by the map's projection of the immediate county territory. The map's scale is not determined or conditioned by any features that lie outside of the county such as the two rivers and their embankments that pass in and out of the county's borders. From the description in the gazetteer we can estimate the approximate size of the county during the Ming, which was roughly 700 square kilometers.<sup>89</sup> Given this size we know that much of what is presented on the map is not 'drawn to scale' in any directly proportional sense.<sup>90</sup> This does not mean however, that this map does not express spatial relations, but rather suggests that these spatial relations are based on an entirely different logic than mathematical scale.

The spatial logic underscoring this map is perhaps best understood as administrative and bureaucratic in nature. A defining characteristic of the Ming dynastic structure was the spatial-administrative hierarchy and regularized chain of bureaucratic command that enmeshed the entire realm. When the Ming state was founded by Zhu Yuanzhang (朱元璋) in 1368, it marked the melding of native administrative traditions with those learned during the period of Mongol Rule in the preceding Yuan dynasty. Imperial order was maintained through three separate, yet coequal institutions: the military, the censorate and the bureaucracy. Control of the military was divided in the capital among Five Chief Military Commissions (五府 – Chief Military Commission on the Centre, Left, Right, Front and Rear) and had mirror institutions in the

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<sup>89</sup> This is an admittedly rough estimate, which is derived through examining the distances provided in the 1506 gazetteer between Linzhang and its neighboring counties and then comparing these against more recent maps and local landmarks.

<sup>90</sup> If the map was drawn to scale, the trees decorating the map would be tens-of thousands of meters tall in real life.

province called Regional Military Commissions (都指挥使司). Likewise the Censorate had branches in the capital (都察院) matched by Provincial Surveillance Commissions (按察使司) in the provinces. The bureaucracy's apex started at the emperor and his imperial household and was then followed by Six Secretariat Ministries (Personnel, Revenue, Rites, War, Justice and Works) located in the capital. These Six Ministries were replicated at the provincial level in what were called Administration Commissions (布政使司). Following in descending order from the Provincial Administration Commissions were prefectures, sub-prefectures, counties, and then smaller forms of sub-county administration such as cantons, wards and tithing units.<sup>91</sup>

As officially state sponsored projects, gazetteers represented this administrative breakdown of the empire into manageable spatio-administrative units divided among provinces, prefectures, sub-prefectures and counties. Gazetteer maps at each one of these levels offer visual depictions of the spatial-bureaucratic logic and administrative unit that created them. When the local magistrate was sent to the county to deal with county affairs his realm of jurisdiction was defined by the county's immediate administrative boundaries. Thus the map's scale is both practical in that it offers a survey of one's immediate field of action, and symbolic in that it is a product of the spatially bounded logic of the Ming administrative structure.

When the 1506 Gazetteer mapmaker decided to represent the county, he had to make choices on what to represent. Clearly, not every building, township, tree nor wall could be represented. So what was chosen for this particular map? In terms of selection, this map offers what one might first expect to see on a prefatory map. First and foremost, it displays an image of the county seat and the city wall. Flanking the city wall are four gate towers, which help to orientate the map to its north-south axis. Next, the map chooses to display some "natural"

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<sup>91</sup> For the most thorough breakdown of these Ming institutions see: Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, pp. 70-82.

features, most importantly the Zhang River that flows to the immediate south of the county seat.<sup>92</sup>

Also “selected” in this map are various local temples, monasteries, villages, and garrisons. Two of these structures are worthy of particular note. The first is the Temple to Rain (雨壇), which is situated immediately south of the county seat between the county seat’s walls and the banks of the Zhang River. The second is the “Three Pavilions” (三臺) situated on top of three mounds found in the map’s left hand corner and southwest of the county seat. The Temple to Rain is important because it reminds the reader that as much as Linzhang County is precariously located next to a river known for its incessant flooding it is also situated in a region plagued by persistent drought. The inclusion of the famous Warring States “Three Pavilions Temple” site serves to remind the reader to the county’s important historic lineage and its connection with the region’s Three Kingdoms history. The map also includes a few trees, which might function as decorative features or point to trees and groves that were existent at the time. One of the most striking features of the map is that, aside from the map’s natural features (i.e. trees and rivers), all of the map’s selections are related to the state in one way or another. All of the monasteries, temples and altars listed on the map were state sanctioned religious sites; moreover the villages included on the map were officially registered taxation units. From the map’s particular “selection” and “silences” we can thus see that the map is primarily statist in its orientation.

The 1506 County map is full of generalization and sign language. The county walls are generalized to a size that renders them clearly symbolic; the *yamen* is represented by a singular

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<sup>92</sup> I problematize the term “natural” here because also included in this map’s selection are the river’s banks, which may or may not highlight ongoing human efforts to intervene in the course of the Zhang River that figured so prominently in the locality.

building situated behind its front gate, commonly known as the “spirit” or “shadow wall,”<sup>93</sup> villages are represented as discrete enclosed structures; and the river is tamed by double lines representing dikes and embankments (one is clearly labeled “the northern dike” 北堤). While possible coincidence, it is also interesting to note that the width of these dikes and embankments is identical to the width of the lines used to represent the county seat’s wall. Perhaps the map-maker is using subtle sign language to alert us here to the county’s longstanding relationship between state power and river control.

### **2.3.2 *Zhong*: Power and Authority**

Unfortunately, we have no way of knowing who actually conceived of and drafted the gazetteer’s map. Gazetteer maps seldom list their creators.<sup>94</sup> We also can only guess that the gazetteer’s chief compiler and local magistrate Jing Fang saw the final proofs before committing them to woodblock. It is clear however, that the gazetteer and its maps were ultimately commissioned by the local magistrate and as such were also invested with his authority. The relationship between state authority and the map is nowhere better witnessed than in the map’s central placement of the county *yamen*. Even though we know from other descriptions in the gazetteer that the county seat was situated in the northwestern corner of the actual county, the map authoritatively places the county seat directly at its centre. Not only does the county seat serve as the map’s compass it also serves as its centre point from which the rest of the map derives its ontological status. In other words, just as authority is conferred from the centre

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<sup>93</sup> For a lengthy discussion on the various physical structures of the County *Yamen* compound see Thomas Nimick, “The County, the Magistrate and the *Yamen* in Late Imperial China,” Phd Diss. Princeton University, 1993, pp. 18-30.

<sup>94</sup> In fact, I have not yet come across a gazetteer map where the maker is clearly indicated. Generally, we are left to assume that the map was an overall product of the gazetteer’s editorial committee.

politically speaking, the existence of a centre also creates authority in both a structural and performative sense.

In his *Remaking Beijing: Tiananmen Square and the Creation of a Political Space*, art historian and theorist Wu Hung offers an insightful discussion of how political authority is created through the creation and existence of a centre.<sup>95</sup> To better understand this coupling, Wu Hung calls on Friedrich Engels' discussion of the "zero-point" in analytic geometry. As Engels wrote:

...zero is a definite point from which measurements are taken along a line, in one direction positively, in the other negatively. Here, therefore, the zero point has not only just as much significance as any point denoted by a positive or negative magnitude, but a much greater significance than all of them: it is the point on which they are all dependent, to which they are all related, and by which they are all determined.<sup>96</sup>

Wu Hung creatively applies this mathematical discussion of the critical importance of zero to the logic of the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square as respective zero-points for their imperial and modern states. While the political rhetoric surrounding these two zero-points – the Forbidden City in late imperial times and Tiananmen Square in the 20<sup>th</sup> century China – is undeniably different their underlying logic is remarkably similar; both the Forbidden City and today's Tiananmen square serve(d) as the points by which the rest of the realm was symbolically dependent, related and determined.

Although Wu Hung is expressly interested in Beijing as the larger empire, or nation-wide zero point, his insights can be applied to other instances where political authority is both represented and manufactured through the creation of spatial centrality. Just as images of the Forbidden City have an "unambiguous centrality and dominance" so too does the placement of

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<sup>95</sup> Wu Hung, *Remaking Beijing: Tiananmen Square and the Creation of a Political Space* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

<sup>96</sup> From Friedrich Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, trans. Clemens Dutt, in *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works* (New York, 1975-), vol. xxv, pp 540-41. As cited in Wu Hung, *Remaking Beijing: Tiananmen Square and the Creation of a Political Space*, p. 8.

the Linzhang County *yamen* in its 1506 gazetteer map.<sup>97</sup> The *yamen*'s thickly depicted walls and its exaggerated size all reinforce the centre's power within the county. Moreover the centering of the *yamen* also provides the zero-point necessary to make contextual sense of the county's underlying administrative hierarchy. All of the villages, temples and monasteries lying within the county exist in direct relation to the centre, whether this relationship be administrative (villages or wards), ritual (state sponsored, orthodox religious institutions) or military (garrison post). The existence of the *yamen* is at the centre of the administrative logic of this map of the county unit. Moreover, its centrality enforces the authority of its primary occupant, the local magistrate.

In *Of Body and Brush: Grand Sacrifice as Text/performance in Eighteenth Century China*, Angela Zito also explores the importance of centrality in the creation of political authority in late imperial Chinese history.<sup>98</sup> Zito refuses to accept simple clichés regarding the nature of late imperial autocratic authority, and rather explores the more “‘invisible ways’ that the Qing monarchy and the state organized itself in order to organize the realm.”<sup>99</sup> At the core of this organization strategy was the ritual concept of “zhong” (中) or “centering.” Unlike Engels more static formulation of the zero-point, Zito's analysis of zhong situates the “centre” within a yin-yang cosmology characterized by a permanent state of dynamic cosmological flux. In this worldview, the centre could not be taken for granted but had to be reproduced in perpetuity through text, ritual and performance. Zhong was not only “the centre” but also quite literally had to also be “the act of centering.”<sup>100</sup> Zito offers an in depth analysis of many of these centering

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<sup>97</sup> Wu Hung, *Remaking Beijing: Tiananmen Square and the Creation of a Political Space*, p. 167.

<sup>98</sup> Angela Zito, *Of Body and Brush: Grand Sacrifice as Text/performance in Eighteenth Century China* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1997).

<sup>99</sup> Angela Zito, *Of Body and Brush: Grand Sacrifice as Text/performance in Eighteenth Century China*, p. 15.

<sup>100</sup> In her own words, “‘Zhong’ works as a noun and a verb – as a noun it means “middle” but an empty one found between the inner and outer, where the upper and lower meet and where there is no movement in the four directions.

discourses, ranging from grand sacrifices performed in the “high centre,” which were then mimicked in all of the empire’s various localities to the way that the emperor’s breakfast leftovers were distributed to members of his court according to their ritual rank. In each of these examples, officials and scribes kept careful ritual records not only for posterity’s sake but also to further ritualize and inscribe the centralizing act. Such meticulous ritual centering was a deeply embedded management strategy and according to Zito is what afforded the Qing its lengthy and “profound connective power.”<sup>101</sup>

Zito’s performative theory helps us to better understand how such prefatory gazetteer maps as found in the 1506 Linzhang gazetteer not only depict imperial authority in the county (displaying the centre – *zhong as noun*), but also actively create the centre through a textual mapping performance (centering – *zhong as verb*). While the map served as a cartographically imperfect rendering of the local terrain, it produced interesting truth effects by displaying and producing imperial authority at the centre of the county.<sup>102</sup>

With all of these structural and semiotic features more thoroughly described we can now move to the larger discussion of how these maps work and what situation they seek to map. Expanding on Wu Hung and Angela Zito’s discussions regarding both the structural importance of a zero point and the performative importance of “centering,” I argue that the 1506 Linzhang county map actually displays two distinct yet strongly interrelated zero-points or centres - the

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As a verb, *zhong* means to hit the centre. “Centering” thus constantly creates itself through a correct separation of upper and lower, the correct bounding of inner and outer. Conceived of in this manner, it is the mediate third that makes meaningful difference possible.” Angela Zito, *Of Body and Brush: Grand Sacrifice as Text/performance in Eighteenth Century China*, p. 30.

<sup>101</sup> Angela Zito, *Of Body and Brush: Grand Sacrifice as Text/performance in Eighteenth Century China*, p. 225.

<sup>102</sup> Aside from these discursive truth effects, this map’s materiality itself must have invested the source with a certain degree of authority. Linzhang was removed from the vibrant commercial print culture more commonly associated with Fujian and Jiangnan. It was also not an important enough centre in the north to command much to be written about it. Indeed, one of the complaints seen in both the gazetteer’s preface and postface is the quality and dearth of the records in the area. That this map was committed to woodblocks in the first place might have been understood as a deliberate centralizing act aimed at creating political authority.

county seat in the middle of the map and the prominent river running in and out of its borders.<sup>103</sup> Much of the work that this map does is to map the dialogic interaction between these two centres or zero-points.

This first centre, the political centre, has been dealt with in some detail in the immediately preceding section. Suffice it here to note that both the county seat's central placement and symbolic exaggeration emphasize the county's political and administrative centre. All of the other administrative features outlined by the map derive their significance and status from their hierarchal relation to the *yamen* as zero-point.

The second centre, the hydrological or environmental one, is a bit more complex semiotically speaking. Aside from the county seat, the other most prominent element featured on the map is the Zhang River, which ran its course across the county flowing from east to west. The mapmaker must have assumed that the map's potential viewers would be significantly familiar with the region and be able to identify the river as the Zhang River; therefore, he offers no explicit indication of the river's identity on the map. Running alongside the river on both its northern and southern banks is a long dike or embankment, which is depicted by a double line.<sup>104</sup> As mentioned earlier, this double line is approximately the same width as the line used to mark the county seat's walls. There is no way to know if this similarity was purely coincidental or a deliberate act used to draw a symbolic linkage; however, based on the sure visual dominance of these equally thick lines command on the map, we can assume that the map maker must have viewed both of these barriers as important enough to highlight and draw attention to.

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<sup>103</sup> In both Wu and Zito's analyses "centres" derive their power from their singular and zero-sum quality within any given field. Their analyses do not address however, the possibility of multiple centres existing within a given field. My reading the 1506 Linzhang County map suggests this possibility.

<sup>104</sup> From the set of double lines located in the top of the map, labeled the "northern dike" (北堤), we can infer that these double lines bordering the Zhang River also symbolize some type of earthwork used to contain the River

Located within the southernmost embankment's borders are the two peculiar and slightly obscured characters, “*zhang he*” (漲河).<sup>105</sup> There are two potential ways of reading these characters. The first reading suggests that the map maker simply mistook “*zhang*” (漲) for “*zhang*” (漳) when naming the river (Zhang he漳河). However, given that the county's name (Linzhang 臨漳) was derived from the river (漳河) and that the river played such a prominent role in the locality, this typographic error is highly unlikely. The second potential reading takes the *zhang* (漲) character as a verb meaning “to swell.” If we read “*zhang he*” (漲河) as the swelling or the expansion of the river, we can see how the map maker stylistically uses two lines to depict the river in both its normal state and in times of inundation. The mapmaker seems to suggest that even when “swollen” the Zhang River's waters can be contained by the outermost embankment surrounding the river. Alternately, any water that stretches beyond these banks cannot be controlled. Thus the map alerts us to the persistent state of flooding found in this county and the human efforts taken to control the Zhang River.

### 2.3.3 State and Water

As previously mentioned gazetteers were produced locally but often circulated widely throughout the empire. Potential gazetteer readers included officials concerned with statecraft and governance as well as literati collectors seeking to gain prestige and cultural capital through vast book collections. If the gazetteer's intended audience was made up of interested locals, administrators and literati collectors it is safe to assume that the gazetteer's compiler would have expected the reader to have some basic knowledge of the region's general geographic conditions.

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<sup>105</sup> Here we can assume that the water radicals for the *he* (河) and *zhang* (漲) characters are obscured by the line used to represent the embankment's outermost barrier. If we read the *he* character without its water radical as an alternate form of *si* (司) the meaning of the two characters does not make sense. It is also possible that there is no water radical for the *zhang* 漲 character making it actually read as *zhang* (張) meaning “to stretch.” In this case, the meaning remains largely the same; a river stretched to its banks with floodwaters, or an inundated river swollen to the top of its banks.

While this degree of knowledge would certainly vary from viewer to viewer, most would recognize and understand that Linzhang was situated in the Central Plains region (*zhongyuan* 中原 or *zhongzhou* 中州) - an environment where flooding, drought and pestilence were serious recurrent problems. Aside from serving as the regional backdrop for a whole variety of ancient cultural heroes, the Central Plains was also the place where China's three most famous hydrologists historically worked and ordered the realm - Yu the Great (大禹), Ximen Bao (西門豹) and Shi Qi (史起). Both educated outsiders and directly affected locals would have been keenly aware of this historically important relationship between the state and the local hydrological environment. The next two chapters explore this relationship in more detail by examining through the historic efforts and legacy of the region's most famous hydro-bureaucrats Ximen Bao and Shi Qi.

Historically we know that the Zhang River, along with other rivers located in the Central Plains region could change their course at will and cause immeasurable damage to land, crops, livestock as well as humans and their settlements. Such dramatic and historic shifts in the Zhang River's course are best outlined in an early 19<sup>th</sup> century collection of annotated river maps entitled *Illustrated Classic of the Zhang River in Linzhang County* (臨漳縣漳水圖經).<sup>106</sup> This little known Qing era source was authored by a former magistrate of Linzhang County named Yao Jianzhi (姚柬之, 1785-1847) who hailed from Anhui Province's Tongcheng County (桐城) and earned his *jinshi* degree in 1822.<sup>107</sup> One year later, in 1823 he was posted to Linzhang

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<sup>106</sup> Yao Jianzhi 姚柬之, *Linzhang xian zhangshui tujing* 臨漳縣漳水圖經 [*Illustrated Classic of the Zhang River in Linzhang County*], 1837, UBC, Puban Collection; modern reprint. *Zhongguo gu ye guji zhengli congshu* 中國古鄴古籍整理叢書 [*Arranged Collectanea of Classical Sources from China's Ancient state of Ye*], eds, Huang Hao 黃浩, Liu Shangfeng 劉尚峰, and Dong Ying 董英 (Linzhang: Hebei Linzhang difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, 2002), pp. 1-76.

<sup>107</sup> Zhu Baojiong and Xie Peilin, eds., *Ming Qing jinshi timing beilu suoyin*, p. 1384.

County where he served intermittently as the county's magistrate over the next six years.<sup>108</sup>

During this period, Yao grew particularly interested in the Zhang River and spent much time surveying the river's banks and critically investigating changes in its historic course.<sup>109</sup>

Although Yao was later promoted to a post in Guangdong province,<sup>110</sup> he continued to research the changing historic course of the Zhang River from afar and eventually published his *Illustrated Classic* in 1837.<sup>111</sup>

Yao Jianzhi's *Illustrated Classic* consists of twenty-two annotated maps outlining the changing course of the Zhang River within Linzhang County's historic boundaries. Although Yao includes other rivers and tributaries on his maps, the Zhang River forms the main focus of his study because according to Yao, "Of all the Central Plain's waters located north of the [Yellow] River, the Zhang River is the greatest."<sup>112</sup> Indeed descriptions of the Zhang River, along with treaties on its origins, course and terminus, are found throughout the classical canon and figure prominently in such foundational works as the *Waterways Classic* (水經) and Li Daoyuan's (酈道元) *Commentaries on the Waterways Classic* (水經注).<sup>113</sup> Descriptions of the

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<sup>108</sup> Yao Jianzhi served as Linzhang county magistrate three separate times - first in 1823-1825 and then twice again in 1826 and 1828. The local records provide no explanation as to why during this six year period Yao Jianzhi held three separate charges, nor do they explain why he was twice "reinstated" (復任); moreover, the records are silent on why the two men who also served as county magistrate in this same time period (Yuan Yong 袁鏞 and Zhou Qibin 周起濱) were relieved of their positions in the first place. Hebei sheng Linzhang xian difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 河北省臨漳縣地方志編纂委員會 [Linzhang County Gazetteer Compilation Committee, Hebei Province], eds, *Linzhang xian zhi* 臨漳縣志 [Gazetteer of Linzhang County], 1995 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), pp. 517, 844.

<sup>109</sup> Yao Jianzhi, *Linzhang xian zhangshui tujing*, 1837, p. 3.

<sup>110</sup> Yao Jianzhi was promoted to Guangdong Province's Ruizhou Prefecture (瑞州府). Huang Hao, Liu Shangfeng and Dong Ying, eds. *Zhongguo gu ye guji zhengli congshu*, p. 2.

<sup>111</sup> Huang Hao, Liu Shangfeng and Dong Ying, eds. *Zhongguo gu ye guji zhengli congshu*, p. 2.

<sup>112</sup> "中州河北之水漳為大," in Yao Jianzhi, *Linzhang xian zhangshui tujing*, 1837, p. 3.

<sup>113</sup> Li Daoyuan's, (d. 527) *Commentaries on the Waterways Classic* is generally considered the first geographic work in the Chinese classical cannon that systematically focus on waterways, river course and seas. Written during the Northern Wei Dynasty, Li's commentaries expanded on the original Waterways Classic (水經) compiled and annotated sometime during the Three Kingdoms period.

river are also found in the vast majority of Ming and Qing era works dealing with geographical issues such as: the *Union Gazetteer of the Great Ming*,<sup>114</sup> the *Union Gazetteer of Historic and Scenic Spots of the Great Ming*,<sup>115</sup> the *Record of the Vast Empire*,<sup>116</sup> and the *Official Ming History*.<sup>117</sup> These sources all point out that the Zhang River is formed by the confluence of two tributaries named the Turbid Zhang (濁漳水) and the Clear Zhang (清漳水). Both of these tributaries originate in Shanxi's Taihang Mountain Range and follow a southerly course down the eastern side of China's loess plateau before historically converging at Jiao Zhang Kou (交漳口).<sup>118</sup> From Jiao Zhang Kou the Zhang River generally assumes a singular flow and begins its slow meander across China's central plains before entering into the region's larger river systems.<sup>119</sup> Much like the Yellow River, the Zhang River also depends on water velocity to keep its exceptionally high silt content suspended in the river's current. However, as the two Zhang

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<sup>114</sup> Li Xian, et al. ed., *Da ming yitongzhi* 大明一統志, 1461, juan 28, 4a.

<sup>115</sup> Cao Xuequan 曹學佺, *Da Ming yi tong mingsheng zhi* 大明一統名勝志 [*Union Gazetteer of Historic and Scenic Spots of the Great Ming*], 1630, juan 5, 5b-10b. Reprinted in *Siku quanshu cun mu cong shu/shi bu* 四庫全書存目叢書/史部. v. 167-169 (Jinan: Ji lu shu she chubanshe, 1996), vol. 168, pp. 358-360.

<sup>116</sup> Lu Yingyang, *Guangyu ji*, pp. 485-493.

<sup>117</sup> Zhang Tingyu, et al. eds., *Ming Shi*, juan 87, pp. 2130-2132.

<sup>118</sup> Both of these tributaries originate in the Taihang Mountain Range that forms the eastern limit of China's loess plateau and forms the natural boundary between today's Shanxi, Henan and Hebei Provinces. The Muddy Zhang is said to originate from the western side of Jiu Mountain (鳩山) located in Shanxi's (山西) Changzi County (長子縣). The Clear Zhang is said to originate from the southern part of Shao Mountain (少山) located in Pingding Sub-prefecture's (平定州), Yongping County (永平). See Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 2, 1a-1b; Zhang Tingyu, et al. eds., *Ming Shi*, juan 87, p. 2130; and Li Kan 李侃, et al. eds., *Shanxi tong zhi* 山西通志 [*Gazetteer of Shanxi Province*], 1475, juan 2, 59a. An image of the Zhang River as it flows by Shanxi's Heng Mountain (恒山) is preserved in Wang Qi's 王圻, *San cai tu hui* 三才圖會 [*Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Three Elements*], juan 8, 21a-22b. Reprinted in *Siku quanshu cun mu cong shu/zi bu* 四庫全書存目叢書/子部. v. 190-306-307 (Jinan: Ji lu shu she chubanshe, 1995), vol. 168, pp. 358-360.

<sup>119</sup> During the Ming period Jiao Zhang Kou was located in Lin County's (林縣) He Village (合村). After passing through Linzhang County the Zhang River has historically tended to split into two different streams. The main stream flowed northwards and eventually entered the ocean near Tianjin (天津) while the second flowed into Shandong about 50 li southwest of Guantao (館陶) where it met with the Wei River (衛河). Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 2, 1b; Zhang Tingyu, et al., eds, *Ming shi*, juan 87, p. 2130.

tributaries flow out of the Taihang Mountains and converge at Jiao Zhang Kou, their water velocity is cut by more than half. The result is an exceptionally high rate of siltation in the area, which, if left unchecked, could lead to devastating floods and major shifts in the course of the river. Both scenarios could cause even larger problems for those downstream and especially Linzhang County, which was located to the immediate southwest of Jiao Zhang Kou. As Yao Jianzhi notes “every time the [Zhang] River shifted [disasters] were most acute in Linzhang,”<sup>120</sup> Local records confirm Yao’s claim and list a total of 56 major water disasters caused by the Zhang River from 1082 to 1904.<sup>121</sup>

Given the longstanding human efforts designed to control the river’s sheer destructive capacities and its almost perennial flooding, one would expect Yao Jianzhi’s *Illustrated Classic* to focus in part on hydrological issues. However, rather than provide guidelines or suggestions for future county administrators on how to deal with the river’s incessant flooding and shifting, Yao focused his efforts on preparing a detailed work of “evidential scholarship”<sup>122</sup> historically outlining the changing course of the Zhang River with comprehensive detail.

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<sup>120</sup> “其變遷也在臨漳為甚,” in Yao Jianzhi, *Linzhang xian zhangshui tujing*, 1837, p. 3.

<sup>121</sup> Local gazetteers report a total of two major shifts in the river’s course during the Song period, one during the Yuan, nine during the Ming, and forty-four during the Qing. Hebei sheng Linzhang xian difangzhi bianzuan weiyuan hui 河北省臨漳縣地方志編纂委員會 [Linzhang County Gazetteer Compilation Committee, Hebei Province], *Linzhang xian zhi* 臨漳縣志 [*Gazetteer of Linzhang County*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1999), p. 130. These major shifts along with minor shifts in the river for the Ming period are outlined in some detail in the *Official History of the Ming*. It appears the Zhang River was most destructive when its waters breached its central course and joined with the Fu River (釜). Such massive floods caused by the joining of these two rivers occurred along the main branch of the Zhang River in 1415, 1425, and once again in 1436. Zhang Tingyu, et al., eds, *Ming shi*, juan 87, pp. 2130-2131. For a detailed discussion of the ways in which changes in the course of the Zhang River affected the larger Central Plains region’s hydraulic system, especially the Grand Canal, see Shi Chaoyi 石超儀. “Ming qing shiqi zhanghe pingyuan duan de hedao bianqian ji qi yu ‘yin zhang ji yun’ de guanxi” 明清時期漳河平原段的河道變遷及其與‘引漳濟運’的關係 [Diversion of the Zhanghe River during the Ming and Qing Dynasties and its Relationship with Water Diversion into the Grand Canal]. *Zhongguo lishi dili luncong* 中國歷史地理論叢 [*Journal of Chinese Historical Geography*]. 21:3 (July 2006): 27-35.

<sup>122</sup> “Evidential Scholarship” is the English term given to the intellectual trend originating in the early Qing period known as “Kaozheng xue” (考證學literally, the “search for evidence”). Partially driven by a rejection of Ming Neo-Confucianism and partially by an absorption of Jesuit “empirical” techniques, early Kaozheng scholars such as Gu Yanwu (1613-1682), Wang Fuzhi (1619-1692), and Fang Yizhi (1611-1671) carved out an intellectual landscape that valued precise scholarship and exacting evidence over speculative philosophy. As Benjamin Elman

To produce his set of twenty-two historic maps, which spanned from the Shang period up until the time when he took office in Linzhang (1823), Yao consulted an exhaustive variety of historic resources including a selection of dynastic histories, local gazetteers, various collectanea, along with the daily court records of the Ming Dynasty (明實錄).<sup>123</sup> The manner in which Yao Jianzhi draws information from each of these sources is outlined in short introductions accompanying each map. Aside from a few specific instances, these introductions function largely as footnotes for the images; they offer direct quotations from the relevant historic passages that Yao Jianzhi used to construct his maps. These introductions also actively remind the reader of the rigor that Yao Jianzhi applied to his evidential scholarship. That the information

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writes on the topic, Kaozheng scholars “stressed exacting research, rigorous analysis, and the collection of impartial evidence drawn from ancient artifacts and historical documents and texts.” These techniques were applied to uncover the “true teachings” of Confucius and verify the authenticity of classical texts which were both seen to have become distorted over time. In this sense, evidential scholarship was as much a historiographical orientation/method as it was a distant philosophical stance. For more discussion of evidential scholarship see Benjamin Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Los Angeles: University of California Los Angeles, Asia Institute, 2001), p. 6.

<sup>123</sup> Yao Jianzhi cites many of his textual sources that he used to construct his *Illustrated Classic*. These sources include: the Bamboo Texts of the Warring States (竹書年紀); Wang Yinglin’s 王應麟 (1223-1296), *Record of Observances from Arduous Studies* (*Kunxue jiwen* 困學紀聞) and his *Sea of Jades* (*Yu hai* 玉海); Hu Wei’s 胡渭 (1633-1714), *Meager knowledge on the Yu Gong* (*Yu gong zhui zhi* 禹貢錐指) (see A); Fu Zehong’s 傅澤洪 (Early 18<sup>th</sup> century), *Golden Mirror of the Passing Streams* (*Xingshui jinjian* 行水金鑒) (see B); *the Classic of Poetry* (詩經); *the Classic of Waters* (水經), *the Guanzi* (管子); *the Annals of the Spring and Autumn Era* (春秋); *the Stratagems of the Warring States* (戰國策); *the Records of Han* (漢書); various dynastic records such as the Records of Jin (晉書), of Wei (魏書), of Sui (隋書) and the Tang (新唐書/舊唐書) as well as various official dynastic histories from the Five Dynasties (五代史), the Song (宋史), the Jin (金史), the Yuan (元史) and the Ming (明史). Lastly, Yao Jianzhi also consulted the *Ming Veritable Records* (明實錄) in some detail to create his Ming period map.

(A) Hu Wei 胡渭 (1633-1714) was born into an accomplished literati family in Zhejiang’s Deqing County (德清縣). Although Hu only obtained the *shengyuan* degree status (生員) he went on to help compile the *Comprehensive Gazetteer for the Great Qing* (大清一統志). While working on this project with such scholars as Hu came into contact with a wealth of geographic sources, which allowed him to write his *Yu gong zhui zhi* (禹貢錐指). The *Yu gong zhui zhi* was a meticulous work of evidential scholarship later praised by the *Siku quanshu* editors. It sought to rectify the historic record regarding various geographic features of the realm including mountains, the changing course of rivers and historic places names. See Arthur Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch’ing Period (1644-1912): Two Volumes* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1943, 1944): Volume 1, pp. 335-337.

(B) The *Golden Mirror of the Passing Streams* (*Xingshui jinjian* 行水金鑒) was edited by Fu Zehong and published in 1725. Like Hu Wei’s *Yugong zhuizhi* it is also a work of evidential historic scholarship but is more chiefly concerned with water issues as the title suggests. Fu Zehong, ed., *Xinshui jinjian* reprinted in *Zhongguo shuiliyaoji congbian* 中國水利要籍叢編, ed., Shen Yunlong 沈雲龍 (Taipei: Wenhui, 1969). Translation for title provided by Mark Elvin, *The Retreat of the Elephants: an Environmental History of China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 494, n.54.

for the *Illustrated Classic* was drawn from such a wide variety of historic sources and was compiled by a man who was both an astute evidential scholar and a directly involved local magistrate make this an invaluable source for understanding the historic dynamics of the Zhang River in Linzhang County.

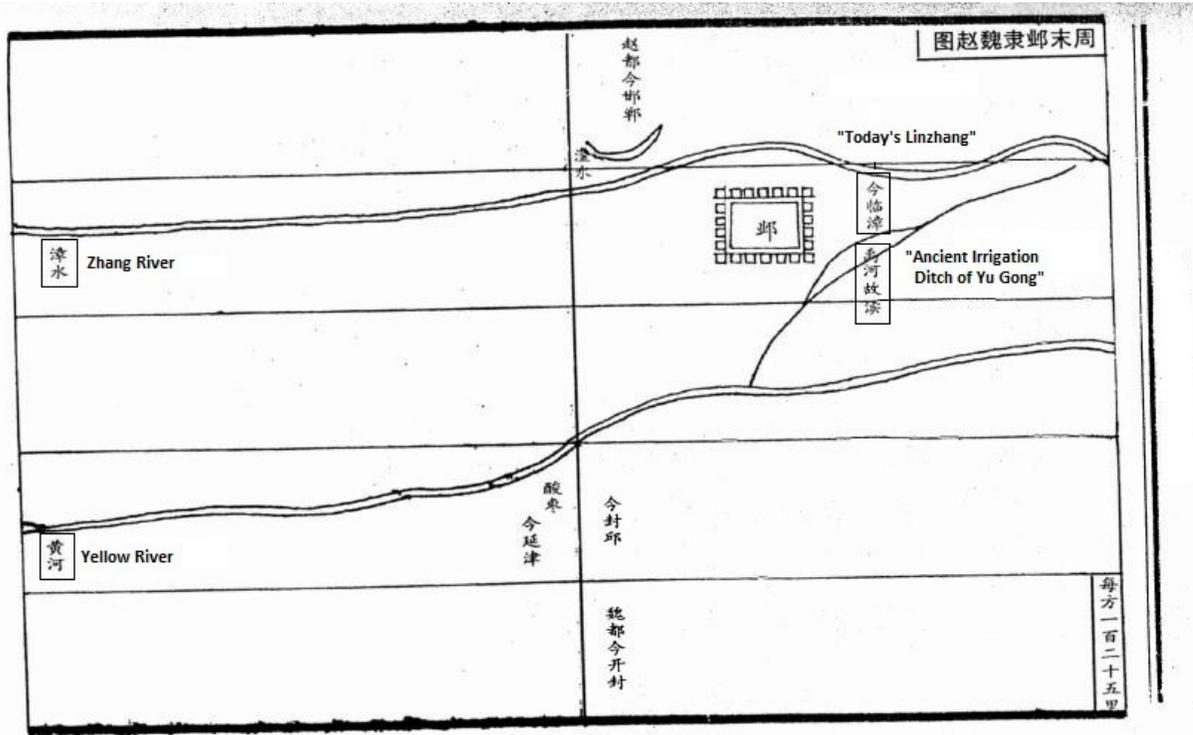
Surveying Yao Jianzhi's set of twenty-two historic maps one issue is made abundantly clear – over 3,500 years of recorded history in the county, the Zhang River has flooded and shifted its course almost incessantly. Moreover, the location of the county seat has also shifted in accordance with the changing path of the river. One feature common to all of Yao's maps is his indication of where “today's Linzhang” (“今臨漳”) was located. By marking where the Linzhang County seat was located in his own time, Yao creates a reference point to help his readers make sense of all the dramatic changes that occurred in this county's hydraulic landscape.<sup>124</sup> Yao's first map outlines the course of the Zhang River during the Shang period (1600-1046 BCE?) and offers a broader view of the region's overall hydraulic system (Figure 2:3)

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<sup>124</sup> One can also compare this stable point with any of the other contemporary places that Yao includes on the map to help orientate the map to the four cardinal directions.



Figure 2.4 Yao Jianzhi's Map of the Zhang River During the Late Zhou Period



Source: Yao Jianzhi, *Linzhang xian zhangshui tujing*, 1837.<sup>128</sup>

By the late Zhou period, the Zhang River had been tamed and followed an ordered and eastwardly course across the Central Plains. The map also depicts the Yellow River, which moves in unison with the tamed course of the Zhang. Calmly sitting between these two rivers is the political centre of the region - Ye. Yao Jianzhi also includes a line labeled, “The ancient ditch of [one of] Yu Gong’s Rivers” (禹河故瀆), which perhaps is intended to draw parallels

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safely assume that Yao’s periodization spans from roughly the founding of the Zhou (1005 BCE) to sometime before the lifetime of Guan Zhong (725-645 BCE).

<sup>127</sup> As the previous map is situated during the life of Guan Zhong, we might assume that this map of the later Zhou period covers the time period spanning roughly from 645 BCE until the founding of the Qin (221 BCE), which is the subject of Yao’s next map.

<sup>128</sup> Yao Jianzhi, *Linzhang xian zhangshui tujing*, 1837, p. 18.

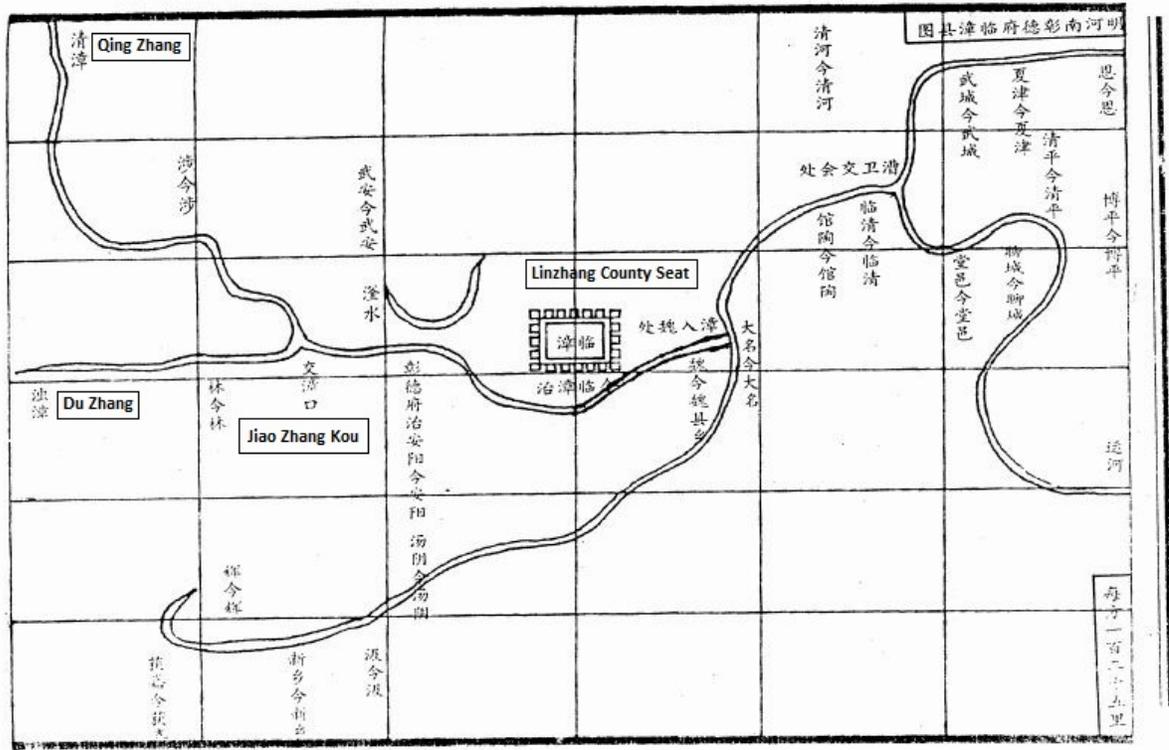
between the taming of the region's rivers and the work of China's most famous ancient hydrologist, Yu Gong.<sup>129</sup> Here Yao seems to be ascribing meaning to the antiquarian landscape of the Zhou period through his visual representation of its hydrological order; just as the Zhou state had brought order to the realm, so too did it tame its rivers. In this golden period, Ye prospered. Not surprisingly, the following map, which documents the Qin period (221 – 206 BCE), shows the river's decaying once again into chaos along with the political order of the realm. In this map, Ye is no longer.

It would be far too tedious to examine every one of Yao Jianzhi's maps here. Suffice it to say that each map presents a different picture in the hydraulic history of the region. While the river's course could vary widely from era to era, for most of the period covered by the maps, the river was situated to the immediate north of the county seat. This orientation suddenly changes in the Ming period however, when we see the Linzhang County seat now depicted north of the Zhang River (Figure 2:5).

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<sup>129</sup> Yu Gong will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

Figure 2.5 Yao Jianzhi's Map of the Zhang River During the Ming Period



Source: Yao Jianzhi, *Linzhang xian zhangshui tujing*, 1837.<sup>130</sup>

To explain this unexpected change, Yao Jianzhi cites information from the *Ming Veritable Records* of the Hongwu period.

In the spring of the 17<sup>th</sup> year of the Hongwu Reign period (1384), an official from Zhangde Prefecture memorialized to the throne that the Zhang River had breached its banks and that a dike should be built in the neighbouring Cizhou to contain the river's flow.<sup>131</sup> It appears that this memorial was ignored and it was not until the ninth month of the following year (1385)

<sup>130</sup> Yao Jianzhi, *Linzhang xian zhangshui tujing*, 1837, p. 18.

<sup>131</sup> Yao Jianzhi, *Linzhang xian zhangshui tujing*, 1837, pp. 61-62. Evidence for this flood is also presented in the public works section of the 1506 Linzhang County gazetteer, which states that the county school was submerged under water by the 1384 flood and that the dormitories for the travelling circuit censors was drowned in water and silt (被水淤没). Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 4, 4a, 6a.

after another devastating flood that the Zhang River Dike was finally repaired.<sup>132</sup> Following this second flood a local official petitioned the Ministry of Works, stating that “last year the Zhang River breached its dike in Linzhang County and the people suffered a great disaster. Although the dikes have [now] been repaired, I’m afraid that this [measure alone] will not last for long.”<sup>133</sup> This official, who remains nameless in the text, then suggests that in order to effectively repair the county seat a much more holistic solution needed to be imagined that both involved the Provincial Surveillance Commission (布政司) and included the construction of variety of earth works projects such as dikes (堤), holding ponds (塘), weirs (堰), dams and embankments (壩) as well as “anything else that could defend against water calamities.”<sup>134</sup>

From the surviving historic records it remains unclear how many of these projects were completed and exactly to what depth. The section in the *Official Ming History* dealing with the Zhang River simply records that “everything was repaired” (皆預脩治). We do know however, that whatever measures were taken were not entirely effective as just eight years later (1393) the incoming magistrate, Yang Xin (楊辛) arrived in the county to find it once again inundated by flood waters.<sup>135</sup> Local records briefly describe how Yang Xin leapt into immediate action and personally supervised the construction of giant rafts to ferry people to higher ground. When the

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<sup>132</sup> Hebei sheng Linzhang xian difangzhi bianzuan weiyuan hui, *Linzhang xianzhi*, 1999, p. 14.

<sup>133</sup> Yao Jianzhi, *Linzhang xian zhangshui tujing*, 1837, p. 62.

<sup>134</sup> “凡堤塘堰壩可以御水患者預為修治,” in Yao Jianzhi, *Linzhang xian zhangshui tujing*, 1837, p. 62.

<sup>135</sup> Yang Xin was a Jiansheng degree holder from Shandong Province’s Gaoyuan County (高苑) located in Qingzhou Prefecture (青州府). His first, and what appears to be his only, official position was held in Linzhang County where he served as county magistrate for an undisclosed amount of time towards the end of the Hongwu Reign period (1368-1398). Although the 1506 Linzhang County gazetteer offers the date when the next incoming magistrate, Zhai Xin (翟辛), took office, there is a clear mistake in the chronology, which makes it impossible to determine exactly how long Yang Xin governed in Linzhang. Later Linzhang County gazetteers correct this error and simply state that both Yang Xin and Zhai Xin governed sometime during the Hongwu reign period (“明太祖洪武中年”). See Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 7, 2b-3a; Zhou Bingyi 周秉彝 and Zhou Shou 周壽, eds, *Linzhang xian zhi* 臨漳縣志 [*Gazetteer of Linzhang County*], 1904, juan 4, 4b-5a, juan 7, 10b-11a; Hebei sheng Linzhang xian difangzhi bianzuan weiyuan hui, *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1999, pp. 14, 513, 843; and Song Bi, ed., *Gaoyuan xian zhi*, 1672, juan 6, 3a.

flood had subsided locals offered him thanks and praises, which Yang Xin reportedly rejected on the grounds that “protecting the people from calamities was his official duty.”<sup>136</sup> Yang Xin then took preventative measures and memorialized the throne asking for the permission to relocate the Linzhang County seat away from the Zhang River. This memorial was approved and work to move the county seat 18 *li* to the northeast of its former position began the following year in 1394.<sup>137</sup> Yang Xin is credited with supervising the relocation, planning, and reconstruction of all of the public buildings that had been destroyed in the 1384 flood, including the county’s office for travelling circuit censors (按察司分司),<sup>138</sup> the county school and public granary.<sup>139</sup> The speed at which these public structures were relocated and rebuilt suggests that Yang Xin might have already begun this moving process sometime before his official memorial had been ruled upon by the Ming court.

This issue raises the pertinent question of who actually was in charge of dealing with the multitude of problems presented by floodwaters from the Zhang River. Here we need to return to the prefatory map for the 1506 Linzhang County gazetteer that started this discussion. As stated earlier, prefatory gazetteer maps not only served to visually orientate the incoming magistrate to features of the locality, they also functioned as clear visual depictions of a magistrate’s immediate realm of jurisdiction and administration. As such, the prefatory map to the 1506 Linzhang Gazetteer does not invite the viewer to consider the river once it passes outside of the map’s borders. The viewer is also not asked to ponder how the actions of other

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<sup>136</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 7, 2b; and Song Bi, ed., *Gaoyuan xian zhi*, 1672, juan 6, 3a.

<sup>137</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 1, 1b-2a. The *Union Gazetteer of the Great Ming* also mentions Yang Xin’s relocation of the Linzhang County Seat. See Li Xian, et al. ed., *Da ming yitongzhi*, 1461, juan 28, 12b.

<sup>138</sup> The county office for travelling circuit censors was also destroyed by the 1384 floods and was relocated and rebuilt in 1394 to the east of the site for the new county seat “...被水淤沒洪武二十七年知縣楊辛重建於今縣治東,” in Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 4, 6a.

<sup>139</sup> The county’s Confucian school and the public granary, which were both submerged in the 1384 floods were relocated and rebuilt in 1394 just west of the new county seat. “洪武二十七年知縣楊辛移建於今縣治西,” in Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 4, 4a.

counties up - or downstream affected the portion of the river that flowed through Linzhang's immediate jurisdiction. In this sense, the map projects a far more bounded view of the Zhang River and of its hydrological management. All of the floods and water calamities that occurred outside of the county's immediate administrative boundaries were simply not the responsibility of the county's magistrate - they were outside his field of vision and beyond his administrative reach.<sup>140</sup> While at first glance the bounded projection provided by the 1506 prefatory map might be viewed as just a cartographic convention, in many ways it speaks to the deeper structural and administrative logic of environmental management and local governance characteristic of the 14<sup>th</sup> and early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. By the mid and late Ming periods however, such localized understandings of environmental governance would come under close scrutiny.

Often in response to various sustained environmental crises such as prolonged flooding and droughts, the Ming state starting in the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century began to create and employ ad-hoc agencies – called Grand Coordinators (巡撫) - to trouble-shoot problems on a case-by-case, region-by-region basis. The defining characteristic of these ad-hoc agencies was that they were invested with jurisdictional powers that transcended not only the more regularized chain of bureaucratic command, but also the rigid spatial-administrative hierarchy that enmeshed the entire Ming realm. Proven efficacy gave way to bureaucratic regularization and these ad-hoc offices later became institutionalized as “Provincial Governors” in the early Qing period.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>140</sup>Moreover, meddling in such extra-jurisdictional affairs was generally regarded as dangerous and always ran the risk of antagonizing locals who were generally reluctant to lend their money and labour to costly and work intensive water control projects even within their own home counties. It is also important to note that a magistrate's performance evaluation would seldom include acts that occurred outside of the immediate administrative unit to which he was dispatched

<sup>141</sup> In his new work *Qing Governors and Their Provinces*, Kent Guy examines the development and regularization of the Provincial Governor position in the early Qing period. He argues that throughout the Ming period, the provincial unit and its exact administrative duties and boundaries were imprecise and often shifting and was only rationalized in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. See Kent Guy, *Qing Governors and Their Provinces: The Evolution of Territorial Administration in China, 1644-1796* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010).

One of these provincial governors, Li Guangdi (里光地, 1642-1718),<sup>142</sup> has left behind an interesting record of his attempts to deal with the trans-regional problems created by the Zhang River in the early Qing period. Reading backwards from these records offers a better sense of the more regionally bound context in which early to mid-Ming magistrates like Yang Xin and Jing Fang operated. Before he rose to the upper echelons of the Qing state, Li Guangdi was first promoted to the position of Provincial Governor of Zhili province in the 12<sup>th</sup> month of the 37<sup>th</sup> reign year of the Kangxi Emperor (1698/9).<sup>143</sup> Within three months of assuming this office, Li Guangdi was forced to deal with the region's river problems. In his *Chronological Biography of Master Wenzhen* (*Wenzhen gong nian pu* 文貞公年譜), Li records that in the 3<sup>rd</sup> month of the 38<sup>th</sup> reign year of the Kangxi Emperor he along with another official Wang Xinming (王新命)<sup>144</sup> were dispatched to survey and assess the Zhang River. He writes:

To the north of the water transport route leading to the capital region is the Sanggan River (桑乾) whose waters flow into the Yongding River (永定河). To the south of the water transport route are the Zhang (漳), Fu (滏) and Huotuo (滹沱) Rivers whose waters flow into the Ziya River (子牙). Of all of these waters, the Zhang River has frequently caused the most damage.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Li Guangdi (z. 晋卿h. 厚庵 and 榕村) was born into a modest family in Fujian's Anxi County (安溪) and earned his *jinshi* degree in 1670. In 1690, Li was promoted to Vice President of the Board of War which he held concurrently with Zhili's Director of Education position. He was subsequently promoted to Governor of Zhili (巡撫直隸) in 1699 and held this post until he was promoted to Grand Secretary in 1705. After his death, Li Guangdi was canonized Li Wenzhen (李文貞). Li Guangdi is most known for his contributions to the Cheng-Zhu school of Neo-Confucianism in the early Qing period. The most complete collection of his works was later published under the title *Rongcun quanji* 榕村全集 [Complete Works of Rongcun]. See Arthur Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period (1644-1912): Two Volumes* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1943, 1944): Volume 1, pp. 473-475; For a fascinating biography of Li Guangdi, also see On-Cho Ng, *Cheng-Zhu Confucianism in the Early Qing: Li Guangdi (1642-1718) and Qing Learning* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001): 51-68.

<sup>143</sup> Li Guangdi 里光地, *Wenzhen gong nian pu*, 文貞公年譜 [*Chronological Biography of Master Wenzhen*], 1829, modern reprint in *Jindai zhongguo shiliao cong kan* 近代中國史料叢刊 [*Reprints of Modern Chinese Historical materials*], vol. 621, ed. Shen Yunlong 沈雲龍 (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1974-1980), p 117.

<sup>144</sup> Wang Xinming was a river official who served in Zhili Province.

<sup>145</sup> “畿甸運道之北有桑乾諸水是為永定河運道之南有漳河滏滹沱諸水是為子牙河是漳數為患,” in Li Guangdi, *Wenzhen gong nian pu*, 1829, p. 121.

The reason that Li Guangdi and Wang Xinming were dispatched to survey this problem was because the Kangxi emperor was particularly concerned about the livelihood of people living around the capital region. As Lilian Li outlines in her *Fighting Famine in North China*, many of the region's Han agriculturalists had had their land confiscated by Manchu bannermen in the early days of the dynasty; without land many people had "very few resources to fall back on" in times of natural disaster.<sup>146</sup> Expressing his concern, the Kangxi emperor declared, "Jifu's [the capital region's] territory is the root of the universe, and we must nurture its people carefully."<sup>147</sup> From 1698 until 1701 the Kangxi emperor invested a great amount of time and personnel towards this task of stabilizing the capital region's hydraulic environment. Over these years, massive river works projects along the newly named Yongding River (永定河, "Eternally Stable River") were completed<sup>148</sup> and a new bureaucratic system was put into place that ensured regular dike and embankment maintenance.<sup>149</sup>

In the effort to stabilize the Yongding River, Kangxi enlisted the help of able hydro-bureaucrats who understood that to tame one river entire river systems needed to be considered.

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<sup>146</sup> Lillian M. Li, *Fighting Famine in North China: State, Market and Environmental Decline, 1690s-1990s* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), p. 41.

<sup>147</sup> As cited in, Lillian M. Li, *Fighting Famine in North China: State, Market and Environmental Decline, 1690s-1990s*, p. 41 from the *Edicts of Sheng Zu* 12/8, 13/8.

<sup>148</sup> This river works included, major dike construction and extensions projects and various drainage and water channeling works. These works are outlined in detail in Li Guangdi, *Wenzhen gong nian pu*, 1829, pp. 136-142; as well as Lilian M. Li, *Fighting Famine in North China: State, Market and Environmental Decline, 1690s-1990s*, pp. 41- 44. Earlier Ming attempts at hydrologically stabilizing the capital region are described in great detail in Yuan Huang 袁黃 (1533-1606), ed., *Huang du shuili* 皇都水利 [*Water Conservancy in the Capital Region*], Reprinted in *Siku quanshu cun mu cong shu/shi bu* 四庫全書存目叢書/ 史部. v. 222 (Jinan: Ji lu shu she chubanshe, 1997). For a visual depiction of the type of tools, techniques, and technical vocabulary used in such late imperial river conservancy projects see Lin Qing 麟慶, ed., *He gong qiju tu shuo* 河工器具圖說 [*Illustrated Handbook of River Conservancy Implements*], 1837.

<sup>149</sup> As Lilian M. Li writes, "The administration of the Yongding River was institutionalized in 1698, with separate officials under the direction of the Zhili governor to supervise the north and south banks. Each bank had eight separate patrols with thirty-six staff who would daily supervise the patrolling of the river by a force of 2,000 river soldiers." Lilian M. Li, *Fighting Famine in North China: State, Market and Environmental Decline, 1690s-1990s*, pp. 43. Drawing on information from, Pan Xien 潘錫恩, *Jifu shui li si an* 畿輔水利四案 [*Four plans for water conservancy and control in the capital region*], 1823, juan 1, 1-2a.

Thus in an effort to stabilize the Yongding River flowing through the capital region Li Guangdi was sent to survey the Zhang River in Linzhang County located hundreds of *li* away.

Li Guangdi left a surprisingly complete record of his dealings with the region's water problems. His posthumously collected writings entitled *Rong cun ji*, include two memorials both dated to the 40th reign year of the Kangxi Emperor (1701) in which Li outlines various problems associated with the Zhang river along with his proposed set of solutions.<sup>150</sup> Both of these memorials start from the assumption that in order to protect the newly completed water projects in the capital, all of north China's river systems had to be stabilized first. As Li quickly realized, stabilizing the Zhang River was a particularly difficult task. His initial surveys found that the Zhang River was divided into four separate branches and that three of these offshoots flowed into the Grand Canal while the other emptied into the smaller Bian River (汴河). The emperor feared if these four courses converged to flow as one, as they had in the past, that the Zhang River might disrupt the Grand Canal or the Ziya River.<sup>151</sup> If the Grand Canal was overtaken, grain transport to the north would be disrupted; if the Ziya was overtaken, floods were sure to ensue in the capital region.<sup>152</sup> Therefore, Li was entrusted with the task of making sure that the Zhang River's various courses did not ever converge. He was also entrusted with the problem of figuring out how to mitigate the flood damage caused by the annual spring run-off.

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<sup>150</sup> From his *Chronological Biography* it appears that Li Guangdi spent the majority of his first years as Zhili Provincial Governor dealing with the region's complex water issues. See Li Guangdi, *Wenzhen gong nian pu*, 1829, pp. 136-142. The memorials are as follows: Li Guangdi 里光地, "Fu Zhang He fen liu shu" 覆漳河分流疏 ["On Dividing the Zhang River's Current"] and "Fu Guangping xian bu ke zhudi shu" 覆廣平縣不可築堤疏 [Why Guangping County must not Construct Dikes], 1701. Both are found in *Rong cun ji* 榕村集 [Collected works of Rong Cun], ed. Li Guangdi 里光地, juan 27 and 32. Accessed in *Siku Quanshu/ji bu/bie ji lei* 四庫全書/集部/別集類 [Literary Anthologies section of the Siku Quanshu], electronic version, n.p.

<sup>151</sup> Li Guangdi, "Fu Zhang He fen liu shu," 1701, in *Rong cun ji*, juan 32, electronic edition, n.p.

<sup>152</sup> Li Guangdi, "Fu Zhang He fen liu shu," 1701, in *Rong cun ji*, juan 32, electronic edition, n.p.

The only way to address these problems was to view all of the region's rivers as an intimate whole where the flood or the change in course of one river was certain to affect other rivers in the region's hydraulic system. Li first noticed that of the three Zhang River branches that emptied into the Grand Canal, two suffered from a weak flow allowing them to silt up more easily.<sup>153</sup> To assure that the Zhang River continued to flow in four branches, Li Guangdi ordered that local officials monitor silt levels in the river branches passing through their jurisdictions. These local officials were also entrusted the task of annually dredging the rivers in their immediate jurisdiction.<sup>154</sup> These actions would keep the Zhang River flowing firmly in its four branches and thus neither the capital nor the Grand Canal would be threatened by flood. It also ensured that any excess water from the Zhang River would not overtake the Huotuo and Yongding Rivers in the north and the Wei and Ziya Rivers in the south.<sup>155</sup>

Combating floods further upstream however, required a different strategy. Li Guangdi recognized that in Linzhang County, “the Zhang River [had] changed its course indefinitely,”<sup>156</sup> and that “every twenty years there was a small change in course of the Zhang River; every fifty years a great one.”<sup>157</sup> The earth in the region was simply too soft and the force of the river too powerful; any efforts to control the river in this county were considered futile. Consultation with

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<sup>153</sup> Li Guangdi, “Fu Zhang He fen liu shu,” 1701, in *Rong cun ji*, juan 32, electronic edition, n.p.

<sup>154</sup> Li Guangdi, “Fu Zhang He fen liu shu,” 1701, in *Rong cun ji*, juan 32, electronic edition, n.p.

<sup>155</sup> Li Guangdi, “Fu Zhang He fen liu shu,” 1701, in *Rong cun ji*, juan 32, electronic edition, n.p.

<sup>156</sup> “從來漳河遷不定” Li Guangdi's comments about controlling the Zhang River were written while serving as Provincial Governor of Zhili. They are preserved in excerpt in the 1872 *Complete Study of the Brief Linzhang County Gazetteer* 臨漳縣志略備考. See Anon., “Jielu Anxi Li zhen gong guang di zhi zhang yi” 節錄安溪李貞公光地治漳議 [“Excerpts from Anxi's Master Li Zhen Guang di's Discussions on Controlling the Zhang”], in Luo Wenguang 駱文光, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi lue beikao* 臨漳縣志略備考 [*Complete Study of the Brief Linzhang Gazetteer*], 1872. Reprinted in *Zhongguo gu ye gu ji zheng li cong shu* 中國古鄴古籍整理叢書 [*Arranged Collectanea of Classical Sources from China's Ancient state of Ye*], eds, Huang Hao 黃浩, Liu Shangfeng 劉尚峰, and Dong Ying 董英. (Linzhang: Hebei Linzhang di fang zhi bian zuan wei yuan hui, 2002): 77-155, pp. 149-151.

<sup>157</sup> “按漳水二十年一小變五十年一大變,” in Anon., “Jielu Anxi Li zhen gong guang di zhi zhang yi,” p. 150.

the local elders also pointed to the same conclusion; they all opposed dredging the river and building embankments. What was the point? “If you open new channels they will soon be full of silt; if you build dikes they will soon collapse.”<sup>158</sup> Rather than forcing a solution on this hopeless situation, Li recommended what the locals had always done – allow the river to move at will and exploit the newly reclaimed fertile land every time the river shifted its course. Li did however, make one slight amendment, which, from what I can tell, was later approved. Newly reclaimed land that resulted from the changing course of the river would be exempt from land taxes until it had thoroughly dried out.<sup>159</sup>

In Li’s dealing with the river we can see a variety of solutions employed to help remedy a complex set of interrelated problems. In some places like Linzhang, the river’s course was allowed to flood and move, insofar as the four branches downstream retained their integrity. This integrity was ensured by the active involvement of a whole variety of local officials in charge of the river within their immediate jurisdictions.

Unlike the early Ming period when the management of lesser rivers<sup>160</sup> was often coordinated by officials within the immediate jurisdiction where the problems were most acute, by the early Qing period a new trans-border approach to solving water problems had clearly emerged. In Li Guangdi’s case, we see a Zhili Provincial Governor surveying land, water and people in Henan’s Linzhang County. That such a far removed county could be pulled into discussions of river security originating in the capital illustrates this shift towards a trans-border administrative approach very clearly. It also demonstrates just how much had changed since the early 16<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>158</sup>“從來漳河遷不定開河則旋淤筑堤則旋塌,” in Anon., “Jielu Anxi Li zhen gong guang di zhi zhang yi,” p.149.

<sup>159</sup> Li Guangdi, “Fu Zhang he fen liu shu,” 1701, in Li Guangdi, *Rong cun ji*, juan 32, electronic edition, n.p.

<sup>160</sup> The Yellow and Huai Rivers were often coordinated under their own separate and distinct offices.

The prefatory map found in the 1506 gazetteer predates many of these administrative changes. It displays a field of bounded action – a bird’s eye view of the magistrate’s administrative territory. Before these larger shifts towards trans-border administration, magistrates made their reputations through the able and thoughtful governance of their immediately assigned jurisdictions. As such, their reputations were in some sense tied to the immediate localities in which they worked and the particular problems that these places presented. This was particularly true in Linzhang County where water problems had been such a longstanding concern. This important context helps us to better appreciate why Linzhang County’s most celebrated local officials, Ximen Bao and Shi Qi, all earned their historic reputations through successes in *local* waterworks projects. It also helps to establish water control itself as an important idiom of local governance and reputation building

Much of the map’s communicative ability however, is intimately tied to one’s level of familiarity with the county’s history. In his *Camera Lucida*, the French semiotician, Roland Barthes, once discussed how “images work.” Although his discussion focuses primarily on photography, his useful conceptual vocabulary can be fruitfully applied to any image. Barthes utilizes two key concepts that have worked their way into the general lingo of visual culture studies: *studium* and *punctum*. To Barthes, *studium* is one’s cultural and social interaction with an image that is marked and mediated by varying degrees of familiarity, sympathy, and distance. It is what makes a picture “understandable” and what subjectively holds and grounds the image. *Punctum* on the other hand, is the element in an image that subjectively grabs the viewer and disturbs the *studium*. It is the rock thrown into the calm pond that disrupts the narrative.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> As Barthes writes, “The second element will break (or punctuate) the studium. A Latin word exists to designate this wound, this prick, this mark made by a pointed instrument: the word suits me all the better in that it also refers to the notion of punctuation, and because the photographs I am speaking of are in effect punctuated, sometimes even speckled with these sensitive points; precisely, these marks, these wounds are so many points. This second element, which will disturb the studium, I shall therefore call punctum; for punctum is also: sting, speck, cut, little hole—and also a cast of the dice. A photograph’s punctum is that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to

I would like to suggest similar features found in the 1506 Linzhang County gazetteer map. As one of hundreds of similar style gazetteer maps, the genre and its conventions are intimately familiar. In other words, we sort of know what to expect when we look at these maps. A prominently displayed county *yamen*, surrounded by a variety of other orthodox features found in the county. Yet for anybody viewing the map with a basic knowledge of the Central Plains river control problems, this serene statist narrative is disturbed by the equally prominent presence of the Zhang River in the map. This punctum sits dangerously close to the county seat and seems to suggest another narrative.

The 1506 gazetteer map thus orientates us immediately to this important and longstanding relationship between state and environment in Linzhang County. Not only was it important for local administrators to be actively involved in local hydrological projects, it was also equally important for them to advertise their successes. The way that the river bends ever so slightly around the county seat seems to visually suggest that by 1506, local administration had been largely successful in taming the Zhang River and hydrologically stabilizing the region. This was a feat worth celebrating and widely publicizing.<sup>162</sup>

## 2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to orientate us to some of the prominent personnel features and environmental dynamics in Linzhang County during the Ming period that will figure prominently in the following chapters. I did this through using the types of prefatory sources that would also serve to orientate any newly incoming magistrate into the area; primarily the gazetteer's preface and the prefatory maps. I argue that although these two sources are generally

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me)." Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), pp. 26-27

<sup>162</sup> The only other era of hydrological stability celebrated by the 1506 gazetteer is associated with the time of Ximen Bao.

dismissed as simply pro-forma clichés, they actually offer a great deal of information about the locality when carefully decoded and contextualized. Chen Wenhui's preface speaks volumes to the unique personnel dynamics found in the immediate Linzhang County region; moreover, the nature, content and authorship of the preface all point to the county's increasing marginality within the Ming polity as well as the various strategies employed by local officials to pull Linzhang back into the Ming *cultural* mainstream. In this sense, Chen's preface displays the power of history and culture in the construction of Linzhang's local identity and in its realm wide reputation.

Similarly, the 1506 gazetteer's prefatory map also helps to orientate us to important regional, hydrological and historical dynamics found in Linzhang County. The dialogic interaction between the map's two cartographic "zero-points" or "centres" (state/*yamen* and the environment/Zhang River) quickly alerts its viewer to the important relationship between, governance, water conservancy and political legitimacy found in Linzhang County. Moreover, the map's bounded projection of the locality also reminds us that we are still operating in an administrative world predating many of the important shifts in environmental governance that began in the latter half of the Ming period and continued through the Qing.

When Jing Fang arrived in Linzhang County in 1497 he would have almost certainly been aware that the locality's most celebrated historic official, Ximen Bao, had earned his reputation through a successful act of water conservancy. He might have also been aware that Ximen Bao's reputation was forever tied to the locality in which he served. Less certain however, was Jing Fang's knowledge of the important role that Ximen Bao's legacy played in defining Linzhang's realm wide cultural positioning in the centuries preceding his arrival. The next two chapters turn to this question and explores the growth, maturation and social/cultural life of the Ximen Bao example in Linzhang County.

## Chapter 3: Creating the Confucian Saint: the Canonization of Ximen Bao

**“Of the five destructive forces floods are the most serious. Once rid of these five destructive forces, men may be well governed” - Guanzi<sup>1</sup>**

### 3.1 Introduction

Local gazetteers are as much about people as they are about places and the 1506 edition of the Linzhang County gazetteer is no exception. Unlike gazetteers produced by more prosperous and gentry rich counties however, the Linzhang County gazetteer’s biographical record is noticeably sparser.<sup>2</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter, Linzhang County did not enjoy a reputation for producing famous scholars, nor was it a place that upwardly mobile officials seeking to gain empire wide fame would likely be posted. Despite being located in the “Central Plains,” Linzhang County was decidedly peripheral by the time its 1506 gazetteer was produced. This does not, however, mean that Linzhang was always an unimportant place, nor does it mean that well-known officials had never been posted there. In fact, one of China’s most celebrated historic officials, Ximen Bao (西門豹, late 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE), earned his reputation in this very region.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In this scene drawn from the “Appraising Terrain” (*du di* 度地) section of the *Guanzi*, Duke Huan of Qi (齊桓公, 643 B.C.E) asks his political advisor Guan Zhong (管仲) to explain the five destructive forces that hamper effective governance. Guanzi replies: “Floods are one, droughts another, wind, fog, hail and frost another, pestilence another, and insects another. This is what is meant by the “five destructive forces.” Of the five destructive forces, floods are the most serious. Once you are rid of these five destructive forces, men may be well governed.” Original text as follows: “桓公曰願聞五害之說管仲對曰水一害也旱一害也風霧雹霜一害也厲一害也蟲一害也此謂五害五害之屬水最為大五害已除人乃可治,” juan 57. As translated in W. Allyn Rickett, *Guanzi: Political, Economic, and Philosophical Essays from Early China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 244.

<sup>2</sup> The Linzhang gazetteer section dealing with famous local officials offers only thirteen biographies for the 1,900 year time period spanning from the late 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE to 1506 CE. Of these thirteen biographies only five offer any extensive information. In contrast, the comparable section in Shanghai County’s 1504 gazetteer also contains exactly thirteen biographies; however, each of these biographies offers far more biographical information; moreover, they span across a much shorter 230 year time frame from roughly 1265 to 1504 CE. See Jing Fang 景芳, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi* 臨漳縣志 [*Gazetteer of Linzhang*], 1506, juan 7, 1a-5b; and Tang Jin 唐錦, ed., *Shanghai zhi* 上海志 [*Gazetteer of Shanghai*], 1504, juan 7, 4a-9b.

<sup>3</sup> Owing to the difficulties in transposing Ming administrative boundaries onto previous historical ones, I use the word “region” in this instance rather than “county.” This question of Linzhang County’s irredentist claims over the region’s antiquity will be examined in more detail in the next chapter.

The Ximen Bao story<sup>4</sup> dates quite far back into China's early antiquity. During the early years of the Warring States period (476 - 221 BCE), Ximen Bao was appointed by Marquis Wen of Wei (魏文侯, 445-396 BCE) to govern the region known as Ye (鄴) – the name for the administrative region that would later be known as Linzhang County.<sup>5</sup> On arriving in his new post and on finding that the region was poor and barren, Ximen Bao immediately called a meeting with the local elders to find the root cause of the people's hardships.

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<sup>4</sup> Throughout this chapter and the next I use the terms “story” and “legend” somewhat interchangeably when referring to the afterlives of the Ximen Bao texts. I do this not to downplay the historic veracity of the Ximen Bao accounts, but to highlight the layers of social meaning that they acquired as they were transmitted through the ages. Although Sima Qian treats Ximen Bao as a fully historic personage in his *Shi Ji* biography, Whalen Lai has argued that Ximen Bao in fact, never existed. He contends that Ximen Bao was an aggregate character, euhemerized out of earlier myths. Lai even goes so far as to suggest that in his victory over the aqueous river god, Ximen Bao was a personified adaptation of Yu the Great's (大禹) triumph over China's great pre-historic floods. Although the fully historic status of Ximen Bao's record is certainly debatable, I reject Lai's claims on two grounds. First, Lai disregards the entire body of Ximen Bao texts that predate the more canonical account in the *Shi Ji*. Pre *Shi Ji* accounts of Ximen Bao make no mention of his triumph over the river god and describe other aspects of his record of governance in some historic detail. Second, even if Ximen Bao in fact, never did exist, he was given life by Sima Qian's biography and was taken as a fully historic personage by later generations. In other words throughout Chinese history, Ximen Bao was, and continues to be, understood as a “real” person. See Whalen Lai, “Looking for Mr. Ho Po: Unmasking the River God of Ancient China,” *History of Religions*, 29:4 (May 1990): 335-350, pp. 342-344.

<sup>5</sup> In his poem, “Ascending the Terrace” (登臺賦), Cao Cao's son, Cao Zhi (曹植) was the first person to put the two characters “Lin” and “Zhang” together. Cao Zhi wrote this poem in 212 CE to commemorate his father's completion of the Copper Sparrow Terrace (銅雀臺). In this poem, Linzhang does not refer to the region itself, but rather to the long scenic river that ran through Ye (“臨漳川之長流兮”). In 313, Ye County was renamed Linzhang County to avoid an imperial naming taboo on the personal name of the fourth emperor of the Western Jin Dynasty (西晉) (266-316 CE), Sima Ye (司馬鄴) who ruled from 313-317 as the Jianxing Emperor (建興). In 319 CE the county's name was restored to Ye, which it retained until the Eastern Wei period (534-550) when the name Linzhang was used once again. Despite numerous changes in county jurisdiction, the county has remained named Linzhang since the 6<sup>th</sup> century. For Cao Zhi's original poem see Dim Cheuk Lau, et al. comp and ed., *Cao Zhi ji zhuzi suoyin* 曹植集逐字索引 [*Concordance to the Works of Cao Zhi*] (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2001), p. 13. For more on Linzhang's changing place name see Jing Fang, ed, *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 1, 1a-1b; Hebei sheng Linzhang xian difangzhi bianzuan weiyuan hui 河北省臨漳縣地方志編纂委員會 [Linzhang County Gazetteer Compilation Committee, Hebei Province], *Linzhang xian zhi* 臨漳縣志 [*Gazetteer of Linzhang County*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1999), pp. 55-57; n.a., *Henan sheng qu xian yan'ge jianbiao* 河南省區縣沿革簡表 [*Simplified Chart of County Evolution in Henan Province*], n.d, Republican era 1912-1949 (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1968), p. 25; and Shao Jian 少劍, “Linzhang you he er lai” 臨漳由何而來 [Where did Linzhang Come From?], *Zhao wenhua* 趙文化 [Zhao Civilization] no. 15 (Feb. 2006): 40-41.

Ximen Bao quickly discovered that the persistent threat of floods from the local river<sup>6</sup> had given rise to a group of petty local officials and female shamans (*wu* 巫)<sup>7</sup> who used this threat of flood to extort money from the locals. As the legend goes, the Shamans proclaimed that the local river god known as “He Bo” (河伯)<sup>8</sup> required a sacrificial wife each year or the river would rise up in anger and wash the locals away.<sup>9</sup> Acting in collusion, local officials and shamans went to all the houses in the county with young women demanding sacrifices; fearing that their daughters would be offered to He Bo, locals either bribed the officials and shamans to

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<sup>6</sup> Due to its sheer dominance in the county’s local landscape and history, most modern accounts of the Ximen Bao story take this river to mean the Zhang River (漳河); however, there are some compelling reasons to believe that it was actually the Yellow River (黃河). Both the Zhang and the Yellow Rivers have changed their courses repeatedly throughout history and at times both have flowed through the Ye/Linzhang Region making it difficult to know exactly to which river the Ximen Bao story refers. In his 1837 *Illustrated Classic of the Zhang River in Linzhang County*, the Late Qing evidential scholar (考證派), Yao Jianzhi charted the changing historic course of Zhang River. According to Yao’s maps and annotations, at the time when Ximen Bao was sent to govern Ye, both the Zhang and the Yellow rivers flowed through the region – the Zhang River to the north of the county seat and the Yellow River to the south. The canonical text for the Ximen Bao story, the *Shi ji*, never refers to the river by name, but only by its water deity, He Bo (河伯). That the deity’s name shares the ancient name for the Yellow River (*He* 河) also suggests that the flood waters referred to in the Ximen Bao story were possibly the Yellow River’s and not the Zhang’s. See Yao Jianzhi 姚柬之, *Linzhang xian zhangshui tujing* 臨漳縣漳水圖經 [*Illustrated Classic of the Zhang River in Linzhang County*], 1837. UBC, Puban Collection; Modern reprint, Huang Hao 黃浩, Liu Shangfeng 劉尚峰 and, Dong Ying 董英, eds., *Zhongguo gu ye gu ji zheng li cong shu* 中國古鄴古籍整理叢書 [*Arranged Collectanea of Classical Sources from China’s Ancient state of Ye*] (Linzhang: Hebei Linzhang di fang zhi bian zuan wei yuan hui, 2002), pp. 19-21.

<sup>7</sup> The term “*wu*” is difficult to render in English partially due to its gender specific quality. Arthur Waley has written on the subject: “In ancient China intermediaries used in the cult of Spirits were called *wu*. They figure in old texts as experts in exorcism, prophecy, fortune telling, rainmaking and interpretation of dreams. Some *wu* danced, and they are sometimes defined as people who danced in order to bring down spirits... They were also magic healers and in later times at any rate one of their methods of doctoring was to go, as Siberian shamans do, to the underworld and find out how the power of death can be propitiated. Indeed the functions of Chinese *wu* were so like those of Siberian and Tungus Shamans that it is convenient . . . to use shaman as a translation of *wu*.” Arthur Waley, *The Nine Songs: A Study of Shamanism in Ancient China* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1955), p. 9. Edward Schafer has offered a more gender specific translation for *wu* as “shamanka.” In Schafer’s words, “Shamans are men who have acquired the power to travel in spirit worlds bearing requests and commands to supernatural beings on behalf of human clients, and so they are able to help and heal. Shamankas are female shamans, the dominant Chinese variety.” Edward H. Schafer, *The Divine Woman: Dragon Ladies and Rain Maidens* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1980), p. 3. Even though the gendered specific quality of *wu* is important, I have followed Waley’s translation of *wu* as “shaman” due to the somewhat cumbersome English rendering of *wu* as “shamanka.”

<sup>8</sup> Translating “He Bo” into English presents some difficulties. Rather than literally translate He Bo as “River Earl,” “Count of the River,” or even “River God” I retain this deity’s proper name, He Bo throughout the text. This choice is to highlight the personified nature of the deity, which will be discussed in some detail in the following sections.

<sup>9</sup> In later literature this practice is commonly referred to with the four character expression, “He Bo qu fu” (河伯娶婦) literally meaning “He Bo’s taking of a wife.”

leave their homes or fled the county with their daughters in despair. According to the county's elders, years of this accumulated tradition had left Ye poor and destitute. The root cause of the county's hardships was thus this local religious practice.

Ximen Bao's solution to the problem is well known in China even to this day. On the morning when the ritual marriage sacrifice was to happen, Ximen Bao went to the river's banks and stopped the sacrifice by stating that the selected woman was not beautiful enough for He Bo's majesty.<sup>10</sup> He then instructed the shamans to go to the riverbanks to tell He Bo that a more suitable bride would be provided the following day. Ximen Bao then had all of the shamans and officials involved in the sacrifice pushed into the swift current of the river. In later literature, this act is canonically referred to in the four character expression, "Tossing the Shamans into the River" (投巫入河).<sup>11</sup>

Ximen Bao understood that the real cause of all the flooding in the region was due to a lack of systematic hydraulic management. He immediately abolished the annual practice of marrying a wife to He Bo and ordered the construction of twelve ditches used to divert floodwaters and to irrigate the people's fields. These irrigation ditches prevented further water disasters and brought wealth and prosperity to the people of Ye. For these efforts, Ximen Bao was honoured by the locals and praised throughout the ages as an upright model of wise and sagely governance. Moreover, to this day many modern scholars still consider Ximen Bao's

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<sup>10</sup> Whalen Lai doubts the historic veracity of this portion of the text and offers a particularly humorous critique. He writes: "Did Pao [Ximen Bao] really foil the shamans' treachery by insisting that Ho Po [He Bo] deserved a prettier bride than the one selected? There is a bit of a "Beauty and the Beast" half-truth in this storytelling. It is doubtful that Ho Po cared if his dinner was "the fairest of them all." King Kong prefers blondes only in our Hollywood imagination." See Lai, "Looking for Mr. Ho Po: Unmasking the River God of Ancient China," p. 337.

<sup>11</sup> The exact location where Ximen Bao "Tossed the Shamans into the River" is unclear. However, a map in the 1999 Linzhang County gazetteer hazards to guess that it was located just west of the remnants of Copper Sparrow Terrace (銅雀台) about 18 kilometers southwest of today's Linzhang County Centre. See prefatory map in Hebei sheng Linzhang xian difangzhi bianzuan weiyuan hui 河北省臨漳縣地方志編纂委員會編, ed. [Compilation Committee for the Linzhang County Gazetteer, Hebei Province], *Linzhang xian zhi*, 臨漳縣志, 1999, n.p

twelve irrigation canals to be the first reliable depiction of large-scale hydraulic engineering found in the Chinese historic record.<sup>12</sup>

Generally referred to by the standard phrase, “Ximen Bao Governs Ye” (西門豹治鄴), the Ximen Bao story has passed down through the ages as a relatively unambiguous tale with a clear moral lesson; only through upright and orthodox Confucian governance could vulgar local practices be stamped out and prosperity be brought to the region. In a similar mold, the Ximen Bao story is taught in China schools to the present day as an example of the victory of rational governance over local superstition. Generations of students who went through the primary school system during the Maoist years remember how the “rationalist” and “atheist” governor Ximen Bao drowned “local witches” and successfully eradicated feudal peasant superstition.<sup>13</sup> Given the Chinese government’s current crackdown against “heterodox” Falun Gong practitioners, it is not entirely surprising to find that Ximen Bao stories and lessons have grown even more abundant in recent years.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps, most striking in this vein is a recent article written by the Editor-in-Chief of the *Inner Mongolian Journal of Education* entitled “Thinking

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<sup>12</sup> See Joseph Needham, Wang Ling and Lu Gwei-djen, *Science and Civilisation in China: Volume 4: Physics and Physical Technology: Part 3: Civil Engineering and Nautics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 271; Mark Edward Lewis, “Warring States Political History” *Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.*, ed. Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 587-650, p. 605; and Zhang Youshan 张幼山 “Ximen Bao yu zhang he shi er qu” 西門豹与漳河十二渠 [Ximen Bao and the Zhang River’s Twelve Irrigation Ditches ] in *Shui li tian di* 水利天地 [Hydrology Universe].vol 4 (1989), p.15.

<sup>13</sup> The Ximen Bao story still figures prominently in today’s Chinese primary and middle school curriculums and is taught in much the same pedagogical manner as the Brothers Grimm tales are in the Canadian and American education systems. One middle school teacher from Fujian Province has written a particularly interesting editorial that discusses the best way to teach the logic behind Ximen Bao’s initial feigned belief in superstitious local practices. See Ma Yandeng 馬延燈, “Ximen bao weishenme jiazhuang mixin” 西門豹為什麼假裝迷信 [Why Did Ximen Bao Feign Superstitious Beliefs?], *Guangdong jiaoyu* 廣東教育 [*Guangdong Journal of Education*] no. 3 (2009): 67.

<sup>14</sup> Notable examples in the recent literature include: Dui Yunshi 堆云石, “Chong wen Ximen bao zhi ye” 重溫西門豹治鄴 [Review of Ximen Bao Governs Ye], *Zhong xue sheng bai ke* 中學生百科 [*Comprehensive Reading for Middle School Students*] no.7 (2006), p. 4; Li Wei 李威 and Liu Qing 劉青, “Ximen bao” 西門豹 [Ximen Bao], *Xin shao nian* 新少年 [*New Adolescence*] no. 12 (2007): 16-17; and Yang Yousheng 楊友生, “Ximen bao jiao xue jian yi” 西門豹教學建議 [The purpose of teaching the Ximen Bao Story], *Xiao xue yu wen jiao xue* 小學語文教學 [*Primary School Language Education*] no. 4 (2007), p.47.

of Ximen Bao and ‘Mr. Science’.”<sup>15</sup> According to the author, the best way to combat the heterodox threat presented by today’s Falun Gong is to emulate Ximen Bao’s example of rationalist governance while furthering the scientific education of the masses as promoted by May Fourth era ideal of “Mr. Science.”<sup>16</sup> This sentiment is still present; on my first visit to Linzhang in 2006, I found sitting below the county’s Ximen Bao monument a banner with the slogan, “Advance Scientific Knowledge and Oppose Heterodox Teachings.”

**Figure 3.1 Monument to Ximen Bao in Linzhang County**



**“Advance Scientific Knowledge and Oppose Heterodox Teachings” (倡导科学反对邪教). This slogan plays off the monument’s depiction of Ximen Bao tossing the shamanesses into the river and his cutting of the twelve irrigation channels. Source: Photo by author, summer 2006.**

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<sup>15</sup> Anon., “Xiang qi le Ximen bao he Sai xiansheng” 想起了西門豹和‘賽先生’ [Thinking of Ximen Bao and ‘Mr Science’], *Nei menggu jiao yu* 內蒙古教育 [Inner Mongolian Journal of Education] (February, 2001): 46.

<sup>16</sup> The author’s concluding remarks are as follows: “In the challenge of facing heretical religious teachings: one should summon Ximen Bao for legal principles and Mr. Science for educational principles. Original text, “面對邪教的挑戰: 法制呼喚西門豹. 教育呼喚‘賽先生,’” See Anon., “Xiang qi le Ximen bao he Sai xiansheng,” p. 46.

One might gloss over the contemporary usages of the Ximen Bao story as just another illustration of the current Chinese state's manipulation of history to suit its own agenda.<sup>17</sup> This conclusion however, elides much of the historic complexity found in the maturation of the Ximen Bao story and ideal. This chapter starts at the very beginning of the Ximen Bao story and explores his transformation into a canonized Confucian saint. We will find that although the early textual record concerning Ximen Bao is by no means uniform in its evaluation of his record in governance, by the end of the Han dynasty, Ximen Bao had clearly emerged as a personification of Confucian humanism and of benevolent and sagely governance. To further flesh this argument out, the present chapter unfolds in two distinct sections.

The first section examines early textual references to Ximen Bao found in the *Lüshi chunqiu* (呂氏春秋), the *Han Feizi* (韓非子), the *Huainanzi* (淮南子), the *Zhan guo ce* (戰國策) and the *Shuo yuan* (說苑). It will become clear through this discussion that, although the Ximen Bao story was later transmitted as an unproblematic and unambiguous story, the early textual record of this famous official is far more ambiguous.

By the end of the Han Dynasty (220 CE), Sima Qian's *Shi ji* (史記) had grown to overshadow earlier textual accounts of Ximen Bao as the dominant version of his achievements in governing Ye. The second section examines the ways in which the *Shi ji* historically fixed, or "canonized" the image of Ximen Bao as an upright and virtuous Confucian official and how this canonization reflected the concerns of times in which Sima Qian wrote. In order to do this, I first explore the pre-Confucian history of the region and contextualize the kinds of local practices Ximen Bao might have brought an end to. Given that Sima Qian lived in a time of dramatic

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<sup>17</sup> The ways in which various modern Chinese states have mobilized the memory of ancient historical figures has been discussed in Paul Cohen's recent work on King Guojian (越王勾踐, 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE). Cohen describes the deep "Chinese cultural resource" found in the King Guojian story as a type of "insiders" knowledge that is instilled in Chinese children from an early age. Despite the pervasiveness and importance of the story inside of China, "outsiders" are unlikely to have ever heard of King Guojian. My research into the Ximen Bao story and its social/cultural/political life in China suggest a similar conclusion. See Paul Cohen, *Speaking to History: the Story of King Guojian in Twentieth-Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), p. xix.

political transformation, many of the qualities that he admires and highlights in the Ximen Bao story reflect the larger political shifts towards state Confucianism occurring around him at the time. Accordingly, Sima Qian casts the Ximen Bao story as a clear personified example of sagely Confucian virtue and governance. Owing to the weight of the *Shi ji* in the larger body of Confucian writings, I understand Sima Qian's depiction of Ximen Bao as an important textual step in his secular apotheosis within an emerging Confucian canon. This section argues that through the *Shi ji*, Ximen Bao was effectively elevated to the status of a Confucian saint, quite literally personifying ideas of order and sagely local governance.<sup>18</sup>

### 3.2 Ximen Bao in the Early Textual Record

Although rarely discussed in the secondary literature, there are several references to Ximen Bao that can be found in China's early historic record that pre-date the canonical account of his actions as recorded in the *Shi ji*. The following section examines these records in a roughly chronological order in an attempt to better understand the origins of the Ximen Bao story and its subsequent developments.

#### 3.2.1 Inept and Disloyal: the *Lüshi chunqiu*

The earliest surviving historic reference to Ximen Bao is found in Lü Buwei's (呂不韋) 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE encyclopedic work the *Lüshi chunqiu* in a section entitled, "Pleasure in Success" (樂成).<sup>19</sup> The chapter opens with a short poem, which sets the tone for the entire section:

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<sup>18</sup> Although it may be more orthodox to refer to ancient cultural heroes in the Confucian tradition as "sages," I find the Christian term "saint" to be effective in describing the elevation of Ximen Bao to his canonical status. Words like "saint," "canonization," and "apotheosis" all suggest a certain religious air or even notions of "the holy," which are arguably absent from the Ximen Bao tradition. However, Ximen Bao does share some similarities with Christian saints in several important regards, including: his initial elevation to canonical status for historical deeds; the recording of these deeds in a canonical body of literature; and finally, that these deeds are said to exemplify and personify key values, morals and lessons.

<sup>19</sup> In their recent study and translation of the complete work, John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel argue that the work's literal title *Spring and Autumn of Mr. Lu* is best rendered in English as *The Annals of Lü Buwei*. The authors

The greatest wisdom is formless;  
The greatest vessel takes longest to complete;  
The greatest music has the faintest notes.<sup>20</sup>

“Pleasure in Success” is about governance and the need for officials to exercise far-sighted patience even in the face of immense public pressure. Lü Buwei contends that the greatest pleasures in governance are found in initiating successful projects that benefit “a myriad of generations” even if the locals are initially recalcitrant to accept such undertakings.<sup>21</sup> This is the context in which we first encounter Ximen Bao.

The text opens with King Xiang of Wei (魏襄王) drinking and offering toasts with his closest officials. An official named Shi Qi (史起) interrupts the merriment, stands up and indignantly states, “Some officials are worthy and others are not. For the worthy to feel satisfied is permissible, but it is wrong for the unworthy to feel so.” Surprised by Shi Qi’s comment, King Xiang of Wei replies, “May all officials be the kind of official Ximen Bao was.”<sup>22</sup> Shi Qi then explains his reasons for feeling that many of Ye’s officials were not worthy and makes particular reference to the inadequacies of Ximen Bao:

The family of Wei has distributed to vassals parcels of land of a hundred *mou* each...Only the territory of Ye was two hundred *mou*, but the fields were bad. The

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also discuss some of the problems in dating the work but suggest that the date given at the end of the work’s postface, 239 BCE, is reasonably valid. John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel, *The Annals of Lü Buwei: A Complete Translation and Study* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), pp. viii, 27.

<sup>20</sup> Original text, “大智不形大器晚成大音希聲,” in *Lüshi chungiu*, 16/5.1 translated in John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel, *The Annals of Lü Buwei: a Complete Translation and Study*, p. 388.

<sup>21</sup> The original text is as follows: “禹之決江水也民聚瓦礫.事已成功已立為萬世利.禹之所見者遠也而民莫之知故民不可與慮化舉始而可以樂成功.” The first example of upright governance offered in the text is Yu Gong’s waterworks projects. “While Yu was digging channels for the rivers and streams, the common people were still futilely piling up potsherds for a dam. When Yu’s task was completed and success achieved, a myriad of generations benefited. His vision was far-reaching, but the people were ignorant of what to do. He could not, therefore, include the people in his plans nor in the initial work, but he could enjoy with them the outcome and success.” *Lüshi chungiu*, 16/5.2 translated in John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel, *The Annals of Lü Buwei: a Complete Translation and Study*, p. 389.

<sup>22</sup> *Lüshi chungiu*, 16/5.5, translated in John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel, *The Annals of Lü Buwei: a Complete Translation and Study*, p. 392. For their complete translation of the passage along with the original Chinese see Appendix A

Zhang River ran alongside them, but Ximen Bao did not know how to make use of it; this shows his ignorance. If he knew but said nothing, this shows his disloyalty. One should not emulate such ignorance and disloyalty.<sup>23</sup>

According to Shi Qi, Ximen Bao's record of governance in Ye was not worth emulating. He in fact suggests that Ximen Bao's inability to fully exploit the region's hydraulic resources was nothing short of disloyal to the people that he was governing and particularly to his sovereign, the Wei ruling house.

The following day, King Xiang summoned Shi Qi to discuss the possibilities of irrigating Ye's fields with water drawn from the Zhang River. Shi Qi explains that it was indeed possible, but that the short-term hardships suffered over the duration of the project would surely incite the resentment and wrath of Ye's people. He states:

If your servant undertakes this project, the people are certain to harbor great resentment against him. At the worst, they will kill him, and short of that, they will trample him under foot. Although your servant may die or be trampled, he hopes that the king will then send another man to see the project through.<sup>24</sup>

Impressed by his far-sighted determination, King Xiang of Wei proclaims Shi Qi commander of Ye and entrusts him the task of bringing water benefits to its people. Just as Shi Qi predicted, "The people of Ye were [initially] greatly resentful and wanted to trample him."<sup>25</sup> In the end however, Shi Qi's project was completed and the Zhang's waters flowed through the fields of Ye. In their new prosperity the locals wrote a memorial song to Shi Qi:

Ye had a sage commandant,  
This was Sir Shi  
He channeled the river Zhang  
To irrigate the lands round Ye.  
What had from old been a salty waste

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<sup>23</sup> *Lüshi chunqiu*, 16/5.5, translated in John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel, *The Annals of Lü Buwei: a Complete Translation and Study*, p. 392.

<sup>24</sup> *Lüshi chunqiu*, 16/5.5, translated in John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel, *The Annals of Lü Buwei: a Complete Translation and Study*, p. 392.

<sup>25</sup> *Lüshi chunqiu*, 16/5.5, translated in John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel, *The Annals of Lü Buwei: a Complete Translation and Study*, p. 392.

Now produces rice and grain.<sup>26</sup>

As the first reference to Ximen Bao in the surviving historic record, the *Lüshi chunqiu* presents a surprisingly negative depiction of a man who would later become a celebrated Confucian cultural hero. The text does not tell us anything of Ximen Bao's historic origins, his rise to power, nor any of his successes in office; we only read of his failure to fully exploit the region's hydraulic resources and his inability to bring prosperity to the people of Ye. The "pleasure in success" outlined in this section does not belong to Ximen Bao as one might initially suspect, but rather to the subsequent governor of Ye, Shi Qi. In this early text, it was Shi Qi's determination, not Ximen Bao's that irrigated Ye and won the affection of its locals.<sup>27</sup> It should be noted however, that although this reference to Ximen Bao is quite negative it does provide some evidence of his lasting reputation in the region and the ways in which his administration set the bar for subsequent governors of Ye. Shi Qi may have not agreed with Ximen Bao's methods, but he was still forced to define and defend himself against them.

### 3.2.2 Impatient and Quick Tempered: the *Han Feizi*

The second reference to Ximen Bao which can be found in the surviving historic record is provided by the Warring States text commonly referred to as the *Han Feizi*. Although far more subtle in its critique of Ximen Bao than what is found in the *Lüshi chunqiu*, this legalist text also points to one of Ximen Bao's failings – his rash temper. In the section entitled, "Observing Deeds" (觀行) the *Han Feizi* offers several historic examples of previous sages who were able to

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<sup>26</sup> *Lüshi chunqiu*, 16/5.5, translated in John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel, *The Annals of Lü Buwei: a Complete Translation and Study*, p. 392. Chinese text for poem is as follows: "鄴有聖令是為史公漳水灌鄴旁終古斥鹵生之稻粱." For their complete translation of the passage along with the original Chinese see Appendix B

<sup>27</sup> It is interesting to note that over one hundred years later, Ban Gu would cite the *Lüshi chunqiu* story almost verbatim in his "Treatise on Rivers and Canals" found in the *Han Shu*. See Ban Gu班固, *Gou xu zhi 溝洫志* [Records of Irrigation Ditches], section 9. *Han shu 漢書* [Book of the Former Han], Modern reprint (Zhonghua Shuju, 1962), pp. 1677-1678.

overcome their own personal shortcomings by first recognizing their own limits. In this context, the *Han Feizi* briefly mentions Ximen Bao, who is said to have worn leather on his feet to slow and calm his quick temper.<sup>28</sup> While it is unclear exactly how this leather worked, that Ximen Bao was pointed out for having a quick temper in this text is noteworthy. As we will read in later sources, Ximen Bao is generally presented as an even-tempered and thoughtful official with no trace of a rash or impetuous temper.

### 3.2.3 Local Resistance to Ximen Bao's Rule: The *Huainanzi*

The *Huainanzi* from the Western Han period (202 BCE - 9 CE) is the second historical text to offer any lengthy account of Ximen Bao's record in office. Completed sometime during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, the *Huainanzi* is an eclectic collection of texts on topics as diverse as nature, philosophy, astronomy and politics.<sup>29</sup> In the section entitled, "Discourses on Human Affairs" (人間訓) we see the text's first and only mention of Ximen Bao. The relevant passage opens with the somewhat vague couplet:

Some are at fault yet may be rewarded  
Some have merit yet may be [judged to be] at fault.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> From the very short original text ("西門豹之性急故佩韋以緩己") it is unclear exactly how this leather on Ximen Bao's feet worked. Some commentators suggest that Ximen Bao actually wore a type of leather restricting belt around his waist, which he would tug at every time he felt his temper over boil. While the primary text would suggest such a reading, the structural symmetry of the overall passage hints that the leather Ximen Bao wore was in fact on his feet. See original text in *Hanfeizi*, Guan Xing (觀行), Book 8, Chapter 24; Modern commentaries in Shao Zenghua 邵增樺 ed., *Han Feizi jin zhu jin yi* 韓非子今注今譯 [*The Han Feizi with Modern Commentary and Translation*] (Taipei: Taiwan shang wu yin shu guan, 1982), pp. 882-883; and Tang Jingzhao 湯敬昭 and Li Shian 李仕安, eds. *Han Feizi jiao zhu* 韓非子校注 [*Han Feizi, Collated and Annotated*] (Jiangsu: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1982), pp. 272-273. For complete English translation of the passage along with original Chinese text see Appendix C

<sup>29</sup> According to both the *Shi Ji* and the *Han Shu*, the *Huainanzi* can be dated with some accuracy to 139 BCE when the work's patron, the Prince of Huainan, Liu An 劉安 presented the work to the Han imperial Court.

<sup>30</sup> The original text is as follows: "或有罪而可賞也或有功而可罪也," in Liu An 劉安 ed., *Huainanzi* 淮南子, 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, Juan 18 (人間訓). Modern reprint with collected commentaries in He Ning 何寧, ed., *Huainanzi ji shi* 淮南子集釋 [*The Huainanzi with collected commentaries and notes*] (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 2004 ) vol 3, p. 1268; and Chen Yiping 陳一平, ed. *Huainanzi jiao zhu yi* 淮南子校注譯 [*The Huainanzi with Notes and Explanations*] (Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1994), pp. 896-898.

This section of the “Discourses on Human Affairs” regards the art of governance - in particular the question of how to evaluate an official’s true worth in confused circumstances. To explore this issue the text offers a parallel discussion of the administrative records of two Wei governors, Ximen Bao and Xie Bian (解扁). The paraphrased story is as follows.

When Ximen Bao was governor of Ye, locals complained to Marquis Wen of Wei (魏文侯) that no millet had been “gathered in the granaries; no money was collected in the storehouses; no armor or weapons was [stored] in the armoury; [and] there were no planning meeting among the officials.”<sup>31</sup> On hearing this information, Marquis Wen of Wei personally went to inspect the county himself to see if what had been reported was true. When he arrived, he found that the accusations were all accurate and scolded Ximen Bao for allowing the region to fall into great chaos. Ximen Bao was warned that if he could not explain the reasons for the county’s depleted state of affairs, he would be severely punished.

In his defense, Ximen Bao responded that in fact, he had been storing up the county’s stockpiles, but that these reserves had been stored among the people. This reasoning was based on Ximen Bao’s sagely understanding that:

“A kingly ruler enriches the people;  
A hegemonic ruler enriches the military;  
A lost state enriches the storehouses.”<sup>32</sup>

Ximen Bao then mounted the city wall and beat the drum. On the first strike of the drum, “the people donned armor, grabbed arrows, and came out carrying weapons and bows.” On the second strike the people, “came pushing handcarts loaded with millet.” Not wanting to breach

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<sup>31</sup>The original text is as follows: “西門豹治鄴廩無積粟府無儲錢庫無甲兵官無計會人數言其過於文侯,” in *Huainanzi*, 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, juan 18. Modern reprint with collected commentaries in He Ning, ed., *Huainanzi ji shi*, vol 3, p. 1268.

<sup>32</sup> As translated in John S. Major, Sarah A. Queen, et al. trans., *The Huainanzi: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China, Liu An King of Huainan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), pp. 733-734. I have put quotation marks around this quotation to preserve the offsetting of this passage in the original text.

the people's trust Ximen Bao then asked for permission to invade the state of Yan. It turns out that Ximen Bao had made adequate military preparations in Ye and was easily able to defeat the Yan troops and reclaim lost Wei territory. The *Huainanzi* concludes that Ximen Bao's record in Ye was an example of "having merit, but [still] being incriminated."<sup>33</sup>

While, the *Huainanzi* ultimately praises Ximen Bao for exercising a broader vision in local administration, the text also explicitly states that the people of Ye resented his rule so much that they complained to higher authorities. Such local dissent and resistance to Ximen Bao's tenure in office is not witnessed in any other historic texts; this makes the *Huainanzi* an important and unique source. Later historic sources are all silent on this episode of a negative local response to Ximen Bao's rule in Ye.

Although individually quite brief, the sum of these early textual references to Ximen Bao found in the *Lüshi chunqiu*, the *Han Feizi* and the *Huainanzi* is important to note for several reasons. First, the early body of texts regarding this ancient heroic figure is by no means as clear or uniform as later understandings of Ximen Bao would suggest. Second, all of these sources present a very different image of Ximen Bao than is generally recognized in the Chinese historic literature and imagination. Ximen Bao is not said to be a model of sagely Confucian governance; in fact there is no explicit mention of any Confucian virtues in any of these texts at all. Rather, Ximen Bao is presented as being incapable of irrigating Ye, rash and ill-tempered, and even the

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<sup>33</sup>The original Chinese text is as follows: “此有罪而可賞者也。” The second half of the story then examines the actions of another Wei official named Xie Bian who was in charge of the eastern border regions of the state. Xie Bian raised taxes threefold in his jurisdiction and won the acclaim of his superiors; however, knowing that this region was not prosperous, Marquis Wei of Wen asked, “None of my lands are rich and prosperous, nor are its people, how can you raise taxes threefold” (吾土地非益廣也人民非益眾也入何以三倍). Xie Bian responded, “In the winter one fells and accumulates trees so that in the summer you can float them down the river for sale” (以冬伐木而積之於春浮之河而鬻之). To this statement Marquis Wen of Wei responded: “In the spring people plow to the best of their ability; in the summer they vigorously weed; during the winter when there is nothing to do, they fell trees and collect them. [In the spring] they then cart and float them down the river. When using people, if they are not allowed to rest, they will grow weary. Is it really necessary to tax them three times? This is an example of having merit, but being worthy of punishment.” In Liu An, ed., *Huainanzi*, 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, Juan 18. Modern reprint with collected commentaries in He Ning, ed. *Huainanzi ji yi*, vol. 3, p. 1268; and Chen Yiping, ed. *Huainanzi jiao zhu yi*, pp. 897-898.

object of local disdain and dissent. For an official who would later grow to represent a model of upright and capable Confucian governance, Ximen Bao had a decidedly rough start in China's early textual record.

### **3.3 The Confucian Shift: Ximen Bao in the *Zhan guo ce*/*Shuo yuan* and in the *Shi ji***

It is only in the Han dynasty that we begin to see the Ximen Bao story stylized into the more commonly recognized and celebrated image of the “Confucian” hero, Ximen Bao. This stylization went hand-in-hand with a larger shift towards official state Confucianism that occurred at the time. In this context, Liu Xiang's *Zhan guo ce* and the *Shuo yuan* along with Sima Qian's foundational *Shi ji* used the past as a historical backdrop for promoting Confucian morality tales that were pertinent to their changing times. As such, Ximen Bao was recast as an exemplar of sagely governance, ritual propriety and upright Confucian virtues despite any evidence in earlier texts to support such a conclusion.

#### **3.3.1 A Confucian Pupil: The *Zhan guo ce* and the *Shuo yuan***

Liu Xiang's (劉向, 79-8 BCE) *Zhan guo ce* along with his compilation of old tales and stories, the *Shuo yuan*, offer the most elaborate descriptions of how Ximen Bao actually came to office in Ye. Most historians believe that the *Shuo yuan* was produced after the *Zhan guo ce* and might have been intended to provide literary embellishments to the already established stories found in the *Zhan guo ce*. This textual relationship is certainly present in the way that these two texts elaborate on the Ximen Bao story. Both of these accounts concern the lessons that Ximen Bao learned before being posted to Ye and cast Ximen Bao as an active pupil in the art of Confucian governance. The *Zhan guo ce* first records that when Ximen Bao was made magistrate of Ye, he went to bid the Marquis Wen of Wei farewell. In this meeting, the Marquis instructs Ximen Bao on the arts of gaining merit and reputation in office. He states:

In every hamlet there are those of the elders who are shown deference. Go among them and ask of them who are men of honor. Then take them for your mentors. Seek out those who enjoy concealing the good and spreading the evil of others and examine them. Things often seem alike which are not: the dark colored grasses that grow between wheat sprouts resemble wheat, the brindled (yearling) resembles a tiger, bleached bone resembles ivory, and *wu-fu* resembles jade. All these seem to be things they are not.<sup>34</sup>

In this text, Ximen Bao is instructed to learn from the people and to make proper distinctions between appearances and reality.

The *Shuo yuan* elaborates on this message, but with a slightly more Confucian and literary flare. The complete text proceeds as follows:

When The Marquis Wen of Wei dispatched Ximen Bao to govern over Ye he told him, “You must go and gain merit and a name for yourself.”

Ximen Bao responded, “I venture to ask, what is the [best method] to gain merit and name for oneself?”

Wen Hou responds, “You are leaving sir! In every locality there are the virtuous, the powerful, the intelligent and the knowledgeable, there are also people who delight in disclosing others’ evil and concealing others’ goodness. You must seek out the virtuous and establish a close relationship with them. Take those who are intelligent and knowledgeable as your mentors. Distinguish between those who disclose others evil and conceal others’ goodness, and investigate and observe. You must not rely solely on what they say. What you hear is never as good as what you can see; what you can see is never as good as investigating into matters yourself. Experiencing matters yourself is never as good as managing affairs. When one first becomes an official it is like entering into a dimly lit room. The longer you stay in the room the more that you can eventually see. Only with such clear sight can you bring forth good governance, and only through good governance can affairs be brought into order.”<sup>35</sup>

Aside from offering more literary embellishments, the *Shuo yuan* text more explicitly highlights Confucian aspects of local governance than the *Zhan guo ce* account. Ximen Bao is instructed to have patience in his administration, and to clearly examine situations before personally acting on them. He is also advised that in order to gain merit and reputation, one must first consult among the people, seek out wise counsel and root out local evil. In both of these texts however, Ximen

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<sup>34</sup> Liu Xiang 劉向, “Ximen bao wei ye ling” 西門豹為鄴令 [Ximen Bao Governs Ye] in the first book of Wei 魏一, *Zhan guo ce* 戰國策 [*Strategies of the Warring States*], juan 22, reprint (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1978), p. 778. Translation in J.I. Crump, *Chan-Kuo Ts’u* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 372.

<sup>35</sup> Liu Xiang 劉向, *Shuo yuan* 說苑, [*Garden of Sayings*]. Modern Reprint, *Shuo yuan quan yi* 說苑全譯 [*the Shuo Yuan with Complete Notes*] (Guiyang: Guizhou renmin chubanshe, 1992), p. 282. For the full English translation along with the original Chinese text see Appendix D

Bao's 'Confucianization' is largely a passive act. There is no discussion of how Ximen Bao acted on these instructions, but rather only a summary of the Marquis Wen of Wei's crash-course in sagely Confucian governance.

### 3.3.2 The Canonical Account: the *Shi ji*

Out of the entire corpus of textual sources that refers to Ximen Bao, only one offers any lengthy discussion of his achievements in office. Written during the Western Han period, Sima Qian's *Shi ji* refers to Ximen Bao a total of three times.<sup>36</sup> The first instance is found in the "Rivers and Ditches" (河渠書) section of the work where it succinctly states that "Ximen Bao channeled the Zhang River to irrigate the fields of Ye bringing prosperity to the Henei region of the state of Wei."<sup>37</sup> The second instance is found later in the text when Sima Qian briefly notes that Ximen Bao was appointed to govern over and protect Ye sometime during the reign period of the Marquis Wen of Wei.<sup>38</sup> The third and last reference to Ximen Bao in the *Shi ji* text is by far the most complete account of his accomplishments in Ye and forms the historic backbone of

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<sup>36</sup> Generally translated as the *Records of the Grand Historian* scholars date the source's completion to 104 - 87 BCE. See Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 490-493; and Burton Watson, *Ssu-ma Ch'ien Grand Historian of China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958).

<sup>37</sup> Original text, "西門豹引漳水溉鄴以富魏之河內," in Sima Qian, "He qu shu di qi" (河渠書第七) [Book of Rivers and Dikes; Number 7], juan 29, *Shi ji* (史記) [*Records of the Grand Historian*], modern reprint (Shanghai: Zhong hua shu ju, 1959), vol. 4, p. 1408.

<sup>38</sup> The original text is as follows, "任西門豹守鄴而河內稱治." An annotation from the Tang scholar, Sima Zhen (司馬貞) states that in ancient times the "Great River," here most likely refers to the Yellow River, which flowed east of Ye at the time. Accordingly, Ye was also known as "Henei" during this period (大河在鄴東故名為河內). Sima Qian, "Wei shi jia di shi si" (魏世家第十四) [Annals of the Wei House; Number 14], juan 29, *Shi Ji*, vol. 6, pp. 1839. For an excellent discussion of the Marquis Wen of Wei's crafty use of personnel, see Song Gongwen 宋公文 and Li Hongxing 李紅星, "Wei Wen hou ji qi yong ren zhi dao" 魏文侯及其用人之道 [Wei Wenhou and his Way of Making use of Personnel], *Hubei daxue xuebao: zhexue shehui kexue ban* 湖北大學學報: 哲學社會科學版 [*Hebei University Journal of Education: Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition*] 27:5 (Sept. 2000), pp. 72- 75. In this article the authors argue that unique to the Marquis Wen of Wei's style of rule was his tolerant and generous attitude towards his officials along with his utmost belief in their abilities. They conclude that today's leaders in China have much to learn from the Marquis Wen of Wei's generous attitude and working style.

the Ximen Bao story. Owing to the foundational status and importance of this particular text, the passage is worth quoting in its entirety.

In the “Biographies of Cunning Officials” Section (滑稽列傳)<sup>39</sup> the *Shi Ji* states:

During the time of the Marquis Wen of Wei, Ximen Bao was appointed to govern over Ye. Soon after [Ximen] Bao arrived in Ye, he held a meeting with the village elders and asked them to explain the root of the people’s suffering. The village elders said that Ye’s hardships and impoverishment came from [the local custom of finding] a wife for He Bo [the local river deity].<sup>40</sup> [Ximen] Bao inquired further. The village elders stated that “the District Elders” (三老)<sup>41</sup> and the inspector (挺掾) regularly levied taxes on the locals, which totaled several million [cash]. [Of this money] two or three hundred thousand [cash] was put towards the [local custom] of marrying a wife to He Bo and the rest was divided among the Shamans<sup>42</sup> [who presided over this practice].

When the time of the ceremony approached the Shamans would inspect lesser households for suitable women [and when they found one] they would proclaim her a suitably graceful candidate to be offered to He Bo as his wife. She would then be washed, adorned in beautiful ceremonial silk and then placed in a ceremonial-house where she would fast in solitude. [Following this] a richly colored red tent would be built along the banks of the river and the woman would be placed therein. A sacrificial ox, alcohol and food were prepared and [they were all] carried in procession for ten or more days. [Finally] her face was adorned with white powder and she was ordered to sit down on a nuptial bed made of reeds that was then released into the river. After floating down the river for more than ten *li*, [this nuptial bed] would then sink [into the water].

Families with suitable daughters feared that the Chief Shaman would select their daughter to be married to He Bo and therefore took their daughters and fled the region in great numbers. This practice has gone on for a great time and has left the city depopulated and impoverished. There is a common folk saying among the people that; “If a wife is not found for He Bo, [the river] will rise up and drown all the people.”

Ximen Bao said, “Next time that a bride is married to He Bo, when the Three Elders, the shamans and the local worthies are all present, please come and tell me so that I may [also be present] to escort the bride away.”

All promised to do so.

When this time arrived, Ximen Bao called a meeting beside the river. The District Elder, subordinate officials, local leaders and local elders were all in attendance along with two to three thousand spectators. The [Chief] Shaman was an old woman already in her seventies; lined up behind her were ten disciples, each dressed in plain unadorned silk clothing.

Ximen Bao commanded, “Bring forth the woman chosen as He Bo’s wife for my examination.” The woman was fetched from inside the tent and stationed before him.

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<sup>39</sup> This section might also be aptly translated as “Biographies of Crafty Officials.” Sima Qian, “Hua ji lie zhuan” 滑稽列傳 [Biographies of Cunning Officials; Number 66], juan 126, *Shi ji*, vol. 10, pp. 3211-3213.

<sup>40</sup> A literal translation of the standard expression, “河伯娶婦.”

<sup>41</sup> It is unclear exactly who these Three Elders (三老) were and what their functions in Ye society was. From the text however, they appear to be the highest-ranking local officials before Ximen Bao arrived in Ye.

<sup>42</sup> It is important to note that the term for Shaman (祝巫) in this text is gender specific and explicitly refers to female Shamans. More discussion on this topic will follow.

[Ximen] Bao looked at the woman and turned to the Three Elders, the shamans and the local worthies and said, “This woman is not good enough; Chief Shaman would you be so kind as to go into the water and directly report to He Bo that we will find a more suitable beauty and deliver it to him another day.” [On these orders] clerks and soldiers lifted the Chief Shaman and threw her into the river. After waiting a few minutes he said, “Why [has this] Shaman been in [the river] for so long? Let one of her disciples go and fetch her.” He then had one disciple cast into the river. After another brief pause he asked, “Why has this disciple been in [the river] for so long? Let another disciple go and fetch her.” He then flung another disciple into the river. After three more disciples were cast into the river in the same manner, Ximen Bao said, “These shamans are merely women who are unable to deliver the message; let the district elder go into the water to deliver the message!” He too was cast into the river.

Ximen Bao put his writing brush into his hair and leaned towards the river for some time. The local elders, the clerks and the spectators were all horror-stricken. Ximen Bao [then turned and] faced them and said, “The shamans and the Local Elder have not yet returned, leaving me no alternatives. I will now dispatch an official and some local notables into the water to hurry them on.” They all began to kowtow; they kowtowed with such force that blood flowed onto the ground and their facial expressions turned to the death-like white color of dying embers. Ximen Bao said, “Good, let us all wait here for a moment.” When time elapsed, he said, “Officials, rise! It seems that He Bo has retained his visitors for so long so that they will never return; [we can all] leave now!” The officials and people of Ye were so terrified that from that moment on they never dared speak again of the [custom of the] offering a bride to He Bo.<sup>43</sup>

Immediately following this passage is an equally important discussion of Ximen Bao’s hydrological works and his enduring legacy in Ye. Once again due to its foundational status, the text is worth quoting in its entirety:

Ximen Bao *then*<sup>44</sup> mobilized the people to chisel twelve irrigation ditches to channel the water from the river and irrigate the people’s fields; all of the fields were irrigated. At the time people felt a little bit bothered by the project and its annoyances. [Ximen] Bao said, “[It is easy] to share happiness with people after things have been done but hard to ponder over things with them at the very beginning. Although now the elder and juniors [in this area] hate me [for this project], they will recall my words today one hundred years later.”

Up until now [i.e the time when Sima Qian wrote this biography], the people have all benefited from the water and have ample abundance. At the time of the founding of the Han, the twelve channels cut off the imperial road. A superior official [in the county] considered building bridges over the twelve channels that cut off the imperial highway, [but realized that they] would all be too close to each other and thus not a tenable project. [Therefore, he] planned to merge and combine the water into three

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<sup>43</sup> Sima Qian, “Hua ji lie zhuan,” juan 126, *Shi Ji*, vol. 10, 3211-3213. In my translation I have consulted, J.J.M. De Groot, *The Religious System of China: Its Ancient Forms, Evolution, History and Present Aspect. Manners, Customs and Social Institutions Connected Therewith; Vol VI, Book 11, On the Soul and Ancestral Worship* (Originally published by Brill in six volumes from 1892-1910) Reprint (Taipei: Ch’eng-Wen Publishing Company, 1967), pp. 1196-1198. For complete English translation accompanied by the original Chinese text see Appendix E.

<sup>44</sup> I had added this emphasis to highlight the cause and effect relationship between these two passages signified by the addition of the Chinese “*ji*” (即) in the text.

channels and construct [only] one bridge when the channels approach the imperial highway. [However] commoners and elders in Ye declined to accept the officer's [suggestion], saying that [the channels] were constructed by Sir Ximen<sup>45</sup> and that the model established by such a virtuous man could not be altered. Eventually, the officer gave up on his plan. Therefore, when serving as the magistrate of Ye, Ximen Bao made his reputation known to all people and his acts benefited later generations without end. How could he not be called a good official?<sup>46</sup>

Although we have already seen that there is a much longer textual record concerning Ximen Bao, these two *Shi ji* texts, which follow immediately one after another, form, almost exclusively, the textual core of all the later Ximen Bao stories. Moreover, possibly owing to its more dramatic flair, the first portion of this text - where Ximen Bao eradicates the practice of finding a wife for He Bo – tends to outweigh the equally important second half of the text - Ximen Bao's waterworks project – in most subsequent accounts of the tale. It is important to note here that while later accounts tend to divide these two texts up, in the *Shi ji* text, they follow one after each other and are structurally related.<sup>47</sup> Before Ximen Bao arrived in Ye, locals understood that the only way to stop the annual flooding of the river was to offer a marriage sacrifice to He Bo. With cunning and patience, Ximen Bao eradicated this local practice and

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<sup>45</sup> The title given is, “西門君”

<sup>46</sup> Full text: “西門豹即發民鑿十二渠，引河水灌民田，田皆溉。當其時，民治渠少煩苦，不欲也。豹曰：「民可以樂成，不可與慮始。今父老子弟雖患苦我，然百歲後期令父老子孫思我言。」至今皆得水利，民人以給足富。十二渠經絕馳道，到漢之立，而長吏以為十二渠橋絕馳道，相比近，不可。欲合渠水，且至馳道合三渠為一橋。鄴民人父老不肯聽長吏，以為西門君所為也，賢君之法不可更也。長吏終聽置之。故西門豹為鄴令，名聞天下，澤流後世，無絕已時，幾可謂非賢大夫哉！” Sima Qian, “Hua ji lie zhuan,” juan 126, *Shi Ji*, vol. 10, p. 3213. This final portion of the text is followed by a short and somewhat obscure passage that reads, “It has been said that when Zichan (子產) governed Zheng (鄭), no one was able to cheat; when Zijian (子賤) governed Shanfu (單父) no one could bear cheating, when Ximen Bao governed Ye, no one dared to cheat. Of these three virtuous rulers' talents, whose are the most sagely? Only those who distinguish (methods of) governance can know the difference. Full text: “傳曰：子產治鄭，民不能欺；子賤治單父，民不忍欺；西門豹治鄴，民不敢欺。三子之才能誰最賢哉？辨治者當能別之。” Zichan is more commonly referred to in the sources as Prince Chan. He was an official in the state of Zheng (today's Zhengzhou) during the Warring States period. Zijian, whose name was Fu Buqi (密不齊, born 521 BCE), was a pupil of Confucius and served as Chief Minister in Shanfu (located in today's Shan County, Shandong Province). For detailed accounts of Prince Chan and Fu Zijian's records see “Pleasure in Success” (五曰樂成), Book 16/5.3; and, “Inquiring into Worthiness” (二曰察賢), Book 21/2. 2 in the *Lüshi chungiu*. Translations in John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel, *The Annals of Lü Buwei: A Complete Translation and Study*, pp. 389-340, 553.

<sup>47</sup> This structural relationship is clearly indicated in the original by the addition of a “ji” (即) character.

replaced it with a new regime of waterworks aimed at stabilizing the region through hydrology. Read together, the lesson contained in these two texts is overwhelmingly clear: the true sage official not only stabilizes the realm by stamping out harmful local and heterodox practices, he also makes long term plans to ensure the prosperity of the region. While common people may be shortsighted in their goals and initially resist such projects they will eventually come to sing an official's praises when they realize the true sagely worth of his efforts.

### 3.4 Contextualizing Ximen Bao and the *Shi ji*: Shamans, He Bo and Magical Efficacy

To gain a fuller understanding of the construction and impact of the Ximen Bao story we should first consider the wider historical context behind Sima Qian's initial reconstruction of the events. Written during the turbulent, yet formative years of the Western Han Dynasty, Sima Qian's *Shi ji* might best be interpreted as a product of rapid social and political changes during the period. Many scholars have commented on this turbulent context and most agree that some of the most important dynamics of the period include: the beginnings of official state Confucianism; the rise of the landlord class, continued interstate conflicts and military expansions and court factionalism that famously resulted in the personal suffering of Sima Qian.<sup>48</sup> Thus some scholars, most notably Burton Watson, have argued that Sima Qian's approach to the past was a highly personal and didactic plea to restore the stability that he perceived to exist in ancient times.<sup>49</sup> If we accept Watson's argument, then accurately knowing the past was of secondary importance for Sima Qian who was more interested in presenting historic examples of goodness, merit, virtue, benevolence, and kingly governance in the hopes of reforming the society around

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<sup>48</sup> On this topic see Stephen Durrant, *The Cloudy Mirror: Tension and Conflict in the Writings of Sima Qian* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995). Durrant's work demonstrates clear linkages between Sima Qian's own life history and his conceptualization and portrayal of China's historical past. He does not argue in any sense that the *Shi ji* is purely biographical in nature, but rather the editorial process and the concerns and nature of the work reflect in significant ways the life experiences of its author.

<sup>49</sup> Burton Watson, *Ssu-Ma Ch'ien Grand Historian of China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958).

him. Such ideals were embodied in the deeds of great heroic men, whose true virtue, or *de* (德), lay in the ability of their examples to positively influence subsequent generations. With his emphasis on the world of embodied Confucian action, Sima Qian promoted the Ximen Bao story to distance himself from the older ways of the diviners, shamans, prophetic dreamers, baleful spirits and human sacrifices.

### 3.4.1 Female Shamans in the Pre-Han Period

The topic of Shamanism has garnered a lot of attention in the secondary literature regarding ancient China.<sup>50</sup> Despite this scholarly interest however, there is actually little surviving archeological and textual evidence to help us reconstruct this history in pre-Han China. What we do know comes primarily from short passages and spotty references found in a variety of ancient texts including the *Shu jing* (書經),<sup>51</sup> the *Guo yu* (國語),<sup>52</sup> the *Zhou li* (周禮),<sup>53</sup> and

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<sup>50</sup> See Fu-Shih Lin, “The Image and Status of Shamans in Ancient China,” in *Early Chinese Religion: Part One: Shang through Han (1250 BC -220 AD)*, John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2009): 397-458; Jordan Paper, *The Spirits are Drunk: Comparative Approaches to Chinese Religion* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995); and Edward H. Schafer, *The Divine Woman: Dragon Ladies and Rain Maidens*, 1980; J.J.M De Groot, *The Religious System of China: Vol VI, Book 11*, reprint 1967. For particular references to the relationship between shamans and rain making see Alvin P. Cohen, “Coercing Rain Deities in Ancient China” in *History of Religions*, Vol. 17: No.3/4 (Feb – May 1978): 244-265.

<sup>51</sup> The *Shu jing* (compilation beginning in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century BCE) provides possibly the earliest textual account of shamans, or “*wu*” in the Chinese historic record. In the Book of Shang (商書) section entitled, “the Instructions of Yi” (伊訓), the Minister Yi Yin (伊尹) delivers the following speech: “The late sovereign instituted punishments for the officers, and warned the men in authority, saying ‘If you dare to have constant dancing in your mansions and drunken singing in your houses, I call it *wu* fashion’.” Translation by J.J.M De Groot, *The Religious System of China: Vol VI, Book 11*, reprint 1967, p. 1187.

<sup>52</sup> Often translated as *Conversations of the States*, the *Guo yu* was compiled sometime between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Centuries BCE. and is often attributed to Zuo Qiuming (左丘明). See Michael Loewe, ed., *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide* (Berkeley: The Society for the Study of Early China, 1993), p. 264; and Wing-Tsit Chan trans. and comp., *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 11.

<sup>53</sup> Several official references to both male and female shamans can be found in the “Offices of the Spring” (春官宗伯) section of the *Zhou li* (3<sup>rd</sup> Century BCE) text. Focused on religious institutions of the Zhou period, this section shows that shamans of all sorts occupied official positions in the Zhou state.

the *Chu ci* (楚辭).<sup>54</sup> K.C. Chang has argued that the particular reference to shamanism found in the *Guo yu* is possibly the most important surviving textual reference to shamanistic practices found in pre-Han China.<sup>55</sup> This text offers a clear description of who shamans were and what ritual functions they performed.

Found in the “Discourses of Chu” (楚語) section, the *Guo yu* describes Shamans as people, “so perspicacious, single-minded, and reverential that their understanding enabled them to make meaningful collation of what lies above and below, and their insight to illuminate what is distant and profound. Therefore the spirits would descend into them.”<sup>56</sup> The *Guo yu* then elaborates that, “the possessors of such powers were, if men, called *hsi* [*Xi*] (shamans), and, if women, *wu* (shamanesses). It is they who supervised the positions of the spirits at the ceremonies, sacrificed to them, and otherwise handled religious matters.”<sup>57</sup> While it remains

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<sup>54</sup> Particularly the “Nine Poems”(九歌) section that is often attributed to the famous Warring States minister, Qu Yuan (屈原, 340 - 278 BCE).

<sup>55</sup> K.C. Chang, *Art, Myth and Ritual: the Path to Political Authority in Ancient China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 45.

<sup>56</sup> Drawing from quotations from Derk Bodde, “Myths of Ancient China” in *Mythologies of the Ancient World*, ed. Samuel N. Kramer (New York: Doubleday, 1961) in, K.C. Chang, *Art, Myth and Ritual: the Path to Political Authority in Ancient China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 45. Full un-paraphrased text from the *Guo yu* as follows: “古者民神不雜.民之精爽不攜貳者, 而又能齊肅衷正, 其智能上下比義, 其聖能光遠宣朗, 其明能光照之, 其聰能聽徹之, 如是則明神降之, 在男曰覲, 在女曰巫. 是使制神之處位次主, 而為之牲器時服, 而後使先聖之後之有光烈, 而能知山川之號、高祖之主、宗廟之事、昭穆之世、齊敬之勤、禮節之宜、威儀之則、容貌之崇、忠信之質、禋絜之服而敬恭明神者, 以為之祝.使名姓之後, 能知四時之生、犧牲之物、玉帛之類、采服之儀、彝器之量、次主之度、屏攝之位、壇場之所、上下之神、氏姓之出, 而心率舊典者為之宗.于是乎有天地神民類物之官, 是謂五官, 各司其序, 不相亂也.民是以能有忠信, 神是以能有明德, 民神異業, 敬而不瀆, 故神降之嘉生, 民以物享, 禍災不至, 求用不匱,” in Zuo Qiuming 左丘明, “Discourses on Chu” (楚語下), *Guo yu* 國語 [*Conversations on the State*], juan 18. Modern reprint, Xu Yuangao 徐元誥, *Guo yu ji jie*國語集解 [*Collected Notes on the Guo Yu*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shu u, 2002), pp. 512-514.

<sup>57</sup> K.C. Chang, *Art, Myth and Ritual: the Path to Political Authority in Ancient China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 45. Italics added by author. Arthur Waley argues that although this semantic difference existed in the ancient lexicon between “*wu*” and “*xi*”, in practice both were called “*wu*” regardless of their gender. Evidence from the *Zhou li* suggests that the gender marker, “*nan*” or “*nü*” was sometimes put in front of “*wu*.” See Arthur Waley, *The Nine Songs: a Study of Shamanism in Ancient China*, 1955: p. 18 n. 1; and translations of the relevant *Zhou li* passages in Deborah Sommer, ed. *Chinese Religion: an Anthology of Sources* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 29-30.

unclear in the text the exact difference between the ritual functions performed by “xi” (male) shamans and “wu” (female) shamans, both were seen as intermediaries who could summon and channel spirits to earth as well as act as diviners of heavenly portents.<sup>58</sup> Acting in this capacity, shamans were employed by ancient rulers to court heaven’s favor as well as to divert its wrath in times of drought, famine and flood.

How exactly shamans worked to save humans from natural disasters such as floods and drought is unclear from the sources, but their gender, age and physical state seem to have been vital to the type of actions that they performed. One of the earliest surviving textual references to shamanism, found in the *Li ji* (禮記), describes how in times of drought, *wu* (female) shamans along with young lame boys referred to in the texts as “wang” (尪)<sup>59</sup> were ritually exposed to the sun to entice rain from the heavens.<sup>60</sup> In ancient *yin-yang* cosmological thinking, the *yin* nature of young lame boys and female shamans was seen to balance out the excessive *yang* of sun and drought.<sup>61</sup> In some extreme cases, it is said that female shamans and young boys were either

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<sup>58</sup> Various textual references in the *Zhou li* provide some discussion of the different tasks performed by female, male and Chief Shamans (司巫). For a translation of the relevant passages see Deborah Sommer, ed. *Chinese Religion: an Anthology of Sources*, 1995, pp. 29-30; and Fu-Shih Lin, “The Image and Status of Shamans,” pp. 411-413.

<sup>59</sup> The *Hanyu da cidian* places the first usage of this term “wang” (尪) in the *Li ji* text and states that it refers to a type of sickness that effects the chest, tibia, back, or bone marrow and causes bending of the bones. Due to the vague nature of the character, I have loosely rendered the Chinese term “wang” as “lame” in English.

<sup>60</sup> The *Li ji* states: “In the year of a drought the ruler Muh [Mu 穆] (409-377 BCE) called Hien-tsze [Xian Zi 縣子] and asked him as follows: ‘Heaven has not sent down any rain for a long time; I will expose some wang to the sun; do you agree to this?’ ‘Exposing such unsound children of men in the sun’ ran the answer, ‘when Heaven does not give rain, is an act of cruelty; no, you may not do it’. ‘Well then, I will expose some *wu*; has this your approval?’ The answer was, ‘Heaven does not give rain, and do you expect rain from silly wives? Will you seek it by means of them? No, that would be still more wide of the mark.’” Translated in J.J.M. De Groot, *The Religious System of China; Vol VI, Book 11*, reprint 1967, p. 1193.

<sup>61</sup> In the later historic record there seems to be some confusion on the exact relationship between *yin-yang* cosmology, droughts and disasters and the role of female *wu* shamans. Expressing this confusion, the Han dynasty commentator Wang Chong (王充) wrote in his *Lun heng* (論衡) “The *wu* contain the breath of the *Yang* in themselves; hence it is that so many people who live in a *yang* country (in the sunny south) become *wu*. The *wu* thus being affiliated with the spirit world, they perform spiritual *Wu*-ism, and the latter has close affinity with the utterance of ditties by boys. The revelations of *wu* point out what is felicitous or ominous, so that they are fortune tellers. Thus it was that the phantom of Shen-sheng manifested itself by means of a *wu*; indeed, as the *wu* contain *Yang*, they can see apparitions of spirits.” Wang Chong 王充, *Lun Heng* 論衡 [*The Balanced Inquiries*], Juan 22., Translated in J.J.M. De Groot, *The Religious System of China: Vol VI, Book 11*, reprint, 1967, p. 1194.

exposed to the sun to the point of exhaustion and death or even purposefully burnt alive in the hopes of summoning rain.<sup>62</sup> As female *wu* shamans and lame boys were seen to possess divinely *yin* qualities, their suffering was required in return for heavenly rain. Thus in many areas, especially those in northern China where the *yang* influence of the land was seen to be much higher than in the south, female *wu* shamans tended to preside over local religious rituals involving the rebalancing of water and sun elements.<sup>63</sup> Given this larger context, it is not at all surprising to see the *Shi ji* refer to female shamans at the ritual head of the annual marriage sacrifice to He Bo that was practiced in Ye.

### 3.4.2 He Bo and Water Sacrifices

Women functioned in this local marriage custom not just as ritual supervisors but also as the ceremonial brides offered to He Bo in exchange for his hydraulic peace. The next section now moves to a discussion of the He Bo legend and examines who he was perceived to be, why he required an annual bride, and what role feminized *yin* played in the ritual marriage process.

He Bo is best rendered in English as “River Earl” or as “Count of the River.” In many popular translations, He Bo’s inanimate and morphological qualities are highlighted with the more generic translations, “River God” or “River Spirit.” Such translations however, obscure the fact that He Bo in ancient times was understood to be a singular deity and not a generic term for any water spirit or god. To stress this singular personified quality, some translators have

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<sup>62</sup> Evidence for this point is found in several historic instances where sovereigns explicitly banned such practices on the grounds of their cruelty. The *Zuo zhuan* (左傳) “In summer [639 BCE] there prevailed a great drought; what can be done with *wu* and wang against such a calamity? If heaven desired them to be killed, it would probably not have given birth to them; therefore, admitting that they really can cause a drought, to burn them might greatly increase it. The ruler followed this advice, and that year there was scarcity, but it did no harm.” Translated in J.J.M. De Groot, *The Religious System of China: Vol VI, Book 11*, reprint, 1967, p. 1193.

<sup>63</sup> Women could also be driven away in times of excessive rain. As Anning Jing notes in the “Stopping Rain” chapter of the *Chunqiu fanlu* (春秋繁露) [*Rich Dew of Spring and Autumn*], Dong Zhongshu (董仲舒, 179-104 BCE) instructs that to stop rain, “all officials should send their wives away from their homes. In addition, women should not be allowed to go around in the streets or markets...” As paraphrased in Anning Jing, *The Water God’s Temple of the Guangsheng Monastery* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), p. 135.

translated He Bo as “God of the Yellow River,” which relies on the understanding that in ancient times *He* (河) singularly referred to the Yellow River.<sup>64</sup> The idea that He Bo was a singular personified deity is found in several ancient texts including the “Nine Songs” (九歌) portion of the *Chu ci* (楚辭, *Songs of the Chu*), and also in portions of the *Huainanzi*, the *Shanhai jing* (山海經),<sup>65</sup> and the *Zhuangzi* (莊子)<sup>66</sup> to name just a few examples.

In several of these texts, He Bo was originally a real man named Bing Yi (冰夷) - or sometimes Feng Yi (馮夷) - who after drinking an elixir became an immortal. Bing Yi drowned while ferrying across the Yellow River and was made “Count of the (Yellow) River” or “He Bo” by the Celestial Sovereign.<sup>67</sup> In some accounts, He Bo is said to reside only in the Yellow River, while in others he is said to be able to wander between all the realm’s “Nine Rivers” (九河)

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<sup>64</sup> For such a translation see Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 175, n. 1.

<sup>65</sup> In the *Shan hai jing*, Bing Yi, which is an alternate name for He Bo is said to live in the deep abysses of water. He is also said to possess a human face and a pair of dragons in, Guo Pu 郭璞, comp., “Hai nei bei jing” 海內北經. *Shan hai jing* 山海經注 [*Classic on Mountains and Waterways*], juan 12, modern reprint, Yuan Ke 袁珂, *Shanhai jing jiaozhu* (山海經校注) [*Collated notes to the classic of mountains and seas*] (Chengdu: Ba Shu shushe chuban faxing, 1993), pp. 369-371

<sup>66</sup> A particularly well-known reference to He Bo is found in “the Floods of Autumn” passage in the *Zhuangzi*: The text reads as follows: “The time of the autumnal floods was come, and the hundred streams were all discharging themselves into the He. Its current was greatly swollen, so that across its channel from bank to bank one could not distinguish an ox from a horse. On this the (Spirit-) earl of the He laughed with delight, thinking that all the beauty of the world was to be found in his charge. Along the course of the river he walked east till he came to the North Sea, over which he looked, with his face to the east, without being able to see where its waters began. Then he began to turn his face round, looked across the expanse, (as if he were) confronting Ruo, and said with a sigh, 'What the vulgar saying expresses about him who has learned a hundred points (of the Dao), and thinks that there is no one equal to himself, was surely spoken of me. And moreover, I have heard parties making little of the knowledge of Zhongni and the righteousness of Bo-yi, and at first I did not believe them. Now I behold the all-but-boundless extent (of your realms). If I had not come to your gate, I should have been in danger (of continuing in my ignorance), and been laughed at for long in the schools of our great System.’” As translated in James Legge, trans, *The Texts of Taoism: The Tao Te Ching of Lao Tzu: the Writings of Chuang Tzu: the Sacred Books of China, Part 1* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1962), p. 374-5.

<sup>67</sup> For the most detailed account of Bing Yi, his transformations into He Bo and his various images in the popular imagination see Guo Pu (郭璞, 276-324), comp “Hai nei bei jing” (海內北經) in the *Shanhai jing zhu* (山海經注) [*Notes on the Classic of Mountains and Seas*], juan 12. Modern reprint by Yuan Ke 袁珂, *Shanhai jing jiaozhu* (山海經校注) [*Collated notes to the classic of mountains and seas*] (Chengdu: Ba Shu shushe chuban faxing, 1993), pp. 369-371. A briefly collated version of some of this history is also outlined in Henri Maspero, *China in Antiquity*, trans. Frank A. Kierman Jr. (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1978), pp. 102-3.

connected via a subterranean waterway.<sup>68</sup> Some accounts state that it was He Bo himself who legendarily rose out of the water and gave Yu the Great (大禹) a map, which allowed him to complete his famous diversion of the realm's water into the "Nine Rivers" found in China's mythical geography.<sup>69</sup>

The most famous references to He Bo are found in two different sections of the *Chu ci*, including the "Tianwen" (天問, "Heavenly Questions") and the "Nine Songs." The Tianwen portion of the text reveals how He Bo was originally confined to the depths of the River. In this tale, the famous archer Yi is (羿) sent by God "to overcome the calamities of the people below" and in doing so he shoots the "River Lord and take[s] to wife Lady of the Luo [洛神]." <sup>70</sup> In this text Lady of Luo refers to the female spirit of the Luo River who was formerly the wife of He Bo but was now taken as a wife by Archer Yi. Wang Yi's (王逸) second century commentary on the text provided the following elaboration on this famous rivalry, which was also added to the He Bo mythological canon:

The Lord of the River turned into a white dragon and played on the riverbank. When Yi saw him, he shot him with his arrow, aiming for his left eye. The Lord of the River went up to complain to God in Heaven: "Kill Yi because of what he has done to me!" God in Heaven said, "Why were you shot by Yi?" The Lord of the River said, "When I transformed myself into a white dragon I came out to play." God in Heaven said, "If you had kept to the river depths, as a god, how could Yi have committed this crime against you? Today you became a reptile, so you were bound to be shot at by someone. Of course he is in the right – what was Yi's crime in this case?"<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Xin Deyong 辛德勇, *Zhang shui shi er qu shi chuang bian xi* (漳水十二渠始创者辨析) [*Analysis and Elucidation of the different founders of the Zhang River's 12 irrigation ditches*] <http://www.lunwentianxia.com/product.free.9010327.4/> (Accessed, April 23, 2009).

<sup>69</sup> He Bo is said to have emerged with a white human face and the body of a fish. This varying body of mythological lore is best summarized in Anne Birrell, *Chinese Mythology: An Introduction* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp. 102-3; and Yves Bonnefoy, comp., and Wendy Doniger, trans. *Asian mythologies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 239.

<sup>70</sup> In David Hawkes, trans., *The Songs of the South: An Ancient Chinese Anthology of Poems by Qu Yuan and Other poets* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 129.

<sup>71</sup> Translated in Anne Birrell, *Chinese Mythology: An Introduction* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 102.

The *Huainanzi* offers a different take on this event and stresses that Yi the Archer shot He Bo in the eye to punish him for washing over the people with annual flood waters.<sup>72</sup> As Yves Bonnefoy argues in his *Asian Mythologies*, this reference is particularly interesting because it suggests that people who became river gods through acts of drowning were especially dangerous river deities because they required human sacrifices to keep them happy.<sup>73</sup>

The last bit of text needed to help make sense of the He Bo story is found in the well-known poem often attributed to the warring states official, Qu Yuan (屈原, 340 - 278 BCE), simply titled, “He Bo” or “Count of the River.” Scholars such as Arthur Waley and David Hawkes generally regard this poem and the collection it is found within – “the Nine Songs” – as the most explicit example of shamanistic literature found in the early Chinese textual record.<sup>74</sup> Translating the poem presents several problems however as it is unclear if its content is primarily religious or sexual in nature. Suggesting a mixture of both, Arthur Waley translates the text as follows:

#### The River God

With you I wandered down the Nine Rivers;  
A whirlwind rose and the waters barred us with their waves.  
We rode in a water-chariot with awning of lotus-leaf  
Drawn by two dragons, with griffins to pull at the sides.  
I climb K'un-lun and look in all directions;  
My heart rises all a-flutter, I am agitated and distraught.  
Dusk is coming, but I am too sad to think of return.  
Of the far shore only are my thoughts: I lie awake and yearn.

In his fish-scale house, dragon-scale hall,  
Portico of purple-shell, in his red palace,

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<sup>72</sup> The text is as follows: “The Lord of the River killed people by drowning them, so Yi shot him in the left eye.” Found in Gao You’s (高誘) (fl. 205-215 A.D.) commentary on the *Huainanzi* text. Translated in Anne Birrell, *Chinese Mythology: An Introduction* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 103.

<sup>73</sup> Yves Bonnefoy, comp and Wendy Doniger, trans. *Asian mythologies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 239.

<sup>74</sup> See David Hawkes, trans, *The Songs of the South: An Ancient Chinese Anthology of Poems by Qu Yuan and Other Poets* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 42-51.

What is the Spirit doing, down in the water?  
 Riding a white turtle, followed by stripy fish  
 With you I wandered in the islands of the River.  
 The ice is on the move; soon the floods will be down.  
 You salute me with raised hands, then go towards the East.  
 I go with my lovely one as far as the southern shore.  
 The waves surge on surge come to meet him,  
 Fishes shoal after shoal escort my homeward way.<sup>75</sup>

In this poem - which may be Qu Yuan's literary embellishment of real shaman incantations practiced in his time<sup>76</sup> - we see a love story between a fickle spirit and a potential suitor. The poem opens with He Bo and what we can assume is a female shaman united in a "mantic honeymoon;"<sup>77</sup> however, He Bo soon departs leaving his shaman lover to wander in a state of anguish. This is a tale of unrequited love where the lines between spiritual reverence and sexual lust are broken down. He Bo eludes his female shaman suitors in a lustful and watery game of religious/sexual offering.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Arthur Waley, *The Nine Songs: a Study of Shamanism in Ancient China* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1955), p. 47. Original text:

河伯  
 與女遊兮九河，衝風起兮橫波。  
 乘水車兮荷蓋，駕兩龍兮驂螭。  
 登崑崙兮四望，心飛揚兮浩蕩。  
 日將暮兮悵忘歸，惟極浦兮寤懷。  
 魚鱗屋兮龍堂，紫貝闕兮朱宮。  
 靈何為兮水中，乘白鼉兮逐文魚。  
 與女遊兮河之渚，流澌紛兮將來下。  
 子交手兮東行，送美人兮南浦。  
 波滔滔兮來迎，魚鱗鱗兮媵予

<sup>76</sup> Arthur Waley addresses this question in his work on Qu Yuan, the "the Nine Songs," and shamanism. See Arthur Waley, *The Nine Songs: a Study of Shamanism in Ancient China*.

<sup>77</sup> Arthur Waley, *The Nine Songs: a Study of Shamanism in Ancient China*, p.14.

<sup>78</sup> Anning Jing provides ample evidence of the perceived relationship between sexual activity and water extending far back into Chinese antiquity. *Zhuangzi* first discusses this relationship stating that rain was the result of "lavish joy" and Guanzi later wrote that, "when the producing elements of male and female unite, liquid flows in forms..." As Burton Watson notes, the expression "clouds and rain" is a common euphemistic expression for sexual intercourse found in classical Chinese. And the Song era dictionary defines 'rain' as the product of the "union between *Yin* and *Yang*." To Anning Jing, even "the form and internal structure of the word *shui* or water were morphologically interpreted as the pictograph showing a woman and man connected with each other, who represented the union between *Yin* and *Yang*." See Anning Jing, *The Water God's Temple of the Guangsheng Monastery: Cosmic Function of Art, Ritual and Theater*, (2002), p.130-134; Burton Watson trans., *Complete Works*

Highly gendered and sexualized undertones are clearly present in the He Bo legend. From the *Zhou li* texts we know that He Bo's wife, the Lady of Luo, was taken from him by the Archer Yi and therefore he lacked the feminized *yin* needed to calm his excessive *yang* energy. If this imbalance could not be adjusted either through feminized shamanistic practices or through offering an annual bride to He Bo, the result would be tragic floods for all.<sup>79</sup>

In fact, He Bo's lust was so well-known that such a practice is reported to have occurred not only in Ye, but also in Shu (蜀, modern day Sichuan) where two girls were offered annually to him as ceremonial brides. This lesser known example of He Bo's insatiable sexual appetite is worth mentioning because it replicates much of the same narrative found in the Ximen Bao legend. In the Shu case, the harmful local practice of marrying wives to He Bo is similarity brought to an end by a cunning and upright local official named Li Bing (李冰, 3<sup>rd</sup> Century CE). In the section dealing with local customs, the Song era encyclopedic work known as the *Taiping yulan* (太平御覽)<sup>80</sup> describes the story as such:

After King Chao of Ch'in [Qin] had attacked and conquered Shu, he appointed Li Ping [Bing] as prefect of the Shu commandery. There was a river god who took two young virgins as his brides every year. The head officer of the region declared, "You will have to hand over a million in cash to pay for the brides' dowry." Ping said, "That won't be necessary. I have young daughters of my own." When the time came, he had his daughters beautifully dressed and made up, and he led them away to be drowned in the river. Li Ping went straight up to the throne of the local god, poured out wine as an offering, and said, "Up till now, I have continued our family line into the ninth generation. Lord of the River, you are a mighty god. Please show your august presence to me, so that I may humbly serve you with wine." Ping held the goblet of wine forward. All the god did was to ripple its surface, but he did not consume it. Ping said in a thunderous voice, "Lord of the River, you have mocked me, so now I intend to fight you!" He drew out his sword, then suddenly he

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of *Chuang Tzu*, 1968), pp. 154; and, Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy, Vol. 1: The Period of the Philosophers (from the Beginnings to Circa 100 B. C.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p.167.

<sup>79</sup> One of the reasons why we know so much more about He Bo than about any other ancient Chinese animistic deity is because his notorious rage spawned a plethora of historic stories and legends. For a lengthier discussion of these stories see Arthur Waley, *The Nine Songs: a Study of Shamanism in Ancient China*, 1955, pp. 48-52.

<sup>80</sup> The *Taiping Yulan*, or the *Imperial Reviewed Encyclopedia of the Taiping Era* is a massive encyclopedic work that was compiled over a ten year period by Li Fang (李昉, 925-96) and first published in 984. See Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual*, p. 558.

vanished. A little later two blue oxen were fighting on the sloping riverbank. After a few moments, Ping went back to his officers and ordered them to help him: “The ox facing south with white tied around his saddle will be me with my white silk ribbon.” Then he returned to the fray. The Keeper of Records promptly shot dead with his arrow the ox facing north. With the Lord of the River dead, there was no more trouble ever again.<sup>81</sup>

Similar to the Ximen Bao story, Li Bing also travels to an area plagued by annual flooding and puts an end to the locality’s harmful practice of marrying wives to He Bo. Li Bing is then similarly credited with initiating a large-scale irrigation project bringing stability and prosperity to the region. To this day, Li Bing’s Dujiangyan (都江堰) irrigation system is still in use.<sup>82</sup> In both of these cases, both Li Bing and Ximen Bao deny He Bo his lustful sacrifice and in doing so, secured their places in the pantheon of ancient Chinese culture heroes as models of sagely and wise hydraulic governance.

That He Bo was understood to have had his wife taken from him and that he was known to respond to the lustful incantations of female shamans both help to contextualize exactly why he was understood to require an annual human wife sacrifice and why this practice was presided over by female *wu* shamans. Wifeless, He Bo required an annual bride delivered to him by female *wu* shamans or he would release his fury as torrential floodwaters. In effect the social order that Ximen Bao walks into is one where the local order is upheld by female shamans and is inherently based on their perceived levels of feminized magical efficacy. This is also the local social order that the *Shi ji* praises Ximen Bao for abolishing.

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<sup>81</sup> As cited and translated in Anne Birrell, *Chinese Mythology: An Introduction*, 1993, pp. 88. The Li Bing legend is also discussed in Anning Jing, *The Water God’s Temple of the Guangsheng Monastery: Cosmic Function of Art, Ritual and Theater*, 2002, pp.132-133. Textual information provided in note 220.

<sup>82</sup> For more discussion of Li Bing and his legendary son Erlang (二郎) see Joseph Needham, Wang Ling and Lu Gwei-djen, *Science and Civilisation in China: Volume 4: Physics and Physical Technology: Part 3: Civil Engineering and Nautics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 249-250; and, Mark Edward Lewis, “The Mythology of Ancient China” in *Early Chinese Religion: Part One: Shang through Han (1250 BC -220 AD)* in, John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 589.

### 3.4.3 The Decline in State Shamanism

Pre-Han primary sources suggest that shamanistic practices, which were meant to bring rain, prevent floods, or appease river gods were commonly practiced throughout the realm and often in Ye in pre-Han times. It is also relatively clear that such practices were frequently presided over by females whose social power derived from their perceived levels of magical efficacy. From the surviving texts of the era, we can also see that shamans were close to, if not actually an integral part of the pre-Han ruling elite. During the pre-Qin/Han periods, all of the realm's feudal domains had their own shamans who conducted sacrifices particular to their own domain, its ruling house and its natural features.<sup>83</sup> Shamans were a crucial part of every feudal court as the power to communicate with higher powers and divine their signals was a prerequisite for political authority in ancient pre-unification China.<sup>84</sup> However, with the official unification of the Chinese state under the Qin and Han, came the unification of the empire's ritual practices known as the "official register of sacrifices" (祀典). The often highly localized shamanistic practices had little place in this newly emerging ritual order. Even by the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods (8<sup>th</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE.), we begin to see critiques of the shamanistic order appearing in the Confucian, Mohist, Daoist and Legalist. Their critiques ranged from "skeptical to utterly contemptuous" and displayed a clear and slow decline in the social standing and status of shamans and shamanistic practices into the early imperial period.<sup>85</sup> Although shamans were sometimes still officially employed by the state, by the first imperial

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<sup>83</sup> Daniel L. Overmyer, *Religions of China: the World as a Living System* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986), p. 27.

<sup>84</sup> The status of Shang kings as actually being regarded as Chief Shamans is the subject of a very inclusive debate. For a brief summary of the positions see David N. Keightley, "The Shang: China's First Historical Dynasty" *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.* Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy eds, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 262; and K.C. Chang, *Art, Myth and Ritual: the Path to Political Authority in Ancient China*, 1983, p. 45.

<sup>85</sup> Fu-Shih Lin, "The Image and Status of Shamans in Ancient China," p. 428.

unifications under the Qin and Han they “occupied an infinitesimally small niche in the bureaucracy,” and were only called up to work on a temporary basis.<sup>86</sup>

This decline is well documented in the secondary literature and does not need to be elaborated in further detail here.<sup>87</sup> Suffice it to note, that around the time Sima Qian wrote the *Shi ji* (2<sup>nd</sup> - 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE) there was already a developed body of literature attacking shamans and their practices. Sima Qian himself wrote in the *Shi ji*, that of the six illnesses for which there is no cure, number six was “trusting shamans rather than physicians” (信巫不信醫).<sup>88</sup>

Expressing further distrust in the efficacy of Shamans, *Lun heng* (論衡) author, Wang Chong (王充) wrote:

People nowadays believe in sacrifices...Rather than improving their behavior, they enrich their incantations. Rather than being respectful to those above, they fear ghosts. Death and calamity they attribute to demonic attack, saying the curse has not yet entirely succeeded. When afflicted by a demonic attack, they sacrifice. When calamities pile up, they attribute it to the fact they were not reverent in their sacrifices. As for exorcisms, they are of no use; sacrifices are of no help; and shamans and invocators are powerless.<sup>89</sup>

Ban Gu (班固) furthered this attack in the preface to his *Han shu* (漢書) stating that the idyllic state of antiquity had been replaced by a time dominated by “illicit cults and befuddled belief in shamans and scribe-astrologers.”<sup>90</sup> This is just a small sampling of the wide variety of attacks

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<sup>86</sup> Fu-Shih Lin, “The Image and Status of Shamans in Ancient China,” p. 432.

<sup>87</sup> The single best discussion of this decline is found in Fu-Shih Lin, “The Image and Status of Shamans in Ancient China,” pp. 397-458.

<sup>88</sup> Original text: “集解徐廣曰; “所病猶療病也。 “故病有六不治: 驕恣不論於理, 一不治也; 輕身重財, 二不治也; 衣食不能適, 三不治也; 陰陽并, 藏氣不定, 四不治也; 形羸不能服藥, 五不治也; 信巫不信醫, 六不治也。 有此一者, 則重難治也。” In Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, “Bian Que zhuan” (扁鵲倉公列傳第四十五), juan 105 As cited in Fu-Shih Lin, “The Image and Status of Shamans in Ancient China,” p. 438.

<sup>89</sup> Original text: “今世信祭祀, 中行子之類也。 不修其行而丰其祝, 不敬其上而畏其鬼。 身死禍至, 歸之於崇, 謂崇未得; 得崇修祀, 禍繁不止, 歸之於祭, 謂祭未敬。 夫論解除, 解除無益; 論祭祀, 祭祀無補; 論巫祝, 巫祝無力。 竟在人不在鬼, 在德不在祀, 明矣哉!” In Wang Chong, *Lun heng*, “Jie chu pian” (解除篇第七十五), juan 25. As cited in Fu-Shih Lin, “The Image and Status of Shamans in Ancient China,” p. 440.

<sup>90</sup> Fu-Shih Lin, “The Image and Status of Shamans in Ancient China,” p. 441.

against shamanism found in the Han era record.<sup>91</sup> Such verbal and literary attacks against shamans were also matched by the active suppression of shamanistic practices led by Han state officials. In many cases, shamanistic practices were outright banned by local officials; in more extreme examples, shamans were rounded up and executed.<sup>92</sup> In addition, shamans and their households were excluded from the newly *Confucianized* division of society into the four classes of people – scholars, farmers, artisans and merchants.<sup>93</sup> Excluded from the state’s new ritual order as well as the newly Confucianized social order, shamans came to be known as heterodox swindlers who both harmed the people and whose existence challenged the state’s newly emerging orthodox ritual order.<sup>94</sup>

### 3.5 Constructing the Confucian Saint

Although some regard Sima Qian’s *Shi ji* to be the first truly “historical” work<sup>95</sup> in the Chinese historical canon, by no means was the text’s only goal historical objectivity. More recently, a variety of scholarly works have examined the politicized context in which Sima Qian wrote. For example, Stephen Durrant has shown that much of the *Shi Ji* project was an intimate reflection of Sima Qian and his father’s struggles and tragedies.<sup>96</sup> Mark E. Lewis has also demonstrated that the construction of the *Shi ji* was a deeply political act that was intimately tied

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<sup>91</sup> For a more complete account see Fu-Shih Lin, “The Image and Status of Shamans in Ancient China,” pp. 428-456.

<sup>92</sup> Fu-Shih Lin, “The Image and Status of Shamans in Ancient China,” pp. 443-445.

<sup>93</sup> The decline in their social status was further accelerated by the creation of China’s first household registration systems (編戶齊民), which did not account for hereditary Shaman household status.

<sup>94</sup> Fu-Shih Lin, “The Image and Status of Shamans in Ancient China,” pp. 445-447.

<sup>95</sup> “Historical” here refers to a work that employs a clear and coherent historical method and is aimed at historical objectivity.

<sup>96</sup> Stephen Durrant, *The Cloudy Mirror: Tension and Conflict in the Writings of Sima Qian*.

to the Han state's creation of a new type of political orthodoxy through textual standardization.<sup>97</sup> In this heady context, the past was not simply a morally neutral ground, but rather a charged historic stage on which Sima Qian could cast larger tales of heroic virtue and goodness. Central to this task was the role of biography and nowhere better were such Confucian virtues witnessed than in the deeds of ancient sage officials and kings. Before proceeding, it is important to first recognize that it was in this political, historical, and moral context that Sima Qian first wrote his biography of Ximen Bao.

To Sima Qian, Ximen Bao was a model of heroic goodness and a pinnacle of correct governance. That his story was situated in the past was also important in that it would remain permanent even amidst the complex backdrop of dramatic social changes that Sima Qian witnessed himself. Sima Qian's biography eulogizes Ximen Bao for shifting local control away from its pre-Han, feminized, shamanistic and religious form of magical efficacy to a more masculine, Confucianized and secular program of managerial efficiency.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, his legacy was secured by the lasting impact of his projects, not by an ability to communicate with and influence the whims of heavenly spirits. Sima Qian's message is overwhelmingly simple: Ximen Bao was worthy of emulation because he eradicated a decidedly "vulgar" local shamanistic practice and replaced it with a benevolent, Confucian hydro-bureaucracy that brought lasting prosperity to the people of Ye. In this message, water control plays a crucial narrative role. Before Ximen Bao arrived in Ye, the river was dangerous because of its spirit's fickle and

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<sup>97</sup> See Mark Edward Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), especially Chapter 7.

<sup>98</sup> While not the aim of this chapter, it also makes sense to understand this shift away from feminized shamanistic magic as part and parcel of the larger Confucianization of women and their roles during the Han dynasty. The *Shi ji* promoted both male and female models of Confucian virtues; however, while men were often celebrated for ideals sagely governance, women were primarily celebrated for their loyalty and acquiescence. This "confucianization" of women's roles is perhaps best witnessed in Ban Zhao's (班昭) (45-116 CE), *Lessons for Women* (女誡) text, which preaches ideals of humility, service, respect, devotion, and harmony as the ultimate female virtues. See William Theodore De Bary, Irene Bloom, eds. *The Sources of Chinese Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), pp. 821-827.

lascivious whims;<sup>99</sup> by the time he left however, the river was dangerous only if left unmanaged by men.

### 3.5.1 Opening the 12 Irrigation Ditches: Managerial Efficiency

Perceived links connecting water management, the ordering of the world, and state control extend far back into antiquity and begin with the body of myths concerning Yu the Great (大禹) and his quelling of the “Great Flood.” Possibly the most important foundation myth in the Chinese tradition, the Yu the Great legend has been recounted through the ages as a story of selfless sacrifice for the sake of humankind. In this legend, King Yao (堯) entrusted Yu with the task of taming the Great Flood after his father Gun (鯀) had failed to do so. Unlike his father, who failed to control the River<sup>100</sup> with dikes and embankments, Yu is said to have opened and channeled nine new rivers and in doing so brought order and stability to the realm;<sup>101</sup> for his

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<sup>99</sup> Anning Jing offers an exhaustive list of the ways in which water was viewed as dangerous by people in ancient China. In one story, Ge Hong (葛洪, 284-364) writes that the Daoist immortal Fei Changfang is said to have accidentally locked up the God of the Eastern Sea for three years and thereby accidentally caused a drought for an equal amount of time. Bodies of water were also well known for abducting husbands and adopting their appearances so that they could steal their wives. Most common however, were water disasters sent by heaven to punish immoral misgovernance. Anning Jing, *The Water God's Temple of the Guangsheng Monastery: Cosmic Function of Art, Ritual and Theater*, pp. 133-135.

<sup>100</sup> Here “the River” refers to the Yellow River (河) as evidenced in the historic texts.

<sup>101</sup> By legend, Yu is said to have been helped by a dragon that used his tail to dredge the rivers and by a turtle that helped Yu make the land divisions that would come to mark the Nine Provinces. Mark Lewis has translated the following passage, which culls information from a variety of earlier sources. The text is as follows: “Yu devoted all his strength to the water channels, guiding the rivers and leveling the peaks. A yellow dragon dragged its tail in front of him [to carve out channels] and a black turtle carried along blue-green mud behind. This black turtle was the emissary of the spirit of the Yellow River [*he jing* 河精]. Beneath the turtle’s chin [the plastron?] there was a seal, whose characters were all in the old seal form. These formed the graphs for [the names of] all the mountains and rivers of the Nine Provinces. Wherever Yu had dug out a channel he used the blue-green mud to seal up [*feng* 封] and record the place, then had the black turtle press down the seal on top of it. The contemporary practice of piling up earth to make boundary markers [*jie* 界] is a lingering imitation of this practice.” Mark Lewis, *Flood Myths in Early China* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), pp. 104-105.

accomplishments, King Yao had Yu enfeoffed as the King of Xia (夏), China's first legendary dynasty.<sup>102</sup>

That Yu is said to have been rewarded with his own dynasty for stabilizing the realm with hydraulic works is important. By channeling the river rather than blocking it, Yu created the “Nine Provinces” and ordered the world away from the state of primal non-distinction represented by great floods.<sup>103</sup> Yu's political authority is directly related to his power and ability to make and act on proper distinctions. It is this relationship between water control, the ordering of the world and political authority that later commentators highlighted when they discussed Yu the Great. In its “Tribute to Yu” the 6<sup>th</sup> (?) century classic, the *Shang shu* (尚書) summarizes Yu's achievements:

Thus, throughout the nine provinces a similar order was effected: the grounds along the waters were everywhere made inhabitable; the hills were cleared of their superfluous wood and sacrificed to; the sources of the streams were cleared; the marshes were well banked; access to the capital was secured for all within the four seas. A great order was effected in the six magazines of material wealth; the different parts of the country were subjected to an exact comparison, so that contribution of revenue could be carefully adjusted according to their resources. The fields were classified with reference to the three characters of the soil; and the revenues for the Middle region were established.” The Nine Provinces were standardized. The four quarters were made habitable. The Nine Mountains were deforested and put down for arable land. The sources of the Nine Rivers were dredged. The Nine Marshes banked up. The Four Seas had their concourses opened freely. The Six Treasuries were well attended to. All the soils were compared and classified. Their land values and revenues were carefully controlled.<sup>104</sup>

The above passage describes Yu's pacification of the world's primordial state of indistinguishable chaos. With the flood quelled, the world could be divided and ordered, proper

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<sup>102</sup> Accounts of this story are found in the “Tianwen” portion of the *Chu ci* and most notably in the “Tribute to Yu” (禹貢) found in the *Shang shu* (尚書).

<sup>103</sup> This legend is the first time that we see mention of what would become an enduring debate between the two most central approaches to river control in the North China River Plain - damming and blocking versus channeling and dredging.

<sup>104</sup> Original text, “九州攸同, 四隩既宅, 九山刊旅, 九川滌源, 九澤既陂, 四海會同. 六府孔修, 庶土交正, 底慎財賦, 鹹則三壤成賦. 中邦錫,” in, *Shang shu* 尚書 (6<sup>th</sup> ? cent BCE), “Yu Gong” (禹公) 6. 16b. Translation by James Legge, trans., *The Chinese Classics: with A Translation, Critical And Exegetical Notes, prolegomena, and copious indexes; Vol III the Shoo King* (Hong Kong: Legge ; London : Trubner, 1861–1872), vol 3, p. 141.

distinctions could be made and the first (legendary) Chinese state, the Xia, could be established. What the *Shang shu* describes here in the aftermath of Yu's flood control is no less than the founding of the first Chinese state.

In his recent work the *Flood Myths of Early China*, Mark Lewis offers a masterful discussion of this relationship between floods, flood myths and political authority in ancient China. For Lewis, water and water control provided a central metaphor for early Chinese thinkers' discussions regarding the nature of human society and political authority.<sup>105</sup> When channeled properly, water could be used to the benefit of the people; when left alone however, it was prone to return to its natural state of chaos. As Lewis states in another work, floods are “the earliest and most graphic form of ... regularly repeated social collapse.”<sup>106</sup> Thus, for many thinkers of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods, violent floods functioned as a central metaphor for the state of chaos that human society always tended to veer towards. However, just as floods could be quelled and rivers controlled through proper human intervention, so too could social harmony be achieved through wise and sagely governance.

This relationship between water and governance is perhaps nowhere better discussed than in the classic 6<sup>th</sup> (?) century text, the *Guanzi* (管子) where it states that, “the sages' transformation of the world lay in understanding water.”<sup>107</sup> To thinkers like Guan Zhong, people's nature was an intimate reflection of the state of the water around them. Guan Zhong writes:

Now, when the water is unadulterated, people's hearts will be correct. When the water is pure, people's hearts will be at ease. When people's hearts are correct, they have no desire to be corrupt. When people's hearts are at ease, their conduct will never be

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<sup>105</sup> Mark Lewis, *The Flood Myths of Ancient China*.

<sup>106</sup> Mark Lewis, “The Mythology of Early China,” p. 561.

<sup>107</sup> In the “Shui Di” 水地 [Water and Earth], section of the *Guanzi* 管子 [Writings of Master Guan], in W. Allyn Rickett, trans., *Guanzi: Political, Economic, and Philosophical Essays from Early China, a Study and Translation: Volume 2 Chapters XII, 35-XXIV* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 107.

depraved. *For this reason, the sages' bringing good order to the world did not lie in preaching to every person or persuading every household, but in taking water as their central concern.*"<sup>108</sup>

All of China's greatest water quellers, such as Yu the Great and Ximen Bao, took water as their central concern, and it is for this that they are celebrated in the subsequent historic literature. Just as Yu the Great is revered for ending the natural/cosmological chaos caused by a state of alluvial non-distinction, Ximen Bao was celebrated for ending the ritual/moral chaos caused by the feminized shamanistic establishment in Ye. In both of these cases, the virtue (德) of these ancient culture heroes rests on their ability to conquer chaos through their sagely powers of differentiation.

As chaos (亂) remained the permanent background condition for many thinkers in the ancient Chinese tradition, stories of sage rulers who could thwart chaos through upright governance and the ability to make proper distinctions were important to the proselytizing of Confucian values and morals. In placing the story of Ximen Bao carving the 12 irrigation ditches immediately after having thrown the shamans into the river, Sima Qian seems to have grasped the moralizing value of setting up such a cause and effect relationship. The people of Ye suffered due to long standing local shamanistic practices aimed at stopping the angry River God from his annual floods. Realizing the "absurdity" of such beliefs, the upright Confucian official, Ximen

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<sup>108</sup> Immediately preceding this text, Guan Zhong describes in far more specific detail how various societies and their peoples are affected by the water structures in which they live. He writes: "Now the water of Qi is forceful, swift and twisting. Therefore its people are greedy, uncouth, and warlike. The water of Chu is gentle, yielding and pure. Therefore its people are lighthearted, resolute, and sure of themselves. The water of Yue is turbid, sluggish, and soaks the land. Therefore its people are stupid, disease ridden, and filthy. The water of Qin is thick like gruel and stagnant. It is obstructed, choked with silt, and wanders in confusion free of its banks. Therefore its people are greedy, violent, and deceptive, and they like to meddle in affairs. The water of Jin is bitter, harsh and polluted. It is choked with silt and wanders in confusion free of its banks. Therefore its people are flattering and deceitful, cunning and profit seeking. The water of Yan collects in low places and is weak. It sinks into the ground, is clogged, and wanders in confusion free of its banks. Therefore its people are stupid, idyllic, and given to divination. They treat disease lightly and die readily. The water of Song is light, strong and pure. Therefore its people are simple and at ease with themselves, and they like things to be done in the correct way. *For this reason the sages' transformation of the world lay in understanding water.*" Emphasis added. "Shui Di," *Guanzi*, in W. Allyn Rickett, trans., *Guanzi: Political, Economic, and Philosophical Essays from Early China, a Study and Translation: Volume 2*, Chapters XII, 35-XXIV, pp. 106-107. W. Allyn Rickett dates the production of this text to sometime around the end of the third century BCE to the third quarter of the second century BCE (p. 100).

Bao abolished such heterodox shamanistic practices and thereby destroyed the dubious link between the River God and the people of Ye. Soon after Ximen Bao ordered the carving of 12 irrigation ditches, which stabilized the river and irrigated the fields of Ye; evil local practices were put to an end and replaced with rationalized Confucian governance. Owing to his achievements, Ximen Bao's name was transmitted through proceeding generations as a model of Confucian orthodoxy.

### 3.5.2 What about Shi Qi?

There is, however, one glaring problem in this story. From earlier texts, such as the *Lüshi chunqiu* we know that one official, named Shi Qi, claimed that Ximen Bao was not effective in irrigating Ye. In fact, according to the *Lüshi chunqiu*, Ximen Bao failed miserably in this capacity and was thus considered an unworthy official. In this source, Ye was irrigated by Shi Qi, not Ximen Bao. The *Shi ji* however, clearly states that Ximen Bao carved the 12 irrigation ditches and irrigated Ye; it even goes as far as to say that locals resisted any revision to Ximen Bao's historic waterworks projects even up until the Han. We are left with the question of how to deal with such a glaring inconsistency in the two historic texts, where in one story Ximen Bao is derided for his inability to irrigate Ye, while in the other he is celebrated for the same act.

In his essay "Analysis and Elucidation of the different founders of the Zhang River's 12 irrigation ditches" (漳水十二渠始创者辨析), scholar of Chinese historical geography, Xin Deyong (辛德勇) works through an exhaustive list of primary literature in an effort to uncover who actually cut the 12 irrigation ditches.<sup>109</sup> Xin's discussion is far too technical to present in its

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<sup>109</sup> In his essay, Xin argues that this question is not just a matter of textual criticism but also important because it involves "the earliest recorded examples of large scale hydraulic engineering projects in the Yellow River flood plain region." Though Xin Deyong 辛德勇 is the current Head of the Historical Geography Research Section at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, his essay has only been published online at a popular site for historic essays. Xin Deyong 辛德勇, *Zhang shui shi er qu shi chuang bian xi* (漳水十二渠始创者辨析) [*Analysis and Elucidation*

entirety here, but there are several salient features of his argument that are worth noting. First, Xin notes that Shi Qi served in Ye during the time of Wei Xiang Wang (魏襄王, 318-296 BCE) who was the great-grandson of Wei Wenhou. Evidence in the *Shi ji* suggests that Wei Wenhou dispatched Ximen Bao to govern over Ye around 421 BCE, putting him in the locality about 100 years before Shi Qi arrived. Given this chronology, it is entirely plausible that the *Shi ji* and *Lüshi chunqiu* accounts are not contradictory at all. It is indeed possible that Ximen Bao first irrigated Ye, but dissatisfied with his work, Shi Qi expanded the projects. Many later scholars adopted this synthetic approach to the question including the Western Jin (西晋, 265-316) era poet, Zuo Si (左思, 250-305).<sup>110</sup> In his “Rhyme Prose on the Wei Capital” (魏都賦) Zuo wrote, “First Ximen Bao irrigated the fields, later Shi Qi [also] irrigated the fields.”<sup>111</sup> Further evidence for this hybrid position is provided by the *Shuijing zhu*, which states:

In former times, during the rule of the Marquis Wen of Wei, Ximen Bao governed Ye. At this time, he channeled the Zhang River to irrigate the [fields of] Ye, but people repudiated this project. It was like this until the time of the King Xiang of Wei, when Shi Qi governed Ye. Shi Qi also built earth works to channel waters to irrigate Ye’s field. Alkaline soil was made fertile and the common people sang his name in praise.<sup>112</sup>

Neither of these texts however, answers the question, if Shi Qi did the lion’s share of the hydrological work in Ye why was he not acknowledged for his efforts in later historic works as the *Shi ji*. Here, Xin Deyong offers a compelling argument. From the historical record we can

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*of the different founders of the Zhang River's 12 irrigation ditches*  
<http://www.lunwentianxia.com/product.free.9010327.4/> (Accessed, April 23, 2009).

<sup>110</sup>Zuo Si’s courtesy name was Taichong (太冲).

<sup>111</sup> Original text: “西門溉其前史起灌其后,” Zuo Si 左思, *Wei du fu* 魏都賦 [*Rhyme Prose on the Wei Capital*], collected in Xiao Tong 蕭統, *Wen xuan* 文選 [*Collected Writings*], Juan 6. Modern reprint (Hong Kong: Shang yin shu guan: 1978), vol 2, p.124.

<sup>112</sup> Original text is as follows: “昔魏文侯以西門豹為鄴令也, 引漳以溉鄴, 民賴其用. 至魏襄王以史起為鄴令, 又堰漳水以灌鄴田, 鹹成沃壤, 百姓歌之,” in Li Daoyuan 酈道元, “Du Zhang Shui” 濁漳水 [*The Turbid Zhang*], *Shui jing zhu* 水經注 [*Commentary on the Waterways Classic*], reprint in Wang Yunwu 王雲五 ed, Wan you wen ku collection 萬有文庫 [*Comprehensive Library Collection*] (Taipei: Taiwan shang wu yin shu guan, 1965), vol 980, p. 87.

say with a fair degree of certainty that the waterworks celebrated in Ye were at least partially due to the efforts of both Shi Qi and Ximen Bao; however, owing to Ximen Bao's reputation in the already established historic record,<sup>113</sup> works such as the *Shi ji* omitted Shi Qi's lesser known accomplishments and grafted them onto Ximen Bao's record instead.

Taking Xin's argument further, I would suggest that the *Shi ji*'s overwriting of Shi Qi's accomplishments is also related to the particular nature of this text, which sought to present *clear models* of personified Confucian virtues in the biographical stories of past officials. The narrative arc established by Ximen Bao's tossing of the Shamans into the river followed by controlling the local flood situation with hydrological works simply makes a better story. Shi Qi was historically less important than Ximen Bao and his achievements were written out of the story as time progressed. Moreover, as Xin points out, one certainly needs to consider that many of the sections that we read in the *Shi ji* are possibly re-writes, revision or even forgeries by later authors.<sup>114</sup>

Whether we agree with Xin Deyong's discussion that the key reason for Ximen Bao's subsequent historic elevation over Shi Qi involves larger textual questions regarding the post-Han transmission of the *Shi ji* is beside the point. What is important, however, is that the *Shi ji* emerged as the *locus classicus* of the Ximen Bao narrative. When we read about Ximen Bao in subsequent historic records, aside from a few specialized cases, he is depicted as a model Confucian who goes to Ye, stops the practice of marrying wives to the river god and then diverts the Zhang River into 12 irrigation channels. It is relatively clear that Ximen Bao's initial attempts to divert the river were possibly ill conceived and most likely resisted by officials and

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<sup>113</sup> By the time the *Shi Ji* was written the only surviving account to Shi Qi was found in the *Lüshi chunqiu*, while Ximen Bao was mentioned in the *Han fei zi*, *Shuo yuan*, *Zhan guo ce*, *Huai nan zi*, and the *Lun heng*.

<sup>114</sup> For an evenly tempered and well considered version of this argument see Scott Geler's dissertation about Xu Guang's, *Shi ji Yinyi*, which is commonly thought to have been an important revision of the original *Shi ji* text. See Scott Geler's "Sounds and meanings: Early Chinese historical exegesis and Xu Guang's 'Shi ji yinyi'." Phd Diss. University of Wisconsin Madison, 2003, especially the first and second chapters.

that much of the lasting water works in the region can be attributed to Shi Qi. However given his inclusion into a wide body of classical works, such as the *Lüshi chunqiu*, the *Huainanzi*, and the *Han Feizi*, Ximen Bao was a likely candidate to have the works of the lesser known Shi Qi attributed to him. Indeed, the story of Ximen Bao throwing shamans into the water and irrigating Ye is taught to this day with no mention of Shi Qi.

### 3.6 Conclusions

This chapter has demonstrated that although the Ximen Bao story has been transmitted through the ages as a relatively simple story of the value of moral and upright governance, the early textual record concerning Ximen Bao is by no means as clear. In fact, the earliest textual references to Ximen Bao that can be found in the historical literature are actually quite negative in their assessments of his merits in office. It was not until the Han dynasty, when owing to the dramatic changes happening in the world around him, that Sima Qian looked to the past for clear examples of personified virtue and recast Ximen Bao in this new mold. Although Ximen Bao was never a “Confucian” in any sense of the term, through the *Shi ji* text he came to symbolize key Confucian virtues of secular humanism and benevolent governance. Ximen Bao’s sagely example of governance held important sway with Han statesmen and philosophers who actively sought to disassociate themselves from the more feminized and shamanistic pre-Han social and political order; Ximen Bao quite literally threw this old world into the river and replaced it with a new regime of masculine, managerial and hydraulic efficiency. That Ximen Bao earned his reputation through water control also helped to ensure his enduring legacy in China’s historic canon of hydro-bureaucrats and “order creators.” The ultimate irony in all of this however, is that for all of his secular good, Ximen Bao was eventually elevated to a god himself. We will

turn to this story - the rise, fall and eventual rejuvenation of the Ximen Bao cult - in the next chapter.

## Chapter 4: The Religious Rise, Fall and Rehabilitation of Ximen Bao in Linzhang County: 220-1644

**“Even if the Zhang River could become dry, your benevolence is abundant. Even if the Western Mountains could become flat, your reputation remains lofty.”** - Popular song from Linzhang County in praise of Ximen Bao, Song Dynasty.<sup>1</sup>

### 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has examined the development of the Ximen Bao tale as it emerged from the earliest surviving textual records to the end of the Han Dynasty period. I have argued that the *Shi ji* biography smoothed over all of the discrepancies found in the earlier textual record and presented Ximen Bao as an upright and moral official who was decidedly against “heterodox” local religious practices and shamanistic magic. The biography also praises him as an able administrator who ordered and brought prosperity to Ye through water control projects, which, as we have seen, was metaphorically central to ideas of moral order and sagely governance. Owing primarily to his *Shi ji* biography, Ximen Bao grew into a central figure in what David Johnson has called, “China’s secular mythology.”<sup>2</sup>

Soon after the fall of the Han dynasty however, another somewhat ironic trajectory emerges in the discursive life of Ximen Bao. We see that for all his efforts in eradicating local religious practices, the famously “secular” Ximen Bao was elevated to the status of a god

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<sup>1</sup> From Yang Meng 楊蒙, “Wei Ye ling Ximen Bao miao bei” 魏鄴令西門豹廟碑 [Memorial Inscription for the Wei Commander of Ye, Ximen Bao’s Temple] in Jing Fang 景芳 ed., *Linzhang xian zhi* 臨漳縣志 [*Gazetteer of Linzhang County*], 1506, juan 10, 8a-8b.

<sup>2</sup> David Johnson uses the term “secular mythology” to discuss the way in which the Spring and Autumn era official, Wu Yun (伍員, style name, Zixu 子胥), “came to be revered as a paragon of loyalty” in an emerging Confucian canon. Johnson argues that not all stories in Chinese antiquity were equally meaningful or equally revered. Owing to their “special authority” some stories held more cultural weight and played an important role in the creation of China’s “central mythical arena.” I find the term “secular mythology” particularly useful to describe the way in which such stories as the quasi-historical Ximen Bao legend grew to have their own social lives in later periods. David Johnson, “Epic and History in Early China: the Matter of Wu Tzu-hsu,” in *The Journal of Asian Studies* (40.2) Feb, 1981: 255-271, p. 256.

himself.<sup>3</sup> This chapter examines this transformation of Ximen Bao from a paragon of Confucian virtue to the object of religious veneration; it then investigates the various social, cultural, political and religious lives that the Ximen Bao cult took in Linzhang County from the end of the Han dynasty and into the Ming period. Textual evidence suggests that following the dissolution of the Han dynasty, veneration of Ximen Bao soon took on different meanings and in time this famously “secular” official became the object of local religious devotion himself. By the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE Ximen Bao was the clear object of local religious veneration and eventually his cult flourished to hold realm-wide prominence during the later half of the Six Dynasties period (roughly 220-581 CE).<sup>4</sup> It was also at this time that Ye enjoyed great prestige as a key political, cultural and economic hub for the north and central China regions. However, starting in the Tang period and accelerating through the Song, China’s<sup>5</sup> economic and cultural gravity began to shift southwards.<sup>6</sup> The status of the Ximen Bao cult mirrored this shift and returned to its originally localized state. By the end of the Song Dynasty the realm-wide prestige that Ximen

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<sup>3</sup> Ximen Bao’s “secularism” is often exaggerated in the secondary sources, especially those produced in post 1949 People’s Republic of China. While Ximen Bao historically put an end to *one* local religious practice, it is highly unlikely that he was an “atheist” in the contemporary sense of the word as post 1949 PRC sources often suggest. For a particularly striking example of this exaggerated sense of atheism and Ximen Bao’s “anti-superstitious” stance found in the PRC sources see Chen Youfang 陈有芳, “Cong Ximen Bao zhi wu shuo qi” 从西门豹治巫说起 [Speaking of Ximen Bao Controlling the Shamans], in *Renmin gongan* 人民公安 [*People’s Public Security*] no. 3 (1999), p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> Here I use the term “Six Dynasties Period” (六朝) as a collective noun referring to the Three Kingdoms (三國時代 220-280 CE), the Jin Dynasty (晉朝 265-420 CE) and the Southern and Northern Dynasties (南北朝 420-589 CE). Situated between the collapse of the Han Dynasty in 220 CE and the reunification of China under the Sui and Tang dynasties in the 6-7<sup>th</sup> centuries CE, this 361 year period is also often conterminously referred to as the “Period of Disunion” or the “Wei, Jin, Nan-Bei Chao Period” (魏晉南北朝). See Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 1998), pp. 774-775.

<sup>5</sup> As it is something of an anachronism to use the term “China” here for this period in history, I use the word with some reluctance. When analyzing longer durée developments that span across many dynasties and several lesser ruling houses, the term China is simply employed as useful shorthand.

<sup>6</sup> This shift was hastened by the Jurchen capture of North China in 1127 and the establishment of the Southern Song capital in the southern city of Lin’an (臨安) (today’s Hangzhou). Other explanations for this shift have been discussed in Chapter One and can also be found in Ch’ao-ting Chi, *Key Economic Areas in Chinese History: As Revealed in the Development of Public Works for Water-Control* (New York: Augustus M. Kelly Publishers, 1970) originally published in 1936; and in Paul Jakov Smith, “Introduction: Problematizing the Song-Yuan-Ming Transition” in *The Song Yuan Ming Transition in Chinese History*, Paul Jakov Smith and Richard Von Glahn Eds. (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003): 1-34.

Bao once enjoyed was clearly diminished and worship at his shrine had grown into a purely local affair. Thus the rise and fall of the Ximen Bao cult intimately mirrors the rising and then declining status of the Ye region as it moved out of China's Six Dynasties period and into the late imperial era; moreover, it displays strong interconnected links between local religious practices, historic memory, and regional status as they played out in Linzhang from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century to the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The second half of this chapter then moves to explore the growth and maturation of the Ximen Bao cult in Linzhang County during the late imperial era. When the Ming state came to power in 1368 it did so as a restorationist dynasty, claiming heir to a long pedigree of "Chinese" cultural traditions and political institutions stretching far back into China's distant antiquity. Although Linzhang was hardly touched by the dramatic transformations that characterized much of south China in the late imperial period, the county was firmly situated in one of China's most important political and cultural heartlands. It appears that some Ming magistrates understood this important link and took steps to re-connect the locality with its "culturally central" past in an effort to retain some measure of "cultural centrality" for the county. Thus in the early Ming period, Ximen Bao gained full status as the county's City God and soon after his City God Temple was built. By the time the county's first gazetteer was produced in 1506, the local importance of Ximen Bao was firmly established. A closer look at the stylizing of the Ximen Bao example throughout this very public text exposes the importance of antiquity as a vital cultural and political resource in a county that, in economic and cultural terms, was becoming increasingly peripheral to the main trends of Ming China.

Just a few years after the 1506 gazetteer was produced, Linzhang's final ritual site devoted to Ximen Bao worship, which was known as the "Temple to the Two Worthies of Ye," was built. That several generations of magistrates in Linzhang County all took such active

measures to restore what I call the “Ximen Bao example” in the locality displays the important role that historical memory played in the construction of Linzhang’s own sense of identity and in the formation of the county’s distinct political culture. It also displays the way in which mid-Ming Linzhang magistrates grasped for “culturally central” models from the county’s distant antiquity in an effort to recreate some of the county’s former importance.

#### 4.2 From the Secular to the Religious: Ximen Bao Worship Following the Han Period

Without a clear body of historic evidence it is hard to know exactly when Ximen Bao was elevated to the status of a religious figure. The most important source in the historical body of works regarding Ximen Bao, the *Shi ji* simply states that for his efforts in Ye, Ximen Bao’s “name was known throughout the realm and his beneficence spread to later generations” (故西門豹為鄴令名聞天下澤流後世).<sup>7</sup> Written at least four hundred years after his death, the *Shi ji* source does not mention the establishment of any Ximen Bao shrines or temples nor does it allude to any religious rites practiced in his honor. Such silences are understandable however, as any discussion of Ximen Bao’s conversion into a religious symbol would be counter-intuitive to the text’s initial intent, which was to proselytize Ximen Bao’s “Confucian” victory over the local religious order. Therefore, without any decisive historic evidence we can only conclude that if there was any religious reverence directed towards Ximen Bao following his death and into the Han period, such expressions were most likely only local in scope and orientation and not widely recognized outside of the immediate Ye region.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Sima Qian, “Hua ji lie zhuan” 滑稽列傳 [Biographies of Cunning Officials], juan 126, *Shi ji* 史記 [Records of the Grand Historian], modern reprint (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), Vol. 10, p. 3213.

<sup>8</sup> Such an interpretation is supported by evidence from the 1506 Linzhang County gazetteer, which states that owing to Ximen Bao’s efforts in governing Ye, the people established a temple (立廟) in his honor. However, given that this source was produced over 2000 years after Ximen Bao’s death, it is highly likely that much of the longer historic durée development in the Ximen Bao temple is conflated and glossed over. Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 5, 2b.

In a recently published essay, scholar Song Yanpeng (宋燕鵬) provides an excellent roadmap through many of the primary sources related to the rise of the Ximen Bao cult during the Six Dynasties period.<sup>9</sup> In his article, Song pours over the textual record and provides ample evidence to support the conclusion that following the Han period, not only a religious cult devoted to Ximen Bao worship emerged, it also blossomed into an important religious focal point for the various states of the period.

Song starts his discussion with the third century *Records of the Three Kingdoms* (三國志) text, which is the first surviving reference to the religious elevation of Ximen Bao. The “Annals of King Wu” section records that before his death, the Three Kingdoms general, Cao Cao (155-220 CE, 曹操) ordered that his tomb be built to the west of the Ximen Bao Shrine (西門豹祠).<sup>10</sup> It is impossible to know exactly what kind of temple Cao Cao is referring to from this textual reference alone; however, given the use of the character “ci” (祠) it is reasonable to assume that it was some type of shrine set up to honour Ximen Bao. This initial shrine did not last for long however, as a surviving stele inscription from the 4<sup>th</sup> century C.E suggests that it was likely destroyed during the Sixteen Kingdoms Period (304-439 CE). Entitled, “Record of the Foundation of the Ximen Bao Shrine” (西門豹祠殿基記) the inscription states that after Shi Hu (石虎, 295-349), the founder of the Later Zhao Dynasty (後趙, 319-351), moved his capital to

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<sup>9</sup> Song Yanpeng 宋燕鵬, “Ximen Bao xin yang: zhonggu ye xia ju min de yi ge shenghuo neirong”. 西門豹信仰: 中古鄴下居民的一個生活內容 [Religious Belief in Ximen Bao: One Fact of Life for Ye Residents of the Medieval Period], *Handan zhiye jishu xueyuan xuebao* 邯鄲職業技術學院學報 [*Journal of the Handan Polytechnic Academy*] (Dec, 2007: 20.4): 7-11.

<sup>10</sup> Original Text is as follows: “古之葬者,必居瘠薄之地. 其規西門豹祠西原上為壽陵,因高為基,不封不樹,” in, Chen Shou 陳壽, ed., “Wu di ji” 武帝紀 [Annals of King Wu], *San guo zhi* 三國志 [*Records of the Three Kingdoms*], juan 1. Modern reprint (Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1959), vol. 1, p. 51.

Ye, he immediately ordered the “construction” (造) of the Ximen Bao Shrine;<sup>11</sup> if the shrine had not been destroyed, it is reasonable to conclude that the stele inscription would state the former shrine had simply been “renovated” not “constructed.”<sup>12</sup>

This same inscription also offers important clues as to the official status of the shrine at time. Rather than providing lavish descriptions of the temple, the inscription simply states the shrine was ordered built in the 6<sup>th</sup> year of the Jianwu reign period (340 CE) and then lists the titles of all of the high ranking officials involved in planning and supervising the temple’s construction. That the orders to construct the temple came directly from Jianwu’s court and that the work was supervised by high ranking officials suggests that by the time the Ximen Bao Shrine was constructed in 340 CE it was considered an orthodox site worthy of official sponsorship.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The original text survives in a Song Dynasty collection of stele inscriptions. On the hall’s construction the source reads: “In autumn of the 8<sup>th</sup> month of the sixth year of the Jianwu Reign period (340CE) the Ximen Bao Shrine was *created* (造)” (“趙建武六年歲在庚子秋八月庚寅造西門祠殿基”). The Complete passage is as follows: “趙西門豹祠殿基記 - 右趙西門豹祠殿基記云趙建武六年歲在庚子秋八月庚寅造西門祠殿基又云巧工司馬臣張由監作吏臣杜波馬孫殿中司馬臣王基殿中都尉臣潘倪侍御史騎都尉臣劉誼左校令臣趙升殿中校尉臣顏零等監其下刻物象甚多如土長強良碩章舒悽雀之類其名頗異近歲臨淄縣人耕地得巧工司馬印徧 史傳皆無此官名不知為何代物今乃見于此碑云,” in Anon., “Ximen Bao ci dian ji ji” 西門豹祠殿基記 [Record of the Foundation of the Ximen Bao Shrine], in Zhao Mingcheng, 趙明誠, ed., *Jinshi lu* 金石錄 [Record of Carved Inscriptions], juan 20, 13a. Modern reprint in *Si bu cong kan xu bian* 四部叢刊續編 [Collection of the Four Divisions of Texts] (Taipei: Taiwan shang wu yin shu guan, 1966), vol. 64. The 1506 Linzhang Gazetteer also dates Shi Hu’s restoration project to the the 6<sup>th</sup> year (340 CE) of this reign period (石虎建武六年). See Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 5, 2b-3a. It is also worth noting that some sources call the structure an “shrine” (趙西門豹祠殿) while others, such as the 1506 Linzhang Gazetteer, call it the “Ximen Bao Temple” (西門豹廟). Unfortunately, the other surviving Song era source regarding the temple, Yang Meng’s “Memorial Inscription for the Wei commander of Ye, Ximen Bao’s Temple” (魏鄴令西門豹廟碑記) is silent on the issue of the shrine’s original construction. See Zhou Bingyi 周秉彝 and Zhou Shou 周壽, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi* 臨漳縣志 [Gazetteer of Linzhang County], 1904, juan 12 1b-2a; and, Yang Meng, “Wei Ye ling Ximen Bao miao bei” in, Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 10, 8a-8b.

<sup>12</sup> Possibly “*xiu*” (修), meaning “to renovate,” “*zhongxiu*” (中修), or “*chongxiu*” (重修), which both suggests more major renovations; or “*chongjian*” (重建) which refers to rebuilding. The use of the word “*zao*” (造) meaning “to make”, “to construct”, “to establish”, or “to create” seems to imply that the temple was entirely rebuilt or possibly even re-founded.

<sup>13</sup> In, “Ximen Bao ci dian ji ji,” in, Zhao Mingcheng, *Jinshi lu*, juan 20, 13a. Partially cited in, Song Yanpeng, “Ximen Bao xin yang: zhonggu ye xia ju min de yi ge shenghuo neirong,” p. 7.

Owing to its official sponsorship and its central location within the capital region of the Later Zhao state, the Ximen Bao Shrine grew to be an important ritual site in the emerging pantheon of official recognized state ritual sites in the Six Dynasties period. Although during the Northern Wei (北魏, 386-557) period, the capital was moved northwards out of Ye,<sup>14</sup> Northern Wei emperors still sent eminent officials to perform rituals at the Ximen Bao Shrine. It is recorded in the *Wei History* (魏書) that the Taihe Emperor (r. 477-499, 太和) visited the Ximen Bao Shrine in the first month of spring in 499.<sup>15</sup> This visit is particularly important because as Song Yanpeng points out, it came after the Taihe Emperor dispatched an official envoy to survey the realm's most important ceremonial shrines.<sup>16</sup> Following this survey, the Taihe Emperor is said to have personally only visited six of these shrines/temples including: the Han Gaozu Temple (漢高祖), the Confucian Temple (孔子廟) at Qufu, the shrines to the sage rulers Yao (唐堯), Shun (虞舜), and Yu (夏禹), and lastly the Ximen Bao Shrine.<sup>17</sup> That Ximen Bao's shrine was included shoulder to shoulder with such sages as Confucius' provides further evidence of his cult's official recognition and high position within a Six Dynasties pantheon of official recognized ritual sites.

The Ximen Bao Shrine also played an important function in larger state rituals dealing with earthly elements and natural disasters. The *Book of Sui* (隋書) records that when the regional political centre shifted once again back to Ye during the Eastern Wei and Northern Qi

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<sup>14</sup> In the late 4<sup>th</sup> century, the Northern Wei established their capital north of Ye in Pingcheng County (平城), which is located in today's Datong City, Shanxi Province. The capital was later moved to Luoyang (洛陽).

<sup>15</sup> Original text: “如孝文帝於太和二十三年春正月“壬午,幸西門豹祠,遂歷漳水而還,” in Wei Shou魏收, ed., “Gaozu Xiao Wendi ji” 高祖孝文帝紀” [Record of Xiao Wendi], *Wei shu*魏書 [Book of Wei], juan 7. Modern reprint (Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1974 ), p. 184. Partially cited in Song Yanpeng, “Ximen Bao xin yang: zhonggu ye xia ju min de yi ge shenghuo neirong,” p. 7

<sup>16</sup> Song Yanpeng, “Ximen Bao xin yang: zhonggu ye xia ju min de yi ge shenghuo neirong,” p. 8.

<sup>17</sup> Song Yanpeng, “Ximen Bao xin yang: zhonggu ye xia ju min de yi ge shenghuo neirong,” p. 8.

periods (東魏/北齊 534-577), there were nine official stations where emperors and officials offered sacrifices to avoid water disasters, drought, and pestilence. These included a shrines/temples to the God of Rain (雩), the Southern Suburbs (南郊), the sage ruler Yao (堯), Confucius (孔), and to the gods of the soil and grain (社稷), the Five Sacred Mountains (岳), the Four Great Rivers (四瀆), the Fu Kou Pass (滏口).<sup>18</sup> Included last on this list was the Ximen Bao Shrine (豹祠), which further displays the realm wide prestige and importance that his cult enjoyed at this time.<sup>19</sup>

### 4.3 Ye and the North China Plain during the Six Dynasties Period

From these various Six Dynasties accounts we can see that the Ximen Bao Shrine was not just simply regarded as a local cult at the time, but also held realm wide significance for the various contending states of the period. Here the prestige of the Ximen Bao temple is perhaps best understood as a reflection of the key position that Ye and the North China plain region held during the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. In his *Key Economic Areas in Chinese History*, Ch'ao-ting Chi has argued that the North China Plain region enjoyed unparalleled economic and political regional dominance throughout China in the period immediately following the collapse of the Han Dynasty in 220 CE.<sup>20</sup> This dominance was based on the ability of the various contending

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<sup>18</sup> Fu Kou is an ancient mountain pass located in the Taihang Mountain range close to today's Handan City, Hebei Province. The pass takes its name from the Fu River (滏水/滏陽河) which also originates in these mountains.

<sup>19</sup> Original Text, “又祈禱者有九焉, 一曰雩, 二曰南郊, 三曰堯廟, 四曰孔, 顏廟, 五曰社稷, 六曰五岳, 七曰四瀆, 八曰滏口, 九曰豹祠。水旱癘疫, 皆有事焉,” in Wei Zheng魏徵, ed., *Sui Shu* 隋書 [*the Book of Sui*], “Liyi zhi er” 禮儀志二 [Record of Rites, 2]. Modern reprint, (Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1973), p. 127. Text partially cited in Song Yanpeng, “Ximen Bao xin yang: zhongguo ye xia ju min de yi ge shenghuo neirong,” p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> Chi argues that Chinese history can be characterized by the regional dominance of three key economic areas. The first was found in the lower reaches of the Yellow River and began during the first imperial unification of China under the Qin. This regional preeminence was later eclipsed by the ascendancy of the Yangzi River region during the Sui and Tang periods. The final “key economic area” remained in the south during the Yuan, Ming and Qing periods but was marked by the movement of the political centre to the north. Chi argues that this is the primarily reason why the Grand Canal acquired such importance in the late imperial era. Ch'ao-ting Chi, *Key Economic Areas*

states of the period to fully maximize their agricultural productivity, and thus their tax base, through promoting water conservancy projects.

Chi's analysis takes many cues from Karl Wittfogel's "hydraulic society" thesis and similarly argues that the root of state power and state cohesion in Chinese history lies in a given state's monopoly over large hydraulic engineering projects.<sup>21</sup> In a pre-modern rural landscape, agricultural productivity was related to several key factors: climate, temperature and growing season; the quality and productivity of soil; and proper irrigation and drainage. While temperature and climatic conditions could not be altered (perhaps only ritually modified through local religious practices) and moving mass amounts of soil was often far too labour intensive to be worth the effort, water was the one variable that could be easily manipulated through government management.<sup>22</sup> States that could effectively mobilize the labour and resources necessary for large-scale hydraulic engineering projects were more likely to see higher levels of agricultural productivity leading to the long-term viability of their state.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the North China Plain had a long tradition of water conservancy stretching back to Yu the Great's quasi-historical dredging of the nine rivers. By the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, discussions of waterworks projects in this region become fully historical

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*in Chinese History: as Revealed in the Development of Public Works for Water-Control* (New York: Augustus M. Kelly Publishers, 1970), originally published in 1936.

<sup>21</sup> Here we see Chi taking (or perhaps providing) many clues from Karl Wittfogel's "hydraulic society" thesis, which argues that the core of state power throughout Chinese history was found in the coercive nature of large scale water conservancy projects. Similarly, Chi writes: "The fact that the course of the development of public works for water-control was to a large extent determined by the political objective of the ruling group, which was to strengthen their hold on the country, and that this objective was attained economically by emphasizing the development of public works for water-control in a particular region, A Key Economic Area, which would serve as an economic base for the subjugation and domination of the subordinate areas, is brought out convincingly..." Ch'ao-ting Chi, *Key Economic Areas in Chinese History: as Revealed in the Development of Public Works for Water-Control*, p. 35.

<sup>22</sup> This agricultural and hydraulic political economy discussion is discussed in Karl Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), pp.12-15.

and include verifiable accounts<sup>23</sup> of Ximen Bao's cutting of the 12 irrigation ditches and Shi Qi's later modifications to this original system. While the previous chapter has argued that these early water control projects often functioned as central metaphors in the construction of political order and notions of upright governance, Chi argues that the development of water conservancy during this period is actually best understood as a byproduct of violent interstate rivalry.<sup>24</sup> Drawing on examples from the Warring States period, Chi contends that it was not uncommon for the various warring states of the period to build embankments, dikes and channels to either deprive their competition of a dependable water flow or to back their waterways up in the hopes of flooding them out.<sup>25</sup> This type of interstate competition, Chi contends, was a major factor in the hydraulic development of the North China plain region and a main factor in the region's economic and political dominance through the Six Dynasties period.

Ye was perhaps the most politically and culturally central locale within this "key economic" North China region; for it was here that China's first fully historical acts of water control occurred - Ximen Bao's cutting of the 12 irrigation ditches and Shi Qi's later modifications of this hydraulic system. Both of these acts were said to have brought long term economic prosperity to the region and for this Ye was chosen as the capital for a variety of the contending states of the Six Dynasties period including: the Cao Wei (曹魏, 220-265 CE), the

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<sup>23</sup> "Verifiable" insofar as they are listed and discussed in a wide variety of primary historic works dealing with the period.

<sup>24</sup> Ch'ao-ting Chi, *Key Economic Areas in Chinese History: as Revealed in the Development of Public Works for Water-Control*, pp. 55-65.

<sup>25</sup> Here Chi cites a section from the book of Canals and Ditches the *Han shu* 漢書 [*Book of Han*] which states: "The building of dikes recently began in the period of the Warring States when the various states blocked the hundred streams for their own benefit. Ch'i [齊], Chao [趙] and Wei [魏] all bordered the Huang Ho [Huang He]. The frontiers of Chao and Wei rested on the foot of the mountains while that of Ch'i was on the low plain. Hence Ch'i constructed an embankment twenty-five li from the river, so that when rising water approached the Ch'i embankment, it would be forced to flood Chao and Wei. Hence Chao and Wei also constructed an embankment twenty-five li from the river." Original text, "蓋堤防之作, 近起戰國, 雍防百川, 各以自利. 齊與趙, 魏, 以河為竟. 趙, 魏瀕山, 齊地卑下, 作堤去河二十五里, 河水東抵齊堤, 則西泛. 趙, 魏, 趙, 魏亦為堤去河二十五里" (juan 29). As translated in Ch'ao-ting Chi, *Key Economic Areas in Chinese History: as Revealed in the Development of Public Works for Water-Control*, p. 64.

Later Zhao (后趙, 319-351)<sup>26</sup> and the short lived Northern Qi (北齊, 550-577). Ye's frequent history as a capital city displays the ways in which this region was able to transfer its "key economic" status into a form of political centrality and maintain it over a long period of time. Moreover, it also helps to explain the lasting importance of the Ximen Bao cult within the region and why the cult's status was intimately tied to the larger realm wide positioning of Ye.

#### 4.4 The Religious and Social Life of the Ximen Bao Shrine during the Six Dynasties Period

At the height of its popularity in the Six Dynasties period, the Ximen Bao Shrine served a wide variety of religious, ritual and social roles in the Ye region. Although there is far too little surviving material to construct any comprehensive picture of the activities surrounding the shrine there is enough evidence to provide some very basic outlines. For all his secular efforts in taking away the aqueous power of the River God, Ximen Bao, first and foremost became something of a water deity himself and later officials went to his shrine to pray for rain in times of drought. During the Northern Wei period (北魏, 386-534), the governor of Xiangzhou (相州, the name of the Ye region at the time) Xi Kangsheng (奚康生, 467-521) performed rain sacrifices at the Ximen Bao temple in a time of great drought.<sup>27</sup> When these sacrifices were not answered with rain, Xi ordered an official to cut the tongue off the Ximen Bao statue located inside the shrine. A few days later, not only had Xi Kangsheng himself grown violently ill, but his second son had also died. Some in the locality blamed this on Ximen Bao's spirit.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> The later Zhao (後趙 319-351 CE) was one of the Sixteen Kingdoms established during the Jin Dynasty (265-420) by Shi Le (石勒) of the Jie ethnicity. While the Later Zhao's capital was first established in Xiangguo (襄國) situated in modern Xintai, Hebei), it was moved soon after in 335 CE by Shi Hu (石虎) to the former site of Ye (鄴城- today's Linzhang).

<sup>27</sup> Although rain sacrifices are often associated with the City God, it is likely that Ximen Bao was not yet elevated to this status by the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>28</sup> Before cutting off the tongue of the Ximen Bao statue, Xi Kangsheng also had the statue of Shi Hu (石虎, the founder of the Later Zhou dynasty) whipped. Thus Xi Kangsheng's punishment might have also been viewed as

The second time that rain sacrifices are mentioned in the historic record occurs during the Northern Qi period (北齊, 550-577) where it is said that in 558 the Wen Xuan Emperor (文宣帝, r. 550-559) ordered prayers and sacrifices to be conducted at the Ximen Bao Shrine. Once again these prayers were not answered and the emperor ordered the destruction of the Ximen Bao Shrine and the exhuming of his tomb.<sup>29</sup> Such extreme acts against gods and their temples were not uncommon in Chinese history; however if any inauspicious events followed they were usually attributed to the god's anger. When a devastating locust infestation ravaged the region's eastern hills, the locals believed it to be the wrath of Ximen Bao. Accordingly, his temple was immediately repaired.<sup>30</sup>

At the height of its prominence, the Ximen Bao Shrine might have also played an important role in local ritual society as a site where people went to pray for sons. The most striking example of this function is found in several references pertaining to the birth of Fu Jian (苻堅, 337?-385), the emperor of the Former Qin Dynasty (前秦, 351-394). The *Book of Jin* (晉書) records that Fu Jian's mother Ms. Gou (苟氏), "once swam in the Zhang River and prayed

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divine retribution from both Shi Hu and Ximen Bao. Original Text: "在州以天旱, 令人鞭石季龍畫像, 復就西門豹祠祈雨不獲, 令吏取豹舌. 未幾, 二兒暴喪, 身亦遇疾, 巫以為季龍, 豹之祟." In Li Yanshuo 李延壽, ed., "Xikang sheng zhuan" 奚康生傳 ["Biography of Xi Kangsheng"], *Bei shi* 北史 [*History of the Northern Wei*], juan 37. Modern reprint (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1974), vol 1, p 1631.

<sup>29</sup> It is highly unlikely that tomb referred to in this text refers to the actual final resting place of Ximen Bao. Therefore this exhuming must have been more symbolic than the real. Original Text: "是夏, 大旱. 帝以祈雨不應, 毀西門豹祠, 掘其冢. 山東大蝗, 差夫役捕而坑之." In Li Baiyao 李百藥, ed., "Wen xuan di ji" 文宣帝紀 [*Annals of the Wen Xuan Emperor*], *Bei ji shi* 北齊書 [*Book of the Northern Qi*], juan 4. Modern reprint (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1972), vol 1. pp. 64-65. Partially cited in Song Yanpeng, "Ximen Bao xin yang: zhonggu ye xia ju min de yi ge shenghuo neirong," p. 8.

<sup>30</sup> Song Yanpeng argues that a short reference from the immediately following Northern Zhou period provides evidence that the temple was quickly repaired. This extremely vague text simply states that the Northern Zhou general Wei Xiaokuan (韋孝寬) had his "troops stationed to the west of the Ximen Bao Temple," providing some evidence that the temple was repaired following its destruction in the Northern Qi period. Original text: "軍次於鄴西門豹祠之南," in Linghu Defen 令狐德棻, et al. eds., "Wei xiao kuan zhuan" 韋孝寬傳 [the Biography of Wei Xiaokuan], *Zhou shu* 周書 [*Book of the Northern Zhou*], juan 31. Modern reprint (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1971), vol. 2. pp. 543-544. As cited in Song Yanpeng, "Ximen Bao xin yang: zhonggu ye xia ju min de yi ge shenghuo neirong," p. 10, n.12.

for a son at the Ximen Bao Shrine. That night she had intercourse with [Ximen Bao's] spirit and owing to this [dream] became pregnant; on the twelfth month she gave birth to [Fu] Jian.<sup>31</sup> This story is also replicated with slight modifications in the Song era encyclopedic work the *Taiping yulan* (太平御覽)<sup>32</sup> and in a wide variety of other sources including the 1506 Linzhang County Gazetteer.<sup>33</sup> However, because all the surviving accounts singularly involve the Fu Jian story, it is impossible to determine the exact depth and popularity of this practice in local society.

Limited historic accounts suggest that the people of Ye went to the Ximen Bao Shrine in their leisure time not only to worship Ximen Bao but to play in the waters of the Zhang River.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, owing to the prestige of the Ximen Bao Shrine and the prime land it occupied, there are several references in the historic record to various emperors and officials of the Six Dynasties period requesting that their burial sites be placed in close proximity to the Ximen Bao Shrine.<sup>35</sup> The sum of all of these historic records however, still provides very little information

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<sup>31</sup> Original Text: “其母苟氏嘗游於漳水,祈子於西門豹祠。其夜夢與神交,因而有孕,十二月而生堅,” in Fang Xuanling 房玄齡, et al., eds., “Fu jian zai ji” 苻堅載記 [Chronicles of Fu Jian], *Jin Shu* 晉書 [Book of Jin], juan 113. Modern reprint, (Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1974), vol 1. P. 2883. Song Yanpeng speculates that this myth of the union between Ms. Gou and Ximen Bao's spirit was created in an attempt to craft Fu Jian as an orthodox, possibly Han Chinese ruler as the Fu family were of Di (氐) ethnicity. See Song Yanpeng, “Ximen Bao xin yang: zhonggu ye xia ju min de yi ge shenghuo neirong,” pp. 8-9.

<sup>32</sup> The *Taiping Yulan* reference is worded slightly different. It states that Fu Jian's mother, Ms. Gou was bathing in the Zhang River and floated by the Ximen Bao Shrine. She later returned and that night in her dream felt the presence of a great person. Because of this she became pregnant and gave birth to [Fu] Jian. Original Text: “苻堅母苟氏,浴漳水,經西門豹祠。歸。夜夢若有龍蛇感己,遂懷孕而生堅。” Li Fang 李昉, ed., *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 [Imperially Reviewed Encyclopedia of the Taiping Era], juan 360. Modern reprint in Xia Jianqin 夏劍欽 et al., comp and punctuated, (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 1994), vol 4. p. 6.

<sup>33</sup> The 1506 Linzhang Gazetteer states that this event happened in sixth year of the Jianwu period (340) and that in her dream Ms. Gou swam and had intercourse with a giant fish in the Zhang River before conceiving Fu Jian. See Jing Fang, ed. *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 5, 4a.

<sup>34</sup> References include the *Taiping Yulan*, which states that before Ms. Gou went to pray for a son, she was leisurely bathing in the Zhang River. Also one particular reference from the *Book of the Northern Qi* (北齊書) states that in the fourth year of the Wu Ding (武定) reign period (546) the emperor gathered people together for a great feast. Original Text: “神武於西門豹祠宴集,” in Li Baiyao, ed., *Bei qi shu*, juan 37. Modern reprint (Zhong hua shu ju, 1972), p. 486. As cited in Song Yanpeng, “Ximen Bao xin yang: zhonggu ye xia ju min de yi ge shenghuo neirong,” p. 9.

<sup>35</sup> For a lengthy list see Song Yanpeng, “Ximen Bao xin yang: zhonggu ye xia ju min de yi ge shenghuo neirong,” p. 9.

about what activities actually happened in the shrine and what the physical structure and its grounds might have looked like. The only surviving record that exists on the subject was penned by the famous poet of the Northern Zhou Court (北周), Yu Xin (庾信, 513-581).<sup>36</sup> Yu's poem entitled, "A Poem for the Ximen Bao Temple" (西門豹廟詩) uses literary imagery to describe an idyllic temple situated by the rushing waters of the Zhang River and surrounded by lush shade-giving locust trees. Describing the Ximen Bao Temple, Yu Xin wrote:

The gentleman manifests benefit widely;  
The wise man cultivates virtue deeply.<sup>37</sup>  
Sacrificial offerings emerging from the reeds;<sup>38</sup>  
Fortunately, not yet encroached upon by firewood gatherers.  
Respectful publicizing [the deeds] of this upright official;  
One's conscience is rectified through self-knowledge of limitations.<sup>39</sup>  
Though years have passed, its scope and appearance still exist;  
Those with high reputation can still be discerned.  
Chrysanthemum followed by fragrant wine,<sup>40</sup>  
Shadows from the locust tree bend towards the window.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> For a brief introduction to the life and work of Yu Xin see Zong-qi Cai, *How to Read Chinese Poetry: a Guided Anthology* (New York: University Press, 2008), pp. 152-156. Also see Yu Xin, ed. *Yu zi shan ji* 庾子山集 [Collected Works of Yu Xin], Northern Zhou period (557-581), juan 4. Modern reprint, Ni Fan 倪璠, ed. *Yu zi shan ji zhu* 子山集注 [Collected Commentaries on the Collected Works of Yu Xin] (Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1980), vol. 1, pp. 1-7. For complete translation and original Chinese text see Appendix F.

<sup>37</sup> Yu Xin scholar, Ni Fan writes that "gentleman" and "wise-man" referred to in this couplet both refer to Ximen Bao. Ximen Bao is said to have "widely manifest[ed] benefit" for his opening of the 12 irrigation ditches and to have "deeply cultivate[d] virtue for bringing an end to the region's excessive religious practices." See Ni Fan, ed. *Yu zi shan ji zhu*, vol. 1, p. 304.

<sup>38</sup> The exact nature of these sacrificial offerings is unclear and has been discussed by generations of commentators. The sum of these discussions suggest that the offering referred to here was a type of reed-like or grassy aquatic plant which had a wide variety of usages, preparations and local names: it could be ground, steamed and then eaten; used to flavor alcohol; and also utilized as a foodstuff in times of famine. In some places the reed could grow as high as 4 or 5 *chi*. Ni Fan, ed. *Yu zi shan ji zhu*, vol. 1, p. 304.

<sup>39</sup> Owing to its deeply imbedded historical allusion, this portion of the text ("良識佩韋心") is extremely difficult to translate. Here Yu Xin directly draws from the Han Feizi text discussed in the preceding chapter where Ximen Bao is said to wear some kind of restricting device to calm his quick temper ("西門豹之性急故佩韋以緩己"). Han Feizi takes this historic example as model of innately knowing one's limits early and taking preventative measures to correct them. Although the restricting device is explicitly included in this poem I have left it out of my translation to better preserve the overall educational sense of the couplet.

<sup>40</sup> The *Xi jing za ji* 西京雜記 [Miscellaneous notes on the Western Capital] writes that on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of the 9<sup>th</sup> month people drank fragrant chrysanthemum wine at the Ximen Bao Temple. See Ni Fan, ed. *Yu zi shan ji zhu*, vol. 1, p. 305.

Flying Cranes hesitatingly dance in unison;  
Fish are startled by the sound of the zither.<sup>42</sup>  
The flowing Zhang waters cry out sound as they pass over stone steps;  
The Copper Sparrow Pavilion reflects the autumn forest.<sup>43</sup>

In this autumn scene we learn that ceremonies conducted at the Ximen Bao Shrine included offerings of chrysanthemum and wine and were accompanied by music from a zither. It also appears that the shrine was intended to play an educational role in local society and publicize the good deeds of Ximen Bao. Lastly, we learn that the temple was located alongside the Zhang River with stone steps that led down its banks into the water. This is possibly where the sacrificial water plants described in the poem were gathered from, but almost certainly where the fish and cranes mentioned in the poem resided. Aside from these details however, the poem offers very little useful historical information that we can elaborate on. Perhaps most significant however, is the poem's author himself, who owing to his status in the Northern Zhou court would have conferred a certain literati prestige on the shrine through crafting this poem.

#### 4.5 The End of the Six Dynasties and the Fall of the Ximen Bao Shrine

From these spotty sources we can see that the Ximen Bao Shrine was not only a key religious site for many of the various Six Dynasties states, but also played an important role in Ye society. However, as China's political, economic and cultural gravity began to shift away

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<sup>41</sup> According to later commentators the type of locust tree described in the poem was also called a "Shou gong huai" (守宮懷)[Gecko Locust Tree?] and is said to have had great black leaves. Ni Fan, ed. *Yu zi shan ji zhu*, vol. 1, p. 305.

<sup>42</sup> The sense here may also be that fish are drawn to the sound of the zither rather than startled by it.

<sup>43</sup> The character "jue" (爵) shares the same etymological origins as "que" (雀) and are thus sometimes interchanged. See Bernhard Karlgren, *Analytic Dictionary of Chinese and Sino-Japanese*. Reprint (New York: Dover Publications, 1974), entry 1126. The *Shui jing zhu* (水經注) records that during the Wei Dynasty (220-265), the Zhang River flowed from west to east across the region and entered into the grounds of the Copper Sparrow Pavillion (銅雀臺). For more information on the Cooper Sparrow Pavillion see Chapter 1, note 1. Complete text of Yu Xin's poem: "君子為利博. 達人樹德深. 蘋藻由斯薦. 樵蘇幸未侵. 恭聞正臣祀. 良識佩韋心. 容範雖年代. 徽猷若可尋. 菊花隨酒馥. 槐影向窗臨. 鶴飛疑逐舞. 魚驚似聽琴. 漳流鳴磴石. 銅爵影秋林." In Yu Xin, ed. *Yu zi shan ji*, juan 4. Modern reprint, Ni Fan, ed. *Yu zi shan ji zhu*, vol. 1, pp. 304-305.

from the North China plain nearing the end of the Six Dynasties period, the status of the region's primary local cult also began to wane. Starting in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, references to the Ximen Bao Shrine in the historic record become more sparse and by the Tang period there is only one surviving account, which simply states that “the former Ye capital was located 50 paces east of the [current] county seat” and that “the Ximen Bao Shrine, was located 45 paces to the west of the [current] county seat.”<sup>44</sup> As the singular surviving record from the period, such a banal account suggests that by the Tang period, the Ximen Bao Shrine was of little realm wide significance.

As the North China Plains region lost its “key economic” status to the south, the prestige of the region's most prominent local cults also suffered and without official state patronage his shrine fell into disrepair. This situation existed until 1093 when a Song inspector named Yang Meng (楊蒙) was sent to pacify the Ding Wu (定武)<sup>45</sup> region, which at the time included Ye.<sup>46</sup> Village elders informed him that although seasonal offerings were still offered to Ximen Bao, his “shrine was small and dilapidated and his statue was damaged and faded with its clothing resembling nothing of ancient times.”<sup>47</sup> A related stele inscription states that a local official surnamed Wang also paid a visit to the shrine and with remorse proclaimed, “Although we can

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<sup>44</sup> Original Text: “故鄴城,縣東五十步 西門豹祠,在縣西十五步” In the “He bei dao” 河北道一, section of Li Jifu 李吉甫, *Yuan he jun xian tu zhi* 元和郡縣圖志 [*Maps and Gazetteer of the Provinces and Counties in the Yuanhe Period, 806-14*] (Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1983) vol 1. p. 453. See Song Yanpeng, “Ximen Bao xin yang: zhonggu ye xia ju min de yi ge shenghuo neirong,” p. 8.

<sup>45</sup> A military command during the Song dynasty under the jurisdiction of Zhongshan Prefecture and Hebei West Circuit.

<sup>46</sup> This account is preserved in a Song era memorial inscription entitled, “Wei ye ling Ximen Bao miao bei ji” 魏鄴令西門豹廟碑記 [Memorial Inscription for the Wei Commander of Ye, Ximen Bao's Temple] found in the 1506 Linzhang County gazetteer. However, this 1506 edition does not list the author to the inscription, Yang Meng, but rather writes that the text was collated by man named Liu Zhi (劉志). Liu Zhi's name is replaced by Yang Meng's in the county's 1904 gazetteer. For full texts see Yang Meng, “Wei Ye ling Ximen Bao miao bei” in Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 10, 8a-8b; and Zhou Bingyi and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 12, 1b-2a.

<sup>47</sup> Yang Meng, “Wei Ye ling Ximen Bao miao bei” in Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 10, 7b-8b; and Zhou Bingyi and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 12, 1b-2a.

sense that [Ximen Bao's] spirit is still here, how badly his shrine is destroyed!" That the structure had fallen into such abandon by the end of the Song period once again clearly demonstrates that the Ximen Bao cult did not hold the realm wide prestige nor received the official state patronage that it had often enjoyed throughout the Six Dynasties Period.

#### 4.6 The Late Imperial Rehabilitation of Ximen Bao in Linzhang County

On discovering the shrine's state of disrepair the regional inspector Yang Meng immediately ordered "both the statue's clothing and the shrine rituals be brought back into line with ancient regulations."<sup>48</sup> Following Yang's orders the shrine underwent major renovations including the restoration of the original Ximen Bao Shrine and the addition of new building to the compound. Yang's commemorative stele inscription celebrating the completion of the project entitled "Stele Inscription for the Wei Commander of Ye, Ximen Bao's Temple" (魏鄴令西門豹廟碑), records that neither locals nor labourers were burdened by the project and that when finished "the [temple's] doors and passageways were cave-like safe and were covered with glorious curtains and both the statue's costume and the temple ritual were brought into line with the ancient regulations."<sup>49</sup> This stele inscription is also the first instance where the Ximen Bao Shrine (西門豹祠) is referred to as the Ximen Bao Temple (西門豹廟). While it is unclear if this new name reflects any significant changes in the types of ritual practices conducted at the temple, from this point onwards the Ximen Bao Shrine is always referred to as a temple in the historical record.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Yang Meng, "Wei Ye ling Ximen Bao miao bei" in Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 10, 7b; and Zhou Bingyi and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 12, 1b.

<sup>49</sup> Yang Meng, "Wei Ye ling Ximen Bao miao bei" in Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 10, 7b; and Zhou Bingyi and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 12, 1b.

<sup>50</sup> The reason for this name change is not discussed in the surviving historical record. Perhaps the new title reflects a shift in terminology used to describe local ritual practices and religious sites in Linzhang County and does not reflect any significant changes to the shrine's composition and ritual status.

Yang's stele inscription also provides an important textual starting point for us to trace the revival of the Ximen Bao cult in Linzhang and to gauge how the meanings associated with his cult changed as the county moved into the late imperial period. We will see that renovating the Ximen Bao temple was only the first step in the local revival of Ximen Bao. Equally important was the rehabilitation of Ximen Bao's local legacy and the steps taken by various officials to more firmly connect this legacy to Linzhang County. By the Ming period the revival of the Ximen Bao cult was purely a local affair and as such reflected a wide variety of local interests and dynamics. Yang's inscription foreshadows this revival and explicitly promotes what we might call the "Ximen Bao example" in local governance.

While earlier textual records also highlight the instructive capacity of the Ximen Bao tale, Yang's inscription begins to localize it in the specificities of governing Linzhang County. After describing the grandeur of the temple renovations that he oversaw, Yang writes that "the size of the [new] building, the purity and solidity of its foundation and even this history of the [entire] temple were of little significance when compared to the services of Ximen Bao."<sup>51</sup> Here Yang explicitly suggests that the renovation of the temple was actually far less important than the overall revival of Ximen Bao's legacy and the example of governance that he left behind. He continues:

We must pay the most attention to Ximen Bao and his record of leadership in *this county*. His life produced a magnificent record and he is recorded in the Code of Sacrifices. Even after much time has passed, many still respect and venerate him as if he was still alive [today]. While the killing of people cannot be tolerated by those with benevolence, suppose that you could save a thousand lives by killing one [person], then this killing is justified. While forcing people to work is not what benevolent people desire, suppose that if you work for a short time, but through this [work] create leisure for thousands of subsequent generations, then this work is justified. Like this, three shamans were tossed [into the River] but their dangerous customs were extinguished [forever]. Twelve channels were completed and with this came abundant harvests. This heroic spirit is so strong that it can rise and touch the sun and moon and is understood throughout a thousand generations.

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<sup>51</sup> Yang Meng, "Wei Ye ling Ximen Bao miao bei" in, Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 10, 7b-8a; and Zhou Bingyi and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 12, 1b.

How great and worthy of recording this is... Now with the renovation of the temple, please rest your soul here. Your achievements have been carved in stone *to instruct all who come here*.<sup>52</sup>

Chapter 3 has already discussed the various themes and virtues associated with the Ximen Bao tale as promoted in more ancient texts such as the *Shi ji*. Yang's Song era inscription however, begins to illustrate how the Ximen Bao tale came to have a direct political influence on later generations of officials serving in Linzhang County. Implored to "pay the most attention to Ximen Bao and his record of leadership in this county," the Ximen Bao example grew to be an important touchstone for subsequent generations of magistrates serving in Linzhang County and played a key role in creating the locality's accepted "repertoire" of local administration.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, that this touchstone was firmly situated within the county's historical boundaries made it all the more locally influential.

#### 4.6.1 Cultural Centrality and the Mid-Ming Textual Revival of Ximen Bao

In his postface to the 1506 Linzhang County gazetteer, local magistrate and chief gazetteer compiler, Jing Fang laments that before his arrival the county's records were in a state of disrepair. Although Linzhang County was heir to a celebrated ancient pedigree, locals had long forgotten this history due to what appears to be decades of neglect. An important emphasis of Jing Fang's program was to revitalize the county through raising the county's own sense of historical self-awareness. Editing and publishing a new and complete version of the county's gazetteer was a perfect way to accomplish this goal. Simpler yet was to personify all that was

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<sup>52</sup> Emphasis added by author to highlight the localizing role that this text plays. Yang Meng, "Wei Ye ling Ximen Bao miao bei" in Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 10,, 8a; and Zhou Bingyi and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 12, 1b-2a.

<sup>53</sup> Here the term "repertoire" refers to the wide variety of complex factors - including but not limited to: local customs and culture, local history and historical memory, personnel and gentry dynamics, and environmental and ecological factors - all intermingled to inform deeply embedded understandings of the acceptable limits of local administration. Yang Meng, "Wei Ye ling Ximen Bao miao bei" in Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 10, 8a; and Zhou Bingyi and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 12, 2a.

once glorious in the county's history in the image of the model official, Ximen Bao. Therefore, it is not surprising then that Ximen Bao is the first person listed in the gazetteer's biography section and that a great portion of the gazetteer is dedicated to his legacy and lasting example of governance in the region.

While places like Linzhang during the Ming were not entirely in tune with the larger themes commonly associated with the time period (primarily commercial expansion, the flourishing of gentry culture, and early modern global connections) this region of northern Henan Province was still widely regarded by many Chinese as a “culturally central” region in the realm. In his *Cultural Centrality and Political Change in Chinese History*, Roger Des Forges writes that, “Unlike many other parts of China, the region that became known as Henan had played an important role in the evolution of Chinese civilization from earliest recorded times.”<sup>54</sup> Long known as the “Central Province” (中州) it was in Henan that China's first “semi legendary” dynasty, the Xia (夏), was founded and where China's first “fully historical” dynastic transition, between the Shang (商) and the Zhou (周), occurred. Throughout the dynastic period the region's reputation was also bolstered by the body of Confucian texts, studied by elites for the civil service examinations, which often directly drew their classical prescriptions and norms from events that occurred in the China's Central Plains region.<sup>55</sup> Accordingly, the entire region

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<sup>54</sup> Roger Des Forges, *Cultural Centrality and Political Change in Chinese History: Northeast Henan in the Fall of the Ming*, pp. xv-xvi.

<sup>55</sup> Many of China's most well known four character idiomatic expressions (*chengyu* 成語) are derived from stories taken from this region. In particular, there over 200 *chengyu* are associated with Handan City (邯鄲), alone, which is currently the administrative superior to today's Linzhang. Both the annual practice of finding a wife for the He Bo (“河伯娶婦”) and Ximen Bao's tossing the shamans into the river (“投巫入河”) are included among this list of 200. For a lively internet discussion of *chengyu* from Handan see Anon., *Handan chengyu 邯鄲成語 [Chengyu Associated with Handan]*, <http://zhidao.baidu.com/question/18237282> (accessed August 5, 2010).

became “an important touchstone for Chinese notions of culture and change that lasted through Ming times.”<sup>56</sup>

Perhaps owing to the region’s increasingly peripheral economic status in the late imperial period, locals and local officials began to tap more explicitly into the region’s historical resources during the Ming in some effort to reassert a form of “cultural centrality.” This “cultural centrality” derived directly from the region’s perceived historic links to antiquity, which newly emerging economic and cultural centres in the south like Shanghai could not claim; simply put, Shanghai had no equivalent ancient culture hero to Linzhang’s Ximen Bao.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, unlike places in Ming Jiangnan, “The people of northeast Henan . . . seemed more concerned about invoking relevant models to maintain or reestablish a legitimate polity than about transforming society or expanding the economy.”<sup>58</sup> Accordingly an “intense” preoccupation with the past developed in Ming Henan, which was often embodied in the promotion of heroic and “culturally central” figures from the Central Province’s distant antiquity.<sup>59</sup>

While Des Forges’ argument is more concerned with explaining how models of Henan’s past were utilized by various rebel groups in their search for “cultural centrality” at the end of

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<sup>56</sup> Des Forges points out that the terms commonly used to refer to this region such as the “Central Province” (Zhongzhou 中州) and the “Central Plain” (Zhongyuan 中原) are still common synecdoches for China used widely to this day. Roger Des Forges, *Cultural Centrality and Political Change in Chinese History: Northeast Henan in the Fall of the Ming*, p. xviii.

<sup>57</sup> In his recent article, “The Honey Nectar Peach and the Idea of Shanghai in late imperial China,” Mark Swislocki discusses how “Shanghai natives were well aware of their hometown’s symbolic deficiencies.” He continues that Shanghai “had never served as a major capital city, and it lacked the cultural pedigree of even many smaller and commercially less significant locales.” See Mark Swislocki, “The Honey Nectar Peach and the Idea of Shanghai in Late Imperial China,” in *Late Imperial China*, vol. 29, No. 1 (June 2008): 1–40, p. 4

<sup>58</sup> Roger Des Forges, *Cultural Centrality and Political Change in Chinese History: Northeast Henan in the Fall of the Ming*, p. 321.

<sup>59</sup> On this point, Des Forges writes: “The invocation of history was also personal and popular, with much general knowledge of the past embedded in biographies that encouraged personal identification with historical individuals who had confronted similar opportunities and challenges.” Roger Des Forges, *Cultural Centrality and Political Change in Chinese History: Northeast Henan in the Fall of the Ming*, p. xviii.

the Ming period, his “culturally central” methodology provides an interesting platform to understand the promotion of Ximen Bao in Linzhang during the Ming period. Increasingly peripheral counties like Linzhang mobilized whatever culturally central examples from the past that they could legitimately claim, “in search of models that would enable them to keep their cultural equilibrium while going forward into the future” – a future that was certainly shifting southwards, if not entirely leaving them behind.<sup>60</sup>

Owing to his canonical status in the *Shi ji*, it makes sense that when Ming local officials sought to connect Linzhang County with its distant antiquity they immediately looked to Ximen Bao. This historical linkage is best witnessed in the way that the county’s 1506 gazetteer consistently stresses Ximen Bao above all other past officials in the county. Clearly, Ximen Bao held a particular place in the county’s historical memory and this status was bolstered by the inclusion of the Ximen Bao account in such canonical texts as the *Shi ji*. Thus it comes as little surprise that when the gazetteer editors penned Ximen Bao’s biography for their 1506 gazetteer not only is his biography listed first, but much of it is drawn verbatim from the canonical *Shi ji* account of his accomplishments in Ye. The text starts by stating that during the Warring States period Ximen Bao was sent to govern Ye and he utilized the rushing waters of the Zhang River to irrigate the region.<sup>61</sup> The next part of the biography briefly recounts how Ximen Bao eradicated the annual custom of finding a wife for He Bo and then how for his efforts later locals established a temple in his honour. The short passage concludes with the following song recited by the locals, which is a rough adaption of the same song found in the *Shi ji*: “When Zi Chan governed Zheng, the people could not bear cheating; When Mi Zijian governed, the people could

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<sup>60</sup> Des Forges elaborates that the similarity between the Chinese characters for centrality (中) and history (史) suggests that history and centrality are by their very nature intertwined in China and were understood as such by those living during the Ming period. Roger Des Forges, *Cultural Centrality and Political Change in Chinese History: Northeast Henan in the Fall of the Ming*, p. xviii.

<sup>61</sup> Here the biography is more explicit and states that his projects irrigated 500 *ding* of land. Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 7, 1a.

not cheat; when Ximen Bao governed Ye the people did not dare to cheat” (曰鄭子產為政民不忍欺宓子賤為政民不能欺西門豹治鄴民不敢欺).<sup>62</sup> That the biography concludes with a song explicitly drawn from the *Shi ji* illustrates the tendency of the 1506 biographical account of Ximen Bao to derive its textual authority through making explicit linkages with the region’s canonical past.

The editor of the 1506 Gazetteer also appears to not want to complicate the Ximen Bao story by entering into the Ximen Bao – Shi Qi debate as discussed in Chapter 3 - namely the question of who *actually* irrigated Ye. Shi Qi’s biography follows immediately after Ximen Bao’s and simply states that during the Warring States period, Shi Qi, “channeled the waters of the Zhang River and irrigated the fields to the great benefit of the people” (戰國為魏鄴引漳水灌田民大得利).<sup>63</sup> There is no mention of the well-known *Lüshi Chunqiu* text where Shi Qi derides Ximen Bao for his apparent inability to irrigate Ye. Rather than entering this debate, the 1506 Linzhang Gazetteer also acknowledges the local importance of Shi Qi and makes no mention of any potential conflict between the legacies of these two men. While it is quite possible that Jing Fang (the gazetteer editor) was aware of this problematic history, that he only mentions Shi Qi once in the entire gazetteer suggests a textual strategy designed to highlight

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<sup>62</sup> The original *Shi ji* text reads, “It has been said that when Zichan (子產) governed Zheng (鄭), no one was able to cheat; when Zijian (子賤) governed Shanfu (單父) no one could bear cheating, when Ximen Bao governed Ye, no one dared to cheat. Of these three virtuous rulers’ talents, whose are the most sagely? Only those who distinguish (methods of) governance can know the difference. (傳曰: 子產治鄭, 民不能欺; 子賤治單父, 民不忍欺; 西門豹治鄴, 民不敢欺。” 三子之才能誰最賢哉? 辨治者當能別之). Zichan is best known in the historic record as Prince Chan. Prince Chan was an official in the state of Zheng (today’s Zhengzhou) during the Warring States period. Zijian whose name was Mi Buqi (密不齊) (born 521 BCE), was a pupil of Confucius and served as Chief Minister in Shanfu (today’s Shan County located in Shandong province). For detailed accounts of Prince Chan and Fu Zijian’s records see “Pleasure in Success” (五曰樂成) Book 16 /5.3 and “Inquiring into Worthiness” (二日察賢), Book 21/2. 2 in the *Lüshi Chunqiu*. Translations in John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel, *The Annals of Lü Buwei: A Complete Translation and Study* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), pp. 389-340, 553. For *Shi ji* text see Sima Qian, “Hua ji lie zhuan” (滑稽列傳) [Biographies of Cunning Officials], juan 126, *Shi ji* (史記) [*Records of the Grand Historian*], modern reprint (Shanghai: Zhong hua shu ju, 1959), vol. 10. p. 3213. Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 7, 1a-1b.

<sup>63</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 7, 1b.

Ximen Bao's clear historic legacy rather than engaging in a messy historical debate and thereby complicate his lineage.<sup>64</sup>

#### 4.6.2 Ximen Bao as City God: Building/Renovating Linzhang's City God Temple

The 1506 gazetteer also discusses how under the active leadership of good magistrates, Ximen Bao worship was revitalized in the county, and how eventually he was elevated to the orthodox status of the county's City God (城隍). The history of the City God Temple in China will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, suffice it here to note that it was during the Ming dynasty that these temples saw their greatest period of growth. By the time that the 1522 Zhangde Prefectural gazetteer was produced all of the six counties and one sub-prefecture under the prefecture's jurisdiction had City God Temples, Linzhang included. That most of these temples were constructed during the early years of the Ming period appears to have been a direct response to the Hongwu Emperor's official decree in 1370 that every prefecture, sub-prefecture and county must have their own City God Temple.<sup>65</sup>

In his "Record of the City God Temple" (城隍廟記), Huating (華亭) native Cao An (曹安), writes that even before the founding of the Ming in 1368, Linzhang County could already claim

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<sup>64</sup>For a very technical discussion of the issues involved in this debate as they related to the historical chronology see Zhang Jianhua 張建華, Zuo Jintao 左金濤, et al., eds., *Handan lishi da shi bian nian* 邯鄲歷史大事編年 [Chronological Record of Important Events in Handan History] (Beijing: Zhongguo dang'an chubanshe, 1999): pp. 24-26.

<sup>65</sup>Lin County (林縣) was the first to construct their City God Temple in the last year of the Yuan Dynasty (1368); followed by Anyang (安陽- the prefectural seat) in Hongwu 2 (1369); Wuan (武安) the following year in Hongwu 3 (1370); and Linzhang in Hongwu 27 (1394); Tangyin County (湯陰) and Cizhou Sub-prefecture (磁州) are both listed as having City God Temples but the dates for their construction are omitted. The 1555 Cizhou Sub-Prefectural gazetteer does not offer a specific date but rather states that their City God Temple was built sometime following the Hongwu Emperor's official decree in 1370. See Cui Xi 崔銑, ed., *Zhangde fu zhi* 彰德府志 [Gazetteer of Zhangde Prefecture], 1522: juan 4, 7b-25a; and Ji Jie 紀傑, "Cizhou zhong xiu cheng huang miao ji" 磁州重修城隍廟記 [Record of the Renovation of the Cizhou Sub-prefectural City God Temple] in Zhou Wenlong 周文龍 and Sun Shao 孫紹, eds., *Cizhou zhi* 磁州志 [Cizhou Sub-prefectural Gazetteer], 1553, juan 3, 27b-28a.

a City God Temple. For reasons unknown however, this temple had fallen into a state of disrepair.<sup>66</sup> He writes:

In the past, Linzhang County had a City God temple,<sup>67</sup> which was located in the northwest corner of the county seat. Reportedly the God [worshipped there] was Ximen Bao. [They] took the 15th day [of the lunar month] of the 4th month of every year as his birthday. Whenever there were terrible disasters caused by flood or drought or the threat of rebellion, people repeatedly [went to the temple] to pray and each time they received a [positive] response. The reason is that during the time of Wei Wenhou, when [Ximen] Bao was the governor of Ye, he tossed the shamans into the river, and dug twelve channels to irrigate the people's fields. Because [these acts] created benefit for future generations, locals offered sacrifices to him; his efficacy was known. How is it [then] that over time the temple structure withered?<sup>68</sup>

From this text alone it is impossible to know exactly when Ximen Bao was elevated to the orthodox status of the City God or when his first City God Temple was built. The “Temple Sacrifices” section (廟祀) of the county's 1506 gazetteer is equally silent on these issues only stating that the “county's *former* City God Temple was originally located in the west of the county seat but [its remnants] were destroyed by flood waters from the Zhang River in 1385.”<sup>69</sup> This text does state however, that even before the 1385 flood washed the previous temple away, a new one had already been established in the northwestern corner of the new county seat in 1384 by the County Magistrate, Yang Xin (楊辛). This is the location where the temple would remain throughout the rest of the Ming and Qing periods.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Cao An's home Huating County was located in Gansu Province. Unfortunately Cao An's text is only dated to the Ming period; however owing to a preface that he penned in Chenghua 4 (1468) we know that he was active sometime in the mid to late 15<sup>th</sup> century. Given this timeframe it is possible that Cao An was commissioned to write his City God Temple record for the 1506 gazetteer. See Cao An 曹安, “Cheng huang miao ji” 城隍廟記 [Record of the City God Temple], in Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 10, 5b-7b.

<sup>67</sup> Although the text explicitly states that this temple was a “City God Temple” (“古有城隍廟”) there is a slight chance that the structure referred to in this text was in fact the Ximen Bao Shrine or Temple (西門豹祠/廟) from previous eras.

<sup>68</sup> Cao An, “Cheng huang miao ji,” in Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, juan 10, 5b-6a.

<sup>69</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 5, 1b.

<sup>70</sup> The 1506 County gazetteer writes that Yang Xin “moved” (移) the City God Temple to its new position, while the 1522 Zhangde Prefectural Gazetteer writes that he “established” (建) the temple in its new position. “Established” seems to be the more correct sense here as Cao An's text suggests that whatever City God Temple was previously

Aside from stating that the new City God Temple was established by Yang Xin in 1385, the 1506 the gazetteer is entirely silent on what this initial structure looked like, how it was funded and who was involved with the project. As with many other public and ritual buildings in the county, the gazetteer offers much more information regarding the structure's later renovations than its initial construction.<sup>71</sup> For example, Cao An's "Record of the City God Temple," does not even mention Yang Xin's re-founding of the Temple in 1384 but rather jumps directly from describing the temple's state of disrepair in the pre-Ming period to its renovation by a later Ming magistrate Dai Xin (戴昕).<sup>72</sup> As is common with most records

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founded had fallen into disrepair and eventually washed away in 1385 one year after a new temple was already established by Yang Xin. Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 5, 1a ; and, Cui Xi, ed., *Zhangde fu zhi*, 1522, juan 4, 18b.

<sup>71</sup>The temple's renovation would have occurred closer to the date when the gazetteer was completed. This chronology of events may therefore help to further explain why the temple's renovation rather than its initial construction is highlighted in the 1506 text.

<sup>72</sup>At the end of the text we learn that Magistrate Dai's full name is Dai Xin (戴昕) and that he first entered the examination system in Shanghai (發身科第松之上海). The text offers no clues as to when he actually served as magistrate in Linzhang County and there is no further mention of him in the 1506 Linzhang County gazetteer.

In the subsequent historic record there is much confusion about exactly who Magistrate Dai was. The list of local magistrates from a late Qing era Linzhang County gazetteer lists Dai Xin as a Tribute Student who governed Linzhang sometime during the Yongle Reign period (1403-1424). This same information is repeated in the county's modern era gazetteer. However, his native Shanghai Gazetteer does not list Dai Xin as a Tribute Student, but rather as a *Juren* who earned his degree in 1447.

There is however, one Tribute Student named Dai Xiu who earned his tribute status sometime during the first nineteen years of the Yongle period (1403-1424). Both Dai Xin and Dai Xiu are listed in the Shanghai Gazetteer as serving as county magistrates (Dai Xiu served as county magistrate in Nan'an (南安) and Dai Xin is listed as serving as a county magistrate in an undisclosed location (perhaps Linzhang) before being promoted to Vice-prefect in Chen Zhou (陳州). Given that the Qing era gazetteer lists Dai Xin as a tribute student from Shanghai who served in the Yongle period, my hunch is that Magistrate Dai was in fact Dai Xiu; however, given source limitations there is no way to historically verify the claim.

While such surname and name confusion is common among gazetteers, isolating exactly which Dai was the Linzhang County magistrate is essential to dating the rough timeframe for the renovation of the City God Temple. Although it is clear that the temple was built sometime during the early Ming period, if Dai Xiu was the magistrate, temple renovation would have occurred sometime during the Yongle reign period (1403-1424). If in fact, Dai Xin was the magistrate, then this timeframe would be pushed back to sometime during the Zhengtong Reign period (1436-1449). I suspect that the Linzhang gazetteer is correct in its timeframe, but incorrect in the Magistrate's name and that a tribute student surnamed Dai did govern Linzhang in the Yongle period, and that this tribute student's name was not Xin, but rather Xiu. See Cao An, "Cheng huang miao ji," in Jing Fang, *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 10, 7a; Zhou Bingyi and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 4, 5b; Hebei sheng Linzhang xian difangzhi bianzuan weiyuan hui 河北省臨漳縣地方志編纂委員會 [Linzhang County Gazetteer Compilation Committee, Hebei Province], *臨漳縣志* [*Gazetteer of Linzhang County*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1999), p. 513; and Tang Jin 唐錦, ed. *Shanghai zhi* 上海志 [*Gazetteer of Shanghai County*], 1504, juan 8, 19a.

dealing with the construction and renovation of public buildings, Cao An starts his discussion by celebrating the magistrate who initiated the project. He writes that Magistrate Dai oversaw the construction of “a front hall to house and revere a statue of the god; a chamber for the god to rest; and [a location for his] temple tablets to be placed for all to see.”<sup>73</sup> He also ordered the construction of temple offices, which flanked the hall on both sides, and a series of verandas located to the east and west of the hall. Finally he had fashioned a “variety of statues admonishing people towards good and warning them of evil,” which further highlighted the instructive capacity of this temple and of the Ximen Bao example.<sup>74</sup> The overall effect is described as “grand and dignified with walls that were lofty and covered in a splendid red and white shining and reflecting off each other.”<sup>75</sup> In conclusion, the text states that, “all of this was created to serve the god and when people come to worship the god they unanimously gave credit to the magistrate.”<sup>76</sup>

Cao An’s text also directly credits Magistrate Dai for seeing the temple project to its conclusion. However, Cao ultimately recognizes Dai’s awareness of the Ximen Bao example as the root of his successes. He writes:

Governing the people and servicing the [City] God are both the responsibility of the County magistrate; however, there are preferences in the priority [of these tasks]. *The Commentary to the Chunqiu* [春秋左傳] states, “[One must] first order the people and then devote himself to the service of the God.”

I have heard that while in office, [Magistrate] Hou’s<sup>77</sup> mind was entirely clear and that he cared for the people as if they were his own children. He eliminated locust infestations, and suppressed water disasters. He admired [Ximen] Bao’s deeds in governance and similarly knew which [actions] were primary. Therefore, he was able to renovate the correctly worshipped temple of the god and was not profaned [in doing so].

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<sup>73</sup> Cao An, “Cheng huang miao ji,” in Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 10, 6a.

<sup>74</sup> Cao An, “Cheng huang miao ji,” in Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 10, 6b.

<sup>75</sup> Cao An, “Cheng huang miao ji,” in Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 10, 6b.

<sup>76</sup> Cao An, “Cheng huang miao ji,” in Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 10, 6b.

<sup>77</sup> Dai Hou (戴侯) was Dai Xin’s alternate name. His *zi* was Jingsheng (景昇). This information is provided at the end of Cao An’s text. See Cao An, “Cheng huang miao ji,” in Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 10, 7a.

Did he not fulfill his [dual] responsibilities of governing the people and servicing the God?<sup>78</sup>

Here, Cao An further highlights the power of the Ximen Bao example in the locality and even suggests that “servicing the God” was not just a matter of temple restoration but also deeply intertwined with following his canonical example of upright local governance. In both of these regards, Magistrate Dai was deemed successful.

That the *renovation* of the City God Temple and not its *founding* is highlighted in this commemorative text also presents some interesting questions regarding the symbolic role of public renovation in late imperial China. As with most structures of the time, Linzhang’s City God Temple was likely constructed in wood and thus was in need of constant renovation. The 1506 Gazetteer states that the City God Temple was renovated by County Magistrate Zhou Huan (周瓛) sometime following his arrival in 1488<sup>79</sup> and then once again by Jing Fang also after his arrival in the county in 1497.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, the renovation of the Linzhang City God Temple was consistent with other City God Temple renovation projects that were happening around the same time throughout Zhangde Prefecture.<sup>81</sup> In 1370 the Hongwu Emperor had ordered the building of City God Temples. Owing to the natural life span of wooden structures, by the mid-Ming period it was certainly time for renovations.

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<sup>78</sup> Cao An, “Cheng huang miao ji,” in Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 10, 6b-7a.

<sup>79</sup> Linzhang County’s most recent gazetteer states that Zhou Huan arrived in Linzhang County in the first year of the Hongzhi reign period (1488). See Hebei sheng Linzhang xian difangzhi bianzuan weiyuan hui 河北省臨漳縣地方志編纂委員會 [Linzhang County Gazetteer Compilation Committee, Hebei Province], *Linzhang xian zhi* 臨漳縣志 [*Gazetteer of Linzhang County*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1999), p. 513.

<sup>80</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 5, 1b-2a.

<sup>81</sup> The Prefectural City God temple that was located in Anyang County was renovated in Jingtai 5 (1454). Lin County renovated their temple in Hongwu 28 (1395) and then again in Chenghua 5 (1469).

#### 4.6.3 Public Performance and the Restoration of the City God Temple in Linzhang

It is often said that, “in China the past was built in wood.”<sup>82</sup> This apocryphal comment stems from the fact that despite having a wide array of sophisticated masonry techniques available, Chinese city and building construction was historically dominated by wood.<sup>83</sup> Perhaps equally important to wood however, was the role that stone (stele inscriptions) and paper (commemorative texts) played in the larger social, cultural and political life of public construction and renovation in the late imperial period. Throughout Chinese history buildings were constantly erected, expanded, renovated and restored and for the entire late imperial period we have an abundance of records that outline why a building was built, who oversaw its construction, how money was raised to pay for it and often a celebration of the local leadership in charge of the project. Such commemorative records make the most sense however, in more gentry-rich places like Jiangnan where the gentry were more actively engaged in public liturgical works and readily promoted this involvement.<sup>84</sup> Yet in places like Linzhang County, where the gentry was comparatively weak and less organized it is difficult to make sense of public

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<sup>82</sup> While this statement is most commonly attributed to Frederick Mote, I have yet to isolate the actual source for this quotation leading me to believe that it is possibly only lore.

<sup>83</sup> The best discussion of this phenomenon is found in Xu Yinong’s recent work, *The Chinese City in Space and Time* where Xu argues that the dominance of timber construction is based on classical precedent and dates back to ancient texts where sage kings were said to have built all of their structures in wood. Xu writes: “For us, the knowledge and techniques of masonry construction possessed by the Chinese, along with those of timber construction, retrospectively present a range of options to the builders; but for the Chinese who were supposed to conform to the ancient tradition, such options did not really exist. Xu also takes issue with both Frederick Mote and Arthur Wright’s classical formulation of this issue, most notably Wright’s notion that Chinese architecture represents a sort of “planned ephemerality.” See Yinong Xu, *The Chinese City in Space and Time: the Development of Urban Form in Suzhou* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000), pp. 295-6, n. 49. Arthur F. Wright’s discussion of the Chinese urban form’s “planned ephemerality,” which is often taken out of context, can be found in Arthur F. Wright, “Symbolism and Function: Reflections on Changan and Other Great Cities,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, 24.4 (August 1965): 667-679, p. 677. Angela Zito has written as well, in terms of the physical presence of buildings, “material permanence was not important.” Angela Zito, *Of Body and Brush: Grand Sacrifices as Text/Performance in Eighteenth Century China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 133.

<sup>84</sup> For a complete discussion of liturgical works largely in Ming Jiangnan China see Timothy Brook, *Praying for Power Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry-Society in Late Ming China*. (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 1993)

renovation/restoration projects and the documents that they left behind based solely on this Jiangnan model.

In her work *Of Body and Brush*, Angela Zito offers a provocative analysis of the more invisible techniques of imperial rule that underscored state authority during the Qing period.<sup>85</sup> The whole plausibility of the imperial system could not work on coercion alone, Zito argues, but rather rested on the daily ritual production of the centre (*zhong* 中), a performative process, which she calls “ritual centering.” While Zito’s analysis is mainly focused on the elite Grand Sacrifices that occurred in Beijing, which was the Qing centre of imperial authority, she hints at other ways that her performative theory might be expanded to other contexts. One such context is the performative and centering role that state sponsored renovation and restoration projects played in localities throughout the empire. Expanding on Zito’s work here, I suggest that the “performance” of public renovation was absolutely essential to the workings of imperial authority, especially in places lacking the depth of autonomous social structures more commonly found in the gentry rich southern parts of China.

First and foremost, public works projects such as the renovation of the City God Temple, the Confucian School, or the County Offices to name just a few, required the requisition of local labor, local materials and local funds. How a county magistrate navigated this tricky terrain was a source of perennial concern. If the locals decided to withhold or withdraw support, projects, reputations and at times even careers could be ruined. Thus the ability of the magistrate to inspire locals to think less about the immediate hardships of a given project and more about its long-term benefits and rewards was extremely important. Herein lies the importance of the

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<sup>85</sup> While her work is explicitly focused on the Qing, many of her findings along with the methodology that she outlines are relevant for the study of the Ming period as well. Angela Zito, *Of Body and Brush: Grand Sacrifices as Text/Performance in Eighteenth Century China*.

Ximen Bao example, which stresses the need to endure short-term hardships for long term benefits.<sup>86</sup>

Second, public buildings, especially City God Temples, were almost always situated within the county seat's walls.<sup>87</sup> City walls not only protected county seats from bandits but also functioned as clear signs of imperial authority in the locality; that public works were often situated within their boundaries also signaled their state sponsorship.<sup>88</sup> However, in gazetteers produced by more gentry dominated localities, generally in the south, it is not uncommon to see long lists of local gentry donors and patrons involved in public renovation projects. In such places as Ming era Jiangnan the resources necessary for public building were often drawn from more autonomous sections of gentry society, which actively sought to expand their public presence through local liturgical projects. However, in Linzhang such donor lists are conspicuously absent. For example the 1506 Linzhang County gazetteer does not list one gentry member in any of its records concerning public works projects. As such, entire credit for the construction and renovation of the county's public buildings and temples is exclusively granted to local magistrates. Moreover as public buildings generally occupied key positions in the urban landscape they also functioned as public testaments to the magistrate's (and thus the state's) ability to see the project to its completion and also a barometer of the general morale of a given county.

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<sup>86</sup> We subtly see this example at work in Cao An's discussion of Magistrate Dai's renovation of Linzhang County's City God Temple

<sup>87</sup> I write "almost always" here because it is conceivable that a City God Temple might have existed outside of one of the many city walls that existed in the late imperial period. However, I have yet to come across such an instance.

<sup>88</sup> On the topic of city wall building and the construction of imperial authority in Ming era counties see, Desmond Cheung, "Chinese County Walls between the Central State and Local Society: Evidence from Henan Province during the Ming Dynasty," in Roger Des Forges, Minglu Gao, Liu Chiao-mei, and Haun Saussy, with Thomas Burkman eds., *Chinese Walls in Time and Space* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell East Asia Series): 81-110.

Finally, and perhaps most instrumental, well organized and carefully maintained public buildings, “signaled the emergence of order from chaos,” in a tangible and physical sense.<sup>89</sup> Here it is important to explore the Chinese concept of “renovation.” The term for renovation (*xiu* 修) itself embodies a sense of “self-cultivation” (in the Buddhist sense “*xiuxing*” 修行, and the Daoist sense “*xiudao*” 修道) along with more common notions of “improvement, refashioning, and restoration.”<sup>90</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter, chaos was the persistent backdrop to Confucian notions of cosmic order. Yet through active and enlightened human effort - perhaps *renovation* - this chaos could be kept at bay. Physical structures were subject to the same conditions. New buildings were constructed by new dynasties, but both were destined to decay over time if proper human agency was not exercised in their maintenance. Thus public renovation projects not only served the function of aggrandizing local leadership (i.e the county magistrate in charge of the project) and promoting local morale, but they also served a performative role in recreating the local leadership’s active involvement in the ritual reproduction of imperial order and cosmic unity in the county. This relationship between decay, renovation, and notions of cosmic and political order is all the more locally compelling given Linzhang County’s frequent history of water calamities.

#### **4.6.4 A Mid-Point Renovation?**

Also worth considering is that many of the public renovation projects that occurred in Linzhang happened over the course of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. While local officials like Jing Fang certainly had no way of knowing that they were living through a time that later historians would call the “mid-Ming period,” it is likely that they were well aware of the dynastic cycle

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<sup>89</sup> Angela Zito, *Of Body and Brush: Grand Sacrifices as Text/Performance in Eighteenth Century China*, p. 133.

<sup>90</sup> Angela Zito, *Of Body and Brush: Grand Sacrifices as Text/Performance in Eighteenth Century China*, p. 70.

model of history which emphasized the organic movement of a dynasty through periods of birth, growth, maturity and then ultimately decline. Within this cycle sat the idea of a “mid-point revival” (中興), where if officials paid heed to the signs of dynastic decay around them they could “reverse the biological life process of dynasties and make them flourish anew.”<sup>91</sup> The “natural” life cycle of wooden structures fits this larger dynastic cycle model remarkably well; with the foundation of strong dynasties came the massive growth of public building projects as tangible symbols of imperial authority; however as time proceeds both dynasties and their structures were destined to atrophy and could only be saved through direct human intervention in the form of “revival” and perhaps even “renovation.”

Thus the various renovations of the City God Temple in Linzhang might also be understood as direct physical attempts to “renovate” the county following a period of perceived decline. After a period of what has been understood as weak imperial leadership throughout most of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Linzhang County had also fallen into a state of disrepair.<sup>92</sup> A consistent lament expressed throughout the county’s 1506 gazetteer is precisely the decrepit state of the county’s public buildings and local morale at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. However, in 1488 the Hongzhi Emperor ascended the throne ushering in an era of capable governance and active imperial leadership commonly referred to in later Chinese historical writing as the “Hongzhi Revival” (弘治中興).<sup>93</sup> At this time the realm saw unprecedented peace and security and

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<sup>91</sup>Frederick Mote, *Imperial China: 900-1800* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 777.

<sup>92</sup> Traditional historiography tends to argue that this weakness stemmed from the growth of eunuch influence in the court following the death of the Yongle Emperor in 1424. Most notable were the court abuses and instances of official corruption during the Chenghua reign period (1465-1487). See Frederick Mote, *Imperial China: 900-1800*, pp. 634-642.

<sup>93</sup> While I have not seen the term “Hongzhi Revival” used in English language scholarship, many Ming historians, including Frederick Mote and Timothy Brook have commented on the vigor of the Hongzhi reign period. See Frederick Mote, *Imperial China: 900-1800*, pp. 634-6; and Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure* (Berkeley: University of California, Press, 1998), pp. 50,103. For recent Chinese evaluations of this period and its key figures see Zhu Ziyuan 朱子彦, “Lun Ming Xiao Zong yu ‘Hongzhi zhong xing’” 论明孝宗与‘弘治中兴’ [On Ming Xiaozong and the “Hongzhi Revival”], *Qiu shi xue kan* 求是学刊 [Seeking Truth Periodical], Issue 6 (1989): 89-94;

pursued rigorous campaigns against bureaucratic corruption, nepotism and ineptitude.<sup>94</sup> It is also precisely at this time, when a whole host of public building renovation projects throughout the realm were initiated including: the Linzhang Ximen Bao Temple, which was renovated in Hongzhi 7 (1494); and the county's City God Temple renovated in Hongzhi 1 (1488) and then again sometime between 1497 and 1506.<sup>95</sup> Given the larger cultural understanding of "mid-point revivals" along with the general vigor and enthusiasm of the Hongzhi period it is indeed quite possible that mid-Ming officials in Linzhang were aware of the larger symbolic significance of their public renovation projects. Although these men could not have ever known they were living through the "mid-Ming period", it is certainly plausible that they recognized the historical significance of salvaging a decaying situation through active and capable leadership within the specific temporal context in which they lived.

#### 4.7 Claiming Ximen Bao

A pressing question that has yet to be explored is how locals and officials in Ming era Linzhang actually claimed the Ye region, and its most famous culture hero, Ximen Bao as their own. The 1506 Linzhang Gazetteer unproblematically states that Linzhang County was the clear historical descendant of Ye. In fact, aside from all the paratext that prefaces the work, the very first words in the 1506 gazetteer proudly declare that, "In ancient times Linzhang County was

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Qu Chen 曲辰, "Ming dai 'Hongzhi zhong xing' ming chen Li Dongyang" 明代 '弘治中兴' 名臣李东阳 [The famous Ming official of the "Hongzhi Revival," Li Dongyang], *Dang an shi kong* 档案时空 [Archive Space], issue 07 (2008): 21-22; and, Zhao Yongxiang 赵永翔, "Guan yu 'Hongzhi zhong xing' zhi ping jia wenti" 关于 '弘治中兴' 之评价问题 [Evaluating of the 'Hongzhi' Revival], *He xi xue yuan xue bao* 河西学院学报 [Journal of Hexi University] vol. 25 no. 1 (2009): 52-55.

<sup>94</sup> Moreover the time period was marked by a decidedly more flexible policy towards statecraft than pursued by earlier Ming emperors. The Hongzhi Emperor's more flexible approach was aimed at addressing the emerging needs of a maturing Ming state while not overwriting its original foundations established in perpetuity by the dynastic founder.

<sup>95</sup> Evidence from the public buildings section of the 1522 Zhangde Prefectural gazetteer suggests that most of the county's public buildings were constructed during the Hongwu region period. While renovations sometimes started in the Chenghua period (1465-1487) their instance increase through the Hongzhi (1488-1505) and Zhengde reign (1506-1521) eras. See Cui Xi, ed., *Zhangde fu zhi*, 1522, juan 4, 7b-25a.

Ye.”(臨漳縣古鄴也).<sup>96</sup> Such clear historical antecedents is echoed in a wide selection of other local texts including the 1522 Zhangde Prefectural gazetteer, which states “Linzhang County assumed the lands of Ye”(臨漳縣即鄴地也);<sup>97</sup> along with an assortment of geographical works including the *Unified Gazetteer of the Great Ming*, and the *Guangyu ji*, which write that “Linzhang...was originally the land of Ye” (本鄴地);<sup>98</sup> and that “Linzhang is the ancient land of Ye” (臨漳古鄴地)<sup>99</sup> respectively. Moreover, most contemporary texts from Linzhang County also tended to privilege such an interpretation and continue to make a direct historical link between the county and its Ye antiquity.<sup>100</sup>

It is true that many of the historic sites associated with the Ye and the Wei states were definitively situated within the Ming-era Linzhang’s county jurisdiction.<sup>101</sup> However, regarding Ximen Bao, the issue is complicated by the fact that the site where he famously tossed the shamans into the river and built his 12 irrigation canals sat directly on the border with Ming-era

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<sup>96</sup> The preface to the county’s new gazetteer produced during the Wanli era, which has been preserved in the 1904 edition also starts with, “Linzhang in an ancient city. Originally it was the ancient city of Ye.” See Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang Xian Zhi*, 1506, juan 1, 1a. and Zhou Bingyi 周秉彝 and Zhou Shou 周壽, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi* 臨漳縣志 [*Gazetteer of Linzhang County*], 1904, prefatory juan, 10a.

<sup>97</sup> Cui Xi, ed., *Zhangde fu zhi*, 1522, juan 1, 6a.

<sup>98</sup> Li Xian 李賢, et al. eds., *Da ming yi tong zhi* 大明一統志 [*Union Gazetteer of the Great Ming*], 1461, juan 28, 2a.

<sup>99</sup> Lu Yingyang 陸應陽, ed. *Guangyu ji* 廣輿記 [*Record of the Vast Empire*], 1600, modern reprint. Taipei: Xuehai chubanshe, 1969, p. 486.

<sup>100</sup> See the intro to a recently compiled collection of local sources from Linzhang County, where the authors write, that in “ancient times Linzhang County was under the jurisdiction of Ye” (臨漳縣古屬鄴). See Huang Hao 黃浩, Liu Shangfeng 劉尚峰, and Dong Ying 董英, eds., *Zhongguo gu ye guji zhengli congshu* 中國古鄴古籍整理叢書 [*Arranged Collectanea of Classical Sources from China’s Ancient State of Ye*] (Linzhang: Hebei Linzhang difangzhi bianzuan weiyuan hui, 2002), p. 1. The memorial description for Linzhang County’s historic monument that was discussed in Chapter 1 also unproblematically starts, “In ancient times Linzhang was known as Ye” (臨漳古稱鄴). Linzhang xian renmin zhengfu 臨漳縣人民政府 [Linzhang County’s People’s Government], *Tong que fei yun ming ji* 銅雀飛云銘記 [*Soaring Clouds of the Copper Sparrow Pavilion - Monument Inscription*], 1998.

<sup>101</sup> Most notably, Cao Cao’s Three Pavilions (三臺).

Anyang County (安陽縣), and Cizhou Subprefecture (磁州).<sup>102</sup> The issue is further confused by the changing nature of administrative boundaries and various overlapping jurisdictions within the region's longer history that dates back into antiquity. Previous to the Han dynasty the administrative regions that would later be known as Anyang and Linzhang were amalgamated as Ye. It is only in the post-Han order when they acquired their own distinct political identity.<sup>103</sup> Despite this separate existence, Linzhang and Anyang were often subject to periods of overlapping jurisdiction with portions of the counties or even the entire county being administered by a larger administrative unit sometimes known as Ye (鄴), Wei (魏), Wei Commandery (魏郡), or Xiangzhou (相州). This more fluid territorial situation existed until the Yuan period when Zhangde Prefecture (彰德府) was created. From this period onwards, both Linzhang and Anyang were distinct and clearly defined county units with the Anyang County also serving as the Zhangde Prefectural seat.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Anyang's county and Cizhou's borders were respectively located 50 *li* to the south and 50 *li* to the west of the Linzhang County seat at the time. Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 1, 3b.

<sup>103</sup> The complex evolution of these two counties is outlined in some detail in a republican era, *Simplified Chart of County Evolution in Henan Province*. This chart states that Anyang first came into its own political existence during the Jin Dynasty (晉, 265-420) when it was put under the jurisdiction of Wei Commandery (魏郡). Although the name Linzhang was first used in 313 to avoid an imperial naming taboo (see chapter 3 note 5) Linzhang County was first fully established sometime during the reign period of the Tianping Emperor (天平534-537) of the Eastern Wei Dynasty (東魏, 534-550). At this time, Ye was split into two and Linzhang County was put under the jurisdiction of Xiangzhou (相州). See Anon., *Henan sheng qu xian yan'ge jianbiao* 河南省區縣沿革簡表 [*Simplified Chart of County Evolution in Henan Province*], n.d, Republican era 1912-1949 (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1968), pp. 24-28. For a copy of the the relevant sections see Appendix G.

<sup>104</sup> The situation is even a bit more complicated than what I present here. Anyang County existed through the Jin period, but owing to larger political changes that accompanied the eventual founding of the Yuan dynasty, Anyang County was restructured and renamed named Fuyan (輔岩) in 1235. At this time however, Fuyan was still administered by the Zhangde Circuit (中書省彰德路). For an overview of the historical changes to both Linzhang and Anyang County's territory and jurisdiction see Anon., *Henan sheng qu xian yan'ge jianbiao* 河南省區縣沿革簡表 [*Simplified Chart of County Evolution in Henan Province*], n.d, Republican era 1912-1949. Reprint (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1968), pp. 23-28; and Anyang xian zhi bian zuan wei yuan hui 安陽縣志編纂委員會 [Anyang County Gazetteer Compilation Committee], eds., *Anyang xian zhi* 安陽縣志 [*Gazetteer of Anyang County*] (Beijing: Zhongguo qing nian chubanshe, 1990), n.p, opening chart.

While Cizhou also shared in this complicated overlapping history - at times placed under the jurisdiction of Handan, Anyang, Wei, and Xiangzhou - its territory was never under the direct jurisdiction of Ye.<sup>105</sup> As such, despite the county's close proximity to Ye sites, the county had no legitimate historic claims to Ye's legacy; accordingly there is no mention of Ximen Bao in the 1533 Cizhou Subprefectural gazetteer. Anyang, on the other hand, had clear and direct ties to Ye and thus could and often did make historical claims to Ximen Bao. The famous local officials section of the Anyang County gazetteer provides lengthy biographies of Ximen Bao and Shi Qi, which echo and mirror much of what was written about them in previous accounts such as the *Shi ji*.<sup>106</sup> Given that both Linzhang and Anyang shared in Ye's common history, their irredentist claims to aspects of the region's antiquity were never as straightforward as their individual county records might suggest.<sup>107</sup>

This complicated issue seems to have come to the forefront when one Jiajing era (嘉靖 1522 -1566) magistrate named Lu Wangdao (路王道) remarked that although Linzhang County could boast having a Ximen Bao Temple and a City God Temple with Ximen Bao serving as its tutelary deity, the county had yet to build a unified temple to both Ximen Bao and Shi Qi as its neighbouring county, Anyang had.<sup>108</sup> According to the Anyang gazetteer, the county's first

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<sup>105</sup> Zhou Wenlong and Sun Shao, eds., *Cizhou zhi* 磁州志 [*Gazetteer of Cizhou Sub-Prefecture*], 1533, juan 1, 1a-2a.

<sup>106</sup> Throughout the Anyang County Gazetteer there are several references to Ximen Bao. In similar fashion to the Linzhang County Gazetteer, the Anyang Gazetteer also discusses how Ximen Bao threw shamans into the river and eradicated local superstitious practices, how he irrigated Ye and how Shi Qi helped in bringing prosperity to the region. Most striking is that in both gazetteers the first two people mentioned in the biographies section are Ximen Bao and Shi Qi. This is not replicated in the Zhangde prefectural gazetteer where Ximen Bao and Shi Qi are only listed in the Linzhang. See Qing Guitai 清貴泰, et al. eds., *Anyang xian zhi* 安陽縣志 [*Gazetteer of Anyang County*], 1819, juan 25, 1a-2a; and Cui Xi, ed., *Zhangde fu zhi*, 1522, juan 5, 23b-25b, 38b-40a.

<sup>107</sup> Interestingly, the 1999 Linzhang County gazetteer places the site where Ximen Bao tossed the shamans into the river exactly on the county's border. See, Hebei sheng Linzhang xian difangzhi bianzuan weiyuan hui, *Gazetteer of Linzhang County*, n.p. opening map.

<sup>108</sup> No date is provided for when Lu Wangdao served as magistrate in Linzhang County. The County's 1904 gazetteer does however, provide a time line of local magistrates and places Lu Wangdao as the twelfth Jiajing era magistrate in a total list of fifteen. Accordingly, his tenure must have come sometime near the end of the Jiajing

Ximen Bao Shrine (西門豹祠殿) was constructed in 340 during the Later Zhao period (後趙, 328-351).<sup>109</sup> Roughly two hundred years later, sometime during the Tianbao reign period (天保, 550-559) of the Northern Qi Dynasty (北齊, 550-577), the county produced its second ritual site called the “Temple to Ximen the Great Worthy” (西門大夫廟).<sup>110</sup> It is this second temple, not the Ximen Bao temple in Linzhang that is recorded in the *Union Gazetteer of the Great Ming*. Moreover, this temple was firmly placed within the Anyang County boundaries located just north of the prefectural seat in Daifu Village (大夫村).<sup>111</sup> In 1494, the “Temple to Ximen the Great Worthy” was renamed the “Temple to the Two Worthies of Ye” (鄴二大夫廟) when Grand Coordinator named Xu Ke (徐恪) travelled to Anyang and ordered that the temple should also serve Shi Qi alongside Ximen Bao.<sup>112</sup> From this point onwards, Anyang’s Temple to the Two Worthies of Ye offered religious rites and sacrifices to both of these famous historic officials.

Despite Linzhang’s claim to the legacies of both Ximen Bao and Shi Qi, the county could not boast a similar type of temple where both gods were worshipped in union. Although Linzhang Magistrate Liu Han (劉漢) was eventually *ordered* to renovate the county’s Ximen Bao Temple it appears that no similar directive to expand the temple’s ritual practices to include

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reign period. See Kong Tianyin 孔天胤, “Ye er da fu ci ji” 鄴二大夫祠記 [“Inscription for the Temple to the Two Worthies of Ye”], in Zhou Bingyi 周秉彝 and Zhou Shou 周壽, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi* 臨漳縣志 [*Gazetteer of Linzhang County*], 1904, juan 12, 2a-4a; and, juan 4, 7b-10a.

<sup>109</sup> The precise date was in the autumn of the eighth month of the sixth year of the Jianwu Reign period (建武335-348). See Qing Guitai, et al. eds., *Anyang xian zhi*, 1819, jin shi lu 金石錄, juan 1, 10a.

<sup>110</sup> The Zhangde Prefectural Gazetteer also states that the Ximen the Great Worthy Temple was established in Anyang sometime during the Tianbao reign period in the Northern Ji Period. The historical relationship between these two temples is unclear in the surviving record. See Qing Guitai, et al. eds., *Anyang xian zhi*, 1819, juan 8, 8b; jin shi lu, juan 1, 10a-10b; and, Cui Xi, ed., *Zhangde fu zhi*, 1522, juan 4, 12a.

<sup>111</sup> Li Xian 李賢, et al. eds., *Da ming yi tong zhi* 大明一統志 [*Union Gazetteer of the Great Ming*], 1461, p, 543.

<sup>112</sup> Qing Guitai, et al. eds., *Anyang xian zhi*, 1819, juan 8, 8a; and, Cui Xi, ed., *Zhangde fu zhi*, 1522, juan 4, 12a.

the worship of Shi Qi were ever issued.<sup>113</sup> That the orders occurred to expand the ritual practice in Anyang's Temple to Ximen the Great Worthy and to renovate the Ximen Bao Temple in Linzhang came in the exact same year (1494) make this omission all the more curious.<sup>114</sup>

Linzhang County's lack of a unified temple to Ximen Bao and Shi Qi was clearly something to lament. One commentator from the 16<sup>th</sup> century named Kong Tianyin (孔天胤, 1505-1581)<sup>115</sup> has captured this sense of lament in a memorial text entitled "Inscription for the Temple to the Two Great Worthies of Ye."<sup>116</sup> In this text, Kong writes that the people of Linzhang could not offer sacrifices to Ximen Bao and Shi Qi (the Two Worthies of Ye) because their temple stood outside of Linzhang County's jurisdiction. He writes:

Formerly, sacrifices to [the Two Worthies] occurred in Daifu Village, which is located southwest of the old Ye city. [The Temple to the Two Worthies] stood far outside of Linzhang County's jurisdiction and accordingly, [those in] Zhangde Prefecture had to offer sacrifices on [the people of Linzhang's] behalf. Both the common people of Ye who want to repay the kindness [of the gods], and the county's officials who wanted to model themselves after the Two Worthies could not visit the temple. What a pitiful fact!<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Liu Han (劉漢) governed Linzhang County sometime before the arrival of Jing Fang in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. Records explicitly state that Magistrate Liu was ordered by both the civilian and the censorial branches of the Ming government to renovate the temple. The importance of Liu being *ordered* to renovate the temple will be taken up in the next chapter. See Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 5, 2b-3a; and, Zhou Bingyi, and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 4, 6b.

<sup>114</sup> The reasons for this omission remain unclear and cannot be determined from the surviving historical record. No memorial text or inscription was ever created for Liu Han's round of renovations to the Ximen Bao Temple. This lack of commemoration is perhaps best explained by the fact that Liu Han was ordered to renovate the temple and did not initiate the project on his own volition. One later magistrate also complained that Liu Han's renovations were not adequate which may also help to account for why a commemorative text was never produced. See Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 5, 2b-3a; and, Kong Tianyin, "Ye er da fu ci ji," in Zhou Bingyi and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 12, 2a-4a.

<sup>115</sup> Kong Tianyin's *zi* was Ru Yang (汝阳) and his *hao* was Wen Guzi (文谷子). He was from Wentong Village in Fenzhou, (汾州文同里) and was distantly related to the Ming royal clan. He passed the *jinshi* exam in 1533 and went on to have a distinguished career in office. He is somewhat known for his interest in philosophy and the "Investigation of Things" (格物). His complete works are preserved in the Kong Wengu wen ji 孔文谷文集 found in the *Siku quan shu*.

<sup>116</sup> Kong Tianyin, "Ye er da fu ci ji," in Zhou Bingyi and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 12, 2a-4a.

<sup>117</sup> Kong Tianyin, "Ye er da fu ci ji," in Zhou Bingyi and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 12, 2b.

Here, Kong deliberately describes the people of Linzhang, and not the people of Zhangde Prefecture [i.e Anyang the Prefectural Seat] as “the people of Ye.” For Kong it was especially pitiful that the direct descendants of Ye could not visit a temple site that was rightfully associated with their own county’s history. By extension, his comments could be construed as also casting doubt on the veracity of Anyang County’s claims to this same history.

This situation did not go unaddressed for long however, and Kong Tianyin describes how one mid-Ming magistrate named Lu Wangdao (路王道) finally established Linzhang County’s own Temple to the Two Great Worthies of Ye. Kong writes that after arriving in the county, Magistrate Lu immediately inquired into the customs of the people (much like Ximen Bao had) and then promoted local sacrifices and military affairs in the correct ritual order. He soon noticed however, that the Temple to the Two Worthies of Ye was located far outside of the county seat and said with a great sigh, “If we do not *exclusively* offer sacrifices to our own ancient heroes, how can [their examples] be transmitted to later generations?”<sup>118</sup> On this issue Lu Wangdao wrote:

When I first started my studies, I myself greatly admired the Two Worthies and when I obtained my first post it was in the same county [where they had historically served]. Although there was a Two Worthies Temple in Anyang’s Fengle Town [豐樂鎮],<sup>119</sup> when I searched for [such a temple] in *this* locality [Linzhang County] I could not find one. For this reason, I deliberately established a temple in this county to glorify the past and to edify the future, to avoid waste and to supplement the lacking.<sup>120</sup>

Kong Tianyin’s memorial text then describes how Magistrate Lu chose a place and a time to establish the temple. He also describes the finalized appearance of the temple structure along

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<sup>118</sup> "喟然嘆曰：“於古之作者不專祀，後何述哉。” Kong Tianyin, “Ye er da fu ci ji,” in, Zhou Bingyi and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 12, 3a.

<sup>119</sup> The location of Daifu Village.

<sup>120</sup> Kong Tianyin, “Ye er da fu ci ji,” in, Zhou Bingyi and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 12, 3a -3b.

with the ritual prescriptions concerning its temple sacrifices.<sup>121</sup> Overall, Kong describes Lu Wangdao's project as a great success, which took just over two months to complete. To celebrate Lu Wangdao's local activism and his restoration of the legacy of the Two Worthies in Linzhang County, Kong concludes:

When the Zhou dynasty fell into decline, powerful states began to compete against each other. [Rulers] enriched the state, but not the people; [they] made their armies strong, but not the foundations of society. Such malpractice existed for a long time. At this time [however], the Two Worthies divided the land according to heaven's plan and thereby enriched the lives of the people. How can we say that this is not a great legacy left by famous kings? Although Zi Chang [Sima Qian] and Meng Jian [Ban Gu] praised the [Two Worthies], those today who are truly aware of [the Two Worthies] virtue are dwindling. But now [with the construction of this temple] the root [of Two Worthies' virtue] will be promoted and the ceremonies [associated with them], which have been lacking for so long will have their light released once again. This all started with the work of Mr. Lu.<sup>122</sup>

Kong's celebration of Lu Wangdao's activism is heightened by his deft use of historical allusion. Just as the Two Worthies' sagely wisdom had once "enriched the lives of the people" after a period of perceived decline, Lu Wangdao's far-sighted activism similarly aided the people of Linzhang by restoring to them an important legacy in their own county's history. This restoration was all the more important in a context where Anyang County could also make reasonable claims to the region's shared antiquity.

By the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Linzhang County could boast its own Ximen Bao Temple, a City God Temple with Ximen Bao enshrined as its tutelary deity, and its own Temple to the Two Worthies of Ye. That several generations of magistrates in Linzhang County all took such active measures to restore Ximen Bao's legacy to the locality (and in this later case, Shi Qi's) displays

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<sup>121</sup> The temple is said to have include one great hall that spanned five bays, one lesser hall spanning three, a primary and a secondary gate, along with a variety of lesser rooms. Statues to the Two Worthies were included throughout the temple. The final product is described as "have a firm quality" and being "bright and colorful and full of beauty and vitality." Sheep and pig sacrifices were offered to the Two Worthies every year on the third day of the third month and the ninth day of the ninth month. Kong Tianyin, "Ye er da fu ci ji," in Zhou Bingyi and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 12, 3a-3b.

<sup>122</sup> Kong Tianyin, "Ye er da fu ci ji," in, Zhou Bingyi and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 12, 3b-4a.

the role that historical memory and commemoration played in the construction of Linzhang's local identity during the Ming period. While Ming officials such as Jing Fang, Lu Wangdao, and Kong Tianyi all looked to Ximen Bao as an upright model of local activism and virtuous governance he was also an important ally in the restoration, re-vitalization, and perhaps even salvation of the county. Thus when these local officials renovated his temple structures and recorded these acts in public texts, their actions also appear to have been deliberate attempts to restore confidence and morale in Linzhang County and to carve out the county's distinct claims to his important historical lineage.

That this activism was initiated by local magistrates (i.e the state) presents a compelling alternative to more southern-centric models of gentry patronage, where local elites often patronized public works to assert their own autonomy. As we have seen, the rehabilitation of Ximen Bao in Linzhang County was an entirely state led process with little to no gentry involvement. Not one of the texts used to construct this history of the rehabilitation of Ximen Bao mentions any local actors by name. Kong Tianyin's "Inscription for the Temple to the Two Worthies of Ye" even goes so far as to present the locals as entirely ignorant of the powerful historical legacy that they had inherited. Much like Ximen Bao's record of governance in Ye, activism in Linzhang County was often initiated by outside agents.

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

The last two chapters have worked in tandem to explore the origins and maturation of the body of texts, meanings, and ritual sites associated with Ximen Bao. The first of these two chapters explored the early genesis of the Ximen Bao tale and its maturation in such canonical works as the *Shi ji*. This chapter has now examined the larger social, cultural, religious and political lives of Ximen Bao following the collapse of the Han Dynasty and into the late imperial period in the specificity of Linzhang County. Although initially admired by Sima Qian for

stamping out heterodox local religious practices, Ximen Bao was eventually elevated to god status during the Six Dynasties period. At this time the Ye region enjoyed unparalleled prestige as the “key economic zone” in Chinese history to use Ch’ao-ting Chi’s terminology. As such, the region’s primary ritual site, the Ximen Bao Shrine, enjoyed great prestige at the time and even received official patronage from a variety of Six Dynasties emperors. However, at the beginning of the Song Dynasty when the Ye region began to lose its “key economic status” to the more commercially vibrant southern reaches of the empire, so too waned the status of its primary local cult. Thus, the rise and fall of the Ximen Bao cult intimately reflects the declining realm-wide status of Ye/Linzhang as the county moved into the late imperial era. By the end of the Song dynasty, Ximen Bao worship was an entirely local affair and it would remain as such through the rest of the late imperial era.

Although the Ximen Bao cult never enjoyed the type of realm-wide prestige that it once enjoyed during the Six Dynasties period, this is not to say that the cult was ever fully abandoned. Rather, the cult began to take on a new and important role in the construction of Linzhang County’s own sense of identity. Starting with Yang Meng’s renovation of the Ximen Bao Temple in the twelfth century we can discern a slow and steady rehabilitation of the Ximen Bao cult in Linzhang County over the Ming period. This rehabilitation is best witnessed in the various building and renovation projects devoted to restoring Ximen Bao’s ritual presence in the county. By the end of the Ming period, Linzhang County could claim three distinct ritual structures devoted to Ximen Bao worship, which was two more than the nearest competition, Anyang County, could boast. The rehabilitation of Ximen Bao not only allowed Linzhang County to make direct links with the region’s past antiquity, but also established a clear and personified model of virtuous local governance, or what I call the “Ximen Bao example,” that would come to affect generations of subsequent local officials.

I opened this dissertation with a description of a monument that the Linzhang County Government inaugurated in 1998 to celebrate the county's past antiquity and in particular, Ximen Bao. That we still see such state-led attempts to reconnect Linzhang residents with the county's distant antiquity, speaks clearly to the deep staying power of history and historical memory in this small sleepy northern Chinese county. The longevity of the Ximen Bao example cannot simply be reduced to a matter of longstanding local pride, however. Rather, I have argued that the persistent promotion of the Ximen Bao example engages with Linzhang County's much deeper historical quest for "cultural centrality." Not unlike today's China, Ming-era Linzhang also stood outside the fold of much of the economic and commercial growth and dynamism associated with the times. With little else to promote, local officials such as Wang Ludao had to mobilize whatever resources were available to help the county remain relevant within a Ming world that was increasingly leaving the county behind. In this context, Ming officials often looked for centrality in Linzhang's past and then used this history in an attempt to recreate some of the county's former importance. In 1998, when the county government inaugurated its monument to Ye antiquity, it was clear that not much had changed.

## Chapter 5: “From the Minute that he Stepped out of the Cart:” Jing Fang’s Magistrate Activism in a 1506 Northern Gazetteer

“Officials do not repair the *Yamen* [just as] guests do not repair the inn” – popular Ming era saying<sup>1</sup>

### 5.1 Introduction

During the tenth year of the Hongzhi reign period (1497), a *juren* degree holder named Jing Fang (景芳) took up his new post as magistrate of Linzhang County (臨漳縣). From the moment he arrived Jing Fang embarked on aggressive policies in the county to repair dilapidated and decayed structures, to build glorious new buildings and to widen roads. He also credits himself with establishing new wards within the county administration, building dikes to divert floods and irrigate fields, and using his own money to prevent the starvation of the local people. All of this activity was recorded in great detail in the county’s first complete gazetteer dated 1506, which, not so coincidentally Jing Fang oversaw the compilation of prior to being promoted to a new post in neighboring Shanxi province. Linzhang County’s 1506 gazetteer stands as a marvelous testament to Jing Fang’s dizzying pace of activity in this small peripheral northern Chinese county. As the gazetteer was edited by Jing Fang himself, it also offers a personalized window into how an activist magistrate sought to represent himself and his actions in the public record.

This chapter explores the ways in which Jing Fang, as Chief Compiler and Editor of the 1506 Linzhang Gazetteer, utilized the “public” nature of the gazetteer genre to create his own autobiography of achievement and cultivate his image as an activist magistrate. Unlike most other Ming Dynasty county gazetteers - where the magistrate was granted the honorary title of Chief Compiler but the actual research and compilation was conducted by members of a less personalized local elite - Linzhang’s 1506 Gazetteer bore the mark of Jing Fang on almost every

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<sup>1</sup> As cited in He Zhaohui 何朝暉, *Ming dai xian zheng yanjiu* 明代縣政研究 [*Study of County Administration during the Ming Period*] (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2006), p. 182

page. This auto-representation of Jing Fang's local accomplishments can best be understood as a personal interjection of his own activist record into the quasi-public local gazetteer genre. Given that he had little chance for upward promotion in the Ming bureaucracy, Jing Fang utilized the resources that were available to him at the time and subsequently employed them to enter his name and legacy into the public record. I argue that these resources that he drew upon – such as the examination system and the emerging gazetteer genre – while realm wide in their scope and orientation, were uniquely “northern” in the context that Jing Fang utilized them. Through the mid-Ming biography of a little-known magistrate working in a peripheral county, this case study also challenges the realm wide applicability of the dominant southern or more precisely, “Jiangnan” model of local governance in the late imperial period. Rather than stressing autonomous commercial development and increasing lineage dominance, Jing Fang's “northern” model gives much more credence to both state intervention and individual achievement in his successes.

## **5.2 Finding the Banal Magistrate**

Constructing a comprehensive biographical picture of Jing Fang is difficult. Unlike more accomplished officials of his time who were stationed to more prominent locales in the empire, Jing Fang and his routine post were simply not important enough to generate any lasting paper trail. Jing Fang would have certainly prepared and received a wide variety of official documents over the duration of his career- including directives, memorials, petitions and legal summaries to name a few; however, such records belonged to the routine world of local administration and were generally not considered significant enough to be preserved for posterity by later generations. Not surprisingly, there is no mention of Jing Fang in any of the standard historical works in which we might expect to see more accomplished officials of the realm such as: *The Standard History of the Ming* (明史), *The Ming Veritable Records* (明實錄), or the great early

17<sup>th</sup> century collection of statecraft writings, *Ming Documents on Statecraft* (皇明經世文編).

Even at the more local level we can only find at best cursory references to Jing Fang in the various provincial and prefectural gazetteers for the places in which he lived and served.<sup>2</sup> Jing Fang was just one of the thousands of local county officials who made up the lower stratum of the Ming bureaucratic system; insofar as the system worked and order was maintained there was no particular reason to glorify the individual magistrate for what were considered routine duties.

This routine and almost banal view of the county magistrate sits in direct opposition to more popular understandings of magistrates and their role in late imperial China. Owing to such popular culture sources as Feng Menglong's late Ming fiction, which was full of stories of tough magistrates<sup>3</sup>; the established canon of legends and stories regarding the cherished Song era magistrate Judge Bao (999-1062)<sup>4</sup>; Robert van Gulik's well-known adaptation of the Judge Dee

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<sup>2</sup> Prefectural gazetteers generally culled their information directly from gazetteers produced by their subordinate county units. However, as information passed up this chain less important details were often omitted. Therefore, the gazetteer produced in 1655 by Jing Fang's native Dingtao County offers a short biography of Jing Fang while the immediately superior 1573 Yanzhou Prefectural Gazetteer only lists his name once in an impersonalized list of local *juren* degree holders. See Zhao Guolin 趙國林, ed., *Dingtao xian zhi* 定陶縣志 [*Gazetteer of Dingtao County*], 1655, juan 6, 55b; and Bao Dazhou 包大燿, ed., *Yanzhou fu zhi* 兗州府志 [*Gazetteer of Yanzhou Prefecture*], 1573, juan 36, 11b. Similarly, Jing Fang can be found on almost every page of the 1506 Linzhang County gazetteer; however, the 1522 gazetteer produced by Linzhang's administrative superior, Zhangde Prefecture, lists Jing Fang's name only three times. The gazetteer twice credits Jing Fang for restoring buildings and offers a brief one line biography stating "Jing Fang was a *juren* degree holder from Dingtao. In the tenth year of the Hongzhi reign period [1497] he took up office [in Linzhang] where he renovated the Yamen; he was [later] promoted to sub-prefectural magistrate." See Jing Fang 景芳, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi* 臨漳縣志 [*Gazetteer of Linzhang County*], 1506; and Cui Xi 崔銑, ed., *Zhangde fu zhi* 彰德府志 [*Gazetteer of Zhangde Prefecture*], 1522, juan 3, 7b - 8b and juan 5, 32a. Even further up the spatio-bureaucratic ladder, Henan and Shandong Provincial Gazetteers only list Jing Fang in the list of local degree holders or county magistrates respectively; no other details are offered. See Tian Wenjing 田文鏡, ed., *Henan tong zhi* 河南通志 [*General Gazetteer of Henan Province*], 1735; and, Yue Jun 岳濬 and Du Zhao 杜詔, eds., *Shandong tong zhi* 山東通志 [*General Gazetteer of Shandong Province*], Yongzheng era, 1723-1735.

<sup>3</sup> In particular see Feng Menglong, "Magistrate T'eng and the Case of Inheritance," Trans. Susan Arnold Zonana, *Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations*, eds. Y.W. Ma and Joseph S.M. Lau (Boston: Cheng and Tsui, 1986), pp. 485-502.

<sup>4</sup> Judge Bao, or Bao Zheng (包拯) as he is more commonly known, is a well-known official who served under the Song Dynasty Emperor, Renzong. To this day, Bao Zheng is widely regarded, and often evoked as the model of the "pure official" (清官).

detective stories<sup>5</sup>; and the whole range of historical dramas syndicated on Chinese television where magistrates often figure prominently; the popular understanding both in and outside of China generally portray magistrates as unconditionally powerful, self-assured and wise officials.

This image is not entirely inadequate; historic sources suggest that magistrates themselves were encouraged to cultivate such an image of power. In his mid-seventeenth century handbook for magistrates *A Complete Book Concerning Happiness and Benevolence*, Huang Liuhong directly comments on this topic.<sup>6</sup> He writes that when an incoming magistrate arrives in his new post, “it takes seven days for a magistrate to size up the quality of his subordinates, while it takes only three days the other way around.” If his subordinates find that the magistrate is weak they will “ingratiate themselves with him and try to deceive him later on.” If they find that the magistrate is neglectful they will “take advantage of his weakness and become corrupt.” Huang continues, “Therefore, a magistrate who knows how to make the most of his potentials always gives others the impression that he is unfathomable and that he does not easily reveal his likes and dislikes. A magistrate who knows how to discharge his duties properly tries to show that he cannot be deceived easily and that he has no weakness that can be exploited.”<sup>7</sup> For local officials like Huang, political authority was intimately related to the tone of power, secrecy and awe that one set while in office.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Robert van Gulik’s Judge Dee stories were loosely based on the Tang Dynasty official, Di Renjie 狄仁傑 (630-700).

<sup>6</sup> Huang Liuhong 黃六鴻, *Fu hui quan shu* 福惠全書 [*A Complete Book Concerning Happiness and Benevolence*], trans. Djang Chu, *A Complete Book Concerning Happiness and Benevolence: A Manual for Local Magistrates in Seventeenth-Century China* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1984).

<sup>7</sup> Huang Liuhong, *Fu hui quan shu* as translated by Djang Chu, pp. 91-92.

<sup>8</sup> In their recent work *Death by a Thousand Cuts*, Gregory Blue, Jerome Bourgon and Timothy Brook suggest that this tone could also be set through the strategic public placement of torture instruments in the magistrate’s courtroom. See Timothy Brook, Jerome Bourgon and Gregory Blue, *Death by a Thousand Cuts* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 4. Thomas Nimick also notes that early European visitors to China often commented on the great speed on which the magistrate’s orders were obeyed. One late sixteenth century Dominican missionary wrote that the magistrate “kept his eyes low without looking to one side or the other: for even with their eyes they will not communicate with the common people, for to preserve their authority the more with them that

Beneath this stylized veneer however, lurked a whole host of powers and factors that often lay outside of the magistrate's immediate control. Excellent studies by T'ung-Tsu Ch'ü, John Watt, Djang Chu and, more recently, Thomas Nimick, and Bradley W. Reed have all shown that beneath the rhetorical veneer of the magistrate's centralized authority lay a complex minefield of local interests that formed real limits to the magistrate's power.<sup>9</sup> Entrusted a wide variety of tasks in the county including: collecting taxes, registering households, administering justice, performing state sacrifices and rituals, promoting education, encouraging morality, administering disaster relief, maintaining public buildings, and providing military security, the magistrate's charge was both wide reaching and intimidating. Equally daunting was that the bulk of resources and the project leadership necessary to accomplish these goals were generally drawn from the locality; as a result, the magistrate's relationship with various local power holders in any county was absolutely crucial.<sup>10</sup> If locals refused to lend their economic, social and cultural support it could spell disaster for the magistrate. In some cases, magistrates were forced to retire in shame or transfer to a new locality to save their careers.<sup>11</sup> As Thomas Nimick writes however, the goal of locals was "not to make administration impossible, but to have the

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they may be the more feared." As cited in Thomas Nimick, "The County, the Magistrate and the Yamen in Late Ming China" PhD. diss., Princeton University, 1993, p. 154.

<sup>9</sup> See T'ung-Tsu Chu, *Local Government in China under the Ch'ing* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), pp.14-35; John Watt, *The District Magistrate in Late Imperial China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972); Djang Chu, *A Complete Book Concerning Happiness and Benevolence: a Manual for local Magistrates in Seventeenth-Century China* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1984); Thomas Nimick, "The County, the Magistrate and the Yamen in Late Ming China;" and Bradley W. Reed, *Talons and Teeth: County Clerks and Runners in the Qing Dynasty* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000)

<sup>10</sup> For a comprehensive discussion of the various local power holders and the types of constraints they put on the magistrate's authority see Thomas Nimick, "The County, the Magistrate and the Yamen in Late Ming China;" pp. 151-170.

<sup>11</sup> For particularly effective examples of how local pressure and resistance could lead to a magistrate's removal from office see Ray Huang, *Taxation and Governmental Finance in Sixteenth Century China* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), pp. 26-27; and Peter Perdue, "Water Control in the Dongting Lake Region during the Ming and Qing Periods," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 41.4 (Aug. 1982): 747-765, p. 756.

magistrate make allowances for their interests.”<sup>12</sup> Thus throughout the late imperial period, the magistrate was subject to pressures from the state above and society below. He was entrusted with the task of maintaining order and stability in the locality and remitting taxes and tribute to the central government, yet it was a mandate that could only be accomplished with the active engagement of the local gentry and the county *yamen*'s staff who often had diverging opinions on how their resources should be put to use. Moreover, every locality had its own repertoire of accepted customs and traditions and accumulated local practices, which would make the task of enforcing any centralized mandate all the more complex and difficult.

The county magistrate occupied the crucial node between the state's interests and local society's strategies. Representing and working within both of these worlds, he was the most important layer of mediation between these two realms. His position was an elastic site where the concerns of both state and society were actively negotiated on a day-to-day basis. Furthermore, this crucial node was a particularistic and personalized one. Magistrates, like local notables, also possessed their own convictions, prejudices, inclinations, idiosyncrasies, and experiences. That the position of the county magistrate was so important, yet so highly personalized is a fundamentally important, yet often overlooked point in our understanding of how local governance in the late imperial period actually worked in practice.

Most studies of Ming or Qing magistrates tend to focus on the larger institutional dynamics of county administration in the late imperial period.<sup>13</sup> This depersonalization of the

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<sup>12</sup> Thomas Nimick, “The County, the Magistrate and the Yamen in Late Ming China,” p. 151.

<sup>13</sup> For example see John Watt's, *The District Magistrate in Late Imperial China*, which deals with the institutional dynamics of local administration at a highly depersonalized level of abstraction. Although there are a few personalized studies of local officials in the late imperial period, these studies tend to focus on officials who started their careers as local magistrates, but eventually went on to obtain realm wide status and acclaim. See Joanna Handlin Smith's study of the local magistrate Lü Kun in the late Ming; Joanna Handlin Smith, *Action in Late Ming Thought: the Reorientation of Lü K'un and Other Scholar-Officials* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); and William Rowe's study of the well known Qing provincial official, Chen Hongmou; William Rowe, *Saving the World: Chen Hongmou and Elite Consciousness in Eighteenth-Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

late imperial magistrate is partially a reflection of the sources available to historians. Simply put, ordinary people working in ordinary places were either not important enough to write about, or what was written was deemed too banal and not worth saving for later generations. Unless one is lucky enough to unearth a treasure trove of personal information – as was the case with Djang Chu’s study of the seventeenth century magistrate Huang Lihong - it is generally difficult for us to get a glimpse of, let alone understand, this highly personalized nature of “ordinary” local governance in the late imperial period.<sup>14</sup> Yet herein lies the challenge for Ming historians; we know that the vast majority of the Ming civil bureaucracy was made up by such rank and file magistrates as Jing Fang who worked in largely routine posts. Their very elision from lasting historic records would perhaps suggest that many of these men were quite successful in getting their jobs done. In so far as it was “business as usual” there was no reason to construct fantastic biographies of ordinary men or save detailed records of their routine tasks. Yet these are precisely the ordinary people who played a central role in the long-term stability of the Ming state. We need to know more about magistrates like Jing Fang in order to know more about the Ming state and how it operated at the local level.

Finding “ordinary” magistrates like Jing Fang in the historic record is, however, not an entirely hopeless task. What it does require is that we just shift our attention to the sources created by the localities where the ordinary routine actions of ordinary magistrates mattered the most – sources created by the localities in which these men served and the native places where their status brought local prestige. There are fortunately a few such sources that can help us to better understand Jing Fang and his career as a rank-and-file magistrate; moreover, through him

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<sup>14</sup> More personalized magistrate writings can sometimes be found in the magistrate handbook or magistrate anthology genre of official writing commonly referred to as “*guan zhen*” (官箴) or “*gong du*” (公牘) respectively. Such collections however, were generally reserved for well-known magistrates or for strategic counties in the empire with well-known administrative problems. We therefore have far less sources by more ‘ordinary’ magistrates serving in more ‘routine’ posts. For an extensive and critical biography of *guan zhen* and *gong du* sources see Pierre-Etienne Will, *Official Handbooks and Anthologies of Imperial China: A Descriptive and Critical Bibliography*, work in progress, 2010.

we can fill in our knowledge of life, governance and politics in local society in the north during the mid-Ming period.

### 5.3 Career Local Administrators: the Rank-and-File Magistrate

Jing Fang's short biography is found in the famous locals section of his native Dingtao County's local gazetteer; several of his achievements and merits are also recorded in the local gazetteers produced in the places where Jing Fang officially served - Northern Henan's Linzhang County where he served as County Magistrate (知縣 - rank 7a); Shanxi's Pingding Sub-prefecture (平定州) where he was promoted to Sub-Prefectural Magistrate (知州 - rank 5b); and lastly in Shaanxi's Qingyang Prefecture (慶陽府) where he concluded his career as a Vice Prefectural Magistrate (同知 - rank 5a).

Jing Fang was clearly not at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Even though he started his career as the magistrate of a little known county, he was still a magistrate and a *juren* degree holder nonetheless.<sup>15</sup> We can also determine from his official appointments that Jing Fang steadily rose upwards through the ranks. Yet neither was Jing Fang at the apex of the Ming bureaucratic system either. If he was, his name would have been preserved in the official dynastic history along with various provincial gazetteers and a variety of collections discussing famous and virtuous officials of the Ming period. The local sources where we do find Jing Fang recorded betrays evidence of his status in the wider Ming polity. As a career local administrator, Jing Fang was important enough to leave some records behind, but clearly not famous enough to

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<sup>15</sup> The *juren* degree was conferred to the select group of men who were successful in passing the second level provincial exam within the empire's three-tier examination system.

leave the amount and type of records behind necessary for modern day historians to construct a complete biographical picture.<sup>16</sup>

Whether Jing Fang had aspirations of climbing into the upper echelons of the Ming bureaucratic system or if he understood that men like him were becoming increasingly confined to the lower-rung of the civil bureaucracy, is unclear. As Benjamin Elman notes, after the Zhengde Emperor (1436-49) established official quotas for the provincial and metropolitan exams, competition for the coveted *juren* and *jinshi* degrees grew increasingly fierce, especially at the provincial level. Elman cites Wada Mashiro's estimates that the number of failed provincial examination candidates in the mid-Ming rose more than four-fold from 850 in 1441 to 4,200 in 1573.<sup>17</sup> Once the crucial provincial bottleneck was passed, only one out of every ten metropolitan examination candidates could expect to earn the *jinshi* degree. In the context of this intense competition, holding *juren* degree status was an accomplishment in itself, but by no means guaranteed one's place in the *jinshi* stream let alone a position in the coveted "Hanlin Club".<sup>18</sup>

Using evidence drawn from the Qing period, John Watt has pointed out the increasing stratification of the late imperial bureaucratic system into three distinctly separate career tiers that saw the sub-bureaucratic clerks, runners, secretaries and servants positioned at the bottom of the structure and the elite *jinshi* degree holders monopolizing top positions in the metropolitan

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<sup>16</sup> For a discussion of a similar type of liminal Ming figure see Timothy Brook's analysis of Li Guanghua in Timothy Brook, *The Troubled Empire: China in the Yuan and Ming Dynasties* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010), pp. 134-140.

<sup>17</sup> Benjamin Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 142-3.

<sup>18</sup> Emerging in the Tang dynasty, the Hanlin Academy was first an elite society of scholars and personal advisors to the Emperor. During the Ming dynasty, the academy became a "fully developed government institution" and its members enjoyed enormous prestige and influence. Hanlin scholars were drawn from the most outstanding *jinshi* degree recipients. Their duties included supervising the metropolitan and provincial examinations, editing and publishing literary works, tutoring the emperor and the imperial family on historical and classical texts, serving as the emperor's private secretaries, among a host of other activities. See Benjamin Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*, pp. 158-159.

bureaucracy and the Hanlin Academy at the top. In the middle realm sat a large number of *juren* and lesser accomplished *jinshi* degree holders who could expect a county magistrate post or two, but had little likelihood of ever being promoted upwards.<sup>19</sup> In his study of Ming county administration, Thomas Nimick has also noted a similar structural dynamic for the Ming period. *Jinshi* degree holders who were first posted to county magistrate positions could generally expect a quick promotion to higher levels within the Ming civilian bureaucracy. “The likelihood of magistrates from other backgrounds” following such a trajectory however was “negligible.”<sup>20</sup> By the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Jing Fang’s *juren* degree status would certainly count as one of these “other backgrounds.”

Without holding a *jinshi* degree, it is hard to imagine that Jing Fang ever saw himself as having any real chance in serving in a higher capacity than as a district or prefectural magistrate. Yet is there any real reason to assume that Jing Fang even wanted to serve at a higher level? From the surviving records we have no way of knowing if Jing Fang even ever sat the metropolitan *jinshi* exams, or if he did, how many times he failed them. All we know is that Jing Fang never earned the *jinshi* degree and followed a career trajectory that was common to *juren* degree status holders of the time. Perhaps, Jing Fang felt that it was at the local level - the level where the vast majority of actual Ming governance occurred - where he could best leave his mark. Certainly this is the sort of activist image that Jing Fang cultivates in the 1506 Linzhang County gazetteer.

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<sup>19</sup>John Watt, *The District Magistrate in Late Imperial China*, pp. 74-76.

<sup>20</sup>Thomas Nimick, “The County, the Magistrate and the Yamen in Late Ming China,” p. 71.

## 5.4 A Transplanted History: The Jing Family in Shandong's Dingtao County

With no surviving lineage or genealogical records, we have very little of the historical material necessary to construct a detailed picture of Jing Fang's immediate family history and how he came to hold a *jurem* degree in the first place. What we can piece together comes from a few short references found in a number of editions of the Dingtao County gazetteer, which was Jing Fang's native place. Jing Fang's biography in the 1655 Dingtao gazetteer states that the Jing family was originally from Jingzhou Subprefecture (涇州) located in central Shaanxi Province (陝西).<sup>21</sup> Sometime during the Yongle reign period (1403-1424), Jing Fang's great grandfather, Jing Hong (景宏) became a student in the Imperial Academy (監生)<sup>22</sup> where he later earned recognition in the Clarifying the Classics Examination (明經).<sup>23</sup> For this achievement he was appointed to serve as Vice-Magistrate (縣丞) of Dingtao County, which is

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<sup>21</sup>Zhao Guolin, ed., *Dingtao xian zhi*, 1655, juan 5, 13a.

<sup>22</sup>Jing Hong's *jiansheng* (監生) status requires some explanation. Starting in 1449 with the fiscal and security crisis created by the Mongol capture of the Zhengtong Emperor, the Ming state began to intermittently sell examination degree status to make up financial shortages. Thereafter, those who bought such degrees were often known as *jiansheng*. However, before 1449, *jiansheng* were those who had been selected through the regularized tribute channel to spend ten years in the Imperial Academy. Although the standard sense of the term *jiansheng*, and indeed the one used throughout Benjamin Elman's work on the examination system, refers to a person who had bought degree status, in this pre-1449 context it is most likely that Jing Hong was indeed a student in the imperial college and had not bought his degree. For more discussions of *jiansheng* see John Dardess, *A Ming Society: Tai-ho County, Kiangsi, Fourteenth to Seventeenth Centuries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 160-161; and Benjamin Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*, pp. 139, 200.

<sup>23</sup>As discussed in Chapter Two, the roots of the Clarifying the Classics, or "Mingjing" Examination can be traced back to the Tang dynasty (618-907) when it was administered alongside the *jinshi* examination as the two top level imperial exams. Unlike the *jinshi* examination which stressed "poetry, belles lettres, and culture among Tang aristocratic elites", students who wrote the mingjing examination were expected to draw from the classical cannon and produce three policy related essays. With the rise of Wang Anshi (王安石) in the Southern Song court, poetry and belles letters in the *jinshi* examination were eventually supplanted by essays based on classical orthodoxy making the mingjing examination redundant. With the return of Sima Guang into power the court later restored belles lettres back into the examination system and a two-track *jinshi* program was reestablished. By the Ming period it is unclear exactly what the mingjing examination was. While it was certainly esteemed at a lower level than the *jinshi* it was enough to get a person like Jing Hong into office – just not a high rank. My guess is that it was a special examination administered to students in the imperial college and based more narrowly on a particular policy question. See Benjamin Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*, pp. 9-17.

located in southwestern Shandong's Yellow River flood plain region.<sup>24</sup> The text notes that although Jing Hong's benevolent administration earned him much local admiration and respect, he died in complete poverty while in office. After his death, the family was too poor to return Jing Hong's body back to his native Jingzhou and thus the family was resettled to Dingtao County.<sup>25</sup>

Unfortunately, the Dingtao gazetteer is silent on how the newly planted Jing family survived in their new county. Given that the family was too poor to pay for something as important as the return of their father's body for proper burial, we can infer that the Jingzhou Jing's were not part of a wealthy lineage themselves. Moreover, as new transplants into Dingtao society, the Jing family most likely did not have access to the type of lineage and land resources that were necessary for their clan's aristogenic reproduction.<sup>26</sup> This problem would certainly have been even more acute had the Jing family not found itself relocated to the relatively gentry poor Dingtao County.

If successful examination results are any indication of the success of members of the local gentry in asserting their cultural hegemony over a given locality, statistics from Dingtao are particularly telling. Throughout the duration of the entire Ming period, Dingtao only produced four *jinshi* degree holders<sup>27</sup> - Qiao Qian (喬遷) who earned this degree in 1523 was the first,

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<sup>24</sup> According to the local officials section of a subsequent Dingtao Gazetteer, Jing Hong was the only person to serve as the county's vice-magistrate and the position was later abolished during the Chinghua reign period (1465-1487). See Feng Lingui 馮麟淮, ed., *Dingtao xian zhi* 民國定陶縣志 [*Gazetteer of Dingtao County*], 1916, juan 4, 11a.

<sup>25</sup> Zhao Guolin, ed., *Dingtao xian zhi*, 1655, juan 5, 13a.

<sup>26</sup> Here "aristogenic" refers to ability of a family to reproduce its high status not only through birth right and land holding, but also through a wide variety of cultural and social strategies. The most important of these strategies were land holding, success in the examination system and local liturgical works. See Robert Hymes, *Statesmen and Gentlemen: The Elite of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi, in Northern and Southern Sung* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

<sup>27</sup> Over the duration of the Qing, Dingtao County managed to produce a total of nine *jinshi* degree holders. Of the thirteen total *jinshi* degree recipients in Dingtao over the entire Ming and Qing dynasties only two surnames – Su (蘇) and Cao (曹) appear more than once, the other nine – Qiao (喬), Meng (孟), He (何), Jia (賈), Liu (劉), Wang (王), Yan (閻), and Li (李) occur only once. See Feng Lingui, ed., *Dingtao xian zhi*, 1916, juan 5, 3a - 4a.

followed by Cao Bangfu (曹邦輔) in 1532, He Erjian (何爾健) in 1589, Meng Sanqian (孟三遷) in 1598 and lastly, Jia Wonian(賈我年) in 1637.<sup>28</sup> That the first *jinshi* degree earned by a Dingtao native during the Ming dynasty was in 1523, well after the Jing family had settled in the region, is important for several reasons. First it demonstrates that when the Jings resettled to Dingtao, there was no previous local tradition of scholastic success in the county. In fact, before the Ming period, the county had only managed to produce two *jinshi* degree holders for the entire Song and Yuan periods.<sup>29</sup> Even more important however, is that what success Dingtao did have in the examination system, all came after the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Southern domination of the examination system was a perennial concern for the Ming state - and rightfully so. Out of the 120 graduates who passed the newly reinstated metropolitan examination in 1371, 89, or 74 percent of them were from south China.<sup>30</sup> Several years later in the 1397 palace examinations, there was not one northerner among the entire list of 52 who had passed. In a fit of rage, the Hongwu Emperor had at least two of the examiners publically executed.<sup>31</sup> It was not until 1425 that the first regional quota system was established by the

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<sup>28</sup> Over the duration of the Ming, the county also produced two Military *jinshi* Degree holders (武科進士), through the Military Recruitment Examination system. I have left these two men – Wang Jinchen (王蘊臣) and Kong Hongbiao (孔宏標) out of my listing of local *jinshi* degree holders as their Military *jinshi* status was something quite different from the regularized *jinshi* channels. The Military Examination system originated in the Song period and was later revived in the Ming in 1464. In 1504, the Military *jinshi* examination system was regularized to a triennial examination cycle. Success in these examinations qualified men for appointment as military officers. Although the Military examination system was designed to counter the hereditary power of weisuo military generals, it did little to significantly alter the largely hereditary composition of military elites in the Ming dynasty. See Feng Lingui, ed., *Dingtao xian zhi*, 1916, juan 5, 6b - 7a; and Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), p. 571.

<sup>29</sup> Their names were Liu Qian (劉潛) and Ren Tianchong (任天寵) respectively. See Feng Lingui, *Dingtao xian zhi*, 1916, juan 5, 3a.

<sup>30</sup> “South China” in this context refers to Southern Capital Region (南直隸), and Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Fujian, Huguang and Guangdong Provinces. See the *Mingshi*, 3/1686-87, 3/1697; and Benjamin Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*, pp. 90, 95 n.87.

<sup>31</sup> Benjamin Elman recounts this story with great finesse. After the Hongwu Emperor discovered that there was not one northerner in the entire bunch of successful examination candidates that year, he demanded the entire groups of tests be re-marked. After this initial re-mark, the chief grader, Liu Sanwu told the emperor that, “In our selection

Hongxi Emperor, which stipulated that 40 percent of all the *jinshi* degrees had to be awarded to northerners - including those from Shandong, Henan, Shanxi, Shaanxi and the Northern Metropolitan Region (Beizhili). In 1427 the Xuande Emperor further revised this quota to include provisions for the ‘central regions’ including Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, and Guangxi provinces. In its final form, this 35:55:10 ratio (northerners: southerners: central regions) lasted until the end of the Ming.<sup>32</sup>

That all of Dingtao’s examination successes came well after these examination quotas were established - and that the county had seen no success before this intervention - suggests that Dingtao’s mid-Ming positive examination results were directly facilitated by government intervention and supervision and were not the outgrowth of lineage strategies as more commonly seen in southern China. One way to ascertain the relationship between local lineage structures and examination success is to simply look at last names in the lists of successful degree holders. In places with more dominant lineage structures, we often see a few last name repeated throughout the texts. To this end, Dingtao’s meager list of Ming *jinshi* degree holders is revealing in that none of the four degree holders share the same surname. Taken alongside the 24 men who were awarded *juren* or *xiangsheng* status in the county, we find 17 different surnames out of a possible 28.<sup>33</sup> While these numbers are not definite proof that Dingtao had no centrally prominent lineages, it does provide evidence to suggest that no one family dominated the

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there has been no division between northerners and southerners. It is just that south of the great Yangtze there are many outstanding literati. Northern literati themselves just don’t compare to southerners.” These words threw the Hongwu emperor into a fit of rage and he executed at least two of the official examiners. After the exams were marked again and when the final list of successful examination candidates was finally issued, the number of successful examination candidates was increased to 61 – all were northerners. See Benjamin Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*, p. 94.

<sup>32</sup> See Benjamin Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*, pp. 88-97.

<sup>33</sup> Of these 17 different surnames, the kong 孔 surname appears the most with five *juren* degree holders over the entire Ming period. The only surname to appear in both the Ming *jinshi* and *juren* lists is Cao (曹) with one of each. Feng Lingui, ed., *Dingtao xian zhi*, 1916, juan 5, 3a - 4a.

county's examination market. Moreover, out of the entire group of 28 local *jinshi* degree holders, only 4 of them had achievements significant enough to warrant biographies in their own county's gazetteer. What gentry might have existed in Dingtao was neither strong enough to dominate local society and reproduce their status through the examination system nor accomplished enough to leave behind a lasting record in the county's public sources.

That Dingtao did not have a strong gentry presence should not be surprising. As discussed in Chapter One and Two, the natural environment of the north China plain gave rise to different forms of economic, social and even political organizations than the ones more commonly found (and understood) in the south.<sup>34</sup> Dry land agriculture, lower crop yields, lack of convenient water transport, harsher climatological conditions, the constant threat of floods, famine and locust infestation, and differences in land ownership characteristic of the north formed serious impediments to reproducing the type of rapid commercialization and economic growth seen in south China from the Southern Song period onwards. Comparing the two regions, Phillip Huang has written,

The differences in landownership made for very great differences in the interrelationships among state elite and peasant in the two regions. In North China, more peasants were owner-cultivators who were taxed directly by the state. In the Yangzi delta, the majority rented the subsoil... and were taxed only indirectly via rent paid to the subsoil landlord.... Thus, in land relations as in water control, the peasant dealt with the state chiefly through the elites, not directly, as he did in the North.<sup>35</sup>

Owing to all of these factors, northern social organization focused more heavily on dealing with the state, while in the south "community structures revolved mainly around kinship ties," which could often be translated into examination success.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> For a succinct summary of the variety of factors that lead to the explosion of the economy in south China and the expansion of its commercial economy. See Philip C. Huang, *The Peasant Economy and Social Change in North China* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1985), pp. 203-209.

<sup>35</sup> Philip Huang, *The Peasant Family and Rural Development in the Yangzi Delta, 1350-1988* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), p.42.

<sup>36</sup> Philip Huang, *The Peasant Family and Rural Development in the Yangzi Delta, 1350-1988*, p.43.

Dingtao's lack of a clear and definable gentry stands in stark contrast to the type of southern or, more precisely, Jiangnan gentry dominance as described by Timothy Brook in his article entitled "Family Continuity and Cultural Hegemony."<sup>37</sup> In this article, Brook examines the astonishing ability of Ningbo's elite to reproduce their gentry status and local dominance over a long period of time through a variety of lineage strategies. As the increasingly commercial vibrancy of the Jiangnan region created new forms of wealth, corporate lineage organizations grew to command large portions of the regional economy. As Brook writes though, "Wealth alone could not create status; it had to be mediated by cultural forms that rendered wealth acceptable."<sup>38</sup> The ultimate arbiter in this negotiation that moved economic capital to cultural capital was success in the examination system in which many places in southern China could claim great achievements. For example, Ningbo Prefecture's Yin County managed to produce over 1,000 various *jinshi*, *juren* and *xiangsheng* degrees over the course of the Ming.<sup>39</sup> Duo Luoken's recent study of Ming *jinshi* degree holders in Fujian Province also provides ample examples of successful lineage strategies converted into examination success in the south. Fujian's Putian County alone produced 508 *jinshi* degrees over the course of the Ming; Jijiang County, 377; and Min County 298.<sup>40</sup> How can we even begin to compare these numbers with Dingtao's meager four?

Brook and Duo's arguments are not alone and are situated in a longer line of scholarship, which rightfully explores elite family continuity in southern China and especially the Jiangnan

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<sup>37</sup> Timothy Brook, "Family Continuity and Cultural Hegemony: the Gentry of Ningbo, 1368-1911," *Chinese Local Elites and Patterns of Dominance*, ed. Joseph W. Esherick and Mary Backus Rankin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990): 27-50.

<sup>38</sup> Timothy Brook, "Family Continuity and Cultural Hegemony: the Gentry of Ningbo, 1368-1911," p. 38.

<sup>39</sup> Timothy Brook, "Family Continuity and Cultural Hegemony: the Gentry of Ningbo, 1368-1911," p. 30.

<sup>40</sup> See Duo Luoken 多洛肯, *Mingdai Fujian jinshi yanjiu* 明代福建進士研究 [*A Study of Fujian's Jinshi Degree Holders in the Ming Period*] (Shanghai: Cishu chubanshe, 2004), pp. 69-74.

region as related to the increasingly commercial vibrancy of the region.<sup>41</sup> But what of places with little economic wealth or surplus? What about the large portions of the Ming realm beyond the gentry packed, commercially rich and politically powerful Jiangnan core? One quick look at Dingtao's examinations "successes" shows that it is very difficult indeed to apply the Jiangnan experience in order to explain the entire Ming realm.

All of the characteristic signs of a strong gentry society that were found in Jiangnan – commercialized economy, gentry liturgical works, detailed lineage records, and examination success were less prominent in these areas of north China. Unlike in Jiangnan, where family identity, as Brook writes was, "always a resource of dominance," it seems that family identity and resources in places like Dingtao had far less to do with one's success in the examination system.<sup>42</sup> In this context, success could be understood as resulting from an individual's particular aptitude (or luck) but more likely as a product of state supervision through the quota system.

The vast majority of Dingtao locals who held any official status through the Ming were able to do so through the wide variety of different recommendations strategies encouraged by the Ming state. Therefore, although the county only produced four *jinshi* and twenty-four *juren* degrees throughout the entire duration of the Ming it could boast a fairly long list of degrees and titles that were granted outside of the regularized three-tier examination system including: six "tribute students by grace" (恩貢), with the first title granted in 1426; two "special examination graduates" (拔貢) titles granted in 1628 and 1635; and 116 "tribute students" (歲貢) with 115 of

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<sup>41</sup> Brook cites Hilary Beattie's study of Tongcheng County, Anhui; Jerry Dennerline's study of Suzhou's Jiading County, and Robert Hymes' study of Tang era Fuzhou Prefecture. See Hilary Beattie, *Land and Lineage in China: a Study of T'ung-ch'eng County, Anhwei, in the Ming and Ch'ing Dynasties* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Jerry Dennerline, *The Chia-ting Loyalists: Confucian Leadership and Social Change in Seventeenth-Century China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); and Robert Hymes, *Statesmen and Gentlemen: the Elites of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi, in Northern and Southern Sung* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 33.

<sup>42</sup> Timothy Brook, "Family Continuity and Cultural Hegemony: the Gentry of Ningbo, 1368-1911," p. 32.

the titles coming after 1436. Aside from one person who was granted tribute status during the Yongle reign period, 123 out of these 124 extra-examination system titles were granted after 1425 when the first regional quota system was put into place.<sup>43</sup>

The institutional dynamics that created all of these different extra-examination categories are too complex to explore in this chapter. Here I simply highlight the clear correlation between the state quota system and the granting of titles in Dingtao County. All of these titles were aimed at getting locals who would be unlikely to have any success in the regular examination system into the Ming polity. Without such direct state intervention it would be impossible for more impoverished northern Chinese counties like Dingtao to compete with the examination power of the economically wealthy and gentry-rich south. The Hongwu Emperor sought to attack this problem through the erratic use of violence in the early days of the dynasty. It was not until the Hongzhi Emperor in the mid-Ming period however, that the state addressed this problem at its systemic base and institutionalized a fixed regional quota system.

Unlike the Jiangnan model, which stresses the relatively autonomous growth of China's southern gentry through vertical lineage and corporate land holding strategies monopolized by the family, examples from the relatively poorer north give much more credence to government supervision and direct state intervention in the incorporation of northerners into the Ming bureaucratic system. This does not mean that family was not an important asset in the north; in fact, we see 84 individuals granted minor titles through the "yin privilege" system (陰襲) by virtue of their father's or grandfather's prestige.<sup>44</sup> Yet this type of family privilege would only

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<sup>43</sup> The Dingtao Gazetteer also states that sixty "miscellaneous tribute" titles (列貢) were granted over the Ming and Qing period and the locality could boast the enrolment of 215 students in the imperial school (國學). However, this list is not broken down by dynasty and therefore I have left these numbers out of my statistics.

<sup>44</sup> Recipients of the yin, or "protection" privilege during the Ming were granted titles and often held minor posts based on the accomplishments and prestige of their grandfather or father. Feng Lingui, ed., *Dingtao xian zhi*, 1916, juan 5, 36a. For a discussions of the yin privilege during the Ming see John Dardess, *A Ming Society: T'ai-ho County, Kiangsi, Fourteenth to Seventeenth Centuries*: p. 165; Francis L.K. Hsu, *Under the Ancestors' Shadow*:

extend to one generation and entitled one to low ranking office in the county's sub-bureaucracy. In Dingtao for example, most *yin* privilege holders served as lowly attendants in the postal, granary or censorial systems or as minor tutors or scribes. Moreover, as the *yin* privilege was directly granted by state agents- generally provincial officials – this status cannot be compared to the ability of largely autonomous southern corporate lineage organizations to perpetuate their wealth and local cultural hegemony over several generations through the mechanisms of land holding and the examination system.

Only in this type of northern context, which suffered from lack of gentry wealth, but also benefited from direct government intervention through the quota system could a newly transplanted family like the Jings hope to have any reasonable success in the examination system. However, in this northern context it is also reasonable to suggest that whatever successes the Jings had in one generation would by no means be guaranteed into the next beyond the possibility of a son or grandson receiving a token *yin* privilege title.

From the historic record we can see that, with the exception of Jing Hong's grandson, Jing Fang, no other members of the Jing clan rose to any real level of local prominence in Dingtao over the entire Ming and Qing periods. The only other Jings listed in Dingtao's record of local degree holders, tribute students, and minor office holders in the local gazetteer is Jing Fang's son, Jing Shiyuan (景世元) who owing to his father's prestige is listed in the *yin* privilege section of the gazetteer alongside another Jing named Jing Zhou (景周). While Jing Zhou was granted a minor position as a post house official (驛丞),<sup>45</sup> no title or position is provided for Jing Shiyuan other than "the son of Jing Fang."<sup>46</sup>

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*Kinship, Personality, and Social Mobility in China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1971); and Ho Ping-Ti, *The Ladder of Success in Imperial China: Aspects of Social Mobility, 1368-1911* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), Chapter 4.

<sup>45</sup> It appears that in more northern societies postal relay positions were not considered entirely minor and carried with them so local status.

## 5.5 Waiting for Work

Two generations after Jing Hong inadvertently moved the family to Dingtao, the family had their first and only success in the regular examination system. In 1483, Jing Fang earned his *juren* degree. Fourteen years later in 1497 he took his first position as magistrate of Linzhang County, which was situated just northwest of Dingtao in the most northeastern part of Henan province.<sup>47</sup> That Jing Fang waited fourteen years to take up his first post should not be surprising. In his study of Qing magistrates, John Watt has argued that such waiting times were extremely common in the career trajectories of Qing magistrates.<sup>48</sup> Thomas Nimick has also suggested a similar conclusion for the Ming period.<sup>49</sup> Unfortunately, for our purposes we have no record of Jing Fang's activities in these in-between years. Based on anecdotal evidence from other magistrates we might speculate that he stayed in Dingtao working as a tutor in the county

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<sup>46</sup> Recipients of the yin privilege during the Ming were granted titles and minor posts based on the accomplishments and prestige of their grandfather or father. In Dingtao, most holders of the yin privilege served as attendants in the postal, granary or censorial systems or as minor officials or scribes. Here I can only speculate, but I suspect that Jing Zhou was Jing Fang's father as his name comes well before Jing Shiyuan's in the chronologically organized list of yin privilege recipients. It is also possible that he was Jing Fang's brother as the yin privilege was known to be passed not only from father to son, but also grand-father to grand-son. From the extant record, there is no way of knowing for sure. See Feng Lingui, ed., *Dingtao xian zhi*, 1916, juan 5, 36a.

<sup>47</sup> Jing Fang's posting to a county that was close to his home county is a reflection of the Ming state's flexible approach to the "Law of Avoidance." To avoid local influence and potential nepotism, early Ming law stated that no official was allowed to serve in his native place. Generally, the law of avoidance was practiced on the provincial unit. The state also made every possible attempt to match a magistrate's talents, experiences and abilities to his particular posting. Thus we see that all of Jing Fang's positions, in Henan, Shanxi and Shaanxi could be broadly defined as belonging to the same Yellow River Flood region as his home Dingtao County. Moreover as discussed in Chapter Two most of Linzhang's magistrates were also drawn from around the same north China region. For a lengthy discussion of the Laws of Avoidance, magistrate evaluations, post transfers and the Ming state's attempt to match up individual abilities to the administrative challenges of each position see Thomas Nimick, "The County, the Magistrate and the Yamen in Late Ming China," pp. 53-70.

<sup>48</sup> John Watt argues that the waiting time between qualifying for a position and receiving one's post in extreme cases could take up to thirty years. John Watt, *The District Magistrate in Late Imperial China*, p.45.

<sup>49</sup> Drawing on evidence from a 1492 memorial contained in the *Ming Huiyao*, Nimick argues that it was not uncommon for expectant magistrates by way of the tribute student route to wait 15-16 years for their first appointment. In some exceptional cases, some provincial graduates, most famously Hai Rui, could skip these long waiting times if recommended by provincial authorities for displaying exceptional aptitude or administrative skill. See Thomas Nimick, "The County, the Magistrate and the Yamen in Late Ming China," pp. 47-50.

school or possibly as a private secretary in the sub-county level of local administration while waiting for his first appointment as was common for others in similar positions. Exploring the broader outline over the entire Ming period, Thomas Nimick has discussed how the general career trajectory for the vast majority of *juren* degree holding magistrates was to first work in a prefectural, sub-prefectural or county school as an instructor until they reached the necessary 7a rank, which would then qualify them for the equally ranked magistrate post.<sup>50</sup>

Although this broad outline is clear, we have few records that fill out the individual stories for less exceptional, rank and file magistrates who left behind no personal records. For such men, much of what we can learn about them is found in gazetteer sources, which generally focus on the clear achievements of scholars marked by the dates when their degrees were earned and their government positions granted; therefore, we have very little information to go on for these in-between years. One can only assume that for people like Jing Fang they were as formative as they were frustrating periods.

The often long years between earning one's exam credentials and finally assuming one's first office must have been extremely important for prospective magistrates; these were the years when one could switch his focus away from studying the more classical texts necessary for securing success in the examination to acquiring the technical knowledge and legal and economic "know-how" necessary for effective local governance. As the content of the civil service examinations was more focused on mastery of the Confucian classics, it would appear that the few successful scholars promoted directly out of the examination system to their first position would have been hopelessly unprepared for realities of the jobs to which they were entrusted. The tasks a magistrate was expected to oversee, including taxation, administration of justice, building and maintenance of public works, famine relief, water control, among a whole host of other tasks, were extremely complex and demanding. How could one expect to govern a

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<sup>50</sup> Thomas Nimick, "The County, the Magistrate and the Yamen in Late Ming China," p. 47.

county when his training was ostensibly in the Confucian classics and had very little grounding in the specific problems of local administration?

Pierre-Etienne Will has explored this question of official competence in a yet to be published study on the wide variety of technical manuals used by magistrates in local governance, which are often collectively referred to as “magistrate handbooks” or “*guanzen*” (官箴).<sup>51</sup> Starting in the Song period, magistrates created technical handbooks to be used in local administration. These handbooks covered a wide assortment of practical topics and functioned as how-to books regarding a diverse variety of topics including: assuming office, the day to day running of the county, managing county finances, handling *yamen* staff, preparing for famines and distributing relief, and transfers and promotions. Will notes that as the genre developed throughout the Ming, it grew increasingly sophisticated and detailed in its approach to administration and offered a treasure trove of theoretical and how-to information on local governance.<sup>52</sup> By the Qing period, the *guanzen* format was supplemented by celebratory anthologies of actual administrative documents by singular officials commonly referred to as “*gongdu*” (公牘).<sup>53</sup> In other words, the focus of magistrate handbooks shifted away from theories of governance to actual practices of governance.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> The term “*guanzen*” literally means “admonitions for officials.” Pierre-Étienne Will, *Official Handbooks and Anthologies of Imperial China: A Descriptive and Critical Bibliography*, work in progress, 2010.

<sup>52</sup> One can place the maturation of this genre in the larger growth of statecraft thinking in late imperial China.

<sup>53</sup> These collections could be published by the magistrate himself as in the famous instance of Huang Lihong’s, *Fuhui Quanshu* or posthumously as seen in the well-known 48 juan anthology of Chen Hongmou’s (陳宏謀) writings *Peiyuan tang oucun gao* 培遠堂偶存稿 [*Surviving Drafts from the Peiyuan Studio*]. See Pierre-Etienne Will, *Official Handbooks and Anthologies of Imperial China: A Descriptive and Critical Bibliography*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>54</sup> This concern with the actual practice of governance is illustrated by the sheer amount of detailed information found in most *gongdu* anthologies. Will states that most, “*gongdu* anthologies feature examples of (1) correspondences (letters, *bing* (稟), communications, *yi* (移) or *zi* (咨), reports, *xiang* (詳), answers to subordinates, *pixiang* (批詳), and so on); (2) orders (circulars, *xi* (檄), directives, *yu* (諭), rescripts, *piyu* (批諭), and the like); (3) regulations imposed on the administrative personnel or on the populace at large (tribunal regulations, *tanggui* (堂規), procedures, *zhangcheng* (章程), covenants, *yue* (約)); (4) addresses to the people and to *yamen* personnel (proclamations, *gaoshi* 告示, orders, *yu* 諭, exhortations, *quanyu* (勸諭), prohibitions, *jin* (禁); and (5) judiciary

Taken together, both *guanzhen* and *gongdu* handbooks were an extremely rich source base for any expectant magistrate hoping to acquire some technical know-how before assuming office. From the sheer weight that both of these sources often afforded to issues of assuming office and the important first days of any magistrate's tenure in a new office, we can see that these sources were primarily targeted towards magistrates entering into the system for the first time. While we have no way of knowing for certain, given the ubiquitous and popular nature of the genre we might safely assume that while waiting to assume his first post, Jing Fang possibly read and learned from such magistrate handbooks – in fourteen years he certainly had time to.<sup>55</sup>

### 5.6 “From the Minute that Jing Fang Stepped out of the Cart:” An Activist Magistrate's Successes

Perhaps due to his long waiting period, when Jing Fang arrived in Linzhang County in 1497, he appears to have hit the ground running – at least this is how he chooses to represent himself in the county's 1506 gazetteer. Throughout this text, Jing Fang's sense of immediate action in the county is highlighted by the standard repeated phrase, “From the minute that Jing Fang stepped out of the cart” (景芳下車...)<sup>56</sup> For example, when Jing Fang arrived in the locality he found that the former magistrate, Zhou Huan's (周瓛) renovations of the City God

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pronouncements (judgments, *panyu* (判語) or *yanyu* (讞語), judicial opinions, *pi* (批), etc.). Sentences and judicial opinions constitute a large subset of the *gongdu* materials, and they were often published separately.” Pierre-Etienne Will, *Official Handbooks and Anthologies of Imperial China: A Descriptive and Critical Bibliography*, p. 8.

<sup>55</sup> As of 2005 Pierre-Etienne Will's “incomplete” bibliography of magistrate handbooks includes 934 surviving individual entries. This number includes both *guanzhen*, and *gongdu* sources, along with a wide variety of other handbooks concerning particular aspects of governance.

<sup>56</sup> While this may have been a standard phrase used to express the urgency of which people address problems, I have only come across it one other time. There exists one late Ming magistrate handbook entitled, *Xiache yiji lu* 下車異績錄 [*Extraordinary Accomplishments after Getting out of One's Cart*]. This handbook outlines one magistrate named Wang Guocai's (王國材) famine relief efforts in Linhai County (臨海), Zhejiang Province in the late Ming. Original copy is held in the National Library in Beijing. Pierre-Etienne Will, *Official Handbooks and Anthologies of Imperial China: A Descriptive and Critical Bibliography*.

Temple, although “towering and lofty” lacked “decoration and grandeur.”<sup>57</sup> The text follows that “*from the minute that Jing Fang stepped out of the cart*, he adorned the temple according to the laws and regulations and hired artisans to cover the building in splendid colors.”<sup>58</sup> The final result is described as “remarkable and radiant.”<sup>59</sup> In another instance, Jing Fang also arrives to find that the Temple to the Eight Spirits of Agriculture (八蜡廟)<sup>60</sup> built during the Xuande Reign era (1426-1435) had fallen into disrepair and ruin. We learn that “*from the minute that Jing Fang stepped out of the cart* he immediately repaired the structure and then prayed for a bumper harvest.”<sup>61</sup>

While we have no way of knowing for sure exactly what problems Jing Fang chose to address first in the county, that he chose to represent these two particular locations as his first sites of action with the standard phrase “from the moment that Jing Fang stepped off the cart” may be telling. Perhaps, this sense of urgency is a reflection of the level of disrepair that Jing Fang found these buildings to be in when he arrived in the county; as we will later see, Jing Fang restores almost every public building in the county. More likely however, is that these particular structures held a certain symbolic cachet in the locality and thus acting on their state of disrepair – and representing these actions as swift and decisive in the public record – was a deliberate strategy used by Jing Fang to highlight his able administration in the county.

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<sup>57</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 5, 1a-2a.

<sup>58</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 5, 1a-2a. Emphasis added.

<sup>59</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 5, 1a-2a.

<sup>60</sup> Although literally translating as the “Temple to the Eight Candles,” I have followed Romeyn Taylor’s glossing of *Bazha Miao* (八蜡廟) as the “Temple to the Eight Spirits of Agriculture.” See Romeyn Taylor, “Spirits of the Penumbra: Deities Worshipped in more than one Pantheon” in ed. James D. Tracy and Marguerite Ragnow, *Religion and the Early Modern State: Views from China, Russia and the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004):121-153, pp. 136-142; also see Bazha entry in the *Hanyu da cidian*, which provides the locus classicus for the cult found in the *Records of Rites*. “Bazha” 八蜡, *Hanyu da cidian* 漢語大詞典 [*Comprehensive Chinese Word Dictionary*] volume 1. (Hanyu dacidian chubanshe, 1986), p.746.

<sup>61</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 5, 3a-3b. Emphasis added

The link between the City God or the “*Chenghuang Shen*” (城隍神), and the magistrate in late imperial China has been well studied. David Johnson for instance has discussed how the idea of the City God emerged in the Tang and Song periods and grew throughout the Ming and Qing periods.<sup>62</sup> Johnson is clear to point out that City Gods only shared a generic label; beneath this official recognized category, each City God was his own individualized deity with his own set of personalized traits and powers.<sup>63</sup> In many places, City Gods were former magistrates or local worthies who in life had been particularly efficacious in warding off harm and bringing prosperity to the people of a particular region. In death these men were venerated to the status of the City God in a long term process that saw the grafting of the officially recognized state religion onto previously established local religious practices. The power and capabilities of each City God was understood as a direct result of the types of activities that resulted in the veneration of an individual to City God status in the first place. For example, in Linzhang County Ximen Bao was elevated to the status of City God because of his measures to stamp out harmful local practices and replace them with an articulated hydraulic system that brought prosperity to the region. Therefore, as City God, Ximen Bao was seen not only as a protector of the people, but also a particularly efficacious custodian of public works, hydrology and flood control.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> See, David Johnson, “The City-God Cults of T’ang and Sung China,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 45:2 (Dec. 1985): 363-457.

<sup>63</sup> See, David Johnson, “The City-God Cults of T’ang and Sung China,” p. 388.

<sup>64</sup> David Johnson offers a similar example for the City God of Jiangxi Province’s Nanfeng County. During his tenure as Nanfeng County magistrate, Yu Maohong ordered the city, dug irrigation channels and built five reservoirs, which all brought prosperity to the people of Nanfeng. As a City God, Yu Maohong was honoured as a protector of the people and custodian of public works and hydrology. David Johnson, “The City-God Cults of T’ang and Sung China,” p. 378.

City Gods were not just custodians of the cities and counties that they inhabited, they were also understood as the direct heavenly equivalent to the earthly rule of the magistrate.<sup>65</sup> As Angela Zito puts it, “The partnership between city gods and magistrates embodied the intersection of the invisible (*yu*) world of the spirits and the visible (*ming*) world of people.”<sup>66</sup> It is in this intersection between the invisible and the visible where City Gods derived their power and significance for both the local magistrate and the people he was expected to govern over.

When the magistrate first entered a county it was customary for him to fast and pray at the City God temple and even make an oath to the City God promising his good custody of the city, lest he face the City God’s wrath. Huang Liuhong describes this scene in his handbook for magistrates.

Customarily the new magistrate performs the fast and overnight ceremonies at the temple of the city god before he takes office. . . He should go to the temple to burn incense on the appointed day. An oath, written in the regular script, should be prepared the day before. At the incense burning ceremony, a clerk of the rites section reads the oath and burns it afterward. The oath declares the magistrate’s intention to keep his integrity which also serves as a warning to himself. He will refrain from breaking his oath for fear of punishment from the god.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> City Gods were graded in their heavenly rank the same way magistrates were in their earthly rank within the Ming and Qing bureaucracy - county, sub prefecture, prefectural or provincial levels.

<sup>66</sup> Angela Zito, “City Gods, Filiality and Hegemony in Late Imperial China,” *Modern China* 13:3 (July 1987): 333-371, p. 334.

<sup>67</sup> In his text Huang even offers a sample version of the oath in the hope of making the ritual process easier for the incoming magistrate. It reads, “Oh God, thou art the most just and upright, who bring blessings and happiness to the people. Thou reside majestically on high, reward the virtuous and punish the wicked. I have been appointed magistrate of the district. With all my heart I shall devote myself to my duties in the hope that I may meet thy approval. Here I have gathered some cheap and worthless objects to make a most sincere offering to thee. Oh God, please listen to my prayer and enjoy the fragrance of the sacrifice.” Huang Liuhong, *Fu hui quan shu*, as translated by Djang Chu, pp. 94-95; 97-98.

In these first crucial days of a magistrate's tenure, not only was it important to set the tone of one's administration through scrupulously observing such rites and rituals, it was also important to curry favour with the City God.<sup>68</sup>

As discussed in the previous chapter, Linzhang's City God was Ximen Bao who was understood to be a particularly efficacious deity. As City God, he was particularly noted for his ability to combat droughts, famines and floods. Jing Fang's heavenly equivalent was thus placed in a longer tradition of activism and water control in the locality. In Linzhang's highly unstable hydraulic environment, Ximen Bao was the kind of City God that Jing Fang would want to be seen as having on his side.

Jing Fang spends much of his tenure in Linzhang, restoring, renovating and repairing a wide variety of the county's public buildings. He did not however, have the opportunity to repair the City God Temple – which was possibly the most symbolically important building to his tenure as magistrate in the county – as this had already been done in 1488 by the previous county magistrate Zhou Huan.<sup>69</sup> Rather than repair the structure himself though, Jing Fang could use the public nature of the gazetteer - that he created - to deride Zhou Huan for not entirely understanding the essence of his undertaking – for creating a temple unbecoming of the City God's majesty. Zhou Huan renovated the City God Temple to be “towering and lofty” but it lacked “decoration and grandeur.” Only with Jing Fang's immediate action and his particular attention to laws and regulations would the City God Temple be truly “renovated.”<sup>70</sup> Throughout the gazetteer we encounter this type of over-writing of local tradition repeatedly. Jing Fang's predecessors may have started to address the county's worn down appearance, but their efforts

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<sup>68</sup> Of course, not all magistrates believed in the power of city gods. Huang still warns however: “If the magistrate thinks the oath is a mere formality, it would be better not to take it. For him to do so would amount to cheating, which is a sacrilegious act.” Huang Liuhong, *Fu hui quan shu*, as translated by Djang Chu, p. 95.

<sup>69</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 5, 1a-2a.

<sup>70</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 5, 1a-2a.

are generally displayed as inadequate. In contrast, from the minute that Jing Fang stepped out of the cart, he realized these inadequacies and began a massive activist program to solve the county's many problems. The 1506 Gazetteer is both the textual record and personal broadcast of these achievements.

Similarly, Jing Fang's immediate restoration of the Temple to the Eight Spirits of Agriculture, known as the Bazha Temple held equally symbolical importance, if for different reasons. Bazha temples were local religious sites commonly found in north China that were devoted to the worship of agricultural deities particularly efficacious to the region. Descending from its *locus classicus* in the Zhou period (1050–256 BCE) *Records of Rites* (禮記), later articulations of the cult saw the worship of eight agricultural deities and spirits.<sup>71</sup> Bazha rites were practiced primarily in North China during the Han, Tang and Song Dynasties, but fell out of the pantheon of official state rituals during the Liao, Jin, Yuan and Ming Dynasties.<sup>72</sup> While not officially endorsed by the Ming state, Romeyn Taylor describes the building of Bazha temples in the Ming period as a “magistrates’ option...built and maintained by local officials on their own authority.”<sup>73</sup> Given that magistrates were already squeezed for resources it is difficult to imagine that many would be interested in initiating a project which was essentially an “option” – or in other words, one that would not figure into their official evaluations. Jing Fang saw otherwise.

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<sup>71</sup> These deities included: the first Husbandman and legendary founder of Chinese agriculture, Shennong 神農; the ancient ministers of agriculture including the legendary minister, Houji 后稷; and the six tutelary spirits of the fields (農夫), huts, boundaries and wells (郵表啜), wild animals (貓虎), dikes and embankments (坊), irrigation and drainage (水庸) and pestilence (昆蟲). Romeyn Taylor, “Spirits of the Penumbra: Deities Worshipped in more than one Pantheon,” pp. 136-142.

<sup>72</sup> Romeyn Taylor, “Spirits of the Penumbra: Deities Worshipped in more than one Pantheon,” pp. 136-142.

<sup>73</sup> Qing rulers reinstated the rites with the most explicit endorsement coming from the Yongzheng Emperor (r. 1722-1735) who ordered that they be performed in all counties throughout the empire. Romeyn Taylor, “Spirits of the Penumbra: Deities Worshipped in more than one Pantheon,” p. 140.

The 1506 gazetteer clearly states that Linzhang's Bazha Temple was built sometime during the Xuande Reign period (1426-1435), "but owing to successive years [of neglect] had collapsed."<sup>74</sup> That the gazetteer uses the word "collapse" or "topple over" (傾倒) stresses the state of disrepair that Jing Fang found this temple in when he arrived in the region. It also stresses that the Bazha Temple had been completely neglected by his predecessors – it was clearly an "option" that they were not interested in. Seeing the weight of the problem, Jing Fang once again springs into immediate action, restores the temple and begins worship practices there once again.

Much like the City God Temple, addressing problems at the *Bazha* Temple must have also been particularly important for any incoming magistrate in Linzhang for two reasons. First the temple was established to venerate agricultural deities central to everyday life and sustenance in north China. The region's constant and persistent threat from floods, droughts, locusts and famine would give Jing Fang every reason to want to be seen as currying favour with powerful agricultural deities. Moreover, restoring this temple, which was so central to religious life in the north China plain, must have also provided positive symbolic capital with local inhabitants. Secondly, the Bazha Temple had clear classical precedent in the *Records of Rites* making it an important "culturally central" site in the locality. Both of these factors help to explain why Jing Fang sprang into action and repaired the temple and restored its rites as quickly as he did.

The fact that Jing Fang arrived to find such a symbolically and culturally important building in such a state of disrepair is also telling of the larger neglectful attitude that many Ming

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<sup>74</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 5, 3a-3b. The 1904 Linzhang County Gazetteer states that the temple was originally built sometime during the Xuande reign period and was located to the southeast of the county seat on Buddhist land (佛家屯). Magistrate He Hu 何瑚 who served sometime during the Jiajing period (1522-1566) late moved and reconstructed the temple southeast of the county seat to the right of the Shenzi Altar (神祇壇). Over its entire history the Bazha Temple was renovated by magistrates Jing Fang (served from 1497-1506), Tian Yingzhao 田應召 (served from 1608-1612) and Zhao Youqin 趙友琴 (served 1613-1615). See Zhou Bingyi 周秉彝 and Zhou Shou 周壽, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi* 臨漳縣志 [*Gazetteer of Linzhang County*], 1904, juan 2, 7a, and juan 4, 6b, 13a, 14b.

magistrates held towards public renovation projects. Building, restoring and renovating public buildings was not only costly business but also ran the risk of being politically sensitive. As He Zhaohui (何朝暉) writes in his recent study of Ming county administration, the fact that funds were always involved in building projects left magistrates open to a wide range of potential slander from their superiors above and from the county below.<sup>75</sup> In extreme cases, this slander could grow into formal charges against the magistrate and leave his career in ruins. One commentator from Shandong's Xiajin County (夏津縣) lamented this situation and wrote:

Magistrates today generally regard the building and repairing of things like city walls, moats, schools, public buildings and bridges as something to avoid. When [these structures] collapse they are not fixed and when they are really dilapidated they will even pretend not to know about it. How can officials carry out their duties? The costs of building and repairing come from either the official [himself] or from the people. If they come from the official than [his superiors] will grow suspicious; if they come from the people then he is liable for much [public] slander. Anybody who cares a little about self-preservation would stay clear from [such projects] and not get involved. Alas! If one only calculates for himself then what about the state and the people?<sup>76</sup>

Clearly the terminal nature of the magistrate's appointment in the locality was a partial cause of such neglectful attitudes. By the mid-Ming period magistrates generally served three to four year terms in a locality. Getting in and out of the county without entering into the complicated minefield of public building and renovation was certainly preferred over jeopardizing one's career for what were ultimately considered less important aspects of the job. As such, a popular Ming expression of the time was "Officials do not repair the *Yamen* [just as] guests do not repair the inn."<sup>77</sup> Given this general sentiment, Jing Fang's activist approach to local renovation and restoration projects is all the more exceptional.

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<sup>75</sup> He Zhaohui 何朝暉, *Ming dai xian zheng yanjiu* 明代縣政研究 [Study of County Administration during the Ming Period] (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2006), pp. 176-182. Thanks to Desmond Cheung for returning my book and pointing out this passage.

<sup>76</sup> From the Yi Shizhong 易時中, ed., *Jiaqing Xiajin xian zhi* 嘉靖夏津縣志 [Gazetteer of Xiajin County, Jiajing Era] (1522-1566), juan 1. As cited in He Zhaohui, *Ming dai xian zheng yanjiu*, p. 182.

<sup>77</sup> As cited in He Zhaohui, *Ming dai xian zheng yanjiu*, p. 182.

### 5.7 Local Gazetteer as Personal Biography: Jing Fang's 1506 Gazetteer

From the first page of the 1506 Linzhang County gazetteer we are told of Jing Fang's magisterial achievements in Linzhang County. The County's Educational Attendant, Chen Wenhui opens the text with a preface praising Jing Fang for his efforts to rectify the county record and produce the county's first printed gazetteer. Through clever historic allusion he also links Jing Fang's enlightened rule to the longer legacy of sagely governance in the area typified by the county's most famous culture hero, Ximen Bao. From the preface we are led to believe that if there was no Jing Fang, Linzhang's history would have remained obscure and its gazetteer would have never been produced. Jing Fang himself also reminds us of this fact in his own postface where he writes about his exhaustive efforts to produce the gazetteer. It is not an exaggeration to say that Jing Fang not only had the first but also the last word in the 1506 Linzhang County gazetteer.

County gazetteers often praise their local magistrates for organizing and producing their county's record in the gazetteer format. Most gazetteers credit the local magistrate for raising the funds and channeling the county's intellectual energies into a gazetteer work's production - even if we know that in many cases it was the work of the local gentry. Yet this level of token praise is usually where a gazetteer's discussion of the magistrate stops. Ming gazetteers are best understood as textual records that occupy a position somewhere between the state's imperatives of local information collecting and society's vested interests in representing themselves in a public record. To understand such interests and how they manifest themselves in gazetteer productions, Joseph Dennis' recent work is particularly useful.<sup>78</sup> Dennis offers the most singularly comprehensive study of gazetteer production and consumption in the Ming period; his

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<sup>78</sup> Joseph Dennis, "Writing, Publishing, and Reading Local Histories in Ming China," PhD Dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2004.

study not only addresses questions like, who paid for gazetteers, their costs, who edited them, and how were they compiled them, he also asks the enormously important question: how did contemporaries read and understand them? While relatively simple, such a question introduces a whole new literary element into both how we understand and should use gazetteers as historic sources.

Dennis starts from the assumption that if we read gazetteers as complete works rather than spot-mine them for information we can see how locals utilized the emerging gazetteer medium for their own purposes. Gazetteers were part of the public landscape of power and were intimately intertwined with the production and display of local social prestige. Serving as editors, compilers, copyists, printers and financiers, locals were intimately involved in producing their own counties' gazetteers. They could determine what kinds of information went into gazetteers along with how this information was presented; moreover, they could simply decide to not fund the project if they deemed its content objectionable. Thus even though a gazetteer was ostensibly a public record generally ordered by the magistrate it was also subject to a wide range of local factors determined by the interests and agendas of the people who produced it – and rarely was this the magistrate himself.

To Dennis, we can best understand these underlying gazetteer strategies if we read the work in its entirety. While all gazetteers have an underlying agenda they are rarely made explicit. If we look hard enough however, buried between all the references to local degree holders, virtuous women and local patrons, we can often find a narrative arc that tells the story of those who created and patronized the work. Employing Dennis' intra-textual reading strategy provides us not only with an entirely new way of reading this important source base, it also allows us to understand gazetteers as something much more important than just the sum of its parts. This approach also raises the important question: if it were local elites who funded the production of

their county's gazetteer and generally sought to influence the overall trajectory of the narrative, what possible incentive would they have to over-glorify the role of an outsider magistrate in their own local record? Here we need to once again consider the difference between north and south China.

If one looks at the 1504 gazetteer from Shanghai County for example – a place with a much stronger gentry and lineage structure than found in Linzhang and Dingtao - the local officials section only lists each magistrate's name and the time that he took up office.<sup>79</sup> No other information for these men is provided. In contrast, the section dealing with local degree holders is far more complete and lists each degree holder's name, the date of their degree and often provides a little bit of career and biographical information.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, the Shanghai gazetteer does not even list the magistrate as its Chief Compiler, but rather states that the work was compiled by a local *jinshi* degree holder named, Tang Jin 唐錦.<sup>81</sup> While the 1504 Shanghai gazetteer is somewhat unusual in absolute downplaying of the county magistrate's role in the source's production, such localist attitudes are found in most Ming gazetteers produced in more gentry rich parts of Ming China. Southern gazetteers in many respects tend to be the public genealogies of the county's most prominent and powerful lineages. The findings in Dennis' study suggest this same conclusion.

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<sup>79</sup> Tang Jin 唐錦, ed., *Shanghai zhi* 上海志 [*Gazetteer of Shanghai*], 1504, pp. 256-258.

<sup>80</sup> Tang Jin, ed., *Shanghai zhi*, 1504, pp. 276- 304.

<sup>81</sup> Tang Jin earned his *jinshi* degree along with six other Shanghai men in Hongzhi 1496. In Shanghai we clearly see a more gentry dominated situation where the locals were able to replicate their success through the examination statistics. In Shanghai we see twelve *jinshi* degrees awarded during the Yongle period (1403-1424), one in the Xuande period (1426-1435), two in the Zhengtong period (1436-1449), five in the Jingtai period (1450-1456), seven in the Tianshun period (1457-1464), ten in the Chenghua period (1465-1487), and fourteen in the Hongzhi period (1488-1505) for a total of fifty-one *jinshi* degree holders from the beginning of the Ming until 1504. By contrast Linzhang produced one *jinshi* degree holder during the Xuande reign period, and two in the Chenghua period for a total of three from the founding of the Ming until 1506. In Linzhang all had different last names - Niu, Cheng and Zhang; in Shanghai we see twenty-eight different surnames, with a clustering of degree success around Shen (3), Li (3), Zhang (6), Tang (3), Wang (4), Dong (3). See Tang Jin, ed., *Shanghai zhi*, 1504, pp. 276-286; and Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 8, 7a-7b.

In the absence of a strong local gentry, Linzhang's 1506 gazetteer is somewhat unique. Throughout the entire source, Jing Fang goes to great lengths to remind his reader that this gazetteer was *his* product.<sup>82</sup> At times, Fang's reminders are subtle and fairly innocuous. For example, at the beginning of each of the gazetteers ten fascicles (卷) Jing Fang includes a short sentence stating that it was "Edited by the literati scholar and County Magistrate from Eastern Shandong's Dingtao County, Jing Fang" (文林郎知縣事東魯定陶景芳編). While this may seem quite trivial, or just a stylistic quirk, in examining other gazetteer sources from this period Jing Fang's persistent reminders stand out as somewhat unique.<sup>83</sup>

Less subtle however, is the sheer number of times and the manner that Jing Fang inserts himself into Linzhang's public record. This is seen most clearly in the public works section of the gazetteer where Jing Fang credits himself with fixing the wide array of problems his predecessors could not. In this section Jing Fang lists himself as renovating and/or restoring no less than sixteen public structures. In several of these instances, Jing Fang criticizes the county's former leadership for letting the buildings fall into repair. For example, Jing Fang criticizes the former magistrate Liu Han's (劉漢) renovation of the Office for the Touring Circuit Censors (按察司分司) for not being colorful enough. Jing Fang springs into action and hires artisans to spruce up the place with paint and decorations.<sup>84</sup> In another instance Jing Fang discovered that former renovations to the county's Prefectural Lodgings (府館), had left the building's

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<sup>82</sup> At times he even subtly derides the locals for their failure to rectify their own historic record themselves.

<sup>83</sup> Another example of Jing Fang's subtle interjection into the text can be found in gazetteer section containing brief writings about the county's eight scenic sites (八景). As is common, gazetteers often celebrate eight scenic sites in a locality with a collection of poems and sometimes images. Linzhang's 1506 gazetteer is no exception. More interesting however, is that Jing Fang offers a short poem for each site, immediately after the only other poem for each site written by "the former county magistrate Li Jing." While it is impossible to say with any certainty, I suspect that Jing Fang here is engaging in a slight act of one-upmanship here. In his gazetteer, Jing Fang gets the final say on everything – even the county's eight scenic sites. See Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 9, 22a-24b.

<sup>84</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 4, 6a.

appearance both narrow and dull. Jing Fang offset this problem by ordering the construction of a pavilion on site called the Laifeng Pavilion (來風亭). The gazetteer describes the final result as “intricate, refined and lovely to behold.”<sup>85</sup>

In a particularly dramatic example, Jing Fang points out that one of his predecessors Liu Han, was actually “commanded” (命) by two separate branches of the provincial surveillance commission to renovate the temple to Ximen Bao.<sup>86</sup> That this magistrate was *commanded* to renovate such a symbolical important building in the county sits in direct contrast to Jing Fang’s activist spirit. Nobody had to order him to act; everything was accomplished from the minute that Jing Fang stepped out of the cart – or at least this is how he represents his own actions.

Jing Fang’s most flagrant self-promotion however is found in the biographies section where he affords himself the longest biography. Out of the total 87 lines devoted to twelve biographies of famous local officials, Jing Fang’s biography takes up 35 of these lines, leaving only 52 for the rest.<sup>87</sup> These numbers noticeably demonstrates the enormous textual emphasis that Jing Fang grants himself as the gazetteer’s Chief Editor. The nature and content of each of these biographies is also important. Ximen Bao was by far the county’s most famous historic local official and for his earthly reputation was later elevated to the status of City God. That Jing Fang’s own biography is over three times the length of Ximen Bao’s illustrates Jing Fang’s sense of self-importance and lasting legacy in the region. If Jing Fang affords more space to his own biography than to Ximen Bao’s it is not surprising then that his biography is far more complete

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<sup>85</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 4, 7a.

<sup>86</sup> “弘治七年有布按二司移文命知縣劉漢督工重修,” in Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 5, 2b-3a.

<sup>87</sup> Ximen Bao (西門豹) is afforded nine lines of text, Shi Qi (史起) three, the Jin (晉) era (1115-1234) magistrates Tang Bin (唐彬) and Lu Zhi (盧志) just under two each, the Tang magistrates Li Ren (李仁) and Li Du (李庶) just over two and Pei Jian (裴鑾) one; for the Ming, Yang Xin (楊辛) receives eight, Zhai Xin (翟辛) two, Guo Zhong (郭忠) six, Li Jing (李經) four, Zhou Huan (周瓏) eleven and for himself thirty-five. See Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 7, 1a-5b.

and celebratory than any of the other eleven biographies of local officials contained in the same section.<sup>88</sup>

The biographies of the other eleven officials tend to be short and limited to listing one merit or deed for each official. For example the Tang era magistrate Li Ren (李仁) is listed as earning the acclaim of the people for opening an irrigation ditch and irrigating the peoples' fields in a time of drought.<sup>89</sup> The early Ming magistrate Yang Xin (楊辛) is singularly remembered for his ability to deal with a massive flood in the 26<sup>th</sup> year of the Hongwu reign period (1393).<sup>90</sup> In contrast, rather than listing only one of his main achievements in office, Jing Fang offers four. As this biography is the single most complete source on Jing Fang's life, it is worth examining in some detail.

### 5.7.1 Jing Fang's Biography

We have no way of knowing who actually wrote Jing Fang's biography. According to Chen Wenhui's preface we are only told that Jing Fang edited the entire gazetteer with the help of two stipend students in the community school named, Yang Jing (楊璟) and Niu Shun (牛舜).<sup>91</sup> Regardless of who wrote his biography however, we can assume that as Chief Editor of the entire project, Jing Fang at least saw the final proofs before they were committed to woodblock. His biography starts:

Jing Fang was a *juren* from Dingtao who in the tenth year of the Hongzhi reign period [1498] arrived [in Linzhang] to serve as county magistrate. [When he arrived] he found that

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<sup>88</sup> That Jing Fang controlled the gazetteer's overall editorial process might account for the enormous textual that he grants his own biography.

<sup>89</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 7, 2a.

<sup>90</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 7, 2b.

<sup>91</sup> Preface written by Chen Wenhui in, Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, preface.

the entire county had fallen into ruins and proclaimed [that he would] uncover [the problem] and strengthen and repair [the county].<sup>92</sup>

Jing Fang's biography explicitly starts at the textual low point of him walking straight into a county disaster.<sup>93</sup> This sense of disaster is a common theme running throughout the entire work.

In the gazetteer's postface, Jing Fang laments this situation in his own words:

When I of little talent took up office [in Linzhang], years of accumulated local customs had left the county with one hundred holes and a thousand scars. With the myriad of problems all my attempts at investigating and planning failed. I asked the Village Elders for suggestions and consulted the old gazetteer [in an attempt] to bring about some transformation. The former gazetteer was [only] in the form of a hand written manuscript. Things that should have been recorded in detail were omitted while things that were simple were made complicated with many miscopied characters. Having to deal with more urgent matters I did not have time to revise [the gazetteer].

I [first] repaired the county school, the walls and moats, departments within the *Yamen*, dikes, government storehouses, the Yin Yang School, the Medical School and the banners extolling the virtuous (旌善申明). The old was removed and replaced with the new and beneficial. What was ruined and dilapidated was reconstructed, the collapsed was repaired, the leaky was covered and the faded and dull walls were repainted. All of the local people were put at ease and in ritual order their talents rose steadily. Through diligent study and cultivation everybody made ambitious progress.<sup>94</sup>

From this postface we can draw out Jing Fang's thinly veiled critique of the county's previous administrators whose years of accumulated practice had eroded not only the physical structures in the county, but also its own sense of history and public morale. Both Jing Fang's postface and his biography start at this textual low point; from here however, things could only get better. Jing Fang's biography continues: "In a short period of time [Jing Fang] accomplished many impressive achievements, which in terms of his governance can be divided into four." That Jing Fang affords himself (or is afforded) four achievements while the other magistrates in the section only receive one is interesting for not only does it demonstrate the enormous textual emphasis

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<sup>92</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 7, 4a.

<sup>93</sup> The phrase used to describe the state of ruin is literally "everything was laid to waste and falling over" (凡百廢墜).

<sup>94</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, postface, 1a-3a.

that Jing Fang places on his actions in Linzhang, but each of these four merits also displays specific aspects of Jing Fang's local governance that were worthy of broadcast.

### 5.7.2 The Magistrate's Private/Public Charity

The first of these merits recorded in Jing Fang's biography regards an act of charity. The text states that in the county there was, "a government stipend shengyuan student named Niu Shun who came from a poor family and was thus not able to get married. When [Jing] Fang heard of this he immediately donated [a portion] of his salary and this help was successful."<sup>95</sup> While the text is silent on exactly how much money Jing Fang donated to Niu Shun, that Jing Fang is recorded as donating money is symbolically important. Niu Shun had shown enough accomplishment to earn a place as a government stipend student, but his financial difficulties held him back from matrimony and full membership in respectable society. Jing Fang's private donation presumably allowed Niu Shun to get married, but even more important, it allowed him to remain on a path towards Confucian refinement through the state sponsored school system. Niu Shun must have been a particularly adept student, because he is one of the two students selected to help Jing Fang compile and edit the 1506 gazetteer.

Jing Fang's act of private charity was thus an explicit intervention into the moral and social workings of Linzhang society. Magistrates were not only evaluated on their ability to remit tax money to the central state and insure stability and peace in their localities, but also on their efforts to raise the morale in the counties that they governed.<sup>96</sup> Rising levels of morale were perhaps best demonstrated in a county's scholastic success; moreover, it was important that Jing

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<sup>95</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 7, 4a.

<sup>96</sup> For discussions of magistrate evaluations and audits see Thomas Nimick, "The County, the Magistrate and the Yamen in Late Ming China," pp. 66-76; and Thomas Nimick, *Local Administration in Ming China: The Changing Roles of Magistrates, Prefects, and Provincial Officials* (Minneapolis: Society for Ming Studies, 2008). For the Qing period see Pierre-Etienne Will, "The 1744 Annual Audits of Magistrate Activity and their Fate," in *Late Imperial China*, 18:2 (Dec. 1998): 1-50.

Fang represented himself as playing an active role in encouraging these processes. In this sense, Jing Fang's private charity was decidedly public in its scope and intention.<sup>97</sup>

### 5.7.3 The Magistrate's Moral Sway

Jing Fang also broadcasts his efforts to raise public morale in the section of the biography outlining a dispute between an unfilial son named Chen Shu (陳恕) and his mother. The short text is as follows:

[There was] a person named Chen Shu whose mother brought a law suit against him for his lack of filial behavior (陳恕母告恕不孝). [Jing] Fang had his functionaries teach [Chen] the classics and exhort him towards filial behavior. [Chen Shu] was moved to comprehension and the mother and son purchased an affidavit that stated both were sad and mournful [for their actions] and that they [indeed] had a mother-son relationship. [Jing] Fang used his own salary to buy [Chen's] release and return from prison. [Chen] was transformed toward filial behavior and his mother was transformed into having immeasurable kindness and mercy.<sup>98</sup>

From this short passage it is impossible to determine what type of unfilial behaviour Chen Shu was engaged in; whatever it was though, it had landed him in prison where he awaited an impending lawsuit. When family disputes leaked into the legal realm they could hold potentially serious legal implications for all involved. Cases of extreme unfilial behaviour (不孝) were regulated by the *Great Ming Code* (大明律), which listed this crime as one of the Ten Abominations (十惡) and punishable by death.<sup>99</sup> Instead of relying on the brute force of the law however, Jing Fang takes this issue to be a moral, rather than a legal one. Through moral exhortation, Confucian teachings, and his own personal charity Jing Fang transforms Chen Shu

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<sup>97</sup> This public display of private patronage is in line with larger patterns of elite charity and patronage seen throughout the Ming period. See Joanna Handlin Smith, *The Art of Doing Good: Charity in the Late Ming* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); and Timothy Brook, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 1993).

<sup>98</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zh*, 1506, juan 7, 5a.

<sup>99</sup> See Article 2 in Jiang Yonglin, trans. *The Great Ming Code: Da Ming Lü* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), p.18.

and re-establishes their mother-son familial bond. With personal charity, Jing Fang demonstrates that moral sway could be just as effective, if not more, than sheer punishments in transforming the people and exhorting them towards good. He also establishes himself as the ideal of the “father-mother official” (父母官), who ruled the people with the same compassion and care as one would apply to their own family.

#### 5.7.4 The Magistrate’s Statecraft

As noted in Chapter Two, Linzhang was a site of perpetual hydrological instability. Throughout the county’s history we can find several examples of flood and inundation caused by Zhang River (漳河). County records show that over the course of the Ming Dynasty alone there were eight major instances where the Zhang River caused major disaster by either moving its course, flooding its banks, or breaking through its dikes.<sup>100</sup> The most severe of these disasters occurred early in the dynasty, when in 1384 the Zhang River broke through its dikes causing massive damage throughout all of Zhangde Prefecture.<sup>101</sup> The disaster was so great that the

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<sup>100</sup> The 1904 Linzhang County gazetteer records a variety of major water disasters in Linzhang over the course of the Ming. These include: the Zhang River breaking through its dikes causing the county seat to be moved (1384); The Zhang River linking and flowing as one with the Fu River (滏河, 1411); Zhang River breaking through and destroying its dikes (1412); Zhang River breaking through more than 24 dikes and embankments in Sanzhong Village (三塚村, 1425); Zhang River breaking through the south-western embankment in She Village (社村, 1436); heavy autumn rains caused the Zhang River to switch to a northerly route (1597); The Zhang River returning to its southerly route in the 6<sup>th</sup> month causing people and their homes to be washed away (1607); the Zhang River moving even further south (1611); the county submerged by water from the Zhang River (1624). See Zhou Bingyi and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 1, 10b-12a.

<sup>101</sup> See Yao Jianzhi 姚東之, *Linzhang xian zhangshui tujing* 臨漳縣漳水圖經 [Illustrated Classic of the Zhang River in Linzhang County], UBC, Puban Collection; modern reprint, Huang Hao 黃浩 and Liu Shangfeng 劉尚峰, in *Zhongguo gu Ye gu ji zheng li cong shu* 中國古鄴古籍整理叢書 [Arranged Collectanea of Classical Sources from China’s Ancient state of Ye], ed. Dong Ying 董英 (Linzhang: Hebei Linzhang di fang zhi bian zuan wei yuan hui, 2002): 61-62; and, and *Zhong yang yan jiu yuan eds Ming Taizu shi lu* 明太祖實錄 十七年春乙酉 [Veritable Records from the Ming Taizu Reign Period], 1384. Modern Reprint (Nangang: Zhong yang yan jiu yuan li shi yu yan yan jiu suo: 1961-1966.)

county magistrate successfully petitioned to move the county seat 18 *li* northeast of its former site<sup>102</sup> – which was accomplished the following year in 1385.<sup>103</sup>

Even though the county was moved to avoid future water disaster, four years into his position as Magistrate of Linzhang, Jing Fang would himself be forced to contend with one. His biography records that,

In the 7th month of the 14th year of the Hongzhi reign period (1501) [the waters] from the Zhang River billowed to the sky causing a boundless flood. Attacked by the force of the water, the western gate [of the county seat] gradually began to collapse. The officials and people grew anxious and nervous, but had no plans to manage the [impending disaster]; the old and young wept bitterly with nowhere to turn. [Jing] Fang personally inspected the entire situation and ordered that each person prepare a gabion made of thorny branches and compacted with earth. [Jing Fang] then burnt incense while doing obeisance and offering sacrifices. Praying for blessings he asked that the city wall not be submerged [by the waters] and that the people be saved from the disaster of drowning. Millet was urgently collected and the people rejoiced and celebrated. The incantations were efficacious and the water immediately dropped by one *chi*. In a space of less than five days the flood was quelled.

There were corpses of those county people who had been swept away and died; for all of those who had managed to hold on and live there was nothing to eat. [Jing] Fang memorialized to his superiors and 20,000 *shi* of [relief] grain was distributed. This amount was not sufficient [however] and he [personally] lent 2,000 *liang* of silver so that [the people would] live.<sup>104</sup>

Governing in this particular locality, it was just a matter of time, before Jing Fang would have to deal with such a disaster. Jing Fang presents himself as a capable leader who, when confronted with confused locals that were uncertain what to do, responded with a clear three-pronged strategy to solve the problem. First he orders the people to construct gabions full of earth and thorns to stop the speed of the water and protect important public structures and secure the

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<sup>102</sup> Originally the county seat was nestled between the main branch of the Zhang River to the north and one of its smaller tributaries, the Qi River 淇水 to the south. After the 1420 move, Linzhang County was located 5 *li* north of the Zhang River where it remained throughout the Ming and Qing periods. See Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 2, 1a. 531; and maps 17 and 18 in Yao Jianzhi, *Linzhang xian zhangshui tujing*, 1837, pp. 55-65

<sup>103</sup> Here the 1506 Linzhang County gazetteer incorrectly writes Yongle 18 (1420) instead of Hongwu 18 (1385). This mistake is corrected in the 1904 edition of the county gazetteer. See Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 1, 1b-2a; and Zhou Bingyi and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 1, 10b. The Ming Veritable Records states that owing to all the water damage in Henan in 1384, the Hongwu Emperor released 123,585 ingots of silver from the imperial coffers to aid the people. It is possible the money used to move the Linzhang County seat was partially drawn from this fund. See *Ming taizu shilu* 明太祖實錄 [*Veritable Records from the Ming Taizu Reign Period*], juan, 174.

<sup>104</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 7, 4a-5a.

walled portions of the county. Second, Jing Fang conducts sacrifices and prays for divine grace from the City God, Ximen Bao, who was as we have noted earlier, was well known for his efficacy in water issues.<sup>105</sup> Third, he memorialized to his superiors asking for grain relief, which would ensure local livelihood in the aftermath of the flood. When Jing Fang realized that the government relief was not enough, he paid for relief measures himself.<sup>106</sup> This three-pronged approach mitigated the immediately damaging effects of the water's onslaught; reduced the amount of rain with heavenly appeals to the City God and provided measures for the post-flood reconstruction of Linzhang.

Jing Fang does not paint an entirely rosy picture however. Even five years later, when the gazetteer went into production in 1506, the biography states “those whose homes had been inundated and destroyed still search for a way to rebuild their homes to this day.”<sup>107</sup> Jing Fang is careful to measure his successes. Despite his appeal to both heavenly and earthly authorities along with his own practical hydraulic measures, damages from floods of this size were unavoidable. Moreover the long term social impacts of the dislocation caused by floods could last for several years. Even a superior magistrate like Jing Fang could not gloss over the harshness of Linzhang's natural environment with all its problems – all he could do was present himself as having mitigated the worst effects of this disaster.

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<sup>105</sup> While the text does not explicitly state that Jing Fang prayed to City God, we can safely assume that he did. City Gods were primarily seen as protectors of cities and their powers were especially important in times of such environmental duress as floods, famine, drought, and locust infestations.

<sup>106</sup> It appears that the reason the government relief measures were not enough was because the flood that Linzhang experienced was part of a larger region wide disaster. The Ming Veritable Records notes that in the seventh month of 1501, Nanzhili, Shanxi, Shandong, and Henan all experienced massive water disasters. All the officials in these regions were ordered to put disaster relief measures into effect to mitigate some of the damage and the emperor dispatched a Grand Coordinator (巡撫) to inspect and deal with the situation. See Zhong yang yan jiu yuan 中央研究院 eds. *Ming xiaozong shilu* 明孝宗實錄 [*Veritable Records from the Ming Xiaozong Reign Period*], 1488-1505. Modern Reprint. (Nangang: Zhong yang yan jiu yuan li shi yu yan yan jiu suo: 1961-1966), juan 177, 10a.

<sup>107</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 7, 4b-5a.

### 5.7.5 The Magistrate's Judicial Cunning

The last section of Jing Fang's biography presents a trope common to most magistrate biographies - their judicial cunning. In this particular case, Jing Fang must solve a case of a stolen donkey. The text proceeds:

[There was] a county resident named Liu Wenjin who had bought a *piao* colored female donkey, which was stolen at night by a thief. Liu Wenzeng [also] had bought a *piao* colored female donkey from a man in a different county named Wu Qing. One day, Liu Wenjin happened to notice that the teeth and hair of [Liu Wenzeng's donkey] were similar [to his stolen donkey's], which cast doubt on [Liu Wenzeng's] donkey. [Liu Wenjin] brought forth repeated lawsuits, but none were resolved. He also petitioned at the prefectural level.

When [Jing] Fang took charge of the county he questioned each [of these men] about the origins of their donkeys. Liu Wenjin stated that he had bought his donkey from the Chang Yun house with the assistance of a neighbouring broker named Liu Deshui. The Magistrate asked everybody for verification [of this fact] and all agreed. Liu Wenzeng then said that he had bought his donkey from the Liu Tai house with the assistance of a neighborly broker named Zhang Youxian. [Again] the magistrate asked everybody for verification and all agreed. At this moment no one seemed sincere.

To solve the case [Jing Fang] ordered two old men from the two villages, Zhao Wenju, Li Zhixue, along with 5 or 6 *yamen* runners to lead the donkey to the front door of Liu Wenzeng's house. By itself, the donkey entered. Then the donkey was led to the front door of Liu Wenjin's house but the donkey did not enter. There was no way that Liu Wenjin was the master of this donkey. Liu Wenjin himself incorrectly identified [the donkey] and submitted to [Jing Fang's] fair judgment.<sup>108</sup>

While there is nothing out of the ordinary in this account, it does illustrate a key point regarding the image that Jing Fang wished to project. The text states that this donkey case had gone on for some time and had even made its way up to the prefectural magistrate. Even the Prefect could not solve what turned out to be a relatively straightforward case. It took Jing Fang's clear and reasonable thinking to solve the case. In this instance, the donkey's natural inclinations would adjudicate the situation for him. That Jing Fang is shown as using reason over useless testimonials and coercion, displays Jing Fang's sense of judicial cunning.

Jing Fang was promoted in 1506 to Shanxi's Pingding Zhou (平定州) where he served as a sub-prefectural magistrate (知州). In his short biography found in the Pingding Zhou gazetteer,

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<sup>108</sup> Jing Fang, ed., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1506, juan 7, 5a-5b.

Jing Fang is also remembered for solving a similar legal case involving animals.<sup>109</sup> The gazetteer reads:<sup>110</sup>

One time there was a sheep thief who was arrested and interrogated but would not submit. [Jing Fang] surreptitiously ordered a runner to take the thief's hat and immediately go to his house and fetch the sheep. The [runner] fetched a sheepskin from a secret hiding place in the thief's home and returned it to [Jing Fang]. The thief was found guilty and submitted to his punishment. There are many other examples like this, which make [Jing Fang] a famous official.<sup>111</sup>

Presumably, the sheep had already been killed and consumed and the only evidence left of the crime was the portion of the sheep's skin used to make the thief's hat. With this physical evidence, Jing Fang could convict the thief. As with the donkey story above, this case also exposes Jing Fang's analytic sense of justice. Both the donkey and the sheep cases show that Jing Fang was not rash in his decisions and that he understood the need for clear physical evidence before ruling on one's guilt and administering punishment. In both cases, the convicted criminals are described as "submitting to their punishments;" with the clear truth exposed they could no longer resist. This is certainly the type of judicial image that magistrates sought to project. His judgments were so fair and self-evident, that even treacherous criminals who had previously eluded the law had to voluntarily submit.

Both the donkey and the sheep cases also show the types of disputes that Jing Fang would have adjudicated. These were not the types of complicated land disputes that would frustrate magistrates in the southern parts of China, nor were they high profile murder cases. They were cases that involved animals, which makes sense in the rural environment in which Jing Fang operated.

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<sup>109</sup> Jin Mingyuan 金明源, ed., *Pingding zhou zhi* 平定州志 [Gazetteer of Pingding Sub-prefecture], 1790, juan 6, 91a.

<sup>110</sup> Unlike the 1506 Linzhang Gazetteer, which Jing Fang created, Jing Fang never produced a gazetteer in Pingding Zhou. This may help to account for why his biography in this text is extremely short.

<sup>111</sup> Jin Mingyuan, ed., *Pingding zhou zhi*, 1790, juan 6, 91a.

Taken together, these four sides of Jing Fang present a fairly well rounded view of a highly active and fair magistrate. He presents himself as a man filled with charity, concerned with the moral and educational welfare of Linzhang's residents, full of technical capabilities and a wise and fair judge. That Jing Fang could present such a complete picture of himself is best understood in direct relation to the fact that he oversaw the entire production of the 1506 Linzhang County gazetteer. Unlike the type of gentry gazetteer strategies described by Joseph Dennis, in the absence of a strong local gentry, Jing Fang could control his public image through the production of his own text. In a sense it works; one walks away from the text with a clear sense that Jing Fang was an activist magistrate, who rectified the historic record, rebuilt and restored public buildings, addressed issues of morality, was good at dealing with local disasters and was also a fair judge.

### **5.8 Losing the Trail: Jing Fang's Record in Subsequent Appointments**

We know that after serving in Linzhang, Jing Fang was promoted to Sub-prefectural Magistrate of Shanxi's Pingding Zhou and then to Vice-Prefect of Shaanxi's Qingyang prefecture. Even though each one of these appointments was a slight promotion through the ranks, as Jing Fang moved farther and farther away from Linzhang he becomes increasingly difficult to track in local records. Aside from his short biography dealing with the case of the sheep thief outlined above there is no other mention of Jing Fang in the Pingding Zhou gazetteer. Even more strange is that his name is entirely omitted from the Qingyang Prefectural gazetteer along with every Shaanxi Provincial Gazetteer.<sup>112</sup> While in the Linzhang Gazetteer Jing Fang

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<sup>112</sup> Only one hand copied Qianlong edition of the Qingyang Prefectural gazetteer survives to this day; therefore, it is impossible to say if he was included in earlier editions. However, in the section where he should be listed – the Ming Dynasty Vice-Prefect section – there is no mention of his name. There is the possibility that the copyist mistook his name as there is a Li Fang (李芳) from Shandong listed in this section. However this is only conjecture and not very likely as Li Fang's biographical does not match up with what we know about Jing Fang. See Zhao Benzhi 趙本植, ed., *Xinxiu Qingyang fu zhi* 乾隆新修慶陽府志 [Newly Revised Qianlong Era Gazetteer of Qingyang Prefecture], 1761, juan 21, 22a.

presents himself as constructing, rebuilding and renovating every aspect of the county, his name is rarely found, if at all, in the sources produced by places where he subsequently held higher positions. Either Jing Fang was not as active in these places as he was in Linzhang or whatever he did do while in these posts was simply too insignificant to record. This is a question we are unable to answer.

We do, however, still need to account for this staggeringly unbalanced record. Even his home county's gazetteer culls most of its information on Jing Fang directly from the 1506 Linzhang County gazetteer.<sup>113</sup> Here I would like to return to some of the issues raised at the outset of this chapter regarding the particular space that Jing Fang found himself in when he assumed office in Linzhang during the mid-Ming period. Unlike the more gentry filled south, where we tend to see lineage domination of gazetteer production, places like Dingtao and Linzhang had very different lineage and gentry structures. Lineages certainly existed. They would have largely performed the ceremonial functions related to ancestor worship in the clan; however, they were nothing like the large incorporated lineage type organizations described by Timothy Brook which came to dominate large portions of southern China and especially Jiangnan.

This domination was not simply economic. With the growth of the Jiangnan commercial economy, southern lineage organizations were able to turn their economic wealth (which resulted both from new patterns of landholding and increasingly high levels of agricultural productivity) into cultural and social prestige through the workings of the examination system and gentry society. Examples from places like Dingtao and Linzhang paint a very different picture. Here the ability of an individual to enter into the examination system and eventually

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<sup>113</sup> The 1655 Dingtao Gazetteer quotes the story of Jing Fang transforming Chen Shu through moral suasion, the way in which he saved the city wall from the flood and the case of the donkey thief. It also says that he was first promoted to Sub-Prefectural Magistrate of Pingding Zhou and then later on to Vice Prefect of Qingyang Prefecture. See Zhao Guolin, ed., *Dingtao xianzhi*, 1655, juan 5, 13a.

become a magistrate was primarily facilitated by direct state intervention through the quota system. If Jing Hong had died in office in a place like Ningbo's Yin County, one can suspect that Jing Fang would have never risen to the rank that he did – even if it was still a relatively lowly one.

Yet Jing Fang's incorporation into the system through state intervention does not entirely explain his high level of personal activism while in office in Linzhang County. Perhaps Jing Fang was aware of the role that the government played in incorporating people like him, from places like Dingtao, into the system. Thus maybe he had a stronger sense of obligation to his duties. After all it was the state, not the largely autonomous lineage structures that were to be credited for bringing him into power. Yet this idea of state patronage and obligation can only explain so much. After all, most of the other magistrates who served in Linzhang were also drawn from the north.

It is also entirely possible that Jing Fang was just an exceptional magistrate. We have several examples in Chinese history of magistrates who governed with great finesse and left behind accomplished records of capable leadership. Maybe the answer is just this simple: Jing Fang was concerned by the wealth of problems in Linzhang and quickly addressed them through his own personal style of capable and active leadership. We still need to ask however, if Jing Fang was particularly capable, why was he only capable in Linzhang? Aside from a brief mention of his ability to solve a sheep dispute, records from his later posting are all silent on what Jing Fang did while in these offices. It would appear that the answer to this question lies in the fact that in subsequent offices, Jing Fang did not have the luxury of controlling his own public record as he had in Linzhang County.

## 5.9 Conclusion: Jing Fang as *Mid-Ming* Magistrate

While these are all pertinent questions, the available sources simply do not allow us to answer them. All that Jing Fang left behind was the 1506 Linzhang Gazetteer, which largely functions as his biography of achievement in one northern county during the mid-Ming period. Thomas Nimick has suggested in his new book, *Local Administration in Ming China* that the Ming system of magistrates changed in substantial ways over the course of the Ming with many of the most important changes transpiring over the 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>114</sup> Middle Ming emperors such as the Chenghua (1465-1487), Hongzhi (1488-1505) and Zhengde Emperor (1506-1521) were not as immediately interested in re-molding Chinese society in the same way that their Dynasty's Grand Progenitor, the Hongwu Emperor (r. 1368-1398) was. Moreover, the emergence of new economic, social and cultural forces largely facilitated by the rise of the Jiangnan commercial economy also made institutional and regional flexibility an important hallmark of the system.

Perhaps most important however, was that during the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries, mid-Ming emperors began to take a more hands off approach to local administration. With the growth of new regulating bodies such as the Grand Coordinators (巡撫) and various other regional inspectors, magistrates increasingly came to report their duties to middling provincial levels of the bureaucracy. These middling levels also came to control magistrates' evaluations. Thus the relationship between provincial officials and local officials grew increasingly close over the mid-Ming period and resulted in essentially the subcontracting of local administration to provincial and county agents.<sup>115</sup> As long as taxes were remitted, there were no major security issues and

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<sup>114</sup> Thomas Nimick. *Local Administration in Ming China: The Changing Roles of Magistrates, Prefects, and Provincial Officials*.

<sup>115</sup> Thomas Nimick. *Local Administration in Ming China: The Changing Roles of Magistrates, Prefects, and Provincial Officials*, pp. 78-125.

the appearance of public order was maintained, mid-Ming emperors were content with allowing local officials to govern as they saw fit and for provincial officials to evaluate their actions as needed.

Nimick's larger institutional history provides a solid place within which to situate Jing Fang's story of local activism. As provincial officials over the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries were increasingly entrusted with the task of evaluating subordinate county officials, the role of on-the-spot county inspections became more important. Thus, it is not an accident that much of the 1506 Linzhang County gazetteer discusses Jing Fang's renovation of the offices and lodgings for touring censors' and provincial and prefectural superiors. First impressions in any locality mattered and if a touring official entered a shoddy and decrepit county it would certainly not bode well for a magistrate's evaluation and chance of promotion. County magistrates could be removed from office immediately if provincial officials were unhappy with what they discovered on a surprise inspection.<sup>116</sup> Here we see a strong correlation between the new dynamics of subcontracted local administration characteristic of the mid-Ming period and Jing Fang's active program to beautify Linzhang County. As previously mentioned, Jing Fang even goes so far as to renovate the touring prefects' accommodations with an intricately designed lofty pavilion, which would have certainly made a favorable first impression.

Jing Fang not only *displayed* his accomplishments to his administrative superiors but he also *broadcast* them by utilizing the emerging gazetteer genre. With little gentry structures in the locality and with no previously printed complete local records, Jing Fang had the unique chance to control the production of the gazetteer and edit its contents to suit his needs. Through dominating this production, Jing Fang could also broadcast his accomplishments to his superiors in the hopes of official recognition. Thus Jing Fang's 1506 gazetteer is far more statist in its orientation than the "localist strategies" more commonly found in Jiangnan gazetteer production.

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<sup>116</sup> Thomas Nimick, "The County, the Magistrate and the Yamen in Late Ming China," p. 133.

Joseph Dennis's argument that gazetteers and their narrative strategies reflect the agendas of the people who patronized, edited and produced them is valid in both cases. In Jing Fang's case, however, we see one individual rather than larger lineage organizations in control.

We also see in this example that Jing Fang's agenda and his target audience were distinctly different, or perhaps more "northern" in their statist orientation than what is more commonly understood in southern examples of gazetteer production. Without a strong local gentry scrutinizing every editorial decision, Jing Fang transformed the 1506 Linzhang county gazetteer into his own biography of achievement; moreover he utilized this public source to present himself to his superiors as a capable and active leader, firmly in control of the locality.

Working in a distant corner of the Ming state, yet a corner, which had a particular historic cachet, Jing Fang used what resources were available to him to publicize and spread his own reputation. He would not have this opportunity again. For reasons unknown both Pingding Zhou and Qingyang Fu did not produce their first gazetteers well into the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>117</sup> Thus Jing Fang had no chance of leaving his textual imprint on these places while in office.

Even more interesting is that subsequent Linzhang gazetteers also tend to minimize Jing Fang's importance in the county. While it is common to see a natural editing out of details as gazetteers grew over time, later compilers seem to almost go out of their way to minimize Jing Fang's importance in the locality. For example: the 1691 gazetteer cuts Jing Fang's biography in half; and, while Jing Fang is still mentioned in the sections regarding the restoration the City God and *Bazha* Temples, his exaggerated phrase "from the minute that Jing stepped out of the cart" has been omitted.

The 1506 Linzhang gazetteer occupies a unique place in time. It sits at the centre of important institutional changes that were taking place in local administration and state-society relations characteristic of the mid-Ming period. That a recent transplant into Dingtao society in

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<sup>117</sup> The first Pingding Zhou and Qingyang Fu gazetteers were produced in 1595 and 1557 respectively.

just two generations could earn a *juren* and go on to be a County Magistrate, Sub-prefectural Magistrate and then a Vice Prefect shows a world of possibilities that were emerging due to active state intervention to try to get more northerners into the system. Jing Fang's 1506 Linzhang County gazetteer also shows his active dialogue with the state that put him into power in the first place. Because of the particularities of Linzhang's local society, Jing Fang had a unique space to broadcast his own achievements to the officials who would control his evaluations. From the surviving historic record there is really no reason to doubt his successes - even if they were exaggerated.

Throughout the mid-Ming period, Linzhang was a quiet and largely peaceful county. In this context Jing Fang had the luxury of being an activist magistrate that many of the people who would follow him did not. Late Ming magistrates like Zhang Erzhong (張爾忠) were simply too busy fighting off bandits and worrying about military invasion in Linzhang to care too much about impressing their superiors with building intricate and refined pavilions. We will turn to this story in the next chapter.

## Chapter 6: Conclusions: Reflections of an Unworthy Magistrate and Linzhang County in the Late Ming Period

“I sighed when I saw the difficulties that faced Master Zhang in governing [Linzhang County]...Even the ancients would have regarded his task as difficult.” – Yuan Kai, Linzhang County, 1636.<sup>1</sup>

### 6.1 Introduction

When Zhang Erzhong (張爾忠, 1581-1653) arrived in Linzhang County in 1632 to serve as county magistrate he entered a dramatically different situation than Jing Fang had 135 years earlier. Owing to decades of sustained environmental crisis, the general weakening of the Ming state, the rise of local corruption and the persistent threat of peasant rebellion, late Ming Linzhang was a different place than what Jing Fang might have recognized. Although Zhang Erzhong initially described Linzhang County as a quiet and sleepy backwater, he soon discovered that governing this locality was a far more difficult task than he had previously imagined.<sup>2</sup> This final chapter discusses the last surviving Ming era document from Linzhang County, Zhang Erzhong’s curiously titled *A Brief Account of an Unworthy Magistrate of Linzhang* (知漳罪略), which was produced in 1636.<sup>3</sup> When reading Zhang’s *Brief Account*, one cannot help but be struck by the impending sense of doom that hovers over the entire text.

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<sup>1</sup> This epigraph is taken from Yuan Kai’s (袁楷) preface to Zhang Erzhong’s 張爾忠, *Zhi zhang zui lue* 知漳罪略 [*A Brief Account of an Unworthy Magistrate of Linzhang*], 1636, preface 2, 1a.

<sup>2</sup> He writes that during his student days he reverently studied the classics and vowed that when he first took office he would bring happiness and prosperity to the place that he governed. At the time that he studied he heard that the old and young in Linzhang lived in security and tranquility and that the animals were peaceful and quiet. When he arrived in the secluded county he found that it was remote but tranquil and owing to the county’s small size with proper “attention he could comprehend all within its boundaries.” Unexpectedly however, by his third year in office he had to “betray these original intentions as matters in the county became urgent.” Zhang Erzhong, *Zhi zhang zui lue*, 1636, preface 1, 1a-1b.

<sup>3</sup> This curious title could also be translated more literally as, *A Brief Record of Crimes/Transgressions/Guilt/Mistakes/Flaws in Governing Linzhang*. The sense of the title is that Zhang Erzhong’s brief record of office in Linzhang County is full of “zui 罪 (guilt)” that needed to be “lue 略 (briefly recorded).” Many of these translations sounds overly dramatic when compared to the actual celebratory nature of the text and therefore I have followed the translation provided in Pierre-Etienne Will, et al, eds. *Official Handbooks and Anthologies of Imperial China: A Descriptive and Critical Bibliography*, unpublished manuscript, 2010, entry number 831. Only one copy of this text survives, which is available in the rare books collection at the Beijing University Library.

Unlike Jing Fang who lived through the general stability of the mid-Ming period and had the luxury of renovating and rehabilitating the county through a wide variety of public projects, Zhang Erzhong was faced with the very real threat of local and dynastic collapse. Simply put, Zhang Erzhong did not have the luxury of renovating public buildings, editing gazetteers or restoring Linzhang's connection with its ancient antiquity as many of his mid-Ming predecessors had.

Edward Farmer has written that the “mid-ness” of the mid-Ming period is perhaps best understood by examining the specificity of the early Ming and late Ming periods that came before and after it.<sup>4</sup> Zhang Erzhong's *Brief Account* provides such a unique window into the entirely different set of problems that one late-Ming magistrate faced in governing Linzhang County. As such, it helps us to better understand the unique space that existed for mid-Ming magistrates like Jing Fang in the time period that fell between the initial consolidation of the empire and its eventual collapse in 1644.

## **6.2 Droughts, Famines, Epidemics and Floods: the late Ming Context in Linzhang County**

Recent historical studies suggest that a key component in both Ming and Qing dynastic decline was the role that prolonged environmental crisis, such as drought, famine, flood, and epidemics played in the weakening of the imperial state and its command over local society.<sup>5</sup> In

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<sup>4</sup> This claim is all the more true given the absence of a strong documentary record for many places for this period. Edward Farmer, “An Agenda for Ming History: Exploring the Fifteenth Century,” *Ming Studies*, no. 26 (Fall 1988): 1-17.

<sup>5</sup> Timothy Brook's new work, *The Troubled Empire* has been the most explicit among Ming historians to argue that the story of Ming dynastic collapse is perhaps best understood as an environmental history rather than a political history centering on the corruption and ineptitude of the late Ming court. Work by Kenneth Pommeranz, Lillian M. Li; and Kathryn Edgerton-Tarpley has also suggested the important role that environmental degradation and crisis played in the weakening of imperial authority in Qing China. See Timothy Brook, *The Troubled Empire: China in the Yuan and Ming Dynasties* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), especially Chapter 3 and pp, 249-255; Kenneth Pommeranz, *The Making of the Hinterland: State, Society and Economy in Inland North China, 1853-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Lillian M. Li, *Fighting Famine in North China: State, Market and Environmental Decline, 1690s-1990s* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), especially chapter 9; and Kathryn Edgerton-Tarpley, *Tears from Iron: Cultural Responses to Famine in Nineteenth Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

his recent *The Troubled Empire*, Timothy Brook has written that the mid to late Ming period was an exceptionally cold time in Chinese history. Not only was it cold, it was also very dry and starting in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century “drought seized the realm,” with dramatic effects on local society.<sup>6</sup> Records from late-Ming Linzhang County suggest a similar interpretation. Linzhang was generally known to be most adversely affected by water calamities; however, historic records show a clear increase in prolonged environmental crisis caused by droughts, famines and epidemics starting in the 16<sup>th</sup> and continuing through the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup>

Although the county had suffered through two instances of widespread famine in 1485 and 1529 when locals were reportedly reduced to cannibalism to survive, by the latter half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century such droughts and famines grew increasingly more frequent and more devastating.<sup>8</sup> County records state that 1586 started off as an excessively dry year (*han* 旱), which escalated into a full scale drought (*da han* 大旱) the following year.<sup>9</sup> This drought not only destroyed crops throughout the entire North China region but also resulted in a massive epidemic that

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<sup>6</sup> Brook argues, “For the final century of the dynasty right down to 1644, the Ming was abnormally dry. The dryness peaked three times, in 1544-1546, 1585-1589, and 1614-1619. The last of these three droughts parched the fields so thoroughly that the History of the Ming reports the landscape in 1615 looking burnt. The dynasty ended in seven years of devastating drought.” Timothy Brook, *The Troubled Empire: China in the Yuan and Ming Dynasties*, p. 59.

<sup>7</sup> Zhou Bingyi, and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 1, 10b- 12a; and, Zhang, Jianhua 張建華, Zuo Jintao 左金濤, et al., eds, *Handan lishi da shi bian nian* 邯鄲歷史大事編年[*Chronological Record of Important Events in Handan History*] (Beijing: Zhongguo dang'an chubanshe, 1999), pp. 274-306.

<sup>8</sup> Zhou Bingyi, and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 1, 10b- 11a; and Zhang, Jianhua, Zuo Jintao, et al., eds, *Handan lishi da shi bian nian*, pp. 285, 289.

<sup>9</sup> For an excellent discussion of how to translate famine, drought and flood terminology see Lillian M. Li's, *Fighting Famine in North China*. In this work Li writes, “A drought could be a dry period, *gan*, or it could be an excessively deficient period, *han*, or even worse, *dahan*, a big drought. A severe drought that reaches crisis proportions was, and is, a *hanzai*. Terms for floods are more complex. Often, records will simply say *shui* (water), *dashui* (“big water”), or *shuizai* (a flood crisis)...These natural disasters may lead to a harvest failure, or *huang*. Although *huang* is assumed to have severe human or social impact, only in the worst case do the records specify hunger and starvation. *Jihuang* describes a subsistence crisis that is accompanied by hunger and is the closest equivalent to the English term “famine.” Sometimes the term *ji*, “hunger” or “starvation,” is used simply by itself, occasionally *daji*, “big hunger.” These terms occur far less often than those for flood and drought, and they suggest a more critical situation, a *zaihuang*.” Lillian M. Li's, *Fighting Famine in North China*, p. 30.

ravaged Linzhang and its neighbouring Wei County (魏縣). The gazetteer records that “the number of people who either died or fled were too great to count.”<sup>10</sup> Just two years later, in 1589 another drought struck the region lingering for the next two years and causing massive crop failures and another widespread epidemic in 1591. At this time, Linzhang’s neighbouring She County (涉縣) reported that grain prices throughout the entire region skyrocketed.<sup>11</sup> In 1598, a lesser drought was reported in Linzhang and owing to limited rainfall in 1599 no spring grains ripened this year.<sup>12</sup> Just one year later in 1600 there was a great drought followed by heavy fall winds, which blew half of the already pitiful harvest away.<sup>13</sup> Finally, in 1640, just four years before the collapse of the Ming, Linzhang experienced its worst drought yet. The Linzhang County gazetteer writes that in this year there was a “great starvation” (*da ji* 大饑)<sup>14</sup> and that the famine was so severe that people were forced to eat each other to survive.<sup>15</sup> An uncontrollable epidemic followed this drought-induced famine and “for every ten people in the county” the local record states, “only one or two survived.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Zhou Bingyi, and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 1, 11a; and, Zhang, Jianhua, Zuo Jintao, et al., eds, *Handan lishi da shi bian nian*, p. 296.

<sup>11</sup> Zhou Bingyi, and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 1, 12a; and, Zhang, Jianhua, Zuo Jintao, et al., eds, *Handan lishi da shi bian nian*, p. 297.

<sup>12</sup> Zhou Bingyi, and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 1, 12a.

<sup>13</sup> Zhou Bingyi, and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 1, 12a. The *Chronological Record of Important Events in Handan History* reports that the grains were actually blown away in 1605. See Zhang Jianhua, Zuo Jintao, et al., eds, *Handan lishi da shi bian nian*, p. 300.

<sup>14</sup> Lillian Li writes in her *Fighting Famine in North China* that the phrase “great starvation” was reserved to record only the direst of disaster conditions. Lillian M. Li’s, *Fighting Famine in North China*, p. 30.

<sup>15</sup> Zhou Bingyi, and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 1, 12a; Zhang, Jianhua, Zuo Jintao, et al., eds, *Handan lishi da shi bian nian*, pp. 305; and Lillian M. Li’s, *Fighting Famine in North China*, p. 30.

<sup>16</sup> The date of these two epidemics that hit Linzhang County, 1590 and 1640 largely correspond with Timothy Brook’s argument that three large epidemics occurred in the late Ming period and were the result of drought induced famine. Brook’s dates for these epidemics are: 1544-1546, 1587-1588 and 1639-1641. See Timothy Brook, *The Troubled Empire*, p. 65; and Zhou Bingyi, and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 1, 12a.

As if all of these droughts and famines were not enough, Linzhang County also suffered its fair share of water disasters during the late Ming period. Although not listed in the county's 1506 gazetteer, Jing Fang is credited with building a large dike southwest of the county seat in order to save its city walls in a time of flood.<sup>17</sup> This dike was thereafter known as Master Jing's Dike (*Jing gong ti* 景公堤). In 1597, one year after arriving in the county, Linzhang County magistrate Yuan Yingtai (袁應泰) increased the size of the dike. This expansion caused the river to flood and change its course to a northerly route flooding out countless residents throughout the region. Accordingly, the project was soon abandoned.<sup>18</sup>

The region's hydraulic system never fully recovered and perhaps owing to this man-made hydraulic instability, the Zhang River would flood and/or change its course four more times before the end of the Ming in 1644: once in 1607 when a dike upstream known as the Weihe Dike (衛河堤) collapsed leading to a major shift in the river's course; once in 1611 when the river shifted its course to a southerly route; two years later in the eighth month of 1613 when the Zhang River flooded and inundated the Linzhang city walls; and finally, in 1624, when the Zhang River swelled and once again overflowed its banks. Local records describe these devastating floods as causing the immeasurable loss of life, livestock and grain throughout the county and the region.<sup>19</sup>

Owing to the damage caused by this last flood in 1624, a local fisherman from Linzhang County discovered an ancient imperial seal, containing the eight character expression, "The

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<sup>17</sup> Although the source does not provide a concrete date for this project it is reasonable to presume that it was imitated sometime after the 1501 flood described in the previous chapter. The ensuing floods are described in the section dealing with the 9<sup>th</sup> month of the 28<sup>th</sup> reign year of the Wanli Emperor. See Li Guoxiang 李国祥, and Yang Chang 杨昶 eds., *Ming shilu leizuan: Hebei Tianjin juan* 明實錄類纂:河北天津卷 [Compiled and Categorized Veritable Records of the Ming Dynasty: Hebei and Tianjin Volume] (Wuhan: Wuhan chubanshe, 1995), p. 759.

<sup>18</sup> Zhou Bingyi, and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 1, 26a, 40b; juan 4, 12a.

<sup>19</sup> Zhou Bingyi, and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 1, 11a, 12a, 26a; Zhang Jianhua, Zuo Jintao, et al., eds, *Handan lishi da shi bian nian*, p. 300.

mandate is endowed from heaven, longevity and prosperity forever” (受命于天既壽永昌).<sup>20</sup> This seal, which was later known as the “Heirloom Imperial Seal” was allegedly the property of China’s first imperial unifier, Qin Shihuang (秦始皇, 259 – 210 BCE) and spoke clearly to the idea of the mandate of heaven and longevity of imperial rule.<sup>21</sup> Given the decades of environmental disasters that had ravaged the region along with the clear understanding that such disasters as droughts, famines, epidemics and floods were all visible signs of the loss of the dynasty’s mandate, that *this* seal should be found in *this* manner might have been viewed as highly symbolic of the state of imperial decay to the people at the time. While this particular finding was never verified to be Qin Shihuang’s actual seal, owing to the gravity of the situation and its symbolic weight the seal was immediately remitted to the imperial capital for review.<sup>22</sup>

### 6.3 Dislocation and Social Unrest in late Ming Linzhang County

Historians tend to avoid the word “inevitable” when describing the historic outcome of past events. Rarely is such a crude and historically deterministic concept able to capture the complexity of historical dynamics and the “outcome blindness” of the people who lived through the events and times that historians now study. This being said, the wave of environmental disasters that occurred during the late Ming period set into motion a process of decay and rebellion that from the vantage point of historical hindsight appears to have been in many ways

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<sup>20</sup> Zhou Bingyi, and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 1, 12a; and Zhang Jianhua, Zuo Jintao, et al., eds, *Handan lishi da shi bian nian*, p. 302.

<sup>21</sup> The words on the seal were written by the Prime Minister of the Qin state Li Si (李斯). The seal was passed through a variety of dynasties in Chinese history and possession of the seal was viewed as a clear symbolic marker of the ruling house’s mandate of heaven. The seal is said to have been lost sometime during the 10<sup>th</sup> century CE. Most historians agree that Qin Shihuang’s actual seal was never recovered. It is unclear from the historical records if this particular finding was understood to have been Qin Shihuang’s actual seal or forgery. For a brief discussion of the importance of this particular imperial seal in the Yuan-Ming-Qing dynastic transition see Shih-Shan Henry Tsai, *Perpetual Happiness: the Ming Emperor Yongle* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), p 149.

<sup>22</sup> Zhou Bingyi, and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 1, 12a; and Zhang Jianhua, Zuo Jintao, et al., eds, *Handan lishi da shi bian nian*, p. 302.

quite inevitable.<sup>23</sup> By the late Ming period, the cumulative effect of decades of environmental disasters, especially in north China, had clearly wearied the population and lowered their morale. In his *Brief Account of an Unworthy Magistrate of Linzhang*, Zhang Erzhong describes a local population clearly in survival mode. Having been forced to fend for themselves for so long, by the late Ming period much of Linzhang society was generally sceptical if not recalcitrant towards the majority of state-led initiatives in times of distress. Even when activist officials like Zhang Erzhong *did* have the will to act, years of droughts, famines, epidemics and floods, had completely drained the county of most of its resources. Its coffers were empty and any private resources that a magistrate might have once been able to draw upon had grown scarce. Without recourse to state or private resources people survived however they could. In some cases this meant people were forced to flee disaster-torn areas en masse; more radical cases saw people scavenging and eating whatever they could, including people, in order to survive.<sup>24</sup> Most worrisome for the dynasty however, was this inability of late Ming officials to nourish and provide for the people, which cast a serious shadow over the moral legitimacy of the entire state itself; as this shadow grew darker, the threat of local rebellion also grew increasingly more real.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Using the concept of inevitability to describe historical events is indeed a slippery slope. I use the term here to simply highlight the crescendo of a variety of factors leading to the eventual downfall of the Ming, which in many ways appear to have been at least partially outside of human control. This is not to suggest that human activity could not have at least mitigated some of the effects of these disasters, but rather that late Ming environmental disasters were so frequent, large and varied that overall effect of human intervention was likely to remain marginal in the larger picture of realm-wide environmental decline.

<sup>24</sup> By the late Ming period a variety of works were produced describing in detail the wide variety of roots, barks, grasses and reeds that could be eaten in times of famine. Most notably is Yao Kecheng 姚可成 *Jiuhuang ye pu* 救荒野救荒野譜 [*Guide to Wild Vegetation Useful in Relieving Famine*], 1642. For a graphic visual depiction of how a late Ming official envisioned the course of environmental disaster see Yang Dongming's (楊東明, 1548-1624) *Album of the Famished* as reprinted in Roger Des Forges, Roger Des Forges, *Cultural Centrality and Political Change in Chinese History: Northeast Henan in the Fall of the Ming* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), pp. 35-55. In this work there are scenes depicting: floods, famine, people fleeing their homes, people gathering bark and wild grasses to eat, the selling of family members, instances of cannibalism, and local banditry.

<sup>25</sup> Moreover the social, cultural and familial fabrics, which in previous times had helped to create and ensure local order were also seriously damaged by decades of prolonged crisis.

Describing this late Ming context, Timothy Brook has provided evidence that it was during the final years of the dynasty when the Ming period also saw its most acute episodes of natural crises. Brook writes that during the Chongzhen reign period (崇禎, 1628-1644):

Crops withered, food supplies dwindled, and the commercial economy shut down, driving the price of grain to unprecedented levels. People had nothing with which to pay their taxes. A hardship for them, it was worse for the government, which found itself without the means to pay the soldiers who defended the border or the courier soldiers who kept the machinery of the state moving.<sup>26</sup>

As the state machinery ground to a halt this question of starving soldiers and unpaid courier soldiers grew especially worrisome. As Frederick Mote writes, “the entire Great Wall defense zone was affected, [...and] its western reaches, from northern Shanxi through Shaanxi all the way to the Wall’s western terminus, were thrown into disorder by desertions, and by desperate uprisings of starving soldiers forced to take matters into their own hands.”<sup>27</sup> Accordingly much of the north China region was left thinly defended against both external invasion and internal local rebellions. By the 1620s much of north China was covered by “roving bandit” groups (流寇) consisting of a motley assortment of mutinied soldiers, unpaid transport workers, and local rebel groups and religious leaders. These groups traversed the countryside in search of the means for survival. They would often steal from the more well off and at times they were known to raid the county seats and even kill local officials.<sup>28</sup>

Although the rebellions that would soon engulf the Ming realm began in Shaanxi Province - which was a region particularly hard hit by decades of famine, drought, and epidemic throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries - the movement quickly spread across much of north and

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<sup>26</sup> Timothy Brook, *The Troubled Empire*, pp. 251-2.

<sup>27</sup> Frederick Mote, *Imperial China: 900-1800* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 796.

<sup>28</sup> For a succinct discussion of this shift from regional banditry to local rebellion see Frederick Mote, *Imperial China: 900-1800*, pp. 795-801.

central China.<sup>29</sup> By the early 1630s the immediate northern Henan region had become a hotbed of local rebellion. In the first month of 1633, Li Zicheng (李自成, 1606-1647) led a raid from Shanxi's Liaozhou Subprefecture (遼州) into the southern reaches of the capital region (畿南) that killed a number of local officials.<sup>30</sup> Linzhang County was located to the immediate south of this capital region. In the 5<sup>th</sup> month of this same year rebel forces led by Gao Yingxiang pushed into Zhangde's Cizhou Subprefecture.<sup>31</sup> The central court was so alarmed that a Henan Grand Coordinator named Xuan Mo was appointed to gather troops from the immediate locality, the Capital Region, Shanxi, and Sichuan Provinces to lead an assault on the rebel armies.<sup>32</sup> Xuan Mo was unsuccessful in exterminating the rebels and only managed to drive them out of the county into the mountains where they regrouped.

Gao Yingxiang and his armies continued to be active in the region and in 1634 he crossed the Yellow River and successfully stormed Kaifeng Prefecture's city walls.<sup>33</sup> Although Gao eventually negotiated his surrender in exchange for imperial amnesty he soon returned to banditry and even led a later assault on the Hongwu Emperor's ancestral tombs in Anhui Province's Fengyang County.<sup>34</sup> By the mid 1630s "roving banditry" had transformed into

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<sup>29</sup> More detailed accounts of these late Ming rebellions along with biographies of their most prominent rebel leaders, Li Zicheng and Zhang Xianzhong (張獻忠, 1606-1647) can be found in a variety of secondary works including; Frederick Mote, *Imperial China: 900-1800*, pp. 795-801; William Atwell, "The T'ai-ch'ang, T'ien-ch'i, and Ch'ung-chen reigns, 1620-1644," in *The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part I*. Eds. Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 615-640; Frederick Wakeman Jr., *The Great Enterprise: the Manchu Reconstruction of the Imperial Order in Seventeenth Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 1-318; and Roger Des Forges, *Cultural Centrality and Political Change in Chinese History: Northeast Henan in the Fall of the Ming*.

<sup>30</sup> Zhang Jianhua, Zuo Jintao, et al., eds, *Handan lishi da shi bian nian*, p. 303.

<sup>31</sup> Gao Yingxiang was otherwise known as the "Dashing Prince" (關王). See Zhang Jianhua, Zuo Jintao, et al., eds, *Handan lishi da shi bian nian*, pp. 303; and Roger Des Forges, *Cultural Centrality and Political Change*, p. 182.

<sup>32</sup> Roger Des Forges, *Cultural Centrality and Political Change*, p. 182.

<sup>33</sup> Roger Des Forges, *Cultural Centrality and Political Change*, pp. 182 -183.

<sup>34</sup> Roger Des Forges, *Cultural Centrality and Political Change*, p. 186.

outright anti-dynastic rebellion. Not only was the court in Beijing deeply concerned about this activity, so too were local magistrates, especially those in northern Henan, who often bore the brunt of all of this military chaos.

#### 6.4 Zhang Erzhong in the Late Ming

I have stressed this chronology of local environmental disasters and the rise of banditry and anti-dynastic activity in the specificity of the Linzhang region to demonstrate that when Zhang Erzhong arrived to govern Linzhang County in 1632 he clearly had his work cut out for him. The county had been ravaged by decades of famines, floods and epidemics in the years preceding his arrival and many more were to follow. Rebellion also ran rampant in the region and there had been two major instances of outright anti-dynastic activity that occurred in the regions to the immediate north and northwest of the county. Zhang Erzhong had every reason to be concerned.

Originally, Zhang Erzhong hailed from Wei County (濰縣), which was located in Shandong's Laizhou Prefecture (萊州府). The 1672 edition of the Wei County gazetteer states that Zhang passed the provincial *juren* exam in 1611 and earned his *jinshi* credentials in 1631.<sup>35</sup> Exactly what Zhang Erzhong was doing during the 20 intervening years between earning degree credentials unfortunately cannot be determined from the surviving historical records. We do know however, that one year after earning his *jinshi* status, at the age of 50, Zhang was appointed to his first post as Linzhang County magistrate.

Both the Qing era gazetteers from his native Wei County and from Linzhang County where he first served offer fairly limited accounts of his record in office.<sup>36</sup> Given that Zhang

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<sup>35</sup> Wang Zhen 王珍, ed., *Wei xian zhi* 濰縣志 [Gazetteer of Wei County], 1672, juan 15, 13b-14a.

<sup>36</sup> Zhang Yaobi 張耀璧, ed., *Wei xian zhi* 濰縣志 [Gazetteer of Wei County], 1758, juan 4, 11b-12a.

Erzhong ended his career as a highly accomplished official the brevity of these biographical accounts is a puzzle that needs to be addressed. The biography of Zhang Erzhong contained in the 1758 edition of the Wei County gazetteer states that Zhang Erzhong's style name was Bugun (補袞) and that he "had great talent and a vast vision and consistently [displayed] the will to order the world. He was first appointed to Linzhang County where he served as county magistrate. In not more than ten years he was promoted [to the position of] Grand Coordinator. [In this position] he lamented the state of the world and made plans to save it."<sup>37</sup> Zhang's plans for saving the world were preserved in a wide variety of his works including his, *Brief Record of an Unworthy Magistrate of Linzhang*.<sup>38</sup> The biography then states that in "1644 [Zhang Erzhong] requested his retirement and returned to his native place. [While at] home he exhausted all his resources to protect the locality and to this day elders are still able to recite [his accomplishments]."<sup>39</sup>

The Linzhang gazetteer offers slightly more information stating that Zhang Erzhong was both "strict and impartial and [that while he was in office] people did not dare to commit crimes."<sup>40</sup> He is also credited with founding the city's outer walls, renovating the armoury, and preparing the county's weapons which included a variety of gunpowder munitions. Because of such acts, "the affairs in the county were pacified and the county did not see any significant

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<sup>37</sup> Zhang Yaobi, ed., *Wei xian zhi*, 1758, juan 4, 11b-12a.

<sup>38</sup> Zhang's biography lists each of these works individually. They include: a collection of Zhang's comments on conversations between the Chongzhen Emperor and, Yuan Chonghuan, the late Ming general who defended the northeastern parts of the empire, known as the *Fen yu zhai ping zhao dui ji lue* 焚餘摘平臺召對紀略 [*A Brief Record of the Pingtai Decrees and Responses Plucked from the Fire*]; a memorial on the palace examination system, and another on policies dealing with grain transport system; two accounts outlining his experiences as Surveillance Commissioner and then Grand Coordinator in Shaanxi Province; and then finally an account of his leaving Shaanxi Province. All of these later works were said to have been published between 1642 and 1643. To my knowledge the only surviving record from this list is Zhang's *Brief Account of an Unworthy Magistrate of Linzhang County*. See Zhang Yaobi, ed., *Wei xian zhi*, 1758, juan 4, 12a.

<sup>39</sup> Zhang Yaobi, ed., *Wei xian zhi*, 1758, juan 4, 12a.

<sup>40</sup> Zhou Bingyi, and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 7, 14a-14b.

disorder.”<sup>41</sup> The Linzhang County gazetteer record is more explicit however, in stating that for his accomplishments in governing Linzhang County, Zhang Erzhong was personally selected and appointed by the Chongzhen Emperor to his new position in the Shaanxi Surveillance Commission.<sup>42</sup> This last bit of information provides an important clue as to understanding why, despite Zhang Erzhong’s clearly accomplished record, his biographical in the Qing era sources are often quite sparse.

What these Qing era gazetteers cleverly omit is the real reason behind Zhang’s quick promotion out of the county. If we read between the lines, it becomes relatively clear that Zhang was selected and promoted for his successful local defence against invading rebel armies and Manchu forces. The focus of all the renovations that he oversaw in Linzhang County, such as his construction of a second city wall, his renovation of the armoury, and his readying of the county’s munitions were all decidedly militaristic in orientation. Moreover, the gazetteer states that because of these acts the county was “pacified and . . . did not see any significant disorder.”<sup>43</sup> Despite referring to himself as an “unworthy magistrate” did Zhang Erzhong successfully insulate Linzhang County from the chaos that was consuming the region?

Local records support such a conclusion and despite the significant disruption cause by the wide variety of “roving bandits” and invading Manchu forces in the region, Linzhang County seems to have escaped relatively unscathed.<sup>44</sup> That the Chongzhen Emperor personally selected Zhang Erzhong and appointed him to one of the empire’s most tumultuous and unstable regions, Shaanxi Province, further displays that the reasons for his promotion were based on his strategic and defensive capabilities. The Qing omission of information regarding Zhang Erzhong’s local

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<sup>41</sup> Zhou Bingyi, and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 7, 14a-14b.

<sup>42</sup> Zhou Bingyi, and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 4, 15a.

<sup>43</sup> Zhou Bingyi, and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 7, 14b.

<sup>44</sup> There are no significant disturbances reported for the last years of the Ming dynasty in any of the local records.

defence program, therefore, must have been politically motivated and should be contextualized within the larger politics of dynastic transition and how it was later recorded in the official records.

### 6.5 A Brief Record of an Unworthy Magistrate of Linzhang County

Such considerations bring us full circle to a discussion of Zhang Erzhong's 1636 *A Brief Account of an Unworthy Magistrate of Linzhang*. It now becomes clear that Zhang's record in Linzhang County was not that of an "unworthy" administrator at all. In fact, it was so much the opposite that he was personally selected by the last Ming emperor for promotion to a strategic position in the empire. Zhang, however, appears to be quite sincere in the selection of this title. In his preface to the work he writes that before assuming office he had thought of a wide variety of ways to address local calamities, but when they actually occurred he "was not even able to achieve half of them."<sup>45</sup> Addressing his personal flaws in office, Zhang continues:

When superiors praise me, I feel as if my back is being pricked by a needle. When the common people praise my accomplishments, I feel as if I am walking on needles...Despite all of this praise I know that I have failed.

People often record their own merits and achievements.<sup>46</sup> It is perhaps better to do the contrary and enumerate a list of [one's personal] transgressions (zui罪). Therefore, I am going to write down my first transgression, my second transgression, all the way to my tenth transgression, which will not even [begin to] cover all of them... If I do not deceive myself and if I am of firm mind, this account will be useful in supplementing and nourishing later generations of enlightened officials.<sup>47</sup>

Zhang then divides his text into nine fascicles (*juan* 卷) according to the six traditional administrative domains, which are: personnel, finances, rites, military affairs, punishments, and

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<sup>45</sup> Zhang Erzhong, *Zhi zhang zui lue*, 1636, preface 1, 2a-2b.

<sup>46</sup> Here Zhang refers to the wide variety of ledgers of merit and demerit that were popular at the time along with anthologies produced by magistrates to publically broadcast their successes, which were generically called *zi pu qi gong* 自譜其功. For a discussion of the popularity of these genres see Cynthia J. Brokaw, *The Ledgers of Merit and Demerit: Social Change and Moral Order in Late Imperial China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991)

<sup>47</sup> Zhang Erzhong, *Zhi zhang zui lue*, 1636, preface 1, 2b-3a.

public works. One final *juan* is reserved for additional comments and a selection of his writings including short essays (文), letters (書), proclamations (示), and judicial sentences (判), to name just a few. The overall work is quite large and provides particularly concrete information about Linzhang County in the late Ming period along with descriptions of how Zhang Erzhong sought to govern the locality in this chaotic time.

Although a full discussion of Zhang's *Brief Account* lies outside the scope of this dissertation, there are several key features and themes that are worth mentioning briefly here. Like Jing Fang, Zhang Erzhong continues his tradition of an incoming magistrate explicitly deriding the locality and its residents for what he perceives to be their cultural and social backwardness. In the middle of the first *juan* concerning personnel, Zhang offers an itemized report, containing 37 points on Linzhang governance entitled "Bao zheng san shi qi tiao" (報政三十七條).<sup>48</sup> Each of these 37 points are uniform in their assessment of Linzhang County's decrepit state of affairs. The first item begins, "Linzhang [County] has long been in the category of *pi* (疲)." <sup>49</sup> *Pi*, or literally, "exhausting" or "exhausted" was one of the four official categories used to describe county status based on its local features and the difficulty of administering it.<sup>50</sup> Zhang states that the county's longstanding *pi* status was due to years of accumulated neglect and if left untreated the county was sure to fall into further decay.<sup>51</sup> The next item begins, "The

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<sup>48</sup> The text provides no dates and is therefore unclear exactly when Zhang Erzhong produced it. By his knowledge of local affairs it would appear though that the text was created towards the end of his tenure in Linzhang County. It is also unclear exactly whom Zhang is writing this report for and who his intended audience is. Zhang Erzhong, *Zhi zhang zui lue*, 1636, li lue 吏畧, 26a-48b.

<sup>49</sup> Zhang Erzhong, *Zhi zhang zui lue*, 1636, li lue, 26a.

<sup>50</sup> The other categories were *chong* 衝 meaning "bustling" or "dynamic," *fan* 繁 meaning "complex," and *nan* 難 meaning "difficult." Charles Hucker states that this designation only became official during the Qing dynasty, but from this reference we can see that it was clearly in use, if unofficially, during the late Ming period as well. See Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), pp.196.

<sup>51</sup> He describes his mandate of renewing the county as akin to a person replacing the strings on a bow.

People of Linzhang are stupid and ignorant” (漳民蠢愚) and continues to discuss the flaws in the county’s taxation system.<sup>52</sup> Zhang writes that the people were generally obstinate in paying their taxes and when they did pay their taxes, much of the total value was siphoned off the top by a variety of intermediary agents before it even reached the *yamen*. People were being cheated because they were too obstinate to adopt the wide variety of fiscal reforms that had transformed many other regions of the empire in the late Ming period.<sup>53</sup> Zhang describes how he then implemented twenty new taxation rules and thereby rationalized the county’s taxation system.<sup>54</sup> In this same vein, Zhang writes that the “county’s corvée labour system was tedious and overly complicated” and that he washed away years of bad practices so as not to burden the people.<sup>55</sup> Zhang’s reforms of the local taxation and corvée labour system were visibly aimed at ensuring the steady flow of tax revenue to the county’s *yamen* along with easing the burden of a local population who were already pushed to their extremes by years of environmental hardship and official neglect.<sup>56</sup>

In terms of local culture, Zhang Erzhong writes that Linzhang’s local customs were “frustratingly stubborn,”<sup>57</sup> and that the “county’s scholars did not know a thing about learning.” In fact, Zhang describes the county’s scholars as lowly and rustic men who “dressed like farmers

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<sup>52</sup> Zhang Erzhong, *Zhi zhang zui lue*, 1636, li lue, 26b.

<sup>53</sup> For a detailed discussion of these fiscal reforms often referred to as the “Single-Whip Reform,” and their realm-wide importance see Ray Huang, *Taxation and Governmental Finance in Sixteenth-Century Ming China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974).

<sup>54</sup> Some of these new rules were: providing official issued scales and weights from the provincial administration in front of the county’s tax chests; new protocol concerning how silver weight was checked; accepting only verified monies: removing tax clerks from the process; and, not charging surplus meltage and administration fees. Zhang writes, “the amount that ordinary people save goes directly towards their own benefit.” Zhang Erzhong, *Zhi zhang zui lue*, 1636, li lue, 26b.

<sup>55</sup> Zhang Erzhong, *Zhi zhang zui lue*, 1636, li lue, 27a.

<sup>56</sup> In another section of the text, Zhang explicitly laments that, “the land taxes in Linzhang County had been unclear for a very long time.” Zhang Erzhong, *Zhi zhang zui lue*, 1636, li lue, 32a.

<sup>57</sup> Zhang Erzhong, *Zhi zhang zui lue*, 1636, li lue, 27a.

and did not exhibit the slightest air of the gentleman.”<sup>58</sup> Yet unlike Jing Fang, who initiated a program aimed at raising the county’s cultural awareness, Zhang’s program seems to be far more geared towards the sheer survival of the county. Following the section in which Zhang describes the county’s scholars as essentially “country-bumpkins,” he immediately states that aside from just refining their *wen* (cultural) capacities he also needed to improve their *wu* (military) capabilities. Accordingly, he trained locals in military strategy and archery and at the end of this training they were tested, regardless of their age and capacity.<sup>59</sup>

This manner in which Zhang prepared the county for military conflict features prominently throughout his entire *Brief Account*. By the early 1630s “roving banditry” had become a problem throughout much of north China. Just one year after Zhang took office in Linzhang, such “roving banditry” had also taken on full-scale anti-dynastic pretensions in the areas to the immediate north and northwest of the county. Pressure from the north was also increasing. In 1629 Manchu forces successfully broke through the Great Wall and led raids on the northern part of the capital region. Ming troops suffered a series of humiliating defeats in the region and many mutinied contributing to deepening instability in the north.<sup>60</sup> Finally in 1636 Hung Taiji moved his capital to Shenyang and declared the founding of the Qing Dynasty.

The gravity of these events could not have escaped Zhang and throughout his entire *Brief Account* we see clear discussions of the steps that he took to ready the county and the population to either deal with local rebellion or defend against external attack. In his introduction to the public works section Zhang Erzong writes that, owing to the county’s flat terrain and general desolation, Linzhang was not an easily defendable locality. “Other than the Zhang River,” he

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<sup>58</sup> Zhang Erzong, *Zhi zhang zui lue*, 1636, li lue, 28a.

<sup>59</sup> The text states that they were given three chances to pass this exam but does not list the rewards for passing or punishments for failing. Zhang Erzong, *Zhi zhang zui lue*, 1636, li lue, 28a.

<sup>60</sup> William, Atwell, "The T'ai-ch'ang, T'ien-ch'i, and Ch'ung-chen reigns, 1620–1644," pp. 616-617.

writes “[the county] did not have any other mountains, rivers or marshes that could act as [natural] boundaries or shelter [the county].”<sup>61</sup> He describes the county as extremely flat, desolate (蕭然) and rural: “Even within the city walls, sheep could be found grazing.”<sup>62</sup> Zhang writes that as he walked through the county the first thing that he wanted to do was to build walls and fences.<sup>63</sup> These walls and fences were to be explicitly defensive in nature. Zhang writes that he “combined all of his strengths to defend the town and planned a second wall and twelve towers for this purpose. [In times of conflict] these towers could house several thousands of fleeing people and the space between the outer and inner wall could house several thousand families. In dangerous times [these structures] would be sufficiently reliable.”<sup>64</sup>

The next portion of the text describes the type of complicated calculations that went through Zhang’s mind when he began this massive infrastructure project in a time of such local scarcity. He writes that for the county to be ideally defended it needed to be surrounded by two separate city walls both faced in brick. However owing to the costs of labour and materials he would not have enough resources to build both two city walls and cover them in brick. Weighing the costs of labour and materials against the threat of external danger, Zhang writes that “in final calculation it was better to build the walls but not brick them.”<sup>65</sup>

When Zhang completed the first phase of this project he wrote the following report. From the text it appears that Zhang did not actually build a new outer wall for the city, but in fact strengthened and secured a defensive embankment that had previously surround the city wall:

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<sup>61</sup> Zhang Erzhong, *Zhi zhang zui lue*, 1636, gong lue shuo 工畧說, 1a.

<sup>62</sup> Zhang Erzhong, *Zhi zhang zui lue*, 1636, gong lue shuo, 1a.

<sup>63</sup> Zhang Erzhong, *Zhi zhang zui lue*, 1636, gong lue shuo, 1a.

<sup>64</sup> Zhang writes that the local commoners could not properly defend themselves and if they entered these structures they could stand firm and help defend the county. See Zhang Erzhong, *Zhi zhang zui lue*, 1636, gong lue shuo, 1a - 1b.

<sup>65</sup> Zhang Erzhong, *Zhi zhang zui lue*, 1636, gong lue shuo, 2b-3a

The city wall is only a few *li* from the Zhang River. . . To protect the city walls there is an external embankment four *chi* high and double this width. This embankment has a broad flat top and encircles the entire city wall. This embankment however is only a few paces from the city wall and therefore rebels can easily assemble directly on top [of the embankment] and attack the city walls. This situation was not ideal.

I worked hard to do something about this problem and donated my own official salary, my supplementary allowance, and the [yamen's] office supply budget along with other funds, which totaled more than 50 *liang* of silver. In addition, I personally donated another 120 *liang*<sup>66</sup> from next year's budget... I also made savings wherever I could, which amounted to approximately 100 *liang*. I took responsibility for all of these expenses and took nothing from the people. A notice was posted soliciting contributions from [the county's] gentry and more wealthy families. Regarding bricks, lime and wood, [I asked that they be] supplied according to each's ability. Moreover, this [project was accomplished] with an equal labour levy during the slack agricultural season. On this basis, all the people worked in concert and rewards were given out periodically. The project was finished according to its original timeline.<sup>67</sup>

Zhang then discusses this new external wall/embankment and its system of interconnected gates and its vast moat. Describing its maintenance he writes, "If materials such as stone and brick prove to be insufficient they will be requisitioned from the stockpiles used to renovate the storehouses, yamen and the granary. Other buildings which cannot be renovated should be demolished and their bricks and stones re-used."<sup>68</sup> This last statement highlights the larger concern running throughout Zhang's text concerning the problems of collecting the materials necessary to adequately prepare the county seat's defenses in a time of local scarcity.

Ultimately, Linzhang County could neither produce nor had the funds to purchase all of the bricks, stones, and lime that was necessary to build the walls; therefore, Zhang Erzong was forced to construct the walls in earth, which concerned him greatly. He writes:

The Linzhang County walls are made of earth and when the autumn rains pour down this results in the collapse of over half of the sides of the walls. [This problem] took up all of my attention and exhausted my energies. In time all things fall into ruin and they

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<sup>66</sup> The character is written as *jin* (斤), but is most likely a miscopy of the character *liang* (兩).

<sup>67</sup> Zhang's accounts of this large public work project are included in the county's late Qing era gazetteer including a record of building the new city wall, individual accounts of its southern, northern, eastern, western, south-eastern, south-western, north-eastern and north-western defensive towers, and an account of the county's armoury and weapons. In all of these accounts, Zhang offers elaborate lists with exact numbers of the county's military stockpiles. See Zhang Erzong, *Zhi zhang zui lue*, 1636, gong lue shuo, 11b-13a; and Zhou Bingyi, and Zhou Shou, eds., *Linzhang xian zhi*, 1904, juan 12, 20a-28b.

<sup>68</sup> Zhang Erzong, *Zhi zhang zui lue*, 1636, gong lue shuo, 12b-13a.

must be repaired. When the rains stop, repairs must be made and thereby the walls will be returned to their towering and lofty state. Next time that the rain falls there should be left nothing which has not yet been repaired.<sup>69</sup>

Zhang writes that he “hoped that he could bear this transgression [*zui* - the crime of not building in brick] for one year and then brick the outer wall and surround it with a large dike and moat filled with water channelled from the Zhang River [the next year].”<sup>70</sup> However, he writes “the whole project soon fell into dangerous disarray.”<sup>71</sup> Zhang does not describe what form this disarray took, but clearly his plans to fortify the county had failed. Lamenting the situation, Zhang stated:

Even if a bird is hurt, it will still squawk when threatened... Some may criticize me for only doing things that will enhance my reputation without knowing that I have [simply] run out of plans and resources...

The city should be defended down to its very last shrine and pavilion. But today the county seat is not even able to withstand the wind and rain; therefore, even the rats and birds are fleeing.<sup>72</sup>

According to Zhang Erzhong this failure to defend the county was his most major *zui* in office.<sup>73</sup>

## 6.6 Conclusions: Reading Back from Zhang Erzhong

Zhang’s *Brief Record* leaves us with a puzzling yet interesting type of symmetry in the historical record. Despite what appears to be his obvious successes in office even when facing

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<sup>69</sup> Zhang Erzhong, *Zhi zhang zui lue*, 1636, gong lue shuo, 11b.

<sup>70</sup> Zhang Erzhong, *Zhi zhang zui lue*, 1636, gong lue shuo, 2b-3a

<sup>71</sup> Zhang uses the expression “yu sha wei bi,” (羽殺尾敝) which literally means “destroyed wings damaged tail” to capture the sense of dangerous incompleteness to this project. Zhang Erzhong, *Zhi zhang zui lue*, 1636, gong lue shuo, 2b-3a

<sup>72</sup> Zhang Erzhong, *Zhi zhang zui lue*, 1636, gong lue shuo, 3a-3b.

<sup>73</sup> Zhang Erzhong requested to retire to his native Wei County in 1644 after holding posts in Shaanxi Province. He died of illness soon after in 1653. I have not been able to verify the details of his later life. Two local historians in Linzhang County both argued that Zhang Erzhong did not retire quietly but rather returned to Wei County to defend his native place. In this account he is said to have raised local money and armies to fend off advancing Manchu armies, but was ultimately unsuccessful in this task. Information based on discussions with local Linzhang historian Huang Hao and his associate in 2005.

nearly insurmountable odds, Zhang still considers his record in Linzhang County to be a failure. That this text was compiled just eight years before the collapse of the dynasty leaves one to wonder if Zhang had already realized that the Ming dynasty was on its last legs. Perhaps his biggest transgression (*zui*) was not helping to remedy the situation earlier. On the other hand, Jing Fang governed the county in a period of relative stability and, from the way that he presents himself in the county's 1506 gazetteer, he regarded his activist record in office as a great success. Despite all of his grandstanding however, Jing Fang was almost entirely written out of the county's subsequent gazetteer editions as discussed in the previous chapter.

From this short discussion of Zhang Erzong's *Brief Account of an Unworthy Magistrate of Linzhang*, it should be clear by now that Zhang operated in a highly different context than did his mid-Ming predecessors. Reading back from Zhang's *Brief Account* thus casts some light on the uniqueness of the mid-Ming period in Linzhang County itself. Although Zhang Erzong was actively engaged in public works projects, his actions were all geared towards ensuring the military security of the county, which was necessary to survive within the increasingly perilous environment of the late Ming period. Zhang was concerned with stockpiling the county's armoury and building fortifications to keep out "roaming bandits." He was also concerned with rationalizing the county's financial and corvée labour systems so as not to incite local rebellion, which was a real fear of any magistrate during this period. Zhang did not have time however, to worry about the county's claim on the region's antiquity or with promoting models of its ancient Ye history. The notable absence of any discussions of Ye or Ximen Bao in Zhang's *Brief Account* speaks directly to the new context in which he operated and the sense of urgency which served as the motivation for his actions.

Jing Fang and his immediate mid-Ming predecessors on the other hand, enjoyed much more peaceful and stable times. They had the luxury of setting aside the types of military

concerns that preoccupied Zhang Erzhong and could focus more closely on recapturing some of the “cultural centrality” that the county had once previously enjoyed. While Zhang Erzhong built military fortifications and stockpiled the armoury, Jing Fang compiled the county’s first complete gazetteer and renovated public structures dedicated to reconnecting the county with its past antiquity. Zhang Erzhong and Jing Fang’s focuses could not have been more different. As such, Zhang’s *Brief Account* reminds us that the county’s intense preoccupation with its “culturally central” past that occurred during the mid-Ming period was not always the norm but occurred within a particular temporal context and was driven by the activism of particular local officials.

In their particulars however, both Jing Fang and Zhang Erzhong seemed to have shared many traits. They were both outsiders to Linzhang County and they both approached their tasks with a great degree of urgency and seriousness. They also worked in the same peripheral corner of the empire, which owing to its lack of local gentry structures allowed both of these men to leave their own highly personalized mark on the county that they governed. In this sense, the continued legacy of their outsider-led activism in Linzhang County speaks to the deep structural differences between this northern county and its more commonly understood southern counterpart as they played out in important aspects of Ming era county administration. Jing Fang and Zhang Erzhong may not have had the depth of social and economic resources that magistrates in Jiangnan could often draw upon, but they were also not subject to the limits imposed by the conditions of these same resources. Therefore, they could deride the locals for being “stupid and ignorant” and govern the county in the highly personalized ways that they saw fit.<sup>74</sup> In this sense, the records of both Jing Fang and Zhang Erzhong display a particular type of “northern” local activism, which the “Jiangnan model” is simply not able to adequately address.

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<sup>74</sup> Zhang Erzhong, *Zhi zhang zui lue*, 1636, li lue, 26b.

Therefore, Linzhang County provides an excellent vantage point to begin to rethink the deeply regional and local characteristics of county governance during the Ming period.

By now, the title of this dissertation *Linzhang County and the Culturally Central Periphery in mid-Ming China*, should not seem contradictory at all. When I first travelled to Linzhang in 2006 I quickly noticed that despite the county's continued peripheral status, locals still claimed a deep and indeed central link with China's ancient past. That even in 2006, the county's local identity was still deeply informed by stylized notions of the region's Ye antiquity, such as the "Ximen Bao example," clearly demonstrates the power of history in the county. It also speaks directly to the successes of Jing Fang and other mid-Ming magistrates who actively sought to revitalize and promote this history that continues to sit at the core of the county's identity.

The development of Jiangnan as a major economic and cultural engine of late imperial China has rightfully attracted the interest of historians of the Ming and shaped much of the scholarship concerning state and society in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. This focus however, has marginalized other geographical areas that were perhaps no less important for understanding Ming history. While the Jiangnan model emphasizes relatively autonomous commercial development and literati academic achievement as the key to late Ming wealth and culture, the "northern," or perhaps more precisely "central" model offered by this case study of Linzhang County gives more credit to state supervision, popular culture, and history itself in the success of the Ming.

While garden culture, urbanization or gentry pursuits, may continue to attract the majority of scholarly attention, we should not forget that the overwhelming majority of Ming people were poor farmers living in rural settings. A quick survey of books written about the Ming period will immediately show that much of what we often count as "Ming history" is in

fact the highly regionalized history of urbanized centres and gentry elites associated with the Jiangnan region. This dissertation has sought to explicitly address this overwhelming urban and southern-centric bias in Ming historical writing, in much the same way that scholars of contemporary China are now refocusing their attention on the country's less studied rural regions. That an acute and potentially worrisome separation still exists between China's southern, and largely coastal cities, and its predominately rural interior makes this relationship between cultural centrality and economic peripherality all the more worth reconsidering in its longer historical *durée*. As Linzhang County continues to experience *both* cultural centrality and economic peripherality this small northern locality is an excellent place to start such a discussion.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Translation of Ximen Bao Passage from the *Lushi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 [The Annals of Lü Buwei] in the “Pleasure in Success” (樂成) section.<sup>1</sup>

King Xiang of Wei was drinking with his officials. When all were slightly high the king offered a toast to his officials, which made them all feel satisfied. Shi Qi arose and said in response, “Some officials are worthy and others are not. For the worthy to feel satisfied is permissible, but it is wrong for the unworthy to feel so.” The King said, “May all officials be the kind of official Ximen Bao was.” The family of Wei has distributed to vassals parcels of land of a hundred mou each,” responded Shi Qi. “Only the territory of Ye was two hundred mou, but the fields were bad. The Zhang River ran alongside them, but Ximen Bao did not know how to make use of it; this shows his ignorance. If he knew but said nothing, this shows his disloyalty. One should not emulate such ignorance and disloyalty.” The king of Wei was at a loss to respond. The next day he summoned Shi Qi and asked whether the Zhang River could still be used to irrigate the fields of Ye. Shi Qi responded that it could, and so the king asked him, “Why have you not done this for the sake of this Unworthy Man?” Shi Qi responded, “Your servant feared that your majesty would be unable to do it.” “If you, sir, truly can help this Unworthy Man in doing it, he shall heed your every word.” Shi Qi respectfully consented and advised the king: “If your servant undertakes this project, the people are certain to harbor great resentment against him. At worst they will kill him, and short of that, they will trample him under foot. Although your servant may die or be trampled, he hopes that the king will then send another man to see the project through.” The king agreed and made him commandant of Ye. In consequence, Shi Qi went to carry out the project. The people of Ye were greatly resentful and wanted to trample him. Not daring to go out his gate, Shi Qi hid from them. The king sent another man to complete the job. When the water flowed and the people thoroughly enjoyed the benefits, they all made a song:

Ye had a sage commandant,  
This was Sir Shi  
He channelled the river Zhang,  
To irrigate the lands round Ye  
What had from old been salty waste,  
Now produces rice and grain.

If the common people knew what was possible and what was not, there would be no need to employ the wise. If a worthy ruler and loyal minister can neither lead the ignorant nor teach the rustic, their reputations will not reach later ages, nor their accomplishments benefit the present. Shi Qi was not a person who failed to understand how things would develop, and he valued loyalty to his ruler. King Xiang of Wei can properly be described as someone “capable of deciding on the right course.” One who is truly capable of deciding on the right course will not alter it, no matter how much the masses moan and complain. What makes true accomplishment so difficult is precisely such moans and complaints. The ruin and destruction of states are caused by the same thing. Thus, in the face of moans and complaints, it would be

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<sup>1</sup> Translation with slight amendments by, John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel, *The Annals of Lu Buwei: A Complete Translation and Study* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), pp. 392-3.

wrong for one to show any interest in such carping. The mediocre ruler stops pursuing the right course because of carping; the worthy ruler establishes his success in the midst of it.

### Original Chinese Text

魏襄王與群臣飲，酒酣，王為群臣祝，令群臣皆得志。史起興而對曰：“群臣或賢或不肖，賢者得志則可，不肖者得志則不可。”王曰：“皆如西門豹之為人臣也。”史起對曰：“魏氏之行田也以百畝，鄴獨二百畝，是田惡也。漳水在其旁而西門豹弗知用，是其愚也；知而弗言，是不忠也。愚與不忠，不可效也。”魏王無以應之。明日，召史起而問焉，曰：“漳水猶可以灌鄴田乎？”史起對曰：“可。”王曰：“子何不為寡人為之？”史起曰：“臣恐王之不能為也。”王曰：“子誠能為寡人為之，寡人盡聽子矣。”史起敬諾，言之於王曰：“臣為之，民必大怨臣。大者死，其次乃藉臣。臣雖死藉，願王之使他人遂之也。”王曰：“諾。”使之為鄴令。史起因往為之。鄴民大怨，欲藉史起。史起不敢出而避之。王乃使他人遂為之。水已行，民大得其利，相與歌之曰：“鄴有聖令，時為史公，決漳水，灌鄴旁，終古斥鹵，生之稻粱。”使民知可與不可，則無所用矣。賢主忠臣，不能導愚教陋，則名不冠後，實不及世矣。史起非不知化也，以忠於主也。魏襄王可謂能決善矣。誠能決善，眾雖誼譁而弗為變。功之難立也，其必由啣邪。國之殘亡，亦猶此也。故啣啣之中，不可不味也。中主以之啣啣也止善，賢主以之啣啣也立功。

## Appendix B

### Translation of Ximen Bao Passage from the *Han Feizi* (韓非子) in the “Observing Deeds” (觀行) Section.<sup>2</sup>

Men of antiquity, because their eyes stopped short of self-seeing, used mirrors to look at their faces; because their wisdom stopped short of self-knowing, they took Dao to rectify their characters. The mirror had no guilt of making scars seen; Dao had no demerit of making faults clear. Without the mirror, the eyes had no other means to rectify the whiskers and eyebrows; without Dao, the person had no other way to know infatuation and bewilderment. For the same reason, Ximen Bao, being quick-tempered, purposely wore hide on his feet to make himself slow; Dong Anyu, being slow-minded, wore bowstrings on his feet to make himself quick. Therefore, the ruler who augments scarcity with abundance and makes up for his weaknesses with his strengths is called “an intelligent sovereign.”

#### Original Chinese Text

古之人目短於自見，故以鏡觀面；智短於自知，故以道正己。故鏡無見疵之罪，道無明過之怨。目失鏡則無以正鬚眉，身失道則無以知迷惑。西門豹之性急，故佩韋以自緩；董安于之心緩，故佩弦以自急。故以有餘補不足，以長續短之謂明主。

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<sup>2</sup> Translation with slight amendments from, W.K. Liao, *The Complete Works of Han Fei Tzu, Volume I*. Translated by W.K. Liao. (London: Arthur Probsthain 1939). Accessed online: <http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/saxon/servlet/SaxonServlet?source=xwomen/texts/hanfei.xml&style=xwomen/xsl/dynaxml.xsl&chunk.id=d2.24&toc.depth=1&toc.id=0&doc.lang=bilingual> (July 26, 2010).

## Appendix C

### Translation of Ximen Bao Passage from the *Huainanzi* (淮南子) in the “Discourses on Human Affairs” (人間訓) Section<sup>3</sup>

Some are incriminated yet may be rewarded  
Some have merit yet may be incriminated

[When] Ximen Bao administered Ye,

no millet was gathered in the granaries;  
no money was collected in the storehouses;  
no armor or weapons was [stored] in the armory;  
there were no planning meeting among the officials.

People spoke several times to Marquis Wen [of Wei] about [Ximen Bao's] oversights. Marquis Wen went personally to the district, and indeed it was as people said. Marquis Wen said, “Di Huang appointed you to bring order to Ye, and it is greatly disordered. If you can lead, then do so. If you cannot, I will punish you.” Ximen Bao said, “I have heard that

‘a kingly ruler enriches the people;  
A hegemonic ruler enriches the military;  
A lost state enriches the storehouses.’

Not because you want to be hegemon or king, I have accumulated materials among the people. If you do not believe it is so, please let me mount the wall and beat the drum. Armor, weapons, millet, and grain can be immediately produced.” At this he mounted the wall and beat the drum. At the first drum roll, the people donned armor, grabbed arrows, and came out carrying weapons and bows. At the second drum roll, [the people] came pushing handcarts loaded with millet. Marquis Wen said, “Stand them down.” Ximen Bao said, “Entering this bond of trust with the people has not been the work of a single day. If [now] you muster them falsely [even] once, you will not be able to use them again. Yan has occupied eight of Wei's cities. I ask permission to strike north and reclaim our occupied territory.” Thus he raised troops and attacked Yan, returning after reclaiming the territory. This is [an example of] “being incriminated yet worthy of reward.”

Xie Bian was administering the eastern fief and turned in three times what his superior had assessed [as his revenue]. The court officers asked that he be rewarded. Marquis Wen said, “My territory has gotten no bigger; my people have not grown more numerous. How has he tripled revenue?” They replied, “In winter he cuts wood and collects it; in spring he floats it downriver to be sold.” Marquis Wen said, “The people use their effort in the spring to plow; they use their strength in the summer to plant; in the autumn they harvest. To make them also cut and store wood [and] carry and ship logs during the winter [when] they have no tasks is to refuse the people rest. If the people are exhausted, what use will even triple revenue be to me? This is “to have merit and yet be [worthy] of incrimination”

<sup>3</sup> Translation with slight amendments by, John S. Major, Sarah A. Queen, et al. trans. *The Huainanzi: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China, Liu An King of Huainan*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), pp. 733-734.

### Original Chinese Text

“或有罪而可賞也，或有功而可罪也。西門豹治鄴，廩無積粟，府無儲錢，庫無甲兵，官無計會，人數言其過於文侯。文侯身行其縣，果若人言。文侯曰：“翟璜任子治鄴，而大亂。子能道則可，不能，將加誅於子！”西門豹曰：“臣聞王主富民，霸主富武，亡國富庫。今王欲為霸王者也，臣故稽積於民。君以為不然，臣請升城鼓之，甲兵粟米，可立具也。”於是乃升城而鼓之。一鼓，民被甲括矢，操兵弩而出；再鼓，負輦粟而至。文侯曰：“罷之。”西門豹曰：“與民約信，非一日之積也。一舉而欺之，後不可複用也。燕常侵魏入城，臣請北擊之，以複侵地。”遂舉兵擊燕，複地而後反。此有罪而可賞者也。解扁為東封，上計而入三倍。有司請賞之。文侯曰：“吾土地非益廣也，人民非益眾也，入何以三倍？”對曰：“以冬伐木而積之，於春浮之河而鬻之。”文侯曰：“民春以力耕，暑以強耘，秋以收斂，冬間無事，以伐林而積之，負輦而浮之河。是用民不得休息也，民以敝矣。雖有三倍之入，將焉用之！”此有功而可罪者也。”

## Appendix D

### Translation of the Ximen Bao Passage from the *Shuo Yuan* (說苑) in the “Principles of Government” (政理) Section<sup>4</sup>

When The Marquis Wen of Wei dispatched Ximen Bao to govern over Ye he told him, “You must go and gain merit and a name for yourself.” Ximen Bao responded, “I venture to ask, what is the [best method] to gain merit and name for oneself?” Wen Hou responded, “You are leaving sir! In every locality there are the virtuous, the powerful, the intelligent and the knowledgeable, there are also people who delight in disclosing other’s evil and concealing other’s goodness. You must seek out the virtuous and establish a close relationship with them. Take those who are intelligent and knowledgeable as your mentors. Distinguish between those who disclose others evil and conceals others goodness, and investigate and observe. You must not rely solely on what they say. What you hear is never as good as and what you can see; what you can see is never as good as investigating into matters yourself. Investigating into matters yourself is never as good as managing affairs. When one first becomes an official it is like entering into a dimly lit room. The longer you stay in the room gradually the more that you can see. Only with such clear sight can you bring forth good governance, and only through good governance can affairs be brought into order.”

#### Original Chinese Text

魏文侯使西門豹往治於鄴，告之曰：“必全功成名布義” 豹曰：“敢問全功成名布義為之奈何？” 文侯曰：“子往矣！是無邑不有賢豪辨博者也，無邑不有好揚人之惡，蔽人之善者也。往必問豪賢者，因而親之；其辨博者，因而師之；問其好揚人之惡，蔽人之善者，因而察之，不可以特聞從事。夫耳聞之不如目見之，目見之不如足踐之，足踐之不如手辨之；人始入官，如入晦室，久而愈明，明乃治，治乃行。

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<sup>4</sup> Translation by author. Liu Xiang, *Shuo Yuan* 說苑, [*Garden of Sayings*] Modern Reprint, *Shuo yuan quan yi* 說苑全譯 [*the Shuo Yuan with complete notes*] (Guiyang: Gui zhou ren min chu ban she, 1992), 282.

## Appendix E

### Translation of Ximen Bao Passage from the *Shi ji* (史記) in the Biographies of Cunning Officials (滑稽列傳) Section<sup>5</sup>

During the time of the Marquis Wen of Wei, Ximen Bao was appointed to govern over Ye. Soon after [Ximen] Bao arrived in Ye, he held a meeting with the village elders and asked them to explain the root of the people's suffering. The village elders said that Ye's hardships and impoverishment came from [the local custom of finding] a wife for He Bo [the local river deity]. [Ximen] Bao inquired further. The village elders stated that "the District Elder" (三老) and the inspector (挺掾) regularly applied levy taxes on the locals, which totaled several million [cash]. [Of this money] two or three hundred thousand [cash] was put towards the [local custom] of marrying a wife to He Bo and the rest was divided among the Shamans [who presided over this practice].

When the time of the ceremony approached the Shamans would inspect lesser households for suitable women [and when they found one] they would proclaim her a suitably graceful candidate to be offered to He Bo as his wife. She would then be washed, adorned in beautiful ceremonial silk and then placed in a ceremonial-house where she would fast in solitude. [Following this] a richly colored red tent would be built along the banks of the river and the woman would be placed therein. A sacrificial ox, alcohol and food were prepared and [they were all] carried in procession for ten or more days. [Finally] her face was adorned with white powder and she was ordered to sit down on a nuptial bed made of reeds that was then released into the river. After floating down the river for more than ten *li*, [this nuptial bed] would then sink [into the water].

Families with suitable daughters feared that the Chief Shaman would select their daughter to be married to He Bo and therefore took their daughters and fled the region in great numbers. This practice has gone on for a great time and has left the city depopulated and impoverished. There is a common folk saying among the people that; "If a wife is not found for He Bo, [the river] will rise up and drown all the people."

Ximen Bao said, "Next time that a bride is married to He Bo, when the Three Elders, the shamans and the local worthies are all present, please come and tell me so that I may [also be present] to escort the bride away."

All promised to do so.

When this time arrived, Ximen Bao called a meeting beside the river. The District Elder, subordinate officials, local leaders and local elders were all in attendance along with two to three thousand spectators. The [Chief] Shaman was an old woman already in her seventies; lined up behind her were ten disciples, each dressed in plain unadorned silk clothing.

Ximen Bao commanded, "Bring forth the women chosen as He Bo's wife for my examination." The woman was fetched from inside the tent and stationed before him. [Ximen] Bao looked at the woman and turned to the Three Elders, the shamans and the local worthies and said, "This woman is not good enough; Chief Shaman would you be so kind as to go into the water and

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<sup>5</sup> In my translation I have consulted, J.J.M De Groot, *The Religious System of China: Its Ancient Forms, Evolution, History and Present Aspect. Manners, Customs and Social Institutions Connected Therewith; Vol VI, Book 11, On the Soul and Ancestral Worship* (Originally published by Brill in six volumes from 1892-1910) Reprint (Taipei: Ch'eng-Wen Publishing Company, 1967), 1196-1198; Sima Qian, "Gua ji lie zhuan" (滑稽列傳) [Amusing Biographies of Virtuous Officials; Number 66], juan 126, *Shi Ji* (史記) [Records of the Grand Historian], modern reprint (Shanghai: Zhong hua shu ju, 1959) Vol. 10, 3211-3213.

directly report to He Bo that we will find a more suitable beauty and deliver it to him another day.” [On these orders] clerks and soldiers lifted the Chief Shaman and threw her into the river. After waiting a few minutes he said, “Why [has this] Shaman been in [the river] for so long? Let one of her disciples go and fetch her.” He then had one disciple cast into the river. After another brief pause he asked, “Why has this disciple been in [the river] for so long? Let another disciple go and fetch her.” He then flung another disciple into the river. After three more disciples were cast into the river in the same manner, Ximen Bao said, “These shamans are merely women who are unable to deliver the message; let the district elder go into the water to deliver the message!” He too was cast into the river.

Ximen Bao put his writing brush into his hair and leaned towards the river for some time. The local elders, the clerks and the spectators were all horror-stricken. Ximen Bao [then turned and] faced them and said, “The shamans and the Local Elder have not yet returned, leaving me no alternatives. I will now dispatch an official and some local notables into the water to hurry them on.” They all began to kowtow; they kowtowed with such force that blood flowed onto the ground and their facial expressions turned to the death-like white color of dying embers. Ximen Bao said, “Good, let us all wait here for a moment.” When time elapsed, he said, “Officials, rise! It seems that He Bo has retained his visitors for so long so that they will never return; [we can all] leave now!” The officials and people of Ye were so terrified that from that moment on they never dared speak again of the [custom of the] offering a bride to He Bo.

Ximen Bao *then* mobilized the people to chisel twelve irrigation ditches to channel the water from the river and irrigate the people's fields; all of the fields were irrigated. At the time people felt a little bit bothered by the project and its annoyances. [Ximen] Bao said, “[It is easy] to share happiness with people after things have been done but hard to ponder over things with them at the very beginning. Although now the elder and juniors [in this area] hate me [for this project], they will recall my words today one hundred years later.”

Up until now [i.e. the time when Sima Qian wrote this biography], the people have all benefited from the water and have ample abundance. At the time of the founding of the Han, the twelve channels cut off the imperial road. A superior official [in the county] considered building bridges over the twelve channels that cut off the imperial highway, [but realized that they] would all be too close to each other and thus not a tenable project. [Therefore, he] planned to merge and combine the water into three channels and construct [only] one bridge when the channels approach the imperial highway. [However] commoners and elders in Ye declined to accept the officer's [suggestion], saying that [the channels] were constructed by Sir Ximen and that the model established by such a virtuous man could not be altered. Eventually, the officer gave up on his plan. Therefore, when serving as the magistrate of Ye, Ximen Bao made his reputation known to all people and his acts benefited later generations without end. How could he not be called a good official?

### Original Chinese Text

魏文侯時，西門豹為鄴令。豹往到鄴，會長老，問之民所疾苦。長老曰：“苦為河伯娶婦，以故貧。”豹問其故，對曰：“鄴三老、廷掾常歲賦斂百姓，收取其錢得數百萬，用其二三十萬為河伯娶婦，與祝巫共分其餘錢持歸。當其時，巫行視小家女好者，雲是當為河伯婦，即娉取。洗沐之，為治新繒綺縠衣，間居齋戒；為治齋宮河上，張緹絳帷，女居其中。為具牛酒飯食，十餘日。共粉飾之，如嫁女床席，令女居其上，浮之河中。始浮，行數十裏乃沒。其人家有好女者，恐大巫祝為河伯取之，以故多持女遠逃亡。以故城中益空無人，又困貧，所從來久遠矣。民人俗語曰

‘即不為河伯娶婦，水來漂沒，溺其人民’雲。”西門豹曰：“至為河伯娶婦時，原三老、巫祝、父老送女河上，幸來告語之，吾亦往送女。”皆曰：“諾。”

至其時，西門豹往會之河上。三老、官屬、豪長者、裏父老皆會，以人民往觀之者三二千人。其巫，老女子也，已年七十。從弟子女十人所，皆衣繒單衣，立大巫後。西門豹曰：“呼河伯婦來，視其好醜。”即將女出帷中，來至前。豹視之，顧謂三老、巫祝、父老曰：“是女子不好，煩大巫嫗為入報河伯，得更求好女，後日送之。”即使吏卒共抱大巫嫗投之河中。有頃，曰：“巫嫗何久也？弟子趣之！”複以弟子一人投河中。有頃，曰：“弟子何久也？複使一人趣之！”複投一弟子河中。凡投三弟子。西門豹曰：“巫嫗弟子是女子也，不能白事，煩三老為入白之。”複投三老河中。西門豹簪筆磬折，鄉河立待良久。長老、吏傍觀者皆驚恐。西門豹顧曰：“巫嫗、三老不來還，奈之何？”欲複使廷掾與豪長者一人入趣之。皆叩頭，叩頭且破，額血流地，色如死灰。西門豹曰：“諾，且留待之須臾。”須臾，豹曰：“廷掾起矣。狀河伯留客之久，若皆罷去歸矣。”鄴吏民大驚恐，從是以後，不敢複言為河伯娶婦。

西門豹即發民鑿十二渠，引河水灌民田，田皆溉。當其時，民治渠少煩苦，不欲也。豹曰：“民可以樂成，不可與慮始。今父老子弟雖患苦我，然百歲後期令父老子孫思我言。”至今皆得水利，民人以給足富。十二渠經絕馳道，到漢之立，而長吏以為十二渠橋絕馳道，相比近，不可欲合渠水，且至馳道合三渠為一橋。鄴民人父老不肯聽長吏，以為西門君所為也，賢君之法式不可更也。長吏終聽置之。故西門豹為鄴令，名聞天下，澤流後世，無絕已時，幾可謂非賢大夫哉！”

## Appendix F

### Translation of Yu Xin's "A Poem for the Ximen Bao Temple" (西門豹廟詩)<sup>6</sup>

The perfect gentleman manifests virtue widely;  
The successful person establishes virtue deeply.  
Sacrificial offerings emerging from the reeds;  
Firewood has fortunately not yet been encroached upon.  
Respectfully making known the upright ministers' sacrifices;  
The good natured recognize sincere admonitions from the heart.  
Though years have passed, its scope and appearance still exist;  
Those with high reputation can still be discerned.  
Offerings of chrysanthemum followed by fragrant wine;  
Shadows from the locust tree bend towards the window.  
Flying Cranes hesitatingly dance in unison;  
Fish are startled by the sound of the zither.  
The flowing Zhang waters cry out as they pass over stone steps;  
Bronze wine cups reflect the autumn forest.

### Original Chinese Text

君子為利博  
達人樹德深  
蘋藻由斯薦  
樵蘇幸未侵  
恭聞正臣祀  
良識佩韋心  
容範雖年代  
徽猷若可尋  
菊花隨酒馥  
槐影向窗臨  
鶴飛疑逐舞  
魚驚似聽琴  
漳流鳴磴石  
銅爵影秋林

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<sup>6</sup> Translation by author. Yu Xin, ed. *Yu zi shan ji* 庾子山集 [*Collected Works of Yu Xin*], Northern Zhou period (557-581). Modern reprint, Ni Fan 倪璠, ed. *Yu zi shan ji zhu* 子山集注 [*Collected Commentaries on the Collected Works of Yu Xin*] (Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1980), vol. 1, pp. 304.

Appendix G

Historical Chart of Changing Juridictions for Anyang and Linzhang Counties.<sup>7</sup>

縣 漳 臨	縣 陽 安	治 專 員	
郡 縣 治	地 善 陰 縣	郡 會 侯	兩 漢
郡 縣	地 內 黃 縣	屬 魏 郡 後 漢 省	三 國
郡 縣 治 興 初 更 名 臨 漳 年 後	屬 魏 郡 安 陽 縣	屬 魏 郡	晉 宋 附
郡 縣 治 興 初 更 名 臨 漳 年 後	屬 魏 郡 安 陽 縣	屬 魏 郡	魏
郡 縣 治 興 初 更 名 臨 漳 年 後	屬 魏 郡 安 陽 縣	屬 魏 郡	齊 周
郡 縣 治 興 初 更 名 臨 漳 年 後	屬 魏 郡 安 陽 縣	屬 魏 郡	隋
郡 縣 治 興 初 更 名 臨 漳 年 後	屬 魏 郡 安 陽 縣	屬 魏 郡	唐
郡 縣 治 興 初 更 名 臨 漳 年 後	屬 魏 郡 安 陽 縣	屬 魏 郡	五 代
郡 縣 治 興 初 更 名 臨 漳 年 後	屬 魏 郡 安 陽 縣	屬 魏 郡	宋
郡 縣 治 興 初 更 名 臨 漳 年 後	屬 魏 郡 安 陽 縣	屬 魏 郡	金 元
郡 縣 治 興 初 更 名 臨 漳 年 後	屬 魏 郡 安 陽 縣	屬 魏 郡	明
郡 縣 治 興 初 更 名 臨 漳 年 後	屬 魏 郡 安 陽 縣	屬 魏 郡	清

<sup>7</sup> Reworked from two sections of the, n.a., *Henan sheng qu xian yange jianbiao* 河南省區縣沿革簡表 [Simplified Chart of County Evolution in Henan Province] n.d., Republican era 1912-1949 (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1968).